28

The New Hungarian Quarterly

Hungarian Writers on the October Revolution

Zsigmond Móricz—Gyula Krúdy—Péter Veres—Gyula Illyés

Socialist Economic Theory and the New Mechanism

Béla Csikós-Nagy

A Gift from the Stag

Tibor Déry

New York Minute by Minute

Iván Boldizsár

Dialogue and Debate

This Year at Marienbad

Dialogue with Clipped Wings

Hungarian Socialism—Hamstrung?

Péter Rényi—Vid Mihelics—Mary Edwards

VOL. VIII * No. 28 * WINTER 1967 * 11S * $1.50

The New Hungarian Quarterly

Editorial Offices: 17 Rákóczi út, Budapest VIII, Hungary
Telephone: 136–857

Annual subscription: 29s or $4 post free to any address.
In Hungary: Ft 80.—

Orders of readers in Great Britain may be placed with:
Collet's Holdings Ltd., Import Subscription Dept.,
Denington Estate, Wellingborough, Northants
Wm. Dawson and Sons Ltd., Cannon House, Macklin Street, London W. C. 2.
W. H. Smith and Son Ltd., Strand House, Portugal Street, London W. C. 2.
Kultura Hungarian Trading Company for Books and Newspapers,
Budapest 62, P.O.B. 149. See also last page of cover.

Published by Lapkiadó Publishing House, Budapest

Printed in Hungary by Kossuth Printing House, Budapest

The New Hungarian Quarterly

VOLUME VIII * NUMBER 28

WINTER 1967

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

ARTS

THEATRE

MUSICAL LIFE

HUNGARIAN WRITERS ON THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

ZSIGMOND MÓRICZ

JÓSKA SAMU KIS

They hailed from the same village, somewhere at the Transylvanian border, and they were as happy a pair of rogues as any of their Székler compatriots. Always cheerful and in good spirits, always side by side in the line, the two lads came to be known by the same name throughout the regiment: one of them was Samu Kis, the other Jóska Samu, but the two together were simply Jóska Samu Kis.

"Brother," said Samu Kis, "I'm beginning to feel hungry."

For two days already they hadn't eaten. Nothing in the world was theirs. They had been sent forward to the barbed-wire entanglements, and behind them there was a big clearing through which only at night a few men could sneak to bring them shells rather than food.

"What'll we eat, brother?" asked Jóska Samu.

"What have we got?"

"I've got water."

"And I've got salt."

"Great! Let's make soup!"

"But what of?"

"Grass."

"Will that be good?"

"Of course."

"Wait a bit! No, that won't be good. I'll cook pigweed soup, that'll be better."

"But we haven't got any pigweed."

"We'll pick it. In this big meadow we're sure to find some. At home, Mother just runs out and fetches a potful."

"Well, that'll be fine."

They even had a good laugh at the idea. They crawled all over the trampled meadow, but found no pigweed they dared to cook.

"Well, brother, I'm going to creep out beyond the wires, nobody's beaten the grass down, there, it's still thick, we're sure to find all we want."

"I'm going too."

"No, you aren't, because if one of us gets bumped off, what's the sense of letting the other croak too for a mere scrap of pigweed!"

"All right, you know what? I'll go."

"So you can graze off that meadow while I look on! I know your sort."

And with that Samu Kis was already creeping out from under the barbed-wire.

He slid forward slowly like a big fat mole. He touched and sniffed at every blade of grass, tasted every leaf, but could not find anything anywhere like Mother used to pick back home—those luscious, tender leaves. How far away Mother was, and home, sweet home, how far!

On and on he crawled; it was such a pleasant feeling to slip slowly through the green grass, softly and silently, fumbling about and occasionally fondling the tall, ripe grass with his face. The Russians were not far off. It was no more than a hundred yards to the Russian trenches, with thick shrubbery in between and grass so tall he could not be detected even when he raised himself on his knees. Samu Kis kept on crawling ahead. Not knowing why or where he was going, he just crept along like a snail, hardly opening his eyes, and his progress was barely visible; he alone saw how the thin, upright blades of grass bent under his body.

Suddenly a queer, rustling sound struck his ears.

For a moment he listened terror-stricken, then began to laugh softly and inaudibly.

The noise he had heard was someone snoring.

What was he to do now?

Who could be sleeping so calmly under this great vault of heaven? When he raised his eyes, he only saw the deep blue sky. White clouds were swimming across it from the east. Good Lord, to think that anybody could sleep in this alien land, amidst the enemy! . . . True, the body wants its own rest. How easily one goes to sleep at home, when the day's work is done, burying oneself in the nice soft hay up in the loft and forgetting until morning what life is like. Only at midnight, when the horses start snorting, is one stirred, still half asleep, by a sense of duty: throw fresh hay to the horses! . . . And how one got used to everything! Even now he could barely keep his eyes from closing, but, just the same, he wouldn't be able to drop off. And yet that man, in his sweet, tranquil sleep, seemed to send out contagious rays of slumber towards him. His own lids had become sticky, as if dabbed with honey, a sensation of stupor had gathered behind his forehead,

and he almost tumbled over a soft molehill in his desire to forget about everything—this world, his worries, his weariness, his numbing hunger—and give himself up to exquisite sleep.

Then suddenly he thought of that other chap, his mate Jóska Samu, waiting back home, behind the barbed wire, for those luscious leaves with which to brew soup.

At once, all drowsiness left his eyes. His life, to be sure, didn't amount to much, others too were dying, thousands of them, tens of thousands, and goodness knew how many since the beginning of the world; and some time, some day, everybody would die... But Jóska Samu was waiting, waiting for those luscious pigweed leaves.

Samu Kis had a great idea.

Tense with excitement and filled with a new will to life, he again slithered forward, stealthily, like a lizard.

And all of a sudden, right in front of him, was the Russian soldier.

There he lay in the grass, spread out in his greenish uniform, the cap dangling limply from his head, his long golden-brown hair matted on his hot, sweaty forehead. His lips were slightly apart, his cheek, gentle and peaceful as a child's, was resting on a tuft of grass. The weapon had dropped from his hand, and there, next to him, was his haversack. He had abandoned himself to sleep as happily and confidingly as a baby in its mother's lap. Nothing in the world mattered to him, one might strike or kiss him to death before he would wake up. What was it this Russian had such faith in? The sacred Earth was hovering under him, one could almost sense its warm throbbing in unison with the tranquil breathing of the Russian soldier.

Samu Kis's eyes began to gleam. There was a sharp edge to his glance as he watched and measured the depth of the muzhik's sleep.

Then he stretched out his hand, the sharp-edged bayonet tight in his fist.

When its tip was less than an inch from the Russian's body, from his unbuttoned, hairy, ruddy-skinned chest, it come to a halt. The cold iron, the ruthless weapon, seemed to stop of its own accord, as if hesitating and trembling under the impact of some true and beautiful thought. Then it drew back and found itself in the other hand.

And with his empty hand Samu Kis grabbed the long Russian gun and lifted it from the grass. What a docile beast a weapon, a machine is when not geared to the living human soul! A Russian death had been right there, in the grip of a Hungarian hand... but again that Hungarian hand was opening and reaching out—to grab the brown haversack.

It wanted nothing else.

Once more Samu Kis scanned the flushed face of the sleeping man. He was

no longer a mere lad, his face was mottled with golden-brown hair, sparse and bristly, and he had the weary look of a father consumed by life's battles, yet he still seemed unmarried.

"Sleep, brother," Samu Kis said to himself, then slung gun and haversack over his shoulder and started to creep back.

He heard a snort and stopped in alarm. Horror seized him. What if the luckless man woke up? He would have to kill him.

He waited motionless, like a beetle feigning death at the slightest noise, and setting out again only several minutes later.

So he too set out, returning on his trail. How easily one could recognize the track of a rabbit in the snow, the double pair of rabbit footprints, two small ones in front, two large ones behind. Or of the fox as it ran ahead evenly, its long tail sweeping the snow. Man's path was heavier yet, it broke the live grass and cut a deep track, like a ditch, through the meadow.

When he had sneaked back under the wire, he found Jóska Samu at his post. There he sat—sound asleep. He slept like that muzhik, and he did not wake.

To sleep while on duty entailed severe punishment: flogging, being fettered to a tree, and in times of great danger even death by shooting... And how deeply he too was sleeping! The poor fellow had been unable to wait for that luscious pigweed.

"Hey, you!" His friend shook him. "Hey there, brother!" He could hardly bring him to.

"Here's something to bite!"

Jóska Samu's goggling, sleep-ridden eyes were fixed on the bulging haversack.

He looked at his pal and nodded with his head. He understood.

But there was something in that haversack, something so odd that it made both of them stare in wide-eyed amazement. A tiny little doll's cradle, of all things!

Jóska Samu picked it up. He placed it on his palm and looked at it. A neat little cradle. Carved with a pocket-knife, one of those rocking cradles, tiny as could be.

They looked and looked in silence.

The sun was pouring down hot from the sky; they grew dizzy in the shadeless patch, beads of sweat showed on their brows, fused into drops around their eyes, and rolled down.

Jóska Samu's tear fell right into the cradle.

"Where did you find this, brother?"

"There he is sound asleep, all by his lonely self," Samu Kis said.

Jóska Samu scratched his head. They remained silent. He had wanted to say: "It will be nice for my little daughter." But he did not say it. He just kept silent. The other wanted to say: "Take it home to her!" But he did not say it either.

They broke pieces from the bread and munched away at them slowly. Bit by bit they devoured the God-given morsels.

Suddenly Jóska Samu said:

"Brother!"

"What is it, brother?"

"Where is that poor devil sleeping?"

"Over there, further down."

They went on eating. After a while, Samu Kis said:

"Well, well, if I had only known..."

And again they went on eating.

This time Jóska Samu spoke:

"I too could make one like it for my little one."

And with the eye of a connoisseur he scanned and studied the cradle.

Then Samu Kis said:

"It's neat, but it doesn't take a wizard to make it."

To which Jóska Samu replied:

"No, it doesn't."

Samu Kis again:

"Let me have it, brother!"

"Me? No, I won't."

"Listen, old man, I'm not going to eat it."

"I don't know what you want to do with it, but I mean to take it back."

"How can you take it back, seeing it was I that brought it."

"But it was my idea that... I've got a child, I know what it means."

He said nothing more, just started off in the other's track. He was afraid the tightness in his throat might prevent his speaking.

"Well, at least put something in it! You're not going to take back an empty cradle, are you?" said Samu Kis rudely and broke off a piece from his bread. "Who knows when that muzhik gets his ration."

The muzhik was awake, he was sitting in the grass, his head hanging, not knowing what had happened.

He gave a start only when a human face cropped up before him.

Jóska Samu merely nodded at him and then reached out his palm with the cradle in it.

The Muzhik just stared at it with bloodshot eyes.

"Come on, take it," said Jóska Samu in a friendly tone. "There's no bloody dynamite in it. You know darn well what it is!"

And the Russian took it. The two fathers looked at each other and then quickly turned away. To hide their tears on the battlefield.

(1918)

GYULA KRÚDY

TEN DAYS' VACATION

Do you know the old hills echoing to the songs?

