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The New Hungarian Quarterly

Global Economic Security and Growth — *József Bognár*

**The Crisis of the International Monetary System
and the Hungarian Economy** — *János Fekete*

Continuing the Policy of Détente — *János Nagy*

The Timeliness of Attila József — *Miklós Szabolcsi*

Genetic Counseling — *Endre Czeizel*

Memoirs — *István Vas, Emil Kolozsvári Grandpierre*

Poems — *Géza Képes, László Kálnoky*

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79

The New Hungarian Quarterly

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The New Hungarian Quarterly

VOL. XXI * No. 79

AUTUMN 1980

Global, Regional, National	<i>The Editor</i>	3
Global Economic Security and Growth	<i>József Bognár</i>	9
The Crisis of the International Monetary System and the Hungarian Economy	<i>János Fekete</i>	25
Continuing the Policy of Détente	<i>János Nagy</i>	43
Hovering over the Abyss (memoirs)	<i>István Vas</i>	55
Home-Coming (memoirs)	<i>Emil Kolozsvári Grandpierre</i>	72
Poems, translated by Laura Schiff	<i>Géza Képes</i>	86
The Timeliness of Attila József	<i>Miklós Szabolcsi</i>	92
Poems, translated by Edwin Morgan	<i>László Kálnoky</i>	119
Sartre's Last Will and Testament	<i>Iván Boldizsár</i>	122

SURVEYS

Against National Tragedies	<i>Gyula Lőrincz</i>	127
Festive Behaviour in Hungary	<i>Miklós Hernádi</i>	130
Pál Justus and the British Labour Party	<i>János Jemnitz</i>	137
Genetic Counseling in Hungary	<i>Endre Czeizel</i>	144
Washington and Kossuth	<i>Nicholas Halász, Robert Halász</i>	154
Ferenc Békássy's Letters to John Maynard Keynes	<i>George Gömöri</i>	159



BOOKS AND AUTHORS

- The Male and the Female Self *Miklós Györffy* 171
Poems on Looming Death and Happy Childhood
(Gyula Takáts, Márton Kalász, Géza Képes,
Gyula Hegyi, Károly Tamkó Sirató) *László Ferenczi* 175
Values in all Fairness (a book by Elemér Hankiss) *C. M. Hann* 179
Edmund Wilson's Letters *Péter Nagy* 182

ARTS AND ARCHEOLOGY

- Wood, Copper and Lyrical Hyperrealism
(Enikő Szöllőssy, Éva Kárpáti, László Gyémánt) *János Frank* 186
Three Portraits
(Tihamér Gyarmathy, Ernő Fóth, Gyula Göbölös) *Iván Bojár* 189
Ernő Goldfinger, an Architect of our Age *Zoltán Halász* 191
The Roman Aqueduct in Óbuda *Melinda Kaba* 196
The Return of the White Madonna *László Zolnay* 198
The Beginnings of Photography in Hungary *Ferenc Bodor* 201

THEATRE AND FILM

- Time Out of Joint
(Szilveszter Ördögh, Magda Szabó, Miklós Boldizsár,
István Örkény, Tibor Gyurkovics, Géza Bereményi) .. *Anna Földes* 204
Pécs Film Week: Views and Reviews *Mari Kuttna-Winton* 212
The Hungarian Inventor of the Sound-Film *István Nemeskürty* 217

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

221

This issue went to press on 4 May, 1980

GLOBAL, REGIONAL, NATIONAL

The two longest pieces in this issue are both taken from autobiographies, by István Vas and Emil Kolozsvári Grandpierre. István Vas is seventy this year, and Emil Kolozsvári Grandpierre was amongst the 1980 Kossuth Prize laureates. Their conjunction in the present international situation is, however, chance. It so happens that István Vas's writing is set around the outbreak of the Second World War, while Kolozsvári Grandpierre's describes the way the war ended for him, many months after the conclusion of hostilities, with his homecoming.

More than a thousand pages of István Vas's autobiography have already appeared, two volumes in hard covers, a third is being serialized by the monthly *Kortárs*. Vas made his reputation as a poet in the first place and should be known as such to English readers as well. His poems have appeared in many collections, and also in *NHQ*, of whose editorial board he has been a member since the paper's inception. This spring he was one of a group of Hungarian poets, a good-will delegation in the best sense of the term, who visited England, Scotland and Wales. (Miklós Vajda tells the story in our next issue.) His autobiography has now raised Vas to the top ranks of Hungarian prose writers. His prose shows every virtue of his verse: rationality and sobriety, an honesty that does not spare anyone or anything, clarity of language, recording surprising changes of mood and feeling, familiarity with every trick of the language, a respect for details while seeing things whole. One hopes that not too much of this was lost in translation.

István Vas was twenty-nine at the time, a young but already known poet, whose work regularly appeared in *Nyugat*, the leading Hungarian literary journal of the age. His wife, Eti, was the most talented of modern dancers, a radiating beauty and fascinating artist. I knew her well, her husband is a life-long friend. I admired not only her dancing and beauty,

but also her character and wit, her Ariel-like qualities. Eti was already critically ill, severe headaches plagued her, and her fits occurred with increasing frequency.

István Vas's resurfacing memories of those days of September in 1939 read as if he were describing events recorded the night they happened. Every line is alive, authentic and exciting. And yet this story is more than that. István Vas writes forty years after the event, what he has to say matured in the cellars of monstrous experience, in the superb and guilty awareness of survival. Another section, including the day Eti died, will appear in a later issue.

The part of Emil Kolozsvári Grandpierre's autobiography we publish includes the very essence of survival, the homecoming. Home is the soldier: the joy of having come through, the anxiety of not knowing what, and who, is waiting at home. Kolozsvári Grandpierre makes you feel on how thin a thread his own and all our survival depended. It is just the dreadful danger and the depth of emotion experienced that elicits an aspect of his style which inclines towards the grotesque. This is history pulling faces at us in a peculiarly Hungarian way. He is returning from captivity, having been made a prisoner while the member of a defeated army, and yet he feels liberated, almost victorious, because the cause came out on top against which he and Hungary had been taken to war.

The characteristically grotesque style finally becomes a huge grimace. In the happy moments of homecoming, after finding his wife, he is forced to recognize that he has lost his virility. (Let me add for the benefit of readers carried away by feelings of sympathy: a later chapter, also translated for NHQ, tells that the cunning trick history played on the writer was happily countermanded.)

*

A find made by George Gömöri, a scholar of Hungarian birth who teaches in Cambridge, adds a bittersweet counterpoint. Going through the papers of J. M. Keynes he found letters addressed to him by Ferenc Békássy, a Hungarian undergraduate at Cambridge before the Great War. Békássy was killed in battle. His promise as a poet was recognised by as great a figure as Mihály Babits, and as readers of this journal (and of *Doing England with a giraffe*) might remember, a plaque in King's College marks his memory. His letters show that he also tried his hand at writing light verse in English.

There is another gem in this issue: "The return of the White Madonna" by László Zolnay. Those readers of NHQ who have visited Buda

Castle will, I am sure, have admired the magnificent white limestone statues. Zolnay found them in what amounted to a buried rubbish heap while digging in the Castle courtyard, and wrote on his finds in NHQ 55. One of the most beautiful was a female torso, promptly called a Madonna because of her characteristically wave-like shape. Zolnay has now found her head.

I am sure I do not have to prove to NHQ readers that these months past we have thought of war not as a past memory but as a future threat. I belong to the same generation as István Vas and Emil Koložsvári Grandpierre. We hold our heads and grab our old hearts, shame and anger fills us thinking of where mankind finds itself today. The intention of détente produced this journal in 1960, the desire for peaceful coexistence assisted its conception and survival. In the years of détente we felt that this Hungarian journal appearing in English was truly a symbol of the coexistence of the two parts of Europe, and a wide open gate to be used by cooperation. Is there any need to make our anxiety and hope explicit, our anxiety that the situation might further deteriorate and our hope that the processes making for deterioration can be stopped and that it will prove possible to continue the dialogue. We know that everyone in the country where this journal is written and printed agrees with us, and we trust that this goes for those countries as well where it is read.

In Hungary we certainly do not wish to diminish but increase political, economic and cultural contacts, that is contacts in all fields of life, with the other half of Europe. We are talking of détente and peace, in that sense the US and Canada belong to Europe as well, since the Helsinki conference. In the NHQ we are carrying on with détente. Saying that I am well aware how odd it sounds, and yet I say it. We are working where two social systems march on one another, we are well aware that the continuation of peaceful work is not the job of politicians alone, but of all those who labour in the vineyard of the spirit and of production. This issue of NHQ is offered in evidence, both major articles and shorter pieces.

*

József Bognár's "Global economic security and growth" is perhaps the most important since, looking out into the wide world from the vantage point of a small country, it has something new to say, and from what is recognised as true boldly draws conclusions relevant for the world economy in decades to come. The heading itself indicates that intellectual life in Hungary does not even wish to consider a lowering of the barriers, that an

open cultural, economic and foreign policy is proposed and planned for the long term.

József Bognár looks at the notion of economic security, its future importance, limits and effects, and reexamines them in the light of the present situation. What he means by the present situation is those seminal economic changes which he has referred to, and expounded, in the pages of this journal on a number of occasions.*

In the present article he argues that economic security implies the sort of social and economic policy which ensures economic equilibrium and encouraging prospects for a nation. He examines the dangers of exaggerating such aspects, and goes on to outline the international background. This leads up to the essence: is it possible to establish a system of world wide economic relations which offers security to all parties?

Another aspect of this most important question is discussed by János Fekete's "The crisis of the capitalist monetary system and Hungarian economic policy." The Vice President of the Hungarian National Bank discusses this highly complex question, which is often judged to be touchy, bringing to bear a familiarity with the theoretical problems and practical experience which will not be new to readers of NHQ. The first part of his paper deals with the causes for the collapse of Bretton Woods, and what this meant for international finance, and in other respects as well, including changing attitudes to gold. The second part demonstrates the effect world economic changes had on the Hungarian economy. Between 1968 and 1973 the Hungarian economy showed balanced growth in keeping with the plans laid down at the inception of the New Economic Mechanism. It proved possible, for instance, to ensure a 6 per cent annual growth rate while at the same time keeping net national production and domestic consumption in a state of essential equilibrium. Articles in recent issues of NHQ have discussed at length what effect the international economic crisis, and measures taken to counteract it, have had on the Hungarian economy. The third part of János Fekete's paper discusses in detail the present Hungarian economic and financial policy, including international aspects, and also covering the often raised problem of the convertibility of the forint.

The article by János Nagy, "Continuing the policy of détente," the third in this group, deals with foreign policy in a stricter sense of that term. As the title of the article implies, the continuation of the policy of détente is what best describes the present foreign policy of Hungary. János Nagy, who was, before his recent promotion to Secretary of State, Deputy Foreign Minister with special responsibility for relations with industrially developed

* (NHQ 67, 70, 74, 75)

capitalist countries, begins by clarifying the notion of détente. He points out that détente is not a pious wish, but a process based on objective international power relations. The stress there is on process. As János Nagy points out, détente can only progress gradually, and with possible backslidings. There is no doubt that we now find ourselves in a period of the latter kind. The author discusses the causes and the background of this situation, as well as the chances of getting out of the impasse, and Hungary's role. He demonstrates that détente has achieved far from negligible results even in this period of real or apparent backsliding. Helsinki started a process which is far from finished, indeed we are right at the beginning of it. The first few years of détente are considered successful and useful from the Hungarian point of view, Hungarian relations with every country in Western Europe and North America have improved and are still improving. The recent 12th Party Congress confirmed this policy.

János Nagy draws special attention to the importance of the Madrid Conference which is about to meet. Hungarian foreign policy is doing everything in its power to ensure its success. The tone of the article expresses genuine national feeling and also true internationalism. The continuation and strengthening of détente is in the national interest of Hungary as well as being a basic common interest of mankind.

May I draw attention not only to matters of world-wide or national concern but also to something regional, to good neighbourly relations. Gyula Lőrincz is a painter and Chairman of the Centre of Hungarian Working People of Czechoslovakia. The article we publish is the text of an address he gave at the unveiling of a memorial tablet on the house in Budapest where Laco Novomeský, the Slovak poet and Lőrincz's friend, was born seventy years ago. The text was simultaneously published by *Népszabadság* in Budapest and *Új Szó* in Pozsony (Bratislava). NHQ, in publishing this article, wishes to serve, as the title itself implies, the common will of the socialist nations against national tragedies.

*

It was mentioned in the last issue already that this is an Attila József year in Hungary. The great poet would have been seventy-five on April 11th. In NHQ 78 we published some of his best translated poems, in this issue we include a paper by Miklós Szabolcsi, the critic and scholar, recognised authority on Attila József, an author of two major books on the poet's life and work. He writes on the timeliness of Attila József in a manner that makes it unambiguously clear to non-Hungarians as well what is obvious

to every Hungarian. Verses written in the nineteen thirties by this poet who could still be amongst us affect us as if they were written today. Clearly this is the mark of all truly great poetry. It happens rarely, however, that a poet's work becomes part of everyone's store of learning, within the lifetime of his own generation, that lines by him are quoted as if they were sayings or proverbs. His fate, his struggles, his tragic death, are all part of the collective memory. Miklós Szabolcsi describes the poet's life by shoring it up with his poems, and presents the validity of a number of the poems by placing them in their biographical context.

*

An editor likes all the material he prints, if he did not he would not include it in his paper. It is therefore always difficult to choose what to stress specially. Let it be the turn of an article that looks novel in the pages of NHQ: Endre Czeizel's piece on genetic counseling in Hungary. After more than twenty years and seventy-eight issues one tends to become aware of the gaps and lacunae of the journal. One of them must surely be that we publish too little about either the natural sciences or health and medicine in Hungary. Endre Czeizel describes the condition of genetics in Hungary by presenting its uses in daily life and its social importance in family planning.

THE EDITOR

GLOBAL ECONOMIC SECURITY AND GROWTH

World economic prospects for the eighties and nineties

by

JÓZSEF BOGNÁR

The interconnections and contradictions of economic security, risk, and growth have preoccupied economists for some time. Risk is an essential element of all economic decisions. The shaping of the future has always, and will always, include incalculable factors. It is therefore argued that greater risk must be made up for by the chance of greater profits.

Interests and considerations deviating from the logic of an undertaking such as a business come to the surface in judging risk and security when the satisfaction of the needs of large masses of the people, for instance the population of a given country, depends on economic activities directed by the government. The masses demand security and continuity in the supply of goods. What is more, security and stability, in the regulation of the conditions of husbandry, are demanded from the government by the undertakings as well.

It is of course difficult to guarantee security, continuity, and stability under constantly changing and unforeseeable circumstances. That is why the creation of greater economic security and stable economic conditions has become part and parcel of the programmes of rivalling political parties.

The epochal economic changes which have made a way for themselves from the seventies onwards also throw new light on the interconnections of economic security, risk, and growth. It is therefore important from the politico-economic and international points of view alike to re-examine and reassess the concept of economic security, its future significance as well as its limitations and its impact on incentives. It is evident that efforts being made to strengthen economic security powerfully influence the logic of action of states and thereby international political and economic relations.

I here wish to deal with these questions and interconnections in the first place. In analysing these questions and interconnections, however, one

should point out already by way of introduction—and this will also be one of the main conclusions of this essay—that economic security is not an objective in itself separable from other social objectives, and that there is no system of action which would tend towards the attainment of this aim exclusively. No such system could even be devised. This was true in a certain sense in the past as well, but it has become many times as true in our days and will be that in the next few decades in the context of the major epochal changes:

(a) the economic, political, and security factors in the world and in the life of societies will become ever more closely interwoven and even interdependent;

(b) the internal and external factors of economic and social development will influence one another to an increasing degree;

(c) radical changes will occur in those parameters which exert an influence on world economic growth, international politics, and security, or rather on the evolution of the conceptions formed of them;

(d) economic and political development will grow more and more insecure and dangerous. No doubt we shall be faced with such variants of insecure development as cannot be counteracted merely by increasing risk-taking. On the other hand, owing to the more dangerous nature of development, greater risks cannot always be undertaken.

Under such circumstances the national economies, economic undertakings, and individuals strive for a greater measure of economic security, but this striving comes up against essential limits. In spite of these limitations—the nature and composition of which will be discussed below—it is possible to achieve economic aims of a general and qualitative character or concrete and quantifiable ones, at the expense of other objectives.

In the case of striving or action of that kind special attention should be paid to the proportions of the various factors of action since, should they be deformed, factors that have been indirectly undervalued may create more insecurity than could have been avoided with the aid of a system of action giving preference to security.

In such cases the regrouping of ratios in the interest of the new aims does more harm than good. Within the said scope and limits, however, it is conceivable that the security of some economic activity is increased at the expense of the attainable result, that is the largest possible profit or the smallest input; in other words, the principal postulates of rational economic activity. Preference given to security in the course of concrete economic action is conceivable in both internal, or national, and external economic activities. (See below.)

After surveying the idea, the possibilities, and limitations of economic security I shall try to clarify the conditions, interconnections and results which concretely, in an established system of economic conditions, constitute a class of criteria of security or insecurity with special regard to the impact of the major world economic changes.

Economic security in national economies

Economic security essentially means the kind of socio-economic policy and capacities with the aid of which national economies ensure adequate employment, relative welfare, socio-economic equilibrium, and reassuring prospects to economic undertakings and individuals.

I do not intend to describe all the components of the internal system of conditions of economic security in detail, only wishing to point out briefly that socio-economic equilibrium implies a great deal, including socio-political circumstances which are not too unequal and which allow for the settlement of disputes concerning the system of distribution on an equitable basis and within an appropriate institutional framework; a relatively stable currency and stable value of savings, relative balance of payments equilibrium, etc. If these are not present, changes in economic policy are usually the result, within the scope of which the decision-making authorities are compelled to give up temporarily the requirement system of economic security. In more serious cases the sacrifice of economic security is coupled with the assumption of greater risk, not in the interest of attaining improved results but as the consequence of an emergency in which there is neither security nor development.

Internal economic security is thus based on a well-functioning socio-economic system within which the recognized legitimate power accepted by the international community is capable of guaranteeing the afore-said results, goods, services, and possibilities in a quantity and composition commensurate with the capacities of the individuals making up that society. Starting from the system of relations between the state and the members of society, the economic results and possibilities enjoyed by the individual signify the concrete implementation of human rights in a given sphere.

In this sense an economic crisis, sudden stops to growth, greater insecurities of economic conditions, a decline of the living standard, grave imbalances, etc. are the reverse of economic security.

The dangers of excessive economic security

It is obvious, however, that not only economic security but growth as well are needed. Growth and security are not contradictory and even presuppose and promote each other. Yet there are contradictory components amongst their conditions; this is why—at critical, especially sensitive points—they can, in a sloganlike manner, in connection with changes in the political line, move into the focus of the struggle between different politico-economic centres of gravity. It is possible, for example, that a very powerful governmental structure ensures considerable economic security to the majority of the population which is relatively satisfied with the established situation. They are therefore relatively non-receptive concerning adaptation to changes. In such a situation it is necessary to break down the structure and to deflect the reflexes of public opinion, but this naturally entails great risks. Thus, in consequence of the struggle between the politico-economic centres of gravity, growth—the possibility of the adaptation of the necessary changes—and economic security, especially with reference to a static situation and the present, come into conflict with each other.

I mention this as a warning against carrying economic security to such excess as may lead to rigidity in the economy and, as will be mentioned later, to dangerous outside conflicts.

*The decline in economic security or the growth of insecurity
at a time of major changes*

Security within national economies has decreased in the past decade for both enterprises and individuals. The decline in security can be characterized by the following facts and circumstances:

1. The faster rate of economic growth established after the Second World War, from the fifties onwards, has slowed down. Different expectations and forecasts exist in respect of the future, but there is substantial agreement that this tendency will continue to prevail in the coming decade even if more rapid development can be expected in some technical sectors and in certain regions (the Near East, the Pacific area).

2. The fast growth in welfare in the developed parts of the world has ground to a halt. This fact will have very important consequences; although we know full well that not even in this golden age was it possible in the Third World to guarantee even a minimum of economic security and the satisfaction of basic needs.

3. Employment in developed capitalist countries has declined, and there are indications that unemployment will again be an aspect of the functioning of a capitalist economy. There are many who assert in this connection that this is only structural unemployment, but this fact is only of relative significance in a period when structural changes are one of the driving forces of growth. I think the issue is rather a conflict between the driving forces of growth and the requirements of full employment, a conflict that can be moderated but cannot be ended.

4. Inflation fed by various sources (imbalances, the rise in the prices of energy and raw materials due to the limitations of natural resources, export price increases forced in the interest of redressing the losses thus sustained, the export of inflation, budgetary deficits, etc.) has become one of the characteristics of the current period. It is common knowledge, however, that the attitudes and reflexes of economic factors in an inflation usually change to the effect that they themselves also become stimulants of inflationary processes. (Everybody would like to escape the consequences of inflation, and therefore—regardless of their intentions—they strengthen the process.)

5. The economies of the European socialist countries are also up against various disequilibria, among which those concerning foreign trade are the most important and most characteristic. In order to restore the balance it is necessary to carry out programmes of action which make the economy increasingly dependent on the international economic situation and its fluctuations. Under such circumstances those economic security factors which have arisen from the relative closeness of the economy dwindle. (We speak of relative closeness since the economy has always been influenced by outside circumstances, as most enterprises and consumers were shielded against their impact. This is why one could talk about hothouse conditions.) On the other hand, intensive development and the new world economic situation postulate substantial changes also in the formation of socio-cultural and scientific structures.

6. External or extra-economic factors such as ecological hazards, dangerous technologies, as well as the uncertainties of the international political-security and economic conditions and circumstances contribute to the decline in economic security.

In examining the internal components of economic security I do not wish to deal in detail with these factors and circumstances, for this will anyway be done in the course of the analysis of external factors. I only wish to point out that the insecure external situation continues to potentiate the uncertainties of the internal factors. This increased insecurity is felt to an

ever growing degree by those who are active within the economy—governments, enterprises, and individuals—for in this period the economies turn ever more interdependent; what is more, there has arisen a powerful global complex of world economic problems affecting national economies from the outside rather than cumulating their activities.

In analysing the probable shaping of the internal components of economic security the conclusion can be reached that, in the future, economies will have to face greater dangers and growing insecurity. These may reach such dimensions as will not only cause greater indisposition but will also threaten socio-economic stability and value systems. Such developments would have as a consequence that enterprises and individuals would, in the course of action, give preference to solutions that serve their short-term interests. This adds to troubles which can be reduced only by integrated, coordinated, and far-sighted measures. The circumstances of economic insecurity are upshots of an internal, international, and global situation which can be ended neither by forcibly repressing the anarchistic social facts that grow out of the troubles, nor by forcibly improving the condition of particular national economies to the detriment of others. But historical experience demonstrates that negative power factors often take advantage of the ensuing insecurity and indisposition and, by trumpeting slogans such as order and stability, aim to seize power and, once in possession of it, they direct society into error. In order to lessen these dangers it is advisable for the constructive political forces to minimize and counteract insecurity.

The international background

I should like to stress in particular three of the international elements of economic security:

1. The world-market mechanisms promoting and serving the interchange and flow of goods, services, technologies, capital, and know-how.
2. World economic problems which cannot, or can only in part, be solved by means of the world-market mechanisms.

Global problems have arisen because, through national economies, mankind already makes use of the resources of the entire globe and is active in one and the same natural environment. Extraordinary inequalities have, however, come about in the distribution of populations, production capacities, technologies, capabilities and incomes. Science and technology, on the other hand, have created powerful forces which endanger the natural environment and the survival of man. The depletion of resources, ecological

hazards, and established inequalities require an international economic order within which the afore-mentioned serious problems could be solved by economic means. If, making use of the normal or extraordinary means at its disposal, the economy fails to solve the said problems, then means of a different kind must sooner or later be employed. That is why global problems must be dealt with in a special manner, there being no solution to them within the present world-market system.

3. The international, global and regional, political relations and the balance of military forces which, on the basis of the established interest relations and objectives, exert a considerable influence on the choice of relations, on the sharing of reciprocal advantages, and the chances of the possible alternatives.

This brief review, so to speak only for reference purposes, of the international parameters of economic security also leads to the conclusion that economic security in the present world must be ensured in face of:

- increasing scarcity (the limitations on non-renewable resources),
- extreme inequality in distribution,
- increasing interdependence,
- more acute economic competition, and
- growing economic, technical and ecological hazards.

This would be serious and complex enough in itself, for it is in contradiction both with the established economic situation and with the inherited order of the international economy, but the danger is increased by other circumstances. Let me mention among them particularly an arms race based on the parity of mutual deterrence, competition between countries with differing social systems, as well as the embittered struggle between capitalist countries for the repartition of economic power, a struggle being waged using every kind of weapon.

The problem is whether it is possible under the given circumstances to conceive a system of economic relations which guarantees security to the interested parties:

- (a) in the supply of energy and raw materials,
- (b) in the availability of modern technologies and know-how,
- (c) in the acquirability of agricultural products and techniques,
- (d) in bringing nearer, or at least in not hindering, the solution of global economic problems,
- (e) in being in harmony with the requirements of interdependence.

I shall discuss in detail the problems under the first three points (a), (b), and (c). The seventies have established a number of negative precedents

in this respect, including the oil embargo, the embargo on advanced technology, or the prohibition of the sale of agricultural produce. The fourth requirement under (d) refers to the fact that the world economy as a centre of the results and effects of human economic management already has an independent system of values (which is not only a virtual system and not even one summed up and deduced on the basis of the national economies), since not only economic results but also dangers and side-effects are cumulated. The fifth requirement under (e), on the other hand, is a reminder that in an interdependent world agreements made between different parties cannot remain without consequences.

Is it not utopic to think of such a system in an age when the real, concrete, economic relations are asymmetrical, that is, when one of the parties has greater interests involved in those relations than the other? One of the parties is usually an economically more powerful and more flexible economic centre, or state, disposing over convertible forms of power, while the other party is a smaller, more one-sided state with hardly any convertible power. Convertible power means that political and military power is manifest in economic matters as well.

This observation and reminder calls, of course, on facts and experience; it therefore includes many aspects of truth. I wonder, however, what alternative there is to the utopia, more precisely, to a conception containing utopistic elements. One alternative to the utopia is the continuance of present economic conditions and institutions in an unchanged form, leading to the further deterioration and aggravation of the situation—of the inequalities, the unsolved problems, dangers, and tensions. It is evident that the said conditions and institutions, in relation to the needs of the coming decade, will be still more unsuitable for solving the problems. It may be presumed that under such circumstances there will be not only local catastrophes but also minor or major wars provoked by economic reasons.

Dangers following from a one-sided interpretation

It can be supposed that the various participants in the world economy strive to reduce their own insecurity (to restore their security). This, however, can be attained obviously only by those economically strong powers which, in the past as well, as part of the colonialist and later the neo-colonialist system, made unequal economic relations one of the bases on which the international trading order was built. Seen from a different angle: the sort of stage (form) of imperialism could come about

within which the developed capitalist countries, in defence of their economic interests which took shape in the course of time, and which also include instrumentalities, situations and connections (dependencies) which derive from the earlier economic exploitation of other nations and states. That is they could

put pressure on governments which give their national economic policies the rank and importance of state policy,

try and establish administrations and systems that depend on them,

or else establish bases to secure air and sea routes. In a system of global international politics; however, such activity upsets the established equilibrium, and this in turn increases the possibility of minor or major conflicts and even the danger of nuclear war. Given proper circumspection and a modicum of good luck it might be possible to avoid a major war, but it must be taken for granted that such an international political situation has a destructive effect on the economies and contacts between them. We live amidst such dangers and problems that the lack of cooperation, or more precisely: the mere failure of the possible solutions implicit in cooperation—let alone the destruction and deformation of relations—also indicates a substantial deterioration of the situation. Merely to reject certain possible solutions and experiments no longer suffices, even from a scientific point of view for new solutions are needed to tackle new problems and prevent new dangers. Protection against the economic and political dangers inherent in prevailing conditions is possible only by improving those conditions. An approach on an imperialistic basis to creating a system of economic security is dangerous also because the security of economic centres is often protected against economies and states which are unable to provide even a minimum of economic security for their own people. It stands to reason that the security of economic centres achieved by means of exaggerated and forcible methods will sooner or later run into conflict with complete economic insecurity and sometimes with the existential uncertainties of the inhabitants of the Third World.

The nature of economic security

In what follows I shall try to define a few principles and requirements which must be taken into consideration in the course of strengthening economic security if the aim is, on the one hand, to develop the world economy and, on the other, to lessen extreme economic differences.

It is obvious that the security of a system of relations in the economy lies in the substance of those relations, i.e. in the fact that the relations in

question serve the interests of both sides, that benefits are distributed equitably, and the participating sides, in the awareness of each other's interest and economic policies, have confidence in each other. Relations based on common interests, on the equitable distribution of benefits, and on mutual confidence are given priority over other alternatives, therefore they are accepted as secure, and they are not dispensed with even for the sake of momentary advantages (more favourable offers on free markets). Of course, the relations in question, in addition to being of an independent character, are part of a world economic situation and practice, within which, e.g. in the case of raw materials, long-term agreements guarantee the continuity of relations on an international basis. Common interests complementary to and conditional upon one another can arise only in case the economically more powerful partner, in the interest of lessening the asymmetry and extreme inequalities, exercises restraint and refrains from using economic or political, military, scientific, etc. superior force.

Systems of agreements of such nature and content encompassing different commodity markets can be established with mutual guarantees.

Of course, the security of relations is essential not only in the sphere of the world economy and international trade in which the developed capitalist countries are importers, but also in fields where they are exporters, i.e. sell their commodities, technologies, and know-how on the world market. Earlier the presumption was that the developed capitalist countries' dependence on exports was considerable and consequently they were eager to sell their products at all times. Recent events in the economic history of the post Second World War period demonstrate that this cannot be presumed. During the past few decades there have always been stipulations, recommendations, and prohibitions concerning the exports of developed technologies. Such stipulations and prohibitions jeopardize the economic development of the other side, of the potential user, and thereby also their economic security. It is an indefensible, anti-economic and anti-scientific argument to restrict trade in such commodities because the benefits to the other side are greater. It is well known that the greatest profits are in the sale of technologically most up-to-date products. The notion of extra-profit is linked to products and situations of such a kind. There is no denying that the importation of developed technologies is advantageous to the other side as well, since it has an expansion-promoting and structure-improving effect. This, however, is quite normal. The advantage of the international division of labour lies precisely in that it furthers the development of national economies, making it possible for them to join, under favourable conditions, in the main stream of the world economy. Lastly it

is in place here to point out that by this right—the exchange of certain commodities being more advantageous to the importer than to the exporter—it is possible to justify restraints on the exports of energy sources and raw materials as well. Since, however, the system of relations in the world economy is built on the principles of reciprocal advantages, it is hardly possible to conceive a regulating principle which would make the purchase of energy sources and raw materials an absolute right but would make access to developed technologies dependent on the sellers' daily changing points of view or on their discretion.

Trade in agricultural produce is also reckoned as being in the problem area of economic security. Its significance will be especially great in the following decades, for countries of the developing world will become capable of supplying the necessary agricultural products to their fast growing populations in the long run only. It is well known that in the eighties the agricultural imports of developing countries are expected to increase at a fantastic speed. (I am not here discussing that only needs with purchasing power to back them will be manifest on the world market, 500 to 600 million people will still remain outside the world economy in the coming decade.) But a process has already started which subjects the sale of basic foods and fodder to political conditions. This and similar attitudes of countries possessing surpluses endanger economic security and the normal course of international trade. Economic security can come into being only on the basis of reciprocal equity. Reciprocal equity—as the twin of reciprocal advantages—means that the partners, acting in the spirit of sweet reasonableness, renounce making the most of their advantages, for such an attitude would lead to the deformation of international trade and to anarchy in economic relations. This is why I have repeatedly emphasized that the security of economic relations lies in the relations themselves, i.e. not in political or military pressure.

The intertwining of economic, political and security factors

When stressing the autonomy of relation systems starting from and reverting to interests, one should refer back to the initial hypothesis of this article, i.e. to the growing interdependence of economic, political, and security factors. The consequences of interdependence, however, do not present themselves uniformly in the three spheres. The effect economies have on politics and security are more concealed and unfold more slowly. Economic factors often play a decisive role in political changes, yet the

changes are effected within the political mechanism and on the basis of political slogans. The real situation, of course, essentially differs from outward appearances since, if a government finds itself in an economically impossible position, political change will inevitably occur. This applies to the most diverse political-power systems, to multi-party and one-party systems, and to military dictatorships as well.

The situation is similar also in the relationship between security and the economy, although the decision-taking and conception-changing system of the security sphere is, as a matter of course, a highly closed one. It is known, however—and several such developments have been mentioned in this article—that politico-security (military) mechanisms are often used as a means of economic pressure.

At critical junctures and in the case of radical changes of policy, however, the political-security sphere rapidly forces the economy into its own current. From the viewpoint of the economy the forced change of régime means that it must "freeze" some of its interest and action systems at a given point. Such decisions endanger economic security, which in a dynamic world can only be dynamic, i.e. it includes also the extension of the interest systems. Experience shows, however, that the economy, which is intrinsically cyclic, is unable to fit in with political cycles. Changes in the political line are usually rapid and radical, i.e. the situation deteriorates suddenly (it suffices to refer to the year 1979). This circumstance is obviously connected with the fact that political decisions are centralized being made by governments and the H.Q.s of leading political parties, while the economy works as a decentralized structure. The interest-related movement of the economy is also comparatively slow, for economic interests do not change with new political decisions, since they have no alternative direction open to them at the beginning of the change. In the case of a new change of cycle (i.e. when tension is replaced by détente) politics again proceed fast, but meanwhile the economy has built up its own interest system and is again only able to change over slowly. Therefore one can assert unequivocally that the escalation of political conflict into the economic field is a threat not only to economic security but to economic growth as well as to the solution of those fundamental problems which require continuous and undisturbed co-operation.

The depoliticization of economic relations

If we accept that the most decisive questions of the world today are of an economic character and postulate continuous cooperation, then the prob-

lem arises whether, at the time of an economic crisis and of the close of the millenium threats to the survival of mankind, it would not be possible to depoliticize the economy to some degree, doing so by international agreement.

One can conceive variants of depoliticization complementing each other and valid in themselves:

1. To declare by the joint agreement of all interested parties (e.g. by a UN resolution) that political crises and conflicts will not be extended to the economic field (de-escalation).

2. To desynchronize the movement of economics and politics in such a sense of the word that in politically favourable times effective help will be given for stepping up the speed of action of the economy, and in unfavourable times it shall be made possible to give scope to the dynamics of relations.

Such a system of coordinated, consciously agreed, action is needed also because every shortfall and every hold-up is extremely dangerous for the reason that:

- it slows down the development of national economies, and this, under conditions of increasing interdependence, damages also the situation of countries that are outsiders to the particular political conflict;

- it hinders the establishment of more developed forms of cooperation in keeping with the needs of the age;

- it causes a serious and dangerous loss of time in approaching global problems, and this means that it increases the danger of present developments and worsens the chances of future developments.

In this sense the conventional systems of action, that is those which synchronize political and economic action in the established fashion, also threaten economic security.

The problem of economic security arises in a dramatic and often dangerous fashion also in connection with political changes in the developing countries.

The fear that the change may exert an unfavourable influence on economic relations established with the developed capitalist world ("it threatens the economic security of the developed capitalist countries") often gives political hawks an excuse for intervention, supported by a considerable part of their public opinion, in the internal affairs of the country in question.

In practice, however, the changes of power interrelated with the shifting of the internal balance of forces are inevitable. This is especially so in the Third World where the social structures and institutions are in a state of transition. It must be taken into account, on the other hand, that the prob-

lems are extremely complicated objectively speaking as well. As a consequence governments relying upon a relatively narrow active social basis often have to make decisions on the most serious matters which affect the foundations of human civilization. It is evident that many a government lacks the necessary dynamics, while other governments pursue a policy out of touch with actual conditions, so they have to be replaced in some way or other. The portents of change and its consequences are doubtlessly difficult to foresee, since the politicians moving into power are in part unknown, and furthermore it is difficult to judge their tendencies and aspirations by European standards. In so far as the fallen government (*régime*) was supported from outside since it had promoted or had not affected the economic interests of the western world, the change of power may give rise to the fear that the successors will adopt a different standpoint. Under such circumstances, in today's hypersensitive world, the usual local change of power acquires not only regional but global significance.

It can be supposed that the frequency of changes of power, besides the many difficult and complicated problems of development, will not show a lessening tendency in the following decades. Of course, it would be an error to underestimate the significance and inevitability of changes of power. It is obvious, however, that it is impossible to keep postponing the solution of the most serious world economic problems simply because one of the one hundred and seventy national states has been the scene of a power change the consequences of which cannot be foreseen by trading partners. Maybe it seems to be just a sentimental argument, but it is a weightier consideration, that the whole world cannot live in a constant fear of war just because every year there are ten to twelve changes of power which are of evil portent at short range.

That is why the need arises to evolve a practice in which the various countries guarantee internationally that for one or two years to come they will not effect any major change in their established economic relations. At the same time such countries undertake to respect changes of power.

I am aware that the possible solutions offered here are in sharp contrast to established international practice, conceptions, and aspirations, and in many respects even to the course of history up to the present and to the shaping of relations between states. It is understandable therefore if reasonable doubts arise in connection with their applicability and acceptability.

I nevertheless hold it necessary to pose the problems and possible solutions in this manner. Current systems of thought and action adapt themselves to conventional structures and methods, but the situation is completely new. The novelty lies in the problems which not only quantitatively but

also qualitatively differ from earlier ones, in their globality and interdependence (every new situation, whose system of interests, valuation, and action differs from the regional types and from those used in national states, appears in the global system), in the oversensitiveness of the relation systems and consequently in the dangers inherent in the functioning of the entire system. Therefore conventional structures, the systems of valuation and action need a general and thorough revision. It is evident that international political and economic action has always essentially deviated from the necessary. Even in the best of cases, inasmuch as the object of action tallies with requirement, what is needed can only be approached on the basis of the interest relations to be expressed in structures, and the efforts made to mislead the opponent, as well as compromises, become part of a process, the end-product of which is the result of action. In our days, however, deviations, that is departures from the required action, are much greater (since the participants in action still follow the old ways of thinking and guiding mechanisms) in a world which is more sensitive to action and which is in a more dangerous condition, one in which global problems that can only be solved through cooperation have also presented themselves. We feel it is a particularly dangerous fact that international politics and economics still follow the earlier rails while science, the experts, and a considerable section of public opinion have already become aware of the dangers.

Problems of this kind, however, cannot be solved by one or a few states changing their own systems of action. International agreements are needed which can be concluded only between the holders of power (and not on a narrowly professional level) after appropriate preparation by specialists.

It must be taken into consideration also that the powerful impact of the conceptions that are not comprehensive create inconsistencies in the international system when certain states are compelled to understand that the other side has the capacity of destroying them in a matter of half-hours while they give up even the chance of self-defence and yet, on the other hand, they threaten to use, in the interest of protecting their economic security, armed force against anyone who ventures to come near to their supplies, as regards energy and raw materials, or who threatens the regular routes between those markets and the metropolitan country.

To sum up:

1. The problem of economic security has so far been neglected by economic theorists. In an economy, however, in which the satisfaction of fast growing needs or the progress feasible in their satisfaction is dependent on extremely complex social and international endeavours and processes, the

problem of security arises of necessity. What then are the conditions and what is the likelihood for such efforts and processes to produce similar results in the future as well?

2. It is obvious that security and performance are two concepts, or requirements, which are complementary to, and conditional upon, each other. In practice risk-taking sometimes produces the greater result and security brings in the smaller benefit. Since expansion and technology have become dangerous and the international conditions have grown sensitive, it can be supposed that in the next few decades the requirements of economic security will have to be paid closer attention.

3. It is doubtless true that the vast majority of mankind today does not enjoy the economic security which follows from human and civil rights. (Problems of the Third World.)

4. The economic security of the peoples of the Third World can be provided only by rapid growth which, in today's world, can be assured only by broad-based economic cooperation. A cardinal requirement of such a programme is the distribution of goods, incomes and services with particular regard to the poor and those exposed to danger.

5. Seen from the international viewpoint: the security of relations lies in the content of the relations themselves, and therefore those relations must be built on principles of reciprocal advantage and reciprocal equity. There must be guarantees that the energy sources and raw materials, developed technologies and agricultural products alike find their way to the users.

6. It will be dangerous from the point of view of the world, and destructive from that of the world economy, if certain technologically and militarily powerful capitalist countries wish to assure their economic security not by rationally developing their resources or within a system of economic relations based on equality but by applying political and military and intervention pressure. We live in a world where on the one hand national resources must be developed in the interests of the whole of mankind, since otherwise the consumption and growth of other countries is potentially limited, on the other hand everybody must accept interdependence and its consequences. Forms of economic and military oppression of other nations might otherwise take shape which carry in themselves the germs of a nuclear war and thus threatens not only the development of mankind but also its mere survival in this age fraught with dangers, may revive under changed circumstances if the real meaning of interdependence is rejected.

THE CRISIS OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY SYSTEM AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE HUNGARIAN ECONOMY

by

JÁNOS FEKETE

In the course of progress over the past close-on quarter of a century Hungary enjoyed favourable international judgement exceeding the modest size of the economy, thanks to an economic policy which reckoned with realities both in respect to the outside world and the situation at home.

It is, however, also undoubtedly true that conclusions concerning Hungarian economic policy must be drawn today from a much more complex world economy, replete with economic and political contradictions, than was true a mere five years ago. Accordingly, the impact which reaches the Hungarian economy from abroad is more complex, and in many respects contradictions have become more acute between a conventional economic policy and the requirements that are in keeping with new conditions.

In many countries the problems of economic growth are again in the forefront of attention, while inflation is on the increase, balance of payments disequilibria are growing, open or hidden protectionist measures are spreading and, partly in consequence of these, foreign trade expands at a slower rate. These are factors which are in close interrelation and interaction with each other, which in the past five or six years have become part of our world. They characterize the external economic environment within which Hungary too must progress, the negative influences of which the socialist countries cannot evade either, even though they dispose of different endowments and possibilities.

The thought may arise that these negative influences are not valid for Hungary, or only valid to a negligible extent, since Hungary transacts the bigger part of foreign trade with socialist countries, and there the tensions of the economic and financial situation in the capitalist world are not operative. Indeed, economic cooperation with the socialist countries has a stabilizing influence on Hungarian activities. But, though there are time

lags and the relation is not direct, the trends and influences making themselves felt in the capitalist world market gradually intrude also into intra CMEA economic relations. If one realistically counts on this, bearing it in mind in economic plans, the difficulties threatening the external and internal equilibrium of the economy can be overcome.

Of international economic problems monetary questions are undoubtedly in the focus of discussion. There is every reason therefore to study this subject closely when drawing conclusions for Hungarian economic policy in general.

I

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE BRETTON WOODS SYSTEM

The Bretton Woods system functioned satisfactorily for about twenty-five years, by and large up to the end of the sixties. It contributed to economic development in a capitalist world free of major crises. In the ten most advanced capitalist countries it was possible to keep the annual rate of inflation around an average 2.5-3 per cent.

In addition to these sound aspects, this period had also showed an extremely negative feature which finally undermined the stability of the entire world economy. Due to the privileged position of the dollar, the United States was able, between 1950 and 1970, to cover a deficit in the balance of payments which approached 50,000 million dollars, by increasing the short-term foreign debt, in practice by printing money. The United States thus, as the "bank of issue" of the world currency, placed own interests above international obligations derived from the dollar's key currency role, and thereby undermined the stability not only of the dollar but of the monetary system as a whole. Owing to balance of payments deficits huge sums of dollars flooded the world, the shortage of dollars was replaced by an abundance of dollars on a world-wide scale, and consequently the dollar gradually became overvalued. This situation created opportunities for American capital to penetrate foreign markets cheaply; for instance, between 1960 and 1970 foreign investments by American corporations grew from 32,000 million to 78,000 million dollars. Out of the increasing foreign investments, at present, 20,000 million dollars are repatriated annually as profits.

The increasingly open and crude exploitation of the Bretton Woods mechanism by the Americans met with the growing resistance of their allies.

In order to put a brake on the aggressive expansionary policy of the United States, they began—to an increasing extent—to exchange their dollar surpluses for gold at the Federal Reserve Bank of the United States. American gold reserves were halved. In such circumstances the monetary system became more and more uncomfortable for the United States, eventually turning into a straitjacket. In this situation the United States openly strove for the destruction of the system, mostly by unilateral measures. Nixon, in 1971, abolished the convertibility of the dollar into gold, and in the spring of 1973 the system of fixed exchange rates was terminated, and floating became a general practice. As a result the Bretton Woods international monetary system fell apart.

Inflation and monetary policy

The dissolution of the international monetary system had grave consequences for the entire world economy. One of the most important was the beginning and continuity of a new type of inflationary process. Since 1973, the annual growth of the weighted retail price index in the capitalist world as a whole exceeded ten per cent, and at certain times it moved between 12 and 15 per cent.

In the sixties, while the international monetary system still functioned relatively well, the average annual nominal growth of international foreign exchange reserves was no more than 7 per cent, in spite of overspending by the United States. In the seventies, when Nixon sanctioned the cutting of the umbilical cord between the dollar and gold, the average annual reserve increment grew to 22 per cent. Foreign exchange reserves rose from 33,000 million dollars at the end of 1969 to 303,000 million dollars by mid-1979, more than three quarters of which consisted of dollars. The gross volume of the Eurocurrency markets, which were unaffected by the foreign exchange controls, grew ten-fold in these years, to 1,000,000 million dollars.

It is not difficult to conclude that the dissolution of the monetary system and the acceleration of inflation were closely connected phenomena. To these was added the raising of oil prices by producers and by the middlemen oil monopolies to an economically unjustified degree, which increased production costs and, as a result, retail prices. It would however be an exaggeration to claim that the higher energy prices were the cause of the inflation, they only added fuel to the fire, since their total effect on the price level can be estimated as an annual 1–1.5 per cent at the most.

Given increased inflation, the importance of the foreign exchange- and exchange rate policy of the capitalist countries grew. After the dissolution of the international monetary system, the aim of the exchange rate policy of the United States was to attempt—by a gradual devaluation of the dollar to a more than justified degree—to reconquer those export markets which it had lost prior to 1973 due to the overvaluation of the dollar. However, an undervalued dollar—while making it easier to place goods on international markets at the expense of competitors—rendered the imports of the United States more expensive, and thereby became an additional cause for inflation in America. At the same time it started unbridled speculation on currency markets, and thereby introduced a further factor of uncertainty into international monetary relations.

Together with other factors, such as increased defence spending, American monetary policy was also responsible for raising price increases in the United States to two figures, and thereby contributed to a world-wide growth of inflation.

In October 1979 a new person was appointed to head the Federal Reserve Bank. He tried to slow down inflation by applying resolute measures. Vigorous financial restrictions were introduced in order to stop the further devaluation of the dollar. The domestic American interest rate (the prime rate) approached 16 per cent by mid-November 1979.

The most powerful capitalist trading partners of the United States—in the first place the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan and Switzerland—exploited the indifferent attitude of the American administration towards the devaluation of the dollar, and regularly revalued their currency against the dollar. By this policy they made the importing of raw materials, and especially of oil, cheaper for themselves, and thus were successful in defending themselves against outside inflationary pressure. It is true that revalued currencies made exports more difficult, but they also exerted an increasing pressure on exporters to try to maintain their competitiveness on international markets through the rationalization of production and the application of more advanced technologies. At the same time, the purchase of raw materials at lower prices due to the high exchange rate, the more modest rises in money wages due to low rates of inflation and low interest rates, helped firms in maintaining their ability to export. Therefore, although the competitors always supported, in their declarations, the United States administration in its policy aimed at strengthening the dollar; in practice, when Washington finally decided to do something about protecting the dollar, they tried to neutralize the positive effect of the American measures through credit restrictions and by raising interest rates. As a consequence,

a regular war of interest rates got going between the United States and other capitalist countries, raising the cost of credits to an unprecedented level.

The demonetizing of gold

Amidst capitalist monetary conditions of which inflation, uncertainties in the exchange rates, the rate of interest war, balance of payments disequilibria and increasing tensions in the credit market are characteristic, gold of course found itself in a new light. Nevertheless, there still are many who—ignoring the facts—continue to speak of the dethronement of gold, of its successful exclusion from the monetary system, that is of demonetization. But has gold really been demonetized?

Legally yes. In rules of the International Monetary Fund, introduced in April 1978—as amended for the second time—the demonetizing of gold was formally declared. Special Drawing Rights (SDR) became the common denominator of the system. Their value is expressed as a currency basket. Member countries cannot tie the value of their currency to gold even if they wished to return to the system of fixed exchange rates. A part of the quotas of the Fund need no longer be paid in gold either, etc. However in practice, one must conclude from certain obvious facts, that gold increased in importance.

—When the confidence in paper money was shaken, gold again appeared on the scene. Since its demonetization its price has increased, by leaps and bounds, exceeding 700 dollars an ounce at the time of writing. The official price at the moment of demonetization was 42 dollars an ounce.

—With such a change in price the increasing importance of gold received an added impetus. The fact is that its reserve role cannot be replaced by any kind of international money or international drawing rights. At a price of 700 dollars an ounce, the share of gold within the monetary reserves rose—in the case of the advanced capitalist countries—to above 75 per cent. (It is at the same time proof of the failure of SDR that their share in the reserves is only 2 per cent.) While the increase in the weight of gold reserves is beyond doubt, their use and transfer among various countries is insignificant. Only 0.4 per cent of the gold reserves of IMF member countries changes hands every month at auctions. The re-groupment of the foreign exchange reserves represents a frequent and sometimes very important volume—while the changes in ownership of gold proceed at a snail's pace. (90 per cent of the monetary reserves of the United States are in gold,

44 per cent in West Germany and only 30 per cent in Japan—which made up for the lag but later. As against this, in traditionally gold-minded France and Switzerland the share of gold is around 70 per cent.)

—In crisis situations gold also served as the final reserve in recent years. It suffices to remember the Italian and Portuguese gold reserves which were mortgaged when obtaining credits. Gold has a role of some importance within the European Monetary System as well.

All this allows one to conclude that gold has been gaining ground at an increasing rate as against paper money. Its rising price causes further uncertainties on the already extremely unstable capitalist foreign exchange markets.

Balance of payments, loan markets

The lasting disequilibrium of the current balances of payments is a further expression of new international monetary power relations, following the 1973 changes.

In the years 1974–79 the balance of payments positions became highly polarized due to oil surpluses and other factors. Although there was some fluctuation during these years—especially in respect of some countries—the most characteristic feature of the picture was nevertheless that a cumulative balance of payments surplus amounting to 300–320,000 million dollars was accumulated, in the hands of a few advanced capitalist countries (for instance West Germany, Japan and Switzerland) and the OPEC countries while increasing deficits became characteristic of other countries, almost without exception. Imbalances in the medium-developed capitalist countries and in the non-oil exporting developing countries became especially accentuated. In recent years the balance of payments of CMEA countries with capitalist countries has also shown deficits.

In order to enable the debtor countries to cover their balance of payments deficits, the balance of payments surpluses concentrated since 1974–79 in a few countries had to be recycled in the form of loan and financial market operations. The extensive international banking network of the advanced capitalist countries became the main channels for such operations, especially working through uncontrolled Euro-currency markets. The recycling occurred primarily through market mechanisms, and not in an internationally organized way.

However, this rapidly expanding foreign loan activity of the commercial banks of the advanced capitalist countries (it was made possible by in-

sufficient international liquidity, and necessary by the large disequilibrium in international payments) has recently given rise to anxiety. These anxieties run in several directions, and are closely interconnected with the complex nature of the process of falling into debt. It may suffice to refer to three aspects:

First: a disproportionately high share of international capital became accumulated in countries with a low investment and consumption capacity. Consequently, these surpluses—instead of appearing as long-term investment capital creating new employment and generating new production and consumption needs—are placed as short-term deposits and thus add to the instability of the international monetary situation. Owing to their rapid flow to and fro, such moneys have become a far from negligible element in the continual monetary crises.

Second: due to the already mentioned nature of the sources of credits, the foreign bank debts have an expiry structure which has created a huge mutual monetary interdependence in the world economy. For instance, the foreign loan stock of the commercial banks of the advanced capitalist countries amounted, at the end of 1978, to 285,000 million dollars, of which 42 per cent (!), 119,000 million dollars were payable within a year or less; this represents, from the aspect of the debtors, a commitment which has to be renewed continuously, and the "behaviour" of which is most sensitive to the fluctuations of economic, political and market factors.

Third: endeavours have recently become stronger on behalf of the international organizations and the central banks to control the foreign loan activities of the commercial banks in order to size up better the credit risks and to introduce certain restrictions. Although in this respect only endeavours, ideas, arguments and the statistical and organizational conditions exist at the moment, these endeavours may soon become concrete factors of the international loan market which will slow down, and render more difficult, the present free flow of capital, and thereby the solution of the ever graver disequilibria.

Cyclical influences

The negative effect of the above described capitalist monetary conditions on the general economic situation is at a growth stage. The outlook for the capitalist world economy—especially due to the further OPEC price hikes—deteriorated further in 1979. Earlier forecasts reckoned with oil price increases representing an excess burden of approximately 80,000

million dollars between 1978 and 1979, reducing the growth rate of the advanced capitalist countries by 0.5 per cent in 1979 and by approximately 1 per cent in 1980, in spite of the fact that the energy consumption per one unit growth of the gross national product has decreased in these countries by a total of 5–6 per cent since 1973. As against this, more recent forecasts make it likely that, due to the reduction of real purchasing power on account of accelerated inflation and stagnating employment, and to the moderation of consumer expenditure—as primary factors—gross national products (GNP) will continue to diminish in the United States in the first half of 1980. This by itself will already have a negative effect on the growth opportunities of those capitalist countries in which a high interest rate and an anti-inflationary monetary policy already slow down growth rates, restraining consumption and investments. The earlier, more optimistic forecasts, have already been revised in several countries.

All these signs indicate that a broadening monetary crisis is not identical with an economic crisis, since it affects a narrower field, the possibility nevertheless is on the cards that, in the early eighties, the monetary crises may lead to a grave economic crisis.

II

THE EFFECT OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC CHANGES ON THE HUNGARIAN ECONOMY

The international monetary situation and its consequences have affected Hungary as well. The Hungarian system of economic guidance applies economic levers which are able to support the objectives of economic policy flexibly, instead of applying central plan receipts which are compulsory for enterprises. These levers mediate the changes of the external economic sphere, and consequently the Hungarian system of economic guidance reacts sensitively to the influences of the capitalist external economic situation.

It is well-known that from 1968 to 1973 the Hungarian economy progressed in keeping with all essential conditions of planned and proportionate development:

—we were able to ensure an approximate annual average 6 per cent growth in such a way that in the meantime the net national product (the sum of the new resources created) and its domestic utilization were essentially balanced, calculated both at current and at constant prices;

—accordingly, external economic relations also showed balanced pro-

gress; the balance of payments was active, and the economy did not suffer large price losses through trade;

—the requirement of domestic price stability could also be satisfied. This created a favourable foundation for the standard of living policy; the real consumption of the population could grow at a rate exceeding 5 per cent annually, much faster than between 1960 and 1967.

It must however be recognised that the favourable results of this balanced, and at the same time dynamic, growth period could be achieved because the external conditions of growth, including market conditions in the capitalist countries, were favourable. At the same time, the existence of favourable external market conditions concealed structural troubles at home. This is why, at that time, an assumption could appear justified that the continued transformation of the structure of the economy—which incidentally was one of the main objectives of the reform—could be realized gradually, in the long run, and as part of a balanced but still dynamic process of growth.

The world market oil and raw material price explosion of 1973–74, and then the permanence of all those problems rooted in the capitalist world which were mentioned above, suddenly laid bare the weak points of the structure of the Hungarian economy. This and the fact that Hungary is a net importer of raw materials were together reflected in a considerable deterioration in the terms of trade, amounting to approximately 20 per cent, compared with 1973 price levels. For the same quantity of imports so much more has to be exported today. In trade settled in the currencies of the capitalist countries this occurred immediately. In trade settled in roubles the deterioration in the terms of trade did not occur at once, but due to the changes in the principles of price formation the capitalist world markets have gradually penetrated the economy from this direction as well. Consequently, the changes in the prices abroad caused losses which can be made good after some time only through genuine savings, an increase in productivity, and national income surpluses. The levers and regulations too must express these requirements.

This recognition and the intention of adaptation were already partly reflected in the fifth Five-Year Plan (1976–80). This found expression primarily in a changed emphasis on the four elements of economic policy:

—in order to restore the external balance the domestic utilization of national income must grow more slowly than the rate at which domestic resources can be expanded, and this difference in the rates of growth must be reflected in the growth of exports (exceeding imports);

—in investment policy export-oriented developmental projects received

preference; the government approved a separate credit line for the National Bank of Hungary for investments of rapid return which ensure the production of goods that can be sold economically on any market;

—the foreign loan raising policy was made to serve export-oriented investment credit policy;

—the gradual harmonization of the domestic prices and price ratios with the external price conditions became a more important element of the achievement of economic goals than had been the case before.

The main trend of economic policy was marked out even more conspicuously—relying on the economic developmental experiences of nearly four years—by the Central Committee resolution of October 1977, which pointed out: "In the coming period the main source of increases in efficiency will be changes in the production structure corresponding to the country's resources and the international conditions, and the satisfaction of the requirements of the foreign market. . . Only efficient developmental objectives should be implemented and simultaneously the restriction and termination of activities should follow which make an uneconomical demand on resources. . . It is especially important to develop the price and subsidy system in a direction where it offers more assistance in the solution of structural tasks." The December 1978 and December 1979 Central Committee resolutions furthermore focussed on the main line of economic policy according to which the domestic conditions of economic growth and the conditions of economic guidance must be subordinated to the achievement of goals aimed at equilibrium.

In the past two years, in other words, economic policy was enriched by further perceptions, and concrete steps were taken to solve the problems of equilibrium. Since the adoption of the 5th Five-Year Plan three facts had become especially obvious. The first was that five years earlier we had underestimated external factors and negative influences burdening the Hungarian economy which in the last resort influenced progress. Second: Hungarian structural features are much too rigid to be changed fundamentally within a few years. Third: in the solution of problems, due to the first two circumstances as well, one can progress more rapidly only if one deals more courageously with the involved problem of the further development of the system of economic guidance.

Setting out from these external and internal factors, the basic attitude of the 1979 national economic plan was already that incomes policy, budgetary policy, and domestic credit policy must create domestic conditions in terms of which production for economical exports becomes the primary bearer of economic growth. This attitude and line of financial

policy wishes to provide dynamic developmental opportunities for export-oriented enterprises which produce economically, but narrows down gradually the opportunities for growth of enterprises which produce uneconomically, or products that cannot be sold on every market. The consequence of such a type of selectivity is obviously a provisional slow-down of the total growth rate, perhaps over a few years, but within this slower growth differentiated processes may unfold. This attitude, by increasingly applying financial instruments, wishes to enforce more rapidly structural changes which are necessary for further economic growth. This selective change in the production structure increases the ability to export, and at the same time reduces import requirements, and thereby improves the balance of trade from two aspects.

The question may arise whether a situation cannot occur where export-oriented production activity draws off goods from domestic markets to an exaggerated degree and thereby causes domestic retail supply to fall short of requirements. Hungarian economic and financial policy wishes to avoid this danger—through influencing the profit of the enterprises—by making domestic sales as attractive as exports.

The question may also be justified whether, during a slump, the results of an export-oriented developmental and production policy may be realized, whether in such conditions the balance of trade can be improved? It seems that processes which got off the ground in 1979 have already provided, in part, a positive answer to this question. Experience shows that given the modest (approximately 0.6 per cent) share of the Hungarian economy in world trade an annual 4–500 million dollar export increment may be achieved, which is negligible on a world-wide scale but has considerable weight in Hungarian terms, that is, if such a developmental intention is accompanied by a greater diversification of markets, proper attention to the norms of the new markets, and greater flexibility in marketing. Export-oriented developmental projects, the machinery imports of which were a considerable burden on the balance of trade in 1976–78, brought 5–600 million in 1979, and in 1980 they are going to produce already 8–900 million dollars surplus income for the country. Part of this surplus may thus cover uneconomical exports which will be stopped due to the selective increase of production, and may also ensure the desired export increment.

Finally one may also ask whether Hungarian economic policy disposes of an adequate system of indices on the basis of which efficient decisions may be made both on the national economic and the enterprise level?

It is certainly true that due to the strength of economic and social interests linked to price stability which were more vigorous than could be

justified by the burden bearing capacity of the Hungarian economy, the domestic price system had become rigid in Hungary. The subsidy and price policy had become more complex since 1974 in spite of the fact that—as an already mentioned element of the 5th Five-Year Plan—partly due to central price measures and partly by allowing free play to market mechanisms, both the producers' and the retail price level grew by 3–5 per cent annually in recent years. But since the rise in the international price level exceeded this rate, the Hungarian price corrections proved to be insufficient in the event, that is as measured by the yardstick of foreign markets.

Measures aimed at further changes in the price and exchange rate system are aimed at a course correction. An important step in this direction was taken in July 1979, and an even more important one—concerning the whole of the price system—on January 1st 1980. Managers must know what the price of everything is in the new situation; what is worth developing; where expensive energy and imported materials pay better; what is worth exporting and where to; where it is possible and economical to replace imports by domestic production. In short: the price and exchange rate system must approach the actual world market price and exchange rate ratios, and even levels. A more advanced price and monetary system is needed.

The rapid rise in foreign prices requires a new approach as well. If rising foreign prices are introduced unchanged or at much slower rising prices into the Hungarian economy, this sooner or later leads to burdens on the state budget where the spontaneous changes of the foreign prices and price ratios then decide on the extent of central resources available for planned distribution and the direction of their utilization.

In connection with the improvement of the price system a decision had to be made concerning the place and role of exchange rate policy in the improvement of the whole system of economic guidance. Exchange rate policy may have—in theory—three main directions: the devaluation of the forint, the maintenance of the real value of the forint, or the revaluation of the forint against foreign currencies. In other words, a choice had to be made among three possible alternatives.

a) An exchange rate policy expressed in the devaluation of the forint may seemingly have a positive role in the case of a country which has a balance of trade deficit, since it stimulates an increase in exports. But in fact the effects are negative in this respect as well. Such an exchange rate policy would increase the forint income of exporters and the incentives in exports without an economic foundation supported by higher productivity, lower costs, or more careful pricing. In some cases it may increase profits

to such an extent that their individual drawing off into the state budget may become necessary. On the other hand, the direct corollary of such an exchange policy is an expanding system of import and consumer subsidies. But every subsidy is a subjective element which ties down central financial means in an unplanned way.

b) The maintenance of the real value of the forint—which was chosen—is able to counterbalance these negative influences. The efficiency of exports remains or may even grow. It is obvious that the competitiveness of exports has to be improved. But this must be achieved in a way which is in harmony with international rules, and with GATT commitments. Realistic possibilities to do this are present.

—A certain support for agricultural exports must be maintained, since this is general—due to the nature of agriculture—in some form or other, in every exporting country.

—Exporting enterprises are justified in demanding that taxes falling on their output realized in exports should be refunded. This is done also by the country's western competitors. Consequently, the re-funding of taxes paid in various phases of the production process is justified in the case of exports.

The October 1977 resolution of the Central Committee of HSWP emphasized the importance of the transformation of the production structure. The introduction of advanced technologies, the rationalization of industrial and agricultural production, rational materials handling and labour saving etc. are all highly capital-intensive objectives. It is obvious that in the period of the transformation of the production structure, investment made with such aims, and then the introduction of new products justifies enterprises in demanding subsidies which must be ensured to all, including the exporting enterprises, for a determined period, at an annually reducing rate.

In the case of both exchange policy lines—whether the aim is the devaluation of the forint or the maintenance of the real value of the forint—the allocation or re-funding of financial resources by the state is involved. In the first case budgetary expenditure is in fact not guided by the central will, but these means may be drawn on by anybody—foreigner and resident alike—(since what we support is distributed in a way which cannot be traced; let us think here only of price subsidies for consumer goods). In the second case, on the other hand, the state makes financial sacrifices for the sake of what those making the decision consider to be the desirable direction of economic growth, as a conscious decision of economic policy.

c) The third alternative of exchange policy, increasing of the real value

of the forint—i.e. the revaluation of the forint against the foreign currencies—can only be undertaken if the transformation of the structure brings the expected and desired results through an increase in productivity.

III

HUNGARIAN ECONOMIC AND MONETARY POLICY

It is expected that, as a result of present decisions, within a few years, the equilibrium of the economy will be restored. This is an urgent and difficult task. In economic and financial policy one may choose—in theory—between two main directions. According to the first, one may achieve the balance gradually through a more intensive participation in the international division of labour. The second alternative would be striving for autarchy, i.e. a reduction of dependence on foreign markets. However, this second alternative exists only in theory, given the size, endowments and structure of the Hungarian economy an autarchic economic policy would very soon become an obstacle to progress. Consequently, the main line for us can only be the conscious and planned increase of participation in the international division of labour, expanding economic and financial relations with every sector of the world economy. The most important carrier of this system of economic and financial goals is investment policy, which must be more resolute in aiming at an increase of export capacities, involving the production of convertible goods—new products that can be sold economically on any market—if necessary through the importing of advanced technology, machinery, or turnkey plants all this on the basis of an improved price system. It is permissible and reasonable, for such purposes, to raise foreign medium and long-term loans.

It is important to emphasize that when I speak of convertible goods, I do not mean the direction of exports but the quality of goods. The growth in the demand for better quality goods is irresistible on CMEA markets as well. Consequently, goods must be produced for which one can, with justification, ask for goods of a similar quality on the markets of CMEA countries. All rational reasons argue for an expansion of trade primarily with the neighbouring socialist countries through the production of goods of better quality. There we enjoy advantages of proximity and freight, and they purchase in large quantities. Those are markets which—in the case of dynamic supplies of improving quality able to mutually satisfy demands—are also the primary external factor of economic growth.

At the time of a capitalist slump no special evidence is necessary to prove the soundness of this argument.

Import-saving investments must of course not be ignored or pushed into the background either, if these offer opportunities for an economical substitution of imports of significant quantity and value.

In monetary and exchange rate policy one must differentiate between goals which can be achieved in the short term and those which must rely on the long term. In the short term one must consider as determinant in this respect the role of forint rates—to be more exact commercial exchange rates—in the formation of domestic prices. But in the longer run—parallel to and in harmony with the formation of domestic prices—it could well be a realistic objective to create a link between the external and the domestic prices through the establishment of a uniform exchange rate. By narrowing down the difference between the non-commercial and the commercial exchange rates the first step in this direction was taken in 1979. This could be followed by similar steps until in time a uniform exchange rate may be achieved. This is one of the preconditions of external convertibility in harmony with a socialist planned economy.

In my opinion, the next link in the chain in the course of the improvement of the system of economic guidance is to create, in harmony with the goals set by the system of economic guidance, all the conditions of a more advanced financial (monetary) system and of the continuous practical functioning of such a system. In the period ahead I consider possible and useful three stages in the development of a more advanced monetary system.

1. The maintenance of the organic link between external and domestic prices by keeping the price system in good shape.

2. A change-over to a uniform exchange rate, which should mean a fundamental qualitative change. Money can best fulfil its functions of measuring value, of payment and of accumulation, if the exchange rates are uniform in all international financial settlements, both in respect of commercial and non-commercial operations. A uniform exchange rate can be established only if we have an adequate price and tax system. If one wishes to progress towards a uniform exchange rate, one must in time further regroup net social income elements (taxes, dues) from producers' prices to distribution. A uniform exchange rate will make it simpler than it is today to measure inputs on the national economic and on the enterprise level, that is efficiency, and thereby it will be possible to make faster and better reasoned economic decisions on all levels of economic management.

