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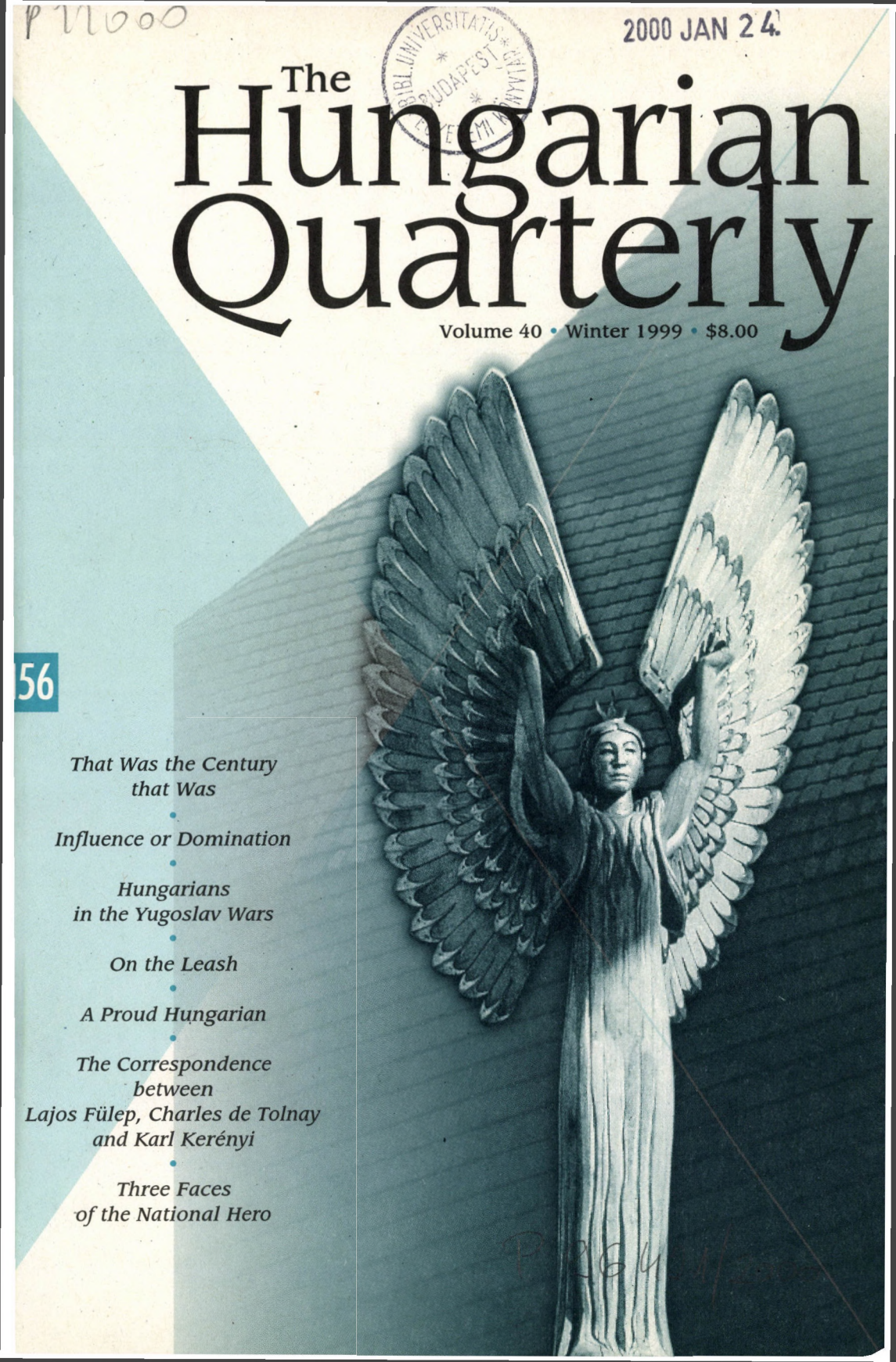

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Cover: Statue of an Angel by László Péterfy. Catholic Church, Paks Architect: Imre Makovecz. Photo: Péter Korniss

Ignác Romsics

That Was the Century that Was

Discontinuity and Continuity in 20th-Century Hungarian History

Hungarian history in the 20th century is made up of four largely differing periods divided by three major historical events. The first and most important of these was the redrawing of the map of Europe following the First World War, which was confirmed by the 1920 Treaty of Trianon; the second was the inclusion of the country in the Soviet sphere of influence in 1945, which produced a break in organic progress; finally the change of regime in 1989–1990, which followed on the enfeebling and subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, which made it possible to segue into the course of development from which the country was hijacked by outside factors in 1945. *Pace* the repeated breaks, the detours, the course enforced by the hijackers, economic and social modernization under a variety of political regimes did go on, and as times changed so did men and the relations between them. Hungarian society, still largely traditional and hierarchical, and basically agricultural a hundred years ago, metamorphosed into a modern mass society within our century. No doubt, organic development without breaks would have produced greater prosperity, very likely bequeathing a population sounder in body and mind to the 21st century. Organic development, however, has never been the lot of the region into which the Hungarian tribes settled over a thousand years ago. Here—in the words of the poet—Turkish, Tartar, German, and lately Russian hosts ravaged, and political skills and resource-fulness were not made manifest in knowing what ideally should be done, but in the recognition of what was possible under the given circumstances.

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"Golden years of peace"

For centuries before the First World War, the Kingdom of Hungary was part of the Habsburg Empire. The 1867 *Ausgleich* or Compromise placed a constitutional arrangement which went back to 1526 on a new basis. The territorial integrity of the realm was reestablished and the Hungarian state enjoyed greater independence. The imperial context particularily favoured economic growth. In 1910 fifty-one million inhabitants lived on 676,000 sq. kms in almost complete autarky. Seventy to 80 per cent of Hungarian foreign trade was with the more industrialised "Cisleithania" within the Empire. The proportion that went to the world outside the *k. und k.* customs area barely reached 25 per cent. GDP grew by an annual 2.4 per cent between 1867 and 1913. In Europe, higher rates of growth were only produced by Denmark (3.2 per cent), Sweden (3 per cent) and the German *Reich* (2.9 per cent).[1] Achievements of the time that are still in use include the railway network and numerous secondary schools, colleges and universities. It was also in the twenty odd years before 1914 that the centres of Budapest and most of the larger provincial towns obtained the features that still delight so many.

But this fast economic growth and spectacular cultural progress went with serious social and political tensions, such as the land or peasant question caused by the undesirable preponderance of latifundia and middling estates and the limitations set on trade in real estate. Four to five million peasants with minimal landholdings, or altogether landless, could not make a living as agricultural labourers or off their own farms. Some were absorbed by fast-growing industry, for the majority, however, emigration was the only option. Between 1871 and 1913, 1.3 million tried their luck in the United States, of whom around two thirds never returned home. That political changes could not keep up with the dynamism of economic and social change was a further source of trouble. In 1910 the Electoral Act of 1874 was still in force. The suffrage was confined to around a quarter of adult males, that is 6 per cent of the total population. In addition, it was an open ballot. At that time in the countries of Western European average of 20–30 per cent of the entire population voted under a secret ballot. It was the Social Democrats in the first place, alongside the newly constituted peasant parties and bourgeois democratic intellectuals, who demanded more democracy within conseravative-liberal parliamentarianism, primarily a wider and secret suffrage. Fewer were personally touched by the Jewish question, nevertheless it had aspects which referred to society as a whole, making it a serious issue around 1900. What was responsible was the disproportion between the 5 per cent of Jews in the population as a whole and the position Jews occupied as owners and managers in finance, industry and commerce, that is in the modern sectors of the economy, as well as their 40–50 per cent presence in some of the professions. At the same time, the traditional ruling classes held on to the key

positions in political life. This peculiar post-1867 division of labour was interpreted by the *déclassés*—and those who feared such a fate—as an aggressive expansion by Jewry which was damaging to the national interest. To this conflict of interests was added a differing cast of mind as manifested in culture. Those who emphasized their Christianity tended to be traditionalists, even romantics, as their attitude to the past did not lack pathos. As against this, the Jewish bourgeoisie showed itself more rational and more open to secular values. The result was a political anti-Semitism that grew stronger in the years leading up to the war.

The problems of the peasantry, the absence of democracy in the political system, the Jewish question and anti-Semitism were all serious, but they could be handled within the scope of the Hungarian state. The exacerbation of the national question, however, existentially threatened the very notion of the Kingdom of Hungary. Not counting Croatia, which enjoyed a large measure of territorial and political autonomy, 55 per cent of the population of Hungary had a native language other than Hungarian in 1880 and 46 per cent by 1910. The 1868 Nationality Act accorded every citizen equal rights, regardless of race, language or religion. Non-Hungarians were additionally assured a number of the elements of cultural autonomy. Thus they were given the right to establish and maintain schools. All demands to be recognized as a political nation, as a *staatstragende* nation of equal rights, and for territorial autonomy, were, however, systematically rejected. These positions did not come closer in the course of time, on the contrary, they moved further apart. National leaders demanding territorial autonomy placed their hopes in the democratic Hungarian opposition, which appeared to be more open-minded on the national question and in the accession to the throne of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand who aimed to restructure the Empire. Simultaneously there was a growing political and cultural attraction on the part of the national minorities for their kin across the borders, that is for separatism and irredentism. This was vigorously propagated by Bucharest, Belgrade and Prague. In those years the Ruthenes were still inclined to be politically more passive. Russian influence grew amongst them in a religious (Orthodox) guise. Thus Hungary entered the war on July 28 1914, as a state where the political loyalty of national minorities making up close to half the population—or at least of their opinion-forming élites—was questionable.

A straight road led to Trianon from the antagonism between Hungarians and the national minorities, which was already discernible before 1914. In this sense defeat in war was not the cause of the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire and of the Kingdom of Hungary within it. All it did was to make possible that national-motivated redrawing of the map of East Central and South Eastern Europe which had been adumbrated for decades. Amputation is of course equally traumatic be it the consequence of an unexpected accident or prolonged discase. It is no exaggeration to compare the territorial prescriptions of the Treaty of Trianon with a loss of limbs. Not counting Croatia, the country's territory was

reduced by two thirds, from 282,000 sq. kms to 93,000 sq. kms. Contemporary economists estimated the loss in national wealth at roughly the same, 62 per cent. All the salt, gold, silver, copper, zinc and manganese mines and of the oil and gas wells then in operation were in areas lost to Hungary. Arable land of the highest quality in the Banat, Bácska and the Csallóköz was lost, so were rich mountain pastures and 80–90 per cent of forests. Hungary turned into a country poor in natural resources and dependent on imports, and thus vulnerable, something that every political regime and economic system had to bear in mind. The consequences are still felt, and will be felt in the future as well.

The country's population was reduced by 57 per cent, from 18.2 million to 7.6 million. 5.2 million Hungarian citizens boosted the population of Romania, 3.2 million that of Czechoslovakia, 1.5 million that of the South Slav state, and 300,000 that of Austria. Of the 10.6 million inhabitants of lost territories, 3.2 million, that is 30.2 per cent were ethnic Hungarians, 1.6 million in Transylvania and other territories allotted to Romania, 1 million in Slovakia and Subcarpathia, and almost half a million in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In the eighty years since 1920, these Hungarian minorities—like other minorities in the region—suffered many trials and tribulations. All the same, their numbers did not significantly decline, indeed they grew in Transylvania.

Like the territorial prescriptions and the economic consequences of the peace, this break-up of the Hungarian nation into minorities outside the borders has become a long-term datum with which every Hungarian political regime has had to cope in some way, nor will future Hungarian governments be able to dodge it.

The Horthy era

The dissolution of the *k. und k.* Empire and, within it, what was termed historical Hungary, not only changed the outside framework but also shook the country to its innards. The war was followed by two attempts at revolution in 1918–1919. The first tried to realize the democratic dreams of the "golden years of peace", while the second adapted Russian Bolshevik principles. Both failed and nothing lasting was produced by the right-wing anti-Semite counter-revolution in the autumn of 1919 either. In 1920 and after, essentially the same conservative gentry and bourgeois principles were in operation, the same institutional structures as before 1918. Post-Trianon Hungary basically differed from pre-Trianon Hungary in scale and the face it turned to the world, the spirit and the principles on which it rested, however, remained the same. As the pre-eminent historian of the time, Gyula Szekfű, pointed out in the mid-thirties: "...neither the structure of society, nor the way it thought changed to any degree, and everything in this field was much as at the time of the third (post-Reform Age) generation. Our middle-class intelligentsia approached the classes below at

most as a passing wish or in formalized speech, the national self-consciousness of either the peasantry or the industrial workers did not essentially progress by way of democracy. Society carried on as before, broken up into groups, and bristling because of the memory of the age of communist revolutions, it instinctively isolated itself from any sort of democratic progress."[2] This was reflected in the survival of titles and forms of address and complex rules of social intercourse incomprehensible to foreigners.

The quarter of a century between 1920 and 1945 is known as the Horthy era. The eponymous Rear Admiral Miklós Horthy was the last commander of the *k. und k.* navy. The first post-Trianon National Assembly elected him as temporary head of state, that is as Regent, on March 1, 1920. Since the international situation excluded a Habsburg restoration—which a number of influential men had placed their hopes in—this temporary state of affairs, that is that of a kingdom without a king—continued until the great *bouleversement* of 1945.

The economic and cultural performance of the Horthy period did not come up to the standards set before 1914. It would, however, be wrong to speak of decline or even stagnation.

The economy recovered from the deep post-1920 recession extraordinarily quickly, in a little over five years. According to the Swiss economic historian, Paul Bairoch, per capita GNP already approached the 1913 figure in 1925 and significantly exceeded it in 1929. (In 1913 per capita GNP for the post-Trianon area was 69 per cent of the average for Europe, in 1929 it was 74 per cent). The rate of growth declined in the early thirties—largely as a consequence of the Great Depression. Per capita national income in 1938 only exceeded that of 1929 by 6 per cent, thus achieving only 67 per cent of the European average. This was again followed by considerable acceleration, which was braked only in the second half of the war.[3] All things considered, one may say that, in spite of the difficult start, Hungary maintained that intermediate position it held between the Balkans and Bohemia-Moravia which had come about in the course of the centuries. There was no leap forward, but neither was there a fall back. Progress corresponded to the average rate.

Agriculture remained dominant, albeit its contribution to national income declined from 44 per cent in 1913 to 40 per cent in 1928/9. This largely corresponded to the Spanish and Italian situation, and significantly differed from that in Western and Northern Europe, where the share of agriculture barely exceeded 25 per cent even before the war. Besides modest industrial development in keeping with the natural resources of the country (food processing, light industry and the chemical industry) transport was modernized. Trucks and buses put in an appearance besides the railways and, of course, motor cars and motorcycles. There were, however, few of them when compared to the European average. At the end of the thirties, there were two cars per thousand inhabitants, at a time when the corresponding figure for Czechoslovakia was five, twenty to thirty in

Northern Europe, and over forty in the most developed countries of Western Europe—Greece and Hungary's southern neighbours however did not rise above one. Nor was there much urban development. Few public buildings of note were erected in either Budapest or major provincial towns.

Right to the end a large proportion of investments were devoted to education. In the second half of the twenties, once the country had its economy in order, 9–10 per cent of the annual budget went to the Ministry of Education. This was more than double the 1900 to 1913 share which moved between 2 and 5 per cent. In terms of cash, it corresponded to 80 per cent of the expenditure of that pre-war period. As regards proportions, there was no reduction in the thirties either, on the contrary, a modest growth was discernible. Thanks to significant spending, elite education continued at a high standard and there were developments in elementary education. The lost universities of Kolozsvár (Cluj) and Pozsony (Bratislava) were replaced by new universities at Szeged and Pécs. It was at that time that the University of Debrecen, founded before the war, was given its present appearance. Albert Szent-Györgyi, the only Hungarian Nobel Laureate who was a Hungarian citizen resident in Hungary at the time of his award in 1937, discovered Vitamins C and P in the newly built laboratories of the University of Szeged. Literacy grew, a considerable achievement. In 1910, 67 per cent; in 1920, 85 per cent, and in 1930, 93 per cent of those above six were literate, favourable figures indeed for Eastern Europe where both international and national statistics showed 45 per cent illiteracy for Yugoslavia, 42 per cent for Romania, 39 per cent for Bulgaria and 23 per cent for Poland. On the other hand there can be no doubt that the range of learning acquired in generally four (and rarely six) years of basic education was pretty narrow. 1940 legislation therefore provided for the gradual introduction of an eight-year primary school.

Much as in the decades before the war, cultural life at this period flourished. Growing literacy and shorter working hours—industry introduced an eight-hour day and 48 hour weeks in 1937—which meant more readers. In 1913, 2,378 titles were published in Hungary, 2,318 in 1921, 3,403 in 1930 and more than five thousand in 1941. The proportionate growth in newspaper readership was just as great. 2,000 dailies and other periodicals appeared in Hungary in 1938, as against 1,882 in 1910 in a country three times as big. The cinema enjoyed considerable popularity. Between 1920 and 1938, the number of movie theatres doubled. Cinema-going turned into the favourite urban pastime. In the 1930s people spent around as much money on admission tickets as on all other products of the printing industry, that is on books and newspapers combined. The wireless was the other new device serving the propagation of news and information, and entertainment. Regular broadcasting started in Hungary on December 1, 1925, four years after the pioneering Pittsburgh broadcast. There were 16,000 registered sets, ten years later, in 1934, 340,000, and 419,000 in 1938. As in just about everything, Hungary beat her eastern and southern neighbours in the sets per thousand-

inhabitants race, however coming in well behind the countries of Western Europe, including even Austria and Czechoslovakia. In the mid-thirties there were 136 sets per 1,000 inhabitants in Germany, 99 in France, 68 in Czechoslovakia, 43 in Hungary, 25 in Poland, 12 in Romania, 11 in Yugoslavia and 3 in Bulgaria.

Reading, going to the cinema and listening to the radio, holiday travel, sports and other pastimes were principally urban pursuits which went with modernization. They were primarily characteristic of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeosie. The lifestyle of the peasantry, who still made up half the population, could still be said to be traditional. Summer holidays or holiday travel were unknown to them. Some of their youngsters occasionally wondered about talking and moving pictures projected onto a white wall, they may have listened to crackling messages and music coming from afar, but it was all exotic for them, it was not part of their daily life. A ride on a train or a bus was still something extraordinary, it was still more usual to travel on foot or by horse or bullock-drawn vehicles even over long distances. The changes in lifestyle already common in urban surroundings only effected a breakthrough in villages and homesteads decades later.

The difference between town and country was also manifest in the exercise of political rights. The post-war revolutionary spirit led to the introduction of almost universal suffrage and the secret ballot in the autumn of 1919. Conservative vested interests considerably limited this in 1922 as they regained their power. The suffrage was reduced from 40 per cent of the population to 29 per cent, and the open ballot was restored in rural areas. There was need of this, since without limiting the political will of the pauperised and land-hungry poor peasantry, the conservative social order restored in 1920 would have been under continuous threat. A modest land reform was carried out in 1920, but there were still more than a million and a half peasant households disposing of no land at all, or of less than one *hold* (cca 1/2 ha). They amounted to 24 per cent of the total population in 1910, and 21 per cent in 1930. In 1930/31, when annual per capita income in the country was 534 pengős, that of poor peasants—day labourers or field servants—barely, if at all reached 200 pengős. Income differences were such that members of the middle classes—close to 20 per cent of the poulation—made twice the average, and the 50,000 to 60,000 landowners and capitalists (0.6 per cent), thirty-three times as much. It added to the deprivation of the poor peasantry that—as against the growing social benefits of compulsory sickness and accident insurance and pensions after 1928 enjoyed by clerks, officials and industrial workers since early in the century—nothing at all was done for them up to the end of the thirties, when old-age insurance was made compulsory for them too. In 1938, per capita social expenditure in industry was 27 pengő, but only 0.36 pengő for agricultural labourers.

Other anomalies included the caste-character of the social structure to which Gyula Szekfü had drawn attention, as well as the low rate of social mobility.

The sons and daughters of landowners, industrialists and intellectuals made up 65 per cent of university students in the mid-thirties, exceeding even the pre-war 57–58 per cent. In the 1930–31 academic year, of the sons and daughters of large and middling landowners between the ages of 18 and 23, one in six attended an institution of higher learning, the corresponding figure for industrial clerical staff was one in 18, for smallholders one in 121, for industrial workers around every 425th and for landless peasants one in 1320. Because of the high rate of autoreproduction of the upper and middle-classes, a number of administrative measures were taken in the thirties to improve the higher education chances of poor but talented village children. The *numerus clausus* applied to Jewish students since 1920 was maintained throughout with minor modifications, indeed, it was aggravated from 1938 on by a number of discriminations which also applied to adult Jews. The anti-Semitism of the mid-thirties could essentially be explained by rivalry and a clash of interests within the middle-classes, but there was pressure from Germany as well. In the mid-thirties Germany was Hungary's most important foreign trade partner and—next to Italy—principal foreign policy ally.

The revision of the 1920 peace treaty was the dominant foreign policy—indeed political—priority of the Horthy regime. Many of the most influential men in the Hungary of the time supported the *"mindent vissza"* (full restoration) slogan, that is an integral revision. The conservative Count István Bethlen, however, arguably the outstanding political figure of the age, in lectures given in England in 1933, demanded only the return of marches predominantly inhabited by Hungarians, suggesting that Transylvania proper become an independent state and that Slovakia, Subcarpathia and Croatia be given the right to decide freely on their own future. Prime Minister Gyula Gömbös who, albeit he stood to the right of Bethlen, was more modern in his outlook and approved a draft plan for revision in 1934 which demanded the return of around half the lost territories and which took into consideration ethnic principles, defence, and the need for raw materials. A revision that took account only of ethnodemographic considerations as present in British and American wartime peace drafts, found acceptance amongst the left in opposition only, that is the Social Democrats, the liberal democrats and the *népi* (folk) writers.

Although the ever closer links with Nazi Germany from the mid-thirties onwards were motivated primarily by this priority given to the revision of the peace treaty, there was also the need of markets for Hungarian agricultural products. The German alliance proved fruitful from the start. It not only helped the recovery from the Great Depression but also made possible, between 1938 and 1941, the return of around 40 per cent of the territories lost in 1920. The country's area increased from 93,000 sq. kms to almost 172,000 sq. kms and the population from 9 million to 14.6 million. Around half of the 5 million old-new citizens were ethnic Hungarians, 20 per cent Romanians, 10 per cent Ruthenes, 8–9 per

cent Southern Slavs and the remainder Germans and Slovaks. Hungary thus ceased to be ethnically homogenous, national minorities made up 21 per cent of the total population. It was envisaged that minority inhabited areas be granted considerable local and political autonomy after the war. Few suspected that this planning was in vain since the war, which Hungary joined in 1941 as Germany's ally, would be won by the Soviet Union with considerable American help and that, as a result, the 1920 frontiers would be restored.

In the Soviet camp

The close to half a century between 1945 and 1990 can be divided into a number of shorter periods. The first takes us as far as 1949. In this brief period, private property and the market mechanism still prevailed in the economy, and a barely limited pluralism in culture, and this in spite of the presence of Soviet troops and the privileges of the Communist Party. Free elections were held at the end of 1945, based on universal suffrage and a secret ballot. It seemed to many that the conservative-authoritarian parliamentarism of the inter-war period had been replaced by a democratic political system. *Ex post facto* it is quite obvious, however, that the Sovietization of the country had been the objective of the Soviet Union and of the Hungarian Communists right from the start. This process was speeded up in 1947–1948 with the liquidation of the political parties. It was completed politically with the enaction, in 1949, of a new constitution on the Soviet pattern. Economically, the closing date was 1961, that is the collectivization of agriculture. In my opinion, the one or two years after 1945 should not be described as a qualitatively different period, but as a transitional stage towards the later Soviet-type dictatorship.

The 1956 Revolution also proved to be an important turning point. The crushing of the uprising taught the Hungarians to see their own situation more realistically, making it quite clear that they could not count on effective outside help in a struggle with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union learnt that one could not get away with subjecting Hungarians as they had been after 1949. This mutual recognition led to the acceptance of the "Hungarian model" by the 1960s, the Kádárism to which the leader, János Kádár, lent his name. It was loved by few in Hungary but accepted by almost everybody as the best one could get. The earlier basic features of the system—the dominance of social ownership, a planned economy, one-party state, Communism as the state ideology and unconditional respect for the power interests of the Soviet Union—remained unaltered, nor did the Soviet troops stationed here leave the country. In this sense, the 1945 to 1990 period forms a unit, as did the quarter of a century of the Horthy age, or the Dualism which lasted from 1867 to 1918.

One of the fundamental characteristics of the Soviet system was the liquidation of private property. This had already started in the spring of 1945 when land

holdings greater than 100 or 200 *hold* (cca 50 to 100 ha) were expropriated and shared out amongst poor peasants. The next step was the nationalization of coalmines and of the largest heavy industry works in 1946, followed by the expropriation of the banks and industry owned by them in 1947. In 1948/49 it was the turn of all works employing ten or more (in practice even fewer). Private ownership in trade or industry was, after this date, confined to repairs and servicing. There was, at the most, nominal compensation but generally none. Church schools—which accounted for around two thirds of elementary education and half the secondary schools, were nationalized in 1948 and compulsory religious education in schools was abolished in 1949. The nationalization of publishing houses in 1950 was a further milestone.

The next step, in 1952, was the expropriation of larger buildings, including urban tenements.The collectivization of agriculture was not an early Communist objective. It was presumed that peasant smallholders whose numbers were considerably increased by the land reform, would offer resistance. Moscow and the Cominform had, however, meanwhile changed their position, so collectivization was placed on the agenda in 1948. Mátyás Rákosi, the all-powerful dictator, reckoned that it would take around three or four years to herd the peasantry into the kolkhoz system. But the peasantry clung to their land tooth and claw. In spite of the aggressive harrassment of the *"kulak"*s, two thirds of arable land was still farmed by husbandman peasants in 1953. Following Stalin's death and the 1956 uprising, the majority of agricultural cooperatives already constituted fell apart. Thus the collectivization of agriculture was only completed between 1958 and 1961. In 1961 the peasantry still accounted for 40 per cent of the population. Of these, 75 per cent were members of agricultural cooperatives, 19 per cent were employed by state farms, and a mere 6.5 per cent farmed their own land. The failure of the Revolution, the passivity of the West, and the execution of the leader of the Revolution, Imre Nagy, and his companions all played their part. "We could no longer wait for the English / We had to join the coop" village folk chanted, as they parted from their land and their beasts, cursing and with tears in their eyes.

The liquidation of private property was accompanied by state planning centralized to the utmost. Market effects were so thoroughly eliminated that costs and consumer prices were barely related. The National Planning Office not only prescribed what had to be produced, and how much of it, but also the raw material needs and other conditions of production. Right from the start, there were a great many anomalies but in the period of economic reconstruction and in the initial, extensive, phase of growth, the advantages of central planning were more in evidence. As the intensive phase approached, with a greater emphasis on efficiency, central planning tended to become a brake on progress.

What was called the New Economic Mechanism was therefore introduced in 1968 and this gave some, albeit limited, scope to market mechanisms. Enter-

prise management was given greater independence, costs and consumer prices were somehow related, and performance was given a greater role in incomes policy. This and a number of other rational measures allowed for a steady improvement in the performance indices of the economy—particularly of agriculture—throughout the seventies. Thanks to the generally faster rate of growth (according to Paul Bairoch) per capita GNP in 1973 was 89 per cent of the European average, which was higher than the 69 per cent of 1913 and the inter-war peak of 74 per cent. Éva Ehrlich, an Hungarian economist, employing natural indices in her international comparison, obtained similar results. According to her calculations the development level of Hungary was 21 per cent that of the United States in both 1937 and 1960. By 1970 it had risen to 23 per cent, and to almost 32 per cent in 1980.[4]

Growth slowed down from the mid-seventies. The world economic environment had changed (oil price explosion), in spite of the reform, management was not flexible enough, and there were a large number of mistaken decisions. Early in the eighties the political authorities tried to counterbalance this by a number of reform measures, including a partial rehabilitation of private property and greater scope still for market mechanisms. These measures largely eased the post-1990 switch to a market economy, but there were no immediate results. After the earlier annual 5–7 per cent rise in national income, there was a mere annual 2.9 per cent between 1976 and 1980, 1.6 per cent between 1980 and 1985, and only 0.3 per cent between 1986 and 1990. The country's relative development level steadily declined. The authorities tried to counterbalance this, or rather to cover it up, by raising huge loans abroad. In 1970 the country's foreign debt only amounted to $8 billion, rising to $9.1 billion in 1980 and $21.3 billion in 1990.

Industrialization was the principal Communist economic objective before 1956, and within it, as part of preparations for war, an emphasis on heavy industry. This investment strategy produced lasting damage and serious distortions. Huge capacities were established in metalurgy, particularly in steelmaking, which were not backed by domestic raw material resources. More rational ways were initiated in this field too after 1956. Greater emphasis was given to agriculture, light industry, the services sphere, and the infrastructure. But most of the heavy industry plants established in the fifties survived, and the losses they produced grew apace. A development policy flawed in its essence led to many odd situations and imbalances which attracted notice. As regards agricultural standards, Hungary occupied place 9 in the pecking order of 23 European states, as against place 18 between the wars. Telephone facilities available to the public, however, resembled those of Albania, Venezuela or Chile even in the eighties, in other words, they were amongst the most backward.

The post-1945 economic and political changes led to a social situation which, in the seventies, in no way resembled that of the Horthy age. The post-war call-

ing to account and retribution, the land reform and the nationalizations as well as voluntary and enforced emigration meant that the two most important upper classes, the estate owners and the *haute burgeoisie,* lost all their social and political influence, indeed their very existence as a class ended in the late forties. The same reasons led to the disintegration of what in Hungarian is called the Christian middle-class. Two thirds of the Jewish bourgeoisie and intelligentsia perished in the Holocaust. They were replaced by the intellectuals who had belonged to the left-wing opposition between the wars and by emergency-trained worker and peasant "cadres." The liquidation of the property owning classes was completed by the collectivization of agriculture. In the seventies there were barely more than 60 to 80,000 smallholders, a figure that includes family members working on the family farm, no more than 1.2–1.6 per cent of the economically active. The number and proportion of self-employed artisans and petty traders was much the same. In other words, members of the public were successfully deprived of the means of production, and this decisively influenced attitudes and mentalities, especially of the young. The acquisitive instinct, very likely a basic human characteristic, did not disappear but that pride of ownership which had been so important before 1945, was in abeyance.

Another important feature was the fast and continuous decline in the numbers of those who looked to agriculture for a living, and in conjuction with this, the growing number of those employed in industry and later in the services sector. The first wave moved from agriculture to industry in the fifties. Between 1949 and 1960 the ratio of those earning their living on the land declined from 54 per cent to 38 per cent, and that of those whose source of income was industry grew from 24 per cent to 34 per cent. The process continued at the same rapid rate in the sixties. In 1970, only 24 per cent were employed in agriculture, the figure for industry was 44 per cent. In two decades Hungary had metamorphosed from an agrarian-industrial into an industrial country. From that time on the speed of the transformation was moderated and even reversed direction to some degree. The agricultural population continued to shrink, accounting for no more than 15 per cent of active earners in 1990, but the growth of the ratio of those in industrial employment ground to a halt, declining from 42 per cent in 1980 to 38 per cent in 1990. At the same time, the ratio of those employed in the services sphere, the tertiary sector leapt from 27 to 47 per cent of active earners between 1960 and 1990, moving ahead of both agriculture and industry. This restructuring, however, unlike the liquidation of the property owning classes, was not specific to the socialist system. Economic modernization sooner or later effected the social structure in much the same way everywhere in the world.

The liquidation of the property owning classes and the transformation of the employment structure largely homogenized the Hungarian people. By the end of the sixties, three large social groupings had taken shape: that of workers in

industry, transport and trade, that of those employed in agriculture, be they members of cooperatives or agricultural labourers on state farms, and the third group of those in clerical employment and members of the professions. One could naturally discriminate between numerous subgroups within them. The principal criteria of these subgroups were acquired skills, that is educational standards, and hierarchical status.

All these changes occurred in conjuction with considerable social mobility. At first it was predominantly intragenerational, later intergenerational, that is a characteristic acquired with schooling. It was typical of the scale of things that the ratio of mobile men jumped from 37 per cent in 1930 to 59 per cent in 1962–64 and 70 per cent in 1981, and that of mobile women from 48 per cent to 59 per cent and on to 73 per cent. As a result the parental composition of various sections of society changed radically. In the early 1960s, two thirds of managers and professionals had manual workers as fathers. Pre-war inequalities of opportunity were thus essentially moderated. Pre-war a man of professional parentage had close to a hundred times the better chance of becoming a professional man than someone of peasant parantage. By the seventies his chances were only twenty times better.

Needless to say, the leap forward in the numbers of those in clerical or professional employment depended on a considerable extension of eductional facilities. A 1945 regulation introduced compulsory eight-form basic schooling. This not only put an end to illiteracy but in time essentially extended the knowledge of those between six and fourteen. The number of those attending secondary schools jumped from 70,000 just before and just after the war to 400,000 in 1965, becoming stabilised at 300,000 to 400,000 between 1970 and 1990. The number of those attending colleges and universities grew at an even faster rate. The 12,000 to 13,000 of the Horthy age had already doubled by the end of the forties, then growing steadily, reached 100,000 in 1975. There is no doubt, however, that the end of the pre-1945 élite character of secondary and tertiary education, opening the gates to the masses, went with a certain decline in standards.

Revolutionary social changes went with a far-reaching transformation of living conditions. It is true that the high ratio of investments implied universal poverty in the country before 1956, but after that date living standards improved considerably and continuously. Per capita real income almost quadrupled between 1950 and 1990. Per capita consumption peaked in 1987. Economic decline could no longer be made up for by raising new loans, and living standards suffered. Real incomes rose in conjunction with diminishing working hours. A 44 hour working week was introduced at the end of the sixties, which was further reduced to 42 hours in 1981.

Most people spent the larger part of their growing income on consumer goods. Between 1950 and 1980, per capita consumption of both meat and sugar more than doubled, that of eggs almost quadrupled, that of fruit doubled and

that of fats, milk and milkproducts went up by 50 per cent. Between 1960 and 1980 the Hungarian masses first achieved a living standard where starvation was no longer part of the vocabulary. In this sense "goulash Communism" as a description of the Kádár regime was fully justified. But there was more than a satisfaction of basic needs. Housing was modernized and most households were equipped with a wide range of appliances. Wirelesses and bicycles had become common in the fifties, washing machines, fridges, hoovers and television sets were purchased in the sixties and seventies. By the early eighties all these were in use in just about every household. But even at that time only about one family in thirty or thirty-five owned a motorcar—none were made in Hungary—and one in twenty a motorbike. In 1980 the Hungarian figure for cars per thousand inhabitants was 73 per cent of he international average, by 1986 this index had grown to 102 per cent.

The end of poverty was accompanied by the reduction in the huge income differences that prevailed before 1945. At the end of the seventies the deviation between the average income of different occupational categories was close to double. Managers earned around 100 per cent more, and skilled workers 30 per cent more than unskilled labourers. The handicapped situation of peasants and agricultural labourers within the manual labour category ceased, indeed, after 1968, they found themselves amongst the privileged in a number of respects. In 1963 the lights were switched on in the last Hungarian village to be connected to the grid, and linked to cooperative membership, various forms of social insurance were extended to cover the peasantry. In the sixties and seventies, new houses—most of which boasted bathrooms—were built by the thousand in rural areas. A few reservation-like folkwear islands survived but with their exception smart city ready made clothes replaced traditional peasant costume throughout the country. It was in these years that village folk became more or less regular consumers of the press, books, the radio and the cinema. The difference between the highest income earning decile, which included prominent intellectuals, members of the nomenklatura, artists, skilled workers and members of agricultural cooperatives, and the lowest decile, mostly unskilled workers, here primarily Gypsies, shrunk from 5.8 fold in 1962 to 3.8 fold in 1982. At the same time, such differences between the top and bottom income deciles were six, ten and even twelve fold in developed capitalist countries, and greater still in developing countries. The relative levelling of incomes lasted till the early eighties. The reforms in economic policy then initiated a widening of the gap. By 1990 that between the top and bottom decile was sixfold.

Early in the eighties, those earning their living on the land spent close to 4 per cent of their income on culture. The corresponding figure for industrial workers was 7 per cent, and around 10 per cent for managers and professional people. The number of titles—books and pamphlets—published more than doubled between 1950 and 1985, rising above ten thousand. The number of copies

published increased proportionately, from 61 million to 116 million. At the same time the number of newspapers and periodicals grew from around 330 to 1600, their annual copies from 475 million to 1.4 billion. In 1981 87 per cent of all those above the age of ten declared themselves to be regular or occasional newspaper readers and 76 per cent claimed to read periodicals regularly. Between the wars, 15–20 per cent at the most could have described themselves in that fashion. The cinema and radio which had become universal pastimes in the fifties and sixties, were, from the mid-sixties, steadily upstaged by television. Regular television broadcasts started relatively late in Hungary (in 1958) but progress was fast. In 1980 there were already 258 sets per thousand inhabitants, 11th place among 23 countries, around the middle of the European pecking order. Holiday travel became another organic part of the Hungarian lifestyle, in addition to reading and televison viewing. Taking a holiday in summer was part of it. Half a million in 1960 and 1.5 million in 1985 enjoyed a free or heavily subsidized holiday lasting a week or two. Growth in foreign travel was exponential. A mere 300,000 went abroad in 1960, 5.2 million in 1980.

The total social change—homogenization, levelling, high mobility—expressed itself in appearances too. Titles, ranks and dignities customary before 1945 were abolished by the National Assembly in 1947. Up to 1949 everyone was some sort of *társ,* literally fellow or associate. In the army *bajtárs*–associate in trouble, the Australian "cobber" or "mate" are perhaps English equivalents; at work *szaktárs,* companion in trade or occupation, i.e. colleague, all the more so since *szaktárs* newspeak replaced the older *kolléga,* in the Social Democratic and Communist Parties *elvtárs*–associate in principles, the Hungarian equivalent of *tovarish* or *Genosse,* hence of comrade. After 1949, the only one of these which survived in offical contacts was the obligatory *elvtárs*–comrade. All comrades were equal in principle but, as in *Animal Farm,* some comrades were more equal than others. Unofficially of course, starting with the seventies, the more Western and bourgeois Sir, Madam and Miss were increasingly used.

Hungarians paid a huge price for relative prosperity. Self-exploitation was potentiated to a degree where it damaged health, and people aqcuiesced in a general deprivation of rights. The basic characteristics of the dictatorial regime—single party rule by the Communist Party, absence of democratic elections and political pluralism—were continuously effective between 1948 and 1990. There was, however, a considerable difference as regards the measure of repression and the general political climate between the pre-1956 and the post-1956 period, albeit the latter did not start in 1956 but some years later. Rákosi had said *Who is not with us is against us,* which Kádár amended into *Who is not against us is with us.* Perhaps the greatest differences between the two periods were the end of a system of terror which kept everybody in a state of continuous fear and anxiety, and the de-politicization of private life. In comparison with Rákosi's times and the norms which prevailed in systems of the Soviet type, Hungarians

lived in the context of rules which may not have been precisely codified but were nevertheless relatively predictable. Provided you refrained from open criticism of the Party line, that is from political opposition, there was little interference in the way you arranged your own affairs.

Much the same applied to ideology and intellectual life. Under both Rákosi and Kádár, Marxism or Communism was the established and only acceptable ideology of the state. In both periods schools and youth organizations laboured at shaping "the personality of Communist man." Russian was compulsorily taught to everyone from the age of ten. In the fifties the total dominance of Marxism had been the objective, after 1960 merely its hegemony, and later an even weaker primacy. Changes in the Party line on the churches and on literature bring out the difference particularily well. Rákosi imprisoned or interned the prelates, Kádár arranged a compromise with them. The basis of this compromise was a 1958 Party resolution, the key sentence of which read: "The fight based on principle against religious ideologies may not offend the religious feelings of the faithful, nor may it limit the freedom of religious practice."[5] As regards literature and the arts in general, the three Ts from the Hungarian initials of support, toleration and prohibition, which laid down the policy line bore witness to the thaw. Partisan and Socialist Realist works enjoyed support, non-Marxist works which did not openly argue against Marxism were tolerated, and works which were unambiguously anti-Marxist and hostile to the system were prohibited. In exchange for avoiding certain taboo subjects, the 1956 Revolution in the first place, the multi-party system and the role of the Soviet Union, relatively wide scope was given, from the early 1960s, to the range of styles, methods and subjects, even to interpretations and creative experiment. It was, however, still impossible for particular schools or trends to become institutionalized with a financial and organizational basis of their own.

In economics and culture, the Kádár system moved a long way from a rigid Soviet model, in foreign policy, however, it was, for a long time, perhaps the most servile of satellites. An attitude to history which identified nationalism as the greatest threat, branding most manifestations of national pride as "nationalist fossils" served to lend ideological legitimacy to unconditional friendship with the Soviet Union and the absence of an independent foreign policy. Concretely this meant the tarnishing of the aura of the various armed attempts at independence which had played such a prominent role in Hungarian history, which could be directly related to 1956, and the reappraisal of the Habsburg Empire, about which much that lacked foundation had been said in criticism before 1956. A show of indifference concerning the fate of the Hungarian ethnic minority in neighbouring countries was part of this opposition to nationalism. The early Kádár age not only kept its distance to any possible renewal of between the wars revisionism but any defence of minority rights was also alien to it. Around the end of the sixties, this "proletarian internationalism" was replaced by a

recognition of the nation as an existing cultural and political reality and by a strengthening of the cultural links with Hungarians the world over. This, much like economic reforms and cultural liberalism, can be explained by Kádár's pragmatism, and that of his associates in the leadership, and by their capacity to alter course when needed, prompting them to seek the support of the nationally minded intellectuals and members of the professional classes, of Hungarian exiles in the West, and through the latter the support of the West as such. Around the end of the seventies there were a number of diplomatic *démarches* in the interests of the Hungarian ethnic minorities, in Bucharest and Prague, most of them futile. At the end of the seventies Kádár supported Eurocommunism, that is he was prepared to consider the theoretical possibility of a multiparty system in the socialist context, then, in the eighties, he obtained some kudos for what he did for East-West relations. Thus, at a time when the traditional sources of his domestic popularity were in danger of drying up, he still enjoyed the unreserved respect of the official West.

Hungarians trusted Kádár up to the mid-eighties, feeling confident of the future of Kádárism. Given nineteen points of comparison, social insurance, options for culture, a stable currency and others, a 1981 survey still showed Hungarians believing that their country was ahead of the West in thirteen, in 1986 only in nine and in 1988 only in a single one, the right to work.[6] Thus, by the mid-eighties, the legitimacy of the Hungarian model of Communism was pretty shaky, by the last third of the decade it was in crisis. The loss of social confidence in the regime was not, however, accompanied by the usual manifestations of discontent such as strikes, wage demands, or demonstrations. Kádár's replacement in 1988 and the 1989–90 collapse of the system was not the result of mass discontent fed by the economic crisis but, much like the crucial changes after the two world wars, they can be attributed to changes in the international situation.

The change of system

"Change of system" (or the various synonyms or near synonyms) refers to the process as part of which countries that came to be dominated by the Soviet Union after the Second World War—which were Sovietized in the course of time—as well as the successor states of the dissolved Soviet Union were transformed—or are changing—into multiparty democracies and their planned economies (which rested on state or social ownership) into market economies essentially based on private property. In most cases domestic changes were accompanied by a restoration of sovereignity or a new found independence. In East Central Europe and Southeastern Europe this process started at different times in different countries, moved along different courses and achieved different results. The diversity of a transformation which essentially moved in the

same direction was due to both well-established historical characteristics and to the political vagaries of recent decades.

Thanks to a centuries-old tradition of parliamentarianism, the economic reforms, cultural liberalism and political tolerance of the Kádár regime, as well as to ever more marked re-embourgeoisement, Hungary—with Poland—was ever in the vanguard of this process. The other dominant feature of the Hungarian transformation was its peaceful character. Changes of a truly revolutionary character took place without the firing of a single shot and not a single life was lost, something that cannot be said about some of the other countries in the region. Nor were there purges or reprisals as after the suppression of the 1918–1919 revolutions or in the post-1945 transition. The political transformation—of which a new democratic constitution, replacing that of 1949, and the proclamation of the Hungarian Republic on October 23rd 1989 was the first decisive stage, and the first free elections held on March 25th and April 8th 1990 the second—can therefore be called a "peaceful transition" with every justification, a "legal" revolution, or, if you like, a revolution by negotiation.

The new political élite which came to power in 1990, consisting as it did of the leaders of the intellectual opposition of the eighties, reformist and pragmatist Communists and surviving veterans of the post-1945 democratic parties established a consensus on the need to carry on with the changes and on the most important objectives. They all supported privatization and a market economy. In culture and education they wished to eliminate prescribed Marxism and to carry out a number of organizational reforms. Freeing the country of the ongoing influence of a weakened Soviet Union and the earliest possible joining of the Euro-Atlantic alliance in all its institutional forms figured amongst the policy aims.

Property relations in the Hungarian economy were once again radically altered following the spontaneous privatization of 1988–89 and the post-1990 state directed process. What had happened between 1945 and 1961 was reversed. Then individual ownership was liquidated, after 1990 it was the turn of collective property. In 1989 80 per cent of GDP was still provided by publicly owned firms, private enterprise only contributed 20 per cent. By 1997 the share of public ownership had declined to 30 per cent and that of private enterprise had risen to 70 per cent. Domestic ownership accounted for 49 per cent out of that, foreign capital for the remaining 21 per cent. The distribution of the workforce showed similar tendencies. Between 1992 and 1997 the share employed by state firms declined from 33 per cent to 7 per cent of the economically active, and that of cooperative members. At the same time the proportion of those employed by wholly or partially privately owned companies rose from 22 per cent to 41 per cent and that of those in business on their own account and their staff from 9.5 per cent to 13.5 per cent. It should be noted that there was not the same radical change of élites in the economy as in politics. Around four-fifths of managerial technocrats who had established themselves in the

closing years of state socialism hung on to their positions. Much the same can be said about the management of other institutionalized aspects of society. It was thus only in the governmental sphere that power changes were accompanied by radical personnel changes.

Privatization was linked to compensation, that is full or partial compensation for the earlier property owners or their heirs. After lengthy and heated debate, parliament finally proclaimed the principle of partial compensation in 1991–1992. Losses due to nationalization were not fully compensated, and as a right, but only partially, and on the merits of the case. Up to 200,000 forints there was full compensation with a significantly declining proportion for higher value property. The upper limit was 5 million forints.

Compensation coupons were legal tender in the purchase of dwellings, shares, annuities and—with certain limitations—land. Privatization and compensation linked to the purchase of land led to radical changes in landownership. Between 1990 and 1996, the land ownership of agricultural cooperatives declined from 72 per cent of total arable land to 22 per cent. In 1996–1997, 1.7 to 1.8 families (more than 40 per cent of total households) owned some land. In 1997 they farmed 45 per cent of all land. Around 80 per cent of the new proprietors, however, farmed on less than one hectare, 17 per cent had one to ten hectares at their disposal. No more than fifty to sixty thousand farms are estimated to be able to maintain a family. No doubt, in time, some of the non-viable small holdings will be acquired by middling or large enterprises.

Inherited problems, transitional difficulties and changed international market conditions all helped to deepen the economic crisis after 1990. 1993 domestic GDP was 18 per cent below the 1989 figure. A slow improvement followed, but the 1989 level was not reached by 1999. Between 1990 and 1997, economic crisis expressed itself in an annual inflation rate fluctuating between 35 and 18 per cent, and around 10 per cent unemployment. A free fall in incomes ensued. The net (after tax) real income of wage and salary earners declined by 26 per cent between 1989 and 1997, that of the over 3 million pensioners and social benefits receivers by 31 per cent. The level of incomes and consumption in the mid-nineties was comparable to that of the mid-seventies. What is more, this decline was accompanied by an ongoing growth in income differentials. The top decile earned almost eight times as much in 1993–1994 than the bottom decile, and that gap has been growing steadily since. The highest income earners include the successful new businessmen, top and middle management, the intellectual and professional elite, and the most highly qualified skilled workers. The poorest are unskilled workers, some of the pensioners and the unemployed. The losers in the changes are then generally those who earlier too were at the bottom of the social ladder. The difference is that the gap between them and those above them has widened.