The old, peeling walls of houses, the sombre-sullen towers, the railway stations with lime-pits, the cages-on-wheels and the sad camps which have heard the songs, laments and desperation of soldiers for three full years?

Do you know the trenches with their rats and the sentries crumbled to ashes and seeping away in the mud? The dearly bought marshes, the heights that cost millions, the villages and holes signifying countries, for which so much blood has been spilt that the winds must blow for years to dry the soaked lands? Do you know the hand-grenades, the gasmasks, the wire-cutters, the identification strips sewn into the coat sleeves, the eyes of men saying good-bye, the splinters, the rag-wrapped feet storming forward by themselves after the shell has blown the body off, the hell-hit wounds deep as the past, the bullet-riddled bodies, the cries of the wounded forsaken in the moonless night, the gathering flocks of ravens which are the armies of Death appearing and disappearing on the horizon, the blood-sucking corporals and Nikolaievich and his companions?

Do you know the fatherless children wandering in the streets, the gaunt war-widows, the soldiers on leave broken in body and soul, humanity degraded out of recognition, the sharp-eyed businessmen, the millionaires smelling of prison, the nurses on the run, the culture withered to nothingness and the conscience battered to death?

Do you know the deserters, the arrogant shoemaker, the brazen oil magnate, the swollen cheese retail dealer bursting in his pants, the war banknotes smelling of sewage pits and of prison camps and the silent poverty biting like a fox cub?

If there be a man happy enough to have seen nothing of the war during

the past two and a half years, he would do well now to keep his eyes open. He should now absorb the atmosphere of these unrepeatable days and their transient figures into his memory. The giant plant is not as it was, the chimney of a factory is about to fall, the firemen have laid hold of the ropes to pull it to the ground. The Eastern Front, the name given to that circle of hell, has fallen silent as the din of the receding battle dies. The sombre-featured workers have downed tools and stopped. Not to repair their machines or to clear the scrap away and let new ants with fresher sight and springing muscles take over; but because there is a standstill, because all pain is bound to come to an end. The impostors who juggle with the peoples' lives run for it like mountebanks hunted along the highway. The illusions of trickery are gone, and suddenly all have begun to see the new portent on high instead of the red-tailed comet... perhaps the sign that appeared to the sentries watching in the Volhinia woods is the same as that seen by the first Christians before the wild beasts tore them to pieces in the arena.

And the opened eyes, the thoughts rising like a fountain, the souls calling like alarm-bells, the conscience bringing reprieve like a distracted messenger: they have stayed the tireless boots that seemed destined to march the earth from East to West, North to South, dripping blood on the war dung which reaches to the lips of Man fallen stifling into the pit: they have rammed their rifles into the ground, as the gravedigger rams his spade, having finished the work; they are herding their machine-monsters homewards like so many wild beasts after the show.

What next?

Man will raise his head like the viper and strike at his fate. The guns still roar in the West, Death still plays his monotonous march on the phantom hurdy-gurdy, the gas which should light men's labour still rolls in clouds over the hillside to choke the hard workers and the talented alike, but the hurdy-gurdy has missed a note now and then, and the hand turning it is feeling more and more cramped, the coming dawn sends shafts of light through the dark tempest of the gas attack, snow-white herons, dream birds wing from the East, shock-headed Russian peasants in big boots set out like the Magi on their pilgrimage to the cradle of peace. The nations of the West, hurt beyond forgetting, cannot yet overcome the blood-rush of anger, still seethe with revenge as a lizard's tail in the witch's cauldron, but a valve has already come loose in the engine stoked to exploding point. The terrible devil's engine rolls forward without a jolt, but far in the distance is already the white valley into which it will crash after the drivers have jumped off, one by one.

As we could not foretell the future in that memorable August—we would have hanged ourselves had we known, rather than live through this time—so we now have tomorrow before us in its Sais veil...

We have had something happen to us, we the happy, the living, which will not be repeated again in the world for many days. We are the chosen of humanity, for it has been granted to us to witness events which will fill the minds of generations to come. It is certain that it will be a long time before a paroxysm like the present World War happens again in the history of mankind. And perhaps never again will an age come in which Man can see Destiny above his head, the directing finger of the Universal Spirit and the road of man's advancement. The fluttering wing of ancient oxygen and thought turned to bloodcells can be felt in earth's atmosphere. Man must take the way of charity.

December fog has come to Budapest, the town is dark even in the day, faces and voices have taken on winter like the fur of animals in the wilds. Sullen days. Melancholic evenings. Care-laden nights. Hopeless tomorrows. An almost unendurably toilsome life. Yet nobody in the town will think of committing suicide. A wonderful Christmas is approaching, one never experienced by people in Budapest. Glittering pine sprays in the refurbished shop-windows, the childish soul of the grown-ups, waiting for the holiday, even the humdrum calendar; all give people a foreshadowing of an eagerly awaited event. Something is approaching in the freezing night, over the smoky housetops, in the impenetrable fog. The jingle of sleds, the singing of fairies and the sound of bells are heard from the far-off woods. A strange apparition rises on Budapest's horizon, one already seen by the weary soldiers out there in the ill-omened fields.

Fiery thunderbolts, rolling-eyed stars, golden crucifixes appeared of old in the sky to portend great events in the history of Man. Now swallow-tailed aeroplanes glide on clouds and drop by the million the leaflets giving notice of the ten-day ceasefire. The soldier catches the circling butterfly and places it on his heart.

(1917)

PÉTER VERES

WHEN I WAS TWENTY

1917. I was twenty years old—the best age in the life of man, when he reaches maturity in work and love. Attila József wrote: "My twenty years—a power, my twenty years—for sale!" I have already sold them for nothing. It was in February 1917 that I returned my exemption to the Debrecen–Füzesabony division of the State Railways, where I was working as a linesman, and volunteered for the army. I was ashamed to stay at home when boys of seventeen and eighteen had already been called up. With my twenty years I was considered quite one of the elder lads, and it was really not very pleasant to hear women in mourning whispering "it's a shame this strong chap is still shirking, while my poor boy is suffering at the front or has already been killed!" And there were plenty of them—the women in mourning I mean—for it was the year of the Doberdo battles and an epidemic of smallpox into the bargain. I was a revolutionary and a socialist and an anti-militarist and a pacifist, because all these went together at the time, and what I really would have liked to fight against was the Hapsburgs and the gentry, but still I went to war, for I could not stand the atmosphere at home, neither the military system at work, nor being called a coward by the girls.

However, it wasn't as simple as that, and involved a great deal of mental distress. So many things happened to me in 1917 that I have a clearer remembrance of when I was six to eight years old than my "golden" age of twenty.

For men of to-day it is difficult to imagine how hopeless was the imperial and royal world for any true revolutionary. (All the more as there are no authentic and genuine books of that period.) How solid and unchangeable the Hapsburg system seemed in the eyes of the poor simple peasants who, lacking historical insight and a sense of the future, could only see the daily manifestations of power. The sickle-feathers and bayonets of the gendarmes always and everywhere reminded us of the powers-that-be, like the whipping post of earlier periods. All the gentry and their servants firmly believed this order to be everlasting—and what became of it? Gone with the wind—the wind blowing from the Putilov Works of St. Petersburg.

And in addition to this almighty apparatus of gendarmes, policemen and the administration, every able-bodied man had to serve in the army. And once you wear a uniform, you are not a human being any more, but an instrument in a huge organization. After three years of service you would be called in for exercises and manoeuvres, so as not to become too civilian.

The system was such that even if you stopped thinking in the old-fashioned servile way, and had already had some notion of socialism, you felt like most of the social-democrat and trade-union leaders did: we are helpless against this overwhelming and oppressive apparatus, and we have to compromise for the time being; socialism can only be realized in the far distant future. Theories about this opportunism were worked out, first by Bernstein, then by others. We, the common rank and file of the labour movement, didn't have an inkling about dialectical revolutionary thinking, and consequently failed to realize that the five to six million bayonets distributed all over the Monarchy were actually in our hands! We knew it, of course, but just kept sighing: oh, if we only stick together! But then who is to begin?

I, for instance, was a revolutionary, an implacable enemy of the existing imperial and royal order, of the landlords and of the capitalist economy, where I could only be a servant or a day-labourer; when I was a small boy I dreamed about setting fire to the castles, breaking open the granaries, distributing the wheat and the lands as well, as ever so many poor peasants did all over the world. But I didn't known how to do it. Both the agrarian socialist movement and the social democrat daily *Népszava* indicated organization as the only way of liberation, and I believed them. Before joining the army, I sometimes read the papers and was somehow familiar with world events. *Népszava*, in which I believed as firmly as I believed in God as a child, wrote about the chances of a socialist revolution during this world war and referred to the great personalities of the labour movement. The general conclusion was that it was not possible. An English labour leader called Hyndman was most categorical about it. He pointed out that the world war had encouraged nationalist and chauvinist feelings. As a further argument against the possibility of a revolution he added that the whole people were mobilized, so there was no political life and possibility of organizing. Everyone was a soldier, even the industrial workers who manufactured the guns and the ammunition were part of the war machinery.

It is easy now to call them fools: they were supposed to be the leaders of the workers, and direct the class-warfare, were they? These people, who hadn't the slightest notion of the dialectical timetable of history, nor of the history of revolutions, the nature of peoples and popular movements, and the dialectics of what is called the people's mind. But then in the very middle of a cataclysm following a long period of peace it was certainly not easy to be clear-sighted, and still less easy to look into the future. Millions longed for socialism, but there was no example to follow, nor any clear concept of how to get it. We had heard nothing about Lenin's policy of converting the imperialist war into a civil war or a revolution; and in the summer of 1914

we were bitterly disillusioned by the failure of international socialist solidarity to assert itself beyond frontiers, that is, by its failure to prevent the outbreak of war by a worldwide strike. With the exception of a few, all the social-democrat, socialist and labour parties voted for the war, or even joined war cabinets—the pretext was national defence and independence —and we felt there was no hope. Real international solidarity was merely a fine dream.

By 1917, however, we began to recover our wits. Even I, the naive and simple-minded peasant lad, began to have doubts about the revolutionary spirit of social-democrats, although I had heard hardly anything about the doubts of others, that is, the conferences of Kienthal and Zimmerwald. I wrote an angry letter to *Népszava* about Hyndman's theory, but I don't know what happened to it, or whether the editor answered it, because I joined the army soon afterwards. There all such ideas were utterly driven out of my head, all I thought of was the bugle-call for meals, for I was terribly hungry. Without spiritual food, papers and books, without reliable comrades in the detachment, my revolutionary spirit, just about ready to take shape at home, withered away; all that was left of it was that I regarded the whole military apparatus as my enemies from the drill-sergeant to the supreme commander who by then, after the death of Francis Joseph, was called Charles IV, as well as the whole political and social system with its ruling classes and its leaders, from the village mayor and the estate gamekeeper to the Prime Minister.

