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ARTS

THEATRE AND FILM

MUSICAL LIFE

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RESPONDING TO A CHALLENGE

Many readers will no doubt miss the *In Focus* section. Let me assure them that it will return in the next issue and that, it is in any case only as it were formally absent in the current one: most of the regular contributors to it took part in a conversation with Zsófia Zachár, the editor responsible for *In Focus*, the text of which figures at the front of the paper under the heading "The Challenge of Modernisation."

At meetings of the Editorial Board and editorial conferences the most burning current issues in Hungary—that are frequently touchy for one reason or another—are mentioned again and again as suitable subjects for articles but it is difficult to find authors who are both ready to tackle them and are also able to do them justice. The informal nature of the get-together of the *In Focus* contributors and the give and take of conversation created the sort of atmosphere which permitted dealing with even the most complex questions, carried away by the impetus granted by living speech.

"The Challenge of Modernisation" is the right heading since that is precisely what Hungary today has to respond to, be it in administration and management, in production and the economy generally, in culture, and in daily life as well. How can what is specific to Hungary, aspects that enjoy international recognition, be taken forward in a way that will exploit the achievement of the technological revolution as well as the requirements of modern democratic change.

Participants were Rudolf Andorka, a sociologist, Tamás Hofer, an ethnographer, Mihály Laki, an economist, György Litván, an historian, and András Sajó, a lawyer. An understanding of the present demands both a knowledge of the historical background and an awareness of the prospects. Let me just mention, to indicate how much attitudes have changed, that the study of history in the fifties and sixties showed two approaches in confrontation, József Révai's "national dogmatism," that stressed past strivings for independence, and Erik Molnár's view, which identified nationalism as the major danger. On the other hand a sound judgement of the immediate past is made more difficult by the survival of a number of people who then

had a major hand in the shaping of events. A key issue is the way sociologists in the mid-eighties see the social changes of the recent past. What was the nature of Hungarian peasant society at the start, in 1945, how did agriculture and rural society change, contributing to the transformation of society as such, what were the consequences of the forced industrialisation of the fifties which the economic reform which started at the end of the sixties had to reckon with... These are only some of the questions discussed.

All that was said about the challenge of modernisation implied that a proper response required the necessary conditions for peaceful progress. Gyula Horn, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, discusses its position and prospects in his "Détente and Confrontation in East–West Relations." Following a historical survey, he deals with the immediate past, that is with the situation and significance of détente with special reference to the position after the Geneva summit and anticipating the next meeting of the leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States. As Gyula Horn argues, keeping confrontation within as narrow limits as possible and maintaining and further developing détente is in the vital interest of a small and open country like Hungary. In the Hungarian view the preservation of peace is implied not merely by foreign policy commitments but also by tradition, geopolitical considerations and the absolute needs of the economy. István Sőtér in his "Europe, our common home" supports this attitude with literary arguments. He links up national consciousness and an awareness of being European, patriotic sentiments and a sense of European identity with a discussion of European culture and literature. According to Sőtér, Europe will maintain its significance as long as it can maintain its cultural strength. He concludes with the hope that, since there is an awareness of being European, there ought to be a European solidarity as well.

There is much of economic importance in *NHQ* 102. "The Hungarian Economy in the World," by Vera Nyitrai, the President of the Central Office of Statistics, as it were serves as a foundation, presenting, as it does, the development of Hungarian agriculture and industry in an international context. This far from long article, with all the indices it gives, comparing them with international data, can truly be described as a small compendium of the present social and economic situation in Hungary. It in a way underlines the long-term importance of what Professor József Bognár has to say about the changing role of foreign trade in the progress of socialist society. According to him, notions regarding the world economic situation around the year 2000 which adequately deal with the problems of survival and progress—not neglecting the aspect of mutual dependence—have not yet been worked

out by socialist economists and social scientists generally. Professor Bognár draws attention to the much greater importance of foreign economic relations in an age of intensive economic development, and then outlines an export-oriented model. What he has to say, though based on the Hungarian situation, is valid for international economic relations generally.

János Fekete's "The crisis of the monetary system" discusses the principles and practical possibilities of a reform of the international monetary system. The text is based on an address which the Senior Vice-President of the Hungarian National Bank originally gave to an international gathering of bankers in Washington D.C. and later, owing to the considerable international interest, repeated at a symposium in Vienna.

An article by László Somfai is sure to be read with close attention by all those interested in music. It was argued, particularly in the fifties, that the works of Liszt's old age considerably influenced the young Bartók. Going back to the documents, and paying close attention to chronology, Somfai shows that this could not have been the case since Bartók only became familiar with these works much later.

Even those in other countries who fancy themselves as connoisseurs of Hungarian literature will be surprised by the excerpt from a novel by Miklós Szentkuthy which we print in this issue. Szentkuthy is part of an aspect in Hungarian literature that can certainly not be described as the mainstream, which was powerfully influenced by Joyce and Proust though no one would dare call Szentkuthy an epigone, and which paradoxically gave rise to a new tradition which is very much alive today. Irén Kiss wrote an account of a Lukács symposium held in Rome which offers additional proof of Lukács's international importance and the influence his works have on current disputes in philosophy, the social sciences and literary criticism.

László Kálnoky, the poet, was of considerable importance in the literary life of his time. He died recently. He is presented through his own poems, in Edwin Morgan's translation. Balázs Lengyel discusses his life and works in a highly perceptive article.

THE EDITOR

THE CHALLENGE OF MODERNISATION

Rudolf Andorka, Tamás Hofer, Mihály Laki, György Litván, András Sajó
in conversation with Zsófia Zachár

The *In Focus* section has been part of this journal since the Summer 1982 issue. Regular contributors present articles of their choice which have appeared in Hungarian scientific periodicals. The editor in charge of the section, who arranged the discussion printed below had a double purpose in mind. She hoped for subjects which could be presented concisely, in a manner that was, if possible, both intelligible and enjoyable, which would offer information, sometimes adding a touch of colour. Being able to include gems such as the story of the portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds which—according to a report by an informer of the Court in Vienna had become a political symbol to the Hungarian nobility at the end of the eighteenth century—was a special joy but the intention to make clear the economic and social changes of recent years as reflected in scholarly publications was also always present. That the social scientists concerned did not shrink back from controversy and forcibly argued their point, was an additional consideration. For at least twenty years now the work of Hungarian sociologists and economists has enjoyed the close attention of the general public and many an issue became the subject of debates that outgrew disciplinary or even interdisciplinary limits. To give just one example: the declining birth rate studied by demographers and economists, with all its implications, touched a raw spot in public opinion, which has been much concerned with the fate of a nation that has suffered dispersal.

Historians have played a growing part in these debates, and not only because they have re-examined the great Hungarian traumas of the century, but also because they have increasingly made it their business to cleanse historical writings of spurious ideologies—all the way from the history of proto-Hungarians to the relationship to the Habsburg Monarchy—thus helping people towards a sober and critical view of history, supported by evidence and arguments. The general periodicals which offer more and more space to

descriptive sociology, economics and historical documents prove that not only scientists and scholars but the general public as well would like to understand the present by making use of the experience of the past, just as people today are aware that economic decisions which appear desirable may upset the social equilibrium of society, or may well be against their own interests.

The subject of this conversation is thus the interwoven pattern of contemporary Hungarian social and economic processes. The support of other disciplines besides sociology and economics has been enlisted since important contributions to an understanding of Hungarian society have been made by ethnographers, and since present economic and social processes can hardly be understood apart from their institutional, i.e. legal projections and, indeed this is the starting point of this conversation, there is great need for a historical perspective today when issues of general interest are discussed.

The participants are well known to readers of *In Focus:* Rudolf Andorka, a sociologist, Tamás Hofer, an ethnographer, Mihály Laki, an economist, György Litván, a historian, and András Sajó, a student of law.

GYÖRGY LITVÁN: The demand for a historic background and perspective is powerful indeed, and it is so for two reasons. A growing number of people would like to see and understand more clearly the path travelled, the twists and turns, achievements and tripwires of twentieth-century Hungarian history. In addition, I believe that after the Second World War a similar process occurred in Hungarian historical thinking as occurred generally in society and in the economy. It was obvious after 1945 that great changes had to be made and new beginnings had to take place, but this process of renewal was distorted as were similar processes in politics, in the economy, and in the social structure. Instead of open discussion and confrontation with the facts, that is, instead of an organic rebirth, an entirely new approach to history was decreed in 1948–49, as it were wiping the slate clean, an approach which was forced on the public, using the educational system, the press and radio and the means of agitprop. What happened was that the pre-1945 insufficiently worked-out Social Democratic and Communist ideological approach to history, which had served its purpose as part of the political propaganda of the labour movement, including exaggerated emphasis on the class-struggle, was applied to the whole of Hungarian history. On the other hand, an arbitrary selection led to the construction of an independence tradition within Hungarian history which did not lack foundation, but was certainly overemphasized and grossly distorted. A genealogy of heroes and ancestors was created from György Dózsa, leader of a peasant rebellion in 1514, through Ferenc II Rákóczi and Lajos Kossuth to the twentieth century, who confronted unequivocal devils, exploiters, reactionaries, clerics, and...

ZSÓFIA ZACHÁR: *Traitors...*

GYÖRGY LITVÁN: Indeed, traitors. It is interesting how two dogmatic trends that contradicted each other in many ways met and clashed. One was József Révai's "national dogmatism" equipped with an official character, which spectacularly tried to link up the class-struggle approach with the idea of independence. As against this, the internationalist dogmatic trend, of which Erik Molnár was the most prominent representative did away with the idea of independence and identified the main danger as nationalism itself. The latter achieved a semi-official status in the sixties. Both agreed in depicting the entire recent past, that is the Horthy era and especially the period of the Second World War, and of course also the decades preceding it, as the age of pure and absolute evil, for which Hungarians had to do penance after the Second World War. The Rákosi and Révai political and ideological leadership wanted to keep this guilty conscience alive for ever and ever.

Those who had returned from exile were, of course, free of guilt, and consequently they could represent this guilty people before the progressive nations and serve some of its interests, as long as the people behaved itself. It is obvious what the power and political objectives of this notion of a guilty conscience were. This of course gave rise to reactions in the public which can be felt even today, many years later, since it is obvious that the Hungarians could not believe such things about themselves. This has then had from the sixties a wholesome—but sometimes understandably exaggerated—reaction.

ZSÓFIA ZACHÁR: *Historians certainly began to regain a lost credibility by raising these questions again. But are they capable of judging the recent past?*

GYÖRGY LITVÁN: I hope that they are capable of doing so to some degree. This is the universal problem of historians. They have certainly proved in the past, say, twenty years—even if not spectacularly—that they were capable of a renewal, climbing out of this completely distorted, false and spurious approach of the fifties. Of course, this may have been done at the cost of other exaggerations. In the sixties historians finally began to concentrate on realism, serious comparative research, economic history, genuine social history, more thorough research, but again at the expense of neglecting completely the national aspects, and not the unchallenged judgement of the recent past, of the forties and the antecedents of the Second World War. It was through the critique and self-criticism of this time that a nationally much more self-conscious, and at the same time truer picture of Hungary's recent past has taken shape in recent years.

A kind of national self-rehabilitation—basically fully justified—began there, at the start, initiated not really by the historians but by writers and erstwhile participants. The latter included the little men, foot-soldiers,

NCOs and junior officers, who in the documentary film *Drumfire* told how they had at the time been driven to the eastern front and how a hundred thousand soldiers of the second Hungarian Army had been driven to certain death to serve German ends. Former officers of field rank and diplomats also had their say in memoirs or in interviews. They told the story of attempts to get out of the war, of anti-fascist organizations, of help given to great numbers of Polish refugees, officers and men, to French prisoners of war, and as a result—of course sometimes with nationalist overtones or an understandable but exaggerated emphasis on self-justification—they put something in place. It was gradually accepted that members of the former ruling or middle classes were not all fascists or blood-sucking monsters, and that they or their children could be useful members of society in the changed world as well. In other words, we are proceeding in a meandering way towards a realistic, less schematic appreciation of the various periods, sections of society and their representatives.

ZSÓFIA ZACHÁR: *The aggressive and over-ideologised approach of the fifties left lasting marks on thinking about history. At the time there was a radical desire to restratify society. What is the balance-sheet of these years? How would you as a Hungarian sociologist in the mid-eighties evaluate the social changes of the time?*

RUDOLF ANDORKA: Indeed, after Liberation a number of political interventions occurred into the social structure which aimed at its radical transformation. These included the land reform, which abolished the landowner class. The nationalisation of the industrial and commercial firms, banks, mines, etc. abolished the Hungarian capitalist class. The collectivisation of agriculture turned peasant individual proprietors into cooperative members. These measures indeed transformed a backward capitalist society into a socialist society.

At the same time, some characteristics of Hungarian social stratification have survived, or have changed only very slowly. When Hungarian sociology was resurrected in the early 1960s and sociologists began to survey this changed society, it was found that the dividing line between white-collar and manual workers, as well as the gap between the peasantry and industrial and other non-agricultural workers have survived. Those in executive position and professional people were at the apex of a social hierarchy based on incomes and the living conditions, and those working in agriculture were still at the bottom. A trade or its absence meant a big difference among workers. Although social differences were smaller than before the Liberation, they survived and their trend had not changed either.

The surveys of the seventies and eighties indicated that substantial changes had occurred bit by bit. But this did not happen as the intended con-

sequence of the political interventions mentioned but rather as an indirect effect, as well as under the influence of economic and social changes. As an example I could mention the slow but very considerable improvement in the situation of the peasantry which has taken place since the mid-1960s. People working on the land caught up with urban industrial workers in incomes and their living conditions also improved. The immediate reasons for this were considerable investments in agriculture following collectivisation—intended to prevent a drop in agricultural production—as a result of which productivity rose considerably, and the authorization and then the stimulation of household plot farming, which produced a sizeable extra income at the expense of much more extra work. The peasantry did not welcome the collectivisation of agriculture with undiluted joy, indeed the first wave of collectivisation in the early 1950s proved very painful, and it cannot be said really that the main goals of the second wave of collectivisation in 1960–61 were the raising of the income of the peasantry and the improvement of its living conditions (although these undoubtedly figured among the declared objectives), nevertheless these more or less spontaneous processes largely contributed to the present situation which shows that the gaps between those working on the land and other sections of society has been narrowed.

ZSÓFIA ZACHÁR: *The situation of the peasantry was of course crucial at the start of the post-war period. Were the agricultural producers peasants in the* rotraditional *sense?*

TAMÁS HOFER: The overwhelming majority of the agricultural population still carried on what was subsistence farming or worked in family units. Tilling the soil and harvesting relied on human effort and the power of horses and bullocks. Country-roads were busy with horse-drawn traffic. Noble pampered horses had their place in the prestige order of villages, and I should say they had a distinguished place in the peasant value system. The dramatic change accompanying the reorganization of agriculture was summed up as "farewell to the horses" by many a novel and story.

But only a minority of villagers owned their own draught animals. The majority were smallholders, and to supplement their income undertook share-cropping, or worked for wages on estates or larger peasant farms, on occasion temporarily in towns. The landless were day-labourers all the year around, often away from home. It was they who made up the three million beggars, of whom only a few managed to get jobs in industry of sufficient permanency to change their way of life. In 1941 they accounted for nearly one third of the population, and it was they who claimed, and were given, land in 1945. Thus village communities were highly structured and there were

great differences of wealth and income. With the exception of some regions where there were flourishing orchards and market gardens, pig fattening in a big way, or dairy farming, most of the peasant farms, with no capital to invest had to fight for mere survival.

Another way is to study the symbolic manifestations of the peasant way of life in their dress, the songs they sang, and wedding and other customs. Paradoxically, and contrary to general belief, these colourful and varied forms developed rather late. In the centuries of feudalism the peasants lead a simple life. It was only when the industrial revolution reached Central Europe, and the influence of urbanisation reached the peasantry of the peripheral regions, including Hungary, in the last century that dress, the furnishing of houses and festive customs became more elaborate. The peasants as well took part in the market economy. They sold surplus produce and were able to pay for the products of craftsmen and manufactures that they could not afford earlier; they paid the piper and called the tune, that is musicians played the music the peasants wanted. This "golden age" of the peasantry—as it is called by Swedish ethnologists—was characteristic in all the peripheral regions of Europe. In some places it began earlier and in others later, and it generally lasted for approximately a hundred years. Folklore studies and ethnography came into being and the creative work of this period was collected in the first place. In Hungary this flourishing period had already ended by the time of the Great War. In the forties colourful folk costumes were worn in fewer and fewer villages.

The Hungarian peasantry was somewhere half-way between that of Central and Eastern Europe, or rather the Balkan peninsula, perhaps closer to the latter. Thus in the forties approximately one half of the working population of Hungary worked on the land and the overwhelming majority of that population were peasants. In Central Europe this ratio was between 20 and 30 per cent, or even below it, but in the Balkans or southern Poland it was as high as 70–80 per cent. Similar differences were present in the size of farms. Compared to Swiss or Austrian conditions, the Hungarian peasant farms were very small, but still in a better position than in South Poland or in some parts of Rumania. The latter, however, could boast of a living folk and still creative culture while in Hungary ethnographers were only able to question old people about this or that old tune.

ZSÓFIA ZACHÁR: *What was the link between the backwardness of the peasantry and the gap between town and country?*

RUDOLF ANDORKA: Budapest was a European metropolis between the wars. In Gyula Illyés's metaphor it was a magic palace spinning on high, while the country, the people could perhaps be said to be living below the

ground. The unequal settlement structure was the legacy of the past. After the *Ausgleich* of 1867 the Hungarian governments deliberately tried to develop Budapest as an equal of Vienna, at the expense of the great provincial centres. It was a huge loss that, after the Great War, almost all the larger and older towns, which were in Northern Hungary and in Transylvania and its fringes, were lost to neighbouring countries. In the inter-war period, and even after the Liberation, little change occurred in this respect for at least fifteen years; a start on the development of some of the larger provincial centres was made in the 'sixties, that of the remaining county seats followed in the 'seventies and that of some smaller towns later still. Facilities in the great majority of the villages still lag far behind those in the towns.

Around 1945 the majority of the village population, approximately 80 per cent, were peasants. The process as a result of which industrial workers became the majority in the villages started in the sixties. What happened to the peasantry economically in the period preceding the mid-sixties was not unprecedented in Hungary. An attempt was made to accelerate industrial development by taxing away the surplus produce of the peasantry. Indeed it was the peasantry that paid for industrialisation. Much the same had happened after the *Ausgleich* of 1867, and the same was tried in the 1920s when Count István Bethlen was Prime Minister.

TAMÁS HOFER: The political folksiness of the 1950s was also called upon to overcome the antagonism between town and country, and to express their brotherhood. That folk art should flourish in a socialist society was made a political requirement and in a period when as living practice it survived in villages only in scattered places and frequently in a decadent fashion. The searchlight was turned on surviving craftsmen and they were encouraged to trump the luxuriant ornamentation of a folk art past its prime. Folk dance groups were formed in factories and offices, which staged choreographed and stylized folk dances on political festivities. There were smiles on the faces of the dancers, since they had to exude the optimism and unity of the people. For the 60th birthday of Mátyás Rákosi gifts were made in the entire country, and these were shown at a huge exhibition in Budapest, for instance, beautifully embroidered red boots were made as a gift for him by a country cobbler. In contrast to this official, optimistically glittering and artificial interpretation of folk traditions, the young people of the 1970s returned spontaneously to the more archaic community forms of peasant culture. They come together within the dance house movement not to stage spectacles, but to dance for their own enjoyment to tunes played on old peasant instruments and to experience the festive sharing of ceremonies.

ZSÓFIA ZACHÁR: *What legacy did the forced economic development of the fifties leave to the economic reform?*

MIHÁLY LAKI: The toughest measures changing the economic structure occurred approximately between 1949 and 1953, but I cannot agree with those economic historians who condense things on the fifties, and attempt to describe preceding and succeeding periods as sharply distinct, looking on the last thirty years as a steady run up to the economic reform. Forms of economic management were developed already between 1945 and 1949, and even before 1945 which came into full flower in the fifties. On the other hand, some tendencies were continued also after 1956 and 1968. To give an example: during the war state intervention in industry had become more frequent, instruments restricting the market, such as the compulsory procurement of agricultural produce, were applied from 1943–44. What was most important in 1949, in addition to the forced industrialisation and the creation of large units in agriculture, was nationalisation. Since then the state has controlled all capital over a considerable part of the economy, including of course the overwhelming majority in industry. Moreover the bulk of the old urban bourgeoisie and its property was integrated in industrial cooperatives or nationalised. Contrary tendencies have come about only in recent years. Another thing that the economic reform inherited was an over-centralised state sector, as well as the forced development of already declining industries, contrary to worldwide trends and the progress of technology. Hungary was to become a country of iron and steel at a time when precision engineering and telecommunications should and could have been given priority.

A demand for reform was not the brain child of economists at the end of the sixties; from even the mid-fifties on members of the intelligentsia had discussed the need for it. In 1954–55 György Péter formulated the principles which became the law of the land in 1968. If we interpret the reform in János Kornai's terms, that is that the role of the market should increase, replacing bureaucratic control, this had cropped up already in 1957. The government and the party leadership at first rejected such ideas and they were only revived in the mid-sixties in order to overcome grave economic difficulties.

RUDOLF ANDORKA: It has become fashionable among Hungarian sociologists in recent years to identify not only the post-1945 period but already the one hundred to one hundred and twenty years preceding it as attempts to modernise the Hungarian economy and society, attempts which sometimes ended in failure and sometimes succeeded in a half-hearted way. In 1945 it was necessary to start from scratch, and try again to put this

country on its feet. At first this attempt, which lasted ten to fifteen years, undoubtedly achieved substantial results, since the country became industrialised. By the end of the fifties and beginning of sixties the agrarian over-population which had been a grave problem before and during the inter-war period was no longer an issue and in other respects too Hungary took great strides towards a modern society, although at a very high cost. Social problems accumulated, and political tensions grew apace. Manpower reserves were exhausted. Finally the road became impassable and turned into a *cul-de-sac*. The conditions had become ripe for the country to change course, and the introduction of reforms became inevitable. A new impetus was given towards the mid-sixties, but things slowed down at the end of the seventies, and today the fundamental question which Hungarian social scientists ask themselves again whether modernisation has ground to a halt, or will be continued along the promising path on which the country had embarked.

ZSÓFIA ZACHÁR: *All the way from Count István Széchenyi through Oszkár Jászi to our own days many have tried to make sense of Hungarian developments which must be placed, at least in recent centuries, somewhere on the fringe of West European progress.*

GYÖRGY LITVÁN: What I consider most convincing in this context is Jenő Szücs's view. He identifies three historic regions in Europe, and includes Hungary, together with the larger countries of East-Central Europe, in the central region. In the last thousand years it often moved eastwards and westwards, picking up much of the characteristics of both large regions, and consequently it cannot unambiguously be included with either the East European or West European region. In recent centuries the dominant intention and tendency has been to make up for the lag, and join the mainstream of European progress. I believe that the economic and cultural problems we have discussed also indicate the difficulties and obstacles of such a catching up. In one of his articles Kálmán Kulcsár refers to the Bartók model, but it appears that he dodged the horns of the dilemma a bit.

TAMÁS HOFER: I am inclined to argue that Kálmán Kulcsár thinks in terms of a universal centre v. periphery model. When the periphery is faced with the tasks of modernisation, it has to acquire the technologies, institutions, etc. which have already been worked out by the centre. It has to adjust to the more advanced nations. But it must also maintain its own identity, if only to be able to get its own people on their feet, and consequently it must draw on history, on culture, on peasant traditions, seeking symbols of integration that are able to produce enthusiasm from all possible and available sources.

In Hungary, on the eastern marches of Central Europe, turning to folk culture was an obvious course. In recent centuries the culture of the élite had largely followed foreign patterns. Aristocrats often had a sounder knowledge of German and French than of Hungarian. Peasant folk traditions appeared to be more authentic, and it was at this time that their objects, rites, music and so forth reached their peak.

GYÖRGY LITVÁN: These traditions have enjoyed a major role in these countries, and this at the same time creates opportunities for dangerours coalitions between political manipulation and populist navel-gazing and historical illusions. An alliance may come about which is an enemy precisely of modernisation, that is of genuine modernisation. Does not the often mentioned Bartók model, of course only if we contrast it to the Western model—thus really moving away from Bartók—express primarily the idea that we may modernise without liberalism or democracy? That is why I am inclined to identify it as an opportunity for that manipulation in bad faith which I mentioned. Still, the conditions for modernisation are primarily of an economic nature. Was not this precisely the meaning and aim of the reform of economic management?

MIHÁLY LAKI: I would not say this was its real aim since in the early sixties, when preparations for the reform were being discussed, a reorganization was still going on in industry. This increased domination by large organizations. The exhaustion of manpower reserves created a growth crisis in Hungary by the mid-sixties which was not as striking as the present one, but according to the accustomed yardstick a major slowdown had occurred, which in the last resort also endangered the goal of modernisation. Thus it proved possible to persuade the leadership that an economic reform had to be introduced which allots greater importance to market forces than to bureaucratic control. Then in 1972, that is a bare three or four years after the introduction of the reform, a sudden U-turn took place. In the mid-seventies tendencies forcing growth, insisting on further centralised control of the economy and the further enlargement of economic organizations came to the fore. In addition, by 1978–79 the country had become a debtor to such a degree that the goals of modernisation were again in jeopardy. It was then that the need for continuing the economic reform once again became obvious, including the further setting free of market forces.

ZSÓFIA ZACHÁR: *What do economists identify as the causes of the present stagnation and what is their opinion of the chances of recovery?*

MIHÁLY LAKI: A consensus more or less exists among economists that there are too many organizations, firms, cooperatives which do not produce in the Hungarian economy but reduce national income. In other words, they do

not contribute to central funds, but syphon off resources. Since foreign loans cannot be raised and extensive resources are exhausted, such inefficient units must be eliminated, and the manpower and capital released must be invested in places where they promise a profit. No consensus exists, however, on the way this should be done. There are those who imagine this reorganization as a government measure, and trust that, for instance, on the basis of international experience or by other planning methods the points of breakthrough can be marked out where the released capital and manpower can be concentrated, thus accelerating economic growth. Others—and I am inclined to agree with them—argue that the marking out once again of these objectives is associated with high risks, and that a market should be created first, a domestic market, an integrated market, which establishes standards of measurement for resources and achievements. After intensively fitting into the international economic division of labour, the international market would indicate those areas in which the Hungarian economy could operate successfully.

Nor is there a consensus on whether it is permissible to eliminate these inefficient units in a radical way. Those who support market arrangements are afraid that if such measures are taken as part of a kind of campaign, such a strategy will become compromised. There are others of course who simply fear for their jobs, and wish to maintain these inefficient units for this reason. The delays met by proposed bankruptcy legislation, two and a half years already, are a good example. Legislation and decrees regulating the situation of inefficient firms are sorely needed in Hungary.

ZSÓFIA ZACHÁR: *Is it realistic to expect the law to give more support to the economic reform?*

ANDRÁS SAJÓ: The drafting of appropriate legislation is not likely to meet with technical difficulties. The problem, however, is not one of isolated legal measures. The socio-economic processes are often by their nature spontaneous, sometimes independent of any kind of central decision. On the other hand, many wish to carry out modernisation by naturalising the legal system of a country that is considered to be more advanced. In Hungary such notions go back to the nineteenth-century Age of Reform. Legislation was passed which was tailored to considerably more advanced conditions. The Bill of Exchange Act resulted in huge debts instead of triggering off industrial progress as had been hoped in the first half of the nineteenth century. The present situation differs since hardly any structural change has taken place in the institutional system in the course of the various reforms. The administrative system has changed little in practice in recent years. Be the subject economic administration, or the control of other spheres of life,

though there has been some legislation and economic legal security is formally guaranteed—the latter is a current modish expression—legislation offers few guarantees, for instance, against the institutionally vested interests. The administrative system is on its own a match for even the most efficient bankruptcy law, if such were to exist. The autonomy of the state-owned firms has recurrently figured in legislation since 1967, but always allowing for exceptions. But it is not on this level alone that the autonomy of enterprises is really restricted. Legislation mostly by government decree does not offer any substantial protection against the automatism of the administrative system.

Indeed, few economic questions are settled strictly on the level of legislation. This is what is called the absence of normativity. There is a sub-legal level as well where round-robins and instructions by different authorities—of restricted circulation—rule. But the level that really matters is known to the economists. Here decisions are guided by informal bargains and influences. This is certainly not a one-directional process. One would think that the legal norm, as some sort of military command, is somebody's decision and others implement it. However, legal norms are to a certain extent the result of bargaining. Sometimes legal norms refrain from grasping reality, since they want to, or have to leave room for bargaining on a different level.

MIHÁLY LAKI: Well, the autonomy of firms is in fact part of the law, but there is something which is called responsibility for supply, which does not appear anywhere in the statute-book. Nevertheless it is true that, informally, firms can be pressurised to produce commodities which are not profitable and which are in every way disadvantageous to the firm.

ANDRÁS SAJÓ: Excuse me for interrupting, but this also works the other way round since the firm—stressing that it has a responsibility for supply—can thus justify a number of irrational decisions.

ZSÓFIA ZACHÁR: *Notwithstanding all this scepticism, what is it that can be hoped for, or that should be urged in the area of legal guarantees?*

ANDRÁS SAJÓ: No doubt, we have every right to demand that everything in the economy be fair and above-board. The law should not be a yo-yo. However, even in developed countries the established legal order has been eroded by state intervention, something which occurs in a paper shower of regulations with little connection with traditional legislative processes, that is with elegant legislation, properly passed by parliament. When people complain about this in Hungary, they forget that this is a worldwide tendency and is not expressly the special product of a planned economy or of control vacillating between central planning and the market. Certain minimum guarantees are safer if the enactment into law of economic desires is

avoided. The law should be as universal as possible and of relatively longer duration. Applying and obeying the law demands sufficient time to become familiar with it.

ZSÓFIA ZACHÁR: *The second economy is one of the most telling phenomena of these years and with a growing number of people participating in it.*

RUDOLF ANDORKA: The second economy is not identical with what is called the underground or grey economy in some parts of Western Europe. I interpret the second economy as those income-producing activities which take place outside the socialist sector of the economy, but which are either legal or at least tolerated. And they produce something. I would omit all that does not increase the national income, and all that is illegal, as for instance extra payments privately made to health service doctors and bribes of any kind. The second economy thus defined still covers a wide range of activities with little in common. I am therefore not at all sure that it is helpful to speak of a second economy.

A large number of people cultivate their household plots, which involves a lot of work, and generally produces a fair bit of money, though very little per hour. The lower income groups are usually engaged in it and it mainly serves to reduce the gap with the better paid. Another type which has come about in recent years is what is called the 'intrapreneurial economic working association.' In these the workers may use the equipment and premises of the company after working hours and they generally do work for the firms which employs them full-time. Relatively few participate, one or two—perhaps three—per cent of the working population, as far as this can be ascertained, and this results in an income which is approximately two or three times as high as official hourly wages. Other types are the various private retailing or tradesmen's activities, the majority of which do not fetch a high income either, but some of which yield very high incomes indeed to a few, thanks to a skilful exploitation of shortages. A further type is the activity of professional people after working hours, and we all know that not much money can be made there.

One should also consider the possibility that the role of participation in the second economy has changed in recent years. No data are as yet available, the last survey of family income covered 1982. So far participation in the second economy has served the great majority to reduce income handicaps, and has not resulted in significant numbers of newly rich. In recent years it has become possible to conduct in industry, the retail trade, and tertiary services lawful second activities similar to the pattern which had been developed in farming. It is possible that, through these, greater opportunities exist for acquiring relatively high incomes.

The truth is that since 1978 real wages have fallen substantially from year to year. The only year when real wages did not fall was 1981. Still per capita real income did not fall in the other years either. Consequently, if the various forms of secondary income had not existed and had not been extended, a considerable fall in the standard of living would probably have occurred. And this would have caused serious tensions, since if per capita real income almost stagnates, this means that it rises for some people and falls for others. All this influences the way of living of Hungarians in such a way that everybody works longer hours and more intensively—in the second economy, and not at their principal job—because people do make great efforts in order to maintain the level of income they had achieved. It is important to add that since state housing construction has fallen off, it has become more and more difficult—especially for young people—to obtain a rented council flat, and consequently considerable efforts have to be made just to obtain housing. These efforts are growing, and this puts its stamp on the way of living of Hungarians. The increase in the death rate due to heart disease or that in alcohol consumption may well be connected with this stress situation due to working under pressure.

ZSÓFIA ZACHÁR: *In the early 1970s, and in recent years again, much was said and written about some social tensions which were blamed on the reform.*

RUDOLF ANDORKA: Hungarian sociologists have carried out numerous related surveys. The evidence of science somewhat contradicts that of gossip.

Let us start with inequalities in incomes. These have allegedly grown. They did indeed increase in the first years after the reform by a hair's breadth, but after that they began to diminish slowly, and according to the last family income survey, covering 1982, the difference between the income of the highest and the lowest income decile was less than at any time since 1962. What can be the explanation? I believe, primarily that the economic reform led to the biggest growth in village farming incomes, wages on the job grew and so did income derived from household plot farming. In other words, it was precisely the income of the poorest that increased most.

I do not, of couse, wish to deny that in recent years, while per capita real income hardly increased and real wages fell, the incomes of some, for instance elderly pensioners and unskilled urban workers without access to the second economy, declined. Incomes improved mainly for those with access to the second economy. A substantial rearrangement has therefore taken place, and those on the losing end understandably complain loudly that their incomes have fallen. But this is not the consequence of the reform, but of the economic difficulties of recent years.

It is also often said that social mobility has diminished, society has

become more closed. This is not so. First of all, in the 1950s social mobility was not as high as is generally believed, and at that time as well the main driving force were not administrative measures but the rapid transformation of the occupational structure. Since then mobility has not been reduced on the whole. To be more precise, it did not continue to grow among men, but among women it rose from generation to generation. Today it approaches the mobility of men. In recent years, at the two extremes, that is as regards entrance to the professions and ceasing to be an unskilled worker, mobility among men has fallen, but in the middle and among women it has continued to grow.

In the case of professional people I explain the fall in mobility by the start of a professional career becoming relatively more difficult. Help from parents plays a greater role, especially in obtaining housing. In the case of unskilled workers the reason may well be that the structural transformation of the Hungarian economy has slowed down, so that the pulling effect of the more favourable occupations is lower than it was at the time of rapid industrialisation. All this results in the family background becoming more important in respect of professional people and of unskilled workers.

There are indeed two social problems which are pretty grave, but about which little is said. One is the demographic situation: the number of live births is constantly lower than necessary for the simple reproduction of the population, and as a consequence of this, the reduction in numbers has already started, and in the years to come—if the situation does not change—it is likely to snowball. The other is deviant behaviour, more precisely the large and growing number of suicides, the spread of alcoholism, the appearance of drug abuse, as well as, presumably, a deterioration in mental health. Both problems are the consequence of extremely rapid modernisation. Both are therefore very difficult to handle, but in my opinion, in the long term the decline in the birth rate and the spread of deviant behaviour can at least be stopped given appropriate social policies.

ZSÓFIA ZACHÁR: *How do these processes affect the structure of society?*

RUDOLF ANDORKA: In the second half of the 1970s it was recognized by Hungarian sociologists that the social model that had been used since the 1960s needed modification. In the early eighties we started on a major collection of data, and the first analyses appeared recently. Since the results are far from final, I shall only mention some lines of thought.

Some sociologists, for instance Tamás Kolosi, set out from a multidimensional model of social stratification. They examined the situation of single persons and families in eight dimensions, to wit: 1. income and wealth, 2. consumer habits, 3. housing, 4. habitat, 5. occupation, 6. partici-

pation in the second economy, 7. education and the way of life, 8. the ability to assert interests. On the basis of the position occupied in these dimensions they determined who belonged to the *élite*, and who was one of the *deprived*. In addition to these two extreme *status groups* they distinguished several middle strata, but these do not cluster around the average, it being possible to distinguish clearly a stratum the position of which is better than the average, and another the situation of which is worse than the average.

Another approach differentiates among the strata concerning the position of the occupations in the labour market, the versatility of special skills, including the possibility of making use of them in the second economy. For instance a television service technician may find work in many more workplaces and can utilise his skill to acquire an extra income to a much greater degree than, for example, a miner.

A third approach tries to classify the families or households on the basis of the occupation of all their members. The social standing of a family where the husband is a skilled worker and the wife an office employee obviously differs from one where the husband is a skilled worker and the wife a semi-skilled worker. Similarly, the social status of an exclusively worker family differs from one where one of the spouses is a worker and the other a peasant.

ZSÓFIA ZACHÁR: *Seventy per cent of families are thus not one-class in Hungary. What is the time budget of such a family and the ratio of its participation in different sectors of the economy?*

RUDOLF ANDORKA: The most frequent type is where one of the spouses works in agriculture, being a cooperative member, and the other is a worker in some other sector. This is the best strategy, because they obtain a household plot from the agricultural cooperative and are able to engage in household farming, and the industrial workplace offers other types of advantages. The husband gets up at six, feeds the animals, then at seven begins to travel to his workplace where he arrives at eight—let us assume that he starts work at eight and not at seven—he works until four o'clock in the afternoon, gets home by five or half past five, again feeds the animals, does some additional work, and towards seven or half past seven collapses in front of the television set. The wife works in the cooperative, looks after the smaller animals and does the gardening. Essentially, she does the same work, plus her household duties.

TAMÁS HOFER: The options open to people also differ according to the place they live. As Rudolf Andorka pointed out much depended on whether this is a town or village. Earlier policies and the National Regional Development Plan which became law in 1971, both benefited the towns. They

stimulated concentration, and handicapped the small villages in particular, but even more the homesteads of the Plains. The administrative reform too acted in the same direction. Small villages were merged into a single administrative unit, their schools into a central school, etcetera. This approach is now being reappraised. The recognition is spreading that urbanisation is a cyclical process and we are now worldwide entering a stage when urban agglomerations are being replaced by deconcentration. It would be harmful to obstruct this natural, and in the last resort useful, process by political measures. The independence and the population-retention capacity of small villages should also be encouraged.

Regional differences also exist. These have their basis in the nature of natural resources and in history. These differences often survived and sometimes became greater, owing to the economic policies of the 1950s and 1960s. One-sided industrial development benefited the industrial and handicapped the agricultural regions. A connected range of hills cuts right across Hungary from the county of Zala in the south-west to the Danube Bend, and then further the counties of Nógrád and Borsod. Hungarian industry is concentrated in this strip, which is also joined by Budapest, and more than 80 per cent of the large industrial investment projects of the first five-year plans were concentrated there. In contrast, both in the northern hills and in Western Transdanubia there are regions remote from towns, where neither soil nor climate are favourable. Villages there found themselves in an especially handicapped situation. The Great Hungarian Plain, as a predominantly agricultural region, fell behind other areas. As a result there was considerable migration from the Plain to other parts of the country. The peculiar settlement structure of the Plain also contributed to a falling behind vis-à-vis the nationwide rate of progress. The medieval small villages had disappeared there, when the Plains became pasture for cattle bred for foreign markets, and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries this area was a battlefield when it was not actually occupied by the Turks. The population sought refuge is agricultural towns. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the status of the peasant-citizens of agricultural towns was higher than of the serfs in villages; they enjoyed a larger autonomy and it was easier for them to produce for the market. In the 1930s Ferenc Erdei still entertained the illusion that the agricultural towns might permit a bourgeois development while maintaining some peasant virtues. But in fact, at least since 1870 when rapid industrialisation began, the agricultural towns of the Plain increasingly lost their standing amongst the towns of Hungary, and this process has not yet stopped, in spite of the numerous efforts which have been made in recent years to develop the Plain. Though

bearing in mind that the Plain is primarily an agricultural region, it offers food for thought that in the value of per capita industrial output there is a ratio of 14 to 1 between County Komárom, situated in the Transdanubian mining and industrial region, and County Szabolcs, on the fringe of the Plains.

RUDOLF ANDORKA: Considering inequalities of social groups defined by occupation, I would say that those unskilled workers are highly handicapped who show no intergenerational mobility, stuck as they are with unskilled work in towns or even in villages. It would appear that such mobility has diminished in recent years. This is worrying, especially since such people are also the worst paid. There are others who give rise to anxiety. The real value of long-fixed pensions has declined owing to inflation, in spite of the supplement that has been paid since January 1, 1986. Another group I could mention are families with more than two children. Their relative position deteriorated in the seventies in spite of all rises in family allowances. If we now do not look at strata but at phenomena, then it is the deviating behaviour and the demographic problems I mentioned earlier which cause serious anxiety in the short and in the long run.

Another problem is that nearly one quarter of the employed commutes. They live in one place and work in another. It happens in developed countries as well that people commute to urban jobs from outer suburbs or rural areas. But in Hungary commuting conditions are very poor for those who use public transport, which is slow and rather uncomfortable. Many commute from a great distance. A minority live in worker hostels and go home only at weekends. These too are undoubtedly in the most difficult situation. Those starting work now face other difficulties owing to the economic stagnation. In the earlier boom period there was a greater choice of jobs and the prospect of pay rises, which implied the prospect of a home. The situation of young people today is substantially worse, especially in the case of professional people. The starting salaries are low, the opportunities for obtaining state housing are much worse than ten years ago. In the years 1976–1980, 57 per cent of housing was financed from private resources, by 1983 this went up to 77 per cent. The best chance for someone in the professions to obtain state housing is if they take a job in the country, no longer in the centres but in smaller towns and villages, where they may be allocated a home. In Budapest, however, this is highly unlikely. In other words, if young professional people do not enjoy family support, they have to get a job in the country, with the attendant disadvantages, or they find themselves in a very difficult financial situation, especially if they marry and have children.

A young professional man starts work at the age of 24 or 25; a skilled

worker has by then already worked for five years, has been earning for five years' experience. It is small consolation to the young professional man that he will be better off in twenty years' time...

ZSÓFIA ZACHÁR: *Given present demographic trends social policy has to reckon with increasing burdens.*

RUDOLF ANDORKA: By the year 2000 a drop in population numbers amounting to several hundred thousands must be reckoned with. If the present situation does not change, the proportion of old people will increase considerably and the proportion of young people fall substantially. After the year 2000 the proportion of those of working age will begin to regress and that of the retired to grow.

It is undoubtedly true that all these tensions have to be dealt with by social policy. But in the last resort solving these problems would be facilitated if there is economic growth. I should like to stress that it is extremely dangerous to conduct a social policy hostile to economic growth, since that is the foundation for the solution of social problems. The basic question is how it may be possible to accelerate economic growth. What is needed is a liberation of talents and initiative leading to greater performance and productivity. In other words, the barriers must be demolished.

ANDRÁS SAJÓ: Whatever kind of social policy be desired, whatever the direction of the modernisation of the economic system, and in whatever manner the numerous social tensions are to be kept within desirable and bearable limits, it is obvious that action is needed. One possible way is the lawful, declared, controllable road. Many are of the opinion that the institutionalised answers to be given to the social problems must provide opportunities for more democratic ways, for personal initiative. Others, mentioning economics, do not consider this road to be efficient. It is nevertheless likely that it releases resources for public-mindedness as well as for the economy or for welfare policy if regulations do not act as a constraint, prescribing rigid limits. The realisation of social policy goals depends only partly on finances, the efficient distribution of money matters as well. The planned programme must be able to rely on an efficient apparatus. How can this be fitted into the existing institutional system? It is certain that a more efficient care of the deprived can be arranged also within the given financial limits. Part of this is legal protection and legal aid so that the persons assisted should not be at the mercy of those who provide the assistance, the cared for at the mercy of those supposed to care for them. Hungarian legal scholars are looking to things and it is to be hoped that legislators will follow suit. At present there are endeavours to improve the legal position of the mentally ill. This is strongly linked to international efforts in these fields.

Another social problem which people would like to see handled by the law is crime and alcoholism. The desire to punish appears to be strong amongst Hungarians. Be that as it may legislation and the administration of the law certainly favour severity in some areas. Nevertheless, there is no fundamental tightening up in this field. The situation is much the same in the economy, where people usually demand more severity and greater discipline. The second economy does little to make this possible but in the state sector, for instance, contractual discipline is demanded again and again. It cannot be enforced, however, since economic considerations determine whether somebody is able to deliver the goods or not. It is futile saying that it should be a moral or even a legal obligation to fulfil a contract if economic obstacles prove to be stronger.

Consequently we expect in vain that the mere existence of the rules will provide a solution to the social problems. The opportunities for progress outlined by social scientists and accepted by politicians mostly demand that lawyers help remove existing legal obstacles and that they should create a suitable framework. What the law can offer as such is first of all security—both for the citizens and economic organizations—as well as justice that finds expression in equal treatment. It can also contribute to the improvement in public morale, something which, I am sure, other social scientists wish to do as well.

GYÖRGY LITVÁN: I should like to add that there are two connected aspects of modernisation which in one way or another derive from what has been said. These are an adult acceptance of the country's place in the world, and a realistic national consciousness, which neither underestimates nor overestimates itself. In recent years the international prestige of Hungary has grown considerably, and is today higher than perhaps at any time in this century. It would be a pity to destroy it again. The objective should rather be to stabilise this situation. Sensitiveness and self-criticism are needed both to accept the past of the nation and to build the national present and future. We must overcome the traumas of both Trianon and of the Second World War. Defining ourselves as a culture and nation, spiritually including also the Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring countries, we have to fit constructively into the broader European context as well as into the community of East Central European nations, which have been interdependent for such a long time.

I believe that I can speak also for my colleagues when I say that historians and social scientists must further this integration in a spatial and temporal modernity by free and responsible research and writing.

DÉTENTE AND CONFRONTATION IN EAST–WEST RELATIONS

by

GYULA HORN

The events and processes of the past forty years in the world show that the shaping of East–West relations is of decisive importance for the future of world peace. The relations between socialist and capitalist countries are encumbered with the most crucial social, political and ideological contradictions of our age. The countries belonging to the alignments of socialism and capitalism possess armaments, the nuclear arsenal, sufficient to destroy the world. At the same time, it is a great achievement of our age that the antagonism implied in East–West relations, such as the current cardinal contradiction, found expression not in a world-wide armed confrontation but in the policy of peaceful coexistence.

Détente as a qualitatively higher form of peaceful coexistence emerged in East–West relations in the middle of the sixties, although incipient forms had been visible in earlier decades. The Second World War can thus be distinguished from the preceding world conflagration by the fact, among others, that countries with different social systems took part in it. The socialist Soviet Union and capitalist countries joined forces against the common enemy, fascism. It became clear that great social, political and ideological differences can also be surmounted in the interest of the common goal, the survival of mankind.

From the latter half of the 1940s the elements of confrontation became preponderant and thus created the cold-war conditions in East–West relations. During almost twenty years of this freeze they managed at great expense, to uphold a state of military confrontation, but the circumstances of the time had far-reaching consequences. In addition to immediate dangers to world peace, the suspension of political, cultural and other contacts acted as a brake on the general development of human civilisation.

The balance of strength

A change of historic importance was brought about in the conditions of international security, of the strategic balance of power, by the fact that the Soviet Union had attained military parity with the United States in quantity and quality alike. The distinctive features and consequences of this new strategic equality, which had come about by the middle of the 1960s, when compared to the earlier military-political situation are:

— The possibility of mutual destruction had arisen, in consequence of which the one-sided threat to the Soviet Union from the leading capitalist powers has come to an end. Thus the danger of outside armed intervention that had accompanied the history of the first socialist state in the world has been replaced by a first-strike potential that might bring on total destruction.

— The strategic equality established between the North Atlantic alliance and the Warsaw Treaty countries is the basis of the European status quo. This is not essentially affected by the considerable differences noticeable in economic potential to the advantage of the Western world.

— The need and interest in interdependence have been brought home to countries with different social systems. Since both socialist and capitalist countries possess the necessary means of waging a new world war, capable in this conflict of annihilating one another, in the current situation the two sides are objectively required and mutually interested in bridging the differences and in creating the conditions for preventing the outbreak of a new world war.

— In view of the fact that the new strategic balance is essentially based upon the military strength of the United States and the Soviet Union, its establishment has further enhanced the paramount importance of Soviet–American relationships for East–West relations and, consequently, the shaping of the world situation. This paramount character is at the same time relative, because it is based on an equilibrium of weapons whose possible use is theoretical rather than practical. The weight of strategic arms manifests itself not directly but indirectly in international relations. Thus the states constituting the totality of international relations, by taking note of the condition of equilibrium, enjoy a fairly large measure of autonomy in contributing to the building of East–West relations.

The position of the two nuclear-armed states is unique also in that they are compelled to determine the entire diplomatic process of nuclear armament or disarmament practically by themselves, with no other states joining in, since the arms programmes depend upon a complex of highly sophisti-

cated and exclusive scientific, technological and manufacturing information and knowledge, the sharing of which with other states is hardly conceivable and indeed, not even advisable.

Interpretation of the concept of détente

Essentially it was the balance of military forces between the socialist and capitalist systems that set in motion the process of détente. The concept of détente denotes substantially more than a certain temporary condition in East–West relations. It denotes the correlation between the determining factors of world politics and, at the same time, the decisive elements in the global international situation. The development of the process of détente means that the socialist and the capitalist countries in their external policies, in their most important foreign policy decisions, give priority to the demands made by this interdependence and refrain from taking any international political or military step that may violate the fundamental strategic interests of the other side; it also means their commitment to building further multilateral relations among themselves. In Soviet–U.S. relations the limitation of the levels of strategic armament is also primarily of a political character, it is not a military measure. By their willingness to achieve limitation the parties manifest their desire to avoid taking political measures which step up confrontation.

In the established strategic situation the cold-war form of confrontation is an anachronism. Firstly, it involves the danger of efforts being made to upset the balance of strength. Yet, an objective circumstance exists in that the maintenance of quantitative and qualitative equilibrium between the opposing parties in the age of nuclear weapons is a decisive factor in the prevention of a thermonuclear world war. Secondly, under cold-war conditions, the absence or scarcity of communication, of regular contacts, considerably curtails the possibility of mutually supervising the nuclear arsenals and increases the danger of collision. Thirdly, it leads to a total lack of mutual confidence, gives an impulse to a continued arms build-up and prevents any reduction in the levels of mutual emperilment. As a consequence of all this, cold-war conditions in the current situation involve incomparably greater dangers than they did in the 1950s.

The experience of the past few decades, in the course of the constant alternation of confrontation and détente, bears out that the common will towards the opposing political factors, their active and positive efforts are indispensable to the realization of peaceful coexistence, to the unfolding of détente. For confrontation to sharpen, for a cold or even real war to break out, however, the resolve of only one side is sufficient.

In the normalization of East–West relations a determining role has been played by the European countries. Europe is the most vulnerable of all continents, the relations between states on this continent are extremely complicated, centuries-old traditions and present-day realities alike bear hard upon the situation for all of Europe. The peoples of this continent made the greatest sacrifices in the Second World War and had the decisive role in defeating fascism. The labour movement and a populist public attitude have living traditions and a great weight in Europe. It is thus entirely reasonable that it is here that the various European peoples realised that the states of this continent, regardless of their social systems, have to rely on one another for the avoidance of a new world conflagration.

Although the process of détente certainly needed the agreement of the U.S.A. for it to be started, in concrete events and results it is a European trend of development. The setting up of an institutional framework, established with the participation of the United States and Canada was preceded, had to be preceded, by the settlement of certain fundamental international problems on the continent.

The development of this favourable trend required French realism in foreign policy, the coming into play of realistic policies on the part of the smaller countries and, primarily, the rise of new political aspirations among the German Social Democrats. Considering the international effect of its activity in foreign policy, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) played a historic role in bringing into being new systems of value in East-West relations. The SPD headed by Willy Brandt and the socialist-liberal coalition governement, were the first in West Europe to recognise the changed strategic balance of forces; from this the appropriate conclusions were drawn and enforced in concrete foreign policy measures. The SPD played a leading role also in the gradual change brought about in the outlook of social democrats internationally and in their attitude towards living socialism.

The SPD, breaking with Adenauer's cold-war platform, laid down its foreign policy programme before the parliamentary elections of November 1972: "From the period of confrontation we shall switch over to peaceful

coexistence." The socialist-liberal coalition concluded the treaties in force up to this day which made it possible to put the process of Helsinki in motion. Without the recognition in treaty form of the territorial and political realities ensuing from the Second World War, it could not have been possible to establish the European system of security and cooperation on the basis of this status quo. All this created new conditions on the continent.

With the particularly active and positive role which it played in the improvement of East–West relations, the socialist-liberal government laid the foundations for the international prestige of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The East–West treaties underlying the political framework of détente, the Four Power agreement on West Berlin, the Final Act of Helsinki and a number of bilateral arrangements are results of a common will and common action. They give expression to a compromise without which not one of the East–West agreements could have been born, because their existence is conditional on the implementation of mutual interests and concessions.

The Helsinki Final Act contains compromises in its entirety and its details. The first basket dealing with the principles guiding political relations is an expression, among other things, of the fact that, by respecting sovereignty, the inviolability of frontiers and the peaceful settlement of disputes, the signatory states subscribe to the established territorial and political status quo, to the existence of the two systems of alliances, and will refrain from any form of intervention aimed at overthrowing the social systems of European states.

It is the second and the third articles of the Helsinki Final Act which reflect most of all the desirable measures for the reinforcement of détente. The removal of barriers to economic intercourse is a common interest, but the recommendations could be formulated only by recognizing common interests. The basket concerned with human contacts is perhaps still more obviously of a compromise character. This contains mostly demands and recommendations in the interpretation of which the concept and practice of bourgeois democracy are basically different from those of socialism. It is due to the differences arising from the divergent ideological-political concepts that the Helsinki process has so far exposed more elements of disagreement in East–West relations under exactly this heading.

Détente has never been a one-way street; this process has no loser or exclusive beneficiary. The world has been made more secure by this process, it has become possible to avert an armed confrontation threatening both sides with utter destruction. What are known as the eastern treaties have given a firm base to the international positions of the Soviet Union, the German

Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia just as they have consolidated the European standing of the Federal Republic of Germany. They have made it possible that the German question is no longer a factor of instability; the Germans as well as other European nations have benefited from this development. The Four Power agreement on West Berlin is a specific expression of the realities the Second World War established. The independent and neutral Republic of Austria, created with the conclusion of the Austrian treaty in 1955, has since played a positive role in East–West relations.

The past ten years

In the course of the last ten years has been seen a specific mixture of the ups and downs of détente and confrontation which had had no precedent in earlier periods. The specific character is manifest primarily in the fact that, although it proved possible to retain the principal elements of the bilateral accords between East and West—the validity of the SALT-1 and SALT-2 treaties as well as the agreements concluded with the F.R.G., and the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act and of the proceedings of related forums—the world situation became strained, political confrontation dominated in certain periods of time. This colder period of détente was primarily due to the failure over ten years to take any substantive step in lessening East–West military confrontation.

In the process of détente relying upon the equilibrium of strategic arms, military factors also have an important part to play. Owing to the constant upgrading of the two sides' strategic and tactical-operational weapons, the maintenance of the established balance of strength means in itself continuous rivalry. A close interaction consisting of a succession of measures and counter-measures prevails in the growth of the military power of the opposing parties. This is true of the development of conventional and nuclear weaponry alike in the sense that an advance by any one of the parties can be very quickly counteracted by the other side in the same or in another field. As a consequence of all this the balance of strength between the two world systems is restored in a fluctuating manner and at an ever higher level.

Since the balance of strength is an essential condition for the process of détente, fluctuations in strength have a direct effect on East-West relations, while foreign policy measures can considerably influence the actual effectiveness of military factors. But the safeguarding of world peace is essentially a political issue, because, in the words of Clausewitz, "...policy is intelligence, war is merely a means, and not conversely. It is therefore necessary

that the military viewpoint should remain subordinate." Developments in the past few years have confirmed also that the decisive sphere of common interests in East–West relations is arms reduction, that is, disarmament.

As compared to developments during earlier decades, a feature of present-day armament is that each and every step has been closely linked to the constituents of the East–West strategic balance of power and thus threatened to upset the equilibrium of forces; escalation in the arms build-up manifested itself primarily in the spheres of quality and territory, lending a new dimension to equilibrium.

The recent spiral in the armament drive has shown also that the treaties in force on the limitation of strategic arms are extremely defective. For example, the SALT-2 treaty leaves out of consideration the modern medium-range delivery vehicles; these are practically not controlled by any treaty provision, although such devices are of strategic importance from the viewpoint of military parity between the Warsaw Treaty and NATO.

The contradictory situation is shown also in the fact that military tension has been increasing despite the very important steps taken and efforts made in these years in the interest of arms reduction. (These include the Soviet–U.S. negotiations resulting in the agreement on the limitation of offensive strategic weapons, the agreement on the suspension of experiments with satellite-killing systems, the Geneva talks on the limitation of the number of medium-range delivery vehicles.)

The essence and the great merit of the Soviet–U.S. agreements on strategic arms limitation should precisely be to stop the further raising of the mutual level of emperilment of the two great powers. As a consequence, any military measure taken to gain a one-sided advantage threatens to disturb this level and can lead to a world-wide confrontation. The danger is realistic if we bear in mind that while political negotations for the purpose of limitation are proceeding at a slow pace, military technology continues to develop at an extremely rapid rate.

When examining the political effect of the East–West balance of military forces, we have to turn our attention to a particular circumstance. The essence of this is that the measures and conceptions announced by one side, as regards their effect on the other side's ideas and decisions, are practically of the same value as the measures it has effectively taken. The announcement of the Strategic Defense Initiative means to the Soviet Union that, if the plan cannot be prevented in time, the Soviet Union will be bound to take appropriate counter-measures. The danger in the whole programme of space armament consists, from the viewpoint of East–West relations, primarily in that the political chances for any further arms limitation are made doubtful.

The extreme rhetoric and attitudes addressed to the other side have in every case sharpened confrontation, and although there have not followed concrete anti-détente measures, such as, say, the termination of the East–West agreements in force, a lot of damage has been done. Especially alarming from the point of view of East–West relations have been the American side's manifestations, decisions and actions which have led to the shaking of the mutual confidence necessary for the continuance of détente. It was in 1981, for the first time since the deployment of thermonuclear weaponry, that the U.S.A. as a nuclear-weapon state did not rule out the possibility of a limited nuclear war—and in Europe at that.

East–West relations are increasingly influenced also by events taking place in the developing world. In addition to the fact that a very complicated political, economic and military situation has arisen in different regions, and that the system of relations in Western and Eastern Europe differs widely from that in the developing countries, the relationship with them also bears upon fundamental question of strategy.

The Soviet Union and the United States as great powers pursue global foreign policies, their international presence covers the entire world. Consequently their ambitions regarding the developing world often appear in the same locality and conflict with one another. In the past decade there has not been a single regional conflict in which the political attitudes of the two leading powers have not been in opposition.

The essential thing is that support to the opposing parties from East and West has as yet not reached a level which could have led to a world-wide confrontation. The Soviet–U.S. channels of communication have been working even concerning events threatening an explosion in the utterly perilous situation in the Middle East. An encouraging development is that the two great powers have begun regular consultations on regional crises. These questions were also brought up with emphasis at the Geneva summit. The hope has risen that more thorough knowledge of the viewpoints and their reconciliation will result in a reduction of the international perils in regional crises.

The importance of the contacts between the smaller countries

As to the relations between countries belonging to the two allied systems, and their relationship with the two leading powers, the past ten years have provided a wealth of experience. The situation of the small and middle-sized countries of Western and Eastern Europe differs not only in terms of their relative strength vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and the United States. Owing to

their openness and their dependence, those countries react more sensitively to the reinforcement of détente or confrontation. The standstill of détente in East–West relations, and especially the tensions straining in Soviet–U.S. relations, have perceptibly narrowed down their international scope of action, have adversely affected their external positions.

The American decisions and programmes formulated in the course of the past few years have increased West Europe's defencelessness and dependence upon the U.S.A. The cold-war and anti-détente steps of the U.S. administration has made it difficult for the allies to continue with their previous policy. The socialist-liberal government coalition in the Federal Republic of Germany broke down because of the sharpening of internal economic and political differences; instrumental in this was also the fact that one of the government's driving forces had become exhausted.

The ranks of the SPD were divided by the conflicts that had arisen in connection with the attitude to be adopted towards the American armament programme. It was only after being driven into opposition that the party could repudiate the NATO decision it had backed up in 1979. While as a government party it took measures against the anti-missile movements, as an opposition party it is a participant in these movements.

In 1984 the French government, which in the early years had supported the American military programme without reservation, was against the Strategic Defense Initiative. This Initiative brought a new element of tension into the relationship of the United States with its West European allies. The attitude of the West European countries towards SDI is affected by more than the war tension, by their interest in lessening confrontation. They have realized that participation in the programme would not secure them a share of the American scientific and technical achievements. Moreover, the space armament programme with the involvement of West European private companies is intended to promote the draining away of European research potential and intellectual skills. Behind the U.S. efforts to make the COCOM list more stringent and have it strictly observed, it can be seen that the U.S.A. is making use of the list to boost its technological superiority and economic hegemony over its allies.

A natural ambition of the West European countries is to seek the institutional means of expressing their own specific identity, of increasingly enforcing their independent political and economic interests. This is the main stimulus and motive force of the Eureka plan, which is meant to help Western Europe to close the gaps in the fields of scientific and technological development, to counteract the American military high-technology programmes's effect of drawing off European intellectual capital. The increasing

efforts at independence find expression in the steps aimed at reactivating the Western European Union. Although the military programmes of the Union are fraught with the dangers of generating tensions, they nevertheless can certainly reduce the members' ever more oppressive military dependence upon the United States.

The process of European cooperation and security as well as the forums working within its framework create favourable conditions for all the participating countries, regardless of the size of their territory and of their international weight, to take part in dealing as equal partners with the questions concerning East–West relations. The Helsinki process is a product of détente, it works against the continuation of confrontation. This is so even if certain stages of different negotiations are dominated by the athmosphere of confrontation. It gives a framework for systematic East–West dialogue and this was especially important when Soviet–U.S. relations had reached their lowest point. It has always helped to soften political conflicts, or has assumed part of them, hindering the intensification of cold-war efforts. It also fulfils a very important function by making concrete recommendations to strengthen cooperation in various fields.

East–West relations—as has been confirmed also by developments of the latest years—are basically dependent on the shaping of Soviet–U.S. contacts, and this is determinative, particularly in the strategic field. Expression has at the same time been given also to the demands of West European countries for the preservation and continuance of the process of détente. In contrast to what happened several decades ago, the increase in international tension has not led to hostility among the European states. No breach, no negative change has occurred in the relations between socialist and capitalist countries of Europe. Moreover, as compared with earlier times—in the interest of combating possible tensions—high-level political contacts have become more frequent, a number of important contact-making mesures have been taken, and several new bilateral cooperation agreements have been concluded. It is true that, while in the relationship between the two leading powers both negative and positive changes can occur quickly, the system of relations and cooperation established between smaller countries by long-lasting and arduous efforts can collapse in a short time and can be rebuilt with much difficulty only by the work of several decades.

All this shows that the dominant role of Soviet–U.S. relations does not diminish the importance of connections between the other countries concerned. The political attitude of all states interested in the maintenance of East–West relations has a definite function. It was especially important to take this into account after November 1983, when the deployment of American missiles

prompted the break-off of the Geneva talks and caused Soviet–U.S. relations to sink to their lowest level ever. It is clear that the maintenance of relations between small and middle-sized countries, the continuation of dialogue between them have a unique beneficial effect on the safeguarding of détente and can promote also the improvement of Soviet–U.S. relations.

Dialogue and cooperation

What in effect underlies the process of détente are the common interest in averting the danger of a world war. In the wake of the tension that has grown during the most recent past, the realisation has strengthened on both sides that mankind has come to a turning-point threatening explosion. The course of building up armaments can hardly be extended further without incurring the immediate danger of an armed confrontation. Although this realisation has manifested itself only in the resumption of negotiations at the moment, its vital importance is because it has made itself visible in relations between the Soviet Union and the U.S.A.

The events of the Geneva summit indicate that they have been concentrated on the decisive strategic aspect of East–West relation. It is encouraging that the issues taken up at the first summit talks for many long years included not only the limitation of nuclear armament but also a radical quantitative reduction of the two sides' arsenals, and that the document drawn up at Geneva shows the intention of both sides to prevent a world war, to preserve the balance of force.

An indication of a considerable movement towards reconciliation of standpoints, of the flexibility of the Soviet Union and its readiness to come to an agreement, is that the summit meeting has opened the way for the separate consideration of reduction in strategic and medium-range nuclear missiles. Nevertheless, the issue of the arms race in outer space has remained a problem of key importance. The possibility of limiting thermonuclear weapons is basically dependent on the condition that the SDI programme should not leave the laboratory stage and should be confined to a strictly limited sphere. The summit talks at Geneva may induce some progress also in this matter. If the results of the Geneva summit were laid down in agreements, this would essentially strengthen all aspects of the process of détente.

Geneva has opened a new stage in Soviet–American relations. The comprehensive and intensive dialogue, the signing of bilateral agreements and the realisation that there are real prospects for arms limitation may set in motion new and favourable processes in the world situation. They may lessen con-

frontation, promote restoration of the mutual confidence necessary to détente, push into the background the extremist rhetoric that has been poisoning international atmosphere. The next couple of years may be decisive in determining whether mankind will proceed along the way marked out at the summit meeting or along that of a fatal confrontation.

In the present situation, the constructive efforts of small and medium-sized countries are needed, for they can contribute to the building of the mutual trust indispensable to the reduction of armaments. Such constructive efforts might be aimed at securing the success of the Stockholm conference. In this framework the countries participating in the Helsinki process might undertake to renounce the use of force in their mutual relations. It would be advisable to put again on the agenda the issue of establishing nuclear-free zones as a means of strengthening mutual confidence and security.

In addition, with the great number of diverse proposals made so far and with its initiatives aiming at the lessening of military confrontation, the Warsaw Treaty countries have demonstrated that they attribute paramount importance to the termination of the arms race. At the same time the Warsaw Treaty Organization keeps an open mind on any initiative coming from the West and aimed at promoting disarmament, on proposals which would help reduce the historically established strategic balance to the lowest possible level. Its members are ready to accept any reasonable compromise and to seek new possibilities, including the establishment of direct contacts between the Warsaw Treaty and NATO.

In fact the socialist countries approach the principles guiding relations between them and states with different social systems by proceeding from the basis of their structure, in consideration of their close interdependence. Among the principles they put emphasis on are the cementing of political ties, the further building of normal relations and mutual confidence between states. This is because they start from the viewpoint that all other aspects of East-West relations are effectively dependent on the implementation of the principles governing political relations. Détente means not merely to put confrontation within bounds but supposes the reduction of conflicts of interests through dialogue and cooperation.

The level at which peaceful coexistence is realised cannot be separated from the trend in the internal situation of the countries concerned—the two are closely interrelated. Détente has a beneficial effect on the internal development and international positions of socialist and capitalist countries alike. Confrontation, on the other hand, deforms internal conditions and in the international field it weakens relations based on equality, imperilling the chances of solving conflicts by political means.

Introversion

The experience of the last twenty years shows that, in parallel with the spread of the policy of détente, the socialist countries have been able to take steps towards modernising internal economic and political institutions. The achievement of political power and, mainly after the establishment of the one-party system, the reforms represent the motive force of development in East Europe. The reform processes presuppose the opening of minds and conditions to the outside world. Similarly, the carrying out of internal reforms requires more secure international conditions, normal and substantial external relations. The sharpening of confrontation, on the other hand, lead to introversion and diminishes the opportunities for experimenting with the modernisation of the internal systems.

Stable East–West relations and the avoidance of increasingly dangerous conflicts can be secured, in the two sides' mutual interest, only if the possibility of balanced development exists in the countries concerned, and if the fundamental social, political and economic factors are firmly established there. The best interests of the West and the need to strengthen its own security require that the situation of the opposing side should be balanced. History has shown that living socialism cannot be shaken by imposing confrontation nor exhausted by forcing an arms race on it. On the contrary, the development of economic, scientific and technical relations with the socialist countries, if based on equality and mutual benefits, promotes a convergence of interests and ways of thinking along with the creation of a safer world. Creating unhampered economic contacts helps to break out of the bounds of geostrategic confrontation.

The interdependence of détente and economic relations is shown in that, during the past two years, the volume of commodity exchange between socialist and capitalist countries has grown almost sevenfold. Confrontation, especially in the past few years, has made its effect felt in the field of economic contacts, too. The politically motivated embargoes pressed for by the U.S. administration and similar restrictive measures have hindered the development of relations and have made future prospects particularly uncertain. The embargo policy is a cold-war method, it runs counter to objectively existing mutual interests, increases distrust, invites counter-measures and is harmful to international security. It is meaningless even from the Western point of view because, although it may cause difficulties in the short term, it still entails consequences which in the long term are contrary to the intended results. For what it means is that the socialist countries are compelled to find and use substitutes for the missing technological imports.

East–West economic relations are faced with growing difficulties even if there were no restrictive measures whose end is political. The world-wide spread of protectionism has an adverse effect on normal relations between the various capitalist economic centres and on East–West ties as well. The European Economic Community initially aimed at expanding contacts with outside countries as well as establishing cooperation among the member states. The restrictive, protectionist provisions and measures taken by the EEC, however, are conducive rather to autarchy within the community, to the limitation of East–West relations.

EEC, CMEA, GATT, Eureka

Restrictions are also in conflict with the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act. The signatory states have undertaken gradually to eliminate the factors hindering trade among them, to promote the growth of trade and to diversify the composition of commodities. In fact, however, there are today more important restrictions, more goods subject to licensing control and other administrative measures in force than there were in 1975. Certain socialist countries encounter considerable difficulties also in the the exercise of their rights under GATT.

The removal of obstacles to economic relations has become a central issue in the process of European security and cooperation. The building of normal, substantial contacts between the EEC and the CMEA may be of paramount political importance. This might be backed up by bilateral agreements between the EEC and individual countries, the Hungarian People's Republic among them. An agreement relying upon the GATT provisions might be of political and economic significance, if the opportunities for openness going beyond integration within an institutional framework could be realised; it might also facilitate the gradual removal of tariff walls and other discriminatory barriers and enhance a better enforcement of common European interests.

Not even in the course of the implementation of the Eureka programme envisaged by eighteen European countries must one forget that there are also interests common to all of Europe in the field of scientific-technical progress. Western Europe would also gain by seeking, in connection with the Eureka programme, opportunities for cooperation with the socialist countries.

In the past few years one of the main issues of confrontation in East–West relations has been the problem of human rights. So much so that, in certain notorious cases, the tension arising in this connection has done serious harm

to the cause of mutual security and cooperation. This is a very delicate area, because most of the ideological conflicts, the greatest differences between the socialist and capitalist countries' conceptions and practices present themselves in connection with the rights and demands of a humanitarian character.

The Final Act of Helsinki contains general recommendations whose implementation is directly dependent on the decisions, systems and legal practices of the signatory states. In spite of the existing difficulties, considerable progress has been also made in respect of the connections between rights and East–West relations. The Madrid meeting of the signatory states in 1983 achieved a breakthrough, so to speak, by deciding to organize the Ottawa consultation on human rights and the Budapest Cultural Forum.

The Ottawa consultation, although it issued no concluding document, signified a great step forward as regards the dimensions and depths of the matters under discussion. There were also violent bouts of verbal sparring and confrontation, but this did not go beyond the bounds of the tolerable, did not produce a breach in the Helsinki process; on the contrary: it demonstrated that dialogue and the reconciliation of opposing views are possible even in such delicate ideological and political questions. Ottawa gave an impulse to the holding of further similar consultations.

The Ottawa consultation and then the Cultural Forum in Budapest have shown that the socialist countries are making an important contribution to the universal implementation of human rights. On their initiative the catalogue of human rights has been completed with social and cultural rights, and the need to institutionalise collective rights has been confirmed.

