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The New

Hungarian Quarterly

**Direction and Operation
of the Economy**

József Bognár

Peasant Income

Gyula Varga

Impression of Hungarian Building

Nikolaus Pevsner

**The Painting of Derkovits,
The Sculpture of Vilt**

(with illustrations)

Júlia Szabó — Éva Körner

Before and After Graduation

Attila Kristóf — Judit Elek

Cold Days

(part of a novel)

Tibor Cseres

The Swing-Door

(a short story)

Emil Kolozsvári-Grandpierre

The New Hungarian Quarterly

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OVERALL DIRECTION AND OPERATION OF THE ECONOMY

The New Economic Mechanism in Hungary

by

JÓZSEF BOGNÁR

The overall direction of the economy—hereafter simply referred to as direction—comprises those aspects of rational human activity, performed on a national level, that permit the operation and growth of the economy to be steered into a particular course. Direction is inseparable from operation (in the sense of a more or less spontaneous process), since economic growth includes elements, factors and situations induced by the system of direction.

The interdependence of economic direction and operation may be proved by numerous logical arguments and by analysis of the functioning economy. Here are a few of them:

a) Rational human action and operation of the economy are closely intertwined in the processes of a planned economy; direction influences the development of these processes and their effect on future processes, but these, in turn, act upon direction by limiting the achievable objectives, imposing corrections and determining the most effective ways and means of direction.

b) The effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a system of direction may be proved or disproved by the concrete development of the economic processes. No system of direction can be called effective if economic growth is relatively slow, if the circular flow of the economy (hereafter referred to as economic circle) shows a permanent or often recurring imbalance, and if the complex development targets achieved as a result of the economic processes substantially deviate from the economico-political aims incorporated in the central decisions (i.e., in the plan).

c) The operational rhythm of a centrally directed economy usually diverges from spontaneous economic rhythm.

The spontaneous rhythm of an economy is determined by such factors as the effect of natural and climatic conditions on the economic circle and the time required by the individual economic processes, especially the realization

of investments. But in centrally directed economies, a third rhythm-shaping factor, the regular or non-recurrent periodicity of the central decisions, is added. If, in the course of developing the system of decisions, the central organs adapt the choice of dates and the spheres of competence to the inner laws of the economic processes, then the effect of this third rhythm-shaping factor can be limited. In the opposite case, a centrally directed economy will react slower to changes (e.g., transformation of the structure of world trade, alterations in consumer needs, etc.) than an economy directed by decentralized decisions, and the processes induced by economic decisions will become unduly abrupt.

d) The objectives and means of growth can only be derived from the actual status of the functioning economy.

THE INTERDEPENDENT PROCESSES OF ECONOMIC DIRECTION

The direction of an economy—in harmony with, and postulated by, the operation of the economy—comprises four interdependent processes in the following logical and chronological sequence:

- 1) central (governmental) political decisions;
- 2) a coherent system of methods and procedures by which the central direction transfers its will to the economic organizations and units (transmission);
- 3) concrete activity of the economic organizations and units under the influence of central decisions and of the economic environment;
- 4) economic processes, interconnections and phenomena developing at the national (macroeconomic) level in the wake of economic activity carried on at the enterprise (microeconomic) level and requiring further decisions by the central organs.

The effectiveness of the system of direction depends primarily on how the economico-political decisions made at the (macroeconomic) level of the national economy, can be transmitted to the (microeconomic) level of the enterprises. If—on account of weaknesses in the transmission system—the activities of the economic organizations and units deviate from the central decisions, then grave disturbances may occur at the national economic level. Assuming the central decisions to be correct, the magnitude of these disturbances will be determined by the size and character of the deviations and by the effect of the random factor on the other factors. But a defective link between microeconomic and macroeconomic processes is not just a variant of the possible disturbances, not just a faulty execution of the decisions—as

is often asserted—but a fundamental, functional weakness of the system of direction. Under capitalism, the contradiction between microeconomy and macroeconomy was the necessary consequence of property relations. Socialism makes it possible to create a harmony between microeconomic and macroeconomic processes, but functional weaknesses in the system of direction represent an obstacle to the exploitation of this possibility. This leads to market shortages of some goods and overproduction (superfluous stocks) of others. The disequilibrium on the market in turn results in a slowing down of economic growth, in veiled inflation, and in waste of material means in short supply.

THE ROLE OF THE SOCIALIST STATE IN ECONOMIC DIRECTION

The socialist state plans rational human activity—determining the operation and growth of the economy—and coordinates it with the interests of the economic organizations and individuals.

The role of the socialist state in economic direction derives from two different state functions:

1) In order to achieve the fundamental objectives of a socialist nation, the state unites, directs and organizes the activity of society as a whole. In discharging this function the state is inspired and guided by the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, which in turn relies on expert advice and public opinion.

In directing and organizing the activity of society as a whole, the state determines the long-range and medium-range growth aims to be achieved, on the basis of an efficient utilization of existing means (developmental potentials) and with due regard to the interests of the various social groups and individuals. When these objectives have been condensed into a coherent system, the state—if need be—corrects the distribution of means, or—if this is indicated—modifies the objectives themselves in accordance with the ultimate aims of socialist society.

2) The socialist state, as owner of the overwhelming majority of the means of production, may also prescribe the production targets, the order of production and distribution, directly to the economic organizations and units concerned. The state as the owner has the incontestable right to do so. In what form the state wishes to make use of this right is another question.

The dogmatic-bureaucratic concept of ideology and economic policy equated the divergent tasks of economic management deriving from these two different functions of the state.

This dogmatism, for instance, qualified all endeavours to establish direct connections between producers and consumers (users) as apt to weaken state control.

It is obvious, however, that the degree of immediacy of the methods of direction applied by the owner do not affect the foundations of a social-economic system, i.e., the property relations. Incidentally, this statement is also confirmed by the history of feudalism and capitalism, in the course of which the owners' methods of management several times changed in both space (depending on continents and countries) and time (in different periods of historical development) without any essential changing in these systems.

The dogmatic-bureaucratic way of thinking separated the issue of state direction from its objective. In its view the leading role of the state was assured by the superior organs issuing compulsory instructions to every economic unit and organization, although the economy suffered from imbalance, the available material and spiritual energies were used uneconomically, technological progress stopped, and the economic structure became outdated.

The conclusion to be drawn is that the state as owner should apply means and methods of leadership that are in keeping with the aims of economic direction, with steering the operation and growth of the economy into a defined course.

As already mentioned, the success, rationality and efficiency of the system of direction depend on how the central economico-political decisions can be transferred to the microeconomic plane, i.e., the enterprises.

I do not wish to extend this study to the content of central decisions, such as the establishment of priorities, the concentration of means in line with growth objectives, the relationship between means used and economic results achieved. I must point out, however, that there is a close and active inter-relationship between economic policy and the system of direction.

If, in fixing the objectives of growth, the rational criteria of the efficiency of socialist production are left out of consideration, if insufficient attention is paid to the natural economic resources of the given country and to changes in the growth objectives called for by the technological revolution, then direct instructions become the only means of concentrating the activities of society on the realization of these objectives.

On the other hand, the system of direction, once established, may, in turn, react on the economic policy expressed in economic decisions, since an economy that does not respond to changes in value relations transmits wrong information to the leadership. As a result, particularly those economic decisions that are related to changes in structure lack a sound foundation.

How did the organs of central direction transmit their will to the economic organizations and units—i.e., how did they link macroeconomic and microeconomic processes—during the first period of socialist economy? It is my view that in Hungary this first period lasted up to 1956. Although the dominant concept of economic policy altered several times within that period, there was no essential change in the concept of the system of direction. (This does not mean that there was no gradualness in the introduction and development of the system of direction—since property relations changed several times in that period—but the long-range idea persisted that direct leadership had to be extended to a steadily increasing number of processes.)

THE DIFFERENT METHODS OF TRANSMISSION: PLAN DIRECTIVES AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Immediate plan directives were believed to be the most characteristic method of transmission in socialist economy. The plan directives and plan indices were to extend to every economic process, i.e., to the totality of the economy. For instance, in line with the complex character of the economic processes, a harmonious system of plan directives and indices was to be set up by specifying the users (consumers) to whom the producers could sell their products, and by determining at what places and under what conditions the users could make their purchases.

But the concept of direct, total and complementary plan directives failed, from the very beginning, in agriculture (where the land, for the most part, is not owned by the state, and where the productive-economic units cannot be given direct instructions) and in the sphere of marketing (home trade, foreign trade with non-socialist countries). This contradiction was sidestepped by limiting, in these cases, the application of the plan directives to the marketing organizations and by compelling these to secure the implementation of the plan.

However much the central leadership tried to turn the system of plan directives and indices into the principal means of controlling the economy, the activities of the enterprises were influenced not only by the plan received from above but also by the economic environment. By economic environment we mean the concrete economic relations existing in a society based on the division of labour and on commodity production, such as prices, monetary system, exchange rates, wage ratios, material incentives, etc., to the extent that they are operative.

To give greater momentum to the plan directives, an attempt was made

to reduce (degrade) the importance of the economic environment with the aid of various theories, according to which—among other things—

a) the sphere of commodity production and of the market was narrowed down;

b) the sphere (and importance) of the law of value was restricted;

c) the importance of economic processes (in the physical sense of the term) was overemphasized and the active role of money denied;

d) these concepts were applied to the sphere of economic cooperation among socialist countries, as a result of which the importance of the exchange of goods (in the physical sense) was overestimated, international financial relations were neglected and prices divorced from value;

e) the importance of human relations in economic processes was indirectly denied (i.e., completely neglected): the interests of society were identified with the decisions of the central organs, and group interests were completely disregarded; analysis of economic decisions from the point of view of group interests or individual interests as well as the expression of opinions on such studies were decried as subjectivism jeopardizing the interests of the state.

There is, of course, no room in the present study for a detailed analysis of these theories. Suffice it to point out that we have treated them in accordance with their objective social effect and that we have consequently ignored the particular ideas that prompted this or that person or group to evolve their theories. The connection existing between their assertions and the system of direction of the economy may not even have occurred to the authors of such theories. But this does not alter the fact that every official theory in this period of economic history was aimed at degrading the importance of the economic environment.

Overestimation of the importance of plan directives and plan indices, on the one hand, and theoretical devaluation of the potential effects of the concrete economic environment, on the other, contributed to the development of plan fetishism. Its adherents regarded the plan as such a primary attribute of socialist economy that its realization was necessary, irrespective of (and in certain cases even against) the concrete objectives of society and of the economy and regardless of the rational course of economic processes.

These theories, however, were obviously unable to cancel the effect of the economic environment, since its existence and influence derive from the objective relations of socialist economy. It has again been confirmed that wrong theories do not change reality, but restrict and disorient the opportunities for rational human action. As a result of these wrong theories, economic leadership sought to direct the economy almost exclusively by means of plan directives and failed to use the economic environment to influence

the activity of the economic organizations and units. The economic environment thus became petrified, indeed—in face of the continually changing economic tasks of society—it became irrational. The course it followed was not a spontaneous one, since it resulted from conscious central decisions. But even a consciously formed economic environment becomes irrational if it does not adapt itself to changes in tasks and processes.

The endeavours of the central leadership to transfer their will had unsatisfactory results, because:

a) the system of overall plan directives is incapable of guiding the increasingly complex economy—the plan directives and indices do not correspond to the criteria of production efficiency; they cannot be collated and thereby render it difficult to make correct economic decisions; they relate to distinct sectors and therefore separate the assessment of economic activity from its objective; and finally certain specified directives and targets can always be fulfilled at the expense of other indices that are not specified but may be more important;

b) from the point of view of the enterprises a contradiction existed between the plan directives and plan indices and the effects of the economic environment.

Hence the central decisions could not be transmitted adequately to the microeconomy, and the activities of the enterprises functioning under contradictory influences differed from what the central leadership assumed them to be; incidentally, further plans were nevertheless based on these activities.

The system of direction built on overall plan directives and on sectoral plan indices unquestionably initiated, developed and strengthened numerous negative economic phenomena. Let us briefly list the most decisive of these: supremacy of producers over consumers (users); predominance of sectoral aspects; severance of economic activity from its objective and from the possibility of measuring it; degradation of planning to bureaucratic routine work; consolidation of bureaucracy in the handling of materials and commodities; exclusion of almost every possibility for the enterprises to undertake risks and responsibilities and to make decisions (choices).

The concrete course of the economy has convincingly proved that a system of direction built on overall plan directives and sectoral plan indices has a conservative effect, discourages structural changes and is incapable of automatic correction. It is a known fact, however, that in the economy—especially at a time of scientific and technical revolutions—the changing factors (dynamism) play a decisive role. A sound system of direction should purposefully impart such dynamism—embodied in structural changes—to the economic circle. It should also stimulate and feed the dynamism of the

social environment (changes in the population's consumption habits, progress in technological ways of thinking through the diffusion of consumer durables, etc.).

Undoubtedly, the pre-1956 system of direction at best tolerated the dynamism of the social environment, but certainly did not stimulate it, although it constitutes an essential driving force of economic advance.

As already mentioned, the efficiency of the system of direction depends primarily on the manner in which central decisions can be transferred to the economic organizations and units. The failure in this respect of the system of direction based on the totality of plan directives and plan indices caused grave disturbances in the entire process of the planned economy. The concrete activities of the enterprises as well as the economic processes, interconnections and phenomena developing on the national (macroeconomic) level deviated from the preliminary assumptions of the economic leadership. It should be mentioned here that macroeconomics and microeconomics are generally spoken of in a hierarchic sense, as if representing two different planes. For the sake of simplicity, we too at times use them in this sense. In fact, however, they are not two different levels, but two different circles; an internal (microeconomic) circle and an external (macroeconomic) one.

Anyone thinking in categories of dynamism will appreciate the intricacy of the situation that is bound to arise in a planned economy when the assumptions (calculations and prescriptions) of the leadership essentially deviate from the actual economic processes. The calculations and prescriptions (e.g., quantitative development of production, cost of production, deadlines for the realization of investments) are not only results (objectives) achieved or unachieved, but also represent development energies which should serve to engender further energies.

Besides inadequate transmission other circumstances also contributed to setting up additional tasks, based on unrealized objectives (in production or in other spheres), as development energies (means). The system of direction, insensitive as it was to changes in value relations, did not secure the information necessary for operative intervention (corrections, modifications). No system of direction can discharge its function unless it is able to supply the leaders with the reliable information necessary for such operative measures.

The systematic deviation of the actual economic processes from the preliminary assumptions and prescriptions surprised the economic leaders, who then tried to make up for the resulting conditions by applying forced measures which again entered the economic circle in the form of orders and resolutions. Born of an emergency, they ran counter to both the original plan

directives and the spontaneous influence of the economic environment; a bureaucratic muddle thus arose in which every economic unit acted in accordance with its momentary (short-term) interests.

It often occurred that operative measures to cope with the emergency were taken, but the plan itself remained unmodified.

CHANGES IN ECONOMIC POLICY AND IN THE SYSTEM OF DIRECTION SINCE 1957

Since 1957 profound changes have taken place in the Hungarian economy, and a new concept of economic policy has taken shape. It is not possible for us to describe this concept in detail within the limits of this study. Suffice it to point out its most important features:

- a) a realistic evaluation of the natural and economic endowments of the country;
- b) recognition of the importance of the economic balance;
- c) emphasis on the postulates of productivity and of technological progress;
- d) an endeavour to adjust production to demand.

A number of reforms have been introduced also in the methods of economic direction—adoption of the profit-sharing system, reform of producer prices, introduction of capital charges, reduction of the number of plan indices, etc.

However, these reforms have brought few real results. Practice has proved that the system of direction represents a union of closely interdependent elements and that an alteration of some elements cannot yield the desired results, if the other elements of the system are left unchanged.

Before 1957 it was believed by many economists that a realistic foundation of economic policy would permit the functioning of the socialist economy to be decisively improved. But recent experience has convincingly shown that the present economic mechanism, which has not been brought up to date despite the reforms of recent years, makes it very difficult, often even impossible, to carry out correct decisions and aspirations. Therefore, after the development of a sound economico-political concept, a well-functioning, up-to-date economic mechanism has to be created.

THREE INITIAL HYPOTHESES

We shall now proceed from three hypotheses.

The first hypothesis.

In the future the economic environment will be used more purposefully and unequivocally to influence the activity of the economic organizations and units, i.e., a system of direction is to be established that will be in keeping with the inner functioning of the economy. Instead of introducing single reforms—as was done in the past—we wish to accelerate this process by creating a comprehensive system, coherent in every respect and to be referred to hereafter as economic “mechanism.” The preparation and adoption of such a system does not mean, however, that it should be set up overnight. Comprehensive systems, as is well known, may also be introduced gradually, especially if the conditions for their introduction can only be created gradually. It is obvious, that until the completion of the new mechanism, the economic and planning system in force will be contradictory, and the contradictions will have to be reconciled through temporary measures.

The second hypothesis.

Simultaneously with the introduction of the new mechanism, the system of plan directives and sectoral plan indices will be abolished. Plan directives paralleling the effects of the economic mechanism would obviously be superfluous, and if they contradicted each other, they would even be harmful and dangerous.

We have tried to prove so far that these two different concepts of direction are incompatible and that the economic environment cannot be eliminated, because it invariably survives and exerts its influence in one way or another. Of course, it is the system of economic direction that has to be adapted to the operation of the economy and not the other way round!

Termination of the system of direction based on plan directives and sectoral plan indices does not mean, however, that the central organs cannot issue operative instructions to the economic organizations and units. Problems arising in this connection (in what cases which organ may issue operative instructions, how changes in the results achieved by the enterprises as a result of such instructions are to be assessed, etc.) must of course be worked out in detail and organically incorporated into the system of direction.

The third hypothesis.

It logically follows from our train of thought that we are seeking to create an economic mechanism that will:

- a) render activities in the different sectors of the economy commensurable;
- b) stimulate rational steps towards achieving the best possible relationship between the material and spiritual energies applied and the new values created;
- c) permit and promote an adequate assessment of long-term needs and tendencies in the course of making decisions.

Such an economic mechanism can only be created if:

- a) we possess a uniform economic equivalent, i.e., the actual value of the domestic means of payment does not depend on the particular sphere in which it is used (at present the unit of our domestic currency—1 forint—has a different value in heavy industry, in the budget, in light industry and in investments);
- b) prices truly reflect the amount of live and stored-up labour devoted to the production of individual commodities, as well as the relationship of supply and demand;
- c) there is a uniform exchange rate showing—from the point of view of the national economy—when the cost of earning a certain amount of foreign exchange will be worth while, and when, on the contrary, it will be more advantageous to save this cost;
- d) there exists a uniform economic criterion (economic index) which makes the maintenance of incompatible and incomparable plan indices superfluous: this uniform and single criterion is profit.

Let us assume that the application of our third hypothesis has led to an integrated system of direction (economic mechanism) meeting the above criteria.

It now remains to answer the question as to what effect the economic mechanism described above will have on:

- a) the daily activity of the economic organizations and units (enterprises);
- b) the trend, on a national scale, of the processes, phenomena and interconnections resulting from the activities of the economic organizations and units; whether they correspond to—or rather under what conditions they coincide with (approach)—the development objectives, growth rate and balance relations expressed by the economic decisions made at the governmental level (in the national economic plan).

A SYSTEM DESIGNED TO MEET CERTAIN CRITERIA

The answer to these questions and—what is more—the sound application of the economic mechanism calls for a thorough understanding of the inner nature and functioning of the mechanism.

First of all, we must realize that the economic mechanism, due to the interdependent character and nature of its elements, constitutes a comprehensive interrelated whole, a system.

The elements of this system may be divided into two large groups:

a) Some elements of the economic mechanism are determined by the character of the socio-economic system—for instance, private property and free competition under capitalism. The history of the last fifteen years has convincingly proved that under capitalism too some economic decisions can be made centrally (on a governmental level) and the social consequences of decisions made by enterprises estimated in advance. It is, however, inconceivable that a central decision should ignore the existence of private property and its consequences, i.e., it must take into account that an increase in profits is the only incentive for extending the activities of an enterprise and that profit is appropriated by the capitalists (the capitalist class).

Under socialism, on the other hand, there is social ownership and consequently the goods and incomes are distributed according to the quantity and quality of the work done.

The socialist state seeks to comply with this long-term requirement under changing economic circumstances.

Technical-scientific progress changes the ratio of live and stored-up labour, the transformation of the economic structure alters the distribution of labour between the different branches, the qualifications of the labour force improve and develop, and the increasingly complex economic tasks may demand the introduction of a new system of wages and incentives. The labour demand in especially complicated trades may require special incentives. The ratio between fixed (guaranteed) wages and collectively produced income may change.

However, a wage and incentive system that deviates from the principle of distribution according to work done is inconceivable under socialism. On the contrary, the new wage and incentive system is called upon to assert the same principle under changing economic conditions.

b) The other elements of the economic mechanism are determined by the actual position and the interaction of economic categories (money, prices, wages, profits, markets, etc.) that remain effective in a society based on the division of labour and on commodity production.

It is evident that the elements of the first group are relatively constant and may occasionally change within very narrow limits only. Some modifications may be caused by the development and shifts in the relative weight of the different forms of ownership existing within the given system, by the general development of the economy and the changing tasks of economic policy.

On the other hand, the elements belonging to the second group are elastic, their actual position and their relative weight may be changed in accordance with the growth objectives set by the government, with the general level of the economy, with the views and experiences of economic leaders and experts.

For purposes of scientific investigation, the economic mechanism may be considered a model and treated as a whole, satisfying (or susceptible to satisfying) certain criteria. However, its inner unity and coherence does not mean that the system can be composed of elements acting exclusively in one direction (i.e., exerting a positive influence in respect of every economic process or every phase thereof), or that it would be at all expedient to compose it in such a way.

It is the system as a whole (a system of interdependent processes, effects and reactions)—not its individual elements taken separately—that has to satisfy certain criteria. Essentially, these criteria can be summed up in the single criterion of promoting economic growth (growth of national income). This growth can be promoted on the basis of various considerations, such as consumption or investment, or even criteria that are not purely economic; but the most general criterion is the increase of national income, the highest rate of economic growth achievable under balanced conditions. Moreover, such an increase of the national income means that an optimal combination has been realized as regards those other factors which would also permit an improvement of the economy. It is not an obstacle but a precondition to the achievement of this criterion (the highest rate of economic growth attainable under balanced conditions) that certain elements of the model, and their effects on different processes and in different periods, include contradictory tendencies.

The existence of contradictory tendencies in an integrated and coherent system may be traced to several circumstances:

a) The principles of economic policy, as motives for rational human action, are not isolated, i.e., they are not correct or incorrect in themselves but only in their proportions and position within certain economic processes. For instance, the chief precondition for raising the national income is increased accumulation. It would, however, be wrong to strive for the largest possible accumulation without taking account of other aspects. When

determining the magnitude of the optimum accumulation (or endeavouring to achieve this optimum), one has to consider the expected effect of the different accumulation variants on consumption, on the balance of trade, on the investment potential, on the time needed to realize the investment, etc. If the accumulation is larger than would be permissible from the aspect of consumption or of the balance of trade, or if it exceeds the investment potential, then—in spite of the best intentions—we have introduced negative processes into the economy, and the rate of economic growth (in the medium or long run) diminishes. To borrow an expression from the natural sciences, one may say that the individual principles of economic policy—as motives for rational human action—are valid only on a limited scale.

b) Each of the economic categories, in their concrete form and proportions (e.g., the actual price and its relation to other prices), represents an active force, but the direction of this force, its radius of action and its capacity of induction depend on the medium and time system in which they operate. For instance, a certain active force (a given price) may be positive in satisfying demand, but negative from the angle of income distribution; i.e., restitution of the market equilibrium may only be achieved through the formation of undesirable income proportions or by tolerating them. (Incidentally, failure to satisfy demand engenders negative tendencies in the distribution of income even if prices are not raised and the producers are not stimulated by incentives. There are many examples for this.) Some active force, positive in the short run (one-sided emphasis on investments with a quick return), may turn negative in the long run (reduced production or lag in technology through neglect of investments having a slow return).

It follows then from the nature of economic processes and phenomena that the system as a whole has to satisfy certain criteria, although particular elements of the model may exert a contradictory influence in the various processes and time systems.

The most decisive among the criteria which the economic mechanism as a whole must satisfy is a sound and efficient relationship between microeconomy and macroeconomy. An unsound relationship, as mentioned before, caused economic crises under capitalism (which can, of course, be ultimately traced back to property relations) and gave rise to weaknesses in the system of economic direction in the first period of the development of socialist economy. The relationship between microeconomy and macroeconomy is efficient if what is economical on the enterprise level is also economical socially (on the national level), and the other way round. In the opposite case, the activities of the enterprises may deviate from social interests, and their production from social needs.

This requirement does not and cannot, of course, mean that social interests coincide, at every point of contact, with the interests of the enterprise. As already indicated society as a whole is interested in a balanced acceleration of economic growth, in a rapid increase of the national income. For the sake of accelerating economic growth, some economic organizations (branches of industry) have to be given priority in the distribution of the means of development and be made interested in a faster than average advance.

It is obvious, for instance, that the immediate interests and endeavours of economic branches lagging behind (or advancing less dynamically) clash with the social interests requiring a faster development of the dynamic branches of industry. Especially strong clashes may occur between social interests (expressed in central decisions) and enterprise interests regarding long-term investments (with a slow or indirect return).

On account of its organization and interests, the enterprise prefers investments with a fast return, while the central decision gives priority to long-range investments. It follows that the means necessary for the realization of long-term investments should continue to be allocated centrally. (We shall return to this subject later.)

In an adequate economic mechanism, however, the enterprise can be made interested in:

- a) expanding economical exports and meeting market needs,
- b) efficient utilization of the material and spiritual means available,
- c) accelerating technological development,
- d) increasing profits.

The enterprise will thus promote a rapid growth of the national income under balanced conditions, i.e., the interests of the enterprise here coincide with those of society.

It is necessary to stress the characteristic feature of the "new mechanism" (the term to be applied from here on, for the sake of brevity, to the model satisfying the above-mentioned criteria), according to which the enterprise (its management) serves social interests not directly but indirectly—by satisfying the needs of the market, by increasing exports, by efficiently utilizing means and by increasing profits.

We shall now try to sketch the effect (or rather, complex of effects) which the new mechanism exerts on economic processes. In order to estimate this anticipated effect we have to imagine the complicated process of the economic circle and growth. (Such a model has nowhere as yet been put into practice).

This process can evidently neither be sketched logically nor described

mathematically in its entire complexity, in the complicated interrelationship of effects and countereffects. We consequently have to restrict the scope of our investigation to examining the role and effect of the new mechanism with regard to the most important problems and tasks facing socialist economy.

What, we may ask, will be the effect of the new economic mechanism on:

- 1) the growth of the national income,
- 2) the equilibrium of the national economy (balanced market),
- 3) technological progress,
- 4) price formation,
- 5) foreign trade,
- 6) investments,
- 7) the attitude and efforts of the direct participants in economic life (managers and workers).

We shall now attempt to answer each of these questions.

1) *Growth of the national income*

National income is an aggregate index, the resultant of all economic processes within a given period of time. The chief criterion of the new mechanism is therefore the optimal growth of national income.

In this respect, the effect of the present economic mechanism is negative for several reasons:

a) since the plan indices cannot be compared, and money does not fulfil the role of an equivalent on the macroeconomic level, it is not possible to select the growth variants correctly;

b) the quantitative outlook evident in the direction and the assessment of production permits and even promotes an increase in the quantity of the goods produced through the wasteful utilization of spiritual and material energies; this has a deleterious effect on national income;

c) the plants are primarily interested in fulfilling the quantitative plans and therefore manufacture many products that have no use value or can be marketed only at sharply reduced price;

d) neglect of the services demanded by internal and external markets has led to a substantial lag in the growth of demand behind the increase of productive capacities; in this situation, the rate of production growth has had to slow down, putting a further brake on the growth of national income.

As against this, the new mechanism:

a) facilitates economic decisions and promotes the choice of sound growth variants;

b) gives the enterprises an interest in selecting variants of production growth that will create the most favourable relationship between the spiritual and material resources utilized and the new values (such variants of production growth obviously have a beneficial effect on the national income);

c) interests them in meeting market needs (demand), so that they do not turn out products having no use value;

d) makes them interested in manufacturing up-to-date products, introducing services and increasing exports, thereby, it may be hoped, enabling market expansion to keep pace with the dynamism of production.

2) *Balanced market*

It is incontestable—as proved by both experience and theory—that in the present economic mechanism unsatisfied demand and shortage of goods (lack of a balanced market) are inevitable phenomena.

This statement finds support in the following arguments:

a) If the planning organs fix the quantity of commodities according to needs (demand), but the plants seek a compromise between the plan directives and the influence of an economic environment that has become irrational, then of some commodities they will produce more than the assumed need, and of other commodities, less. Since the shortages cannot be compensated by overproduction, there are bound to be permanent shortages on the market.

b) In the event of shortages the rigid system of planning and investment does not permit an elastic regrouping of means.

c) The rigid price system makes the enterprises indifferent to the liquidation of the shortage. (In most cases, the shortage itself is already a consequence of lacking material interest caused by the rigid price system.)

d) The monopolistic organizations created in the first period of socialist economy—as will be shown later in more detail—present an obstacle to the creation of a balanced market.

On the other hand, numerous elements of the new mechanism promote market equilibrium (satisfaction of demand):

a) The plants become interested in increasing profits and production. They therefore readily produce the quantity of goods needed according to the preliminary economic calculations of the central organs and the orders of the users (sales organizations).

b) If, in spite of the expectations of the central organs or of the sales organizations, the quantity of goods should prove to be too little, then the production enterprise—through the profit motive—will be interested in ending

the shortage. If production capacity is insufficient, it can be expanded through the decentralized investment funds and investment credits. If there is a temporary increase in the market price of the commodity in short supply, then the investment will promise a fast return.

The monopolistic organizations created in the earlier period are likely to hamper the satisfaction of demand and the creation of a balanced market.

In the new mechanism, the monopoly also has an interest in raising profits, but it has no interest in reducing prices that have risen during a shortage. (We shall revert to this question when discussing prices.)

Are the monopolistic forms created in the first period of socialist economy compatible with the new mechanism?

To give a correct answer we have to analyse briefly the creation of monopolistic organizations under socialism, their relation to the market (to the satisfaction of demand), their economic strength and mobility.

In the course of this analysis, the monopolistic organizations in socialist economy will be compared with those in capitalist economy, with due regard to the attributes outlined here (creation of the organizations, their relation to the market, etc.). To a socialist economist it is obvious that—with all their large and thorough economic organization—the capitalist monopolies play a negative role on the social and political plane, from both the national and international aspects.

The creation of socialist monopolies was governed by essentially correct ideas and endeavours of the leading economic organs. It can be observed all over the world that an increase in the size of the production (and trading) organizations reduces costs of production, promotes rational utilization of the available capacities and labour, and accelerates application of the principles of modern business organization. The monopoly was considered a means of ending irrational competition that wasted much material and spiritual energy.

The idea that under socialism monopolies—provided they are capable of rationalizing production—are a common interest was correct, since the excess income and surplus energies thus created do not add to the wealth of the capitalists, but serve to develop the national economy.

In practice, however, the monopolies almost automatically covered too broad an area, irrespective of the character and economic strength of the enterprise and of market conditions. A bureaucratic-administrative character was thereby imparted to the socialist monopolies. This should not be ascribed to their being founded by the central organs, but to the disregard of concrete economic conditions. The typical features of the bureaucratic-administrative monopoly may be summed up as follows:

a) The creation of a socialist monopoly does not in itself mean that it is capable of satisfying demand; and if demand is left unsatisfied, the monopoly finds no competitor.

On the capitalist market, on the other hand, monopoly is born of competition, but the winner has no absolute monopoly. An economic organization that does not satisfy the aggregate demand for its products will lose its earlier monopolistic position through the activities of old or new competitors.

b) The socialist monopoly cannot invest from its own means and cannot carry out accessory investments that would increase its productivity, because this would hurt the monopoly of other branch organizations.

The capitalist monopoly, on the other hand, with its huge capital resources, is able to finance its own investments and extend its activities to any branch, if this increases its productivity or profits.

c) The influence of the managers of socialist monopolies is very restricted, and they are only allowed to make responsible decisions in a very limited sphere. A socialist monopoly can expand only to a very small extent, since otherwise it would come into conflict with the monopolies of other branches and, in addition, find itself up against the national boundaries.

The capitalist monopoly, on the other hand, is a complex vertical organization which in most cases expands beyond national boundaries.

This leads to the conclusion that the existing forms of monopoly in socialist economy are not efficient and, in certain respects (e.g., the satisfaction of demand), even play a negative role. Such a bureaucratic-administrative monopoly cannot be justified in the new mechanism.

Let us substantiate this contention by another argument. The bureaucratic-administrative monopoly distorts the thinking and behaviour of the leaders of the economy. It does not give the managers sufficient power and influence to develop their creative ability and initiative. Yet, without these, and in the absence of courageous risk-taking on the part of the managers of the large enterprises, there can be no economic progress! The monopoly, however, gives sufficient power to its managers to obstruct others in exercising their initiative—and this under the pretext of defending the monopoly! Managers thus often become active only when the monopoly is in danger.

The new mechanism must consequently—within certain limits—permit competition and give greater flexibility to the monopolies.

The activities of the enterprises (trusts) operating in the new mechanism should be built on a more complex foundation (not limited to single branches) because more rational and stronger economic organizations can be created in this way. These large enterprises organized on a complex foundation (vertical trusts) should be made to compete with one another.

3) *Technological progress*

Experience (covering actual economic processes and situations) proves, and the analysis of methods of economic direction confirms, that technological progress and concomitant changes in economic structure have not yet been given their due share in shaping decisions and actions.

This may be illustrated by an analysis of the effects of the existing system of direction:

a) Owing to the rigid price system, technologically up-to-date products do not secure additional profits, and therefore the profit of an enterprise does not increase in proportion to the investments necessary to manufacture a new product.

b) The factor of risk necessarily involved in experiments is not offset by an adequate counterpart.

c) Low rates of depreciation and utilization of depreciation funds for other purposes delay the replacement of obsolete production equipment.

d) Discarded production equipment cannot be sold.

e) The material and spiritual forces necessary for technological progress are not available to the enterprises.

f) Inventions are not satisfactorily protected, and adequate material incentives to their introduction are lacking.

The new mechanism, on the contrary, will have the following characteristics:

a) The new price system will enable the enterprise producing technologically up-to-date products to realize a surplus profit; to the extent that for some prices only the lower and upper limits are fixed centrally, while for various goods and services prices may be freely agreed upon by producers and users, it becomes possible to charge more for up-to-date goods.

b) The enterprises will have reserve funds (out of their own means or profits, of course) permitting them to undertake risks openly—for not every initiative may prove successful and failures are possible not only in a scientific but also in a business sense (market).

There are, of course, risks also in the present economic mechanism, but they are hidden. Two major reasons may be cited for this: on the one hand the consequences of economic decisions cannot be clearly assessed in today's mechanism; on the other, owing to the sectoral character of the decisions and to the predominance of economic bureaucracy, nobody can be made responsible for the totality of the economic processes as they develop.

One of the decisive advantages of the new mechanism is that the consequences of economic decisions will be clear, i.e., the taking of risks will

become open. Indeed, if the decisions are adequately decentralized and sufficiently complex, the risks taken by the enterprise will not only be more open but also greater, while the risk taken by society (every bad economic decision weakens the national economy) will be substantially reduced.

c) The enterprises will be encouraged to accelerate the replacement of obsolescent production equipment in compliance with their own judgment and development objectives.

d) The problem of inventions will be settled and material incentives for their introduction assured.

4) *Price formation*

In the present economic mechanism, prices fulfil their fundamental functions imperfectly: they do not offer an adequate incentive to production and have a limited effect on consumption.

Hence the state can assure only the primary distribution of incomes in accordance with its economico-political conceptions, while, in the course of the redistribution of the national income, disproportions in income levels arise which contradict both the intentions of the government and the principle of distribution according to work done.

Let us add that a rigid price system, divorced from both production costs and value, has a damping effect and puts a brake on economic dynamism, which would otherwise express itself in structural changes.

In the case of an unsound economic policy (we think here of the pre-1957 situation), the rigid price system fosters disequilibrium in the market and the appearance of a chronic imbalance. If prices are free, this imbalance leads to a price increase, and if such increase—on account of the interdependence of prices—spreads to other goods, then money loses its purchasing power at a quickening pace and a "classical inflation" develops.

The rigid price system, however, is a bar to any increase. Here the dual effect of rigid prices becomes evident: they obstruct the restoration of the market equilibrium on the one hand, and protect the consumer against open inflation on the other.

Nevertheless, inflationary tendencies always occur when demand remains unsatisfied; their difference is purely superficial. Hidden inflationary tendencies may disguise themselves in the following ways:

a) deterioration of the quality and durability of goods—a process that may later spread even to goods available in sufficient quantity;

b) a substantial rise in the free-market prices of goods made by craftsmen and of agricultural products;

c) various types of excess payments for fixed-price goods in short supply.

In all three cases it is obvious that money has lost some of its purchasing power, although official state prices have remained unchanged.

The hidden inflationary tendencies have a very adverse effect on the economy. The shortage of goods may become chronic, since no organization is interested in redressing the market equilibrium.

Since 1957 the government has made great efforts to achieve a balanced market and to satisfy consumption demand. But the results show that, if a rigid price system is maintained, the aims of economic policy cannot be realized.

In sketching the expected operation of the new mechanism, we make the assumption that, while the prices of the most decisive commodities (from the viewpoint of supplying the population and developing the economic circle) will continue to be regulated centrally, there will be minimum and maximum prices for certain other commodities and in a third category of goods the prices will be freely agreed upon between producers and users.

What processes will develop when the demand for a certain commodity is not met?

In the first category with fixed (centrally regulated) prices, there can be no spontaneous price increase. If the shortage is due to bad planning, but the production of the given commodity is advantageous for the enterprise, the shortage will quickly be eliminated. But if for some reason the production of the given commodity involves a loss to the enterprise, it would be unreasonable to make up for the shortage in one commodity by issuing instructions contrary to the operation principles of the entire mechanism. Instructions designed to increase the production of the commodity must therefore be linked with some sort of material incentive (special premium, etc.).

In the second category (with only maximum and minimum prices centrally determined) a shortage will raise the price to the upper limit. The question now is whether the upper limit provides a sufficient incentive for the producer. If it does (as is the case when the difference between minimum and maximum price is substantial and production costs are not far from the lower limit of rentability), then the enterprise has an interest in satisfying demand. But if the maximum price does not offer sufficient incentives, then instructions have to be issued for the commodity to be produced, and they should again be linked with adequate material incentives (special premium, temporary subsidy, etc.).

If the state (and the cooperative) enterprises satisfy market demands, then—unlike today—an increase in craftsmen's and free-market prices can be avoided. Here it is particularly important to avoid a continuous deterioration of quality, because this leads to loss of confidence in the goods produced by the state sector, which, in turn, permits the other sectors to maintain their special market position as expressed in high prices.

Prices in the third category (where price depends on direct agreement between producers and users) will rise in the case of shortage. This rise will change the ratio of revenue derived from the different commodities produced by the enterprise and induce it to concentrate on those goods that are in short supply.

Temporary open price increases will have the following additional advantages:

- a) the producing enterprise will not be "interested" in a deterioration of quality;
- b) craftsmen's and free-market prices will not deviate from state prices;
- c) excess payments for goods in short supply will cease.

It is true that open price increases have a bad "psychological" effect on the consumer and may easily cause nervousness in the market. Special care should therefore be taken to prepare the measures and to create the institutions that will enable the market equilibrium to be redressed and prices forced down.

The steps called for include, among others:

- a) liquidation of the bureaucratic-administrative monopoly; competition between the large, vertically structured enterprises (trusts);
- b) intentional overproduction of goods the prices of which do not drop or drop too slowly;
- c) import orders.

If the possibilities inherent in such measures are duly exploited, the "inflationary propensity" (sensitivity to inflation) of the new mechanism—despite possible short-term open price increases—will be smaller than that of the present mechanism.

5) *Foreign trade*

A country sensitive to foreign trade must pay special attention to the effects the new mechanism is likely to exert in this sphere.

The present economic mechanism manifestly has an adverse influence on foreign trade:

a) The artificial exchange rate and the failure to utilize the economic environment make it impossible for economic leadership to reckon with the effect on foreign trade of its various decisions—especially those relating to investments.

b) A system of direction based on plan directives and plan indices disregards the basic requirement that exports should be economical and profitably organized. This results in a lack of interest in—often, indeed, in interests opposed to—services closely linked with the exchange of goods. Yet the maintenance and expansion of markets and the economic efficiency of exports are known to depend primarily on the organization of services.

c) It prevents both the economic leadership and the export enterprises from clearly seeing the cost limit within which exports are still economical or at least tolerable.

d) It encourages the enterprises to increase imports, since the imported products are generally cheaper and often of better quality than those produced at home.

In the new economic mechanism:

a) By introducing a new exchange rate (perhaps marginal rate) based on the sober consideration of value relations and by purposefully utilizing the economic environment, the profitability or non-profitability of foreign-trade activity becomes measurable (can be assessed), enabling the leadership to take into account the consequences of its decisions on foreign trade.

b) An exchange rate established with due regard to value relations (especially a marginal rate) covers the home-production costs of most export goods. Consequently, the sales returns of the export enterprise may be tied to the foreign exchange receipts.

In this case the enterprises producing for exports have an interest in:

- 1) achieving higher prices for their products (which requires the organization of proper services, the improvement of the finish and packaging of the products, etc.);
- 2) giving their export products a favorable composition;
- 3) increasing their production for export.

Through the introduction of a foreign exchange bonus, this interest may even be increased.

Adoption of an exchange rate established with due regard to value relations (perhaps a marginal rate) will eliminate the direct interest of the enterprises in increasing imports, since imported products will become more expensive. (If there is a difference in quality, they will want to go on importing, but this cannot—and should not—be avoided.)

Over a longer period, the new mechanism may bring about decisive

changes in our foreign trade, which are likely to improve the entire economic circle at the most sensitive point of our economy.

In the short run, however, one has to reckon on the emergence of a number of serious problems:

a) After adoption of the new exchange rate (perhaps a marginal rate) built on real relations of value, it may turn out that the high cost of certain goods makes their exportation unprofitable, even intolerable.

If these goods are not capable of attaining a cost level at which the acquisition of foreign currency can still be tolerated, their exportation has to be stopped gradually. This may temporarily lead to a reduction of exports and may even affect our international obligations.

These problems will be transitory, because the new mechanism will bring about new export potentials. But from the point of view of economic policy, such transitory problems should not be underestimated, because even a temporary imbalance may demand a basic regrouping of resources, as a result of which the original objectives of development may become unattainable.

b) If there are price increases on the internal market and some prices do not fall back to their former level even after the demand is satisfied, then production for the home market—as compared to exports—will yield higher profits. In this case, the export potentials will not become export capacities.

It is therefore very important for foreign trade too that, through the measures described above, the provisionally rising prices should be reduced without delay.

A few transitory problems have to be reckoned with in the domain of imports as well:

a) If the enterprises wish to increase their production—in accordance with the demand of the internal and external market—there will be a temporary need for more imports. The transitory increase of import requirements may, by and large, be balanced later by import replacements that may develop under the influence of the new mechanism. In the provisional period, the positive or negative character of this phenomenon will depend on whether the excess imports lead to an increase in economical exports. If exports can be increased and made more economical (for instance by obtaining higher prices through the improvement of finish and through the extension of services), then the excess imports should be promoted, since they will make the economic circle more healthy and efficient.

b) In acute market situations (price increases due to unsatisfied demand), more consumer goods have to be imported than planned. This may later be balanced by new export possibilities, to the extent that potentially exportable goods are available.

6) *Investments*

It may be said without exaggeration that the least rational and most negative aspect of the old (pre-1957) system of economic direction was the selection and execution of investments.

Logically, this is quite comprehensible, since investments represent the most dynamic element of the economy. The rigidities and irrational effects of an incorrect system of direction are not reflected primarily in the usual and frequently recurring phenomena and processes. The stream of day-to-day practice sooner or later breaks through the dams of rigid direction and, after a certain time, a complicity develops between the leaders of the central organs and of the enterprises in devising processes that are tolerable for both parties.

In the case of investments, however, there is no "customary activity," although economic growth is inconceivable without a regular extension of existing production capacities. In the sphere of decision making, investments require perfect understanding of the situation, a particular combination of strict reasoning and creative spirit, correct foresight as regards future economic processes, and acceptance of great personal responsibility. These attributes are indispensable also in the sphere of execution since—depending on its purpose and timing—every investment has an individual character (in the true sense of the word).

Since 1957—in the spirit of the government's more realistic economic policy—a number of measures have been taken to further a correct selection and better execution of investment variants. In spite of this, the essential attributes of the present investment mechanism hardly differ from those of the old one.

In the present mechanism:

a) Investment priorities (i.e., investments decisively affecting economic growth) cannot be established correctly in the sphere of decision making. The principal economic preconditions for making sound decisions are lacking: comparability of various economic activities (as investment variants), prices reflecting social labour input as well as supply and demand, money fulfilling the role of a general equivalent, and exchange rates based on real value relations.

b) The investment mechanism (the sum total of processes and prescriptions relating to decision making and execution) favours investments that have a slow return, are prompted by sectoral bias, and are realized over an unreasonably protracted period of time. This trend in the investment mechanism derives from over-centralization of the means of investment, from

the absence of any obligation to repay them, from branch chauvinism, and from the methods applied in measuring plan fulfilment in the building industry.

c) Investment decisions favour the new establishments and continue to neglect the technological development of previously built plants.

d) Owing to the attributes of the investment mechanism mentioned under item b), the development of consumer industries is, to some extent, still neglected.

As against this, in the new economic mechanism:

a) The economic preconditions for the correct determination of investment priorities in the sphere of decision making are assured.

b) Priority is given, on the one hand, to investments with a relatively quick return and undertaken under the direct influence of domestic and world market relations, and to technological development of existing plants, on the other.

The transformation of investment tendencies (and of the economic environment affecting the character and trend of investments) has many advantages. Through a radical reduction of the refund period, investment energies are produced more quickly, the execution of investments is governed by more complex thought processes, technological development quickens, and the building industry is prompted to complete the construction jobs faster.

c) Investments with a slower return may, however, easily be pushed into the background, especially if we bear in mind a certain decentralization of investment funds. A decisive portion of available funds should therefore be devoted to investments with a slower return. This, again, requires the centralization of a considerable portion of the increasing investment energies.

7) *Attitude of the participants in economic life*

The dogmatic-bureaucratic concept of ideology and economic policy denied the importance of human factors and relationships in the development of economic processes. The leaders of economic organizations—like those of other bodies—were considered merely executive agents, senior civil servants.

This concept is completely erroneous, because—and this is not the only reason—economic work differs radically from office work.

Economic leaders possessing the abilities required of entrepreneurs or managers cannot be replaced by civil servants under capitalism.

Under socialism too, the economic leaders must have creative-combi-

native abilities, be capable of making quick decisions, be bold and circumspect in taking risks, and assume full responsibility for their decisions and resolutions.

Not even the greatest diligence on the part of the employees of an enterprise can replace adequate decisions made at the right moment!

However, the system of selection applied in the dogmatic-bureaucratic period made it impossible (or very difficult) for people having such abilities to become leaders of the economy, or to remain in such positions. (By ability we do not, of course, mean inclination only, but knowledge and erudition, a creative integration and application of experience as well. It should, nevertheless, be emphasized that the fastest progress in studying and in applying experience can be achieved in domains for which one has an inclination.)

The present economic mechanism does not develop creative-combinative ability (in general or on the part of the leaders). Without adequate authority even those possessing the best combinative abilities are unable to take initiatives. Large-scale bureaucracy prevents quick decisions, especially if individual responsibility is lost in the maze of institutions and bodies initiating, negotiating, passing on, approving and modifying the various decisions.

It is to be hoped that the new economic mechanism, which offers opportunities for creative ability to unfold, will, at the same time, teach and impose the taking of risks and responsibilities, and bring about decisive changes in this sphere too.

One of the preconditions, however, for the successful functioning of the new mechanism is the improvement of the material and social status of the leading employees of the enterprises.

The method of fixing and distributing income (wages and salaries) inherited from the past should gradually be improved.

Today the opportunities for increasing one's income within the enterprises are very limited: the enterprises are divided into rigid categories, the difference of income between employees in leading positions and ordinary employees are minimal (many people refuse leading positions for this reason), and the divergence in pay for differing skills and unequal diligence is insignificant.

This has unfavourable effects on the development of the economy. The realization that by working harder and making a bigger effort one can obtain a higher income is an essential driving force in economic development.

If the method of fixing and distributing income limits these opportunities too strictly, two kinds of behaviour may develop.

Some profess that if one cannot earn significantly more through greater effort, then it is better to live comfortably and quietly (i.e., with less work). This attitude is unfortunately a mass phenomenon.

Others choose the path of increasing their income by work outside their place of employment. The limits of this study do not permit an analysis of the variants of this type of behaviour. Its practitioners too seek a quiet and comfortable life at their regular place of employment so as to profit from the energies and the ingenuity they devote to their second job.

*

The development and introduction of the new economic mechanism is beyond doubt the most important change in the history of socialist economy since the creation of socialist relations of ownership.

The intricacy and uniqueness of the task of building the new mechanism is enhanced by the circumstance that this mechanism does not result from a gradual development but is a comprehensive, interdependent system based on scientific investigations and on considerations of economic policy.

In the old system of economic direction based on the totality of plan directives and indices, only part of the elements were consciously chosen and determined in advance; the others resulted from emergency measures taken to counteract the difficulties arising in the process of the economic circle, the lack of balance and unforeseen developments.

The comprehensive and interdependent character of the new economic mechanism does not mean that every element of the new system has to be introduced and every consequence foreseen simultaneously. This would be unreasonable and even impossible, since the conditions for the introduction of some of the elements still have to be created. The implementation of a system in several phases does not reduce the coherence of its elements and interrelations.

The conditions and circumstances of its introduction make it obvious, however, that the problems of the transitional period have to be analysed with special care. There will be times in which some processes of the economy will be shaped and influenced by the new mechanism, while in other domains they will continue under the influence of the old system of direction or subject to temporary measures.

It may sound like a paradox to say that the fate of the new mechanism will be decided in the transitional period.

Some attribute importance to the coherent and correct functioning of the model (system) only, thereby underestimating the problems of the transi-

tional period. The economic circle and growth, however, constitute a process that has to be realized under balanced conditions. If the equilibrium is disturbed to a larger extent than is expected (or tolerable), then a series of operative emergency measures have to be taken, and this gradually changes the whole character of the process. The period remains transitional, but the objectives that can be set realistically (selected as the relatively best in the new conditions) change, and the transitional period does not lead to the processes and objectives originally decided upon.

The new economic mechanism, as a unified and interdependent system, is much more perfect and complete than the one existing at present. What is even more important is that it seems suited in all respects to solving the present and future tasks of the socialist economy.

In emphasizing this, I should point out once more that the interrelations and processes resulting from certain propensities of the model have to be observed with special care. Should processes, arising from possible negative effects of the model, exceed the permissible scope and jeopardize the projected course of the economic circle, then new "countervailing" (mitigating) factors should be introduced into the process of economic growth.

Aware of the objective and psychological difficulties that may be expected, we still have to emphasize that only a comprehensive and interdependent new model can give a fresh impetus to the growth of the socialist economy.

FROM OUR NEXT NUMBERS

ANGLO-HUNGARIAN RELATIONS—PAST AND PRESENT

Tibor Pető

BANKING IN SOCIALISM

Béla Sulyok

EAST-WEST TALKS OF INTELLECTUALS

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Alain Robbe-Grillet—Béla Köpröczki

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY

by

PÉTER VERES

I

That St. Stephen's Day, the one in 1944, was typical of the St. Stephen's Days and the days around it in good summers in our part of the east country—pleasantly hot, but not unbearable. Bright, fair days, with white clouds just vaguely floating here and there and dispersing by dusk, and cool, dewy nights. For although slowly but surely from far off in the west and southwest the advance guard of autumn kept coming from the Atlantic Ocean, mingling with the chill of the Alps and bringing windstorms and heavy rains that would mourn the summer and replenish the dry fields of the Hortobágy, rearing white mushrooms like children's hats on the edges of fat meadows and in the mysterious mushroom patches—these frontline advances had somehow not yet penetrated this far. They had spilled their wrath before they reached the Danube.

Perhaps that is why the Tokay wine is so good in these parts (here the mountain rises above us, and around noontime, for want of a watch, we measure our shadows against it), and why the Szabolcs apples and the Szatmár plums are so succulent—because in seven or eight out of every ten years the weather is usually like this. The leftover summer heat is caught between the two ranges of the Carpathians, so that we get the long, lingering Indian summer that ripens the Aszú grapes.

But that was a rich summer in any case. It is one of the secrets of the ages, a mystery to the peasant but not quite clear even to the agronomist, why one summer is rich and another poor. The peasants claim that a rainy summer will be rich and a dry one poor "because rain means no want," but this paraphrase of the poet Csokonai comes closer to the truth: "We sowed in cold wind, we reaped in hot noon amidst thistles and weeds. What the weeds did not choke, what the bugs did not riddle, was killed by the blight."

In other words, it never rains but it pours; sometimes evil and at other times good comes all at once.

Now the good had come all at once. Even in the poorer land the wheat was waist-high, and on the fat land it was up to a man's neck, and still it did not bend—for which we said an extra hallelujah, because there were few men left at home who could wield a scythe.

And all the other crops were doing just as well. Even in the patchy salt land the peas had grown bulgy pods, and the wild marrows had not flowered only for the wasps, but had fattened their fruits almost to bursting. (In time of war man also eats wild marrows. . .) The melon vines did not cast off their violently green or stripy young, but let them grow round and plump. And from the thick of the maize you could not see, as in the lean years, the bright or funereally black headkerchiefs of the women thinning corn on the adjoining farm, but only the sky, the very centre of the sky. Deserters could hide in there, and so could partisans (and hide they did; my nephew Bandi Kis flew home from the Ukraine at about that time, landed by parachute, and sat there in the maize until October—but that is another story).

There was plenty of hay and the promise of a good vintage; in the orchards the apples were red and the plums blue—lo, a year of plenty! (“But who was going to eat it all?”)

At that time, until the end of summer, I was still at home. And although some nine or ten little volumes of mine had already been published, and I was writing for a score of papers and periodicals, I had not yet grown accustomed to the fact of being a writer, either in spirit or in making a living at it and adjusting my life to it, nor was I yet accustomed to the idea of being or becoming a “public figure” or a political personality; so I reverted completely to being a tiller of the soil. Only in my free moments, which were few and far between, and during sleepless nights—which had various causes—did the writer and the socialist revolutionary in me come to the fore, with all his special worries and hopes: What was going to happen next? How would things turn out? How were we going to react when the Russians got here? (That they would eventually get here seemed a foregone conclusion even to their more astute enemies by that time.) What would we do then?

The land is a very powerful magnet when you get your living from it, nor is the pull of the family less compelling. There were hardly enough hours suitable even for farm work now (air raid warnings were growing frequent), and able-bodied men were scarcer still. My older sons were factory workers and were taking care of themselves; only my third son, Sanyi, now sixteen, remained to help me, and my younger daughter Margit, who, luckily, was good at hoeing and good at binding sheaves.

My older daughter Julianna was already married and had just had a baby, and on top of that her husband had just been transferred to the eastern front for the second time. They worked for fifty percent of their harvest on the Sáskahalom estate of Count Semsei, which meant that they were working twice as hard as people who farmed their own land for their own benefit.

As a result my wife also had her hands full, because our first daughter-in-law, my son Péter's wife (another Julie) was "expecting any minute" at that point.

My mother was still alive but getting on to seventy, and the previous winter she had slipped on the ice under the eaves (there was no drainpipe under the thatched roof) and had broken her arm. Her old bones just about knitted, but she could not even use the arm for milking. When she had to, she managed to give feed and water to the poultry, or she would let in the cow returning from pasture when we were not at home.

I had only just started, but I already realized what it meant to be "head of the tribe," a "patriarch." And in addition to that, I felt I must be a writer. And one also had to be a revolutionary. . . Had to, had to!

For the time being, however, especially since March 19th, when the Germans had completely taken over in Hungary, there was no literature. The papers and periodicals for which I used to write had closed down. And I dared not even work "for the desk drawer" because there was no knowing when my desk drawer might be turned inside out.

And I really knew nothing apart from what one gathered from newspapers and the neighbours' versions of radio reports (I had no set of my own). Ferenc Erdei had come over on his bike one day in midsummer. Since then I had not heard anything about anyone. We did not trust the mail.

Of course, a writer is a writer even when he has no place to write for, because his head and his heart are always "writing"; but who has the moral courage to say to a family deluged by work and worry and afflicted by fits of despair, "Leave me alone, I want to write"?

Work and the soil, as it happened, provided a welcome escape from literary introspection. If you live on the soil you develop the nature of a beetle: You lie low on it.

So there were two strong men in the family, Sanyi and me. A good crop meant a lot of work. And now we had to cope with my son-in-law's chores as well. Luckily, he had been able to complete the harvest, but we had to do the threshing and the gathering-in. The Count could, of course, have arranged for that, but then they would not have got their share. True, this old order was in a state of collapse, but its laws were still automatically operating, like the wristwatch of a suicide.

So I had hauled half their grain to the Count's granary at Kónya, and had piled the other half onto the porch of their little house and into a corner of the main room. (There were no longer any compulsory deliveries for there was no longer any available transportation. So we had the greatest abundance of grain within living memory.)

There was no one else in the family who could haul. As a matter of fact I myself was a little too old. (Forty to forty-five is supposed to be the age limit for hauling sacks, and I was pushing forty-eight.) It was not yet possible to count on my son Sanyi for this sort of thing. Sixteen seems a fine age when you look back on it years later ("God, if I could only see sixteen again!"), but it is a burden to live through. You are not yet a man, but you are fed up with being a child. You can't carry a sack yet, you don't understand hoeing, and almost any grown man's job is beyond your strength or your skill; life is bitter. And the girls look down on you too, you can't talk properly with anyone but your own kind, your nature is at once cowardly and full of bravado; your feet are big, your stomach bottomless, your palate inquisitive—and so on.

You are constantly disgracing yourself, even at home with the family; true, in front of father, mother, brothers and sisters you can still be clumsy and scatter-brained, but on the other hand the family considers you nothing but a child and treats you as such—the father as a brat, the mother sometimes with "Boys will be boys" and sometimes with "What gets into you anyway!?" (equally unbearable), while the brothers and sisters vary in their attitudes and are at best inconsistent.

Although I was never the type of father to dote on his children, I was very fond of this boy. True, before I got married I told my future wife, "And we'll have six kids or so . . ." (because the number six seemed to lend a sort of magic quality to family life), but such talk is only to enable a young man to refer to the conjugal mysteries without improper language.

For later, when the children kept coming in earnest, I too became subdued by the worries of a pater familias, and in addition, although hidden deep inside me (which did not make them any lighter), by the troubles of a writer and a socialist.

At any rate, it was my son Sanyi whom I felt to be my favourite child, although I never let the others guess it. While family life makes sense only where there are more than just one or two children, the main paternal principle is not visible affection—and above all not promiscuous caresses (how hard it is to resist the longing!)—but justice. As in a well governed state—or it should be so.

I never cherished any illusions about being an "ancestor," and I never

attempted to bring up the boys as people who would suit my ideal of "posterity"; and the reason that this boy was so much to my liking was just because there was little need to "raise" him. He proved to be a quite complete product from tender age, although not entirely without shenanigans.

I'll never forget the time—I wrote about this once—when as a little boy (he must have been four or five, the age of sweet absurdities), having heard his mother say, after the departure of a visitor, ". . .and Tóth's face fell," he went after the man to look for it.

"Mother, I can't find it," he said when he came back.

"What can't you find?"

"That man's face. . ."

The man had asked for a loan (not for the first and not for the last time) and on that particular occasion had not been given any, which was why his "face fell," but my little son Sanyi did not understand figurative speech at that time. Later he more than made up for it and could even make fun of his teacher; I never saw him down in the mouth over his lessons, I never saw him either terrified by not understanding something in school or making a pompous show of what he knew.

The fact that I cared so much for Sanyi—although in such deep secret that not even his mother really knew—was only overlaid by an apparently cold objectivity, but it could not suppress the paternal conviction: This boy is going to be somebody! A character—a personality.

This paternal feeling—futile to try and suppress it—is obviously one of the primitive laws of nature which raise us above all other animals. They will fight to the death for their helpless offspring, but once the little ones have learned to fend for themselves, the parents no longer watch over them. From the very beginning, this trait in man was connected with the idea of futurity, with providing and storing victuals, and in the last analysis with becoming organized as people.

Yes, but in this too, I wanted to be a revolutionary, a "new type of man": I wanted my children to be free—at least spiritually and intellectually—as free as possible. They were not to consider my ways when they considered their future. . .

But what does one know, what can one know at this time of another soul—the soul of a child—whose human countenance has not yet taken shape in thought and action—even when it is his own son? What could my parents and relations have known of me when I was a young whelp? I had already mixed up the world of books with my own world to such an extent that when my old grandmother asked what I was reading with such absorption instead of fetching water from the well, I talked to her about Nebuchadnezzar whom

God had made like unto a beast of the field, eating grass, because of his wicked reign. (Served him right!)

So what could I know about the desires, plans, self-willed thoughts of my son Sanyi, which betrayed themselves only in an occasional fit of obstinacy—although not always—when I could not even cope with my own cares?

I could not know anything essential. I simply liked the kind of person he seemed to be.

According to the popular ideal of good looks in the Debrecen region, this Sanyi lad was not “handsome.” He might have passed for a Mordvinian, a Chuvash or a Kalmuk. One sees his type of crudely unfinished children’s faces in Soviet films.

To be sure, his eyes were not slanted (such eyes are called “roguish eyes” in our part of the country, and they can lend great charm to the face), but were simply hooded by a “Mongolian fold.” He did not look like either of us; one of our remote ancestors must have been reincarnated in him. In any case he was not a “cute” boy.

At some time during the forties, when we already owned a horse, our Sanyi went horse-crazy (a common seizure among Hungarian kids; on horse-back even the callowest country lad is a man in the eyes of the girls), and one day during the winter, when it was impossible to drive a cart out on our street, either because it was too muddy or because the dirt road was frozen into hard ruts and bumps, he took out our horse Laci, a spirited animal, to give him a little exercise.

But he was far from being a really good horseman (he was the grandson of horse breeders and riders—but all the same riding has to be learned). Riding back from the paved Kishortobágy highway and turning into our pitted Kadarcs Street, he did not slow down, but broke into a gallop in the direction of our house, probably in order to show the whole street—grown-ups and children alike—what a lad he was on a horse.

Fine—but an unfortunate bicyclist was trying to reach the paved road in the very same hard and narrow rut, and he could no longer avoid our boy or stop and jump aside. Nor was the foolishly fiery steed able to slow down or swerve to let the bicyclist pass, and they collided. Both horse and bicyclist tumbled, and Sanyi flew from the back of the horse into one of the hard-frozen ruts.

I just happened to be standing at the side door, probably because I had already become anxious about him (“that kid’s going to get in trouble with that horse one of these days”)—but before there was even time for my heart to turn over, Sanyi was on his feet and leading in Laci, who was all a-tremble with fright and horse-ardour.

I don't recall having scolded him much or having been overly angry with him, because although he might have broken his neck or made the horse break a leg, after all nothing had happened. While I shook my head and cursed, I was actually impressed. That boy is going to be a real man and most likely a first-rate farmer. He has what it takes!

II

As a young man I never felt that St. Stephen's Day was any business of mine—either as a state holiday or as a church holiday.

This was not my State (I was considered a black sheep) and I was no Catholic either. In my foolishly credulous childhood days, I had taken in every idea and sermon of my teachers and pastors with deadly seriousness. When I was taught (or when it was merely suggested—for the soul thirsty for salvation laps up every hint) that the Catholics were idolaters who worshipped graven images, I did not doubt it. Nor did I doubt that their church was chock full of such things, even though I never dared to go in despite the fact that it was just opposite ours. I needed only to pass the gate to glimpse, by the light of candles burning even during the day, a whole mysterious "other world" that was alien to me. But even on the front of the church one could read the peculiar legend INRI, and in the Count's garden there was a statue of St. John, whom we simply called "the breadman," for around him stood a number of honey-locust trees whose beans looked like real St. John's bread* (except that they were thinner, and we loved to chew them and suck at them—they had a sickeningly honey-sweet taste).

In any case we had nicknamed the Catholics "Cathartics" and they had ridiculed us as "Deformed."

True it was not much later that agrarian socialist ideas—in which I put all my faith in those days—entirely rid me of this sort of belligerent piety, but since they were hostile to every religion and every church, this was no gain for tolerance or equity. In fact, because in our opinion the greatest enemy was the church that "usurped" the most land ("why should they have it?") it was of course the omnipotent and Hapsburg-protected Catholic church which remained the arch-enemy. (The vast estates of the Archbishopric and the Cathedral Chapter of Eger were next to our farm and extended over villages. We went to work there too. The local farm labourers claimed that the estates comprised 99 farmsteads, and that the

* The locust-bean, traditional inexpensive sweet given to children in central Europe.

only reason there was no hundredth was because the Chapter would then have been obliged to maintain its own troops.)