Lenin's brilliant talent was shown precisely by the fact that it was this hostility he relied on, and not simply the number of organized workers or the votes given to the socialist parties. Lenin knew what was wanted for a victorious revolution: the simple working man—the "man of the street"— had to repudiate the existing order, or at least, rebel against it; all the rest was the business of the conscious revolutionaries. Lenin not only knew the way an industrial worker of Petrograd or Moscow thought about the war; he also knew the feelings of the peasant from the Ukraine, from Tambov, Kuban or Siberia, and of the Russian soldier he had become; in fact, he knew my feelings, those of a Hungarian navvy accustomed to eat a lot of bread, who had become a soldier and was reduced to dried vegetable soup and a daily bread ration of 20 dekagrams. Unlike the "learned" ones, like Kautsky and the rest, Lenin knew the thoughts and feelings of the workers, the poor peasants and common soldiers all over the world, and this is why he believed in the victory of the revolution. Because he not only knew the prejudices, the beliefs and the customs which held the peoples tied, but he also knew the realities which forced us to think, and he knew the feelings and pas-

sions which sprang from it. And he also knew, which is the stronger, and when.

And Lenin also knew the thoughts and feelings of oppressed people, small and big nations, when subjugated by foreign powers. Lenin knew what it is to be a slave, not only as a single man, but as a whole community, as a nation as well. For Lenin knew not only what a party and what a class is, but also what a people and a nation is. And since he knew these things and also believed them, he was able to persuade everybody, not only workers, peasants and soldiers, but thoughtful intellectuals as well, who wanted to know and were able to believe. And that there was no universal world revolution or even a European revolution, apart from the so-called objective reasons and historical circumstances, was quite considerably due to the millions of petty bourgeois, the half-civilized and half-socialist ones, who neither knew nor believed the truth Lenin told them, and were afraid to risk the loss of the petty privilege, the little rank and the small fortune they possessed in the universal revolution.

This digression, however, would take me a long way away if I was to formulate it clearly; so I prefer to describe what I saw and felt of the great October revolution.

I must admit that I actually knew far less than I ought to have known, and far less than what I could be proud of to-day. In all the fatigues of the training period my only "mental" interest was concentrated on the meal: will there be any leavings, for how many days is a day's loaf supposed to last—five or six? And I was eager to know when the girl I was going to marry would write and when my mother would send me a parcel.

I very rarely saw a newspaper, and when I did, it was full of white blanks owing to the censorship. Hardly any ideas or opinions were published, except for a few articles about German Mittel-Europa, written by politicians and journalists who were either absolutely blind themselves as far as the war was concerned, or who wanted to blind the Germans by making them believe that they still had faith in the German victory and in the New Europe they were supposed to be building.

I was unable to learn anything definite about the Russian revolution. Every now and then the name of Lenin was mentioned, but those of Prince Lwow, Miliukov and Kerensky appeared much more often, and I couldn't expect much from them, particularly when I heard that they were forcing the Russian army to further exertions.

But these were only passing experiences. When my training period was over I went on active service and my whole nervous strength was absorbed by the excitement of leaving for the front. This excitement was interrupted by

the harvest: our company was switched to the farms of Debrecen to gather the crops. Here I saw no newspapers. Later I was transferred to a training course for telephone operators in Szeged, and from here, maybe just when the revolution was breaking out in Petrograd and Moscow, we were sent by train to the Italian front through Doberdo, right to the river Piave, in pursuit of the defeated and fleeing Italian army.

At the front I could obtain still less information about the Russian revolution, although we occasionally got newspapers there. It was only in autumn 1918, when some former war prisoners returned from Russia were posted to us, that we realized what the Russian revolution really was and what the Russian Bolsheviks really wanted.

But what the whole difference was between the Bolshevik revolutionaries and our social-democrats and agrarian socialists, I only realized later in autumn 1918, and still better in spring 1919, when the Hungarian Soviet Republic was proclaimed.

(1957)

GYULA ILLYÉS

ORATOR IN THE NIGHT

Szilas. Bogárd. Szolgaegyháza. These were still familiar names. But later the certainty was gone.

As we approached Budapest the hold-ups became more frequent. We were kept waiting on the Összekötő Railway Bridge for at least an hour, and spent the same length of time in the Rákos shunting yard and the Ferencváros railway station. The stations were empty. Everywhere ours was the only train on the tracks, fifty wagonfuls of snores. But not far from the Eastern Railway Station we ran right into the middle of a commotion with the sound of trumpets and the neighing of horses and singing. And, of course, we got stuck again.

It looked as if a national market was in full swing under the high arc lamps. People were coming and going and scrambling across the rails, some tugging at the reins of rearing horses, others apparently carrying shining tin containers and other utensils.

Two other trains were standing idle close by, each with two engines from

which—impatient to start—came pouring thick smoke, steam, water, oil and hissing. In the front of the engines, stuck as it were to the right and left in their noses, like feathers in the noses of savages: flags. I stood up on the roof of the carriage. The figures hurrying to and fro were soldiers, the utensils sections of machine-gun. A trumpet blast, a whistle. "Béla Kun's coming!" they shouted from several directions at once.

People came jumping from the railway carriages, gathering into groups as they ran. As if this suddenly formed throng had thrown him up from itself as the sea tosses up a boat or a wreck: a man was there standing on top of a railway carriage and addressing the crowd.

He was a long way from me so that I could only make out what he said when he shouted. But I did not want to go any nearer, leaving my train, for fear it might start moving again in the meanwhile.

There was a wind rising with increasing strength. Not far from the speaker a big shaded arc lamp swung on a cable above the rails. The gusts of wind twisted the lamp, tilting its shade towards us. Light and shadow floated across the speaker's face for short seconds at a time; the wind dropped for a moment to start up again the next. In those fleeting seconds I had to strain my eyes to take stock of the nervously turning face of the speaker. The face seemed flushed from the rays of the lamp, and the heat of what he was saying, framed in the now bronzed brown hair bronzed by the light and the stubble of beard. I stretched my head as far as I could and even stood on the haversack filled with potatoes, much to the annoyance of the small woman beside me, in order to see if it was the famous leader who was speaking.

It was Béla Kun speaking.

But that I really saw him at the time in the dazzling alterations of light and shadow I was only convinced a good while later.

For this reason I cannot give a definite picture of his appearance at that time. Like a twice-exposed photographic plate two pictures are superimposed in my memory. The event itself is inextricably fused with the second meeting, which followed this first, fifteen years later almost to a day, in Moscow. And I do not desire to separate the one from the other.

The speaker flung his arms wide under the lamp and swayed to and fro like the wind-tossed tree branches behind him.

He was calling on the soldiers to fight.

Up to that time the people's leaders had been daily predicting the outbreak of a proletarian revolution. That fine phrase, to which so many other phrases could be added about the Hungarian workers' self-sacrificing heroism and their certain victory, began to be replaced about this time, after the

fiasco of the international strike, by a new set of typical rousing slogans about the proletarian homeland, ringing even more grandiloquently but also a trifle more defiantly. "The heroic regiments of the proletarian homeland, have crossed the Tisza and are driving the slave army of the Rumanian boyars before them!" the speaker cried in one long breath. He wore a morning coat which made him seem taller of an almost imposing height, like a full-grown tree, standing there alone on top of the railway-carriage. The image I retained was of a tall man with quick movements.

On the second day of my stay in Moscow—in July 1934—they asked me over the phone to go to one of the side-streets off Tverskaya to discuss my sightseeing plans and the question of my guide.

There were three or four men waiting for me in a room. They introduced themselves. All of them were Hungarians, as emigré people generally are. I did not catch their names at once, so immediately did they plunge into conversation. On the spot they began to discuss literature at home, or rather that freak of the mind called official literary policy. They were far more adept at it than I was. We drank tea and smoked. At the window, with his back to the light, sat a short man, stocky rather than fat, in a shirt without a tie and a badly crumpled white suit. He was going bald on top. He was speaking at me, or rather about me. After a few sharp remarks, half bantering, half hectoring, but intended rather to create an atmosphere of intimacy than really to hurt, he explained with the air of kindly superiority of the well-informed that I would undoubtedly leave *Nyugat* (West) because I and my editor Babits would never be able to get along in the same tavern (alluding to the Hungarian proverb about two pipers in one tavern being too many). I did not take him up, because my opponent took my peasant mentality as a basis, and such arguments ad hominem always depress me. Then he launched into an attack on the village research movement, which had started about that time, but here his criticism was so much more objective, as well as cutting, that I felt I had to reply. We almost quarrelled on the subject. He analysed the subtle difference between the "defence of the nation" and "the defence of the people." According to him I was walking on a knife edge between the two and it was to be feared I would come down on the wrong side, that is, the former.

I pulled at my cigarette a little nervously, not because of the argument but because I also had an appointment with Malraux that morning. We came round to Ady: he had walked on that knife-edge too. But with what assurance!

The man, who had been speaking with a vigorous liveliness up to then, now went at it like one feeling familiar ground beneath his feet. There

was no stopping him. He had known the poet Ady from his school days. They went to school in the same town. Later he disclosed, casually, for fear his pride should seem like bragging, that Ady coached him.

At that I forgot my impatience. I cocked my ears listening first intently then almost carried away by that vivid account, I was listening to the memory of student life in that one-time part of Hungary on the border of Transylvania. What games of Hungarian *longameta* there had been! And Nagyvárad! What future had been in ferment there, what coruscating mixture of the Hungarian and the international in its spirit! Ady's collar was so high it rubbed him sore under the ear. The speaker thoroughly enjoyed what he was saying; and he also enjoyed, as a pleasant extra, the effect it made. "My God," he said after every two sentences, as an introduction to each new paragraph.

Why don't you write it all up, I asked him, you really should. They'd be only too glad to publish it in *Nyugat*.

"I doubt it."

I asked him why. "Because of my name, perhaps, to begin with."

Here was the painful moment when one has to ask the name of someone to whom one has just been introduced. Much embarrassed, I was preparing to take the step, when the face that fitted the stocky figure so neatly suddenly seemed familiar. On the plate now exposed a few faint lines of the picture of fifteen years ago came up. I looked hard at the original of the picture. If for no other reason, I could not now avoid the question.

I hope I have sufficiently prepared the reader so that he is not too overwhelmed. Béla Kun was sitting in front of me. I closed my eyes to put this stocky private person, this literary critic, back into his place on top of the carriage as the popular orator slim as Mephistopheles. It took time.

In keeping with his morning coat the speaker wore a bowler hat, held in his hand there on top of the carriage. With each wide gesture of the arm the hat flew aloft and filled with wind, and one feared it would carry the speaker away with it, like a bellying sail.

"Comrades!" he shouted, "we who have been vagabonds without a fatherland. . ."

From the shreds of sentences blown to me I made out that the homeless vagabonds would show that they too knew how to conquer a country for themselves. They would get themselves a fatherland by force of arms. "A better one than the capitalists, feudalists and bishops have got." The speaker played with vehemence on the low notes of national dissatisfaction under the high notes of class hatred. He spoke about our brothers waiting to be freed. People could understand proletarian or Hungarian brothers as

they wished. Most understood the reality: both. Then more and frequently, the wind, as if flailing the chaff, picked up and blew past our ears the word —"victory, victors, be victorious!" There came roaring past my ears the synonym of the word which, heaven knows why, then sounded imperialistic to me: "to conquer!" It was July 27 or 28. "On July 27 or 28, three or four days before the defeat, you were speaking of final victory, in Budapest," I said fifteen years later in Moscow.