3. The establishment of the external convertibility of the forint can only be undertaken after the uniform exchange rate has been established. The

external convertibility of the forint—on the basis of socialist economic planning—continues of course to assume the central management of the foreign exchange stocks, and a foreign exchange and foreign trade monopoly. The convertible forint would be an obvious proof of the stability and unbroken growth of the Hungarian economy and would result in the further growth of the country's international standing and credit-worthiness. Given convertible forint accounts it would also be possible to import foreign capital economically. I consider the realization of the external convertibility of the forint a realistically achievable goal in the improvement of the Hungarian monetary system which is compatible with a socialist planned economy, if—while maintaining a system of export and import licences—in respect of current payments (goods, freight, insurance, etc.) the convertibility of the forint is ensured, but in respect of capital movements and the satisfaction of the requirements of citizens, restrictions corresponding to, and depending on the changes in the monetary situation, are maintained.

Joining the Hungarian monetary system to that of the CMEA

Hungary, as a member of the CMEA, and a signatory of the Complex Programme, takes part, responsibly and actively, in the realization of the goals of the monetary policy of the Complex Programme, in work undertaken in the Standing Committee for Monetary and Financial Affairs, the International Bank for Economic Development and the Council of the International Investment Bank.

The realization of the uniform exchange rate of national currencies figures also among the goals of the Complex Programme. Consequently, Hungarian monetary policy ideas concerning the realization of the uniform exchange rate are in harmony with goals jointly set in Chapter 7, Part I of the Complex Programme ("Perfection of the monetary-financial relation"). According to paragraph 16 in this Chapter of the Complex Programme, CMEA member states study the possibility of introducing uniform exchange rates for the national currency of each of the member states, and undertake measures to create the necessary conditions for their introduction. The introduction of uniform exchange rates of the national currencies as well as the time for such an introduction are to be decided later. Paragraph 31 of the same Chapter reads: "The CMEA member states study the possibility of changing over in the long run, dependent on the elimination of the considerable differences which exist in retail and producers' price levels and price ratios, to the settlement of all payments

among each other on the basis of the uniform exchange rate of the currency of each country."

The present CMEA financial system rests on the transferable rouble, a currency introduced on January 1st 1964, which is issued by the International Bank for Economic Cooperation, established jointly at the same time. By introducing the transferable rouble the CMEA created a stable socialist accounting unit, based on the gold standard, which can be called upon to fill, within the socialist camp, all the functions of the key currency. In the implementation of trade transacted within the framework of trade agreements the transferable rouble satisfies some of the functions of a key currency—to the extent of the mandatory quotas and bilaterally balanced trade.

The situation is different if, in the course of the year, some country supplies goods above the planned level and against which it cannot obtain an adequate counter-delivery, or, if for some unforeseen reason, a country cannot carry out planned deliveries. The crediting country is unable to use this active balance automatically for purchasing goods from a third CMEA country. According to experience over many years it is, however, only a minute part of the total turnover (2–3 per cent).

Thus a bilateral attitude towards trade is opposed to the more advanced multilateral accounting system of the financial system. This situation does not permit CMEA member countries, in their mutual trade, to develop the optimal level which would be most beneficial for all member countries since, in bilateral relations, as everywhere in the world, trade is always limited by the possibilities open to the country which is capable of the economically lowest performance (exports). Consequently it seems that, in accordance with the goals set in Chapter 7 of the Complex Programme, it is in the interest of the CMEA countries as well to accelerate measures directed at the perfection of the monetary-financial relations.

*

The creation of several conditions appears necessary in order to produce conditions of economic growth within the framework of an international monetary system which is able to function. In my view these are the following, in the first place:

1. The joint resolution of interested governments to create a world currency which has the function of an international standard of value, and which can become the key currency of the monetary system. The events of

recent decades have proven that national currencies are unsuitable for this role. Their issuers always prefer their own selfish interests to international obligations.

2. The settlement of the gold question; that is the rehabilitation of gold as a measure of value. This means the recognition that gold cannot be banned *de facto* from the monetary system. It is quite unrealistic that central banks should be willing to abolish the monetary role of their gold stocks which account for three quarters of their reserves.

3. The fixing of realistic parities between convertible currencies and the new world currency unit. This should make possible the return to a fixed exchange rate system, which must, however, be more flexible than the earlier one, abandoning the present practice of floating that is harmful in many respects.

4. The universality of the international monetary system should be assured by asserting the economic and political realities of the world today. However, the creation of such a system is not possible in one go. For this very reason, regional monetary systems or areas should first be created. Such may be: *a*) the dollar area; *b*) the Common Market; *c*) the yen area; *d*) OPEC; *e*) the non-oil exporting developing countries, and last but not least *f*) the CMEA. It should then be possible to create links between these areas and thereby gradually achieve a universal monetary system.

It is obvious that, based on the Leninist principle of the peaceful co-existence of differing social systems, it is also in the interest of the socialist countries that the present monetary chaos should be replaced by some new, orderly monetary situation. The capitalist and the socialist world economy are not hermetically sealed, but on the contrary influence on another, and even compete with one another. In this external economic medium it is in the interest of Hungary, and of every socialist country, to develop separately and together, an economic policy, and to conduct an economic practice which most ensures the proper representation of their interests in world-wide competition.

CONTINUING THE POLICY OF DÉTENTE

by

JÁNOS NAGY

I

Following the events of recent months—that is the decision to station medium-range missiles in Western Europe, the case of Afghanistan, anti-Soviet measures conceived in Washington, the threat of naval manoeuvres, attempts to boycott spread as far as economics and the sports arena—Hungarians tend to ask with increasing frequency what the prospects of détente might be in such a context? Can cold warriors demolish within a few months all that has been achieved by arduous constructive work under the conditions of détente? In replying to such questions one has to emphasize first of all that the peaceful coexistence of the two world systems prevails in the context of defined international power relations. The Cold War was a period when peaceful coexistence could not prevail consistently; when forces trusting in the superior strength of international imperialism could take up a threatening stance against the socialist countries in the first place, but essentially against all the nations of the world. At that time the nascent world socialist system and the principal power within it, the Soviet Union, although working against the Cold War, was not yet in a position to prevent its inception and temporary effectiveness in the international arena.

Threats of war and of armed intervention, however, could not prevent the economic and political progress of the socialist countries, and the fight of the international working class movement and of working people everywhere for their political and economic interests, nor the successful national liberation struggle of the peoples of the colonies. As a result the power relations constantly changed. The end of the American monopoly of nuclear weapons and the new military equilibrium between the two world systems was of paramount importance. A Cold War policy proved to be objectively untenable; a subjective recognition of this fact could, however, only come about after a prolonged fight by the socialist countries, and all

peace-loving forces. In that time international tension gradually relaxed. Mankind stepped from the Cold War into that of détente, and peaceful coexistence.

Détente is thus a process built on the objective foundations of international power relation; that is why, as long as there is no change in power relations to the detriment of the advocates of détente, a return to the Cold War is essentially impossible. Even so the cause of détente may suffer damage owing to the specific interests and subjective political motives of certain forces. That is, détente is accompanied by repeated halts and setbacks; it can assert itself only as a constant struggle against the forces opposing it.

Thus détente could proceed only gradually and with occasional setbacks. It took time before some of the powers that be in certain capitalist countries became aware of the changes in strength, and a new set of leaders came on the scene who were ready to liquidate the earlier one-sided notions. This is very important, since it takes two sides to produce détente.

2

Of the proposals made by the socialist countries some points were carried through earlier and others later, but ultimately significant steps were taken to normalize relations between socialist and capitalist countries, furthering mutually advantageous economic, political and cultural cooperation.

The expansion of bilateral relations between socialist and developed capitalist countries was especially remarkable. The improvement of Soviet-U.S. relations e.g. was of decisive importance for the entire further progress of détente. The highly important first SALT agreement and a document on the principles governing bilateral relations were followed, after 1972, by several—altogether about eighty—Soviet-U.S. agreements. These instruments, collectively and severally, not only furthered Soviet-U.S. relations but had a salutary effect on the world situation as a whole, and on conditions in Europe in particular.

The greatest progress in East-West relations took place in Europe. Political détente made the most headway. The treaties between the Federal Republic of Germany and the socialist countries, and the quadripartite agreement on West-Berlin, basically settled the German question. Leaders of European socialist and capitalist countries met from time to time as a matter of course. The status and regularity of such meetings varied, but there was an upward tendency everywhere. Progress in the legal regulation

of interstate relations, which took the form of either basic documents summing up the substance of détente or treaties and agreements concerning various specific fields moved parallel with the political dialogue.

Progress was made also on the military plane, although military détente lagged far behind political détente. This has long projected the dangers which Europe is faced with today. In the summer of 1979, in Vienna, Leonid Brezhnev and Jimmy Carter signed the SALT-2 treaty which—should it be ratified—may well mean the greatest progress ever made towards curbing the arms race. The treaty spells it out that there is military parity between the two powers, and reflects the intention of securing this parity by gradually limiting the arms race; in such a way that limitations might in time be followed by reductions.

Talks on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe have been going on in Vienna since 1974. In spite of all efforts and concessions by the socialist countries which participate in these talks no result has so far been attained since the NATO countries strive for unilateral advantages. But the mere fact of the start and continuation of the talks has been and will remain a positive factor from the point of view of European peace.

Agreements concerning the limitation of one or another category of weapons of mass-destruction are important. Add disarmament talks held elsewhere with two, three or more participants, and the many, many initiatives taken by member countries of the Warsaw Treaty and by others, for example France. This allows one to say that although the armaments drive continues to be a difficult and unsolved problem, in the absence of the talks in progress the situation would probably be far more serious. Many questions are difficult in themselves; negotiations can be a time-consuming process even if political and military circles and influential economic pressure groups opposed to agreement do not put a spoke in the wheel. Yet their work of obstruction is a fact. Nevertheless, the fact that it is possible to negotiate about the most complicated matters, and to get close to a solution, at least on occasion, is again the reflection of something new which détente has added to international relations.

East-West economic relations have also made considerable progress in the past ten years, although the possibilities are far from exhausted. In the latter half of the seventies the economic troubles of the capitalist world and the protectionist measures which the Common Market introduced—also for political reasons—already made their negative effect felt. All the same, the volume of trade increased sevenfold between 1965 and 1976, the number of projects of industrial cooperation also grew: as things go,

East–West economic cooperation has turned into the most vigorously developing area of international economic relations.

There are results of importance in culture, science, education and information as well as in human contacts. Opponents of détente always focus on such matters when attacking the socialist countries. Things cannot, however, be placed on their head. Weakening détente by breeding distrust and turning one's mind to intervention and at the same time to demand a wider scope for human contacts does not make sense.

The Helsinki summit and the Final Act adopted there best symbolize all that has been achieved in European and generally in East–West détente; that document summarizes the essence of the mileage covered since 1975 and serves as a starting-point for further development. The summit meeting has not lost any of its historic importance; moreover, the Final Act has stood the test of time and has continued as a long-term programme for relations between European socialist and capitalist countries. To what degree, and at what pace, that can be implemented will always be determined by the state and the outcome of the fight against those who oppose détente.

3

This brief outline makes it clear that what has been achieved is by no means little. For Europeans especially détente is more than a mere word: it embodies the principles laid down in the Helsinki Final Act. I say "Europeans" with good reason: the United States, unfortunately, has not taken an effective part in the mainstream of the implementation of the Helsinki recommendations; U.S. official policy is concentrated on points that suit its political designs. But détente has brought effective results for Europeans, the past ten years are irrefutable proof that these offer advantages to all countries, and all nations, whatever their social system. Europe has never before seen such lasting peace, such a period of peaceful development.

This should be specially emphasized since those opposed to peaceful coexistence often claim that détente is of one-sided benefit to the socialist countries. One of the arguments is that the forces of socialism made a breakthrough in many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America precisely in the period of détente. It has never been denied in this part of the world that détente favours social progress, not least because peaceful conditions make the export of counter-revolution difficult, though not impossible. It is, however, more than an oversimplification, it is an actual distortion to go on from such facts to blaming détente for the defeats suffered by

imperialism and colonialism. The root cause of such failures is the sharpening of social contradictions under given local conditions; the fact that the masses, becoming aware of their vital interests, rally around ideas of progress. One should remember that the disintegration of the colonial system and of imperialism began back in a Cold War period: that the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu and the American fiasco at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba did not occur in the period of détente.

To claim that in Europe proper the socialist countries alone have profited by détente is equally tendentious and misleading argument. True, trade relations and oft-mentioned credit facilities are advantageous to them, promoting the growth of their economies. But credits are part of normal economic relations, as profitable to the creditors as to those who receive them. Growing trade is likewise mutually advantageous, especially so at a time of an incipient recession. As was said in a BBC broadcast lately, hundreds and hundreds of thousands would lose their jobs in Western Europe if the orders of socialist countries were cancelled overnight. East-West economic cooperation is obviously an expression of real common interests, and its importance is greater than reflected by its share in the total foreign trade of Western Europe.

All this is only the most tangible aspect of mutual benefits. One might well wonder whether the scientific and technical progress made by Western Europe these past ten to fifteen years would have been possible in a Cold War situation. Both in Western and in Eastern Europe there a generation has grown to adulthood which has no memories of war, a generation, what is more, for which détente and all it implies are part of normal life. Pettily counting the profit and loss of détente, determining precisely where it falls, therefore means missing its essence.

The Hungarian People's Republic, in close cooperation with the other socialist countries, has therefore always endeavoured to do its bit towards furthering détente, the strengthening of security in Europe, and the promotion of cooperation. That détente managed to get off the ground increased the chances for Hungary, in the international arena, to profit from a good name due to the sound policy of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and what was achieved at home in the way of socialist construction. Hungarian representatives are active in various international bodies, those administering European security and cooperation, the United Nations, the Geneva Committee on Disarmament, and elsewhere.

Hungary has laid stress on expanding its bilateral relations with developed capitalist countries both to strengthen détente and to promote the

country's interests. Appreciable results were achieved in this field. Cooperation gained momentum and qualitative changes first manifested themselves where relations had been settled earlier, e.g. with Finland, Austria and other neutral capitalist countries, furthermore with France and, after 1974, with the Federal Republic of Germany. This was followed by the normalization of Hungarian-U.S. relations and the settlement of long outstanding issues by means of arrangements and agreements which were not subject to concessions on matters of principle by either side.

Visits by János Kádár to Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy and France must be reckoned salient stages in the shaping of Hungary in foreign relations. Meetings with the leaders of those countries were occasions for discussing, at top level, the most important aspects of bilateral relations and of the international situation. And negotiations with several Western European countries have taken place on the head of state, head of government and foreign minister level and it becomes clear that Hungary has been striving to increase and exploit the possibilities inherent in détente, and in the improvement of conditions in Europe.

Hungary's economic relations have expanded, although the country has not been exempted from certain discriminatory and protectionist measures. The importance of cultural and scientific cooperation, of human contacts and holiday travel has grown as well. The Hungarian People's Republic has always ensured the necessary conditions and has consistently—even if not with complete success—demanded the same from Western countries as well.

4

So far I have discussed what has been achieved in the given international conditions. Now that certain changes are apparently taking place in the foreign policy of the United States, one may well ask why this is happening.

Many in the West argue that events in Afghanistan, and American domestic policy issues connected with the electoral campaign must be held responsible.

It is certainly true of events in Afghanistan, that they did not shape in a manner that suited those who wished to surround the Soviet Union and the socialist countries with a series of military bases. The revolution of April 1978 upset imperialist designs to gradually detach Afghanistan from the policy of non-alignment, and traditional friendly cooperation with the Soviet Union. These efforts were continued after the revolution. Those

hostile to it and others who took refuge in neighbouring countries because of its accesses were organized as armed bands and returned to the territory of Afghanistan. The idea was to force a political change, leading to a counter-revolutionary Afghanistan which could then offer a home to reconnaissance bases ejected from Iran. Such a country could have played a key role in carrying out Pentagon designs concerning Iran and the Persian Gulf area. The Soviet assistance granted at the request of Afghan leaders was an inevitable step of exclusively defensive intent, and in keeping with bilateral and international agreements in force at the time. This step preempted a deterioration of a situation which threatened serious international conflict.

Measures subsequently taken by Washington—bearing in mind the presidential election campaign and the convention that candidates try to outbid their rivals by making concessions to extremists—truly include many band-waggon campaign elements. Two factors must not, however, be left out of account. One is that such measures—primarily arms expenditure and the cutting down of Soviet-U.S. contacts—which are taken midst the ballyhoo of such an electoral campaign, influence events not merely until November 1980 but in the long run as well. The other is that measures taken with reference to Afghanistan have had their antecedents. In other words: Afghanistan was not a cause but a pretext.

U.S. policy concerning *détente* suffered a reappraisal not at the time of the Afghan events but earlier, following the debacle in Vietnam. The concurrent successes of *détente* and social progress mobilized all those whose interlinked interests urged a heightening of the confrontation. The Watergate scandal and certain measures taken by President Ford were indicative of a strengthening trend. It was argued that the United States should subject *détente* to conditions, that the Soviet Union and other socialist countries should respect the social status quo, that is, that they should not help national liberation and other progressive movements.

Approaching the threshold of the eighties, these negative elements gained strength in influential circles in America which clamoured for a revision of foreign policy, a reappraisal of *détente*, and—in an effort to change the existing military parity between the two world systems in their favour—wished to give military factor a dominating role in the shaping of foreign policy. Following the inauguration of the Carter administration such views achieved the status of official policy.

In recent years U.S. policy took a number of steps which ran counter to *détente*. Such negative acts range from the acceleration of the NATO arms build-up, the growth of military spending to record heights, to the post-

ponement of the ratification of SALT-2; from the playing of the China card to the decision to station new types of middle-range nuclear weapons in Western Europe. The exploitation of trade relations for purposes of political pressure and the organization of a boycott of the Moscow Olympic Games should be included here. All this is obviously directed against détente, being intended to disturb mutual trust and cooperation among the nations and to break the numerous ties which link them.

5

Until recently artificially inflamed hostility to the Soviet Union has muffled the voice of the more sober of the American politicians and publicists who are aware that the measures taken by the administration harm the United States as well. Senator Edward Kennedy, a presidential candidate; Paul Warnke, who formerly represented the U.S. at disarmament talks, and others also have said things of that sort, stressing that the Carter administration had over-reacted to events and had thus created an atmosphere of war. To quote George Kennan, the noted American scholar and diplomatist: "Never since the Second World War has there been so far-reaching a militarisation of thought and discourse in the capital. An unsuspecting stranger, plunged into its midst, could only conclude that the last hope of peaceful, non-military solutions had been exhausted—that from now on only weapons, however used, could count." More sober appraisals of that sort are growing in number but they do not define the situation as yet.

The United States brings heavy pressure to bear on the capitalist countries of Europe expecting them to follow it without reservation. This pressure has produced divisions amongst these countries. The neutral capitalist countries in the first place show scant willingness to support extreme U.S. measures, trying to dissociate themselves from them.

In general the reaction of the Western European allies of the United States can be said to show a certain degree of ambiguity. On the one hand—and this cannot occasion surprise—they confirmed their loyalty to their alliance after the Afghan events and their readiness to carry out accepted obligations; on the other their position expresses the view that steps taken by the United States are not proportionate to the cause. Not one capitalist country on the continent of Europe identified itself with the U.S. accusation that the Soviet presence in Afghanistan is the first stage leading to the occupation of other countries and of an entire region. A growing

number object to the unilateral decisions by which the United States confronts even its own allies with accomplished facts, endeavouring to strengthen their dependence on an unpredictable policy which occasionally displays signs of irrationality. The fact that several countries of Western Europe are unwilling to make their own actions over a number of issues dependent on the interests of the United States is relevant. They are unwilling to sacrifice what has been achieved by East-West cooperation.

Great Britain alone backs all the measures proposed by the United States without reservation and, what is more, is severely critical of some of the Western European allies for dragging their feet.

Within French policy declarations assuring Washington of solidarity in principle are overshadowed by stressed reservations. French foreign policy endeavours to preserve an independent identity while wishing to carry on with cooperation. President Giscard d'Estaing formulated the ambitions of French foreign policy after the Paris visit by the German Federal Chancellor arguing that the objective is to ease tension, an approach which is not identical with sanctions. European powers, he pointed out, have responsibilities of their own, deriving from their existence and their important, and growing, political and economic resources. They are specially anxious to maintain peace. *Le Monde* of Paris succinctly editorialized: "Like it or not, Europe and France are not America. Their interests often do not coincide . . ."

There is more ambiguity in the policy of the Federal Republic of Germany. As is known, that country assumed a great responsibility for the creation of the current tension by undertaking a key role in the adoption of the NATO decision on the medium range missiles. At the same time Bonn also stresses the necessity for détente, and for containing contacts. It gives expression to its interest in the preservation of what has been attained through common efforts concerning security and cooperation in Europe.

In Western Europe the Communist Parties, the working class movement, progressive organizations and leading public figures raise their voice opposing the threats to détente, and every kind of sabre-rattling.

This is the position of Austrian and Finnish socialist leaders and of West German Social Democratic leaders such as Willy Brandt and Herbert Wehner. Their declarations express concern that the Cold-War campaign inspired by Washington chimes in with the voice of politicians on the right wing, or rather on the extreme right, of the political spectrum of Europe: A communiqué issued at a conference the Socialist International in Vienna in the early days of February stressed that the achievements of détente

must not be exposed to risk, there being no meaningful alternative. Therefore the Socialist International considers it essential to keep open all possibilities for bilateral and multilateral negotiations and to continue preparations for the Madrid meeting. If the Social Democratic and Socialist parties of Western Europe as well as governments controlled by them act accordingly, this may well help to find a way out of the present impasse.

6

There can be no doubt that the policies of the countries of the socialist community will continue to focus on efforts to strengthen détente and peaceful coexistence.

Hungary is clearly on the side of an ongoing policy of détente, and the strengthening of peaceful coexistence and cooperation. The principal pledge of the growing effectiveness of this endeavour lies in the further strengthening of the unity of the socialist countries and in their coordinated and concerted action. To quote János Kádár: "Our Party, our state, and our government profess, on the international plane, the necessity of the unity of the socialist countries, and of coordinated and concerted foreign policies on their part. We proclaim this and we are intent on acting in the interests of what we proclaim. We maintain that the socialist countries, even divided and in isolation, represent a certain strength, but joint action on this part, concerning international questions, multiplies their strength."

The 12th Congress of the HSWP has defined the main line of Hungary's foreign political activity as the determination to secure the best possible conditions for the building of a developed socialist society. The essence of this policy—the easing of tension and cooperation in Europe—can always only be implemented under the given concrete circumstances. Only a careful consideration of all circumstances allows one to decide whether the furtherance of détente and of good relations is served by implementing or by postponing concrete action, such as a high-level meeting. Contacts of importance from the political point of view have always called for an atmosphere which makes the success of such meetings likely. In the future as well the country will be guided by the wish to make sure that East-West relations are once again, and as soon as possible, constructive, and certainly not by any intention to produce a deterioration.

Cooperation between Hungary and Finland, Austria, and the other neutral capitalist countries, as well as with France, the Federal Republic of Germany and several other countries of Western Europe will, in my

opinion, continue to grow. Hungary wishes to maintain contacts based on peaceful coexistence with the United States and other capitalist countries, trusting not only that no hitches will come up in the implementation of the bilateral agreements already in force, but also that, wherever possible, further headway will be made on the paths of cooperation.

The Helsinki Final Act continues to be interpreted as an important programme in relations with capitalist countries. Nothing can be taken away from this document of long term validity, to work out anything better would be a futile undertaking for a long time to come. Hungary wishes to contribute to efforts designed to prevent the process of security and cooperation in Europe from being interrupted and preparations for the Madrid meeting will be continued. The success of these preparations will of course not depend on us alone. There are some in the United States—and also in Western Europe—who, when speaking of the Madrid meeting, keep stressing two points: strict monitoring of the implementation of the provisions of the Final Act so far and respect for human rights. Future tasks, forms of cooperation acceptable to all, and the strengthening of confidence remain unmentioned, although the holding of the Madrid meeting, and its effectiveness, require appropriate circumstances, a politically supportable atmosphere, and a joint quest for points of contact. Hungary feels confident that this will be recognized by all.

The furtherance of military détente continues to be indispensable including the introduction of concrete disarmament measures, especially in Europe. Hungary will, in the future as well, do its best to this end.

Hungary agrees with the proposal to resume and continue all negotiations initiated in recent years, within various international bodies as well as on a bilateral basis, with a view to putting a brake on the arms race. Even where progress is difficult, the dynamics of détente must be upheld. As regards the medium-range missiles, the carrying out of the NATO decision must be hindered with the help of negotiations. Hungary continues to be interested in the Vienna talks leading to concrete results as soon as possible, as well as being persuaded that the entire disarmament process would be promoted if the SALT-2 agreement were eventually ratified by the United States.

Given the present state of the international power equilibrium, there is invariably no acceptable alternative to peaceful coexistence, and the only realistic aim must be to prevent a new world war. It is true that the situation in which the ongoing process of détente finds itself is more complex and more difficult than before. What is at stake now is whether the conditions

will continue to become more difficult or whether détente can gather new momentum during the eighties. The stake is the substance, the quality and the progress of détente. Even if the setback that has occurred in détente looks like being no short-term affair, there is good reason to believe that it will be possible to get out of the present impasse. The position of Hungary is clear and unambiguous: international peace, and European security in particular, can be strengthened not by new rearmament programmes but by negotiations, by the development of East-West cooperation. In this respect Soviet-U.S. contacts continue to be of special importance. In the present situation much depends on the stand taken by those Western politicians who have for some time played their part in building up security and cooperation in Europe. I am confident that a sense of reality will prevail, and that the pressing questions of the age, which cannot be evaded, will eventually, both in Western Europe and in the United States, be soberly answered giving priority to peace and security. The continuation and strengthening of détente are surely in accord with the basic, shared interests of mankind.

HOVERING OVER THE ABYSS

by
ISTVÁN VAS

Astarte

Eti's moral indignation, it seems, did not, after all, penetrate my conscience. I slept the sleep of the just, a good long sleep, and woke rested. When I opened my eyes the rays of the sun were beginning to filter through the white shutters of our west-facing windows. Perhaps Eti herself was not perilously upset by the dawn scene. Her face was calm as she dreamt, as if she were smiling inwardly. I knew that if I let her she would go on till Monday morning. Her sleep was so deep that she only stirred when somebody or something woke her. But I could not leave her be, it being Sunday, we had dinner at my parents'. However long the meal took to cook we had to hurry if we did not want to be spectacularly late. I woke her then, we had a quick shower, and we got ready, getting to the Sas utca just in time, and real hungry too, after all we had been in too much of a hurry to have breakfast. All this time we really had no chance to continue the quarrel, nor did Eti act as if she had a mind to. She showed no sign of being cross or in a bad mood. On the contrary, she was more sprightly and more cheerful than at any time these days past. While rushing to get ready I tossed her a few questions to try her out and she answered them all naturally, showing no prejudice. Surely she hasn't forgotten the whole thing, I anxiously wondered. True she did not usually remember the time immediately before an attack once she came to, otherwise she had not, so far, shown symptoms of amnesia.

An uneasiness gnawed me, I wanted to know how we stood, but there was no way to find out, for the time being. We had to cope with the pitfalls of forever-crisis-ridden meals at home. My father morosely inclined

The penultimate instalment of the 3rd volume of István Vas's autobiography *Nehéz szerelem* (Difficult Love) serialized by the monthly *Kortárs*. Vol. 1 appeared in 1964 and Vol. 2 in 1967 (see NHQ 37). The Hungarian title *Miért vijjog a saskeselyű?* (Wherefore screams the lammergeyer?) is taken from a poem by Mihály Vörösmarty. Eti was the poet's first wife, a professional dancer (eurythmics), and the step-daughter of Lajos Kassák, the poet and artist.

his head, resolutely burying himself in the plate, indicating on the one hand that he was fair game in his own home and at his own table, and on the other that there was no one there he could look at. If possible he avoided addressing anybody, nevertheless he was able to convey his hatred: for my mother by the way he gestured at the food, or the sour way he looked at what she had cooked; for Eti by the way in which he, with his head still down, stuck his own fork into the serving dish, or by his other underhand, filthy eating habits which, as he well knew, turned even the most tasty morsel sour in Eti's mouth. Finally he gulped his black coffee, like the dregs of a last bitter cup, and retired to his room, once again with his head turned away.

That eased the atmosphere, with the source of hatred submerged, my mother was no longer fired by that desire for revenge which prompted her to bait his impotent rage with cutting remarks. Nor did she want to continue to irritate Eti. Since she had seen Eti hesitating and fallible and even fallen, and not just as a hard and determined girl, she began to like her, not only because she had made up her mind to—to some extent in opposition to my father—but with a genuine, almost motherly, tenderness. Eti, for her part, did not harbour ancient grudges, she eagerly reached for this unexpectedly flowering tenderness, and was, now and then, close to being that little girl to my mother which she had always been to her own.

There was still me, whom my mother could freely annoy—without doing so she could not really love me. Once again, as always, the usual contraption began to tick over which, however, always had to be started by my mother in a new and ingenious way: an apparently innocent remark which would not arouse my suspicion. By the time I smelt a rat, or even saw the trap, it was too late, it had closed behind me. A mysterious instinct allowed my mother to find blindfold that precise word or naive question—precise though she did not know what she was about—which proved my most sensitive point right then, a point which, at the touch, made me flare up without wanting to. That afternoon she innocently asked—both of us—whether marriages like ours were frequent amongst young people these days, where after so many years neither had committed adultery. Eti answered yes, there were some, amongst our friends as well. She turned towards Eti: what a lucky girl she was to get such a good soul as a husband—it would not surprise her if I turned out to be a virgin still. This time Eti anticipated an explosion on my part. She said, smiling sweetly in a manner unusual for her:

“Mummy, please,” lately she too had started to address my mother in that way, “don't speak like that to Pista. He is a grown up man now.”

I heaved a sigh of relief, doubly so. She had not forgotten what happened yesterday, and she was not angry because of it. Mummy could not start the parried attack once again, the phone rang. Karola who, as usual, had accompanied Eti's training on Saturday. They had agreed that she would ring the Sas utca number the next day, and we would either go and see her, or she would come up to our place. Eti, however, called it all off, saying she was tired. I wondered what was up, she did not in the least look tired to me, I thought rather that the charade had put a spark into her, though it was true that, before we left, she stretched out for half an hour on the leather couch in my father's den while I pinched a big blonde Media from my father's cigar box and, puffing away, read an Agatha Christie—I had lately taken to detective stories.

The sun had gone down by the time we walked through the front door of the Hold utca house.

It was Eti's confirmed habit, whenever we got home on our own, to walk over to the brown stove, and lean against it, in winter; in summer she went out onto the balcony. It was from there that she returned my looks now. She was beautiful, more beautiful than she had been for some time. That call in her eyes and skin, in the arching of her leg, at once asking and challenging, and triumphant in anticipation: I could never resist it, not that I wanted to. That magnetic call was itself such a delight that, if I managed, I tried to stretch it. This time too I just stood, waited, and sensed for a while. It would have been impossible for the night before not to flash up inside me, the unexpected meeting of two bodies that were strangers to one another, a meeting free of any kind of meaning or process; and that I should not take joy in anticipation of the rites of our familiar magic preparing to come true in the descending night, rites that took shape, and were blessed, in the course of the years, that remained identical, and always effective.

The games and rituals had hardly started this time when they were interrupted. As if a deity, more precisely the goddess herself, had appeared midst a storm in the early moments of a liturgy sanctified and ordered to win the favour, pacify and control powers greater than our human life dispersing the sacred procession of the sacrifice. But this goddess was no longer the slightly slant-eyed, nevertheless originally classical Aphrodite who radiated even at night. It was as if, at the very least, she had meanwhile visited the underworld, not that tawdry superficial underworld glistening with paint, which it had been my fate to meet the night before, but the true underworld, darkling in the depths, where she had been joined by Hecate.

Something was about to start compared to which sexual congress with Elvira was truly, and even more so with hindsight, the airy and pure pyrotechnics of the fleeting moment. A meeting free of any kind of meaning or process, I just said. And yet who knows? The unsuspected lava-flow of this mysterious Sunday evening was without a doubt connected with the airy pyrotechnics of the previous night—true enough, only as a result of my unsuspecting and careless honesty. It may have been free of process but my confession—which I had certainly not meant to be a confession, only an objective and interesting report—nevertheless directly influenced our ten year old process, diverting it from its course.

Lighter and more serene manifestations of mood had put in an appearance on Eti's face midst the sombre portents of volcanic activity; daylight ones, I could call them: alternating curiosity and wonder. As if yesterday's dismissing "You too are only a man" had changed into a "Well, well so you are a man" tinged with admiration, if not in her words, at least in her eyes. Even before the eclipse that preceded the eruption a half-smiling, half-threatening flash streaked across her face which I read as saying: "So that's the position? I'll show you all right!"

So the eruption of the volcano was meant to be punishment? I certainly saw it a bit that way. Today I know that in so many words, even formulated with hesitation, and fragmentarily, that would be far too simple an explanation. I mentioned earlier that in a sense Eti handled me—I almost said brought me up—*as if I were a small boy who cannot, as yet, be initiated into the most difficult duties, in other words as someone to be shielded as much as possible. I noticed that much, especially midst the most recent turns of her illness. What I did not notice was that she had shielded me in the ten years of our love-life with the same sort of more or less maternal feelings. For me the flaring up fires of our nights made the desired splendours of the Greek and Arabian Nights daydreams of my adolescence come true. Eti however, at least I presume this today, trained me in love as a mother trains her growing son, playing his games with him, happy when she notices that the shared game gives him pleasure. She felt perhaps that the unquenchable volcano of her nature was not meant for small boys. And now, it seems, when she found out about my adventure of the night before, she realised that I was no longer a small boy, that there was no need to spare me any longer, no need to keep secret the source of the flame. So she stepped out of her mother-role and set free her long-restrained volcano. And my mother once again hit on the truth, using

* In Hungarian *kezelt* = handled and *nevelt* = brought up, sound very close to each other. (Translator's note)

the mysterious talents of her malicious love. Could be that Eti truly took my maidenhead that night.

"Perhaps" and "it seems" and "could be" and "I presume" and "today". I did not look for an explanation then, I did not get beyond wonder—I too had something to wonder about. After ten years there were still things for me to discover about Eti—as I had predicted chapters earlier. The biggest discovery was this night which differed from all earlier nights. The lava flood went over Eti's face, washing off that blessed Madonna smile as well which was wont to shine on it in the moments of fulfillment of our love. Its purposeful dynamism also buried the games and rites of our sensuality—there was no need of them. Even my own orphaned lechery proved an innocent daydream faced with the shapeless surge that tore our love out of every kind of continuity.

In all our embraces up to then all earlier embraces had accumulated and integrated. Every one of them carried and brought to the Hold utca our meeting on top of the Rax and our nights in Vienna, on József körút, Klotild utca, Biharfüred, the Rózsadomb and Szentendre,* and the accumulation had enriched the brazen familiarity of every new night. But that night the ten years foundered, and every link with every process. What happened between us that night had no connection whatever with what had happened before, perhaps not to us ourselves either. The person whom I knew as Eti disappeared, her place being taken by some sort of frightening elemental force, while my personality huddled sensitively on the fringe of the flood of lava. If Eti took notice at dawn that day that I had grown into a man, then I woke up to the fact that night that, compared to her, I was still a little boy.

I know today. . . Then I not only did not try to find an explanation for what happened, I was not even keen on understanding what had happened. One reason being that I did not think there was a need to understand—that there would be a sequence. All I thought was that Eti was cross after all—why did I have to tell her?! But who could have imagined that she could be jealous? because of this! that jealousy was possible between us, and that she would be jealous of me! It seemed I had to accept that her illness had made Eti more feminine, in evil as well. I had to recognise, even without analysis of any kind, that this darkling, angry passion was a most feminine passion indeed, that this elemental force itself, breaking out suddenly, together with all the temptations of the underworld, was one of the manifestations of eternal womanhood. But the storm passed, we woke

* Vienna speaks for itself. The Rax is a mountain in Austria, Szentendre a town north of Budapest, Biharfüred a resort in the Carpathians. The others are Budapest addresses.

on a bright day, and I felt confident that the moon which transfigured our love would rise again.

That's not how it turned out to be. Our sensuous and familiar nights did not return. A series of nights of a new sort followed, at far closer intervals, not the way the old ones had linked up, slowly and comfortably, in times that took their time. In the weeks that followed our bodies became one more often than in a whole year before. True I could also say that this was the peak of our love, but I will not say it. Earlier, on the rare occasions when I found myself in the sort of male company where bragging had its turn, I naturally said nothing, as a rule, but if showing one's colours could nowise be avoided, I generally escaped saying: "I always only managed as much as I needed."

But now, in these weeks, I managed more than I needed. Could that be true? Certainly not in the strict sense of the term, if the biological need had not been there I could hardly have managed what I did. I have ever felt an aversion to the idea of a dispute between body and soul, even though we owe many beautiful lines to the subject. I have also always had my doubts about the text: the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Now, suddenly, I had to experience the reverse: the flesh stands ready but the spirit lacks force—at least it is not prepared for this test of strength. It is not impossible that Eti felt the same way. Perhaps she did not identify herself either with this elemental force that had seized hold of her, making use of me by acting through her. That asking and challenging call, triumphant in anticipation, which I never wanted to resist, in which her most personal immodestly modest smile would hesitatingly flash, no longer appeared on her face. An impersonal tremorless magnetism regulated the putting into use, implacably and monotonously. Not only the call was left out but also the taking off into a dream after our embraces—the deliberate annexation of our happiness. There wasn't much time, to start with, on the other hand we seemed to be ashamed of what had happened to us, as if this were some kind of obsessive action, the sooner it was over and done with, and we found our way back into our personal and social lives, the better. In this our social and personal life Eti had never before been as meek and compliant as now, after our wild and implacable nights. True, there were moments when I suspected that this alternative appearance was the manifestation of the same newly resurrected femininity.

Some might conclude from this description of the new process, that interrupted the process of our love so far, that it occupied a longer period of time during which life outside remained unchanged. And yet it is the story of a few weeks only, while things kept changing all the time, and

always in one direction. Eti's condition fast deteriorated, her splitting headaches became more violent all the time, her attacks returned too, like that, in the plural, to a degree that they started to become part of the order of life. We discovered that one could get used to this as well. They even fitted a diagnosis of hysteria: they never occurred in the office, or on the way, but always at home. As a result they did not greatly disturb our way of life which, true enough, tightened considerably, diminishing in everything except the rate of our love. That did not relax in the least but continued, midst the comas of fainting fits, before or after the jerks and twitchings of attacks. I often wondered where I got the strength from to keep up the pace, and wondered even more that Eti had the strength. The lack of an answer to the question suggests that we were caught in a continuum of obsessive action, and that a power outside us, or beyond us, or above us, enabled us to go on. Sometimes I suspected that the spectre that appeared between the twitchings dictated this forced pace. It is also possible that approaching death released this repressed elemental power in Eti. And what transfer of will transplanted this never before experienced and never to return strength into me?

All these, of course, are questions after the event. Then I did not recognise—I refused to recognise—approaching death. I buried my head into the sand at the very thought of a presentiment of it. But dance of death found its way into my vocabulary. That is what I called the obsessive exercise we performed together almost every night under the aegis of the spectre.

In the vice of questions and constraints, pursued by fear and hopelessness, face to face with the spectre and approaching death, poetry could be my only analgesic or drug. Still in the spring we went to the zoo one Sunday with Fifi and Miklós Radnóti.* Both Fifi and Eti liked to go to the zoo. The Radnóti brought along György Donáth, a young lawyer who hoped to write poetry and who was later posted missing when on Forced Labour Service in Russia. He was translating Lucrece at the time. Walking around we stopped in front of a cage, a pretty narrow cage even for the lone old wolf who stood there with legs wide apart and neck stretched, howling to high heaven, not wanting to stop. I stood there fascinated, they could barely drag me away. Not much later I wrote a poem about this zoo intermezzo. It ended: Brother, instructor of poets, I thank you lone wolf, that you sang this song in my place. In my place since I avoided singing this song myself, I did not know that singing your troubles more or less

* Fifi Radnóti is the widow of the poet. For verses by Miklós Radnóti see NHQ 18, 36 and 45 as well as autobiographical prose in NHQ 76 and writings on Radnóti in NHQ 36.

sang them away, at least for a time. * True enough I was not able to express myself precisely, on the contrary I was superstitiously afraid that I would call troubles onto my head by naming them. Therefore, the greater the despair I felt the more I wanted to write light and insolent verse. Akward and clumsy attempts were the result, not one of them was even as successful as Old fashioned song, fortunately none of the others was published.

Suffering from such writer's cramp I once again opened my copy of Villon. I told the story long ago what a direct impact he had on me some years before, how modern he seemed. My penchant for the classic made me forget him later, and then, when he became all the fashion following the success of the "adaptations" ** I lost all interest. Then, when I discovered early in the year that Vilma and her friends also liked this adulterated Villon, I looked at the original once again in my rage. Turning the pages an ambition to translate him seized hold of me. Not that I wished to confront the false Villon with the true one. This time after all, contrary to what had happened earlier in the case of famous forgeries such as Thaly's Kuruc ballads*** or Macpherson's Ossian, the genuine article had appeared in Hungarian before the forgery: two ballads rendered by Árpád Tóth, **** two magnificent translations by Attila József, ***** and particularly ten ballads rendered by Lőrinc Szabó***** which appeared as a separate brochure and had proved as successful as genuine and serious poetry can be. If they could not keep the public off the forgeries, how could I?

When it comes to that, I aimed higher. I did not wish to compete with the successful impostor, but with my worthy predecessors. Not that I thought that I could exceed them in what I was about to do. I did not object to the way they translated, but that they only translated little, and only of one kind. All they had seen of the huge fresco were the lively colours, not the composition; they had only shown an interest in the gothic sculpture and grotesque decoration of the huge cathedral, and not in the sombre walls and bold arches. What I wanted to know, rereading Villon, was, in the first place, whether the backbone of the *Grant Testament* could me made to speak in my language, that is the basic text, the thoroughly serious music of the octaves, that bitter philosophy.

* *eldalolni* = to sing something right through; *el dalolni* = *el* (away, off) + *dalolni* (to sing). (Translator's note)

** The reference is to Villon adaptations by György Faludy which enjoyed a considerable success with the public when they appeared in the 1930s.

*** A literary scandal was caused in Hungary when ballads alleged to be folk-songs of the 18th century Kuruc (followers of Thököly and Rákóczi) turned out to be written by the historian Kálmán Thaly (1839-1909) who published them.

**** Árpád Tóth (1886-1928)

***** Attila József (1905-1937)

***** Lőrinc Szabó (1900-1957)

*En l'an de mon trentiesme aage,
 Que toutes mes bontes j'eus beues,
 Ne du tout fol, ne du tout sage,
 Non obstant maintes peines eues —*

That is how it started. I began one summer evening, trying things out, as if my hands had raced along a keyboard, and translated.

But that was about me! True, I was only twenty-nine, that is I would be twenty-nine in a month, but twenty-nine or thirty, what was the difference? The essence was that I had drunk of all my shame, and not wisely but not wholly a fool. Later I thought of my first version as awkward, and rewrote it as natural Hungarian speech, in spite of the *enjambement* which Villon rarely uses.

I decided then to start seriously on the translation of the octaves, that is I would lay the stones of the walls and columns of this extraordinary cathedral. The composition, however, proved more powerful than my intention. While translating I felt it to be absurd to leave out the insets. I accepted that they belonged to the structure and systematically continued the subjects of the octaves. So I translated the ballades in the way, and never mind if someone had done so before me. A daunting task, thinking back how little grounding I had for the job then. I owned a copy of Villon, a cheap, popular edition, but it did not even occur to me to find out whether the text was the most exact, in keeping with the most up to date position of Villon scholarship. I was even less aware that well-glossed scholarly editions existed, with commentaries that changed almost year by year. On top of it all my French was pretty poor. This was translating as they couched cataracts of old. The thought did not even arise in my head that my translations might be printed. I worked for myself, as practice and consolation. When I lost courage seeing how imperfect my knowledge was, the octave XII consoled me, working on which gave me special pleasure.

Yes, I thought, experience can to some extent be a substitute for scholarship. Identifying myself with the text I learnt a lesson which I found so useful ten years later: that a man can say what he has to say in a translation, if he cannot, or does not want to—or he may not—speak in his own name. If the stuff of my life at the time, my view of life, and the most urgent things I had to say, were amalgamated with the translation, the translation itself also found its way back to my experience. Dance of death does not occur, even once, in Villon's text, and yet it found its way into my most personal and most secret vocabulary from his *Testament*. "This time tomorrow dead."

Since Szebenyi* had brought Béla's message that, in terms of procedural rules of the Second Jews' Act,** I was reckoned an exception, that is I was "not to be considered a Jew," what went on in the world started to interest me once again. Lately I usually looked through the front of the papers, half-listening to the speculations in newspaper and publishing offices and in the coffee shops. If we (or I) will very likely commit suicide anyway, then why burden my mind with such vanities? But now that we nevertheless had to live, a curiosity suddenly seized me: what is going on around us?

The first news which intruded into my unexpectedly receptive interest did not boost my rising hopes, the effect was more like that of a well aimed thick shillelagh: the German–Russian non-aggression Pact. I did not believe it at first, I imagined they had thought up some gigantic trick. But I saw a photograph of Ribbentrop and Molotov toasting each other in champagne. Then a banner headline appeared on the front page of one of the Arrow Cross papers, it must have been *Magyarság*: "Good news from Moscow" —we lived to see that too—and then the sub-heading, still in pretty large bold type: "Stalin dismisses his Jewish wife." Budapest buzzed like a beehive. We met in large numbers in the Café Dunakorzó as well as at the Monday table of *Nyugat****? uncomprehending and bewildered. But the political experts did not see the new alliance as the plague we took it to be. Cs. Szabó**** and György Bálint***** both calmed us saying this was an act of despair on Hitler's part which succeeded in alienating two reliable allies, Spain and Japan, what is more he could no longer count even on Italy.

Some of my Communist friends, however, regarded the German–Russian reconciliation as something that should be welcomed in itself. Things worked out splendidly, they explained with eyes shining, the English and the French did not succeed in pitting the Germans against the Russians. They won't be able to watch maliciously, with arms folded, how Fascism and Bolshevism fight to the death, now the Soviet Union could calmly bide its time while the Fascist and capitalist imperialists destroyed each other, and then World Communism would be automatically victorious. Not that I was not able to follow the logic of the argument. What made

* Endre Szebenyi (1912–1949) Lawyer, Undersecretary in the Ministry of the Interior after the Liberation. Trumped up charges were preferred against him, he was convicted and executed.

** The 1939 Second Jews' Act while further restricting the employment etc. of Jews, made provision for certain exemptions for Jews who were baptized and married to non-Jews.

*** *Nyugat* (West), the leading Hungarian literary journal from its inception in 1908 to its demise in 1941 when it was prohibited.

**** László Cs. Szabó (b. 1905) writer and critic, senior staff member of Hungarian Radio at the time, later on the staff of the BBC, now retired.

***** György Bálint (1906–1942) Journalist, a leading Hungarian intellectual between the wars. Perished during the war on forced labour service. See NHQ 58

my hair stand on end was the philosophy of history at the back of that logic, which I had often met in my surroundings following Fascist victories or advances: whatever happened was necessary, therefore right, and therefore to be welcomed.

My dislike for the final conclusions of this logic was so strong that, for a long time, I was not able to grasp the starting point, that is the necessity of the non-aggression pact. I was convinced that it had been unavoidable in practice much later by Churchill's memoirs. The arguments could not be gainsaid. And yet I had experienced earlier as well that the European countries and governments which figure under the name "democratic powers" did not see Fascism and Hitler as their greatest enemy, but Communism, they would sooner surrender the threatened countries, one after the other, rather than putting an end to Hitler's conquests in alliance with Russia. In possession of that knowledge it should have been logical for me to ask at the time: what other way out was there for Russia, if she did not want to confront Germany alone and unprepared, except to try, if possible, to obtain a postponement and come to an agreement with Hitler.

Though I was not able to reach that logical conclusion at the time I did not doubt for a moment that neither party took this pact seriously, neither could think of it as other than time-gaining tactics, and that the Soviet Union had gained the more precious time, since all her strength would now be concentrated on the great reckoning. It did not even occur to me that Stalin would put his faith in Hitler even for a moment, and even less that this non-aggression pact could result in some sort of reconciliation with Hitler's wolfish ideas.

And what if I had, already at the time, drawn the logical conclusion, that is if I had recognised that the Russo-German Pact was unavoidable, and therefore necessary? I would not have thought of it as a lesser plague even then. Though I heard the more frequent but still gappy news of trials and purges there with bewilderment, and even shock, my closest friends, and me as well, still saw the Soviet Union as Hitler's most consistent opponent—it was the Soviet Union in whom we put our trust, we believed that they would eradicate the fascist contamination.

Now, however, Hitler was protected in the east, he was given a free hand. There could be no doubt, the next bite, about to be swallowed, was Poland. It was also clear that Poland would not be as soft and tasty a morsel as Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain once again recommended a peaceful solution, that is that Danzig be handed over to the Germans, but the Poles put England into an embarrassing position: they did not agree. We had the

most beautiful after Saint Stephen of Hungary (August 20th) weather, splendidly summerly, but no heat-wave. Budapest was full of strangers. I stopped at the newsagent's outside the Gerbeaud Patisserie and looked at the headlines, a young couple looking very English came up to me, and indeed the girl addressed me in English. I do not know why they picked on me, many must have passed through Gizella tér in those days whose English was much more fluent than mine. She said they had not seen an English language paper for days, and could read no other language. They were very worried—could I tell them the latest news. I told them that a Nazi German was in power in Danzig, that the Pope had addressed a peace appeal to the world, and that England and Poland had concluded a pact of mutual assistance. The girl was visibly frightened—how would they get home? Then she looked round astonished: noone here seemed to have a care in the world—true, she remembered, she had read before they left home that Hungary would be neutral in the war. I did not know about that, I answered, it was my belief rather that this was the nature of Hungarians, they were a frivolous lot. I had wondered for days now that noone here cared about the war, they all acted as if Germany, or Poland, were none of our concern. You could not hear a word of politics on the street, or on the tram. Most discussed what they would do at the weekend, completely absorbed in it. In Hungary, to be sure, noone was afraid of the war.

Me least of all. That night we went to Margaret Island, to see *The Tempest* on the open-air stage. Babits's* translation had its performance at the National Theatre early that year, and I had missed that. His text had been the principal attraction on Margaret Island, it sounded magnificent even in the patchy and confused performance. We met Oszkár Gellért** and his wife as we were being swept away by the human tide, and strolled as far as Margaret Bridge in their company. Naturally we spoke of the chances of war. I naturally said I was afraid Poland would make concessions after all. If only that were true, Oszkár Gellért sighed. I thought I did not hear all right. Would Oszkár like the situation to be drawn out? Drawn out was not the word! If Poland fell the position of Hungary, and ours as part of it, would deteriorate further. War would lead to greater trouble still—he answered. Nothing could be worse than this phony peace, that is Hitler's unhindered conquests—was my rejoinder. Anything is better than war—he countered. It was then that I woke up to the fact that I belonged

* Mihály Babits (1883–1941), a leading poet and man of letters of great authority. See NHQ 41

** Oszkár Gellért (1882–1967) a poet best known for his editorial work on the journal *Nyugat*.

to the war party (imagining, of course, that we would keep out of the whole thing), and that I still, even after the Russo-German non-aggression pact, hoped that, if things came to a head, England, France and Poland would soon beat Hitler, as long as the Russians did not stab them in the back—but that was surely out of the question. I simply could not understand Gellért's point of view—by the time we parted at the Margaret Bridge stop, we abandoned our debate, giving up hope of reaching agreement.

Next day somewhere in England, I do not remember where, perhaps in Westminster Cathedral, they held prayers for peace, and there interceded for Hitler and his general staff as well. At the time I interpreted this as a world record in hypocrisy—now I can, unfortunately, imagine that they sincerely prayed for them. Poland followed another English example of divine service, Cromwell's "Put your trust in the Lord and keep your powder dry." Two days later they ordered a general mobilisation.

Another two days later, at dawn on Friday, the Germans attacked Poland without declaring war, they occupied Danzig and bombed Cracow and Kattowitz. Budapest woke up. Everyone talked about the war, on the street, on trams, in coffee shops. One could only rarely hear pro-German remarks—people felt sorry for the Poles, and though it was sometimes said, chiefly by members of the lower orders, why didn't they give them Danzig? that too showed anxiety for the Poles: the Germans would eat them up. I too felt anxious for the Poles, more anxious for Warsaw than for Paris, I realised then. I had never seen Paris, and Eti, at least, had been to Warsaw. That is where her dancing had first been successful, and I also identified with the town.

I do not think there was another country right through the war, whose leaders so quickly, without a moment's hesitation or deliberation, issued the order to resist the Germans at every point and using all possible means, as those of Poland. The British and the French only declared war against Hitler after two days, and Hitler himself started the Second World War with a bombastic speech. I listened to the broadcast with self-torturing attention. Feeling disgusted I had to admit that it was a good speech in its way. A compilation of crowd-charming phrases, base but genuine rhetoric, effectively delivered. He started by saying that his only aim was to be the first soldier of the German Reich, and finished declaring that he would not survive defeat. You don't say, we said to each other in the coffee-shop, that will at least be some consolation to a defeated nation. None of us doubted that Germany would soon lose the war, but I did not question his declaration even for a moment. I could not imagine Hitler as a lonely exile, like Napoleon. Napoleon was a personality in his own right who,

lonely, on St Helena, still remained a giant; Hitler was one of the masses, whom the masses had brought to power. He would lose the soil he lived in without the masses, and creaking mass media—not that the term existed at the time.

On Sunday I looked in at the Café Florence on Szabadság tér to see Tibor Déry, the writer. He started by dreaming of what would happen once Hitler is defeated—in other words, would the Bolshevik world revolution break out? I said I did not think revolutions would decide the fate of the world after the war, the victorious armies were more likely to do so. One could not guess what would happen after that—there would be cause enough for joy if they managed to finish off Hitler and Hitlerism. No there would not, Déry said, Hitler's defeat would mean the absence of something, but something to be present must be searched for—one must believe in something. What I tried to say then was that the most important thing for us is to have ideals and to hold on to them. Tibor closed the conversation saying that the revolution alone could make our ideals come true. He was nobly sublime, as always in debates of this sort.

Next day, at the *Nyugat* table, we talked about more practical things. Radnóti and I naturally went together to the Café Dunakorzó. Many sat around the table, the war had made men assemble. We listened chiefly to the political types, and to those whose occupations placed them close to news sources: László Cs. Szabó, György Bálint, György Káldor, and "little" Schöpflin, that is Gyula, son of Aladár. We, the less well informed, watched the words forming on their lips. Speculations varied considerably. I recorded the most interesting at home, intending to look them up after the war, should I still be alive, checking how the prophecies had been fulfilled. Most agreed that the war would be over within a year: the Germans were not ready yet, they were in rags, and starved. Hitler could not count on Mussolini, the Italians would stay neutral. But the British would not allow them to stay neutral, Cs. Szabó played a trump card against the journalists. The Duce would be forced to make a choice since the British will want to pass through Italy and attack the Germans from the direction of Trieste. The French will make a frontal attack on the Siegfried Line, that is not invincible as the Germans say, the concrete will only harden to resist ordnance in ten years. Besides the French will not spare the lives of—negroes. The Polish plan of campaign was to retire as far as the river Bug, giving up Warsaw as well, launching their counter-attack from there. And what will they do—a few asked—if the Russians join in from the East?

They also quoted a military expert who had argued that the war between

the Germans and the Poles was in fact the clash of the heavy ironclads, that is motorised artillery and light horse, that is horse-drawn field pieces. Needless to say the arms involved would in themselves have placed me on the side of the Poles even if there had been no other reasons. I even enthusiastically mentioned an inspiring but tragic skirmish when at—where was it? I recorded Satanov, but I cannot find it on the map now, however hard I look—a regiment of uhlans, in full dress uniforms, with lances pointing straight ahead, charged German armour—of course every man jack of them was killed. The *Nyugat* table could not establish a consensus on that, the lefties went as far as telling me off. You think that's beautiful? That sort of bravery is proof of their incompetence. They have to fight like that because the government and the general staff pinched all the money the allies gave them, instead of equipping the army properly. That is why the Polish army was a feudal army, the same way as the whole of Poland was a feudal country. György Bálint summed it up in a single sentence:

"We are not for the Poles but against the Germans."

There were a few who contradicted, trying to moderate this sharp differentiation. I held my peace, I could not gainsay György Bálint's arguments. But all in vain, I was not only against the Germans but also for the Poles. I loved Poland from afar and uninformed, I was not even familiar with their poetry. I had barely heard the names of Mickiewicz and Slowacki, and I did not really think much of Reymont, who had got the Nobel Prize, the only Polish writer I had read, not counting Sienkiewicz and his *Quo Vadis*. I was not as enchanted by *Peasants* as many were. Why then was I for the Poles, apart from the fact that I would have been for anybody ready to fight the Germans. I knew it was because Eti had been successful there, her first real success, because she had been lovingly welcomed, and because Prime Minister Beck, who was not exactly spoken well off at the *Nyugat* table, had pleasantly chatted to her at a garden party. Another reason for keeping quiet.

My suppressed dissenting opinion—dissenting feeling, rather—did not, however, affect my continuing faith in the political experts of the *Nyugat* table. I accepted their information concerning the Polish plan of campaign: a withdrawal to beyond the Bug, and a counter-attack to be launched from there, as coming from a reliable source of news. This knowledge did not all the same console me for the fast German advance. That they entered Czestochowa, already on Monday, was blasphemy in my eyes. Westerplatte on the other hand, which they took on Thursday, was an unknown name then, and not the mythological notion it became later, in retrospect. On Saturday the Germans were already lined up outside Warsaw. The

Poles, caught in a pocket, surrendered. On the radio I listened to a German victory celebration. An exultant voice, with a beautiful High German intonation, reported events. I recorded some of the sentences on the spot, next to the set: "There has never been such a Tannenberg before..." (Tannenberg was an East Prussian village where, early in the Great War, Hindenburg had crushed the Russian Army) "the Polish army, so arrogant such a short time ago... is in the palm of our hand... none shall escape... within a few weeks they will be smoked out of their foxholes and hiding places..." An echo of shouts and screams met every sentence.

Planned retreat? The British and French, beating about the bush, still made it clear that they were shocked by the German blitzkrieg. Ferenc Julier, the noted war-historian, writing in the rightwing Sunday *Új Magyarország*, found the collapse of the Polish army to be inexplicable. Noone would have thought then that the Germans would need even less time for Paris than for Warsaw, and that they would meet with less resistance on the way... Also in the Sunday issue, but of the liberal *Magyar Nemzet*, György Parragi, in an impetuous and inventive article, explained the slowness of the British and the French. All that England had done after declaring war was to bomb a few towns in the NW, a bit of catapulting compared to later air-raids, and the French only managed to manoeuvre between the Maginot and Siegfried lines, then retiring into the Maginot line. In practical terms they allowed Poland to bleed to death.

That did not really surprise me. My own political basic experience had been Spain left to fend for herself, and whatever came afterwards followed from that. And if the world abandoned—each in its own way, but essentially identically—Spain, Czechoslovakia and Poland, why should it not abandon us, Eti and me?

That night, Sunday to Monday, I dreamt of the dead. First I was swimming with Uncle Miksa, who had loved the water all his life, there he was not handicapped by his game leg. Uncle Miksa was a good swimmer. Now too he was happily splashing about, what was odd was that we were not in the Lukács Baths where he had often taken me when I was a small boy, but in the Gellért Bubble Baths where I had only been once in all my life, and even then not with Uncle Miksa. But we had a marvellous time there as well—all the same I was sad when I woke towards dawn.

Then I fell asleep again. Mrs Kassák appeared in that dawn dream, in all her splendour and full of the joy of life. The three of us, including Eti, played happily. Then she performed a number of metamorphoses to show what a good actress she was. Finally she displayed herself in a peasant get up, with a shawl and wicker basket—this was obviously an unconscious

remembrance of that plan of hers to go and see "that woman" dressed as a peasant, and to cut her face with a whip. She was as beautiful as in life, only her face was as yellow as wax. We were sorry for her, and afraid of her, we could see that she had come back from the dead. But she as well seemed to pity us because we were alive, and because she knew what awaited us. That, at least, was how I, still dreaming, interpreted her sad nod.

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

INDEPENDENCE AND SOLIDARITY,
COMMON RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEACE

János Berecz

THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF HUNGARY'S AGRICULTURE
AND OF HER NATURAL RESOURCES

István Láng

A RICH MAN HUNTS WILD BOAR

Imre Szász

FROM GAGARIN TO FARKAS

Péter Rényi

ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN HUNGARY AND WEST GERMANY

Iván Lipovecz

HOME-COMING

by

EMIL KOLOZSVÁRI GRANDPIERRE

On the way home from a Soviet PoW camp the first surprise I had was at Rîmnicu-Sărat, in Rumania. This was the other big reception camp besides Focșani. It lay close by the railway line. The sliding doors of the trucks stood open, so that, through the loose barbed wire, we easily saw into the camp.

"Take a look at that!" a soldier near me cried out of whom it was revealed at that moment that he was a friend of the Nazis. Up to that time he had not stirred. Now his face glowed, shining with happiness. "We won the war after all!"

There was a threat in his voice and behaviour potentiated by the unexpectedness of what he said and the firmness of his statement. The soldier as it were grew taller, we looked at him dumbfounded for a moment, with that meekness in his soul which a soldier experiences whenever he feels defenceless facing his superiors. For a second we acknowledged the Nazi, who had thus far been an abject sulker, as our master, our virtual hangman. In the Second World War surprise followed surprise, it reminded of all we had heard about the *Wunderwaffe*. Somewhere in Austria or Bohemia I had seen a German-made jet with my own eyes—which then passed for a miracle. And obviously it would have worked miracles if the aircraft factory had not been accurately bombed to pieces by the Allied air force before the start of mass production.

The instant we had got over our surprise we worked our way to the truck door. The train slowed down and came to a stop. We jumped off one after another.

A few hundred metres from us we saw a large number of soldiers stripped

This is the first chapter of the author's autobiographical volume *Béklyók és barátok* (Shackles and Friends). Another, *Utolsó hullám* (Breakwaters), describes the writer's life as a soldier and a prisoner of war. The volume starts with the end of captivity. (*The Ed.*)

to the waist and, farther off, officers standing in groups. From time to time a soldier left the crowd, moving his legs in a Prussian goose-step, so that his boots kicked up the dust, and marched past the officers. The striking thing was that the soldiers saluted German fashion, *saluto romano*, to use Mussolini's words.

"What do you say to that?" the afore-mentioned soldier asked defiantly. "When we get home we will finish off the rest of the stinking Jews."

He headed for the camp at the double to report for duty at once. Suddenly he froze, as if rooted to the ground. He now noticed what others had noticed before him, namely that there was something amiss with that triumphant salute. It was usual to salute with the right hand, not the left. All of these undoubtedly smart soldiers saluted by raising their left arms. The herald—the herald of Nazi victory—donned camouflage and mingled with the crowd without leaving a trace.

We were witnessing a screening procedure. The Soviet officers were separating SS men and members of the Wehrmacht among the prisoners of war. The SS had a sign tattooed under their left arms, this betrayed them. In the Mariupol PoW camp some of the SS who had chanced to get there tried to remove the distinctive sign: they pressed red-hot spoons on the tattoo mark without moaning so the guards should not notice the manipulation, but every muscle of their face was quivering, and the air was heavy with the smell of burnt flesh.

We could not look around for long, a group approached us: officers, soldiers and—the most important of all—an interpreter. At their command we clumsily lined up, then we walked wearily into the camp. We were directed straight to the decontaminator. Happily I took off my clothes and handed them to the soldier in charge of sterilizing them, then I stood stark naked under the shower. The last time I had thoroughly washed had been at Mariupol, in the PoW camp, from there up to this place I, at most, washed my face, my hands and, if I was not pressed for time, my neck—with cold water. I had never been so glad of soap as of that suspicious-looking, stone-hard, black something I found under the shower, and which only betrayed that it was soap and not concrete after vigorous rubbing that yielded thinly foaming suds.

Emerging from the showers I got my clobber back in a sterilized state. No sooner had I got my clean body back into the sweated-through dirt-caked shirt, and into underpants pining in a still more disgraceful condition, than my half-joy evaporated.

Until lunch we loafed about freely in the camp. I began talking to Hungarians, among them a warrant officer educationally qualified for a

commission, an agronomist in civilian life, who was just as much in the dark about his fate as were his companions. We, the new-comers, had already been told in the Mariupol PoW camp that our destination was Hungary. The prisoners of the camp at Rîmnicu-Sărat, on the other hand, had been taken there from home and were not informed of the future in store for them. Our arrival confused them: some thought it auspicious and others inauspicious.

Presently another train drew into the station. German soldiers disembarked, with their equipment in apple-pie order: brand-new uniforms, with equally new blankets rolled up on top of brand-new packs. Had they carried arms one might have imagined them to be an élite unit. Such companies, regiments, and divisions had marched into Paris and the other occupied Western cities when the fighting was over. Their mission was to give an idea to the subject nations of the ideal soldier, member of the master force. That this stratagem succeeded to such a degree that this favourable image has not faded yet as far as some are concerned was substantially due to this really beautiful uniform. The mob flooded behind the élite. Decrepit old men, half invalid, in threadbare uniforms, dirty and undisciplined, as if they had not been soldiers but a riff-raff army of beggars. The reality behind the shop-window.

Hardly had the train slowed down than the Germans jumped out and began to walk up and down along the track, chatting in groups, in a mist of cigarette smoke. That none of them took off the obviously heavy packs to stretch their muscles, that they did not move away from the train, made it obvious that they would shortly continue their journey.

But where to?

"Where to?" the interpreter whom we asked echoed the question. "Well, to work. They have destroyed more than enough."

"To work! But where to?"

"To Siberia."

Up to then only prisoners had mentioned that long-dreaded part of the world, now we heard of it from an official source. The agronomist's eyes, which were dark anyway, grew darker still, he looked at me in alarm and confusion, then his gaze fell like lead before his feet. By the time he looked up his face had changed.

"When will you be off?" he asked.

"I haven't the foggiest idea."

His eyes again searched the trampled ground.

"Which hut are you in?"

I showed him.

"Will you accept me as a bedfellow?"

Of course I did. A night's rest depended on the two neighbours. We lay side by side, not packed like sardines (that would have been luxury) but pressed together like tobacco leaves. We shared everything: the sound of snoring, the smell, and the hair-raising nightmares, an involuntary kick moved along every member of the row. Under such circumstances it counted as a blessing if a relatively well-groomed, civilized bedfellow lay to one side.

"Come on!"

I already knew whose pack I was going to push further off to make room for Józsi, the agronomist's, swag. As to accommodation, there is no hay-cart which could not carry one more fork of hay. The same is true when shoving up against one another. Józsi ran off to fetch his pack and came back galvanized, but in a few seconds he practically collapsed. A guard stood before the barracks. His glum face and his submachine-gun indicated no entrance.

The escape scheme seemed to have struck a sandbank.

For lack of anything else to do we stood gaping at the only thing fit to look at in the camp. Four men busied themselves with a new latrine which was finished by and large: the walls of the nearly three-metre deep pit rose perpendicularly, only on one side was there a sort of bulge, which one of the prisoners was busy levelling; he was a pick and shovel man—to judge by his workmanlike movements. His eyes ran over the wall, anxious to cut off neither more nor less than necessary from the bulge.

"What do you think, pal?" I asked Józsi. "How many men will have to crouch over this pit, and how many times, until it becomes full?"