As a matter of fact, not even our day labour reconciled us to the saints (although we farm workers would, of course, have enjoyed still more holy days—holidays for us!) because working for the State Railways and the Catholics we always lost a day's pay on account of these saints, sometimes two days' pay since if the saint's day fell on a Friday it was not worth our while to go back so far just for a Saturday; and on St. Stephen's Day—threshing time—this meant the loss of about a bushel of wheat, a good week's bread for an average family.

I recall all this merely to emphasize how far I had to travel—from what a spiritual distance—in order to see in a different light the people praying and singing in the churches on St. Stephen's Day, 1944. Yes, I admit it, my feeling of protest against all this had been so strong that it even extended to the singing and the music, the beautifully booming organ music. I regarded it as a means of bamboozling the people, the most powerful of narcotics, and it actually pained me (for although religious feeling was waning in our village, I still knew how strong it still was in other villages) to see them singing psalms so devoutly. I did not admit to myself that in my fanatic heart of hearts, I would have liked them to sing our socialist songs in just that way.

Literature, however—not my own as yet—had widened my horizon by that time (current history also helped) and by then, when the vital interests of the Hungarian people were at stake, and my own and my kin's interests (and those of my kin in the broader sense, the hosts of people who were of one mind and one conviction with me), I regarded King Stephen not so much as a saint of the Church and of religion, as the founder of the country, the great man who held the people and the nation together.

The socialist revolutionary in me already felt (many people did not understand this at the time, and some do not understand it yet) that everything the Hungarian people had created, built or given birth to in a thousand years or more, including the greatness, wisdom and heroism of human beings, belonged to us. For tomorrow or the day after, if we lived that long, we would take over, and we would have to be the custodians of not only the physical but also of historical, spiritual and intellectual treasures of the nation.

I did not go to church at that time either; after all, I had not gone once since my childhood, and it would have been rather singular to go there so suddenly; but this was a time in my life when I really understood why people who were abandoned to themselves, desolate and despairing, turned

to Heaven. And although there had been a time when I was angry with them, although in the spring of 1919, at the very beginning of the Hungarian Soviet, I had almost weepingly implored them to protect the revolution, to protect our freedom and defend our land, which we were just beginning to distribute, now, deeply moved, I realized that in their bewilderment and vacillation they saw no other way out than to go to church where "Fate" was enthroned in the guise of God and to sing to him: "King Stephen, Where art thou? Thee Hungarians do love. In clothes of deep mourning. Weeping to thee, avow. . ." Or, in the Reformed Church, with eyes lifted and with sonorous piety: "In thee our trust is everlasting. . ."

For all of us had been living in grim tension since the hot and humidly sunny day in early summer when the Anglo-Americans had ruined the main station of Debrecen. (Trainloads of workers, students, market-women, soldiers and visitors to the garrison to that town every morning.)

By this time they were setting off with a sigh of "Who knows if we'll ever get home?"

And recently practically every day the church bells were tolling or the sirens wailing while across the plains and farmsteads the railroad tracks would vibrate shrilly, sometimes several times a day: Air-raids over Baja and Bácska!

I am no longer absolutely sure—for those days were so apocalyptically crowded, the many-horned beasts and the angels trumpeting bad tidings followed too fast on one another's heels, but the guardian angels still delayed—whether it was on St. Stephen's Day itself or the morning after, but it was certainly still under the spell of the holiday, for my memory has preserved the atmosphere of it through eighteen years: The morning sun had barely begun to steam the air when the air-raid warning sounded.

I remained at home, because my wife had gone to see our daughter-in-law, who had given birth the night before. I had sent my son Sanyi with a horse and cart to a place known as "Woe Is Me" at the end of the village to bring young maize for the cows, because they no longer had enough to eat in the pasture.

We were scanning the sky as we usually did now: Where might they be from; where would they be bound? We always did this with the feeling, "Oh, well, we're nothing but a big flat village, we have no factory, we have very few Germans"—but just the same we breathed easy only after they had passed over us.

This would be the same thing again, because the first planes had already flown beyond the village. There they were glittering in the heavens, with their engines running and rumbling as calmly as if they were at home.

They must be attacking Miskolc, we thought, because they were cutting across the Hortobágy. Many planes, a great many, a whole army in the air: Woe to the town on which they would unload their bombs!

Yet another aerial army had turned at the same time in the direction of Hajdúböszörmény, where the Germans were using cow pasture as an air-base, but we had not even noticed this, because further air squadrons were emerging opposite them, out of the mirage-like Hortobágy. They were German planes, intent on preventing the attack on the industrial region of Miskolc, Diósgyőr and Ózd.

What was going to come of this?

In seconds, an immense air battle had developed over the north-western part of the village, in Bánlak-Újtelep, the poorest section. That was where my daughter lived with the first of my grand-children, and also my daughter-in-law with the second of them just born.

Now one had to take cover, because bombs and shells were dropping. Machine against machine, like hawks and harriers fighting in mid-air, they fired at one another at close range and scattered their loads. Only small reports could be heard, not the ear-splitting blasts of major detonations, and machine-gun bullets were hissing into the gardens and between the houses from all sides.

Yes, an aerial battle overhead, but the village was completely defenseless against such a thing.

There were no cellars under the houses because our ancestors, to escape the Turks, had moved to the islet between the Kadarcs river, the Lesi marsh and Magdolna pond. In a rainy spring or autumn the inland waters rise and would have filled the cellars with water, but in any case there was no need for any because no grapes were ever grown in this village. Only the village council hall, the count's mansion, the bank, and a few affluent farms and inns had cellars.

Of course, the authorities had ordered everybody to dig a trench in his courtyard, whether there was anything to cover it with or not (here in this part of the village few people had anything to cover it with), but it was duly dug, by women and children where there were no men.

And this is exactly what caused the worst of the troubles. The ruling stated that people were not to stay in their houses during air-raids but were to seek shelter in those narrow trenches or hide under trees or bushes so as not to offer a target.

This ruling was intended for explosive bombs. The people were not to remain in their houses, because the walls might collapse on them and kill them.

Yes, but aerial mines do not destroy houses, they bespatter and kill everything and everyone in their radius.

Mrs. Sándor Szenczi, the married daughter of the widow Balla, our neighbour to the rear, also lived in this part of the village and had been huddling with her four small children in the shallow trenches dug beneath the stunted bushes. The four children died; she herself survived, although she was wounded. As she told us later, the children fluttered and writhed about her in the dust stirred up by the mine, like chicks whose necks have been severed and who have been thrown aside until all life leaves them.

Another woman, I can no longer recall her name, squatted in the same way in her garden, like a broody hen with five or six little ones. The mine knocked her out from among her children; she died, and the children survived.

Our neighbour Jozsi Tar's daughter, a beautiful young married woman (a distinction not lightly acknowledged in our village), set out with horse and cart for their farm at Daraksa, before the aerial battle, taking the Kishortobágy road. The cart and horse were cut apart and Erzsi Tar perished.

It did not last long, perhaps ten or fifteen minutes, and then they withdrew, truly like crazed birds fighting in air with all else forgotten, in the direction of Hajdúböszörmény, where some six hundred cows, almost an entire herd, and I do not know how many human beings, were killed. The least of the damage was done to the German planes, because they were either in the air or had been carefully distributed and left on side roads and under clumps of trees at some farms.

Afterwards, as after a big thunderstorm with hail and a downpour, everyone ran into the streets, into the fields, to children, parents, brothers and sisters, relatives—what happened, where did it happen, what damage, what sorrow?

I also got on my bicycle at once and sped to the children: How were my daughter, my daughter-in-law, my wife, and my innocent little grandchildren?

The first I reached was my daughter Julianna. No trouble! Many dead and wounded nearby (practically no ruined houses or fires, for the mines and machine-guns only kill), but they had been spared.

From there I hastened to my daughter-in-law, where my wife was.

Nothing wrong there either. A window had been broken by the blast, but there was no other damage.

But... my son! Where is my son? Where was he when it happened? He went exactly in that direction. The road that leads to the farms where he went for fodder joins the paved road to Hajdúböszörmény near the

air-base. Had he got there before the air-raid began? Or had he started by then and blundered into the hottest danger spot?

I did not set out to meet him, however, because there was the chance that he might have reached home already, so I rushed there first.

He was not at home. My mother and my daughter asked in the anguish of despair: "Sanyi? Where can he be?" "My God, what has happened to the child?" my mother wailed.

I said nothing. I had already learned during the first world war that talk was no help whatever in trouble; and in the presence of the gendarmes, in jail and as a prisoner-of-war, I had got used to clenching my teeth.

I would go out to meet him and find out the truth sooner. Perhaps on the way I would get news of him, because people were swarming homeward, some in carts, some on foot, each one as he was able, from the fields, from distant farmsteads, to find out what had happened to their kin. Some were hurrying away from the village as fast as they could to find out about relatives who were not at home; others were eager to get home and make sure the family was safe.

But something intervened and I was delayed. After that there was no more need to go, because all of a sudden the horse was snorting in front of the gate. Oh, God! Sanyi!

Nothing was the matter with him; he was not even upset. (Dear kid! He would be a man! But all I said was, "Good, you got back!") He had watched the aerial battle and the bombing of the air-base from under the row of trees in the side road leading to the fields. He had unhitched the horse, crawled under the cart, and waited there for the end of the battle.

And he brought the news that just beyond Városkút, alongside the highway, a young soldier at home on leave had gone out with his wife to gather in wheat, and they and their cart and horse were shattered by a bomb. And in the fields of Görögtanya even the threshing machine was hit, and a man had been killed there too. In our parts, they never reckoned the wounded but only those whose lives were extinguished forever.

(Though Sanyi had had a narrow escape, but in the end he was martyred just the same.)

The village, however, went on living its harrassed life. The dead were buried—there were some thirty or thirty-two of them, including children. Those of Imre Dobi, a distant relative, and his playmates had found a mine on the cow-pasture of Kiskarinko (mines were scattered all over the fields) and begun to examine it (accursed technical curiosity!); it blew up and the three children died. Most of the other dead were also women and children.

And everybody carried on as before; those who had something to do in the fields went there, those who had business in town went to town, and every day on the way home everyone would start looking from a long way off out of the train window or from the tops of heavily laden carts to see whether the towers were still standing and the village had not gone up in fire and smoke.

I, however, lost contact with it all, because I was marched into the bullpen at Hajdúnánás, where I was assigned to the 462nd punitive company for rubble-clearing; but that again is another story.

FROM OUR NEXT NUMBERS

FROM FAIRY TALES TO SCIENCE FICTION

Roger Caillois

SOLITARY JOURNEY

Gábor Goda

THE AUTHENTICITY OF ACTION ON THE STAGE

Miklós Hubay

DON QUIXOTE'S LAST ADVENTURE

Endre Vészi

THE IRONY OF THOMAS MANN

Péter Rényi

SURVEYS — BOOK REVIEWS — THEATRE AND FILM —
ARTS — PRESS CUTTINGS — ARCHEOLOGY — ECONOMIC LIFE

IMPRESSION OF HUNGARIAN BUILDING

by

NIKOLAUS PEVSNER

I know only too well I cannot call myself anything but a general practitioner in architectural history. I have worked one way or another on quite a number of periods and taught more. I have grown up in one country and lived in another longer than in the first, and I have seen comparatively many countries inside and outside Europe.

The invitation to Hungary came as a welcome widening of my art-historical horizon. When I started, I was not totally unprepared. I possessed Professor Rados's book on the history of Hungarian architecture, though I can't read it. I had received the *Acta Historiae Artium* for some time. Bouquet number one: What other country has a learned journal with articles in English, German, French, Italian, Russian—any principal language in fact save that of the authors. Bouquet number two: The authors know and quote literature of all these countries as a matter of course, even the *Architectural Review*, the paper I am one of the editors of, although each number as a rule has only one or two historical papers or features. If an English colleague of mine quoted, say, German articles with such ease and competence (or a German English articles), I would say: Here is something very special. And something very special the *Acta* are, and the buildings, when at last I saw them, even more. I cannot tell *The New Hungarian Quarterly* of all those I was enabled to visit, and so want to confine myself to three periods which seem to me specially significant or important, significant the first, important the other two. They are the Romanesque, the Early Renaissance and the Classical Revival.

The one Romanesque village church I looked at, Bánfalva near Sopron, West Hungary, might just as well have been in England. A nave and a square-ended chancel, and a chancel arch totally unmoulded on the simplest imposts, exactly as in a Norman village church. But the major churches are totally different. I saw chiefly Lébény, Horpács and Ják. (But not Zsámbék, unfortunately, in spite of the implorations of the editor of this journal.)

They are high and exceptionally short, with two west towers and no tower over the crossing, because there is no transept and hence no crossing; and inside there is no gallery. They look militant and compact with their beautiful capitals in the interior. For the architectural historian they are a fine puzzle. First of all they are very late, the best of them contemporary not with Durham, Ely and Norwich, but with Lincoln and even Salisbury. Their style, seemingly uniform, is a synthesis of many elements. The plans derive from Lombardy and the general character from southern Germany and Austria. That is as one might expect, but in addition there are contributions from further west, French Early Gothic crocket-capitals, as they occur in a thirteenth-century-Romanesque context in west Germany (I mean west Germany) too, and also—and this for the tourist from England must be the greatest surprise—unmistakably Norman ornament, zigzag, crenellation motifs, lozenge-chains, etc., a good deal of the apparatus of English twelfth-century building. The travels of Norman motifs east, via Bamberg and Regensburg until they ended in Hungary, have been traced more than once. Here they were to welcome me and baffle me.

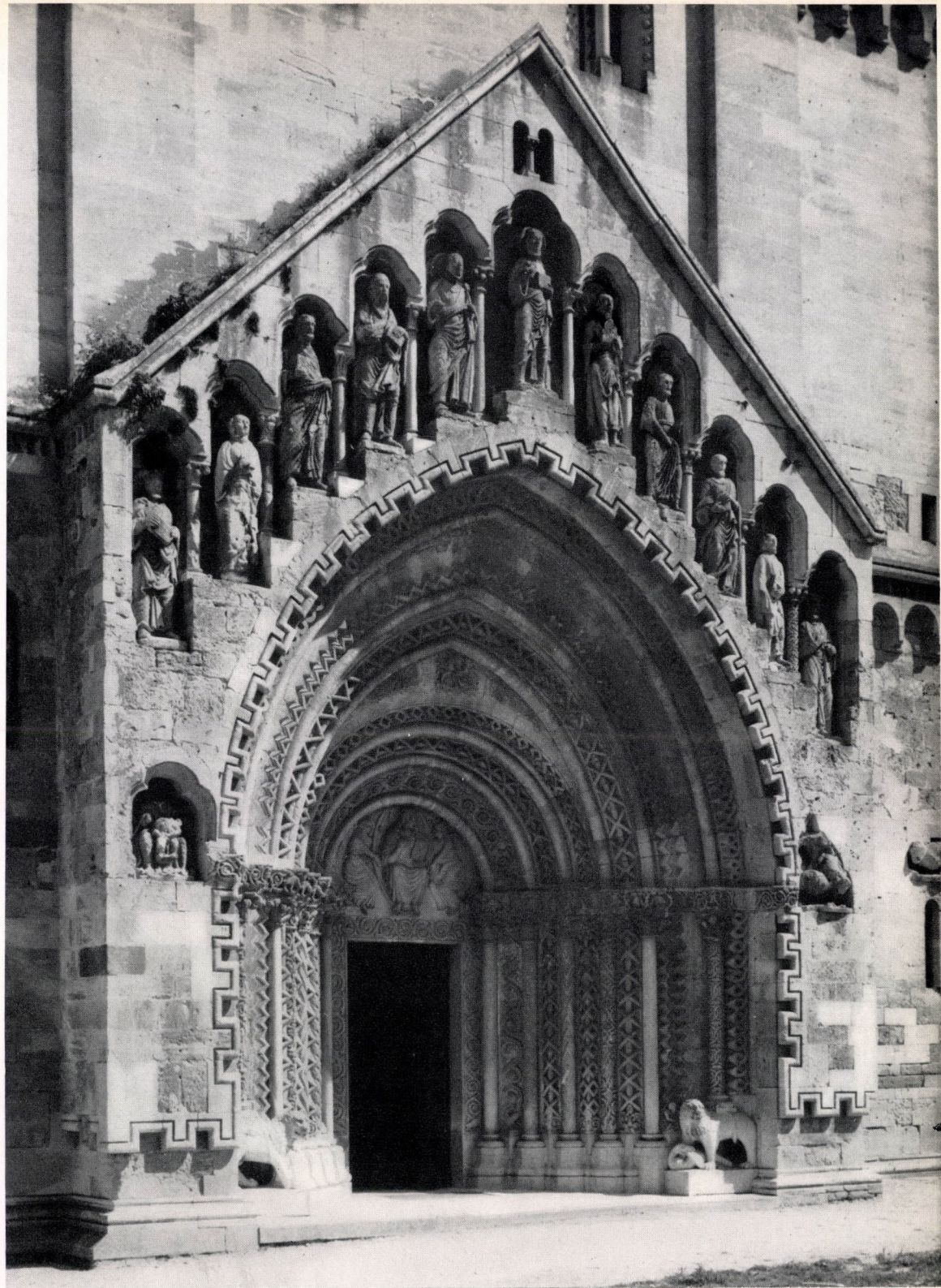
And, apart from the major buildings, there are small ones to put out students. Feldebrő is eleventh century and looks tenth; it is small and its plan links it with the out-of-the-way Carolingian Germigny-des-Prés near Orléans which in its turn has Byzantine ancestors. Did it come to Hungary from the west or the east? And Felsőörs had a nave, aisles with a gallery over the aisles. They are in fact outer passages opening to the outside with twin windows almost at floor level. Westminster Abbey has something like this on the west side of the south transept. But that does not help. Why these outer arcades? Burials were found in them. I know no parallel anywhere, except S. Juan de Baños in northern Spain, and that is of the seventh century, and hence does not help either. So Felsőörs must be added to one's black list of problems refusing to be solved.

The thirteenth, fourteenth, early fifteenth centuries I will leave out here, thrilling as the royal castles of Buda, Esztergom and Visegrád have become thanks to the recent excavations and reconstructions (bouquet number three). The information recovered is prodigious, but the jobs at first must have been daunting for the Ancient Monuments Office. Just imagine Westminster Palace left in ruins after the fire of 1834 and Windsor Castle largely buried in the ground, and you will get an idea of the scale and the difficulties. What would we have done, and how would we have done it? The case of Clarendon near Salisbury is discouraging. Excavation of this, one of the most famous medieval royal palaces, started privately under the late Pro-

fessor Borenius in 1933. The recovery of the plan was very exciting. Then the war came, and since then all has gone back to the natural state. Trees grow where the excavators had worked. The Ministry of Works looked on and did not move. What a scandal it really is was only brought home to me examining the perfectly exposed and labelled recovery of Visegrád, a group of buildings on a most complicated plan and with many unexpected features. They reconstruct more freely in Hungary than we would. If the profiles and curvature of a rib vault are known, they are ready to rebuild it. It is the principle on which the Greek re-erect columns of the Parthenon. No rebuilding, unless all details are certain. But where they are, let a hall—e.g., in Buda Castle—re-emerge which had not been seen for centuries.

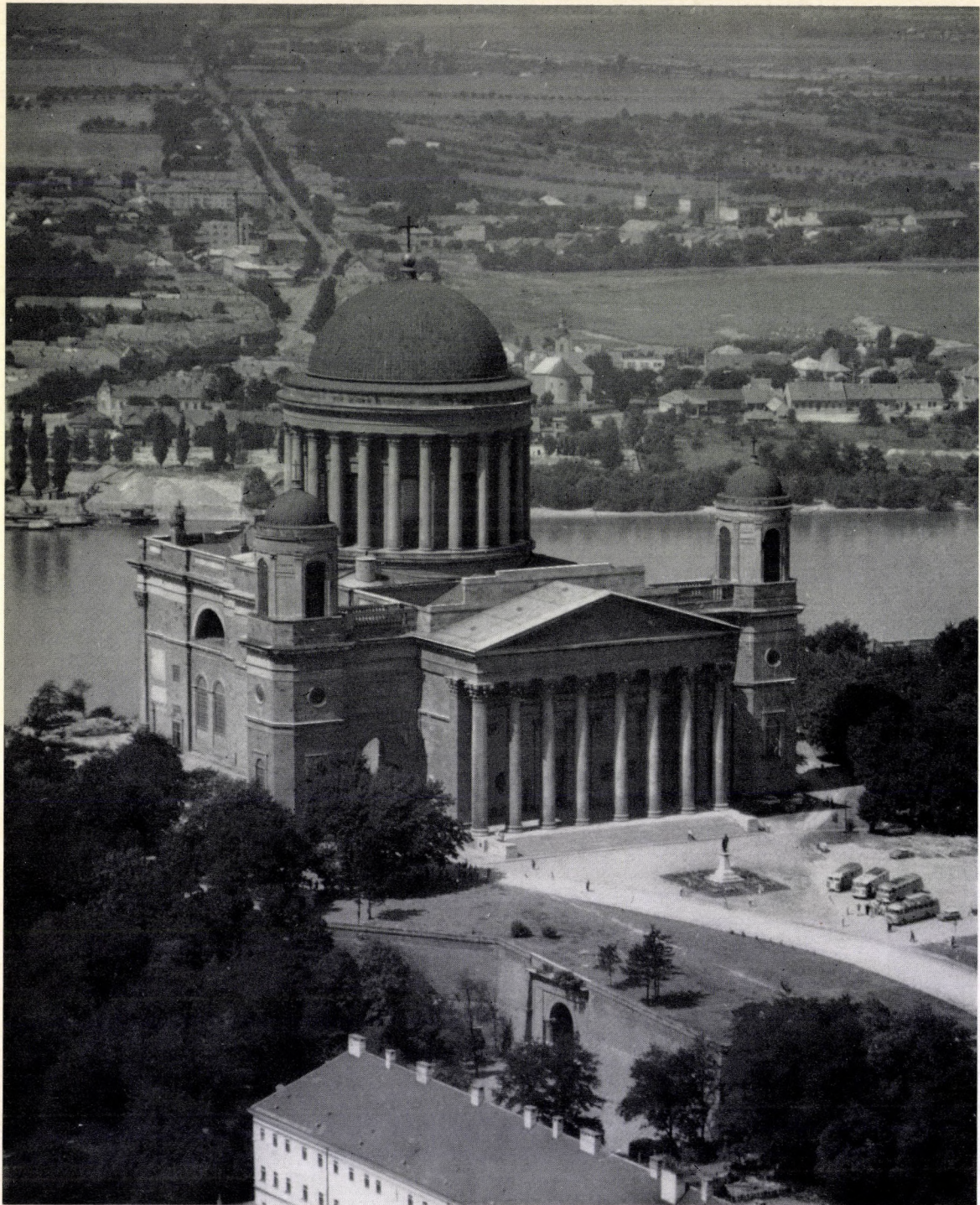
Both in Buda and at Visegrád the climax of royal building came under Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungarian blood, who ruled from 1458 to 1490. His queen came from Naples and belonged to the house of Aragon, but he seems to have discovered for himself the superior beauty of the Italian Renaissance before he married her. This is a fact of outstanding European importance; for Hungary is the first country outside Italy to turn to the new mode *all'antica*. Italian bits in the painting and illumination of Jean Fouquet in France we can leave out of consideration, and also a chapel built at Marseilles by a Dalmatian sculptor in 1475–81. It is true that Matthias, e.g., at Visegrád, did not object to pointed arches and patterned rib-vaults of the German type, but in the same courtyard which is bordered by this arcading is a fountain of red marble which is perfectly Italian, derived as Matthias's other works in the new style from Florence and Urbino. The red marble (so-called marble) endows it with a special character, rich and at the same time robust. At Esztergom and in Buda much in this style has been found, exquisite fragments, ornamented as well as figured. All this is of before 1490. By 1507 at Esztergom Cathedral there is a whole chapel, entirely of the Renaissance. That is earlier than the Fugger Chapel at Augsburg, and any complete Renaissance interior in France, let alone England. It is vain to speculate what qualified Hungary for this early appreciation. Of course, the artists and craftsmen were mostly, perhaps all, Italians. But what brought them, what kept them?

The quality of the fragments is high, candelabra motifs on pilasters, a dolphin here, putti there, nudes, wreaths, acanthus scrolls. One can admire them at close quarters; for they are placed in museums of which that in Buda on the castle hill, the *Vár*, is a model of unpretentious but modern display. I found the same (bouquet number four) in the small local museums at Szombathely, at Vác, at Szentendre. Good display cases, Finnish lighting, instructive captions. I have a feeling that if one English town as small as



ENTRANCE OF THE JÁK CHAPEL

(13th Century)



ESZTERGOM CATHEDRAL
(19th Century)

these was to re-furnish a museum like the Roman Museum of Szombathely, we would at once put a picture or two into *The Architectural Review*.

Of Baroque churches I saw many, all Austrian in inspiration, and none of the first order. Baroque portals of town houses also derive straight from Vienna, and the *maison de plaisance* of Ráckeve was in fact built for Prince Eugene of Savoy by Hildebrandt himself as early as 1702. It is the climax in quality of the Late Baroque in Hungary, as far as I could judge, but the climax in quantity is without any doubt Fertőd, the Esterházy palace in the countryside close to the Austrian border. This is bigger than Castle Howard and Wentworth Woodhouse, in bulk if not in length, and it is alas not very good. In the links between centre and wings for instance there are pilasters carrying a pediment and then continuing above the pediment, as if nothing had happened. The double-flight outer staircase to the *piano nobile* on the other hand has quite some swagger.

Fertőd was completed after 1760. Vác Cathedral was begun in 1761. The architect, Isidore Canevale, came from a family originally near Como, one of those Lombard families of itinerant mason-decorators, like the Carlone, who had appeared regularly in Germany and Austria ever since the seventeenth century and been responsible for town palaces, country houses and churches. Many of them were *stuccadori* only (and some of them, such as Bagutti and Artari went as far west as England), but others designed such monumental buildings as the Czernin Palace in Prague and indeed the older Esterházy Palace at Eisenstadt (Kismarton) across the Austrian border from Fertőd. Isidore Canevale, as it happened, was born at Vincennes near Paris but had moved to Vienna in 1760, where later he did much good work. If the façade of Vác Cathedral is really a design of 1761, then Vác is of much more than Hungarian interest. Such a portico of detached columns, and such a heavy attic on it, without any pediment, and such a pair of short square towers are every bit as up-to-date as St. Sulpice in Paris, as it was finally given the upper parts of its façade in 1770-7 by Chalgrin and only the fact that the interstices between the columns are not even, i.e., that the entrance axis is a little wider, echoes the Baroque. The rest is pure Classical Revival, rare in church design in the early sixties anywhere outside England and the Veneto. The interior of Vác Cathedral is less radical.

After this monumental beginning the Classical Revival carried on in Hungary with undiminished impetus. The climax in purity and competence is Mihály Pollak's National Museum of 1836 i.e., a late work, and one visibly influenced by Schinkel who was nearly ten years younger than he. But the climax visually is without any doubt the cathedral of Esztergom, designed in the early twenties by a lesser man, Johann Baptist Packh from

Eisenstadt, and completed after Packh's early death by József Hild as late as the fifties. The interior details show the turn from the classical to what we would call the Early Victorian. The façade is superb, again as impressive as any neo-classical church façade anywhere in Europe. If it were in Paris, tourists would count it among—as the travel books say—their musts. It is also a very successful solution to a very serious problem of church design: how to combine two façade towers and a portico with a dominant dome. Wren at St. Paul's Cathedral has given us one solution making the west towers prominent and Baroque and placing the classical dome so far further east that it does not play a part in the façade. This of course was the same at St. Peter's in Rome, as long as Bernini's façade towers stood, the so-called donkey's ears. Soufflot in the Panthéon has given his solution, by not playing the game and leaving out façade towers. Schinkel in the Nikolaikirche at Potsdam reduced the façade towers to small corner turrets. Esztergom has really the best solution. The dome with its ring of many only just detached columns and its exactly hemispherical cap is near enough the façade to dominate it, the portico of six splendid giant Corinthian columns stands well beneath it, and the façade towers are pushed outside, separated from the façade proper even by two high archways in a linking bay. Thus each part in a typically neo-classical way keeps its independence, and yet the whole is not bitty but perfectly unified. Moreover, the whole composition is set at the end of a long, straight and rising axis. There are few churches of the early nineteenth century that can be considered in competition with Esztergom, St. Isaac's Cathedral and the Kasan Cathedral at St. Petersburg perhaps and S. Francesco di Paola in Naples, but what else? The side elevation is decidedly behind the scenes, and the end elevation above the Danube is more traditional. And as for the interior, Hild's other cathedral, that at Eger is purer and more novel. It has a dome halfway from entrance to apse, and nave and chancel are given tunnel-vaults on rows of detached columns carrying straight entablatures, not arches—a demand made by classicists ever since Laugier and Soufflot.

These neo-classical buildings are really—Europeanly speaking—the most central ones of Hungary. The façades of Vác and Esztergom ought not to be missing in any history of Western architecture. They are—need I add—of course missing from mine. As for the last hundred years Budapest ought also to be at least mentioned in such general books; for it is during the years between about 1890 and 1914 that Pest received its present face and the river front its two principal accents, the dome and long stretched-out front of the Royal Palace on the Buda side, and the Houses of Parliament on the Pest side, the one Baroque, the other a belated Gothic follower of our Houses of Parliament in London and the Vienna Town Hall. The first is

by Ybl, the second by Steindl, both Hungarians, but both trained in Vienna. Neither was in my opinion of European calibre. But Lechner was, the architect of the Museum of Decorative Art and the Postal Savings Bank, the museum on the way from historicism to an independent style, the bank entirely independent and almost up to the Gaudí standard. In the museum Lechner paraphrases with profuse inventiveness Gothic motifs outside and Moorish inside. The façade of the Postal Savings Bank has gables of curvaceous outlines, much play with the possibilities of brickwork and window reveals and soffits set out with coloured fayence. The central hall inside is too small, but has lantern lighting with window shapes so unconventional that one has to look forward to Le Corbusier's Ronchamp to find their like. So here once more is a building in Hungary which is Europeanly memorable.

I should go on from here to the Early Modern of Lajta's house in the Martinelli Square and to recent industrial buildings in the countryside, but I must not try to fill a whole issue of *The New Hungarian Quarterly*. Moreover, I have just read what I have written, and it sounds like a puff for Hungary. Yet every sentence is to the best of my knowledge true. Perhaps in their excavations they reconstruct (as against preserve) a little more than I would—but then we excavate far too little and reconstruct too little too. So to grumble I would have to go on to such mundane matters as lavatory paper innocent of any perforation and hence resulting in long streamers of limited usefulness partly inside their container, partly thrown on the floor by disappointed customers, or I would have to report the occasional agonies of slide projection, an inexhaustible subject, and the breakdown of the Volga car far away from any garage and replaced finally after four hours by a rescue action direct from Budapest. However, as our plane reached London Airport, the great British Commonwealth had forgotten that one needs a staircase on wheels to descend, and it took fifteen minutes to get one. So who are we, and in any case what are such *contretemps* as against Visegrád Palace and Esztergom Cathedral and Lechner Ödön?

MOVEMENT AND SPACE

The Sculpture of Tibor Vilt

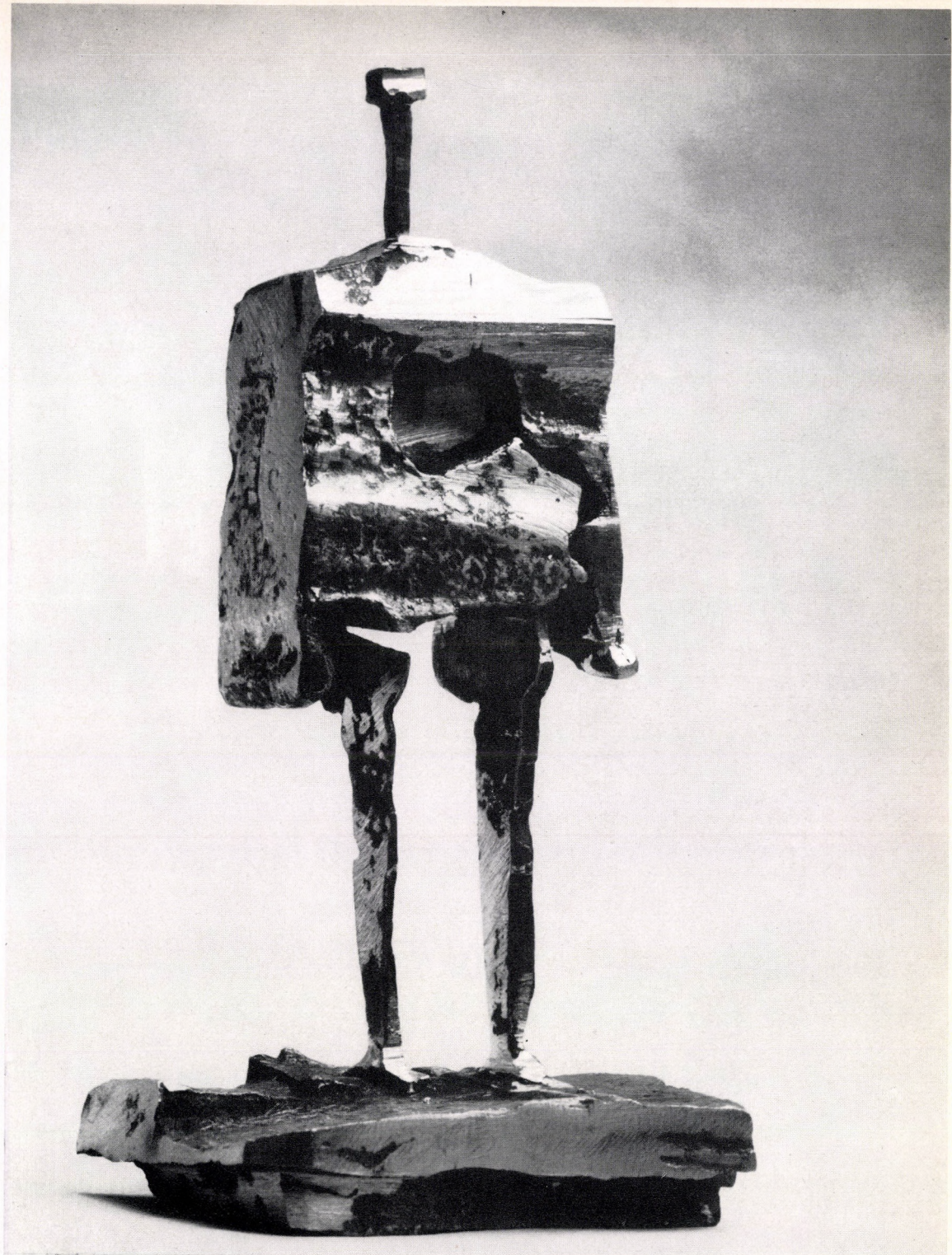
by

ÉVA KÖRNER

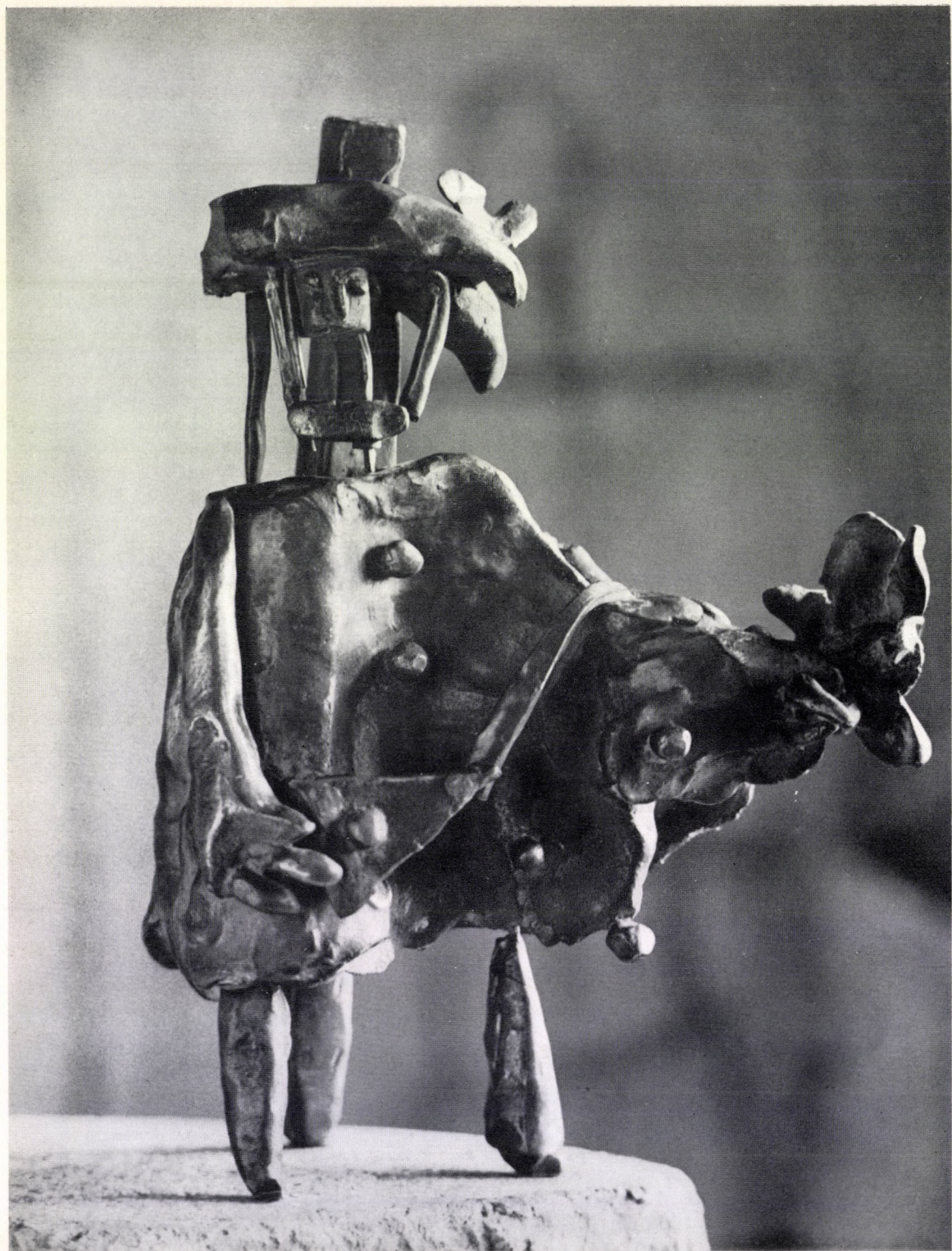
“**W**hat higher aim could I have had—and still have—than to realize—as it is always realized in Nature—a structural cohesion without loss of diversity. The need to harmonize these contradictory aspects in the sphere of art is usually revealed in the consistent quest of the artist after appropriate means of expression.

“... I do not opt out of society in joining the community of artists who work with structures in space that is, of those who, in their work are aware of belonging to the great structure of the world—a community that, knowing no national boundaries, plays its part in advancing the welfare of mankind. To “work with structures in space” means—in the workshop, before the easel, at the sculptor’s stand—to sweep from the path of society the cobweb of romantic superstition woven about works of art and to remove the remains of the passive attitude propagated by romantic art. We must ignore all secondary motifs and concentrate on the structure latent and inherent in the work of art, in order that it should subserve the truly valuable human elements in us and improve man’s lot, throughout the world no less than in our own country. Our task is not to express a transient imperfect stage of society, but to devote ourselves to taking full possession of our own potentialities and realizing them through the symbol of structure. In no other way can art develop into action, least of all in chasing after the Blue Bird of Happiness.” (Passage from a statement by Tibor Vilt in the September 1956 issue of *Szabad Művészet*—“Free Art.”)

Tibor Vilt reached maturity as a sculptor in the second half of the 'twenties, a time that was far from favourable to powerful and independent personalities interested in the real issues facing art rather than in the plastic reproduction of false conceptions. Hungarian fascism—well ahead of its German counterpart—sought, through an aggressive cultural policy, to make even the arts subservient to its ideology. His first works—the finest example

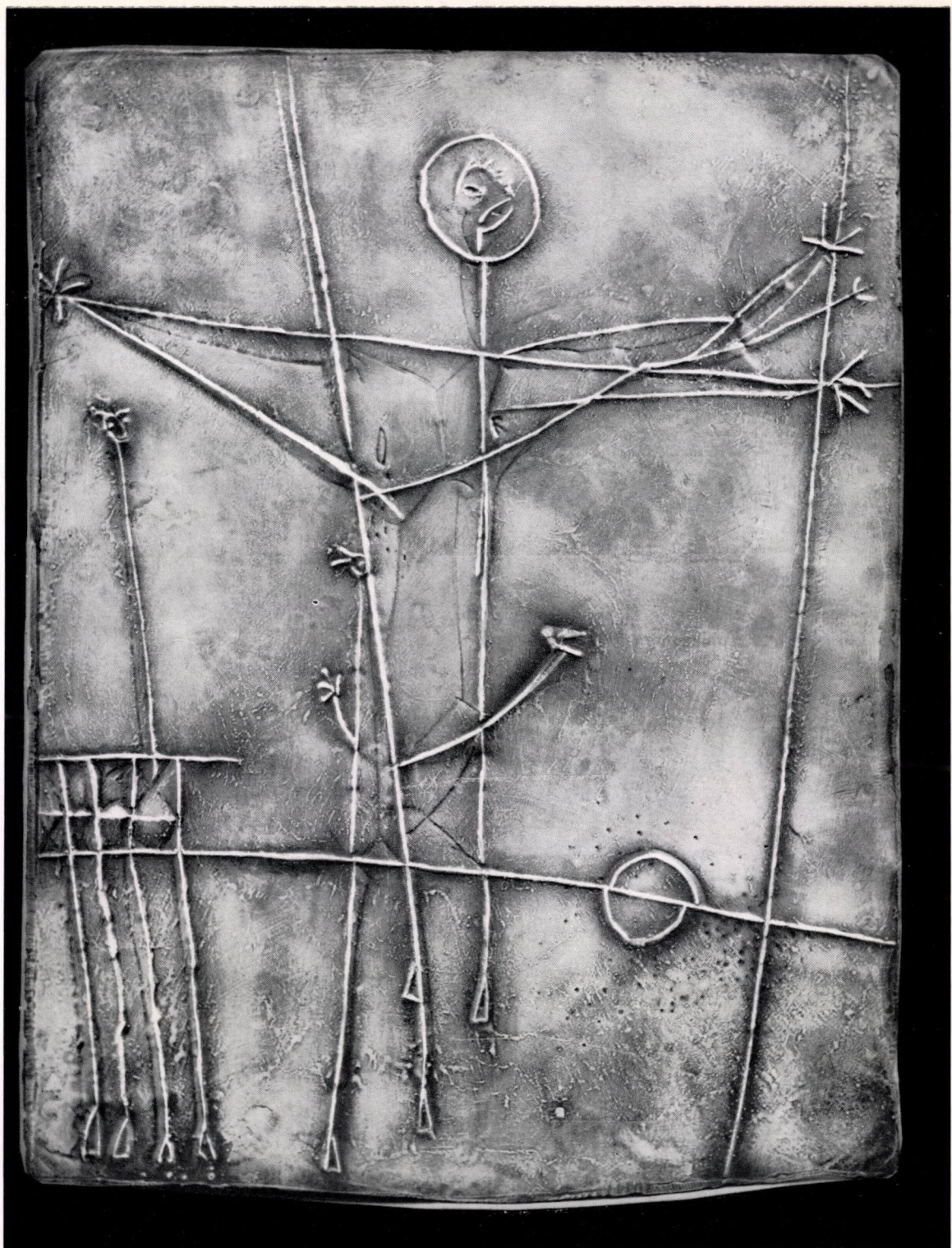


TIBOR VILT : BRONZE



TIBOR VILT: CLOWN WITH FLOWER

(Bronze)



TIBOR VILT: "CRUCIFIX"

(Copper, silvered)



TIBOR VILT : HUMAN FIGURE WITH A CHAIR
(Bronze)

of which is the self-portrait in wood dating back to 1926—evidently aroused the attention of the cultural organs in search of likely recruits, for he was awarded the Rome scholarship, which not only acquainted young Hungarian artists with the works of classical art, but at that time also with examples of Mussolini's *novecento*. The few decorative pieces of sculpture however, for which he was commissioned by the state after his return, found no favour in official eyes, even though he had been compelled to adapt himself to the current pseudo-modern style.

Faced with their grandiose and inflated ideals of man, life and beauty, the young artist, repelled by everything that was classical, regular and symmetrical, groped his way in a frenzied search in the opposite direction. His ever-changing art was based on one latent ideal—the human world—at first the inner world of the individual, then the wider world in which man is an organic part of a greater entity.

Unwilling and unable to satisfy official demands, Tibor Vilt set out to build a career of his own. The prevalent political and economic circumstances compelled every sculptor anxious to safeguard his artistic freedom to restrict himself to a purely private market—and consequently, to small figures. This, indeed, was what happened with Hungarian avant-garde sculpture, barred by the powers that be from access to, and reactions from, the public.

As already mentioned, it was in 1926 that Vilt created his famous self-portrait, at the age of twenty-one. Its rigorous simplicity is reminiscent of antique sculpture, though it lacks the robust tranquillity of the Egyptian model which it resembles. Vilt's Italian studies in classical art (1928-30), far from proving an obstacle, made him aware of numerous unexplored possibilities in form, material and expression, but it took some time to convert this knowledge into practice. The early 'thirties were still a period of experiment, marked chiefly by sculptured heads expressing introvert reverie and expectation. The form, however, soon became "restless." His broken and jagged "After the War," is infused with a sense of irrepressible restlessness. "Meditation" and "A Human Couple" are the embodiment of fear. Even when his interest in a theme was purely aesthetic, the end result was feverish and agitated. He became absorbed in the study of movement as an aspect of plastic art. To use his own words, he wished to create "the form produced by movement but chained down in space and incapable of breaking out of the limits set by space. It is this dissonant tension in the figure, and its forcible return to itself, that gives harmony to a piece of sculpture." The smooth surfaces of his sculpture indeed appear to vibrate, as if roughly handled, and the harmoniously linked forms swing into feverish, increas-

ingly unrestrained and dissonant movement. In the 'forties the surfaces of his sculpture displayed a rough and irregular texture, the forms were swollen and convex, revealing the inner wound; the war and its horrors had matured Tibor Vilt's plastic imagination.

This dramatic expressionism, centred on the human figure, inspired the best Hungarian artists of the period in sculpture and painting alike, as Bokros Birman, Kerényi, Vajda, Ámos, Dési Huber and Gadányi bear witness. This kind of expressionism was characteristic of Hungarian art in the 'forties, as it had been from time to time previously, whenever the struggle for integrity in art against academic convention became acute. Expressionism had already been in vogue in the 1910's when the Hungarian avant-garde was at war with academic naturalism; and once again after a lost war and a lost revolution—though much more slowly among the sculptors than the financially more independent painters. In sculpture expressionism was a reaction to an officially supported classicism, whose irrelevance to a society that had lost its basis and was drifting towards destruction was becoming more and more apparent.

During the inter-war years this trend, which stripped off the surface of things and destroyed false illusions, dominated the plastic art in Hungary. It centred its attention upon man—upon the intrinsic nature of man, upon man betrayed by society, upon man defying betrayal. In this period, overshadowed by the basic problem of survival, the choice of sculptural subject could not extend to the more general connections between man and nature. Problems of pure art of the kind raised by Brancusi, Arp or Moore would have been out of place. It was by no means chance that László Moholy Nagy created his abstract constructions in space abroad, in emigration; at home the intellectual and material conditions for such experiments were completely lacking.

A ruthlessly sincere dissection of the ego and the world, the rejection of every smooth compromise, constant change as opposed to the outdated conventions of classicism, freedom of movement and form in search of genuine expression—these characteristics of Tibor Vilt's work in the 'thirties and 'forties were at the same time characteristic of Hungarian plastic art as a whole.

Even after the Second World War the dramatic tension of Vilt's art did not slacken. Plastically and emotionally "Figure and Chair," on which he worked for the ten years from 1945 to 1955, is a direct continuation of the solitary male figures he modelled during the war. But as conditions became more normal the range of his interests and themes expanded. His pre-occupation with the representation of man, and chiefly of the ego, in isolation,

were complemented by attempts to reproduce Man's relations with Nature. Here a more relaxed experimental trend is already evident. A restless agitation again and again gives way to calm contemplation, even to serenity.

It is mainly in his reliefs, a form he frequently uses, that he prefers to attack the relationship between man as a physical being and the outside world, including the natural and cultural environment. For the most part he is inspired by some direct experience, though his own scientific interest in the laws of nature also plays its part to the extent that the "constants" disengaged from a hidden law give stable support to accidents of phenomena ("Reflection in a Mirror"). In some of his reliefs and small bronze figures, however, he penetrates beyond primary forms and surfaces, and, abandoning purely scientific criteria intuitively, reveals a host of associative elements ("The Crucifix," "The Worrier," "The Night"). The fine-drawn lines on the one hand, and the blocked masses on the other, have a threefold significance; there is the primary, objective meaning; there is the use of association—the invocation of some subjective memory or suggestion of another subject, another substance—and, finally, there is the purely plastic meaning unconnected with subject-matter. He is free-ranging in his choice of materials—such as the bone, wire and gypsum of the "Head," the painted gypsum and wire of "Anatomy," or of the cork of "The Cock," the products of a light experimental mood.

His sense of structure asserts itself particularly in his large-scale figures. In its proportions and movement the huge, running female figure adorning the Tiszalök Power Plant (1956–57) is "the complex expression of all active forces," geometrically constructed in the Renaissance manner on the basis of exact calculations.

The interchanging, contradictory—yet mutually complementary—attitudes, which for the last fifteen years have shaped Tibor Vilt's work, are summed up in "The Clown." This century-old symbol, which has served many an artist as a means of disguised self-confession and self-revelation, also serves to personify Tibor Vilt. Like the clown, he unites reality with fantasy, dissolves tragedy into comedy, expresses bitter truths with a smile, and, with the expert gesture of the clown, hints at exciting depths under the smooth surface.

THE BITTER BREW

by

VILMOS FARAGÓ

After a professional career as a writer of poetry and fiction for nearly thirty years, Cseres, at fifty, has suddenly leapt to national fame. His work has long been noted for a tone of vivid realism, dramatic tension and vigorous, full-blooded characterisation, and he has been responsible for several very successful radio scripts. Yet real fame has only now come his way: his short novel "Cold Days"* has created a literary sensation and given rise to considerable political controversy. The second edition was sold out in a matter of weeks, and critics have been unanimous in their judgment of the work. "Cold Days," they are agreed, is the most overpowering indictment of the Hungarian fascism of the Horthy régime to see the light of day.

The historical event which forms the subject of Cseres's novel, put briefly, is that in January 1942, at Novi Sad (Újvidék), in the northern plains of Yugoslavia, with a predominantly Hungarian minority population, the Hungarian fascist gendarmerie and Hungarian army troops detailed to collaborate with the gendarmes murdered 3,300 of the civilian population, Serbs, Jews and Hungarians. The events which led up to the massacre are as follows:

November 20, 1940: The Hungarian Government, under the leadership of the

Prime Minister, Count Teleki, signed a pact aligning itself with the Axis Powers—Germany, Italy and Japan.

March 12, 1941: Count Teleki signed a Hungarian-Yugoslav Pact of "everlasting friendship" in Belgrade. This move was supported by Hitler, as he needed a "loyal" Yugoslavia allied with Hungary and Germany to implement his Balkan plans.

March 25, 1941: Yugoslavia joined the Three-Power Pact.

The following day, however, the pro-German Yugoslav government was overthrown. Hitler at once decided to occupy Yugoslavia. The road to Yugoslavia led directly across Hungary, and feverish negotiations with the Hungarians followed. Hitler insisted that the Hungarian army should actively participate in the invasion, and offered Hungary in compensation Yugoslav territories which had once been Hungarian. Teleki reminded him of the recently concluded Pact of "everlasting friendship," but on the other hand, he found it difficult to resist the bait of territorial aggrandizement.

March 30, 1941: Count Teleki sent secret messages to London and Washington in the absurd hope of securing connivance for a Hungarian invasion of Yugoslavia.

April 2, 1941: London replied that if the Hungarian army joined the Germans in invading Yugoslavia, the British Government would break off diplomatic relations with Hungary.

* *Hideg Napok* ("Cold Days"), by Tibor Cseres, Magvető Publishing House, Budapest, 1965, 201 pp. Part of the novel appears on p. 60.

April 3, 1941: Premier Count Teleki committed suicide. The German troops reached Budapest en route to Yugoslavia, and raced on southward.

April 11, 1941: Following in the wake of the Germans, Hungarian army troops crossed the border into Yugoslavia, and occupied areas of the Vojvodina region that the Germans had offered Hungary.

The Pact of "everlasting friendship" thus remained in force for less than a month. During the first days of the occupation, the Hungarian fascist army murdered 2,300 civilians. The reaction of the Yugoslav people was to take to guerrilla action. The Hungarian fascist army and the gendarmerie launched a joint "mopping-up" operation. At Zsablya, early in January 1942, 400 people, including women and children, were massacred—the children because they "might take revenge after they had grown up." After the massacre at Zsablya, others at Csurog, Mosorin, Ó-Gyurgyevó, Titel and Óbecse followed with a total of more than 2,000 dead.

January 15, 1942: The Hungarian army authorities in the occupied territories requested permission to extend the "mopping-up" operations to Novi Sad, the county town of the Vojvodina.

January 19, 1942: The Bárdossy Government granted permission.

January 21, 1942: "Mopping-up" operations began at Novi Sad.

They continued for three days. In the depth of winter, the massacre was continued with bestial cruelty. The Hungarian fascists lacked the methodic qualities of the Germans; there was only one valid principle throughout the operation: all civilians were *ipso facto* suspect. Corpses littered the streets, the bodies of whole families wiped out lay disregarded in their homes. Unsuspecting passengers alighted from trains to be seized by waiting gendarmes. A haphazard "identity check," and they were pushed onto trucks and sent off in batches to the bank of the Danube. Large holes had been cut in

the ice, the victims were lined up before them—and the light machine guns began their work. The ice-holes swallowed the corpses; those cast up by the black waters, were pushed back under the ice with carriage-poles.

And the story of the novel? Four soldiers—three officers and one corporal—share a prison cell in the summer of 1946 when the war is over. Slowly the whole picture of the frightful massacre emerges from the self-exculpating conversations of the four prisoners, adding up, against all will and intention, to a tremendous and devastating indictment. They were not the chief criminals. The major guilt lay with General Feketehalmy-Czeidner and his willing henchman Colonel Grassy. The prisoners in the cell were merely tools—like the majority of Hungarians who had been dragged into fascism and the war. Yet this is precisely the reason why the novel has created such a stir; it has goaded the Hungarian people further in the painful task of self-knowledge; it calls to account those who are anxious to forget that even as mere tools they were party to the crime. It shocks into a horrified realization of complicity the public which at the time silently dismissed rumours of the horrors as propaganda, and is now, either oblivious of the past or self-deceiving, only too eager to whitewash what was one of the darkest periods in Hungarian history. It seems twenty years have had to elapse, and a new generation grow up, before Hungary was ready for such soul-searching. Not that "Cold Days" is the only one of its kind, nor is this sort of Hungarian literature unique in contemporary international writing. It is part of the cathartic process which has been equally apparent in German, Italian and Japanese literature.

For the Hungarian soldiers who took part in this operation those three days, then described as justifiable reprisals, were a *carte blanche* for the lowest impulses of sadism, and for a surfeit of murder. The four characters in Cseres's novel represent different

types of Hungarian fascist soldiery. Corporal Szabó belongs to the species of "biddable brutes"; he was ordered to "shoot 'em," so he "shot 'em." Ensign Pozdor is a junior officer, compliant to the point of servility, suffering from a sense of inferiority on account of his peasant origin. Tarpataki, a junior officer in the Danube flotilla, regarded the whole business as a joint action of the infantry and the gendarmerie, and deliberately refrained from any attack on the civilian population, and even attempted to help them; yet for all his good intentions he became a party to the massacre of thousands of innocent people. Captain Büky would have carried out every order with the precision of the professional soldier but for the fact that the orders ran counter to service regulations, and that his own wife and little son were in the town. He had been compelled to hide the fact that his family were with him, because all officers stationed at Novi Sad had been forbidden visits from family and dependants by the town commandant. Captain Büky therefore found himself forced into sharing the agony of the local population.

The narrative builds up in double suspense; the three days of horror build up into a coherent whole from the monologues of the prisoners not only for the readers, but for the inmates of the cell themselves, none of whom had, or could have had, a comprehensive picture of what was happening in the town at the time. Mounting tension in the interwoven narratives of the three-day massacre, matching the mounting tension in the prison-cell; it is this interplay of double tension which generates the white heat of the whole.

Cseres deliberately foregoes any appeal to harrowing effects; no attempt is made to heighten the horror; his descriptions are matter-of-fact and precise, and he refrains

from all subjective comment, leaving his characters to speak for themselves—and the reader face to face with his own reactions and judgment.

Cseres's novel has been the subject of animated discussion among Hungarian critics. They have applauded his courage in choosing this national disgrace of recent Hungarian history for his theme, and for the literary qualities he has brought to the task. Critics have noted the skill of the author in revealing the provincial crudity of the Hungarian variant of fascism at the same time as the universally conformist mentality which may well sink, on occasion, to the level of the obedient tool. They have also stressed the heightened impact on the reader caused by the cool restraint of the style, the constant change of angle in the narrative, and a construction designed to lead inexorably to the tragic end.

What critics have failed to note is that this novel is not an exceptional, isolated achievement on the part of the author. It is the climax of an organic process: the final conclusion of many years of creative writing and experiment. In his former books he resorted to physically plain and unvarnished description, and its fruit can be seen in the graphically harsh scenes of "Cold Days." If in the past the ballad-like, elliptical shifts in his tales have proved disconcerting, their present use gives "Cold Days" a dramatic tautness. And the excessive sexuality in some of his stories, which appeared to have been introduced for its own sake, serves a proper purpose in "Cold Days"; it fulfils a gruesome psychological function in the soldiers' greedy stares glued to the women stripped of their clothes. And if in the past his extravagant situations seemed unrealistic and far-fetched, they acquire purpose and meaning on the frozen Danube at Novi Sad, where truth outstripped imaginable unreality.

COLD DAYS

Part of a novel

by

TIBOR CSERES

It is the summer of 1946. For a number of months, four men, one-time members of the Hungarian armed forces, have found themselves imprisoned in the same cell. Their conversation—revealing mutual distrust, based largely on divergencies in military rank and social status—gradually turns to the role each of them played in the three-day massacres at Novi Sad in January 1942.

Captain Büky, speaking in a low voice mainly to his two fellow officers (Corporal Szabó thereby misses much of what he says), gives vent to his detestation of the garrison commander, Grassy, on account of his orders prohibiting married men from visiting their wives, and vice versa. Of his three cell-mates Tarpataki (himself married) alone has an inkling of the real motivation of the captain's anger: Büky's own wife and little son had secretly come from their home in Győr (Northwestern Hungary) before Christmas and were still illegally with him at his private quarters when the massacres began. Prior to their arrival—Büky admits—he had had an affair with the wife of his Jewish landlord. The basement of Büky's lodgings was occupied by Milena, of Serbian origin, whose husband had been drafted into the Yugoslav army the year before and not been heard from since.

From Ensign Pozdor's account it develops that he too had been stationed at Novi Sad for some time and had taken part in punitive actions against partisan (chetnik) groups. At the start of the three-day massacres he was placed in charge of army units assigned to assist the local gendarmerie and with headquarters at the Levente centre, a paramilitary youth organization. He leaves no doubt as to his approval of the punitive measures, though—on the first day—he did hasten to the station to protect his Serbian mistress returning from a visit to Budapest. On the second day he was given the task of supplying his units, engaged in the round-up, with tea and rum, but he also accompanied his chief and former fellow-student, Sanyi Képtéró, in making house searches and arrests, and in transporting prisoners to the sport stadium and to the Danube for execution.

Lieutenant Tarpataki arrived in Novi Sad only on the eve of the events and, unable to find suitable quarters, spent that night with a prostitute of non-Hungarian origin, named Betty, who, however, refused to accept pay from him. Put in charge of the military units at the railway station, he did what he could to preserve a semblance of order there. A state of emergency having been proclaimed, civilians appearing in the streets unaccompanied by men in uniform were shot at sight. Passengers from incoming trains were checked: those without—or with suspicious—papers were herded into lorries, the rest filled the station to overflowing; but Tarpataki managed to relieve the congestion slightly by getting a train or two started.

Corporal Szabó, without apparent twinges of conscience, tells of the increased involvement of himself and his unit (commanded by the callously brutal Corporal Dorner) in the various stages of the massacres.

The concluding portion of the novel, which follows below, covers the third and last day. Captain Büky had spent the preceding night on duty at Government House. (The Ed.)

BÜKY:

I had been waiting at the entrance to Government House since six a.m. I was standing behind the main watch, almost breathing down the guards' necks, waiting for daybreak. I'd had no idea there could be fog at that time of day. Where had it come from, that fog? From the frozen river, maybe. Never mind. It came just as dawn was about to spread over the square. But then it descended for all it was worth, and I had no choice but to wait.

I waited a long time; yet when I eventually set out, it was still so murky that, had it been dusk, I would never have dared move a stone's throw from the familiar sentries' field of vision.

I went along my customary route home, without running into a single identity check or challenge all the way. True, I duly kept to the middle of the road, in compliance with orders, my halter open, my pistol cocked. I had fully determined what to do, and that put guts into me and steadied my step.

At a street corner, a patrol hovered undecidedly. On catching sight of me, the men one by one turned to face me and, with arms raised in salute, waited for me to pass.

And I did pass, nonchalantly waving my hand in acknowledgement. At that moment, the thought crossed my mind: How would they take my not speaking to them? Might they not think I was a *chetnik* in disguise? They were not of my battalion, and so I simply had to say something.

"What's your detail, patrol leader?"

The non-com bounded forward one step and dutifully began rattling off his orders. The moment he began to speak, I saw that they were—or had been—up to some mischief. But no, I did not want to notice anything.

"See to it that there are no disturbances!" I snapped sternly. "Stick to your orders throughout!" And I strode on, so as to give them no chance of making some report and forcing me to issue orders.

I hadn't made up my mind about what I was going to do once I got to my place. I made straight for home, full of confidence. There I was greeted with such loud lamentations that, had I not seen and felt everybody to be whole and hearty, I should have thought somebody had died.

At midnight, I was told, a patrol had "made investigations" three doors from our house and taken with them the aged owner of the place, a little old Serbian who spoke good Hungarian.

The commotion in the neighbourhood had waked up my people. They had dressed, half expecting that it would be their turn next.

They had shaken my batman, usually sleeping like a log at that hour of

the night, out of his sleep and told him to get dressed and stand at the house-door—on the inside, of course. He would thus be on hand, in uniform and of soldierly bearing, ready to report—or, if need be, to protest—when the patrol came and pounded on the door.

But the comb-out party never turned up.

All the same, my man was quite unnerved by his responsibility, and only on my arrival did he regain his composure, heaving a deep sigh of relief.

The suspense and terror on the faces of my family told me at once what I had to do.

“All right, everybody,” I said. “We’re off to the railway station. This excitement’s too much for us.”

At that moment, I hated the town commandant so badly, I was burning with rage.

Zoltánka flung his arms around my neck.

“Dad,” he said. “You’re coming with us, aren’t you?”

My wife looked at me with eyes contracted from lack of sleep, expectantly and gratefully, and yet a bit puzzled. A faint gleam in her eyes seemed to say:

“You want to get me out of the way, don’t you, so you can start up with that woman again?!”

Zoltánka was clinging to one arm; the other I put around my wife.

“Dearest, don’t you see it’s too dangerous here?”

She nodded. Yes, she sensed the danger. And yet. . . I had touched on the subject early in January but, faced with her jealousy, had promptly desisted.

My experienced male eyes now read in her glance some mild reproach which said: “Do you want to make me jealous again? After having explained everything so neatly.”

True, the first days of her stay here had been taken up with my having to explain to her how unfounded her suspicions concerning the landlord’s wife had been.

It was Milena who unwittingly helped me to dispel them through drawing my wife’s attention to her wild, natural beauty. Dark-haired like my wife, she was somewhat shorter—my wife, indeed, was taller than I.

Contrary to the many lines I had devoted to the landlord’s wife, I had never mentioned Milena in any of my letters. This too served to nourish her new suspicion!

So my darling Rózsa kept her eye peeled grimly. This time, however, the landlord himself came to my rescue. I was unaware of it, for I was scarcely ever to be found in the house during the daytime. But it was precisely around

Christmas and New Year that my landlord, the commercial traveller, stayed at home quite a lot, and my wife, from her observation post at our window, noticed that he made surreptitious visits to Milena's flat in the basement, whose entrance gave onto the garden and thus was below our window.

It always happened when Milena's charming little daughter, Angyélika, left home on some errand or came up to us to play with the landlord's Ildikó and our Zoltánka. This took place quite often, since the two little girls of almost the same age got along very well with each other, and both of them worshipped our Zoltánka, who accepted their homage with natural male superiority as something that was his due.

