The New Hungarian Quarterly

26

KODÁLY

Bence Szabolcsi — Dezső Keresztury — Percy M. Young

Coexistence without Illusions

Péter Rényi

Elementary Americanology

Iván Boldizsár

Budapest in 1967

Zoltán Halász

Foreign Trade in the New Economic Mechanism

József Bognár

Short stories

Péter Veres, István Örkény, Iván Mándy

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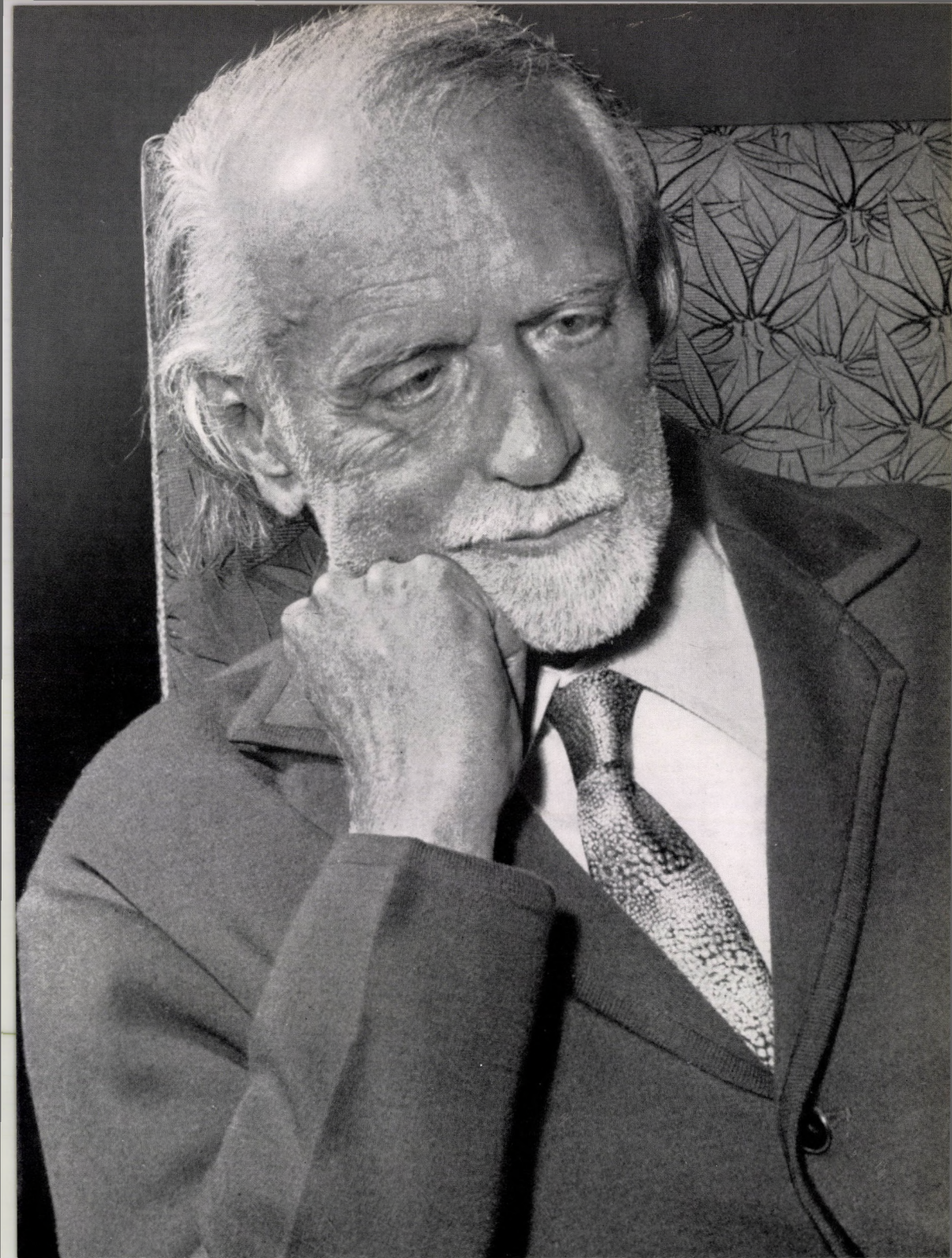


Zoltán Kodály
1882–1967

FAREWELL TO ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

by

BENCE SZABOLCSI

A royal oak has fallen. The last of the great royal oaks among us, the last giant of the generation which transformed the intellectual aspect of Hungary in the early years of this century, and through all the following decades. This was the generation of Endre Ady, Zsigmond Móricz and Béla Bartók, the generation of creators and pioneers, those who broke through barriers and "cast up a highway for the people." But of all of them perhaps none "spent the wealth of his rich life on the millions" as did Zoltán Kodály, the poet of music, youngest brother of all the great Hungarian poets, Dániel Berzsenyi, Ferenc Kölcsey, Mihály Vörösmarty and János Arany.

What he undertook was no lesser task than to recreate Hungary in music. The work he has accomplished and bequeathed to us, cannot be measured; his compositions are more than pieces of music, his scientific and teaching activities more than scholarship and education. Single-handed he accomplished the work of generations; single-handed he refashioned the minds of generations. He gave them faith, confidence and a future; a direction and a goal. The classic wholeness of life which he discovered in the poetry and music of the nation radiated through his work and his teaching on to all around him, on all his pupils and the poets, artists and musicians of his lifetime, all creative minds, all Hungary—all were his pupils. People and poet gave each other, multiplied manifold, what they received from each other. His was a creative and integrated life, growing harmoniously and closing harmoniously, as those classic masterpieces he studied, followed and revived; in him life and work were fused in an indivisible radiance which has today spread all over the cultured world.

To this catafalque come today to pay tribute not only the representatives of the Hungarian and foreign musical worlds, not only Hungarian music, but also the representatives of Hungarian literature, folklore, education, language and history, all those people who symbolize what are the cultural riches of the nation; the Hungarian language, to which he could impart the profoundest poetic resonance, Hungarian poetry, whose hidden secrets he knew; the Hungarian past, which in matchless heroic dreams

Farewell speech at the funeral on March 11, 1967.

he recalled, linking it at the same time with the life of today, recognizing in that past our present; Hungarian education, which he rejuvenated in the spirit of music.

But in all these things, and above all these things, Zoltán Kodály was a poet—the poet of the thunder of biblical psalms; of the fairy delight of the folk tale; of the sad melodies of the Hungarian countryside; of the dark tragedies of the ballad; the poet of the Psalmus Hungaricus and Háry János; the man who leaves us now was one of the greatest poetical musicians of our age.

And we, his pupils, who followed and honoured him, like wanderers bidding farewell to the setting sun and awaiting the darkness, pay him our last respects with heavy hearts.

And yet the last great poem he was working on, Endre Ady's poem "The Trumpet of God" intending to set it to music, seems to have been designed for our consolation, as was his Psalmus Hungaricus. "This is a command: let all live. This is a command: let all rejoice!" As if these words of Endre Ady were proclaiming Zoltán Kodály's will, the legacy he has left us and the world.

Life and joy—this is the farewell he has given his nation, this is his last message, speaking to us from beyond the grave in imperishable notes.

KODÁLY—THE MAN AND THE ACHIEVEMENT

by

DEZSŐ KERESZTURY

His lifework grew as ancient oaks: their annual rings preserve the memory of a historical past more important than their own, their leaves give her deepening shade, and their bark, thick and crusty, suggests the strength of endurance. His physical appearance, it is true, did not in the least suggest an oak, yet he himself had the impression of sturdiness given out by those who have rich and full lives. His thin-boned, graceful body developed a timeless endurance and flexibility; his movements, slightly hesitant until middle life, settled into a calm assurance; his manner of speaking in fits and starts, punctuating concise sentences with long pauses, gave way to fluency; and his quiet, veiled voice took on a rougher timbre. The whole man seemed to grow in strength until the moment of his death. Not long before he died he made a joke of the fact that he could take two stairs at a time when in a hurry; in the last few years he travelled more than in all his life before; and his fresh, clever, and ironic conversation dazzled everyone.

He owed his many wide interests, the broadly based intensive culture of his manhood, his intellectual and physical integrity and activities to some extent to the lasting educational influence of the Eötvös College in Budapest, where he studied after leaving secondary school. The Eötvös College was founded when he was young on the model of the Paris Ecole Normale Supérieure, and its educational methods were also borrowed from Oxford and Cambridge. It's aim was the all-round man, and its method, creative study based on specialized knowledge; the continuous development of character through free discussion in the service of humanist ideals. The first generation of the College had already produced a number of Hungarians eminent in art, literature, science and education.

The Ideal

This ideal perhaps found its fullest embodiment in Kodály. His greatness, perhaps, depended in part on the fact that throughout his life he governed and controlled his exceptional talent with disciplined purposefulness and consistency. Kodály combined in himself the creative artist with the methodical and systematic scholar—and the results achieved by the two were transformed into treasure for the public by the educationalist, dedicating his life to the national culture of his country.

The Composer

As a student in Eötvös College, Kodály studied with the intention of becoming a secondary school teacher of Hungarian and French, and obtained his Ph.D. in these literatures. At the same time he studied composition at the Budapest Academy of Music. His teacher, János Koesler, was a devotee of Brahms, but the kind of teacher who believed in giving gifted students free scope in developing their individuality. They included Béla Bartók, Leó Weiner, Zoltán Kodály and also Imre Kálmán, who revived the Hungarian operetta. At that time the Hungarian Academy of Music was dominated by the schools of Brahms and Wagner, and the same standards and taste dominated Hungarian concert audiences—a cultured élite which made the Hungarian capital a centre of international music. Kodály rejected them, just as he rejected the pseudo-Hungarian music of the time, which he believed had lost any national significance it had once possessed, and had no future. It is possible that the French orientation of the Eötvös College helped to direct his interest toward the modern French composers of the period, chiefly Debussy. Kodály knew this pioneer of modern music personally; his first important instrumental compositions followed in the French composer's footsteps, and he wrote a study of the musician, which still remains the best Hungarian essay on Debussy. All this, however, although it produced several excellent compositions, was no more than first gropings. Together with the others of his generation, Kodály was looking for the sources which would rejuvenate Hungarian music. When he found them, he found himself.

Not even Liszt, toward the end of his career, had been content with the pseudo-Hungarian style of the *verbunkos*, the popular Hungarian music of the nineteenth century. For a long while Kodály's generation chose to reject this tradition altogether. Intensifying and extending the earlier

efforts of folk music collectors they went deeper in their search for the most ancient layer of genuine Hungarian folk music, the world of music many centuries old which was still alive in Hungarian villages, among that section of Hungarian society relegated to the depths, and retrained by their poverty.

These tunes had been preserved in the memory of the people not outworn, seminal in their force. It was on this world of music that modern Hungarian composers like Weiner, Bartók and Kodály drew.

Bartók and Kodály systematically and devotedly explored region after region for this folk music, not only of Hungary, but also of neighbouring countries, and even farther, distant countries whose melodies seemed to bear a relationship to Hungarian music. Both of them consistently stressed that to collect or know the musical material, and make use of its themes, was not enough. One must go to the actual place where these songs are sung, where this music is part and parcel of the expression, and the decoration of people's lives. These field trips had an enormous influence on the development of both musicians. They understood that music was the voice of communities, that a genuine artist expresses the soul and spirit, the deceptions and the aspirations, of his community. It played its part in leading them to join the group of left-wing intelligentsia who at the beginning of this century were demanding social, intellectual and political reform, and who consequently, Kodály and Bartók among them, were subjected to unending attack and discrimination from the conservatism of the time.

The experience of a people in which song was a natural expression of their lives had a decisive influence on the development of Kodály in particular. The songs he composed were his first really original and successful works, and in particular his choral works, written for children and for adult choirs, in which he introduced folk melodies to the world of classical choral music. He used the same type of ancient theme for his ventures into opera—the folk opera *Háry János* and *The Spinning Room,* incorporating a medley of old folk-songs. And the same combination of the old themes and melodies of folk music used with all the modern resources of written music went into his church music, such as *Jesus and the Money-lenders,* the *Te Deum of Budavár* and the *Missa Brevis.*

But let there be no mistake. Kodály was not "just" a collector and adapter of folk music. He composed scores of works in which only certain signs of melodic phrasing and tonal colouring indicate the composer's preoccupation with Hungarian folk-song. In addition to a number of fine choral works, he wrote a string quartet, a sonata for cello and piano, a solo

sonata for cello, piano pieces, songs and orchestral songs which are entirely original in source and spirit. He not only, moreover, discovered the original springs of folk melody, but also reclaimed and renewed more popular sources; in the orchestral *Marosszék Dances*, the *Dances of Galánta* and the *Peacock Variations* the old folk tunes are combined with the fiery and melancholy-sweet melodies of nineteenth century *verbunkos* music.

By this time, however, Kodály was no longer merely one of several composers who used the themes of folk music to give new freshness to European music. He had become a musician who saw himself as expressing the grief and hopes of his people. In his most effective works chorus and orchestra reinforce each other, echoing the tragic voice of the past, intermingled with the anger and jubilation of living hearts, as in *Psalmus Hungaricus* and *Zrínyi's Appeal*.

The Scholar

Kodály the artist could always rely on Kodály the scholar, hard-working, methodical, with a tremendous range of knowledge at his fingertips.

The first—and to the end the most important—subject of his research was Hungarian folk music. Together with Bartók he collected a vast volume of folk music material. He made use of every modern device available, from the waxed phonograph cylinders of his youth to the newest types of sound-tapes of his old age, and equally of all the scholarly apparatus and systems of classification furnished by folklore research. He and Bartók together trained young research students and educated a team of highly qualified experts who have practically concluded and completed their work, salvaging at the last moment the final remnants of the treasure of Hungarian musical folklore before it disappears. Collection and recording was, of course, only the first phase of the work. This was followed by the exacting labour of description, control, comparative study, cataloguing and classification—work that demands a very thorough knowledge of the material. Long years were spent in preparing the "Collection of Hungarian Folk Music" for the press. Bartók left Hungary for the United States in protest against Nazi influence in Hungary, and died there, and the final supervision and editing of the collection was left to Kodály. He classified the material according to the international system of folklore research, but—how characteristic of his ideas!—grouped it under individual functional headings, under holidays, and other rituals of folk life, with further categories such as children's songs, wedding songs, laments, etc. As a result the material

is easily accessible not only in terms of musical forms, but also in more purely folklore terms, illustrating occasions and scenes in the life of the people.

Kodály's first paper was on the strophic structure of the Hungarian folk-song. The classification and critical analysis of Hungarian folk music continued to interest him throughout his life. His work on Hungarian folk-song, translated into several languages, was based on extensive research, and was the first to sum up all the significant aspects of the subject, illustrating it with a wide range of instances. In an important article he elaborated on his argument that the history of Hungarian music, and in general of all Eastern European, Middle-East and Oriental music, cannot be written without an investigation of the folk music of the region. In these oral cultures which have preserved the remains of ancient music by word of mouth, folk music constitutes the major source of music history. Which does not mean that he ignored research on the history of art music in Hungary. He worked on a number of questions dealing with ancient and more modern art music, especially the period of Hungarian vocal compositions in the second part of the nineteenth century, when Hungarian poetry was in its golden age, the period of János Arany, whose literary concepts were similar to Kodály in the same blend of folk and national elements in his work.

When a few years ago a collection of Kodály's papers, articles and other writings was published, the most remarkable thing about them was the amount of space and the emphasis given to questions of music policy and musical education. The collection made it clear, even for the less informed, that, in the second half of his career, Kodály had increasingly turned towards the whole problem of the aims, methods and practical organization of musical education in Hungary. This was the period when so much of his large-scale contributions to music education were evolved—contributions which have changed music teaching all over the world.

The Educationalist

The Eötvös College gave Kodály a training as a secondary school teacher, and he became a professor of the Academy of Music. His students remember him as a teacher who gave much, and demanded much. After he had accepted a chair of composition there, he transplanted the aims and methods of the Eötvös College to the Academy. He demanded the same meticulous absorption, the same wide range of interests and passion for research from

his students as from himself. What was beautiful was difficult; knowledge of the forms of expression and of the great traditions of music provided nothing more than a foundation for the arduous and dangerous task of developing their own talent. That he was an excellent teacher is clear not only from the large number of world-famous pupils of his—Mátyás Seiber, Antal Doráti, Géza Fried, Sándor Veress, Tibor Serly and Pál Járdányi—but equally by the fact that he trained a generation of musicians who reformed musical life in Hungary and valiantly withstood all the difficulties facing them in the Hungary of those days. He was the first to develop a style which determined the dominant note in the compositions of two or three generations, the characteristic features of the Kodály school.

Besides his work in the education of a musical élite, he devoted more and more attention to the problem of popular musical education. A few years ago his first and last symphony was heard for the first time. The work in question, he said, was actually the finished version of a composition outlined and half-completed thirty years earlier. Asked why he had waited so long, he said, "I was otherwise occupied. I had to educate an audience." Popular music education was completely neglected in Hungary even up to the time of Kodály's middle age; schools of music were designed to educate a cultured élite along the lines and in the spirit of contemporary German musical instruction; the great mass of Hungarians grew up knowing nothing of their musical mother tongue, or, indeed, much of any other.

The reforms so sorely-needed and an adequate development of musical education for the people demanded a great deal of skilled effort. The most important requirements were to make music a compulsory subject in every school of the country, to organise methods of teaching singing on the same level as the teaching of reading and writing and the mother tongue and, in so far as the content of the teaching was concerned, to supplement Hungarian folk-songs with the works of the classic composers suitable for children. Opening the cultural centre of a large village a few months before his death, Kodály said in his last speech:

> "In the first half of my life, forty years of close contact with the villages of the country convinced me that the Hungarian country folk, down to the last peasant child, are just as talented as the sons of other people; they only have to be taught and given the chance to develop their talent. . . After 1945 we began with increased enthusiasm to do something in our own seemingly limited but fairly important field of music teaching, something that had not been done before. The struggle was hard. But we did achieve something. What we achieved was that today there are

already over a hundred schools in the country, like the one here in this village, where children are taught the language of music, beginning at the age of six... These musical schools have shown that it has really been very simple. Music is an essential part of human culture. There is no all-round man without music. So it was only natural for music to be included among school subjects. It was inevitable. And it turned out that in the schools where music is one of the subjects—a compulsory subject, an every-day subject—children learned all the other subjects with greater ease and thoroughness. This is not the working of any mysterious magic, but simply the fact that a little time spent with music every day stimulates the mind so much that it will be more receptive to everything else... When there are a thousand such schools instead of the present one hundred, then there will be a secure foundation that will no longer make the establishment of the other schools of this type a dream, but a reality within our grasp."

These words, and the persistent efforts which proved how genuine they were, reveal the man who devoted his entire life to the people from which he came. The folk-song as the musical mother tongue of the nation, had to be once more restored as the living foundation of national culture, and this concept now permeates the educational policy of the country. "Music for Everyone" was the title Kodály gave to one of his articles on educational policy, and to the volume in which he collected all his relevant essays on the subject. "A singing people" was the ideal in his mind, a people who had at last become fully conscious of being a nation, and he took the substance of his material from their world.

The Hungarian and the European

The news of his unexpected death stirred us all. Leaders of Hungarian intellectual and political life stood guard beside his coffin, and behind them a mourning people stood in line to pay their last respects. Music lovers and musicians throughout the world joined the Hungarians in their sorrow. In the obituaries published on this occasion and in the general expressions of sympathy which were received, Kodály was remembered not only as an outstanding composer, scholar and educationalist, but also as one of the great old men of his generation.

He was born in the same year in which János Arany, the great Hungarian poet, died. This is not to impress believers in reincarnation, but to point

out a certain inner continuity, for Kodály did something for Hungarian music that was closely similar to what Arany had done for poetry. He took the ancient melodic patterns of the people as the basis of composed music with a national significance. It embraced all that he could use from the achievements of his Hungarian predecessors and from the classics, without being derivative or eclectic, imprinting on it the independence of the creative genius. Like Arany, Kodály also believed, in Herder's spirit, that national education could develop through organic growth and progress in the mind of the people. This is a further indication how the work of Kodály represents one of the last expressions of centuries of Hungarian national romanticism. It has the moral sense of this romanticism, with the lofty ideal which considers that the chief value and justification of nationhood is to be part of and contribute to the culture of humanity as a whole. He recognised universal values in a local folk-song as clearly as in the work of a consummate genius: and drew boldly on both. "Hungarian culture: the eternal struggle between traditional and Western culture... It can end only if the culture of the people grows up according to its own laws, into a high culture," he wrote at the height of his career, adding later that such a Hungarian high culture is European only when and where it is universally valid. He himself embraced the distances of space and centuries; joining the simplicity of a Vogul, Tatar or Magyar folk tune to the complicated elaboration of a Palestrina; with one hand he clasped the hand of a village child; with the other the hand of Bach.

A long, full and ripe life has come to its close. Kodály's death ends a life lived in good measure, "pressed down and shaken together and running over" and closing with the happiness of fulfilment. What better passing could we wish him? What better inspiration could we wish ourselves?

THIS SIDE IDOLATRY

by

PERCY M. YOUNG

At the end of a long session in my publisher's office I stepped out into the tinted light of an early spring evening in London. According to custom I crossed Fleet Street, throwing a glance at the benign majesty of St. Paul's Cathedral, bought an evening newspaper, and boarded a bus. We were half-way along the Strand when a middle page threw up a familiar portrait. Simultaneously the words below took meaning. It was one of those rare points in time when, momentarily, time stood still.

When one has been privileged to know a great man with some degree of intimacy the first news of his passing concentrates the significance of a relationship into the imagined stroke of a tolling bell. A personal relationship has many facets. In this particular one the essential features lay alongside the line connecting two national traditions. At this juncture the personal and the particular become general. Kodály was Hungarian, but in communion with those who were not he was also Hungary. On March 6 a great citizen of Hungary had died. Among the British there were many who lamented the loss of one who was not only a symbol of his own country and its traditions but who had also established himself as a kind of honorary Briton. Hence the notice in the London evening newspaper, the long and generous obituaries that followed in the dailies, and the memorial performance of Mozart's *Adagio and Fugue* in C minor (K.546) at the Royal Festival Hall on March 7.

A creative artist has his own sort of immortality. Two days after Kodály's death I was in his London publishing house. On an editorial desk lay recent, and characteristic, letters, the engraved score of a choral work, and the proofs that Kodály himself had just passed of a new set of (77) sight-reading exercises. In due course these exercises (an inadequate word, but let is pass) will follow the hundreds of others from the Master's pen

into our schools, and those of many other lands. Thus he will, as he would above all have wished, remain a lively guide to youth for generations to come.

I recall an injunction from one of his last letters concerning these exercises: drop the sugar-coat of annotational teaching aids customary in British pedagogic publications, he urged, and let the pupils concentrate on their own "active thinking." My colleagues and I, perhaps, had our secret thoughts on this matter of "active thinking." On occasion we had been hard put to it to survive the Master's tough argumentation. He knew precisely what he wanted (to be truthful, not what he wanted but what he wanted for other people in the way of the enrichment of life) and in pursuit of his aims took pleasure—sometimes an impish pleasure—in the reduction of the citadels of reaction.

Kodály had strongly held views, but he infused them with humour. Every Englishman is brought up to reverence what is piously called "the national sense of humour." Kodály was by nature well equipped to act as an expert exponent of the English sense of humour; or so it seemed to us. In truth, of course, this was in his case a Hungarian quality which transplanted perfectly, demonstrating that in which he most believed—the indivisibility of human nature. While on the vital subject of humour let it be remembered that for us the particular symbol of Kodály's appreciation of the spirit of comedy is the concert suite from *Háry János*, a regular fixture in the general repertoire for the past forty years.

Kodály made his mark in Britain with *Háry János* and the *Psalmus Hungaricus*. The one, as indicated, is comedy; the other is tragedy. But since these terms are used in a classical—or perhaps more particularly in a Shakespearean—sense, we discover that there is no barrier between the two works. Since both are expositions of human nature observed with compassion from first hand, then the one is the complement of the other. The fact that they are Hungarian enhances rather than diminishes their universal significance. I well remember how Vaughan Williams impressed me many years ago when he argued that great art could only spring from the place in which the artist lived. In our day the great exemplar of this truth is Kodály.

Although Kodály's part-songs had begun to appear with English translations in 1926, and English disciples—in particular the song-writer Peter Warlock and the publisher Hubert Foss—had pioneered what later became for many of us an obligatory pilgrimage to Budapest, the decisive years so far as Kodály and England were concerned were 1927 and 1928. My old teacher, Cyril Rootham, performed the *Psalmus* at Cambridge in

1927. In the following year the work (with an English text by Edward Dent, also of Cambridge) was performed at the Three Choirs Festival, while Henry Wood launched the *Háry János* Suite during the Promenade Concert series. In both years Kodály visited England. He found the intellectual atmosphere congenial; he was enchanted by our quiet countryside and by the inset felicities of medieval architecture; he made friends, and he seemed to discover a pattern of enduring yet flexible traditions. That this turned out so was due to previous reading in depth—he had a fine knowledge of history and something of a Macaulayan feeling for its poetic nature—and, I suspect, to certain convictions that may or may not have been justified.

Kodály used to speak of the virtues of tolerance; he believed that this virtue was present in British life and institutions. He may have been right; he may have been wrong: what matters is that what he thought he descried was a reflection of his own character and temperament. This begins to explain why when he visited abroad he appeared to be at home. When one lunched with him, for example, in London it was as though one was on a strip of Hungarian territory. Likewise it also explains why when in Népköztársaság út 89 we were also at home. There the credibility of the situation was assisted by homely pictures—as of the Cathedral at Gloucester where the *Psalmus* made such a profound impression long years ago; by a catholic range of familiar (and sometimes unfamiliar) English books in the library; by recollections of mutual acquaintances; and by an affectionate and precise manipulation of the English language.

Kodály spoke English well, with a nice touch of pedantry that sprang from an engaging tendency to invent words for contingencies. This he did logically, by moving from Hungarian to Latin (this he loved both for its own sake and for its historic significance in the Hungarian context), which he then proceeded to anglicise. The result was somewhat Augustan, and the more intense his philosophic preoccupation the more his utterance in English took on the tone and rhythm of, say, Samuel Johnson.

Here we come to the fulcral point. The language of a nation in one sense is the nation; the sum of its moods, its aspirations, its frustrations, its glories. Folk-song is language amplified. Choral music, especially *a capella*, is an extension of folk-song. The art music of a nation exists in its own right only when it carries an awareness of the indigenous traditions of folk music and of the correlative folk dance. Kodály's public career as scholar, composer, and educator, followed a consistent and logical course. The early years at Nagyszombat, at the University, the Academy of Music, and the Eötvös College, in Budapest, moulded natural inclinations and

boyhood impressions and loyalties into a philosophy that, in brief, hinged on the regeneration of Hungarian spiritual and cultural life and the consequent advantages that would thereby accrue to culture as a whole. I remember vividly how Kodály one day concluded a discussion: nationalism, he said, was good; chauvinism was bad. In fact his principles of education become ineffective if this is not underlined. To the Hungarian the music of Hungary is fundamental: but, in a different way, so too is the heritage of world music. English visitors to Hungary were likely to be entertained by one of Kodály's teacher-friends and his/her pupils. The programme invariably included Hungarian music on the one side, but excerpts from Purcell, or Morley, or Britten, on the other. The school books used in music lessons in Hungary reflect the wholeness of Kodály's outlook. For a people naturally so musically endowed the whole world of music must be accessible.

Britain has not been without its great composers. Some nations have produced more, but of the major masters of the European tradition not a few have been indebted to the British in one way or another. The prime example—and the one we tend to take for granted—is Handel. In the present connection it is to be observed that Handel was both beneficiary and benefactor to the choral tradition. Indeed he democratised music in his adopted country through exploitation of the word-music instinct. (Once I heard a *Messiah* performance in Budapest which was so compelling that it seemed as though the original text might have been Hungarian!)

Another case that comes to mind is that of Josef Haydn, who, although coming to our shores only towards the end of his life was directly influenced by his visits in the matter of both symphonic and choral music. Anecdotally one picks up two details of Haydn's London life: his diary note concerning the excellence of the piano playing of the youthful John Field; his emotion on hearing the singing at the Service for the Charity Children in St. Paul's Cathedral. In these there is prevision of Kodály, just as within the corpus of Kodály's music there is an indelible sense of Haydn *redivivus*. I think especially of the nobility of the *Budavári Te Deum* and the splendid humanistic gestures of the *Symphony*. Within Haydn there is, of course, also the impishness that is endemic in Kodály. In respect of both men the English appreciated them as musicians, but also as complete and integrated persons. There is even a certain similarity in the English routines of the two masters. Not to miss the most obvious point; Kodály was just as delighted with his Mus. Doc. (h. c.), Oxon, as was Haydn when he subscribed himself as "Doctor von Oxfort" *(sic)*.

When Kodály picked up the threads of English musical life he was already

at the mid-point of his career. He had achieved a more than respectable European reputation as a composer, and as a folk-music scholar. Although the idea of his future development was clear the manner of giving to it positive form was less clear. But in 1927–8 Kodály like Haydn before him was moved by the clear-voiced certainty of the singing of English children. (I suspect that it was the expertise of English cathedral choirboys that really bowled him over; in particular the prodigies of sight-reading of which these young musicians were and are capable.) He also found out the fuller glories of the invincible madrigalists and the Tudor-Stuart composers of church music. In both cases there was evident the essential indivisibility of word and music.

There is never one single cause for a course of action—or if there is, then the activating cause has its separate facets—and it is important to remember that Kodály's response to English singing became effective only when coordinated with his own national traditions of music (already, thanks to the eighteenth century pioneers of Debrecen and Ferenc Erkel, strongly based on a popular appreciation of choral singing) and when set in apposition to the alternatives. The teaching of music in Hungarian schools and the quality of what was taught often left much to be desired. When Kodály undertook to redeem the former and to refurbish the latter a revolution in musical education had begun. It may be observed that like other revolutions this one was not to remain confined.

What Kodály did was relatively simple. That is why it was so significant. He opined that song was the basis of musical experience. He revivified the notion that properly effective singing depends on an acute perception of pitch relationships and on facility in reading. All this had been said before (as, for example, by John Curwen) but never applied on a national scale. It is not for me to determine how Kodály so far triumphed over the quirks, prejudices, and cautionary habits of administration across the years; but he did. The result is the present general and enviable situation of music in Hungary—not only as a thing in itself but in relation to the whole. This is where the stranger senses envy. "Ah," he says, when reflecting on the status of music in his own environment, "look at what goes on in Hungary." The answer was—and must remain—Kodály. Genius is rare. Kodály had a particular genius, for illuminating education through music that is both purposeful and inspired. Within the province of pedagogy the *Bicinia Hungarica* are unique.

Kodály's effectiveness is strongest when his general principles are followed and his so-called "methods" adapted to environment. The marvellous feature of the man was his own humble sense of ever moving towards but

never arriving at finality. The last of his essays in school music are as yet unpublished: they provoke, as always, new thinking. It is, therefore, to be hoped that the great and stimulating teaching of the Master is not now calcified into a "method"—a sequence of dogmas. If that is done it will negate the precept concerning "active thinking." The dangers of dogmatism are more likely to occur outside than inside Hungary, where the musical life of the nation has absorbed the idea and recognised its purpose. The purpose goes further than music, and to impose limitations in the narrow interests of classroom efficiency is to obliterate the humanistic virtues that Kodály engendered. To some extent Kodály's broad sense of flexibility was, perhaps, influenced by his appreaciation of British modes of controlling affairs both within and without education.

The availability of his works with English texts (and the consequent demonstration of the basic patterns of Hungarian lyrical and dramatic literature) and their increasing use among amateurs in Britain, a number of settings of English poems direct, and certain dedications, indicates a close and mutual understanding between Kodály and the British people that intensified across the years. The growing practice of organising courses for teachers in order to introduce them to the basic pedagogic principles testifies to the incentive power of the original inspiration. Such activities as these are not imposed, but grow out of a general will to know more about what is important. Again, this is the way Kodály would have had it. From the personal point of view I know the excitement that such courses and lectures arouse: in addition to visiting many Kodály groups in England I have also been present as interpreter (in so far as this is possible) of the Master's intentions in the capital cities of Wales and Scotland. Here one comes to what might have been. I had long wished Kodály to visit the musical communities of Wales, where the traditions are so similar to those of Hungary (and not only musical traditions). I think we had got to the point where an invitation would have been coming from the Festival in Swansea. That this will not now be makes me more than sad.

We have used the word inspiration. This is a focal word; Kodály, as the prophets, and the poets of Hungary, was inspired; and he inspired. This implication of both inward and outward flow suggests what in this connection is vital. Kodály was a repository of many kinds of knowledge and wisdom. He was one who remembered and savoured old experiences (which, in conversation, he would readily reanimate) and sought new ones. At the end of his life, carrying the wealth of long experience that now lies in concentration in his works, he was excited at the prospect of conquering new worlds. More particularly, the New World. This, indeed, is where

this essay is being written. An evening or so ago I met with those who had encountered him in Tanglewood and in Dartmouth. It was at Dartmouth that he heard an American boys' choir sing to him. "And," continued my friend, "the beautiful thing was the way in which he went to and embraced one of the little nine-year-olds." Age and youth; the old and the new: a single memory brings up the comprehensiveness of the man.

This is where Kodály stood away from practically every other major composer of his era. He was by way of being a complete man, one cast in the mould of the Renaissance ideal. He was a particular kind of Renaissance figure, if only because his country, through force of historical circumstances, had undergone not merely one or two but a whole series of events, each in its own way a form of rebirth, or Renaissance. At home Kodály embraced and transmuted the significance of these particular events—historic, cultural, musical, social—into forms of music. This is why the music as a whole may be precisely defined as substantial, and consequently, why it communicates. This is also a reason for the particular respect in which Kodály is held in Britain.

In recent years we too had our "grand old man" of music. This was Ralph Vaughan Williams. There is a proper comparison to be made. In the true sense both men were patriots. whose patriotism effused through folk-song and through once revolutionary personal idioms that were based not so much on folk-song as on a faith enshrined in folk-song. Vaughan Williams and Kodály were, in the widest sense, scholars, and each gave a further dimension to national literature through the medium of choral music. In the field of music Vaughan Williams had a harder part to play than Kodály, simply because the professional values on which the creative musician depends were, at the beginning of the century, less efficient in London than in Budapest. On the other hand Kodály's life as a citizen was for many years fraught with difficulties unknown to the English musician. Thus one detects, on the one hand a surer professional touch in Kodály, especially in the realm of instrumental music; on the other, a sharper cutting-edge in respect of public affairs.

In the general sense we have lost a friend. When on that evening some two weeks ago I opened the newspaper I was aware of a sense of desolation. Thus, to give it shape is less than easy, for its form is based more on a remembered general pattern—of gestures and involuntary movements, of subtly modulated tones of voice, of response to attitudes, and so on—rather than on specific points.

I had the honour to be the guest of the Kodálys on numerous occasions in Budapest. My first meeting was in the Academy of Sciences after the

Master's return from, I think, Rome. The fact that this meeting took place in that institution, and that he was greeted by particular colleagues and friends, was in itself an indication of his dedicated service to the cause of Hungarian music; for one was immediately aware of the outstanding quality of the folk-song researches of more than half a lifetime. Within the learned society the Master displayed his *gravitas*, relieved by the sharp resilience of his speech and the eloquence of eyes that at once affirmed and posed questions.

At home it was otherwise. Simple generosity flowed out, but in courtly manner, so that the affinity between the observer of the peasant and the peasant himself was apparent. Even in old age Kodály was a connoisseur of fine food and good wine (and the therapeutic waters that he used to recommend as good for the digestion), and he recognised that they properly accompanied conversation. Conversation (interlarded with casual asides) on contemporary music or public affairs started from abstracts, for Kodály was as one who had walked with Socrates. However, what was profound he dealt with deftly, so that one recognised his talent for turning abstract into concrete. The main themes were universal, coming from history, literature, philosophy, and, of course, music. The themes were large, but by the directness of his exposition they were made familar. Kodály—who remained a villager at heart—made of the world a village, just as he made of the village a world.

He had his eccentricities. He once recommended a particularly potent, sulphurous water as an aid to efficient digestion. Out of respect I made it a practice to request this health-giving tonic at meal times—until, that is, I put the matter to a doctor friend in Budapest, whose mirth was apparent when the most likely results of a course of such water were explained. It was a matter of a difference in biochemistry. Kodály kept on about the subject of health at some length. Of his own vigour he was, not unjustly, proud. One day he solicitously asked whether I (his junior by the space of a generation) could fall in with his usual Sunday custom of walking to lunch, or was I too tired. He had already been for a constitutional in the Buda Hills.

Kodály was entirely himself. He had the simplicity of greatness. Sometimes this was disarming. He cut across pretensions with sharpness, sometimes with wit, and with a classical precision. Certain modern composers he would dispose of with a flutter of sardonic phrase. Once he admonished me for suggesting (in an educational essay) that music was "fun." Nothing of the sort, he proposed. Music was work—rather according to the principle of *laborare est orare*. He was, of course, right. Once again he looked at a

score and wrote, "So you believe in the Orff-ic cult!" It was, however, "fun" to dispute with him; for he was a generous listener. From time to time we fought skirmishes in the outskirts of the educational battle ground. The necessity for open scores, and for C clefs, and the supposedly debilitating effects derived from the supply of "piano, rehearsal only" staves below the parts of *a capella* music: these were matters which tended to stir up a kind of seigneural displeasure, as at some display of lack of refinement.

Kodály's reputation is secure where, in his view, a reputation should signify. Innumerable choral societies welcome his music for the best of all reasons. It is singable. The extent to which it has become domiciled with us is best shown, perhaps, by the fact that the Methodists of Great Britain at their last Annual Conference made *Jesus and the Money-lenders* the centre-piece of the inaugural service. He raised his own monuments to our culture in settings of Collins, and Shakespeare, and O'Shaughnessy. *Music Makers* (composed for Merton College, Oxford, in 1964) meets up with English affairs otherwise. The only other setting of this poem was by Elgar, who, at a Three Choirs Festival, once gave to Kodály a signed score of *The Dream of Gerontius*. "What," I asked, "do you remember of Elgar?" "He told funny stories all through lunch," he answered.

A sense of humour: we are back where we started. We conclude with the connecting link. At the roots of understanding what we mean by "sense of humour" is "sympathy." That is the ultimate word of definition; for, above all, Kodály, the man, the musician, was sympathetic. The influence endures, and will endure; for this uniquely universal sympathy is as a beacon light in a shadowed world.

Vale, egregie Doctor—atque ave.

COEXISTENCE WITHOUT ILLUSIONS

by

PÉTER RÉNYI

Without illusions—that is the slogan of today; in eastern and western, in socialist and bourgeois papers alike one can read the phrase.

Let us, then, examine and evaluate the contacts between the two systems without illusions.

Why "without illusions"? Why this repeated emphasis? Were there ever any great illusions on the subject? And what kind of illusions? And who had them? A multitude of questions crowds into one's mind. And then, what will the lack of illusions mean? Will all our ideas about peaceful coexistence up to now suddenly be considered invalid? Will all we preached, all we regarded as achievements in this sphere, turn out to be nothing but misleading illusions? In reading some of the articles on the subject one is inclined to feel that representatives of certain political tendencies would like to convince the world of the futility of taking the socialist offer of coexistence seriously.

Obviously we in the socialist countries mean something else by the absence of illusions. So let us examine the nature of the illusions themselves. They can be reduced to a few prototypes. We shall begin the analysis on the socialist side as an indication that I certainly do not hold only the other side guilty of wishful thinking.

To my mind two basic types of misconceptions were prevalent in Hungary and other socialist countries, appearing, of course, in many variations. One of them fostered the belief that peaceful coexistence of the two systems essentially meant their peaceful fusion. According to this notion the monopolistic tendencies that have come to dominate in modern capitalism—and which do, in fact, lead to a rapid concentration of production and ownership, and thereby to a vigorous socialization of production—are equivalent to the development of socialism within capitalist society; consequently

only a few adjustments were needed—for instance, a relaxation of the over-centralization of socialist economy, and greater emphasis on competition, market conditions and value—in order to eliminate not only the contrast but even the difference between the two systems as regards their economic foundations and character. Those who held this opinion regarded the modern efforts of western economy (e.g., the expansion of the internal market, etc.) as essentially resembling the socialist countries' efforts to raise living standards; they regarded the social measures taken in advanced capitalist countries as an acceptance of socialism, or at least an approach to it, and considered control by the state intertwined with monopoly a guarantee that some of the dangers of capital concentration will be checked. According to this view peaceful coexistence, of course, would be assured once and for all; the only problem left was to make people, and especially the political leadership in both systems, aware of the altered state of affairs, press for a few reforms, and that would be that.

Adherents of the other type of misconception did not go quite so far. They recognized that, in their basic character, the two systems are antagonistic, but their evaluation of the changes that have occurred in the power position was that the balance had shifted so sharply in favour of socialism as to exclude the possibility of any kind of effective counter-action by the other side. In their opinion, the economic and military potential of the socialist camp—reinforced by the anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist trends in the world—had shifted the scales of the world balance permanently in favour of the socialist side. They interpreted—in political practice rather than in words—the often quoted declaration of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the effect that war between the two systems was no longer "inevitable" as meaning that peaceful co-existence had now become "inevitable"—a welcome inevitability, let us admit. In other words, the struggle for coexistence had, they maintained, already been decided. This view underrated the chances of the other side and, to put it mildly, overrated our own, a kind of wishful thinking that was bound to come into conflict with the facts, which were far from being as favourable as all that.

And how can the illusions cherished by the capitalist side be summed up? First of all, there was the notion that peaceful coexistence meant an abandonment by the socialist countries of the struggle for revolutionary ideas: some sort of ideological isolationism, a declaration by socialism that beyond the boundaries within which it has so far been victorious, it not only will refrain from any kind of armed intervention, but will even maintain an ideological and political neutrality; that it will neither express its sympathy

or foster solidarity with the anti-capitalist forces, nor give aid to peoples fighting against imperialism; that it will give up disseminating the idea of the coming triumph of communism over capitalism throughout the world. Several politicians in the West openly expressed this notion as their wish, alleging that only so could the socialist states demonstrate their willingness to live in peace with the other peoples of the world.

But there were several even more ambitious ideas. Some people were not content with the demand for an ideological *status quo*, but deceived themselves into the belief that the striving of the socialist countries for peaceful coexistence was a sign of the internal weakening and decay of the socialist system, resulting from a loosening of the structure of the proletarian dictatorship and from the gradual disruption of the relations between socialist countries. According to this idea peaceful coexistence between the two systems presupposed that one of them, namely, the socialist side, should yield as soon as possible to some other social pattern—one that would resemble the social order of the capitalist partner. This theory, based on illusions, was, naturally enough, followed by a practice similarly based on illusions, for subversive propaganda and various attempts to increase the internal conflicts of the socialist world found full justification in the theory.

Though I have confined myself to a rough outline of the alternatives, I believe I have shown that each of them—to whatever degree they differed in their interpretation—regarded the relations between the two systems as essentially and finally decided. The fact that each naturally chose an interpretation favourable to its own ambitions is not decisive for our purposes. The very approach to the problem was wrong, for it started out from the premise that the acceptance of the principle of peaceful coexistence would ultimately put an end to the conflict and struggle between the two sides—either because they would come to resemble each other, even synthesize, or eventually be so self-contained as to become neutral toward each other. Such views could not provide a basis for understanding the actual process. Whether just naive or ill-willed, their propagators were bound to be disappointed. This was the lot of those, for instance, who regarded the sober actions of President Kennedy in his last year as evidence of a final change in the relations of the United States to the Soviet Union, and who were shocked into a sense of reality only by the fatal shots in Dallas (and since then every day by the hundreds of bombs dropping on Vietnam!). This was the lot of those who celebrated the encouraging attitude of some of the newly independent states as amounting to socialism just around the corner, and realized only after a putsch here and a plot there that the former overlords of these areas do not remain idle when it comes to protecting their

interests. (And that there are also complex internal conflicts hindering social progress in these areas of the world.)

But disappointment was the lot also of those who, in the expectation of a "peaceful transition" of socialism to capitalism, consistently made the most of national and class conflicts, for there was not a single socialist nation, not a single stratum within the socialist nations which was not told, frequently and consistently, what its own specific interests were, contrary to the interests of everyone else and contrary to socialism as well...

And similarly disenchanting experiences were in store for those who speculated on the chances that socialism would abandon its own ideology, who, victims of their own propaganda, believed that in the socialist countries the political system was a mere veneer, a thin shell which only needed a scratch or two to break and reveal the narrow nationalism of yesterday, a nationalism which, because of its opportunistic miscalculations, falls easy prey to the other side. A few loans or credits, or other economic favours, would easily induce us to relinquish our "abstract" ideals, if only in the hope of producing results more rapidly.

I have no intention of dealing with each of these illusions one by one to prove why they were wrong; I would, after all, have to adduce as evidence, for the most part, facts which are commonplace today in both East and West. I prefer to ask whether this process of disillusionment is not without its positive side.

If we examine it in its wider context we can consider this disenchantment as a more or less necessary stage in the process of getting to know one another. It is inconceivable that the two systems which were for so long a time more or less isolated from each other (and I mean not only the years of the Cold War, but also the conditioning of the earlier pre-war decades, not easily changed by the few years of the anti-fascist coalition) should form the right ideas about each other from one day to the next without prejudice and without mistaken conclusions.

One might take it that the retreat from the Cold War was also one kind of disillusionment, an abandonment of the erroneous view that communism could be "rolled back" by force (as John Foster Dulles thought), and partly the recognition that there might be forces even within the Western world which—realizing the danger threatening them if they dared start on aggressive action—are ready to pursue a policy of peaceful coexistence. Illusions generally refer to a pleasurable alternative—yet in essence these two beliefs were illusions, erroneous judgements on the international situation and the international balance of forces. And we all recall the general sigh of relief that went up when mankind was relieved of the burden of these misconceptions.

Today the psychological effect of loss of illusion is the opposite. On both sides those who abandon their illusions must abandon with them the hope of rapid returns and advantages gained free of charge, and that is probably the reason for the depressed atmosphere, the general cheerlessness and pessimism evident among those who had drugged themselves earlier with false hopes. But it would be both stupid and harmful to allow ourselves to be overcome by this particular pessimism, which would sooner or later result in plunging mankind back into the darkest abysses of the Cold War. Rational thinking, proud of its scientific objectivity, must guard against such vacillating moods, which would be bound to give rise to newer and perhaps ever more dangerous illusions, and, in their wake, even more bitter disappointments. The approach should be similar to the process of cognition. Despite repeated corrections and the rejection of false hypotheses, it progresses, never losing faith that the correct solution will be found.

Doesn't this hold good for international affairs as well? Was the cause of peace any more secure when both parties, some in this way, some in that, projected their own wishful thinking on to the idea of peaceful coexistence? Is it not more reassuring today to know that we are beginning to understand each other, and learn what we can each expect? If instead of extravagant visions and over-hopeful expectations we settle down to consider the actual state of affairs? We should consciously and deliberately do everything possible to expedite and expand this process of getting to know each other: we could probably spare the world a number of unpleasant surprises. Such an effort would be all the more valuable in that, after learning and assimilating unpalatable truths, the irrefutable facts and undeniable mutual interests that make peaceful coexistence *inevitable* would be at once clearer, more accurate and more reliable.

There are some who have no taste for this kind of sober and strict calculation. We are thinking, for instance, of some of the western comments on the Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party held in November 1966, comments which regarded the general survey of the international situation in the report of the Central Committe as too bleak a picture. And yet, once it was accepted that the survey reflected a determination for peaceful coexistence—and in fact no responsible commentators doubted or could have doubted it—then why should we hesitate to present an unvarnished picture of the world as we see it? It is just the contrary course of action that we should hesitate to take—especially after the experiences of recent years. And our determination should be evaluated just that much more seriously; the determination of those who take the grave conflicts which still hamper peaceful coexistence into earnest consideration, but *none*

the less stand firm on its behalf, must be taken much more seriously than the asseverations of those who construct an image of the world after their own illusions, and invent their own consolations for any awkward facts which disrupt this image.

Without wanting to engage in polemics, one might mention that in the official communiqués of the western camp a similarly dialectical stand based on principles is very rarely seen. If, for instance, one considers how the international situation is interpreted elsewhere, one cannot help being aware that, according to the view dominant in Washington to this day, the United States is able to curb anti-imperialist freedom struggles throughout the world, that in fact, this is claimed to be its mission, since it has to defend the "Free world" against "Communist aggression." The late President Kennedy had already recognised that the reasoning behind this claim is false; in point of fact it does an actual disservice to the aims of the United States, for it denounces any movement directed against a reactionary regime—and there are many of them in the world—as Communist inspired, thus actually elevating the part played by the consistently revolutionary forces to a leading role. But the American attitude is above all dangerous because it is based on a mistaken estimate of real possibilities, or, in other words, it leads to such adventures as US intervention in South Vietnam and the escalation of the war against the Vietnamese Democratic Republic. The disastrous miscalculations of President Johnson and his staff—for after all they have found themselves putting into Vietnam, perhaps ten times the number of troops originally deployed there, and they will have to concentrate even greater forces there without the slightest hope of final victory, is evidence enough that the basis of this attitude which led to such an undertaking was unsound, was an illusion. The price that is being paid, most of all by the people of Vietnam, but also by the American people themselves and the burden it has laid on all of mankind, is a most serious warning on the current dangers of illusion. And nothing reveals more clearly the absence of reality in the American strategy, the wide gap between real and quite mythical conditions, than the fact that Johnson, who wants nothing more than a victorious conclusion to his "crusade" in Vietnam, is in other matters forced to emphasise that he is quite ready to come to terms with the same Communism that he is using ruthless violence to try and quell in Vietnam.

Similar contradictions, some sharper, some less so, can be seen in the attitude of every power unable to rid itself of earlier misconceptions rooted in wishful thinking. In political life two basic types of illusion can be distinguished: Some of them gloss over the problems, claiming that all the questions worrying us socialists are simply the product of our morbid imaginations,

an attack of pessimism, which can be dispelled by a wave of the hand or a few pleasant phrases; accompanied, of course, by implicit suggestions of an encouraging nature. The other type of statement does not minimize the problems, and in fact sees unbridgeable sources of conflict even in matters where a little sober thinking would have found some way to agreement long before. The exponents of this attitude make no veiled promises; they simply conclude that there is no possibility, or almost no possibility of normal coexistence. The first type of policy is exemplified in the statements of Kiesinger, the new West German chancellor, who is doing his best to hypnotize the other side with an optimistic attitude and has invented smooth formulas to sugarcoat the same old points of view and the same old problems. An example of the second type are the statements of another West German politician, Franz Josef Strauss, who in his recent book *(Entwurf für Europa,* 1966) described with impressive frankness all the problems on which we differ (naturally enough from his own point of view) but shows not the slightest optimism for the future, in fact expresses his surprise that there are people who dream of the end of the Cold War. "At the end of the 'forties," he wrote, "frequent mention was made of the 'Cold War', which is now said to be approaching its end. I think this supposition is doubtful. Consistent pressure and permanent aggression against the free world are the basis of the entire practice and ideology of communism. . ." (p. 61, *op. cit.*).

It gives one to think, when one realizes that Strauss is a leader of the very party coalition of which Kiesinger is a member; that he is, in fact, a member of the same government now headed by Kiesinger. This combination encourages the conclusion that these two kinds of judgement differ only in the arguments, but that in their essence they are the same.

As against this, let us admit quite freely that we think János Kádár's approach in the report to the Party Congress of 1966 was better founded and more profound: "However complex and menacing the international situation may be, none the less our country. . ."

None the less I think that is a more realistic approach to the problems of today, and one capable of awakening the hope of a more secure future. That "we are fighting for the peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems," that "averting the outbreak of a world war is consistently at the heart of all our international activity"—we could go on quoting the principles which were reaffirmed at the Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party—is nothing new. What makes these statements significant is the fact that they are repeated in full appreciation of all the difficulties attending international disputes, in full awareness of the complex dangers of the time, as our fixed and unalterable goal.

ELEMENTARY AMERICANOLOGY

by

IVÁN BOLDIZSÁR

March 14, New York

I had been in New York for two hours and had just come out of a bookshop in 23rd Street where, as a depressive first experience, I saw a Negro boy being beaten for attempting to steal.*

Meanwhile it had grown dark. I looked up at the sky and quite near, almost right above my head, I caught sight of an extremely high, illuminated tower. It wasn't difficult to recognize it as the tallest skyscraper of New York, that is, the tallest building of the world, the Empire State Building, which has nothing to do with either Empire or State, it was simply that the firm which built it thirty-five years ago had that name. I did not get this piece of information by innate genius, nor from some guidebook, but from my first New York friend, the unforgettable Mr. Z.—now, alas, dead—the dear omniscient chief reception clerk and book-keeper at the Chelsea Hotel, who was, of course, Hungarian-born. He added one more to his list of outworn Hungarian literary elegancies, such as "albeit" and "withal," and other long-forgotten idioms of that kind, by addressing me in Hungarian as "*úr*"—"good gentleman"—"kind sir"—"squire"—it has a hundred nuances of that kind—by which he managed to put me some thirty years back, about the year when the skyscraper was built.

The great tower floating so high above my head seemed so menacingly near that somehow or other I felt that I was not in a busy street but in some dreamland where things stretch and persons shrink to nothingness. How could I have missed it a minute or two ago when I went into the bookshop, I asked Mr. Z.

(A lesson in cashing a cheque.) He lifted his finger and asked me to wait a moment; he was just then engaged in a financial transaction. In front of

* See *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, No. 25, Spring, 1967.

a small opening in a glass partition beside his desk stood the fair-bearded young man I had seen in the foyer at my arrival. He was handing a cheque to Mr. Z. Is he settling his bill? I asked Mr. Z. in Hungarian. "Just watch, kind sir. Your first American lesson."

Kind sir watched so carefully that he managed to see how much the cheque was for. Eighty dollars. Mr. Z. went to the safe, took out eight ten-dollar notes and handed them to the young man, muttering all the while that here he was taking the cheque of an out-of-town bank again, and the young man ought to know it had no branch in New York, and who the devil did he—the young man—think he was—the manager of the Chase Manhattan Bank incognito? The young man gave him quarter of an inch of that perpetual and obligatory American smile, then snatched up the banknotes and off he went.

"Hey," Mr. Z. yelled after him. "You wouldn't like to leave the half of it with me by any chance—in case?"

The fair boy stopped dead; the hunch of his shoulders betrayed that extravagance was fighting a losing battle with common sense, then he turned and like a child walked slowly back to the counter, laid down forty dollars, and without saying a word hurried out. Mr. Z. put the money in an envelope, put the boy's name on it, locked it up in the safe and then he turned towards me: "You see, this is the Chelsea."

I said I saw; where else did it occur to a reception clerk to protect the guest against his own extravagance?

"You're still thinking with your European mind, which is only natural. That's not it. No other hotel would honour the cheque of a provincial bank. Now you may think that it has no branch in New York because it is such a lousy little bank?"

What else could I think? "Then you'd better learn straight away, on the first day of your stay in New York, and not when you've already made your first million in America, that not a single bank in New York State has a branch in any other State, and no other State whatever has one in New York. That's the law."

"That's all very well, but only this morning I saw a branch of the First National City Bank of New York on the Champs Elysées in Paris."

"Oh, yes, you can have a branch in a foreign country, but not in any other of the States in America. Do you understand?"

Even if I had I wouldn't have said so, because I was so fascinated by his lesson in Americanology. "This is to prevent banks and big business from getting too rich. They're very careful about that, you can see, can't you?"

I could have kissed him for this delicious first lesson in Americanology.

But he went on, stressing his words with uplifted finger like the village schoolmasters in the old days. He explained that America was the world of cheques. Wages and salaries—"are those the right Hungarian words for them?"—are paid by cheque.

"Then one goes to a bank and cashes it, I suppose?"

"There you are. I knew it. Everyone from the old country thinks that. No. You go to *your* bank," and he came down on the word *your* like a conductor giving the signal for the timpano. "The cheque of another bank is only honoured in a bank where you have an account. How long do you expect to stay in America? Four months? Then you will have a bank account too."

I certainly shouldn't—I replied. I don't know why. Or perhaps I do know. The whole cheque business—or being in the States I should write *check*—is completely unknown in Hungary. And if you are thinking that is a sort of socialist achievement, you are quite wrong: it is a national tradition. Nobody paid with cheques even in the good/bad (cross out adjective which does not apply) capitalist days in Hungary, even when there were a lot of private banks. Aristocrats and other big landowners left their card when they bought something; other rich people paid cash; the other 99.99 per cent of the population to whom the present writer belonge lived from hand to mouth. Now I guess why I demurred at the idea. But if I wanted to live like the Americans did, as I had promised to myself, I shall be obliged to open a bank account.

"Four months? Then from the second month onwards you'll be playing the stock exchange. Don't protest. Just wait and see."