In the cultural sphere too the change of system started in 1989. The first sign was the end of compulsory Russian in school and of the monopoly of the 8+4

system introduced in 1945. Today 4, 6 and 8-form elementary and secondary schools exist in Hungary. A number of these were returned to church ownership or operation, but compulsory religions education was not restored. The Marxist approach was eliminated in subjects of an ideological nature. The 1995 National Basic Curriculum stresses the importance of "a value system that matured in European bourgeois progress" and of "values manifested in scientific and technical progress," placing the "values of democracy" first.[7] Several hundred publishers mushroomed in a new situation free of every kind of censorship, and the number of titles published grew, but the number of copies printed (books, newspapers and periodicals) declined by 40 to 50 per cent. Lower incomes, and market forces present in the cultural sphere as well—which produced price rises—reduced the numbers of consumers of culture.

In the context of such difficulties of transition the foreign policy successes of the past ten years proved particularly noticeable. In keeping with an agreement between the Soviet Union and Hungary entered into in March 1990, the last Soviet military unit left Hungary on June 19th 1991, Comecon came to an end on June 28th 1991 and the Warsaw Treaty Organization on July 1st. The dissolution of these two organizations and the exodus of Soviet troops meant that Hungary had regained her independence. The barriers had come down that had been obstacles in the way of joining Euro-Atlantic organizations. It soon became clear, however, that these Western organizations—dashing Hungarian hopes—had a prolonged accession process in mind. Moscow saw the NATO extension eastwards as a threat to Russian security and tried to delay things. All the same, on March 12th 1999 Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland achieved full NATO membership. EU accession was delayed by a number of member states with contrary interests. It is now expected in the early years of the new millenium. When that happens Hungary will once again join the community it first entered a thousand years ago by converting to Christianity. That is where Hungarians always felt to be in spirit and thought, even when ill-fate held them in the vice of alien economic, social and political forms.

A renascent Hungarian foreign policy placed greater stress on the patronage of Hungarian ethnic minorities abroad. Who can deny that in the midst of truly major historical changes, it occured to many on both sides of the frontier that not only Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam, but Trianon too might be declared null and void or at least amended. It is also true that mavericks in politics articulated such hopes. So far, however, every Hungarian government has repudiated such revisionist intentions. What was done instead was to conclude basic treaties, with the Ukraine in 1993, Slovakia in 1995, and Romania in 1996 which, in exchange for a renewed guarantee of the Trianon frontiers on the part of Hungary, assured greater rights to the Hungarian ethnic minorities.

The foreign policy successes of the past ten years and generally the democratic aspects of politics and the liveliness of culture are a source of satisfaction for

Hungarians today. At the same time unexpected difficulties have disheartened a great many and indeed led to disillusion with the political changes as such. A 1994–1995 sociological survey showed that 51–54 per cent of those questioned judged the new system to be worse than what it replaced. Only 30 per cent said that it was an improvement. Furthermore many lost their faith in the future. They looked back in regret and longing to the Kádár age. Zsuzsa Ferge's research between 1991 and 1994, employing a seven point marking scale, showed the new system at 3.09 and the fifties 2.79. Similar results were obtained recently, in the summer of 1999, by the Median Public Opinion and Market Research Intitute. Close to half of those questioned still consider the seventies to have been the most successful decade in 20th century Hungarian history and the nineties second from bottom. Only the ten years between 1940 and 1950 did worse. The same sort of historical image can be deduced from the popularity of 20th century politicians. 41 per cent of those questioned declared János Kádár to be the politician they liked best, and only 22 to 21 per cent the national liberal József Antall and the socialist Gyula Horn, the first two post-change prime ministers. Miklós Horthy (7 per cent) did even worse. He was only beaten on the unpopularity list by the most disliked Mátyás Rákosi (52 per cent) and by Ferenc Szálasi (34 per cent), the 1944–1945 fascist leader.[8] All this confirms the hypothesis that the majority, at least in this part of Europe, judges social security and welfare to be more important than competition in the economy and democratic rights. May the 21st century bring them these too. ❧

NOTES

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2 ■ Gyula Szekfű: *Három nemzedék és ami utána következik* (Three Generations and What Follows Thereafter). Budapest, 1938, Királyi Magyar Egyetemi Nyomda. pp. 409–410.

3 ■ Paul Bairoch: "Europe's Gross National Product 1800–1975." *Journal of European Economic History,* 1976. No. 2. pp. 273–340.

4 ■ Éva Ehrlich: *Országok versenye 1937–1986* (Countries in Competition 1937–1986), Budapest, 1991, Közgazdasági és Jogi Kiadó, pp. 69–70.

5 ■ *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt határozatai és dokumentumai 1956–1962.* (The Resolutions and Documents of the HSWP 1956–1962), Ed. by Henrik Vass and Ágnes Ságvári. Budapest, 1973, Kossuth, p. 238.

6 ■ Lajos Géza Nagy: "A kettészakadt társadalom" (A Society Split into Two) *Jel-Kép,* 1989/4. p. 55.

7 ■ *Nemzeti Alaptanterv* (National Basic Curriculum), Budapest, 1995, Ministry for Culture and Public Ecucation. 7.

8 ■ Ignác Romsics: "Történelem és emlékezet" (History and Memory), *Heti Világgazdaság,* 1999, July 10, pp. 66–69.

Tibor Scitovsky

A Proud Hungarian

Excerpts from a Memoir. Part 2

Army days

When basic training ended, we were sent to a Reassignment Center at Oklahoma A.& M., in Stillwater, there to wait a few days until assigned to our service unit. My few days lasted four months, but I was excused from tedious time-filling exercises in exchange for organizing and giving lessons in introductory French, which, in view of our impending landing in France, were in great demand. I also used that time for writing an article that was soon published.

After that long wait, I was sent to Stanford University for 9 months of training in the Army's programme for postwar occupation duty in ex-enemy countries. Fortunately, I had little time to worry about the devastating impact of such an assignment on my hoped-for academic career, because ten days later I was transferred to Camp Ritchie, Maryland, for two-months' training in combat intelligence.

That was an excellent, well-run, intelligent, imaginative training programme, the Army's show piece they often showed off to visiting high-ranking British generals, presumably to reassure them that our promised military aid, while slow in coming, was at least being well prepared. I enjoyed it and was pretty good at most of what we had to learn but utterly hopeless at things like interrogating the hysterical French woman who had just been raped by German soldiers, because I could not bring myself to put an end to her pretended hysterical attack by slapping the lovely face of the beautiful young French actress, who played the role to perfection.

We completed the course and were within three days of embarking for England, when I was called into the office. An elegant captain, with a British offi-

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Tibor Scitovsky

is a distinguished Hungarian-born American economist whose memoirs, from which the above is taken, have recently been published in Hungarian. A previous set of excerpts appeared in the Autumn 1999 issue.

cer's swagger-stick under his arm, enquired about my knowledge of French and German; when I assured him that I spoke both fluently, he asked if I would be interested in being transferred for propaganda training. I answered that I much preferred staying in combat intelligence and seeing active service at long last, but was transferred the following day to the Army's propaganda school in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

There were about 300 of us students in the school, which was a one-man operation run by Hans Habe, the captain who had interviewed me the previous day. He turned out to be a fellow ex-Hungarian, son of Imre Békessy, a notorious Viennese yellow journalist, who was banned for life from Vienna by a judger, who was frustrated by the fact that Austrian criminal law provided no punishment for extorting money for not publishing embarrassing or incriminating evidence and was thus unable to send him to prison. I knew all that, because Békessy, on being expelled from Vienna, moved to Budapest and offered his dubious services to all the Hungarian politicians and bank presidents, including my father, who, though the mildest and gentlest person I have ever known, threw him out of his office. There must have been others like him in those parts of the world at that time, because mother's and my favourite opera, Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier,* contains two such characters, Valzacchi and Annina.

His son was a colourful, highly gifted journalist in Vienna, who had changed his name, because Békessy was too disreputable a name in Austria for a reputable journalist to write under. He fled to France when Hitler annexed Austria, enrolled in the French Foreign Legion, became a prisoner of war of the Germans, escaped, wrote his best seller, *How I Escaped Hitler,* and coming to the United States, soon became the US Army's propaganda expert. I could sense that he must also be tremendously attractive to women and found my instinct confirmed decades later, when I read his fascinating autobiography, *All My Sins.*

In Gettysburg, however, he was only on his third wife, the heiress to Post Toasties cereals and adopted daughter of Joseph Davies, the US ambassador to Moscow at the time. She fell in love with him when she helped him emigrate to the United States; and he promptly divorced his German wife, the heiress to the Tungsram Lightbulb fortune, in order to marry her.

Habe held classes from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. seven days of an eight-day week on a variety of subjects, having his orderly, Sgt Atlasz, another fellow ex-Hungarian, spray his throat between classes against hoarseness. At 7:30, each of us received a copy of that day's *New York Times,* with its short summary of contents cut out, and were given 45 minutes to write a summary of the paper with the most important items placed first and the least important ones omitted. Thereafter Habe explained what items and which parts of each were the most important for propaganda purposes and why. By the following morning he had read and graded all our papers.

In other classes, we wrote short papers for news-sheets and broadcasts, practised making broadcasts, in French or German, with everything very intelligently discussed and criticized by Habe, who also pointed out differences in the composition of headings and arrangement of pages between American and European practice. Other classes dealt with the making of propaganda posters, since Habe was not only a highly skilled and experienced journalist but had also been a former student of the Bauhaus, the famous German art and architecture school.

The programme completed, I was assigned to the 4th Mobile Broadcasting Company whose captain was a former editor of a Redwood City paper, its first sergeant Joseph Wechsberg of *The New Yorker* fame, my fellow corporals Perkins, the *Herald Tribune*'s music critic and Igor Cassini, the Hollywood gossip columnist, brother of Oleg Cassini, the dressmaker. We arrived in Britain at the height of the V1 and V2 attacks, which to my surprise frightened the liveliest and most bellicose among us almost out of their wits, while the slow ones like myself took it in our stride.

We camped for weeks in the rain-soaked royal park of Kettering, but before we could start our work, the campaign to push the German armies out of France was virtually completed, rendering our company's French section, to which I belonged, redundant. We were told that unless we managed to pull some strings and get transferred to some other duty, we would be doomed to continuous kitchen police and night-guard duty.

I had no strings to pull but when a London outfit of our armed forces wanted a volunteer truck driver, I volunteered. Each truck had three soldiers, a driver, another man to read the map and ask the way when necessary, and a third to deliver the papers and packages and have the recipients sign for them. When the lieutenant in charge heard me say that it would be easy for one man to do all three jobs, he said "ok, you try"—which sounded more like retribution for my boasting than encouragement.

Soon, however, my doing all that single-handed made me into a celebrity of our outfit; and when other officers were present in the lieutenant's office when I reported for duty, I heard him whisper to them "that's the guy I told you about".

I was soon given the nightly job of taking big packages of propaganda newspapers and leaflets from the London branch of the US Office of War Information to a landing strip way beyond Oxford, where a plane picked them up every night between 11 and 11:30 for dropping behind the lines. The package was seldom ready before 10 p.m., so I had to drive at breakneck speed in the winter rain during England's wartime blackout, with lights weaker than the weakest flashlight.

After two months of those nightly, nerve-wracking drives, I was ready to quit. Coming upon Paul Sweezy, an aquaintance from Harvard working in the London office of the OSS, the US intelligence agency, I asked him to think of me if he heard of an available job for a corporal other than truckdriving. That resulted in my most interesting assignment.

In a letter to Henry Stimson, the Secretary of War, President Roosevelt suggested that an independent agency be created to assess the Air Force's contribution to the war effort. A copy of the letter and the task of organizing the agency had been handed to Major Colbert, a corporation lawyer in civilian life, who had the good sense to ask the advice of the Air Force's London-based Economic Objectives Unit, a small group of young Harvard economists and Ph.D. candidates, who selected economic targets for precision bombing. They advised him to get plenty of German-speaking economists and recommended me Jürgen Kuczynski, a German-born British civilian, and Master Sergeant Derald Ruttenberg, a former employee of the Anti-Trust Division of the US Department of Justice. Major Colbert hired us right away but his recruiting activities ultimately led to a mammoth intelligence organization.

Kuczynski, son of the professor of Demography at the London School of Economics, was well known in London (though not by Americans) as a Communist Party member, whose book on the history of the British labour movement supported Marx's thesis about the immiseration of the working classes on the, to my mind, absurd ground that their living standard was diminished because the displacement of small breweries by large mechanized ones substituted synthetic ingredients for natural yeast and thereby reduced the vitamin content of beer, the British working classes' main source of vitamins.

His job in our organization gave him access to the US officers' mess, whose copious, low-priced meals must have seemed like paradise to him after years of Britain's skimpy wartime rations, because he was a tremendous eater and made a habit of standing in line for and eating two lunches every day. His interest in our work, however, was marginal; his failure to get security clearance led to his dismissal three months later. But he retained and continued to wear his US officer's uniform and so managed to go on consuming two daily lunches at the officer's mess for another few weeks until caught.

Many years later, he became the Rector Magnificus of Communist East Berlin's University, where I visited him and found a sad, disappointed, very lonesome person, with apparently no contact whatsoever with his faculty. He was overjoyed to have a Western visitor (or perhaps any visitor at all) and proudly showed off his enormous collection of mystery stories, which he believed to be the world's largest.

Master Sergeant Ruttenberg, by contrast, was an energetic, very bright lawyer, passionately interested in doing our work, very quick on the uptake, able to make good judgments quickly and act upon them promptly. During our work together for which I, as an economist, was trained but to which he was a novice, I could observe, admire and envy his qualities, which showed up even in so trifling a matter as when we went to a movie together and he saw within minutes that the film was not worth looking at and we had better leave—the correct decision, which I would have needed another half hour to reach and carry out. (I suspect that he divorced his first wife almost as expeditiously.)

I took to him as duck takes to water and we became close friends right away both in and out of work. We even shared a London apartment for a short while and a hotel room in Paris; when quitting the Army we said *au revoir* and asked what the other's plans were. I reiterated my hopes of an academic career, he said he wanted to become rich and did exactly that.

He went to Chicago, I to California; but I checked up on him almost every year when I took the train to the East Coast for some conference and used the need to change trains and railway stations in Chicago for an overnight stay with Derald. He had a basement apartment in 1947 or '48; a much more spacious one on a higher floor a year or two later; then the elegant penthouse apartment of one of the beautiful Mies van der Rohe skyscrapers. By the mid-1950s he had a large house with its garden coming down to the lake in North Chicago and later moved from there to a beautiful apartment on Beekman Place in New York City, which is still his main address in this country. In 1969 he wanted me and my wife to visit him at a country place he had just bought in Pennsylvania and when I hemmed and hawed about how to get there, he kindly sent his plane and pilot to pick us up. A few years ago, we also visited him at his London *pied-à-terre* in St. James' Place but have not yet accepted his oft-repeated invitation to his castle in Scotland, where he indulges in riding and grouse-shooting.

In short, he kept his word and became rich, doing it by practising, or I suspect even inventing, what decades later became known as leveraged takeovers. He also made constructive use of his high income and wealth, in which he was greatly helped by Janet, his charming, sensitive, beautiful wife, with her hands-on artistic interests and excellent taste. Their Pennsylvania country house, including the guest room where we stayed, was largely furnished with antiques she had refinished, having picked them up on her Wednesday early-morning walks along New York's Park Avenue, just before the garbage people got there on their weekly collection of junk and discarded furniture. She inspected every promising-looking piece and when she liked one, she nodded to her chauffeur, who slowly followed her with a big car and picked it up.

Of their beautiful New York home, I best remember the many dozens of Goya etchings decorating the dining room, a beautiful four-panel screen painted by one of the Nabis, Bonnard, if my memory serves me right, and Janet's own etchings.

Counting the cost of bombing

But let me return to my desk job in the Army. While Major Colbert went on recruiting and Kuczynski waited for work to be assigned to him, Sgt. Ruttenberg and I began the initial planning and preparatory work on the US Strategic Bombing Survey, better known as USSBS, which a few months later became a huge organization with a thousand members, 300 jeeps, a dozen trucks and a

plane. Being at the centre of its modest beginnings was a challenging and enjoyable task; and we did a lot of thinking, talking and writing memoranda on what information would be needed, how to go about getting it and what to do with it.

London had a library that obtained all the German newspapers, periodicals and official publications through a Swiss firm, where I could familiarize myself with the organization, institutions and the names of the main personalities in Germany's war production and armed forces, in order to prepare myself for the lectures I had to give on the subject to later recruits. For the first task we planned for the end of hostilities was to track down those offices, capture those people and get hold of their statistics and other documents.

In that library in London, I also came across an article by Rolf Wagenführ, a German economist, in which he described the US war production programme with evident surprise and admiration. For instead of basing our armaments production on the military's estimates of their requirements as the Germans had done, we used an economist's (Robert Nathan's) estimate of what our national product would be with the full employment of our labour force, subtracted from that our estimate of actual civilian consumption and the cost of minimal capital maintenance, and used the residual as an estimate of the maximum defence production possible without inflicting hardships on the civilian population. That figure, which was a multiple of what our War Department originally asked for, became the basis of the Roosevelt Administration's Victory Programme and our overwhelming superiority in armaments, which won the war.

I knew something about all that even before reading Wagenführ's article, because in 1942, when the War Production Board was created, Robert Nathan, a fellow Keynesian, became director of its Planning Committee. I was delighted to see a thoroughly Keynesian approach applied with evident success to an altogether different problem than the one for which Keynes intended it. Since I also learned that the same Wagenführ, who knew about and appreciated our Keynesian approach to war production, had been recruited by the German Ministry of Armaments and War Production, headed by Albert Speer, I took it for granted that the Germans learned from and followed our example. Fortunately, such was not the case, as we later discovered.

Derald and I also spent weeks on drawing up a questionnaire, designed to help teams visiting bombed-out factories to obtain all the data necessary to appraise the effectiveness of their bombing. Having completed the questionnaire by November 1944, we went to Paris to test its usefulness on the Renault plant located on a small island in the Seine just below Paris, which made trucks for the German armies and had been targeted for precision bombing by our Strategic Air Force.

Our Paris trip showed up the difficulties, severe limitations and costliness of that piecemeal approach and made us abandon altogether the idea of looking at individual targets of precision bombings, which was a sound decision and a

worthwhile result. The particular case of Renault, however, was especially inconclusive, because the plant's truck production diminished substantially after our air raid but management maintained that bombing did little damage and was merely an excuse for the firm's patriotic sabotage of the German war effort. We did not quite accept that explanation, because from a conversation I overheard between Raymond Aron, the famous sociologist, and another Frenchman (neither of whom suspected that the American corporal standing close by would understand their fast French), we knew that the firm was accused of collaboration and in danger of punitive expropriation by De Gaulle's Government; the data we collected did not enable us to decide whether management was telling the truth or trying to lead us (and De Gaulle!) by our noses in an effort to defend itself against the impending threat of expropriation. (We learnt later that De Gaulle's Government did not believe them either and expropriated the company.)

Apart from our experience at Renault, however, our stay in Paris, so soon after its liberation, was a wonderful personal experience, because we could witness the population's euphoria, admire the French genius for impressive pageantry on the occasion of the Free French army's festive march down the Champs Elysées with General De Gaulle, and partake in our own army's popularity while it lasted.

I showed Paris to Derald with as much pride and pleasure as if I had built it myself; we went to a small party given in honour of American soldiers by two pretty French girls who sang Fauré songs and kept us warm with a bucketful of coal bought in the black market; we attended a Molière play at the Comédie Française, where the atmosphere was so tense that it made me ask my neighbour what was up. It was to be Raimu's, the famous actor's first appearance after liberation; and since the German governor of Paris, who ordered special performances to celebrate each German victory and supposed victory, always specified that Raimu must play the principal role, many people considered him a collaborator. That was why the audience was waiting with bated breath to learn whether he would be booed or applauded. There was plenty of both when he first stepped on the stage but the applause gradually overwhelmed the booing. The reason, I suspected, was that many people in the audience must have felt guilty of collaboration themselves and all knew how thin was the line that separated the collaborators from those whom economic necessity compelled to continue in their jobs.

Let me just mention here an amusing episode. Major Colbert brought along a Romanian-born private to serve as our French interpreter. His French sounded good, but on our first day in the Renault plant, his French vocabulary turned out to be so limited that he was quite useless when discussing with the plant's engineers and dealing with documents relating to damage to machine tools and other technical matters.

From the next day onwards therefore we gave him leave to enjoy Paris on his own, only meeting him for meals at the enlisted men's mess, where we found

him busy buying cigarettes and Parker pens for very little from NCOs and privates and selling them bottles of French perfume at high prices. There was a shortage of all three items in the just liberated Paris; but our Romanian colleague discovered somewhere a small warehouse of Chanel perfume, where the employees were delighted to barter them for much coveted American cigarettes and the then fashionable Parker pens (ballpoint pens had not been invented yet). He made a small fortune on those transactions, because American soldiers were anxious to send French perfume to their wives and girlfriends, bought generous rations of cigarettes in the PX, and all of them had two or more Parker pens, those being the most popular presents to send to soldiers from home.

On our last day in Paris, however, Major Colbert insisted that everybody show up at our farewell meeting with Renault's managers and engineers, so we took our interpreter along. In the midst of that large meeting, the phone rang and someone asked for him. We politely stopped discussing to let him answer the phone. The caller was obviously a girl with whom he managed to have an affair in those two weeks, because he called her *mon petit chou,* my little cabbage (*chou* means not only cabbage but also darling) in just about every other sentence, excusing himself for leaving, assuring her of his eternal love and promising to return as soon as he could, etc., all that in his fluent perfect French. The Renault's management and engineers listened with fascination, hardly able to keep from bursting out laughing, while the Americans kept a respectful silence, having no idea what that conversation was about.

Back in London, we found Major Colbert's latest recruit, Captain Burton Klein, who had been a navigator in the Air Force, an economist before that, and was a bright, imaginative and very pleasant person we immediately took to. He was the most absent-minded person I ever met, something we discovered the very day he arrived.

In our office, which had a fireplace, we were having a cup of coffee, with most of us sitting, only Captain Klein standing in front of the fireplace to warm himself. He stood so near the burning fire that we could smell his clothes' beginning to catch fire; but we, all being NCOs, were not going to tell an officer that his trousers are being scorched if he was not smart enough to notice it himself. Fortunately, he did notice after a while, because the thread with which his trousers were sewn disintegrated before the fabric caught fire and his trousers began to fall apart.

That was only one of many instances of his absent-mindedness, which soon became a legend among us. While he was still a navigator, his bomber was supposed to take part in the devastating night raid on the city of Dresden; but after half an hour's flight in the pitch-dark night he discovered a 180° error he made in his calculations and found that they were flying not towards Dresden but in the direction opposite, across the Atlantic, towards North America. He told the captain his mistake and they agreed to drop their bombs into the sea and turn

back homewards so as to arrive no sooner and no later than when the other planes were due back from their mission. He told me that story when, soon after V-E Day, he received an offer of a navigator's job from United Airlines. I succeeded in persuading him to accept a professorship at the California Institute of Technology instead.

But to return to our wartime job in London, Burton Klein was so interested in and helpful with our work that he, Derald and I soon became a kind of brains trust of USSBS for many weeks to come.

My being in that position with the humble rank of corporal created occasional awkwardness as Major Colbert brought more officers into our organization. He wanted to get me a commission, but the Army had lost my papers in the course of my many moves from one assignment to another, which meant that my rank could not be raised until months later when my papers were found. That did not bother the NCOs and civilians, but bothered some of the officers. Major Colbert explained to all newcomers why they had to accept a mere corporal's superior authority, which most of them took in their stride; but one lieutenant started court-martial proceedings against me for "masquerading as a professional economist with a view to obtaining a commission".

I took that for a joke but colleagues, more familiar with court martials, thought it was no joking matter and Captain Klein flew to Washington for the sole purpose of getting hold of the documents relating to my impending court martial, which he stole and obliterated in an unguarded moment.

Our first task was to recruit more German-speaking economists. I went to Oxford and Cambridge for this purpose but succeeded in getting only three: Nicholas (later Lord) Kaldor, Kurt Mandelbaum (later Martin) and E.M. Schumacher, author of *Small is Beautiful,* though he did not make himself small when interviewed by Major Colbert, whom he assured that "relations between the Schumacher family and the United States had been very cordial ever since [his] father's visiting professorship at Harvard". The two very able Austrian economists at the Oxford Institute of Statistics, Josef Steindl and Kurt Rotschild, decided against coming, because they did not want to visit their homeland in enemy uniforms.

Since we needed a few more economists, Burt Klein and I prepared a list of forty names and asked Major Colbert to fly to Washington to recruit eight to ten men from that list. To our dismay, he recruited all forty of them. Victory was near by that time, and the Washington economists must have had a bad conscience for spending the entire war sitting in Washington and grasped at the last chance of serving their country in uniform and seeing Europe into the bargain. Besides, Major Colbert, a true bureaucrat, seemed to have believed that the more people he recruited, the better our work would be, which may partly account for the giant size USSBS reached in the end. I took a gloomy view of that

because, as a trained economist, I believed in the law of diminishing marginal productivity or, in plain English, that too many cooks spoil the broth.

A minor episode illustrates how our organization or, for all I know, our entire war machine was run. In the course of studying how the Germans organized their defense production, I learned that Funk's Ministry of Economics kept an inventory on Hollerith punch cards of all the machine tools owned and used by German industry. Since that inventory would have been invaluable for our purposes, I suggested to Major Colbert that he might get hold of an IBM-made Hollerith machine so that in case we got hold of those punch cards, we should be able to read them. He agreed and a week later told me that he had asked to have shipped to London not one but eight such machines and enough personnel to handle them.

Weeks after V-E Day I learned that the section of Funk's Ministry of Economics having those punch cards had been evacuated to Jena, a German town we were occupying at that time; but which, according to the Yalta Agreement, was to become part of the Russian zone. I rushed to Major Colbert, asking for a truck with which to bring those punch cards from Jena to our then headquarters in Bad Nauheim before we evacuated and handed over Jena to the Russians. He gave me instead an entire convoy of trucks, saying that for safety's sake I must bring back not only the punch cards but also all the machines and the German personnel handling them, because who knows if our machines and operators would be able to decipher them. I got to Jena 24 hours ahead of the Russians and the machine operators welcomed me as a saviour and begged me on their knees to take their families along as well, away from the much-feared Russians.

That was the only time I was the commanding officer of a whole convoy and am still proud that all went well. Soon thereafter, however, Major Colbert came for advice how to keep the eight American punch-card machines and their operators busy. I suggested that until other work came up, they might catalogue all the raids of the US Air Force. He was overflowing with gratitude for my saving him from embarrassment, but a few weeks later, when we had something more important to put on punch cards, I was told that it could not be done, because the catalogue of our raids was prepared in such (completely unnecessary) detail that it would take many weeks to complete.

But to return from overequipping to overmanning, that, besides its disadvantages, had at least one important and undoubted advantage. Immediately after V-E Day, we moved our headquarters from London to Bad Nauheim, near Frankfurt and then split into small groups, mounted jeeps and spent a fortnight scurrying all over Germany, tracking down the evacuated Berlin ministries and sniffing out the hiding places to which their heads and high officials deemed it prudent to withdraw. Thanks to our overwhelming numbers, we got hold of all the high officials worth interrogating from Albert Speer downward and all the statistics worth having. Our headquarters became an invaluable archive, and not

only for us. Trevor Roper obtained all the data for his book on *The Last Days of Hitler* from us, as did the tiny British counterpart to our mammoth organization whose members did all their work and wrote all their reports as our guests.

Being on teams looking for people to interrogate and documents to seize provided plenty of events, excitement and surprises. My first team, however, with Ken Galbraith on one jeep, was uneventful, except for my fearing for my life when he insisted on relieving me, an experienced professional truck driver, from part of the driving, and for our always having to ask, not for one but for four or five billets to choose from, because Ken, a 6 foot 7 inch giant, could only sleep in beds with no footboard or one with slats where he could put his legs out between the slats.

Much more interesting was my later team that contained Kaldor, three NCOs and 2nd Lieutenant Straus, the only non-economist whose job was to get us billets and food. We started out with a 4-day stay in Salzburg, where we were billetted in an elegant villa kept in order by two maids. For our first meal, we had to separate, with Kaldor, Lt. Straus and I, who in the meantime had also become 2nd Lieutenant, going to the officers' mess and the NCOs having to go to the enlisted men's.

I resented being separated on that upstairs-downstairs basis, which was inconvenient as well, because we mostly had important business to discuss. So I asked Lt. Straus if he could arrange for us to have our future meals together so that we could discuss our plans and problems; he told me to leave that to him. Indeed, when we got home in the evening, the entrance hall was full of sacks, several of them containing many dozens of loaves of bread, cornflakes, potatoes, lettuce, and fruit; cans the size of large hatboxes containing beef stew, vegetables, soups, butter; not to mention innumerable other cans and boxes. I had never seen that much food anywhere before. Lt. Straus told me somewhat apologetically that the smallest quantity of food he could get from the army's supply office was two days' meals for a company—which meant 1,200 meals, 6 meals for 200 people.

The six of us stuffed ourselves for the three remaining days of our Salzburg stay, after which I left it to Lt. Straus to dispose as best he could of the mountain of food remaining. He gave the two overjoyed maids enough food to last them for at least a month, took the rest of it to the officers' mess; and we buckled down to being separated during meals for the remainder of our trip.

Driving on through Austria we soon came to our jackpot. As we were driving, I could see the railroad track in the distance, and a train standing on the open track, with a German soldier patrolling it. Through my binoculars I recognized his colonel's insignia and immediately stopped our jeep, feeling that a train guarded by a high-ranking officer must contain some VIPs. Indeed, it turned out to be the headquarters of the so-called Southern Redoubt, the southern part of Germany's armed forces, which our fast advance into Germany split into two. We found a dozen of the highest-ranking generals, with Karl Saur, Albert Speer's second-in-command, the only civilian. They were listening to the radio, sur-

rounded by ashtrays brimful with cigarstubs, impatiently waiting for General Patton's staff to find and arrest them.

Kaldor and I found them before their arrest and interrogated them for two hours. They must have been terribly bored, waiting there for days after Germany's surrender; and visibly impressed by our knowledgeable questions, they went out of their way to give us important, relevant and, as we later checked, highly reliable answers. That was most useful from our point of view; yet I found it somewhat repellent that they should be quite so helpful to us who, after all, were their enemies.

Albert Speer, however, was our prime human target and Kaldor, excited by our accidentally finding Saur, Speer's second-in-command, persuaded Ken Galbraith, our boss in the Overall Economic Effects Division, to let him have a jeep for a week's search to find Speer. He managed to find out the name and address of Speer's ex-girlfriend whom he went to visit on V-E Day, but Kaldor arrived there days after Speer had left her for an unknown destination, leaving behind a small leather case. Kaldor took possession of the case, which was lined with green velvet and contained the hammer with which Hitler placed the first stone in building the Siegfried Line, the Nazi's equivalent of the French Maginot Line.

Speer was captured a few weeks later in Flensburg by Sergeant Fassberg, a less prestigious member of USSBS, who idly ambling through the streets of Flensburg found Speer's visiting card thumbtacked at the entrance of an apartment house. Kaldor, however, consoled himself with having captured an important memento of the war, which he kept on his desk and proudly showed off to all of us until he took it home as a present to his wife. Galbraith, however, spoiled his pleasure by announcing that such an important trophy must be surrendered to the War Department and would probably be exhibited in its museum.

What neither Kaldor nor Galbraith knew was that forgetful Captain Klein, having to affix a notice to the bulletin board, used Hitler's hammer to drive the nail but then forgot to put it back into its box on Kaldor's desk. Days later, when he remembered his omission, he could not find the hammer, so he went out to where the jeeps were parked, took a hammer from one of them and placed that into Hitler's velvet-lined box on Kaldor's desk, without anyone noticing the exchange.

Let me also mention another unexpected find. I was driving along an autobahn, when I came to its intersection with another autobahn where, in the middle of nowhere, far from any city or village, there was an enormously big building. I stopped the jeep to investigate and finding the entrance unlocked, entered a huge hall, choek-full of overturned, broken desks, chairs and at least a hundred filing cabinets, half-drowned in a sea of torn-up papers and documents, through which one had to wade knee-deep in order to get into other, equally big halls with the same contents. The upper floors contained hundreds of smallish identical bedrooms, each with a broken wash basin, apparently destroyed using a hatchet or pickaxe. There was not a soul anywhere, nor a piece of unbroken fur-

niture and only a single attic room intact, a storage room, containing a whole library of beautiful, big, mostly French volumes of architectural pictures and drawings, some of which I recognized, because they were also in my parents' library.

I found out that the building, originally meant to be a vacation house for workers, housed Todt's evacuated Ministry of Construction, along with some of the foreign workers it employed in building the Siegfried Line. The architectural books I found were the personal library of Albert Speer, who had been Todt's successor in that Ministry and seemed to have left behind his library when appointed to head the Ministry of Armaments and War Production.

When Germany's capitulation was announced, the German officials fled, fearing the vengeance of the foreign workers, who celebrated Germany's defeat by tearing up their identity cards, the Ministry's files, and going on a rampage, destroying everything destructible. They must have been very badly treated if instead of rushing home to their families they took the time and effort to give vent to their bitterness by so thorough a destruction of what until then was their prison.

Less depressing episodes on that trip were a visit to Hitler's Eagle's Nest (Adlershorst) in Obersalzberg on top of a mountain and to Göring's personal train hidden in a tunnel, which a US officer discovered minutes before I arrived there. Göring's living room occupied an entire railway carriage and contained an extensive library full of German literature, an excellent collection of classical phonograph records and a chest with dozens of small drawers, containing beautiful and very fancy stationery, with each drawerful headed with a different one of Göring's innumerable functions and titles. I took a couple of each as mementos but soon used them all up for my own correspondence. His wife's car contained a bedroom in very ornate baroque style and a bathroom with a sunken tub.

The freight car on the train contained the paintings and other art objects Göring had pilfered from Jewish homes and occupied countries' museums. Those I saw only a few weeks later, when one of Patton's regiments exhibited them in a large villa on the Königsee. It was a huge collection of paintings of which I mainly remember the dozen or more paintings by Cranach, whose nudes must have been his favourite pictures.

War economies

As a result of Major Colbert's feverish recruiting, USSBS outgrew all of us. People higher up in the Armed Forces hierarchy seem to have realized that so huge an organization needed more experienced and authoritative people to head and administer it than Major Colbert, a young corporation lawyer and our even younger, humbler and less experienced triumvirate. So his place was taken by a general and Mr. d'Olier, a high official of IBM, as its civilian head; our organization was split into half a dozen divisions each with a civilian VIP as its director, the most notable of whom were Kenneth Galbraith, former chief of the

Office of Price Administration, later US Ambassador to India and Harvard professor; George Ball, later undersecretary of state under Kennedy's and Johnson's presidencies, and Paul Nitze, later chief US negotiator and several presidents' adviser on arms control matters.

An important advantage of acquiring those high-level civilian directors was their (and especially Galbraith's) willingness and ability to stand up against the Air Force's pressure to change our concluding judgment that our aerial attacks had not made an important contribution to shortening the war. A quarter of a century later, I found confirmation of that judgement from the best possible source when reading Albert Speer's voluminous but very interesting memoirs, written during his twenty years in prison. (Our own judgement, however, was not quite independent of Speer's, having been influenced by our interrogation of him.) For only on May 12, 1944, in the fifth year of the war and less than a year before its end in Europe, had the US Strategic Air Forces started the precision bombing of Germany's synthetic oil industry, which both we and Speer, the organizer of Germany's war production, considered the fatal blow to Germany's military might and prospects of winning the war.

With that many people, we completed our work by mid-summer. All that remained was to summarize the innumerable reports and memoranda into a set of final general surveys. At that stage, however, our whole enormous organization moved on to Japan, there to do a much shorter survey of the effects of our aerial attack in the Pacific theatre of operations. From Galbraith's Overall Economic Effects Division, only two of us, John Kendrick and I were excused from going to Japan and left behind in London with a couple of typists and the assembled documents, data and memoranda, to write the summary volume of *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on the German War Economy.* That was hard work but also enjoyable and restful thanks to the quiet atmosphere, which was a welcome change after the hullabaloo of our overcrowded and overstaffed headquarters in Bad Nauheim.

I shall not describe here our findings and conclusions, which have been published in many volumes and thousands of pages; however I do want to say something about one aspect of them, which seems very relevant today when all peaceful people expect the world's only superpower to defend them against the aggression of much weaker powers that compensate for their inferior power by ruthless disregard of treaties, agreements, international conventions and humanitarian principles.

I have in mind Hitler's spectacular early successes achieved with surprisingly modest military forces, thanks to his mastery of Blitzkrieg—lightning-fast, unrelenting, surprise attacks with all available planes, tanks and artillery massed against the barely defended border of unprepared and unsuspecting countries. He substituted surprise, speed and relentless advance for the overwhelming force required for prolonged war—a strategy that defeated not only Poland within a month but in another, later month France as well—after the

phoney war of the 1939/40 winter lulled her into unpreparedness against so sudden and so unexpected an attack.

For, to quote one of my sentences from the book mentioned above, "the outstanding feature of the German war effort [was] the surprisingly low output of armaments in the first three years of the war... as measured not only by Germany's later achievement but also by the general expectations of the time and the level of production in Britain. In aircraft, trucks, tanks, self-propelled guns, and several other types of armaments, British production was greater than Germany's in 1940, 1941 and 1942."

Our first inkling of that was the discovery that unlike Britain's and our American defence industries, hardly any German factory worked a double, let alone a triple shift, because they had no shortage of machine tools, the most vulnerable economic targets of aerial attack. For one thing, the Germans were not on a total war footing in the first years of the war; for another, leaders of their machine-tool industry, believing in German victory, made preparations to capture the German-dominated European market for machine tools by building up their inventories in advance.

That is why the Germans could easily and quickly replace their machine tools when damaged or destroyed; when not, they could utilize the remaining ones more fully by adding a second shift. That explains why so few of our aerial attacks against economic targets had a noticeable effect on their war production. Nor did they suffer from a shortage of labour, because they could and did utilize slave labour from such occupied countries as Poland, Czechoslovakia and France; although they used it mainly for the construction work of the Todt Organization on the Sigfried Line and similar projects.

In short, the Germans, unlike we and the British, were never on a total war footing, except at the very end of the war, by which time it was far too late. Hitler was confident that the same limited forces, with the same Blitzkrieg tactics that so easily defeated Poland and France, would also subdue the Soviets and Britain. He felt so sure of ultimate total victory that he ordered a reduction in armament production in the autumn of 1941—an order which was rescinded and reversed, of course, by the end of that year, following the German defeat before Moscow and our entry into the war.

Indeed, the Germans were able to double their armament production between the beginning of 1942 and mid-1944, a striking indication of how far they were from total war preparation during the first three years of the war.

Stanford days

But let me return to my appointment by Stanford University in 1946, first as associate, three years later as full professor of economics. Today, half a century later, I recognize that as the high point of my life, achieving unaided, through my own exertions, my ambition to establish myself in a profession of

my own choosing. It was no great achievement by ordinary standards but a great advance from the extreme timidity and utter lack of self-assurance of my youth.

Not only did my becoming professor in an alien country represent a great advance in my development and self-esteem, it was also my last such advance. For I enjoyed the academic routine, the persistent mental stimulus provided by having to lecture, participate in conferences, answer students' occasionally very penetrating questions, and do some writing and publishing that requires mastering a variety of subjects as well as, and occasionally even better, than their originators mastered them, thinking of new, simpler or more useful ways of developing and expressing them. All that became a routine, which I found satisfying and enjoyable and was willing to settle down to for the rest of my life; but it involved no great problems, changes, and no hurdles to overcome which would be worth recounting here.

If I picked up a couple of fellowships, prizes, academic memberships and honorary degrees, that was part of the average and above average professional economists' standard routine, though I may also have owed them to my generation's excellent training at the LSE in the heady, competitive atmosphere of the Keynesian revolution at a time when economics was still a small enough subject to enable many of us to acquire a broad view of almost all its branches. Anyhow, I had no intention to sacrifice any part of my interesting and varied life for the sake of rising higher on the professional or economic scale.

For I inherited father's gentle, conscientious, non-agressive and not very ambitious temperament; my sheltered upbringing as an only child, with private tutoring that protected me from the competition of my contemporaries, only reinforced that easygoing temperament. Revolt against my mother's domineering personality and desire to stand on my own feet and make my own decisions were my main driving force, which largely evaporated as I achieved those aims.

At Stanford, however, I stayed for twelve years at first, to return another twelve years later for good. For Hungary's aborted 1956 revolution against communist rule led many Hungarians (including my second wife) to emigrate, among them some university students and a young physicist whom I tried to help find a livelihood at Stanford. I failed to secure a job at Stanford for the physicist, because Felix Bloch, the Physics Department's Nobel-prize winning star, could not be persuaded that Hungary's revolution was directed against Communism, not against Jews, he would not accept as colleague an anti-Semitic physicist. Fortunately, I knew of Dr Kürthy's, the Hungarian-born Oxford physics professor's, visit to the University of California in Berkeley and a phone call to him secured a job for the refugee physicist within 24 hours.

As to the students, I visited the heads of the two best known local companies, Varian and Hewlett-Packard, to ask them if they would be willing to establish a few fellowships, for Hungarian refugees. Russell Varian hardly let me finish my request before offering to finance four graduate students' $6,000; at the time his

offer seemed more than generous. Two days later I approached David Packard who, on learning what Varian had offered, immediately matched that offer.

I was overjoyed and felt that I had done my duty; but soon thereafter a phone call from the Stanford President's office ordered me in no uncertain terms to cease and desist asking local businessmen for charitable donations, because the university reserved for itself the right to ask for contributions. I was outraged by both the tone and the substance of that reprimand, the more so because the sums I obtained were piddling compared to the millions the University's president collected from the same people soon thereafter.

My hurt feelings were largely responsible for my leaving Stanford and accepting UC Berkeley's offer of a professorship with the salary of $13,000. That more than doubling my income would not, by itself, have made me leave Stanford, because the offer would almost automatically have raised also my Stanford salary. For Stanford in those days was very stingy and considered better offers from outside, the only acceptable proof of one's worth being greater than one's Stanford pay. Indeed, my Department's chairman often urged us to encourage other universities to make us offers, because that was the only way in which he could obtain raises for us.

That may also explain why Stanford and UC Berkeley had a "gentleman's agreement" not to lure away each other's faculty members, but the then chairman of Berkeley's Economics Department, Andreas Papandreou, the later prime minister of Greece, who made me that generous offer, was not a man to abide by gentleman's agreements that went against the interests of gentlemen.

At the time, both the city of Berkeley and its university had a wonderfully lively atmosphere and, being a city boy, I also enjoyed its vicinity to San Francisco and the wonderful view of that city across the Bay. My new colleagues were pleasant and interesting, some of them became lifelong friends, and quite a few had contacts with the California state administration as advisers on policy matters, which made the university less of an ivory tower than Stanford was at that time.

The nearest I came to policy decisions was my membership in the so-called group of 32 economists in the 1960s and '70s. For when Douglas Dillon, then secretary of the US treasury, inaugurated the periodic meetings of the finance ministers and central bank governors of the "Group of 10" industrial countries, he made some uncomplimentary remarks about academic economists to justify his failure to invite any of them to those meetings. His remarks led to enough protests to induce the Ford Foundation to finance parallel meetings of academic economists, the Group of 32, to consider reforming the international monetary system.

That was a good group of well-informed people discussing interesting and important subjects, mostly joined also by Paul Volcker, then chairman of the Federal Reserve's board of governors and Ottmar Emminger, Governor of West Germany's central bank. I joined the group in mid-1964, at its fourth meeting, and enjoyed all the lively discussions of practical problems and the contact with

policy makers; but felt a little like an intruder among them, suspecting that they, with their narrow concentration on the problems of the day, would not share my theoretically oriented scale of values, which assigned equal weight to problems of the long and the short run.

One of our meetings for example, which followed the 1973 oil price shock, began with general elation and self-congratulation over the successful recycling of OPEC's oil profits deposited in US banks, thanks to their relending them (at high interest rates) to developing countries, thereby enabling them to maintain their oil imports undiminished and so prevent the world depression that the oil price shock was generally expected to create. As a result, however, those developing countries accumulated enormous foreign debts; I raised the question whether they would ever be able to repay those loans that saved them from a major depression but contributed nothing to their development. That indeed became a major problem in years to come, but at that meeting, most participants considered my question highly inappropriate, and the chairman hastened to shut me up and change the subject, as if I had said something obscene. That taught me the lesson that practical people deal with problems of the moment and let the future take care of itself.

All the meetings were held in such beautiful places as the Villa Serbelloni in Bellagio on Lake Como, a luxury hotel in Cascais on Portugal's Costa del Sol; the grand Hotel Dolder on the hill above Zurich; the Hotel Imperial in Vienna; but the most memorable meeting place for me was the Trianon Palace, an old-fashioned hotel in Versailles. Arriving there, the building struck me as having a *déjà vu* quality, although I knew that I had never been there before. I continued to be puzzled by the strange trick my memory seemed to play on me, until at the first dinner in the hotel's dining room I discovered the marble tablet commemorating the stay of the Hungarian delegation to the Peace Treaty of 1920. That immediately recalled the completely forgotten picture postcard father sent me of that hotel half a century earlier when I was 9 years old. It was not a particularly remarkable building; and I am still amazed that something as simple as a picture postcard depicting an ordinary hotel building should have been so vividly impressed on my memory.

Joyless Economy

In 1965 I spent a sabbatical year as visiting professor at Harvard from where I did not return to Berkeley. I went to Paris for a two-year stint with the Development Centre of OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development).

Despite our drastically reduced income, we had a happy and full life in France, which strikingly confirmed my belief that the enjoyment of life had no less to do with consumption skills than with income. Much more difficult was to

find the flaw in the tendency of economists to take for granted that consumers can be trusted to know best what is good for them and always to aim at achieving it—two assumptions on which our faith in income as a measure of welfare rested.

Once I began to question those assumptions, I realized that I myself did not know what made my life enjoyable and became anxious to find out. My amateurish readings of psychology textbooks, however, were of no avail. More promising and suggestive were a few snippets and *obiter dicta* I found in the lesser writings of such distinguished Cambridge economists as Marshall Keynes, Harrod and especially Hawtrey, all of whose ideas on the subject originated, as I later discovered, in the work of the classical Greek philosophers, mainly Plato, with whose works, thanks to the excellence of British public schools, all of them were much more familiar than I.

Then a psychologist from the Stanford Medical School drew my attention to the writings on motivation of a group of physiological psychologists; and some of those were a revelation to me. They anwered all my questions; fitted in with introspection into my own feelings and behaviour, and seemed to verify and provide a scientific explanation also for the remarkable insights of Plato and Hawtrey. I was thrilled to learn how well animal experiments and scientific research on the working of the central nervous system accorded with my own feelings and actions, and how well some of the data I was able to collect fitted in with the psychologists' findings.

All that proved so interesting and revelatory that in my enthusiasm I immediately started writing a book, amalgamating the psychologists' findings and my economist's thoughts and data, trying to present them in language accessible to economists and the general reader alike. That such a book would not contribute to economic theory nor change it in any way, was something I realized from the outset; but I had hoped that it would make economists more aware of our subject's limitations; and I also felt that a book whose writing gave me so much pleasure and self-knowledge ought to have the same effect also on the general reader. After all, the book dealt with such topics as the borderline between pain and pleasure, the role of novelty and danger in providing pleasure, the need of all living creatures for enjoyable stimulation, the question what activities are enjoyable when and why, the difference between skilled and unskilled stimulus enjoyment, the conflict between comfort and pleasure, and the relation between income and happiness.

All those seemed to be issues that ought to interest everybody who wants to enjoy life; and I had some confirmation of that, because quite a few of the my book's readers took the trouble of writing to let me know how much they enjoyed and learnt from it. Also, I was pleased to learn of its having been listed nineteen years later by the *Times Literary Supplement* among the hundred most influential books of the post World War II period.

Nevertheless, I now feel that publishing that book was a mistake, because I could have made it very much better. It explored the idea that for a full and sat-

isfying life we must not only meet our bodily needs but must always have or find readily available some challenging activity to keep us from getting bored; and that the prerequisite for that was education.