"Couldn't we have Ildikó and her parents accompany and perhaps stay with us?" my wife turned to me imploringly.

"With us?"

"At Győr, if possible. Or they might come with us as far as Budapest. Surely they have friends in Budapest."

I saw no substantial objection to that.

"Certainly," I agreed in a soft, caressing voice.

We packed up right away, and Ildikó and her mother also bundled up their most necessary belongings. The landlord merely lent them a hand. That too seemed reasonable, for, after all, somebody had to stay behind to take care of the house.

Until then, I had pooh-poohed my wife's love conjecture. Now, however, as I observed Milena's eyes resting on our landlord, they were bright with a woman's warm gratitude towards her faithful lover.

Now, I again considered my wife's logic, and wondered how it could fail to take the short leap to the conclusion: what an easy pray a deceived wife must be to me!

However, I did not like to think of that myself.

Well, we must have made an odd-looking caravan. I opened the procession, along with Zoltánka, who took great fancy that year to wearing a plumed Bocskai cap.

Behind us came the two women, arm in arm, with little Ildikó snuggling against my wife on the other side. I had a good mind, at that moment, to put my darling to the blush for all her former anti-Semitism: Well, well! What a difference practice, actual experience, could make!

My batman brought up the rear, lugging, indeed almost dragging along, two heavily laden trunks. There was more luggage at home, but no one to carry it; so we men had persuaded our prospective refugees to leave it behind.

"Do you know what that man wanted to do?" my little boy said suddenly, squealing on the landlord, the one person who throughout his stay there had

been least nice to him. "He wanted to put on your coat, the one with the ribbons and medals. Your medals! But the lady wouldn't let him, and she said to him, 'Come, Ármin,' she said; 'they'd just look at you and know at once it isn't yours!'"

I had some difficulty in diverting my little son's attention from the danger that had threatened my tunic; he was very proud and sensitive about my ribboned decorations.

As we went along he began to feel cold and was glad when we came into the stinking, thick warmth of the railway station.

Nobody spoke to us on the way, though we ran into a truckload of gendarmes. They gaped at us in astonishment, but our wise and well-considered battle order gave them a jolt: as advance-guard—the male élite; a rear-guard consisting of the infantry with pack; and the bulk—all women!

This mental picture had almost succeeded in cheering me up by the time we approached the station. Once there, however, we wasted about two hours, during which occasional gleams of hope were extinguished as suddenly as they sprang to life.

"No trains leaving today," was the reply echoed by everybody. I looked for the station-master, but he was not at his office. So I asked all available railwaymen, mostly engine drivers, and learned that there was little, if anything, to prevent trains from leaving. After all, they were arriving, from almost every direction, and no orders had been issued to stop departures. Two or three trains had indeed left the day before. (There were also hints that the second or third train had returned after dropping most of its passengers.) Some of the engine drivers looked as if they were merely waiting for an order to go ahead. One of them even said to me: "If you'd stand by my side on the engine, Captain, we could leave this very moment!"

All were highly excited and gesticulated without the least show of respect.

As word of my activity got about, the crowd was thrown into a veritable travel fever. All around people were whispering and shouting about instructions, permits and orders that had supposedly been issued by various sources. Pushing my way through the increasingly dense throng (as more trains pulled in), I knew for sure that all the good news of escape that went round the railway station had originated with me, and I realized that the danger must be grave indeed.

I accommodated my people (I might say, the inmates of my house) near the exit. There they could partake of the human warmth that filled the station and also satisfy the human need for fresh air.

"Don't leave us, dear," my wife implored.

"Don't leave us here, please," my landlady said, throwing me, for the first time perhaps, an amorously despondent look.

The two children were clutching my coat on either side.

I left them under my batman's protection and went off to argue endlessly with complete strangers: stokers, railwaymen, soldiers, gendarmes, engine drivers.

This was a mistake. In such a situation, a captain had to yell and act.

My mind was at ease, for I saw few gendarmes about the place. And oddly enough, I cannot remember seeing a single river guard. Looking back, and knowing the facts, this seems incomprehensible.

Fool that I was, it took me an eternity before I realized that the one person I had to see about getting trains started was the RTO. I was just looking for him when several cars stopped outside the exit. Scenting danger, I abandoned my search and elbowed my way through the crowd back to where I saw my batman's head looming above the multitude.

Of a sudden the throng parted, as two gendarmes, shouting "Way!" in stentorian voices, opened a lane. I alone had the face to remain in the middle of the lane, for it was Colonel Grassy who, a moment later, started down it, followed by his ADC (I knew the fellow: he too was a captain), both of them in fur-lined greatcoats.

Stepping slightly to one side, I stiffened to attention.

But Grassy stopped next to me and severely looked me up and down.

"What are you doing here, captain?"

"Beg to report, sir, I have something to attend to," I whispered, almost menacingly.

His eyebrows rose in astonishment.

"Follow me!" he too whispered, if anything more menacingly, and instantly turned away from me. "Where is that first lieutenant?" he asked his ADC.

They moved on, and I followed them, without a single glance back. Not once did I look back, for fear I might be changed into a pillar of salt. I stalked along behind those two, in stunned humiliation, hearing nothing, seeing nothing. My only thought was not to give my wife away. I must not even mention her before this lecherous bachelor. As we stood looking in each other's eyes for a moment, I felt almost sure he knew she was in town and that he would make me suffer for it. All the more reason not to drop the slightest hint about my family.

From time to time we stopped, and the colonel asked questions and gave orders in a muffled voice, then the three of us pushed on, preceded by the two gendarmes.

The real shock came as we reached the open space outside the station through the side-exit, and the cars came round to pick us up.

My wife—I had wanted so much to catch another glimpse of her!

I got into the gendarmes' car, in front, next to the driver. Behind me sat two men with submachine guns. As yet, this did not strike me as ominous; indeed, I even felt relieved at not having to reply to Colonel Grassy's questions.

The streets were silent, deserted.

Inside Government House, Grassy dismissed me without a word. Like one who had graciously forgiven me my fault or forgotten about it.

I went to the office I had occupied the day before, dropped my head on the desk, and wept with shame.

Half an hour or so later, in popped my batman. He reported he had taken the trunks and escorted the ladies and the children back to the house. He brought me my midday meal too.

I rose, hugged him, then continued to weep. But I soon stopped, as the food in the dinner pail was still steaming.

I ate with relish and only afterwards dismissed my batman, who had patiently watched me tuck in, bite after bite.

"Now go back," I told him, thoroughly calmed, "and see that everything is in order."

As I went out into the corridor in search of the toilet, I noticed a lot of coming and going.

The voices, the hectic bustle, the scraps of words, all boiled down to this: that it was impossible to preserve my method of retreat any longer. Quite so, I thought, and perceived my batman standing at attention in the turning of the corridor, a frown on his face as he desperately tried to find some meaning in the unholy hubbub. He'd never shown any sign of inquisitiveness. He was a real gentleman. On spotting me, he thumped his heel—like my son's rabbit when I tried to catch it—raised his chin and blinked guiltily.

"It's all right," I said. "Nothing the matter. But now get going and tell everybody at home to set their minds at ease: there's absolutely no further cause for anxiety."

He made an about-turn and left. I felt relieved and reassured, and thought the best thing would be to have forty winks. But as I listened to the talk, now whispered, now louder and louder, about transgressions of authority (I myself kept my mouth shut), as I observed the general tumult and noted that only those who minded their own business seemed to have kept an even keel—I slipped into my greatcoat, put on my belt and left for home, whistling as I went along.

To my dying day I'll remember that I was still whistling as I reached the door of our house.

No, my memory serves me false, after all. I stopped whistling about two houses beforehand. Dragged into the cobbled gutter along the sidewalk lay a Hungarian soldier on his belly. I stopped whistling and, as I drew near him, slowed my pace. I became thoroughly dismayed when I saw that he was wearing an officer's top-boots. So this was an officer! His greatcoat and toppled hat indicated as much. I did not stop beside him.

Even now I had no misgivings. But in the courtyard complete silence reigned. The door was unlocked. I ran up the stairs.

There was nobody in the whole place. I went through all four rooms, not only ours.

Nobody. I nearly lost heart. I did find one hopeful sign, however: the trunks that had been left behind had disappeared too!

This atmosphere of desolation was suffocating, and I tore open the window of our room. There was dead silence in the garden too, in that little back-garden. At the creaking of the window, Milena's door, some three or four steps down and half below ground level, opened.

The head of my batman appeared. When he saw that it was me, he came up the steps, stooping, then drew himself up in front of the window.

"We are here, sir," he reported.

One by one they filed out and came up to him—Angyélika, Ildikó and Zoltán.

Great was my relief.

"Where are the others?"

"I've no idea, sir. And the kids have practically no idea, either."

My son, wearing his Bocskai cap, stood between the two girls. He didn't speak—perhaps because the girls were holding his hands.

"We were playing here," Ildikó said, "and then an army officer came round the building, and he shouted down, 'Anybody there?' And then Zoltánka went up to him and saluted, and the officer said 'Well done, my lad.' He never looked into our place."

"What about the others?" I asked my batman once again.

"Beg to report, sir, when I got back with the dinner-pail I found the grown-ups gone. Mrs. Büky and the other ladies too."

Now Angyélika started praising my son.

"Zoltánka was very brave. He cried, 'Mummy, when'll you come back?' And he tugged at Uncle Ármin's coat and shouted, 'Take that off! It's not yours.' But Uncle Ármin didn't take it off, he ran after the lorry."

So they'd taken them away in a lorry!

I yelled. How far could it be heard? Did anybody hear me? There are as many kinds of grief—and yells too—as there are people.

Go and find them, man! Go and find them!

In that first hour I anticipated the worst.

Was there anybody I could blame? I had to absolve my batman: after all, he had brought me my dinner.

Now for that truckload!

I shouted at the batman, "You stay here!"

Yes, somebody would have to stay with the kids.

The first thing I saw in the street was the uniform, my uniform. Now as before, I did not stop to look at the prostrate corpse. But no sooner had I passed it than I fell into a towering rage. What a dastardly trick, donning a captain's uniform! That was the limit! I was sorry I hadn't kicked that body. I had to hurry. Why on earth? For a few moments, rage clouded my brain.

"Rózsa! Rózsa!" I started shouting my wife's name.

The street was deserted, and my behaviour could hardly cause consternation. But in Government House all the more.

Faltering and confused as my account was—for I was shouting and fuming with anger, half-distracted—the officers on duty at once grasped what had happened and showed deep concern and indignation.

A squad was dispatched to the waterfront forthwith, and I was given a car by the corps commander's ADC. For His Excellency General Feketealmi himself, so it was said, had been informed of my distress.

Into the car, and off to Levente House. "Rózsa! Rózsa! Rózsa!" A throng was gathered in the courtyard. Among them there was a Jewish girl called Rózsa. We pushed on, like madmen. My frantic state of mind spread to the ADC, who had joined me, no less than to the driver. They too shouted my wife's name as soon as we got to the secondary school building. Here, however, very few people were left, mostly old men. I felt like turning round and going back to the Levente headquarters.

"No, no!" the driver cried. "Let's go to the stadium!"

There, indeed, hundreds of suspects were lined up four deep. It was senseless to keep on shouting. The grandstand was empty; and had she been among those lined up on the field, she would have come flying towards me!

Hurriedly we went through the dressing-room building. Only troops were quartered there. Reluctantly they scrambled to their feet. We asked them, but they just shook their heads. Already they couldn't remember anything.

"To the beach!" Yes, to the beach!

From cabin to cabin: "Rózsa! Rózsa!"

Then all along the river bank. Without the car. On foot across the down-trodden snow. The river bank was already deserted. Some soldiers were gathering pieces of clothing. Whose clothing? What clothes? The ADC, disgusted, boxed the ears of one of the men.

Now to the ice-holes! Down to the ice-holes! How many holes were there? Three? Six?

We saw three. At the first, the water was calm, as if the hole had just been abandoned by fishermen. We went upstream. In the second ice-hole the water seemed to be boiling. That was all.

In the third ice-hole, a piece of cloth floated in the water. Caught by the ice.

Some poles were lying there. The driver poked at the cloth, but it didn't move away. On the contrary, more and more of it became visible. The whole thing finally turned over and stared up at us. The bearded face of a man. Probably an old Jew.

"Shall I pull it out?" asked the driver.

"No! No!" we shouted in unison.

And like a fool I had thought I'd find Rózsa there!

Up on the embankment, the tavern was just being evacuated. A sergeant of the gendarmerie was herding children into the street like a flock of sheep.

"Rózsa! Rózsa!"

The gendarme looked drunk. "Hic, hic!" he said to his flock, and ignored us completely.

Nobody knew anything about Rózsa. They all said it was possible—no, it was altogether likely—that she had been taken away by the Germans, who would need to have witnesses. For those two platoons of German troops that had come over from Pétervárad were gone. Melted into thin air. And over at Pétervárad, nobody wanted to know about anything these days. One could see why, of course—reasons of diplomacy. I've repeatedly put forward my assumption about the Germans, and all those I've asked have replied, after thinking it over: "It's just possible."

To this day I'm convinced it was the Germans who took them away, and that they'll be found in some camp or some other place. For all I know, they may be held in captivity by the Russians, or the French.

Though if they've been taken prisoner by the Russians. . . No, I still believe it was the Germans! And they'll turn up from some camp or elsewhere, both of them. I mean, the three of them. And yet—who knows?—maybe they've been taken prisoner by the Russians or the French. It depends on where they were when the war ended.

At that time, however, this idea, this assumption, lasted only a moment.

I realized my batman could not be blamed, I had to admit that. I went on hunting that truckload of captives, but nobody knew anything about it.

By late that night, I had been all over the town, all the scenes of those three days. And so help me, I was glad I found no trace of the trunks.

The place was still littered with corpses that night. The soldiers were removing the victims from the houses and from the streets.

It was late in the night when I staggered home, my forehead burning, my collar undone, and not caring a damn for service regulations. This time I paused beside that corpse not far from our home. Stripped of its officer's clothing, it was lying on its back, its limbs stiffened. Frozen blood over the face and in the middle of the belly showed where the bullets had entered. I did not recognize it.

In our quarters upstairs, my batman was polishing my topboots and trying to remove blood stains from my gala tunic with soap-suds and petrol.

The three children lay asleep in the landlord's double-bed. The two little girls, even in their sleep, were clasping my Zoltánka's hands.

My greatcoat was wringing wet—with perspiration! Everything on me stuck like jelly. Had I been sweating blood? I still don't know.

SZABÓ:

(He's mumbling his bloody yarn as if he meant to keep it from me, damn him. Who does he think I am? A nobody? A zero? I've seen gents chatting with their dogs like other folks chat with their friends. Does he look on me as worse than a dog? Why does he keep hiding things from me? There's no secret I hadn't a hand in carrying out! I too can hold my tongue when I have to! But I don't have to here, we're among ourselves here! Or aren't we?)

TARPATAKI:

I also got up early in the morning, though I found it hard to leave my steam-heated hotel room. I'd told the reception clerk to have me waked at five-thirty, for I wanted to have a bath. I'd had one the night before too, when I turned in. I just couldn't have enough of that hot water.

At the station I saw that the gendarmes had beaten me to a start. I figured they might do so, and had ordered them to leave the inner area of the station.

They held on to the locomotive shed, though. The only excuse for getting them out of there was for me to get some trains started. I dispatched reconnaissance parties of railwaymen, and they came back with the news that the gendarmes had again closed the lines in all directions. Two trains had arrived. They had held up one of them outside the station and begun sorting out the passengers.

When this was reported to me, I thought I'd go there, but eventually dropped the idea. However, I gave orders to stoke up those trains whose engines stood beside the coal-bunker.

As soon as the news got around that some trains were going to leave, people emerged from the waiting-rooms and swarmed into the carriages. That was just what I wanted. Then an engine driver turned up and mentioned some captain under whose protection he was willing to drive a train in the direction of Topolya. And what if the gendarmes fired on it? Why, they too were human beings, he said. They'd hold their fire when they saw the captain.

Eventually, however, we found that there was a cold train in front and another one behind. Our train with the stoked-up engine was sandwiched between them.

And that captain could not be found. He had turned up here, he had turned up there—like a legend, like a rumour.

Then came Grassy. Yes, he came, and I went up to him to make my report.

Behind him marched two captains, as if on a parade-ground.

I saluted and made my report. Grassy stopped me and offered me his hand. What was he up to? That was not how he usually behaved. He had quite a different reputation.

"Look here, old chap," he said. "You're giving too much work to our identity checking apparatus. You're sending too many people to garrison headquarters."

Letting go of my hand, he took me along towards the platform where he had detected a clear space. As we strode over, he put his hand on my shoulder, practically embracing me.

"You arrived in town only recently, but I suppose you attended the officers' meeting day before yesterday?"

"Yes sir. I was present."

"Well, then! I want you to stop sending all this rabble to us. The town's keeping us busy enough as it is."

"I respectfully request permission, sir, to have incoming trains stopped at stations as far off as possible."

He paused for a moment and looked at me, as if pondering the matter.

"The trains must arrive according to schedule," he said. "As though nothing had happened. No alarm should spread from here."

"If you please, sir, not sending out trains is alarm enough."

"Send them out!" he said, waving his arm.

"The gendarmes have been executing the passengers, sir!"

By now we had reached the platform. Here were my sentries and some gendarmes.

"That's absurd!"

"Yes, sir."

"It's absurd, the kind of language you are using."

I kept my peace. He too wasn't shouting, far from it.

"I want you to stop sending us all those civilians! It's up to you to *dispose* of them, you and your men!"

"I respectfully request authorization, sir, to decide on the procedure of identity checking at the railway station as I see fit."

"Granted. *Dispose* of them!"

"I ask for permission to have none but suspects escorted to HQ."

"I said you should stop sending them over!"

"So far, the gendarmes have been taking away passengers indiscriminately. I must have authorization to check their identity."

Grabbing a button of my greatcoat, he explained:

"That's not what I mean! And anyway, identity papers are of little importance. Lots of faked papers are in circulation. It's easy to fake them. You and your men have no means of ascertaining it. But there are other proofs!"

"If you please, sir, I haven't been briefed on that point."

"I'm briefing you now!" he roared; then, lowering his voice again: "Instead of checking identities, you are to *dispose* of arriving passengers on your own authority!"

Now I too dug in my heels.

"I request express orders as to whether I am to check people's papers or have all of them escorted to HQ!"

"You know of no other way?!"

"I cannot imagine any other way!"

"You are discharged of your duties with immediate effect!" he hissed.

"I'll see that you are relieved this very day! Dismissed!"

He made a disdainful gesture and strode off without saluting.

POZDOR:

I don't want to know anything about this, I kept saying to myself. I've had enough of it. I'm not even here at all. At most, I'll see about the tea and rum—the tea lorries with the jerry cans, you know. And about the petrol supply, of course. What else could I have done in that situation? Should I, perhaps, have gone and put *ersatz* rum in the tea for those yokels? Where would I have got *ersatz* rum when Quarter-Master was sending nothing but the real stuff! Dumped water in the petrol so that the engines would misfire? There was no way of doing that—except with my own hands—without being seen and peached on. But when could I have done that? Only at night! And then get myself picked up by the sentry! Chums, friends, gentlemen, you know as well as I that the petrol dumps were being guarded by sentries! At the slightest movement in the darkness—Bang! Especially in those days, when the town was teeming with dare-devil chetniks wearing Hungarian army uniforms!

At that, I did do something with the petrol. Major Kormos—of General Staff—got after me. “Look here, my boy,” he says to me. “Go and get me twenty litres of petrol. I've an urgent trip to make. A matter of life and death.” I jumped on a motorbike and rode off to our own barracks, and I got the petrol. Twenty litres. Had the air force maybe refused to let him have fuel? Yes, they had. Just lying low all the time! Suddenly, they had run short of petrol! About noon already, the prisoners were being taken to the waterfront on foot. So now this Kormos started up his car and sallied forth. Sallied? Hell, no—he raced off like mad, Kormos did. Sorry—Major Kormos of General Staff. He was the man who stopped the killing. Personally.

Now, had I not got the petrol for him, it would have taken him a couple of hours to make up his mind and grope his way there on foot. How many people does that make? All of them owe their lives to me. And I bet not one of them knows it!

SZABÓ:

The black-an'-red tab was known to other ranks too—that meant a brass-hat from General Staff. Even officers'll freeze to attention before the likes of them. And yet. . .

About two in the afternoon, a staff major drove up in a small cross-country car. Why insist on “General Staff”? He was a major, no more, no

less. His vehicle was still moving, yet he was yelling as if out of his mind, "Cease fire! Cease fire!"

Some fifteen to twenty people were still left of that batch. What was to be done about them?

Corporal Dorner and the gendarmerie staff sergeant—they'd become a perfect team—looked at each other: but we can't leave those!

"You're the army man," said the gendarme. "It's for you to report."

With this he stepped back and stood behind the remaining few people. Dorner advanced and snapped smartly to attention, stiff as a post—the best drill sergeant couldn't have done better. The brass-hat had no choice but to stop in front him.

"Beg to report, sir," Dorner said. "These people here have seen everything; they know too much. Let's finish off the job with them, sir."

The brass-hat, after a long look at Dorner, cocked his eyes at the remaining prisoners. Dorner, with a flourish of his hand, went on:

"We were about to go for dinner soon, anyway. . . ."

Now that was something not even Sergeant Sasvári would have put up with.

It was cold, cold as could be, when you didn't have to work or move.

Leisurely the brass-hat peeled the glove off his left hand. He had a sealing on his middle finger. Deftly turning the seal inwards with his thumb, he instantly struck. Two or three times with that same bare hand. The blood was trickling over Dorner's face.

I thought to myself, Dorner, you've certainly been getting more than your share of facers these three days! But then I saw he could never say die.

The last blow had sent his cap flying from his head. He reeled, but then pretended he was only ducking to pick up his cap. Yes, he picked up his battered cap and stuck it on his head. Then—so suddenly, you might, if you shut your eyes for a moment, think they were playing tricks on you—he socked the brass-hat on the chin. The man tilted backwards but didn't fall, because, luckily for him, he'd taken a step backwards.

Dorner, standing at attention, hit out once more, again with a fist stiff with cold, for he had no gloves on. But this time the brass-hat put his hand with the ring in front of his face. Dorner drew in his breath and began to suck his bleeding finger.

All of us—except Dorner—were watching the brass-hat. He plucked off his other glove with his teeth, not with his bare hand. He had a small pistol, and before Dorner was aware of it, the pistol went bang-bang. Dorner had been on the point of hurling himself on the major; even so the bullets hit him in his belly.

The brass-hat turned on his heels, pushed him back with his shoulder, then let him have a third.

That's something like! we thought. He didn't expect any help from us.

For Corporal Dorner it was better that way, we thought. He would've had some nasty things coming to him if he'd gone on living.

Yet he'd figured on a decoration. That very morning, between two batches of prisoners, he'd told me: "If ever I get a grand silver, it'll be now."

Not just any silver, mind you; he was reckoning on a grand one.

I don't know how they divided up those batches of prisoners. Some time we would get a group of fifty, another time more than a hundred. The machine-gunner did off the first lot without trouble, but his face was white as chalk. He didn't dare to disobey orders. When a new batch arrived, the submachine-gun went click-click, then hung fire, and the gunner announced a "hitch." I just took a look at it and knew even Dorner could not fix that gun. During the lull, while the others busied themselves with clearing the ice-hole, the gunner fiddled with the firing-mechanism. From that moment, the firing-device would not snap home. You could discharge it by poking at it—and then, of course, you couldn't take aim—but the gun wouldn't eject the empty cartridge. You had to remove it after each shot. Now there's little sense in firing single shots with a submachine-gun. Our new-type Mauser would be of far more use, for you can fire six shots without a hitch and take aim to boot.

So Dorner carried on with rifle and pistol.

The water beneath the ice was rising rather than going down; and if you left the hole empty or unused for fifteen minutes, it would start skinning over. By morning, the ice would be thick—thick enough for two or three of us to stand on it. You had to use axes and spades to clear the hole. There was a tavern on the shore nearby, and there we would go for axes and spades. And now when I went up to fetch a suitable carriage-pole, I found our gunner there, playing "Hot Roast" with little boys and girls in the well-heated kitchen. Their hands were cold, so they were only too glad to go into the kitchen. There they settled on benches and stools, and shrieked with laughter whenever that wretched soldier missed his slap because his paws were slow to turn and hit.

Single shots could be heard from the ice-hole, but inside the smoke-filled kitchen that bunch of brats roared and roared with laughter. I at once saw that most of them were Jewish kids, but tell me, what could I have done about that loony, whom even Corporal Dorner knew better than to pick a quarrel with?

We set great store by that carriage-pole, for, as I said, the water level, far

from falling as was usual on a day of pinching cold like that, went on rising. Whenever we broke a hole in the ice, the water would come gushing forth.

That's why Dorner and the gendarmerie staff sergeant—we were only half-way through the morning then—were just wasting their efforts, trying to shove all those spies and partisans and chetniks under the ice. They'd shove them in head first, but after a while the water would push them up again, bottom first. Yet even Dorner couldn't say they'd carried air under the ice in their clothes.

By now my head was spinning. Something hot hit my mug after one burst, when one of those shot staggered backwards instead of forwards. It wasn't blood, that hot stuff, but something jelly-like and white. Out of his head. I saw very little blood.

When they got to the ice-hole, they now hardly had any clothes left. The men were in drawers, the women in slips and those cheap little panties. There was one woman in frilly knee-length drawers, stamping her feet as she waited for her turn.

"Look, Dorner," I said, "that one surely is neither a partisan nor a spy."

To scare me, he picked up the demijohn of rum standing behind him and flung some of it at me.

"A fat lot you know about that, you damned private. You've never even been to a non-com training school."

True enough, I hadn't. Not then. I only got sent to one the following March.

Feeling sick as I did—for I can't take rum neat very well—I said:

"Corporal, looks like they've got stuck somewhere, so how about giving them a push with some pole or other?"

"You've said a mouthful, mate," says Dorner, "at least your tongue's wagging again." That was his way of talking, and anyway, he had no time for more. Nor did I need to be told more than that.

Not all of the section were drunk, and there were a couple among the older trainees—well, they felt awfully sorry for those wretched people, so they did what they could to ease their lot. At the outset, the prisoners were made to strip down to their shirts and drawers at the tavern, but the line beyond stretched out so far that the poor wretches turned blue as they moved on. So these older soldiers took pity on the lot and let all of them keep their clothes on till half-way to the hole.

And a curious thing happened. While they were still wearing their outer garments, those folks would clamour and protest, despite orders to keep quiet. But as soon as they had to strip to their underwear, they gave up.

Dorner and the staff sergeant took turns in keeping an eye on the crowd behind.

One young chap tried to hook it, and the staff sergeant bumped him off on the run. The rest never made an attempt, for the warning was lying there under their noses.

Just the same, quite a bit of grousing was still going on along the line, and all sorts of things were being said. All of them claimed they were Hungarians and that they'd been brought here by mistake. "I was a first lieutenant in the Great War!" shouted one of them, a fellow I distinctly remember. And each of them claimed credit for something or other. But none of them had papers, so they were just wasting their breath. There were one or two that kept their mouths shut. Most of the women were crying. But not all of them.

When—as I already told you—I was climbing up the embankment to fetch the pole, I saw three women close together and holding forth loudly. Yet, though they shouted, not one of them wept. They were attractive women and were saying their piece in Hungarian.

"Our husbands are Hungarian army officers," they claimed whenever somebody happened to pass. But they had no papers.

The staff sergeant was just passing by. "Listen to them, staff, please," I said to him. "They're worth listening to."

One dark-haired woman was slightly taller than the rest, the other a bit on the plump side but with more shining eyes. The third had chestnut hair and a look like a frightened rabbit. They sounded so genuine, the staff officer stopped beside them a moment. "Come here, Dorner," he called. "This lady knows the names of all the officers of the battalion."

Dorner came over. The lady listed the names of the officers.

"Correct?" asks staff.

"Correct," says Dorner. "But none of them has his wife in town."

"None?"

"Of course not, there's the ban."

"Well, now that's very suspicious. For a person to know the roll so well. . . So you don't know this lady here?"

"Never saw her."

They asked something of the shorter dark-haired woman. From her speech, you could at once tell she was not Hungarian.

"There, you see!"

Dorner walked back. I too went about my business, climbing up the embankment. Staff stayed down below. I rummaged among the junk in the yard of the tavern, trying to find a pole.

Suddenly I see the staff sergeant coming up with the taller woman. They go straight into the house, which was deserted except for the kitchen, and into the innermost room.

I hear her talk of her husband, imploringly. And staff says: "We'll see afterwards!" Meanwhile I went to the kitchen, where I watched the kids play "Hot Roast" and warmed myself. I already had found the pole, but wasn't in a hurry to get back with it. I started off about half an hour later and saw that woman, with dishevelled hair, going back and being kicked repeatedly by the staff sergeant as she stumbled along.

"Own up to being Serbian, you slut, or Jewish, and I'll let you go!" staff yelled.

"When my husband learns of this, you'll pay for it, you swine!" she cried.

Staff got furious and kept pushing her down towards the shore. Even after she'd joined the queue, she went on shouting, "Dirty swine! Low-down, dirty swine!" I watched them as they stumbled along, for I wasn't in much of a hurry to get back with the pole. When they got to the heap of clothes, she too stopped shouting. Yes, there everybody fell silent.

Maybe it was because they felt ashamed; maybe because of the cold; maybe because from there you could already hear the rifle talking quite differently.

The lady could have remained at the end of the line, but she came forward to where the other two were.

There the three women hugged each other to keep warm and hide their snivelling. They had fine underwear, and they had lovely round bottoms. The shorter dark-haired one had the largest and roundest of all. Yes, and her drawers were of good warm flannel. I'll tell you in a minute why I remember these things so well, though I only glanced at them, for with that pole I just couldn't stop.

"Come on there, blast you!" Dorner urged me. I had to move along, no chance of looking round.

Time to make room in the ice-hole. It took more than one man to do the job, so two of us worked with that pole, me and another soldier. Any of the riflemen would gladly have come to help—all of them, for that matter—if only Dorner had let them. Now, about fifteen minutes later, along came those three women; it was their turn. . . . The one with the chestnut hair would not go up to the edge of the water, so they gave her a push, and the bullet hit her as she flew through the air. The shorter dark-haired one, with the winter drawers, at the last moment turned about to face the rifle and screamed something in Serbian. The tallest of the three suddenly lost

heart; she flung herself down at the staff's boots and started kissing and hugging them. Now I noticed that her silk drawers were torn. When I eased her into the water, the iron end of the pole got caught in them, splitting them still further, and . . .

FOUR IN THE CELL, FOR THE LAST TIME:

Szabó couldn't finish his story. Engrossed in his narrative, he had avoided looking at Büky, although it was to him that he had actually been relating the detailed "how-we-dun-it." And even if Büky should again try to stop him by howling "Shut up!", he was determined to ignore him and this time to complete his story, including all the details about the ice-hole.

Yes, he must carry his narrative to the very end, to the event he had never dared to re-live. In no other way could he have stuck it out. The memory of it? That he could have borne, if only the old stinker, Büky, hadn't always begun to yammer every time he came to the point—the precarious area which separated the river from the bank. Ah, in summertime, even in spring, it had been a river, all right! They had gone there often enough—with ladies, with hussies. But Szabó had never told anyone of what happened there later, or just where it had happened. Although he might well have shot off his mouth about it a little. For he had heard that others had done so, despite strict orders to hold one's tongue.

While spinning out his story of how he went to fetch a pole, he had shot a single glance towards Büky, but only downwards, below his knees—noting how Büky, seated on his bunk, kept those two heavy, unlaced ski boots of his one beside the other, civilian-like. Yes, civilian-like, one boot pressed alongside the other, instead of forming a "V" with the heels as base. What a funny sight: his legs, sheathed in thick, striped-and-chequered woolen stockings—they could step out of those boots onto the stone floor as easily as out of a tub or a pair of slippers. Those skinny gentleman's legs!

He had just led his account beyond the heap of clothes which, through the merciful intervention of the old trainees, had been allowed to pile up half-way to the ice-hole and after which all the victims would keep silent and try to cover themselves as best they could.

While talking he was looking up at the window high above, which the summer sun was passing by as it had done since spring. The two others were looking at the floor. Büky did not speak. But now he stepped, one by one, out of those huge, open ski boots.

His fingers closed round them. Gripping the sole of the right boot in his

left hand, and the left boot in his right, he made the heel-irons gleam to see if they were sharp enough.

He struck two staggering blows with each boot.

All his strength went into these blows: left, right! left, right!

There was no need to overpower him. When Tarpataki laid hold of his arms, those steam-hammer muscles appeared to have wasted away in a matter of seconds. His arms were trembling all over.

Pozdor pounded on the iron door.

When two wardens dragged Szabó out of the cell, he was still alive. But his eyes had already turned inward. He dirtied the cement floor as they dragged him away. Only the following day did two unknown prisoners wipe the floor.

But Büky was taken away that same day.

He was shaking and retching, but vomited only into the slop-pail.

He retched again and again, though there was nothing left in his stomach but the spasms. And those he could not bring up.

The first lieutenant, supporting him in his arms, would never have thought that well-set man had so few reserves under his skin.

No fat at all. Yet the other three had each put on several pounds. And what was left of his muscles vibrated as if from an electric current.

He did not say goodbye when he was taken away. Without once looking back, he tried to walk unaided on his stocking feet. He had completely forgotten about his ski boots.

For a long time, the first lieutenant and the ensign did not talk.

The next day, Tarpataki tried to sing a song or two.

The day after, Pozdor started to analyse the section of the service regulations dealing with an officer's right and duty to use firearms. How sloppily it was worded!

Tarpataki squelched him, and the ensign took it amiss.

It was quite a while before they spoke to each other again.

The first lieutenant again remembered his Betty, and she put him in mind of all that had happened at the railway station, when the town commandant came there. And that again brought him back to Betty and, later still, vaguely, to the subject of ice-covered rivers as dealt with at the naval college.

For his part, the ensign pusillanimously unburdened himself about the batch of prisoners that had been driven on the last remnant of petrol left in the lorries. The rest of them had had to go on foot.

So he, Pozdor, was a coward, was he? Gentle and tactful would be closer to the truth.

In fact, he himself had never been able to believe the whole thing.

TARPATAKI:

Oh, Betty, Betty! I forgot her completely that morning. I had other business in hand. Business a-plenty.

By having the engines stoked up, we gained some space and elbow-room inside the station. One train we announced as heading for Topolya; the other, for Futak. Just empty words, for any departure was ruled out on account of the gendarmes. What's more, a goods train somehow got shunted in front of the train for Topolya.

I had a few men get busy with brooms, and I ordered a latrine to be dug outside. I was making arrangements for prolonged defence, so to speak, with the troops under my command.

The train from Budapest arrived. I could scarcely believe that the outside world was as ignorant of what was going on here. The train was not overcrowded, yet it was pretty full, and that created some confusion.

But the tumult subsided when Grassy arrived. He spoke very softly, and I too made my report in a very low voice; for all that, the air around us seemed thick with ears.

As I saw Grassy and company out of the station, everybody knew what was up, what we had been talking about.

Not a murmur disturbed the silence outside the building as the multitude automatically opened up a lane for them.

I almost burst out laughing, though I was far from being in the mood for it, the way that colonel and the two captains marched along like marionettes, in Indian file. I only had an inkling of what was brewing when one of the captains turned his head towards me and whispered: "My wife."

And he pointed a finger at the corner of the building.

The colonel caught sight of that little gesture.

"Get in this car, captain!" he commanded.

Two gendarmes were already seated in the car.

Only after they'd gone was it reported to me that they hadn't arrived together. Of course, they hadn't. I now recalled, I too had seen that captain gesticulating wildly, talking his head off about some train departure. A lot I cared then what this or that muddle-headed infantry officer was up to.

I recognized her, though. A beautiful woman, proud and cold. I'm sure she didn't love that Büky, but must once have been a poor girl, and you still have to show me a poor and pretty girl that can resist the prolonged siege of a uniform faced with gold. I only talked with her a minute or two—and knew all there was to know. Or rather, having gotten to know Büky, their past is now clear to me.

"It would be best for you to go home," I suggested to her. "Or you can wait here if it makes you feel safer."

"We'll go home," the dark-haired woman answered. I detailed two sailors to escort them.

About half an hour passed, and by mid-morning the gendarmes weren't keen on doing anything. All right, I thought, I intend to make defensive arrangements, anyway.

Somebody suggested we should attempt to start one train.

We sent off the one for Futak. I placed five sailors at the carriage doors. I told them to jump onto the railway bed once the engine had passed the cordon. We listened—no shots were fired.

An hour later, the five sailors came back. The train had pulled out, they reported. The gendarmes had waved their arms but never fired. My sailors had waved back at them. But as they made their way back to the station, they had given the tracks a wide berth.

I now sent the two sailors that had escorted the captain's wife to ask her if she didn't want to leave for Budapest—via Topolya.

The whole train was kept waiting. After about half an hour the two sailors reported that the ladies had already left home. I at once sent one of the sailors back (this time I could not spare both of them). The captain—he said on his return—had been shot dead, and the house was deserted. I was thunderstruck.

There were some thirty goods waggons in front of the other train. The station-master balked at the idea, but the engine driver said he was ready to assume the responsibility. He only asked for a few sailors as escort. My men grumbled, but went all the same. This time we heard a few shots, but the train did not stop. Nor did my sailors come back.

Then already all these circumstances had led me to the conclusion that the slaughter was letting up. The rumours, however, kept on telling a very different story.

About noon, a truckload of wailing people stopped in front of the station. I had never heard of an uproar being raised on other lorries. Such wailing was most unusual.

It was Betty, my Betty, who was stirring them up! Two gendarmes made her jump from the lorry and began to shout my name. I came forward, and immediately they treated her with respect while they asked me:

"Beg to report, sir. This lady here claims she is your wife, and she is stirring up the whole batch. Is it true what she says about you, sir, and herself?"

She flung out her arms and sighed theatrically:

"Darling!"

My men knew—they must have known—that she was lying. I thought of the captain of that morning and his real wife. No, I must not hesitate.

"Betty, my darling," I said, and put my arm around her as she threw herself against my chest.

She was now wearing her fur-coat. Was that why they had believed her? The gendarmes handed me my wife's travelling certificate.

"What's this?" I said. I almost shouted with surprise. Betty had returned to me the fifty-pengő note I had given her that first night, but had swiped my wife's railway certificate from my wallet. I ought to have handed it in to my unit for yearly renewal.

The gendarme saluted. I said, "Thank you, corporal." The truck driver started up.

POZDOR:

I realized immediately that it was his wife . . . But that idiot of a soldier . . . a blockhead like he just won't heed. He deserved what he got. Better to hold one's tongue. I was simply obeying orders and tried to keep away from places where it looked like dirty work was afoot.

I well remember that little boy with the plumed cap. The one who suddenly burst out of the basement flat at the back, in Bocskai cap and braided coat, and saluted so smartly as he said: "Beg to report." I gently rapped him on his cap and said, "Well done, my lad!"

By then the women had already been hustled onto the lorry.

In the beginning, the gendarmes had gone about their job in a rather stupid manner: they would herd suspects from neighbouring streets into the nearest open space. Here, a throng formed, chattering, muttering and spreading alarm. Some were again asked to produce their papers. No doubt, there was more than one opportunity for bartering and otherwise getting hold of identity cards.

Eventually, Sanyi Képiró realized that it would be best to check people's identity in their homes. There, in their own surroundings, you would quickly separate the goats from the sheep.

And once the lorry was full—Off you go!

Sanyi, blast him, had picked me, picked our lorry.

Until the lorry came back, we could comb some more houses, for three of the five gendarmes detailed to us would always stay with us.

I could either remain or go along with the lorry, sitting next to the driver.

Whenever I did so I ousted one of the two gendarmes escorting us. They would not climb on the platform the way some fatheaded soldiers did, but would hang on outside the driver's cab.

We found those three women together.

The shorter of the two dark-haired ones answered our knocking. She was so jittery she could scarcely get out a word in Hungarian.

We walked in and in the entrance hall were met by the lady.

"I am the wife of a captain of the Royal Hungarian Army," she said.

She produced her identity card and told us her husband's name and the designation of his battalion.

"Do you know her, Pozdor?" Képiró asked.

"I know the name, but I don't know the lady."

Behind her stood another better-class woman, identity card in hand. Sanyi studied it and made a wry face. Softly she pronounced her name—it sounded unmistakably Jewish.

"One lady will stay here," Sanyi commanded in his usual manner. "The other two will come with us for further checking."

By now this had become mere formality; and the women must have sensed it.

"Please," whimpered the shorter woman, "what can I take with me?"

"Food for one day," said one of the gendarmes, and the women started bundling up some edibles. Sanyi went from room to room, and it was then that I went downstairs and round the house towards the back-garden, and patted the head of the little boy with the plumed cap.

When I got back to the lorry, this is what I heard:

"We told you to stay here!"

"I want to clear my landlady! Take me to my husband! He will clear everybody here."

"Get on that truck, everybody!" Sanyi commanded. He was not to be trifled with. The lorry was already full, and the gendarmes had taken their place in the cab.

"A captain of the Royal Hungarian Army!" the woman cried. Had she stopped pressing that point, we would have yielded to her pleading. But this made her suspect.

As the lorry was about to move off and we were just debating what to do next, there popped up at the street-door—a captain. He was dressed in gala uniform, with ironmongery dangling from his chest, in topboots and shako!

It was an odd sight, and we were thunderstruck.

His greatcoat was wide open.

"Halt!" Sanyi yelled to the driver, determined to get to the bottom of this.

The lorry had just begun to move, and it went some distance before it pulled up with a jolt.

"I'll save you, darling!" cried the man in captain's uniform. The little woman, who had found room right at the back of the platform, shouted: "We'll be back, Ármin! Take care of yourself!"

Anyone paying attention could tell that the "darling" had not been addressed to her.

Topboots and shako! In those days! And such a Jewish name, at that! Képiró at once saw that this was a case of illegal wearing of uniform.

"Get going!" he yelled to the driver.

The lorry gave a jerk, then gathered speed. The women were clamouring. The man started to run after the lorry. I don't know what he hoped to do. He stumbled in his topboots, and the shako tumbled from his head, where it had sat pretty uneasily.

"Hands up!" Sanyi shouted. The blighter got cold feet and raised his arms. Now we knew our customer. Sanyi motioned to one of his rifle-bearing gendarmes. With his fingers he made the sign "two."

"Ármin?" he asked.

"Ármin," replied the Jew, and as he said it you could tell from his expression that he regretted having tried to fool us with a Jewish face like his.

Sanyi brought his hand down—the signal for the gendarme.

Two shots followed in close succession. By then the lorry had gone quite a distance. We too could push off.

"We're going to report this," Sanyi mumbled. "The colonel will be delighted."

TWO IN THE CELL:

The first lieutenant hummed some folk-songs, but the ensign did not like it. Then he held forth on the subject of ice blasting. How strange that at the naval college you studied this as the most peaceful of subject-matters—on the side, as it were: to prevent floods when there was drift-ice, or if your detachment wanted to catch fish, you'd blow holes in the ice—with so and so much TNT. Yet, see what it had finally led to!

This failed to arouse either surprise or protest on the part of Pozdor. He knew that the service regulations were of no interest to Tarpataki (it would have been a waste of time to dish up other regulations, infantry or tactical—to a river fleet man). Mostly Pozdor kept muttering to himself about the one thing that pre-occupied him more than anything else.

"How on earth could they establish the number and sex of the corpses? It's absurd. Three thousand three hundred and ninety! And what about the water? By the end of January, the water level beneath the ice had begun to go down, and by the time the thaw set in, nobody was left to tell the tale! The first day, of course, they had clothes on; but after that, only the barest underwear. Not even that, so they say. Two hundred and twenty-nine persons crippled with age? There's no proof of that!"

The other prisoner had nothing but contempt for these speculations and never commented on them.

He simply began to think aloud, impersonally, under his breath:

"Again I wonder—I've thought about it a lot ever since—it seems to me we were discussing this in the restaurant of the Dungyerszky Hotel, the last night but one—what reprisals will follow?"

"Maybe none."

"That's impossible!"

"They never thought of such things when they started the business."

"That's possible, for they were very stupid. I'm not even considering its wickedness. After all, it was done by military people."

"There were a few civilians in it too!"

"Certainly. But the idea of reprisals never seems to have occurred to them either."

"Maybe it did. Several times, many times, I myself thought: What if the tide should turn? But even then, if there are to be reprisals anyway, let us at least make sure that a hundred or a thousand more of their people perish than of ours. If theirs is to be the last trump, let's bleed them white in advance."

"That's one way of looking at it," Tarpataki sighed, and spat out. Though he wasn't a smoker.

After some time, they received fresh cell-mates, and now they stopped discussing those things altogether.

After all, the corps commander himself had said in an order that very week, in the last days of January '42: "Gentlemen! Not a word about this!"

CHANGES IN THE PEASANT LIVING STANDARD

by

GYULA VARGA

PEASANT CONSUMPTION

The word consumption, used in its widest sense, includes the sum of products consumed by the population (housing, industrial goods, food, etc.), services (transport and communications, personal laundry and cleaning, medical care, etc.), as well as state provision of benefits, compensation, and allowances for the population (education, health, social benefits, etc.). The main data on peasant consumption in Hungary published in my previous article,* may be briefly summarized as follows:

Per capita peasant consumption in 1963 was approximately 11,200 forints annually, of which he freely disposed of 9,500 forints. This is approximately double the amount he was free to dispose of before Liberation. As social benefits were very limited before Liberation, total consumer expenditure today is considerably more than double what it was before Liberation. The per capita consumption expenditure of the peasant is about 83 per cent of that of the worker and employee. This disparity is less for those with a supplementary source of income in addition to their income from agriculture, than for the exclusively peasant population.

Present total consumption and its pattern, and the changes which have occurred, result from several interconnected factors. Fundamental among them are the social and economic position of the population (real income, living standard and living conditions in general) and natural and climatic conditions. Mention is generally made of consuming habits as the third factor, but for the most part these may be traced back to natural or economic

* In my last article—"Changes in the Social and Economic Status of Hungary's Peasantry," Vol. VI, No. 20, p. 28—I attempted to give a basic economic and social outline of the living standards of the Hungarian peasant, and the changes which had occurred in the course of recent decades. In this article I shall attempt to follow them up with particular aspects of the changes that have occurred in living standards.

conditions, and only to a lesser extent to questions of religion or taste. It is of course true that with social and economic progress natural and climatic conditions and local habits have less influence on the pattern of consumption (serving only as a general framework), which is increasingly determined by economic-social factors, both internal and international.

Economic progress increases national consumer expenditure and changes its pattern. The proportion devoted to food is highest at a low level of economic development, runs equal with other consumer goods at a stage of medium development, while the proportion of national consumer expenditure devoted to food in the highest stages of economic development is relatively low compared with expenditure on other goods and services.

As an illustration, and as a basis for a certain international comparison of the data which follow, it is worth quoting from a statistical study sponsored by the United Nations, which compares the pattern of consumer expenditure in Hungary and Britain.* Without discussing the U.N. study as such, or the problems involved, it should be pointed out that in principle there are two ways of considering the consumer figures, according to the method of calculation. Consumer expenditure may be calculated according to the Hungarian or the British method of collecting and calculating statistics. For the sake of accuracy, we shall here give both. The share taken by the more important consumer categories in the total consumption of the Hungarian and of the British population in 1959 is shown in the table on p. 88.

Without further comment on the figures of the table it is worth mentioning that differences in economic development—apart from the problem of price ratios—are accurately reflected in the lower food consumption and much higher spending on transport in the U.K. as compared to Hungary.

The following table—on p. 89.—again gives the correlation between economic development and the pattern of consumption, but this time in comparing two social classes at two points of time within Hungary.* Due to the rise in peasant incomes *pari passu* with the rise in the peasant standard of living between 1957 and 1963, the consumer pattern also changed considerably, but the pattern is still inferior to that of the worker-employee section of the population, which enjoys a higher standard of living and whose pattern of spending also changed for the better during the same period.

* "Consumption of the population in Hungary and in the U.K.," *Statisztikai Szemle* (Bulletin of Statistics), October 1964, pp. 1018-1032. Since price changes within the period under examination were not important enough to alter the general trend, the data presented by the two points of time are suitable for comparison. The absolute figures differ slightly from those published in the previous article, because the present detailed data are based on the representative household statistics published annually on the basis of a survey covering 4,000 families.

Total Hungarian and British consumption in 1959

Category	According to the Hungarian statistical method*		According to the British statistical method	
	Hungary	U.K.	Hungary	U.K.
Food	42.1	33.2	38.1	29.5
Beverages	10.0	7.3	10.5	6.8
Tobacco	2.1	7.2	2.2	6.7
Clothing and footwear	16.1	10.7	17.0	10.0
Rent and water rates	4.0	4.8	4.0	9.1
Fuel and light	3.7	4.6	3.0	4.3
Furniture and household equipment	6.6	7.4	6.9	6.9
Household expenses	1.1	3.3	1.4	3.6
Cleaning, medical care	3.5	1.9	1.6	2.3
Transport and communications	5.1	10.4	5.5	10.1
Education, entertainment, leisure activities	3.6	3.4	3.5	4.4
Other goods	1.2	1.6	1.3	1.5
Other services	0.9	0.4	5.0	4.6
Miscellaneous	—	3.8**	—	0.2***
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

* One difference between the two methods is that consumption in Hungarian statistics only includes the consumption of goods and the material expenditure on services, while the British method includes the full value of the services. The other difference is that Hungarian statistics include the total consumption of goods of the whole population, whether the spending is personal, or from other sources, e.g., the state budget; whereas the British method is limited to personal or household expenditure.

** Free consumption of goods.

*** Income in kind of the members of the armed forces.

Per capita consumption
(in percentages)

Category	Peasants with agricultural and supplementary sources of income		Workers and employees	
	1957	1963	1957	1963
Food, beverages, tobacco	60.7	53.6	49.3	45.6
House maintenance	6.6	6.9	8.6	7.5
Clothing	14.6	14.7	18.0	15.4
Durable goods	5.1	8.4	7.9	10.8
Health and hygiene	2.6	2.4	3.3	3.7
Education, leisure activities	0.6	1.0	2.0	2.4
Transport	0.9	1.3	2.1	2.6
New building, purchase of real estate	5.5	6.8	2.9	3.8
Other expenditure	3.4	4.9	5.9	8.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Of which—

Money purchases	48.6	60.3	93.0	92.0
Subsistence production and allowances in kind	51.4	39.7	7.0	8.0
Per capita personal consumption (in forints)	7,271	9,561	8,893	11,363

In addition to the difference in total consumption—which is a primary factor in determining the pattern—we have to take into account differences in relation to village and housing conditions, as well as the fact that the peasant still depends for the major part of his food requirements on subsistence farming or receives agricultural produce as wages in kind in the producers' cooperatives.

The change in the pattern of consumption, i.e., the proportionate reduction in the consumption of food and proportionate increases in the consumption of durable goods as the income rises, can also be observed among the

peasants. At first glance it would seem surprising that the spending of this social class on building and the purchase of real estate is still very high. But this is not at all the same thing as the earlier accumulation of wealth, the purpose of which was the acquisition of land; it is only the expression of a desire for more comfortable housing conditions. It is also partly due to the fact that while the urban population generally lives in state-owned flats with low rents, the agricultural population has to solve its housing problem itself, with the help of State loans. The purchase of real estate, however, pre-supposes a higher than average income, and only where the income level is high land purchases occur to any extent. One may hazard the statement—and the following data support it—that if peasant incomes rose, the pattern of peasant consumption would change considerably, and the proportion of expenditure on the improvement of housing conditions would rise steeply. In 1963 the pattern of annual peasant per capita consumption divided along various income levels, was as follows:

Per capita annual income
(in percentages)

	under 7,200 forints	over 16,800 forints
Food, beverages, tobacco	60.1	44.2
Clothing	16.0	12.1
Durable goods	5.0	11.5
Building, purchase of real estate	3.1	14.4
Other expenditure	15.8	17.8
Total	100.0	100.0

These figures show that given an increase in income, and consequently an increase in consumption, the pattern of peasant consumption would undergo considerable changes of a positive kind.

Considerable differences—depending on the social group and the level of income—also exist within the various consumer groups. A short account of the principal differences is not out of place here.

Hungarians as a whole attach greater (too great) importance to good food than most other countries, even those economically more advanced. This is shown in actual amount of food eaten and its calorific value. Although

the per capita food consumption of Hungarian peasants is high in terms of calories (3,150 calories per day), it is none the less unsatisfactory in terms of a balanced diet, breaking down into 432 g. hydrocarbons, 106 g. fat and only 97 g. protein (including 35 g. of animal protein). But this form of "dissatisfaction" is after all negligible in relation to the satisfaction felt over the progress achieved over the last twenty years in the field of nutrition. Not only a desirable level in calories has been reached—in 1934-38 the peasant consumption of calories per day only amounted to 2,000 calories—but the consumption of less valuable dietary foods has decreased and that of meat, sugar, fruit and vegetables has increased. The considerable change which has taken place is reflected in the per capita national consumption figures.

Per capita consumption (in kgs)

	Average for 1934-38	Average for 1963
Cereals	147	135
Potatoes	130	89
Sugar	11	29
Fruit and vegetables	95	159
Meat	33	50
Eggs	5	9
Milk and milk products	102	97
Fats and oils	17	24
Wine (litre)	35	29
Beer (litre)	3	41

Peasant consumption today differs from the national average in that their consumption of cereals is higher and sugar, fruit, vegetables and meat lower. The lower consumption of meat is due to the fact that we have not yet succeeded in assuring the village population a continuous supply of fresh meat. This is one reason why poultry-keeping by the peasants is so important, with the consequence that the Hungarian peasant per capita consumption of poultry is 15 kg annually higher than the average of any European country.

The picture would be unrealistic if we omitted the high consumption of liquor. Per capita consumption of wine has decreased somewhat since 1934-38, but the consumption of beer has increased from an annual 3 litres

to 41 litres, and the annual consumption of 3 litres of spirits in 1963 was also several times higher than before Liberation. Peasant consumption of spirits—part of which they distil themselves—is much higher than the overall figure of 3 litres given above, about double that consumed by the worker-employee population. The total spent on liquor and tobacco by the peasant is equal in the amount to that spent on durable goods, and in the below average income groups is even higher.

Foreigners visiting Hungary today are quick to observe that in general none of the population is in rags, either in the towns or in the country. Only those who visited Hungary thirty years ago can really understand what a fundamental change has occurred in this respect. The amount of money spent on clothing is still increasing, occasionally verging on irresponsible extravagance. Between 1957 and 1963 the peasants spent 40 per cent more on clothing, but in absolute figures this is still only four-fifths of what workers and employees spend. But a comparison of the expenditure of the two social groups on clothing, according to age groups, is interesting to consider.

Per capita expenditure on clothing in 1963 (in forints):

	Peasants	Workers and employees
Children under 14	1,101	1,137
15-30 age group	2,424	2,485
31-44 "	1,450	1,902
45-59 "	1,079	1,601
60 years and over	759	962

The figures show that peasants do not spend less on their children's clothing than workers and employees, and in terms of income even more. Between the ages of 15 and 30 years, i.e., those who have grown up since Liberation, there is no difference in the clothing expenditure of the two groups. It is not only, moreover, that there is very little difference in the amount spent by these age groups among peasants and among other sections of the population, but there is also very little difference, as far as fashions and the mode of clothing is concerned. Peasant costume has disappeared, there are hardly any villages today where on both working days and holidays the peasant youth does not wear modern town clothing. The older generation however has partly kept to its own peasant garb.

There is a big difference between peasants and worker-employees in the amount spent on durable goods. Per capita expenditure is as follows (in forints):

	1957	1963
Peasants, and peasants with supplementary sources of income	372	801
Workers and employees	699	1,228

Although in seven years the progress achieved was startling, the very low level of peasant purchases of durable goods in previous times, and the much lower level of expenditure for this purpose than the level of worker-employee spending, has left the peasants far behind workers and employees in the number of durable goods purchased, and for the time being this difference appears to be growing, e.g., in the purchase of television sets, cars, but even more in furniture and home appliances. The following figures show the possession per hundred households of a few selected items (in percentages):

Category	Peasant households and households with supplementary sources of income		Worker and employee households	
	1959	1964	1959	1964
Radios	69	84	96	97
Television sets	0	20	5	44
Bicycles	96	123	59	78
Motorcycles	6	14	7	12
Cars	—*	1	—*	3
Washing machines	5	29	24	54
Sewing machines	48	48	42	42

* No figures available

We may conclude with the statement that quantitatively peasant consumption has shown a satisfactory improvement over the last twenty years. Relatively, however, there is a certain undesirable disparity between the income and consumption of peasants and other sections of society. There are possibilities and plans for bridging the gap. It can be seen from the figures that

as the peasant's income increases the pattern of consumer expenditure changes for the better, and this will have the effect of diminishing the differences between town and country.

HOUSING CONDITIONS

Statistics, and especially earlier statistics, make no differentiation between housing figures for the peasants and for other sections of the population. This makes it difficult, though not impossible, to make valid comparisons between housing conditions in general and in the villages in particular. Housing conditions in villages are a suitable criterion for describing peasant housing conditions in general, as a number of surveys have led to the conclusion that differences are caused much more by the form of settlement on the land than by social status.

The bad housing conditions which existed already in the nineteen-thirties deteriorated further during the Second World War. Twenty dwellings out of every hundred throughout the country were damaged, five of them seriously. The proportion of damaged dwellings was generally lower in the villages than the towns, but a higher proportion of those damaged were in fact destroyed, being smaller and less strongly built. In the post-war years there was a special shock programme for village building; economic consolidation and changes were first evident in the villages. Unfortunately the buildings so rapidly constructed provided only temporary solutions, because they mostly copied the old and obsolescent peasant cottages.

The most universal type of dwelling to be found throughout the whole of Hungary is the family cottage. Eighty per cent of all dwelling houses are inhabited by one family, and 98 per cent are one-storeyed. Even today 44 per cent of village houses are built on a foundation of beaten earth, adobe or mud, and about 60 per cent of the walls themselves are constructed of these materials. The high proportion of houses of this type is of course due to the fact that most of them were built before liberation. Thirteen per cent of all houses in the villages still have thatched or reed roofs. Since the majority of village homes are old and out of date (about a quarter of them were built before 1900 and a half between 1900 and 1944), a mass demand for a radical transformation of housing conditions in the villages is all at once making itself felt. New village housing has increased considerably in recent years; in spite of the lack of growth in the village population, 35,000 dwellings a year are being built in the villages. But the proportion of old houses is so large that even at this rate of construction at least 15 years will

be needed to replace all houses more than 60 years old. Since there is the growing desire on the part of a section of the agricultural population to move from the isolated countryside and the homesteads* into villages and towns, these do not take any steps to modernize their present homes (which is partly the reason why the number of houses with shingle and reed roofs is still so large).

The figures for these homesteads, neglected and in a state of disrepair—since owners are saving for the new house which they intend to build—cannot be isolated from the overall statistics, and are therefore partly responsible for the unfavourable picture presented by the figures of village housing conditions, and of the population as a whole.

In 1960 the number of rooms in village and town dwellings was as follows (in percentages):

	One room	Two rooms	Three rooms or more
Villages	62.8	33.7	3.5
Towns	60.8	31.5	7.7

Only 40 per cent of the village houses built between 1957 and 1961 have one room.

The difference between towns and villages, however, is more marked in the number of inhabitants per 100 dwellings than in the number of rooms. Single-room dwellings in the villages are occupied by an average of 3.4 persons and two-room dwellings by 4.0, while in the towns the figures are respectively 3.0 and 3.8. The essential difference between village and town housing conditions, between the agricultural and the non-agricultural population, does not lie in the size of the dwelling or the number of its inhabitants, but in disparities in quality, comfort and amenities.

In 1960 the distribution of homes according to their type of flooring was as follows (in percentages):

* The homesteads were originally houses owned by the agricultural population outside the town and large villages of the Great Plain, several hundred metres from each other, and as much as one to ten kilometres from the centre of the town or village. They were built by their owners in the first place as temporary buildings to be used only during seasonal agricultural work, later on they were used as homes for the duration of the working life, and finally as a permanent residence. In the course of the land subdivisions of the last century, many peasant families who obtained land as small owners or tenants, moved out to the spot where their land was. See the article by Ferenc Erdei: "The Hungarian Homestead," *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, Vol. II, No. 3.

	Wood flooring	Tiled flooring	Beaten earth
Villages	42.3	4.8	52.9
Towns	88.0	3.8	8.2

In 1960 the distribution of dwellings according to the provision of public utilities was as follows (in percentages):

	Running water	Electricity	Gas	Water closets
Villages	5.4	62.5	1.7	3.8
Towns	63.8	91.8	30.7	50.8

The lack of amenities and comforts in village housing is primarily due to the form of settlement on the land. It is almost impossible to bring public utilities to isolated homesteads. A regional breakdown of the figures shows that a high proportion of the dwellings badly equipped with modern amenities are to be found in the districts with a large number of these homesteads. And the number of those living scattered and isolated should not be underestimated. In 1960, about one million two hundred thousand people lived settled in isolation in the countryside, four-fifths of them on homesteads. The village character of the settlement is also an obstacle to the introduction of public utilities, with the exception of electricity. Today all villages are connected to the electricity network. In 1965, 80 per cent of the village population had electricity in their homes, i.e., only isolated dwellings outside villages and towns are now without it. The typical size of home-sites in a village settlement varies between 1,000 and 2,000 square metres. In view of the great distance between the homesteads, it would be more sensible to organize a small electric pumping system for the well in each homestead and assure it its supply of bottled gas, than attempt to extend the public utilities these distances. The use of bottled gas is spreading, but the supply is as yet insufficient to meet the demand. The introduction of these pumps, however, represents such a high initial investment that it is not possible at the general present level of incomes.

Considerable progress has been achieved in the provision of wholesome

drinking water. In most of the Great Plain the underground water level is very high, wells are mostly contaminated, and their water is not suitable for drinking purposes. Since Liberation artesian wells have been sunk in every larger settlement, and are often equipped with street stands. On the homesteads the provision of drinking water is still a problem, though the risk of contamination is less.

Economic activities of the village population based on the home, the importance attached to them, and the methods employed, are closely connected with the introduction of public utilities and the size of the area surrounding the dwelling house. As the land attached to the house is important in terms of income and subsistence, part of it will be devoted to agricultural activities. At the present time land around the house plays an important role in Hungary. There is hardly a peasant home in Hungary today without poultry and pigs around the house, and every second family keeps cattle as well. In most cases, no cattle pens are constructed beside new dwelling houses (people living in them no longer keep cattle), at most a pigsty, but a fowl house is almost invariably included. Every peasant home possesses an orchard and a kitchen garden around the house; and even in towns they may often be found. But while in towns the emphasis is on rest, recreation and relaxation, the villager insists on a larger area of land at his disposal in order to supply himself and his family with food, and in many cases to produce fruit or vegetables for sale.

The taste of the country population, as expressed in the home, is underdeveloped and completely devoid of character. The traditional taste of peasant wares and peasant art has disappeared, and its place has not yet been taken by modern functional styles, but by petit bourgeois designs, and characterless mass-produced articles. This is true of the house itself, its outward appearance and inner design, but even more of the furniture and interior decoration. The old "clean room" has survived and lives on; this is the best and most comfortably furnished room, which is only used on special occasions.

It would be incorrect to ascribe this lack of taste to the often emphasized "conservative mentality" of the peasant, although this aspect cannot be entirely neglected. But the real reasons are objective. On the one hand, the general economic and cultural level of the country population lags behind the town, and on the other the very conditions of work and life in agricultural settlements in themselves form a bar to "urbanization" and often make it impossible.

The picture is not so bleak if we compare the village today with the situation that existed before Liberation. To all extent and purposes the

electrification of the countryside has been carried out, the railway network complemented by a dense bus network, a great number of schools, cultural centres, and libraries have been built, the construction of pavements in the villages is gradually progressing, an up-to-date network of retail shops has been established, cinema shows have become universal, etc. But at the same time developments in the towns have not stood still and the disparity between village and town has not lessened to any appreciable extent.

WORKING HOURS, LEISURE TIME

A few decades ago regular recreation was almost entirely unknown among the peasants, and it was almost regarded as blasphemy if, with the exception of Sundays, a man failed to work from daybreak to dark. Working hours might have been anything from twelve to sixteen hours daily, and at harvest time even longer. It was in fact the introduction of the organized work of the large-scale socialist farms which—with their more or less strictly regulated working hours—represented the first step in the radical, though not as yet completely satisfactory, transformation of the working conditions of the peasantry. About a quarter of the peasants permanently working in agricultural cooperatives begin and end work daily at a certain time like industrial workers. Workers on state farms work around ten hours a day, as against eight hours for industrial workers. But these ten hours, as in the case of those in charge of the livestock, for instance, may consist of two shifts of five hours each in morning and evening, and between the shifts they are free to dispose of their time.

But for the majority of peasants working in agricultural cooperatives, hours of labour are still geared to the requirements of the day. They are much longer in summer than in winter, and there are great differences between the working hours of men and of women; in addition to common work on the collective cooperative farm, members also work on their own individual household plots, so that their working time is divided into two; further, hours of starting work change with daily requirements, being considerably earlier in summer than in winter. Even among the cooperative members themselves the differences in working time are great, depending on the work they do. Although precise figures are lacking, it is clear that the differences between the working hours of peasants and workers and employees are still considerable. This is true in general, and even more so if specific groups are considered. (The data given refer to the time spent at the place of work, which we take as equal to hours of work).