It can be regarded as a sign of progress that there are beginning to take shape those norms and provisions governing cooperation feasible in the field of human rights, whose implementation and fulfilment will gradually take effect, depending on the rate of progress in East-West relations and on the internal development of the countries concerned. The successful work of the Cultural Forum also has proved that, in spite of the complicated situation, common interests and common efforts exist to eliminate divison in the humanitarian field, to make differing cultures universal. Likewise, the more than three hundred unambiguously constructive proposals submitted at the Forum have shown that the participating countries desire to make progress on the road of cooperation. It has been proved that culture plays an equal role with the matters of security, politics and economics in the European process of détente, because it can bring closer the different countries and nations.

The role of Hungary

The Hungarian People's Republic, as a small country pursuing an open policy, is vitally interested in repressing confrontation, in preserving détente. Its foreign policy commitment to the safeguarding of world peace, just as its historical traditions and geopolitical conditions, give it a profound interest in maintaining normal and fruitful relations with the surrounding world. In earlier decades of the twentieth century, the Hungarian nation suffered enormous losses in human lives and material goods. In 1918 and in 1945 the country was grievously damaged territorially, ethnically and politically as a consequence of the erroneous policy of the then ruling classes; only in the past forty years has it found a course which rejects armed confrontation, irredentism; it now puts its international activity to the service of mutual understanding between peoples, good relations with European and other states, and the cause of peace.

Hungary is an active partner in the common peace initiatives, in the efforts aimed at promoting disarmament; it has supported and continues to support the all-European cause of security and cooperation. Characteristic of the consistent line and balanced conduct of Hungarian foreign policy is that in particularly strained periods of the past decade (including 1984), it not only maintained but encouraged dialogues and contacts with the countries of Western Europe and thus made a significant contribution to the continuance of détente.

The establishment and operation of the means of more active participation in the world-wide international division of labour have become indispensable to the economic reform process begun in Hungary in 1968. In parallel with the reduction of internal administrative restrictions, a number of measures have been taken with a view to enhancing the country's openness, its adaptability to the requirements of the external market. Hungary's accession to GATT and the monetary institutions of the United Nations has considerably increased the opportunities for the participation of its economy in the world economic processes. The Hungarian proposal made to the EEC on a free-trade agreement is designed to promote closer cooperation with the economy of Western Europe. In Hungary's international economic links European countries play a prime role since Hungary transacts 85 per cent of its exchange of goods with them.

From the very outset the Hungarian People's Republic has been active in trying to implement fully the recommendations of the Final Act of Helsinki. It has issued a number of legislative acts and comprehensive government decrees which are directed at the implementation of the Helsinki document.

The Hungarian People's Republic has adopted an act on environmental conservation and a public education act; it has enlarged and augmented the scope of human rights and has considerably improved the conditions of their implementation; it has acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; it has consistently complied and continues to comply with obligations serving to strengthen military security and confidence and those concerning the prior notification of military manoeuvres.

Hungary has practically eliminated barriers to human contacts: it issues visas to foreign visitors within 48 hours; what is more, foreign nationals can receive entry visas on the spot at the frontier stations and airports. In contrast, most Western states grant Hungarians the necessary visa only after a lengthy procedure. With no single one of the Western countries does Hungary have any controversial, unsettled case concerning family reunification; it allows foreign press correspondents to work unhindered in the territory of the country. Hungarian cultural policy is open to all foreign intellectual productions of real value. Indicative of the disproportion prevailing here is that five to eight times as many literary works, films and plays originating from Western Europe are published or shown in Hungary as Hungarian productions are taken on by West European countries.

Hungary's active role as an initiator is shown by the fact that in the autumn of 1976 the Hungarian government forwarded to nineteen non-socialist countries its suggestions for the concrete implementation of the Helsinki provisions by recommending the institutionalisation of high-level exchanges of political views, by the conclusion of agreements of free trade, on the elimination of double taxation, on subsidies to cooperation projects between enterprises, on tourist traffic, on judicial assistance in civil matters, on the extension of travel facilities and the exchange of information and cultural values.

The addressees favourably received the initiatives of the Hungarian government although the practical reaction was less to the point as only very few of the proposals were carried out. In the autumn of 1979 the Hungarian government presented the interested countries with another group of recommendations, which added new elements to the earlier initiatives.

Multiliteral and mutually advantageous East–West relations and the reinforcement of détente are indispensable to the creation of a world free of war. On this basis it will be possible to re-create and consolidate the regions of common European civilisation. In all European countries concerned the realism now flourishes that has put the Helsinki process in action. So too must the realisation exist and act that mankind has to choose between two roads: those of war or peace—but only one of them is in its interest, that of peace.

EUROPE, OUR COMMON HOME

by

ISTVÁN SŐTÉR

Our home is not only Hungary but Europe too, from the Gothic art of Chartres to the Romanesque–Byzantine architecture of Vladimir and Suzdal whose counterparts are to be found in the South of France. Hungarian Romanesque churches are twinned with the French Cistercian and Premonstratensian monastic churches. Europe is one and indivisible: this unity may be disrupted by politics but it is culture which affirms it because culture cannot be circumscribed. It may happen that the same idea emerges at the same time in the North and in the South. Our own country has found itself isolated at several points in its history; but just as Metternich's police could not prevent the spreading of progressive ideas in Hungary, so too the obstacles of later eras failed. During the Second World War the Budapest cafés dropped their chic English names but the spread of English and American literature could not be prevented. In those years German literature was for us by those German writers who had emigrated to the U.S.A. The walls of Hitler's fortress Europe were erected in vain. We must never allow Europe to arrive at a similar cultural state again.

If we are far away from Europe for any length of time we become more aware of our Europeanness. The U.S.A. is a fascinating and exciting place but seeing a European film in New York, Italian shoes, or a French dress in the window of a Fifth Avenue shop evokes the same nostalgia for home as hearing Bartók's music at a Boston concert. Europe's state borders disappear when looked on from afar; overseas being European means being Hungarian, Italian, French, Russian, Danish, Norwegian, English, Greek, and German —all at the same time. Politics will never unite the peoples of Europe but culture always has. Every attempt whose aim is to cast the peoples and cultures of Europe into a single mould is doomed to failure. Even Napoleon was unable to create such a mould: Europe never has been nor ever will be a unified empire, not even to the extent that the Holy Roman Empire was.

The peoples of Europe have been aware of themselves as nations not as empires. In the aftermath of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, the Habsburgs tried to encourage an imperial patriotism but the attempt remained confined to articles by Viennese journalists inspired from above.

However, there does exist a European patriotism which is so instinctive that a traveller on his way home from the U.S.A. greets the hedges of Normandy with real emotion! I remember once arriving from enchantingly colourful Rio de Janeiro into a grey summer morning in Frankfurt; the mere proximity of Goethe's house suggested that I had arrived home.

Europe's openness has existed since its very beginnings and it is constantly increasing. The continent has not only been open to itself, its people open to each other: it has been open to other continents and cultures too. The Spanish Conquest did not give as much to the New World as the latter did to Europe: plants, spices, poultry, and the new literatures which emerged in the wake of European literature. What would have happened if, instead of Europe penetrating America, Indian ships had embarked on British and French shores? This would have been historically impossible since Europe's openness also implies curiosity and a sense of place—only Europe would have been able to hear the call of distant continents. Europe has still to discover Asia: it seems as if countries larger than Europe herself awoke to their own existence and significance only in the consciousness of Europe. China and Japan had shut themselves into their own culture; this distinguished them from Europe which used Chinese motifs for its furniture, dressed in Chinese silk and discovered porcelain under the impact of the Chinese; the Japonais merged with Art Nouveau; African sculptures inspired Europen art and Napoleon's craftsmen made furniture using Egyptian motifs.

Europe's power of assimilating is still on the increase. Nobody passing the Budapest Opera House sees anything remiss in the sphynxes sitting at the entrance. Only strong and vital cultures can assimilate. Europe has always flavoured everything acquired or looted from the culture of other continents with its own national histories.

Europe was always more interested in autochtonous national taste than in imitations. It is now a major dilemma of the Third World whether to develop a national culture or to follow the modern—or allegedly modern—culture of Europe. Arab novels in French translations surprise me with the effort they make to develop national characteristics in this typically European literary genre. (Goethe had every reason to admire the Chinese novels written many centuries before because, as he said, they could have been set in the present.) The Arab cultures of the Third World have discovered the need and the opportunity to present their conditions by following in the tracks of

the European novel. However, an imitation of Proust strikes one as bizarre in a modern Arab novel and we feel that the struggle for the national assimilation of the novel in today's Arab literatures is being exaggerated. What is clear is that imitating European forms will not achieve this. Europe does not export the formal treasures of its huge trove of novels but it may set an example through the ideological lesson implied in its novels, namely that a national character can be achieved only through experiencing national problems. This includes social problems and the understanding and discovery of the secrets of individual inclinations, temperaments, and other human particularities.

We must not confuse the inhabitants of different continents. The imagination and mental processes of an Asian can be very different from those of a European, and they must be different because tradition and history are alive in every people and individual and they differ greatly from people to people. Europe can export its technology as can America even better, but art can be exported much less. Others can be acquainted with it but cannot have an obligatory curriculum imposed on them. Japanese films are excellent when they bring to life Japanese history; they become chaotic and childish—despite the best of intentions—if they try to transplant contemporary European psychological problems into Japanese life.

It is strange that Europe assimilates what it has learned from other cultures more thoroughly and organically than other cultures with what they have received from Europe. The Japanese example shows that civilisation must not become national, it must be bought and paid for just as any know-how is acquired. Art, however, can never be bought, hence it has no price. Art must be experienced and created, not from one minute to another but through the work of many generations. Hungarian literature came late to the novel and tried to assimilate and nationalise it through their translations until a Hungarian novel had developed and grown to be a full brother to the novels of world literature while remaining Hungarian. Assimilation is possible only through experience. Among the European nations those of Central and Eastern Europe were able to experience and assimilate the achievements of their own continent only through imitation or sojourns abroad; but they could experience and appropriate only what they or their national cultures needed. Culture is not built on resolutions but upon spiritual impulses. Europe can preserve its own culture only as long as it preserves its own history. This applies to every nation, European and non-European alike.

European culture has been assembled from the experience and knowledge of reading and travelling people. The best Hungarian example of this is Count István Széchenyi. The travellers from Central and Eastern Europe

learned of the institutions of the advanced western countries from the beginning of the nineteenth century; in turn they helped adjust their own reform movements to those examples. The western travellers of the Romantic age, conversely, came upon Eastern and Central Europe as an exotic, picturesque, and original world, attractive in its very backwardness. Duc de Ligne saw in the Hungarian, Turkish, Croatian, and Serbian folk costumes the colourful dress of a royal feast. Bismarck, when staying in the Castle of Buda, saw the moonlit Danube, the town and the Plain beyond as the twin landscape of German romanticism. Despite so many custom barriers, border guards, and passports, the carriage tracks of East and West crossed many times. Indeed, it was not only the aristocrats, such as the young Baron József Eötvös, the son of a high state functionary who travelled to the West, but also figures such as Bertalan Szemere from the minor gentry and János Erdélyi, the descendant of serfs. More important still were the craftsmen, the printers, cabinet-makers, jewellers, and tailors who, from their wanderings brought western civilization to the country of Széchenyi; he was not ashamed to risk his good name by smuggling a gas-generator out of England.

The theologians studied at German universities, the artists in Rome, Florence, and Munich, and the craftsmen in Holland, France, and Britain. The Renaissance houses of Upper Hungary were built by Polish masters, Hungarian fortifications by French and Italian military engineers. The craftsmen were responsible for establishing a balance between national cultures: empire furniture could not be had only in Napoleon's country but also in the St Petersburg of his adversary, the tsar. The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, despite its obsolete structure, was the image of Europe on a small scale, a camp of peoples whose relations with their neighbours were not brotherly because they were not independent. Yet their culture had much in common, enhanced by the similarity of their fashions, not only in dress and hair-styles but also in buildings and interior decorations. A middle-class apartment in Zagreb resembled its counterpart in Budapest and not in Paris.

Our greater home, Europe, will preserve its political power as long as it preserves its cultural power. And the best proof of this power is receptivity, the ability to assimilate, and the claim to irradiate culture. Europe has created itself at the price of savage wars, sufferings, and redressed errors. For its achievements Europe has paid a higher price than continents which have shared its achievements almost without paying for them. Hence they have been able to develop faster than a Europe which needed millennia to create something which enabled America to advance to its present state in barely two hundred years. If there is such a thing as European self-awareness there should be also a feeling of European affinity, and a feeling of responsibility toward ourselves.

THE EXTERNAL FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIALIST ECONOMY

by

JÓZSEF BOGNÁR

In a number of my studies I have referred to the generally recognised phenomenon that socialist society and economy have failed to develop a world economic concept capable of answering the great problems of survival, development, interdependence and the possible economic "world order" through an analysis of the economic-technological and power processes in play at the turn of our century. In addition to this, the present Hungarian situation and the public view of it prove also that there is no Hungarian *external economic conception* which would lead to a convincing demonstration of the effect of external economic factors and connections on the alternatives for development of the national economy either. The stopping short of taking brave decisions, not only in the opinions and expectations of individual people but also in subsequent steps in economic policy, can be attributed to this lack of those firm concepts that would develop into an economic policy. Of course, the fact that the social and economic effects of an unavoidable measure have to be moderated is not uncommon in economic policy; however, in recent years the second step taken in Hungary often was not simply moderating, but one actually rendering the first step ineffective.

It is obvious that resolving the above problems would require a detailed, complex and historically founded analysis; this could only be done in a lengthy essay or monograph. Naturally, understanding and clarifying these problem areas requires an innovative and complex way of thinking rather than sheer voluminousness; thus outlining the problems and situations may in itself lead specialists in economic policy to further develop the ideas presented in this study.

We mentioned socialist society and economy, but it is obvious that the role the external economy fills in the national economy is subject to changes in time (according to phases of development as well as in space depending on the fundamentals of a given national economy).

It is also obvious and convincingly shown by experience that this role varies also in the function of the nature of world economic processes; for the problems emerging in a relatively dynamic and balanced era such as the golden age of the sixties, differ completely from those needing solution in a crisis of over-production, or in the event of structural transformation.

Until now, when talking about the developmental phase we usually discussed the extensive period that accompanies social transformation, and the intensive phase that follows it.

When distinguishing from the economic point of view between the fundamentals of different national economies, one recognises some as having a large domestic market because of the size of their population and a wealth of natural resources on the one side, and recognises others as having small domestic markets and limited natural resources. Besides this, some overseas socialist countries are setting out on the difficult course of economic development weighed down with their inherited monocultural production.

Differing economic situations during the extensive phase

Since socialism has developed—and in contrast to the original expectations—in countries that were not economically developed, each of the countries concerned has had to face problems of being relatively backward in the course of their transformation.

Making up for that backwardness involves special problems from the external economic aspect; the large-scale importation of foreign technologies has to be paid for with exports.

In the case of economies rich in natural resources and commanding a large domestic market the situation is relatively simple, because

a) their growing or potentially increasable energy and raw material exports can, for a while, cover the cost of the extra imports involved in the purchase of new technologies,

b) market limitation has not emerged yet in the course of developing industrial production, since the domestic market is potentially capable of absorbing increased production in the capital as well as in the consumer sphere,

c) thus their economic intercourse with the external (capitalist) world can be narrowed down to the exchange of raw materials for technologies, which means a narrow area and makes possible a certain retreat into isolation in the event of adverse international conditions (blockade, embargo). The obvious consequence is that the sensitivity of a country to that type

of economic growth, developing on extensive grounds, to foreign trading is limited.

Naturally, some distortion of domestic development which raises difficulties for technology imports, such as the Soviet importing of cereals—which takes 5,000–6,000 million dollars annually from technological imports—is possible also in this type of growth.

The model of social change followed by making up for relative backwardness differs from the above essentially in the case of national economies commanding a small and strongly limited domestic market and relatively meagre natural resources. In their case market limitations emerge right away, at the beginning of development in the domestic economy and the natural resources are insufficient to balance the necessary technological imports; indeed, they may even necessitate the increase of imports.

Undoubtedly, this type of development is extraordinarily sensitive to the external economy under such circumstances, since it has to import raw materials and semi-finished products in addition to the necessary technologies; it can find items to balance these only in the processing industry and in agriculture.

Finally they must consider also that extensive growth will rapidly consume the labour reserves; thus the development of quality will also postulate changes in activities (and capacities), which will involve the importation of certain mass-products in the interest of ensuring quality and marketability.

Cooperation among socialist countries may ease the situation both by way of assuring supplies of raw material and of providing markets.

In spite of this, the policy of social change—extensive development—followed by making up the backwardness is coupled with serious external tensions and uncertainties (and also instability) in economies of this type. As a consequence of the great need for imports, balance can be maintained only by a vigorous export drive, and this is hard to imagine in the extensive phase during social transformation. Uncertainty and the lack of a stable balance do, on the other hand, slow down the import (or transfer) of technologies, for at critical times those guiding the economy would naturally prefer those imports necessary for the continuous operation of the economy for the basic supply of the population.

It stands to reason that an economy of this type can retreat or go into isolation only to the extent made possible by its partners.

However, the establishment of the economic political model of social change, development and catching up is even more complicated and fraught with contradictions in the case of a monocultural economy. This is unconditionally dependent on the world market in respect of exports as well as im-

ports. Considering the political tensions the economic political model starting with social changes and continued by efforts aimed at catching up may evoke in the environment and amongst powers with contrary interests, it can be assumed that the successful realisation of this economic policy is possible only if it receives vigorous support from abroad.

Growing sensitivity to external economy in the intensive period

There is no doubt that development can be started in the extensive type of growth, but the target—of catching up—cannot be reached as labour reserves as well as those hidden due to the centralisation of assets become depleted. Nor is this model sensitive to the requirements of structural change and of rapid technical growth. Nevertheless, the model of intensive growth (catching up) will increase external economic sensitivity in each of the three types of development, namely, that insensitive to the external economy, that very sensitive, and even that developing from a monocultural situation. In the first type the limits to raw material and energy exports will soon be evident; in such a structure exports will soon be incapable of covering the continuously growing cost of ever-increasing technical imports. In addition to that, the import demand of the domestic economy will also increase (energy and raw material saving, reduction of costs, infrastructural development, rising standard of living and soon). Thus a vigorous growth in export of the products of the processing industry becomes necessary, inferring an engagement in world economic processes, in international trade, and technical exchange as well as adjustment to the international monetary system.

In the case of economies very sensitive to the external economy, an unambiguous orientation towards exporting is needed and this also involves a vigorous approach to the system of conditions within the world economy (monetary system, loans, techniques, organizational forms, methods of cooperation, etc.). The role of imports increases in the economy in order to develop its structure, quality production and modernised production organization. These requirements obviously make necessary the more extensive engagement of external resources in the domestic economy and for export purposes.

In economies starting their development from monocultural conditions, more intensive cooperation with the regional economic processes would also be necessary—if that is not made impossible by political conditions. The connections expounded above make it plain that the external economic factors of economic growth play a substantially more important role in intensive periods than in the extensive phase.

The role of the external economic factor increases in the national income (national production); this means that the circle of processes, in the shaping and rational solution of which external economic connections play a decisive role, increases continuously. The new demands in most cases cannot be rationally met without the engagement of external economic factors. Consequently, the external economic factor plays an increasingly vigorous role in the development of the standard of living too, since the more successful competitors and trading partners may syphon off a part of the national income if the terms of trade change adversely. It stands to reason, therefore, that the system of economic preferences and subsidies will have to concentrate on the stimulation of exports instead of on "protecting" the domestic market and on import-savings. This is because subsidizing uneconomic solutions in the domestic economy and not applying an internationally accepted stimulation (GATT) of exports in the external economy doubles the losses, and no national economy can bear that over a longer period. Due to the paucity of available means, however, export stimulation can be given only on a selective basis. Competitiveness among exporting enterprises has to be developed on a selective basis first; then it has to be maintained, for they are facing competitors such as the multinationals, the supranationals or other company "empires" evolved out of other economic environments, as well as the rapidly industrialising developing countries, where wages and consumption standards are still well below those pertaining in the socialist countries.

Above, therefore, we have examined the changing role of the external economic factor in the transformation-development-catching up model of socialist economic policy. The conclusion reached in the analysis is that the change from the extensive to the intensive phase is particularly sharp and critical, indeed, in certain respects, revolutionary, in the shaping of the external economic factor. It is a general experience in economic policy that the switch from import substitution to export orientation raises serious problems in every economy and society; furthermore, it is particularly difficult in a socialist society and economy, for structures and interest relations are inclined to ossify in these countries and the intensive model requires substantially more, livelier and more complex international relations than the socialist countries have built up during the recent cycle of international politics, with cold war giving way from time to time to a thaw.

The world economy and the world market have been, however, discussed only in general so far in the course of our analysis of the problems. In other words, we have postulated a state of the world economy, in which the nature and extent of the changes proceeded according to some accustomed pace. It is generally acknowledged, though, that the changes which took place on the world market since the mid-seventies laid question marks on the norms, the mode of thinking and rationality developed by economics which had been taken for granted until now. These changes evolved partly in the long-term and partly in the short-term phenomena; their effect was global, extending to each of the 180 national economies, stimulating and forcing them to devise new decisions. Thus the question of where the world economy will be in five or fifteen years' time arises, since for an export-oriented policy it is a pivotal point of our system of actions. Answering that question we will, first of all, have to make a distinction between the long and short-term conditions of the world economy and those which exert direct or indirect effects.

The long-term contains factors such as the population explosion, which means that the world economy will have to support about 6,000 million people by the end of the century at a considerably higher standard of living than the present but with large differences from region to region. Many experts have questioned the limitations to natural resources, but energy and raw material savings became a dominant feature in the latest technologies. The scientific-technological revolution, which accelerated as never before, and now extends to services as well as production, makes possible an extraordinarily precise review of various economic and technical problems. (This has been called the information revolution.) On the other hand, the acceleration in the scientific-technological revolution and its extension to more and more fields revealed the dangers technology pose—for every new possibility is coupled with new perils in history—not only in armament and national security, but also in using high technology for anti-social purposes.

As a result of the speeding up of world economic processes and the selective effect of the crisis, deep divisions have opened between various economic regions of the world; this inequality is now threatening the opportunities of communication in the broad sense. (The centres of action and power, which engage in the development of the state-of-the-art technologies are not capable of understanding African famine, or the actions and behaviour of African states, still determined by the structures of the tribal system.) The malfunctions caused by inequality will presumably force a greater mobility and convertibility of resources. Finally the signs indicate that the recognition

of the fact of interdependence is taking place in international politics in that the leaders of the two super-powers declared the recognition that the security of the United States depends on the Soviet Union and that of the Soviet Union on the United States.

Epoch-making changes have evolved also in the shorter-term, more directly economic sphere.

National economies participating in the world economy have come to a mutually dependent relation with one another. Mutuality does not mean balance or equality in this case, since the economically weaker country is more dependent on the strong one, than vice versa, just as the debtor is more dependent on the creditor. Mutuality in this case means limitation of action for the wealthier or stronger side, because unilateral action holds risks for them also. For instance, debtors can be made bankrupt, but ruined debtors cannot repay loans, which may bring severe, even fatal consequences to the creditor in his own sphere (international banking).

Prosperity is concurrent in the world economy and each participant is interested in its maintenance, since external economic connections mean critical growth sources for each economy. The world economic processes, the events of world markets have speeded up extraordinarily and quickly exert their influence. Due to the rapid growth of mutual dependence and external economic relations, the external economic factor now critically influences the standard of living of the various national economies, since those trading under adverse terms of trade suffer continuous losses. Considerable shifts of the pivotal points are taking place among various regions of the world economy, and the world trade importance of the South-East Asian region is rapidly increasing. (This has been called the Pacific zone and includes the U.S.A.) New structures and forms are appearing in world trade.

Approaching the problem from another angle, these longer and shorter term phenomena can be characterized by the fact that the internationalization of the economies is proceeding rapidly yet this process is not leading to the elimination of national states. Thus the problems of the world economy —including even the global problems—will have to be solved through cooperation among the national economies.

These changes, however, are involving the problems of the domestic economies with the problems of the external and the world economy. In this sense even the cooperation between two socialist countries cannot be regarded as free of world economic effects (which permeate the national economies) since every cooperation postulates a certain state and certain intentions and the world economic effects influencing the two economies are also organic parts of this state and intentions.

It also seems obvious that certain global and international connections must be kept in mind even in a system of bilateral relations.

The handling of current world economic developments and effects is made difficult in the socialist economy by the fact that the introduction of the export-oriented model is uneven and meets with non-comprehension and even opposition. This fact can be attributed to the ossification of the views, structures and interest relations characteristic of socialist society, all of which (due to their rigidity) "automatically" resist changes. Nevertheless, the export-oriented development model is an organic part of the domestic development of the economic system, the realisation of which is a necessity for the adequate operation of the system.

This does not conflict with the circumstance that the model in question seeks for fruitful relations between the given economy and the world economy, since beyond a certain development level the rationality of economic action itself demands the settlement of this relation.

The developments due to the change in the world economy clearly derived from the world economy (thus from without), and they demand adjustment even in economies where only a few years ago the view that they were not directly effected by world economic developments was dominant.

A complex analysis of these phenomena leads to the conclusion that the recognition of the necessity for change and adjustment to the new circumstances poses a difficult and contradictory problem in socialist society too. Thus the necessity for changes must be recognised in the old structure, and the changes have to be realised in opposition to the views deriving from the old structure and interest relations. The recognition can only come about through objective scientific analyses and enquiries once the freedom of research is institutionally established. The transformation of the developed structures and interest relations is, however, a question of political struggle and of power relations, since it meets opposition from power centres and groups interested in the maintenance of the old structure and interest relations.

It must be emphatically pointed out, however, that the successful operation of social systems and national structures is part and parcel of their ability to adjust and to renew in a world developing at a pace hitherto unprecedented.

If the ability to adjust and to renew is lacking, the nation and the regime both arrive in a perilous situation; this leads to conflict between the leading stratum and the masses, ungovernability at home and backwardness interna-

tionally. Therefore the structure and interest relations of the socialist society and economy must be transformed in a manner that will make them mobile, innovative and capable of action even when faced with the accelerated development of an extraordinarily dynamic world. The task is, of course, extremely complicated, although modern economic history has recorded precedents and examples such as the export-oriented model leading from backwardness in modernising economic political and action systems. However, there are no precedents for the changes that have evolved in the last few years of this century. Therefore adjustment to the conditions—which themselves vary depending on the fundamentals, situation and abilities of various economies—postulates a vigorous innovative spirit and energetic action.

It follows that the rigid, sectoral system of action, which moves in a narrow zone and suffers from bureaucratic conservatism, must be replaced by a new information, decision and action system. Through its more complex and combinative evaluation system it will be capable of understanding the new problems, and of developing new and mobile action systems that quickly arrive at considered decisions.

To bring this about demands new, special forms of connections, innovative and mobile information and consultation systems, and decision systems operating under special conditions. The luxury of burdening decision-making organizations with detailed problems related to the technique of implementation instead of the complex and fundamental problems must not be allowed.

Social systems, as history proves, live for many generations in a quickly changing world. Therefore their ability to function is not primarily documented by the development of structures conforming to the dominant (accepted) political doctrines, but by the skill in their adaptation and handling of new situations and important changes, for these may decide the future of systems and nations for decades or even centuries.

The understanding and the proper handling of changes and needs springing from domestic and external changes is, in our days, the paramount requirement for the renewal and upswing of socialist society and economy.

THE CRISIS OF THE MONETARY SYSTEM

by

JÁNOS FEKETE

The severe strains that have accumulated in the international monetary system, clearly and unequivocally call for its reform. These strains were present throughout the existence of the floating currency system. But they seem to have grown to and intolerable degree since the beginning of the eighties.

The system of floating exchange rates was introduced in March 1973 amidst sanguine expectations in many academic and political quarters.

It was hoped that

a) free readjustments in the rates of foreign exchange will automatically assure balance of payments equilibrium—through a convergence of exchange rates and purchasing power parities;

b) the level of inflation in the different countries would level out;

c) minimal interest rates will prove adequate given the level of inflation and consequently real interest rates would be levelled as well;

d) this would prevent major capital movements;

e) as well as major diversions of foreign exchanges rates from purchasing power parities;

f) as a result countries could pursue independent economic and monetary policies.

Around twelve years of floating give us ample evidence that none of these assumptions proved correct.

a) The system was not able to correct balance of payments disequilibria —on the contrary: severe and aggravating imbalances were characteristic of this period;

b) extreme differences in rates on inflation occurred;

c) real interest rates also showed enormous differences;

* The text of János Fekete's paper was submitted to the Congressional Summit Conference about exchange rates, initiated and sponsored by Senator Bill Brady, Dem., and Congressman Jack Kemp Rep., held in Washington between the 11th and the 14th of November 1985.

d) large capital movements of a speculative nature resulted in excessive exchange rate volatility with the consequence of growing uncertainty in international trade;

e) protectionism has grown to dangerous proportions—threatening to destroy the international trade system;

f) the consequences of economic policy mistakes were passed on to other countries;

g) freedom to pursue independent economic policies vanished;

h) the system of floating exchange rates based on the US $ as key currency became itself a major independent source of world-wide inflation during the seventies;

i) central banks by the end of the decade could not avoid fighting inflation applying shock methods of treatment—pushing the world economy into the longest and severest recession since the Great Depression of the thirties.

While the direct causes of the international debt crisis of 1982 must certainly be sought in the inflation of the seventies and the recession of 1980–83, the basic problem, the lack of an adequate framework for development finance under the present system should also be addressed in any effort to reform the international monetary system.

The recycling of petrodollars (which consisted essentially of short-term funds) during the seventies was made—with the approval and encouragement of governments—by commercial banks, on market terms, on a floating rate basis. The interest rate risk was thus transferred to the borrowers. As a consequence, a whole credit pyramid was built on extremely fragile ground, and it was left exposed to any sudden shock, to any sudden change in international economic conditions.

Precisely such changes occurred in 1979, with the beginning of the era of high real interest rates, falling commodity prices, and a strong dollar.

The cooperation on an *ad hoc* basis of international institutions, governments, central banks and commercial banks has up to now been successful in containing the debt crisis and in avoiding the collapse of the international monetary system. This was made possible by the willingness of debtor countries to pursue drastic adjustment policies, and by two years of economic recovery in developed countries—however modest and uneven that may have been—which relieved some of the pressure on the developping countries.

But the world has gained only a breathing space, which is quickly approaching its end.

Debtor countries have reached the limits of what is socially tolerable. A further pursuit of adjustment on such a scale and without the hope of re-

turning to an economic growth path, would certainly destabilize the governments of these countries. Accordingly, resistance to such policies mounts.

There is growing evidence that, if not addressed, the growing imbalances in the world economy will soon lead to economic slowdown, if not recession. Growth forecasts are repeatedly downscaled: the latest IMF forecast puts average economic growth in developing countries in 1986 well under 3 per cent, which is the minimum rate necessary for developing countries to service their debts, according to the IMF's own estimates.

In contrast to some optimistic views, I am inclined to argue that, if we fail to act quickly, a second outbreak of the debt crisis is inevitable.

The clock is about to strike twelve. However short the remaining breathing space, the recently started shift in U.S. policies and an emerging consensus that the system needs reforming, gives us hope that there is now a window of opportunity for placing the international monetary system on a new, healthy basis.

During the past ten years the U.S. became a more open economy: imports represented 9.8 per cent of GNP in 1984, in contrast to 7.3 per cent in 1980 and 5.2 per cent in 1975. As a consequence, the U.S. can less and less afford to conduct domestic economic policy without regard to external economic conditions, and without regard to the external repercussions of its actions.

For the first time in history, the U.S. government experiences the discreet charm of external constraint. Up to now, the U.S. could finance its budget deficits without problems, relying on foreign funds. But the price of this were high nominal and real interest rates and an irrealistically high dollar exchange rate and, consequently, growing balance of trade and balance of payments deficits. The balance of payment deficit will be around $130 billion in 1985. Despite its recent fall, the dollar is still overvalued.

A further, potentially most damaging, external constraint is the growing net indebtedness of the U.S., it is estimated that by the end of 1985 this indebtedness will reach $ 200 billion. Thus the U.S. has become a debtor for the first time since the Great War, and if, by the end of this decade, it does not change its policy it will accumulate more external debts than the total of those of all the developing countries today.

While there is no shame attached to being a debtor—my country, for instance, has been a debtor for centuries—the problem is that the U.S. continue to behave like a creditor. This is not acceptable. A debtor must behave in keeping with his status. It is illogical, for instance, that the U.S. government opposes any proposal aimed at increasing the credit-granting capacities of the IMF and World Bank.

I am of the opinion that today creditors and debtors, rich and poor coun-

tries, East and West, North and South are all interested in avoiding the outbreak of a trade war or of a second, even more disastrous debt crisis, followed by long years of deep recession. We are all in the same boat.

In order to propose a possible solution to the problems we face, as a pious Marxist I went back to the Bible and composed—already during the first debt crisis, at the beginning of 1983—Ten Commandments of a new international monetary system. Let me share them with you.

1. The national currency of any country—even one as large as the U.S.—cannot play the role of key currency any longer. Whenever national interests are in conflict with international obligations one cannot expect a Central Bank or Government to give priority to their international commitments against the national interest.
2. Consequently the key currency should be issued and managed by an international organization—like a more up-to-date IMF—with the participation of all interested member-countries of the United Nations.
3. The key currency must fulfil all classical functions of money (means of credit, means of settlement, standard of value, asset for thesauration, international reserve currency). To be able to do this properly the key currency must be linked with gold. Gold must play the role of *numéraire* and reserve of the last resort. Neither a basket of currencies nor any other raw material can give the key currency the stability and confidence what gold could.

   The value of all currencies can be expressed in the new unit as a fixed rate of exchange.
4. The rigidity of the former par-value system could be avoided by larger margins and a new understanding that devaluation and revaluation will not be considered as defeats or victories but the logical consequences of different national economic policies. The fact that a currency must be devalued or revalued does not mean that a policy is wrong or right. The best policy will be that which allows the highest economic growth with an acceptable level of inflation, unemployment, deficit or surplus in the budget and in the balance of payments.
5. Debtor countries must continue their adjustment efforts. First every country must put their own house in order. They must know that any adjustment program has social costs. But how these costs are shared out among the various sections of society is the responsibility of the given government. The debtor countries have to change their policies as well. Instead of all kinds of restrictive measures, emphasis must be on economic growth. Indeed, a chance must be given to them to grow out of the crisis.

6. In the new international monetary system, the IMF can play a pivotal role, but the IMF must take even more care than up to now not to make conditions excessive or misdirected. It must be taken into consideration that there is a limit to social tolerance in each country. Therefore a case by case approach must be here as well. It is easy to prescribe that budget deficits must be reduced, imports must be cut, etc., to provide enough cash or service debts, but the IMF's role is to find acceptable solutions for both creditors and debtors.
7. Everybody must make additional efforts to avoid a new debt crisis. Governments have to issue guarantees to cover export risks involved in sales to LDC-countries.

   Central Banks must support the fellow central banks in the case of sudden liquidity crises by granting short-term overbridge facilities. International monetary organizations such as the IMF, IBRD, IFC, etc. need ample resources to cope with system-wide payments imbalances. To do this, Governments must *support* the further and essentially greater growth of IMF, the maintenance of an enlarged access of credits, a new distribution of SDR, a general growth in World Bank capital, etc. In conditions such as present high unemployment, low raw materials prices and unused capacities, a quick resurgence of inflation is not an imminent risk, therefore public enemy No 1 today is not inflation but depression.
8. Commercial banks should again increase their lending activity towards LDC countries. It will be difficult, however, to convince commercial banks to do so. Some parliaments and governments heavily critized the easy-handed commercial bankers who lent too much during the recycling of the petrodollars. The same banks which were praised before for the excellent job they did in recycling were condemned later for the action. It is quite natural that these commercial banks are now, in spite of the invitation issued by the Treasury Secretary, reluctant to lend fresh money to the same debtors for balance of payments purposes. This time I think they will not go ahead—only follow the governments, central banks and international financial institutions.
9. Protectionism must be restrained. At least the repeated but always unfulfilled promises and declarations made at all recent government conferences of the most developed industrialized countries should be honoured.
10. A substantial reform aimed at restoring order in international finances can only help to get the world economy back on the path of sustained non-inflationary economic growth. It can be achieved only through the

coordination of the economic policies of the major participants of the international monetary system.

A *conditio sine qua non* is an improvement in the political atmosphere—a return to the policy of détente. Geneva could mean a start. If this proves true, economic development could follow quickly. Developments in the direction of mutually advantageous economic relations between East and West would contribute more to the security of both sides than a couple of trillion U.S. $ spent on new military programmes.

This conference has a special importance. It means that something new is starting. It is true that it took three years of fundamental crisis, one million lost jobs in the U.S. and social arrest in the developing world for some outstanding representatives of the U.S. business community, congress and administration to realize that the present monetary system is slowly strangling world economic growth. If the management of the wealthiest capitalist country does not like the floating system and if the representatives of the far from wealthy socialist countries do not like it either, then something must be wrong with this system.

THE HUNGARIAN ECONOMY IN THE WORLD

by

VERA NYITRAI

A small country with an open economy, such as Hungary, can best have its situation and progress assessed by recourse to international statistics. Statistical comparisons of this kind go back many years in Hungary. In the mid-eighties, now that we wish to outline the foreseeable trends of our development to the beginning of the next century, it is especially important to examine the progress we have made in the last ten years and see how it fits in with the economic development of other countries. In addition to economic statistics, sociological surveys are increasingly important, since economic and social phenomena and processes can strengthen or weaken one another.

Of the comparative studies which the Statistical Office of Hungary made in the early 1980s, I wish to review in this article three studies. They deal with the level and development of Hungarian industry, the comparison of Hungarian and European agriculture and the collation of the principal social indices with Czechoslovak and Austrian figures.

Hungarian industry between 1970 and 1983

Early in the 1980s, the effects of the two world economic depressions of the 1970s elicited different responses from particular countries, different in size and in their socio-economic systems and development. In the 1970s the rate of economic growth declined in both advanced capitalist and socialist countries alike; it was only in the developing world—and there primarily in the petroleum-producing countries—that the rate of expansion was higher than in the 1960s. Between 1971 and 1980 the annual average growth in gross domestic product was 3.2 per cent in the advanced capitalist countries and 6 per cent in the developing nations; the national income produced by the socialist

economies grew at a rate of 5.4 per cent on a yearly average. (What this index contains differs to some extent.) In this period the annual rate of Hungarian economic expansion, at 4.6 per cent, was a little below the average for the socialist countries. From the point of view of per capita increase in gross domestic product, however, the rate of growth between 1971 and 1980 in Hungary was outstanding by comparison with other regions of the world. In that period the annual growth on a world average was 2.1 per cent, with 2.3 per cent in the advanced capitalist countries and 3.7 per cent in the developing ones: Hungary's rate of increase was an average 4.3 per cent.

Economic expansion in Hungary was conditioned by the fact that extensive manpower reserves had already been exhausted, that the available investment resources were scanty and that the efficiency of investment was not altogether satisfactory.

Considerable changes occurred the world over in the consumption-accumulation ratio of national income. In most of the advanced capitalist countries the accumulation ratio decreased in the 1970s and the consumption-accumulation pattern of the 1950s was restored by the oncoming 1980s. In some of the developing countries (particularly in those with oil interests) a constantly growing part of the gross domestic product was expended on investment during the 1970s as well. The majority of the socialist countries reacted to the first world economic depression with a phase lag. Whereas in 1975 the net accumulation ratio in the socialist countries was between 22 and 35 per cent and fell to between 16 and 27 per cent by 1982, the lowest ratio, at 16 per cent, was registered in Hungary.

In the same manner as during the 1970s, industry became dominant in the structure of the Hungarian economy early in the 1980s; this trend agrees with the situation in other socialist countries. Industry's share in the national income in Hungary is the lowest among the CMEA countries. Factors are the difference in the pricing systems and the fact that, because of Hungary's geographical and natural conditions, agriculture has a relatively great share in the production of national income. From the early 1970s the infrastructure providing for the needs of the public and the service trades expanded somewhat more rapidly than before, to the point that by 1982 the ratio of the service sector rose to 24 per cent (in the majority of the CMEA countries the ratio of the tertiary sectors is generally lower).

At the beginning of the 1980s the ratio of industrial investments in the socialist countries was between 33 and 51 per cent. The highest ratio (51 per cent) was registered in Rumania as a result of a forced rate of industrial expansion, while the lowest were those in Hungary and Poland.

In the period from 1971 to 1983 the development of Hungarian industry was parallel with that of the entire economy. Thus Hungary retained its place somewhere in the middle of the European range even though this part of the range had become crowded. Faster than the Hungarian rate were those of industrial growth in Greece and Portugal and these countries thus came nearer to the Hungarian level. In comparison with the progress made by the socialist countries as a whole between 1971 and 1982, the average rate of growth in Hungarian industrial output was the lowest at 4.5 per cent a year; it was considerably higher in quite a few other countries (such as 7 per cent in Bulgaria and 9.6 per cent in Rumania). Highly instrumental in the expansion of Hungarian industry during the past fifteen years were the central development programmes: one of the important objectives of these programmes was to promote a speedier implementation of technical development and the introduction of up-to-date technologies. Of particular significance was the successful programme for the manufacture of pharmaceuticals, insecticides and pesticides and intermediate products. Part of the industrial programmes was aimed at reducing outlays and at promoting more rational economic activity. Other results of these programmes were the increased use of natural gas in the production and consumption of energy, the utilisation of recycled materials and the stepping up of the manufacture of instruments relevant in computer techniques and their application. By the mid-eighties the computerisation programme, with both economic and social dimensions, has assumed particular importance; its formulation and implementation alike contain entirely new elements. The two world oil-price explosions and their knock-on effect have led to a greater structural rearrangement in the advanced capitalist countries than that visible in Hungarian industry.

The share of the energy-producing sectors in the output of Hungarian industry is still relatively high, although in the 1970s it had declined in all CMEA countries. In the past decade the engineering industry has increased its share in the industrial output of the socialist countries; today the share taken up by Hungarian mechanical engineering is identical with that of its counterparts in the GDR and Poland. Machine manufacturing has a lower share in industrial production in Bulgaria, the Soviet Union and Rumania. In the 1970s the proportional output of mechanical engineering in the advanced capitalist countries was by and large identical with that in Hungary, through its internal structure was essentially different.

What happened was that the most spectacular structural rearrangement all over the world took place within mechanical engineering. The composition of the output of this industry and the quality of its products reflect well the technical and technological development of a given country and

underlie the expansion of industry as a whole and the other sectors of the economy. The total output from engineering works between 1971 and 1983 increased by 5 per cent yearly across the world, by 2.9 per cent in the advanced capitalist countries (starting from an already high level), by 7.7 per cent in the developing countries, and by 8.8 per cent in the socialist countries. In Hungary the annual average rate of growth of the engineering industry was 5.4 per cent. In this country some sectors of the industry show an increment well above the average and a better than average renewal of product. For example, the growth in the output ratio of electronic products, which in 1970 represented all in all 15 per cent of all engineering, was already higher than 21 per cent at the beginning of the 1980s. Another important and fast expanding area of mechanical engineering is the machine-tool industry, which also has close links with the application of electronics. Within Hungary's machine-tool industry there has grown, in addition to analogue-controlled machines, the output of the new CNC machine-tools whose precision and reliability parameters now come near to the world standard. Because of this, in the Hungarian machine-tool exports of the early 1980s, the share of non-rouble accounting trade came to nearly 37 per cent, some two-thirds of this going to advanced capitalist countries. A favourable structural transformation occurred also in precision engineering (where computerisation was also highly significant). A particularly dynamic development was seen in the manufacture of regulating equipment for control engineering. Hungary's other traditional engineering sectors developed to a lesser extent and the ratio of Hungarian shipbuilding declined by the early 1980s. While Hungarian-made farm machinery has important markets abroad, especially in CMEA countries, the industry is not yet prepared for more considerable exports.

Yet another important sector is chemicals, where the dynamic development of the 1970s has continued in the 1980s. Here, Hungary stands up well in the international table. Between 1971 and 1982 the yearly average rate of growth of the chemicals industry world-wide was 4.6 per cent; in the advanced capitalist countries it stood at 4 per cent, in the developing world at 6 per cent and at 7 per cent in the socialist countries; Hungarian chemical works increased their output by an annual 7.3 per cent. The structure of the chemical industry has also improved and a good number of products from Hungary's rubber industry have acquired an international reputation and can well be exported to any markets. The Hungarian pharmaceutical industry has kept abreast with international progress, manufacturing time has been reduced, productivity has grown and the material indices have improved. In contrast, Hungary's shortcomings are noticeable in synthetic fibres. In 1983,

per capita output of synthetic fibres in Hungary was 2.5 kg; it was 18.3 kg in the GDR, 11.7 kg in Bulgaria and 12 kg in Czechoslovakia.

The international trend whereby the ratio of some light industries diminished, was also seen in Hungary; this was especially true of textile and clothing. Between 1971 and 1982 the share of Hungary's textile industry in industrial production fell from 5.4 to 4.1 per cent (though this was the lowest ratio within CMEA, it was still high in comparison with advanced capitalist countries). The output ratio of the clothing industry in Hungary fell from 2.8 to 2.2 per cent between 1970 and 1982; this also corresponds with the international trend.

In the light of these main trends, Hungarian industrial development, compared with that of other countries, also shows that we still have a great deal of reserves. Such an indication is, for example, the fact that Hungarian manufactures (especially in mechanical engineering) are too heavy and very material-intensive; this adds considerably to the costs of their production and impairs their competitiveness. Product renewal is not fast enough throughout industry. I am of the opinion that an enormous drawback for Hungarian industry today is that in the past decade investments were concentrated on certain phases of production and the technical standards of production remained unchanged. We were unable to make effective use of the scarce available investment resources. All this points to the necessity of concentrating more resources on coordinated and selective technical development during the 7th five-year plan period.

Hungarian agriculture in the European context

During the 1970s and in the early 1980s the most outstanding results within the Hungarian economy were attained by agriculture. Our production conditions come up to the level of Hungary's economic development and the country has a good supply of arable land: in terms of the amount of farm land per 1,000 of population, Hungary comes third in Europe, preceded only by Denmark and Finland, and in respect of the agricultural area of land per 1,000 of population it takes seventh place in Europe. Grassland and forest areas are not substantial.

However, the situation is not favourable with regard to the supply of agricultural implements for this is largely dependent on the industrial background. Since Hungary's farm machinery manufacturing is not sufficiently developed, a considerable amount of farm machinery has to be imported. The stock of tractors per unit of area is the smallest in Hungary among the coun-

tries of Europe; in Czechoslovakia and the GDR among the socialist countries, this figure for tractors is more than double of that in Hungary.

The efficiency of Hungarian agriculture is nevertheless indicated by the fact that the figures for cereal production per inhabitant show that in the 1970s Hungary occupied second place in Europe, being preceded only by Denmark and followed by Bulgaria, Rumania, France and Yugoslavia. Towards the close of the 1960s, we still held second place in per capita output of pork, but we fell back to third place early in the 1980s. At the same time we rose from second to first place in respect of the production of poultry.

European comparison shows that the Hungarian population is very well supplied with farm products; in the past ten years only in Denmark and Ireland has agriculture produced more per capita than in Hungary. With regard to labour productivity, however, we take a middle rank among European countries; we occupy 14th place in spite of the fact that during the 1970s and in the early 1980s the productivity of agricultural labour increased most rapidly in Hungary among all European countries. However, earlier shortcomings could not be overcome precisely because of the low level of the supply of farm implements.

By comparing the conditions and results of agricultural production in 23 European countries, a more detailed study has shown that Hungary's conditions of production meet the requirements of the average. By the mid-eighties, however, the level of our agricultural production has come near to the results of countries having more favourable conditions, Denmark among them. The export capacity of Hungarian agriculture has also increased in this past period, even though this rise has been accompanied by a rather considerable deterioration in Hungary's terms of trade.

The figures for maize production per capita put Hungary first in Europe. However, our position is not so favourable in respect of average yield. Among the countries examined for average yields of maize in the years 1981 to 1983, Hungary with an index of 6.13 tonne/ha is in fifth place after Greece (8.96), Austria (7.34), Italy (7.04) and France (6.15). Obviously among these countries, Greece and Italy, with their Mediterranean climate, have most advantages for maize and there are other countries where precipitation conditions are more favourable than those in Hungary. As regards average yield, our relative position has changed only little in the past thirty years; we have been in the middle rank of the major European producers all this time.

International comparisons regarding agriculture have called our attention to quite a few favourable phenomena and processes, of which we can rightly be proud. If, however, we look a little more deeply and examine our investment outlays, the picture is no longer so favourable. These comparisons have

also disclosed reserves which are still hidden today in respect of the supply and use of implements, the level of productivity and efficiency, and of which we shall have to make better use for the sake of more intensive farming in the forthcoming period.

A comparison of social indices

Population growth in Hungary has been negative in the 1980s. Similar processes are present in the GDR, Denmark and the Federal Republic of Germany. This phenomenon makes itself felt also in the age structure of the populations. In 1983 the number of persons aged 60 and upwards in Hungary amounted to 17.8 per cent of the population. In comparison with our level of economic development this ratio is high, since this index places Hungary 10th among the 23 European countries. During the past decade the number of marriages per 1,000 of population in Hungary has considerably decreased, the figures being 9.9 in the mid-seventies and only 7.1 in 1983. The rate of marriages contracted in the early 1980s fits well in the international field, since similar rates have been registered in the United Kingdom, Greece and Portugal, while in Belgium, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Italy and Switzerland the number of marriages per 1,000 of population is considerably lower (between 5.1 and 6.1). It is to be noted, however, that in some of these countries an increasingly high ratio, really remarkable even from the statistical point of view, is represented by couples who live together as co-habiting partners without actually contracting marriage.

Hungary is one of those countries where the number and rate of divorces are even traditionally relatively high. Early in the 1980s the number of divorces per 1,000 of population was 2.6–2.7; only in Denmark, the United Kingdom, the GDR and the Soviet Union among the 23 European countries were the divorce rates higher. Our position is unfavourable in terms of live births per 1,000 of population, as this rate has greatly deteriorated from the early 1970s onward. Between 1971 and 1975 the average number of live births in Hungary was 16.1; this figure dropped to 15.8 between 1976 and 1980 and reached the lowest mark at 11.9 in 1983. This agrees with the ratios in Austria, Belgium and, approximately, in Norway; lower than the Hungarian ratio were those in Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Sweden. In the majority of the 23 European countries, however, the rate of live births was considerably higher, and, most remarkable, a decreasing trend is not even a general feature. What with the high mortality rate per 1,000 of population. which has considerably risen from the early 1970s

on, our position is most unfavourable. In the first half of the 1970s the rate of mortality per 1,000 of population was 11.9 on average, and this figure rose to 12.9 in the second half of the decade and reached the earlier maximum of 13.9 in 1983. This was the highest figure ever registered among the 23 European countries.

Between 1975 and 1983 the life expectancy of men at the time of birth declined somewhat, from 66.4 to 66.1 years, while it rose from 72.5 to 73.7 for women. It is usually characteristic of European countries that women's life expectancy at the time of birth has an edge of a few per cent over men's. From this point of view Hungary is typically European. As regards the average life-span, in 1982 we held the last place for men and were next to last (ahead of Yugoslavia) in respect of women. At the beginning of the 1980s the average life expectancy for men was above 70 in a good many countries and the average female life-span was close to 80 years in several countries.

Comparisons with Czechoslovakia and Austria

A more detailed comparison of demographic figures is easier to make on the basis of an analysis of data concerning two countries; in the past few years we have thus examined separately our statistics and those of Czechoslovakia and Austria, and have evaluated our position by comparison with these two countries.

As regards Czechoslovakia, we have analysed how, proceeding from differing levels of development beginning with the early 1970s, the social processes changed in our respective countries. The educational level of the population in Czechoslovakia was higher in the 1970s, and this was due also to the differences in economic development. The ratio of persons with training qualifying them as skilled workers in Czechoslovakia was higher than in Hungary at the beginning of the 1970s and also in the early 1980s. Early in the 1970s life expectancy was by and large identical in the two countries, but by the 1980s a considerable difference was observable in favour of Czechoslovakia. Natural population growth turned out to be more favourable in Czechoslovakia and this was perceivable also in the differences in the age structure. Mortality in both countries worsened considerably, somewhat more in Hungary. The divorce rate also rose in both countries.

The standard of health services improved in both countries: the number of doctors increased and infant mortality decreased. All this was possible to no small extent also because there was an important increase in expenditure on public health. Indicative of sanitary conditions for the population is that

the previously large number of TB cases has decreased in both countries; the incidence of tuberculosis is equally low these days. At the same time there has been an increase in the incidence of cancer, which is 30 per cent higher in Czechoslovakia than in Hungary. The most frequent causes of death in the two countries are cancer, circulatory diseases and gastro-intestinal complaints. These three causes of death make up about three quarters of the total mortality rate in both countries. There is a difference (in favour of Czechoslovakia) in the rate of deaths due to diseases of the circulatory system. In the early 1980s this rate represented 72 per 10,000 of population in Hungary and 63 in Czechoslovakia. Considerable efforts are being made in both countries to promote more healthy life-styles, but they have yielded rather different results. In respect of hospital care the situation has changed more favourably in Czechoslovakia, where the number of hospital beds per 10,000 is close to 100, while in Hungary it is below 90. Early in the 1980s the number of inhabitants per doctor was 396 (against more than 450 in the early 1970s) in Hungary and 309 (against 432 in 1970) in Czechoslovakia.

Characteristic of both countries is that since the 1970s greater attention than ever before has been paid to providing assistance to families with children. In the early 1980s the expenditure on family allowances, expressed as a percentage of national income, represented 2.76 per cent in Czechoslovakia and 2.31 per cent in Hungary. But the rise was more considerable in Hungary, where in 1970 only 1 per cent of the national income had been spent on family allowances against 2.4 per cent in Czechoslovakia. With regard to the child-care benefit the situation is more favourable in Hungary, where the proportion is more than double that in Czechoslovakia. In respect of provision for the elderly, the Hungarian situation is more favourable: nearly 10 per cent of national income in 1980 went on old-age pensions, while the corresponding figure in Czechoslovakia was only 8.8 per cent. The scope of the retirement benefit in the two countries was not identical in the early 1970s: the retired section of the population in Hungary was far smaller than in Czechoslovakia, and the institution of old-age pension was extended only in the 1970s. There still remains today some difference in this respect in favour of Czechoslovakia. One difference between the two countries is particularly worthy of attention: since the mid-seventies the ratio of those receiving a disability pension within the total population has decreased in Czechoslovakia and has been on the increase in Hungary.

The comparison between Austria and Hungary has shown first of all that there is a great difference between them as to the occupational ratios of the population: in the year of comparison, 49 per cent of the total population was economically active in Hungary against 44 per cent in Austria. The ratio

of pensioners in Hungary was 20 per cent, in Austria it came near to 19 per cent. At the same time the ratio of dependants was higher in Austria, 37 per cent against 31 per cent in Hungary. The differences arise first of all from the fact that about 80 to 90 per cent of the female population between 20 and 55 years of age in Hungarty are gainfully occupied, while this ratio in Austria is merely 50 to 60 per cent.

The population is decreasing in both countries, since the rate of increase is below 1 per cent, a little higher in Hungary (0.837) than in Austria (0.746). This is due primarily to the fact that maternity among the female population of the younger age-group (15 to 24 years) in Hungary is perceptibly higher than in Austria. On the other hand, in the past 15 years the mortality rate has changed more favourably in Austria than in Hungary. In 1970 the mortality rates were by and large the same in the two countries: men's life expectancy in Hungary was a few tenths of one per cent above that in Austria, while the life expectation for women was considerably better in Austria (73.7 years) than in Hungary (72.6 years). Contrasting processes occurred in the two countries between 1970 and 1983: while the male mortality rate in Hungary deteriorated, some improvement in this respect was observed in Austria. During the past 13 years female life expectancy grew by one year in Hungary and by three years in Austria. Neighbouring Austria is better off also in respect of infant mortality. It is worthy of note that the deaths due to circulatory diseases and to accidents are more frequent in Hungary than in Austria.

We also examined the differences between household statistics; the most significant was the expenditure on food and beverages. In Austria such expenses make up altogether one-fifth of the household budgets, while in Hungary they represent two-fifths. On the other hand, the expenses incurred by housing, heating and lighting are sensibly higher in Austria: 18 per cent against 8 per cent in Hungary (here the differences in the price levels for rents and public utilities are important). Similar differences exist in terms of the costs of public transport which are far lower in Hungary. Austrian households devote an average 16 per cent of their expenses on urban transport, which is almost double the Hungarian figure. The difference is accounted for, also by the fact that early in the 1980s as many as 55 in every 100 households in Austria possessed a car, while only 24 households had a car of their own in Hungary. Differences are remarkable in housing conditions and, consequently, in the circumstances of life. Of apartments in Austria only 6 per cent are single-room flats; the comparable Hungarian figure is 27 per cent. The average floor-space of Austrian apartments is 76.5 sq.m. against the Hungarian average of 59 sq.m. These are very remarkable differences in

favour of the Austrian population, and there are similar differences also in other components of the standards of living. We must not leave out of consideration, however, that the differences are determined by different work performances: we compared the levels of industrial productivity in the two countries at the beginning of the 1980s, and the level was found to be substantially higher in Austria than in Hungary. Up to the mid-eighties the difference has not diminished substantially.

In Hungary more money is spent on child welfare and its institutions than in Austria. Especially important are the expenditures on institutional provision for infants accommodated in crèches and for nursery-school children (this follows to no small extent also from the fact that a greater part of Hungary's female population is gainfully employed).

Worthy of attention is also the comparison of time utilisation, which shows that the hours spent at work in main occupations are about thirty minutes longer in Austria, but this is counterbalanced by the longer time devoted to side-lines and part-time jobs in Hungary. The time devoted by the population to household chores is longer in Hungary both on workdays and at weekends. The situation is fairly similar as regards the spending of leisure-time, most of which is taken up by TV watching in both countries (especially at weekends); in Austria more time is spent visiting to friends, excusions and walking, while in Hungary more time is taken up by reading.

Although these data are not sufficient for the drawing of general conclusions on the situation and development of the Hungarian population and society as compared to other countries, I hope they show that statistics provide an interesting picture of the social development of our country and the related results; this picture will be still more interesting if we add to it the earlier outlined data of economic development.

Now, at the beginning of the second half of the 1980s, the few data outlined above as well as statistical comparisons not included here demonstrate that we have entered a phase of stabilisation of our living standards, in which we shall have to pay greater attention to our way of life, particularly as regards health and culture. This can and must have a better base on the economic background, in more efficient, more productive and more profitable work done during the principal working hours.

WOUNDED BY EXISTENCE

LÁSZLÓ KÁLNOKY, 1912–1985

by

BALÁZS LENGYEL

So László Kálnoky too has gone over to the other shore, to the domain of Nothingness, against which he had fought all his life. Hungarian poetry has suffered an enormous loss with the deaths recently in rapid succession of some outstanding poets who had once belonged to the same group. There remain only a few among those who stood the test of the most difficult times in the fullest possible solidarity, the Stalinist years in which the very continuity of Hungarian literature was in jeopardy. Literary history has already recorded that they took a similar stand and their careers thus ran a parallel course: instead of committing to paper what was expected, prescribed, dictated for them, by turning to translation they helped bring about a splendid blossoming of literary translation in Hungary. If at all, they wrote for the drawer showing their writings only to each other. By and large, two generations of poets were united by outside pressure in this solidarity and chose silence as their common destiny. The first of these was the third *Nyugat* generation, named after the prestigious monthly which appeared between 1908 and 1941 and was decisive in the shaping of Hungarian literature in this century. While they began their career in the thirties, the fourth generation made their appearance in the forties and also grouped around the monthly *Új Hold* which appeared between 1946 and 1948 and was edited by the present writer. Of this latter generation, the name of János Pilinszky, who also died recently, might be familiar to the foreign reader interested in Hungarian poetry. Kálnoky, who started late, belonged to the third *Nyugat* generation.

When his first volume, *Az árnyak kertje* (The garden of shadows) was published in 1939, most poets of his generation—Weöres, Jékely, Vas, and Radnóti—had already at least three volumes behind them. If on this exceptional and sorrowful occasion I am allowed to recall personal memories of him, I should add that I only read his first volume after our friendship had

started. But I had known about him, from issues of *Magyar Csillag*, the successor to *Nyugat* until 1944 and edited by Gyula Illyés, and from Géza Ottlik's and István Vas's stories, and I knew that as a ministry official he had given help to persecuted Jews and leftists. In other words, he was, naturally, anti-German and anti-fascist, as is testified to by his poems *Egy modern zsarnokhoz* (To a Modern Tyrant, 1939), dedicated to Vas, in which he mocked Hitler, and the fine *Baka utca* (Baka street, 1944). There was also his statement in the poem *Intermezzo*, which he also wrote in 1944, which tells only half the truth (unfortunately the prose translation fails to convey the power of the triple rhyming that holds the stanza together): "The eternal hero defended here the eternal land, / my family coat of arms has a sword and a Turk's head on it. / Why is it that in me the many ancestors who had moved into my blood / became silent and are asleep?" It may well be that the eternal hero who had to defend the land was not asleep, only the forms of defence have changed throughout the centuries. Beneath his gentleness, one could always feel there was something hard, something as sharp as a blade in Kálnoky. But his land expanded, beyond national borders and historical situations, to the whole of existence. This is where he was attacked in person too, something well known to those who know his poems, among which the matchless youthful masterpiece, *Szanatóriumi elégia* (Elegy from a sanatorium) and the sonnet *Bordaműtét* (Operation on a rib) record in almost realistic detail the operation on his lung. If not otherwise, from these poems alone one could learn how the healthy, sportsloving young man became a pulmonary patient overnight, fighting for his life. Because of his illness he experienced very early on the dreadfulness of existence, the almost palpable proximity of Nothingness which was from then on to be reckoned with. This drove him towards some kind of heroic pessimism and led him to develop in his poetry a defence against existence. This defence is, however, more complex and multi-layered than could be approximated through mere philosophical categories. True, the basic attitude can easily be gleaned from the poems—as is proved by lines from "Elegy from a sanatorium:" "Existence offers no hope, / the loneliness of the heart is dark." Or: "The Universe is cold, the Earth a tiny planet, / man a tolerated newcomer / who eats the bitter bread of mortality / and vegetates, poor one in the warmth of the Sun's burning oven." Another example is taken from *Jegyzetek a pokolban* (Notes in Hell), written in 1950: "While shooting out his many-coloured blossoms, / the individual merely brings his own death / to ripeness, and so does the species too, / for their bustle urged by hopes / and desires is awaited by eternal nothingness. / The tragedy of all who exist is / to over-estimate their momentary life." There is something irrefutable in these

statements about the hopelessness of existence and the tragedy of the individual, but it is at the same time constantly refuted in and through the careful, precise formulation, the intention to be exact. Poems communicate through their form, which can strengthen or question and refute the conceptual communication. The poems of Kálnoky cited here contain such hidden emotional paradoxes. If the poet had not grappled with the philosophical experience of existence that he recognized and summarized, the splendid form in which these desperate theses are related could not have come into being. The music of "Elegy from a sanatorium," so ingratiating and brimful of desire for life, the succession of radiantly warm rhymes postulate against the certainty of nothingness, a certainty of beauty and harmony.

At this stage of his poetic career Kálnoky was still close to a range well explored in Hungarian literature, which is typified by an intention to overcome pain, loneliness, illness and despair through the help of creation, through the ability to create beauty. Examples are Árpád Tóth, who died in the late 1920s, and the Transylvanian poet Jenő Dsida, who was already dying when Kálnoky made his appearance. Although Kálnoky's verse forms part of this tradition—which can be traced back still further, to Keats for instance—and serves as more evidence for the high standard of Hungarian poetry written in the 1930s, very early on he showed individual traits. They included the elevated tone on the verge of rhetoric as conjoined with the grotesque, and precise, careful observation occasionally gave place to a bizarre vision. *Kövérek a fürdőben* (The fatties at the baths, see p. 79) a minor masterpiece written in 1939, already shows features of the kind of verse that is to characterize Kálnoky's later output. A few lines, first of all an example of the precision with which he examines the minutest detail:

> Their chest-hair's thickly matted like dark scrub,
> a jungle for the wandering ants to explore;
> their belly and their forehead have the daub
> of red the summer sun makes roses for.
>
> Sweat seeps into the furrows of their fat
> and trickles down like greasy, ropy tears,
> but gathers in their navel's little vat;
> purple apoplexy bulges behind their ears.

After this descriptive section comes the surprise image which ends the piece:

> They lie there peacefully, waiting perhaps
> for the sun to suck up their obesity,
> and on a light ray, a thread that never snaps,
> like indolent balloons, they'd fly away.

This poem was written in the style and versification characteristic of the 1930s, in regular quatrains with cross-rhymes. Then came a mystery for which, though an eye-witness, I cannot offer any good explanation; Hungarian literature enjoyed a splendid, fruitful phase in the short coalition period between 1945 and 1948. This was a rare moment of free development, of "relative immanence" of literature in this part of Europe. With the fall of fascism, the pressures and the censorship of the previous period had disappeared, and the demands set up by the literary policy of the new power structure still took the form of advice and exhortation. Everybody was busy writing and publishing in this period which lasted until the Stalinist take-over—a point which meant forced or self-imposed silence for a great many writers. However, Kálnoky wrote only three poems in these three years. Even these were, as the title of one has it, "untimely confessions." He started writing again in 1950, when writing became impossible because of the dicta of official cultural policy. So he wrote for the drawer and began his career as translator. Although translation was drudgery for him, he produced a series of brilliant translations with full enthusiasm. He did congenial translations of the lyric poetry of the world, with a faithfulness to form. Among the poets he translated were Vogelweide, Goethe, Heine, Rilke, Ronsard, Hugo, Nerval, Baudelaire, and Apollinaire. He also translated some English poems of fundamental importance, by Spencer and Donne, Keats and Burns, T. S. Eliot, Cecil Day Lewis and Louis MacNeice. Today these are favourites of the wide reading public and are frequently read at poetry readings. The longer works he undertook, from Goethe's *Faust* to classical French drama, would make a long list. His translation work, begun in the 1950s, continued until the last decade of his life. But the poet in Kálnoky paid dearly for it, as is clear from the complaint of the poem *A műfordító halála* (The Translator's Death. See on p. 80) But, to raise the question again: why did the poet become silent even before he was silenced and immersed in verse translation? Was it the window covered only with paper during the winter after the end of the war? Or the hardship of earning a living? Or a hasty and soon dissolved marriage, the calumniation and early death of his father? There is no answer. Was it a crisis in the poet, the devaluation of the

inner voice? No signs of this can be perceived in the poems which he wrote during the fifties and published in 1957 in the volume *Lázas csillagon* (On a Feverish Star); they do not show a change in style. The years of silence in which the poetry of his fellow poets gradually underwent a change and took on new forms and tones, went practically unmarked in Kálnoky's poetry. Signs of a poetic renewal and fulfilment can only be noticed at a later time, in the volumes *Lángok árnyékában* (Shadowed by Flames), published in 1970 (see "De Profundis" and "Instead of an Autobiography" in *NHQ* 40), and *Farsang utóján* (In the Last Days of Carnival), published in 1977. Then began the last period of his career in which, even though ailing, he published a volume every second year, winning general acclaim.

This was, however, just another form of the battle with Nothingness. In the meantime, one way of writing poetry, a matured ideal in lyric poetry was, though not invalidated, eventually challenged by voracious time—especially the articulation of a poem in stanzas, of which Kálnoky was a master. His fellow poets, also great masters of form, started writing in a different manner. In 1951 Pilinszky rewrote his *Apocryphal*, originally in quatrains, discarding the stanzas. The outer form was being pried apart by the inner form which, as János Arany once said, is the content itself. The great poems of this period were different from the "fine writing" to which we had accustomed to in the previous years. Nor are the great poems in Kálnoky's volume *Farsang utóján* written in this vein. He did not employ the stanza and, in the majority of the poems, even discarded rhyme—though he was the poet who, after Kosztolányi, was peerless in this, as can be seen from virtuoso translations in which he would use rhymes recurring six or eight times. In his new poetic diction, although the tone was in a natural way elevated, the material itself was effective, not the form, not the music of the poem. What kind of material was that?

He confronted the drabness of everyday life, the small facts and events which influenced his mental reactions and disturbed his essential experience of life. In his last period Kálnoky discovered an area of life, and raised it to the domain of poetry through realistic and surrealistic visions, which until then had fallen outside the usual bounds of lyric poetry. His everydays, however, are different from any everyday: there—as he says—"the residue of the hours is greyish mud, thought drags along chained ironballs, and there is no redemption for the one leaning over his desk." "The furniture, the dust-covered objects, / unwashed glasses and dishes / are like desolate requisites / of some temporary scaffold." There are here "bluish corpses of wrung days," and "whatever is alive here lives in the background / and is not itself but a pale symbol / of something which, left alone, / wriggles

but cannot appear, / cannot continue what has no continuation." Such are the new reports on Nothingness, about the nearness of Nothing, of which only a chosen few can speak. These reports are written in an amazingly precise, objective manner. Some of his statements are as though based on instrument measurements. "I shall never take / the steps that would lead me / into my heart of hearts / to find out / if the chronic gangrene / gnawing away there / is an epidemic or my own affair"—he writes in the fourth part of his poem "Findings." In one image he gives a graphic representation of this vivisection in which the object under examination is the state of existence ready to break up: "I aim at trans-existence navigation, novice sailor." In fact, he tried to navigate on an inner course towards Nothingness, about which no words could be said, and above the door of which was written: "The rest is silence." Yet Kálnoky's heroically written poems, these reports, lead us one step further inside this door, to learn something, not pleasant, not comforting, but characteristic and fundamental, about the human condition.

After the volume *In the Last Days of Carnival*, there came another mystery in his rising career. After so many sad experiences, with shortening breath, humour appeared in his poetry via the grotesque, and also serenity (though mixed with some malice). In a series of short sketches he depicted the simple, insignificant absurdities of living, with great relish. These are the Szaniszló Homálynoky poems (a quasi-anagram of his own name), written with a pointed realism and even pedantic attention to detail. In these anecdotes from the poet's alterego, everything is looked upon with a different eye. The poet, who had broached large contradictions, now notices almost with pleasure the grotesque in insignificant human affairs and events. His biographer is right when he says that in these poems a re-humanizing of his memories takes place through irony and self-irony. In the light of a navigation beyond existence, they are amazing; they soar, in spite of their down-to-earth character. Still, throughout his life, Kálnoky observed the tragic in existence, and faced it with an unwavering eye: from this springs the moral and poetic power of his poetry and, indeed, of his life itself.

LÁSZLÓ KÁLNOKY

POEMS

Translated by Edwin Morgan

THE FATTIES AT THE BATHS

The sun prowls impatient of its own heat
and kindles the coal deep under ground.
We pant for coolness. But the baths have a weight
of stricken monoliths, stranded slugs, all round

the water's edge, where the heavy fat ones lie;
they sprawl on their backs, growing slowly ripe
like huge fruits in their steam conservatory,
while stubble makes black chins you cannot wipe.

Their chest-hair's thickly matted like dark scrub,
a jungle for the wandering ants to explore;
their belly and their forehead have the daub
of red the summer sun makes roses for.

Sweat seeps into the furrows of their fat
and trickles down like greasy, ropy tears,
but gathers in their navel's little vat;
purple apoplexy bulges behind their ears.

The mirage somersaults and shimmers away.
Their heads take a hundred thousand white
steel-rays, reeds like metal in a glittering spray.
The water boils, bursts into flame. Noontide!

Nine angels blow their blistering trumpet-brass,
but the bathers have gone deaf to such appeals,
their vacant watery eyes watch nothing pass,
their consciousness sinks in unfathomed wells.

They lie there peacefully, waiting perhaps
for the sun to suck up their obesity,
and on a light ray, a thread that never snaps,
like indolent balloons, they'd fly away.

(1939)

THE TRANSLATOR'S DEATH

Twenty years further on, what will I be like?
I think of it more and more, with less and less delight.
Hacked and battered, grey and bald, thin as a rake,
my study an espresso-bar for old times' sake,
I'll sit there scribbling, to cup after cup
of caffeine euphoria, my artery walls
growing sclerotic and silting up
just to remind me of coffins and palls.
Yet it's not the embolism, the cerebral haemorrhage
that brings the threat. My end is more strange:
the lifelong translator must leave the stage
shot like the mark on a rifle-range.