(The next four months were to resolve the argument in a draw. I did not speculate on the exchange, but I had to open a bank account, because the Ford Foundation sent me the scholarship money in cheques. The first was cashed by Mr. Z. himself at the Chelsea, but for the rest I opened an account at the First National City Bank.) But what about the bearded boy, I asked. Hasn't he got a bank account? Mr. Z. waved his hand: "He's an amateur Bohemian. He has a rich father but he lives here because it's near Greenwich Village. Of course he has a bank account, but he pretends to be a real down-and-out, and I pretend with him."

(Block-lore.) I reminded him that he still hadn't answered my question about the skyscraper. I was standing here, right below it, yet a few minutes ago I hadn't noticed it. "It's because you're not standing right below it. You're standing a long way off. The Empire State is on 34th Street, that is to say, eleven blocks away. You might as well learn that the native American in town reckons in blocks. He does not say the second street on

the left, but two blocks from here. To judge distances allow approximately 20 north-south blocks and about 7 east-west blocks to the mile. You remember that. It's useful. Otherwise you might walk miles and miles. A block is longer between two avenues than between two streets. But what was I saying? Oh yes, the Empire State is eleven streets away, almost three-quarters of a mile from here. In daytime it's quite a long way. But when it's lit up at night it's much more impressive and everybody thinks he has only to reach out his hand for it. New York looks best at night—you don't see all those one and two-storeyed rickety old houses."

I took my leave and started for the lift. "Wait a minute," Mr. Z. called after me. "You know, don't you, that the thing is lift in Hungarian and lift in English but elevator in American. And also that the ground floor is the first floor. And that no building has a thirteenth floor. So you can deduct two stories from every skyscraper. And that you shouldn't buy post stamps from automatic machines because for an eight-cent stamp you have to put in a dime, and they don't bother to return two cents. That doesn't matter here. Nor does a dime. It's not money. To them. But it will be for you. So take care. Now, you have had a small basic seminar exposition in the American way of life. Is that the proper expression? I know, my son-in-law in Nógrád writes to me and tells me all the current jokes. And now go to bed, because you're tired and thirsty."

He was right. I was. I went up to my room, my head swimming, my tongue sticking to my palate. I lifted the receiver and wanted to order a cup of tea. It turned out that there was no room service in the Chelsea. Most of the rooms had a kitchenette or at least some cooking appliance. I went down and told my distress to Mr. Z.

"I said you were thirsty, didn't I? In my first couple of weeks here I was almost driven mad by the constant thirst. The sea is quite near. The air has got a lot more salt here..." He stopped, and with a glance at me, murmured—"the tears are saltier here...and the griefs are different."

He stopped again. The echo of Endre Ady's lines hung in the silence. "I was going to conquer America too," he said. "I was quite a good singer, you know." "And?" I asked. "There's no *and* to it. I'm all right, I have a job and no worries."

I had not noticed that he had sent the Negro bell-boy on an errand, but the boy suddenly appeared and put a bottle of orange juice before me. So one could get it at the hotel after all? No, he had sent out for it to a nearby grocer. It was a nice big bottle, rectangular and wide-throated. And the orange juice was icy, misted over on its sides. I asked how much I owed. "I'll add it to your bill." He never did.

(Everything is written everywhere.) I took the orange juice up to my room and tried to open the bottle. It defied me. The wide cap was stuck on so firmly that no matter how hard I tried to turn it right and left, it never budged. I experimented this way and that until I cut my finger, but the enemy bottle would not surrender. What was I to do? Down I went again to Mr. Z.

"The Village Boy in Budapest," I said and showed him the bottle and my bleeding finger.

"By József Gvadányi," he replied smartly. Then with a jerk he unscrewed the cap. "I'll tell you an American secret," he said.

"How to open a bottle of orange?"

"No. It's that they don't leave anything to chance. Everything is written everywhere. Didn't you notice the traffic lights in the streets just now? The green light is not enough. They write on it 'WALK' and on the red 'DON'T WALK.' Just in case someone can't remember he can go at green and must stop at red. At crossings where cars are forbidden to turn right or left there's not only a curved arrow crossed but it is inscribed: No turning right or left. They assume two things about the pedestrian: that he can read and at the same time that he can't make out even the simplest signs. You'll find the instructions on how to open this bottle are on it. Meticulously described. Look, here at the side of the cap. First push in, then turn right. Everyone here is very clever, but everyone assumes everyone else is a complete idiot. An extremely practical assumption. Basic Americanology, lesson two."

(Exploring my room.) Cleverer, as well as more of an idiot, that is, more Americanized, I went up again to my room, and in two gulps I poured the orange juice down my throat. My eyes were burning with lack of sleep for though my watch, duly put back, might show half past six, it was half past midnight really. But I didn't feel sleepy. So I started to explore my room. The window, of course, was not a double window, but single, as everywhere west of the Rhine and south of the Alps. You can't push it open, you can only push it up. There was something else that puzzled me about this window, something strange. I pulled it up, leaned out and then I saw what was wrong with it; the window ledge was much lower than at home and it was somewhere about my knees. You couldn't lean out without holding on. On either side, on the outer wall, there were two hooks. Could it be for the acrobatic window-cleaner known in Europe only from films?

By the window there was a small desk with a top that could be lifted, with a looking-glass inside, and, for the benefit of the ladies, a tiny toilet

table. On the left a telephone on a small cabinet with four telephone books in it, each of them three times as thick as the Budapest directory. I reached out for it but drew back: exploration of the telephone book was not for the first day. Bed, bed-table, standard lamp, easy chair completed the furniture of the room. On the other hand, it had four doors. One led to the corridor, one to the bathroom, the other double doors to a tiny cupboard room in the wall which is called a closet which in turn sounds funny east of the Rhine and north of the Alps. (During the four months of my stay I never once saw an ordinary European, free-standing cupboard or wardrobe. But at last I understood the much-quoted title of a bad Broadway play: "Ah Dad, Poor Dad, Mommy's Hung You in the Closet and I am so Sad." No European can understand this title before he has seen a closet like this, in which an infuriated mommy can enter and proceed to hang poor daddy in if she feels like it because this closet can't fall over. Later when I awoke from a killing thirst at night, I went still half asleep, not into the bathroom, but through the closet door, and woke up completely when I found myself struggling with my suit that was hanging there.)

Helen had passed me on an invitation while I was still at the airport. The Hungarian UN delegation was happy to invite me to cocktails in honour of the Hungarian Folk Dance Ensemble. Before saying good-bye she told me that the party would be at 75th Street, not far from my place. At the time I had not paid much attention, but having been put wise by Mr. Z. I made a little calculation: twenty-three streets from seventy-five leaves fifty-two. Multiply it by hundred yards and that adds up to more than three miles. If that is not far I don't know what is. (I had not yet realized that Broadway, which runs from the southern to the northern tip of Manhattan Island and irritatingly is not always at right angles to the side-streets, and continues into Bronx, is a mere 25 miles long, so that three miles is really a trifle.) Helen had advised me to take a cab. But since I had read on the side of the taxi that it cost 35 cents for a quarter of a mile and three miles would therefore work out about four dollars, I hesitated. (Later my American friends used to smile uncomprehendingly when they learnt that I grudged taking a cab for even shorter distances. But if you have got used to economizing throughout your life, especially over little items of personal comfort, you can't change from one day to the next and adopt a way of life based on the throw away principle, even if for the time being you don't have to count every dime.) In the end I went to the farewell cocktails by subway, and though I am no Orpheus it nevertheless felt like descending into the underworld. But of this another time.

(Back to the bottle of orange juice.) All I would like to tell you under that day's entry is that though I drank half a dozen glasses of pineapple juice at the reception—I didn't dare touch anything stronger because of my constant dizziness—by the time I had got home, the Chelsea had become "home" in a few hours, I was again tortured by thirst. Going in I noticed that the grocer's was still open. A good Hungarian, I picked up the empty bottle, rinsed it carefully so as not to bring shame on the house, and went down to the grocer's. From the open refrigerator I got another bottle and with the clean-rinsed old one I put both down on the counter.

"Forty-five cents," said the grocer, and clink-clink went his cash register. I pointed to the empty bottle: no deduction for this?

He did not understand. "What do you want that bottle for?" he asked. I began to have doubts but started to explain that I had brought the bottle back and that the price of it... "And what am I to do with that bottle?" he barked at me. I was not exactly on the ball. I muttered something as far as I can remember to the effect that it was a nice bottle and a good bottle and that the firm making the orange juice would perhaps like to have it again. He gave a laugh. "If it's so nice and good, stuff it up your..." he said. This is how I got to know two further important aspects of elementary Americanology: first, the national benediction, which they use about as frequently as we use the Hungarian well-wishing formula about the backside of a quadruped, and secondly, the waste.

I walked back to the Chelsea, with the full as well as the empty bottle of orange juice in my hand, or rather, for ease, with the empty one tucked under my arm. Mr. Z. was still sitting in his glass cubicle. A look told him everything. "You didn't try to return the empty, did you? I'm so sorry, I'd have warned you. It's part of the elementary course. Please remember the word waste. Note how many times you'll hear it: a hundred, a thousand times to every once it is used at home or in other parts of Europe. People talk about it, condemn it, and go on practising it. They claim that this is what keeps industry going, and that the economic boom is due to it. Get wiser people than me to talk to you about it. But as a first day's lesson please keep it in mind that here people throw everything away. Empty bottles, broken down refrigerators, last year's cars, furniture they've got fed up with. There are Hungarians who came out in '56 and settled down to an existence of collecting and taking home tables, chairs, settees thrown on the street."

I watched to see whether he winked or not, because by now I was certain he was pulling my leg. "I see," I said, and winked comprehendingly.

"All right then," he nodded. I wished him good night; it was half past nine in the evening. I had got up in Paris that morning at half past six, that

is, I had been on my feet for twenty hours. I did not feel sleepy, all I was conscious of was a kind of buzzing noise inside me, like when the choke in the car is left on. I started for the lift. "What are you doing with that empty bottle?" Mr. Z. called after me. I looked embarrassedly now at him, now at the bottle. "You haven't the heart to throw it away, eh?" I admitted it. It was so nice they would be sure to like to have it at home. "Take it upstairs with you and cuddle it. Only when you throw it away will you finally have arrived in America."

(I brought back in my luggage five gorgeous, prismatic, capped orange juice bottles.)

March 15, New York

I woke up early in the morning; it wasn't yet six o'clock. I went to the window: the early spring sun was battling with the low-hanging clouds. It was a bit of a wonder I had slept till then, because I had been warned on the plane that owing to the change in time I would awaken sometime in the middle of the night, around one or two in the morning, corresponding to my usual time of getting up at seven or eight in Budapest. It would seem, however, that we still don't know enough about the adaptability of the human organism, for now it would be twelve noon at home, and yet I was feeling quite myself and on top of the world early in the morning. I had already learnt the previous night that no food at all was served in the hotel, and I could hardly believe that I could find a cafeteria or a grocer's open in 23rd Street at six in the morning. (Though I could, as it turned out.) So it happened that the very first breakfast I had in the richest country of the world was a very Spartan one. I had some instant coffee left in my overnight bag from Paris, and luckily the water from the tap was hot. On the plane we had been given cheese biscuits with the drinks. I had put two in my coat pocket—a reflex of a habit acquired during the war years. The food tasted better when it struck me that my friends at home were now imagining me feasting with millionaires.

(Horn-play.) I looked out of the window. Below me there was what used to be called a *grund* in the old times in Budapest, and nowadays a "missing tooth." Here it was a car park. At the gate there stood a little hut, and from its chimney came a slender coil of smoke: so there was someone having breakfast there too. A little while later the first car appeared. It was a quarter past six, but that made no difference, it sounded its horn so loudly it made the Chelsea Hotel tremble. Out from the hut came running a blue-

overalled, red-sweatered Negro boy. The owner of the car got out and handed over the key. The Negro boy put it in his pocket and went back to his hut: the car was left there half across the entrance. Having nothing better to do, I went on watching what would happen next. In two minutes' time another honking. That was a real siren scream. The Negro boy only signalled from the door of the hut; evidently the key was left in the car. That one was half in the street. Then came the third, it must have been feeling down in the mouth because it did not hoot, but then, on the other hand, its owner dumped it in the middle of the road, completely blocking the way. No sound in the hut. At that moment a lorry came tearing up from the other direction, doing sixty miles an hour at least. It pulled up, brakes squealing, right in front of the car in the middle of the road, swung aside and started an ear-splitting hooting. I expected people in the neighbouring houses to appear at the windows in pyjamas, shaking their fists. The car park attendant waited until the second blast sounded, then, like lightning, he dashed out of the hut and into the first car, rushing it to the middle of the lot, then back to whisk the second alongside it with an elegant swoop like a turn on skis. Then came the third, the most beautiful. That he took to its proper place: the innermost corner of the parking lot. The driver of the lorry hooted his thanks and from the car the boy raised his hand in salute. (In a few days' time I discovered that this was their regular early morning game.) Now the cars were coming in one after the other, and the boy swerved in and out with them like the boys in dodgems on a Sunday afternoon at the Fun Fair. He did not range them in rows; he seemed to know which car would be required in what order of time. Suddenly I had the feeling of *déjà-vu*. Have I dreamt of a similar scene? No, it was not a dream, but something I had read; the nightmarish beginning of Kerouac's *On the Road* where he describes the devilish driving qualities of his friend Dean. At the time I could not visualize it, because I had never seen a parking lot like that; I thought it was all symbolic.

The sun was up now. Its strange, slanting rays caught the sides of the skyscrapers, lighting the edges of these geometrical prisms. Window panes glistened, while on the opposite side the shadows were still black. That was new, I had never seen a townscape to compare with that. As long as I kept my gaze level with the ninth stories or higher, it was beautiful. Below that the buildings were disfigured by the fire escapes. As if a child playing with building blocks had left out the staircases, and had then put them outside up the wall. (Half of New York, and almost the whole of America, is like that. The stranger does not understand. Fire hazards, they reply, and one shakes one's head, until one has seen one's first house blazing.)

It was eight o'clock. I had four complete months before me. Where to begin? I had to go to the Institute that morning. It corresponds a little to the British Council, a little to the Alliance Française and a little to our Institute for Cultural Relations. On behalf of the Ford Foundation—"we are its hand," Helen said yesterday—it was taking care of me and my programme. But where was it? I unfolded the large map which Helen had given me in the taxi, together with a number of other useful little things like booklets, a conversion table of weights and measures, a subway plan, and a "What one has to know about New York." The parcel also contained a diary, a scribbling pad, a ball pen, and—what's that? A tiny sewing outfit. Needle, thread, buttons, thimble and on the capsule the inscription: "If away from home a button comes off. . ." I unfolded the map and while looking for the place I reflected on how we receive arriving guests in Hungary. The question was doubly rhetorical, since I was alone in the room, and I knew the answer perfectly well, since I have some experience of showing visitors around myself. We could leave out the sewing things, since we are not so gadget-minded as the Americans, but giving visitors the other small things might be a good thing to learn. With a pleasant feeling of anticipation I meditated on the nice detailed programme I was going to be given in an hour's time.

But for the moment, true to my invariable habit in strange towns, I set out on foot on the first day to have a look at the town. The Institute was near the United Nations, which was easy to locate on the map. East bank of Manhattan Island, First Avenue, at the crossing of 42nd Street. Taking it in at a go I should proceed to see for myself that street of good and ill fame. Every second American novel refers to its cinemas, its erotic bookstalls, its bars and ladies of easy virtue. In the morning? Yes, even in the morning, since one of the New York guidebooks speaks of "round-the-clock places of entertainment."

(The bored newsvendor.) I set out in a straight line, and this means something different in New York from all other towns of the world: you can't lose your way in the cross-ruled pattern of streets. I calculated very nicely that the distance as far as First Avenue was seven blocks, and from 23rd Street to 42nd only nineteen: a good hour's walk. But I left out of account that I had to go uphill. No, no hill had come into being in the heart of New York overnight, but the wind was so strong that I could only proceed by leaning forward and straining the legs as if climbing. The wind was twirling the masses of litter knee-high in the street, snatching up a newspaper sheet here and there and sending it up on an invisible string like a kite, only to dash

it down smack on my hat. I caught the sheet, four pages of today's *New York Times*. Ah yes, I had to buy a copy anyway. There was a stall at the corner of 7th Avenue. Back home I last saw a rickety one like that at the beginning of the 'thirties. When was it the Prince of Wales visited Budapest, the one who has since been Duke-of-Windsorized? It was in that year that the municipal authorities had a spring cleaning of Budapest's streets and banished the patched up wooden newspaper stalls. They seemed to have emigrated here.

I asked for a *New York Times*. The vendor jerked a thumb at the stack indicating I should help myself. There was a ten pound weight on them; I took one out of the stack. The newspaper was a good pound in weight, 156 pages. "Nice weather," he said. "What was it like in Europe?" I was intrigued. How on earth could he recognize the European in me, since I had only said four words: "*New York Times*, please," and my pronunciation was not all that wretched, I hope? At any rate, I am told that half America speaks with a foreign accent. The newsvendor, a lean, thin-skulled old man, laughed. "The pronunciation was all right. But three of the four words were unnecessary. If you were a native you'd simply have said: "*Times*." It's only Europeans who think of the London *Times*. And who's got time here to say please? But come a bit nearer, my stall keeps out the wind."

I went nearer. Why did he say it was nice weather? The wind was just awful. "This? It's hardly blowing today. In New York the wind is king. These damn parallel streets. The sea on all four sides. And the mountains. They are all like this." He stuck out his hand, fingers together, as if pointing forward in some direction. I didn't quite understand. "You've come here and didn't have a look at the map of America? You'd better go back, sir—quick—you'll never make it here." I promised him that within the four months I'd follow his advice, but in the meanwhile, what had the mountains to do with it? "You still don't understand? The big mountains in Europe lying east-west stop the cold northerly winds and the hot southerly ones. Here all mountain ranges go from north to south, so the wind rushes down from the North Pole and blows all the way up from the Equator. I haven't been able to get used to it in forty years. Living at the Chelsea? I thought so. I'll lay aside a copy of the *Times* for you every day."

Still in the lee of the stall I looked at the front page of the paper. What The Senate voted on a consular pact. The Powell affair. LBJ declared that... Not a word about Vietnam. "Are you looking for something?" asked the bored but helpful newsvendor. No, no, I was just looking through it. But I'd like to ask you a favour. I'd like to leave the paper here till the afternoon because it's too heavy to carry. "Throw it away then,"

he said, "and buy another in the evening." I slipped the huge bundle of unread paper into the litter box and began to feel myself American.

I thought of beating the wind by going around the corner. The wind was blowing there too. So this was what the newsvendor meant about the damn parallel and perpendicular streets! This street also cut straight across the island and opened on the sea. Yet I had one advantage of proceeding in a Greek key pattern: suddenly I found myself in Park Avenue and for the first time it was not the wind that took my breath away.

(Pan Am.) The wide road at the northern end—in Budapest we never use the cardinal points of the compass for orientation, there is always the Danube. But in New York, as in London, one soon gets used to finding one's way about not by the help of the river or the number of the district, but by the compass. The numbers of the houses go up towards the northern end of the street, and in this one the street ended with a tall, strong, light and graceful building. Later I learnt that Park Avenue is New York's widest thoroughfare, divided down the middle by a carpet of lawn. I was cheered by that too: I had been walking for three-quarters of an hour without seeing grass or trees except the few plane-trees of a small square. I went into the middle lane—walking on the grass is allowed—and I looked and looked at the building, at ease, in my own time. It introduced itself. PAN AM, it said, that is, Pan American Airways. It might be some sixty stories high—later, because I often made the pilgrimage to it and in May I also lived thereabouts—I counted fifty-nine, but it is not its height that is so captivating, but something else. And that, I think, is that here the building of skyscrapers took a new direction. I did not realize this at first, all I felt was that some proportion had been found which modern architecture seems to have lost in masses of glass and steel concrete and the search for functionalism. Then I thought of an expression picked up in my first youth when exploring medieval Hungarian village churches and castle ruins: "closed in by three sides of an octagon." This medieval architectural device was used in the apse of small churches and chapels. Something of this kind now towered above me at a height of some four hundred feet. The architect, or rather the three architects, as I was to learn later, though I can only remember the name of Gropius, used up the whole width of the road and broke the right-angled shape made with the two longitudinal sides of the street by re-forming it into the three sides of an octagon. From the distance the walls—as much as remains between thousands of windows—seemed to me to have been made of marble or travertine, but going closer I saw that it was prefabricated concrete. And that made perfect.

I was in an elevated mood, enthusiastic, as when I first set eyes on Notre Dame in Paris or the Ják Church at home, one of the very few that remained intact after the Tartar and Turkish ravages, and is the younger sister of the Stephanskirche in Vienna. Just to see this would itself have made my trip to America worth while. I went on looking at it for a good while, until I realized that I'd have no time for 42nd Street, but to tell the truth I didn't much care, as I had no real desire to get to it just then. I went nearer to Pan Am and discovered that it rose above a low building built in an *art nouveau* style. Great was my astonishment when I found out that this was the Grand Central Station, unforgettable for me, though as yet unseen, from Leo Szilárd's ironic science fiction short story bearing the same name. (I never understood why it has not been published in Hungarian.) The Pan Am building literally dwarfed the *art nouveau* station. If I were a New York citizen I would interpret this as a victory of style. But as I was a foreigner I didn't know whether it is not simply due to a lack of town planning, like all the rest of the higgledy-piggledy architectural chaos of New York.

In the meanwhile I had arrived at 42nd Street, I only had to turn left-towards Fifth Avenue and Broadway—its lights and colours were glittering and beckoning—but I turned right, eastwards. That was where the United Nations in First Avenue and my host institute lay. I promised to be there at ten, it was twenty to. I reckoned I could do the four blocks in twenty minutes. I kept up a steady pace, or rather I intended to, as I could not help stopping to look at a shop window here, a modern building there, or turn after a pretty girl. I consequently remained faithful to myself and was, as usual, eight minutes late for my first New York appointment. I was in such a hurry that passing the UN Building I turned my head away—I would look at it another time—although glistening in a pearly mist it was much more beautiful than any photograph could convey.

(The non-existent programme.) The people at the Institute were extremely kind to me. I met this chief director, that deputy director, a department leader, and finally the young lady who was to look after my programme under Helen's benevolent supervision, and who appears under the name of Betty in these pages. The building is a brand new one, it was opened last autumn. It is so modern that only a couple of the top executive people have rooms of their own; the others sit in boxes and the bosses' rooms have no doors, everybody walks in and out as they please. A strange sort of office promiscuity.

I asked Betty about my programme. What was I due to do tomorrow, where I was to go for the weekend, with whom had she arranged meetings? She smiled: "You do whatever you like, you travel wherever you fancy,

and you'll let me know whom you want to meet. We don't want to push you around."

They were apologetic. They wouldn't like to force a programme on anybody. I remembered that a friend of mine who'd recently been in America told me: "You'll see. Every minute of your time will be so taken up that you'll hardly have any time to meet progressive people at all." It didn't seem to fit. Betty consoled me by saying that if I really wanted to we could put together some programme tomorrow. What about going to lunch for the time being?

This was the best way out of all diplomatic deadlocks. For a moment I was sorry that I hadn't come to America twenty-five years younger and much more unmarried. The fragile and blonde Betty reminded me of the Gainsborough which I knew in the picture game of Snap from my childhood. But by the time we reached the ground floor we had been joined by two or three of the directors and top men, and the nice Helen too; and what's more, I suddenly found my hands being warmly shaken by Lewis Galantière, the president of the American P.E.N. Club. His office was there in the building. "Aha," I told him, "I see one thing in which our two countries are alike. In both countries you will find P.E.N. at the Cultural Institute."

I didn't mean anything particular with that remark, but I managed to stir up a considerable storm. It was rather hotly pointed out from both sides that it was mere coincidence. P.E.N. was an independent organization. The Institute was an independent organization. They had nothing to do with each other at all. Or with the Ford Foundation. I said I hadn't meant anything of the sort and thanked them for the information. After all it's pleasant to learn from disclaimers who is getting the money from where.

(It's hot in winter. . .) We went to an Italian restaurant. They tried to create a Neapolitan atmosphere by South Italian heat. I had been gasping with the heat in the Institute, but here I began to feel dizzy. Galantière comforted me by saying that I would get used to it. Look, he had a pullover under his jacket. Another of the Institute people told me to feel the material of his suit—it was the thinnest tropical worsted. (A few months later the same gentleman was sitting in his air-conditioned room in a tweed jacket in the June dog days. But then I was no longer astonished, because by then I had worked out for myself a fundamental principle of the American way of life: America is the country where you have to wear lightweight clothes in winter because you get baked by the overheating, and thick clothes in summer because you catch cold from the air-conditioning.)

Huge portions of everything are served, twice as big as a normal Budapest

portion that is twice as big as the biggest London portion anyway. I had more than filled myself up on the Italian raw ham with melon which was the *hors d'œuvre,* and then came soup and then a little fish and then a veal cutlet topped with cheese. Why wasn't I eating? Didn't I like it? Should they order me something else? Was I feeling ill? Should they send for a doctor? I would have given anything for less solicitude on their part. At last I managed to change the conversation back to my visit. Everybody offered suggestions where I should go. To Florida, now, at once, it was summer, I could bathe in the sea. No, California, the spring season was the most beautiful time, later it was foggy. Oh, no, go to Washington immediately, the cherry trees would be in bloom the following week. That cherry blossom time was associated in the American mind not with Japan but with the White House was surprising. I cut the argument short by saying that I intended to remain in New York for quite a bit and to talk to as many people as possible. "About what?"

(What did I want to talk about?) For instance, about how they see the world, themselves, Europe and, God forgive me, Hungary... I took a deep breath and was about to explain my plans to my hosts when I forgot the whole thing and came out with what had really been bothering me all morning. I couldn't find anything about Vietnam in today's *New York Times.* My words were received with a little silence. Or were they just busy on their veal cutlets? So I asked them if they felt awkward talking about it? At that they all started to laugh and said now *that* was a genuinely European question. One of them suggested that possibly nothing much had happened in Vietnam that day. If nothing happens in a war for a day, I answered, it's news that nothing happened. Galantière remarked that there was Vietnam news in the paper even though not on the front page, and that I should look harder.

But that's just it, I went on. They had a war, and even if I did think it wrong it was at least a war which interested the whole world, and their most important daily was not reporting it on its front page. There must be a reason. Another of my table companions helped himself to more meat and answered with another question. "Tell me, why does the Vietnam affair interest you so much? We can't understand it. Vietnam is far away from Europe, no Hungarians or other Europeans are fighting there, and the chances are that they won't—so what do you want?"

I had expected all kinds of questions in connection with the current international situation in America, but not this one. And yet all the others at the table were nodding, yes, yes, quite true, why were we so worked up about it? I tried to answer. I made it short—I hadn't come here to convert

people or to listen to my opinions, but theirs. Back at home, I said, if five or six people were sitting around a table, they were sure to discuss politics sooner or later, and Vietnam was bound to crop up.

They smiled indulgently and went on eating. It certainly would not crop up with them. With that a conversation started which I was to go through many times over in the coming months—in varying forms but always essentially the same. Of course, they were interested by the Vietnam war as well, but not more than by politics in general, and that not very greatly. They asked me not to jump to conclusions. I must try to get to know the American way of thinking. (That was just what I wanted, and what I was trying to do even at that early moment.) I would have to get accustomed to the fact that in this country people were much less interested in politics than in Europe. And if they were, it was primarily domestic affairs. No, no, not internal politics, I mustn't translate what they were saying into European. Be very careful, they pleaded. It was not the domestic politics of the United States as a whole, but the politics of the individual States: the local power struggles, the fights in the cities between established politicians and reformers. I should read their papers. Talk with people. I would see it for myself. I should not condemn the Americans for this.

Vietnam was part of those politics, and not the most important part. Would I realize that too? I got a strangely inexplicable sense of fear that they—and here I'm not thinking only of the people round the table that day but of the many people I lunched and dined with later—did not regard the war in Vietnam as a war at all. They do not want to think of it and they don't think of it—that American boys are dying there, and what is even more difficult to bear, that American boys are killing other people.

No, they said, we should not dramatize it. (A little reminder: these conversations were held in Spring 1966, when the number of U.S. soldiers in Vietnam did not exceed a hundred thousand.) The Vietnam war was a necessary evil, it would be good to have it over, but it was not the world-shaking tragedy many people abroad and some people in America would have liked to make out. I kept silent in those first days, and thought about it. There must be another reason too. Could they be so indolent? So heartless? Of course, I couldn't have possibly asked them this the very first time they invited me to lunch.

(Long weeks, even months, passed before I discovered, or thought I discovered, the explanation. I've tried to formulate it roughly like this. In Europe, more particularly in the smaller countries, including Hungary, the fluctuation of politics, the ebb and flow of international tensions, affect people directly in their persons, families, daily lives and future plans. In

America politics are a distant rumbling of the sea. People continue to live, work, relax, and plan just as they did before the Vietnam conflict started. A pioneering people? Yes, they won't learn anything except from their own direct experience. In addition, they do not know what war is on their own skin, in their own land and from their own suffering.

The dessert to round off the lunch, peaches in ice cream—Pêche Melba—was brought in. I refused politely. I had no appetite? The change of air, of course. Yes. Possibly. Certainly that too.

(Heart and stomach.) During my first lunch I was too absorbed in asking questions and waiting for answers to pay attention to a phenomenon which is at least as typical of America as the secondary place taken by politics. There were five of us sitting round the table and three were drinking coffee not at the end of the meal, oh, no, but—angels and ministers of grace defend us—during the meal. Out of big cups, a thin liquid like camomile tea, with a little cream in it. This they drank after the ham with melon, this they drank with the soup, with the veal cutlet, this they sipped with the dessert. They drank it instead of water. Tap water is undrinkable and unthinkable, it tastes like detergent. The only thing they mix their whisky with is soda water, mineral water is very hard to get throughout the whole country, they drink orange juice before breakfast, or at cocktail time, and the other fruit juices, which incidentally are nothing like as good as our peach and quince juices (down, down, thou rising patriotism!) are for the children. There remains coffee, for wine is only just applying for naturalization, and is as eccentric an intellectual habit as having a Volkswagen; the proper American naturally goes about in a huge street cruiser and drinks thin coffee with his meals. But it must spoil your appetite, I thought at that first lunch. The weeks went by, and suddenly I caught myself—tell it not in Gath, whisper it not in the espresso bars of Budapest—drinking the coffee in the big cup which the man behind the counter in a small restaurant or in a drugstore automatically brings me with my steak and salad as if my stomach had asked for nothing better all through my life. Who changes countries should change hearts, wrote a Hungarian poet, but it seems that you need not change your stomach, even if you are away from home only for a few months.

At that first luncheon party, on the Ides of March, my table companions exchanged indulgent looks with the waiter when—we were in an Italian restaurant—I ordered red wine. Fortunately Lewis Galantière has not only a French name but Gallic tastes as well, and he joined me. And only we two enjoyed the fine black coffee after the lunch. That was my first—and for a long time—my last black espresso coffee in America.

(Choked for air and a very odd machine.) Despite the after dinner coffee I could hardly drag myself along. As if I were wearing diver's boots, or had been carried fifteen thousand feet up. The others noticed it and with great kindness immediately started looking for a taxi, although we were only a block away from the Institute. "How are you feeling?" they asked. I muttered it seemed like being short of oxygen. "Not seems! Is!" they said. There *is* a shortage of oxygen. You have to get used to the New York air. Three million cars use up the oxygen. The factories are right here in the city. Just have a look. Here we are passing the United Nations Building. Did you ever see a photo of it from this side? You didn't, did you? Because then it would include the three factory chimneys behind the palace, so unworthy of the first really contemporary skyscraper inspired by Le Corbusier. I now learnt the name of its architect, Wallace K. Harrison, almost as we entered the Institute, for by the time the first taxi appeared we were almost at the gate, but we got in all the same, or rather I was gently tucked into the car in their great anti-walking passion.

Upstairs on the umpteenth floor I was put into an easy chair to rest for a while; they'd call a taxi for me a little later to take me back to the hotel. Not on your life, I thought to myself. I wasn't going to spend my dollars on no taxi, not I. But for the time being I leaned back in the comfortable chair, though still gasping for air. I wanted to open the window, but there was no handle or knob. I went to the other window, but no handle there either. So I went to Betty's box to ask. I learnt that no windows had handles, not in any of the modern New York buildings, and therefore you couldn't open them. But why should you want to? They are air-conditioned in winter as well as summer; in winter hot air blew from the grating beneath the window, in summer cold. How could they stand it? Not at all, thank you, they said. But it was tolerable at present. Wait and see what it would be like in the summer. I suddenly began to think kindly of the Chelsea Hotel. It was not an aluminium-frame, dark green, many-windowed building like this, but at least the windows opened, the worst hazard being a little shock from static electricity. These unopenable windows gave me claustrophobia, and that I should have this sort of little neurosis just in America of all places was a surprise. And I didn't then know that the windows that *could* be opened must not be touched in summer because it would ruin the air-conditioning machine. How many arguments did I have with my hosts and the hotel people when, gasping in the heat, I broke the regulations and pulled up the window for the night. In the meanwhile I could hardly repress my laughter because the sancrosanct air-conditioning machine had reminded me of another which always made me laugh like a Pavlov dog.

I went back to my armchair, and dozed a few minutes. I woke up much refreshed and wanted to go, because I hoped to be able to call on my hotel neighbour Arthur Miller later that afternoon. Betty, however, asked me to wait a little, as she had started to make arrangements for my programme, and soon she would be able to tell me something definite. All right, but could I have a sheet of paper? I'd like to write my first letter home.

I got the paper and envelope. I wrote the letter on Institute notepaper and talked over next day's plans—a visit to the Columbia Broadcasting System and a talk with one of its directors—holding the letter in its envelope in my hand all the time. Betty told me to leave it there, they would post it. "Should I close the envelope?" I asked. A curious sort of politeness possessed me. Maybe if I used their paper, they ought to be able to have a look inside. Betty understood me differently. "Oh, just leave it as it is; we have a licking machine at the secretariat."

She didn't understand why I started to laugh. "What's there to laugh about? You only have to insert the envelope in the machine..." Oh yes, I quite understood. I just found it uproariously Kafkaesque. Or rather, I added—foolishly, I admit—rather Karinthyesque. "Is he some Hungarian follower of Kafka?" she asked. What less could I have said than that he was not a disciple, but a contemporary. Karinthy's name was later to crop up quite often in conversations and on these occasions I couldn't resist adding—"Oh, of course, Ionesco was a disciple of his." I was alluding, of course, not to *The Singing Lesson*, the well-known one-act play by Ionesco, but to *The Singing Lesson*, the well-known one-act play by Karinthy. I often translated it to university audiences and at parties after dinner, and used to be amused at their astonishment at the similarities.

(In praise of New York bus drivers.) I succeeded in convincing my hosts that I really did not want to go by taxi but by bus, as that was also a way of getting experience. And it was. The buses are spacious, the seats lengthwise, they run frequently, and they stop at every second street corner, literally at every second corner, because that's the regulation. If you are in a hurry take the subway. All very well, but since the Elevated was pulled down—do you remember those early American films with the trains hurtling and rumbling away and making life intolerable?—there is no Elevated or underground railway on the East Side, that is, East from Lexington Avenue.

The bus driver earned all my admiration. The buses have no conductors and the driver does both jobs. There is a box by the driver's seat and as you enter you drop 15 cents in it. And what if you haven't got any change? In Hungary, or not to be personal, in Europe in general, the passengers, I'm

afraid, would just have to have the change ready. In busier town machines giving change might be found. In New York the driver changes the money. I hadn't 15 cents in change. I gave him a one dollar note. There is an ingenious gadget for sorting the coins out at the bottom of the box. He pulled a lever and the change dropped into his hand and he handed it to me. I thanked him and went inside as any well-disciplined Budapest passenger does. "Hey, where're you going?" he called after me. I stopped, puzzled. I mumbled that I had already paid the fare, he had just given me the change. Now he really sounded cross and told me to quit fooling, he was busy. The passengers were pushing up behind me, those inside stared vacantly before them. No one was interested in our argument. I thought I could afford another 15 cents, it wasn't a fortune, apparently I had to pay the tuition fee for something. Only what? (Mr. Z. explained it to me the next day at the Chelsea Hotel: bus drivers are forbidden to deduct the fare from the change, and what's more, he's not allowed to drop the three nickels into the box himself. He gives the whole change for one dollar back and the passenger then drops the 15 cents in the box. Why? Regulations are regulations in America too.)

(A bag with a message.) My resentment against the bus driver soon evaporated as I watched him at work. He drives all day in New York's mad, chaotic traffic, in a continuous nervous tension, dashing forward, moving an inch or two, stopping at all the regular stops on the way. He drives with his left hand only and handles the box and the coin-sorting machine with his right, every now and then digging his hand into the little bag where the coins collect to pull out a handful and drop it into the machine, so that there should always be enough change. In the time I took to write this we had stopped twice, twice people got off and on, and the driver kept an eye open to make sure no more passengers wanted to get off. It's true he didn't have to change gear, as all buses are fitted with automatic gears.

In the meanwhile I saw a vacant seat; I sat down. Opposite me sat a woman with a paper bag on her lap. Big letters on the bag read: "Don't Buy Blouses at Judy Bond!" I have never seen anything like that. What sort of a game was that—*don't* buy? I changed spectacles and now I could read the whole text on the bag. "Don't buy at Judy Bond because her workers are on strike and blacklegs are working there." Signed by the "Trade Union of the Garment Industry." That put the whole thing in a different light. Only I could not decide whether it wasn't the best way of letting the whole town know of Judy Bond's blouses?

The bus had filled and many passengers were standing. An old woman

got in just in front of me. I got up to give up my seat to her. The old woman looked at me wondering, when she saw that I was not going to get off at the next stop. At the third, at 23rd Street, I got off.

(Hotel room No 610.) I inquired at the desk of the Chelsea if Arthur Miller was at home. "610," the bell-boy answered. I didn't see Mr. Z. I called up Miller on the 'phone to ask him if I might pay him a visit as a neighbour in the hotel. "Well, are you really here, in America? I wouldn't have believed it, just this time." Would I go up?

I went up to room No. 610 and saw at once why Arthur Miller was fond of this old hotel. Number 610 did not indicate a room but an apartment of three rooms with a little hall, bathroom and kitchenette. The apartment itself did not feel like a hotel at all, as most of the furniture was theirs; the walls were hung with some fine paintings and photographs by his young Viennese wife who is a photographic artist. I had arrived at an important moment of family life: Mrs. Miller was taking her little daughter to skate for the first time at the rink at Rockefeller Center. The little girl was pleased and nervous at the same time, and Mrs. Miller called on me to encourage her. I skated, didn't I? All Hungarians did, didn't they? I said yes and yes, but the child sized up my volume with suspicious eyes, and obviously would have given worlds to see me making curves on the ice. But fortunately I was spared this ordeal, as the head of the family was glad to stay at home and have a chat.

We began with the child. I envied him that he had such young children; it made one younger. He envied me that I had grown up children—how nice to be able to talk to them about everything. "I feel like a child today, by the way. I went to see my father this morning." He spoke of his father with such great tenderness that I had to restrain myself not to put the usual question—how much of his father did he put into the father figure of the *Death of a Salesman?* He told me that in his youth they were sometimes badly and sometimes well off, but they knew what money trouble was. The American children of today had to be taught the value of money by all sorts of trick devices. I thought he must have read the other day that the father of a Rockefeller boy allowed his son 25 cents a day as pocket money because he had had as much, or so he remembered, twenty-five years ago. In those days you could buy a meal for that; today it is too small a sum even for a tip. He wasn't worried about the Rockefeller boy, he wouldn't go hungry on that 25 cents a day. He was more afraid for his own children and the whole new generation. What was coming to a country where no one was ever hungry in his life? "That was what I talked to my father about."

My previous association, it seemed, was not far from his thoughts, because he asked me if I had seen the *Death of a Salesman*. I told him that I had, and that when poor József Timár played it in the National Theatre, in the end he was so mortally ill himself that he was almost taken to his death bed from the stage. He noted down Timár's name and asked if *After the Fall* had been shown in Budapest, for he had heard that there was some wrangling about it. When abroad one defends even the wranglings of one's compatriots and this is what I did, and quickly changed the subject to *Incident at Vichy*. I told him that I had seen it twice, once in Budapest and another time in Amsterdam. I liked the Budapest production better. "Why? Because you could follow it in Hungarian?" I answered, seriously, that I thought that because our national consciousness had inhaled the German opium more deeply than the Dutch did, the problems of the play affected us more directly. I was glad that a writer who has seen so much international success was not afraid to ask the thing the writer always wants to know, not whether I liked it better in Budapest or Amsterdam, but, if I liked it, why?

(Arthur Miller in Faremido.) That was easy, as I am really very fond of his "Vichy." He wanted to return the compliment, but since he had only read part of my South American journal in English, it would hardly have been a return, so he passed the praise on to Hungarian literature. Did I know that recently an excellent Hungarian book had come his way? He had never heard its author's name before. If I waited it would come back to him—one couldn't remember these Hungarian names, but it seemed like the name of an Austrian province, was that possible? Barely an hour ago I had tried to give a vague idea of Frigyes Karinthy's greatness—greatness? mere existence– to a young American lady, and had been rather despondent about it, and here was Arthur Miller saying he knew and had read him? What was it?

Voyage to Faremido, in an English translation published by Corvina Press. What he liked most in the book was the part about a restaurant with an automat in which people dropped a coin and out came the food. But behind the wall there sat a man who caught the coins and pushed out the dish. "That writer of yours visualized our present-day society as far back as the 'thirties. People here trust machines more than men. We have forgotten to think, everything is left to the computers. What can be read by this author in English?"

(What had Oedipus been before he became a complex?) The domination of the machine is bringing about a certain automatization in human thinking

itself, he continued. The other day he was called on by a psychologist who asked him about the method he used to establish the subjective relationship between two persons in the scene of a play. "What do you mean establish?" Miller asked. "I imagined it and wrote it down." But the specialist would not be bought off with that: yes, yes, but on the ground of what psychological theory? Miller's voice still rang indignantly as he recalled the conversation. "What do you mean on the basis of what theory?" The psychologist lost his patience and almost shouted at him that he wanted to know, and please hurry up and tell him, whether he stood by Freud, Jung or Watson's behaviourism?

"That was nothing better than contempt for literature and man's creative faculty," Miller fumed. "There seem to be scientists who believe that before Freud people had no ideas at all about the relation between human minds, about their repressed emotions, about the struggles going on between the consciousness and the passions. I had to remind the good man that Oedipus had been the protagonist of a drama before he was promoted to a complex, and that he was imagined and created by a writer," he said.

"*Be glad that you won't live in the twenty-first century.*" I was with Miller for two hours. We went on talking, and naturally Vietnam was mentioned and again as a matter of course Miller was against it. But there you are again. He too said he couldn't understand why we in Europe, especially in its eastern half, were so much engrossed by it? The word absurdity was used in connection with that war, and from there we changed the topic to the drama of the absurd and the search for new forms. He referred again to the *Death of a Salesman*. "They're putting it on TV again." (I didn't then know how rare that was in America.) "I've seen again what I wrote," Miller continued. "I think even at that date, the beginning of the 'forties, the spectator and the critic could find everything of the new drama in that play, don't you think?"

We also spoke about the international P.E.N. Congress in New York in the summer, about the role P.E.N. could play, more particularly about the writers' role in the period at the end of the Cold War, about the roads to socialism and its prospects, and finally about my American plans. "Don't read any guidebooks about New York for anything in the world, before you have conquered it for yourself." (That's how he put it.) "Roam and stroll about a lot, but take care you don't go into Central Park at night, because you may be knocked down. And where else do you plan to go in the States? You must go to Los Angeles so that you don't regret that you won't live to see the twenty-first century. That city is made up of cars. People used

to go there, to the Pacific coast, for the air, now it stinks of cars; the whole town is full of express motorways on piers, one above the other without intersecting, and one doesn't see anything but cars and cars. Four hundred HP and three tons of steel. That is the anti-Utopia of the future."

I asked if New York didn't have as many cars?

"New York? Compared to Los Angeles it is still in the nineteenth century. Here people get out of the habit of having a car. I have a friend, a doctor, he has to go about a lot, but he's sold his car. He hires one if he needs one and that's that." That reminded him to tell me that in America one can hire just anything. "Car, boat, tent, trailer, but not only things like that. Silver and china, and if one has people in, one can even hire carpets and furniture. More than that, clothes and shoes, and the businessmen can knock off the cost of the hire from their basic tax. Perhaps you could say it is a form of socialism," he says, "it's not objects that have value, but their use. I don't like it," he added, "I cling to my things, I'm attached to them, I'm growing old with them."

That, on the other hand, made me think that this was not a form of socialism but one of alienation. In the end a man has nothing left which he is fond of, which belongs to him, grows with him. He merely uses everything and then throws it away.

He said in farewell that I would find lots of things in this country to like and lots of others to dislike. Then he repeated it and rephrased it: "Lots of things to admire and lots of things to hate."

"What?" I asked.

"If I told you, what would you do for four months in America?"

*

I looked at my watch. I had arrived in New York just twenty-four hours before.

BUDAPEST IN 1967

Planning an Exhibition

by

ZOLTÁN HALÁSZ

When in the autumn of 1966 one of the executive members of the Budapest Metropolitan Council asked me to write the detailed plan of a Budapest Exhibition to be held at the Vienna Rathaus, I remembered that golden rule of journalism —don't write about a town unless you have lived in it three days or three years. After three days, you will write with the assurance that is based on a cursory and—you flatter yourself—therefore comprehensive impression; three years gives you the assurance of familiarity. Both of these conditions are useless for me; in the half century one has, with only a few interruptions, lived in one's native city, one will have accumulated a whole body of comprehensive and multifarious experiences that are apt to blur the type of clear-cut impressions a temporary sojourner might take away with him. At the end of the First World War, a small child, I saw the starving city, then I saw it seething with the rebellion that was making history. As I grew out of my 'teens and into early manhood, I knew the ostentatious, purse-proud provincialism of the 'thirties, which covered the slopes of the Buda hills with imitations of neo-Baroque mansions. I lived through the years of the Second World War, the new beginnings of the immediate post-war period when the nation got down to the hard job of starting a new life in towns of demolished bridges and bombed-out homes; I was a witness of the tragic days in the autumn of 1956 and the subsequent process of consolidation—and what it all adds up to is still no more than a few bare lines and touches outlining the complex image that I, a Budapest citizen, carry in my mind of my city. To me, it is a city of extremes, being at once one of the oldest and youngest of European cities: its first ancestor nearly two thousand years ago—Aquincum—was the principal town of the Danubian province of the Roman Empire, a large city with close on 100,000 inhabitants; on the other hand, Budapest as we know it,

is less than a 100 years old, the twin cities—or rather triple towns of Buda, Pest, and Óbuda having been merged as late as the second half of the nineteenth century. Count István Széchenyi, the great reformer and statesman, was the first to write, in the eighteen-forties, the word *Budapest*—and it was not until a quarter century later, in 1873, that the merger of the three into the single city of Budapest received the sanction of law. Budapest has been a city, recalcitrant, rivalling, rebelling in relation to its great neighbour, Vienna. It has also been a responsive city in its trade with neighbouring countries. During the Austrian–Hungarian period, Budapest made every attempt to rival Vienna; situated at the centre of the Hapsburg Empire, it directed its gaze in intellectual affairs, to Paris. On the other hand, its dynamic "American-type" speed of growth about the turn of the century was due to the fact that, situated as it was at the meeting-point of regions of different economic character in the Danube basin, it was an ideal terrain for industrial development and commerce.

So which is the true Budapest? Which of its several aspects, most within the limitations of the available floor surface, deserves to be set before the Viennese public (and, later the publics of Helsinki and Stockholm)?

It has finally been decided to try and exhibit the Budapest of 1967, the Budapest of earlier periods being included only in so far as it survives in the city of today.

The battle of the Dome

For an exhibition on Budapest held in the Spring of 1967, you could hardly find a more appropriate starting-place than the *Vár*—the former royal palace that sits in majesty on the heights of Castle Hill, on the Buda side. This complex of buildings—partly incorporating, partly superimposed on the Friss Palota—or New Palace—of Sigismund of Luxemburg and the sumptuous Renaissance palace built by Matthias Corvinus in the fifteenth century, was reduced to ruins by bombardment in the Second World War. It is now in the process of repair and restoration, and this very year, will again form part of the living organism of the city. A number of cultural institutions are to be housed in the restored buildings of the Vár, such as the Széchényi Library, the National Gallery or the History of Budapest Museum. (This institution has, this spring, moved into the southern wing, a structure dating from the age of Sigismund, built upon Romanesque foundations.)

The restoration of the Vár marks an important and characteristic turning-point in the most recent development of Budapest, in more than one respect.

For one thing, it is a good illustration of the care taken to integrate a vitally important complex of historical buildings in the contemporary life of the capital and country, in a manner that takes the changing historical requirements into proper account. (Had this attitude prevailed twenty years ago, Budapest might now be the richer for a good many historic examples of architecture; to mention only one, the bombed Lloyd Palace, a remarkable neo-classical building, certainly not beyond repair and restoration, would not have disappeared from Roosevelt square.)

The questions of style involved in the restoration of the Vár complex are also of great interest. I am thinking in particular of the bitter debates which preceded the work. At the very beginning there were suggestions that the Vár should not be restored, or at least not on its former scale. Later on, another project was put forward, to change the appearance of the Vár by rebuilding it on the model of the Eszterházy residence at Fertőd. Public opinion was enraged at both suggestions: it wanted the traditional townscape restored—and the panorama on the Buda bank with the whole complex of palaces, as they had developed in the nineteenth century, formed an essential part of it. In the end, public demand won: the final decision was to restore the Vár in its original proportions.

However, this would have been too simple a solution; and is not the way we deal—we have ever dealt—with our aesthetic problems in Budapest; we maintained tradition with the outbreak of the memorable "cupola controversy."

The pivot of the whole ensemble as it developed in the nineteenth century was a not very original cupola, which none the less became a dominating and characteristic landmark for the whole city. This cupola had been reduced to ruins during the siege in the last months of the war.

One group of architects proposed to abolish the cupola altogether, and emphasize the centre of the building by a smaller, projecting, quadrangular block. Another design put forward a slightly higher dome in shape resembling a Mongolian tent, while others again demanded that the cupola be restored to its original shape.

The fight assumed surprising proportions. It grew and grew, and spread from the architectural journals to the daily press; it became a public concern, it was argued with acrimony between colleagues and friends. The length of the dispute was one of the causes of the delay over the restoration of the Vár. (Another was the staggering cost of the whole project.) The design that was eventually adopted only made a slight change in the curve of the cupola.

The Vár has in fact been restored without any essential alteration in the exterior design (the interior plan of course will be governed by the func-

tional needs of the institutions to be housed in these buildings); the whole ensemble of buildings has been restored according to the original designs, as drafted by Miklós Ybl and Alajos Hauszman in the nineteenth century. (Not everyone, myself included, is happy about the final design of the cupola, although generally speaking we are about the Vár complex as a whole.)

Nor, as a matter of fact, does one regret the controversy that raged over it. Never before had a question of town development in Budapest excited such widespread interest, or aroused public opinion to such an extent. This universal interest has now developed, beyond the restoration of the Vár and the Castle district, to embrace buildings of architectural or historical interest elsewhere in the city, and the design and form of the townscape as a whole in the fast-growing capital.

In the Óbuda district, for instance, where, under the housing programme, a new housing estate has arisen (and continues to expand), parts of Roman walls, stone carvings and mosaic floors have repeatedly turned up, for the remains of ancient Aquincum, buried in the earth, lie under practically the whole area. Many a Budapest citizen is prepared to go to considerable trouble, as a matter of public concern, to see that these remains are brought to light, to see that they are competently preserved—where possible *in situ*, even to sacrificing a couple of leisure hours in voluntary work. I know there is nothing surprising about this, as the growing interest in archaeology and historical buildings is worldwide. But such a demonstration as this in Budapest—or in Hungary, for that matter—is a comparatively new thing. One thinks of the long and frustrating struggle carried on by János Schulek between the wars. For twenty years that enthusiastic schoolmaster and do-it-yourself archaeologist fought the persistent conspiracy of silence with which Visegrád smallholders hid from him all news of stone carvings turned up in their back-gardens for fear excavations would disrupt their cultivations. It was twenty years before he managed to get things moving and the remains of the fifteenth century royal palace of King Matthias, sunken under ground and forgotten, were discovered.

The Óbuda development project is a typical example, I believe, of the sound compromise that is concluded with growing frequency between those concerned with the preservation of ancient monuments on the one hand and town planners on the other: it is obvious, for instance, that Óbuda, a small, baroque, half-rural town, cannot be fully preserved as it is since living, growing Budapest clamours for more space. Between them, however, the experts concerned have managed to evolve a development plan which preserves the most important historic buildings, while giving full scope

Buda Castle reconstructed: Hall of the Knights
from the early 14th century castle of Sigismund of Luxemburg

Erzsébet Bridge, 1945

Erzsébet Bridge, 1967

Overleaf:

View of the Buda hills

New housing estate in the south of Buda

Turkish tombs in front of a medieval fortification in Buda castle

to new large-scale housing developments. The most important Roman remains (such as the large baths, unearthed in 1966) are to be incorporated in the ground floors or basements of new buildings. Thus preserved, they will be thrown open to the public. Various points where the best examples of baroque architecture are concentrated are being declared "historic building enclaves." The buildings in these "enclaves" will not only be preserved: they are to be given new functions adapted to modern city-life, housing public library branches, local history collections and similar institutions.

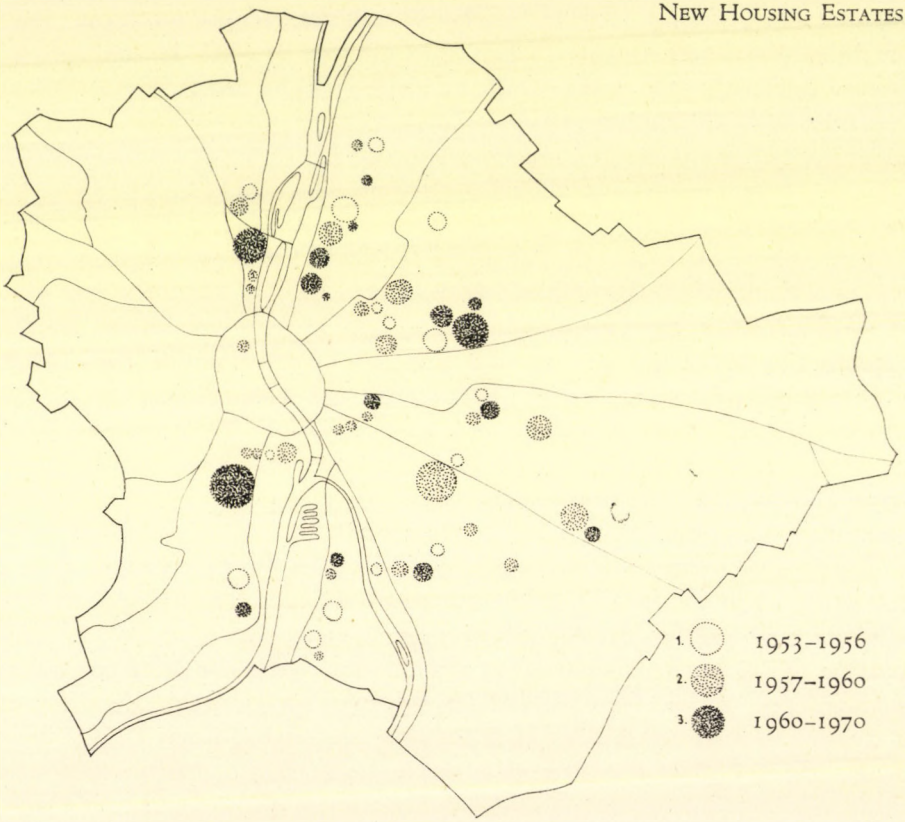
The New Town Districts

Although Hungary is at the bottom of the world list in population growth, the population of Budapest has increased considerably since the last war. According to the 1949 census there were 1.6 million inhabitants in the capital; this figure had gone up to 1.8 million by 1960, and in 1965 it was over 1.9 million. Comparative statistics on the total population of the country are still more revealing: one in five out of a total population of 10 million lives in Budapest—a figure which leaves only Vienna and Copenhagen, among the European capitals, ahead of Budapest in the concentration of its total population living in the capital.

There is no need to go into the historical causes for this here, (and even less necessary in a Vienna exhibition; after all, the capital of the once mighty Hapsburg empire has developed into a great metropolis quite out of proportion to the national territory as a whole for much the same reasons as Budapest; prior to the First World War, Budapest had been the capital city of a country three times as large as it is today). It is more interesting to look at the efforts Budapest is making to tackle—efficiently or inefficiently—the multitude of problems arising from a concentration of the population which, in the context of Hungary, is quite excessive.