"If we calculate the contents of the pit and establish how many cubic centimetres on the average a man disposes of every day, you'll have the result."

Hilarity suddenly stuck in our throats. The man digging suddenly collapsed as if struck by lightning. Three others worked in the pit, the one nearest rushed to support him and help him get up, but when bending down he fell flat on his face and did not move either. The third prisoner understood what had happened, he rushed to the ladder propped against the pit wall and nimbly began to climb it. The fourth man noticed the danger only when hearing him shout. He immediately made for the ladder.

The cause of the tragedy was that the new latrine had been sited too close to another filled up earlier. Gases expanding in the adjoining pit had seeped through the thin wall of earth separating the new latrine and the old. The gas they inhaled had caused the collapse of the two men. The third

already saw the flood of excrement sweeping into the new latrine, on the two motionless victims. This was why he rushed to escape from the pit. The fourth prisoner reached the ladder and clambered up two or three steps, then his strength failed him; the third man stopped to help him, the other grasped his hand, but all he could do was tighten his squeeze. However hard he tried, he was unable to work his hand free, the third man could bear it no longer and took a breath, whereupon he fell headlong into the slowly swelling muck, which swallowed up the four of them in a matter of seconds.

Shuddering with horror we ran as far as we could from the hideous scene of hideous deaths and from the stench spreading into the camp in thick, relentless waves. There was confused shouting in Rumanian and Hungarian.

Then the creaking of wheelbarrows, the all-pervading music of chirping sand crickets. By evening the latrine was filled up, with the four nameless dead men in it. Someone would perhaps write about them to the relatives—if anybody ever discovered their names, nationalities, and domicile—that they had laid down their lives for their country, that they had fallen on the field of honour.

*

Next morning we lined up. As we were jostling one another getting into twos, to my surprise my eyes met Józsi's. He winked at me happily, but a little excitedly. His excitement did not attract notice, for we all were excited and could hardly wait to get on the train. We did not even know that we would be entrained in the morning, how could Józsi have known who had been lodged at the other end of the camp? He did not know, but in order not to miss an opportunity for liberation, he had slept in the vicinity of our barracks, on the bare ground, wrapped in his greatcoat. It was getting on towards the end of August, the summer still continued.

Józsi—he of the many hundreds and thousands of Hungarian soldiers—deserves a memorial: of all those about me he was the only one who seized the opportunity offered by good luck, and he alone escaped. Gloomy statistics, one column is unending, the other consists of a single man.

At Segesvár a PoW train stopped beside us for a few minutes. An officer with a red-swollen head leaned out of a cattle truck and roared in a stentorian voice:

“I am Colonel Dorozsnyai. Of Slavonic descent on my mother's side. See to it that I am directed homewards.”

“We will,” we replied readily.

We were still side-tracked, the other train started off. The officer had good lungs, we could hear his message for some time:

"I am Colonel Dorozsnyai! Of Slavonic descent on my mother's side!" Then his voice only floated in the air rather like a memory: "I am Dorozsnyai. . ."

I wonder whether that poor mother of Slavonic descent knew what a fool she had carried in her belly.

This sorrowfully howling warrior reminded me of one of his fellows. That officer, when seeing the fodder requisition of a forced labour company, declared in a strident voice:

"Jewish horses cannot be given so much hay!"

I parted from Józsi at Szeged, we were demobilized there in the twine works. Our dark mood lightened in the street, we did not realize yet that we were not mere objects any more: soldiers and the sick are disposed of as if they were not living beings.

Weary, apathetic, blundering, and dispirited we loitered along a street on the outskirts leading to the railway station; the shadow of the trees obstructing the rays of sunlight daubed large patches on the roadway and the sidewalks. There was a wash-tub on a chair in a yard, soap suds in it swallowed the washing, the girl glanced up from beside the tub and her eyes met with those of the spunky soldier. The latter leaned against the fence, took a closer look at the pretty thing, then he winked at us and broke into song:

When a girl washes underpants, there is no sleep in her eyes. She's thinking where the dong may be now that was inside them.

A jingling peal of laughter echoed in the dusty suburban street: the girl's ringing laughter floated, on top of the throaty male voices, like a boat on the sea as if she had responded to the dong, bashfully and curiously at the same time.

I laughed with the others, but differently from them, in any case differently from the way I used to laugh.

In what did this laughter differ from the rest? Perhaps in that it had the taste of unsalted food. At the sight of so charming a creature as the girl washing at the tub something stirred in me, now deep inside, now on the surface. I thought about it for some time until I sadly realized that I had laughed imperfectly, mechanically, like a wooden doll, there was no joy of the senses in my laughter. I asked myself in alarm whether women had dropped out of my life for good, whether the source of so much desire, so much suffering, and so much joy was exhausted.

I arrived in Budapest the following day, the eleventh of September, exactly a year after I had been mobilized. The first thing I did was go and see my mother: I did not know if she was still alive, for I had had no news of her since we had crossed the Austro-Hungarian border. I was choking with anxiety, it was as if I had an iron hoop around my chest. The wife of the concierge assured me that there was nothing wrong with my mother, that she was upstairs in the flat but would hardly be awake yet.

If I observed the international rules of fiction-writing and followed the stereotypes, I should write that she received me with boundless joy. This would not be a lie, still less would it be the truth.

My father's acidly ironic manner had left its mark on the behaviour of all the members of the family. My mother virtually swooned with the unexpected joy which filled her but it did not prompt her to any burst of speech or gesticulation. She passed her small emaciated hands over my face several times over, and she kissed me again and again. Her lips barely touched my skin.

She never rid herself of my father's dispiriting influence, she muffled her every manifestation and never loosened the reins. She had been a widow for decades when I noticed the first thought-giving signs in her behaviour, and this not even in the family circle but amongst strangers, when on a visit. Strangers congratulated my mother on how sociable, good-natured, and cheerful a person she was and how irresistible a sense of humour she had.

I listened to them in astonishment and unbelievably. I began to realize then that her nature, humour, and character were different from what we had witnessed day in day out earlier. My father had had an education, my mother lacked one; my father made good money, but what my mother had brought into marriage was not a dowry but my grandmother, that is, a burden. My father had lacked a zest for life or, if he had it, he had curbed it, while my mother radiated it but was forced to subdue it. My father could not laugh: whenever we others were happy, he frowned at us. After my father's death this senseless act of suppressing good humour was carried on by his faithful heir, my younger sister. This is the clue to the fact that news of my mother's cheerfulness and sense of humour always came to me from strangers.

Well, she did not receive me as she would have done after her heart, she did not celebrate, although later she confessed what a red-letter day my home-coming had been to her; she soon freed herself from my embrace and stepped back to take a look at me, to see if she had received me back in one piece.

"You look ill, darling."

How did I behave? Roughly as she did, I was paralysed by the *genius loci*, the family spirit. My joviality, which had allowed me to captivate so many people, failed me at home. At the very beginning, in the past, the keynote of our communication had been struck by my father, since then we had tuned every instrument accordingly.

"I only recognized you by your big nose," my mother went on.

The index finger of my left hand was swathed in shreds of dirty gauze, so I held my arm raised high to protect my aching finger from striking against something, as a yard-master does when signalling a train to leave the station.

"No," I answered her, "this is not a wound, but only a slowly healing infection."

The injury truly did not get better but was spreading from day to day and, still worse, was moving closer to the bone. I was afraid my finger would have to be amputated. I had reconciled myself to this as I had to so many things. After all, one can do without one's left index finger, I would then index with my right. The harm was due to vitamin deficiency, and vitamins saved me from an amputation.

In these small hours the flat looked dark, dreary, and more miserable than it really was. I had roused my mother from her sleep, she wore the old flowered dressing-gown she had bought years before.

I found out from her that Lili, my first wife, had survived the horrors unharmed. But she could tell me nothing definite about my flat. In one of my suitcases, entrusted to the care of the concierge there, I had concealed cameras worth a fortune, belonging to Juci Laub, a fashionable photographer of the time. At her request my mother had gone with her to the flat in Bem utca. The concierge, Mr. Major, had opened the trunk, and Juci Laub got back her cameras intact. What had, and what had not, happened to the flat since then, my mother could not tell.

On the other hand, she told me that the cottage at Szentgyörgy-puszta had been looted. What had been carried off were not only our own things and valuables of strangers we had concealed there, including the stamp collection of my sister-in-law Ági, but pieces of furniture and the crossbeams from the ceiling. In short, the looters did a thorough job. On top of it all, they lit a fire in the room—apparently to fry some bacon—and burnt a sizable hole in the deal floor.

Having finished relating the woeful story, my mother suddenly turned round in her seat, took a searching glance at me and asked:

"Have you any lice, darling?"

As far as I knew I did not, for at every third or fourth station, both on the way out and on the way home, we had been ordered to the disinfecting room. But lice are so tiny and self-effacing things, they need so little to feed themselves, that one cannot easily find traces of them. On the way home I had exchanged all my wearables, boots included, for food. Thus I agreed, with a light heart, to the idea that my kit be confined to the flames lest it contaminate a flat that had been cleaned and tidied up, from where parasites that proliferated in hard times had fled.

After taking an immensely enjoyed bath, I clothed myself in my brother's things, from head to foot. Rested and cleaned up, I sat down to breakfast. My mother made herb tea and served with it bread and substitute liver-paste made from soya-beans.

"If you don't mind, Mother, I would like real tea."

"You would, would you. But where would I get real tea from?"

"Here you are."

I was about to say goodbye to earthly existence in the camp, I had erysipelas, with my temperature up around 40 to 41 °C when—quite irregularly—a Soviet soldier came into the room where I was lying on the floor all by myself, a greatcoat under me with a pack as a cushion. In addition to erysipelas, I was plagued also by enterocolitis: whatever I ate or drank, I had to rush immediately to the latrine. My system was on the verge of dehydration—I was about to expire. The Muscovite (God knows what brought him into the camp, why he dropped in just where I was dying) diagnosed my illness. To help me, he went out and came back with a box of tea-powder. This tea saved me. Half of it was stolen by one of my fellow-soldiers, the rest I brought home.

"Here you are, Mother, but make some for yourself, too," I insisted because I knew that her modesty would prompt her to deny herself this rare treat.

As I mentioned, we committed my clothes to the flames. In my haste to get rid of them, and of the dirt they had soaked up, I almost threw my trousers in, belt and all, and with my fortune in it. I had concealed my fortune, nearly three thousand pengő inside the leather-belt. My mother looked on amazedly as I quarried the hundred-pengő notes and then the thousand-pengő bill.

"This has already been withdrawn from circulation. It is worth nothing."

Although the motor of inflation steadily took the currency uphill, three thousand pengő was still some money, as was proved the same day.

The last I had seen of Magda, my second wife, was in November 1944. I set out in search of her.

The Number 6 tram was already working, so I could have taken it part of the way. Nobody waited at the stop, an indication that the tram had left a little while before. I was impatient with an impatience fed by a dozen sources. Not to mention anything else, I had for years been waiting for the collapse of the Third Reich, for the end of war. Thus I started walking along Ferenc körút—which had remained relatively intact—like a recently released convict whose hair had barely begun to grow, to whom everything he saw in the world was news, and who was pleased with everything because what he could see had the splendour of freedom on it.

I felt indescribably happy that there were no watch-towers with armed guards around me, no barbed-wire fences marring and scarring the horizon. The pleasing numbness created in my limbs by the hot bath, the long unfelt touch of clean underwear, the fact that I had found my mother alive and had found out that others had come to no harm either—all this tuned me in for optimism. I took for granted that I would soon be in a position to embrace Magda. A happiness woven of many threads in the early September sunshine.

Magda's sister-in-law lived in Rózsahegy utca, in Buda. I knew that the Nazis had blown up all the bridges, but what this really meant I only understood when I reached the Danube embankment and stood in front of Elizabeth Bridge: the dainty structure had sunk into the Danube on both banks, here and there metal wrecks rose from the river, turbulently swirling water flowing round them.

A pontoon bridge led from Pest to Buda. Other than that traffic flowed only over the one-time Francis Joseph Bridge: German *Gründlichkeit* had not proved as perfect as befitted its international fame, two bridge sections that had remained intact were connected by an emergency floor built by sappers.

The pontoon bridge—a Persian bazaar in the middle of the Danube: softer in colours, duller in noise, lazier in tempo, and poorer in gestures than the markets of the Orient. Everybody carried something: one in a sack slung over the shoulders, or in a haversack or a leather bag, the other on the luggage-carrier of a bicycle, or in a fibre trunk tied up with string, again others in bed-clothes, in a knapsack, in a pack, in a briefcase crammed full or in a red-chequered table-cloth, on a wrecked motorcycle, in a garbage-can, on a wheelbarrow, in a pram, in a basket, in a barrel, in a German blanket; some salvaged the remains of their possessions, others hurriedly placed stolen goods in a safe place, and others again who hastened to a meeting with village folk on the lookout for business. There was bargaining at both bridge-heads, on the bridges, and all over town, in every doorway, in every alley, under every tree in the street. Peasants offered potatoes, maize, eggs,

chickens, geese, bacon, sausages, fat and crackling in exchange for clothing, gold, jewelry, watches, and all sorts of trash. The whole town changed into a huge rag-fair, and thick smoke pervaded the air: here queues were formed to buy *lángos*, chapattis fried in lard, Hungarian style, elsewhere baked pumpkins or soup were to be had. . . . With their stores round their necks, hawkers offered their goods with loud cries.

A war was needed for this lazy city to get blood coursing through its arteries! I wondered how long the spirit of renaissance, of resurrection, would last.

The racket of the Persian bazaar abated only in the streets of Buda. I was lucky in Rózsahegy utca, I found Magda's sister-in-law, Anna Zádor, the noted art historian, in her once splendid apartment that had looked like a museum rather than a family home. The siege had tried her as well as the apartment, what was left of her small bird-head was mere skin and bone, the rest had been gnawed off by the war. She told me how to find Magda, who was then employed in the "Monpti" espresso.

"You know, don't you," she asked me, "that the Arrowcross people had shoved Bandi Péter into the Danube?"

It was Bandi Péter who had engaged me as an editor at Franklin Publishers. Besides, we had been good friends.

"In the last days. . ." said Anna Zádor, and her eyes grew dim, her voice was strangled with sobbing. She could only wave goodbye to me.

The "Monpti" was the most elegant coffee-shop of the time. It was in Petőfi Sándor utca, in the neighbourhood of the then Inner City Theatre, now the Katona József Theatre. Anikó, a good-looking young woman with a fine business sense, had founded the espresso and was running it with energy and skill. It was a mystery where she got the coffee from. In times of paralysed foreign trade, molasses for sugar, soya-beans, *lángos* and herb tea, it was no easy task to obtain the necessary supplies for a much-frequented coffee shop.

Not only locals, members of foreign missions as well sipped their daily cups of coffee in this espresso, first of all because of Magda, who not only waited on them but chatted with them, since her interest covered many subjects, practically everything. Without Magda's knowledge of languages the "Monpti" would not so easily have outstripped competitors. The Hungarian customers were taken care of by Ciluka whose buxomness made her a favourite. The reason why she did not rise any higher in the world was probably that, instead of learning languages, she chose to enlarge her already ample bust.

The tension of weariness I had so far failed to notice relaxed when I reached

Rózsahegy utca. The invisible hoop came off my ribs. I was given an address, I had to go there, again through eviscerated Margit körút, over the pontoon bridge and some more streets.

I entered the espresso and said hallo to Magda with such ease as a regular customer might who frequented the place every day. Upon seeing me, Magda stiffened, holding the posture I caught her in—one hand on the handle bar of the coffee machine, the other holding a cup. A picture to be cut out and framed together with the background.

One second—and the still came to life in a way. Her body did not move, nor did her hand on the handle bar, nor the cup in her other hand. Her eyes filled with life, her expression changed from shock to astonishment, to doubt, to wonder, until the clear radiance of joy squeezed all other emotions out of it.

She let go of the handle of the coffee machine, put the cup on the table and, as if sleep-walking, she went round the counter, round the table and a chair standing in her way, stepped up to me and hugged me. With her eyes she virtually tied me to herself as if she were afraid of seeing a ghost that might dissolve into thin air in a moment but could not disappear as long as her eyes held me back.

I embraced her with my eyes closed.

Magda could not leave the shop without Anikó's permission and she was out on business. While waiting for her return I tasted with indescribable pleasure the first black coffee made from the genuine stuff (I had not drunk any for an entire year) and smoked cured American cigarettes. The many fresh experiences raining upon me caused my head to swim a little, I indulged in the joy that spread in me, I mechanically kissed Anikó's hand when she came back at last and thanked her for giving Magda a few hours off.

"How could I not let her go," she said, "this is the age of home-comings." And after a moment's pause she added: ". . . and of the no returns."

Memory is like an impressionistic painting, with contours blurred by light, colours mingled, details vanishing in the brilliance. This brilliance shines through the years like a fixed star the light of which can still be seen on the firmament although the star itself may have fallen to dust in space long ago. Every subject we touched on has faded away, burnt up, or dissolved in this overwhelming joy, only the fact of our chatter has indelibly been imprinted on my mind, as well as the ensuing cheery laughter which burst into our life turned grey and dreary as a child bursts into the oppressive loneliness of a long barren marriage.

We rushed back to the "Monpti" amidst fits of laughter.

What did we laugh at?

In September, when I came home from captivity, Magda had not yet

moved back to her home in Kapás utca. This flat had been occupied by the Arrowcross: one of their infamous courts of reckoning had been set up in that house, all the walls were reeking with blood. The tenants had not yet moved back, public security had not yet been restored. Magda had therefore moved to her sister Ági. Ági got back her former flat and put up there, in addition to Magda, also Éva B. and her sister Trudi.

For some reason or other Magda alone of the four women had a job, she alone made money. The other three women, in return for Magda's support, did the household chores, shopping, cooking, heating, cleaning, dishwashing, and laundering, and served dinner to Magda when she trudged home dead-tired in the evening.

Since, during the siege, they had suffered more from hunger and thirst than they had eaten, they were prone to gluttony: they had a craving now for this, now for that, and since they craved for it they bought it—for Magda's money. However, Magda's earnings were not steady, she earned a lot one day and little the next day. Off and on she gave Ági or Éva only a certain sum of money for household expenses.

To provide for a rainy day she tucked away the rest in a volume of the great Révai Encyclopaedia—in dollars, of course, for inflation swallowed the value of currency as the python does its own prey.

Luckily for her in many respects, Magda did not have a good memory. She tended to forget in which volume, and at which entry, she had hidden away her dollars. Whenever, hard pressed, she had to draw on her savings, she haphazardly pulled out those volumes one after another, more and more excitedly and unsystematically.

It happened rarely, but it did happen, that she was caught at it.

"What are you looking for in the encyclopaedia, Maggie?" Ági asked once. "Perhaps I can tell you."

Ági's encyclopaedic knowledge covered a wide range of subjects.

Blushing up to her neck, Magda glanced at her. At bursting point, she had to change the subject and to invent some plausible excuse.

"I'm looking for coalition," she answered quickly. This word could often be heard in those days.

"You don't know what coalition means?" Ági asked adopting the manner of an inspector of schools ready to give information. "Why, we have lived under a coalition since the time of the Debrecen National Assembly. . . A coalition happens when political parties. . ."

Before she started to amplify she stared at her elder sister perplexed:

"But look for coalition under V?"

"Leave me in peace with your stupid coalition!"

Thereupon Magda shut the book with a bang and shoved it back to its place. She ran out of the room barely hearing Ági's remark:

"I don't understand, Maggie. . ."

This produced our first fit of laughter, exploding with peace-time resonance, unstoppably.

All this happened in the morning, in a morning on the eve of which income had been very slim. As there was no way to continue searching for the dollars, Magda put what money she had with her in Ági's hands and said: "Manage as best you can. But let there be poppy-seed."

One of the foremost duties of the room-mates was to prepare boiled poppy-seed diluted in milk and sweetened with sugar and to serve it to Magda every night, who, having come home from the coffee-shop, taken a bath and donned a nightshirt, went to bed.

"May I have the poppy-seed please?" She muttered like a tired queen and, having slowly emptied the cup of thick poppy-seed with a spoon, turned out the light. Whether it was the poppy squash or something else that did it, she slept soundly till morning.

We just laughed at this again.

Time was up, I took Magda back to the "Monpti," went home and had lunch. I drank with it Villány *oportó* bought by the litre in a tavern at the corner of Ferenc körút and Tompa utca.

After lunch—I don't remember what I had for my first lunch after captivity—I retired to rest at Mother's flat, and after a good wholesome siesta I went to see my first wife, Lili, and then a kinsman of the dictionary-maker Ballagi, the dermatologist Ballagi, to have him examine the raw wound due to avitaminosis on my finger.

While ambling homewards I thought of Magda again and again. Recalling the hearty laughter, I broke into a smile. But the smile soon faded from my face. In my mind's eye I saw Ági's room, the sofa we were sitting on, side by side, as we kissed and fondled each other now and again. We spent more than an hour and a half in this way.

I realized in alarm that the nearness of Magda, the touch of her body, produced no effect whatever on me. First in the Mariupol camp, then upon demobilization in Szeged I already faced the fact that my virility had been a casualty of war—so and so many register tons lost, as the Germans used to report enemy ships sunk. This has a ring of frivolity, I know, but that is about how I assessed my loss: I am thirty-seven years old, and the horizon before me has been blocked up. I am losing Magda and, with her, my ambition to work, my ability to work. I have never been able to work unless love inspired me heart and soul.

GÉZA KÉPES

POEMS

Translated by Laura Schiff

CHARLES DUMAS, BLACK-AMERICAN HIGH JUMPER,
IN THE PEOPLE'S STADIUM

Now, I can tell you, my love: this afternoon
at the Stadium, Dumas, the high jumper
pulled free from earth's embrace,
from her iron grip, soaring to the sky
for a few seconds, true, but for those seconds
clumsy mankind gaped
wondering: can he break
his own record—wrench
a few more centimeters out of the claws
of his stingy captor—

Oh if I could write poems
the way he catapults from earth
casting off every smug, vain
artistic trick—
grabbing masses of matter
for a huge masterpiece—hurling
himself into the target
like a steel arrow—
Oh Dumas, if I could fling myself

as you do your glittering black body
into the white hot sun—
if I could strip from myself
earth's shabby burdens

to set a hymn on your brow,
 that has been wreathed in wild triumph
 so often,
 with so much evergreen.
 Burned into my soul is this sharp
 reel:

 You are taking off one shoe:
 on your right foot on which you jump
 the shoe remains, the left is bare.
 You take three steps, three soft,
 easy steps—like a leopard
 confident in the kill,
 but the last step with which
 he pounces upon his marked victim
 is not soft or easy:
 from his tight muscle fibers
 from his taut wire nerves explodes
 a sealed force:
 your body, all muscle, all nerve, an exact geometry
 streams vertically
 silently splitting
 the air's numb mass.

At that moment you were
 a spring pushed down by an immense force
 that suddenly flings loose.

That's how a palm flings back
 when its green crown, gold with fruit,
 is pulled to earth
 so its bulging fruit can be picked.
 Its trunk arches delicately but then
 when released: one rustle and
 the trunk, like an arrow, a lovely ray,
 pierces again the thin heights.

Never before have I longed so
 to see a thrust aimed high
 hit the target—
 And look! far up, there

you are—but how?
 there you're sailing horizontally
 sweeping over the bar.

Champion? Hero? Athlete? What are you?
 When such a beautifully framed man
 boxes, wrestles, or throws a hammer
 I don't marvel.

"Brute force"—I think, but here
 when I see a man lifting like a bird:
 that's not force but
 force become poetry—I sense
 my ears can hear the sound
 of your dark-skinned brothers hitting
 hollow trunks and from the heavy sticks
 rises the most inflamed intricate song.

(1960)

BARTÓK

STRING QUARTET NO. 5

sunk in a mountain lake
 suddenly a bell rings
 a cane breaks into flowers
 a flute sets an orchestra
 singing
 four phantoms four heavenly visions
 hold violins and
 play—do you understand?
 No! feel it?
 maybe your cells
 your hairs, guts
 feel
 the glass screams of
 strangled violins
 the bloodless shadows of tortured willows
 the magnetic whispers of the poles
 the faint lights of far planets:

on glass looms
four fates weave
the threads of your destiny
the sound stops!
your life falls
like a soldier dropping
on a snow crag
blood seeping
from his unseen wound . . .

matterless matter
shrieks, grows, a dull snap
it floods
melts
your muscles
your shins
your skull:
your obsessions
are washed away
by waves
now just ancient memories
pulse.

swaying swimming throbbing flowers
creep and glitter:
coral brushes sprout on the chest
of sunken rocks,
polyps, squids
jellyfish
twist then chase
and mirror-sleek rays
dole electric shocks— —

(1964)

CURRICULUM VITAE

SUBMITTED TO OBTAIN A LIGHTHOUSE-KEEPER'S JOB

I went on to the Arctic Ocean
 sat down on a polar bear
 that took me to nothingness
 then Clio appeared
 she whipped me with her wild hissing
 snakes
 spat on my forehead and deserted me
 I went on a pilgrimage—southward
 my legs were ground to the knees
 so I slid on the stumps
 to the South Sea:
 from a rock
 washed almost to a sponge
 I shoved myself into the water
 my legs grew again.

For people I feel just pity
 It's only the sea I can love
 the South Sea
 because it's so blue the sky
 doesn't dare reflect down

(1967)

SNAIL-SHELL

Maybe it's wrong I love you so
 fret
 protect
 hedge
 you like the shell does the snail—
 The shell must be
 hard
 and
 slight:
 every joint

every curve
every spiral cave
of mine exists
to house you
faultlessly.
And you take me
everywhere
my weight is not separate:
I am you.
If I split
under the boyish
bungling fist
of fate
you're nothing without me.
But if you were
trampled
you
and I'd be left—
Oh there's no more meaningless
stupider scrap
than an empty
snail shell
In it like crazed spiders
the vague shadows
of two lives
moor.

(1970)

THE TIMELINESS OF ATTILA JÓZSEF

by

MIKLÓS SZABOLCSI

He led an arduous and hectic life, full of crises and disappointments, one which may have seemed to radiate little joy or gaiety; he virtually embodied in his own person the life and destiny of the Hungarian proletariat of his time, since he was an intellectual who had risen from the proletarian lot; and above all he was a child of the times.

He was born on April 11, 1905, in Ferencváros, a district in Budapest; that verged on being a slum; two sisters had been born before him. He belonged to an age group whose teens were overshadowed by the Great War, who were adolescents in the trying years of the twenties, still a period offering some hope, but who, having barely reached manhood, were to witness the onset of fascism in Germany. It is important to stress the fact that he was born in Budapest, for his fellow-poets hailed for the most part from the Hungarian countryside. The slum surroundings of the city had not previously made any notable contribution to Hungarian literature. It was with Attila József that the periphery of the city, the suburbs and the industrial districts in general, entered the field of Hungarian poetry.

Apart from the place and date of his birth, there was also much that was characteristic and almost symbolic about the family into which the poet was born. "I am the world—everything that has been, and that is: many generations rushing at one another. . ." * he wrote towards the end of his life, and not without reason. His father, "the soap-maker Áron József," came up to the capital from Temes County, which lay in the southern part of the Hungary of the day; his father had been only a farm-hand on a large estate, but Áron learned a trade and became a soap-maker, a worker respected in his community but one with a taste for adventure and romantic inclina-

* Except where a translator's name is added, quotations from poems are here rendered in prose.
—*The Ed.*

tions. He had worked in Budapest for quite some time when he fell in love with a little servant-girl from Szabadszállás, Borcsa Pócze, "Mummy." This frail young woman hailed from an entirely different region and environment: a characteristic part of the Hungarian Great Plain, the Danube-Tisza interfluvium is a boundless lowland still dotted with lakes, reeds and marshes, still the country of hard-working, gaunt peasants. "I am the son of the street and the land:" the poet's blood is a mixture of the blood of workers and of peasants, just as it mixes the different ethnic groups of pre-Trianon Hungary.

In the beginning husband and wife got along very well together, but Attila was barely three when his father deserted the family. Nobody really knew why and how, but the others thought that he had emigrated to America, the poet himself writes as much in a poem. This is what we all thought up to 1957, but then it was discovered that Áron József had returned to Southern Hungary, that later he had practised his trade in various towns of Rumania, with no news of his family: longing for them, but unable to rejoin them. Hence the mother brought up her three children alone. Their life was a wearisome struggle, moving from one sub-tenancy to the next, from bed-sit to bed-sit. Little Attila also came into contact with another world, that of children abandoned by their parents: "... the National League for the Protection of Children placed me with foster parents in Öcsöd. I lived there until I reached the age of seven, and like the children of the village poor generally, I was already at work, minding pigs. When I was seven, my mother—the late Borbála Pócze—fetched me back to Budapest and enrolled me in the second form of a primary school." So at the age of seven he was thrown once more into the rough and tough life of the proletarian kid in the suburbs, the essentials of which were practically the same all over Europe. "When I was nine, the Great War broke out, and we grew even worse off. I did my share of queuing up at shops—sometimes I joined the queue at the grocer's at nine at night, and at half past seven in the morning, when it was finally my turn, they said right in front of my face that there was no lard left. I helped my mother whichever way I could. I sold drinking water in the *Világ* cinema. I pinched wood and coal from the Ferencváros railway yard to give us something to put on the fire. I made paper pinwheels and offered them for sale to children who were better off. I carried shopping baskets and parcels in the market-hall, etc."

Meanwhile it has to be added that his mother's sickness grew worse and worse, she was obliged to spend more and more time in hospital; her neglected and hungry children roamed the streets; soon the diagnosis was confirmed: cancer of the uterus.

"I was borne by Borcsa Pőcze, / who was eaten up by cankers, / her stomach and belly in succession / by centipede scrubbing-brushes."

What did Attila József's childhood mean to him in later life, and what had he become by the age of fourteen?

"Following reality's heavy tracks, take a look down here at yourself, upon your origin," wrote the mature poet, and in this one line childhood's double lesson resounds. The tracks one must follow are heavy, heavier than anything; excruciating, painful memories must be evoked. When one talks about childhood, one must always descend to relive every conceivable hell. Yet at the same time these oppressive memories provide a variety of instructive lessons, for it is in these moments that his character, his talent and his political orientation were all moulded. "Is this where you're from? So you are never forsaken by the sombre desire to be like the other poor wretches. . . ." For the poet who identifies himself with the people of the outskirts, who is neither forgetful nor ashamed of his childhood but who explains and comes to terms with it, childhood provides the basic experience behind his conscious embracing of community. He does not look down upon the poor and the downcast from some lofty vantage point—he grows out from them; so far from disowning them, he comes to regard their fate as an example and a mandatory law, whilst his own fate binds him to their struggle, to waging a common cause. The slums furnish him with memories and a firm resolve. Amongst the memories: the image of poverty and that of human togetherness, "the frozen smell of vegetables," the clatter of the freight yards, "the serried row of tenement houses," and the crowdedness of emergency lodgings. The tunes resounding in his ears are those of workers' marching songs, some of them to recur later in poems.

"Heavy tracks:" a long succession of humiliations and, more especially, of permanent defencelessness against the ceaseless force of poverty. This child is cut off from the world of adults, not only by his being a child, but because he lacks bread: this is what erects a dividing wall between him and the others. It is always money which plays the key role in the various fluctuations in the fortunes of the family, often enough even the funds necessary to mere subsistence were not forthcoming and the small child was made aware of the pressure of "cold, hunger and want." He was constantly having to muster all his strength, energy and astuteness to keep his head above water, and sometimes these efforts expended in childhood weighed heavily upon him in later life.

Injuries and humiliations may also, however, stimulate one in other directions, both in childhood and later: one has to rise above one's fate, one

has to draw certain lessons from it. There are two aspects to this transcendence: one must set out to change the entire order dictating this fate to so many, and at the same time one must preserve one's own purity, mental health and integrity.

This miserable childhood, typical of the conditions of the Hungarian proletariat in the early years of the century, made Attila József conscious of the strength of that class which, after "the priests, the soldiers, the burghers," as he writes in a poem, is destined to carry the meaning of human life forward. However overwhelming the poverty and humiliation, this world already contained the seeds which would shape a new way of life, which would give birth to new types of relations, togetherness and solidarity; and occasionally these were enough to give the poet a new and hard-won harmony. Yet the poet still had a long way to go before he could elevate his childhood experiences to the realm of poetry, before they could ripen into conscious convictions.

First of all he had to acquire the rudiments of an education, to find the ways and means to fulfil his aims. After outgrowing a period in which paper-bound trashy novels were the only literature at hand, the little boy soon outgrew Jókai's romantic story-land as well. He began to familiarize himself with books which were the favourite reading matter of the more educated members of the working class: Zola in the first place, but also Gorky and other socialist novelists. Whether guided by fortune or quite by accident, he became acquainted at an early age with the poems of the outstanding Hungarian poet of the first decades of the century, Endre Ady (1877-1919).

Attila József tried his own hand at writing poems very early on; only one of them has come down to us, the famous verse written in a letter to one of his sisters: "How I should like to be rich;" the poet was probably nine-years old at the time, and the poem is a child's touching and illuminating confession.

But he also began to rise in a different way. His elder sister Jolán married very young, and her second husband (who married her in 1918) was a well-to-do Budapest lawyer. The social pattern was a characteristic one—a man belonging to the upper layer of the Jewish middle classes but possessed of a radical mind and disposition, like Pygmalion, was out to form the character of a proletarian girl who was both attractive and intelligent. Of course this gave rise to a whole series of strange, grotesque and humiliating situations, for the social origin of the young wife had to be kept secret from the wealthy family; mendacity and awkwardness, deception and disguise were to beset this relationship from the very beginning.

The 1919 Hungarian Republic of Councils left an indelible mark on the

mind of this 14-year-old boy. He attended mass meetings and street festivals, and to his dying day he clung to a Hungarian edition of Lenin's *The State and Revolution*, given to him by an unknown Communist orator. After this short and ill-fated episode the horizon blackened, both politically and as far as he personally was concerned: the Republic of Councils collapsed, the White Terror went on the rampage, and widespread famine coincided with the hospitalization of his mother and her eventual death in the Ferencváros barrack-hospital at the end of 1919; at the moment of her death her son was visiting relatives in the country, hoping to pick up some food there.

"During a spring and summer season I served on the steam tugs *Vibar*, *Török* and *Tatár* of the Atlantica Marine Corp. At that time I sat for the *polgári iskola** leaving examination as a private student. Later my guardian (Attila's brother-in-law, the lawyer Ödön Makai.—Ed.) and Dr. Sándor Giesswein sent me to Nyergesújfalu as a seminarist with the Salesians. I spent only two weeks there, as I am Greek Orthodox and not Roman Catholic. From there I went to Makó, to the Demke boarding-school, where I soon got a free place."

Makó is a small market-town on the southern borderland of post-Trianon Hungary, not far away from the birthplace of Áron József: his son was to live there for three years (1920–1923), and these years marked the start of his career as a poet. He never felt entirely at home in the rigid atmosphere of the Makó *gimnázium*, although he threw himself with the utmost eagerness into everything he studied, showing equal interest in languages and in literature, in mathematics and history alike. More satisfying to him was that small Masonic circle, composed of a few lawyers, doctors and journalists, which took the young man under its protective wing. In the first and most dangerous years of the Horthy régime these educated professional men led a very isolated life in Makó, and it was in their company that the homeless young man with his unusual background could find understanding and sympathy. He was a boarding-school student clad in the outgrown clothes of his brother-in-law, engrossed in his studies, but carrying the memories of a difficult childhood in his heart, a student with a precocious mind and obvious literary talents. These friends encouraged and assisted him, and he was till only in the seventh form of the *gimnázium*, when his first volume of poetry was published, characteristically entitled *The Beggar of Beauty*. This volume shows the young poet still following closely in the footsteps of his precursors.

The greatest of these precursors by far was Endre Ady. His effect on Attila József was to induce a new consciousness in the young poet, to liberate

* A four-grade junior secondary school which offered only limited possibilities for further education.

and incite him to rebel further; temporarily it was to divert him from objective reality and incline him towards the celebration of a bloated ego, to lend him a stock of poses, mannerisms and attitudes, but in the longer run to supply infinitely greater depth to his poetry. In place of objective-descriptive versifying, Ady offered him a model of impassioned, agitating, self-analyzing, stylized poetry, and this was another lyricism which the younger poet had to make his own. He had to conquer Ady's domain of symbols in order to be able to step beyond it later, but he would profit greatly from the experience; he had first of all to magnify his own lyrical ego before he could infuse this into the collective ego and then, developing his art still further, work out harmonious relations between society and poet, community and individual. He never forgot Ady's testimony as to the poet's importance: in hard times attributing value to the individual personality implies the protection of the general interests of mankind as well; hence Attila József would throw the value of his personality into the balance against fascism. He never forgot what he learned from Ady, since it coincided so well with his most profound personal inclinations—analysis of the poetic soul, its purposeful, plastic and suggestive representation. But in 1922–1923 Ady's lyric poetry and revolutionary spirit provided him with even more than this; it amounted to a reply, first of all, to his personal condition and then to the situation of the country and society, to the underlying conditions of the age.

Attila József adopted and assimilated this new voice, these new strivings, from the start. It was for this reason that he managed to avoid both the epigonism of earlier Hungarian socialist verse and some of the initial weaknesses of communist poetry. Apart from Ady, the other great influence was a poet living only thirty kilometres from Makó, in the city of Szeged on the banks of the Tisza. This was Gyula Juhász.

Juhász was an outstanding figure of the *Nyugat* generation, who secured himself a niche in that pantheon with his own unique art, gloomy Hungarian landscapes, and escape into an exotic land of dreams. He was the first great poet to recognize Attila József, and to write a far-sighted preface to that first volume. His Tisza landscapes, his pervasive melancholy and repressed revolutionary zeal came through powerfully in the verses of the young poet.

The József poems of this period are realistic and precise representations of the landscapes, persons and objects he observed at Makó, sometimes in sonnet form, sometimes in the strict metre of another form. A picture from the banks of the River Maros, a sunlit landscape at noon, a scene beside the threshing-machine—these poems capture such images so convincingly, with such finality, that many of them might well be transposed without any

changes being made into his later, nature volumes. These poems convey the stabbing pains of homelessness, of being an outcast and of the will to make changes, both at the personal level and at the level of the nation. In them his basic nature emerges for the first time: the yearning for peace and love, harmony and compensation, and for the love of man. His heart felt ease and identification with nature are articulated almost as eloquently here as in the great poems to come. The summoning of the "men of the future," his "warranted disgust at the world" and "fight for tranquility" appear in a variety of formulations, but show that the poet is still searching for form and tone; his voice cracks like that of the adolescent, but this start is nonetheless rich and pregnant with experiences; this volume gave him his first real taste of creative writing, it bears witness to his first great—and, naturally, frustrated—loves, to his first great friendships and conversations which would go on till morning, to the first significant protests and the first newspaper publications of his writings. By the time he left school in early 1923 (to continue his studies privately) it was clear to all where his future lay: he would become a poet and a teacher.

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The next few years acquainted the young poet with life and society both inside and outside Hungary, with the whole agitated and forever changing world of the twenties.

In Budapest he was a private student without a job, then a book salesman and a bank clerk who soon tired of his jobs; he was a contributor to short-lived periodicals and he began to mix in the circles of young literati. In December 1923 he sat for his school-leaving examination, and the young poet, already notorious for the verse entitled *Christ in Revolt*, predictably obtained a bad mark in Hungarian literature. Then at Szeged University he was a student of Hungarian and French, a lanky lad who wore peasant boots and his hair long, like an artist's, who could never really fit in at the university. He joined the Social Democratic Party and gave lectures to peasants and tradesmen, and this was the background to his first serious brush with the authorities: "I felt very proud when Professor Lajos Dézsi declared me to be fit to do independent research, but I was completely discouraged by Professor Antal Horger, who was going to examine me in Hungarian Language; he summoned me and declared in front of two witnesses—I still remember their names, *they* are both teachers now—that I would never be employed as a secondary school teacher as long as he lived, because, as he put it, 'we cannot entrust the education of the future genera-

tion to someone who writes such poems,' and he pointed to a copy of *Szeged*. One often speaks of the irony of fate, and this was really it: this poem of mine, *Tiszta szívvel* (With a Pure Heart), has become widely known, seven articles were written about it. . . ."

After this came a long spell abroad.

He spent a year in Vienna to begin with, living in poverty and subsisting only on the charity of others; he sold newspapers and he cleaned the premises of the Collegium Hungaricum; but he also paid the occasional visit to the Lainz chateau of the famous patron of Hungarian letters living in exile, Baron Lajos Hatvany, a writer himself. At the same time he also worked for periodicals published by Hungarian exiles in Vienna, he was able more freely to familiarize himself with trends and notions, and for the first time to establish contacts with the Communist Party and the group of Hungarian Communist writers then based in Vienna. György Lukács said of him at the time: "He is the first proletarian lyric poet who has universal—not cosmopolitan!—literary talents." The following year he went to Paris, where the student survived on "milk, cheese, bread and poems," as he wrote in a letter home; he studied at the Sorbonne and acquired a thorough knowledge of the French language and French literature. He was perhaps fascinated most of all by Villon and Apollinaire, whom he studied and translated. His time in Paris was crowded with impressions and experiences: the avenues, the avant-garde theatre, and the organization of the Hungarian Communists in Paris. He had no contacts with top-ranking writers, but he absorbed the stimulating air and the atmosphere, he could see a flourishing literary life forever taking on new shapes before him.

It was in Paris that he began to read Lenin and contemporary Marxist literature. In letters to his sister he sometimes delivered veritable political discourses on such subjects as the conflict between imperialism and Bolshevism and on the growing strength of the Bolshevist Party. Finally, after spending a summer on the French Riviera, in the painters' village of Cagnes, he returned to Budapest, a sunburnt and happy young man; indeed he was positively chirpy and jolly:

"My sister Lidi's brother here, / a Budapest relation of Batu Khan, / lived on bread alone for years / and had no azure quilted blanket; / for whose verse here death / cooks beans in a big pot— / hey bourgeois! hey proletarian!— / I, Attila József, am here!"

These were years of adventure and youthful experimentation in his poetry as well. His poems threw back a simultaneous echo to the voice of German expressionistic poetry, of French surrealism, of the great master of the Hungarian avant-garde, Lajos Kassák, and of Hungarian peasant populism. "It isn't me you hear crying, it's a growl from the earth,"—he makes a collectivistic confession together with other poets of the twenties; in the profuse and flowing free association of these verses modern technology, the large industrial town and a mass of new concepts come bustling and scrambling to the foreground. At the same time the poet discovered for himself the authentic voice of Hungarian folksong. Already in the early twenties, partly as a reaction to the leading literary journal of the period, *Nyugat* (1908–1941), and partly in order to express quite novel ideas, a new type of populism had begun to emerge in Hungary. In a simple manner in the tone of a popular ballad, the artist would seek to evoke the fate of the poor man, of the wayfarer, of the ordinary peasant, and József joined this trend with his series of "poor man" poems; closely related to this series are the exuberant verses of his teens, among them the often quoted, often censured and much praised poem *With a Pure Heart*, the anarchic confession of a young contemporary whose revolt against the absurdity of society, against violence and pompousness, is the same as that which produced the Dada school in France and *humour noir*. Apart from the sweeping aggression of the "collectivist poetry" and the simple populism of the "poor man" poems, everpresent in his lyrics is the specifically Józsefian voice which is all sweet charm and simplicity, sticking closely in touch with all the minute phenomena and objects of life.

The quest for a home, the memory of his mother, a generalized love of others and deeper desires for friends and for a woman, a mother—these are the themes which establish the permanent overtone to his poetic output in these years. Nonetheless the sweep is ever broader, and the voice which resounds ever more loudly and ever more clearly is the voice of a man who is changing from rebel into revolutionary, in the process of adopting an unmistakably socialist view of the world. These poems betray his disgust at the state of the world and a defiant revolt; they evoke the poor man's fate and the loneliness of urban man and his hunger; they culminate in the need for collective action.

Both the finances and the social status of the young poet back in Hungary were as precarious as ever. He enrolled again at the university, this time in Budapest, but supported now to all intents and purposes by his brother-in-law, the well-to-do lawyer; eventually, after many stormy quarrels, he moved into a separate, small rented room. He was still a young man, and

still searching for intellectual adventures and political reform. In rapid succession he published material in the bourgeois radical press, in social-democratic papers, in a radical paper with a socialist bias and *Nyugat*. It was in these same years that he went through one of the most profound experiences of his life and also one of his greatest disappointments: "I was in love with a wealthy girl—her social class took her away from me," is how a fine poem of his sums up events. Márta Vágó was the precocious, beautiful daughter of a rich radical from the upper middle classes, and the young poet fell deeply in love. So rarely in his life was he privileged to experience full understanding and complete harmony, to find and become completely absorbed in another person, but this idyll was short-lived. Márta Vágó's parents warned their daughter against a risky marriage and sent her to London, ostensibly to continue her education there, but in fact to keep her away from the man she loved.

The affair was still enough to purify the poet and bring him to maturity. The turmoil of these stifling years generated some marvellous poems, a harvest which is gathered in a volume entitled *Without Father, without Mother*, published in 1929. This period is characterized by great delicacy and sober playfulness, by ironic, grotesque and grimacing self-mockery, by tensions thinly veiled and by anger always just about to burst out. The vibrating voice of the poet is ethereal, it suggests cosmic perspectives, it is a fantastically grotesque voice of the people, it conjures up nature through animation and anthropomorphization, and it sings fairy songs which treasure the memory of his great love. This is an idyll, but a fugitive and evanescent idyll which is often viewed ironically. It is a sedate surrealism, a controlled madness, a reality twisted into the grotesque and then stiffened, for all this is expressed in increasingly severe and increasingly strict forms. A vast emotional range of love, fulfilment and disappointment radiates through the poems of this collection.

He develops a seemingly perky and indolent standpoint filled with dramatic suspense, but the truth is that emotions were never far from the surface: "I am jolly and taciturn," he says, and he goes on: "I do not think of good and bad, all I do is work." But this pose—how good it would be to maintain such appearances—is abandoned under the influence of impending crisis:

"I am of glittering heart, capable of / victory, one who must want / to do justice and take sides / bound by these stark memories. / But what business of mine are memories? / I rather put down my useless pencil / and

sharpen the edge of the straightened scythe, / for in our land time is ripening / soundlessly and threateningly." (From *Végül*—"Finally," 1926. Prose translation.)

Time was ripening in the wider world. Under the dual impact of the economic crisis of 1929 and of the success of the first five-year plan in the Soviet Union, a genuine wave of revolutionary sentiment swept over Europe. It seemed that the old order was giving up the ghost and that the glorious world revolution was about to march in, merrily and victoriously. On September 1, 1930—for the first time in eleven years—the workers of Budapest paraded on the streets in large numbers. This was a stormy period and a tragic one in many respects, but it was also a period of promise: who would not be persuaded to optimism when the cream of Hungarian intellectual life began to turn towards socialism? The new climate helped the young poet to find his feet at last. Of course he had been probing and searching in this direction for many years already—his disappointments and the blows he had suffered in the radical circles of the upper middle classes had caused him to turn for a while to the populist spokesmen of radical peasant movements—but from the autumn of 1930 onwards (to be exact, starting from the huge demonstration organized on September 1, 1930, which inspired his poem entitled *The Mass*) he joined the fray as a member of the underground Communist Party of Hungary.

A sharp turnabout took place in his poetry and in every sphere of his life, including his private life. He found himself a woman "who cooks and kisses:" Judit Szántó, also a member of the underground party and an assistant in an umbrella-maker's shop. This blonde woman of striking beauty became his companion almost for life, she took care of him, pampered him, assisted him in his work, and smoothed the ground before him wherever he stepped. The poet plunged into the lively but illegal work of the party, holding workers' seminars both in his home and in the suburbs of Budapest and feeling himself to be at home amongst those who attended. He now knew his own life to be important, he found peace of mind, he knew where he was heading.

In 1930-1931 his poetry went through a revolutionary phase of storm-and-stress. The volume *Knock down the Stump** deploys all the force and guile of his poetic craft to pave the way for world revolution and for seemingly immediate change on the Hungarian scene: "I was a stag in days gone by, I regret becoming a wolf." In several of these poems the poet is out to explore

* *Töke* in Hungarian means both treestump and capital

what is involved in becoming a revolutionary, and when he identifies himself with landscapes, with nature and with people, the grand design behind it all is to render himself tougher, all the more implacable and resolute.

Landscapes and nature are themselves filled with profound meaning, depicting the situation prevailing in the whole country in these times of trouble and growing tension. Winter, inclement frost and biting cold are metaphors which recur more and more frequently; fleeting fairy-land summers, small hills and bends, monotonous rain—all his nature imagery carries a hidden meaning and a profound message: they suggest tasks that have to be carried out and they urge and invite the reader to tackle them.

Alongside more subtle poems more abstract in meaning, numerous products of this period are absolutely explicit, as stark and as clear as recruiting slogans, designed to mobilize political support for the immediate struggle: "Poem, go and serve the class-struggle!" He followed up his own plea with the poems *Socialists* and *The Mass*, definitive statements and the summation of the poetry of the labour movement; their didacticism furthered the cause of the revolution very directly, for those poems were well suited to delivery by legal or semi-legal choral-speaking groups, they spoke in simple forms close to prose. The contemporary Hungarian working-class movement was familiar with this kind of poetry, and in József's hands the lyrics resounded on a high artistic level. But no sooner had he mastered the genre than he left it behind and proceeded to usher in a remarkable new phase of creativity.

To convey his revolutionary message József again had recourse to a wide range of poetic means and methods. On the model of his Villon translations he then wrote a series of Villonesque ballads; from his reading of *Kalevala* he adapted the rhythm of its parallelisms for his own purposes, he experimented also with folksong verse-form and with free verse, with the grotesque, with impressionistic pastel sketches and with hexameter dialogues.

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Two years elapsed—and what happened to those dreams of world revolution? The crisis shook the edifice of capitalism but did not demolish it it did, however, hasten the onset of National Socialism in Germany. The counter-revolutionary dictatorship in Hungary did not collapse either: on the contrary it became tougher and more extreme than before when a minion of Mussolini named Gyula Gömbös took over the reins of government in 1932. In those years Attila József launched a whole series of poems

protesting against a crude, false nationalism, against mystical and racialist literary trends which were really no more than disguised forms of fascism, and against what he saw as the freakish anomalies of the early populist movement. Problems also ensued in connection with his membership of the underground Communist Party.

Around 1932-33 József was still a member of the Party, which was illegal in Hungary. He was no longer a member by 1935, and there has been a lot of controversy as to what happened in the meantime. Many theories have been put forward, and it has been established for certain that he was no longer considered a member of the Party by about 1934; connections may not have been formally severed, but as far as the Party was concerned, he had been dropped.

The reasons for this breach are undoubtedly to be sought in the general tendencies of the politics of the workers' movement at the time. Right up until the 7th Comintern Congress the Hungarian Party lived in anticipation of imminent revolution, it based its politics and its agitation on this expectation of a renewed installment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Hence the Hungarian movement was characterized by impatience, the striving after quick results and, it almost goes without saying, a certain contempt for the intelligentsia; its leadership was often flawed by sectarianism and left-wing deviations. Equally, the majority of Party members was not able to appreciate the poetry of József from an aesthetic standpoint. As early as 1930 there was a vociferous polemic against him in the periodical of the Hungarian exiles in Moscow, and although the leaders of the Party at home attempted to defend the poet against the unfounded charges levelled against him, their impact on his sensitive character was considerable. In 1932 the Gömbös government executed Imre Sallai and Sándor Fürst, two outstanding leaders of the Hungarian Party, and men who had respected and understood József.

He recognised very early that the responsibility for the success of the Nazi party in Germany lay in part at the door of the workers' movement and he explored the implications of this recognition. Long before the 7th Comintern Congress he was calling in his articles for a rapprochement with the Social-Democratic party and the necessity for building a broadly-based peoples' front to combat fascism. This too was misunderstood by many in the Party, both leaders and rank-and-file members.

It is also only fair to point out that József was not the easiest of men to get along with, that he sometimes seemed to relish controversy and often found himself in the dissenting minority. Furthermore, the mere fact that he was undergoing psychoanalysis was grounds in itself for excluding

him from the underground Party: how could they tolerate the membership of a man who would regularly bare his soul to his therapist, an outsider?

The poet was particularly hurt at not being invited to attend the first Writers' Congress in the Soviet Union in 1934. It is true that two of his friends, two genuinely talented writers, Gyula Illyés and the novelist Lajos Nagy, received invitations; but Attila József felt, and with some justification, that he was the true socialist poet. "Why not me?" he asked, and his omission on this occasion caused him bitter disappointment.

All of this, and other personal factors besides, lay behind the breach with the formal organization of the Party. Differences of opinion did not, however, grow into ideological differences: József regarded himself as a socialist and a historical materialist all along.

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In the years ahead illness and poverty added to his problems. "His wife scrubs floors, and he is running for copying work..."—he wrote of himself in a poem. He had no job and little money coming in from any source; his repeated outbursts isolated him in bourgeois literary circles and he had also antagonized the *Nyugat* people. A permanent shortage of cash, an unheated flat and shoes in need of soling, rent in arrears and the typewriter at the pawnbroker's—these were not just romantic formalities, they were grim realities for the poet in the middle of the thirties. In a letter he shyly admitted this distress: "I have grown accustomed to hunger." And disease, attacking first of all the body, but then before long the mind as well, began to plague and ravage his system; the level-headed doctor to whom he turned for psychoanalysis abandoned him as a hopeless case.

And yet this period, one of increasing loneliness and isolation, of poverty and illness,—is also one in which he rose to greatness as a poet. The art of Attila József, the really mature poet with all his talents at his fingertips, stands or falls on the work of this last phase, beginning with the year 1932. There is no longer any question of girding one's loins for future combat, or searching for new directions or suddenly abandoning the old ones—the poet has found himself at last, and he has found the means to convey his authentic message in poetry of the highest quality.

First of all we note a new, singular variant of his poetic realism, the poem *Workers* (written towards the end of 1931) marking a turning-point. There is no longer any trace of the generalities concerning roughly sketched and

stylized "workers," typical of the working-class lyrics which unfolded in the wake of expressionistic poetry. One listens instead to a poet who is thoroughly familiar with life, who is not out to mystify the workers with fancy embellishment but who sees their distress and their conflicts as his own, who is living their life with them. But he did not stop at the sharp and thorough observation of reality, immaculately impartial; he enclosed his descriptions in a single system of ideas, in a unified conception.

He considered the work of art to be a "reality fixed by inspiration;" and the unity of these two, reality and the ideal notion, petty facts and sweeping conceptions, meticulous observation and the perfect vision of reality, the harmony which must be accomplished between every petty detail of the poem and its overall structure—this is what underlies these poems and goes to make them so uniquely great. Large intellectual frescoes and marvellous amalgams of observation and thought follow one after the other in poems like *Night in the Suburbs*, *On the Outskirts of the City*, *Elegy*, *Ode*—gathered first in the volume entitled *Night in the Suburbs* and then in the follow-up *Beardance*.

Neither the accurate observation of reality, nor its sweeping conceptualization, would have been sufficient, no matter how painstaking the composition, had they not been pursued in conjunction with the advice of a traditional folksong, noted in the introduction to one of his volumes:

"He who wants to be a piper / must descend to hell, / there he must learn / how to blow the bagpipes."

Descent to hell has been the painful lot of every great European artist of the twentieth century. Attila József had to descend to a deeper-lying and more bitter inferno than anyone else, to the hell of loneliness and isolation, and the memory of all the debits of the childhood he had missed and joys he had lost or never knew. It is out of this hell that the image of his mother emerges, along with so many painful, dreadful visions of childhood, but adulthood brought him no release. He was still condemned to the hell of his soul, to the profound abysses of the illness afflicting him, schizophrenia. And beyond these personal hells he had to go through the hell of his nation and class as well. After 1932, in a period of increasing darkness and inhumanity, when sensitive ears such as his could already hear the thud of boots marching towards war, Attila József had to experience the struggle of the Hungarian peasantry, the humiliation of the working class, the hopeless predicament of the intelligentsia, of the lower middle classes as they sank into poverty, of his entire beloved people. It would be a mistake to suppose

that playfulness, humour and mocking irony are entirely missing from this period; it is precisely the sensation of dancing over the abyss that makes poems such as *The Swine-herd* or *Beardance* (written to a Bartók tune) so staggering.

The homogeneity of this poetry is born of the anguish of the poet, transcended by intellectual and conceptional clarity and shot through with a thorough and down-to-earth knowledge of the real world. The poet himself said that "the interrelations springing from one or two lines of the poem determine in advance all that is to follow; that is, every point of the work is Archimedean". And indeed, each and every point is spot-on, the compass he uses in his poetry is practically the same instrument as that by which he orients his entire schema of the world. "The facts of this (artistic) world are not real facts, but the connections between them are real and correspond fully with the interconnections of the real world." Meaning that is crystal-clear, self-control at the helm and great deliberateness characterize all these poems, those elaborating the most sophisticated political conceptions on the one hand and his most personal outbursts on the other. "Existence stutters, the law alone is clear speech." József was always looking for this law, and it saved him from falling to pieces in the hardest times. Two keywords, "order" and "knowledge" appear over and over again. "I have a definite word for our negligent society. . .", lines like this reveal his most profound ambitions. In many of his metaphors and formulations in these poems one can unmistakably perceive traces of the Marxist convictions which helped him to plot a way out of darkest poverty, to replace the desolate individual and national abyss with the promise of a "bright, secure and well-planned future." This prophetic vision is expressed when he writes about the poet:

"The word is rattling on the poet's lips, / but he (engineer of the charms / of the world we take as given) / sees into a rational future / and constructs in himself, as you / will outside, harmony."

He called for "order born of freedom," for socialism, and a socialist society imbued with profound humanity. "Be disciplined!" is the advice he gives himself. He digs deep, but he never succumbs to the irrationalism which claimed so many of his Hungarian and non-Hungarian contemporaries. He struggled for the working-class movement, but he was neither boisterous nor showy; he took advantage of all the magnificent achievements of the twenties, including a breakthrough in the use of free metaphors, loose associations, the fleeting flight of ideas, but he never became incon-

sistent and he always stopped short of the bizarre; he registered all the troubles of his soul with formidable accuracy, but he never gave way to lamentation and prostration.

In the forms of his art, too, these poems signified both a summary of what had gone before and an opening up of new ways. Except in the brief phase when he cultivated expressionistic free verse, he always sought to concentrate his message into the discipline of a verse-form; his entire profile as a poet and a human being, and the programme he set himself in poetry, necessitated a continuous struggle for deliberate, ordered discipline. The drum-beat of a rhythm is perhaps fundamental, and his musical propensity was great (apart from the poems stimulated directly by Bartók, melodic evocation is rich in a whole series of his works). In his studies of Hungarian prosody he dealt specifically with questions of verse-form and versification, including the comparison between quantitative and accented rhythms. He himself made use of the most varied verse-forms and stanza structures, amongst them typically Hungarian forms, French melodies and classical pentameters. He was deeply convinced that intellectual strength was to be gained by employing regular form, and he felt that discipline could be enforced in this way. In the last year of his life, reflecting on his illness, he heaved a sigh: "...it is lucky there are iambs, I have something to hold on to. This is how the child learns to walk..." He also recapitulates past achievements in his deployment of the language, and his success in transposing into poesy the images of workers and the labour movement, in such a manner that they do not seem out of place when combined with the traditional vocabulary of the lyric poet.

Needless to say, all this would be but a fleshless skeleton and an abstract manifesto if it were not heated by the force of an extraordinary personality. "You hard soul, you soft imagination..." he sought to express a desire for purity, for joy and mollification. Behind these late poems there stands a highly serious man much given to meditation and reflection, but also one with a zest for life, who likes to be happy and has a boundless craving for love.

If we cast around for a single poem to summarize this fruitful period, our choice is difficult. Should one plump for *Night in the Suburbs*, this shocking panorama of desolation, of the lot of contemporary working man, with its remarkable confession of fidelity at the end? Or perhaps *Elegy*, a painfully accurate evocation of identity with that same quarter of society, the quarter which is shaping the future but is so sombre in the present? Or should one choose the *Ode*, this great symphony of the love of modern man? Or the stanzas of *Horror*, in which the horrors of his own childhood

and the distress of a worker's family are interwoven in a vast tapestry? The assessment is practically impossible, but on balance the claims of *On the Outskirts of the City* may carry the day. This poem is another great conceptional synthesis of the poet and his class, of the poet and his nation; it is a masterpiece of Józsefian composition and formulation, and one of the peaks of materialist-philosophical verse. No sooner has one chosen than one remembers *Winter Night*, a precise and gently flowing composition which invokes silence and death in the emotive confession of an intelligent man who has braved nothingness, a man who has travelled to the verge of nihilism, but who has come back again.

Attila József remained on these summits until his dying day, whilst the years went from bad to worse and the situation in Hungary became more and more distressing. He remained fundamentally isolated, despite winning the loyalty of a few understanding critics and the love of many workers and of a part of the left-wing intelligentsia. His circumstances were normalized in certain respects. Early in 1936 he obtained an editorial job, taking charge of the poetry column of the literary magazine *Szép Szó*. This was a lively journal situated on the left wing of literary life, and characterized by a general liberalism with a certain radical tint. He selected the poems to appear, and wrote a few pieces of criticism besides. "The poor poet has to read manuscripts by the bundle, attend to the typographic make-up and go through the proofs," he wrote in a letter, and he urged himself in a poem to do the job precisely and well. In any case, he felt for a time that he had found his place in the world, and that this world was full of promise, despite the darkness looming on the horizon, and even though "mankind, as though with cancer, is being gnawed at by the horror of more than one monstrous state...". The clear-sighted could already see that it was war which was threatening the country, which was falling more and more rapidly into the orbit of Berlin. The condition of the poet also continued to deteriorate. Schizophrenia had been induced by the successive blows his life had dealt him: hitherto latent, it now began to strengthen its hold on him. By early 1937 his state had become clinical.

Towards the end of his life it is not so much the signs of illness which multiply as poems which describe and relate the causes of the illness. His cry "Oh! love me violently—shoo away my great affliction!", and the lamentation of *It Deeply Hurts* are shocking. He presents the ghastly symptoms of his illness in precise and suggestive images, in strictly formulated poems in which the deep layers of his soul are illuminated by the consciousness medical treatment imparts.

Is this a sick poetry? Miraculously it is not. First of all, he himself is the best judge of the root cause of his condition:

"Suffering is here inside, / but the explanation is there outside, / Your wound is the world / —burning and firing, / and you feel your soul, the fever."

The poet had first become acquainted with Freudian therapy in 1930. But this first spell of analysis came to an end two years later at the suggestion of the doctor, who felt that his case was not susceptible to such forms of treatment. He was back on the analyst's couch for the second time early in 1935; and this time, in a fit of impulse, he fell in love with his lady analyst, quite hopelessly of course. This is the origin of the voices of horror and inhuman love in the poem *It deeply hurts*.

Freudian themes make their appearance very early on, inspiring his poetry and enriching its imagery. In the course of his analysis, childhood memories, threats and complexes come flooding to the surface in such images as, for example, with the appearance of "sin" and of an emphatic Oedipus complex. But he is also influenced by the methodology of analytical techniques: the *Notes of Free Ideas in Two Sitzings* is one of his most shocking and remarkable works, but it is difficult to know whether to classify it as a poetic composition or a psychoanalytical diary.

Apart from all this, like so many of his contemporaries, he too, in his own way and with his own conceptual system, attempted to find links between Marxist beliefs and Freudian theories, and eventually to forge them into one. Here too he set out from the fact that the Nazi party had already come into power, he was anxious to find the mistakes that had been committed and the hidden stimuli behind their success, not contenting himself with explanations which went no deeper than the economic level. This is what led him to develop almost right up until the end of his life in his study *Hegel, Marx, Freud* a conceptual system enabling him to perceive in their unity "the productive forces out there, and the instincts here within," to discipline them and to cure them. His synthesis of Marx and Freud is an impressive effort at conceptualization which still merits attention today.

He adopted his disease as a poetic subject as early as 1934, and analysed it more fully in the years 1935–1936. He then described, projected and objectified his illness in a whole series of great poems beginning with the 1935 sonnets and concluding with *Twilight*. They are extraordinary examples of how the poet tried not only to circumscribe the area of his obsessions, visions and anxieties, but also to pin them down and define them, to make

them understood and to elevate them poetically: "I listen to the news which my own voice brings out of my depths. . . ;" the poet's task here is diligently to note down the news: consciousness of guilt, Oedipus complex, solitude, escapist flight to his mother, dissolution of the ego:

" . . . and what I summoned so much / does not exist. / I chew its last morsels / until this poem is finished . . ."

Yet these poems reveal more than the clear consciousness of a condition and the struggle of an analytical mind with the obsessions which haunt it: again and again we are witness to the mind's victory over disease. Quiet but carefully chosen words heighten the quality of this victory: "I am no fool." It has been won partly through confession—"I trusted in myself from the outset. . ."—and it is the victory of the poems themselves, the product of a remarkable artistic performance and an impressive feat of the human will. In addition to expressing his personal suffering, solitude and illness, communal pain is ever present, for behind personal solitude lies the pain and desolation of the country and the people, behind his personal desperation there lies the more general desperation of mankind. It is awful to realize that 1937, the year of his death, when clinical opinion declared him to be more sick than ever before, and when he was obliged to spend months in hospital—this is the year when his poetry soars highest. Most of the poems which date from that year are characterized by an elevated tone and a broad range of vision, by a certain calm and confidence; it is as if the poet has taken a deep breath, cleared his voice, and is now ready to move from the narrow confines of his illness towards a broader political and national horizon, towards universal questions. There are glimpses of the humour, irony and bantering that have been missing for years past, there is the plaintive voice of political pathos, and there is his song, resounding clearly and ethereally even as it bids farewell.

Near the end of his life, having broken with Judit and followed his whim here and there for a while, there was a new emotional upheaval, the love affair with Flóra. This was a love that was greater and purer than anything that had preceded it, it seemed to him that this clever young girl of exceptional beauty with whom he became acquainted in the early part of 1937 was to bring him salvation: she was the woman of beauty and intelligence he had been dreaming about all along, and for him love was always more than mere sexual attraction. ". . . this is union and not even love," he wrote once, and indeed that is what it was for him—union in the struggle against the dark powers of the world, union behind the banners of gentleness and

intelligence; and this union more than any other was a rejection of the stifling shackles of the world and an awakening to a new life.

Hence this great, purifying and elevating love fuses, in the greatest of the Flóra poems (entitled simply *Flóra*), a personal ecstasy and physical desire with a plea for a better future for all people and a commitment to the struggle of mankind. All the great themes of his life, his childhood and the community he embraced, his politics and his humour his tearful tenderness and his melancholy—everything now rings out at once:

“Already two thousand million people / bind me up to make me a faithful
pet of theirs. / But moving from their world towards the south / are fair
goodness and gentle feeling. / To hold their universe up to the light, / as a
doctor does when looking into a glass vessel / has become too much for me;
I throw myself on their mercy / if you, love, do not help me.”

On the high poetic plateau of these last years of his life a number of new perspectives are also evoked. The poem *At the Danube* was written in 1936. It is a grandiose evocation of the march of history which proclaims the deep unity of the Danubian peoples, a poem more powerful than all the manipulations of rampant chauvinism which would have had those peoples turn against each other. In February 1937, prior to a lecture delivered by Thomas Mann in Budapest, the police prevented him from reading another outstanding work, and a great confession of European humanism, the poem *Greetings to Thomas Mann*:

O, do but speak, and we can take heart then.
Being men by birthright, we must remain men,
And women, women, cherished for that reason.
All of us human, though such numbers lessen.