For we learn early in life that food, drink, sleep, rest, clothing, shelter and sex satisfy our bodily needs; and we economists are probably right in assuming that most people know how best to satisfy those needs, given their means. Very different, however, from catering to bodily needs is the relief of boredom. Any one of innumerable physical and mental activities can relieve boredom, provided it is sufficiently challenging to one's physical or mental aptitudes to make it enjoyable. The challenge is to one's strength, skill or knowledge, which means that almost all those activities only become enjoyable and relieve boredom if one has learnt their particular skills or acquired some of their relevant knowledge beforehand.

Moreover, since different situations, different times of day, and different periods of one's life call for different activities to relieve boredom, one needs a broad and varied education in many skills and subjects to assure a full and satisfactory life.

That was the central theme of my *Joyless Economy* (1976). But just as with my first book, *Welfare and Comptition* (1951), when I discovered something new and important to say, I once again rushed into print before recognizing its full and much more important implications. For the book dealt with boredom and its relief only from the point of view of ordinary people, who work most ot their lives and earn their bread by the sweat of their brow or the strain of their brain. Boredom for them is a minor nuisance, a passing phase, relieving which eliminates occasional yawns and makes merely comfortable lives enjoyable and more interesting, but does no more than that.

I completely ignored the idle rich, the long-term unemployed, and the unemployables whose inadequate upbringing made them unfit for work; in short all those who have more leisure than they know what to do with and suffer from uninterrupted chronic boredom, a deprivation as serious as starvation, with equally fatal consequences. As hunger makes one look for food, so boredom makes one seek excitement, and just as people with no money for buying food stoop to thieving to avoid starvation, so those who lack the skills that can relieve boredom in a harmless way, will relieve it with violence or vandalism—the most exciting and so most enjoyable activities and the only ones that require no skill, only strength. Think of the mischief small children engage in when bored. Violence and vandalism are the adult equivalents of mischief.

Education, therefore, not only adds interest and variety to people's lives, it is also an essential and necessary condition of civilized society and the peaceful coexistence of its members. As I was writing my book, I suspected that I was on to something important; but resenting it the way I did, I failed to recognize and stress that much more important function of education, which was almost within my grasp. ❧

Zsuzsa Kapecz

May

(short story)

It is reported that, in the final years of the Ceauşescu regime, several thousand children were deliberately infected with AIDs in Romanian state orphanages. These children were all infected with the F version of HIV-1...

Népszabadság, *22 February 1997*
(From our Rome correspondent)

My favourite month is May. The time when everything turns green and the trees begin to flower, exuberantly, selflessly, not caring that frosts may still come. In these parts, in the mountains where we live, the more well-to-do often put up a maypole, decorate it with ribbons, then drive it into the ground near a bush of goldenrod or lilac. In the village of paupers where I was born, no one bothered with such things; I saw these spring decorations for the first time on the day my father brought me here, to be with the others. It was the day before the big cattle fair, and on the way, driving along in the cart, we saw a great many market women and horse copers along the tracks leading down into the valley, saw how they watched over, how they guarded the light-footed horses, the glossy apples, the chicks raised with painstaking care all through the long journey. It was only themselves they did not spare, and the young children accompanying them; I still remember the young lad whom his father flung to the ground and then kicked with the toe of his well-worn boot as he lay in the dust for not feeding the horses properly. It all happened a long time ago. Not one, not two, but five springs have passed since my father put me in the orphanage and promised I could come home in a month's time. He got up in the cart and I never saw him again, nor heard news of him since.

Many of the children don't mind living here. It's all the same to the little ones, brought here as babes, bundled up, whimpering or crying, by relatives or a parent, and the child may never learn where he comes from. It is harder for us older ones. We still remember the cosseting and the caresses, can still recall the smell of home, still understand a couple of soon to be forgotten words. Here in the home the carers give orders in another language.

The house is large. It was built in the days of my grandfather's youth; they say wealthy invalids were cared for here, and there used to be pretty cottages in

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Zsuzsa Kapecz
has published two novels and a collection of short stories.

the park and a fountain at the centre of the lawn. Now everything has changed. During the war there were soldiers here, later the building was used as a school, and finally as a foundling hospital.

The people from the neighbourhood scorn us of course. No one wants their children to have anything to do with us. We don't like their brats either, they remind us of the time when we were still free to go about as we pleased. At home I had proper food, proper clothes. Bread, potato soup, maize-meal porridge, everything I needed. I had trousers, a coat, two shirts, boots handed down from my brother. I had no need of anything else. Here I went barefoot for a long time, but nowI've figured out how to steal shoes for myselfwhen I get the chance. There are plently of second-hand clothes and shoes in the stock-room because people send us parcels, but they keep them locked away.

At home I used to have a playmate, a girl. She lived next door to us. Her name was Veronika, but I used to call her Pretty Vera. Everything about her was pretty, her hair, her eyes, her mouth, and she came out every day in a freshly washed dress. We liked to go to the brook, throw pebbles in the water, or float small boats. My brother made me those boats in the evenings. He did not have the time to make them in the daytime because he was always working in the kitchen garden or in the stables. They did not think I was old enough to be entrusted with a proper job, so I was allowed to roam freeon the fringes of the forest. On holidays my brother would sometimes go with me. One time I fell into the brook and he jumped in after me and pulled me back onto the bank. I was soaked and he just kneeled there beside me on the ground and laughed. My brother radiated strength, he was impetuous, high-spirited and good-humoured, I always felt calm and safe when I knew he was near me. I can see him still, there on the bank of the brook, laughing, laughing at me, soaked to the skin like a flooded-out ground squirrel. He died the following winter. He was gathering brushwood in the forest, and he caught a cold in the great snow, he coughed for a long time, then the fever took him. They buried him beside my mother. My father did not cry, just stared at him without saying a word. Pretty Vera cried. She liked my brother.

There are some who were brought here to the home with their brothers or sisters. Only rarely are they allowed to stay together. The carers do not permit it, as they do not permit our making friends either. Here it is everyone for himself, left to himself, alone. That is what they consider safe. They do not allow us to speak to each other in our own language among ourselves. We must use their words if we want something; if any of us should have the nerve to want something, to have a will of their own. Silence is safest.

I only asked them once, when my head was crawling with lice, to give me some soap. They shaved my head instead. It was strange. I kept feeling my head, even started up from my sleep, I missed my hair so much. I told myself it would grow out again, but they won't allow that. Nowadays I wear a knitted hat, Foxy gave it

to me, crafty Foxy. He's got hats hidden everywhere about the place. Foxy too was ashamed of his hairless head at first. But in the end you got used to everything.

Like we got used to the cold. We made ourselves a nest out of old cast-off quilts, burrowed into them and curled up together for warmth. Foxy lay on one side of me, Dumpling on the other. Foxy is a tall, lankyboy, Dumpling is short, scrawny and freckled. They arrived on the same day. I was already here when they came, and I helped them find their way about, get their bearings. The most important thing was to make them realize they must never contradict, never defy the carers. Resistance never did any good in the outside world, here in the home it leads to beatings, punishment, confinement. The word "No" must be forgotten immediately upon arrival.

The winter is long. A cold wind blows, the sky is overcast. We rarely go outside into the courtyard, we haven't enough clothes. There are mounds of snow in the yard, piles of debris and weeds. We break icicles off the eaves and slip them down each other's backs. Pretty Vera used to suck icicles, I remember, and smiled and joked. Does it taste nice, I asked her, why don't you try it, she asked, and laughing, she ran away. Dumpling sucks icicles too, but only when they forget to give us supper.

In the evenings, Foxy tells us that he'll soon be going home, and will eat walnuts with honey, and milk-loaf, and chocolate at Christmas. He speaks of chocolates wrapped in silver foil. We listen to him, our mouths watering. We used to have a walnut tree in the garden back home, but I can no longer remember the taste of walnuts.

At night, Dumpling often screams in his sleep. He wets the bed. At such times Foxy jumps over to him, clamps his hand over the freckled boy's mouth, and when he's quietened down, we get rid of the traces. Quickly and silently. The carers must not notice us. They do not like noise, and they never stop to think before they hit.

The winter is bleak, dull, monotonous. We sit about shivering, waiting for the spring. My favourite month is May.

Dumpling has no parents. He has no one, not even a proper name. He was found on the fringes of the rubbish tip, a grubby bundle. He couldn't have been more than three months old at the most. A family took him in. They lived on the tip in a corrugated iron shack, and subsisted on what they found. They roved the narrow, straggling paths winding between the heaps of rubbish, foraging all day long. Dumpling learned to walk in the muddy cart ruts, holding on to rusty pipes strewn about on both sides of the path. He never saw anything around him except rubbish. He always walked with his eyes cast down, searching. That is probably why he is so stooped, his head hunched between his shoulders; he really does look like a pitiable, badly shaped dumpling. He lived in the shack on the tip until he was about six. In the summer he went about naked, in the winter he wore rags. He slept in the daytime, in the mornings, because there

weren't enough beds to go round at night. In the evenings he sat down on the doorstep and huddled there until morning. He was always hungry. Then they brought him here. Dumpling did not protest, he says he likes it here. It's better than at the tip.

Foxy comes from very different surroundings. He is the only city boy among us. His father was a trucker, doing rounds in the neighbourhood. Foxy used to live in a beautiful, spacious flat, went to school, and once spent a summer holiday by the sea. Crafty Foxy is a clever boy, he can read and write perfectly, and he knows all about machinery. Here in the home there is just a radio and a telephone, but we are not allowed to touch them. Foxy would never have ended up here among us if his father had known what was good for him and closed his eyes and ears like his neighbours. But Foxy's father was a proud, headstrong man, and one day, ignoring his wife's entreaties, he put on his best suit and joined the procession of people marching to the memorial on the outskirts of the town, carrying flags and flowers and singing. The group was dispersed. At night some of the men disappeared. The next day the flag-bearer was nearly beaten to death in the main square. The third day they found the truck by the roadside. Foxy's father was never found. His mother died soon after of a heart attack. Crafty Foxy hopes that in a couple of weeks his father will come to take him away, in the winter, or perhaps in the spring, but in the summer at the latest. Every year he spends a couple of days crying.

Foxy spends a lot of time leaning on the window-sill, staring at the gate. It was he who first caught sight of the car. He gave a great shout, he thought his father had come for him at last. He ran along the corridor, pounded down the gap-toothed stairs, and would have stormed through the dining hall if one of the carers hadn't caught him, given him a vigorous clout on the back of the head and a hefty shove towards the stairs, go back to your room, she hissed at Foxy, don't you dare disturb the doctor.

That is how we learned that our visitor was a doctor. He had a long talk with the director, then we saw the black car jolting along the garden path and passing through the gate. For some time after this nothing happened. It was almost spring when one morning we woke to hectic hustle and bustle. We were ordered out of bed, and given soap and towels, for the first time since Christmas. There was no water in the taps so we washed out in the yard, by the water-butts. They opened the stock-room and everyone was given a clean shirt. There was a feeling of suspense, of something about to happen, we all felt it, Foxy said maybe we'd have our photographs taken. We lined up in the corridor. We were divided into two groups, the little ones were made to stand apart. Some carers came in, they had put on white smocks over their clothes. Aha, said Foxy, there's going to be a medical examination. What's that, asked Dumpling, but all he got in reply was a poke in the ribs, and he was told to shut his mouth. The two groups were counted, and made to stand in pairs. So we waited for a while in silence.

It really did not take longer than a second, as I remember; Foxy, who was standing beside me in the line, said it looked like we were getting an inoculation, perhaps there'd been an outbreak of smallpox or some other contagious disease in the neighbourhood; it took only a second, no more, a quick prick in the arm, fleeting pain, nothing to speak of. They shepherded us into the dining hall in pairs, where the unfamiliar white-overalled doctor was sitting at the table, reading through a large stack of cards, sometimes he wrote something in a notebook, and in the meanwhile the nurses gave us our inoculation. They were pretty and cheerful, one of them was wearing lipstick, and a velvet ribbon in her hair. I leaned close and inhaled her sweet scent, she noticed and laughed softly. At this Foxy sniffed too. The doctor looked up from his papers, smiled, and said something in a language we did not understand; then he waved us away. It pleased us that he was so nice.

Along the dark corridor from the opposite direction came the girls, shepherded to the dining hall from another wing of the building. They walked hurriedly, almost at a run, but as they passed us a small, close-cropped girl in a cloth coat, one of the last pair, waved to me timidly; do you know her, asked Foxy; who, I asked, that egg-headed one at the back of the line, she waved to you; Dumpling said something too, but then the carers told us to be quiet.

Later we went back to the dining hall. The long table had been laid, fruit, pastries, milk loaf and milk were set before us. At first we did not dare touch anything, then everyone fell on the food, sounds of noisy chewing and smacking of lips came from everywhere. A small boy gorged himself on cake and threw up. He was not given a beating this time, for once the carers were kind, pleased with the good food. Everyone looked satisfied and ate as much as they could.

I was eating my third slice of milk loaf when someone touched my elbow. I turned. The close-cropped, spotty-faced girl was standing behind me, hugging her cloth coat around her as if she were cold. Don't you recognize me, she asked sadly. I trembled at the sound of her voice, my stomach churned; is it you, Pretty Vera, I whispered huskily. She had lost a lot of weight, her face had become pinched and drawn, they had shaved off her blonde hair, pustules marred her skin, only her big blue eyes were unchanged. Shebegan to cry, the tears coursing down her disfigured face. How did you get here, I asked dismayed. They took everyone away, she sobbed, they took half the village, they knocked down the houses, demolished the church, I don't know where my parents are, I haven't heard anything about your father either, we children were thrown into a bus and now here I am, I've been here for over a week, and I can't bear this place, I can't stand it that we can't wash. You'll get used to it, I mumbled, and pressed her hand encouragingly.

From then on I was always there beside Foxy, leaning on the window-sill; he watched the gate, I watched the terrace of the wing opposite, and the courtyard. The girls were allowed out to take the air more often than us, and when they were outside, Pretty Vera grown plain waved to me. That was all we could

do, and we both waited for the day when the boys would be allowed to go out into the garden as well.

It was crafty Foxy who first thought of running away. At first he just joked about it, then it somehow became serious. We decided to hide in the forest. We were a bit worried because it was the rainy season, it rained all the time. It doesn't matter, said Foxy, once we're over the fence, it'll be as easy as pie; you're cazy, I replied, you don't know the pinewoods, you don't know this region. That doesn't matter either, said Foxy, I know the carters who used to live in the city, then moved up to the deserted kilns of the charcoal-burners and ended up in a cabin at the top of the mountain; they carry food to the woodcutters on trolleys they fixed up with rollers, goimg up and down between the marketplace and the mountaintop several times a week; on their way back they get trucks to pull them up the mountainside, my father often took them, willingly, whenever they asked him to, said Foxy, and his lips narrowed to a slit, like a blade, he sat there silently for a while, then muttered that we could trust him, he was no fool.

I trust you totally, said Dumpling, who was lying behind us in the nest of quilts, poor little freckles had the shivers ever since we got our inoculation, and wet the bed every night, so he had to use a rag as a nappy, I trust you totally, Foxy, just please tell us how we're going to get over the fence or through the gate. Well, that's the part I don't know yet, answered Foxy listlessly, then turned to the window, because Plain Vera was waving to us from the courtyard.

Luck was on our side. The next day a consignment of potatoes arrived for the kitchen, a couple of crates of onions and a big parcel had also been put on the truck. We watched the director from the corridor, walking around the dilapidated truck, talking to the trucker. It appeared that one of the tyres was flat. Foxy pinched my arm, we'll never have a piece of luck like this again, he said, articulating with care. I'd got to know Foxy very well by then, and knew that when he spoke slowly, he'd thought of something clever.

Soon after, we were taken in to supper, and we saw that the truck was still standing outside the entrance to the kitchen. Foxy happened to notice that the trucker was sitting in the director's office, they were laughing loudly and drinking brandy. After supper I stayed behind in the washroom and waited for the girls; don't fall asleep, I whispered into Plain Vera's ear, I was still whispering when one of the carers shouted at me and sent me upstairs.

We waited until the rest of the boys were all snoring and snuffling in the dormitory, and the weakly-lit corridor grew silent. We crawled carefully out of bed, quickly put on all the clothes we owned, Foxy took out several hats from various hiding-places, and thrust them into his coat pockets. We knew we had very little time, just as long as it took for the carer to drink a shot of brandy down in the director's office, then he'd be back to stand guard. We slipped down the stairs and across the courtyard, keeping close to the wall. Plain Vera arrived from the

direction of the terrace. With a practised movement, Foxy jumped up into the loading space, pulled up Dumpling, then me and Vera. We lay silently, flat on our stomachs behind the crates.

Around midnight, when the truck was swerving to avoid the potholes along the high road and we could plainly hear the driver's continuous loud swearing, Foxy gave the sign and we jumped off the truck at a level-crossing gate. We lay in the ditch and did not dare climb out until the hum of the engine receded into the distance. We watched the fog swallow up his tail-lights and set off towards the pinewoods in pitch darkness.

What came after that has become blurred in my mind. The cold, the rain did not matter, the mountain was ours, we could go where we liked. Next day we found the cabin, and the carters let us stay on sufferance. We did what we could but they did not really want or need our help. There was hardly anything to eat, just enough watery soup to spare us a bowlful each. We spent a lot of time wandering around in the forest. It turned out that Foxy was very good at climbing trees. He climbed up as high as he could, perched among the branches like a bird and stared at the countryside for hours. He did not mind getting drenched in the rain. He could see as far as the city, he claimed he could see the house they used to live in. Dumpling took no notice of anyone, he made up a bed of blankets in a corner of the cabin and slept all day. Foxy said he didn't like the look of the freckled boy who could not stop coughing, he'll end up with pneumonia, Foxy grumbled, but Dumpling smiled, told us not to worry, his cold would soon be gone.

I hung around Plain Vera, who was slowly turning into Pretty Vera again. Her hair began to grow out, blonde wisps framed her face, and the red spots were beginning to fade. I watched her at night as she slept. Sometimes she was angry, sometimes she didn't mind, and once she took hold of my hand.

The rain would not stop. We all caught cold and coughed like Dumpling. Our throats hurt, so we drank hot water. We huddled together beneath the blankets and listened to the news from the city. The carters, who often went down into the valley, spoke of disturbances and chaos. The woodcutters sat around a crackling pocket radio. They said everything would change very soon. The next day the announcer talked a lot of nonsense, then the transmission was suddenly broken off. One of the carters, on his way up the forest path, started shouting when he was still quite a distance away that the ammunition dump had been broken into. We heard shots from a distance. Foxy climbed a tree and saw a great cloud of smoke; in the main square the presidential palace was in flames. Trucks carrying soldiers passed along the main road. We did not know what to do, wandered what would happen to us. In the night Dumpling was delirious, raving, he perspired heavily and wet the bed three times. Foxy said we would have to go back to the home in the morning, even though we'd be sure to get a beating. Dumpling needs a proper bed and hot food.

We heard gunfire during the night as well. In the morning we laid Dumpling in a handcart and with the help of two lads hauled him back to the orphanage.

It started raining again. Dumpling groaned and mumbled, Pretty Vera cried. Foxy did not say a word all along the way. When we said goodbye to the carters he picked up the freckled boy and set off with him towards the gate. I was surprised to see how strong the lanky Foxy was.

We walked into the entrance hall. We could tell at once that something extraordinary had happened. They were clearing out the stock-room, the dining hall was full of hastily done up packages; the stock-keeper and the cook were arguing about sharing them out. A loud dispute was going on upstairs; we soon realized that the director was shouting at the carers. Threats were made, the director listed which of them he would inform against and why, the carers in turn spoke of squandered relief funds and misappropriated parcels and said that there were informers among them. In the meanwhile the cook was carrying the packages outside and putting them on the back seat of a battered car. The stock-keeper ran out after him into the courtyard, they started pushing each other about, began to fight. Foxy muttered that the rats were deserting the sinking ship. No one paid any attention to us. Foxy set off down the staircase leading to the sickroom in the basement. Dumpling was in a very bad way, he was delirious. Pretty Vera turned away and brushed a tear from her cheek.

We sat in our room until evening. We learned that others had come down with the fever as well, and that the director was very angry about the inoculation. He shouted in the corridor that he'd been duped, deceived, and would now be held responsible for everything. He spoke about truth, proclaimed that truth will out, and that the guilty must atone for their sins. He was drunk. We didn't care about the truth. All we cared about was getting a proper meal, but there was no food of at all, as there was no heating or electricity either. Pretty Vera groped her way over to us from the other wing in the dark, we held hands and shivered with the cold. Every now and then Foxy would swear softly. He was very worried about Dumpling, but they would not allow him down into the basement. We knew there were no medicines in the building, but we did not speak of this. We sat and listened to the sound of gunfire coming from the direction of the city.

At dawn the shouting recommenced, rousing us from our sleep. Then we heard the hum of an engine. Foxy ran to the window and gave a shout. A truck was driving through the gate. We rushed along the corridor, down the creaking stairs. Someone was pounding on the entrance door. The director staggered out of his room in an overcoat, holding a candle. He was bringing the keys. The man who walked in through the door was tall, gaunt and grey-haired, his face scarred. He stared at Foxy, rooted to the spot. Foxy made a strange noise like a bark and threw himself into the man's arms. They embraced each other, Foxy sobbed, and from time to time a yelping sound escaped from his throat. Then he collected himself, quietened, and stared at his father. I've turned grey, that's what you're staring at, isn't it, asked the man. He spoke with difficulty, with a lisp. Where are

your teeth, asked Foxy. They smashed almost all of them, replied the gaunt man with an expressionless face, but that's not important, come on, let's go while we can. Home, said Foxy happily. The boy's not going anywhere, said the director. Foxy's father did not bother to reply, spoke only to his son, we're going across the border, pack your things, son! Foxy stared at him uncomprehendingly. Haven't you got any clothes, his father asked. Of course I have, I'm wearing them, said Foxy. In any case, said the director, I think you ought to know that these little rascals did a bunk, if you'd have come yesterday, you wouldn't have found your son here. The gaunt man, as if noticing the director for the first time, looked him very calmly in the eye. I hope you were only speaking in jest when you called my son a rascal, because if you weren't, I'll make you eat this candle. Not so fast, said the director, raising his voice, don't you dare threaten me, and I'm not letting the child leave, what do you think, you can't just take a child away from here like that, you have to get authorization from the town hall!

Foxy's father turned on his heel, and through the door left open a crack spoke softly into the early morning mist. Outside everything was cloaked in white. Appearing out of nowhere, five tall, rugged, grim-faced men walked into the house. They came silently, without wasting time with explanations or threats. They surrounded the director, who involuntarily took a step back.

Let's go, repeated the gaunt man emphatically, but Foxy hesitated. My friend, he said slowly, my friend is very sick, I'd like to say goodbye to him. There's no time, replied his father, there are several of us as you see, and we have to pick up others on the way. Foxy still made no move. Then Pretty Vera walked over to him, be glad you're going to be taken away from here, your father's come for you! I too stepped up to him and said, we'll stay with Dumpling, you go.

The lanky boy hugged us both. Then he snatched his most precious hat off his head, the black one he had brought from home, into the lining of which his mother had embroidered his initials. He thrust it into my hands: here, take it... give it to Dumpling... God bless you!

And they left, seven of them, like the deadly sins, but that was just chance, a small group of hardy men who had been through a great deal, and who now disappeared as suddenly as they had come out of the white mist, and crafty Foxy disappeared with them.

That left just the two of us, Pretty Vera and I. The freckled boy died next morning. There was no time to give him Foxy's hat. They did not allow us more than a moment to stand on the threshold. We stood in the narrow basement corridor and saw a small heap covered with a white sheet on the bed. The boy with no name had always walked hunched and had fallen asleep curled up into a ball.

That week more and more children got sick. On Saturday more beds were carried down into the basement. In the evening a man came from the city, someone we had never seen before. He ordered the director into his office and questioned him for hours; only half-sentences could be heard through the locked

door, the strange man's sharp, stern questions and the director's defensive bluster as he kept repeating the words "experiment" and "noble aim".

Next day at noon a black car stopped before the entrance. Two men wearing dark overcoats got out. They walked into the dining hall without a word of greeting, pushed aside the carers and dragged the director away from his Sunday lunch, taking him with them.

I don't remember how we got to learn the truth. Perhaps it was the carers, grown suddenly, surprisingly garrulous who let slip the secret, perhaps it was another, hastily conducted medical examination that disclosed what had really happened, or perhaps it was we ourselves who realized that we had been infected with a disease, for money. The pharmaceutical company had paid a lot of money to have us inoculated. We were infected on purpose, that was the experiment. It was the virus that gave us fever.

The truth came out, but the director's prediction didn't come true, not completely; no one was punished. Suddenly he was back in the house and has been walking about in his shabby overcoat ever since, getting drunk on brandy in the evenings, just like before. Nothing has changed.

I don't care about any of it. I remember the day of the inoculation as the best day of my life: I've never eaten so many wonderful things; that was the day the Plain-Pretty Vera arrived, and Foxy and Dumpling were still here. And I remember the sweet-smelling nurse with the velvet ribbon, I remember her caressing my face. I don't care that the fever keeps coming back more and more often, don't mind feeling thirsty all the time, don't care that I'm getting weaker. The carers say they'll be bringing me medicine soon, and I'll get better.

I don't mind that Pretty Vera's gone either. Maybe she'll be lucky. A wealthy family is going to adopt her. Pretty Vera cried when she heard that her parents had disappeared at the time of the shooting, and she cried when the director pointed her out to the strangers who came from so far away. Pretty Vera will be put on a plane, will get new clothes and new shoes, and chocolate in silver foil, as much as she wants; she can go to school and spend her holidays by the seaside. They're still here in the city, staying at the hotel, fixing her papers.

In the afternoons I lie on my bed and stare at the sky, watch the airplanes. Wandering which plane Pretty Vera will be on. I have Foxy's hat hidden under my pillow. Pretty Vera gave me something to remember her by too, she cut the top button off her cloth coat. I was in the courtyard when the car left, Pretty Vera turned and pressed both palms against the window, pressed her face against the glass. I stood with my hands in my pockets, unmoving. Neither of us waved.

I lie on my bed, stare out at the sky, at the courtyard. Spring is passing slowly. A long time ago, around this time, my brother always picked cherries for me. Everything has turned green, the garden is really pretty. My favourite month has arrived. It is May. ❧

Translated by Eszter Molnár

István Deák

On the Leash

Éva Standeisky: *Az írók és a hatalom,* 1956–1963 (Hungarian Writers and Government Power, 1956–1963), Budapest, 1956-os Intézet, 1996, 482 pp. illust.

The very title of this fascinating book points to a fundamental difference between the position that writers occupy, or are believed to occupy, in East European, as opposed to Western societies. Who in the West would want to write a major monograph on relations between writers and those in power? It is understood, especially in the United States, that writers are free to criticize everybody and everything to their hearts' delight, but that they should wield little, if any, political clout. Their primary role is to entertain, not to influence decision-making in a democratic state. Not so in Eastern Europe where writers are expected to represent the conscience of the nation. When tyrannies, whether domestic or imposed by a foreign power, create an unbridgeable gulf between the governors and the governed, it is the duty of writers, poets, and other creative intellectuals to uphold national values, even at the risk of their lives. The bard who sings his defiance of arbitrary authority and who is killed for his efforts is a recurrent theme in East European patriotic literature. National revolutions are often seen as the direct consequence of the bard's self-sacrifice. In brief, literature in this region has often served as a surrogate for politics, and writers and poets have often substituted for politicians, who were seen as corrupt, tyrannical, or in foreign pay.

But there is also an opposite figure, especially in twentieth century literary works: the bard who bows to tyranny for money, privileges, or to protect his life. Éva Standeisky explains very well that writers in mid-century Hungary played both roles, sometimes simultaneously, and that to see them as knights in shining armour would be as wrong as to treat them like the rogues many of them

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often appear to be. Moreover, Standeisky makes it clear that while Hungarian writers exercized real political influence before the events of 1956, this influence began to wane almost immediately after the Revolution when their earlier sharp criticism of the Communist regime was gradually replaced by compromise and submission. The author does not state it in so many words, but we know that what is finally diminishing the political importance of writers in Hungary or elsewhere in Eastern Europe is post-Communist democracy which treats writers no better and no worse than they are treated in the West.

To be more precise, as Standeisky explains, during the three years preceding the revolution of 1956, Communist writers in Hungary played a crucial role in uncovering the crimes and shame of the Stalinist Communist regime; this often included their own crimes and shame. Fatefully, however, the spiritual upheaval writers created in making reformist demands soon burst from the confines of the writers' clubs and literary journals. A mass political movement emerged that wished not to reform but to end Soviet rule and with it perhaps state socialism. These rapid developments made writers both enthusiastic and uneasy; during the revolutionary days, they ran after the events more than they led them.

Carried away by the excitement of the Revolution and their own popularity, writers made radical statements; after the suppression of the Revolution this led to retribution. Interestingly, however, retribution affected only a minority of writers; the vast majority escaped punishment for having written the same type of poems, manifestoes, and editorials that had sent others to prison.

Who was punished and who was spared? This is Standeisky's second major theme, in which she explains that while the victims of retribution were mainly Communist writers, those who escaped punishment were generally writers who had never belonged to the Party. Among the latter, a conspicuous place was occupied by the so-called populists, who thought of themselves as modern Hungarian history's greatest patriots, but among whom one could find some unscrupulous servants of both fascism and Communism.

To be truthful, East European populism knew many varieties, and populist intellectuals represented many shades of politics. What tied all populists together, whether in Hungary, Romania, or elsewhere in the region, was their attachment to the peasantry, from among whom most of them had originated. Populists wanted to improve social conditions in the usually terribly neglected East European countryside, a goal which made them suspicious of central power, the big cities, and modernity. Government, they felt, favoured industry over agriculture; banks exploited the small farmers, and the city dumped an immoral, foreign culture on the unsuspecting country folk. The hostility of populists toward the city was aggravated by the fact that city people were traditionally alien to those in the countryside in both language and religion. However, matters were not simple for the populists either because, despite their rural origins, they too

were city people, living and working in Budapest, for instance, in close association and friendship with individual urban, often Jewish writers. What separated the populists from the so-called urbanist writers was that the populists' concern for the peasantry overruled all other ideologies and cultural orientations. Hence the populists' willingness to accept any government that was likely to improve the condition of the peasants.

The author's third theme is how those writers behaved who had to face police questioning, the courts and imprisonment as opposed to those who remained free but had to decide day after day what to do, especially whether to publish while their colleagues were in jail.

Standeisky's excellent work benefitted from the sudden availability of a mountain of original sources: police reports, court records, letters to and from prison, prison diaries, reports written by stooges (which makes for most interesting and discouraging reading), and the minutes of discussions in Party headquarters regarding policy towards the literati. The author concludes, among other things, that the greatest psychological burden was borne by Communist writers: both those who had lost faith and were now forced to make compromises with the Party, and those who had not lost faith and worried about their behaviour in the autumn of 1956. Standeisky feels that some writers, like Tibor Déry, Zoltán Zelk, and Tibor Tardos, may have become convinced that they had betrayed the Party during what was now officialy termed a counter-revolution. She describes Déry's prison writing, entitled Lelkiismeretvizsgálat (Examining My Conscience) as "a strange mixture of spontaneously arising guilty conscience and dissimulation driven by the instinct of survival" (Standeisky, p. 308). Déry wrote in *Lelkiismeretvizsgálat:*

> My error consisted of not having recognized the Party's right to be wrong... in my thoughts I constantly sinned against the Party...; I abandoned it when it needed me most. (p. 308)

Was this the confession of a penitent sinner or a bitter satire? We'll never know.

Standeisky says about Zoltán Zelk that, while being interrogated, the writer "came to believe more and more that he, together with his fellow-oppositionary Communist writers, had unwillingly helped the 'counter-revolutionaries'" (p. 317). Reading the many self-flagellating confessions, cited by Standeisky, one cannot help feeling that some of the mea culpas, written both in and out of prison, were genuine. Writers who had devoted their life and career to the cause of Communism, felt responsible for having contributed to the ruin of their ideology and their nation.

Events leading to the Revolution are rather well-known. Under Stalinist rule, writers, whether Communists or not, generally acted as "Court Writers," kowtowing to Mátyás Rákosi and colleagues, penning odes to him and to Stalin, and attempting to fulfil the wishes of József Révai, Hungary's cultural dictator.

Unfortunately for himself, Révai was too intelligent not to know that most of the "socialist realist" pieces of literature created under his iron rule were worthless. Yet he had no idea how to improve their quality.

A few writers may have had doubts about the course of events, but if they did, they did not dare show it. Standeisky mentions that the principal character in her story, Tibor Déry, a famous Communist writer of long standing, was much impressed when, in 1947, he read Arthur Koestler's devastatingly anti-Stalinist Yogi and the Commissar. He was tempted to draw the consequences with regard to Communism, but then changed his mind. In 1949, Déry as well as most other Communist writers excoriated László Rajk, the Communist former minister of interior, who confessed in a great show trial to the vilest of crimes. The Rajk trial had destroyed his faith in "real socialism," Déry later claimed, but of this there has never been any proof. Rather, we must believe Déry, when he stated, at the 1951 congress of the Hungarian Writers' Association: "It is thanks to the Soviet Union that I'm a writer and that I'm alive."

Déry's statement brings us to a dilemma that Standeisky tends to shy away from: scores of writers under the Rákosi-Révai regime were of Jewish origin, as were, of course, many among Hungary's political leaders at that time. The fact that both Jewish writers and Jewish politicians had Hungarian names; that they behaved like any other Hungarian, and that they never, ever openly admitted their Jewish origin in public, makes the problem all the more interesting. Déry's statement could be and probably was interpreted as meaning that he, a Communist, survived thanks to the timely arrival of the Red Army. In reality, he was haunted by his Jewish descent, and that by being a Jew he had come so close to death under Nazi rule.

Very occasionally, Standeisky quotes Déry and other writers making oblique and mostly private allusions to their Jewish origin, but she does not attempt to investigate how this influenced their behaviour, or that of their non-Jewish fellow-writers, or that of the Party leadership toward them. Yet it must have been a crucial factor. Not without reason did the interwar and the immediate postwar Communist Party harbour such a disproportionate number of Jewish intellectuals. Déry and colleagues survived the Holocaust because they lived in Budapest from where Jews were not deported to Auschwitz; or because they were lucky, or because they had non-Jewish friends. Still, the loss of family members and friends as well as the fact that they had been rejected by Hungarian society must have left a very deep mark on them.

These writers were no Zionists and even their professed Communist internationalism did not exclude their Hungarian patriotism. Like all other Hungarian Jewish Communists, whether in 1919 or after 1945, they not only felt Hungarian, they tended to see themselves as among the better Hungarians. Still, their life since at least 1944 was ridden with fear. Standeisky quotes Zoltán Zelk, another

famous reformist Communist writer and poet who, initially during the 1956 Revolution, did not dare attend demonstrations because, as a Jew, he feared that he would be torn to pieces. All the greater his joy that, when he finally appeared in the street, he was hoisted on the shoulders of demonstrators. In brief, not to discuss the Jewishness of so many writers means not to discuss an issue that decisively influenced the writers' lives.

The first criticism of the regime's shortcomings appeared in 1953 after the Soviets had caused Imre Nagy to become prime minister and after he had begun a more liberal political course. The first cautious signs of yearning for free speech became a flood in the next few years; this, despite the removal of Imre Nagy from his post in 1955 and Party Secretary Rákosi's last-ditch stand against the writers. No doubt, many writers behaved very bravely at that time; they risked the loss of their income, even imprisonment.

Instead of new oppression, however, there came massive demonstrations, on October 23, 1956. Reform Communist intellectuals participated actively in these events; the non-Communists were more cautious. Many described these as "delirious days": the formerly dogmatic and now enthusiastically reformist Writers' Association met repeatedly, issuing manifestoes and watching over the moral purity of the Revolution. In general, the writers were ahead of Imre Nagy and fellow reformist Communist politicians in demanding democratic changes. Still, overall, the writers now played a secondary role. Real power lay in the hands of the newly created or re-created political parties and of a few thousand armed youngsters in the streets who had stopped and defeated the Soviet tanks.

Even those writers seemed to be happy who, a few years earlier, were more Stalinist than the worst Stalinist political leaders. The term, "miraculous revolution", flowed freely from everyone's pen; in the last days of October even the generally more cautious populist writers decided to step forward.

Standeisky is rather gentle when it comes to discussing the actions of such famous populists as Péter Veres, Ferenc Erdei, László Németh, Géza Féja, and others. These men, who claimed to represent the peasantry—considered the true Hungarian nation—had shown themselves great masters of survival. Often they were highly talented, which makes their opportunism even more reprehensible. Some of them had shared in the general anti-Semitism of the years before the Second World War. As a result, they were condemned to silence in the immediate post-war years and one, József Erdélyi, was imprisoned. But once the Communists had established themselves firmly in power, they began to favour the populist writers. Why it was so is one of the unsolved questions of Communist rule. Perhaps it was because as non-Jews, the populists were likely to serve as a bridge between the Party leadership and the people. It was another sign of the degree of Jewish assimilation that the Jewish Communist political leaders demonstrated more sympathy for the populists than for the mostly Jewish urbanist literati in whom they may have perceived their own shortcomings.

The populists were enthusiastic about the Revolution but because they were generally more interested in public welfare than in the elusive concept of freedom, they were among the first to warn, during the Revolution, against dismantling the welfare state created by the Communistsystem. In recognition, János Kádár's post-revolutionary regime hastened to honour László Németh, next to Gyula Illyés the most famous populist writer. Never mind that, before 1945, Németh was a militant anti-Bolshevik and, in his own peculiar way, a strong anti-Semite. Note that not a single populist writer was imprisoned either under Rákosi or under Kádár.

In praising the Revolution, the writers were, of course, not any different from János Kádár who, as head of the newly constitute democratic Communist Party, at the end of October 1956 hailed those who had fought with weapons in their hands. A few days later, however, Kádár went over to the Soviet side and returned to Budapest in a Soviet tank.

When Soviet armour appeared for the second time in the streets of the city, it was the Writers' Association that launched the country's last appeal to the free world for assistance. As Standeisky explains, the appeal was drafted by Gyula Háy, another Jewish writer of long-standing Communist past who, after 1953, belonged to the reformist opposition. For this, Háy was later sentenced to six years in prison.

The crushing of armed resistance did not mean the end of the Revolution. Many weeks of a general strike followed. Communist oppositionary writers were not idle either; they continued to publish free newspapers. In this and similar acitivites they were joined by such courageous non-Communist writers as, for instance, Árpád Göncz, today the president of the Hungarian Republic.

János Kádár's early regime was so bewildered and so powerless that it did not proceed immediately against the intellectuals. Arrests began inn earnest only in January 1957; Tibor Déry's turn came in April 1957.

Discussions in highest Party circles regarding the writers are best typified by the words of Deputy Minister of Interior István Tömpe: "The government is profoundly disenchanted by the writers." Meanwhile, a number of dogmatic Communist writers emerged to incite the Party against the reformist Communist writers. One of the radicals was shameless enough to argue that Tibor Déry and Zoltán Zelk were "out-and-out fascists". Yet, as Standeisky shows, Kádár and colleagues did not trust the leftists either in whom they also recognized the lack of talent. The Party was slow in making up its mind, and when it finally did, the instructions it gave to the political police were so vague as to make it difficult to build a case against the writers.

This was, in any case, not the political police of old. Confused and frightened by the events of the Revolution, and also by the punishment meted out to some of their leaders both by the pre-1956 and the post-1956 Communist leaderships, the police behaved with some circumspection, at least vis-à-vis the intellectuals.

Not so toward the young workers and students, who had fought with weapons in their hand: these were treated as common criminals, were often beaten in prison, and were executed after a mockery of a trial. Writers in jail were threatened and intimidated, but they were not tortured. Nor was this necessary for, unlike the Communist and democratic victims of the Great Purges in the late forties and early fifties, these intellectuals were not "innocent". They may have been and often have remained dedicated Communists but, during the Revolution, they issued manifestoes, wrote poems and editorials, denouncing the Soviet Union and unmasking Communist crimes. This, according to Kádár and friends, amounted to treason and to an attempt to overthrow the people's democracy. Never mind that Kádár himself was guilty of such "crimes".

In mounting a propaganda campaign against the writers, regime propagandists often referred to the "petty-bourgeois background" of their targets. This, as everyone understood, was an indirect reference to the writers' Jewish origin. Still, it would be wrong to accuse the Kádár regime of anti-Semitism; if anything, it was less so than the Rákosi, Révai, Gerő, and Farkas team, all of whom were of Jewish origin and who thought nothing of inciting people against black marketeers, for instance, emphasizing their Jewish-sounding names. Also, such Jewish Communist politicians as, for instance, the relatively enlightened György Aczél, played a key role in the prosecution of the writers.

The events put the populist writers in a quandary, Standeisky argues. Much less committed to Communism than the Communist writers, and profundly patriotic, the populists should have been outraged by János Kádár's betrayal of Hungary to the Soviets. Maybe they were outraged; still, in the spring of 1957, László Németh readily accepted the prestigious and highly remunerative Kossuth Prize, as did, incidentally, the great poet Lőrinc Szabó, another former right-wing writer and post-World War II outcast. It is true, however, that no populist engaged in an ideological campaign against Déry and other imprisoned writers. Rather, Gyula Illyés and others tried to help the defendants when called before the court as witnesses. Still, the populists had little to be proud of in those days.

By the summer of 1957, eighty-eight intellectuals and politicians were in prison: against them a series of trials were mounted, mostly in secret. While this went on, the country as a whole, and the writers in particular, began to accept the inevitable: on May 1, 1957, hundreds of thousands marched in Budapest in what was at least a partly genuin demonstration of loyalty to János Kádár and the the Party. Without any doubt, the marchers included many who, in October 1956, had demonstrated for an end to Communism.

The writers showed their own party loyalty, when they signed, in September 1957, a manifesto protesting the United Nations' condemnation of the suppression of the October Revolution. Among other things, they accused the United States of blatant imperialist intervention in the affairs of the sovereign Hun-

garian state. This was a shameful document, indeed, that few writers were willing to remember later. But, as Standeisky shows, nearly everyone signed it, including Gyula Illyés, the great old man of Hungarian letters as well as all the other populist writers. Only a handful, including such individualists as Miklós Mészöly, Géza Ottlik, János Pilinszky, and Ágnes Nemes Nagy, did not append their signature to the document, and it is questionable whether they had been asked to sign it in the first place.

Why did more than two hundred writers sign? Why did dozens of others hasten to append their signatures later, complaining that they had not been notified in time? Standeisky tries but cannot find an answer; a hope that this gesture may help those in prison may have been one reason; fear may have been another, but they could not have been the main reasons. Individual actions, good contacts in the Ministry of Interior were the way to help those in prison, and as for fear, there was no chance whatsoever that the political police would arrest a Gyula Illyés, for instance, for such a minor act of defiance. In fact, no harm came to any of the non-signers, even though they were much less well positioned than Illyés and others. Some specialists of the period feel that the writers and the regime were in silent collusion regarding the need to satisfy the Soviet leaders with meaningful gestures while preserving some freedom of action at home. I do not share this view; nor does Éva Standeisky. No doubt, such a silent collusion came into being a decade or two later, long after Imre Nagy and hundreds of revolutionaries had been executed. But by then, Kádár and friends had turned in a liberal direction.

The fact is that most Hungarian intellectuals were no less malleable than other people. Unfortunately, as Standeisky explains, the UN protest manifesto had a devastating effect on those in prison and on younger intellectuals.

Few imprisoned writers persevered in their defiance. Some at least avoided accusing themselves and others; the great majority of imprisoned literati, however, engaged in a desperate campaign to get themselves out of prison. Tibor Déry, whose nerves were frayed to begin with, and who suffered from intolerable claustrophobia, besieged the Party leadership with letters confessing his failure as a Communist and praising the Party. Zoltán Zelk, Tibor Tardos, and many, many others acted no differently.

How sincere were these letters? Again, it is nearly impossible to tell. Standeisky reminds us that Déry and others voiced the same sentiments of shame and humiliation in writing to fellow prisoners or to family members; but, then, these letters, too, may have been written for the eyes of the censor and the prosecutor.

The *mea culpa*s did not seem to have helped the defendants. One wonders also whether worldwide protest against, for instance, Déry's imprisonment, led by Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, François Mauriac, J.B. Priestley, T.S. Eliot, and other internationally famous writers, was of much use to him. In court, Déry confessed that he had been a "bad Communist"; he was still given nine years, of which he actually spent three in jail, always in very bad nervous condition. A few

writers, such as, for instance, István Lakatos, never gave in to the police investigators. He was sentenced to less then three years which, on appeal, was changed to less than two years. But then Lakatos must have benefited from his never been a Party member: in Communist Hungary, renegade Party members were dealt with most severely.

It seems that while the Party gave general directions on who should be punished, the precise number of years in prison was left to the judges. The lay judges were generally more bloodthirsty than the professionals, although Ferenc Vida, the professional judge who sentenced both Tibor Déry and Imre Nagy, seems to have been the worst among all. Note that Vida lived and died peacefully in post-Communist Hungary.

Lest we cast a stone at these writers, let us remember that other defendants under totalitarian control rarely behaved any better. The majority of resisters involved in the German July 20 conspiracy, for instance, asserted in captivity that they were good National Socialists (which many had certainly been before joining the resistance), and they readily betrayed their fellow conspirators. Yet, as a new book on the German resistance rather effectively proves (Theodor Hamerow, On the Road to the Wolf's Lair: German Resistance to Hitler. Harvard University Press, 1997) by far not all the defendants were tortured by the Gestapo. Add to this that the German conspirators were mostly officers and aristocrats, two good reasons for them to be proud and defiant, whereas the arrested Hungarian writers were intellectuals with little other experience than fear and worry.

Conditions in János Kádár's jails were much better than in Mátyás Rákosi's prisons, at least for the writers. They could receive visitors; they were given books, and they were allowed to write. A few, like the historian Domokos Kosáry and Árpád Göncz, claimed later to have been happy in jail: no one disturbed them and they were free to work. For others, prison was hell. A few writers were freed on the day of sentencing; others, such as Zoltán Zelk, were amnestied a year later; Tibor Déry was released on April 1, 1960. For several years after he was not allowed to publish, and only in 1963 was he granted a passport. Thereafter, he published frequently, but his new writings, some of them outstanding, were permeated by sadness.

In 1961, Kádár announced his celebrated policy of "whoever is not against us, is with us." Later, Hungary's cultural tsar, György Aczél, introduced his controversial policy of recognizing three types of cultural activity: "the one we support, the one we tolerate, and the one we suppress." It seems that few of the writers who burned their fingers back in 1956, risked falling into to the third, or even into the second category. Their places in the political arena were taken by such younger intellectuals as György Konrád, Ferenc Kőszeg, János Kis, György Bence, Gábor Demszky, and László Rajk, Jr., the latter the son of the executed Communist leader of the same name. With a few exceptions, these and other dissidents were not writers but rather political philosophers, often of Marxist

background. Some had been the disciples of the Marxist-Leninist philosopher György Lukács. Not untypically, quite a few among them were of Jewish origin.

A number of populist writers, especially Gyula Illyés and his circle, entered the fray earlier but restricted their activity to trying to persuade the government and the Party to speak up for the rights of the Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries.

All the oppositionaries together created a quiet and bloodless revolutionary movement that contributed significantly to the collapse, in 1989, of the Communist experiment. It must be stated, however, that many Communist Party leaders did their own best to bring about this peaceful collapse.

We are to thank Éva Standeisky for her occasionally lengthy but honest, informative, superbly documented, and highly stimulating oeuvre, and we are to thank the Institute for the Research of the 1956 Revolution in Budapest for publishing this book. ❧

Miklós Lackó

The Truths of the Soul

From the Correspondence between Lajos Fülep, Charles de Tolnay and Karl Kerényi

Fortunate the man whose enthusiastic and knowledgeable disciples will not allow their teacher's oeuvre (even though it be fragmentary) fall into oblivion, but become loyal custodians of what he has left behind. Lajos Fülep (1885–1970), one of the great names in 20th-century Hungarian philosophy of art and art history, was such. Two of his disciples, Dóra Csanak and Árpád Timár, have long devoted their energies to arranging Fülep's papers. The result so far are four volumes of correspondence (1904–1945), and three volumes of collected papers (1902–1930). They have worked with great care and some of the many footnotes, particularly to the correspondence, give evidence of research exemplifying a love for their teacher which comes close to awe.