The period of government by ukase is, happily, over. The ban placed on moving to the capital, by which the Rákosi government tried to stop the exodus from the countryside, in any case proved a failure: the manpower needs of Budapest industry were too strong. There remained the other alternative: to create new industrial centres in other parts of the country in the hope that they would absorb the newly released mass of manpower from the countryside. The industrial development programme which followed did succeed in reducing some of the oppressive predominance of Budapest on the industrial scene: twenty years ago, over 60 per cent of the national industrial capacity was concentrated in Budapest; today this

percentage has been reduced to 43. Percentages, however can be misleading: alongside the development of industry on a nationwide scale, the output of Budapest industries has been increasing at a phenomenal rate, and is now 4.5 times as much as fifteen years ago. Budapest industry employs



a labour force of 640,000; and it accounts for nearly two-thirds of the total output of Hungarian light industry: two-thirds of the chemicals; 95 per cent of electrical engineering; the bulk of electronic equipment and so on—the list could be extended indefinitely. The ability of the Budapest industries, therefore, to syphon off labour has not been weakened at all: and the capital, with the work opportunities it offers, with the lights and the entertainment and attractions of a great city, continues to act as a lodestone for tens of thousands of countryfolk.

It follows that there is only one solution to the housing problem created by an inevitably growing population—massive housing developments, the

extension of public utilities, and an expansion of the public services. An uphill task in any big city, it presents exceptional problems in Budapest, where the need to provide adequate housing for the natural growth of the population and the multitude that has come in from the country over the past ten or twenty years, is coupled with the need to rectify the disparities existing between the old "inner districts" of the town and the original industrial satellite townships—poorly provided for—that were integrated into Budapest in 1950.

In preparation for the Vienna exhibition, I once again went round the districts of the capital which had been rebuilt or newly built in the last ten years.

Statistics show that a yearly average of some 10,000 homes have been built in Budapest in recent years—not an unimpressive figure; and the results can be most clearly seen in the many places where a number of new buildings were built as a unit, as in new housing estates. Empty spaces between buildings in streets all over Budapest, buildings either damaged or demolished during the war or fallen into disrepair are being built over, repaired or replaced, in an operation that is, unobtrusively but pleasingly, brightening up the look of the town. In many aspects, on the other hand, that look has barely changed at all in twenty years: some inner districts—nearly the whole of Józsefváros, as well as Terézváros and Ferencváros, as well as many sections of the outlying industrial suburbs inherited from the capitalist past, with their dreary tenement houses or small, rustic-type cottages, await clearance in either the near or the more distant future, to be re-built on modern town-planning principles. This project is not, however, simply a pious hope for the future. New, decentralised, urban centres have been designed and built in several industrial districts, formerly satellite towns ringing Budapest. The town centres built in the great industrial stronghold of Csepel, along the southern perimeter of the capital, and in the outlying southeastern district of Kőbánya, with their tall modern buildings, shopping centres, services, add a big-city touch to the seedy, small town or downright rural appearance of these districts. These modern blocks of flats with district heating, up to date shopping centres, and good roads improve the general standard of the community and help close the gap that still exists between the central and suburban districts of the capital. Of all of them the change is most striking in the working-class district of Angyalföld (Angel's Field) at one time a depressed and dreary area on the northern edge of the city on the Pest side. Here the gap between the former working-class district and the amenities of the centre has been almost completely closed; the new housing estate near Árpád Bridge represents one of finest ar-

chitectural and building achievements in Budapest of recent years; the supermarkets and cinemas of the district, the new theatre, the cultural centre should satisfy every need. The blueprints and designs for further developments have moreover already been completed; these plans envisage the demolition of a whole section of crumbling buildings along the river embankment and the construction, between 1967 and 1970, of a pleasant housing estate on the cleared site designed in modern horizontal blocks, provided with district heating, plenty of greens lawns and gardens.

In Vienna, whose communal housing developments in the early interwar years were famous, each block of flats is marked by a plaque bearing the date it was built, from the Marx-Hof—a housing estate with unforgettable historical associations—which was built in the 1920's, to the blocks of the Vorgarten section, completed in the mid-1960's. Though no such plaques are found on Budapest's new communal housing units, the ground-plans of the various housing estates and the architectural styles in which they are built, date the various projects pretty accurately, and indicate the developments of urban planning over the last fifteen to twenty years. The earlier developments were not based on functionalism, and all sorts of false historical and folk styles were employed. Such attempts at pseudo historical and monumental effects—and of regimentation—are features which are characteristic of the architecture of the Stalin era in other places as well as Budapest. There is a considerable improvement in more recent building developments—as, for instance, in the huge housing estate bearing the name of the poet Attila József (which, incidentally, was built on the site of one of the most appalling slums of interwar Budapest). Here the rigid, criss-cross pattern of streets and roads of the earlier projects is replaced by looser curves linking the green stretches of grass and gardens with one another. The buildings are well placed, and the proportions of built up and open space generous. The buildings follow no hard and fast rules; they run parallel, or at right angles, or obliquely to the roads, in accordance with the loose over-all design. Higher blocks are almost carelessly, yet in fact very carefully, juxtaposed with longer and lower masses, and space is used in a variety of ways, here enclosed to make a square or semi-piazza, there open to give long vistas of green among the buildings. The same sort of improvement can be seen in the Lágymányos housing estate (completed in 1966). Here, the long horizontal blocks on the northern side of the estate are balanced by the slender tower blocks, built in a curving ribbon, on the south, giving a curiously peaceful and harmonious air to the ensemble as a whole.

Modern principles of design will be applied with even greater consistency in the 14th district housing estate scheduled to be started in 1967, in the

eastern part of Pest. This will be built from prefabricated parts manufactured by a "prefabricated houses factory" imported from Denmark. Three out of four of its projected 13,000 homes will be in 10-storey blocks of flats. These will be combined with three-storey houses for large families and with 16-storey tower blocks. The central part of the new district will be closed, sealed off from noisy traffic; here amenities such as a shopping centre, a department store, cinema, public library, and the local clinic, as well as restaurants and espresso bars will be found, all the establishments and services in short, that are needed in an estate of this size.

In addition to questions of style and architecture, town planning, it goes without saying, has its own internal, sociological problems. The failure of housing plans to keep up with demand, which seems to increase in almost geometrical progression, is a worldwide experience (though made worse in the case of Hungary by the low rents which encourage people to make exorbitant demands in housing). A particular problem in Budapest—which Hungarian town planners have only lately realized with dismay—is the fact that a considerable proportion of the homes in the newly built housing estates are overcrowded from the start. In a survey conducted for the Metropolitan Council of Budapest in three new housing estates,* workers of the Budapest City Planning Office (after investigating living conditions in 6,267 homes) found more inhabitants per flat than were planned for—in 44% of the one-room flats designed for two tenants, in 30% of homes for three (with one large and one small room), and in nearly 20% of two-room flats designed to take four. This overcrowding is principally due to the fact that the planners based themselves on earlier tenancy figures from the inter-war period, which were influenced by the high rents then prevailing, and as a result planned too high a proportion of small flats. This survey also investigated the ages of the new occupants who have moved into thousands of these new homes, and found (as was to be expected) that the average age of these tenants differed widely from the average for Budapest as a whole: they were much younger, and there was a far higher than average proportion of children.

Crèches, kindergartens and primary schools were of course also built on the new housing estates. Since however these were planned on the same estimates, they are also overcrowded. It is not easy to change these things once they have been finished: the occupants of many of the recently built small flats try to solve their problems through the mutual transfer of flats.

These lessons are being taken to heart in planning the newer housing

* Dr. Fodor L., Dezső J., Gyuris A.: *Lakáspolitikai vizsgálatok a lágymányosi, az Árpád-hídfői és az Üllői úti lakótelepeken.* (Study of living conditions on the Lágymányos, Árpád-hídfő and Üllői út housing estates.)

estates: the proportion of larger flats will be higher, and the capacity of the various schools and crèches larger, to meet the larger number of children expected.

Danubian Metropolis

Once you have stood on the Fishermen's Bastion or the top of Gellért Hill and admired the view of Budapest and the Danube, you become aware of the important, the decisive role the river plays in the life of this city. The part it plays from the aesthetic point of view is vital. It makes the townscape. The huge rolling river runs right down the centre of Budapest, like Paris, unlike Vienna, with its quaysides a characteristic feature of the city. The bridges which link the two sides of the town over a stretch of water that is, at certain points, 400 to 1,000 yards wide, are not only arterial roads: in a certain sense, they symbolize the life of Budapest. The oldest of them, Count István Széchenyi's Chain Bridge, was built in the "age of reform", the great movement of national revival at the beginning of the nineteenth century; the youngest of them—the Elizabeth Bridge, was rebuilt as a cable bridge and rededicated in 1964, the last of the original seven Danube bridges, all of which were demolished in the last stages of the war, to be rebuilt. On the Pest embankment rises the landmark that characterizes this city, the pinnacles and dome of the neo-Gothic Parliament building. From this building runs the Corso, the riverside promenade, along which the first of a complex of hotels, replacing the once famous riverside row of hotels destroyed during the war, is now under construction. Last but not least, there are the steps descending to the lower quay; a place frequented by lovers, fishing enthusiasts, dog-walkers, or those who simply enjoy a walk beside the Danube waters.

The Danube is inseparable from Budapest; it is the most important part of the whole Budapest scene, and every Budapest citizen carries it in his heart. But association of the city and the river is even closer than that. One can think of London as "the city on the Thames." But is its river as closely bound up with its life as ours is? I doubt it. With Budapest it is different; "the city on the Danube" comes naturally to the tongue. Budapest is happily placed at the central point of the middle reaches of the great river which links the Black Forest and the Black Sea: from this point barges laden with goods can steam up-river to ports in Austria and Germany—Vienna, Linz, Passau, Regensburg—and when, at some future date, the Danube–Rhine–Main and the Danube–Oder–Elbe

East European waterways are completed, up to the heart of the major industrial basins of western and eastern Europe. Seagoing Danube vessels (developed over the years in Hungarian shipbuilding yards) sail from Budapest to Middle East ports—via Rumanian, Turkish and Greek ports as far afield as Beirut and Alexandria—thus avoiding the transhipment of cargoes.

The Vienna exhibition—designed to show the main features of contemporary Budapest to a foreign public—will of course also deal with Budapest the city-on-the-Danube. The exhibits include material on the Csepel Free Port just south of the capital, which has developed into a major free port in Central Europe over the last ten years. Also material on the Hungarian shipbuilding industry, which, in addition to river craft, builds seagoing vessels for countries abroad, even such maritime countries as Norway. There is information on the work done in fighting water pollution—increasingly important in the Danubian countries as local industries—(and particularly the chemical industry)—develop, and flood control. (Ever since the disastrous flood of 1838 Budapest has continued to take precautious on such an extensive scale that it is now one of the best protected riparian cities in Europe, despite the excessive fluctuation in the level of the Danube.

The fact that it is a riverside city, however, determines Budapest's position in the Danube basin. The decision of the International Danube Commission (made up of representatives of the riparian socialist countries and, since 1959, Austria, and with which experts from the German Federal Republic collaborate) to choose Budapest as its headquarters is not without practical as well as symbolic significance. Budapest is also one of the nerve centres of the international energy network, originally a joint project of the East European socialist countries alone, but now, owing to bilateral agreements between Czechoslovakia and Austria, and Austria and Hungary respectively, extending beyond the Comecon countries and well on the way to developing into a sort of Danubian Power Authority.

The flow of goods and the establishment of systems of economic cooperation nevertheless only make up one of many aspects of the Danubian community as a whole, and a community that transcends the Danube Basin itself. The international Trans-European highway—the E5, now nearing completion—which crosses Europe in an east-westerly direction and goes through Budapest; the air routes which intersect at Budapest; and a number of traditional but all the more comfortable international expresses have helped to produce a dramatic upturn in tourism in recent years. Not counting the hundreds of thousands of travellers in transit, visitors to the Hungarian capital in 1963 numbered 740,000, and in 1966 the figure was 2,420,000

But anyone who attempts at the same time to paint a true picture of intellectual life in Budapest is taking on a very difficult job. In sheer number of inhabitants, let alone economic power, Budapest is the almost depressingly overwhelming intellectual centre of Hungary. It has a population of little less than 2,000,000; the second largest city in Hungary, Miskolc, has 167,000; the third, Debrecen, 146,000. This gap is all the greater in considering the distribution of professional workers throughout Hungary. 68%, for instance of all engineers with university degrees live in the capital. 70% of the economists, 45% of the doctors, 42% of all schoolmasters and university professors. Forty-nine per cent of all university graduates live in Budapest. According to the latest census, 77% of those who follow the arts also live in Budapest—and since the majority of artists living in the provinces are painters and sculptors, it is fair to say without too much exaggeration that Hungarian writers and poets, film-makers and musicians live in Budapest. As a result of this excessive concentration, theatre and concert performances of a higher standard are likely to draw much larger audiences in Budapest: the audience in Budapest for serious music is about as large as those of all the other towns combined. The two opera houses, the sixteen theatres for plays and light opera, always draw sizable audiences despite the strong competition of television. A great deal of fine work has been done by the twelve provincial theatre companies and by the State Rural Theatre company, whose travelling companies tour the villages, yet Budapest is the only and exclusive intellectual centre for the stage and the film (all the film studios are in the capital).

I am not boasting of all this with the narrow pride of a Budapest devotee —what I write is rather a criticism of the way Hungary has developed—and, this criticism is not directed at the distant past alone. Large-scale concentration in the cultural sphere began, it is true, in the nineteenth century, and assumed extravagant proportions in the first decade of this century. Nevertheless, not even the ten years of considerable and well-meaning effort has fundamentally altered the established pattern. The government, guided by the desire to lessen the cultural domination of Budapest, has been busy decentralizing, founding new universities and colleges, countless new cultural institutions, theatres, public libraries and cultural centres in the provinces—creating at the same time, thousands of new jobs for intellectuals. By setting up industries and big cooperative farms in the provinces, it has also provided new jobs in provincial towns and in villages for a broad stratum of technicians, from which intelligent audiences could be created. Yet all these measures, important and beneficial as they are for the nation, have met with only a slow and feeble response in terms of movement from the capital.

Many of the young professionals, taking a job in the provinces after graduation, look upon it as purely temporary, move heaven and earth for the chance to live in Budapest, and are prepared to pay a heavy price in professional advancement or salary to do so. Thousands of intellectuals, doctors, stage managers, university lecturers, museum staff, continue to live in Budapest despite the excellent positions they have obtained in the provinces. They commute weekly between their places of work in the provinces and their Budapest homes.

This picture may be somewhat exaggerated; a movement in the opposite direction—i.e. from Budapest to the provinces—has begun to make itself felt in recent years. But on the whole, Hungary is still Budapest-centred in all intellectual and cultural matters. The towns in the provinces for instance are making rapid economic and industrial advances, but are slow in reaching the cultural level of such centres—whose number is, for historical reasons, rather small—as Pécs, Szeged, Debrecen and Eger. And the citizen of Budapest, while taking pride in the importance of his native city in European intellectual life, thinks somewhat wistfully of the polycentrism which has put such intellectual centres as Turin, Bologna or Florence almost on a par with Rome and Milan.

There is, however, another side to the intellectual image of Budapest—and one that is diametrically opposite. Admiration—often carried to excess—is not the only emotion Budapest can arouse. Surprisingly little space was given to Budapest, considered either as a theme or a background in earlier Hungarian literature. In the more recent past, even as late as between the two wars, there was a literary school which was in arms against the influence of the metropolis, regarding it as a growth alien to the real, rural, folk life of Hungary. The literary aspects of the Populist and Urban movements have been discussed on several occasions in the pages of The NHQ. In mounting this exhibition on Budapest, however, for a non-Hungarian public I had to go farther back if the transformation that is now taking place was to be made clear.

Following its fourteenth century prosperity, Buda, the royal seat of mediaeval Hungary, and of Pest, the town across the river inhabited by merchants and artisans, grew during the fifteenth century reign of King Matthias into a Renaissance city that became the economic and administrative heart of the country, in which the main characteristics of a national capital in the modern sense were beginning to mature. Under Matthias it was an intellectual centre whose light shone far and wide: the great library he maintained was a meeting-place for eminent humanists; and less than a decade after Gutenberg had invented printing, a printing-press—that of András Hess—was in

operation in Buda. After only about fifty more years of unhindered development, a century and a half of Turkish occupation ensued: Buda and Pest were blacked out of national life; and when, during the siege of 1686, it was retaken from the Turks, it had been so destroyed, that the troops of Charles of Lorraine found no more than 200 human beings alive within the gutted walls of the royal town.

All this might have been no more than a tragic episode, had not the Turkish occupation been followed by Hapsburg rule. The colonial attitude of the Hapsburgs although in a different way, also thwarted all developments in Buda and Pest that might have made a great Hungarian city of them. In the reconstruction of Buda and Pest after the siege, newly settled burghers—mostly German—were given building sites and granted privileges; the greater aristocrats tended to absent themselves from their estates and live for most of the year in Vienna. The gentry and the serfs (who were bound to the soil—*glebae ascripti)* remained untouched by urban development. To top it all, Buda-Pest lost even the semblance of a capital for years to come: the Diet—infrequently as it convened—met in Pozsony (Pressburg—present-day Bratislava), a town that was much nearer Vienna. It took the eruption of a national revolution, in 1848, for the first national Parliament to meet in the ancient capital, and for the first "independent Hungarian administration" to have its residence in Buda-Pest.

But this took place on the eve of a life-and-death struggle. The Hungarian War of Independence was lost, and for many years afterwards national life was once more dominated by foreign oppression. Buda-Pest, however, had regained its place as the capital of Hungary, and this place was never disputed again. Indeed, the great movements for national revival in the nineteenth century—the Reform Era early in the century and capitalist industrialization in the second half of the century—harnessed a very large proportion of the national energy to the task of developing the capital. It was in those years that the industrialization began in Hungary, concentrated in Budapest. In that period of incipient capitalism the national railway system acquired its present-day pattern of centripetal trunk lines all converging upon Budapest. The diversion to Budapest of both passenger and goods traffic gave of course a powerful impetus to the growth of the capital; but the drawback—which still exists—is that people wishing to travel from one provincial town to another are compelled to make a big detour via Budapest to reach their destination. All the administrative buildings needed in a capital, all the outward physical paraphanalia of public and cultural life were built up in Budapest with a tremendous expenditure of energy and money—sometimes far beyond the resources of the country. That was how the Royal

Palace came to be built on a scale far in excess of its function; that was how the largest legislative building on the Continent came to be built—a Parliament building grossly oversize—to put it mildly—for the legislative building of a semi-feudal country.

The trauma caused by the fact that for centuries the centres of Hungarian intellectual life had been found in the towns in Transylvania and in the series of small towns in the mountainous northern part of the country (present-day Slovakia) as well as certain country-seats of the nobility—superseded, almost without transition, by the Budapest-centred developments of the nineteenth century—led to a curious love-hate relationship between the capital and the provinces. The love was expressed in the eagerness with which provincials would go up to Budapest to make or spend money, and meditate wistfully on the lights of the big-city. The hate in the attitude which, not so long ago, many not unimportant people persisted in thinking of the city which is the home of one-fifth of the Hungarian population, as an entity of secondary importance in the life of the nation.

In preparing the Vienna exhibition, however, we had to do more than just consider the role played by Budapest in the intellectual activities of the nation: we collected a large number of exhibits to put on display. Shelves were filled with literature—books and magazines—published in Budapest in German, English, and French. Paintings and sculptures representative of the various tendencies of recent years were assembled, stage designs borrowed from theatrical companies, glass cabinets filled with a variety of manufactured goods to illustrate industrial design. Most of the exhibits are necessarily in the form of photographs, since nothing captures the lights and shadows of the city with such ruthless objectivity as the camera lens.

The picture which emerged was probably more surprising to me, a Budapest citizen, than to the foreign visitor to the exhibition. His mind is not saturated with national memories and notions of trauma and love-hate relationships; the image of a modern European metropolis that emerges from the countless splinters of this mosaic is bound to appear something that on the whole he takes for granted. But to me, who have lived through so much in this city, something about it has come home with the force of revelation. Not the huge scale on which building has been taking place, far outstripping anything in the past. It is the *inner development* that has been taking place in our city, one for which I can find no better term than the—to west European readers probably commonplace—word "urbanisation." The gentry-aping citizen of the turn of the century, as well as the jingoist provincialism of the Horthy era, are now things of the past, as are the grandiose plaster colonnades and pseudo-heroism of the Stalin era—and good riddance,

say I. What capitalism failed to achieve in Hungary is now beginning to mature under the conditions of socialist construction: by now Budapest has a consciously *urban* population that takes pride in its city; and if, in overcrowded buses and trams, sharp words are sometimes heard, it is precisely because this population increasingly demands and accepts all that accompanies civilized city life.

It is possible—in fact it is pretty certain—that what visitors to the Budapest exhibition abroad will find most impressive will be the exhibits illustrating the truly imposing, constructive efforts that have been made, and will attach little importance to demonstrations of that *inner development* (which anyway they have to take for granted). For me, however, they prove that at last Budapest has found its identity.

FROM OUR NEXT NUMBERS

AN ACTIVE POLICY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE DANUBE VALLEY
Dr. Josef Klaus

MODERN FORMS OF COOPERATION IN THE DANUBE VALLEY
Tibor Pethő

HUNDRED YEARS OF *AUSGLEICH*
Péter Hanák

ANTON MAULBERTSCH
Klára Garas

MELCHIOR HEFELE
Anna Zádor

DANUBIANA
Zoltán Horváth

THE DANUBE WATERWAY
György Fekete

ENCOUNTER WITH THE CITY

by

KATALIN HANÁK

The social regrouping that took place in Hungary as a result of industrial development during the last decades is characterized by a great increase in the urban population owing to the influx of villagers into towns. The population of Budapest increased between 1949 and 1965 by 345,215 persons,* 79 per cent of the growth representing the influx from the provinces. (The population of Hungary's capital at the end of 1964 was 1,920,000.)

*Migration to—and from—Budapest***

	from the provinces to Budapest	from Budapest to the provinces	difference
1960	202,496	160,929	41,567
1961	189,163	151,022	33,141
1962	179,062	149,828	29,234
1963	169,931	146,917	29,014
1964	156,917	138,689	18,228

Our study does not pretend to give a comprehensive picture of townward migration. We wish—on the basis of a not yet concluded sociological survey—only to report on the motivation of migrants who moved within the last twelve months from the country to Budapest and who now work there as factory hands; and on their encounter with the city and worries about how to adjust to their changed environment.

* See: János Bertalan–Dr. Mihály Viszket: *Az ipartelepítés és Budapest népesedési problémái* ("The location of industry and the population problems of Budapest"), *Megyei és Városi Statisztikai Értesítő* (Statistical Bulletin for Countries and Towns), Feb. 1966.

** Source: *Budapest Statisztikai Évkönyve* ("Statistical Handbook of Budapest"), 1965. p. 48.

Our investigation aims simultaneously at studying the problem of the rural migrant's adaptation to a large city, industrial work and the urban cultural setting, and to discover the factors that promote and hinder assimilation, and how the adjustment process can be most favourably influenced from the point of view of both society and the individual.

Data of the first survey

Our investigation, also making use of objective data, is based on what is known as the panel-method (repeated interviews). The first survey was concluded in the summer of 1965 and the second in the summer of 1966. During the latter we made use of half the sample employed in the first survey and by repeating with slight modifications the questions of the first series of interviews attempted to ascertain the changes and development that took place during one year of adjustment. The sample includes 600 persons from ten large-scale industrial enterprises in Budapest: 447 workers in the textile industry and 153 in the machine and chemical industries. Our investigation of the control-group will be made in the final stage of the work.

For the time being, only the data of the first survey are available. Moreover, from these only simple synoptic tables have been drawn up so far. These tables do not point to more intricate connections and correlations and are of no universal validity, but they do yield certain information on the rural migrant's first period of city life. (Only global data are given since a breakdown by industrial branches was not considered necessary for this study.)

Breakdown by sex and age

	15—25		26—40		Total	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Women	428	80.0	26	40.6	454	75.7
Men	107	20.0	38	59.4	145	24.3
Total	536	100.0	64	100.0	600	100.0

The breakdown by age corresponds, by and large, to general statistical data; however, the breakdown by sex differs necessarily from the latter since the sample includes, chiefly, women textile workers.

Family status

	No.	Per cent
Unmarried	526	87.9
Married	57	9.9
Divorced and living separately	11	1.9
Widowed	2	0.3
	600	100.0

The overwhelming percentage of unmarried men and women is explained by the large proportion of young people and also by the fact that few men with a family are willing to move to Budapest because of housing conditions there. The majority of married men live alone. They hope that some sort of miracle will happen—cheap and good lodgings will turn up—so that they will be able to send for their families. The persons questioned were interviewed at their lodgings, and so it was possible, at the same time, to make an investigation of their living conditions. Since it would require a separate study to disclose the results of this latter investigation, we now report only on the bare data: 13 were tenants (of whom ten were women married in Budapest); 81 were family members; 30 lodgers lived under acceptable conditions; 145 lodgers, under poor circumstances; 87 night-lodgers, that is, lodgers who must be out of their rooms during the day, lived under passable conditions; 108 night-lodgers, under miserable circumstances; and 136 lived at workers' hostels. On the basis of past experience we adopted very modest standards for the "acceptable" category. Even so, 253 persons were classed in the group living under poor conditions. Not infrequently, as many as five to seven people live in one small room. This also explains why the majority of our sample consists of young people—unmarried men and women—who can manage more easily without the basic conveniences of life.

Among the younger age-groups it has become general to finish eight elementary forms, even in the villages. (Those who have not completed

Educational level

	No.	Per cent
Less than 8 elementary forms	84	14.0
8 elementary forms	438	73.0
More than 8 elementary forms	58	9.7
Passed secondary school-leaving exam	19	3.3
Higher than secondary school-leaving exam	—	—
	600	100.0

eight elementary forms belong to the older age-group.) Those who have passed their final secondary school examinations without exception consider factory work as a transitional state until they are admitted to a higher educational institute.

Where did they come from?

Our small sample is, of course, not a suitable basis from which to draw general conclusions. If we give information on the degree of urbanization of the counties from which the persons interviewed came, it is to characterize the background of the migration trend. Our classification of counties according to degree of urbanization is in accordance with Edit Lettrich's study: "Urbanization in Hungary".*

Character of counties

	No.	Per cent
Urbanized counties	183	30.7
Partially urbanized counties	63	10.6
Counties of rural character	350	58.7
Not assessable	4	—
	600	100.0

* Edit Lettrich: *Urbanizálódás Magyarországon* ("Urbanization in Hungary"), (Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1965, p. 65).

Budapest does not exert as strong an attraction on those who seek manual employment in towns as it does, for example, on non-manual workers. The sample shows that 244 persons would rather work in provincial towns, and many of them would even undertake to commute to and from work, however tiring that might be, if there were any work, especially any work suitable for women, in the provinces. These data throw light on a warning we became aware of long ago and have not yet consistently turned to good account: a sounder location of industry would relieve Budapest, as well as some of the provincial towns which have started to grow too quickly, of overcrowding.

	Tried to find employment in provincial towns		Did not try to find employment in provincial towns		Total	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Wishes to work in Budapest	126	49.8	214	64.7	340	58.2
Prefers work in provincial towns	127	50.2	117	35.3	244	41.8
Total	253	100.0	331	100.0	584	100.0
No answer					16	

Origin and social status

Within the categories of origin the present social status of the parents was also taken into account, and within the latter, three sub-groups—low, intermediate and high—were differentiated on the basis of financial situation, earnings, and the role actually played in the life of the community.

One of the social consequences of urbanization is "the disintegration of typical multi-generation families of peasant stock,"* as more and more of the younger generation become town workers.

The families of the persons questioned were classified—according to the number of brothers and sisters, and the dwelling place of immediate family

* Mrs. Aladár Mód: *A belső vándorlás és a társadalmi átrétegződés Magyarországon* ("Investigation of Inner Migration and Social Regrouping in Hungary"), *Demográfia*, 1964.

Social status

	Low		Intermediate		High		Total	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Peasants	246	53.8	59	45.4	5	41.7	310	51.8
Workers	118	25.8	36	27.7	1	8.3	155	25.9
Other	93	20.4	35	26.9	6	50.0	134	42.3
Total	457	100.0	130	100.0	12	100.0	599	100.0
Not assessable							1	

members—into the following types: Homogeneous (the entire family lives in the country with the exception of the person interviewed); Heterogeneous I (some of the family members already live in town); and Heterogeneous II (the majority of family members live in town).

	Small families of 1—2		Medium families of 3—4		Large families of 5 and over		Total	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Homogeneous	65	53.7	55	22.9	27	11.6	147	24.8
Heterogeneous I	36	29.7	107	44.6	52	22.4	195	32.9
Heretogeneous II	20	16.6	78	32.5	153	66.0	251	42.3
Total	121	100.0	240	100.0	232	100.0	593	100.0
Not assessable							7	
							600	

The transformative role of the trend to urbanization is indicated by the fact that the smallest group is that of homogeneous families living in the country, whereas the numerically largest is that of the highly urbanized heterogeneous large families. Formerly, too, large rural families living in villages supplied the labour force of the towns. Many children of landless families, and descendants of small landowners—who could not expect any inheritance or land—looked for a living beyond the confines of their native village. And even today, the younger children of large families leave the village, although privately-owned landed property and the traditional order of succession no longer have importance. Today the family is less and less a productive unit even in the country. Its work-in-common and its joint productive activity are falling into disuse and, as a consequence, the strongest bonds which held together generations of peasant families are loosening.

However, moving from the country does not itself break family ties. The advance guard who settle in towns help and support those who follow and often encourage them to take the decisive step of moving into the city. Two hundred and seven of the persons questioned came to Budapest in answer to the call of relatives. Several of those who took up residence in the city asked their friends and acquaintances who stayed at home to join them: 162 moved to the capital at the call of friends or compatriots. One hundred and three were lured by newspaper advertisements and only 127 embarked boldly upon city life without any outside aid, leaving the future to chance.

The solidarity of villagers, that is of relatives, friends and acquaintances, is one of the reasons for the segregation of villagers in large towns. This often means segregation in certain living quarters too. In the neighbourhood of large factories, virtual rural colonies develop. To stand by fellow countrymen is an unwritten law. People of the same native village or nearby area make a place for the newcomers and, as a rule, share rooms permanently. (The labour department of one of the large textile works—aware of the stabilizing influence of friends staying together—gives newly employed girls addresses where they can live with other girls from the same village.)

Occupation, qualification and earnings

The majority of the young people who come from the country have no qualifications whatever.

	No.	Per cent
Skilled labourer	76	12.7
Semi-skilled labourer	302	50.3
Unskilled labourer	109	18.2
Industrial apprentice	29	4.8
Adults attending a course to learn a trade	84	14.0
Total	600	100.0

A comparison of present earnings with earnings received in former rural occupations gives interesting results:

Monthly earnings in forints

Rural occupation	Present earnings					Present earnings as compared to rural earnings*						total
	under 1,100 ft No.	1,100–1,500 ft No.	over 1,500 ft No.	total		less		equal		more		
				No.	per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	
Not working	41	98	23	162	26.9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Factory worker	17	71	33	121	20.3	36	29.7	15	12.4	70	57.9	100.0
State farm	27	57	25	109	18.2	19	17.4	6	8.3	81	74.3	100.0
Cooperative farm	10	40	10	60	10.0	4	6.7	1	1.7	55	91.6	100.0
Helping cooperative family members	23	35	13	71	11.9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other	20	36	20	76	12.7	11	14.5	5	6.6	60	78.9	100.0
Total	138	337	124	599	100.0	70	19.1	30	8.2	266	72.7	100.0
Not assessable	—	—	—	1		—	—	—	—	—	—	—

* Includes former earners only.

The table reveals the following:

1. The number of those formerly engaged in agriculture is scarcely more than a third of the total number surveyed. Moreover, 18.2 per cent of these had worked as labourers in state farms, and only 60 persons (10 per cent)

were fully qualified cooperative members. Another 20.3 per cent were former factory workers commuting to and from work.

2. For the majority, i.e., 80.5 per cent of those formerly engaged in agriculture and 57.9 per cent of the factory labourers, work in the city means increased income, though the number of those who earn less in the city than they earned previously in agriculture, is also considerable.

3. For one-third of the category "other," work in the factory means decline, whereas the remaining two-thirds feel they went up the rungs of the ladder, as do former agricultural workers who, with few exceptions, think that by working in a factory they have attained a higher social status.

Expectations attached to city life

The archetype of the motivations of inner migration can already be found in folk-tales. In stories too, there are almost all the characteristics and causes which produce modern migration: economic "necessity," which most affects the youngest son who has no hope whatever of a change for the better (see: ratio of migration of large families); rise in social status; desire to develop talents and abilities; wish to break free from the traditional order of the village and to shoulder the risks and perils of the unknown.

The person who breaks loose from the routine order of the village will have to face problems demanding character and ingenuity and cope with the difficulties of the new way of life.

It is, indeed, an intricate task to survey and assess subjective wishes and expectations. Expectations do not always coincide with reality, and attraction and repulsion consist of several—often contradictory—intermixed motivations. The researcher, however, has no alternative other than to sum up a few typical, identifiable motivations and expectations.

The interviews started with the life history of the persons questioned. They were asked to give an account of the village where they lived and the life they led there. This procedure enabled us to get better acquainted with the circumstances of each person's life and personality before he filled in the questionnaire. For the evaluation, we collated the life history with the answers to the precise questions and, by sizing up both, we were able to draw the final conclusions.

What do they expect from Budapest and from the city in general?

The persons questioned could choose, according to their own preference, from among three alternatives in order of importance, but only the first two answers were coded:

	In the 1st place		In the 2nd place		Total	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
1. Opportunity to work	436	73.5	96	24.7	532	54.2
2. Vocational training, study	77	13.0	104	26.8	181	18.4
3. Family affairs	40	6.7	16	4.1	56	5.7
4. Entertainment facilities	23	3.9	133	34.3	156	15.9
5. Other	9	1.5	4	1.0	13	1.3
6. More ease and freedom of life	7	1.2	12	3.1	19	1.9
7. Cultural facilities	1	0.2	23	6.0	24	2.6
8. No answer	7		212		219	
Total	593	100.0	388	100.0	981	100.0

Expectations also indicate what the person questioned did not achieve and what he missed in country life. Family reasons are, of course, an exception and include all kinds of things: e.g., she followed her husband who works in Budapest; the step-mother forced her to leave home; he deserted his wife or his wife deserted him. Almost without exception, those who had been divorced named family reasons in the first place. Let us quote a young woman whose parents forced her to marry a half-witted invalid: "For me the town is a shelter where I can take refuge. Among a great many people I will somehow find my peace."

As was to be expected, for the majority the opportunity to find a job comes first. However, it is noteworthy that the proportion of those who were attracted to the city for the purpose of learning a trade and studying is rather high.* This is also confirmed by answers concerning the continuation of studies. Two hundred and forty-two (40.3 per cent) do not wish any further education. But almost as many, 215 (35.9 per cent), wish either to attend school or to take part in vocational training.

* Representative investigations of inner migration by Polish sociologists also point out that the desire for learning contributes substantially to the influx of population to the towns. See also: Tamás Szecskő, *Ember és nagyváros* ("Man and Metropolis"), Gondolattár, Budapest, 1966. pp. 163.

Breakdown of those already studying

	No.	Per cent
Attending school	30	5.0
Industrial apprentice	29	4.8
Adults attending a course to learn a new trade (minimum skill)	84	14.0
	143	23.8

The wish to obtain further education refers, of course, to different levels of schooling, i.e., to finish the elementary school, acquire qualification as a skilled worker, or graduate from the university. There is, however, a common feature: the wish to learn and the desire for professional skill. In recent years, the prestige of having a trade has greatly risen among the different strata of our society. The survey of the Sociological Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences made in the villages in the neighbourhood of Gyöngyös also confirms in what high esteem a trade is held by the peasants.

Several of the persons interviewed came to the city only to study a trade, and after they mastered it they were ready to return to the country. One of the chief social functions of large towns is to raise the more backward villages. In our opinion, towns could fulfil this function by a more purposeful attempt to satisfy growing professional needs, e.g., by providing more workers' hostels and higher standard accommodation for those who come to the city in order to study and learn.

Adjustment to city life

The operative concept applied for investigating the adjustment process to large towns was knowledge and understanding of the city, i.e., how far the person questioned was acquainted with, and felt at home in, Budapest; the intensity of his attachment to the country as well as the degree and nature of his contacts with townspeople.

Degree and nature of knowledge of the city

	Including its cultural character*		Not including its cultural character		Total	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Slight	2	0.9	255	66.1	257	43.0
Intermediate	74	35.1	118	30.6	192	32.2
Good	135	64.0	13	3.3	148	24.8
Total	211	100.0	386	100.0	597	100.0
Not assessable					3	

* i.e., knows the chief cultural institutions of the town.

It has to be taken into account that the majority have been in Budapest for only a few months and live, for the most part, in village-type suburbs. Several of those who settled down accidentally in districts on the edge of the city were disappointed: "It is as if I were living in my own village. I imagined a town to be different. Maybe, it is better this way, I'll get used to it sooner." One-third of the people interviewed feel fairly at ease in the city, come and go in the downtown area, are regular cinema-goers in the inner districts and frequent amusement places with dancing and music.

Links with the village, attachment to the city

The intensity of village ties is in inverse ratio to attachment to the city. The table below refers to the strength of the bonds to the village and sums up the answers to the hypothetical question: "If you were to inherit a house in your village worth a hundred thousand forints, would you return there or stay in Budapest?" (Sub-questions: "Would you keep it or sell it? In the latter case, what would you do with the money: buy a flat in Budapest, a car, a plot of land with an orchard in the neighbourhood of Budapest? Or put it in the savings-bank? or spend it for other purposes? and, if so, on what?")

Village ties	Return to the country		Stay in Budapest		Total	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Intensive	121	72.5	55	14.3	176	31.9
Intermediate	40	24.0	111	28.9	151	27.4
Weak	6	3.5	218	56.8	224	40.7
Total	167	100.0	384	100.0	551	100.0
Not assessable					49	

From the answers to the sub-questions we give only one conclusion: those persons who adapted themselves to the city without exception would sell their village house and use the money to buy a flat in Budapest. However, opinions differed on where they would like the flat to be situated: the younger people would like to live in a modern house in a central district, whereas the staid and older men would prefer a house with a garden, where poultry could be kept, in the neighbourhood of the capital! (An urban sociological investigation made in Munich also proves that rural migrants to urban areas prefer to live in surroundings reminiscent of the villages.*)

Opinions about the city

Opinions about cities greatly depend upon the extent to which a person has found what he was looking for in the new setting. Only very few (13) in their estimations of the city could emancipate themselves from their actual conditions.

The persons interviewed were asked what they liked or disliked in Budapest. An attempt will be made to give an evaluation of the answers by content analysis in the final elaboration of the survey now in progress. Here, we wish only to report some of the typical answers.

Opinions on one and the same item differ according to the person's individuality and actual life experience as well as according to his antipathy or sympathy towards city-life. The type becoming easily urbanized is pleased with the tolerance of city-dwellers:—"There is no gossip, and tongues don't start wagging in the town." "The sort of life I lead is nobody else's concern.

* O. Boustedt: *Die Wachstumskräfte einer Millionenstadt* (Munich, 1961).

Did Budapest come up to expectations?

	Expectations disappointed		Partially realized		Realized		Total	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Prefer country	23	43.4	39	25.7	35	10.2	97	17.7
Find country and town equal	17	32.1	24	15.8	41	11.9	82	14.9
Prefer town	13	24.5	89	58.5	268	77.9	370	67.4
Total	53	100.0	152	100.0	344	100.0	549	100.0
Not assessable							51	

At home, one has to respect the opinion of every Nosy Parker." On the other hand, country folk consider this attitude to be unsocial and inhuman: "Townspeople don't give a damn for each other and that's wrong." The urban type is not greatly inconvenienced by noise and crowds: "I have become so accustomed to the town that the quiet of the country makes me fidgety when I return home." "I like the bustle. In the village one scarcely sees anybody." The village type suffers from the noise and the crowds: "There is hideous noise and an awful lot of people. I took a dislike to people after I came to live in Budapest." The more adaptable type enjoys the variety the town offers: "Here everybody finds the things he takes a fancy to. One sees more and always different things." Villagers get rather confused by the many novelties: "In the country one always knows what is happening. One never knows anything here. In the town I am at a loss because of the many strangers." The urban type highly appreciates the convenient marketing facilities of the town: "It is easier to do one's household shopping." The villager sets less value on this and complains: "Here everything has to be bought for cash." "If I want to eat I must produce money from my pocket and I am not used to doing that at home." The urban type enjoys the wide range of entertainments: "One can go anywhere and amuse oneself to one's heart's content." The villager who has an aversion to city-life does not amuse himself even as much as he formerly did in the country: "Here I never mix with people. I have not even been to a cinema yet. I go home, clean up, sit down and ponder over my fate." This last

sentence suggests that the answers sometimes convey subtle nuances. A young girl who is on the verge of becoming urbanized expressed her relation to the town in the following words: "For me nothing is strange here, only unusual so far."

The spontaneous replies, almost without exception, and whatever the point under discussion may be, reflect the characteristic features of the city in the relationship of man and town, and man and man. This human-centred view suggests that "man and town are one" and reveals that the connection to the town is, primarily, the intricate system of human relations to which the city-dweller inevitably must adjust, irrespective of his satisfaction or dissatisfaction with these relations.

Establishing contacts

Whether or not and how a person has succeeded in participating in urban society, in the community, greatly influences his opinion about the city. The persons questioned were classified, according to the intensity and character of their urban contacts, into groups of closed and open relations and/or groups consisting of the combination of these two relations. (*Open relations:* subjective readiness to become acquainted and make friends with townspeople and already having friends and acquaintances in the town. *Closed relations:* lack of subjective readiness to become acquainted with townspeople, isolation, and without urban acquaintances and friends.)

	No.	Per cent
Closed relations both at and outside place of work	88	14.7
Closed relations at place of work—open ones outside	22	3.7
Open relations at place of work—closed ones outside	298	49.9
Open relations both at and outside place of work	189	31.7
Total	597	100.0
Not assessable	3	

The most significant are the relations at the place of work, for this is the right spot to find friends and acquaintances at the outset. Undoubtedly, workers who come from the country have an inclination to seclusion. However, when care is devoted to this problem, rural enclaves split up more easily, and more direct contacts develop with city workers.

In the past there were many antagonisms between urban and rural workers. Today, these conflicts are on the wane owing, among other things, to the fact that the conditions that enabled former factory managers deliberately to incite town and country workers against one another no longer exist.

Dwelling place and neighbourhood play a role in the contacts established outside the place of work. Though villagers usually live together, they visit neighbours and ask for small favours, watch television together, etc., and so become friends with town neighbours too.

A significant number of people seclude themselves and are not able to establish any sort of contact with townspeople. However, the majority of cases show that a more benevolent and sympathetic atmosphere now awaits the villager coming to the city.

The improved relationship between villagers and townspeople reflects the changes that have taken place in our society. At the same time, it indicates that the assimilative capacity of the city has grown and that nowadays people coming from different environments mingle sooner.

However, even these positive symptoms cannot conceal the fact that the adaptation process is far from being free of conflicts and that in several domains the deliberate intervention of society could remedy the difficulties. The following table referring to the degree of adaptation points to these difficulties.

Degree of adaptation to the city

	No.	Per cent
None	82	13.7
Weak	258	43.3
Intermediate	212	35.5
Strong	45	7.5
Total	597	100.0
Not assessable	3	

In conclusion, we should like to outline the provisional typology—in spite of the fact that, for the time being, it is not well-founded either from an operational or a theoretical aspect—since it is suited to reveal some essential connections, even at this early stage of investigation.

Group I: Conservative villagers

The first group includes the *conservative type of villagers*. As a rule, they consider city life as a transitional, second-best solution. In the town they feel out of place in every respect, and the change of the way of life in general means for them a serious conflict. They do not make the best of the opportunities the town offers and isolate themselves from townspeople.

Group II: Transitional

The largest group consists of those who are now becoming urbanized and are in the *transitional state between villagers and townspeople*. They still observe rural traditions and customs, but the town too attracts them, and certain expectations in relation to the town have already developed. Since they are beginning to become familiar with and make use of the town, the adjustment process does not present a grave conflict, and they do not seclude themselves from townspeople.

We divide this group into the following sub-types according to the nature of expectations:

1. *Lumpenproletariat in process of urbanization:* for this type the town means chiefly the ragamuffins' way of life.

2. *Urbanization of the "consumer type":* the expectations of this type centre round the more favourable possibilities to acquire consumer goods. Accordingly, for the "consumer type" the town means a place of non-cultural pastime.

3. *Urbanization of the "cultural type":* learning, cultural and professional efforts stand in the forefront of his expectations, though, of course, larger possibilities to acquire consumer goods and, perhaps, non-cultural entertainments also attract him to the town.

4. A type apart are those who consider the town exclusively as an *opportunity to find a job*. If adequate work could be found in the country they would rather return there. (They stand close to both the conservative villager and the "consumer type.")

Group III: Urban type

The smallest group includes the *urban type*, i.e., those who have positively chosen the urban way of life. They feel at ease in the town and adapt themselves without difficulty to city life. They are capable of adjusting themselves to the town and are in command of the typical qualities of townspeople. Their social relations are known as open type relations. They know the town and make the best of the opportunities offered by it. This group includes the same sub-types as Group II but is at a more advanced stage in the adjustment process to the city.

Summarizing characterization (contains added-up data only)

	Conservaive villagers		1. "Lumpen"		2. "Consumer type"		3. "Cultural type"		4. Exclusively work		5. Other		Total	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
I. Conservative villagers	119	19.8	—	—		—		—	—		—		119	19.8
II. Transitional in process of urbanization	—	—	10	1.7	119	19.8	133	22.2	124	20.7	10	1.7	396	66.0
III. Urban type	—	—	5	0.8	19	3.2	48	8.0	11	1.8	2	0.3	85	14.2
Total	119	19.8	15	2.5	138	23.0	181	30.2	135	22.5	12	2.0	600	100.0

A second survey as well as cross-checks and control of subjective and objective data may give a more precise and well-founded answer to a number of questions: how the lives of the persons interviewed work out; how the degree and content of their expectations in relation to the city change; and, furthermore, whether the difficulties involved in the adjustment process deepen or lessen.

Experiences gathered during the period of our study of the encounter with the city also reveal that the city helps to realize and reinforce positive inclinations in man, primarily by helping the individual to develop his capacities and enrich his personality.

CURRENTS OF THE METROPOLIS

by

IVÁN VITÁNYI

Every modern city is made up of old and new. In every modern city the elegant new hotels, the spare lines of modern apartment buildings jostle with the ornamented intricacies of the nineteenth century—and its humbler manifestation. This is a truism for every modern city—and for Budapest too. Walk along the Kiskörút—the Inner Boulevard—where the modern shopfronts sparkle and the neon lights beckon. Wander aside under the archway of the former Hacker Inn, and step back a century. Small shops fill the centre of the narrow cobbled courtyard, and on each side rise depressing tenement houses, discoloured, plaster peeling, like the sets of a film dealing with early capitalism. (Though the scrawled "Beatles' Cottage" on one of the doors would have to wiped off.)

And the same is true of people—of the inhabitants of these great cities. A great deal has been said and written of the persistence of the "petty bourgeois" spirit, the "petty bourgeois" way of life. But still older ways of living and thinking continue to persist, left-overs, "bygones," tucked away in odd corners of the city. What do the sociologists call it? Social stratification? Social inadaption?

What would they say of the visit I once paid in Szalag Street? A friend dragged me to see the home of an old retired roadmender, who lived on the ground floor of a decaying house partially demolished by bombs. All at once we had the feeling we were in the world of feudal peasants. It was a tiny hovel, with the kitchen and the unused "clean room" of Hungarian peasants. The wife of the roadmender bakes her own bread, boils her own soap, eats the kind of food and wears the full black skirts and bodice only found nowadays on very old-fashioned women. Cottage garlands of dried red paprika decorated the tiny aperture of a window. Their attitudes, their picture of the world is just as old-fashioned. My friend told me that the couple can't even understand the fact that he is a writer, they are simply

unfamiliar with the concept. They call him a clerk, which is something their experience comprehends. And from here it is only fifty steps to Corvin tér, where the members of the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble park their roadsters bought from the savings of western tours.

In Síp utca, three minutes from Rákóczi út, one of the busiest thoroughfares of Budapest, there lives a man in a room which has no electric bulb, and no panes of glass in the window. He uses the old-fashioned shutters, he sleeps on a bare bed without bedding or bed-linen. He is not mad: returning home, he greets his neighbours in the house, politely exchanges a few pleasant words with the *concierge*, and then withdraws into his room to heaven only knows what end. He is said to be a decent fellow, who doesn't drink and is generally no trouble at all.

A few years ago I visited the landlady of some of my old friends from student days in darkest District Eight. Mrs. S. had been a circus rider, but she had had a fall, and became an artists' model, posing in the nude; the principal of the art school fell in love with her and married her, which gave her a respectable name and a position in the world. But the husband died, and she was left alone, with no money. She sank deeper and deeper into poverty, and sublet a room to students. Finally, when no more students came, she took to begging. Sometimes I passed her in the street, but did not like to speak to her. Now she is a little better off: she is living with a one-eyed man and they keep a chicken farm in their flat. There are hens everywhere: in the kitchen cupboard, under the bed, on the pantry shelves and in the W.C. The state and odour of the flat are better left undescribed. One of her former boarders recently had a play put on at the National Theatre. Another had a successful exhibition of his paintings in London.

A short walk will take you on to the retired house-painter who paints pictures in his leisure time—though he uses a trowel to apply the paint. He has covered the staircases of the houses in the neighbourhood with frescoes (not bad ones at that!) and received a Volunteers' Gold Medal for this activity from the District Council. Upstairs in his room he devotes the rest of his time to the great problems of philosophy. For a while he was in correspondence with a religious organization in Switzerland which holds that the Lord's land should be built on this earth, and he used to write for their periodical. When we talk about God, he smiles; his picture of God is different from that entertained by bigots. "In my terms," he declares, "God is the sum total of all the problems to which we can find no answer." He decided to share his flat with my friend the old prophet, with whom I spent some time in prison in 1944, because he wanted to reconcile Christianity with Communism, and with this object in mind came to the conclusion

that it was an act pleasing to God to take up arms against the Fascists. Now he and some of his brethren are writing a book to be entitled *Evangelica Sociologica*, for private distribution. They are putting down on paper their ideas on a classless society, without private ownership, in which the state will wither away and the teachings of Marx become one with the teachings of Jesus Christ. The two old men, the painter and the prophet, spend their evenings sitting there, discussing philosophy and sociology, sipping home-made quince wine, and laughing with great joy while they wait for eternal bliss.

And there was that extremely moving moment for me when I once heard my own aunt, a solitary seamstress, a kindly old soul worn out from a life of work, tell me of the dream she had of my mother and father's grave. Two rose-trees had grown out from the grave, she said, each from the heart of the other. The plants grew and grew, bore roses, and intertwined, because those who lay below had loved each other dearly. That was what she told me. But she had never heard any song about rose-trees springing from a double grave, a theme found among all the folk songs of the world. It is just that she still lives in a world in which people think like that. Every story she tells falls quite naturally into a well-rounded ballad.

Other curious echoes of the feudal past can be seen here or there, some touching, some extraordinary. From a family of former landowners I heard about the son of their former butler, whom long ago they had sent to school. Today he is chief in a government department somewhere, but every spring cleaning he turns up and beats the rugs to show his gratitude. And I know a man who grew up in one of the ruling class families, who still works as a manual labourer throughout the day. In the evenings he devotes himself to a certain branch of scholarship in which he is by now extremely learned. He ghosts for less able but more successful men who lack his information and industry. There is a story told of him that he used to mix the mortar all week for the rebuilding of the Hotel Gellért, but over week-ends took a room in that same luxury hotel and had his breakfast served him in bed as it was once served to his ancestors. As a scientist he is realistic about the world, but as a private person he is happy he does not have to call the building foreman by his first name, because "in that way we can keep our distance, you know—rather topsy-turvy, it's true, but that's not important."

I'm not trying to give a picture of a collection of cranks. I merely want to show how stubbornly old ways of living, lost and forgotten views of the world, persist. The examples I have given are somewhat extreme, I admit, but deep down in every man is an extremist. Strip off the protective covering, and below it we are certain to find something unique, something particular to each of them.

There are plenty of other instances to be found stemming from more recent times, but they are better known. You can find them in any textbook under the heading of "petty bourgeois vestiges." Nor am I discussing the contrast between two ways of life, the petty bourgeois of the past and the proletarian socialist of today. Everyone knows that fundamentally these are the two main antagonistic patterns struggling with each other. What I want to show is how many different layers of the distant past and the unfolding future piling up, intertwining, go to make up the two main patterns. And when we turn from those living in the past to those living in the future, I call to mind, not examples stemming directly from the great themes of socialist construction, work and social life, but rather instances culled from the more restricted world of intellectual, artistic and scientific life. This is partly because it is my own "field," but also because it demonstrates the many and diverse ways the new formulas of the future are developing.

Some time ago I spent a few hours in the centrally located flat of a serious and accomplished musician, universally respected in his profession. Behind the face (not mask) of the sound artist and the honest paterfamilias is also hidden a third face: for many years now our friend has been devoting himself to a highly specialized branch of mathematics, in which he does interesting and original research of particular significance for aesthetics. When he presented his results to a group of artists, critics and mathematicians, and when, after his talk, we relaxed and started to talk about artistic matters and world affairs in general, I could not keep from thinking of the tenant in a block of flats not very different from this, only a few streets away, who never bothered to put in an electric bulb. What a distance! Not a few streets, but from backward into the past to forward into the future.

I had the same feeling when I read the memoirs of my friend the colonel. He was born a peasant and the son of a peasant, but he grew up to be a worker and a dedicated communist. He has known all the battle-fronts from the Spanish Civil War on, and all the prisons. And now, in his present life, he combines all the ways of life he has known. He is a colonel in the army—that is his profession. He is a revolutionary—that is his vocation. At home he is both peasant and worker, for he cannot live without digging in his garden, or building and fixing something around the house. All that was left was to become an intellectual, and that he has now done. He is now writing the second volume of his memoirs. And in reading it one is struck by the power of some of the simple metaphors, very akin to the laconic literary style which many regard as the modern manner of writing. Strange: varied experiences which come to literature from life, suddenly and naturally

find their expression in the language and style of the most modern writers of today.

It was no less exciting when a young man recently called on me. He has had a hard life: at the age of fifteen, as an industrial apprentice, he was arrested—owing to a misunderstanding—and spent several years in prison. There, in prison, he made his first acquaintance with the working-class movement, and this was where he learned to love and respect its members—in the person of his fellow-prisoners. It was a paradoxical situation, one had to be a man to remain a human being, and to learn to draw the right conclusions from the bitter experience. He did both, and decided to devote his life to research on the history of the Hungarian working-class movement. He had came to see me to get some information on the activities of various comrades I knew. I took him to visit a friend of mine, a foxy old veteran, who knew the subject inside out, and put him through his paces in no uncertain manner. The young man passed with flying colours: he had all the facts and figures at his fingers' ends, he could interpret them in terms of human experience; he disagreed on some of the issues, and argued his point with intelligence and logic.

The common factor in these three cases is easy to recognize. In each case the future is born out of the past, out of a conquest over the past. Not by the grace of God, not under orders, not even in the course of a neutral, milk-and-water evolution—but in struggle, in bitter fighting. Something is born; in the complex and multiple levels of great city society a new stratum is being born, a new view of the world which is destined to attract others into its orbit and invalidate the old dispensation. It is mostly a mass phenomenon; but there are cases where it happens almost as an individual and spontaneous process—like a law of nature.

GÁBOR GARAI

A MAN IS BEATEN UP

They are beating up a man in the bar
They are banging and banging his head with their fists
He doesn't cry out or try to protect himself
Even the blood creeps patiently over his face
They beat and beat
        a silent exhibition
broken by one voice:
        —He's probably a gipsy!
They beat and beat
        and the barman comes forward
takes a knee to jerk him outside
into the street
        A man's head smashes
against a block of hard snow
        —Go tumble your mother!
The barman wipes his hands—easy!
The one who beat blood out of a face orders:
—Beer all round for these fellows, with a dash of rum!
The service continues without a break.

A score of other people in the room
They have nothing to do all this while?
They chat and smile together, what is it to them?

Their detachment disguises
squalid pub-crawls
racist fantasies
defoliating embraces
genocide volunteers
jerrybuilt residences
wandering H-bombs
curetted foetuses
meat-trusts ordnance-factories
slippery so-help-me-gods
prudent no-comment betrayals
specious reasons interests knives
handcuffs stocks keys

like snakes all interlocked
blood-money and forebodings
frozen hard in the ice

What if this ice should once be thawed?

Translated by Edwin Morgan

HUNGARY'S NEW ELECTORAL LAW

by

OTTÓ BIHARI

I.

Parliamentary elections and elections of council members were held in Hungary in March 1967, under Act III of 1966. It seems worth while, at this juncture, to offer a brief survey of Hungarian constitutional history.