(Tr. Vernon Watkins)

The vision of “beautiful freedom,” of “humane order” appears more and more often with a beautiful clarity all of its own: “Come, freedom! Give birth to order for me, teach your handsome, earnest son with good words, and let him play as well!” (*Airl*)

The poem *My Country* is a great work which expresses Hungarian patriotic feeling in a modern vein. In form it is a string of seven sonnets, in content it is the poet’s declaration of an anti-German war for national independence. The appallingly accurate panorama of the country which it presents also suggests another message: the nation will become really independent only after

an internal social transformation has taken place. And finally, of all the poems written in 1937, pride of place must be given to *Ars Poetica*—communal poetry in the loftiest sense, a hymn of faith in the infinite possibilities of the human spirit.

It would seem that he was on the threshold of a new phase in his use of the language and in his poetic forms in this last period: greater calmness and clarification are evidenced here as well, and poems broader in sweep have lines that are more compact and concise than ever before. The structure remains solid and the conceptual skeleton marvellously precise, but the voice is clearer; the images are bold and exceptionally sharp, the rich associations are tempered by a firmer discipline. The descriptive tendencies of his earlier years here serve to introduce a mood at the outset, whilst the fabric of the verse itself is composed of a close *mélange* of description and of plain facts drawn from the real world.

Only a few months were left to him, spent under leaden skies and in drenching November rain at Balatonszárszó, a deserted resort by Lake Balaton. His last poem is a final reckoning, a summation of the wisdom he had accumulated and the bewailing of the passing of his youth:

I've been trying to keep my feet
In whirling winds my whole life long.
Great joke—I didn't do the harm
To others that they did to me.

Spring is lovely, summer too,
Fall more yet but winter most,
When you can't hope for a home and family
When you can just wish them for other men.

(Tr. Lucas Myers and Agnes Vadas)

The final act was a letter to his doctor: "Dear Doctor, I send you my heartfelt love. You attempted the impossible to no avail." His two quarrelsome sisters and their screaming children were in a small room of the boarding-house to which he had withdrawn, while his acquaintances and Flóra were all in Budapest, a long way away. The scene of the tragedy was the little railway station; the long freight train was the executioner; news of the ancient tragedy was first carried by the village half-wit. The fact that he threw himself under a train made his suicide a symbolic one, and this symbolism was noticed even by his contemporaries. The train, fascism, and the spectacle of his country rushing headlong into war had combined to

destroy a great poet who had risen to universal heights of excellence. A few months after the poet's death, on March 15, 1938, Austria was occupied by Nazi troops, and the fate of Central Europe was sealed.

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Attila József was a modern poet in the sense that he went beyond that revolution which Baudelaire and Rimbaud had brought about in European lyric poetry. His poetry is really new—in image construction, in visual angle, in idiom, in its portrayal of the individual, and also because of the role attributed to poetry itself in mastering reality and in expressing the self. He is a modern poet too in the sense that he continues another great trend, the "linguistic revolution" begun by Mallarmé. József lived through the great lyrical revolution of the twentieth century, he sought to conjure up a new world through the force of his imagery and at the same time to build a new poetic universe from pre-existing elements and to relegate the whole to the task of creating a new and more sensible social order. Perhaps this is why, among European poets, he stands very close to Apollinaire, who likewise conjured up a new perspective of the future through his extravagance and song, his sincere desire for change and his colourfulness.

Yet Attila József was also an artist who espoused socialist ideas, whose philosophical, political and ethical tenets, and whose outlook on life and work were basically shaped by Marxism. He brought to socialist literature many novel poetic methods. In twentieth-century literature it has become almost a commonplace that lyrical poets (even though sometimes in a contradictory manner, and wrestling with all sorts of inner and external conflicts) take an active part in mass movements, and especially mass movements of the left. In earlier times (but more recently as well in many cases) artists were attracted to anarchism, which seemed to hold out the greatest hope for the free individual, for the self-expression of the free poet. Yet nevertheless it has become more and more common to find the cause of social and later socialist revolution taken up in the arts. *Surréalisme au service de la révolution* was the title of one short-lived periodical of that movement, and indeed, the path followed by surrealism is a good example of many of the factors which led artists to embrace a cause, only to desert it later. Attila József's links with the working-class movement were afflicted by many disputes and conflicts, hampered by misunderstandings on both sides; the road he took represents a distinct trend within socialist poetry, and the great poems written after 1932 are especially difficult to pigeon-hole.

The more commonly known variety of revolutionary lyric poetry (which implies the revolutionary transformation of the individual, his full participation in the revolutionary movement and simultaneous deployment of new means of expression alongside the new ideas) tends to come into its own and reach veritable fullness when the revolution is being prepared, and then in the days of the revolution itself and immediately afterwards. This is well illustrated by the activist wing of German expressionistic poetry, by the lyrical poems of the young Becher, by the great period of Mayakovsky. But when the tide of revolutionary enthusiasm has begun to turn or reached a low ebb without a revolution taking place, or when on the morrow of the revolution the new power has established itself and is preoccupied with everyday problems, then this kind of revolutionary lyric poetry tends to lose its bearings, it scratches around for means of expression that previously seemed to come so naturally, and much of its content somehow evaporates.

The first half of the thirties was the crest of the left-wing wave in many European literatures. Auden, Spender, Day Lewis, McNeice are the best known amongst English poets who in their younger days, recognizing the threat of German fascism and influenced by their experience of the Spanish civil war, developed a committed poetry sympathizing with socialist ideas. Although he was never in direct contact with any of these figures, the later years of József's poetic career display a certain analogy with this general trend.

The period of his adult life coincided with the low tide of revolution, both in Hungary and in other countries of Europe as well. He had to chart his course in the difficult and complicated situation following a revolution that the authorities had crushed, and when the new revolution which he anticipated failed to materialize. Hence József is an outstanding (and practically unique) representative of a revolutionary poetry devoid of revolution, a poetry which still makes the fullest use of novel techniques and methods and maintains steadfast faith in its approach to social reality. He is the Mayakovsky of the second half of the twenties, or he is akin to Pablo Neruda (in one phase of the Chilean poet's career); perhaps a still better analogy would be the late Aragon.

The possibility of maintaining one's revolutionary attitude and loyalty to the revolution in a more complicated period when no revolution takes place: this is the wholly valid message conveyed by József's poetry, and no doubt one of the main reasons why it has retained its appeal and its popularity. This revolutionary attitude consists in part of facing up to the whole human condition, with its depths and abysses, with all its suffering; and it consists too of familiarity with many kinds of love, how to formulate

them and how to master them; here too Attila József has much to say that is highly relevant today.

His poetry as a whole is also an eloquent artistic reply to the challenge of the natural sciences. After 1906-1908 there flowed into the consciousness of the European mind a succession of startling new intellectual attainments, amongst them the pioneering works of Freud, Rutherford, Planck, and Einstein. The creators of the new psychology, the new physics, the new mathematics, all queried in their different ways both the *raison d'être* of all previous types of literature and the forms in which they had existed. Everyday life was also transformed by new technical-technological achievements which went hand in hand with scientific progress. The challenges posed by new conceptions, by the scientific outlook on the world and by technology are still being felt at the present time. As an artist and thinker, József embodied this new type of intellectualism, and he reacted by endeavouring to take up the challenge of science, to build on its results and integrate them into his poetry. He set out deliberately to think in the philosophical terms of the age, and he achieved in his oeuvre an impressive unity of intellectual content and sensuous representation; the source of his much analyzed and debated image-construction was to be found in the natural sciences and in philosophy.

He was not alone in this endeavour: Eliot, Valéry, Gottfried Benn or (in the Hungarian context) Mihály Babits and Lőrinc Szabó set themselves comparable objectives. But amongst those who contributed to socialist poetry, and especially to revolutionary poetry produced after the revolution, I can think of no-one whose cultural-scientific grounding matches that of Attila József. To which it must be added that his poetry was also influenced by revived interests in ancient history (from mythology to the Bible, from the *Joseph Tetralogy* to Hungarian prehistory), and that hidden behind his poems we often find seams rich in historical and cultural meaning.

His perspective on the past leads us to a much discussed and debated problem: the relationship between Attila József and the "Bartók model." Very early on the poet sought and established organic connections between old and the new, between deep strata of popular tradition and modern expression, between archaic custom and twentieth-century rationality. In this too he forms part of an important European trend. From the beginning of the twentieth century onwards there was a strong tendency in many countries to dig back into the roots, roots thought to be genuinely archaic, of national life; men sought to recapture an art they considered to be purer and more original, they looked for it on remote continents: the tendency can be traced from Picasso's Negro statues through Stravinsky and the music

of Bartók's *Bluebeard*, to Kodály's *Psalmus Hungaricus*; or from the *Khovanshchina* through to Yesenin's lyric poetry. Turning towards the common people, towards authentic sources and deep folk layers, often implied the desire to return to some imagined archaic way of life, but this did not follow necessarily. In Bartók's case, it is but one component of a synthesis in which the force of an immense poetic passion and discipline serves to combine the primitive and the modern, the urban and the mundane, the technological and the pretechnological into a new quality, into a vision which fuses past and present in a single embrace and at the same time conjures up the future.

Another notable example of such a synthesis is the oeuvre of García Lorca and of twentieth-century Spanish and Latin American poetry in general. A number of prominent Rumanian authors, of whom Lucian Blaga is best known in Hungary, have also developed a modern lyrical poetry based to some extent on "folk" elements, and a strong current within Hungarian literature, the exponents of "folk" poetry, have also aimed at cultivating this synthesis. With József the aim is magnificently realized, aided and abetted by a deeply intellectual art and a revolutionary attitude that outlives the revolution. The past and the folk heritage were successfully integrated in his mature oeuvre: one more foundation stone, not only for a modern poetry but more broadly for an entire new culture. "We are both ancient and modern, we are the Hungarians in Europe," he wrote.

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In respect of poetic methods, as of artistic forms and subjects broached, various lines of analogy might be developed. The big city, the industrial district, the train, or even the motifs of the law and the star have all been taken up by others and usefully analyzed by specialists. Attention has concentrated on the anger and accusations of his later poetry and his antifascism is linked with the noble efforts of other writers—in particular he stands close to the Brecht of *Arturo Ui* and *Furcht und Elend*.

The middle of the nineteen-thirties presents a distinct picture in Hungarian literature, one that might be labelled "neo-classicism" or "neo-realism." Towards the end of the twenties the vigour of the avant-garde had broken down, but while this impetus ground to a halt, many of its achievements were to survive—in the form of poetic methods, whole new genres, and a quite new outlook on life shared by many artists. These enduring achievements of the avant-garde took their place in the incipient realistic synthesis of the early thirties and they enriched it greatly. Needless to say, poetic mutations are not independent of political evolution, and it was

vital that all that was of any value in the recent past could and should be put to use in the struggle to combat fascism.

In the mid-thirties this new trend was apparent in French literature, in German antifascist writing, and also in Czech and in Polish; and it was represented on the highest level by the lyric poetry of the mature Attila József. Parallels are to be sought amongst his companions—in the prose of Tibor Déry, in the new lyricism developed by Gyula Illyés, in the mature lyric poetry of Miklós Radnóti, and, in another field, in works composed by Bartók in the same period.

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC COMPONENTS OF STRUCTURAL CHANGE

József Bognár

HUNGARY AND POLAND IN 1939 — THE GERMAN-POLISH WAR
AND HUNGARIAN POLICY

Gyula Jubász and Maciej Kozminski

ISTVÁN ÖRKÉNY, THE PLAYWRIGHT

Tamás Koltai

ARNOLD HAUSER ON HIS LIFE AND TIMES

Kristóf Nyíri

DEZSŐ KORNIS'S RETROSPECTIVE

Zoltán Nagy

HUNGARIAN ART IN LONDON

Paul Overy

CROOKED ARCHITECTURE

János Frank

JÓZSEF JAKOVITS'S "VITAL SCULPTURE"

Éva Forgács

LÁSZLÓ KÁLNOKY

POEMS

Translated by Edwin Morgan

WHAT AM I?

Piano in a deaf-and-dumb institute,
stone-age transistor,
telescope down a coalmine,
windmill caught in a dead calm,
pointless ticket for a cancelled performance,
bunch of keys to a bombed-out flat,
pair of sunglasses for nighttime viewing,
toupee close-cropped in error,
prodigal son's piggy-bank,
scarecrow scaring the Sahara,
snowman iced in the tropics,
dogfish looking for its doggone dentures,
centipede disqualified from the championship walk,
crocodile wiping off its tears,
tomcat caught in the mousetrap,
leopard running from gazelles,
brown bear in the throes of winter insomnia,
parrot squawking in Etruscan,
hamster sweet as a cooing dove,
firefly cursed with night-blindness,
giraffe strolling under a sofa,
fish gone limp in a drying-out station,
chimney-sweep in a white dinner-jacket,
leaseholder to Jack Landless,
butterfly-hunter at the North Pole,
illiterate polymath,

vegetarian cannibal,
 ice-cream man in penguin country,
 diver in the depth of the desert,
 cellerman afflicted with alcohol allergy,
 messenger delivering pure dada,
 electrician at the court of King Arthur,
 clown in a cortège.

THE POSSIBLE VARIATIONS

The possible variations
 may be infinite in number, yet no more
 than the gradations of grey, the monotonous ticking.
 The metronome in our breastbone
 slows down, speeds up, stops now and then.
 Patterns in ceaseless process
 seem to be still as if we knew them
 ages back. Present boredoms
 equal the catalogue of failures
 in years long gone, or what we might expect
 in a thinning, shrinking future:
 our particle of good,
 our proliferating ill. Heads of statues spill dust,
 birdshit cakes them. Every twenty years
 someone will clean them. Poetry-books too
 are taken from the shelf at times. A line
 here and there comes clear, the reader pours
 his own blood into frozen veins, makes light
 steal through smashed eyes. But that is nothing more
 than surface, deception, self-harm.
 What will our faces be indeed
 but a wilderness of sand,
 carved into incomprehensible images
 by the winds only, only the unresting
 endlessly thirsting wasteland winds.

FLAME AND DARKNESS

Without warning you flared up,
a bluish flame burning day and night,
the wind tried in vain to blow you out,
made a beckoning ghost-figure from the dust
of the road—in vain,
you failed to follow it.

Your austere needle had its own target,
nothing deflected it.

What am I now without you?
Ashes sifting from a riddled bucket,
a scrap of paper stuck to a railing,
an animal shadow fading in mist.

The day will come when we search for each other.
You prowl the room as if blind.
Feel a chair, floor, wall.
Touch the cold profile of my life,
and fail to hear me as I try to shout
to you with stretched, silent mouth.
It is useless. You sit alone.
And like a thundering crushing weight
a flake of plaster
drops from the ceiling.

It is for your sake, my make-believe
that I believe the golden legend:
a handhold in the scree of things.

SARTRE'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

by

IVÁN BOLDIZSÁR

(*I have not long to live . . .*) Jean-Paul Sartre did not intend the ideas which I shall endeavour to report on, or the conversation with his disciple and fellow philosopher Benny Lévy, to be some sort of last will and testament. True enough, he mentioned death, and that throws a special light on the whole of this highly tense and interesting text. After much argument, many probing questions and moving answers, right at the very end, speaking of hope, the major subject of the conversation, Sartre says that, coming down to brass tacks it is all the same to him: "I have not long to live anyway, five years at the most . . ." then he stops and corrects himself: "I said five then, but really I am thinking of ten." Within three weeks he was dead.

For the young, or those about to be initiated into old age, men around fifty, say, this is at most a terrifying chance event. Perhaps it gives greater force to Sartre's message. But if one reads this knowing oneself to be a bare seven years younger one gets the cold shivers. A hundred things to write about, vain plans and aims moving further and further away beckon temptingly. We all say five but think of ten or fifteen. Right through the conversation Sartre again and again mentions what he means to think through yet, or re-think. This is no last will and testament, but a plan for a philosophic journey.

And yet it was not merely to catch the eye, or in lieu of a memoir or obituary that I put last will and testament in my heading. Approaching and unexpected death made it that, but also the humanism of the final chords. "Existentialism, a new humanism?" was the title of a much read piece of his, back in '45, at the height of the existentialist fashion. (Géza Rubletzky, who died behind bars, translated it into Hungarian.) But before that, and after it, in every one of his works, sometimes calling it freedom, Sartre wrestles with the word and notion of humanism, and we, his contemporaries, have done so with him, for forty-five years. There is no thinking man in this divided Europe that is truly one who, writing the story of his career, or just telling it, looking for his own place, or that of his country, or of Europe, does not meet Sartre somewhere along the way. We Hungarians, for instance, did so surprised and satisfied, when, shortly after the War, he proclaimed the commitment of the writer. That was a novelty in the West, but has been the rule in Hungarian literature for four hundred years. A contemporary meets him, either comes up against him, or travels part of the way with him, then falls flat on his nose, trying to follow him, or only really to understand him. Sometimes one moves away from him being unable to identify European reality with the Sartre-cloud-cuckoo-land of the Paris super-intellectuals. Nevertheless one discovers again and again that Sartre said, but more perfectly, what one thought oneself, and wrote what one would always have liked to write.

(*Read a hundred times over.*) The only stories I may have read a hundred times are "Mario and the magician" and Sartre's "The wall". Perhaps we who are a generation older than our western European contemporaries at any time can understand and empathize with the implicit and frighteningly tough proposition put forward by this story. There are situations where one choses what one imagines to be good in vain, one's action is evil in any event. "Hell is other people," the last words of *Huis Clos*, seen in Paris as far back as 1946, reappear in my nightmares again and again, an implacable, self-tormenting curse, comparable only to Vörösmarty's cry of woe after the lost 1848/49 Revolution: "Mankind, a sowing of dragon's teeth." Noone has described frustrated sexuality as one of the roots of fascism delving so deep and with a lack of mercy which was the due of a pseudo-ideal as Sartre did in "*L'enfance d'un chef*." The seemingly cliché subject of *La putaine respectueuse* flares up again and again, the mind of a philosopher brings it to life, the recent success of Kamilló Lendvay's television opera may be cited as proof. And "*Les Mots*"! In addition to the reading of Stendhal recommended by Endre Illés this is the work in translation which every Hungarian writer should read again and again, before writing, and while writing. The tense style creates harmony between systematic Cartesian thinking and free floating existentialism.

And yet while Sartre, the inspiring writer, has spurred one to read and write for decades now, an article in a paper here or there, a rough or obtuse statement, gives rise to indignation. Again and again one wishes to argue against Sartre the politician, or rather the dabbler in politics. For instance when, hoary headed, he goes out into the street to sell *La Cause du Peuple*, a paper of the way out extreme left, or when *Temps Modernes*, with his name on the cover, attacks the socialist countries in every issue.

What is interesting and particularly thought-provoking in the hour of death, is that Sartre again and again wrestles with his own self. It is just ten years ago that I discussed a self-examination of his conscience in the columns of the literary weekly *Élet és Irodalom*. That time too Sartre concealed it in a conversation, and that too had appeared in *Le Nouvel Observateur*.

(*The problems of humanism.*) Humanism and freedom were two of the things which that contest with himself was about as well, the possibility of choice between yes and no, *L'Être et le Néant*, the relationship between existence and non-existence, nothing. Ten years ago Sartre said: "There is one idea to which I return again and again, further developping it, that in the last resort every man is responsible for what is made of him, even if he can do no more than accept responsibility for being able to do nothing."

The idea is further developed in this final conversation. I am avoiding the term interview on purpose. Benny Lévy did not interview his teacher and friend, he talked to him. His manner was so disrespectful, so much that of one talking to an equal, that *Le Nouvel Observateur*, publishing Sartre in their 800th number, as they had done in their first, thought it right to explain the situation in an introduction. How was it possible, to start with, that Sartre and this young man whom he only met in the heady days of '68 should say *tu* to each other, when Sartre was on *vous* terms even with his most intimate old friends? The young on the other hand, the sixty-eighters, they call themselves *soixante-huitard* on the model of *communard*, say *tu pour épater les bourgeois*. Sartre took over this usage from them, at least when talking to his young friends.

Benny Lévy has for a decade now been publishing ultra leftist articles in *Les Temps Modernes*, Sartre's journal, signing them Pierre Victor. This is the point of view which he maintains in arguing with Sartre, without the slightest show of respect, on occasion even impertinently. True the master's ripostes are sometimes hard enough to take away B. L.'s breath. This construct of question and answer, in which Sartre sometimes asks the questions,

has the advantage for the reader that it allows one to follow the conception, pregnancy and birth of this or that of Sartre's ideas, sometimes catching him out in contradictions, as well as observing attempts to overcome them, some of them successful.

(*Hope today.*) The conversation was published in three separate issues of *Le Nouvel Observateur*. It was obviously with Sartre's knowledge that it appeared as three separate chapters, with headings of their own: 1. Hope today, 2. Fraternity and violence and 3. The history of the Jews and Judaism. It would show greater disrespect than Benny Lévy's to squeeze the three parts into a single article, adding the associations of a reader and contemporary. I shall try to deal mainly with the first part: the hosts take up their positions, the battle order, the first clashes, the decisive part of the skirmish, then the battle as a whole, the final, irreversible victory sealed as it is by death.

The first question, setting the tone, concerns hope and its opposite. "For some time now you have been worrying yourself with questions of hope and despair. You used to hardly touch on them before."

Thus Benny Lévy starts by confronting Sartre with his past. As it becomes apparent later, it is one of the paradoxes of the conversation, and one of its charms as well, that the young philosopher better remembers Sartre's writings and ideas than the aged master himself. There is nothing comic about this, there is gentle humour in it, that is all, and it is precisely that which cannot be found in Sartre's literary works.

Sartre answers the first question, or rather assertion, with what amounts to a summing up of his life's work as a philosopher. He had always been concerned with hope, though in other ways. He had always believed that every man lived with his hope. In other words one believes that whatever one has undertaken, or whatever is important to the social group to which one belongs, is about to come true, or will come true, and that this will favour him and his group. After this he says something that is new in Sartre. Dare I write: a new Sartre on the brink of eternity? "I believe that hope is part of man; human action is transcendent, that is, starting from the present it always aims at a point in the future... the fact of an objective set up before it is realised, presupposes hope."

B. L. promptly counters: "Yes, you said that the aim of human action lies in the future, but you always added that the aim is vain and unrealisable." He does not rest content with that but goes on to say that, according to Sartre, hope is necessarily condemned to failure. If one reads Sartre, he continues confidently, one discovers that "a café waiter, a leader of the people—Hitler or Stalin—a Paris drunk, a revolutionary Marxist militant and Jean-Paul Sartre, all these people, it seems to me, all have that much in common that they set themselves aims, and that, whatever these may be, they fail."

(*Sartre defends himself, and counterattacks.*) This is a rare scene, one could call it bizarre: Sartre defends himself. "I did not say exactly that, you exaggerate." He begins to explain, but the far from drunk Parisian will not let him complete the sentence, and quotes *L'Être et le Néant* at him. True enough man sets himself aims, but finally he desires a single objective, that is to be God. "You called that being self-caused. Failure naturally follows."

Sartre moves over into counter-attack. "One must not forget that at the time of *L'Être et le Néant* I did not speak of hope. I only recognised its value later". (What a pity that Sartre did not remember a beautiful sentence he used in his 1970 wrestle with himself. Of course I did not remember it either, but I looked it up. In order to change, he said, he had to go through the Resistance experience; to quote, "the myth of heroism." "What had to happen was that the man I was before the war, selfish, individualist, a follower of Stendhal, had to be shoved into history.")

That is, I imagine, what took him into politics and politicking, confronting him and

Camus—this is one of the subjects of Simone de Beauvoir's *Mandarins*—moving him into the proximity of the working class movement, taking him, it is difficult to believe it now that it happened, to the platform of the 1962 Moscow Peace Conference screaming a French word into the large hall of the Palace of Congresses that had not been heard there before, or since: *Merde!* The hall had been empty, but it filled as soon as he started speaking. If pulmonary oedema had not carried him off, who knows, whether in the present international situation, when the cause of peaceful coexistence needs hope, and great personalities like Sartre, as much as the air we breathe, he might perhaps have attended a similar gathering once again. I shall not continue. He left us hope philosophically buttressed, embedded in the new humanism.

Answering B. L.'s objection Sartre points out that though he did not speak of hope, he had written of despair, and had often argued that it was not opposed to hope. "Despair was the belief that my basic ends could not be achieved and that consequently human reality held in it an essential failure." He briefly digressed to allude to Kierkegaard and Heidegger's influence, and to an influence that could not be described as philosophical, essentially something he mentioned ten years earlier as well, using different language. He had experienced destitution. B. L. repeats the word with mocking overtones, but Sartre will not give in. Yes, indeed, human destitution, naturally other people's, but this set him off thinking in a different direction: from unavoidable failure to a meaningful objective. At this point the recognition of the contradiction and the attempt to resolve it can be observed *in statu nascendi*.

(*Hope and necessity.*) Benny Lévy counters once again that, in his early philosophy, Sartre considered failure to be unavoidable. He answers: "We have reached a contradiction here which I am still stuck with. I am thinking of getting out of it through these conversations." True, he had maintained for a long time that man, owing to his very nature, comes a cropper in whatever he undertakes. "He cannot even think what he wants to think." Since 1945 however he has been increasingly thinking, and now he sees his way clear, that hope is an essential characteristic of human action.

A far from easy passage follows, but for that very reason it is worth translating word by word. It is precisely here, as his last will and testament, that he makes it impossible to nail his whole oeuvre to the masthead of *Huis Clos* hopelessness. "And hope, that means that I cannot undertake a course of action without counting on it bearing fruit. And I do not think, as I am telling you, that this hope is some sort of poetic illusion, it is part of the nature of action. That is, action, being at the same time hope, cannot on principle be condemned to absolute and certain failure. This does not mean that it must necessarily get to its goal, but it must present itself as a realisation of the aim which is posited as the future. And there is a kind of necessity in hope itself."

B. L.'s leftish soul is not satisfied with that. He refers Sartre to his "*Les Mots*" where he tells that already as a child he had decided to devote his life to writing, that is to immortality. What about that?

(*Progress and immortality.*) Sartre answers that, true enough, he is neither a Shakespeare, nor a Hegel, but he gave as much care to every one of his works as he was able, "some I consider to be failures, for sure, others less so, and others turned out well." B. L. then speaks of success and failure not in terms of Sartre personally, but of the influence of his works on the position of the French Left. There Sartre appears to retreat a step: "Look you, my works amount to a failure." Numerous papers in Western Europe seized hold of precisely this sentence, quoting it and misinterpreting it. But one should read on:

"I have not said everything I wanted to say, nor have I said it the way I wanted to say it."

This often troubled him in the course of his life, nevertheless his major recognition, now in the winter of his days, was that in any event history was slowly but continuously moving towards man becoming conscious to man. "When that happens everything that had been done in the past will occupy its proper place and achieve its value. For instance what I have written. And this will lend to all we have done, or will do, a certain immortality. In other words one must believe in progress." He then adds with the coquetry of old men: "Could be that this is one of my last naivities."

This tart grimace shows that he is well aware that he knows that whatever this may be it is not a naivity, though it may well be the last. How he manages to reconcile this with his principal political attitude of recent years, that is with the rejection of socialism: as it exists: we can no longer ask him that. *All the same* urges itself onto paper, but I shush it. Yet I cannot resist quoting what he said of old age. Benny Lévy asked him if it was not old age that had modified his thinking.

"No," Sartre said and then added something that expressed what every aging man feels half-ashamed to think. "All the world treats me as an old man. I laugh at that. Why? Because no dotard ever thinks of himself as such." (Oh Jókai! The Hungarian Scott was as old as Sartre at the time of his death when he married a young actress and wrote a novel "An old man is not a dotard") "I can understand from watching others what old age implies for those who see it from the outside, but I do not feel my own old age. Therefore old age cannot in itself teach me anything in particular. What does teach me something is the way others behave towards me. . . they are pleasant to me because I shall die soon, and that is why they show respect." Then, as if absolving the terrifying closing words of *Huis Clos* he concludes: "The others, they are my old age."

And his immortality as well.

SURVEYS

GYULA LŐRINCZ

AGAINST NATIONAL TRAGEDIES

In Prague you would find Laco Novomeský in the Café Metro with Sekanina, Nezvál, Rybák, and other progressive intellectuals (we can safely say they were all Communists); at home in the Slovak capital he would write or argue on the first floor of one of the best coffee-houses, the Astoria or the Metropol; in summer he would join Clementis and his group in the Ship-Café on the Danube. Since there were hardly any newspaper offices in the land, most of his articles and poems were written in the coffee-house; the other official residence of writers and editors was the printing office, the make-up table. And this outstanding writer and editor, who was also politician and artist, was equally at home in political meetings, strike quarters, court-rooms, factories and the shop floor, exhibition and conference halls. Laco Novomeský lived this life intensely, he watched and recorded the life of the poor, and it was he who documented the tragic phases of the struggle of the working class in Slovakia.

He first put pen to paper to describe the gendarme fusillade in Korompa.

What, in fact, happened in Korompa on February 21, 1920?

"The workers were allegedly extremely

Text of an article printed in the Bratislava *Új Szó* on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the birth of Laco Novomeský, the Slovak poet, republished by the Budapest daily *Népszabadság* on 24 December, 1979.

dissatisfied because maize-meal had been distributed instead of flour... In the clash with the gendarmes two workers lost their lives, seventeen were wounded, seven seriously." (One of them died in hospital. Gy. L.)

Laco Novomeský, the faithful chronicler of the class struggle and simultaneously a convincing commentator, continued to record other tragic events.

"Kosút is a small village by Galánta; the farm-hands and their families, to whom the Guttmans of this world, the Bradác, the Preiss, and Baron Kuffner dictate paltry wages, live in indescribable poverty. For a workday of twelve, even fourteen hours, the men get 7 crowns, the women 6, and the young 5... no spring has passed in Kosút since 1925 without strikes breaking out amongst the workers and their mates elsewhere in the district.

"This spring farm-hands received 0.90 an hour, the wages of women and youngsters varied between 0.50 and 0.60. In the second half of May another strike broke out on the estates of the sugar mill of Diószeg. The workers demanded an hourly rate of 1.30 for adult men, 1.10 for women and young people. Pfeiffer and Schiketanz, the managers of the sugar mill in Diószeg, would not even hear of a wage increase." (The yearly income of Pfeiffer was 1,200,000 Crowns. Gy. L.)

May 25, 1931 was Bloody Whitsun in

Kosút. Another strike had broken out and a mass meeting was summoned, at which the communist representative, István Major, was due to speak. The preparations of the gendarmerie were on an unprecedented scale. Novomeský takes up the story: "János Gyevát, a 17-year-old worker from Diószeg, fell after the first shot with a bullet through his heart; István Thurzó, a 30-year-old worker from Kosút, was shot in the neck. Sándor Zsabka tried to flee from a hail of bullets but fell to the ground almost at once with blood spurting from his chest.

"He was not the only victim hit while trying to escape. Amongst the five wounded treated in the hospital at Diószeg, four were hit from behind."

Oppressed farm-workers and the tough industrial workers of Korompa or Tiszolc drew the same support from Novomeský. He became involved in the problems of the peasants of Csallóköz. He protested because the Csölösztő peasants had no seed to sow. Although the agricultural council had offered them seed for 160 crowns, they could not afford this; because of a drought they had nothing to sell, and if they could not sow now they would be starving within a year. Novomeský added: "If the gang of usurers, factory-owners, and landlords were expelled, and the wealth they have appropriated were restored to the people, their miserable existence could become a valuable creative life... And a life worthy of human dignity would be possible even in little Slovakia."

This was the sincere voice of Novomeský, this was the stand he took in the bourgeois Czechoslovakian Republic against capitalist exploitation.

In the period of the so-called Slovak State his political activity had to be illegal. With his comrades Husák and Smidke he became one of the leaders of the underground central committee of the Communist Party and he participated in the preparations for the Slovak national uprising. On September 6, 1944 he was among those who prepared

the programme of the Slovak National Council and, also, fought for schools for national minorities to be restored to pre-1938 conditions after the liberation of the country.

After the liberation he was appointed commissar for schools and adult education and in this capacity he proposed in 1946 to deal with outstanding matters concerning Hungarian schools, the Hungarian press, and the national status of Hungarians. Unfortunately he was outvoted in the Slovak National Council. In spite of his efforts, he was later accused of anti-Czech and anti-Hungarian nationalism. Together with a group labelled bourgeois nationalists he was brought to trial on the basis of trumped-up charges and sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

That was not the Laco Novomeský I knew either under the bourgeois republic or after the liberation!

On Saturday October 22, 1949 we travelled together to Trenčénteplic to a training course for teachers in Hungarian schools; we talked throughout the journey, and this conversation convinced me that my companion in the official car was quite simply a Communist of long standing, an internationalist, a Slovak poet, publicist, and a true teacher.

I remember his confidential words on that occasion as vividly as he expected me to.

In evoking them on what would have been his 75th birthday I want to let him speak for himself, as he spoke to me on that 22nd of October 1949. Novomeský said: "...Just one year ago, in September 1948, the government of the Republic decided to settle the matter of the civil rights of Hungarians living in Czechoslovakia and this has led to the decree establishing Hungarian schools for Hungarian children... The teaching of Hungarian children in their own language is more than a beautiful promise in Czechoslovakia: it is a fact, and it is not a minor or subordinate element of our cul-

tural policy but fully as serious and as highly valued as the teaching of Slovak children in their mother tongue or the teaching of Czech children in Czech. This training course is one proof of this. . . . Allow me to stress that with these measures we not only wish to express the dispassionate objectivity of this State; we apply equal standards to Czechs and Slovaks, to Ukrainians in Eastern Slovakia and Hungarians in the South, because in fact we want to attain a still higher goal: equal conditions for all the national minorities of this State, equal conditions for Slovaks and Hungarians!

"This goes beyond the objectives of any previous cultural policy. We are opening a new era in the history of Slovak and Hungarian coexistence, something without precedent in our history. We, Slovaks and Czechs, do not merely wish to give something to the Hungarian population, we are ensuring at last for ourselves peaceful development at home without nationalistic friction and chauvinistic quarrels and, at the same time, and this should not be thought illusory, the age of cooperation and fruitful exchange of experiences and values will become a reality in the dynamically developing cultural life of our nations."

"No past period did, or could have favoured such intentions. Slovak national life has progressed midst ceaseless struggles, though what I say applies mainly to the last century, and 'progress' is hardly the word, in constant opposition to the Magyarization endeavours of the ruling classes in the Hungary of old, and in Hungary after the Great War and during the Second World War. This ambition discriminated against Slovaks and it also became the source of the Hungarian tragedy. It erected a barrier between Hungarians and ourselves, as well as all the other national minorities of old Hungary, and there was no necessity whatever for such barriers. The rule of the magnates provoked dissent and often hostility in ordinary people; the truth is that this rule had consequences which were unfavourable

not only for ordinary Slovaks, Rumanians, and Croatians, but also for Hungarians.

"Hungarian aristocratic arrogance, of such ill repute, enslaved the common man not only in Northern Hungary and Transylvania but also on the Hungarian-populated Great Plain. If, despite the clarity of the issues, ordinary Slovaks, Rumanians, and Croatians could not find a common language with Hungarians of their kind, this was so because neither side was able to see the source of its misery and humiliation from a class viewpoint but so to speak always on a nationalist basis. In those times there simply were no farsighted forces able to convince the masses that the workers of all nations should wage a common struggle for their rights and national liberties against the common class enemy who was oppressing Slovaks and Hungarians alike."

I have been quoting the words and ideas of Laco Novomeský, more powerful and convincing than any that may be written about him. However, I must add a brief story about him. The Central Committee of the Slovak Communist Party once held a meeting in Szliács and I had decorated the hall for the event. In the evening, after dinner, caught up in nostalgia for the old cafés, we were sitting in the coffee-house and evoking the poet Endre Ady over a glass of wine; we vied with each other as to who knew more poems by heart; there were three of us at the table, two serious contestants, Laco Novomeský and myself—and I lost.

Ady had a passionate love for the Hungarian people, and was afraid for their future; this was what underpinned his hatred of the Hungarian ruling class, his struggle against feudal lords and his quarrel with István Tisza. And Novomeský loved Ady and yet they still brought up those false charges against him. It is too late now but I still ask myself and others: why didn't they scream it from the rooftops that the charges were false?

We put this question once to the poet

Hviezdoslav, who had answered Ady's poetic plea for a like-minded poet to raise his voice, and who had adopted Ady as his own blueprint:

"When shall we at last join forces! / When shall we say something profound at last? / We, the oppressed, the crushed, / Hungarians and non-Hungarians together."

MIKLÓS HERNÁDI

FESTIVE BEHAVIOUR IN HUNGARY

In the life of every community there are periods when more or less uniform behaviour by members of the community, patterns not arising simply from the division of labor, are legitimized or required. Such behaviour on special occasions is generally value-rational in the Weberian sense of the term, and it often contains symbolic elements as well. If we look at such behaviour with a functionalist eye, we may find that it is extremely apt to reveal concrete manifestations of the abstract sense of belonging felt by individuals towards their community, or the community's own identification with certain values and ideals.

In such cases the community is seen by the individuals who compose it to be a live, and functioning organism; and the individuals may perceive each other as associates and live through this period as the collective pillars of this organism. In order that a holiday should become a major event in the life of the community, relatively uniform behaviour is necessary. Holidays are also necessary if a community is to be able to show that it can mould and guide the actions of its members in some way. Seen in this light the holiday is both a major challenge to community life and a demonstration of its ability to function.

The fact that community life becomes problematic with the onset of industrialization, and that in consequence festive customs (along with other aspects of life in disinte-

grating traditional communities) are understandably neglected by ethnographers, if anything only enhances the importance of analyzing this subject sociologically.

Holiday customs in Budapest

In a long-term investigation of holiday culture in contemporary Hungarian society, we chose to begin with the working population of a factory in Budapest. We were interested first of all in the weight of festive traditions in the holiday culture of those employed in industry in Budapest. Secondly, we wanted to find out the effective range of the community within which festive behaviour was primarily manifested. Finally, we wanted to explore how factory people defined holidays, and what importance the attributed to a number of specific occasions.

The VBKM Battery Factory, which had 1285 employees on February 1, 1978, the day the random sample was taken, is situated in the 13th District, in an area towards the north of the city, with strong industrial traditions. 344 questionnaires were evaluated, and the respondents were visited in their homes in March 1978. Two thirds of the respondents were blue-collar workers, the remaining third was composed of graduate engineers, technicians, and clerks. Men and women were equally represented; there is no skilled-worker training in the

Battery Factory and the bulk of production is carried out by semi-skilled workers, the majority of whom are women.

One third of the sample commutes to work from a village or from a country town. Four fifths of those who commute are unskilled or semi-skilled workers. The workers who live in the countryside are brought in by factory buses, but even so the journey takes hours. It was discovered that only those with less than eight years of schooling had three or more children. Every second respondent had to leave the community of residence in order to visit the majority of his relatives. Every fourth respondent had to travel over an hour in order to reach the majority of his close relations. Every third respondent went off on vacation every year. Nearly half the respondents had not yet been abroad (except for war service or P.O.W. captivity), and approximately the same number had no access to a car. Approximately one third of the respondents were dissatisfied with their housing conditions, and one fifth said the same concerning their place of work.

The role of tradition

In all societies of the world, the more important holidays are accompanied by abstention from work. The more recently introduced holidays in Hungary have adjusted to this tradition, although opposition manifested itself for some time at the beginning of the fifties in the widely proclaimed and implemented practice of "celebration by work", and "voluntary" (read obligatory) work on holidays. As in so many other areas of life, it was not administrative measures directly that caused traditions to decline, but the changing pattern of life itself. It may suffice to refer here to continuous (shift)-working, the renovating, gardening or do-it-yourself activity that is carried out in the main on Sundays and holidays, or the official practice of shifting

the holiday a day or so either way in order to achieve two or more consecutive free days.

Scarcely half the respondents rejected out of hand the idea of a job that would require working on holidays. Among those who would accept such a job, skilled workers mentioned additional pay as a precondition, and technical employees (graduate engineers and technicians) cited the love of the projected job, both in larger proportions than had been expected. In justifying their *negative* answer men tended to stress the value of their free time, and women the need to be together with their family.

We found almost no trace in our sample of the traditional, Protestant prohibition of working on holidays. The rejection of such a job, when it is rejected, is bound up with the style of life to which the individual aspires.

Only one eighth of the respondents criticised those who accepted extra work at exceptional rates on red-letter holidays. But here too the reasons were very seldom given in religious terms; the most frequent complaint was indignation at the insatiability of others. Those who lived in the countryside were no more vociferous in the condemnation of holiday-working than those who lived in the capital. No significant differences concerning the influence of religious belief could be discovered. This is evidence of the great extent to which the norm investigated here has become fuzzy at the edges and divorced from its original religious foundation.

However, the mere fact that the majority of our sample do not conceive holidays as occasions of pious indolence does not mean that they would not welcome more such red-letter days in the year. More than a quarter of the respondents voiced the opinion that the number of holidays was too low today (seven holidays with nine rest days, excluding Sundays), January 1st, April 4th, (the anniversary of Liberation), Easter Monday, May 1st, August 20th (Constitution Day), November 7th (October Revolution)

tion), December 25th and 26th (Christmas Day and Boxing Day). It was blue-collar rather than white-collar workers who found this number too small. Whilst the majority of respondents considered the present number of holidays to be adequate, their comments reflected little enthusiasm; their acquiescence is passive: "You see, it's not up to us to decide," "if it's good for them, it's good for me too," etc.

Another tradition is the postulation of a logical link between the holiday and a surfeit of eating and drinking. For three quarters of our sample such a link appeared to be taken for granted, though the proportion was slightly lower in the case of the white-collar workers. Members of larger families were more inclined to view the holiday in this light than those with a less extensive family circle.

More than half of our sample declared that they spent their holidays at home. Women, the inhabitants of villages, married people, those with less schooling, and those with larger families were more likely to prefer to sit at home. The members of the most populous families almost invariably reported that they stayed at home. There was an understandable correlation between car ownership and mobility at holiday periods. From all this we may conclude that traditional house-visiting within the local community no longer characterizes the majority of contemporary holidays (including Sundays), and that the majority who do leave their homes do not do so for the traditional reasons. The high proportion of those who sit at home can in itself be considered important. It is also worth knowing that according to time-budget research, in 1977, Hungarians spent nearly twice as much time in front of their television sets on Saturdays and Sundays, compared with the average weekday; on holidays this ration may be even higher. Certainly, television viewing also plays a role in our respondents' reluctance to go out and socialise on festive occasions. This is not simply because tele-

vision programmes engage the viewer's attention on holidays just as they do on other days, but because the holiday television programmes offer virtual surrogate alternatives to socialization in the community. It is partly for this reason that *individual families* take over from the local (neighbourhood) communities the communicational and emotional functions of the celebration.

The timing of *major cleaning activity* in the flat or house may seem to be a trivial problem. It is well-known that in most places the most thorough house-cleaning occurs in the Spring. The reasons for this go back to ancient times. Thirteen per cent of the factory people timed their Spring cleaning to coincide with a holiday in this case, (generally the Easter holiday), while 32 per cent stressed only the season; six per cent mentioned both the holiday and the season. It was rather instructive that just over one third of our sample answered that such activity was unrelated either to the season or to the holiday, which suggests a considerable weakening of the tradition.

The theoretical comment may be made that the importance of some holidays is enhanced in the public consciousness by the fact that they coincide with some seasonal

Table 1.
Timing of major annual house-cleaning(s)
according to two types of domicile, in absolute
figures of the deviation from expected
frequencies

	village resident (N-94)	Budapest resident (N-229)
tied to holiday	5.7	-4.0
tied to season	5.2	-3.6
tied to both	1.8	-1.6
unrelated	-4.9	3.5
don't know	-7.8	6.7
$\chi = 12.1$	df = 4	p = 0.02-0.01

change. Easter coincides with the coming of the good weather, the end of the heating season, the beginning of various tasks on the land, etc. The 4th of April, May Day, and Mother's Day are also connected year after year in countless press commentaries to the onset of Spring, to a general good humour which instinctively evokes the ancient human desire for a celebration at this time. Public cleaning activity in Budapest is also most intensive in the Spring.

The correlation is not particularly strong, but it may nevertheless be concluded that in villages the tradition of one or two major annual cleanings still exists, while in Budapest the cleaning of the flat tends more to be a regularly recurring activity which lacks conspicuous peaks.

Preparation for a holiday (or for Sunday) implies the wearing of *clean, best clothes*. At a wedding or funeral, it is highly unusual to see anyone inappropriately dressed. More than one third of our sample (39 per cent) would judge such a person intolerantly. 31 per cent were indifferent, and 29 per cent would want to know more of the circumstances before stating their opinion. Those factory people in whose lives religion had always played a role (one seventh of the sample) spoke much more intolerantly about slovenliness on holidays; with the bulk of the workers, intolerant opinions, when they occurred, were embedded rather in aesthetic or socio-psychological motivations than religious-ethical ones ("he is mocking the festivity"; "once he has been invited, and once he goes there, he ought . . ." etc.).

Costly *weddings and sepulchral monuments* (gravestones or crypts) have been the subjects of repeated press reports and these have given rise to much popular discussion. The opinions of the factory people are shown in Table 2.

Our respondents were slightly less critical of a family throwing a costly wedding than of a family erecting a costly sepulchral monument. On both questions villagers were much more tolerant than residents of

Table 2
Percentual breakdown of opinions concerning lavish weddings (1), or erecting costly sepulchral monuments (2)
(N = 344)

	(1)	(2)
This is the way it should be done	7.8	7.8
It is their own concern	29.4	26.2
It is money down the drain	31.4	33.7
It is showing off	30.8	31.1
Don't know	0.0	0.6
no data	0.6	0.6
Total	100.0	100.0

the capital city. Concerning weddings, young people (and the unmarried) were much more sympathetic than the average; and sepulchral monuments were defended by the religious. In both cases the majority of respondents said they had no intention of following either path, but this does not of course mean that when the opportunity arises, some of them would not fall into the very category they verbally condemned.

Family, kinship, community

Since it was a factory that we were investigating, we wanted to know how respondents' felt about *fetes within the enterprise*. (Fêtes within the enterprise are generally held on Liberation Day (April 4), May Day, Constitution Day (August 20) and the anniversary of the October Revolution (November 7). Those who approve are in a minority, and even these explained their approval in terms of the entire workforce gathering together rather than in terms of the programme itself. Unskilled workers, the majority of whom commute, seldom attend

such fetes or stay to their end. The most scathing criticism was voiced by the subgroup with the highest level of education, the technical employees. Fetes are most popular with the semi-skilled workers, who are mostly women; they referred especially to the celebration of Women's Day.

The higher the average income of the respondents' household, the more likely they were to consider the programme poor, and the more likely they were to attend the fete! Thus those who attend the fetes have a worse opinion of them in general than those who seldom bother to go along.

Against this, many spoke in an appreciative, even emotional tone of celebrations within a smaller group within the factory. "A fete within the workshop is good, a larger one is not", "to celebrate spontaneously, for instance on a name day, is clearly nice. But it is better not to speak of the big factory fetes." (Approximately 70 per cent of Hungary's population are Catholics, and consequently the celebration of name days is still common, though declining somewhat. This practice is no longer limited to practising Catholics, and has lost its religious colouring.)

The majority of the answers criticise factory parties, but not in such a way that one might conclude either a low level of demand for festivities amongst factory workers or an absence of community feelings. Displeasure was motivated only by poor organization and the non-festive character of factory fetes at present.

The reactions to questions concerning the possibility of *solitary celebration* were interesting. Nearly half our sample considered solitary celebration possible making a virtue out of necessity (10 per cent); but possibly due to the free wish of an individual (24 per cent), or on account of other circumstances (10 per cent). Those who gave a negative answer referred to the sad or tragic nature of solitary celebration (8 per cent), the dearth of festive mood (31 per cent), and also "other circumstances" (16 per cent).

Those with larger families were less likely to accept the possibility of solitary celebration.

Although most respondents held it impossible by definition that a solitary celebration should be considered a fete ("the fete is a social affair;" "only the ox drinks by itself" a well-known Hungarian proverb), there were numerous alternative responses which generally stressed the *contemplative* nature of solitary celebration: "I came through the war alive, and I always celebrate this by myself," "a birthday is an intimate matter," "I always spend New Year's Eve alone," etc. Kerényi and Pieper base their entire holiday theory on the element of contemplation.

Of course, the fact that many respondents considered some types of holidays potentially suitable for individual celebration does not mean that the same respondents should not require company on *other* holiday occasions. Still less does it imply that the individual celebrating on his own does not have others on his mind at the time. In any case, these results call our attention to the importance of elements of individual reflection in festive behaviour. Whether this occurs at the expense of social life in the community (possibly caused by the narrowing of the bounds of the community for the individual), or is merely to be seen as adding a subtle new colouring to community life, is a question we shall only be able to ask when we have a lot more data.

A question referring to community life in a broad context concerned reactions to the *Hungarian National Anthem*. The question galvanized some powerful sentiments. Not only did 92.4 per cent of the sample report a deep emotion when the anthem was played but most respondents considered it necessary to explain their answers. They came up with rational arguments to explain their emotion, but also articulated internal emotional and even physiological processes. Several commentaries threw light on the instructive fact that is was through the

anthem that great sporting events were transformed into festive occasions in popular consciousness.

Our respondents made a classification of 36 holidays, by arranging cards carrying names of holidays into groups, and then describing these groups briefly. We wanted to learn whether there were any clear distinctions generally recognized between various types of Hungarian holidays. The most important classifications, in our own wording, were the following: family (205), state-political (170), national-historic (116), church (110), village community (81), holidays of a specific social group (71). As may be seen, the classifications cited most often designated without exception a specific *circle* within which the holiday had a meaning and significance in society. ("I don't know" was a common response to religious holidays which have taken on a rural colouring: Epiphany, Candlemas, St. Lucy's Day, parish-feast.)

Classifications of principal holidays religious in *origin* have been abstracted and assimilated into the other categories. In our sample All Saints' Day (November 1st), St. Nicholas' Day (December 6th), Christmas, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day were stated to be *family rather than church holidays*. This ties in with the findings by Benney and his co-authors concerning Christmas (*American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LXV. pp. 233-240). However Easter and especially Whitsun are still felt overwhelmingly to be religious occasions. Carnival, Peter and Paul (June 29th), St. Lucy's Day, (December 13th), the parish feast and Epiphany (but not Candlemas, February 2nd, which was perceived as explicitly ecclesiastical) were considered by a majority to be "village community" rather than "church" holidays. The "national-historic" and even "state-political" labels were also commonly assigned to principal holidays of ecclesiastical origin.

One of the marking events of Hungarian history, March 15th (the anniversary of the

1848 Revolution) was seen curiously enough, as "state-political" rather than "national-historic", in contrast to the day of the Martyrs of Arad executed by the Habsburgs in 1849 (October 6th), where the proportions were reversed. Both days are normal working days at present. We had some frank answers to a separate question, namely that respondents thought that March 15 should be a rest day, only one third agreeing with the present practice. The younger the respondents, the more likely they were to disagree. Blue-collar workers and non-party members disagreed with the present practice more strongly than white-collar workers and party members.

In public opinion as represented by our sample there are *clear lines of demarcation* between the church holidays on the one hand, and family, or state-political holidays *affecting the whole of society* on the other. In the course of the grouping of the cards, the various holiday categories exhibited a strong logical cohesion. Although March 15 has not been celebrated as a rest day in recent years, our respondents see this holiday in practically the same light as the principal state-political holidays.

In general, the family and the kinship network form a homogeneous unit as far as the observation of holidays is concerned; members observe, or do not observe, the same types of holidays. This is one factor maintaining cohesion and keeping the family alive as a socio-psychological network.

Our data indicate that holidays are experienced primarily in the clear-cut framework of the family and the community established by kinship.

The dimension of the wider social (national) community is also important from the aspect of the individual, but primarily in a symbolic way. The importance of holidays experienced in an actual or symbolic *religious* community is receding. The rank of holidays observed at one's place of work, or place of domicile (neighbourhood) also appears to be low.

Holidays in the life of the individual

Most respondents believed holidays had some repercussions in the realm of their *private lives* (additional leisure, rest and recreation, good humour, cooking and baking, visiting, giving presents, eating and drinking). Attributes that could be considered partly or wholly "public" were not cited so prominently. (Joint commemoration, socialism, universal festive symbols.) The nationwide survey by Zoltán Jakab in 1970-71 also noted "the preponderance of individual, private factors". As might be expected, the aspect of additional free time figured more frequently amongst younger people. Nine out of ten respondents who selected this factor (three selections were open to all) were persons under 38 years of age.

"Rest and recreation" was typically mentioned by those who seldom or never took a vacation; holidays obviously have a compensatory nature here. The larger the family, the greater the emphasis which fell upon it. "Cooking and baking" was predominantly cited by female workers.

We expected to obtain an *indirect* definition of the holiday by asking for a definition of "how a holiday could be spoiled". Our respondents indicated as likely causes quarrels or provocative behavior (20 per cent), antisocial bad humour (20 per cent), overdrinking, drunkenness (15 per cent), and fighting (3 per cent). Villagers and blue-collar workers mentioned more vulgar kinds of behaviour, inhabitants of the capital and white-collar workers milder forms than we had expected. This indirect definition outlines what positive expectations our respondents have of their holidays. The fullness and cohesion of social togetherness, mutual esteem amongst the participants and an atmosphere of co-operation thus appear as the key conditions for an undisturbed festive mood.

When we enquired as to the most festive *moment* in the lives of our respondents,

seeking a further indirect definition of the holiday, it turned out that among those who could specify such a moment (82 per cent) one quarter referred to an experience connected with love or marriage (including the *wedding* ceremony), more than one third to *child-birth*, and nearly one tenth to some form of *initiation*, oath, or admission to a community. All these occasions reflect the *rites of passage* studied by anthropologists. Other answers included calendar holidays which had remained individually memorable, family events and their anniversaries, survival and return from some peril, obtention of a flat or acquisition of other property, recognition in the narrower or wider community (e.g. a public decoration), successful examinations, memorable "firsts" in general (e.g. "when I became a man," "when my child started to walk"). One individual indicated as the festive highlight of his life "his welcome home after one of the natural disasters of the 'fifties."

It may be pointed out theoretically that some of the more universal social holidays, rather like the "festive moments" in the life of individual, also record famous passage-events (great victories, successes, transformations); and later it is the *social recognition* of these events that forms the nucleus of the celebration. Individual "festive moments" differ here in the sense that social recognition is sufficient *in itself* to engender a festive satisfaction. One of our respondents said that his deepest festive satisfaction came when he shook hands with a deputy minister, another while "reciting a poem in Eger in the state childrens' home" and a third on taking his seat "in the presidium of a festive assembly where there were 800 people present."

Our respondents were confronted with a list of eleven lucky and/or pleasurable incidents and asked which of them had a "festive" character. The list covered a rather wide range from childbirth to victory in a soccer match from recovery of health to success in love, etc. Women and blue-collar

workers were much more liberal in applying the term "festive" to all manner of events. Is there a greater demand for the festive feeling expressed over a broader range of occasions, in women and blue-collar workers? Are they inclined to associate these occasions directly with spontaneous celebration in the family circle or with friends? It is certainly evident that in the conduct of one's individual life a great role is now played by celebrations which have no connection whatsoever with the calendar of official holidays, apart from the fact that the quantity of free time available for spontaneous celebrations is augmented by official rest days. The value of official holidays is often enhanced by spontaneous parties held the night before or even on the day itself; they may have no connection with the "purpose" of the holiday, but are more truly festive.

Let us now assess the popularity of the seven major public holidays in turn. Respondents were asked to cite the three holidays which they would be most reluctant to forego. The weighted ranking order was as follows: (overwhelmingly) Christmas, then May Day, April 4th (anniversary of the country's Liberation), Easter, New Year's Day, August 20th (Constitution Day), November 7th. With the exception of August 20th, all of these holidays were held in higher esteem by residents of the capital than by country dwellers. Easter had a high level of preference amongst those with a lower level of schooling. Party members were even more loyal to April 4th and

November 7th than had been expected; the latter was mentioned exclusively by party members. Those with a higher level of schooling were more committed to Christmas. These data indicate that in families with a more modern mode of life (as has also been demonstrated by Lüschen in his comparative survey taken in Western and Northern Europe, see in: Lüschen—Lupri eds., *Soziologie der Familie*. KZfSuS. 14/1970. pp. 270–284.), Christmas may have a higher expressive function than in more traditional families, where contacts with relatives are more evenly maintained throughout the year, and there is less need for an emphatic family get-together at Christmas. We shall be investigating this problem separately at a later date.

Summarising, we can say that, for the workers examined, traditional (religious or secular) imperatives have weakened and the importance of the neighbourhood and one's place of work in celebrations is conspicuously low. The *intermediate* sphere of the community, which formerly linked the family feast with the holiday culture of the whole of society, is almost entirely lacking in the holiday culture of the population examined. This has been offset by an increase in the role of spontaneous forms of celebration that are only indirectly related to calendar holidays (via the provision of free time), and which obtain their real significance from the most diverse passage-events or other lucky and pleasurable occurrences in the lives of individuals.

JÁNOS JEMNITZ

PÁL JUSTUS AND THE BRITISH LABOUR PARTY

Pál Justus died ten years ago. Though he was born in Pécs and died in Temesvár, throughout his career he was very much the socialist politician of Budapest. He was the

man whom Denis Healey, head of the Labour Party's international department after the war, described in his report on a visit to Budapest in 1946 as: "a young socialist

theoretician." From 1945 onwards Pál Justus was indeed recognized as the leading theoretician of the Social-Democratic Party, known in the terminology of the time as the "sister party" of the British Labour Party.

Justus's path to the national political arena was a long one. He qualified as a secondary-school teacher, but in the political conditions of Horthy's Hungary it was quite out of the question for him to make his living through teaching. Instead this young intellectual who had joined the Social-Democratic movement at twenty made ends meet by taking up a clerical job. In the late 1920s he published a number of poems and articles in *Munka* (Work), a left-wing socialist review edited by Lajos Kassák. Later, between 1932 and 1936, he spent much time in Paris and during this period he acquired extensive political and historical knowledge about the workers' movement; at the same time he also became involved in journalistic work. His years in Paris probably had a decisive impact on his outlook, and two convictions in particular took firm hold on him. The first was his socialist faith, which was not rooted in old-fashioned social-democracy even though (as we shall see later) it had many ties with pre-1914 revolutionary socialist traditions and a few points in common with more recent trends. Revolutionary socialism and a rigorously critical stance were characteristic of Justus both as a young intellectual and as a responsible statesman, M.P., and party leader after 1945. I may add that they remained characteristic of the man I knew, after his release in 1956 following seven years imprisonment.

Internationalism was his second abiding conviction. He clung tenaciously to Hungarian reality and he served the establishing of democracy and socialist advance in Hungary—but he could not ignore general developments in Europe and other regions of the world. His analyses of them were realistic and matter-of-fact, but he also tried to investigate their dynamics and to explore the possibilities of further progress

yet to come. For a parallel one might choose the young Marx's disagreement with Hegel over "facts," or, to take an English example, the case of Bernstein well on in years by 1916, telling the editors of the *New Statesman* that their review's particular weakness is its exaggerated cult of facts. So the ideological element is limited to an excessively narrow field, but without this no party which claims to represent the future of humanity can exist. Justus thought and acted in this sort of spirit when surveying the complexities of the world political scene.

In 1936 Justus returned to Hungary and began to take an active part in the life of the Social-Democratic Party. He became deeply involved in the work of two inner-city districts, the VIth and VIIth, serving as the secretary of the former. During the Second World War he was one of the leaders of the intelligentsia section of the party.

In May 1942 he wrote the following characteristic lines, printed in 1945 as the foreword to his most voluminous work, "The Socialist Road":

"For those revolutionary socialists who abjure cliqueism it is obvious that they do not identify in the first place with any faction, party, organization, or even ideology: they belong simply to their class. Everything else is secondary... It follows that this study is not intended for salaried bureaucrats, blind enthusiasts, or intellectual charlatans; neither has it been written for those who lament or who wait passively for the Messiah; I do not wish to convince these people—I have written this work for those known and unknown friends who have struggled with problems as I have done, and who have felt the full weight of the failure of revolutions, the collapse of the European workers' movement, the ordeals of Russian Socialism, Fascism, Spain, the Popular Front, and the Second World War—in other

* *A szocializmus útja*. Népszava Publishing House, Budapest, 1945

words, those who have lost all their hope and their illusions, but have rejected escapism and do not expect miracles. . . ."

The dark phase of persecutions and ordeals was also a fruitful opportunity for "desk work," and Justus analysed in depth the phenomenon of Fascism, the lessons of 20-30 years of organized struggle by the working class both in Hungary and abroad, economic conditions, trends, and different intellectual currents of the workers' movement. Scholars in the field still praise the thoroughness of these studies even today. Yet all this work remained more or less hidden from the public eye—that is to say it consisted primarily of material delivered orally at seminars and conferences.

These years of analysis and preparation preceded even darker times to come: Fascism increased its hold on Hungary, the extremist right-wing Arrowcross movement became stronger and Social-Democratic organizations (including even cultural, trade union, and sporting bodies) were uniformly dissolved. Justus himself was drafted into the forced labour service and adapted to life in still more miserable circumstances. When the Liberation finally took place he was at Bor, a labour camp in Yugoslavia.

In the Coalition

There followed the very short period of his life (only three years in all) when he became a nationally known politician when he earned praise (from far and wide) as an earnest theoretician and persuasive debater. Young Social-Democrats of the left, many of them still only teenagers, surrounded the bespectacled figure of Justus who looked pretty much like a student himself; his open seminars were always crowded and at interparty "coalition" meetings he was far and away the most regular proponent of the viewpoint of the Social-Democrats. Denis Healey no doubt saw and experienced this, hence the special mention he makes of Justus

in his short character sketches, hence his hailing him as one of the leading figures of the Social-Democratic left. Although polemics flared up within the Social-Democratic Party after 1945 and there was some bitter in-fighting, Justus maintained his enormous prestige, both as a theoretician and as an agitator.

When the Social-Democratic camp expanded its international relations in the years from 1945 to 1947 Justus was there amongst the path-breakers. He was always prominent in strengthening ties with France, attending congresses of the SFIO; he also kept up relations with Nenni's party in Italy, to which he felt himself personally close. At the international congress in Antwerp in 1947 he—together with Szakasits—represented the Hungarian party. When it was suggested in 1947 that the major left-wing Social-Democratic parties of Italy, Poland, and Hungary hold joint meetings and put out a common periodical, Justus naturally lent his fullest support to the idea.

It was in 1946-47 that Hungarian Social-Democrats put forward their "bridge conception," arguing that the Eastern European countries, and especially the workers' movements within those countries, should to a certain extent serve as a "bridge" between West and East. Justus was among those to formulate this thesis, he agreed with it in principle, but held that the place of Hungary, for many reasons, was nearer to the Eastern bridge-head. This conception was a hopeful starting-point for maintaining relations between the various workers' movements of Europe and also for counteracting the harbingers of the Cold War to come.

"The socialist objective"

When Justus stepped into the forefront of political life in the first weeks of 1945 he was well prepared intellectually and the essence of his stance is not difficult to define. One is not obliged to rely only on oral

material, for we also have the party's theoretical monthly, *Szocializmus* (Socialism), as an instructive source at our disposal. Justus was a member of the editorial board and as editor of the "scientific debate-section" he defended the views of the Social-Democrats against those put forward in other party periodicals. The Communist Party, like the Smallholders and Peasant parties, all had their own theoreticians (ranging from József Révai and György Lukács to Gyula Illyés and Péter Veres). The debates were always straightforward, they were not given to muck-raking nor to displays of rhetorical skills, but to clarifying vital and important issues of the day. Most of these arguments turned around Hungarian problems, and Justus was wont to develop his own position on some of them more extensively, in separate articles.

Neither was he blind to new developments in the international situation and the experiences of the workers' movements of other countries. Characteristically, in the works he published after 1945, scrutinizing both the immediate present and the foreseeable future, he gave pride of place to well-grounded historical analysis. His translations of a number of Engels' texts were published for the first time in *Szocializmus*; the first major two-volume selection of the works of Marx and Engels to be published after 1945 in Hungary also appeared with a foreword by Justus and his name amongst the translators. He also pioneered work in translating and publishing other classics of the socialist movement—significantly his choice fell upon the works of Rosa Luxemburg, Otto Bauer, and Rudolf Hilferding. He never concealed his commitment to left-wing socialism; and even the shortest of his translations was accompanied by a substantial introduction establishing the contemporary relevance of the work in question. Selection from the work of contemporary writers was also typical of the man: *Szocializmus* carried two long studies of the realities of 1945-46; the authors were two foreign socialists, Jules

Humbert-Droz and Harold J. Laski, names which speak for themselves, and reveal much about the sympathies of Justus. The choice of Laski prompts the question of how Justus saw Great Britain and the British workers' movement, but first we should show how Justus the theoretician saw the state of democratic forces in Hungary.

He was one of those statesmen for whom the cause of socialism was virtually one and the same thing as an espousal of democracy, one who considered this connection self-evident and so deeply inscribed in the workers' parties that it would never be questioned by tactical considerations or manoeuvres. Democratic socialism was to be proclaimed openly as a political credo. He had said as much in his study of 1942, and in the spring of 1945 he surprised and shocked many in Hungary with the slogan which rang out at the conference of the Social-Democratic Party: "democracy today, socialism tomorrow!"

He wrote in October 1946: "After the collapse of Fascism, which we predicted so clearly, nothing could be more natural than that the workers' parties surged irresistibly to the forefront of national politics everywhere; nothing could be more natural than that the workers' parties have remained faithful to the socialist ideal to which they owed their indestructibility. It follows that their policy differs from the policy of every other party, for they alone rely on this basic realization that the conditions of workers can be radically, lastingly, and securely changed only by the creation of a different social system. . . . So socialists consider not only political change but also profound social and economic changes to be necessary and inevitable—all their everyday political struggles and efforts are motivated by this objective, the creation of the prerequisites of socialism."

Justus did not content himself with the statement of elementary truths. He fitted the sequence of his ideas into the main-

stream of world developments: "It is clear to those of us who apply the Marxist method to the history of the Marxist workers' movement itself that socialist theory and the workers' movement are about to go through their second major transformation within a century." The first major transformation, according to him, had been the period of the emergence of scientific socialism, the works of Marx and Engels and the growth of the workers' movement in the nineteenth century. Justus deduced that an entirely new era was starting after the Second World War, and he assessed it in these terms: "We are convinced that however complicated, painful, and troubled the age in which we live, this is the era in which socialism will be realized. Socialism, the socialist society which used to be dismissed as an issue for the faraway future is now overtly or covertly on the agenda of our everyday struggles and problems... The 'socialist objective' is now so near that it can be seen and formulated accurately, and it regulates our everyday behaviour. And this basic fact both facilitates and complicates our task. It makes it easier, because in these new conditions the control of the purity of the principles of our policy and its unmistakably socialist nature is not merely a theoretical demand or an ethical norm, it is also a political necessity. But it complicates the task insofar as the socialist principle must now prove its superiority in many new fields, in every practical domain."

This glaring truth of this value judgement was later to become apparent, but the politicians of the day did not give much thought to the circumstance that the "realization of socialism" could be and in fact already was part of the business of practical politics.

By now Justus had already stepped beyond the limits of party propaganda: weighing up all the problems, tasks, and perspectives of everyday reality, he was offering complex and non-partisan explanations. Thus in the same article of autumn 1946 where he

spoke of land reform not in the euphoric tones of victory but with the following perspicacity: "With this land reform we have but made a start on the structural transformation of Hungarian agriculture. We know that the operational reforms still lie before us but we also know that the reform has opened a perspective of capitalist development and capital concentration. The pace of growth in agriculture and ensuing social restratification will depend on the balance of class forces... The rapid emergence of class divisions is demonstrated by the circumstance that, while there was no serious resistance during the actual implementation of the land reform because the forces of reaction and of large capital were too shocked to resist, it took several months for the cooperative association law to go through; this means, of course, voluntary association, and we have considered this right from the start to be the necessary technical, economic, and social follow-up to the preliminary steps taken by the land reform."