Was Lajos Fülep really as great as his editors make him appear? A final answer must await the complete publication of his collected works. What has been published so far in the way of papers and correspondence suggests that Fülep was the unique and extraordinary participant in that Hungarian cultural modernization which took off early this century. When still young, he published much that was novel and gave evidence of considerable maturity. In 1906 he was among the first to show enthusiasm for *Új Versek* (New Verse), the first volume published by Endre Ady, who revolutionized Hungarian poetry. Even earlier, when barely twenty, he wrote on Cézanne whom, right to the end of his life, he looked on as the transcender of Impressionism and the greatest of the new painters. He was one of those militants of the alternative culture of the nascent 20th century who confronted the ruling arch-conservative spirit of the time. They included György Lukács, long before he took up Marxism, Leó Popper, who died young, and whom many today consider an early avatar of Erwin Panofsky,

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and the poets Mihály Babits and Dezső Kosztolányi who, with Endre Ady, renewed Hungarian poetry; Frigyes Karinthy, the father of the modern literary grotesque in Hungary, József Rippl-Rónai and József Egry, whom Fülep considered the most important Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painters, and that most unique and most original painter, Tivadar Csontváry-Kosztka, who actually belonged to an older generation.

What could be called the alternative counter-culture of the time were a bunch of highly diverse personalities. Most sympathized with Social Democracy and were bourgeois radicals of liberal leanings—who had not yet broken with positivism. A smaller number, however, Fülep amongst them, recognized that European culture was in crisis. They looked to the new wave of idealism, the reawakened interest in Nietzsche and Dostoevsky, to Bergson, Simmel and to German (or Italian) neo-metaphysical idealism for a way out. In the years of the Great War they liked to call themselves ethical idealists, remaining progressives in social thought. In the more developed parts of Europe, the neo-idealists strengthened the ranks of the neo-conservatives, but in backward Hungary they stayed in the progressive camp.

Within this camp Lajos Fülep, (much like Béla Bartók and Endre Ady, and Mihály Babits and Dezső Kosztolányi in their own way) distinguished himself in ridding the national consciousness of some of its pathological offshoots, and in anxious care and admiration for the *hoi polloi* and ancient peasant culture.

As his works and correspondence show, Fülep's creative interests covered a wide span up to the end of the First World War. Between 1907 and 1914 he lived in Italy, chiefly in Florence, interspersed with a longer stay in Paris and a shorter one in London. One of the young philosophers in Florence he studied was Benedetto Croce, for whose neo-Hegelianism he showed some enthusiasm while maintaining his independence as a thinker. At the outbreak of war in 1914 he returned to Hungary, as did Lukács from Heidelberg, and Béla Balázs, the most typical of the Hungarian Art Nouveau writers from Paris. In Hungary he confronted the spiritual backwoodsmen by producing outstanding papers on Dante, Saint Francis of Assisi and Petrarca. What was even more important, he enriched thinking on the theory of art history. His *Magyar művészet—európai művészet* (Hungarian Art—European Art), a series of papers which established the canon more or less still valid today, was written in the war years. The aim of the work—which was only published in book form after 1919, and which remained the *magnum opus* of his printed works, was to look at painting, sculpture and architecture, opposing currently dominant views, so that the line of a worthwhile tradition could be established. Much like Babits, Fülep was primarily interested in the relationship between national and European art. It was in this context that he elaborated his theory of the correlation of the national and the European. According to this, works of art inevitably show the features of the national context of their genesis, but

only have European importance if they also carry a universal (European) message.

Fülep was never directly involved in politics but he had an interest in all that crucially affected the fate of the nation. He stood for a nation with sound social institutions, a nation with a healthy culture. As far as one can tell, he supported the 1918 bourgeois revolution, and although he was never a Marxist, he accepted an appointment to a chair in art history at the University of Budapest during the short-lived (March–July 1919) ultra-left Hungarian Soviet Republic, where his long-time colleague, György Lukács, who had converted to revolutionary Marxism, was in charge of culture. This happened even though Fülep had studied theology during the war, publishing much of importance to Calvinist theology. A tremendous respect for the young Fülep was shared by just about everybody who took part in the alternative culture. Later, in the 1930s, when the borders between oppositional and official tended to be blurred to some degree, this respect spread to a wider palette. Fülep's personality, the moral and vital attractiveness of his person, played as important a role in this as his works. He was a man of some stature and one and all within his radius was aware of this. Every kind of progressive or reformist trend in Hungary would have been glad of his adherence, even in a dominant position. In 1930, after much prevarication, the Faculty of Arts of the University of Pécs appointed him to a lecturership. Right up to 1940, as long as the Faculty of Arts at Pécs lasted, he gave lectures in the history and the philosophy of art. At long last the students were able to show enthusiasm for a scholar of great learning.

As a writer Fülep was not as productive between the wars as earlier. After 1919 he, as it were, went into internal exile. He qualified as a Calvinist minister and was successively elected to serve the congregations of Baja and then Zengővárkony. The emoluments were small and he lived in straitened circumstances. Things were made even more difficult by accusations of sedition in 1923 and of ideologically addling his congregation in 1929. Being a highly sensitive man, he was only able to clear his name at the cost of considerable mental anguish. As against this, the publication in book form in 1923 of earlier papers was a great joy. (*Magyar művészet*—Hungarian Art). *Művészet és világnézet* (Art and Ideology), written in 1923, somewhat under the influence of Charles de Tolnay, shows a receptivity to the Dilthey–Dvorak *Geistesgeschichte* (history of ideas) approach, albeit maintaining the notion of the autonomy of art.

Rural solitude made contact with a number of friends and disciples particularly important, especially contact with Károly Tolnay, or, as he is better known abroad, Charles de Tolnay, the international authority on Michaelangelo and Flemish painting (Maître de Frémalle, Hieronymus Bosch and Peter Breughel). Tolnay, who had moved to Vienna already in the summer of 1918, had been a disciple of Fülep's while still at school. He maintained his loyal respect for Fülep in Vienna, studying under Max Dvorak, or in Hamburg, where Erwin Panofsky

was his teacher. In memoirs written in old age, Charles de Tolnay stressed two points about Fülep: "He was the last polyhistor," who moreover had a keen sensibility as regards interpretation, stressing the moral importance of works of art. Their correspondence—as the appended letters show—that Fülep, who was a vain man, appreciated Tolnay's loyalty, who was important as a source of information for the isolated and solitary Fülep. But the correspondence was also important to him as a lifelong debate. The principal subjects of the correspondence and of their rare meetings were Tolnay's Michaelangelo interpretation, particularly that of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, Hungarian art, especially small terracotta pieces by Miklós Izsó, whom Fülep regarded as the finest embodiment of "national" art and ideas centred on the correlation of the national and the universal. Fülep's influence is documented by a paper on Cézanne which Charles de Tolnay published in Hungarian in 1924. Tolnay expressly stressed his indebtedness to Fülep's 1906 and 1907 papers. Following Fülep, Tolnay argues that Cézanne's greatness lies in the fact that his is the most adequate depiction of the fragmented world of modernity. It was this that explains Cézanne's preference for still lives. As Tolnay puts it: for Cézanne, "fragmentariness is a matter of principle, which embodies the essence of form."

Sometime late in the twenties, Fülep started on a major comprehensive work on the philosophy of art. This was his prime preoccupation to the end of his life. But this major work remained unfinished, though long fragments in manuscript bear witness to Fülep's great intellectual efforts. In the thirties there were signs of a break in his isolation. Between 1933 and 1935 he associated with a group of writers (László Németh, Gyula Illyés, et al.) with roots in the peasantry, and who stood for patriotic values and reform and published an article "National Self-centredness" in the periodical *Válasz,* an explanation of the idea of European universality which was in jeopardy at the time. In 1939–1940 he worked on a longish paper he called "The National in Works of Art." It was never completed but it contained many exciting ideas. Thus he argued that the value of the nation lies in the fact that it is an integration on a higher plane than the earlier and more primitive "people" and therefore a more suitable creator of values. The nation in itself is, however, only of potential value, the national character of works of art primarily derives from links with the people.

It was through his academic work that Fülep established contact and later an intellectual friendship with (Károly) Karl Kerényi, the classical scholar and student of myths. Kerényi obtained a professorship in Pécs in 1934. At the time few were aware of the high reputation which the Faculty of Arts of the University of Pécs enjoyed between 1934 and 1940, that is until its cessation, in non-academic circles, in the first place owing to the presence of Fülep and Kerényi. Kerényi was of inspiring assistance to Fülep primarily in the understanding of ancient religion and of the links between myths and art. Fülep guided Kerényi in an understand-

ing of the real place of mythology and of the differing character of myth and art, and in the potentials of a philosophical approach as regards the history of religion. What particularly interested Fülep was that Kerényi transcended the usual approach to myths of classical scholars, pointing out their disharmonic, darker side, their "wolfish-hard" aspect. This approach shored up Fülep's thinking, which was always inclined to the dynamic and tragically dramatic. But Kerényi also repeats Fülep's concept of "reality" which took shape in the early years of their friendship. This differed from traditional philosophic thought and appeared to be inspired to some degree by the Existentialism of the times. What Kerényi and some Germans recognized as *seelische Wahrheiten* (truths of the soul) pointed in the same direction. These are truths which apply to everything that exists, even if it be only imagined, longed for or felt, including all the irrational aspects of life. As Fülep noted in manuscript: "The ancient anthropomorphic approach in its mythical form is closer to reality than the later abstract concept of reality."

Fülep agreed with Kerényi that mythology was a peculiar form of human communication. It had many functions but it was a language of communication for a very long period of time, one by which ancient man and later even people of antiquity were able to articulate thoughts that they could not formulate otherwise, either because their linguistic means were as yet not adequately developed, or because myths were from the start more suitable for communicating a complex idea, than everyday speech. Fülep considered the arts to be not only autonomous and existentially necessary, but also an extraordinary means of communication. Fülep writes: "For us, art is an infinite revelation of truth-values, it enriches our life, offering not only culture, enjoyment, etc, but also providing a gate to life, the world, the universe, lending a voice for our sake to everything, to every meaning of 'reality'. Art revives potentialities that lie dormant within us, when it draws attention to values of reality which were either unknown to us or which we did not understand, preserving the ancient idiom of the Cosmos as an addition to the idiom of science and the vernacular, a much narrower and poorer language... for the great dialogue between the Universe and man."

Kerényi's transfer, in 1940, to the University of Szeged made contact between them more difficult. After Kerényi moved to Switzerland in 1943, it was confined to correspondence. Meanwhile in 1935, he had arranged for a meeting between Kerényi and Tolnay on his last visit home before the war. An intensive intellectual friendship came into being between Kerényi and Tolnay. They wrote numerous letters to each other and—before Tolnay moved to Princeton in 1939—they went on several trips together, to which they always invited Fülep, but the solitary "old man" (54 in 1939) never set foot out of Hungary again, except for a brief journey to Rome in 1948.

Fülep wrote hundreds and hundreds of pages of notes on the philosophy of art from which I briefly quoted. Even a partial discussion would go well beyond

the scope of this article and my own competence. Fülep experienced 1945 as a liberation, more precisely as an expulsion of fascism. Temporarily, his lot improved. He obtained a teaching post at the University of Budapest and was elected a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, but he could not really fit into the conditions of an ever more rigorous dictatorship. In 1947 Lukács invited him to review books published in Hungarian after 1945. Fülep consented but found himself unable to carry out his promise. As he wrote to Tolnay, a whole book ought to be written on Lukács as an example of "sacrifizio del intelletto," and on why there were no Marxist aesthetics, and why it was good that there were none. He grew more and more despondent about his major work, but the depth and originality of his thinking continued to be in evidence in occasional work, such as a paper on Rembrandt, a so far unpublished lecture on Leonardo, which is a work of genius, and statements he made in support of the status in the Hungarian canon of the painters Tivadar Csontváry-Kosztka and Gyula Derkovits, whom he also held in high esteem.

A final answer regarding Fülep's standing within international, and not just local Hungarian, scholarship should be given by those parts of his oeuvre that still await publication, that is, the volumes which will contain the fragments of his projected philosophy of art. I can only hope that life will grant Fülep's literary executors the strength and peace of mind to complete their work.

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Charles de Tolnay—to Lajos Fülep

[Rome, 1925] 18 October

My Dear Respected Professor,

Please excuse my writing only now, but I have spent the first weeks in reviving memories[1] and in looking for a room. As to the latter, I was lucky, I got a truly good room; I believe it is in the same place where that legation official used to stay of whom you talked to me (so much, at least, is certain that a member of the Hungarian legation to the Holy See lived here a few years ago): *Via Sicilia 24, V.int.*[erno] 18 presso Signora Cherchi. True, that two-room apartment was not for rent, but I did get a very spacious bedsitter. She also has another bedsitter, so that if you come here in January[2] (which I certainly hope you will) there will be no problem as regards accommodation.

1 ■ Tolnay was in Italy in 1921.—Let me mention that for notes to the letters before 1945 I made use of Dóra Csanak's scholarly edition [M.L.].

2 ■ The mayor of Baja, Ferenc Vojnics, requested Fülep four days before the date of this letter to participate in the Italian Türr festivities as an official representative. The daily *Független Magyarság* mentioned that Fülep had not accepted. Fülep did not go to Rome.

I searched for the Donato Gianotti[3] in vain, both in Florence and here; it is out of print. Similarly, the short stories of Matteo Bandello[4] are also not available. On the other hand, S.[an] Agostino's *I libri della Fede*[5] has arrived, and I shall post it in a few days' time. The books by Perez and by Baratono[6]—I must frankly confess—I have forgotten to order: tomorrow I shall have time and shall take care of this matter.

Otherwise I am well, Rome is wonderful and even the weather is perhaps only rarely as fine as it is now. I actually only started to work[7] last week (the libraries had been closed until then), but it is going slowly. There are so many things to see here that one does not really feel like sitting in a library.—As to the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, I still believe that one *must* look from the entrance towards the wall behind the altar, that Michelangelo himself imagined the composition in this manner; on the other hand, what you said is true, one can see even the last pictures upon entering. (Right now I am occupying myself mainly with the Ceiling and am collecting material for a—never-to-be-written—work[8] whose subject would be how cyclical composition historically developed in Italy and what its relationship is to the whole of architecture; in other words, the *chapels* of Italian churches as artworks created from a unitary idea are the main substratum of this topic.—For, up to now, the individual paintings have always been described and discussed in *isolation* instead of—as the facts demand—understanding the composition of the individual paintings from their role in the entirety of space. The reason why this is not easy to do is that relatively few of them have remained unchanged; but in spite of all the restorations—I believe—it is still possible to obtain a clear picture of the *entirety* of the development, and

3 ■ Gianotti, Donato (1492-1573?), Florentine writer on politics.

4 ■ Lajos Fülep's library contained Bandello, Matteo: *Le novelle a cura di Gioachino Brofnoligo.* 2nd rev. ed., vols. 1-5, Bari, 1911-1928.

5 ■ I could not find data concerning this volume either in the catalogue of Lajos Fülep's library or among the Italian-language editions of the works of Saint Augustine. [Note by Dóra Csanak.]

6 ■ Perez is such a frequent family name that he cannot be identified without the given name. Baratono, Adelchi (b. 1875) is a reference to one of his works, perhaps to *Dante e la visione di Dio.* Genova, 1909.

7 ■ Tolnay later wrote as follows: "It was on account of Breughel that I went to Italy, to study the influence of the contemporary Italian art upon Pieter Breughel the Elder. I went to church after church; I must say, the result was rather poor. But, instead, I received something much more beautiful as a gift. In Florence I was so affected by the Medici Chapel: I saw something new, so that I decided that I would have to write about this as soon as I finished the book on Breughel. This feeling came upon me again in Rome, in the Sistine Chapel: I was spellbound by its greatness, and, at the same time, I had seen something which, I believed, was worth elaborating upon.

I should have liked to work out three things: the interpretations of the Medici Chapel, of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and of the *Last Judgement.* A modest enough plan, I thought; perhaps two or three years will be enough for it. And as soon as I had received my Ph.D. at the University of Vienna, I indeed immediately set out for Rome to do work on these. I believed, somewhat naively, but nearly everybody believes this, that we already knew everything about Michelangelo. He has such a huge bibliography, more than five thousand works, that one thinks that everything has already been said."

8 ■ Tolnay's first essay on the Sistine Chapel was published in 1936.

this is what is important. For, even so, a few hitherto scarcely discussed basic features of Italian art would become apparent.

I truly hope you will let me know if you need other books (or anything else), and I trust you will come to Italy in January.

Your devoted student,

Károly Tolnay

N.B. Before my departure, while still in Vienna, I copied the bibliography of the *Höllenfahrten,*[9] and now I don't remember whether I sent it to you or have forgotten to post it. I no longer have the receipt; if it has got lost, I can put it together again, having brought with me that part of my dissertation.

Please convey my greetings to your wife.

Manuscript Collection of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Ms 4590/23.

Lajos Fülep—to Charles de Tolnay

Zengővárkony, 19 January 1934, via Pécsvárad

Dear Carlo,

I was very glad of your October letter. I can tell from it that you are working and trying to create a position for yourself. You are, of course, perfectly right in what you wrote about the German universities—but, perhaps, it would have been possible to wait somehow until the dirt drains off; sooner or later this is bound to happen. But by then it will hardly be possible for you to return.

I would gladly go to Paris,[1] especially since there I could be together with you. But this is a dream which I can dream at most at night, in bed. I am scarcely able to make a living; where would I find the travel expenses? Had I received the Baumgarten[2] this year, I would surely have gone—there were, indeed, a few people on the board who were fighting for me, but in vain; in this matter Babits[3] and Basch[4] decide in a sovereign manner, and they have left me out. And so Paris too was lost.

My state of health continues to be bad, fever every day—these days I can't even imagine that I'll ever get well and how that would feel. I would sobnest run my head against a wall.

9 ■ Tolnay collected the bibliography of descents to hell for his dissertation about Bosch.

1 ■ ■ Fülep did not go to Paris, where Tolnay stayed from 1933 to 1939.
2 ■ The Baumgarten Prize was the highest-ranking literary award in Hungary between the two world wars.
3 ■ Mihály Babits (1883–1941) poet, editor of *Nyugat* and one of the curators of the Baumgarten Foundation.
4 ■ Lóránd Basch (1885–1966) curator of the Baumgarten Foundation.

If you publish anything, please send it. I hear that a book of yours is being published in Hungarian about Noémi.[5] You did well to write about her. Perhaps it will be of help to her. As I hear, she lives at Pest and in great straits.

What is the situation with your book on Michelangelo?[6] It's time that were published. Something could be made of that in England. There they still have money for everything.

Please tell Rina[7] not to be angry with me for still not having written to her separately—I should like to answer her in person; I trust that we can meet this year, if not in Paris, then in Várkony. I have the feeling that the two of you will come—and I am very much looking forward to this.

My wife joins me in sending warmest regards to both of you,

Fülep

P.[ost] S.[criptum] It is in vain that you write on your letter "messenger paid" and put more postage on it—it is money down the drain.

Florence, Casa Buonarroti, estate of Charles de Tolnay.

Karl Kerényi to Lajos Fülep

Ascona, 7 September 1943

Dear Lajos,

I mailed a copy of *Hermes der Seelenführer* to you yesterday.[1] It is a lecture I gave here last year, but it has only now been published. Other than that, the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* printed (on the day that Syracuse fell) my article *"Selbstbekenntnisse des Livius."*[2] Perhaps it will reach you. The same with the text of my lecture *"Der Geist,"*[3] given first at the request of the Zürich students in the auditorium maximum of the university there and later, expanded in different ways, in Basle, in the Leysin, the TB sanatorium for students. The entire thing is just the nucleus and starting poing for a major work in process. The title of my lecture in Ascona this year[4] was *"Vater Helios"*; it continues the "Hermes" line.

5 ■ Károly Tolnay: *Ferenczy Noémi.* Budapest, 1934. *Ars Hungarica* 4.—Noémi Ferenczy (1890–1957) was an outstanding tapestry artist.

6 ■ Fülep refers here to the first variant of Tolnay's *Werk und Weltbild des Michelangelo* based on the texts of Tolnay's lectures at the Sorbonne. It was published in print as the 8th brochure of the series *Albae vigiliae,* edited by Kerényi. (Zürich, 1949.)

7 ■ Charles de Tolnay's wife.

1 ■ ■ Expanded to book length: *Hermes der Seelenführer. Das Mythologem vom mannlichen Lebensursprung.* Zürich, Rhein Verlag 1944, (*Albae Vigiliae,* Neue Folge 1).

2 ■ *Neue Zürcher Zeitung,* July 1943.

3 ■ "Der Geist." *Schweizer Monatshefte,* Sept. 1944.

4 ■ Ascona was the venue for the Eranos Days, organized annually by the society supporting the psychiatrist C. G. Jung.

And the "Hermes" lecture—well, you can judge for yourself how far this paper is advancing in the direction prepared by "*Mythologie und Gnosis.*"[5]

I was glad to read, although with some skepticism, what you wrote in your postcard, that there was somebody else besides you at home who was enraptured by it. A talented youth, you say. If indeed talented and he really understood it, he should have said "No more, for the time being! Even this is too much for a single occasion!" Since we are talking about a youth.[6] That it is too little for you, I can understand. You can rightfully expect that, in the wake of this guiding principle, grasped at long last, the entire historically given *gnosis* should now be unravelled. In principle, this would be possible. What is more, it would be work requiring only time and not much acumen. A good pupil (if I shall have such another) or myself, in the days of a playful old age (if I live that long), might manage it.[7] But you may have noticed that what drives me is, still and increasingly, more than the claim for mere historicity (although I am not renouncing any of that, either here, if anywhere, there must be severity).

The place to which a student of Greek civilization must get and to which the understanding of a religious man facing the Absolute naked must lead, is understanding Man in all his aspects. As a science: anthropology, independently of all the sciences called anthropology up to now, must stand on the naked soil of humanity. It is at this that every truly humanist effort must achieve. And only this can be the foundation of a new, true humanism.

This is the goal toward which I can work together with psychologists. And you know me well enough to know that the *telos* toward which my fate is moving is not a set goal. But it is something toward which I have been driven since the beginning of my beginnings, and which is always becoming clearer only to the extent to which I am getting nearer to it. Thus my "scholarship" first met ethnology (Frobenius; in English: anthropology) and later, now, met psychology which, in the last analysis, should be anthropology (meeting Jung is only the beginning; Szondi[8] is, from the aspect of anthropology, more than Jung. For the time being both of them lack a philosophical foundation, and Jung also lacks coherence of thought).

Szilasi[9] really is a help to me in making me conscious of the road which I am "walking" rather than "covering." The calmed wisdom of his age makes his

5 ■ Károly Tolnay: *Ferenczy Noémi.* Budapest, 1934. *Ars Hungarica* 4.—Noémi Ferenczy (1890–1957) was an outstanding tapestry artist.

6 ■ The "talented youth" mentioned in Lajos Fülep's previous letter was presumably József Szigeti, a young philosopher, who obviously contributed some critical remarks on Kerényi's paper.

7 ■ In this passage Kerényi is answering Fülep's critical remarks; it is to be noted that he considers the systematic survey of the "entire historically given *gnosis,*" that is, the mere history of the multilayered, religious-philosophical school changing in time and appearing in many variants, to be a somewhat too easy task.

8 ■ Lipót Szondi (1893–1986) psychiatrist, friend of Karl Kerényi; known for his theory of "fate analysis."

9 ■ Vilmos Szilasi (1889–1966) philosopher friend of Mihály Babits, left Hungary in 1919 and subsequently settled in Switzerland. Before 1933 he worked with Heidegger. He lived in Brissago, close to Kerényi's home in Ascona, and, after Kerényi moved to Switzerland, a close intellectual friendship developed between them. Later they drifted apart. The cooling of the relationship was doubtless furthered also by Fülep's strongly critical opinion of Szilasi.

philosophizing more than word-coining craftsmanship. Our being neighbours is also a stroke of good fortune from this point of view. But, as always, duties take one better forward than does theory. In the winter, for one semester, lectures arranged by the Zurich Institut für Angewandte Psychologie, under the title *"Seele und Griechentum. Rolle des Seelischen in einer schöpferischen Hochkultur."* Further, continuing the *"Geist"* lectures, among others on the topic: *"Geist oder Betörung? Probleme der mörderischen Ekstatik am Beispiel des Schamanismus erörtert."* (Right now I am wording it approximately this way.)[10]

How difficult it is to write about these matters, when one cannot explain in detail and to the full extent what one thinks! You yourself know best how one cannot write in a letter, ahead of time, what one has intended to be a work: the great work or whatever form it takes (paper or lecture), to that degree of its completion which fate allows us to reach. I ask for your trust until I can show something more finished. And you know that you too are an object of my trust at home. Please write about what hopes there are as to a spiritual future? Will there still be substantia in one form or another?

We have both seen the direction and have also correctly interpreted the signs. But the macabre entanglements until the final dénouement! In Milan they named a street after Amendola[11] already on the second day. But will this street still stand after the bombings? (Leonardo's *Last Supper* is still there—the question only is: is it possible to keep the wall up on which it was painted?)

If you write here, do so using my full embassy address (on the envelope); that way the letter will move faster and easier across the borders. We can probably stay here in the winter. I have little business in Berne (a lecture at the end of this month: "Anamnese und Sympathie," at a psychological congress). I shall hold the Zurich lectures every fortnight as a peripatetic lecturer.[12] It would seem that this is my fate. Did they want to hinder Pécs–Budapest? The road through the Gotthard is, without a doubt, more beautiful!)[13]

The way things are suits the children: both of them—Lucia, already three, and Kornélia who is one—can continue blossoming under a southern sky. And they are doing that splendidly, indeed! And with them and together with me, Magdi, who also sends you her greetings. She is a true help who I can rely on in the new circumstances. I hardly mentioned these this time. Perhaps another time. Suffice it for now that the figs are ripening; I would gladly send you a boxful, if I could, by way of thanks for the winter apples.

10 ■ "The Soul and the Greeks. The Role of the Soul in a Creative Elite Culture." The "Spirit" lecture: "Spirit or Madness? Problems of a Deathly Extasy Explained through the Example of Shamanism". Lecture in Zurich in early 1944.

11 ■ G. Amendola (1882–1926) Italian philosopher and politician, a steadfast opponent of Fascism, Fülep's childhood friend became a victim of the Fascists in 1926.

12 ■ The lectures were about Szondi's "fate analysis."

13 ■ Reference to his journeys between Ascona and Berne.

Anyway, I am expecting your answer! No news of Carlo.[14] As soon as there are any, I shall let you know.

Warm regards,

Károly

Lajos Fülep to Karl Kerényi

Zengővárkony, 11 October 1943

Dear Károly,

Your letter made me very happy, everything in it. I wanted to write to you immediately and also to thank you for the *Hermes*—which I am doing now—but I have again been smitten by such misery that I am ashamed to talk about it; I feel as Odysseus may have felt when driven out by Aiolos as "one whom the happy gods came to hate."

So much misery in one person truly offers food for thought. I won't bore you with the details. In brief, only this much: they performed an "oral surgery operation" on me, which means that they kept hoeing away at my tonsils for 24 hours to remove a fully, indeed, overly well-developed sapiens, which had not grown in the outward direction but lay almost horizontally inside the bone. The doctors said that in the entire history of the clinic there has never been such a case; in fact they have never even heard, or read, of such a thing. This uniqueness was my lot. You can imagine, the suffering was unique too—how can one emphathize with such a thing?—and also what ensued it, for weeks, without a minute's respite, night and day the most furious pain (swallowing a huge quantity of painkillers did not help); only now do I begin to get to the point of again being able to think that I can write the first letters, and first of all this one to you.

Well, at least you are able to work at full strength. And without being disturbed. This calms and pacifies me, to some degree, otherwise I feel extremely bitter.

It interests me very much what you say about the developing "major work." May I infer from the fact that "Der Geist" is already finished that it will be purely philosophical? For that reason, I am very much looking forward to the text of this lecture—of the others too, of course, for if we can't talk to each other, then let us at least stay in touch this way. From what you ask, "Will there still be a *substantia* in some form?", I can guess how much you are driven by feeling the current emptiness; and where you want to get to, I think I won't guess but I am asking. But is it possible even to ask such things today? Our misery is that we see the beckoning shore, but of the way that leads to it, there's no news whatever. You are speaking of a "new, true humanism"; but is there a true humanism without God? And where is God? We are an infinitely long way from Him and He is from us, and there is still a huge amount of suffering needed before the meet-

14 ■ Károly Tolnay.

ing. The present is, I believe, only the beginning. This world of today is not really standing "on the naked soil of humanity"—it stands on the humanity of the inhumanity which belongs to it. For everything to become visible we had to get to the point where we are and even farther; we are not yet at the end. At some point we have to arrive to the point of completeness—to the point of complete recognition, complete confrontation, complete reckoning.

I don't know if you are right concerning the young man; as to me, it is precisely in a young man that I can understand this eagerness. Perhaps it would not be good if such a young man were so deliberate and moderate.[1] My demand is of a different nature: of a person who, in general, has already often hit that stumbling-stone which appeared, sometimes here, sometimes there, under his foot, and an eternally bothersome stone which nobody could tell what it was. Now, at last, somebody is speaking up—it is understandable that I should like to see it built into the edifice.

You mention Szondi with Jung—and I don't even know him! I have seen the name once or twice, but I know nothing of his works. I don't even know where he lives.[2] Here, at home? This too is characteristic, that somebody whom you consider superior to Jung, someone like myself knows almost nothing about. This air here is an excellent heat conductor. Where and under what titles have those of his works been published which could interest me too and which are not purely medical?

Thanks for your wife's kind remembrances to me. My respectful greetings to her, and I hope the children are happily flourishing.

With warmest regards,

Lajos

Karl Kerényi to Charles de Tolnay

Tegna, 8 April 1948

My Dear Károly,

There is no lack of work or anxiety here either but since the autumn, travelling and the experiences of travel have taken up much time and have also been very informative. It was at the end of November that I travelled to Hungary with Magdi.[1] After that we spent Christmas, together with the children—for whom Magdi made the journey home here alone—in Rome, where we stayed till the end of February. I saw Fülep again, at first in Budapest, at the Eötvös College,[2] not in a good shape, but later again, in all the better health and rejuvenated—in Rome. We spent almost the whole of February there together, and we were both

1 ■ Reference to József Szigeti.

2 ■ Lipót Szondi was deported to Bergen-Belsen in 1944; towards the end of that year he succeeded in getting to Switzerland where he lived and worked until his death.

1 ■ ■ Kerényi was admitted to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences at the end of 1946. This was the last time that he was in Hungary. His wife was Magda Lukács.

2 ■ Lajos Fülep resided at this time in the Eötvös College, an elite-training institution founded on the model of the Ecole Normale Supérieure.

very much awaiting a letter from you. By now Fülep is already back in Budapest (XII. Nagyboldogasszony útja, Eötvös Kollégium); it would be good if you wrote to him as soon as possible.

I won't write about my experiences at the Palazzo Falconieri;[3] ask him about these also, the more so since I hear you have plans to go there for the summer. I can only say this much: Fülep's two lectures on the philosophy of art which he gave there are for me just about the best of European philosophy today, speaking in general. We must make every effort that he should publish his work as soon as possible; it is the theoretical foundation both for your most important findings in art history and for a true knowledge of the Greeks. I have never been more spiritually moved facing a living man, and can say that I have met one or two who are at the very summit of European intellectual life. Now, after the event, I am only sorry that although we met daily, spending time together in the Abruzzo bar on the Piazza Farnese, where Fülep took fiendish enjoyment in the wild *saltarello* danced to the music of bagpipes, in the improvised recitation of stanzas by the barkeeper and customers, indeed, even in the bloody fights of the men and in hair-tearing brawls by the women—I say, I am sorry that, in spite of all this, we talked too little. As a matter of fact, it is always like that with Fülep—our many encounters have been characterized by a shared silence. It is perhaps also for this reason that I was so deeply shocked—in a positive sense—by the agreement, down to the last hair, with what I have known for a long time to be the meaning of my whole life and work.

About the situation in Hungary—concerning also my own fate—I am expecting news from Fülep right now; in the meantime, the experiences and prospects of the autumn are already out of date. Everything is in motion, and everything depends on the eastern orientation. In spite of a good reception in Hungary, I cannot guess where we shall be after six months. While waiting, I shall publish in the *Alb. Vig.* my recent papers under the title of Niobe.[4] Chastel[5] wrote and we wrote to him also—I am glad that in the autumn you too will finish your volume. Angelo Brelich's *Vesta*[6] is finished—in Italian; we have to have it translated into German. I assume that you have received Eitrem's[7] pamphlet—if not, please let me know, so that I can take the necessary steps.

Magdi and the children are in a great shape—the air, the bustle, and the life in Rome did a lot of good to the little ones. They are beaming, as if they had returned from a wonderful summer holiday.

Unfortunately I did not manage to meet Laci Németh.[8] His address is, as before: Hódmezővásárhely, Kollégium. When I went to Szeged, I wrote to him to

3 ■ The building of the Hungarian Institute in Rome.

4 ■ *Albae Vigiliae:* Kerényi's series of books. The Niobe volume was published in Zurich in 1949 under the title *Neue Studien über antike Religion und Humanität.*

5 ■ French art historian.

6 ■ The work by Angelo Brelich, a former pupil of Kerényi's, was published in 1949 in the *Albae Vigiliae* series.

7 ■ S. Eitrem (1872–1966), Norwegian classical scholar, professor at the University of Oslo.

8 ■ László Németh (1901–1975), writer, essayist, friend of Karl Kerényi.

ask him to come there; he was pleased to prepare to do so and sent his daughter Gigi ahead to arrange the details of our meeting. But they had not thought of the fact that my train from Pest would only arrive in the evening, and Gigi, not finding me in Szeged at noon, believed that I was not coming at all. So we only exchanged letters, jut a few words.

In Pest I obtained for myself *Gondolatok a könyvtárban,*[9] but I left it there for Magdi's brother, Kari, to read. Now I shall have it sent to me here, and I shall also have its price written, which I haven't committed to memory.

I kiss Ria's hand, warm greetings from Magdi to both of you, I am waiting for more recent news!

Károly

Karl Kerényi to Lajos Fülep

Ponte Brolla pr. Tegna, on March 18th, 1951

My Dear Lajos,

I actually meant to write yesterday, in any event so that you would at least hear from us by this early Easter and, hopefully, by the beginning of spring. Indeed, I hardly ever write letters now, at the most on festive occasions, bound not even strictly to a day but, rather, to the position of my microcosm and macrocosm. *Sine sole sileo,* as the sundials have it. These months there was reason indeed to keep silent, although you were very much in our thoughts, especially during our time in Rome. As at the turn of 1947–48,[1] Magdi again brought the children down to me, so that I should not have to lay aside the work started in December and yet we should be able to have a real Christmas. In these three years these little ones have talked to each other so much about Rome, Kornélia has drawn such exact pictures of the Capitol—the child produces surprising drawings, from life too, in the art school to which we have sent her (otherwise she is in the third year of elementary school)—that I was sure that we all would greatly enjoy it. And so it was, in spite of April weather with rain every day.

Thus there has also been an outside occasion to think of you, not only an inner one, which simply exists: who else should I speak to, within myself, about the biggest problems, in my native language? True, Carlo was here in the summer at the Eranos, but there was no serious conversation with him, he rather avoided it. And not for the whole world did he talk about a fact which came to my knowledge later, by chance but with documentary evidence, that what he inherited from his father amounts to a Nobel Prize, at least as far as the sum goes.

9 ■ *Gondolatok a könyvtárban* (Thoughts in the Library) a volume of essays by Antal Szerb, writer and critic (1901–1945).

1 ■■ Reference to Fülep's journey to Rome in early 1948 and the days he spent with the Kerényis.

Don't take notice of this in a way that he will catch on; but it will surely please you to hear this from me.

Nothing has changed in our life; but perhaps even that fact is something, that this miracle, our existence based purely upon my inner productivity, can be maintained. The house in which we are living by the above-named bridge—this is the Maggia bridge which connects Tegna and Locarno—was built in swallow's-nest fashion above the river; it is more spacious, more beautiful, and I found an epigraph for it in Hölderlin: *Will einer wohnen/So sei es an Treppen/ Und wo ein Häuslein hinabhängt/Am Wasser halte dich auf/ Und was du hast, ist/Atem zu holen.*[2] This is exactly what is here: a chance to write the works I carry inside me. The ready accessibility of Rome is part of things. In the summer, working 8–9 hours daily even in the fiercest heat, I finished there, in one volume, the first complete, non-Romantic but also not classicistically idealizing, faithful exposition of the Greek mythological tradition. The German version is being published here in Switzerland, the Italian, French, and English translations are also ready and, in part, in the press. I am working now on the fair copy of the first volume of the explanatory companion volume, not a systematizing work, rather analytical in a scholarly manner and historically reconstructing—belonging to but indepen-dent of it.[3]

Only some of my old works have been published in new—in part already third and fourth—editions: *Pythagoras und Orpheus* and the *Labyrinth-Studien*—which you possibly have in your possession—and all of my papers published since 1938 on this subject in a collective Italian volume of 500 pages.[4] This spring *Einführung* sees its fourth edition—after years when it could not be published on account of the unfortunate Kollár,[5] I don't know if you have heard of his suicide.—*La religione antica* is the second Italian edition.[6] There is no substantial change in any of these, but if I can add them to your library—all or any one of them—please let me know, and I'll be happy to do so. The title of the large Italian volume is *Miti e Misteri.*

I believe that I have given an account of everything important and have again acquired the right to expect at least some short news from you. To read something by you would also be a pleasure. There is little intellectual news in this world gone rigid! It is, so to speak, only the rigidification which is growing, and that at the innermost core.

I hope that we will see each other again, although, for the time being, until the works which I have intended for these years are finished, I can't even think of it.

2 ■ If you want to dwell / Let it be at stairs / And where a cottage cliffhangs / Over water, stay there / And your business is / To take a deep breath.

3 ■ Kerényi's *Greek Mythology,* published in German and English in 1951.

4 ■ Carlo Kerényi: *Miti e Misteri* (Trad. di Angelo Brelich. Torino, 1950).

5 ■ Hungarian-born manager of Pantheon Books (Amsterdam), until 1943, he frequently published Kerényi's work. He committed suicide in 1950.

6 ■ First edition: Amsterdam, 1940.

It is a joy to me to think of the fact that you too can live for your work, and I trust that also the question of your home will be settled soon. Do not forget to let me know your new address: mine, as far as the post is concerned, is the old one.

Wishing you a Happy Easter, with warmest regards,

Károly

Lajos Fülep to Karl Kerényi

Budapest, 19 June 1951

My Dear Károly,

At last I am in a position to answer your letter, which made me very happy; not only because it had come from you but because there was so much good news—and only good!—news in it. (Although I have become used to this—and may this always be so!)

Apart from the good news about the family I am, of course, happiest about what you say concerning your work. It is very good that you have such momentum—whatever the old fogeys may say on this topic. It is you who must do the essential things, and you will, too, since you already have done most of it. I have not, of course, kept up with what has been published in classical scholarship in these past four decades, but I do not believe that anything has been said anywhere commensurate with what you have said—this is what I feel whenever I pick up any of your books or papers. It quite pains me, too, that I can do this with your work but you cannot with mine; your saying that you would like to read what I wrote would be especially good for me—there is nobody here to whom I can show something or with whom I can talk. I am more of a hermit here than I was at Várkony; after all, I could talk with you there, and here I cannot.

Otherwise it is only now that I am beginning to feel my way back into work—I have been very much jolted out of it. Of course, I had also become shamefully tired; the work I had to do when I moved and got settled was inhuman.

Now, since the Eötvös[1] was abolished, I have been giving lectures on art history at the university; a few weeks ago I received an appointment to the department.

It is very kind of you to offer me the new editions—but how can I lay that burden on you? I do not dare to quote from them, but I shall answer your question: I don't have the *Labyrinth-Studien,*[2] neither do I have the *Einführung,* but I do own the first edition of the *Rel. antica* about which I seem to remember your saying that it is shorter than the German text. I do not know which parts of the *Miti e Misteri* exist in separate editions.

I was also very glad about the good news about Carlo, but I don't know what has happened: I sent a registered postcard to his Paris address and have had no answer to this day. Didn't he get mine or I his?

1 ■ The Eötvös College, where Fülep taught from 1941 to 1948 and in whose building he lived until 1950.
2 ■ First published: 1940.

I had not known about Kollár's fate, I only heard it now from you—I take it he may have had financial troubles.

I don't know if I wrote that the neighbourhood of my Hölderlinesque home with steps[3] is quite beautiful (perhaps you know this area); its main advantage is that it is cool in the summer, what it will be like in winter *Iddio lo sa.*[4] I don't stir from here unless I have to.

With warmest regards,

Lajos

Lajos Fülep to Charles de Tolnay

Budapest, 20 December 1952

Dear Carlo,

I am answering your Paris postcard of June 14 after such a long delay, which I really regret, now that I have looked at your card again and seen how much time has passed since! But time is flying, and there is still so much to do! The longer one lives, the more things to be done one sees and, of course, one believes that one alone is able to do them—in fact, that's even what others think too. Has your Leonardo lecture not been published? Somebody has seen it mentioned somewhere, but I don't know in what form. If it has been published, send it! I am thinking of writing up mine[1] in a more orderly fashion and publishing it. Its gist was that Leonardo was an *anima naturaliter hellenistica,* his Madonnas etc. are Hellenistic Aphrodites, John the Baptist (it is not important, whether authentic or not) is the hermaphrodite, etc.; in him we find the beginnings of modern *l'art pour l'art;* society is like that, too (Ariosto, etc.). The actual question is whether the L. problem (his frittering away etc.) is a biographical question or not. Answer: no, or, if in anything, then not in the way in which it has been seen up to now. He could not be different or act differently. Either: artistic, like Raphael, or: a world, like Michelangelo. The L. estranged from religion and looking for a new world could honestly only be like this. The *Last Supper* is a tympanum, without the Parthenon. From this you can perhaps see if you are interested. If yes, I can write about it in a letter, in greater detail.

I am expecting the 4th volume of the Michelangelo; when published, don't tardy with it! I shall write about it.[2]

With warmest regards from Lodovico.

My greetings to Máli,

Lajos

4 ■ *Iddio lo sa:* God knows (Italian).

1 ■■ Fülep's essay on Leonardo, which remained in manuscript at the time, was composed in the spring of 1952. It was delivered as a lecture at the University of Budapest, on April 15, for the fifth centenary of Leonardo da Vinci's birth. It was published in *Művészet és világnézet. Cikkek, tanulmányok 1920–1970* (Art and Weltanschauung. Articles and Essays 1920–1970). Budapest, 1976, pp. 527–537.

2 ■ Charles de Tolnay's five-volume Michelangelo series was published by Princeton University Press between 1943–1960. The 4th volume: *The Tomb of Julius* (1954). Fülep's review did not materialize.

Géza Mezei

Influence or Domination

The Post-War Settlement in East Central Europe

Was there a greater chance in 1945 for Hungary to preserve a "reasonable degree of liberty and independence" than the other East Central European ex-enemy countries had? This article offers new hypotheses on the interregnum between war and peace in Hungary, mainly from the perspective of inter-Allied co-operation. The immense social and political changes that took place in the region between Germany and Russia were not the outcome of an autonomous transformation within these countries: it was the Allied powers that influenced their fate decisively.

After the signature of an armistice between Hungary and the Allied powers (in January 1945) and until the conclusion of the peace treaty (in February 1947), Hungarian sovereignty was to be subjected to the anti-Hitler coalition and an Allied Control Commission was set up to verify the provisions of the armistice. In Hungary, as in the other ex-enemy countries, this transition period was to have lasting political repercussions.

The focus here will be on the concept of the "open sphere".[1] In my view, the ultimate question of Allied co-operation was how to transform the wartime military solidarity into a lasting political "concert-diplomacy"; for East Central Europe the question concerned the prospects for a Soviet security sphere in this region. In this respect, "open sphere" implies a policy of agreement between the Great Powers in the sense that the Western powers accepted Soviet strategic superiority in East Central Europe. In exchange, however, they expected Stalin's acquiescence to the "Yalta principles", that is to say the organization of free elections, and in more general terms, an autonomous (internal) development for

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the respective countries. Moreover, one could even argue that a successful "open sphere" policy (recognizing Soviet hegemony over the region, but seeking to temper it to acceptable limits) coupled with (early) projects for "jointly controlled German demilitarization and neutrality" could have been an alternative to containment.

The Romanian and Bulgarian armistice and the antecedents

After the Soviet offensive had opened on the southwestern front on 4 March 1944, and with the resounding victories of the Red Army in the spring of the same year, post-war Europe began to take shape. Concurrently, the military developments brought a new dimension in relations between the Allies, a dimension which showed them the post-war horizon for the armistice regimes to be imposed on those countries in the region allied to Nazi Germany (Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary), where the governments were called on to break away from Germany.

For the organization of the future control system, the Allies already had a precedent which tangibly demonstrated the potential difficulties, namely the Italian armistice.[2] When the Foreign Office drew up, in the spring of 1943, a general plan for all European armistices, this plan was clearly inspired by the conviction that "the decisions concerning the occupation of the territories belonging to the common enemy... should be made jointly by the British, American and Soviet governments". The advantage of this "best possible formula" proved to be particularly obvious for British diplomats because they thought that Italy would be a precedent and the Russians would consider this as a "test case susceptible to determine their ultimate attitude in the question of co-operation".

Nevertheless, at the beginning of 1944 it had become obvious that the control system established in Italy by the Western powers did not correspond to the pattern agreed on at the Moscow conference of Foreign Ministers in November 1943. In other words, tripartite collaboration, which should have made possible the future cohesion of the Allies, had unequivocally failed in Italy. Even if it is true that London and Washington did not deliberately intend to exclude Moscow from Italian affairs, it is indisputable that the Italian armistice was considered as a test case by the Soviets, one which they subsequently used as a pretext to exclude the Western powers from the East European armistice regimes.

Of Nazi Germany's three satellites in Southeastern Europe, Bulgaria had declared war only on the Western powers, but the other two, Hungary and Romania, had participated actively in the war against the Soviet Union. The Hungarian and Romanian governments had expected a British-American landing in the Balkans to protect them from a Soviet occupation and its consequences. These governments made several secret approaches in 1943 and 1944, in the hope of concluding a separate armistice with the Western allies.

However, the Western allies were not willing to abandon the demand for unconditional surrender to help assure the survival of enemy governments. On 16 March 1944, when Prince Barbu Stirbey arrived in Cairo to discuss the conditions for Romania's withdrawal from the war, the Soviets conveyed to him, in the name of and with the benediction of the Western powers, armistice conditions which anticipated Romania's surrendering to the Soviet Union, the country responsible for the military operations.[3]

Recognizing the "Soviet Union's primary interest in Romania", the most important political aim of the Western powers was to ensure, according to a State Department memo of 30 March 1944, "Romania's continued existence ...as an independent country".[4] As for the British, the Foreign Office also considered that "policy towards Romania is subordinated to relations with the Soviet Union and [they] are... unwilling to accept any commitments or to take any action except with the full consent of the Soviet Government". The Foreign Office also concluded that "since the Red Armies would be the first Allied forces to reach Romania... [Moscow] would have to play the principal part in determining the armistice terms".[5]

On 20 August 1944 the troops of General Malinovsky and Marshal Tolbuchin launched their offensive on the Iasi–Kishinev front. Three days later King Michael summoned the pro-German dictator Antonescu to the Royal Palace and had him arrested. In a proclamation, the King announced the end of war against the Allies, ordered Romanian troops to cease fire against the Red Army and immediately formed a new government, ready to collaborate with the Soviets. He appealed for an armistice.

Indeed, the Romanian armistice terms reflected clearly that, in line with the military aspects, the Western powers considered Romania to be primarily within the Soviet sphere of interest. According to the preamble, the execution of the armistice "was entrusted to the control of the Soviet High Command, acting on behalf of the Allied Powers", and article XVIII of the armistice called on the ACC to assure "the regulation and control over the execution of the [armistice] terms under the general direction and instructions of the allied [Soviet] High Command ".[6]

As Bulgaria had not declared war upon the Soviet Union, the Bulgarian government, whose emissaries also arrived in Cairo in August 1944, addressed itself solely to the Western powers in order to withdraw from belligerencies. However, the Bulgarian attempt at disengagement was doomed to failure: on 5 September, Moscow suddenly declared war upon the Muravev government and three days later Red Army divisions crossed the Bulgarian borders. The Soviet Union only accepted the Bulgarian plea for an armistice when a "Popular Front" government was formed on 9 September 1944. Negotiations were resumed in Moscow and an armistice with Bulgaria was concluded by the end of October 1944. Previously considered to be of secondary importance, the stipulations of the Bulgarian armistice document on the establishment of an Allied Control Commis-

sion acquired an increased and unforeseen importance following the Soviet declaration of war. In an attempt to assure a more balanced Western participation within the Bulgarian ACC, Sir William Strang, the British representative to the European Advisory Commission (EAC), proposed a modification of the armistice terms on 15 September. However, the immediate Soviet response left no doubts: Ambassador Gusev declared that, in the given military situation, the sharing of authority proposed by the Western powers "would work against the common interest" and he insisted on complete Soviet control of the Bulgarian ACC.