It is now 120 years since discussions on a bourgeois electoral system in Hungary began. In the course of establishing the revolutionary state apparatus of the 1848/49 Freedom Fight passionate debates on electoral rights took place inside and outside the National Assembly. The first non-feudal electoral law—Act V of 1848—came under attack from right and left. Since that time a great mass of politico-legal literature has been devoted to electoral rights. The suffrage fight was a natural concomitant of the struggle for political liberation and the democratization of Hungarian public life. Undoubtedly the efforts to achieve a democratic franchise in the first decade of the 20th century often served to deflect attention from more important political and economic issues; nevertheless they greatly contributed to the political maturity of the Hungarian working class by solidifying its organizations and unmasking retrograde politicians.

The keenest battles were fought for ballot secrecy and the general franchise. (At that time, a notorious statement originating in the immediate circle of István Tisza, political leader and more than once Premier before and during the First World War, saw the light of day: "The secret ballot contradicts the ancestral character of the Hungarian nation—it makes people faint-hearted, hypocritical and secretive.") In the period between the two wars, following the brief democratic and socialist experiments of 1918–1919, electoral systems grew less and less democratic. At the parliamentary elections of 1939, the last before the liberation of the country, the number of

voters still amounted to less than a third of the population. Women and the younger generation, in particular, were disfranchised (the voting age was 26 and 30, respectively.) Industrial and rural workers were largely disfranchised through such indirect measures as long residence requirements, property and educational qualifications.

The introduction of democratic political rights at the first post-liberation elections in 1945 thus involved a nearly 70 per cent increase in the number of voters as compared to 1939. The inequality of women was abolished in this domain too, and so were all property or educational qualifications. This was, in fact, the first opportunity for genuine elections by secret ballot.

Since there were several parties at these elections (all of them participating in the government coalition), the system of voting by lists was chosen as being the most democratic under the circumstances. It goes without saying that under such a system it depended entirely on the leading gremium within each party whether its parliamentary members kept up any contact with their constituents. Mandates were not linked with particular constituencies, and so there could be no question of giving the constituents the right to revoke their representatives. The 1947 parliamentary elections were of the same character. No municipal elections (in the towns, counties and villages) were held except in Budapest. The local boards and municipal organs consisted of representatives delegated by the parties taking part in the coalition on a paritary basis.

The development of the electoral system in the first period after liberation can be regarded as positive insofar as it abolished the former inequalities and disproportions, and it was in this period that Parliament began, for the first time, to reflect the will of the citizens *en masse*. The parties of the coalition's "Left Block"—the Communist Party, the Social-Democratic Party and the National Peasant Party—consistently continued to build up contacts between the representatives and their constituents. Although there was as yet no legal obligation do to so, it was becoming increasingly clear that without such links no democratic parliamentary activity was possible. Still, under the list system such endeavours had their limits, and this often proved a bar to a genuinely democratic role of Parliament.

II.

Election by lists, having justified itself in the preceding years, survived the multi-party system and was still applied in 1949, when the former coalition partners no longer entered the campaign with separate lists but

subscribed to the uniform programme of the Hungarian Independent Popular Front. Yet at that stage it no longer had the same character as when there was an electoral struggle between several parties. Moreover, when in 1950 the local representative bodies—the councils—were elected, the voting in every territorial unit was again by lists. And as at the parliamentary elections there was one list of candidates for each county, at the council elections all candidates within a territorial unit, (country, district, town, village, metropolitan precinct) were included on a single list. To accept or to reject a list amounted to approving or rejecting the entire policy of the Front. It was not possible to delete individual candidates from the list.

Consequently each member of parliament or of a council, elected on the basis of a particular local list, became the representative, the delegate, not of a limited number of constituents, but of an entire territorial polling unit, whether a county, district, town, village or metropolitan precinct. This fact naturally limited his contact with the population. As a result, considerable practical difficulties arose in implementing those provisions of the Constitution according to which the representatives or the council members were obliged to report to their constituents and were subject to recall by the latter (sect. 62, paras. 2 and 3; sect. 30, para. 3; sect. 32, para. 2.)

The drawbacks of the system first became apparent where direct representation is a natural requirement, i.e., in local representation. It should be noted that the system of list elections had no tradition, even after 1945, in the municipalities, in view of the fact that (with the exception of Budapest) no multi-party elections, in fact no elections at all, were held there prior to the introduction of council system. As a result, the 1950 elections of council members carried out under the system of general voting lists had an artificial character. This is why both the population and the specialists and legal experts desired a change in this respect. At the next council elections (at that time they were not held simultaneously with the parliamentary elections), Act IX of 1954 introduced a new procedure, setting up individual electoral districts and the majority system. Only one council member could be elected in each such district, but the law, far from prohibiting, made possible the running of several candidates. Thus, in the council elections of recent years (particularly in the villages) the number of districts with more than one candidate has steadily increased. Still, it would be incorrect to say that the system of several candidates has become dominant at the elections held so far. The system of individual electoral districts also excluded the possibility of electing substitute members. Under the preceding system of local elections, the general lists included both candidates for council members

and candidates for substitute members; in other words, the voters simultaneously cast their votes for or against both the regular members and the substitute members, and when a council member dropped out, no new elections were held, but the member in question was automatically replaced by one of the substitute members. This system still prevailed in parliamentary elections even after the 1954 electoral reform. In the councils, however, new elections had to be called after 1954 upon the cessation of the mandate of any council member.

The majority system introduced in the municipal elections also required a new definition of the quorum. The law required the participation of more than half of the constituents to make an election valid. At the same time the principle of absolute majority was enacted. A council candidate who received more than half of all valid votes was to be considered as elected. If either of these conditions were lacking, by-elections had to be held.

In dealing with the democratism of the electoral system, we should mention the changes that have ensued in the field of active and passive election rights (franchise and eligibility). Under the Constitution of the Hungarian People's Republic, both the franchise and eligibility are conditional upon a person's coming of age. Prior to 1952 this was set at 20, but after 1952—and this is still the situation under the Civil Code—all persons above 18 (even earlier if they are married) were to be considered as being of full age. Accordingly, the age limit of the right to vote has been reduced *ipso iure* to 18 years. It should be noted that Hungarian constitutional law makes no difference between the franchise and eligibility. As a consequence, in all representative bodies the participation and activity of the younger generation is considerable.

Another important aspect of the 1954 reform was that it regulated the nomination of candidates for council membership. These principles are still in operation under present legislation, and we shall consequently deal with them in detail further on.

III.

To a certain extent 1954 thus opened a new path in the field of electoral law. At the same time, it had the unhealtly result of setting up wide divergencies in the method of creating nationwide and local representative organs. Election by lists for Parliament—individual electorates for the councils. The differences had other consequences too. Henceforth the system of elected members' reporting to their constituents and of their being subject

to recall became technically feasible—at the council level. As against this, members of parliament found many complications if they wished to fulfil either obligation.

Notwithstanding this, the Hungarian constitutional rules were based on a fundamental uniformity of the representative organs. The councils—at various levels and governing various territorial units—were and are an integral part of the state apparatus, just as Parliament itself. The Constitution very characteristically declares in sect. 2, para. 2, that "in the Hungarian People's Republic all power belongs to the working people" (thus announcing the principle of the people's sovereignty), further that "the workers of towns and villages exercise their power through elected representatives who are responsible to the people." The latter provision sets forth the most direct means of realizing the people's sovereignty, i.e., a system of governing (subsequently circumscribed in detail by the Constitution) in which the organs directly elected by the citizens are the most important organs for applying this sovereignty. Such directly elected organs give expression to the will of the state in the form of statutory norms (Parliament through laws and resolutions, the councils through decrees and resolutions). Further, these representative organs either elect or appoint other state agencies, or entrust state organs created by them with this task. Thus, the characteristic features of the elected representative organs are their legislative functions and their basic role in setting up the state apparatus. The Constitution stresses their common traits also by calling them uniformly "organs of state power."

Parliament is the supreme organ, while the councils are the local organs, of state power. Distinct from these organs of state power are the organs of state administration and those of the judiciary and of the Public Prosecutor. Of course, there are considerable differences also among the organs of state power. Parliament, for instance, can decide on the long-term or five-year national economic plans, whereas the councils are only entitled to approve of the plans covering their own scope of activity. Parliament is at the apex of the entire state organization, whereas a council's control is limited to the relatively narrow sphere of local administration and supervision. (One cannot even say that the council controls all local organs of state administration as there are, inevitably, specialized administrative organs that are directly subjected to central organs, e.g., the local branches of the postal administration, of the traffic administration and of the central statistical organization.) Nevertheless, structurally, there is more affinity than difference between the various levels of the representative organs of state power, particularly bearing in mind that all of them directly serve to implement the will of the citizens.

It follows logically that the representative organs have to be established under equal or almost equal conditions and that, despite their divergent functions at different levels, identical or similar rights and obligations have to be laid down for parliament members and council members. The mandate itself must be based on a common principle, since the Constitution has uniformly entrusted the elected and responsible delegates with the primary tasks arising from the people's sovereignty.

Interestingly enough, it was in connection with the council members that the character of their mandate first became the subject of argument. This was a direct outcome of the fact that, after 1954, they became more directly linked with their constituents. The Constitution itself had declared it to be the duty of parliament and council members to report to their constituents and had made them subject to recall. Yet, before these principles could be translated into practice, numerous detailed statutory rules had to be enacted and implemented. This became possible when the system of lists was abandoned at the council elections. Henceforward, each council member became attached to a precisely defined group of constituents. The 1954 legislation stated that council members must report to their constituents at least twice a year and carry out the mandates of public interest entrusted to them by their constituents and take into account the interest of the working people. This imperative requirement (which is also limitative, because it defines the general scope of the representative's activity without necessarily affecting his vote on each individual issue) also applied in principle to members of parliament, though it could be translated into practice only after passage of the new electoral law.

The demand to unify the electoral system had its impact on other aspects as well. Though admitting the statutory differences, several attempts were made in the past years to bring the position of parliament members nearer in practice to the system laid down in 1954. Thus, although under the list system each member of parliament represented a whole county, yet in each county the group of members representing it passed a resolution dividing the territory of the county among the individual members, who then carried on their activity and delivered their reports in the areas assigned to them respectively.

IV.

Such transient experiments were, of course, unable to resolve the problems of electoral procedure and mandate. A new electoral law was called for, based on uniform guidelines. Debates on the basic principles of a new elector-

al law have been going on ever since the promulgation of the 1954 Act on council elections. Particularly in the last two or three years countless informed discussions have taken place participated in by various political and social forums and resulting in the publication of numerous papers on the subject. The new law may thus be said to express the public will.

The new law, Act III of 1966, under which the parliamentary and council elections took place last March, contains uniform rules for the election of members of parliament (the supreme organ of state power) and of members of councils (the local organs of state power). This involved bringing the two types of electoral system into close harmony by unifying the rules relating to the preparation of elections, to voting procedure, to determination of the results and to the cessation of mandates. The reasons accompanying the Bill referred to the fact that the fundamental principles and the system of election for council members have proven themselves in practice and have furthered the unfolding of socialist democracy. On the strength of this experience, the 1966 Act took over a number of the provisions of the former legislation without change.

The two most characteristic provisions of the new law are: the introduction of individual polling districts also for the election of parliament members, and the possibility of nominating several candidates in a single polling district. The law specifies that the constituents of each parliamentary polling district shall elect one member of parliament, and the constituents of each council electorate shall elect one council member (sect. 1, para. 2). On the other hand, sect. 28, para. 2, of the Act contains the following provision applying both to the parliamentary and to council elections: "In each polling district one or several persons may be nominated as candidates." Both rules signify an important further step towards the development of socialist democracy. This becomes particularly evident if they are examined in the light of the spirit of the entire Act.

V.

The Act maintains general, equal and direct franchise, and the secret ballot. Under the general franchise every Hungarian citizen of age—regardless of sex or any other qualification—has the right to vote and be elected. Disfranchisement is mainly the consequence of pending judicial proceedings or court sentences (court prohibition to take part in public affairs, including the exercise of voting rights; serving of a sentence involving loss of liberty; preliminary detention). Other cases are persons placed

under police supervision or suffering from mental disease. Experience shows the number of persons thus debarred to be very low. Lists of constituents must be prepared before every election. First a temporary list of names is compiled on a census basis. Anybody unlawfully omitted from the temporary list can lodge a complaint with the organ supervising the compilation of the list, i.e., the executive committee of the village, town or metropolitan precinct council. If the executive committee considers the complaint unfounded, it is obliged to refer it, within a day from the date of filing, to the pertinent district court (in Budapest to the Central Metropolitan District Court). The Court decides the case within three days, with the participation of lay assessors. If necessary, it can hear the interested parties. If the decision is favourable, the complainant is entered on a supplementary list. The final list of constituents is a combination of the temporary and supplementary lists. The general franchise is thus also placed under court protection.

In order to guarantee equal voting rights the law states that each elector shall have one vote, all votes being equal. Equality is further served by the proportional division of the constituencies for the various organs to be elected. Each member of parliament, for instance, represents approx. 30,000 citizens; in the capital a constituency for the Municipal Council elections consists of about 10,000 citizens. Other provisions of the law determine the number of council members (i.e., lower and upper limits), and the residential areas of the electorate are divided into polling districts proportionate to the number of council members to be elected.

The directness of the elections is assured by the fact that the constituents themselves elect all representative organs of state power (from the village and town councils up to Parliament itself, without the intervention of intermediate organs). As to the secrecy of the ballot the law contains several guarantees. Thus sect. 40, paras. 3–4, states that the casting of votes shall take place in a polling booth to which nobody but the voter can have access while the vote is cast. Afterwards the voter encloses the ballot paper in an envelope and drops it in the ballot-box in the presence of the scrutineers. Any vote not entered on the official ballot paper is void. (A further guarantee is provided in section 143, para. 1/d, of the Criminal Code which prescribes loss of liberty up to 3 years for violating the secrecy of the ballot.)

The election organs are established by the national and local organizations of the Patriotic People's Front. These organs are: the election boards (there is a national board and a local board for each territory where councils are elected), further, the electoral district committees (in each polling district). The election boards have the task of watching over the legality of the elections; they also set up the scrutiny committees and have other

important functions in the preparation and organization of elections. The National Election Board approves the nominations of the candidates for Parliament and registers them. The electoral district committees deal with complaints lodged against the decisions of the scrutiny committees in respect to the voting results. There is one scrutiny committee for every polling ward (comprising from 600 to 700 voters); its task is to handle the voting and ensure that it is carried out peacefully and in accordance with the law.

The most important stage in the preparation of the elections is the process of nomination, especially now that the law stresses the possibility of several candidates' running concurrently. Nomination takes place at meetings called for this purpose. They are sponsored by the local divisions of the Patriotic People's Front with the assistance of the election boards and electoral district committees. Such meetings can take place in residental areas, industrial establishments or commercial enterprises, in cooperative farms, etc. Meetings can also be convened within the armed forces. (Incidentally, the members of the armed forces in Hungary are not debarred from voting or being elected.) The actual candidates for Parliament or for council membership are then proposed by the appropriate committee of the Patriotic People's Front from among the persons proposed at the meetings. While the organs of the Patriotic People's Front are not obliged to accept every candidate proposed at the meetings, they can only nominate persons previously accepted by the meetings. The one restriction provided by law is that one and the same person cannot be nominated in more than one parliamentary constituency or council polling district of one and the same level.

The date for the general elections is fixed by the Presidium of the People's Republic. To vote for a candidate, his name must be left untouched on the ballot paper; to vote against him, the name must be crossed out. If the voter has left several names on the ballot paper, it must be presumed that he has cast his vote for the candidate at the head of the list. Should the voter write any remarks on the ballot-paper, this will not affect the validity of his vote. On the other hand, as already mentioned, only the official ballot-paper can be used for voting; it is handed to the voter by the chairman of the scrutiny committee.

After closing the polls, the scrutineers count the votes and set forth the results in a protocol. The results are then totalled by the electoral committees. The latter must, in particular, verify a) whether more than half of all persons having a right to vote have cast their votes and, if so, b) whether any of the candidates has got more than half of all valid votes. If both con-

ditions are fulfilled, the polling must be deemed effective. In the absence of either of these conditions, there is no elected representative or council member. A letter of credence is delivered to the elected members of parliament by the parliamentary electoral committee; to the council members, by the council electoral committee. The letters of credence are examined at the first session of the newly elected Parliament or council, respectively, upon the motion of the credentials committee. The 1966 Act permits the lodging of complaints against the validity of the election in the individual parliamentary polling districts, and it is for Parliament to take a decision.

If the election is void, either because the majority of those entitled to vote failed to do so or because no candidate has received the necessary number of votes, the competent electoral board will fix the date for a bye-election. The bye-election must be held within fifteen days from the first election. The conditions are the same as at the original election, viz., more than half of those entitled to vote must cast their votes, and one of the candidates has to receive an absolute majority. However, new candidates may be nominated for the by-election.

Under the new law supplementary representatives are no longer elected either for Parliament or for the councils. Consequently, whenever the place of a parliament or council member becomes vacant, new elections must be held, at a date to be set by the Presidium of the People's Republic—as a rule, twice a year. Vacancies may occur for the following reasons: expiration of the mandate of the given organ or liquidation thereof; incompatibility of the member, declared by the representative organ; recall or resignation of the member; loss of eligibility; death of the member; liquidation of a council by merger with another territorial unit.

An important feature of the new electoral law is the extension and general regulation of the procedure of recall. The electors can recall the delegate of their electoral district (member of parliament or council) if he is unable to fulfil his mandate or has become unworthy of it (section 58, para. 1). A member of parliament can be recalled on the motion of the national presidency of the Patriotic People's Front; of a council member, on the motion of a local committee of the Front. In order to recall a representative, at least half of his constituents must be present at the meeting or meetings, and a majority of the votes of those present is required. Voting is by open ballot.

VI.

As may be seen from the foregoing, the new Hungarian electoral law is the logical outcome of the process of building up socialist democracy in Hungary. The earlier trial-and-error rules and experiments have now been replaced by a uniform code. Particularly noteworthy is the precision of the guarantees the law provides for protecting democratic institutions. This is further evidence that Parliament, in passing this law, was guided by the aim of strengthening the activities of Parliament and of the local representative organs. The Hungarian legislators thereby wished to make further progress along the road, marked in the last ten years by such important landmarks as the Code of State Administrative Procedure, the Citizenship Act, the Civil and Criminal Codes, the Mining Law, the Education Act, the Building Act, the Water Conservancy Act, etc. Every one of these laws has in its own field strengthened the legal order of Hungary.

ATTILA JÓZSEF

GRIEF

Like a deer I darted,
Grief gentle in my eyes.
Wolves with sharp fangs started
Within my heart their cries.

My antlers, long since shorn,
In branches hung, bereaved.
Though as a deer I'm born,
I'll be a wolf, I grieved.

A sleek wolf now I roam,
Transformed by magic's guile;
The pack around me foam:
I do my best to smile.

I prick my ears—the doe!
Then close my eyes in sleep.
Dark mulberry leaves flow
To nestle at my feet.
(1930)

LET ONLY HIM MY VERSES READ

Let only him my verses read
Who loves and understands my need,
Who into nothingness can peer,
And knows the future as seer.

For oft before his dreaming eyes
Silence hovers in human guise,
And in his heart sometimes appear
The tiger and the gentle deer.
(1937)

Translated by Eric M. Johnson

THE PEASANT VOICE OF PÉTER VERES

by

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Writer? Would-be revolutionary? Statesman? Controversial mentor of the country at large? Peasant genius? Philosopher? Or each reinforcing and weakening the other in turn? He is a writer first of all, a writer; but who could, or would, dare to sketch Péter Veres in a single stroke of the pen?

There is no adult or child in Hungary who has not at least heard his name. He is generally referred to, *tout court*, as Uncle Péter. For some thirty years this familiar title Uncle Péter brings him to mind. A name? No, not just a name, a concept, in which affection and sympathy, a taste for fables, a gentle smile provoked by lovable eccentrics, are all combined. Which of them predominates is difficult to decide. The decision usually characterizes the person who gives it, not Uncle Péter himself.

But whoever meets him succumbs to the spell of his personality. He has gone round in peasant clothes for seventy years; top boots, black knee-breeches and a white shirt without a tie. He wears them in the House of Parliament, at the Academy of Sciences, at any conference of writers. He would wear them at the Vatican, at Buckingham Palace, in Hollywood. In 1947–48 he was the Hungarian Minister of Defence, the head of the democratic army. He wore them to military reviews, a somewhat strange picture in that world of stripes and epaulettes. Strange? Perhaps just natural. The papers made a joke of it, and he enjoyed the joke. People worshipped him and called him the peasant king; it did not turn his head. Even in accepting public posts and honours, he remained himself.

Writer? Would-be revolutionary? Statesman? Peasant intellectual? Could I call him the Hungarian Rousseau or the peasant Machiavelli? No. Péter Veres is like no one else in contemporary or classic world literature. He began with no entry to the world of literature, not even a Nansen passport; he had nothing to rely on but his own experience and good instincts. No

literary and intellectual companions, only fellow-peasants, fellow-labourers, fellow-farmhands, fellow-railway workers, fellow-shepherds. He had no aesthetic or philosophical ambitions, only a craving for liberty. Not only European, even the Hungarian intellectual trends of the time were far from him.

Between the last decades of the nineteenth century and the 1930's one and a half million landless Hungarians, the vast majority of them peasants, emigrated to America. Many more escaped the oppressive slavery of landlords and tenant farmers to become postmen, factory workers and office boys. The same driving force that moved the poor to try their luck elsewhere drove Péter Veres to literature. For him literature was the promised land. Not just to inhabit and enjoy a harbour where he could anchor but to create a homeland for others as well. Though it took him years to reach it.

Until he was forty Péter Veres could only afford to write because he was at the same time, every spring, summer and autumn, a peasant. Not only his birth, but also his bread-and-butter, tied him to the peasant world. His patron was no aristocrat, no rich merchant or progressive publisher, but a milch cow and a few piglets for the market. And instead of the Muses gendarmes warned him—sometimes with rifle-ends—that literature has its own hazard.

To be a writer, or to be a peasant, is difficult enough in itself; the difficulty is more than doubled in trying to be both. Given this destiny, a man bears the double burden of the Ten Commandments of two moralities. He must be effective both as a peasant and as a writer, lest the deficiencies of one detract from the authority of the other.

The most anguished part of his trials, however, was not when he realized and accepted this double burden, but before. Training to become a writer forced Péter Veres into the solitude of a one-man underground movement: his ambitions had to be kept quiet. In the character of Julien Sorel, Stendhal created the likable young opportunist ready to ally himself to God, the Devil, the pimps of passion to get ahead. Though he walks through life in a mask, the masks he gives himself are attractive, inviting notice. When passion can help him his ambition, he wears the mask of passion, when humility, then the mask of humility. The concealment practised by Sorel is always to reveal something of Sorel.

Although similar traits of ambition and genuine talent were not missing, Péter Veres is the exact opposite of the Stendhal hero. He was anxious to reveal nothing. His worst fear was that those around him might one day notice that he had talents and intelligence. He was farmhand, day-labourer, soldier, prisoner of war, political prisoner, factory worker and track-

repairer, but always, everywhere, intent on behaving like the rest, like the typical average man of his surroundings; it was a matter of principle with him not to climb above his fellows, because solidarity was one of the basic tenets of Péter Veres's life. And he hid his capacities from his employers and superiors as well, lest they took advantage of his unusual ability to drive him into petty battles and inglorious defeat. But he who is not noticed, must notice everything—he believed. With Julien Sorel, individuality started out on its Napoleonic conquest; with Péter Veres it was the representative of the community who dominated. He was confident that the more his personality remained in the background until the decisive moment of action, the larger the number of persons for whom he could act when the occasion presented itself and the time was ripe. His particular daemon has a name: it is called service. Both religious and political movements know this type of inspiration.

But what has this got to do with literature?

His autobiography "Reckoning" (*Számadás*, 1937), which tells how and why he became a writer from a peasant, is the story of a man preparing himself for community service. The great autobiographies of world literature are, as a rule, wild, unrestrained and adventurous. The recollections preserve the intensity of the original emotions, meditations and frailties. Past dreams are relived, reawakening old anxieties. Frankness and self-revelation radiate from them. This type of autobiography reveals the enthusiasm or torment in which they were written.

In the first significant book Péter Veres wrote—"Reckoning"—something else can be seen. He is transforming himself through his confessions. He did not write to confess his feelings, but to control them. To control them and to compel them to an even greater puritanism. His puritanism became first the basis of self-knowledge, and then the basis of his revolutionary attitude. Writing could have opened horizons to him, given him the opportunity to break through the bars—and this is just what he refrained from doing. It was not personal passion that interested him but reality and freedom. Consequently he did not search for emotional but intellectual means of expression. He took part in the First World War, but apart from natural fear, observed nothing apocalyptic or horrifying it it. There was a Nazarene, serving in his unit, who, on religious grounds, refused to bear arms. Their commander did all he could, but the man could not be persuaded to change his mind. Finally he even refused to march. The commander ordered the man to be dragged by his arms along the broken highway. Soldiers setting out for a foreign front in a strange country to drag their own comrade along —like a dead body—a rare moment of drama for a writer—but Péter Veres

merely communicated the event in short dry sentences with no emotional undercurrent.

"He did not want to go and did not want to carry arms. The commander was a very good man, but after all he could not leave a man behind simply because that man was a Nazarene, and as there was no other way, he had to be forced to go. But the man took no notice, he was stubborn as a young bull when it smells blood, and then two strong men took hold of him each side and dragged him along the ground, or rather over the stones of the highway. I was not close to them and anyway it was dark; I could only hear the curses and the Rumanian's monotonous *oh, Domnu, Domnu'*— Lord, Lord'."

Had he no eyes or ears for drama? Did he deliberately avoid it? Was it that he did not want to expose himself to feelings of sympathy, because not sympathy, but his mission, was important? Action rather than anger? Was it that one had to be careful about anger because it could maim one like alcohol?

He had this casual attitude not only to the Nazarene and the pilot burnt in his plane, or the soldier blown to pieces by a mine, but to the tragedies taking place in his own peasant surroundings. Speaking for the community, he was only shaken by the tragedy of the community. Personal and dramatic destruction was no more tragic in his eyes than the life that preceded that destruction. Death was no worse than that which imperceptibly prepared it: poverty, bad food, defencelessness, servility, passivity and all the rest. Not burning feelings but the coolness of dialectics determined his character and attitude. To be passionate about what was evil and what was good was, he thought, an emotional judgement and certainly not objective reasoning.

Throughout his life Péter Veres put objectivity high in the list of virtues. But objectivity is not an aesthetic, but an intellectual quality. Can a literary lifework be built on such a misunderstanding?

The answer can only be no. But that it was built, can only be explained not by reference to some kind of twisted aesthetics, but to the twisted history of a country.

Ever since it began, our literature has been steeped in national resistance and sorrow. Hungary was ravaged and devastated by the hordes of Ghengis Khan. The sword dipped in blood sent round to call the country to arms— could have been accompanied by a poem, written about 1242, a desperate poem (*Planctus Destructionis Regni Ungariae per Tartaros*—"A Plaint for the Destruction of the Kingdom of Hungary by the Tartars"). And this note of despair struck in the thirteenth century, has reverberated throughout our history.

For Europe as a whole the Renaissance enabled the idea of the struggle for human rights to come to birth. Renaissance man in Hungary perished in the hundred-and-fifty years of Turkish darkness and in internecine strife. He did not build cathedrals, or a freer society; he built fortresses and ramparts. Hungary's only strength lay in her sense of mission. "Hungary is the shield of Christianity"—it was with this zealous sense of mission that the Hungarian defended Christian Europe while falling a hundred years behind it. And ever since then the Hungarians have lived looking backwards, eternally pressed for time, forever trying to catch up, make reparations. Our independence existed only in independent minds.

It was this historical compulsion that gave Hungarian literature its national character. It has always been ambitious, prophetic, soul-stirring —in a word—romantic. A reliance on miracles, a demonstration of righteous anger, a fervid appeal to the future, has been more characteristic than a controlled anger united with real power. Even Endre Ady in the twentieth century assumed a semi-Messianic role.

The change came later. Only after the defeat of the First World War, and the failure of the Hungarian Council Republic was the idea born that the way to save a nation is not to weep over its fate, curse and complain, but to look for the reasons of its continued existence in history, and to consider social, psychological, emotional and sociological realities at least as seriously as the flashing visions of poets. Following Ady, Attila József was the first of the modern poets to bring poetry and revolution into contact, and to connect the rise of the nation with the fate of the working class, the peasants and the poor.

In the Hungary of the 'thirties a reform movement of the same force as the reform movements of the nineteenth century sprang up. This was the populist writers' movement, which by various means, poetry, investigation, essays, sociological research, short stories and novels, studied the position of the peasants.

It was this movement which brought Péter Veres to the surface. For the fact was that not only Péter Veres needed literature, but literature needed Péter Veres. For who else could have reported with greater authenticity on the general state of the peasants and the poor, the great mass of the nation, than he. Where real knowledge is missing, there can be only supposition. Péter Veres had the real knowledge. He had no need to get to know the people; he had only to express them. Not as an outside sympathizer, but as they would have spoken themselves. He described what they ate, what they thought. What kind of mud clung to their feet, what sort of weeds killed their crop, what kind of draught withered their minds; what

hope they have, and if none, what force nonetheless keeps them alive. Birth, death, the dance, education, superstition, movement, sighing and silence—what all these elemental forces of life mean for them. It is possible that the book Gyula Illyés, the poet, wrote at the same time on the people of the puszta is more beautiful than the book of Péter Veres about the peasants of the Great Plain. But to this day the effect of Péter Veres's book is more disquietening, precisely because of its very barrenness and bleakness. He does not bluster, he records the facts. He is not shocked, he considers. He gives his fellow-peasants a name; like the animals reared on the bleak and cheerless plains, he calls them nomadic—who feel no national ties, who have never moved for a national cause, whose plaints have been of conditions and local ills. A man who lives not for his country, but for the land.

Here I come back to the objectivity and realism which are so characteristic of Péter Veres. His objectivity is not formal but human; in other words it presupposes action. It is not a form of lyricism or tragic self-confession, it is strict and accurate self-documentation. The voice is the voice of the individual; the theme is that of society, the world which determines the individual. As Gyula Illyés said, this effort of objectivity made by Péter Veres thirty years ago could be related to the current objectivism prevailing in modern French prose, except that we are not talking about resemblances in style, or in their passion for the minute description of objects. It might perhaps have developed into literature of a European standard. It did not, because the medium, the language in which this objectivity developed and was forced to express itself was not European. It was Asiatic, medievally backward. It was a language unconditioned by skyscrapers and monstrous machines and the featureless loneliness oppressing men who live with them; it was the language of primitive poverty and hunger. When Péter Veres spoke, for instance, about the education of the people surrounding him, he never used the word education in the European sense, but as expressing the conditions of mere subsistance. Saying, as it were, that the educated man is he who can stay alive, who can adjust and adapt himself to any kind of miserable existence. Literary parodies often satirize his excessively detailed descriptions of the right way to grease harness or the tops of your boots, how to handle four oxen hitched to a waggon, how to stack hay, how to knead bread, or how to open the skull of a sheep with the staggers. The comparison with Stendhal includes their respect for detail. Observation of details, objective accuracy, however, were not his aim, but only the means employed to suggest how comprehensive an "education" is needed by the man who is lowest in the social scale if he is to survive and to keep his family alive.

In one of his earliest short stories Péter Veres describes the everyday life of a village woman from daybreak to midnight. Feeding, milking, mixing the swill for the pigs, cutting firewood, and cooking; sudden forays on the pigs, or ill-behaved children sneaking into the kitchen; nursing the baby, hurrying to the shop for salt, oil and paprika; hypocritical play-acting for the benefit of neighbours, to silence envious gossip: the pathological concealment of poverty. Péter Veres writes of it all in a quite unemotional manner. But his extremely objective writing quietly reveals that a peasant woman uses up at least as much energy as the ruler of a country, or the commander of an army; and it carries him, slowly, inconspicuously in the direction of the class struggle.

They say masterpieces are likely to be born when new and great changes are due. Péter Veres was fortunate enough to be born into such a situation, but nonetheless he has not created a real masterpiece. Did his ability fall short of the standards required? No, it is rather that his human commitments were so great that they prevented him. He wanted to fight for the new and great change, not for himself, but for those from whose ranks he rose. He wanted to prove that a peasant from the lowest ranks, without schooling, with no special help, with no bent for trickery or fraud, could rise to greatness. That in fact the peasants forced under, were as able as he to rise to greatness in the eyes of history and the nation. Instead of writing a succession of significant works he made his life a masterpiece.

Success? Power? The glory of a popular leader? It all came to him. The peasant who had only four years of schooling became a party leader, and the soldier who served in a forced labour battalion during the war became Minister of Reconstruction and then Minister of Defence after the Liberation. He accepted his new role as he had accepted the role of a writer when a peasant, trying to keep himself in the background. He accepted office in the coalition government because he felt committed to the peasants, not for political ambition. He considered himself an instrument in the onward march of democracy. His signature is to be found on the documents initiating the Land Reform and similar national measures. That later others indeed made use of him as an instrument and abused him? The failure touched a whole people rather than he himself. He failed in public life, and after his failure Péter Veres was concerned to find work, not to justify himself. Was the statesman in him discredited? The writer and thinker remained. In fact they revived and flourished. Now there was only one instrument to consider; literature. He wrote short stories, novels, articles and recollections. He pondered on a number of theoretical and fundamental questions. What sort of group, tried and steeled in collective work, can

offer the kind of moral lead and example on which a collective society could build its future? Works dealing with this question are his *Próbatétel* (Ordeal) and *Pályamunkások* ("The Track-repairers"). The second of these recounts the history of a motley collection of riff-raff and how they are welded into a firm and reliable group with strong collective feeling, through pleasure in their work.

There are any number of accounts of the joys of artistic effort. Much less has been written about manual labour, and then more likely than not, idealized or written in a strictly naturalistic style. What Engels has demonstrated with scientific arguments about the role of work in the biological and historical process of human development is expressed in a vein of poetic prose in two or three books by Péter Veres. He sees work not only as producing value or as a duty, or even as something noble and beautiful, but, as the starting point for a new system of values. Behind all the hierarchies which developed in various societies has hovered either God, or private property, or some misty and intangible ideal. Péter Veres bases the real and consequently higher morality of socialism and "the hierarchy of mankind" on work. How else can we get to know ourselves and each other if not in work? Work interests him not only as a complex practical or intellectual activity, but as some kind of idea—a religion or ideology.

And his other preoccupation? To make up for centuries of omission, in his great novel of the Hungarian peasantry—the trilogy entitled "Three Generations" (*Három nemzedék*)—he tried to do the people proper justice and to paint a full picture of them and their situation, something that Hungarian prose had only dealt with in half-sentences, and as a subordinate problem. But here was still that peculiar Hungarian burden: the need to make up for, to catch up, to make reparation. Perhaps this is why "Three Generations" is of more sociological than fictional importance. He laid out the small universe of poverty for all to see, with greater authority than anyone else. Not only in the external world, but also in the inner world of the characters. A mass of facts, of observation and experience went into this book. Every part of the doomed peasant world he knew so well is assembled in it. Nonetheless, it has not become the *Les Thibault* or *And Quiet Flows the Don* of Hungarian peasant society. Authenticity may be one form of perfection, but it is not necessarily the freedom which glows behind life, and without passion and drama there is neither freedom nor human greatness. In the characters of Péter Veres's novels—in the Jani Balogs and Gábor Kisses—passions may be at work, but they do not erupt in the jealousy of Othello, the agony of Karamazov? Fatal love? The glint of a knife? There is not a ghost of them in his work.

In a sequel made up of short stories amounting almost to a novel—*A Csatlós* ("The Satellite")—he paints the Julien Sorel of peasant society. One can refer to Stendhal's Sorel again here, but not in comparison with Veres himself this time, but with one of his characters. András Török, a young man of Sorel's abilities, in the one great adventure of his life can achieve no more than becoming the servant, a satellite of his lords. His energy, shrewdness and passion consume a tremendous amount of energy, but the most they can earn him is a few slaps, a stick raised, and a curse that almost cracks the skull. Should we support the author and protest with him that his characters are not the sort who meet at balls or in opera boxes or in obscure corners of churches, or in prison cells? And when they fight each other, it is not in snow-white shirts before the chalky faces of seconds, but at work? Yes, indeed, if we were moved by a manifest, authentic truth, by what actually happens in the book—not by what should have happened.

Authenticity and reality are interesting and effective in themselves, for they give satisfaction. Few know this better than Péter Veres. But what he does not know are the rules governing illimitable desires. Or if he does, he always confines them strictly to the possible, as his characters do. He believes that the poor always suppress their passions, and it would be sheer luxury to give them free vent, for their passion not merely expresses but also betrays their feelings. And consequently his convictions on the way people—the poor—should conduct themselves to gain the desired end, which is to him the reality of human and social existence, determines his aesthetic principles. He will not accept dramatic behaviour and events because first and foremost, it is the future that matters. One must survive, one must endure, one must win through; and this idea plays hide and seek in his mind, almost replacing the final idea of freedom. No, he never confuses the two; and in fact never changes their order of precedence. He does not consider the substitute solution of endurance as the final ideal, but is unwilling to sacrifice it for a hope, an unstable illusion. For this reason he has been accused in the past of too great a willingness to compromise; though in fact he is not given to bargaining but deliberately makes his own choices.

At the beginning of his career his attitudes and his character were conditioned by his dual role of peasant and writer. He deliberately effaced himself in peasant surroundings while preparing to break away from them when the time came. His natural reflexes learnt to respond first to the stimuli and events of his own rural environment, then—expanding—to national events and finally to the universal problems of humanity.

I know nobody with more curiosity than Péter Veres. But his curiosity, like his intelligence, carries him only in the direction of what is useful and

salutary. If he were being taken to his own execution, he would spend his last moments throwing a few searching glances at the guard, casting an eye over the landscape and the land—that plot over there would do nicely for maize, one could plant a fruit tree here... The inclination to evil is simply missing from his make-up. This is not in the first place a question of strict morality, but rather of interest. A stake in what is good. His originality lies in his peculiar kind of dogmatism. He accepts as real only that which helps man, the nation, and humanity at large to live to the best purpose. "My direct object is a socially-conscious culture—feeling and thinking in terms of a community, or, in other words, the service of historic realism which is essential for national survival," he once wrote. And, modifying it slightly —"The aim of all my integrated thoughts—both in their finished forms and in their vague impulses—is to find out whether mankind has, had, or will have the common sense it needs. The amount of common sense it needs for survival at all times and at all places." And with this end in view he examines and tries to use every thought, all experience, each argument, this suspicion and that despair. He searches Machiavelli as much as Frederick the Great did, but for opposite reasons. Rousseau as much as Kafka or Dürrenmatt. He speaks of birth control and housing with the same brand of charming dogmatism, so peculiarly his own, as he speaks of Camus, or the fashionable themes of alienation and disenchantment. He has an almost idolatrous respect for Shakespeare, because Shakespearean poetry shaped "the realism of thought" rather than the realism of poetry. Of Thomas à Becket he is able to write with the same sense of excitement and zeal as of the undrained swamps of Africa or Asia. For he thinks Thomas à Becket's life and death is a common concern of all mankind, and draining the swamps of Africa and Asia could become a common challenge in time to come. An amusingly grotesque lack of any sense of proportion? Faulty taste? Pseudo-philosophy? A peasant turning from cultivating the soil to cultivating the Earth, and losing his way? Those who know his purposes, his humanism, feel a deep respect for his unquenchable spirit and his very limitations.

A writer? Certainly. But not designed only to be a writer. He should be given a one-man job in Hungary, pointing out the urgent individual and historical problems which need to be done, which must no longer be neglected. Not necessarily how to solve them; but let him name them, diagnose the ill. Then at least we should not suffer from so many ill-directed plans, but start with the advantage of practical and sober appraisal.

But, then, isn't that what he has been doing without insignia or badge of office, of his own generous volition, with all the wisdom of understanding affection? What he has been doing in his books?

TWO STORIES

by

PÉTER VERES

GENESIS

I was a small child, about the age when memory begins, somewhere between four and five years old. Real human life was just beginning for me. From the time I had been freed from the cradle, or rather squeezed out by my little sister Erzsi (but I certainly couldn't tell you when that was), I hung round my mother's apron. The summer before I was already playing in the courtyard and even the road, under the window, and sometimes was lured by bigger children as far as the grass plot at the end of our street, but once the autumn came I could hardly get as far as the porch before I was instantly ordered in by my mother: "Come in at once, you little scoundrel! Don't you dare run out barefoot! You see what you'll get if you start coughing again!"

The thing was that I hadn't any boots as yet. Small boys like me were not supposed to have any, being unable to pull them on or off. Only the bigger ones, about six years of age, who already had to go to school, would get a pair of small boots, but then they also had a lot of trouble with them. Shoes, on the other hand, shoes were only for gentlefolk in those times, not for the children of the western end of the village like me.

So, from autumn to spring my home was the chimney-corner, or sometimes the bench beside the table. If you have no flat of three rooms, you arrange yourself in a single room as though you had three of them. The children's home is the chimney-corner, their seat the small chair, and their dining-room the small table.

As a matter of fact, I had a pair of something like slippers, but the most they were good for was to save me going barefoot on the often damp earthen floor. The bigger children of some relatives of ours had outgrown their boots, so the legs were cut off and used for making sandals for the summer, or for tapping, while my mother brought me the foot parts so that they shouldn't be wasted.

But these slippers were no good for going out in the street, not even into the courtyard, because they let in not only the water but even the most solid mud.

So my world was very small indeed, and my mother meant everything to me in those days. She was Providence and Omnipotence all by herself. My father was very seldom at home, every other Sunday, that was all; and even when he was, he usually went to the market-place for some work or other, or was occupied with some troublesome piece of business. In winter he worked by the month up at the manor, in spring he worked as a navvy somewhere far away, and in autumn he dug sugar-beets for the Szerencs sugar works. So, at that time, I became very much attached to my mother.

It made me a lot of trouble. When the spring came and the ice-flowers on the windows melted, I was restless, and extremely unwilling to stay and rock little Erzsi while my mother went to the well or the market-place or the shop to get kerosene or vinegar. I hung on to her apron-strings and trotted behind her, like a colt trotting alongside the measured pace of its harnessed mother. And if my mother slapped my hand, meaning that I should let go her apron and stay at home, or if she left furtively through the back door so that I didn't notice at once, I ran after her in the street howling aloud.

In the end she was obliged to take my hand or to allow me to clutch at her apron, because she couldn't stand the howling; and she also disliked people criticizing her, saying things like "just listen to that pampered brat of Bözsi Nagy! I'd show him something if he were mine!"

Of course, it often didn't help if she held my hand or I clung to her apron, because she was in a hurry and hadn't time to walk slowly with me, so I had to run beside her. As a result I didn't look where I was going, and my toes, accustomed to the chimney-corner, every now and then stubbed themselves against the hard little heaps of mud squelched up in the autumn by human feet and then frozen stiff, and remaining so when they dried up in the abrupt sunshine of spring. Not before the hot and dusty summer would these heaps be crumbled flat again by the feet of women and children.

But it was still worse if I stubbed my toe against the piece of hidden brick thrown into the puddle in winter to prevent boots from getting muddy when people went to church or to the market-place or to dance. That brick was still hiding in the dried mud where it had sunk, only its edge slightly sticking out a bit, just enough to make my toe bleed.

When that happened, I started to scream; sometimes I even fell and roared at the top of my voice, because I was frightened at the sight of the blood running from my toe. In fact I roared with such vigour that my mouth

proved too small for the performance. It is only in the really second-rate choral societies that you see such contorted round open mouths as mine must have been on such occasions. In vain my mother would cry: "Stop screaming, or your mouth will stretch and the girls won't like you!" (For in our parts, a young man with a big mouth was considered ugly.) "Didn't I tell you to stay at home?!" my mother would scold.

But I didn't care a farthing about the future size of my mouth, nor about the girls, whether they liked me or not. I went on screaming with the full force of my lungs. And if after a while I stopped screaming it was only because the thrashing I expected to get from my mother for screaming in the street used to be much harder than the spanking for crying at home. In our street it was a shame and a sin to cry. Perhaps for the very reason that there were many who wept. A well-behaved child was one who cried seldom, and the best-behaved child one who never cried at all.

At home too I felt the weight of my mother's might and anger. I used to go to the burning stove and choose a long and strong straw, hollow all the way through, or, if we cooked on reeds, a hard reed, and put its end into the fire; when it caught, I put the other end into my mouth and puffed as I saw the men and big boys do when they smoked a pipe or a cigarette. Suddenly a hard blow would interrupt my absorbing occupation; it came from the calloused hand of my mother, or from her rolling-pin, or her broomstick—and no one could bear it without crying! And her voice, always so kind, became angry and severe as well—"playing again with the fire, are you! I'll give you something that you won't forget, be sure of that! If I see you doing it just once more, I'll push that pipe right down your throat!"

Or again I took the calendar from behind the mirror, standing tiptoe on the bench, and admired the fine pictures—the ram, the bull, the fishes, the twins and the old fortune-teller with his long grey beard and the owl sitting on his shoulder, and then further inside, the coughing man, pressing his hands to his breast: "Oh, this damned cough is choking me!" (Only much later I learned it was an advertisement for pills.)

Anyway, I went on peeping at the calendar until a page got torn off in the front and another at the back. The cover with the smart red soldier had already been lost a long time ago, but the months weren't supposed to get torn off before they were over. The result was once again a sound slapping, until my hands were red as a turkey-cock.

Other times I would open the drawer and take out the small or big knife, and begin to carve this or that—small sticks or toys, or occasionally along the edge of the table, until I either cut my finger or my mother saw me and

whacked me. I was also slapped if, instead of asking for water, I tried to pour it out myself from the can that stood under the table, and missed the cup, or made myself wet, and the water ran all over the earthen floor, that was damp enough by itself.

And so it went on—I got smacked for taking down a pot from the cupboard, for opening the door of the cooking stove and letting the embers fall out—in short, for everything a boy of four or five years can do wrong.

And yet, in spite of the frequent smackings and bad temper, my mother was dear to me. Her hand was hard indeed when she twisted my nose, if a black incrustation of dust and moisture was deposited on it and I was unwilling to wash it off, but with the same hands she would take me on her lap and fondle me when I wept. Although I was rather heavy for her; she would very soon say: "Oh my little son, get down, you're too heavy for me, you aren't a little boy any more!" (But she always said "my little son.")

After she had smacked me for some mischief or other, I didn't run away like the bigger and naughtier boys did, but—after an angry exchange of words and a few bitter tears—hid my face in her apron. What was so good was that she was quickly appeased and would say: "Now, now, that's all right, you won't be naughty any more, will you? If you'll be good, I'll always love you."

So you see, in those times my mother was still for me the source of all might and strength, wisdom and justice. It was she who distributed the bread, who smeared it with lard if I begged her to, who kneaded the bread, cooked and washed, brought the water from the well, a can in each hand, went shopping to the grocer or the market-place, knew the whereabouts of the mysterious money—if there was any—and standing on the kitchen stool, was able to reach up and take down the key under the pent roof. There were other women who came to see us, some rather younger, who wore bright-coloured clothes and never stopped laughing, and older ones, always wearing blue aprons and black headsquares. I remember one of them was as broad as the kneading trough, while the other was thin and crooked and had a spiky nose and a thin mouth surrounded with wrinkles. These elder women looked on my all-powerful mother as a child-like, delicate little girl, and called her Bözsi dear, or my daughter, though at that time I couldn't understand the difference. Only my mother was nice to the old women, I didn't like them. I preferred the younger ones, because they liked me too. There was only one thing I couldn't stand: when they smothered me with kisses, because I already felt a big boy and thought they should keep their kisses for little Erzsi, who sat in her cradle howling or sucking her finger.

The only supremacy over my mother I acknowledged as rightful was my

father's. Because I saw those heavy sacks of flour or wheat, which my mother couldn't move to let the cat through when the mice nibbled a hole in the sack and the precious red wheat or the powdery white meal ran out on the floor, swing away with a single grip of my father's hand. And I also saw the knotty acacia log which my mother couldn't even begin to split, although her palm had blistered from the handle of the hatchet, and my father took the big axe and smashed it to matchwood. And I saw that my father was strong enough simply to lift up my mother just like mother did with me. Mother laughed and cried: "Let me go, you old fool!" and she gently pushed him away. "I really haven't time to play!"

In winter time it sometimes happened that mother stood in front of the outside opening to the great oven, in the long verandah, lighting it either because it was cold, or she had to bake bread. The fire shone from the stove on the face of my mother, and she was so beautiful with her sparkling black eyes gleaming from her flushed face in the glow of the embers that my father went to her—if he happened to be at home—and fondled her or put his arms around her. I became jealous and crept from the other side to her skirt, although it was pretty hot there from the flame of the stove. "Now, move away, both of you," said mother, and poked up the fire, or turned the toasted bread or the fried dough, or stirred the stewed cabbage; she often warmed the food for breakfast in front of the heated oven, so that the flame should not be wasted, and the small oven need not be lit, since we were always short of fuel. Father also used to put his arms round her when she was making bread, or washing in the trough, or kneading the dough on the reversed table top. I greatly admired the strength of my father, but I still believed my mother to be the more powerful of the two, because it was she who gave my father to eat, and it was she whom father loved.

So this was my relation to my mother when the incident occurred which makes me tell this story. It was rather late in spring, when everybody was going barefoot, not only me, but mother too, in fact even the old women had left off their slippers to save them wearing out, when one day my mother's face beamed with joy and she covered me with kisses and cuddled little Erzsi to her. "Your father is coming home, my little son, he's coming on Saturday, he's just written," and she showed me the letter, although I couldn't read it and was rather astonished that a scrap of paper could tell us that father was about to come home.

But there was no time to be wasted. "We are going to bake bread," said mother, "so that father can take it with him when he goes back next week. And if we are going to light the fire, then we must bake something else as well. What shall it be, my little son? Plain cake, or turnovers?"

"Turnovers, mother," said I, "and crackling cake, and fried dough, because I like them..."

"We'll bake sweet poppy-bread, I've still some poppy seed, so I don't have to go to the grocer..." said mother without listening to me. "We'll have to light the oven in advance, anyway, because there hasn't been a fire in the oven for three weeks, and the bread would be under-baked without warming the oven up first," she continued to talk to herself, for she was already racking her brains over the fuel for the stove, there being not a single sheaf of reeds or even straw in the courtyard.

I went on whining: "No, I don't want poppy seed, I want curd cake, and cake with jam, and fried dough, and crackling cake too..."

"Now, my little son, we can't have everything at once; I've got some poppy seed, that will have to do..."

"No, it won't do, I want cake with jam!"

"I've got no money, little son, the grocer won't give us any jam!"

"But he will! I want jam..."

However, my mother was now worried about the fuel—where should we take it from? At least as much as can be carried on the back? She would have been more than happy to go and collect dead weeds or nettle, or reeds, or even thistles—for they lose their prickles in winter—but there weren't any left. Gipsies and the very poor had carried them all away in winter and in the windy, chilly hunger-spring. The bit left was all smothered with fresh weeds and grass; that year's nettles already reached as high as the knee and the children were making pipes of the hemlock, while the leaves of the burweed were as big as tobacco in August.

There was nothing to be done; either she had to borrow from somebody, or fetch it from the fields of the manor, for it was impossible to get fuel even for money—even if she had any...

To borrow—that's easily said... But from whom? Here, at the western end, everybody gets his fuel the best he can, gathering it or "fetching" it. Over here, nobody considered the fetching of fuel stealing. I never heard anybody say "let's go and steal some straw," but only "let's go and fetch a load of straw or a few bundles of cornstalks."

So in the evening, when the sun was about to go down, we started out, my mother and I, across the fields, where the tousled straw-stack of Mr. Csatáry appeared brown on the horizon. She took me with her although, on other occasions, she disliked me hanging round her; but I think now that she must have been afraid to go alone. For it was only in my eyes she appeared brave, strong and powerful; to the rest of the world she was but a mere slip of a girl finding reassurance in the presence of such a little chap as I.

She tried to get someone from among the neighbours, but nobody would come. There's a lot of work to be done in the evening: the pigs and the cattle are coming home with the herd, and supper has to be ready when the men return from work. We had no cattle at that time, only a few hens and three geese, so we could easily go. As for little Erzsi, mother fed her and then we rocked her to sleep. Oh yes, if she's sleeping now, she won't sleep at night and she'll scream, but that's of no importance now when father is coming home and we want to bake something. Mother has to get up at night anyway to soak the bread leaven.

So my mother took the straw rope, hiding it in her bosom so that no one should see it. At first she wanted to take the hook too, because if you want to know how difficult it is to pull a load of straw out of an old settled stack of straw by hand, handful by handful, you've only got to try it yourself... But then she thought again and hung the hook back on the fence. 'What if the field-guard caught us and took our fine hook away,' that's what she must have thought, but she didn't say it aloud.

The straw-stack was half an hour's walk, and the sun was just about to go down behind it when we arrived. And that was very good, because then we would be in the shade and nobody would see us.

Incidentally, we felt rather sure of ourselves: mother knew how things went on the estate since we had lived on it too. She knew that the coast was most likely to be clear about sundown, when everybody made for the big farm-house. The farm labourers and drivers went there to unyoke and feed the animals while the field-guards, keepers, overseers and bailiffs gathered in the farm office to receive their orders for the next day.

It was all right so far; we managed to pull out the straw we needed; by this time I was aware how difficult it was to pull the straw out when one was not doing it for fun, as I used to at home when playing at the bottom of our straw-stack. (I mean, whenever we were lucky enough to have a little stack of our own.) My mother straightened the straw into long and hard clusters to lie parallel on the rope and fit well to her back and her hips.

Then she bound it up with the strong but soft rope, which had a shining ring at one end to pull together more easily. She tightened it thoroughly, just in the middle, so that it balanced like the grocer's scale when there was nothing on it. For if one half was heavier than the other then the whole bundle tipped to the ground on one side, and it was impossible to carry it like that. Mother tied a fine handle of straw on the ringless end of the rope to prevent it from slipping out of her hand, which it is always only too much inclined to do when the bundle tips backwards and becomes too heavy. Then she knelt down and put it on her back, for it was too heavy

to be lifted while standing upright. If we have already taken the risk of coming here, we shall certainly take enough to put fresh straw under the brooder to prevent the chickens being infested with lice, and the straw in Erzsi's cradle is damp enough from every sort of wet to be ready to be changed too. And the oven must be preheated, for a single stoking up would leave the bread underbaked. And water must be warmed too, because it's Saturday tomorrow and father is coming home after a long absence.

Making a big effort, she took the bundle on her back—oh, that's going be hard to carry, half-bent in two (I knew already that it was this kind of work that put the hump on the poor peasant women's back); and how often will she have to change the rope from one shoulder to the other when it cuts too heavily into her soft skin!

And then, just as mother stood up with the huge load of straw, adjusting it so that it rested solidly on her hips, a noise struck our ears. It was like the clattering of hooves, and we also heard that funny rumbling noise that comes from the belly of a trotting horse.

The next moment a big dog with long, hanging ears came running towards us, barking in an ugly deep tone, and I became very frightened and clung to my mother.

Fortunately the dog took no notice of us; he ran around the straw-stack looking for hares and partridges; but at this very instant, the farm bailiff appeared.

He was coming from the village, and was in a hurry to reach the farmhouse in time to give his orders, but when he noticed that there was somebody busy at the straw-stack, he left the farm road: "Now I'll catch them!" he thought.

I was stricken by panic. Not only because he wasn't like other men. He had a green hat, with a big tuft of bristles standing up at the back. And then, his boots were yellow, something I had never seen before on anybody, and the middle of his trousers was made of leather, which I had never seen either.

"Damn you—what's going on here?" he shouted to my mother. "Stealing, are we?"

Overcome by fear, my mother let the bundle of straw fall to the earth. In her pain she was unable to speak a word, she just held me tight.

So far it had never happened that somebody had been rude to my mother in my presence. Or only once, a man in the market, but that had provoked nothing but a slight indignation and a moment, no more, of childish pain in me. It was at the St. George's Day market, where we went with mother, because she wanted to buy me a pair of trousers: a big boy like me couldn't

go on being dressed in girl's dresses. When she had made her choice, she measured the trousers against me and then asked the stallholder how much they cost. The figure the stallholder gave was very high. Mother was taken aback—in fact she didn't possess that sum—and replied: "Oh that's too expensive, they're not worth that much!"

The stallholder—he had a shaved fat face—snarled at her: "Put them back then, if they're not worth the price! Go and see if you find anything cheaper! These aren't anything for you, you've got no money!"

The brute saw that my mother was an inexperienced young woman, and that there was no older, capable woman with her. So he wanted to bully her, to make her give way and pay without bargaining out of anger and shame.

But my mother didn't pay; she looked around to see whether the incident had been noticed by others and with a flushed face said to me: "Let us go, my little son, and leave that ugly-face."