When I die, I hope you will all laugh out loud,
don't let pity lie on your hearts like a cloud.
Pass your strictest judgements upon me:
"Well, at last this fool has got his fee,
he knew what he was after, pouring his life's blood
into a succession of alien spirits, proud
to meet a new commission for his pen
by slicing his heart like an onion-skin.
What if it was his sweet treasure, his talent, he chose
to sell it mercilessly, like glucose.
And so he emptied himself bit by bit
till he was a bag of bones... which broke and split.
And now? He's ripe and ready for trash city."
Don't hold me back with mercy, don't give me pity!

(1953)

MEETING

In the marshy twilight you still sometimes appear.
Like a ring round the moon the yellow gleam from your face
blights the photosensitive greenery.
An unseen wire-entanglement bristles its barbs between us.
On the table the wineglass slowly bleeds to death,
and a signal creaks in the furniture.

I move off, the sea-green rain-waves buffet my face,
I aim at trans-existence navigation, novice sailor
at the mercy of every mocking gust,
battling the bad currents, daring death.
Or like someone waiting in a pitch-black room
who casts around him groping for direction
and bangs into a chair, knocks over
some table things with his fumbling hand,
and cannot find the door long since bricked up...

(1975)

FINDINGS

I

spun round by the bandstand strains
the hanged man
swings like a pendulum—
where the brass trumpets
lie among the shrubs
the moonglight on its evening stroll
pauses and muses

2

the armchair dust puffs up
and covers thought with its grey powder
the toes of an immovably silent
wooden leg are being thumbscrewed
at this moment by a patient inquisition

3

what are those insects sipping
from my half-emptied glass
while the shadow plaits its absurd
chastity-belt on the fruitless
sculpted loins of Polyhymnia

4

it seems I shall never take
the steps that would lead me
into my heart of hearts
to find out
if the chronic gangrene
gnawing away there
is an epidemic or my own affair

(1977)

FURTHER FINDINGS

1

a wild boar tears through the rose-garden
a mass of whale like a hill blots out
the silver grid of choppy ripples
and the island swimming greenly in the blue—
what we see as transparently clear
is starred and sprinkled with scholars' footnotes
as the commentators juggle to persuade us
that the shiningly plain is unfathomably obscure
(or that the truly obscure is plain)

2

condemned in my life cell
I sit listening to the endless market-squabble
the chest-beating that jangles the bear-chains
the bowtie-bobbing garrulousness
I would rather let what I've learned
about others and myself remain unsaid

3

I may have built it through a lifetime
but how could I miss seeing even while I am alive
how the musty stains of corruption
spread over the city's face
and how the wearying walls
slough off their scarf-skin with a shrug

4

lion-fronted locomotives puff
at the station of our arrival
molten gold drops down onto
store-window cobwebs eagles
up above are flying a blue baldachin
but the hand of our fate is already dealt
and we shall not be what we could have been

5

cheerful tiles shining and a fine hot bath
there we were splashing about in happiness
when suddenly at the height of our enjoyment
out flies the plug and we are left
to shake at the deafening roar and shiver
as we wait for a far greater cold
in the time that ebbs and trickles from the tub

(1977)

ONE LEADER, TWO BUSTS

It was summer 1956 when Szaniszló Homálynoky, my Transdanubian-born
colleague,
became eye-witness and ear-witness to some truly remarkable happenings.
One afternoon he switched on the radio absentmindedly
and was greatly disturbed to hear the voice of our people's sage and leader,
Rókus Mátyási, announcing at that very moment
that because of his poor state of health he would resign all his offices
and leave the country. Szaniszló learned later
how certain high-ranking persons had arrived
from a fraternal country and had spelt it out to
Rókus Mátyási that the climate there
would do him no end of good and had whisked him off with them
at high speed to their own land. One day soon after,
in the corridor at the publishing house from which
doors opened on the left to offices overlooking the street and on the right to
offices overlooking the courtyard,
the latter including Szaniszló Homálynoky's,
though for lack of windows it grew darker
the further a man penetrated its length
—and even an editor is a man—at any rate
at the darkest end of the corridor, on the empty bookshelf that stood there,
two completely identical plaster busts of
Rókus Mátyási appeared, objects made suddenly surplus
and hence removed from the offices of the manager
and deputy manager of the publishers. There they were, two busts,

standing as if in some shadowy showcase.
Appropriately enough, the politician they mimicked
having given himself wholeheartedly to dressing showcases,
though the show in those cases consisted not of busts
but of political trials involving matters of life and
death. My Transdanubian-born colleague, however,
remembered a showcase, or more precisely a show of old photographs,
set up at a different institution, when he was still a librarian,
with the title: "Comrade Mátyási's
Life in Pictures." The series of photographs began with
Rókus Mátyási as a little boy of three,
fairly unprepossessing face, bow legs, straw hat—
but so innocent and unassuming a creature
that a woman gazing round the show
could not contain her delight and cried out loudly:
"Oh I could eat that sweet little snout!" This colleague
of Szaniszló was a party candidate, and disciplinary proceedings
were started against her on that single count of
lack of respect towards Comrade Mátyási. But the disciplinary committee
having weighed up all the mitigating circumstances
of what was after all an unconsidered outbreak of emotion,
let the offender escape with no more than a verbal reprimand.
Now, however, Szaniszló had to pass these completely identical busts
at least three or four times a day,
since the door leading to the office of the editorial department's secretary
opened, as luck would have it, right opposite the bookshelf.
The second time Szaniszló paused there, he noticed
that someone had secretly shifted the two busts
so that now they faced each other, with their nose-tips just
touching and Rókus Mátyási staring
into Rókus Mátyási's eyes. Despite this strange sight,
Szaniszló left the busts as they were. An hour later, however,
he had some further business at the secretary's office, and by then
someone had turned the busts back
to their original position. Szaniszló Homálynoky
decided it was not his place to intervene.
His view was that the dividing-line between
the first and second phases of the Great Window Dresser's career
was sharp and extreme. Nothing seemed harder to reconcile
than the early revolutionary whose ideology

kept him shut in prison year after year
with hideous interrogation in the very shadow
of the gallows, and the later tyrant, the lord of
orange and lemon plantations that refused to bear fruit,
the party leader and implacable liquidator
of potential competitors and even imagined enemies.
So Szaniszló Homálynoky left it to the distant future
to judge, to historians and psychologists who would have
a better nose for the motives than he, a nobody, a
publisher's employee, who wanted nothing more than
independence but who would have passed up
power. (It's true he had never been offered it.)
One day later the two busts
had again felt the interferer's hands, and faced each other,
and the same day someone else moved them back once more.
My Transdanubian-born colleague gleaned from these actions
that Rókus Mátyási had both denigrators and supporters at the workplace.
The bust-turners
probably moved with speed and little care. (They clearly
would have hated to be caught.) As a result, the nose-tips
of both busts began to rub off and crumble, plaster
being no marble. It was about a week
before the two factions stopped their tug-of-war. One Monday Szaniszló
found an empty bookshelf. The busts
had left for an unknown destination. My colleague
did try, covertly, to track them down,
but could not ask open questions. So the busts remained
finally hidden from him, wherever they were.
Only one thing was not hidden: he knew they did not set out
to follow the person they imaged. For no one doubts
that busts, though they certainly stand,
never have feet.

(1982)

FIVE BITTER-SWEET STORIES

by

IVÁN BOLDIZSÁR

NOW YOU'RE IN, NOW YOU'RE NOT...

The minute I stepped into Mátyás Rákosi's large, long, rectangular office in the party headquarters in Akadémia utca I noticed that he was sitting in front of the window again. That was back in 1946. Once upon a time he had had his desk pushed lengthwise along the wall to stand between the two windows—I know, because I was R.'s neighbour for a while. The windows of his study opened on Zoltán utca—and the offices of my weekly *Új Magyarország* were at number eight Zoltán utca, one floor higher. In the winter of 1945, during the spring of 1946 all I had to do was to stand in front of my window to see, as if from a first-tier box, the top of R.'s bald pate as he wrote, read or conferred. And once during a reception, or perhaps it was on the corridors of the parliament building, in the middle of our conversation, I rashly remarked that I saw him more often than he saw me. At that time, in the beginning, you could still banter with him. That would be a real task for a historian: to trace the process, to discover the point at which a man becomes an idol. For a writer the task would be to determine and describe the moment the man himself begins to believe in himself as an idol. Perhaps it was around then that the process began. The practised tribune-smile froze on his lips as I spoke. In the end he showed his gums and said: "Very interesting."

The next morning I looked down upon the building opposite the windows of our offices. Thick brown curtains screened the windows of R.'s study from my view. In the afternoon a gentleman appeared in our office flourishing a card, followed by two other policemen dressed in overalls and carrying buckets, cans of paint and paint-brushes. They painted our windows brown up to eye-level. When I asked them what all this was good for since windows could be opened, they replied that they would not advise me to try. And we never did get around to opening them as in a couple of weeks we were turned out of the offices in Zoltán utca.

A few months later R. sent for me. He was all charm. He said he reads the paper every week and everything is just fine except for one thing. Could I please tell him whether there is any man living in Hungary today who laughs at the cartoons taken over from American magazines. Because he just can't make head or tail of them. Or perhaps I have some special reason for publishing them? Like has someone been encouraging me to do so? Or has someone promised me something? The thick brown curtains screened the window completely but he was no longer sitting in front of it—his desk had been moved to stand between the two windows by the wall.

And now, four years later, in the summes of 1950, there is only a thin net curtain at the window, and R. has moved back into the light. Security service men have been stationed in our one-time offices in Zoltán utca. *Új Magyarország* has long since ceased publication; I am Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. R. wanted to discuss Unesco with me. When I first heard the word in Paris in the summer of 1946 in the Palais de Luxembourg I thought it was the name of a member of the Rumanian peace delegation. The French often change the common ending of Rumanian names, transforming *-cu* into *-co*—or perhaps the Rumanians write their names thus themselves as their own way of spelling the ending designates a certain part of the body in French. This is how the leader of the Rumanian delegation at the peace conference became Tataresco. I was soon enlightened that Unesco had never been Unescu, but was the cultural and scientific world organization of the recently founded United Nations or, as it was then written, of UNO. Its founding general conference was being held that autumn in Paris. I was there as an observer, officially present but not as a delegate, since the victorious powers had not yet concluded the peace-treaty with Hungary. No one made me conscious of this there and I have always prided myself on being one of the founding fathers. When the treaty was concluded, it fell to me to submit and sign the diplomatic note accompanying the declaration of entry in the summer of 1947, one minute before the Cold War began.

Three years later the tables had turned in R.'s study. Unesco was then succinctly labelled an imperialistic agency and a People's Democracy that had any sense of honour could not debase itself by admitting to be a member. I tried to raise objections to our resignation at first by word of mouth, later in memoranda. I called on members of parliament, even József Révai to help. My objections cannot have been completely ineffectual; in that case I would not have been summoned to take part in this discussion. Four people were sitting around the conference table, all my seniors in rank. And not only in rank: should I be sitting at the end of that table today, thirty odd years

later, I would be older than the eldest who had then sat there—R. was not yet sixty—but they are all gone now.

As a preliminary, R. remarked that though he himself had already formed an opinion concerning the matter at hand, he respected democratic forms and would therefore like to hear and deliberate upon the opinions of experts. I grew bold. I enumerated the advantages that Unesco membership held for us—in detail, point by point—facts relating to what this country had received in the form of technical books, educational material and scientific equipment to date and, last but not least, counted off what we had gained, and still stood to gain, in the form of international, personal relations.

R. nodded, took notes. "These aspects of the case are all worthy of note," he said at the end, and called upon the others. The first two, under the influence of my arguments or perhaps taking their cue from R.'s countenance, decided by and large in favour of retaining membership. During the third contribution R. began to tap his pencil rhythmically against the table-top, thereby interrupting the speaker's train of thought. He wavered, but in the end did not speak in favour of leaving. The fourth raised his hand. But R. closed the discussion.

"A unanimous decision has been reached in the matter of the international intellectual espionage centre and saboteur training-college named Unesco," he said, "in accordance with which our membership shall herewith be declared to be at an end. The diplomatic note accompanying the notice of withdrawal will be signed by the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs." I must have looked surprised because he turned towards me and added, benevolently and in magisterial tones, "The one who joined must be the one to leave. That is an international rule of conduct. And if I were you I'd be proud of it, Boldizsár, old man."

I drew up the declaration, signed the note and sent it to Paris. I was not proud of it but I was tied to R.'s wheel and could do no other than put my shoulder to it.

Twelve years later I was a member of the delegation at the general conference of Unesco. I ran across S. during the very first lunch-break. He recognized me, shook hands and asked me, with the sing-song intonation of the Anglomane French who speak English: "You are here? You? In Unesco?" I assured him that he was looking splendid and had not changed an iota since the founders' meeting. He quickly told me that he was the deputy to the Director General's principal private secretary. When we first met he had been dogsbody in the first Director General's, Julian Huxley's, cabinet. "Do you remember that Australian girl who always sat up on our desk and

tucked her legs under her? My God, what legs she had, and you could see she had nothing on underneath. . . " I remembered. "You've got a good memory," he said. He did not wait to be thanked for his words of appreciation but continued in the same breath: "But mine's not bad either. I remember your speech at the first meeting. You tried to convince us that though Hungary had been on the losing side in the war, she did not feel that she had lost the war because she had been liberated. It was a good show you put up there." I was glad that he had not forgotten that either. "And I haven't forgotten that it was you who signed the document of joining." That was really nice of him.

"I don't know," he replied thoughtfully. "Tell you what, let's go and have a drink." We went down to the Bar des Délégués. It was my turn to remember. I ordered Calvados just as in the old days. "Splendid", he said. "And what are you doing with yourself these days? Still signing official declarations?" I reassured him that I was busy writing in other fields. "Your memoirs perhaps?" Only when my memory begins to fail me.

"Ha, ha! Correct me if I'm wrong, but didn't we use to call each other by our first names then?" And he was already ordering the second round of the apple spirit. We toasted each other. Calling me by my first name he told me that he remembered one other signature of mine—after all, he had been in the Director General's cabinet at the time. I'll not forget that signature either, I said. "Then tell me, how is it possible that you're here in Unesco now? How do you do these things?"

I did not answer him right away. I sipped my Calvados. Should I begin to explain that though it was us who joined, we who resigned and us who joined again, we are not always identical with ourselves? Not on your life!

"I'm a capricious man," I replied.

JOURNEY TO WROCŁAW

I recognized Yves Farge's voice even on the telephone. It was as deep and as musical as that of his namesake's, the other Yves, Yves Montand's. As it happens, I met both the same evening, in the autumn of 1946. It was the first time Yves Montand appeared in his mousegrey overalls in the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées. I was almost late for the performance because I had gone looking for the theatre in the wrong place. It went under the name of Théâtre des Champs-Elysées but was not on the boulevard itself, only near it. After the performance our friends took us—I was with my wife—to the famed Brasserie Lipp on the Boulevard St-Germain. At that time anybody could just walk in off the street and see Jean-Paul Sartre sitting at a table,

naturally with Simone de Beauvoir. We did not see them that evening but my friends excitedly recognized the Yves Farges and we sat down at their table.

It took him ten minutes to win my heart. He asked me about the Hungarian peace-treaty and listened to what I said. We had been in Paris for three months by then, many people had asked me about the peace-treaty but nobody had ever listened to what I said. That is how a friendship began. He came to Budapest and was tremendously impressed by the new people's colleges. "You've thought of something really original there. We'll try the same thing in France when the time comes."

That summer day in 1948 he called me in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs because this time it was he who had good news to share with me. "Do you want to conspire with me?" he asked. Come life, come death. "Come life," he replied, "that's just the point!" War hysteria was raging in Europe at the time. Nobody remembers it today but people were expecting war to break out any moment. "We should do something about this," he said. He should? Or I should? "That's just the problem, you see. That you should have to ask such questions. You, me, all of us should be doing something. That is what I want to talk to you about. People must be made to realize—war is not unavoidable, *nom du chien!*"

The name of the dog was such a strong expression coming from the lips of my sedate friend that I vacillated no longer. Where was this conspiracy? "Here and now, right at this moment on the telephone." He told me that a delegation of Polish writers, journalists and professors had recently visited Paris. They had met French writers, journalists and professors and had got on very well together. Not only had they got on very well together but they also had a fine time. Remembering our talks at Lipp's and in other cafés and bistros and inspired by the memories of those good times, he had called me to suggest that we assemble all such birds of a feather from Europe and discuss what must be done to avoid the war. For birds of a feather he had used the expression *des gens du même acabit*, an expression I had heard for the first time two years before in Paris—from him. What did I think of his idea?

He did not wait for my reply but continued. Eluard and Aragon are in on the conspiracy too, and Picasso, believe it or not—even Frédéric and Irène, and I knew he was thinking of the Joliot-Curie couple. The Poles had already begun to make arrangements. Did I know Jerzy Borejsza? He had undertaken the organization of the meeting which means things are sure to get done.

While he was speaking, the line went dead twice—he could hardly hear me when I asked him where the meeting was to take place. He does not know yet, but would call me again. At all events, I should take charge of things in Hungary and perhaps arrange for some of the finances.

As it happened, a government delegation was about to leave for Sofia. R. sent for me in connection with their trip. He listened to my reports and gave me his instructions. When we had finished I asked him whether I could take up a few more minutes of his time. "All right, but quickly." I told him about Yves Farge's proposal. He listened without a sign of enthusiasm. I don't know how he did it but his features remained serene while his eyes seemed to grow darker, as though the lights had been switched off inside.

"Look," he said in a strident voice, "I've already told you to let these Western things well alone. Don't you see that it's all a trap?" But Yves Farge, surely... I attempted to interrupt. "What do you know about him? Have we had him checked?" I had nothing to say. But in any case I did not have a chance to do so. "If these people were really serious they would not have turned to you."

A week later Yves Farge called me again. "I've got the name of the city for you: its Wrocław. How do things stand with you?" I mumbled something. Another week passed. Borejsza called from Warsaw. "How many of you are coming?" I had to stall for time again. Another two weeks. Yves Farge called again, impatient, indignant: they have to issue national lists of participants. "Have you spoken to György Lukács? We can't have an international meeting of intellectuals without him!"

I found myself in a quandary. I had made a mess of things; I should have told Yves Farge that my suggestions had fallen on deaf ears. But I was ashamed to admit it. I screwed up my courage and the next time R. called me up about an article published in Paris, I brought up the meeting again. He gave me such a dressing-down that I began to pack my desk, thinking I might find myself out of a job the next day.

Nothing happened. Yves Farge did not call again but the first articles about the approaching meeting in Wrocław began to appear in foreign newspapers. Kingsley Martin, the editor of *The New Statesman*, declared his intention of attending. The names of Sholokhov, Ehrenburg, and Julian Huxley were mentioned. One morning that telephone rang again. And this time it was not the secretary on the line to announce comrade R.—it was R. himself.

"You are in grave trouble, Boldizsár, old man. It is greatly remiss of you to have neglected a matter as important as this international meeting of intellectuals. All Europe is busy making preparations and here we are caught napping again. What have you been doing with yourself that you've not

found the time to make arrangements? I must have a list of participants by tomorrow at the latest."

Ten days later we were in Wrocław.

Yves Farge met me, vexed, out of temper. "You almost wrecked the whole conference. What happened?"

I did not look into his eyes. I had so many things to do, I replied.

"Can anything be more important than this?" asked Yves Farge, and turned to walk away.

IN THE SALOON-CAR

When the Soviet–Hungarian friendship pact was signed in Moscow in February 1948, I was sent to Záhony on the Hungarian–Soviet frontier to welcome the returning delegates. The train rolled in, flourish of trumpets from the military band, salutations galore. R. was at the window, smiling, nodding, waving. When he caught sight of me, he beckoned for me to join him. His two metre tall body-guard was standing on the carriage steps. He would not let me up. But I shall be travelling on this train. "Not in this carriage, you won't." From that day onwards he always looked askance at me every time we met. At receptions he always stood in front of me so R. should not notice me, and all because there, at the station in Záhony, R. himself pushed him aside to allow me to pass.

"Come on up, come on up, Boldizsár, old man," he said, shepherding me into his compartment, "and tell me, what's been happening in Budapest?"

He knew very well what had been happening in Budapest. It was his arrangement that the right-wing Social Democrat ministers had been ousted from the government in his absence. I therefore began: "As you know..." but he interrupted me. "Don't you go supposing things. Tell me what's been happening, that is what I asked you to do."

I gave him an account of what had happened but he was not satisfied. "Tell me how it went, hour by hour. What did people say? Gyula Ortutay and József Bognár, for example?" So he had even been advised of my telephone conversations with my friends an hour before my departure. By tomorrow he will surely be informed of every word that had passed between us. But he was impatient. I told him what Gy. O. and J. B. had said, then attempted to relate the events hour by hour. While I spoke, he kept nodding as though checking the details of a scenario in his head. "For a venture to be successful it must be well prepared," he said finally and added: "Remember that, if you intend to go on with this work."

There was a guard with a Kalashnikov in front of the door. He sent him to fetch us some tea. He leaned back, satisfied, reassured. He offered me a cigarette. I thanked him but refused. "I can see you learned your lesson well," he said, smiling benignly. He knew diabolically well how to sweep people off their feet. Right now he had just remembered the incident over the cigarettes. He had granted me an interview the day following my appointment as Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in 1947. He had known everything about me. That my parents were divorced. Where I had met my French wife. That we had founded a national committee during the siege of Budapest in the liberated district of Budagyöngye and that I had fallen out with his then rival Skolnyik several times. He cited an article of mine entitled "His Excellency's Desk," published in *Szabad Szó*. He asked me when I had stopped writing poems as he had read "Twenty-year old boy on the operating table," though I had written that during his spell in prison at Vác.

Then he had offered me a cigarette. I thanked him but refused. I don't smoke. He lit a cigarette, blew the smoke leisurely in my direction and shook his head in disapproval. "If I had known that you don't smoke you would not have got the appointment. You are to be a diplomat. You will be negotiating with men whom you'll discover to be tough and cunning opponents. On these occasions a cigarette can do you good service. You can't answer a question offhand? You take out your cigarette-case, open it, select a cigarette at your leisure, tap it against the back of your hand. You've won half a minute. You look for your lighter, flick it on several times to make sure that it's in working order and only then you light your cigarette. A minute has passed and you've had time to consider what to say. Or—you do not wish to reply. You take out your cigarette-case, ask your guest whether he favours that particular brand or perhaps prefers Egyptian Khedive—because you've got a packet right here somewhere in your drawer. You begin to talk about smoking and have thus warded off the question or at least made your opponent realize that you do not wish to answer it."

He put down his cigarette, took out his silver case, flicked it open and tended it towards me. "Here you are, take one." He was watching my hand to see if it would move.

Again I replied: no thank you, I don't smoke.

He snapped the case shut and disappointment flashed across his face for an instant—for the instant it took for the case to snap shut. Then he smiled, a fatherly smile. "Congratulations. If you had accepted a cigarette now I would have countermanded your appointment immediately."

I did not accept a cigarette in the saloon-car either. Tea was brought in. He put a lump of sugar in his mouth and sipped his tea slowly. "Try it,"

he said, "this way you can taste the bitter and the sweet together." I tried it and he was right. I liked it. I've been drinking my tea this way ever since. He leaned back in his seat and asked:

"Now tell me, who are people saying will be the deposed minister's successor as Minister of Industry?"

Rumour has it that Imre Vajda, perhaps...

"And would you approve of that choice?" I was honoured at being consulted. I said yes.

"Are you out of your mind? He's a Jew!"

CHURCH-GOERS

In the beginning of December 1948 the whole country was agog with the news that something was about to happen to Cardinal Mindszenty. Newspapers abroad had begun to write about it. R. sent for me from the party centre in Akadémia utca. I was to bring some clippings with me, the most important ones. I placed them before him. He leafed through them quickly. "I know this one, and this, I've read this. And this."

He always knew everything beforehand; you could never tell him anything new—he always told you that he had already heard about it. They said he'd once called the offices of *Szabad Nép* at midnight and asked the editor on duty to come to the phone. "Tonight I am studying questions of the world economy," he said. "Could you find out Iran's gross output of crude oil for the last year for me?" The editor on duty happily announced that he fortuitously knew the answer without having to look it up as he had recently written an article upon the subject. He gave the answer. There was a second's silence, then R.'s voice came drily, angrily over the phone: "You are mistaken. It was four thousand five hundred tons less."

He pushed the cuttings aside. "Regardless of their tittle-tattle, something must be done." He remained silent for some moments and this inspired me to venture the remark that it would perhaps be wise to exercise caution in this case—two-thirds of Hungarians are Roman Catholics. "And what do you mean by that?" he replied huffily. He was not interested in my reply. "That is exactly what I mean! Look at the churches: crowded to bursting point every Sunday. All those people demonstrating against me." He quickly added: "Against the party, against democracy."

Not all of them, I remarked. A lot of people go to church because of their religion.

"Nonsense. Old women, children, young women maybe. But grown men?"

I begged to disagree. My personal experience had shown me that the majority of men do not go to church on Sundays for political reasons but because they wish to attend mass.

"What makes you think that?" I have friends among them. Old schoolmates. Neighbours, acquaintances.

"Are you trying to convince me that all those church-going men are devout? That they believe in God? Like hell they do. It's a political demonstration, I'll have you know." He picked up my clippings and threw them before me. "I'm greatly disappointed with you. You are finding it hard to shake off your religious upbringing. You'll be in real trouble when we've scared the hell out of this Mindszenty of yours."

THE CAPTAIN OF HUSSARS

In the autumn of 1950 they telephoned again from the party centre in Akadémia utca. Comrade R. wished to see the American and English clippings on Hungary which appeared since the Rajk trial a year earlier. I had been waiting for him to send for me for a long time but not because of the articles. I was watching for the opportunity to put in a word for Brigadier General Kálmán Révay. He had disappeared a few weeks earlier together with several other generals of the new People's Army. It was an open secret in Budapest that they were to stand trial. I had been brought into close contact with him twice in the course of my life: we had both attended the Piarist school in the twenties and, for a while in the autumn of 1944, we had shared a cell in the prison on Margit körút, Budapest.

There never was a captain of hussars to compare with Kálmán Révay for elegance. In those days dashing was the word used to describe those young officers, hussars mostly, horse artillerymen at the most—never officers of the infantry or, inconceivable!, the army service corps in their drab brown uniforms—who used to strut along the riverside promenade or down Váci utca around noon, their sabres cradled in the crook of their arms. Dashing was what they were called, a word that reminded one of the essence of the Imperial and Royal Army. As Révay was older than me we did not attend the same class in the *gimnázium*. A student knew the older boys up to two classes above him but those younger than himself were simply ignored. It was basketball and the Vörösmarty Literary and Debating Society of which he too was a member that brought us together. Most boys either played basketball or recited, sometimes wrote, poetry. The first time Révay deigned to address me was at the Monday afternoon basketball game

following the Sunday morning meeting of the Literary Society. I scored a basket in the inter-class championships—a basket against the eighth-formers. By addressing me he had singled me out for distinction—even allowed me to accompany him as far as the statue of Petőfi on our way home.

The other sixth-formers followed us at a respectful distance: they were envious of Révay's token of favour and even hated me a little for it. Later my prestige grew. Révay asked to see one of the first poems I had written and read it aloud during the next meeting of the Literary Society. That was when I learned that besides his other talents he also drew and painted admirably; after the recital the sketch he had made to illustrate my poem was handed around. In my memory that image has accompanied the word pride ever since.

He finished *gimnázium* soon after and we did not see each other for some time. It was forbidden for Piarist students to walk down the Danube promenade and it was best not to dawdle along Váci utca either because if a teacher saw you, you were sure to be questioned the next day, and woe to your miserable head should you be unable to recite your lesson to perfection. The first Saturday noon-time after we had left the school, I and two others strolled leisurely along the promenade from the Chain Bridge to the statue of Petőfi, crossed Piarista utca to enter Váci utca, passing by the iron door inlaid with glass which remains unchanged to this day, with unrestrained joy. We were hoping for an event which we had till that moment dreaded—that we would meet up with one of our teachers.

You could have knocked me down with a feather when I came upon Révay in front of Cserépfalvi's book-shop (later to become the nursery of my literary career). He was wearing the uniform of the Ludovika military academy, dangling his sword on his arm. In my joy at seeing him again I almost dashed myself against him. He shook hands reservedly without removing his white kid gloves though the weather was end-of-May, fine and warm. Suddenly I was conscious of the nakedness of my palms; his gloves bothered me even though I knew that they were compulsory wear for academy cadets. During the poetry-reading following the meetings of the Literary Society, or in the intervals of ferocious debates over Endre Ady—we were a minority in favour, together with Révay—he used to say that he would soonest spend the rest of his life drawing and painting, but art was not a real career. He was going to matriculate in the Faculty of Arts, would attend the literary courses of János Horváth and would spend a couple of semesters down in Szeged to attend the seminars of Sándor Sik, the poet, an old teacher of ours.

"You, in the military academy? How on earth did you end up there?"

He drew himself up and became at least half a head taller. "I'll thank you to pick your words in future," he said. Then, his back half-turned to me, he added: "I strongly advise you to."

I could not answer him because he had already sauntered off with long, graceful strides. But there was nothing to say in any case; the words had stuck in my throat. The military cadets belonged to a world apart.

From 1935 onwards I often saw him in Váci utca from the windows of Cserépfalvi's book-shop. Soon he was wearing the stars of a lieutenant. I turned away from the window. We no longer had anything to say to each other.

When in November 1944, at five a.m., I came to from the first nightmare I was to have in the prison cage on the Margit körút, the first thing I saw was a dark-blond, deep-chested, narrow-hipped young man with moustaches doing exercises at the far end of the long cell beside the trough-like wash-basin. It was he. He was stripped to the waist and was doing deep kneebends, trunk-twists, bending forward stiff-kneed to touch the floor with the palms of his hands. "Get up! Come over here, all of you! We must keep fit if we want to stay alive," he urged while doing push-ups. I scrambled to my feet and joined him. He embraced me. "I saw them bring you in last night." I started on push-ups too. "Aren't you going to ask me how on earth I ended up here?"

By way of reply I did about ten more push-ups with him. He had begun to think things out for himself in March 1938, at the time of the *Anschluss*. The Germans had got very close to us. A year later he was among those who marched into Northern Hungary. "I had to fight back my tears in Kassa, when we stood by Rákóczi's grave. In '40 I sang 'Sweet Transylvania we are come...' together with my hussars when they dismounted. I had to parade one of my officer cadets because he had continued with '... and who knows how long we're to stay...' The boy found a plausible excuse: he said he had been thinking of how long the troop was to stay at Kolozsvár, when the reserves would be discharged at last. But you could tell from the way he spoke that he did not intend it to be taken seriously. I caught him as he was about to go off on short leave. It turned out that we had gone to the same school—he was two years my junior. He was in the secondary reserve and worked at a publisher's." Révay told me his name—I had known him too. "We went to that beautiful coffeehouse facing the King Matthias statue. It took him some time to unbend. I kept nagging him until he finally stopped calling me lieutenant sir, and even ordered a brandy. When

he had drunk it he asked me whether I was sure the Germans would win the war and did I really want them to?"

"I did not want them to. Alright, said the boy, but do you think the victors are going to let us keep Northern Transylvania? I was taken aback. I had not thought things out like that before."

I was shivering in the unheated prison cell; I was terribly cold and scared stiff that someone might overhear our conversation which was sure to land us in trouble. I interrupted K. R. Don't go on with the story now, I pleaded, I have to think up a plausible reason for having been in the flat of Vilmos Tartsay, a leading figure of the Resistance. I retreated into a remote corner of the cell, scraped some straw into a heap and lay down on top of it to rack my brains. It did not work. I kept thinking about my friend's volte-face. I thought of that officer cadet with respect. I too had been an officer candidate of the special reserve at Kolozsvár at the time. I too had thought there would be a high price to pay for the Vienna Award, the decision which returned parts of Transylvania to Hungary, but I did not dare discuss it with anyone. The whole country was in a state of euphoria, people felt that an injustice had been redressed.

I went back to Kálmán Révay. What happened next? "Once one begins to think the road is cut out for one, I had to do something to recover the honour of the country."

After the German occupation he began to look for associates. That is how he got into contact with Lieutenant General János Kiss and the military wing of the resistance movement.

He made us do exercises every morning. Those of us whose soles were swollen from the beatings were allowed to do them lying down. "Don't let yourselves go, that's the secret." The last time I saw him was on the day the prison was cleared out and I managed to get away.

He was taken to Sopronkőhida with Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, László Rajk, György Markos. He did not let himself go there either. He sketched his fellow-prisoners with undiminished energy and fortitude; Bajcsy-Zsilinszky on the last day of his life. In the winter of 1945 he had his sketches published in an album. He brought me a copy to the offices of the daily *Szabad Szó* in Nagymező utca. The dedication was already in it: "See where I ended up?" He was out of uniform, wearing a thin springcoat, but he knew he would soon be promoted direct from captain to general. He became the commandant of the new military academy. That was where the black car went to fetch him in the autumn of 1949.

Perhaps if his parents had considered art a passable career at the time... it does not bear thinking about. The fate of this generation is interwoven

with Hungarian history, its threads crimsoned by blood, adorned by the pearls of their dreams.

This time M. R. did not keep me waiting. He snatched the *The Times* and the Paris edition of *The New York Times* from my hands.

He was in a good mood. I could not have found a more opportune moment to put in a word for my friend. I asked permission to take up five more minutes of his valuable time. I told him all I knew about Révay. He fiddled with the papers on his desk while I spoke. This did not worry me; it was a habit of his. I ventured to suggest that he had perchance been misinformed about Brigadier General Kálmán Révay's role in the resistance movement. He raised his eyes to my face. His eyebrows shot up. His glance cut me short. He did not speak for seconds that seemed to take years to pass.

"And why are you telling me all this?," he said at last.

I am convinced that Kálmán Révay is not guilty.

"It is not a question of belief. And it is none of my business, as you very well know. The independent people's tribunal will decide his fate." He raised his voice. "You don't seriously think that you can saddle me with the responsibility of the condemnation of a traitor who happens to be a crony of yours?"

I never for a moment thought...

"Nonsense. But I can see you know a lot more about the case than what we've been able to discover so far. The investigating authorities may be able to make use of your knowledge." He took a slip of paper from a box in his desk and wrote something on it. While he wrote he glanced up at me. He wanted to see whether I was watching his hand. My countenance cannot have offered an uplifting sight. He let his glance rest upon me contentedly.

"I've already told you not to stick your nose into matters that don't concern you."

I understand, I managed to rasp out.

"Don't interrupt me. I wanted to say that your word carries a lot of weight with us. I'll attend to things."

I started towards the door somewhat relieved. R. called after me: "Tell me, if you ever got into a fix like this brigadier general pal of yours, would there be anyone to come to me and put in a word for you?"

A week later the trial took place.

Ten days later Kálmán Révay was executed with six other generals.

Translated by Eszter Molnár

BLOODY ASS

The Preface to Vol. IV of "The Breviary of St Orpheus"

THOMAS OF VILLANUEVA

by

MIKLÓS SZENTKUTHY

Thomas was the scion of an illustrious and rich family; the red blood of feudal arteries and the azulejo, azure-silver of haute-bourgeois veins, mingled in a new and colourful stream beneath his skin, for he was born in the town of Fuellana in the great and holy country of Spain. The family possessed a smaller palace in the town and a larger one some miles away from it, with a French, geometrically laid out, park, an English game-forest, a pretentious (mannerist) labyrinth, a devotional way of the Cross and moss-covered caves of Venus. In the Park there was an endless succession of celebration lunches, dinners beneath Chinese lanterns, in the private chapel mass followed mass like the lenses in Copernicus's telescope as he searched the skies—the poor of the town and neighbourhood were "in clover" (so the festive and solemn hosts thought and went on thinking), they were loaded down with alms; this, this was the greatest joy of the infant Thomas, to see the smile and gratitude of the beggars, he himself—secretly—always added something, he would steal anything for the pobres and necesitados as they departed. The kindly parents did not mind this.

It happened that Count Orgaz, a great relative of the family, departed this world of shades with piety that chimed in well with his life—the family desired to honour the eternal memory of the count's unparalleled puritanism with sensational, hidalgo pomp and ceremony. Thomas's parents (and this was the sacred custom in Spain for centuries) arrayed themselves in almost carnival-like fancy dress, and covered *this* with black velvet, silk, sateen, taffeta funereal cloaks and mourning-gowns—and why? After the interment came the pagan-catholic funeral feast. They took off the black, bat-like cloaks and at the funeral feast there gleamed far and wide the fiery-marble curves of breasts and the voluptuous rime of rose-coloured or indiana-blue powder mingled with drops of refined perspiration, all framed in the lace curlicues and balsam froth of the ladies' décolletage.

The ten or twelve-year-old Thomas was also decked out in finery, leaping tailors flourished then tentacles of their measures around the boy, and there was a millstone of a snow-white collar for him too.

Leading the way, the parents travelled in a separate carriage to Count Orgaz's griego- (or greco-) style private chapel, to the bier, to the requiem—the boy followed them in the other carriage. In his carriage his two former nannies, pert young ladies—they never experienced more piquant outings than when the court was in mourning—giggled and frisked about in the well-sprung carriage that floated and swayed like a swing, playing with each other and with the little boy. They jested about death and love, but at that time Thomas knew nothing of either love or death—or did he? In the darkness of his infant ignorance he already had some mystical presentiments of these two trump cards of our human destiny, hearts and diamonds, check and checkmate; such lurking, sensual, cryptic dreams which are perhaps worthier of the whirlpools of love and death than the thinner gruel of "clever" adults concerning this noble theme.

The carriage containing Thomas and the two requiem-nymphs suddenly stopped with a great jolt and the heads of the three occupants knocked together, a virtuoso or unintended billiard-stroke. Thomas was the first to jump out and he saw and heard the driver in the middle of a discussion with an army of beggars, a host of paupers all too well-known to Thomas. The "leader" of the beggars was complaining that all their lives they had partaken of thousands of charitable acts at Count Orgaz's generous, almsgiving court, so they had set off singing and praying in a holy procession to the Count's funeral and requiem, but—Count Orgaz's *new* major-domo and dilettante master of ceremonies for the funeral rites had thrown and kicked them out with disgust—them, Orgaz's sweetest gospel-children!—yelping as he gesticulated with a consecrated aspergillum like a mace that "it's sacrilege to turn up in such lousy stinking rags at the bejewelled, pyramidal catafalque." But they, the beggars and paupers, were neither lousy nor stinking nor ragged, they had dressed in the decent clothes they had last had from the count. That they were not leprous with jewels, bleeding with emeralds, Byzantine, Griego or Greco, balsam-basilisk ceremonial robes, the Lord Christ and his servant Orgaz would obviously have forgiven.

The "crusading and martyr" leader of the poor went on declaiming his holy Jeremiad—the driver began to seethe with rage against the rascally major-domo, long ago he had destined his whip for *him*, not for his horses—and the little Thomas dashed over to a weeping lad, who wore a fine, simple red robe, but the idiotic snob of a new major-domo had even ripped this when he banished the crowd blessed in the Sermon on the Mount.

Thomas (the nannies shrieked) stripped naked there on the highway: shoes, belt, collar, jacket and golden dart and bayonet flew—he ordered the weeping little boy to undress immediately, yes, they were to change clothes, the naked little Thomas helped to dress the poor boy, no theatre dresser could have done better. He silenced the nannies—Be quiet and don't interfere in my business!—... the child Jesus too must surely have been severe often enough in Nazareth, and not only at that moment in Jerusalem when he chose God and the Scriptures instead of his parents... He sat the poor boy, now in gala dress, in the carriage, and ordered the two (now certainly not laughing!) nurses and the driver to give an exact and word-for-word account to his parents of what had happened here on the highway.

Our little Thomas went home alone; there he made straight for his mother's dressing-room, for in it was a gigantic mirror up to the ceiling, and he wanted to see himself in it; he was twisting from left to right, backwards and forwards when his parents arrived home from Count Orgaz's funeral with the beggar-boy between them dressed in the gala clothes of a Spanish-Baroque teenager.

At the time of the funeral, the parents were understandably amazed when the two (cowardly and disorientated) nurses presented the tricked-out beggar boy in the clouds of funereal incense in place of their Thomas—but ("having stifled their amazement at the amazing events in this intermezzo") accepted what had happened with a gentle smile. Now, however, they requested their "tyrant" son Thomas to take off the beggar-boy's red robe and give it back to him, while he, Thomas, was to put on once again the gala costume tailored for *him*.

Thomas had a ready answer. Yes indeed, he would take back the gala costume, but *not* just *yet*. Why? Because! Thomas had discussed it with his priestly tutor, his moral and educational instructor, his confessor and the director of biblical plays for the domestic stage; this beggar-boy would play the part, in the family's intimate passion-play, of the rich man in purple and fine linen who would have left (and did leave) the beggar Lazarus to die of starvation (Luke XVI, 19–31); this beggar-boy would play the rich Joseph of Arimathea, he would play Simon the sorcerer (Acts VIII, 18–25), and the third and youngest of the Three Kings.

The parents looked at each other and smiled; they had hopes and doubts about their son's future sanctity, they prayed about it, on Mondays and Thursdays they dreamt of him becoming Pope, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays they dreamt of a Castilian princess to be his bride.

So Christmas arrived; the "niño despota," the child-tyrant carried things so far that at midnight mass he was server in the poor boy's red robe, and the

beggar-boy sat in the front pew between his father and mother, dressed once again in his, Thomas's, best clothes (the only way he could 'read' from his illuminated missal was by crumpling his stiff starched collar, larger than the circle of the Zodiac, well under his chin—he almost died of fright in case he was to be scolded for maltreating the gala robes).

In an orchestra, the chief roles are those of the conductor and leader (the first violin); when the great festivals arrived and school-dramas were performed with child-actors in palaces, refectories of monasteries, hospital "operating theatres," common prayer-rooms of retreat-houses or the *garderobes* of convents, the conductor was always the child or youthful Thomas and the leader or first violin was his learned tutor, with whom it is impossible to decide whether Thomas talked more about theological themes or the complicated problems of Baroque dramaturgy. Was the question of questions (command of commands!) the charitable love of the gospels (Luke XII, 33–34) or the theodeo "cabaret" clothes of velour and moiré? When they staged the poor man Lazarus, the child and youthful Thomas delved into the questions of the angels' bodies, souls, existence, non-existence, their Hebrew and gospel interpretation and role, their female or male nature, their sublimated symbolism and pagan-rooted materialization, the *historical* and *abstract* role of Abraham built into scholastic works, and the "problematics" of hell and damnation, mercy and redemption (and incidentally he loathed the word "problematics" to the point of nausea as he leaned out of the red window of the Heart of Jesus!). But, when he had really fired the imagination of his tutor with the Talmudic labyrinth of these hair-splitting concerns, it was Thomas who cut the Gordian knot, almost fuming with impatience; he would recite again and again, repeating insistently the command of generous love, "Sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven" (Luke XVIII, 22).

Thomas's instructor, tutor, first violin and leader of the orchestra, noted in his Memoirs that nobody ever spoke with such delicacy, purity and tenderness, with such refined Elysian tactics and a knowledge of the blackest secrets of love (doubtless he was enlightened by inspiration), of those legends and holy pictures in which Mary Magdalen figures as a *princess*, in those years preceding her career as a courtesan, or where writers and painters depict Magdalen as the bride, or even wife, of St John the apostle. It was a salutary delight to listen to Thomas (continues the well-instructed instructor in his Memoirs) when he explained the legend in which the penitent and contrite Magdalen (M in the Greek text) is tempted by Satan disguised as a shivering beggar; he asks her for her long hair to wear as a warm fur coat, though in that case only her (unchangingly beautiful) nakedness will be visi-

ble... Magdalen cut off her ankle-long hair *without* a moment's hesitation, for she knew that the Lord Jesus would cover her pagan-plastic curves with a thick cloud.

When his parents introduced Thomas to the professors at the University of Salamanca, they already knew from the instructors of all his fine and good qualities, about the indispensability of knowledge in the possession of love, and about the indispensability of love in the possession of knowledge.

And then? Thomas began his career not with study but with teaching ("our Assisi, our Aquinas")—when at the head of his pupils he arrived at the *golden* gate of the library, he recalled the meeting of Joachim and Anna, the parents of the Virgin Mary, at that Golden Gate (painted a million times!). Now he, the scholar, was Joachim, and now the library was the Biblical wedding-chamber where the books (Anna, Anna!) awaited their loving and beloved husband.

Similarly, when he taught in the gallery of the library, with the stalagmites and organ-pipes of gold-bound folios behind him and a gigantic globe on the marble floor of the reading-room below, our young Villanueva would say, "This is it! The true and genuine balcony-scene from Romeo and Juliet: each of the books is a Romeo, each irradiating a cientifico love, and down below the globe, the World (and universe...) is 'Juliet,' the 'ganze Welt' and the two of them are now holding their nuptials in Salamanca."

Thomas acquired not only the laurels of a university degree and doctorate, but also a much more glorious crown: he was ordained a priest of his Church. He celebrated his first mass on Christmas Day and from the Gospel side of the altar said:

"Is there any greater and more rational miracle in the world than when the God who created the universe, the myriad of stars, the millions of light-years and the atoms of atoms of atoms determined, as the Great Actor of transcendence, to don a human mask, choosing a stable as the only possible stage, and being born poor and beggarly, the sub-tenant of Existence, smelling of cows and donkeys? Do you like it or not? It must be accepted once and for all, that there appears to be a cosmic and dogmatic *charm* to poverty. And here and now and once and for all we must realize (and here the new priest Thomas raised his voice), that the sanctity of the poor, however deep and bearing Divine stigmata, does not, I repeat not, mean that we are to bury ourselves with mystical voluptuousness into the stinking Bethlehem of poverty for the greater glory of God. Whoever thinks that is the most idiotic of idiots. The poor man is doubly holy. First he is holy because through his poverty he is a thousand times closer to every primeval human affair in his nakedness than is the rich man. Birth, death, eating, drinking, sickness and

marriage, table and bed, clothing and weather, animals, flowers, stars, youth and age, grief and happiness, all and nothing, distance and proximity, war and peace, secrets and knowledge, hearth and opium, the gnarled work of two hands and midsummer-night's dream, suicidal disenchantment and spring resurrection—are closer, far closer to Bethlehem than the inhuman, abstract, golden-domed brothel of emperors and bankers. Secondly, he is holy because he is an infamous warning that poor folk should *not* exist! Angels, the three kings, frankincense, myrrh, gold, poor shepherds to the Even Poorer God, sheep, dogs, pipes, all holy material dancing with the Christmas star of Venus to guide them, Natura Infinita Bacchans—all this is a blessing on the poor, for *only* out of them can the definition of man be born and *rebellion!* Its leading players and minor parts are those who have now said the Litany, new St Johns, let them write new apocalypses about the great Nativity, the birth—nacimiento enigmatico: *revolution* from mercy, amen."

(Everyone, indeed even more than everyone, will say, "How ridiculous!" To cite such an address from the mouth of Villanueva in his age, in his circumstances! Yet this address was indeed delivered and what is more, it was *not* followed by any kind of inquisition-like performance, discussion, confession, accusation of heresy or unfrocking, for the simple reason that nobody took the word revolución or rebelión to have its present historical and sociological meaning. They simply thought that these words were just baroque, mannerist and Marianesque metaphors, playful and frivolous rhetorical purple passages, which were used to depict the delights of *charity* in a piquant and skirtlifting way!

The laurel-crowned doctor of the scholarly love of God and love of poverty preached three famous sermons. This was the first of them. The third spoke of his deathbed, and in due course will be heard here. Of the second, this will suffice:

The sermon was preached in that royal-phantasque-surréal-légendaire-dogmatique church which was built to commemorate Christ washing the feet of the apostles. In this church was kept as a relic that splendid "lavoir," of Greek workmanship, in which Christ our Lord washed the feet of his apostles with the intention of apotheosizing humility. It was brought back from the Holy Land by a bishop who had been on pilgrimage there, and in his deed of gift he emphasized with surprising frankness that it did not matter if the bowl was not genuine. The sight of it even so would move the faithful to fantasies of meditation and prayer from the dephts of their being.

In the church of the *Washing of the Feet* (humility! humility!) the pulpit, on the epistle side to the right, was suspended high on the wall, it might have been a lamp, a well-bucket, a swing, a boat or a rumpled golden nest—on its

rounded sides were the symbols of the four evangelists in marble, bronze and alabaster, a naked angel twisting in delirium, a buffalo or bison ducking its shaggy head between its front legs, a vulture treading at the ledge of the pulpit with its pincer-like beak, the lion (a guest-animal from a coat of arms?) blows into an enormous trumpet—in the middle the anchor of Hope clangs on a real chain, the heart of Love is a lamp with a real flame, the cross of Faith rears up to the sky from the bottom, the first step of the spiral staircase leading up to the curling balcony of the pulpit, like the skeleton not of exalted confession, but of despair. The baldachin above the pulpit is a scalloped shell, torn, slashed and curled; the statues of Jesus, Moses, prophets and the Lord God appear like raging, quarrelling, drunken fountains, intertwined in kisses, wrestling, embracing and killing, their curly hair matted. It was from this pulpit that the famous *second* sermon was preached.

All the details and other material relating to it are in the Confessions of Charles V, King and Emperor, from which we quote. A few weeks before the sermon was preached, the Emperor had read the Confessions of St Augustine (in other words, his confession of faith in praise of God); he too acquired the urge and inspiration to write (dictate) such a confession and confided his plan to Thomas of Villanueva, adding with a smile that just as Herodotus had used the nine names of the Nine Muses as chapter-headings, he would do the same. "Is that madness?"—asked the emperor, continuing to smile, "after all, my mother was Juana the Mad, my father Philip the Fair, and I am their most legitimate bastard, the most illegitimate rightful heir to their throne (. . . he was well educated in Augustine's style and the King of the Baroque age. . .), so why should I not do it?" . . . And Thomas gave a kid-gloved blessing to the moral, literary, historical plan (distantly? on his approach? warmly? coldly? did he mutter anything later? Charles Quint—Harlequin?. . .)

Concerning the sermon, Charles V recorded the following:

I myself lived and died right through this sermon—vision! miracle! transfiguration! mystery play! extasis en actitud teatral!—in disguise; dressed as a mendicant Franciscan friar I sat at the right end of the fourth pew. Thomas described the gospel scene of the *Washing of the Feet*, the eternal example of all humility and its model of dogmatic worth, in the most colourful words, like a playwright of golden tongue and silver rhymes. And then? Then? He raised himself up and rose from the pulpit and flew from it like a migrant bird, swimming and floating, losing nothing of the totality of his material body and—he settled by the side-altar of *St Alfonsus Liguori*. He also took me with him, and put into my hand the relic, the bowl in which the feet were washed; I was to hold it, hold it! while he began symbolically to scrub the nethermost

step of the side-altar, while he explained that the saint of Liguori in his humility did *not* heed the visionary, hallucinating nun who prophesied to him that he would be the founder of a world-famous order of monks, and he even refused obedience to Pope Clement XIII when he "terrorized him into becoming a bishop" in the Kingdom of Naples. Finally, however, he did bow his head, for (being a superb psychologist) he saw in *obedience* (paradox...) an even greater independence for his spirit and anarchic freedom for his holy dreams.

(Here in Charles V's Diary, in a totally different hand the following marginal note can be read: Terpsichore. *Marginalia to Casanova.*)

After this we flew to the altar of *St Dunstan;* there, while washing the pedestal of one of the pillars, he related in charming, spell-binding words what a totally universal, Apolline and Dionysian man St Dunstan was, philospher, dandy, singer, and poet, sculptor and painter, versed in classical and Welsh poetry, a virtuoso performer on every instrument, goldsmith and scholar of Roman law, the beloved favourite of the King of England, but the king listened to Dunstan's slanderers and banished the saint from his court; gravely ill, he accepted this "flattering" loss of favour with glad humility and became a hermit, living among the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey for his arts that were more varied than the colours from a Roman candle, and (when politics also having altered) they wanted to drag him away to be Bishop of London and Archbishop of Canterbury, he sat more uncomfortably in his stall than an animal dragged to the slaughter.

(In Charles's manuscript again there is a mysterious note in another hand: Erato. *Black Renaissance.*)

Thomas, floating on a raft of clouds, flew with me to the altar of *St Francis Borgia;* there on a pillar covered with black velvet Francis's death-mask was to be seen, and at the foot of the pillar, seemingly trodden down and thrown on the dustheap, there was a royal crown, with the decoration and chain of an order of knighthood—and Thomas preached: This Jesuit Francis did *not* wish to be the grand master of the Order of St James or even its least servitor, this follower of Loyola renounced the viceroyship of Catalonia and the kingship; according to Christ's hard (or feather-light?) command, he abandoned his richly-sensual, richly-fecund marriage-bed for the intellectual happiness of the Union Mystica (and never, never mystifica). Thomas kissed the hem of the black "skirt" of the death-mask, and from the lavoir of the washing of the feet (in my hand) sprinkled a few drops on the fabric, a symbol, holy water.

(Who wrote it? Who could have written it? But that other hand, that interpellation is here: Melpomene. *Escorial.*)

The altar of *St Turibio* was surrounded by half-naked statues, the voluptuous devotion of Aztec, Maya, Toltec, and Inca figures; Turibio was the Bishop of Peru, but he too had to be driven with whips to be consecrated with the holy oil of the Holy Spirit; only when he was told that the natives in 'New India' were being tortured to death by hidalgo-brigands or kept in serfdom to do menial work, did he set sail to go to their aid. After his death the Indians decorated his grave with fantastic orchids, parrot and bird-of-paradise feathers, and these feathers were now to be seen in glass reliquaries on the altar; at the time of mass, after Holy Communion, six-year-old children imitated the sounds of the "Christian" humming-birds on pipes called "Turibios."

(Manuscrito misterioso: Cleo. *Europa Minor.*)

I approached the altar of *St John of the Cross* neither in a gull-winged galley nor in a G-minor gondola; we went on foot: Thomas seemed to be possessed by some deep emotion, and endless, murmuring devotion, spellbound and astonished. Above the altar there rose an iconostasis with five niches, like stage dressing-rooms with open doors; in four of them, there were coloured wax figures. *St John of the Cross* could be seen among tottering piles of books in the University of Salamanca—next he was the king of poets, with a lute in his hand, more ecstatic than King David, voluptuosidad consonante—in the third icon-niche the mortally sick John was to be seen tortured to death and hacked by drunken barber-surgeons, bone, blood, skin pulled back, a rainbow-like jelly of secretion—and (yes! yes! yes! here, in this church!) as devil-headed inquisitors, torturers, Caiaphases of cardinals nip his horse-radish-stalks of arms with pincers—then together with Teresa of Avila, with Mount Carmel in Palestine between them like a pyramid; Teresa and John appear to be playing hide-and-seek, peeping impishly at each other from left and right; in their hands they hold a joint ribbon of parchment with a quotation from the prophet Jeremiah on it: "And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel..." (L. 19). And in the last niche? A solitary organ, which plays by itself "from the beginning for ever and ever," sonorously and lamentoso doliente, a soprano sings the Song of Songs, the favourite religious poem of St John of the Cross, "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? ... I am sick of love" (V, 3–8).

When mass was celebrated at the altar of St John, they never read lessons; on the epistle side instead of the lectern there stood the relic of the bones of John's hand, with fingers spread wide, and on the gospel side the bone of his foot. Instead of reading the lessons, the celebrant always kissed these, deep in meditation. This is what Thomas and I did now, sprinkling holy water on the footbone. (Washing of the feet! Washing of the Feet!)

After the sweetest, most tearful devotions, Thomas continued his sermon thus: John was once playing ball with his fellow-students near a river, and the ball flew into the stream; John immediately threw himself in after it, but the river was full of weeds, his foot became tangled with them and he might have drowned within moments. Then a snow-white female hand stretched out to him from the heavens, the right hand of the Virgin Mary; her thumb was snow-white coral, her index-finger a trembling, white compass-needle, the middle finger a willow-twig covered with diamond dust, the ring-finger twanging whalebone, the little finger the first April bud on the Tree of Life. John felt the hand to be so beautiful, holy and pure that he was unwilling to seize it with his muddy palm and would rather have drowned; like a troubadour poet, he struck up an Old Provençal, neo-Baroque hymn, during which he reached the bank like a gull with flapping feathers.

The preacher Thomas also began a hymn in praise of the mannerist literary style that had reached its ultimate perfection under Marino: every word was made by the most microscopic, learned and sensitive observation of Nature into palpable, visible reality, fantasy run riot, dreams, a rainbow-mixture grown fat on poppy-head seeds, are eternally present in every moment of a sentence, every half-uttered syllable, and together with them is every crystal, flower, animal in Creation, static stars and planets, the clouds of stars that screen infinity like snow; all this carnival, all these comets frothing with kisses run on wheels and pulleys of the strictest logic and mathematical reasoning, but atom-splitting paradoxes shatter the wheels into a hundred thousand splinters and cynical Nonsense displays its larva-flanks in exhibitionism made irresistible by the opiate of nihil;—all that love can offer in body and soul, in sweet order and even sweeter pseudo-disorder, for the cannibal plants of our desires and the raving, blinding and deafening glamour of our gratification, seethes and bubbles beneath the arch of Aphrodite's arm. The most succulent tavern-jargon, the texture of ideas and ideals of neo-Platonism, the unrestrained meteor-shower of puns, titillating puzzles, incestuous catapulting rhymes, anapaests that resound in Danaids' casks, the classical world, Gethsemane-world, the maddened theogonies of the New Indies twine their fresh green-blooded arteries about our European souls that have been anathematized into a spectre, the grilled-chicken heretics of Cataluña Católica and Estremadura. It is almost as if new religions came to birth in the lawnsoft, adolescent girl's breasts of similes and metaphors, every back-stage scene of world-history and clownish hero competes with the narcissistic salamanders of ghetto-cabalas, and madly frolicking, suicidal, ravishing and murdering *Sport* shrieks from the fiery appendix of every clause, so that *Pain*'s bat-wing and Parca-shade may cast night on the espiritual,

sensual, divino, animal grammar of Orfeo Marino and San Juan de Agostino. (Marginal note, footnote, a barely-legible insertion like a centipede: Polyhymnia, *Cynthia.*)

Saint Boniface, at a time when he was not yet by any means a saint, was asked by his very imaginative, very mystical, very hysterical, very Füssli-romantic, very superstitious and very luxuriosa mistress to bring her relics from the Near East, parts of the bodies of Christian martyrs, to cure her sickness, give her the peak of sensual delight, blaspheme against the Olympus of which she was bored, and ease her path to Heaven with Christo-Judean grace. Boniface set out, but during his search for holy relics became more Christian than any martyr; he too became a martyr, and sent his martyred body to his mistress on the symbol of the struggling Church, a "Peter-Vessel." On the altar to which the preacher Thomas now took me (yo, el rey) in the course of his sermon on the humility of the *Washing of the Feet,* the statue of St Boniface was to be seen on a bier—a long, weary evening cloud resting on the loving shoulder of a hill, on the platter of a plain—and his *mistress,* with long hair and long unction, kneels, mingling perfume with tears, a Magdalena Renata, to wash, stroke, confirm, christen and shoe Boniface's feet with crossgartering. Boniface is smiling, he knows everything; generally a man knows everything if his blood is a martyr's, if he died a "Christ-fish" gliding into infinity, if his love is the finest, if marriage and consecrating grace intermingle like the Tigris and Euphrates;—in the temple of eternity which knows no walls, our earthly existence is an unwound clock—Boniface knowns that too (so Thomas of Villanueva explains Boniface's Gioconda-smile and the tears that cling and tinkle like the long earrings of the mistress, not even touching the superfluous bowl of the washing of the feet or asking for me)—Boniface knows this too, so does she, so do you, Harle-Quint: *every* human body, from birth to death, is a *relic,* for after all the plastic, eternal heir of the creative idea of the Lord God, its holy and most holy relic even in all its filth is the vessel of the Holy Spirit, the body of leprous beggars.

(Postscript, an intrusive scribble in Charles V's notes: Euterpe. *Confession and Puppet Play.*)

Carolus Quintus, you know that for you and for me (. . . fellatio cum vocabulis. . .) the fate of the Jews who live among us in great and holy Spain is a continual concern; that of bloodthirsty, chauvinistic Maccabeans, of humble, gentle questioners of Christ, of foxy, cunning, opportunist converts, of those steeped in mystical-magical daydreams in the ghetto-hovels that they themselves have chosen or been ordered to occupy by their Spanish and Arab masters, of philosophers pursuing supreme Logic and mole-like, gnome-like

rationalism, of Shakespeare's Shylock and of Imre Fortunatus, the finance minister of your sister Maria (Hungariae Regina!).

This seventh altar commemorates *Pope St Sylvester I;* if the Jews were allowed to depict man or God in sculpture, you might think, Your Spanish-spaniel Majesty, that you were in a synagogue, for in the altarpiece you see nothing but Jews, rabbis, cabbalists, philosophers, prophets, the most distinguished representatives of the Kosher School, Aquinaj of Haifa, all of which is nothing compared with the fact that you can see the empress and Saint Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine the Great, the discoverer of the Sacred Cross, in *Jewish* splendour, almost like a female Solomon; she is depicted most true to life, and why? because in every history, legend, document of Tacitean severity and fragile hymn of praise there is unanimity: as a result of her long stay in the orient, the empress "began to turn towards the Jewish faith," indeed she adopted it in secret. At the head of her rabbinical "conclave," she engaged in a religious debate in Rome with Pope Sylvester I, but in the synodical theo-gymnastics the pope was victorious, confirming his strictest and triumphant Aristotelian syllogisms with the raising of a dead bull; Helene repented of her blasphemous sin of apostasy, knelt at the feet of the pope and (like the theological repentant prostitute, Magdalena Renata) wiped them with her hair, smeared them with myrrh and kissed the twenty snow-white toes of Sylvester I. (Nor was Satan idle, for the devil does not sleep; he immediately fabricated, and refashioned, the novelette of the bull and Pasiphaë and vilified Helena with it.)

(In old plays, when a character betrays a secret to the audience, the author writes "Aside;" such is the flavour of the next note in the "Carolingian" manuscript: Callipe. *The Second Life of Sylvester II.*)

You may well stand amazed at the altar of *Doubting Thomas*, the apostle, Charles, earthly king and earthly emperor of an earthly kingdom. You see the dome of glass; finely-regulated clocks and cheeses for finicky epicures are kept in such containers. And here? A seemingly endless document, parchment "note-paper" stretches out before your eyes with an ant-like army of letters on campaign; from the end of the *letter*—for that is what it is, an epistle!—weightier than a bison's udder or a bull's testicles and redder than any redness, there hang seals, leads and anchors which have struck now ineradicable roots in the ocean-deep sand and soil of Ultimate Truth. And the apostle Thomas, bent double, with his head almost grave-deep in the earth and his bottom a Babel pushing up into the clouds, kisses these congealed-blood seals; he has learnt the art of this moral movement from Magdalen who kissed the feet of Christ.

The letter contains Thomas's doubts, his most sacred questions, which are

not criticisms and imprecations but an anxious and respectful hunger for an answer in face of the panorama of the world's secretiveness that is blind and brilliant at the same time. He wrote it in his solitude, to send it to Christ. The letter has survived. Did he send it? Or did he not? Did Christ read it? Or did he not? This is one more item in the catalogue of *unknowns*.

The seals he kisses are the wounds of the Lord Jesus (the greatest in his side); plunged in them, he received if not an answer, then the *absolute* promise of an answer to come.

The letter:

I gaze at the crystal-fair flowers of created nature, I search them, seek them, query them—their flower-fair, geometrically-fair, bubble-and-berry-fair crystals, the laws of their life, with its whims, order and adventures; in my breast there whirl all the rotting bones of the dead, past mannequins of mortality, the forgotten ashes of the cremated, while my every nerve, my poesy and thought thirst for eternal life and eternity—here I shiver in the cloakroom of the most voracious mortality and nobody comes for the cloak he has cast off—man, star, primeval cell, when did they all begin? When will there be an end to them all? Or are these words "beginning" and "end" only prostitute's cast-off shoes into which no woman would ever put her foot? Are our language and words the caricature of thought and truth themselves? A falsely-tuned and impotent death-knell? The two run and run together like a dirty satyr Silenus and an impudent siren Nymph—the most endless astonishment at the operations of Nature, the quadrillions of cells of flowers and animals which from a *single* cell multiplied into the most orderly and planned puppet-theatre, Garden of Eden—and beside the almost stifling, ecstatic madness of *astonishment* the slaughterhouse, cattle-axing certainty of *non*-knowledge, the knowledge of nothing. Whatever we turn to is contradiction, our affirmatives (and anyway we brought them to birth with such justifiable cowardice) are hermaphrodite negatives, our negatives wild asses that turn and laugh at us, furies that kick us into the grave and calculate our debts with the drumming of horseshoes on our coffins—Lord Jesus! If you are the way, the truth and the life, if you are the son of God, if you are God himself, why is it your will that for man, beast, life and understanding nothing has *any way out?* That this world of ours is a retching orgy of Falsehood? That the Hellenic beauty of the body in our marriage-beds, caro carnalis, is even in our arms a kingling knick-knack, Hades takes it to his bastards—Petrarch's Laura—a cheap game for idiot children... Why are our morals a rag-and-bone market of a thousand meanings? What is virtue in the south is sin in the north, what is a totem in the east is taboo in the west—pestilence plays the hurdy-gurdy, injustice bellows and bleats a Te

Deum to itself, destitution and poverty on dung-heaps give rhythmic applause to their corps-de-ballet of crab-lice; stupidity is the only vulva (a purple-holed gristle-medallion) which titillates the filthy gangrenous priapism of vice. . . !

I rage, Lord Jesus, I rage, compared with me Jeremiah is a dilettante, Job an incompetent, bungling poetaster of torture and *after that* there is nothing else! Clinging to the straw of logic, its gossamer-thread, its possible, rare golden chain, and losing heart, yet believing, for there is nothing else, nothing else! *after that*, I bow in humility "at the feet, all corns and pearls" (I quote Jeremiah from the Apocrypha) of the incomprehensible world willed by the Lord God—with the black crown of secrets on my head, the spreading peacock-tail of *marvels* and their rainbow cloak on my shoulders, the Adamite fig-leaf of *ignorance* to hide the nakedness of my brain—ego te, mysterium, in humilitate et dubitatione adoro!

The seals

have *two* meanings. First, they mean that Thomas (the apostle Thomas and Thomas of Villanueva) has absolute faith in the person of Jesus Christ and in his personal promise that he will give a perfect *answer* to every doubt and question—tomorrow? the day after tomorrow? in the red dawn of Whitsun? on the eve of the Last Judgement, the "dies irae?" And secondly, they mean humility before the secrets of Nature and the promise of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus said, "The greatest among you must bear himself like the least, the chief of you like a servant" (Luke XXII, 26; IX, 48; Mark X, 43).

(Scribbled marginalia, the *nota bene* of a last sentence: Urania, *Canonized despair.*)

The last altar! The very first of themes! The abdication of the pope *St Celestine!* . . . How often have you prayed, you child of Philippine beauty and Juana's madness, Charles, in the town of Halberstadt, in the church of Our Lady, before the coloured relief of St Philip the Apostle? The apostle's left hand is on a book, and his right hand, dismissive and keeping at bay, banishes from him the devil, this world, heretics, Weltgeschichte noise, mist-navelled females, the badly-darned blue-stockings of "thought" pre-ordained to die. *Our* ninth altar depicts St. Celestine in *this* dismissive, resigned, romanico-pomposo, catolico sumioso gesture, in all its fullness. Beneath his feet (let us sprinkle them!) in eloquent Latin style, is his desire to the end of the world that there should *not* be any opposition between the goodness, peacefulness, poetry, and wisdom of *solitary* hermits and all the hullabaloo of the personality of *world history* (hitherto bloody, stupid, wicked, lying and hypocritical)—whoever called it up—Satan? Jahveh? The Lamb? The apocalypse of the Lamb, his sacrifice on Golgotha be the most natural idyllic order, the

"common denominator" to use the thieves' language of the algebraic Arabs, of our solitary weeksdays and our public histories. (Postscript: Thalia. *Bloody Ass.*)

Clarity, comprehensibility and complete lucidity are the prime necessity in every epic and drama, hence we may deduce the following in connection with the scene now described. The most passionate sermon of Thomas of Villanueva was intermingled with his great vision; this vision he communicated step by step with his audience which, under the influence of magic, sacral mass-suggestion, fell into just such a visionary dream as did Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Spain. At the end of the sermon they all felt they had witnessed, and partaken of, a *miracle* and left the church in possession of a *miracle.* This miracle applies to the nine *saints.* The connection between the nine saints and the nine Muses? Their connection with the nine stations of the Breviary of St Orpheus?

Translated by G. F. Cushing

A NOTE ON THE AUTHOR

Miklós Szentkuthy, who was born in 1908, is one of the most original and controversial Hungarian writers of this century. Some critics imply or even claim outright that Szentkuthy is the greatest living Hungarian writer. Others find his work unreadable and the zest that produces the flow of his often highly complicated sentences simply a form of verbal intellectual deviance. Just as the opinions of critics are strongly polarised, there are those, unswerving admirers of Szentkuthy, who keep his novels, poured forth in generous abundance, in the place of honour on their bookshelves; others passionately complain of his verbal diarrhoea and the lack of a clear-cut line of events in his novels. No reader, however, remains indifferent by the work.

What is definitely of lasting value in Szentkuthy is his ingenious use of the stream of consciousness technique, partly inspired by Joyce, which breaks down accepted forms and is inherent even in his first novels Prae *(1934),* Az egyetlen metafora felé *(Towards the only metaphor), 1935, and* Fejezetek a szerelemről *(Chapters on love), 1935. With these Szentkuthy made a radical break with the mostly realist traditions of Hungarian fiction, launching a one-man revolution in the novel. A constant feature of his later works, including* Szent Orpheusz breviáriuma *(Saint Orpheus' Breviary) is the non-linear representation of events: the line is complicated, entangled, lost in whirlpools, leading nowhere. For Szentkuthy is a born manierist—there are few writing in Hungarian this century who sense more acutely the disruption of a once solid system of values and taste and the difficulties encountered by the birth of a new set of values.*

Realism, social criticism, public commitment, social mandate, topical relevance, are all alien to Szentkuthy's personality; as an opponent to his superhuman verbal sabre-rattling, he has chosen an enemy of considerable historic stature—the Catholic Church itself. For he is a natural blasphemer, a libertine, an alchemist, a magician, an arch-pagan—at least these are his favourite disguises—behind whose heretic prose, never to be taken completely seriously, it is not difficult to discover some kind of hope that the history of mankind is, perhaps, not an entirely futile effort, and that, perhaps, writing is not an utterly useless occupation either.

What else could lend strength to this blasphemous rebel decrying the heavens in writing his monumental works? Szentkuthy's output is so copious that its mere physical weight would almost crush a reader to death. He is one of those proud writers who misses nothing in any line in his novels: he is the author of a world who is able to flash and reflect something from the very richness of creation in each and every line of his. Naturally, his desire for totality is also his limit as a writer, in that what he creates suffers from not being more condensed and lacking construction. He was educated not by writers of belles-lettres but by the whole of cultural history; at times he is strongly inspired by the fine arts. Unable to have his own novels published in the fifties and the sixties, he had to be content with writing excellent novels on Mozart, Haydn, Goethe, and Jesus. As a literary translator, he has procuced translations of Swift, Dickens, and Joyce. (His translation of Ulysses is far superior to the other existing Hungarian version).