"Of course."

"Well, didn't you realise the position? Everything was hopeless by then. Even I, a mere child, could see it. The middle Tisza Army had already been taken prisoner!"

The former orator of the people raised his eyes to me. He said in a low voice: "The next day the Rumanians were already advancing between the Duna and Tisza."

"I went to welcome them myself," I said. "Responding to your call I was on the banks of the Tisza on the 30th, arms in hand."

"On the 30th I was at Királyhida. With Weltner and Peyer, and Böhm back from Vienna. We were discussing Cunningham's message. The Entente appeared to be ready to bargain at that point. I was against."

I saw him for the second time towards the end of my visit to Russia. We took a stroll together in the park of a resort near Moscow, then we had supper, then on the way to catch my tram we took another walk. He had wanted to meet me once more, but I was also eager to seize the opportunity. I had to write a book about my journey and I already saw the chapter to be devoted to him. Going out to see him I had been thinking of interviewing him, the first interview of my life. Nothing came of it.

When, a good way along in the conversation, I asked him if he would allow me to write about our meeting on my return. He looked at me in astonishment.

"Would you have the courage?"

I did not understand why it should have needed especial courage. "Others put their questions to kings, my destiny has given me you," I commented. Then in a voice which showed I knew that the person I was talking to despised the genre as much as I did, I added: "Imagine the stir it would make in Budapest!"

He shook his head.

"I do not talk to journalists."

"Would you to a writer? Am I to understand that I am free to write about it in a poem or a novel?" The second sentence was not really a question. At that time the western press was publishing weekly reports of Béla

Kun undermining the social order in Mexico or Spain or China. Was that why he refused me permission to write about him, sitting comfortably in a middle-class armchair eating his wife's meal, paprika chicken, prepared in honour of the guest, but without paprika?

Now the interview, if I had written it would really have created a sensation. My aunts back in the village at Ozora had crossed themselves when they heard about my journey to Moscow, and had perhaps even had a mass celebrated for me surreptitiously. In their mind the man was Anti-Christ.

Now we sat at table together.

He was holding forth on the differences in the approach to materialism in the poetry of Lőrinc Szabó and Attila József, and he got it right.

My efforts to direct the conversation to politics, the past and the part he played were useless.

"How old were you when the fate of Hungary was placed in your hands?"

"Is that of any interest? I was thirty-three," he answered and began to talk about what he had been doing before that time. He had been on the same editorial staff as Kosztolányi.

"*Édes Anna* is a masterpiece."

Turning away he looked at his son, who was fiddling with the wireless. "He keeps it tuned into Budapest the whole day," he said. Later we came back to nationalism again. I spoke in defence of national feeling, in exaggerated terms, and more strongly than I really believed. He thought for a while, suddenly took down a book from the shelves, one of Lenin's works, and translated a chapter extempore: Why can a Bolshevik be proud that he is Russian or even Great Russian? On account of Pugachov, Stenka Razin and Pushkin.

He got up and went to adjust the knob of the wireless. We were sitting on the verandah. Crackling and sputtering and sounding as if the flood were bursting a dam, over us poured the second part of that First World War march "I belong to the Thirty-Second Regiment."

I saw him once more. We met before the Comintern Building on the day of my departure. He invited me to lunch. We went down to the cellar room of a small Caucasian restaurant opposite the G.P.O. We had shaschik. At the end of lunch when I had already picked up my hat, I asked him jocularly: "Well, what message have you got for the Hungarian proletariat? I'm due back in Budapest the day after tomorrow." He had also risen. He sat back suddenly. I did the same a moment later, perching on the edge of the chair. I thought he still had something to pay because he was looking in the direction of the waiter. Then with a sudden movement he turned his head towards the wall.

I never saw a man cry like that. His face was motionless, his eyes never moved. He sat upright with arms folded and cried and the tears poured out without stopping as the lesson pours out of a virtuous pupil.

If I see a man laughing I do not laugh with him, but at the sight of tears I cannot prevent my eyes growing moist as well. In this impossible situation, with sympathy welling up, I sat there hesitating, when suddenly I found myself paralysed with curiosity instead of feeling. I had heard that that man could be a tiger to counterrevolutionaries. He had decided the fate of thousands. I looked searchingly at him. He passed the back of his hand across his eyes. Then he went on crying.

"I once heard you speak," I began, feeling awkward. I felt as if guilty of his tears. "You were addressing a crowd from the top of a railway carriage at the Eastern Railway Station."

"Did you?" he turned to me with the kind of interest one would show on receiving an important piece about a mutual acquaintance. "What was I speaking about?"

"You were addressing soldiers, the Csepel steel workers who were leaving for the front. But there were hussars there too. There were two trainloads. At the end you asked the men if there was anything they needed.

He looked at me attentively.

"The hussars had everything they needed. But the steelworkers were cold. There was a terrible wind blowing. One of them shouted up to you that they needed coats to cover them. It was night."

"I don't remember."

"You shouted down to the station guards that they should go around in lorries and collect all the blankets from the hotels in the neighbourhood. If there weren't enough they should go and take them from the flats."

"And then?"

The tears were now caught in the wrinkles of a childish smile and only rolled further when large enough.

It was not a long speech.

The wind blew more strongly and the lamp rocked more quickly. The small space lit up in flashes on the railway carriage with the orator and the soldiers massed around stood out in the night and the wind like an island, like a flying barge eclipsed every now and then by the waves. Like a shipwreck in the times before steam was invented. In Delacroix's youth. Another trumpet blast. When next the light swung back on the railway carriage the orator had gone, swept off as if from a deck. Whistles. Dawn was breaking.

(1939)

TENTATIVE OUTLINES OF A NEW WORLD ECONOMIC CONCEPT

by

JÓZSEF BOGNÁR

Just occasionally it is worthwhile making an approach to such a fundamental human activity as the economy from the most simple angle. By most simple we mean the definition of this activity and the objectives and meaning of the processes which accompany it. Hundreds of millions of people take part in this activity, but their participation takes place within a certain framework and through different institutions and organizations. Without such a framework and such organizations its fundamental objectives could clearly not be achieved. The experience of history has shown that these structures and institutions—at once the expression and the vehicle of certain human interests and endeavours, whether collective or particular—follow their own dynamic laws, and as a result directly pursue particular objectives; objectives which are not completely consonant with the fundamental objectives of the economy, or, indeed, may even contradict them. The conflict between the fundamental human objectives and the particular institutional objectives tends to become acute—

a) the less elastic and the more bureaucratic the institution in question, and

b) the greater the change taking place in society, in international life, and in the economy itself (for instance, the technological revolution).

In the world of rational political and economic activities, only to apprehend it is not sufficient; in order to achieve the fundamental objectives, the framework, the institutions, the mechanism of the economy must also change, even though this meets with opposition from the institutions concerned. The only purpose of the economy, i.e., the world economy in the full sense of the term, is to meet the needs of humanity on a rising standard of living, and thereby encourage the full development of human faculties.

If the world economy is viewed from this angle, we must reach the conclusion that the means of production which are utilized and the capacities

which are available are still not sufficient to meet the demands of the world's population. And since the population of the world has grown faster than production—particularly agricultural production in the last ten years—per capita consumption has fallen.

Since the world economy works through the framework and within the limits of different national economies, it follows that its inadequate operation does not affect the whole population on the globe equally, since in one part of the world, where capital and scientific knowledge are plentiful, an ever-decreasing number of people are able to produce the goods needed to meet the high demands of the population, while in the other the scarcity of both make it impossible to expand economic growth. This growing contrast has become particularly dangerous in the present age, when the political history of mankind is beginning to develop along the same lines, communications are developing at a tremendous rate and the demographic explosion daily widens the gulf between the distribution of modern means of production throughout the world and the distribution of its population. Another factor to be taken into account is the rapid growth in the number of nations, i.e., in national economies: of the one hundred and twenty independent nations in existence more than one hundred have a population below fifteen million.

It is therefore quite natural that mankind is again compelled to adjust the framework and economic institutions which embody the economy, in order to meet its fundamental objectives.

International economic relations designed to promote the maximum growth of the world economy as a whole—and the single national economies within it—have passed through three characteristic phases of development in this century.

It was essentially the system of free trade that was dominant in the first phase up to the time of the world crisis in 1929, a phase in which the structure of the economy invariably subserved the stronger partner. During the twenty or thirty years following the crisis, the second phase developed, when the war and acute international tensions prompted the national economies to depend far more on the domestic market, and consequently on a policy of bilateral agreements and protection. This policy was not only dominant in the socialist countries, where the dynamic conception of protection for nascent industries had been adopted, but in the advanced capitalist countries as well, since most (about 70 per cent) of the imports of raw materials and agricultural products were subject to customs duty, to quotas, and high taxes. (The duties levied on raw materials exported from the developing countries—with the exception of crude oil—amounted to $800 million a year at that time, whereas taxes reached the sum of $2,200 million.)

In the third stage of development the outline of new forms of international economic cooperation began to emerge, such as attempts to achieve regional blocs, and experiments in association, and the new forms have quite clearly produced considerable results.

Generally speaking, the countries taking part in some form of association have evolved certain economic and trade rules for—

a) the development of economic ties between the member states,

b) the promotion of the rapid growth of the national economies,

c) the stake one nation has in the economic advancement of the others.

Regionally uniform trading techniques clearly meant not only preferences for the member states, but also disadvantages for trading partners outside the association. As a result the internal increase of trade within the association reached a point where it became an obstacle to the expansion of trade with countries outside it.

But all the various systems have so far proved unable to solve the four basic problems of the world economy today. They are as follows:

1. The reduction and gradual liquidation of the gulf between the economically underdeveloped countries and the other parts of the world.

2. The ideological confrontation and economic competition resulting from the coexistence of the capitalist and socialist systems.

3. The growing economic polarization among the advanced capitalist countries, in particular between the United States on the one hand and Western Europe on the other—as a consequence of which the West-European economy is being downgraded and is acquiring a reproducing character.

4. Owing to the rapid growth in the number of national economies, the world economic mechanism built on principles of international competition and private enterprise is becoming increasingly unsuitable as a means of securing a comparatively balanced development of the world economy and of promoting the rational utilization of the means of production and productive capacities.

It is worth analysing these four problems in greater detail.

1. No less than 89 per cent of the world's income, 88 per cent of the gold and currency reserves, and 94 per cent of steel production are concentrated in thirty countries representing 29 per cent of the world population at the present time, a figure that will have dropped to 19 per cent in the year 2000 A.D.

60.6 per cent of the cereal production of the world, including rice and maize, 68.6 per cent of its meat production and 79.3 per cent of its protein production, are concentrated in the same thirty countries.

There is an even wider divergence in the long-range factors of economic

growth, since no less than about 95 per cent of the world's scientific research capacity is to be found in the advanced countries.

It is therefore quite evident that with such a distribution of intellectual and material resources, i.e., the factors affecting economic growth, the difference between the industrially advanced and the economically underdeveloped countries has not diminished but increased during the last ten years.