Justus dealt with a still more important and topical question, one of significance all over Europe, when he tackled the subject of nationalizations in 1946. He wrote about nationalization in general, and about particular problems faced in Hungary. "Nationalization in industry means what the land reform means in agriculture. We know and we have always pointed out that nationalization is not automatically socialism. We also know that nationalization does not necessarily lead to a raising of living standards for those who work in nationalized enterprises; but the decisive significance of nationalization is that it brings us into contact with the economic bases of the political power of industrial capitalism. And there is another similarity between the role of land reform and nationalization: nobody stood up openly against the nationalization of coal mines. Capital's counter-attack, concealed under a flood of 'objective economic arguments', started only several months as a

campaign against the management of the nationalized enterprises. The tendency is clear: they are out to compromise the idea of nationalization in order to prevent, or at least to stall, the further nationalizations that must inevitably be carried through."

These lines were followed by a passage as characteristic of the climate of the age as it is of the ambitions and attitudes of Justus: "For socialists it is clear that they must work for the democratization of state power and the extension of the rights of workers in parallel with the drive to increase the economic power of the state. This is the link between our plans for nationalization and our efforts to work out guidelines for enterprises. . . We regard the establishing of shop-floor committees in enterprises as one of the foremost achievements of Hungarian democracy, not only because we see in them the fundamental bodies to represent the interests of the workers but also because they will serve as schools to train a new workers' élite, who will in time become the managers of these enterprises."

The British elections of 1945

Justus saw Hungarian reality in 1946 from a Hungarian standpoint, but these Hungarian problems were themselves undoubtedly of European significance. The man in daily tune with the problems of Hungary never lost touch with the wider sphere. He was chiefly oriented towards France and Italy, but as an open-minded theoretician he followed new phenomena and the hint of any novel possibilities with the utmost attention. The electoral success of the British Labour Party in the spring of 1945 qualified as stunningly new in the history of the workers' movement, particularly in view of the general situation at the time. Hungarian emigrants of democratic and socialist persuasion who were resident in London (Mihály Károlyi, Rusz-

tem Vámbéry) perceived this election as an important turning-point, and this was just how the leaders, theoreticians, and publicists of the Social-Democratic Party saw it from Budapest. Justus wrote the first short evaluation in the very first issue of *Szocializmus*. He gave a characteristic sketch of the historical background and emphasized political and class contradictions; he claimed that the pattern of votes for the Labour Party "give a much more instructive picture" of the party's strength than did the actual distribution of seats "because owing to the obsolete and unjust electoral law and especially the absurd constituency boundaries of 1935, a Conservative representative needed only 27,000 votes to be elected, but a Labour member required almost double this number." He followed up this analysis with his own evaluation: "The British people have decided and they have voted. *Against* Churchill's personal prestige, *against* the victory propaganda, and *against* the pseudo-freedom of capitalism, they voted not only *for* Attlee, *for* the Labour Party in opposition, but also *for* socialism." The concluding sentences of this short article discuss still more interesting perspectives. Justus was still optimistic concerning the great changes to come, and here too he sets forth the same high standards: "It is enough for the time being to say that there are still many difficulties facing English socialism. . ." He meant to imply here that the real question was not one of preserving the government's power and not one of piecemeal reforms on whatever scale; the main issue was the crucial breakthrough towards socialism. Justus wound up his commentary with the observation that it was of incalculable significance that in England, where the majority of the population had belonged to the proletariat for the previous three decades and more, at last the electorate had voted unmistakably in favour of socialist demands.

In the summer of 1945 he was still emphatically confident, especially in all that he directed towards the outside world and

the general public. However, in private forums of the party and at meetings of the leadership, controversy over the general international policy (and especially the Eastern policy) of the new Labour Party was already raging. The first declarations of Ernest Bevin created something of a scandal and a sense of outrage amongst Hungarian Social-Democrats, but the left-wingers who shaped the party's foreign policy, Justus amongst them, still clung to their faith that on the basis of its origin and ideology the Labour Party would eventually throw its weight behind the cause of international cooperation. But debates within the party could not be suppressed, and the left-wingers both criticized the Labour government and passed onto other party members the criticisms voiced within England by left-wing Labourist rebels.

Keir Hardie

This was the atmosphere in which the second issue of *Szocializmus* appeared in September 1945. It contained two pieces by Justus, both of a historical nature. One was about the Zimmerwald movement, the other discussed Keir Hardie. The encyclopaedic references of the latter, a salute to a comrade, are not the essence of this piece—Justus certainly exaggerated the significance of Keir Hardie in the British movement and was also at fault in his ideological classification; but in 1945 this last was a very typical mistake. He claimed that "Hardie had belonged to the left wing all along, he took his ground on the basis of the class struggle and was a Marxist stalwart in a mass party which was still in search of a course and a programme and had no very well-defined ideology."

Two points deserve attention here: Justus was looking for historical precursors and he believed that he had found one in Hardie. This was why he emphasized his left-wing credentials and, despite some ahistoricism

in Justus's approach, this was basically true taking the character of the Labour Party as a whole. It was also true that the stress placed by Hardie on the class struggle was less ambiguous than the attitude of many influential leaders of the Labour Party. But as far as the alleged commitment to Marxism is concerned, Justus's standpoint is clearly untenable. His opinion here is more characteristic of himself than of Keir Hardie. But he was acute and persuasive on the man's legacy: "He was one of the greatest socialists. Thirty years after his death the British Labour Party, the grounding and organization of which was closely associated with him personally, has won the greatest victory of its history . . ."

From the autumn of 1945 the leaders of the Hungarian Social-Democratic Party maintained their relations with the Labour Party despite a spate of disagreements and sharp polemics. There were exchanges of delegations and meetings in third countries at major events, but there was no doubt that the Hungarian Social-Democrats of the left were increasingly concerned by many manifestations of Bevin's foreign policy, and at the same time in the assessment of the Labour Party's domestic policy they tended to sympathize with its left-wing critics. This attitude crystallized both in the discussions of the leadership, in articles in *Szocializmus*, and at several conferences: Justus was always prominent amongst the left-wing critics. He followed the situation in England with a lively interest, which extended even to some of the more important details; but from this time on he wrote about the progress and prospects of French and Italian socialism. In July 1947 he was a delegate at the Ideological Week organized in Paris, where the topics under discussion included Marxism, freedom, democracy and dictatorship, the state and monopoly capital—in other words all the most pressing issues of our time.

The Antwerp Conference

Justus carried out one more important assignment at a major international conference, and the role he played there was closely connected with the foreign policy of the Labour Party and the onset of the Cold War. The occasion was the conference of Social-Democratic Parties held in December 1947 at Antwerp. The conference gathered in an exacerbated, indeed already poisoned atmosphere. The Hungarian party leaders, Justus amongst them, gave a clear exposition of their stand in two basic issues. On questions of general European and world politics they argued consistently in favour of international cooperation, and with respect to Eastern European countries they explained that here it was absolutely necessary to maintain the closest cooperation between the two workers' parties. This opinion was sharply opposed by the Labour Party leaders, who were determined to push an unrealistic, decidedly anti-Communist and anti-Soviet political line. In Antwerp Justus had talks with Labour Party General Secretary Morgan Phillips and also with Laski. The latter showed more understanding of the realities of Eastern Europe but one voice alone could not carry the day.

These weakening ties, under pressure from so many quarters, had broken definitively by the spring of 1948. The arrival of the Cold War also engulfed the Hungarian-Polish-Italian socialist left-wing alternative still in the pipeline. Justus was one of the first socialists to fall a victim of the new period. After the merger of the two workers' parties he was excluded from the leading group. In 1949 he was arrested in connection with the Rajk trial and sentenced to a term of imprisonment in the first of the frame-up trials in which several other leading Social-Democrats were also involved. He was released and rehabilitated only seven years later, in the spring of 1956, but he was not to take up political work again. In the latter, more flexible years of his imprisonment he undertook some literary translation work, including a version of Shakespeare's sonnets, later published in a bilingual edition. After his release he worked as an editor for Corvina Press. Undoubtedly, of all the former intellectuals of the Social-Democratic left he was the one denied any real opportunity to continue the career abruptly terminated in 1949. But I for one can vouch for the fact that he kept up his interests in all the vital problems of our age until the very end of his life.

ENDRE CZEIZEL

GENETIC COUNSELING IN HUNGARY

The initiative which led to the establishment of a genetic guidance service in Hungary was taken by Dr. György Lénárt, who established a centre of this kind at the Pediatric Unit of the János Hospital in Budapest in 1963. The task of this service is to improve family planning. Geneticist-physicians who do this type of counseling give prospective parents information and advice; this may involve specific medical

tests and examinations, and, if necessary, the doctors see to it that treatment is administered. Often enough the treatment consists simply of dispelling ungrounded fears and misconceptions, but on occasion it may also require application of the most advanced available medical techniques in order to avert inherited and congenital birth defects, or at least to minimise their risk.

Genetic counseling is more than an ordinary one of consultation. The relationship between the geneticist-consultant and his counslee is built up as a rule during a number of sessions (two is the average), in which considerable time is devoted to the exchange of information, to tracing and evaluating medical records, and going through family documents and case histories, in addition to conducting specific examinations and tests. The whole process can be divided into seven phases: 1. Preliminary exchange of information for clarification of the problem. 2. Diagnosis. This is the vital and most time-consuming step, for apart from the usual clinical tests it is based chiefly on a nosological and etiological understanding of the case involved. It is axiomatic that the efficacy of the counseling is a function of the accuracy of this diagnosis. 3. Determination of the risk. This is the specific and primary task of the geneticist-consultant. 4. Presentation of the advice. 5. Checking how well the counsees have understood the advice and listening to their response. 6. Providing aid for effective family planning. 7. Recording the outcome.

In determining the degree of risk involved for a given couple in planning a child, the genetic counsellor considers the following aspects:

1. The statistical probability of the occurrence of any anomaly i.e. its transmission to the child. The probability has to be calculated according to the known laws of heredity, taking due account of the free combination of chromosomes and of crossing over—the scientific term for interchange of genes—toward the end of germ-cell development. In genetics this probability is called *risk*. Six categories of risk are distinguished: minimal (2 per cent), low (2–5 per cent), moderate (5–9 per cent), considerable (10–19 per cent), high (20–50 per cent), and very high (over 50 per cent). A risk of over 10 per cent is sufficient to warrant a request for abortion on medical grounds; above 20 per cent suggests a strong case for stringent

birth control, whilst in the most serious category, a risk exceeding 50 per cent is ample justification for a decision to terminate a pregnancy at mid-term (between the 12th and 20th week).

2. Evaluation of the severity of the potential dangers constitutes the most important aspect of genetic counseling. Seven categories may be identified: *a*) minor disorders which cause no special problem, e.g. brachidactyly; *b*) damage which necessitates medical treatment but involves no hazard to life or social activity, e.g. congenital dislocation of the hip; *c*) defects which make social integration difficult, e.g. congenital blindness; *d*) conditions which may shorten life, e.g. certain cardiac problems; *e*) serious hazards to life and social integration, such as an open spinal canal (*spina bifida*); *f*) fatal diseases, e.g. certain kinds of muscular degeneration; and *g*) handicaps which render any independent social activity impossible, such as serious cases of mental subnormality and insanity. For the purposes of genetic counseling the last three categories are all considered to be grave.

3. Susceptibility of the condition to treatment. There is good reason to seek to prevent anomalies which are not effectively treatable and not likely to be corrigible after birth.

4. Possibility of intrauterine diagnosis of a defect, the reoccurrence of which in the child may be suspected. A number of new techniques developed in the 1970s enable intrauterine diagnosis of some more serious abnormalities around the 16th week of pregnancy. Where such diagnosis is possible, we recommend pregnancy but emphasize the need for intrauterine tests. If the suspicion of foetal damage is corroborated, there is still time for the geneticist consultant to suggest that the pregnancy be terminated. On the other hand, if abnormalities can be excluded at this point the pregnancy can be maintained without significant hazard of disease or malformation in the infant.

5. The parents' medical records. It is part

of our concern to assess how any disease in the parents, especially in the mother, may influence pre- and post-natal development. For instance, an alcoholic mother may pose significant problems for the geneticist consultant.

6. The risk the mother takes in becoming pregnant. When certain illnesses (heart conditions, tumours) have been diagnosed pregnancy may constitute a further hazard to the health of the mother, one which may even endanger her life.

7. General evaluation of the family situation, including the personalities of the parents, the number of children in the family and full records and diagnoses concerning them, and the socio-economic and cultural situation of the family.

The above considerations, together with any further relevant factors specific to the individual, determine the advice given by the consultant, which may be schematized as follows:

a) Pregnancy recommended, risk assessed as negligible.

b) Pregnancy recommended after treatment or preparation.

c) Pregnancy to be seriously considered, but, the risk of grave abnormality being higher than 20 per cent, a final decision to be taken only after intrauterine tests of the foetus.

d) Extreme caution is advised on account of a 5-19 per cent risk of severe, nontreatable and prenatally nondiagnosable disorder, or a still higher risk of potentially treatable, preventable or otherwise less serious abnormality.

Facts and Figures

In Hungary genetic counselors operate under the Counseling Service for Women and the Family, set up in 1974 by a decree of the Council of Ministers. There are at present 12 genetic clinics in the country, seven of them in the provinces and five in

Budapest. The figure corresponds fairly closely to international recommendations, which have suggested one genetic counseling service per one-million inhabitants. Each year about 4,000 couples make use of the service, and this number corresponds to 2 per cent of the annual number of births and approximates to the international norm.

My associates and I work at one of the Budapest centres. Between 1973 and 1978 we gave counsel to 3,778 prospective parents, or 20.8 per cent of the total number of cases considered in Hungary during this period. Consequently our material can be considered a fairly representative sample.

The individuals who turn to our genetic counseling service can be divided into 10 categories, devised on the basis of etiology:

1. Genetic anomalies (e.g. hemophilia), 15 per cent of all our cases.

2. Chromosome aberrations (e.g. Down's syndrome), 7 per cent.

3. Polygenic liability and the extraneous effects which provoke their appearance (e.g. congenital dislocation of the hip), 13 per cent.

4. Hereditary diseases, such as schizophrenia, 4 per cent.

5. Fear of the noxious effects of external elements which may give rise to genetic problems (e.g. exposure to X-ray radiation) 2 per cent.

6. Worry about blood relationship (e.g. cousins) 1 per cent.

7. Worry about real or imaginary problems occurring during pregnancy which might have harmed the foetus, 7 per cent.

8. The desire to obtain specific information after an abnormal child has already been born (though not through predictable genetic anomalies), 2 per cent.

9. The general wish for information, 2 per cent.

10. A residual group of barren couples, of parents who would like to have further children after the intrauterine or postnatal death, abnormality or deficiency of an earlier baby (but where genetic etiology of the prob-

lem can be excluded). These made up 45 per cent of our counselees—the largest group.

Our genetic consultants do not deal only with hereditary problems. Genetic counseling is in fact one of the general bases for high standards in family planning.

Only 26.2 per cent of the people who visited the counseling clinic were referred by their physicians. The vast majority came voluntarily. This is good sign inasmuch as it indicates peoples' concern to have healthy children, but it poses a problem in the sense that the majority have undergone none of the preliminary examinations required, and that many counselees show some misunderstanding of our tasks. The statistics demonstrate that professional people are the social group most inclined to avail themselves of this service, provided free of charge by the Hungarian national health system.

It is a serious problem that many patients come to us too late in the day. Women already pregnant when they come to the guidance clinic comprise 14.5 per cent of our patients, although counseling at this stage is largely a formality in the majority of cases. Moreover, in many cases we are consulted only after the birth of a second abnormal child, and nineteen couples did not turn to us for help until their third defective child had been born.

The prevention or termination of pregnancy was recommended in only 4 per cent of all cases we handled. In an additional 10 per cent of cases we suggested an intrauterine examination of the foetus. Hence in 86 per cent of cases we gave unambiguous encouragement to these planning a family.

Results

Our control examinations indicated that 91.8 per cent of counselees were able to grasp the substance of the advice we gave them. The ratio of understanding and recall concerning the precise extent of the danger

was not so good (74.5 per cent) and even poorer (24.7 per cent) in regard to the actual assessment of the risk.

As for acceptance of the advice proffered, our results can be considered good by international standards. Women whom we advised not to become pregnant did try to avoid conception. (Despite their wishes 37 per cent nonetheless conceived, and this shows that a great deal has yet to be done to improve the effectiveness of birth-control practices. The fact that the women concerned genuinely needed improved means of contraception is confirmed by the high proportion within this 37 per cent who had the undesired pregnancy terminated.) On the positive side, of those whom we advised to go ahead with pregnancy 92 per cent have already conceived or are planning babies. (This means that the remaining 8 per cent, realizing the presence of some hazard, have decided against pregnancy. Thus the deterrent effect of our genetic counseling cannot be regarded as high; in fact it is definitely lower than the figures which have been quoted in English and American studies.) In the group to which we recommended intrauterine examination of the foetus, 90 per cent of the couples continued to desire pregnancy, indicating that suggesting such examinations was by no means a severe deterrent.

Of course, the efficacy of the guidance can be best gauged by the outcome of the pregnancies. The children born to couples whom we recommended to refrain from having babies but who decided to go ahead regardless were in 44 per cent of such cases born with severe and usually fatal anomalies. On the other hand, the babies born to couples encouraged to have children exhibited such abnormalities in only 4 per cent of all cases. This compares very well indeed with the 3 per cent hazard that can be postulated for *any* pregnancy. The difference of 40 per cent between the two groups is sufficient to establish the need for genetic clinics and to confirm the general reliability of their recommendations.

Special note should be made of the increasing significance of intrauterine examinations in the prevention of certain very serious anomalies, above all chromosome aberrations, gene-linked anomalies appearing only in male children, and such frequent problems as anencephaly and spina bifida cystica.

The social usefulness of genetic counseling is demonstrably great and many-sided. Above all, it can supply answers to the real or imaginary problems of would-be parents. It minimizes risk and it promotes early diagnosis and effective treatment. Not the least of its merits is that it helps to reduce the number and proportion of abnormalities in the population—which is certainly in the interest of the whole society.

The Hungarian results tie in well with the findings of genetic counseling clinics operated in other parts of the world, regions with similarly high standards of public health and preventive medicine; this reflects well on the level of these services in our country. This does not mean, of course, that no errors are ever committed, or that there are no problems left to be solved. Let me now go on to mention the types of problems which in my opinion need extensive social discussion.

*Reconciling Individual Rights
and Social Interests*

Responsible family planning requires three fundamental human rights to be borne in mind:

1. The right to be "the master of one's fate", in other words, the right to conduct one's personal life according to one's own ideas and decisions.
2. The right to have children.
3. The right to enjoy a healthy life.

In the course of genetic counseling these rights are sometimes found to contradict each other, and in some cases they conflict with the interests of the community and of society as a whole.

According to the Galtonian principle, the doctor who is consulted by a patient has the right and the duty to provide information and advice—but that is as far as his rights extend. It is the parents who have to take the decision in the cases with which we are concerned, but although this is clear and indisputable in theory, in actual practice certain problems arise. Many people accuse the geneticist-consultant of being unduly cautious; they allege that he merely talks, and takes no constructive action in the interests of society, he is a Pontius Pilate who aspires only to wash his own hands clean. The fact is that correct decisions can be made only when all the data are available and objective evaluations rendered possible. Parents rarely have access to such data and are in any case scarcely qualified to attempt objective evaluation. Even if they have some understanding of the laws of heredity, they certainly lack objectivity in the matter, for it is that fate of their own offspring which they must consider. The geneticist consultant on the other hand is professionally equipped to make such decisions and he is not subjectively prejudiced. Why then his exaggerated caution?

Another frequent accusation is that genetic consultants are too radical in their interference in family planning. Unresolved problems abound even in the specialist literature: there are always disputes about just how directive doctors should be. Some say that information concerning the likelihood of abnormalities should be passed on, but that no further recommendations should be made and the parental decision should not be influenced. Others hold that advice should be suggestive and even manipulative in order to promote socially desirable ends.

Personally I think that a middle-of-the-road course offers the best solution. Some guidance may, and in fact *ought* to be given for the sake of the health of the child and that of the family and of society. This must not mean, however, direct persuasion, and certainly does not entail the setting of rules,

or having resort to administrative instructions. At the same time there is no reason why rational and humanistic arguments should not be brought to bear, and this is the aim of the "tactical" principles which have become chrystallized over the years and which should promote the efficacy of genetic counselling in the future. The consultant is called upon not only to assume the responsibility for providing information, but also to see that the optimal decision is taken by acting as geneticist-psychotherapist and moral advisor all wrapped in one.

Experiences with follow-up studies have been very interesting. We asked the couples we had counselled what they had thought of the procedure, and "overdoing the tact and diplomacy" was a most common complaint. Many people apparently expect more than just facts and figures and one or two hints from genetic counseling; they want outright instructions. Such a desire may sound reassuring, but it also serves as a warning. The geneticist-consultant must not in any circumstances assume the ultimate responsibility for family-planning decision. Yet there are geneticists who clamour for regulations, for compulsory birth control with the threat of administrative measures (including even compulsory sterilization) to be taken against those who fail to follow instructions. They argue that society needs to be protected, as it is already in the case of contagious diseases (e.g. there are measures which call for notifiable disease slips, quarantines and compulsory vaccinations, etc.)

Let us take a concrete example. Anyone who has contracted syphilis has to register at a venereal diseases clinic to obtain treatment. Patients who fail to appear as required, can be legally compelled to attend. The risk of transmitting syphilis through intercourse is 25-30 per cent, the early stages of the disease are not grave and are treatable. In contrast, a great many hereditary diseases are more grave, do not respond to any known therapy, and the chances of their being trans-

mitted from parent to offspring may be higher than 25-30 per cent! Despite these facts, no one is given the right to persuade the parents to act so as to limit the chances of passing on serious hereditary diseases. The similarity between the two biological processes of inspection is striking. In both cases a troublemaker—virus, bacterium, parasite or defective gene—is transmitted from one person to another. Why then does society take action on behalf of the community in the case of danger from contagious diseases, even when this means an incursion into the rights of the individual, but leave the unborn child defenceless in the name of the alleged rights of the parents?

The health of the young should be at least as important for society as the health of adults. Grown-ups are able to protect themselves, whereas the foetus and the infant can not. Does society regard children as somehow being the private property of their parents? By no means, as is clearly demonstrated by the social protection accorded to the child once born. Parents are not permitted to damage the health of their children and transgressions of this law are strictly punished. Why then are they allowed to transmit to their offspring grave anomalies, when the reappearance of these abnormalities can be predicted by the expert with a reasonable degree of certainty?

The existence of such weighty arguments on both sides suggests that a middle course is the most humane and ethical. Radical legal measures are out of place in this domain and must not be invoked. With rare exceptions, the solution is to be found in better health education and social enlightenment. Two important principles have to be reconciled: the parents' right to have children and the child's right to a reasonable expectation of sound health, which includes the right to be born healthy.

The right to procreation is generally accepted. We go along with Galton and affirm that even the blind and the deaf, the physically and the mentally handicapped

should be allowed to have children, even when there is some danger of these defects recurring in the child. Although the interests of society would require birth control in such cases, the begetting of children remains a universal human right of which the individual, or rather the individual couple, must not be deprived.

But how far can we take this principle? It is acceptable that the subnormal and mentally ill should want children and should be allowed to have them—if this is a responsible decision which fulfils a genuine emotional need. This right becomes questionable in the case of couples who are unable to exercise it with any sense of responsibility, who do not understand what is involved, and for whom conception is merely an incidental by-product of sexual activity. Some kind of progressive birth control is certainly desirable if the number of children born to such couples is not to be four, six, eight, or even higher. (In Budapest the average number of children born to couples where both parents attended remedial schools for the subnormal is six, three times the national average. And a still graver problem: 50 per cent of the children produced by such couples themselves end up attending remedial schools. In these cases special educational and counseling methods are called for in order to impress on the parents the need to observe the imperative interests of society.)

It must not be forgotten that the offspring's right to health is also a basic human right! In the United States some states have already approved laws proclaiming the right to be born healthy. In these states abnormal and defective children—or their guardians—may take legal proceeding against the parents. This can hardly be considered a solution, for to the extent that it works at all it will surely only lead to a deterioration of the relationship between parent and child. The goal must be to raise the standards of social education. It must be brought home to people that a good start in life is of crucial

importance for the child and it is everybody's responsibility to help to provide it, parents included.

To illustrate the scope of the problems involved, let me present two case histories from our records.

1. A man and wife, both schizophrenes, visited our Genetic Counseling Service. They met and married while patients of a mental hospital, now they wanted to have children. I explained to them that our experience indicates that the probability of the children of the marriage becoming schizophrenic was in the order of 25 to 50 per cent. This was good news for them, they told me, because their psychiatrist had spoken of 100 per cent certainty. I tried to impress on them the fact that a probability of 25–50 per cent was a very high risk in the case of schizophrenia, and they were quick to reassure me that they would have at least five children to be absolutely sure of producing one that would be healthy... Where both parents are schizophrenic, both the genetic risk and the family predicament of any children born are so serious that it would seem important and useful to prevent any pregnancy from following its course. How were these would-be parents to raise their children in a mental hospital? Telling this couple the lie that they had absolutely no chance of having healthy children would have promoted the socially desirable aim. On the other hand, non-directive advice and the quoting of the correct figures proved unfavourable in its social effects. What is the ethical course of action, to give precise information irrespective of the social damage, or to exaggerate the risk and effectively give directive advice? (This couple presented their first child at the Clinic when this paper was being prepared).

2. An 18-year-old unmarried woman came for genetic counseling. She had undergone operations to mitigate the spina bifida with which she was born, but because of some nerve damage to her lower limbs she has a bad limp and cannot control her

bladder and bowels. She was nine weeks pregnant when she called at the Clinic to ask whether her condition was likely to be inherited by the child. The recurrence risk is about 4 per cent. As the alfa-fetoprotein analysis of a sample of amniotic fluid provides a reliable test of the foetus, we recommended that she undergo this test. The result of the examination was positive and therefore we suggested the termination of her pregnancy on medical grounds. But our explanations of the seriousness of the damage to the baby were in vain, the patient rejected an abortion, "because my fiancé will only marry me if I am pregnant"; for her it was more important to get married than to worry about the health of her child. . .

We could mention a lot of similar cases, but this is already enough to suggest the magnitude of the problem. It is up to society as a whole to suggest what can be done with a view to satisfying the criterion of socialist humanism, without affronting individual interests. Perhaps more use should be made of directive techniques to discourage the mentally ill and the mentally deficient from having babies. In my opinion—and this is supported by follow-up studies—those who consult a clinic generally do so because they are aware of the responsibility involved in having children, and therefore they are people open to medical advice and rational arguments. I believe that it is the right and duty of the physician to draw attention to the tremendous responsibility involved, for genetic counseling must serve the interests of the children and of society as well as of those desirous of having a family.

Open Questions

Genetic counseling is an integral part of the health service and it behoves the consultant to observe the usual professional secrecy. This is not always easy in practice. The parents of marriagable children often

try to obtain "compromising" data concerning their potential in-laws. In some cases the genetic consultant comes across clear proof that the husband cannot be the father of the baby, but it is certainly not his task to divulge this information; his purpose is to help in successful and harmonious family planning. Very rarely, however, a case arises where such a problem causes us to supply mistaken advice.

A healthy couple once called at our clinic because the wife's first pregnancy had resulted in a son suffering from cystic fibrosis, an inheritable disease of the pancreas. This is a problem our clinic encounters rather often and so the counseling was quite routine. The recurrence of the anomaly in the offspring is high (25 per cent), the condition is serious and cannot be effectively treated (even though recognition and therapy in early infancy have recently improved chances of survival, the gravity of this disease remains beyond dispute). Therefore our advice was naturally to refrain from a second pregnancy, at least for the time being. The couple heeded our advice. Somewhat later, when genetic screening procedures were started in our country, we requested families with any history of cystic fibrosis to participate in the project. In the family concerned, despite the presence of the disease in the child—that is, in his mutant pair of genes—only the mother proved to be a carrier of the aberrant gene. We asked the wife to come in again, but now unaccompanied by her husband. It turned out that she had reason to doubt that the son born with cystic fibrosis was her husband's child. In the light of the genetic information from the screening we were quite certain that her son was the child of another man, for the woman could not have had this child from a man with a normal pair of genes. Hence we were able to revise our earlier recommendation and encourage a new pregnancy.

Obviously, the fact that the father is not always known with certainty must always be considered in genetic counseling.

Data from British and US sources indicate uncertainty in some 15-30 per cent of children examined. There is reason to suppose that the uncertainty factor is somewhat lower in our own culture. Sometimes we unwittingly establish that the paternity of the husband can be excluded. At present we always ask couples to visit the genetic counseling service together, as only in this way can we hope to get complete case histories of both families. Both the time factor and fear of raising suspicions make it difficult to insist on separate talks with husband and wife. Nonetheless, we do make an effort to call in husband and wife separately, at least in cases where recessive anomalies are our concern.

There is another problem, also connected with recessive genes. Every human being carries two or three potentially dangerous mutant genes among the 50,000 or so genes in his or her 46 chromosomes. As a rule, they never exert their potentially damaging effects. The fact is that genes are always present in pairs in their given locus in the chromosomes. In most cases the pair to the aberrant gene is undamaged and represses the abnormal effect of the defective gene. When a child is conceived, defective genes may also be transmitted, but luckily they rarely cause trouble: when chromosomes and genes are transmitted the mutant genes are much more likely to come from different loci in the two parents and pair off with a healthy allele resulting in a combination of a damaged and an undamaged gene—out of which again the sound gene will be dominant. It may, however, happen that a man and his wife have their defective genes in the same locus of their respective chromosomes. This is most likely to occur among blood relations descended from a close common ancestor. Nonetheless the majority of these potentially dangerous gene combinations derive from the non-assortative mating of people who are *not* related to each other, simply because coupling of any other type so rarely takes place. In such cases the likelihood

of a handicapped child being born is only 1 in 4. Hence in many a modern marriage, where only one or two children are born it may easily happen that the partners never discover that they are genetically ill-matched. On the other hand it also happens on occasion that healthy parents produce sick children, and perhaps even only sick children. There are numerous cases in our records where two abnormal children were born, more than ten cases where three were produced; one mother had four seriously damaged children, another had five. Unfortunately "chance has no memory", and even when one or two abnormal children have already been born to a given couple, the genetic gamble starts anew with every additional pregnancy. If the risk for the first child was 25 per cent, it remains at 25 per cent the second time around, regardless of whether the first child was born healthy or damaged.

Thus, whenever faced with the probability of grave or lethal damage that is medically untreatable and at present unrecognisable by any intrauterine test, we must recommend refraining from pregnancy. Some 40 per cent of the couples who wish to start families are unwilling to accept this and insist on hearing about additional or alternative possibilities. In such cases we try to gain time, especially if the counselees are young, for there is good reason to hope that the near future will bring considerable advances in the medical treatment of these rare but grave anomalies, or enable their intrauterine diagnosis. If the couple is not prepared to wait, then we recommend an adoption, and if we see that this is not for them, we broach the possibility of artificial insemination (AID).

To couples in this high-risk category who desperately want children of their own, reject the possibility of adoption or of AID, and who are at the same time intelligent enough not to wish to bring handicapped children into the world, there is nothing more we can say. Or rather there is, but we dare not say it. The fact is that the man

and the woman involved could almost certainly have healthy children if they married someone else. To suggest this would, of course, go against the fundamental aim of genetic counseling, which is to promote the harmony of the family.

To date we have had three cases of "genetically ill-matched" couples who have divorced. Two of the six individuals involved have already had healthy children through a new marriage. It was these cases that made me realize that sometimes it is highly desirable to have some information on the quality and stability of the marriages of our counselees. In the above cases, if there were some evidence to show that the marriage in question was a bad one in other ways, there would then be all the more reason to raise the possibility of divorce instead of proceeding with a high risk of the wife bearing a seriously damaged child. I think that in a high proportion of divorce cases nowadays the background reasons and arguments for splitting tend to be far less weighty than the consideration of genetic incompatibility. Direct questions on the quality of the marriage are naturally out of the question. We are currently experimenting with a Hungarian version of the Burgess-Cottress family adjustment index to see whether this may serve as a suitable and reliable test for our purposes.

The last topic on which I wish to touch concerns the *motives for wanting children*. Before we make our recommendations there are many things we want to know, including even facts about the personalities of the prospective parents. But I do think that there is an area which has not received sufficient attention, namely the reasons for wanting children. Many people cannot really express their motivation in words, but still a number of reasons do emerge in the course of discussion. Often the stress falls on the material advantages of having children. (In Hungary these include the three-year allowance associated with child-minding leave and

maintenance of seniority rights at work, priority in housing allocations, family allowances, exemption from military service, relief from night work, children's help in domestic work and later in supporting aged parents, etc. etc.) Another group prefers to put the accent on family and family ties. The people in this group are out to cement the marriage, to commit the man to his marriage or to keep the wife occupied; they want the family to survive, the family name to live on, and the family wealth to be passed down; or they may want a second child primarily as company for the first; they may want children of both sexes, etc. Members of the third group which I would identify cite personality fulfilment as their main reason; they speak about the flowering of the female personality, motherhood as an experience and an achievement, and family responsibility as marking the attainment of adulthood. For them the child is an overriding goal, a product of love, its fruit and its symbol, the fulfiller of the parents' unfulfilled hopes and ambitions, as well as (more realistically) one who will continue the work, struggle and efforts of the parents. Finally, there is a fourth group, for which social expectations and adherence to the family model are all-important: it is because their parents, their siblings, their colleagues and their neighbours all have children that they too wish to conform.

I do not know whether one can, or even whether one should attempt to rank these different types of motivations. I have to admit myself that I have more sympathy and understanding for the woman, or the couple, who want a child for reasons pertaining to personality growth and not associated with material advantages. I am not at all certain, however, whether such subjective feelings should be admitted in borderline cases between the various categories of risk. Nonetheless something tells me that this is yet another field where there is a need for more research to be carried out.

WASHINGTON AND KOSSUTH

I.

The frenzy that, in 1851, spread from America's Eastern seaboard to what was then the West is known to history as the Kossuth Craze. Its intensity was such that it threatened to dislodge American foreign policy from its axis and entangle the country in a conflict with such distant despotisms as the Habsburg empire and Tsarist Russia.

This prairie fire of public emotion was ignited by the presence and the sweeping eloquence of a tragic and solemn hero of the Hungarian revolution and war of independence of 1848-49. The U.S. warship *Mississippi* brought this hero, Lajos or, as he was called there, Louis Kossuth, to America from Turkey, where he had found temporary refuge from the vengeance of the Habsburg emperor. Franz Joseph had demanded that the leader in exile be extradited so that he could be hanged like numerous other Hungarian revolutionary statesmen and generals.

Kossuth's magic oratory added a new dimension to Manifest Destiny, the grandiose view of America's future which then enraptured the American public. Manifest Destiny suggested that America's mission was to spread her principles throughout the world.

Kossuth had been a lawyer, a deputy to the Diet, and a professional journalist of great skill and tremendous popularity, before he became the leader of the Hungarian revolution and fight for independence from Austria. He came to mobilize the American public for intervention against Tsarist despotism, which had stamped out Hungary's fight for freedom and independence. His impact was so great that it prompted men active in public affairs to take a fresh look at the principles contained in Washington's Farewell Address and to examine whether

they remained valid in an America grown gigantic since its slender beginnings.

Assuming that Washington had been right in urging neutrality in Europe's affairs, some basic problems remained for American statesmen. To what extent was American foreign policy to reflect prevailing opinion? How could American leaders fend off passionate public opinion, which brought pressure to bear on the government to take action that went beyond national interest or power?

The Kossuth Craze cast a sudden sharp light on the question whether isolation or internationalism, ideology or narrowly interpreted national interest should guide American foreign policy.

II.

The *Mississippi* landed in New York quarantine at Staten Island at 1 a.m. on December 5, 1851, with Kossuth and his retinue on board.

As it steamed toward American shores, an orgy of belligerent headlines appeared in the newspapers. President Fillmore was urged to dispatch a fleet to the Adriatic Sea to attack Austria, and another to the Baltic Sea to shell Kronstadt and St. Petersburg.

Later in the day, the boat *Vanderbuilt* ploughed from Staten Island with a host of guests, members of the reception committee of the Common Council. An Italian exile and an American Indian were the first to greet Kossuth and his retinue upon landing. Governor's Island fired a salute of thirty-one guns. Not to be outdone, New Jersey boomed one hundred and twenty guns. The warships *North Carolina* and *Ohio* chimed in and all the boats in the harbour blasted their horns. A crowd of one hundred thousand broke into a tumultuous roar as the boat, gaily decorated with American and

Hungarian flags, arrived at the Battery. A pastor likened the arrival of the exiled hero to the second coming of Christ.

Surrounded by fellow exiles, Lajos Kossuth stood serenely, his pensive blue eyes gleaming at the sight of the spectacle before him. He held his famous black plumed hat in his hand and leaned on his long sword. His open black cape reached down to his boots. He was a solemn, dignified figure. A gentle expression on his pale face, which was framed by a small beard and accented by a small moustache, softened the gravity of his proud appearance. His fame as an outstanding orator in a language not his own had preceded his arrival.

"I have come here to evoke the aid of the great American Republic to protect my people, peaceably, if they may, by the moral influence of their declarations, but forcibly, if they must, by the physical power of their arms to prevent any foreign interference in the struggle about to be renewed for the liberty of my country. . . . Your generous act of my liberation is taken by the world for the revelation of the fact that the United States are resolved not to allow the despots of the world to trample on the oppressed humanity."

Then he mounted Black Warrior, a horse which had seen many battles in the Mexican War, and reviewed troops lining the way to Broadway. "The greatest of Roman generals back from a victorious war might have been proud of such triumphal homecoming," a paper commented. Yet Kossuth was only a defeated leader of a small country somewhere in Europe, a country known by very few people before her revolution. "I have never seen greater enthusiasm that that which emanated from this immense crowd, which grew at times to fury, hailing a stranger. They hailed in him the symbol of liberty," Jean-Jacques Antoine Ampère, a visiting Frenchman wrote. In the evening, the City of New York toasted Kossuth at a banquet in Irving House. The Democratic Party of New York handed him a resolu-

tion stating that "the time for American neutrality has ceased. . . . at the tap of the drum one hundred thousand armed men will rally around the American standard to be unfurled on the field when the issue between freedom and despotism is to be decided." To crown the exultation, Kossuth was presented with a Joint Resolution of Congress resolving "in the name and behalf of the People of the United States to give [Kossuth] a cordial welcome to the Capital and to the country."

"It is quite certain that if, these December days, a popular vote of New York City had decided the foreign policy of the nation, it would have been in favour of intermeddling in European affairs, for the metropolitan people had seemingly lost their heads." Thus James Ford Rhodes, a historian of the era, referred to the grand opening of Kossuth's speaking tour.

As it was an election year, politicians and officialdom, sensitive to public opinion and eager to draw benefit from the excitement, became involved. Charles Sumner referred to Kossuth as a "living William Tell." Secretary of State Daniel Webster, attending the Congressional banquet in Kossuth's honour on January 7, 1852, expressed the wish that "the independence of Hungary be accomplished." This statement moved the ambassador of Austria to leave Washington. Webster also said of the Hungarian leader that "The world has waited for nearly nineteen hundred years to see his like." But privately, he was worried about the effect of the public mood. In a letter to a friend he wrote: "There is not only existing among us a spirit favourable to further territorial acquisition, but a zeal also for intervention in the affairs of other states, of a fearful character and already of a considerable extent. The spirit has gained great strength and vivacity from Kossuth's visit and speeches. . . . I suppose it will be revived here, to some degree as Kossuth comes here today, and a large section of the Democratic Party intend taking advantage of his pre-

sence to bring the country, if they can, to the doctrine and the practice of intervention."

III.

Kossuth confirmed his reputation as a public speaker of irresistible oratorical powers. This, however, did not generate the Kossuth Craze, it was rather a reflection of the deep emotional empathy of the American people.

In February 1848 the Mexican War ended in a treaty that represented perhaps the greatest windfall in history. It added to the United States immense territories, comprising California, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, plus parts of Colorado, Arizona, at the price of insignificant sacrifice. Suddenly the American people believed the force of a revelation that America was the depository of a manifest destiny to expand the national realm from ocean to ocean. At the same time a revolution flared up in Paris and swept the Continent, shaking the thrones of kings and princes. As centuries-old despotisms, both large and pocket-sized, collapsed like a row of dominoes, the enthralled American public recognized their own ideals remaking the Old World to the image of the New. But American pride and enthusiasm turned into frustration and sorrow as European reaction recovered from its initial fright. Despotism was about to be reinstated on the old Continent.

However, a single country refused to fall victim to reaction. Revolutionary forces there took up arms against the Habsburg despot and inflicted on him one defeat after the other. The spectacle of their heroism stirred immense admiration in America. Anger and horror rose in America when the Tsar's armies invaded Hungary to help Franz Joseph defeat the revolution in 1849.

America had taken steps to help the Hungarians, resolving in 1849 to be the first country to recognize Hungary as an

independent state. A diplomat at the U.S. Embassy in Paris had been dispatched to Vienna to make preparations for this act of recognition. But he arrived as the Hungarian army surrendered to the Russians. The military intervention of Russian autocracy to help destroy the liberty of a small nation, appeared to the American people as an insult. Kossuth appealed to this feeling when he pleaded for America to help Hungary resume the fight. He knew how to move the American public:

"The West! The West! The region of the Father of the Waters! there thou canst see the cradle of the new born humanity. —The West, a cradle! Why, the cradle is a sleeping place of a child—people of Cincinnati, you are the child, which awakening in an unwatched moment—swept away by its left arm the primitive forest, and raised by its right arm this mighty metropolis. And if this be your child's pastime work, I am awed by the presentiment of your manhood's task."

Speakers in Congress echoed Kossuth's high-strung eloquence. Senator Lewis Cass of Michigan offered a resolution to protest the intervention of great powers in crushing national independence. Senator Walker of Wisconsin went further, asking the country "to interpose her moral and physical power and warning that the country ought to be ready to fight for the restoration of freedom in Hungary."

While Stockton of New Jersey urged active physical force in behalf of struggling republics, William Henry Seward stated that even though commercial advantages were to be derived from the triumph of the republican idea in Hungary the moral argument was sufficient for a protest against Russia's intervention.

Senator Cooper of Pennsylvania warned that a single intervention might serve as an excuse for Europeans to intervene in America's domestic problems.

Beside the opposition of manufacturing interests an even more solid block of Senators

from the South, indeed all Southern Senators, except one, Soulé from Louisiana, opposed any intervention and conjured the spectre of danger of dissolution of the union since the intervention "would further weaken the bonds of the union."

The hint at "weakening" and "dissolution of the Union" by Congressmen from the South signified their fear that intervention in any form might rouse the question of slavery. Jeremiah Clemens, Senator from Alabama, made clear what he regarded to be the principles of sound foreign policy. He quoted Washington as saying,

"We can expect nothing as a favour from other nations, and none have the right to expect favours from us. Our interference, if we interfere at all, must be dictated by interest."

The Kossuth Craze did not long survive the speaking tour of the Hungarian leader, but it infused fresh vigour into "Young America," a group advocating that Manifest Destiny become the governing principle of American policy. It was not strong enough to play an independent part in the 1852 elections, but it turned into an important stream of influence within the Democratic Party. "Young America" supported Kossuth who, in his turn, urged the German ethnic groups to support Franklin Pierce, the presidential candidate of the Democratic Party. George Sanders of Kentucky, editor of the influential *Young America*, led the interventionists and tried to enlarge the camp by adding fresh immigrants, especially Germans, who came to America after the collapse of their revolution, also bringing in people in the frontier sections and in the big cities. To the middle class he emphasized that if republics were established in the heart of Europe free trade would enormously expand American commerce and provide a market for surplus products.

Kossuth left America, unsuccessful in his campaign despite his resounding personal success. But he was hopeful that his friends would turn things right after the elections.

After spending six and a half months in America, Kossuth settled in London, watching for an opportunity to arouse support for an armed revolt in Hungary against the Habsburg ruler. He joined numerous political exiles of subjected countries engaged in a grand conspiracy against the autocrats on the Continent.

Pierce won the election. He appointed George Sanders, Kossuth's most fervent supporter and friend, to be Consul in London. He had succeeded in influencing Congress to release 140,000 surplus muskets for sale, and Kossuth bought part of them with the money collected in America.

Fantastic plans, all based on presumed American support, were circulated and synchronized among the exiles in many capitals of Europe. Rumours of armed invasions and efforts to incite revolts at home, kept alive a vigorous propaganda for insurrection. Orense, a Spanish republican, offered Cuba in exchange for American support for a revolt in Spain. Ferenc Pulszky, a great Hungarian scholar of art, and archaeology, former Minister now in exile, and secretary of Kossuth, suggested to the State Department that an uprising was about to break out in Milan, and this was to be the sign for a revolt in Hungary. August Belmont, U.S. Minister to The Hague, was of great help in establishing communications with the State Department.

Consul Sanders now became the centre of conspiracies. Buchanan, the U.S. Ambassador to the Court of St. James, liked the idea of a new initiative in foreign policy. Sanders threw a festive party for the foremost exiles, primarily for Kossuth, whose prestige had grown tremendously due to his powerful connections. The Ambassador accepted an invitation and, indeed, enjoyed seeing around the dinner table, in an elated mood, such famed leaders as Garibaldi, Mazzini, Kossuth, the French Liberal Ledru-Rollin, and Herzen, all of whom would have been hanged, shot, or imprisoned in their homelands. Buchanan discreetly asked the

hostess "if she was not afraid the combustible materials about her would explode and blow us all up?" But she was enchanted with the colourful guests and harboured no fear. However, the Austrian and Russian spies followed the conspirators everywhere and their governments feared that America was officially supporting rebels. Buchanan reported back to Washington on the party, understating the effect of his presence: "They were all evidently much pleased that I was neither ashamed nor afraid to meet them."

Kossuth was ready to send a shipload of armed revolutionaries, provided the American representative in Constantinople would pledge the United States to defend Turkey against Russian intervention. The signal for simultaneous revolts and invasions would be an American declaration in favour of the liberal cause in Europe.

All these schemes collapsed in 1854, when the Senate, alarmed by Sanders' activities, refused to confirm his appointment.

IV.

After the concerted conspiracies of European exiles had ended in smoke, Kossuth moved from London to Turin in Italy. He kept a careful watch on the European scene for events which might help him to implement his plans for a revolt in or an invasion of Hungary. In reality, the Continent successively took the shape of national states that endured throughout a peace of almost fifty years—the longest Europe had ever known.

In 1867, the Austrian Emperor made a compromise with Hungary that actually enabled the former Hungarian nobility to restore

the historic predominance of the Hungarian race over the other ethnic groups in the country, the policy Kossuth's mind took before and during the revolution.

But Kossuth, having become wiser with advancing age, and having learned from his many frustrations, saw the pitfalls in this compromise. The old exile remained in Turin, a living protest against the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

The people in his land forever identified him with the abolition of serfdom. They blessed Kossuth's name and hung his portrait among their pictures of saints, although he was a Protestant. The whole nation wept, mourning its highest aspirations, when, in 1894, he was buried in Budapest, having died at the age of 92.

V.

To what extent does world responsibility increase with growing power?

Can and should a country thrive in isolation, free from entanglements in the troubles of other countries?

If a country becomes involved in other countries' conflicts, should it be guided by ideological affinity or by selfish reasons of state?

The so-called Kossuth Craze caused America to examine these questions. It served as a warning that these problems will remain and, in an emergency, will need to be faced squarely. Washington gave an answer for his time, but the problem emerged again as the world changed, and with in America's position in the world.

These questions have been posed but never answered with finality.

GEORGE GÖMÖRI

FERENC BÉKÁSSY'S LETTERS TO JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES

Those who die young inevitably become encased in a legend. That is what happened to Ferenc Békássy, the Cambridge graduate and bilingual (Hungarian-English) poet who fell at twenty-two in the First World War, only a few months after the death of Rupert Brooke, another near-legendary figure. Mihály Babits published a poem on Békássy from which the legend grew. Although some years ago István Gál tried to resurrect Békássy's memory (NHQ 41, Spring 1971), until recently we had to be content with brief, though usually warm references in the work of his memoir-writing English contemporaries. R. F. Harrod, who had never met Ferenc Békássy, describes him as "an undergraduate of King's who made a mark in Cambridge".¹ It was clearly a case of serendipity when last year I found in the Keynes collection of King's College Library, Cambridge, a box containing letters by Ferenc Békássy. These letters give us a chance to reconstruct the image of a gifted young Hungarian educated in England; they allow us to see the person behind the legend.

These letters are catalogued as "Keynes 30/5" and are kept in a large buff envelope containing—apart from Ferenc Békássy's postcards and letters—notes and letters concerning him, by Noel Olivier, John and Emma Békássy (Ferenc's younger brother and his mother). As for the Békássy material, it consists of two short notes, one postcard, several light poems, and five letters, all written to John Maynard Keynes. (In a different collection there is also one letter of Ferenc Békássy to J. T. Sheppard, a Fellow and later Provost of King's, a letter not unconnected with Keynes either.)

Ferenc Békássy, born in Hungary in 1893, was educated at Bedales and in October 1911 was admitted to King's College, Cambridge, where he read History. He soon became friends with John Maynard Keynes, ten years his senior and already a Fellow of King's. It was mainly due to Keynes' patronage that the young Hungarian became quickly accepted both in select Cambridge intellectual circles and in Bloomsbury. In 1912 he was already elected to "the Society," known also as the Apostles (where undergraduate members usually numbered about a dozen, though people did not lose their membership upon graduation), and participated in various outings of Keynes and his friends. In December 1911 Békássy joined Rupert Brooke's reading party at Lulworth; in June 1912 he stayed for a while with J. M. Keynes and G. B. Luce in Goring, Oxfordshire, and in 1914—perhaps on Keynes' invitation—he was a guest in Asham (Asheham) House in Sussex, owned at the time by Leonard and Virginia Woolf. Though it was maintained (by Keynes himself) that Békássy was one of the Everleigh party,² in other words that he stayed with Keynes and his many friends and acquaintances at Everleigh, near Andover, in July–August 1912, this now seems to be very unlikely. They were together towards the end of June but not in July—the reason for Békássy's absence was his return to Hungary in July 1912 for the Long Vacation. There is a line in one of his letters sent to John Maynard Keynes from Zsennye in Hungary, which substantiates the above claim: "Noel who is in Switzerland," writes Békássy,

¹ R. F. Harrod, *The Life of John Maynard Keynes*, London, 1963, p. 161.

² In a letter from J. M. Keynes to his mother, 17th July 1915. Quoted by R. F. Harrod, *op.cit.* p. 202.

"described your Inn in glowing language." In other words, Békássy, while knowing about Keynes' plans concerning Everleigh, never saw the Crown Hotel rented out by Keynes for his friends.

The brilliant economist from King's seemed to have liked his Hungarian friend very much; he even visited him in Hungary in the autumn of 1912. Some of Békássy's letters in fact discuss this occasion at length, informing Keynes about railway connections which would bring him to Kis-Zsennye in County Vas. (Harrod, Keynes' biographer, is mistaken when he believes that the Békássy estate was close to Budapest.) Békássy had thought that Keynes probably would find Kis-Zsennye boring, although most of his family spoke English and his friend clearly came for his sake, rather than for the pleasures of the Hungarian countryside.

Another person whose name often occurs in Békássy's letters is Rupert Brooke. I would hesitate to call his relationship to Brooke a "friendship;" although Ferenc Békássy may have been fond of the author of *Grantchester* and was keen to hear from Keynes about the reception of Brooke's first book of poetry, they were also rivals. Not so much poetic ones, but both were in love with Noel Olivier. As Sir Geoffrey Keynes, the editor of Brooke's correspondence, put it: "Brooke's affection for Noel... was for a period very deep,"³ and Brooke was reported to be often openly and hysterically jealous of the women he had admired. Brooke was several years older than Békássy and already a much published poet in 1912, but Békássy, roughly the same age as Noel Olivier, had known her already at Bedales and was probably closer to her than his handsome rival. Perhaps the main reason for avoiding an open confrontation over their feelings for Noel Olivier, was Brooke's parallel tortuous involvement with Katherina

("Ka") Cox, rather than any special bond of friendship with Békássy.

The first written communications between Ferenc Békássy and J. M. Keynes date from late 1911 and February 1912. These are notes sent about in King's; it is worth noting, that on the first the young Hungarian still signs his name in full, whereas the second note (asking Keynes for a walk) is already signed "Feri," thus indicating increased familiarity. Indeed, 1912 seems to have been a year of intense friendship between the two men. The poetic exercise *The Prophet to Zuleika*, preserved by Keynes, was almost certainly written in 1913—in it Békássy demonstrates his technical skill by producing readable English verse in an unusual metre.

As his letters show, Békássy went home twice that year: first in the Easter Vacation, and then again in July for the summer. He kept writing steadily to Keynes from Hungary. His first letter actually registers something of a "culture shock" (it is strange to be back after a long stay in England), as well as a determined attempt at re-acclimatization: "I have become quite Hungarian now," writes Békássy, "nothing is more absurd than the idea of my thinking in English." Although this might reflect Békássy's state of mind at the time, there is a certain coyness and some play-acting in this letter, not unusual in itself from a bright nineteen-year old. The contrast between Kis-Zsennye and Cambridge is dramatised, and towards the end of the letter its writer admits that he has been "mildly melodramatic," partly for effect.

The next letter to Keynes was posted in July 1912 from Hungary—it is, in fact, a poetic letter, a light, humorous poem which describes two things: Békássy's journey back to Hungary and reminiscences about some undefined place in the English countryside. While this second theme could be a composite picture drawing on experiences of Cambridge, Goring and other places, a close reading suggests that Békássy's

³ *The Letters of Rupert Brooke*, ed. by Geoffrey Keynes, London, 1968, p. 119.

allusions probably refer to Limpsfield. Here a few words could be said about Békássy's friendship with the Olivier family. Sir Sydney Olivier, a Fabian Socialist and a civil servant, at the time of Békássy's Cambridge days Governor of Jamaica, had four daughters. The Olivier sisters (Margery, Brynhild, Daphne, and Noel) attracted a large number of friends and admirers both to their frequent camping expeditions and to Limpsfield, where the family owned a house, The Champions. Rupert Brooke often went there in 1910-12, although he did not much like the extended family atmosphere: "The atmosphere of Priest Hill and The Champions is too damned domestic. I love the people and loath the atmosphere."⁴ Yet go he did, for Noel Olivier's sake. Sometimes the young guests were camping out in the park under the pines, played games, had lengthy discussions. Although in the letters to J. M. Keynes Békássy did not mention Limpsfield by name, we know of his feelings for Noel Olivier and his London encounters with the Olivier sisters; having been used to a large family, he probably enjoyed his visits to Limpsfield much more than Rupert Brooke did.

For it is Limpsfield that provides the idyllic background to the poem *Trunk-things floating*. . . The poetic form is borrowed from Browning, a poet whom Békássy both admired and censured. (In his letter to J. T. Sheppard⁵ he wrote; "The critics. . . are as bad as Browning himself who intends to write bad poems though they sometimes come good by chance.") It follows the rhythmic pattern of *A Toccata of Galuppi's*; there is even a muted textual allusion to this particular poem, a partial repetition of Browning's words ("was a lady such a lady.") Of course, Békássy's tone is not at all serious; its light-heartedness is apparent in the too-easy flow of contrived or funny rhymes,

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 270.

⁵ Under cat. no. Sh. 3.5 in King's College Library, Cambridge. It was written from Goring, Oxfordshire, on June 21st 1912.

(hence Békássy's apologies to Brooke for the rhyme Rupert—stupid)—the overall effect being suggestive of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. "James," mentioned in the poem, must have been James Strachey who stayed at Limpsfield at the same time as Békássy, visiting the Oliviers, and it looks as if neither Keynes nor Rupert Brooke were there at the time, that is, *if* the idyll related by Békássy in the second half of the poem took place at the end of June—early July 1912. (There is always the possibility that Békássy referred here to earlier events.) At any rate, the word that gives us the topographic clue is Oxted—that is Oxted, Surrey, only a few miles from Limpsfield where Békássy was driven down, as he recalls, in pouring rain by Lady Howard, probably just in time to catch a train to London. Finally, the last line, "the beauty-seeking brainy brothers of the West," is a glorification of the Apostles and of Keynes' other friends gathered at Everleigh.

Békássy's next letter, also written in July, starts with another poem (*Rain*), this one less structured and more impressionistic than the previous one: it is a rhapsody about a summer shower which does not quite materialize. The poem is followed by a whimsical and not particularly informative account of Békássy's life at Zseny, also providing some interesting philological information. The following two letters (August and September, respectively), although in the main to give instructions to Keynes before his impending journey to Hungary, also contain passages which shed a light on Ferenc Békássy's reading and thinking at this period. Having re-read Nietzsche, he recommends him to Keynes, asking with a shade of irony: "or doesn't Cambridge philosophy allow it?" Keynes, as most of the Apostles, was an admirer of G. T. Moore, enthused over his *Principia Ethica*, and probably agreed for a while with Moore's teaching, according to which the supreme value of life were the states of consciousness involved in human relations and

in the appreciation of beauty.⁶ Moore's approach to reality, however, was more reflective than active, and Békássy, although very appreciative of beauty, was by nature more a man of action—hence the interest he expressed in Nietzsche.

There is a gap between the autumn of 1912 and early 1915, but the friendship between Ferenc Békássy and John Maynard Keynes continued; we know, for example, that Békássy sometimes visited Keynes in the house which he shared with the Stephen sisters in Bloomsbury, at 38 Brunswick Square. In May 1914 Békássy sat for his Tripos Part II exams in Cambridge and got his degree, after which he spent some time in Switzerland, though it is not quite clear whether before or after his final departure from England. As David Garnett relates,⁷ Békássy borrowed the money to return home from Keynes. For a number of reasons, he felt compelled to return to Hungary; his younger brother, John, stayed in England, and was interned during the war.

Békássy's last two letters, both written in 1915, complete the story. One of those reached Keynes only in 1920—it was forwarded from London by John Békássy with a covering note, saying that though the letter was written after the beginning of the war it was never posted—Békássy's mother found it lying about among Ferenc's papers. The other one was addressed to Noël Olivier who then copied out "bits of it" and sent them to Keynes in the autumn of 1915. Both letters reflect the complex emotional situation in which Ferenc Békássy found himself upon his return to Hungary. As a young gentleman from the country, one part of his being enjoyed "this soldier's life," the lively bustle of Budapest and the camaraderie he found amongst his fellow-officers; on the other hand, he was openly unhappy about the war and could feel no hatred for the enemy. A sentence toward the end of

his 1915 letter to Keynes is telling: "I suppose in England there is the same idiotic hatred of the inimical nations as here." He felt that the only way to solve this contradiction would be to take an active part in the fighting—hence the impatient cry: "I want to be in it and forget what I think."

The last letter that Ferenc Békássy ever wrote to Noël Olivier is already tinged with nostalgia ("how sad it is that I suppose things will never be quite the same again") and with disappointment: it is an illusion to believe that the world can be made better. The man who writes this letter is someone whose ideals have been shattered; not even poetry can save them, for it is not worth writing poetry for people infected by the "spirit" of the war. Békássy is worried that the war, if it goes on long enough, will numb people's feelings, will cauterize them, and yet—paradoxically—he believes that it is "very worth taking the risk," that somehow the experience of fighting will enrich his life. The youthful naiveté of this sentence in his letter to Noël Olivier is mitigated only by the matter-of-fact realism of the last few words: "unless I die in it." He died as Lieutenant of the 5th Honvéd Hussars in the Bukovina, on 25th June, 1915.

There are obvious parallels with Rupert Brooke—an awareness of death permeates the work of both poets. Békássy, who was six years younger, remained much less accomplished, there is more promise than actual achievement in his work, but his themes (judging from his posthumous book of poetry *Adriatica*) contained a similar presentiment, a strong foreboding of early death. The thought of it sometimes frightened him: "It is not actual life but the prospect of variety that makes me want to live. Everything in me is just beginning to develop its nature..." broods one of the aphorisms in *Adriatica*. At other times, he seems to have accepted this possibility calmly, in a spirit of quiet resignation, as these lines of the poem "1914" show:

⁶ Harrod, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

⁷ Quoted by István Gál in *NHQ* 41, p. 190.

He fell without a murmur in
 the noise of the battle; found rest
 'Midst the roar of hooves on the grass,
 a bullet struck through his breast.⁸

With the death of Ferenc Békássy both English and Hungarian literature suffered a loss, the dimensions of which are difficult to measure. On the battlefield "not blood, but the beautiful years of his coming life have been spilled;" it may have been only a virtual loss for poetry but was a very real one for those who had known and loved Feri—a charming and intelligent young man who left behind few writings but many fond memories.

Ferenc Békássy's letter to J. M. Keynes
 No place, probably
 Kis-Zsenye, Hungary, (April?) 1912

Dear Maynard,
 to get over business first: you might have remembered. We Are Seven. Six of us still left, that is one more than in Wordsworth. Neither the masculine nor the feminine element is preponderant. I mean, neither boys nor girls are in a majority. 3:3.

To proceed: I am quite alone; outside the grass is smothered in flowers, it is raining, and there is a strong north wind. The rooms have been empty since Xmas and their condition is appalling. I have nothing to do but to admire everything in turn, and count the keys over and over again. The tops of fir trees are scratching at the wall below my window. The rest of the family are straggling home and will arrive during tomorrow and the day after.

The most sensational news is that the King has been sensible and that the heir presumptive was behind this crisis, carrying on a flirtation with the clericals. The old go-

vernment is returning⁹, and my father is not going to resign, etc.

But for the next 40 years—after this government *does* fall—the whole country will be smothered in clericalism. All my generation are intensely clerical. I shall be here for the worst of it. At the Budapest University one has to be a Clerical or a Philo-Jew, and arrange one's opinions on matters of learning accordingly. Those of the landed gentry (the only class that counts in politics) who aren't clerical are retiring.

Before I came here to repent and renounce my sins I debauched in town, coming in for the very end of the season. But it was dull.

At any rate I *have* become quite Hungarian by now; nothing is more absurd than the idea of my thinking in English. There are three perpendicular lines between my eyebrows; my lips have an expressive curl; and the peasant-women kiss my hand, as though I were a bishop. Perhaps I might add, a *young* bishop.

I don't ever want to see Cambridge again. Nothing need ever happen, really. I might just as well stay here, go out to shoot duck in the evenings, keep bees, and read the classics, and be glad I've got some brains.

I am in perpetual excitement about the fate of Gerald's¹⁰ five franc pieces. I think gambling is rather a strain on one's nerves, I almost wish you hadn't drawn *me* into it. Besides, I have never been at Monte Carlo, and you left me to find out for myself how the game works.—Anyhow, I suppose Gerald has got you to lose all your money by now, and the Bank has sent you home with a 2nd class ticket. That is what happens to heroes in our novels. If the writer is a preacher, at the beginning of the book, if he is a

⁹ Although Prime Minister Khuen-Héderváry resigned on 8th April, 1912, a member of his former cabinet, László Lukács, formed the new government.

¹⁰ Gerald Shove, a friend of Keynes'. They spent the Easter Vacation of 1912 together at Beaulieu on the Riviera, and they visited Monte Carlo as well.

⁸ *Adriatica and Other Poems*, The Hogarth Press, London, 1925, p. 9.

cynic at the end, and if a decadent all the way through.

Other things I've done—besides riding with my sister and others—and that have happened are too unintelligible for me to tell you about them.

I don't want to go to bed yet because a cart (furniture) that ought to have come (everything's upside down) has not arrived yet. If it were not raining so abominably and &c., I would go out to meet it. I suppose Rupert will get his fellowship next year, anyhow.*—I don't want to think about

* Rupert Brooke got his Fellowship at King's College, Cambridge, in March 1913.

people or English and Cambridge things. I am full of things I dare not write because they sound ridiculous and I go mad when I think about them. What on earth am I to do *all* next term?

(You see I had to end up somehow like this, it would have been too undramatic otherwise. This, at any rate, is mildly melodramatic. I like to have some proof that I really have been feeling feelings I have imagined for myself. This is getting complicated.)

Yours sr.
Feri

Békássy's poem sent to Keynes
(n.d., n.p.—1912?)

THE PROPHET TO ZULEIKA

Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt, vigilemus!

When, pleading passionate for feelings fashioned deep from the heart
I waited silently, hoping by love to see thy evry part
Raised to sublimity; (love scorns what limit he easily scapes,
Fashions reality tortured mentality drearily apes)

Wily with passionless wearying wariness, why did you cast
Dust of doubt over me, lo! who aspired to be first, who was last,
Ranked with the godhead high, raised voice to prophesy unto the lands?
Tamed it the beast of prey, ere night o'er takes the day, under your hands.

So must cries, passionate, clamorous, perforate ever the shame
Blameless virginity silently brings to me! Back whence he came,
Wild among beasts that rage, back to his heritage must the man roam
Brute who aspired to rise, whom you made fool—or wise?—Lust is his own!
Mute, mawkish, senseless, lewd, so shall reap the fruit, since he has sown!

The rhymes are plainly stunning and the sense is there; I hardly think the metre of Bernard of Cluny exemplified here is really such a grand' mystère!

Note: This poetic exercise could have been written in Cambridge or at Goring (in June 1912) where some kind of a 'poetic contest' took place between J. M. Keynes' guests. The title of the poem is a clear allusion to Max Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson*, an Oxford romance, which was published in 1911 and read by most undergraduates of the day. (G.G.)

Békassy's humorous letter-poem to Keynes,
July 1912, Kis-Zsennye, Hungary

Trunk-things floating, sisters gloating—dreary prospect, you'll agree—
Still unpacking, yawning, slacking: very hot and half past three.
This to ease me—if it please me— so again you hear from me.

'Hardly settled down to Zsennye;' nothing write of that self, here,
So you picture (—it's a stricture—); *that* at any rate is clear.
Just an hour from the journey; now the news! What? none to hear?

"Oh, the Bishop! how they've fished up sacramental ornaments
—Operation—inflammation—here official knowledge ends;"
"X and miss S and their blisses"—county scandal twists and bends.

And "the corn is rain down-beaten; worms have crunched and chafers eaten,
Gnawed the very heart of roses; nothing on the plumb-tree rows is."
"Then the balls at Mrs H's; dancers rubbing knees and noses—"

So forth. Journey! Such a journey! Long and sooty, dull enough;
Had a neighbour (purple, pouchy, leery-eyed, in manner bluff)
Told me, how his wife's aunt's cousin's daughter had the whooping-cough!

. . . Was a country such a country, was a lady such a . . .
Where we climb the Calycanthus, leaping as with locusts' wings,
And where nightly James talked rightly, in the shrubs, of Love and things?

(For we slept beneath the heavens when the heavens were good enow.)
Where we'd Parsons, murders, arson—(well we acted, all allow)
Yonke Danky Do-s and donkeys, stuff and nonsense.—Well, and now?—

To the circles where no turtles swiftly scurry, ah, where James
Feels at home, once being up to peoples' tricks and little* games
Greeting (but I hope you will not let him call me beastly names.)

What with James and Jews and Browning,
Soon I left them, sadly frowning
As Lord Howard's consort drove me down to Oxted, rain-pour-down-ing

Just as Rupert—but 'tis stupid,—I'm too tired to tell the rest.
So remain in *Son* and *Father* and the Holy Spirit blest,
(Nerves not week'ning) beauty-seeking brainy brothers of the West!