Again, during British–Soviet negotiations in Moscow in October 1944, Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden was charged with finding a solution to the question of the Bulgarian ACC. Following laborious, difficult and bitter negotiations, Molotov managed to obtain Eden's consent to the Soviet wording. It provided only a non-specified improvement in the Western representatives' status after Germany's capitulation. According to Molotov, the Soviet dominance of the ACC in Bulgaria reflected the 90 per cent influence that the Soviet Union claimed over Bulgaria as part of the famous "percentage deal". Thus, in the final document of the Bulgarian armistice, article XVIII specified that "during the period between coming into force of the armistice and the conclusion of hostilities against Germany, the ACC would be under the general direction of the Allied [Soviet] High Command".

Hungary tries "to work her passage home"

The Kállay cabinet was formed in Hungary on 10 March 1942, and its first task was to progressively modify the direction of the country's foreign policy, which had largely been assessed as negative, if not disastrous. The catastrophic situation went back to the failure of Count Pál Teleki's policy, which tried to safeguard Hungary's freedom of action and non-belligerent status.[7]

In Hungarian foreign policy, the German orientation had completely gained the upper hand once Hungary achieved its border revisions with the assistance of the Axis Powers. By entering the war against the Soviet Union, the political future of Hungary was to be decided, from 27 June 1941 on, through the global conflict, both at the level of military operations and at the locations where the Allies negotiated among themselves.

As the turning point approached on the battlefields of North Africa and at Stalingrad, and with the annihilation of the Second Hungarian Army at Voronezh in January 1943, the Kállay government made a solid effort to withdraw from the Axis. In this vein, Kállay tried first to establish contacts with the Western powers in neutral countries. He had been pursuing this policy in the belief that a "British-American" army would appear sooner or later at the Hungarian borders. Obviously, the Hungarian government ignored the fact that the great strategic decisions taken by the Allies in 1943 had settled the destiny of Danubian Europe in a completely different manner. The American Joint Chiefs of Staff decided in

the autumn of 1943 that "the U.S. should take no responsibilities in the area of the Balkans, including Austria".[8] Furthermore, the Western powers had given up any idea of a landing in the Balkans, submitting to Stalin's insistence at the Moscow and Teheran conferences of 1943.

Taking stock of the situation, Kállay in a letter to the Stockholm Hungarian mission on March 1, 1944 said that "for the time being, all our original projects are left in abeyance since, because of Anglo-Saxon military inactivity and the political withdrawal which is its natural consequence, our imaginary partner is missing..."[9] In the absence of the "imaginary partner", Hungarian peace-feelers could only come to a dead end. Moreover, out of fear of the Bolshevik danger, the Hungarian political elite of the *ancien régime* proved to be too undecided and weak to be able to command the course of events once Germany decided to occupy Hungary in March 1944.

While the German occupation abruptly changed the prospects of Hungary's disengagement from the war, the Allied powers did their best to formulate their policies toward the satellites of Nazi Germany from the spring of 1944 on. On 9 August 1944, in an analysis on the European policy of the Soviet Union, Anthony Eden ran over Hungary's prospects from the viewpoint of inter-Allied relations. According to Eden, there was a certain danger of collision between Soviet and British policies because of the expected territorial settlement (in Transylvania) and also as regards the possible domestic evolution of the country: "at insisting upon far-reaching measures of land reform and the substitution of a more genuinely democratic regime for the present oligarchic structure of society and government, British and Soviet policy can go hand-in-hand... There is however, a danger of more revolutionary developments in Hungary similar to the excesses of the Béla Kun regime after the last war. It does not follow that the Soviet Union would necessarily foster such developments, but, if chaotic conditions arose, she might find it difficult to refrain from supporting the more extreme elements of the left." Therefore, Eden stressed that "British policy should aim at convincing Russia that the [British] object is not to maintain an anachronistic regime, nor to back exaggerated Hungarian claims based on the old Crown of St Stephen against Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia or Romania". To these priorities, Eden also added that "insofar as Hungary is a country with a Western outlook and not a Balkan country, and a country with no affinities with the Slav world, the desired reforms can probably be promoted more effectively by British than by Soviet precepts. Without, therefore, attempting to displace Soviet influence, which must be great in Central Europe, we should not hesitate to make our voice heard in Hungary and to show that we expect to be fully consulted regarding developments in that country."[10]

As regards the American position, until the end of 1944 and beyond, with the somewhat amazing declaration of President Roosevelt who felt that "Austria, Hungary and Croatia were likely to fall under a Soviet protectorate, but in ten or twenty years of European influences would encourage the Russians to become

less barbarous," it is fair to say that the policy the Americans were pursuing with regard to Hungary was of "low profile". This attitude was reflected in statements like that of Assistant Secretary of State Adolphe Berle who held the view that "east of Germany... a Soviet 'sphere of influence' operated in somewhat the same fashion as we operate the good neighbour policy in Mexico and the Caribbean area would not be a threat to anyone... since it would not conflict with the basic interests of these countries, nor with the operation of the British life line."[11]

The Soviet position was expounded most explicitly in the so called Molotov letter of July 1943, in which Molotov defined the general principles of negotiations with the German satellites: unconditional surrender, evacuation of occupied territories, reparation payments, and punishment of war criminals. Regarding the political future of Hungary, Molotov thought that "for the help which Hungary has given Germany by means of her armies and also for the murders, violence, pillage and outrages caused in the occupied districts, the responsibility must be borne not only by the Hungarian government but to a greater or lesser extent also by the Hungarian people."[12]

In August 1944, after King Michael's successful coup in Romania and with the Red Army at the Hungarian borders, the problem of an armistice became acute. Regent Horthy undertook one final attempt to reach an agreement with the Western allies, which induced the Foreign Office to note that "the Hungarians are at last facing realities and seriously considering coming out of the war."[13] At the same time, the Hungarian government finally established direct contacts with Moscow. At the beginning of October 1944, Molotov informed his Allied counterparts that "a few days ago a Hungarian mission had been allowed to pass through the Red Army's lines and was now in Moscow... to conduct negotiations for an armistice."[14]

Meanwhile, between 9 and 17 October, British–Soviet negotiations were taking place in Moscow. The famous "percentage deal" on the share of respective influence zones reached by Stalin and Churchill on 9 October 1944 provided the Soviets with a 50 per cent influence in Hungary. However, as a result of long discussions between Molotov and Eden during the next few days, Molotov managed to increase this ratio to 80 per cent in Moscow's favour. For many observers of the Cold War, this agreement amounted to a symbolic bargain with enduring consequences for the region. However, I am inclined to consider the impact of this deal to be rather limited. Indeed, its logic was entirely compatible with British objectives, notably to reassure the Soviets that the British accepted their strategic dominance of the region.

Whatever the impact of this agreement, during the days of October 1944, Hungary's internal evolution took a dramatic turn again. On 11 October, the Hungarian delegation in Moscow had already signed a document that settled the preliminary armistice terms, and on 15 October, the Regent issued a proclamation on the armistice that he had just appealed for directly to the Soviets.

However, this was the worst ever prepared *renversement des alliances:* the Germans, once they had learned of it, had no difficulty in seizing key positions in Budapest only a few hours after the Regent's proclamation and arrested Horthy and his associates. Horthy was forced to sign his resignation and to agree to appoint Ferenc Szálasi, leader of the Arrow Cross, the Hungarian Nazi party, as prime minister. Szálasi seized power immediately and the very same night he published a counter-manifesto declaring the utmost support for the German command. Hungary had become merely a name.[15]

The collapse of the Horthy regime naturally led to an end of the armistice negotiations in Moscow. In an analysis on the repercussions of Hungary's new situation, Frank Roberts pointed out in the Foreign Office that "the situation has changed by the failure of Admiral Horthy's coup d'etat. It is now possible that the Russians may occupy Budapest, while the Szálasi government retreats with the Germans to Vienna, leaving no government in Hungary with whom an armistice could be negotiated. Russian policy elsewhere suggests, however, that they dislike a vacuum of this kind and that they will wish to see established, or to establish themselves, some sort of alternative Hungarian government with whom an armistice could be negotiated..."[16]

That was exactly what happened in November and December 1944 as far as Hungarian domestic politics were concerned, for which policy was entirely prepared in Moscow. At the beginning of December, in compliance with Stalin's intentions, a tripartite government was formed, comprising the members of the armistice delegation, some generals of Horthy's army, and some Hungarian Communists in exile in Moscow. During the Moscow negotiations, Molotov's preoccupation—confirmed by Stalin's irregular interference—was to assure the political transition without offending either the Allies' sensitivities or public opinion in Hungary. Therefore, the Soviets explicitly insisted on the "democratic character" of the future regime: no revolutionary ardour, no precipitous moves against private property. Of course, this behaviour only confirmed the image of a careful and moderate Stalin, who was not in a great hurry in relation to Hungary, a country that he considered as a stake altogether secondary.

As a result, following the inception of a new National Assembly—the outcome of hasty elections in the liberated eastern part of the country—a government was "elected" on 22 December 1944, in Debrecen. The Prime Minister was Béla Miklós Dálnoki, a high-ranking officer in Horthy's army, with only two of the eleven ministers as Communists. Sir Orme Sargent's remark showed how the Foreign Office perceived the new Hungarian government: "Surely even if the Russians do set up a puppet government in Hungary which we and other Allies will proceed to recognize, this is no reason for allowing Hungary to cease to be a defeated enemy..."[17] It is interesting to note that the US reception of the new government was perceptibly different. According to the State Department Director of European Affairs, Matthews, the government formed in Debrecen "albeit in all respects acceptable

to the Soviets, was a group of responsible personalities and not another 'Lublin Committee' to be imposed on the Hungarians... a well balanced group representing the significant pro-Allied political forces in Hungary."[18]

The history of the ACC for Hungary began in autumn 1944 in Moscow on 12 October, when the Soviet government urged that the representatives of the Allied Powers "should immediately start to examine questions of sending to Hungary a United Allied Military Mission... for the purpose of supervising and controlling evacuation of Hungarian troops out of Czechoslovak, Yugoslav and Romanian territory occupied by Hungary."[19] Obviously, the Szálasi coup and the advance of the Soviet army rendered this irrelevant. On the other hand, by the end of 1944, when the Allies started again in Moscow on working out the armistice terms for Hungary, the status of the ACC incontestably preoccupied the Western negotiators. During the Moscow conference of October 1944, Molotov and Eden had finally agreed that the organization of the Hungarian armistice regime should follow the Bulgarian pattern. However, in the light of the lessons learned by the Western representatives in the Romanian (and even more) the Bulgarian ACCs—complete exclusion from decision-making and rigorous limitations imposed by the Soviet High Command on their free movement in these countries—the Western allies tried to assure a more balanced participation in the ACC for Hungary. As the British representative cabled to London: "if we are to avoid repetition in Hungary of all vexations experienced on Bulgarian and Romanian ACC, we should be advised to confront Soviet Government with a list of what we regard as legitimate facilities under the armistice for our representatives in Hungary."[20]

In this context, it would appear that the US negotiator, Averell Harriman, tried even harder to settle this problem: "The status of our representatives on the ACC is a matter of prime importance. There seems little to be gained by our participating in a control commission unless we have a clear-cut agreement that our representatives can have a participation commensurate with the responsibilities we take under the armistice." Harriman also urged the State Department to use the lend-lease shipments (to the Soviet Union) as a "bargaining chip", but the Secretary of State, Stettinius, confirmed that "the State Department does not desire to raise questions of Lend-Lease in connection with this discussion..."[21]

During the 14 January session in Moscow, the argument over the rights of the Western representatives "was continued at length and grievances were freely aired on both sides." According to Harriman's account, after several démarches made jointly with Balfour, they managed to obtain some guarantees from Molotov that their movements were to be interpreted "as liberally in Hungary as in the case of the Soviet representative in Italy." At the same time, Harriman felt considerable relief, learning that Marshal Voroshilov was to be the Chairman of the ACC, for he believed that "Voroshilov will have greater

independence of action and a wider view of his responsibilities than the chairmen of the CC in Romania and Bulgaria." [22]

Finally, on 20 January 1945, the delegation from the new Hungarian government was authorized to sign the armistice agreement with the Allied Powers. On that occasion, Harriman and Balfour set forth two letters to Molotov stating that "[the British and US governments] consider it necessary at some later date to discuss and reach agreement regarding the detailed manner in which the Commission should function after the end of hostilities with Germany..."[23]

Frictions between the Allies

The preparations for peace in Europe in spring 1945 were closely connected with the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe, and particularly with the implementation of the "Yalta principles" in the ex-enemy countries. In this regard, the way the Groza government of Romania was established on March 6, 1945 (barely two weeks after the Yalta Conference) proved once again the difficulties and limits of Allied co-operation. In the light of this experience, the Foreign Office tried to reconsider and redefine the British policy towards East Central Europe. On 27 March 1945, in a memorandum that he called an assessment of Soviet policy after Yalta, the British ambassador in Moscow affirmed that "it is safe to assume that the Soviet government are under special temptation, at this stage of the war, to press ahead with their plans for Eastern and Southeastern Europe while they have a relatively free hand... They now have a unique opportunity, with the Red Army in occupation and with the complete disruption of pre-war social systems, to bend internal developments in those countries according to their will." All the same, Sir Anthony Clark-Kerr concluded that "this Russian policy, however distasteful it may be to us and however great a strain it may at times put on our patience and upon our belief in the whole system of collaboration and consultation between the three Great Powers, has the air of remaining a policy of limited objectives, none of which immediately endangers essential British interests."[24]

The Deputy Undersecretary, Sir Orme Sargent, also advocated a policy toward East Central Europe that was subordinated to the fundamental British policy of post-war co-operation with Moscow. Sargent felt that "His Majesty's Government ought to remember that the [Western] form of parliamentary democracy had never established itself in Central and south-eastern Europe, except in Czechoslovakia... The exhausted populations of these countries were unlikely to put up any fight for parliamentary institutions which in any case they have never learnt to rely on or to respect..."

According to Sargent, the Foreign Office seriously had to ask itself "how far and how long it would continue the loosing battle of enforcing the Yalta principles." He recommended to end this "unheroic course" in order not to endanger

"the fundamental British policy of post-war co-operation with the Soviet Union for the sake of an issue which, even if not entirely academic or quixotic, [was] at any rate not vital to British interests in Europe." Therefore, Sargent proposed to accept tacitly the governments which the Soviet authorities were setting up, "no matter what their political colour and their domestic policies may be."[25]

Foreign Secretary Eden summarized the British-Soviet debates in a note to Churchill on 25 May 1945. Eden pointed out that "our aim in Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary was to secure their evacuation by the Red Army and the establishment of independent governments." Yet, in the territories liberated and occupied by the Soviets, the British and American military missions delegated to the ACCs could only act in the capacity of observers and the execution of the armistice agreements was wholly controlled by the Soviet military authorities. In these circumstances, according to Eden, three courses of action were open to the British government: (a) seeking for an improvement in the status of [British] Missions, (b) withdrawal of Missions (from Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania), (c) an offer to conclude peace treaties with the three countries.[26] Eventually, Eden proposed to pursue the third course, which was supported also by Clark-Kerr because he was convinced that this course of action should lead to the withdrawal of Soviet troops. Thus, the British government raised the issue of concluding peace treaties with the ex-enemy countries as early as May 1945. At the same time, the State Department contrived a policy that differed from both the Soviet and the British courses of action. In fact, Washington insisted on the reorganization of governments and the earliest possible holding of free elections as prerequisites for the re-establishment of diplomatic relations and the conclusion of peace treaties. Consequently, on 23 June 1945, the State Department informed the Foreign Office that "the US government could not give more than a qualified support to the British proposals, since they did not wish to conclude peace treaties with the existing unrepresentative governments of the Soviet-controlled countries."[27] Moreover, on 6 July, after having consulted the American missions in Sofia, Bucharest and Budapest, the State Department even doubted that the "conclusion of peace would necessarily result in withdrawal of Russian troops, especially if real political authority remains in the hands of communists." [28]

In this context, it is interesting, however, to see that, compared to the other ex-enemy countries, the Hungarian briefing paper prepared by the State Department for the Potsdam Conference reflected a perception more favourable with regard to Hungarian internal developments: "there have been some instances of direct Soviet intervention in Hungarian internal affairs, but there has been no attempt, as in Romania, to substitute a purely leftist regime for the coalition government."[29] Nevertheless, the State Department considered that the non-Soviet representatives delegated to the ACC "were not allowed to exercise all the rights vouchsafed to them by the agreed status of the Control Commission." That is why in early June, Washington proposed to reorganize the Hungarian ACC.

Still, the Foreign Office presumed that the Soviet Union would hardly consent to the US proposal to ensure equal status for the Western military missions in the ACCs. As the British representative in Budapest, Gascoigne, wrote to Churchill: "Although the Americans seem to have hopes that they will be able to induce the Russians to change their present methods, by taking the British and Americans into partnership with them, there are no indications here that we should achieve anything concrete by such a démarche. The Russians have got their teeth into Hungary [sic!] and I find it hard to believe that they will take them out until they actually leave the country."[30] On 12 July 1945, the Foreign Office expounded again the British position: "really democratic governments can only be established if the peace treaties are concluded before the present governments can entrench themselves too strongly." [31]

But it appears that the Soviets were not interested in admitting the failure of the ACCs before the new tripartite conference in Potsdam. The Soviet commanders submitted new proposals on 11 July 1945 in Bulgaria, the day after in Hungary and on 16 July in Romania, likely to ameliorate the functioning of the ACCs "in connection with the termination of the war against Germany."[32]

At Potsdam (16 July–2 August 1945) President Truman and his new Secretary of State Byrnes raised almost immediately the non-execution of the Yalta Declaration on Liberated Europe and declared that Washington would not extend diplomatic recognition to the East Central European satellites until their governments had been made more representative. The Soviet dictator had, however, a different perception on the general aims of Allied policy, arguing that "after these countries were defeated and the Control Commission of the three powers started functioning to keep these countries under control, it was now time for a different policy, a policy of concessions." Stalin insisted that Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland be granted equal treatment with Italy because he judged the "artificial distinction" of the four countries as "discrediting the Soviet Union".[33]

During the July 20 session, the Foreign Secretaries discussed again the question of resuming diplomatic relations with the ex-enemy countries. According to the Soviet political stance, "in Romania and Bulgaria as well as in Finland and in Hungary since the signature of the instruments of surrender... due order existed and legal power in acting [sic!] which had authority and [was] trusted by the population. The governments of these states faithfully carried out the obligations assumed by them... Romania and Bulgaria gave the United Nations serious assistance by their forces in the struggle against German troops... Under these circumstances, the Soviet government saw no reasons for interfering in the domestic affairs of Romania or Bulgaria."[34]

In the course of the discussions, Eden remarked that the British representatives in Romania and Bulgaria "had few facilities to see anything and still less to get anything done." Molotov retorted that "the number of British representatives in these countries was greater than the number of the Soviets... in addition, the

Soviet representatives recently made proposals for greater co-operation." Byrnes sought to convince Molotov that the American government "had no interest in the government of Romania and Bulgaria except that they be representative... If the Big Three will see to it that free elections are held the US would recognize any government formed... [Washington] is interested in having governments friendly towards Russia." In an effort to paper over the differences, Byrnes proposed on 30 July a package deal likely to settle all controversies in the frame of one compromise: the Western borderline of Poland, the German reparations, the peace treaties with the ex-enemy countries and the admission of Italy to the United Nations.[35]

Thus, according to the Potsdam Protocol, "the three Governments considered it necessary that the anomalous position [of the ex-enemy countries] should be terminated by the conclusion of peace treaties." In pursuit of this goal, they created the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) which was entrusted "to draw up... treaties of peace with Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Finland and to propose settlements of territorial questions outstanding on the termination of war in Europe." Simultaneously, the three governments agreed "to examine each separately in the near future, in the light of the conditions then prevailing, the establishment of diplomatic relations with Finland, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary to the extent possible prior to the conclusion of peace treaties with those countries." [36]

Regarding the East Central European satellites, it is fair to believe that the Allied debates in Potsdam reflected a perception more favourable towards Hungary. This difference in perception widened in the aftermath of Potsdam: compared to the violent political passions in Romania and Bulgaria, Hungarian domestic policy evolved in a more peaceful fashion in the second half of 1945. It would appear that Moscow was more disposed to respect the "Yalta principles" in Hungary than in Romania and Bulgaria. In other words, similarly to Finland and Czechoslovakia, Hungary was becoming part of a Soviet "open sphere" in the making.

Applying the "Yalta principles": the case of Hungary

Barely a week after Potsdam, new political crises broke out in Romania and Bulgaria. In Romania, after the Soviet diplomatic recognition of the Groza government on 8 August 1945, it very soon turned out that Washington was not to follow the Soviet precedent. Similarly, a new political crisis arose in Bulgaria over the elections, which had been fixed for 26 August 1945. In his messages to Washington, the American representative in Sofia, Barnes, continuously denounced the massive political repression that dominated the Bulgarian political scene. He repeatedly insisted that Allied intervention would be crucial "if Bulgaria is not to witness on 26 August a Hitlerite plebiscite staged to confirm control of the country by communists and their stooges."[37] At any rate, succes-

sive Bulgarian domestic development confirmed the Western fears that "postponement of elections [was] not itself assurance that democratic processes would be followed in future in Bulgaria." The postponed elections finally took place on 18 November 1945, but the Communist Party pursued its campaign with the same methods of intimidation as before. In the absence of the promised guarantees, the opposition decided not to participate and thus the "Patriotic Front" obtained 86 per cent of the votes. The Western representatives in Sofia immediately called this outcome into question.

While the political evolution in Romania and Bulgaria reflected surprising similarities, in autumn 1945, the "Hungarian difference" *vis-à-vis* these two countries became more emphatic. In the wake of the Potsdam conference, on 15 August 1945 the President of the Hungarian ACC, Marshal Voroshilov summoned the Hungarian Prime Minister Miklós Dálnoki and the Chairman of the Hungarian National Assembly Béla Zsedényi. Voroshilov explained to them that "in accordance with discussions at Potsdam, the Allied governments would not make peace or have diplomatic relations [with the provisional government]... it was therefore—Voroshilov said—for Hungary's own good that [he] was advising the holding of immediate elections." He also declared that it would be desirable "to hold an election prior to a peace treaty so that the ACC could insure orderly voting."[38]

This is at least what one of the leading figures of the Hungarian Smallholders' Party István Balogh reported the day after to Schoenfeld. Dismayed by Voroshilov's initiative, Schoenfeld sought to obtain the authorization of the State Departmen "to request that election question be placed on ACC agenda." Still, the Secretary of State reiterated to him: "Dept does not feel that ACC which is charged only with execution of Armistice terms should intervene... either collectively or through individual members." Nevertheless, on 22 August 1945 during the next ACC meeting, the American military representative, General Key, raised the issue of elections before the above-mentioned instructions had arrived in Budapest.

According to Schoenfeld's account, during the meeting "Voroshilov vehemently denied the truth of the rumours [about his 'friendly advice' to the Hungarian politicians] and spoke excitedly for as much as fifteen minutes on the subject after General Key had stated his acceptance of his colleague's assurances."[39] The "friendly advice" of Voroshilov surprised the Foreign Office, too. But their analysis was that this Soviet action clearly testified that the Soviets attached great importance to early elections and even more "to the emergence, as a result, of Communist or Communist-controlled governments which would keep these countries in complete subservience to Moscow... At the same time, the Foreign Office considered this initiative at least an indication that [the Soviets] would prefer not to maintain this subservience by stationing large bodies of troops in these countries for an indefinite period."[40] Still, according to Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, "[in Hungary] no immediate British action was

required" and concurrently he underlined to Gascoigne that "I can not authorise you to give any assurance that we should be able or willing to supervise the elections."[41]

In fact, the representatives of the Smallholders' Party exhibited more than once their distress to Gascoigne in Budapest, as they were convinced that "if elections were held with Russian troops in the country and with the lack of Anglo-Saxon participation in control, it would be impossible to prevent them from being rigged." But in response to their "cry for help", Gascoigne tried to convince them that "it was not the policy of HMG to interfere in the internal political affairs of foreign countries by supporting political parties..."[42] In this context it is interesting to mention the discussion which took place at that time in the Foreign Office regarding the attitude of Gascoigne, and which reflected also the dilemmas British policy had to face in Hungary. According to Professor Maccartney (of the Research Department): "Mr Gascoigne in his despatches does not weary of expressing his dislike of the Hungarians—whether [they] are pro-Russian or pro-British they are always wrong... [according to Gascoigne] all elements in the present government coalition are lumped together as either Bolshevik agents or spineless cowards." In lieu of this "policy of total discouragement" Maccartney advocated finding "some active expressions of support to the middle block of Social Democrats and Smallholders ...the 'democratic' and 'popular' Hungary for which [Great Britain] was constantly agitating during the war."

Nevertheless, the Chief of the Southern Department, John Addis, had a completely different opinion on that matter. According to him, "[the British] attitude to all the parties which make up the Hungarian coalition should be the same. [The British] influence on Hungarian politics must be exercised from outside, in the CFM for example... [the British] should not try to play a part inside the country. If [they] were to attempt to do so now [they] should at once find themselves trying to bid against the Russians which would be totally unavailing..."[43]

Yet, insecurity was emblematic for Hungarian politicians. On September 10, the leaders of the Smallholders' Party confidentially inquired of Schoenfeld "whether to announce non-participation of [their] party in forthcoming election... or to await result of election and then determine whether it was sufficiently free to warrant acceptance." Again, Schoenfeld did not feel authorized to give them any guidance whatsoever on that matter. All the same, following the enactment of the electoral law on September 14, Schoenfeld hinted to Foreign Minister Gyöngyösi that it would not be long before American diplomatic recognition was extended to Hungary. It is, however, fair to assume that rather than a concern for the provisions of this law, it was the objective of American diplomacy to draw a clear distinction among the East Central European ex-enemy countries which influenced this decision: "it was felt [by Washington] that the restoration of normal diplomatic procedures between Hungary and the United States would emphasize and give added validity to their refusal to do business

with the governments in Romania and Bulgaria".[44] Still, the announcement of Byrnes on 21 September 1945, during the CFM meeting in London, created a sensation. The Secretary of State declared the willingness of the US to recognize the Hungarian government "provided that full assurances were given that free elections would be held". Regarding the required guarantees, the official response of the Hungarian government referred to the new electoral law and to the composition of the coalition "on a wide democratic basis", and offered a "full guarantee that free and untrammelled elections will be held... in Hungary". Interestingly, even before the Hungarian reply, on 25 September, the Soviets hastened to afford diplomatic recognition to the Provisional Government "in view of the Hungarian Govt's compliance with the armistice terms and [their] general good conduct".[45]

The first test to assess the balance of power among the Hungarian parties took place on October 7, 1945 during the local government elections in Budapest. Giving way to the pressure of the Communist Party, the Social Democrats decided to run on a common list with them and they together obtained 43 per cent of the votes. Surprisingly, the great victor of the elections was the Smallholders' Party— with more than 50 per cent. Commenting on these results, Gascoigne changed his tone: "this victory for Moderates should have a considerable influence throughout the country and it augurs well for the general elections".[46] Influenced by these results, but also by the initiative of Byrnes, the Foreign Office decided to accept a Hungarian emissary in London "on the same basis as the Italian government representative".[47]

However, the unexpected failure of the leftist parties had immediate repercussions. On October 16, Marshal Voroshilov sought to convince all the parties to make up a common list for the forthcoming legislative elections, and to distribute beforehand the percentages among them: "Voroshilov told [the party leaders] that civil war might ensue and he urged that Smallholders' Party should go on a common list with other parties." At the same time, Voroshilov stressed that "he did not wish to interfere with internal affairs of Hungary... he was only acting as 'mediator' between the political forces in order to save what might resolve itself into a disastrous situation".[48] What alarmed the Western powers was that the day after, all three main parties, including the Smallholders, treated the "very friendly intimation" of Marshal Voroshilov favourably. Beforehand, representatives of the Smallholders made inquiries about the attitude of the Western powers, but Schoenfeld gave them an evasive answer. Similarly, Gascoigne remarked that "[he] did not consider that [Great Britain] could take any hand in controlling the elections or in helping to maintain public order".[49]

On October 19, the American chargé d'affaires in London, W. J. Gallman learned that the "first impact on Foreign Office of Voroshilov's step [was] that recognition by British may be held up for some time as Hungarian Govt will not be fulfilling its pledges of free elections. [They] probably will not receive any

Hungarian representative in England until situation is clarified." Gallman added, however, that "no blame [was] attached to Hungarian Government itself as this situation had been created entirely by Soviets." Gallman also telegraphed to Washington that "Gascoigne will be given instructions [by the Foreign Office] to urge Hungarian Government to resist [the] Russian pressure."[50]

In fact, on October 18, the Foreign Office authorized Gascoigne to inform the Hungarian Prime Minister Miklós Dálnoki that the reception of a Hungarian representative in London "must be considered further... the [British] pledge referred to 'free and untrammelled elections' and the prospect of these [was] rather dimmer..."[51] Informed of this British decision, the Prime Minister, although "obviously weak and frightened", was inclined, however, to believe that "despite Russian pressure, the political parties would eventually decide against the joint list..." In contrast, Foreign Minister Gyöngyösi, who was seemingly not surprised by the British attitude, "took the line that the parties had no alternative but to accept the joint list." According to Gascoigne's account, Gyöngyösi seemed however very uncertain as to the result of meeting of the Smallholders' Party leaders.[52]

Encouraged by British intervention, the Smallholders' Party leaders discussed during the whole night of October 19 the attitude to take regarding the Soviet demand. According to Kálmán Saláta, who attended this meeting, Zoltán Tildy (the future Prime Minister) desperately tried to convince the participants to accept the common list. Nevertheless, at dawn of October 20, the party chairman Ferenc Nagy declared the intention of the Smallholders not to meet the Soviet demand. According to Saláta, "Nagy could read the emotions on the faces... the decision was not easy to take as it was the first time we defied the Russians..." [53]

In fact, after this decision the parties "definitely gave up the idea" of running on joint lists in the forthcoming elections. The significance of this was however limited by a new agreement "proposed" by Voroshilov to maintain the coalition structure, whatever the outcome of the elections should be.[54] Thus, on October 25 the British Ambassador in Washington, Lord Halifax informed the Foreign Office that "having now learned of the agreement between Hungarian parties to contest the elections on separate lists, the State Department consider[ed] that action on their part [was] no longer necessary and they assumed [the Foreign Office] would take the same view."[55] Indeed, on October 26, M.S. Williams formulated the British stance : "if the Russians accept this rebuff and the elections in fact proceed as arranged, we can presumably agree to accept a Hungarian representative in London as originally decided."[56]

On November 4, 1945, indisputably multiparty elections took place in Hungary. These gave the Smallholders an absolute majority in the newly elected parliament with 57 per cent of the votes cast, the Communists obtained 17 per cent. However, under the preliminary agreement, the governing coalition was maintained and the new government contained Communist ministers as well. Because of these results, the Hungarian elections attracted worldwide attention.

On November 15, the new government (with Tildy as prime minister) was immediately given diplomatic recognition by the U.S. and Great Britain. On November 20, the daily of the Communist Party considered the fact that among the East Central European countries Hungary was the first to send a diplomatic representative to London as a "real victory of Hungarian democracy". But, as early as December 1945, the historian István Bibó affirmed in a perspicacious article that "Hungarian democracy was in crisis because she lived in fear..."

Did the "open sphere" matter ?

Contrary to the "Yalta-myth" (the Crimea Conference seen as a symbol for the division of Europe into hostile spheres), the Allied powers indeed tried to devise common procedures regarding the post-war settlement which would have transformed their wartime solidarity into lasting political co-operation. The political future of the East Central European ex-enemy countries was directly related to the ultimate question of Allied co-operation, namely the prospects for the Soviet security sphere in that region.

The East Central European policies of both Western powers were motivated by deeply held beliefs on how the international system should function, their underlying assumption being that Great Powers should exercise a predominant influence over lesser neighbours or would tend to do so. Both the British and the American post-war planners considered East Central Europe as an "area of natural interest" for the Soviet Union and their main political aim was "to ensure an autonomous existence within the context of strong Soviet geopolitical and strategical influence." Once it was understood (by the Western powers) that the importance of East Central Europe was derivative rather than intrinsic, they formulated different policies towards this region, capable of effectively tempering Soviet hegemony.

Clearly, the Foreign Office advocated measures in the spring of 1945 which would not endanger the fundamental British policy of post-war co-operation with the Soviet Union "for the sake of an issue which, even if not entirely academic or quixotic, was at any rate not vital to British interests." Therefore, by proposing the early conclusion of the peace treaties, the Foreign Office sought to avoid the presence of Soviet troops being used to bring about an irreversible Sovietization of these countries. Concurrently, after the Yalta conference, the State Department elaborated a more "activist" policy towards this region and insisted, in the spirit of the declaration on liberated Europe, on the reorganization of the ad interim governments and the earliest possible holding of free elections as prerequisites for the reestablishment of diplomatic relations and the conclusion of peace treaties with these countries.

By that time, the growing number of Soviet *faits accomplis* proved that Moscow considered her hegemony over East Central Europe as crucial for her

security. All the same, it is evident that Stalin had different agendas, pursued different priorities with regard to different countries. The organization of free elections can certainly be considered as an important litmus test of Soviet motives and objectives: it is significant that after the war free elections were to be held only in four countries in the Soviet dominated part of Europe: in Finland, Austria, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The case study of the Hungarian elections also showed that in the Hungary of 1945 the Soviet role was cautious rather than assertive. It would appear that the Soviets were more disposed to accept the "Yalta principles" and, as Stalin said to Byrnes during the Moscow CFM meeting in December 1945: "the Soviet Union exercised self-restraint for the sake of Allied co-operation in Hungary."

What was unique in the Hungarian situation largely arose from the fact that, due to Hungary's vicissitudes in working her passage home, the ravages of war, the lack of political power and the destruction of the old regime in Hungary had been the most extreme. Paradoxically, this collapse also meant the almost total discrediting of those Hungarian political forces which could have aroused the suspicion of the Soviet Union. The principal opposition parties (the Smallholders and the Social Democrats) were part of a powerful tide in favour of reform and democracy, and even if there was a strong sentiment against Russia there was an unavoidable understanding of the need for co-operation with her.

In December 1945, the appraisal of István Bibó still seemed relevant: "the Soviet Union prefers a government whose structure is different from hers but can rely on a stable majority domestically and gain [her] confidence... to a government with an identical political regime [with the Soviet Union], but which is in a minority at home and whose survival may not demand constant intervention, but at least it represents a permanent source of distress for the Soviet leaders..." [57] With all the advantages of hindsight, it would be difficult to provide a better description of the "open sphere" policy.

It now seems clear that the initial reliance of the Soviet Union upon coalition regimes lasted longer in Hungary than elsewhere. But even after the free elections in November 1945, the Communists or their protegées progressively controlled the essential Ministry of the Interior, the army and the police. Just as in other parts of the "open sphere", the Soviet Union felt increasingly difficult "to distinguish between influence and domination... between friendly governments and puppet governments".

In conclusion, as regards the post-war development of East Central Europe, the judgement of Charles Bohlen still appears to be valid: the Western Allies "were not attempting to deny to Russia the prerequisites of a great power, namely that she has a certain primary strategic interest in the countries that lie along her borders. It has been the abuse of that right which has caused the most of the trouble [in that region]..."[58] ❧

NOTES

1 ■ On the open-sphere interpretations, cf. Mark, E.: "American Policy Towards Eastern Europe and the Origins of the Cold War 1941–46: An Alternative Interpretation", *The Journal of American History*, LXVIII. No. 2., 1981, pp. 313–336; Mark, E.: "Charles E. Bohlen and the Acceptable Limits of Soviet Hegemony in Eastern Europe: A Memorandum of 18 October 1945", *Diplomatic History*, III. No. 2. 1979, pp. 201–213.

2 ■ Cf. Arcidiacono, B.: *Le "précédent italien" et les origines de la guerre froide*, Bruxelles, Bruylant, 1984.

3 ■ On the Cairo negotiations cf. Arcidiacono, B.: "Gli alleati e l' armistizio della Romania: variazioni su un tema italiano (settembre 1943 – settembre 1944)", *Storia delle Relazioni Internationali*, 2, 1988, pp. 317–354.; Quinlan, P. D.: *Clash over Romania; British and American Policies toward Romania: 1938–47*, Los Angeles, 1977, pp. 90–93.

4 ■ *FRUS*, 1944, vol. IV, p. 147.

5 ■ *Foreign Office to Washington and Moscow*, January 14, 1944, PRO FO 371 R 755/294/37 (43992).

6 ■ *Department of State Bulletin*, September 17, 1944, pp. 289–292.

7 ■ On the policy of the Teleki government cf. Juhász, Gy.: Hungarian Foreign Policy 1919–1945, Budapest, 1979; Barker, E.: *British Policy in South Eastern Europe in the Second World War*, pp. 62–71.

8 ■ Cit. in Kertész, S.D.: *Between Russia and the West. Hungary and the Illusions of Peacemaking*, 1986, p. 73.

9 ■ The letter by Kállay cited in Ullein-Revicky, A.: *Guerre allemande, paix russe. La drame hongroise*, Neuchâtel, 1947, pp. 140–153.

10 ■ *Eden*, August 9, 1944, PRO FO 371 C 8983/8983/62 (39041).

11 ■ "Principal Problems in Europe, September 16, 1944", cit in Davis, *The Cold War Begins*, pp. 153–154.

12 ■ The letter by Molotov cited in Juhász, *Hungarian Foreign Policy*, pp. 158–159.

13 ■ *Roberts*, August 30, 1944, PRO FO 371 C 11717/10/21 (39253).

14 ■ *Sir Clark Kerr to Foreign Office*, October 6, 1944, PRO FO 371 C 13571/10/21 (39254).

15 ■ Cf. Maccartney, C. A.: *October Fifteenth. A History of Modern Hungary 1929–45. I–II*, Edinburgh, 1956, 1961, vol. II, pp. 385–443; Juhász, *Hungarian Foreign Policy*, pp. 322–330.

16 ■ *Roberts*, November 6, 1944 C 15648/5439/21 (39281).

17 ■ *Sargent*, December 27, 1944, PRO FO 371 C 17836/5439/21 (39281).

18 ■ Matthews cit. in Max, S. M.: *The United States, Great Britain and the Sovietization of Hungary 1945–48*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1985, p. 12.

19 ■ *Clark Kerr to Foreign Office*, October 11, 1944, PRO FO 371 C 13857/10/21 (39254).

20 ■ *Balfour to Foreign Office*, December 28, 1944, PRO FO 371 C 18062/10/21 (39256).

21 ■ *FRUS*, 1944, vol. III, pp. 953–955.

22 ■ *FRUS*, 1944, vol. III, pp. 973–975.

23 ■ *FRUS*, 1944, vol. III, p. 800.

24 ■ Clark-Kerr on Soviet Policy, March 27, 1945, cit. in Ross, G. (ed.): *The Foreign Office and the Kremlin. British Documents on Anglo-Soviet Relations 1941–1945*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 196–197.

25 ■ *Sir Orme Sargent*, March 13, 1945, PRO FO 371 R 5063/5063/67 (48194).

26 ■ Cit. in Woodward, L.: *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, vol. III, London, 1976, pp. 587–588.

27 ■ *Foreign Relations of the United States*, The Conference of Berlin 1945, vol. I, pp. 357–359.

28 ■ *FRUS*, The Conference of Berlin, 1945, vol. I, pp. 399–400.

29 ■ *FRUS*, The Conference of Berlin, vol. I, pp. 366–367.

30 ■ *FRUS*, The Conference of Berlin, vol. I, pp. 366–367.

31 ■ *FRUS*, The Conference of Berlin vol. I, pp. 409–410.

32 ■ *FRUS*, The Conference of Berlin, vol. I, pp. 405–406; vol. II, pp. 689–691.

33 ■ *FRUS*, The Conference of Berlin, vol. II, pp. 168–175.

34 ■ *FRUS*, The Conference of Berlin, vol. II, p. 698.

35 ■ *FRUS*, The Conference of Berlin, vol. II, pp. 150–152, 480–483.

36 ■ *Ibid.*, pp. 1499–1514.

37 ■ *FRUS*, The Conference of Berlin vol. II, pp. 717.

38 ■ *Gascoigne to Foreign Office*, August 18, 1945, PRO FO 371 R 13936/26/21 (48463).

39 ■ *FRUS*, 1945, vol IV, pp. 850–851, 854, 856.

40 ■ *Political situation in Hungary*, August 19, 1945, PRO FO 371 15313/26/21 (48461).

41 ■ *Foreign Office to Gascoigne,* August 23, 1945, PRO FO 371 R 14053/26/21 (48463).

42 ■ *Gascoigne to Bevin,* September 3, 1945, PRO FO 371 R 15789/26/21 (48467).

43 ■ *Political situation: Soviet domination of Hungary,* September 10, 1945, PRO FO 371 R 15313/26/21 (48461).

44 ■ *FRUS,* 1945. vol. IV, pp. 886–887.

45 ■ *Ibid.,* pp. 876–77.

46 ■ *Gascoigne to the Foreign Office,* October 8, 1945, PRO FO 371 R 17137/26/21 (48469).

47 ■ *Hungarian elections,* October 25, 1945, PRO FO 371 R 18155/26/21 (48470).

48 ■ *Gascoigne to the Foreign Office,* October 17, 1945, PRO FO 371 R 17694/26/21 (48469).

49 ■ *FRUS,* 1945 vol. IV, p. 892; *Gascoigne to the Foreign Office,* October 17, 1945, PRO FO 371 R 17694/26/21 (48469).

50 ■ *FRUS,* 1945 vol. IV, p. 895.

51 ■ *Foreign Office to Gascoigne,* October 18, 1945, PRO FO 371 R 17718/26/21 (48469).

52 ■ *Gascoigne to the Foreign Office,* October 19, 1945, PRO FO 371 R 17818/26/21 (48470).

53 ■ Saláta, K.: "The Struggle of the Smallholder's-Party in 1945, *Irodalmi újság* 1989, 3, p. 14; cf. also Nagy, F.: *The Struggle Behind the Iron Curtain,* N.Y. 1948, Budapest, 1990.

54 ■ *FRUS,* 1945 vol. IV, p. 897; *Gascoigne to the Foreign Office,* October 23, 1945, PRO FO 371 R 18038/26/21 (48470).

55 ■ *Earl of Halifax to the Foreign Office,* October 25, 1945, PRO FO 371 R 18155/26/21 (48470).

56 ■ *Hungarian Elections,* October 25, 1945, PRO FO 371 R 18155/26/21 (48470).

57 ■ Bibó, *The Crisis of Hungarian Democracy,* pp. 71–73.

58 ■ Cit. in Mark, *American Policy Toward Eastern Europe,* p. 336.

PERSONAL

Miklós Györffy

Out Riding

The photograph shows the Habsburg Archduke Frederick and his family out riding, around 1900, and is one of many hundreds that depict the private and social life of the family that are found in Archduke Frederick's family collection. Although the Archduke's wife, Princess Isabella of Belgium, was herself an enthusiastic amateur photographer, most of the pictures were taken by professionals, most notably Gyula Jelfy, who to all intents and purposes was the household photographer of the Archduke, though he also ran a studio that enjoyed a high reputation in the centre of Budapest. One hundred and fifty photographs from the family collection turned up in Budapest among someone's papers in the seventies to be selected for an album published by Corvina Books under the title *Photo Habsburg*. It was here I came across the picture of the family out riding.

The picture is above all remarkably beautiful. Its beauty, however, is purely photographic in nature. The way the group is photographed is unusual, and this makes for a unique composition—there is no sky to be seen. The riders and their entourage are on a slope which carries on a little further before rising steeply up a rocky hillside in the background. The camera is looking slightly downwards. As an amateur photographer I know that the brightness of the sky often causes overexposure, and in any case the sky in black-and-white pictures is often just a dead, empty space without colour, tone or texture. For this reason I like landscape or nature photographs in which the black-and-white of the terrestrial objects provides the picture with all its photographic tones. The group of people in the foreground stands out from the background in purely visual terms; in other words irrespective of any thematic emphasis, by the fact that the black-and-white tones are so much sharper, more defined and more alive than the details of the hillside.

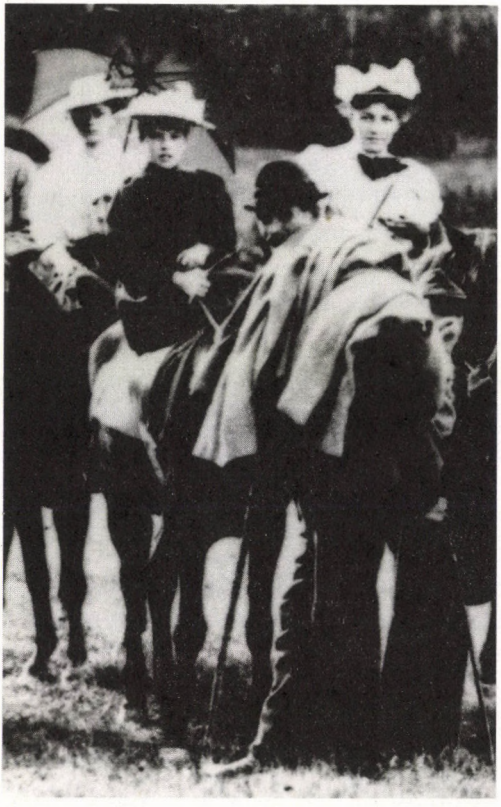
Miklós Györffy,
a novelist, critic and university lecturer, reviews new fiction for this journal.

The archducal family with their grooms and servants.
From: Photo Habsburg: Archduke Frederick and his family. *Budapest, Corvina, 1988.*

This is largely due to the nature of the light and the angle at which it falls on the group, which is also one of the factors which makes this such a fine photograph. The light falls from the left and from behind, so that the picture is almost back-lit. However, this is not strong sunlight, but filtered light. It is as if the sun were shining through a thin haze of cloud; of course we can only feel this, we cannot see it. The clearly defined contours of the forest of horses' legs cast barely discernible, hazy shadows on the grassy ground. I think that it must have been quite daring on the part of the photographer to attempt to take a picture in these lighting conditions, given the technology available and the lighting conventions of the time. If the light had been stronger, then perhaps he would not have taken the picture here or in this way, virtually back-lit.

The filtered light which streams in from outside the picture concentrates especially in the white hats and blouses of the women. The lighting conditions show up with particular effect on women wearing a white hat with a dark blouse. This is even truer for one woman in particular, whom we can see clearly, sitting side-saddle, just right of centre, with the light also picking out strongly the pale-coloured saddle-blanket that can be seen foreshortened in the picture. In general, both in compositional terms and in terms of the definition provided by the lighting conditions, the group in the focal point of the picture lying slightly to the right of centre is presented in a particularly intense and elaborate way. Behind the woman in the white hat slightly to the left of centre, whose horse

happens to be turning towards the camera, there are seven horsed figures close behind one another towards the right of the picture; the way they are positioned as regards both depth and breadth produces differences in tone that lend rhythm to the space. I would love to ask the unknown photographer if the groom in the centre foreground is carrying the horse-blanket over his shoulder intentionally so that its folds will be thrown into relief by the light? Whether co-incidental or the result of deliberate positioning, the way the central tableau is composed in accordance with the lighting conditions is quite remarkable; this can be seen in the way the legs gain solidity, but it becomes even clearer above waist level: a woman with a white hat and dark blouse; a man with a light jacket and dark hat, sporting a moustache; two women with white hats against the background of a darker-toned parasol, one wearing a white blouse, the other a dark one; in front of these four, who are moving forward in arrow formation, the groom, who was mentioned before; then, behind him, the woman with white ribbons and a white blouse. Towards the right-hand side another two women in white hats, whose two horses, in dynamically divergent positions, hold this duo apart from the others to form a separate unit. This central group of figures, all but one female and on horseback, more or less faces the viewer and is flanked on two sides by male riders standing crosswise.