The daily schedule* (based on a yearly average) of manual labourers, divided into workers** or members of cooperative farms, is as follows (in hours):

	Men		Women	
	workers	cooperative members	workers	cooperative members
Gainful employment	8.6	8.6	7.2	3.3
Work on personal household plot	0.2	1.4	0.1	1.9
Total	8.8	10.0	7.3	5.2
Household duties	1.4	1.5	4.2	6.1
Sleep	8.0	7.7	7.9	8.1
Eating, dressing, etc.	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.5
Leisure time	3.2	2.2	2.2	2.1
Total	24.0	24.0	24.0	24.0

As may be seen, men who are members of cooperative farms work much longer hours than workers, and women work less. But if we add the work of the cooperative farm and household work together, we then discover that the men on the farms work 1.3 hours more than the workers, and the women almost the same number of hours.

The question of a day of rest deserves further attention. According to figures given, workers and employees are assured of a day of rest, but there is practically no day of rest for peasants, especially in summer.

The old peasant attitude still survives in many agricultural cooperatives in that those in charge of livestock still have no day of rest. On the other hand, there are cooperatives already in existence where the working members get paid holidays and sick pay. This is not as yet enforceable by law, and the rule is therefore spreading very slowly. (At the same time, however, every cooperative member and his family—which means practically every peas-

* Twenty-four hours of the day. Central Statistical Office. *Statistikai Időszaki Közlemények*. (Periodic Statistical Publications, Budapest, 1965/8.

** Workers include those employed on state farms, but the number of the latter is relatively small.

ant—is nationally insured in the social security scheme and is therefore assured of free medical care, medicaments, hospitalization, etc.) There is no doubt that if agriculture is to retain an adequate labour force, the social services will have to be extended within the next year or two, and agricultural workers enjoy the same benefits and amenities as industrial workers.

The time-schedule of cooperative members in the summer season, given below, represents the average in producers' cooperatives today (in hours):

	Men			Women	
	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday	Weekday	Sunday
Gainful employment	11.7	10.3	4.7	7.4	1.8
Work on personal household plot	1.2	1.4	2.0	2.3	3.2
Total	12.9	11.7	6.7	9.7	5.0
Household duties and children	0.7	0.8	1.8	3.9	5.6
Sleep	6.7	6.8	6.5	6.9	7.3
Eating, dressing, etc.	2.6	2.7	2.9	2.4	2.9
Leisure	1.1	2.0	6.1	1.1	3.2
Total	24.0	24.0	24.0	24.0	24.0

These figures reflect many of the particular characteristics of peasant life. There is less time for sleep in summer, and practically no free time on weekdays. The one hour of leisure after thirteen hours spent in work at the place of work and at home cannot be considered a period of recreation, but rather as a form of rest complementing sleep. It is also interesting to note that on the household plots more work is done on restdays than on workdays, and that work on the household plot is mostly done by the women. And finally, it is clear that neither for the women nor the men does the

Sunday bring rest and recreation commensurate with the very full schedule of work during the week.

The most unfavourable picture, however, in terms of hours of work, is presented not by exclusively peasant families, but by those with another source of livelihood as well, i.e., families in which those members who do not work on the land travel to work. There are about 400,000 of them, i.e., almost 10 per cent of all employed. In general they may be divided into two groups: those who go daily to work and those who are absent for weekly or fortnightly intervals. As far as hours are concerned, those who travel daily to work are in an especially disadvantageous position, since they may spend from two to four hours a day travelling. This—with a few exceptions—is time lost from every point of view. They often help on the household plots, and so, to a limited extent, remain peasants. This dual life also leaves its mark on their approach to life.

On account of the housing shortage, most of them are unable to transfer their home and family to a district near their place of work. But even where the place of employment is easy and quick to reach, they do not want to give up their agricultural connections, because they hold that the double income is profitable. Those who commute at weekly or fortnightly intervals only maintain their links with agriculture because they cannot find housing near their work.

This problem demands a double answer: on the one hand more houses must be built—a vital necessity for a variety of other reasons as well—and on the other, the development of short-distance transport must be intensified, and the speed and comfort of travel increased.

FROM OUR NEXT NUMBERS

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

Imre Vajda

THE STYLE OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE

Máté Major

THE SYSTEM OF SOCIALIST JURISDICTION

György Gellért

FERENC JUHÁSZ

THURSDAY, THE DAY OF SUPERSTITION:
WHEN IT'S MOST DIFFICULT

On the third day, it's most difficult, on the third day.
I don't curse
and feel no self-pity.
I just
stand on this octagonal
electric-stone-isle this evening. It's Thursday.

Blue, yellow, green, red rain's falling,
An oil rainbow-river's running at my feet
with jostling bubbles.
Their living skin, like that of chameleons moving
their filmy eyes rotate
their velvety texture creases
mutating they are changing their colour.

Like red headed rain lizards they
crawl on top of each other while
making this place a blossoming stone-solitude
Galapagos isle.

I am alone.

The place like a giant wheel turns around;
it has ships: trams, taxis, buses,
it has windows: shopwindows,
it has prostitutes: phallic gladioli.

Blue, yellow, green, red rain's falling.

The newsvendors are shouting.
The flowergirls are silent.

Metallic structures lift
 Night flowers of silence
 Night neon beasts
 high above all roofs, chimneys and trees.

My heart, stretched to the sky
 looks at its own fate:
 Above me, like a giant brain
 an electric map vibrates.
 Hungary.

The small dots are braincells
 and places; each is a small city.
 The light rivers blue veins
 Glittering in their tangles.

Oh everyone!

On the third day, it's most difficult, on the third day.

I don't curse
 and feel no self-pity.

But help me everyone, help me humanity.

Look, here and there in the rain
 walls and roofs blossom, look at the sky:
 the spider of light in its cobweb of light
 is moving amoeba-like.
 Ads open and close
 shrink like mimosa leaves
 like starfish when
 they float
 and grope around.

Nylon and plastic macs tussle
 under the crystal-fern of the rain
 each is a monster celophane
 and together they swish and rustle.

Women hidden in hides of lizards,
 Men hidden in hides of snakes,

And hungry
 and thirsty.

Blue green yellow red faces
 hurry.

Who knows that my teeth chatter?
 For whom should I buy the flower?
 Where are the friends who would listen
 When I cry out: "listen, I say, listen."

I look at the rain
 and search for you
 with cold blue words I call for you
 Hungary.

And red yellow green
 lines of light
 from the shape of a giant pint
 of beer drawn out of the night to fall in rain
 To evanescence.

Golden beer in a golden mug
 golden mug spouts shining slugs
 the drops drip down on the slimy floor
 froth of light voltage phosphor.

What song should I sing
 and where should I go?

"O Lord deliver me from evil!"
 On the third day, it's most difficult, on the third day.
 I should stay here.
 I should run away.

I linger on the electric froth of beer.
 How I would cry out
 how I would cry out like a child
 if everyone would not laugh at me.
 How I would climb upon you, electric-current-Hungary,
 How I would lie upon your neon-brain
 so that the x-rayed ribs
 would show up my swollen heart
 which is yours.

But I mustn't, it's forbidden.

On the third day, it's most difficult, on the third day.

I don't shout
 I don't curse
 I just stand in the rainy rainbow wilderness
 my grandmother's words spurt from my lips:
 "Deliver me Lord from the Unicorn, from the Fourbreasted Bird,
 deliver me Lord from the Snakescaled Ram, from the Howling Flower,
 deliver me Lord from the Barking Frog from the Blackhoofed Angel
 deliver me from evil amen."

But for whom should I mumble it, who wants to know?
 Would I save anyone from death with my song?
 Laughing I have denied my God
 his loins I flogged and ran like a dog
 turning up my flame to outshine God:
 world-worms broil in it slimily
 with green bubbles green tear sizzles,
 and the red green blue electric roots
 enlace my head.
 Electric man's long lilac beard
 flows down around and over and chalks me.

Only you can help me, I know it well enough.
 On the third day, it's the most difficult, on the third day.

What do I want?
 What did I want?
 Into your heart I scratched myself
 like the hairy little soldier under shell-fire
 scratched himself into mother earth:
 above him skulls of light
 metallic leaves
 blood-flies, ruby fountains around and
 cool stalagmite gorges, rotating eyeball-flowers about.

Like an embryo
 in pulsating bloody jungles
 I lie here folded up:
 in you I roll with the rhythm
 of the gently moving ribs.
 I listen to the rumble of your blood-fall
 to the minute trembling of your bowels
 to the working sounds of your kidneys, your liver and lungs.
 With my open eyes I see your inner night
 your looming body
 is touched by my feeler eyes.
 You are the depth of the ocean and the height of space.

I am alone.

I am with you.

Blue, yellow, green red rain's falling
Light-animals crawl out from the deep.
And like the ocean brain of electric jellyfish
Hungary billows above me;
the globe, this space-jellyfish floats at the bay
of the milky way.

I believe
that if you cast
your soft grub off
you will build your faith again;
unfold your wings of gold
uncoil them from the slimy muck.
Let them dry and harden once and again
and when the wings stretch
and the womb of time silently closes
and you throb up from blue-veined sludge
I know that my fate is also yours.

Here I stand alone
Boving my wet head.
On the third day, it's most difficult, on the third day.
It's Thursday night tonight.
I don't curse
and feel no self-pity.

And wet to the skin I start for home,
In the blue green red rain, in the age of socialism, resolute for life.

Translated by Tamás Kabdebó

SURVEYS

BEFORE AND AFTER GRADUATION

I.

LOOKING FORWARD IN ANGER

In September 1956, nine years ago, I took my degree at the Arts Faculty of the Loránd Eötvös University in Budapest.

I was at the student hostel of the University during the tragic days of the 1956 explosion and, later, of reconciliation, when my and my companions' future and the country's fate gradually became clear and all of us came to understand that we and our country shared a common fate.

Now, nine years later, I revisited the places I had frequented when I was a university student. I talked to young people living the same life I had lived at that time, and I tried to find out what their future prospects, their present ways of thinking, their habits, and beliefs, their lives as a whole were like.

The student hostel known as Eötvös Hostel stands in Ménesi Street on the slopes of the Gellért Hill in Buda. The city, the bright ribbon of the Danube and, further south, one of the bridges crossing it can be seen from its windows.

Many famous scientists, philosophers, poets and university professors lived and studied in this building in their youth. It was from here that a number of leading Hungarian intellectuals set out on their career.

In the ground-floor common room there is a television set, a radio, a billiard table

and a piano. Every morning the newspapers arrive there; the well-stocked library is on the first floor; above are the studies and bedrooms; the gymnasium is in the basement, and there is a dark room for photography next door to the common room on the ground floor.

Each autumn the young people flock in from the country by the 49 and 61 trams, climbing the steep Himfy Steps with their suitcase in their hand, and take possession of their rooms. From that moment this will be their home for the next five years, until they have finished their University course.

By permission of the head of the hostel I settled down in the guest room and tried to get re-acquainted with the once so familiar life.

At times the loudspeaker at the end of the corridor would give a howl. Only the last, drawn-out word could be understood: "te-le-*phone*."

Somebody wanted on the 'phone again—I would think—just as in old times. They call them in the same sing-song manner. But where is Puzsér, and where is Kogé, who understood Hebrew and Hindi and occasionally would even speak a few words of Sanskrit?

Kogé turned into a scholar and Puzsér into a history master. And I am a journalist. But of a morning Auntie Mariska, the char, will—I imagine—still be sitting her-

self by the boys' bedside to tell them how she smuggled food into Budapest from the country at the end of the war: "... and as the control guard on the outskirts stroked me—and the bacon hidden under my skirt—his face flushed: 'You've got a wonderful behind, love'."

The radio was going full blast in the common room. Out of doors it was getting dark. Three young men were sitting in the corner playing cards.

Should I go up to them? "... just a minute, chaps... .. er ... Let's have a chat... .. er ... you can play cards any time..."

Supposing a stranger had come up to us eleven years ago, when we were sitting about here and had said: "Just a minute, chaps..." I'd have thought: "What the hell's he up to?" Later on I might have told him that the food was pretty good at the University canteen but there wasn't enough of it, or that there was enough but it was lousy; that I went in for sports or went to the cinema, that I liked my subject and was quite satisfied—on the whole the University students of my time were contented and enjoyed their work. That's what I'd have said, and if he didn't like it he could lump it.

I had come back here a stranger, but memories kept me from behaving like one.

Only on the third day did I begin to work. By then I had discovered that there were some arts students who were prepared to teach in the country, that the food in the canteen was both bad and insufficient, that the University lectures were pretty dull and that some of the first year students went to church on Sunday mornings. On the third day I spoke to four students in their first year at the Arts Faculty. It was arranged that one or two students who were not at the Eötvös University and did not live in the hostel would be invited to the common room for a chat.

At night the concrete grandstands of the Budapest University Athletics Club (BEAC)

sports grounds in Mező Street conserve the heat of a Hungarian summer day. I know this for a fact because I had lived in a storage shed at the end of the tennis grounds for nine months. After finishing at the University I got a job in Budapest, but for a long time I couldn't find a room. It was with the tacit consent of the BEAC President that I moved into the storage shed in which young people in a similar position had lived before me and are living now. In the room there was an iron bedstead, a desk and a cupboard. I had a pleasant time there. Early in the morning we played tennis, we hosed each other down with tepid water from the garden hose; nobody cared a damn what we did, nobody mentioned the word rent; as a matter of fact in the end I was rather sorry when I had to leave when a new job took me away.

I had known young Péter Pákay for a long time from the BEAC sports grounds. Early in his teens already one noticed him with his huge pectoral muscles and also by the fact that even when it was pouring with rain he did not put on his track suit. I had also known Péter Pápai for quite a long time. He was unbearable at basketball—and otherwise a quiet and modest youth. They both were athletes; they trained at the BEAC grounds, hammer throwers, handsome young men, both of them University students, of course. Their names were very similar, and so were their interests; they found themselves in competition time and again on the red slag of the BEAC grounds.

From among the students of the Institute of Physical Education I spoke with a girl. She was beautiful, with a delicate face, conjuring up visions of moonlit walks along the river bank; but when I shook hands with her her grip was iron. In the streets of Buda leading to the sports grounds of the Institute of Physical Education one can often see these cheerful girls in their blue track suits. For the spectator, games and sports spell gaiety and fun. The students of the Institute are professional sportsmen and sports-

women; and yet they are not. Their profession is not to compete but to teach. At the Academy they study teaching methods, philosophy and anatomy as well. Although some first-class sportsmen and sportswomen of world renown have been trained at the Institute (Gyula Zsivótzky, the world champion hammer thrower graduated there), it is principally designed, like the Arts Faculty of the University, to turn out teachers.

In talking to the girl the delicate face and iron grip I discovered that the lot of a student at the Institute of Physical Education was no bed of roses.

The same twelve questions were put to each of the students:

1. Why did you choose this profession?
2. Did you think that University life would be like this?
3. Do you have enough money?
4. What clothes have you got?
5. How do you get on with your fellow students?
6. Have you ever been to a night club, the Pipacs, for instance?
7. What do you think of your future? Do you think there are proper opportunities and rewards for talent in our society?
8. Who are some of the people you admire?
9. When did you last go to church?
10. What do you think of love and of marriage?
11. Are you interested in politics?
12. What would spell success and happiness for you? What would satisfy you?

Vilmos Klein is a sturdy young man with reflective eyes. He is a second-year Arts student. He finished his secondary education in Veszprém, in western Hungary. His father is a factory worker.

István Bartos is a second-year Arts student of the Arts Faculty and found his way to the University from Várpalota, a small mining town. His father is a miner.

Árpád Zámbó, with a dreamy, poetic face, comes from the village of Sand in Zala County. His parents are peasants and members of an agricultural cooperative. He is studying history and Hungarian language and literature at the Arts Faculty.

László Laki is a self-confident and resolute young man. His father is a workman.

Péter Pákay is in his fourth year of electrical engineering. He is a tall, good-looking young man, constantly to be seen in pullovers. His father is a lawyer.

Péter Pápai is intending to teach physics and mathematics and has been studying five years now. He wears horn-rimmed spectacles and is slightly overweight. His father is a secondary-school teacher.

On her own request, I cannot reveal the name of the student at the Institute of Physical Education, who feared her answers would adversely affect her career.

"Why did you choose this profession?"

Vilmos Klein: "I want to write and I thought if I studied at the Arts Faculty I might be able to. I don't want to be a teacher."

István Bartos: "I like children."

Árpád Zámbó: "After finishing secondary school I taught in a village at the back of beyond. I thought if I took a degree I would get a better post."

László Laki: "I don't want to be a school-teacher either, I want an academic career."

Péter Pákay: "I went in for electrical engineering because I've been interested in technical things ever since my childhood, and it's only got stronger at the University."

Péter Pápai: "My father is a secondary-school teacher and I never wanted to be anything else, and not even the University has managed to kill the desire in me."

The student at the Institute of Physical Education: "In the beginning I went in for sports because movement was a joy and relaxation for me. I thought it would be like that my whole life."

"And now?"

"In some way or other I'll finish at the Institute. But by now they've got me hating the whole thing. I'm only too happy if I don't have to move. They force one to overstrain oneself and I'm not at all sure that it's the gym teacher's main job to be proficient in all and every branch of sport. As a result of physical over-exertion one grows indifferent. I can't imagine how I could teach children anything worth while in such a frame of mind. I don't know what'll happen to me."

I also asked the hammer throwers why they had taken up sport.

"Once you've started you can't stop," they said. "It's part of our lives now. It's all the same what sort of sport one takes up, but one must move about. It'll be useful later on whatever we do."

"Did you think that University life would be like this?"

The Arts students: "We expected much more. We thought we'd hear interesting lectures and all we hear are the same things as we heard at school. It's nothing but a repetition. Only what we read is new. But we could read without going to the University, couldn't we?"

Péter Pákay: "I'm not disappointed with anything. But I do object that we've got to spend a good part of every summer at practical work in an electrical factory. It hasn't proved very useful so far, and it robs us of our vac. But our lectures are exciting."

Péter Pápai: "Our lecturers are very good at their subjects, but they aren't always good lecturers. Scientific training at the Science Faculty is excellent, but anyone who is planning to become a teacher will pretty soon be sickened by the idea here."

The student at the Institute of Physical Education: "I am disappointed. There are only ten to fifteen people in my whole class worth talking to. The rest are only interested in sports. They don't know what books are and hardly read at all. We have some first-class experts but we've also got people

teaching at the Institute who haven't a clue."

No fees are charged at Hungarian Universities. In exceptional cases, when the student's academic results are not too good and his parents have a good income, the Dean of the faculty can oblige him to pay a tuition fee. A great many students receive a regular grant from the University, depending on their financial circumstances and the progress they make.

"Do you have enough money?"

Arts students: "God knows. It's enough for one and not enough for the other. Twice a year you can get a special grant from the University if you apply in writing."

(I remembered the fellow student of mine who began every application with "my sick old mother, who is a poor widow . . ." and each time he got the grant. There's no denying there's a trick to everything—including the writing of applications.)

Péter Pákay: "I get a grant of a hundred and fifty forints, and two hundred forints from my parents. It's not a lot, but, on the other hand, it's what one wants that determines whether the money is enough or not. The food at the canteen of the University of Technology is excellent."

Péter Pápai: "I get three hundred and fifty forints from the University and another three hundred from home. That's enough."

The student at the Institute of Physical Education: "I never have any money. In the morning and evening I get my meals at home, and in the daytime I can do without eating."

"What clothes have you got?"

Vilmos Klein: "An overcoat, a dark suit, in which I sit my exams, another for daily wear at the University, a track suit and a hat."

Péter Pákay: "Three suits, six pullovers, three pairs of trousers, two pairs of shoes, a lot of shirts, an overcoat, a raincoat and a wrist-watch."

"Have you got any books?"

"Oh yes, quite a lot."

Péter Pápai: "Five suits, two pullovers, three pairs of shoes, two pairs of sandals, an overcoat, a winter coat, a mac, and a wrist-watch. I've also got an old radio, and heaps of books."

The student at the Institute of Physical Education: "Four summer and four winter dresses, three sweaters, two coats, a rain-coat, two pairs of high-heeled shoes, a pair of stockings and a pair which is being mended. I've got a wrist-watch, a pocket transistor and about a hundred and fifty books."

"How do you get on with your fellow students?"

(I wondered what their answers to this question would be, chiefly because the capital is almost exclusively the centre of cultural life. Although the big provincial towns have a certain independent intellectual artistic life, press and university, yet the leading theatres, publishing houses, newspapers, art galleries, museums and central research institutes are all in Budapest. This, of course, gives a certain advantage to young people educated in the capital, as against those from provincial towns and particularly from villages.)

Arts students (all of whom came from the country): "We are on perfectly good terms with our fellow students from Budapest. There's no bad feeling between us."

"Didn't you ever feel that the Budapest people were better informed than you?"

"Of course, at the beginning. But in the long run it's talent that counts."

Péter Pákay: "I'm on good terms with my fellow students from the country as well. I don't think we make any difference."

Péter Pápai: "From the second year on, by the time we've come to know each other better, I've had closer relations with my fellow students from the country than with the Budapest ones. I've never felt any difference between us."

The student at the Institute of Physical Education: "I'm on very good terms with all my fellow students who are able to utter an intelligent sentence."

"Have you ever been to a night club, the Pipacs, for instance?"

Arts students: "We know where the Pipacs is but none of us has ever been there. In the evening we go to the Borostyán, to the University Club and what we call the House of Lords."

"What's the Borostyán?"

"It's a restaurant close by the student hostel. They sell very good wine there."

"And the 'House of Lords'?"

"It's really a self-service cafeteria, here near the hostel. One eats standing at counters but you can eat as much as you need for six forints."

Péter Pákay: "I've never been to the Pipacs. I spend my leisure time at the club of the Technological University."

Péter Pápai: "I don't go anywhere. Not even to the theatre. I much prefer reading."

The student at the Institute of Physical Education: "I've never been to the Pipacs. We go to the Paradiso."

"That's the same sort of a place, isn't it?"

"Maybe. Sometimes I go there, when I'm taken out by somebody. In the same way I go to the theatre. Otherwise I can't because I haven't got any money."

"What do you think of your future? Do you think there are proper opportunities and rewards for talent in our society?"

The Arts students: "Everybody has a chance. If one's determined enough one will get on."

Péter Pákay: "The trouble is that people want material things and there are only a few that choose intellectual advancement. Most of them only work for money, although wealth does not necessarily mean developing our talents. But of course, opportunities to develop our talents do not always mean financial security."

Péter Pápai: "I can't imagine what sort of a successful career a teacher could make. If someone really embarks on a scientific career in Hungary, for a time at least he's certainly going to have a lot of privations

to endure. It's up to him to decide whether the game is worth the candle."

The student at the Institute of Physical Education: "People with good 'connexions' can certainly make a career. Though in financial matters not even good connections mean a lot. I don't see any chances for myself at all. A good painter, now, an actor, a doctor or a football player does make a decent living. But in our profession a sense of dedication is the only reason."

"And do you feel any sense of dedication?"

"I did."

"Who are some of the people you admire?"

The Arts students: "Károly Novobáczky, the physicist, János Kádár, the politician, and Ferenc Juhász, the poet."

"Why do you admire Novobáczky?"

"Because he knows a great deal."

"And János Kádár?"

"Because what he is doing is realistic and suits us. He works terrifically hard, and he's sensible and sincere. We ought to have had such a leader long ago."

"What about Ferenc Juhász?"

"Among our present-day poets he's the one who really gives himself to his readers in his poems. That's the great thing: to give ourselves."

Péter Pákay: "Zoltán Kodály and László Papp, the Olympic champion."

"Why do you admire Zoltán Kodály?"

"Genuine art is to be admired."

"And László Papp?"

"Because he was Olympic winner three times over and is still going strong."

"Do you think he was right to become a professional?"

"I think it's hypocrisy to speak of pure amateurism with us."

Péter Pápai: "György Hajós, professor of mathematics. It's from him I've learned most at the University."

The student at the Institute of Physical Education: (A long silence and a long shrug of shoulders).

I try to help her: "It doesn't matter if he is dead. Nor if he is a foreigner. Have you never had an ideal? Is there no one you respect—an artist, a scientist, a sportsman?"

"It's their work, it's what they've done I know."

"Who?"

"Bartók, Miklós Radnóti, the poet. . ."

On the radio Edith Piaf is singing "Milk-lord."

"—And Edith Piaf."

"Is there anyone you despise?"

"Yes. Those who have no respect for others."

"When did you last go to church?"

The Arts students: "None of us goes to church."

"Do you know anybody who does?"

"Yes. Some of them here at the hostel go to church on Sunday morning."

"What do you think of it?"

"Nothing. It's their own business."

Péter Pákay: "I was twelve when I last attended mass. But I have some friends who go to church at Christmas and Easter."

Péter Pápai: "Some of my fellow students go to church regularly. We've had great arguments, but they've made no difference."

The student at the Institute of Physical Education: "I haven't been to church for ages."

"And the others at the Institute?"

"I think there are very few believers among them."

"What do you think of love and of marriage?"

Vilmos Klein: "I fell in love with a girl. We first met at the University and after that very often. And then she put a question to a divinity student at the Arts Faculty. She asked oh, well, something like why clergymen always advocated great and noble things in their sermons when they were immoral and lustful in their private lives. And she asked it in the presence of others. In fact she was just a left-wing anarchist with

no manners. And then I realized that we couldn't go on together, she wasn't the person for me."

"She was a silly goose—not a leftist."

"Don't—it still hurts."

"I'm sorry, I take it back."

"After that it's hard to imagine what sort of life I would have with my wife. In a marriage one must be careful about everything."

István Bartos: "I'd like to marry a teacher. We'd teach together. She would only cook on Sundays and of course we'd share the housework. I'd like to have two children: a girl and a boy."

László Laki: "This Bartos is an optimist, born to be henpecked."

Árpád Zámbo: "I can't tell you what my idea of love and marriage is. I haven't the faintest idea."

Péter Pákay: "I don't want to marry early. I want freedom for a time, I want to travel."

"What do you expect from your wife? Beauty?"

"It won't hurt if she's beautiful."

"Faithfulness?"

"Oh yes, indeed, I'd expect her to be faithful to me. I'm not so strictly exacting with myself in this respect. I'd like to have two children at least."

"How long in your opinion can an affair between two people last?"

"Well, I've been going steady with a girl a long time. We are getting on very well."

Péter Pápai: "I'm going to wait for some time before getting married. If one has a family, one has to earn money to keep them. That's a heavy responsibility. As far as love is concerned, I think it's just as it comes. It's there or it isn't."

The student at the Institute of Physical Education: "It's great luck when love and marriage coincide."

"What do you hope for from the man you love?"

"That he should love me at least as much as I love him—possibly even more. We

should be able to talk with each other. I want him to be sincere. If I am faithful he must be faithful too."

"And his looks?"

"Good-looking and well-dressed."

(This is like the wording of a marriage advertisement.)

"Character?"

"More intelligent than I am."

"When you get married, do you want to have children?"

"Yes. But I don't want it to be a struggle to bring them up."

"Do you think marriage is a sensible institution?"

"If marriage is a failure it's better to get divorced than flounder about in it."

"Are you interested in politics?"

The Arts students: "We should like our politicians to consider the present as well as the future. We are always being told about the mistakes that were committed in the past. We don't want the actual present to become another past mistake later on."

Péter Pákay: "I'm greatly interested in politics. Why, our whole future depends on it."

"Do you feel that you're a free person?"

"Certainly I do."

Péter Pápai: "It's only natural that when one's alive, one's interested in what's going on around one. I'd like the Vietnam mess to come to an end as soon as possible. I'd like not to have a war."

The student at the Institute of Physical Education: "I'm not interested in politics."

"And the destiny of the country?"

"Only as far as it affects me personally."

"Do you feel you're a free person?"

"Only if my future turns out the way I want."

"What would spell success and happiness for you? What would satisfy you?"

Vilmos Klein: "To be a journalist."

"And what would you do if you were a journalist?"

"I would go to a village and write the story of a family."

"Quite a few people went to a village and wrote the story of a family."

"Success, too, means a lot, you know."

"So you want to become a successful writer?"

"As a matter of fact, I do."

"Do you think this is enough?"

"Yes, I do."

István Bartos: "Before I was admitted to the University I worked for two years as a manual labourer. I haven't any extravagant desires. After I take my degree I'd like to go back to Várpalota. It's a new town, it's grown up with me. I'd like to go back there."

Árpád Zámbo: "I can't answer that question. I don't know what would make me happy or give me pleasure. I just don't know anything."

"I don't understand you. You are only just past twenty."

"When I finished secondary school I taught in a village for two years. There, when I was alone in the afternoons, I just lay on my back and stared at the ceiling. I was only upheld by the hope that sooner or later I'd get to the University. Well, I did—and nothing happened. I get up in the morning, I go to my lectures, I have lunch, I go home, I watch the telly and I go to bed. And when I've got my degree, I can go back and teach where I came from. What's the point of it all? I don't know. I'd like to have a purpose. I don't care what it is—I only want to be interested in it."

"Aren't you interested in anything?"

"Up to a point I'm interested in everything, but in nothing completely. I don't know what to do with myself. There's nothing wrong with me, I've got what I wanted—and yet... I think probably everyone's got to struggle through this, because we are all looking for a purpose and we can only live when we have found it."

Péter Pápai: "One's work is the most important thing. And work can satisfy one if it's useful, creative work. And if other people as well take seriously what one is doing. Besides that I'd like to travel a lot."

"And you think you can make this kind of life for yourself?"

"It just depends on me."

Péter Pápai: "I should say the same."

"What are you interested in most of all?"

"My work, literature and sport."

"You've already got your degree. Where did you get your job?"

"At Győr, in a secondary school. I don't mind going there and if things turn out well I'll stay there."

"Are you satisfied with your lot?"

"Yes, I think so."

The student at the Institute of Physical Education:

"I'd be satisfied if I could live free of financial care, in congenial company with a congenial husband."

"What do you mean by 'free of financial care'?"

"A nice flat, good food and clothes, and a car."

"What are you interested in most of all?"

"In my future."

Of course, neither the questions nor the answers are in any way complete. I have simply written down the opinions of seven Hungarian University students, adhering to their own words without distorting or suppressing anything.

When they first come up young people believe that by this very fact all the problems of their future have magically disappeared. But the professions they choose—which really means the whole of their future lives—may either maintain its charm in the course of their five University years or lose its attraction and degenerate into an "oh well, so what's the odds" attitude. And in that case no one is going to make sacrifices for it. I have known a would-be teacher who became a model, and a biologist who became a manual labourer. Simply because, having finished at the University, the only job "suited to him" would have been in the country. University studies present no finan-

cial problem either for the young people themselves or for their parents. The system of grants takes the students' financial circumstances into account, and rewards good academic results. University students are neither too well nor too badly off. During their student years the hostels and canteens provide for them relatively comfortably, and it is only their clothes they have to find themselves.

Even if they come to Budapest from the country the majority of graduates make every effort to stay in the capital afterwards. As a rule, family commitments are taken into consideration when jobs are being assigned. And yet cases occur like the one five years ago, when a marriage was endangered because the young wife was assigned to a position in the country. She had to choose between her profession or her family, and of course, she gave up her profession.

A pleasant and useful life goes on in agreeable surroundings at the University Clubs. Teenagers' bands play on Saturday nights or the young people may organize debates or recitals of a poet's or writer's works.

In Budapest there are three big sport

clubs for University students: the BEAC, the MAFC (Club of the University of Technology) and the TFSE (the Sports Club of the Institute of Physical Education). More and more University students take up sport, being firmly of the opinion that sport is an integral part of contemporary life.

In answer to the question about their future and whether there are proper opportunities and rewards for talent in our society, not all of those questioned gave an unequivocal yes as a reply. They have little faith in the future in terms of financial success—nor, to be fair, is financial success their only criterion. Most of the young people believe in looking for happiness in their future work. And the figure they choose "to admire" seems to be selected from the same basis. I had wondered a good deal what kind of people, what kind of heroes are admired by the young people of today. And the answers seems to be: those that do their work seriously and do it well.

These answers give some clue to the way of thinking and the life of University students today. The genuine answer however will be found less in their words today than in their life and actions in the future.

ATTILA KRISTÓF

II.

FRUSTRATION?

I should like to make a documentary about a girl who graduated in Hungarian and History at the University, and then goes to the country to teach. I'd like to know what happens to her there? How does she live? Where? What kind of people does she meet? What are her pupils and colleagues like? Her relations with men? What sort of relationships does she build up? The film would begin with the preparations for her finals and end with the distribution of the school reports after her first year of teaching.

These immediate and personal aspects of a teacher's life are, of course, intimately bound up with problems of a more general, social nature. There are at present fifty to sixty unfilled posts for teachers in each Hungarian county. On the other hand, out of the two hundred and twelve graduates in the Arts Faculty of the University of Budapest in 1963-64 only thirty accepted teaching posts in the country, the others preferred to remain in Budapest. Nine out of every ten of those remaining in the capital or in the

County of Pest are in non-teaching occupations. One in five of them makes use of his academic qualifications in his work; the others are employed in work mostly unconnected with their university studies. By background a hundred and thirty were born in Budapest, eighty-two come from the country.

To appreciate the proper significance of these figures one should add that 829 of the posts offered to candidates in the last year of the university course were in the country,* and it is generally regarded as well-nigh compulsory to take up teaching posts in the countryside, and that several administrative measures have deliberately been taken to make it difficult for young graduates to remain in Budapest. Provided, that is, some institution (such as the National Library, the Academy of Sciences, the Institute for Psychology, the Radio and Television, publishers, etc.) does not put in a claim for the student, owing to his or her outstanding capabilities, or circumstances justify it (husband working in the capital, permanent domicile in Budapest, children). In spite of this, however, the figures quoted recur year by year and even get worse.

Judging from statistics and from the average student background, graduates fall into the following four main categories:

1. Graduates from Budapest who remain there—in work unconnected with their professional skills.
2. Graduates from the country who stay in Budapest—in work unconnected with their professional skills.
3. Graduates from Budapest who go to the country to teach from a sense of vocation.
4. Graduates from the country who return to teach in their home towns or other parts of the country.

I have deliberately chosen to ignore exceptionally gifted graduates who are offered,

* In Hungary every graduate from the University is guaranteed the offer of a post, which he may accept or refuse.—[Ed.]

and accept, professional positions in Budapest on their merits. Their case presents few problems and what there are, are unconnected with those I tried to investigate.

I

Tibor B. read History and Hungarian at the University. As a small child he was brought up and cared for by his grandparents in a small village in the south-western tip of Hungary. On reaching school age his parents sent him to Budapest. They were surprised to see the excellent reports the boy brought home, but none the less they did not want him to stay on at school on account of their poverty. From the time he left secondary school he has in fact kept himself.

His university entrance essay was on the novels of the early twentieth-century writer, Zsigmond Móricz, who wrote on village themes. The subject brought to mind early childhood memories, the grandparents, the village. It revealed him as intelligent, frank and independent-minded. During his undergraduate years he eked out a living by working as a supervisor in a hostel for out-of-town schoolboys, then for a term he left the University and kept himself as an unskilled worker. Since he broke his course, he was only allowed to sit for his exams by obtaining special permission from the Rector of the University. Despite the break he came through with flying colours.

His university testimonials all agree that he is hard-working and persevering, able and good with children. He did his trial teaching in the north Hungarian town of Balassagyarmat. The school authorities were satisfied with his work, and the county educational board asked especially for him at the end of his university career. He accepted the post, but at the beginning of the school year he failed to report. Instead he wrote to the authorities asking for his work-book to be returned to him. Since August 1st he has been employed as a supervisor in a hostel for apprentices in the building industry.

On the eastern fringe of Budapest is the suburb of Zugl6, and across the railway tracks there stand a set of five long blocks built in the neo-classicist barrack style of the early 'fifties. There are a few green spots at the back of the blocks, a handful of saplings, and wire fences surrounding the whole compound. These five buildings, together with the pavilion-like dining-hall and the Cultural Centre, a huge megalithic block nicknamed the "Concrete," make up the workers' hostel and apprentices' school of the Ministry of Construction. Four thousand people live here, and two and a half thousand of them are boy apprentices between fourteen and eighteen years of age.

Tibor B. was a shy young man wearing spectacles, a jacket of some nondescript colour, and the ordinary conservative trousers of the not-with-it young man. The room where he took me to had a long table, a couple of chairs with tubular legs and a radiator in it. This was the room of the Young Communist Organization (called the *KISZ*).

He answered all my questions calmly, but a little too mechanically. I could see at once that he had said it all several times before.

"How was it you came here to work?" I asked.

Just before he was due to take up his new post in Balassagyarmat he did a little calculation and decided to remain in Budapest after all. In the meanwhile his mother had fallen ill and his younger brother had been called up for military service. He had been a supervisor during his undergraduate years, which meant that it had been easier for him to get the job.

"What do you do as an instructor?"

He had two hundred and twenty boys in his charge. He came in at 2 p.m. and stayed till 9 or 10 every evening. As soon as the boys got in at noon from the building sites, they tidied up their rooms and prepared their lessons. He supervised their homework and helped them with any difficulties they had. In the evening he marshalled them into line

and accompanied them to the dining-hall for supper. If there was a discussion or a lecture after supper he took charge again, if not the boys were free to do as they liked until ten o'clock. On those nights he could leave earlier.

In addition to this sort of supervision he was also due to teach, but this year there had not as yet been a single lesson, though we were then in December. The building firms had fallen behind in their plan fulfilment, and so the boys were away working on the sites all day.

"What sort of relations do you have with the boys? How well do you know them? Do they ever come to you with their personal problems?"

I gathered that two hundred and twenty youngsters were too many to get to know as individuals, and moreover this was not a regular school. They only started studying after their return from work. It was evening by the time they had finished their homework. They had almost no free time and what little they had they had to spend listening to compulsory TIT* lectures three nights a week with maybe an odd visit to the cinema in the "Concrete." But many of them were so tired that they fell asleep in the afternoon, especially the older ones who did an adult job during the day.

When he had been an undergraduate and had first undertaken the job of supervisor at the school hostel, he had been full of enthusiasm. He gave extra talks on ethical and literary topics, arranged visits to museums on Sundays, and got up poetry recital competitions. Then the headmaster told him to stop. Such things, he said, distracted the students from their proper subjects. So he gave it up. Here you had to do what the building engineers told you to do, the teacher came second. He did his work, saw to it that the boys kept their things tidy and in order, and that was all. A school was a different

* These letters stand for the nation-wide organization for the popularization and advancement of culture and scientific knowledge.—[Ed.]

thing; they had their own traditions, they organized groups to cater for specialized interests, they ran inter-school competitions; when you were there you could have some ideas and maintain some sort of standard.

He was laconic and spoke with the quietness of a man who had thought it all out a long time ago and was resigned to this state of affairs.

"If you feel so nostalgic about teaching, don't you have any regrets about having left Balassagyarmat?"

He stiffened.

"I won't go to the country. I told them so in the district council, I told them so in the University."

"When did you last go to the cinema?"

"Two weeks ago, with the boys. We saw the Count of Monte Christo."

"And when did you last go to the theatre?"

He had not seen a play since leaving the University. He was on duty till nine or ten o'clock in the evening. When he had a day off, he sometimes went to the University Stage if there was anything on he thought he'd like to see. When his lessons were cancelled, he spent the time reading. And he took aimless walks.

A meeting was ending in the teachers' common room. We entered. The inevitable physical map of Hungary met the eye, there were curtains of folk embroidery at the windows, pots of flowers on the tables and a set of table football.

I asked to see a textbook of literature and a copy of the school syllabus. While I studied the syllabus Tibor B. distributed theatre tickets among his colleagues. He must have been the cultural propagandist.* I flicked through the pages of the textbook.

"I have never once managed to get it all in, of course. We always seem to run out of time, you know." I found a man of in-

* In most offices, factories and places of work one of the staff is usually responsible for getting theatre and concert tickets for a slight premium, thus saving the employees the trouble of queuing up.—[Ed.]

credibly thin build with blue eyes standing before me.

He introduced himself.

"My name is János Z., I teach Hungarian and Russian," he said. "I hear that you want to know about the life of recently graduated young teachers."

He finished University two years ago, taught half a year in a provincial town, then took up the full-time job of cultural propaganda and organizing work in the big Iron Works at Csepel in Budapest. He was transferred from there.

Tibor in the meanwhile had sold all the tickets. He nodded towards his friend.

"He is writing his doctor's thesis. On related roots in the Hungarian, Vogul and Ostyak languages."

"So what," János shrugged his shoulders.

"Why, it's a fascinating subject. Where do you get the material for it?" I asked.

"Two chaps have just returned from the Soviet Union after studying there for eighteen months, and have brought back lots of taped material." He launched into a detailed disquisition of the peculiarities of the Ostyak and Cheremiss languages. Then he suddenly broke off.

"By the way, he is working for his doctorate as well," he said, indicating Tibor.

"And when you have got your degree?"

"We can shove a Doctor in front of our names."

"Is that all?"

"That's all. For a time at least you feel you're doing something sensible."

"Well, isn't looking after youngsters a sensible job?"

"Yes. If you could do really that. But you can't. And then these are not that sort of youngsters anyway."

Not "that sort?" What sort then? I asked them to show me the rooms where the boys lived.

In each room there were iron bunks, three of them one above the other, four factory lockers, a table with tubular legs, a few chairs and a loudspeaker. The loudspeaker

system relayed Radio Kossuth from 5 in the morning, till 10 at night. The air was stuffy, the room was in a mess. Greasy paper, chicken bones, crumbs scattered all over the table. They were not allowed to take plates or glasses up to their rooms. They ate the food they got from home as they unpacked it.

When we entered the boys jumped off their beds and stood stiffly at attention. I asked why.

"Headmaster's order."

In the next room the whole place seemed to be overrun by an invasion of pumpkin-seeds. The floor was so thickly covered with them that the green linoleum could hardly be seen.

In another room one of the beds was empty with the sheet and blanket gone, only the mattress remaining.

Bandi S. "lived" there. He was a gipsy. He could not get used to the discipline and decamped, taking with him the sheet and blanket.

I was told this in the corridor by János, who was on the point of tears in his helpless anger.

"The trouble I took over him! I sat by his side afternoon after afternoon while he plodded away at his lessons, his nose had to be kept at the grindstone because he simply couldn't concentrate. I even did his drawings for him. And I clipped his room-mates one on the ear if they jeered at him."

In the meanwhile Tibor had marshalled the boys for supper. Five hundred of them lined up in threes in the corridor. It went relatively smoothly, they did the same every day. They filed past the kitchen counter, put the dishes and things on a tray, and took it away.

Those who had finished took their trays back to the sink. It all had to be done in a hurry because the next batch was already waiting at the door.

It was half past nine when Tibor could at last call it a day, and we could leave the hostel. A freight train shunted past overhead while we waited for the tram.

"I once knew a girl," Tibor said unemotionally. "We were together for two years. After her finals she asked to be sent to the town where her parents lived. She asked me to go there too. I said I would not go to the country. That finished us. I wrote to her later but got no answer."

The suburban train pulled up beside us with shrieking brakes.

"You're no wiser for this conversation, you know," said Tibor as he waved goodbye.

Tibor returns to his home in the XIXth district, to a kitchen-living-room flat which he shares with four other persons. A forty-watt unshaded electric bulb hangs from the ceiling, nothing stronger would be allowed by his mother. The W.C. is at the far end of a small plot surrounding the house. He travels one and a half hours to reach the centre of the town. From 2 to 10 p.m. he spends his time among boys who are too many to receive any individual attention or concern. Once in a while he gives a couple of lessons, but it is almost impossible to cover the ground because every so often the boys are taken away for work and when they come back he has to start all over again.

So gradually he develops a dislike for the boys because they are "only" apprentices, because it is more important for them to know how tiles are put in place than learn about eighteenth-century Hungarian patriotic poetry. He works for a degree just for something sensible to do and requests his transfer. But there are no vacant posts in Budapest.

"Well, I can always go back to unskilled labour or do office work."

He received the last letter from Balassagyarmat a fortnight ago. It said they were still keeping his post open and had even made some arrangement for lodgings in the hostel there. But he clings to the "better" way of life offered by the capital and refuses to go. He feels hurt and frustrated, as one who was given a promise and then disappointed.

Erzsi T. was a teacher of Russian language and literature. She was born in the County of Békés in the south-west of Hungary. Her father was a factory worker, a member of the Social Democratic Party from 1935, a party secretary after the liberation when the two workers' parties, the Communists and the Social Democrats, merged, and later still a director of a state farm. As the daughter of a party secretary she was given a number of jobs to do in the general activities of her school. She was remarkably pretty, and she acted and danced in the village drama group.

She also wrote her university entrance paper on the novels of Zsigmond Móricz. Her essay lacked originality and character, was formal and conventional. In her *curriculum vitae* submitted with the entrance application she said rather primly that she intended to return to her native village after completing her studies and wished to build socialism by educating the children of the people.

In her third year at the University she was summoned before a disciplinary tribunal and expelled from the university hostel on the grounds of immoral conduct.

In her application for employment to the education authorities she wrote that, if possible, she would like to get a post in the Budapest school where she did her teaching practice. She also referred vaguely to some possibility of marriage, which might also keep her in Budapest, but added that if her request could not be granted she was prepared to go back to the County of Békés to teach in a school there. At present she is responsible for surveying and filing technical literature in a business enterprise.

The office where she worked was crammed to the ceiling with stacks of files and papers; five people were working there and Erzsi's desk was the first on the right of the door. Unconsciously I was looking for some trace in her of the wild and turbulent past, the pro-

vocative bearing, the showily smart dresses mentioned reprovingly in her testimonials.

She was wearing a high-necked black jumper, a tweed skirt and black shoes. A chain of beaten silver was round her neck. There was no make-up on her face with the exception of the discreetly pencilled eyes. She was extremely attractive.

"Why didn't you become a teacher?"

They insisted she should take a job in Transdanubia, at Szombathely or Ajka. She had never been to either of these places and knew nobody there. She thought she would never have got accustomed to living in the country.

"You know, one has got to have the right temperament for it."

Why, what sort of temperament did she think she had?

"I need to have fun, I want to enjoy myself after work is over, I must have places to go to, theatre, cinema and all the rest of it. You don't find these things down there. I can't be shut up in a room with a TV set. Maybe when I get older..."

"When you went up to the University you were quite prepared to go back to the country?"

"I was. And I wouldn't have minded it... You know, there was nobody to stand up for me at the University. When I wanted to do anything they were always looking for hidden motives on my part. It didn't make any difference that they were pleased with me at the 'guinea pig' school. And so were the children. Whenever I pass the school now, I cross over to the other side because they would come running to talk to me."

"And what's wrong with that?"

"Makes me feel bad because it was a long time ago I gave up any idea of becoming a teacher."

"Why?"

"I'm not made that way. Perhaps if all those things had not happened at the University..." and Erzsi proceeded to go through "all those things" in turn as they appeared to her looking back on them.

Her parents did not keep her financially so she had to keep herself. At first she washed glasses in the Astoria Bar, then she was promoted to the counter. In the catering industry in those days qualifications were not needed, and what she wanted was a job which left her mornings free. Then she became self-employed, in a way; took a concession from the Government which allowed her to run a type of semi-independent shop. It was from that time that she began to buy clothes for herself, but they wouldn't believe that she had paid for the things herself, and soon people began to say that she was being kept. For when she had been young, she said, she had been considered very attractive, and when she first went to the University she had a lot of boys around her. It was true she often stayed out late, but she also worked hard. She wasn't going to deny that she liked to have a good time but what was wrong with that?

Following the disciplinary tribunal's decision she found herself in the street without lodgings and without money. Yes, she was prepared to admit now that the charges against her had something in them, that she went a bit too far in enjoying herself. She had come from a village, and all the fun of town life had turned her head. But did they honestly believe that by throwing her out of the hostel they were really doing something to help her?

Everybody thought at the time she would leave the University altogether. She did nothing of the sort. On the contrary; for two years she took a bed in an unheated room for two hundred and fifty forints a month and did all kinds of odd jobs to keep herself. And she passed all her exams with top marks, both at the time of the disciplinary action against her and afterwards.

The end of it all was this room where she worked documenting technical literature.

She applied for the job after reading about it in a newspaper advertisement. She said she was influenced by the word "documentation" and that knowledge of Russian

was one of the qualifications required. During the interview she had had to translate a Russian letter containing some technical information. A week later she received a note saying that she had been given the job and would she please report for work at the personnel department with her work-book.

She had had the choice of going to teach in Szombathely for twelve hundred forints a month, some three hundred miles away from her parents' home, or remaining in Budapest in her new job with a basic salary of sixteen hundred plus an allowance for each language she knew.*

In the end the problem was settled for her by a friend of hers getting married and leaving her her rented room in the Castle district.

"I was lucky, because I had already been in the job for two months when my papers were sent after me by the University office, and by then nobody in my new place took any notice. Here they don't bother who you were or what you did before. Only last month I was given a four hundred forint bonus for good work. I am always asked to accompany foreign visitors to the Tiszaszederkény Plant, and translate at the business talks. When this new plant was inaugurated we toured the premises for a week, and believe me you cannot help feeling enthusiastic about such a modern chemical plant. Next year we shall build a new production unit based on an English process and plans, and the boss said that I can get that too if I can make enough progress with my English. I take lessons from an old lady three times a week and there's still five months to go. It is not impossible that I should be promoted to deputy department head, but that's not certain yet. I've only heard them talk about it."

"It might have been better if you had

* In certain branches a knowledge of languages entitles the employee passing a proficiency test to a language allowance, amounting to 10 to 15 per cent of the basic salary, depending on the number of languages and level of proficiency.—[Ed.]

applied for this job in the first place right after you left secondary school, d'you think?"

Erzsi's eyes betrayed that she was taken by surprise by the question. After a slight pause she said frankly:

"Yes, it would have been better."

3

Ildikó P. was a gym teacher in Balassagyarmat, a provincial town sixty kilometres or so north of Budapest.

The school stands at the end of the main street, a three-storied building erected at the turn of the century, with walls three feet thick and stairs well worn by the generations.

Ildikó was a small, plump girl with a freckled face. She liked it there very much, everybody was so nice to her. Incidentally she was form mistress to the fourth form.* In her school all the classes were already mixed, so you may imagine how hard it was. She had boys in her class so tall that when she wanted to reprove them for some misdemeanour she had to crane her neck upwards. But they were never insolent.

She had taken them on three-day excursions twice, in the spring and winter holidays. They had seen a play in Budapest and discussed it later. They also held picnic parties in the class-room. The only trouble was that there were too few boys and they were not allowed to invite boys from the other classes.

"How do you spend your leisure time?"

Whenever she could, she went home to Budapest, where there was a boy who had been with her at the Institute of Physical Education. But heaven knew if anything would come of it. He worked in the County of Pest, he got up very early in the morning and got home late in the evening. They simply had no time for correspondence.

* In Hungary secondary schools have four forms. Pupils come here at the age of 14, after completing the compulsory eight grades of the general school, if they wish to continue their education.

For some time she had been considering asking to be transferred to the same county, but had given up the idea. Was there any point in leaving the school where she was appreciated and felt happy? And anyway there was no vacancy at present in the school where he taught, and what would be the point of their travelling long distances from Budapest to two different places? For it was impossible to get a flat either here or there.

She had lodgings in Balassagyarmat, sharing the same room with the owner, an elderly woman. She paid two hundred and fifty forints. She could have found a room to herself but that would have cost her five to six hundred forints. The present arrangement had its discomforts because she could never be alone, but she grudged spending all that money on accommodation. She preferred to save it. In the summer she planned to go to Italy and had already applied for a passport. A group of eight of them, all colleagues, had planned to go together.

"It would be grand to go to the Olympic Games in Mexico," Ildikó sighed, then added in a more confident voice: "Why not? Not at all impossible. Anyhow one should not let oneself be left behind."

4

Mária B., a teacher of Latin and French at Pásztó, a large, ancient village at the foot of the Western Mátra Mountains in north-eastern Hungary.

The school, which was built three years ago, was several stories high and stood in an open unfenced plot, now under snow made glassy with the sliding and skating of the children. The staff-room was so cramped that on entering one stumbled into the desks which were ranged back to back. (I later learnt that the staff-room had been forgotten in the builders' plans, and a part of the corridor had to be cut off for a makeshift room for the teachers.)

"I'd like to talk to Mária B."

"Not in today," they said. "She's ill."

And so the conversation would have ended, but the overcrowded room had such a friendly, inviting atmosphere and the teachers around me were so unusually young that I did not move. They looked at me expectantly.

I told them what I was doing. A man by the stove who looked about thirty and seemed the oldest of them spoke up across the room:

"Whatever you do it won't get us a rise!"

And he proceeded to explain the financial position of the teachers. As a senior member of the staff he earned seventeen hundred forints, the others earned an average of fourteen to fifteen hundred, the beginners twelve to thirteen hundred, and there was a young man on the staff, still doing his last year at the University, who only got a thousand. I felt that this was going to get us nowhere. I told them firmly that my salary was seven-hundred, and would they be kind enough to direct me to Mária B.'s lodgings.

"There's Z., he'll do it for you," they said, pointing to someone behind me.

Z. stood behind me in an overcoat and fur hat. He must have come in very quietly because I had not been aware of his presence. He was twenty-eight and came from the north-eastern plain. Until recently he lived with his parents, and he only came to Pásztó a short while ago, to start an independent life, as he explained. He was a science master and taught physics and mathematics.

The room we entered was almost dark, except for the dim light given off by an unshaded bulb hanging from the ceiling. One side of the double peasant bed was unmade, and a pink wollen cap peeped out from under the eiderdown. The cap stirred and Mária's face could be seen. She was very pale, only her dark eyes shining. The day before she had gone in to teach but that day the fever had got the better of her.

In the corner, close by her head, was a small utility stove with an aluminium saucepan on it. Beside the stove lay scattered crumpled up bits of paper, a few sticks of wood, and some coal and matchwood in a

cardboard box. Apart from these the furniture consisted of an old-fashioned chair with curved wooden frame, a pair of overcrowded cupboards, a stool with a white enamelled wash-basin on it, and at the foot of the double bed a small table covered with books, note-books, pieces of bread and lemon rinds. It was bitterly cold in the room.

Z. lit the fire; from the way he moved about the room and the few words they exchanged I concluded that he was Mária's fiancé. I was left to put the coal on the fire because Z. had to hurry back to school where he had a class.

Mária was born by Lake Balaton in western Hungary. I asked her how she had come to Pásztó.

She was assigned to this school to do her trial teaching and she found it so pleasant here that she resigned her post in the County of Fejér in favour of her present place, although she herself had pulled every string to get the other post in order to be near to her parents. The whole staff here were young, they worked together, and helped and visited each other. Pásztó, I learnt, is an educational centre in a way, with its eight schools and two hundred teachers living in the town.

"How much do you pay for this room?"

Two hundred and fifty forints plus electricity. She was also allowed to use the washing machine and cook. The fuel she had to buy herself.

"What are your pupils like?"

Very dull indeed, she explained. True, she had been given the "C" stream of the three parallel first forms. The "A" stream had a higher number of hours in Russian, and all the picked pupils were in it; the second was a specialized class for horticultural training with the rest of the promising children in it; and she had got the rejects of the other two streams.

She told me all this simply, without any self-pity or bitterness. On the eiderdown beside her lay the latest copy of *Nagyvilág*.*

* *Nagyvilág*, a Budapest monthly devoted to translations of contemporary world literature.

Her class subscribed to it, and she took it home, read it and recommended to the children anything she thought worthwhile.

"How many hours do you teach a week?"

Forty-two, sometimes more. Specialist study groups, supervising the work of pupils who stayed at school to do their homework; in addition she taught Latin as a non-compulsory subject, and also had a few gifted pupils she thought worth giving private tuition. She gave an embarrassed smile. I noticed a gap in her front teeth. She has had no time to have it filled, though she had the money for it half a year ago.

"What are your plans for the future? Do you intend to stay in Pásztó?"

No, they didn't intend to, they had no flat and so they could not get married.

"Can you get it somewhere else?"

She paused, thinking. No, there wasn't anywhere else. Maybe after all they could get something here, and then they would stay on. She liked it here, her colleagues were very nice, and if they could improve their circumstances a little she would have more time to spare. And if she and Z. did not have to live apart they would have more money over.

Before their engagement she could afford to go up to town to do a theatre, a cinema, a concert or meet friends. But now that they wanted to marry she couldn't afford such things, they had to save. And she was tired too. It was eight or nine o'clock generally by the time she got in; when she had a class in the evening it might be ten o'clock. Only then did she begin marking papers and preparing for next day's lessons. There was no time left for anything else. She used to be a great reader but since she had come here she had only finished one book, a biography of Ferenc Liszt, and that only because it wasn't long, and the last part Z. had read aloud to her.

How is it that during the five years at the University she had found nobody to marry her, and here in four months she had found somebody?

"I was very lonely. And he was lonely too."

Géza C. taught Latin language and literature.

He was born in 1938. His father was a headmaster, and there were eight children in the family. He was sixteen when he decided to become a teacher. He was fond of literature and wrote poetry. At the end of the second year at school he was rude in class and the mistress had him expelled from school. He continued his studies at the Piarists' school in Budapest, and finished secondary school in Székesfehérvár, forty miles from the capital.

He went to the University in 1956; his entrance essay was on "Suggestions for the extension of the literary curriculum in secondary schools." He suggested the inclusion of the Latin writings of the Humanists and of contemporary Hungarian writers. On October 23rd, 1957 he cut classes, together with a few of his classmates, which ended in their being sent down. For three years he worked as a manual labourer.

In 1960 he was readmitted to the University at the request of his workplace. Two years later he married. His wife was a music teacher. She obtained her degree a year before him, and she now taught in the town where both of them were born. They had a baby daughter.

During his last two undergraduate years he worked as a reader for a Budapest publisher. A few of his poems had already appeared in literary magazines, and he did odd jobs for the University Theatre. On the strength of his abilities and talent both his professors and the Young Communist Organization unanimously put him forward for a post as publisher's reader. A publisher where he had done part-time work, did in fact keep a place open for him. Yet in his application he indicated his native town as his choice. He was brought up there, he had his parents and brothers and sisters there, his wife also taught there; he would like to teach.

Overcrowded and overheated staff-room; the teachers' record books all bound in folk embroideries.

"I want to talk to Géza C."

"He is no longer here, he only taught here for a short time. You may find him at the local paper."

I stood there surrounded by that familiar and pervading school smell, and I hated Géza C., the son of generations of teachers, the national hero, who had refused a job at a Budapest publisher's to come down here to teach, who was held up to freshmen at the University as a kind of model, an example that there *are* a few who . . .

Then I walked slowly out of the school and went to look for—not the Géza C. who figures in the statistics, but the real Géza C. at the local paper.

The paper was the local county daily. The editorial office was deserted, everybody was out at lunch.

"His case is here," a secretary said. "He may only have gone home for a moment. You might look for him there. He doesn't live far from here, it's the third street from the corner."

The room into which Géza took me was huge even by big town standards. One of the walls was covered with books in modern steel shelves, and before it stood a piano. On one side there was a desk, on it a typewriter with an unfinished manuscript. Géza's wife was in bed with influenza. Their eighteen months old daughter was crawling about on the floor in rompers and playing with a block flute which she was throwing about and blowing on alternately. She was definitely musical. The large Venetian window gave on to the main square and the castle gate beyond it.

I told him what I came for and also that I had looked for him in the school. He replied as if he were reciting something painful he had to learn by rote. He wasn't really needed in the school. He had had to teach Russian, although his subjects were Hungarian and Latin. He had taken half a day to prepare for

each lesson, and even so he had been scared the students might ask something that would give him away completely and make it clear that he was only a couple of lessons ahead of them.

He had been teaching six weeks when the editor of the county paper stopped him in the street and inquired whether he would like to come and work for them. He knew something about his literary attempts. Géza C. felt that anything was better than teaching Russian, and he decided to go over to the paper.

"How did you come to write agricultural stuff?"

"That was the column they needed somebody to do!"

"Why didn't you remain in Budapest when you were offered a reader's job there?"

"We wanted decent living conditions, and, having no flat, this was impossible to achieve. We thought that after all the privations we had gone through during our undergraduate years we would come here to recover a little. And chiefly because of the baby." They were then living with his wife's parents; there were another five rooms in the house in which the other members of the family lived, the father, mother, grandparents, a younger and older brother, etc.

"We have never for a single moment considered this as a permanent arrangement, but we have no illusions that it will only last a short time."

Well, that sounded pretty desperate.

"It's true that here there is a University, a theatre, and three cinemas, but anybody who has lived here for a couple of months will see for himself that it's the same dismal small town as any other, full of corruption, and people scratching each other's backs, and parochial preoccupation with purely local interests. We had higher standards than that at the University."

They had no friends or companions and only the baby to care for besides their work. Once in a while they bought the odd book, and always they kept their eye open for a

possible opening in Budapest. But since the prospects were dim, even for the far distant future, they increasingly withdrew into themselves.

I asked him if he still wrote.

"Well, once you have begun . . ." he said hesitantly, and by and by it appeared that he had recently started to write short stories, and that somebody in the editorial staff on a Budapest literary magazine told him they might get published.

I offered to take up to Budapest some of the works he considered good. My proposal was frigidly turned down. He only gave his manuscripts to his friends to read; I could read them when they were published.

Afternoon. The schools in the Castle district had been taken over by adults. In addition to evening courses, one of them was used for an independent secondary school for workers.

Géza C. accompanied me there because it was there that I could meet Ilona V. who taught Hungarian and History. Her parents were peasants; she went up to the University from the small village ten miles away where she still lived.

We met in the corridor in the interval between two lessons. She wore a white overall over her dress, her eyes were the colour of tempered steel, she wore her hair gathered up into a knot at the back of her head. She was not beautiful, but she seemed—lit up. Her pupils—most of them ten or fifteen years older than her—took their corrected and marked exercise-books back from her with a sort of shy respect.

The class we went into was the third year of the workers' school. Twenty-five adults sat at the desks; eighteen of them were women, between twenty and fifty years of age. It was a literature lesson, and the subject that day was the epic poetry of Vörösmarty.

Ilona began by recapitulating the material of the earlier lessons. She was still a little inclined to teach by the book, but she was

firm and commanded the attention and respect of her class. All her words conveyed a sense of certainty, the assurance of a person confident that she is doing a right and useful job.

"I always wanted to be a teacher," she admitted in the interval. "I don't remember ever thinking of anything else. I really did come here to teach because I felt a vocation for it. At the beginning I felt a bit queer at being assigned to the workers' course. I was a bit afraid of them because they were so much older than I, but now I don't mind a bit. I wouldn't have been able to teach literature to the ordinary school children, and the only thing I'm interested in is literature. At the University I always wished I had only had my literary subject to do."

She commuted by long-distance coach but when she finished too late to catch the last coach home, and that happened quite often, she stayed in town with her sister, who came here when she married.

She had two days off, Saturday and Sunday, and she had the better part of each morning free. There was no man she was interested in, she did not often go to parties because she did not want to inconvenience her sister and her husband, and in her native village there was nowhere to go. She had only once been to the cinema since she came down, and not once to the theatre. But she read a great deal; she was in charge of the school library and she borrowed the books in turn.

In the spring holidays she intended to visit Budapest, and then she hoped to make up for all the things she had missed during the school year. She had already made a plan for what she was going to do or see every day she was in town.

Ilona then took a hurried leave of me to return to her pupils and answer their questions. Géza and I set out to the museum where we were to meet Márta K. and Péter T. Márta obtained her diploma last year, Péter two years ago; both of them were students of Art History and Italian.

"I think the trouble with me is that I

don't like what I'm doing at present, or rather that I don't understand very much about it," said Géza at the entrance to the museum. "The moment I have to take a stand on any question or simply decide myself which side to a dispute is right and which wrong, I come up against a number of things which I don't know anything about."

Géza's musings were interrupted by Péter T. who came down to open the gate. He was a slender, dark-eyed young man with a sallow complexion. He looked very like a romantic poet of the nineteenth century, perhaps because of his moustache which gave him a slight look of Sándor Petőfi.

It was Monday, the day the museum was closed to the public. Péter took us along to the director's room among the usual official furniture and heavy nineteenth-century cupboards. The walls were hung with nineteenth-century paintings, landscapes by Károly Markó and Barabás; the wallpaper was old gold in colour. We found Márta K. and Péter's wife sitting together at the oval table in the middle of the room. (Péter's wife was now doing her last year in French and Hungarian at the University.)

In this setting it became clear in a matter of minutes that what I took for last century romanticism in Péter is on the contrary very much of our own time.

"The one thing I'd like to be enlightened about is why on earth they have to shout from the housetops about the need for young intellectuals, and carry on so much against those who finish University and do not come and settle down in the provinces? Where on earth can I find a place to settle down?"

Márta explained that Péter had just come back a quarter of an hour ago from the county hall where the names of those who had been allocated flats had been posted up. (Péter had filed his application for a flat three years ago, on the day he received his first salary at the museum.)

"They can always get the better of me because they know I'm not going to leave."

Péter was born and brought up in Sümeg.

Or rather, he was born in Sümeg but spent his childhood around the Castle on the hill above Sümeg. That settled his future. As an undergraduate he spent more time here than in Budapest. In the last year he was no longer allowed to do this and so he transferred to the correspondence course; it was at this time that the excavations started at Városlőd.