Per capita national income in the developing countries has fallen since 1958. Their share in world exports and imports has been substantially reduced. The developing countries have found it necessary to increase imports of agricultural staple products. The terms of trade have also taken an unfavourable turn for the developing countries (a deterioration of 28 per cent between 1950 and 1962).

After comparing import needs and export possibilities, on the assumption of a population growth of 2.3 per cent a year, the Geneva World Trade Conference came to the conclusion that in 1970 the annual deficit in the balance of payments of the developing countries will amount to as much as $20,000 million.

When assessing the various developments to be anticipated it becomes fairly evident that the long-range trends of economic growth are making for polarization, and the present forms of international trade—the actual world market mechanism—only go to increase the differences. The mere process of exchange, i.e., the exchange of goods on the basis of mutual advantages and equality, is insufficient to correct the uneven distribution of the production factors. One reason is that the process of exchange is the result of other processes which precede it. The other reason is that not only the commodities themselves are meeting in competition on the market, but the economic powers as well, whose influence inside and outside the market obviously has a great effect upon the modalities of the exchange. In recent decades the advanced capitalist world has seen the development of precisely those economic super-powers which have been able to turn the processes affecting the conditions of exchange to their own advantage.

The widening gulf between the industrialized and the economically underdeveloped countries must consequently be bridged by such economico-political measures as make it possible—

a) to transfer a part of the world income to the developing countries,

b) to achieve the industrial division of labour in terms of an overall comprehensive plan,

c) to undertake and coordinate the solution of certain basic economic problems (for instance, the food and agricultural problems of the economi-

cally underdeveloped countries, mainly Asia, through action on a world scale.

These comprehensive economico-political measures could be carried out partly through the market mechanism, by correcting it in a definite direction, and partly by other means.

A part of the national incomes could be redistributed, for instance, by adjusting the prices of raw materials. It is common knowledge that the principle of demand and supply results in low incomes for the producers of primary products. According to the economico-political practice adopted today in the advanced countries, the proceeds from the centres of growth are transferred to agriculture by taking steps to see that the income of the producers should not differ essentially from the income of workers in the growth industries. The chief agency of the transfer mechanism is the *price policy*. Prices—of raw materials as well—ought to be high enough to effect such a transfer without allowing excessive high prices to lead to overproduction (barter agreements) or to the substitution of synthetic for raw materials.

Adjustment of the prices of raw materials is not in itself enough, since the factors of growth still remain scarce. The major part of the transfer of income must therefore be carried out in some other manner.

A new division of labour carried out as part of a comprehensive design would demand the transfer of certain industrial activities to the economically underdeveloped countries. The governments of the advanced countries would have to commit themselves to the purchase of a certain amount of industrial goods. These agreements could be negotiated through the market if the market is understood, as at present, to mean the short- and long-term agreements of legally independent but economically interrelated and interdependent enterprises.

A settlement of the food problem demands a whole series of planned, coordinated and interdependent agreements. This type of activity should be planned and coordinated by international organizations, such as UNO, FAO and UNCTAD, but in order to increase the complex possibilities of giving aid and assistance they will have to accept all offers that can be converted into aid in some form or other.

2. The simultaneous existence of capitalist and socialist systems in the world involves both ideological confrontation and economic competition. In the course of this confrontation both systems exert every effort to convince the world of its superiority, i.e., of its capacity to solve the problems which have developed in the course of historical development, in a more efficient, more equitable and more modern manner. The functional capacity of a social-economic system cannot be separated from the results it achieves in the

economic field, i.e., from its rising productivity, technological development, the growth rate of the national income and an equitable system of distribution. Socialism—the newer social-economic system—makes every effort to demonstrate that it is capable of meeting the high-level needs of the population without the oppression or economic exploitation of other peoples in the course of its rapid economic advancement. This economic competition, however, shows itself in the first place in an intensified drive in the domestic economy, but does not necessarily extend to the field of international trade.

Some of the socialist countries of Europe have reached the state where the increase of exports takes precedence in the economy over the substitution of imports through the development of domestic production. Western sources usually describe it as a "shortcoming" of the planned economies that their policy of planned priorities in development acts as an obstacle to imports.

This "shortcoming" is connected in the first place not with the volume but with the type of import. Since the socialist countries of Europe are very anxious to import specialized plant and equipment, this "shortcoming"—as far as the Western desire to export is concerned—is in fact an advantage. The planned economy does not set out to create an indiscriminate export industry in conflict with the economic efforts of other countries, and which would compel their own governments to market them abroad at any price. Obviously, once the new economic mechanism has been introduced, the socialist countries will be anxious to create favourable conditions for export and import with a due regard to such factors as prices, costs and trade structure. It must be taken for granted that after the introduction of the new economic mechanism, increased efforts will be made to encourage the coordination of East-West trading procedures and techniques, efforts that began in 1959 with the European Economic Council and have continued since 1963 with the *ad hoc* Group.

There is not much point in discussing earlier East-West problems, since an entirely new situation has developed in both international politics and world trade, though I cannot refrain from pointing out that Mr. Gunnar Alder-Karlsson (Stockholm) gave a remarkable lecture on this question at the 5th Conference of ESTO *(Institut für Europäische Studien)* that is still well worth reading. What I want to stress is that East-West economic cooperation is part of larger world processes, and its significance and future prospects cannot be adequately assessed without the analysis of these processes. I shall consequently examine the question of East-West cooperation only after describing the other factors which determine the character of the world economy to-day.

3. A growing number of economic and scientific developments show that

Western Europe can no longer keep pace with the United States in four of their growth industries, each of them with multiplying effects in terms of technology. These are the machine industry, the chemical industry, electronics and spacecraft development. With regard to the machine industry, the manufacture of automatic machinery and equipment has lately made great advances in the United States; European enterprises buy most of their computers from the United States, and the annual addition to the number of digital computers in the States is larger than the whole stock of digital computers in the three economically strongest countries of Western Europe.

There is a concentration of European enterprises in the chemical industry and important results have been achieved. On the other hand new investment in America is largely centred in the chemical industry.

The strongest sector of the American chemical industry is to be found in the sector dealing with the "revolution in materials" connected with space research. This revolution in materials not only involves the introduction of new synthetic materials (the first, *corfam*, is expected to lead to substantial changes), but extends to other fields as well. Some believe that polymers are due to become the "fundamental structural material" of our civilization. In pharmacology, for instance, there is the manufacture of drugs based on molecular biological processes. Here American industry has made an excellent start, which she is exploiting with growing success by assigning large material and intellectual resources to scientific research in this field.

In the electronics industry American superiority is undisputed; in 1964 the United States manufactured 81.9 per cent of the electronic equipment of the world. (The rest is distributed as follows: Great Britain 6 per cent, France 5.1 per cent, the German Federal Republic 4.2 per cent, and Japan 2.8 per cent.)

American superiority is in fact even greater than these figures suggest, since a large part of the electronic equipment manufactured in the West-European countries is produced by American-affiliated firms.

The economic and technical importance of space research can be seen in the multiplication and proliferation of its effects. The demands of space research have created industries for the manufacture of specific equipment. New lines of specialization, new services and instrumentation have given an impetus to the revolution in materials and produced new plant and new complex systems of scientific research. Space research underlies the telecommunication systems based on artificial satellites, which foreshadow the age of "global telecommunication."

The cost of the space industry and space research is known to be so high that no country can afford it except the Soviet Union. (In Western Europe

France has been the only country to build a satellite of her own and the carrier rocket which launched it. The latest French satellite was launched with an American-made rocket.)

But the differences in the four strongest growth industries only reflect the present relative economic strength. The gap in scientific-technological research indicates that the disparity between Western Europe and the United States will steadily increase. It is recognized that the scientific-technological revolution of our days is the most decisive factor in economic progress and rapid technological development. A very close interaction exists between scientific research and economic power, since an economically stronger country can allocate greater intellectual and material resources to scientific research, while the speedy application of scientific inventions yields a greater profit for the economic enterprises.

According to reliable figures per capita scientific expenditure in the USA is about $96–98; in the countries of the Common Market it scarcely amounts to 17 dollars. True, the very low figure in Italy is the main cause of this low average; the average in France is $27, in West Germany $21. Great Britain is superior to the countries of the Six in this respect; per capita scientific expenditure in the United Kingdom is $33. The per capita average, however, does not give us the full picture: the size of the absolute sums invested exerts its own influence. The United States, for instance, spends fourteen times more on scientific research than France, whose population is a quarter of that of the United States. European research, moreover, is not so productive as American research. A number of reasons have been adduced; some say that European science has not been able effectively to weld together inductive (Baconian) and deductive (Cartesian) ways of scientific thinking; others, again, say that in Europe the scientific centres—for traditional reasons—are located at some distance from the economic centres. Expenditure on the development of discoveries consequently takes a larger share in US research expenditure as a whole—75 per cent—than the sum spent directly on technical development in Europe. (In France, for instance, this figure is 60 per cent.)

In considering the contrary directions American and West-European scientific developments are taking, the brain drain must also be taken into account. There is some alarm that it may turn into intellectual suicide, like the anti-Semitism of Hitler Germany.

According to reliable data, the past ten years have seen the emigration of some 85 thousand highly qualified research workers, young scientists or technological experts from Western Europe to the United States.

Western Europe is already aware of the danger threatening the economy,

and society in general, through the backwardness of scientific research, and various plans have been put forward to improve the situation. Fanfani, the Italian Foreign Minister, has suggested a scientific Marshall Plan; Wilson, the British Prime Minister, has proposed the formation of a West European Technical Development Community. The United States, working in a parallel direction, has been evolving plans to perpetuate American technical and scientific supremacy. Late in 1966 Professor Kindleberger spoke in Paris of schemes by which research and economic centres would develop new products, to be exported in large quantities, in the first place; their manufacture would at a later stage be turned over to the "reproducing countries," and the products then imported, while the country with the original research and economic centres would continue to invent and manufacture newer and even more modern products and repeat the pattern.

I shall return to the disparity between the United States and Western Europe later.

4. The world market mechanism based on competition between nations and enterprises is becoming increasingly incapable of solving basic questions of the world economy. The present world market mechanism influences the distribution of incomes and means of production to the benefit of the economically stronger partner. Owing to the rapidly growing number of national economies, the correct decisions made on the macroeconomic level may not always make complete sense on the continental or world level. It is clear that for a long time to come national economies will constitute the framework and foundation of the economic activities of mankind. The last hundred and fifty years have clearly demonstrated that a people will reject the most advanced economic system if it is imposed at the price of its independence, or by outraging its national feelings. Economic integration, or the international planning and coordination of certain basic questions, would seem to be in contradiction to the existence and continuation of national economies. It would, however, be a mistake to attempt to solve this contradiction with the statement that the new conditions and requirements are the only needs to be considered, and that the interests, aims and emotions of the people as such, of the national entities, can be ignored. Neither human societies nor the world economy can be programmed in abstraction, and the interests, conditions and relationships expressed by national economies are certainly no less real than those now in the making and coming to maturity as a consequence of the scientific-technical revolution and the demographic explosion.