To introduce Szentkuthy, we have chosen the opening to Véres szamár *(Bloody Ass), the fourth part of his series Saint Orpheus' Breviary, in G. F. Cushing's virtuoso translation. The writer's deep—irrational, if you will—faith in humanity may be felt in this volume too: humanity, the bloody ass, is staggering towards its ontological destiny, awash in its own blood, along the road of History, unless its Messiahs, constantly reborn, manage to "check" it. The ass, washed clean of its blood is, perhaps, no longer an Ass, but the Stallion of the fairy tales. But this pathetic conjecture would be absolutely alien to Szentkuthy.*

I. K.

FROM THE MEDIA

HUNGARIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Mátyás Szűrös on the phone-in programme "Radio Diary"

Hungarian Radio broadcasts a programme called "Radio Diary" in which aspects of public life and politics are discussed informally. Hungarian foreign policy was the topic chosen for the programme put out on January 27th. The programme's guest was Mátyás Szűrös, secretary for foreign affairs of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and the programme's presenters were Éva Szécsi and György Bolgár.

Radio Diary involves listeners in that they may phone in before and during the programme and put questions to the reporters and public figures on the show. January 27th's received more questions than usual. The high level of interest was due to the appearance of Mátyás Szűrös and the current, complicated world situation. Twice before in the last two years, Mátyás Szűrös had been on this programme. At the beginning of 1985 he described the previous year as decisive in world politics.

His foresight has been justified by events of the last year for 1985 turned out to be the year of international détente. As he put it the situation may be called promising, especially in the light of the series of changes taking place in the domestic and foreign policies of the Soviet Union today. In Soviet foreign policy this can be seen in an increased intention to take the initiative; this enabled the Soviet–American summit meeting to be convened in Geneva. Mátyás Szűrös emphasized that a new situation has been brought about by the arms race. Certain platitudes such as "if you want peace, prepare for war", have collapsed.

Similarly the interpretation of the concept of a just and an unjust war has changed as well. So the reaction of Hungarian citizens, Hungarian listeners is much influenced by changes in foreign and world politics. Here optimism or pessimism in Hungary are induced primarily by the state of East–West relations including Soviet–American relations.

Such a great improvement has taken place in the Soviet–American relations—said Mátyás Szűrös in answer to one of the presenters' questions—that today perhaps even Reagan believes that the Soviet Union does not want war. The Central Committee member pointed out that in this connection great importance is to be attached to the detailed Soviet proposals on disarmament and arms limitation put forward in the middle of January, a course which extends in time to the year 2000.

This is the road mankind must proceed along and not that of the Strategic Defense Initiative. Mátyás Szűrös considers it important that the Soviet proposal "takes into account the other side's interests, viewpoints, the interests of mankind... coming closer in several respects to earlier American stances."

What is new in the present proposal is

that France and Great Britain as well as the People's Republic of China are handled separately. A further Soviet proposal is for a moratorium on nuclear testing. Mátyás Szűrös expressed his hope that a new Soviet–American summit will be held this year and stressed that the primary aims at present are to reduce the chances of a surprise attack to their minimum and to quicken the pace of the work being done in multilateral forums. He summarized the situation by pointing out that "the Soviet Union has worked out a disarmament programme that in a way takes the wind out of the sails of the Strategic Defense Initiative. The very significant question is whether this programme is sufficient in itself for delimitating this enterprise of the Americans, dangerous and, in many respects, illusory."

Answering a question on regional crises, Mátyás Szűrös underlined that they contribute to a deterioration of the international atmosphere and are dangerous *foci* of tension. Mátyás Szűrös believes that the cause of the Libyan crisis is the dependent relationship Libya had with the United States till the beginning of the 1970s, which has left its mark on the present relations between the two countries and on the anti-American policy of Libya. The United States criticizes this Arab country sharply, saying that it supports international terrorism. However, Mátyás Szűrös pointed out, the criminal acts of the Arab terrorists have turned out to the advantage of the United States and Israel since those who committed the acts have compromised the Arabs, especially the Palestinians, in international opinion. The cause of the Palestinians is not helped by divisions within the Palestine Liberation Organization either.

Mátyás Szűrös pointed out that Hungarian foreign policy rejects terrorism as a phenomenon and method and condemns acts of terrorism. This it does even though terrorism is always bred by some kind of situation of exposure and unsolved problems. The Hungarian government condemns the terrorist attacks in Vienna and Rome—in which its own citizens were caught up, condemns them in theory and politically; it does so not merely because the Viennese attack left a Hungarian victim seriously wounded. The Hungarian government has taken measures to exclude the opportunities for terrorism.

A listener's question raised the possibility of restoring diplomatic links with Israel. Szűrös stated that there are no obstacles in principle and "the question may be made the object of consideration if Israel behaves in accordance with the accepted norms of international life... However, while the Israeli stance in the matter of settling the Middle-East question hinders the effort to put on the agenda the restoration of diplomatic links, we cannot forget that more than forty years ago the Hungarian nation was involved in a tragedy as a consequence of the policy of Nazi fascism... According to some estimates, the number of Israeli citizens speaking Hungarian exceeds two hundred thousand. So we also have an interest and a connection in this respect, and that must be taken into account when forming the Hungarian–Israeli contacts—especially when the questions at issue are human relationships, the union of families and other related questions."

Afghanistan was another topic raised by a listener. Mátyás Szűrös argued for a negotiated settlement pointing out that some advances were made in this respect in 1985. Pakistan believes that the time has not yet come for entering into direct negotiations with Afghanistan. However, the negotiations have speeded up and the preparation of a four-part agreement is underway. If implemented, Soviet troops could finally be called home from Afghanistan and the country could arrange its own affairs itself.

The internal development of individual countries sometimes exerts a powerful influence on the whole international situation. As an example Mátyás Szűrös mentioned that although Mikhail Gorbachev was

elected secretary general of the Soviet Communist Party barely a year ago, since that time a huge political ferment has got under way in the Soviet Union. He said that he himself had lived in the Soviet Union for ten years—first as a student and later as the ambassador of Hungary—and thus has a wide circle of personal contacts and a great number of acquaintances. He mentioned Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev as one of them. He added that the present changes in cadre policy taking place in the Soviet Union are of enormous significance. He stressed that the starting point of the Soviet leadership is the real situation and it looks upon the work of building a developed socialist society as a long historical process. A change has taken place in the economic policy of the Soviet Union in the direction of intensive development. The change in style is characterized by the very critical tone used recently at party conferences and the developing of further democracy in public life. The autonomy of the local collectives and councils is increasing, political and professional requirements are being given equal weight simultaneously. "The strengthening of discipline and order, the critical and self-critical spirit belong here."

Speaking of Hungaro–Soviet economic relations, Mátyás Szűrös pointed out that since the Soviet Union is taking steps in the direction of intensive development, requirements placed on external partners, including Hungary will also increase. The Soviet Union is expecting increasingly better, more highly developed and up-to-date products in the Soviet–Hungarian trade turnover. Therefore the Hungarian party must have a better understanding of the Soviet market "for there lies the path of the development and the expansion of our economic cooperation, which is of vital importance for Hungary. For the Soviet Union accounts for more than 30 per cent of Hungarian foreign trade turnover." Not to mention energy, received from the Soviet Union, which is of paramount importance for Hungary.

Thus it is an excellent investment for Hungary to take part in the exploitation of the natural gas from Yamburg; this will increase the supply of Soviet natural gas by 50 per cent. The Soviet Union is Hungary's most important trading partner while the Hungarian People's Republic occupies the fourth to fifth place in the Soviet Union's international trading relations. These proportions—Mátyás Szűrös emphasised—will be maintained in the course of the next Hungarian Five-Year Plan. The natural gas pipeline of Yamburg will enable Hungary to receive two thousand million cubic metres of natural gas from the Soviet Union until 2008 and this will be counterbalanced to a significant extent by the export of Hungarian products. Thus participating in the work on the spot is clearly favourable in economic terms for Hungary, especially since it secures the future.

Speaking on the problems of energy, Hungarian public opinion is greatly concerned with the Danube hydroelectric system of Bős-Nagymaros. The Hungarian leaders concluded an agreement to build the system with the Czechoslovak government in 1977. "Then, of course, measures taken in the field of environmental protection were expressed differently than they are today. Therefore, Hungarian, Czechoslovak and Soviet scientists have recently prepared a comprehensive study on the possible harm to the environment because of this project. Its construction will cost more than planned originally, in view of the additional measures taken for environmental protection: "The barrage must result in economic advantages, for example for navigation on the Danube, flood protection and, last but not least, the production of electric power."

In this connection he pointed out that "we shall build the system of Bős-Nagymaros and the power plant in a way that will not damage the Danube region on either the Hungarian or the Slovak side

of the frontier... There are people in Hungary, referred to as 'the Blues', if I am not mistaken, who are still worried today about what is going to happen and whether we shall cause damage to this beautiful and historic area... I trust Hungarian scientists and believe that they carried out this major task with responsibility. The Hungarian government may take measures in view of that. Nor should anyone suppose that members of the Hungarian government love our homeland less than those who are worried at present."

Several listeners who phoned in touched upon Hungarian–Rumanian relations. Mátyás Szűrös stated that "the Hungarian–Rumanian relations could be better than they are at the moment. Over the last year, the Hungarian authorities worked with great responsibility, taking the initiative, on the implementation of the programme adopted at the highest-level Hungarian–Rumanian negotiations in Debrecen and Nagyvárad in 1977... Unfortunately, however, no favourable changes have taken place in Hungarian–Rumanian contacts. Indeed, in several areas it must be admitted, the opportunities to cooperate have decreased so that the implementation of the plans jointly drawn up and adopted are hindered. Our opinion is that the problems and duties in bilateral relations are to be solved by both parties with great tolerance, good will and understanding. In this respect there is no question of making the difficulties and problems international. It is not helpful to voice historical prerogatives or to seek revenge for the grievances of the past."

Mátyás Szűrös emphasized that a fundamental feature of Hungarian nationality policy is to set the objective of satisfying more demands than those actually raised for the manifestation of rights. Quoting a well-known axiom of Gyula Illyés, he stressed: "The principle in Hungarian politics is that the majority nation must display a high degree of tact in relation to those in minority. The Hungarian national minority is the internal affair of Rumania, though, naturally, it has its international aspects."

As to Hungarian–Chinese relations, he pointed out that the Chinese Communist Party has moved away from the incorrect idea of Mao Tse Tung that the class struggle is constantly becoming more acute. The party has set itself the objective of increasing production and national income fourfold by the turn of the century. The Chinese leadership has rejected the so-called Cultural Revolution of 1966/67, has opened up to the external world and is promoting the economy through the introduction of gradual reforms. There is a comprehensive renewal now taking place in China, as a consequence of which agricultural production is enjoying an upswing, the living standard has risen and the supply of goods has improved.

Mátyás Szűrös pointed out that the relations between the Hungarian People's Republic and China are in good order and the Hungarian party has always considered the People's Republic of China to be a socialist country. Apart from these good bilateral relations, Hungarian–Chinese trade turnover has increased threefold in the past few years.

Finally, this is what Mátyás Szűrös said concerning the concrete aims of Hungarian foreign policy: "...Strengthened by the 13th Party Congress we are continuing our foreign policies since—I may say this with all due modesty—their correctness has been justified by events. They have their priorities, fundamental ideas and it is in accordance with these that we shall carry on. It is very important that, for example, in this present year, the Political Consultative Body of the Warsaw Treaty will meet in Hungary, at this session our international activities and efforts will be harmonised."

I. K.

SURVEYS

LUKÁCS AND EUROPEAN CULTURE

A Conference in Rome

In the years following the Second World War many Italian intellectuals became Marxists thanks to György Lukács. A number of ideas were transmitted to leftist Italian youth by the Hungarian philosopher. Lukács was undoubtedly an important chapter in the intellectual evolutionary story of the entire West-European intelligentsia. Thus it was symbolic that the conference examining the relationship between Lukács and European culture was arranged in Rome of all places, at the Department of Philosophy of the University of Rome's Faculty of Humanities, between October 17 and 19, 1985. The joint hosts were the Hungarian Academy in Rome and the Gramsci Institute, and the occasion was provided by the one hundredth anniversary of the philosopher's birth.

Participants were welcomed by János Szita, the Hungarian Ambassador. Nicola Badaloni, who opened the conference, represented the Gramsci Istitute. He stressed Lukács's endeavour to achieve universality and discussed his idea that the opposition of intellectuals to the post-industrial social system may put obstacles in the way of the manipulation of our days.

The publisher Alberto Scarponi examined the European-centredness of Lukács. He said that Lukács was usually talked of as a theoretician of the labour movement with his roots in the Third International, but little is said about his having been also a typical cosmopolitan intellectual of his time. He considered culture the moral substance of a community, in which one had to strive always for the unity of the individual and the movement. Endre Ady, the Hungarian early twentieth-century poet, who also fought for the Europeanisation of his country, was considered by Lukács the prototype of Hungarian revolutionaries without a revolution.

Scarponi expressed the opinion that progressive European intellectuals of the first half of the century wished to feed European culture to the Russian revolution, and wanted to obtain in return its practical energy, so as to be able to rejuvenate their own culture. In this period, which had basically still been centred on Europe, everyone was responsible for his, or her, choice. There was no innocent philosophy. Everything was promptly turned into an ideology, and often became the prey of Stalinist hyperrationalism, which was also *The Dethronement of Reason*, only carried out by the other side. According to the German thinker Arnold Gehlen, who was Lukács's contemporary, the time of ideas was over in our post-historic period, and no surprises were possible on this earth in the domain of culture either.

In Scarponi's view that was denied by Lukács's notion that the starting-point of history was still man, whose field of operation was the genuine democracy of daily life, free of manipulation, in opposition to a

wide variety of alienations, *individuum versus manipulationem*.

Cesare Cases, who teaches German at an Italian university, examined Lukács's ties to German literature, emphasizing that the philosopher fought against putting rationalism and irrationalism (i.e. Enlightenment and *Sturm und Drang*) against each other. In Lukács's view, irrationalist German literature was somehow always a response to the French revolution—and this was true even of Goethe, let alone of Hölderlin, who was truly a Jacobin after his time. Lukács had stressed the unity of German literature and found that even the most aristocratic works demonstrated a link with the life of the nation. German intellectuals, in contrast to the French, restart everything from the beginning without conditions, and this is why they philosophize so much. Cases drew attention to Lukács's contradiction whereby, although according to him bourgeois art must not lose its ties with the people, he described Brecht's—who had put the bourgeois period into parenthesis—as philosophically regressive.

The Communist Party and class consciousness—the political thought of Lukács as expounded in *History and Class Consciousness*—was the subject of Professor Giuseppe Bedeschi's lecture. According to him, the political thoughts of the philosopher were based to a large extent on the Leninist thesis that socialist consciousness did not follow directly from the struggle of the working class. The two were born simultaneously but of different antecedents. Consequently, the spontaneous evolution of the labour movement would lead to submission to the bourgeois ideology, that is, to trade unionism. But the Leninist party knows what the historic interest of the proletariat is, and consequently the Communist Party is entitled to make the decisions.

Lukács was an early supporter of Lenin's party-idea, but he considered it just one theory which was not sufficiently effective in the formation of consciousness. According to him, this caused the ideological crisis of the proletariat. Bourgeois ideology continued to live on in the consciousness of the proletariat, creating a paradoxical situation in which the proletariat, as the sole revolutionary class, was unable to come to power by itself. For Lukács—Bedeschi continued—it appeared a solution if the proletariat subordinated itself to the Communist Party, which was itself the complex, conscious will, and as such was—according to him—infallible. But to achieve this it had to be united and disciplined. Any introduction of bourgeois forms of freedom would undermine this unity of action which—according to Lukács—at the same time guarantees the freedom of tomorrow.

Bedeschi argues that in Lukács's approach to the party the mystical-fideistic choice of the philosopher's youth was reflected. And yet Zinoviev had accused him of idealism because of his *History and Class Consciousness* of 1921, and Béla Kun made him withdraw his Blum Theses of 1928, declaring them a rightist deviation. In 1947, after an article headed "Literature and Democracy," Lukács was forced to withdraw from Hungarian public life, and in 1957 he found himself under arrest following his participation in Imre Nagy's 1956 government. Notwithstanding these facts, the lecturer stressed that Lukács's relationship with Stalinism was not entirely guiltless. At one time he had himself become a Stalinist, identifying it as the direct continuation of the Marx–Engels–Lenin line. Although he *ex post facto* morally condemned the Moscow show-trials of the thirties, he considered them politically sound, because he thought that Trotskyism might have mobilized the West against the Soviet Union. In the view of the lecturer, his entire œuvre reflected the sectarian, messianistic position of his youth, when he argued that the individual counted for nothing in comparison with majestic historic processes.

Replying to Cases, Professor Dénes Zoltai, who teaches the aesthetics of music at

Budapest University, emphasized that the rationalism–irrationalism problem of Lukács's work on German literature between 1935 and 1945, and his stand against romanticism, had a special meaning in that irrational period when the future of European culture was at stake.

Professor Giuseppe Prestipino, a moral philosopher, covered Lukács's work between 1933 and 1953, in particular his realism-idea. He claimed that during that time Lukács had to face the dilemma of good literature and bad ideology, or good ideology and bad literature. The bad faith of naturalism was expressed in his views. Positivism had treated scientific truth and artistic creation as equal. At the same time it was not his understanding that the avant-garde had practised a truer realism than did the positivists.

Prestipino discovered also that between 1933 and 1953 Lukács's faith in the unity of subject and object became shaken. His belief strengthened apace that art had to offer a vision of reality raised to the ontological level, and that compared to this, the demonstration of the direction of historic movement was only a secondary aim.

Professor Miklós Almási, of Budapest University, undertook an ontological approach to the *Aesthetics*, stressing that Lukács had succeeded in creating, in the image of democratic socialism, an alternative to Stalinism and fascism for the European intelligentsia. He pointed out that Lukács's ontology began to be formulated for the first time in his *Aesthetics*, and that Lukács's *Aesthetics* was based in essence on two interrelated ideas. The text is pregnant with a concealed argument between the ontological and the epistemological approach.

In Almási's interpretation the basic ontological idea of Lukács is that a work has its own world, and consequently, it does not make sense to compare it directly to reality, but a work has to be judged in its own terms. The process of formation of works of art also takes on an autonomy vis-à-vis the artist. The writer always betrays more than he means to. Thus recreation by the recipient also has importance, and consequently, the domain of art is a pluralistic sphere. Several works may speak through different approaches about the given period, and the same work may also have several meanings. History often rewrites a story on account of the difference among the recipients; the work has a chance to survive its time if it represents the values of the human species.

László Sziklai, who heads the Lukács Archives in Budapest, chose as his subject the circumstances of the writing of the *Aesthetics*. He quoted from a Lukács letter to Lifschitz in May 1963, according to which the *Aesthetics* are a bridge leading from the past to the future, even if it is only a pontoon bridge. According to Sziklai, Lukács saw full well the determination of his era, in which Marxist aesthetics existed and did not exist at the same time. Lukács's solution relied on the Leninist legacy. He thought that art reflected the same reality as science, but in it everything referred to man. Historicity was always present behind the work, behind everyday life, even if only in a hidden way. Lukács's categories, Sziklai stressed, are at the same time abstractions of history and abstractions from history.

Professor István Fehér, of Budapest University, discussed the questions of reason, rationality, and rationalism in modern philosophy. He found that in *History and Class Consciousness* Lukács looked at the entire reality as history through the spectacles of Hegelian dialectics. For Lukács, irrationality was equivalent with imperceptibility. He considered irrationalism to be the complement of rationalism, and not its opposite. With Nazism gaining power, an alternative opened up between rationalism and irrationalism, and the latter seemed to many a distortion of rationalism. But Lukács was of the opinion—as Fehér pointed out—that irrationalism was the step-brother of rationalism.

Hegelian dialectics had already become problematic for Heidegger, when Lukács still claimed that history was deeply dialectic. With Hegel the principle of evolution referred to the evolution of mankind, which he considered saturated with individual and communal tragedies. Croce had also claimed that what first appeared to be regressive, may be cosmically progressive. Horkheimer as well was of the opinion that irrationality was the incurable and inevitable disease of reason. Hegel and Lukács guarded the scientific nature of history against the unscientific nature of irrationality, and consequently, defended evolution.

Professor Lucio Colletti chose as his subject the relationship between Lukács and the German romantic critique of society. By way of introduction he emphasized that it was impossible not to give credit to Lukács's work, since at the time of Stalinism he lent dignity to Marxist thinking. In the difficult years of the Second World War, Lukács had compared Marxism and classical German philosophy in his *The Dethronement of Reason*. His central problem was the history of modern Germany and the defeat of the bourgeois democratic revolution, which led to imperialism. The path from Schelling to Hitler was that of self-destruction. Colletti pointed out that it was beyond doubt that German romantic anti-capitalism provided the best critique of modern bourgeois society and all this in the conditions of German fragmentation and the semblance of unity.

In *The Dethronement of Reason* Lukács made a contribution to the theory of the antithesis of civilization and culture, in which civilization meant the technical and material progress of the western type as well as the formalism of parliamentary democracy. Culture, on the other hand, interpreted the nation as an organic unity, as the community of traditions, and the later *Reich* idea also relied on this. A deep chasm came into being between Germany and the West, and within this there was a gap between the individual and the German state. This is why the critique of modern industrial society developed precisely in Germany, both on the political left and the political right.

Colletti considered that German culture relied on the great misunderstanding of modern society, especially of its economic forms and of modern science. At the same time he stressed backwardness and the absence of democracy. According to him, Lukács saw this backwardness almost as an advantage when criticizing German social institutions. Colletti argued that in Lukács's Marxist model of society the differences between the classes as well as between society and the state ceased, but there was fragmentation and a contradiction of interests where unity should prevail. The autonomous institutions divorced from each other formed a self-contained abstract unity. The state, for instance, expresses the common interest, and should thus coincide with the community, and should not function as a separate institution. According to Colletti, the German classical thinkers longed for the organic unity of a feudal society that imitated the Greek *polis*, since in the *polis* there was still no gap between the various elements, and the state was not machinery. With its octopus nature it had absorbed citizens and forced them into a community.

Colletti blamed Lukács for not noticing that the model of the *polis* was just as archaic as the one he criticized, and he was consequently unable to understand the laws of modern society, the totality to be recreated being a mere utopia. According to Colletti, the revolutionary myth was a total misunderstanding of modern conditions, since he considered the productivity of labour to be the single measure of progress. He claimed that Marx's Hegelian philosophy of history demanded a negative social totality in which every conflict was extinguished. He added that Marx was led into this direction by his education. He disregarded social mediation and its domain, the market. Colletti does not consider it a coincidence that Marx

and Engels often used the word community instead of society, and thus Marxism became—from the nineteenth century to our days—a part of the German romantic tradition.

Colletti pointed out that the sociologist Tönnies, a contemporary of Lukács, described the two alternative models in his *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. The community is an organic, rural, and patriarchal unit, while society is disorganic. Colletti does not consider it a coincidence that this author had a considerable influence on Lukács as early as 1923. According to Colletti, the major contradiction of Marxism is that it wants to resolve the contradictions of modern society according to a utopian and ancient model.

Niculae Tertulian, a Rumanian who teaches in Paris, chose Lukács's struggle against irrationalism as his subject. He argued that *The Dethronement of Reason* proved to be a "cursed" book. Both Adorno and Marcuse disagreed with it. However, the book reflects in an overwhelming way the demonology of German philosophy, the process of increasing irrationalism from Nietzsche to the triumph of national socialist demagogy.

In Tertulian's interpretation the leading idea of the book is that there is no innocent ideology. Nietzsche, for instance, reacted so vigorously to the socialism of his period because he identified the internationalists as the destroyers of culture. Heidegger supported the Nazis, because he wanted to create his own national socialist revolution. For him Bolshevism and Americanism were the offsprings of the same rationalist idea.

Tertulian stressed that Lukács's fight against irrationalism itself provoked the antipathy of Stalinists, who thought in terms of the antinomy of materialism–idealism, and declared Lukács to be a revisionist because, by focussing on the opposition between irrationalism and rationalism, he had sacrificed Marxist ideology. At the same time Lukács also fought against clumsy Stalinist hyperrationalism.

Costanzo Preve, a secondary-school teacher, commented on Colletti's paper, claiming that Colletti somewhat resembled Heidegger. For him the capitalist steel cage was a nemesis, and the individual can never escape from his isolation. On the other hand, Lukács's ideology, according to Preve, was not organic, but was precisely a farewell to this organic philosophy. In respect of Tertulian's paper, he noted that he was just as unjust to Heidegger as Bedeschi was to Lukács. In both cases the politics of the authors studied was the cause of the antipathy. Preve emphasized that Heidegger should not be included among the conservative revolutionaries but among the critics of society of the Horkheimer type.

Colletti's paper was also discussed by Professor József Lukács, head of the Institute of Philosophy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He emphasized the necessity for a revaluation of Prussian evolution. According to him, Germany had caught up with France by the beginning of the century. As far as the attempt of restoring an organic community is concerned, József Lukács pointed out that Marx considered the human essence to be the sum total of social conditions, and examined its relationship to the organic. In the case of Marx it is precisely the tendency of rising out of the organic, out of the immediate that is decisive. He considered society an association of free individuals, and sketched the alternative of the social individual of a new type. In his approach the zigzag of history also followed from the choice of the individual.

In another paper Dénes Zoltai discussed the links between Lukács and the post-war Peace Movement, describing the ideological path covered by Lukács from the Geneva *Rencontres Internationales* of 1946* to the Wrocław meeting of 1948. This was a period when both anti-capitalist tendencies and the Cold War had an influence on the West-European intelligentsia. At the meet-

* *NHQ* 98.

ing Lukács conducted fruitful exchanges of ideas about the future of the European spirit, the questions of democracy, evolution, belief in reason, and humanism with de Salis, de Rougemont and Jaspers.

The scholar Vittoria Franco discussed the path covered in Lukács's work from the fragmentary *Ethics* to the *Ontology*, drawing attention to the contradiction between the attempt to realize individuality and the objective circumstances. According to her, Lukács's fundamental questions at that stage of his life were: (1) Who is the subject of ethics? (2) What is value? (3) Has our era a specific ethical question? Lukács tried to answer the question raised by him from an ontological angle. For him the true ontological form of existence is the process: historicity and genesis. He considers the historic process to be irreversible, and for the *Ontology* the categories, the objective products of existence also exist as a continuous totality. In Vittoria Franco's interpretation, Lukács wanted to elaborate a scientific ethic which corresponded to the historicity of the values. He saw in ethics the objective tool of the reproduction of social existence, just as for him ideology too was an inseparable part of social existence. He considered morally good what acted against manipulation, and bad what supported it. In Lukács's view, the options are always determined by social existence, and individuality too is the product of the historic process.

Professor Tibor Szabó of Szeged University examined the relationship between Lukács and Gramsci, claiming that, after Lenin, it was these two thinkers who wanted to reform Marxist theory most radically. Both covered a long road towards Marx's original ideas, Lukács fighting Stalin and Gramsci Croce. However, according to Szabó, their critiques are limited and do not take the entirety of the criticized subject into consideration. Lukács's reflections were not focussed on the economy but on man. He maintained that the subjective factor did not change automatically with the changes in social existence, and it was for this reason that the philosopher demanded the development of democracy, also as a moral requirement. Gramsci too rejected the automatic determination of the other parts of social life by the economy, and in this he relied on the practical experience of the class struggle.

Csaba Varga, a student of jurisprudence, discussed the relationship between law and Lukács's philosophy, claiming that Marxist legal theory is limited to the mechanical application of the law. On the other hand, modern law is formal and bureaucratized, and its institutional system is rationalized to the extreme. Its validity is formal, with the requirement of equally formal legality. For Lukács law is a system of its own fulfilment, and its ideological strength is legal positivism. The free law movement of the Hungarian Republic of Councils in 1919 discarded law in practice, the connections between socialism and law had not been recognised for a long time. The enacted will of the ruling class was considered to be the law, but this was made rigid and was fetishised. Lukács stressed that in Marxism too great an emphasis was given to epistemology, and a measure of justice was sought in law. Varga stressed that law was in fact an artificial and not an epistemological category, and that Marx too considered it the legal recognition of the facts. The notions of law are also practical categories: there is no actual connection between ideology and the legal interpretation of subjects.

Varga pointed out that by explaining the category of socialisation Lukács did something important in the interpretation of the law. He established that law had its own laws; his ontology made possible an interpretation of law in which law is dynamic, active judicial practice, that is a social recognition. The philosopher attributed to law dynamic, actualised meanings, and thus, through the renaissance of Marxism, he was able to become the introducer of a new kind of process of the interpretation of legality.

Costanzo Preve in a second paper placed Lukács's category of everyday life right at the centre of his interest, claiming that it was worth while speaking about everyday life only embedded in the ontology of society. After 1956 Lukács wanted to redeem everyday life that had been subjected to manipulation. Then he was no longer an organic intellectual, he belonged to nobody, he emphasised the struggle of individuals against those who wished to manipulate them. According to Preve, Lukács could never truly become a Stalinist, since he cultivated an ideological Marxism of a pluralistic sort, instead of legitimising a totalitarian attitude he stressed the rights of the individual. He implied that the best ideological cover for manipulation in socialism was planning, and in capitalism the fetishisation of the market. Lukács opposed both, he was a seminal thinker, who will truly come into his own in the third millennium. Preve added that, together with Ernst Bloch, Lukács was perhaps the first philosopher who made a break with the orthodox Marxist approach, in which an organic approach of a new type is contrasted with the non-organic nature of the individual. He recognised that the super-prosperity evident in everyday life had no connection whatever with public life as manifest in the idea of the policy. Thus his views represented a qualitative leap forward compared to the views of merely conventional Marxists.

János Kelemen, Head of the Department of Philosophy of Budapest University, undertook to compare the theories of rationality of Popper and Lukács, stating that the problem examined in Sir Karl Popper's 1943 *The Open Society and Its Enemies* was the same as that of *The Dethronement of Reason*, rationalism and irrationalism, as the characteristic conflict of the period. In Sir Karl's argument, irrationality is dominated by emotions and passions. Lukács considered irrationality a position opposed to the social problems and historic changes, which had no integrated and consistent history, because it was itself nothing but a reaction to a process which had already occurred. According to him, irrationality was made possible by the fact that every kind of rationalism was limited. However, the irrationalist does not carry out the critique of limited rationalism in the name of dialectic reason. Sir Karl Popper's misconception was that rationalism could only be based on irrationalism. According to Lukács, the choice between the two was not an immanent philosophic question but the function of the social situation; in fact the foundation of rationalism was history itself. He considered irrationality to be anti-human, because its choice was the denial of history. It is a question whether an immanent truth existed in history—Kelemen put the question, and then quoted Lukács according to whom a starting-point may be provided by the Hegelian–Marxian unity of the logical and the historic elements.

Professor József Lukács's second paper discussed the role of religion and irrationalism in the work of the philosopher, picking out the thought that alienation may also continue in socialism, and thus every person had to decide individually for or against his own alienation. The question is whether man himself shapes his life, or entrusts this to transcendent powers? József Lukács stressed that today the perspective of a long-term process of liberation was socially given, even if with regressions. But the longing for a new *polis*—the absolute—could be asserted only through a renewal of intimacy and of art, principally of the epic.

Professor Antimo Negri discussed the ontology of György Lukács and his work-centred œuvre. He established that in the question of work Lukács had his problems. Although he considered man a social being, he nevertheless wanted to create the aesthetic of immanence. He placed his mechanical and naturalistic materialism in the service of transcendental aims, providing thereby a good example for the possibility of a meeting between Roman Catholics and materialists. Lukács placed the category of work in the

centre of his ontology. If we accept that man as a social being realizes himself through the mediation of nature—Negri argues—man is not only a social but also a natural being. Work lends things a new objective form, but the *homo faber* also has to change the world of things in order to become a *homo technologicus*. According to Negri, the new type of man has a teleological purpose. Man interferes with nature even more efficiently by creating tools. It is to be feared that Lukács was not sufficiently familiar with this new technological world and his theory of surplus value also suffered from this shortcoming. Today it is no longer man's work that is decisive, but that of machines, since the technical world has changed its image in the past fifteen years.

He finally stressed that Marx had taken a great interest in technology. His aim was that work should be less and less burdensome. With the advent of the third industrial revolution, times are coming which already come very near to Marx's utopia, especially as far as growing leisure is concerned.

Niculae Tertulian made an attempt to sum up the conference. He was sorry to say that in the West today Lukács is believed to be a Stalinist mystic and secret irrationalist, but this image was false. This is best proved by the paper which he wrote about the necessity of democracy in connection with the Czechoslovak events of 1968, which will shortly be published in Italy as well.

It is the present author's impression that the Italian participants at the conference examined Lukács's work from the position of post-modern philosophy, contrasting its monolithic approach and their own pluralistic views. The majority emphasised those elements in Lukács's work, which are rich lodes and yet also abound in self-contradictions. They serve as a model. At the conference Lukács's democratic, ethical, and anti-manipulation aspects were stressed.

IRÉN KISS

LÁSZLÓ SÓLYOM

CIVIL LAW AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Natural law in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries based the liberty of man on a few rather abstract rights, such as the right to liberty and the right to life. On the other hand, no effort was spared to deduce from these basic rights specific, particular, innate and inalienable rights of man in every imaginable field, all the way to the right of free use of the senses or the right of dressing or wearing one's hair as one pleases.

Between 1790 and 1848 these rights gave place to abstract freedoms in bourgeois constitutions and the also rather abstract and formal modern civil law. Another hundred years have passed, and the old, small liberties have become timely again today. These liberties are, as a rule, deduced from a very general freedom, the right of personality, right to human dignity, the right to privacy and so on, the different terms of which relate to an identical substance in most law.

The old and the new rights often show great similarity even in their wording. The natural right to cut one's hair and nails as one wishes is no curiosity from bygone days. A lawsuit brought by an American policeman, who claimed that he had the right to wear his hair as he chose, that is that a po-

lice department regulation limiting the length of a policeman's hair was unconstitutional, is a textbook classic. In the early sixties, schools, employers and even the authorities tried to stop Hungarian males growing beards. Naturally, they used only informal pressure, for which they lacked any legal basis. In fact, those hassled could have applied to the court to have their right to grow a beard established under Section 75 of the Civil Code[1] but that did not occur to them.

Friedrich Schiller mocked the natural right to use one's nose with a well-known epigramme[2]. But would Schiller have ridiculed this right had the city council forced him to smell rotten apples? (By dumping rubbish in front of his house, for instance, for economic considerations.) In 1985 the municipal council of Dorog, a Hungarian mining town with a bad level of air pollution, issued a permit to establish a risky waste burning plant within the limits of the town, in spite of massive protests by local citizens, and the competent ministry granted special exemption from regulations which insisted that the plant be at a statutory distance from residential areas. Does not this action infringe the rights of inhabitants to smell breathable air? Or perhaps their right to healthy air? Or should we describe it as their right to a healthy environment, and then use a term which socialist legal literature also acknowledges as one of the rights of personality?

It is evident that the same right can be described absolutely concretely and at various levels of generality. In places where an adequate number of law cases have been decided, rights are generally crystallized at a medium level of abstraction, such as the right to a personally chosen lifestyle in the U.S., for instance, and then later in the Federal Republic of Germany. The newer and the less developed a field is, the more and the more peculiar the rights one encounters are, for the border of the permitted and the non-permitted initially follows a markedly zig-zag pattern, according to the chance circumstances and power relations in the individual cases.

Medicine and biotechnology, for instance, are creating new possibilities today so rapidly that the moral consideration of the problems cannot keep pace with them, if for no other reason, then because conventional morality has also lost ground. Thus an increasing number of people question the right of the state to interfere in decisions related to methods of contraception including abortion, or even euthanasia. Various expressions gaining in popularity would do honour even to a Baroque imagination. For instance, the right to the sacred precincts of marital bedrooms, of the right of the foetus to be born. These do not sound as bad to the layman but they pose extremely difficult problems in law. The next thing that follows logically is the right of the ovum artificially inseminated in a test tube to be placed back into the womb. (Or should one be permitted to pour surplus ova down a sink or must they be put into deep freeze until they are used?) Not only the rights of those already conceived are being discussed, but also the rights of future generations. (The latter is a generally accepted category in the literature of environment protection.) To return to the Hungarian example: noting that the proportion of children born with congenital development disorders in Dorog is twice the national average, does that not make the present state of affairs already an infringement of the right of future children to be born healthy? A recent case which raised conceptual questions of the freedom of self-determination (as well as of the attitude of the authorities and the courts), to which I will return a number of times for these reasons, also concerned biology. The question was whether

[1] Everybody shall respect the rights of personality. Personality rights are under the protection of law.

[2] Jahrelang schon bedien ich mich meiner Nase zum Riechen. Aber hab' ich an ihr auch ein erweisliches Recht?

a man had the right to have himself sterilized. The court found that the man, a husband and father of three children, whose wife could not use contraceptives of any kind for medical reasons, could not be permitted to have himself undergo a vasectomy[3].

The question as to whether it was permissible to make a sound recording of shouting that could be heard in the adjoining flat also cropped up among recent cases. Could a recording made without the consent of the speaker be tendered in evidence? Could the subject of a report withdraw his consent to the telecast of the recording? Would it be contravening the public interest for an accused person to withdraw his approval to appear on a Real Life Crime television programme? The question arises not only in the form of what rights I have, but also in its opposite, what cannot be done without permission granted by the authorities? There are important practical problems such as those facing what are called basic communities or autonomous groups in Hungary, namely, can they consider their existence to be unquestionably legal only if they register as an association, or at least operate within some institution (an enterprise, the Communist Youth Federation, the Patriotic People's Front, or at least within a Cultural Centre)?

Break lines

These minor liberties have always appeared along the break lines: *a)* at the point of impact between legal solutions fashioned to suit obsolete social paradigms and new relations, *b)* on the borderline of law and morals, *c)* where there is a doubt whether the law is technically capable of grasping the most personal problems. In this constantly changing no-man's land, it is not possible to specify generally in advance what is permissible and what is not. Basic principles considered as pillars of society, constitutional rights and guarantees in their usual application are no help here, but those rights and liberties have to be made concrete and established again and again.

a) The first major formative period of minor freedoms or rights of personality is connected with the change in paradigms, when around the turn of the century state interference became necessary in respect of the formerly self-regulating liberal society. Swiss and German court decisions which elaborated the right of personality (right of privacy in common law) kept the economic and wages struggles within limits, prescribing the permissible methods. As a result the free market was replaced by a minutely regulated order in the economy, the deterioration of the former chances for self-protection on the part of proprietors was balanced by the offer of legal protection. Rights came into being for the protection of non-pecuniary values (e.g. the right to decide whether one's picture be taken or painted, or a sound recording of one's voice be made) they attempted to delineate the limits of fair advertising (business), or to decide what the state could regulate. The reason why Warren and Brandeis I. I argued in defence of the right to privacy versus the yellow press was because gossip had become a trade. The old, interference-free *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* ceased to exist, and emphasis shifted to guaranteeing the private sphere of the individual as the ultimate sanctuary.

After the Second World War, two factors stimulated the spread of the right of personality everywhere. In the first place, legal guarantee of the free development of personality (the right to privacy in common law) was an answer to the hostility to autonomy of fascism. Furthermore the threat to personality still survived, indeed, it had increased since the technical opportunities for interference and manipulation became almost impossible to contain, and because the price people had to pay for state welfare services was total administration. A third

[3] The Budapest Court; 47 Pf, XII. 23415/1984.

reason was added to these in Hungary, that is that due to non-organic progress and the peculiarities of socialist national development the state simply swallowed an inordinately large number of social functions.

The rights of personality entrench themselves in the breaches of this process. While the first change of paradigms was signalled by acknowledgement of state interference, the second after the war was characterized by a complete separation of the rights of personality from any concept of property rights; thus the advance of non-pecuniary institutions of the civil law was accompianed by their intertwining with constitutional law.

b) The break line between law and morals is especially drastic today. This chasm is the breeding ground of the rights of the unborn, of sexual minorities, of exotic sects, of the terminally ill. Most usually it is the odd extreme cases that get publicity and I should like to call attention to the seriousness of the situation for the very same reason. What is at risk here is the social virtue of tolerance. Refusal by the state of relevant small rights supports uniformisation and instinctive aggression towards the different, and yet customs differing from the standard can be vitally important in, for instance, the survival of a national minority.

As I have intimated above, the problem lies in morals which are increasingly pluralistic and incapable of keeping pace with technical progress. It is the law that fills —often willy-nilly—the void. When a judge must decide on a question of morals on which there is no public consensus and which lacks even a conceptual basis, then he is weighed down by an immense moral and professional burden.

No wonder, therefore, that the authorities in this field try to avoid making decisions. Reference to a general prohibition, for instance, may put the problem itself beyond discussion making it impossible for a consensus to come into being. In the vasectomy case, the ministries as well as the courts deduced the prohibition of the operation from the general principle of the Health Act that operations can be performed only for the purposes of healing. In my view this rule obviously does not cover vasectomy as an extraordinary medical interference. In other words, the case is more analogous to organ transplants since vasectomy is intended to serve the well-being of another person, the wife, from whom the husband would take over the burden of contraception. Furthermore, the mental health of the husband and the wife could be used as arguments in favour of the operation just as in the case of plastic surgery which is permitted, that is that the purpose of healing can also be established. The court rejecting the suit also referred to a law that forbids one to mutilate oneself. Thus it isolated the husband and did not take into consideration that man and wife are but one body not only according to the Book of Genesis and to St Paul, but to Hungarian family law which treats them as a single entity and obliges them to support each other. If, apart from these arguments, the court is sincere about equal rights, it should have compared the risk of male and female contraception and also—if it considered vasectomy evil—whether the husband in the case was to undertake the operation in order to avoid a greater evil (the illness of his wife, perhaps surgical abortion). I think that besides the above arguments in favour of vasectomy, moral values could be associated almost too obviously (taking on the responsibility and sacrifice for the spouse, considering the family as a unit). One must suspect the rejection of what is thought abnormal at the back of the scale of values of an official attitude concentrated rigidly on voluntary mutilation, and exclusively on the interests of the husband, not to mention misconceptions about an unknown and allegedly unmanly method of contraception.

c) The third break line is the limited technical appropriateness of the law for directly grasping fundamental social and individual values. The law transforms philosophical and moral categories into less indi-

viduated technical concepts (as in the case of responsibility, causation, or fault). Fortunate indeed is the era and the field of law, which finds a universal key, by which it transposes categories such as liberty and autonomy into a genuine legal world of means and concepts. One of the rare examples of this was the property concept of liberal bourgeois law, which—together with the institutions generated by it—not only guaranteed autonomy with a financial basis, but was also able to serve a moral system centred on independence and responsibility.

It is precisely such a central institution that is lacking in the civil law of today. Liberal free small ownership was already relegated to the background a hundred years ago. Citizens were gradually transformed into consumers. If there is no new legal institution to guarantee their freedom in addition to property, their autonomy will be stunted. But if they put up a defence of autonomy, they must forgo classical civil law, which interpreted property as ownership of material objects and made only interests actionable which could be given a price. That is what is happening now. Civil law institutions where morals and law, and politics and law communicate directly, without pecuniary transmission, and demand a direct legal solution for moral problems are being given increasingly prominent roles. An example of the latter is the right to privacy. This, however, is also the reason why a hitherto unknown oversupply of values exists in the law which threatens an inflation of values. Realization of human dignity and the free development of the personality have gradually found their way into post-war constitutions and the civil law.

But how can the law promise me the free development of my personality? Both development and autonomy are exceptional and also the most personal achievements, of which only a few are capable (an occupation for the saints, said T. S. Eliot), and independent of the law. They can be achieved under oppression and in prison just as well as in a democracy, and indeed, even in spite of both. What the legislators have in mind here is obviously guaranteeing the external conditions of a free and good life fit for the average man as people imagine it at the time, that is the continuation and adaptation of the classical liberty and equality ideal to the present shape of threats.

However, a complete model of a society that is like that of the liberal age is not among the values stressed today. At the most this occurs as a negative programme, as anti-totalitarianism. The right to dignity, development, to an inviolable personal sphere nevertheless has an important function. It is a constant critical yardstick vis-à-vis restrictions, and an inexhaustible source of protection from which the court can deduce personal rights needed in concrete cases and mark out the borders of the permissible and non-permissible. It is true, however, that the law can provide only an average protection. Once autonomy is a service provided by the state, we must also tolerate the paradox that the more one deviates from the average, that is behaves in an autonomus way, the less one can count on the acknowledgement of one's right to autonomy! But still, the use of the rights of the personality may extend the limits of the normal and by so doing, may extend the field of liberties. By winning protection, it renders marginal behaviour and norms accepted—but naturally it also integrates non-conformism. It uncovers not only the patent restrictions, but also those made acceptable to the normal majority by ideas that they are the price to pay for progress, part of modern administration in the public interest and so on.

Hungarian problems

The problems of the break lines described above are aggravated in Hungary. In order to ensure that limits of the permissible and the non-permissible shape to favour freedom, and in an unambiguous and secure way, it is also necessary to ensure the emancipation of

autonomy, as a value, from the still oppressive conditioning of a state-centred era.

I cannot enter into the totality of the social problems of this change of view, but attempt only to outline the specific tasks of civil law and civil courts and the forces acting against these.

a) The root of the problem lies partly in the one-sided modernisation of Hungarian civil law. After 1945 the nationalised industry and agriculture, organized in socialized and cooperative farms, as well as the economic system of planning directives, have de facto wrenched the whole economy from the competence of conventional civil law. The civil law institutions which continued to be formally employed, completely fused with the state administration. From the point of view of a citizen, this was no longer civil law. For citizens it remained the world of personal property and of meeting needs; civil law, which was once the par excellence field of individual freedom, indeed, the foundation of the political existence of the citizen, has narrowed down to this passive consumer existence. The most elementary rules of classic civil law naturally functioned well in the socialist sector, limited to the most primitive direct exhange of goods, and in the private sector the individual autonomy was reduced to the spending of wages and some real-estate transactions. Socialist civil codes could well have been issued in 1820. That is to say that the view, which was appropriate a hundred and fifty years ago, that civil law in itself was politically neutral, lingered on. While the modernising experiments carried out in relation to large enterprises proceeded outside the Civil Code, the nature reserve character of civil law that remained for the citizens was for a long time considered suitable from the angle of property relations as well as politically. For this reason, the fundamental task of civil law of ensuring autonomy and the necessary changes entailed remained in the background until very recently.

This, however, does not alter the fact that civil law surviving to serve citizens does remain the bearer and guarantor of autonomy in all those relations in which the citizen is neither a mere subject, nor defined by his employment, but his own man. Today, he does not necessarily have to be an owner to enjoy these privileges; furthermore, these relations are no longer neutral—since, for instance, the rights of personality cannot be separated from constitutional freedoms.

Where then do we stand now? Practice is again outpacing codified opinions. The pillars of autonomy, the institutions independent of traditional property rights such as, for instance, the right of personality (right of privacy) and the law of association are in ferment. The new feature is that they both go beyond the neutrality the legislators and the practice of even the recent past intended them to have. Where rights of personality are concerned, it is only domestic affairs of a still personal, but in effect a last-century world, that were considered when the Civil Code was enacted (1959) and for some fifteen years thereafter: slander, gossip and intrigues at the place of employment. (At best the "comrade courts" would have represented a socialist feature—but they did not succeed.) Neither political rights incorporated in the Civil Code (e.g. protection of the liberty of conscience, prohibition of discrimination, Section 76 of the Civil Code), nor the general clause on the general right of personality (Section 75 of the Civil Code) are of practical application. The really modern task, that of warding off the domination of politics or organizations is just beginning to get a say now. Its fate is uncertain yet.

Libel cases increased in number since the late sixties parallel with the decline of the earlier quasi-authority role of the press. Criticism published in the press ceased a long time ago to be seen as a signal, indeed, a command to get the punitive mechanism of the law moving. In recent years the Supreme Court established the conditions of tort of defamation in a great number of publicised decisions. The Court has also taken into account the interests of the freedom of the

press (the freedom of criticism); thus, for instance, a mere value judgement cannot be the subject of legal action if its mode of expression is not insulting; expressions and statements of fact must be interpreted in the context of the full text, and not in themselves; in general, the Court has scope to consider whether the paper really put the plaintiff in a false light. At the same time the Supreme Court also delienated firm lines of defence for individuals; e.g. when a judgement of the court of last resort differs from earlier press reports in any respect, the paper must publish a correction free of charge on request. However, the position of the individual vis-à-vis television is still difficult. The latter is today the most influential and the most centralized medium; and it broadcasts programmes in which state institutions backing programmes assert their own scale of values. Thus, for instance, a heated discussion took place this year in the law reviews about the insufficient defence of the right of privacy of suspected and accused people appearing on the popular Real Life Crime programme. Television deemed the limitation of these rights permissible on the pretence of crime prevention and the education of the public. Unfortunately, it was backed in this respect even by higher courts, while the lower courts and the theoreticians argued for equal legal rights.

The law of association did not look beyond the small world of Don Bartolo either. Associations of anglers or gardeners have thousands of members, a fact which is pointed out ever so proudly nowadays. The troubles around associations began when, in recent years, they went beyond the hobby character that was designed for them or they simply wanted to extend the legality offered by the association form, and other advantages to unusual pastimes. The association of naturists, for example, could only be founded after three years of struggle. It became evident that the perfect law of association laid down in the Civil Code (Sections 60–69) was almost strangled by creepers of additional administrative regulation, which rendered illusory the autonomous starting point of law of association, that is that no permit is needed to establish an association.

This is true. But each association has a state supervisory authority which must be notified of the intention to organize an association, and which registers properly established associations. Although these authorities do not issue permits, they have power to prohibit any association. Opportunities for civil courts to control them are very limited. Although the supervisory authority can be sued the key to the situation still remains in the hands of the administrative body. The preliminary phase, the prohibition to organize an association, cannot be taken to the courts.

The real problem in the case of properly notified intentions to form an association is, however, not the risk of an anti-state conspiracy (which is the formal reason given for administrative action—although this is questionable from the point of view of civil rights), but that of autonomy. In practice the objectives of association are always permissible, indeed social participation in their realization is often a statutory obligation. Protection of the environment, for example, is a civil duty under the Environment Protection Act. Within the scope of the administrative control over objectives of social participation and the ability to stop associations if so desired, the right to free association exists. On the other hand, a genuinely autonomous association breaks the monopoly of authority. It means publicity, alternative propositions, indeed, even criticism concerning undesirable subjects. All these raise difficulties for the administration, as democracy generally does. It is characteristic that the mushrooming of associations for urban beautification was given the green light only once it became customary to reserve a leading role in them to civil dignitaries. Such integration is impossible in the case of environment protection movements since interests clash. Such

associations would give publicity to information about the state of the environment which is usually confidential. Their interference would upset official compromises between the interests of environment protection and those of production and industry even if they do not represent extreme views but simply keep the longer term in mind. Since manipulation with the permissibility of the objective of such associations is difficult, potential supervisory authorities make associations impossible by refusing to acknowledge their supervisory competence. Faced with that civil law is just as impotent as in cases of express prohibition of organization. This again reveals that autonomy as promised by the civil law would only become guaranteed if the whole of the administration were brought under the control of the courts. The literature on the subject has lined up all the arguments in favour a long time ago. The decision is, however, of a political nature, and has not been taken yet.

b) As soon as civil law breaks out of the reserve of consumer existence, the status quo of the division of power between the courts and the administration will also falter. In keeping with the earlier situation, the social and political weight of the courts kept on increasing over the past ten to fifteen years. Litigation involving state enterprises is again heard in the courts; the public prosecutor's department can no longer exercise supervision of the courts on legal grounds; the list of administrative decisions that can be contested in court is growing, even if only slowly. People are also aware how much more independent even a county court judge is than, say, a head of a council department, and that the courts are not yet flooded by corruption and personal influence.

At the same time, the old vested interests still hold entrenched positions. They dominate the attitudes of lawyers. The administration—in all good faith—does not even consider the possibility that the courts may interfere with their business. In fact, the courts do not wish to do so. They do not consider themselves competent to make decisions going beyond the financial relations of litigants, or of taking decisions of greater importance. Undoubtedly, the courts also accomplished several breakthroughs within the conservative property view. Thus they award damages even in cases where environmental pollution was within the marginal values considered permissible by the authorities—in other words they indirectly overrule administrative norms. But when a judge makes use of the opportunities given by the Civil Code and grants an injunction closing a small plant that pollutes the environment, this is still news.

Why then are provisions of the Civil Code such as injunctions restraining wrongful acts, or the rights of personality which reiterate constitutional freedoms, or the general right of personality itself left unexploited? These require a new, political attitude instead of the conventional and bureaucratic attitude of the judges. In these matters, it is the court that draws the borderline between the permissible and what cannot be permitted. Here the judge must, in the spirit of the civil law, which guarantees autonomy, set out from the premise that everything is permissible that is not prohibited. But the conventional, bureaucratic starting point is the very opposite. One sadly experiences day after day that licence, authorization, verification or at least the semblance of officiality is required to do anything. Naturally, this also means passing the buck or sharing responsibility. In practice therefore, only that is not prohibited, which is covered by an express permit. Making use of tacit permission deduced from the lack of prohibition requires courage in a society with étatist and paternalist traditions. After all, what is involved is not the norm, but only the logical conclusion of other norms. It is not at all certain that the legislator had such a permission in mind. Who then will undertake the responsibility for the decision?

Well, nobody did in the vasectomy case. Sterilization is prohibited because there is no

legislation that permits it—concluded two ministries and also two courts. Deciding such an important issue is the business of the administration, the courts argued. This is a matter for legislation and the courts cannot legislate. The rejection of judge made law is, in socialism, a conservative convention of the fifties—it cannot, however, be interpreted in such an undifferentiated way. Judge made law follows from the nature of the general right of personality. The application of the latter always means the establishment of concrete rights related to the given facts of the case. The judge is expressly obliged to do this, thus there is no reason of principle why the solution should be provided by the legislator.

In practice one can, however, understand their way of reasoning. The judge is bound not only by legal and political conventions, but also by the subjective difficulties of taking the decision. In many cases of personal rights, the judge cannot rely on an official or majority moral or political opinion. He is left to himself to decide the lot of others, even in respect of issues he would not otherwise have tackled even for his own person. The new function of the civil law, therefore, really put judges to a severe test.

Not only committed judges, but also the moral courage of plaintiffs is needed for the defence and further development of autonomy. The vasectomy case was after all a pressing personal problem for the plaintiff, though only a case to cite for the rest of us, and it went on for years before the ministries and the courts reached a negative verdict. But there are encouraging decisions in cases concerning environment protection as well as in libel cases. But even the unsuccessful cases have significance. They make one aware of new problems and get then discussed. Indeed, even the rejected intentions of forming environment protection associations were not pointless, even though the assistance of the civil courts could not be expected. These movements forced the official side to make a move; environment protection bodies sprung up in their wake within organizations such as the Patriotic People's Front and the Communist Youth Federation.

To sum up: Ensuring the autonomy of citizens will remain the duty of civil law even if classical property-based autonomy continues to narrow down to consumption. The new instruments of this duty are the non-pecuniary institutions of the civil law, the most important of which is the right of personality. These institutions intertwine also with the constitutional liberties and directly politicize civil law. In order to make civil law break out from the reserve of passive consumer existence in Hungary as well and to develop it into an instrument of the autonomy of citizens, judiciary control over the administration must be extended on the one hand, and on the other—until the latter is introduced—the previously little-used opportunities offered by the Civil Code must be activized, in the first place the general right of personality and generally the rights of personality, the moral damage, or, for instance injunctions against threatening dangers. Committed judges and committed plaintiffs are needed, however, to achieve this.

BÉLA BUDA

DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR IN HUNGARY: SUICIDE

A fact which is increasingly disturbing the public is that Hungary heads the international list for numbers of suicides.[1] Earlier this subject was less talked about. The indications would seem to be that the authorities felt ashamed of the situation. A clear picture was the more difficult to obtain because of certain general and over-emphasized explanations of the phenomenon. Some affirmed that the suicidal tendencies of the Hungarians were due to their nation's tragic history, that too much suffering in the past had sapped the people's vitality. Others referred to the sad Hungarian soul, claiming that grief, low spirits and despondency were features of the Hungarian mentality, and that such moods easily generate the desire to put an end to oneself. There were also views which held that suicide was a reaction by society and that the relevant data substantiated criticism of the present-day social system.

Unfortunately, little modern research on suicide has been done. Sociology and social psychology, or social psychiatry, were barely studied in Hungary until the seventies; the relevant theories did not become known here, although researchers would certainly have called atten tion to the fact that suicide had no connection with the existing social order of Hungary. Death through suicide has always been high in this country, at least as far as the available statistics attest.[2] Ede Böszörményi, a clergyman of Hódmezővásárhely, has demonstrated on the basis of parish registers that, in the region of the Great Hungarian Plain, a greater number of suicides had occurred during the early years of the nineteenth century.[3] A visibly growing incidence of suicide was shown in the statistics of 1870s.

The first two articles of this series, one on alcoholism, and one on crime and delinquency, by Rudolf Andorka and András Sajó, appeared in *NHQ* 99 and 100.

In the closing decade of the century the frequency of suicide in Hungary was one of the highest in Europe, as Durkheim's classic work of 1897 attests.[4] A recurring theme in twentieth-century Hungarian literature has been suicide, which is dramatically described in works by István Tömörkény, Zsigmond Móricz and others. In the early 1930s the number of suicides was rising substantially in the second great suicide wave that followed the 1870s. It is not difficult to see behind this rise the impact of the Depression, which hit Hungary particularly hard. The suicide rate (the number of suicides per 100,000 head of population) was 34.4 in 1931, and 35.1 in 1932. This was a considerable increase against the 24.5 recorded in 1920. At that time the number of attempted suicides also rose to such an extent that the Budapest Police Department organized a special ambulance service for suicide attempts. This service performed important work inviting international attention but soon ceased functioning for lack of funds.[5]

Late in the 1930s the incidence of suicide had decreased somewhat though it still remained high. A decline was observed during the years of the Second World War, except in 1944 when the excessively large number of more than 4,000 suicide deaths was registered. The increase can be explained by many people being driven to suicide and some of the fascist murders also being recorded as such.

Social factors

After the liberation in 1945, the frequency of suicide was lower than it had been earlier. The incidence rate was 23.8 in 1946, 22.2 in 1950, 20.8 in 1953, and the lowest figure of the past 60 years 17.7 was recorded

Table 1

THE TREND OF SUICIDE

Year	Instances of suicide	
	Number	Rate per 100,000 head of population
1897*	1,463	21.3
1902*	1,564	24.2
1910*	2,034	26.7
	(yearly averages)	
1921–1925	2,289	28.0
1926–1930	2,555	30.0
1931–1935	2,910	32.9
1936–1938	2,778	30.5
1946–1950	2,168	23.7
1951–1955	2,069	21.5
1956–1960	2,316	23.4
1961–1965	2,742	27.2
1966–1970	3,326	32.4
1971–1975	3,944	37.8
1976–1980	4,557	42.7
1978	4,610	43.1
1979	4,770	44.5
1980	4,809	44.9

* Recalculated for the present boundaries of the country.

Source: *Az öngyilkosságok alakulása Magyarországon* (Suicide Trends in Hungary), 1978–1980. Central Statistical Office, 30 Sep. 1981, p. 5.

in 1954. The rate has been on a steady increase from 1955 onwards: 26.6 in 1960, 29.8 in 1965, 34.6 in 1970, 38.1 in 1975, and 44.9 in 1980. This increase has continued in the 1980s, though the rate of increase has slackened.

The most peculiar—and most alarming—feature of suicide in Hungary is this steady rise in its incidence. No such increase can be observed in other countries. In the 1970s Hungary came to the head of the World Health Organization's suicide statistics. The suicide rate in countries following after Hungary is in the low twenties, the Hungarian figure is therefore almost twice as high.

This rise is obviously connected with the originally high Hungarian suicide incidence. It indicates that the hypothesis of escape from society is unacceptable, because it is difficult to explain why suicide was declining during the 1950s, during the years of one of the most trying periods in Hungarian history, when society underwent a radical transformation. How is it that suicide curves rose in the 1960s, the years which were characterized by political consolidation, economic growth, greater personal freedom? But it is equally difficult to refer to the "national character" or the "sad national mentality", because what could it be that has made it "sadder" from year to year and why did people not give way to grief

more frequently when the country suffered catastrophe or was ravaged by war?

The rise in the frequency of suicide at the time of social and economic expansion does not cause much surprise to students of the subject. This was already noticed by Durkheim, whose famous anomie theory was conceived out of his study of such periods.[6] In such periods, he found that the cohesive force of society, the force which unites people through direct human relations, flags. What Durkheim argued, however, was that at such times the desires of people tended to be excessive while their ambitions became immoderate and were thus easily hampered and often thwarted. Researchers after Durkheim pointed to simpler, more prosaic circumstances. When people flock into towns, this mobility is coupled with a change in their manner of living. All this means that a large number of people break away from their natural community and find themselves in strange, unorganized patterns of community life, in new living conditions. The influence of religion declines; family connections become looser and are broken; competition between people for the possession of material goods and values intensifies. This competition does not foster mutual help; moreover, it continues to weaken even the most intimate human relations, since the competing man can find even an old or sick member of the family a nuisance. The aggressive spirit of competition is likely to oust these weaker members, to expel those in the minority, since failure is the bigger shame and frustration.

All the tendencies which underlie Durkheim's anomie, a concept which other sociologists and social philosophers have adopted, manifested themselves in an increased degree, with brutal force from time to time, in Hungary's social history of the past quarter of a century. By the early 1950s an extensive process of urbanization had started; this, however, took place rather fitfully owing to a shortage of housing, to underdeveloped public utilities, to unorganized services, among other reasons. This was accompanied by wide-ranging restratification and vertical social mobility. Industrialization has not only taken place in the towns but has reached agriculture as well. Although for the past twenty-five years people have not had to conceal their church-going, and the relationship between the State and the Churches has been normalized by mutually advantageous agreements, the influence of religion has tangibly diminished. Besides this secularization one can notice a degree of individualization, too, mainly indicated by an increase in consumer demands, the growing desire for self-realization, the decline of interest shown in collective concerns. The performance principle becomes predominant in life, especially where acquisitiveness is concerned. Competition goes hand in hand with this. The disintegration of communities is taking place before our very eyes. The aging population of villages is left to its own devices, a great many villages are becoming depopulated. The abandonment of old people, the diminishing strength of family ties are recurrent topics in the daily press. Certain unpleasant social processes which follow from the foregoing intensify, such as separation according to social categories, the exclusion of people regarded as less valuable and various other tensions and conflicts between people. The growing number of divorces is also well known.

Groups in jeopardy

In general the stress of life is rising, while the desire for happiness and self-realization is stronger, which reduces one's stress tolerance. For this reason the consumption of medicine is growing; alcohol consumption has doubled in these twenty-five years with the greatest amount being consumed precisely in those counties where the suicide incidence is showing the greatest rise.[7] (See *NHQ* 99.) This probably reflects not only the hidden

causes but a direct causal relation as well. Alcoholism, which necessarily rises with the consumption of alcohol, is a primary condition of jeopardy from the point of view of suicide, because the alcoholic is left to himself, becomes excluded and mentally diseased, is liable to suffer a break-down and thus easily puts himself into a suicidal crisis. A similar situation pertains with neuroses and with psychiatric cases in general; these also multiply exponentially and, through vital frustrations and serious conflicts, they increasingly lead to suicide; together with alcoholism, drug addiction and suicide, they are also expressive of growing social tensions and stresses on the plane of the individual personality.

In this context the suicide statistics are already somewhat more telling. It is a little more obvious why suicides include so great a number of old people. Old people are more in jeopardy than the young. Anomie afflicts them most of all, but often they are already physically ill; if they have been drinking to excess and have suffered from the destructive effects of alcohol, the vascular sclerosis of the central nervous system makes them more exposed to traumata. If they are left to themselves, if they are deprived of their loved ones, they become prone to taking their own lives. Abandonment or isolation is an important factor instrumental in putting the sick, especially psychiatric cases, in a suicidal state of jeopardy. Indicative of the role played by the stresses of life is that the suicide rate has considerably risen among women. While men and women who died by their own hand are in the ratio of 5 to 1 or 4 to 1 in countries with a high incidence of suicide, in Hungary this ratio—continually rising—is now 3 to 1. The situation of women in Hungarian society today is particularly difficult. Within one or two generations women have had to achieve emancipation in a society with strong feudal, patriarchal traditions. In vain does the Constitution of the socialist state proclaim that women shall have equal rights if they cannot find their way into positions of higher social prestige. The burdens borne by them (dominant functions in the family plus working hours in employment) have grown, and their rights are becoming equal only gradually. It is very difficult to break out of the bondage of the female role and its preordained mode of life: women intending to break out of it are often left to themselves, they encounter various conflicts and frustrations; at such times the danger of suicide grows either directly through crisis or through psychic disposition.

The incidence of suicide among middle-aged men also has a social cause. The mortality rate in these age-groups is alarmingly high, wherein a great part is played by drink; a further principal cause is the high frequency of cardiovascular diseases (which unequivocally reflects the stresses of life, if only because of an overstrained manner of living unwholesome for lack of physical exrcise).

The frequency of suicide among the young and young adults is also rising, but fortunately only to a small degree. As regards these age-groups, several Western countries are ahead of Hungary in terms of suicide. The reason for this lies in the spread of drug abuse in those countries, especially the use of hard drugs such as heroin and cocaine. These narcotics often produce psychological problems which lead to suicide. In connection with the young, however, it is to be noted that the frequency of attempted suicide is particularly high. On this there are no precise data available, because no pertinent statistics are drawn up. But it is known that the number of women who attempt suicide is roughly four times that of men, and that adolescents or young adults are involved in about two-thirds of all instances. Analysts of suicide have found that a large number of those attempting suicide do not intend to die, their attempt is rather a sort of dramatic experiment in communication, a form of escape from some conflict or hardly supportable life situation, in order to influence their

Table 2

THE FREQUENCY OF SUICIDE IN A FEW (MAINLY EUROPEAN) COUNTRIES IN 1970, 1975 AND 1978

(Rates per 100,000 head of population)

	1970	1975	1978
Hungary	34.6	38.1	43.1
Austria	24.2	24.1	24.8
Switzerland	18.4	22.3	24.1
Denmark	21.5	24.1	23.3
Federal Republic of Germany	21.5	20.9	22.2
Sweden	22.3	19.4	19.0
Japan	15.1	18.0	17.6
Poland	11.2	11.3	13.3
Norway	8.4	9.9	11.7
Netherlands	8.1	8.9	9.7
Greece	3.1	2.8	2.9

Source: Az öngyilkosságok alakulása Magyarországon (Suicide Trends in Hungary), 1978–1980. Central Statistical Office, 30 Sep. 1981, p. 11.

environment by means of the suicidal act. For this very reason many reasearchers do not consider attempted suicide to be identical with suicide proper, they mention "parasuicide" in this case. Attempts at suicide are nevertheless dangerous, for a false attempt can also be fatal, and the person who has once tried to kill himself is often likely to try again. As is well known, more of those who have attempted suicide take their own lives than the members of any other group of similar age and sex composition among the average population.

Inadequate social help

An important element in the suicide situation in Hungary is the large-scale social transformation taking place on all planes, suddenly and often without proper organization—at least from the psychological point of view. A peculiar Hungarian factor in anomie is the inadequacy or backwardness of the mechanisms for social help and protection. This circumstance is pointed out, in particularly clear terms, by Elemér Hankiss in his books.[8]

The most serious problem facing social policy in Hungary for the time being is that there are hardly any relief organizations and the burden of social welfare is often shouldered by the Ministry of Health alone; characteristically the occupation of social worker is absent in Hungary. The Churches do not maintain relief institutions. Psychiatrical health provision is rather undeveloped, some improvement has been observed only in recent years. But mental hygiene as prevention is practically non-existent, there is hardly anything worth mentioning in the field of psychological counselling, psychotherapy has just now begun to find its feet after having been banned in the 1950s. Telephone first-aid counselling services have been functioning only in this past decade, but they receive little official support and their work usually meets with incomprehension. The treatment of alcoholics is still a moot point, nor has a

crusade against drug abuse been institutionalised.

At the same time these deficiencies call attention to the fact that suicide can be fought against, that the problem need not be responded to with fatalism or defeatism. Research has explored quite a lot of possible approaches which, combined with appropriate social policy, social welfare and psychiatric help, could reduce the incidence of suicide or stop its rising trend. In recent years, fortunately, government authorities have been campaigning to make this understood and now contemplate taking measures to overcome these deficiencies.

Psychological and cultural factors

The study of suicide reveals to some degree the role of "mentality", but has mobilized relatively little readiness to clarify and solve the problems of human relations. A psyche closed into rigorous patterns has more difficulty in adapting itself to new human circumstances and finds it easier to isolate itself. It has recourse, sooner than others, to hereditary problem-solving patterns such as alcohol or even suicide. Many data indicate that suicide as a symbolic problem-solving pattern is socially hereditable. Already about the turn of the century there were typical modes of suicide which were practically common in certain life situations or crises in some regions of the country. The girl finding herself pregnant jumped into the well; the housemaid drank poison if she was longing for home or came into conflict with her employers; the bankrupt merchant killed himself by jumping from a tall building; the soldier blew his brains out; the old peasant took a rope to hang himself. Hanging as a fatal mode of suicide is typical of Hungarian males, especially in the southern areas of the Great Plain and among Budapest professional men. That suicide was socially transmitted as a sort of unconscious problem-solving formula appears also from the fact that, characteristically and constantly over a hundred years, the incidence of suicide in certain parts of the country has been higher than in other regions. Thus, the suicide rate in Csongrád, Bács-Kiskun and Békés counties is 2.5 times as high as in Győr–Sopron, Zala and Vas counties. This cannot be explained by demographic, religious, economic and other circumstances; it may be found through historical and cultural factors. Interestingly, this consistency has not been affected by the restratification and relative replacement of the population, and this too is indicative of the dominant role of cultural usages in these parts.

Attempted suicide is also usually dangerous because of the cultural transmission of the pattern of suicide as a problem-solving formula. Together with actual suicide cases, these examples spread, almost automatically, the idea of suicide. The "successful" suicides and attempted suicides make an impression not only in themselves but also in the environment's reaction to them. Thus, attitudes take shape which determine when, in what life situation, taking or just risking one's own life may be "permissible", or even a "must", an "understandable", "proper" or possibly "manly" act.

The coldness of human relations, the immaturity of the habit of helping others, exclusion and stigmatization are likewise transmitted culturally. In regions with a traditionally high frequency of suicide, unfortunately, human relations lack feelings, are highly aggressive. Tömörkény's or Móricz's realistic writings often describe the same human problems and their crude solutions as, say, Maupassant's stories of Normandy (suicide in France is most frequent in Normandy). People acquire these forms of human relations without noticing them in the course of socialization, they acquire them unconsciously from infancy. Consequently, they are less immune against the stresses and tensions of life. We may say that they have more difficulty in supporting the burden of social transformations.

Table 3

DISTRIBUTION AND FREQUENCY OF SUICIDE BY SEXES IN HUNGARY

Year	Number		Percentage		Rate per 100,000 head of population	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Yearly average 1937 to 1949	1,845	822	67.7	32.3	41.4	19.0
Yearly average 1960 to 1964	1,831	825	68.9	31.1	37.8	15.9
Yearly average 1970 to 1974	2,704	1,152	70.1	29.9	53.7	21.6
1977	2,894	1,398	67.4	32.6	56.1	25.6
1980	3,344	1,465	69.5	30.5	64.4	24.5

Source: *Az öngyilkosságok alakulása Magyarországon* (Suicide Trends in Hungary), 1978–1980. Central Statistical Office, 30 Sep. 1981, p. 15.