The subject of Péter's research was the Italian religious orders that came in the Middle Ages to Hungary and settled there. He made the plans for the restoration of the medieval monastery and church discovered at Városlőd, when the foundations of the local cultural centre were being laid. Unfortunately this was still only in the planning stage because the county council had not yet been able to finance it and the National Committee for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments had not yet given its blessing to the project.

Before Péter's angry outburst against the Committee had been able to get under way, I moved up to the other end of the table to sit by Márta, leaving Péter to be calmed down by his wife.

In the meantime I learnt that Márta was married, that her husband was also an art historian and that he worked here in the same museum. They met each other during restoration work on the Sümeg Castle.

Márta was a quiet, soft-spoken woman. Her chestnut hair was parted in the middle over a broad, clear brow, and her eyes were beautiful. She was born in Budapest, and had never lived anywhere else until she came here to join her husband. She worked in the museum half-time, and taught Italian in one of the schools in the other half.

In the museum she was responsible for cataloguing the new acquisitions and for organizing the temporary exhibitions. She spent her first half year going round the county visiting artists. Some of them were her "discoveries." But the work she preferred was archaeological excavation; she wrote her final thesis on the Roman finds that came to light recently.

Her husband then arrived. He was a tall, lanky man with shaggy hair and blue eyes, not looking more than seventeen, although he had just turned twenty-six. He too had begun his career at Sümeg; he had been a labourer in Péter's work party after leaving secondary school, and had never left the county since.

He was an acknowledged expert on Sümeg Castle; he has got together a wonderful collection of stones from the ruins in three years. The children are his best helpers; they look upon him as one of themselves, and are willing to do the most dizzy feats of mountaineering on the steep face of the hill to get a couple of half-buried stones for him.

In order to make both ends meet while paying the exorbitant rent of their furnished room, Sanyi, Márta's husband, took over the direction of the museum attached to the Herend Porcelain Factory. To Márta's question of how the day passed, he answered, smoothly. This meant that he had once again managed to muster up sufficient self-control not to smash the whole place up. All the pink roses, birds of paradise and capering hussars were still there, safe in the glass cases to delight foreign tourists that would be visiting them the next day.

Sanyi would be taking his degree at the end of the year, through the correspondence course. Then at last he hopes to get a permanent post at the museum, which would mean an end to his duties at Herend.

The whole group was discussing the various roundabout ways of getting specialized books published abroad, when a boy in a weatherproof jacket covered with mud burst in on the scene.

Misi, that was the boy's name, had come straight from the "field," that is, from the site of the excavations. He briefly reported to Péter—Misi was head of the operations—on the day's events and the progress made at the various sections. After which he began to empty his pockets of a beautiful Roman time piece of ceramics with reliefs, a jar with handles, a copper ear-ring from the

time of the first Hungarian dynasty, a saddle ornament of the age of the Magyar settlement of the country.

It was eight o'clock when I left the museum with Géza. The others remained but Péter saw us out through the gateway to the back door, past the jumbled heaps of stones carefully labelled by Sanyi.

"There have been so many new finds since the cooperatives began to build that we can hardly keep up with the cataloguing. What we have here would be enough for two exhibitions," Péter commented with a wide sweep of the arms.

He was due to leave for Italy a fortnight later to work on documents there relating to the monastic orders that settled in Hungary.

It was apparent everywhere that this was a university town; there was a bustling life in the streets even after eight o'clock. Géza plodded silently at my side. He had not said a word throughout the whole evening. Apart from Péter he knew nobody in the company. Suddenly he burst out.

"Can it be that I am a stupid ass? These are incredibly nice chaps!"

We stumbled upon Ilona V. at the corner of the main square. She was returning from school where she had spent the latter part of the evening rearranging the classics section in the library, and as usual she had found some book so absorbing that she had forgotten the time. She has to run if she wants to catch the last coach.

Nothing is further from my mind than to jump to conclusions, or to generalize on the situation of young teachers from the random and very subjective examples which I have collected. All I set out to do was to take a brief look—in so far as time and space permitted—at the reality behind the closed and sealed records of some of the students who graduated at the Arts Faculty of Budapest University in the academic year 1963-64.

Yes, I should like to make a film about them.

JUDIT ELEK

ZOLTÁN HALÁSZ

CHAT UNDER THE CANVAS

The Huns who invaded Europe numbered about 300,000, the Avars a quarter million, and the Magyars conquering Hungary may have been 200,000 in all. The Great Migrations seem to have been rather modestly conducted tours, compared to the millions which contemporary tourism has brought surging from spring to autumn along the highways of Europe.

This mass movement is helping to change the face of Europe; in recent years it increasingly includes Hungary, which both receives foreign tourists and sends out its own. Out of a population of ten million, one and a half million Hungarians went abroad in 1965 (approximately 200,000 of these to Western Europe and overseas), and approximately the same number of foreign tourists visited the cities and countryside of Hungary.

Far be it from me to welcome it with unqualified enthusiasm. After the experiences of recent years, an artist who lives on the Tihany peninsula of Lake Balaton spoke of the inevitability of more and more tourists with the same wry resignation as the soft-spoken and delicate elderly Venetian gentleman with whom I admired the sunset on the Piazza. I asked him how he liked the teeming crowd swarming over his city—and he replied with an air of resignation that 'Venice belongs to everybody'. The contemporary Hungarian tourist, when he piles

all his camping kit on his car, is well aware that he is no longer setting out on a romantic and personal voyage of discovery, like Goethe and Puskin, or Wesselényi and Széchenyi—those wayfaring Hungarian aristocrats of the early nineteenth century whose travels to Britain are the subject of various travel books and novels. He is only a drop in the huge river which streams across the continent in well regulated channels, between standardized road signs and through a multitude of hotels and camping sites which can hardly be told apart.

And yet all this mass travel, deprived of most of its ancient romance, gives something of its own, some give-and-take on the camping sites and in the youth hostels which is perhaps not less valuable.

*

I read in the periodical of the Camping Club of Great Britain* that one of the first obligations of the camper is always to respect the privacy of the other campers. Basically, of course, I agree, but let me add something. Privacy is often important, even indispensable, but on a camping holiday the man who has taken refuge from the city—in this return to nature frequently abandons

* Camping and Outdoor Life, Magazine of the Camping Club of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. 60, No. 7.

his longing for withdrawal and isolation (which are perhaps reactions against the continual and massive coexistence of the big cities) and on occasion enjoys the most surprising, the most unexpected company.

In Venice, although we occupied neighbouring tents, I broke the rule and spoke to the lean elderly Scandinavian when we met by chance in St. Mark's Cathedral, and found ourselves both admiring the mosaic marble inlaid floor on one slab of which, according to legend, Frederic Barbarossa rendered homage to the Pope. I could not help it: I took him to a dark corner of the cathedral to show him the little known tomb which I had discovered by chance in my teens: in it rest the bones of Gerardo, the Friar of Murano. Thousand years ago the friar had been invited to Hungary by King István, the founder of the Hungarian State. After many years of missionary work (when, with the assistance of a little judicious violence, he had converted the great majority of the population to the Christian faith), a group of rebellious pagans captured him, enclosing him in a barrel full of nails, and rolled him down the rocky hill dominating Buda. The royal forces duly defeated the rebels, Bishop Gerard-Gellért lay in state in Buda, and later his body was solemnly returned to Italy and he was canonized as Saint Gellért.

The old Scandinavian accepted with resignation my passion to communicate—and even listened to me, full of Budapest local patriotism—as I informed him that in Budapest a hill, a square, an embankment and even a luxury hotel were named after the bishop who apparently rested here in Venice, forgotten by the world. What is more, quite happy to surrender his privacy, he joined us in the evening—and so was caught there by the populous Trinidad family which came gaily to settle down with us. The family ensemble consisted of the two parents, their three daughters, and the fiancé of the eldest daughter. (It turned out to be an ensemble in the true sense of the word, when

the three girls began to sing, to the plucking of the guitar by the boy). . . We were soon informed—what we already suspected—that they were not millionaires on a world tour, but “foreign workers” in Switzerland. The father and fiancé worked in a machine factory, the three girls were kitchen maids in a hotel. They came to Italy for a short trip in the search of sunshine and, maybe, a little music.

Why does an entire family migrate from the tropical paradise of Trinidad to the cold mountains of Switzerland? To save money for a farm near Port of Spain. At first they were going to save the necessary money in four years. But in the meantime prices had gone up, and it now appeared that it would take six years before they had enough.

Only the trouble was—said the father—that the young ones no longer wanted to return to Trinidad at all. They said it was crazy to scrape pennies together for years and then drudge on the farm for more years and years until somehow they found their feet.

The Scandinavian, who had been silently smoking his pipe, joined in. During the war, he said, he had twice escaped from forced labour in the Ruhr. Admittedly he had not found himself behind barbed wire in Germany of his own free will. The first time he was captured and very nearly executed. The second time he succeeded in joining the partisans in the Norwegian mountains. He had been through a lot of sufferings and privation since then too, but he would not act otherwise today. “It is worth while going through risks and dangers to get back to your home.”

The father from Trinidad—grateful for the moral support—conjured up another bottle of Chianti from somewhere, poured a glass for everyone and helped himself as well.

“And . . . when everything was all right again, I mean, after the war, did you finally succeed in buying your farm?” he asked the Scandinavian.

There was no smile on the Scandinavian's face.

"No . . . I did not," he answered quietly. "My life took a different turn."

Next day I learned his name by accident. He was a well-known statesman, frequently seen at international conferences, who had for many years also been a Cabinet Minister in his own country.

*

There are of course other sorts of give and take that occur in the camps.

Small episodes. Tiny children get lost in the labyrinth of tents, and the distraught screams of Italian mothers with dishevelled black hair bring out everyone who is alive and can move to look for the children. A car, tired of combatting the shifting sand, breaks down: in a few moments it is surrounded by a crowd, everyone of them highly expert and giving different advice and assistance. A storm breaks out at night, self-sacrificing men strengthen and pin down the sagging tents while they themselves get drenched . . .

Comedies too. Our friend and compatriot whom we greet with open arms, flees in panic on our arrival . . . because the lady with whom he is wandering across Italy bears no resemblance to the wife we know equally well. Our other Hungarian neighbour (a gay energetic ironworker from Győr, travelling across Austria with his wife, his sister-in-law, two sons and an Austrian boy picked up somewhere on the way) comes to a decision that no matter what Western dwellers in town think, he is going to teach the inhabitants of the camping site on the Wörther See the Hungarian shepherd way of frying bacon. In vain do we try to dissuade him; within fifteen minutes the bacon is sizzling on the spit over the charcoal fire. His little notion is so successful it sparks off a veritable international cooking competition. A French gourmet, who has brought his charcoal barbecue with him,

barbecues a whole chicken on the spit. A German joins with a "salad composition"; he works on his creation with the greatest care and devotion for more than half an hour. Even the owner of the camping site, an elderly Austrian gentleman with a military bearing and a clipped moustache, mellows. He sends for beer and sips it pensively. Perhaps the many Hungarians who now visit Austria call up old memories from the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

The real act of give-and-take, which united us all in a common cause, and which I believe none of us will forget for a long time, also happened in Austria, in the mountains near a small town called Köfflach. The valley of the Drau was visited by one of the devastating wild storms of the summer of 1965. The raging river washed away roads and bridges; dams collapsed, the water covered villages and the outlying districts of the town. The inhabitants of the gay little tented city got little sleep that night, from evening to morning they were up defending their canvas homes from the raging storm.

In the morning it was learned that the downpour had caused a tragic catastrophe in Köfflach. The dam guarding the slag basin of the coal mine had collapsed, and the enormous mass of mud had been washed down into the town. Whole streets were submerged in thick mud. People, animals, railway engines swamped in the morass.

There were of course a few tourists who broke camp and hurriedly left that ill-fated neighbourhood. But far greater was the number of those who hurried down the town to help. Late at night they were still there shovelling together: Frenchmen and Englishmen, Poles and Hungarians, and the nomads of God knows how many nations.

*

It is one of the moments of camping life when at eve the tent-dwellers put on their only good suit, transported on a clothes

hanger, and carefully, but uselessly, protected against creasing, and flock to town.

By the third day of our stay at Palavas, the spa in the heart of Languedoc which has exceptionally kept something of its character of a fishing village, we were already habitués at one of the sea-side bistros. The patron sat down at our table, and his wife—whose face had something familiar about it—brought the muscat without waiting for our order. Somebody later said that in her youth she was supposed to have been Modigliani's model, who at one time used to paint in this neighbourhood. Incidentally, Van Gogh also stayed here, and the Palavas railway station was one of Dubout's favourite subjects.

We were sipping the muscat and enjoying the oysters, best at Palavas because they are served fresh from the nearby marshes. We watched the passers-by taking their evening walk round and round the little cobblestoned square between the bistros and the harbour; from time to time the young ones got up to dance.

Suddenly there was a hush, the music stopped, the dancers returned to their seats. A woman and a man appeared on the small rostrum; we were to have a performance of telepathy. He proceeded to bind the eyes of his partner with a black velvet scarf, and then communicated by telepathy the words whispered into his ear by the audience, which she repeated loudly from the platform. Tension heightened as the audience, requested not to whisper, only pointed silently at an object in the room, and the blindfolded woman with her back to them faithfully described it. A pretty blonde pointed at the man in her company, and the medium gave such a graphic description of the man that we all but saw his company and his wife whom he had left in some German town, while he used his expense account to make a trip to the French seaside.

"Can you Marxists believe supernatural things like this?" the Palavas taxi driver, who quite obviously preferred the bistro to the driving wheel, asked.

"It is not a question of belief," a Swiss boy answered in my place. "If the bats and the bees can have 'radar'..."

The man now turned to us for a "task." I handed him my calling card.

The medium pressed her hands against her face, it could be seen that she had difficulty in interpreting the "exotic" words. She stamped her foot nervously, and then slowly, with a foreign accent, but exactly, gave my name and my address in Budapest.

After the programme the man went around with small cards: he asked for two francs for the performance, neither more nor less, and everyone gladly paid.

But he would not accept money from me.

"I was a prisoner during the war, and I escaped from the camp in Austria to Hungary like many other Frenchmen," he said. "They were very good to me, they looked after me until I recovered my health, and then the underground passed me on. I succeeded in reaching the Middle East. Please accept as a token of my gratitude the performance which you have just seen."

We invited him to our table and offered him a glass of wine.

Later his wife, a dark, vivacious little woman, typically southern French, joined us too.

"I knew if he found a Hungarian he would settle at his table," she said after a few sips of wine. "He must have had a girl there. He asks about her from every Hungarian whom he happens to meet!"

She said that teasingly, but with a suspicious glint in her eye. It appears that even so many years after the war, telepathy offers no protection against the pangs of jealousy.

*

The meeting at Palavas was a chance encounter: but there are others which are axiomatic, which go with camping as paprika goes with pork.

I am speaking of the meetings of the young.

I was wandering through Europe with my daughter. The trip was her "treat" for success in her school-leaving and university entrance exams. And it was of course as much a "treat" for myself too, to watch her tasting and discovering the world outside Hungary for the first time.

In Vienna, in the hilly parkland of the Hütteldorf camping site, American students settled down near us. An old truck was their "Noah's Ark"; they travelled and slept in it. Scrawled in big letters across it was their destination—Istanbul: they were going through Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria to the Turkish metropolis, and from there they intended to return by sea to the United States.

They told us that theirs was a "goodwill trip" through Europe. Last year students of Dartmouth College had gone down the Danube from Passau to the Black Sea in their canoes. This year they were crossing the Continent in a truck.

They mentioned the professor who had originated the idea of the "good will trips" (and had helped in word and deed to bring them about)—and we discovered with no little joy, behind their New England accent, the name of the former professor of Szeged University, the Nobel Prize winning biologist, Albert Szent Györgyi. The Szeged discoverer of vitamin C has been living in America for two decades, but he sent his students to the Danube Valley for their summer vacation. . . .

In Florence we talked to a young Italian couple. They came from Turin, and both worked at the Fiat works: the boy was a turner, the girl a wages clerk. They were intelligent, well-informed—and "angry." They were in a state of rebellion against the standardized wishy-washy flood of entertainment which, they said, inundated Italy. They blamed the commercial programmes of television and radio, the Westerns in the picture shows, and the comics which are called "fumetti" in Italian.

We asked them whether others were of

the same opinion, because we thought that they were not "typical" at all.

"In Turin, Milan and other northern cities many do," the boy replied. "In Rome not many, and in the South practically none. . . . The *mezzogiorno*," he added ironically, "is not really Italy at all. . . ."

In Parma, a Hungarian boy stepped out of a smart luxury car with a French registration mark. We thought he was a Hungarian living abroad—but he smilingly denied it; he had come from Hungary with a tourist passport, and had spent four weeks in England, London, Oxford, Stratford, mainly visiting museums, libraries and theatres. And then he ran out of money, so he started to hitch-hike home. He met these kind French people on the way, and they had become such good friends that they were now going to extend their original itinerary and take him all the way to Budapest.

Our guess was that he was an art student, perhaps studying literature or history. We were wrong: he was a medical student from Pécs, the city of the Hungarian South.

*

Montpellier in the month of the "summer university," appeared to be the meeting place of youth from all over Europe. François Rabelais, in his fur cap looked down from the wall of the conference hall on the teaming international assembly, which might have stood for the living embodiment of his famous injunction—"vivez joyeux."

There were Hungarians among the students, and a band of us continued our walk from the university to the famous botanical garden, where it was not the herbal plants from every corner of the earth that attracted them but the shadow of two poets who once used to walk, talk and dream here: Paul Valéry and André Gide.

A strange impromptu encounter—a 'Poets Olympiad'—began under the old trees, between the hedges. Somebody said a verse of Valéry in French—somebody else

continued it in Hungarian in the translation of Lőrinc Szabó. A young French girl murmured lines from Apollinaire and was answered in the words of Miklós Radnóti. The strange dialogue went on, or was it so strange? Knokke le Zoute, the Poetry Days

in Budapest and other meetings of poets more and more disprove the old fallacy of the fatal and irremediable isolation of lyric poetry. Of our many encounters during our three weeks of wandering, this perhaps was the one which pleased me most.

PÉTER RUFFY

AN AVERAGE WEEKDAY *

Department-store manager

"Yesterday I got up at half past six in the morning. Ran through the morning papers, had my first cup of coffee, and swallowed my first Corontin. I had a coronary thrombosis two years ago, you know. We had breakfast, my wife left for her office, my daughter was off to school, and at half past eight I reached this room on the fourth floor. I have the use of an official car. House to house."

The manager is an informal, pleasant fellow.

"First thing I went round to the trade department purchasing section. We discussed such matters as: the articles that have remained unsold after the winter clearance sale; repeat orders to be placed; stocks in hand in the various departments; funds available and credits required. We would like to have the time limit for repayment of these credits lengthened while the National Bank wants to shorten it. What types of articles should each of our purchasing agents buy for the Easter sale? I stayed there until half past nine.

"At a quarter to ten I went downstairs for the opening of the store. Before that, we'd held a short staff conference. One of the cashiers who was ill had to be replaced

temporarily. Also, in one department, quite a few salespeople had fallen sick, and arrangements had to be made to avoid any hitch in serving the public. Three assistants had made billing errors the day before; since they had inadvertently charged less than the actual purchase price, the customers had left without bothering to complain.

After ten o'clock I looked into the incoming mail, and distributed the letters to the department heads concerned. I came in for two surprises. Two artisans' cooperatives had written to tell us that because of a shortage of materials they would be unable to make deliveries by the date that had been fixed. Then I looked over the outgoing mail, consisting only of the copies of letters the department heads had written. Whenever I don't see eye to eye with one of the writers on the terms of some letter, I ask him to prepare another one. But it isn't often that I have to do this. I finished reading the mail by 11 o'clock.

"At this time two of my employees came to see me. As a rule I start seeing people at 11 o'clock. One of the callers asked to be allowed to take his holidays when he could get his passport made out. I endorsed his application for a passport. The other complained that her child was suffering from softening of the bones and that the required medicine was not available at the moment. She asked me for help. Well, my wife had had the same disease herself, but was not

* Two selections from a series of profiles of people from all walks of life, as told in their own words. From the daily *Magyar Nemzet*.

able to take the drug in question because she was allergic to it. So I promised this attendant that I would pass the drug on to her.

At 11.30 I made the rounds of each department and each floor. At 12.30 I had lunch at the store canteen, drank my second cup of coffee and swallowed my second Corontin. I usually eat *à la carte*—one meal costs about seven to eight forints. My wife having joined me at lunch, we talked about our daughter, who will be passing her school-leaving exam this year.”

My interlocutor is a youthful-looking man, well-dressed and genial. I would never have thought him a sick man if I hadn't been told so.

“After lunch I went back to my room and, if I remember rightly, pondered over several matters during those few minutes that still remained of my lunch-recess. Take this business of night deliveries. A number of wholesale enterprises, adopting the practice current in big cities in the West, have decided experimentally to switch over to delivering goods at night. How will this work out? And how many hands will have to stay on the job at night? Then there's this business of the investment department. The choice has fallen on us: we've been designated as investors for financing new department stores being erected at Csepel, Szeged, Veszprém and Miskolc. So I tried to figure out when I'd have time to go to Szeged or Csepel to take a look at the work. Three million forints have already gone into the Csepel store construction; six building engineers are employed in the investment department of my store.

“Later on, I read through the Official Gazette, the Commercial Bulletin, the Economic Review, etc.—only, of course, to the extent that they had a bearing on our job. Then I took out the speech I am going to give at the Fifth District Young Pioneer House on the Liberation of Budapest in 1945 and the partisan skirmishes in Újpest. Running over it with my eyes, I touched it up here and there.

“Meanwhile the second batch of mail came in. The chief accounting office of the Directorate of Department Stores informed us that our situation had improved as a result of a decline in inventory losses. We were notified of the new economy measures, and of a challenge to a socialist competition on the part of the Salgótarján department store. While I was studying this correspondence, my secretary entered and said that an engineer sent by the Directorate of Department Stores had come to see me. He is to join the staff of our newly set up investments department. I discussed with him investments, new store constructions, and other matters and problems that had arisen. It was past four o'clock when we had finished.

“Between 4.30 and 5.30 I was in the store's inquiry office. This is where all complaints are lodged, and you have to take prompt action and be obliging. There were quite a few matters in dispute yesterday, and I entered into the middle of a lively discussion. One customer had bought his wife a nylon pullover for 320 forints. It turned out that she preferred a bed-jacket, and she had scolded him for buying her a pullover. Now he insisted that either we exchange it for a bed-jacket or refund the money. Since we had no bed-jacket to his liking, we gave him back his money. We're not under obligation to do so; still, we returned the money and took the jersey back.

“I spent an hour or an hour and a half dealing with this and similar disputes. To the best of my recollection, I left for home around six o'clock. My family was already there. We had a visitor—an aunt of mine, 74, but still working in an office. Ever since my thrombosis, we have an early dinner. After dinner we watched TV. A performance by the Kaposvár theatrical company was being televised. We didn't like it very much, so after a quarter of an hour we switched it off.

“I took my third Corontin, and went to bed. I read a book by Ehrenburg, whom I like very much. It hadn't been an extra-

ordinary day, yet some tension still lingered in me.

"I gulped down a pill and dropped off to sleep. I slept soundly."

This manager, incidentally, is 57 and has been through a lot.

Scuttle-woman

"Yesterday I woke up at five and got up at six o'clock. I had breakfast shortly after six."

The woman in the cotton smock, who tends stoves in twelve office rooms, is 58.

"I ate bread-and-butter and jam. That's my usual breakfast. The apricot jam is of my own making, the apricots were grown in my orchard.

"The house I live in is on the slope of Hármashatár Hill; it belongs to my elder brother's son, a gymnastics instructor and volley-ball coach. I do his washing and ironing and cleaning for him in exchange for a room and the orchard. My share of it includes the apricot-trees and the strawberries."

She wears spectacles; her face is improbably narrow.

"After breakfast I did some washing, as I can see better in the morning. After that, until nine o'clock, I did the two rooms. Then I dressed to go out and, as I do each day, took a bus Number 37/M down the hill. I did my shopping in town: I bought milk, bread and fruit for the evening meal.

"I got to the office at half past ten. In the cleaning women's room, I changed into this cotton smock. I've learned no trade. My job is to heat stoves. I've worked in this building for the last eight years. My hours are from eleven in the morning till seven in the evening. I heat stoves in twelve rooms, with coal and briquets.

"At 11 o'clock I opened all the stove doors. I got the slag out and made a fire in all twelve stoves. I crouched before each

tile stove, placed four boards that had been prepared in advance crosswise on the grate, put some sawdust soaked in black tar underneath, built the lot up like a housetop, heaped coal and briquets on it, and set a match to it. In that office work begins in the afternoon. For over two and a half hours from 11 o'clock on, I kept feeding the fires."

Her hands, grimy with coaldust, are resting in her lap.

"Twenty times I went and filled the scuttles with coal and briquettes and brought them to the rooms. I fed two scuttles of fuel into the larger stoves, and a scuttle and a half into the smaller ones and the iron stoves. The coal and the briquets are stored in wooden boxes in the corridors upstairs; you don't have to go downstairs, either to the ground floor or to the cellar. Even so it isn't an easy job, as I have to make the trip with the scuttles and pails twenty times a day.

"After two and a half hours' hard work tending the fires, I went to fetch lunch. I and a little typist have joined up together, and the two of us share one lunch. We pay 30.50 forints a week for our lunch. She is a mere slip of a girl and doesn't eat much, and for my part I can do with little food too. I brought the lunch upstairs, warmed it up a bit, shared out the food, and we tucked it away. We had soup, followed by a dish of peas with smoked meat."

She speaks in a soft voice.

"From then till seven in the evening I kept watch over the stoves. I left a small slit open below to make sure there would be no coal-gas, and when the fire had burnt down I shut the slit. Later I went from room to room and placed my hand on the stoves to see if they were warm enough.

"Sometimes, I would stand still in the corridor or lean against one of the stoves. Heating is a seasonal job, and I was wondering what I'd do in the summer. I'll have some job or other for sure. Yes, work there'll be, but I was trying to figure out just what kind of a job and where.

"I knocked off after seven o'clock in the evening. I queued up for not quite ten minutes at a Number Twelve bus stop. At the corner of Fürst Sándor Street I changed to a Number Six and at the terminus took a Number 37/M. I sat there, thinking of my strawberries, my strawberries in the orchard. I wondered if they had been frozen during the winter. It'd be such a pity if they had.

"I got home at a quarter to eight. My younger brother was not at home yet. I am not married and have no children. Negus was waiting for me—my dog, you know, a fine, big black watch-dog—and my cat, Berci. Whenever I can get some bones at the canteen kitchen I take them home for Ne-

gus. Yesterday, I got no bones. He looked up at me expectantly, but I had no bone to give him.

"I gave the dog thick brown soup, and bread and milk to the cat. As for me, I had my usual bread and apricot jam.

"At nine o'clock I went to bed. I read a comic paper for about half an hour. I like comic papers a lot. Then I dropped off to sleep and had a dream. I dreamed I was walking through mud with my feet in slippers. I had promised to give those slippers to a woman. She saw me in the street, and stopped and asked me what I meant by getting her slippers muddy. I just stared at the ground, at the slippers and the mud."

GYÖRGY MOLDOVA

RAGS AND RICHES

We are at the MÉH* Central Office in the Ministry of Light Industry, at No. 22 Alpári Gyula Street, Budapest.

"It is no secret, gentlemen, that we have no raw materials, we are short of foreign exchange, and we have to hang on to every ounce of iron or textile waste, every cent or pennyworth; yet it appears that we are ashamed of our poverty; people are squeamish and supercilious about the work of MÉH. How much do you think the turnover of MÉH is a year?"

"I don't know. A hundred thousand forints?"

"Between nine hundred million and one billion. We contribute a profit of two hundred and twenty million forints annually to the Treasury. We save the economy of the people 16 million dollars a year."

* MÉH are the initials of the Enterprise for the Disposal of By-products and Waste; in Hungarian the initials give the word "MÉH," which is Hungarian for "bee."

"Where do you get the money from?"

"190,000 tons of scrap iron, 49,000 tons of paper, 11,000 tons of non-ferrous metal, the same quantity of textile waste, and 41 million forints' worth of hides. And furthermore, hair, bones, broken glass, sheep's guts, horse chestnuts, used packaging materials, barrels, fire-clay waste.

"The public might also be interested in one or two of our special lines. We collect photographic fixative, extract the silver, and deliver it to the Mint. We collect 400,000 litres of fixative a year from photographers and hospital laboratories, and extract three kilograms of silver for every thousand litres of fixative, that makes almost a ton and a half of silver annually.

"Or take human hair, for instance. When I came here, it was not yet being collected. I asked why not. I was told there were no buyers. This surprised me, for in the 'forties the Nazi authorities thought I would benefit from a little stay in Auschwitz at their ex-

pense, and there I saw that the Germans collected the hair and shipped it somewhere. So we entered the field ourselves and we now export 250 to 280 tons annually."

"Where to exactly?"

"Well, mainly to West Germany."

*

In the afternoon I asked my barber:

"Mr. Haskó, do you collect hair too?"

"We have to. They sent a circular round. They pay five forints a kilo."

"What d'you spend the money on?"

"We pay the radio rental and odds and ends for the shop out of it."

*

MÉH warehouse for hair. IX. Dandár Street, Budapest.

"World production is approximately three thousand tons of hair annually. Its market price is, I think, 25 cents per kilo. Prices and demand fluctuate according to the hemp crop. In 1962, for instance, the hemp crop was good all over the world, we had great difficulty in disposing of our stocks; in 1963 the hemp crop was smaller, we were overwhelmed with orders. This indicates one of the uses of hair: it is employed by upholsterers for stuffing mattresses and horsehair cushions."

"What else?"

"The pharmaceutical industry. They make stimulants for laying hens out of it and—but don't write this, it is not very appetizing—they say the coating of pills is made of hair, because the substance of the hair is easily dissolved by the gastric acid. Only abroad, of course. We don't process the hair here in Hungary. At the Kőbánya Pharmaceutical Works, I believe, they know the manufacturing formulae for nineteen substances that are all derivatives of hair—theoretically at least—because they don't produce any of them. Reazol and the State Institute for the Production of Vaccines

carried out a number of experiments here, but they got nowhere, they even returned us the hair that was left over."

"Could we, perhaps, have a look at the warehouse?"

"Certainly."

We fumble our way down to a cellar; at the foot of the stairs two old gipsy women sort the hair from ox tails, sifting the yellow-striped tufts of hair with morose faces.

"We handle oxtail hair and horsehair as well. The oxtail hair goes to the Technical Brush Factory and the horsehair for export."

We enter the first cellar. In a corner small bales are piled up.

"What are those?"

"All women's hair that is more than eight centimetres long we sort and pack separately. The world market price for it is much higher."

"What is it used for?"

"Toys, and delicate meteorological instruments."

I cannot put it off any longer, we have to enter the large cellar. All along the back of it is a mountain of hair. It turns me up; last year I visited Auschwitz, and since then I've been unable to stand the sight of hair piled up in masses, although this mountain of hair here looks more like tow. From its uniformly dusty, dark brown colour no fair or grey or any kind of light locks stand out, only the fag-ends, peach stones, and bits of paper that have been tossed in among the hair catch the eye. The work here is simply to remove all this dirt and litter from the hair.

A worker steps up to the mountain, forks his basket full, and then tips the content of the basket into a dusting machine. The machine removes the larger sweepings, and the hair is then finally sifted by hand on the wire tables on the ground floor.

Eight women stand at the four tables and pick the bits of paper and cotton wool out of the hair. Their ages range from twenty to sixty. I address one of them at random:

"Did you ever learn a trade, Auntie?"

She looks at me with a startled smile, and it is her neighbour that answers:

"Auntie is Greek, but we have a Macedonian woman here too, and she speaks better Hungarian."

"We came here after the war, we fled because of politics, and we lived near Lake Balaton for some time. I learned to be a machine operator there, but since 1958 I have been working in the store here."

"Are there others here who were trained for anything?"

"I was a weaver."

"I was a dressmaker."

"And why did you come here?"

"We like hair."

"How can one like hair?"

"Whenever we see a beautiful lock of hair we immediately think of a handsome boy, don't we, girls!"

"No, joking aside, why didn't you stick to your trade?"

"D'you know what's it's like to work three shifts when you have two small kids at home? And anyway it's all too much of a rush in a weaving mill. We earn the same 1,200-1,400 forints here in one shift, and our Saturdays are free."

"But don't you feel sick, for instance, if you have to sort greasy hair?"

"Sick? Why, greasy hair is much the best, it's the heaviest. We can sort more of it and earn more."

I ask the usual question:

"Do you ever find anything valuable among the hair?"

"Oh yes, of course. We've found money, and engagement rings, and even a watch."

"What happened to them?"

"Findings keepings."

I take my leave and thread my way with the storeman through the bales of hair put out in the yard.

"We're going to move into new premises soon. Unfortunately our production won't rise there either, it's been static since 1962."

"Why?"

"The fashionable longer hair do's and the Beatle cut. It'd be a godsend if a Western jazz-singer made bald heads fashionable."

*

We are again at the MÉH office of the Ministry of Light Industry, at No. 22 Alpári Gyula Street.

"MÉH employs about 4,200 people. They include Horthy officers and former capitalists, but please do not jump to the conclusion that MÉH collects human refuse too. We have already given more than one leader to the country, and our long-service staff is made up of decent and reliable people. You will find an old woman here who has been in the business for forty years, and a gipsy who has been decorated as an Outstanding Worker of Industry."

"What's his name?"

"Ferenc Radics, manager of our Rétság branch."

*

MÉH branch, Rétság.

In the office Radics, hollow-cheeked, with a dark moustache, wearing a sports jersey jacket and a nylon shirt, is making out an invoice for another gipsy, a private collector, a tall man in a worn suit who has brought in five sheepskins. I address the private collector:

"How much did you get for the skins?"

"1,410 forints."

"What did you pay for them?"

"A thousand."

"And how much do you manage to get together in a month?"

"Well, in March, for instance, let's say, 4,700 forints in all."

"How much of this was your net profit?"

"Let's say, half. But I get up at four in the morning, and never have a Sunday or holiday off. I don't go spraying* at Easter

* "Going spraying" is an old Easter custom in Hungary, when the young men spray the girls they meet with scent, and the girls invite them home and entertain them.

time, I'm too busy watching out that no one else gets hold of the skins of the slaughtered Easter lambs and kids before me. But I have to, I've three children to keep."

"What did you do before?"

"I played the contrabass at the Varsány inn. I was category C.*

Radics stops writing out the invoice.

"In category C," he said, "one cannot support a family. The leader of a gipsy band earns 46 forints a night, the members 30 to 35. If they played every night—all right—but they have to beg for three nights a week. With only two they are not entitled to national health benefits. And sometimes they don't even have two nights. What also happens—it's happened here in Rétság too—is that they bring out the military band for Sunday to play dance music, and the gipsies—they can go home. My brother—he is not called Radics, but Puporka, József Puporka—is 45, with a 75% war disability classification. He was the leader of a gipsy band, and a good one, and still he asked me to get him a job at the Danube Cement Works as an unskilled labourer. Just think, a man accustomed to playing music is now simply shifting 100-kilo sacks! And none the less he said to me the other day: 'Thank you, brother, for helping me to get the job, now we do not suffer so much.'"

I return to the collector.

"What d'you want most in the world?"

"I'd like to have a Trabant.** There are some people in the trade who have a Škoda; they have it easy, they earn as much as eight thousand. And I have one other great desire—that my son won't be a collector."

He meditates.

"True, my father was a collector too, and he insisted that I should be a musician. The devil knows how it's all decided."

Radics takes over.

* In Hungary the musicians who play in catering establishments are classified in categories and paid accordingly.

** A small four-seater car, made in the German Democratic Republic.

"I was a 'folk musician' too, as they like to call us, and a contrabass player. We were a famous family of musicians, the great Béla Radics was the brother of my father's father, and my wife was born a Rácz. They thought at home that I was going to show talent too, but I felt that that career was not for me. The Radics have played all over the world, but I only got as far as the Budapest suburbs.

"I earned between 700 and 800 forints. And then, in 1950, I said to myself: 'You have three children, your bedridden father-in-law, and an orphan girl to support, this money just won't do. You haven't been born such a great musician that the world is going to cry if you leave off.' So I left off."

He takes out his identity card, and checks the next entry.

"So in 1950 I went and asked for a job at the Civil Engineering Enterprise in Budapest; we did construction work on the tunnel at the Chain Bridge, and on certain defence installations, of which I cannot give you any details, as you will certainly understand, comrade. I lived at the workers' hostel at No. 10 Attila Street; there was rationing in those days, and we got quite enough coupons there. I would have stayed on, but I got what they call an achronic heart ailment."

"What's that?"

"I may go on living with it a long time, but I may die any minute. I became a musician once more, but I could not earn enough, so I had to give it up again, and I became a labourer here at Rétság."

He turns over another page in his identity card.

"From 1955 to 1957 I worked as a private collector, like Comrade Berki, to whom you were just talking. I collected hides and feathers, but then the company demanded rags too, and that is not possible without some sort of a vehicle. I rented a tricycle in Budapest for 300 forints a month; I carried the rags in that.

"I don't have to tell you that I was despised in the village—a relation of the king

of the gipsies, of Béla Radics, picking rags. Even the gipsies shouted 'rag-and-bones man' after me. I didn't take offence; I knew it was no shame to work. My ideal is Aladár Rácz who, although he used to be a musician, worked his way up to be decorated six times over as a Stakhanovite construction worker, and never missed a day's work in eleven years.

"I collected within an area of ten miles, all of it mountains. My heart was exhausted by the continuous cycling, so I appealed the village council: 'Comrades, help me, I don't want to live the gipsy way, give me a chance to make a living.'

"I got a licence for a private greengrocer's shop. I did the buying and my wife the selling, and we were beating the co-operative shop, when the decree came out in 1959 that private greengrocers were only allowed to buy in the town or village where their shop was. This amounted to a sentence of death, as I did my buying in Pest and Vác; in the Rétság district here not even grass was growing. I had to hand the licence in.

"On October 7th, 1959, I became a labourer at the Wood Chemical Works at Tolmács. There was no regular job vacant, so I took on the most difficult and dangerous work, a job that no Hungarian would look at.

"They sent me to work with the charcoal-burners. The coal came down the chute thirty times in one shift, I had to push the tip under it, pull it away, empty the glowing coal, sift it, put it out, and then back to the chute again.

"The sparks flew, time and again I got burned, but finally the coal-gas affected my heart again, I fell sick and left. On January 29th, 1962 I came here to MÉH, and since then I have been working here.

"My daughter is training to be a photographer, my eldest son wants to be a motor mechanic, and I want to bring the youngest up as a musician—but a classical musician. My adopted daughter is working too, she is a shorthand-typist in Vác."

"But what about you, how do you live?"

"I am thirty-eight, though I know I look ten years older. I weigh 59 kilos, and my heart is no better either, but the struggle for one's daily bread overcomes the fear of death. I now earn 1,400 forints, plus a 30 per cent premium. Three years ago I built a new house for 160,000 forints in the best spot in the village. Mind you, I had already been living among the Hungarians for some time." *

"And how do you stand with the gipsies now?"

"I make a point of greeting them first in the street, and here at the store I deal with them so that they can see they are not being cheated. I let them have a look at the scales, because in many places if the shopkeepers notice that you are a gipsy they promptly adjust the scales and sell you short."

He looks at me.

"Will you do something for me?"

"Go ahead."

"Will you write down that I should like to help in the education of the gipsies. I don't want any money for it, perhaps just a little bit of time off. In our district, not even 30 per cent of the gipsies who are capable of working do really have a job. I could visit them, invite them home and tell them how I have been decorated and how my daughter is training to be a photographer, and that they can all get there too if they will only try. I'd tell them what they don't know or have already forgotten, that before liberation no one would give the gipsy work even if he wanted to work; he went and hewed wood all day for a packet of tobacco. They can be persuaded, they are not opposed to the régime, in the elections after forty-five, you know, every gipsy voted for the Communists."

*

MÉH Enterprise for the Pest—Bács—Nógrád Counties, Kresz Géza Street, Budapest.

* Gipsies generally live by themselves in a gipsy quarter of the village.

"Ten similar enterprises are under the direction of MÉH Central Office. With the exception of the Budapest MÉH, ours is the largest of them; we have sixty warehouses and depots in the three counties. We have a total staff of 420, plus 300 collectors working on commission; we have a friendly agreement with 700 schools, which help us. In 1959 we collected sixty million forints' worth of waste materials, in 1964 it was one hundred and twenty-one million."

"Is it true that MÉH collect more waste material because industry has more rejects?"

"No, it is not. It is rather modernization that's the thing. In 1959-60, for instance, whole mills were handed over to MÉH because they were being replaced by new ones. The output of paper is also increasing, more wrapping paper is used, and it all eventually comes to us."

"It's useless for us to appeal to the university, we simply won't get any graduate engineers or economists. It's the police who send people to us, persons sentenced to corrective labour; our guts-washers are constantly teased that the butcher-shop in the neighbourhood was closed down because of their smell, and for years some of the public have been making fun of that old, unfortunate slogan of ours:

'Collect the iron and the fleece,
And ragpick in defence of peace.'

"But you can hear all this at any MÉH country enterprise, so let's talk now about what you can only see here. See those people there in the corner of the yard? They are our Container Retrieval Section. Seven persons produce a turnover of three and a half million forints a year out of old iron and wooden barrels and crates, but if we could only get them a proper warehouse and transport, they could double the turnover."

"And why can't you get them?"

"Haven't you been told yet that MÉH is the orphan child of the State? In ten years we have paid 150 million forints into the Treasury, and in the three counties all

we've been given for it is two new warehouses. I'd like to ask you to go to Szigetszentmiklós and visit our guts-washing plant there, where fourteen persons produce four million forints in a year, and save the country 60,000 dollars worth of imports annually."

*

MÉH sheep's guts washing plant at Szigetszentmiklós.

"Years ago no one collected the sheep's guts, I came on the idea by accident. At Kunszentmiklós I was bargaining for a bundle of thirty sheepskins against other collectors and I was looking for some way of outbidding them, so I pointed to a heap of guts: 'I'll take those too.' I thought it would be nice to get my money back, so I asked the management for permission and took them to the Casing Enterprise, and it turned out that I'd started a big business.

"Today there are regular collections of sheep's guts. Even so we only cover 30 per cent of the animals slaughtered, but we are organizing new sources all the time. The organization has its methods, you can't just go at it higger-mugger. If I go direct to the chairman of the co-operative farm, it would be no good for him to give instructions to the farm butcher to put the guts aside, the man would simply tear them into twenty-inch bits and swear anything else was impossible. You have to start at the bottom, with the butcher himself."

"D'you have sheep's guts, mate?"

"I don't, but the sheep does. I've just thrown them away."

"Don't throw them away next time. I'll give you 18 forints for the guts of each sheep."

"So the butcher takes care, and takes the guts out in one piece. After a year, when we are well worked in, we go to the chairman and tell him to put the guts down on the official slaughter sheet, and what the butcher did for himself, he now has to do for the cooperative."

"What are the guts used for?"

"We deliver them to the meat industry. The best sausages use sheep guts for casings, their taste is quite different from sausages in plastic skins, which also contains guts, but ground, second-class."

I swallow and decide not to eat sausages again.

"What else are they used for?"

"The guts which are punctured and unsuitable for sausage cases we make into gut-rods. But wouldn't you like to come and have a look at the process?"

The washing plant operates in an ordinary house; it is the women working here who most feel the drawbacks of the confined space; fourteen of them have to change in a room the size of a pantry, and there is only a single shower for their use, although in addition to taking a shower they have to wash their hair nearly every day, because no matter how they cover it, the smell of the guts penetrates the hair.

First I am led into the cooling chamber. The thermometer shows six to seven degrees above freezing point, the guts salted down by the butchers are stored between cool, whitewashed walls. They show them to me, they look like narrow strips of parchment. Here the smell is quite bearable, and privately I flatter myself on my strong stomach, but as they open the door of the workshop before me, I turn white in the face and feel my stomach jump into my throat.

I look around me. The workshop was originally built for butchers, hooks protrude from the cross-beams on the low ceiling. The room is low and dark, even during the day, all the work is done by the light of two one hundred watt bulbs, and the walls are thick. Although it is now May the place still has to be heated.

In huge vats in the corners, the salt is being soaked out of the guts, thirty-six hours at a time. Then they are sorted. Soaked, the guts glitter with water; they are like thin white threads of some greasy macaroni. The women smooth each one out

like a thread of cotton, and run water through it. At the point where any hole lets the water through they break it, and opposite them is a calibrating machine which classifies the guts by width. Their hands move as if they were not actuated by muscles, but automatically turned by the white thread.

We go into the other room. Here the smell is somewhat less, three women are sorting and making up second-class guts into bundles.

"How long does it take to get used to the smell of the guts?"

"About a fortnight, but those with weak stomachs never get used to it."

"Tell me, you, why do you do it? Couldn't you get a job elsewhere?"

"Oh yes, we could. Take me. I used to work in Csepel, at the big factory, but there was too much rush there for me."

"—and we earned five hundred forints less."

A third woman butts in:

"I like guts."

"What exactly d'you like about them?"

"It's hard to explain, but sooner or later, you know, you get to like whatever you are working with. You couldn't carry on otherwise."

I write it down. Their answer was almost the same as that of the hair sorters. In the meantime the organizer of the enterprise comes in, goes around the sorting table with a scent spray, and sprays a few drops on the tight-pulled buns and curls of the workers; the women forget the guts, smile, and preen themselves a little.

*

Head office of the Textile Waste and Thread Sorting Enterprise (Temafor), Vigyázó Ferenc Street, Budapest.

"We are the biggest enterprise under the direction of the MÉH Central Office, we employ twelve hundred men and women. We supply rags for machine cleaning to the

entire country, and other rags to the Diósgyőr and Erzsébet paper mills, and in Mohács we have set up a rag shredding plant which makes something like cotton wool out of the textile waste."

"If you don't mind, I should rather like to hear something of your problems."

"Don't you think it'd be simpler if you just wrote that the finest cigarette and bank-note paper was made from linen and hemp rags? It would interest the public and wouldn't make trouble."

"No. What causes your worst worries and troubles?"

"All right, but don't say you haven't been warned."

They look at each other.

"Let's begin with the machinery. When the Goldberger Works were modernized, they discarded sixteen carding-machines. We bought those sixteen machines, and wanted to use them to make vigogne yarn out of waste. Through this operation we could have turned the material which had previously been exported for ten cents into a product worth 50 cents. We sent the machines to Mohács, but before we could set them up, we received instructions up top to break them up. Why, we asked. We were duly informed that the conservation of outdated technologies was undesirable, although we're damn sure there are far more outdated machines than these still operating in Hungary. So we break up the machines. If you hurry up and go to Mohács, you may still find one in one piece."

Somebody else takes over.

"But the laundry caps it all. The Temaforg laundry, where they sort machine-cleaning rags, is in the Józsefváros district, in Leonardo da Vinci Street. Everyone agrees that it is not the most suitable place for a laundry, and in addition the boilers are obsolete—they can't produce white smoke but cover the house opposite with soot—although, to be honest, there is more than one noisy and dirty workshop in the neighbourhood of the laundry. All the same,

the house opposite was apparently occupied by district councillors who made themselves heard, so they were promised in higher quarters that the laundry would be shifted.

"The central plant of the Temaforg is supposed to be ready in 1970, so we had to find a site for the laundry in the intervening years. In 1959 one of our boilers broke down, and while it was being repaired the Kaposvár Laundry not far from Lake Balaton did process work for us, as at that time it was not working to full capacity. Someone had the bright idea to move the laundry to Kaposvár. We pointed out that if the rags had to be transported from Budapest to Kaposvár and back, this would increase costs by one forint per kilo, and would tie down four railway waggons a day. And in addition, there wasn't enough water in Kaposvár; the daily water production was 800 cubic metres, and our laundry alone would tie down 500 cubic metres of it."

An expert who, apparently, had something to do with the plan, interposed.

"We wouldn't take it from the town water supply."

"Then there are only two ways to get it. By foreign aid, that is, to invite Moses to make water spring from the rock, or rely on home resources, meaning the holy King László, whom they said managed to do the same in the 12th century.

"We suggested Ajka, where the steam from the turbines of the Thermal Power Station is at present released into the air; it would have meant free power for us. We planned the cost of the new laundry at six million forints; the Research Institute for Municipal Industries examined our plans, and costed them at ten million forints; so Ajka was rejected. Kaposvár was left, and we continued to protest, but our superiors were determined to push it through. They did not shirk from a little irregularity either, they split the investment cost into two parts, so as not to reach the limit where the plan has to go to the Council of Ministers, which might not have approved. The trick

was found out, the Investment Bank stopped the whole thing, and the free-for-all continues.

"The nicest bit of the story is that the whole basis on which their plan was constructed, the surplus capacity of the Kaposvár Laundry, doesn't exist any more. The resorts around the Balaton keep them so busy that they can hardly cope with the work. But there is nobody with the guts to admit it. Now the whole plan is like a sentry standing guard before a deserted annual.

"Unfortunately, the whole administrative process is very cumbersome, and chock-a-block with formalities; somebody has calculated that it takes at least two thousand days for an investment to go through all the prescribed channels. And even that would be all right, if all these administrative safeguards worked properly, but we are all well aware of the loopholes it leaves. Let me tell you a story off the record.

"There's no need to name any particular country, it might have happened in any one of the People's Democracies, since they all subsidize toy-making. So let's just say that a craftsman was commissioned to produce teddy bears, and for this he received teddy-bear material at a reduced price. He duly finished the first thousand teddy bears, delivered them, and was issued more teddy bear material.

"The craftsman then took paper and pencil, and worked out that at the rate of the subsidy he would earn considerably more if he did not make teddy bears out of the material, but sold it by the yard on the black market. None the less he would have to fulfil the order somehow.

"Next day the craftsman and his family went to the department stores of the capital, bought up the bears which they had made, did them up a bit, and delivered them to the purchasing organization once more. They got a new order and further teddy-bear material, and this they sold under the counter to private tailors.

"They then became bold. They bribed

the sales clerks to put the teddy bears aside for them, not to sell any to the public. In one order for three thousand teddy bears they sold the same one thousand bears three times over, and became the uncrowned kings of the teddy bear market.

"In the end, the great enemy of all big swindlers—taking it easy—put an end to their little game. In all this constant carrying to and fro, the thread on the bears' ears came loose. The craftsman did notice it, but from sheer laziness he put off repairing it, until a supervisor noticed that bears with torn ears were arriving all the time. An investigation followed, and the chap was caught. This is the true and authentic story of the teddy bears."

*

Household rags sorting warehouse of the Temaforg in Teve Street.

"Our warehouse sorts 15,000 tons of rags a year; all old clothes end up here. We can tell you how people live in the various districts. From the rich Transdanubian region we get rags which are still in quite good condition, which the poor Nyírség people in north-east Hungary would go on wearing in the packing plants and the fowl houses; we'd only get them after that.

"We get all the costumes thrown out by the theatres. Sometimes our workers put them on for a laugh, and run around the corridor dressed up as a bride or a Spanish grandee. Sometimes tailors come rushing in looking for the pieces of the suit they had cut out and thrown in the dustbin by mistake. We've been asked for fur coats, for children's overalls, once even for a tin of nut cake that the children had handed in in a parcel of rags.

"This year unfortunately we had to import two hundred tons of rags from socialist countries and from Scandinavia. The Scandinavian rags contained pieces of excellent quality; we found a foam-plastic coat among them that its owner threw away because it

had a coffee spot, a second-hand Persian carpet and lots of children's clothes.

"Years ago the Temaforg used to take the usable pieces out of the rags and maintained a store in Ecseri Road, where our employees could buy things for themselves or for their children at a price of 50 forints per kilo, if I remember aright. Later this was stopped, partly because it was for industrial purposes that the State imported the rags against foreign exchange, and not for private persons, partly because they were afraid that we would compete with the State Commission Stores, and above all, because foreign propagandists would make use of the fact.

"So we 'denatured' these rags, we cut them to pieces on a machine. Of course, some people still steal, mainly by putting on two or three slips or trousers under their own clothes. At the beginning of this year our manager was in Denmark, and he decided to buy less valuable rags in order to prevent stealing.

"The other day the news spread that a large consignment of western jeans had arrived at our Népfürdő Street warehouse as machine-cleaning rags. The youth of the surroundings went quite crazy, they tried to climb in during the night, we had to have a new fence built at an expense of about 10,000 forints.

"We do, of course, also get rags which are not exactly subject to the same danger. A Middle Eastern country bought Hungarian machinery, but was unable to pay; our foreign trade people tried to save the day,

and accepted a consignment of rags. It consisted of faded desert burnouses, most of which were unusable. It was covered with camel-dung, and it was rumoured that in one bale a severed hand had been found. You don't have to believe it, it's a story someone starts every now and again for a joke here or at the wool sorters.

"We sort the rags into twenty-eight classes. We send some to the paper mills, although this is becoming increasingly more difficult, because if there is any artificial fibre mixed with the consignment the paper mill cannot use it. We supply the raw material for tar-paper, and of course machine-cleaning rags is one of our main lines. Out of one kilo of rags we can sort 30 dekagrams of machine-cleaning rags and 30 dekagrams of wool.

"The women here earn 1,500 forints, men 1,800 to 2,000, including 20 per cent dirt money. Sickness is rare, but as they mostly work standing, it is their legs that suffer most.

"I know that lots of stories are told of the riches we find among the rags, that our pay is only a supplement to what we find. I won't say it never happens, but it's much more seldom than they think. A savings deposit book was once found under the patches of a workhouse coat; the heirs, who had forgotten the old woman while she was alive, hurried to claim it. All objects which can be traced are returned to their owners. The other day I talked to a transport worker. All he has found since he started to work for us was a broken earring."

EGON SZABADY

POPULATION CHANGES IN HUNGARY IN THE LAST TWENTY YEARS

In the course of the twenty years that have passed since the liberation of Hungary, considerable changes have occurred in the demographic situation. The socio-economic transformation which has taken place has had its effects on the composition of the population, and these changes have in turn produced further consequences. Developments in the country in the two decades since the liberation in 1945 have not proceeded in a steady, uniform flow, and variations have correspondingly made themselves felt in population structure and trends. It is therefore difficult to present a comprehensive picture of demographic developments in Hungary since the end of the Second World War in a short survey such as this. We can only pick out the main features which characterize this period and compare them with population development between the two world wars.

I. POPULATION STRUCTURE

At the time of the liberation in 1945, the population of Hungary—estimating the losses during the Second World War at 420,000, was somewhat under 9 million. Twenty years later the population was more than 10 million: at the end of 1964, to be precise, it was 10,135,000, i.e., it increased by 1.1 million in two decades.

The approximate increase of 13 per cent over the last 20 years—disregarding for the moment the catastrophic demographic losses of the Second World War—was less than that in the twenty years following the First World War, since between 1920 and 1940 the population of Hungary increased by 1.25 million, or 17 per cent. The lesser rate of increase was caused partly by the drop in the

rate of natural growth, owing to a reduction in the birth rate, and partly by various losses through migration.

Population growth was far from uniform in the course of the twenty years under investigation. The rate of increase was relatively higher between 1948 and 1950, when it approached 1 per cent annually. From then on the natural rate of increase began to fall, with the exception of a temporary increase between 1952 and 1955, when it attained its highest level, 1 to 1.2 per cent, since the liberation. In 1956—owing to the large illegal emigration—there was an actual decrease in the population, and from 1957 on the trend towards a gradual fall in the rate of increase continued. The figures have only been stabilized in the last three years (1962–1964), and that at the lowest level so far, an annual 0.3 per cent.

It was only in the first years after the Second World War that the natural reproduction rate of the population ran parallel to developments after the First World War, when the rate was also 10 to 11 per thousand. But in the earlier period the relatively high rate persisted some time longer, in fact for seven years, whereas after the Second World War it persisted for only three years. In both cases the rate of natural reproduction began to fall after this initial improvement—the decline was only temporarily interrupted by the rise in the rate of increase of 1953–1954, due to administrative measures against abortion—and the declining rate of increase has been considerably greater than it was in the inter-war period.

Birth Rate

The extent and the trends of natural growth rates of the population since libera-

Date	Population growth					Population growth (in percentages) ^{a)}			
	Population	Years	Increase or decrease (total)	Natural reproduction and	Migratory balance	Increase or decrease (total)	Natural repro- and	Migra- tory balance	Average ^{b)} annual increase or decrease
31.12.1920 ^{c)}	7,986,875	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
31.12.1925	8,341,562	1921—1925	354,687	388,130	- 33,443	4.5	4.9	- 0.4	0.87
31.12.1930 ^{c)}	8,685,109	1926—1930	343,547	383,708	- 40,161	4.1	4.6	- 0.5	0.81
31.12.1935	9,014,733	1931—1935	329,624	292,164	37,360	3.8	3.4	0.4	0.75
31.1.1941 ^{c)}	9,316,074	1936—1941	301,341	267,883	33,458	3.4	3.0	0.4	0.65
1.1.1949 ^{c)}	9,204,799	1941—1948	- 111,275	332,547	- 443,822 ^{e)}	- 1.2	3.6	- 4.8	- 0.15
1.1.1955	9,766,600	1949—1954	561,801	543,933	17,868	6.1	5.9	0.2	0.99
1.1.1960 ^{c)}	9,961,044	1955—1959	194,444	372,589	- 178,145	2.0	3.8	- 1.8	0.40
1.1.1965 ^{d)}	10,135,000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

a) In relation to the population at the beginning of the period.

b) Geometrical average.

c) Census data.

d) Population calculated on the basis of the final figures of the census of 1.1.1960.

e) Including non-registered deaths.

Trend of the principal vital statistics
(per thousand persons)

Years (average)	Live births	Deaths	Natural increase	Live births	Deaths	Natural increase
1921-1925	240,129	162,503	77,626	29.4	19.9	9.5
1926-1930	221,594	144,853	76,741	26.0	17.0	9.0
1931-1935	198,025	139,592	58,433	22.4	15.8	6.6
1936-1940	182,444	128,867	53,577	19.9	14.1	5.8
1941-1945	181,503	152,901	28,602	19.4	16.4	3.0
1946-1950	186,861	114,284	72,577	20.4	12.5	7.9
1951-1955	203,434	106,800	96,634	21.2	11.1	10.1
1956-1960	163,219	102,230	60,989	16.5	10.3	6.2
1961	140,365	96,410	43,955	14.0	9.6	4.4
1962	130,053	108,273	21,780	12.9	10.8	2.1
1963	132,335	99,871	32,464	13.1	9.9	3.2
1964 ^{a)}	131,899	100,594	31,305	13.0	9.9	3.1

^{a)} Provisional data

tion have been determined primarily through changes in the birth rate. Developments in the number of live births were almost completely parallel to that of the natural growth of the population. In the years following the Second World War the gross reproduction rate did not increase immediately (in 1945-1946 it was under 19 per thousand). This was very different from the position after the First World War, when, compensating for the half a million births or so that failed to materialize owing to the War—the birth rate shot up considerably and increased by 27 to 32 per thousand between 1919 and 1926. Such a compensatory process was not noticeable after the Second World War, since essentially there had been no decline in the number of births. After the first two years, the birth rate increased to a small extent (it was 21 per thousand between 1947 and 1950), and then fell again (1951-1952: 20 per thousand). Partly due to measures against abortion, the crude birth rate increased again in 1953 to 22, and to 23 in 1954. From 1955 there was a considerable annual fall in the birth rate, due in part to the fact that abortion had been legalized. In

1962 the birth rate fell to 13 per thousand and it has since remained around this level.

The decline in the number of births over the last nine years—a considerable drop even by international standards—is similar to that which occurred in the period after the First World War. Following the compensatory increase, the numbers fell in the late 'twenties and especially in the 'thirties, only a little less than the similar fall experienced in the second half of the 'fifties and in the 'sixties, for the average birth rate of the years 1936-1940 was 32 per cent lower than that of 1921-1925, and that of 1961-1964 35 per cent lower than that of 1946-1950.

The decrease in the number of births can also be seen in the number of children per married woman. At the beginning of 1963 the figure was an average of 2.29 children per 100 married women, 28 less than the 1949 figures. After the First World War, between 1920 and 1949, the decline in the number of the children born was much greater, i.e., 105 per 100 married women. The decline in the birth rate has been less in the post-liberation period than between the wars.

Mortality Rate

Throughout the last twenty years, the mortality rate has fallen considerably, with the exception of the deaths caused by the 'flu epidemics of 1953, 1959 and 1962. The rate of reduction was, however, far from even: after the exceedingly high figures of the three post-war years, the mortality rate fell in 1948 to 11.6 per thousand, and fell to the lowest level which has been achieved, 9.6, in 1961.

The lowering of the death rate can be seen—better than by the crude death rates—by the standardized death rates, which eliminate the effect of changes in distribution according to the age composition of the population. In terms of the age composition of the population before the First World War, the crude mortality rate would be around 6 to 7. Standardized to the age distribution of 1910, mortality fell between 1938 and 1963 to less than half, 47 per thousand, which is considerably better than the decrease following the First World War, since in 1938 the standardized death rate was 58 per thousand, as compared with 1911. This considerable improvement in the mortality rate after liberation is all the more noteworthy, as it becomes increasingly difficult to reduce still further a death rate which is already on a low level.

Expectation of Life

The decrease in the death rate increases expectation of life at birth. According to the latest mortality tables (1959–1960), expectation of life for males is now over 65, and for females nearly 70, that is, an increase of 10 to 12 years over twenty years ago. The expectation of life for males increased, however, by 14, and for females by 15 years in the corresponding twenty years period after the First World War, i.e., it was greater than the increase after the Second World War. This indicates a certain slackening in the decline of the mortality rate.

Mortality Distribution by Ages

Decreases in the death rate differed in the various age groups. The death rate for infants fell between 1940–41 and 1963 by two-thirds, for those under five by almost three-quarters and for those between five and nine years by four-fifths; the drop in the death rate for the higher age groups was considerably less: the mortality rate for those 70 years old and over improved by roughly one-fifth, and for those in the oldest age group (85 and over) by only one-seventh. Nor have even these improvements been uniform. The mortality rate of infants and children—apart from small fluctuations—fell steadily throughout the twenty-years period, but the figures for the old show certain periods of increase, followed in recent years by practically no changes.

These same differences in the decrease in the death rate can equally be seen in the period following on the First World War, when the decrease in infant and child mortality was most pronounced, although far less than the decrease after 1945. In the twenty-year period after 1945 the death rate dropped by 36 per cent for infants under one year, and 63 per cent for all children under five, while that of the old remained nearly unchanged (the figures for the group of the 85's and over showed only a 4 per cent increase at the end of the period over the beginning).

Cause of Death

Considerable changes have occurred in the mortality figures classified according to the cause of death. Contagious diseases, which in 1941 accounted for a crude death rate of 179 per 100,000, have lost their former importance over the last twenty years. In 1963 the crude death through contagious diseases had fallen to 32 per 100,000 or less than one-fifth of the former figure. Breaking down the overall figure, death from tuberculosis fell by 82 per cent, as compared

to the 49 per cent decrease in the twenty years following the First World War, and all the contagious diseases together by 60 per cent. In addition to these successes, there have been outstanding improvements in the mortality rates for pneumonia and gastric and intestinal catarrh (primarily due to the introduction of new drugs and therapeutic measures, and their success in controlling infant and child mortality), which fell respectively to 13 per cent and 16 per cent of the 1941 mortality rate. In the corresponding earlier period, between 1920 and 1941, the fall in these two causes of deaths (to 64 per cent, and 26 per cent respectively), which was already considerable, was none the less much smaller in extent.

At the same time, deaths due to tumours, arterio-sclerosis and other heart and circulatory diseases continued to increase in the period following the Second World War. But the rate of increase was no greater than the rate after the First World War. It is worth noting, however, that accident fatalities, which had remained stationary between the two wars, rose considerably in the twenty years following the Second World War. In 1963 the mortality rate from accidents amounted to 38 per cent more per 100,000 persons than in 1941. The suicide rate also remained high.

Infant Mortality

The improvement in the infant mortality rate has played an important part in the decrease in the general level of mortality. The crude death rate for infants under one year was gradually reduced after the considerable increase in the figures for 1945; in 1948 it was already under 100 per thousand lower than at any previous period. In the early 'fifties the figures remained stationary, but by then they had fallen to half the pre-liberation rate. From 1958 there was an acceleration in the rate of decrease; and

in 1961 only 44 infants out of a thousand died during their first year. In 1962 the figures temporarily rose (to 48 per thousand), to be followed by further improvement, and in 1964 the most favourable rate to date was attained (40 per thousand). In the twenty years after the Second World War the level of infant mortality has in fact fallen by over 66 per cent, as against the 40 per cent reduction in the twenty years after the First World War.

This decrease was largely due to the improved treatment of acquired diseases (pneumonia, gastritis, contagious diseases, etc.). The mortality rate from congenital defects, however, has remained unchanged, as can be seen from the fact that deaths on the first day after birth have remained unchanged, and the number of those dying within the first six days has hardly declined at all. On the other hand, deaths from the first to fifth months dropped to one-quarter, and from the sixth to eleventh months to one-sixth.