From the mechanism of free competition it logically follows that leading enterprises vie for priority, and concentrate all their efforts on outdistancing

the others. As a result they encourage scientific research, allocate large sums of money for technical development, make large capital investments, make a more various and concentrated use of raw materials, press forward with new inventions, modernize their sales departments, etc. This competition between enterprises takes place in a world economy full of striking contradictions in the distribution of the means of production, and as a result it makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. Such a market mechanism may become particularly dangerous in a period when all reasonable human, political and economic considerations require the differences between the rich and the poor to be reduced.

I shall now try to outline the international economic policy and world market mechanism which might best solve these basic problems of the world economy or—to be more correct—bring them closer to solution. It is no accident that I refer to international economic policy in the first place and the world market mechanism only in the second place. What I mean here by economic policy is that highly *conscious* decisions are essential if we want to change the present situation. In theory conscious decisions can be made *irrespective* of the present market mechanism, yet experience has shown that economic policy is ineffective unless rational decisions are backed by a mechanism which expresses the interests and reflects the internal movements of the economy. If politics and this mechanism are kept separate, the decision-making centres may become alienated from the economy, and this leads to bureaucracy. The comparative coordination of politics and the market mechanism, on the other hand, not only prevents the development of powerful centres of bureaucracy but also encourages enterprises directly concerned to carry out their own purposes to promote indirectly general economico-political purposes. The economic mechanism required in the present situation should stimulate the economically weaker countries to higher productivity and the advanced ones to a more equitable distribution of wealth. Otherwise it is impossible to conceive a more realistic distribution of the means of production, one more in keeping with the distribution of the population. In the present situation, nevertheless, the mechanism cannot be corrected without the consent of all the participants. The point is that on the international level there are no political or economic centres capable of introducing and operating a new mechanism. Hence the solution of economic problems cannot be separated from the fact that the majority of the national economies operate under conditions of capitalist ownership and follow a distribution system based on these conditions.

In order to reduce the tremendous disparity in the distribution of the means of production and accelerate the growth of the underdeveloped

economies, it is consequently necessary to make use of a system which combines more than one method, that is, new tendencies must be encouraged partly by improving the existing mechanism, and partly independently of it. The redistribution of part of the national income might, for instance, be also brought about by raising the price of raw materials, i.e., by a price policy. While negotiations on coordinated activities by the international organizations could clear the ground for the new industrial division of labour, the goods themselves can only be exchanged through normal market transactions.

Only international organizations, with the consent of all concerned, are in a position to direct advanced countries to transfer a share of their national income, determined by certain criteria, to the underdeveloped countries. Such criteria might be, for instance, the volume of national income, its per capita value, or the strength of economic ties with the developing countries.

Large-scale activities, as, for instance, increased agricultural production in the Asian countries, can only be planned, organized and coordinated on an international basis, i.e., irrespective of the world market mechanism. I consider that the problems of Asia are of primary and decisive importance in this connection, since it holds more than half of the world's population (53 per cent today), its cultivable areas are overpopulated, and yields can no longer be improved by increasing human labour. The monocultures that have developed to maintain the dense population (rice, for instance) have, as everyone knows, exhausted the soil, and the number of work days employed in cultivating one hectare is extremely high.

The great international organizations, therefore, must play a decisive part in assisting the underdeveloped countries. The international organizations of today are undoubtedly far from satisfying requirements. It may, however, be hoped that a reasonable evaluation of the new conditions and requirements, and the impetus provided by the difficulties and contradictions encountered, will gradually lead to the recognition that the world, interdependent and interconnected as it is, wants strong and efficient international organizations.

If we want to prevent the growing polarization between Western Europe and the United States of America, cooperation between the countries of Europe must be based and developed on new foundations. Western Europe and East Europe enjoy different social systems, but the cooperation between these countries and their economic organizations is not an ideological problem but a question of common interests. Some of these common interests spring from natural or historical causes, others derive from the fact that the countries of Western Europe do not want to fall behind the USA, and

the socialist countries are anxious to draw level with it. The division of Europe which has resulted in a series of wars over the past hundred years, and came to an unhappy climax in the Cold War, has greatly contributed to weaken the economic, political, scientific and demographic position of the continent.

The common interests which link these countries may create a foundation for economic cooperation, but cannot substitute for it. The shortage of capital in Europe (as compared with the USA) could be reduced and eased by a coordinated, complementary investment policy. A complementary system of industrial development would result in considerable capital savings for both parties, and the capital thus saved could be usefully invested in other fields. Scientific shortages could be not only lessened but even eliminated by common East-West research and cooperation. According to reliable figures the number of scientists in the Soviet Union is around 700 thousand. (In the USA the figure is about 800 thousand.) Many state-financed and well organized scientific institutions exist in the other socialist countries of Europe. Research in the socialist countries of Europe shares, of course, the general weakness of European science as compared with American, that is, too much theoretical research and relatively few practical results. In other words, the productivity of science is lower than in the United States. But serious efforts are being made to improve the situation, and the new economic mechanism encourages a direct interest in the practical application of theoretical scientific achievements.

The Soviet Prime Minister, Mr Kosygin, made a series of suggestions on his recent visit to Great Britain concerning the expansion of scientific cooperation among the countries of Europe. France and the Soviet Union are beginning a scientific cooperation from which—to quote the official French view—"France benefits from the achievements of Soviet research (space research, telecommunication, physics of high-power particles), and the Soviet Union directly profits from certain achievements of the western world." "The Soviet Union," writes *Le Progres Scientifique*, the official review of French research institutions "can thus play a part in the western economic system, particularly in the leading technological industries which are of such great significance for the future."

In addition to the policy of developing industries which complement one another, cooperation between industrial enterprises could help to promote the expansion of European markets. In most socialist countries the economic reform gives industrial enterprises authority to enter into agreements with foreign enterprises. By industrial cooperation I mean a systematic technical and economic association and connections between two production units

before or after the finished production of the goods, as, for instance, the joint production and the marketing of products, cooperation on third markets, the sale and purchase of patents, the exchange of information, business on commission, the provision of the spare parts needed in domestic manufacture in exchange for goods of a similar nature, etc. Industrial cooperation is moreover the best way of maintaining the balance of payments and is also a reliable means of improving the export structure.

A common basis of understanding is necessary between capitalist firms and socialist enterprises, the latter enjoying great independence as a result of the economic reform, if cooperation between them is to increase.

East-West economic cooperation is likely to reveal many opportunities of increasing the capacity of the advanced world to give aid and assistance to the developing countries. This capacity cannot of course be equated with either the amount of surplus or available capital or the general characteristics of an advanced economy. Cooperation on a multilateral and wide-scale basis will enable the capital-absorbing capacity of the developing world to be increased through regular and complex measures.

When considering likely developments and the future of the world economy, the economic problems of the United States must be carefully studied. The USA possesses huge economic resources and is developing technologically at a tremendous pace. In this respect we face a new situation: technological development is reaching the point where the needs of the population can be supplied by the work of far fewer people than formerly. This fact may lead to great social and racial tensions if governments are unable to improve the system of the internal distribution of wealth. (The distribution principle of the capitalist system is based on private property and marginal productivity; if "too many" people consequently wish to participate in the work, the margin of productivity is reduced to zero, i.e., the need to introduce new principles of distribution arises.) If the internal system of distribution fails to improve, then an expansive, or in a certain sense, an aggressive, international economic and trade policy develops. The present situation is, naturally, different from what it was in the nineteenth century; overt colonization is not possible. Yet the extensive export of capital, and interests all over the world, result in an aggressive international policy, because these American capital investments need protection. And this protection is preventive in character, supporting and helping to power governments which, on account of their political views, can be relied upon to secure the safety of American interests. When these governments come into conflict with the masses, i.e., with various progressive movements, they promptly turn to the US government for help, thus involving them in unaccountable complications.

There is no need to go further into these processes and all their consequences, I only wish to stress the grave dangers which already exist and are increasingly impending, as a result of these accelerated developments in technology.

Economic power can undoubtedly be employed in very different ways, as the past and the present have shown; to start wars, to threaten the economic independence of other nations, or destroy it. (We have only to recall super-enterprises to be seen in some of the economically underdeveloped African countries emerging from the tribal stage of development.)

The economic resources of mankind are today still insufficient to meet all needs of the world population. It follows that the world urgently needs the tremendous economic and scientific resources of the United States of America. These huge energies must be so directed as to promote economic development on an international scale, the independence of the nations of the world, and cooperation between partners with equal rights.

I should like to emphasize that both East-West cooperation and the giving of aid and assistance to the developing countries offer vast opportunities to the American economy. American society, and in particular the progressive forces, willing to be objective, and following the fighting traditions of freedom in American history, must, however, face a new situation. If in addition to increasing their productivity they are incapable of making the system of distribution more effective, and capital continues to expand by present-day methods, then the world—and the United States in it—will have to face very serious dangers. They stem from economic facts, but their consequences will make themselves felt beyond the economic field, in political and even in strategic planning. If a very rich country is incapable of uniting the high productivity of labour with an efficient system of distribution, then peace, the economically less developed countries, and nations fighting for their rights, are all seriously threatened.

The ideas I have been outlining are rational in character. But is mankind today capable of acting rationally amidst so many different interests and aims? "Rational" of course is to be understood in the widest possible sense of the word, since millions of examples daily prove that enterprises and national economies are indeed capable of acting rationally *from their own point of view.* But what we want to know, what we are discussing, is whether or not these activities—which in their own spheres of the micro and the macroeconomy are rational—are to be regarded as rational from the point of view of mankind or the world economy as a whole.

One might sum up the answer by saying that these activities may well come to be rational, within certain limits, if the world market mechanism is

improved in conformity with changed requirements, and with due regard to the interests deriving from them; if by well-considered economico-political provisions those who make up the world market come to be interested in one another's economic development, and if we are able to set up international centres of action (not, for the time being, political or economic centres) to plan, organize and coordinate activities of basic importance for mankind.

The endorsement of a rational concept of the world economy by all participants requires the power capable of such action, and presupposes partners contributing to them through intellectual conviction. Only through the alliance of these two elements can the forces which oppose the changes on grounds of personal interests be overcome.

The struggle for a new world economic concept, therefore, must be fought not only economically but also politically. The great bulk of economic power is concentrated in the hands of those who oppose change, and only a minority of them is convinced of its inevitability.

Political forces, on the other hand, are more satisfactorily divided; those standing for progress constitute the majority. Political activities of course cannot be divorced from the existing economic situation, but they can precede it by a few steps.

Only the unity of the progressive political forces therefore, and their activities—always taking the position of powers in the world into account—can bring a new world economic concept into operation. If the new ideas fail to strike root and the present world economic mechanism stiffens into rigidity, then human civilization is menaced with disaster in the coming years.

SOCIALIST ECONOMIC THEORY AND THE NEW MECHANISM

by

BÉLA CSIKÓS-NAGY

It is as a result of a peculiar interaction of theory and practice that Hungary is currently preparing for a large-scale reform of her economic control system. Science is contributing to this economic reform through a critical analysis of the traditional system of socialist planned economy and through drawing general conclusions from the deficiencies revealed. At the same time, acceptance of the idea of economic reform and its realization pertain to the realm of political action rooted in practical experience. But why refer here to a peculiar interaction of theory and practice? Because the preparation of the economic reform could rely only to a small extent on the science of socialist political economy.