Traps

Many interesting implications can be inferred from the different rates of suicide in Hungary and from the interpretation of them in the light of international statistics and studies. We shall not deal with them here. But one circumstance is worth pointing out, namely that, serious as the problem of suicide is in Hungary, it is not at all certain that Hungary heads the list in the world's suicide statistics, nor is it certain that deaths by suicide are most frequent in this country. We know of minor cultures and smaller countries where suicide is known to be more common (thus, Greenland or certain Pacific islands). We know that some countries fail to supply the international organizations with information about the instances of suicide. Others stopped publishing such information when the suicide rate began rising and the country concerned would have been listed among the first in suicide statistics. We know also that Hungary's supply of relevant data is precise and reliable. This cannot be said of all countries. Different methods of collecting statistics are used in several countries and this is a source of error. Suicide deaths in Hungary are verified jointly by police and surgeons after carefully considering all circumstances and making proper investigations. In the Anglo-Saxon countries, a coroner is appointed to inquire into the cause of death in cases of suspected suicide. He has to prove that death was by the deceased person's own hand. Since suicide often entails untoward material, moral and other consequences (e.g. life insurance is invalidated), the demonstration of death by suicide must be unequivocal. Accordingly, the coroner includes ambiguous cases of suicide in the category of deaths due to accidental causes and declares the cause to have been drowning, inadvertent poisoning—in short, some sort of fatal accident. This means that statistics can be supposed to include fewer suicides than actually do occur. There are data to show that in some countries the instances of suicide are twice as many as, or even still more than, those listed in statistics. For this reason students of suicide hardly regard as

comparable the statistical data supplied by particular countries. The correlations and trends of change can be evaluated only within one country.[9]

It may be therefore that Hungary's place should be only among the leading dozen or twenty in the suicide statistics of WHO. It is, however, a lamentable fact that nearly 5,000 people a year kill themselves within the boundaries of this country, including about 4,000 healthy persons of working age under 60 years.

NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

[1] In 1984 suicide was discussed in the weekly *Élet és Irodalom*.

[2] From the late 1950s the Central Statistical Office has issued regularly, every two or three years, a report on this subject (Suicide Trends in Hungary). These publications constitute the primary source for our analysis of the incidence and conditions of suicide in Hungary.

[3] Cf. Ede Böszörményi: Hódmezővásárhelyi öngyilkosságok (Incidence of suicide in Hódmezővásárhely), in: *Történeti statisztikai tanulmányok* (Historical Statistical Studies), No. 3 of 1977, pp. 237–304. Statisztikai Kiadó, Budapest.—See also the author's unpublished studies, which were prepared under the nation-wide research programme entitled "Troubles with Social Adjustment".

[4] E. Durkheim: *Le suicide. Étude sociologique*, 1897. F. Alcan, Paris.

[5] Stephan Szimon: *Die amtliche Organisation des Selbstmordschutzes in Ungarn. Suizidprophylaxe. Theorie und Praxis*, 1979, 2. Sonderheft, pp. 78–84.—The study is a reprint from No. 1 of 1932 of the short-lived periodical *Archiv für Erforschung und Bekämpfung des Selbstmordes*.

[6] On anomie, cf. also R. K. Merton: *Social Theory and Social Structure*, 1957 (sec. rev. ed.). Free Press, New York.—M. B. Clinard (ed.): Anomie and Deviant Behaviour, 1963. Free Press, New York.

[7] The pertinent data are to be found in the latest volumes of the periodical *Alkohológia* and in the publication "A társadalmi beilleszkedési zavarok Magyarországon" (Problems with Social Adjustment in Hungary), 1983. Institute of Psychology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest.

[8] See, e.g., Elemér Hankiss: *Társadalmi csapdák. Diagnózisok* (Social Traps. Diagnoses), 1983 (second edition). Magvető, Budapest (Gyorsuló Idő series).

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KATALIN FORGÁCS

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND THE ECONOMY

Persistent legislative and institutional activities started in Hungarian environmental protection around the mid-seventies. The first Act on the Protection of the Human Environment was passed in 1976. The Council for the Protection of the Environment and its executive arm, the National Office for the Protection of the Environment and Nature, were founded in 1977. The latter soon established seven district inspectorates covering the whole country.

Considerable efforts have been made to reduce the *ad hoc* nature of environmental activities and to make environment protection a more planned and better regulated field of the national economy. Attempts have been made to start with to evaluate the damage done and to determine which were the most polluted areas of the country. According to these estimates, the damage caused by pollution annually amounted to approximately 2.5 to 3 per cent of national income. The areas worst affected followed the pattern of the industrial zones dotting the country from North-East to South-West, where 50 per cent of the population live and 70 per cent of buildings, equipment, etc., are located.

Besides surveying the current situation, attempts have been made also to estimate the likely trends of pollution hazards posed by future economic development and changes in the production and consumption pattern.

The main environmental hazards can be classified under the following headings: 1. poisonous wastes, 2. water pollution, 3. soil pollution and 4. air pollution.

The following figures will give a good illustration of the actual environmental situation.

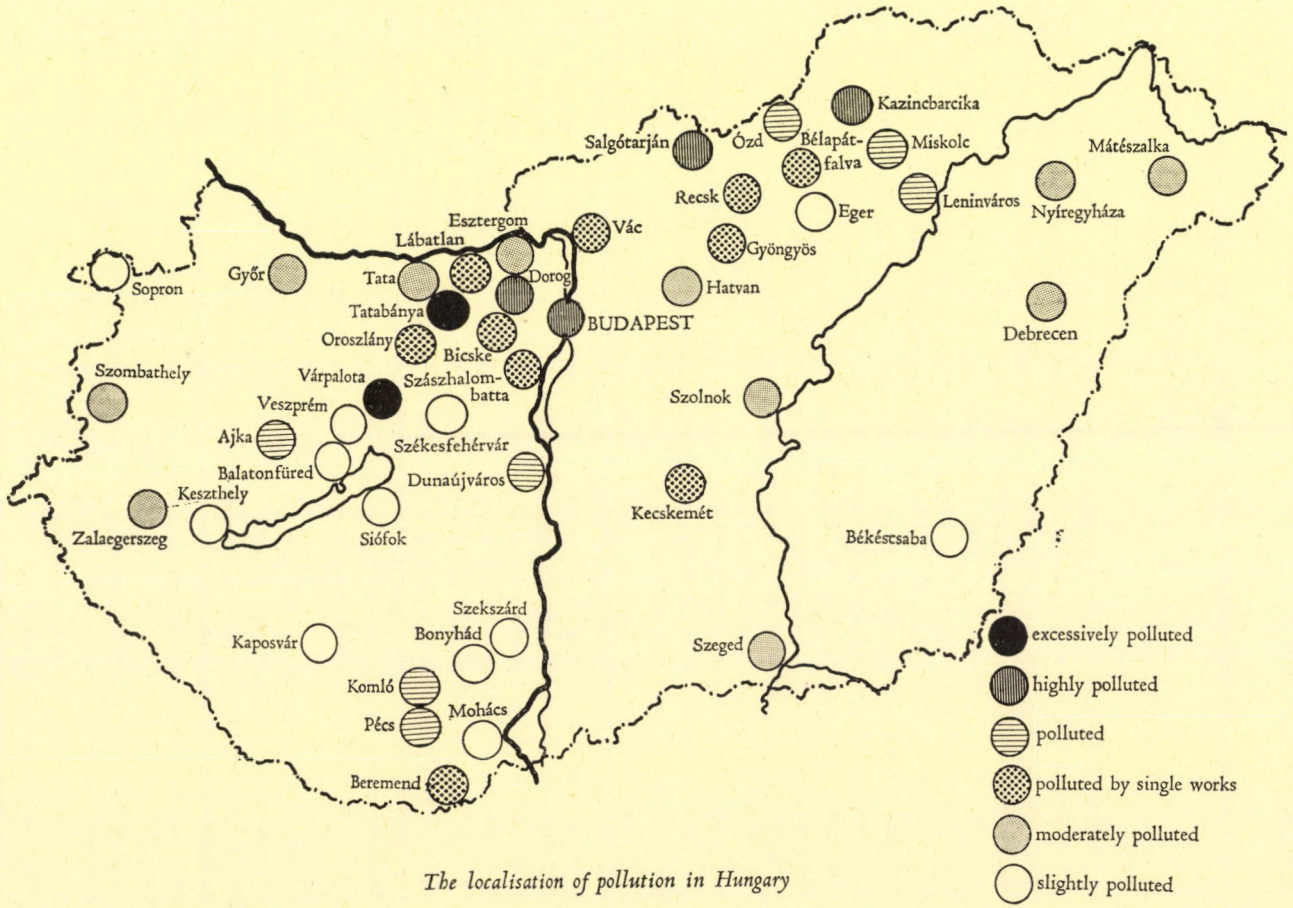
The proportion of cultivated land has been steadily declining in recent years and it is feared that this trend will continue. Twice as much fertilizer is expected to be used around 1990 as in the mid-seventies. Air pollution may also increase because of the growing sulphur dioxide emission of thermal power stations as well as the growing number of cars.

As regards water pollution, total water demand, which was about 7 cubic kilometers in the mid-seventies, is expected to increase to 12 cubic kilometers by 1990. This includes an expected increase of industrial water consumption from 3 to 6 km^3 as well as the likely growth of agricultural water use from 2.0 km^3 to 3.5 km^3 due to the rapid expansion of irrigated acreage. All in all, Hungary will very likely have to cope with twice as much waste water and sewage in 1990 as in the mid-seventies.

In order to deal with these problems, a long-term programme has been drawn up for the major investment projects needed for various aspects of environmental protection. Regarding sewage, drainage and purification, for instance, it has been decided that 90 per cent of the homes will be connected to water mains by 1990 in contrast with the 60 per cent in the mid-seventies, and the percentage of homes connected to sewage pipes will be raised to 70 per cent from the 33 per cent level in the mid-seventies.

Implementation of these plans means that water purification capacity should increase tenfold by 1990 compared with the 1970 level.

No accurate data have been made available to this day concerning poisonous waste, the latest and most dangerous pollution problem, only approximate estimates exist



The localisation of pollution in Hungary

about the huge quantity of harmful waste accumulated by industry for decades.

Hungarian environmentalists are, of course, fully aware that the conventional planning method outlined above, that is planning investment projects needed on the basis of forecasts concerning future economic development and likely pollution trends, is a rather passive approach. It limits itself to determing the expenditure needed to counter already existing and expected environmental damage. Wide recognition of the principle of concern for the environment in all fields of planning would be a more sophisticated and effective approach.

In order to promote the latter, ambient standards were set up in regions considered as ecological units. Ambient standards must be distinguished from effluent standards. The latter relate to what comes out of a stack or a pipe while the former relate to the environment medium itself and are usually specified in concentrations. It is these ambient standards that should serve planners as the basic figures. Once these standards of pollution are given, the production and consumption patterns of the given region should be developed in a way which will guarantee compliance.

This rather complex approach would obviously be the ideal. It is still a far cry at present. Nevertheless, ambient standards have already been set in Hungary. Ecologists have determined pollution limits for both air and water in the main regions. These ambient standards help to ensure that no irreversible damage is allowed to occur in the ecological system. Thus the most important watercourses of the country have been classified into six categories while standards for air have been fixed in three categories. The pollution limits are enforced by means of levying fines on polluters.

Pollution limits, punitive fines

The system of fines in current Hungarian environment protection legislation extends to four fundamental sources of environmental hazards: dangerous waste, water pollution, air pollution and noise and vibrations harmful to human health. In addition to the above fines, charges of non-punitive character are to be paid only for the use of live waters and the public sewage system.

Regulations covering dangerous waste and noise and vibration hazards are relatively recent (1981 and 1983 respectively), thus there is not enough enterprise experience available about their effect-mechanism.

The regulations issued to combat air and water pollution are relatively older. The 1973 decree, which stipulated norms of air quality in various regions was of fundamental importance. The norms stipulate the milligramme/m^3 limit of the most usual pollutants for every region.

In fact, the whole country was surveyed in the course of determining the norms of air quality. The degree of basic air contamination caused by seven critical polluting materials was determined, that is the milligramme/m^3 ratio of each of these materials. The next thing was to determine district by district the possible further degree of pollution, which would not yet endanger the environment. Setting out of these norms, individual limits were then determined in respect of major industrial pollutants: the quantity of permissible emission of various materials was given an upper limit. When these limits are exceeded, a fine must be paid according to the number of hours and the excess kilogrammes of the polluting material. The fines are paid into the National Environmental Protection Fund, which uses them for assisting environment protection projects of various enterprises.

The general scene is made more intricate by the above-mentioned practice of fixing individual emission norms in respect of big industrial polluters. Thus, for instance, a series of negotiations are held every few years about the power stations of the Hungarian Electricity Works Trust, where the degree of emission, the size of the fines

and also possible concessions are determined. This system is obviously open to many subjective motives which may be one of the reasons why, although the norms of air quality have been set for various districts, observation of these norms is still wishful thinking rather than reality.

A somewhat more normative system operates in the protection of water, although regulations allow for a number of possible exemptions in this field, too. The relevant regulations were issued in 1978 and replaced by new and substantially stricter measures in 1984.

Under its terms the catchment areas of the country were classified in six categories. The permissible level of nineteen pollutants and thirteen poisonous materials was in turn specified by milligramme per litre of waste water in each of the categories. Should the waste waters discharged contain a higher concentration of such materials than permitted, a fine would be imposed commensurate with the excess quantity of pollutants and multiplied or reduced according to a number of modifying factors.

The decree issued in 1984 is substantially stricter than the earlier one in respect of marginal values as well as the size of fines. As the years pass, offending plants which violate the regulations will be fined increasingly more progressively. The system of marginal values and fines concerning materials damaging public drains was constructed on the basis of a similar pattern.

Thus, as in other countries, charges and fines play a fundamental role in environmental protection in Hungary also. This is due to the fact that economists dealing with the problems of environmental protection have not yet been able to devise a suitable system of prices for environmental values. In principle, people and organizations damaging these values should be charged the total cost of rectifying the damage done by their activity. In other words, a system of charges should be worked out for disposing of waste in the air or in water, and these prices should cover the cost of restoring their normal environmental qualities. Charges of that nature should affect cost calculations in various sectors of the economy.

They would also stimulate the reduction of effluent discharges and affect decisions on the use of communal property resources. They could alter the patterns of industrial processes, the kinds of raw materials used as well as the nature of the end products. Practical introduction of such a system of prices is, however, almost impossible because of the considerable problem of how to define the value of the assets of the community in respect of which the market does not generate any price information. Thus instead of setting prices, environmentalists must be satisfied with charging a fine to destructive users of environmental goods if they want to stop unrestrained access to common properties. By means of these punitive fines it can be achieved that environmental considerations already do play a modest role in the calculations of producers and the costs of eliminating the environmental damage caused by their activities are not borne by society alone.

Economic pressures

János Kornai has shown that although the growth of production has slowed down since the mid-seventies, the costs of the bureaucratic machinery have continued to increase, indeed, the pace of the process has somewhat speeded up. Administrative expenditure increased only by an annual average of 4 to 4.5 per cent in the first half of the seventies, while the annual growth of GDP averaged 5.9 per cent. Since 1979 the growth of GDP declined to an average of 1.4 per cent, yet administrative costs continued to rise at the rate of 5.6 per cent. Three-hundred and nineteen regulations were issued in 1971, and four-hundred and thirty-three in 1981.

András Bródy criticized taxation. His

point is that in Western market economies the corporations as well as the individual workers operated in a relatively orderly and predetermined economic environment. The extent of taxation is known in advance and does not change with retroactive force, nor is it dependent on the caprice of the administration.

Contrary to this, the attitudes of the corporations in Hungary are determined by the intricate system of taxation and subsidies. Nothing is more characteristic of the taxation jungle than the fact that the government syphons out about one and a half times as much as the net profit of enterprises, in other words it appropriates even a portion of the funds needed for production. Even this is not done in a predictable way, with the ultimate result that the enterprises find out how much they can use up of the profits only at the end of the year and after nerve-racking negotiations. Thus neither the earnings and position of the executives of the enterprises, nor the very existence of the enterprise, depend on the service offered to consumers, that is on the quality and competitive price of products, but mainly on the subsidies the management can secure and on the taxes they manage to dodge.

Due to constant interference from above, which considerably alters actual economic relations, the enterprises are often forced to take unreasonable and loss-making economic decisions, and this progressively diminishes the efficiency of management.

Why is this excursion into economics necessary? Because the relation of government and enterprise casts light also on the problems of Hungarian environmental protection.

The idea that the government in a socialist economy could achieve its objectives of environment protection solely by legal and administrative measures has already proven wrong. Consequently the government is compelled to rely on the operations of the market in Hungary as well. Charges must be paid for the use of water or sewage facilities. As we have seen, a system of fines is also operational.

But the government may promptly revise these means of the market economy, since the relation of authorities and enterprises is permanently characterized by bargaining. Exemptions from regulations are frequent. When an enterprise can prove to the authorities that its very functioning is threatened by the impossibility of performance because of environment protection regulations, the authorities only in the rarest of cases will stick steadfastly to the regulations. A compromise of some sort is likely to be reached.

In addition, many enterprises are not at all dependent on their customers, since there is excess demand for many commodities. In market economies the passing on of costs meets with difficulties, and fines imposed in respect of each unit of pollutants will really punish the polluters inducing them to change their technologies. In Hungary, on the other hand, a number of surveys in recent years have convincingly demonstrated that a monopoly situation is enjoyed by a large number of enterprises, many of which are in a position to arbitrarily dictate domestic prices. They can still do this, because cost sensitivity of real importance does not exist for want of price barriers set by an active competitive market. The enterprises are thus able to pass on their costs—including costs and fines related to environment protection—to the consumers. These tendencies are further strengthened by the loopholes available to enterprises in financial difficulties. A tangle of subsidies keeps loss-making enterprises going. The government goes as far as it can to prevent bankruptcies that may create even only limited unemployment. It must be admitted, however, that Western governments are also inclined to find compromises concerning regions stricken by unemployment, and propping up companies in trouble frequently occurs there as well.

A tax reform appears absolutely necessary in order to increase the cost sensitivity of

enterprises; income regulation should be introduced based on some other concept and not the taxation of profits. The current situation is that "those who make much profit pay high taxes, those who make less profit pay less, and those who make a loss pay no tax at all, for they have nothing to pay from". (András Bródy) An ever-increasing proportion of profits has to be withdrawn from where it is made in order to finance rising government expenditure and to keep the growing number of loss-making enterprises above water. But when the budget syphons away two-thirds or three-quarters of each unit of profit increment derived from a reduction of costs, then it takes the edge of an interest in costs and just about stimulates squandering instead of improved cost management. (Past a certain threshold of response the management may feel that "they are spending the taxes.") For this reason a fine—particularly when it is tailored individually for almost every company—can only be a soft sanction. This is precisely the reason why there is much talk in Hungary nowadays about the timeliness of introducing value-added taxation.

This ambivalence in central intentions is one of the principal reasons for the excessive uniformity of Hungarian environment protection legislation. In their endeavour to cover all of the fields of environment protection, law-makers have failed to specify the sphere of originally defined exemptions, a very important point, since there are obviously many objectives of environment protection which the enterprises cannot attain from their own resources. For instance, no progress can be expected in the matter of dangerous waste without regional storage facilities financed by central funds; there are also sectors where fines are unreasonable because of the overwhelming presence of non-profit organizations; finally there are also some sectors where the government—for one reason or another—is forced to make special concessions just as in the case of metallurgy and the steel industry, which are kept going all over Western Europe with government help.

The administrative background

A complex organization was set up to administer the regulations described above, and the organizational issues were regulated by a 1979 government ruling.

As was mentioned before the National Council for the Protection of the Environment and Nature is the coordinating, advisory and controlling arm of the Council of Ministers.

The National Office for the Protection of the Environment and Nature deals with the administrative business of the Council. The Office is also the central authority of the protection of the environment and nature. Its authority extends to the protection of air, dangerous waste, the protection of nature and the fight against noise pollution and against harmful vibrations. The Office maintains seven regional inspectorates.

Protection of waters has remained under the control of the National Water Conservancy Board even after the establishment of the National Office for the Protection of the Environment, and Nature. The Board has a well-organized structure due to a considerable extent to the fact that regularly occurring floods and inland water accumulations have had to be controlled by it in the territory of the country even in the recent past.

Besides the Water Conservancy Board and the Office for the Protection of the Environment other organizations are also involved in environmental protection. The protection of the soil, for instance, is the duty of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Supplies. The Public Health and Epidemiological Services of the Ministry of Health are also responsible for environmental issues. It regularly controls communal

establishments, water works and water purification plants, and carries out air pollution and noise pollution tests, controls plants producing and storing toxic materials, etc.

The National Planning Office is also involved in environmental protection. The Office started including environmental protection objectives in a separate section in the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1975–1980), and the most important long-term objectives of environmental protection represent an integral part of the general plan for the years up to 1990.

The above is but a brief description of the administrative organization of Hungarian environment protection. It needs to be added, however, that the fines for polluting the air or public drains are imposed by local councils on the basis of assessments by the relevant authorities. The fact that the local councils are the primary authorities meting out fines is a regular subject of criticism. The majority of environmental protection specialists consider that the Building, Traffic and Water Supplies departments of the councils are burdened with so many responsibilities (issuing building and public works connection permits, controlling water and drainage work in the area of the council, etc.) that the cause of environmental protection will necessarily suffer.

It matters little that the councils exercise authority in environmental protection matters, since they make use of it only on the rarest of occasions, and they are far from being the proper representatives of environment protection interests.

There have only been isolated cases of enterprises shut down by local councils. (E.g. the closure of the Tatabánya plant of the Salgótarján Alloy Works or the ban on further operations or the Tatabánya plant of the Cement and Lime Works.)

What are the reasons for the councils' evident lack of interest? Besides the inability to measure performance in bureaucratic organizations (using the term in the organizational sense here), as well as the poor qualifications of some of the councils' staff, the current financial regulations in respect of councils certainly contribute to this lack of interest. Under the terms of the present regulations, the councils cannot become true masters in their own territory, because the state automatically syphons off surplus revenues generated in specific areas (and makes good for deficiencies generated elsewhere just as automatically). This practice has handicapped the development of self-government right to this day. At the same time the councils are extraordinarily interested in industrial projects realized in their area. This is understandable not only for employment and prestige reasons, but also because of the current practice of enterprises which, in the present way of doing things, often hand money to the councils (for instance for building kindergartens). In exchange for these favours, the councils often have to make compromise decisions. Central funds also tend to favour the more industrialized areas—having done so since the fifties. In this situation the councils obviously approach environmental protection issues with caution. The cause of improving the general development standard of the county prevails over specific issues of environmental protection (in spite of the fact that each of the county councils has had an environmental secretary since 1980, and that a Council for the Protection of the Environment operates next to each county council). Since no substantial change is expected in this respect, a way should be found to charge some other organization with enforcing the interests of environment protection in view of the ambiguous attitude of the local government councils.

MIKLÓS MOLNÁR

THE REFORM AGE MOVEMENT FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE LANGUAGE

To speak of a culture which one feels to be one's own is an undertaking difficult to separate from one's own life and identity. A thousand things which cannot be classified according to the learned definitions of books and encyclopaedias come to mind. A thousand things in which one looks for, slightly desperately, a safe and certain point of reference, a concept of synthesis, or a symbolic event around which the disparate elements of cultural experience organize themselves. It is rare that this symbol or event is encountered in the course of a lifetime as happened in the case of the poet Gyula Illyés, while on a journey in Russia in the 1930s, among the small Finno-Ugrian peoples near the Urals. Of it he made a sort of moment frozen for eternity. Arriving in a small village and near the House of Culture, he suddenly heard a familiar tune. The people were Voguls, separated from the Hungarians for two thousand years or more, and they were singing in the pentatonic scale, a song which was common to both cultures.

By what miracle this minute ethnic group was able to retain its ancestral heritage, I do not know. The other miracle by which the Hungarians maintained this music until it became integrated into that of a Béla Bartók, is also an enigma for which there is no scientific explanation.

It was another symbolic encounter which led me to submit to this colloquium some information concerning the role of the language in the evolution of Hungarian culture. Thirty years ago I happened to examine the œuvre of a writer from the beginning of the nineteenth century, József Katona,* who wrote two versions of a tragedy in five acts which has remained to this day the undisputed masterpiece of Hungarian dramatic literature. The two versions are only separated by the four years between 1815 and 1819. Only four years, yet an entire universe. The first version had been written in the literary language of the eighteenth century, a language—of which I shall say more—half-dead, atrophied, and worn-out, which had lost the vigour and freshness of the language of the centuries preceding. "To make Hungarian the official language would be a catastrophe," Samuel Kohlmayer, an ethnic German solicitor in Pest wrote at the time. "It is a language which is only good for swearing in." ** And yet, this language was becoming transformed. The second version of Katona's play was already written in a modern language, dressed anew from top to toe. And along with the language, the ideological and sentimental environment of this great dramatic work also became rejuvenated. The plot itself was hardly modified, the persons and the tragic conflict remained unchanged, but the new language carried the ideas, passions, and sensibilities of a new society which had turned towards its future.

What happened during those four years? The writer, son of a cobbler, had become aware of and assimilated the innovations of a vast movement for the renewal of the language and of literature which had been in progress in an organized form from the beginning of the century. His play is one of the numerous documents of this renewal, of this veritable cultural revolution. Without this change in the language, Hungarian culture would be something else today. Perhaps it

* *Katona József válogatott művei* (Selected Works of József Katona), Budapest, Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1953, published and introduced by Miklós Molnár.

** *Magyarország története 1790–1848* (History of Hungary, 1790–1848), Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1980, vol. V/1, p. 59.

would be one of the extinct cultures which speak to us in a dead language, whose superb statues turn on us—to borrow a metaphor from Malraux—their unseeing eyes.

In the following pages I shall not so much try to analyse the reform of the language, since this is practically untranslatable, but try to show by what rapid movements, how and why, after the double failure of Joseph II and Josephinism, and the passing illusion of Jacobinism, only such a cultural revolution could open up the road towards the modernisation of Hungary.

To do this, one must first return to the mid-sixteenth century.

1. *The anteeedents*

One of the best modern Hungarian literary historians, János Horváth, demonstrated how the successive divisions of culture, from humanism and the Renaissance to the nineteenth century, had finally led to the unity of culture in modernity. The initiative of King Matthias Corvinus, he wrote, had a dissolving effect only for a time, because the new humanistic, Latin, and secular culture which he introduced spread through the country and had a fertile effect on all forms of literature, including monastic literature.* On the other hand, this scholarly lay culture overwhelmed, almost into extinction, court poetry and popular oral poetry, which were to be reborn in the second half of the sixteenth century through the poetry of Bálint Balassa. Horváth found that the poetry of Janus Pannonius, who wrote a Latin worthy of Horace, but expressing the genius, spirit, and sensibility of Hungarian culture, had the same dissolving but, in the long run, fertile influence. Horváth also attributed an identical effect to the Reformation. Its effect was one of dissolving to the extent that it added to the previous divisions, between the sacred and the profane, the scholarly and the popular culture, a religious division which was both fertile and enriching in every way.**

* János Horváth: *Az irodalmi műveltség megoszlása* (The division of literary culture), Budapest, Magyar Szemle Társaság, 1944. p. 283.

** János Horváth: *A reformáció jegyében* (In the mark of the Reformation), Budapest, Gondolat, 1957 (2nd edition).

The Reformation and the Counter-Reformation cover 150 years of religious history, political and military history, intellectual history. It is impossible to enumerate their extremely numerous directions and significances. In the sixteenth century almost the entire country was Protestant, Lutheran, Unitarian, or mainly Helvetic, according to the united doctrine of Calvin and of Bullinger, but strongly influenced also by Melanchton and Wolfgang Musculus, as well as by the radical anti-Trinitarianism of Michel Servet and of the Italians Camillo Renato, Giorgio Blandrata, Bernardino Ochino, Faustus Socinus, *e tutti quanti*. Hungary became a veritable proving ground for new ideas and religious controversies. All of this took place amid the crossfire of polemics. In spite of the ardour which can carry people away so easily towards intolerance and the spirit of exclusivity, it is a spirit of tolerance, of freedom of opinion which ruled in this divided and ravaged country. Preachers even visited the villages under Ottoman occupation.

The progress of the theological literature was wonderful. Religious controversies take up several hundred works and tracts in Latin and in Hungarian. They were printed. The first printing-shop in Buda dates from 1472. At the same time schools and colleges of a high standard were established, particularly the one in Debrecen, the "Calvinist Rome," at Sárospatak, and elsewhere.

The Catholic Church produced counterparts somewhat later. To meet the need for religious propaganda, the Church also multiplied her cultural institutions and established, among others, Jesuit, Piarist, Dominican, Benedictine, and vocational schools for a modern élite at an advanced European standard. The Archbishop of Esztergom, Cardinal Péter Pázmány, established a new university in 1635, which was to become the cultural centre for the western parts of the country, under the Habsburgs. During all this, bilingualism is not at all reduced, and slowly trilingualism appears through the use of German. Above all, the Reformation had an immeasurable effect on the usage of the Hungarian language. The translation of the Bible, which had begun in the fifteenth century with the Hussite Bible, made great progress in the next century with no less than six or seven partial and three semi-

Several other European cultures passed through the same stages and the same divisions, along the road towards that marvellous unity in diversity by which they are characterised. Hungary's case is nevertheless different for political and linguistic reasons.

First, the political reasons. To mention the division and devastation of the country during the 150 years of Ottoman domination is sufficient. In the east lay Transylvania, a fief of the Porte, in the west the Habsburgs dominated, in the centre of the country the Turks. The Great Plain, depopulated, lost two and a half out of its four million inhabitants in 150 years. Not a single township was left, not a single monastery, not a single castle save for fortifications along the frontier. The peasants paid tax both to the Ottoman *defterdars* and to the Hungarian landlords. The economy no longer existed. Only Transylvania knew some decades of prosperity, and the region subject to Vienna a slowed development. The withdrawal of the Turks at the end of the seventeenth century did not put an end to the tribulations. Freed of one occupier, Hungary, and especially the Protestant nobility of the east and of the north, continued to fight another, the Austrians.

integral or integral translations (Heltai 1551–65, Károlyi 1590, Szenci Molnár 1608 and 1612). The great source of interpretations, exegeses, controversies was from then on available to those who were literate, the élite, but it descended also lower, through sermons, to the illiterate. And this sweet new style spread and was absorbed even further through the psalms, which also had their poet-translators, profoundly inspired, especially Albert Szenci Molnár.

This is familiar to all cultures which were touched by the Reformation; this is what makes it European. In this way Hungary participated fully in one of the great spiritual and intellectual currents of these centuries. But Hungary made at the same time a cultural acquisition which had little to do with this current and was more specifically Hungarian: she had saved the vernacular language, elevating it—with the assistance of popular literature and scholarly lay literature—to a level which had not been reached before then. A high level, but one which was far from unified in the manner of a national culture.

If the Hungarian language and culture were extinct today, the historian would have no difficulty in demonstrating the fatal character of their losses. The situation as regards culture was scarcely better than the political and military situations. Of the Hungarian institutions only local administration, the *comitatus* system, and the churches survived. The Hungarian state had ceased to exist, a Dual Monarchy had not come into being, the bureaucracy of Vienna was far away and incapable of acting on the hinterland; the task of saving the culture fell to the nobility of the counties and on the few aristocrats living on their estates. János Horváth again wrote on this account* that there existed then "two types of distinct cultures, two territorial 'Hungarities', and almost two Hungarian nations with their respective literatures..." during and even after the Ottoman occupation.

It should be added that until Budapest became the cultural centre of the country in the nineteenth century, there were as many centres as counties, sixty-three, to which could be added some chateaux where aristocrats paid host to a Haydn or later to a Liszt. This dispersion should not be confused with the healthy diversity of regional culture. It sprang from the effects of multiple divisions, those political, religious, social, and linguistic trenches that were extended until the mid-nineteenth century.

As far as the language was concerned, the non-Magyar half of the population found itself totally or almost totally isolated from the principal cultural currents of the Hungarian centres. The Hungarian peasants at least spoke the same language as their landlords. The Reformation, as we have already pointed out, contributed powerfully, thanks to the translation of the Bible, a vast literature of controversies, books, and schools. This still precarious linguistic unity was the only promise that a cultural unity could be

* János Horváth: *Tanulmányok* (Essays), Budapest, Akadémiai Könyvkiadó, 1959, p. 95.

arrived at some time which would put an end to the national divisions. And this linguistic unity was again menaced at the end of the eighteenth century.

The last two sentences, even in such a short survey, demand some explanation.

Why was the language this promise? First, because there was nothing else: no court civilization whose importance Norbert Elias has studied, no urban civilization comparable to those of German, Italian, or Flemish towns. Second, the Hungarian language was simultaneously a factor for isolation and for unification. Every element in the language isolated it from the neighbouring languages: its vocabulary, its phonetics, its linguistic structure, its grammar. This Finno-Ugrian language is at the same time amply developed and unified. The difference between the dialects is essentially of a phonetic nature and comes from vocal assimilation. Depending on the region, it is the vowel "e," or "ö," or "i" which dominates. Otherwise, the fusion of regional varieties into a common literary language proceeded thanks to the almost uninterrupted continuity of the production of literature which was transmitted by the minstrels.*

Where then did the threat come from? It was not unsophisticated. In spite of the enormous effects of the Reformation, the translation of sacred texts from the Latin into the Hungarian was not without its drawbacks. The linguist Géza Bárczi** commented that the translations from the Latin retained certain characteristics of the original language. On account of the prestige of the Latin, and rather bad Latin at that, the translators did not dare to Magyarize these texts and consequently injected Latinisms into the Hungarian, especially syntactic forms which were alien to Hungarian. (For instance, the double possessive.) This is the reason for the curious phenomenon that there is one literature of a Latin spirit translated into Hungarian and another, humanistic literature of a Hungarian spirit written in Latin, such as the poetry referred to of Janus Pannonius. More than this, the bilingualism of the preceding centuries was substituted, through the addition of German, for a trilingualism which had heavy consequences; the usage of language divided society on all planes. The language of politics remained, especially at the Diet, Latin. Latin was also, with some exceptions, the judicial language, as well, of course, as the language of the Catholic Church and of the majority of secular writers. German was the language of the royal administration. That too was the language of commerce, that of the cities and the more developed towns, such as Pozsony, Sopron, and of the future centre of Hungarian culture, Pest itself. The common people spoke Hungarian in the centre of the country and in the west, Slovak in the north, Rumanian and Hungarian in Transylvania, Serbo-Croat in the far south, and German in several important pockets near Austria, and in faraway Transylvania. But, as we have already mentioned, even the Hungarian population itself were far from using their mother tongue in numerous domains of public and cultural life. At the end of the eighteenth century, for instance, numerous periodicals in Latin and in German can be found. In addition to Hungarian newspapers, a Pozsony publisher published, for instance, towards 1770 an educational review in Latin, *Ratio Educationis*, and a civic review intended to inculcate loyalty to the sovereign in the citizen, in German under the title of *Allergnädigst Privilegierte Anzeigen.*** In 1794, a

* A large part of this oral tradition is lost, but some has survived in manuscripts dating from the thirteenth century and some in popular memory, mainly in the ballads of Transylvania. See: Zoltán Kallós: *Balladák könyve* (Book of ballads), Magyar Helikon, 1973, which is a collection of 258 ballads, some of which have their roots in the Middle Ages and others in the popular imagination of the last five centuries.

** Géza Bárczi: *A magyar nyelv életrajza* (Biography of the Hungarian Language), Budapest, Gondolat, 1963, p. 186.

*** János Horváth: *Tanulmányok* (Studies), op. cit., p. 100.

Jacobin intellectual wanted to disseminate the French constitution and translated it into Latin. Count Széchenyi, "the greatest Hungarian," after having seen at the theatre the most beautiful Hungarian drama of the era, noted in his diary in the mid-1830s: "Unbegreiflich, dass es die Regierung erlaubt, solchen Unsinn zu spielen. Schlechte, gefährliche Tendenz".* Another great figure of the early nineteenth century, the economist Gergely Berzeviczy, published in 1808, in German, his great study *Über den Welthandel*, and another one in Latin, *De indole et conditione rusticorum in Hungaria*, recommending in the first the Germanisation of the country in order to further commerce, and in the second the radical reform of the feudal system in order to arrive at a modern system of production. Every political orientation had its own language. Berzeviczy wrote on commerce in German for a Germanized urban public turned towards the West. He wrote in Latin about the peasants to address his own noble class reluctant to bring on the reforms necessary for modernisation.

This trilingualism has nothing more in common with the earlier divisions, which could be called normal, between the clergy and laymen, between the élite and the non-educated. With modernisation and the arrival of the urban middle classes these could have disappeared and left Latin to the liturgy. The trilingualism is, on the other hand, at the same time a sign of the persistence of archaic structures and the sign of the appearance of a new tendency seeking the path of modernisation through the alignment of the wealthiest and most dynamic classes with Austria. It is in these conditions that, in order to rectify them, the "movement for the renewal of the language and literature" appears. This is the work of a few men. It begins at the end of the eighteenth century among the officers of the Imperial Guard of Maria Theresa and continues on a broader foundation in the years which follow the wars of the French Revolution and of Napoleon.

* Incomprehensible that the government permits such nonsense to be put on. A bad, dangerous trend. *Ibid.* p. 211.

2. *The Renewal of the language and literature*

In 1801 Ferenc Kazinczy, an erudite gentleman, proprietor of a modest estate, came out of prison after serving 2,387 days for rebellion. In fact, Kazinczy had had a rather passive part in the Jacobin plot which he had joined in and which had brought him a heavy sentence in Habsburg prisons. On his release, he withdrew to his estate, and for the thirty years up to his death, he devoted himself to a single passion, this renewal of the language and literature, of which he was the prime mover and untiring organizer.

His friends, his collaborators, and his correspondents were recruited from among the literary people, mostly gentry, but also some high aristocrats, and some town-dwellers of modest extraction. They were, in short, the intelligentsia which was coming into existence, a group which in some way played the role of the cultured middle-class in all the countries of Central Eastern Europe.

What was specific to this Hungarian intelligentsia was that it consciously chose, aware of the cause, a cultural model of development as—or instead of—a political programme. It set itself as a priority the modernisation of the language and literature to enable them to express, adapt, and carry the new ideas of the Europe of the Enlightenment and of the Revolutions.

Contrasting this linguistic-literary movement with other trends of the era will allow its importance to be seen.

Somewhat arbitrarily, I have divided cultural life into five currents: there was a conservative-patriarchal trend, an economic-reform trend, the Jacobin movement, the movement for the renewal of the language and literature, and finally, a very heteroge-

neous set of adversaries who adopted the title "orthologues" to demonstrate their opposition to the "neologues" of the linguistic movement.

This classification may seem to be confusing as in some cases, for instance Jacobinism, the criteria for classification are mainly ideological and political, while for others they are cultural and literary and appear to have no connection with ideology or politics. However, I would claim that on levels of ideological structuring which are not equivalent they are all trends which are both cultural and political and are distinct from one another, offering a different model of evolution. This classification through cultural-political models seems to be useful also because other methods which come to mind distinguishing them would be ineffective. As regards political ideas, for instance, all trends were touched more or less by the Enlightenment and the Revolution. Even the conservative poet Sándor Kisfaludy, at one time a prisoner of war at Draguignan in France, where he made numerous conquests among the republican ladies, returned to Hungary as both a critic and admirer of the new institutions. The national idea, in its Latin and German Romantic form, also penetrated the thinking in all, or in almost all, camps.

Distinguishing these trends through artistic categories, such as Baroque, Neo-Classical, or Romantic, would be just as unsuitable as a purely ideological classification. In fact a mixture of styles, fashions, and genres can be seen in Hungary, up to a realism in *all* currents.

To arrive at a better description of this movement for linguistic and literary renewal, it would be useful to compare the five trends already outlined.

The conservative trend, especially in the person of Kisfaludy, certainly contributed to the evolution of literary sentiments and forms; its difference vis-à-vis the "neologues" is that it denied the necessity for reform on political, social, democratic, and economic planes. Their rejection of change, their exaltation of the traditional values and of the patriarchal and paternalistic social conditions resulted in an ineffective model for a national identity in their literary works. In opposition to the conservatives can be posed the economic reform trend, a representative of which, Berzeviczy, we have already mentioned. This precursor of Count Széchenyi quickly saw the need to seize the opportunity of the first industrial revolution and of the opening of markets hitherto inaccessible to Hungarian agriculture. Cereals, animals, wool, timber, and Hungarian fodder would easily have found buyers outside the frontiers because of the increase in demand caused by many factors including the long period of war. But first of all, deliveries had to be increased through methods less out-of-date along roads which did not even exist and along unnavigable rivers. The ideas which came from this gentleman thinker were those of modernization, creation of credit and investment, a system of commerce, paid work more efficient than the *corvée*.

All of these were to lead to abandoning the nationalism of the nobility as archaic as the hand plough. Berzeviczy was able to sell his books, written in Latin and German, but not his ideas.

Equally opposed to conservatism, but for different reasons, was Hungarian Jacobinism.

Hungarian Jacobinism is a strange phenomenon. Its leader was also a strange figure, Martinovics, a Franciscan, later an atheist, natural scientist, professor at Lemberg, ardent revolutionary... and at the same time a spy in the pay of the police of His Majesty Leopold II. Its spread was also strange: the revolutionary catechisms of the conspirators circulated in 1794 as far as the manor-houses of distant counties where there were not even passable roads. It was a marriage of the archaic and the modern. The rumours which spread were also curious: 30,000 armed revolutionaries ready to start an insurrection... it was believed in Vienna.

The Court moved to Laxenburg under armed escort, and the military council assembled troops.* In fact, there were only about fifty dreamers. They were arrested. Five were beheaded, the others condemned to heavy prison sentences.

Romantic and heroic, Hungarian Jacobinism was certainly without a morrow. One of the conspirators, who incidentally escaped prosecution, was a poet whose accents were to be rediscovered half a century later in the revolutionary poetry of Petőfi. Bacsányi, the poet in question, called on his compatriots to follow the example of the French and called on aristocrats to cast their eyes on Paris to see the fate that awaited them. However, all this was completely premature and utopian. I would almost dare to say that it was the failure of Jacobinism which gave the real impetus to the linguistic reform movement, whose features I would like to trace rapidly.

Its principal merit lies exactly in its refusal to take the other roads, the other currents. Kazinczy himself, who survived the trial of the Jacobin plotters, was in a good position to judge the unsuitability of Jacobinism to Hungarian, especially, cultural conditions. On the other hand, he was equally repelled by conservative immobility and by purely economic reformism. If Jacobinism was a foreign ideological model, the economic movement would have led to the subjection of the country by the stronger partner, Austria. The reforming linguists were aware, in contrast to their orthologue adversaries, that all had to pass through the renewal of the language in order to alleviate the lack of preparedness in the Hungarian mind. It is in this nexus of opposites that the importance of their action can be seized. How can one promote commerce in a country, they asked themselves, where no Hungarian word existed to denote this activity? How can one develop industry where one cannot say it in Hungarian? Or make a revolution? Commerce, industry, revolution, as well as several thousands of other modern notions or shades of language did not have their equivalents in Hungarian. To create them was the priority which Kazinczy and his friends set themselves, carrying along in the furrow created by their action all the literati and thinkers in the country, with the exception—still—of their orthologue adversaries.

As far as their methodology for creating words went, it ran from formations and derivations proper to the genius of the language to monstrous invented words. It would be impossible to enumerate all their methods: the revival of ancient words, the revaluation of popular and idiomatic expressions, the creation of imitative words, the transplantation of foreign loan-words, etc., etc.... They also recoursed to association of images: for instance, the Hungarian word created for "revolution" comes from the verb "to boil"; the word "secretary" from the word for secret; the word "isolation" from that for "island," following the French fashion.

The aim of the reformers was to build a nest for new concepts and ideas. This is how they intended, though they knew nothing of *Annales* and Roy Ladurie, to change the collective mentality. They also aimed at providing literature with the means to its ideological and artistic renewal. Finally, they also aimed at strengthening the national identity of a people whose élite expressed itself better in Latin than in Hungarian, and which was under a German-speaking administration. The plan of the reformers certainly aimed at the formation of an élite as a priority, but beyond that also at a broader cultured public.

The question still has to be answered what the relation was between this cultural action and the social reality of the time.

This certainly was a cultural revolution. All conventions were broken, everything changed: vocabulary, grammar, orthography,

* *Magyarország története* (History of Hungary), *op. cit.*, vol. V/1, p. 200.

style, form, language, and content. In theory, the same effect could have been achieved through administrative and educational reforms. But, apart from the linguists and writers, there was no institution capable of taking charge of a cultural revolution. Secondly, a reform coming from above, from the Diet or from Vienna, would never have penetrated minds deeply. The linguistic change corresponded to a social need which was not only material and technical. No parliament or government would have been able to create a new language and through it a new system of references and values which the country would need. This was cultural work in the full anthropological sense of the word culture.

Here a page by Kazinczy is revealing. He relates, following Karamzin's own account of his visit to Russia, how Karamzin wrote to Herder in 1802. Karamzin and Herder are conversing on literature and the art of translation.* Why is it, they ask themselves, that the Germans produce good translations, but the English or the French do not? It is because, says Karamzin, Homer is Homer to the Germans (and not, it is to be understood, simply a Greek text). Kazinczy commented: "This is because for the French the thing was the thing (a word = a word) without understanding that for classical writers, just as for painters and sculptors, it is not the thing that was the thing. The language is like a rainbow, the play of all its colours. Whoever wants to divide up the colours according to their nature, spoils the beautiful play [of the whole]. So let us leave [in our language] free play to all that makes up a literature: laws and customs, analogy, harmony and taste, tradition and innovation, cold sobriety and poetic flights."

* *Szöveggyűjtemény, a felvilágosodás és nyelvújítás korának irodalmából.* (A collection of texts from the literature of the era of enlightenment and linguistic renewal), Budapest, Tankönyvkiadó, 1953, p. 681.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

QUIET WORDS

János Kádár: *Selected Speeches and Interviews*, in the series: "Leaders of the World," published by Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1985, with an introduction by Robert Maxwell, a biography by László Gyurkó, and with 63 photographs. 469 pp. In English.

In the autumn of 1918, during the last weeks of the Great War, on the threshold of the Hungarian revolution, a six-and-a-half-year old child was much taken with Budapest:

"When I stepped out of the Southern Railway Station and caught a glimpse of Budapest which I later became familiar with, it had an indescribable effect on me... It was there that I first saw asphalt, hard-surfaced roads, electric lamps, multi-storied buildings, trams, the underground, motorcars, aeroplanes, cinemas, and other formerly unknown wonders. And it was here that I first saw enormous crowds of people who were strangers. All this was at once wonderful, alien and awe-inspiring for me."

The boy, the son of a working woman, who had been brought up by foster-parents in a small village in the middle of nowhere, who read and studied by the lights of street lamps in Budapest because the electricity did not work at home, became the youth leader of a banned political movement—"I can say that I was appointed to a leading post at the age of twenty"—was, at the age of thirty-six, Minister of the Interior of the Hungarian Republic, then from 1956–57, the leader of the Communist Party reorganized by him, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. He was imprisoned by the Royal Hungarian Government and by the Hungarian People's Republic; in 1956 he found himself temporarily the object of dislike on the part of half the world; having overcome the Hungarian public's lack of confidence in him, he has been for many years now one of the most popular and respected of statesmen.

This is no common career. In Hungary no one except him had risen from such a low birth, among the oppressed and exploited—in the most classical sense—to occupy the leading post in the country. Kádár has remained the modest man he was when still a worker. His photograph is nowhere to be seen on public display. Whenever possible, he is happy to turn public appearances into informal meetings. He lives simply, in a modest house in the Buda hills, his only diversions being chess and reading. Immediately after the liberation of the country, the leaders in both the bourgeois and workers' parties, came from well-to-do middle-class backgrounds. This helps explain why Kádár, with his innate understanding of the language of simple people, was able in a relatively short time to win over millions of people. Millions here is no exaggeration—it is of great significance since in a Hungary with a population of ten million the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party has only eight hundred thousand members. Thus the majority of those who accepted János Kádár's policies are non-party people. This means that Kádár has managed to express his goals in such a

way that they have been considered by the population as the goals of the whole nation.

The present volume is the expression of these goals, containing twenty speeches and nine interviews culled from the years between 1957 and 1980.

These speeches perfectly summarize the essence of his polity.

It is a matter of no little courage for a politician still in office to collect speeches made for particular occasions over such a length of time. Someone willing to reveal ideas, views, political promises, and programmes worded twenty-five to thirty years ago and adjusted to the circumstances in which they were expressed to millions of readers including foreigners, must be an unusually consistent man, true to himself. There can hardly be any political leader still active who, whether active in London or in one of the socialist countries, could have his political speeches of 1957 or 1960 published without any alterations.

The most important characteristic of the Kádár speeches here is their ideological, indeed their ethical consistency wisely adjusted to the changing circumstances. Emphasis should be laid on the word "ethical," for it is rarer still than ideological consistency. One of the secrets of Kádár may well be that his speeches are characterized by an ethical responsibility extraordinarily developed in comparison with other important political personalities of the twentieth century. His ethical, his moral goals—and the word moral is in itself a rarity in the vocabulary of a politician—are clearly worded in his first speeches; they are also unchanging and unequivocal throughout. To Kádár, facing facts and putting them in words unequivocally is an imperative. What he promises he always holds to, when, however, he feels that his own opinion will not necessarily be shared by everyone, by the public, he patiently and carefully justifies it. In this lies the origin of his highly careful behaviour; he shrinks from taking sides in matters which he believes he is no expert in. Thus, for example, though the volume makes frequent reference to his love of reading, his delight in books and literature, in spite of that (or, perhaps, for that very reason?) he almost never takes sides in questions of art or literary policy; if he does so, it is to content himself with emphasizing that there is need for extraordinary tolerance when judging the arts from the point of view of politics. There are hardly any leading politicians in the socialist countries who would not find the occasion and the opportunity in such a large collection of their works to teach a lesson to the artists and writers of their country on what they consider to be the proper behaviour for writers and artists, down even to the choice of topic or the method of treatment.

Some of the man's appeal can be seen in the answer he gave to a question put to him by the *Frankfurter Rundschau*. What, they asked, caused him the greatest anguish? His reply:

"The most difficult case is when our decisions are not understood or are not immediately understood by those in whose interest they are being made. During this long period, unfortunately, I have had more than one such case."

It partially follows from the above that Kádár takes into account the entire history of the Hungarian people in almost all of his statements. His predecessors were inclined to consider the year 1945 as the beginning of Hungarian history; what had happened before, was the sin of others, they, the hitherto oppressed working class, had had nothing to do with it. Kádár, however, from 1957 on, has consistently accepted the common history of our people, including the painful and tragic moments. This is what he said to the Hungarian Parliament in May 1957:

"Hungary has five neighbouring states. There is not one among the five which does not possess territory which once, in the course of history, for shorter or longer pe-

riods, very long or not so long ago, belonged to Hungary. This is a historical fact."

Or in an interview given to Henry Shapiro in July 1966:

"After the Great War, Woodrow Wilson... along with the other three great men, Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Orlando, inspired and guaranteed the imperialist dictates of Versailles and Trianon which dismembered the territory of Hungary."

Thus too, at the Helsinki Conference in August 1975:

"The Hungarian people established their state 1,100 years ago between the Danube and the Tisza, in the centre of Europe... but following the useless sacrifices of the Great War, the territory of vanquished Hungary was reduced to one-third of what it had been."

Or at a press conference in Vienna in 1976:

"This place—Hungary—does have a drawback: it is situated at the crossroads of marching armies."

However, he would not be consistent if he considered all this to have been the blows of fortune; he is constantly reminding Hungarians that essential factors in the evolution of the situation were nationalistic bias and the selfish and ill-conceived policies of the ruling classes. As a communist, he allows no concessions to the nationalistic policy of exclusion and does everything he can to ensure that peoples of the Carpathian Basin live in peace with each other.

"We follow the right path when we reject nationalistic-revanchist ideas... we are aimed at implementing the principle of peaceful, fraternal coexistence and joint struggle along with the peoples of the Danube basin. And we are right in doing so, because this is the interest of the Hungarian people."

One of this volume's attractions is that it allows the reader an opportunity to trace the path of the economic reform over the last twenty odd years.

It was in 1966 that Kádár mentioned the necessity of an economic reform for the first time:

"The reform will also be extended to essential issues of socialist construction," his report to the Central Committee said. Elsewhere, in the same year:

"The economic mechanism must be changed so that it will be capable of meeting new demands... the systematic development of the national economy in the future will not be ensured by central instructions... the pace of technological progress will be accelerated."

What led Kádár and his colleagues to this recognition?

Note that Kádár does not say that from now on this is the way it must be because that is the wish of the party; his argument runs along the lines that we have recognized that the development of the times and of production relations have taken this path and therefore it is necessary to make certain changes in the spirit of this recognition. It is not a *fiat* but a necessity that our time demands. "This reform is timely and necessary now, and it seems to me that it cannot be put off."

Let us focus our attention on the word *timely*. Kádár has a favourite anecdote on the importance of taking time into account:

"In the meeting room of the Executive Committee [of the Eighth District of Budapest] there was a portrait of Lenin. Time passed and afterwards I told the comrades that something was missing from the wall: a clock. At the Central Committee we have both a portrait of Lenin and a clock on the wall... The clock tells us that time passess, we should make haste as much as we can."

Another noteworthy thing is that Kádár also heeds the signals of public opinion. As early as 1957 he stated in Parliament:

"The leadership can perform their duty only if they never disregard the thinking and will of the masses... we should really fight against mistakes and not against the people."

It was under these circumstances that the economic reform took place, of which he

said as early as in 1967: "We are now dealing with one of the biggest undertakings of the past thirty years."

This undertaking has been going on for nigh twenty years and we may not be yet half-way through it. In order to succeed, there is need for extraordinary purposefulness, a constant adjustment to the world economic situation, and at times patient, at times firm persuasion of certain inner political circles. In 1978, János Kádár's report to the Central Committee points out:

"In France, each miner works twice as productively as those in the Bakony bauxite mine [in Hungary]... This example is surely not unique... This is what I call really understanding the economic resolutions of the 11th Congress..."

Such and similar examples, painfully true and heard with little pleasure, are frequently spiced, and thus alleviated, with humour. I cannot think straight off of an important contemporary politician who is able to enliven his speeches and political statements with so much humour and irony frequently directed at himself. Humour for Kádár is a political instrument; it is both a proof of the self-confidence of the speaker, the sign of his having a perfect command of the topic and situation in question; it is also, in the positive sense of the word, the speaker exposing himself to his audience, showing a sense of his being one of them, one of many. How consciously he uses humour can be seen in this comment: "I like healthy humour. If you are angry for some reason, go ahead and be angry; but if there is also a humorous or funny side to it, don't fail to recognize it."

In the present volume, the humour less frequently appears than his Hungarian audience has grown accustomed to. The reason, however, is not a "dehumourization" of the text but that Kádár frequently resorts to the vocal and physical gestures of rhetoric; his contact with his audience is accomplished through physical and facial gestures, vocal tone and emphasis—and these are more lively than the printed word can convey. On such occasions the audience feels the unrepeatable uniqueness of the meeting; this is the classical method of persuasion, known and used by the Greeks and Romans of old.

Perhaps it appears clearly from what has been said above that this volume is not merely a collection of texts useful for politicians and journalists, from which it is easy to quote, but a mirror of a colourful personality, of a man sincerely working for the welfare of his nation and people. The self-portrait the speeches make up, demonstrates even more truthfully than the sixty-three photographs a personality who, as Robert Maxwell, the General Editor of the series, puts it in his Introduction, is a "modest man with simple tastes."

In one of the photographs, János Kádár is leaning on some kind of canvas sack, talking to a teenage-boy. The boy is listening to the words of the First Secretary with obvious interest but without the slightest sign of awed adoration. They are, quite simply, talking. That picture was taken in 1969. This boy has since grown into a man. We do not know where he is now or what he is doing; but it is his generation that may today fulfil the intention of the reform and prove through their actions that the teachings of Marxism and socialism are not bookish dogma but the ideals of people able to change with the changing world, in order to change the world's lot for the better.

István Nemeskürty

ON THE BORDERLINE OF FICTION AND THE ESSAY

Miklós Mészöly: *Megbocsátás* (Forgiving), Szépirodalmi, 1985, 82 pp.; Miklós Mészöly: *Merre a csillag jár* (The way the star goes), Szépirodalmi, 1985, 279 pp.; László Márton: *Menedék* (Refuge), Magvető, 1985, 182 pp.; László Kolozsvári Papp: *Variációk* (Variations), Szépirodalmi, 1985, 330 pp.

In the last fifteen or so years, enormous changes have occurred in Hungarian narrative fiction, just as they did in several other literatures, earlier or simultaneously. The traditional methods of relating a story have been pushed into the background by a new approach and by the new techniques that go with it. In this new fiction, reflection itself has become the topic, not infrequently a reflection on the literary medium, the language and the manner of discourse, and an enhanced role has been allotted to the personal tone of the writer. Novels were no longer concerned with a comprehensive interpretation of the world, and at best assign names to things, but even these are to be taken with quotation marks around them, limited in validity. The arrival and success of meditative texts, reflecting on the medium itself, is radical in Hungarian fiction since the tradition of a fictitious narrative based on historical and sociological detail has been very strong, almost exclusive up to most recent times.

Naturally, this new writing has had its forerunners in Hungary too, in the period directly preceding the breakthrough of Miklós Mészöly, today considered to be one of its main masters by younger Hungarian writers. Mészöly, in his sixty-fifth year, published two volumes in 1985: a book of short stories, *The way the star goes*, and a novella, *Forgiving*. The latter especially seems to be a unique achievement, probably one of his chief accomplishments. An interesting feature of his career is that, after some extreme, abstract and experimental digressions, the author seems to be returning to story-centred writing, though by no means in any of the forms he had developed before. This return is not absolute, as several pieces in *The way the star goes* prove, pieces which can be called stories only in the absence of any other description. In fact, nothing in the traditional sense of the word 'story' is to be found in it.

Nor is there a complete, uniform story in *Forgiving* either. Certain points of the mosaic structure are in themselves complete anecdotal units, scenes, genre pictures; that they are united in both atmosphere and purpose can be felt at first reading. The elements of the fragmentary story belong to a defined and perceptively drawn medium and situation. It is about a family, sometime at the beginning of the thirties, in a Hungarian country town, among farmers and towndwellers, clerks and respectable people sliding down the social ladder, offspring of the small gentry. (This is also the milieu of *The way the star goes*, and given Mészöly's background, the inspiration would seem to be autobiographical. We could conjecture that the family in *Forgiving* is the author's own, because he creates a warm, homely atmosphere, a dreamlike world of reminiscence.)

The main character in this mosaic is the father, a clerk at the townhall where he goes through the archives to investigate some mysterious events, sometimes almost legendary, which have had consequences on his own family too. The reader acquires only a fragmentary knowledge of the legends of the family and the town, preserved in archives and memory; the view of the people

in the clerk's house remains fragmentary and seemingly accidental. It is as if the reader were only looking at old photographs.

Included in the clerk's household are his father and sister-in-law. A strange old man, the father rarely leaves his room where he sits all day beside the radio, then still a novelty and a rarity, listening to the water-level forecasts from all over Europe. He keeps an accurate record of them and draws graphs of the seasonal correspondences and differences. The sister-in-law is a spinster whose fiancé has died, "and since that time she had lived with them in an attic room made comfortable for living in even during winter. Mária was incomparably more beautiful than her younger sister, beautiful in her own right, beautiful like a flower or a crystal—actually all those adjectives suited her well—she came home, left, sat down among them again, took with her and brought back some kind of permanent radiation which immediately cooled as soon as someone tried to be warmed up by it. From early summer till the end she sunbathed an hour every day among the big hazelnut bushes, she lay on the lawn with her arms apart like a crucifix, with her thighs closed tightly, like a statue placed gently on the ground, a plastic figure carved out of linen."

This posture corresponds to that in which, "at the time of the story," the pilot of a crop-spraying aircraft came upon the body of a young woman in the geometrical centre of ears of corn laid in a circle with a radius of fifty metres, in the middle of a wheatfield otherwise apparently untouched. "She had thrown apart her arms in the form of a crucifix, closing her thighs tightly. She had a snow-white dress on." There are no tracks leading to the dead body, the vision-like quality of the discovery, the identity of the girl, the similarity of the posture, all throw an eerie shadow over the whole story and especially ove the figure of Mária.

The tension thus accumulated is to a certain extent released at the end: one enchanting and slightly dizzy Christmas Eve, more elaborately drawn than any of the other details and not unreminiscent of the Christmas scenes in Bergman's *Fanny and Alexander*, the clerk, having, in advance, asked his wife to forgive him, deflowers his sister-in-law. The festive games and merriment before the act, and the act itself, combine to produce something of an initiatory and fertility rite and a kind of a Christmas gift. The attitude of all those involved is related to the love celebrated at Christmas and its concomitant understanding and forgiving. So is the attitude of the writer towards his subject, the figures conjured up, his beloved, his ancestors, their deeds: forgiving. He forgives, he is reconciled, he accepts that the world in which he lives is what it is. In that this world is fragmentary, he forgivingly accepts that it refuses to reveal all its details and secrets.

One of the finest pieces in *The way the star goes*, the title-giving short story of his previous collection, *Winged horses*, also has an anecdotic core. Going out into his vineyard, a wine-grower finds his wife and her lover dead in the wine cellar. They are lying there in the tub where they were suffocated by the fermentation gas in the cellar. With the help of the narrator, an acquaintance of the wine-grower and participant in the event, the wine-grower places the tub—with the two dead bodies in it—onto a carriage. All this is done with expertise and care in such a way that the two bodies should not move and everything should remain precisely the way the two men found it. They carry their burden off in the dark of the night towards the Danube, even though their purpose is not known exactly to the narrator, since the wine-grower has not informed him. (Perhaps he intends to sink the two dead bodies in the river.) Finally, at the bank of the river, he changes his mind and they transport the tub back to the press-house and place it back exactly where it was. Mészöly tells the story with a ballad-like haziness and compression which, partly because of its non-linear, non-explicit method of narration,

evokes archaic associations, atavistic reminiscences. The wine-grower seems to be acting like a sleepwalker propelled by the law of some ancient custom, and this exerts a weird impression in the contemporary environment.

In another story, *Where the cats live*, one character tells to another who comes from the same background rooted in the past, from the wine-covered hills of Tolna: "When I was watching you with my telescope, suddenly a picture came, and I don't know even now what it was. I think you yourself don't know either what you were doing for so many years. Or what you are doing now. You looked in the telescope in a way that frightened me. I was scared not by you. As if there were people dwelling in you ... or there was someone living in you."

Mészöly's short stories attempt to trace that something "dwelling" in these characters, the creatures of the landscape itself. "And what is left behind them is not so much the things themselves but their place," we are told in *Where the cats live*. The author is examining the spirit of the place, the form in which it haunts different situations and individuals. He is analysing the collective subconscious of a typical Central European place burdened with its own unfortunate past; he constructs a mythology on the memories and findings he brings to the surface. The outlines of a Hungarian mythology are drawn from the remains in myth and legend of a family, a town, a landscape, a way of life, all depicted with a fidelity and precision of a good minute-taker and with a lyrical suggestiveness. *A Hungarian story** is one of the short stories in which subjective memories of the old rural Hungarian life, not fitted into a closed narrative sequence, are laid onto one another. What characterizes this world is that it has passed, become a fossil, and this quality of being forever fixed attaches to the photographs which feature importantly in Mészöly's writing. The deadly rigidity of this world keeps captive even those who are alive and reminiscing. The wine-grower of *Winged Horses* is imbued with the mystery of this paralyzed immobility. Warmth, liveliness also emanate from the pictures before us, the warmth of the people and the passions which have filled the place where we are with their spirit. Their warmth is as vapour above them; it may have cooled according to the thermometer of physics but not according to the thermometer of reminiscence. In addition to fear, helplessness, the search for a sense in things, forgiving, awe and, perhaps, even nostalgia, are the components of Mészöly's mythical exploration of the past.

In the wake of Mészöly's pioneering efforts came László Márton, one of the most radical of the young writers of abstract fiction. His second book, a first novel, proceeds along the direction he had embarked on with *Monsterchasing in Greater Budapest*.** *Refuge* takes place in the heart of the protagonist, Béla Monori, a travelling peripatetic lecturer, for it is there that he seeks refuge when matters become entangled around him. The opening of the novel more or less follows the traditional rules in introducing Béla Monori, who is just about to deliver a lecture on the origin of man in a fictitious small town along the border. The lecture is cancelled because there is no audience; the people take more interest in a travelling circus erecting its tent on the edge of the town. After going to see the circus performance, Béla Monori, lacking enough money for a hotel, drives off in his battered old car to find accommodation for the night in the neighbourhood, some "refuge." Various mysterious incidents happen on the road, partly because of its location along the border, until, finally, after a nightmarish escape, Béla Monori finds himself in a confined space in the company of all kinds of lopsided creatures. This place turns out to be Monori's own heart.

The border is partially to be taken literal-

* *NHQ 78.*

** *NHQ 99.*

ly, in that the details are realistic: there are border guards and barbed wire, gunfire and explosions are mentioned; real places along the western frontier are named in addition to the fictitious placenames. An iron curtain, once guarded by electronic devices, is before us, and this border seems to have a transferable meaning too. There is the actual border and there is that frontier that Béla Monori crosses, which up to now he has remained this side of.

The more or less regular opening to a thriller is weakened by the fact that Márton introduces the vicissitudes of Monori from three different angles, on three parallel planes. A foreword is written by a compiler, who introduces the three fragmentary and makeshift pieces of writing found in the town archives of Zsombokhalmágy, arranged by the compiler into some chronological and logical order. He calls them Diary, Description, and Account. The Diary is the diary of Béla Monori (which is found in a very bad state, full of unreadable details, with several pages missing), the Account is written by Theophrastus, who turns out to be the glasses of Béla Monori, yet identical with Paracelsus, the seer of the late Middle Ages. The author of the Description is anonymous. It must be pointed out that, just as with much in a book replete with free digression, at places openly boasting of bluffs, this division into three sources is not to be taken too seriously. The sources, meant to be of different origin and at different angles, finally merge into a continuous narrative of unified tone, in so far as *Refuge* is the narrative of anything.

Refuge is a book that devours itself. Some kind of self-generating, self-annihilating force is active in it. Béla Monori crosses the border of final questions in the nightmarish night on which he gets lost at the beginning of the story. He penetrates his own heart in order to scrutinize the secrets of human existence. He has almost official licence to do so, since he is a disseminator of knowledge and this is his topic. Thus *Refuge* is a regular philosophical novel in its inspiration and, like Voltaire's *Candide*, an allegorical parable, a tale like *Pilgrim's Progress* or Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (translated into Hungarian, by the way, by Márton). However, during his philosophical adventures, what Monori experiences is that he is the captive of a perverse logical system. "Firstly, we are in someone's heart," says one of the inhabitants of the heart, one of Monori's companions in his own heart, "Secondly, this someone is among us; thirdly and consequently, he is also inside his own heart." Or: "By the way, why are there no veins, strings, valves and other such things usually to be found in a heart," Béla Monori was pondering in his moment of crisis. It is tempting to leave him as an alien body in his own system, but the author of Description cannot decide the fate of the author of the Diary. In any case, if Monori, after so much fruitless pondering, were to complete his career as a clot of blood causing thrombosis, he would at least complete something. It also strikes him that someone might open the heart from the outside at the last moment and save him. But as a dead, alien body, he would destroy his own heart and so he would not survive the destruction of his refuge either. This heart swarms with all sorts of impossible creatures: half-human, half-inhuman, they too have external memories and relations with the outside world, but they also have half-finished, embryo-like characteristics, on this side of man and life: monsters of fantasy, recalling those of Hieronymus Bosch, they are repellent, playful and foolish, in the mode of a fairytale. Finding himself among them, Monori is reduced to his miserable creature-self: "... whether Béla Monori has come closer to guiltlessness by the fact that the physical signs of childhood and old age appeared on him simultaneously; whether the innocence of a new-born babe will ever be coupled in him with the wisdom of an old man: Theoprastus cannot and does not even intend to answer that question. To do so, he would have to reveal a secret,

buried deeply and addressed to the initiated only, whereas here we are tackling not the secrets of the universe but the agony of a miserable creature."

Naturally, these are the secrets which are discussed, would be discussed, if there were such secrets, and if the miserable creature had not renounced, was not forced from the outset to renounce, all efforts at revelaing them. "I do not believe that I am a prisoner, therefore I do not believe that I may become free," says Monori in the Diary. This reduction of man is performed by Márton not so much through such axioms or allegoric adventures but primarily by degrading the language. Out pours a passionate flow of linguistic nonsense, word-play, obscenity, until all that is left in Monori's heart is a huge, repulsive linguistic muck-heap. Márton's linguistic coprography is an original and eerie demonstration: it does occasionally possess a certain black humour, but it deviates too far from real life—it is concoction rather than literature.

Whereas László Márton's distinction in contemporary Hungarian fiction is that he is its most recently discovered writer, László Kolozsvári Papp's is as its most proliphic. Kolozsvári Papp's *Variations*, just like his previous novel, *We used to be birds*, also categorizes the behaviour of the intellectual class.* This time, he is preoccupied mostly with large-scale conversation and small-scale adultery. Here too it is the men who are under the spotlight, three of them; again in his previous novels it was the men on whom the variations were rung, the women—here four of them—are merely witnesses, catalysts, victims of the crises of their male companions.

György, the lawyer, is a master of self-justification. He manages to make himself believe that his life is the best of all possible lives. He personifies social consensus, as do the laws he enforces. That is what he compares everyone to (and not only those infringing the law) for the sake of legal order; he applies gentle violence for the sake of his own internal order as well—against himself, his wife, his friend.

His friend, Ádám, however, refuses to give way. He is György's opposite in everything. He is constantly rebelling, sometimes purely for the sake of rebelling. He shouts, throws things around, hurts people, curses. He has some kind of a job, but it does not really matter where, for his ambition is to write. However, his instinct for destruction does not spare even his own efforts; he is unable to reconcile himself with what he himself writes down. His life is a devastated battlefield, and whoever comes into contact with him is in for the same fate. For a long time György seems to be the only one whose life he is unable to destroy. The two of them are to some extent dependent upon each other. György is all lawyer—stability, conservation, preservation—while Ádám is the restless demon and agent of destruction, doubt, malcontent, change. Ultimately, he manages to capsize temporarily György's marriage; the latter as is to be expected, comes into conflict with himself and the self-deluding life he has been living, but afterwards he returns to his former self and life.

Ádám ruins the life of the third male figure, Hamu, too. Hamu is obsessed with history. He is devoted not to an age or a special field but to all of human history. His goal is to write the history of mankind from his own point of view. There is a certain solidity and intransigence in Hamu, though these qualities are different in him than in György. In him there is the security and superiority of the scholar of enormous erudition, the greatly respected master but his is also the attitude of the man standing above the everyday problems of the present, as he surveys the centuries. There is an archaic firmness in him, he is a bit like the objects he surrounds himself with in his flat.

* See the review in *NHQ* 99.

Ádám ruins the castle of his life, too, though he falls in love not so much with his wife but with Hamu himself. It is through his conversations with Hamu that he sees himself from a distance for the first time; it is through Hamu's historian's viewpoint that makes him understand how barren and futile his blustering is. But he would not be what he is if he criticized only himself. In criticizing Hamu's approach, he is criticizing Hamu too. Finally, in the classical formula (though at an unrealistically accelerated pace), the disciple rebels against the master, by eloping with his wife. The master is also subjected to criticism: he realizes the error of starting to lose sight of the everyday personality and life of his wife through his remoteness from everyday life. Yet Hamu is also attracted to Ádám, his courage, his openness ready to take risks, the dedicated discipleship, which flatters his own vanity, just like almost all the figures of the novel, including the girl Vera, who does not even meet him but forms a picture about him from what György tells her, pay their respects to Ádám.

Kolozsvári Papp presents variations on forms of behaviour, and on the crises of self-consciousness and on the attempts at adjustment that they cause. However, all this is clad in a fairly abstract, sterile form in *Variations*. The tendency towards modelling, formulation and demonstration oppresses the liveliness and truths of life. True, the writer is making deliberate efforts towards abstraction, the characters floating in en experimental space, as it were. Yet he overreaches; what is described in the novel are psychological and socio-psychological traits snatched out of their context.

Another of the novel's faults is the excessive level of articulation of the endless analytical discourses, interrupted only for coffee and lovemaking; the characters express everything in innumerable aphoristic variations. Kolozsvári Papp's novel is in fact really a monologue, an obsessive essay of a monologue, on the position of intellectuals and that does not enhance its value as a fictional work.

MIKLÓS GYÖRFFY

FUNCTIONAL SOLMIZATION

Ernő Lendvai: *The Workshop of Bartók and Kodály*. Editio Musica Budapest, 1983, 762 pp.