It was the first time I felt that my mother had been insulted, but the effect on me was lost in the noise of the market and the many curious things there were to see.

But now it was different. We were alone, face to face with the enemy.

"Take it back at once to the stack!" he shouted in a harsh voice. "Untie the rope and give it to me! I'll teach you, damned thieves that you are! Carrying off the straw as if it were theirs!" (That was true—all the poor people came here when they wanted to bake.)

My mother obeyed. She was unable to lift the bundle on to her back again, so she pulled and then pushed it to the bottom of the stack. But before untying the rope, she plucked up her courage and, still sobbing, said:

"Please, your lordship, please let me take this little bit of straw home! My husband's coming home, he's a navvy, and I ought to bake some bread, but I haven't any fuel, and can't find any." And she was just about to tell him my father's name, saying that he used to harvest here and he had been among the men who piled up that stack of straw. But in the last second she realized that it would be better if the bailiff didn't know his name, or he might refuse to engage him as share-cropper next year.

The bailiff interrupted her roughly: "Give it to you? Oh yes, I'll give it to you, you scoundrels! Who's your husband? What's his name?"

But instead of replying, my mother burst into tears. No, she certainly wouldn't give her husband away, unless forced to; as she hurriedly untied the rope, the bailiff reached for it and snatched it from her hand. "Clear out, now! And don't you dare come back again, or I'll turn you over to the gendarmes!"

Then he turned away, whistled for his dog, still sniffing around the

stack, and, banging his heels against the flank of his horse, trotted away. The hooves echoed on the dry farm road, and the belly of the horse gurgled rhythmically as it trotted.

Bowing her head and taking me by the hand, my mother started homewards, silently crying. There's nothing to stoke the oven with, she can't give a bit of pleasure to her man, and the fine rope with the ring is also lost. What is my father going to say—it's a precious tool for a poor man, a ringed rope like this. He uses it to carry everything that can be carried on the back.

But she cried silently, only her big tears fell. She went on holding her apron, for she was constantly obliged to brush them away.

I did not cry... I was overcome with passion—with a child's anger: my mother was crying—my strong and powerful mother, though it was I who used to cry. This time it was her turn to cry, but it hurt me, it hurt me too.

I think this was the beginning of the class-war in me. Trotting beside my sobbing mother, I was cut to the heart by this infamy, and the first hatred blazed up in me against the bullying gentlefolk who didn't care a pin that my father was coming back or that we wanted to bake him fresh bread and cake.

Because the mind is able to forget, the mind can forget what has happened, but the soul cannot: every offence becomes either pain or anger. And in the heart of the offended ones, pain and anger swell to the size of an ocean—and that is the first beginnings of revolution.

A LONG DAY

Sári and I quarrelled in the evening. There was no bread or bacon or potatoes in the house again. All there was was a basketful of flour and a bushel of maize, which Sári had been saving up like a miser for her chicks. She wasn't going to have us run short of chicks, or perhaps go without one for a whole year. Mózsi's garden would still take some time to finish, and as things stood, there was nothing to be expected from relief work that week. The hungry spring was dragging on too long. The rabbits are a happy lot, they only mate when spring draws near and there's grass for the baby rabbits. Our neighbours, the Szabós, had only finished their stint the previous day, and our turn would not come before the middle of the following week at best. For in those days a man had to wait

his turn for work, much as they queue up for soup in the army. The angry words we had were about where we could get two more basketfuls of flour to the one we'd already got, to make up to one baking at least. Sári was nagging me to go and borrow some from Mózsi on tick, but I was very much against it, since we were in debt as it was. Well, then, I should beg some from my Uncle Mihály; they were well enough off and had some. Or maybe my brother-in-law István Kis, husband of our Erzsi, could help. She went on insisting that we borrow from my family, and that was just what I didn't want to do. Let her go and beg from her people. But that she wouldn't do either. They were poor as well and not very willing to give.

"Then sell the brood of chicks that have just hatched. This is just the time they'll fetch a good price and we can buy them back in May when we're earning money."

But no, she wouldn't hear of that either. Come what may, she was not going to be left without her chicks, not even if all of us were to starve to death. If she didn't raise them now, we should never have any eggs in the house. We could never buy chickens out of the wages. And they were only enough for bread anyway. And then March chickens were really worth something, as they would start laying eggs the following winter. We'd made a couple of miserable fillérs on them until we had had to sell the hens.

Both of us were in the right. The question at issue was merely which truth was stronger. Mine, I thought. After all I wore the breeches.

We went at it hammer and tongs during the meal. She had made a soup of flour and water and there were just a few crusts over to eat with it.

Now I knew as well as she that we hadn't got anything else, but why in the name of goodness can she never wait till after one's eaten? But she's got such a cussed nature that she never fails to rake up whatever trouble there is during meals. And that's the very time when one's blood is apt to boil and one gets mad enough to murder. Even dogs are at their worst at feeding time. But she can never stop, even though she damn well knows it's going to lead to trouble. She starts just the same, and then I can't control myself and I fly into a temper. Time and time again I had told myself firmly that next time I would keep my mouth shut whatever she said; it isn't worth starting rows because they never help. But I just can't do what Uncle Mihály Polyák does. He keeps his mouth shut when Aunt Erzsók makes a row and says, "she'll come to her senses, all right, she'll make it up soon," and he remains silent, sitting on the bench like a brat that's dirtied his pants. Or he goes out to the cows in the stable, and mumbles away at the beasts for a while.

Now I can't control myself like that. In the old days it was different.

If my mother made my father mad he slapped her face or hit her hard once or twice and that made it much easier to make up. My darling mother broke into tears, father had let off steam, and they got over it. But nowadays it isn't the custom any more to beat a woman. People start running you down. "Thinks himself a fine fellow, does he? He can do it to that poor rag of a woman—just let him try laying hands on me, I'd give him hell!" That's how women egg one another on. So one controls oneself and it makes the blood boil all the more. Because she always says something that has no damn sense in it, or something that can't be done anyway, just for the hell of contradicting. In my mad anger I didn't know what I was doing. I snatched up the plate to fling at her, soup and all, but at the last minute I pulled my arm back and banged the plate down on the table so that some of the soup splashed over. I was so furious that I then reached for the oil-lamp standing near me on the table, but the fear of fire pulled me up. And then I seized a knife and a piece of bread in my passion. I lifted them to fling them to the floor, but at that moment my eyes fell on the children and I saw how frightened they were, the whites of their eyes showing. Eszti was crying, Gábri was looking at me like a little scared puppy, so I threw the lot down on to the table. I got up: "See, that's what your mother is like," I said to the children; "she won't let a man eat in peace," and I went out. I slammed the door behind me with a bang that shook the whole ramshackle house and the handle came off in my hand. The screw had came loose inside because it was only fastened with a piece of wire. I threw it on the ground—another aggravation—and the door swung open again.

I went into the back garden, came back, and walked up and down in the yard before the house.

I carried on like that for a quarter of an hour. My anger slowly cooled, and as I was bareheaded I began to feel cold, so I went in. My son Sanyi had meanwhile found the screw and as he was very good with his hands, he was fixing it. Sári, sobbing, was washing up on the floor in front of the iron stove. The bigger children were tucked away in silence in different corners, but seeing that the storm had passed, after a while they began to move around a bit. Eszti crawled over to me with a battered rattle in her hand. "Daddy, daddy, daddy," she repeated without stopping, and showed me what she'd got. "What's that, my little daughter?" I asked her in as gentle a way as I was capable of at that moment. "Stefi bringed it from school," she babbled. I took her up on my lap and she went on happily rattling the worn-out toy in my ears. "You silly little girl of mine," I thought. "I wonder if you'll feel like playing when you can't even have your fill of soup."

By then my anger was completely gone. I thought back to my childhood:

how scared I also had been when my parents quarrelled. It was only when my father whistled, or sang, or played the zither to the soft sound of my mother singing that we little ones felt happy and secure.

But I didn't make it up with my wife that night. She made the bed silently, I lay down, she put the children to bed, blew out the lamp and sat in the chimney-corner in the dark. That's what she always does when she's angry. She either sleeps on the bench, or late at night, when everyone in the house has gone to sleep and she's tired of hanging about, she comes and slips into bed beside me—I always leave room for her. Then at dawn she gets up earlier than I do, so she needn't speak to me.

But in a day or so we always make it up if nothing happens to start it again.

That morning I rose early too and went to Mózsi. There was another day's digging for me to do there. I hadn't seen Sári about, she must have been somewhere in the back of the house, or perhaps she had gone out to try and get some bread, for she had been up well before light.

I started digging, but I intended to have a word with Mózsi as soon as he stirred.

Some time later I did go into the shop. "How are things, neighbour?" he asked as I entered.

I took some time getting round to it.

"I came in, neighbour, to say that I want to knock off for a little while, because there's something I've got to do and I'll have to leave for a bit."

"That's all right, neighbour," he said, and I thought he'd leave it at that and then I would be hard put to it to come out with my difficulties, but he added lightly, as an afterthought: "What have you got to see about?"

"To be honest," I began, "I've got to go and try and get some bread; because we've run out of it and the relief work is delayed as the surveyor took some time coming, you know, and our turn may not come till well into next week... and we can't hold out till then. I'm going to Uncle Mihály or my brother-in-law István Kis to ask them to help us out until the relief work gets started. We've got a basketful of flour, and we've got some maize flour as well, but all that isn't worth the cost of the fuel to heat the stove." I told him it all in a casual, lighthearted way, as if it didn't matter very much. "In fact I did think of asking you to lend me something," I went on, cautiously, "but then we're in debt already as it is, the day-wages don't come to so much, the old maize stalks for fuel have to come out of it first and my wife has had some potatoes and lamp-oil on tick too, so I wouldn't get much from you..."

"And will your uncle give you the flour?" Mózsi asked.

"I don't know. If they will they will, if they won't, they won't. All I know is that they don't give very willingly, because they think we won't pay it back, though I've never been behind with them for as much as an ear of corn. . ."

"I'll tell you what, neighbour, don't go anywhere else. I'll let you have as much flour as you say you need, and you'll pay me back when you're earning. . . How much do you need?"

"Twenty or twenty-five pounds would do nicely," I said. I didn't dare say more, grateful as I was for that much.

"Do you want to take it away now or at dinner time?"

"I'll take it now, since there wasn't any thing for breakfast and I don't want my wife to start making the rounds in the village, because she'll certainly have gone out to try and borrow some flour as well. I go to my relatives, she goes to hers. That's the rule. . ."

He measured out twenty-five pounds of meal flour into a large brown paper bag on the spot, and I hurried home with it.

But Sári was out. No sooner had I left home than she had been sent for by the Kelemens, well-to-do farmers; St. Sándor and St. József Days were come and gone, so would she come and help with the spring cleaning? She was only too pleased to go, it was a godsend. There'd be leftovers, and a bit of money as well. And that would come in handy for the salt and the yeast, so we wouldn't have to go and borrow those things from Mózsi in addition.

There was no food, of course, in the house.

Erzsi, the bigger girl, hadn't gone to school, and that meant she'd have another absent mark against her name, but it couldn't be helped, the children couldn't be left at home by themselves if their mother had gone out. She had made some black coffee, but sour soup of husks would have been more welcome. There was a bit of the roast barley "coffee" left, but she used burnt bread crusts instead of coffee substitute making it so bitter that no matter how much saccharine you put in it, it only makes it worse.

We put in the old bits of crust left over from last night, and managed to drive our hunger away. They would make some sort of noodles for dinner from the flour I'd got. I went back to get on with the digging, and the children went to school.

But my poor Sári took care of their dinner as well. Much as there was to do at the Kelemens she ran home, on the excuse that she had to start the yeast for the bread-making, although she couldn't then have known yet that I'd got hold of some flour, and under her apron she had brought dry sweet bread and stale cakes and cold paprika stew scraped together into a jug.

It had been given her by the young wife when she lamented that she'd left the children at home without anything to eat. The old woman didn't know about it, she had no idea of how miserably poor we were. She still thought that it was as it used to be in the old days, that only people who didn't like work went without, or drank away what they had earned.

I wouldn't have gone home for lunch. Why should I? But Erzsi was sent to call me home.

With the new state of affairs, I now felt relieved. Now we'd have bread for a week if we economized. And Sári might get a little lard and bits of bacon for roasting fat from the Kelemens. They always gave her some.

In olden days when the whole flitch of bacon that hung in the loft gave out, we thought we might starve. Now we were glad to get even half a pound, and that not for eating, but for greasing the iron pot.

That evening Mózsi settled our accounts. He gave me one pengő fifty fillérs for the day. That was decent enough, because at Maurer a day's wages was only 1.20. He balanced what I had earned for pruning against the maize-stalks and the price of the flour against the digging. All in all we were only in debt now for 3 pengős.

Sári brought home really quite a lot of leftovers for supper and also a jug of dripping. It had been poured off from under the roast, flavoured with paprika. The soup smelled deliciously, and one was really taken in by it. You'd have thought it was made with real meat and sausage in it.

The children could once again eat as much as they needed. Sári breathed more freely. Once more we managed to drive our troubles away for a week. She didn't normally pray, she was more inclined to swear. And she wasn't a church-goer either. But she said:

"Now you can see the Lord is good, he doesn't abandon the poor... He always comes to their help at the last moment."

"Wait a bit," I said. "It'll be worse again before the brats grow up. He'll have to come and help quite a lot of times till then."

But it didn't matter. We were over the worst of it once again. Sári dashed off to Mózsi's, taking the one pengő she earned from the Kelemens to buy salt and yeast. I wanted her to pay fifty fillérs of what we owed to prove our good intentions to Mózsi—it was very good of him to help us—but Sári was set on bringing back some ten pounds of potatoes instead; that at least should be in the house, and then she could cook some food...

THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SEVENTH PSALM

(A story)

by

ISTVÁN ÖRKÉNY

We had no stretcher. Maurer and Ligeti carried the patient in their arms and wanted to put him down on the operating-table with all his clothes on; they had to be told not to soil the sterilized sheet. After that they undressed the man, reluctantly.

I saw Laci Haas without his clothes on for the first time. He had been working all through the five months without a pause, and until the appendicitis attack the day before he had never reported sick. When I looked at him I felt as though needles were being jabbed in the back of my head. There was something unfinished, something you might say, moving, in the way his body was built. It was slim and white like a girl's, the chest a little hollow, the belly sunk, and the flesh desiccated like dried fruit. Lumber work demands 5,500 calories a day; it was the heaviest work we had ever done. Where did a child's body like his keep its reserves of energy? I had no idea. I had forgotten to wonder about it.

The big brawny ones melted away like ice in the sun. A lorry driver as strong as an ox for instance, was done and finished before the unloading was over, and of the manual workers (we hadn't too many in our company anyway) only this Maurer had managed to survive, possibly because he was just too stupid to give up the ghost. Only a thin chalk line between his brows and woolly hair seemed to indicate the place where his forehead should have been. Sluggish, indolent, callous. A railway engine could have rolled over him. I had only asked him to come and help with the operation because of his strength.

He lifted the patient like a feather on to the operating-table.

I had had so much experience by then that I could tell at a glance how long a man had to go. These Laci Haases, unpromising, made of soft wax, could stand anything. It was all a matter of strength of mind. Death is not

outside, it is inside us. It is there we have to keep it in check. Let go of yourself for a second and it starts to grow, to divide like a cell, to swell and even without wanting to, kills you like an embryo bursting its mother to pieces.

When he was laid on the table, he said:

"Take good care how you kill me, Silberman, won't you?"

And he smiled.

"I don't care a damn about you, if that was a little dig at me," I said. "Why the hell didn't you tell some whopping lie when the company was lined up at Jablonovka?"

"I told them straight: a poet."

"Big joke. A poet's good at any damn trade. Couldn't you have told them something else?"

"It makes no difference what I'm good at," he said, "I can't lie."

"Everybody told lies at Jablonovka," I said. "By the way, I did spend a term and a half at the Medical University in Prague."

"We heard that," he said wearily.

"I did a bit of dissecting too," I went on.

"Cut it out," he waved his hand.

"Did I ask to operate on you?" I asked.

"Cut it out," he said. "Give me plenty of ether. I don't care about the rest."

And he closed his eyes.

At Jablonovka the company had been lined up and Harangozó ordered every one in the corn trade to come forward. Four corn dealers stepped out. Harangozó had them taken behind the ramp and beaten to death. That scared us out of our wits. We thought we had got a regular butcher of a commander, but later it turned out he reserved his hatred exclusively for corn dealers and wasn't out to get anybody else. When they asked us our trade or profession, forty-seven of us in sheer fear swore we were doctors, or rather forty-four of us did, because three were real doctors. But they are no longer with us. Harangozó looked us over and said:

"That one with the scar on the throat will be the company's doctor."

At nineteen I had had a thyroidectomy and the scar that had remained proved to be a stroke of luck at Jablonovka. But I had never dreamed that I would ever have to operate on anybody. Corporal Bisztrai of the Medical Corps called me to the tool-shed that morning. The operation was to take place there, and he told me to get a couple of others to help get the place cleaned up.

It was woodland all around. The house was built of wood and a pleasant

smell of pine came from the walls, which made your hands sticky with resin if you touched them. The only snag was that the room was originally intended for storing things, so it had no windows. The resourceful Ligeti had taken the headlamps and the batteries from the company's defunct Mercedes. He rigged the light up just like a real operating theatre. We had the sheet sterilized in sodium and boiled the catgut, the syringes and all the other instruments we could lay our hands on in a hurry. I also had a wash-basin with disinfectant put in the room.

"Wash your hands," I said to Ligeti.

"I have," he replied.

"But you touched his clothes. And you too, Maurer!"

"Does it make any difference to him?" Ligeti shrugged his shoulders, looking at Laci Haas, who was lying white, eyes shut in the floodlight, shyly covering up his private parts with his left hand.

"Go and wash your hands, I told you."

They obeyed, their faces betraying insolence. I had got used to that. At first everybody hated me. Not because of my not being a real doctor and still being the company's doctor, but because I lived and ate with the army guards. In the evenings I listened to the radio in their company. I was exempted from wearing a yellow armband. That was what made them sore. But as time went on they began to realize that I was on their side all the same. There was the time, for instance, when the order came through that from then on those with chilblains had to turn out for work just the same, because the sick roll must never exceed three per cent. But by then I knew about Harangozó's changes of mood and temper. Most of the time I exceeded the three per cent limit; in late December in fact, when the great frosts set in, I managed to exempt twenty-seven men. They saw that I was playing a risky game for them. From then on they hated me a little less.

"What are you doing?" I snapped at Maurer and Ligeti. "There's a clean towel to dry your hands on."

With the same impassive face they dried their hands. Because that impassive, sulky face was there to stay.

They sat on a crate. We were waiting for Bisztrai. Maurer was holding his ham hands away from his body so as not to touch anything, and in the meanwhile he watched my movements. That stare made me jumpy. There was silence. The good smell of pine oozed from the walls, like at home when my father brought the pine tree home for Christmas and hid it in the pantry and the smell seeped through, betraying its presence. Father had always bought the tallest tree that would fit into the room. He had started life all over again four times because his business had always gone bankrupt;

perhaps that was one reason why he had wanted me to become a doctor... I took out a Russian cigarette and lit it.

"Are we forbidden to do that too?" Ligeti asked.

"Your hands are already disinfected," I said. "But you can smoke, Laci."

He opened his eyes. He sat up. He lit a cigarette. I was a little relieved because it was painful to see him stretched out pale in the white light, motionless.

"Do you want anything?" I asked.

"What could I want?" he asked without interest.

I thought a moment.

"Food is out of the question. Do you want some tea?"

"I don't want tea."

"I may be able to get some rum for you."

"Don't get me anything, Silberman."

There was silence again. Nobody spoke. No noise came from outside because the huts of the army staff were covered half way up with dung and on top of that a thick layer of snow had fallen. It made the silence lie on your heart like a weight of lead.

"We could at least talk," I suggested.

"What shall I talk to you about?" he asked.

"Recite me a poem."

"I can't think of a single poem."

"Do the one you recited at the social evening."

"It wasn't by me."

"Who was it by?"

"Who knows?"

But whenever it came to discussing poetry he always livened up. This time too he soon recovered and started to talk and gesticulate, even forgetting to keep his left hand on his genitals. He had been the great surprise of the social. A voice as strong as the roar of the wind came out of this soft-spoken boy. It swung over the long sheep pen so that even those with gangrene, whom we didn't dare bring forward for fear Harangozó might see them, could hear it.

We had got up the social on the Regent's birthday on Harangozó's order. He had these fits of humanity. He was in constant conflict with himself, but the boys were unable to see it. He had been ordered to produce so many cubic metres of timber for saw-logs, sleepers and telegraph poles, and in the course of it to exterminate the company. But he had quite a bit of idealism, too. He wanted to maintain the illusion that here everything was as if we had been free people—free as far as anyone could be free in war time. As

long as everyone did his work he wouldn't let anyone so much as eye us. He insisted on our singing and enjoying ourselves in the evenings; occasionally he himself came and mixed with us in the sheep pen. When Laci Haas began to recite at the social he broke into tears. He turned aside and went out to keep his emotions from betraying him. The next day I learned from his batman that he had been pacing his room the whole night, clearing his throat. I daresay that was why he had insisted on the appendicitis operation; he hadn't forgetten Laci Haas reciting those lines.

It wasn't an ordinary poem. It was the Hundred and Thirty-Seventh Psalm in some old seventeenth century version.

"Recite it, please," I asked him.

"I can hardly remember it."

"As much as you can."

"I don't feel like it."

All my prompting was in vain. Then Ligeti, speaking over his shoulder, turned on him:

"Why are you putting on dog?"

At that he obediently rose on one elbow, looked round, and threw the loose corner of the sheet over his loins. He didn't seem to want to recite a poem naked. He spoke very softly, almost inaudibly.

> By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea,
> we wept, when we remembered Zion.
> We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.
> For there they that carried us away captive required
> of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us
> mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
> How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?
> If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning.
> If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to
> the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

He fell silent. He got a cramp, and lay back again, drawing up his leg. I started to sweat. If anything makes me nervous the palm of my hand becomes damp and cold sweat comes out on the small of my back. Ligeti was staring in front of him, biting his nail; Maurer was breathing heavily with his mouth open and his sticky fish-gaze fixed on me. Laci panted slightly for a while yet, then once again the silence was complete and again the smell of pine wood came flooding into the stillness. Through my mouth and nose, through my very pores it penetrated; I felt like crying behind my

closed eyelids. I was shaken. I thought of things I had never thought of. What life was like, what it was about and who had conceived it and if it had come about of itself, why did it have to be so full of conflict and self-contradiction, why was it self-suffocating, inscrutable, insoluble. . . I brushed the thoughts away, but at that moment my father's sallow face as he lay on his sick bed flashed before me. To shut out the image I tried to imagine myself dead. I did not succeed. I was living even in my death. Not very much alive but just enough to know that I was not dead. Then in came Bisztrai.

He had got bandages but no ether. Instead of that he thrust into my hands a bottle of novocaine. He inspected the headlamps, switched them on and off, smiling complacently. Before he left he snarled at me:

"If the shed is not empty by noon, I'll kick you in the belly, Mr. Silberman."

He mistered me. He didn't like anybody to come into the tool-shed. He lived next door in the room to which the shed was attached. He would lie on his campbed day and night, but eight or nine times a day he came out to see if the padlock on the door of the shed was still there.

We boiled the instruments on the big utility stove. I had only once given an injection in my life, six weeks before, to a chap suffering from dysentery. But it hadn't made difference anyway.

"We haven't got any ether," I told Laci. "I'll do it locally."

"What's that?"

"A local anaesthetic."

"Will I be awake?"

I said yes. He asked if he might smoke. I shrugged my shoulders and handed him the whole packet.

"All you'll feel will be one sting," I said.

In civilian life Ligeti was a drugstore shop-assistant. I knew him to be a clever man, but at this moment he was not particularly exerting himself. He moved about with a slowness that was an ironic comment on the futility of his activity. I had to round on him three times before he shoved the scalpel across to me.

"Now throw away the cigarette," I told Laci Haas.

"Lovely smoke rings," he said grinning, and blew the smoke up into my face.

"If that was intended as sarcasm don't exert yourself," I said. "I sat in the library every day till closing time. I wanted to be a good doctor."

"You've said that before."

"If Hitler hadn't marched into Prague I'd have become one too."

"Oh, well," he said.

"What's that 'Oh, well'?" I demanded.

"That's how we indicate something unsaid in literature."

"What's it all about?" I asked.

"Do you know where the appendix is?"

"I bloody well know," I said.

I think I made the cut beautifully at the right place. To be frank, I felt damp on the forehead and down the neck, but I had stopped trembling now, and the tension I had been living under since the previous day was relaxed. I didn't know what I was doing but something inside me told me that I was doing it correctly.

"Your peritoneum is like mother-of-pearl," I said.

"Don't flatter me, Silberman," he replied.

Up till then there had been sharp knives in everything he said. That was the first sentence with a milder tone. I knew that this softening was not intended for me; it was merely the onset of nerve paralysis, or what we call operational shock.

There weren't enough artery forceps, so the wound had to be swabbed frequently. Slowly, very cautiously I began pulling out the small intestines.

"Does it hurt?" I asked.

"It doesn't."

"You're lying," I said. "Not even Professor Schleiermacher could do this without pain."

"What we tell you cannot be a lie."

"Do you hate me?" I asked.

"Should I love you?"

I did not answer. One does not expect gratitude. Yet I'd walked my feet off before I could cajole them into letting me have the headlamps and allowing me to borrow the instruments from the veterinary clinic. A drop of sweat sprang out from under my hair and rolled down my temple and face. Haas gave a cry of pain.

I ought to have found the appendix by then. On Laci's belly, above the cut, lay the sterilized sheet. I put the bowels on it in apple-pie order. But now my hand stopped.

"Who do you think I'm siding with?" I spoke with irritation, because I was again seized by that internal trembling. "Who's holding the baby for you? Who's hiding the chaps with gangrene? How many times have I put you on the sick list, Ligeti? And you, Maurer? Go on, answer me!"

Ligeti was grinning. Maurer was breathing heavily down my neck. I could feel the hot steam of his breath. I could have killed him.

"Is what I'm doing betrayal? And what you're doing not?"

"It is not," Laci said.

"Not even your reciting at the social?"

"We can do anything," he said.

"Why can you do anything?"

"Because we're going to die anyway," Laci said.

The room was overheated. Everything on me was drenched through, my neck, shirt, hand. I mopped my forehead with my arm.

"Don't be glad too soon," I said. "You're not going to die. I'll find your appendix in a moment."

"Congratulations!"

"I'd already read all the fourth year text-books in my first year."

"It's a pity, all that cramming wasted," he said.

"I didn't think about how much I'd earn," I said. "I wanted to be a country doctor."

"Cut out the talk," he said. "Operate."

Now and again he gave cries of pain, although I took care, because I knew that if I didn't, they would be right. The minutes dragged on, very slowly. Maurer still gaped at me with those paralytic eyes of his.

The bowels were already lying in a big heap placed on top of each other.

"You haven't found it?" Laci asked.

"Don't be afraid," I said, "I'll find it."

"Don't make it a question of prestige."

"Do you want to get better or not?"

"Idiot," he said and closed his eyes.

The trembling had completely taken possession of me.

Schleiermacher had lectured to the fourth year; I had never got as far as that. But his famous sayings were known to everybody at the university. This one, for instance: "Gentlemen, the appendix does not float about like the kidney. The appendix is always in its right place, you only have to find it." I didn't. I had to call Ligeti to help hold the bowels together, when Laci's head slid to one side.

"Finished," Ligeti said.

He turned on his heels and was about to leave everything; he only returned to his place when I shouted after him. The pulse was regular but weak, weaker than it should have been. I had no camphor. I had no caffeine. I told Maurer to prop up the patient's head and throw water on his face.

He let the forceps slip. It was torture to see how he picked up the jug from the ground; it seemed as if this was the first time he'd taken anything in his hands. Then he poured a little water into a tin cup, looking at me

every now and then in the meantime, which only made his snail's pace still slower.

"Quick!" I shouted at him.

He started to move with the cup in his hand but no faster than before. He crossed the room as though his feet were entangled in sea-weed. He bent over Laci. He looked into his face. He looked at him, then at me, at him, at me again. If he'd looked at me once more I'd have gone mad.

"Don't stare like that, you miserable fool!" I shouted. "You'll kill him if you waste time like that!"

He stood there stock still. A dim-witted wretch like him needs time before the voice reaches his brain. He stared at me, turned, went over to the jug dragging his feet, and poured the water back into it. He placed the cup back in its place on the shelf, in exactly the same place he had taken it from, going through these actions like a trained gorilla. Then he came over to me.

"Put the bowels back," he said.

"What are you saying?"

"Put the bowels back and sew the cut together."

"You beast," I said. "What do you know about it? You dim-witted, stupid bastard, you crack-brained monkey! You idiot!"

His face didn't as much as move a muscle. The insults had not penetrated his ear-drums.

"Sew him up," he repeated with the same impassive voice, and lifted his hairy-backed hand.

I backed away. He came after me. A prehistoric mammal, a beast rearing on its hind legs, a Neanderthal male. He had been standing there behind my back while I had been working and felt his hot breath down my neck.

The stove began to pour out heat. The sweat trickled down my neck. The pine-wood smell from the warm walls was so strong it seemed as if the wood had come into the room. I sewed the cut together. My father had wanted me to be a doctor. He had said: "Not only because a doctor can make a livelihood wherever his fate takes him, but also because the work of a doctor is noble and honourable. He serves the good of mankind."

PRIVATE LIVES

(A story)

by

IVÁN MÁNDY

Faces between the railings, dimpled knees between the railings, battered toe-caps. There they cling in white shirts and blue dungarees. Hanging on the railing with both hands, gazing out. Behind them a woman in a white smock. They take no notice of her. Or the garden. Or the sandpit. They cling to the railings, gazing out.

A tram comes into sight on the other side of the street. As it stops and the passengers get out the blue dungarees start screaming. The tram has brought out its load for them: a woman with a bag, a man with an upturned coat collar, and all the others.

Some are open-mouthed with delight, letting go the railings, dropping to the ground. One reaches out a hand. He wants to pull the man with the moustache behind the railings. To drag in the woman in the green dress and the other in the coat with big buttons.

One blue dungarees goes on spitting. On stones, on shoes, at anyone before him.

"What'll become of a child like that?" says the woman in the green dress. "He's always spitting."

"So what!"

"But what can he be thinking of?"

"Nothing. They don't think of anything at that age."

"That's what *you* think," a young man breaks in. "They're full of ideas and dreams. It's only later they. . ." He stops.

"Only later they what?"

The young man does not reply. He takes a small wet paw in his. It is a tiny paw, a paw as red as the face. The child burrows with two fingers into his palm. Here at last someone to drag in, right into the garden. The others stretch out their hands as well. Small fluttering hands the length of the railing.

The street is empty.

The hands stop fluttering. They cling to the railings again, gazing out.

"Come down off there!" A woman in a white smock claps her hands behind them. "Now get down please."

They do not get down. They are waiting for the tram, the tram that will bring them a woman in a green dress, a man with a moustache, an old woman with a bag.

Behind them women in white smocks. They stand motionless a moment, then start to pick them off the railing. Like so many little pea-pods.

They shout and go on gazing out, waiting for the tram, the tram that will bring them a woman in a green dress, an old woman with a bag.

The square sandpit is like a pool.

Some of them build castles. They carry the sand in children's buckets. Then they pat the wet walls, the walls of the castle. Sand on their faces, sand on their hands, sand running down the legs of their dungarees. A boy stands up. Big clods of earth drop from him. A little girl goes up to him; she rolls up his sleeve. The boy gazes before him, holding out his arm.

Suddenly another boy goes to the castle. He plants a foot down firmly in the inner courtyard. He looks round at the others, then stands there, one foot in the courtyard of the castle.

A little further on, behind the sandpit, are three swings. A girl in blue dungarees sprinkles sand on one of them from a spade, then carefully spreads it on the seat. So that it is well covered with sand. She takes sand to the second swing. Then the third.

The boy still stands with a foot inside the castle. Arms reach out for him, start tugging at him.

"Come out of there!" orders the nurse in white.

The boy does not move.

"I ought to get up," the woman thinks, "and lift that boy out of there." She does not. Somehow she cannot bring herself to get up from that impossibly dwarfish bench. Low bench. Small stone table. Who's been sitting at *my* table? On it are cups and tin bowls. Who's been drinking from *my* cup? Who's been eating from *my* bowl?

Book in hand, she does not read. She gazes before her and hears the noise in her ears. "Come out—come out!" Then a sharp "Ow . . . !" She notices the girl sprinkling sand on the swings. She keeps running from one swing to the other as if one of them was complaining:—"What about me?" She runs to and fro, tossing sand with her spade. Not on the swings now, but up into the air.

The boy's foot is still firmly planted inside the castle, but as they tug him he slips a little to one side. Two of them get a grip round his waist, and he promptly subsides on to the tower of the castle.

"He's knocked it down. . . !"

The tower collapses, the walls are in ruins.

They drag the boy up and round, and everything crumbles. The sandpit is a cloud of dust as they haul him out. Three of them pull, the others run beside them with spade and bucket. They pelt him with sand from their buckets and their spades.

"Put it down his neck!"

"Push it into his mouth!"

"Down his neck!"

The woman in the white smock stands beside the ruins of the castle.

The sand is now swirling around in the deafening noise; everything is invisible. For a while she stands there, then makes a grab at a neck, catches a hand, a shoe.

She sits on the stone bench. Before her is a scratched bedraggled face. She runs a handkerchief over it. No, hopeless. She takes the boy by the hand.

"I'll give you a wash."

Off they go.

The girl scurries between the swings, sprinkling sand.

A boy in blue dungarees clatters his spade like a clapper against the inside of the pail. He sits in the sandpit clattering the spade.

The hollow sound of tin.

The sound of clanging flies over the gardens. Gardens, streets, yards.

As if at a signal they prick up their ears. They squat on the ground in their tiny track-suits over the dungarees. For a short while they only listen to the tin bell. Then they start crawling to their buckets and strike up.

"Stop it, you!"

Nurses in white smocks run up and down, shouting.

"Put that spade down!"

"Give me that bucket!"

They sit on the ground beating away at their buckets. The hollow, clanging noise drifts from garden to garden, from yard to yard.

Twenty-six buckets and twenty-six spades. The toys of the nursery. And three swings. A few Teddy bears and a Spanish dancing doll, Rosita Omelette.

Rosita Omelette has lost the comb from her black hair, and the fan has

fallen from her hand. Instead of the Spanish dancer's costume she now wears a cotton dress.

"You're still the best of the lot whatever you wear," comes from Bumbus, the oldest of the bears; Bumbus's one eye dangles, when turned upside down his eye swings. It does not drop out, it just swings.

"Time something was done about that eye." Rosita Omelette lies near the edge of the sand. Close by a spade and the torn-out page of a picture book.

A little further off Bumbus, gazing up into the sky.

"Little Harriet... I used to be with her before I came here."

"And that was quite a long time ago."

"She tucked me under her pillow. She simply couldn't go to sleep otherwise."

"You look it too."

"She tucked me under her pillow. Her mummy sometimes pulled me out but she kept on begging until..." They fall silent.

A pause, then Rosita Omelette...

"But you had already come right apart, hadn't you?"

"Don't say it!"

"Why you were sewn together before my very eyes."

Bumbus would like to protest but all he can mumble is: "Yes, I got sewn together."

Not a word more between them. They lie close to each other on the edge of the sandpit: Bumbus and Rosita Omelette, the Spanish dancer.

Table napkins tied behind in knots around the table. This is how the children in blue dungarees sit in the dining-room, spoon in hand, plate before them.

The spoons dip. They surface laden with thick broth. Long threads of vegetable marrow dangling. The threads swing to and fro; they drip, they splatter, they spurt from one plate to the other. The spoons roll sideways like so many uncertain boats. They pitch and toss in the air, then at last up they go.

"Why not put it right down your neck!" The woman in the white smock moves along the table. She catches a spoon and steers it into a mouth.

Vegetable moustache around the lips.

The napkin is stained with smears. So is the table. Whole continents of smears. Carrots sticking in spinach. Cabbage. Stains on the table. Stain upon stain. The outline of vegetable stains, faint stains of outlines.

The spoons are busy dipping and rising.

A child in blue dungarees pushes the spoon into his mouth, puckers his face up and blows. A gush of thick soup spurts out.

"It's because he never does anything but chew and chew and chew—nothing else!" The woman wipes the child's nose and mouth with the napkin. "He never swallows anything, not he!"

All round her is a stirring, a tinkling, a clinking. Eddies of soup in the plates, dirty little heaps of vegetables on the table.

"Who made this mess here?"

The spoons rise and fall. Puffing, grunting, panting.

A potato ball surfaces from the vegetable sea. It swirls round and round on waves of soup, then lands on a heap on the table.

The heaps are so many desert islands. Two shipwrecked figures swim towards the island. Robinson Crusoe and Friday. They have already reached the uninhabited thicket. They stumble over croquettes and fried egg.

"Who brought matches in?"

The marooned couple dig themselves into the egg.

The spoons clink, clinking and stirring the thick broth. Round faces chew and swallow, blowing out, sucking in.

The spoon has been pushed deep down inside a purple face. The tiny sausage fingers thighten on the spoon but do not pull it out. The woman moves to him and pulls it out. In a convulsive movement the small sausage fingers try to snatch it back.

"Haven't you had enough, Halmos?"

The woman passes on, then suddenly stops.

"Which of you brought Bumbus in?"

The Teddy bear falls into a plate. Both its arms twisted; both its feet twisted; vegetable broth dripping from its fur.

The woman lifts Bumbus out of the plate. Her hands, wrists and smock are sticky with the mess.

"How many times must I tell you..."

The spoons rise and fall. All is sucked down in an eddying sea, an eddying sea of vegetables.

They lie on camp-beds underneath pale blue and pink blankets... Around them the stillness of the afternoon, the stillness of the deserted sandpit and the swings.

Beside the beds the woman in the white smock. She straightens a blanket, looks into a face.

Ancient, wrinkled faces. Panting, half-stifled moans. Here and there a clenched perspiring little first relaxes.

The woman in the white smock does not move. The heavy breathing floats around her like clouds. Clouds of vegetable broth, clouds of semolina pudding, endless cascades of milk. Plates and spoons hover among the clouds. Spoons pressing and rubbing the vegetables against the side of the plate. Puffed out cheeks passing the food from side to side. Clouds of never swallowed vegetables, clouds of spewed semolina pudding.

Clouds of jobbies. They squat on the pots for hours, they try to do their jobbies for hours and hours. But nothing... nothing at all.

The woman tucks in a blanket.

Gloomy clouds of jobbies above the pale blue and pink blankets.

Strung out along a piece of string like beads.

That is how they go in line through the streets and squares, clutching the string. The woman in the white smock at the head, blue dungarees behind. They turn their heads left and right, they slide back and forwards on the string, sometimes bumping into one another.

A dark-faced boy gazes upwards at nothing in particular. He just stands and gazes upwards.

"Mincsik, please!" The woman takes him by the shoulder and pushes him gently forward.

Mincsik moves forward, but looks back again and again.

They cross the road. Traffic comes to a halt. A driver leans out of his car and stares at the procession.

A woman in a grey hat steps up to the woman in the white smock.

"Can't you see that those at the end have dropped behind?"

The woman in the white smock lays her hand on a shoulder, and hears the voice speaking.

"What d'you think you are doing? What on earth do you think you're doing, if I may ask?"

The hiss comes through the noises of the street as they move along.

"You know what I'd do with a woman like that...?"

The street brings shop-windows and cinema posters into their view. The blue dungarees slide forward on the string and then back again.

A little girl with curly hair clings obstinately to the hand of the woman in the white smock.

"They pinch," she grumbles, "they're always pinching."

The woman in the white smock does not bother to look. Nobody is pinching the girl. Nobody is pinching her and nobody is pulling her hair.

Suddenly she stops and lets the line file past.

"Mincsik!"

Dark-faced Mincsik slides forward on the string, gazing upwards.

The girl with curly hair begins to sing. "Cock-a-doodle-doo, My dame has lost her shoe. . ."

"You don't have to sing it now, Screechy-voice!"

Shop-windows shiver, a silver-browed bus hurtles past into the sky. Huge pillars lean forward, then nothing again except the boundless sky.

Mincsik stands, gazing upwards.

A gap opens between the beads on the string. The others lurch to the left and right.

They cross the road. A bus brakes right in front of them. Its whole frame trembles and snorts.

"That was a narrow escape!" The woman in the grey hat is standing by the bus.

They cross in front of the bus. The string winds its way between a line of taxis and lorries. A dirty little hand touches the radiator of a car.

The woman in the white smock stops, and lets them all pass over. As if she were stringing beads.

"Mincsik!"

She stops them. She slides a shoulder further along the string. She pushes the beads up and down.

"Mincsik!"

Incomprehending round faces. They are without words.

She counts them again. She scans their faces as if hoping that Mincsik would appear from nowhere.

"It there one missing?" The woman in the grey hat is standing beside her.

She does not move. The line of blue dungarees also stands still. Only one of them lets the string drop to the ground.

Mincsik stands in front of a poster. Lost, staring at the blinding white ship. The ship skims gaily over the water. Men and women on board. The captain smokes a pipe and talks to a woman with golden hair.

Mincsik is also there on board. He walks as far as the railing; he looks down into the water; he waves towards the shore. He goes back to the captain. The captain and the golden-haired woman link arms with him.

But someone lifts him out from between them. Someone takes him by the shoulders and lifts him off the deck.

Little Screechy-voice with the curly hair goes to the end of the line and takes the hand of the woman in the white smock.

"If she starts that Cock-a-doodle-doo again. . . !" She shuts her eyes. "When I open them again Mincsik will be here, in front of me." She looks up, and there in front of her is the woman in the grey hat.

More and more people gather round.

"What's happened?"

"Has anybody fainted?"

"A boy has got lost," says the woman in the grey hat. "And it's not surprising."

Commotion on the pavement. Two men are leading a little boy in blue dungarees.

"Does he belong with this lot?"

On seeing his playmates Mincsik waves cheerfully. When they see him they wave back cheerfully too.

Mincsik falls happily into line on the string.

The woman in the white smock cannot find words. At last she forces out:

"Mincsik. . . !"

Almost desperately, she bends down to pick up the end of the string.

"Say thank you. Say thank you to the gentlemen!"

From below, close to the ground, he mutters something inaudible.

"Don't mention it."

"It's a good job we collared the little beggar!"

"Lucky for you he was caught!" The woman in the grey hat flounces by them. "Lucky for you he was caught!"

The string starts threading its way forward again. The beads slide backwards and forwards.

"Look at this, now just look at this!"

"Now that's really too much of a good thing. . ."

They stand in front of the child. The child sits on the edge of the table, dangling his legs. He looks apathetically at his shoes. The laces are undone.

"That's how he came home!" The mother bends down and gives the lace a violent tug. She has a good mind to tear it out of the shoe. "It wasn't laced up."

"That's how they sent him home." The father also bends to try and tie up the shoe-lace. The ends of the lace are frayed and in threads. They cannot be threaded through the holes.

"Leave it. It makes no difference now."

"So that's how they sent him home." The father straightens up and looks heavily at the lace.

"What do these people care? Not at all!"

The child dangles his legs.

"Stop dangling your legs!"

"Let him dangle them!" The mother's voice breaks. She looks at her husband accusingly. "After all it's lucky he..."

The father bends his head and strokes the child's legs.

The mother pushes her chair close to the table and presses her face against the white-stockinged knee of the child. "Go on dangling them, darling, go on dangling them."

Silence. The father repeats:

"So this is how he came home..."

"You must go in and do something about it. That woman cannot stay there."

"This is how they sent him home. He came home like this." The father begins lacing the shoe.

The mother watches him for a while. "Why are you doing that?" she says. "Tell me." A slight pause. "The others were sent home the same way. I ought to call up Mrs György and Mrs Márkus."

"We'll hear in any case if there's something." The father fiddles with the lace.

"Leave that lace alone!"

"What's the matter with you?"

"Leave that lace alone!"

The father straightens himself again. The mother kisses the white-stockinged knee once more, then rises.

The child looks intently at the undone lace and goes on dangling his legs.

"Go on swinging your legs, darling," the mother says. "Go on."

Laces, laces, and more laces.

The woman in the white smock sits on her haunches in front of a row of shoe-laces. She cannot say how long she has been squatting like that, bending over feet.

The stocking keeps slipping down over the shoe. She tries to pull it up. It slips down again. It's a long time since there was any elastic in it. It hangs limp, and collapses like an accordion. Above it are the pink little rosy creases of the leg. Creases, folds, bulges, tiny double chins...

The woman slowly manages to tie the shoe-lace. It is so flimsy... a careless movement, and it is done for.

The shoes are dusty. At a touch the sand runs off. From the stockings as well.

"Oh, these stockings!" They simply will not stay up.

The children in blue dungarees sit in a semicircle, stretching out their feet. Someone is doing something far down below them. Someone takes off their shoes and pours out the sand. Their shoes are put on again and someone starts tying up their laces.

And their legs swing.

"Stop swinging your legs," they hear from below.

Swinging legs out of control; flapping laces coming undone.

The woman feels that in another moment she will pinch that tiny red bulge. Pinch it or bite it. But she bends down and goes on lacing.

They cannot bring themselves to move on. Men with attaché cases, women with shopping bags stand in front of the day nursery, glued to the railings. How they swarm around in that sandpit! Little creatures in blue dungarees. One flattens the sides of the castle tower, another brings water for the moat.

"Look!" A woman leans over the railing. "Now they're hoisting the flag."

"Its only paper."

"It's a flag all the same."

A boy in blue dungarees plants the flag on the castle tower.

Some way back, at the end of the garden, a woman in a white smock reads. She looks up now and again, then buries herself in her book again.

"I'd love to come here!" sighs a woman outside. "A big garden, and quiet, and these tiny things. . ."

"I don't believe they built that castle themselves," says a man, shaking his head.

"Why? You helped them, did you?"

"No, the nurse."

"She didn't, she only looks after them."

"But she must have shown them once how to do it."

The brigade of blue dungarees marches around the castle. One of them sits on the edge of the sandpit, his head propped in his hands.

"He's tired."

The blue dungarees go about, pouring water into the moat. Crouching, standing up. Puffing and panting.

"The moat," says someone outside, "that's the most difficult job of all."

"I used to build them jolly well with a friend I had."

"Why are sand castles always destroyed?"

"Destroyed?"

"I mean after they've been finished."

"What do you think would happen if all the sand castles that have ever been built remained? Look, they're up now."

The blue dungarees, as if at a signal, all get to their feet together in the sandpit square. Only the boy on the side does not stir.

And the walls of the castle begin to tremble. The walls shake, the sand trickles down.

The blue dungarees stand without moving.

A vague voice from outside says: "An earthquake."

They do not speak. They look at the earth slowly rising before their feet.

The sand heaves slowly, stretches, and a meagre spectre emerges. The very ghost of the sand. It trembles in a haze of sand. One would expect it to grow and grow, or disappear completely.

The blue dungarees do not move. Then one of them makes up his mind and approaches; and then it seems as if the spectre sneezed.

The expectant silence outside continues. Then somebody in a scarcely audible voice says: "Oh, look!"

Two burning eyes in the haze of sand. Two burning eyes from the depths of the volcano. Only the ears and the eyes show through the earthquake.

"It's a... It's a..." can be heard from outside.

A woman bursts into the garden.

"What are you doing with that cat?"

The blue dungarees stand by, in silence.

More people pour in. Some squat down, some just stand about.

"Newly-born," the woman says from the ground. "A newly-born kitten." She puts her hand into the haze and sand. She holds up a cat for the bystanders to see.

"They buried it."

The woman in the white smock is also there.

Says the woman from the ground: "D'you know what's been happening here?"

"I can't be expected to be at their side every minute of the day."

The sand trickles down the animal. Perhaps the cat too will crumble to nothingness with the trickling grains of sand.

"The only thing I can't understand is how it managed to get out."

"When it was buried, completely buried."

"They never did such a thing before," the woman in the white smock says. Turning to the children: "What put the idea into your head?"

The blue dungarees keep silent. A girl reaches out her hand towards the cat.

"I'd better take it away." The woman bundles up the kitten and stalks off.

"Well, I never!" A man shakes his head and he too walks away.

"Whose idea was it?" The woman in the white smock looks round. "Péter Földi! Halmos! Dénes Major!"

The blue dungarees drop to the ground beside the castle. They sit down and keep silent.

"You will be small too one day and then I'll give you a good beating!"

She sits at a garden table, bending over a piece of paper. She breathes heavily. Bright bubbles form round her mouth. She is drawing a circle and all kinds of lines.

The woman in the white smock bends over her.

"How's it going to turn out? I see. . . a face." She puts her hand round her shoulder. She watches her putting the eyes outside the circle. The mouth, the nose.

"Judy, why are you putting them outside the face?"

"They're inside."

"They aren't. And now you're putting the moustache outside too!"

Judy pays no attention. She is drawing the man's belly. Beside the man's belly a small stick for one leg, beside one stick of a leg another stick of a leg. . .

"Judy!"

She does not bother to look up. She draws the lines. The bubbles round her mouth rise and burst.

The rain soaks the garden of the nursery. The benches, the tables, the sandpit are all drenched in the rain.

Indoors, inside the red brick building, the lights are on. No one can be seen outside. They can only be heard through the closed windows.

". . . Fiddle-de-dee, fiddle-de-dee

The fly shall marry the bumble-bee."

The garden is deserted. The brown paper covering the table has got torn. The drenched sand of the playground is being washed away. A spade and a tin drum lie there forgotten, and a little further on a drumstick, black with the rain. "Who left the drum outside? And where's the other drumstick? Who left the drum outside?"

The rain patters on the drum and makes ripples in the sand.

They will look for the other drumstick and will not find it. They will not find the soldiers either, who are lying face downwards under the sand

with their rifles slung over their shoulders. Infantry and cavalry, deep under the sand. Battered helmets, half severed heads of horses, swords which have lost their point.

"Last time we still had five cavalrymen, five cavalrymen and forty-six infantrymen! Where have you left them? I can't see the lancers either! Show me where the lancers are!"

No one is going to show the lancers. No one speaks of the lost guns. Nor of the grenadiers in peaked caps.

There they lie deep in the sand, together with their battles.

Wagram, Waterloo, Isaszeg... * Battles lost and battles won.

They went into battle at the trumpet call... The drums rolled as the infantry lined up and the guns took up position.

They were defending the hill. The red-coats held out to the last man. Those who fell were not stood up again.

The artillery duel raged. The guns that were smashed were not picked up.

Wagram, Waterloo, Isaszeg... Soldiers of battles lost and won are marching and counter-marching deep under the sand. The infantry soldiers were not stood up again, nor the guns picked up.

"Show me the lancers!"

No one shows the lancers.

"Who left the drum outside, and where is the other drumstick?"

The sand disintegrates in the rain. A tin drum sunk deep into the sand. A tin drum and a drumstick.

"Aggie, come and see me at home."

"No, I'm going to see Gyuri Korniss."

"I'll play my radio for you."

"Leave me alone."

"I'll show you my slides."

"Leave me alone."

He sits on the edge of the table, his face red with crying. A short while ago he was shrieking at the top of his voice, but now he just dangles his legs. In front of him, mother and father.

"I thought my head would split." Mother passes a hand over her brow. "He has never been like that before."

"And now he's dumb."

There is silence in the room, the uncertain silence of a headache.

* Site of a famous battle during the Hungarian War of Independence in 1848–49.—[Editor.]

"I should bring him Aggie Kaufmann!" The father shrugs his shoulders: "Who is Aggie Kaufmann and where should I bring her from?"

"Oh, hush!" The mother draws him aside with a frightened movement. "Don't start it again!"

Blue straps pulled down . . .

They are sitting on the pots with their straps down, their heads resting on their knees; it seems as if they have been sitting like that from time immemorial.

Little white pots with all kinds of coloured pictures. On one of them a bearded dwarf, on another a giraffe. A tulip, a bear cub holding a pot of honey, and Little Snow White with golden locks.

The woman in the white smock is at the end of the room, reading a book, or just staring out of the window.

There is silence in the room. Silence and heavy breathing. Now and again a delightful soft purr starts, then leaves off.

The child who is sitting on the giraffe nods over his trousers as if he were asleep. The one on Little Snow White is turning round on Snow White until suddenly he finds himself on the floor.

The woman puts the pot upright and sets the boy back on it. Silence and heavy breathing.

The child squatting on the dwarf slowly begins to raise his head. He is admiring the giraffe with a furious single-mindedness. He rises and toddles to the pot with the giraffe.

The boy sitting on the giraffe smiles at him.

"It's mine!" He holds his strap up with one hand, and points at the giraffe with the other. "It's mine!"

The boy on the giraffe is still smiling, still smiling when he is seized by the shoulders and pushed over. With his legs drawn up beneath him he still seems to be squatting. He does not cry, nor scream, nor stand up.

The other child is already up on the giraffe. He pulls the strap up on his shoulder, then lets it down again. He presses his chin on his knees.

"Get off it!"

He tosses his head and looks round. The other child is still on the ground. He does not cry, nor scream, nor stand up.

A pot from the far end of the room.

"The one with the giraffe isn't yours!"

And now several pots are clattering.

"It's not yours! It's not yours!"

The woman in the white smock looks up. Her face seems to refuse to

accept the clattering. But the next moment she is beside the two bent knees.

"What is the matter with you?"

"He pushed him off!" the pots are crying.

"Who pushed him off?"

"Gyuri Korniss."

The woman lifts up the small lump from the ground. He presses his face against the white smock, and cries—now he cries for all he is worth. He cries more and more wildly as he is taken back to the pot.

"The one with the giraffe is his! The one with the giraffe!"

Gyuri Korniss does not raise his head as they approach.

He just sits on the giraffe, staring in front of him. Nor does he look up when he is spoken to.

"Did you push Lajta off?"

"He did!"

A moment passes—and suddenly Gyuri Korniss is yanked into the air. He swings into the air and alights on the dwarf.

The woman in the white smock stands in front of him and rubs the back of her hand.

"So you bite, do you?"

Gyuri Korniss sits on the dwarf with his straps down. He does not look up.

The woman stands there for a while, then goes back to her book.

Deep silence in the room.

And then Gyuri Korniss starts. He still does not look up as he slowly begins to move forward on his dwarf. Straps flapping, he slithers forward with a clatter. The bear cub holding the pot of honey starts out after him. Little Snow White, the giraffe and all the rest of them. The pots jerk, the blue straps jerk forward in unison.

The woman looks up from her book.

Gyuri Korniss is on the dwarf in front, with the bear cub and Little Snow White bringing up the rear... No other sound, just the clatter of the pots.

"What are you doing?"

Little Snow White topples over. The whole thing lasts a moment, and the next moment she is in line again.

The woman sits and looks at the ride.

It gets faster and faster. They lean forward squatting, and the pots seem to be flying. The giraffe bounces over Little Snow White and over the bear cub holding the pot of honey...

The woman cannot move.

Now they are galloping round her. One seems to jump out of the other. Little Snow White out of the bear cub, the giraffe out of Little Snow White, the dwarf out of the giraffe. The straps fly through the air.

The woman does not move.

Wild little white orbs are flying around her. White orbs flying round and round.

PRINCIPLES OF FOREIGN TRADE IN THE NEW ECONOMIC MECHANISM

by

JÓZSEF BOGNÁR

Ever since the appearence of the commodity and money market every socio-economic system has endeavoured to achieve rational economic action. Certain criteria of rational economic action are inseparable from the factors that determine the course and the limits of such action, but other criteria apply to all societies living under commodity and money conditions, that is, societies that have broken away from natural economy.

The most important of the factors determining the course and the limits of rational economic action are the established ownership relations, the character and pattern of the superstructure (the power structure), and society's short-term and long-term objectives as influenced by the above two factors.

An increase in accumulation, for instance, may figure as a requirement in capitalist economy in a particular period, but this objective can only be achieved if accompanied by rising profits. In a capitalist economy it would be irrational to expect a fall of profits to bolster an investment boom. It may be that in some socialist country the wages received by a social stratum of vital importance for economic growth are not sufficiently stimulating, but measures designed to increase incentives should always be governed by the principle of distribution according to work, since distribution according to property is impossible under socialism.

Yet certain starting points and postulates of rational economic action apply to all socio-economic systems existing in our age. Let us mention, in the first place, the postulate that economic activity should invariably have the aim of obtaining certain surpluses (net income, profit). In private households, available goods are, on the contrary, distributed according to needs. Since there is a scarcity of goods and development energies compared to the objectives of society and to human needs, they must be utilized in

such a way as to obtain an optimum result through their investment. This is the principle of economic efficiency, the main postulate of rational economic activity.

This postulate can only be fulfilled if the means to be invested are comparable and convertible as regards the possible alternatives of their use.

Rational economic action, however, has certain limits. Under capitalism, for instance, rational action on the microeconomic (enterprise) level may be socially irrational. In the developing countries, on the other hand, the survival of traditional economy and the extreme scarcity of energies feeding and determining economic growth are similar obstacles.