Feri

* (*with apologies to Rupert*)

Békássy's letter to Keynes

Kis Zsennye, Rum,

August 1912

Dear Maynard,

The 16th will do admirably. After the 18th there will only be four of "us children" here, my eldest sister, my "twin" brother and my youngest sister, besides myself. (I hope you won't find it too few, nor too many, nor too much!)

At Vienna you book from the Südbahnhof to RÁBAMOLNÁRI (reah'bo-mol'-naahry) but the train is just "nach Ungarn." Probably you'll come starting at a.m. arriving about p.m.¹¹ You can get a dinner (if you think you'll be able to eat it) brought into the carriage at Sopron, if you tell the guard soon after Wiener-Neustadt. At about you get to Szombathely (Steinamanger): there look out of the window for five minutes, I might be there. You might bring a black coat and something to ride in, other things don't matter. (What you will ride on, I don't quite know yet. Don't expect something too grand.)

Unless you can convince me of the contrary, I shall go on believing you're arriving on the 16th by that train: though it's almost incredible, Cambridge and all you being so very far. The only other news I had's from Noel,¹² who is in Switzerland, described your Inn in glowing language, and told of Bryn's engagement. What Popham? Hugh!¹³ (Expression of red Indians used for feelings [see Karl May] which we in ordinary language have no way of rendering (see St. Thomas Aquinas and the others). It seems very silly, but then perhaps it isn't.

I wonder how you'll like it here, I think

¹¹ Gaps as in original. Evidently Békássy forgot to put down the times of departure and arrival. This is also the case two lines further down.

¹² Noel Olivier, daughter of Sir Sidney Olivier, civil servant, statesman and, before the First World War, Governor of Jamaica.

¹³ Brynhild Olivier, Noel's sister, was engaged to marry Hugh Popham in 1912.

not much. Are you really intending to work steadily until your brain gives way?

It seems I am going to the Tyrol with Tónika (elder sister) the day after tomorrow, but it's not quite settled yet. I don't know what to think of it; as a matter of fact it's like when I wake up in the early morning, want to go riding but would rather lie in bed and think or get up and do nothing: but am miserable for the rest of the day if I haven't ridden. The second crop of hay been carted in just lately and one can ride all over the meadows.

Have you ever read Nietzsche or doesn't Cambridge philosophy allow it? I wish you read *Beyond Good and Evil*, I like him so much: he seems the only person who really has launched out and struggled through in all the masses of thought that always seem to lead nowhere (beginning with things like *truth*, and so forth) so that whatever he says does come genuinely, and he never says things he believes "in order that he may stand," without mentioning that as the reason of his belief; one can deal honestly with him. You know I read him ages ago, and it seems strange to me now how much of him I understood then—but it's no use talking.

I am reading the Hungarian Classics (who begin at the end of the 18th century: down to the middle of the 19th). That too is a change, because they are all bad—unreadable—and I need to read like a butterfly, going only for beauty. But they made it possible for us to master our language (though we still have to do it each for himself, and an immense amount of talent (among poets) is wasted because of this; unlike your poets who find a language that expresses their things for them)—and I am reading even their quarrels with tremendous enthusiasm.¹⁴

¹⁴ Békássy here probably has in mind Kazinczy and the neologists' quarrels with the more conservatively inclined literati; what he is talking about is less the Hungarian Classics than the Classicists.

I am slack to go on writing down things and don't feel inclined to talk. So—

yrs.
Feri

Békássy to Keynes
Schluderbach, September 1912

Dear Maynard,

I retract all I ever said about black coats of any sort; please don't take any notice,—how *can* you ask *me* about clothes! *What* an idea!

But I'm an authority on routes. The usual one we go by is Quenboro' (or Folkestone), Flushing, Hanover, Leipzig, Dresden, Teschen, Vienna; that's the most direct, and one gets in one end and out at the other, having only to trouble about not committing suicide through sheer boredom in between. You must leave by the night boat so as to get to Vienna in the morning and Molnári at four p.m. as I said.

Then one might go up the Rhine which is less ugly and doesn't take much longer; Vlissingen (Flushing) as before; same train as before, but a different carriage, to Cologne; Cologne, Frankfurt, München (Munich!) where you would get in the evening, as to Dresden; Vienna next morning (by Lienz).

Of course, you may like to visit some town you are fond of, e.g. Berlin, or Moscow, St. Petersburg, or Irkutsk; they are all very fine places, worth going to. To get to the first you go the same old Vlissingen-Hanover way (different direct carriage) and I suppose it would only take three days; to get to Vienna by Moscow might take five, St. Petersburg seven: Irkutsk—it is not safe to venture on any definite assertion.

I hope we'll manage the doddering back; I don't see why not as I haven't got a return ticket either. We might go to Berlin then?

It's so cold my fingers are quite numb—but I forgot, you don't even know I've been here (Aust., Tirol) for a fortnight with my eldest sister, Tónika; am going back tomorrow though.

Of course they haven't forwarded the literary supplement, for which many thanks. Still reviews on Rupert! He must be getting quite pleased by now about the way people take his poems.¹⁵

I wrote James¹⁶ a silly letter after I got yours, as a cultured grandson might write to an old gentleman who is a staunch supporter of liberalism and professes all the great ideals and ideas new 30 years ago. But he must be getting tired of that joke by now. I was immensely amused by Lucy's poem,¹⁷ I wonder where he is now.

Hotels! And the people in them! If I stay here longer my poetry too will reflect the hopeless failure of the (lower middle) i.e. citizen classes—as has been said lately *in praise* of a new Hungarian poet!!

Write if you're not arriving on 16th.

Yours,
Feri

Békássy's unposted letter
to John Maynard Keynes

Budapest, Üllői út 115/B. I.
1915. I. 6.*

My dear Maynard,

Why didn't you *write* instead of just arranging that I should do so? I know just as little about all of you, and would like to know just as badly.

Perhaps you have heard how my brother is on the Isle of Man in a prisoners' camp (No. 1129, Peel)—I wanted to write and ask you to help him but Mr. Badley did everything that was possible. Éva**—whom

¹⁵ Rupert Brooke's first collection of poetry, *Poems* was published by Sidgwick and Jackson in December 1911.

¹⁶ James Strachey, psychologist, a friend of John Maynard Keynes'.

¹⁷ G. H. Luce was a poet and a friend of Keynes' who later financed the publication of Luce's poems through Macmillan's. (Cf. R. F. Harrod, *The Life of John Maynard Keynes*, London 1963, p. 161.)

* 6th January. (G. G.)

** Ferenc Békássy's sister.

Justin remembers, at least he ought to—writes sometimes, she of course is having a grand time. As for me—I am neither dead, nor have I been mutilated, nor have I been to the front yet, though here people said all these things about me. When I came home in August, I thought I would certainly be going in 6 or 8 weeks—and it was almost true, and since then I often thought we would be going, but now, after having been in a wretched little town for some months,¹⁸ I am back in Budapest, where I am staying till March. It is too long—I would like it best if I were going now—but perhaps March will be time enough.

I am enjoying this soldier's life—I have become a swagger horseman (!) a crack shot (!) and anything else you like, the brain capacity decreasing in proportion to the accumulating brawn. Before I came up here, I met and made friends with many—now officers, but usually of course ordinary citizens—who have mostly gone to the war and some are dead and some have come back wounded—I want to see one just now, a splendid lieutenant who taught me all I know about military matters. Life in Budapest is almost as gay as ever and much more full of sense and spirit—but I am occupied from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and see comparatively little of it. Many of my relations are gone to the war, and it was rather a sad Christmas, but the New Year brought Tonika's¹⁹ husband back to her for two days.

I hardly know what to write. I am simply WAITING and WANTING to DO something. I can't write about what I think of the war,²⁰ and even if I could I would hate

to, I want to *be in it* and forget what I think.

I am already firmly rooted in Hungary, as of course I knew I would be when I came home—when I come back to you it will be for a visit only.

Write and tell me about *everybody*; I was ill a few weeks ago, and thought of you all, all the time. Tell me what Lucy is doing, one hardly knows whether his part of the world is peaceful or not.²¹ Tell me how the Society²² continues—the only undisturbed thing in these times. Lucas I know is splendid: has he found anyone else?²³ And tell me please about Noel, if there is anything to tell.

Of course, Budapest is full of hospitals, but it only makes people more full of spirit if they're occupied most of the day, and it's a morally good occupation, looking after the wounded. (*The following sentence is crossed out.*
The ed.)

I suppose the war touches you much less than us.—I am glad and at the same time and (*sic!*) embittered when I think of things—but the good people always have the best of everything (it's easy for us) and I am only annoyed because the others always make a mess for themselves.—

I have been with my cousin at her hospital and saw all the different nations—Bohemians who can't bear pain, but the loss of a limb causes them no mental suffering (a Hungarian would rather die than be a cripple), the patient Russians, and the various Ruthenians and Rumanians who are quite like animals, and a lot more—Poles who can

¹⁸ This must have been Pápa where Békássy wrote the poem *Into thy hands, o love...* Cf. *Adriatica and other poems*, London, 1925, p. 14.

¹⁹ Ferenc Békássy's eldest sister.

²⁰ An obvious allusion to letters being censored in Hungary. It is very unlikely that Békássy felt any hatred towards the "enemy", as for Keynes, he was horrified by the slaughter the war involved. Cf. his letter to Duncan Grant, quoted in R. F. Harrod, *The Life of John Maynard Keynes*, London, 1963, p. 201.

²¹ G. H. Luce, Keynes' friend, taught English at the University of Rangoon. Cf. Harrod, *The Life of John Maynard Keynes*, p. 161.

²² The Cambridge Conversazione Society, known also as The Apostles, of which both J. M. Keynes and Békássy were members. Wittgenstein was also elected to the Society in 1912. For an account of this, see Michael Holroyd, *Lytton Strachey: A Biography*, London 1973, p. 516.

²³ F. L. Lucas, who later on wrote the Preface to Békássy's slim collection of verse in English, *Adriatica*.

amuse a whole room, and one who we thought was dying, began to sing Polish songs on Christmas eve. He had two voices, & I thought one was a woman singing—but all Poles are gifted! There are persistent Germans and *krautig* Austrians but of course the Hungarians (the peasants) seem almost an aristocracy of intelligence among them all.

I very much wonder how you take IT—some adventurous spirit whom you despise—perhaps (but I don't feel at all sure) Watson—will have gone to the war. Of course I am writing poems but that's not what I'd really like to be writing now—one can't write anything else though it's only poems one can spin out of nothing. (To create is to make something out of nothing, says the Catechism!) It's too late & I must of course get up early, and I am sleepy and can't write.

Write about everyone and everything. I suppose in England there is the same idiotic hatred of the inimical nations as here.

For myself and unless I die in it, I shall have got nothing but good out of this war. Love to everybody, a different kind to each—and choose which you like, for yourself.

Feri

*A copy of Békássy's letter to Noel Olivier,
forwarded by her to J. M. Keynes*

No place but prob.
Budapest, May 1915.

Dear Noel,

I am going to the front in five days' time, and am already feeling quite detached from everything so that nothing interests me very much and the only vivid remembrances are: people. A week ago I still thought a lot about how sad it was that 38 Br. (*unswick*) Square had broken up and that everything among you is changing, though I had felt it would never change, and, how sad it is

that I suppose things will never be quite the same again, and that the last four years were so splendid.

It's a year, almost, since I've left—I was in Switzerland with Peter last June. The time has gone so fast, I felt as though someone had robbed a year out of my life—because, though it has been very instructive of course (I got to know Budapest—and Jews and business and women and the "social order")—*it hasn't been my life*. I think it will be, when I go.

I'm going gladly, I know it's very worth taking the risk and I am sure to get something good out of the war unless I die in it. It's part of "the good life" just now, that I should go: and the sooner one gives up the idea that the *world* can be made better than it is, the better. I dare say one can make it happier, but then happiness isn't the main point, is it?

Since the war began, I have written poems again. I think they are good but its no use writing for *this* public!—Everything is beautiful now, there are some evenings in which all the lovely things are heaped together, flowersmells, clouds, water, chestnut-trees (*sic*), and young corn. There are very beautiful sunsets, and all this makes it somehow easier to go. I've come to think everything is more important about lives than when they end; because when I die, someone else is born instead, so it really doesn't matter, (but this is so impersonal that one can only think it when there's no occasion). I wanted to write much more about May and the country.

Do you know I think there's a difference between poets (who write poetry) and other people, that poets take hold of the feelings they have and won't let go; and other people let feelings have their natural effects and so don't write poems.

I must be changing a good deal now—at any rate outwardly, and that's what seems to matter in one's relations to people. I can't believe I've left all of you though it seems definite enough—and perhaps the war won't

stop till everyone is too tired to be good for anything. People are getting so used to the war.

By the time I go, there'll be roses, and I shall go with a crest of three red ones on my horse's head because (but people won't know the reason) there are three over the shield in our coat of arms.

This isn't at all the letter I meant to write, but I can't help it. I long to see you, and all of you again. I often think of you.

And we shall meet, shan't we, some day?

Good-bye—

Yours

F. Békássy

This letter is accompanied by a note of Noel Olivier to Keynes which says (October 22nd 1915) "I've been just visiting Éva Békássy and that made me think that I'd better send you those bits of Feri's letter which I promised you: although so out of time now." This indicates that Noel Olivier omitted more than a few "personal" sentences. (G. G.)

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

THE MALE AND THE FEMALE SELF

Emil Kolozsvári Grandpierre: *Béklyók és barátok* (Fetters and Friends), Magvető, 1979. 341 pp.; Judit Tóth: *Kifutópálya* (Runway) Szépirodalmi, 1980. 316 pp.

I have never met Emil Kolozsvári Grandpierre but after reading his new book, *Béklyók és barátok* (Fetters and Friends), an autobiography,* he feels like a near acquaintance, indeed a friend. The author himself admits that spontaneity and sociality have been protective and rewarding qualities throughout his life; now, for the first time, he has managed to assert these qualities in a literary work and elevate them to form an aesthetic category of their own. Here is a writer whose suppleness, vitality and optimism distinguish him from most of his more reticent, shy and inhibited confrères. In the welter of works on the inability to communicate, the stories of his friendships and conquests stand out a mile and it is thanks to these same gifts that he survived the most horrible of historical tests with unbroken humour. Who wouldn't like to have such a man as a friend? And Emil Kolozsvári Grandpierre extends a hand of friendship to the world.

This peculiar wizard of Hungarian literature is seventy-three years old. There is nothing in his book that would bring this fact to mind. We hear the voice of the man who experienced all the events of the decade between 1945 to 1955 (when he was in his forties), but who seems to have come through

all unscathed to this very day. These were years, however, when his literary output was severely affected by the tumult of history.

In 1944, when he was called up and sent to the Eastern front, the 37-year old Kolozsvári Grandpierre had already made his name as a writer. Five of his novels had already appeared, amongst them *Tegnap* (Yesterday), an autobiographical book about his formative years, considered to be his chief work, and like its predecessor, *Szabadság* (Freedom), a unique blend of essay, novel and memoir. The traces of this technique can also be observed in *Béklyók és barátok* (Fetters and Friends); the method is the height of fashion in Hungary today, two recent examples being Tibor Déry's *Ítélet nincs* (No Judgement) (1969), and Gyula Illyés' *Beatrice apródjai* (Beatrice's Pages), (1979).

Tegnap (Yesterday) and *Szabadság* (Freedom) deal with the Christian Hungarian middle class, with its oldfashioned *dzsentri* overtones, the world from which Kolozsvári Grandpierre hailed and whose spirit had such a profound influence on Hungary between the two world wars. Kolozsvári Grandpierre did not share the general faith in the mission of middle-class intellectuals. He exposed how obsolete this concept was with criticism of devastating force. Against the nebulous illusions, doleful pseudo-patriotism and irrational nostalgia

*See p. 72 of this issue for a section of this work.

that was nourished by prevailing notions in the history of ideas, he opposed sober and moderate French rationalism and sometimes an almost anti-philosophical empirism. The key to his personality as a man and writer may well be this empiricism, which tolerates philosophizing only in the form of witty aphorisms. This empiricism opened his eyes to the crippling obsessions of his own environment, and it was this which made him into such a sure-handed, sharp-eyed and free-spirited writer; the same empiricism drew him close to left-wing movements, it remained his basic outlook when he returned from captivity, and it gave him a measure of protection during the vicissitudes which followed.

It might seem as if nothing extraordinary happened to Kolozsvári Grandpierre in the post-war coalition period (1945-48), or in the period of the show trials which followed. He had no significant political role, he did not suffer deportation, he was even spared great cataclysms in his private life. But as a writer he practically ceased to exist.

After having more or less luckily survived a stretch as a prisoner of war, he was appointed in 1946 to head Hungarian Radio's literary department, a rather vacuous post as no such department had existed up to that point. He stayed there quite a while—until 1950, by which time almost everybody else had been dismissed, many colleagues and the leadership transformed beyond recognition. Even then he quit of his own free will astutely opting out of the increasingly intolerable pressure. His purpose was to devote himself entirely to writing, to become a free-lance, and his starting point was a novel written furtively in the pauses stolen from his work at the Radio. The work made the compulsory minimum of concessions to the contemporary requirements of socialist realism, but it was not to be completed, for the author was obliged to take up another job, this time as reader at a publishing house. Three years later he succeeded in publishing a historical novel written in the

style of a folk-tale and he has been a full-time professional writer ever since.

These years were indeed not the sort of decorative and spectacular period which demands to be included in any memoir. The greatest shock of this phase comes when the writer devotes an entire chapter to informing the reader of his impotence. The country lies in ruins, party feuds are raging, feudal-capitalist Hungary has come to the end of the road and a new world is in the making trying to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of many centuries: yet this notorious philanderer is concerned only with the impotence contracted during his captivity, the records of his repeated attempts to seek treatment, and how that treatment failed, yet without wishing to be the least bit provocative or exhibitionistic. He is not washing dirty linen in public, for a rare and propitious balance of healthy irony and natural self-confidence redeem his presentation of an embarrassing episode from every unpleasant connotation. The opening chapters of this volume of memoirs, together with the author's previous works, suffice to endear him to the reader. His honesty in the portrayal of his personal experiences arouses keen interest because the reader too experiences history chiefly on the personal level.

The best pages of "Fetters and Friends" are those of a novel with the author himself cast as the hero. Kolozsvári Grandpierre manages in these pages to be a hero of general interest, the representative of his readers. This is one of a number features which distinguish his book from the memoirs of Illyés* which appeared at about the same time and appear at first sight to be a novel of very similar character; Illyés remains Gyula Illyés throughout the book, whereas Kolozsvári Grandpierre becomes his own romantic hero without detracting from his own personality in any sense.

The story of his marriage has a comparable

* "Beatrice's Pages," reviewed in NHQ 78 by the same author.

effect on the reader. With all its regularities and irregularities, it reflects the fate of a man who has come home from captivity to find the world turned upside down and himself compelled to find a new place within it. His marriage is not an ordinary relationship: sometimes it is a genuine marriage, and sometimes it is not. The spouses live in two separate apartments, and the husband seems to value his freedom as a man and as a writer above everything else; yet common ordeals, the understanding and interdependence which underpin their relationship bring them together again and again. The author's views on women and marriage are sometimes a little odd, and they make him almost larger than life; this is the literary means with which the hero is characterized. Kolozsvári Grandpierre attains this not through looking back and evoking the incidents of the past, systematizing explaining and evaluating them from the standpoint of old age; he does not write memoirs at all (in the usual sense of the word he does not even have all that much to write about); instead, he relives the past, throws himself back into his past ego, and it is all the easier for him as he has never distanced himself from it, has always remained true to himself.

The book has also a rich seam of personal recollections. An abundance of striking small data, anecdotes and apposite portrayals help the author to describe goings on—as around the hero. Every such tit-bit could well serve as the germs of a short story. Kolozsvári Grandpierre does not deny that for the most part they have been culled from his notebook, where they have been waiting to be knocked into literary shape. Here they appear in their crude state, unprocessed, as rough sketches in colourful disarray, the results of a writer's major clearout. There may not be time to write them all up, it would be a great shame to let them go completely to waste. The anecdotic traditions of Hungarian prose, frequently criticized but such a pleasure to read, and the inexhaustible delight in story-telling of Mikszáth and Krúdy haunt these pages.

But the book is not devoid of aesthetic tension either—the morbid absurdities of these stories have a grotesque effect when related in a jovial tone; this is one way, perhaps the only way, of coming through these hard times—with brazen cheerfulness.

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Judit Tóth's novel, *Kifutópálya* (Runway) is a refreshing, interesting specimen of contemporary Hungarian prose, although its standpoint is very different from that of Kolozsvári Grandpierre. This novel too is obviously autobiographical in inspiration, but this is concealed by the trappings of fiction. The subject is the Paris sojourn of a Hungarian student, a girl who has won a scholarship there, and the great love which befalls her.

The author, who is also a poet, lives in Paris as the wife of a French architect, but she was born and raised in Hungary; she studied French at university and started to publish poetry and literary translations. When she married and moved to Paris it might have seemed that her connections with Hungarian literary life were likely to be terminated: she would become either an emigrée dilettante or a French housewife. But this is not what happened: with her poems appearing regularly in Hungary and her novel serialized in the literary review *Kortárs*, Judit Tóth maintained and even improved her standing and reputation in this country. This fact is remarkable in itself. No author and certainly no Hungarian author of recent decades, has been able to live in another part of Europe and write about personal experiences in his native tongue—not as an emigrant cut off from his roots but (in this case) as somebody still living in natural symbiosis with Hungarian conditions and culture. The recent history of Hungary has left its stamp on Judit Tóth, even if in her present life she is a French citizen. She might well become the spokesperson of many other Hungarians abroad and

her readers might include all those Hungarians who are eager to know the experiences of those in her position. Maybe she will also find a public amongst French, Swedish and American readers. Judit Tóth and her colleagues could explore, amongst many other questions, what it is that interests the Western European reader, and foreign readers in general, in the complex of problems that is specifically Hungarian or originating in this area of Central Europe. The student heroine, modelled after the authoress herself, might have brooded over questions such as these during the months she spent in Paris.

Those months, as narrated in "Runway," appear as an anticipation of her later life in a strange land. It is a kind of "magic-mountain"-effect with which every Hungarian scholarship student and tourist is familiar. Temporarily they break with their life in the Hungarian "lowlands," and in rising above it they reinterpret and reassess everything. Things dulled by habit at home appear in a different light. Details hitherto invisible or somehow different now spring to the eye. Franciska, the Hungarian girl who studies French, leads a lonely existence in the unfriendly environment of Paris in winter; sometimes she does not budge from her bleak hotel-room for days on end. She relives her life at home, confronts her conditioning there with the life she sees in Paris. Gradually she becomes less and less sure of herself but at the same time she becomes friendly with a middle-aged French doctor whom she knows a little from Budapest, having been his interpreter at a scientific congress.

The foreground of the novel is the unfolding of their love story, but there is more to it than that. The background refuses to lie still, and forces itself upon the attentive reader. It would seem that for the man, Dr Julien Bessodes, only the foreground exists, that he loves this Hungarian girl here and now, and that she for her part should quickly cast off all her needless

anxieties. But behind him looms a sombre past: he has lost a small child, his wife went mad and killed herself, and he has managed to block out these recollections by "walling himself in."

Franciska, on the other hand, makes no attempt to repress her painful and anguished memories. The death of her parents "could be an illustration of what contradictory things happened in 1944 in that half of Europe. Because it might have happened that one of them (my father) was shot in the nape of the neck by the Allies as an officer of the Hungarian Fascist army, and the other (my mother) was executed as an enemy of the Hungarian people —on the grounds of her parents' religion or even that of her grandparents. You, with your enlightened minds, know very little of these things." You: it is the French she has in mind, those who refer to chaotic remote places like Hungary as "là-bas"; and what they know of the slow progress towards civilization in those countries they read in columns labeled "Eastern Europe," hidden away inside their daily papers.

Franciska, although sincerely in love with Julien, must travel home to Hungary if she is to use the strength of this love to free herself from her shackles. She practically runs away from Julien, because she is afraid that he would never understand this. She tries to excuse and explain herself, but only in a letter:

"I want to tell you that everything over there, yes, there, in that hole of a place, is mine, and it belongs to me the same as my ears, my legs, or all my beautiful and horrible memories. But I can identify too with the things that do not exist there, things like superiority, detachment, Gothic art, the Atlantic ocean, heaven only know's what, atomic reactors, orange trees, and so much more besides. And all these things which do *not* exist are also (another metaphor, maybe now you'll smash the ashtray on the table) like a tie, a cord, I might even call it an umbilical cord."

Is it possible to cut this umbilical cord? This is the question examined in "Runway." Is it possible to turn from an Eastern into a Western European? In the story of Franciska the story-teller sometimes hints at her later marriage to Julien. But the novel says nothing about the inner experiences of Franciska after her homecoming. "Runway" only exposes the problem, the heroine's run

up to the runway. Whether she succeeds in flying home and the losses and sacrifices she must endure, together with the new joys and deceptions which await her—all this is a rich trove on which it is to be hoped that Judit Tóth and others in her position will continue to draw in the future.

MIKLÓS GYÖRFFY

POEMS ON LOOMING DEATH AND HAPPY CHILDHOOD

Gyula Takáts: *A semmi árnyéka* (The Shadow of Nothing), Szépirodalmi, 1980, 251 pp.; Márton Kalász: *Szállás* (Abode), Szépirodalmi, 1978, 120 pp.; Géza Képes: *225 gramm epe* (225 Grams of Bile), Magvető, 1980, 108 pp.; Gyula Hegyi: *Európai földalatti* (European Underground), Magvető, 1980, 82 pp.; Károly Tamkó Sirató: *Kozmogrammok* (Cosmograms), Szépirodalmi, 1975, 177 pp.

In his *Vulkánok, fűgafák* (Volcanoes, Fig-trees), 1978, Gyula Takáts harvested the poetic crop of almost half a century. The first poem is dated 1930, the last 1976. Saint Francis of Assisi, Francis Jammes, and Yeats have all left their mark on his poetry, as have Csokonai and Berzsenyi, two outstanding Hungarian poets of the period of the Enlightenment, who were in their different ways admirers of antiquity. Painters have also influenced the way Takáts looks at things, but he has perhaps learned most from nature itself: "Gardening makes life more complete," he writes, and a reviewer can but add, "hear hear!"

A semmi árnyéka (The Shadow of Nothing) introduces a new note of tragedy into his poetry. "I have always been seeking the hidden light", he writes in the blurb. "In style of life I wanted to find that harmony of work and art conducive to general morale... And after 1975 darkness descended

and in 1977 one tragic blow cast the 'shadow of nothing' over my Garden..."

The new poems of Takáts are variations on a single eternally topical theme, death. The entire book is one long necrology in many parts. (Quotations are prose translations.)

With your death you bury yourself to life
.....
You who were my mother have become my
child.

His deceased wife is present in every minuscule unit of the southern Transdanubian landscape, made famous by so many songs; she is there in the old garden, in the house:

"I was never with you so much while you
were alive".

Everything is designed to evoke the

memory of the deceased, whose absence has transformed the survivor's whole way of life, and who remains ever-present despite her non-existence: "...and silvery memories are looming." There seems to be some sort of passage between life and death, because "you swish into an unmeasured mirror;" or, as he puts it elsewhere:

nothing is finished or completed
but the gods are dwelling in shadow.

The first three cycles of the book, including the sonnet series "Más távlat" (Different Perspective), discuss the psychological, ethical, philosophical, and everyday practical problems connected with the loss of the person one loved. The last three cycles are also imbued with the nearness, the consciousness of death. The poet remembers a dead class-mate, and poets, his former colleagues, who have departed this world. In the closing *étude*, he says: "only you are immortal." The poem entitled "A Magyar Waste Land-ek" (The Hungarian Waste-Lands) he dedicated to T. S. Eliot; it is about the ruin and decay of mountain villages by Lake Balaton. Other sources of inspiration include the park of the Louvre and Dante's sarcophagus. Several poems evoke the memory of the poet Dániel Berzsenyi, in one of them he is linked to Hölderlin who was his contemporary.

It might be mentioned incidentally that Hölderlin is one of the favourite heroes of Hungarian poets today. Amongst those who have evoked his memory is Márton Kalász who also happens to be a translator of modern German lyrical poetry. He was born in 1934, and his first book of poems appeared in 1955. He published an anthology *Megszámított vigasz* (Calculated Solace) in 1976, and his latest collection, *Szállás* (Abode), contains mostly more recent poems, but also a few from the last cycle of *Megszámított vigasz*; the inclusion of the latter indicates the underlying continuity of his poetry.

Kalász began his poetic career with descriptive poems, the traditional melody and structure of which were often reminiscent of the folk-song. In an early epic, *Szegődés* (Engagement) he told of how he had gone to work as an overseer for a wealthy farmer family and how he had spent his first day at work. The subjects of these poems were the family, nature, work, love, and friends, and he dedicated a poignant cycle to the memory of the Polish poet Tadeusz Borowski. His poetry attained its first peak in the volume *Viola d'Amour* (1969). This is the story of a love-affair told in a hundred verses, each of four rhyming couplets. But *Szállás* is without a doubt his most significant work to date. The title can be explained with a little help from the dictionary, "a sheltered place, in general some part of a building where a person resides temporarily." Could it be that life is an abode such as this when the foreboding of death grows in oneself? Titles such as "Temető" (Cemetery), "A halál angyala" (The Angel of Death), or "Zsoltártöredék" (Psalm-Fragment) betray the poet's anxieties.

I wait for that which effaces or wipes
me off
the world like an uncertain trace of chalk.

This is the opening of "Képlet" (Formula). His foreboding, his vision of imminent death, gives him no respite and "I cry out, still young..." is the last line of the poem "Bartók." This is lyricism of a severe and down-to-earth nature. The poet's ambition is to reach a position of unconstrained objectivity:

If you read not I, but we,
you should understand by this only
a few good friends.

Kalász's new poems contain many elliptical sentences. He also uses rare or archaic words and dialect expressions. But the most outstanding feature of his poetry

is his highly unusual word order. The order of words in Hungarian is much more flexible than in English or French, but it has, of course, a number of regulations. Kalász has a bold approach to these, he sometimes alters the word order and structure of his sentences according to a Latin or a German pattern. He creates dramatic tension through this recourse to the stage of language creation. Kalász began his career with the appropriation of a traditional technique which one might call nineteenth-century. Sometimes it is obviously his brilliant translations—I am thinking of his rendering of Kunert—which have led him to ponder the unusual and potentially outlandish possibilities of the Hungarian language. Kalász has also developed a homogeneous system of signs, which subjects his readers to a severe test. I am not sure that I always follow him accurately because sometimes his lines can be interpreted and even read in a variety of ways. One thing, however, is certain: his great artistic care, refined and forceful use of language, and a highly ethical approach to reality.

T. S. Eliot wrote about Pound: "I am not prepared to say that I appreciate epigrams; my taste is possibly too romantic. . . . And I am sure. . . . that Pound's occupation with translations and paraphrases, and lighter forms of serious verse, provide evidence of the integrity of his purpose. . . . Pound's epigrams and translations represent a rebellion against the romantic tradition which insists that a poet should be continuously inspired, which allows the poet to present bad verse as poetry, but denies him the right to make good verse unless it can also pass as great poetry." (*Ezra Pound: Selected Poems*, edited with an introduction by T. S. Eliot. Faber & Faber, 1933.)

I don't know if Géza Képes* knows of this appreciation of Pound, which is not included in the volumes of Eliot's collected

essays. Eliot the poet he knows very well, for he has translated him, and I think that on one essential point their opinions are identical. Képes published a rigorous anthology of his poems in 1978 under the title *Őnarckép hegy formájában* (Self-Portrait in Form of a Mountain). The editing of this compilation was a work of art in itself, for Képes was careful to leave out all the many epigrams which have flowed from his pen (he is perhaps the most authentic cultivator of the genre in twentieth-century Hungarian literature). The reason for this omission was probably that the epigram usually has a momentary topicality and in *Őnarckép hegy formájában* this is not what Képes wanted to achieve. In this book the poet wanted to fashion and record for posterity a timeless model of a given personality. However, he did include a good many of his translations, and what a fascinating assortment they are—there is an Ugaritic epic about Baal, an Egyptian hymn to the Sun, Omar Khayyam (translated from the original), Saint Francis of Assisi, Goethe, Seferis, Pablo Neruda, et al.

The new volume entitled *225 gramm epe* (225 Grams of Bile) complements the anthology rather well. The Hungarian word *epe* means bile, but 225 epigrams is a factual description of the contents of the book. Again some of the poems date back almost 50 years. His ancestors in the genre were, of course, the same as for Pound—Martialis and the Greek Anthology. But the best of these poems were not born in the trough between waves of inspiration: on the contrary, they are genuinely inspired. In Eliot's terminology we might say that Képes writes poetry and verse not alternately but simultaneously. His themes: the abuses in political and social life, women, and bad poets. There are some that are artificial and uninteresting but if one reads them from cover to cover at a sitting one cannot fail to find them both amusing and instructive.

Taken together, they constitute a kind of diagnosis of the morals of the decades of

*See poems by Képes on p. 86 of this issue.

the recent past. There is a major who in 1944 is still repeating parrot-fashion the propaganda slogan: "we will push the Russians back to the Urals!" There is a general manager who hires his own wife, citing as his pretext the need for political vigilance. There is the "sage" who in the days of the Rákosi system vilified the Horthy system, and who nowadays vilifies the Rákosi system. There is a young poet, adept in the study of writing nonsense, and also a poet who could put up very well with being neglected, but was killed by praise.

Európai földalatti (European Underground) is Gyula Hegyi's first book of poetry. He was born in 1951, graduated from the Budapest University of Technology, and worked for a short time as a construction engineer; since 1976 he has been a journalist specializing in culture.

He himself has this to say about his book: "Twice a day I ride on the underground of Budapest, but on certain days of privilege I find myself alighting at Montparnasse in Paris, Studencheskaya in Moscow, Omonia in Athens, and Hauptbahnhof in Hamburg. I believe that all these lines are connected in some way. I like canned orange juice, thrillers on the T.V., and contemporaries of mine who loiter before the slot-machines in the subways; and I am convinced that our ordinary lives can inspire poetry fully as well as the taking of Troy, or the crucifixion of Our Lord, or the world of our grandfathers."

He writes about childhood experiences, sweethearts, travels, and the friends he has made. Also about Budapest, which he claims is the only city where he does not count the stations when he travels by bus or by metro. He evokes the overwhelming uniformity of European cooking, the scenes of conversations in Stockholm, Sofia, Budapest, and Szombathely: "When all is said and done, we discussed everything there." He calls his youth "self-destructive, beautiful;" "maybe we liked the beer-houses

best," a place for kids born and raised in the "long peace" to debate Marx, the news of the day, and their emotional lives. Born six years after the end of the Second World War he nonetheless has indirect experiences of war; one of his poems describes the ruined shell of a building which had remained outwardly intact, observed in the course of his travels. Another poem describes the survivor who comes to realize much later that everything which happened to him was absurd and unbelievable. He also wrote a poem about Auschwitz. As to literary influences, there are two poets whom he portrays with warm sympathy, amounting almost to identification: Emily Dickinson and Rimbaud. The poems contain remarkably few images and allusions. He is moderate, concise and clear throughout—all in all, the *Európai földalatti* is a first volume of great promise.

Károly Tamkó Sirató died in February 1980 at the age of 75. He published his first volume of poems as a teenager in 1921. *Papfrenber* (Paperman) appeared in 1925, to be followed in 1942 by *Kidltás* (Outcry). Much of the same material features in *A Vízöntő-kor hajnalán* (At the Dawn of the Age of Aquarius, 1969). In 1936 in Paris he put his name to the *Dimensionist Manifesto*, along with Hans Arp, Picabia, Kandinsky, Albert-Birot, and later Ben Nicholson and Huidobro. According to the *Manifesto*, the unconscious beginnings of dimensionism reached back to Cubism and Futurism. It grew out of the Einsteinian vision and the technical characteristics of the age. The dimensionist tendency demanded of literature that it "step out of its linear path and enter the plane; calligrams, typograms, planism, electric verses." "Painting can conquer space, and sculpture can conquer space and time, as well."

The *Manifesto* has been reprinted once or twice in the last decade, but both historians of the avant-garde and the various signatories forgot about the name of Sirató. Obviously this had much to do with his illness—in 1936

he was brought home from Paris on a stretcher, and for an agonizingly long time he hovered on the brink of death. Then came the war. In any case by 1936 the great waves of the avant-garde had died down and this *Manifesto*, coming as it did relatively late in the day, did not arouse quite the same interest as its precursors. Be this as it may, Tamkó Sirató remained true to the spirit of dimensionism to the end of his life; he was loyal to the avant-garde and he never lost his faith in the future. This is made abundantly clear in his last book, *Kozmogrammok* (Cosmograms, 1975), and his translations reinforce this conclusion, *A Hegedű Vőlegénye* (The Bridegroom of the Violin, 1971). He translated many works of young Mayakovski, and the Russian proletarian poets, a volume

of Prévert, and numerous poems by the most important French surrealists.

Tamkó Sirató practised yoga and has bequeathed to us the "Ten Commandments of the Space Age." A sample: "Rejoice that you live on Earth and were born human." The third: "Always rely on the breath which gives you life." The fourth: "Be at home in your body, in your brain, and in your age." His credo, his confidence in the idea of progress is perhaps expressed most concisely in a fragment of the poem "Az ember éneke" (The Song of Man):

I once had water-lungs
I now have air-lungs
I shall have space-lungs.

LÁSZLÓ FERENCZI

VALUES IN ALL FAIRNESS

Érték és társadalom (Value and Society)
by Elemér Hankiss. Magvető, 1977. 392 pp.

This book is subtitled "Studies in the sociology of values" (*Tanulmányok az érték-szociológia köréből*). Whatever reservations one may have concerning the approach which the student of literature turned sociologist Elemér Hankiss brings to bear on this subject, and I shall turn to some of my own at the end of this review, one is bound to admire the range which he covers in the twelve studies of this collection. Hankiss is that comparatively rare bird of the age in which we live—a sophisticated scholar (the notes testify to his astonishing familiarity with the international literature in the field) who is capable of writing lucidly and intelligently for the general public on matters which range from the abstruse realms of linguistics and philosophy to the most topical issues of the day.

Both title and subtitle are liable to mislead the reader unfamiliar with the Hankiss who made his name in the nineteen-sixties with a vigorous and refreshingly modern approach to literature and criticism. A substantial part of the present book is likewise concerned primarily with the analysis of works of creative art and "culture;" but the direction in which the author has been moving since the sixties is clear. Even in the more literary studies of the present volume he is consistently out to identify and to clarify underlying values and their role in society; it is the rigor and clarity of this search which give the book its unity of purpose. As Hankiss writes in his preface, it is in fact impossible to draw a sharp dividing line between the study of values in society and the study of values as they are reflected

in the domain of literature, which is always "organically and inseparably built into social practice."

This is not to say that every study in the book is perfectly in line with the overall intentions of the author, for a literary bias comes through strongly in one or two of the earlier chapters. One feels this especially in the very detailed analyses of fragments of poems by Attila József and Dezső Kosztolányi, designed to show that certain key experiences cannot adequately be captured in any other way except through works of literature, in which the written language serves as "a special instrument for the registering of information." The exposition is convincing and the textual analysis is a veritable *tour de force*; but, as happens in a number of other chapters, the elaboration of basic concepts (e.g., the concept of *élmény*—experience) is a trifle long-winded, whilst the flow of the argument is not improved by the occasional intrusion of the jargon of systems of signs and of information.

Much more satisfactory in my opinion (despite the forbidding title: "Donald Duck and Semiotics") is the long two-part study which investigates the role of jokes and cartoon films in "checking and questioning the basic relationship between language and reality." Hankiss gives an interesting review of various theories that have been put forward, ranging from the "joking behaviour" studied by social anthropologists to Marx's opinion that comedy and ridicule is a means of eliminating incongruous survivals from the past, in the general cause of historical development. His own analysis of cartoon films (for the most part Hungarian) leads him to suggest a number of recurring types and patterns and stimulating comparisons with other literary genres, particularly with tragedy, in the course of which the heroes likewise challenge our assessments of the appearance of situations and the customary sequences of cause and effect. Of course the social and psychological functions of the joke are more specific than this. They con-

sist, according to Hankiss, in attacking distortions in the relation between language and reality and in making them seem ridiculous. I cannot resist quoting examples of the two types of distortion identified. The first concerns the *deterministic* aspect of language, when the joke removes an object from its habitual context: says cannibal father to son "Steve, do you like your grandma?" "Yes daddy, of course." "Well, help yourself to some more then!" The second distortion arises out of the *magical* aspect of language: a mouse in one of the Gustav cartoons sniffs approvingly when a bottle of eau de cologne is spilt in the apartment, but then dies on the spot when it catches sight of the emblem of this particular brand on the bottle—a big black cat!

Another study, bearing the title "Why couldn't Shakespeare or O'Neill write better Tragedies than Sophocles?" examines the concept of "development," both in society and in literature, and explores the interrelations between the two. The answer to this rhetorical question (a device which Hankiss uses a little too often) is simple—there can be no question of forming any hierarchy of literary masterpieces, for the development of literature "though not independent of the motions of society is not simply dependent on it in an automatic fashion." The classics of the past are all classics in their own right and no useful purpose can be served by ranking one above the other. In line with the standpoint adopted in earlier writings, Hankiss has a number of valid comments on the "extensive" development of literature, i.e., on the fact that the broad masses of society now have greatly improved access to literature. He is surely right to conclude that, rather than expect any linear development of an *intensive* kind (i. e. improvements in quality), we should become more aware of persisting deficiencies in "social practice;" this latter still falls far short of that "totality, the demand for totality, which has been encapsulated time and time again by the masterworks of literature."

This particular study includes a long section on the driving forces which instigate development. They include technical, psychological, intellectual, and ethical factors, but the analysis of these is inevitably superficial. The author can do no more than gloss on a number of concepts which really demand a fuller philosophical treatment e.g., a typical contribution of his own, *humánium*—human essence. Also typical of the summary manner in which the author proceeds is the following sentence on the ethical factors: “*Etikum*, the moral sense with which a man is born (Vico), which together with the intellect (Kant, Herder, Schiller), or even in opposition to an intellect outgrowing and outstripping the usual range of its effects (Rousseau, Schweitzer, Sorokin), is the motor of development and its pawn.” But the upshot of this and similar digressions is ultimately very positive, for in the latter parts of the book Hankiss is led to continue his study of values in the sphere of sociology proper.

Perhaps the clearest demonstration, and at the same time an article which reveals a good deal about the author himself, is the outline of the plight of provincial teachers in contemporary Hungary. “The Dangers of a Teaching Career” (*A tanári pálya ártalmái*) is subtitled “can a person be expected to set an example to others twenty-four hours a day?” Teachers in small settlements live in the “shop window” of community life, the lives they lead are expected to be exemplary. There is a rigid emphasis on values such as modesty and diligence and “an obligatory obscurity;” the qualities may in themselves be positive, but their main function is to facilitate the individual’s adaption to the community; their combination will not necessarily have the most desirable effects on the personality of the individual.

Another of the highlights of the book, and one which raises issues that are far from specific to Hungary, is the long study of distributive justice in society, originally published in the Hungarian Philosophical

Review (*Magyar Filozófiai Szemle*, 1976 No. 4). The author explains how it is that so many people perceive themselves to be disadvantaged in present society, and he goes on to consider actual and potential foundations for consensus and a “social contract.” He argues that a careful reformulation of the principle of remuneration according to one’s achievement (*teljesítményelv*) can be no more than a “minimal” principle for social harmony. Here the philosophical foundations of his “maximal” principle, the principle of “fairness” (*méltányosság*), are more adequately developed. Hankiss is concerned to stress that the values he wants to see clarified bear not upon the isolated individual but upon man in society, on a genuine basis of community. It is significant that he plumps eventually for the term *méltányos*, which has implications of equity certainly, but not necessarily of equality, another theme dealt with at some length in this article.

Whatever the desired objectives may be, Hankiss is no doubt perfectly correct to claim that the socialist state is in a better position to achieve them than any other form of society. But the author does not go into detail as to why this is the case in principle, nor does he offer much evidence to convince us that it is so in reality. One feels that there is perhaps some unjustified optimism in the closing studies of the volume, which contain a number of hypotheses concerning the changes that are presently taking place, both in the types of value held by individuals and in the value-systems of society. The final study, “What will be rated as good, just and beautiful in the year 2000?” includes a number of stimulating observations on the necessary interdependence of “objective” and “subjective” values. In the end the basic humanism of the author wins through, and subjective factors are given an emphasis that is not always accorded them within marxist theory. The study is not an exercise in futurology; rather, it is an opportunity for Hankiss to assert that men make their own history, and

that they must affirm their own values; if only we could set about the task more carefully and systematically, we should be able to influence the hierarchy of values which emerges more efficiently and deliberately.

Could anyone ask for more than this? On two points in particular I think the answer must be yes. Firstly, Hankiss has the knack of dealing with questions step by step with deceptive and sometimes almost irritating simplicity; but despite the admirable logic with which these studies are presented, one could wish for a deeper penetration of certain key concepts; one could also wish for more critical acumen as regards the various authors who have influenced him in different parts of this book (e.g., in bringing out the contrasts between E. Markarjan and the likes of Kenneth Boulding and Daniel Bell). Secondly, and more importantly, as Hankiss himself is well aware it is pointless to talk about subjective factors in isolation. Apart from the need for clarity and good theory (and the theory of this book is on the whole excellent) there is also a need to examine objective factors susceptible to empirical study. Hankiss calls for a system of statistical

and sociological indicators at the end of the study on distributive justice referred to above. However, apart from his impressionistic comments on the predicament of the teachers, this is a task that is not tackled at all in this volume. At the end one has a welter of abstract knowledge about values and value-systems, but one is not much better informed either as to the inherent potential of socialist society in general or as to the particular developments that are currently taking place in socialist Hungary. In recent years, however, Hankiss has been working primarily as a sociologist; one would like to hope that the healthy, demystifying approach applied in "Value and Society" to preliminary questions of theory will bear still more fruit in the realm of empirical sociology. Hankiss is much too clever to lose his way in the fog of statistics which envelops so much of that subject. I for one am convinced that in Hungary this is where his many-sided talents and his vitality can be most usefully employed.

C. M. HANN

PÉTER NAGY

EDMUND WILSON'S LETTERS

Reading collected correspondence is a peculiar pastime. It may even arouse a little suspicion: scholarly interest is sometimes hard to distinguish from the curiosity of the valet. It was with mixed feelings of attraction and repulsion that I began to read Edmund Wilson's letters on literature and politics, an altogether admirable selection of which has recently been published by his widow.

Edmund Wilson was the foremost—or at least one of the most prominent—of modern American literary critics. This pro-

minence arose from a combination of talent and will-power, together with his unyielding character as an author and his tirelessly inquiring mind. He wrote a lot of books: volumes of critical essays, dramas, pamphlets, travel books: he acquired a command of several languages (including a proficiency in Hungarian), and his natural inquisitiveness made him a master of every field of knowledge in which he dabbled. I think this was his most important quality. Most often he himself called his writings journalistic in character; not out of modesty (this was not

one of his more conspicuous flaws!), but because he attached a high priority to conveying information and arousing attention—the very qualities of good journalism. It is quite another matter that, when Wilson's job was done, the serious essayistic thoroughness and elegant style of his writings rendered them unsuitable for the columns of newspapers; they belonged in periodicals, but his correspondence demonstrates that placing them even there was not always easy.

The very length of his life has also contributed to his prominence among American critics. He lived seventy-seven years, and some sixty of them—as vividly demonstrated in this collection of letters—were spent in intellectual activity of one sort or another. As a statistic, this is enviable in itself; more so is the fact that his interests and his intellectual appetite remained lively and responsive throughout those sixty years. His letters prove this practically from day to day with fascinating force. The first piece in this collection of nearly 800 pages was written immediately after graduation from high school; it is an exercise, in criticism, tackling one of Kipling's novels with the help of some Greek quotations. The last letters, dated a few days before his death, mention the poems of Akhmatova and Mandelstam, as well as the galley-proofs of a volume of his own writings.

*

This large-format, bulky (but really exquisitely presented) collection falls far short of containing all the letters Wilson ever wrote; indeed, often only fragments of varying sizes are printed from particular letters. Mrs Wilson, who collected and compiled the material, was of the opinion that passages relating to private life were, for the time being at least, no business of the public. This may give a somewhat one-sided picture of the letter-writer, but is nevertheless a credit to her discretion. It may

be that a complete correspondence would have sold more copies, but its literary value would have been diminished; certain pieces which have been included show that neither the love of gossip nor the readiness to use a vitriolic tongue were alien to Wilson. A "complete" edition would certainly pander more to the curiosity of the valet present in all of us, but the volume in its published form gives us all we need to gratify our literary curiosity.

Really characteristic of Wilson is his outstanding sensitivity to quality. He maintained contact and exchanged books, views and ideas with the best writers in America and, to some extent, in Europe as well. One might begin with Christian Gauss, who was Wilson's master in his years at Princeton (but whose letters, just like those of Wilson's other correspondents, are unfortunately not included in the collection: thus there is no sure way of knowing whether the correspondence was sustained by mutual congeniality or only by the reverence of the pupil; from my own knowledge of Wilson, I can almost safely say that the former was the case). The list continues with Sherwood Anderson, Walter Lippmann, and John Peale Bishop, to James Joyce, Scott Fitzgerald, and Dos Passos (and the names, taken from an index running to nearly forty pages of small print, could be enumerated interminably). Only the critics amongst them are fewer than one might expect; but perhaps I have been slow to detect members of the profession in the voluminous index; certainly those with whom he carried on regular correspondence—like Max Eastman or Maxwell Geismar—were amongst the very best.

It is this responsiveness to quality and the breadth of his own culture that made his critical activity so important and significant; this is also manifest, in a somewhat freer, more casual, and often sketchy form, in his letters. He was perhaps the very first to recommend his correspondents and friends all over America to read Joyce; in judging the works of a close friend, a distant acquaint-

tance, or unknown author—when writing either to them or to mutual friends or even to someone who did not know the person in question—he always applied equal standards; but when he wrote direct to the author, he somehow found a way of expressing his opinion with the sting removed, if it was particularly damning (possibly the best examples are his last letters to Dos Passos); he recognized the valuable in unknown works, the weak in the well-known, and he dared to say so—all this makes his character as a critic attractive and worthy of respect.

It is evident in his works, but perhaps shown more directly and more palpably in his letters, that Wilson's path was influenced by all the fluctuations of sentiments, moods, and even ideologies through which American intellectuals passed during half a century. The young aesthete flirting with the idea of art for art's sake, took part in the Great War as a volunteer, became a radical by the end of the war, and a Marxist in the twenties—and all this was a sophisticated mental process, for he studied Marx, Engels, and Lenin extensively, in the original languages in which those authors wrote. Even if his path is a typical one, Wilson was almost unique in his time, for the thoroughness with which he pursued it, and not only in America. For a while he was associated with the ultra-Left, although he never became a Communist, and his experiences in the early thirties in Moscow and then during the series of show trials served to turn him against Communism; but he never changed his basic stance, which may perhaps be characterized as classic liberal progressivism. It was from this position that in his last years he attacked American bureaucracy, that in a number of letters he reproved Dos Passos for having been taken in by the scarecrow of the Soviet threat, and the same stance caused him to speak up for various national minorities: the Iroquois at home, the French and the Indians in Canada.

*

Edmund Wilson's career might well be hailed as exemplary. I think the man who discovers in his early youth what he wants to do, and eventually succeeds throughout his life in doing just that and travelling wherever his passion sends him—that man is really to be envied. It is also enviable that a man over sixty years of age takes up new languages (Hebrew in his late fifties and Hungarian even later) out of mere curiosity and interest. How glad he would have been to know that a most eminent Hungarian of the sixteenth century believed there was a strong affinity between Magyardom and Jewry. This obviously did not come to his ears during his stay here (he was in Budapest in April 1964, meeting a number of Hungarian writers and men of letters), but he did gain a number of definite and favourable impressions of Hungary and its people. One interesting observation he made in a letter is that "the old-type Hungarian gentleman" is nowadays to be met with only abroad, that the people of Budapest are no different from the citizens of Boston or Paris. When he made this observation he was already seventy years old. What most attracted him here was the peculiarity of the Hungarian language; it is hardly an exaggeration to say that Wilson came to Budapest for the sole reason of hearing Gábor Devecseri recite his translation of Homer, having heard it said that the qualities of the Hungarian language—the alternation of long and short vowels—enabled us to produce translations unusually close to the prosody of the original Greek...

*

I met him on two occasions. In 1956 I read Wilson's plays and enjoyed them greatly; later I proposed translating them and wrote off to the author, whom I did not yet know. I got a rather chilly answer:

ÉVA KÁRPÁTI: BÉLA KONDOR
(OIL, 80 × 100 CM, 1979)

József Milos



ÉVA KÁRPÁTI: DOVES IN SESSION (OIL, 70 × 100 CM, 1979)

Zoltán Szalai





Zoltán Szalai

ÉVA KÁRPÁTI: WINGS OF LACE (OIL, 60 × 80 CM, 1979)

ÉVA KÁRPÁTI: WITCHES DANCE (OIL, 80 × 100 CM, 1979)

Zoltán Szalai

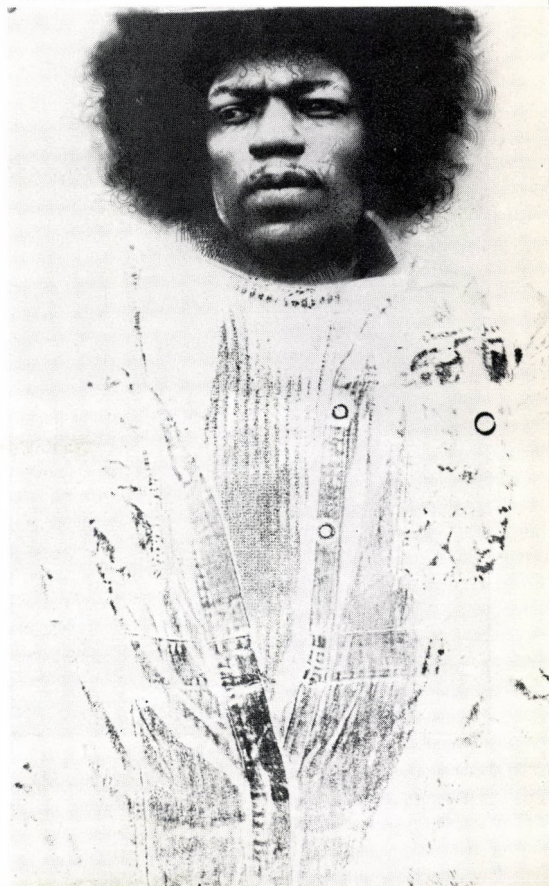




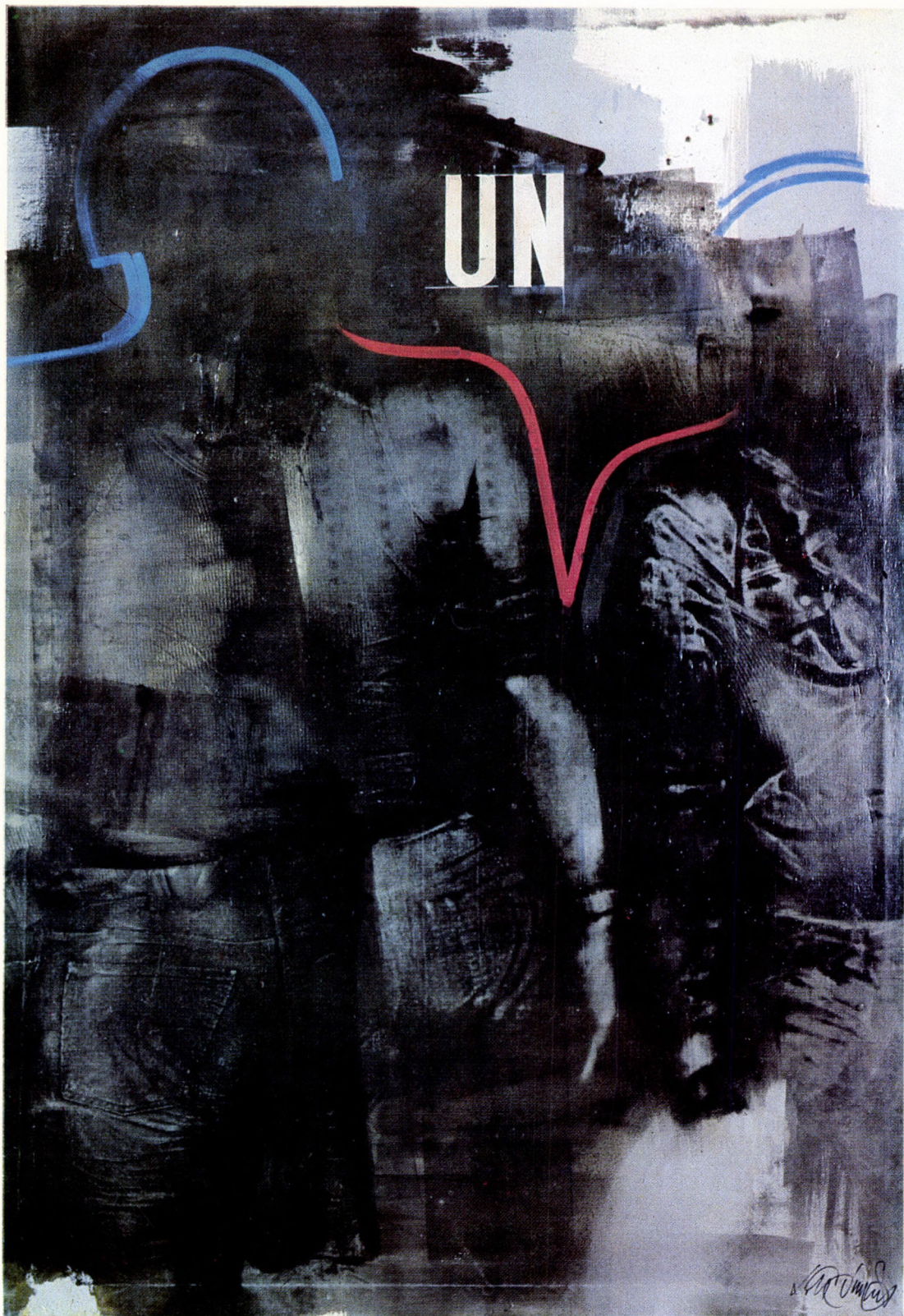
LÁSZLÓ GYÉMÁNT: GREY HORROR
(OIL, 74 × 53 CM, 1978)

László Gyémánt

László Gyémánt



LÁSZLÓ GYÉMÁNT:
JIMMY HENDRIX
(OIL, PENCIL, CHARCOAL,
75 × 55 CM, 1975)

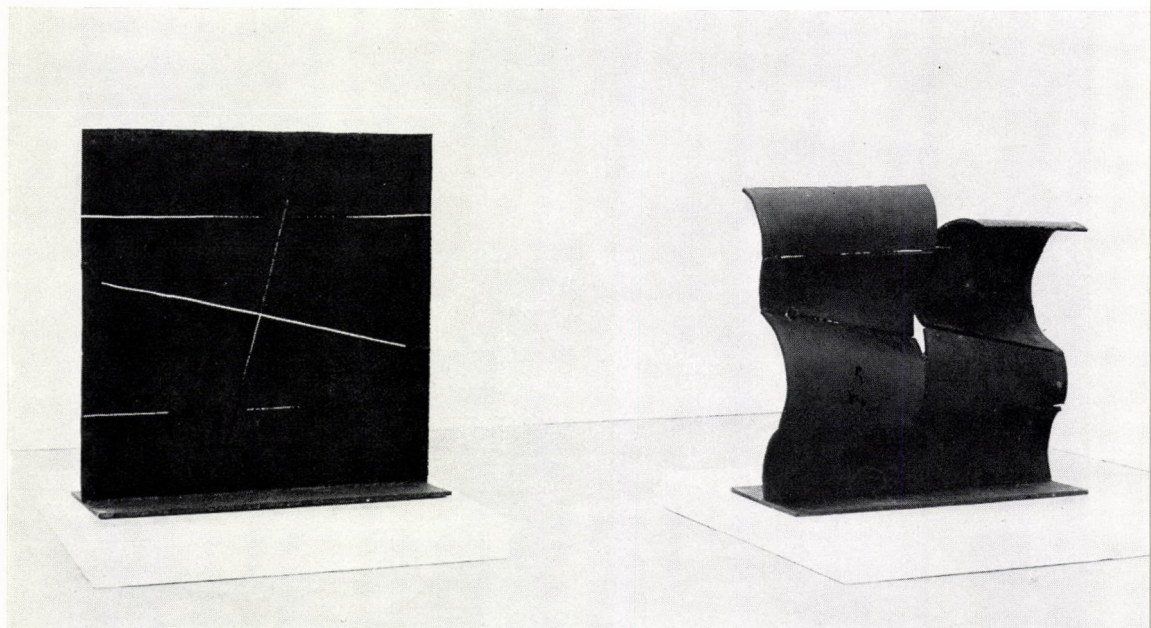


LÁSZLÓ GYÉMÁNT: U N (OIL, 120 X 100 CM, 1979)



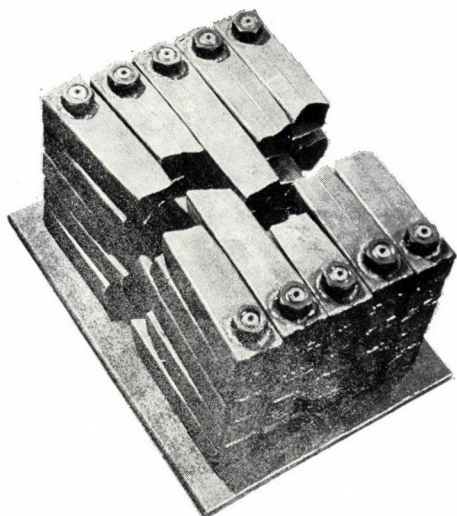
LÁSZLÓ GYÉMÁNT: AFTER RAIN (OIL, COLLAGE,
80 X 60 CM, 1980)

Zoltán Szalai



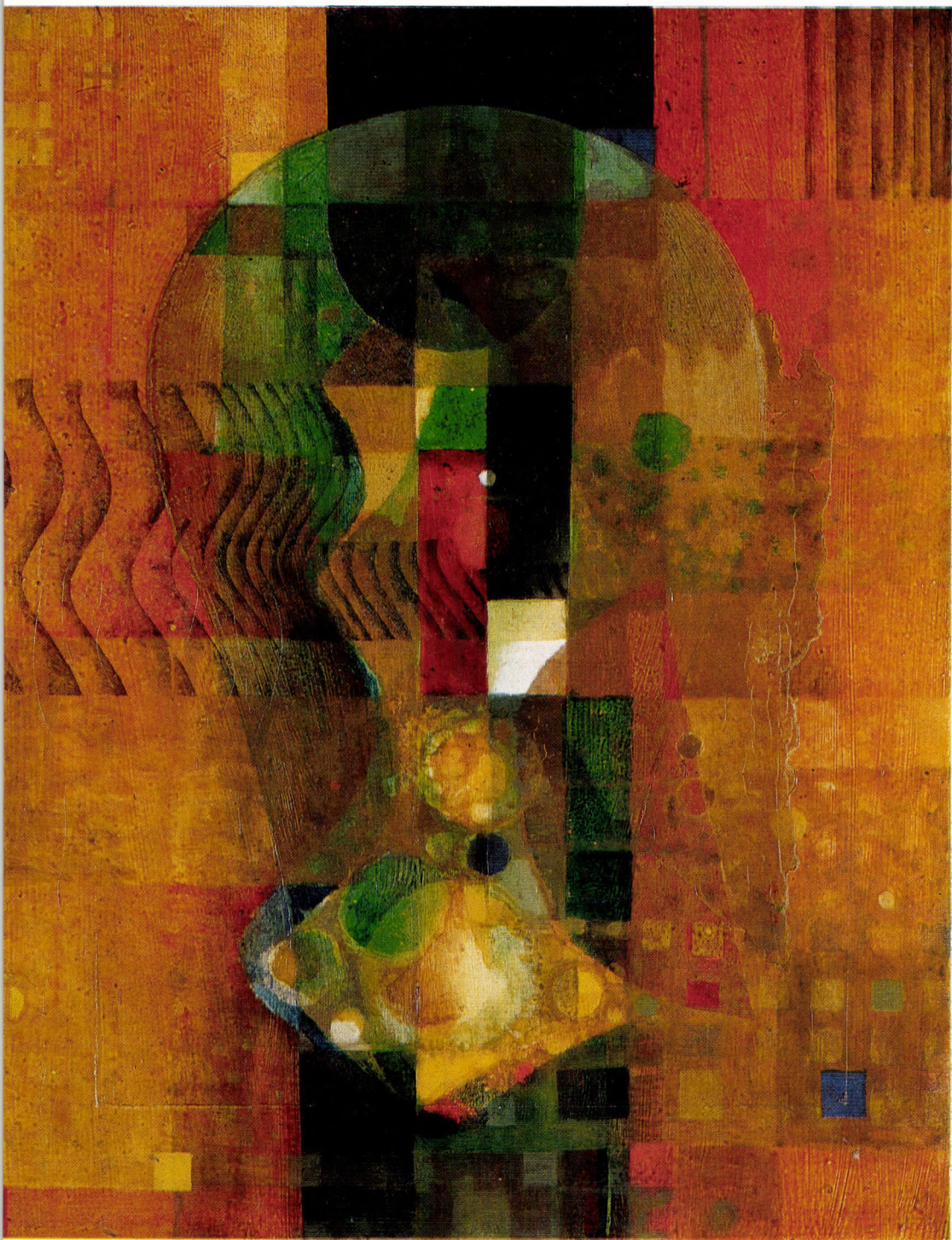
József Ács

ENIKŐ SZŐLLŐSSY: WALL I-II (STEEL, 89 × 89 × 21 CM, 1976)



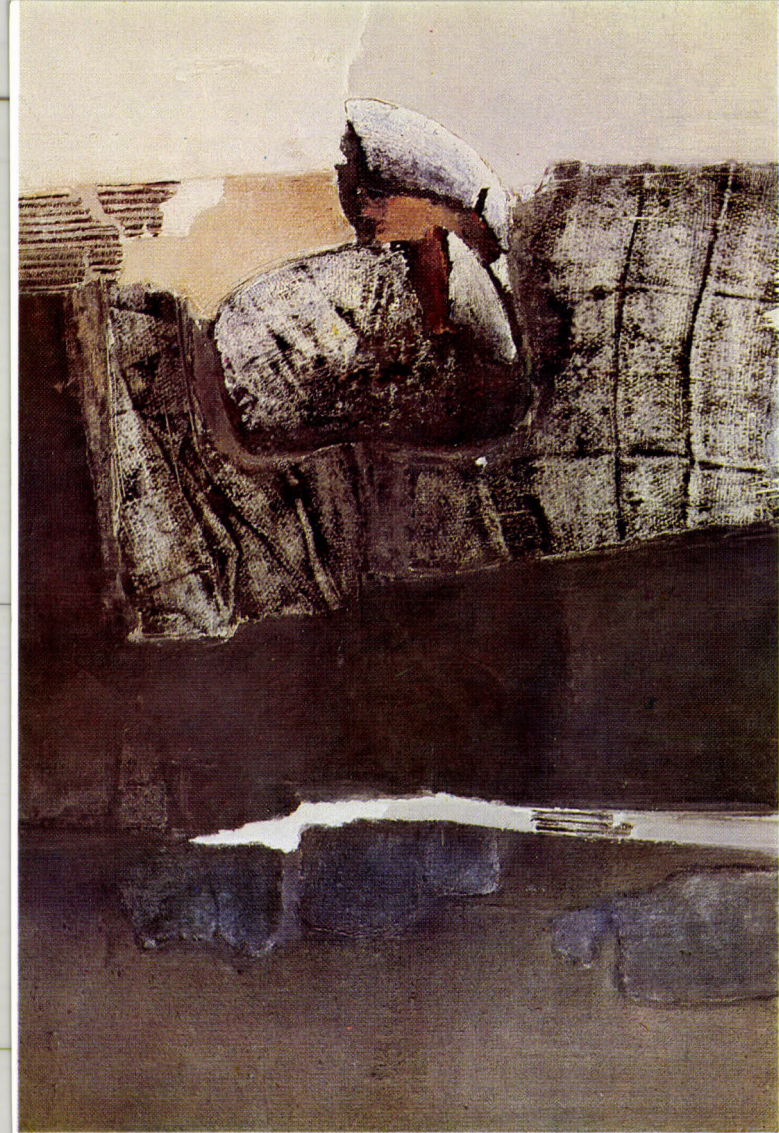
Zoltán Szalai

ENIKŐ SZŐLLŐSSY:
RUPTURE (STEEL, WOOD,
21 × 15 × 21 CM, 1979)