In some ways, *The Workshop of Bartók and Kodály* is a misleading title. Workshop carries suggestions of what is now fashionably termed the composition process. Lendvai's main concerns are analytical and this book is concerned in equally fashionable terminology with the neutral level and *aisthesis* rather than *poiesis*. Nor is it primarily about Kodály; he is a guiding spirit but the object of Lendvai's pursuit is Bartók. Such explanation is necessary if only because Lendvai swims against tides current in analysis in the English-speaking world in more serious matters than titles and terminology. Lendvai's name is inextricably linked with the notion of the Golden Section as a structural principle. Thanks to the work of Roy Howat and others, this is now dignified with the title Proportional Analysis and its application has spread, notably to Debussy and Ravel.[1] Lendvai has sub-

[1] See in particular Roy Howat, *Debussy in Proportion*, Cambridge, 1983, and Roy Howat, 'Bartók, Lendvai and the Principles of Proportional Analysis', *Music Analysis*, ii (1983), 69–95.

stantially affected the way in which musicians think of structure; the degree of precision in his analyses, however much they may be disputed to the nearest quaver or decimal point, has opened up interesting questions of intentionality which in the nature of things tend to remain unresolved, as reflected in Howat's use of "subconsciously formed" (disputed with some justice by the late Hans Keller) and eventual "stage of conscious recognition".[2]

But there has always been more to Lendvai's theories and analyses than GS construction, and the publication of his English book gives the English-speaking world the opportunity to encounter the theory of the Golden Section in a full and detailed context. The small book in which Lendvai's ideas were originally published in English was a cramped affair, expounding the proportional system and the axis system to which it was linked in a dry prose which remained unascribed to any translator.[3] Much of that book is incorporated into *The Workshop of Bartók and Kodály*, but with the difference that it appears in Lendvai's own English, reminiscent of Paul Bekker's "this English, my English";[4] things familiar from the 1971 version appear as if in a distorting mirror. There are few places, however, where technical discussion is rendered unclear by Lendvai's battle with the English language, even if the notion of Bartók's superb stunts will cause much falling about in seminar rooms. It is only in the more hermeneutically orientated sections on individual works and groups of works that the question of style becomes oppressive; as a description of the *Allegro scherzando* in the slow movement of the Violin Concerto, "Screams of joy, tickling laughter and giggle" seems better suited to the reader's reaction.[5]

Three aspects of Lendvai's book present a challenge to the English reader, the problem of historical derivation of modality in Bartók, the value of the Kodály concept of solmization in analysis, and the degree to which Lendvai's whole approach is orientated towards harmony (or line versus harmony) at a time when scholars are increasingly preoccupied with contrapuntal modes of perception. Of these, the use of relative solmization is the most puzzling. That its use is little-known among English-speaking analysts does not disguise the fact that the work of Lajos Bárdos on Liszt, for instance, has couched genuine musical insights in a terminology which makes discriminating use of solmization, particularly in modal contexts.[6] Solmization as applied to Pentatony is a useful device for cataloguing the "five imaginable octave segments of the anhemitone pentatonic row of degrees" described by Bartók in his Harvard Lectures.[7] As a terminology, it is less cumbersome than most and functions as an adequate shorthand in describing the various kinds of relationships which exist between triads whose roots stand a third apart. Lendvai's insistence that certain relationships described in solmization are clues to expressive character (as signifiers with a more or less verifiable signification) is rather harder to accept on the basis of his technical argument, which is richer in individual moments of insight than in solidly-buttressed theory. It is here that the question

[2] Howat, 'Bartók, Lendvai and the Principles of Proportional Analysis', *Music Analysis*, ii (1983), 84–90; Hans Keller, Correspondence, *Music Analysis*, ii (1983), 299–300.

[3] Ernő Lendvai, *Béla Bartók: an Analysis of his Music*, London, 1971.

[4] Paul Bekker, *The Orchestra*, New York, 1936, p. xiii: "As for the rest, I refer again to my dear and honored model, Moonshine; 'this English, my English, and these defects, my defects.' "

[5] Ernő Lendvai, *The Workshop of Bartók and Kodály*, Editio Musica, Budapest, 1983 (henceforth Lendvai 1983), p. 461; as for a variation's "bottom-position" (p. 486), modesty precludes further comment.

[6] Lajos Bárdos, 'Modale Harmonien in den Werken von Franz Liszt' and 'Die volksmusikalischen Tonleitern bei Liszt' in *Franz Liszt: Beiträge von ungarischen Autoren*, ed. Klara Hamburger, Budapest, 1978, pp. 133–196.

[7] Béla Bartók, *Essays*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff, London, 1976, pp. 363–364.

of historical derivation becomes particularly urgent. Much of the music that Lendvai uses for tracing the historical development of Bartók's modality is operatic, with Verdi singled out for special prominence. This leads to some interesting harmonic problems. At the close of Act I of *Otello*, Lendvai wishes to describe the change of key from E major to D flat major as *do-mi-so* to *la-di-mi;* the latter is C sharp major beginning the question why Verdi wrote it as D flat major.[8] It is tempting to relate the latter structurally to the G flat with which the love scene begins; the cellos material at both points offers some motivic corroboration. This in turn raises the problem of establishing structurally important tonalities in opera and discussing their relationships. The E major singled out locally as *do-mi-so* is unquestionably a vital tonality in *Otello*, and its relationship to C sharp major is important enough to bear the weight of Lendvai's investigations. How this E major should be interpreted in a large context, however, is not so clear: is it a structural parenthesis in the love scene between G flat and D flat or a signpost towards later events? The opera does end in E major after all, but how the triumphant E major of the storm scene relates to the E major of the kiss theme and the E major of the tragic conclusion is not to be clarified by any simple hermeneutic equation. Nineteenth-century opera raises too complex issues of tonal interdependence to be a model for more than local and associative (and hence hardly systematic) employment of solmization.

Lendvai accordingly deals with the historical problem by traditional associative means. He takes up the case of Otello's 'Esultate!' on analogy with the close of the first Act, but as an example, it comments obliquely on a key sentence at the start of the chapter, 'Modality: Atonality: Function': "The dramatic power of Mozart resides in FUNCTIONAL, while that of Verdi, in MODAL tensions."[9] While the power of Otello's entrance is enhanced by the contrast between the initial G sharp major and the concluding E major, functional tensions are not abrogated; Otello's last line is an unimpeachable perfect cadence which also possesses dramatic power by saving itself for l'uragano whose violence the audience has just experienced with all the crude violence that modal and functional tension can express if they are handled by a real master of the theatre. In other words, Lendvai's insistence of relativity in modal relationships sits oddly with the somewhat rigid classification of their historical development and expressive effect. There are in any case instances where a modal characteristic is questionable because it has been taken out of its wider context. At the start of Haydn's *Creation*, the tension that matters surely is that between the C minor of Chaos and the C major of light;[10] the role of E flat major is incidental, suggesting that an adequate explanation of expressive or dramatic effect demands consideration of long term relationships as well as associative accumulation of incidents. It is hard not to feel also that the important relationship of tonic major and minor is displaced by the fascination of the *la-do-mi* and *do-mi-so* triads; much nineteenth-century music makes structural use of the tonic major-tonic minor relationship to the point that it acquires a symbolic meaning. To note these reservations is in no way to impugn the axis system and its functioning in Bartók. It is necessary to point out, however, that they do little to illuminate positively the historical background to Bartók, and often end in a Manichaean alternation of light and dark; if relativity is of importance in technical description, let us have shades of grey in hermeneutics rather than black and white. To refer to the start of the *Liebestod* in *Tristan* becoming "darker and darker" as it passes "around the whole A flat—B—D—F axis" is hardly helpful when

[8] Lendvai 1983, 96–97.

[9] Lendvai 1983, 93.

[10] Lendvai 1983, 98–99.

the climax falls on "Immer lichter wie er leuchtet".[11]

If Lendvai overvalues the usefulness of the Kodály concept as a key to unlock technique and history, turning a slender thread into a major theme, he presents a pertinent and formidable case when it comes to analysing Bartók. In a recent discussion of the *Improvisations*, Op. 20, Kofi Agawu has suggested that when Lendvai speaks of tonics and key centres, he seems to be discussing the melodies (specifically folk-inspired melodies) "considered in isolation" from their accompaniments.[12] Bartók himself had some highly revealing thoughts on this matter. Analysing the fourth of Stravinsky's *Pribaoutki*, he noted:

> The vocal part consists of motives which—though perhaps not borrowed from Russian folk music—throughout are imitations of Russian folk music motives. The characteristic brevity of these motives, all of them taken into consideration separately, is absolutely tonal, a circumstance that makes possible a kind of instrumental accompaniment composed of a sequence of underlying, more or less atonal tone-patches very characteristic of the temper of the motives.[13]

In the example, he goes on to speak of "despite all that atonality, a domineering [a'] which gives a solid basis to the whole", i.e. a melody note (the final) rather than a harmonic root.[14] This is close to Agawu's description of Lendvai's analytical conclusions, and in this new volume it seems to underline many remarks such as "Pentatony has its source in Eastern folk-music, accordingly it is of *melodic* origin".[15]

The corollary that tonally systematic approaches in all-embracing uniformity will not do for Bartók is more or less confirmation of the heroic failures represented by such efforts as Roy Travis's Schenkerian dissection of the first movement of the Fourth Quartet.[16] What is needed is not so far from what Agawu terms a "multi perspective".[17] How far this is equivalent to Lendvai's notion of two systems, diatonic-overtone and pentatonic-chromatic is less easy to decide. Lendvai depicts them as a dialectic but it is not always easy to discern how they come together in a meaningful synthesis. One important mediating category, the concept of function borrowed from diatony to describe certain attributes of pentatonic chromaticism, in particular the various dominants described in the chapter Axis System, loses much of its character divorced from traditional diatony. Resolution and synthesis is best discerned in the dramatic works, hence Lendvai's fondness for the traditional procedure of transferring meanings deduced from dramatic and vocal music to the rather more inscrutable world of chamber music and concerto, a tradition no closer to universal acceptance now than in the past. But dialectic or not, Lendvai's methods reveal an element of happy opportunism that is appropriate to a style as rich as Bartók's.

In this resides its principal challenge to Bartók study in the English-speaking world, in this context a euphemism for the U.S.A., where the most challenging work on Bartók has taken place. Both Agawu and Paul Wilson have quoted the example of Milton Babbitt who felt that compromise was necessary between analytical methods derived from tonality and atonality if Bartók's style was to be comprehended in its totality. In America this has meant increasingly Schenker and Allen Forte's Pitch Class Set Theory; Wilson's work on op. 20 has depended almost

[11] Lendvai 1983, 102.

[12] V. Kofi Agawu, 'Analytical Issues raised by Bartók's *Improvisations for piano, op. 20*', *The Journal of Musicological Research*, v (1984), 136.

[13] Béla Bartók, *Essays*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff, London, 1976, p. 318.

[14] Ibid., p. 319.

[15] Lendvai 1983, 9.

[16] Roy Travis, 'Tonal Coherence in the First Movement of Bartók's Fourth String Quartet', *The Music Forum*, ii (1970), 298–371.

[17] Agawu, op. cit., 161.

entirely on juxtaposition of these methods without recognition of Lendvai's contributions.[18] The reason for this is not far to seek. As never before, Lendvai's new book clarifies his indebtedness to Hugo Riemann, whose dualistic theories (whatever their scientific dubiety) underlie Lendvai's thought as a potent myth and sometimes as more than that. As a consequence, Lendvai's approach is chord-centred, with the principle of chord-invertibility carried to extremes. There is no real notion of contrapuntal prolongation of a harmony in the Schenkerian fashion here; counterpoint for Lendvai (as for many German theorists) is a bundle of contrapuntal tricks. It would be hard not to find places in Lendvai's analysis of the slow movement of the Violin Concerto where linear description according to voice-leading, highlighting suspensions and passing notes, would afford an alternative and equally valid description related to the melodic tensions the listener perceives, rather than to the deciphering of inversions of highly complex chord-structures. But to see the latter as a weakness in Lendvai's analyses would be to object to the *alpha* structures whose ubiquity in Bartók suggests that they are no more to be regarded as dependent products of voice-leading than the six-four in Richard Strauss. In matters of this kind there is surprising compatibility between Lendvai and the theories of Forte. One does not have to subscribe to a view of Bartók as atonal to see that *alpha* chords and 1 : 2 scale models are compatible with *The Structure of Atonal Music*. What is needed as a complement is some reasoned basis for explaining voice-leading in the more explicitly tonal pages of Bartók in his high maturity. Ultimately such problems will have to be faced on the scale of Travis's endeavours in relation to the analytical complexities of the Fourth Quartet. Lendvai has provided unique and permanent insight into the classification of harmonic and modal phenomena; future Bartók research will have to clarify those areas where Bartók resorted to "more or less atonal tone-patches very characteristic of the motives" and answer the questions, in what ways are these compatible with function, or how far do they fit into hierarchical theories appropriate to tonal music (which Bartók claimed to be writing). It is debatable, to say the least, whether these questions will permit simple, systematic answers.

It would be a thankless task for a reviewer to enter into detailed discussion of the many analyses of individual works in Lendvai's book. Those interested in elaborations of GS structure should note that apart from the familiar material, there is also the odd note at the back of the book which draws attention to GS features in individual pieces. Some of Lendvai's most arresting writing concerns *Bluebeard's Castle*, a vital work in his characterization of Bartók's music as dramatic, which he conceptualises as Bartók's Instrumental Dramaturgy. Increasingly as the book progresses, technical discussion becomes subservient to "the temptation of 'poetical' exegesis"; Lendvai insists that he is "deciphering the poetic message of these masterpieces (the Quartets) on the basis of tonal and formal features".[19] Inevitably the formal concepts lean on familiar ideas such as *Bogenform*. A cautionary word on historical derivation is in order here. Lendvai comes close to turning a suggestion of Gerald Abraham concerning the Wagner analyses of Lorenz into received opinion. All that Abraham said was that arch form "may well have been suggested to Bartók by Alfred Lorenz's monumental *Geheimnis der Form bei Richard Wagner*", a hypothesis which defies proof now as in 1945 when Abraham

[18] Paul Wilson, 'Concepts of Prolongation and Bartók's Opus 20,' *Music Theory Spectrum*, vi (1984), 79–89; the particular appeal of the *Improvisations* to analysts like Agawu and Wilson is underscored by Bartók's own judgement that they represent "the extreme limit in adding most daring accompaniments to simple folk tunes" (*Essays*, 375).

[19] Lendvai 1983, 547.

was writing.[20] On a slightly different question of deciphering, Lendvai seems unaware of the good company he is keeping in the reading of a "dictionary of keys and note-symbols", particularly in relation to the nineteenth century. The work of scholars like Frits Noske[21] and Constantin Floros suggests strongly that such a dictionary and its accompanying mentality was far from being lost between late Beethoven and Bartók. In these matters, there is good material for establishing historical tradition and precedent from Schubert to Richard Strauss with particular prominence for Wagner and Verdi, two composers whom Lendvai holds in particular esteem. To persuade musical forms to give up their secrets in poetic guise remains one of the more challenging tasks for the musicologist working in the field of nineteenth and twentieth-century music, and Lendvai's endeavour to read through the Quartets of Bartók is no matter for apology.

JOHN WILLIAMSON

[20] Lendvai 1983, 350; Gerald Abraham, 'The Bartók of the Quartets', *Music Letters*, xxvi (1945), 192.

[21] See in particular Frits Noske, 'The Musical Figure of Death' in *The Signifier and the Signified: Studies in the Operas of Mozart and Verdi*, The Hague, 1977, 171–214, and Frits Noske, 'Das exogene Todesmotiv in Musikdramen Richard Wagners', *Die Musikforschung*, xxxi (1978), 285–302.

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

POEMS

Translated by George Szirtes

Árpád Tóth

ÁRPÁD TÓTH: FOR WHOM BEAUTY WAS TRUTH

Balázs Lengyel

ÖRKÉNY IN ENGLISH

George Szirtes

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ARTS

THE ARTIST IN BRACKETS

Whether I look at a photo of Christo presenting cliffs packed in plastic foil or Jovánovics's burning rags suspended from a rope used for drying clothes; whether I read about eggs distributed by girls in the nuddy at an exhibition opening (I cannot remember whose idea it was) or admire a performance by Yves Klein known as a Painting Ceremony offered to us in the form of a photo document—I begin to wonder: what is going to happen to these "works of art"?

There is no doubt that they are much more exciting—especially when experienced on the spot but even in photo documents—than the boredom presented by still-lives or landscapes or even gesture prints lined up on the walls of large rooms. The revolt is understandable. We have had our fill of these panel paintings created with distinguished skill but presenting increasingly less novelty and excitement! Let us try something new!

Well, there is no lack of innovating spirit. At first the picture as such was eliminated—and its place was taken by the work. Instead of a drawn or painted and framed imitation of a vision, we had a plastic, mounted something made unique by all kinds of pinning and sticking (which was still a picture). Then came something which turned its back not only on the generic but on the material requirements as well: plastic art and painting, an arranged heap of litter, thrown-away things put on a pedestal. The concept behind it was that there is no need to create a work of art, it is enough to display my idea about it on a piece of paper. Finally, happenings happened. What is interesting is not the work created but the process of creation; the artist is drawing, painting, modelling, if possible under shocking circumstances, in public; then it is no longer important that the artist should create, it is enough if some people, the man in the street, anyone, is ready to participate in some kind of hanky-panky—perhaps enriched by the television camera and the screen. Then they are recorded in photos, perhaps on film even—for eternity.

A good game. And then what? It occurs to the museum director immediately, his calling being to preserve every new artistic production for posterity, that he must find a way of guarding these artistic creations, placing them in the storerooms of the museum—frequently referred to in a derogatory manner, and—the main point—making it possible to resort to them and display them in twenty years to teach the young and—if we are still around—to find pleasure in them. We already have serious problems with works denying their genres or ignoring generic characteristics. Special plastic boxes must be made for them so that they do not lose their features and decay covered by dust. Finally, there is nothing we can do with the products of the happening and the environment: their timebound character and evasiveness make it impossible for us to preserve them in their original form.

The same problem is faced by the connoisseur, the patron of the arts, the collectors, who would like to continue collecting or simply ornamenting their homes in a discriminating and modern way while counting on the classical forms of works of art and the ways of preserving them. Can we use concept art as an ornament? Or an *objet trouvé*—e.g. an old wireless-set saved from a rubbish heap, a lavatory seat, or a burnt rag? He who undertakes to do so must surely be a dedicated art lover. Even if at the bottom of the garbage or piece of paper hit upon by accident there sits the name of an artist of growing reputation.

Works which do not exist, which have perished, which were born to live for a day, can be neither hung nor looked after in a museum. The problem of the museum is easy to solve. Its documentation department, photo and video collections will render an account of these products—there is nothing else they can do. But how will these artists make a living if the art lovers do not buy their works—because they cannot be used for anything? I believe that here I am touching on the gravest practical problem of today's (neo- and post)avantgarde art—even though it is not talked about, perhaps people are not even aware of it. What then is the fate of works of art, in what form will they survive?

For this is what must be considered here: the essential social role, not to say form of existence, of the classical work of art, be it a picture or a statue, is its preservation by the community or by the individual. That is why all the works of art in the classical sense of the term—that was the *conditio sine qua non*—were made from a lasting and noble material, that is why all of them were made with great care, with a knowledge and work incorporating a long apprenticeship and the experience of decades. And—consciously or unconsciously—all the works of art in the classical sense were born with the teleological aspect designed in them. That is how they were created and conceived, but that is how they were ordered too. They were intended, if not for eternity, then at least for many years or even centuries. This applied to pictures and statues but also to furniture and furnishings.

In my view, the gap about which both artists and the public have been complaining for quite some time is a pseudo-problem, at least in the manner it is usually formulated, as a gap and lack of understanding between new art and the (old) public. This has always been so—at least since a public for art in the present sense of the term has existed. It appears to have the nature of a permanent law. In the long run, the problem resolves itself: the works create their own audience, although doing so slowly and perhaps only after the passing of many years. The processes and ways of looking at the world of the avantgarde of yore, proclaimed to be impossible to understand and shocking, sooner or later become commonplaces that found their way into the clichés of the mass media. The real problem today is that a powerful and aggressive trendiness amongst the artists of our days not only declares that it renounces eternity (and the museums), as was done by the classical avantgarde, but actually abandons a lasting existence or—whether on purpose or not—makes lasting preservation impossible. That is to say, it denies and eliminates one of the basic, not to say ontological, conditions of art.

The phenomenon has substantial aspects as well. What can be communicated or expressed with the help of an object made by someone else and found by me (a discarded tin, a disembowelled wireless-set) or by a work abstracted into a brief text recorded on a single piece of paper, i.e. rendered in verbal form? The age and its civilization will perhaps be incorporated in it just as the polished flint tools and other archaeological findings incorporated the faceless and soulless hordes, thousands or tens of thousands of people, of their age. But no more than that.

This consideration may be best examined in the context of photography, an art the ontological realism of which (i.e. the char-

acteristic feature of always recording some kind of physical reality which is transposed into timelessness) is a basic condition which distinguishes it from all the other arts. Photography is compelled to operate as a medium of description even when the other arts do not depict but display and present only when they no longer create but find and improvise things (or through things) which existed and exist without them as well. At this stage a photographer is still forced to create his work for himself. (Here I am talking about autonomous photography only, leaving out of consideration its utilization in the arts, in mounting, application, manipulation, imitation, etc.)

Thus at this stage the complete negation of material and the technical side of elaboration does not appear in relation to photography. Once photos will be made to fade in a few hours or days—and it is not impossible that such photos will also be invented—then we can return to this question. Or, rather to the end of photography, that is of what Nièpce and Daguerre invented.

On the intellectual side of taking photographs, however, one can discern that same phenomenon, appearing, almost dominating, at least becoming fashionable, which can be seen operating in the above-mentioned avant-garde productions of the object-forming fine arts too: what is the making absolute of the idea in object-creating art, the cult of improvisation. This is nothing else but raising the chance occurrence, the arbitrary to a principle of creation. This modern trend of photography—frequently relying on amateur pictures and moulding them into a cult, moreover into paradigms—may be briefly characterized as follows: its representatives are devoted to recording ensembles of persons and objects put together by chance or arbitrary cutting, in disadvantageous, at times definitely bad light, with figures moving away, exposed onto each other, in the last resort by neglecting technical prescriptions.

Nowadays an increasing number of photographs are exhibited, included in albums, special journals (the mass media reject them!) which were earlier mostly discarded by the photographer himself, even if he was only an amateur of the more discriminating type, and if he failed to do so, they were rejected by the selection committee as bad photos not satisfying technical minimum requirements. Now this type of photography has gained acceptance at certain special forums, moreover it enjoys the admiration of certain people in the profession as well.

"Set" or "made" photos gradually lost their credit which had to be part of the recorded piece of reality—today the photo may be raised to an object of art by the negation of artistic creation or the gesture of the reporter as well. The theoretically conceived *petitio principii* is hidden in the aesthetics of the ugly photo: reality is ugly because that is the way I present it. Naturally, this artistic behaviour is justified under all circumstances—but it has its consequences too, especially if it observes the rules of art. The only way I can put this is that the pattern of controlled chance occurrence is—and here I have in mind Chinese and Japanese calligraphy—that the arbitrary is reality, while control is in my hands.

If the artist refuses to acknowledge this rule, he must reckon with the consequence that including creative subjectivity in brackets means that the creator waives the right to a choice—a judgement in the most general sense of the term. Once he waives the right to a choice, making a judgement *a fortiori*, the document of reality made and presented by him (we cannot talk about a work of art) will offer no more information than an amateur photograph—which corresponds to an everyday message (a banal telephone call, a business or private letter—I purposefully mention here only messages that can be recorded and preserved). Undoubtedly, everyday messages also convey information but to such a minimal extent only that they may be utilized exclusively by statistical or sociological meth-

ods, i.e. it is information which may be evaluated in mass only.

The photographer putting creative subjectivity into brackets must also take into account that his future will be lost in anonymity. If he undertakes to create exclusively modern archaeological findings, then he may continue making botched photos failing to satisfy even the technical minimum requirements. For I cannot imagine the future of his pictures in any other way, but—by analogy with the archaeological processing of the amateur photos of today—as processing by computer. Having occupied the dust or damp of chests of private or (generous) community archives for one or two decades, they are taken out of their hiding places and are analysed together with thousands of anonymous documents and utilized as individual documents in statistical and sociological syntheses. This is a no more attractive future than that which faces the happening or the *objet trouvé*.

PÁL MIKLÓS

THE REDISCOVERY OF HUNGARIAN ART DECO

The exhibition *Hungarian Art Deco* in Budapest's Museum of Applied Arts, is the first move to introduce a trend which has scarcely even had a name here in Hungary and did so by displaying articles of both original and of a high quality. *Art Deco* has been given cautious treatment in the literature internationally. The expression was coined at the 1925 *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris but critics are wont to couple post-Art Nouveau decorative trends to some one or other artistic tendency. To speak of Hungarian art deco is especially daring since interior decoration here in the 1910s, '20s and '30s was not even linked to any genuine Hungarian "grand style".

Nevertheless, the exhibition seems to have justified its organizers' efforts in that there did exist (and still exists) a Hungarian art deco. Both Art Nouveau and the stylistic trends that have grown out of it, gradually becoming simpler and more functional, have had their Hungarian projections in interior design and decoration. This is demonstrable in the use of Hungarian folk art motifs in interior decoration and in the work of artists such as Lajos Kozma, Béla Lajta, Gyula Kaezs and Mrs Kató Kaesz née Lukáts. They have created a decorative art of a unique atmosphere, developed out of European styles and Hungarian particulars. Their work contains functionalism and decorativeness. They have created works which are enriched by stylized folk-art elements, and are clearly recognisable even in their colour scheme, the use of mellow blues and terracotta reds.

The objects are arranged in interiors at the exhibition. Although not all the periods could be represented by all the relevant pieces of furniture and assemblies, the exhibition still conveys information which otherwise would require lengthy descriptions—here one can judge at a glance the function of a given object, its customary place in the home and its rank among the other objects.

Another point in favour of the exhibition is its sincerity. It reveals that art deco was called to meet bourgeois needs and these at times also included trash. As the catalogue implies, the organizers intended to present Hungarian art deco as a case-study in the sociology of art—to show how in a period when real objects of art became rarer and more expensive between the two world wars, the various social strata compensated with pseudo works of art. Some were in a position to have Lajos Kozma or some other major artist design interiors for them; there were also those who had to be content with ready-made fur-

niture and mass-produced vases, lamps and ceramic wall ornaments, fitting into their environment anyhow. Each of the interiors provides a telling proof of what Éva Csenkey, one of the organizers of the exhibition, wrote in her study for the catalogue: "A basic feature of art deco objects is that they principally wish to characterize the owner, the user, and only secondly to serve him. Intellectual functions, considerations of visual effect come before practical function in their shaping."

The exhibition follows Hungarian interior decoration from the late Art Nouveau period to the 1940s, focusing attention throughout on the fact that the main trust of art deco is to create a uniform environment, to blend furnitures, articles for personal use, ornamental pieces and accessory textiles into a harmonic, unified whole. It can be clearly seen how the cheaper, more modest outfits are also given a standing by a rational, airy, reasonable character, and if one were to extend mentally the exhibition to the present day, one could see that the simplest and most modest "high tech" style, with the most modest externals, has now become the most expensive too.

An independent style?

The exhibition raises a problem which has been waiting for an answer for a long time, but it was difficult even to focus on it before art deco could be physically encountered. The problem is this: is art deco a confinable artistic style which emerged at a given moment (say at the Paris exhibition of 1925) and came to an end at another, definable date, or is it a function, a genre of objects of art which in fact has always been a concomitant of grand art?

It is easy to list arguments for and against both propositions. The objects on show at the exhibition perhaps lean to the latter as they suggest that all the main stylistic trends from Art Nouveau onwards, have aimed at a unified concept and a pictorial and formal realization of this conceptual homogeneity, and so have drawn the material world into their sphere. Until we could see the objects in such a systematic grouping, in such large numbers and arranged in chronological order, the inner development of art deco had not been so clear, namely that at first, in the late Art Nouveau period, unity and formal harmony signified a unity of ornamental motifs, but this gradually switched to a formal harmony of the objects when the ornamental motifs virtually disappeared from interior decoration which has become of a functionalistic spirit.

The art deco character of some of the objects on show is questionable, for instance Anna Lesznai's embroidered cushion. But the main feature of the exhibition is not the enjoyable ensemble of spectacle it displays. What makes it praiseworthy is that it has collected more than 500 different objects from more than thirty private and public collections, which have never before been on show, and whose exhibition has now turned attention to a blank spot in the history of Hungarian art.

Art Nouveau ceramics

A fine complement to the exhibition is a small show displaying the ceramics of Hungarian Art Nouveau. The exhibition mounted by Éva Csenkey proves two facts: that a high standard of ceramics existed in Hungary during the period of Art Nouveau and that the rich collection in Budapest's Museum of Applied Arts is able to offer a representative picture of it.

The exhibition centres on products from the Zsolnay factory. "This is the Hungarian factory", Éva Csenkey writes in her preface to the catalogue, "which with its artistic and technical achievements rose to the vanguard of contemporary ceramic art in Europe in such a way that it also shaped the character of this art. It can count on international interest too because a considerable number of the fac-

tory's products can be found in collections far beyond the Hungarian borders and they also feature on the markets for objects d'art, as 80 per cent of the Zsolnay factory's goods have always been produced for foreign markets."

Around the turn of the century Hungarians took part in the research aimed at discovering the secrets of the glaze on chinaware from the Far East. Along with chemists, the painter József Rippl-Rónai[1] also took part in experiments with porcelain in France; his work as a porcelain designer is borne out by several plates, wall pictures and vases in the exhibition.

In his factory in Pécs, Vilmos Zsolnay produced from 1885 onwards, porcelain objects with a specific glaze of a metallic lustre which he called eosin glazed porcelain and which gives his products their specific character. A great many objects at the exhibition attest to the extremely varied uses of this eosin glaze, shading into different colours, either covering the object as a whole or applied to certain parts of it. Although it is very difficult to choose what to comment on, two objects perhaps stand out among them: the *Vase with Chestnut Branches*, an exceptionally fine example of the harmonic use of the original motif and the eosin glaze of virtuoso colouring and the flower bowl with its birds and scrolls.

Alongside the Zsolnay workshop, the exhibition presents the work of the porcelain factories of Herend, Körmöcbánya and Budapest (Ignác and Emil Fischer), the Városlőd Pottery, the Hungarian Royal School of Applied Arts, and of some private designers.

Of the latter the works of Elza Kövesházi Kalmár are pre-eminent. The artist, working with an excellent sense for material and form, who lived and achieved acclaim in Vienna and Florence as well as in Budapest, features in the exhibition with some individual works she composed expressly for ceramics. Apart from her sculptures, the *Frogshaped Lamp* (illuminating from within,) is outstanding with a magic character recalling Egyptian scarabs and superbly executed.

This exhibition of the ceramics of Hungarian Art Nouveau was originally mounted in Faenza, commissioned by the International Programme of Artistic Ceramics. The chairman, Edoardo Dalmonte, called it the most outstanding display of 1985.

[1] *NHQ* 99.

ÉVA FORGÁCS

HUNGARIAN GOBELIN: THE WHEEL COMES FULL CIRCLE

Late 1985 saw an exhibition in the Budapest Műcsarnok under the title of *Hungarian Gobelin 1945–1985*. After 1945, the radical change that took place in the sponsorship of the arts in Hungary, was felt principally in branches which need significant financial support. According to the catalogue, the exhibition set itself the twin main goals of giving a historical review of the tapestries made on official commissions and of reflecting the present state of Hungarian tapestry.

The fact how closely linked tapestries are to state sponsorship can be easily seen in the exhibition. A mere ten per cent or so of the more than one hundred works on display are in private ownership; the majority are to be found in museums or in cultural centres, council-halls, schools and other public buildings. The organizers wished to display the broadest possible range of contemporary works and to this end, a competition was conducted in 1982. This sparked off great

interest and most of the new works on show were made for this occasion.

*

Between the two wars tapestry could be considered as marginal in Hungary. By the late 1950s it advanced into a supported, indeed practically artificially revived form. Over many years it has ensured a living for quite a few painters and weaving artists. The recent exhibition presented a selection from the work of nearly half a century.

*

The first room displayed the works of the acknowledged masters, the most notable of them being Noémi Ferenczy[1]. She is, to the present day, the only truly outstanding artist in Hungarian gobelin art though she died nearly thirty years ago. Her tapestries on show, although all dating from after 1945, convey the radiating light of a much earlier artistic period of hers. Noémi Ferenczy was born in 1890, and studied at the *Manufacture des Gobelins* in Paris. She preceded by some twenty-five years Jean Lurcat, who revived French tapestry design. By the second decade of the century Ferenczy arrived at the view that tapestry is only able to carry a modern message if the artists abandoned their custom of weaving existing paintings and, always aware of technical considerations, make genuine designs for tapestries. She made many innovations, the essence of her method being that all phases of the work, from the design to the actual weaving be carried out by the artist. This calls for a flexible imagination —Noémi Ferenczy kept changing her designs even during the process of weaving if the colour, the form or the quality of the thread so demanded. Just as the painter's approach differs from that of the sculptor and just as the statue and the painting receive their final form in the hands of the artist, so too the tapestry has its own particularities which spring from the nature of the material and to ignore these would be similar to trying to sculpt with a brush. At the beginning of the century, Noémi Ferenczy's views were topical. For her to weave by her own hand must have been important not only from a technical point of view, while doing it she also developed a practice of contemplation which helped her come nearer to a better understanding of nature and the human world and to revealing the relationships between the two.

This made her themes original too. In his study of 1934, Charles de Tolnay described how Noémi Ferenczy built her singular system of symbols out of her pantheistic view of nature and how this was transformed in her works of the 1930s, in keeping with her leftist political leanings. The *Woman Carrying Sticks* or *Budding Tree*, to take two examples from those of her works on show, are allegories in praise of work; however, the pattern in the fringe suggests a further interpretation: the original theme becomes expanded and the round of nature is placed in parallel with the round of communal life. Work done for others, as the only useful activity and sense of human life, remained a specific and sincere element of Noémi Ferenczy's art throughout.

*

By now it has become a general practice for both the painter and the weaving artist to design their tapestry themselves and take part in the preparation of the cartoon. But there are many fewer who actually weave the tapestry themselves. Many painters make tapestries starting from an expressly pictorial approach, without conforming to the demands of the technique.

The realism of the 1950s, with its scenes in detailed narration, was followed by the 1960s, by a great stylistic variety. The tapestry made greater aesthetic freedom possible than the panel painting of the period did. This, however, resulted not only in a

[1] *NHQ* 75.

bolder artistic approach, in the majority of cases it also brought forth ill-considered compositions, which are not really worth mentioning. Unfortunately the style and the history of the tapestry cannot really be evaluated if the outstanding works in the genre are only reflections of Hungarian painting. In the course of the adaptation the original work often lost its essence and even where an adaptation is successful it has little in common with the qualities of the original work.

Work by Dezső Korniss, one of the most important figures in the painting of the recent past suffered this fate. The lines of the dynamic calligraphy still preserve the wing of the artist's gestures, but the random run and spread of the paint, which forms part of the aesthetic effect, loses its very essence—spontaneity—when woven into threads. Naturally there also are more fortunate adaptations, such as a sketch of Jenő Barcsay's composition, the *Interlocutors*, which was originally a mosaic; woven into a tapestry, it now resembles a collage. Of contemporary Hungarian painters, it is the panels of József Németh whose soft colours and flat, large forms are perhaps the most suited to serve as bases for adaptations.

Of the works of present-day Hungarian textile artists, mention should be made of Gabriella Hajnal's tapestries and pieces by Lenke Széchényi, Endre Domanovszky, Klára Tassy and Mária Tury. Unfortunately the imposingly rich exhibition fails to present to the visitor how Hungarian textile artists have attempted to go beyond officially supported mediocrity. Having applied mixed weaving processes, they raised Hungarian tapestry into a noteworthy means of expression, pointing beyond the role of mere decorativeness. Had the exhibition adhered less rigidly to giving priority to hand-woven tapestries, it could have ensured more space to the textiles of the youngest generation. Because this generation, in an ironic retrospection, strives deliberately to imitate techniques that are contrary to the gobelin. Katalin Nagy, Judit Nagy, Ibolya Hegyi, Ildikó Dobrányi, Márton Barabás, Zsuzsa Pérely and Gizella Solti, to mention just a few, imitate in their use of the thread and the delicate reticular structure which follows from weaving mosaics, copperplates, photography and autotypes of the video screen. The contrast between the gobelin technique and the imitated technique, a taste for the bizarre, the inapposite, this new eclecticism is self-evident consequence of the artistic past of those forty years which have been on show here.

MÁRIA ILLYÉS

GRAPHICS — ILLUSTRATION — ANIMATION

Works by István Orosz and Dóra Keresztes

In August 1985 an exhibition of the works of two graphic artists opened in the Vigadó Gallery. István Orosz* and Dóra Keresztes, husband and wife both in their early thirties, specialize in applied graphics. They began working in the second half of the seventies. Orosz distinguished himself with his surrealistic posters, evocative of the steel engravings of the turn of the century and Keresztes with her illustrations taken from the motifs of eighteenth-century sunk-panelled ceilings. Both artists differed in style from the forms of the drawings and posters of the time—mainly concept art and photography—and critics soon discovered and appreciated their originality.

The exhibition in the Vigadó offers a cross-section of Orosz's first ten years. His

* *NHQ* 72.

early work which attracted attention stems from his student years: an alphabet composed of insects. This work was significant both typographically and as a poster; it was followed by posters assembled from the motifs of old maps: *Voltaire* (1976) and *Zrínyi Miklós* (1977). Voltaire's head is shaped as a paraphrase of a map of Paris: the city walls outline the head, the brows and eyes are playfully and wittily shaped from the buildings, streets and squares, his mouth is the Seine and the Ile de la Cité and the jaw is part of the city on the other side of the river. At the bottom of the map, from the crest of a hill, people admire a view of Paris, the head of Voltaire mosaically constructed.

A work commemorating Miklós Zrínyi is composed with the same technique but here the portrait of the great military leader is made up of a fortress and its surrounding moat. Here too, Orosz followed the convention of old maps, and put a figure on the poster: on the hill in the foreground Zrínyi on horseback repeats the portrait in the background formed by the fortress and the moat.

Two theatre posters—for József Katona's *Bánk Bán* and Csokonai's *Dorottya*—have a similar structure; here the portraits of the author and the heroine of Csokonai's comic epic are constructed from the interior of the theatre, the curtains, the stage, the hall and the chandeliers.

Posters made in the second half of the seventies reflect István Orosz's interest in the characteristic, serried horizontal hatches on the steel engravings of the late nineteenth century. Although his earlier works had already featured a kind of surrealism based on montage, these posters—the *Painter* (1979) the *Sculptor* (1979) and *Centaur* (1979)—are clearly surrealistic and comparable to Max Ernst's drawings of the 1920s. In the final analysis these works are built on some unusual function of a motif of part of the body or object. *Centaur* leaning on the pedestal is the twentieth-century descendant of the half-man, half-horse mythological figures. (In the Hungarian spelling *Kenta ur* there is a pun involved: *ur* is *Mr*, so he is *Mr Kenta*.) On his pedestal the statue is not his own bronze portrait but a toy horse on wheels. Mr. Kenta himself is probably an artist, anyway, *Weltschmerz* is written all over his face but even if he is something else, he is a rather more poetic creature than his wild, rough and violent relatives in Greek mythology.

Orosz's attraction to anamorphosis is shown by his print *Verne* (1984). Here two figures watch the struggles of a wrecked sailing-ship—a reference to one of the favourite themes of the great French story-teller—but if we place a polished steel cylinder on a certain point of the paper, the portrait of Jules Verne appears.

In the works of Orosz, professional craft and technical expertise play an important part; these are more than formal concerns, they are organic to his composition. The artist is also interested in mazes. These prints are mainly re-interpretations of older mazes though some have been designed by the artist himself.

Orosz creates a kind of secondary world beyond vision, constructed of different object-elements; he paraphrases by using originals—old maps, photos, 19th century engravings—as raw material.

Since 1977 Orosz has been making animated films: up to now he completed five. The latest made in 1985, is entitled *Ah, America!* In theme and style it draws on the turn of the century; the characters are emigrants from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy en route to the U.S.A., the story tells their vicissitudes and their assimilation in the new world.

Dóra Keresztes has been and is reaping success mainly with her book illustrations and lino-cuts.

Her illustrations to the shaman-songs feature a cosmic unity of man, beast and nature. This effect has been obtained through abstract, stylized forms, with different symbols—the Sun, the Moon.

Her illustrations to *The Peasant Decameron* (1977), especially on the inside covers, show

István Orosz: Ah, America!

the inspiration of eighteenth-century sunk-panelled ceilings. The illustrations whose original lino-cuts were exhibited show surrealistic forms and concise composition.

The small textile pictures assembled from different pieces of cloth were made in the late 1970s. These works could be called patchwork pictures: they are applied and sewn collages from cloths of different material and colour.

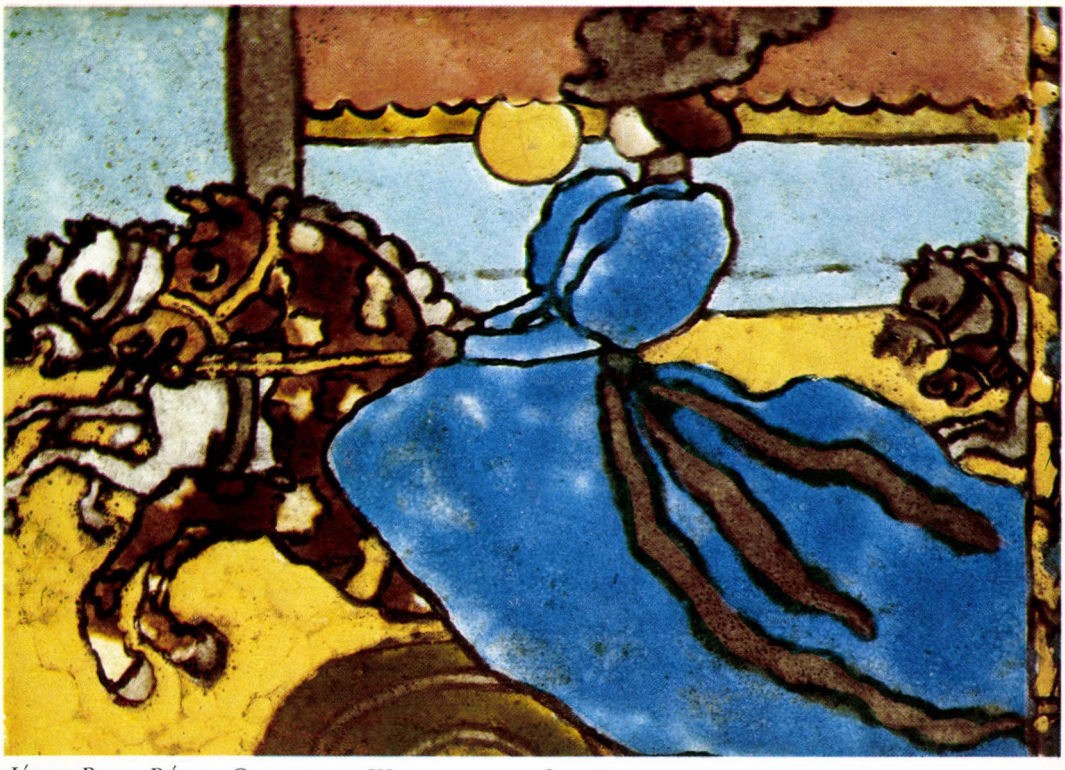
A painting made for the album cover of *Outstanding Days* (1985) consist of several tiny pictures of brilliant reds, blues, greens and whites; inspired by folk tales: they are epic and surrealistic at the same time.

The figures on her lino-cut illustrations for Hungarian folk tales, the man stuck in the barrel or the pigtailed centaur with extended arms resplendent with vivid colours (1983) bring to mind the forms and motifs of old woodcuts and cards.

The illustrations of Keresztes evoke the mood of the *Biblia Pauperum*, the poems of Villon or *Carmina Burana*, where religion, eroticism, myths and superstitions mix spontaneously and create a colourful and yet homogeneous world. Her art is fresh and remarkable because, unlike many of her colleagues, she does not strive for some artistic glory of her own, she is content with only making illustrations. But she treats her themes with so much sensitivity—especially the tales and myths—that although intended as illustrations to literary works, her pictures become original works with their own content and style. Dóra Keresztes has tried to find her individual path as an illustrator and she succeeded. This path avoids the two usual pitfalls: the draughtsman seeking books, texts for his works, and the slavish, styleless drudgery of the artisan of limited or no ambition.

This exhibition in the Vigadó showed that the works of these artists have similar roots and complement each other. They both extend the styles of different periods of the past

Ágnes Kolozs



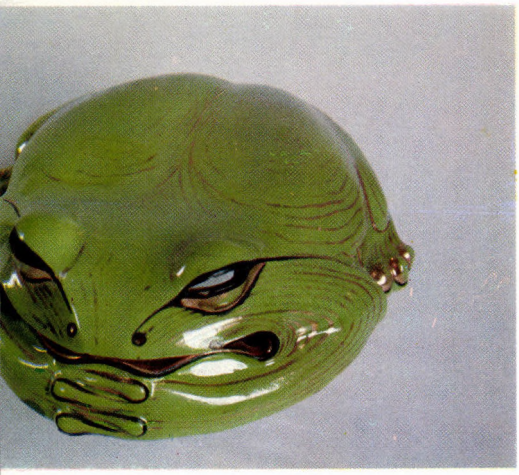
József Rippl-Rónai: Carroussel. Wall picture. 1897. Glazed faience. 17.5×24.9 cm

Vase with chestnut branches. 1900.
Faience eosin glaze, Zsolnay Factory

Mihály Szabó

Interior from the Art deco Exhibition: Furniture by Ödön Faragó, cca 1905

Interior from the Art deco Exhibition. Furniture by Károly Nagy
Carpets by Árpád Vértes, Ceramics by Mária Ráhner, Bowls by Margit Fiora, cca 1935.

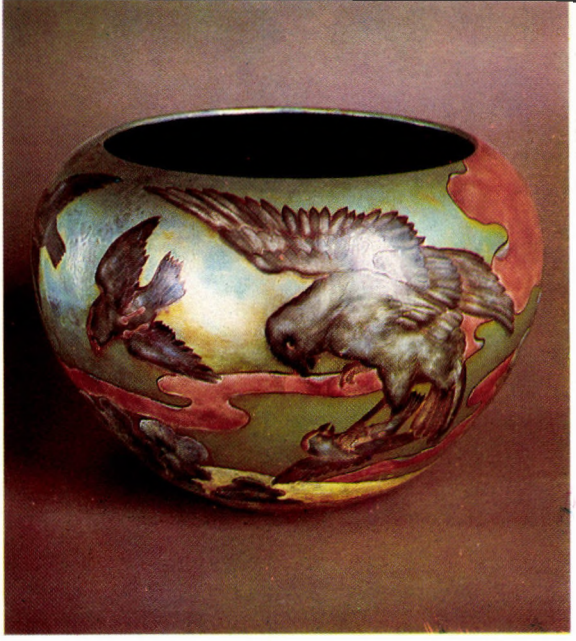


HAPED LAMP DESIGNED BY ELZA KÖVESHÁZI KALMÁR, 1911. FAIENCE, GLAZED AND GILDED. WIENER KUNSTKERAMISCHE WERKSTÄTTE.

DISH, DESIGNED BY SÁNDOR APÁTI ABT AND LAJOS MACK. 1903. FAIENCE, EOSIN GLAZE, ZSOLNAY FACTORY

ARMCHAIR BY LAJOS KOZMA, 1912

Ágnes Kolozs

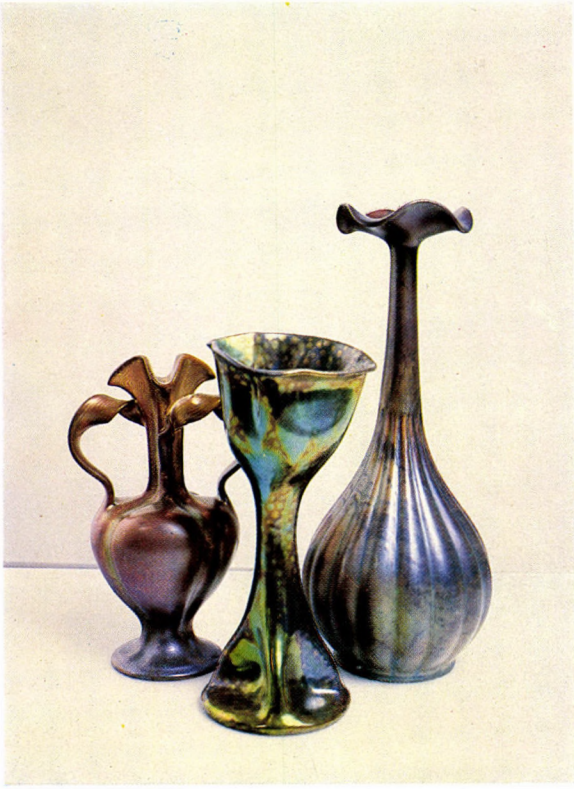


Ágnes Kolozs

Flower bowl by Sándor Hidasi Pillo. Faience Painted Eosin from the Zsolnay Factory

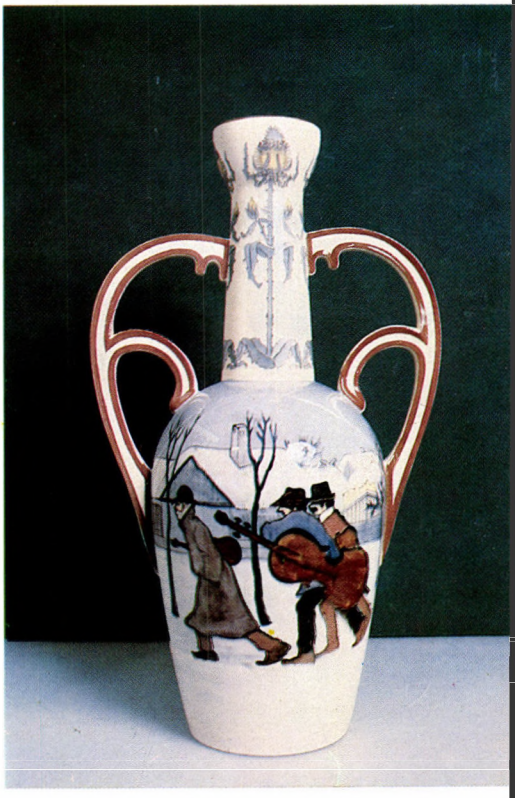
Vase with butterfly designed by Mihály K. Nagy 1900–1901. Faience eosin glaze, Zsolnay Factory

Vases from the Zsolnay Factory. 1898



Mihály Szabó

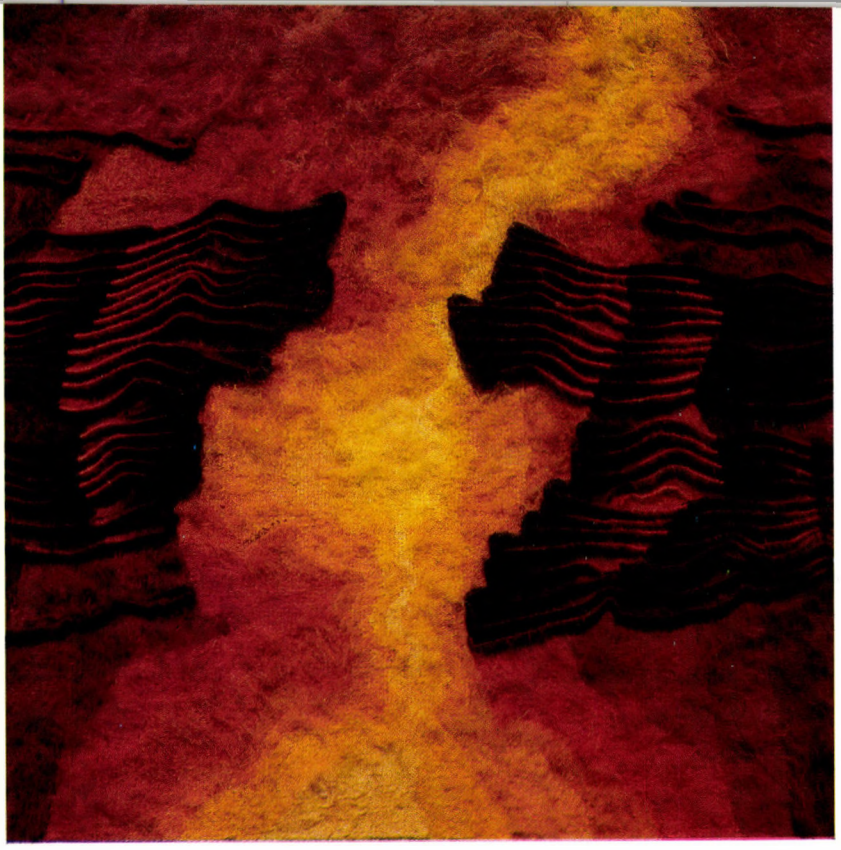
Vase from the Zsolnay Factory. 1904



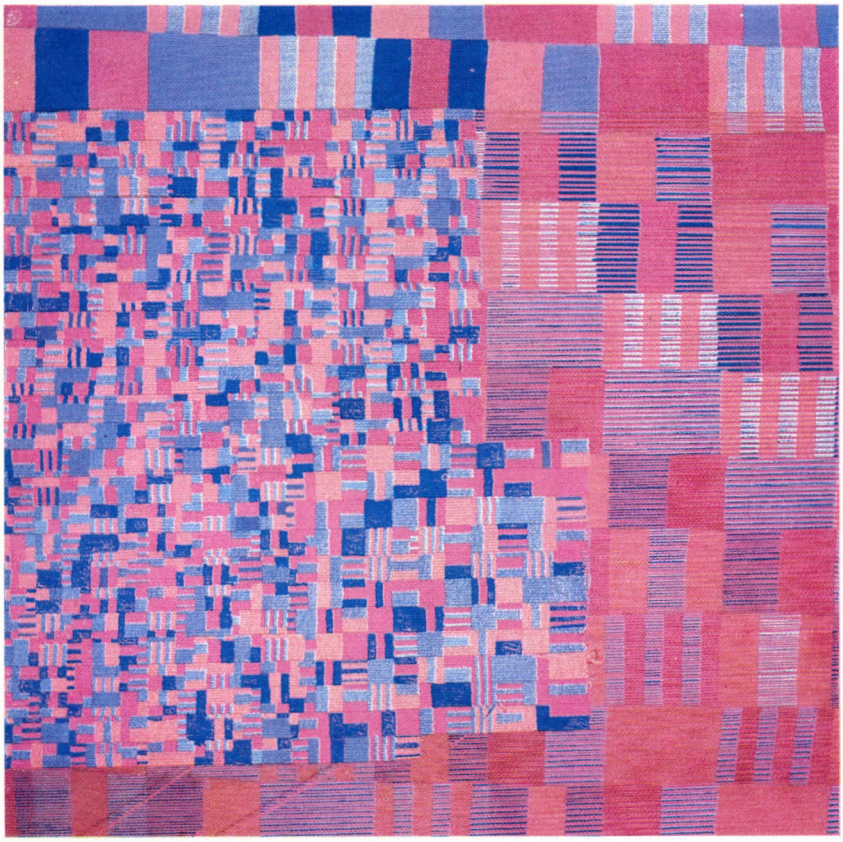
Noémi Ferenczy: Woman Carrying Sticks.
1945–46. 160×87 cm
Hungarian National Gallery

ó Barcsay: Sitting up. 1983–84.
adruple warping. 240×280 cm
say Collection, Szentendre

Judit Ruzsa

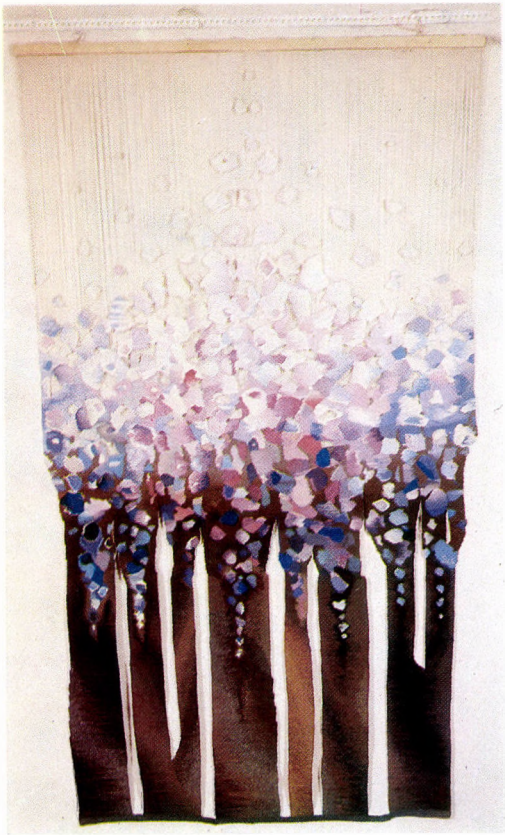


Anna Kubinyi: Volcano.
1983. 160×160 cm.
Bük Medical Baths



Gabriella Hajnal:
Cylinder and Superficies
1983. 210×245 cm

Judit Ruska



Erzsébet Katona Szabó: Blooming,
1982. 240×150 cm

Judit Ruska

Eta Erdélyi: Talks, 1983.
250×175 cm.
Ministry of Culture

Zsuzsa Pérely: The Musicians Came Back, 1982. 110×150 cm. *Private property*

Endre Domanovszky: Studio House, 1977. *Applied Arts Company*

Judit Rusk

and make them the vehicles for their own mode of expression in a way that their individuality always breaks through the archaic world of forms employed.

The posters of István Orosz may be classed among the works of the best younger artists who started in the second half of the seventies. As to his other graphic works and those of Dóra Keresztes, they belong to the sophisticated category of the genre treating literary and historical themes with sensitivity and refinement.

LAJOS LÓSKA

FROM THE DIARY OF A NAUGHTY LITTLE GIRL

Ágnes Háy's drawings

Ágnes Háy is unique in Hungarian art. Her animated cartoons, drawn first as an amateur, then produced by the Balázs Béla Studio, made her famous because it was immediately clear that a particular way of seeing and rendering things distinguished this artist in her mid-thirties from everybody else.

The secret of her films and drawings is a kind of hidden grotesque view of things. However, while the stylized figures of her films perform stylized actions (stumbling plasticine figures, Kafkaesque little bureaucrats totter through her sequences) and the grotesque experience derives from their humour, her drawings are so scrupulously realistic in every detail and their line is so clear that one wonders why they seem ironic and distant and wonders what makes them so strange.

In her first one-woman show the subjects were the illustrations, drawings and comic strips made for her animated films and the apparently insignificant trivia of our everyday environment: wall-sockets, pencil-holders, water-heater tubes, dressers, corner cupboards, tea-cups and left-over food, heavy wardrobes handed down—the list is almost endless—elevated and emphasized through the act of drawing them; the grotesque effect is partly due to the sudden prominence of objects kept in the background of servitude. Ágnes Háy visibly enjoys thrusting objects before our eyes whose existence we normally ignore. This attitude has presumably something to do with the behaviour of a naughty child: one has the impression that mummy has taken a little girl with her on a visit and while the adults talked of serious matters, the little girl drew everything she saw and drew it exactly as befits a good little girl. The accent, however, is on her doing *other things* than adults would do, or indeed, expect from a well brought up-child. Heeding the imaginary invitation to "be good and draw something," she puts on paper things which the world wants to hide from sight: filthy corners with cobwebs, unwashed dishes, messy dressers, untidied tables are sketched with charmingly innocent skill, drawn with incredible deftness and sensitivity, enclosed within characteristically strong lines.

Line is something special in the hands of Ágnes Háy, and, as with every graphic artist, her style remains a secret. She does have her own style—not manner!—which can be recognized from afar. The line follows her pencil with a mocking precision, and while it seems to record tangible reality with a humble fidelity, it actually obeys the command of a highly subjective inner power. The line itself bears the mark of the artist's personality, not her mode of rendering: on this level of spontaneous expression we come to know Ágnes Háy as a persistent, accurate,

cool and sharpsighted artist, free from the routine of adults and the commonplace of habit.

Despite all, this graphic work is not child-like or infantile, although she has preserved the childlike ability to look at things without prejudice, to tell stories, and breathe life into an object with a power and an intensity far above the average.

Ágnes Háy selects her motifs with deliberate sophistication: she manages to find those segments of reality which can convey the essence of her message.

ÉVA FORGÁCS

A HUNGARIAN ARTIST IN THE NETHERLANDS

Exhibition of Vilmos Huszár in Budapest

To coincide with this recent exhibition a beautifully produced monograph was published in Utrecht.* Its authors, Sjarel Ex and Els Hoek, also organized the Budapest Exhibition which was mounted in the Hungarian National Gallery by art historian Mariann Gergely.

Visitors enter a world of lucid, simple forms, exquisite colours, order and consistency. Vilmos Huszár's career was unbroken from Art Nouveau to constructivism, he produced a great quantity of harmonious works in many genres: painting, drawing, interior decoration, glass painting, furniture and architectural design.

He was born in Budapest on January 5th, 1884, and moved to Holland in 1914 where he lived until his death in 1960. In 1905 he had introduced himself with a romantic work in the Budapest Art Gallery, a self-portrait with pistol, which was probably his last truly tragic work. He had studied in the Industrial Drawing School of Budapest, as did most of the young artists of the early twentieth century who were in touch with the latest developments. He then endeavoured to learn painting more thoroughly in the free school run by Simon Hollósy.

Nevertheless, his best pictures from around 1906 show the influence of Ripp-Rónai, one of the first great figures in modern Hungarian painting: his one-man show in 1906 was the first sign of the triumph of modern Hungarian art in Budapest.**

In the first decade of the century Huszár had stayed in Paris too where, apart from Van Gogh, the drawings and paintings of Seurat had had an impact on him. The graceful forms and ethereal eroticism of Art Nouveau were also a source of inspiration to Huszár as the portraits he painted between 1907 and 1912 clearly show. For a time he followed the great post-impressionist masters but around 1912–13 he was jolted out of this refined, organic world by Futurism, then sweeping across Europe. Among the Futurists, Severini's pictures full of movement had the greatest impact: in these the figures turn into the rhythmic movement of regular, cell-like forms. Around 1915 Huszár first copied, then paraphrased Van Gogh's fishing boats (1888) from above.

In 1916 he embarked on a new course with a more abstract idiom and became a Dutch avantgarde artist. In the Netherlands, the space analysed by cubism became a very simple structure of horizontals and verticals, coloured rectangles, squares and screens. The progress of Piet Mondrian, who worked in Paris in the 1910s, is evidence of this trend: so too were the forms created by the architect

* Sjarel Ex–Els Hoek: *Vilmos Huszár schilder en ontwerper*, 1884–1960

** *NHQ* 99.

and stained-glass designer Bart van Leck, who became Huszár's close friend and collaborator. The transparent glass held out opportunities for the play of light; the lucid order of straight lines fascinated Huszár and he became a representative of the new trend. Theo van Doesburg, a Dutch artist and theorist, tried to define this trend in a book published in 1917 in Delft. It was at the same time a *style* which could be used in every branch of art, as is suggested by the title of the journal *De Stijl*, a major periodical of the new movement. In 1916 Huszár was still involved in Art Nouveau portraits and cubist composition; in 1917 he was already designing windows of a chess-board structure and produced the design for the cover page of *De Stijl*, a woodcut representing a ground-plan of a building, a spatial design graphically produced.

He felt the significance of the beginning of a new era. In his *Composition no. II*, painted in 1917, a dynamic mosaic built up of coloured rectangles, composed to recall the different movements of people walking in the streets, he wrote the year and month in the top corner.

The suggestion of movement was always a major element in Huszár's paintings and drawings. Severini's streetscapes influenced him greatly and stylized movement remained one of his main themes. Between 1917 and 1920 he produced his mechanical dancing figure in two versions: as a graphic and as an actually movable stage harlequin: it was the precursor of the mechanical theatre figures introduced several years later on the German stage.

From 1918 he was also concerned with colour-light relationships, and after 1919, like the other artists grouped around *De Stijl*, he turned to interior decoration. He designed the furnishings of house-boats and living-rooms; his interiors are full of bright, cheerful elements. Between 1920 and 1924 he worked together with many architects; by then Dutch contructivism was known throughout the world. In those years he was prominent among the Hungarian activists and contructivists working in Vienna and Berlin, and reproductions of his work appeared in the *Book of New Artists* (Kassák–Moholy-Nagy, Vienna, 1922). In 1922 he visited Weimar and the Bauhaus, attended the Dadaist meeting, and, together with Theo van Doesburg who lived there, organised a Dadaist tour in Holland. He met the great Russian constructivist El Lissitzky in 1923 in The Hague; earlier he had met Moholy-Nagy in Berlin and Schwitters in Hannover. In the mid-twenties Huszár was often in Paris, moved in the circle of Paul Dermée and met some compatriots, Alfréd Réth, József Csáky and Lajos Tihanyi.* André Kertész photographed him in the company of Parisian friends. He presented his mechanical dancing figures which are related to Oscar Schlemmer's figures and even more to the mechanical theatre made by another Hungarian, Andor Weininger, in 1923 in Weimar.

Like constructivist artists in general, Huszár was greatly interested in typography and poster design. His posters and vignettes (such as the vignette of the dancing school made around 1930) were better known in Europe than his paintings.

Between 1930 and 1940, like many other European artists, Huszár returned to figurative painting, and between 1940 and 1960 he produced variations on and combinations of the two styles.

Both the 1985 Budapest exhibition and the book printed in Utrecht have the merit of having selected with the utmost care the most valuable works from Huszár's rich and manysided œuvre.

JÚLIA SZABÓ

* *NHQ* 97.

A PAINTER OF THE GREAT PLAIN

In an article appositely headed People of the Hungarian Plain in the *Daily Telegraph* for April 10, 1984, Terence Mullaly wrote that "The roots of her art are in the countryside (. . .) Rozália Koszta knows how to record the character of the people of the great Hungarian plain."

Rozália Koszta has indeed got the Hungarian plain in her blood. She was born in Gyula, a small town in South-East Hungary in 1925, where she lives to this day. One of the paintings in her exhibition in London's Fryd Gallery was *My Mother*, representing a peasant woman with a headscarf. Rozália Koszta has remained faithful to the landscape and human types of her native Plain. She has also retained the reticence of its people in works which are laconic, devoid of superfluous finery.

She herself remembers being able to draw before she would walk. In the family, they said of her that if they sat her on a large piece of wrapping paper and gave her a pencil, she would be totally and silently absorbed. In school she had the best penmanship, her copybooks were shown around and admired. Later she copied the faces and figures of actresses from postcards she was sent by her classmates. At the time it seemed that there would be no chance whatever for her to study drawing and go to the academy.

After completing the four years of higher elementary school she went to work at the age of fifteen in one of the many childrens' sanatoria that had been established in Gyula. As a hobby she used to draw portraits of the tiny patients.

In the years after the Second World War many young talents of peasant origin were given the opportunity to study in the capital. Rozália Koszta was one who tried her luck. In 1948 she was admitted to the Derkovits Art College, and in 1949 the Academy of Fine Arts. She studied painting under Gyula Hincz and anatomical drawing under Jenő Barcsay. The Principal of the college was András Beck, the sculptor who recently died in Paris, and according to Rozália Koszta, he concerned himself with more than professional education of his pupils by interesting himself in imparting a general cultural education to them.

In 1950 Rozália Koszta obtained a scholarship to the Repin Institute of the Leningrad Academy of Art. There, in the dominant style, they learned to represent everything minutely and naturalistically; in so doing they acquired sure drawing skills and sense of form. When she came home, she started painting with the resolve "to express myself with as little as possible because I have made detailed paintings for so long. . . . I tried to paint more freely, with broad, dynamic brush-strokes, like sketching . . . ."

She had her first exhibition in her native town in 1957 and settled there. It was not easy to break immediately with what she had learned at the Academy. Her post-impressionist period with a looser mode of painting lasted until the early 1960s. "I started to stylize only slowly, I spread out larger and larger planes, and used less and less division. A journey to Lake Balaton proved to be very helpful, because of its impact I returned to pure colours".

She found her present style toward the end of the sixties, to go by her exhibition in the Budapest Ernst Museum in December 1985. Her works of fifteen years clearly show that Rozália Koszta is unique among the practicians of plain painting in Hungary.*

She considers herself first and foremost a portraitist. Her portraits are characterized by a large-scale synthesis of sensitive details. These portraits are sketched with a sure hand, going straight to the core of the character of their models; in many

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cases they are sociological diagnoses. Alongside the men in fur-caps and the women with their hair up whose faces reflect the peasant past, appear the people of the present. Sentimentalisation is entirely absent even in her many portraits of children. The line reveals the artist's hidden humour and inclinations to caricature. Her adults are often yellowish-green, as in the paintings of Gauguin, and yet they are the genuine types of the Hungarian Plain. If they are beautiful, their beauty is austere and puritanic: it appears in the form of their head or in the structure of their features.

There is no sentimentality in her landscapes either. She studies the structure of the landscape not through geometric abstraction but by unifying natural forms—as *Fekete Körös* (1983) (Black Körös) or *White Church* (1985)—whose suggestivity derives from just this disciplined unity.

Her still-lifes are of small flowers which appear larger. She paints also large panneaus —the first was entitled *My Great-Grandmother with Her Daughters* and was made in 1972. Its size is 125×122 cm. One of her early major works was *Women* (Souvenir from Kárpátalja 1975, painted in several versions) in the process of abstraction.

The timeless calm of the two women on the bench, the unbroken mass of the dark forest in the background, the ultimate simplicity of the whole render this work monumental. This, together with other large-size compositions, suggests that the artist has arrived now to the threshold of abstraction several times but seems to have decided against crossing it.

MÁRIA EMBER

THE PAINTING OF MARIANNE GÁBOR

The Europe of yesteryear, the Hungary of the misty past is what contrasts the visitor at Marianne Gábor's exhibition of 1986. A Europe which is not yet suffering the consequences of industrialization, a Hungary that knows nothing of modernisms, infiltrating slowly but surely. What it does know is the culture of spectacle and the spectacle of culture—in a most delectable interpretation. Cafés and old ladies turned grey in decent respectability, sanctuaries of vocal music and intimate grounds of craftsmanship, people in hats and in cloth-caps, garden furniture and tropical plants are the characters that appear on Marianne Gábor's stage.

It was in the school of the painter István Szőnyi*, that Marianne Gábor learned both her craft and her sense of art. After 1945, she tried to make her entrance as a member of the community of Hungarian Post-impressionists, the great names of bourgeois standing. In the early 1960s she became known in Italy and France and she found the manner in which to realize her Italian and French experiences into pictures. This is perhaps why Marianne Gábor's art has not really been integrated into Hungarian painting. She recounts a world which is wonderful even in its dilapidation and shabbiness, in which those who feel at home are privileged in intellect and taste, enjoying through the mysterious faculties of sensitivity.

* *NHQ* 97.

Marianne Gábor exhibits her works regularly in Western Europe. Her self-portraits are in the Uffizi, and her work in San Marco, Florence, has inspired a poem of Diego Valeri's. And yet her art seems to be isolated, even though it shows a kinship with the former futurist Filippo de Pisis and Raoul Dufy, the one-time fauve. Marianne Gábor is a late relative of theirs. Italian and French "Re-impressionism," a modernism exchanged for Impressionism, means the preservation of values but it also means a withdrawal from problems. Today, however, this attitude is engaged in tying up a severed strand in Hungarian culture.

JULIANNA P. SZŰCS

ASIAN SADDLE-CLOTHS

Exhibiton in Budapest and Sárvár

A valuable and fascinating private collection was recently on show in Hungary, first in the Ethnographical Museum of Budapest and later in the Nádasdy Museum of Sárvár. What Nicolas M. Salgo, the present U. S. Ambassador to Hungary, put forward for exhibition is, in fact, the largest collection of eastern saddle-cloths in the world.