Distribution Changes According to Age Groups

The twofold consequences of natural changes in the population can be observed in the distribution according to age groups. Owing to the fall in the birth rate, the percentage of children (under 15) in the total population has fallen: in 1964 it was 24 per cent, as against 26 per cent in 1941. The population indeed increased by 8 per cent, but there has been scarcely any increase in the actual number of children between 1941 and 1964. Owing to the improved mortality rate, the number of the old (60 years and over) is increasing. In 1964 they were more than 1.5 million, or 15 per cent of the population. This represents an increase of more than half a million (53 per cent) over 1941. After the First World War, between 1920 and 1941, the older age group had increased, but only by 280,000, or 39 per cent.

Population age-structure by major age groups (in percentages)

Date	Total population	0—14	15—39	40—59	60—
31.12.1920	100	30.6	41.3	19.1	9.0
31.12.1925	100	29.0	42.0	19.7	9.3
31.12.1930	100	27.5	42.6	20.1	9.8
31.12.1935	100	28.4	40.5	21.0	10.1
31.1.1941	100	26.0	40.6	22.7	10.7
1.1.1949	100	24.9	38.8	24.7	11.6
1.1.1955	100	25.8	35.9	25.8	12.5
1.1.1960	100	25.4	36.8	24.0	13.8
1.1.1961	100	25.2	36.5	24.2	14.1
1.1.1962	100	25.0	36.2	24.3	14.5
1.1.1963	100	24.6	36.1	24.5	14.8
1.1.1964	100	24.1	36.1	24.6	15.2

Marriage Rate

The increased number of marriages is a very significant demographic trend of the twenty years since the Second World War. Throughout this whole period the marriage rate has been higher than in the corresponding period after the First World War.

What is extraordinary in this marriage rate as compared to the past, or to other countries, is that following the post-war rise, the number of marriages did not decline, the high marriage rate continuing for twelve years. Until 1957—with the exception of three years—it was above 10 per thousand, and for four years it even exceeded 11 per thousand. During this particular period after the Second World War the marriage rate was consistently higher than in any year after 1923. It then began to fall, and in 1962 there were only 8.1 marriages per thousand. After this, the lowest level, a small rise followed; in 1963 the marriage rate was 8.6 per thousand.

This high marriage rate can primarily be explained by an increased "disposition to marry." The changes in socio-economic conditions, the greater financial security of the young, improved opportunities for work,

and, not least, the economic emancipation of women, increased the number of marriages contracted at a younger age. Before 1945 only one-fifth to one quarter of the men who got married were under twenty-five, as opposed to almost half of them in 1963, while among the women those under twenty increased from under 30 per cent to 33 per cent to 35 per cent during the same period. The trend towards marriage at a younger age stopped in the 'sixties, and the number of marriages contracted under twenty-five even decreased, although still considerably exceeding the rate before the Second World War.

Divorce and Re-marriage

Another factor contributing to this increase has been the growing number of second or more marriages. Before 1945 one of the parties in 18 to 19 per cent of all marriages was widowed or divorced; in recent years this proportion has risen to more than 28 per cent.

This is largely due to a considerable increase in the number of divorces. After the end of the Second World War the number of divorces per thousand marriages, which

Breakdown of adult population (from 15 years upward) by sex and personal status (in percentages)

Date	Total population	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Divorced
<i>Men</i>					
31.12.1920	100	34.7	60.3	4.6	0.4
31.12.1930	100	34.1	61.2	4.1	0.6
31.1.1941	100	32.5	62.5	4.2	0.8
1.1.1949	100	30.6	64.5	4.0	0.9
1.1.1960	100	23.7	71.5	3.4	1.4
1.1.1961	100	23.4	71.8	3.4	1.4
1.1.1962	100	23.4	71.7	3.4	1.5
1.1.1963	100	23.6	71.5	3.3	1.6
1.1.1964	100	23.7	71.3	3.3	1.7
<i>Women</i>					
31.12.1920	100	27.3	56.8	15.2	0.7
31.12.1930	100	26.4	57.8	14.6	1.2
31.1.1941	100	24.7	59.3	14.6	1.4
1.1.1949	100	22.7	59.1	16.6	1.6
1.1.1960	100	17.3	64.4	15.7	2.6
1.1.1961	100	17.0	64.7	15.6	2.7
1.1.1962	100	16.8	64.8	15.6	2.8
1.1.1963	100	17.0	64.6	15.5	2.9
1.1.1964	100	17.0	64.5	15.4	3.1

by international comparison was high even in the inter-war years (in the last years before the Second World War it fluctuated at just under 3 per thousand), rose continuously until 1959, when it approached 9 per thousand. In the 'sixties the divorce rate has been roughly stationary on a somewhat lower level: there are now 7 divorces annually per thousand marriages.

These changes have considerably altered the distribution of the population by personal status. The number of married persons has increased beyond all previous figures. Seventy-one per cent of all males and 65 per cent of all females over 15 are married. Between 1941 and 1964 the number of men and women living in the marriage state increased by 24 per cent, even though the percentage had already increased consider-

ably between 1920 and 1941 (by 29 per cent). The number of divorced persons has also increased to a considerable extent, although the growth rate has been smaller (at 138 per cent) than between the two wars (166 per cent).

Reproduction Rate

The most effective way of showing the present position is through the reproduction indices. Due to the large decrease in the number of births, the pure reproduction index has tended to fall since 1958 and indicates a fall in the population in the future; according to the data of the 'sixties, these indices are between 0.8 and 0.9. The fall in this index has, however, been less than that of the rate of live births, on account of

the considerable improvement in the mortality rate, and within this of the infant and child mortality rate. Between 1940-1941 and 1963 the net reproduction index fell by 16 per cent, exactly to the same extent as in the twenty years after the First World War.

II. SOCIAL CHANGES

The most significant changes in population distribution have occurred directly as a result of the socio-economic transformation of the country. The victory of the socialist system of production, which brought with it speedy industrialization and an extensive increase in the number of those gainfully employed, has produced fundamental changes in the population statistics.

Working Population

In the first place, there has been a profound change in the ratio of working to dependent population. While the total population increased by 8 per cent between 1941 and 1963, the number of those gainfully employed rose by 24 per cent. And during that period, the number of dependents per 100 wage earners dropped from 107 to 81.

The increase in the number of the inactive

working population* exceeded the rate of increase in those gainfully employed, due to both extensions in the scope of the pension scheme and the ageing of the population. During this period it more than trebled and in 1963 approached 8 per cent of the population.

The ratio of the active working population, which fell somewhat between 1960 and 1963 owing to the socialist transformation of agriculture, was 48 per cent to 46 per cent in 1941. The increase between 1941 and 1963 amounted to 11 per cent. But if the reduced numbers in employment caused by the Second World War are taken into account, the increase has in fact been greater; compared to 1949 (when the number of persons in work was 140,000 lower than in 1941) the increase was 15 per cent.

The growth in the number of those gainfully employed is largely due to the increased number of women gainfully employed. The number of women in gainful employment increased by 69 per cent between 1941 and 1963; in the inter-war period it only increased by 11 per cent. In 1963, 38 per cent of all persons in gainful employment or with pensions were women, as against 28 per cent

* Those not in gainful employment but in receipt of an income, in the overwhelming majority those in receipt of state pensions.

*Population distribution by employment
(in percentages)*

Date	Total population	Gainfully employed			Dependents	Dependents per 100 persons in work
		Active	Inactive	Total		
31.12.1920	100	45.7	1.3	47.0	53.0	113
31.12.1930	100	44.0	2.0	46.0	54.0	117
31.1.1941	100	46.1	2.2	48.3	51.7	107
1.1.1949	100	45.1	2.8	47.9	52.1	109
1.1.1960	100	48.9	4.4	53.3	46.7	87
1.1.1963	100	47.5	7.7	55.2	44.8	81

in 1941. And while 26 women out of 100 earned their living in 1941, this figure had risen to 41 by 1963, while the ratio of men earning their living did not change (71 per cent). More than half of the women between the ages of 15 and 54 are today gainfully employed (54 per cent in 1963).

Economic Distribution of Working Population

The economic transformation of the country is also reflected in the distribution of the working population according to the different branches of the economy. The industrialization which is a concomitant of the socialist system of production and the change-over to large-scale agricultural production led to a considerable reduction in the number and proportion of the population engaged in agriculture. There was hardly a trace of such a trend in the period between 1920 and 1941, when the number of those employed in agriculture even slightly increased, and the percentage only fell from 58 to 50 per cent. Nor, at the beginning of the period following on the Second World War, was any trend towards a re-division of labour as yet visible; on the contrary, the percentage of those employed in agriculture increased on account of the agrarian reform, and amounted to 53 per cent of the working population. But with the beginning of the five-year plans industrialization led to a considerable reduction of those employed in agriculture; between 1949 and 1960 their number fell from 2.2 million to 1.87 million, and their percentage of the working population to 38 per cent. This process continued in the early 'sixties, as a result of the socialist transformation of agriculture, but was largely due to formerly independent farmers—and consequently classified as part of the working population—reaching the age of retirement and becoming pensioners of the agricultural cooperatives. By the beginning of 1963 the number of those employed in agriculture had fallen to 1,566,000, and their proportion to 33 per cent.

The other side of the coin in the process of transformation is the large-scale increase in the number of those employed in secondary industry. The number of those employed in secondary industry, including the building trades, had already risen in the inter-war period (by 57 per cent between 1920 and 1949), but this increase was intensified in the period after 1949: by 1963 their number had increased—from 963,000 to 1,810,000—by 88 per cent and today accounts for nearly one-third of all of the working population.

The number and percentage of those employed in transport and in the public services also increased considerably. In 1963, 6 per cent of all persons in employment were employed in transport and almost 8 per cent in the public services. Through the extension of the pensions scheme, those members of the working population who had retired or no longer worked formed a not inconsiderable group within the whole. In 1963 they amounted to 14 per cent of all those gainfully employed as against 6 per cent in 1949. Their number, which doubled between 1920 and 1941, rose to even more between 1949 and 1963.

As a consequence of the socio-economic transformation of the country, the distribution of the working population according to occupation also changed. In the first place, the socialist transformation of agriculture brought to an end the significant place in the statistics occupied by the self-employed or auxiliary earners in the family, although in 1941, 41 per cent and in 1949, 54 per cent of the working population fell within this category. In 1963 this group consisted of just over 200,000 persons, amounting to no more than 4 per cent of the total. During the same period a new social stratum had emerged, that of members of producers' cooperatives. In 1963 they exceeded 1,000,000 and indeed represented more than 20 per cent of the working population. As a corollary of industrialization, the number and the proportion of those in employment has

Structure of the working population according to branches of the economy

Date	Working population	Agriculture	Industry, including the building trades	Transport and communications	Trade	Miscellaneous
31.12.1920	3,652,489	2,128,008	639,588	113,465	202,877	568,551
31.12.1930	3,822,121	2,030,844	825,984	107,968	252,190	605,135
31.1.1941	4,297,407	2,164,975	1,005,348	139,768	282,941	704,375
1.1.1949	4,154,543	2,196,185	963,493	164,927	219,990	609,948
1.1.1960	4,876,232	1,872,730	1,682,233	296,321	308,441	716,507
1.1.1963	4,790,050	1,566,400	1,809,700	314,400	324,950	774,600

Structure of the working population according to branches of the economy (in percentages)

Date	Working population	Agriculture	Industry, including the building trades	Transport and communications	Trade	Miscellaneous
31.12.1920	100	58.3	17.5	3.1	5.5	15.6
31.12.1930	100	53.2	21.6	2.8	6.6	15.8
31.1.1941	100	50.4	23.4	3.2	6.6	16.4
1.1.1949	100	52.8	23.2	4.0	5.3	14.7
1.1.1960	100	38.4	34.5	6.1	6.3	14.7
1.1.1963	100	32.7	37.8	6.5	6.8	16.2

grown steadily. In 1949, 2,000,000 persons or 46 per cent belonged to this category, and in 1963 already 3.35 million or 70 per cent of the whole working population. This increase has far surpassed the increase between 1920 and 1941, when the number of workers and employees had grown by no more than 17 per cent.

The effect of changed opportunities for work is also shown by the shift in the types of occupation. In 1963 nearly one-fifth of all employees and cooperative members were professional and clerical workers and four-fifths manual workers. In 1941 the percentage of professional and clerical workers among those in employment was only 12 per cent. In the earlier period, between 1920 and 1941, the number of professional and clerical workers increased by just over one-

third; between 1941 and 1963 it increased by 300 per cent. At present the ratio is 24 professional or clerical workers to every 100 manual workers, as against 13 in 1941.

Urbanization

This occupational-social transformation took place concurrently with the process of urbanization. Between 1949 and 1963 the urban population increased by 25 per cent, while the village population remained essentially unchanged. Today 42 per cent of the population live in towns. The trend to urbanization had already emerged before the Second World War. In the twenty inter-war years—the figures being based on present-day administrative classifications—the urban population increased by 26 per cent, almost

Territorial distribution of the population
(in percentages)

Date	Total population	Budapest	Other towns	Villages
31.12.1920	100	15.4	19.9	64.7
31.12.1930	100	16.6	19.7	63.7
31.1.1941	100	18.4	19.9	61.7
1.1.1949	100	17.3	19.3	63.4
1.1.1960	100	18.1	21.6	60.3
1.1.1961	100	18.4	22.3	59.3
1.1.1962	100	18.7	22.6	58.7
1.1.1963	100	18.9	22.9	58.2
1.1.1964	100	19.0	23.2	57.8

the same rate as after the Second World War. During that period, however, there was also an increase of 11 per cent in the village population.

The present increase in the urban population has been due to large-scale internal migration from the village to the town. Between 1949 and 1963 the urban population of the towns increased by the addition of 550,000 persons from the villages, or 16 per cent of their 1949 population. This increase due to migration occurred mainly in the new socialist towns and in Budapest. Today the population of Budapest approximates 2 millions, more than 230,000 of whom migrated to the capital since 1949.

Education

As a result of the cultural revolution accompanying the social transformation, there has been a considerable improvement in the level of education. Following the transformation of the school system, between 1941 and 1963 the number of those who had completed the eight classes of primary education increased by 180 per cent, those who completed their secondary education by 168 per cent, and those who graduated from a university or other institution of higher education by 110 per cent. In the earlier

comparative period the increase in the educational level was far below this rate: between 1920 and 1941 the number of those who completed the eighth class of primary education had only increased by 66 per cent, and the number of those who had graduated from a university or institution of higher education had only risen by 25 per cent.

At the beginning of 1963, 20 per cent of the population of seven years and over had ended their formal education with full completion of the eight classes of primary education; in 1941 only 7 per cent had managed to achieve this. The percentages of those who had completed secondary school increased in the twenty years after the Second World War from 2 to 5.8 per cent, and of those who had graduated from an institution of higher learning from 1.1 to 2 per cent.

The results of educational progress look even more impressive if we investigate the education of the population of different ages. At the present time over 38 per cent of the total population of 15 years and over have completed at least the eight classes of primary education (as against 15 per cent in 1941), and 10 per cent of the population 18 years old and over have completed secondary school (as against 4 per cent in 1941).

The improvement in the level of education is especially striking where women are

concerned. Feminine education has been under a considerable disability as compared to masculine education. While masculine education still enjoys certain advantages, the disparity is much less; the number of women enjoying the benefits of higher education has increased at a faster rate than the number of men; between 1941 and 1963 the number of women graduating from institutions of higher education quadrupled, while that of the men "only" doubled; in 1963 there was a 500 per cent increase in the number of

women who completed their secondary education over the figures for 1941 (for men the increase was 100 per cent).

This short survey is designed to show the more important demographic changes which have taken place since the Second World War. Its limited objective has been to present a coherent historical sketch of the demographic processes and changes which have taken place in the population structure as a result of the socio-economic transformation of the last twenty years.

Educational levels of the population (in percentages)

Date	10 years and over. No schooling	15 years and over. Completed at least 8 classes of primary education	18 years and over. Taken secondary school leaving exam	25 years and over. Taken university degree or higher diploma
<i>Males</i>				
31.12.1920	10.3 ^{a)}	12.7	—	3.3
31.12.1930	7.4 ^{b)}	14.1	—	3.3
31.1.1941	5.2	16.1	7.0	2.8
1.1.1949	4.1	21.9	8.1	3.1
1.1.1960	2.6	34.5	11.6	4.5
1.1.1963	2.0	40.8	12.7	4.8
<i>Females</i>				
31.12.1920	15.3 ^{a)}	9.8	—	0.2
31.12.1930	11.1 ^{b)}	11.8	—	0.3
31.1.1941	7.5	14.1	1.6	0.4
1.1.1949	5.5	19.5	3.3	0.5
1.1.1960	3.7	31.3	6.3	1.1
1.1.1963	2.9	35.9	7.6	1.3
<i>Total</i>				
31.12.1920	12.9 ^{a)}	11.2	—	1.7
31.12.1930	9.3 ^{b)}	12.9	—	1.7
31.1.1941	6.4	15.1	4.2	1.6
1.1.1949	4.8	20.6	5.5	1.7
1.1.1960	3.2	32.8	8.8	2.7
1.1.1963	2.5	38.2	10.0	2.9

^{a)} In these years, of 12 years and over.

^{b)} Excluding those who have not gone to school but are literate.

GYÖRGY BERÉNYI

HUNGARIANS ON FOREIGN SCHOLARSHIPS

Western Countries

In the past few years Hungary has concluded cultural and scientific agreements with an increasing number of foreign countries and institutions. These agreements have provided for study abroad for Hungarian scholars and students, and *vice versa*. Both partners together determine the amount of the grants, the number of scholarship holders, and the period. Recommendations for scholarships are made by the competent authorities in each country—in the case of Hungary, by the Institute for Cultural Relations—from among the applications submitted to them. The applicants work out their study plan in advance, and the programme for study in the donor country are drawn up in accordance with this plan.

We are here dealing with only one side of this bilateral programme, namely study trips of Hungarian scholars abroad. These are for the most part young post-graduates destined for important work, and occasionally for work of immediate importance to the nation. Their general hope is that their trip abroad will enable them to acquaint themselves with the latest scientific achievements and methods of work, and afford them an opportunity to pursue their research work under the more up-to-date conditions of the foreign institution for a defined period of time. The scholarship grants are available in a number of countries, socialist and capitalist alike. With the development and extent of the exchange programmes depending primarily on the relations between the countries concerned, it is only natural that the most extensive exchange agreements should be with the socialist countries on terms of close friendship with Hungary. The clauses on scholarships in the cultural agreements recently concluded with West European countries as well as with American scientific

institutions have given postgraduate students a still wider range of opportunities.

Austria

Up to the present no cultural agreement exists between Hungary and neighbouring Austria. Trips on a scholarship are consequently based on separate grants. The Austrian State grants the Erasmus scholarship to two Hungarians every year; in 1965 a chemical research worker and a historian were selected to spend ten months in Austria. Under scholarship grants from the Hungarian State, some thirty scholars and research workers annually spend a few months in the neighbouring country. They stay at the Collegium Hungaricum in Vienna, and work in Austrian universities, libraries, museums and other cultural institutions. Two Hungarian students of German were invited to a two-month summer course in the German language by Salzburg University in 1965, and in the same year, four Hungarian writers and literary historians made a study trip to Austria on grants from the Austrian Literary Society.

Belgium

Belgium is the only Benelux country with which an agreement was signed in 1965, but the detailed plans are still to be drawn up. For the time being, exchange scholarships still depend on direct relations between individual institutions in the two countries. A case in point is the regular annual exchange of visits by two professors of the University of Liège and the Budapest Eötvös Loránd University respectively.

Canada

No regular exchange scholarships have so far come into existence between this country

and Canada. McGill University of Montreal recently offered a one-year scholarship to the Budapest Research Institute of the Meat Industry which sent out one of its research workers to attend lectures in the 1965-66 academic year. Such cases however have so far been only sporadic and occasional.

Finland

As regards the countries of northern Europe, an inter-governmental cultural agreement exists only with Finland. Since 1959, when the agreement was signed, some seventy Hungarians have been given scholarships in Finland. They were given in the first place to experts in philology and ethnology whose interest in Finland—based on the related origins of the two peoples—have by now become traditional. University professors, teachers and research workers from Hungary visited corresponding Finnish institutions to study their research methods and achievements or collect material for their own doctorate or Candidate's thesis. Special grants for a one-year scholarship for young scientists or university students engaged in Finno-Ugric studies are also provided in the agreement. But over and above problems of philology and ethnology Hungarians are interested in the Finnish wood, paper and building industries and, as a consequence, the professional distribution of the recipients has considerably changed in recent years. Hungarian constructional engineers have gone to Finland to study housing, and forestry experts and technicians in the wood and paper industries to study their own subjects. The visits usually last four to eight weeks. The total period to be divided amongst them was at first fixed at fifteen months per year; this was then raised to eighteen, and recently to twenty-two months.

France

The first, one-year cultural agreement between France and Hungary was signed in

1963 and this was shortly followed by a second for two years. Under the agreement thirty Hungarian teachers of the French language visit France annually. Ten attend a one-month postgraduate summer course in Besançon, fifteen attend a similar course at Sèvres, while five will follow an advanced course in French language, literature, history and culture in general in a six-week course organized by the Alliance Française in Paris.

The agreement also provides thirty ASTEF scholarships for research in the technical and natural sciences. A woman geologist in the Budapest Geological Institute is to carry out petrographic tests; a research worker in the Institute for Chemical Technology will investigate the phenomena of material transmission, and a post-graduate specializing in internal diseases in the Institute for Post-graduate Medical Training is to study the connections between cardiac infarction and the hormones. The majority of those awarded an ASTEF scholarship will work in a French research institute for a period varying from two months to one year. A few would join a group of their fellows from other countries in order to study—with the aid of lectures and visits to institutions—modern methods of economic planning, road construction, standardization or internal transport in France. Scholarships are awarded by decision of a mixed Franco-Hungarian committee.

The French-Hungarian cultural exchange agreement also provides other types of scholarships. Undergraduates specializing in French are enabled to study in French universities. In 1965 grants were given to six students and the total period of study adds up to 30 months a year. In the same year ten Hungarian students of agronomy received a month's training on French farms. For 1966 training courses of the same duration will be provided for ten students of medicine in 1966. An annual 35 months of study will be divided among young Hungarian research workers anxious to continue the scientific work they began at home in

a French institution. Forty-five months in all will be divided among young Hungarian engineers for postgraduate study in French technical universities. And further grants are available annually for two persons engaged in the arts—preferably young stage and screen directors—as well as for five publisher's readers and literary translators, who will be enabled to make study trips of four to eight weeks to France.

German Federal Republic

There is no cultural agreement at present in force between the German Federal Republic and Hungary. Although some institutions—such as the Humboldt Foundation or the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst—are willing to give scholarships to Hungarian citizens, these have so far been confined to private invitations. Negotiations are now in course to centralize these activities, in order to ensure that the selection is made in accordance with the national interests of Hungarian science, economy and culture.

Great Britain

The first cultural exchange programme between the United Kingdom and Hungary was signed in 1961. Under the terms of the agreement, ten Hungarians went to study in Britain in the first year; in the following year their number increased to twenty-two, in the third year to forty-seven, for periods varying between two weeks and six months. For the 1964–65 academic year the number was fixed at sixty-five, and the total period added up to seven and a half years, divided according to their plans of study among the sixty-five beneficiaries, who represented a wide variety of professions. Fifteen teachers of English from secondary schools in Budapest, Pécs, Szeged and Salgótarján attended one month courses in London, Cambridge, Oxford and other universities. They were given opportunities to improve their knowledge of

the English language and literature as well as to study advanced methods of language teaching in the language laboratories of English universities. The doctors studied new techniques in surgical anaesthesia, the agronomists up-to-date methods of farm management, and the architects pursued their researches into the latest British experiments in building design, mechanization and multiple storey construction. They also included a research worker from the Hungarian Postal Research Institute on the use of electronic computers, a researcher in the Hungarian State Archives, the conductor of the Miskolc symphony orchestra, a professor of literature from one of the Budapest universities who is a well-known literary translator, and producers of two Budapest theatres, who visited the Shakespeare Festival with a two-week grant.

The British-Hungarian cultural exchange programme also allowed for longer scholarships for a full academic year. In 1963–64 there were two from each country, from Hungary a chemical engineer and a biologist, and in the subsequent year this was raised to four each. The ten-month period gives the scholarship holder an opportunity to carry out full-scale research. A young lecturer at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, for instance, made use of the longer period to collect material for his thesis on Shaw's plays at London University. A lecturer of the Budapest University of Technical Sciences did research in the Physical Chemistry Department of Nottingham University. A lecturer of the Budapest University of Veterinary Sciences, who had already obtained his Candidate's degree, worked in Edinburgh University on a paper entitled "Immunity against Parasites." A research worker at the Budapest University of Architecture studied new techniques in the design of ferro-concrete structures in the University of Southampton. Each of the four Hungarian research workers was aided by an adviser appointed from the staff of the host university. Before returning to Hungary, each scholar-

ship holder wrote a report summarizing what he had learnt in Britain, comparing it with his earlier work at home and drawing the necessary conclusions. A copy of this paper was handed over to the British university concerned. The remarks in such papers are sometimes found very helpful by British specialists themselves. The basic purpose of the work, of course, is to make use of it at home, partly in the individual research plans of the scholars concerned, partly in the development of their respective disciplines. But the exchange programme in addition helps to foster mutual relations.

In point of fact, the Hungarian who has visited England on one of these scholarships will in most cases remain in contact with his English colleagues. More often than not, their relations go beyond a merely friendly correspondence and develop into a connection between two scientific institutions. Following a scholarship exchange between the universities of Glasgow and Szeged, for instance, not only have reciprocal visits of the staffs of the two institutions become a regular thing, but also the exchange of scientific literature and documentary material. The friendly and fruitful relations existing between the leading scientific institutions of the two countries—the Royal Society and the British Academy on the one part and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on the other—also include exchange scholarships. The cooperation between the two countries has come to embrace an increasingly wide field. The National Pedagogic Institute of Budapest has lately been organizing summer courses for teachers of English who do not benefit from the exchange programme; these courses not only follow the same curriculum as those held in Britain but are in fact the same, conducted by lecturers from Britain. Again, the assistant lecturer in the English Institute of Debrecen University went to England last autumn on his second study trip. The first time he was there on a grant; now he is to work as a lecturer at London University, and to assist in teaching the

Hungarian language and literature in the University's Hungarian Institute. His appointment is the first of its kind in the history of British-Hungarian cultural relations.

Greece

In 1963 Hungary also signed a cultural programme with Greece. Six visits of two weeks, two of three months and two of ten months have since regularly been made each year by Hungarian archaeologists, philologists, literary historians, artists and scientists.

Holland

Dutch institutions also cooperate with their opposite numbers in Hungary and from time to time have offered scholarships to Hungarian art historians, mathematicians and experts in water supplies.

Italy

The Italian-Hungarian cultural agreement has provided for the systematic exchange of scholarships since 1964. The number of Hungarian secondary-school teachers of Italian attending a one-month course in the *Universita Italiana per Stranieri* of Perugia rose from fifteen in the first year to thirty in 1964 and to sixty in 1965. Under the agreement moreover the Italian Government has offered scholarships to a total amount of Lir. 8,600,000 for scientists and specialists in other fields, especially in the technical sciences. In 1965-66 forty-six persons will benefit from this offer. An assistant professor of the Szeged University of Medicine will spend eight months in Italy, an astronomer, an art historian, a design engineer of the Budapest Telephone Works and an architect four months each. The rest will study in Italy for between four to twelve weeks. Thirty to forty scholarship holders will be sent by the Hungarian Government each year to the Hungarian Academy in Rome which, in cooperation with

the appropriate Italian institutions, arranges for their studies there. The scheme also provides two-week study trips for specialists from each countries; Hungarian experts were sent to Italy to study Italian factory law and the system of social insurance.

Japan

Also failing an agreement on government level, the 1965 trip of a young electrical engineer from the Budapest Institute for Telecommunication Research to Japan must be regarded as not only rare, but almost unique. He was granted an eighteen-month scholarship by the Mombusho Foundation; a study of the language will take up nearly a year of this period.

Norway

A cultural agreement was signed with Norway in 1964 and renewed in 1965. In the first year only one scientist—a biologist from the Natural Science Department of the Budapest Eötvös Loránd University—was sent to Oslo University, where he spent six months in investigations into the adrenal secretion of birds. Two scholarships for eight months each are provided in the new agreement. One of these was made available to an assistant professor in the Budapest Technical University to study the shipbuilding methods and the training of engineers in Norway, and the other to a publisher's reader for a study of Scandinavian literature. Two-week study trips for five scholars and a place at a summer course for one student will moreover be given under the agreement each year.

Sweden

Failing any agreement between the Governments there are only the grants of the Svenska Institutet in Sweden to help Hungarians to study in that country. One of the three scholarships given so far—to a young lecturer in chemistry in Budapest Technical

University, to carry out experiments in the modern laboratory of the Stockholm College of Technology—was extended for a further period of four months. Some time ago an agreement in principle was reached by the Svenska Institutet and the Institute for Cultural Relations to increase the number of Swedish scholarships granted to Hungarians.

United States

No cultural agreement on the inter-governmental level exists at present between the United States of America and Hungary. A number of agreements however have been concluded between the Institute for Cultural Relations on the one hand and certain American institutions on the other. One of them is the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants with which an agreement for two years had been signed in 1963 by the Hungarian state agency, and which was extended for a further three years on its expiry. This agreement provides for reciprocal scholarships totalling 36 months, divided between three scholars from each country every year. In 1965-66 the Hungarian beneficiaries were an agronomist from the Martonvásár Agricultural Research Institute, who is researching into the cultivation of cereals at the University of Wisconsin; a research worker of the Department of General Chemistry in the Budapest University of Technical Sciences studying ultra-trace analysis, and a lecturer of the Institute for Experimental Physics at Szeged University who carried out investigations into the spectrum of fluorescence of chlorophyll.

Considerably more important is the agreement concluded with the Ford Foundation, which came into effect in autumn 1964. Under its terms 25 Hungarians travel each year to the United States for post-graduate studies. They are selected in equal numbers from natural and social scientists, and study American working methods and scientific achievements in university research institutes. A chemical research worker in the Buda-

pest Research Institute into Synthetic Substances pursued his studies in the Brooklyn Institute of Polymer Research, a senior staff member of the Budapest Research Institute for Electrical Power was the guest of Pennsylvania University, a scientific worker in the Research Institute for Agricultural Mechanical Engineering studied in the University of Kansas. Under grants from the Foundation two young Hungarian opera-singers trained in Italy for a year. The scholarship holders included lawyers, sociologists, linguists and the representatives of a number of other disciplines, who all began their stay in America with a month's course in English. Their wives may accompany them, and in addition to travel expenses, they receive a 25 per cent extra allowance from the Foundation. In 1965 the Hungarians included two women: an economist from Budapest and a lecturer in English language and literature from Debrecen. The latter was accompanied by her husband, who received the same allowances as the wives of other students.

Over and above these scholarships, the Ford Foundation, as from 1965, is inviting four linguists every year for a three to six months' stay in the United States. In the first year, a lecturer from the Budapest Eötvös József University, the Karl Marx University of Economics and the Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, respectively, as well as a lecturer in French from the University of Pécs, have been invited. Additional invitations are also extended by the Foundation to distinguished visitors: scholars of international reputation, or outstanding representatives of the Hungarian world of science. Some five invitations of this type are issued every year, and it was under this part of the programme that Zoltán Kodály, among others, paid a visit to the United States in 1965.

The Ford Foundation sends a selection team to Hungary to pick the recipients of the grants. Following personal contacts the team select the best qualified twenty-five

out of the fifty applicants recommended by the Institute for Cultural Relations. On his arrival in the United States the Hungarian scholar is met by the representatives of the Institute of International Education. This institution is responsible for seeing that the scholarship holder is given systematic advice and help by a professor of the guest university, and this accompanies the guest throughout his stay in the United States to the moment of his departure.

The report of a teacher of English in a Budapest secondary school on his return to Hungary may perhaps give an idea of their programme and the character of their studies in the United States. First of all he attended a language extension course in the English Institute of the University of Ann Arbor (Michigan). He visited a number of primary and secondary schools and was present at the national conference of English teachers held in Cleveland. He lectured on Hungary in a high school within the framework of a course entitled "World Culture." In Los Angeles he attended classes at the high school attached to the teachers' training college. In San Francisco he visited both the City College and the State College and was present at a session of the municipal committee on education. In Denver he visited the academy of the U.S. Air Force where he was present at classes in Russian and German. In Bloomington he took part in a conference on the teaching of foreign languages. In Washington he gained an insight into the work of the Foreign Service Institute and the Office of Education. In New York he visited a school television centre. He was at the same time constantly inundated with invitations from American families for lunch, for supper and for sightseeing tours. The warmth shown him can be seen in the fact that when he filled up a form in the Denver office of the Institute of International Education it turned out that the day happened to be his birthday, and the Americans, noticing this, promptly improvised a celebration in his honour.

Even more varied was the programme of the Hungarian expert on acoustics who spent three and a half months in the United States, two months each in Great Britain and Sweden, one month in Italy and two weeks in Spain, as the guest of the Ford Foundation. Part of his time was spent in visiting music centres: he was taken to the Philharmonic Hall in New York, the Kresge Auditorium in Cambridge, Mass., the Carnegie Music Centre in Pittsburgh and several other important concert halls. He carried out experiments in the acoustics laboratory of Columbia University, as well as in a Stockholm research institute. Making use of the 51-channel analyser there, an instrument of the most up-to-date type, he prepared spectrum cards of type-recorded vowels, processing in two months an amount of scientific material which would have required two years by previous methods.

These travels and activities of the Hungarian students and experts have, generally speaking, helped to improve American-Hungarian cultural relations. The presence of a Hungarian linguist at the universities of Berkeley and Bloomington has aroused the interest of several students in the Hungarian language. The Institute for Cultural Relations has received letters from a number of under-graduates of the two universities, expressing their wish to study in Hungary. It frequently happens that a distinguished Hungarian, on his return from the United States, suggests to the competent Hungarian authorities that they invite some American scientists whose acquaintance he had made in the course of his visit overseas. The recent exchange of correspondence by the National Academy and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences promises to contribute to the development of scientific cooperation.

A number of Hungarians have travelled to other countries—and, naturally, to those

listed above as well—on grants obtained through personal or private connections. Information about a scholarship reaches the prospective applicant through relatives, friends and acquaintances, and applications are made through the same channels. Some institutions actually prefer this manner of selection, though it is inappropriate for more than one reason. On the one hand, it is unfair to those who deserve scholarships but are excluded owing to the lack of personal connections. And on the other hand, it is contrary to the policy of planned progress in all fields, including that of the training of specialists, adopted by the Hungarian State; in a country where the development of the various branches of the economy, science and culture are carefully co-ordinated, the subject and the abilities of the scientists and specialists enjoying the facilities of study and work provided by a foreign scholarship cannot be a matter of indifference to the State. It is in the national interest that the knowledge acquired and the results attained by the aid of a scholarship should be made available to that sector of the national economy which actually needs them, that they contribute to the speedier realization of the national tasks. For example, it is in the national interest that an important proportion of the scholarships should be granted to those engaged in technical and natural sciences, in contrast to the one-sided tradition in which all the emphasis used to be on art history in Italy, philology and ethnology in Finland, and on the study of foreign languages in general.

The number of foreign scholars pursuing their studies in this country under Hungarian grants is also steadily growing. In its long-term effects the exchange of scholarships may encourage the development of relations between two countries, not only within the narrow limits of individual branches of science, but also in the field of international trade.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

ZOLTÁN HORVÁTH

A NEW HISTORY OF HUNGARY

1.

Reviewing the new two-volume History of Hungary,* the first comprehensive work of its kind in the last twenty years, which certainly should meet popular demand and which rectifies many of the faults of previous history books, one is nonetheless led to look back Hungarian historiography before 1945. Marx's laconic maxim, expressed in a letter to Engels, rebuking people who falsify history, "*Die Geschichte geschieht*—History happens" serves as a good starting point. This is a strong and emphatic warning that no amount of prejudice or bias in the writing of history can alter the fact that historical events happen and have happened in one particular way.

In the past, when narrow class interests and ultranationalist hatred aroused political passions and frequently blinded historians to the truth (unfortunately, such instances are even found nowadays), people concerned with historical studies were liable to make arbitrary decisions on *what* had happened—and by whose agency things had happened. As often as not such decisions would be reversed with the passing of time.

Before 1945 Hungary, a country saddled

* *Magyarország története* (The History of Hungary), Edited by Erik Molnár, Ervin Pamlényi, György Székely. Two volumes. Gondolat Publishers, Budapest, 1965.

with an oppressive class rule which retained not a few medieval features and only too prone to indulge in a defensive ultranationalism, adopted an approach diametrically opposed to the Marxist maxim in its attempt to refashion the past to suit its own interests.

For hundreds of years the Hungarian nobility sought to justify their claim to their flagrantly outdated privileges, by maintaining that they had been earned by services rendered over the centuries. Hungarian historians open-minded and outspoken enough to point out the truth such as Béla Grünwald** or Ervin Szabó*** by showing that the argument advanced by the nobility was based on spurious premises, and who were courageous enough to maintain the truth (the very opposite of the official line) that the loyalty of the nobility to the country only lasted as long as it answered their interests—would be regarded as worse than traitors and hounded from their positions and from institutions of learning. Béla Grünwald, one of the most distinguished of Hungarian historians, was the author of the book "Old Hungary" (*A régi Magyarország*), an exposure

** Béla Grünwald (1839—1891), a country squire and deputy lieutenant of Sáros County.

*** Ervin Szabó (1877—1918), Socialist theorist, librarian. Author of "Social Conflicts and Party Struggles in the Hungarian Revolution of 1848—49."

of the long anachronistic feudal system of his country. The impact it made was so overwhelming that the semi-feudal ruling class of the day could not forgive it; Grünwald was socially ostracised and eventually hounded into exile; the courageous scholar committed suicide in Paris.

That is not to say that Hungary has had no honest and useful, even distinguished, historians. Mihály Horváth, a bishop and a Minister in the Hungarian administration of 1849, wrote a "Universal History of Hungary" and a "History of the War of Independence." László Szalay, the Hungarian envoy in Frankfurt during the War of Independence, left behind him, in addition to a number of unfinished works, an incomplete but brilliant history of Hungary. Ignác Acsády wrote a history of serfdom in Hungary at the turn of the century; and works of considerable significance were produced by Professor Henrik Marczali and Dávid Angyal, who were chiefly engaged in the study of sources.

Ervin Szabó deserves a word to himself. This Marxist analysis of the War of Independence of 1848—49, if not quite unexceptionable, in certain parts is an excellent piece of work and a model for the way history should be written. Shortly after his death his work was published by Hungarian emigrés in Vienna following the fall of the Hungarian communist Republic of 1919; the first edition published in Hungary was brought out in 1946. Péter Ágoston has also written an outstanding "History of the Secular Latifundium in Hungary." Most of these works however only dealt with particular aspects of history and were not substantial enough in themselves to have exerted a popular influence. The approach of the masses to history is not unimportant. There is hardly a subject in the school curriculum, apart from the study of one's native tongue and arithmetic, which leaves a deeper impression on people's minds: thus the attitude to history as taught in schools and disseminated in literature

becomes a major factor in the formation of the national consciousness and a generator of national ambitions and aspirations.

Hungarians saw a clear demonstration of this process after 1919, when the triumphant counterrevolution soon found its historians—Gyula Szekfű, particularly, springs to mind—writers who exerted a decisive influence in shaping the national consciousness during that period.

Gyula Szekfű (1883—1955) was an outstanding historian and a writer who achieved a high standard of literary craftsmanship. As a result of these qualities he became the most effective ideologist of the counter-revolutionary regime in the early years of the Horthy era. His method was to marshal and present the events of history, unaltered and unadulterated, in accordance with the actual facts, but to draw wrong and misleading conclusions from them. He thus misled his readers, and though he did not fail to censure the Hungarian ruling classes, he laid the real blame for the national crisis in Hungary (the eclipse which followed the First World War) at the door of sections of the urban population, largely Jewish and in part non-Magyar, which he described as "subversive," and alien to the Hungarian national spirit. This indeed gave extraordinary significance to his *volte-face* in 1938, when, the intensification of the Nazi peril having brought home to him his grave responsibility, he wrote a newspaper editorial entitled "Gone Wrong Somewhere," in which he recanted many of his earlier views. Szekfű eventually became one of the leading personalities in the anti-Nazi, anti-German movement.

It is, however, Szekfű's pre-1938 attitude which dominates the comprehensive, several-volume "Hungarian History" (*Magyar Történet*) he wrote with Bálint Hóman, a fine historian who in later years drifted into politics—to the extreme Right, and ended up as Minister of Education in the Fascist administration.

Until quite recently this was the last

comprehensive work on Hungarian history to be published with the exception of various history textbooks for different educational levels, and for this reason one cannot go too far in welcoming the newly published comprehensive "*The History of Hungary*," which is—let it be said at once—the best and most reliable work on the subject to be written so far.

2.

Despite the fact that the work is the product of the joint efforts of three editors and eleven authors, it does on the whole bear the impress of a certain uniform historico-political school of thought—so far as is permitted by an editorial choice of structure which may be open to question on the method adopted. Above all, it investigates the elements and processes which have been factors of progress in Hungary in the past, and which are cherished today as part of the national heritage. More clearly than in earlier histories it focuses attention on the significance of popular movements, and takes for granted that it should point out the adverse influence of feudal class rule in retarding the economic, cultural and social development of the nation as a whole.

The contributors and editors of this volume, while not hesitating to criticise either side where necessary, manage to maintain an objective, scholarly tone throughout—a quality which, naturally, enhances the reliability and authority of the work.

Another merit of this work is that, unlike earlier comprehensive histories of Hungary, it is unprejudiced in its appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of the national character. It shows none of the predisposition of earlier historians to view national history through rose-coloured glasses and refuse to see anything but honour and glory on the one side while attributing all—or nearly all—national failures to extra-national elements, above all the Turkish conquerors and the Hapsburgs, Austria and—to a lesser

extent—other neighbouring countries. The authors of "*The History of Hungary*" do not fail to point out the errors of action and weaknesses of character which have so often been disastrous in the course of Hungarian history, often (and in some cases fatally) preventing the progressive development of the country—preventing Hungary from keeping pace with the development of Europe, to which she had committed herself under King István I, nearly a thousand years ago.

In its full exposure of facts, in its analysis of the arbitrary and dishonest excitation of jingoist feelings, "*The History of Hungary*" undoubtedly makes a considerable advance towards lack of illusion and valuable self-knowledge. It even in fact errs a little too much on the other side; it tends, for instance, to estimate the schemes for a Danube Valley settlement put forward by nineteenth century non-Magyar democrats (the Rumanian Nicolae Balcescu or the Slovak Ludevít Stur) higher than similar concepts put forward by Hungarians, an emphasis which is not warranted by the facts. We are talking, of course, of views held by the most progressive Hungarians and non-Hungarians of the time, views which were by no means shared by the broad masses, or even by a majority of the intelligentsia of either Hungary or, for instance, Rumania.

Balcescu's 1850 project of a Danubian Confederation was essentially a Rumanian version of Kossuth's Hungarian project, but both are far outdistanced by the plan which was put forward by László Teleki. Kossuth, even in his 1859 programme, had no more in mind for the non-Hungarian nationalities than a few measures of self-government on the parochial level, cultural emancipation and the right to organize; only in his 1862 Confederation project did he accept the right to some measure of regional autonomy. As early as 1850, however, László Teleki had already advocated a plebiscite on the basis of universal suffrage, recognised the full right to self-determination, and based

his whole scheme on a Confederation built on the sovereignty of the Danubian nations. He failed to win any support for it. In the 1850 scheme put forward by the Rumanian Balcescu, all the areas with any proportion of Rumanian population—i.e., not only Transylvania but the whole of the Bánát, the Partium, and the eastern frontier zone of the Great Plain—were to form part of Greater Rumania under Rumanian sovereignty. His plan included no rights for non-Rumanian nationalities, nor did he contemplate holding a plebiscite. The Greater Rumania which had thus come into being might then enter into a closer alliance, but one which would not impair national sovereignty, with what remained of Hungary. This draft plan never mentions the rights of the Slavs, Germans and Hungarians inhabiting the region concerned; contemporary historians, therefore, in contrasting Balcescu with the Hungarian ultranationalists, have no justification in estimating him more highly.*

This of course is only an instance, dealing, after all, with an exceptionally sensitive point. There are other examples veering to the opposite extreme in the same field. The writer, in his treatment of the 1848—49 period, recognises only the anti-Hungarian atrocities committed by the non-Hungarian nationality groups. He finds no space to mention the atrocities committed by the Hungarians, let alone any reference to the victims of summary proceedings, and there were quite a few of them.

The problem of the editorial choice of structure to which we have already referred raises the question of which is the soundest policy: to publish the independent papers of eleven contributors together in one volume, or for a single writer (or two, at the most) to incorporate these independent

papers into one uniform, coherent work. The editors of "The History of Hungary" have opted for the former course; for my part, I would choose the latter, even though I am quite aware that a comprehensive work on this scale demands the joint efforts of a number of specialists in various historical periods. I believe, however, that the second method lends itself more readily to the coordination of various points of view, and the establishment of a uniform style and a proper balance of the whole.

Another question concerns the *terminus ad quem*? Up to what point in time should a historian's pen go? As I see it, "The History of Hungary" in the final analysis is a fine piece of work, which breaks new ground and, despite a few minor defects, is admirable in its treatment of the subject up to 1918, that is, to the end of the First World War. The sections on the 1918—19 revolution are substantially weaker; weaker still are the chapters on the counterrevolutionary regime of 1920—1945; and the account of the 1945—1961 period is bad to the point of being absolutely useless. One need not be particularly perceptive to realise that we do not yet have the proper historical perspective to judge the immediate past; we are still living in its direct continuation. After all, even the inter-war period is too recent for us to give any authoritative judgments on its events and facts, even when, as is indeed the case, there is agreement on condemning those twenty-five years of the counterrevolutionary regime and considering them one of the darkest periods of our national history.

The chapters on the Hungarian Middle Ages and on modern times are very instructive, economic and social developments well handled, and the evolution of the type of feudalism which was peculiar to Hungary is admirably treated. The writer makes it clear that it was a feudalism that only began to develop in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries—when it was already beginning to crumble in, for instance, the North Italian

* Balcescu prepared his project after talks in London with Hungarian emigrés of the War of Independence. It was sent to Lajos Kossuth, then still in internment. The original copy is preserved at the National Record Office, Budapest (Kossuth Records, Chronological Collection, No. 1568).

cities—and came to full development in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. But the Turkish conquest, when one-third of the country was occupied, another third (Transylvania) was an independent principality struggling between the Turks and the Hapsburgs, and the remainder of Hungary under foreign (Hapsburg) rule, fixed its form in the sixteenth century, a form which survived until 1848. The peculiarity of Hungarian feudalism, he points out, lay in the fact that the great nobles in turn fought for national independence against the Austrian Emperor and in turn joined with him in order to maintain their grip on the common people, while the Emperor never allied himself with the people against the nobles in order to strengthen his own power (as occurred in Western countries), rightly fearing to open the way for demands for national independence and realise passions beyond his control.

Equally well treated is the destructive effect of 150 years of Turkish occupation and the movement for national revival from the eighteenth century to the 1850s, along with its social and cultural aspects, and, again by György Szabad, the era of absolutism which followed the Hungarian defeat in the War of Independence in 1848–49, and the two decades following the Settlement of 1867. He is very sound on the factors which forced Austria into a compromise settlement with the Hungarians and on others which helped to make the Settlement an instrument for reactionary trends.

Péter Hanák has written an exceptionally perceptive and level-headed analysis of the 1890–1918 period—those three decades of the crisis of the Dual Monarchy—which includes a comparison between Hungarian and general European economic and social development, and a study of the part played by the semi-feudal system of land tenure and the growing working-class movement. Despite minor flaws—mainly of style—the sections written by both Szabad and Hanák are excellent.

The studies which follow, dealing with 1918, and especially of the periods following 1919, represent a sharp fall in critical standards. A full treatment of the history of the inter-war years is still lacking in most countries, and it is natural that in Hungary the problem is still almost insuperable. There are complicated questions like the territorial and minority problems raised by the Trianon Treaty, the decline of the workers' movement, the peculiar, illegal position of the communist movement, the continued survival of the great estates, and the vigorous development of industry; and the fact that the attitude towards these questions differs vastly today from then, that contradictory political considerations and above all strong emotional elements—and this applies even more strongly to events after 1948—make the task of clear and unbiased assessment almost impossible at present. The existence of such strong feelings over this period and the lack as yet of any historical perspective should have been enough to induce the editors to content themselves with a chronological table of events for the period, the general chronological table at the end of the volume being excellently done by Péter Gunszt. This section of the book, as it stands, can only detract from the authority of the work.

3.

None the less there is good reason to rejoice in the publication of the first comprehensive history of Hungary which represents a truly painstaking, consistent and successful effort to steer clear of the hyper-nationalist tradition that has dominated the writing of history. It is no exaggeration to commend this quality, when considering the work as a whole, as its most outstanding asset.

Yet taking one thing with another it is fair to commend "The History of Hungary" as an encouraging piece of work, a valuable achievement. The history of a nation is the nation itself; and recording that history is, in some sense, like painting a self-portrait.

ANNA FÖLDES

LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR BETTER

László Németh has produced a vaster *oeuvre* than have most of his contemporaries. A bibliography of his works has not yet been compiled, nor do we to date possess a monograph on his life. The only short story he has ever written opened his literary career by winning a prize; and it has been followed by a long succession of novels. His drama output—plays of manners and historical dramas—would fill volumes and keep our stages busy through several theatrical seasons. As critic and essayist he has been no less prolific than as a novelist. Mr. Németh started out in life without any intention of becoming a writer. From the time when he became a young medical practitioner and through his later years as a schoolmaster doing literary translations on the side, writing was as much a hobby with him, a means of sublimating his will to action into communicative impulse, as work done to earn a living. Thoughts and ideas he held to be essential for the community engendered these works, not the works the thoughts. The unquestionable authenticity of the world of fiction he has created—for the characters, originally chiselled by their gifted maker as vehicles for his ideas, have indeed come to live a life of their own—has, for the most part, served to deliver Németh from the ever-present danger of illustrative description.

This does not, however, alter the fact that this intellectually inspired creative method and the author's absorption in Hungarian—specifically national—problems constitute one of the barriers which (beyond that of language) make it difficult for Németh's novels to be quoted at their real aesthetic value on the world literary market.

It is to be hoped nevertheless that, like Németh's best novel to date—*Revulsion*,* of

* László Németh: *Revulsion*. Translated by Kathleen Szász. Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1965.

which German, Czech, French, Serbian and Spanish editions have appeared, in addition to the English one—"Compassion"*** will prove another of the barrier-breaking literary works.

It has taken forty years, embracing Németh's whole literary career, to bring this novel into being. In the author's own words, taken from his comment accompanying the novel: "From the dazed search on seeing the light of day to the farewell spoken on departing from it." Though we, his contemporaries, cannot but deny the latter half of that statement, the sentence is not to be understood in a purely figurative sense. The first version of "Compassion"—a story entitled "Telemachos"—dates from 1925. The growth of that short story into a full-blown novel thus extended over well-nigh forty years. The author cannot have been halfway through his work when the tempest of war swept away his first manuscript of it. When in 1957, with the novels *Revulsion* and "Eszter Égető" already behind him, he resumed work on "Compassion," the birth of the book was again retarded, this time by peace, not war—a lengthy journey abroad. At last, in 1962–63, the author, then sixty-two, finished the novel, his most voluminous work thus far.

The plot of the two-volume novel reaches back to 1921, during the period of turmoil and hardship which followed a lost war and a routed revolution. A contemporary theme at the time of its inception, it has since, in the perspective of four decades, become "historical," although, as a *résumé* of the story that follows may make clear, neither as a contemporary nor as a historical picture can it be regarded as being essentially the description of a period. Apparently the period only served as background for the novel

*** László Németh: *Irgalom* ("Compassion"), Szépirodalmi Publishers, Budapest, 1965.

rather than as the decisive, dominant element. The entire intellectual, structural and psychological burden of the novel rests on the shoulders of a woman, who is invested with almost timeless human greatness, and in whose life story every encounter and every event is, to all appearances, inevitable, while only the dates that unavoidably creep into her biography are accidental.

In most of his literary works, the weight of Németh's ideas is borne by such caryatids hewn of a single block of marble. From their birth onwards, these women are the darlings of the gods, excelling everyone around them in beauty and virtue; they are imbued with deeper understanding and higher morality, they are able and qualified to pass judgment. In each case, however, they are made to bear a burden that is portioned out by Fate with an unmerciful hand. Zsófi Kurátor, the heroine of "Mourning" (*Gyász*), is inflicted with a widow's harsh and hopeless solitude. Nelli Kárász of *Revulsion* is forced into the bondage of a hateful marriage. Eszter Égető, the noble lady who gives the novel its title, for all her desire to spread happiness, ends up in solitude, like a tree whose fruit has been gathered. The heroines of Németh's plays—"Mathiász's Boarding House" or "The Nagys"—have a similar fate. Shipwrecked in their own lives, all of them seek to convert their own unhappiness into the vicarious pleasure of promoting the happiness of others, from which they derive a kind of *Ersatz*-happiness akin to peace of mind. The heroine of "Compassion" is the youngest as well as the latest addition to this line of caryatids and, like her sisters, upholds her heavy burden with a straight back and a radiant face—a worthy guardian spirit of others' happiness.

Ágnes Kertész, a medical student, is the daughter of a schoolmaster with a peasant background, who at the time the story opens is a Hungarian prisoner of war in Russia. Her mother tries to escape from her workaday, indigent wartime existence by finding comfort in the unworthy love of a man very

much her junior. Ágnes, on the threshold of womanhood, thus faces life almost totally orphaned. In her forlornness, she pieces together her father's figure from girlhood memories, and the lyric power of distance enhances this image to larger-than-life size, since "years of absence may build as well as destroy relationships." For her mother, Ágnes has always felt pity rather than love. Her loneliness becomes more palpable still in the wake of an ill-matched and emotionally unsatisfactory courtship, broken off at an early stage. With her increased understanding of life as a young woman and as a student of medicine, she is beginning to find her virginity a burden to her. The exposition of the novel radiates tense expectation: after the cease-fire, the nation is longing for general pacification and the repatriation of distant fathers, sons and husbands. Ágnes is eagerly awaiting the return of her father, the solution of the hapless situation in her home, the fulfilment of her own womanhood. And the readers are all keyed up for a violent stroke of lightning from the charged atmosphere. The lightning does occur—in the shape of news which is of decisive importance in the lives of all the characters. It tells all those concerned that János Kertész, schoolmaster, is on his way home. Through a clever literary device, the news is brought to Ágnes at the university by none other than her mother, who now has to face the dilemma of breaking with her lover or being discovered.

At the first moment, the sensational news brings Ágnes unalloyed happiness; only gradually does awareness of danger mingle with her bliss. She is determined to recompense her father, when he returns from his Odyssey, with love and tenderness for all the suffering he has endured and that still lies in store for him. On János Kertész's arrival back home, it turns out that Ágnes's determination could not have been more opportune: a broken man of fifty, the veteran soldier cannot be identified with the idolized hero and scientist of her mental image or even with his own self of seven years ago.

Scurvy, which sapped his body, crippling his feet, has not spared the blood-vessels of his brain. Even if he were in full possession of his physical and mental faculties and his virility, it would be doubtful whether he could restore the disrupted order and harmony of his home. But broken as he is in mind and body, he is devoured by helpless anxiety, and the solution of the conflict passes inevitably into Ágnes's hands. She has to take her mother's place and stand by her father's side, leading him with protective tenderness back into life, to his school, and, lastly, making a new, more peaceful, if humble, home for her father, turned out of his old one. It is through her father's anguish that Ágnes becomes emotionally involved in her parents' broken-down marriage. She is linked to him by bonds of love and solidarity. A long time passes before an entry from an old diary she reads at her mother's insistence makes her understand that her parents' marriage had from the outset been unharmonious and emotionally barren, and that as their relationship worsened neither party had remained innocent. She now realizes with something of a shock that her mother's belated unfaithfulness is the first and last surge of passion in a woman's loveless life. Here, for the first time, the unambiguity of Ágnes's judgment becomes qualified by understanding, by divided sympathy.

Ágnes's story meanders along its course encumbered by a ruined family life, but devoid of spectacular storms, dramatic crises, adventures and struggles. She divides her time between the university, her studies and the cares of earning a living—a life filled with work and almost no play. If we consider "Compassion" a *roman d'évolution*—and we have every reason to do so—then the path followed by its heroine is that of complete devotion to her duties. In the girl as we come to know her in the exposition, her own high standards of morality still glow coldly, and she undertakes to pass judgments as a champion of justice. Studying is for her a kind of shell into which she with-

draws to defend herself against the outside world. Later on, under the pressure of her burdens, this armour, far from hardening, becomes softer. Not only does Ágnes develop an understanding and sympathy for living humanity around her, but she becomes ready to give up her inner integrity for the sake of dedicating herself to others. For Ágnes, the drudgery of private tutorship is not only a source of livelihood, but a form of intellectual charity. Her hopelessly dreary work as a doctor in a home for incurables, beyond providing her with good professional training, fills her with a kind of Messianic pleasure, giving her an opportunity to do battle with death. The heroine of "Compassion" readily shoulders the burdens not only of her parents but almost anyone else. She shares the sorrow of a colleague who is disappointed in love and the brood-hen anxieties of a grandmother raising a retarded pupil of hers. Sex is a remote pleasure she never experiences. After her first, unfulfilled affair she drifts into another one, built on resignation from the start. She rewards a half-lame colleague for his persistent love and helpfulness, devotion, faith and imposing human greatness by, at first, permitting him to cherish hopes, then by not crushing his burgeoning love-dreams. Confronted with this undeveloped relationship, Ágnes, usually so active when it comes to helping others, sins—against herself—with a passivity arising from tact. "Those you admire do not appeal to you," she broods long before reaching a decision; "those who do you have to save your soul from." Eventually, almost as a kind of penance inflicted on herself, she turns down the man who might, perhaps, be able to arouse her senses. It is an appalling scene: the generous, sacrificial, almost forbidding human greatness of Ágnes, in which—in her rejection of love and of the possibility of sexual happiness—one also senses her predestined acceptance of a woman's life burdened with unhappiness and sacrifice.

"Compassion" winds its way to a forced

happy ending. The Kertészes' marriage is patched up—in a fashion; and Ágnes, her peace of mind regained through the stabilization of her parents' lives, is ready to face the new act of feminine compassion that lies in store for her—marriage. She offers affection for love, believing as she does that giving is the essence of life, while receiving—the joy received in return—is merely accidental. Ágnes truly overfulfils the biblical norm, for she loves her neighbour better than herself.

It is, however, one thing for the heroine of a novel, suffering under the burden of her shortcomings, to undertake such a sacrifice, and quite another for the author to accept it on the part of his heroine. László Németh not only accepts it but regards it as a natural, even exemplary deed springing from Ágnes's character.

And at this point it becomes difficult for the reader to follow the author's logic. Not that Ágnes's decision strikes one as inconsistent. On the contrary, László Németh guides his heroine towards this self-immolation in a masterly manner, almost with the inexorableness of Fate. Ágnes's personality and mentality no less than the logic of circumstances argue eloquently that it could not have happened otherwise. Yet—and here I must take issue with the author—her decision is not unequivocally uplifting: indeed, it tends to leave us confused and distressed. One may well—as an act of heroism—jump into a turbulent river in order to rescue a drowning man, but it is not possible thereby to make him happy throughout a lifetime. If, as the story unfolds, the affection awakened in László Németh's heroine were to overcome her initial physical aversion and if Feri Halmi's inner values were in time capable of arousing genuine love in Ágnes, then her acceptance of life in common would cease to be a sacrifice, an act of heroism, and would become a kind of human, womanly fulfilment. On the other hand, when a young girl of Ágnes's qualities gives herself, without emotion (and even doing violence to her feelings), as a sister of Mercy, to the man who loves

or needs her, then such a gesture will, sooner or later, be followed by regret, and a monotonous life full of anguish will ultimately land in fresh tragedy. This must be perfectly clear to Mr. Németh, who in his *Revulsion* has given such an unforgettable, drama-charged drawing of the tragedy an unwanted marriage leads to. After all, Nelli Kárász too is driven by compassion of a sort—her sense of filial duty to help her family get out of its straitened circumstances—into a hell from which the exit was descent into a deeper and more horrible inferno. The compassion of Ágnes Kertész is, it is true, charged with symbolical content—her last gesture is an apotheosis of charity towards humanity. But this symbolism is weakened by the fact that the vehicle of the metaphor is a flesh-and-blood human being whose life—and the judgment passed on it—must by no means be permitted to contradict its real meaning, expressed in the book. In her self-abnegation “till death do us part,” Ágnes's deed, paradoxically, also implies an accusation. The girl who today rescues Feri Halmi may, twenty years hence, destroy him through her physical indifference and the resulting almost inevitable hatred. Even if we accept the logic of Ágnes Kertész's actions in the novel—and there is no reason why we shouldn't—the author's complete agreement with his heroine and his exaltation *ad absurdum* of compassion seem open to question.

This *résumé* of the 800-page novel may have given some idea of the slowly rolling waves of the actionless plot. Phases of character-analysis do duty for the absent turning-points. In page after page we learn more about Ágnes. “Compassion” is not the first one-character novel László Németh has written. “Mourning,” *Revulsion* and “Eszter Égető” also have a single heroine. The structure of the Némethian novel is sometimes compared to concentric circles. From the point of view of composition, on the other hand, his novels look like short stories expanded to monumental size. The author constantly turns his spotlight on one and the same

character, while the environment is of importance only insofar as it has a bearing on the heroine's character and destiny. In "Compassion" this technique, while essentially maintained, is further perfected. Every accessory figure of the monument to Ágnes Kertész is carved in the round, a character living its own life. The drama of the mother, of Ágnes's girl-friend or of the hospital nurse in the home for incurables is of the same intensity as that of Ágnes. The difference lies in the breadth of the portrayal of the individual lives. The problems of the subordinate figures are given an importance corresponding to their focal distance from the principal heroine; Ágnes's character and destiny are thus rendered more complete by the drama of each accessory figure—through analogy or contrast, direct or indirect influence. Contrapuntal construction is characteristic of this novel. The crisis in the marriage of the doorkeeper and his wife is a comedy-tinted variant of that of the Kertész family, just as the mother-and-son episode taking place among the patients of the home for incurables underscores Ágnes's fondness for her father.

There is no reason for criticizing an author on the mere grounds of concentrating on a single character. A number of masterpieces applying this method have achieved world fame. It would hardly occur to anyone to criticize Dostoevsky for failing to give us a more detailed character-drawing of the old woman, Raskolnikov's victim. In the same way, the portraits of the characters peopling Ágnes Kertész's world are satisfactory. Many a time, something they say or do makes up for exhaustive analysis. Why then does the reader at times have a feeling that the heroine is fighting her battle in a sort of vacuum? I read and re-read passages underscored and scenes marked with exclamation marks in an effort to refute this first impression. It is enough to remember the wedding party, charged with the odour of fat, at Tükrös; the chance remarks made by the local seamstress; the depressing atmosphere in the home for

incurables; the seedy name-day parties at János Kertész's school—for the critic to allay the reader's misgivings. Nevertheless, the arguments thus adduced have a weakness in common; though they establish Ágnes Kertész's story in space, they fail to do so in time. True, László Németh is far too painstaking a writer not to weave time-hints into his story. After all, the opening circumstance of the POWs' captivity is a concrete historical fact. The wartime poverty of the early 'twenties, the financial circumstances of the Kertészes, and the prospects of the schoolmaster's profession are all duly treated. The plot contains an incident characteristic of the Hungary of the 'twenties, a university students' brawl, and Feri Halmi's destinies are determined by his leftist sympathies. Yet the characters' lives, the atmosphere of the novel, are insufficiently affected by history. What one would like to see is not so much the isolated vignette of the polemics between János Kertész and Feri Halmi, but a historical portrayal forming an organic part of the whole—a representation of how the disturbed atmosphere, the serious social tensions, of the time influence the lives of the individual characters. In a typical incident the author does, indeed, reveal the motive which makes the literature-loving, would-be art student Ágnes Kertész decide to switch to medicine under the impact of the historical upheaval and ensuing disenchantment. But this motive is accorded too little space, quite out of proportion to Ágnes's lengthy life-story, a mere fraction, for instance, of the space devoted to her pedagogic experience as a private tutor. Except in the case of Feri Halmi, the ideological aspects of the characters are only lightly touched upon.

László Németh is one of the greatest human portraitists in present-day Hungarian—and possibly European—fiction. His method resembles Michelangelo's principles of sculpture: his masterly hand chips from reality's block of marble all that is superfluous. This time, however, his chisel seems to have worked harshly on his material. It is not univer-

sality, the posing of psychological problems of universal validity, that is open to criticism here. In *Revulsion*, for instance, in the defencelessness of an intensely sensitive, though seemingly frigid woman, Nelli Kárász, in the conflict of social pressure and biological protest, the author has produced a superb portrayal—authentic in both time and space—of psychological problems. It is therefore in the very spirit of the author's intention, not against it, that one deplores the sketchiness of the historical atmosphere, the haphazard historical motivation of "Compassion," compared with the forcefulness of its psychological authenticity. This criticism is the more justified since the novel does, in fact, contain some episodes that are perfect examples of historical treatment, such as the reception given the returning POWs at the railway station.