Historically, this science, as elaborated by a group of economists, was based on rather abstract hypotheses of socialist society. They set up an economic philosophy and applied it in teaching economics. This course of events is understandable enough, for the antagonism and the struggle between the capitalist and socialist systems created demands which economics too could not fail to take into account. However, this naturally led science onto a path that prevented it from giving appropriate support in the realm of economic practice.

Marxian economists have always held the view that living and developing socialism cannot once and for all be encased in a final, unchangeable theoretical system. A considerable advance in socialist political economy has taken place notably in the 'sixties. In their approach to theoretical problems Marxian economists increasingly emphasize the need for generalizing the experiences gained in their own countries. Nevertheless, the contradictions between theory and practice still exist; indeed they have tended to sharpen in the wake of the economic reforms being realized in the socialist countries.

It would have been unwise to allow scholastic debates to impede the theoretical work of preparing for the economic reform. But the time has now

come to re-examine some of the theses of socialist political economy and reformulate them in the light of experience—that is, through the interaction of theory and practice.

Planned Proportional Development and the Theory of Value

Socialist political economy, in studying economic relations from the production aspect, assigns a central role to the Law of labour value, i.e., the exchange of equal amounts of labour. This law is taken into account in state planning. It serves to adapt production to consumption on the one hand, and consumption to production on the other, and it is closely connected with the concept of planned prices. Price is assumed to be identical with the socially necessary input of labour and is enforced through administrative pricing in compliance with plan requirements. Planned pricing accordingly embraces value expressed in terms of money, as a general rule, and a conscious deviation of prices from value, in particular cases.

In the case of consumer articles and partly also of agricultural produce, the main objective of such price deviations is to ensure a balance between supply and demand, since in these spheres administrative control based on the plan relies on the market mechanism. In the sphere of state production, on the other hand, price formation starts out from the criteria of self-accounting on the part of the enterprises through a corresponding application of the input principle. Planned pricing leads to the evolution of a characteristic national price system, in which foreign trade prices are kept completely apart.

Such an interpretation of planned pricing leaves a whole series of essential questions unsolved; to find out the actual relationship between value and price, it is necessary to reveal the relationship existing between value and plan.

It was socialist political economy which helped disclose the laws of macroeconomics applied in state planning on the basis of socialist production conditions. The laws of macroeconomics assume the existence of independent economic efficiency on a nationwide scale. In other words, planning, if it is to ensure optimum economic progress, must be based on macroeconomic efficiency. Modern mathematical methods and computers provide the necessary facilities for the drawing up of optimum plans. Mathematical programming, through a series of variants and through repeated regrouping of the productive factors among the productive branches, determines the optimum rate of growth and the economic structure best

suited to this growth, and, finally, yields the long-run equilibrium prices. This has been known for quite a long time, and it is no mere coincidence that, in seeking for ways and means to consolidate the scientific bases of planning, almost all socialist countries use the latest methods of mathematical programming. Most Marxian economists, however, disregard the fact that optimization of the plan does not automatically ensure economic efficiency and that a rational structure of consumption can exist only when price relations reflect value relations.

If we accept planned proportional development as an objective law, commodity exchange must be objectively determined also by demand. When the Government, through the arbitrary fixing of consumer prices, creates a far from optional consumption structure, when consumer prices differ from value, this law is deprived of its essential content, of the very feature that brings it into relation with the concrete tasks of state planning. The problem facing us today lies precisely in the fact that retail prices are no more than a technical means for creating a balance between supply and demand; planning determines the structure of supply, and the Government adjusts the structure of demand to it through corresponding prices. Exaggerating slightly, it may be asserted that, theoretically, a retail price policy can always bring supply and demand into harmony, since unavailable products can have no price, whereas the price of products in short supply may be marked up to the point where the available small stock seems relatively large. However, we are interested not merely in whether consumer price policy can create harmony between supply and demand but also in what the prices that have brought about harmony are like.

In long-term planning, the consumption structure can be forecast in various ways. We may set out from the prices valid in the given period of programming. These being the equilibrium prices for a short term, the long-term structure of consumption can be determined with the aid of the foreseeable living standard and of demand curves. Using this as starting point, the long-term equilibrium prices, derived from mathematical programming, by and large maintain the deviation of price from value (based on labour) and thus fail to ensure a supply structure that would create an equilibrium through closing the gap between price and value.* On the other hand, we may set out from corrrected prices which essentially correspond to value but are corrected to correspond to demand curves. Subsequently this demand structure must be forecast for the long run, taking the varying factors into account. In this case, we obtain long-term equilibrium prices that follow value trends and also improve economic

* For definition of value concept see below, page 46.

efficiency from the demand side. It follows from all this that, if the criteria of price formation are derived from the plan, then the plan criteria must also be derived from value. Value and price are linked in the plan and through the plan. Value relations may form the basis for pricing to the extent that rational and purposeful economic development creates an economic structure ensuring equilibrium at value prices.

It must be borne in mind that in Hungary this issue has arisen at a time when retail price relations radically diverge from value relations. This explains why the economic reform could not from the outset aim at closing the gap between retail prices and values. For short periods the problem of prices, as a rule, is a question of equilibrium, for long periods—one of planning. Equilibrium prices must consequently be judged in their relation to the supply structure; for the short term this structure is given, while for the long term it is determined by purposeful economic development.

Plan and Market

Economics, in its classical form, was the theory of a free market economy and as such evolved over a relatively long period. Economists elucidated its laws by assuming the existence of "homo oeconomicus," of a rational behaviour on the part of producer and consumer. To have consistently approached the norms of economic life on the basis of macroeconomic laws is the prime merit of Marxian economists. At the same time socialist political economy has, until recently, been built upon the assumption that the macroeconomic laws enforced through planning tend to eliminate market laws. It interpreted the disproportions and imbalances in socialist economy as the result of an inadequate scientific foundation of state planning on the one hand, and of the very existence of the market mechanism on the other. To remedy such disproportions and imbalances, it recommended steps towards the perfection of planning and the narrowing of the market mechanism. Political economy suggested that a synthesis of plan and market would amount to an attempt to blend the contradictions of deliberateness and spontaneity. Consequently, the laws of macroeconomics should be given full scope in the struggle against the market.

The scientific debates which took place in Hungary during the period of preparation for the new system of economic control led to completely different conclusions. The economic reform is built up on the dual hypothesis that (1) no purposeful economic development is conceivable without central planning, and (2) no rational distribution is possible without a market.

Critical analysis of the model of centralized management based on plan instructions has resulted in a modification of the previous views on the relationships between deliberateness and spontaneity. The market laws that determine the producers' and consumers' behaviour are derived from natural, biological and various other laws. These inevitably start operating when material incentives are attached to the more efficient organization of production and when the consumer is free to decide on how to use his income. Market laws cannot be nullified through legislation; nor is this necessary to make the laws of macroeconomics prevail. In a market economy spontaneity is necessarily present, not only in those domains of the economy that do not fall under central control but also in those that are subject to such control. However, under such conditions spontaneity will prevail in an irrational manner. This tendency follows from the anti-market economic policy, viz., from the Government's overestimating the efficacy of a central control that extends to every detail. And this is what led to the realization that there must be a novel approach to the synthesis of plan and market through the deliberate application of a regulated market mechanism.

If value guides the plan and the plan in turn guides prices, the question arises whether there are any other criteria of pricing than market conditions. The rather debatable answer of socialist political economy is in the affirmative and finds expression in the following theses: (1) planned pricing must be ensured through centrally fixed prices; (2) with regard to products sold within the sphere of state ownership, the price is not a market price but an accounting price; (3) in the case of products sold outside the sphere of state ownership, the principle of equilibrium is one—but not the sole—criterion of administrative price formation.

These theses give rise to numerous problems. Experience shows that administrative price fixing for products sold within the framework of state ownership has caused a rigidity in the price system, leading to a freezing of prices. In an administrative price system, prices mostly change in the course of so-called producers' price revision campaigns. The revision of prices is a highly complex task, which requires thorough study and application of input-output relations. The difficulties involved are among the principal reasons for the rigidity of the price system. As against this, value relations are constantly changing. Labour productivity and production costs vary, and so do all the market criteria that must be taken account of in bringing about equilibrium. In a rigid price system prices cannot be adjusted either to value or to market requirements.

Government pricing for products sold outside the sphere of state ownership is more flexible and takes the criterion of equilibrium into account.

Nevertheless, there is still a fundamental difference between market prices freely adjusting themselves to the quantitative relations of supply and demand on the one hand, and an equilibrium resulting from centrally established fixed prices on the other. Free market prices differ essentially from administratively regulated consumer prices (even if the Government takes account of market requirements), and they also lead to diametrically different results.

Experience has shown that in a system of fixed prices it is almost impossible to take account of each and every element of demand in such a way as to make production follow demand. Either equilibrium or administrative prices must be renounced. A rational organization of the economy imperatively calls for a market mechanism and a market price system adapted to it. Economic equilibrium involves an economic policy based on a system of interrelated aims and means, and a market mechanism based on a system of consumer preferences.

In an administrative price system, consumer preferences prevail to a limited extent only. Under such conditions the consumer has only an indirect influence on the production structure, namely, through the consumption structure; the consumer cannot influence the prices directly but only to the extent that the Government's price policy responds to consumer desires. The debate on this subject also brought up the question whether the consumer should not play a more active role on the market; this, in turn, presupposes a flexible price mechanism. In a number of socialist countries the price system is gradually evolving in this direction. These countries are expanding the domain of goods (and services) in which prices move freely, and they are confining fixed prices to certain basic articles of mass consumption; at the same time, they are adopting more flexible methods of administrative pricing (maximum prices, maximum-minimum).

Transition to a market price system will pose the problem of ensuring price stability. The relative stability of consumer prices in the socialist states is regarded as a political and social issue, and this lent special significance to the fixed price system. Consumers in the socialist countries have got accustomed to the fact that they can buy a particular commodity at the same price in all shops and that rates never change without a prior political declaration. This sort of price stability obviously cannot be preserved in a market price system, and it is consequently necessary to undertake the transition only gradually.

Socialist political economy regards the state plan as a comprehensive economic regulator embracing all essential elements of economic life. However, if we accept the role of the market mechanism, we must study the productive plants as self-reliant units. The traditional system of socialist planned economy accepts production costs as the criterion of the efficiency of enterprise management. In comparing this or that enterprise or industrial branch, the one whose production costs represent the smallest share in the price is regarded as the most efficient. Production costs, in turn, appear as the sum of live and dead (materialized) labour expended in production. First cost consists of amortization, cost of materials (dead labour) and wages (live labour). This system of economic calculation permits the enterprises to undertake their own accounting, and the Government relies on this system in regulating the prices used in accounting for the turnover in means of production. The enterprises, on the other hand, are expected to cut first costs by economizing on working time in the productive process. This requirement is linked up with a variety of incentives that give the enterprises a material interest in exploiting capacities and combining live and dead labour in such a way as to ensure the smallest first cost per productive unit.