It must have been difficult to get the group of riders and their attendants into this formation, since all are on horseback, and horses with riders on their backs do not usually stand still. One can see that one or two of them are taking a step or shaking their heads. The riders themselves are all quite composed and disciplined except for the woman with the parasol on the far left of the picture who is opening her mouth as if to call out, and the man just to her left, the Archduke Frederick himself, who is not looking at the camera. The women are all beautiful, well-groomed and attractive. I myself am particularly drawn to the young woman sitting on the bright saddle-blanket. There are surprisingly many of them—seven in all, and the ride has evidently been organized for their pleasure. They would hardly have been out for a gallop dressed like that, with those hats. And in any case, hampers can be seen beside the grooms on the left-hand side, indicating that the company must have stopped somewhere en route for a picnic. The gentlemen are in the minority; there are only four or five of them. It is not clear to me whether the man on the far right is one of the company or one of the servants. With his feathergrass hat, drooping moustache and slightly stocky build, he looks to me like some kind of steward or head groom who was perhaps there to supervise the staff and coordinate the ride. In any event, the fact that he is on horseback could mean that he is not simply one of the ordi-

nary grooms or servants because they— there are five of them—are all standing. We get a glimpse of a small servant-boy, almost completely hidden from view by the man with the blanket, who is standing in front of him.

The fact that the scene, the whole idea of going for a ride on horseback, dates from "peacetime", from before the Great War, naturally makes it a poignant reminder of a past that has long since vanished. Photography seems to be suited for more modern times, and for a different type of image. The aristocratic ritual of riding on horseback is preserved in paintings, etchings and novels. It is particularly perplexing that this picture of the company displays a level of technical accomplishment that would do credit to a modern photograph, in addition to a masterful use of light. One is almost looking at a scene from a modern film, an example of outstanding camerawork. Such elegant, refined ladies in white hats, some of whom were in fact sisters, might recall the three sisters of Bergman's *Cries and Whispers*. What we have here, however, is not a film, it is a real and authentic image from the lives of royalty at the turn of the century. This picture dates from the same period as other documentary photographs that have turned yellow, or are faded and scratched. A subject matter worthy of the court painter's stylish manner is captured here in all its authenticity.

I can spend ages looking at old group photographs like this. One by one I study the individual people about whom I know nothing other than how they appear at the moment the photograph was taken. I try to imagine what might have happened immediately before and after the photo was taken, on the previous day, that same day and the following day. In the first instance, these faces from the past were not interested in appearing natural—what is natural anyway? Rather, the owner of the face wanted to give an indication of the status he considered he had and enjoyed showing to others. Of course it is difficult to take up such a pose while on horseback. This is another reason why this particular picture is special, because here we have gentlemen and ladies who would otherwise, undoubtedly, have donned the appropriate facial expression and pose in front of the camera, the more or less conventional pose of sitters in a painted portrait. Fully aware of the beauty and elegance of their lifestyle and surrounded by all the trappings that denote the subtle differences in rank, they nevertheless let themselves be glimpsed at in an incidental and improvised moment. And at that moment ultimately all distinctions of rank and status disappear; in the photograph all that remains of everyone is a human face, a fleeting moment in life. ❧

Zoltán Fejős

Three Faces of the National Hero

Statues of Kossuth in the United States

I aim to discuss issues of national culture and the relationship between the figure of a national hero and that national culture. More particularly, I would like to examine how the image of a national hero contributes to the creation and maintenance of various forms of communal identity—most notably the diaspora identity, independent of state boundaries.

By way of illustration, I have chosen the three most important Kossuth monuments in the United States: those in Cleveland (1902), New York (1928) and Washington, DC (1990). These sculptures show how the Kossuth cult changed in the experience of Hungarians in the United States, and they also testify to the changing role of a national hero in establishing and strengthening social cohesion through the imagined world of national culture.

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Lajos Kossuth became a myth in his own lifetime. Legends surrounding both his person and his deeds started during the 1848 Revolution and the ensuing War of Independence, and continued to spread after Hungary's military collapse in 1849. There are numerous folk songs, historical legends and anecdotes about him, which testify to the devotion people felt for Kossuth. His reputation was established primarily by the April Laws which dethroned the Habsburgs and declared Hungary's independence, and most notably by the emancipation of the serfs. His nationwide popularity grew with every one of his many recruiting drives, occasions when the rural population saw him in the flesh.[1] Kossuth's legendary status was confirmed after the failure of the War of Independence, when his name became identified with protests against the absolutist regime. The final deed that established him as a true national hero was his staying out of the country: his willingness to live in exile for the sake of his patriotic ideals and his decision never to set foot again on Hungarian soil after the surrender at Világos (Siria) in August 1849. Kossuth's homecoming was eagerly awaited by the people, who were hoping for him to remedy the nation's grievances. The cult of Kossuth grew after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. Emotionally and

politically motivated, this cult presented Kossuth as the symbol of national independence; and the cult's gradual adaptation to the existing political system, a parallel development, already then signified that times were changing.[2]

Kossuth's death in Turin in 1894 brought his status as a national hero to consummation. His death in exile set the seal on a self-sacrifice undertaken for the nation. In death—and only in death—Kossuth came home. The climax of the Kossuth legend was undoubtedly marked by his funeral, a political demonstration interwoven with sacral elements: the ceremonial return of the corpse, the refusal of an official burial, the funerary ceremony in Budapest, which attracted over half-a-million mourners, and the thousands of obituaries in the press. After this the cult began to fade, although some spectacular attempts to sustain it were still to come. The two decades that followed his death were marked by an eagerness all over the country to erect Kossuth statues, and by work on his mausoleum, but now without the important political message that his funeral had sent.

Legend and cult—both are social projections of the myth of a national hero and both have their own set of instruments creating the associated imagery. In his brilliant discussion of the elderly Kossuth, the historian Gyula Szekfű drew a clear distinction between the two phenomena: "The legend was spreading in the Hungarian lands from the moment he visited them, calling people to arms, wearing a sword and the Kossuth hat: a fine figure of a man, who was soon to disappear without a trace. The legend was born out of the prayer on the battle-field of Kápolna, where 'noble Hungary is mourning, Kossuth, her true son, is feverish'—Kossuth did not, and indeed, could not, know this legend, as it was not customary to correspond with legendary heroes or to take a train to visit them." By contrast, the cult was created by the intellgentsia, "who saw Kossuth with their own eyes, heard his voice and read his writings."[3] This cult was propagated in schools, in reading circles and in the press, and thus communicated to the many, in town and country.

The two modes of creating a national hero—legend and cult, the popular and the official (or institutional) processes—were rooted in emotions. However, the hero is also an ideological source for the establishment and the continuous reinterpretation of national culture. Kossuth's person and activities went hand in hand with scholarly analyses. The communal/public domain of national culture derives from these three sources, providing the raw material for monuments, recollections and anniversaries—both in Hungary and in the diaspora.

Kossuth as the focus of ethnic identity

"We were scattered over the world like a second Israel," Kossuth wrote in the introduction to the first volume of his memoirs.[4] These refugees were to be followed by further waves of Hungarian exiles and fugitives in the nearly one hundred years that began in the last third of the 19th century. The dispersion grew even more pronounced as Hungarian diasporas of various sizes and durations were being formed over a much larger area "over the world" than Kossuth had experienced in his lifetime.

"For Hungarian refugees leaving behind Hungary, a land of economic and political oppression, and arriving in the United States, a country of democracy and personal freedom, Lajos Kossuth became the idol, and the Kossuth tune their prayer, which was sent flying towards Turin on

the wings of heavy sighs from the lips of thousands upon thousands of Hungarian-Americans. Whenever a Hungarian community in the United States launched a patriotic initiative, the magic of Kossuth's name was sounded."[5] From the very beginning, the legend and the cult of Kossuth were instrumental in forging the ethnic loyalty of Hungarian-Americans; they made their own contribution to the formation of Kossuth's image as a national hero, partly by idealizing the emigrant status and partly by nurturing a distinctly local, American tradition, when evoking the memories of Kossuth's American tour in 1851/52. The "Kossuth-Craze",[6] Kossuth's idolization by American society in the last century, provided a distinctive source of communal identity for subsequent Hungarian exiles.

Creating self-esteem: Cleveland, 1902

Hungarian migrants in the United States wanted to erect a monument to Kossuth even in his own lifetime—at a time when no one in Hungary thought of doing so. The first attempt, in 1893, in New York, foundered due to the rivalry between the various communities and their leaders, as well as for the lack of an appropriate organizational framework.[7] This plan to erect a statue fits into the line of events marking the Kossuth cult in America after the 1880s. From the very beginning, Kossuth and the 1848 traditions were crucial in the communal life and historical conscience of the emigrants; this was enhanced by the fact that Kossuth was popular in the United States.

A few years later a small group of 1848 emigrants, the Honvéd Veterans' Club of Cleveland, decided to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Kossuth's visit to their city by placing a plaque on the wall of American House, from the balcony of which Kossuth had delivered his speech on February 2, 1852. To carry out their plan, they approached the other Hungarian organizations in Cleveland and jointly formed the Committee of the United Hungarian Associations. In the course of the preparations, the public notary Lajos Perczel suggested that it might be more appropriate to mark the 100th anniversary of Kossuth's birth with a statue. The issue was finally settled on an American cue on October 6, 1901, during a commemoration of the Arad martyrs (the thirteen generals executed by the Austrians), when a Cleveland lawyer, C.W. Pollner made it known that the city's American population was also considering the idea of a Kossuth statue. The Americans were only waiting for the initiative to come from the Hungarians. This explains why a broadly based fund-raising campaign was quickly organized. Most of the local Hungarian associations and local newspapers were active in their support. The fund-raising campaign was launched with a proclamation by the Protestant clergyman Elek Csutoros: "Let us put together our pennies and erect a statue for Kossuth, a prayer book made of bronze in which all people, great and small, can read about patriotism, faith and hope! Let it be us, castaway but loyal children of our motherland, that set an example to the entire Hungarian nation!"[8]

On May 24, 1902 the Cleveland papers announced that the city's Council of Public Works had given permission to erect Kossuth's statue right in the heart of Cleveland, on Public Square. The immediate response of the leaders of the city's Czech and Slovak population was to try and foil the attempt. Two respected priests, Fathers Furdek and Horák, one Slovak and the other Czech, published a declaration in the Cleveland papers stating that the Slavs were appalled at the idea of the statue, since Kossuth had been "an oppressor of

the nations". The Slovaks even went as far as to send a delegation to the Mayor in protest. They claimed that Kossuth was not the man the Hungarians tried to make him out to be, "because the Hungarians' love of freedom is a shamme, the nationalities are all oppressed in Kossuth's country."[9] Debates followed both in the press and in public assemblies, where the Hungarians, the Slovaks and the Czechs rallied all their supporters to attempt to persuade the city authorities. Finally the City Council permitted the erection of the statue, not however on the original site but in one of the city parks, Euclid Circle (also known as University Circle). Rather than mention anything about the protests by local Slovaks and Czechs, they referred to traffic problems. The compromise satisfied the Hungarians, as they regarded the new site as one of the finest in the city.

The Kossuth statue of Cleveland, a copy of one by the Debrecen sculptor András Tóth in Nagyszalonta (Salonta, Romania), was unveiled on 28 September 1902. A mere five months had passed between the first public announcement and the ceremonial unveiling. More than 16,000 took part in the parade before the event and a crowd of between 60 and 70,000 watched. Between seven and eight thousand Hungarians from other US towns and cities came to Cleveland for the occasion. The unveiling was not simply an exclusively Hungarian ceremony, as the speakers included Cleveland's Mayor Tom L. Johnson, Governor of Ohio George Nash, Senator Mark C. Hanna and several other prominent Americans, as well as the Italian Consul. Besides the Hungarian societies, the local German and Italian associations also marched in the parade.[10]

Numerous elements of the Kossuth cult and of the 1848 traditions were resorted to in the ceremony. For example, surviving veterans of 1848 in America were in attendance. Members of the Batthyány Society sang the Kossuth song in front of the statue. Soil from battlefields was deposited around the pedestal. (It was sent from Hungary by various county administrations at the request of the statue committee.) In this way, according to the introductory words by Lajos Perczel, who sported a Kossuth beard, "in free America, we have been able to erect the statue of our nation's resuscitator, Lajos Kossuth, on the blood-stained soil of Hungary".[11] For Hungarian migrants soil taken from the homeland was a romantic and symbolic token, their mythical tie with the mother nation. We must not forget, as he wrote, that Kossuth himself had taken "a pinch of soil" with him when he left Hungary after Világos.[12] At the same time, in the manner of Hungarian soil mixed with the American earth, this nostalgic symbolism was mixed with the ideals of "free America", frequently brought up during the ceremony, with the heroic figure of Lajos Kossuth being evoked to render the message visible.

The Hungarian emigrants of the turn of the century, who were mostly of peasant stock, had no direct political connection with the Hungarian government through political parties or politicians. Furthermore, back in Hungary there was (in the words of a contemporary) no "serious interest" in the United States, a country largely overlooked "from a political point of view".[13] Certain Hungarian-American religious and community leaders tried to ease their isolation in Hungary, albeit with only minimal (and temporary) success. The ceremonial presentation of an ornamental Hungarian tricolour in New York, which preceded that unveiling of the Kossuth statue, was an exception to the rule. A gift of the Hungarian National Association, the flag was presented to the "American Hungarians" by the Association's chairman.[14] However, the Hungarian government did

The unveiling of the Kossuth statue, 15 March 1928, New York

not concern itself with the impoverished masses who emigrated to the United States nor with the patriotic Hungarians of Cleveland. Contemporary chroniclers were embittered to note that the Hungarian government failed to send a message on the occasion, and not one of the Hungarians en poste in the United States was present at the event. Of all the wreaths, of which three were sent by Hungarian associations from the old country and twenty-two were placed on the pedestal by Hungarian clubs in America, "only one wreath, only one ribbon was missing: the wreath with the red-white-and-green ribbon of the Hungarian state."[15]

Kossuth's name failed to bring the emigrants closer to the homeland; quite the opposite was the case. This could be explained by the deep-seated desire, shared by most of them, for Hungary's sovereignty. The migrant Hungarians wished to belong to the nation through the person of Lajos Kossuth and this view clashed with the official position. It appears that, in creating their self-image, the emigrants chose the wrong symbol (at least in the eyes of the contemporary political establishment), because Kossuth never accepted the 1867 Compromise. Nor did the unveiling of the statue in Cleveland generate any response from the Hungarian opposition party, the Party of Independence, either, vividly demonstrating the fact that the emigrants had little weight in Hungarian politics.

The Hungarian-Americans' first momentous action in connection with Kossuth's name enabled migrants from various parts of Hungary to develop some sort of a collective identity. The national hero conjured up a shared historical background and common fate, thus contributing to group solidarity. On occasions, such as that in Cleveland, the power of ethnic identity, which was so effective in organizing groups and communities, could coun-

teract the inherent fragmentation of immigrants. The New York reception of the national flag and the unveiling of the statue started a new era, when "the true history of Hungarian-Americans" began and when "Hungarian-Americans came together and joined in an embrace",[16] as a contemporary recalled two decades later.

Secondly, Kossuth's person served the migrant Hungarians' self-definition. This had a twofold purpose: on the one hand, those identifying with Kossuth's ideals were able to present themselves as distinct from other natives of Austria-Hungary. This helped their transformation from migrant workers into a distinct ethnic group in the metropolitan and industrialized environment of the United States. On the other hand, the act of expressing their own national identity and characteristics gave them an awareness that they formed part of American society. In Kossuth's person, who was held in high esteem by Americans, they established some kind of a link with the American nation. The national hero helped to strengthen this link, which the immigrant peasants and their leaders could not take for granted. Ottokár Prohászka, the influential Catholic bishop, author and politician himself, noted this during his journey to the United States in 1904, when he remarked that "to be a Hungarian in America is not a very glorious feeling"; "with their economic and social backwardness" the uneducated masses of migrant workers and "desperadoes" "could not have made a good impression on American society". Yet, Kossuth's statue erected by the Hungarian-Americans stood tall in Cleveland, commemorating the man "who linked the greatest American ideals, freedom and the determination to fight for freedom, with the idea of Hungary for all eternity."[17]

Thirdly, we must emphasize once more that the Cleveland statue of Kossuth was wholly independent of the Hungarian state, of official politics. It was a grassroots initiative, which concurred with similar movements in Hungary. By that time Kossuth statues clearly personified an opposition attitude.[18] The Cleveland monument was the 29th, and the first abroad. It owed its existence to the independence tradition among elite circles of Hungarian-Americans, to the Kossuth cult and to the 1848 traditions of the migrant population as an "exported" national idea.

National representation and the Kossuth pilgrimage: New York, 1928

After the fiasco at the end of the last century, the plan to erect a statue for Lajos Kossuth in New York resurfaced in the mid-1920s. A campaign was started in 1927 by Géza D. Berkó, the editor of the New York Hungarian daily, the *Amerikai Magyar Népszava.* He urged Hungarians all over the United States to establish committees for the purpose of collecting money for the statue. Local journalists and communal and religious leaders proved to be the main supporters; they themselves professed the traditional, late-nineteenth-century and early twentieth century political views of the opposition in Hungary. (As I mentioned earlier, this view prevailed among the elite of Hungarian-Americans from the moment that Hungarian communities came to be established.)

The significance of the statue unveiled on March 15, 1928 was boosted by "Kossuth pilgrims", who came from Hungary to attend the ceremony.

Numerous aspects of the Cleveland ceremony were repeated, such as the involvement of prominent American public figures, the symbolic placing of Hungarian soil at the pediment of the monument, and so on. However, by this time the memory

of Lajos Kossuth's American journey was fading, and no one in the crowd could have had personal recollections of Kossuth or his triumphant American tour. At the beginning of the century, some of those Americans who had seen and heard Kossuth in 1851 and 1852, and some 1848 exiles also, were still alive. No doubt family traditions, books and schools made up for the lack of such personal experience.[19]

From the viewpoint of the Hungarian-Americans, the 1928 ceremony clearly showed that co-operation within the strongly divided community was still possible. It was less than perfect, but despite all internal conflicts and jealousy between the leaders, a total of $40,000 was collected and a modified version of János Holvay's statue in Cegléd was erected in New York. Although contemporary newspapers contain numerous reports on the altercations, dubious financial dealings and instances of corruption, assumed or real, the occasion was hailed as an example of "the unity of Hungarian-Americans" at the unveiling ceremony as well as in the pages of the daily *Amerikai Magyar Népszava* and in the travel notes published by the Kossuth pilgrims. Unity was, indeed, born within the patriotic camp, but there was resistance on the part of Hungarian-Americans of liberal, socialist and communist leanings, most of whom had come to America after the collapse of the 1918 and 1919 revolutions. In his political analysis "Kossuth meggyalázása" (Kossuth's Defamation), the emigré historian Oszkár Jászi, a member of the 1918 Károlyi government, posed the question "Of what use was that comedy of the Kossuth statue to the Hungarian feudal fascists?"[20] One of the most active groups of the protesters, the Anti-Horthy Liga (an association closely allied with the Communists) followed the Hungarian pilgrims along their travels, trying to interrupt even the unveiling ceremony. It was the publicity campaign for what they nicknamed the "Horthy–Kossuth" sculpture, that the protesters attacked, rather than Kossuth's person. Protesters, leaflets scattered from aeroplanes and articles in tough, occasionally rough, language in newspapers marked the limitations of the proclaimed national unity. Kossuth's name was on banners, when in fact he—and in a broader context the national hero—was subject to diametrically opposed interpretations.

Opinions on the prestige of both the event and the statue were also divided. "Quite frankly, Kossuth's immortal memory and the spirit that Kossuth had represented in America deserved a more monumental work in one of New York's finest parks", a pilgrim commented.[21] But money was in short supply, and any assistance to erect a worthier monument was not forthcoming from Hungary. Whether there was corruption at play or simply on account of the poor quality of the material, within a few months the bronze started to deteriorate. This was loudly reported primarily by the Anti-Horthy Liga, who had opposed the idea of the statue from the start.[22] However, others also noticed—including the Calvinist Bishop László Ravasz who visited the city in 1928—that after the great razzmatazz of the ceremony, the deteriorating statue was a pitiful sight.[23] Eventually the statue had to be discretely replaced at considerable extra cost.[24]

The homeland, no doubt had political reasons to keep a high profile at the ceremony. Headed by Baron Zsigmond Perényi, who was Chairman of the Magyar Nemzeti Szövetség (Hungarian National Alliance), a deputation of more than five hundred people represented a broad section of the Hungarian political and social establishment. The Social Democrat working class and the peasantry were absent.[25] The representatives of the homeland were in-

vited by the originator of the idea, Géza D. Berkó, and his followers. By this gesture, the migrant elite transcended its narrower organizational function, one that was limited to the public life of Hungarian-Americans. In addition to uniting the Hungarian communities scattered all over America, which was equivalent to a nation-wide expression of the ethnic identity of Hungarian-Americans, the elite members talked about the "national mission" of the diaspora.

Beside being present at the inauguration ceremony, the pilgrims from the old country visited the more important sites of Kossuth's journey to the United States. They met politicians of all sorts, municipal, state, and federal, as well as businessmen, bankers and representatives of the leading American newspapers. Their professed aim was to pay homage to Kossuth, rather than to carry out propaganda. It is undeniable, however, that one concealed aim of the visit was to generate sympathy for the Hungarian cause, which was openly and continuously ridiculed by the Communist daily, *Új Előre*. The pilgrims, who surreptitiously promoted the "Hungarian truth" and the rejection of the Trianon Peace Treaty, assigned a new role to the Hungarian-Americans. "The Hungarian community in the United States", Lóránt Hegedűs wrote, "is a power to reckon with, and it is the pilgrims' duty to raise the Hungarian-Americans' status. Anyone who visits them must make them feel conscious of their own importance and instil in them an awareness that they have become a force in Hungarian history."[26] On this occasion the Hungarian National Alliance gave the Hungarian-Americans a book on Hungary, which contained, in addition to historical, geographical, cultural and economic information, the essential facts of the Trianon Peace Treaty.[27] They overlooked the fact, however, that while most Hungarian-Americans identified with some elements of the romantically orchestrated Kossuth myth, and were enthusiastic about the Kossuth statue, only very few of them showed a willingness (and still fewer had the means) to make a political and financial commitment to the homeland. From the viewpoint of Hungarian-Americans (or more precisely, of their elite), the most important message of the Kossuth statue was the gestures made by the pilgrims towards the emigrants. In this way, through Kossuth's person, a connection was established between the homeland and the Americanized emigrants. From the perspective of the Hungarian-Americans' past, the limited redress was a gesture signalling the will to forgive the "disloyalty" of physically deserting their country; therefore, it was more than a political manipulation, as frequently claimed by the contemporary opponents of the action.

On their return, the pilgrims—in numerous travel accounts and newspaper articles and even in books—declared their "national mission" successfully accomplished. However, they rarely examined their journey in the light of Kossuth's ideals. The only exception was, perhaps, Zoltán Horváth, a former member of the bourgeois radicals, who published his partisan view in the significantly named newspaper of the Independence Party of Kiskunfélegyháza, *Csonkamagyarország* (Truncated Hungary). In his view, America showed more respect to Kossuth than did Hungary, since the people of the United States followed Kossuth's advice. The author summed up the lessons of the American journey in suggestion that Hungary "immediately had to switch to the sincere and true, democratic and liberal methods of government in line with Kossuth's principles."[28] The view that the Kossuth heritage was more than a narrowly interpreted national idea, and more than

the consistent representation of national sovereignty, failed to win much support, as it could not compete with the image of a national hero who was being used indirectly to express the "Hungarian truth".

The Kossuth pilgrimage was captured not only in detailed travel accounts, but also in photographs and illustrated reports. Indeed, the Hungarian Film Office "kept the Hungarian audience informed" about the pilgrims' journey with the help of its "original report" on celluloid.[29] The up-to-date mass media of the time played an important part in the unveiling. Several radio stations reported the ceremony live, and we know of newsreels covering the event. It appears that, besides the main features of the ceremony, such as the parade, the prominent Hungarians formally attired *à l'hongroise,* the speakers and the wreaths, the American reporters also showed a marked interest in the more controversial aspects of the occasion: in the protesters carrying placards condemning the Horthy regime, and in aircraft dropping leaflets.[30] Through the new mass media devices the national hero became "modernized", and the collective ideals could be presented through Kossuth's person to a wider public.

The past as model: Washington DC, 1990

In the more than sixty years that passed between 1928 and 1990 the cult grew, as new elements were added to the inevitable March 15 and October 6 celebrations. New interpretations of Kossuth and his exile surfaced, in conjunction with the arrival of new waves of Hungarian exiles and emigrants. In the period in question, another two Kossuth statues were erected, one in Los Angeles, California and one in Welland, Ontario, Canada.[31] Thus Kossuth, the national hero continued to play a major part in the ethnic identity of the diaspora. The most recent effusion of the cult was associated with the political changes in Hungary, culminating in the unveiling of another statue.

A new element is that here we have a work by a Hungarian artist abroad, rather than a copy of a sculpture erected in Hungary. After leaving Hungary in 1945, Csaba Kúr settled in the United States in 1951. It was he who was responsible for the restoration of the Kossuth statue in Cleveland in 1985. In the following year he produced, with the support of the American Hungarian Federation, a bronze bust of Kossuth. Though they tried hard, no appropriate location was found for the sculpture in the United States. A number of the Federation's leaders argued that the Kossuth bust should be donated to the United States Congress, in this way securing a permanent and illustrious location for it. The Hungarian political changes gave a favourable impetus to the plan. At the proposal of the Hungarian-born Tom Lantos, the Democrat Congressman of California, who played an active role in the plan, both houses of the legislature supported the motion that the sculpture, a gift of the American Hungarian Federation, be put on permanent display on Capitol Hill.[32]

In association with the unveiling ceremony held on March 15, 1990, a memorial exhibition was arranged in the Russell Hall of the Senate, where Kossuth relics provided by the Library of Congress and Hungarian-Americans were on display. The exhibition mainly focused on Kossuth's visit to the United States, and was primarily based on contemporary documents, but some works of art inspired by the Kossuth cult were also displayed. Thus, two oils painted in 1990 by Sándor Bodó, who lives in Nashville, Tennessee, were shown *(Kossuth on the Broadway* and *Kossuth on His Way to Boston).*[33]

In addition to repeating and rephrasing the symbolic motifs mentioned above, the ceremony accompanying the unveiling of the Kossuth bust in the Great Rotunda of the United States Capitol produced some new elements. Instead of the independence motif favoured on earlier occasions, this action addressed the crucial questions of national identity after the political changes. The political turn in Eastern Europe and Hungary provided a new significance to Kossuth's ideas on freedom and independence, and the installation of the bust in the Congress building was in appreciation of the region's return to "the foundations of democracy". In this way, the event expanded beyond the immediate horizons of Hungarian-Americans' everyday lives, while also stimulating the sense of identity and the ambitions of the diaspora's elite.

Further emphasis was laid on the key element of present-day national rhetoric and culture, which is the unity of the region's divided Hungarian community, living in different states. Unlike in the case of the New York statue, when the main issue was the relationship between the diaspora and the homeland, the emphasis was on the ethnic Hungarians in countries adjacent to Hungary. The national hero no longer serves the purpose of building the nation, but of creating a symbolic cultural (and occasionally other) national unity.

As the heroic figure of the national past, more or less known and appreciated throughout the United States, Kossuth in the Capitol Rotunda represented and personified the connection between the past and present phases of a nation's culture, thus helping to legitimize the Transylvanian bishop László Tőkés, the modern-day hero, who honoured the occasion with his presence. In his welcoming speech, Congressman Tom Lantos described the link between Kossuth and Tőkés as direct connection. Kossuth was the freedom fighter of 1848, Tőkés of the Romanian revolution of 1989.

In the same way that Kossuth has legitimized Tőkés, the hero of the Hungarians in neighbouring countries, the latter incarnated the connection between Hungarian minorities and the nation as a cultural entity that transcends the frontiers of states. On this occasion, Hungary was represented by the country's highest dignitary, Mátyás Szűrös, the Interim President of the Republic of Hungary, and that "real life hero Reverend Tőkés"[34] symbolized the spiritual union between the Hungarians in the whole of the Carpathian Basin and the core of the realm. Furthermore, through the gesture and ceremony of the unveiling, the leaders of the diaspora wished to give a pledge of the "active and steadfast patriotism"[35] of that diaspora, an attitude they modelled on Kossuth.

Again in sharp contrast with the unveiling of the two earlier Kossuth statues, the question of the unity of Hungarian-Americans was not in the foreground. Although its initiators originally conceived the action as the Hungarian-Americans' joint effort, this could not be maintained in view of the deep and usually rather noisy conflicts at the time between the politically active organizations of Hungarian-Americans and their leaders. The internal crisis of the American Hungarian Federation a body founded in 1907 to integrate Hungarian organizations, reached its peak during the inauguration ceremony. As a result of the leaders' haggling, the organization first split into two factions, then divided into two rival associations. In that particular period the AHF (American Hungarian Federation) and the NFAH (National Federation of American Hungarians) were engaged in a law suit. Only the former was represented at the ceremony, but its chairman, a man of extreme right-wing views, who formally offered the statue to the

United States legislature on behalf of the Federation, had earlier made himself politically unacceptable in the eyes of most people, when he placed a plaque celebrating the memory of Ferenc Szálasi, the Arrow-Cross leader (who was hanged as a major war criminal in 1945), in a Hungarian old people's home.[36] It can be safely assumed that the two other Hungarian organizations, the Reformed Federation of American Hungarians and the Hungarian Human Rights Foundation, shared a common platform with the Federation only for this one occasion. To signal the political differences, the reception following the unveiling was given by these two latter organizations (and by the charitable William Penn Association), and the Federation gave a dinner in Lajos Kossuth's memory. Kossuth's name thus continues to be a link between the emigrant associations, which on this occasion also served to demonstrate the commitment to the cause of Hungarian minorities.

Despite its intellectual and political motivations, the unveiling did not lack some of the folk manifestations of the Kossuth legend. To conclude the ceremony, the President of the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America, Imre Bertalan said a prayer. He began his speech by pointing out that Kossuth had not only been "a champion of liberty, he was also a man of prayer". He referred to the highly esteemed painting held in the Kossuth House, the Reformed Federation's Washington headquarters, which shows Kossuth praying on the battlefield of Kápolna over the dead bodies of his soldiers. Next he cited the entire text of what is known as "Kossuth's prayer at Kápolna", not merely in memory of Kossuth but also as a direct tribute to the "heroes of Timişoara", Romanians and Hungarians who died for freedom". Then the March 15 ceremony was ended by the crowd's singing the Kossuth song, *Kossuth Lajos azt üzente...* ("Kossuth's message...").

All this was not simply an ideological interpretation, but was part of the cult, or even of the legend. We know that Kossuth never went to the battlefield of Kápolna; his prayer was the figment of a journalist's imagination,[37] which subsequently made its way into folk memory. Along with the accompanying print of which several versions are known, this element has been one of the most popular devices to sustain Kossuth's name in the public memory. The "prayer of Kápolna" can also serve to indicate that the almost religious veneration of the national hero, and the highly emotional identification with him, applies to this case, too, although it primarily had ideological and intellectual motives. In national culture, people's relationship with a hero are mainly emotional, and the fundamental values of such figures are also expressed in terms that are usually highly charged with emotion and often of a religious nature.

The national hero: permanent and changing elements

The first lesson of the three examples here discussed might come as a surprising observation. It seems that the statues, along with their symbolic place, were steadily shifting from the fringe towards the centre, from Cleveland through New York to the capital. However, this shift from a marginal position to the centre stage of the American scene has inevitably meant "losing" the masses. The festive spirit of the inaugurations in Cleveland and New York changed into an exclusive ceremony in Washington DC regardless of the fact that—as I mentioned earlier—some of the popular elements of the Kossuth cult were preserved.

The Hungarian-Americans' eagerness to erect statues, along with the public cult of the hero, permitted a peculiar sort of group formation in the diaspora. As a narrative, the participants rephrased their collective values in reference to Kossuth. Cleveland showed the formation and demonstration of self-esteem. Kossuth's name served to bind together the exiles and emigrants and American society. It bound them together by emphasizing the values that were common to them and counterbalancing the differences in social status under the given conditions. In New York the connection with the homeland became the crucial motif, the Hungarian government and public opinion looking upon Hungarian-Americans in a manner that was distinctly different from what had been true earlier. The Washington DC ceremony emphasized the nation as a cultural unit through Kossuth's person, and it did so in such a way that the three constituent parts—the Hungarians of Hungary, the Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries and Hungarian emigrants—were seen as complementary and equal elements.

Instead of existing in a definite and *a priori* given form, the true hero lives in a series of recreations using permanent and continuously changing elements. Remarkable skills are displayed in adapting to the changing requirements. Permanence is established by solidarity and group cohesion, the desire for unity. However, the professed desire for unity can also produce division. The fact remains, however, that in all three cases the figure of the hero was to further and to demonstrate co-operation. At the same time, all three events were different as regards the specific way in which the participants wanted to achieve and to express these values. Group solidarity, group awareness and pride permeated all three celebrations. Furthermore, it became apparent that the participants viewed themselves as part of a social and cultural unit larger than their immediate living space, as is well demonstrated by the second and the third examples. In those cases the distinctive function of the figure of Kossuth was to further the experience and awareness of an identity that transcended political borders. ❧

NOTES

1 ■ Gyula Ortutay: *Kossuth Lajos a magyar nép hagyományaiban* (Lajos Kossuth in Hungarian Folk Tradition). *A nép művészete* (Folk Art), Budapest, 1981; Linda Dégh: *A szabadságharc népköltészete* (The Folk Poetry of the War of Independence), Budapest, 1952; Ákos Dömötör: *Hősök és vértanúk. Mondák és visszaemlékezések a szabadságharcról* (Heroes and Martyrs: Legends and Recollections about the War of Independence), Budapest, 1998, pp. 7–47.

2 ■ Róbert Hermann: "A Kossuth-kultusz" (The Kossuth Cult), in Katalin Körmöczy (ed.): *"...Leborulok a nemzet nagysága előtt"*. A Kossuth hagyaték ("I Bow before the Greatness of the Nation": The Kossuth Legacy). Budapest, 1994, pp. 155–58; Domokos Kosáry: *A Görgey-kérdés története* (History of the Görgey Case), Budapest, 1994. vol. II, pp. 122–23; Lajos Vayer: "Kossuth alakja az egykori művészetben" (The Figure of Kossuth in Contemporary Art) in Zoltán Tóth (ed.): *Emlékkönyv Kossuth Lajos születésének 150. évfordulójára* (Festschrift on the Occasion of the 150th Anniversary of Lajos Kossuth's Birth), vol. 2, Budapest, 1979.

3 ■ Gyula Szekfű: Az öreg Kossuth 1867–1894. (Kossuth as an Old Man) in Zoltán Tóth (ed.): *Emlékkönyv Kossuth Lajos születésének 150. évfordulójára* (Festschrift on the Occasion of the 150th Anniversary of Lajos Kossuth's Birth), vol. 2, Budapest, 1952, pp. 409–410.

4 ■ Lajos Kossuth: *Memories of my Exile*. London, 1880, p. viii.

5 ■ Géza Kende: *Magyarok Amerikában. Az amerikai magyarok története* (Hungarians in America. The History of American Hungarians). Cleveland, Ohio, 1927, vol. 4, p. 27.

6 ■ John Komlos: *Louis Kossuth in America,* 1851–1852. Buffalo, 1973.

7 ■ Géza Kende, ibid. vol. II, pp. 97–120.

8 ■ Ibid. p. 213; *Souvenir Book to Commemorate Kossuth's 100th Birthday and the Unveiling of his Monument in Cleveland, Ohio.* Cleveland, 1902.

9 ■ *Szabadság,* Twentieth Anniversary Number, December 21, 1911, Third Part, pp. 9–90.

10 ■ For press reports, Americans, as well as Hungarian-Americans see Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Politisches Archiv des Min. des Aussens, 1848–1918, XXXIII, USA, Liasse I. Kart. 66, Nr. 529 (Oct. 5, 1902).

11 ■ Géza Kende, ibid. vol. II, p. 224; *Souvenir Book,* ibid. pp. 78–80.

12 ■ Lajos Kossuth, ibid. p. V.

13 ■ Géza D. Berkó: *Az Amerikai Magyar Népszava jubileumi díszalbuma* (Jubilee Album of *Amerikai Magyar Népszava*), New York, 1909, pp. 198–209. As we shall see later, it was Berkó who proposed the Kossuth statue of New York.

14 ■ For further information about the gift and the ceremony see: Géza Kende, ibid. vol. II. pp. 168–188.

15 ■ Géza Kende, ibid. vol. II, p. 226. The Pittsburgh consul Wein, who submitted a report on the unveiling, made no mention of the causes of this absence. (At that time Austria-Hungary had no consulate in Cleveland, and the Pittsburgh consul spent two days in each month there.

16 ■ *Amerikai Magyar Népszava,* Jubilee issue, April 20, 1924, Hungarian-American supplement, p. 3.

17 ■ Ottokár Prohászka: "Képek az Újvilágból" (Pictures from the New World), in *Utak és állomások* (Roads and Stations), Budapest, 1928, p. 292.

18 ■ cf. József Ádámfy, (ed.): *A világ Kossuth-szobrai* (Kossuth monuments all over the world), Budapest, 1979.

19 ■ This fact was pointed out by one of the Kossuth pilgrims, György Lukács, the Minister of Religion and Public Education and also the head of the Pilgrim Committee, who at the time of his 1904 visit of America was able to meet some of the people who had witnessed Kossuth's triumphant journey in America. Cf. György Lukács: *Életem és kortársaim* (My Life and My Contemporaries), Budapest, 1936, vol. II, p. 236.

20 ■ *Jászi Oszkár publicisztikája* (Oszkár Jászi's Journalism), Budapest, 1982, pp. 415–420. His article was published in English in *The Nation,* March 15, 1928.

21 ■ László Faragó: *Kossuth-zarándokok útja Amerikában* (Kossuth Pilgrims in America). Békés, 1928, p. 85.

22 ■ *Új Előre,* September 10, 1928, p. 5.

23 ■ László Ravasz: *Emlékezéseim* (My Recollections), Budapest, 1992, p. 252.

24 ■ Carl Helm: "Would Replace Kossuth Statue". *New York Sun,* January 25, 1930 (Somogyi Library, Szeged, Vasváry Collection, Kos XI.).

25 ■ László Faragó, ibid. pp. 7–46 enumerates and presents name by name all pilgrims. Also see Zoltán Bíró: *Amerika. Magyarok a modern csodák világában* (America. Hungarians in the World of Modern Wonders). Budapest, 1929; István Vásáry: *A new-yorki Kossuth zarándoklatról* (The New York Kossuth Pilgrimage), Debrecen, 1928.

26 ■ Quoted by Miklós Szántó: *Magyarok a Nagyvilágban* (Hungarians in the World). Budapest, 1970, p. 126.

27 ■ *Magyarország tükre* (Hungary's Mirror), Budapest, 1928.

28 ■ *Csonkamagyarország,* April 22, 1928, p. 1.

29 ■ Az amerikai Kossuth-zarándokút, dokumentumfilm (The American Kossuth Pilgrimage, a documentary), 1928, Hungarian Film Archive.

30 ■ Zoltán Bíró, ibid. p. 59.

31 ■ József Ádámfy (ed.), ibid. pp. 49–50.

32 ■ *Dedication by the Congress of a Bust of Lajos (Louis) Kossuth.* Proceedings in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda, March 15, 1990, Washington DC, 1990. (101st Congress, 2nd Session, House Doc. pp. 101–168).

33 ■ Ibid. pp. 51, 59 and pp. 73–75.

34 ■ As Congressman Richard Gephardt called him. Dedication, ibid. p. 12.

35 ■ Lajos Kossuth, ibid. p. viii.

36 ■ For these and other nationwide Hungarian associations' activity see Gyula Borbándi: *Emigráció és Magyarország. Nyugati magyarok a változások éveiben 1885–1995* (Emigration and Hungary. Hungarians in the West in the Transition Years 1985–1995). Basel–Budapest, 1996, pp. 142–145.

37 ■ The prayer was fabricated by the Kaposvár journalist István Roboz; its text was published by Péter Pogány (ed.), *Riadj magyar! 1848–1849 fametszetes ponyvái, csatakrónikái* (Hark Hungarians! Wood-cut Illustrated Broadsheets Chronicling the Battles of 1848–1849), Budapest, 1983, pp. 385–386; on the authorship, see the corresponding note, pp. 600–602.

Miklós Györffy

Heaven and Homeland

Anna Jókai: *Ne féljetek* (Fear Not). Széphalom Könyvműhely, 1998, 342 pp.
János Háy: *Xanadu.* Palatinus, 1999, 294 pp.
Márton Kalász: *Tizedelőcédulák* (Decimation Lots). Kortárs Kiadó, 1999, 195 pp.

Anna Jókai's new novel *Ne féljetek* (Fear Not) has had a very good reception, unusual enough in recent times. Among a readership that is hard to define, Anna Jókai has always been a popular author, but the more prestigious critics have largely ignored her. The usual explanation for a situation like this is that we have a bestselling author who writes for the market and who relies on proven recipes in satisfying public demand. Aside from the fact that a critic's task should include the analysis of popular taste, it should be said that Anna Jókai does not fit at all into the category of "a bestselling author". Emotionally involved with her stories and characters, she always writes on what is of personal interest to herself, instead of trying to anticipate what potential readers expect from her.

Fear Not is about old age and death. It is also about faith: the overcoming of the fear of death through Christian faith. This is not exactly the type of subject that the average reader would go for. Having said that, the stories of the aging characters, who gradually come to terms with death, are embedded in the Hungary of the past two decades, and that is what could appeal to readers, especially since contemporary "high literature" more or less ignores the lives of ordinary people to which readers could relate. Besides discussing old age, anxiety over death, physical decline and preparation for the other world, *Fear Not* is also a family saga with a social picture of the period, and a demand for that undoubtedly exists. The other highly successful Hungarian novel of this year, *Jadviga párnája* (Jadviga's Cushion) by Pál Závada, which in a way is also a family saga, also proves the existence of that demand beyond reasonable doubt.

Anna Jókai's novel tells the story of four parallel lives from the second half of the 1970s to recent times. The four people form two couples, one married, the another unmarried. At the centre of the story is Mária, a retired air-stewardess. At the beginning of the book, she is still an attractive and healthy woman, who lives in a stable and harmonious relationship with her husband, Richard, a moderately prosperous lawyer. They admirably complement each other: Mária is a sensitive, educated and religious woman, Richard is a practical man with both feet firmly on the ground, who looks after his family. This is Mária's third relationship: she has two grown-up children by her first husband, whom she had divorced a long time ago.

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She fell in love with the third man in her life, Márió, when her first marriage was in a deep crisis. While it meant a great deal to both of them at the time, they eventually broke up. In the period covered by the book, Márió is living with Villő, and he meets Mária only once more, and even then only in passing; nevertheless, they both feel a painful void whenever they think of each other.

A psychologist by profession, Márió is an intellectual with dissident views, greatly respected by his students and his patients, yet the way to career advancement is closed to him. Not that he minds. Villő is a social worker, active at the beginning, but retires after a while. Unlike Márió, who is a basically vain and aloof man given to depression, Villő is a simple soul; still, she can see many things in greater clarity, thanks to her natural female empathy. In the first third of the novel, the independent lives of the two couples are introduced in a sweeping exposition, roughly spanning one decade. Although already getting on in years, the four characters are presented still in their full vigour in this part of the book, with ample details of their sexual activity.

The narrative method is something special. Fragments of the characters' interior monologues intermit the narrative. With the former method playing the lead, the characters regularly take their turn, with their names indicated on the margin. Between these fragmented monologues, which rarely exceed half a page, we find even shorter narrative parts, which usually prepare for the next monologue. In this way the perspective is continuously changing between the objective and the subjective.

At the beginning of the second part, a heart attack suddenly kills Richard, the person who seemed the strongest and the hardiest. For Mária, now in her sixties, a dark period begins. While earlier on she tried to see aging more as a personal enrichment and consummation, now she goes through a serious crisis. Her life seems to grow gradually more and more empty, her family drifting away from her, and she struggles with anxiety about death as well as other psychological problems. She looks for solace and support in her faith but for quite a while without success. She knows and understands what Christ's exhortation "Fear not" means, yet she cannot transform it into a deep faith. Finally she is able to find peace of mind in an unconditional and selfless love for her children and grandchildren, which makes her accept loneliness and approaching death. Mária's story is taken right to her death bed, which thus becomes the exemplary story of inner purification and spiritual enlightenment.

Márió and Villő also pass through a painful period of depression, forbearance and sickness, and they, too, are able to overcome. In their story it is primarily their relationship that suffers from the trials and tribulations of aging, so much so that they almost lose each other; then, through caring for each other, they find the strength to face death. At the end of the book, Villő says farewell to Márió.

Besides the four main characters, the novel introduces members of Mária's family. It is primarily in the reference to their lives that the story of the past decades emerges. Through Márió's deliberations the period's political and social developments and mentalities also find expression in a more abstract form. Luckily, the inner and the outer spheres are not discussed separately; nevertheless the spiritual dimension and the societal portrait sometimes do not mix well.

Despite its values and intricacies, *Fear Not* is not a powerful work. A little overpolished, it becomes long-winded towards the end. When applied over several hun-

dreds of pages, the narrative technique eventually becomes automatic and monotonous, indeed the internal monologues occasionally sound contrived. Sometimes they explain things that should be self-evident, and thus their monologues are being blatantly addressed to the readers. There are too many clichés in Márió's deliberations, and too many trivialities in Mária's and Villő's problems. The everyday layer of the novel has something of a soap opera about it, which is good and bad at the same time. On the one hand why should literature not learn something from television, in the same way that the cinema and television have learned so much from literature? Where is it laid down that soap operas should be shallow? On the other hand, the ready-made patterns tend to produce clichés.

We might view this layer of the novel as a popular formula which enables less sophisticated readers to relate to the passions of the characters; the great success of the book—it was voted Book of the Year in 1999 in the novel category—shows that the formula works: thousands of readers may discover the secret resources of their personalities, learning ways of how to live with old age and the thought of death.

János Háy was first a poet, before writing in the early nineties *Dzhigerdilen,* a seemingly historical novel set in Hungary under Turkish occupation. It constituted more of an imitation and persiflage of the clichés found in textbooks on history and in those naive historical novels that shape our picture of history in our youth. Háy belongs to those postmodern authors who conceive storytelling not in the form of relating "true" stories, but of creating texts, the rules of which can be jazzed up at will.

On the surface, his new book *Xanadu* is also a historical novel, insofar as it has a storyline that takes us back to late-fifteenth-century Venice, Pirano on the Istrian peninsula, the Adriatic and the Mediterranean. The central character is a merchant of Venice, who courses the sea with his goods during the summer and spends the winter with his wife at home. Háy has been inspired by a particular legend, according to which once there was a merchant in Venice who fell head over heels in love with a beautiful girl in Pirano. He bought her from her father for 200 ducats and built her a lavish palace on the harbour where they could make merry while he was there. This palace still stands in Pirano, now called Piran, and there is an inscription in Italian on the façade: *Lassa pur dir*—Let them gossip. The merchant had it inscribed there: let the people of Pirano gossip, he did not care, for him the girl was worth all the trouble. According to Háy's version, after a few years, the merchant ended his sea-going days and entrusted his captain with his business. When summer came, he still left Venice, and secretly went ashore in Pirano to stay with his lover until autumn, when his argosy returned loaded with goods. However, fate played a cruel joke on him: he was not the only one who was unfaithful; rumour had it that the girl, too, cheated on him during the winter. On hearing this he rushed off to Pirano and killed his lover in his first anger.

Háy tells this legend amidst numerous long-winded detours, as if his narrator himself were bent on defying the rules of economical storytelling, saying "Let critics say whatever they want, I gibber as much as I please, this legend is only an excuse for me to improvise text fragments according to my own whims. The novel comes with the subtitle "Earth, water, air", which can be read as "as you like it", meaning that the narrator feels free to roam about the world of his own creation. In the aerial dimension this world extends right up to

God who, with his angels, regularly appears, sitting pretty in heaven, living lives full of intrigues and unruly behaviour, watching earthlings closely.

The two angels Marlon and Marion, for example, fell in love with each other, which leads to God assigning them with the guardianship of the icebergs of the two poles. But whenever passion overcomes them, they heat up so much that the icebergs begin to melt. Finally God has had enough; he gives another assignment to Marion, who then has to yearn after his girl for all eternity.