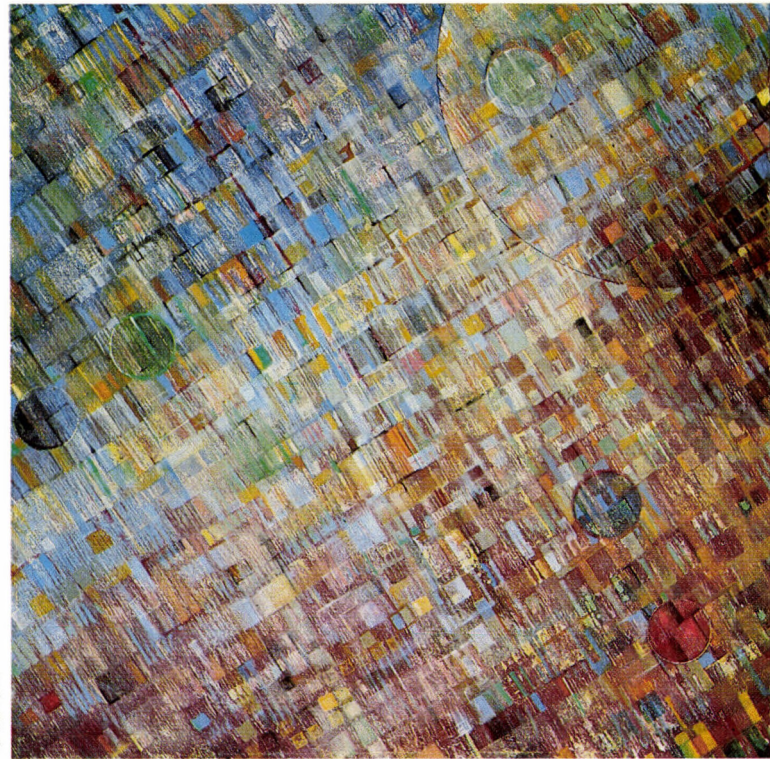
TIHAMÉR GYARMATHY: SUCCESSFUL EXPERIMENT
(OIL, CANVAS, 50 × 40 CM, 1968)

Attila Károly



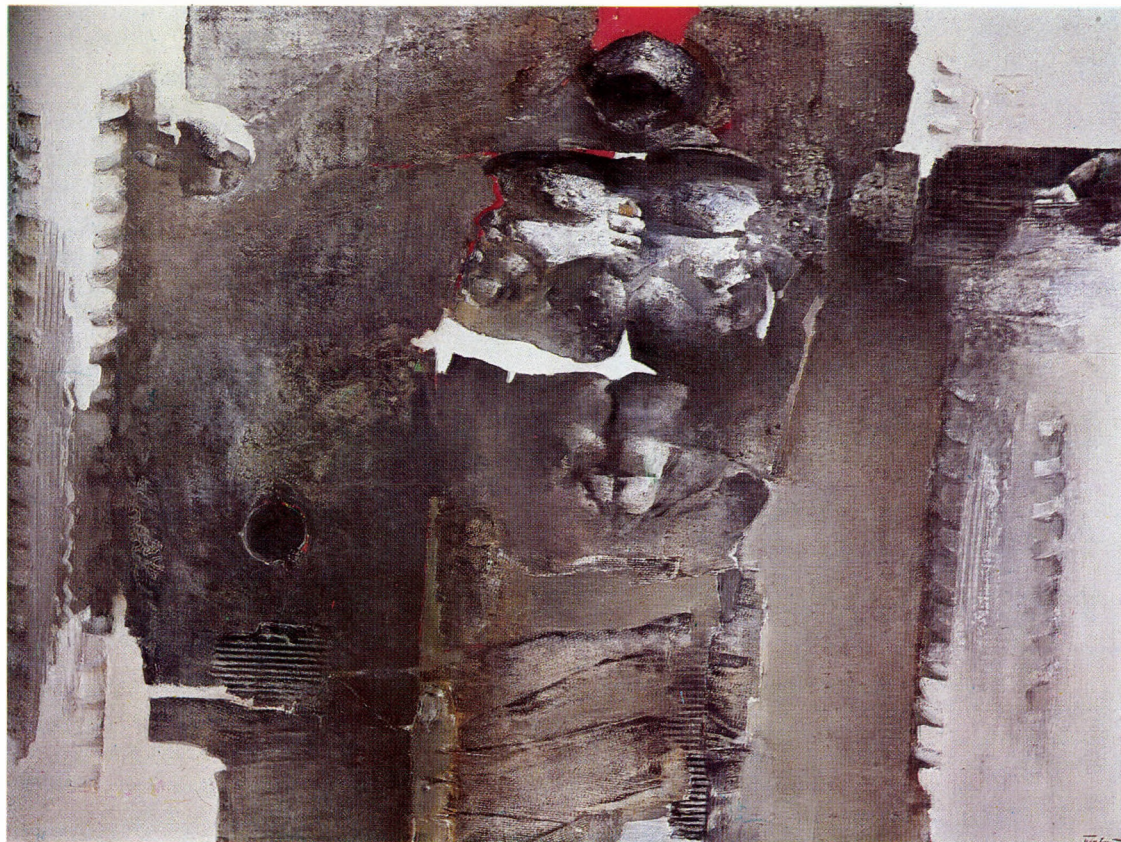
Ernő Fóth

ERNŐ FÓTH: LOAF OF BREAD (MIXED TECHNIQUE,
70 × 90 CM, 1977)



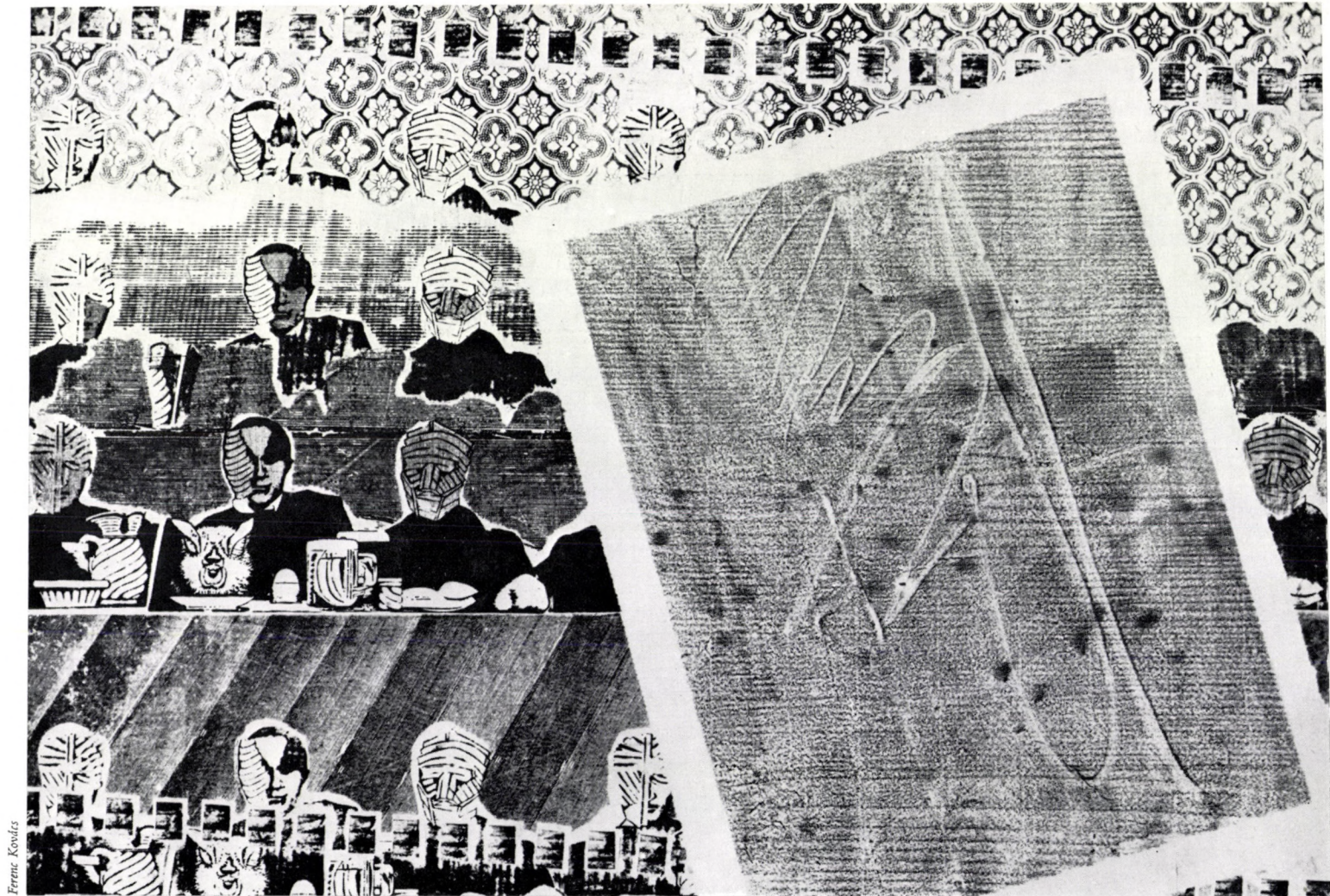
Tihámér Gyarmathy

TIHAMÉR GYARMATHY: ENDLESS SPACE (OIL, CANVAS,
90 × 90 CM, 1977)



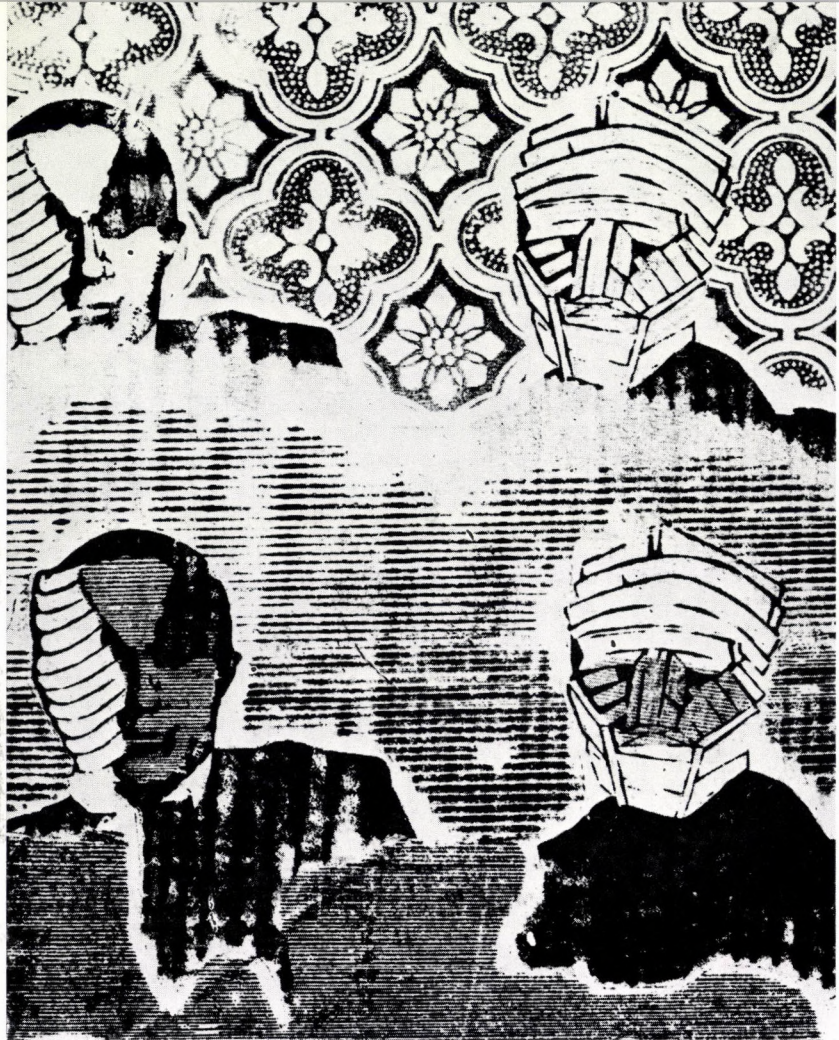
ERNŐ FŐTH: CLODS (MIXED TECHNIQUE, 100 × 80 CM, 1977)

Ernő Főth



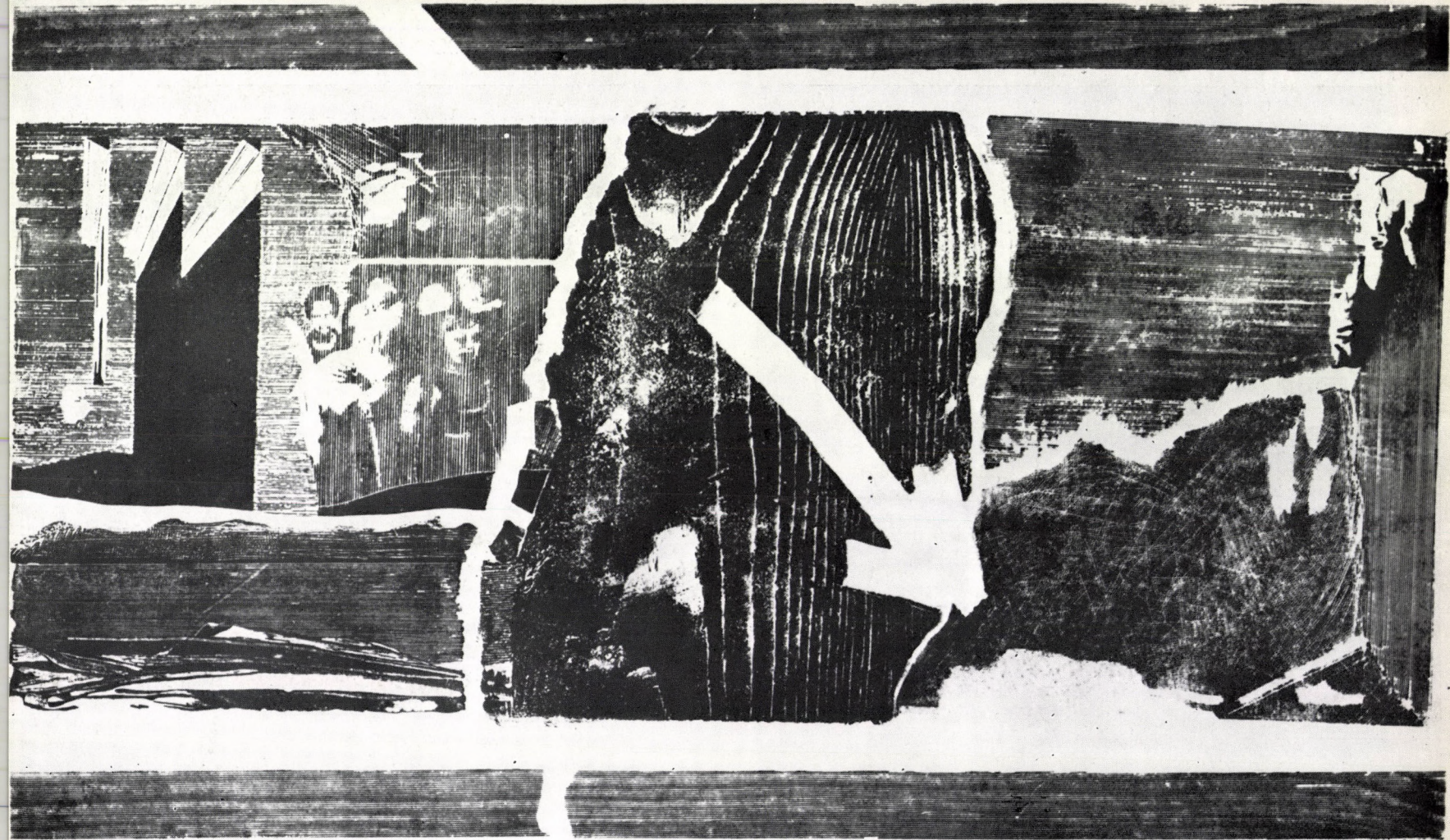
Ferenc Kovács

GYULA GÖBÖLYÖS: BUREAUCRATS (LINOTYPE, 43 X 66 CM, 1977)



GYULA GÖBÖLYÖS: FRAGMENTS FROM "BUREAUCRATS" AND FROM "FLIGHT"

Ferenc Kovács



GYULA GÖBÖLYÖS: FLIGHT (LINOTYPE, 51 × 81 CM, 1979)

"Wellfleet, Cape Cod, Mass.

May 6, 1959.

Dear Mr. Nagy,

I have notified my dramatic agent of your application to translate and produce my play *Beppo and Beth*. He will handle the business arrangements. I do not want this play to be used as propaganda for Communism, and I shall have included in the contract a stipulation that the translation will be sent me to be checked on before it is produced or published.

You will be able to find the main facts about me in the American or English *Who's Who*, and you can obtain most of my books from W. H. Allen & Co, 43 Essex Street, Strand, London, W.C.2., England.

Yours sincerely, *Edmund Wilson*"

I sent a rather shell-shocked answer to his agent; but I went ahead and translated three of Wilson's plays for the "Modern Library" series of Europa publishing house, and they appeared at the end of 1959. Now I received a hand-written note in a very different mood:

"Aug. 4, 1960.

Boonville, R 781

New York

Dear Mr. Nagy,

I was much interested to see my plays in your translation, which I am told is very

good. There is an error, however, in the note at the end: I was born in a rather large town in New Jersey, not in a small town in New York. Also, I gather from what you say that you did not understand that the two Chinamen in *Beppo and Beth* are meant to be comic, too. I am curious to know whether these plays have been produced in Hungary or whether they are likely to be.

*Baráti üdvözléttel:**

Edmund Wilson."

So by the time we met in Budapest we were already on friendly terms; we had several heart-warming chats about literature and politics. These two letters are my own humble addition to Mrs Wilson's excellent collection (they do not figure in her compilation).

Edmund Wilson did not regard correspondence his principal activity. His life-work lay elsewhere in belles-lettres, in criticism, and in literary history. But his correspondence is not unworthy of a great writer who was also probably the most significant American critic of our century. His vivid and finely written letters make this a significant literary document of the twentieth century, and one which is not only instructive but also a pleasure to read.

* Friendly greetings (in Hungarian)

ARTS AND ARCHEOLOGY

WOOD, COPPER AND LYRICAL HYPERREALISM

Enikő Szöllőssy, Éva Kárpáti, László Gyémánt

Enikő Szöllőssy has always been going her own way and keeping her distance from all the various schools and artistic groupings. At her memorable exhibition of 1974, she erected a monumental sculptural complex, the *Labyrinth** in a room of barely nine square metres.

Now the spacious Chamber Hall of the *Műcsarnok* has provided adequate room for her space-consuming pieces. Enikő Szöllőssy looks into the nature of the material, the contents and laws inherent in them. Her exhibition has rendered account, by and large, of two kinds of processing. One is the treatment of wood giving it virtually a cabinet-maker's finish and the chiselling of brass and copper with the delicacy of jewels. Wood and copper usually appear together in her works. The other branch of her exhibition shows just the opposite in a group of the most rustically possible shaped iron and steel objects. Fire and water—and yet the work of the same hand.

Variable Sculpture consists of horizontal brass rods with knobs at both ends, combined with plastics. Every knob can be pressed, and the object humbly changes its form. Children played with it with great pleasure, but adults did not dare touch it, they did not know you were allowed to. The imposing complex of *One Square Meter* consists of a red

wooden board with ten copper bands adjusted to it, which bend down and away from the level of the board in a settled order, like willow branches, so that here the law of gravity also has a share in the plastic form. *Biography* offers a series of black and red wood carvings suspended in mid-air, in some of which the negative form also has a decisive role. It is not difficult to find the solution: the series relates the life story of a man, true enough it does indirectly only.

Upon entering the exhibition the visitor is faced by the two *Walls*, each of nearly a square meter; the first is a standing open-work iron plate, while the second has already been exposed to pressure which even split it in two, giving it the profile of a multiple curve reminiscent of the letter S, thus indicating this simple metamorphosis. The three pieces of *Phase* are bunches of thick iron bands placed one above the other, they are like the springs of a well sprung coach; here, too, the sculptor has studied the curves and up-warping of the bands, and we can do the same, through three grades. *Process* follows the course of a steel profile of square cross-section, illustrating the modifications it undergoes while receiving heat treatment, up to the last piece, when the pneumatic hammer has already pressed it into a flat cake. A more complex, richer and even wittier variant of the same is offered by *Babylon*. Here shafts of quadratic profiles

* NHQ 58.

were put in a cold state under the pneumatic hammer, and beyond their inner message, the three blocks—tall, medium and low—are also able to exert an attractive, decorative effect. The most highly developed member of this group of iron objects is *Rupture*. It shows a kinship with *Babylon*, only here the quadratic steel profiles are in horizontal layers. There are five lines next to each other, in six layers, held together by a powerful screw and female screw. Then the construction was torn apart, in a cold state, with a machine, and surprising and fascinating tearing edges were formed in the middle of the irons in every profile, in an accidental manner, not even in proportion, as if the whole thing had been merely of paper—a pattern brought about off chance. This then seems to indicate the existence of expressive constructivism.

It is impossible to produce such a type of iron and steel sculpture in a sculptor's studio. Luckily, Enikő Szöllőssy enjoys the patronage of the Danube Iron Works of Dunaújváros, with a workshop, machines and materials put at her disposal, together with the aid of skilled craftsmen. Thus this mill also served as a vector in bringing forth Szöllőssy's collection.

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The other showing, of paintings this time, has links with Dunaújváros, as well: the Uitz* Hall at Dunaújváros was the venue of Éva Kárpáti and László Gyémánt's joint exhibition. If, like an archaeologist, I were to look for the "findspot", I could even call this newly formed group of two, the Dunaújváros school, but actually it just so happened that Miss Kárpáti and Gyémánt went to that town. What is true, however, is that, before their Academy studies, both Miss Kárpáti and Gyémánt attended the Budapest specialized secondary school of

fine arts, and that proved a decisive stimulus. Drawing was taken very seriously by the teachers at that school, and this training has remained basic for gifted students. The painters of Hungarian Pop Art have come from that school, predestined for that road by their draughtsmanship. I would call the painting of Miss Kárpáti and Gyémánt, with a selfcoined nomenclature, post-Pop Art, or let us rather term it lyrical hyperrealism, if such a thing exists. What distinguishes them from the orthodox hyperrealists is that, even though they are enthusiastic about photography, and are masters of the camera, they still turn to it only when there is no other way. Their draughtsmanship and their thorough grounding in the techniques of brushwork is of such an exquisite quality that they do not have the heart to neglect such skills. They are able to draw or paint the job they set themselves with photographic precision without, however, detesting or avoiding the aid of the camera if it is called for by the picture, or a given element of the picture. This is as far as the parallel goes between them. Yet the best thing in their show is that, in the final analysis, their message and mode of expression are of the opposite kind.

Éva Kárpáti wanted to become a graphic artist. For many years she worked as a textile designer, but for nearly twenty years now she has been back with painting. Earlier she was attracted by traditional surrealism. For the last seven years her works have appeared in numerous exhibitions. Aside from a number of minor shows, she had two major exhibitions in 1979, one in the Mednyánszky Hall in Budapest, the other in the Holdsworth Galleries in Sydney.

Although Éva Kárpáti is a hyperrealist, classicism and pre-Raphaelite languour are equally characteristic of her sharply drawn paintings. The figures in her panel-pictures are mostly girls and women. They are lovely and pliable, still I would say they appear in an objective presentation. Or to use a paradox: these girls are dispassionately

* Named after the artist Béla Uitz (see NHQ 29, 48 and 68).

sexy. They are sensual creatures, in a reserved artistic presentation. Of course, reverse is also an artistic message. One of her series, the torsos (Nike, Caryatid, Venus, The Muser, The Reposer) do not refer to Greek stone sculpture but the Roman works with the decisive difference that these torsos (their heads or limbs are not missing, the cutting is done by the picture frame) depict the bodies of real flesh-and-blood women, and the bodies are in most cases covered by subtle drapery. The pictures are infinitely reduced in colour, with grey dominating in them.

The portrait of the painter, Béla Kondor*, who died young is a cold, bluish, almost monochrome painting. It is a double portrait, based on a photograph—if I remember right Kondor himself, took it using a mirror. It shows two Kondors, one smoking a cigarette, the other, in a displacement, touching his face with his hand, as if the painter had mounted two squares of film one on the other. Still, the picture remains painterly, because it is not the idea or the posture that are decisive, but the manner in which it is painted. It draws on a photograph, and so does *Daguerrotype*—a real piece of orthodox photo-realism—this turn-of-the-century group of children in sailor-suits. Éva Kárpáti's main work in this exhibition is obviously *Witches' Dance*. Four attractive, young, blue-eyed, dark blonde witch belles waltz in muslin veils, like the nuns in the Polish film, *Mater Johanna*. The composition juxtaposing the figures in one line, could easily have Botticelli's *Primavera* as its archetype, were the message and form of the *Witches* not so contrary to the spirit of the Quattrocento.

Lace wings also held in white and cold light blue, shows a similar approach. It is the sharply delineated portrait of a beautiful baby doll in a rich and wonderful lace frame, obviously freshly washed and starched. It is a fascinating and at the same time

alienating canvas. Even the segment is daring, as the portrait, or rather bust, is framed, instead of in the conventional vertical form, in a horizontal rectangle, perhaps also to make the *trouvaile* of her lace painting come across effectively. *Doves in session* though of a different subject, is still akin to the above canvasses, both in the colour atmosphere and juxtaposing composition.

It caused a sensation when László Gyémánt* in 1965, merely one year after his graduation from the Academy, burst into the Hungarian art scene with his first show at the Young Artists' Club. At that time we termed his kind of painting realism, while others, unfortunately, called it surrealism; later Gyémánt works have been included with Hungarian Pop Art. Brilliant draughtsmanship always been one of Gyémánt's greatest assets, something in which he outran his teachers, and so has been his knowledge of painting and materials and craftsmanship. Gyémánt lived in Britain and Austria for ten years and he had a great many exhibitions, also in West Germany, some of them in distinguished institutions like the Camden Art Centre in London, the Bristol Art Centre and the Galerie in der Blutgasse in Vienna.

Once I interviewed the young Gyémánt, then at the beginning of his career, and he declared, "...I take pains not to identify myself with any school of painting". But I, the viewer, could find a term for Gyémánt's style, I think I could identify him, only not with a single, but, in some of his series of pictures, with various schools. His subjects are always grave, full of a sense of responsibility. With him everything is weighty, both in the kernel and the surface of painting. And yet, emotion shines through all of his canvases, because this painting, although tuned to a full orchestra, is lyrical.

The end of the story is clear allegory, with its scrap yard composed with sound feeling.

* See NHQ 17, 40, 48, 53

* NHQ 22.

The painter has added the wreck of a propellered airplane atop the ancient Opels and other car skeletons. In the picture entitled *UN*, the title letters are inserted in a caret between two blue-helmeted United Nations soldiers. *Don't!* is actually a self-portrait in which the artist, with his raised right arm, signals stop, obviously to war. These paintings, besides reminding of the precision of a photograph, are to the same extent also subjective, many other things can be read into them which the artist wants to express, beyond a mere communication of the subject. The label magic, or rather fantastic realism well befits the monumental painting, *Grey horror*. The figure covers his horrified, snarling, terrified face with his hands: at least four hands can be counted, but part of this mass of hands could also be taken as some monster cat's or pig's head. As indicated by the title, the artist actually keeps the painting in *grisaille*, the play of the hands seems to show motion and kinetics, it is as if the photographer had forgotten to turn the film while the hands changed their position. *After the rain*, with its realism, dark brown colours, tonal richness and Baroque gestures, evokes Rembrandt, being to a certain extent in homage to him. It is a timeless picture, even if the painter has dressed it in a jeans shirt. He applied a real shirt to the picture, breaking with the tradition of *assemblage*, the insertion of an alien

object. Here the shirt is not alien, it plays its own role, it belongs to the picture, forming an inalienable part of it. *Trompe l'oeil*, a Rococo inheritance, allows the painter to give the impression of drapery or of architectural, sculptural elements on the canvas using his brush alone. Here Gyémánt has created a reversed *trompe l'oeil*: by crumpling, pasting a real garment, real drapery on the picture. Yet, our eyes see the surface of the shirt as a cluster of painted folds.

For those who so far have not perhaps discerned draughtsmanship in Gyémánt's paintings, indeed his passion for drawing, he also added a large size drawing to the oil paintings at the exhibition, a portrait of *Jimmy Hendrix*, to present a perfect example of his attainment. The pop singer's almost super-plastic, hard-featured face, with his huge Afro crown of hair, shows up against the background, but his clothes are indicated only with a feather touch, like a pseudolithograph, to give added emphasis to the effect of the face. Gyémánt has also pushed the face to the upper part of the field, so that the frame even cuts off the top of the head. But we do not notice this lack, because with it the artist has added something. This Jimmy, for all its precision is not hyper-realism, but simply a characteristic László Gyémánt drawing.

JÁNOS FRANK

THREE PORTRAITS

Exhibitions of Tihamér Gyarmathy, Ernő Fóth, Gyula Göbölös

It is common to assert that the person of the artist can be separated in some way from his work and to claim that the work is an objective reality which can be judged only by its intrinsic merits as an object. I myself used to proclaim such views, conforming to

the general practice, and sometimes I still pretend to proclaim them. But now the hand of chance—or perhaps of some mysterious design—has acquainted me with three artists and their work which cannot possibly be isolated from their individual personalities.

The artists in question belong to different generations, and their motivations and achievements have nothing in common.

Tihamér Gyarmathy is well past sixty—and his career has run closely in unison with the evolution of Hungarian art in the course of his lifetime. When he was a student in the early thirties post-impressionism, concerned with spectacle and the beauties of brushwork, was still waging a rearguard struggle, not so much against Expressionism (widely accepted by this time) but against a new kind of commitment in painting, one which concentrated on conveying a social message through pictures. This was the climate in which Gyarmathy started to paint, but a few years later, influenced by the group "Abstraction et Création" in Paris, and by the general intellectual life of Europe at the time, he found another track; from this track—*mutatis mutandis*—he has never deviated ever since.

In the beginning he was interested in bare form, in the simplification and schematization of the world of sensitive forms and in the simplest formulae of harmony and balanced relationships; but his attention soon turned towards the combinations of form and objects of a more complex world, with faint traces of the influence of Miró and Paul Klee, absorbed constructively but not taken as direct models. Gyarmathy returned to his native land, but in the Hungarian art world of the inter-war period he could find little scope for his talents; only after 1945, in the enthusiasm generated by the group known as the "European School"* did he receive both public attention and a measure of professional recognition. Soon after this narrow-minded and heavy-handed cultural policies excluded him from exhibition halls, but gifted artists of the same breed would visit and encourage each other during these years, and in this way they prepared themselves for the opportunities open to them today. Tihamér Gyarmathy's

exhibition at the Múcsarnok is a mixture of recent works and works dating from a period when opportunities were few and far between.

The exhibition shows that what most interests Gyarmathy is space itself. The boundless infinite, extending beyond the borders of the picture frame in all conceivable directions, sells and pulsates and constitutes at the same time an unbroken time-space continuum. Yet each point of this process has its specific determinants and can be separated from the rest: they are basic geometrical units and, like the parts of a complicated atomic structure, they form an entity so vigorous as to challenge its own boundaries, to question whether these are inorganic shapes or living organism that the artist wishes to depict. Light filters through every point of this space with peculiar inner radiation: sometimes it seems to penetrate a bubbling mass from the outside, and sometimes it bursts forth from within like the beam from some faraway pulsar.

Ernő Fóth, a mature artist now in middle age, also exhibited recent works at the Múcsarnok. At first sight his paintings seem abstract; a closer inspection shows that they hail from a realm of lyrical and mildly Surrealistic abstraction. Some shapes reveal their original nature only when scrutinized very closely: a piece of bread, a furrow drawn by a plough, and a human form here and there. Earth and bread: both brown, both brittle, a crease in one corresponding to a mark on the other. The colours are as reticent as the form-world is narrow. Fóth's palette varies only in the nuances of brown which it contains—a colour scheme seldom broken by a streak of yellow, white, or deep black.

Fóth is committed to the earth, to the convulsions of geological groups in labour, to cracked surfaces and ravines regardless of their depth. Size is not so important as relationships and states, for example the relationship between water and earth, the thirst of the earth, the concreteness of the

* See NHQ 55

earth, compared to the inconcreteness of water. Behind Fóth's pictures we can feel something of his village childhood and the atmosphere of his father's workshop, smelling of mud and the carpenter's shavings. One feels from these pictures that Fóth is the sort of man who must have built the house in which he lives with his own two hands.

Gyula Göbolyös is a young graphic artist deeply versed in the styles of folk art. His home looks more like an artisan's workshop or an ethnographical exhibition than a painter's studio. Glass cupboards are full of tiny carvings, the walls are covered with glass pictures painted on the back in the typical folk manner, the floor is crammed to persuade the artist to show you his own large-scale graphic works, woodcuts almost without exception.

One leaf shows identical heads in a row of black monotony, as if to evoke the array

of stamps on the office desk, the dreariness of the citizen's everyday life, the intolerable tedium of the dull thudding of stamps and the incessant chatter of typewriters. Another work shows a peasant sowing seeds, sowing life in the style of the peasants of François Millet or Van Gogh, but this peasant is quoted as a symbol of the past, he is more nostalgia than reality. The individuality and character of this figure of yesteryear challenge the faceless bureaucrats of the other leaf—it is a beautiful gesture, but the artist is quite aware of the fact that this figure of the peasant conjured up from the past has been irremediably lost. While Ernő Fóth sees survival in terms of clinging to the earth, Göbolyös shows us the impossibility of living in the past and warns us that we have to solve the burning questions of the now in our own way.

IVÁN BOJÁR

ERNŐ GOLDFINGER

an architect of our age

It is interesting to reflect on the fact that Hungarian art has been represented in all three spiritual centres of modern 20th century architecture in Europe. In Leiden one of the five founders of the significant movement to unfold around the periodical *De Stijl* was Vilmos Huszár, later to be heralded internationally as a painter. In the Weimar Bauhaus László Moholy-Nagy was active as a teacher and editor; he later became the head of the New Bauhaus, after Hitler's Germany obliged the school to move to America. Marcell Breuer was first a pupil and later a teacher of the Bauhaus, and he too, with his tremendous oeuvre, later established himself as one of the world's best-known architects; another Hungarian Farkas Molnár was also active in the Bauhaus and

a pioneer of modern architecture after his return to Hungary. Károly Dávid, the designer of the People's Stadium in Budapest, was one who became acquainted with modern architecture in the third of its outstanding spiritual centres in Europe, which was, of course Le Corbusier's "monastery workshop" in Paris.

De Stijl—Bauhaus—Le Corbusier

Ernő Goldfinger spent the early part of his life in Hungary, but studied architecture abroad; the first phase of his work shows a marked affinity to the trend established by the French masters. He was born in Budapest in 1902, and spent his childhood in

Transylvania—the high peaks, vast forests, and all the wonderful landscapes of this region have clearly influenced his art down to the present day. He attended a *gimnázium* in Budapest, but completed secondary school studies in Switzerland. From there he moved to Paris at the age of eighteen.

In the early 1920s, when the young student of architecture reached Paris, modern architecture was in a most vigorous phase of development. Le Corbusier, together with the painter Amadée Ozenfant, had founded the periodical *L'Esprit Nouveau* in 1920; in its opening number it articulated all the great expectations filling the progressive artists of the age: "*Une grande époque a commencée, animée d'esprit nouveau: un esprit de construction et de synthèse, conduit par une conception claire.*" The years to come shoved this optimism to have been exaggerated in many respects, but still it gave Le Corbusier the strength and impetus he needed to effect an epoch-opening breakthrough, faced with the conservatism of the "historicists" and of the general public.

Goldfinger made some preliminary studies in the workshop of the architect Jaussely whilst preparing for his admission to the *École des Beaux-Arts*, where he actually started formal studies in 1923. By the following year he was already working in the workshop of Auguste Perret at the Beaux-Arts. Under the influence of this eminent master, he began to develop an interest in problems of interior decoration, furniture design, and even in designing individual pieces. The profound impact of Perret's art on the young Goldfinger was borne out by his study of Perret masterpiece, the modern church at Raincy, which he had published in the Budapest's German-language daily, *Pester Lloyd*. By that time Le Corbusier's "Five points" had already started to have their effect on Europe's more progressive architects. They expressed in a simple, logical order the principles by which modern architecture, making use of all the achievements of technical development, could free

itself of the now anachronistic restrictions of traditional architecture; and these new ideas had a decisive impact on Goldfinger's further orientation. In 1926 he received the first major commission of his life, and almost as an omen of things to come he was to carry it out not in France but in London; by this time he was already well qualified and well-fitted to stake out his own path, to apply his own wide vision to the further development of modern architecture.

Whilst still living in France, Goldfinger collaborated with András Szivessy, another noted architect of Hungarian extraction, who settled in France under the name of András Sive. Their relation started during their student years, and later they jointly opened a designing bureau in Paris. This was the period of Goldfinger's already mentioned first major work, which was the Helena Rubinstein salon in London. Later the partnership with Szivessy disintegrated, and during his last years in France Goldfinger worked independently. Works of this period included a Paris studio—apartment for the English writer Richard Wyndham. The same period also saw Goldfinger's emerging interest in conceptual questions and he started to occupy himself seriously with the analysis of space, scales, human and architectural proportions. One outcome of this research work was the *beliometer*: an instrument of great practical significance, constructed by Goldfinger himself, which permits easy and exact determination of the optimal degree of exposure to the sun in designing buildings.

"The Sensation of Space"

Much has been spoken and written about the style of the architecture of the last fifty years. According to Pier Luigi Nervi's noteworthy statement, the 20th century will go down in the distant future for having developed a style faithful to the laws of nature, and provided man does not turn his back



Tibor Szentpétery

Supporting pillars of the Roman Aqueduct on the road to Szentendre



A section of the Aqueduct

Tibor Szentpétery



THE WHITE MADONNA OF BUDA



Bene Tihanyi

HEAD OF THE MADONNA



THE FITTED HEAD OF THE MADONNA



GIRL'S HEAD (RELATED PIECE)



WOMAN'S HEAD WITH VEIL (RELATED PIECE)

Bence Tibanyi



WOMAN SAINT IN
A BLUE CLOAK

Bence Tibanyfi



FIGURE OF A BISHOP

on the advantages of science this precept will never again be transgressed. Continuing his train of thought, Nervi adds that the style developing in our age is a style of justice, because the dignified forms of the works being accomplished are, in the strictest sense of the term just: "The form of a great ferro-concrete span is just," he writes, "if its cross-section corresponds to the tensions inherent in it, the form of a large steel supporter is just, if its profile follows the changes of the flexural torque." To understand the unfolding of Goldfinger's career and the works he produced after setting in Britain, one must first of all point to that inner, conceptual basis which in his method of design provided scope for an extraordinarily high-level artistic blending of deliberateness and intuition. He gave an interesting summary of his philosophy in a series of articles published in the *Architectural Review* in 1941. In his introductory study, entitled "The Sensation of Space", he clarified the bases of architecture by taking an unambiguous stand against the mystification of aesthetic relations. Without denying the significance of intuition, he points out that "It is, like everything else, a natural phenomenon and it may serve some purpose to recapitulate its characteristics in the simple factual way that the recognition of this fact suggests." It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that this statement, a definite and conscious "submission" to the fundamental facts forms the basic feature of Goldfinger's architectural outlook. In the study above quoted he throws light, step by step, on how "enclosed space" exerts its effect on the individual. In doing so he touches on the essence of what architecture is all about; as he puts it: "whatever the utilitarian, aesthetic and other aims of an architect may be, architecture becomes manifest by the barriers (imaginary or real) enclosing space. A person within this defined space is subject to the subconscious *spatial sensation*. A person subject to a spatial sensation is usually (at the time affected by it) absorbed in other

pursuits and is only subconsciously affected by it. But it is also a fact that whatever a person is doing and however much absorbed he may be in other pursuits, he is always intensely affected by his spatial relationship and enclosure. . . . A point that it is essential to make clear is that *the sensation of space cannot be experienced by simple visual contemplation*. It cannot be experienced by any one organ alone." But Goldfinger is not content to stop at this negative statement. He goes on to set forth in a positive way, how "enclosed space" affects man; he argues that: ". . . we have no special organ for registering a spatial sensation; the awareness in this case is subconscious and takes place by the *automatic registration of successive images* and by the *effect of memorized analogies*. The spatial order is built up by an amalgamation of multiple phenomena, the perception of which, subconsciously integrated, helps in building up the sensation of space. Memories and experience, not only of visual sensation but also of sound and touch and smell, enter into it."

In further studies he developed his own postulates for urban design upon these principal bases. 'Enclosed space', within which man carries out some of his functions, when viewed in conjunction with other buildings, becomes part of an 'enclosure' in the city which itself comprises a 'spatial order' at another level. As for the human being at the centre, "while being 'out' in the street, he is 'within' the street and consequently within a spatial order." This is not the place to quote in greater detail Goldfinger's concepts of urban planning, for he goes on to compare the medieval townscape and its functions with the cities of our century, the century 'of accelerating time'. This study, written almost forty years ago, forecasts with almost prophetic exactitude all the problems that were to be raised later by technical progress and the failure to recognize or to pay due attention to social requirements in the metropolises of the modern world. Yet Goldfinger went even further than this: he also

pointed to the inevitable aesthetical consequences of the changes that were to come. "Two different categories of experiencing the new spatial order will now appear. The one of persons moving up to, say three miles an hour i.e. walking; the other of persons moving at a rate of 80 and more miles an hour. If we consider that a normal person can register about 12 separate images in a second, the fundamental difference between the two sensations becomes clear: solid screens become transparent, far-spaced objects come into spatial relationship, etc. A complete aesthetic revolution follows; the enclosure will no longer be the street and its bordering buildings (i.e. the urban 'ribbon-development'), they will be divorced from each other: the street will be at the time-space scale of the new speed, and the buildings and their approaches at the scale of human beings. "All of which—in Goldfinger's view—serves not to decrease but to enhance the importance of the artist in architectural and urbanistic design. Goldfinger emphasizes that *"it is the artist who comprehends the social requirements of his time and is able to integrate the technical potentialities in order to shape the spaces of the future."*

The London Architect

Ernő Goldfinger moved from Paris to Britain in 1934, and during his first few years there he concentrated on interior design; his first work was an apartment and a showroom in Tavistock Square, to be followed by a toy store in Wimpole Street. At the same time he reconstructed the rooms and the façade of a split-level store selling ladies' clothing, using glass as the predominant surface material. This was followed directly by the first family house he designed in Britain, situated in Broxton; and then, in 1937 he started work on a three-flat family house on Willow Road, the middle flat of which has remained the home of the Goldfinger family ever since.

As a guest of the household in Hampstead, the present writer has been fortunate to enjoy the delightful and lasting experience of the atmosphere of that home. Ursula Blackwell, Mrs. Goldfinger and very much the mistress of the house, is an eminent painter in her own right. The walls boast works by Braque, Delaunay, Man Ray, Arp and Max Ernst, souvenirs of the Paris years. The house, which was completed in 1939, is still a landmark of contemporary architecture, both as to functionality and aesthetic effect. This fact was given public recognition in 1970, when Goldfinger's modern masterpiece was scheduled under the National Monuments Act. This house in Hampstead was an appropriate starting point for a "sightseeing tour of London", accompanied by Ernő Goldfinger in his sports car, in the course of which the architect treated me to his comments on the various works he had accomplished in his years in London. Without any regard for chronological order, let me begin with the Alexander Fleming House, because Goldfinger's architectural concepts have been realized most tangibly in this building. He began to deal with the rebuilding and planning of the Elephant and Castle district in 1959, when the scheme involved the construction of several new buildings and the appropriate formation or modification of roads and squares. The product of a comprehensive urbanistic concept, the block known as Alexander Fleming House was built between 1962 and 1967; and the completion of the Odeon cinema was also a Goldfinger responsibility, though the future of the rest of the Elephant and Castle district has taken a different turn. In his design for Alexander Fleming House, Goldfinger employed the "module net" system which he himself had worked out: this method is one which assures the consistent realization of Goldfinger's architectural philosophy, it unites the use of modern technology and an overriding rationality, the whole to achieve striking aesthetical ap-

pearance and harmony. If Pier Luigi Nervi's statement about the style of our age, *the style of justice*, can be applied without any reservations to any architectural work, it can certainly be said of each of the four buildings that make up Alexander Fleming House that "its forms are just, in the strictest sense of the term". At the time of my visit Goldfinger had to see this work of his for quite some time, and so we gazed at the harmoniously pulsating rhythm of the façade together at some length; later he only added to the deep impression the spectacle had made on me, by noting that, during the construction of the complex, he had tried as far as possible to bring about a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Knowing the many different points of view that must be taken into consideration whenever new public buildings are constructed, the realization of such intentions would certainly be no small task; but he, as he added, had succeeded in carrying through his own conception, even down to the acquisition of the furniture. The Odeon cinema is lent animation by the fabric play of the unrefined concrete surfaces, but the design of the interior made an even greater impression on me. It ensures undisturbed access to seats, as well as an excellent view of the huge screen from every angle: I remember exclaiming how I wished Budapest had cinemas to compare with this one!

During our tour of London we also went to see the Design Centre on Haymarket, and then the Belgian Tourist Office, which Goldfinger designed in collaboration with Charlotte Perriand, a former colleague of Le Corbusier; Goldfinger was responsible for the rooms and Perriand the furniture. We also inspected the French Tourist Office in Piccadilly (also a joint project with Perriand) and finally one of the clusters of tenement houses he designed in North Kensington. Goldfinger has replanned three London districts in all: the site in North Kensington takes up 7 acres, with an additional 4 acres of open space, with paths playground and sports pitch. To meet the various

requirements of different categories of tenants (smaller and larger families, single young people, pensioners etc.) he projected ten types of apartment in all. By the time of our visit the block of houses was already fully occupied and many of the tenants coming and going in the street and in the adjacent park recognized the architect and stopped to engage him in conversation. As is usually the case on such occasions, there were some who brought up problems that had emerged, of greater or lesser magnitude as if the architect who designs a building can be held responsible for hooliganism or having the lift repaired. But there were many more who expressed their gratitude and satisfaction with the comfortable and good-quality housing they enjoyed in homes made available to them by the Greater London Council.

During the course of his architectural career Goldfinger has achieved notable results, both in theory and in practice. The scale of his activity ranges from the "Goldfinger-module" mentioned earlier, and the window type which he developed which is now in general use in design in Britain (the reason being that it ensures optimal lighting and its excellent plastic elements enliven façades), to his educational work carried on within the Architectural Association, and the establishment of the Design Centre. He is an active member of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and he has been elected a member of the Royal Academy of Arts. And yet, when I think of the figure of this great architect, the first thing that springs to my mind is the image of simple Londoners turning to him with such confidence at Trellick Tower, North Kensington. This is the most characteristic feature of all that Ernő Goldfinger has accomplished in the course of his life: he has created works for the people, works built on a human scale to serve the purposes of living men and women.

ZOLTÁN HALÁSZ

THE ROMAN AQUEDUCT IN ÓBUDA

In the course of road works to enlarge highway M-11, which leads northwards out of Budapest towards the Danube Bend, a remarkable archeological find has been made in the Hungarian capital. This aqueduct once supplied water to the town of Aquincum, the Roman predecessor of Budapest. Now a 350 metre long section of it has been uncovered and made accessible to the public.

The stone pillars of the old aqueduct, which rise above present-day ground level in some places, have been known for many centuries already. Anonymus mentioned in his twelfth-century chronicle that Árpád the Conqueror found some marvellous edifices on the bank of the Danube; they must have been the remains of the Roman town and the large aqueduct, which at that time still stood high above the road. A letter on the inspection of landmarks was written in the age of King Louis the Great in 1355: this is the first written document to mention the pillars, in ruins by this time, and parts of the wall which also served as landmarks. Marsigli, an Italian military engineer who made detailed reports and maps of the siege of Buda, included these ruins on a map prepared after 1686. In the early years of the 18th century Mátyás Bél also observed remnants of this aqueduct, still standing high above the ground. During the time of building activity after the recapture of Buda from the Turks, the inhabitants of Óbuda utilized the excellent broadstones of the pillars; hence most of them disappeared from the surface.

The idea of preserving and maintaining these relics was first mooted towards the end of the last century. At a meeting in 1878 the National Committee for Artistic Monuments decided to set up a commission for the systematic continuation of excavations in Aquincum and the preservation of the pillars of the aqueduct.

It was Gusztáv Zsigmondy, the discoverer and explorer of Budapest's thermal waters, who made the first maps and measurements of the remains of the pillars. He limited his attention to the blocks on the surface, and it was later discovered that in many cases their location did not correspond to the actual place of the pillars. These stone blocks were the deposits of lime dissolved from the aqueduct, which over the centuries have become shapeless conglomerates on top of the pillars. At the time of intensive building in the area people extracted good building material from under such conglomerates, and as a consequence the blocks which held together the crowns of the pillars were dislodged from their original places. This is why their places on Zsigmondy's map did not correspond to the original location of the aqueduct's pillars.

The first precise survey was made by Ernő Foerk in 1888. In order to build railway foundations, earth was transported from the Western side of the Szentendre road and the remnants of pillars were found during this digging. In the same year work began on the Szentendre local railway, in the course of which careful attention was paid to remnants on the surface; whenever possible a detour was made around the pillars. The same happened in 1911 when the second track was laid. Ernő Foerk also conducted excavations, and 57 pillars were dug out. (*Antiquities of Budapest*, X. 1923, 35.)

As far as we know today the almost 2000-year old aqueduct was 4 kilometres in length. It conducted water from sources at the still existing Roman baths right into the town as far as the amphitheatre at what is now called Nagyszombat Street. Water from the springs was lifted by hoisting gear into a tray which was held by pillars linked by arches. The space between the pillars was three metres. The body of each pillar was some 1 m to 1.60 m in diameter and 1.45 m

in height; the pillars were connected by 1.50 m high arches. In several places pairs of pillars were found in their original state, together with their arches.

New excavations were commenced in 1975 when I was commissioned to provide archeological data in connection with the planning of the new M-11 highway. The level of the ancient Roman pathway and the track of the pillars had to be ascertained. Available data contained numerous uncertainties, which had to be clarified for the planners. In the course of this work it proved possible to follow the track of the pillars along a stretch of 510 metres and, (necessarily omitting a few obstacles, such as the now demolished local train station at Aquincum and a bus stop), in all 93 pillars were brought to the surface. Research work was limited to providing technical data and there was not much opportunity for archeological observations. The many public utilities (water mains, gas, telephone and electricity cables) hampered the work. Finally it was the chief engineer József Topál who drew up new plans which took into account the pillars at or near the surface and provided an opportunity for presenting them to the public along a section of 450 metres by the new road. In the central reservation of the six-lane highway leading to the Danube Bend the pillars can now be seen standing on a green lawn around 10 metres in width; they have been protected by a concrete wall. Plans for the presentation and reconstruction of a number of pillars were devised by Dr. Gyula Hajnóczy, Professor at the Technical University, in fulfilment of a commission by the Budapest Municipal Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments.

*

In 1979 the pillars were explored in more detail and more interesting facts were uncovered. Excavations will continue until restoration work can be started. Several vertical and horizontal lead pipe cutlets have

been freed and traces of the different building periods of the civilian town of Aquincum have been identified at the pillar blocks. The outlines of brick and mortar debris from water towers have also been revealed. Stonewalled canals were found in a surprisingly good state of repair. It was possible to determine precisely the round-bastion section of the Southern city wall which also traversed the rows of the aqueduct pillars. When the Eastern side of the pillars was laid bare, whole street sections came to the surface intact; these were the malls of the ancient city, which linked the monumental pillars of the aqueduct to the front wall of shops found earlier. The most remarkable findings were the three pillar remnants built in the axis of one of the main streets traversing the town from East to West. The usual structure of the pillars differed here, their foundations were not built of the well-known small-sized broadstone but carved out of large monoliths with the surfaces of the basic blocks rounded off and polished smooth. The three pillars were probably part of a portal which interrupted the stone blocks of the pillars. This portal evokes the *Porta Maggiore*, built into the city waterworks of Rome, *Aqua Claudia* and the *Anio Novus*; and it was reproduced, as it were, in miniature in Pannonia, proving that the towns of the provinces were but smaller imitations of the "eternal city".

This applies equally to the water-supply system. Three mains branched out from the *castellum*, the water-distributing basin. The first ensured the supply of drinking water from public fountains to the general population, the second supplied water to theatres and ornamental wells, the third to the apartments of private consumers. The clay or lead pipes were built at different heights. The uppermost was for private consumers, the pipe on the bottom for public wells. If water became scarce, in the first place private houses and secondly decorative monuments would be deprived of it; but the bottom pipe was built on a level which en-

sured that water going to the public fountains would never be exhausted. The distributors were regularly spaced, so as not to damage the main at too many places. The yield of the pipes was measured at the source and in the town according to the season. Water consumption in Antiquity was three-four times greater than at the present day, because the water never ceased to flow, day and night.

Rich house-owners used to build collection-points at the main, sharing the costs. Every consumer had his own pipe into which a standard bronze tube was built: the quantity of water which flowed through this tube was the norm on the basis of which the inclusive rate of water consumption was calculated. Such tubes could be built into the aqueduct by specialists only, after control and sealing by the authorities. So connecting up with the main did not depend solely on the whim of an individual. He would have to apply for a permit and indicate why he needed the water. Requests for

water under false pretences were punished. No private right could be inherited or sold, every individual had to apply anew in his own right.

The maintenance and control of the water supply and the invoicing must have been carried out by highly qualified technicians in Aquincum. Although the names of the planners and builders are still unknown, the excavations testify to the accuracy and lasting quality of their work.

Many centuries after the collapse of the Roman Empire, water still trickled in pipes built at the time the Emperor Hadrian. The masses of those chalky granular conglomerates, which signalled the location of the pipes over all those centuries, in the end were dissolved by the water and settled at Medieval levels below the surface. It can be asserted without hesitation that the aqueduct of Aquincum occupies an important place amongst all the many aqueducts of the Roman Empire.

MELINDA KABA

THE RETURN OF THE WHITE MADONNA

On November 2, 1979, during the ongoing excavations in the palace of Buda Castle, we came across the head of the statue of a woman. It was yet another piece in the graveyard of Gothic statues (consisting of fifty-nine torsos in all) that was discovered in 1974.* We wasted no time in positioning this small graceful head, sculpted with the careful devotion of the true artist, on the trunk of the White Madonna of Buda, our most beautiful torso. And it fitted perfectly! The finest statue of our Gothic gallery, on display since 1976, has thus been restored to something nearer its former con-

dition. As the head of both the 1974 and the current excavations, I felt like the legendary Pygmalion (every archaeologist has something of Pygmalion in him), when the beautiful but lifeless fragments of the torso we had found five years before at last became a living artistic reality. And indeed, one to be reckoned with in the history of art in this country.

The Head

It is a mere seventeen centimetres in height. The top has been cut off, just like those of a number of other pieces in the gallery of statues found in Buda. There is a

* On the discovery of the "graveyard" see László Zolnay's article in NHQ 55.

hole in the centre of the smooth, flat face where the cut was made, and this served for the fastening of a crown or a halo. Its material is the soft limestone from the Budafok-Nagytétény quarries, which also constituted the medium for sculptures previously uncovered. There is no trace whatever of painting, but of course this does not preclude the possibility that expert examinations, including isotope analysis, will disclose signs of the original colouring. The softly carved, wavy locks of the head are covered by a reticular edged veil. And, as we will see, the same veil continues over the cloak that envelops the shoulders of the torso found earlier. The head bends gently forward and to the right when placed on this torso, as if the Madonna wishes to protect, even with her eyes, the child she holds in her right arm. (Unfortunately the figure of the child has been almost completely lost; no more than a few tiny toes, clinging to the waist of the Madonna, have remained extant.)

It is very probable that the child fashioned onto the right arm of the Madonna clutched with its little hand at her hanging veil; faint carving traces supporting such a hypothesis have been discovered by the restorer Ernő Szakál.

The forehead and the lower left section of the Madonna's face became damaged in the 1430s and 40s when the head was broken away from the trunk and the whole statue condemned to the rubbish heap. The figure of the child was destroyed at the same time. During the first trial setting we could establish that the fractures of the head and of the neck fitted together exactly. This, together with the exact fit of the veil, was incontrovertible evidence of their unity. (It was later proved that the two pieces were sculpted from the very same block of stone.) The reticular edged veil that covers part of the head also serves to hold together the Madonna's hair at the nape. Unlike the workmanship of another of our statues, depicting a female saint dressed in blue,

here the hair does not fall loose over the shoulder. The veil hanging from the head shows the same fine serrated chisel traces as those evident on the trunk; even in its torso state, this trunk had been generally considered the most beautiful of our Gothic statues, precisely because of this feather-light sculpting.

The eyes are carved with great care and virtuosity, and radiate warm emotion—the Madonna is turning towards her child. Her posture also evokes a closed artistic and emotional unity, that harmony which once existed between the two figures.

The Trunk

In the context of the trunk, let me quote what I wrote in the first professional report describing the Gothic statues found during the 1967–1975 excavations in Buda Castle *Antiquities of Budapest*, Vol. 24–3, 1977, p. 58.—Cf. L. Zolnay: "Der gotische Skulpturenfund von 1974 in der Burg von Buda." *Acta Historiae Artium*, Vol. 22, 1976, p. 297): to my great delight, my hypotheses then were confirmed by the fresh evidence of 1979.

"White Madonna. Hands and head, body of the Child all completely missing. Height in this state is 73 centimetres. A Madonna torso of a markedly S-lined, counterpoised structure. One piece in the gallery excavated in Buda in 1974, carved with peerless sensitivity and devotion, and a virtuosity unmatched by any other piece.

"Madonna status proven by a few toes of the child clinging to the waist. Gyula László was the first to draw attention to this fact, even before the statue was lifted from the ground.

"The straight, slim trunk counterbalances the weight of the body of the child, nestling in the right arm, with a strong tilt to the left. (Accordingly, the missing head of the Madonna was obviously leaning to the right.) The female figure was represented with both

arms elevated, and this also determines the drapery scheme (showing the shape of a letter M, from both the front and the rear).

"Her cloak is fastened under the neck, but it leaves a little bit of the chemise still visible. This stretches out under the child's body and up to the right hand that holds the child; from there it falls down to the base, in vertical and in V-shaped pleats. The feet of the Holy Mother are completely covered by this garment, dropping onto a thin, octagonal base plate.

"The head of our Madonna must have been covered by a reticular edged veil, parts of which extend below the neck. (Similar veil edges have also been found on one of our trunkless statue heads, and on torso No. 20. The same ornamentation is also evident on the little girl's head of the small corbel which came to light during our excavations in 1949-1951.) The brittle shoulders of the Madonna are girdled by the draping reticular bonnet, forming almost a collar at her back. The right forearm holding the child has remained extant as far as the wrist; above the wrist the Madonna's surplice closes tightly. Just as the figure of the knight, No. 5, the bishop, No. 16, and the woman's figure, No. 20, are the three outstanding figures amongst the larger statues of the gallery (by virtue of their gracefulness, the slant of their shoulders, their slim line and Gothic transcendence), so our White Madonna is a cut above the more stocky naturalism of the Apostle or the Prophet. In this respect this torso also contrasts with the considerably more rustic composition of the woman saint cloaked in blue, No. 32."

(The trunk of the statue found earlier bears the inventory number BTM 75.1.30, while the head just discovered is marked 79.125.1.)

At the time of writing these lines, the trunk and head have not yet been reattached to each other. Hence the ranking of our Madonna among the European madonnas of the period, generally known as "Beautiful Madonnas," is a task still awaiting art

historians. Yet it is safe to surmise that the opinion of the few experts already called in for consultation will be widely echoed: the new find in its completed form will be the most beautiful masterpiece of all that remains of Gothic stone sculpture in Hungary.

*The Natural history
of Rubbish Dumps*

The finding of the head was not merely a fluke. It will perhaps sound rather prosaic if I say that in order to hit upon it—true, with hands led by Dame Fortune—a great deal of attention had to be devoted to the science of rubbish depositing.

During the years since the excavations of the main find in Buda, with my small working group I continued operations both north and south of the site of 1974. In a rubbish pit some twenty-two metres north of the location of the statues we hit on a fragment bearing the Luxemburg coat of arms, which could only belong to the group of Gothic statues; it was part of a two-piece crown which fitted the head (or the helmet) of one of our statues. We were unable to work in the area east of the site of 1974, because this is now the site of the western wing of the Museum of the Working Class Movement, a building ten metres in width, added in the 1960s to the north-western wing of the former Royal Palace. We could not work to the west either, because here a makeshift road had been built to ensure temporary access to the Budapest Historical Museum and the Hungarian National Gallery whilst the new, permanent road was under construction. It was by this temporary road leading towards the Krisztina District that in 1973 I unearthed some two-thirds of the medieval cellars which we know to have been filled in between 1420 and 1440. I came upon the cut down trunk of a statue of a knight here, and in the same filled-in cellar—termed site No. IV, or "cantilever room"—we also found fragments of pottery



György Mayer: Adam Clark, the Scottish builder of the Budapest Chain Bridge



Lipót Strelisky: Hugo and Fridolin Peczek (coloured, 1846)



Unknown photographer: Gábor Egressy, the actor (centre) with friends (talbotype)



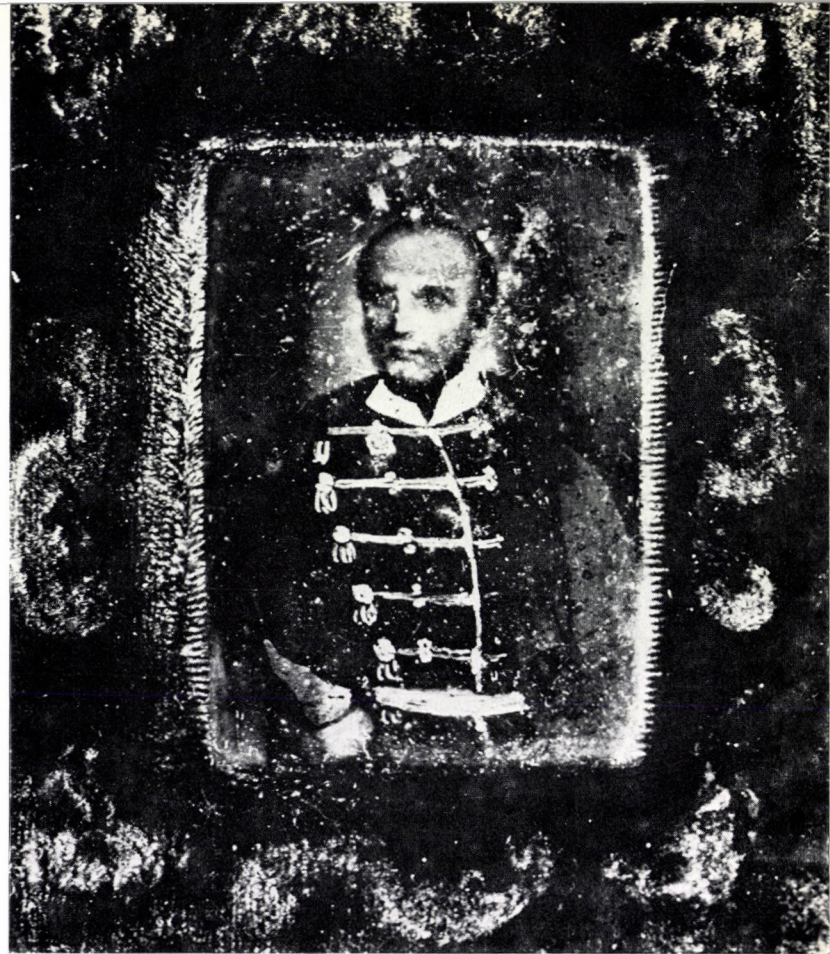
*Lipót Strelisky: Domokos Zeyk, General Bem's aide-de-camp in 1849
(reproduction of a daguerrotype by Miklós Zeyk)*



*Unknown photographer: Lipót Rottenbiller, Lord Mayor of
Pest (late of the 1840s)*



*Sándor Letzter: The main street in Kassa seen from the Cathedral Spire
(middle of the 1850s)*



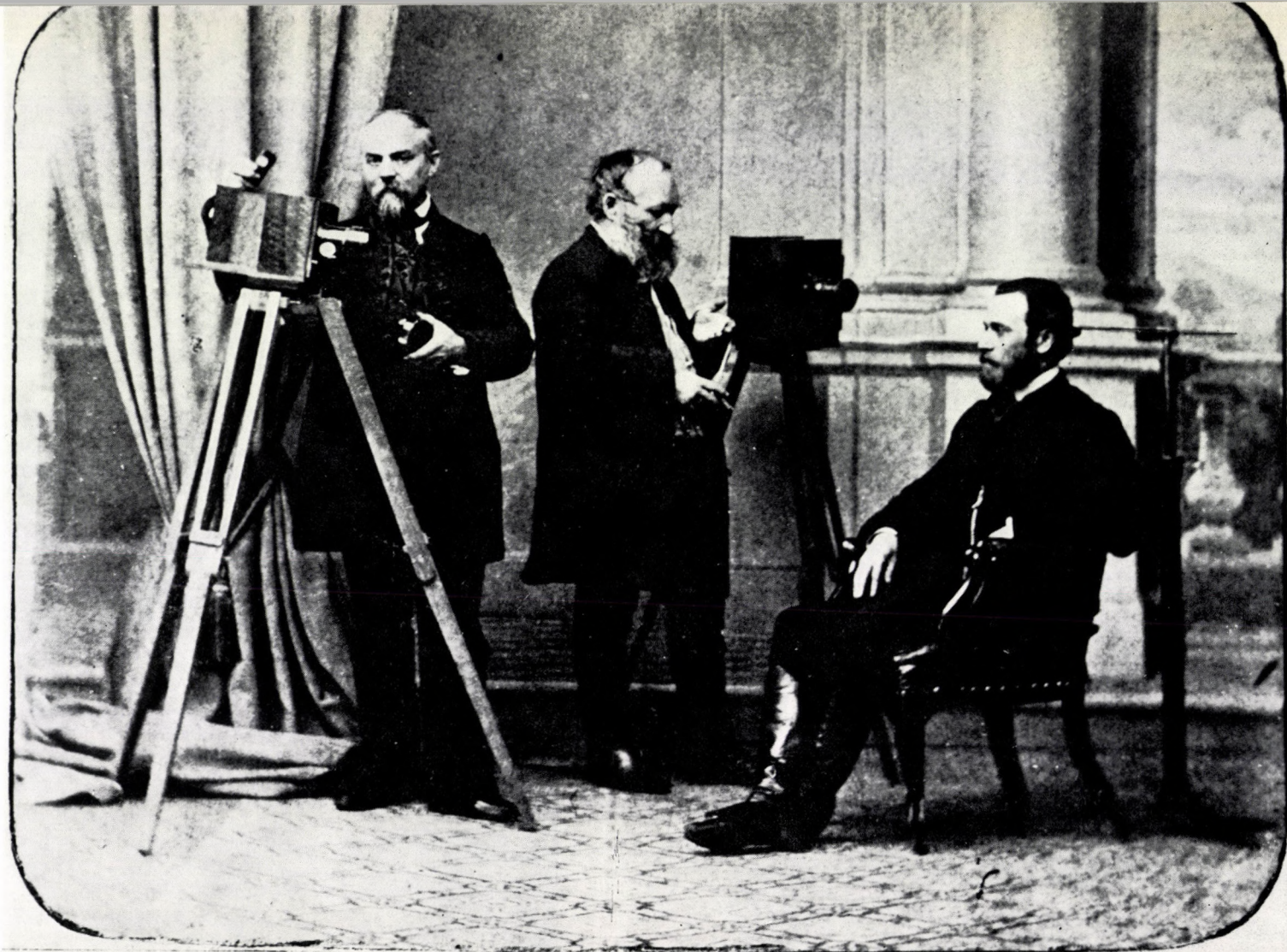
*Unknown photographer: General Bem
(after a lithograph of around 1848)*



Unknown photographer: Baroness Dóry with her daughter (a positive photographed on glass, around 1860)



Ciebulsky and Csonka: Widow of Domokos Zeyk, née Julianna Kemény (around 1880)



All reproductions by György Macky

Miklós Barabás: Business card of his studio, opened in 1863 (A painter and portraitist, experimented for a time with photography)

and stone carvings, some of which were to be completed later, when missing fragments were brought to light at the site of the statues in 1974. In this way it became quite clear that the cellars and basements on the far side (the western side) of the temporary road had been filled in at the same time as the site of the great gallery of statues, and with similar material, rubbish cast out from the Royal Palace. What this means is not that any romantic "burial of statues" took place here in the period before 1440—it was merely a matter of levelling the ruins of old houses in order to make room for the northern court of honour of the Sigismund Palace, and the great market of the castle.