These saddle-cloths are from China, East-Turkestan, Tibet, Central Asia, Afghanistan, India, Persia, the Caucasus, Turkey and Syria. Salgo has attempted to build up a complete collection and has succeeded in that it offers a comprehensive view of the saddle-cloths used by the equestrian peoples of Asia. With recent acquisitions, the collection now numbers one hundred and twenty-seven pieces, including eighteen Chinese, twenty Tibetan and sixty Persian saddle-cloths; one Afghan, Uzbek, Turkmenian, Indian Moghul, Anatolian Turkish, Azerbaidzhani and Syrian saddle-cloths also figure in it and there is the attractive supplement of ten eastern horse-blankets, two saddle-bags and a saltbag.

The majority of the pieces were made in the second half of the last or in the early years of this century with the exception of an embroidered Moghul saddle-cloth from India made in 1737 and a few Chinese and Tibetan saddle-cloths which may date from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

The historical and artistic significance of this unique collection lies in the fact that Asian saddle-cloths are a gradually dying art since motor transport is bringing an end to the reign of horses and other pack animals in Asia as well. The Salgo collection preserves and displays a treasure of forms, colours, patterns and materials, preparation techniques and methods of use which go back several centuries. Through them an essential part of the life and art of the equestrian peoples of Asia is evoked.

At international auctions old examples are only occasionally to be found and even the largest collections of carpets contain hardly any saddle-cloths from the Far East or Persia. Mr Salgo bought the first saddle-cloth for his collection in Switzerland in 1940 and for years methodically looked for typical specimens of Asian saddle-cloths in Iran, Afghanistan and other eastern countries. The saddle-cloths of the eastern collection of A. J. Prior, purchased in Asia Minor and London prior to the last war, are now an integral part of the Salgo collection. In 1981 Youssef Bolour, an expert on carpets, wrote an article on Persian saddle-cloths published in the periodical Hali in London, in which he presented nineteen specimens of the Salgo collection, pointing out that this is the largest collection in the world, a collection only

rivalled by that in the Fitzwilliam Museum of Cambridge.

Asian saddle-cloths represent a variety of different forms: the Chinese, Tibetan and East-Turkestanian specimens have angular or rounded corners. Tibetan saddle-cloths were generally used in pairs, the characteristic butterfly-like saddle-cloths were placed on the back of the horse while the smaller, rectangular cloths were put on the saddle. The saddle-cloths made in Persia are generally rectangular but some of them have rounded corners at one end. The Afghan, Turkmenian, Uzbek saddle-cloths are smaller in size with one end generally rounded. Saddle-cloths are made of wool, cotton or some kind of animal hair with Indian, Chinese, Tibetan, Uzbek and Syrian examples containing silk as well. In most cases the saddle-cloths were made making use of various techniques of knotting; they were also made from woven materials, embroidered, combined with silk and leather, with their lining and hem being of velvet, silk, felt or simple canvas. (An analysis of the materials and techniques involved was made by the textile-restorer Zsuzsa Farkasvölgyi Gombos.)

Their colours are harmonious; the colours and shades of the saddle-cloths made at the turn of the eighteenth century and during the nineteenth century are bright, the colouring of the most recent specimens is more striking; the materials of the majority of the saddle-cloths were coloured using organic dyes. Chinese saddle-cloths are characterized by pastel colours and in the range of colours light, medium dark and greenish-blue colours with a special emphasis given to golden yellow, light yellow and ocre peach, rose and different hues of brown and stone. Tibetan saddle-cloths contain more bright, warmer colours, but orange, lilac, greenish yellow and rose-red colours occur too. Persian, Central Asian, Turkish and Caucasian saddle-cloths are characterized by a brave contrast of bright colours. Persian saddle-cloths are in imposing dark blue, blackish blue, warm red, less frequently green, sometimes light brown or bone-coloured. The colours of the ornaments in the mirror—the central field of the saddle-cloth—are always in contrast to the surround in the dark-blue mirror the colour of the small *mir-i-bota* ornaments (in Hungary this flower pattern is called Turkish pear) is generally golden yellow or red.

The range of saddle-cloth frames from the Far East generally consists of a single flower-pattern or has a symbolic meaning, while Persian saddle-cloths usually contain two or three frames which are ornamented with flowers.

The largest group in the collection are Persian. Even recently these specimens indicated the owner's place in the tribe or his origin; moreover the more richly ornated pieces pointed to his financial standing too since an attractive saddle-cloth, together with a fire stallion, added to the respect due to their owner. On ceremonial occasions—religious, tribal or warfare demonstration—the most expensive saddle-cloths were used, together with colourful sets of harness and weapons. Persian saddle-cloths were made by the girls and the women of the tribe as tokens of their fidelity and love, as a part of their trousseau, or, in some cases, as presents for men. Sometimes saddle-cloths were made to be sold but the majority were used by the tribe itself. Artisans in the famous Persian carpet-making towns worked to order and for the bazars. Chinese and Tibetan saddle-cloths were designed by professional masters and made in workshop while the Central Asian, Afghan, Turkmenian and Uzbek saddle-cloths are still made by women today. It is becoming increasingly difficult to identify the exact origin of saddle-cloths made in China, Tibet and Central Asia, for in the past hundred years, as a consequence of mutual contacts, these workshop have been in a state of constant transformation.

An enormous number of Taoist and Buddhist symbols occur on Chinese and Tibetan saddle-cloths. The most typical is

the dragon, the symbol of China. Deer, roe, crane, stylized trees, bamboo, peony are also encountered frequently. The symbols of arts and literacy (lute, chessboard, patterns of folded pictures and books) are also favoured. The symbols of Tibetan saddle-cloths are identical with their Chinese counterparts but a specifically Tibetan symbol is the Snow-Lion, the guard of the roads, the realm of eternal ice and snow, the protector of fatigued travellers. The Tibetans are fond of the butterfly ornament too, which is the symbol of love, happy marriage, gaiety and friendship.

One of the most favoured ornaments on the saddle-cloths of the Persian, Turkish and Kurd tribes is the *mihrab* since the nomadic shepherd tribes used their saddle-cloths as prayer rugs when saying their daily prayers. Also popular are the *mir-i-bota* ornament, the Herat design, which is a combination of plants and flowers, the life-tree with birds, the vase with blossoming twigs, and the rose, the queen of flowers. The lions holding the coat-of-arms are the representatives of the power of the Persian kings, symbols of bravery and victory. The deer represents purity, the dog is the symbol of faithfulness, the birds are the lords of the air and the sky but they may also be a symbol for the soul leaving the body, while the nightingale is the bird of spring and love; the rooster and the peacock are the birds of the Sun though the Sun may be represented by the dove too. Asian saddle-cloths incorporate almost all the symbols of the store of patterns and the world of beliefs of the Asian peoples, since the horseman on the road is protected by these symbolic patterns and talismans. Similarly, colours also have meanings: in Persia white is the colour of innocence, yellow represents the life force, red is the symbol of faith and fire, fortune and wealth, friendship and humanity, green is the colour of spring and hope and the Prophet, blue represents the sky and the air while orange is the symbol of meekness and humbleness and black symbolizes divine extasy.

A special case is the red saddle-cloth once belonging to the Maharaja of Taiphur, the mirror of which is adorned by a flower pattern embroidered with thin and colourful metal. This Indian saddle-cloth is the oldest piece in the collection.

Especially attractive are the Turkish saddle-cloths made from fine wool whose patterns include medallions, plant ornaments, rosettes, stars, triple spheres. Another rare specimen is a saddle-cloth made in Aleppo in Syria in the nineteenth century, woven from coloured silk with a striped pattern, ornamented with fringes at both ends.

The horse-blankets differ from the saddle-cloths in that they fully covered the horse as a protection against cold and rain. These blankets are generally thick, heavy, warm and long-lasting.

It is to be hoped that future research will produce fresh insight on this fascinating branch of textiles, one which has received little appreciation to date.

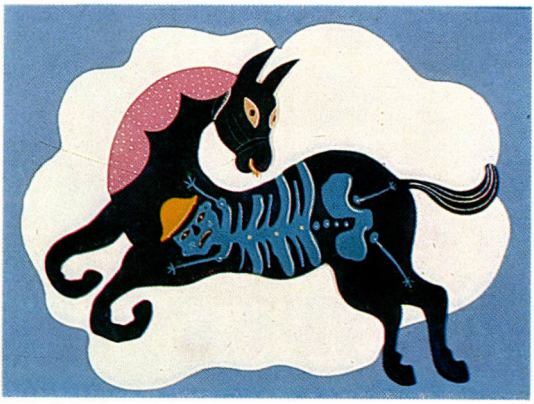
KÁROLY GOMBOS

István Orosz

Dóra Keresztes: Outstanding Days. Album sleeve. 1984. tempera, 50×50 cm

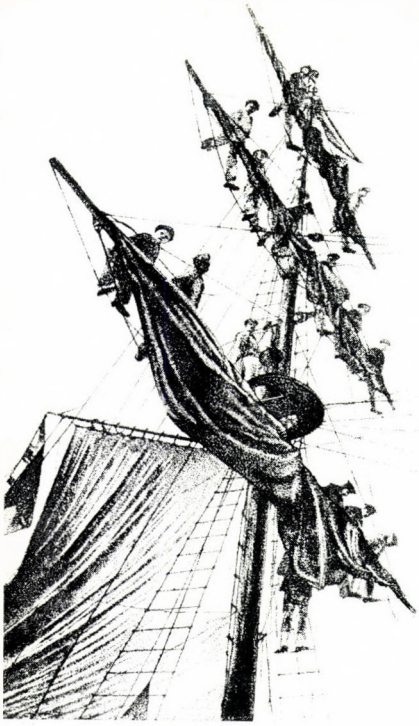
Dóra Keresztes: Illustration for the Hungarian Peasant Decameron, 1977

István Orosz



István Orosz

DÓRA KERESZTES: THREE DESIGNS FOR THE ANIMATED FILM 'MOON STORY'



István Orosz: Drawing for the animated film 'Ah, America,' 1985

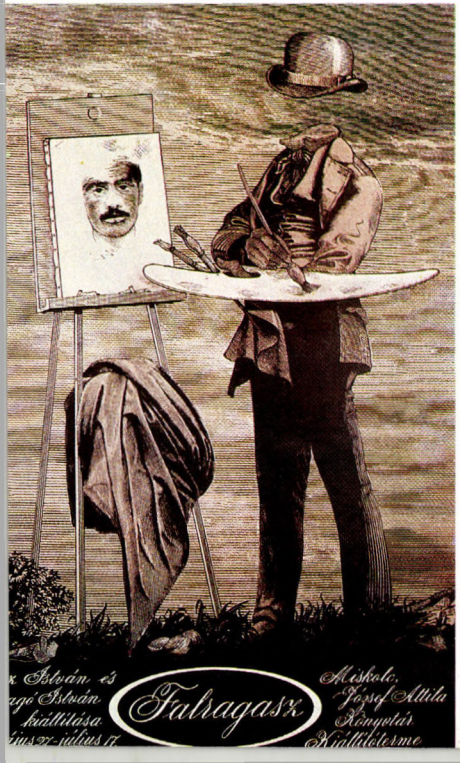
László Haris

István Orosz: Poster for Csokonai's Dorottya for the Kaposvár Theatre. 1978.

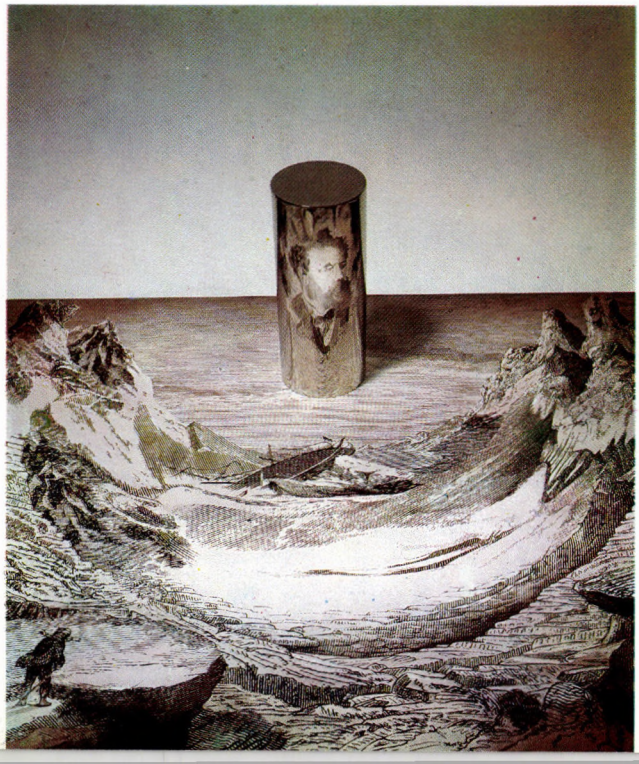
István Orosz: Photo montage from the animated film 'Ah, America,' 1985

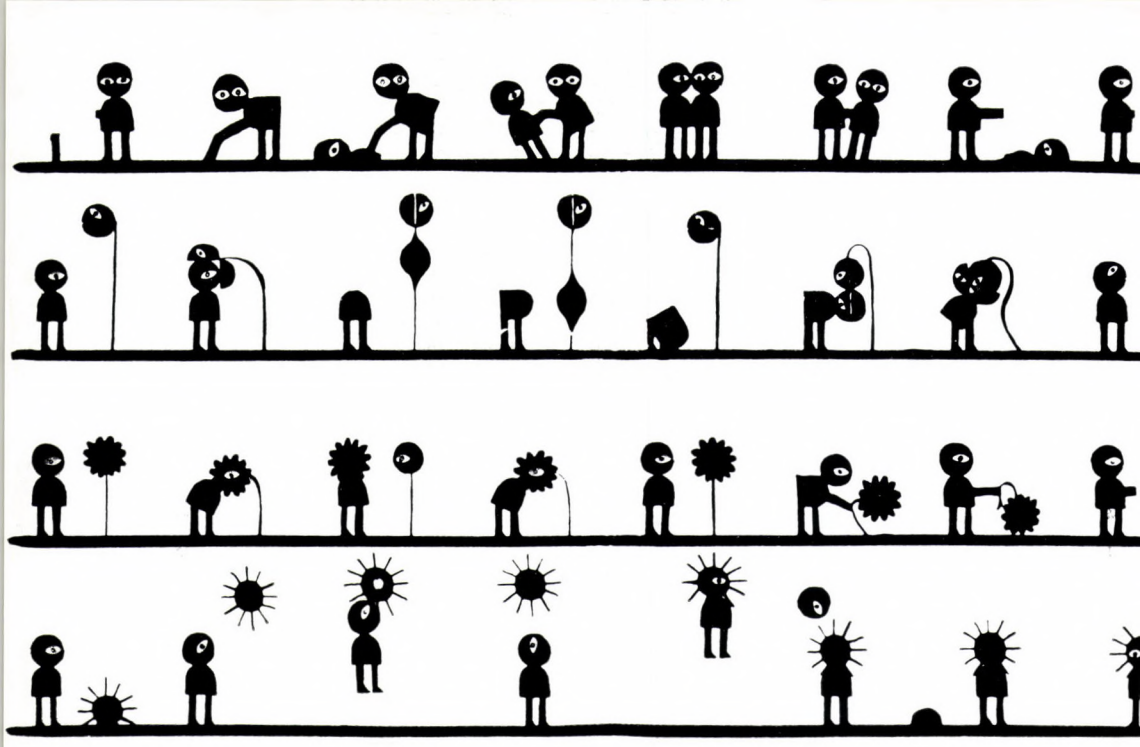
István Orosz: Mister Kenta *(Kenta-ur)* 1979

István Orosz: Poster for an Exhibition.
offset, 50×70 cm



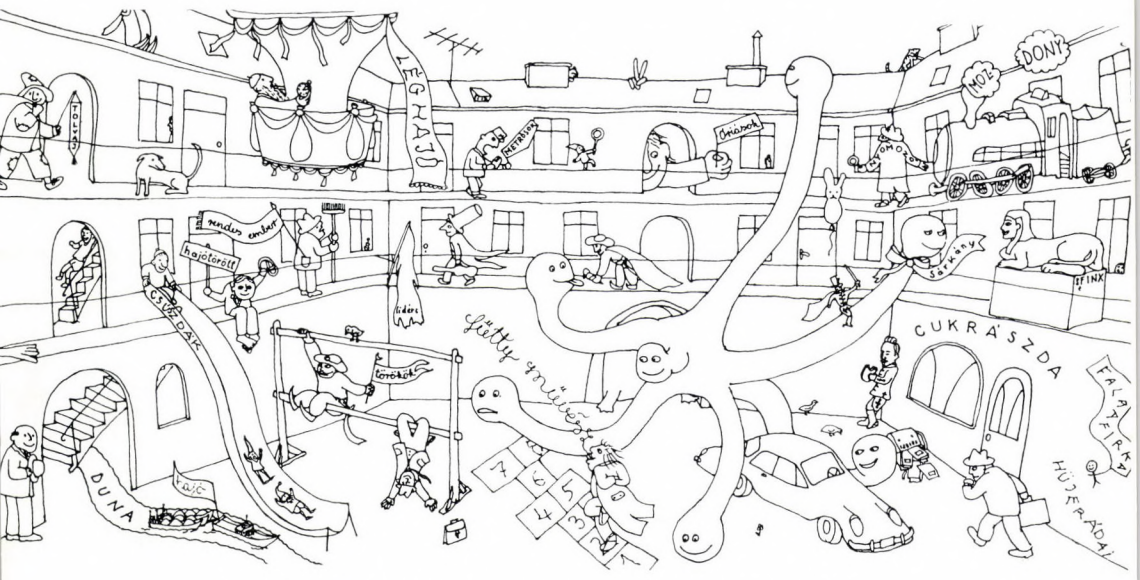
István Orosz: Verne anamorphosis. 1984.
Offset, chromed copper engraving. 16×15 cm





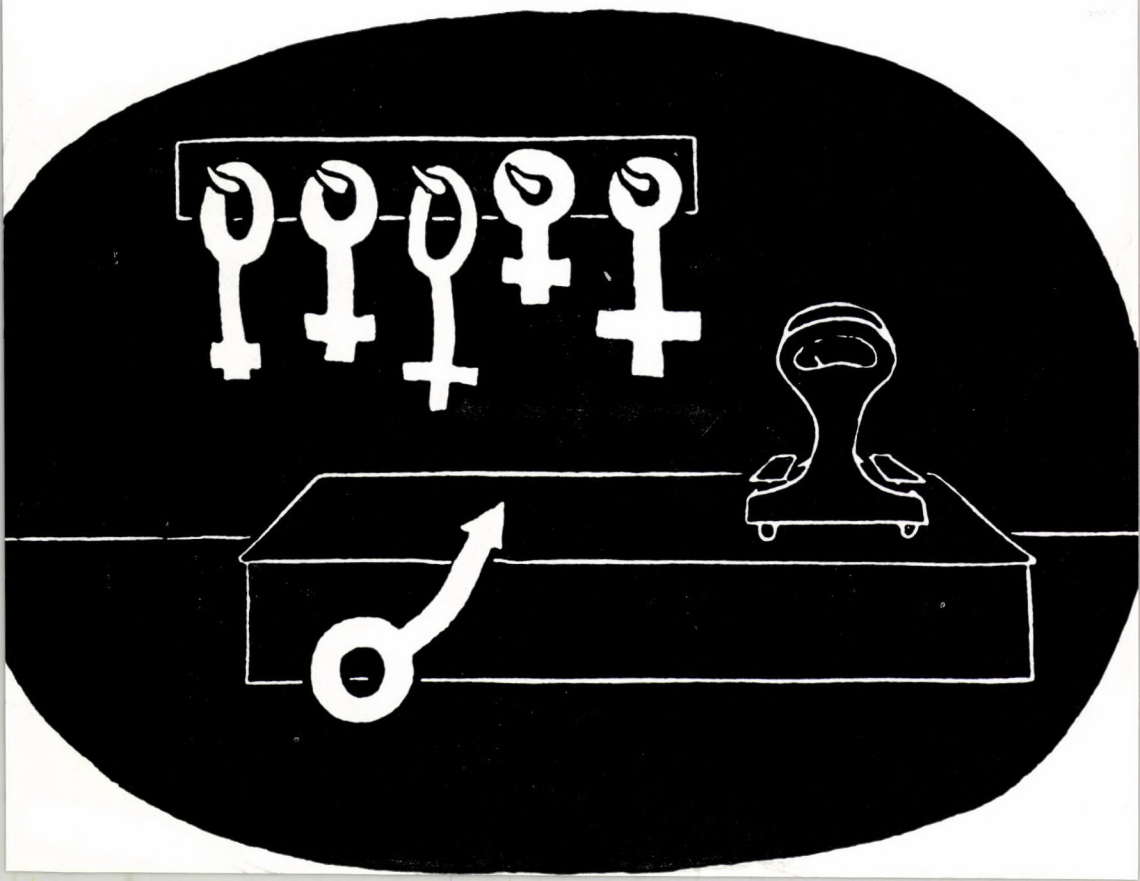
Ágnes Háy: The Courtyard. 1980. Illustration for tales from Budapest

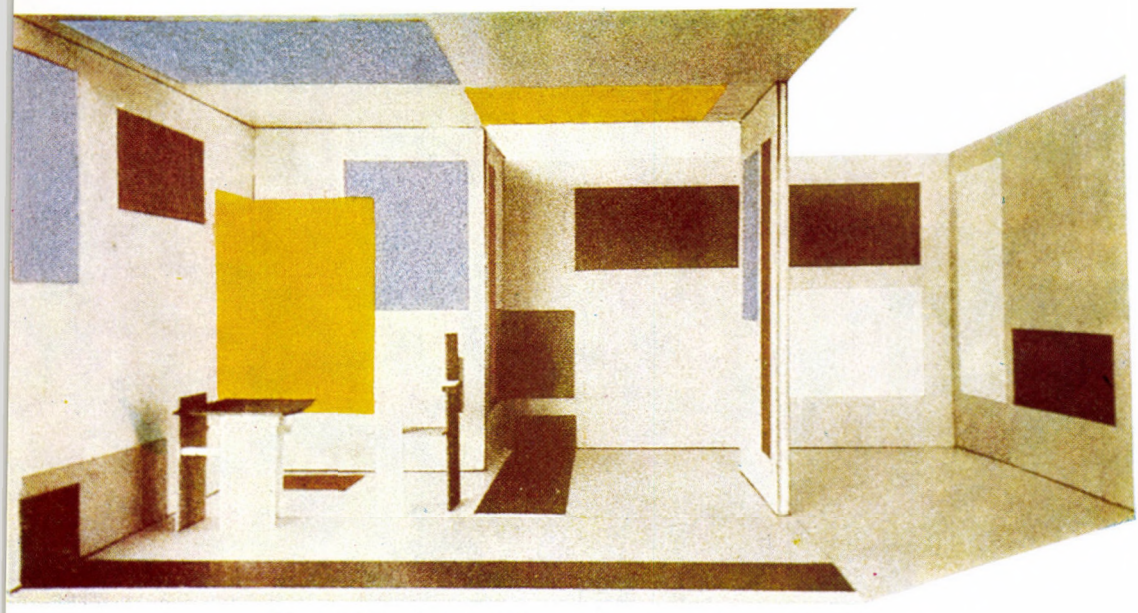
Ágnes Háy: Hotel Room. 1983. Drawing



ÁGNES HÁY: TALE. 1971. FROM THE SERIES *Diary of Mister Strange*

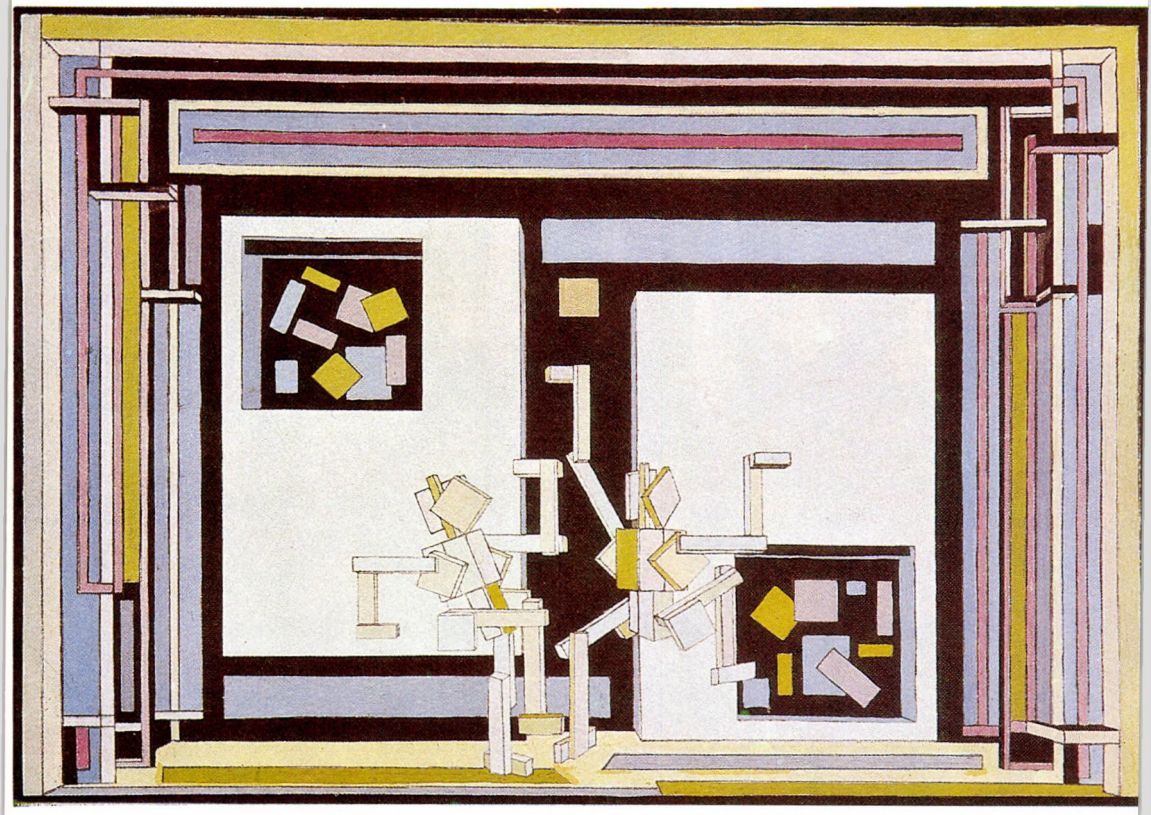
ÁGNES HÁY: MEAT SHOP. 1984. LINOCUT FROM THE SERIES *Sex*



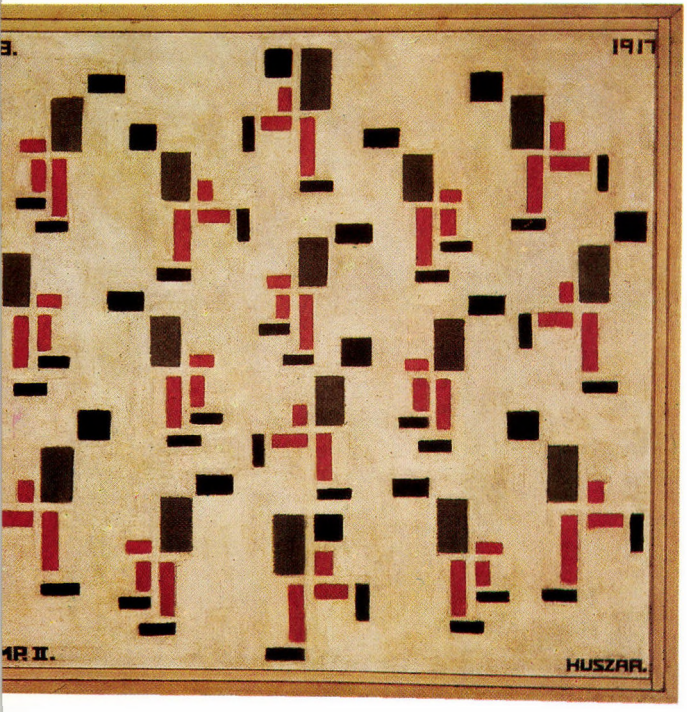


VILMOS HUSZÁR WITH GERRIT RIETWELD: RELIEF, 1923. MAQUETTE

VILMOS HUSZÁR: MECHANICAL BALLET. RECONSTRUCTED INSTALLATION. 1920/21



Vilmos Huszár: Boy Under White Cloud, 1912. tempera on wood, 64×46 cm, *Private collection*



Vilmos Huszár: Composition II. 1917. oil on asbestos sheeting, 74×81 cm, *Gemeente Museum, Hague*

György Makky

Vilmos Huszár: Bizarre Disco. Watje Henny's Dance School, 1930.

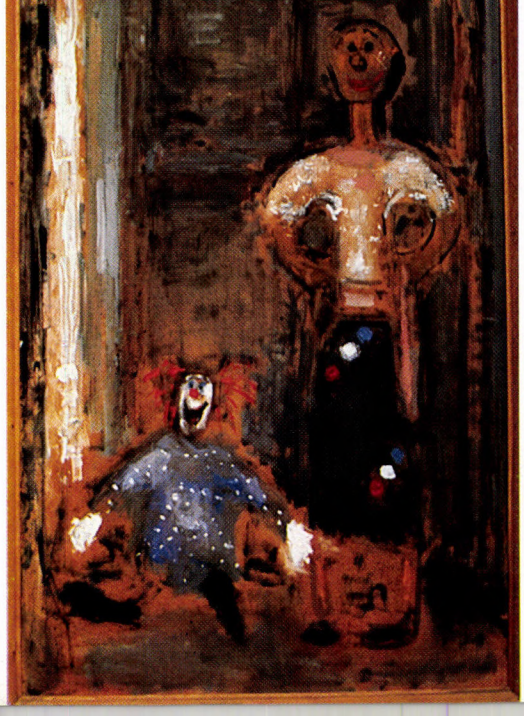
Rozália Koszta: Couple. 1980. Fibre, oil, 100×70 cm

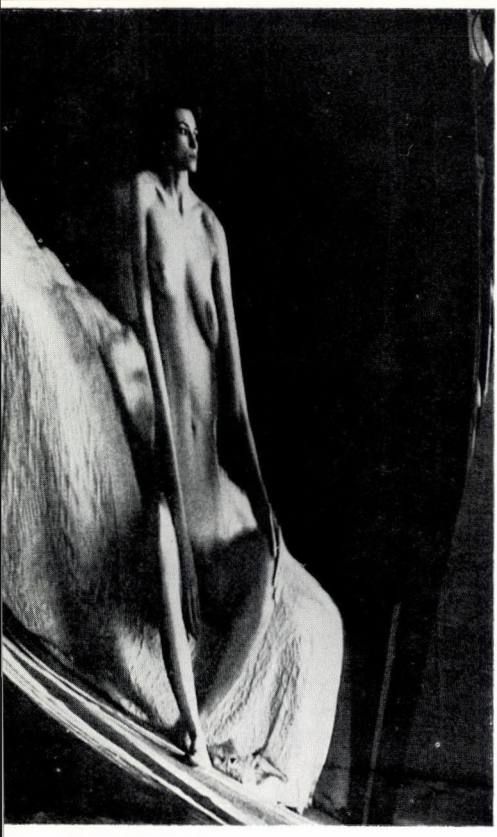
Rozália Koszta: The Black Körös, 1983, oil on fibre board, 60×80 cm

Rozália Koszta: White Chapel, 1985, oil on fibre board, 62×90 cm

Marianne Gábor:
Auntie Berta in Her Finery, 1956

Marianne Gábor:
Olivia and Popov, 1977





André Kertész: Distortion, 1984

André Kertész: Kiki, Paris, 1927

ndré Kertész: Rainy Day,
New York City, 1952

André Kertész: Old Buda, 1914

André Kertész: Kálvin tér, Budapest, 1971

André Kertész: Flaque, New York City, 17 september 1967

André Kertész: New York City, 1979

Tibetan Saddlecloth. Sixth century.
116×72 cm

Chinese Saddlecloth. End of the sixth century.
144×72 cm

Indian Saddlecloth. Jaipur. 1737. 90×69 cm

THE CONSTANT EYE

The Art of André Kertész

The death of André Kertész on September 27th, 1985, marked the departure of one of the great figures in the history of photography. He was the creator of both photography centred on man and photojournalism. For him the camera was a means to show how he lived. His photography was a visual diary with which he noted everything he saw around him in the way that writers set their experiences down on paper.

He was born in 1894 in Szigetbecse in Hungary to which he used to return for summer vacations as a child; in the attic of his relatives' house he found German illustrated newspapers which impressed him so much that he decided to do something similar. Being only six years old and without a camera, these photos existed for a long time only in his head. But from that time on he treated his surroundings as photographic themes.

With his first earnings he bought a camera and took his first photographs in 1912. He travelled around villages with his brother and photographed everything that happened around, and with, them. In 1982, seventy years after taking these photos, his book *Hungarian Memories* was published in New York and occasioned his remark that "These photos contain everything which gave meaning and colour to my life at the time."

In those years what he was doing in photography did not meet with understanding; nor did his family approve of his intention of becoming a professional photographer. In 1923 he sent three of his pictures to the National Amateur Photo Exhibition in Budapest; he was told that one of them would get a prize if he made a bromoil print of it. Kertész refused because according to him the photograph expressed what he had wanted to say only in its original form. This consistency he preserved all during his life.

At the age of twenty he found himself on various First World War fronts. He photographed in Poland, Albania and Rumania, practically doing the work of a war correspondent. The most important documents in these photos are naturalness, originality and, as ever, the personal touch.

In 1925 he went to Paris. The leading artists of the time, Eisenstein, Chagall, Ehrenburg, Mondrian and the Hungarians knew that Kertész was not photographing what he saw but what he felt. He found himself the acknowledged leader of a school of photography, his followers were Henri Cartier-Bresson, Walker Evans and Robert Capa. While most good photographers shoot at the most important, the decisive moment, Kertész was able to produce that decisive moment. The perfection of his pictures is the result not only of technical accuracy but of empathy. He spent altogether ten years in Paris and had an exhibition as early as the second year of his stay. He soon became popular, working for *Vogue*, *Vu* and the *Münchner Illustrierte*. In 1933 he published his first book, *Children*, which met with great success. The same year saw his series *Distortion*, which is of historical significance in photography in that he opened up the way experimental photography breaking away from the usual forms of expression. His nudes taken in a distorting-glass had the impact of a revelation—which could be surpassed only with an other *Distortion* series of thirty-six photographs done fifty-one years later, in 1984.

He had a considerable reputation in Europe when he left for the United States in 1936. This was a turning point in his life, one which he remembered later with anger and bitterness. It was the phase-shift in his life, the result of an unfortunate contract with which he had been lured to New York. He never recovered from this trauma

because, the victim of fate, he lived in New York although he loved Paris and had made his name there. He was lost in anonymity for several decades and had to struggle to make a livelihood. While he lived for his art, he came up against incomprehension for thirty years, achieving recognition only when there was no one with whom he could share it any more.

In the U.S.A. his man-centred photography was unknown in the 1930s. All that counted was technical perfection, so that when he was working at *Life* magazine his colleagues made the reproach that "he said too much with his pictures." He fought for his truth as a lonely outsider. Most of his American colleagues simply copied what they saw or photographed for photography's sake. Kertész, however, continued to *interpret* what he felt in a given moment.

In 1963 he sent his photographs to the Venice Photo Biennal where they took the grand prize. This helped him to organise a large one-man show in the New York Museum of Modern Art in 1964. Although Beaumont Newhall, the curator of the photographic section of the Museum of Modern Art devoted only a few sentences to Kertész (even in the second, revised edition of the book) between long pages on Brassai and Cartier-Bresson, his reputation took off in the United States all over the world.

His books were published one after another. The most important are *Sixty Years of Photography*, *J'aime Paris*, *Washington Square*, *Distortion*, *From My Window*, and *Hungarian Memories*.

Eventually, after considerable delay, his works were exhibited in Hungary, in the National Gallery in 1971, a short booklet being published with its contents. Some of the pictures, including the cover, were cut for the sake of the lay-out and the then seventy-seven year old artist resented this. However, the always smiling and always sad old man lived to see himself appreciated in his country of birth. Apart from the official distinction accorded him, devotees of his work greeted him with wild enthusiasm at the 1984 *Spring Festival in Budapest*, at which he was a guest of honour and opened his own exhibition in the Vigadó. He came back once more in the same year for the publication of the book *André Kertész in Hungary*, visiting for the last time Szigetbecse to see the house which was to be his memorial. For the permanent exhibition there, he had promised fifty photographs and sent one hundred and twenty.

When, a few weeks before his death, I told him over the phone that the purchase of the house had been completed, he said: "You know, what pleases me most is that now I have my own proper well with a pole. Do you think that a man like me can achieve more?"

JÁNOS BODNÁR

THEATRE AND FILM

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Mihály Vörösmarty: *Csongor és Tünde* (Csongor and Tünde); András Sütő: *Advent a Hargitán* (Advent on the Hargita); Tibor Déry: *A tanúk* (The Witnesses); Gyula Hernádi: *Hagyaték* (Legacy); Imre Dobozi–András Jeles: *A drámai események* (The Dramatic Events).

From the beginning, drama has made use of metaphor, allegory and figurative language in order to clothe its message. Certain periods and certain messages have prompted writers to disguise what they had to say in poetic form: such is the case with dramatists whose genre is made up equally of the words spoken and the words not spoken to the audience.

One of the most carefully hidden messages in Hungarian drama is in Mihály Vörösmarty's verse play, *Csongor and Tünde*, written in 1831. The influence of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is frequently referred to. It is clear that the reading of Shakespeare had left a mark on this poet aspiring to become a playwright; his later translations of *King Lear* and *Julius Caesar* are still being used in the theatre to the present day. Csongor, the young hero and Tünde, the fairy girl, are searching for each other, as if in Shakespeare's magic forest of Athens; the three young devils have some kinship with Puck. The plot of the play is divined from a sixteenth-century romance, conjoined with a number of folk motifs. Vörösmarty's own creations are the allegorical figures: the personified Night, predicting the end of the world with all the haughtiness of a bride, and the three travellers—the Merchant, the Prince, and the Scholar—who set out to conquer the world and return from their adventures disillusioned and broken.

Another dramatic work invites comparison with *Csongor and Tünde*. There is the strange coincidence that the aging Goethe completed the second part of his *Faust* in the same year that Vörösmarty completed his play. Without going into a detailed comparison of the philosophical tale of the thirty-one-year-old Hungarian poet to the masterpiece that Goethe continued to polish all his life, it may be pointed out that they both spring from similar inspirations, a similar intellectual élan, a similar order of interpreting the world. In this way, Csongor is also a Faustian figure in that he is constantly chasing a desire which is always disintegrating, never to be attained in this world of ours. He is constantly missing Tünde (they only meet in Fairyland). It is in the "timeless moment" of Faust's analysis of Friedrich Gundolf that all the potentials to live of the only man, set amid the figures of the Merchant, Prince and Scholar, take on a palpable form again. Pater Extaticus, at the end of the second part of *Faust*, whispers "Whatever is worthless / should be gone forever / And let eternal love be / a star stationary." This notion is echoed by the last line voiced also in the "intellectual region"—in Fairyland—: "It is only love and nothing else that's awake."

In his early work on drama György Lukács called *Csongor and Tünde* "the most lively, perhaps the only really organic creation of the Hungarian drama." Nevertheless, it has had mixed fortunes on the stage. Vörösmarty

submitted his work anonymously to a "committee of drama critics" of which he was a member, in 1844. It was unanimously rejected by all those taking part in the committee's session. Also shocking is that no one remembered the play that had appeared thirteen years earlier in print. It was first staged in 1879, when Vörösmarty had been dead for twenty-four years. *Faust*, in contrast, was enjoying long runs abroad: in Henry Irving's theatre, for example, it was approaching its five-hundredth performance.

For a long time *Csongor and Tünde* was considered to be a part of the children's repertoire; over a hundred years theatre tradition connected it to the fairy tale and folklore. A feature of the recent performance of the Gárdonyi Géza Theatre in Eger is that János Szikora is the first director to have fully interpreted it as a philosophical allegory. He staged not the fairy tale inspired by *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, but an embittered poem on existence. As he is a director who pays close attention to visual values, the production is a vision appealing to our senses.

The magic of the scenes revealed plastically before our eyes, the play of light and shade, recall plays directed by Patrice Chéreau. The stage represents the wild garden prescribed in the last scene of the play. Real trees standing on the stage, their roots deep into the soil, the light infiltrating through their foliage. New naturalism is diluted into mild surrealism by a piano half buried in the ground and a rickety armchair at the foot of a pile of sand—the paraphernalia of romanticism in disintegration. Disintegration and evasiveness constitute the basic vision of the play, brought to life by the pictorial metaphors of the sand and the veil. The motifs of sand flowing infinitely and the obscuring veil dominate the production in which the characters are found within this double symbol, searching for each other and their happiness. Dominating all are the decadently floating music and the gloomy atmosphere. The self-destroying dream on the ultimate questions of human existence is completed by the appearence of the morality figure of Death. With something of the technique of the Japanese bunraku-puppet theatre, it conducts the Merchant, the Prince and the Scholar, who have realized the futility of worldly vanities, into the empire of the monster figure moved by three men clad in black gowns and hoods. And the lovers, having found each other, experience the protective nakedness and defencelessness of the first human couple in this allegoric play of love and death.

Ethnographic objects and motifs are also used in *Advent on the Hargita*, the most recent play by András Sütő, a Transylvanian Hungarian writer. (Hargita is a mountain in Transylvania which frequently figures in Székely folk tales.) The core of the story is a surrealistic ballad or tale of a girl who metamorphoses into a kingfisher. Réka Árvai, possessing the powers and attractions of a witch, is destined for eternal penitence, unhappiness, damnation by her mother, a forced marriage, her own wickedness, and the indelible suspicion it evokes in her childhood lover. There is a puckishness in her personality in that she is always wishing for something else, risking everything, and is playful, even dangerous. She is affianced to Gábor but this does not stand in the way of some passing fancies, one of which becomes fatal when she finds herself with child while preparing for her wedding. She makes the boy rehearse the proposal while she, Réka, plays the role of her own mother. This is how she confesses her "sin," her child. The boy runs away but, at the girl's cry of love, enormous balls of snow bury Gábor. Naturally, the ballad requires that the boy is resurrected in twenty years' time. By then Réka has become an aging woman with a daughter of twenty. Hence the poetic repetition: the boy, returned from the dead, does not know who he is to find in the house. Réka has grown old, her daughter, however, is like

the girl he left behind twenty years ago. Réka would still be ready to love him but the boy chooses young Réka. The avalanche sets out again and buries the unhappy couple. The metaphor of the kingfisher, able to soar magically, is expanded into an allegory in the frame of the play which deals with more than the expectation of love and happiness or the return of the dead lover. In this external frame, expectation or, rather, delay, becomes allegoric. As the weeks preceding Christmas, Advent, await the birth of the Saviour, Vencel Bódi is waiting for the return of his daughter, Mária (the biblical name is no accident). Mária has been taken off from her father's house by a sailor to a faraway land. Those close to each other in spirit, though far away physically, are separated from each other by the Great Ruin, a canyon covered with an enormous mound of snow, threatening avalanches. Across this the father cannot even shout to his child for the godly (or godless) fate of decay enjoins silence, having confiscated the right to shout. The avalanche breaks at Réka Árvai's cry of love, whoever the call is addressed to is buried by the Great Ruin. If resurrected, he is buried again.

There is no need to explain the range of meanings of the allegory; the allegories are poetically valid for communities, peoples, nations. In the sixteenth century, a Hungarian Protestant Minister, Péter Bornemisza, translated, or rather recreated, Sophokles' *Electra* and wove the fortunes of the Hungary of his day, then sundered in three parts, into the story of the princess of Argos. Sütő's play is also imbued with an anxiety for the fate of Hungarians living as a minority. In *Hungarian Electra* (1558), Bornemisza craved for justice from God and made it clear that the longer justice was delayed, the more complete it would be.

Sütő's spokesman, Vencel Bódi, does not believe in divine justice, he thinks that its inability to produce miracles has already manifested itself; all that remains is to keep vigil by the dead until everything is swept away by the Great Ruin. Nevertheless, Vencel Bódi believes in waiting:

"There is no void where someone is expected. Don't say that heaven has turned from us. An answer comes for everything if we learn to wait . . ." There is need to wait, and should the order enjoining silence lapse, it is necessary to speak as well:

"Oh Lord, give us back the right to cry out in order that we could speak to our children with our voices raised. Lord, take from us the duty to keep silent. Muteness itself is louder and happier amidst us, among our mountains."

There is little hope left by *Advent:* ". . . we have no hope of a miracle . . ." But later, "We are searching for each other among the living while we are alive and our dead will investigate for us," says Vencel Bódi, while the auditorium on the stage is filled by people and the lights of the vigil. The play ends with a vision of devastation and a requiem.

Ferenc Sík, who directed this production at the National Theatre, could not resist the temptation to frame the Christmas scenes with carol singers. I am not convinced that there was need for it. As his own notes in the programme point out, in spite of its swollen tone, the play is in actual fact a chamber-work for four. Its beauty, hidden in the complexity and poetic force of the recurring motif of the folk ritual, combines the two structural elements, the tale and reality, into an integral unit and a uniform atmosphere. At the appropriate moment of the play, the changing characters make their entrance in an entirely natural gesture. With this the director, who wrote that "the real material is not concrete enough in the traditional sense," has raised what originally was realistic into a more abstract, ballad-like, symbolic sphere. The scene which stylizes the mounds of snow into tombs also conforms to this poetic-symbolic interpretation. At the end of the performance the snow walls crumble and the audience is faced only by

the silent witnesses, candles in their hands, standing at the doors of the auditorium.

Witnesses and questions of fate also figure in a play staged by the Szigligeti Theatre of Szolnok. It was written by Tibor Déry, a leading writer of fiction, who died in 1977. Déry as a playwright has been neglected and forgotten; his expressionist-dadaist masterpiece, *The Giant Baby*, born in 1926, was first and successfully performed by an amateur group at the end of the sixties. He wrote *The Witnesses* in an air-raid shelter in 1945. It was completed almost at the same time the country was liberated: the play closes with the moment when the first Soviet soldier arrives.

The Witnesses expresses the lesson history has taught to the Jewish upper-middle class which Déry himself belonged to. Considered and pursued as a threat to man's existence, the main character is led to an understanding of his own fate, to a contact with the essence of existence. Educated in the ideals of universal humanity, Béla Kelemen sews the yellow star onto his coat, and in this gesture of surrender he accepts the fate meted out to him. From that moment he may observe himself in the eyes of other people, those who hide him, those who refuse to shelter him, and those who watch him indifferently. The latter are the "outsiders," the witnesses; their spokesman is the Housekeeper (by which no job or occupation is designated, rather a specific type of crooked behaviour). He encloses that mental attitude which raises the subservience to the powers that be into observation of the law.

But the contrasting of the persecuted and the witnesses is only one layer in the play. On another plane, Dr. Kelemen also acts as an "outsider" or "witness" in relation to his own destiny. While his Christian wife is ready to share his fate of being persecuted, his mother commits suicide in order to save him; he gets as far as to show the door to a Jewish government adviser who, the owner of a factory working for the Germans, is about to obtain a laissez-passer from the Gestapo. Déry also confronts his hero with the figures from other layers of society. These include, for example, the worker sabotaging war production, or his own class, what used to be called the Christian middle-class, which despise the worker and at best acknowledge the persecution of the Jew only with a disapproving shake of the head.

So the historical lesson Dr. Kelemen has to learn in six months is on social and class relations, a recognition, through what happens him to him as a Jew, of "what it means to be oppressed." In addition to the historical reality in the play, a wider range of meaning attaches itself to the term. The ending of the piece is to be interpreted in that light. When the soldier entering the shelter is greeted as a liberator—the spokesman is, naturally, the Housekeeper—the soldier answers in broken Hungarian: "Why didn't you liberate yourself?"

The Witnesses in dramatic genre is something of a mule: Déry has cross-bred naturalist drama with elements of expressionist-dadaism. The basic plot is accompanied by the straightforward statements of the witnesses, individuals without personalities or choruses. Through the means of Brechtian alienation, Tibor Csizmadia, the director, developed the poems into imitations of the tone of the popular songs of the time and the choreography added to their effectiveness. In this way we are separated to some extent from the plot, the events are under the control of the intellect, and we are able to word our opinion about them. A similar purpose is served by the sets. The lower part of a vertically divided stage is an authentic reconstruction of one of the stations on Budapest's oldest underground line (built at the end of the past century and still operating); it is also a visual metaphor for being "underground," being persecuted. The upper part of the set presents symbols of the city's panorama. This is unusual at the beginning—since the scenes taking place in everyday places are transposed

to this "concretely abstract" space—but it gradually gains acceptance and expands the range of references until it encompasses the behaviour of the intellectuals "fading into the woodwork."

Intellectuals and their problems are the focus of several playwrights' attention. Gyula Hernádi's *Legacy* is on Aristotle, which seems to mark a return to his early work as a dramatist fifteen or so years ago. Even some of Hernádi's serious plays are based on some kind of fantastic hypothesis, as does the genre most closely linked to his name. Known as *blődli* (nonsense), in these he usually presents the most absurd historical nonsense imaginable; for example, in one he manages to identify Jack the Ripper with Queen Victoria. There is a similar absurd supposition in *Legacy*, namely that Alexander the Great was not only Aristotle's pupil but his son as well, the result of the philosopher's affair with Olympia behind her husband's back. The secret remains hidden until Demosthenes calls upon Aristotle to join in the presence of her old lover, discloses the king's paternity.

The play's commitment becomes uncertain at this point. Hernádi, who wrote the script of most of Miklós Jancsó's films, seems to consider as ideal the intellectual who wishes to join neither the Greek nor the Macedonian party, hating "the patriotism of smelly feet," and who believes that, as a thinking man, he has to look beyond the walls of Athens to universal intellectual values: "I am neither Greek nor Macedonian, I am a man of the intellect, and a man of the intellect may only have one god, one people —his freedom." Aristotle does not wish to play a part in the forming of events for, in his view, the man who is right is he "who stands outside, measures the bigness and smallness of things, who cries out when the victim is killed, and who also cries out when the henchman is killed." The problem with this is that he produces it only when breaking his promise to join the conspiracy after the skeleton has been produced out of his family closet. This seals his fate, since he is now considered Macedonian by the Greek party and Greek by the Macedonian party. Failing to win him over, they misuse his name, renown, proclaim him a traitor, make him captive, condemn and exile him. No matter what turn things take, no matter which party comes to power, Aristotle remains branded and persecuted. Finally, he seeks refuge in suicide.

Such is the tragedy of a man who thinks and looks into the distance, in an inhuman world burdened with petty political interests. Looked at from another angle, however, it is also the tragedy of intellectual neutrality, "behaving as a witness." But if this is so, it would have been more persuasive if Aristotle had been a man of pure intellect from the outset, rather than being deterred from indulging in a political act through ties of blood. It is possible, of course, that Hernádi is talking of the futility of being deterred from acting or, simply of not acting, of being neutral. For this is where the play's epilogue points to. It comes to light that what we have seen so far has been the rehearsal of a play on Aristotle, and the actors are ladies and gentlemen of noble rank, secular and ecclesiastic, of the Middle Ages. Thomas Aquinas, after watching the rehearsal, protests indignantly at the profanation of the memory of Aristotle, the "potential Christian." As the pope's censor, he immediately bans the performance, a ban which is rejected outright by Archbishop Colonna, who also plays the role of Aristotle and directs the play. The mortally ill theologian leaves in fury, and Colonna remarks that the play will be staged anyway and Thomas of Aquinas will have to be canonized after his death. Accordingly, the death knell is heard. This ending is more impetuous than enigmatic: the sudden change in style cannot really be followed in this production of the National Theatre of Pécs, directed by Menyhért Szegvári.

A Budapest amateur group, exotically named "Monteverdi Wrestlers' Association," produced a surprise with a completely different figurative mode, a different stage stylization. The group was recruited for the occassion by András Jeles, who has directed a number of remarkable films *(Little Valentino)*, and this is his first stage production.

The Dramatic Events is the title of the group's production and is also the euphemism for, and common reference to, the events of October 1956 in Hungary. It is an avantgarde production and was preceded by rehearsals for almost a year. Its subtitle indicates its genre: "An attempt to understand a text." The text on which the performance is based is Imre Dobozy's heavily propagandistic play *Windstorm*, written at the end of the fifties. This is set in the stormy Hungarian October of 1956, in a village, in a cooperative. The plot follows the events with detailed naturalism, the reaction of the people to the news coming about the fighting in Budapest, and the political passions behind them. Dobozy's work, naturally, is not free of the characteristics of the topical ideological drama of his day and these have a comic effect today. Looked at now, the play is outdated both in its form and its content; the time that has passed since has put considerable distance between it and the artistic approach of our days.

The production is based on this distance. It does not handle the play ironically, it does not even parody it: it simply enhances our distance from it. (Again Brechtian alienation comes to mind.) The director, first of all, eliminates the actual situation, thus abandoning psychological realism as a means of role-forming. He employs an attractive girl in a mini-skirt as narrator, who at times whispers the instructions of the dramatist into a microphone. She is a typical modern girl who projects a sensual aura at the audience. The Gioconda smile she directs at us one by one is erotic, she directs electric sparks towards us by rubbing her long thighs in wavelike movements. She is following the plot with the tone radio announcers used to supply the listeners with the information necessary for understanding a play being broadcast.

A range of stylization is employed, from the ceremonical theatre of the Far East to the romantic-pathetic school of the last century, from the theatre of gestures of Brecht to Grotowski. But this is more than clever parody: for an interpretation of the world, a "philosophy of existence" is born out of the ecclecticism in this collection of styles and techniques.

The actors usually speak down-stage, with their faces turned towards us. "Speaking" means at times forming a sort of chant, at times austere, debunking objectivity. At other times we seem to be watching kabuki actors, who interpret certain paragraphs motionless, without facial mime, with internal concentration. At another point, an actor appears straight out of Bob Wilson's theatre in orthopedic shoes, with the consequent hindrance to his movements. At another point again a dialogue between three actors becomes the trio of an Eastern opera: drums are played with increasing intensity, one of the actors is forced to speak more and more loudly, while the other two accompany him with inarticulate sounds.

Naturally, we do not receive an authentic picture either of the characters or the situations or of historical reality. Certain female roles are played by men, other male roles are played by women, for here we are faced with a metaphysical amoeba which, pathetically, ironically—but always with incredible precision—demonstrates ideals, behaviours, passions. At the end of the play, the *Dies Irae* movement of Mozart's Requiem is heard; the actors then shed the disguises distorting them into fantastic figures and, posed rigidly in their civilian selves, eliminate the distance between the role and the actor. This withdrawal of alienation is a true catharsis, a true demystification.

TAMÁS KOLTAI

QUESTION MARKS

János Xantus: *A hülyeség nem akadály* (Idiots May Apply); István Gaál: *Orfeo ed Euridice.*

Hungarian film critics have recently had their annual meeting in which the previous year's film output is discussed and the annual Hungarian critics' prizes for best director, cameraman, and actors are awarded. This time there was a general concurrence that what the Hungarian film industry produced in 1985 was disappointing, as compared to an average, let alone a better, year. Since this is not simply a domestic concern—films are international, their fate is not exclusively of Hungarian interest—it is in order to convey the appraisal to the interested foreign reader, the more so because every effort should be made to make this setback temporary.

The title of János Xantus's film could be literally translated as "cretinism no obstacle," though this critic, for one, is inclined to question its truth. I think that idiocy, as the main subject, the *leitmotif*, or message, is indeed an obstacle to the making of a good film comedy about it. For there are two ways of viewing idiocy. One is that it is genuine and pathological, thus an illness, and therefore it is in just as much bad taste to make it the object of derision as it is to make fun of a hunchback. Alternatively the idiocy is artificial, and is the basest form of stylization, the object of sketches and skits by comedians. In the film in question, however, we are bombarded with a series of gags and jokes so old and stale that even a newborn baby could scarcely raise a smile at them.

János Xantus, whose *Eskimo Woman Feels Cold** was well received abroad, provides us with fifteen minutes in his new film which promise an arresting psychological-social plot immersed in a morbid humour. It appears to be about genuine idiocy, consequently, not a film comedy. What we get is a strange family story with excellent acting, Albeesque touches and Strindbergian psychology, and a structure that reminds one at times of Bergman. However, this is only the first fifteen minutes. The opening serves up a family row; the wife packing and moving back to her mother's, the husband cynically goading her, the children watching the routine scene wearily as some kind of circus show, and then, the reconciliation. All this is interesting, promising, and original. Then, in the ensuing scenes, we see the husband as lawyer, defending a Gypsy charged with theft, giving a witty demonstration to show how the defendant could not possibly have committed the crime. The Gypsy spectators in the courtroom break out into some kind of folkloristic celebration with singing and dancing. And so it goes on, with the film continuing in the vein of a neo-realist comedy tinged with folksy humour, offering both entertainment and art which are original and fascinating in idiom and concept.

Then, however, comes a scene in which the male lead steps into an aquarium with his shoes on, and he jumps onto the table at a party and creates a row. The genuinely idiotic becomes the artificially idiotic, and with that the film touches depths rarely seen in the cinema. It is as though a different director and a different scriptwriter had taken over at this point (the script was written by János Xantus and Ildikó Kórody); as though one had been transported from the Stockholm National Theatre of the sixties to a third-rate, provincial music hall. Whatever has ever been contrived (and worn out) in the way of inane, daft, nonsensical music-hall humour about idiocy, the mad psychiatrist, the hysterical, nagging wife, the sex-mad spinster, the obsessed inventor, and

* See *NHQ* 96.

other clichés, is now paraded in the film. Moreover, the dialogue, though in the style of the lightest, crudest variety-sketch, is acted *au grand sérieux*, with all the appearance of authentic characterization and realistic acting. The consequence is, paradoxically, that the film becomes not funnier but all the more boring. The script and the style of directing are definitely counter-effective.

No one can give authenticity and a realistic touch to scenes which lack authenticity, credibility, and reality in their conception. Genuine cabaret entertainment has its own specific, make-believe sphere of irreality which is created by means of a particular stylized method of playing. It is funny because it is abstract and absurd. But the effort to prove in a realistic acting style that screwiness is not daftness at all is like trying to square the circle. Some critics are bound to see intellectual "depth" in this, but the general film-goer will feel that this film is too melodramatic for a variety show, and too skit-like for a melodrama. So we fall between two stools. What one can accept from Laurel and Hardy, or the Marx Brothers, is hardly palatable from, say, Erich von Stroheim or Lillian Gish. One searches in vain for any method in this madness, any character, even if only distorted and pathological. The film was not made to give a picture of idiocy, it is just acted out as though it were idiocy, piling up impossible gags from various sources. There are excellent actors playing in some episodes which have no connection with what comes before or after. All this is done under the direction of an excellent film-maker and is filmed by an excellent cameraman, András Matkócsik.

After having seen the film I had an idea: how wonderful it would have been if the director had been given a second chance, to continue where he left off after the first fifteen minutes, and round it off into another full feature film. He ought to have recruited someone who was badly missing—a good scriptwriter. Péter Gothár, for instance, did something like this when he found a collaborator in the person of the excellent young novelist Péter Esterházy for his film *Time*.* Though not a faultless film, it is vastly superior to this one, for Gothár succeeded in giving method to madness—thereby giving humour and comic character to his film.

If I were once again on the selection board that chooses Italian films for showing on Hungarian television, I would snatch at István Gaál's *Orfeo ed Euridice*. It promises a treat for that smaller but demanding audience in the musical material (based on the 1762 Vienna version of Gluck's score; the Ferenc Liszt Chamber Orchestra is brilliantly directed by Tamás Vásáry), in visual quality (enough to say that the cameramen are Sándor Sára and Sándor Kurucz), in the directing, elegant, reserved, yet ingeniously conveying the exuberance of the Baroque age (Fellini and Kawalerowicz come to mind), in the acting (Orfeo, Sándor Téri, sung by Lajos Miller, Euridice, Enikő Eszenyi, sung by Maddalena Bonifaccio, and Amor, Ákos Sebestyén, sung by Veronika Kincses).

If István Gaál, a film-maker of genuine stature *(Current, The Falcons)*, had turned to me for a piece of friendly advice whether to make this film or not, I would have said no, primarily in his own interest. For, however important and gifted a film-maker Gaál is, he is no Bergman, and no matter how important a composer Gluck is, he is no Mozart. Bergman can make a film out of *The Magic Flute* since both the music and the plot are full of stir and movement, exceptionally rich in motifs which lend themselves for various interpretations; but it is an entirely different matter for Gaál making a film from Gluck's opera, which does have some mythological charm but is rather static both musically and in plot. Even if the film had been made equally well, this would not bring the two cases any closer. In addition, the film has been made for Hungarian audiences. Yet it

* See *NHQ* 94.

speaks and sings in Italian. Now, while this is standard practice in opera houses throughout the world, it goes against the norms of film-making and distribution. From this, one can have some idea as to what the producers, by not thinking it through in advance, have exposed Gaál to, undeservedly, in view of his important artistic achievements.

An opera-goer can be expected to be familiar even on first viewing of the opera with the myth of Orfeo who, to recover his dead loved one, descends to Hades and defies death, pitting his artistry with the lyre against it. This is not, however, to say that the larger film audience commands the same knowledge. They will be literally shocked to find that they are shown a film the language of which they do not understand. (I firmly believe that this film is suited entirely for television, for with television there is possibility to provide the viewers with some advance information or to give some sort of translation or sub-titling of the texts.)

Yet I think I do understand why an artist seeks the answers to his own questions and to those of his time in myths. Obviously, the explanation why the film departs from Gluck's happy ending and reaches back to the Greek myth itself is to be found in the personal circumstances of the artist. Orfeo cannot finally avail himself of the unique and miraculous opportunity of bringing back his beloved from the underworld. After mastering all the difficulties, he cannot overcome his own weakness, and looks behind him at Euridice, before they leave the world of shadows. The gods do not pardon him for this violation of the law and the agreement, and Euridice is snatched from him again and for good. Beyond a sense of cultural mission to popularize a famous opera, it is here, in this alteration of the ending, that Gaál's personal motivation, his concern with the Orfeo myth and the opera, are to be sought out. This is so abstract and esoteric that it is practically unapproachable for the general audience, even if they could understand Italian to make sense of the film. (Luckily, though, the language of music is universally comprehensible.)

I strongly hope that television companies throughout the world will snap up this film, that it will also be released in Italy, and in this way all will not be entirely a failure—not necessarily in the financial sense, but in the moral and artistic recognition of the film. Neither the voice of Lajos Miller, nor the film's other musical and cinematic merits, not even the wonderful camera-work, the stunningly beautiful surrealistic sequences, the subdued and elegant colours, will recover this work of Gaál's from the underworld of unsuccess. Gaál seems to have overestimated the intellectual curiosity of film audiences, which might not even sense that there was a modern and sad personal message to be found here, wrapped in Greek myth cum glorious Baroque music cum brilliant visual effects. I have a feeling that he might think that the experience he brought with him from his childhood and youth, and on which he based most of his previous films, is spent, used up, and that he is to seek his material elsewhere, even in places where his excellent and genuinely realistic artistic inclinations would not have led him to. If this is so, he is probably wrong. The example of Bergman shows us how the same subject can be approached in a wide variety of ways. As for me, I prefer a half-successful film from the director of *Current*, *Green Years*, *The Falcons*, one which is rooted in his own real experiences, to the faultless filming of an opera.

ERVIN GYERTYÁN

MUSICAL LIFE

MUSIC OF OUR TIME '85

To summarize this year's festival: less spectacular events and fewer works of penetrating force than last year but the same attendance figures and the same interest was perceivable both in the number of tickets sold and the atmosphere at some of the concerts played to packed houses.

The simplest way to gauge the difference seems to be to compare the traditional portrait concerts of the two festivals. The Stockhausen recital in 1984 was a revelation, while the Pendereczki evening a disappointment in 1985. The two Polish compositions—one in an instrumental setting (with the Hungarian State Symphony Orchestra), the other in an oratorical frame (Budapest Choir, Mátyás Antal, Jadwiga Gadulanka, Jadwiga Rappe, Henryk Grychnik, and Andrzej Hiolski) and conceived in Pendereczki's neo-romantic style, which began with his Violin Concerto, and which for years has been kept in evidence as an international trend, left the impression of a flagging invention. The Second Cello Concerto of 1982, which borrows even its subject from previous works of the composer, proves unable to lend animation to a melodic and harmonic structure built on the mere alternation of two intervals while the programmatic approach of the *Te Deum* cannot conceal the dilution of the *al fresco* style, which in the *Stabat Mater* still had the effect of an inspired and personal tone. In the Cello Concerto Miklós Perényi's brilliant performance and the left-handed conducting of the composer-conductor were unable to make the listener forget the vacant runs, the occasionally constrained design and more than once laboured orchestration. It is not the Mahler, Shostakovich and Liszt reminiscences that the listener objects to in the work, void of any inner glow, but rather the discrediting of various strata of nineteenth-century music, its idiom and the composers, styles and works it takes as its models. The *Te Deum*, which dates from two years earlier, draws its meaning from the magnificent text; the interpretation of thanksgiving—such that it virtually resembles a Requiem—lends the setting a singular tone. The troping of the line "Salvum fac populum tuum Domine" (which recalls a medieval practice) and the comment upon it with the words of the hymn *Boze cos Polske pres tak liczne* heard as a distant chorus, might have been the kernel and the climax of this interpretation of the poem. With the piece lacking sufficient weight, this quotation remains an external decoration; even the conclusion in C fails to recall eternity, it rather comes as a warning that the waves of neo-romanticism are slowly lapping on the shores of 1950.

Even if not within a composer's evening, the Dutch Hoketus Ensemble made its début in Hungary as representative of a single trend, the style once serving as model for the Hungarian Group 180. Their Budapest performance seems to indicate the ap-

proach of repetitive music to the ideal of hard rock and heavy metal rock. The deafening roar of the electric amplifier made the effect limited, relegating the text to the background; the latter, however, could have been the determinant element, as for instance in Rzewski's *Coming Together*, the impact of the melody was weakened and harmony was practically suspended. The rhythm, mainly due to the steel-like arms of the pianist, hammering away on two Yamaha instruments, and to the percussionists, got the upper hand. Rumour has it that the ensemble, which creates a taste and expresses an opinion with their deliberately neglected appearance and stage manners (pulling off their jackets and pullovers while playing, throwing down the music sheet by sheet), will soon disband. Is it perhaps that they feel the glory of the repetitive school is on the wane? Or are they indicating their unwillingness to step beyond the magic circle of onesidedness, unlike more important names do, as borne out by Steve Reich's *Tehillim*, heard at last year's festival? In any case, one listened to Louis Andriessen's *Hoketus*, the piece from which the ensemble took its name, in a brilliant, rhythmically unswerving ecstatic performance, as a classical moment of a vanishing period.

The musical realm to which we were introduced by the Tallinn Trio is narrow and its limits have been set by a different set of considerations. In their geographical region the nineteenth century has grown peacefully into the present, and with insufficient fresh vital juices to draw on, the conservative form, apparatus, and technique of composing have become petrified. The trios for piano, violin and cello by Rjaets, Kulberg, and the Kulberg, Sumera, Kangro collective, testified simply to thorough craftsmanship and a sober elaboration of the always abundant musical material.

Brian Ferneyhough's Second String Quartet and Chris Dench's First String Quartet had their first performance in Hungary at a concert which, as regards the performance of the Arditti Quartet, was a real sensation, but otherwise seemed an imposition. Judging them from Budapest, one can only surmise the role the two works play in British music; their lack of personal impact in any way leaves doubts about their international relevance.

The billing of the string quartets of Ferneyhough and Dench shows all the same that it is the effort of the organizers at least occasionally to provide information on the musical scene of a particular country. Over the past fifty years presumably the only work heard in Hungary by England's eighty-year-old composer laureate, Michael Tippett, is his Fourth Symphony at a concert given by János Petró and the Szombathely Symphony Orchestra. This one-movement work, in the nature of a symphonic poem, built on three character themes, and somewhat after the model of Liszt's B minor Sonata, conjoins a sonata cycle and a sonata allegro. Nicholas Maw's solo cycle with an Italian text and in five sections, scored for soprano voice (Adrienne Csengery) and chamber ensemble, at the closing concert of the festival, was indebted to the inheritance of Purcell, Tallis, and Britten. With a title taken from Dante *(La vita nouva)*, it brings evocative settings of five poems, by Cavalcanti, Boiardo, Tasso, Michelangelo, and Gasparo Stampa. The central poem "Tacciono i boschi," in suggestive, colourful scoring is flanked by two madrigals, one merry and one bitter.

In a gesture to the host country, the Arditti String Quartet balanced the English works in their programme with two Hungarian works, the string quartets of György Kurtág of 1955 and of György Ligeti of 1968. They were both—as was the closing piece by Xenakis—performed at an absolutely amazing technical and intellectual standard. The first Budapest performances of *Tetras*, composed in 1983, and *Persephassa*, only now reaching Hungary after fifteen years, was given by the Amadinda Percussion Ensemble. These too added to the portrait of Xenakis which was a significant contribution of the

festival. *Tetras* launches undisguised passions, is hard, almost relentless, at places automatically so and at others suggesting anonymous allegro barbaros. By the strength of its rhythms and intensifications, it ultimately has a convincing aesthetical effect and Xenakis enjoins his work upon the listener. *Persephassa* is a concerto, stirring and paralysing at the same time, from percussion instruments divided into six groups and placed all over the hall (Zoltán Rácz, Zsolt Sárkány, Károly Bojtos, Zoltán Váczi, Aurél Holló, and László Juhász). In it the composer, a modern Polyphemus (in 1945, during the siege of Athens, a Sherman tank shell caused him the loss of an eye), warns generations who have never known war, for possible cataclysms, introducing them to mysterious tectonic powers.

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Of the Hungarian performers, who contributed a great deal, István Matuz gave a splendid rendition in the Szombathely Symphony's concert, of Dufourt's work for solo flute and chamber orchestra, which had taken first prize in the 1978 La Rochelle International Flute Competition. The work reminds me of a letter Mendelssohn wrote to his young nephew, Henschel, in the year of his death, warning him that if he wished to take up composition as a profession, he should devote more attention to contents than to sound. The letter has obviously escaped the notice of Dufourt. Bernhard Krol on the other hand, if he has read the letter, must have interpreted Mendelssohn's words rather too one-sidedly, for in writing his miniature cycle for horn and organ, resembling a low mass, he paid no heed to the need for a sound that is at least somewhat distinguished and individual. András Ligeti introduced two fine pieces, heading the Chamber Ensemble of the Hungarian Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra. Pierre Boulez scored the sextet *Dérive* for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, vibraphone, and piano, in July 1984 as a tribute to William Glock, who was just retiring from his post as director of the Bath Festival. The piece is marked by sustained notes and hovering motions in alternation, one being conditional upon the other. The beautiful, virtuoso sound brings vibration both in the constantly changing combinations of timbre and in the density with which it rustles; yet it always calms the thrill it arouses. A truly French score, after a minute expansion, the opening tempo is restored for the last time as a Gallic melodic fragment, symbolizing the year 1900, unfolds enthrallingly on the flute. It is certainly not the most momentous work of the composer's, but few musicians could condense so much poetry into seven minutes and a single idea.

A work approximately of the same compression and quality is *Chain T.* by Lutoslawski. Through the title, this composer of international repute refers to the principal structural feature of this piece built up of gestures. It is tougher, more fibrous and animated than the work by Boulez and at certain points almost recalls pantomime. After the arrival of an aleatoric moment (so typical of the composer) and an appassionato climax, the sound peters out in space. As always, Lutoslawski has written a proportionate, entertaining and exquisitely orchestrated work with a deep sense of music and without the slightest trace of pomposity. Dating from 1983, the piece was dedicated to Michael Vinar and the fourteen instrumentalists of the London Sinfonietta. Ligeti gave a conscientious and inspired interpretation of the work. He created a fine ensemble from members of the Radio Orchestra, who obviously took their commission most seriously. An ensemble of this quality is sure to have a future in the Hungarian musical scene once the financial backing is ensured for them.