Another version(?), or a later chapter(?), of Marlon's story is told to the merchant's sailors in a tavern by Vincius, the ancient sage of Pirano. According to his version, Marlon once stole out of the celestial palace, and from the barbican peered down through the skin, muscles and bones, right to the soul, where he could see that the girl he had left down below still loved him. He just watched her with despair, then said to himself: I won't be an angel! He cast himself off from the barbican, flying through air, skin and muscle, right to the soul, but before he could get a hold there, he felt a great force pulling him back, as if he had been attached to the palace by a spring; and the girl felt the pain grow. The angel jumped off again with an even wilder kick, only to experience the same pull on reaching the edge of the soul; twice more he tried, but the girl now seemed to be in agony. After the fourth try, the angel looked back and saw God holding his suspenders; he realized that he would never be able to reach that soul, because it was not up to him to decide whether he would be an angel or not.

The disarmingly naive celestial scenes and angel stories are, of course, related to the legendary chronicle of our merchant of Venice and his lover: it is almost as if the same old story would be repeated all over again everywhere: sooner or later, "man" inevitably emerges from all creatures of the earth and sky, longing for the other half, but never quite being able to unite with it. The very title *Xanadu* refers to such a legend: "In Xanadu did Kubla Khan a stately pleasure dome decree" for his lover; chased away by her enemies after the Khan's death, she was eventually sold off to the Caliph's harem. The latter made her his favourite concubine, but no matter what he did he could not help feeling that "his power ended at the boundary of the woman's skin, and that this human-size patch on the painting of the world was outside his empire".

Such a reading would, however, lend the book a character more serious than it is actually entitled to, because of its frolicsome excesses, its arrogant linguistic anachronisms and foul language. Háy's book is in fact a textual cocktail of flavours, which might or might not appeal to readers. Some will appreciate this stylistic cavalcade of irony and parody, a clever imitation of naive painting, or the dazzling collection of legends of a crafty storyteller. But some will be fed up with these stylistic feats and will find no pleasure in a novel that has very little to do with the real world around them.

In his new book *Tizedelőcédulák* (Decimation Lots), Márton Kalász turns to the history of German families living in Hungary. According to family tradition, the regiment in which the great-grandfather of one Swabian family had served was literally decimated after the collapse of the War of Independence in 1848/49. Nine white lots and one black were placed in an urn; those who drew the black lots were executed. The great-grandfather survived, but it had been possible for a Swabian Hungarian soldier to fall victim to the Austrians' revenge. Later on, with the ad-

vance of civilization, new and sophisticated methods were employed in Eastern and Central Europe to thin out the non-desirable nationalities by decimation, or by quartering or halving them. At one point in history it was the Germans' turn. The word "decimation" has all but lost its original meaning; nowadays it is called ethnic cleansing or genocide and, as shown recently in Yugoslavia, it remains alive and kicking.

It would be difficult to ascertain exactly when and where the chain reaction of ethnic cleansing began. The fact is that there was a time, not all that long ago, in the 18th century, when foreign settlers came to Hungary in large numbers; soon they felt at home here, so much so that in less than a century their descendants were already fighting as Hungarian soldiers for the cause of Hungarian liberty and bourgeois progress. It was precisely the Germans, the Saxons who founded towns in mediaeval Hungary and the Swabians who came during Maria Theresa's reign to repopulate the deserted lands in the wake of Ottoman rule, who played a crucial role in promoting a burgher lifestyle in Hungary. In some cases this was in direct opposition to the colonizing ambitions of Imperial Austria. Regardless of the occasional conflicts, the Germans constituted a body politic for centuries in Hungary, notably in Transylvania and in Upper Hungary, where they were a driving force both economically and culturally. They were also to be found in the Bánát and Bácska, Tolna and Baranya, or around Buda, where they formed self-contained economic units.

Márton Kalász, who is of German stock himself, has published facts and episodes arranged in a historical chronicle using private, unpublished documents, personal memoirs and family history about the Germans in Hungary, with special regard to their twentieth-century history, the role of the infamous Nazi *Volksbund* and the reprisals following its dissolution. The first half of the two-part book forms a chronicle, a historical account spanning from the 18th-century settlers to the fall of the *Volksbund*. The entire second part is dedicated to the deportations to the Soviet Union and to the expulsion to Germany, producing a trauma that has apparently remained a crucial and painful experience both for Kalász and for all the people he interviewed.

It is not the first time that Kalász turns to this subject: in his outstanding novel *Téli bárány* (Winter Lamb), which was published in 1986, he also portrayed the period of population exchanges on the basis of personal recollections. The novel makes it clear what kept these Germans bound to this place: land, work, and the village community. This was their homeland, and they had no desire for other country, other nation, other *Lebensraum*. Everything that the politicians and party officials cooked up in the cities seemed remote and far-fetched to them, and it filtered through to their isolated, archaic village communities in a distorted manner, with its demagogue character plainly exposed.

Similarly to that novel *Decimation Lots* is characterized by the detached and almost dry tone of a chronicler: the author lets the facts and the eyewitness accounts do the talking. The narrator's interference is extremely spare, in some cases almost ascetic: the author seems determined to refrain from passing judgment, or jumping to conclusions, which might put a political, historical or moral spin on the events. Even on those rare occasions when he does open up the perspective, it is only to provide facts, statistics or assumptions. He is obviously aware that he is treading on dangerous ground. Up until recently, it was not possible to talk openly about the expulsion of the Swabians. In Béla Bellér's

book *A magyarországi németek rövid története* (A Brief History of Hungary's German Minority), published in 1981, the author mentions the expulsion only in a very brief concluding chapter. He writes: "Today we still do not possess the necessary historical perspective and factual information that would enable us to give an accurate and unbiased Marxist evaluation of the period of resettlement. So much is undoubtedly clear, however, that some mistakes were made in the execution..." One such mistake, according to Bellér, was that in the early phase of the resettlements considerations of social class weighed very little.

Although he carefully avoided even the suggestion, Kalász is probably of the opinion that the Germans should not have been expelled at all, since that served no historical justice. Many people would probably agree with that today. But of course it is easy to be calm and rational in retrospect—back then passions ran high, and not without reason. The flight and expulsion of Germans, seen all over Eastern Europe, not just in Hungary, had been preceded by Nazi war crimes and the Holocaust, and in this the *Volksbund* had taken an active part. At the height of its power, this organization—according to Bellér—had 200,000 members (300,000 if we count its youth and women's sections), which was 41 or 42 per cent of the 720,000-strong German population in Hungary. The ringleaders wholeheartedly supported Nazi interests. Also, not only Germans were expelled at the end of the war, essentially on the warrant of the Allied Powers; hundreds of thousands of Hungarians also had to flee their homeland, mostly in Northern Hungary, but also in Transylvania, Bukovina and the Bánát, and they needed housing. The Szeklers of Bukovina and the Hungarians of Northern Hungary were mainly resettled in villages evacuated by Germans.

Therefore, the German question cannot be discussed and evaluated in isolation from the other issues. Their tragedy formed part of a larger, much broader tragedy, in which other ethnic groups also fell victim and (assuming that it is possible at all to make such comparisons) paid an even higher price. Kalász, therefore, is not out to do justice, to redress past wrongs, as nothing can be set right in retrospect. His only aim has been to show how brutal and unfair the whole thing had been from the viewpoint of the individual German victims. Perhaps it was understandable from a psychological viewpoint at the time, but collective punishment proved to be senseless in the end, unfair and inhuman. It affected hundreds of thousands of innocent people, with no guarantees that the true villains would be punished. Probably a large number of incriminated *Volksbund* members escaped from the locals' revenge precisely by fleeing to, or being expelled to Germany. And as regards Eastern Europe as a whole, millions of people were uprooted in the infamous "population exchanges", robbing a number of countries of one of their valuable and important elements. Was that the right way to revenge the genocide and the cultural destruction that the Germans committed against the peoples of the region, principally the Jews?

Márton Kalász does not try to rehabilitate the German victims of expulsion, whose memories he commits to paper. He only wants to show that these people, who mostly live in Baden-Würtenberg and who are all getting on in years, have settled down and are prosperous, and neither they nor their grandchildren would ever come back to Hungary, even though they would be entitled to do so. These people once regarded themselves as Hungarian citizens, and thought of Hungary as their homeland, just like the earlier mentioned grandfather who the Austrians had made

draw a lot; in Germany, which is their fatherland now, they no longer feel homesick, but whenever they visit Hungary and look at their old homes, they feel a painful void, an irreparable loss, the memory of a paradise lost. Some of these people tried to come back illegally to Hungary through Austria, at the time when the Hungarians were fleeing in the other direction. Some even succeeded and now live in Hungary. One might ask the cynical question: Who is better off? Those who lived safely in West Germany between 1948 and 1989 or those who stayed behind? Kalász does not ask such questions; he only presents human stories in order to show that people do not necessarily agree with political ideologies and social value systems as to what they regard to be the most important in their lives. One thing should be added, however; those who committed crimes must be called to account. The other extreme, for which recent history seems to produce evidence, would be equally wrong: that crimes should always go without punishment. ❧

Tibor Hajdu

Setting the Points

Rudolf L. Tőkés: *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution.*
Cambridge, Cambridge Univerity Press, 1996, 544 pp.

Those who keep up with the Hungarian news media would probably agree that Hungarians are able to better understand what is happening in Romania or in Afghanistan than the Romanians or the Afghans themselves. Yet, when it comes to what has been happening in Hungary in the past few years, we are not as well-informed: unforeseen events, public scandals, the difficulties of obtaining access to documents, passions running high and many other frustrating circumstances confuse analysis. The judgment of Western observers is more detached and more credible, despite, or because of, the fact that they are not troubled by the differences between Budapest and Bucharest (thought to be crucial by local observers).

The Cambridge University Press has managed to find the right author in the person of Rudolf L. Tőkés; a professor of political sciences at the University of Connecticut (who had interrupted his university studies in Hungary in 1956, in the same year that marks the chronological beginning of his book). He is a scholar who has never relinquished a special interest in Hungarian affairs; well-versed in the international political science literature, he uses its terminology and sees his small country through the eyes of the world at large, never getting lost in the meandering paths of Hungary's history.

Having accessed a large amount of source material and conducted a great many interviews, he is able to say something new even to his Hungarian readers, presenting his material in a highly enjoyable format, in that popular border zone between historical report and textbook. The textbook character inevitably has brought with it some current methods and models from American political sciences, which, while failing to influence the essence of the author's conclusions, are hard to digest for readers brought up on different patterns: these include a thematic breakdown of the agenda of Politburo meetings (when Tőkés fully knows that the really important issues did not always feature on the agenda), or statistical information regarding the age distribution of members. It is clearly pertinent that Kádár was only 44 years old in 1956, meaning that he could quickly change his views, something he could not do at 75, still, the age distribution of the Politburo was quite irrelevant.

Tibor Hajdu's *books include* A magyarországi Tanácsköztársaság *(The Hungarian Soviet Republic, 1969) and a biography of Count Mihály Károlyi.*

Original and important for both political scientists and the laymen is the second chapter, which sets off the contrast between the Hungarian political transition's chief driving forces: the opposition and the "reform elite" of the MSZMP (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) on the other side. Tőkés makes the point that by the 1980s every concept about the future, whether it was put forward by the "democratic" or the "popular/national" opposition, the Reform Communists or party functionaries and civil servants aware of the scale of problems, was concerned with the same thing: the avoidance of anarchy, of complete economic collapse and of bloody conflict. He subtly points out that everyone contemplating the possibilities of the transition in foreign policy, domestic politics and economics was intrigued by the same problem: the element of unpredictability of popular reaction during the changeover.

(I note here between brackets that quite a different attitude characterized the majority of the party elite, who lacked any political perspective and who were simply playing for time. The party bureaucracy was so confident about its ability to manipulate party members, the intelligentsia and society that only a few months before the final collapse they carried out a general exchange of membership cards with minimum losses and, a few years earlier, they had nationalized party property, something that would cause them considerable embarrassment in the year of the changeover.)

In this part of the book, the author concentrates not so much on the people, who only had a say in the first plebiscite, the so-called "four-yes" plebiscite, as well as in the first multiparty elections; nor on the huge party, state and parrallel bureaucracies, busily trying to preserve their positions for the period after the transition (and in general, successfully), but on the elite. The most important and most original part of the book examines the composition, attitudes, programmes and tactics of the political elite, both old and new. The author specially mentions the sociologists and economists of "double bonding", who worked in scholarly institutes, in the press, and in the ministries. They were fully aware of the general failure of the Kádár regime and were working to find a way out of it, without actually having political ambitions (despite being courted by various factions in the immediate future), trying to influence the events of the transition as independent experts.

These analysts wrote important studies and background material, rightfully building a reputation in the course of it. As they were unable to foresee the events, however, they could not influence them. In the complex processes of the political transition, those who knew what was happening would not reveal the truth, while those who did not know could say whatever they wished. Tőkés singled out four people as the driving forces behind the changes within the leadership of the MSZMP, making sure to interview them and to concentrate on their roles (Károly Grósz, Imre Pozsgay, János Berecz, Miklós Németh). Under the weight of the material thus compiled, he ignored what he himself must have recognized, namely that Berecz had been a helpless puppet on the stage of history, that Grósz had probably failed to appreciate the true scale of the changes, along with the limitations of the power he strove so hard for and which evaporated so rapidly, that Pozsgay had been more an instrument in the hands of the driving forces in the transition than a driving force —something Pozsgay has refused to admit to this day. Of these four, perhaps Németh alone knew what he was doing, being one of the new economic elite whose members were aware that it was the framework of

Who Is Who

On April 25th 1987. Károly Grósz, the Budapest party secretary, was appointed prime minister. At the same time, Miklós Németh, a young economist on the staff of the Planning Office, became secretary to the Central Committee responsible for the economy.

It was at the May 1988 Party Congress that Grósz really got what he wanted. He replaced Kádár, who was henceforth powerless as general secretary. His chief rivals, János Berecz, the secretary to the Central Committee responsible for ideology and László Maróthy, the minister for the environment, lost much of their power. The leading reformer, Imre Pozsgay, head of the Patriotic People's Front, was unacceptable to Moscow, hence he supported Grósz, who was ready to cooperate.

Between May and November 1988, Grósz combined the offices of general secretary and prime minister. In November 1988, he resigned as prime minister, and was replaced by Miklós Németh.

Gyula Horn was of the same generation as Grósz, Berecz and Pozsgay, and like them, was an old apparatchik who started to climb upwards on the career ladder after 1956 to become secretary of state at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1985–89 and minister for foreign affairs 1989/90.

On June 16th Imre Nagy was reburied. This was the symbolic start of the change of system.

Kádár died on July 6th, 1989.

At the September 1989 Party Congress Grósz was replaced by Rezső Nyers, a Social democrat in his youth, later an economic reformer. Berecz, Grósz and Maróthy did not join the reconstituted party, renamed the MSzP (Hungarian Socialist Party). The Németh government then shook off party control.

the existing socialism itself, rather than just Kádár and his regime, that had proven unsustainable, and rightly concluding that the system could not be reformed but must be removed if there was to be any progress.

Several of the book's Hungarian critics made the point that in this way Tőkés put undue emphasis on the "Reform Communists" at the expense of the regime's anti-Communist opposition and their leaders, who played an equally important role in the political transition. It is unlikely that Tőkés was led by personal sympathies in this particular choice: the political personalities of József Antall or Viktor Orbán probably appealed to him more than did Grósz's or Berecz's; nevertheless, since he had source material on the latter, he examined the events from this aspect. (It is the personal opinion of the reviewer that the acrimonious debate about the relative merits of Hungarian politicians in the political transition is of secondary importance: as has so often been the case in the course of history, the country's fate was decided not in Budapest but in Malta or places even further away. Lately it has even been claimed that the political transition truly began in 1990, the year when the first multiparty elections were held and the Russian army left, regardless of what had happened in 1989. This is a view that Tőkés's book does not bear out.)

Tőkés finds proof of Pozsgay's leadership qualities to win supporters in the fact that he was able to extend his personal influence to include such key figures in the party apparatus as Gyula Horn and Mátyás Szűrös (p. 319) The truth is that those in charge of the Central Commit-tee's Foreign Department—Szűrös, Horn, Szokai, Kovács, Tabajdi and others had all found out what the score was before Pozsgay did, but were too cautious to try to race ahead. They also knew how little Hungary counted on the card table of the great powers; as long as we were a card in Gorbachev's hand, we had to stay put, but as soon as he laid out the Hungarian card, we would have to go over to the West as quickly as we could. If Pozsgay had foreseen this, he would have had to start taking English lessons instead of trying to get the backing of the Soviet reform wing (Yakovlev). Through his much-publicized statement about 1956 being a "popular uprising", made in late January 1989 (the true story of which still has to be told), he may have become the hero for a day or two, but he alienated the majority of the MSZMP without winning the active support of the 1956 groups. Iván T. Berend, President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and as such, a leading figure among the Reform Communists, himself helped to devise the new historical concept for the Central Committee's subcommittee headed by Pozsgay, which contained the formula of 1956 being a "popular uprising"; tactfully, he makes no mention in his recently published memoirs of how Pozsgay had boosted his personal involvement in this. In view of the fact that Berend currently teaches in California, Tőkés would have made the effort to visit him in Los Angeles to find out how much of the Pozsgay story had to be taken seriously. Pozsgay's best bet would have been to join the MDF (the Hungarian Democratic Forum) in 1989, if not by quitting the Party then perhaps by letting the infuriated Central Control Committee expel him, as they did the political scientist László Lengyel and his friends a year earlier. Grósz and his circle still needed Pozsgay (and Rezső Nyers) for a little longer. In late 1990, at the MSZP conference at Siófok, Pozsgay's departure failed to produce the dramatic impact he had hoped for.

Having made this one reservation, we should give credit to Tőkés for his able characterization of the protagonists, whose personalities and ideas he has studied, understood and illustrated with numerous concrete examples taken from the large documentation he had compiled. The four "parallel biographies" shed light on many problems and circumvent the familiar mistake of individual biographies, namely the overestimation of their subject. Without trying to decide which one of the four was the "real McCoy", Tőkés undertakes a study of why and when, at the given stage of the drama, this or that politician was able to get the upper hand over the others. Although he makes it clear that Pozsgay is more acceptable to him than Grósz, he also documents that, much like Berecz and Grósz, Pozsgay, too, belonged to that steadily rising "young" generation within Kádár's party apparatus, the generation which started their careers after 1956; and if we see Pozsgay as different from, or better than the average party official, then we should also see that he had to hold back rather than show off his skills if he wanted to stay close to the fire. It was hardly by coincidence that Kádár's choice fell on the less talented, less educated and less presentable Grósz. Beside being more agreeable to him personally, this choice also coincided with the will of the apparatus, then still a force to be reckoned with.

Around 1980 Pozsgay did, indeed, venture outside the usual crowd party apparatchiks moved in, making new friends

who came to exert an influence on him, but as he was gaining sympathy amongst the opposition and the intelligentsia, so his chances to become the boss of the apparatus withered to the extent that the only chance for him was to be forced on them by Gorbachev or Kádár, an eventuality that never materialized. Berecz made far too obvious moves as a pretender, which made him anathema in the eyes of many, and when it turned out that a consensus had to be reached with the opposition and the Western observers, his infamous book on 1956, *Ellenforradalom tollal és fegyverrel* (Counter-Revolution with Pen and Weapon) made him a wholly unacceptable candidate.

In his thought-provoking article "A kádári párt bukása. Az utódlási harc". (The Demise of the Kádár Faction. The Struggle for Succession, *Rubicon* 1998/1), the political scientist László Lengyel polemicizes with Tőkés's book. He describes Grósz, not underestimated by the former author either, as the politician who masterminded the putsch against Kádár; a determined and dynamic revitalizer and rationalizer, the 58-year-old leader of the "Young Turks". I do not wish to underestimate Grósz's qualities and courage in the White House (the ironic name given to the white building of the Communist Headquarters in Budapest) increasingly running low on confidence: one needed courage to stab the dying Kádár in the back, but I think what really settled the issue was the fact that he was both Rizhkov's and Kádár's choice. The party apparatus had wanted to get rid of Kádár ever since 1972: the conservatives for his lenience, the progressives for his inflexibility. When the opportunity finally came, they opted for Grósz, who did, indeed, carry through changes that should have been introduced ten or fifteen years earlier; however, after the initial successes he flinched back from what Tőkés calls a "negotiated revolution", others call political transition, still others treason, while I myself simple regard it as "a change for the better" (changing from the Warsaw Pact to NATO). The big question is whether Grósz would have started out on this road, had he known how soon he would fall. His manoeuvering skills were considerable, his plan and strategy negligible. And that also applied to his real successor, another apparatchik of roughly the same age, an even better tactician and better organizer, but perhaps also more unscrupulous, Gyula Horn, who has not been given the attention in Tőkés's book that he deserves.

Obviously, a book that ranges so widely as this is open to different interpretations and criticisms. In a highly favourable review published in the April issue of the *American Historical Review,* the Hungarian-born Professor Andrew C. János of Berkeley University, California, wrote: "One of the great virtues of this volume is that it not only tells us a story in the vein of Leopold Ranke, 'as it really happened', but it also advances a number of bold hypotheses likely to stimulate further historical debate."

In 1998 the book was finally published in Hungarian, too. (*A kialkudott forradalom. Gazdasági reform, társadalmi átalakulás és politikai hatalomutódlás 1957– 1990.* Negotiated Revolution. Economical Reform, Social Changes and Succession to Political Power, Kossuth Kiadó, 1998) Despite the shortages of space and time, the Hungarian publication includes interesting new elements. Of these, I would like to call attention to one or two in the interview with Miklós Németh, who currently appears to plan a return to the Hungarian political arena.

Németh revealed that not only was he left out of the foreign policy legal, administrative and political "emergency commit-

tee" formed under the direction of Károly Grósz in December 1988, he was not even informed about possible planned moves against the opposition forces. In total indignation he rejected Grósz's insinuation whereby if he had been there, he would have immediately passed on any information to US Ambassador Palmer when playing tennis with him. Minister of Defense Kárpáti was the only one who felt obliged to notify his prime minister about the secret military and state security preparation.

In the first week following Németh's appointment as prime minister, Grósz took him into the strong room in the basement of the Ministry of Defense, and asked him to sign the secret protocol about the stationing of Soviet nuclear weapons in Hungary. Once he recovered from his initial fright, he asked Kárpáti where these weapons were deployed, to which the minister replied that although he had not been informed, the chief of Hungarian military intelligence was betting on the Bakony Hills. After this, Németh "regarded his first and foremost task to be the removal of Soviet nuclear weapons from Hungarian territory. The first opportunity in this regard was provided during his negotiations with his Soviet counterpart, Prime Minister Rizhkov, in late March 1989. Although Rizhkov did not regard himself competent in the matter, he promised to raise the issue with Gorbachev. The Hungarian Prime Minister was able to discuss the matter with Gorbachev on the very same day. He accepted Németh's demand, committing himself to the removal of the said weaponry from Hungarian territory. Five months later—Németh seems to recall the second or third week of September 1989—the Soviet Ambassador to Budapest handed over Rizhkov's letter, in which the Hungarian government was officially notified of the successful completion of Gorbachev's promise" (op. cit. pp. 304-305).

Hopefully, Tőkés's valuable work will have further editions in English and so English-speaking readers, too, will be able to read the interview with Németh, along with other results of the author's research. In the past year he has been in Budapest and among the materials he was able to study were the fascinating minutes of the National Round Table talks, which have only recently been declassified. ❧

George Szirtes

Outsize

The Journey of Barbarus. Poems by Ottó Orbán. Translated by Bruce Berlind. Pueblo, CO, Passeggiata Press, 1997, 91 pp.

There is, I think, a general recognition in Hungary that the twentieth century has produced more than its share of major writers, most of them—until fairly recently—poets. It is too early to pick over the bones of the post-war period but it is already clear that Sándor Weöres, Ferenc Juhász, János Pilinszky, Ágnes Nemes Nagy, István Vas and Dezső Tandori are figures of international significance, their success beyond Hungary being to a great extent determined by the quality, quantity and timing of the translations of their work into other languages, above all English. Of living contemporaries, György Petri and Ottó Orbán are clearly of comparable stature (I would add Zsuzsa Rakovszky's name to theirs) and are part of this elite group whose work has already transcended national boundaries. And what a heterogeneous group they are, resembling each other in little but ambition. Their sheer variety indicates the poetic health of the epoch. Only a lush and exciting environment can support such diverse largescale life forms and it would need a deep literary, historical, linguistic and sociological enquiry to describe the apparently unlikely conditions that produced it. The differences between the poets are as fascinating and as complex as their achievements and are not easily summed up.

Various crude attempts at classification might however be made. For instance, on the one hand, there are copious producers who spread their wings wide like Weöres, Juhász, Vas and Tandori, and on the other, intense mythmakers who stand still and build high: Pilinszky and Nemes Nagy. Petri, for all his social satire, belongs with the latter group, Orbán with the former.

How does Orbán differ from the others in his group? Weöres (of whom Orbán has written) is one of the great poets not just of this but any century. His natural terrain is the cosmos: he moves from prehistory to the present, from politics to myth, from the child's nursery to the mystic's visionary experience. Juhász's terrain is the natural world and the legends associated with it. Vas's work comprises anything that is human: it involves the world of social and intimate history. Tandori is a remarkable formal experimenter and pusher of boundaries.

Orbán's enterprise lies elsewhere. He is closer perhaps to Vas than to the others, but remains quite distinct from him.

George Szirtes's
Selected Poems (1976–1996) was published by Oxford University Press in 1996. His latest collection, Portrait of My Father in an English Landscape, *was published also by OUP in 1998.*

He has instinctively positioned himself as a chronicler of his life and times, an observer who registers the impact of his observations on his own passions and humours. He projects himself into the colloquial, joky, dangerous post-war world and turns its energies back on itself. In a poem not included in the current collection he refers to the shema, that definition of monotheism God sticks under the tongue of his people, and ends the poem with this typical piece of defiance:

> ... under my tongue glows my father's tatty
> inscription
> while I spit the millennium in small balls of
> paper back at the world.
>
> "The Golem"
> (translated by George Szirtes)

Elsewhere he affirms his Taurean nature. To continue citing from a previous book, *The Blood of the Walsungs,* he is the bull who has to "suffer all these fancy diseases". He lives by sensations not abstractions. He is impulsive and heavy and dazzled. His demon is essentially moral but because it lives in an immoral world it is horrified, amused and infuriated, and it registers these emotions in bull-like rushes of imagery. Orbán has little of the gentleness of one of his major mentors, Allen Ginsberg. One cannot imagine Orbán as a Buddhist with jingling bells. He resembles Lowell in his sense of the century's hurt, but has none of Lowell's patrician hauteur. Yet Ginsberg and Lowell are clearly recognizable elements in his own compendious, idiosyncratic voice.

It is not surprising then that the subject of America should loom large in his work. He has often been to the United States as a visiting poet or professor, and has recorded it on his own epic map of madness, humour, suffering and injustice.

Bruce Berlind's introduction to *The Journey of Barbarus* introduces Orbán to his American readers with elements of biography and social history, tracing the American strands in his work, relating him particularly to Lowell and Ginsberg, but pointing out the debts to Pilinszky too ("I stole from Ginsberg and Pilinszky" Orbán himself wrote in his poem "Individualism"), thereby highlighting the antitheses contained in Orbán's voice, for Pilinszky and Ginsberg are not easily reconciled in either their technique or their sensibility. He quotes the Hungarian critic Balázs Lengyel, who talks about Orbán's "dual, ambivalent way of seeing... the constant and enlivening of opposites... sublime and grotesque". This sense of oppositions, of the dramatic interplay between dark and light, of old and new and big and small has equipped Orbán particularly well to deal with his experiences of America, the land of contrasts.

Size first. "A big country; I feel the functioning of the huge body, the lungs enlarging from Canada to Mexico", Orbán writes of America in "The Dazzling Disparity of Size" and no doubt that size, or consciousness of size, matters both to visitors and residents. (Berlind's reference, in his introduction, to Hungary as "a country even smaller than England", is a perfect and, I assume, unconscious, example of American gigantism.) Opposite this are ranged

> ...clouds, countries, wars
> and the negligible small black dots
> the human explosive
>
> from "To Be Rich"

Orbán's body metaphor is important because the notion of health underlies his vision—particularly the health of those small, explosive black dots—ordinary people—to whom he owes his strongest allegiance. The "salesman-toreador" in "Lorca's New York" has "paper bowels". The traffic jam in "The Angel of Traffic" is

the cause of "the fevered breath of the ocean" being squeezed from "the desert's lungs". "Empires at close range are like living skin" he tells us in "The Landscape Unfolding Before Us". The human form is writ large across the world in all its organic, pockmarked fury.

The America that emerges out of Orbán's "barbaric" journey is an amalgam of pop-art, poster, caption and snatches of intense transferred observation: candid photographs with collaged juxtapositions. This is the journey Barbarus makes. In "What Became of the Sixties" he records how:

> a black boy practices karate on the green grass
> the imaginary jawbone breaks
> COME TO JESUS FOR HE IS THE KING

The observed detail opens on an image extended from it, then snaps into the capitalized (and therefore sloganized) call. The three are presented as a natural progression: the real—the poster—the caption, the whole triad with a Robert Rauschenberg or James Rosenquist largeness and cumulative power. In fact the whole American experience is punctuated by such capitalized cries, like enormous roadside billboards: THE POET IN THE CAGE ("Canto"); TRAVEL ON FOOT TO THE HEART OF THE WORLD ("Sunday in a Small American Town"); WOULD YOU CARE FOR A DRINK SIR ("To Be Rich"); YOUR PLACE OR MINE... KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN, POP... EXIT SIXTY-FIVE KEEP RIGHT ("The Four-wheeled Man") and so on, throughout most of the book. The effect is to amplify and equalize. It is like being at a party where everyone is shouting, but some of the voices are not those of people but of institutions, signs, collections of folk wisdom or commercial organizations. The fact that these voices can be mixed and brought to equal prominence suggests the synthesis of them all into a single myth. A large country gets large letters, among other things.

With largeness comes heroism. America is a place of large deeds. Road building, for instance: "Concrete concrete concrete concrete to the horizon" ("The Gray-haired Swashbuckler"); or flight": I saw the dawn plane / with red and green lights flashing lurch through the void towards Denver" ("Mickey's Birthday"). And as for people, their energies seem boundless, they "spout off, screw, squabble, harum-scarum / and we still haven't mentioned the rowdy minorities" ("The End of Adventures"). The immensities are there to be overcome but at an almost apocalyptic price. "The End of Adventures", a poem dealing with the AIDS epidemic, offers us the plague; "Snow" a "no more bloodthirsty killer than the other cheek of banality"; in fact the whole of America produces a poem, "more than poetry / it's a planet-sized risk in itself".

But none of this is specific to Orbán: it is part of the myth of America, a myth aided and abetted by America itself. Orbán's socialist, humanist perspective regards the conservative elements of the American psyche with horror and foreboding, but that is scarcely surprising. What makes the poems remarkable is his grasp of extremes and his ability to internalize these in images of volcanic energy. The images transcend truism by virtue of the intensity of their juxtapositions. Pity and irony appear in high relief, but they proceed as much from the poet as from the world: it is, we realize, a case of the topography of the soul matching the topography of the subject.

Berlind's translations capture Orbán's rhythmical and colloquial structures with considerable skill. I have already quoted a number of passages which demonstrate this, but the bounce and sensuality transcend local effects. The local effects are useful microcosms of course:

I take a long walk at night on the west side of
Central Park
and hear the spasmodic dry wheezing of the
great lecher
like a spearshaft combusting his hard lovers
in his red-hot lap,
since they don't know how to teach him
what he cannot know,
the showery, happy satisfaction that brings
on dreamless sleep.

"In New York Again after Ten Years"

This slightly softens the orchestrated attack of the original last line *("az álomtalan alvást hozó, zuhatagos, boldog kielégülést")* but is very effective within its own linguistic dynamic. Orbán's Hungarian has few points of rest: Berlind's American-English requires more to bring out the sheer pitch of the verse. It naturalizes the Hungarian so the American reader hardly perceives the voice as foreign.

Homer stumbles up the platform
and winking at the gods with his blind eye says
I DONE SUNG THIS FIRST OFF IN KAINTUCKY

"Old Fiddlers' Picnic"

The sheer conceit, a splendid example of the ambivalence Lengyel talks about, of the blue grass fiddler as blind Homer, arises as discovery not calculation. The fiddler is heroic, naive and mythopoeic at once: he is and is not Homer. His music has more in common with "the wind that jogs on at a slow lope over the endless cornfields" than with high art and the "finicky musicologist" who switches such music off when he hears it on the radio.

"Tradition like ancient monuments leaves me cold" Orbán says in "Canto" the first poem in the book. Barbarus, the traveller, is a self-declared bumpkin ("The Journey of Barbarus") who, in "Under the Thundering Ceiling" teaches "the complex character of barbarians to simple-minded Romans". What Barbarus has to teach the Romans is, in effect, tradition, but it is the tradition of vanished empires and bloody trails in the snow.

The social commentator in Orbán knows very well that the poems about America are as much about the old world as the new. The dazzling disparity in size is the given condition of life: the gigantism of geography is more than matched by the gigantism of history. Isolating the American poems tends to conceal this a little. After all, the visiting Barbarus hasn't come from a liberal, humane democracy into an immense imperial power prepared for his horror and delectation. He is a visitor from another imperium and pretty well wise in its ways. He is, at heart, a Budapest poet but he reads Budapest into the world and the world into Budapest; into the specific historical moment of Budapest that he knows and feels deeply. In Orbán's oeuvre the American poems move in and out of his other work with ease, without any dazzling disparity in size. The danger of isolating these poems is that an element of tourism—that mixture of wonder, contempt, fear and flattery—hovers a little more spectrally about the book than about Orbán himself. But this is only a very faint spectre and the sheer energy of the work drives such spectres away with its enormous gusts of imagery.

The fact is that Orbán is a remarkable poet and Berlind's American-English versions are substantial confirmations of that. As I myself found when translating him, he is not difficult to translate. You just have to stand in some appropriate place and you feel him blowing all around you. ❧

János Végh

Counting the Costs

The "Sacco di Budapest" and Depredation of Hungary, 1938–1949: A preliminary and provisional catalogue. Includes archive photographs and documents from Hungarian public archives, as well as from libraries, museums and private collections. Edited, and with an Introduction by László Mravik. Budapest, Hungarian National Gallery, 1998, 468 pp.

"Sacco di Budapest"... is the *titre juste* for this book and its intentions. For Sacco di Roma is how historians describe the infamous plundering of Rome in 1527, when Charles V, later Holy Roman Emperor, wished to punish the Pope, then in alliance with the king of France, by sending an army mainly composed of German mercenaries against the Eternal City. Although Clement VII took refuge in the Castle of St Angelo to avoid falling into their hands, the city was thoroughly looted. Under the conventions of the day, a victorious army was entitled to plunder a town it had taken by storm and Charles' troops were merely exercizing this right. This they did all the more zealously, since most of them professed the new faith promulgated by Luther; they derived special satisfaction from the capture and sack of the city of the Anti-Christ himself. This explains their lack of restraint, their deliberate desecration of the holy places, the horses tethered to the marble pillars of churches and bedded down on parchment codices, the dicing next to the *confessio* above the tomb of St Peter—games spiced with crude language and riotous drinking from communion chalices the soldiers shared with prostitutes were remembered for centuries.

The sack of Rome appalled contemporaries, who considered it to be the desecration not only of the papal seat, but of a centre of fabulous monuments and artistic treasures. Undoubtedly, the looting had a great part in the development and spread of the new style known as Mannerism, which conveyed the tart and, sometimes, the bitter. It is also clear that some of the longing expressed in this was nostalgia for a golden age in which continuity and a flourishing of the arts were ensured. So, to return to the title of the book, the situation before the *sacco* at the end of the Second World War really did seem, in Hungarian eyes, a state of affairs that would never again come back, if only because of the sheer quantity of art treasures in Budapest.

In addition to the public collections in Budapest and elsewhere in the country, there were numerous rich private collec-

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tions—many times the present number; these contained far more valuable works than private collections do today. Among the owners of these works were members of the aristocracy, or at least of the nobility, and of the well-to-do upper middle classes. Of this latter, many were Jews, since Hungary's essentially liberal life at the end of the nineteenth century opened all careers to Jewry: they were present in the officer corps, as members of Parliament, and even in the aristocracy, as some were created barons. Those who collected, exhibited an interest in all areas of art. Some collected paintings and sculptures, while others favoured the decorative arts, famous tapestries and Near Eastern carpets or old porcelain. Others still built up collections whose historical importance complemented, or even exceeded, their artistic value.

The great value of some of the works in their hands can be most simply attested to by listing a few of the artists whose works—in some cases seminal, school-inspiring—were to be found in their possession. Amerling, Bonnard, Boucher, Brueghel, Chassériau, Constable, Courbet, the Cranachs, Daumier, Delacroix, Füger, Gauguin, Géricault, Goya, Ingres, Kriehuber, Lawrence, Longhi, Makart, Manet, Millet, Pascin, Proudhon, Renoir, Rodin, Ruisdael, Schiele, Tintoretto, Turner, Waldmüller, and Winterhalter—and this is without mentioning any Hungarian names. The value of the collections of ivory carvings, silverware, carpets, and porcelain cannot be conveyed so simply, although we can be sure that it was not less than that of the fine art collections. The total value of art works removed from Hungary can be estimated only roughly; in what follows the difficulties of doing this will be discussed, along with the uncertainty with regard to the actual number of the objects taken.

As the Second World War proceeded, life for Hungary's Jews—long envied by their co-religionists in Germany's other satellite states—grew increasingly difficult. In spring 1944, when Hitler's mistrust of his ally reached the point where he occupied Hungary and foisted a puppet government on it, the rounding up and deportation of Hungary's Jews to Nazi death camps was set in motion. They had to leave behind everything they had, including their art collections, which passed into the hands of a government commission set up especially for this purpose. As the fighting came closer, this government commission tried to hide away some of these collections and to move others westwards, to Germany. (A few collections were simply appropriated by individuals working for the confiscating authorities.)

In addition to this, there was also a German unit operating under the direction of Adolf Eichmann (who was posted to Hungary at this time) which was busy tracing Jewish property—in some cases art treasures, too. This functioned completely independently of the Hungarian authorities and the Hungarian government, which by then was pro-German to the fullest possible degree. The plunder thus seized by the Germans—filling several goods trains—was sent direct to Berlin, where it disappeared without trace. László Mravik has every reason to suppose that this booty was not destroyed during transportation: he believes that it fell into the hands of the Red Army, and is today somewhere in Russia. We also know that some Jewish-owned pieces, which could not be taken through the Soviet ring around Budapest, were destroyed in the garden of a Buda villa taken possession of by the German army.

At the same time, on the orders of the fascist Hungarian government, many Hungarian public collections, including trea-

sures from the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts, were despatched to the Third Reich; it was only thanks to poor organization and the wartime shortage of transport that so much of this failed to cross the border. Those that did came to no harm, since they ended up in Southern Germany, which was to be within the American occupation zone. Accordingly, they arrived sooner or later at the Central Collecting Point in Munich, from where they were returned to Hungary within a year or two.

In addition to the shipments to the West organized by the Hungarian and German authorities, another cause of the losses may well have been simple war destruction, but the scale of this appears to have been relatively modest. Much greater danger lay in store for those art works that remained within Hungary. In the areas affected by the fighting, law and order broke down; it was easy to gain entry into damaged buildings and remove valuables, including art treasures, especially easy for armed military personnel. Many soldiers—Germans and Russians alike—made use of their opportunities. An even greater source of losses—perhaps one which could be considered as part of the inevitable destruction that accompanies war—was what happened in country houses requisitioned for military purposes, usually as rest centres or hospitals. (This was customary for the Soviet troops, they were advancing, and country houses already captured and well behind the line were suitable for medical and recreational purposes.) These buildings were rarely spared: most were stripped to the walls, with their contents taken away, pilfered or burnt. The soldiers frequently bartered with local peasants, paying for farm produce and fresh fruit with valuables taken from such buildings. Fertőd, the former Eszterháza, boasted the magnificent Late Baroque palace known as the Hungarian Versailles, which was Haydn's home for twenty-seven years. Long after the war it emerged that some were locals doing their milking on Rococo stools.

Most importantly, there was deliberate, organized looting. Here, perhaps, it will be sufficient to mention the looting in the capital. Soviet troops systematically emptied the safes of major banks, using explosives and cutting equipment to open them. They were probably looking for cash, precious metals and jewelry containing precious stones; if paintings, porcelain or other objects of artistic as well as monetary value came their way, they were not displeased. Their strategy was logical, since people fearful of the bombing and shelling were happy to entrust their valuables to these large underground storerooms constructed of steel and concrete. What was especially appealing was the availability of what were called "locked deposits", without any inventory or other document clarifying their contents. In other words, some of the banks had not investigated what was in the cases and trunks placed in the strongrooms.

The units dealing with this—"Economic Officers' Commissions" in the official documents of the time—did not shrink from the systematic search of a foreign mission and the removal of the valuables found there. The legation in question was that of Sweden. It gave sanctuary to many persecuted persons by exploiting the immunity enjoyed by neutral states, and allowed many others to deposit their valuables there. When its looting took place, the Third Secretary, Raoul Wallenberg, had already been kidnapped by the Soviets.

The perpetrators of the sack of Budapest differed from those of the Sacco di Roma in that they did not carry it out with brazen assurance, but usually made an effort not to be seen; they sealed off areas

and sometimes operated during the night curfew. Unlike the Lutheran mercenaires, they steered clear of churches, public buildings and ecclesiastical collections, although they did remove the 1400-volume library (which also contained codices and incunabula) of the Calvinist College at Sárospatak.

Clearly, the explanation for this decidedly discreet approach was that those who organized it knew that what they were doing was contrary to international law. The 1907 Hague Convention forbade the removal of cultural assets as booty; there is a heightened poignancy in the fact that this particular clause was included at the insistence of the Russian delegation. The Potsdam Agreement of the summer of 1945, and the peace treaties which ended the war all stipulated the obligation to return any property that had been taken. By this time the looting had already ended, and presumably so had the transportation of the booty to the Soviet Union. From there, by the way, it could have been returned, as happened with the works taken to the West. But there has been no great willingness on the part of the Russians to do so, although the need for such action was recognized in the "basic treaty" concluded between Hungary and Russia on December 6, 1991. Russian public opinion, often capable of ultranationalism, sincerely believes that these objects were acquired through the undying merits of warriors who had spilled their blood in a war of liberation, and are, in any case, the Motherland's compensation for the horrors it suffered. What is more worrying, however, is that the successor of one of the powers in the anti-Hitler coalition does not—or dares not—regard art works taken from Jews threatened with annihilation by the Nazis as illegitimate war booty.

This substantial book publishes the findings of its compiler's many years of research, a task which, clearly, will never come to a complete end. As such, the book belongs to a gloomy strand in the literature on art history, the strand which registers the losses encurred during the Second World War, and which consists mostly of works published around 1950. In the many years that have since passed, additions to this have been rare indeed, until now that is. An obvious reason is that over forty years or so, in Hungary certain details of the Soviet army's activities could not be mentioned, or only in private conversation. No-one dared broach the subject in writing. Interestingly enough, at the end of 1998, another book came out containing research of a similar nature: *A magyar jóvátétel és ami mögötte van* (Hungarian Restitution and What Lies Behind It, ed. Sándor Balogh and Margit Földesi. Budapest, Napvilág, 1998).

László Mravik,* a specialist on the Renaissance and the Baroque, dealt with the history of Hungarian art collecting earlier, but only after the 1989 opening of "confidential" dossiers could he devote his attention to the direct causes of the 1944–45 losses of art works. This became his principal work, and, however strange it may seem, he engaged in it alone, although for some time now he has been helped by two young colleagues.

This involved slow and patient work, since the entire documentation had to be built up from scratch. Furthermore, the methodology had to be worked out as he went along; decisions had to be made as to where it was worth looking, where information on the former collections could be found, and so on. These, after all, were private collections, for most of which there

* See the two-part article by László Mravik in *The HQ* Nos. 149 and 150, Spring & Summer 1998, amply complemented by some of the documents, in extract or in full.

were no printed catalogues, and even the existence of an inventory was by no means certain; in many cases there may have been just a list recording the names of the artists and the titles of the works, plus their sizes, at best. If works featured in scholarly studies or in connection with an exhibition (photographs may even have been published, too—and this happened repeatedly with the more important pieces), this was fortunate—but for most of them this was not the case. In this very difficult situation, the losses could hardly be documented in their entirety.

No written records were kept at the time of sequestration, still fewer at the time of forced acquisition, and even the banks—as mentioned above—held the great majority of the objects as locked deposits; into their well-kept records crept statements declaring that "the Soviet military authorities forcibly opened all the strongroom compartments, including the [...] compartments rented by you, and took away their contents". On other occasions they were more cautious, informing owners of deposits that "owing to wartime action" their property had "passed out of the bank's custody". Some owners later submitted complaints to the Hungarian authorities. This produced no results, but the lists made at the time survived to assist researchers later.

In some cases, a work unexpectedly lost at the end of the war can be tracked down only in photographs that show the interior of the building where the collection was kept, enabling us to get at least some idea of what some items looked like. Fortunately for the most important collections, these photographs are of fairly good quality, clearly showing paintings hanging on walls and sculptures standing on baize, although, of course, these are only aids to making recognition and identification possible. Truly reliable were inventories of objects lent for exhibitions, and those which the collectors compiled, or had compiled, for themselves.

It can easily be imagined how wearying it is to compare lists of art works using such methods, and how scant are the data that do not need to be confirmed through comparison with other data, and how many comparisons are needed, when the aim is to reach an acceptable level of certainty with regard to an object which is very uncertainly documented. Clearly the compiler is right in acknowledging the incompleteness of his work, but he took the view that it was time to publish the list, albeit as "preliminary and provisional".

After a brief discussion of the history of events, the introductory part of the volume contains documents—among them the text of a law; articles from extreme right-wing newspapers of the time on the confiscation of Jewish art treasures; an eyewitness account of the removal of such treasures; memoranda testifying to the looting of banks and the Swedish legation; an account of a ministry official concerning the condition of historic country houses in western Transdanubia in the summer of 1945; letters from the Hungarian prime minister and the minister of religious and educational affairs of that time to Marshal Voroshilov, the chairman of the Allied Control Commission, in the interests of recovering art treasures; an inventory dealing with a few paintings returned by the Soviet Union in 1971 and Party headquarters memoranda; and finally, the text of the 1991 Hungarian–Russian "basic treaty" and the protocol appended to it, which deal with the mutual return of art works that had been removed.

The most apposite part comprises the lists of lost art works (sculptures, paintings, drawings and various applied art artifacts and, in exceptional cases, books) which immediately follow this. The missing objects are numbered in ascending or-

der throughout the book. The last number is 44,156, which does not represent the number of items, since again and again there are gaps in the numbering—for example, the first number is 121. Since the material is presented as a succession of collections in alphabetical order according to the names of the collectors, and since the numbering continues from one collection to the next, we must assume that where the numbering is interrupted individual collections were left out at the last moment; clearly, these collections omitted are not yet at the same stage of processing as the others. The alphabetical order has whimsically placed next to each other persons who collected Jewish liturgical objects, and those who collected Hungarian paintings or old porcelain; this seems appropriate in a book which attempts to give an account of all the losses.

The lists try to mention all the objects belonging to these collections briefly, disregarding their value, and presenting only the objects that have been firmly identified. This involves giving the name of the piece (for a fine art piece, this means the master and the title of the work), its size, the material or materials used, the literature dealing with it, and a short account of its provernance and fate. Descriptions are frequently accompanied by a photograph, although sometimes this is just a blown-up detail of a photograph showing a room. The inclusion of illustrations is a little uneven, since not every collector considered it necessary to have photographs of his treasures, and even when there were photographs it is not certain that they are still available now. In the case of works by better-known artists, the proportion of photographs is higher, but still does not exceed 20–25 per cent of the objects included. Naturally, the literature covers only the more important works, hence applied arts objects are at a conspicuous disadvantage.

Works are always indicated as being by the authors whose names appear in collectors' inventories, or in catalogues of exhibitions in which the objects featured. We know, however, that a great number of owners were inclined to upgrade their own pieces somewhat. In the case of a few objects, which are currently owned by museums in the West, new identifications have been made (some owners of objects recovered from Nazi hands later smuggled them to the West in contravention of Hungarian laws on exporting art works). However, the number of these was not great, less than 10 per cent of those taken to the East according to Mravik's estimate. As those qualified to modify attributions have not been able to study the works stored in repositories in the former Soviet Union, the old identifications for these works have naturally been retained.