We already knew by 1974 that Sigismund of Luxemburg (1387–1437) embarked on the extension of the Anjou palace in Buda, he wiped out the southern residential quarter of the town, comprising some thirty houses. When these were demolished, he had the northern forecourt of his palace built over the ruins.

When the new permanent road had been opened in 1979, we were able to begin explorations on the sites previously closed to us. At first there was great disappointment, for in the western section of the area we hit on nothing more than a rocky wall. But in the second round we removed the cellar filling of Site No. IV, completing the work

begun in 1973, and it was here that our logical calculations and our constancy finally bore fruit: we found the head of the lovely White Madonna.

It is another question whether we can expect to make further discoveries here or anywhere else which will embellish the torsos of statues already excavated. The archaeologist's eyes cannot see into the earth, and I myself am not superstitious; nor am I given to excessive optimism. I do now take it for certain that all the statues of the Gothic collection were discarded within this area, part of which is sure never to be excavated (the section in front of the western entrance to the National Gallery). At the same time, the surroundings of the sites where we have worked to date were used in the eighteenth century as foundations for the thick walls of the Royal riding hall and stables. We come up against these at every turn. Thus it was not so much the Turks but the later construction work of Hillebrand which caused the more serious damage to the Gothic statues hidden in the ground.

By the time of the Turkish occupation—as is borne out unambiguously by strata which the archaeologist can prove have been untouched since the first half of the fifteenth century—our torsos had long been resting in the earth.

LÁSZLÓ ZOLNAY

THE BEGINNINGS OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN HUNGARY

The István Csók Gallery in Székesfehérvár mounted a fascinating exhibition, entitled "The Beginnings of Photography in Hungary," in the summer of 1979. It displayed the results of research done by László Beke, Mária Albecker, and Károly Karlovits, as well as samples from their col-

lections. The first decades of Hungarian photography are largely unknown to the general public. No exhibition had been mounted for a very long time, and the relevant studies are published in year-books and periodicals to which the layman has no ready access. The richness of the material

came as a surprise even to those with some knowledge of the subject. A great many valuable exhibits, supplied by both institutes and private collectors, were previously unknown outside a very restricted circle.

The exhibition coincided with the 140th anniversary of the invention of photography. It is a sign of the growing interest in their history that photographs have become art objects, they are bought and sold, and original photos of noted Hungarian personalities fetch rather high prices at auctions. A couple of years ago old leather-bound family albums, full of unknown faces gazing at us from brown, faded photographs, were sold at giveaway prices at jumble sales. Today a photo dating back only to the twenties may change hands for a fortune. The present vogue is luckily ensuring that more and more photographs are being discovered. Frantic collectors keep thumbing through albums of elderly ladies and gentlemen, and discover surprising treasures in heaps of snapshots buried deep in old chocolate boxes. One of the lessons of the Székesfehérvár exhibition has perhaps been that, despite all the historical vicissitudes, a surprisingly large number of photographs from the middle decades of the last century have survived.

The significance of photography was soon recognized in Hungary. The invention of photography had only just been announced and evaluated by the French Academy when the paper *Hasznos mulatságok* (Useful Amusements) was describing the epoch-making invention for its readers. In 1840, Daguerre's book was published in Hungarian, translated by Jakab Zimmermann. The exhibition also gives an inkling of the long prehistory of photography. Visitors could marvel at lantern plates (now in the possession of the Sárospatak Calvinist College) which once served to entertain Ferenc Rákóczi II, Prince of Transylvania (1676-1735). Early and tantalizingly interesting school optical apparatus has been preserved in the collection of various schools. One of the earliest

photographs of all, presented to Count Antal Apponyi, (1839) then ambassador in Paris, by the inventor, is normally preserved in the National Technical Museum in Budapest. Also on display in Székesfehérvár was the Petzval lens, which had such a great effect on the further development of photography, and which brought the Voigtländer firm to world fame.

Some of the early literature of the subject was also exhibited; the obsolete jargon is replete with thrilling technical terms, a challenge to the modern expert. In Hungary, the first professional photographers began to appear around the middle of the last century. Who was the very first? Many are convinced it was Jakab Zimmermann, but it is possible that a studio was opened even earlier in Arad. They started by making portraits, and the subjects had to sit rigidly for a long time in front of the large machines. Well-to-do families in ornate clothing and Biedermeier dresses, proud provincial entrepreneurs, and Austrian officers from the nearby garrison, all were enthusiastic to have their pictures taken. Daguerrotypes soon faded and many were destroyed; only some two hundred have survived out of at least ten thousand produced in Hungary in the 1840s.

Photographs were also taken during the 1848/49 War of Independence. They include one of Lipót Rottenbiller, the first mayor of the city of Pest, and one of the poet Sándor Petőfi; the plate was developed by a photographer one century after it had been taken. Even in the turmoil of 1848, *honvéd* officers in their laced uniforms look up at us on scratched, blotchy photos. A small daguerrotype conjures up General Józef Bem, the Polish general of the Hungarian War of Independence (this photograph was developed contemporaneously from a lithograph and is covered by a mist-like veil). Arthur Görgey, the Commander-in-chief of the Hungarian Army, had a photograph of himself produced as a keepsake for his wife, at the end of the 1849 spring offensive

when he recaptured Buda Castle from the Austrians. Domokos Zeyk, a captain in the Hungarian Army in Transylvania, looks gloomily at the spectator. The photograph may well have been made by his relative, Miklós Zeyk, one of the pioneers of photography in Transylvania.

It is a real pity that no more pictures have survived of the participants of the great struggle, officers and privates; it is still more of a shame that no photographs at all show us the battlefields, and the burnt and looted towns, the more so as only a few years later the Crimean War had its own "press photographers"; they included the Hungarian Károly Szatmáry Papp, who later took some memorable photos during the Russo-Turkish war 1877/8.

Technical developments lured photographers out of doors and encouraged them to tackle landscapes. Few pictures have survived from that early period, but the tower of the Matthias Church glimmers faintly in its pre-reconstruction state from one picture taken in the 1840s.

Károly Divald's photographic tours amounted to veritable expeditions, with carriers and packhorse. The exhibition also displayed beautiful South American photos taken by Pál Rosti, which were gathered together in an album in the mid-nineteenth century.

Some photographs employed special techniques, projecting rigid faces onto glass or metal. A uniformed soldier is puffing out his chest, his legs are crossed, and looking at this picture one wonders whether it is not a painting worked out with meticulous care. Baroness Döry and her daughter face posterity on a positive photographed on glass. The musical prodigies of Kolozsvár were snapped by Lajos Mezey. And one further rarity: wine bottles and glasses on a carefully laid table, and Gábor Egressy, a noted actor of

the period, touching glasses with two other men.

People wanting to have their photos taken swarmed to the prospering studios of excellent photographers: Simonyi, Barabás, Lipót Strelisky, György Mayer, József Borsos, and György Klösz, amongst others. When going to visit someone or giving presents, people would delight their acquaintances and friends with photographs of which they commissioned innumerable copies. Side by side in the display cabinets one can see an anonymous lawyer, a rising tradesman, Bishop Arnold Ipolyi, the great novelist Mór Jókai, with his roguish smile, the poet János Arany, and the politician Ferenc Deák, architect of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867.

The pictures throw light on old friendships: it is very revealing to see with whom people wanted to be photographed, how they wished to live on in the memory of posterity. This period marks the beginning of the gross inflation of the photograph, but it also provides exact and reliable information about the attire, the poses, and customs of the age. Photographic poses and mannerisms tell us much about the times. Defiant Hungarians who could not reconcile themselves to Habsburg rule wore distinctive Hungarian clothes until the mid-sixties, with ornate braiding on their long coats and tightly-fitting boots. Adam Clark, the Scots builder of the Budapest Chain Bridge and the adjacent tunnel, stands out a mile in his checked apparel.

This splendid exhibition at Székesfehérvár, however overdue, marked a great step forward in the presentation of the early history of Hungarian photography. Let us hope that we shall not have to wait so long for the follow-up.

FERENC BODOR

THEATRE AND FILM

TIME OUT OF JOINT

Plays by Szilveszter Ördögh, Magda Szabó, Miklós Boldizsár,
István Örkény, Tibor Gyurkovics, Géza Bereményi

Hungarian plays first performed in the early months of 1980 have one outstanding feature in common: their characters are pitted one and all against the formidable adversary of History itself. Some of them are intent on setting right the incongruencies of history; but even where this is not the case history is the touchstone and the yardstick for the individual in all of these plays.

Szilveszter Ördögh: Kapuk Théában
(*Gates in Thebes*)

There is no need to go over the story of Ördögh's *Gates in Thebes*, for the reader with any acquaintance at all of Greek mythology will deduce the outlines of the plot as soon as the name of the main character is supplied—Jocasta. Waiting at the gate to Thebes, well past the prime of her life, the widow of King Laius sizes up her past, the royal marriage she did not want, the fate of the son she bore in disgust and hatred, the horrible consequences of her brother Creon's decree and the crimes she herself has committed out of self-interest, weakness and vanity. Shadows of the dead, including murderers and victims, weigh heavily on Jocaste's stooping shoulders as she waits in despair for the unknown newcomer whom fate has chased to the throne of Thebes and to her own widow's bed. In the final

section of the play, by which time Jocaste has confessed all that there is to tell about herself, when the irreparableness of the lies of the past is clear to all, Oedipus arrives inevitably on the stage.

Szilveszter Ördögh expands the mythological story in two directions. One is a disproportionately detailed and exaggerated picture of the marriage of convenience into which Jocaste and Laius find themselves forced. The second, much more interesting expansion, unfolding to some extent from the dialogue between Jocaste's two bodyguards, draws the life of the ordinary people of Thebes into the well-known story. One critical review of the play appeared under the title: *Jocaste under Psychoanalysis*. But actually the psychological dimension of the play is carefully designed to substantiate the dialogues, to intensify the anatomy of power and of the means of its enforcement. It is this latter theme which adds tension and topicality to the play.

A master-stroke by director János Sándor was to have the Queen appear in two forms on the stage. There is the real figure of the suffering widow recalling the memories of her youth while waiting at the gate; but we also see what her mind is still able to conjure up, the beautiful young girl she used to be, a silhouette performed in pantomime by another actress.

Certain illogicalities in the plot and short-

comings in characterization result from the author's lack of experience as a dramatist. Despite these, the play is proof that this young writer, hitherto known primarily as a short-story specialist, has a definite talent for drama and an expressive and subtle style; Ördögh can look forward to a promising future as a dramatist.

Magda Szabó: A marenai fiú (The Boy of Merano)

In the initial stages of her career as a novelist, Magda Szabó was no more than a passing guest in the world of the theatre. The dramas she wrote were no more than stage adaptations of her epic works in other genres. In recent years, however, her ties with the theatre have become increasingly strong. *Az a szép fényes nap* (That Bright, Beautiful Day), her first historical drama, set in the court of prince Géza, father of the first Hungarian king, drew a unanimously favourable response from critics and general public alike.

Both in theme and style, the Boy of Merano is designed to follow-up her earlier success. This time the author outlines a panorama of 13th century Hungarian history and throws light on some basic general and topical issues in the life of the nation. The narrower story, the peg on which wider issues are hung, is that of the failure of King Béla IV (1235-70) to unite society, to organize a national army and to defend the country against the Tatar invasion.

Magda Szabó recommends her Boy of Merano to young Hungarians who do not usually find history lessons especially engrossing, as well as to the not-so-young with vague recollections of having studied these historical events at some time in their own past. The dilemma is that of the honest king lacking the resolution to grasp the problems of a country weakened by discord, rebellion and strife between national groups. He did not know where to place his trust in the face of imminent invasion by the Tatars,

how to construct an alliance to avert disaster. Of course it is common knowledge that the hopes and illusions of Béla IV were all shattered, since western assistance to repel the Tatar hordes failed to materialize; superior in numbers, the Tatars advanced irresistibly as far as Muhípuszta. It was after the fatal defeat which the Hungarian army suffered at this spot that an unidentified monk noted down in his chronicle for September 12th, 1241: "In the said year of the Lord, owing to the Tatar destruction, Hungary ceased to exist."

Today, 739 years later, it would be a rather pointless gesture to engage in a detailed refutation of that statement. It is a much more exciting enterprise to examine the figure who was the hero of that national catastrophe and of the ensuing reconstruction, the King who is revered as the second founder of the Hungarian state. Béla IV was not only a descendant of the rulers of the House of Árpád and the son of Endre II (the King of the Golden Bull), he was also the son of Gertrud of Merano. History cast Gertrud as the foreign woman at the Hungarian court, and no one was more hated than this cruel, haughty schemer who acted consistently in the interests of her compatriots and against those of the Hungarians. She was finally slain by Bán Bánk, the distressed and humiliated hero of the classical drama which bears his name.

Every school-child is familiar with this dreadful story. It assumed its definitive literary form (thus immortalizing the legend) in the drama written by József Katona. Magda Szabó is probably the first playwright to realize that the victim of Bánk's legitimate vengeance was also a human being and a mother, not only a manoeuvring queen. Her orphaned son had to cope with his personal grief following her death, and he also had to fight against the shadow of his mother, widely hated as a foreign queen, when he occupied the throne. In a stimulating essay written at the time she was working on this drama, Magda Szabó explained

that over and above the basic historical idea (prompted by her experiences as a teacher of literature and her own historical research), what lead her to base a number of recent writings on this theme was the curious repetition and recurrence of certain basic situations in Hungarian history. (It is the author's intention to develop this theme into a trilogy.) Her choice was probably motivated in part by the simple puzzle of how the boy from Merano could overcome, psychologically and socially the embarrassing setback that he, the King of Hungary, was the son of a hated foreigner. Was it this thought haunting his mind, and a similar suspicion lurking in the nation as a whole, which was to some extent responsible for Béla IV's failure to mobilize national support? The other fundamental question, perhaps of even greater importance, is why were those in power blind to the real danger threatening the country? Why did they disbelieve the learned monk, Julian, who had ventured to Asia on an expedition to trace relatives of the Hungarians, witnessed the frightful signs of the Mongol conquest, and brought the first news of the Tatars' advance westwards?

If that's the way it happened (and the facts appear to be incontestable) in the thirteenth century, in what way was the tragedy repeated? It was the mistaken assessment of a situation which was to repeat itself over and over again. "You don't have to analyse Hungarian history up to our alliance with Adolf Hitler to see that our reaction to a situation of crisis has been the same from the beginning. In fact, the age of the Tatar invasion reveals the archetype of our national behaviour patterns", writes Magda Szabó and she adds, "in all our national crisis you will find deaf ears and eyes blind to the truth, alliance with the wrong side, the adoption of erroneous views and betrayal of or disassociation from the natural allies of the country." The playwright intends this historical drama to be an anatomy of Hungarian behaviour in a time of crisis.

One feels that in the real situations of history, presented in the drama in a colourful, plastic and transposed way, the motives behind the decisions and the given possibilities are much more complex. The decorative frames of Magda Szabó's play do not do them full justice. Yet the audience following the sad turn of events nightly at the Madách Theatre has been so consistently enthusiastic that it would seem as if people were hoping against hope—perhaps this time the national catastrophe could be prevented. The tension created is only partly explained by the play's dramatic mechanism, smooth and well-oiled despite a somewhat clumsy start. The plot is carefully worked out, but more important is the fact the audience does not stop seeking and feeling the topicality of the play. In the gaps deliberately left in the historical tableau they try to find signs of the present and to the historical questions posed they come up with the replies of the 20th century. The replies are all there in the drama, but in a more open and multifarious form than is usual in *dramas-à-clef*. Magda Szabó is a born teacher, and one who does not deprive us of the joy of discovery and interpretation. Where she falls down slightly is in the originality and depth of her character drawing, and this is important, for without multidimensional character drawing a drama of traditional structure can never develop to the full. It is as if she were trying to evade bringing lives into direct and hellish confrontation, contenting herself with the sure effects of a quick succession of genre-scenes.

It is impossible to fault the director György Lengyel, who has done a very professional job in managing the enormous apparatus necessary to mount a performance of this play. But one feels that this, combined with the task of rendering the spectacular historical tableau convincing, seems to have taken up too much of his attention; he has not done as much as he might have to bring out the more modern, ironic, Dürrenmattean line of the work, and the same gentle crit-

icism may be levelled at the traditional, almost romantic performances of Péter Huszti and Szilvia Sunyovszky in the leading roles.

Miklós Boldizsár: A hős (The Hero)

Since the impact of Dürrenmatt there has been no more popular genre within the theatre than the tragicomedy, but young Miklós Boldizsár has turned the category upside down. In his comic tragedy he does not deprive his hero of a martyr's death, but the build-up is not at all the conventional one; through his own manner of mixing elements of comedy and tragedy, he proves that some tragedies may be grotesque rather than glorious.

Its hero, the Croatian ban Péter Zrínyi has not earned himself a place in the Pantheon of Hungarian history. He seems rather to belong amongst the figures of Madame Tussaud's wax cabinet. He is a second-rate poet, a dilettante, far less significant than his brother Miklós, one of the outstanding figures of early Hungarian literature, whose epic poem, *Sziget Disaster* (*Szigeti veszedelem*) Péter translated into Croatian. The play is set some 300 years ago when the united forces of Europe were at last putting an end to a century and a half of Turkish occupation, replacing it by the tyranny of the Viennese Court, with the Habsburg emperor posing on the Hungarian throne. A group of Hungarian aristocrats conspire against the new oppressors, but although Péter Zrínyi takes part in the nationalist conspiracy lead by Baron Wesselényi, he takes flight when he perceives the real risks involved in political struggle. He then hastens to call on King Leopold I, his friend of old, and informs him of the plot, beseeching the Monarch for mercy, at least for himself. The frivolity of the plot is clearly demonstrated by the fact that Péter Zrínyi was not the only one of the aristocratic conspirators to turn his back on his comrades: selfishness and cowardice proved to be

stronger than their patriotic fervour. But those in power are little disposed to offer concessions, and the price for mercy is unconditional surrender. More and more out of touch with his own situation, Péter Zrínyi is irritated by the authorities' demand, just as he is by the idea of fulfilling it, or by his own impending death sentence should he reject the conditions imposed from above. He therefore tries to mix oil and water, to build a bridge-head on the surviving ruins of his self-esteem, all in order to preserve his own illusions. King Leopold, although not anxious to lose sight of bán Zrínyi's beautiful wife, is not a man of half-measures: he demands total, humiliating obsequiousness in return for a pardon and possibly further royal favours to follow.

The duel at Court and in the courtroom between the cowardly hero and the generous tyrant is pursued on stage through numerous sharp dialogues until the last drop of blood has been spilt. Zrínyi's seconds are his wife born Katalin Frangepán and the former caretaker who has been elevated to the position of chancellor. In the end, a victim of successive manipulations, Péter Zrínyi becomes a hero and a martyr against his will. He was not one of those mournfully typical figures of Hungarian history dubbed "Hercules by Necessity" by Endre Ady, men driven inevitably to the barricades by the situation in which they found themselves and who, once there, rose to their fate and did what was expected of them. Miklós Boldizsár's hero emphatically does not belong to any such imposing group, for his Péter Zrínyi was not turned into a hero by the ineluctable power of circumstances leading up to the scaffold; right up until that moment he has seemed a weak, fallible, comically cowardly figure. Yet may it not be doubted whether the playwright has the right to pass judgement on the moral behaviour of a character who has to part with earthly existence on the scaffold of tyranny? As Márton Karinthy, the director of the play, comments "Hero or clown, martyr or

traitor—it's all a question of viewpoints. It depends on the situation and on numerous incalculable possibilities what posterity and history will eventually make of one."

Indeed, it is not the task of the dramatist to deliver judgement in the historical trial of Péter Zrínyi, and the real subject of the play is more exciting. It has to be admitted that here too the dramatist is obviously preoccupied with deficiencies in the make-up of his hero that have retained their relevance down to our own century. If Magda Szabó's play is an anatomy of crisis, The Hero dissects manipulation, and Miklós Boldizsár matches Szabó for the fervour and irony with which he exposes the seemingly generous manipulator and the pathetic, hopeless struggle of his victim.

The historical parable used by Miklós Boldizsár to demonstrate the deeper truth he wishes to get across is a very appropriate one to launch a drama. The verbal combat is often excellent. In the development of the plot, however, the emotional and dramatic development of Péter Zrínyi's wife is not happily unfolded, though this should add important contrast and colour to the main theme. What one misses is not consistency or solid realism, for Miklós Boldizsár's drama would probably gain in effectiveness if writer and especially director did not in some places try to make whole murals where only sketches are called for. If the somewhat loose plot were presented in a lighter or in a more abstract manner the result would be more entertaining. But this bold and original approach to the topical aspect of a historical theme does more than hold out a promise—it is a guarantee that this debut drama is not the last we shall hear of Miklós Boldizsár.

In Memoriam I. Ö.

The life of István Örkény bears out his personal confession that he was a "fortunate writer". He was fortunate in that he started writing with a chemical engineer's diploma

already in his hands, in that he was no more than a beginner when well-known periodicals accepted his writings and outstanding critics reviewed them. He was fortunate enough to reach Paris before the borders were closed, and to get home again before the collapse. With the vicissitudes of the Second World War, history was generous enough to provide him with a catharsis, a hell which brought him to maturity as a writer. At the age of fifty, unable to write a satisfactory novel, he renewed the classical short-story and refashioned it according to his own taste by writing his *One-Minute Stories*. He was also fortunate because the contemporary and universal message of his dramas, written in Hungarian and inspired by Hungarian reality proved powerful enough to arouse attention and understanding in major theatres throughout the world.

Örkény was once asked in an interview whether he was a tragic writer. He formulated his reply with his usual lyrical rationalism (or, if you like, rational lyricism): "Despite all miseries, my generation of writers has been a fortunate one; because we had the chance to create new concepts, or at least, to reformulate some old ones. We have paid an enormous price for it, because we lost so much more than we could possibly make up, yet we broke the deadlock; therefore, even if I could, I would not have wished to have lived in any other century."

The ultimate veracity of this confession is to be established in his oeuvre, prematurely cut short by his death in June, 1979 at the age of 67. The current theatre season has come up with fresh stimulating corroboration—nightly performances at the Víg Theatre in Budapest of Örkény's tenth and *unwritten* drama. The apparent paradox has a simple explanation: director Péter Valló has adapted written and for the most part published excerpts from Örkény's oeuvre (including dramatized short-stories, *One-Minute Stories*, reportage and dramas) to compose an eloquent and befitting tribute.

Valló might have expended his energy on

compiling a general anthology for a festive occasion. This was not his aim, for he was concerned to compose a drama around the lifework in question, and one that would be faithful to the spirit of István Örkény. The characters, seven unidentified men and six unidentified women, plus a dozen extras, also begin their historical Calvary before the Second World War. One of the characters embodying the personal historical experiences of the writer is still able to reach Paris, but already he can feel the rumbling of the earth beneath him; he suffers anguish as he realizes that Hungary will lose the war. Then, in a soldier's uniform, he enjoys a few minutes of happiness. Interludes of peace bring new burdens, love weighs heavily on his shoulders but the rich chemist's son cannot marry a girl from a poor family. The war goes on and deprives them of the happiness of a next meeting: who knows which boys will return from the front and which will not?

This is followed by flashes which stagger the spectator, not only with their actual contents, but on account of their atmosphere and the mere spectacle they offer. On an empty stage, with a carpet of small white plastic balls reminiscent of fields of endless snow, wounded soldiers doomed to freeze to death in the bend of the River Don drag themselves feebly along. One stumbles in the snow, another struggles painfully to his feet, there are corpses lying unburied in the mine field and the bodies of Russian women hanging from trees. A soldier carries his own frozen ear in his hands, holding it helplessly, hopeful of a miracle. Another, the eternal optimist, keeps repeating that one at least of the two hundred thousand Hungarian soldiers on the Eastern front will surely find his way home.

Then comes the historic turnabout, on stage as in reality, a whole roundelay of reckoning and U-turns. In the distorted mirror of the fifties Örkény studies naive and unmanagable rank-and-file soldiers of the Idea; the scale of values is tipped back

to normal, but apart from showing us the new distortions which appear in attitudes, it is for him but a short distance to laying bare the abstract psychological pattern underlying the mechanism of the show-trials and helpless individuals accepting their decorations in one moment and facing up to the threat of execution in the next. In the short-stories and One-Minute Stories, politics intrudes on a human level, for here Örkény is interested not in the crimes but in the state of mind and behaviour of the man-in-the street, playing into the hands of those manipulating the crimes. They may be brief, but they are perfect, concise and rich in meaning—these One-Minute Stories are devoted to the milder satire of everyday life; it was a shrewd move on the part of the director to devote the last third of his montage to this last reckoning, to let these witty illustrations of the instinct for life and understanding stand as the last farewell.

Not only is each and every word and situation of this unwritten drama the work of Örkény, but the performance exudes his spirit throughout. It is a compilation of details, glittering mosaics and fragments of artistic entities, yet in Valló's adaptation the parts seem to form a new whole, a fresh creation for the stage. As Örkény expounded matters in a passage as relevant to this posthumous tribute as to his volume of One-Minute Stories:

"If you lace a great many cherry paprikas on a thread, you will have a string of paprikas.

But if you don't lace them, you will have no string.

You have just as many paprikas, just as red, just as strong. But no string.

Would the thread make all that much difference? No, it doesn't. The thread, as we know, is a negligible thing of minor importance. What makes the difference then?

If you contemplate this, taking care to restrain your thoughts from wandering about, to train them in the right direction,

you may hit upon some great truths." (The Aim of Being)

The impact of the performance is exceptional by any standards. Applause seems to be the wrong word—perhaps it would be more in keeping with the occasion to pay homage to Örkény's memory by a minute's silence as the curtain comes down. In fact the audience applauds, night after night, and this is for the living: for artists who treasure the spirit of Örkény, Péter Valló and all his actors.

Tibor Gyurkovics: Magyar menyasszony
(Hungarian Bride)

Few Hungarian writers have made such constructive use of the legacy of Ferenc Molnár as Tibor Gyurkovics. He is a psychologist by profession, a poet in his literary ambitions and a writer who knows all the ins and outs of the dramatist's craft. He was excited and attracted by the school of the absurd when this was in vogue in Hungary and it is to his credit that his lyricism in *Az öreg* (The Old Man) succeeded in winning over the diehard opponents of dramatic works strongly infused with philosophy. In the first recent wave of literature inspired with a concern for social problems we gave due recognition to the documentary which in his hands developed into a powerful drama. (*Az isten nem szerencsejátékos*.—God is No Gambler.)

His two-act Hungarian Bride, currently being performed in Kecskemét, is a grotesque act of self-criticism on the national plane. The play introduces us to the eventfully eventless everyday life of a family of three generations. The old man is practically a vegetable. The next generation is active, in fact excessively so. They are propelled by the feverish impulse to accumulate money, a possibility that was not open to them when they were young. The youngest members of the family exhibit a contrasting docility—they have no liking for work, for physical

exercise or even for love. This is how Mari remains a young bride for the duration of her life and her fiancé Gyugyu is shown to be a lazy good-for-nothing, disguising his lethargy behind big words, such as the longing of the younger generation for freedom in our time. One would not expect such characters to produce convincing drama, or even a rich plot, but fortunately their witty dialogues and a few bizarre episodes offer ample consolation: the display of ideas is often quite dazzling.

After the interval we move into a new phase. The colours are more vivid, and we soon learn that the heroes are now living in Argentina. They arrived as tourists to support their team at the World Cup football tournament and then decided to settle and start a new life there. The superficial changes are quite startling: Mari may still be a bride, but Gyugyu has become an active businessman and Mother, the former Party worker, has now metamorphosed into a real vamp. But behind the showy elegance of the nouveau-riche the old emptiness is still there. The cast (and the plot) are but a mirror image of the first act. The author's grotesque humour sparkles once again in a few exchanges of repartee; but amidst the clichés of the day (related, it must be admitted, to important social and national problems, but for the most part of fleeting topicality) the thread of the drama is irretrievably lost.

Géza Bereményi: Halmi

Géza Bereményi has paraphrased Hamlet in his resolutely contemporary play, Halmi or The Prodigal Son, but this is stating the obvious. One critic has added that the paraphrase is not a parody, while another critic has seen in Bereményi's drama the "counterpoint" of Shakespeare's tragedy. Certainly it is no parody, for the author's approach to both classical and contemporary Hamlet is serious all the way through.

János Halmi, a 19 year old Hungarian student, is a figure who cannot be pigeon-holed, as he himself points out in self-criticism, but also with self-assurance. His teachers say he is intelligent and fall back on his age and adolescent sensitivity to explain his extravagances. He entertains parallel notions in his mind concerning the possibilities of crime and punishment—on this point, he is a distant cousin of Raskolnikov.

Shakespeare's Hamlet wants the truth—at least, he wants to discover where truth lies. But Halmi, when told about the secrets of the past by the spirit of his father (by his real father, to be precise, unexpectedly visiting Hungary after an absence of 18 years and calling secretly on his son), is rather put out to hear the truth. He is indifferent to the past, to the period when his father and step-father (Kondor) exhausted their youth, shared work and shared the same beliefs, and found themselves nevertheless on opposing sides of the barricade in 1956. He is unmoved by the recollection of how Kondor-Claudius seduced his mother while his father was in prison. He feels that the image of the family deceitfully acquired is now abruptly destroyed by the ghost-like appearance of his father. The prince of Denmark believes that it is his duty and his purpose to hear his father out, to consider the truth and to make it public, indeed, to take vengeance for his father. But at the same time Halmi rejects the burden of the past and truth itself; he fails to understand that time is out-of-joint and he is not called upon to set matters right. He is an anti-Hamlet, even before he sets out on the tragic road followed by the original Hamlet.

Wavering between questions of life and death, Hamlet recoils from action. Equally unshaken by all the perspectives of past and present, life and death, Halmi with his indifference becomes his father's murderer and an accomplice in the tragedy of his love. Bereményi's hero views the world he rejects through the eyes of his generation, without

illusions, indeed numbed at the sight of reality; his cold irony is only infrequently warmed by traces of passion. He tries to live illicitly and illegally, but by refusing to face all duties and denying objective alternatives, almost imperceptibly he grows into a monster. But "almost imperceptible changes" are not the stuff of which tragedies are made. The *tragedy* of a hero is always more exciting and deeply moving than any *exhaustive case history*. True, what Bereményi's drama studies is not the individual deviation manifested in Halmi's life but its wider, more general validity, its social roots and the forms in which it appears—in brief, the collective deviation of a generation. In Bereményi's treatment, truth is a complex phenomenon, the author is fully aware of the fact that Halmi's fathers actively contributed to a positive social transformation, that they acted on their beliefs wholeheartedly, and that they were not entirely unsuccessful. This, however, does not automatically absolve them from their sins. There is no one who mourns the dead in this drama. Confronted with the news of the death of his love, Lili-Ophelia, Halmi articulates what we have known for decades but are usually afraid to put into words: "She's dead. All of them, one after the other. Them, and not others. All of them. There's a system in this. They only appear to be unrelated to each other. There is a system." The acute insight of the dramatist suggests that Halmi is responsible for the deaths of several people related to him in this way or in that. That is what creates the necessity for a tragic dénouement and deprives Halmi's senseless death of any trace of grandeur. The point is underlined by the final line of the tragedy, in direct antithesis to the closing lines of Hamlet: "It is certain that no ceremonial salute will be fired over this dead body."

Géza Bereményi has made significant progress as a craftsman since his *Léghőmérő* (Cubic Metre), a play in which his sensitive approach to problems and a striking originality were already apparent. His editing

is rigorous and he is now capable of carrying through a dramatic idea without losing for a moment his hold on the thread of the story, without easing the tension. Admittedly, there remain a few faulty screws in the dramatic structure of the play, but despite shortcomings it is the work of a mature dramatist. With the tragedy that befalls his hero the author succeeds in conveying his own complex reflections on metaphysical

questions. Success is also due in large measure to the director Péter Gothár, who controls the movements of the characters in the exaggerated space of the Kaposvár theatre, amidst the impressive scenery designed by Gyula Pauer, in such a way as to suggest the figures' isolation without losing anything of the intensity of a chamber performance.

ANNA FÖLDES

PÉCS FILM WEEK: VIEWS AND REVIEWS

Once again, the annual review of Hungarian films took place at Pécs, in south-west Hungary, in February this year. As this is the twelfth of these annual reviews, it is worth recalling that the first eight had all been arranged at Pécs.

Twenty-two feature films were produced in 1979, of which more than half merit serious attention as ambitious contributions to the art of the film. Their individual evaluation, however, may be hampered by the very conditions of such a film week, crowded into five days when even a seasoned film critic may have moments of mental indigestion or at least inattention. The quality of projection equipment, the audibility of soundtrack and especially of translations all influence first impressions. Thus, even within the habitual range of a critic's prejudices and preferences, there is a strong likelihood of further distortions; and of unfair comparisons.

For instance, the most promising breakthrough in Hungarian films over the past five years had seemed to be the quasi-documentary technique, in which lay people act out stories through situations familiar from their own lives (See: *Documentary Into Drama*, NHQ 71.) However, from the two new films of the kind shown at Pécs,

even the quasidocumentary seems to have developed some mannerisms and conventions by now. Both films were made by members of the group which came together during the early '70s in the Béla Balázs Studio, to create the six-part Educational Series. Basically, both have the same approach and structure, and were scripted by Györgyi Szalai, one of the founders of the group. In *Stratagem* (Harcmodor), directed by István Dárday, a country doctor sets about establishing an old people's home and day care centre from local funds; while *Peacetime* (Békeidő), directed by László Vitézy, shows an agricultural co-op manager's efforts to repopulate and revitalize a dying village. Two crusades, two crusaders... The lady doctor in *Stratagem* succeeds, but only by humiliating herself with undignified intrigues and compromises; the co-op manager succeeds partially, but his final effort, of building a connecting road to link his village to a large town in an adjoining county, is baulked by the ill-will of the local big brass he had offended.

The major difference between the two films is their respective length, which throws a different emphasis on the subject matter of each. Vitézy's film is conventionally edited: he cut it to the usual, 90-odd minute feature

length, resembling Dárday's own 1975 film, *Holiday in Britain* (Jutalomutazás.) In *Stratagem*, which is Dárday's third feature, whole scenes are retained uncut. This technique shows people passing through doors, taking their seats, exchanging the formal platitudes of corporate life, repeatedly offering and accepting ritual refreshments, so that, in the end, the film is 170 minutes long. The little flyposter advertising *Stratagem* claimed that it is "the film of the majority." But is any "majority" patient enough to sit through 170 minutes of unedited commonplaces? Besides patience, great political acuity is needed, of the same kind which keeps some people awake while others doze off during the interminable arguments of most subcommittee meetings.

And yet, *Peacetime* may be erring in the other direction. By compressing the diverse activities of co-op Manager Bencsik into the most telling scenes, pinpointing his actions at their most dramatic moments hides, perhaps, too much of the mundane grind, the administrative donkey-work involved in such achievements. Without its stretches of tedium, Bencsik's daily life is dramatized to the point of being romanticized: from a competent official, he turns into a myth, a legendary hero like some sheriff of the Wild West. The looks and personality of the man chosen for the part (a co-op farm chairman in his own right) are partly responsible: he jumps into his yellow Polski Fiat with all the verve of Tom Mix springing on his horse; and the contrast with his ratfaced, treacherous sidekick, the party secretary (played by a professional actor from a provincial theatre) introduces an element of commedia dell'arte as well. However, there is also a possibility that it is the quasi-documentary method itself, with its improvised dialogues, which carries the seeds of the commedia dell'arte's simplified characterization and, occasionally, over-acting.

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Perhaps it is to avoid such pitfalls that a director like János Rózsa, equally fluent in documentary and feature films, maintains a strict separation between the two. His wide range of documentaries, especially on educational subjects like *Lady Teachers* (Tanítókisasszonyok) and *Caring By Request* (Botútés kívánságra) have given him a facility in dealing with teenagers, as well as an insight into juvenile maladjustments, which he dramatized in *Spider Football* (Pókfoci) (1978) and now in his *Sunday Daughters* (Vasárnapi szülők). Scripted by István Kardos, who wrote all of Rózsa's feature-films, Rózsa gives a fictional framework to a world-wide problem: namely, that children and teenagers in institutional care have insurmountable difficulties in adapting to society, even in a socialist country. The generation gap, which is a world-wide phenomenon, grows into a dangerous ravine between children in care and the "outside," that is legal and organized society.

Sunday Daughters is set in a girls' reform school where the inchoate desire for life outside finds expression in attempts at escape. Yet these are self-defeating adventures: there are no open, loosely-knit hippy communes where the girls could survive. Instead, their escapes bring them into contact with the police, and it is useless to pretend that this is anything but humiliating, alienating and feeding the teenager's certainty that the enemy is the police and thus, the law.

A particularly goodlooking girl (Julianna Nyakó) attracts the attention of a worker's brigade from a nearby factory. The women of the brigade undertake to invite her home in turn on Sundays, but jealous of a flirtatious husband, and of a teenage son who falls in love with the girl, destroys all chances of rapport. The girl's attempts to escape from the institution are doomed; but so are her chances of happiness on her release. The better-looking girls from the reform school are handed over in marriage to complete

strangers, like Mohammedan brides: such ill-omened marriages represent their sole chance of "normal" life.

This, at least, is the film's subject; but its images tell another story, more concerned with teenage sexuality bursting out in violence and self-mutilation, and of a sadistic pecking-order burgeoning behind the backs of well-meaning, blandly helpless pedagogues and administrators. On one hand, the subject follows naturally from the satire on pompous or opportunistic teachers in *Spider Football*; on the other hand, the gore is a reminder of the violence in Rózsa's previous film, *The Trumpeter* (*Trombitás*). In neither film is the violence gratuitous, though in *Sunday Daughters* Rózsa makes it even clearer that the medium is the message, and that the real subject of his film is the shock which the well-intentioned, liberal-minded filmgoer feels on being faced with the sullen, intractable, drugging or glue-sniffing young.

Every Wednesday (*Minden szerdán*), by Livia Gyarmathy, is also a product of this shock. It is her fourth feature film: the previous one had been a quasi-documentary, *The Ninth Floor* (*Kilencedik emelet*) (1977), about the breaking up of a family, and a young boy's alienation and gradual drift towards gluesniffing and sleeping rough, which represents the Hungarian variant of dropping out. Then, two short films later, Gyarmathy once again returned to a teenage protagonist: a young boy who is seen, before the main titles, vandalizing a supermarket. Defiantly he leaves his fingerprints on the shattered glass, but even so, he is only identified by an old man who was passing the store in a cab. The boy is caught, and sent to reform school. On release, he drifts into dead-end jobs and relationships, until by chance he meets the old man again. The boy's first impulse is revenge; the second, to take advantage of the old man's guilt-feelings for grassing on him. But the tables are turned: the old man is only too willing to do anything he can for

the boy, and a relationship develops which, at a surface level, seems an over-facile moral realignment for a delinquent. However, it is not the old man's rectitude, but the insight the boy gains into the tangle of needs and misconstrued duties which surround the superficially well-to-do family which affect him. His perception of the contradictions and intractable problems of other lives, as much as his sorrow at the old man's death, are his first steps towards maturity. The film's incidental pleasures, like Jiri Menzel's performance as the stumbling, self-effacing government official, or the glimpses behind the organization of the May Day parade are reminders of Gyarmathy's talent for sardonic comedy. However, in the current economic situation, there is little hope of her returning to comedy. Visual gags, an essential ingredient of the genre, are as expensive to set up as resplendent spectacles: world inflation may result in the comic as well as the spectacular being left to Hollywood, while directors with limited budgets will be forced to retreat into the world of private emotion.

For her newest film, *Koportos*, shown first at Pécs, Livia Gyarmathy completely abandoned her preoccupation with the periphery of industrial society, and embarked on her first literary adaptation. *Koportos* is based on a short novel by József Balázs (he had also written *Magyarok*, filmed by Zoltán Fábri in 1976), classical in form and subject. It is about a helpless "little man" and his single, almost superhuman effort to fulfil a self-appointed task. He is foiled in the end, and his defeat acquires tragic dimensions from the conviction which a lay actor, (Mihály Rostás), brought to the role. He plays a gypsy roadmender, who is told that his young wife has died of cancer in his absence. The story of their marriage emerges in flashback: how she had left Skid Row and her doubtful reputation to marry him. Whether she had been a good wife or not, he loved her, and wants her to have a beautiful funeral. Jiri Menzel plays the priest who, out of compassion, asks for no other payment

than some rush baskets. The acquisition of the rushes for the baskets prove to be the gypsy's final Herculean task, the end of a shattering odyssey.

It had been an altogether fruitful year for women directors. The Pécs survey included a new film by Márta Mészáros, *On the Move* (*Útközben*) in which the French star Delphine Seyring plays a fortyish lady of Polish extraction, who takes a short holiday from her life with her Hungarian husband and revisits Poland. She meets distant, kind relations, and also a handsome Polish actor (Jan Nowicki) with whom she falls in love. For some reels, the film becomes an idyllic travelogue; but such idylls seldom last. Eventually she returns to her daily life, which tends to be the usual outcome in films about fortyish ladies who fall in love with handsome foreigners.

A somewhat different extra-marital affair, and handled with realistic detail, is the subject of Judit Elek's *Maybe Tomorrow* (*Majd holnap*), her first non-documentary film since *The Lady from Constantinople* (*Sziget a szárazföldön*) (1968). In *Maybe Tomorrow* (*Majd holnap*), the story begins *in medias res*, in bed. The lovers, Eszter and István, are both married, and both their spouses know of the affair. It is implied that Eszter's husband has other women in his life, while István's wife, though disillusioned about their love, is still emotionally dependent on him. When István's old aunt dies and leaves her country house to István, the love story intersects the complicated relationships within the family next door, who covet the legacy. Their points of intersection can be regarded as fuseboxes, where emotional powerlines are earthed; or where the sparks can flare up, if anything goes wrong. Judit Elek's direct, almost bald presentation of love and marriage as reflected in anxieties about housing, children and their future focuses on the guilts and regrets of her protagonists. She stresses the need that something should be settled among the four of them, but not just yet... maybe tomorrow.

There is little dialogue, and this may be one reason why the wider issues are implied, and not discussed. No one questions, whether outside the confines of conventional religion, marital fidelity should be regarded as a moral absolute, or as a matter open to negotiation between husbands and wives.

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Adultery, in circumstances unusual enough to be described as historic necessity, forms the subject of István Szabó's new film, *Confidence* (*Bizalom*), in which he probes the depths of fear and love in the subhuman conditions of 1944. A young woman is stopped in the street in Budapest to be told that her husband has been arrested, and that she must not go home, but report at a hospital, where under the guise of a chest examination, a new identity is assigned to her. She must turn into a Transylvanian refugee, and join a man likewise hiding with false papers, and live with him in a rented room on the outskirts of town, pretending to be his wife. She is naive to the point of helplessness; the man has to teach her the simplest facts of a fugitive's life. He is trained in evasion, fear and mistrust, and her transparency first irritates, then attracts him. They both have to fight against their loyalties towards their distant but "real life" husband and wife, as well as surmount the strains of being under their landlady's observation, and their own complicated feelings; and yet the story of their attraction ripening into love has great lyrical beauty. There is, however, one sequence of explosive dramatic strength, when the heroine is confronted by a Jewish woman, who claims to be an old friend, and begs for a hiding place; her urgent despair, in spite of the shortness of the scene, drains emotional force from the heroine's predicament which is not quite recovered until the last three scenes. None the less, the tension of the couple's danger, and the fate of their friends and comrades is enthralling; *Con-*

fidence deservedly won the prize for best direction at the Berlin Film Festival, while the camerawork, again by Lajos Koltai, is beyond praise or prizes.

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Zoltán Huszárík's *Csontváry* was presaged by the highest possible expectations. Huszárík has earned fame with a comparatively slim output: ten short films, among them several multiple prizewinners, and one feature, *Sindbad* (Szindbád) (1972), which was probably the most popular and generally appreciated "art-film" in Hungary. His *Sindbad* was not a sailor, but a poet or artist whose work is his life, created from sensuous experiences of landscapes, women, food, flowers, sunsets, and rain; pictorial equivalents for Gyula Krúdy's poetic turn-of-the-century hero and his ambiance.

In *Csontváry*, Huszárík undertakes far more complex artistic interrelations than visualizing poetic imagery. First, he captures on film a vision which already has physical form, in the paintings of Tivadar Csontváry-Kosztka (1853-1919). There are several recent examples of the marriage of painting and film: Georgi Shengelaya's *Piroshmani*, or Jack Hazan's *A Bigger Splash*, about David Hockney, are probably the most successful full-length features of the kind, but a large number of short films attest the fascination of painters for documentary film-makers. To recreate the world through the painter's eye, the director has to find, assemble or re-visit his models, subjects or landscapes and frame each shot from the exact angle of the easel; and more important still, the entire film must reflect the spatial relationships, colours and moods not only of the works, but also of the painter's own period. Huszárík achieves all this, but he also attempts to cross it with the formidable demands of another Muse. His original script had projected a simpler film, in which the actor who had played Szindbád, Zoltán Latinovits, would have

played the painter Csontváry. But just as the film had passed its pre-production stages, and the shooting began, Latinovits committed suicide. He was believed to have been the victim of a mental illness not far removed from Csontváry's own obsession, and as it now stands, the film suggests that his suicide may have been because of, rather than in spite of, the demands of this great role. The painter's journey towards the Land of the Sun, to exotic oriental landscapes, and the actor's journey through the painter's madness inward, towards his own, are seen as the same trajectory. A Bulgarian actor, Ichak Finci, united the two parts, dubbed by the voice of Ádám Rajhona. The two journeys, the one away from, and the other into, the self, coalesce in Huszárík's surrealist images, fully realized in Péter Jankura's camerawork, and accompanied by the exciting modern music of Miklós Kocsár.

*

Of the new directors making their debut, Péter Gothár showed quite exceptional maturity and expertise in *A Priceless Day* (*Ajándék ez a nap*) based on his own screenplay. Like many other new Hungarian films, it deals with the emotional area where the housing shortage, and the tribulations of getting a flat, conflict with other needs and with moral principles. The heroine, Irén, is a nursery teacher who finds it difficult to obtain a mortgage and so enters on a nominal marriage. Her young husband turns out to be a small-time crook; but then, who else would marry a complete stranger for cash down? By the time Irén has her nearly-built, unfinished flat she has lost a large sum of money, her freedom, and her married lover. It is clear that though she undervalued freedom and independence while she still had it, she overvalued the man; Gothár's ironic appreciation of this makes him direct the film's early part in fast flashes of narrative, while the central, crucial scenes are presented in Brechtian (or rather, Godardian) terms of

distancing satire. Then, towards the end, when her self-esteem, her marriage and her sense of identity begin to break down, Gothár has the courage to lift Irén's predicament into another plane: he drops his sardonic approach, as one would stop teasing a child who starts crying. In a series of intimate, un-posed closeups, he presents how Irén's last hope is to borrow from her lover's wife, and he shows the sincere rapport which draws the two girls into intimacy over a drink or two. Such a twist in the mode of expression necessitates not merely an assurance in handling his players (the

cameraman, being Lajos Koltai, has often proved his skill with either technique) but something even more concrete: a ripe, thoughtful philosophy which dares to assess comedy, tragedy and tragicomedy in their appropriate perspectives. At thirty-three, Péter Gothár already has a number of TV productions to his credit, so the maturity and assurance of his first feature film is not surprising. None the less, it is reassuring to know that Hungary has a seemingly endless supply of very talented film-makers.

MARI KUTTNA-WINTON

THE HUNGARIAN INVENTOR OF THE SOUND-FILM

Dénes Mihály and the Projectophone

On June 7, 1916, in the middle of the Great War a student of the Budapest Technical University, barely 20 years old and doing his military service in the War Ministry, shot a sound-film in Budapest. The filmstrip shows a stocky, balding man with a moustache, in his shirt-sleeves but wearing a necktie, in the process of shouting something, but holding his palm vertically in front of his mouth. The scene is some kind of workshop; in the background, through typical workshop-windows, a bare yard is visible and more of the same windows, with a kind of pedestal beside one of them—could this be a camera? The stocky man is shouting something, the sound track is clearly visible on the edge of the filmstrip, and to repeat, the calendar shows June 7, 1916.

Before June 1916 three methods of sound photography had been patented in different parts of the world. In 1885 Bell and Tainter

obtained a patent for the *Photophone*, enabling "sound reproduction from phonograph recordings," but of purely theoretical significance for the shooting and projection of sound-films (USA). In 1901 E. Ruhmer developed the *Photographophone*: this apparatus made it possible for the first time to fix sound on to the light-sensitive strip (Germany). In 1906 Eugène Augustin Lauste, working with the engineers Daint-Vicent Plette and Haines, followed Ruhmer and devised a "new and improved method for shooting and reproducing movements and sounds simultaneously." This equipment is preserved in the museum of the Bell Telephone Company, but the sound which it rendered could be heard only through ear-phones (British patent).

At this time, no equipment was yet capable of projecting a sound track photographed on a 35 mm film-strip so that the whole cinema audience might hear and en-

joy it without earphones. None of the three existing patents was up to this task. Other experiments and patents had tried to synchronize gramophone records with motion pictures (Edison's Cronophone and Vitophone, Warner's first sound-films, etc.), but despite early successes, none of these yielded a long-term solution.

Dénes Mihály admitted himself that the starting-point of his own 8 mm film was Ruhmer's experiment. He had got to know this technique from Ruhmer himself in 1912 when holidaying in Germany, as a reward for fine results in his school-leaving exam. (Lauste had also visited Ruhmer.)

Here is a paragraph from his patent specification: "This invention is designed to make possible the filming of motion pictures with simultaneous sound by means of optical effects elicited by the sounds and registered on the same film as that on which the pictures are shot."

After his successful experiment Dénes Mihály presented a detailed patent specification on April 30, 1918. It was published by the Hungarian Royal Patent Office (No. 79,584 IX. h. class) on October 18, 1922. The invention was called the *Projectophone*.

Other relevant patents are all of a later date; the American Lee de Forest was granted one on September 18, 1919, but this was a partial invention only: "instruments for taking and reproducing sounds"; the deservedly world-famous *triergon* method, perfected by three German engineers, Engl, Massolle, and Vogt and still in use to this day, was developed in several phases between 1919 and 1922; since it demanded a 42 mm. instead of a 35 mm. film, it could not be utilized in cinemas for many years to come.

Mihály's claim to priority was recognized by a German volume of film history published in 1956: "D. von Mihály... erhielt das erste Patent für sein Projectophon... ein Verfahren zur Aufnahme und Wiedergabe sprechender Filme... in 1917. Wir müssen das Mihály-Verfahren als ersten

Sprechfilm im heutigen Sinne anerkennen." (The first patent was obtained by D. Mihály for his Projectophone... a method for shooting and reproducing sound films... in 1917. We must acknowledge Mihály's technique as constituting the first sound film as we understand it today.) Friedrich von Zglinicki: *Der Weg des Films* (The Path of Film). Berlin, 1956, p. 617-618.

Why has such an important fact never become general knowledge?

One reason (I will come back to this later) is that Mihály also played an important role in the invention of television, and it is only understandable that public attention since the twenties has focused more on this; the other reason is that, although the patent specification of the sound-film shot in 1916 was submitted in 1918, for various reasons (including the war, revolutions, and the consequent delays in comparing the Mihály patent with American, French, English, and Italian patents) publication did not take place until 1922; and by that time, the experts already knew of the Engl-Massolle-Vogt *triergon*-method.

I was unable myself to deal satisfactorily with this particular moment in Mihály's career (which otherwise, in the field of television, has been duly appreciated), until at last I found the specification of his patent. Zglinicki made an error in fixing the date: Mihály applied for the patent not in 1917 but on April 30, 1918, but the specification itself was only to be found among papers from the year 1922.

Mihály himself recalled the year 1917 in his own book (dated April 12, 1927 but published in Berlin by M. Krayn Verlagsbuchhandlung only in 1928).

The book was entitled *Der sprechende Film* (The Talkie), and in it Mihály published a photo of the film strip of 1916 and other documents. In any case slight inconsistencies concerning the date are not important, because as we have seen the first *triergon*-patent was submitted only in 1919.

It is a mystery that in spite of every-

thing (and especially Mihály's book in German of 1928, which was easily available to professionals) Zglinicki remained the only specialist to devote much attention to this invention. Jean Vivie's exhaustive technical manual published in Paris in 1945, 300 mimeographed copies of which were distributed in Hungarian in 1961, did not even mention his name (*A filmtechnika története és fejlődése* [The History and Development of Film Technique]).

It is now up to the engineers to undertake the task of comparing Mihály's completed patent specification with those of other inventors and with Mihály's book of 1928; in so doing, they will determine the exact theoretical position of the *Projectophone* (we are in no doubt as to its chronological position) between the patents of Ruhmer and Lauste, and later the *triargon*-method of Engl, Massolle, and Vogt, and maybe some of the relevant patents of Lee de Forest. I share the opinion of Zglinicki; to me it seems incontestable that—if we follow the usual custom and take 1918 as our basis, the year when Mihály applied for his patent—he definitely preceded the *triargon*-method; and compared to Lauste's equipment, which functioned only under special laboratory conditions, Mihály's invention was the great step forward.

Even if we take as our starting-point the date of the communiqué of the Hungarian Royal Patent Office, October 18, 1922, the significance of the invention remains indisputable. The first public (but still experimental) projection of the *triargon*-film of Engl, Massolle, and Vogt took place on September 17, 1922 in the Alhambra Movie Theatre in Berlin. Musical and theatre scenes were projected, but it was clear that the use of the 42 mm. film strip was complicated and other imperfections were also apparent. In other words, that method could never be suitable for mass application. Mihály, however, did not use the expensive microscope lens; using the techniques of macro-projection, he made pos-

sible the application of cheap lenses. An English film-producing company, the *Universal Tonfilm-Syndicate Ltd.* utilized Mihály's patent in such a way as to facilitate later improvements of the *triargon*-method. We should not forget that in 1922 there were still five or six years to go before the mass-spreading of sound-pictures became widely known; and besides, Warner productions such as *The Jazz Singer* and others, usually classified as the first talkies in popular film manuals, were based on the joint preparation of record and film strip according to the *Vitaphone* method; this did not apply the principle of the photographed optic sound track which was reconverted to sound during projection—the principle invented by Mihály, and which is still being applied to this day. Such "real" sound-pictures were produced only after 1929, when the Fox company bought the *triargon*-method for the trifling sum of 200,000 Swiss francs (incidentally: the inventors themselves got only 21,000 Marks each) and started to produce the type of talky it called *Fox Movietone*. (Beginning in the same year of 1929, other sound-film producing companies commenced operations, using a combination of the patent of Mihály, the *triargon*, and other new patents which emerged after the mid-twenties. On the basis of an international agreement concluded in July 1930 the *Tobis-Klangfilm* was the method applied generally in Europe.)

Dénes Mihály, both as a man and as one of the inventors and improvers of television, has not been denied the attention and the credit that is his due.¹

However, obviously because that particular patent specification was missing for so long, Mihály's merits as one of the pioneers of the sound-film have never been fully appreciated.

Yet his life and career were both exemplary. In 1924 the young engineer signed a contract with the enterprise AEG in Berlin, as his own company, the Telephone Factory of Budapest, showed no in-

clination to support his experiments. In 1928 he improved his television invention (see his book *Das elektrische Fernsehen und das Telehor*—Electric Television and the Telehor Machine, Berlin 1928), and he took part in the organizing of German broadcasting. During the war the German authorities imprisoned him for sheltering deserters and other persecuted individuals. By the time of his release he had already developed pulmonary trouble, and he died of consumption on August 29, 1953.

I have on my table the annual report of the "Mihály Vörösmarty" secondary school of the 8th district of Budapest for the school-year 1929/30. It is edited by the headmaster and regional school superintendent Cyrill Horváth. Dr. Dénes Koren, a member of the staff of this school, which had been in No. 11, Horánszky Street ever since 1874, noted that a former pupil had paid a visit to the school on April 12, 1930. Dénes Mihály, the visitor in question, had been a pupil between September 1904 and June

1912, when he passed his maturity exam (he was born on July 7, 1894). He had written his first scientific book at the age of 16 when he was in the 6th form. *The Automobile* was published in Budapest in 1911 by the Athenaeum Publishing House and reprinted in 1917 and 1925; it remained the manual for those preparing for driver tests in Hungary until the 1930s. Dr. Dénes Koren also notes that his former pupil had shown a lively interest in television even as a young boy. In the spring of 1930 the old boy had returned and lectured to pupils on the principles of television; he had expressed the hope that this mysterious equipment would soon be available and functioning in every apartment.

Dénes Mihály doesn't deserve to be forgotten. As the inventor of the sound-film alone, he merits a place of honour in the Pantheon of Hungarian intellectual achievements.

ISTVÁN NEMESKÜRTY

¹ Ferenc Tarján discussed Mihály at great length in *Feltalálók műhelytitkai* (The Workshop Secrets of Great Inventors, Budapest, 1942) and in the periodical *Magyar Rádió*, No. 49, December 5, 1955. He also mentioned that Mihály had presented his first functioning television set on July 7, 1919 under the Hungarian Republic of Councils; it broadcast letters and shapes. Pál Vajda wrote of him briefly in his *Nagy magyar találmányok* (Great Hungarian Inventions) published in 1955, and Péter Ruffy devoted an article to him: "Az elfelejtett ember" (The Forgotten Man), in the newspaper *Magyar Nemzet*, July 4,

1965). In the third issue of the *Hungarian Quarterly* in 1940, Caroline J. Porter wrote a few appreciative lines on his work ("Hungary Blazes New Trails Through the Ages"). He has entries in both the *Magyar Filmlexikon* (Hungarian Film Encyclopedia) of 1941 and the *Új Magyar Filmlexikon* (New Hungarian Film Encyclopedia, edited by Péter Ábel) of 1971, as well as in the *Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon* (Hungarian Dictionary of Biography). He does not figure in the *Új Magyar Lexikon* (New Hungarian Encyclopedia, 1961), neither is he mentioned in its supplementary volume (1972).

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BOJÁR, Iván (b. 1924). Art critic, painter, designer, for a time on the staff of the Institute of Art History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, later designer for various theatres. Also taught design at the Budapest Academy of Applied Arts. Author of numerous books and articles on art.

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FERENCZI, László (b. 1937). Our regular poetry reviewer. See his essays on Endre Ady, NHQ 66, on Gyula Illyés, 68, and on Ferenc Juhász, 74.

FÖLDES, Anna (b. 1931). Journalist, critic, on the staff of *Nők Lapja*, a weekly for women. Our regular theatre reviewer.

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GÖMÖRI, George (b. 1934). Slavic scholar, poet, translator. Educated at the universities of Budapest and Oxford. Lecturer in Polish in the Department of Slavonic Studies, University of Cambridge. His most recent book (with Clive Wilmer) is *Forced March*, a selection of poems by Miklós Radnóti.

GYÖRFFY, Miklós (b. 1942). Translator, film critic, assistant professor of comparative literature at the University of Budapest. A graduate in German and Hungarian of the same university. Has translated numerous classical and modern German authors, written the scripts for several films, and published books on Bergman and Antonioni.

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graphy. Principal works: *A History of Czechoslovakia*, *Captain Dreyfus*, *A Biography of Alfred Nobel*, *Roosevelt Through Foreign Eyes*, *The Rattling Chains*. See his "Leo Szilárd, the Reluctant Father of the Atom Bomb," NHQ 55.

HALÁSZ, Robert (b. 1937). Son of above. B. A., University of Chicago; M. A., Roosevelt University. Assistant Editor, *New Standard Encyclopedia* 1960-64; Editor, *World Progress*, a quarterly, Chicago.

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JEMNITZ, János (b. 1930). Historian, specializing in the history of the international labour movement. See "The Hungarian Democratic Press and the British Working Class Movement," NHQ 40, and "Zsigmond Kunfi and the British Labour Movement," 77.

KABA, Melinda (b. 1926). Archeologist, on the staff of the Budapest Historical Museum, now as a senior research fellow, working on the excavations in Aquincum, a Roman town within the boundaries of Budapest. Excavated Roman cemeteries in Austria in 1964 and 1969. Her book on the Roman organ at Aquincum, (in German), *Die Römische Orgel in Aquincum*, appeared in 1976 published jointly by Akadémia Publishing House, Budapest, and Bärenreiter Verlag, Kassel. Has published numerous other works on Roman excavations, especially in Aquincum.

KÁLNOKY, László (b. 1912). 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 also poems in NHQ 40. Hungarian titles of poems in this issue: *Mi vagyok én?; Láng és sötétség; A lehetséges változatok*.

KÉPES, Géza (b. 1909). Poet, translator. For many years on the staff of the world literature section of the Institute of Literature of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; now retired. Author of fourteen volumes of poems and an equal number of volumes of translations from many languages, including English, Modern Greek, Spanish, Russian,

Finnish, and Persian. He is an Honorary Doctor of the University of Helsinki. See poems in NHQ 24. Hungarian titles of his poems in this issue: *Charles Dumas amerikai néger magasugró a Népstadionban; Bartók; Életrajz, világtótorony-éri állás elnyerésére; Csigaház.*

KOLOZSVÁRI GRANDPIERRE, Emil (b. 1907). Novelist, short story writer and essayist. Published his first novel in 1931. Has since published many volumes of short stories and novels, as well as tales for the young. Recently he has waged a successful one-man press-campaign against the bureaucratic jargon which is threatening the Hungarian language. See his article „Women's Life is One Long War,” NHQ 34, and his short story “Conditioned Reflex,” 64.

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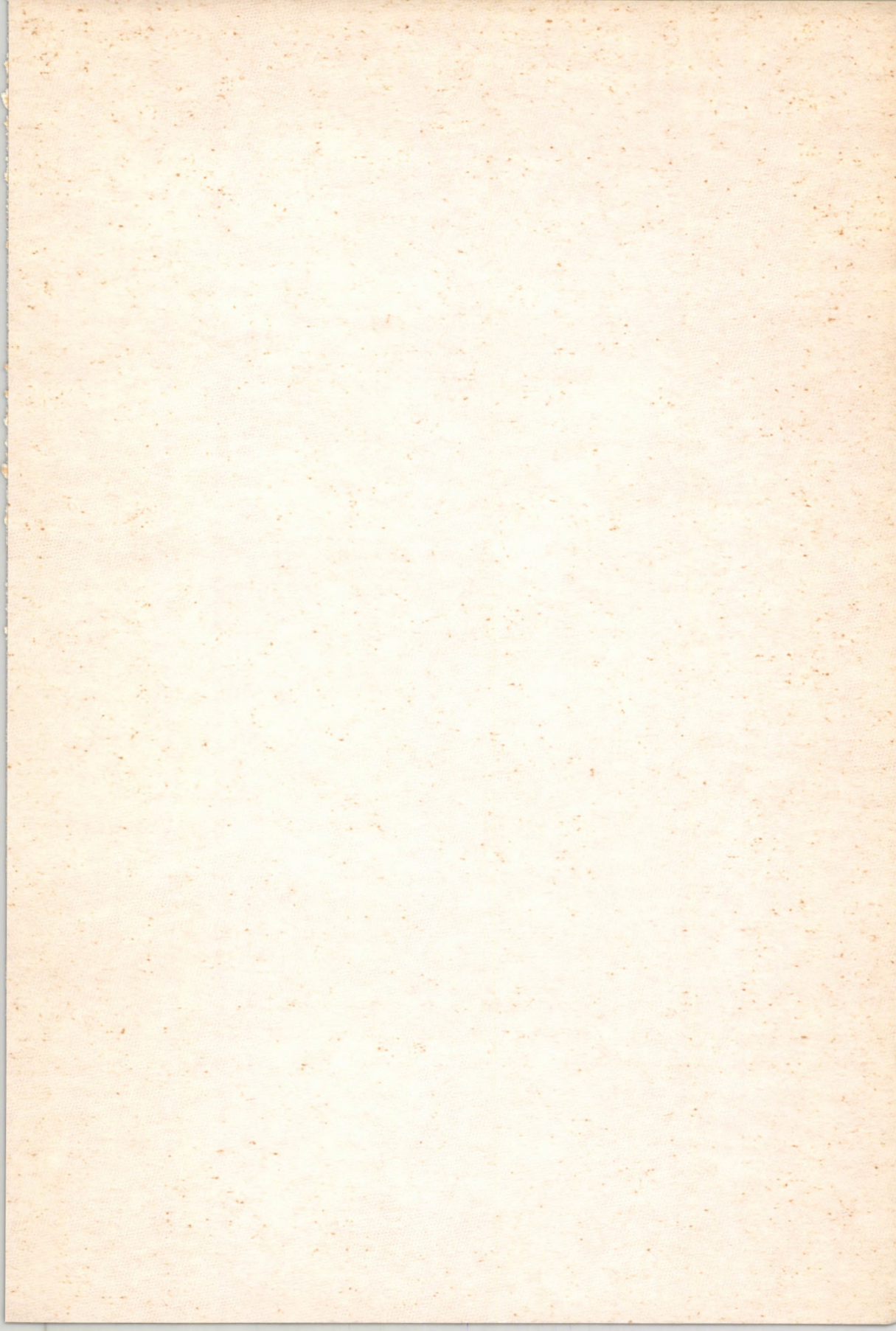
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archeologist; graduated from Péter Pázmány University in Budapest. Has written on the history of art and on a great many mediaeval subjects. Was director of the Museum at Esztergom for many years, at present on the staff of the Budapest Historical Museum, in charge of excavations in Buda Castle. See his "The Mediaeval Royal Chapel of Esztergom," NHQ 10, "The Mediaeval Great Synagogue of Buda," 23, and "Excavating Gothic Sculpture at Buda Castle," 55.

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