Under socialism too, rational economic action has its limits, among them the insufficient experience or the relative weakness of the economic incentives and stimuli.

But the necessity of rational economic action, in spite of the existing differences, links the various participants in the world economy and enables each to understand the motives governing the actions of the others. In other words, this necessity makes it possible to estimate and calculate the norms and reactions of the various participants, in different situations.

The action and reaction norms of the individual participants can only be discerned and predicted—with relative certainty—if the socio-economic factors determining the course and the limits of rational economic action are known and taken for granted.

This is how peaceful coexistence and competition may develop in our world economy, since the necessity for rational action in the economic sphere comprises wide trade relations, the adaptation of impulses coming from world economy as well as a reasonable division of labour and cooperation in the solution of concrete economic-political problems.

In a centrally directed economy rational economic action embraces various spheres.

A) The economico-political conception of the central power, as well as all the measures necessary for its implementation. (This is usually referred to as the macroeconomic sphere, but only from the angle of decision-taking and not in respect to the processes it involves.)

B) The actions and endeavours of the economic units, such as enterprises, cooperatives (the microeconomic sphere).

C) The interests, endeavours, opinions and assumptions of the members of society as expressed in their action and behaviour.

D) The actual economic processes taking place in the wake of institutional and individual actions prompted by motives that vary in the different spheres. (This is macroeconomy in the true sense of the word.)

These divergent and variously motivated economic actions are linked together through the economic mechanism.

The economic mechanism consists of the correlated and mutually interacting actual status and modifications of the economic categories (money, credit, interest, goods, wages, profit, subsidies, bonuses, etc.) existing and functioning in a society based on the division of labour and on commodity production.

The constituents of the mechanism are elastic, their relative weight may change or can be changed in line with the development targets set by the government, with the level of economy and with the anticipated reaction of the economic units and individuals.

We nevertheless regard the mechanism valid for a particular period as a model that can be optimized in accordance with various criteria. Certain conditions must be satisfied by the system as a whole and by the individual elements of the system separately. In this sense the system is internally uniform and coherent, though consisting of elements exerting different—possibly contradictory—effects.

The criteria applying to the system can, essentially, be summed up in a single postulate: the prevailing mechanism should promote the optimation of economic growth, that is, secure the highest attainable rate of growth under conditions of equilibrium.

To achieve this, a good economic mechanism should prompt such microeconomic decisions and actions as are socially expedient, i.e., coincide with the intentions and conceptions of the central economic direction. On the other hand, it is called upon to convey to the central direction and to various economic sectors information on the situations evolving from a given microeconomic decision that will enable all those concerned to take them into account.

If the economico-political conception is correct, the mechanism stimulates microeconomic action more efficiently and conveys fuller information on it to the other branches of the economy than does the complex system of instructions that is based on our present knowledge and is embodied in a plan.

Obviously account must be taken of the fact that the microeconomic units and the individuals will not make their decisions dependent exclusively on how these will affect the mechanism. It may happen, for example, that in a developing country the mechanism stimulates increased investments, yet political instability and the uncertain position of the government discourage investments. A socialist country, in turn, may wish to increase the difference between the remuneration of highly qualified and of unskilled labour, yet

this comes into conflict with public opinion; as a result, workers doing highly qualified labour are not stimulated by the possibility of attaining higher incomes.

The government (central power) must weigh various political factors when making economic decisions. All important economic decisions associated with the concentration of certain material and intellectual funds or with their redistribution, with the stimulation of some layers or areas, or with changes in the existing economic structure, have an impact on the political conditions. Economic decisions of major importance may upset the equilibrium of the political factors and lead to their readjustment.

Economic growth is greatly accelerated in the event of a similarity between the impulses which the mechanism, government policy and public opinion exercise on the participants of economic life (enterprises and individuals). But this occurs only in the case of a lucky coincidence of all circumstances.

It logically follows from the above that a mechanism truly reflecting the internal motions and power relations of the economy cannot be introduced by arbitrary government fiat. There are four fundamental preconditions to the introduction of such a mechanism.

1. Ownership relations characteristic of the new socio-economic system—of socialism, in our case—have to be developed and made predominant in the economy.

The internal power relations of the economy are socio-political as well. At the outset of socialist transformation a mechanism permitting the historically developed power relations of the economy to prevail would, obviously, have favoured the capitalists in industry and—after the land reform—the rich peasants in agriculture.

In this period, therefore, the establishment of an economic system of direction permitting a rapid growth of the national income and the reconstruction of an economy ruined during the war had to be achieved through supporting the state and cooperative sectors and putting a certain brake on the activities of the other sectors.

It follows that the introduction of a uniform economic mechanism at that time would not have been possible.

2. The period of stepped-up accumulation, of stormy structural changes and of a concomitant regrouping of labour, associated with the accelerated growth of a comparatively backward economy, has to be brought to a close. In his fashionable theory on the stages of economic growth, W. W. Rostow refers to this period as the "take-off" stage. (Let us mention parenthetically that we regard Rostow's theory as a variant of the non-equilibrium school, a variant which is in many ways related to the ideas put forward by F. Per-

roux, Albert Hirschmann, Hans Sinder, H. Leibenstein and others. However, we do not share Rostow's interpretion of the socio-economic formations *juxtaposed* in our world as *succeeding* one another in time, a view which follows from his misinterpretation of their true nature and origin. Yet it is obvious that never has the economy of the West-European countries been in a situation resembling that of the developing countries today. A detailed discussion of this problem would lead us too far astray.) The sudden increase of accumulation involves various forms of forced saving as well as a concentration of profits derived from various sources. Profits develop in agriculture and in the consumption industries, but they have to be assigned to the development of investment industries. Accumulation at a stepped-up pace and a structural change involving the regrouping of vast labour forces can only be achieved in a centrally directed model.

Deep-going economic reform requires a consolidated socio-economic system and a government with undisputed authority. A profound economic reform involves a certain power shift inconceivable in the case of an uncertain equilibrium. In the case of such a reform the basis of power widens after a certain time, but in the transitional period (that of changing conditions) contradictions may arise even among the strongest supporters of the regime and its opponents may become more active. The contradictions among the supporters of the regime can be traced back to the impossibility of reaching complete agreement on all questions concerning the necessity, the extent, the time of introduction and the interpretation of the reform. It should also be taken into account that a change in the economic conditions, taken in a narrower sense, may also give rise to a number of difficulties which in themselves may jeopardize unstable governments.

4. In the period of accelerated economic growth those quantitative, qualitative and structural conditions must develop that permit the national economy to participate advantageously, or at least without major drawbacks, in a world trade governed by the present world market mechanism.

These four fundamental preconditions were realized in the Hungarian economy by the mid-sixties. The situation had thus become ripe for the introduction of the new economic mechanism and of foreign trade (of an intensified participation in world trade), but before embarking on an analysis of the interactions of these two factors, I should like to make two comments.

The first is that I have—perhaps somewhat strictly—confined myself to an analysis of the objective preconditions for the introduction of a new mechanism, discarding all other points of view. It is clear, however, that the introduction of a fundamental economic reform requires a far-sighted government and a politically mature public opinion. A far-sighted govern-

ment—since the introduction of every reform involves certain transitional risks and difficulties. Even an energetic government may only incur these risks if failure to act (that is, a discarding or postponing the reform) involves greater risks over a medium or long period than does the introduction of the reform. In this respect the present situation is favourable, since the economy has expanded in the past years but the rate of growth has slackened. In 1965 the national income was 25 per cent higher than in 1960, although a growth of 36 per cent had been foreseen by the plan. Why is it favourable for the reform if economy expands but the rate of growth slows down? Because in the case of stagnation or a setback a crisis develops which makes it impossible to prepare the reform carefully and cool-headedly. In the case of a high growth rate, on the other hand, the economic leaders would not be convinced of the absolute necessity of the reform.

Governments are usually expected to satisfy two contradictory requirements: to see far ahead and act at the most propitious moment, and, at the same time, to make their decisions in compliance with the will of public opinion. It is quite clear that the far-sightedness of the government cannot always coincide with the will of public opinion. On the issue of the economic reform in Hungary these two requirements harmonize because the majority of the population attributes the shortcomings in the operation of the economy not to accidents or to mistakes committed by individuals but to the existing economic mechanism. Under such conditions public opinion gives preference to energetic measures aimed at liquidating the functional shortcomings as against hesitation and clinging to the older ways.

My second remark relates to the evaluation of the old economic mechanism. We have so far tried to prove that an economic mechanism reflecting the internal motion and power relations of the economy cannot be introduced at an arbitrarily chosen moment and that in Hungary the conditions for this step had ripened by the mid-sixties. This statement, however, does not imply that the concrete mechanism established in the various economico-historical periods, together with all its characteristic features, was necessary or fully adequate. To use a simple simile, the fact that someone cannot buy a new suit does not mean that he may not have the old suit retailored or mended. Dogmatic and vulgar Marxists interpret the notion of necessity in much too wide a sense, i.e., they deduce a whole system of concrete events from one single postulate, mostly by logical arguments. Political and economic principles, as constituents of rational human action, cannot, however, be considered true or correct in themselves but only through their proportions and arrangement within some process and in a whole system of interactions with other factors. To use a term

borrowed from the natural sciences, economico-political principles as motives of rational human action are only valid within a certain range and time system.

In the "take off" period, for instance, accumulation must be concentrated and increased. Yet it is not at all certain that it was necessary or wise to deprive the enterprises of *all profits*, even of renewal funds, for the sake of concentration. To increase accumulation it was indispensable to apply certain forms of forced saving, yet it was an unfortunate step to raise accumulation above the optimal limit, since in the first period of industrialization too the absorption capacity of the economy is limited. Hence, exaggerated accumulation not only elicited political problems but also often led to a postponement of investments, to a rise of their costs and to their freezing.

It was correct to recognize that the existing and potentially utilizable energies of the economy had to be concentrated on industrialization. Yet here too the gauge was set too high, and this resulted in withholding all development energies from agriculture. As a consequence, industrial production and agricultural production became asynchronous, the growth of the former being accompanied by a stagnation and, for a time, by a decrease of the latter. A situation of this sort jeopardizes the development of technology, since agricultural exports have to be reduced and food imports increased; as a result there is a lack of foreign currency for the importation of up-to-date investment goods.

The economic mechanism evolved in the course of difficulties and emergency situations was also full of contradictions and inconsistencies and often led, in itself, to undesired consequences. Industrialization, for example, was given an import-saving character at the outset, which means that the demand for import goods ought to have been kept down by appropriate economic measures. This was partially achieved, since the state monopoly of foreign trade made it possible to plan imports and thus to check any growth in imports that might endanger the equilibrium; yet the prices of imported goods in the investment and production spheres were set too low, thereby giving the enterprises an interest in increasing their imports.

It often happened that some commodity that could replace imports and could have been procured from home production was more expensive than the imported product. Hence the enterprises did not strive to replace imports by domestic products but to acquire larger import quotas.

The fixing of import prices in a manner contrary to the economico-political tasks and interests was neither necessary nor reasonable. On the contrary, it was a grave error.

Thus, a coherent system such as the economic mechanism, or an economic process, does not become rational in its entirety by the mere fact that the first decisions launching or motivating the operation of the system or of the process are correct and reasonable theoretically (that is, only in themselves but not in their dimensions or interactions with other factors). A theoretically correct decision may turn incorrect in its proportions (above or below the limit of its range) and may later, due to emergency situations, result in the accumulation of so many errors and distortions that the resulting situation may be at variance even with the original decision.

I wish to deal with the situation of foreign trade in the period of the economic take-off.

First of all it should be remembered that, owing to her economic and natural endowments, Hungary is an import-sensitive country. This means that the rate of growth of imports is more rapid than that of the national income. Assuming a balance of payments maintained in equilibrium, exports too must rise more rapidly. Although we pursue a different economic policy today, the problem cannot be understood without bearing in mind that between 1960 and 1965 the unit increase of the national income (one per cent) was accompanied by a 2.1 per cent increment of imports and a much higher increment of exports.

Another thing to be remembered is that, owing to the size of the population (ten million), the domestic market is limited and the development of contemporary industry requires the acquisition and preservation of export markets.

Thus, in the period of economic take-off, foreign trade has to satisfy the following postulates:

a) Import-saving industries have to be established and protected, during several years, by various possible measures (protective tariffs, import prohibitions, import planning on the basis of national-economic preferences, etc.).

b) Imports saved in this manner should be used to secure up-to-date foreign capital goods, services and technology.

c) A market has to be established for the products of the new industries since in a small country industry cannot be built exclusively on import-saving, that is on the domestic market.

d) Traditional exports (from the period before the take-off) should be increased.

On account of the necessity of satisfying these requirements simultaneously, the domestic value relations and the system of incentives should be separated transitionally from the value relations and impulses of the world

market. It is inconceivable that a domestic industry can be developed if all the value relations and impulses of the world market are taken over indiscriminately.

At the outset the domestic industry evidently produces at higher costs and yields products of lower quality than does foreign industry. The separation of the domestic economic mechanism from world economy in the case of a small mid-European country does not involve the development of a closed national economy in which foreign trade activities are only supplementary. As can be seen from the above enumeration of postulates, only the value relations and the associated impulses can be separated or transformed to suit the development targets of the home economy; imports and exports —the volume of economic ties with the "outside" world—must be increased energetically. What happens in the sphere of imports is essentially a change in structure: the importation of consumption and luxury commodities and services is replaced by that of capital goods. At the same time, a market should be ensured for the products of the new industry and also for the traditional goods exported in growing quantities. It follows that what can be separated temporarily from the impulses of the world market is the sphere of preferences in economic development.

Later, however, the impact of the world market will be strongly felt through the evolving commodity exchange and through the conditions governing it.

In Hungary, these postulates could not be entirely met because, on the one hand, the equilibrium conditions of the take-off period worked out less favourably than expected and, on the other, the domestic economic mechanism was separated from the impulses of the world economy over much too wide a range.

It was a serious economico-political problem that the exportation of traditional export goods was stagnant for a time and then fell. (This can be ascribed to an unreasonably large extraction of development energy from agriculture.) As a consequence, capital goods and technology could not be imported in sufficient amounts, and technological development could not keep pace with the quantitative increase of industrial production.

Owing to the artificial rates of exchange and domestic prices in the economic mechanism of this period the economic leadership was unable to take due account of the world market requirements of its investment decisions. The export enterprises were unable to assess the cost limits beyond which exports become unprofitable or intolerable. On the other hand, as has been pointed out earlier, the producing enterprises became interested in importing foreign raw materials, spare parts and semi-finished goods, thereby pre-

venting the material means from being assigned to the importation of capital goods and complete technologies. In these circumstances the economic leadership was unable to judge the conditions under which the saving of foreign currency was useful or favourable. As a result, the decisions concerning the establishment of import-saving industries were not reliable.

The economic policy applied in acquiring new markets—disregarding certain negative tendencies and trends—can, nevertheless, be said to have been successful. The success should, in the first place, be attributed to the Council for Mutual Economic Aid (CMEA, also known as Comecon), whose member states had opened their markets to each other's products. It was owing to this that the share of machinery and industrial consumption goods in the Hungarian export structure amounted to 56 per cent between 1961 and 1965. The CMEA countries, particularly the Soviet Union, constituted a steady market for the products of Hungarian industry. On the other hand, Hungary, a country poor in raw materials, could buy these under steady conditions, avoiding the cyclic price fluctuations and the consequences of booms and recessions. (The share of raw materials and semi-finished goods was 57 per cent in the imports of the country.) The mechanism of CMEA trade—relying in practice on the mechanism developed in the internal economies of the member states—secured protection for Hungarian industry since the prices of industrial goods had, in general, been set higher, those of raw materials, lower than world market prices. This made it possible to avoid the export losses and import difficulties generally attending new industrialization.

Yet these economico-political advantages were accompanied by several drawbacks. These derived not from the intentions of the participants but from the mechanism and from the associated economico-political mistakes.

For a country on the road to industrialization it is an obvious advantage not to be compelled to vie with stronger and more experienced partners on the market of another country. There is no doubt, however, that an economic branch reared in hothouse conditions becomes indolent, its reactions become blunted. It often happened that the CMEA countries delivered technologically outdated commodities to one another and failed to secure the services concomitant with the delivery of the goods. Thus, the outdated products often set back the technological standards of the receiving country.

Uncertainties in connection with price and cost conditions were also felt in international cooperation, because in the given price situation the manufacture of every product seemed to be economical. The absence of convertible currencies was also a brake on the raising of mutual trade, which is still transacted under the aegis of bilateralism.

From the above considerations it is evident that—as far as the destination of the goods is concerned—three spheres of economic activity developed: the commodities of the first sphere could be marketed at home only, those of the second sphere were exportable to the CMEA countries, while those of the third sphere met the requirements of the world market in the broadest sense of the term. This treble sphere of commodities was coupled with three different price systems, material interests and impulses. The majority of the industrial enterprises were not interested in exports, in prices and selling conditions. In such circumstances the enterprises had nothing to risk, but the national economy had to cope with all problems associated with this kind of export activity (price-levelling, subsidies, etc.).

The extent of the difference between these two types of foreign trade activities (trade with the CMEA countries, on the one hand, and trade with the other countries of the world, particularly with the advanced capitalist countries, on the other) can be assessed by the structural differences in Hungarian exports to these two groups of states. Machine equipment and industrial consumption goods make up 65 per cent of Hungarian exports to the CMEA countries (attaining 76 per cent in Hungarian exports to the Soviet Union). The finished goods delivered to advanced capitalist countries amount to 22 per cent of Hungarian exports.

In a country sensitive to foreign trade it is of particular importance that the norms of the domestic economy (its value relations and incentives, among other things) should gradually approach the world market norms. Exports play a growing part in the Hungarian national economy, as shown by the fact that already 40 per cent of the national product is exported. This proportion, as has been pointed out, is rapidly increasing, since a one per cent increment in national production involves a 2.3 to 2.4 per cent increment in exports. It should also be realized that the period of import-saving industrialization has come to an end and the task of the future is to go on increasing economical exports, i.e., to manufacture for export a growing number of products standing up to competition on all markets.

To accomplish this task it is necessary:—

a) To introduce a rate of exchange based on a sober assessment of value relations making it possible to measure or to estimate whether the foreign trade activity results in profits or in losses. Such assessment will, naturally, be facilitated by other elements of the new economic mechanism, such as the transformation of the currency into a uniform economic equivalent, the adaptation of commodities to the conditions of supply and demand, the development of profit into a uniform economic criterion, the new forms of material incentives, etc.

b) To insure that the rate of exchange, established as described above, covers the domestic production costs of the majority of export goods. As a consequence, the price returns of the exporting enterprises can always be related to the foreign exchange revenue. In this case the exporting enterprise will have an interest in increasing the manufacture of goods meant for export, in adapting its structure to its own advantage and in improving the quality of its products and services so as to achieve a higher price return. The system of foreign exchange bonuses to be introduced will provide further incentives to the producing enterprises.

c) To increase the role and the responsibility of the producing enterprises in the sphere of exports by decentralizing foreign trade activities in diverse organizational forms. Beside the direct export activities of the producing enterprises, the specialized foreign trade enterprises will continue to function in certain sectors or become the commission agents of the industrial enterprises in others. The industrial enterprises should be permitted to establish cooperation with foreign enterprises in order to rasie their exports.

d) To allow the means of production and raw materials to be freely imported on an increasing scale and within reasonable limits. As a result of the approach of domestic prices and value relations to world market prices the enterprises will give preference to imported products only if by their use they can produce more, better or cheaper. It should be borne in mind that in the "transitional period" the liberalization will be less marked than later. In the initial period, certain processes of economic life will be influenced by the new mechanism, while others will be under the impact of various provisional and transitory measures.

The problems of the transitional period must be analysed very thoroughly because the fate of the reforms is usually decided in this period. If the equilibrium is disturbed by troubles of an unexpected magnitude and quality, emergency measures have to be taken and it is by no means certain that, following this, the original objectives can still be achieved.

It is obvious that both in the sphere of exports and in that of imports certain problems are likely to arise during the transitional period. For instance, the exportation of goods incapable of attaining a cost level that will secure a tolerable amount of foreign currency will have to be gradually abandoned. On the other hand, under the impact of the new mechanism, new export capacities will arise. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to predict when the anticipated tendencies towards a fall and rise in exports will equalize one another.

It is equally obvious that in the transitional period the endeavours of the enterprises to increase production, on the one hand, and the relative liberal-

ization of import facilities, on the other, will lead to a growth in imports. But the direction this phenomenon will take depends on whether or not there is a rise in economical exports in the wake of surplus imports. If such an increase takes place, the only sound thing to do is to advance payment on the surplus imports, since this will result in a more efficient and homogeneous economic circulation.

It is therefore essential for the economic leadership to follow the course of events very closely after the introduction of the new mechanism.

Some of the difficulties and problems may be predicted, although their order of magnitude depends on how events shape up in practice. There are, however, difficulties and problems that may crop up unexpectedly. At the moment when the new mechanism is introduced the economic leadership will therefore have to have reserves with which to balance or at least to mitigate possible negative phenomena.

Thus the new mechanism provides the first conditions for raising exports and bringing the norms, requirements and effects of the three markets (domestic, CMEA and world market) closer together. It still remains to be seen whether the preconditions for increasing Hungarian exports are extant on the foreign markets, i.e., in the CMEA countries and on the world market in its broadest sense.

On the market of the CMEA countries the old mechanism, except for some major or minor changes and corrections, still prevails. Hungary's task, therefore, is to promote, through appropriate suggestions and proposals, the creation of a new mechanism for the economic relations between the CMEA countries, one that

a) renders more efficient the international division of labour by means of new price and value relations,

b) accelerates technological development by raising quality requirements and by stimulating the industries of the various countries,

c) provides wider scope for the industrial enterprises of the various countries to compete for markets,

d) promotes the conclusion of direct agreements between the enterprises by decentralizing spheres of competence,

e) encourages the conclusion of multilateral agreements and cooperation in the sphere of the third market by introducing convertible currencies.

The introduction of a new mechanism obviously requires the cooperation of all parties concerned. Therefore, in the course of its development, different and often contradictory interests have to be taken into account. It is thus probable that a new mechanism can only be introduced gradually and by widely articulating it in time.

The perspectives of the new mechanism do not alter the fact that Hungary—like the other CMEA countries—must live up to the international engagements which she assumed in the past and which are still in force. The fulfilment of commitments embodied in international agreements is obviously the basis on which cooperation and confidence between states are founded.

Complicated problems also arise in connection with the increase of exports to the western states. The core of these problems has already been mentioned: the share of finished goods in our exports constitutes only 29 per cent. (Let me recall that as regards the CMEA countries the ratio is 65 per cent.) Hungary is poor in raw materials; the most important industrial raw materials—except for bauxite—are imported. There are no serious possibilities for increasing our raw material exports. Our agriculture is vigorously developing and becoming more and more intensive, but here the rise of our export trade is hampered by the agricultural dispositions and conventions binding on the CMEA countries. In any case, the exchange of agricultural goods has no multiplicative effect since these products are soon consumed.

The future of our industrial exports to the advanced capitalist countries depends on whether we succeed in finding partners, setting up combinations and using contemporary methods liable to open the road for Hungarian products into these countries. Western importers today give preference to imports from the Common Market, since in this geographico-economic area the movement of goods is governed by wide-scale industrial conventions, supported by tradition and habit, the absence of customs dues, uniform conditions of payment, close acquaintance with the selling firms, etc. One could go on enumerating at length the advantages enjoyed by importers who favour the products of the Common Market.

Considering these circumstances, I think that an increase of Hungarian exports to the advanced western countries and an improvement of their structure can only be achieved through industrial cooperation.

By industrial cooperation I understand the regular technical relations created before and after the mutual delivery of commodities between two producing units. These relations may consist of mutual delivery of products on the basis of common development, regular participation in the production of major industrial equipment, cooperation on a third market, the buying of patents, exchange of documentation, commission work, acquisition of spare parts for domestic manufacture in exchange for payments in goods of a similar type, etc.

In the past one or two years, conventions on cooperation have been concluded with several big western firms.

Yet grave psychological obstacles still have to be overcome on both sides to secure a more rapid increase of industrial cooperation and thereby of the mutual delivery of goods.

One of these psychological obstacles derives from thought patterns and reactions (conditioned reflexes) elicited at the time of the cold war. Both sides have preserved certain political fears fed on the assumption that an energetic economic and scientific interchange would disintegrate the internal cohesion of the existing socio-economic regimes and the existing political equilibrium built on the former. Yet it seems evident that the different socio-economic systems develop not only on the strength of their own innermost nature but also under the impact of impulses coming from world economy, including other socio-economic systems, and through mutual competition. In this sense two confronted socio-economic systems may, and sometimes do, need each other.

Nobody can maintain that western integration, French or Dutch planning and the economic policy built on it, or what is more, economic thinking, would have developed as far as they have without competition with the socialist countries.

Nor can the representatives of the socialist countries maintain that without competition with the capitalist countries they could so quickly have overcome the dogmatic way of thinking and would have evolved conceptions as bold as those incorporated, for instance, in the new economic mechanism.

It follows that, while both parties have already benefited from confrontation, relationships under the aegis of peaceful coexistence will presumably be much more beneficial for both of them in the future.

The other psychological obstacle is the product of economic dogmatism—dogmatism of this kind can, naturally, be found on both sides—which is expressed in the belief that fruitful cooperation can only be established between countries and enterprises operating within identical or similar economic systems.

Yet contemporary economic science has revealed that even economies operating on the basis of different principles may synchronize some of their activities, and, let us add, very important activities at that. It is not the driving energies that call for synchronization but the economic processes, for the same final result may well be achieved in very different ways (by means of divergent driving forces). It is, of course, important to know in every socio-economic system what objectives can be achieved by what methods. Both wider and narrower cooperation necessitates the availability, at an appropriate moment, of definite, synchronized results to be used for some purpose—products, elaborate technology or markets.

In conclusion, I should like to mention very briefly the wide perspectives opened up by the new economic mechanism in the social, political and scientific fields.

A change is taking place in the collective consciousness of socialist society, i.e., in the way this society thinks of itself and of the world. Hence science is beginning to study the actual problems of the living and functioning socialist society in order to promote the planning of rational political and economic action. Public thinking has recognized that different variants are available for solving the political and economic problems arising in socialist society. It logically follows that political institutions have to be established for the discussion and the confrontation of variants deriving from socialist principles yet essentially deviating from each other. The different opinions and views may join battle on the arena of political democracy; that is why socialist democracy and public life are to be developed with this purpose in mind.

But the social and political effects of the new mechanism can unfold only if the international situation develops favourably or at least in a tolerable manner. Grave international tensions, the imminent danger of war—not to speak of war itself—result in a further concentration of (political and economic) power in every country instead of leading to decentralization. Large-scale armaments—especially in our days—exceed by far the economic capacities of the small countries, thereby rendering impossible a sound growth of the economy, on the one hand, and the application of economic incentives, on the other. The instability of the international situation characteristic of the period of war danger, and concomitant shifts and turns in the internal political situation, necessarily create an atmosphere contrary both to political democracy and to the requirements of rational economy. In referring to the links between the development of the Hungarian economy and the international situation, I wish to voice, once more, my conviction that the economic prosperity of every country, especially of the small countries, in a period imbued with interdependencies is determined, in the last analysis, by the international situations.

It is, however, beyond doubt that the introduction of the new mechanism is a new element in the long series of transformations and achievements that started with the appearance of socialism in the history of rational economic and social action.

ZOLTÁN JÉKELY

THE ELEGY OF A BRONZE AGE MAN

VISIT TO A MUSEUM

I

Time has been when I longed for this safety—
when the walls of our hut at midnight shook
to the shaggy brown beast-backs rubbed there,
the teeth and horns whetted, sharpened
there on the stakes... I was a brat on a dog, riding:
and even at that age my friends disappeared,
bear paw, eagle claw seized them, hauled them,
their shouts of pain hammered and hammered the rocks.
Time has been when I longed for this peace—
when savage invaders at midnight shot
their flaming arrows at our hearth and
their voices barked out claims for us to die...
I was a brat huddling in my mother's bed in the dark,
my mother's lap with the sheepskin over it.

Thank you for coming after me into death,
now we can be at rest together in the earth.
Only here is there peace, in your open lap;
the moment now is a moment for ever.
They know why man and wife are laid in one grave.
There is no clash in our bones now.
Our heart let it flutter out, the mad bat,
Terror,
our belly let it slide out, the black snake,
Hunger,
our mind let it fluster out, the blind owl,
Anxiety.
Jealousy, vanity, envy, all all left behind,
frantic insects from the log rolled into the river.

No need now to meet each day and match it!
No need to kill to miss being killed!
No need to fear others might possess you.
I have you here in the good dark earth:
the earth is warm!
And here are my good weapons: the spear,
the bow, nine arrows, the good quiver,
my knife, my drinking-cup and the dear
little flute also—and all this is for ever.

2

I always liked to trace the bones
that lay under the shape of your flesh.
How often I pressed your jaws, stole
glances at your hips—often! Yes,
under the passing flesh I felt
and followed what can never melt.

Don't think it is a compromise
to lie together in this place!
The smile that glints on your white teeth
is brighter than a living breath.

Look at your jewels, set and worn
as you had wished and I had sworn.
You needn't be afraid of thieves
coming in unkempt alien droves;
round your breast is the embrace
of twelve thorny flowers in bronze,
on your arm-bone a bracelet weighs,
two shining pearls are in your ears—
beautiful on flesh, on fur,
but now their beauty is most pure.

3

The day we dropped here under ground
our names were no more to be found.
We neither felt inferior
to others, nor wanted to be better.
You are you, I am I,
In the grave's long night we lie.
No one calls my name at all
now, not even you can call.
What was my name? I've forgotten it.
I know I got many blows for it,
a hundred times I wanted a name
more splendid, more colourful, more grim.

Or else I wished I'd been a bear
and shaken my great chops, or had the fear
of the quick wolf in my own teeth:
I wanted the vulture's wingspread, the keen
hawk's sight—
but most of all the raven's three hundred years of life.
All these desires were to remain in a
limbo by the calm cycles
of the millennia.

4

I don't deny the joy would be immense
to know who walks above our tombs!
And why do we never end wondering
where the world is wandering?—
Even now I find I want
a net to cast, a fish to net!
To throw a ball on the green grass,
play catch with bones on a big rock,
kindle a fire to hear it crack—
oh, living has such happiness!

What a betrayal you'd give me now
if I thought you regretted following me here!—
but even so I would haunt your steps!
Not for a moment would you be
at rest.

I would embitter your drink and your food!
I would insinuate myself into your kisses:
with you they would not find happiness.

My things that you still kept would be round you,
gathered like breathing demons at your ear,
you would hear creaks, treacherous slitherings
come between you and every pleasure.

Bloody, in spurts of bestial pain,
the embryos would be dragged from your womb;
tortured by daily fiends you'd trail
daylight through a living tomb.

Sleep on therefore quietly in this earth
till your bones and my bones tangle into one.

Translated by Edwin Morgan

SURVEYS

LÁSZLÓ ORSZÁGH

CALIFORNIA REVISITED

1.

The first Hungarian ever to set foot in California and leave a still readable account was János Xantus, a veteran of the 1849 Hungarian War of Independence. In the early fifties Xantus made his way to America where he entered the service of the Geodetic Survey of the United States. Two books, both in Hungarian, published in Budapest over a hundred years ago, testify to his keen eye for observation and graphic descriptive power—"Letters from North America" (1857) and "Travels in Southern California" (1860). In them one may catch a somewhat startling glimpse of the infancy of California.

Xantus was rather critical of Los Angeles and its environs. He admitted that the insignificant, struggling town "offers a charming view, surrounded as it is on all sides—except the western—by lofty hills beyond which glitter the snowy peaks of the Sierra Nevada"; but he did not find much else to praise. "It is the misfortune of travellers," Xantus wrote in 1857, "that there are no decent inns in this place. Instead, there are far too many churches, most of them in a rather decrepit condition, their priests living a very lax life, busy peopling the foundling hospitals with their illegitimate offspring." One wonders what Xantus would have thought of today's smart Los Angeles businessmen's dining clubs, where the cocktails are served by charming young waitresses in topless bathing suits. Or, another sign of progress, of the news-vendor's kiosks around Pershing Square offering two dozen varieties of nudist magazines. Or of the hundreds of beautifully kept churches, chapels, tabernacles and what-have-you of the innumerable denominations and impossible sects flourishing in the languid air of California today.

In Xantus' time the houses of Los Angeles were "low structures, rather like prisons. The town is dreary, uninteresting. It is only the environs, San Gabriel Mission, the San Bernardino Mountains and Santa Clara waterfall, that offer a compensation with the beauty of their architecture, vegetation and landscape." It is, however, worth noting that in three small towns near Fort Tejon, Xantus saw shops offering such luxury articles as "Cuban cigars, French champagne, patent leather boots, Brussels lace, Manchester cottonware, Paris carpets, Italian sardines, Strasbourg canned meat—yet all these at exorbitant prices. Even ice-cream could be had, but it cost a dollar a pound because ice had to be fetched from a distance of seven hundred miles."

"The inhabitants of Southern California represent many nations, with a very liberal sprinkling of down-and-out adventurers. No wonder," Xantus added, "that bullfights, cockfights and bear-baiting are the principal amusement of the Los Angelenos. The arena there seats several thousand people who twice

a week may see bulls fight bears and are offered at least one cockfight a day." Xantus took a dim view of the cultural life of even the greatest town of California. "Not even in San Francisco is there a museum, an academy, a library or any other institution that has anything to do with the sciences or the arts."

2.

If Xantus could visit Southern California today, a century later, he would be obliged to revise his negative opinion on nearly every point, and particularly in the field where sciences and culture are pursued. This, at least, is the opinion of the present writer, a later compatriot of Xantus', who thirty-five years after his student days in the United States could visit America again and stay in California for a long time, doing research in the field of literary history in the Huntington Library. By establishing this library Los Angeles, or rather its satellite town, San Marino, suddenly found itself in the lead on the western shores of the United States. It has done even more: in its special field—English literature of the past five hundred centuries—the library has caught up with the three libraries richest in this genre: the British Museum, the Bodleian of Oxford and the Folger Library of Washington.

And yet, it was not with a view to serving science that the Huntington Library came into being. Originally it owed its foundation to the private hobby of a rich man. Mr Huntington was not a scholar but a great entrepreneur in the bygone age of the robber barons who, starting on the lowest rung of the ladder, succeeded in amassing a huge fortune. He may have been not unlike the railway magnate portrayed in *The Octopus* by Frank Norris. When Huntington was fifty-five years old, in the early years of our century, he turned his back on money-making, on the electrification of the Los Angeles area and on successful large-scale speculation in California real estate, and devoted his inexhaustible energy to book-collecting.

The result—the research library he founded, with an adjoining small but exquisite gallery of eighteenth-century English art—is a masterpiece of its kind. Every book of importance in English literature and history, from the fifteenth century nearly to our own day, and of American literature of the last three centuries, is there, in the first and in the best editions, primary sources, secondary and even tertiary material. The range, the completeness of coverage, is astonishing, for Mr Huntington fortunately had the best advisers, and since his death in 1927 the direction of the library continues to be in the most competent hands.

One of the strong points of this marvellous institution—open only to a limited number of *bona fide* scholars—is the rare book and manuscript collection. The latter section is particularly rich in relatively modern American material. Thus it includes the manuscripts of some of the sacred books of transatlantic literature, such as Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*, Thoreau's *Walden*, Mark Twain's and C. D. Warner's *The Gilded Age*, which lent its name to an entire era of American history. In the field of English literature proper the line of valuable manuscripts starts with the famous and beautiful Ellesmere manuscript of Chaucer. Mr Huntington's predilection for very rare and therefore very expensive books is well illustrated by a fine copy of the Gutenberg Bible, a sort of status symbol for the top-notch American libraries.

The history of English literature continues on the same high level in this library. What at one time may have seemed to be merely "Huntington's folly" to the multi-millionaire's colleagues is now securely established as California's glory, a paradise for scholars. Here the adjective "priceless," worked to death in the descriptions of so many American museums, is, for once, not an exaggeration.

3.

When the present writer arrived at the library and began making notes there, the American scholars working in the library repeatedly asked him two questions.

The first had sprung from quite comprehensible curiosity, namely, what the son of a distant country had come to California to explore, what the aim of his research was. He was admitted to the scholars' community when he said that thirty-odd years before he had been a post-graduate student in the United States and had studied the history of American literature under the late Fred L. Pattee, one of the pioneers of American literary studies. Now he had come to the United States to resume the studies he had dropped because of the war and other reasons.

The second question followed logically from the first. What changes or advances—and in what direction—did he, a foreigner revisiting the scene, see in American literary studies as a result of these three decades. This was a good question and therefore none too easy to answer. What first strikes the returning visitor's eye, is of course, the change in quantity. When, in 1930, the Hungarian post-graduate student was getting acquainted with the field of his special study, the quarterly *American Literature*, the first periodical of a scientific level in this relatively new field, was launched. Since then the interest of American philologists and critics has turned to such an extent to the exploration of the past of American literature—a subject that had attracted far less attention before—that a work merely indicating with the terseness of a bibliography the 1963 crop of writings of this kind makes up a substantial volume in itself. The volume entitled *American Literary Scholarship*, edited by the Californian Professor Woodress, enumerates well over a thousand papers and articles published in about a hundred-and-fifty periodicals in one year alone, not to mention independent monographs.

What renders this novel phemonenon particularly noteworthy and valuable is the fact that this seemingly inward turn has by no means reduced the discussion of other disciplines in literary scholarship which have long traditions in the United States, pursuits whose volume is, by the way, also increasing. Nor has research in the history of British literature, the studies of classical, Romance or Celtic philology or even of Assyrian or Aramaic philology—not to mention another fifty different subjects—suffered, either financially or in manpower, from the fact that American literature has gained ground and developed. It can be stated in general that philological, historical and critical studies in every subject enjoy in the United States a golden age never before experienced.

Evidently, this arises from several causes. One is the ever growing number of universities, research institutes, university publishing houses, enormous foundations, which create scientific jobs, raise the prestige of scholarship and lay the material foundations for all this. These factors, coupled with the academic attitude expressed in the slogan "Publish, or perish!" act as mighty stimulants in fostering scholarship. The second reason is a slight shift in social values, in the rating of occupations. Throughout the nineteenth century almost all the best brains in the United States went into money-making. "The business of America is business," as an eminent statesman of the time put it. In consequence such occupations as politics or literature or scholarship (and quite a few more) had a considerably lower rating, i.e., little prestige. Today, however, it seems that scholarship begins to attract an increasing number of first-rate men. The time may be quite near when an American college professor will not of necessity have to take his seat below the salt, as is still fairly often the case when he (or she) is not a Nobel or Pulitzer prize-winner.

But the main source of the great upswing in studies of the history of American lit-

erature may lie in the strengthened national self-esteem of the United States. The successful colonization of a country the size of a continent, the winning of two world wars, the emergence of unrivalled economic power, and a technical development such as would have been unthinkable a century ago—these have created a material basis that has put an end to the inferiority complex, the cringing before other countries, and the measurement of the products of the American intellect by foreign yardsticks, all of them phenomena quite common in the spiritual life of early nineteenth-century America.

Today, in the mid-sixties, the concentration on the exploration of domestic cultural achievements is embodied in the American Studies Program. This is a complex, so-called interdisciplinary branch of study, in which emphasis is laid upon investigation of the national characteristics of the history, literature, language, arts, legal system, education, religion and social sciences of the United States. Twenty-five years ago the subject did not even have a name. It was not even a soft option in the universities. Yet today—as the author could ascertain when visiting eleven American universities and colleges of different orders of magnitude—it is on the way to becoming a prestige subject.

A significant branch in the pursuit of literary studies is the publication—already in progress—of complete critical editions of the nation's great classics. In this respect, however, the Founding Fathers of the Republic and certain nineteenth-century statesmen (e.g., Calhoun) seem to fare better than the belletrists proper. For the moment, the complete works of Whitman and Emerson's diaries are the only works of great writers being issued in such editions. Publishing (i.e., business) reasons are perhaps responsible for the relative dearth of similar ventures undertaken on behalf of some other great American authors. The lack of reliable and comprehensive critical editions is, however, counterbalanced—and this is another welcome feature of the increasing literature-consciousness of American life—by the constantly multiplying number of so-called case-books, source-books, collections in volume form of critical essays by diverse hands on an author or an important literary work, and even facsimile editions of rare books or of first editions.

The visitor returning to the shores of literary America is highly impressed by various series of biographical and critical monographs addressed to a wide circle of readers, such as the University of Minnesota Pamphlets, or the United States Authors Series, which deals with nearly a hundred American authors in as many volumes. The number of full-length literary histories of America, produced in this century, has probably topped the twenty-five mark, not to speak of the great number of two- or three-volume college readers in American literature.

A colourful blossoming of preferential subjects, of principles and critical approaches in American writing of literary history can be observed today such as was not even discernible in the bud half a century ago. In American historical science this phenomenon can be well assessed in Page Smith's *The Historian and History* or in H. H. Bellot's *American History and American Historians;* in literary studies it can be measured in various progress reports or in recent books by the doyen of the history of American Literature, Howard M. Jones. As regards research on American history the greatest number of scholars seem to be engaged in themes of the first two centuries, the seventeenth and eighteenth, as well as in questions of regional history of the nineteenth century. At the same time, in the history of literature, the stress is laid on the past century and a half and, to a greater extent, on the South and West as against the literature of the North-East, which used to be overestimated. Like every other branch of science, the history of literature too tends to a marked specialization, to a constraint to the field of American themes, which is getting smaller and smaller.

On the other hand, the spectrum of the critical approach shows such a rich variety and is not infrequently liable to such extremes that it even gave an excellent young scholar, Frederick C. Crewe, the opportunity to parody the chaos in an amusing and witty book, entitled "*The Pooh Perplex.*"

4.

The symptoms of an increasing interest in national culture are the most conspicuous phenomena for a person with a historical bent who, coming from Eastern Europe, revisits the United States after an absence of three decades and a half. The interest in American history is evident not only in manifold scientific forms but also in a great many popular ones. They are all aimed at elaborating the "usable past," at enhancing national consciousness and cohesion and at emphasizing, from every point of view, national independence. Events belonging in this category include the celebration of the centenary of the Civil War, which lasted a long time, involved great masses of people and were terminated last year, and of the bicentenary of independence for which preparations have already started although it is still ten years off.

Four decades ago there was usually a relatively modest corner in most American galleries and museums devoted to the works of old and more recent American painters and sculptors or to the products of American handicrafts (e.g., the cabinetmaker's craft). Today the task of collecting these American works and trying to elaborate them scientifically has become a zealous pursuit. The aim is an impressive display of such works in as wide a scope as possible. The exhibits are frequently placed in new wings of the buildings that house them.

Although the cult of architectural monuments is older, it has experienced a real upswing in recent years only. Significant buildings that have survived America's relatively short history have been located, restored (often at considerable expense) and rendered accessible to the public. This is true, at least, of buildings connected with important personages or events. Examples of these efforts to preserve historical relics can be found virtually all over the United States. Among them there are some contrived phenomena too, for example, the wigs and costumes sported by the personnel of the Williamsburg reconstruction, or the pell-mell collection—almost surrealistic in its effect—of the works of art and buildings amassed with questionable taste by Henry Ford.

What surprises the historian of literature is the fact that—at least in California—American writers have been pushed into the background in monuments paying tribute to the past of the nation. It was in this vast state that a number of significant writers of the last century were born, here that they set out on their careers or worked; such figures as Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Jack London, Ambrose Bierce, Frank Norris, Robinson Jeffers, Joaquin Miller, Robert Frost, John Steinbeck—to mention only the best known among them. But they are not commemorated by any tangible tribute, such as a street named after them, a plaque on the house they lived in, or anything else. Only two British writers have been granted this distinction: the eighteenth-century philosopher-bishop, after whom Berkeley University is named, and Robert Louis Stevenson, whose stay at Monterey is commemorated by a small memorial museum. And among American writers only Whittier, a poet of the mid-nineteenth century, who was honoured by a small town in Southern California, which took his name. However, this was a tribute not to the poet's literary merits but to his abolitionist and Quaker views.

By no means do we want to say that the United States in general and California in particular do not keep in evidence, or fail duly to appreciate their most outstanding writers and poets in their lifetime. Far from

it! Every respectable American university has its own well-paid writer or poet-in-residence, a sort of modern poet laureate with the lightest possible of duties, a greatly appreciated cricket on the hearth. However, before the homes of dead American poets become places of pilgrimage, like Concord in Massachusetts or Abbotsford in Scotland, for example, quite a few decades will have to pass in California.

LÁSZLÓ PASSUTH

A HUNGARIAN WRITER IN SPAIN

The first answer I had to give in a radio interview in Madrid was how I had come to be interested in Spanish culture and literature, so remote from our own. I said that my childhood had been made beautiful by *Don Quixote*, and that when I began to work —with more and more passion—on pre-Columbian civilizations, I had to learn the language of the sixteenth century conquistadors and chroniclers. The first book I ever had published in a foreign language was the Spanish translation of "The Rain-God Weeps for Mexico," which appeared in Barcelona over twenty years ago. This was followed by the publication of four other novels of mine. The latest, entitled *El musico del Duque de Mantua* and dealing with the world of Monteverdi—came out during my stay there.

All this may explain why El Ateneo of Madrid invited me to Spain—the first Hungarian writer since the end of the war. This institution for the "sciences, art and literature" with tradition going back a hundred and fifty years, was founded after the Napoleonic era by progressive-minded intellectuals; and it has continued this tradition by representing the progressive trend in each and every change in Spanish politics. Today its library (300,000 volumes) is one of the best in Spanish-speaking countries with the great advantage that its reading-room is open to members—mostly young—up to two a.m. The palace, which housed it, was full of life and movement when, in mid-November 1966, I entered its front door, somewhat overawed.

When one arrives at the Spanish frontier by train one has to change, for the railway gauge is different. The traveller feels that he has entered a strange new world. The principal entrepreneur of the first Spanish railways about the middle of the nineteenth century was August de Crouy-Chanel, a close friend of Napoleon III, and a claimant to the Hungarian throne as an alleged descendant of the early Árpád dynasty. Once in the express which during an eight-hour journey took me across the countryside of northern Spain, I felt as if the great picture-book of Spanish history was unrolling before me. The train announcer broadcast magic words as we passed: Burgos (three minutes), Valladolid (two), Medina del Campos (where the train barely stopped).

*

I arrived in Madrid in sunshine, Sunday at noon. The city was like a slumbering giant.

My hotel has been named after Nuñez de Balboa, the first European to see the Pacific Ocean, not far from the home of a charming Hungarian family where Hungarians who are now Spanish subjects, meet on a Sunday. That very evening I had to face my baptism of fire, conversation in Spanish; the novelist

Ramon Solis, General Secretary of the Ateneo, was expecting me to dinner. Oh, those charming Spanish dinner parties! They start at about eleven o'clock, mostly in fascinating and typical Spanish restaurants with traditional and substantial menus, and are over at about two a.m. The first night I met some Spanish writers; none had even seen a Hungarian writer, let alone a Hungarian writer arriving straight from Budapest. The first contact with the warm and enchanting courtesy of the Spaniard, glowing with some inexplicable inborn elegance, was most engaging, framed as it was in the beauty and music of one of the great languages of the world. They welcomed me cordially and were very kind about my Spanish, "which is sometimes a bit Italianized." During the fortnight I spent in Spain I communicated with everyone exclusively in the language of the country, even those—many of the writers and intellectuals—who could speak French or English perfectly well.

That first night relieved me of my worst anxiety. The next morning I gave interviews and spoke on the radio. In Spanish. No wonder I was afraid, wandering among the pitfalls of a foreign tongue and giving unrehearsed answers in a live broadcast interview. The questions might have proved quite tricky, if we remember the ideological distances separating Budapest and Madrid. I have to thank my Spanish friends for their invariable kindness and tact, evidently innate, for it never failed. Never was I asked a question I would have found unpleasant to answer. All the interest was concentrated on matters of culture, particularly literature. Thus, in the capital of the "Spanish miracle," it was pleasant to report on our "Hungarian miracle"—our immensely rich treasure of literature, our publishing houses and the reading habits of our public.

*

As soon as I could I rushed to the Prado. It was three years ago that the final volume of my "Spanish trilogy" was published in Hungarian. The first—the Rain-God—tells the story of the conquest of Mexico, the second, "In Black Velvet" (in Spanish *El Señor Natural*), is a picture of the world of Philip II. The title of the last volume is "The Third Steward of the Royal Household" and centres on the figure of Diego Velázquez. With the exception of the fine "Bodegon" canvas in Budapest, and the Velázquez paintings in Vienna and London, I had only been able to study the pictures I wrote about in reproductions. The whole work of Velázquez did not come to more than eighty or ninety paintings altogether. More than half of them are in the Prado. (What particularly impressed me was the great composition of the *Capture of Breda.*) No reproduction comes near to the original. In this picture everything is alive, everything is a glitter. And together with it, in the other rooms, my other picture-friends. Great and famous paintings. Past the zenith of my years, for the first time in my life I could see them in all their beauty and reality; along with other treasures in the vast Prado—from the hardly known masterpieces of early medieval Spanish painting, through El Greco and Zurbaran to Goya, whose works fill perhaps as many as seven rooms there.

I gave a lecture in the Ateneo on "the historical novel," my specific field. Some two hundred and fifty people might have been there, sitting in the great hall of the Ateneo where, for about fifty minutes, I could listen to the sound of my own voice speaking Spanish. Who had come and why? Kind Hungarians who lived in Madrid—but they were in the minority. I came to be convinced that *El Dios de la lluvia llora sobre Mejico*, which had been in circulation in several editions over the past twenty years, was well-known enough to lure so great a number of Spaniards to the first autumn lecture of the famous institute. A Hungarian writer standing bowing in a great historic hall in Madrid, with portraits of Unamuno, Ortega, Pérez-Galdós, Jiménez, D'Ors, Marañon

and their great companions all around him on the walls—it still seems like a dream.

One of the leading arbiters of Spanish cultural life, Señor Robles-Piquer, the Director-General of the Ministry of Information, was present at the lecture, and invited me to dine with him two nights later at the Club de Prensa. The dinner at the Club de Prensa was perhaps the most interesting part of the welcome I was given. There were three Director-Generals there (representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Board of Books, the "Instituto Nacional del Libro") and three writers, in addition to myself. The youngest, the 24-year-old Jesus Torbado, had won the previous year's literary Grand Prix. The conversation revealed a warm interest on our literary life and organizations in Hungary, in which PEN was also mentioned. Its Hungarian centre—one of the first in the world—was founded some forty years ago. This interesting party ended with Robles-Piquer's kind phrase: "The gates of Spain are always open to you." It was a fine Spanish sentence, and to tell the truth, it touched the traveller's heart from far away.

My new Spanish friend, Raul Chavarri, showed me over the Instituto de la Cultura Hispanica, where he worked. This organization unites the 200-million Spanish-speaking people who live outside Spain. The Institute was very impressive, with varied branches of activity: in one of the rooms postgraduate girls from the Philippines were studying. The work of the Institute was supported by the existence of a magnificent museum, where I could see the originals of numerous pre-Columbian treasures and finds I had previously only known from books.

*

I treasure the memory of three excursions: Toledo, Segovia, the Escorial. Looking up from the motorway, for the first time I saw Toledo on a hill, the city in blood-brown and yellow of which I had written so much. I must admit that in actual fact El Greco's house is quite different, much smaller, more modest, than I thought. And the painting —*The Funeral of Count Orgaz*—is not half-hidden in Gothic dimness, but displayed in a light church, well illuminated, with comfortable seats ranged in front of it. The wealth of the Cathedral is overwhelming. In the vestry hang El Greco's paintings of the twelve apostles. Several were obviously based on the same man, who must have also been the model of the splendid apostle's head in the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest.

Segovia is a town built of yellow stone. The gigantic, untouched arches of the Roman aqueduct, about 600 yards in length, run through the heart of the town, with its many Romanesque buildings. The whole place has a close, rather fifteenth-century atmosphere. In the museum of its Alcazar I saw the first gun-barrel, cast in the middle of the fourteenth century.

The Escorial came into being by the will and autocratic taste of Philip II (a "Pharaoh," says the writer Eugenio D'Ors). From the outside—and from some distance away—it makes a single harmony. But seen from close by it gives the impression of a barracks, since the eye cannot take in its huge breadth and height. Here, too, was the same feeling of suspense: to see, at long last to see in reality the place where this enigmatic ruler lived, to see the adjustable armchair in which he used to sink, the armchair which was his sickbed, and from which he could gaze on the church... Yet somehow all the beauty of the interior could not overcome the essential frigidity of this monument conceived by Philip of Spain.

I spent the second half of my stay in Barcelona. After twenty-five years of correspondence I could at last embrace the publisher of five books of mine, Don Luis de Caralt —in the flesh. From the fine airport of Madrid the plane took me within an hour to a strange and peculiar world: to Catalonia. Here I was far less aware of the atmosphere of—shall I call it conformity?—which I felt

in the capital and in Castile in general. I heard plenty of critical remarks, all the more because my stay coincided with the promulgation of "the Organic Law." Here too I met fellow-writers whom I had known before. Most of them were Catalans: a hard race, faithful to their militant traditions. Quite a few of them were bilingual: writing partly in Catalan and partly in Spanish. I signed copies of my new books in the Casa del Libro, in the heart of the Catalonian capital. I was surprised to see the great number of books published in Catalan, and amazed at the pride in the hearts of those born and living in this most hard-working province of Spain. Their complaints about the suppression or abolition of the use of Catalan, in publishing and the press, on the wireless, in films and in the theatre came out here and there in the course of cautious conversations.

Barcelona is a much older town than Madrid; the people of Carthage sent their wares to its port. It was there, in a pretty little square, that Isabella and Ferdinand —the "Catholic" rulers—received Columbus on his return from the New World. The square lies in the old town, the Barrio Gotico, where history breathes from every building. Not a stone's throw away runs the famous Rambla of Barcelona, the great town thoroughfare, flanked with an avenue of trees and brilliant with flower markets and luxurious shops.

After the wireless interview I had another ordeal to face, an unrehearsed talk on television. The first—most unexpected—question was "Do Hungarian bridegrooms in Budapest present your books to their brides?" The Holy Ghost helped me: I was able to say that at home, where the size of editions is unbelievably high by western standards and the prices far lower than in Spain, books are quite frequently given as presents as a matter of course.

When once I had found my mental bearings, I felt that all we knew about Spanish life, its economic situation and its social problems, was some years out of date. Tourism which determines the foreign-exchange position of the country, has had a stimulating effect on Spanish life, which is expressed in certain measures of social welfare; but the cost of these measures falls upon the private entrepreneur, who attempts to pass it on to the public, thus raising the level of prices, and the differences in price, which in the past had made Spanish holidays so cheap for foreign tourists, are slowly levelling out.

I met also with the same sort of metropolitan "alienation" as in Paris or Milan. Maddening traffic, troubles about parking, restaurant prices unimaginably high for us, increasing luxury and a boom in flat building. For the most part, unfortunately, I only met employers, chiefly Hungarians, who complained about the costs of social welfare, but I also talked with a few employees, who said that in the past three to four years their economic position had improved.

There are a great many problems facing the Spanish people: the struggle between the traditional and the modern way of life; the emancipation of young people—and especially women—from the patriarchal organization of the family; the war of the generations, the greater part being played in politics by the younger generation—that generation for which—as Juan Goytisolo's fine novel *Duelo en el paraiso* reveals—the Guerra Civil, the terrible civil war of 1936–39, is mostly history.

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When, in the spring of 1945, after the siege of Budapest, which had lasted two months, we emerged from the cellars, I sent a telegram by the Red Cross to my Spanish publisher: "I have survived the deluge. What about my book?" Luis de Caralt sent a telegram in response: "The Rain-God is in the press." This was my first contact with the Spanish world. From that day I had longed to go there; even now it seems like

a dream that after twenty long and hard years I succeeded. My impressions of the world I visited are by no means black or white; they run through a gamut of colours, shades, and nuances. Undoubtedly differences are great between us and them—in structure, in the economic system, in historical views of the recent past, in the rhythm of development, in considering the future, and in the problems of constitutional law Spain will have to face and solve in a short time—too great to enable the visitor to obtain a clear and incisive picture during so short a stay. I was only a visitor to the country, and, in addition, a guest who had been very kindly received, and this imposes on me a debt of affection for that now distant country—and even more of its intellectual life—which had invited me to visit it, a country where I met so many readers of my works. But the classic image of the great Iberian historian still haunts me: according to Oliveira Martins, deep in the depths of Spanish earth, huge Cyclopses swing their sledge-hammers; their labour beats out the rhythm of Spanish life. Sometimes, without any visible reason, they stop working for several centuries. At such times the Spanish world runs to waste. Then, suddenly, and just as unexpectedly, they awaken, and their feverish and often revolutionary activity rouses the conditioned order of Spanish life to another rhythm. Was it on the threshold of just such a new period that I paid my first visit to Madrid and Barcelona in November 1966?