This publication, fifty-three years after the end of the Second World War, may be deemed a little overdue. If we bear in mind that for decades silence had to be preserved, and that until recently only one individual was working on this subject—an individual greatly esteemed by his colleagues, but to whose efforts even the Hungarian authorities more than once reacted with incomprehension and defensiveness —then we must acknowledge all the more the sheer magnitude of what this volume achieves. In a certain sense, through the fate of works that were taken away, László Mravik has been doing work for every Hungarian art historian. With the publication of his findings so far, others will perhaps be able to join him in his efforts.

This volume is not on public sale, but was printed "For the Joint Restitution Committee at the Hungarian Ministry of Culture and Education". It is intended for, and will be made available to, museums and institutions. ❧

Clara Györgyey

This Kingdom Should Rather Go!

Thy Kingdom Come: 19 short stories by 11 Hungarian authors.
Selected and edited by Peter Doherty, Gyöngyi Köteles and Zsófia Bán.
Translations by Eszter Molnár. Budapest, Palatinus Books, 1998, 322 pp.

The very idea of collecting nineteen short stories seemingly selected at random, and in English to boot, invites not only the customary, a priori objections but a skeptical wince. Granted, all the representatives are established contemporary authors (eight men and three women, ranging from forty-five to eighty-three years of age) who have achieved fame both at home and abroad. Still, the selection appears arbitrary and unbalanced, (the female writers are allotted a total of thirty pages out of 322), lacking any thematic or other conceptual unifying component other than that each piece has already been translated into English by Eszter Molnár and featured in *The Hungarian Quarterly*.

On the jacket, *Thy Kingdom Come* promises "a wide variety of the best quality Hungarian literature, along with a slice of Hungarian reality" and *that* it delivers indeed. It also provides a cross selection of the best and most prolific authors, complete with photographs, biographies, lists of awards and foreign editions of their works. An additional bonus is Eszter Molnár's superb translation. In an enjoyable and genuinely idiomatic English, the translator allows every author's voice distinction while maintaining a feel for the whole. It is a horrendous task to have to produce such an accurate, sensitive, "native-sounding" translation of these notoriously challenging authors. Ms Molnár deserves equal credit with her "customers."

The stories are extremely depressing, featuring unfathomable poverty and antiheroes consumed by existential anguish, alienation, rootlessness, exploitation (especially of children, illiterate labourers and the homeless), physical and psychological torture, pain and suffering. By and large, a dark mood prevails and most denouements are bleak or bittersweet at best; this holds irrespective of the style or trend, be it realism, naturalism, surrealism, stream of consciousness, utopia, absurdity or postmodernism.

Ádám Bodor, the sixty-three-year-old Transylvanian writer now living in Hungary, first achieved immense success with his magical short stories, and in 1993 acquired international fame with a run-away bestseller, *Sinistra District*. Translated at once into a dozen languages, this thin volume of spellbinding tales (subtitled

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"Chapters of a Novel") is a cycle of fifteen stories (three of which are in our volume) —each complete in itself—forming a novel of sorts. Here we are in the realm of an anti-utopia, a cursed, amoral totalitarian existence poignantly familiar. The ambiguous setting is somewhere in the Carpathian Mountains in Romania. In this dark, devastating region, a "freezing hell," people live in captivity, some in enforced bondage, some in self-imposed exile. The balefully restricted territory, controlled by the sadistic secret police, is not simply a fictional penal colony but an absurd, postmodern gulag, an irrational survival zone of demonic proportion. The novel's antihero, Andrej Bodor, is both narrator and victim of a series of most terrifying happenings facilitated by the "grey goons," Ceausescu's militiamen. Andrej never displays any emotion even in the most horrific or senseless situations: at sight of murders, tortures, an eyeball on the road, a frozen human ear in a rodent's mouth, and much more. What unfolds in these tales is as absurd, incomprehensible, and horrible as it is logical. The district is populated by subhuman, animal-like creatures clad in rags, subsisting on frozen potatoes, mushrooms and methyl alcohol. These buglike, Kafkaesque characters are both animalistic and mechanical; distorted archetypes, though they both epitomize and symbolize multiethnic nationalities and different social classes. For instance: there are the two Petrika Hamzas, homosexual twins servicing all the needs of the half-wit innkeeper Doktor Oleinek, the dwarf Gabruel Dunka tarnishes glass with sand for the prisons, the truck driver Mustafa Mukkerman, who transports frozen carcasses, corpses and smuggles people, Coca-Mavrodin, the woman forest commissioner who will freeze to death, and scores of other freaks; they ably serve as collective metaphors for this much-tormented region. The true main character, however, the omnipotent tyrant, is nature. Each episode contains superb descriptions of the frigid landscape and its elementary power over the living. Bodor's unique stylistic devices (typical of folk ballads and surreal horror stories), his beguiling characterization, succinct descriptions and dialogue, dark vision and humour enable the reader to consider the physical and metaphysical, the realistic and mythical, as no longer opposites but rather the organic surface of a bizarre totality. The measured, elegant sentences balance on the edge of naturalism and grotesque parable-making in these repulsive yet persuasive tales.

Lajos Grendel, a fifty-one-year-old Hungarian from Slovakia, is an enigmatic author; social criticism and political satire, delivered with savage grin and humour, abound in "The Story That Didn't Make the News." It presents an ordinary Slovak apartment house where one night a group of armed men simply occupy the cellar and order everyone to leave. Who they were, how many and why they came no one knows. The frightened, typical low-class residents rally around the chairman of the tenants' committee; they spread rumours, attend inane mass-meetings, whisper all-knowingly that "it must have been the Hungarians, or the Jews, or the Gypsies who had masterminded the vile attack". The delegation sent to negotiate with the intruders returns with the demand that the building must be handed over to the rebels, all tenants must leave at once. Cursing, they all move out. The chairman "left the perilous neighbourhood stealthily... it crossed his mind that perhaps he ought to have resigned before leaving, but he did not have the heart to turn back. His tenants had given evidence of great patience, civil discipline and wisdom... some will supply the troops, others will engage in the fighting. The way it usually hap-

pens." Grendel's misleadingly "relevant," confessional text, intimating scathing indignation, is eclipsed by a new mood of skepticism, cynicism and facetiousness that further qualify him to be a genuine postmodern writer. His rapid portraits and occasional acrid vision of feelings may appear indistinct but never indifferent; he effects us and convinces us.

The youngest and most controversial author is László Krasznahorkai (at 45 he has a sixties look, long hair, beard, shapeless fedora hat, scarf and black Zorro cape), whose two challenging, though not a little chaotic stories lead us into Beckettian landscapes where absurdity pervades in the postmodern fashion of self-referencing. In "The Last Boat," for instance, all the dialogue is put in footnotes; the entire text is a giant *non-sequitur* paragraph, anecdotes are begun but left incomplete to be replaced by other fragments; in the convoluted sentences, amid humorous asides, there is no unity of theme, mood or narrative. In "Getting Away from Bogdanovich" (as in his award-winning novels), he portrays an eerie apocalypse of the socialist reality in Eastern Europe; it is a nightmarish pursuit of the eponymous "hero." Ultimately the story's tediousness is as profound as the alleged themes. A philosophical story-teller, he is a new mystic without God, in quest of a "postmodern divinity" through harmony with the "awful, hitherto unknown, drastic disquiet world and its creatures." His novels—*Sátántangó*/Satan Tango, 1986, made into a successful seven-hour film; *Az ellenállás melankóliája*/The Melancholy of Resistance, 1999, of which a chapter appeared in the *HQ* (No. 152, Winter 1998) in a translation by George Szirtes, and the recent *Háború és háború*/War and War, 1999)—are about the possessed and the obsessed, they are set in disintegrating, decaying country towns in Eastern Europe where (except for *War and War* a group of satanic people will soon arrive to take over. His realistically described world is devoid of all human values and instinct an menace prevail. Another of his bestselling books was a spellbinding account of his solitary railway trip—via Siberia—to Communist China in the eighties.

On the opposite spectrum stands the popular, often awarded and translated writer of children literature, Ervin Lázár, who contributes one story "The Porcelain Doll." Despite the classical, crystal-clear style and realistic descriptions, we are led into the Twilight Zone, in a weird, dreary, faraway village in the Hungarian prairie, the *puszta*. A modern-day miracle worker shakes up the populace with his "ability to resurrect the dead." Woebegone mothers faint as their children's coffins are unearthed and "corpses" suddenly come to life. Like the Rainmaker, this impostor disappears next day and life will never be the same again. The hope-for-one-day is more than the customary superstition of the village, the Lazarus theme is universal, crossing all cultural boundaries. Lázár writes with gentle irony and in elliptical fashion; here and there the story flaunts elements of the grotesque and the surreal as well. Despite the realistic exposé, it is hard at first to escape the impression that nothing really believable is happening. Yet, the anticipation is sustained—and not in vain. The narrator manages to maintain a mystique that bedazzles the reader to the point of misty eyes, it's catharsis à la mode. No vestiges of modernism, only honesty and emotive power, compassion, and velvety, caressing story telling.

The sixty-year-old Péter Lengyel is already something of a classic; his awards and the list of foreign editions of his novels barely fit into the assigned space. A brilliant translator, editor and teacher, Lengyel is first and foremost a highly re-

spected, highly talented novelist. He clearly demonstrates his contagious nostalgia, intellectual sincerity and style (post-Joyceian stream-of-consciousness) in two gems: "Merry-go-round", a chapter from the novel *Macskakő* (Cobblestone) and "Boulevard in the Rain, 1928." In both, the action takes place in meditated flashback, while the current time seems frozen as the narrator stares incessantly at the computer screen in his MS-filled, overcrowded study. The text, detailed and precise, is peppered with contemporary songs, ditties, aphorisms, word games, children's rhythms, random verbiage, political slogans, jokes and mock totems. At parts the score is either hypnotic or tedious, depending on one's taste. In both stories so fascinating are the details, colourful the characters, that the author might almost be forgiven for keeping silent about how he performed this miracle, like water changing into wine: his painting a vibrant canvas of the past while re-enacting the vulgar present. He takes us from time to time and space to space with the greatest of ease. Writing during communism, he combines scathing social criticism with cunning, elusive misspellings or using heavily metaphoric idioms. The occasional arbitrary linguistic stunts are tempered by a resigned humour. Like Ferenc Molnár in his plays, Lengyel in his prose (his work conjures up his idol, Marquese) pays a touching tribute to his beloved hometown.

Undeservedly, Aliz Mosonyi (55 years old) is perhaps the least known among these authors. Her *Shop Tales,* a charming, absurd series, is the shortest text in the volume, bringing to mind István Örkény's one minute stories. On an imaginary street sprawls a number of fictional shops, each elegantly described in paragraph-size bites: "The Shop of Maps" requires a brief recitation of autobiography after which the shopkeeper "takes out a map, pins a tiny flag onto it and says, 'Here you are. This is where life tossed you.'" In another intriguing piece, "The Shop of Practical Doughnuts," a question is asked: "Is life a sour doughnut? Or a sweet one?" "You've got to buy one and try one. Then you'll know." Finally, "The Shop that Once Was" is precisely what it says. Ms. Mosonyi should have been represented more generously.

Now comes another heavy-weight, the internationally known playwright, novelist, translator, Slavist scholar, dramaturge supreme, György Spiró, who provides two pieces. Each of the two dozen books by this irascible gadfly, evokes extreme reactions and controversy, all the sound and fury, the panegyrics and scorn are motivated by social, racial and political reasons in any given era. In "Utopia," he sets out to reveal the hard truth, to contrast the sham and the real in present-day Hungary, in an allegorical tale about rebuilding life after the Holocaust. Such a premise, or promise, is audacious and preposterous, but Spiró delivers the goods. This brief story—delineated with cool irony and dry humour, though in a somewhat cynical manner—draws a penetrating picture of how people "manage to survive." In "Forest," on the other hand, he tells a hilarious, well-woven tapestry of romance and farce, in effect, a moving and also tragic autobiographical tale of lost love. Added curiosity here is the setting: the main characters (then still husband and wife) are "travelling on a local train, along the Moscow-Gorky line immortalized in Russian fiction." He was to meet the wife's new lover, a "superannuated Bulgarian ballet dancer", who was now living with his pregnant Russian girlfriend ("anything can happen in Russia!"). Within this framework Spiró comments on contemporary Russian poetry, social problems, Jewish immigration, the nineteenth-century Hungarian War of Independence, and much more. The story evokes a ponderous and powerful breath

of Russian life—an amalgam of cruelty, compassion, drunkenness, unexpected delicacy and *joie de vivre*. In the anticlimactic conclusion, the ex-wife is dying of cancer and the cuckolded, super-cool ex-husband is apparently devastated. The author's dialogue and eye for detail show that realism and farce are not distant cousins, that absurdity can be mined from simple events without diminishing either verity or humour. Occasional pontifications notwithstanding, even these short samples testify to Spiró's unique talent.

The 82-year-old Magda Szabó, winner of many prizes, whose great body of work (close to forty volumes in every genre) has been widely translated, appears here only with one delicious morsel. "Silver Ball" is enough to justify the entire volume and prove her exquisite style, humour and mesmerizing sensitivity of themes. Szabó gained renown primarily through her novels and their extraordinary heroines. Though not a feminist, she succeeds in redirecting the focus on women (all ages) through her prose. Here the heroine is herself a little girl, whose relentless curiosity gets her into trouble with majestic grand dames amid the family. While a charming mystery is solved, the story is pregnant with her self-ironizing distance, detached gestures with which she interrupts herself, seldom erupting muted fury, precocious musings of a child, along with moral seriousness and ethical anguish. Furthermore, she re-enacts with nostalgia the erosion of human values, the irretrievable past, fossilized evidence of an extinct social class—the gentry and the Calvinist country professional classes—a tradition-filled culture and a world that has been obliterated.

The sixty-year-old Dezső Tandori, a prolific, path-breaking poet, writer, translator, graphic artist and performer, who has won numerous prizes, awards and has been published abroad frequently, is under-represented here by one piece. "Baalbeck Hotel" combines sophistication and periodic mondaineity in which he is acting as a cantankerous, haughty, old critic and a sentimental bird-father, with brazen insouciance and terrifying cleverness. The bird-aficionado is at once a democrat and a snob, a seminar-room grandee and a party pooper who, at times, falls prey to some vices that afflict the most talented writers: gigantism, obscurantism, verbosity and cognate authorial hauteur. Still, he is thoroughly committed to keeping up the appearance of kindness (especially to animals), but underneath all the musings Tandori appears cold and controversial. While he is an expert on horse-racing, tennis, mysteries, movies, Australian and other kinds of wine, sparrows and Wittgenstein, his tale basically depicts a stifled, nerve-wrecking stay in England. It is an unflinching examination of loneliness and a trenchant trajectory of negation too. A genuine non-story, postmodern to a tee, it is studded with asides, fragments and other ultra-modern literary paraphernalia. Here is the opening: "Everything—happened in Worchester! That everything had to happen there. On Friday, January 3rd, 1993 in Worchester. What do I have to arrive on Saturday for? What for? Well, never mind. I read 'Yesterday's results, Worchester,' And then again, 'continued from page 7.' And in the meantime." This cold-hearted, ferociously educated, enigmatic, fascinating and at times infuriating author is dedicated to the power of the "master narrative," a writer determinedly of our time endowed with a bibliography that is 19th century in its variety and magnitude. The vivid vignette of the English landscape, his busy schedule therein, provides a perfect venue for Tandori to disseminate one of his pet credos: there are no masterpieces today because our

moment is "post-Gutenberg and pre-Apocalypse;" what reigns now is generalized corruption, mechanized inhumanity leading to the obsolescence of literature, whose place is taken by the idiot box. This is no post-structuralist criticism or semiotic explanation, it is a rightful modern outrage by extension but, to make sure, do check into his Baalbek Hotel and judge for yourself how gifted this cosmopolitan wanderer is.

The most generous space (87 pages) was awarded to Sándor Tar—his story sets the volume's tone and yields its title—a relative newcomer whose rise to fame was as rapid as his output enormous. At fifty-eight Tar, an eminent social documentarist, began to pen imaginative novellas which are both brilliant contrivances and masterpieces of naturalism. In every story his familiar stock figures are the downtrodden, stuck in mud and squalor, the lumpen, both urban and rural. His turf is the poor region of the Great Plains in northeast Hungary, where in dilapidated factories, overcrowded tenement houses, filthy shanties, stinking bars, and rumbling, slow freight trains we behold the forever exploited common men. The volume's feature story, "Thy Kingdom Come" presents three labourers whose dismissal—"the bosses threw them away like a rotten apple"—mirrors their own hopelessness and also intimates the universal disintegration of their class. In the other three dark, raw, unpretentious stories, with the neutral observation of a sociologist, the author speaks up for the impecunious, truculent loud enough to be heard. Brilliantly drawn characters are in each tale as it leisurely winds its way to the inevitable bleak conclusion. There is a gritty authenticity in their tone. In effect, Tar, himself a former factory hand, impresses us as an unsettling portraitist of the destitute, the abandoned and maladjusted.

Poverty is also prevalent in Zsuzsa Vathy's story "I Love You, Edua," a yarn reminiscent of Tar's work with its sinister overtones. This writer of sensitive, resonant prose in which sharp observation often shades into metaphor, knows no condescension to the poor, her whimsical descriptions are indeed mesmerizingly lethal—they hurt. A fine realist, Vathy is freeze-framing the complexities of human relationships with precision, rooted in factual knowledge. In her short piece Edua is a naïve, lonely female executive who, as an experiment, while on vacation, immerses herself into the world of the homeless with dangerous abandon. This captive of the solitary existence of the pseudo corporate world of mini-successes, for a fleeting moment feels loved at last among the homeless. "On the pavement someone had written in neat regular white letters: I LOVE YOU, EDUA! The words transported her high above the square, above the linden trees... her heart beat rapidly in alarm and in exultant joy." Who is more miserable in the long run: the poor little rich girl or the destitute derelicts? Vathy is a honest storyteller, her intrinsic purity breaks through the filth and beams triumphantly on the cutting edge of fiction and reality.

The collection is a welcome sign, a tiny indication that we might be breaking out of our long-lasting literary isolation. The photographs are excellent, the biographical information useful though a bit inconsistent (for instance, Spiró's English translations are missing, among them one by this reviewer), and despite a few silly typos (Getz and not Betz Foundation, etc.) the layout is more than adequate. In sum, the release of this confident, fine English text should be hailed as an enticing calling card from contemporary Hungarian writing. ❧

Tamás Koltai

Tragedies and Comedies

Imre Madách: *The Tragedy of Man* • *Tragédia-jegyzetek* (Tragedy Notes) • Géza Bodolay: *A magyar mennyegző* (The Hungarian Wedding) • István Tasnádi: *Titanic vízirevű* (Titanic Water Show) • György Spiró: *Honderű* (National Mirth)

"You think this is tragedy. Regard it / As comedy instead: it will amuse you".* This line from Imre Madách's dramatic poem *The Tragedy of Man* is addressed to Adam by the fallen angel Lucifer on seeing the first man's horror after he was given a glimpse of mankind's future history. I have discussed this classic nineteenth-century Hungarian piece often enough in these pages, and I propose not to repeat myself. (Hopefully some readers will have read it in translation or, better still, seen an English-language production.) In the space of one month, four Hungarian companies recently premiered their new productions of the play. My other motive, and hence the quote, is that quite often judgment is only a matter of viewpoint; anything that might seem tragic and fatal in history or in our everyday lives will appear simply comic or grotesque when seen from another perspective, that of an outsider or an indifferent observer. A good many tragedies have comic overtones, and vice versa, and there is the border zone in between, the tragicomic, which appears in the modern theatre—think of Beckett or Ionesco if you will—as a basic attitude.

This vacillation between the tragic and the comic is plainly evident in productions of Hungarian plays, old and new alike. One example is the *Tragedy* itself. Earlier, it would have been unthinkable to perform it other than with tragic pathos. The creation myth, which plays a pivotal role in the play, demanded this pathos; just as Goethe's *Faust,* the play is about the battle between God and the Devil for the soul of a man. History provides the *places d'armes* for the battle, and for Madách, who saw human history as a succession of discredited ideas, it is a tragic field. Through a set of visions, Lucifer guides Adam through the history of ideas, from the remote past to the distant future—from ancient Egypt to the end of life on Earth—in an attempt to lead him into despair and to suicide. Since, however, this is impossible (mankind has, according to the latest evidence, survived its own history), the play's pessimism can only be resolved by way of a spiritual deus ex machina. This is the *Tragedy*'s famous concluding line, God's divulgence: "Man, I have spoken: strive on, just have faith!"*

As the world grew more profane—with religious world view and affected theatrical

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* Translated by George Szirtes

delivery going out of fashion—so did *The Tragedy of Man* lose its aspect as a mythologizing tragedy. Nowadays an everyday and playful interpretation prevails, often verging on the ironic. In the production of the Merlin Theatre (directed by Tamás Jordán) Adam and Eve lie on God's palm. Literally. An enormous plaster hand descends from above, making a comfortable bed, today's version of paradise, for the first couple. We see two unselfconscious, instinct-driven creatures at the high end of biological evolution. There is even a reference to Darwinism in that Adam and Eve do bear some resemblance to our primate cousins. Lucifer is portrayed as a kind-hearted private tutor presenting the history of mankind to his students with the help of a film projector. The historical scenes take place both as theatrical reality and on film. A technical trick transports the actors to the silver screen, only to return at the appropriate moments. For example, the Roman gladiator is stabbed on screen and his body rolls forward onto the stage out of the screen. In the final act the protective hand descends again, and Eve, the perennial conformist that she is, rubs herself against God's little finger.

For the first time ever, the *Tragedy* is being performed by the Budapest Puppet Theatre. The possibilities are, indeed, limitless here, as the puppet stage can be changed almost at will, both in size and in proportion; cosmic at one minute, it can be turned into a cosy interior the next. The dimensions are infinite, time and space can freely be roamed, with no physical laws to bound fantasy to earth. The surreal visions of the play can be realized here with ease: armies of toy soldiers are shown marching; a meat mincer spews out the French tricolour during the French Revolution scene; robots work in a Fourier-type phalanster; Adam orbits in space in the manner of a sputnik. In modern puppet theatres "live" actors and puppets mix freely: a huge cherub bursts into the puppet Paradise; the audience can see the "handlers" of Adam and Eve as they manipulate the marionettes. We are all puppets in the hand of a supreme power, or so it seems. Rather than being a transcendental creature, this supreme power is the director himself, who presents the comedy of creation and history on stage. Here, Lucifer is a disgruntled, rebelling actor who has different ideas about the play. And since the Budapest Puppet Theatre's version is directed by none other than Dezső Garas, one of the most obstreperous of Hungarian actors, who himself had played Lucifer in a "proper" theatre, the concept of "violating the rules" receives an additional twist, making room for an ever broader interpretation.

The first premiere in the recently renovated Madách Theatre is billed as a "variation" on the Madách drama. This should still be all right, as every production is in a sense a variation of the original play. Nor should we object in principle to the fact that the director Imre Kerényi has rewritten the text, standard practice in modern and, especially, postmodern theatre; even Shakespeare is not safe from such meddling. What is dubious is the principle and, on seeing the result, the manner of the rewrite. As to the director's principle, he thinks that not everyone in the audience is a university professor who understands the original text. This is a familiar argument; some people say that, for the same reason, it is easier to put on Shakespeare in translation than in the original English. But *The Tragedy of Man* was written in 1860, and while some philosophical deliberations do appear in it, the language and the message of the play should be intelligible to an average person with secondary

school education. (Not to mention that the play forms part of the national curriculum for schools who usually have organized trips to the theatre to see it.) Besides being a forgery, however, the Madách Theatre's "text variation" is also a depoetization, a primitive simplification and, quite often, defiles the text and the prosody. The whole production was conceived in the same spirit. A ballroom orchestra is arranged on an estrade in the middle of the revolving stage (sometimes disappearing from view, sometimes popping up, as if in the Folies Bergères of Paris), playing music "appropriate" to the actual historical scene. We are treated to a tune from *Aida* for the Egyptian scene, then to a popular *syrtos* for the Athenean scene, the Neapolitan song *O sole mio* for the Rome scene (!), Mozart's Sarabande in Constantinople during the Crusades, the cancan from Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* in Paris during the French Revolution, and the song *The streets in London are numerous* from a Hungarian operetta for the London scene, and so on. The choir of angels sing Madách's words to Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*. The whole thing resembles a cheap gala performance on a commercial TV channel. Three actors and three actresses play the parts of Adam and Eve in succession, probably to demonstrate the aging of mankind. We might have suspected a case of deliberate comedy, or parody even, had we been oblivious to the director's mentality, to his diligence in satisfying the demands of shallow taste. There is an element of schizophrenia in the production, in that we can perceive a calculated entrepreneurial spirit at work on the one hand, and a militant messianism on the other.

The real Madách parody is produced by the alternative theatre group Mozgó Ház Társulás (Moving House Company), without actually claiming to be such. The group was formed five years ago in opposition to the institution of official theatres, catching the public's attention through their cheeky and highly talented re-interpretations of classic plays (Shakespeare, Beckett). These off-beat productions used the originals as raw material, producing a peculiar brand of subcultural values. Lately the younger members of the group began to show off. With Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard,* they produced a highly effective but not really profound potpourri, complete with video clips, small etudes and nude scenes, inevitably earning them international success. As a result, their latest production was financed jointly by the Berliner Festspiele and the Avignon Festival. Hence the *Tragédia-jegyzetek* (Tragedy Notes) based on Madách's work. The director László Hudi made it clear that he wanted to concentrate not on the work itself, but on his own generation's relation to it. This in itself guarantees that those who do not know the play would not learn much about it from this production. (Which is fair enough: a theatrical performance should not be expected to form part of a public education campaign on drama.) We see eleven actors face the audience behind a long table, devoting themselves to the task of eating apples (obviously from the Tree of Knowledge). In front of them there are video cameras disguised as microphones, capable of showing the face of any one of them on one of the two large monitors, montaged into the films shown. Operating the cameras and the projectors from behind the control desk, the Omnipotent of the Almighty Multimedia co-ordinates this classico-historico-geografico-pornografico show; he is perhaps the alternative personification of God Almighty. Ingenuity and professionalism hallmark the stage sets and the costumes, the light effects and the props. Shown through a distorting lens on the monitors, the mug-

ging and grimacing create a caricature of mimicry. Creation is presented as a science-fiction parody, and history consists of idiotic disputes, gymnastic exercises and infantile handicraft classes. There are surrealistic associations: in Egypt, we have "desert" sand blown by a vacuum cleaner from a shovel; we witness the diagnosis of Miltiades's wounds and a bandaged arm manipulated as a marionette figure in the Athens scene; sex symbols in Rome; currency symbols in medieval Prague, where Kepler is prostituting his talents; the Eiffel Tower put to the guillotine and a bucket of blue blood in revolutionary Paris; factory mass production on a conveyor belt and Orwellian turmoil in Fourier's phalanstery. We are treated to a torrent of associations, all wildly eclectic, through a cascade of texts and pictures, a caricature of the *Tragedy*. But with Hamlet I might ask "What is the matter?" There is no answer to that.

The Tragedy of Man is one of the few mythologizing dramas in Hungarian literature, if not the only one. What we are witnessing are belated attempts to fabricate the missing dramatic mythology. Even by resorting to foreign help, if necessary. This was how the production *A magyar mennyegző* (The Hungarian Wedding) recently came about at the Katona József Theatre of Kecskemét, based on Stanislav Wyspianski's work. Polish historical drama was born out of poetic mythology; the best known example is perhaps Wyspianski's *Wedding*, thanks to Andrzej Wajda's movie version. It was written exactly a hundred years ago, at the *fin de siècle*. It focuses on a village wedding that took place in real life. Less than six months after the ceremony the participants were sitting in the theatre, watching the première of the play which portrayed themselves under their real names. The wedding between an urban intellectual, the groom, and a peasant girl symbolized the actual social programme—national unity as a patriotic duty. The visionary scenes that emerge from the pictures of the wedding served to promote a symbolism elevated to poetic dimensions. In the manner of some ghosts, all the great figures of Polish history appear during a drunken revelry, bringing messages from the past, calling for a peasant uprising, a fight for freedom and national independence. Then the sobering dawn finds all the guests in a deep sleep: by cock crow their flash-in-the-pan patriotism all but dies out, and readiness for action proves an illusion.

Géza Bodolay, the author of the adaptation who is also the director, thought that it was possible to substitute the Polish references, largely incomprehensible to Hungarian audiences, with corresponding Hungarian ones. His wedding takes place in a Hungarian village near Cegléd, rather than near Cracow; the guests dance the Hungarian *csárdás* rather than the polka; and a Hungarian Scarecrow is invited to the occasion, rather than the Polish Chochol; the apparitions also come from Hungarian history, rather than from Polish. The Magyarized text is complemented with the poems of Endre Ady, the Hungarian symbolist poet and a contemporary of Wyspianski's, as these poems are similarly accurate reflections of the turn-of-the-century sentiments in Hungary. Regardless of all this, *Hungarian Wedding* does not work, mainly for two reasons. On the one hand, the historical background is different. In Hungary, which celebrated the millennium of the Hungarian conquest in 1896, the ideals of national freedom were not currently on the agenda: at that time the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was going through a very intense phase of bourgeois development, industrialization and urbanization. The urban intelligentsia was

not seeking any alliance with the peasantry, and the ghosts of the past would have been wasting their time in trying to rally support for their cause; the picture of peasant armies waiting for orders with their scythes beaten into swords is simply anachronistic. On top of that, the Hungarian theatre has no analogous play to work with or against—this is the other reason why the Magyarized version cannot resonate for an audience. Since poetic symbolism is entirely absent in the Hungarian theatrical tradition, Hungarian audiences do not understand mythologization in verse. It is thus futile to back-project onto a curtain the fata morgana of Hortobágy, the very symbol of Hungarian illusions, for the belated creation of theatrical mythology itself is an illusion.

Endre Ady, whose poetry features in Wyspianski's text, was a scourge of contemporary rural Hungary, and himself one of the nation's great sobersides. What he achieved in his poetry, his friend, the outstanding novelist of the first half of the century, Zsigmond Móricz did in prose. In his novels, and partly in his plays (both those that he wrote and fiction adapted to the stage by others), he unmasked the social anomalies of the gentry in rural Hungary. Instead of poetic-symbolist works, these are down-to-earth pieces of stern realism, the diagnosis of real life. *Rokonok* (Family Relations) is the most famous. It is about the reign of nepotism, corruption and the economic and political "mafias" in the provinces (at a time when this word still meant nothing). The central character is one István Kopjáss, who is elected the town's chief prosecutor on his reputation as an honest and insignificant man "not involved in any scandal". However, it is the hope that he would be corruptible that inspired his patrons. Determined to clean up the town's public life, Kopjáss sets down to work, and he soon comes across cases of fraud, dubious bank dealings, bribery, and family enterprises financed from municipal loans, in which the mayor and the local bank manager are implicated, as are numerous civil servants and their kin. As soon as he starts unravelling the cases, with the guileful support of his superiors, he finds himself entangled in corruption: for the lifestyle befitting his position, he is expected to be socially prominent, suitably housed and those who come to his help here are those who he wants to unmask. Inevitably, the relatives also knock on the door to ask for small favours. All along Kopjáss deludes himself by saying that he will accept favours only until he reveals the truth: when he discovers that his reputation is irrevocably tainted, he commits suicide.

László Babarczy, who directed this adaptation for the Csiky Gergely Theatre of Kaposvár, could safely assume that the audience was familiar with similar cases from the press and television. The book has lost none of its topicality since its original publication; indeed, after the Communist intermezzo—with the revival of true parliamentary democracy and a market economy—history seems to have picked up the thread remarkably easily. This is all emphasized, when the relatives asking for money call out to Chief Prosecutor Kopjáss from the auditorium, clambering up the stage from there, while he occasionally walks to the front of the stage, so as to peer into the future from a tiny wrought-iron pulpit in the manner of a man who is satisfied with his prospects. By recalling similar "cases" from their own experience, the audience theatrically, or mythologically if you like, relives the situaiton and judges accordingly.

Titanic vízirevű (Titanic Water Show) by the young playwright István Tasnádi could even be called a myth parody, if

provincialism, pettiness and operetta-like nostalgia counted as myths. In this grotesque piece, there is a small-time conman whose great ambition is to play the male lead in an operetta and to sing a duet with the Famous Diva. Another character is a peasant boy turned local Mafioso, who grew up on Ady poems as recited by a legendary actor of the recent past, which does not prevent him from owning the trendiest night club, complete with female wrestlers. There is also a poetic metaphor in the play: the Hungarian Titanic. This is a small boat sunk into the bed of the sluggish river near the village roughly round the time that the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy went down, but with the help of the mayor and some local businesses it has now been restored in order to hold an operetta gala on board, with the Diva wrapped up in the Hungarian tricolour, singing operetta numbers at the prow of the boat as some kind of a Nike; the boat would then sail from the village, up the Tisza, then onto the Danube, up to Vienna, reaching Germany and passing through 150 European cities, then out into the open seas as far as Greenwich, where it would cross the meridian of Greenwich just in time to enter the twenty-first century. Unless it runs aground just outside the village, that is. Together with the "shipload of harmony" and all the phantasmagoria holding sway over the operetta-singer profiteer and the poetically-inclined—the mayor/innkeeper, who sank all the village's government subsidies into the boat project, the village teacher, like Penelope raising her children alone and waiting for their father, the post office miss, who burnt all her bridges behind her on the road to a career in operetta and her prosaic night soil collector, and the entire local amateur rock theatre company. In short, everyone who travels to the European Union on the wrecked little boat.

The allegory forms only the tip of the iceberg; the irony of *Titanic Water Show* delivers its impact below the water line, with the precise characterization and verbal mannerisms of the figures, which graphically express the mentality of the age, its delusory mythology based on commercialism. Tasnádi's stylistic armory spans from cabaret wit to vulgarity. But only one half comes from the text; the other half is from the actors of Bárka Theatre, directed by Eszter Novák.

The tragicomedy of the century is elegantly summed up in György Spiró's play, *Honderű*. The title is a pun impossible to translate: it refers to the grammatically slightly incorrect French expression *honte de rue* (the shame of the street), pronounced very close to the Hungarian word *honderű*. The latter is a somewhat outmoded compound word (and also the title of a magazine published at around the middle of the last century), meaning national mirth, joy at home. The play's characters use it among themselves as a catchword when they want to comment on something very stupid. All are members of the so-called Christian middle class, all fought in the Great War, all were taught some Latin and Greek and so can quote a few Classical tags; they know who the best ophthalmic surgeon is; they all fought on the Russian front, all have been interned, worked as car drivers and coal carriers, etc. In other words, they lived through, and survived, the twentieth century, treating it with the gallant, derogatory, sarcastic *"honderű"* that it deserves in their view. Three somewhat debilitated but still presentable gentlemen, who duel with the sword for the honour of a charming lady, a widow four times over, strictly in accordance with the rules, because forms should be observed: without respect for them everything would fall apart. The

whole thing is, of course, terribly outmoded, and this is pointed out by the debt collector—the old lady refuses to pay her electricity and gas bill, not because she has not got the money but because she has moral objections, the electricity and the gas are disconnected, the old lady uses candles and a primus stove, the man has just come to collect the debt—so the debt-collector thinks the whole thing is terribly outmoded, the duel, the gallantry, the Classical education, the respect for forms, and the rest. The debt collector is absolutely right, this is all terribly outmoded, this is the age of general barbarism, baseness and one cannot do anything about it except for writing a play about it.

Through his characters, Spiró gives us his view on the human condition in this new world, with all its boasters and ignorant loud-mouths who think that history began with them ("Kindly learn your way around the country in which we happen to live"), and does that in a rather outmoded fashion, as far as dramaturgy and language are concerned. Like his characters, he respects the forms: he insists on proper conversation and well-constructed sentences in his dialogue. That can be achieved only with the help of "outmoded" actors in the Budapest Kamaraszínház, under Péter Valló's direction. True, they are young for their parts, but these actors put up with the trials, ailments and the proximity of death with the mannerisms, bearing and unaffected charm of old age, so that their performance is itself a testimony to agelessness (and immortality).

They really deem tragedy a comedy. ❧

Erzsébet Bori

Trapped in the Yugoslav Wars

Zoltán Brády–Péter Pál Tóth: *Magyarok a délszláv háborúban*
(Hungarians in the Yugoslav Wars)

All through the 1990s, a bloody conflict in the Balkans raged just across Hungary's southern borders. Although we read, heard and saw the reports day after day, the documentary film *Hungarians in the Yugoslav War* by Zoltán Brády and Péter Pál Tóth stirred me deeply. The two filmmakers visited the locations, they sought out eyewitnesses and participants, went through the archives of newsreels and checked amateur videos for material which they then carefully edited. They divided it into sections, wrote notes as an aid to interpretation and to lend emphasis; finally, they added the virtuoso violinist Félix Lajkó's disturbing and passionate music. The chapters have separate titles and a common emblem: the damaged face of a statue of a Hungarian soldier which is part of a First World War memorial. The Hungarian connection with this vicious Yugoslav civil war can be explained by one of its episodes, by no means the bloodiest, namely the armed conflict that broke out between Serbia and Croatia in 1991. The prize in this conflict was precisely an area where a large Hungarian population lives.

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"Délvidék" or the South Country, as Hungarians still call this region has always been populated by an assortment of peoples: apart from the sizeable Serbian, German, Croatian and Hungarian populations, there were also Slovaks, Ruthenes, Muslims, Jews and Armenians living side by side, sometimes peacefully and sometimes not. By now, the Yugoslav war has sealed the fate of the region: the last multicultural island in Europe will have been replaced by numerous small and ethnically homogeneous nation-states early in the next millennium. The conflicts started years ago, even before Tito's times. The preliminary events included the two World Wars of this century, as a result of which Hungary lost two thirds of her territory and population. Demographic changes did not stop when the guns fell silent: aggravating the losses due to war, were blood feuds and population exchanges combined with out and out genocide. Finally, there was a long period of peace. In Tito's Yugoslavia the main source of tension was halting economic growth and the consequent conflicts between the more prosperous and the economically backward regions. The recipe that started a war was quite simple: increasingly clamorous nationalist propaganda added an ethnic, religious and symbolic twist to these clashes of interest. The Slovene intermezzo was

still no more than a demonstration of power; it was in Croatia that things began to turn decidedly nasty, and that is where the film starts. It is worth recording the sequence of events, since the same scenario that was observed in the Croatian war was to be copied in Bosnia and Kosovo, until NATO air power changed all that. In Croatia's Baranya triangle, which marches on Hungary and Serbia, and also in East Slavonia, there were Serbian and Hungarian villages next to the Croatian settlements; people who lived there had traditionally maintained good relations. They took part in each other's festivities; mixed marriages were frequent, and the various ethnic communities worked side by side in the region's factories; they even used the same bars in the nearby towns. All that came to an end: mixed marriages came to be despised, and "foreigners" were put to flight; those who were warned not to turn up ever again because there would be no protection for them could count themselves lucky. Then came the Serb paramilitary units, calling on the Hungarian houses one after the other, advising or threatening people to move out. These paramilitary units were invariably guided by the inhabitants of neighbouring Serbian villages, former work or boozing mates. Some took heed and left, but the majority stayed on; it was not easy to leave one's homeland and everything that one had put together in a lifetime of hard work. Still more difficult was to believe that a civilized European state would suddenly not be able to guarantee the lives and property of its own citizens. People who lived in fear and in insecurity looked to the Yugoslav People's Army for help: the soldiers would arrive and put things in order, they hoped. "There was no other armed force in the whole of Central Europe that could match the respect and the prestige of the Yugoslav Army", one interviewee recalls. And the soldiers did arrive, with tanks and heavy weapons, but instead of protecting the local civilians, they sided with the local Serbian paramilitary units.

Korógy is a village that has been in existence for a thousand years, inhabited solely by Calvinist Hungarians. It is no use trying to locate it on the map: squeezed between two Serbian villages, it means something special only to its inhabitants. In the summer of 1991 it was invested and bombarded for three months, with the remnants of the Hungarian population surviving the siege in cellars. All through this time the minister had to be brought in from Kopács to bury the dead. "We knew and heard what was happening over there, but until you actually see it, you don't want to believe it," János Kettős, the minister, said. The final offensive was launched on September 25 with a barrage from guns, mortars and rocket launchers; after this the tanks and the armoured personnel carriers fitted with machine guns rolled in. The soldiers moved from house to house, firing on everything that moved. In the wake of the regular army came the irregulars to finish the job; they killed and raped indiscriminately: men and women, old and young alike fell victim to them. Last came the pillaging: in many cases nothing except the walls were left standing. The paramilitary forces even took door frames and bathroom fittings. The same fate awaited Kopács and Darázs, along with the region's other villages of Croatian and mixed population. The small Hungarian village of Szentlászló fell on November 23, 1991, after a siege of 152 days. "They fired two thousand grenades in a single day, and the seven surviving members of the 'international brigade' defending the village—consisting of local Hungarians and Croats, Hungarians from the Vojvodina (in Serbia) and Croats re-

turning from Chicago—were forced to withdraw." The words of Eduardo Rózsa-Flores, the unit's Spanish-Hungarian commander. He had arrived on the scene as the correspondent of a Madrid newspaper; after vainly trying to raise public awareness of the danger with his pen; on seeing the indifference and ignorance of international politics and media he swapped it for a gun. When the UN Security Council passed its short-sighted and fatal resolution about the arms embargo in September 1991, they were in effect authorizing the slaughter of Croats and Bosnian Muslims, Eduardo claims. The arms embargo seemed like a rational and fair decision, as it applied to both sides. It was based on the false belief that the hostilities were no more than a local conflict between Croat separatists and Serbs loyal to Yugoslavia. And since the great powers also supported the preservation of the status quo, and thus the maintenance of Yugoslavia, they readily believed the Yugoslav leaders (some of whom have since been declared war criminals) that the Yugoslav army would not intervene in the fighting. In fact, they were sealing the fate of the Croats, whose defence against the former joint army's numerical and technical superiority was a force of hastily recruited volunteers, militia and deserters from the Yugoslav army, virtually unarmed. The results speak for themselves: not until 1997 was Croatia able to restore its territorial integrity and to recover its towns occupied by the Serbs in 1991.

Bosnian Muslims, a Briton born in Botswana, along with Hungarian, Croatian and Serb volunteers from Croatia and Serbia died in the defence of Szentlászló, a small Hungarian village in East Slavonia, just two hours from Budapest by car. One of the people interviewed lost his brother in the fighting. "What kind of a man was your brother?", the reporter asks. "What kind of a man? A young man", comes the answer.

One watches the film in a state of shock. Nor is the agony only derived from the taking stock of the brutalities and suffering. The filmmakers have also interviewed the enemy. They are also Hungarians, from the other side of the river Danube, the border between Croatia and Serbia. Adults and teenagers alike were called up in 1991 for the Yugoslav army. They were ordered to take part in a several-day long exercise, a routine assignment for reservists. Within one or two weeks, or in some cases within twenty-four hours, they found themselves in the front line. The Serbian propaganda machinery, with the media under strict Serbian control, did a good job. The Hungarian soldiers called in from the small villages of the Vojvodina stormed the villages of Baranya in the false belief that armed militiamen and civilians would be lying in ambush, with snipers in every church spire and garret. They only became suspicious on seeing the sign at the village end, and as soon as they began talking to the villagers, instead of shooting at them straight away, their amazement became complete: "So this isn't an Ustasha village then!?"

Those Hungarians in the Vojvodina who were called up in the second stage were not as ill-informed as their brethren; they used every conceivable method to avoid military service: some disappeared when the call-up notice was delivered, some simply failed to report to the draft committee, some moved out of their homes, and those who had the means fled to Hungary or even further away. (Out of a Hungarian population of 350,000 in the Vojvodina, 50,000 have fled since 1991.) People living in small villages or isolated farms could only resort to passive resistance; in the larger towns peace movements were organized (and not just by the Hungarians), with protests and demonstrations. Hun-

gary showed real duplicity in the matter: we admitted all ethnic Hungarians coming from Croatia, but not those from Serbia. Some of them were turned back at the border, others were screened by the authorities, including an entire high-school beavers class sent back over the border by the vigilant authorities at Szeged. It is no different today: ethnic Hungarians from the Vojvodina who fled to Hungary because they did not want to fight in Kosovo, are now held in the crowded camps—because refugee status cannot be given to draft dodgers, an official declared on television the other day. Those ethnic Hungarians who were unable to avoid conscription and were forced to fight in the army saw and experienced the same from the other side. Firing at the villages from a distance was not the worst, one soldier told the reporter; the truly horrible part came when you victoriously marched into the shot-up villages, passing smoking ruins and defiled human bodies, not knowing when you would hear a woman screaming in Hungarian or a child crying in the cellar, until they were silenced with a hand grenade. There was talk of soldiers posted to the front without proper training, who caused the death of both their comrades and their own; of soldiers who cleverly sabotaged orders and those who heroically refused orders, for which they were either shot on the spot by the commanding officers or forced into the tank with a pistol at their head; of Hungarians sent into the firing line without arms or ammunition on a reconnaissance mission; of officers' badges that were distributed to privates so as to make them targets for the Croatian snipers; of infantry attacking enemy lines under the influence of drink and drugs; of Hungarian regular units sent into action with Serbian irregulars behind them, with orders to shoot. Soldiers enlisted from the Vojvodina and Slavonia claim independently but in total concert that the barbarity of the paramilitary forces defied belief; they were a law unto themselves and knew no mercy; the dreaded Voivode Seselj, Commander Arkan and the others appeared on the scene round about that time. József Földi, who served three years as a mercenary, claimed that he had seen "nothing like this in Swaziland". There was no end to the horrors that these people had gone through, seen and heard, wherever their ill-fortune had taken them. Perhaps the hardest lot fell on the Hungarians fighting on the Serbian side. They knew that this was not their war, and that truth was not on their side. Unlike the Hungarians in Croatia, they had no hinterland: Hungary failed to stand up for them; in Serbia they became pariahs; the Yugoslav army used them, along with the Bosnian Serbs and the "unreliable" Serbs, mostly from the Vojvodina, as cannon fodder. Many of them became psychologically unstable under the burden; if they did survive, they were sent straight on to Bosnia. Sometimes a father fought on the Croatian front, and a son was sent to Kosovo. The Croatians regarded the hundred days of the fighting for Vukovar as the turning point in the war. The Serbs fired eight hundred thousand shells onto the town, defended by a force of 1,620, who were joined by 900 unarmed volunteers later. Eventually Vukovar, too, fell to the enemy, and was razed to the ground like Kórogy and Szentlászló, but the Serbs lost 11,000 soldiers in the fighting, according to their own report. Of the 1,400 Hungarians from Bácska, only 120 survived, in addition to the twenty men who had escaped to Osijek (Eszék). Hungarian deserters had a choice: they could either go to Hungary or join the "enemy"; by 1992 the Hungarians had their own unit within the Croatian army.

Absurd, funny, touching or painful anecdotes are told about the meeting of

Hungarians either on the front or behind the front line; these have the advantage that they usually have a happy ending, or at least a lucky one.

I find nothing strange about the fact that the Hungarians interviewed in the movie seemed to bear no ill feelings towards the Serbs. Perhaps this was due to their discovery that they had been cast in a rotten role in this war. They probably realized that they, by the same token, could have hated themselves or their own kin, since in some case, families were severed by the front line. "This was not a war", the Foreign Legionnaire said and he should know; "here a country's army tried to subjugate its own people and failed, because no army in the world can defeat a people". Whatever it was, it inflicted the same wounds a real war does, it had no victors, and it has still not ended. ❧

Most importantly, there was deliberate, organized looting. Here, perhaps, it will be sufficient to mention the looting in the capital. Soviet troops systematically emptied the safes of major banks, using explosives and cutting equipment to open them. They were probably looking for cash, precious metals and jewelry containing precious stones; if paintings, porcelain or other objects of artistic as well as monetary value came their way, they were not displeased. [...] The units dealing with this—"Economic Officers' Commissions" in the official documents of the time—did not shrink from the systematic search of a foreign mission and the removal of the valuables found there. The legation in question was that of Sweden. It gave sanctuary to many persecuted persons by exploiting the immunity enjoyed by neutral states, and allowed many others to deposit their valuables there. When its looting took place, the Third Secretary, Raoul Wallenberg, had already been kidnapped by the Soviets.

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