There is no need, in Hungary at least, to praise László Németh's penmanship. In

terseness of expression and in the forceful imagery of his idiom, he stands at the apex in Hungarian prose. The piling up of adjectives and the insertion of purely decorative linguistic flourishes have always been foreign to László Németh. But the disciplined power and graphic quality of his writing and the terseness of his style are now, perhaps, more marked than ever before.

"Compassion" is a thought-provoking, challenging novel. Its psychological bravura proclaims the possibility of a revival of realism. It may arouse interest even beyond Hungary's frontiers, wherever people respond to charity and compassion, or where, in the individual's battle against alienation, in his bitter struggle with loneliness, there is need for a guardian spirit such as Ágnes Kertész, who is ready to "draw half-lame mankind to her breast, to instil into it faith in its ability to run, while watching its step lest it stumble in its lameness."

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THEATRE AND FILM

IVÁN SÁNDOR

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

Can the theatre, and the art of acting, renew themselves to match the changes in modern life?

Ever since Ibsen exploded the conventions of the romantic drama and the old declamatory manner of acting gradually disappeared, men of the theatre have been seeking a style which would give authentic expression to modern changes in life and thought, and to the daily background and habits of their audiences.

For the last few years, in England, France and other countries of Europe, wherever in fact I have been, all the most outstanding productions which have won the attention and admiration of audiences have done so by projecting a new measuring gauge for the speed and transformations of modern life. The Shakespeare productions of Peter Brook and Zeffirelli provide one example; Jean Vilar's production of *The Oppenheimer Case*, which I mention especially because not so well known, is another. Vilar's achievement surpassed all the other productions of *The Oppenheimer Case* I saw in Europe because the intimacy and simplicity of his interpretation impressed on the hearers the vital questions of the age, which are the very stuff of the play, with a magnetic force unequalled elsewhere.

I envy those countries and theatres in which the pattern of acting and the pattern of daily living and their fusion in the theatre are dictated not only by the directors, man-

agers and actors, but also by the playwrights themselves. The English and West-German drama of the last ten years is a good example. In Hungary we only hear this new voice as yet in the work of the interpretative, not the creative, artists, and during the last few months we have seen several impressive experiments on their part.

Two Hungarian Comedies

In the first half of the 1965-66 season there have been few successes, but one or two reasonably good plays, or rather productions, have been put on. No truly important new Hungarian plays have appeared. Miklós Gyárfás's comedy *Egérút* ("A Loophole for Escape") and István Csurka's *Az idő vasfoga* ("The Ravages of Time") nonetheless provided good entertainment. Both are light, easy-going, natural, in the best traditions of comedy, and the turns and developments in plot and situation are on occasion unusually amusing.

István Csurka, a highly gifted writer of prose, proves himself equally at home in the theatre. In the *Vígjátékbáz* production of "The Ravages of Time" (*Az idő vasfoga*) at the small Ódry Theatre, delightfully produced by Zoltán Várkonyi, characters from the Budapest underworld hold the stage. A confidence man who has specialised in robbing drunks moves to the country, there to set up

a Disintoxication Institute. He now has the opportunity to work on a large scale. While the patients transported to the Institute in a state of intoxication are awaiting their first "medical" treatment, the "doctor" proceeds to strip them of money and valuables. This is a highly profitable piece of business—quick and without risks and danger. But meanwhile, willy-nilly, he must treat the habitual drunkards of the small town as well. He moves from success to success, he attracts attention, he is given more and more authority, until at last he finds himself in a big national institute—as its medical superintendent.

Csurka deftly exposes the unbridled ambitions of his principal character as he adopts the pose of social usefulness as a cover for selfish careerism. But the playwright also satirizes, in equal measure, the "others," the people around him who, accepting the pretext of a valuable social activity, shut their eyes to the most uninhibited shamelessness.

The second success was the production of Miklós Gyárfás's "Loophole" (*Egérút*) at the Attila József Theatre, directed by György Pethes. There are so many topsy-turvy situations in life, let's turn the world right side up again, seems to be Gyárfás's standpoint. It is an attitude that delights us with its light-hearted gaiety, its elegant, easy attack on things and persons antipathetic. He puts no gloss on reality; he arouses natural amusement without needing to recur to saccharine words, tawdry jokes and artificial glamour. He exposes the void behind dogmatic authority in family life using the rapier-edge of satire on all that is false and worthy of ridicule.

A Novel Form of Brecht

Some of the plays of the season were of particular interest in terms of production and interpretation. The Madách Theatre presented the *Threepenny Opera* of Brecht. In the last eight years at least three productions of this play have been seen in Budapest, in-

cluding that of the Berliner Ensemble. And yet we all awaited the newest production with lively interest because the company of the Madách Theatre is today the best in the country and the director, Ottó Ádám, is original and inventive in his approach. Rumour had it that Ádám was discarding the usual modern methods of producing Brecht, and we were all curious to see how Brecht could be presented outside the Brecht tradition, and whether in fact the production would be successful in preserving the essential effect.

What do we see? An open stage. Stage props, beams, scaffolding. The whole back-stage, its discoloured and peeling back wall, the fire hose. No more than a form of announcement—Brecht is being played, theatre in the theatre.

But they are something more, they are the real props of the play—the director will take them and juggle with them to build it up. An old rocking-horse, for instance, can be seen upstage right. It will be used at the happy ending, when the tragedy turns to comedy, and Tiger Brown enters on it prancing to eliver the queen's pardon. And behind it, also among the props, is a crucifix.

A rocking-horse and a crucifix—suggestive emblems to precede a performance of Brecht.

And the crucifix lies slightly tip-tilted against a beam. It has a hint of sacrilege. And with that we have arrived at the Brechtian idea.

But Ottó Ádám's production, maintaining the essence of Brecht, rejects the usual form of interpretation. Its originality, in regard to Brecht, lies in what Ádám has chosen as substitutes for the accepted nonconformities of the Brechtian style, as, for instance, the act of Matthew stopping the orchestra which is playing sacred music, and ordering it to switch to a modern rhythm, as he starts to sing the opening song.

In the two first scenes the underlying concept does not quite come off. The atmos-

phere is somewhat too fine, too delicate, too melancholy. But only until Polly begins to sing. From then on the whole production falls into a harmonious whole, with very specific features of its own.

One of them is a rigid simplicity of effect. No one stands on his head, Lucy's pregnancy is not underlined with a stuffing of cushion, the procession of beggars needs no terrifying masks.

Another is the natural style of acting, nothing is overemphasized. The Brechtian figures trample each other underfoot with the utmost ease, as in life. Human relations easily disintegrate under the spur of a destructive spirit, there is no need for symbolic emphasis.

The songs melt naturally into the turbulence. They are pungent, but not overstressed or repeated. They are not "recited." They are flashes of lightning lighting up the human jungle. One instant—then they pass, and life resumes its natural, turbulent way—until the next flash illuminates it again.

What Ádám has done is to pile one traditional method of stage production upon another to achieve the essential Brechtian effect. He succeeds not simply by methods of playing, but by bringing a philosophical standpoint to bear, not simply by adapting the width of a stage as an arena, but by presenting the arena of life in terms of the muddle of everyday life in which people live out the comedy and tragedy of their existence.

Libraries of books have been written on Brecht. I believe that his most important achievement was to suggest the relativity of things and human relations. It is an approach which brings something new and dynamic, as compared with the rigidity of absolute concepts.

Miklós Gábor, as Mack the Knife, fully comprehends what Brecht intends; his Mack is at once a blood-thirsty scoundrel and a victim. He exemplifies Brecht's famous saying that robbing a bank is nothing to establishing one, murdering a man nothing

to employing one. Gábor's Mack the Knife is the gang-leader, the philosopher, the seducer of women all in one. A wise scoundrel who could at times make even Brecht sound emotional. On occasion, however, I felt that Gábor was too suave, too Shavian in his approach. I should also like to commend Irén Psota's Polly. Her sense of style is such that in the point and counterpoint of Polly's tempestuous changes the firm and essential shape of the character firmly emerges.

The productions of *Úri Muri* ("Gentlemen on the Spree") in the National Theatre of Budapest and *King Lear* in the National Theatre of Pécs, may also be of some interest.

Úri Muri was written by Zsigmond Móricz in the inter-war years. It is a play by probably the greatest Hungarian realistic prose-writer of the twentieth century. The hero is Zoltán Szakhmáry, a landowner and member of the gentry class, inspired by a desire for something different than the tradition of his ancestors, who squandered away their fortune and their lands. He wants to introduce modern methods of farming and to bring new life to Hungarian village. He dreams of a creative work, of a mission to lead his whole generation out of the idleness and slow decay of their lives. His tragedy is that his vision goes further than those around him. What, therefore, happens in this play is not merely the failure of a man desirous of improving his surroundings and turning against his own particular world of the Hungarian gentry. It is more than that—it is a human tragedy on a universal scale, for in the end what finally undoes Zoltán Szakhmáry is that it is his own friends and the members of his own class who prevent him. In the end of the play he blows out his brains.

In the production of the National Theatre, Ferenc Kállai plays Zoltán Szakhmáry, and his interpretation of the character lifts the play from the past to the present. *Úri Muri* can be played with "Hungarian verve," which turns it primarily into an emotional battle. In this production, however, we see—

very rightly—a battle where the values are different. Szakhmáry is presented as a man of enlightened intellect, not a sensual landowner, absorbed in women, but a man vulnerable even in his manliness, left to the tender mercies of others, destroyed because he wanted something greater than himself. Kállai raised the character to a genuinely tragic level. The producer, István Egri, set him against a background of disintegrating lives, alienated clearly even to themselves, making it inevitable that in such surroundings a man with a real creative passion could only end in solitude and tragedy.

The production of *King Lear* by the National Theatre of Pécs was interesting. I cannot say it gave us much that was new, especially after seeing Peter Brook's production and the version of the Budapest National Theatre two years ago. Nevertheless the quick rhythms and the spare rationalism of the settings in this production of Vilmos Dobai was worthy of note. The whole tempo of the production suggested Greek tragedy, the fatal inevitability attending human destinies, and this despite the fact that he was using a company in which there was scarcely one true Shakespearean actor.

It would seem that the only way for a modern director to make his mark today is to find a new interpretation of an old play. And the lack of any such interpretation bears it out. It would have been almost impossible for anyone to detect a fresh, inventive spirit in the plays put on in many of the Budapest theatres. In too many of them a faded boredom ruled triumphant. The Ibsen production, *John Gabriel Borkman* at the Vígszínház was far from being a success; under the direction of István Horvai it only confirmed our conviction that this play has nothing to say to us today. His choice of old-fashioned naturalism in the style of acting and production only emphasized everything in the play that is today so removed from us. The style of acting adopted in the Vígszínház version of Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* was equally uninspiring. There was, however,

one play this season that made up for all the other mediocrities. This was Izak Babel's *Twilight* produced by the Thália Theatre of Budapest, directed by Károly Kazimir.

Babel's Twilight

What can one say of this Soviet playwright in so limited a space? He was born in 1894, the son of Jewish parents living in Odessa. A child scared with the knowledge of pogroms, a student, a soldier of the Red Army, a writer. In 1939 he was arrested on false charges. In 1941 he died in prison. A few dozen of his short stories, and two plays, have survived.

The chief character of *Twilight* is Mendel Krik, a Jewish teamster from Odessa, a wealthy and arrogant man, inspired by noble aspirations, but tyrannical, bringing up and dominating a family of fine sons, strong, handsome, and cruel in their turn to their cruel father. They loved one another and they fought one another. The "twilight" in the play is the twilight of Mendel Krik, and he is punished by those whom he had reared up and punished.

The suffering of the disintegrating family, known from Chekhov's plays, hangs over this as well as Gorky's "Life is not to struggle through but to live," says Benya Krik, the son who broke the paternal tyranny with another kind of tyranny. It lends a grotesque, Brechtian irony to the play. The Jewish milieu, the ritual customs and environment which frame his characters will not deceive anyone. *Twilight* is something more than a Jewish "regional" play, just as *And Quiet Flows the Don* is something more than a "regional" Cossack novel. Babel wrote best against the background he knew best. "The writing of each story of mine makes me a year older," he said in one of his short stories. This is the voice of the creative artist, who must first live and suffer the life and sufferings he describes.

The production at the Thália Theatre was honest and beautiful, bringing to life the atmosphere of those Jewish homes in long-past Odessa to vivid life. Tragedy and sorrow impregnate this unusual and very great drama, shot through with ironic compassion. Károly Kazimir seemed to catch the very spirit of Babel in this production. He was aided by a very capable company. Károly Kovács, playing Mendel Krik, revealed great powers of emotion in moving from force to pain, from pain to deeper suffering. Another outstanding piece of acting was the picture

produced by Rudolf Somogyvári of an Odessa version of "Mack the Knife."

The play ends with the old man Krik standing in impotence as the victorious and cruel smile of his triumphant eldest son sweeps round the stage. "Daylight is daylight, and evening is evening," says Ben Zarya, the wise rabbi, which means no more and no less than "justice is justice." Particularly impressive as a stroke of stagecraft was the figure of the youngest, most innocent of Krik's sons, Levka, spotlighted at that particular moment.

YVETTE BÍRÓ

FROM THE PERSONAL TO THE IMPERSONAL

When the history of the art of the cinema comes to be written, the 'sixties will probably figure as the period in which the personal film came into its own. The genuinely creative spirit, the unmistakable mark and individual style of this or that filmmaker have ceased to be exceptions, and interpretation, even when carried out on the highest level, has been replaced by creation. In Hungary the art of the cinema, within its more modest limits, has also followed the same path. New talents in filmmaking have emerged within the last few years, and have not only given us a handful of young directors, each with his own individual and unmistakable signature, each seeking new approaches—but also what we consider more important, the evocative and subtle manner of conveying the world of their impressions, which is characteristic both of the younger generation as a whole, and of their own strongly personal and intimate experiences in particular.

However attractive this use of the cinema as a personal instrument of expression may be, however highly we may value the frankness

of this subjective attitude, these changes towards an essentially individual approach can obviously only be accepted as a starting-point. Once a film is meant to achieve aesthetic significance, the filmmaker must succeed in translating the intimate account of his inner world, his private preoccupations, pains and pleasures to a universal level. It is true that the first of these personal diaries in film form made a great impression through the very warmth and directness of their approach. Even if these vigorous and lively films were not very profound and their intellectual content not very impressive, they arrested the attention on account of their new and refreshing flavour.

This phase was necessary; it was necessary to experiment until the point was reached where the personal element in a film was no longer its basic preoccupation, but a condition, a substructure for a picture of the world which took on a general validity. This development in fact occurred throughout the studios of Europa. Instead of composing films from jottings from personal notebooks or diaries—some of them fascinating in their

delightful confusion—filmmakers gradually turned to the creation of first-rate works with a far broader approach. An example of this development is Antonioni, whose work, while retaining all the strongly pronounced marks of his vigorous personality, expresses in sharp and dramatic form a whole philosophy of life.

The same process can be observed in the Hungarian cinema. One of the most important Hungarian films last year was "The Age of Daydreaming" by young István Szabó, a film which breathed an ingenuous crispness. Some of the later films, however, such as Zoltán Fábry's internationally recognized "Twenty Hours," or the two recent films of Miklós Jancsó—"This Was My Path" and "Outlaws"—clearly reveal the author's intention of expressing some intellectual or philosophical attitude.

"The Age of Daydreaming"

The Silver Sail of the 1965 Locarno Festival was awarded to "The Age of Daydreaming," a film by a young man of twenty-six, whose comparative youth must not be taken to mean reckless audacity on the one hand or hesitant uncertainty on the other. The picture is a suggestive and powerful account of the smaller and greater shocks awaiting a new generation as it takes its first steps into adult life, and of the discomposure and distress that follows, presented in the same terms of confusion and torment as the young men experience them in their own lives.

Before making his first feature film, Szabó had made more than one short which had won international praise, such as "You," shown and acclaimed in Cannes and Tours—and "Concerto" and "Variations on a Theme." These films showed a remarkable grasp of cinema values, and a dynamic personality underlying the imaginative gaiety of his approach. "You" was very much a short lyric or sonnet on the theme of love, a picture of the loved one painted with the trans-

parency and grace of a very young lover. The picture is nothing but a composition of transient, almost trivial sketches of a young girl; now she smiles, now she prepares to meet him, now she merges into the bustle of the street and is lost, now lies across her bed, making up, grimacing into the glass... These passing glimpses of a coltish, not very beautiful girl, of her abrupt movements and adolescent impatience, catch and express the emotions of the young of today.

"The Age of Daydreaming" takes the same sense of structure, the same individual style, a stage further. The film is concerned with a group of young graduate engineers. All their college life they have been together, studying, walking, together eagerly awaiting the unknown before them. But nothing is quite what they expected. Indifference and listlessness, an insuperable wall of mediocrity, seem to surround them. Worse, they are faced with the realization of their own inadequacy. They had believed that the world was waiting to be taken by them; that there was a lamentable and ridiculous complacency and self-sufficiency on the one side, faced by the energy and vigour of the young men on the other. And they are forced to realize that these beliefs were oversimplifications, illusions, that spectacular triumphs are not for them, only the inevitable adjustment to the round of daily life, and that their savage desire to assert themselves will not take them far. Angry opposition is not enough.

What the film deals with is the perfectly commonplace though somewhat sad process of shedding illusions. The title, though, suggests that there is something more than that, and the film itself carries further implications. "Daydreaming" has a double meaning. On the one hand, the word indicates all the beauty and fervour of young dreams, the determination to conquer the world, and to overthrow the dead hand of conformity, on the other, that they are rash and unconsidered. The process of growing up necessarily involves adaptation to reality.

The final sequence expresses it tersely and symbolically. The young engineer, deeply distressed by all the disappointments and disillusionments he has undergone, breaks out in anger. His bitter dissatisfaction, the frustrated urge to action, the ferment of all these experiences, mount to an anticlimax—he falls asleep. Instantly a sweet feminine voice is heard, gently and urbanely repeating “Good morning, it is time to wake up,” “Good morning, it is time to wake up”—repeated down a line of pretty, white-coated girls—the early morning call service. “It is time to wake up.”

There was considerable discussion when the picture was released in Hungary. Some of the reviewers criticized Szabó for too harsh, too cruel a view of the world. This reproach, we feel, is unjust. It might be more to the point to stress that the film bears all the marks of a young impatience, a young bias. In other words, despite the director's attempt to produce a fully integrated and rounded view of the whole, he failed to give due weight to the process, to the intricate balance of forces. Szabó's predilection for his young characters allows them too much sympathy, too ready an understanding and leniency for their weaknesses. The indulgent, even nostalgic attitude suggests that youth in itself is a full excuse for all inadequacies. While the merit of this film lies in the open, even passionate exposure of an attitude of the young generation, one cannot help regretting that Szabó failed to rise above the narrowness of this adolescent emotion. Had the film conveyed not only their impatient search for a point of departure and the nervous restlessness of new arrivals, but the whole complexity of the process of becoming part of the adult world, it would certainly have added to its value.

The construction and style of “The Age of Daydreaming” is extremely witty. The pace of the picture, the use of acceleration and retardation in some of the sequences, suggesting the atmosphere and the staccato rhythms of contemporary youth, is so effective that

one is tempted to believe that Szabó himself was not quite aware of its dynamic power of expression—or he would not have gilded the lily with over-explicit dialogue which produced the exactly contrary effect—slowing the action down. Another objection is that in his effort to “place” his characters as fully as possible he has fallen a victim to the other “infantile disorder” of overcrowding the film.

“The Outlaws”

The two recent films produced by Miklós Jancsó seem to come from another world in terms of mentality and style. Perhaps the only feature in common with Szabó is the refusal to use conventional methods of narration; his manner of attacking the problem is very different. While Szabó chose the lyrical and yet uneven diary-form—the “first person singular”—Jancsó's course has led him to the less direct, more sophisticated use of symbols.

It is only natural that Jancsó's first attempt to explore the possibilities of this new style was not entirely successful. Only now, after his second attempt in this style—“Outlaws”—can we fairly begin to assess it. Jancsó's theories of filmmaking seem to be the same as many and more experienced directors: to resurrect the possibilities of an interwoven complexity of film language, even if necessary to return to the use of expressionist or symbolic devices.

Jancsó's first feature film, I repeat, could hardly hope to escape all the snares which lie in wait for first experiments. Set against the background of the historical events of 1945, the film admirably attempts to bring together and display quite deliberately haphazard and prosaic bits and pieces which, composed into the pattern of a film, reach out to give the viewer the authentic experience, the “homecoming” of an entire generation. The title “This Was My Path” is a little naive, just as unpretentious as is the testimony given by the film.

Jancsó takes his principal characters—two

lads, Russian and Hungarian, brought together in the flow and flux of the 1945 days—out of the mainstream of history and places them, as it were, in no man's land, where they live side by side, their mistrust blended with curiosity and expectation. They get food, they chase naked girls found bathing, they romp and wrestle. In the beginning they are kept apart by the seemingly unsurmountable barrier of language; gradually it crumbles, and the friendship grows until at the crucial moment, when the Russian lad falls ill, the Hungarian risks his life by passing as a Russian in a vain attempt to save him. Yet the director has carefully refrained from emphasis or appeal to dramatic tension. His rejection of anything that might suggest solemnity or authority is so consistent that occasionally it robs the film of its moving impact.

The system of symbols, moreover, can only be meaningful if one knows the key, and that Jancsó fails to provide. We feel, however, that each little detail had a hidden meaning; behind the little helping gesture, the mistrust and hesitation, lie the broader truths of history; and behind the widespread view conjured up at the end we sense the young Hungarian's determination to leave pain and bitterness behind and make a fresh start.

What then are the characteristic marks of Jancsó's style? On the one hand, his predilection for large, wide-sweeping compositions, saturated with landscape, movements and sounds. An image of his shows a close-up of boots, feet marching the exhausting forced march of faceless shadows; while the sound track carries a strange, deep, soft melody coming from far away, suggesting sorrow and loneliness, twining and hovering over the procession of boots on the bleak road. A simple fusion of boots and haunting tune, but effectively symbolic. At the same time the haphazard unimportance of each sequence compels us to generalize, to ponder, to look for something beyond the scene before our eyes.

In his second film—"Outlaws"—this

method of abstraction has been turned into a conscious principle. Here again Jancsó breaks new soil. Again set against a historical background, the film revolves around human actions and reactions reduced to classical simplicity, fined down to their essence, without, however, abandoning plot and coherent meaning.

The historical event with which the film deals is the suppression of the bandits of the *pusztá*, the "rough-lived men" in the eighteen-sixties. In long past times these men used to be the Robin Hoods of the Hungarian *pusztá*, legendary righters of wrongs, whose exploits were hymned in popular song and ballad. In the 1848 War of Independence they fought intrepidly as national heroes. After the revolution was crushed and the war lost they became outlaws, taking refuge in isolated homesteads and living a wild and savage life from which it was an easy step to criminal ways. The *betyárs*, the outlaws, lived by looting, robbery and murder, and gradually degenerated into long out-of-date, spurious heroes, hunted down by the law, oppressed, and mentally warped by oppression. The film is about the outlaws—and those who outlawed them—men who incite people to treason and drive them to murder, the murderers without guns.

In Jancsó's film the black-cloaked gendarmes are in pursuit of the leader of the bandits, the celebrated Sándor Rózsa. They know that the populace will never give their legendary hero up to justice, and in order to compel them to inform on him, the gendarmes deliberately set out to sow terror among them with extortion. The atmosphere is heavy with nameless, mental fear, more crushing than physical pain, and the most potent weapon of the gendarmerie is the sense of helplessness they create.

Although based on historical facts the film makes no attempt at sustained narration; it is rather an analysis and diagram of the rule of terror which followed the 1848 War of Independence. Without oversimplifying Jancsó is trying to establish how man reacts

to oppression, to lack of freedom, and the cruel consequences for both which spring from a harsh disregard of human rights.

He is not, however, concerned with psychology. He prefers to indicate, to epitomize, to flash signals. In this film he uses an abstract film language, which is not common in this medium. In the very first sequence a general statement is established. An exhausted man runs; a maze of corridors and unknown structures, probably prison cells, is invested with dark shadows, moving, cutting off, following. The man's face is not seen. We do not identify with him as an individual; we identify with him as a hunted creature, in the attempt to escape as a tangible thing. The pattern set here is continued throughout the film. We are not concerned with Sándor Rózsa's character, his personality. What is stressed is the situation, a situation in shorthand, conveyed by the atmosphere and single notion implicit in the picture: the inhumane situation of the exposed human being. The faceless, fleeing shape never appears again. After a few wild sequences of flight and pursuit he is destroyed, the victim of a meaningless and motiveless death, and the atmosphere of all the dark terror of a remorseless, incomprehensible machine grinding steadily forward is established. Everything that happens from that moment suggests laws mysterious to the characters and the viewers alike, which are merciless in their working and incalculable because incomprehensible.

In this atmosphere of nightmare and impenetrable darkness none of the characters is sharp or distinct. One "black coat" is indistinguishable from another, the chief is confounded with the men—their comings and goings are unaccountable, their disappearances inexplicable. There are always others to step in their shoes, to continue their task with the same merciless exactitude. The terrible malignity underlying the whole film is due in part to this void, these featureless reasons, this sense of a world of demonic forces governed by its own peculiar and automatic laws.

Jancsó's attitude—but not the methods he employs—is reminiscent of Eisenstein's "Ivan the Terrible." Eisenstein succeeded in weaving the warp of historical facts with the woof of universal postulates to make an integrated whole. Jancsó, we feel, has succeeded in creating a similar synthesis between the intellectual content and the historical background without explicit emphasis or explanation. What he wants to say forms an intrinsic part of the story told by history.

As a director his language is controlled, trenchant, and unromantic. Recurring elements in the pithy yet poetic style he has made his own are the geometrical organization of vast structures, the repetition of key shots, a use of harsh and bleak contrast. His compression, however, his sparing use of dialogue, are more than mere questions of style; they add a dimension to the view of the world embodied in this film.

ARTS

JÚLIA SZABÓ

THE PAINTINGS OF DERKOVITS—A MEMORIAL EXHIBITION

An exhibition of Gyula Derkovits (1894–1934), the most significant Hungarian painter of the period between the two world wars, was held in spring, 1965, in connection with the anniversaries of his birth and death. The retrospective contained about three hundred paintings, drawings, woodcuts and etchings. Assembling and preparing such a wealth of material for exhibition took more than six months, but it was worth the effort, for it included everything Derkovits had ever done, with the exception of a few important works which are known to be lost.

Critics and art-lovers had another opportunity to discuss and re-evaluate Derkovits, whose work had already won recognition during his lifetime. It had been seen at two Venice Biennales (1934 and 1960), as well as at several other exhibitions abroad, where from the very start it heralded a new note in Hungarian painting. The achievement of this more or less self-taught artist, who lived a scant forty years, is highly individual for the most part, but notwithstanding the personal synthesis of styles is inseparable from the more significant trends of 20th-century Hungarian painting.

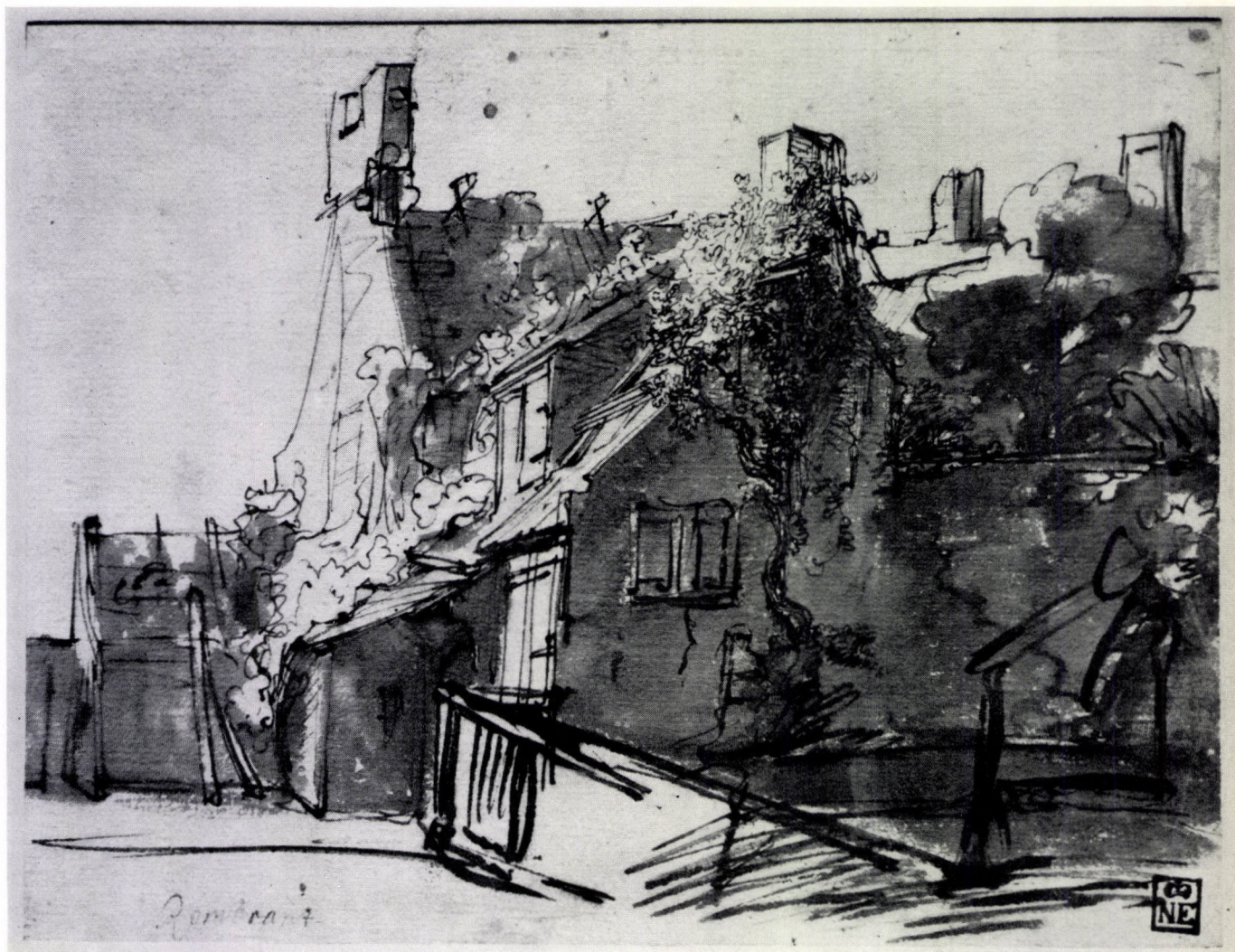
Gyula Derkovits was one of the second generation of 20th-century painters in Hungary. They created a new artistic idiom under the influence of a Hungarian avant-garde whose work between 1900 and 1910 formed the backdrop against which Derkovits's ca-

reer unfolded. He himself had no traditional or academic training. His first charcoal studies were submitted for a few months to the critical eye of József Rippl-Rónai, once a member of the *Nabis*; later, for a short time, he was a pupil of Károly Kernstok, who considered himself a disciple of Cézanne (although he was actually following in the footsteps of Hans von Marees and André Derain) and who was a leading figure in "The Eight," a group of painters formed in 1909. While this group, like so many other 20th-century painters, had drawn its initial inspiration from Cézanne, its main problem was neither values nor spatial homogeneity but simply that of creating an autonomous picture world distinct and separate from that which the eye actually recorded. They liked to emphasize the fact that they opposed any kind of naturalism or impressionism; rather they favoured expressionistic distortions of form and bolder colour effects.

Although "The Eight" represented no uniform style trend, their interpretation bore a substantial resemblance to that of the *Fauves*, with just a bit of progressive German influence thrown in. What did distinguish "The Eight" from analogous groups elsewhere, was its more objective, more ponderous approach, its tighter, more restricted world of form. Later a freer sweep in the dynamic play of lines was inherited from *Art Nouveau*. Thus the ambitious but often



REMBRANDT VAN RIJN: HAMAN FALLS INTO DISFAVOUR
(Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest)



REMBRANDT VAN RIJN :
PEASANT HOUSE
(Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest)

uneven style of the Secession continued developing in its own peculiar channels and only the Activists, the second of the two main art groups of that decade, who were already working in the consciousness of cubism, futurism and expressionism, were able to restrain this runaway proliferation of form.

Towards the end of the century's second decade, the name of Cézanne, so often reiterated by painters, was given a new connotation as it became linked with the austerity of cubist composition, and in the early 1920's, when word was spread of the theory and practice of constructivism, composition based on geometric principles received a new impetus. Interestingly enough, out of the complex pictorial philosophy of cubism, out of its search for new spatial dimensions, and out of its sundry doctrinaire pronouncements, Hungarian painting retained only the aim for geometrically executed composition, which after a while found a quite feasible *modus vivendi* with the classical principles of composition.

In this way the revolution of the avant-garde in art was effected without any real clash. It brought about a break only in the social sense, between officially supported schools and the living development of art; but there was a period when even this gap seemed easy to bridge. In the tide of the great revolutions following World War I, the Hungarian bourgeois revolution of 1918 and the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919 had a significant impact on all of eastern Europe. Like their fellow artists in Russia, the Hungarian avant-garde were among the first to espouse the revolution, and they were accorded an important role in public life. 1919 gave rise to the explosively vigorous, openly political poster art of "The Eight" and the Activists, in which the new voice of the 20th century rings out clear and loud. The few months of the existence of the Hungarian Republic of Councils were, of course, far too brief to leave their imprint on other, more enduring genres, but the

blatant political posters preserve a vivid memory of those feverish days.

This background is necessary to the understanding of Derkovits's early career, for in the eyes of the struggling young painter who was still a cabinetmaker's assistant, those progressive artists represented the pinnacle of his chosen vocation. The modern artist groping to find himself in the language of form and colour and the revolutionary fighting for social change were united in Derkovits from the very first, his moral and his aesthetic motivations always mutually dependent. In contrast, for instance, with several artists of the Russian avant-garde of the 20's, Derkovits was never conscious of any conflict between his artistic and his political aims, but had the faith to declare that his individual objectives had an incipiently historic role. That this indeed proved to be the case was due to both his talent and his will-power.

Although between 1918 and 1921 young Derkovits, as yet essentially uneducated, possessing only the manual culture of the craftsman, was still just trying out the techniques of drawing and painting, by 1922 he was already composing one of the major paintings of his first period, the grand-scale "Last Supper," whose bold blue-purple-and-scarlet colouring was inspired by the Cézanne interpretation peculiar to the Hungarian avant-garde. This picture is more closely linked with the angular severity of André Derain's "Last Supper" (1921) than with Kernstok's paintings on the same subject in the 1920's, Kernstok having become extremely expressionistic by that time; nevertheless his own basically emotional attitude prevented Derkovits from making a completely mental and dispassionate analysis of his subjects, the presence of his deliberately symbolic message communicating itself even to the spectator who is completely uninformed in matters of art. In his five-figure "Last Supper," by no means an iconography, the figure of Jesus preaching is really a self-portrait, that of a gentle but determined,

benevolent, enlightened prophet-agitator. What gives the work its force is the artist's enthusiastic desire to teach, which makes one tend to overlook the still schoolboyishly stiff, monotonous composition.

The next phase in Derkovits's career is centred in Vienna. From 1923 to 1926 he lived in the Austrian capital, where the atmosphere created by the Hungarian émigrés after the downfall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic had a maturing influence on his painting. It was an exhilarating atmosphere that fanned interesting discussions and debates among the avant-garde writers and artists, produced sharp differences of political opinion, and encouraged the organization of the progressive forces. No wonder it stimulated the development of Derkovits, especially as he was able to meet western European painting "face to face" at the same time and perfect his technique in art. The Vienna period saw a strengthening of the expressionist tendencies in his painting. His compositions built up of dynamic diagonal planes were dominated by strong colour contrasts and a spatial tension strained to the very limit. Although Derkovits did not explicitly follow any particular expressionist master, his style was related, curiously enough, to the rugged artistic idiom of the *Brücke* painters, whose group started in Dresden in 1905. Perhaps he achieved results similar to theirs because, like them, he was primarily a graphic artist and not an avid colourist, having achieved the bold colour contrasts he produced in the 20's and the subtle colour harmony which marked his mature period only by virtue of great concentration and deliberation. But Derkovits's inspiration and youthful desire for expression overcame the obstacles that stood in his way, and the period between 1923 and 1927 was already one of complete originality, where he used his own vigorous, expressive idiom in presenting dramatic situations to convey a symbolic message. The memory of the ordeals he went through at the front during World War I exploded into his powerful series "Re-

fugees," which includes both drawings and paintings. The expressiveness of these pictures is not so much due to projection of the tempests in the depths of his own subconscious, which was the case with his pre-war expressionist paintings, as to the actual horrors he himself experienced, the reverberation in his mind of real events.

The young artist was perfectly aware of his historical position, and the task before him assumed more and more definite outlines in his consciousness. In his catafalque paintings and large-scale compositions depicting mourning, his shock over the loss of his own brother, who had died young, merged with the memory of catastrophes that had affected all of society. In his painting "Mourning" (1924), he uses the type of iconograph which has already acquired practically historic significance in Hungarian painting to portray symbolically a Hungarian society suffering the aftermath of lost wars and defeated revolutions. At the same time he makes no attempt to illustrate, nor does he resort to dusty 19th-century symbols, but with the attitude characteristic of the expressionist, with unsparing insight, almost consuming himself in his own fires, he pours out feelings for the community which have acquired, for him, the intensity of a personal cause.

In thought content, his series of woodcuts, "1514," also belongs to the Vienna period, despite the fact that they were done after his return to Budapest, in 1928 and 1929. This series of woodcuts on the Hungarian peasant revolt in the 16th century has a wider application, evoking the problems of an age-old social conflict which had assumed virtually unbearable proportions in his own time. The large blocks cut with feverish energy to produce alternate fields of black and white, are like inarticulate cries of anguish over the condition of Hungarian society, still semi-feudal and deep in the throes of crisis after World War I. Like Petőfi, Ady and Artila József, Hungary's greatest poets, Derkovits had a strong sense

of responsibility which made him speak out openly on historic issues. He was a master of the robust, staccato idiom of the 20th-century woodcut, achieving perfect unity between idea and line. With an ability to synthesize which has been relatively rare in our time, he resolved the conflict between pure thought and the visual world, a conflict which is by no means imaginary and which has troubled many artists deeply. Thus, in the 20's, he was following the example of great artists who transcended all "isms"—Picasso and Léger. The "isms" simply became a part of Derkovits's artistic vocabulary, and he used and combined them as the requirements of the moment suggested.

On the other hand, Derkovits's symbolism does to some extent link him with the turn-of-the-century artists from whom he gained his primary inspiration; the roots of his imagery cannot be traced back any earlier than that. However, he developed his spatial structure of mutually intercepting diagonal planes quite independent of outside influence, giving cubism an interpretation of his own. His space arrangements, in which opposing strata create tension, become reduced after 1930 to three or four planes, one behind the other; and in his last pictures these are ultimately simplified to one single plane. Nevertheless, Derkovits retained his basic spatial concept to the end, even when, around 1930, the post-impressionist trend which widely influenced Hungarian painting also propelled his colour combinations in the direction of subtle harmonies, again evoking a turn-of-the-century atmosphere. The colour problem of his mature period was how to combine gold and silver dust with the traditional oil and tempera paints to create these subtle harmonies—between glittering metallic hues, soft greys, subdued pinks, warm browns, and blues that were vivid or veiled. Derkovits was interested in the study of Byzantine and Medieval colour symbolism; his admiration for the gleam of gold and silver and his search for the independent meaning of colours served to bathe

in pulsating light the subjects that were close to him emotionally, and to elevate them to new aesthetic heights.

Beginning in 1927, the life of the street became the main source of Derkovits's themes. He observed the throbbing of big city life, the monumental conflux of the crowds teeming in the streets; his models were working-class mothers in the slums with rough hands and premature wrinkles, broad-backed dock-workers on the Danube embankments, lorry drivers and transport workers, and the common people on the public beaches. The yearning for a more human existence and for beauty among the people of the factory districts of Pest, which had suddenly grown into a big city, are expressed in Derkovits's painting with the attitude of a fellow proletarian who lived and breathed among the people he depicted, and who deliberately accepted their lot as his own. This personal identification with the working class had been constantly evident among Hungarian writers since 1905, for example in the prose, poetry—and paintings—of the versatile Lajos Kassák; but it had never before been so explicit, so direct and so many-faceted in painting as with Derkovits. "The Eight" came to the social revolution by way of artistic rebellion, but most of them returned afterwards to their old *milieu*. Derkovits, however, because of his permanent way of life and the effect of his personal experiences, was truest to himself in his capacity of proletarian painter. Familiarity with the rhythm and movement of manual labour and respect for those whose lives were hard are evident in his rough-hewn yet lyrical portrayals of workers studying, reading, thinking, and mothers toiling to bring up the coming generation.

Derkovits believed that social conflicts would be solved through the organized working class. The deeply considered philosophical content of his work never makes the impression of being contrived, because it is so imbued with fresh observations and experience. Sketchbook in hand, the painter

roamed the metropolis, wandering along the Danube embankments and through the central markets; he observed and sketched with the same eager interest the man sitting and eating melon on the lower steps of the quay, the builders working on the construction of the new bridge, or the women peddling their merchandise. He was adept at conjuring delicious and joyful colours in his still lifes and animal portraits, and at sensuously communicating the meaning of everyday scenes; but what dominated his art was always the dramatic strain of social tension. He and his sketchbook bore witness to demonstrations in the streets where mounted police used the flats of their swords to beat back the workers; he watched, recorded and pondered over the interrelations between the events he observed. In paintings which are close-ups of these dramatic scenes, he arranges symbolic segments of vision on different planes, creating a montage-like composition. This is a mode of painting derived from the collage technique which he began using in one of his major works, "Still Life with Fish," in 1928. This was a collage consisting of cardboard, crinoline netting, tinfoil, gold-leaf and cellophane applied in layers, where each object—the tablecloth, the knife, the cheese-wrapping, the alarm-clock and the glittering gold body of the fish—is also endowed with symbolic meaning. Later he gave up the collage technique and retained only a suggestion of montage, but there is no doubt that he had been influenced by the photomontage technique and similar experiments in the cinema, which had been startlingly effective in their time.

Throughout his artistic career Derkovits continued to examine himself mercilessly, as if checking and re-checking whether he were fulfilling the mission he had undertaken. Scores of such self-dissecting and self-revealing portraits of himself exist, and the attentive student can find any number of

disguised self-portraits which Derkovits had smuggled, so to speak, into his paintings and drawings on other subjects. In 1926 and 1927 he painted himself in the person of an itinerant fire-eater, a symbol of his identification with the fate of the avant-garde artists who were outcasts from the society of the early 20th century. The glamorous unreality of the circus illumines his painting "Artistes," 1933, where we find his portrait again in the guise of the strong-man straining with a terrible effort at his chains. He is not only railed off from the ladies and gentlemen of the audience, but is alone even among his fellow performers with their evil little flashing smiles of derision.

By the 30's, Derkovits was struggling for his artistic goals completely on his own, and was becoming increasingly conscious of his isolation. Although his middle-class public appreciated his talent, they were strangers to his message. And few workers came from the slums to visit art exhibits.

In the visionary paintings of his last years we often see the people of the streets appearing within the walls of his shabby studio. In one of his finest self-portraits, "Winter Day," which disappeared, sad to say, in 1948, he depicted himself again—as he had so often done previously—absorbed in his work, revealing how the painted picture came into being. The weary workers with their heavy tread, the mothers dragging their children, grow beyond the frame of the painting and rise to the plane of the painter's face, as if floating in his room. And he himself becomes a part of the picture, for he has painted himself on the same plane with his subjects. The vision condenses the system of carefully integrated planes into one single monumental plane, and in this imaginary dimension the painter and his work become completely identified. The pictorial expression of this identification marks the peak of Derkovits's career.

GYÖRGY SZABÓ

HUNGARIAN ART AT THE CROSSROADS

The Lessons from a National Exhibition

Ever since 1945 a large and comprehensive bi-annual exhibition representing all the current trends of Hungarian art is held in Budapest. In 1965, related as it was to the liberation of Hungary twenty years ago, it took on the aspect of a jubilee, and consequently attracted a larger number of visitors than usual. Fortunately the organizers anticipated a large number of visitors, and the pictures were hung and the sculpture displayed along modern lines, with plenty of space and air, and easily accessible to view. The pleasant first impression, enhanced by the colourful variety of the works on show led to a series of meditations and assessments, which jotted down on reaching home. Here they are.

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As one passes methodically through the exhibition and notes the incomparably greater variety of paintings and sculptures than usual on show, the visitor realizes that the 450 artists exhibiting here have at last succeeded in finding an opportunity to display highly diverse tendencies, as seen in the works, nearly 700 of them, selected for display. This is a happy turn in the struggle waged against various restrictive trends, in particular against the predilection for the idyllic-heroic style which resulted from the theory of realism being interpreted in a formalist manner, and which revealed itself in a photographic naturalism in the 'fifties, following Zhdanov's cultural policy. The visitor also realizes that, with the passing of the former monotony of commonplace theme and pattern, the artists' individual responsibility has also increased. It is no longer possible to cite the orders of a dictatorial authority as an excuse, to shield behind comfortable references to the conformity which was

demanding, and to avoid responsibility under cover of dogmatic generalizations. This means that in future artists will find it difficult to evade the crucial demands of the age and of society as a whole by invoking the force of pressures external to the world of art. But even with the cessation of intervention and demands enforced by authority, artists cannot ignore what society expects of them.

The present exhibition demonstrates the headway made by Hungarian art during the last few years: the general level has risen considerably. There has been nothing amiss with professional levels since the beginning of the century: skilfully painted pictures have been on show in the gallery in previous years as well. What we see here are new and exciting attempts of the painters and sculptors to achieve original forms of expression. Gradually, step by step, they have left behind them the post-impressionism and the "traditional" avant-garde attitudes familiar in the first decades of the century, while preserving what is valuable in them, and are now interested in the chaotic and contradictory developments of the arts after the Second World War, particularly in terms of a more effective language of expression. Signs of this interest can be seen at first glance—on one or two pictures the paint drips, the traces of the welding torch can be seen on several pieces of sculpture, through the back door abstract and pop art are feeling their way, and even anecdotal painting has crept back in surrealist compositions, as in the neo-surrealist experiments being made in West European painting. This is to be seen in the first place in the work of the leading artists of the 'fifties, in the portraits of Endre Domanovszky, the still lives of György Kádár, and the sculpture of Viktor Kalló, but most of all in Imre Vargha's "Pro-

metheus," while the most characteristic example of anecdotal painting is the painting of young László Patay. This search for expression only reinforces the old lesson, that it is not the question of the means and tools which is important, but the inconsistent and fashionable use made of them, that the works which dabble in new techniques are not necessarily superior to paintings based on traditional styles. It is, for instance, easy to acquire the idiom of cubism with its demand for an analysis of forms and a ruthless quest for the essential, but it is apparently impossible to practise it successfully unless this analysis is unrestricted and remorseless, or without adventuring into abstraction. Otherwise it is still-born. And are these new ways of expression really necessary? They seem to be simply a timid imitation of current fashion. How, and to what purpose, contemporary Hungarian artists are making use of traditional and newer styles, is an even more interesting question, and what if anything, do they wish to convey about the society in which they live?

In my opinion, it is the rich variety of the materials used, the arrangement of the exhibition, and the whole effect of vivid colour which reflect more of present-day social reality—paradoxical as it may sound—than do the individual paintings or sculpture. By all rules of art the converse should be true; we should not be seeing partial results, which can only be assessed *in toto* in the work of the organizers; the artists themselves ought to be searching for a rounded fullness instead of being satisfied with half-solutions, or indeed with contradictions that cancel each other out. If a painting or piece of sculpture is examined at close quarters, we cannot fail to observe beneath the immediate choice of form, the faults of the past. These are the consequences of that historical fact that the artists failed to fight against superficiality, a pseudo-idyllic picture of life and complacent narcissism, in other words that they evade the social necessity forcing them to face their own heritage. It is quite under-

standable that the narrow point of view prevalent in the 'fifties—which was unable to imagine a socialist art which was rich in subject-matter and style—forced many painters and sculptors into a stereotyped and comfortable self-complacency, sometimes accompanied by a trite conformism, or drove them into an old-fashioned aestheticism, or the meticulous reproduction of naturalistic detail.

All this was unfortunately aggravated by the difficult and inconsistent position of the Hungarian arts in the inter-war years. The provincialism that was prevalent then and became the style of so many mediocre artists (and which incidentally drove Derkovits to starvation)* continued after the Liberation—and exerts an influence even today—because Marxist criticism has never raised the simplest question in this connection. It has been content with merely surface explanations, while in other branches of art (literature, film, etc.) Marxist criticism has successfully contributed, with the aid of its more elaborate and more modern views on aesthetics, to the shaping of a new socialist scale of values. This scale of values takes as its centre-point the awareness of opportunities for equitable social development and an endeavour to co-ordinate community and individual interests in a modern and natural manner. However, the questions of content connected with this in Hungarian art are still bedevilled by questions of form; a bitter struggle is still going on among Hungarian painters and sculptors on the football field of the arts, though the ball has long since rolled in another direction. One may indeed wonder whether another or newer fashion in styles borrowed from the West might not have the effect of still further postponing the essential question—which may sound ridiculous on first hearing—What exactly are the fine arts? Do they simply mean a transmission of the visible world, or something beyond that?

In vain more colour is splashed on our

* See: Julia Szabó's study of Derkovits in this number, page 186. [Ed.]



Overleaf

JENŐ KERÉNYI: CSONTVÁRY



still-life compositions, or paint drips more boldly from our portraits, or spectacular abstracts hang on the wall, if in the end the essential activity of the artist continues to be directed towards a simplified description, a passive registration, enchanted with its own gestures. In that case they will scarcely reflect reality on an aesthetic level, and will at best come to fulfil the same decorative function as the "abstract" and "ultra abstract" wave of bourgeois art, well known here, although examples are missing from this exhibition.

As one looks around, the suspicion grows that a modern revaluation of even the basic concepts is still lacking; that in this country the interpretation of what is "naturally beautiful," hitherto the almost exclusive subject-matter of painting, is still given the hackneyed turn-of-the-century interpretation; that our artists want to solve the task of "giving pleasure" by a free impression of subject-matter done with good professional skill but without analysis or commitment. The most influential and important painter of this type, Aurél Bernát,* is content to do no more, judging by the paintings exhibited here. László Bartha** is unsuccessfully and confusedly seeking an escape from abstract experiments in impressionism. Many of our painters take refuge behind surface forms and colours, and very rarely go beyond the simple statement that this or that appeals to them. But they prefer not to express their purpose, place or role in the work. They do not "confess," they only "tell a story." It is doubtful whether this is enough for modern man to establish the aesthetic relations with these works of art which would help to acquaint him with the world and with social reality. Indeed, many of the pictures remain part of the painter's "private world": the onlooker is incapable of the same feelings of enthusiasm for some land-

scape or still life which inspired the artist himself.

The extent to which the responsibility for this lack of contact lies with the artist or the public can, it seems, only be discovered—unless we wish to get lost in the great international debate going on on this subject—from the analysis of particular cases. Arguing from the basis of one of the key-concepts of modern Marxist aesthetics, the reason must undoubtedly sought in both directions. But it seems clear that the question of the artist's responsibility and the degree of his engagement with the subject-matter has to be raised when it is realized that the public of today is not the same as the public of fifty years ago. Aesthetic pleasure is not provided by a piece of descriptive painting, a partial representation, one or two meticulously detailed accounts, nor of a single particular truth, but of a general and universal truth, expressed in all its interrelated aspects. The contemporary spectator, when looking at works of art, cannot dispense with the analysis of reality revealed in the specific dialectics of intellect and emotion. This, however, is a debt as yet unpaid in contemporary Hungarian art—as evidenced by the present exhibition.

And when indeed attempts to provide a more profound and intellectual answer to the great questions of existence are made, what an *art nouveau* and Edwardian view of the world presents itself to our eyes! Ideas at this exhibition are few and far between: which is why visitors fall for the slightest manifestation of an idea, however banal. They linger a long time, for instance, before a picture that expresses an opinion on life in unequivocal allegory (László Patay's painting entitled "Life"). A man and woman stand side by side on what seems to be the base of a monument; a child drops his toy-pigeon to step up to them; on the left a young man places a wreath of flowers upon the head of his blushing betrothed; on the right we see the backs of an aged couple, seated on a bench; gazing at the scenery, in the

* Cf. *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, Vol. III, No. 5.

** Cf. *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, Vol. VI, No. 20.

background are hills, a lake, a village... Someone might believe this picture is here by error. No, this painting is not one of those of a similar character adorning the walls of the Central Marriage Hall in Budapest—it is a genuine exhibit in the Tenth Exhibition of Hungarian Art. The picture is “modern,” indeed it shows traces of surrealist techniques. It is only that the visitors’ demand for genuine art is abused by the idyllic falsity of this picture. Can any artist who has comprehended the depths of this century produce so bright and serene a version of it as his considered judgement?

“We should like to observe,” writes Gramsci in one of his “Notes,” “that optimism is often no more than a method of justifying one’s own laziness, idleness and irresponsibility, and one form of a fatalistic and mechanistic way of thinking.” The ideal man in our society is he who absorbs and integrates diversities and achieves harmony within himself through his struggles, the man we find in the poetry of Attila József or in the music of Béla Bartók. Or in the works of Gyula Derkovits—saved from oblivion by a hair’s breadth, and neglected for a long time even after the Liberation—Derkovits whom, if he were alive now, would be walking wonderingly among so many lyrical scenes, concentration on formal expression and sterile preoccupation with blocked masses of colour. And Derkovits would at last come to a standstill before “János Szántó Kovács, the Peasant Revolutionary,” a statue by József Somogyi. Those critics are right who see in this work of art the fixed point from which at last Hungarian art can move towards a true socialist art. This piece of work, which is a monument to the leader of the agrarian-proletarian movement of the early twentieth century, who came to a tragic end, not only suggests the powerful social tension of the period, but speaks through this symbolic figure of the people, and the strength of the movement that they launched. And if the form of this statue—somewhat reminiscent of Zadkine’s “Van Gogh”—has proved

eminently suitable to express restlessness, tension, and strength, it is clear that only a style which made no concessions over the essential subject-matter in the interests of the mode of expression could have achieved it. In this work we catch the rare fusion of intellect and emotion at white heat: here is a piece of sculpture which expresses a clear-cut idea in clear-cut form, and is devoid of undigested borrowing.

I believe Hungarian art has now reached the stage where, conscious of its responsibilities, it must decide the road it wants to follow. We have only too recently experienced the dangers of an art based on strong national traditions, isolated from experiment and developments abroad, unable to break away from a mechanical and petrified repetition, disguised with progressive themes. The art of Hungary and the neighbouring socialist countries were badly affected in the ‘fifties by this conservative-nationalist provincialism. In the early ‘sixties, however, largely as a reaction, we saw painting which foreshadowed another danger: what happens when our artists in a socialist environment, so basically different from Western bourgeois conditions, discard those traditions to become uncritical apprentices and sedulous apes to passing Western fashions. Notions which have provoked many aesthetic debates in Hungary, such as “folk character,” “tradition,” and “nationalism,” should be re-examined in a modern light.

Our art, therefore, must choose that *other* road, here and now, and must expend every energy on analysing the truth and on expressing and conveying what we ourselves have to say. That is, Hungarian fine art must reach a level where once and for all—not only on occasion, but with every fibre in its body—it takes its stand on the side of progress in the world of art. Neither conservative naturalism on the one hand, nor an eclectic indulgence in superficial and rootless modernity on the other hand, can provide what the new society justly expects of all creative artists.

JOLÁN BALOGH

WEALTHY PATRONS OF THE HUNGARIAN RENAISSANCE

The development of style in the first period of the Hungarian Renaissance (about 1460–1541) has been described in general terms by art historians and outstanding examples are not unknown. Little is known, however about the Maecenases of the era, the patrons and donors of Renaissance works of art, the individuals whose support was decisive in the development of Hungarian Renaissance art. The result is that misunderstandings and erroneous views have taken root. King Matthias is said for instance, to have patronized the Renaissance only under foreign pressure, to have had no interest in it himself, and to have encouraged it only to further his own power politics. The Renaissance was supposedly only supported by prelates educated in Italy, while the nobility on the whole ignored it; the Renaissance style attracted only the upper classes and did not affect the consciousness of the middle or lower orders; and so on ad infinitum.

We hope to dispel these erroneous views by introducing the persons who supported the Hungarian Renaissance and elucidating the social make-up of Hungarian Renaissance culture. Owing to the scarcity of written records and the fragmentary nature of relics, this task is not an easy one; nevertheless some light is thrown on the subject by occasional remarks found in surviving documents and books, and certain conclusions can be drawn from correlations between art works or ancient relics and their donors.

It is of course impossible, within the framework of a brief study, to delve thoroughly into all the relevant issues, nor can a fully adequate picture be drawn of the entire epoch. Only an outline of a few of its characteristic features can be given.

The personality of King Matthias domi-

nates the beginning of the Hungarian Early Renaissance. There can scarcely be any doubt that the background that determined his activities as a generous patron of art was the cultural and commercial relations between Hungary and Italy which dated back to the 14th century and were still very much alive when Matthias ascended the throne. The man who thus made his appearance on the stage of history was in fact a personality who, by virtue of his intellectual powers, perspicacity, and character was extremely well suited to lead and to rule. The principles of a centralized monarchy formed the backbone of his policy; his patronage of the arts also manifested the unmistakable tendency towards centralization and individual leadership. Matthias was not only a passionate collector and an affluent patron, but also a far-sighted cultural planner who set about developing the arts of his country with great energy and determination. His leadership, influence and organization are clearly discernible in the buildings erected during his reign, the collections he made, and the establishment of a Hungarian craft industry. His interest in innovation made him willing to encourage new forms of art.

What was entirely novel about Matthias's patronage of art was the fact that he did not regard it as a purpose in itself, but as something that would make his country more illustrious in the eyes of the world. When he rewarded the services of a favoured sculptor of his, Joannes Duknovich de Tragurio, by raising him to the nobility and giving him a castle and an estate, the king emphasized in the deed of transfer that this expressed his appreciation of "*quantum nominia etiam sua arte et industria in similibus operibus ad nostram et totius regni nostri gloriam adjeciatur.*"

His foresight came of ambition for the glory of his homeland when he ordered the reconstruction of houses in Buda which were falling to ruin, emphasizing, "Quod Nos civitatem nostram Budensem, quasi sedes et solium dignitatis Regiae exitit, cupientes de suis relevere desolationibus, quod etiam erit pro commodo et utilitate Regni nostri." Leading figures in the Hungarian nation said of the king's most magnificent achievement, the Corvina Library, that the deceased monarch had founded it to bring honour to his country (pro regni decora extracta).

As a patron of the arts Matthias proved himself to be a uniquely gifted organizer of grand schemes. This applies not only to the collection of manuscripts in his library, but also to the buildings he had erected and his collections of art. It was extremely important for Hungary that he was not content to purchase art treasures abroad and bring them home, but organized artisans' ateliers in Hungary with the help of foreign and Hungarian masters. Book copyists, miniaturists and book-binders worked for the king and for the bibliophile prelates. There were also stone-masons and bronze-casters; an atelier where glazed pottery was made, as well as a marquetry workshop for inlaid furniture, and a workshop for joiners who carved ceilings.

These ateliers became excellent schools for Hungarian masters, whence the new art forms were distributed to every part of the country. Without them the Renaissance could not have spread so fast or taken root so readily in Hungary. It would have been a passing fancy of the court and not an artistic trend which transformed the whole country.

The driving force behind Matthias's patronage of the arts was his personal interest. His thirst for knowledge, his love of books, his enthusiasm for architecture, his passion for collecting stimulated him to carry out his aims. On the evidence of Antonius Constantius (1464) the twenty-one year old king was known as an admirer of the Latin muses. In 1471 Matthias himself wrote to Pompo-

nus Laetus that he enjoyed the writings of Latin authors and envied scholars who could devote all their time to studying them. The tone of this letter is extraordinarily informal, expressing a warm and eager interest; "Quiquid superest temporis, literis non sine voluptate et solamine vovemus, huic est, quod oblatum a vobis donum gratissimo, hilarique exceperimus non vultu solum sed animo." An inscription to the same effect was carved on the capital of a pillar in his library at Buda: "...INGENII VOLUPTATI OPUS HOC CONDIDIT GENEROSUM."

He personally directed the organization of his library. He discussed orders for new manuscripts with his scholars, as is indicated by a letter from Bartolommeo della Fonte written in 1489, as well as by other data. His plan for collecting books had far-reaching ramifications. His agents visited Italy, Germany and Greece. In 1478 he wanted to buy up the library bequeathed by the Regiomontanus, and in 1488 that of Galeotto Manfredi, Duke of Faenza. His orders gave steady employment to Florentine scribes and the miniaturists' atelier the king had established within the royal palace of Buda to satisfy his continuously increasing passion for books. The specimen shown here is a page from the Paris Cassianus produced at this workshop.

He showed his love for art in an equally informal manner. In a charter granting a coat-of-arms (1481) he praised the work of his miniaturist, Francesco di Castello, in the following terms: "...subtili artis pictoriae magisterio depicta sunt." These words show what great delight the king took in the art of Francesco and how highly he esteemed it. What he wrote in praise of Joannes Dukovich de Tragurio's talents is no less significant: "Quod nos ad singulare illud ingenium praeclaramque artem fidelis nostri Magistri Joannis Dukovich de Tragurio, Statuarium sive Marmorum Sculptoris, debitum et decet respectum habentes."

In his collections, too, the king was moved by personal interest, desire, and a dynamic

inner drive. When Matthias's queen, Beatrice of Aragon, carried on a lengthy correspondence with her sister on the acquisition of the coin and jewel collection of the Bishop of Mantua (1488-1489) she emphasized that her husband earnestly wished to possess these art treasures: "E desidero di tal cose." That Matthias kept these negotiations going for several years testifies to the fervour of his desire and his perseverance in striving for an objective. Beatrice remarked in regard to her husband's collection of medals, "Volontieri mave donde ne po have." These words characterize the genuine collector.

King Matthias's love of art was well known to the sovereigns of Italy, who made him gifts of art treasures to win his friendship, not only silks and brocades such as they had sent his predecessors, but also sculptures and paintings by the most eminent artists living at their courts. Instructions to and reports from ambassadors were full of allusions to art. Lodovico Sforza initiated political relations with King Matthias by having a picture of the Madonna painted for him by the most brilliant painter of his court (probably Leonardo), for he had heard that the king "se delecta molto di belle pitture." Later Matthew looked forward to receiving an antique statue of Bacchus from Lodovico. Since restoration of the sculpture took a long time the despatch of the Bacchus was delayed. Matthew instituted passionate inquiries about it through the Milanese ambassador Maffeo de Traveglia. Maffeo could not stress to his duke often enough: "El quale dono essendo molto desiderato da questo Signore Re."

Also in invitations to artists and the granting of commissions, the king's own will and personal choice were obvious. In most cases it was after seeing a work with his own eyes that the king invited an artist to the court, as for instance Filippino Lippi and Ercole di Roberti or Caradosso. It was after seeing their paintings himself that he placed orders with Mantegna. Filippino Lippi, Verocchio.

Within the brief period of three years (1487, 1488, 1489) the miniaturist Gherardo received many commissions from the king for his increasingly gorgeous manuscripts. This can only mean that Gherardo's style greatly pleased the king.

Matthias's sensitivity to beauty, his good taste and his flair for quality were amazing. As a result the works of art which were connected with his name were unparalleled masterpieces of that era, for example the tapestry of his throne and the base of the Calvary in Esztergom ornamented with his crest.

Architecture was Matthias's chief interest in his patronage of the arts. This was generally agreed by his contemporaries, friends and enemies alike. Antonio Bonfini, his court chronicler, gave an excellent account of his ambitions when he wrote of the king, "Omnes bonas artes coles et in primis architecturam, quia nihil ad principalem magnificentiam magis pertinere videtur." According to Galeotto, Matthias "Nam supra omnes homines aedificiis pulchris oblectatur eoque in aedificando ingenio est, ut cum peritissimis architectis devora et commoda aedium divisione non sine victoria certavit." His library included the latest writings on architecture, two copies of the great theoretical work of Leon Battista Alberti and Filarete's treatise translated into Latin by Bonfini on a commission from the king, in order "...ex hoc enim Tua serenitas omnem symmetriae rationem omniumque aedificiorum structuram accipiet." This work so fired the king's imagination that Bonfini was obliged to complete his translation in three months. The many designs that decorated the manuscript fascinated Matthias and inspired him to new ideas and plans. Bonfini gives an arresting picture of the king's ardent spontaneous interest and the creative power of his imagination: "Nonne statim, visa pontium ichnographia de traiciendo marmoreo ponte Danubio, Traiani exemplo, ac de aedificando plerisque urbibus in Pannonia cogitasti?"