MIKLÓS KOVALOVSZKY

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON HUNGARIAN PHILOLOGY

Is it possible, or even necessary, to organize an international congress on so specifically national a subject as Hungarian philology, which is essentially confined to the limits of our country?

The international conference organized by the Institute of Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian Philological Society in Debrecen, from August 24 to 28, 1966, provided the answer. The theme of the congress was to be strictly Hungarian: "The History and Structure of the Hungarian language," but the participants gave it an international content. That was really what the organizing committee of the congress had intended to happen. Indeed, answers to the invitations sent off a year before had come in from places as far away as New York and Tokyo. Over forty scientists and scholars from abroad (among them twenty whose mother tongue is not Hungarian) announced their intention of coming, and sent in summaries of papers they planned to contribute, and the organizing committee sent out stencilled copies of these summaries in advance. About fifty foreign participants and members of their family came, or about the quarter of the total, and they added if not an atmosphere of Babel, at least a touch of colour and liveliness to the proceedings. Most of them came from Czechoslovakia, the United States and the Soviet Union, a few from Yugoslavia, Rumania, Poland, Finland, England, Sweden, Holland, France and the two Germanys. There are, of course, many more people abroad engaged, or interested, in Hungarian philology. And the greater part of the vis-

itors from abroad did not come simply to listen: 24 of the 110 papers were read by foreign members of the congress.

In the countries which are Hungary's immediate neighbours, especially in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania, there are a considerable number of Hungarians concerned to make full use of their right to preserve and foster the culture of their mother tongue. The practical requirements of education, the press, literature, economic production and social life require that a certain scientific attention is paid to the study of Hungarian and—because of the permanent influence of the official language of the country—the increasing need to cultivate the native tongue. In addition, endeavours are made to preserve local traditions: to record local dialects which, with the passage of time, merge into standard Hungarian and vanish.

The relatively small number of Hungarians in the Soviet Union is compensated by another important fact; excluding the Hungarians and Finns themselves, most of the other, minor, Finno-Ugrian peoples live there, thus making the Soviet Union one of the centres of Finno-Ugrian linguistics, which includes, of course, the study of Hungarian as well.

In addition to the Finno-Ugrian linguistic studies long established in Finland and in Sweden, a number of Western European countries, and even overseas, set up scientific institutes and university departments after the Second World War where, besides general Ural-Altaic and Finno-Ugrian studies, the Hungarian language was also studied both for practical purposes (teaching, information, documentation) and for theoretical reasons. The establishment of these centres was encouraged on the one hand by the increasingly keen international interest displayed during these years in Hungary, in the Hungarian people and, less directly, in the Hungarian language and, on the other, by the fact that many experts of Hungarian origin were now living abroad.

No less important is the fact that foreign specialists in Indo-European and exotic languages have discovered in Hungarian a lesser known language, different in character, origin and structure from all the other European languages, that is, an all but exotic language which offers the research worker the advantage of being an evolved language of Western civilization, and rich in written historic records, among the kindred Finno-Ugrian languages. It provides a wealth of material and interesting lines of research in general linguistics, language logic, semantics, typology and the structure of language. There are indications that an increasing number of philologists abroad are availing themselves of these opportunities, for the Hungarian language is a fresh source for them in general linguistic researches. Not only the Hungarian grammars published in foreign languages, but the language journals and other foreign-language publications of the Hungarian Academy, also provide valuable aid.

Apart from the plenary sessions, the congress also broke into four main groups under four main headings: (1) History of the Hungarian language (including the study of names, origin of language, the investigation and interpretation of old Hungarian texts); (2) Present-day Hungarian (including questions of grammatical categories and typology); (3) Hungarian dialects, including methods of collecting and recording; (4) Applied linguistics (maintaining the purity of the language, stylistics, teaching, computerized translation).

Most of the over one hundred lecturers were free to chose their subjects, and although some of them chose themes which were extraneous to their own special fields of interest, taken as a whole the papers read were typical of the interests engaging Hungarian philologists today. A summary of the papers reveals that studies are going on in most of these main special fields, though in some, like semantics, less than in others. The picture presented, however, is not really complete, for hardly any of the papers re-

ferred to subjects covered by the large-scale work already accomplished or going on in the Budapest Institute of Linguistics (the seven-volume Hungarian dictionary, language manuals, dialect dictionary, historical descriptive grammar, dictionary of synonyms). Not that this work was passed over in silence. The failure of specific papers to deal with this work was compensated at the plenary session by reports on the position and work of language studies in Hungary, including a factual account of the current activities of the Institute of Linguistics.

Although the congress papers in general covered contemporary trends in language studies perfectly adequately, they were characterized by conventional topics and theories. The final picture however revealed definite and considerable progress. As against the self-limiting positivist trend and particularly in matters of history, today we are increasingly concerned with theoretical and practical issues, though this interest in the historical aspect can also be found in the background of advanced studies in descriptive linguistics or, for example, of language cultivation today.

Among the papers read by foreign students of the Finno-Ugrian languages we would like to draw attention to those dealing with the problems related to Hungarian philological research and the teaching of Hungarian in the United States, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, England and Holland. It is only to be regretted that the notable researches into Hungarian philology conducted in Rumania were not reviewed at the congress since Rumanian scholars were unable to attend. Based on the considerable number of foreign, mostly African and Asian, students on scholarships studying in Hungary, one of the papers gave an account of some of the special differences between Hungarian and several other languages of completely different character and structure which had been observed, on how they had been overcome and adapted by the students' capacity to understand the logic and structure of the language.

It may be a little surprising that not more than four lectures dealt with language relations and interactions between Hungarians and the neighbouring peoples. One of them analysed Hungarian elements in the Slovak language, another spoke of the problems of bilingualism in the cultivation of Hungarian in Yugoslavia, and two papers were read on the reciprocal influences of Russian and Hungarian and Hungarian and Ukrainian respectively.

A number of foreign speakers dealt in some detail with questions of history, structure and grammar, while others—out of natural curiosity as outside observers and comparative linguists—concentrated on the typology of the Hungarian language. A few papers on more peripheral subjects are worth mentioning. One of them illustrated the formation of Hungarian speech sounds by means of an X-ray film with a sound-track made at Columbia University, New York. Another visitor from the United States spoke on "The predictability of interference phenomena in the English speech of Hungarians." In connection with the problems of electronic translation Soviet, Czechoslovak and Rumanian specialists dealt with various Hungarian language models.

The full text of the lectures delivered at the congress will be published in book form this year. The congress decided that a similar conference ought to be held at least every five years. The preparation and coordination of research plans should be entrusted to an international committee on Hungarian philology. This committee would arrange a regular exchange of information on the subject between specialists and scientific associations of different countries, the editing of bibliographies, the exchange of publications, and study tours of scientists and students.

TAMÁS SZECSKŐ

THE FRONTIERS OF SOCIOLOGY

Expansion or Change of Approach?

In opening the 6th World Congress of Sociology in Evian M. Raymond Aron not only referred to the French origin—the work of Auguste Comte—of the term "sociology"; he also pointed out—not without malice—that the word was a hybrid, composed of a Latin root and a Greek suffix. A hybrid like sociology itself, which from the start has had to engage in constant border clashes with philosophy and psychology in order to assert itself as a science in its own right. The subjects dealt with in sociological research are still marginal for the most part, belonging to the borderland between sociology, on the one hand, and economics, law, political science, philosophy or socio-psychology on the other. At the same time its methods are being influenced more and more of late by mathematics, mathematical statistics, cybernetics and information theory.

And after all, where are the frontiers of sociology? Whoever was expecting an answer to this question from the Evian Congress must have been disappointed. Among the 2,500 participants there were Piaget, the Swiss psychologist, the Soviet philosopher Konstantinov and a high-ranking Dutch army officer—a military sociologist. There were also observers from the Vatican. Nor did the papers that were read or submitted in writing make it any easier for an observer to get his bearings, for the subjects were almost as varied as are the problems in the life of modern society. With no wish to hunt down extremes, here are a few themes picked at random from among those heard at the congress: a simulation model of the Vietnam conflict, an analysis of the content of the late Sir David Low's political cartoons, problems of individual and collective free will, the reception in France of Japanese films, the procedure followed in taking decisions in the organizations for European integration, and disaster research in the U.S.

The organizers of the Evian Congress—the ISA, Unesco and the French Sociological Society—had in fact aimed at having a diversity of themes. The various subjects discussed at the Congress fell into two principal categories. One was called "Unity and Diversity in Sociology," and it found an almost symbolical interpretation in the other main line of inquiry, entitled "Sociology of International Relations." In itself the selection of these twin subjects was significant. For the growing diversity and increasing specialization in sociological research has been taking place not only because the twentieth century, an era of social and scientific revolutions, continually raises new problems, and not only because the achievements of sciences increasingly serve to enrich sociological thought, but also because sociology—like its more conventional sisters, economics and the political sciences—has become an international science. The results of this scientific expansion were closely reflected in the lectures and debates which took place during those pleasant early autumn days at Evian.

Four dimensions of expansion

Sociology is widening its frontiers in at least four directions, viz., the quantitative growth of the body of sociologists, the diversity of their scientific interests, and the extension of the frontiers of sociological research in time and in space.

The 1st World Congress of Sociology, in Zurich, 1950, was attended by about a hundred participants, whereas in Evian, in 1966, there were 2,500. And though this growth in the number of participants also reflects changes in the world situation, what the statistics mainly reveal is that in

most countries—and especially in highly industrialized societies—the number of people engaged in sociological research or applying the results of such research in practical activities has been growing rapidly: they now hold jobs and posts in every sphere, from the personnel departments of big companies to hospitals and schools, from government offices to military training camps or football club managements.

With regard to the widening of the range of scientific interest the most prominent feature is not the quantitative growth of research subjects, but the fact—and this was borne out, from several aspects, by lectures and debates at the Congress—that this growth has involved a shift of emphasis. International comparative enquiries are steadily gaining ground at the expense of research limited to a national scale; static analyses of social structure are increasingly being superseded by conflict-angled analyses of the dynamic processes that affect society; finally, sociological research in the field of labour is losing ground in favour of leisure-time sociological research.

Sociology, for many years regarded as a science of today, is beginning to strain at the barriers of time, trying to look into the future and back into the past. While only the initital symptoms of this trend were in evidence at Evian, the reasons already seem obvious. On the one hand, sociology is developing an awareness of history under the influence of scientific "injections" administered by history; on the other, the ever more frequent application of models—here too, mainly simulation models—is making it possible for it to try to conquer the future and the past as well. Let us add that this is as yet mainly a tendency towards "conquest" in a pejorative sense, and that there are still only sporadic instances of historical research or glances into the future that become "historical" even in a philosophical sense. The ethnological data are often treated as statistical raw material from which the sociologist takes a random model in an attempt to support his contemporary hypotheses, while simulation experiments are easily debased into mechanical extrapolations disregarding actual historical forces.

Most important, perhaps, is the change which results from the break-through in space—i.e., from the fact that sociology, a few decades ago still primarily a West European and American science, has developed into a truly international activity. The Evian Congress was the first international gathering of sociologists to be attended by large contingents from the socialist countries. (The Soviet Union, for instance, was represented by an 80-member delegation, and Hungary's included 17.) A delegate from the East—Professor Szczepanski of Poland—was elected Chairman of the International Sociological Association (ISA). There were a fair number of delegates from the Afro-Asian and Latin American countries.

This larger communion of sociologists marks the end of an era in the history of sociology: the post-World War II period, during which sociological thought was almost entirely conditioned by Anglo-Saxon—mainly U.S.—hegemony, and when at sociological congresses—to quote the words of a British scientist—"the minimum of intellectual consensus which is necessary before any useful exchange can occur was very largely provided through the dominant influence of American sociology, in spite of attacks against this. At Evian, where for the first time the Americans were outnumbered by sociologists from Eastern Europe, it proved no longer possible for discussion to be structured around the 'American' position."[1]

The international composition of the 6th World Congress of Sociology was accentuated by the fact that the papers and debates represented the first results of the international comparative enquiries mushrooming the world over. They cover such widely divergent themes as a balance-sheet of the

[1] J. Goldthorpe: "The Evian Failure." *New Society*, 22 Sept. 1966, p. 433.

leisure-time activities of town-dwellers of eight countries; a comparison of the party systems of Poland and India; an analysis of the social structure of Scandinavian countries. The actual results of these enquiries, important as they are, seem to be overshadowed by a lesson concerning method.

In his inaugural lecture, Professor René König, the retiring chairman of ISA, pointed out that, whereas the relationship between the sociologist and the evaluation provided by him—e.g., the way the personality and social status of the researcher determines the result of his work—had always been extensive and multifarious, the opening of the research process (the phase when the researcher observes and perceives the social phenomenon) had, by contrast, often been ignored. One might add that the question is whether the researcher observes and analyses the phenomena of society from the outside, i.e., from a lofty ivory tower, or from the inside, himself at the centre of things. Aloofness, as the experience gained in international comparative enquiries shows, is becoming more and more impossible, more and more absurd. "You can't make safari-researches in sociology," one professor declared to great applause at Evian, in an allusion to the "guaranteed safe and comfortable" African safaris organized for bored millionaires.

This thought brings us to the realization that sociology is a science—but a science with an ideological background; and one of the lessons drawn from Evian is that, either by implication or in so many words, the vast majority of participants expressed this idea. This was what the *Journal de Genève* reporter covering the congress had in mind when he said: "Thus the motto should not be 'an end to ideology', which infuriates Marxists, but 'beyond ideologies'."[2] Sociology, like the other social sciences, is therefore the hinterland of ideology.

[2] C. Monnier: "Comment peut-on être sociologue?, *Journal de Genève*, 6 Sept. 1966, p. 8.

The Hungarians at the Congress

One of the multinational comparative research projects that have aroused keen interest was prepared under the guidance of a Hungarian, Professor Sándor Szalai.* The "Multinational Time Budget Research" project, under the guidance of the European Coordination Center for Research and Documentation in Social Sciences, Vienna, relies on research work done in 16 scientific institutes of 11 countries, among them the Soviet Union as well as the U.S., Hungary as well as Belgium and Peru. The results, published at Evian, fill two bulky volumes, and the sheer size of the project (an illustrative exposition of materials alone occupied an entire floor of the Congress Hall) makes it impossible to give in this article even a brief summary. I must confine myself therefore to mentioning a few findings of what in a press release of the Congress was called "the most important comparative sociological research ever undertaken."[3]

It was found, for instance, that daily commuting to and from work in the cities under investigation—whether it be Jackson, U.S.A., or Győr, Hungary—averages an equal amount of time. It is interesting to learn that the mass communication media—radio and television—affect the time devoted to reading far less seriously than one would have expected. The time balance shows that listening to the radio is increasingly becoming a "secondary activity": people listen in while doing something else. Győr citizens listen in as a primary activity—i.e., doing nothing else meanwhile—for a daily average of only 10 to 12 minutes, although they have their radio turned on for nearly an hour.

The analysis of the discrepancy in the social status of men and of women is highly revealing. Statistics show that, in develop-

* Cf. "Differential Work and Leisure-Time Budgets as a Basis for Inter-cultural Comparison" by Sándor Szalai, *The N.H.Q.*, No. 16.

[3] 6th World Congress of Sociology: Press release No. 9.

ing as well as in economically advanced countries or areas, "the last state of human bondage—to use Bebel's expression—still persists, even if its burdens have been considerably lightened. That is to say, women are at a disadvantage compared with men: the working women because they are overburdened with work, the non-working women because their labours are underestimated and their existence is much more drab than that of the men."[4]

Some of the Hungarian papers dealt with this large-scale multinational research project, others contributed to the debates on the sociological problems of leisure. Zsuzsa Ferge attempted to outline the sociological difference between weekdays and holidays through an analysis of the statistics supplied by the time balance.[5] Miklós Szántó investigated the relationship between way of life and leisure-time;[6] and Ágnes Losonczi analysed the social components in the apperception of music.[7] Besides the Hungarian papers contributed to the committees on the sociology of religion,[8] law[9] and labour,[10] a lecture by András Hegedüs (director of the Sociological Research Group at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) on the Structural Criteria of Socialist Society met with considerable interest.[11] Hegedüs's hypotheses, which have given rise to a vehement controversy in the Hungarian sociological press, are based on the realization that, like other societies, socialist society is a stratified society, but here, contrary to capitalist society, ownership is no longer the most important strata-creating criterion. The place occupied in the communal division of labour is the most decisive determinant, with ownership and other criteria of secondary importance retaining, of course, their determinative function. On this basis, Hegedüs distinguishes three groups of factors shaping the social structure: independent variables (ownership, the place in the division of labour), complementing variables (domicile, educational level), and dependent variables (earnings, social prestige). The fact that the strata-creating criteria have a different authority and hence determine the social structure in a different manner than in pre-socialist societies, reflects the historical changes that have taken place. "The importance of the differences in ownership is greatly diminished by the fact that the delimitation of the members of society according to ownership relations is not valid for their whole life; in the case of state and cooperative ownership, the change is no more than a change of job. Take the case of a tractor driver at a machine station going back to work at the cooperative; or of a lorry driver in a cooperative going to work for a state enterprise."

This is not to say that a state of equality has been reached in the socialist societies. In the historically determined system of communal labour "there still remain essential differences—above all with respect to the place occupied in the division of labour—which act as independent variables, criteria marking distinct social strata (e.g., the differences between manual and non-manual occupations, or between those directing and those being directed, etc.)"

"Thus, with the creation of socialist relations of production, the criteria which were earlier pushed into the background come to the fore and the 'value' structure of the cri-

4 *The Multinational Comparative Time Budget Research Project* (Report prepared by S. Szalai, S. Ferge, C. Goguel, V. Patrushev, H. Raymond, E. Scheuch, and A. Schneider.) Vol. 1, p. 32.

5 S. Ferge: *Jours de semaine et dimanche dans la vie des hommes et des femmes* (Hungarian Papers for the 6th World Congress of Sociology in Evian)

6 M. Szántó: *Way of Life, Cultural Activities, Leisure Time. (Ibid.)*

7 Á. Losonczi: *Social Characteristics of Apperception of Music. (Ibid.)*

8 I. Varga: *Secularization of Hungarian Youth. (Ibid.)*

9 K. Kulcsár: *Ricerche di sociologia del diritto in Ungheria.* Milan, 1966.

10 A. Hegedüs and M. Márkus: *The Process of Humanization of Labour in a Socialist Society and Identification with Work.* (Hungarian Papers, etc.)

11 A. Hegedüs: *The Place Occupied in the Division of Labour as the Most Important Determinant of Social Structure in Socialism. (Ibid.)*

teria establishing social strata are also necessarily transformed. This should be regarded as a natural process accompanying the liquidation of social classes, which takes place whether we are aware of it or not."[12]

Dynamism of conflicts

The lectures and contributions of researchers from the socialist countries enlivened the debates on macrosociological problems. Numerous non-Marxist sociologists, however, also made dynamic and significant contributions to the congress. For instance, Professor Eisenstadt of the University of Jerusalem, speaking at one of the plenary meetings, pointed out that "the greatest challenge to sociology is the need to investigate the way traditional societies are transformed into modern ones. To achieve this, we need to do more than just point out the divergence between the parameters of the two social systems... In other words, the conventional, typological, approach is inadequate. What we want to do is analyse the way a new system, a new pattern of parameters emerges from the one that precedes it." S. M. Lipset, on the basis of his own empirical researches, unwittingly supplied proof to the effect that little by little the conventional, static macrosociological approach is becoming untenable even in social practice. Lipset claims that the American New Left flatly rejects the social sciences; it sees an irreconcilable conflict between the image of revolutionary, activist man on one hand and the image of man as projected by sociology—or at least American sociology—on the other, considering the former as being free and the latter as entirely subject to manipulation. As the subsequent debate made clear, however, this attitude, far from being a general aversion to sociology on the part of young American intellectuals, is merely a protest against a certain school of sociological thought, that of structural functionalism, which holds an absolute monopoly in the U.S. The works of the late C. Wright Mills, for instance, are currently having a real renaissance in the States, largely within these same social strata.

The desire to evolve a more realistic—more historical and dynamic—image of man and view of society was expressed almost universally in nearly every working committee and round-table debate of the 6th World Congress. This dynamic tendency was aided by the fact that here for the first time "conflict research"—a new branch of sociology—laid its findings before a large international scientific forum. Among the eight working committees devoted to the "sociology of international relations," two (on "conflict research," headed by Professor R. C. Angell of Michigan University, and on "Strategic thinking," headed by Professor A. Etzioni of Columbia University) devoted their attention specifically to these studies, while lectures and debates on the same subjects were held in four other committees.

Sociologists engaged in conflict research look upon international political events—and what's more, of late, upon developments on the social scene in general—as a succession of conflicts, with every solution followed by the rise of fresh conflicts *ad infinitum*. In their analysis of these conflicts they employ highly formalized models (often clothed in a garb of figures), mostly simulation models that best suit the aims of their research. Far more important than the specific method they employ, however, is the fact that their attitude may be regarded as a form of reaction to structural functionalism: an attempt to break through the limitations of the social balance view of that particular school of sociology. In theory, they stand close to Dahrendorf's critique of social balance theories (and, in particular, to Talcott Parsons), which suggests that the "social balance" model is essentially utopian, and that a model based on social conflict should be evolved as against a model that views con-

[12] A. Hegedüs: *(Ibid.)*

flicts as a "pathological" departure from social norms.[13] These ideas were frequently voiced during the debates by the working committees of the Evian Congress. There were suggestions that "conflict research tries to find ways of enabling us to recognize conflicts and to live with them" as well as lectures endeavouring to break through the wall of structural functionalism with the aid of conflict research.

As the debates proved, we are presently witnessing a situation that has frequently occurred in the history of science and is now repeating itself in the case of conflict research: having come into being on a strictly empirical basis, and working with up-to-date mathematical forms, it is faced, at a certain phase of its development—and precisely to ensure its further development—with the need to find certain foundations for its theories. As the foregoing clearly shows, it has been trying in vain to find these foundations in structural functionalism. We can but declare ourselves in perfect agreement with Professor John Rex of Durham University, who, in an article written shortly after the Evian Congress, says: "Whereas previously quantitative methods were developed largely in the context of market research, for which the concept of interaction was not central, much recent work has derived from conflict research, which, though it may take a mathematical form, does take the 'double contingency' of interaction situations seriously. This sort of mathematical theory cannot proceed very far without some sort of engagement with the classic tradition. Hence it is not surprising that, among those who welcome the revolution in research technique which has taken place, there are those who are insisting that the questions which are fed into the computer should be sociologically significant."[14]

13 Cf. R. Dahrendorf: *Gesellschaft und Freiheit*, Munich, 1961, pp. 107–127.

14 J. Rex: "Which Path for Sociology?" *New Society*, 6 Oct. 1966, p. 529.

Diversity and search for theory

It emerges from Professor Rex's article that by "classic tradition" he means the work of Comte, Marx, Spencer, Durkheim and Weber. The editors of *New Society* illustrated the article with the following—highly revealing—photo-montage: A sociologist is shown operating a computer, and on the tape that is twisting out of the apparatus there appears a portrait of Karl Marx. Modern sociology, employing empirical instruments polished to clockwork precision, is more and more often reverting to Marx and the categories of the Marxian analysis of society. "At the congress, we witnessed a remarkable Marx revival," wrote András Hegedüs soon afterwards. "Interpretation of the Marxian concept was a constantly recurring theme and sociologists from the West displayed extraordinary interest in it, often showing themselves to be as well versed in the subject as their colleagues from the socialist countries."[15] Hegedüs adds that in western sociology this tendency acquires a different meaning and varying intensities, according to the particular school—and, sometimes, even to the individual scientist.

Whatever the degree of intensity or the nature of this tendency to revert to Marx—and to classic sociology in general—it proves beyond doubt that the pattern and thought system of sociology, which a decade ago, mainly as the result of the influence of American schools, showed grave symptoms of arterio-sclerosis, is once again becoming more elastic, more dynamic. Thus, the four-dimensional expansion I have outlined is not only resulting in an expansion of the frontiers of sociology, but is beginning to mould its very structure and shape its outlook. More and more of the great post-World War II "generation of empiricists" are being supplanted by researchers with greater susceptibility to theoretical questions and a keener

15 A. Hegedüs: "*'Kelet' és 'Nyugat' szociológusainak találkozója.*" *Élet és irodalom*, 1 Oct. 1966, p. 5.

eye for the totality of social reality. Paradoxically, even the great popularity of multinational comparative research—with an empirical starting-point—is due to the fact that comparisons of different social systems offer the possibility of a more dynamic and historically more accurate analysis than has been practised hitherto and call for categories so universal (nothing short of universal could be applied to societies with divergent characteristics) that they come close to appearing as theoretical abstractions, playing the part of a "substitute" for theory.

The expansion and structural changes of sociology, it goes without saying, raise some organizational problems too; that is the reason why at Evian, the Executive Committee of the International Sociological Association almost found itself in Laocoon's predicament. ISA, called into being fifteen years ago as a temporary expedient designed mainly to convene international congresses, is now finding the organization and coordination of the world's sociologists and the researches that proliferate everywhere more than it can handle. There were those at Evian who suggested that ISA be reorganized into a federation of regional—American, European, and "Third World"—associations. Others proposed decentralization into specialized associations according to fields of research. Others again called for an extension of the interval between two full-scale world congresses from the present three or four years to six, with one or two special or regional conferences to be held during the intervening period, since the sheer proportions of an international congress such as the one at Evian threaten to paralyse it. A definitive resolution on these matters failed to be taken: the Executive Committee postponed the decision.

In evaluating the theme of "Unity and Diversity in Sociology," the Evian scales were thus tipped in every respect towards "diversity." This has caused several scientific commentators writing since the Congress to voice fears for the future of sociology. Such fears are justified only if sociology is conceived of as being a monolithic entity. The history of science shows, however, that artificially maintained unity and scientific isolationism result in science's becoming atrophied. The Evian debates enable us to be confident that such a dire end is not in store for sociology.

ARTS

RECENT EXHIBITIONS

Not for a long time have we had so rich and varied a season of exhibitions as in the autumn of 1966. So many comprehensive shows, exhibitions of artists' groups and high standard one-man shows followed one another that even just to list them would require a lot of space. That is why we can only manage to discuss a few comprehensive and a few retrospective shows.

Vásárhely and Szolnok art

The exhibition of the Szolnok artists' group was held in the Hungarian National Gallery in Budapest almost at the same time as that of the Hódmezővásárhely artists in the János Tornyai Museum there. Both artists' colonies have an important part to play in twentieth-century Hungarian art. Their aims too are related, but the work of the Hódmezővásárhely group is more mature and of a higher artistic quality.

Though the latter artists' colony has been in existence for less than a decade and a half, "Vásárhely art" has several decades' part to look back upon. Not only does it embrace the artists working at Hódmezővásárhely, a market-town in the south of the Great Plain, but also those artists working in the Tiszazug region, the area around the confluence of the Tisza and Maros rivers. Their art reveals a great many similarities both in form and in spirit. The "Vásárhely school," however, is closely linked with a specific landscape and with the ethnical and ethical characteristics of the people living there. The atmosphere of the Tiszazug area, the characteristic, mauve mist of the flood-lands and their contrast with the sharp outlines of the white-washed, dazzling cottages point to the fact that here the landscape itself hides some quality suitable for reviving Munkácsy's traditions, in a more contemporary variant. The Hódmezővásárhely artists have further developed Mihály Munkácsy's romantic realism but have increasingly discarded the elements of genre painting. János Tornyai, one of the few pupils Munkácsy ever had, was the first master of the Hódmezővásárhely school to exert a marked influence upon his fellow-painters. He turned the artistic idiom and spirit of Munkácsy's painting towards expressiveness, although in his art expressive conciseness clashed with the illustrative approach of genre painting. However, József Koszta, who worked among the scattered farmsteads of Szentes, a small town in the vicinity of Hódmezővásárhely, overcame the limitations of genre painting and created a passionate style of his own, based on the plebeian and barbaric contrast of light and dark colours. The art of Tornyai and of Koszta is the pillar of the "School of the Great Plain," which played such an important role in twentieth-century Hungarian painting. Hódmezővásárhely art is the strongest branch of the "School of the Great

Plain," but nevertheless the younger generation of Hódmezővásárhely artists turned away from romantic realism, or rather from its development, into the direction of expressionism. The art of György Kohán and of István D. Kurucz forms a bridge between the generations of Tornyai and Koszta and the endeavours of the young artists of today. Kohán is an artist of monumental inspirations, who is imbued with the spirit of twentieth-century constructive styles but has also been influenced to some extent by Vilmos Aba-Novák's decorative art. His painting can best be compared with the trends of modern Mexican mural painting. In the tense austerity of István D. Kurucz's landscapes and pictures of the life of the peasantry, the romantic expressiveness of the "School of the Great Plain" has also been toned down. His great formative influences were the frescoes of the quattrocento. He stopped painting in oils, a technique offering pictorial solutions, and began to produce his deliberately composed pictures, neo-primitive in their approach, with tempera.

While preserving the plebeian-democratic spirit and the folk-art inspiration of the "School of the Great Plain," the latest generation has pursued paths leading to a sterner shaping of style. As a result of their activity Hódmezővásárhely art came to be organized into a veritable "School" of painting which produced minor artists, those painters one associates with art schools, who nearly always repeated the stylistic ideas in merely their outer form and in doing so reiterated as it were hackneyed phrases. At present the art of József Németh and of Ferenc Szalay respectively form the two points of focus of this specifically Hódmezővásárhely style. In the art of both of them the themes and symbols of peasant life assert their claims in a generalized way. The former extends the horizon and the possibilities of the "Vásárhely School" towards a summarizing, homogeneous style, partly inspired by the mythical, while the latter strives in one direction towards the realism of Verism and in another towards classicism. At the autumn show of the Hódmezővásárhely artists, which was the thirteenth held by the colony, József Németh was the one who exhibited a painting of outstanding merit, the "Vásárhely Madonna." In this painting the economical construction of space and mass is felicitously blended with decorative summarizing. The composition unites the mother and child theme with the motif of a *pietà*, for the woman's left hand protects and blesses at the same time. Expressing primeval emotions in the clear terms of an emblem, this picture represents the best aspect of the "Vásárhely School" by uniting folk traditions with its pictorial principles originating from Gauguin.

However, not only those artists who have settled down in the town exhibited their work in the annual autumn shows of Hódmezővásárhely, but those too who have been to the place and feel close to a town and countryside that provide such artistic inspiration. Among these we can mention Béla Kondor* and János Orosz** who, along with Németh, put on show the most exciting pictures of the exhibition. With his graphic works, in which the elements of constructivism and surrealism are blended, the name of Béla Kondor, who won a prize at the Tokyo Biennale of Graphic Arts in 1964 and, having been invited to the Lugano Biennale of Graphic Arts, scored a great success there last year, is becoming internationally known. In Hungary too he is considered to be primarily a graphic artist, because—despite the fact that he is only thirty-five—he has created a new school in this field. And yet he is a first-class painter too, and his "Clown," shown at the Autumn Exhibition of Hódmezővásárhely, is one of the great works of contemporary Hungarian art. He is now able to realize also in colours the ethereal nuances that until now mainly characterized

* See "Béla Kondor, the Painter" in No. 17 of The N.H.Q.

*** See "Two Exhibitions" in No. 12 of The N.H.Q.

his delicately vibrating, meaningful drawings. In this painting again he is a sovereign master of symbols and explores layers of the human soul to a depth which very few twentieth-century artists could reach.

Up to now we have known János Orosz to be a talented artist, although for a long time his art lacked the flavour of individuality. It was only a fairly long study tour in Italy that led to a turning point. His painting "Sun, Moon and Animals," on show at Hódmezővásárhely, represents his style and symbolism, which are growing more and more individual. The world of his symbols springs from folk myths like those of García Lorca or of the contemporary Hungarian lyric poet, László Nagy. His colours are fresh, his composition deliberate.

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As already mentioned the aims of the Szolnok artists' colony are in several respects identical with those of Hódmezővásárhely, since both sprang from Munkácsy's traditions, and from the "School of the Great Plain." Their sources of inspiration are also related, namely the themes of peasant life and the natural beauty of the Tisza river landscape. For Szolnok lies on the Tisza, although its character and atmosphere differ from the singular world of the Tiszazug region. Thus, the two colonies have quite a few features in common, but the paths they have taken in the history of art differ: Hódmezővásárhely is much more important than Szolnok. This cannot be explained simply by the difference in talent working there; indeed, there are a great many talented artists in the Szolnok colony too (Ferenc Berényi, Sándor Baranyó, etc.), and perhaps the present members of the artists' colony will succeed in creating an independent art for Szolnok. But for the time being the term "Szolnok art" as against that of "Hódmezővásárhely art" is nothing more than a geographical definition, without a specific ethos or artistic idiom. Yet it has a longer past to look back upon than Hódmezővásárhely, for —following the example of the Nagybánya artists—Szolnok was organized as an artists' colony as early as the turn of the century; even before that, it had been discovered by the Austrian painter Pettenkofen, an artist related in spirit to the Barbizon painters, and then, at the end of the nineteenth century, by the painters of genre pictures who had been trained in Munich. The plein-air painter and realist Adolf Fényes worked there for several years, and László Mednyánszky, the strange genius of Hungarian painting at the turn of the century, also had connections with Szolnok. It was the favourite haunt of Vilmos Aba-Novák, who depicted in bright colours and with grotesque figures the popular fairs and circuses.

Retrospective show of Bertalan Pór's paintings

One-man exhibitions presenting all the works of a single artist lent interesting patches of colour to last year's autumn season. The National Gallery displayed the *œuvre* of Bertalan Pór, who died two years ago. Pór took part in the avant-garde struggles of Hungarian painting. He began his career as a painter of realistic portraits and had already made his name when he joined the Group of the Eight, the first modernist painters' group in Hungary. He played a leading part in the art life of the Hungarian Council Republic in 1919. Between the two world wars he lived in exile, chiefly in Paris, where he produced a series of graphic works with the symbols of bull and herdsman as their central motif. Thus he played an important role in progressive Hungarian art; yet, his *chef-d'œuvres* are the portraits painted at the beginning of the century. No sooner had he chosen the path of the moderns than he became uncertain. His 1909 composition entitled "Family" held out the hope of great possibilities; it could have become the "Demoiselles d'Avignon" of contemporary Hungarian painting, but later on the clear

line he pursued began to waver. In the 1910's he did monumental designs. In them, however, genuine monumentality was replaced by a surfeit of muscles and flesh. These figures of symbolic and often allegorical meaning looked like oversize nudes by Signorelli. It is interesting to note that at the same time similar features were appearing not only in Pór's art but also in the work of Fülöp Ö. Beck, one of the leading figures in modern Hungarian sculpture. The art historian Károly Lyka called this phenomenon an "extravagance of flesh." These colossi of muscles in Bertalan Pór's designs are odd formations of the Hungarian *art nouveau*. In the inter-war period Bertalan Pór's *œuvre* was much more unequivocal. His series of graphic works with symbolic beasts properly belong to the sphere of expressionism.

The Gulácsy memorial exhibition

The memorial exhibition of Lajos Gulácsy, one of the most remarkable figures of Hungarian *art nouveau*, was staged at Székesfehérvár. Essentially Gulácsy's art is a somewhat belated Hungarian variant of Pre-Raphaelitism, despite its individual style. To escape his own turbulent age the painter, who had suffered a grave psychosis, took refuge in the Middle Ages and the Rococo period. He created a weird dream-world, a city beyond this earthly existence, called "Naconxipan," which he peopled with his heroes—the secret love of Dante and Beatrice and characters born from his fantasy. He had been to Paris, but he liked roaming over Italy best of all, where in towns still reflecting the atmosphere of the Middle Ages he imagined he was living in bygone centuries. He felt a stranger in his own age, which frightened him. The existentialist worries of hectic modern life ruined his nerves. He kept on running away from this life, and the dream-land he had created, a country ruled by the reality of dreams, offered shelter. He painted the scenery and figures of this imagined town, and that with a curiosity adumbrating secret symbols. The very titles of his paintings are characteristic: "The Mulatto and the Statue-White Woman," "The Magician's Garden," "Dream of an Opium Smoker," etc.

In the years of the First World War the spirit of Gulácsy's art underwent a change. His sensitive nerves were crushed by the terrors of war, his anguish and fear grew out of all proportion and became the persecution mania of paranoia. Compelled by his visions he painted over several pictures he had done before: female bodies, glimmering behind a veil of mist, and underwater visions whirled in his pictures, silvery in their colours, pastel-like and soft. These pictures are related to the symbolism of the end of the century, to the *art nouveau* symbols of Odilon Redon, Alfred Kubin and Fernand Khnopff. By the end of his life he had become completely deranged, and finished up in a lunatic asylum, where he later died. His painting is the finest product of the branch of Hungarian *art nouveau*, reminiscent of English *art nouveau*. Moreover, his visions, coloured by his psychosis, represent symbolism in its ability to pave the way to surrealism.

Jenő Barcsay's constructivism

The exhibitions of Pór's and Barcsay's art threw light upon Hungarian painting in the early twentieth century. Jenő Barcsay's one-man show, held at the Ernst Museum in Budapest, presented the best known Hungarian master of constructivism.

At the start of his career Jenő Barcsay* was influenced by the art of István Szőnyi and of his professor at the Academy, Gyula Rudnay, who represented the "School of the Great Plain" and created realistic paintings mingled with romanticism. Barcsay came into direct contact with the painters of the Great Plain and also worked at Hódmező-

* See "Jenő Barcsay's Art" in No. 15 of The N.H.Q.

vásárhely. However, during his study tours to Paris in 1926 and 1929 he discovered Cézanne and Cubism, and from that time on his course took a turn towards more and more modern, constructivist solutions. The fact that from 1929 on he has worked at Szentendre, a quaint town on the Danube, has but aided him in his endeavours.

Barcsay's art is unthinkable without Szentendre, for this place, just like Hódmezővásárhely, the character of which has already been analyzed—possesses an atmosphere that can create and determine art. Szentendre is a happy mixture of a village, a small town and a holiday resort. It is blessed with the Danube, with an island of the Danube, with the range of the Pilis hills rising behind the town and with unspoilt Baroque remains; all these features, with the meandering streets climbing up the hillside lend the place an Italian, a Mediterranean character. It is near Budapest, its population consists of numerous different groups: people commuting to Budapest, workers of the local factories, agricultural workers, market gardeners, Danube bargees and fishermen. And all this is to be found in a small town easy to survey, a place where essential elements are clustered, where the surviving art monuments are not lost amidst non-artistic shoddy buildings but strike the right note. It is a homogeneous world, not only suitable for being surveyed artistically—internally and externally—but calling for it.

Of course, the town influenced the artists living there in different ways. For Lajos Vajda,* the leading member of the surrealist group of the Szentendre School, motifs inspiring myth were essential. In Barcsay's art Szentendre appears in advance like some reality ready-made for the painter. The basis of Barcsay's constructivist period is the projection on a plane of something already fashioned and determined in space. This pictorial metamorphosis is more difficult when a primary landscape of nature is to be painted, unless it is a hilly country, seen from a distance and radiating plastic forms. In the enclosed world of Szentendre the motifs have emerged and become formed at the outset. No longer do the town, the walls of the houses constitute space, no longer are the fences and churches offered as mere raw material: they afford ideal possibilities for abstracting pure formulae of shapes and their further logical development. It is not at all by chance that L'Estaque, La Roche-Guyon, Carrières-Saint-Denis, Horta de Ebro and Horta de San Juan played such significant roles in the emergence of Cubism: the spatial arrangement geometrically determined and made up of cubic houses of Mediterranean hillside towns both worked as determinants and offered possibilities. At Szentendre the situation was somewhat different. Barcsay did not merely rediscover the principles of Cubism. The rich Baroque remains of Szentendre, the characteristic Baroque gables and the decorativeness of the portals left their mark on his constructivism. The odd blend of geometrical spatiality with layers of decorative planes became one of the dominant features of his pictorial metamorphosis.

From the 'thirties onwards Barcsay's artistic career has pursued a logical, straight line. At first his constructivism was coupled with an internal dynamism. This early period is characterized by heavy contrasts, by impasto painting and by a geometrical order of prismatic forms that suggest spatial depth. Later on the expressive elements were replaced by a closed and massive calmness. Severe geometrical forms, oblongs and a network of black contours came to the fore during the 'forties. Hsi constructivism verged on non-figurative art but not even in his most abstract periods did Barcsay drift away from material reality, from materialism.

In the latest period Barcsay's art grew more lyrical. He continued his series of Szentendre, a pictorial transposition of characteristic local motifs, of still lifes composed from the equipment of his studio; all the time his painting covered the distance

* See "The Search for the Archetypal Form" in No. 23 of The N.H.Q.

between the motifs of nature and non-figurative construction. Colours serving to interpret emotions have now been given their full rights as decorative elements. The dramatic black and white austerity of previous pictures is replaced by warm and soft colours: deep browns, ochres and enamel-like, glowing reds, blues and yellows. In his small-scale paintings the beauty of the texture has been endowed with special emphasis. Though he has again approached non-figurative art, these pictures are not as expressive as those painted in the 'forties; they are, rather, lyrical transpositions.

Designs for monumental figure compositions play a highly important role in Barcsay's *œuvre*. As early as his constructivist period the idea of a frieze with monumental female figures occurred to him. In recent years he was able to realize these designs in monumental mosaics. (Technical University of Miskolc, National Theatre of Budapest.) His figures have something of the primordial power of Henry Moore's Fatal Sisters; however, in these large-scale mosaics Barcsay was engrossed mainly in the relations of form: the oneness of plane-space and form, their analysis and synthesis. These works can be considered a summation of his entire *œuvre*.

Ceramics of István Gádor

Barcsay is one of the greatest personalities of contemporary Hungarian painting and his effect on the young generation of artists is very great indeed. With respect to Hungarian applied arts the same holds good for the ceramist István Gádor,* whose comprehensive one-man show was staged at the Ernst Museum before the Barcsay exhibition. There is scarcely any young Hungarian ceramist in the first rank who would not consider Gádor to have been his master. This was proved by the show itself, because the material was completed by the well selected material of his best pupils, who by now have become mature artists in their own right.

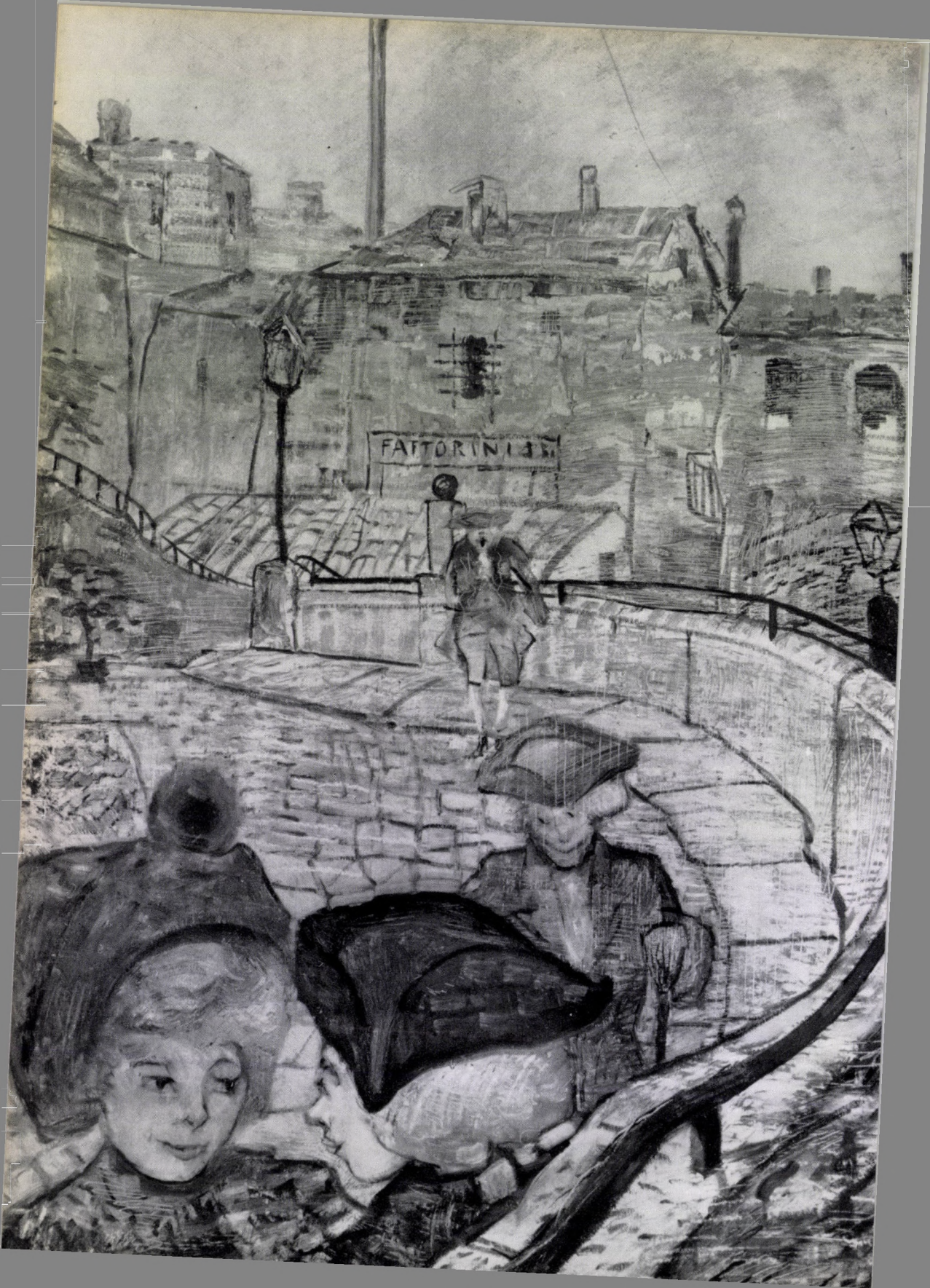
The start of Gádor's artistic career coincided with the development of Hungarian ceramic art in the early 'twenties. He set out from his creative work in arts and crafts and followed the period of the *art nouveau;* then he adopted some elements of expressionist plastic art and particularly the characteristics of Negro sculpture, which became widely known at the beginning of the century. At the same time he was among the first artist craftsmen to turn for inspiration to the art of the Haban (Anabaptist) potters, who had played so vital a part in the history of Hungarian folk pottery and of Hungarian applied arts. But he did not look for the oddities of folklore, and was diametrically opposed to the phoney primitiveness of imitated folk art. He wanted to understand the spirit of peasant art in the same way that he had tried to understand the spirit of Negro plastic art. He kept abreast with his own age and with the new achievements of modern plastic art; Hans Arp's abstract fashioning of space was as interesting for him as was the plastic possibility offered by positive-negative forms. But these achievements were always realized within the possibilities provided by the medium of ceramics and in a way corresponding to the individual logic of Gádor's art.

Although the autumn show afforded a retrospect of Gádor's whole *œuvre*, the bulk of the works exhibited were produced in the last few years. They reveal that even now, in his seventies, the artist is incessantly striving for new technique and form. His wall plaques in ceramics are completely individual in their idiom; his novel dishes represent attempts at uniting enamel and glass with ceramics; his non-figurative garden decorations, playful and original, show an unflagging creative spirit. In Gádor's works modern Hungarian ceramic art has risen to an international level but has, at the same time, preserved its national flavour.

LAJOS NÉMETH

* See "The Ceramics of István Gádor" in No. 6 of The N.H.Q.

LAJOS GULÁCSY:
FORTUNE-TELLER.
OIL

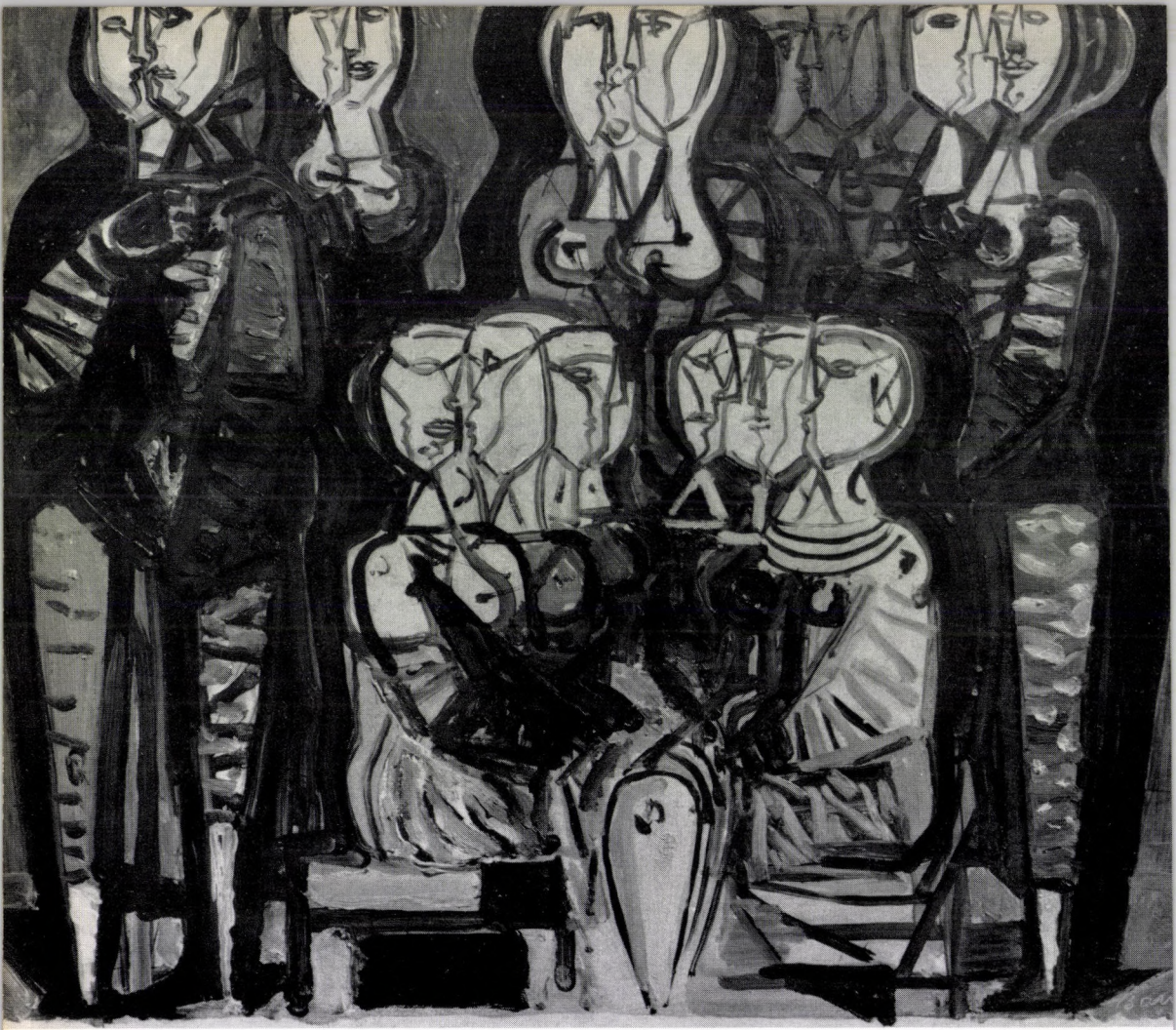

FATTORINI

Bertalan Pór: Portrait of the Poet Endre Ady. Charcoal

◂ Lajos Gulácsy: Sunday Afternoon at Como (detail)

BÉLA KONDOR:
CLOWN.
OIL

JÁNOS OROSZ
SUN, MOO
AND ANIMAL
OIL-TEMPER



Jenő Barcsay: Composition. Oil

Jenő Barcsay: House with Cross. Oil

István Gádor: The Cock. Ceramic

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

THREE SHORT STORY COLLECTIONS

What is the writer up to?

The question—strange as it may sound—is not put by the critic this time but by the interested party, the writer Iván Mándy, in the epilogue to the latest volume of his stories, called *Walk Round the House*. This is in the nature of a confession and a reminiscence. And the answer to the question "What is the writer up to?" is this: "Strange as it may sound, writing. According to the dictates of his talents." The *raison d'être* of the epilogue is to define these dictates as closely as possible. Exercising an unsparing objectivity the author comes in the end to reject aesthetic rules alien to his talent. "Neither plot, nor fantasy, nor observation. There remains the world inside. And whatever of one's experiences have gone into it."

The artistic creed of the writer György Moldova is diametrically opposite: "For all we know literature may have begun with a group of savages squatting round and gazing into a fire while one of them told lies. He was the writer. Since then literature has been encrusted with the enamel of philosophy, pedagogy and other scholarly concerns, and it has been exiled to the depths of libraries. However, the primordial source—the living tale—is still flowing on uninterrupted from story-teller to audience."

Iván Mándy, summing up the rules of his own talent, is this side of fifty. György Moldova, listening to and spinning yarns, has just passed thirty. The third author, István Örkény, whose new collection of stories may appropriately be reviewed with theirs, is older than Mándy, and yet he says of himself introducing this volume: "I have passed fifty, but I am still living in the period of experiment. I know that this is not a healthy state. Other people go about it by exploring their particular domain when they are young and finding for themselves the form that suits them, that is, their style. From then on they write good, bad and indifferent stuff depending on person, time and method. It is then said that they have found themselves. Why I have not found myself I haven't the slightest notion. Perhaps I merely did not want to... My method of yesterday may have become outmoded by today, what is good today will not be so tomorrow."

More divergent, more antithetical views would be hard to find even if one deliberately searched for them. And yet the three volumes are brought together by more than the mere coincidence of publication. I believe that these three acknowledged practioners of the art of the short story are linked together by certain ideas and attitudes shared in common.

As with all affinities, this kinship too is conspicuously rooted in the past. Of the two fountainheads or main currents of twentieth-century Hungarian literature, the one that has predominated and proved more attractive is popular, peasant realism, the road of Zsig-

mond Móricz. The three writers under review, however, took at the outset the less well-defined, at places discontinuous, but none the less traditional road, which for simplicity's sake we usually call metropolitan (with a Hungarian term of Latin origin *urbánus*) in contradistinction to the peasant populist road. As against the provincial character of Hungarian letters, dominant up till the nineteenth century, the more urbane asserting itself from about the turn of the century did not mean simply a town-centred outlook in literature but rather a revolt against provincialism and parochial views of life and art. In fact, together with the discovery of urban man's cares and feelings, and his poetry, it brought a growing orientation towards the more urbanized West. In the 'thirties—after the fiasco of a bourgeois and the overthrow of a proletarian revolution—all this assumed a different aspect, but the polarization of literature, the metropolitan and populist tendencies, were thrown into even greater relief. The former became historically important chiefly because it rejuvenated prose writing. Parallel with the populist school which explored reality, the metropolitan school worked out experimentally a more indirect, more impressionistic, more fairy-tale-like and grotesque, more "airy" kind of representation. One could imagine Iván Mándy figuring among the masters of Moldova only fifteen years his junior, since Moldova continues the same legend-saving and exploratory work that Mándy began, and by now has become more susceptible to intellectual problems, having left behind the vacant lots of the slums. Sometimes he dons the outgrown paraphernalia of classic romanticism and is for a while delighted by them. Örkény's world is different from theirs but contiguous. His lost characters, however, do not always end up on the outskirts of the town. But it is not necessary to reside in the outskirts to feel outside the life of the town, and it is not only Moldova's tough guys who have a brush with the moral or institutional law but Örkény's professionals too.

Yet another feature that links the three writers is that they extend by imagination whatever they observe, and, setting out from concrete experience, they build a world that is new and peculiarly their own and is complete with grotesque situations and bizarre ideas. The volumes of Örkény, Mándy and Moldova are also linked by the extraordinary gamut of forms ranging from the classic short story to the short novel, utilizing the most varied techniques, from the radio documentary almost up to the drama synopsis. The definition "volume of short stories" is in fact problematic; for a prose work shorter than a novel is not necessarily a short story, and in these volumes very little can qualify for the name, and then only by the broadest interpretation. Of course, it is also true that literary reportage has long since been severed from the reality that inspired it and the radio documentaries now published in book form are today "merely" period pieces rather than concrete facts with the authenticity of a record. Perhaps it was the attraction of sociology, that is, of the greatest possible authenticity, that extended the bounds *this side* of the short story, and the inspiration of prose verse and the enticement of the film that extended the bounds *beyond* the short story.

One-minute dramas, one-hour novels

Örkény's first collection of stories appeared a quarter of a century ago, but his writing can still spring surprises. In most cases the theme itself is a surprise. Örkény has no hackneyed or for that matter crystallized literary habits, prefabricated themes or citadels of problems attacked many times over. Each of his ideas is fresh and appears in a setting he has not previously portrayed.

István Örkény: *Jeruzsálem hercegnője* ("The Princess of Jerusalem"). *Szépirodalmi* Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1966. pp. 470.