The finest work from abroad was a Hungarian composition, being a four-movement cycle by György Ligeti, inspired by Brahms'

Horn Trio and dedicated to that composer.* We heard a committed, at some points immaculate, interpretation from Ádám Friedrich, István Gulyás, and András Keller. The two inner movements are flanked by a gentle, ternary andantino and an adagio of a lamento type, at certain points with a natural horn sound. The two inner movements are a vivacissimo built on an ostinato and in Bulgarian rhythm, which develops in the direction of an ecstatic opening up, as in jazz, and the other is ternary in form, whose principal section is a march replete with energetic accents. It is not impossible that this arrangement—*mutatis mutandis*—reminds others too of Bartók's Sixth String Quartet. The predominant intervals, the horn fifth memory of Romanticism, the structure built on periods, the dedication, the genre, the closeness to genres (dance, march), the traditional forms and all this taken together, point to Ligeti's neo-romantic attitude. Yet the piece is so fine, a work of such a free personality, that the role it plays in the composer's own œuvre is virtually of secondary importance. Scarcely has it ended when one would like to listen to it again. I intentionally used the term œuvre, as today it counts as a rarity when instead of individual pieces, there unfolds a whole œuvre.

The works composed in Hungary also include some of more lasting value; there are certain features easy to generalize, partly in connection with the relationship between styles and audiences, partly with the status of instrumental music. The relative size of concert audiences in Hungary (perhaps elsewhere too) seem to be linked with various prejudices. In the case of Group 180 or that of the Amadinda Ensemble, young people book seats at the Academy of Music for the same reason that they follow their favourite pop groups wherever they appear. The Hoketus Ensemble played "the same thing" as the Group 180 and only drew a 33 per cent attendance, while the popular Amadinda Ensemble's concert offers "mixed" values, but since these included the poignant *Persephassa*, the hall is filled to 92 per cent of its capacity. Almost exactly the same amount of interest was shown in the festival's star event: Pendereczki's author's evening. On the other hand, Ligeti's Horn Trio drew 200 listeners to the Academy of Music, and 247 people were drawn to the Pest Vigadó for a programme which billed Kurtág, Ligeti, and Xenakis performed by the Arditti String Quartet. Instrumental music owes its status and, it seems, in our age unattainable glory, to the German Romantic movement of the 1790s, the generation of Wackenroder and Tieck, and in the history of music, to the new aesthetic ideas of E. T. A. Hoffmann. Somewhat earlier the widely travelled Charles Burney still spoke of wordless music as some article of consumer goods, and even Kant found that there is perhaps more enjoyment than culture in instrumental pieces. The recognition so hardly won by the works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, the rank of a sublime, lifting, educating and ennobling character and a philosophical content, have by now again been called into question by the hundreds of instrumental pieces intended for passing enjoyment but still performed in temple-like concert halls. The far from little confusion evident in the aesthetic judgement of modern music is enhanced by the spread of what may be called contemporary *Tafelmusik*, of happening-like, ephemeral musical events and their conjunction with works of more lasting aspirations. This is a sensitive problem which should be faced by programme organizers who, alas, have to keep financial considerations in mind. It is also of concern to music criticism, which is forced to compare incommensurable works, and finally it also confuses audiences, who slowly lose their natural sense of value and judgement. At the evening of the Amadinda Percussion Ensemble, the Hungarian works—Miklós Sugár's four-movement *Dissolvings*, pointed to a well-balanced frame of mind, while József Sári's *Axiom*, revealed a bent for constructivity—

* See *NHQ* 94

but both pieces with their chamber dimensions and introspective nature necessarily fell victim to a lack of audience interest as the shadow of the monumental *Persephassa* loomed over them. István Mártha's *Doll House Story* undertakes, with a good stage sense, to blend repetitive technique with a measure of happening-like visual effect without any pretension to more than the category of *Tafelmusik*; moreover, in the proximity of Xenakis, it cannot be more than cute, gifted yet slightly cheap and insufficient.

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Turning to the Hungarian premières, the loudest positive audience response came for Endre Székely's *Bauwerk* and György Kurtág's cycle *Six Songs and Ars poetica*, which was encored by the audience. Székely's piece, performed by Ádám Friedrich (horn), István Ruppert (organ) and Zoltán Rácz (percussion), is a skilfully constructed composition—built on a single idea—a prelude, which leads to an unexpected quotation of Bach's Gloria, with the effect of a final closing point. Kurtág's *Six Songs* for soprano voice (Adrienne Csengery) and cimbalon (Márta Fábián) are settings of poems by Amy Károlyi, supplemented by a three-line Japanese haiku. The parable on the mountain climbing snail in it also holds true for Kurtág who, with his eighty songs over the past five years, has indeed climbed Fuji. In fact these six miniature songs represent the whole recent output of song cycles from the composer, and on the highest grade, with the precision and sensitivity for each syllable in the text, with a lyrical interpretation of the madrigal form, and with that unique capacity through which the poetic idea becomes transformed, in an infinitely differentiated way, into musical form.

In a felicitous innovation, the festival also billed revivals of Hungarian compositions, which have proved viable works, to launch them on their way towards becoming repertoire pieces. They included *Notices* by Rudolf Maros and *Variant*, by Miklós Kocsár (Hungarian Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra conducted by György Lehel) and *Pezzo concertato* by Kamilló Lendvai (Szombathely Symphony, Csaba Onczay, János Petró). *A Dayreamer's Diary* by Sándor Balassa and *Ornamenti* and *Impromptu in F*, both by Zsolt Durkó, were heard in three different concerts, for the first time in Budapest. Balassa's work was commissioned by an American foundation in 1982; an orchestral suite in six movements, in sound it seems to be a postlude to the *Song of Glarus*; it experiments with the possibilities inherent in the scherzo and the fast finale and various interpretations at various venues have won it acclaim in Europe and overseas. Durkó wrote his *Impromptu* for a British commission, scoring it for solo flute (István Matuz) and chamber ensemble (the Chamber Ensemble of the Hungarian Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra). *Ornamenti* for orchestra was commissioned by the Szombathely Symphony, and it was premièred at the opening concert in Szombathely of the International Bartók Seminar in 1985. Both works use themes with variations, and both exhibit what is typical of Durkó's style—an endeavour subtle in elaboration, forms built out of small units and sections, and a virtually improvisatory technique without precise arrangement, which at certain points of the form comes to the fore. But his interest in experimentations in form is also evident, primarily in *Ornamenti*, which owes its title to the origin of the musical material in ornaments. The fairly long motif cores developing in convoluted lines, the intertwining variations, the work's more forceful, tangible muscles, freer breathing and more powerful articulation seem to anticipate a shift in Durkó's style and, even more so, in his attitude.

The most significant Hungarian première, that of József Soproni's Violin Concerto, was heard at the opening concert of the festival. Accompanied by the Hungarian Radio and Television Symphony Orchestra conducted

by György Lehel, Eszter Perényi gave a wonderful rendition of this work which consists of three interwoven movements of a duration of about 25 minutes, whose invention lies primarily in its ability to draw cantabile sounds from the violin and in its harmonic fertility. Apart from a few moments, the orchestra does not become a concertante partner of the soloist, it has its major role rather in creating a kind of harmonic atmosphere and suggestions of colours. The texture surrounding the predominant violin solo is of an elegiac, meditative mood. The required contrast is met by a few energetic moments of a fast tempo character, which, however, are thematically perhaps less strongly marked; in connection with this, the violin part is scored in an expressly virtuoso manner, and the transitions, of a cadenza nature, play a significant part. The concealed *hommage* character of the work is suggested by variation as the decisive formal principle and a kernel, which refers to the andante tranquillo movement of Bartók's Violin Concerto of 1938. Within the grand form, moving towards a slow conclusion, the first movement ends in a sostenuto, the central mood in the second movement is created by a significant andante moderato middle section and the work ends with an adagio movement. Soproni who, for many of us, made his name with the Fourth String Quartet has now again written fine and communicative pieces of slow music in which he manages to make the violin sing.

After attending the festival in its entirety (I only missed the first performance of László Sáry's new work at Alan Feinberg's afternoon concert) and despite the absence of new recognitions or sensations, I once again opt for the continuation of this series. For the next occasion I hope for—within the given limits—a larger number of topical, fresh pieces, somewhat more participants from abroad and a further orientation towards stage genres, which would more resolutely continue the initiative launched in 1984. Music of Our Time is a project that stands above personal and group interests, Hungarian or non-Hungarian. It is independent of the incalculable and suspect consequences of reciprocal obligations, and takes aesthetic bearings based on conviction alone. With this impartial organizational principle, it will, we hope, be mounted again in 1986 for the 13th occasion, for the benefit of us all.

GYÖRGY KROÓ

LÁSZLÓ SOMFAI

LISZT'S INFLUENCE ON BARTÓK RECONSIDERED

As an undergraduate musicologist, I witnessed keenly the creative excitement around Ernő Lendvai's Bartók analysis and the almost simultaneous discovery of the atonal Liszt in the composer's late works. I had not been a student of either of the two key figures who presented these novelties —Ernő Lendvai (on Bartók) and István Szelényi (on Liszt); however, my teachers did include authors of major studies on Liszt: Bence Szabolcsi, Lajos Bárdos, and Zoltán Gárdonyi. My own experience makes me believe that it was natural and inevitable that the demonstration in Liszt's music of the scales, chords, and progressions labelled by Lendvai in his highly sophisticated analysis would shock the Hungarian musical public.

The question arises whether this was not a kind of narcotic to help exclude the main current of twentieth-century European music, and make it almost conceivable that Liszt alone had been sufficient to give a fillip to Bartók for the discovery of the path leading to modern music. The Hungarian musical scene of the time did indeed accept such a narcotic if it helped forget the partial discrimination imposed on Bartók's œuvre by cultural officialdom. Bence Szabolcsi was working almost at the same time on his essay "The Twilight of Ferenc Liszt" and on another one he intended as ammunition for the performance of Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin*, which had been withdrawn. All this took place in a musical scene where all first performed contemporary Hungarian works were more traditional in tone (more romantic, tonal, national, etc.) than most of Bartók's work. So the introduction of a "modern Liszt," one who had anticipated Bartók, could have an effect on composition. Something else which contributed to the halo around Liszt's name, which in the 1950s had a certain tactical value as well, was that several Russian national composers of the late nineteenth century had looked upon Liszt as one of their significant forerunners.

If a young man—for instance someone working on a doctoral thesis abroad—were to ask today how a few skeletal textures, pieces scarcely completed, and scale segments taken from lengthy scores could have such an exaggerated effect on good musicians trying to build a bridge between Liszt and Bartók, one could easily relate a few incidents from one's own memories. One would be the fact that by that time the Wagner repertoire had been slowly and quietly reduced in the Budapest Opera House to the earlier pieces, and *The Mastersingers*; another would be the fact that the single performance of Richard Strauss's *Zarathustra* ended in near scandal due to the miserable state of the organ at the Academy of Music; still another fact worth mentioning is that all those momentous works which once had helped Bartók, then in his early twenties, overcome his frustration as a composer, fifty years later were mostly unused scores in Budapest. The musicologist, who in the mid-1950s had to work in a class-room atmosphere, sitting at the piano and looking into the past, did indeed have to put the question what it would have meant had Bartók been acquainted with Liszt's old-age csárdás music and other feats of daring. Or whether Bartók did in fact know them in those decisive years when leaving behind his late romantic manner and discovering peasant music he finally found the tone that was his own.

The very irony is that, as it has been recently discovered, Bartók did indeed encounter Liszt's *Csárdás macabre*. Only not at the time it had previously been assumed, but in 1912, after he had developed a mature style of his own and had composed his Allegro barbaro. He was even engaged in editing it for the Liszt *Gesamtausgabe* of

Breitkopf und Härtel, but according to all indications, the piece left no mark on him.

Why that was so will only be understood if, examining our current knowledge of sources, one takes a look at the documents in a strictly chronological context.

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Before embarking on such a chronologically oriented survey, let us have a closer look at the relevant passage in Bartók's autobiography, this being the only place where he related expressis verbis, what the music of Liszt had meant in his artistic development.

Yet one should not be content with merely looking up the passage in question in just any of the English editions of Bartók's *Autobiography*. It becomes inevitable at this point to make a philological detour and even take into consideration quotations written in other languages. To start with, the writing in question is not the autobiography but Bartók's autobiographies. Apart from two youthful autobiographical sketches in Hungarian and one late sketch written in English, Bartók wrote his autobiography proper in German in 1918 *(Selbstbiographie/1918)*, which he later enlarged, inserting passages and bringing it up to date *(Selbstbiographie/1921)*. This version he later translated into Hungarian *(Önéletrajz/1923)*.[1]

In the 1918 version the name of Liszt only features in connection with Bartók's years of study at the Budapest Academy of Music, and actually with a negative note, closely linked with Wagner's name:[2]

"...I took Dohnányi's advice and came to Budapest and became a pupil of István Thomán (in piano) and of Hans Koessler[3] (in composition). I stayed here from 1899 till 1903. I started studying with great enthusiasm Wagner's work, till then unknown to me—*The Ring, Tristan, The Mastersingers*—and Liszt's orchestral compositions. I got rid of the Brahmsian style, but did not succeed via Wagner and Liszt, in finding the new way so ardently desired."

This same passage includes the often cited sentence: "From this stagnation I was roused as by a lightning stroke by the first performance in Budapest of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, in 1902."

For the second German version of 1921, Bartók made, apart from the natural additions to the end of the biography, two insertions, both of which are, surprisingly, connected with Liszt, and indeed, both in a most positive context. The first insertion features in parentheses after the excerpt already quoted in his studies of Wagner and Liszt:

"... (I did not at that time grasp Liszt's true significance for the development of modern music and only saw the technical brilliance of his compositions.)"[4]

The other insertion is an entire paragraph, which follows a description of his output inspired by the influence of Strauss (the symphonic poem *Kossuth* of 1903, etc., up to the works of 1904–5):

"Meanwhile the magic of Richard Strauss evaporated. The reinvestigation of Liszt's music, especially of some of his less popular works,[5] like *Années de Pèlerinage, Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses*, the *Faust* Symphony, *Totentanz*, and others had, after being stripped of their mere external brilliance which I did not like, revealed to me the true essence of the matter:[6] I began to understand the significance of these works:..."

And here I would like to break off the line of Bartók's thought in the middle of a sentence, to look at what exactly Bartók wrote in German:

"... *ich empfand sie [die Bedeutung] nun als eine um vieles höhere als diejenige sowohl Wagner's als auch Strauss's.*"

This is in fact what Bartók wrote in his manuscript. The *Musikblätter des Anbruch* wanted to improve Bartók's German, and by so doing they grossly distorted his conception:

"... *ich empfand bei ihm (Liszt) viel*

größeren Genius als bei Wagner und Strauß."

Two numbers later the periodical carried a Qualifying Statement:

"... *Ich empfand bei diesen Werken stärkere Bedeutung für die Weiterentwicklung der Tonkunst, als bei Wagner und Strauß."*

("For the future development of music these works seemed to me of greater importance than those of Wagner and Strauss.")

This was the second insertion. It seems justified to ask whether anything had happened between 1918 and 1921 that made it suddenly important for Bartók to lay special stress upon Liszt's influence. Why had he not mentioned it in 1918? And when exactly did "*Das erneute Studium von Liszt*"— "The reinvestigation of Liszt's music"— take place?

Since a Bartók scholar can only put forward hypotheses in answer to these questions, it seems to be time to begin a chronological survey of Bartók's relationship with the music of Liszt.

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To assist orientation, I include a chronological chart which shows in parallel the moments in Bartók's life related to Liszt and the periods and stylistic questions of Bartók's music.

It is not immaterial that the juvenalia Bartók wrote before the age of eighteen, reams of piano pieces and chamber music, betray no influence of Liszt whatever. At the time Bartók was much less interested in Liszt than in Brahms and the classics. Although he did perform the ever-successful Spanish Rhapsody at a gymnasium concert (a piece he later included in his programmes again) together with a transcription of the *Tannhäuser* Overture, at the age of sixteen he still did not know what to do with Liszt's Sonata in B minor.[7] In his note-book, a *List of Good Musical Compositions*, which he kept fairly regularly from March 25, 1897 until 1903,[8] the first 350 entries include a total of seventeen works by Liszt, which bespeaks a modest interest.

The years at the Budapest Academy of Music from 1899 on brought a change in this respect. Of the studies of Wagner and Liszt which Bartók mentioned in his Autobiography, his Wagner studies were in greater depth, nevertheless he certainly did encounter the scores of *Les Préludes* (1900), *Hungaria*, and the *St Elizabeth* Oratorio (1901), and in the autumn of 1902 he attended a concert in which the Faust Symphony was given. He also entered in his list a late piano piece (*Sunt lacrymae rerum*), as well as several Hungarian rhapsodies (which in fact he never performed). As a student of István Thomán, a former pupil of Liszt, Bartók achieved considerable success at concerts in the years between 1901 and 1903, with the Sonata in B minor (October 1901),[9] a transcription of the *Erlkönig*, several études and the Spanish Rhapsody (1903), but his repertoire, which was just taking shape around that time, included Schumann and Chopin with approximately the same frequency.

The first wave in Bartók's activity as a composer, which at long last started up under the influence of Strauss in 1903 (the *Kossuth* symphonic poem; Four Piano Pieces, Violin Sonata) yielded a kind of mixed Hungarian style. Naturally there are ample signs of a fairly superficial influence of Liszt, primarily in passages where the emphasis is on the national idiom. But the features which, for instance, in the motivic transformations of the *Kossuth* link with the mature Bartók and which are generally considered to originate from Liszt, Bartók received, even if via Liszt, from Richard Strauss. (For example the "extension in range": projecting major or minor motives into a narrow-ranged scale such as the octatonic scale, or in an augmented one like the whole-tone scale.)

1904–1905: The "reinvestigation" of Liszt's Music

One can only surmise that Bartók, during his private studies after graduation with Dohnányi at Gmunden in August and September

Lisztiana				Composition
		*1881		
		1889	childlike pieces	
moderate interest in Liszt's piano music	c1896	1894	classical imitation	
		1897	Brahmsian works	
		1899		
study of Wagner and Liszt scores;	1899	1899	studies with Koessler	
		1902	["Zarathustra!"]	
Sonata in B minor	1901			
Spanish Rhapsody	1903	1903	mixed Hungarian style	"Kossuth" Four Piano Pieces Violin Sonata
"The reinvestigation of Liszt's music"; *Années; Harm. poét.; Weinen, Klagen* Var.; *Totentanz*	1904	1904	major works in Hungarian style— parallel to the first folksong arrangements [Debussy, Reger]	Piano Quintet Scherzo op. 2 Rhapsody op. 1 1st Suite op. 3 2nd Suite op. 4 Violin Concerto
	1905			
		1907		
		1908	establishment of Bartók's mature style	* 14 Bagatelles op. 6 First String Quartet, etc.
(1911: LISZT YEAR)				
first essay on Liszt	1911	1911		Allegro barbaro, "Bluebeard" opera
editorial work for the Liszt-*Gesamtausgabe*		1914		Suite op. 14 Second String Quartet "The Wooden Prince" Etudes; "Mandarin"
	1918	1918		
Autobiography: insertions on Liszt's influence	1921	1921		Violin Sonata no. 1 * Violin Sonata no. 2
		1922		
		1927		* Third String Quartet
		1928		* Rhapsodies nos. 1–2
(1936: LISZT YEAR) second essay on Liszt; recording of *Sursum corda*	1936			
		†1945		

1903, received a fundamental stimulus on the Liszt question too. These he assimilated in the following year. From May to October 1904, he retired to *Gerlice puszta* in the country to prepare for the "great breakthrough" both as a pianist and a composer, by writing new works and expanding his repertoire with large-scale piano pieces. (In fact this "breakthrough" failed to take place.) What he had not expected was his first encounter in *Gerlice puszta* with genuine peasant song, both Hungarian and Slovak.

It must have been then, alongside the completion of the Piano Quintet and the composition of op. 1 and 2, that Bartók embarked on the "reinvestigation of Liszt's music" he mentioned in the interpolation to his autobiography. According to a letter of his, in 1904 he rehearsed *Funérailles* and *Cantique d'amour* from *Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses*, the *Weinen, Klagen* Variations and the *1st Mephisto Waltz*, and was already preparing for the performance of the *Totentanz*. We have no similarly direct information on *Années de Pèlerinage*, but a few sections of his Scherzo op. 2 and the fugato in the second movement of the Suite No. 2. are eloquent proof of the influence of the Faust Symphony.

I think Bartók was never so close to Liszt as when he approached him through these pieces (most of which date from Liszt's Weimar period) while composing his great works in a Hungarian style in 1904–5. Thus if there still remains any essential point requiring research involving a style analysis of Bartók's music and his relationship with Liszt's music, it would principally concern this brief period. Of course, here too, it is not only a question of any direct Liszt influence, since that of Strauss (and Wagner) still prevailed at the time, and one can also discern some slight influence from Dohnányi and others as well. By 1907 Bartók already had scores of the music of Debussy and Reger, and in the summer and autumn of the same year he discovered in Transylvania the ancient Hungarian pentatonic folksong style.

In the short piano movements Bartók began writing in 1908 with great intensity he reestablished, according to his singular musical logic, his individual idiom and musical grammar from the very foundations upwards. The influence of Liszt (although it could be still felt after 1908 too, in *valse diabolique*-like features, in moments of musical irony, in the monothematic contrast form, the rich piano textures like in Two Elegies, and so on) was no longer of primary significance. And when he broke away from traditional tonality, Bartók was not led by Liszt and particularly not by the music of Liszt in his old age. A thorough study of Bartók's Fourteen Bagatelles and other piano cycles, supported by data on Bartók's intimate knowledge of contemporary music,[10] makes this apparent.

On Bartók's Liszt Repertory and Liszt Essays

At this point we should turn to two groups of data which characterize the mature Bartók's relationship with the music of Liszt. The first is a catalogue of Liszt works he performed on his concerts.[11]

*1a	(1897)	Spanish Rhapsody (repeatedly played in 1903–5)
2	(1898)	WAGNER–LISZT *Tannhäuser* Ouverture
3	(1901)	Sonata in B minor
4		SCHUBERT–LISZT *Erlkönig*
5	(1902)	Etude in F minor (Études... No. 10)
6		Paganini Etude(s) (*La Campanella* also in 1905, 1924)
1b	(1904)	LISZT–BUSONI Spanish Rhapsody with orchestra
*7		*"Weinen, Klagen"* Variations (in 1924, 1929, 1937 repeatedly)
8		*Funérailles* (*Harmonies*... No. 7)
9		1st *Mephisto Waltz*
*10	(1905)	*Totentanz* (also 1930, 1935; repeatedly in 1936)
11		*Feux follets* (Études... No. 5)
12		*Cantique d'amour* (*Harmonies*... No. 10)

13 (1911) Concerto in E flat
14 (1928) *Années*... Third Year, No. 2 *Aux cyprès de la Villa D'Este*, No. 4 *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*, No. 5 *Sunt Lacrymae rerum*, No. 7 *Sursum corda** (in 1929, 1936 too, No. 7 for gramophone record too)
*15 (1936) *Concerto pathétique* for two pianos (1938–9 too)
16 (1937) *Années*... First Year, No. 7 *Églogue*

According to a study of Bartók's repertoire by Béla Bartók Jr., Liszt was the sixth most often played composer by Bartók (Bartók 444, Beethoven 124, Kodály 117, Debussy 80, Scarlatti 70, Liszt 67). The *Totentanz* occupies an even more distinguished place if we consider the concerto pieces separately (Bartók's Rhapsody 39, Second Concerto 29, First Concerto 27, Liszt's *Totentanz* 9, Liszt's Concerto in E flat 3). Nonetheless, essentially only the *Weinen, Klagen* Variations, the *Totentanz* around the Liszt Year of 1936, and subsequently the piano duo *Concerto pathétique* had any major part in the recitals, or other appearances given by Bartók the pianist-composer, between 1920 and 1940, the period in which he was comparatively active in the concert hall. He played the "modern" pieces from the Third Year of *Années de Pèlerinage* fairly rarely, although he recorded *Sursum corda*.

In fact, those Liszt works that have survived in Bartók's performance (particularly the fragments of a phonoamateur recording of *Weinen, Klagen*, from 1937 and the *Concerto pathétique* he played with Dohnányi in 1939) reveal Bartók as a grandiose pianist of Liszt's music.[12] But his performance, declaimed with romantic extremes, also shows that he included Liszt (or Chopin and Brahms) in his recitals not to present him as the intellectual ancestor of his own music, but rather in way of a rewarding stylistic contrast.

The other group of data is related to the Liszt works mentioned in Bartók's writings. The majority of these references, particularly in studies on folk music, are conventional and negative in tone: "Chopin and Liszt" or "Brahms's Hungarian dances and Liszt's Hungarian rhapsodies" usually feature as models not to be followed. Specific works by Liszt were dealt with by Bartók in the essays he wrote on the occasions of the two Liszt Years and in his autobiography. The following are the Liszt works that Bartók mentioned, with those he dealt with in some detail marked with an asterisk:

in: "Liszt's Music and Today's Public" 1911):

*1 Sonata in B minor
2 Piano Concerto in E flat
*3 Faust Symphony
*4 *Totentanz*
5 B–A–C–H: Prelude und Fuge
6 "*Weinen, Klagen*" Variations
7 *Années de Pèlerinage*
*8 Hungarian Rhapsodies (Nos. 6 and 12 in particular)
9 Dante Symphony

in: "Autobiography" (1918):
(orchestral compositions)

in: "Autobiography" (1921):
Années de Pèlerinage
10 *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*
Faust Symphony
Totentanz

in: "Liszt Problems" (1936):
11 Spanish Rhapsody
12 "a Rumanian Rhapsody"
Totentanz
Sonata in B minor
Faust Symphony
Piano Concerto in E flat
(symphonic poems)
Hungarian Rhapsodies
Années de Pèlerinage
Harmonies poétiques et religieuses

In connection with these works Bartók mentioned the following as being novel features which had stimulated the development of music (and which may accordingly be con-

sidered as an account of Liszt's influence on himself):

— the irony in Liszt's music,
— the invention of the one-movement cyclic sonata form based on monothematic variations of the theme,
— "Slow-Fast" rhapsody form deriving from the conventional juxtaposition in folk and popular dances,
— Liszt's influence on Debussy and Ravel via his late works, such as for instance *Les jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este*,
— juxtaposition, without any transition, of two keys the most distant from each other, etc.

The *Csárdás macabre*, however, is mentioned in none of these articles, nor in any other writings or letters of Bartók's. How long had he been acquainted with the piece at all?

New Sources: Bartók's editorial work for the Liszt "Gesamtausgabe"

For the time being, until the publication of the correspondence between the German Breitkopf and Härtel firm of publishers and Bartók, consisting of some 160 letters,[13] the tremendous editorial work Bartók, the young piano professor was doing between 1911 and 1918 on a commission from the Hungarian Ministry of Culture and the Liszt Academy of Music, is only known to a restricted circle of Bartók scholars. As part of his work for the *Gesamtausgabe*, over and above the Hungarian translation of the titles of the works and the notes featuring in the scores, he had to draw up the engraver's copies for what are known as Liszt's "Hungarian works" and supply the Critical Commentaries on them. Of all this, the revision of two short orchestral marches have appeared under Bartók's name (*Ung. Königsmarsch* und *Ung. Sturmmarsch*), and Peter Raabe's preface to Vol. II/12 includes a one-sentence acknowledgement to "Professor Bela Bártók" (sic), who revised at first instance the Hungarian Rhapsodies, collating the final forms with the preliminary forms and variants, too.

In fact, however, Bartók's work covered no less than the completion—up to the phase of proof-reading—of 216 pages of the Hungarian Rhapsodies Nos. 1–19 and of 144 pages of the volume *Magyar Dalok* and other early versions of the rhapsodies. Furthermore, he prepared for print further piano pieces and songs, all of a Hungarian character, and he also went over the symphonic poem *Hungaria* before its publication.

I do not intend here to enter into the details of how this work became more and more unbearable for Bartók, the experienced editor, and how much unnecessary supplementary work he was forced to do by bad organization, the changes in the editorial principles and the partly justified and partly inconsistent hair-splitting of several aging German professors. But here follow, with exact dates, the details which seem to be the most important from the point of view of Bartók's acquaintanceship with Liszt's works:

— March 1911: Bartók revised *Hungaria*.
— June 1911–March 1912: He completed the engraver's copy for "23 Hungarian Rhapsodies", in which, after Nos. 1–19, Nos. 20–22 were identical with Nos. 8–10 in *Magyar Dalok*, and No. 23, later published as Liszt's "*Rumänische Rhapsodie*" also referred to as "*Ung. Rhaps. No. 20*".[14]
— January 1912: Bartók received a volume of Liszt's Weimar manuscripts, from which he had 2 *Klavierstücke* in Hungarian style (Weimar Ms. J 12, 12s) and "*. . . eine angebliche Csárdás macabre*" copied in February.[15]
— February 1916: Completion of another, 2-volume form of "19 Hungarian Rhapsodies", and preliminary forms and variants of the rhapsodies, which Bartók intended as his final revision.
— September 1917: According to a letter of Bartók's, at the time he was not acquainted with the late pieces of *Historische ungarische Bildnisse*.

— February 1918: The publisher wishing to force P. Raabe on Bartók as a co-editor, he retired from the Liszt editions for good.

As regards an affinity with the music of the aged Liszt, I consider it of utmost significance that in his later writings too, Bartók judged the "late" rhapsodies, Nos. 16–19, of the 1880s in no way different from those of the popular, earlier pieces. In all probability he did not even consider the *Csárdás macabre* a definitely completed, finished, and matured work. If he had attached real significance to the piece, he would in all probability have mentioned it in his essay on Liszt in 1936, as he did the so-called "Rumanian" rhapsody.

Indirect influences

In conclusion let us return to the events that took place between 1918 and 1921, the dates of the two versions of Bartók's autobiography. In March 1920, in Berlin when Bartók was writing his most important, considered views on, and personal interpretation of modern music for *Melos* ("The Problem of the New Music"), he still referred to Liszt in the same Wagner–Liszt context which we know from his relevant articles.[16] In the same piece in *Melos* he mentioned Schoenberg repeatedly. His article became immediately known in "new music" circles. Soon after, Bartók was considered, for instance in England, to be under the influence of Schoenberg (that is, to follow the atonal path of Wagner and Schoenberg). Bartók was deeply indignant about this, as his letter of November 24, 1920, to Philip Haseltine (Peter Warlock) bears out.[17]

If he wished to dissociate himself publicly from this assessment, the best opportunity for this was offered by the request of the *Musikblätter des Anbruchs* for permission to carry his autobiography. This enabled Bartók to state, in the insertions to his autobiography, that at a given juncture (the time when he had become acquainted with folk music) he felt the influence of Strauss diminishing, he began reinvestigating Liszt's music, and he considered its significance for the music of the future more important than that of Wagner and Strauss. (Let me emphasize that Bartók makes no mention of Schoenberg in the text, while he does mention, in a positive context, Debussy and Stravinsky.) All this is not in contradiction with the 1918 version of the autobiography; nevertheless Bartók, in his own defence, accentuates a strand to which on other occasions he had given less prominence to. To this extent it is tendentious.

However, all the writings of Bartók's which deal with his own music are tendentious being affected by the reception of the work at a given moment. For example, they are almost always tendentious in favour of peasant music and in stressing the influence this music has had on him. Let me illustrate this with an example which indirectly has a negative bearing on Liszt. At one point in his "Harvard Lectures" of 1943 (*Béla Bartók Essays*, p. 363), Bartók produced a music example with three scales that he had observed in peasant music, which are "...absolutely unknown from modal music, and furthermore, scales with seemingly oriental features (that is, having augmented second steps)". Two of these three scales can be clearly recognized, indeed in scale-like progressions, in the B minor Sonata (from bars 101 and 750, respectively, onwards), a work he had often played and even described in his writings. Does this mean that as long as he encountered these scales only in Liszt's music, he had not even noticed their peculiarity, and this only struck him when he himself observed them in peasant music?

Although it is naturally impossible to understand the logic of a creative genius, I am one of those who incline to the opinion that this is in fact conceivable. While consciously deliberating on the creation of his tonal system—in the winter of 1907–8 and in some of the years that followed—Bartók was no

longer inspired by individual works from the past, but by musical systems and procedures he had extrapolated from the "oral art" of the hundreds of folksongs he himself had collected, and which, through his transcriptions, appeared now for the first time in musical notation.

The last significant, although clearly indirect, influence of Liszt's music can be detected in the origin of two typically Bartókian cyclic forms. One is the amalgamation of two contrasting movements as developed by Bartók from the structure of his Piano Sonata No. 2 (1922) to the attacca form of his Third String Quartet (1927), revealing a tangible relationship with the form of Liszt's B minor sonata. This was Bartók's most typical structure up to the time he crystallized his cyclic "palindrome" or bridge form (String Quartet No. 4, 1928, etc.). The other form concerns his splendid solution for the problem of the rhapsody—concert pieces of a national character and yet based on peasant themes, in his First and Second Violin Rhapsodies (1928). What Liszt, in Bartók's opinion, had been forced to produce out of inferior material (the Hungarian rapsody), has now been created on the basis of genuine folk music. It may have lost its ostentatiously "Hungarian" character and instead aligned Transylvanian+Rumanian, Rumanian+Hungarian and Ruthenian elements. For Bartók, who was familiar with that certain Liszt rhapsody known as (with or without justification) "Rumanian," there was nothing against the spirit of Liszt in this.

[1] See the latest list of Bartók's writings in: *The New Grove: Modern Masters: Bartók, Stravinsky, Hindemith* (London—New York), 1984, pp. 89–92.

[2] B. Suchoff, ed., *Béla Bartók Essays* (London, 1976), pp. 408–11.

[3] In the German original of 1918 it reads: "the Brahms-enthusiast Hans Koessler."

[4] In the German original of 1921 the second half of the sentence reads: "ich sah in seinen Werken nur die Äußerlichkeiten."

[5] In the loose translation of *Béla Bartók Essays:* "A really thorough study of Liszt's œuvre, especially of some of his less well known works . ."

[6] In *Béla Bartók Essays:* ". . . the true essence of composing."

[7] "I felt that the first half of the exposition was cold and empty, and I did not receive the irony of the fugato" in: "Liszt's Music and Today's Public." *Béla Bartók Essays*, p. 453.

[8] *"Ein Verzeichnis guter Musikwerke;"* for the list see: D. Dille, *Thematisches Verzeichnis der Jugendwerke Béla Bartóks* (Budapest, 1974), pp. 218–41.

[9] ". . . I took up the work anew; its piano technique, and the mastering of its difficulties interested me. As I studied it, gradually, if not unconditionally, I came to like it", *ibid*, pp. 453–4.

[10] See V. Lampert's and J. Demény's lists of contemporary music in Bartók's library and on his programme in: L. Somfai, ed., *Documenta Bartókiana 5* (Budapest—Mainz, 1977), pp. 142–76.

[11] New data in two volumes by Béla Bartók Jr: *Bartók Béla műhelyében* (In the Workshop of Béla Bartók, Budapest, 1982), pp. 97–269. and *Apám életének krónikája* (Chronicle of My Father's Life, Budapest, 1981). It should be noted that in several cases the programme cannot be precisely recontsructed.

[12] L. Somfai and Z. Kocsis, ed., *Centenary Edition of Bartók's Records (Complete)* (Hungaroton 1981).

[13] Based on the original letters preserved in Leipzig and in part in the *Bartók Archives*, Budapest, in preparation for *Documenta Bartókiana.*

[14] Although recent Hungarian Liszt research has established that the name "Rumanian" rhapsody is apocryphal, readers may perhaps be interested in the following three facts: It was Bartók who originally called the attention of Octavian Beu to the existence of the piece, which in 1936 Beu published as "Rumänische Rhapsodie." In the same letter of November 5, 1930, written in German, Bartók mentioned the piece as *"eine bisher unveröffentlichte Rhapsodie mit wahrscheinlich rumänischen Themen"* (a so far unpublished rhapsody whith presumably Rumanian themes); and finally, he himself referred to the work, in his lecture in February 1936, entitled "Liszt Problems" as Liszt *"egy oláh rapszódiája"* ("a Wallachian rhapsody by Liszt").

[15] I learned of this engraver's copy which had been made in Budapest and includes Bartók's notes, through the courtesy of Imre Sulyok.

[16] I have published the original texts of the drafts of "The Problem of the New Music" in: L. Somfai, ed., *Documenta Bartókiana 5*, pp. 23–33.

The reference to Liszt in the first, Hungarian draft reads: "*Sokkal többet köszönhetünk Wagnernek és Lisztnek, akik merész modulációkkal és alterált akkordok szabadabb alkalmazásával gazdagították a zenei lehetőségeket.*" ("We owe much more to Wagner and Liszt, who have enriched musical possibilities by bold modulations and a freer use of altered chords".) The second, German, draft essentially corresponds with the final text as it also appears in the English translation: "The increase of altered chords in the post-Beethoven period (Wagner, Liszt), then the continually freer use of non-harmonic and passing tones above chords which for the most part have tonal functions (Strauss, Debussy) are two important transitory stages from tonality to atonality." (*Béla Bartók Essays*, p. 455.)

[17] For the French original see: *Documenta Bartókiana 5*, p. 140.

NEW RECORDS

Approaches to the Baroque

The triple tercentenary of Bach, Handel, and Domenico Scarlatti in 1985 was undoubtedly a gift to both concert promoters and record producers, who for one year at least were spared the problem of finding a rationale and profile for their programmes and releases. Certainly in Britain Bach and Handel were fêted to the point of saturation, so much so that the other significant musical anniversaries of the year—the 400th birthdays of Schütz and Thomas Tallis, the centenary of the birth of Alban Berg—were allowed to pass with far less ceremony. If such events are customarily the opportunity for reassessment and rediscovery, it seems highly unlikely that the reputation of either Bach or Handel was significantly furthered by the additional exposure, in the way that less familiar composers find themselves enhanced in public stature after anniversary years.

Nevertheless in retrospect the celebrations may be seen as having performed a useful and significant function, in crystallizing attitudes to the way in which audiences expect music of the Baroque era to be presented. Perhaps 1985 will come to be regarded as the turning-point at which careful attention to the performing practices and instrumental characteristics as they were in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries ceased to be a case for the special pleading of a vociferous minority but became the accepted and standard starting-point for any interpretation, a prerequisite that must be taken into account before the niceties of the musical minutiae are considered.

In *NHQ* 98 János Malina set out the history of the authentic performance of early music in Hungary, a progress that in its major features, if not its time-scale, is roughly parallel to the development of the art in Western Europe. The first Hungarian chamber orchestra to be composed of performers who use only instruments of the period, the Capella Savaria, founded in 1981, is evidently embarked on an extensive series of recordings, three of which have appeared recently. Undoubtedly the most substantial is that of the complete version of Handel's *Atalanta* (SLPD 12612-14), conducted by Nicholas McGegan with a Hungarian cast. It is the first ever recording of the work, and it is interesting that while the most valuable part of the Handel celebrations in Britain was the vast range of opera productions that it elicited, many of them of hugely neglected scores, the same interest has not been shown by the record companies, for whom operatic Handel is still largely an unknown quantity.

Atalanta was written in 1736, and thus belongs to Handel's final period of operatic composition, when he was opera manager of

the Covent Garden Theatre in London, and required to furnish each season with his own work. It was completed in only three weeks, yet its première was an enormous success and proclaimed as the best of Covent Garden works. The librettist is unknown, but the text was adapted from Valeriani's pastoral *La caccia in Etolia*, an Arcadian tale of love and mistaken identity, which Handel treats in a relaxed, light-fingered way, adding a deus ex machina in the third act to manufacture a rousing celebratory finale. The characterization of the principals could hardly be described as profound—Handel's audience in 1736 demanded entertainment rather than psychological intensity—though in its musical forms the opera leans towards *opera seria*. There is the familiar alternation of secco recitative and aria, varied occasionally with accompanied recitative and instrumental interludes. Perhaps the most striking feature of *Atalanta* is that despite its rigid formalistic framework, it manages to preserve its variety of expression and mood. The use of a *deus ex machina* breaks the convention, replacing the aria-recitative sequence with choruses and orchestral sinfonias. *Atalanta* was written to celebrate the wedding of Frederick, Prince of Wales, and it is interesting to note that in his use of a *licenza* to end the work Handel was borrowing a convention from his continental contemporaries, such as Cesti, whose stage works, also intended as celebrations, frequently employ such a device.

In many respects the performance by the Capella Savaria and the band of soloists is a model of what carefully considered Handel performance should be, scrupulously researched as to performing editions, and using orchestral forces that precisely match those of Handel's time. As in all authentic performances of Baroque vocal works the most palpable gain is in the renewed equality of voices and instruments, so that gestures and tone do not have to be amplified beyond the scale of the opera to be balanced against the power and resources of modern styles of playing. The main beneficiary is undoubtedly the dramatic vividness of the recording: one can imagine all too easily how theatrically inert this work might seem when presented by big, "operatic" voices supported by succulent strings and forceful wind. The delicate tissue of Handel's pastoral would be hopelessly overstreched. Here, though, the scale is just right; whether or not the conventions of such an opera can be successfully projected to a modern audience and whether there is a sufficiently strong dramatic thread to convince the gramophone listener of the work's viability is another matter. There are one or two moments in the recording when one is aware that one is listening to a studio recording and not a relay from an opera house; events do not quite gel as they might have done with the emotional charge of a live performance behind them. This is only a passing worry, however, and the standard of singing and playing, the judicious choice of tempi and phrasing deserve nothing but praise.

The bass László Polgár, who sings the role of Mercury in *Atalanta*, is also the soloist on the second of the new Capella Savaria releases. Of all the six recordings included in this review, this pairing of two Bach cantatas, No. 56 "Ich will den Kreuzstab gerne tragen" and No. 82 "Ich habe genug" (not "genung" as consistently used on the record sleeve and text) gave the most unalloyed pleasure (SLPD 12650). Polgár has the scale of both works exactly right; his smooth, relatively light-toned voice contains a great deal of expressive potential that is used musically and unselfconsciously here. The conductor is Pál Németh, the founder of the Capella, and the chorus the Savaria Vocal Ensemble, presumably the precise counterpart of the orchestra. Certainly it sounds a small, carefully selected choir, and its contribution to the achievement of these two performances is significant. Everything about the interpretations seems right and in exact proportion; "Ich habe genug" is a well-known and widely recorded cantata, yet this version emerges fresh and consistently absorbing.

In the matter of Vivaldi's concertos, be they for violin, trumpet, piccolo, or any more unlikely instrument, I must confess that I incline to the view expressed once by the composer Luigi Dallapiccola (himself a Vivaldi expert) that Vivaldi did not compose 600 concertos as much as the same concerto 600 times. It is a sweeping and unfair generalization, I know, but not without a kernel of truth. Of the violin concertos, the most celebrated are of course those belonging to the *L'estro armonico* Op. 3 and *Il cimento dell' armonia* Op. 8 sets, to the latter of which the famous *Four Seasons* belong. But there are almost 250 more, almost half the total catalogue, and five of them are contained on a single record in which the Capella Savaria is directed by Jaap Schröder, a familiar name to British listeners from his work with the London-based Academy of Ancient Music. The selection on SLPD 12684 appears to be unsystematic, though all of the concertos are from approximately the same period.

To the admirer of Vivaldi's facility and inventive flow the selection will be a delight; the sleeve note contains an unusually full analysis and comparison of each of the works. The less specialist listener will find points of contact between the E major Concerto R. 271 and "Spring" from the *Four Seasons*, and perhaps be taken aback by the almost theatrical openings to both the B minor R. 390 and B flat major R.382. Jaap Schröder's playing is as scrupulous as might be expected; anyone reared on modern accounts of Vivaldi, played on instruments with steel strings and at today's concert pitch could at first find the sound lacking in penetration: the Capella Savaria plays at a pitch of A equal to 415 Hz, more than a seminote below today's norm, and the reduction of brightness in the violin figuration is immediately noticeable. The ear soon makes the necessary adjustment, however, and then begins to relish the detail which the more intimate focus allows. It could be that Dallapiccola's dictum will one day be conclusively disproved by just such sensitive, sensibly integrated accounts.

As one adjusts to the leaner textures of performances that are historically aware, so at the same time one develops an intolerance towards "old-fashioned" interpretations which pay no heed to such factors. Certainly in Britain the "historical revival," as one might call it, has spread on from the Baroque and into the classical period, even, quite recently fostering experiments with Beethoven to assess the benefits there. In January of this year the *Missa Solemnis* was performed in London with forces on the scale of Beethoven's time; the occasion was regarded as partially successful, but certainly more such ventures will be tried in the coming years. In the case of pre-classical figures such as J. C. Bach and Carl Stamitz one would have thought the issue had been settled almost as conclusively as it has for composers of the immediately preceding generations, and then along come performances of J. C. Bach's E flat Bassoon Concerto and Stamitz's Double Concerto for Clarinet and Bassoon that are defiantly traditional in every respect (SLPX 12530).

The orchestra is the Budapest Symphony, conducted by György Lehel, and the bassoonist the accomplished József Vajda. There is no doubt of Vajda's excellence, even if his tone is rather tremulous and reedy for a listener attuned to the more chaste style of British bassoonists, yet neither concerto betrays a spark of vitality or imagination in its execution. Textures are leaden, phrasing dutiful; Vajda, joined by Béla Kovács in the Stamitz, effortlessly purls off the figuration as if technical purity was an end in itself. Heard so soon after Baroque performances that were so consistently and comprehensively alive only underlined its shortcomings.

J. S. Bach's *Der Kunst der Fuge* stubbornly defies attempts to classify it according to historical proprieties. Even the instrumentation is a matter for debate; while it is generally accepted nowadays that Bach's writing is most clearly designed for keyboard realization, there is no shortage of chamber orchestras and string quartets willing to

perform a larger-scale arrangement. And even when the keyboard version is preferred, the precise nature of the keyboard instrument is still to be settled. It is a teasing paradox that at a time when so much energy is being expended upon ensuring that Bach's music is heard as near as possible to the way in which it was conceived, the practice of playing Bach on the modern piano has come back into fashion. In my mind it has been the example of the late Glenn Gould that has encouraged the rediscovery of the Bach piano; Gould's recordings of almost all the major keyboard works (though not, curiously, *Der Kunst der Fuge*) are one of the greatest achievements of the gramophone in the last 30 years. Gould, however, was a totally individual genius, as well as being one of the handful of genuinely great pianists to have emerged since 1945, and what he could achieve on the piano in the matters of touch and articulation are by no means common currency even among top-flight performers.

By comparison with Gould's playing, Zoltán Kocsis's version of *Der Kunst der Fuge* (SLPD 12701-02) is relatively staid and monochrome. While he is undoubtedly a magnificent pianist, it does not follow that his particular gifts can be focussed onto the playing of Bach with total conviction. Kocsis chooses to play the 14 fugues first appending the assortment of canons afterwards, and he possesses the textural control to elucidate every polyphonic thread with exemplary clarity. It is all, though, slightly too civilized and fails to accrue tension in the way that such a great piece of musical architecture requires. One begins to hope that at least one tempo will be faster or slower than one expects, that some phrasing detail will not follow the natural, predictable shape; in short, that the performance will acquire some element of the unexpectedness needed to keep the ear alert and ready to be teased.

The blandness that threatens but never quite overtakes Kocsis's playing is more obvious in the version of the same work recorded by the Ferenc Liszt Chamber Orchestra, conducted by János Rolla (SLPD 12810-11). It is an ensemble that I have much admired on its tours of Britain, but here it is hopelessly ensnared by the problems of apportioning this work to a group of strings. When the concentration of a single performer is removed, the fugues begin to lose their inner tension, the lines fail to generate sufficient energy, even though individually they are much easier to hear than when confined to a single keyboard. With those basic misgivings the arrangement itself seems intelligent and well-intentioned; it is just the victim of one problem in interpreting Bach that is never likely to be solved to everyone's satisfaction.

ANDREW CLEMENTS

THE MAN SCHOENBERG ADMIRED

A Conversation with Tibor Varga

"Dear Mr Varga,

My illness and lack of access to a proper record player has prevented me from listening to your recording of my Violin Concerto. I have played it through once on my primitive machine and was struck by your powerful interpretation of my music. But now, having heard it on a decent gramophone, I can at last understand why you and your playing inspire so much enthusiasm all over the world. It sounds as if you have known the piece for 25 years—your interpretation is so mature, so expressive and well phrased. Frankly, I have never heard a performance of such perfection unless I have had a hand in the shaping of every detail. It is proof not only of your outstanding talent that you have found the key to my music all by yourself; it also gives me great pleasure because it demonstrates that my music is capable of talking meaningfully to the genuine musician: he will understand me without the need for any explanation, from the music itself.

Thank you very much for this experience. I wish I were younger and could supply you with more material of this kind. I will certainly follow your interpretations with close attention. I hope to hear a performance of my Violin Fantasia as well, in the near future.

Los Angeles, 17 June 1951

With best wishes..."

Those familiar with Arnold Schoenberg's letters—in the edition of Erwin Stein or otherwise—will realise just how exceptional the above is in tone. (Quoted in translation.) The letters present the composer as an irascible, rather bitter man, cantankerous by nature, quick to take offence, thirsting for love and recognition and desperately disappointed that neither was forthcoming.

Thus this letter to the Hungarian violinist Tibor Varga (b. Győr, 1921) stands out like an oasis (though by no means unique) in a rather depressing desert of reproaches and protestations.

When he paid his first visit in many years to Budapest in 1980, I hastened to contact the man Schoenberg admired. I recorded an interview which was broadcast on Hungarian Radio a few years later. I am pleased to be able to make it available in an edited version, in *NHQ*, for the light it throws on the background to Schoenberg's letter as well as on the figure of a remarkable musician, a pupil of Hubay and Flesch, who has decided to opt out of our all-too-commercialised world of music. As a result, he is now a violinist known largely for his past achievements rather than as a musician active to this day.

"I lived in England in the late forties and visited the Continent at regular intervals to give concerts. In 1949, I was making an extensive tour of Germany, playing the Bartók and Berg concertos along with some classical compositions when I was offered the first European performance of Schoenberg's Violin Concerto* at the first ISCM Congress to be held after the war, in 1951.

I kept putting off a firm reply until three or four months before the concert was due to take place. I was playing in Stockholm when a telegram arrived in my hotel. It was an ultimatum: I was to make up my mind by eight o'clock the following morning. Unless they heard from me one way or the other, they would offer the première to somebody else.

I was carrying the score in my luggage wherever I went and I had it with me then, so I decided to study it properly during the night. It took me until 7 in the morning. I had arrived at the opinion that the concerto was a work of considerable interest and I sent

* Composed in 1936, the concerto was first performed in 1940 by Louis Krasner, with Leopold Stokowski conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra.

a reply confirming my readiness to play the European premiere.

Schoenberg was supposed to be available for consultation if points needed to be clarified but he fell ill and we never met. You can imagine how happy I was to receive a letter from him out of the blue—it served as encouragement for the future, I saw it as a confirmation of the path I had set myself."

Who conducted the first performance?

Hans Rosbaud, with the Frankfurt radio orchestra. He was a fine musician and an excellent conductor and we had had many concerts together in England, France, Germany and Switzerland. I was to perform the concerto on numerous occasions in Norway, Sweden, Britain, Australia and elsewhere.

Had you come across Schoenberg's music before?

This is a sad story. In the letter you quoted, Schoenberg expressed the desire that I should play his *Fantasia* for violin and piano. I obtained a copy of the score and proceeded to study it with my friend, the composer Mátyás Seiber. We liked it so much that we immediately telephoned the BBC and offered it for a recording. The proposal was readily accepted by the producer and we were soon discussing dates. I insisted that the recording be broadcast at a time convenient for Schoenberg to listen to. Within an hour a time and date were set: the Fantasia would be broadcast both on medium and short wave so that it could easily be picked up by the composer. I immediately sent him a cable with this information, to Los Angeles.

I remember that afternoon to this day: it was a damp and rainy day in London. My wife prepared some tea and we sat down in front of the fireplace and turned on the radio to listen to some music. An announcer was reading the news and presently we heard that the world-famous composer Arnold Schoenberg had died a few hours before in his home in California. The telegram was on its way to Los Angeles... I play the Fantasia a lot: it is rather short but a substantial, meaty piece of music.

Fortunately, you misunderstood my question as the story of the Fantasia was certainly worth putting on record. What I meant was whether you had heard or played any of Schoenberg's works before addressing yourself to his Violin Concerto. Had you been exposed to any of his music before?

The concerto was my very first encounter with his music. That is why it took me so long to make up my mind about it.

Can you tell me more about that night in Stockholm?

I followed my tried and trusted method of looking for the very core of the music from which the whole composition is derived, the fundamental kernel of it. I found that it is firmly rooted in tradition; its links with the past outweigh in importance those aspects which set it apart. The score could therefore be interpreted in much the same way as a piece by Bach or Mozart.

Over the years, I have played the concerto with several conductors known to be prejudiced against modern music. In all but one case I have succeeded in convincing them of the merit of Schoenberg's music. Joseph Keilberth was the only one I failed to win over to the concerto and I must admit he had a case. He argued that traditional music consisted basically of harmony, melody and rhythm. As a rule, whenever the rhythmic aspect happened to be complicated, harmony and melody would be simple; where harmony was complex, rhythm and melody tended to be less involved, and so on. With Schoenberg, Keilberth said, all three elements were complex at the same time. That is why for anyone unfamiliar with his music, listening to any of his works proved a tiring business and concentration would flag sooner or later. Webern helped matters by keeping his works very short. Schoenberg, however, often kept to the classical form.

That explains, perhaps, why Schoenberg's concerto has not really become part of the repertoire—while Berg's certainly has.

I think this is true. To help prepare the piece properly for the European first performance, I made a violin reduction of it. (I did not have a pianist to study it with, so I reduced the

orchestral accompaniment to a single violin part for my wife. Condensing it and then playing it with my wife was a fascinating experience. The first orchestral rehearsal, however, proved all the more disappointing. If Schoenberg were here, I would hesitate to tell him this, I would not wish to hurt his feelings. I found that it was all unnecessarily complicated. If there are sixty-four 64ths, and a bassoonist has to play one note on the 31st and the 37th of the 64ths, it is taxing on the bassoonist's nerves and diverts his attention from the music itself. The second movement, on the other hand, is a lovely, flowing Mendelssohnian Andante.

As far as the Berg Violin Concerto is concerned, that is also a story all by itself. After the war, I spent a few days in Vienna before an extensive tour, waiting for some visas. I was approached by two gentlemen who asked me if I would be willing to play Alban Berg's Violin Concerto in a week's time, to mark the tenth anniversary of the world premiere in Barcelona.* They said it was scandalous that the composition should never have been heard in Vienna, the city where it had been written.

Since I had not seen or heard the piece, I replied that I wanted to see the score. I received it that same evening and I got down to studying it right away. Within a week, I played it by heart at a concert conducted by Hermann Scherchen. I tell my students how I succeeded in mastering it, for I applied a method which has been of considerable service to me throughout my career.

For three days I did not even touch the violin. Instead, I learned the score by heart. Then, for two days, I studied the violin part, worked out the fingering and phrasing, once again without touching the instrument. I only started practising two days before the concert. The actual performance proved an unforgettable experience for me.

I recorded the Berg concerto with Rosbaud for Bavarian Radio. We had five rehearsals and when we listened to the result—the composer Karl Amadeus Hartmann, founder of the famous Musica Viva series in Munich, was also in the studio—we were rather pleased with ourselves. However, Rosbaud turned to Hartmann and asked him how much my fee had been. Hartmann told him.—Could you invite Mr Varga next year to record the Berg concerto once again and double his fee?—Yes, of course. But what do you mean?—Because next time I want to have ten rehearsals instead of five.

That was of course a mistake, common to many conductors. It is a fallacy that ten rehearsals rather than five make for a better performance. A minimum number of rehearsals—let us say, six—is of course necessary but it is for the concerts to provide the framework for a free, unselfconscious interpretation. Fricsay was like Rosbaud but with him, too, I found that concerts prepared with excessive care were not as successful as performances that had been less thoroughly prepared.

Talking of Fricsay, I understand that the two of you are credited with the second gramophone recording of the Bartók concerto.

I do not know if ours was in fact the second but we did record it early on, in 1952, in Berlin.

In an earlier conversation, you mentioned that you had Bartók's signature on one of your scores. Does that mean that you knew him in person?

Yes, we met several times. He heard me play at a concert at the Budapest Academy and commented favourably. On one occasion, I turned pages for him. Before the age of twelve, I saw him quite a lot, his music-making made a lasting impression on me and I responded with passionate interest to his own works.

Obviously, you had a flair at an early age for

* First performance on 19 April, 1936, at the fourteenth ISCM Festival in Barcelona. Louis Krasner was the soloist and Hermann Scherchen the conductor.

new music. No wonder you took Schoenberg and Berg in your stride later on.

Yes, but I think my musical development followed the usual pattern. Most of us start by admiring the Romantic composers, then we discover Mozart, then Bach. The next stage is Brahms, Wagner, followed by the first Schoenberg pieces and so on.

In your case, it must have been in the reverse order.

No. Do not forget that I started playing the violin at four or five and played the Mendelssohn concerto at ten. I discovered Bach when I was twelve and, to the consternation of my parents, I played him on the piano day and night. For a year I was a Haydn fan, playing his quartets on the piano, revelling in the harmonies. Again and again I would be engrossed in the world of a different composer and these preoccupations accumulated over the years to shape my musical make-up. My interest in new music is as lively today as ever. The moment I notice the signs of indifference, I will know that sclerosis has set in!

It must have been a source of pleasure for Bartók to see that a boy of your age should love his music. And I expect he unwound in your company and was less reserved than he was reputed to be with most people.

I can only remember one occasion when he gave a concert at Győr with his wife. At the reception which followed I was sitting next to him all evening and he chatted a good deal to me. About music, my plans, the pieces I was playing and a lot about the Kreutzer Sonata. He struck me as a very warm and open person and was surprised to hear later on that many conductors were frightened of him. He would turn up with his famous metronome and make the conductor concerned feel ill at ease.

How did Bartók strike you as a pianist?

Of the old masters, his Bach impressed me most. His playing was extremely subtle, soft but powerful. There was also something else which struck me as typical of the man: as a composer, Bartók was uncommonly sensitive to the value of intervals. He sensed the distance between two notes as we register the height of a mountain. Rising or falling with an interval was for him a tangible experience. He could create tremendous tension by placing two notes next to one another and could open up an altogether different dimension with the addition of a third note. A comparable awareness of the interval is lacking even in many really great compositions. With Beethoven, it only appears in the late works—the *Grosse Fuge*, the late quartets and sonatas. With Bartók, it was present in nearly all his compositions.

This same awareness of the interval came to the fore in his playing of Bach. He rendered intervals almost visible for his audience. I can vividly recall my reaction to this day. When other people play Bach, the music is in front of you. When Bartók played his works, the music seemed to surround you. You heard it behind and above and below you. The atmosphere he created was unique.

Finally, I wonder if I can ask you a question point blank. Why have you relinquished an international career? Your stature as a soloist would warrant a flourishing career but while your name is remembered with respect, you seem to belong more to the past than the present.

Musical life has a commercial side to it with laws of its own. You have to observe these laws if you are to make a success of it—and this is precisely what I have never cared for. I have always had enough money to live on and have thus been able to devote myself to realising in music what I believe in.

My festival and master courses at Sion enable me to stay at one place: rather than having to travel, people come to me. The festival lasts for two months and its programmes constitute something of a musical composition. The first note of the first piece and the last note of the last piece are connected by inner strands of logic and relationship. Three hundred students come to Sion every summer from all over the world and this gives me so much pleasure that I would

not dream of exchanging it for any form of public prestige.

Our activities are not lost to the outside world. Our last concert last year was broadcast in forty-two countries and we have released thirty records. I play or conduct on many of them—for instance, all of Seiber's works for the violin, Chausson's Concerto for violin, piano and string quartet, symphonies by Mozart, Handel's Messiah with a large English choir and so on.

Also, it seems to me that many of my contemporaries who have elected to stay on the commercial treadmill reach for their violin as a matter of routine—all pleasure has gone out of their music-making. When I look at them, I think to myself that I have after all taken the right decision...

Playing the violin gives me as much pleasure today as it did when I was allowed to give a concert at the age of fifteen, at the Academy of Music in Budapest.

BÁLINT ANDRÁS VARGA

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

BODNÁR, János (b.1949). Art critic, a graduate of the School of Journalism. Originally a typographer, 1970–1972 editor on the staff of a publishing house, in 1973 on the staff of the daily *Világgazdaság*, since 1980 on that of *Ország-Világ*, an illustrated weekly. From 1980 art editor of *Magyar Hírek*, a journal for Hungarians abroad and member of the editorial board of *Fotóművészet*, a periodical. His main field of interest is photography. Has published a book on the photographer André Kertész.

BOGNÁR, József (b. 1917). Economist, MP, heads the Institute for the World Economy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Member of the Editorial Board, as well as a frequent contributor to, *NHQ*. His most recent contributions are "Hungary's Economic Prospects", *NHQ* 100, and "A Man and the Environment" (Aurelio Peccei), 101.

BUDA, Béla (b. 1939). Psychiatrist. A graduate of the Medical University of Budapest. Since 1978 has headed the Psychotherapy Department in the National Institute of Sport Medicine. His field of interest is individual and group psychotherapy, communicational and system thinking in psychotherapy and psychiatry, the treatment of sexual disfunctions, suicide, alcoholism, etc. He frequently lectures at international congresses and contributes to many scientific journals. Has written, together with Rudolf Andorka and László Cseh-Szombathy, *Az alkoholizmus kialakulásának tényezői* (Factors of the appearance of alcoholism), 1972, and *A deviáns viselkedés szociológiája* (Sociology of deviant behaviour), 1973. Has published two other studies: *Az empátia — a beleélés lélektana* (Empathy—the psychology of insight), 1978, and *Pszichoterápia*.

CLEMENTS, Andrew (b. 1950). Our regular record reviewer. See "New Hungarian Scores," *NHQ* 100, and "Operatic Rarities," 101.

EMBER, Mária (b. 1931). Journalist, novelist, translator. A graduate of Budapest University in Hungarian and German. Art critic of the daily *Magyar Nemzet*. Of her extensive fiction the greatest response has been to the novel *Hajtűkanyar* (Hairpin bend), 1974, dealing with the deportation of the Jews during the German occupation of Hungary in 1944. See "Erzsébet Schaár Commemorative Exhibition," *NHQ* 93.

FEKETE, János (b. 1918). Economist, First Deputy President of the Hungarian National Bank, in charge of international operations. Has published numerous papers on Hungarian and international monetary problems. A frequent contributor to this

journal; see "Reflections on International Monetary Policy," *NHQ* 84, and "Problems of International Indebtedness—as Seen from Hungary," 90.

FORGÁCS, Éva (b. 1947). Art historian, on the staff of the Budapest Museum of Applied Arts. Has published *Kollázs és montázs* (Collage and Montage), Corvina Press, 1976, and studies on the Bauhaus and the art critic Ernő Kállai. Recent contributions include: "Tamás Lossonczy: a Retrospective," *NHQ* 74, "Border Cases," 78, "József Jakovits's Vital Sculpture," 80, "Soft Material, Hard Contours," 84, "The Precise Surrealism of Albert Kováts", 90, "Károly Schmal's Three-Dimensional Pictures," 94, "Decorative and Functional Textiles," 99 and "New Sensibility, III." 101.

FORGÁCS, Katalin (b. 1947). Economist, a graduate of the Karl Marx University of Budapest. Since 1973 on the staff of *Figyelő*, an economic journal. Her fields of interest are monetary regulators and environmental economics. Since 1982 has headed a scientific research project on economic regulators in environmental policy. Has published a book and various essays in Hungarian periodicals.

GOMBOS, Károly (b. 1924). Orientalist. Director of the Hopp Ferenc Museum of Oriental Art in Budapest. Graduated in the social sciences at the State University of Moscow. Returning to Hungary, worked for the party apparatus and in cultural administration. Published *Örményország építészete* (The architecture of Armenia), 1972, also in German and English; *Üzbegisztán* (Uzbekistan), 1974, with photographs by Károly Gink, also in German and English (Corvina Press). See his "Oriental Carpets in the Christian Museum," *NHQ* 69, and "A Sixteenth Century Tapestry in the Esterházy Treasury," 83.

GYERTYÁN, Ervin (b. 1925). Our regular film critic.

GYÖRFFY, Miklós (b. 1942). Our reviewer of prose fiction.

HORN, Gyula (b. 1932). Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Studied in the Soviet Union, at the Economic College of Rostov. Starting with the sixties on the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and later of the Foreign Section of the CC of the HSWP, finally the head of the latter. Has published much, including "Our Southern Neighbour—Yugoslavia"—1972, "The Crisis of the Imperialism in our Age"—1974, and "The Economic Development of Albania"—1977.

ILLYÉS, Mária (b. 1942). Art critic. On the staff of the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts. Her main field is contemporary painting. Recent contributions include "Artificial Paradise", *NHQ* 77, "Sticks and Hands," 81, "New Acquisitions of the Hungarian Fine Arts Museum," 83, and "Word and Picture," 87.

KÁLNOKY, László (1912–1985). Poet, translator. Studied law and spent some years as a civil servant, librarian and, later, publisher's reader. Has published eight volumes of poems and a great number of verse translations from practically every major language, including plays by Racine, Molière, Marlowe, and Goethe. See his poems in *NHQ* 40 and 79. Hungarian titles of his poems in this issue: *Kövérek a fürdőben; A műfordító halála; Találkozás; Megállapítások; További megállapítások; Egy vezér, két mellszobor.*

KISS, Irén (b. 1947). Staff writer of the *NHQ*.

KOLTAI, Tamás (b. 1942). Our regular theatre critic.

KROÓ, György (b. 1926). Musicologist, head of the Faculty of Musicology at the Liszt Ferenc Academy in Budapest. Member of the Editorial Board of *NHQ* and a frequent

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LENGYEL, Balázs (b. 1918). Essayist and critic, our regular poetry reviewer.

LÓSKA, Lajos (b. 1951). Art critic. Read Hungarian Literature and Art History at the University of Budapest. From 1975 on the staff of *Művészet*, an art periodical. His main field is contemporary graphics.

MIKLÓS, Pál (b. 1927). Critic and sinologist. A graduate of the Universities of Budapest and Beijing. For a time on the staff of *Helikon*, a review of comparative literary history. Formerly head of the Budapest Museum of Applied Arts and the Museum of Far-Eastern Arts. Has translated numerous classical and modern Chinese works, and published books and articles on Chinese intellectual history and the theory of art and literature. See "Literature and the Scientific-Technological Revolution," *NHQ* 54.

MOLNÁR, Miklós (b. 1918). A graduate of the University of Budapest and of the Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva. Has lived in Geneva since 1957. Was editor of a literary weekly in Budapest before leaving the country in 1956. His main field is the history of international relations. Teaches at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva and at the University of Lausanne. In 1952 he published a biography of József Katona, the 19th century Hungarian playwright. Recent publications: *La déclaration de la Première Internationale*, Geneva, 1963, *Marx, Engels et la Politique Internationale*, Paris, 1979.

NEMESKÜRTY, István (b. 1925). Literary historian, critic, film expert, and teacher. A graduate in Hungarian and Italian of the University of Budapest. Was a teacher, an editor at a literary publishing house, a dramaturgist, and from 1972 to 1984 manager of the Budapest Film Studios. Now heads the National Film Institute. Author of many books on history, films, and literature. Has published books on, among others, Fellini. See "The Hungarian Inventor of the Sound Film," *NHQ* 79, and "History Answered a Man," 81.

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 books and articles on industrial analyses, comparative studies, and efficiency and structural surveys. See "The International Contacts of Hungarian Statisticians," *NHQ* 92, and "Statistics Fit for the Nineties," 98.

SOMFAI, László (b. 1934). Musicologist. Heads the Bartók Archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Teaches history of music at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music. Publications include *Joseph Haydn: His Life in Contemporary Pictures*, 1977 (in English), and *Joseph Haydn zongoraszonátái* ("Joseph Haydn's Piano Sonatas"), 1979. See "Haydn Autograph Scores Reconsidered," *NHQ* 77, "A Major Unfinished Work on Bartók," 82, and "Piano Concerto No 2," 84.

SÓLYOM, László (b. 1942). Lawyer, a graduate of the University of Pécs. 1966–69 assistant lecturer at the University of Jena, German Democratic Republic. For a time on the staff of the Institute for Legal and Administrative Sciences, of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and librarian at the Library of the Hungarian Parliament. Since 1983 lecturer in law at the University of Budapest. Has published works on the law of torts, insurance law, environmental protec-

tion, international economic legislation (especially CMEA), and of privacy. Main publications: "The Decline of Civil Law Liability." Sijthoff and Noordhoff—Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1980; "Environmental Protection and Law of Privacy," Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1980, and *Die Persönlichkeitsrechte. Eine vergleichend- historische Studie über ihre Grundlagen*. Heymann, Köln, Berlin —Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1984.

SŐTÉR, István (b. 1913). Writer, literary historian, a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Studied at Eötvös College, Budapest, and the Ecole Normale Supérieure. Was Professor of Hungarian Literature at the University of Budapest, and Rector of the University. 1956 Deputy Minister of Education; since 1957 heads the Institute for Literature of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. 1968–70 President of Hungarian PEN, 1970–73 President of the Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée. Author of novels, volumes of short stories, as well as studies, essays and monographs on Franco-Hungarian connections, 19th century Hungarian literature, and problems of the theory of literature. See "New Belgian Poetry," *NHQ* 35, "Sándor Petőfi: Folk Poet and Revolutionary," 49, and "Baroque Culture in Hungary," 84.

SZABÓ, Júlia (b. 1939). Art historian on the staff of the Institute of Art History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Her field of interest is 19th and 20th century Hungarian art. Besides studies on Douanier Rousseau and Kandinsky, she is the author of *A magyar aktivizmus művészete* (The Art of the Hungarian Activists), 1981. See "Twentieth Century Hungarian Art," *NHQ* 95, and "József Nemes Lampérth," 98.

SZŰCS, Julianna (b. 1946). Art critic Editor of the monthly *Mozgó Világ*. Books include *Morandi* (1974), *István Szőnyi's Copper Engravings* (1978, also in English). Contributes art criticism to dailies and periodicals. See "The Fascination of the Garden," *NHQ* 73, "A Caricaturist's Small World," 86, and "The Repentant and the Annoyed—Environment in Bronze," 88.

SZŰRÖS, Mátyás (b. 1933). Secretary to the Central Committee of the HSWP, with special responsibility for Foreign Relations, a diplomatist and economist by training. Held various posts before becoming Ambassador to the GDR (1975–78), and later to the Soviet Union (1978–82). He has published widely on foreign affairs. See "National Cause—Common Cause," *NHQ* 90, and "Interaction of the National and the International in Hungarian Policy," 93.

VARGA, Bálint András (b. 1941). Music critic, a graduate in English and Russian of the University of Budapest. Head of promotion at Editio Musica and regular contributor on music at Hungarian Radio and Television. Has published two volumes of interviews with prominent musicians, as well as volumes of conversations with Witold Lutoslawski (in English: "Lutoslawski Profile," Chester, 1976), Iannis Xenakis, and Luciano Berio. See "A Choreographer's Catechism—Interview with Aurél Milos," *NHQ* 89, and "Three Questions on Music," 93.

WILLIAMSON, John (b. 1949). Musicologist. Read music and history at the University of Glasgow and researched in music at Balliol College, Oxford. Since 1974 has been Lecturer in Music at the University of Liverpool. Has published various articles on Mahler, on Liszt and on Eugen d'Albert. Forthcoming publications include analytical and historical articles on Mahler and on Richard Strauss, and an article, "Pfitzner and Ibsen" arising from current work on a book about Hans Pfitzner. He reviews regularly for *Music and Letters* and *The Music Review*.

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