The report of the ambassador from Ferrara also discloses that architectural as well as philosophical problems were discussed at the king's table. Matthias followed with keen attention the architectural projects ordered by the Italian princes and asked the ambassadors accredited at his court for information about them, as in the case of the palaces of Ercole d'Este. He was deeply concerned with his own building schemes. On the last journey he made, he inspected all of his construction projects from Buda to Vienna.

Matthias was not content to order new building projects of his own wherever possible, but on the evidence of Bonfini encouraged the whole country to follow his example as best it could. Bonfini's records are not the only proof. The number of deeds and decrees he issued to support the construction of new buildings in the country is legion, from churches and town fortifications to housing for serfs. His decrees provide a clear insight into his endeavours at town planning and improvement and reveal that his remarks and wishes were invariably the result of direct personal experiences.

The influence of Matthias's patronage of the arts was felt by his entourage, his court, and directly or indirectly the whole country. The court of Buda was eminently suited to promote the conception and development of a Maecenas attitude on the part of the courtiers. The patrons of art who supported or ordered the erection of buildings and who made donations to architectural projects in the closing decades of the 15th century were all connected with his court. Moreover, the outstanding and leading patrons of the era which followed had also been educated at Matthias's court. The new style, the Renaissance, was spread throughout the country with the help of family ties and court and official connections.

Only a few of the long line of art patrons will be named here, those whose personal characteristics and activities in support of art were most typical of the period and the Renaissance trend.

László Geréb, a nephew of the king and former student of Ferrara, became Bishop of Transylvania while still young and was one of the first in his high office to declare his approval of the Italian Renaissance style. His magnificent coat-of-arms from Gyalu Castle, carved in stone, is evidence of this.

Among other official dignitaries, the treasurer Orban Nagylucsei, Bishop of Eger, and the king's right-hand man, became highly sensitive to Renaissance art under Matthias's influence. He commissioned the king's best Italian artists to work for him. Giovanni Dalmata carved a marble altar for him, his Psalter was illuminated by the most talented artist in the Buda workshop, referred to as Master Cessianus; his real name was Fra Zoan Antonio Cattaneo. In connection with the construction of his palace at Buda, Nagylucsei stated, "*Decori redivivo formeque splendidiori restituumus.*" The reference to "*forma splendidior*" makes his choice of style perfectly clear, while "*decor redivivus*" would seem to indicate the Renaissance.

The other prelates of the court (they were all high dignitaries of the Church) were no less ardent in their support of Renaissance art. There were János Vitéz and Janus Pannonius, who stimulated the young king's ambitions through their own activities as book-lovers and patrons of the arts, then Péter Váradí and János Filipecz—these four were all chancellors in their time—as well as the king's secretaries, István Bajoni and Tamás Bakócz, Miklós Báthory, Domonkos Kálmáncsehi, János Vitéz the younger, László Geréb, and many other equally notable patrons. Through their studies at Italian universities, their journeys abroad, and their service as officials, these churchmen were continuously in contact with the achievements of Italian art, so that their response to the Italian Renaissance was only natural. They built their palaces in Renaissance style, collected Italian manuscripts for their libraries, and filled their homes with Italian objets d'art.

The Hungarian early Renaissance also

prepared a few surprises for posterity. Excavations in the last ten years have uncovered proof that even Matthias's generals, who had defeated the Turks, were under the spell of Italian art. Pál Kirizsi, leader of the war against the Turks, who has gone down in history as a grim warrior, ordered a relief from the king's distinguished sculptor, the master who created the marble Madonna. A fragment of the relief, with its fresh, vivaciously modelled heads of cherubim, is a surviving example of the beauty which delighted the victorious hero after the stresses of the battlefield. We have long been familiar with the Nyírbátor crest of István Báthory another general of the Turkish wars, but today it is considered almost certain that this was a part of a Renaissance building from which several fragments have been recovered—the remains of casements, shafts of columns, and sections of balustrades. With these clues it is not difficult to imagine the palace with its Renaissance row of windows and its pillared loggia. And all this was built in the years between 1488 and 1493, at the remotest eastern frontier of the Hungarian Plain.

The warden of Buda Castle, Balázs Ráskay, who had been educated from childhood by the King, had buildings erected at Csóvár and Pápa. As evidenced by a fragment decorated with his coat-of-arms, which was found in the papal archives, and by the tabernacle at Csóvár, the time he spent in Buda had made a profound impression on him. The same influence is plain in the buildings constructed at Simontornya by Mózes Buzlay, formerly Matthias's ambassador, and in the book collection and house furnishings of István Egerváry, a member of the landed nobility.

Miklós Bánffy of Lindva, Lord Lieutenant of Pozsony, was one of the king's confidential advisers. All that remains of his buildings are written records. His enthusiasm for Italian miniature painting was astonishing. In 1481 when Matthias endowed him with an estate, Bánffy had the gift certificate

illuminated like a page in a manuscript by Francesco di Castello, the King's own miniaturist, with marginal ornamentation and decorative initials. By royal decree it devolved on the recipient to cover the costs of such a document. There can be no doubt that it was Bánffy who ordered the ornate framework of the certificate and paid not only the expenses involved in connection with the document but also the miniaturist's fee.

The art of Francesco di Castello captivated the Hungarian court. Among his patrons we find Domonkos Kálmáncsehi, Prevost of Székesfehérvár, Chancellor Péter Váradi, Archbishop of Kalocsa, Miklós Bánffy of Lindva, Ambrus Török of Enying, and Lukács Apáthi, Provost of Eger, Vice-Chancellor. Two of the five were laymen.

Hungarian patrons of the arts evinced a lively interest in Italian painting. They liked to have the façades and rooms of their residences painted in Renaissance style, as evidenced by the remains of frescoes discovered at Buda and Pécs. The sermon of the Dominican priest Jacobus de Cassovia (1494) praising the art of Fra Angelico also testifies to the influence of Italian painting.

Hungarians responded still more enthusiastically to the masterpieces of Italian applied art. Inventories and last testaments frequently mention Venetian glass, wrought inlaid chests, Italian hangings, and great quantities of Italian textiles.

Under the influence of the Renaissance, collecting antique relics became a pastime of the courtiers. Vice-Treasurer János Bornemissza collected antique medals and coins. Antique intaglios were also widely favoured and set in seal-rings. Many seals can be found attached to certificates of this period made with an intaglio signet-ring. It is instructive to observe which persons used such seals and which intaglios they selected for the purpose. The chancellor Filipecz, Bishop of Várad, used a handsome, bearded antique head for his seal, Boldizsár Bathyány, Matthias's former captain of Kőszeg, a winged Cupid.

After the death of Matthias the generation that had been educated at his court developed and disseminated the art of the Renaissance with increasing effectiveness. New centres outside of Buda were being established by art-loving bishops, a process which had started in Matthias's day. At Esztergom the initiator was Tamás Bakócz, at Vác, Miklós Báthory, at Pécs, Zsigmond Ernus de Csáktornyai, at Várad, János Filipcz, Ferenc Thurzó, and Ferenc Perényi created the centre, in Bács it was Péter Váradi, at Gyulafehérvár the bishops László Geréb and Ferenc Várday and the archdeacon János Lázói. The splendid achievement of Bakócz was the chapel of Esztergom (1507), a famous gem of Renaissance architecture. In his will (1517) Bakócz referred to it, as a marvelous work, "mirifici operis structura exactis." He evidently understood its architectural value and deeply appreciated its beauty. A similar personal relationship connected the founder and donor, Archdeacon János Lázói, with the chapel he erected at Gyulafehérvár.

In secular circles the Renaissance trend spread by way of official and family connections. In the Báthory family effective support of the Renaissance style became a tradition handed down from generation to generation. As early as 1484 the Ecsed residence of András Báthory the elder was ornamented with a coat-of-arms that displayed garlands of fruit. His youngest son András, who fought bravely in the wars against the Turks, ordered in 1526 a relief of the Holy Virgin to which he proudly referred as "egregium opus." Other families (the Gerébs, the Várdays, the Perényis, the Drágffys, etc.) likewise continued their patronage of the arts. This generous support of art generation after generation was an important factor in the continuity of the Renaissance in Hungary.

The palatine Imre Perényi was also an advocate of Renaissance style, and so were lesser representatives of the gentry: In 1503 László Lipthay had a Renaissance tabernacle installed in the church of Kisgerge. Désházy,

in 1514, commissioned Joannes Fiorentinus to carve a red marble portal for the church of Menyő. Antal Veres and Tamás Novai had a Renaissance door carved for the church of Keszű in 1521, with an inscription engraved on it that perpetuated their names as donors. The inscription on the door of the church of Bakta was also engraved to commemorate the donor: "MATTHEUS DE BAKTHA FACIUNDUM CURAVIT 1519."

Carvings on crests and tombstones furnish eloquent proof of the spread of Renaissance taste. The persons who ordered these things did so out of love for them; the relics we find provide evidence of a rapid and widespread change in attitudes and taste in general. From the end of the 15th century on, the great majority of tombstones were carved in Renaissance style, undoubtedly because the families of the deceased had so ordered. These orders were placed not only by members of leading families, but also by people whose names were quite obscure. The tombstone of István Csaby, captain of Eger Castle (from around 1534), is a case in point. These names make it clear that through the enthusiasm of the art-lovers the new style had found its way to every part of the country.

Besides individuals and families, official bodies also manifested their interest in the new style. In 1498 the District of Somogy had the certificate granting its armorial bearings painted by the eminent Italian miniaturist of the Buda court atelier, Master Cassianus (Cattaneo), notwithstanding the doubtless substantial expenditure involved in commissioning an artist of that calibre. In 1507 the town of Pest commissioned the carving of a Renaissance shrine.

The most specific case was that of the town of Bártfa. When the town-hall was built in 1507, the contract with the stonemason specified, "Ferimus conventionem cum Magistro Alexio hoc anno pro fenestris ytalicalibus..." Today we can still admire these Italian windows, characteristic ornaments of the building.

The Italian style also had many supporters

among those who lived in the silent seclusion of monasteries. The Paulites of Vázsony ornamented the prayer-book of Kinizsi's wife with Florentine motifs (1493-1494). The manuscript of the Hungarian Bible was illuminated in 1516 in Renaissance style at a monastery which probably belonged to one of the Dominican orders. In 1534 László

Hédervári brought his younger sister embroidery patterns from Italy; in a letter, he remarked, "I have never seen finer embroideries than those brought from Italy." This enthusiasm was a tribute to the beauty of ornamental Renaissance art. Its charm not only won the heart of László Hédervári, but appealed to almost all Hungarians.

TERÉZ GERSZI

REMBRANDT GRAPHICS IN BUDAPEST

The Budapest Museum of Fine Arts is justly famous not only for its paintings but also for its collection of prints and drawings, containing more than 7,500 drawings and nearly 100,000 etchings and engravings. From the fifteenth up to the twentieth century almost every important artist is represented by at least one fine drawing; and the Museum can pride itself on possessing almost the complete oeuvre in line-engravings and etchings of the greatest masters of graphic art, Dürer, Callot, Rembrandt and Goya.

From this rich and various material the Department of Prints and Drawings—once or twice a year as a rule—stages exhibitions illustrating the works of a particular master, drawings or prints of a particular period, or the development of a certain technique during the course of several centuries. For these shows catalogues are printed which, apart from listing the works exhibited, also contain reproductions and a comprehensive historical introduction.

Since the inauguration of the Museum altogether 97 exhibitions of graphic art have been presented to an increasingly interested public. Several exhibitions held in recent years have attracted the attention of internationally renowned researchers in art history. Among these exhibitions those entitled

"Master Drawings" (1956), "Art in the period of Mannerism" (1961), "North Italian Drawings" (1960) and "Drawings of Central Italy" (1963) deserve special mention. But none of them could vie in popularity with this year's Rembrandt exhibition which included 148 etchings and 15 drawings.

Among the collections of Rembrandt etchings all over the world that of the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts ranks high because from among the 279 etchings the master produced it possesses 240 prints. With one or two exceptions the collection contains all of his outstanding etchings. What is more, some of the compositions are to be found in several stages, enabling the spectator to study how the master elaborated a composition and what changes he made at a later phase on the copper plate in his effort to find a final solution that would satisfy him.

A significant part of the Budapest Museum's rich material originates from the collection of Prince Esterházy. This also applies to the Rembrandt drawings to be seen at the exhibition, but not to the etchings, most of which were owned by Professor Gyula Elischer, whose beautiful Rembrandt collection was bought at the beginning of this century by Károly Pulszky, then Director of the Museum.

The Rembrandt drawings were acquired by Prince Miklós Esterházy early in the nineteenth century. He purchased them partly from the Kollowrath collection of Prague and partly from Cesare Poggi, the Parisian *marchand-amateur* of Italian origin.

Virtually the whole of Rembrandt's artistic development can be followed in perusing these world-famous drawings, which were made at different times in a period stretching from 1630 to the years 1662-65. By and large the arrangement both of the drawings and of the etchings follows a chronological order. The drawings are not displayed separately but together with the etchings of the corresponding period.

One of the drawings—a study representing several figures and probably dating from 1630-31, i.e., before Rembrandt moved to Amsterdam—is among the earliest sketches recording his impressions of everyday life. At that time Amsterdam was the meeting place of people of the greatest diversity in rank and type, and Rembrandt never tired of watching and drawing them. The study shown in Budapest reveals a beggar sitting at the roadside, a scribe busy with his writing utensils and the half-figures of two men engaged in conversation—all of them linked only by the human warmth radiating already from Rembrandt's early works. There is a groping and searching quality to the drawing, for at that time Rembrandt had not yet achieved perfection in expressing his ideas.

The drawing entitled "Woman with Child and Dog" made about five or six years later, is a veritable masterpiece. It is closely linked with a number of sketches, drawn at the same time, in which, as here, Rembrandt recorded charming scenes of family life. In the figures of the mother bending down to her weeping child, of the child lifting its hand to its face, of the woman looking out of the window, and of the dog stretching its neck forward and sniffing, he recorded haphazard moments of transient movement, and in doing so imparted an amazing animation and intimacy to the scene. The

portrayal of lively emotions in the faces and the rendering of the milieu through a few lines evidences the touch of genius. The work reflects the inner world of a man serene, satisfied and full of hope, of an artist who can rejoice in little things and who sympathetically observes the agitation of everyday life around him.

At that time he must have been fascinated by the idea of depicting motion. The date of the small drawing "Rowers" can be set at about 1636. The intersecting, at first sight seemingly entangled lines convey to perfection the effort exerted by the figures moving in the same rhythm. The expression on the faces of the two men, sitting side by side and engrossed in their job, conjures up the hushed, soothing mood of a great expanse of water.

The first artistic manifestations of Rembrandt's interest in nature also date from the same period. Two of the earliest among these drawings (around 1636) are also to be found at the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts. Both of them represent an old peasant cottage. In one the house can be seen from a certain distance and in the other a detail of the same house is to be seen from a closer approach. Far from being mere sketches, preliminary studies to a painting, they represent independent works of art, made for their own sake. In these early drawings of landscapes as well as in the etchings created some years later Rembrandt endeavours to record the landscape and the houses as straight portraits, whereas in his paintings the landscapes appear as fantastic, Baroque compositions. This does not mean that in his drawings and etchings he only strove for an exact recording of what he had seen; he tried, rather, to give pictorial expression to the emotional atmosphere of the countryside or—as in this case—of the house.

The first drawing, representing the peasant cottage from some distance, emanates a kind of happy restlessness. The serpentine runners of the creeper which climbs the walls and the vibrating spots of light and

shade give animation to the quiet house. In contrast to the whimsically twisted runners, the tendrils and the irregular foliage of the creeper, drawn with painstaking detail, the fence in the foreground is indicated with hasty and thick—almost coarse—lines. The second drawing, showing part of the cottage, evokes a mood of silence and tranquillity, the hour of the siesta, enjoyed in the cool shade and security of an old house, on a close and sultry summer afternoon. No doubt, only a few hours separated the birth of these two drawings, so different in their mood and emotion.

The pen drawing with wash representing his wife, Saskia, presumably dates from the same period as the drawings just described. The young woman is sitting at the window, bathed in sunshine. Gracefully leaning her elbow on the window-sill, she rests her head on her hand. Her whole attitude indicates that she can have assumed this position only momentarily. In front of her there is a book leant against the wall. Her husband must have taken her by surprise when she was engrossed in reading. She turned to him, and with swift and fresh lines he caught her likeness.

In the mid-1640's Rembrandt was preoccupied with the problem of depicting the human body in the nude. A number of brilliant drawings and etchings bear witness to the devotion with which he studied the structure of the body and its connexion with the space surrounding it. The "Female Nude" of the Budapest Museum, a drawing in black chalk, is a splendid and monumental instance. Immersed in soft light, the simple and quiet figure stands in profile in the semi-darkness of the room. Only a few strokes are used to convey the plasticity of the forms. The soft parallel lines that indicate the forms of the body do not serve to separate the figure from space, but rather to fuse it with space. The face and head are marvellously drawn; the powerful and repetitive lines give vibrancy to the drawing by avoiding any exact delineation.

The pen-drawing representing a scholar may also have been produced in the 1640's. The agitated style already points to the older Rembrandt, whose art becomes more and more subjective and abstract. The carriage of the head and the tense expression reveal a deep understanding of the state of mind of a profound thinker. Some experts regard it as a portrait of the calligrapher van Coppenol, of whom Rembrandt made two portraits in etchings in the late 1650's.

It is the master's graphic style of the 1650's that we find most fully represented among the Budapest drawings. They include studies of figures, sketches for compositions and drawings of landscapes. During this decade Rembrandt reached the summit of his draughtmanship. His style underwent a rapid change, his intellectual restlessness increased and his penchant for experimentation came to full fruition.

In the 'fifties his studies for a variety of figures again grew in number. The model for a pen-drawing (about 1651) of an old man, wearing an ample and patched fur-coat and a high hat, was an inhabitant of the Amsterdam ghetto. His groping hands convey the hesitating gait of old people. The drawing is rich in careful details, and the subtly applied wash creates an almost palpable illusion of material reality.

"The Angel Leaving the Family of Tobias," on the contrary, is concentrates dramatic aspect. This drawing is an important link in a series of compositions on one and the same theme. Together they enable one to follow the evolution of a compositional concept. In the drawing here reproduced—unlike some earlier compositions of a narrative character—all unimportant and external motifs have been omitted with a view to concentrating upon the dramatic qualities of the scene—the consternation caused by the departure of the Angel. The space is dominated by a dazzling light in which the figures seem to be mere phantoms; their earthly existence has been transformed into an ethereal one. The movements and gestures, though indicated by a

few fine lines only, are comprehensible and suggestive. Only in his later years did Rembrandt reach such a concentration of artistic expression, and it is likely, therefore, that the drawing dates from the early 'fifties.

During this period, his connection with Italian art—particularly through etchings and engravings of Renaissance and contemporary masters—makes itself felt. An interesting evidence of this link is preserved in the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts. A fine pen-drawing of a hilly landscape, the work of a Venetian master, presumably Domenico Campagnola, once belonged to Rembrandt's own rich art collection, and it was this landscape, drawn with regular lines and laborious detail, that Rembrandt retouched with strong, powerful lines. His corrections aimed at emphasizing the chief motifs of the evenly and uniformly elaborated landscape. The sheet has thus become a unique testimony of the connection between Rembrandt and the Italian Renaissance.

Under the influence of Italian art his figures became simpler, bolder, at times truly monumental. His compositions acquired a tectonic structure, often symmetrical and well balanced. In one group of drawings his human figures have forms that are almost cubistic. In the Budapest drawing "The Two Shepherds," he applied simple, straight lines, leaving the inner surfaces almost blank, to depict two men in wide cloaks, one in profile, the other from the back. Even more simplified are the forms in the "Talkers," a drawing which also depicts two men and in which the lines, drawn with an almost dry brush, have faded here and there, and as a result almost vibrate. Rembrandt thus succeeded in suggesting the atmosphere surrounding the figures in a particularly convincing and realistic way. In the landscapes drawn during the same period he applied this artistic technique particularly effectively, e.g., in a drawing representing a part of the Amsterdam ghetto and known in art

literature as "Houses on Rozengracht." The place here depicted was not a long way from the house where Rembrandt spent the last years of his life in quiet seclusion. His chief aim in the drawing was to convey the square and the mood surrounding the group of houses. The austerity of the cubistic block of the buildings is softened by the irregular silhouette of the foliage of the trees, the whole immersed in a misty atmosphere and silvery light.

Only few drawings are extant from the last years of Rembrandt's life. Colours were the most suitable means for expressing the pictorial visions of that time. Often it was not with the brush but with his fingers or with a small spatula that he spread the paint onto the canvas, and for drawing he often used his pen holder. The sketch of his composition "Haman Falling Into Disfavour," dating from about 1662-65, was produced with this technique. The three characters of the scene are separated—or rather linked—by a heavy, cloth-covered table. Each of the three persons is portrayed at the moment of the outbreak of different passions. Esther, who has just given vent to her accusations, has stopped short, as if frightened by the violence of her own words. Ahasuerus has indignantly sprung to his feet and is at the point of passing judgment; he has not yet opened his lips, but the carriage of his head and his sinister look reveal everything. Under the weight of the accusations Haman has broken down; imploringly he raises his hand, although he knows that his fate has been sealed. The breath-taking tension of the silent scene is conveyed to perfection by the scarcely noticeable gestures. This very restraint serves to make Haman's tragedy the more authentic, immediate and overwhelming.

This masterpiece, reflecting a peerless dramatic and artistic concentration, crowns the Budapest collection of world-famous Rembrandt drawings.



GYULA DERKOVITS : STREET MUSICIANS
(Oil)





GYULA DERKOVITS: THE LAST SUPPER

(Oil)

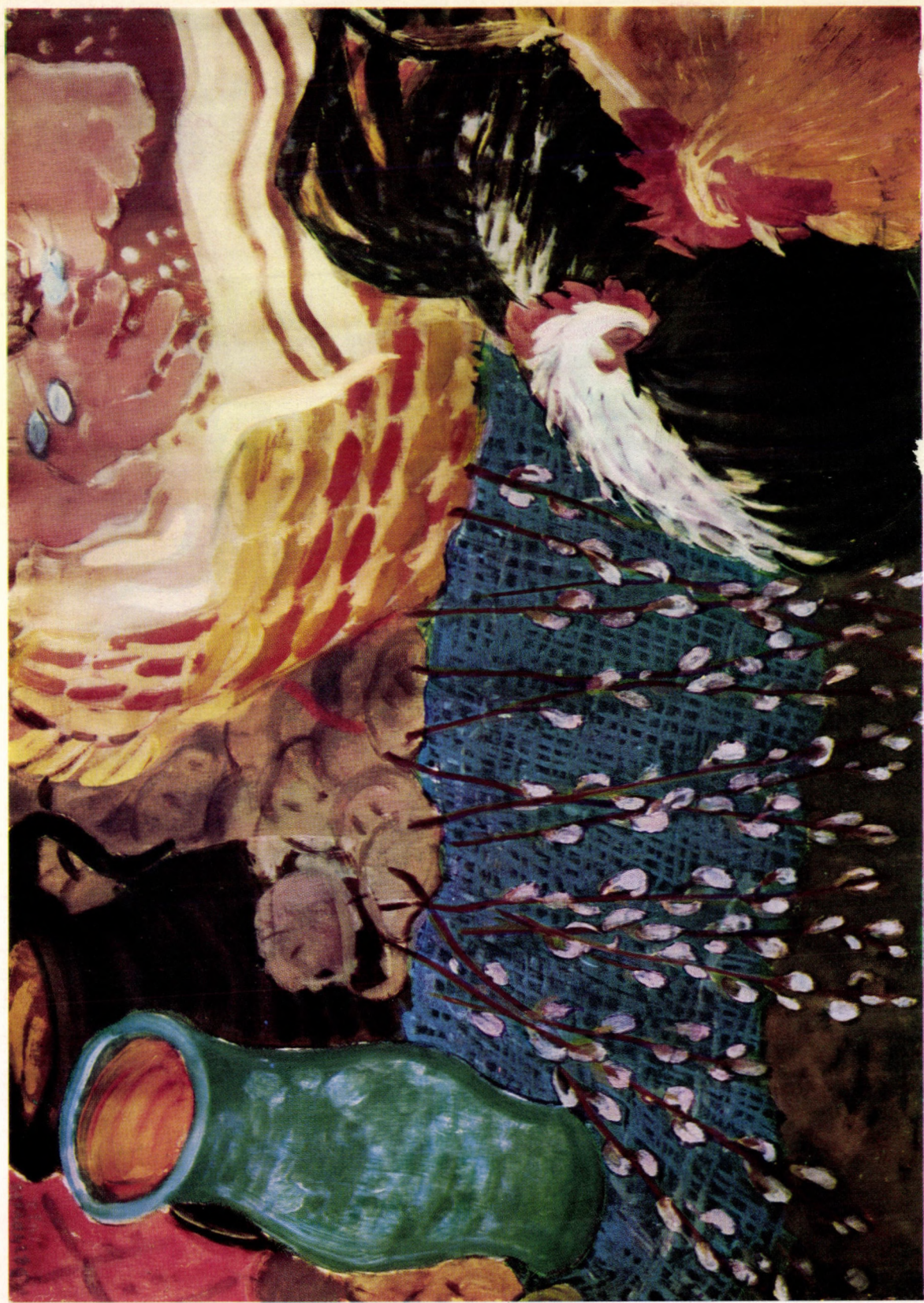
GYULA DERKOVITS: SHIPYARD WORKERS

(Oil)

Overleaf:

GYULA DERKOVITS: STILL LIFE WITH PUSSYWILLOW

(Oil)



THE SWING-DOOR

A Short Story

by

EMIL KOLOZSVÁRI-GRANDPIERRE

He was the first to sit down at the small round table. He waited with his hands folded over his stomach. Little by little the others arrived—some of them panting, some of them smiling, some cutting a wry face. The men still had red patches on their jowls from the early morning shave; the women wore freshly ironed blouses. Matches and lighters flicked, and soon yesterday's sour smell of cigarette smoke was stifled by the fresh smoke.

They began the day with the usual "five minutes for the press," under Stalin's picture. Someone summed up the domestic political articles, another the foreign ones. Of course he rose to speak:

"We cannot tolerate . . ." he burst out passionately while all heads turned towards him—fish-like eyes and faces, as if he were addressing a congregation of fishes in an aquarium.

Afterwards he walked over to his office. Hastily he arranged a few meticulously sharpened pencils beside the ink-stand, opened the drawers of his desk, placed before him the file of documents that had to be dealt with today, checked the ink, took his erasers from a drawer, in short, did everything that was required under the "Ready to Work" drive. Now he could face control without anxiety.

He was very hungry. This was the time when the drive "Don't Eat Your Breakfast in the Office" was linked with the struggle for peace. So he ate from his pocket. He had bread in the right-side pocket, cracklings in the left.

The cold water he drank after the last mouthful of cracklings was not to his liking. He had woken up rather late that morning and had not had time to fill his thermos flask with hot tea. He picked up a file and opened it as if about to study it. Then he had a smoke. After the third cigarette he heard his stomach grumble; cold water and cracklings did not seem to agree. He felt slightly dizzy.

He dipped his pen in the ink, wrote a few lines on a piece of paper, then struck them out one by one. He glanced at the clock—it was quarter past nine. He stared at the big black minute-hand on the white dial.

Heaving a sigh, he dipped in the file. A complicated case—very complicated. He dipped into another file. That, too, seemed to be complicated.

His brooding glance roamed from the desk to the floor, to the clock, to the ceiling, and back. Then he replaced the dossiers in the drawer, locked it, and thrust the key in his pocket. On a slip of paper he wrote: "Have gone to the lavatory, 9.49 a.m."

The corridor looked abandoned as in a monastery. Reception hours started at 11 a.m. Approaching door No. 4 on the right, he slowed down and his thoughts turned to Violet. They had warmed up to each other at the last club-meeting of their enterprise. It already seemed... well, if I'd just been a bit smarter!

He stood still, pricking up his ears. There was no one in the lavatory. He stepped up to the window and looked down at the vacant lot below on which children were emitting shrill whoops as they played ball. Mothers and grandmothers were sitting on the benches, knitting. Dust-covered lime-trees loomed beyond. He dragged at his cigarette, slowly, comfortably, relishing each inhalation. On his way back he again slackened his pace and thought of Violet. He ought to give her a ring and ask her to lunch with him in the canteen. But his hand became petrified as it picked up the receiver. Discouraged, he replaced it and again took the files from the drawer; but now the case seemed even more complicated than half an hour ago. He began to write. He wrote quickly but took his time to cross out each line he had written.

There was a knock at the door. The first client. He waved him in, had him take a seat, questioned him at some length, and the case became much clearer. But he had no time to make notes, for he was called to a conference.

"Excuse me," he said gently, and put everything back in the drawer. He left nothing on the desk, except the ink-stand and a chit saying: "Am attending a conference." Then he locked his door.

Hurrying steps broke the silence of the corridor. For a fleeting instant he saw Violet, but she disappeared in the crowd entering the hall. Clients were waiting on benches ranged along the right wall of the corridor.

At the conference he also made a speech.

"We cannot tolerate..." he began passionately, and his words were enthusiastically applauded. One of his neighbours squeezed his hand, encouragingly. Afterwards he just sat there doodling, as was his wont. Over and over again he drew the national emblem.

The conference ended shortly after one o'clock. The reception hours were over. An importunate fellow had bided his time. He showed him into his office and took the files and writing utensils from his drawer. The furious client made frequent references to his past, his deserts, his civic rights, and only then got down to facts. He was terribly hungry but heard him through.

"This isn't within my competence," he said gently. "I'm sorry, but you don't seem to have come to the right floor."

He looked at the clock. Half past two. Again he cleared the table. He walked out, washed and dried his hands, then placed a chit on the table with the message: "Have gone to the canteen." On another list he entered his name and appended the time 2.41 p.m.

In the canteen he was served quickly. He did not like the soup but dutifully ate it up, slowly trickling the last drops into his spoon. His stomach had been crying out for hot food; now that he got it he immediately felt better. He also consumed all the vegetables, scooping them out with his spoon.

When he had entered the canteen he had not seen Violet anywhere. He looked around for a while in the hope that she would come. Now he rose crestfallen. The waiter hurried past him with a dish full of vegetables. His stomach turned, and he winced.

At the entrance to the main building he handed his identity-card to the janitor who compared his face with the photograph and handed it back to him. He stepped into the lift. The long corridor on his floor was empty. Suddenly making up his mind he opened the door to Violet's office. She was not in. They said she would be leaving the next day on an official mission.

He looked for his name on the list and wrote in the time of his return: 3.19 p.m. So Violet will spend a fortnight out of town. He felt relieved. The more complicated aspects of the case seemed to have become clearer. He took the file from his desk and delved into it, even making notes on a separate sheet.

The telephone rang; he had to go over to the section head. There he was told that he had been given a new assignment. He was praised for having honourably stood his ground everywhere, though this was going to be the fourth job he would be tackling in two years.

"How much will my salary be cut?" he asked. A hundred and fifty forints. On the way back to his office he did some mental arithmetic, but got little satisfaction from it, so he gave it up. He pulled out the drawers of his desk and sorted out the contents—what belonged to the office and what to him.

The yellow autumn sun shone obliquely; he had left his sun-glasses at

home. That evening there was to have been a game of cards at Béla's place, but it had been called off because the wife was sick. So, after the office, he met his friends Kazi and Frici and drank beer with them in a small restaurant. He would not have minded getting drunk, but his budget could not afford more than two glasses.

"Boys, don't you know of anyone who could fix my bed?" he asked anxiously. "It creaks as though it were on its last legs. Each time I move I wake up. The joints have become warped, only a craftsman can repair it. Couldn't you suggest someone, boys?"

Suddenly the stifling atmosphere of the pub, the stench and dirt, oppressed him, and with a sigh he waved a deprecating hand.

At a street corner the three friends parted. He walked down to the Danube embankment and sat on a stone step until dusk fell. He slowly smoked a few cigarettes, threw the stumps into the water and watched the ripples until they were smoothed out by larger waves. Casting a last glance over his shoulder at the river, he started for home.

The smell of frying oil tickled his nose. So he stopped to buy two large doughnuts for his supper and devoured them as he went along.

The solitary sumach-tree in the otherwise bare courtyard was peculiar. Its leaves flared up whenever the light struck them. As he inserted the key in the door to his flat, he had a forboding of some unpleasantness awaiting him inside: maybe a corpse lying on the floor or swinging from the chandelier, or evidence of a domiciliary search.

On entering, he caught sight of the trapeze-shape brown wooden bedstead, tottering between the two walls. Looking his enemy in the face, he turned back the blanket, then, leaning on one hand, he pressed down the bed with his full weight to see whether it creaked. It did. He turned back the faded mattress and looked at the joints. Four iron clamps held the bedstead together. He looked under the bed, but saw nothing promising there either.

He wound up the alarm-clock, then sat on a chair behind the bed and started reading until he grew sleepy. He undressed and gingerly crept into the bed that heaved and creaked each time he moved. He lay flat on his back—and the bed grew silent. He turned on his side—and the bed creaked. He reached for the light switch—and again the bed creaked. Suddenly he fell asleep.

He awoke in a daze and, feeling that he could go to sleep again, turned over—no noise. How's that? He raised his back and let it drop with a thump. The bed heaved—but made not a sound. He tried again—to the same effect.

Could it be that the bed was cured?

Then the alarm-clock rang—softly, as if it had a damper on. He wanted

to jump out of bed, to the right, as was his wont—and he bumped his head against the wall. He turned round without thinking—and his feet did not land on the cold floor but sank into a soft thick carpet. He bent down wonderingly, as if disbelieving his feet. It was a carpet all right, not the small patch of a rag which his feet never could find before his bed of a morning. No, it was a real carpet. By way of trial he tugged at it, but it scarcely moved. Heavy pieces of furniture seemed to be standing on it.

Heavy furniture? In my flat?

He stared helplessly into the dark, strange silence of the room, his heart in his mouth. He was sitting on the edge of the bed. Suddenly he thought of Violet and had the silly and fleeting hope that were he now to thrust his hand under the blanket, he would find her soft body lying there. Misfortune or happiness, how often they hinge on some trifle, on a word or two uttered at the appropriate occasion. Did he tell Violet the right thing yesterday?

He could not find his cigarettes either, let alone Violet. Sniffing the air he somehow could feel that this was a spacious room. He uttered a word in an undertone, and his voice was lost in the dark. He jumped up with a start, retaining his breath and peering into that quiet darkness.

He stood there his head bent, resignedly, waiting for some word of command.

The soft ticking of the alarm-clock struck his ear. He would be late at the office, just today when he had to hand over his work. He made a step or two, and then a tiny point of light caught his eye. He headed towards it. A heavy curtain smelling of tobacco hung before the window. He pushed it aside and pulled up the shutter.

He noticed that the carpet ran nearly along the entire room. There were paintings on the wall, opposite him a marble fireplace, with Murano vases on it and an Empire clock, like a golden box, on the wall. He must dress quickly lest he be late. On his way to the bed, he looked into the large mirror. A man with fine-cut features, dense black hair and an *amoroso's* moustache was staring back at him from the mirror.

At last, he thought relieved. At last I shall know everything.

He quickly turned about to address the stranger.

"Could you tell me please . . ." he began, but then the words stuck in his throat. The stranger should have been behind him, but there was no one. He looked at the mirror and saw him again. The stranger wore pyjamas with black and dark blue stripes. He looked at his own legs—he too wore the same kind of pyjamas. No doubt the stranger had borrowed them from him. He gave a smile, but his smile froze when he saw the stranger smile and then grow earnest like himself.

My God! he thought, appalled, and felt a void expand within him and swallow up his thoughts. It was a sultry, hot, steadily expanding void. He took a step. So did the stranger. Again and again. He stood before the mirror and examined the unknown face bravely. Then he slowly raised his hand and felt the stranger's short, cropped moustache under his own nose.

After a few gestures before the mirror, executed in double, as though they were doing a ballet, there could be no further doubt, the handsome thirty-year-old man, full of life, was himself, the bitter, worn-out fifty-year-old has-been. If he should go to his own apartment, would he meet there the man he had been till then? And if so, what would he say, what would he feel?

He threw off his pyjamas, examined his own nakedness, and that of the man in the mirror. Yes, the image was equally naked. He heaved a sigh. He had to put up with it, with everything that was inevitable. There were three pockets in his pyjama top. Slipping into it, he thrust his hand into each of the three pockets. All he found was a woman's silken handkerchief.

"Why don't you come for your breakfast? Haven't you even had your bath? I thought I'd lost that handkerchief."

He let his head drop and did not look in the direction of that young ringing voice. With a glance he scanned the distance from the mirror to the door. Yet he did not take to flight. He stood there, rigid, his head in a constrained position. His heart was thumping. The fat was in the fire. . .

"Well? Don't you hear what I say?"

Lightly scurrying steps. First pattering, then a soft rustling on the thick carpet. Two arms embraced him and a head looked up at him from his chest. A tiny head, with pouting lips, astonished eyes and quivering nostrils. The freshness of twenty-five years spent without doing a stitch of work.

"Have you got lumbago?"

"That's right, but it seems to be passing now." He spoke in an unnatural voice. In a gesture of pity, she stroked and pressed and kissed his neck, his mouth, his ears. From her words he knew she was his wife and that her name was Susie.

She thrust her hand into the pyjama pocket, dug out her handkerchief, blew her nose, then replaced the handkerchief. She wore a night-gown that looked like the tulle skirt of a ballerina; it had no pockets.

"Go and take a bath," Susie said, giving him a jocular shove. "The hot water will do your lumbago good. I'm devilishly anxious to get started soon."

He steered towards the door with the assurance of a sleep-walker. It was the bathroom all right.

The bath-tub was full of steaming water. He stood still and looked about

him. The place was lit up by an opaque white bulb. The built-in tub was big and square, the soap green, and there were Turkish towels on the rack.

When had he last taken a bath? It may have been two weeks ago. In a basin. Hardly the ideal thing, but this, this was it!

He stepped up to the edge of the bath-tub and looked at the steaming water. The transom-window sucked in the rising vapours. The plug dangled from a chromium chain. He heard a sound and turned around in fright. A dark-blue bath-gown resembling a sleeping bat, was hanging from the door. No reason to turn his back on it.

"Have you had your bath?" he heard Susie's voice.

"I have," he fibbed, quickly moistening his hair and his face.

"Come on! I'm famished."

On catching sight of the rich breakfast on a small table, with the newspaper beside the napkin, he turned pale. He looked at the clock. It was almost nine. No, he wouldn't escape some disciplinary procedure at the office. He felt he was losing his head.

"Where are my clothes? Where are my clothes?"

Susie scanned him from head to foot, and put down the bread-and-butter she was eating.

"Why, Daddy, have you gone cuckoo?"

She resumed her breakfast. The pleasure of eating seemed to occupy her whole being. Contentment radiated from her.

"You're pretty calm, I must say," he remarked, still standing.

She shrugged and swallowed another mouthful.

"What's the matter? Have you forgotten that you've taken a two weeks' holiday? You seem to be all done in. We'll eat, get in the car and drive down to the lake as fast as possible. I don't want you to go dotty, Dad!"

He took a few bites with a bad conscience. Not until he was dressed did he calm down a bit. He had his smoke before the window. Outside he saw trees and a few flower-beds.

"Let's be going, Dad."

"Why do you say Dad? Why don't you call me by my name?"

"What's got into you? Haven't I always called you Dad?"

On their way out he read his own name-plate: "Gedeon Soós." True enough, but what's my occupation?

The car was waiting at the kerb. He had no idea how to drive a car. Susie had the key. After unlocking the car-door she sat down in the farther seat. So she wanted him to sit at the wheel. He clutched his back, then ruefully shook his head. Susie's face lit up.

"Oh, Daddy! So you're going to let me drive?"

To start with, things were all right, but when they reached the busy streets congested with traffic, shivers kept running down his spine. He clung to the door, as far from her as possible, his hand clutching the handle, his feet jammed against the floor of the car. Whenever she stepped on the gas, Susie winked at him.

As soon as they were on the highroad and he saw that there were almost no cars coming towards them, he calmed down.

"Look, how beautiful!" she exclaimed. "Look at the marvellous scenery!"

Her enthusiasm about the autumn landscape was boundless, and he obediently turned his head to and fro, though it was not the yellow-leaved willow groves or the meadows studded with purple crocuses that he watched; what he was looking out for in constant terror was some hay-cart turning in from a by-road or a policeman stepping out from behind a tree.

The recreation home was surrounded by plane-trees. A gravelled alley led to the entrance. Arm in arm they reached the swing-door. Susie held him back.

"Look!" she enthused. "What a splendid couple we are! Susie and Daddy . . . Two fine specimens of the human race."

She nestled against his body and kissed him, while from the corner of her eye she observed their image reflected in the panes of the swing-door. Once in their room, she threw off all she had on. He neatly placed his own things in the wardrobe, smoothing each shirt with the edge of his hand.

"Now?" she asked. "Or later?"

In reply, he involuntarily rubbed his back. For a fleeting instant he glanced at her, and what he saw imbedded itself in his memory. He flushed like a thief caught red handed. He heard a rustling sound and inferred that Susie was putting on her bathing-suit.

"Hurry up, Daddy! I'll be waiting for you at the beach."

The door slammed, and he sat down on the uncomfortable white-backed chair. He lit a cigarette and eyed the floor. Why had it ever occurred to him in those days to save money? He had deposited five thousand pengős in the bank. The war broke out in the autumn of '39. And he lost all his money during the post-war inflation period. He had wanted to make a trip to Naples, right across the Adriatic and through the Straits of Messina.

Why Naples?

Susie had made the room cosy by setting out her own photos. There were photos on the chest of drawers, under the mirror. Snapshots showing her in sundry bathing-suits. A portrait on the night-table. One of the pictures reminded him of the girl from Naples.

He remembered her very clearly now. It had lasted for three days only.

How often her picture had haunted him when he was a prisoner of war in Italy! Later her face had faded from his memory, but Susie brought it back now.

He heard the gong. It was lunch-time. The door flew open. Susie. Already she was squatting before him. The sun's warmth emanated from her body, the odour of Lake Balaton from her hair.

"Dad! What's happened to you, Dad? You haven't even undressed!"

The soup was served quickly, and he was glad of it, for he was very hungry. As was his wont, he started to let the remaining drops trickle into his spoon. Susie slapped his hand. Her eyes flashed.

"What do you think you are doing?"

Regretfully he watched the waiter remove his plate with the remnant of soup in it. He dropped his slapped hand on his knees, stroking it with the other. She regretted her outburst and kept on smiling at him, hoping he would smile back. He did not. He was afraid to open his mouth. A new kind of fear, fear of any subject of conversation that might come up—for they must have been married a year or two, and what would happen if some memorable common experience should bob up?

After lunch the woman started towards their room. He followed reluctantly. In the hall he stopped short. Susie looked back questioningly from the stairs.

"I want to have a look at the newspapers," he said.

So they settled down at a table littered with mountains of newspapers and magazines, new and old. He immediately started sorting them out, so as to put an end to the confusion.

"Newspapers should be arranged according to dates," he muttered to himself.

Susie got up, her eyes glittering, her face aflame.

"Are we going up?" she asked with unmistakable emphasis.

"I want to sleep . . . sleep . . ." he said plaintively.

There was a double bed in their room and they went to bed without delay. He immediately turned on his side, his back to her, and he tried to breathe evenly, as if he were asleep.

But he was wide awake, painfully awake. If I fall asleep now—he thought—the hotel, the lake would vanish into thin air. And Susie too. He heard the scratch of a match; she was lighting a cigarette. The current of air wafted the smoke towards him, he inhaled it, thinking of her mouth. Susie did not budge but her body was on fire, her back burnt his.

Feeling his side grow numb he climbed out of bed and looked through the window. Of a sudden he turned back and asked:

"Do you love me?"

"How can you ask such a thing, Daddy? Of course I love you."

He shook his head and whispered:

"Me? Do you love *me*?"

In the afternoon they walked down to the lake. The sun shone obliquely, the frogs were croaking. A stork flew over the lake, its long red legs trailing behind, its wings flapping lazily. They sat and sat, watching the approach of dusk. His eyelids became heavy; he lay down and soon sank into a deep sleep.

The lake sent its cool breath towards them, wave after wave. Susie shivered and touched the man's shoulder to wake him. He sprang to his feet and shouted wildly:

"We cannot tolerate!"

Susie watched the cry as it receded on quick wings, they seemed to lose their motion, became a floating speck, and soon dissolved in the hazy distance. Dusk set in, the sun's last red rays were tinging the horizon and gradually faded away. By the time they got up and made for home, it had become dark. In the dining-room the lamps were burning and beneath them dark figures were bending over white table-cloths here and there.

At the entrance he let Susie pass ahead of him through the swing-doors, and he waited until the doors swung to again. Then he stepped forward but suddenly stopped dead, withdrawing his arm hesitatingly. The panes of the swing-door again reflected the old image—a worn-out man of about fifty. He looked at the image uncertainly, then smiled and hailed his own self with a wave of the hand, as one does an old acquaintance. The image waved back.

"Well," he said in an undertone, "that too has come to an end."

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

BOGNÁR, József (b. 1917). Economist, MP, Professor of Economics at Karl Marx University in Budapest, President of the Institute for Cultural Relations. Has held various high official posts since 1946, has been Mayor of Budapest, Cabinet Minister, etc. As an economist has turned from problems of demand analysis to questions of general economic planning. Is a member of the Editorial Board of this review as well as a frequent contributor. See his "Economic Planning in Ghana," *The N.H.Q.*, Vol. III, No. 7; "Science and its Application in Developing Countries," Vol. IV, No. 11; "The Structure of the Hungarian Economy," Vol. V, No. 14; "Coexistence and the World Trade Conference," Vol. V, No. 16; "Guidance Through Coordination," Vol. VI, No. 20.

PEVSNER, Nicholas (b. 1902), the well-known British art historian and authority on the history of architecture, spent a fortnight in Hungary in the autumn of 1965, in the course of which he visited some of the architectural treasures of the country and gave a number of lectures.

VARGA, Gyula (b. 1938). Agrarian economist, research worker at the Agrarian Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest. Has written a book in collaboration with fellow scientists on long-term production planning in agriculture and contributed to several publications in this field. See "A Cooperative Village," *The N.H.Q.*, Vol. VI, No. 19; "Changes in the Social and Economic Status of Hungary's Peasantry," Vol. VI, No. 20.

JUHÁSZ, Ferenc (b. 1928). Poet, one of the most outstanding and controversial figures of Hungarian literary life today. His first volume appeared in 1949 when he was still at college; nine published volumes of poems mark the development from folk-song and

ballad inspiration to poems of enormous sophistication with a completely modern approach. After a long period of political and philosophical frustration a new creative period appears to be opening with his last two volumes: *Virágzó Világfa* (a volume of selected poems, 1965) and *Harc a fehér bárányal* (new poems, 1966) both published by Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó. His poems have been translated into German, French, Italian, Russian and other languages.

VERES, Péter (b. 1897). Writer. Spent a large part of his life as a peasant. Later became a key figure in the populist writers' movement between the two wars and was deeply involved in the political struggles of the period. Following 1945 held various important posts in public life, including that of Cabinet Minister. His novels, and a long autobiographical sequence, deal with peasant life of the past and present. Also as essayist and a vigorous and original critic of contemporary literature and thought. In 1966 he published an autobiographical work: *Az ország útján* ("The Road of the Nation"); and a volume of essays *Évek során* ("As Years Pass By."). See his "Petty Bourgeois?" *The N.H.Q.*, Vol. IV, No. 12; "First Days on the Shores of the New Order," in Vol. VI, No. 17.

FARAGÓ, Vilmos (b. 1929). Journalist on the staff of *Élet és Irodalom*, a literary weekly in Budapest. Originally taught literature. See his "Thirteen per mill," *The N.H.Q.*, Vol. V, No. 16; "The Firm as a Functional Model in the Planned Economy, 2. Human Relations," Vol. VI, No. 18; "Twenty Years," Vol. VI, No. 19.

CSERES, Tibor (b. 1915). Novelist and short story writer. Began his literary career with poems. Works on the staff of *Élet és Iro-*

dalom a Budapest literary weekly. The majority of his novels and stories deal with past and present village life.

SZABÓ, Júlia. Art historian. Studied the history of art and English at Budapest University. Main interest is twentieth century and modern Hungarian art. Works at the Hungarian National Gallery in Budapest. Has published a study on Gyula Derkovits in *Acta Historica Artium Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, in 1964. Took part in the preparations of the 1965 retrospective exhibition of Derkovits' work in Budapest.

KRISTÓF, Attila (b. 1938). Journalist. Graduated from Eötvös University in Budapest. Works on the editorial staff of the Budapest daily *Magyar Nemzet*. Writes articles, short stories and poems.

ELEK, Judit. Film director and writer of film scripts; working at one of the Budapest film studios. Directed the documentary *Találkozás* ("Encounter"). Published a novel in 1964. At present preparing a documentary on youth. The report published here forms part of a longer work.

HALÁSZ, Zoltán (b. 1914). Deputy Editor of The New Hungarian Quarterly, journalist, author of books on cultural history. Graduated at Budapest University, was Rome correspondent of MTI, the Hungarian News Agency, reader with Corvina Press, Budapest; His publications include: *Budapest felfedezése* ("Exploration of Budapest," 1959); "Hungarian Wine Through the Ages" (in English), Corvina Press, 1958); *Ur városától Trójáig* ("From the City Ur of the Sumers to Troy," 1961); *Históriák a magyar régészet történetéből* ("From the History of Hungarian Archeology," 1964); "AurélStein in Central Asia" (in preparation). See his "Sociographic Survey in a Workers' District of Budapest," The N.H.Q., Vol. IV, No. 11; "Brussels Encounter with Marie de Hongrie," Vol. V, No. 14; "Home-

Thoughts from Across the Channel," Vol. VI, No. 17.

RUFFY, Péter (b. 1914). Journalist, on the editorial staff of the Budapest daily *Magyar Nemzet*. Lived for a period in Paris as a reporter. Main journalistic activities in the cultural field, they earned him the Ferenc Rózsa award, a high distinction. Publications include several books of travel, collected journalism and a novel. See his "The Ninety-five Years of the Art Historian Károly Lyka," The N.H.Q., Vol. V, No. 14; "We Were Bored," Vol. V, No. 15.

MOLDOVA, György (b. 1934). Writer. Worked as miner, building labourer, waiter, stonemason, boilerman and factory hand before training in the Budapest Academy of Dramatic and Cinematographic Art. Has published two volumes of short stories, wrote the script for a recent film; another collection of short stories and a novel are to be published shortly. Spends much of his time roaming the countryside visiting odd places and meeting odd people.

SZABADY, Egon (b. 1917). Demographer. Departmental head in the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, secretary of the Research Group in Demography of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; editor of *Demográfia*, the Hungarian journal dealing with demography. Was in charge of the 1960 census in Hungary, and is a member of the International Demographical Union. See his "International Demographical Symposium in Budapest," The N.H.Q., Vol. IV, No. 11.

BERÉNYI, György (b. 1928). Journalist, publisher's reader at Corvina Press in Budapest. Graduated from Eötvös University. Has published several volumes of general essays and sociology.

HORVÁTH, Zoltán (b. 1900). Political writer and historian. Before 1945 was mainly

engaged in publishing and journalism. In 1934 published a biographical novel on László Teleki, leading diplomat during the War of Independence of 1848-49. In 1942 edited *Világtörténelmi Lexikon* ("Encyclopedia of World History"). Has translated many English, French and German works, and written essays on Tolstoy, Thackeray, Dickens, C. F. Meyer and Lajos Kossuth. A leading member of the Social Democratic Party, was active after 1945 as a political writer and later as editor of the party daily, *Népszava*. Arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment in 1949, he was set free and rehabilitated in 1955. In recent years has devoted himself to history. In 1961 published a comprehensive work on Hungarian political, economic and cultural life of the first decades of the twentieth century, entitled *Magyar századforduló* ("Turn of the Century in Hungary"). Has recently written a two-volume monograph on László Teleki. See his "Clio and the Social Democrats," *The N.H.Q.*, Vol. V, No. 15; "Nation and Progress," Vol. VI, No. 19.

FÖLDES, Anna. Journalist and literary historian, at present on the staff of *Nők Lapja*, an illustrated weekly for women. In addition to studies in literary history, has published a book on the problems of low-standard trash in popular literature. See also her "Mr. G. A. in X., Tibor Déry's New Novel," *The N.H.Q.*, Vol. VI, No. 17; "A Generation Mirrored in Hungarian Literature," Vol. VI, No. 20.

SÁNDOR, Iván (b. 1930). Playwright and drama critic, on the staff of *Film, Színház, Muzsika* an illustrated Budapest weekly for film, theatre and music. Has written several plays for the stage as well as for radio and television. See "The Summer Season," *The N.H.Q.*, Vol. VI, No. 20.

BÍRÓ, Yvette. Film-critic, research worker at the Budapest Institute of Cinematography. Graduated from Eötvös University. Wrote *A film formanyelve* ("The Visual Language of

Film") which appeared in 1964, and another on dramatic rules and the film which will shortly be published. Writes regular film reviews for several periodicals.

SZABÓ, György (b. 1932). Literary historian and critic. Studied at Eötvös University, Budapest. Chief field of research is twentieth century Hungarian and Italian literature. His book "Futurism" appeared in 1962. Has published studies on Pirandello, Quasimodo and a travel book on Italy. A play of his ("Play and Reality") was performed in 1963. At present works on the staff of *Új Írás*, a literary monthly. See his "The Reception of a Novel," *The N.H.Q.*, Vol. IV, No. 12.

KÖRNER, Éva. Art historian. Graduated from Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. Has written a book on Picasso (1960) and a number of essays on Hungarian art of the inter-war period. See her "Painter on the Defensive: Lajos Vajda," *The N.H.Q.*, Vol. V, No. 16; "Jenő Gadányi," Vol. III, No. 9.

GERSZI, Teréz. Art historian, working at the Graphic Department of the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts. She is engaged in catalogueing and describing the important graphic collection in the Museum, especially the German and Netherland works. Has published articles in this field in the *Bulletin du Musée National Hongrois des Beaux Arts, Acta Historiae Artium, Ond Holland* and *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen*. Her "Catalogue of 15th-16th Century Netherland Drawings in the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts" is to be published shortly.

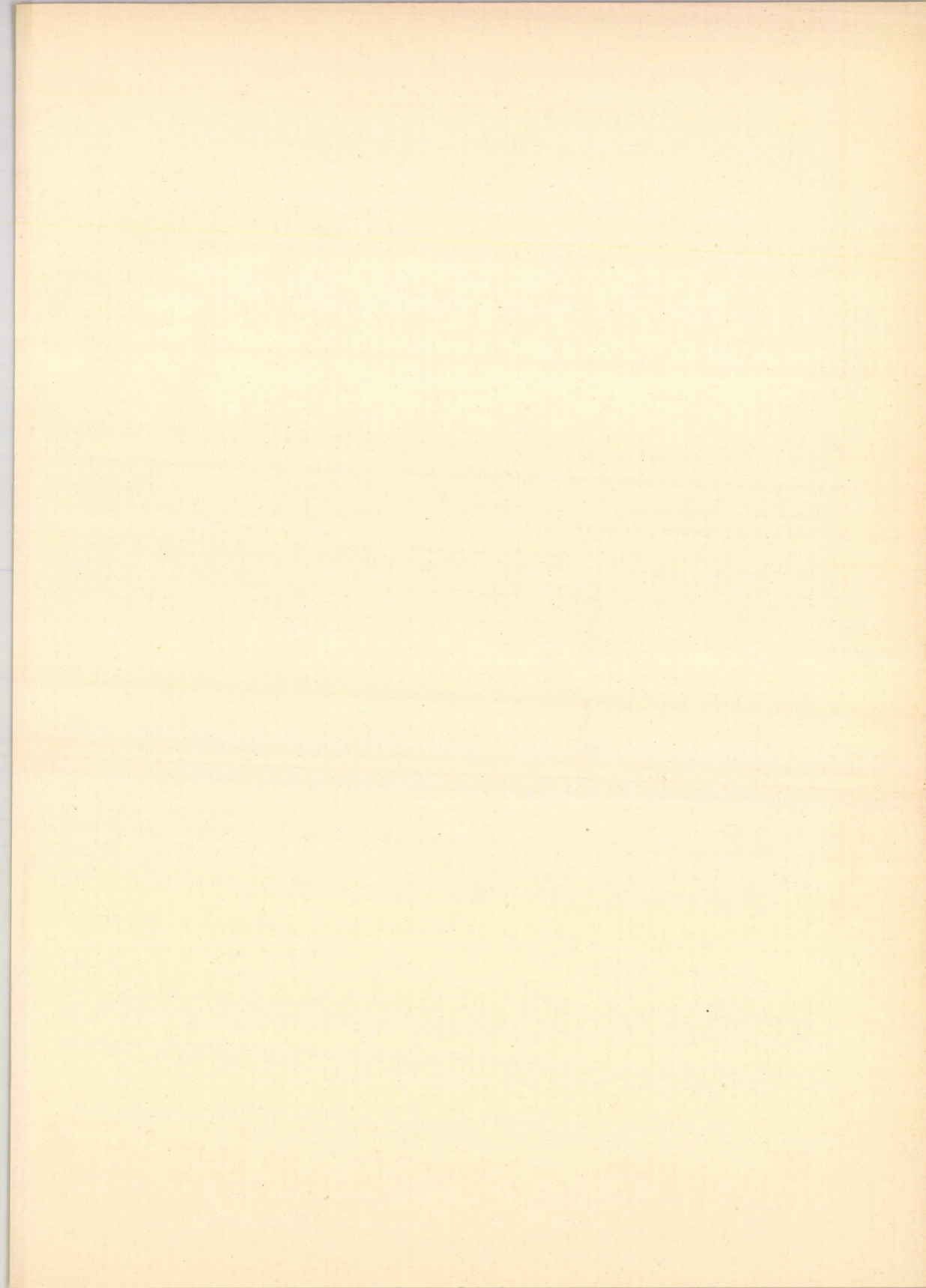
BALOGH, Jolán. Art historian. Head of the Department of Early Sculptures at the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts. Has concentrated mainly on this important collection and on its classification. Has published numerous articles on this subject in various periodicals. Also interested in the Hungarian Renaissance, including the investigation of records and artifacts of the period. See her

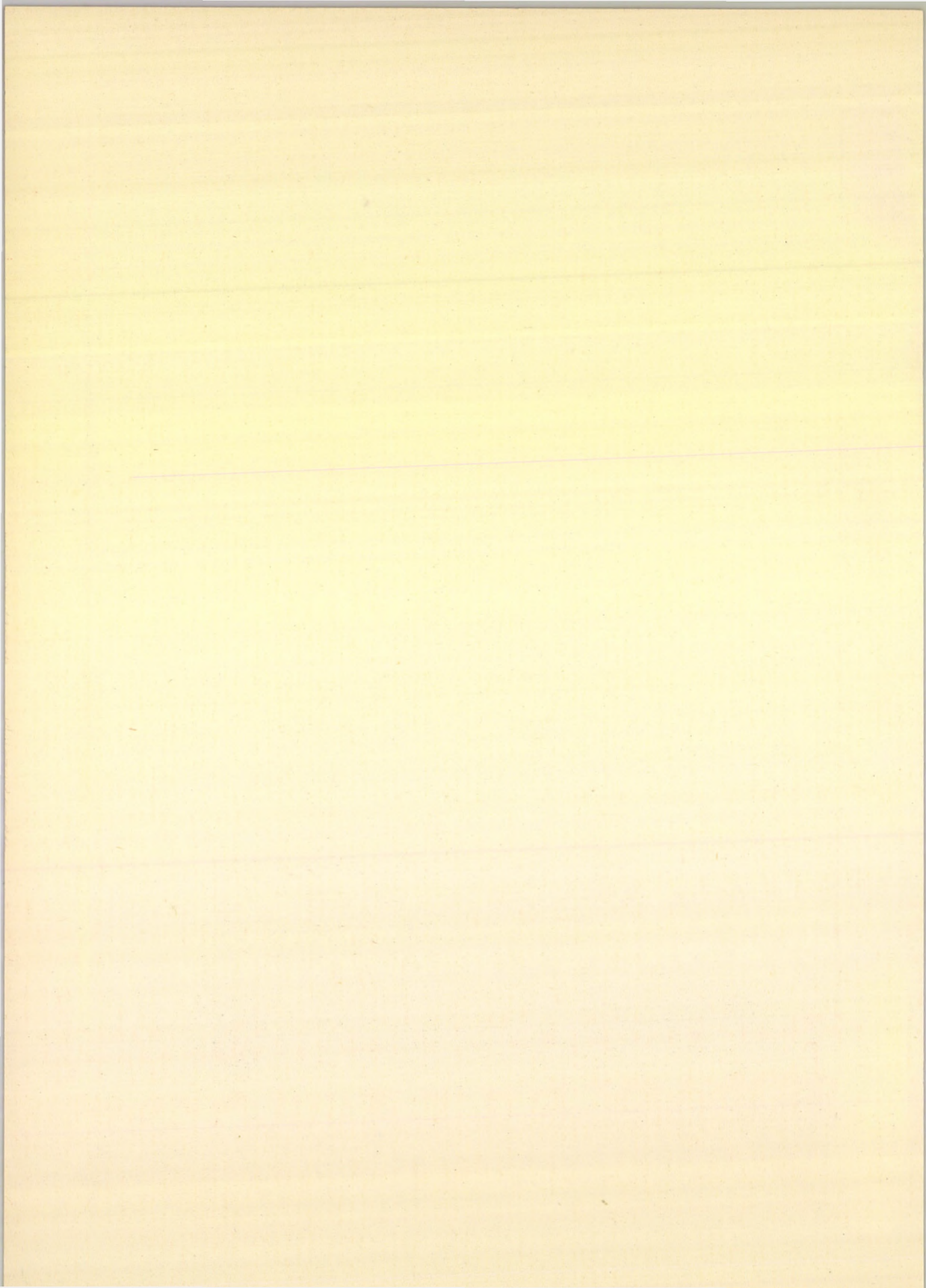
"Italian Sculpture at the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts," The N.H.Q., Vol. IV, No. 9.

KOLOZSVÁRI-GRANDPIERRE, Emil (b. 1907). Novelist, short story writer. Ironically described the drift towards fascism of the Hungarian middle classes in his earlier novels: *Dr. Csibráki szerelmei* ("The Loves of Dr. Csibráki"), *A Nagy ember* ("The Great Man") etc., broadening his treatment of society in *Tegnap* ("Yesterday"), an autobiography, and in *Mérlegen* ("In the Balance"),

a novel written after the liberation. Has also published several widely-read volumes of short stories. In 1965 he published two novels: *Aquincumi Vénusz* ("The Venus of Aquincum") and *A burók* ("The Cover"). See his "Christmas Celebration," The N.H.Q., Vol. III, No. 8.

ERRATUM. On p. 153 of No. 20, our previous number, in János Jemnitz's "Mihály Károlyi and the English Left," the date of Sidney Webb's letter should read 1932, and not 1923.
— Ed.





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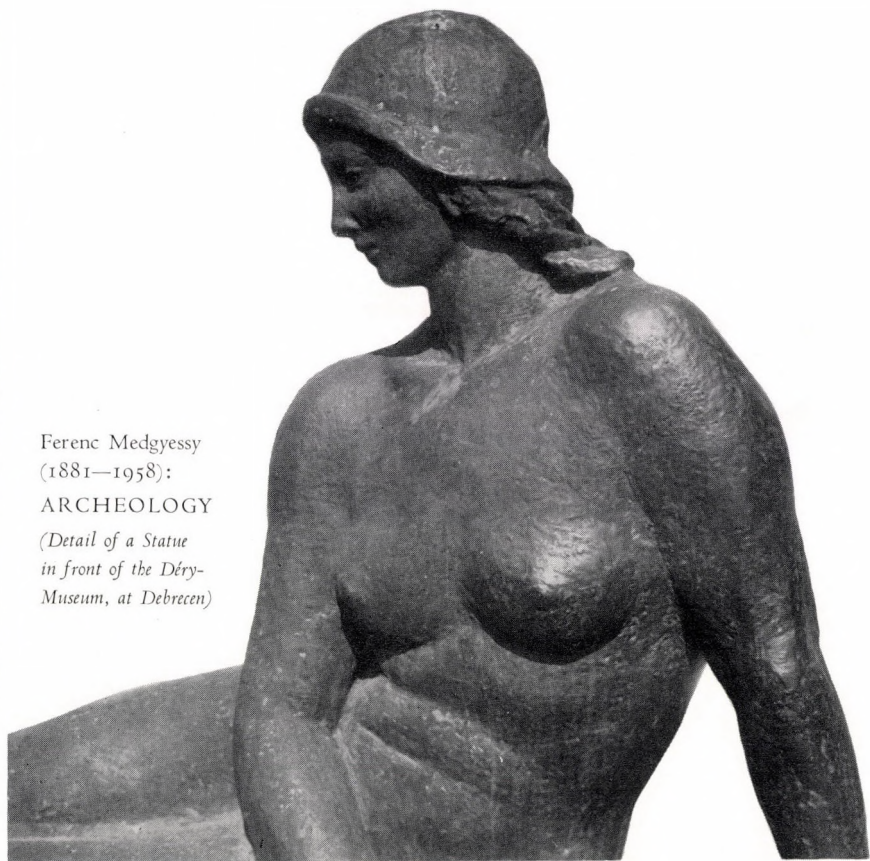
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