As often as not his handling of the theme too is surprising: he has a way of conscientiously circling round each little conflict until he finds, if not the only appropriate angle of vision, certainly one not yet discovered by any other writer. It may be drama or irony, letter or dialogue—but never the conventional forms. Whenever he touches a subject worked over many times—experiences of the war or war prisoner camps or the obligatory Stalinist themes of the 'fifties—Örkény is always at pains to break away from the too obvious solution and attack the problem from the steeper side. At the time he did not put the hero—who then assumed the proportions of a giant of Stakhanovite competitions—on a pedestal. He was interested in what happened when only one of a married couple became such a lionized hero and the other remained on the ground. In the title story of the present volume, in which a Polish stage director recalls the dishonoured memory of his former wife Jadwiga, who became the mistress of a German officer, the writer questions both the crime and the punishment. After two decades he demands an ethical retrial of the case: the culprit was probably a victim herself, and the judge's pitilessness brought him only too close to the point where murder begins.

Historical themes in themselves are few and far between in Örkény's short stories: his themes generally do not impinge on the direct currents of history nor do they illustrate historical situations. More often we meet with a solution in which history is neither a theme, nor a backdrop to timeless events, but much rather the fearful determinant of individual dramas, an inexorable catalyst. A catalyst in the presence of which processes—or, speaking of short stories, the individual, for the most part non-political, conflicts at the centre of the stories—take a different course. History determines people's attitudes and also the value of the historically determined attitude: the appendicitis operation performed by the medical student acting as a surgeon becomes here not an irresponsible adventure but a stubborn effort on the part of a man to save his own and countless other people's lives. In a situation like this it is not in the least comical that at the decisive moment during the operation the medical student stands at a loss over the opened human body. It is not comical, but it is not tragic either—the effect is simply shocking. The writer is not concerned with the outcome of the operation; the source of the tension this time is not the fate of the patient but the false doctor's state of mind as he tries to face life and death. ("137th Psalm.")* An acquaintance struck up at a railway station, a sudden love affair or rather the possibility of a love affair could only too easily lead to a romantic idyll. Even in the shadow of the war the same theme still remains an idyll, though in the storm. ("The Last Train.") Örkény outlines such an idyll but he finally steers clear of the danger of melodrama.

In almost all his satires, Örkény's main characters encounter death. Some are shocked by a threatening medical diagnosis, others by the loss of their child or father, into recognition of the transience of life, into awareness of the fact that life is lived only once and sins are irredeemable. "No Pardon," says one of the unmercifully true stories.** There is no pardon if we deny each other common humanity, if we are stinting in our love or charity for others, if we have renounced life for ourselves. It is in this that Örkény's humanism consists, an objective humanism purified of all sentimentalism, and occasionally assuming a cynical mask. Örkény does not strike some altruistic pose, nor does he try to make his heroes out better than they are, nor gloss over their relationships. Yet at the same time he has respect even for the fallible man, and he is always discriminating in his damning moral judgments. He is implacable when he denounces

* This story appears on p. 131 of present issue.

** It appeared in No. 17 of The N.H.Q. p. 218.

or exposes, but humane and understanding when he passes judgment. His judgments are in general conveyed not in tirades or categorically applied epithets but in finely exposed elements of the plot.

In most of the short stories the writer's message is transmitted through the situation rather than the plot. The atmosphere grows hot in this concentration on the situation, and the sentences become charged with tension. Örkény is a past master of compression and he is absolutely conscious about it. He has in fact said that all supererogatory details give him a feeling of nausea and that he always tries to suppress anything accidental. He lives up to this requirement completely in the most interesting cycle of the book, the "One-minute Stories." A characteristic piece in this section is "In memoriam Dr K.H.G." It is no longer than a prose sonnet. The two characters are a German guard and his prisoner, the Hungarian inmate of a forced labour camp, a man with a doctorate. We know nothing of the interlocutors, whether they are young or old, fair, dark or otherwise, serious, gay, lonely or in love. Yet we know the most important thing about them: one of them has a gun and power in his hand and the other has only humanistic culture, an absolutely impractical thing to possess in war. The prisoner and the guard carry on a conversation during a period of forced labour. The prisoner asks questions and explains. Quietly, perhaps a little too subserviently too, but nevertheless with an irresistible superiority. And the guard, humbled by his own stupidity, first blushes, then tries to defend himself. What can a fascist bring to his defence? First lying and then murdering. And the final rifle shot contains all at once—without commentary and explanation—the shabbiness of power and the human and intellectual superiority of the victim.

One may wonder which of the many novels that have been and will yet be written about the cultural elevation of the peasantry can rival in suggestive power that other snapshot in which an old peasant woman's superstitious nightmare, weighing heavily on her days and nights, fights it out with the new word she is for ever forgetting—cybernetics. Cybernetics with which the old woman has suddenly come in contact, more than that, relationship: her grandson studying in the town will make a living out of this branch of knowledge. ("One Room, Mud Wall, Thatch Roof.")

It may sound paradoxical to assert that the most striking artistic merit and the most conspicuous defect of the stories are both connected with their economy of construction. What we so much enjoy in the one-minute stories is precisely the writer's virtuosity in condensation that is so sorely missing in several other pieces in the book. The author, who is a disciplined enough artist to create an aphorism compressed into a dialogue out of a drama, on some other occasion spins out the material for a sketch into a short novel. ("The Hunnia at Csököd," "The Duel.") The dates appearing under these writings offer some reassurance, however, because they show that Örkény has progressed or else returned in recent years to a representation simple in method and going right to the heart of the matter. Strangely, the concentration on essentials and diffuse composition can be found not only from one story to another but also in one and the same piece of writing. It sometimes happens that the carefully exposed situation and the setting up of a psychological equation are not followed by psychological deduction and the outcome also seems totally unexpected. In a few of his writings the decisive logical link between the plot and the denouement that gives the clue to all that has gone before is missing. It is entirely legitimate for the writer to leave open the series of incidents begun—especially if by so doing he wishes to indicate that not what happened but how it happened is the essential concern. And he is entitled to leave the final judgment to us, but he should not throw the reader on his own resources of imagination at the crucial intermediate points. Yet Örkény experiments

with this highly disputable method in several of his tales. The lonely medical professor in the short story "Man Longs for Warmth," for instance, slowly goes crazy over his brand new acquisition, a low-combustion thermo-coke stove. Örkény describes the process whereby the old man undergoes a change of habits and way of living so masterfully and convincingly that we have no reason to doubt it. Description alone, however, cannot replace justification; nor detailing of the symptoms, the motives. Örkény fails to give us the explanation, instead referring the reader to his conjectures and general experiences more or less independent of the story.

Perhaps the most abiding feature of Örkény's varied, not easily definable character as a writer is his predilection for the grotesque. Undoubtedly this affinity is symptomatic of the age: the modern writer in his abhorrence of pathos often approaches the true essence of things from the reverse side, and from Dürrenmatt to Mrożek many have chosen this form of exposing appearances. With Örkény it is mostly the situation that is grotesque—less frequently the puny men kicking around in it. Every anachronistic desire, endeavour and action becomes grotesque—for instance, the contemplated duel in the story of the same title, in the circumstances of today's Hungary; or the love affair losing all purpose and point in old age in the short novel "Cat's Play": the manikins who fly in the face of time but are in reality pathetic, impotent figures are sadly ludicrous, and yet sometimes it seems as though Örkény did not trust his powers of condensation, and so the effect of "Cat's Play" may be blunted by its being overwritten.

"The Princess of Jerusalem" stands out among the short story collections of the recent past. Despite their often uneven achievements, Örkény's short stories are exciting reading: not by reason of their plots but by reason of their vision and originality. It is undeniably true that not all his stories hit the nail on the head like most of his sentences do, and not all his portraits are as infallibly perfect as most of his adjectives. But does not literature begin with sentences and adjectives? Each of Örkény's lines attests to his conscious search for themes and forms uniquely consonant with his artistic temperament, and his uncompromising experiments are worth more than the achievements of mediocre writers.

Reversed telescope

The telescope generally serves the purpose of making distant objects appear nearer and larger. In a Hungarian short story by Dezső Szabó that has become a classic, the main character, the unhappy, confused adolescent son of an alcoholic petty official, discovers a completely opposite use of the field glass and finds out that by holding it the wrong way you can dwarf the hostile world around you. In this way he escapes from the family quarrels in his bleak home; in this way he finds security of a doubtful value. He is less afraid of his drunkenly bawling father when he sees him through the reversed glasses, but he looks with unchanged love and pity at his mother, now appearing more defenceless. It seems that Iván Mándy, who recently made a successful *début* in translation in France and West Germany, has possessed this telescope from the beginning of his writer's career, and he too by preference holds the wrong end to his eyes. Örkény eschews using the magnifying glass. Mándy prefers scaling everything down. But like the character in Szabó's story he cannot view the world this way with impunity either, because it recedes from him a little. Iván Mándy holds his characters at a distance: he does not identify himself even with those for whom he feels sympathy.

Iván Mándy: *Séta a ház körül* ("Walk Round the House") *Magvető*, Budapest, 1966. 330 pp.

Sympathy however can take various forms: there are those who dive in to save a drowning man and those who call for help. Mándy acknowledges with resigned bitterness the fact that life's cruelty demands more and more victims: he registers rather than wishes to change the facts.

At the beginning of his career, in the early 'forties, Mándy turned with special interest towards the inhabitants of the slums, rowdies, drunks, *déclassé* elements of all sorts. It was among them that he looked, if not for companions, for allies: those people who came in conflict, by necessity or choice, with the philistine life of appearances, with the comfortable bourgeois life erected out of bricks of lies. The characters of his latest volume also move on the fringe of solid middle-class existence, but now their outsider's lives are no longer surrounded by a romantic aura. To live on the fringes of life in the situations described in Mándy's stories is no longer a gesture of revolt but simply misfortune. Misfortune that may have many and varied causes. But the first among these is other people's indifference and lack of sympathy, or for that matter the cruelty of the bourgeoisie camouflaged by a protective mimicry of lies and conventions. The periphery of life—where Mándy still feels at home—is both wider and narrower than his earlier world, the geographically conceived outskirts of the city. Of course many people are adrift outside the main current of life: old people, lonely individuals, gipsies and others unfortunately still swell the numbers *en masse* even today. Individually almost anybody who has lost contact with his own sphere may drift here. The genteel girl of the small town who loved a gipsy boy, or the other one who came to hate the many hypocrisies of the home and at the first kind word blindly followed the man who later proved unworthy of her affection. Or simply anyone who has reached the age at which the old woman, but more so the old man, becomes a burden to the family.

Generally speaking Mándy's writings, his stories and radio documentaries, have two layers. The stories themselves are usually conventional and not particularly original. After all, the double suicide of a young couple defying family and small town morality, the heroic struggle for her children of a woman sinking ever further from the protected home, the clinging to the future of a lonely school mistress finding her only satisfaction in teaching—these themes do not promise much. Stereotyped, cut-and-dried conflicts, and, in experienced hands, always successful melodrama. But the gipsy Romeo and Juliet is not merely about the lovers, nor yet about the still haunting spectre of racial prejudice, but about the impact their tragedy makes; that is, how the death of the young couple awakens others—the friend who was formerly in love with the girl as well as the stranger who arrives in the town—to the weight of responsibility for fellow creatures and to the responsibility indifference carries with it. In the melodramatic piece "In the Waiting-Room," the thing that is really important is not the family, social, natural and who knows what other calamities that crowd upon Jula, but the woman's figure drawn with so much psychological insight and lyricism. And the fact that despite the romantic handling of the plot in the climactic scene the writer can finally drop the theatrical paraphernalia and spectacular devices, avoid tears, and sum up in barely ten words the collapse of the woman's life of selfless sacrifice: "If you should need me . . ." the woman says, and the man, going off to the alcohol cure, answers, "I will not need you."

The best of Mándy's writings remain those in which his atmosphere-creating power, his bizarre and very sensuous vision must take the place of the plot. To this category belong above all two radio documentaries conceived as reportage but attaining literary standards, "Good Morning, Sir" and the title piece "Walk Round the House." In the first we become acquainted with the inmates of an old people's home. They are so many

dispossessed and dethroned Lears on a small scale, who live and move about in an almost grotesquely eventless world of memories, medicines, childish cares and joys. The reversed telescope here shows an isolated world, tragi-comic in its autonomous laws, where only gastronomical pleasures grow disproportionally large and where a department-store leaflet can bring happiness to the addressee since it appears to be new, from the real world out there. This is a world apart, but at bottom it is identical with the real one: lack of charity and a destitute and helpless condition are a torture here as well as out there. After the disquieting report about the misery of old people, "Walk Round the House" reads as if the author had dropped the reversed telescope in his indignation at the spectacle; here the complaint of gipsy families, restricted in their human rights and still deprived of a genuine chance of rising in the social scale and of being assimilated, suddenly looms large. The first person singular account of the thirty-eight year old Norbert Bitó, a gipsy labourer of Kál, is as a document authentic and as an indictment passionate. This documentary at the same time reveals Mándy's highly individual prose technique. The plot centres on the red-tape delays in securing a building permit—this is at best a suitable subject for a report. Yet the account throws up at least five good story themes on top of one another. The agonizing loneliness of a gipsy inmate of an overcrowded workers' hostel; Norbert Bitó clutching at every appearance of equality, inviting the peasant host to drink brandy with him; the father's "guilt" when in freezing weather he steals a rug in which to take his new-born baby son home from the hospital. Or the first dark suit, purchased after much scraping and saving, only to let it gather dust on a peg in the wall for want of an occasion to wear it and of a wardrobe to hang it in and finally having to dispose of it. All of them Chekhovian themes. Flashes of drama compel the reader's sometimes wandering attention to return and perhaps may point a lesson for the author too: the mass of experiences contained in the volume offers a thought-provoking social as well as a creative psychological document, but has not everywhere matured as a finished literary form.

This is not meant to imply that Mándy has not once again given proof of his creative qualities in the present volume. It means that this time the stories as a whole do not everywhere equal the evocative impact of the details. In particular we have in mind "Private Lives,"* which contains exquisite insights and a shockingly unemotional quality. Golding apart, scarcely any other writer has written so debunkingly and unlyrically and with so much revealing force about children: but whereas an extreme situation authenticates the dehumanization and relapse into animal state of the awakening adolescents of *Lord of the Flies*, here we have a bizarre vision of a peculiar real world, an abstraction of its discovered real tendencies. It is not the circumstances that are extraordinary, but the eyes observing them. As if the writer were looking not at living children but at an aquarium: his objectivity attracts and repels at the same time. The indisputably authentic and original details override the inherent ambivalence of the whole: the troop of tots going haywire and riding on pots is a vision not easily forgotten.

With Mándy things insignificant in themselves often assume immense proportions; his unique world and atmosphere take shape out of a series of small observations. The objectivity of his style goes perfectly well with his striving for sensuous effects. The bizarre elements attest to a kind of anthropomorphic vision: when he compares a bunch of shrivelled, dusty grapes to withered nipples and when the mood of two chatting women is motivated by the "moodiness" of the objects, bags and cardigans surrounding them, it becomes clear that Mándy's objectivity hides an incessant concern for man and a carefully disguised lyricism.

* The story appears on page 140 of present issue.

Suburbian Münchausen

The world of vacant lots in the slums is not only a theme for Moldova but also his native ground. This young writer grew up in the suburb of Kőbánya, in the squares of the outskirts. He did not seek but presumably already as a teenager he inhaled their rowdy romanticism and he shared his bread with those who had been pushed beyond the social pale. I have already mentioned the similarity between Mándy's and Moldova's early phase. I imagine the result if they were to come across the same theme in the square, if they happened to hear the same story to inspire them. I imagine them in the half-circle round the story-teller: Mándy attends to the faces, Moldova to the stories. The one wishes to pierce the speaker with a penetrating look; the other would like to take over and finish the story for him. In the mental X-ray picture the features of the face gradually melt away and only the struggles of the soul show. In the tale, on the other hand, the facts of earth-bound reality dim and the imagination soars. And by the time the works—not one but two—are born the common experience has also receded into darkness.

János Háry, a symbolic figure in Hungarian letters and opera, a bragging veteran soldier claiming to have beaten Napoleon, amuses a whole village with his feats. János Háry, our Baron Münchausen, was the comforter and story-teller of the grown-ups. Both Háry and Münchausen tell big tales about themselves and their heroic exploits, but the story-telling characters of Moldova, these perfectly made proletarian Münchausens, tell about, and lie about, the world. About the resourceful heroes, wonderful guys, cranks and moral whores they have met in lots, doorways of suburban houses and football grounds.

Moldova's writing career of ten years started with a sweeping impetus. Then, after a temporary setback, it became clear—the critics were quick to point it out—that Dumas père and the young Gorky were competing for the romantic Moldova's soul. His story-spinning talents and his passionately keen eye for the real often do not act in unison but play off against each other. Enchanted by adventures he was prone to forget that it is only possible to take off from the ground if the rocket of fantasy is sufficiently well supplied with fuel: understanding of people, ideas and the basic requirements of artistic authenticity. At that time Moldova was attracted by uproarious and sensational successes, and by preference he recruited his readers through adventure stories. His latest volume again shows him at his best: we get in his short-story sequence the picture and poetry of the real world, in portraits and tales.

Formerly Moldova came in for much criticism for almost invariably choosing his characters from the fringes of society and for finding his themes only in eccentric figures and extreme destinies. The main characters still come from the periphery and they are just as eccentric as before. It cannot even be said that their destinies and concerns have more timely relevance now than a few years ago. On the contrary: their ways of life are more anachronistic than ever. But Moldova no longer tries to idealize this queer world. One of his characters admonishes his pupil brought up in the square with these words: "... The square is a warm swamp. Full of dirt and mud. Here only pigs like me feel well, those that need the warmth so much that they don't mind getting dirty. You don't belong here. You're young and healthy and have a good trade. Don't stay here even if your mother bore you here." And the youngster, getting over the first shock, starts thinking about what he has heard. He starts thinking about "the swamp slowly drying up." He reflects that once all the boys had a chance to break out: some of them were

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György Moldova: *Gázlámpák alatt* ("Under Gas-lamps") *Szépirodalmi* Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1966, 260 pp.

called to enter the officers' training college; others were given a chance to learn a trade; still others went to evening courses. Why had they given up? Because not all of them could use their opportunities to rise? Now putting questions like these is quite a new thing for Moldova. It suggests that the subjective attachment and the objective criticism are beginning to approximate in a necessarily more complex method of representation. The tales of extraordinary destinies heard in the square are now weightier, firmer, by the more general relevance given them by the writer. The tension of his stories derives not, or not primarily, from the incident of adventure but rather the thought holding together the structural elements of the plot, in other words, from the unfolding essence behind the passing phenomena.

A few examples may make clear how this fresh advance in literary standards and value comes into being even within the compass of a short sketch. Probably the best piece in the book is "Straniczky, the Hungarian Father." The hero is an insignificant actor who, when he has fallen lowest, is discovered—not for the stage, but for history. At the suggestion of the mayor of the small town he becomes "a public figure"; he is dressed up in the braided uniform of the extreme Hungarian nationalists, in the "Bocskay" dress, and gives pep talks in farewell addresses to his "sons," the soldiers going to the front. Encouraged by his first successes, the professional Hungarian father later on finds out that he can have the best of successive worlds, and he is as convincing an agitator in the guise of a proletarian father in the 1919 Council Republic as in the guise of its victim later on. He turns and turns like a weathercock, always with the prevailing winds of history. Still later he enlists in the State Bureau of Demagogy and from now in an organised manner he acts enthusiasm, agitation, anxiety or incitement, whichever happens to be in greater demand at the moment. His wardrobe consists of only two items: in Bocskay dress and in overalls he can represent all Hungarian history in the first half of the twentieth century.

In Moldova's volume the hero of the anti-fascist resistance is a Municipal Park showman who is trying to make amends for the crimes of his son, turned SS; the absurdity of the personality cult appears in the framework of a nonsensical building project organized by a dental mechanic; the stalemate of the 1956 events is demonstrated by the murder of a Jesuit priest, bent on setting up an underground organization, by his own companions; the cares of economic construction are brought home in the light of fatuity blown up to cosmic proportions. The themes are national concerns, problems of public interest but always presented in some out of the ordinary way, in romantic, satiric, grotesque or just plainly bizarre form.

György Moldova has an uncanny gift for antitheses. In depicting his lost, dissipated or depraved characters he accepts as natural the vices amid which they were brought up and at the same time discovers features in which their lot or nature deviates from socially determined norms. He discovers and enjoys any unusual and shocking characteristic by which they stand out from their fellow human beings. He appreciates that they can not only love but love more strongly than anyone else, and that they are truer friends than friends loyal only in protestations. His figures, stuck in the mud, suddenly stand up, and fired by a great passion transcend themselves. The tale is generally about the metamorphosis when lives lived in the shadow are suddenly illuminated by a passion that erupts in the midst of humdrum existence. The foolish Vilma is ennobled by love. Dezső Pál, the accountant, is ennobled by his passion for the Latin tongue. These stories tending towards an extreme romanticism are hardly true in the strictly everyday sense of the word—the deeds of tarts more moral than any other woman, of fabulously depraved children and of football stars with golden feet. But in point of authenticity they are for the most part unimpeach-

able. They are true as tales are true that help us to believe the ugliest toad is capable of being changed into a princess by the true lover. In a well integrated writer's world it is perfectly in order that expatriate Hungarians "weep red-white-and-green tears." In this world it is conceivable, nay, probable, that to replace a broken screw some suggest starting an air-lift; others make railway barriers that can be kept closed for more than a hundred minutes or suggest experimenting with "folk-pattern embroidered tin rockets."

Moldova's invention is not really new: the use of the real in an absurd setting and of absurd ideas in the real world can be met in the theatre of Dürrenmatt and Mrożek, among others. Moldova, however, deviates to some extent from the standard uses of paradox and parable. It is perhaps with Marcel Aymée that he has the closest relationship, since he has a firm grip on realism even in his self-created absurd world. And not just realism in general, but the features of yesterday's and today's Hungarian reality, what's more, of his native Budapest. Whether this adherence to the concrete is a merit or otherwise is a difficult question: it is undeniable that in this way his truths are more limited in validity, the world explored more constricted and, presumably, his works more difficult to assimilate, and have a lesser impact outside the confines of Hungarian literature. This is not an incidental drawback but is bound up with the fact that Moldova does not measure up to the philosophical-intellectual standard of Dürrenmatt and Mrożek; his philosophy, if we can call it that, is less formed and more superficial. And this, considering the growing intellectualism of modern literature, seems an almost insuperably negative feature. Yet Moldova caters to a very real need with his brand of the absurd not yet cut off from the umbilical cord of romanticism, and he fulfils this demand with great skill. He offers tales instead of philosophy, but his tales are astonishing, true and modern.

It would be useless to deny that the electric circuit between reality and fantasy, working up to such tension in the best of his writing, is sometimes disrupted, and that a few inept, high-pitched and still insipid pieces were included in the book. The stories refurbishing the faded colours of outlaw romanticism show that Dumas père has not yet given up the struggle for his soul. But one thing has already been decided: Moldova, in his avoidance of the dead end of romanticism, has chosen the more difficult pathway and swung away from a traditional interpretation of realism in the direction of satire. In retrospect it may appear that "Under Gas-lamps" was either a detour on Moldova's path or a turning-point in the development of his talent. These questions will be decided later. But it may be confidently affirmed that "Under Gas-lamps" is one of the most intriguing, attractive and enjoyable collection of stories to see the light in recent years.

ANNA FÖLDES

LATE ARRIVAL

On the occasion of the Hungarian publication of Eliot's selected poems

T. S. Eliot's arrival in Hungarian letters now, in a volume of selected poems* after earlier scattered translations—will be far from being the shock, the exalting experience, when Mihály Babits, the eminent poet and organizer of Hungarian literary life, who in some ways played a role in Hungarian literature similar to that of Eliot's in English literature, discovered Eliot for himself. Or for that matter that it would have been even a decade later, when Gábor Halász, one of the most widely read and gifted critics of the next generation, wrote a highly intelligent and well-informed essay about "recent English poetry" with Eliot as the leading figure of the movement, combining his enthusiasm and insight with flashes of the critic's perception. And if Eliot was not then appreciated the reasons must be sought in contemporary Hungarian poetry itself at least as much as in the poet: if it failed to assimilate Eliot in his own time this was evidently because he was not the poet for whom Hungarian poetry then had a compelling need.

Now he makes his appearance in an elegant volume and in almost complete array. István Vas, one of the significant poets of the generation now in their fifties, used all his wide and mature experience and talent as writer, poet and translator to render the ambiguity, allusive richness and hidden rhythms of Eliot's poems, their fusion of the heightened and the everyday, modernity and timeless classicism, with clarity, perception and complete harmony; and he prefaces the translations with the story of his meetings—intellectual and physical—with Eliot, the man and the poet.

István Vas's personal reminiscences are usefully complemented by an essay on Eliot's poetry by Tamás Ungvári, one of the younger critics. Relying on a mass of English comment of Eliot, Ungvári introduces the Hungarian reader to the allusive techniques and the intricacies of structure of Eliot's poems and throws light on the structural beauties and difficulties of his poetry, its power as well as its weaknesses. Surrealist-inspired wash-drawings enriched with collage, by the poet-translator's painter wife Piroska Szántó, complete the volume. These illustrations have a life of their own, independent of Eliot's poems, but dispersed between the poems they greatly facilitate their comprehension, because like poems themselves, they speak to the mind and feeling at once.

The critics—both here and in England—used to stress that Eliot has conquered a new world for modern English poetry and English literary thought, and that—by incorporating this into the body of his work—he found new ways of expression for modern ideas and feelings. He rediscovered the English metaphysical poets of the 17th century: Donne and Webster; as well as French symbolists like Baudelaire, Laforgue, Mallarmé and Rémy de Gourmont. All these are undeniable facts—but they are not the decisive facts, despite their novelty and their impact, despite their exciting taste and their poison. Eliot's decisive influence stems from the link that binds him to his contemporaries; but it stems also from the gap that separates him from them. Those who are entranced by his poetry tend to forget that Eliot does not stand alone. Though in the poetry of the 'tens and 'twenties, he might have created a very individual and insular variation of the trend which we here on the Continent call expressionism. His connection to this trend, the correspondence of his outlook, of his experiments and results, to those of the expressionists is nowadays hardly deniable.

* T. S. Eliot: *Válogatott versek*. Translated and introduced by István Vas, with a postscript by Tamás Ungvári. Budapest, Európa, 1966.

Because of its enlightening and revelatory character his connection with his English colleagues and contemporaries is even more interesting—and exciting.

Many of his readers and critics have wondered and pondered over the question how it was possible for a young middle-class American to have become so thoroughly and genuinely a dyed-in-the-wool Englishman, to have assumed the position of leader in his generation of poets, the master and idol who was to be dethroned in the next. The key to this paradox may certainly be found in his biography and psychological make-up, in the aspirations of the man and the artist; all this is perhaps less interesting for us. A question of more importance is the way in which Eliot's poetic revolution linked up with and carried further, with modifications, Yeats's innovation; in which Eliot, not by himself but in close companionship and poetic competition with Yeats and Ezra Pound, found his own voice and tried to follow his own path.

And that was again not solely a matter for the poets. Today it becomes more and more evident that Eliot's innovations are akin to Joyce's contribution and that Sweeney is a close relative of Bloom's; the creative ambition in "The Waste Land" is closely related to that inspiring "Ulysses"; and further that Eliot and Aldous Huxley are not separate monads either, that the intellectual fireworks in Huxley's novels, at once their fascination and dead weight, are there in the poems of Eliot too, and have similar roots and effects.

The common experience of that generation was the limitless breadth and depth of the cultural heritage that was revealed to them by their wide education, and put only in a more enticing light by the new sciences and scientific schools, comparative ethnography and, in line with it, the comparative mythology and the science of psychoanalysis that was then emerging. Everything which appears to be new is the repetition of something that has been, a re-entry in a novel garb; and everything that has been appears more splendid and magnificent, more majestic and mythical than that which is or may be yet. This was the presentiment of the end of a world, of a civilisation, therefore an expression and exaltation of it: of that world and culture which had begun with the Greeks and was in its last agony with the close of the bourgeois era.

The feeling of this agony and the artistic formulation of this feeling united them. This presentiment was authenticated by the First World War, from the aftermath of which the artists and indeed the whole intellectual community throughout Europe, derived the antithetical feelings of despondency or soul-lifting hope, according to whether they saw in it the end or the dawn of a new world. This sentiment of the end of a world, of a way of existence was all the more pervasive for the English intellectuals since the First World War meant the beginning of the end of the Empire, and almost without exception they felt it, even though they seldom succeeded in facing it. The consequence of this failure was that to almost all of them the present seemed infinitely petty in comparison with the grandeur of the mythological past. Moreover, they insisted with striking perseverance on linking this pettiness with mythological greatness, usually by means of irony and the grotesque, as did Joyce, Eliot and Huxley; but sometimes creating new myths, a device that can transpose the present directly into the sphere of the mythological, as was done by Yeats.

It was Eliot himself who defined the desire of his generation as "giving a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history." The sentence includes the grandeur as well as the impossibility of the undertaking. It is grand since it sets out to impose some order on the chaos, to show up purity amidst the filth, and to extricate the light of the mind from the confusion of instincts and impulses; at the same time, however, it is impossible since it views the world as shallow

and pointlessly anarchic, and wants to introduce reason, the principle of order from outside. The world, however, can only be comprehended from within, and this has been done by all great creative artists in every age. Only those artists can form a unified and comprehensive picture of the world of any generation, in the past as well as in the present, who try to approach it from the side of the forces and tendencies at work within it, and endeavour to explain its meaning and significance in this way.

This *Weltanschauung* makes Eliot's poetry, for all its greatness and pretensions, a magnificent attempt, an experiment carried to the furthest extreme, rather than a harmonious fulfilment. Despite his mythical allusions, his game of quotations, his instinctive-conscious superimpositions of the present on the past and his intermingling of the trivial and the sublime, we are left with the impression that his poetry is a kind of nostalgic longing for the past and a shuddering revulsion from the future, with which this present is pregnant. As Antal Szerb, one of the most talented Hungarian critics of the interwar years, put it, there remained by the late 'twenties, when this poetic experience had spent itself, only two possible ways of escape from this attitude: suicide or dogmatic religion. Eliot chose the latter, and the result of his option was that, although from "Ash Wednesday" onwards and still more in the "Four Quartets" his poetic diction and image-creating faculty attained new subtleties and refinements, his poetry leaves us rather cold. As one of his English critics has said, to be able to follow him in these pieces we ought to follow him in his faith. Perhaps the realization of this on the poet's part would explain why Eliot's poetic utterances from the 'thirties onwards became increasingly sparse, with Eliot the poet giving way to Eliot the extremely perceptive and captivating essayist and the innovator of poetic verse-drama.

But beyond his personal success and failure, what is in his poetry, we may ask ourselves, that still represents a lively force today. Apart from his assured place in the history of English poetry, what part of his art still possesses a significance and exerts an influence in modern European poetry?

What strikes us most and in the first place is its innovation compared to Victorian poetry. In contrast with the *bel canto* of Tennyson, Arnold and Swinburne, Eliot introduced a fragmentary, disjointed quality and created thereby a rich new rhythm, a more freely handled verse, made terse and taut by the rhythm which comes from a deeper and more severe poetic logic than that of the fixed verse patterns. He introduced that odd negative quality, which ever since has become almost positive in English poetry: that bound rhythm, strict and lavish rhyming, became devices of irony and persiflage rather than expressions of the lyrical content which flourishes in the free and rhymeless lines.

Even more, once and for all, he enfranchised the poetry of the big city and invested the surroundings and experiences of urban man with a new dimension, that is, the consciousness of the past and the possibility of mythical correspondences. He created a lyric poetry capable of expressing simultaneously all the complexities of great city life and of the thoughts and feelings of the urban intellectual. This lyric poetry is shy and withdrawing instead of self-revelatory, and in order to avoid having to show the poet's emotional commitment, works out for itself new lyric situations within large-scale poems of epic character, and makes the persons in the poems act out a drama—yet at the same time in the next line or expression or image he will speak more directly and candidly, only to hide himself again in the following word or line. By this play of hide-and-seek and reflection in mirrors multiplied indefinitely he heightens the reader's interest and simultaneous intellectual and emotional involvement. He originated a diction in which surprising and at first sight incongruous collocations (especial-

ly in attributive combinations) are allotted a considerable role: he explores or projects into his words and situations new layers of meaning (simultaneously historical, transcendental or mythical). And he couples all this with a colloquial idiom and an anti-climactic use of the poetical. He builds the verse as a poetic entity with an exceptional consciousness, a mathematical or rather musical exactitude. But he covers up the girders supporting the whole structure, pulls out the logical props as it were, in order to force the reader to make the same psychological effort that has gone into creating the poem and to lift him through his active cooperation to the rank of co-author, a kind of poetic partner.

Eliot's poetry is accessible only to a narrow section of the reading public. That this should be so is inevitable, since few readers are able without assistance and the benefit of research to get right, or even to apprehend, all the allusions and references of an Eliot poem. Their number, as far as one can predict, will increase only slowly. For this reason, much as we may be in agreement with Eliot's dictum, quoted by István Vas, that the reader can apprehend the emotional content of the poems even if he fails to find his bearings in the maze of allusions, hints, quotations and references—it seems equally true that missing these will render the poems unduly obscure and only partially comprehensible and that their impact will be musical rather than intellectual.

All this, of course, only enhances the boldness of István Vas's poetic venture. To do justice to all this complexity so that it comes across and speaks in its own right to the modern Hungarian reader, to activate all this as poetic material (at least in part, and most of the time the best part), in the conventions and with the means of a poetic idiom of quite other traditions and development, takes an enterprising spirit. Its success bespeaks most exceptional care and devotion. István Vas's selection may be said to be impeccable: nearly all of Eliot's major works are included, and all the essential features of his poetry are illuminated. Philological overnicety could, no doubt, spot some few lines or passages to gloat over, where the Hungarian solution fails to do justice to *all* that there was in the original. In a few instances, for example, the colloquial ordinariness comes through over-transfigured; a reference lost for the sake of euphony.

The core of Eliot's *oeuvre* as well as of this volume, "The Waste Land," is not only a feat of translation, it is also a work of emulation: earlier the poem was done into Hungarian by Sándor Weöres, the great poet and versatile translator of his generation. I think Vas's translation the more authentic. Weöres was quite often carried away by his own virtuosity and baroque linguistic resourcefulness, and he enriched the poem unnecessarily in comparison with the original; Vas is more Eliotesque precisely in his dryness and spareness. It is regrettable on the other hand that he did not include the poet's notes. This is regrettable not only because these are the poet's own notes, regarded today as integral parts of the poem, but also and first of all because they could best explain to the Hungarian reader how an Eliot-poem is built up and how many things appealing to the ear, the mind and the memory are there to attend to in the other poems to which no commentaries were supplied.

The volume also contains Eliot's best verse-drama, "Murder in the Cathedral." Eliot's modernity, his evocation of antiquity, his Catholicity and irony are all superbly manifested in Vas's translation. The richness offered by the book only makes the reader wish for more. He may deplore that the essayist could not be found a place by the side of the poet and playwright. It is not impossible that the effect of Eliot's essays will survive that of his poems. One can only regret that the opportunity has not been taken to make these prose writings available in Hungarian.

PÉTER NAGY

THEATRE

THEATRE REVIEW

Recently, when I reported on the removal of the National Theatre of Budapest to its new premises, I took the opportunity to review its history in retrospect, examining the place it has taken in the Hungarian theatre. Another anniversary—also commemorated by the newspapers and in a simple form by the theatre itself—induces me to go on to examine our second oldest theatre, the Vígszínház ("Gaiety") Theatre, which, right from the year of its establishment, in its programmes and style as well, has been a contrast to the National Theatre.

The Vígszínház Theatre opened its doors in 1896 during the millennium celebrations of the foundation of the Hungarian State. It stands in the busiest part of the capital, Szent István körút. However, at the time of building, this part of the city was still mostly undeveloped. To build a theatre in this part of Budapest of all places was a daring undertaking. The citizens of the capital, however, were full of optimism; they wanted a theatre of their own, as opposed to the feudally conservative National Theatre. They wanted to see plays after their own taste, performed in a style to their liking. Unlike, therefore, the National Theatre, which was state-owned, the Vígszínház was owned by a group of shareholders, who formed a company to build and run it. In the prologue of the inaugural performance, the Spirit of the new theatre defined its task in the following words:

"To put on plays of the present to an audience of the present."

This prologue amounted to an open declaration of war on the National Theatre. The name of the Vígszínház Theatre however—"gaiety"—reflected the optimism of the "burghers" of Budapest rather than their determination to stage nothing but comedies. The Administrative Board appointed Mór Ditrói as director. He engaged very young actors and actresses, mostly from the country, and they were a pleasant surprise to the Budapest audiences. Figuratively speaking, even the comedies wore cothurni in the National Theatre, while in the Gaiety Theatre even the tragedies tripped in sandals. The main assets of the new theatre were a young actor, Gyula Hegedüs, and a young actress Irén Varsányi. (Today their statues adorn the hall of the Vígszínház.) A contemporary joke has it that the leading comedian of the National Theatre went to the Gaiety Theatre to see Budapest's new favourites. The play began with Gyula Hegedüs as a country minister, walking on in shirt-sleeves and braces, sitting down, beginning to eat, and taking up the paper. During the interval the actor from the National Theatre left, highly indignant. "It's fantastic," he said later to his colleagues. "This Hegedüs sits there eating and reading as if he were in his own home instead of on the stage!" But this was the highest possible praise in the eyes of the public, for what the new theatre

provided was precisely naturalness and lack of formality. People realized that the new dramatic literature of the age, plays by Ibsen, Hauptmann, Shaw, Chekhov, could no long longer be put on in the traditional, pompous style of the National Theatre. And though to begin with its reportory was based on naughty French comedies, the new theatre soon gave the Budapest audience its own playwrights as well, with Sándor Bródy, Melchior Lengyel and Ferenc Molnár among them. The latter practically became the "official playwright" of the Vígszínház. These Hungarian playwrights were indeed so successful that the Vígszínház was able to play nothing but Hungarian plays—advertised as a "Hungarian cycle," for a whole year. This triumphant period of the Vígszínház lasted until the end of the First World War. After the war new dramatic and theatrical trends came into vogue. In Italy Pirandello, in Germany the Expressionists, in France a new avant-garde, then Giraudoux, and in America O'Neill brought new styles to the stage, but the Vígszínház continued to put on the light "gaiety" style of plays for which it was famous.

During the Second World War the Vígszínház was razed to the ground in an air-raid. Following the Liberation, it was temporarily rehoused in a cinema, but this was not successful.

In 1949 the Hungarian theatres were nationalized, and soon afterwards the State decided to rebuild the ruined Vígszínház. The new Vígszínház was opened in December 1951; with its 1,150 seats it was the largest theatre of Hungary. The actual construction work was partly done by the new Hungarian People's Army, and when it was finished it was renamed "Theatre of the Hungarian People's Army." It bore this name for ten years before the old name was restored. Belonging to the Army meant that it established not quite natural ties with it. The new theatre had an excellent company. Among its members were some of the best actors of the earlier Vígszínház (Elma Bulla, Mária Sulyok, Gyula Benkő) and new actors who became the pillars of today's Vígszínház (Éva Ruttkai). This strong company, which had a repertory of a somewhat military character, toured many a provincial barracks, but it finally became more and more evident that the fatigue-jacket of the soldier was slowly becoming the straight-jacket of the arts. At the same time some useful features were also being developed: a stronger belief in their vocation, and the Stanislavsky Method, which inspired a higher level of acting; the new repertory also showed that the first steps had been taken towards a truly socialist theatre culture. Nonetheless, instead of developing along more modern and bolder lines, the style of acting deteriorated: the old natural Vígszínház style was now blended with the pompous style of the old National Theatre.

After 1956 the socialist state found itself relieved of the political, cultural and social burdens of the personality cult and the Vígszínház Theatre, in regaining its name, also regained its artistic freedom.

A wild exploration of these new opportunities followed: the general managers changed almost yearly up to 1962; and the policy of the theatre chopped and changed as well. At times there was a nostalgia for the pre-war Vígszínház, at others a hankering for propaganda. Finally it began to adopt the latest trends—but always keeping its close contact with the audience. This was and has continued to be the theatre which has the closest contact with its public and which has the most varied repertory. The struggle to find its own style has not yet ended; but there is no doubt that this is our most popular theatre with a very wide repertory, and financially it is the most successful. Last year's plays included *The Trojan Women* by Sartre—Euripides (translated by Gyula Illyés), *The Guardsman* by Ferenc Molnár, *The Physicists* by Dürrenmatt, *Shooting a Film* by the young Soviet dramatist Radzinsky, and *The Brothers Karamazov*. This year the Vígszínház opened the season with

Schisgal's *Luv*, continued with Brecht's *Mann ist Mann* and then came *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Cyrano* and *A Lady at Maxim's* by Feydeau. Now, on the 70th anniversary of its establishment and the 15th anniversary of its reconstruction, the Vígszínház has produced a Hungarian play with its usual success. Some theatres do not like to give Hungarian plays a chance, because Hungarian first nights are often followed by an empty house. (In Budapest the number of plays by national authors put on is less than in the neighbouring socialist countries.) The Vígszínház does not put on more Hungarian plays than other theatres but what it puts on always attracts a full house. The anniversary production, entitled *The Ravages of Time* by István Csurka and first shown two years ago, is still a box-office hit in Budapest. The same thing will probably happen with Gábor Thurzó's play *The Devil's Advocate* recently produced at the Vígszínház.

A Modern Catholic Writer

Gábor Thurzó ranks among the modern Catholic writers who have consistently cooperated with the socialist system without giving up their faith. He has written two plays for the Vígszínház which were great successes. His first play *Closing Time* was about the triumph and the fall of a political opportunist and shows us how the personality cult relied on this type of unprincipled careerist. His second play *Back Door* was less simple in its essential meaning but technically better. In it he analysed the physical and emotional conflict aroused in an ageing Professor, a family man, by a young irresponsible girl who is absolutely unsuited to him in every way. In his new play entitled *The Devil's Advocate*, Thurzó has adapted a novel of his, *The Saint*, for the stage. Play and novel appeared simultaneously with the première. The Saint was a young Jesuit monk who died of cancer, and whose life had been an inspiration to Hungarians during the war. After his death, in the mid-thirties, legends grew up about him, thousands of miracles were attributed to him; the faithful prayed to him, and the Jesuit Order asked the Holy See to canonize him. In the centre of the play stands a churchman of great learning, honest and forward-looking, well past the prime of life, who had been appointed by the Church to prepare the canonization procedure. In the course of the preliminary investigation the prelate becomes more and more bitter over the personal interests, tricks and machinations which hide behind the canonization procedure, and refuses to recommend the young monk for canonization; whereupon the whole political machinery of the Horthy regime is set in motion, leagued against the prelate, finally driving him into a tragic emotional collapse. The novel revolves around the machinations centred on the young monk, but it is the churchman, at the suggestion of the theatre, who is at the centre of the play. The play was directed by István Horváth. Among the actors, Antal Páger, who played the prelate, and Iván Darvas in the role of a ninety-year-old diocesan bishop scored the biggest success. Antal Páger was awarded the Grand Prix of Acting at Cannes three years ago, while Iván Darvas, a young actor at the height of his talent and popularity, is now rehearsing the role of Brick in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. The critics reproached Thurzó for failing to break away sufficiently from the novel, for concentrating the drama on the person of the prelate, and thus ignoring many good opportunities. The critics were right but even so the play is interesting and worth seeing.

The Plays of László Németh

The year 1966, nobody knows why, gave birth to many original Hungarian plays. Each of our theatres came out with a Hungarian play, and among the names of the new playwrights one name emerged more

and more often, that of László Németh. In the last three months he has had three plays put on: two in Budapest and one in Veszprém.

Sixty-six-year-old László Németh is one of the greatest personalities of contemporary Hungarian literature. He is an incredibly prolific writer, primarily a novelist, essayist and translator. But he has also written over twenty plays. Despite the fact that he is a prose writer, he has a highly lyrical nature. He writes it all down, everything he experiences, and all his moods are immediately reflected in his writings.

His plays can best be described as strangely ambivalent. According to the New Hungarian Encyclopaedia:—"his plays are characterized by a technique derived from Ibsen and a markedly intellectual content, which turns them into plays for reading, not acting." His social plays are thus defined: "In their overwhelming majority they are a variation on the same theme: a hero who personifies the ideals of the author and works for a Utopian community of his own imagination, fails for lack of understanding on the part of his family, and is thus incapable of realizing his great plans." "A technique derived from Ibsen" would certainly not please Ibsen if he were alive. Indeed, Ibsen's strict technique and the tense atmosphere it created, eliminating everything superfluous, can hardly be found in Németh's plays. Here, very often the hero has no opponent. The function of the other characters is to give him his cue and their number can be varied at will. Nonetheless, the theatres like to have Németh's name on their bills because his plays are very successful. One of the reasons for this is their high literary and intellectual quality, and his fine language. This pleases both actors and audience. He is also an excellent judge of human nature and even his secondary characters are recognizable to all. His third advantage is that intellectual ideas are expressed that are good to hear on the stage, where ideas are generally few and far between.

Among his social plays the *Henpecked Husband*, written in 1938, was staged last year in Veszprém. It was a great success, and the Veszprém company brought it to Budapest in a guest-performance.

Last year the National Theatre of Budapest presented another of his plays, *The Monster*, written in 1953. The background of this play is also laid on Horthy's Hungary. The hero is a history professor, who has passionate visions of Hungary's brilliant future—just like László Németh. But to realize them he would be forced to oppose the Horthy system with which he is at variance, openly. A gifted young girl falls in love with the widowed, aged professor. (This too, is a recurring Németh motif.) But because the professor defends his rights by attacking everybody right and left, his young wife abandons him, too, and he remains alone. At the end of the play he says to his daughter: "You all say you are the real humans. But I tell you, I am the man with the hungry heart you have all changed into a mythological monster." This, then, is the pattern of László Németh's plays. Lajos Básti plays the leading role, Tamás Major a Secretary of State, and Mari Törőcsik the young wife.

The most interesting László Németh play was put on in the Madách Theatre. *The Traitor*, in terms of drama, is one of his weakest plays; but in its boldness and sense of responsibility it provides much food for thought. Its hero is Arthur Görgey, the military commander of the Hungarian War of Independence in 1848–49, who laid down his arms before the Austrian Imperial troops and their allies, the troops of the Tsar. Lajos Kossuth, the spiritual leader of the War of Independence, was against the capitulation and to avoid giving himself up, he emigrated. From that date Görgey has been regarded as a traitor by Hungarian public opinion. As a reward, he was allowed to live in safety and even received a pension, while thirteen of his fellow-generals were executed by the Austrians in Arad. The accusation was that he sold

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

RÉNYI, Péter (b. 1920). Journalist, critic, Deputy Editor of *Népszabadság*, the central daily of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party in Budapest. Specializes in cultural affairs, contemporary world literature, film and theatre criticism. See also his "Hungarian Experiment," "Socialist Democracy and the Individual" and "The Irony of Thomas Mann" in Nos. 12, 17 and 23 of The N.H.Q.

HALÁSZ, Zoltán (b. 1914). Journalist, author of books on cultural history, Deputy Editor of The N.H.Q. Graduated from Pázmány (now Eötvös) University in Budapest, was for years Rome correspondent of MTI, the Hungarian news agency, later reader at Corvina press. His publications include: "Hungarian Wine through the Ages" (in English, publ. by Corvina Press), 1958; *Budapest felfedezése* ("An Exploration of Budapest"), 1959; *Úr városától Trójáig* ("From the City of Ur to Troy"), 1961; *Históriák a magyar régészet történetéből* ("From the History of Hungarian Archeology"), 1964; *Romvárosok a sivatagban* ("Ruined Cities in the Desert"), a biography of Sir Aurel Stein, 1966. See his "Sociographic Survey in a Workers' District of Budapest" in No. 11, "Brussels Encounter with Marie de Hongrie" in No. 14, "Home-Thoughts from Across the Channel" in No. 17 and "Chat under the Canvas" in No. 21 of The N.H.Q.

HANÁK, Katalin. Secondary school teacher in Budapest, sociologist. Graduated in Hungarian Literature at Eötvös University in Budapest. Is doing research into the process of urbanization and the adaptation of former rural inhabitants to city life. Has published studies in this field in various periodicals. With Péter Hanák, a historian, she published a sociological study of a big textile plant in Budapest in 1964.

VITÁNYI, Iván (b. 1925). Student of the philosophy of art. Was at school at the English-language college at Sárospatak. Worked on the staff of *Muzsika*, a musical review; since 1960 has been on the staff of *Valóság*, a monthly devoted to philosophy, sociology and anthropology. His essays have appeared in various musical and sociological reviews. Major works include a book on the dance (1963) and another on the aesthetics of light entertainment (1965).

GARAI, Gábor (b. 1929). Poet, secretary of the Hungarian Writers' Association. His first poems were published in the early 'fifties. A strongly intellectual yet passionate approach and a devotion to the public interest characterize his poems. He was awarded the Kossuth Prize in 1965; in 1966 he was elected a member of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. In addition to six volumes of poetry of his own he has published translations of Blake, Shelley, Yeats, Rilke, Verlaine, Cocteau, Brecht, Mayakovsky, and contemporary English, German, Russian and American poets. See his poems in Nos. 19 and 23 of The N.H.Q.

BIHARI, Ottó (b. 1921). D.L., Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Pécs, Dean of the Faculty of Law. Between 1945 and 1960 has held various executive posts in central and local administration. His main interest centres around Hungarian and comparative constitutional law. Has published several works in this field, the most important of which is a comparative study on the theory of the representative organs of state power (1963).

KERESZTURY, Dezső (b. 1904). Poet, literary historian, essayist, department head at the National Széchényi Library in Budapest. Has published several volumes of po-

etry, anthologies, essays on Hungarian and German literature, theatre and film criticism, etc. At present he is at work on an extensive Life of János Arany, the nineteenth century poet. See his theatre reviews and other contributions in Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 17, 19, and 23 (a poem) of The N.H.Q.

CSOÓRI, Sándor (b. 1930). Poet, writer. Studied Russian at the Budapest Lenin Institute (since incorporated into Eötvös University), began his writing career in the early 'fifties. His poetry reflects a deep sympathy for and identification with the working people, especially the peasants, and is often concerned with the painful process of transformation they are undergoing. Recent poems show an almost desperate search for new, more modern ways of expression, as well as his struggles with doubts and uncertainties and the solitude of city life. His essays and articles have of late attracted considerable attention. Has published five volumes of poetry and two collections of articles.

ÖRKÉNY, István (b. 1912). Novelist, short story writer. His sharp wit and dryly intellectual approach, his shrewd and subtle powers of observation and a tense, often ironic style, have given him a wide audience in Hungary. His experiences during the war, especially in the time he spent in a forced labour battalion, are often treated in his stories and plays; the short story we publish in this number belongs to this theme. His main interest is exploring human reactions in moments of the greatest pressure. Some of his latest works have a tendency to invoke the grotesque—a quality rare in modern Hungarian literature. A play he made out of one of his short novels, almost bordering on the absurd, a study of the relation between terrorism and servile stupidity, has been one of the great successes of the season in Budapest. His last collection of short stories, *Jeruzsálem hercegnője* ("The Princess of Jerusalem," 1966), is reviewed on p. 202 of present issue. See also his "No Pardon" in No. 17 of The N.H.Q.

MÁNDY, Iván (b. 1918). Short story writer and novelist. Most of his stories, written in a concise and remote style of his own and full of sharp observation, with a genuinely half comic, half tragic atmosphere, are almost exclusively about the eccentric characters frequenting the back streets, cheap pubs and junk markets of the city. A volume of his short stories as well as his short novel, *Fabulya feleségei* ("Fabulya's Wives," 1959), a humorous story of a writer submerged in hideous literary hack-work and fantastic love affairs in the strange intellectual atmosphere of the early 'fifties, have also been published in West Germany. For further information see Anna Földes's book review on p. 201 of the present issue. See also the story "Morning at the Cinema" in The N.H.Q., No. 4.

BOGNÁR, József (b. 1917). Economist, MP, Professor of Economics at Karl Marx University of Economics in Budapest, President of the Institute for Cultural Relations. As an economist has turned from problems of demand analysis to general economic planning. Member of the Editorial Board of, as well as a frequent contributor to, The N.H.Q. Among his previous contributions see "Towards a New System of Guidance in the Socialist Economy," in No. 20, "Overall Direction of the Economy," in No. 21, and "The Future Place and Role of the Developing Countries in the World Economy," in No. 23 of The N.H.Q.

JÉKELY, Zoltán (b. 1913). Poet, novelist. Studied in his native Transylvania and at Eötvös College in Budapest. His intellectual qualities reinforce and stiffen the often elegiac or mystical moods of his poetry, blended by a passionate sensitivity into a lyrical whole. His collected poems were published in 1957 in a volume entitled *Tilalmas kert* ("Forbidden Garden"). His

novels are in part autobiographical; in later books, however, he seems to be attracted by tales of adventure. Has also published translations of Dante, Shakespeare, and Racine as well as other French, English and some Rumanian poets.

ORSZÁGH, László (b. 1907). Literary historian, philologist, Professor of English at Kossuth University in Debrecen. Studied at Hungarian and American universities. Is the author of a book on Shakespeare (1948). Has also edited a large Hungarian–English, English–Hungarian Dictionary, (1953–1960) as well as the seven-volume Dictionary of the Hungarian Language (1959–62). Toured the US on a Ford Foundation Scholarship in 1965. Is a member of our Editorial Board. See his "Lexicography at Its Best," "A Programme for American Studies in Hungary," and "Shakespeare Through the Centuries" in The N.H.Q., Nos. 17, 23, and 24.

PASSUTH, László (b. 1900). Novelist whose historical novels, rich in colour and authentic historical detail, have won him great popularity in Hungary and abroad. All his historical novels are based on a profound study of the subject—usually a great personality of the past like Cortez, Joan of Naples, Constantine the Great, Theodoric the Great, Monteverdi, Giorgone, Velasquez, Raphael, etc., and the semi-romantic treatment, in addition to its literary qualities, has interested a large audience in history and art. He is one of the most widely read Hungarian authors; his works have been published in German, English, French, Dutch, Italian and Spanish, some of them in several editions.

KOVALOVSZKY, Miklós (b. 1910). Philologist, literary historian, D.Litt. Works as research associate at the Philogical Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Has published works on various questions of literary style, the analysis of style and the cultivation of the Hungarian language. As a literary historian he is researching into early twentieth century Hungarian poetry. He was one of the editors of the seven volume Dictionary of the Hungarian Language, published in 1962.

SZECSKŐ, Tamás (b. 1933). Sociologist, broadcaster. Graduated at Karl Marx University of Economics in Budapest. Works at Radio Budapest, where he has a regular programme. As a sociologist his main interests are research into mass media and political sociology. Has published: *Az ember és a nagyváros* ("Man and Metropolis"), 1966; *A rádiózás szociológiai és pszichológiai problémái* ("The Sociological and Psychological Problems of Broadcasting"), 1967.

FÖLDES, Anna. Journalist, critic and literary historian, on the staff of *Nők Lapja*, an illustrated Budapest weekly for women. Graduated in English and Hungarian at Eötvös University. Has written monographs on Ferenc Móra and Sándor Bródy, two Hungarian novelists, for a post-graduate degree in literary history, and a book on cheap literature. See her book reviews in Nos. 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 of The N.H.Q.

NAGY, Péter (b. 1920). D. Litt., literary historian and critic, Professor of Modern Hungarian Literature at Eötvös University in Budapest. Studied in Budapest and Geneva, worked for a time in the diplomatic corps, then in the publishing sphere. Wrote important monographs on Zsigmond Móricz and Dezső Szabó, two leading authors of twentieth century Hungarian fiction. Also writes theatre and film criticism. Has translated works by C. G. Jung, Sean O'Casey, Tennessee Williams, Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre. Among his many contributions, see "The Anti-Theatre," "Irreverent Thoughts on Maeterlinck," "London Nights" and "Bookshelf" in Nos. 5, 8, 12, 14 of The N.H.Q.

CZÍMER, József (b. 1913). Theatre critic, translator, literary manager of the Budapest *Vígszínház* theatre, a psychologist by training. Has translated plays by Anouilh, Tennessee Williams, Baldwin, Cassona, etc. In addition to two collections of articles, has published numerous essays on the theatre. See his "Letter to London," "Visiting the New York Theatres," and theatre reviews in Nos. 15, 18 and 25 of The N.H.Q.

NÉMETH, Lajos (b. 1929). Art historian. Studied at Eötvös University and Eötvös College in Budapest. Travelled in France, Italy, the USSR, Austria and Czechoslovakia; was for a while editor of an art review. At present works at the Budapest Museum of Fine Art. Has published books on Piero della Francesca, on early 20th century European art and on Simon Hollósy, the Hungarian painter. See "Tivadar Csontváry" and "Current Exhibitions" in Nos. 14 and 24 of The N.H.Q.

Erratum. On p. 1 of our last issue, No. 25, the number of the volume is given as VII. It should, of course, be Volume VIII.

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