Socialist political economy thus depicts socialist production fundamentally as the simple type of production that characterized the pre-capitalist stage of development. This view is based on the hypothesis that every departure from simple production under capitalistic conditions is typical of capitalist production only and becomes invalid under socialist conditions. This assumption is contained in the following theses:

First Thesis. The process of production has a dual character. It is first of all a labour process (producing use-value) and at the same time a value creating process (in which value expresses the amount of labour embodied in the commodities produced). This duality is typical of each and every process of commodity production. The elementary factors of the labour process are: (1) man's personal activity, i.e., work itself; (2) the object of that work; and (3) its instruments. With the exception of the extractive industries in which the material for labour is provided directly by nature, all branches of industry, objects and instruments of labour (means of production) are the result of previous work materialized in commodities.

Second Thesis. Under capitalist private ownership, the means of production are alienated from labour and confront it independently. Labour appears in the form of wage-labour. The means of labour then become capital, and

the soil becomes the disposable property of land owners. As a result the process of creating value is inevitably transformed into that of producing surplus value. In the course of producing surplus value, the latter disintegrates into its elements. Profit, interest, land rent make their appearance as a result of the distinct roles—those of entrepreneur, money lender and real estate owner—assumed by the capitalists in the production process.

Third Thesis: Capital, profit, interest, rent, wage-labour, surplus value—all these categories are a reflection of definite social factors in the process of capitalist production: while the means of production are the private property of one part of society, the rest of society does not possess such means. Once the means of production are owned by society, this division ceases to exist.

Determination of the criteria of economic efficiency takes place in a different way. As regards the national economy as a whole, the Government must insist on the most rational utilization of all available productive factors. The Government has at its disposal the land as a productive force, as repository of natural resources and as site of production. Accordingly, it controls the utilization of uncultivated areas and the amelioration of soil in arid regions. As regards natural resources, the Government designates the mineral wealth that may be economically exploited, and the management of water supplies is in its hands. In line with its siting policy, it allocates land for new enterprises.

The Government keeps capital resources under its control, reallocates buildings and machinery between enterprises and industrial branches to suit the purpose in hand. In pursuing its investment policy, the Government distributes buildings and new machinery among the productive branches so as to promote efficient economic development.

In its planning activities, the Government has to take account of the fact that the supply of land and capital is limited. This limitation also serves as a criterion of and a constraint on productive labour, which must not be left out of consideration in running the enterprises themselves. Yet they do remain unconsidered as long as land and capital are at the disposal of the enterprises free of charge. If the enterprise does not pay for them, the requirement of cutting first costs will inevitably come into conflict with economic efficiency, since every scheme serving to reduce first costs—even by a wastage of land and capital—will then become profitable. This is why the economic reform stresses the need for charges on the use of land and capital.

Although Marxist political economy accurately sets forth the difference between simple commodity production and capitalist production, the hypothesis relating to socialist commodity production is open to debate. It was

impracticable already at the time of its theoretical formulation. All socialist countries acted on the assumption that the formal separation of labour conditions from labour itself was an objective necessity even under socialism. Accordingly,

(1) separate account is kept of capital (the value of the means tied up in production);

(2) the enterprises have their own accounting system and their balance sheet clearly shows their profit;

(3) work done is paid for in the form of wages;

(4) the categories of credit and—although in a narrower sphere—of interest are applied;

(5) the net social revenue flows into the treasury through various channels.

The use of these categories in state planning rests on a still broader foundation. Government pricing adjusts the price ratio of substitute products to the ratios of their use values—thereby ensuring an additional revenue. In elaborating the investment plan, the efficiency of investments is calculated from the returns on capital, while plan optimization—a trend that has gained ground in recent years—is based on an optimum combination of the various productive factors.

The categories under discussion thus appear fairly consistently in Government planning and to a considerably more limited extent in enterprise management. This explains why the new economic mechanism endeavours to activate these categories first and foremost in the sphere of enterprise management.

Why is it that Marxist political economy is opposed to the application of categories that, in actual practice, are being used in socialist building? No doubt, the frontal attack of non-Marxist political economy on the theory of labour value has had a considerable share in this. After Marx had entered the scene, non-Marxist economics combined the categories of market economy with subjective value theories. The theory of marginal utility, as applied to consumer goods, was derived from biological and other laws relating to the satisfaction of human needs; it then announced the identity of value and marginal utility. The theory of marginal productivity transformed the natural law of returns into the law of marginal returns on three production factors—labour, land and capital—which it regarded as value creating and from which it derived the value of the means of production. The untenability of the subjective theories of value was clearly proved by Marxian economists. At the same time, many of us tend to deny the validity of such natural, biological and other laws as were already operative in the sphere of market economy long before the birth of the subjective

value theories. We must be capable of separating genuine laws and categories from subjective theories of value.

Capital, rent, profit and interest are categories of commodity production and, as such, their recognition and application do not contradict the theory of labour value. Marx did not contest the existence of the three factors of production. While declaring that labour is the only value-creating factor, Marx also noted the role played by profit, interest and rent. It is therefore clear that the hypothesis of the three production factors does not involve a negation of the theory of labour value, as some Marxist economists assert. The one justification for citing Marx in this connection would be to recall that he regarded surplus value, profit, etc., as categories typical of capitalism. It must be remembered, however, that Marx, in general, clung to the view that a market economy was unsuited to socialist society, which—he thought—would be based on a direct exchange of goods (on natural economy). The line of demarkation between capitalist market economy and socialist commodity production was drawn only later. This separation contradicted the criteria of traditional planned economy. For, while money, commodities, prices, etc., are retained as categories of socialist commodity production valid beyond capitalism, capital, interest, wage labour are abolished as being interlinked with capitalist exploitation.

Socialist experience shows that although capital and surplus value developed under capitalist conditions, the formal separation of labour conditions from labour itself and the functional organization of social production could never have come about without development of the productive forces. These forms are created by the market economy through developing the productive forces. At the same time, they become the preconditions for a rational development of productive forces. The fundamental difference is that, while under capitalism these categories are linked with exploitation, under socialism public ownership of the means of production precludes exploitation.

Distribution According to Work Done

Distribution according to work done is a fundamental thesis of socialist political economy, calling for the direct distribution of products according to the amount and quality of work done and equal pay for equal work to each and every member of socialist society, regardless of sex, age, race and nationality, whether in industry or in agriculture. The principle is put into practice through planned regulation of wages by the Government.

Control of personal earnings in the socialist countries is based on two

models: direct regulation of wages and indirect control of other earnings. As a general rule the socialist countries apply direct methods predominantly in the state sector and resort to indirect methods in the non-state sectors. This makes wages the chief means of income regulation in state industry, whereas prices and taxes mainly serve this purpose in the sector of cooperatives and small-scale private producers.

In industry, this system of control poses the problem that the workers' abilities cannot be fully utilized—efficiently harmonized—as long as individual earnings are independent of enterprise gains. In agriculture, on the other hand, with personal incomes dependent on prices, incomes may vary considerably from year to year due to fluctuations in crop that depend on meteorological conditions—particularly if prices do not adapt themselves to these conditions. Especially serious problems may arise in drought years.

An attempt has therefore been made—without abandoning central wage regulation—to establish a certain connection between personal incomes and enterprise gains in the state sector and to attain a certain degree of independence of personal incomes from enterprise returns in the cooperative sector. In the state enterprises, this has given rise to some elements of autonomous (decentralized) regulation of wages, and in the cooperative sector to the introduction of a system of wages. Some socialist countries have abolished the rigid prescriptions of the central wage system in industry. The German Democratic Republic, on the other hand, has introduced a system of guaranteed wages in the cooperative sector, and most socialist countries are subsidizing their weaker and more backward cooperatives with a view to supplementing personal incomes.

In recent years the question has arisen whether there was any objective necessity to establish a central wage system in the state sector. Lively debates have taken place on the interpretation and practical application of the principle of "distribution according to work done." These debates were especially heated in those socialist countries where a substantial part of social production is once more distributed on the international market. For, here, excessive central control hampers flexibility—a prerequisite of profitable foreign trade—and thus also puts a brake on economic efficiency in general. This in itself shows the complexity of the issues we are facing, which extend over the entire state-owned sector and cannot—indeed must not—be considered as merely a specific problem of income regulation.

A concomitant of centralized regulation of wages is an accounting system at the enterprise level in which prices are administratively fixed on the basis of first costs, while the budget "neutralizes" divergences in the economic efficiency of the branches and plants by way of taxes, profit deductions, and

the application of a system of compensation for losses and of subsidies. Such a method of accounting at the enterprise level is particularly detrimental to socialist countries dependent on foreign trade, because domestic prices completely separated from foreign trade rates make a realistic price calculation as well as the realization of economic efficiency impossible, not only in programming the assortment but in development too. To overcome these obstacles, a more rational attitude in the economic sphere is called for along these lines: (1) differences in the efficiency of various branches and individual plants should permit differentiation and act as a means for healthy selection; (2) the financial status of the workers should be more closely dependent on enterprise returns.

A switchover from direct methods of regulating incomes to indirect methods is inconceivable without a transformation of the whole economic mechanism. In a number of socialist countries, this transition is already under way, in others preparations have begun. Czechoslovakia has shifted from the regulation of wages to the regulation of enterprise incomes on the basis of material incentives, by making the enterprises interested in maximizing gross income. Hungary plans to base the system of incentives upon a maximization of enterprise profits. In Czechoslovakia gross income and in Hungary profits will be taxed accordingly. This mechanism will bring about an income differentiation on a completely new basis. Government control in the interests of society as a whole will continue; indeed, to eliminate such control would hardly be reasonable.

Workers in the socialist countries, in addition to their wages, enjoy various social benefits. They either fall into the sphere of general social welfare, or are connected with working conditions. The former cover what are regarded as social exigencies of the individual members of society and as political and ethical obligations of society as a whole; the latter serve as partial compensation for the disproportionate burdens imposed by divergencies in working conditions.

Social benefits are granted according to the needs of the members of society and not on the basis of work done. This is linked with the thesis that the elements of communist distribution according to needs tend to evolve and develop already in the period of socialist building.

The thesis in question sets out from the objective necessity for the gradual restriction of commodity and money relations (commodity exchange); an extension of the system of social allowances thus becomes an element of the policy relating to living standards. As a result, the real income of the population increases at a faster rate than real wages; there might even be periods when a growth of real incomes goes parallel with a stagnation of real

wages. This happened in Hungary, for instance, in those years when, due to poor crops, the money income of the peasantry decreased: the price of some agricultural products rose, industrial wages remained unchanged, and the sphere of social benefits expanded, accompanied by an increase in their rates.

Several socialist countries have realized in recent years that social allowances, if too extensively granted and if administered too centrally, have an undesired effect in that they lack the stimulus provided by wages. The essential problem here is that when living standards improve through an extension of social benefits, it becomes impossible to secure a sound ratio between productivity and wage movement, to the detriment of the former. This has given rise to the following tendencies:

(1) Restriction of the allowances granted from the Government budget to the sphere of fundamental social care, i.e., to those areas that affect the reproduction of the labour force.

(2) Regulation in a decentralized manner of social benefits linked with work. The budgets of the enterprises have at all times included social and cultural funds, and its significance is steadily growing; at the same time the benefits distributed will increasingly differ from enterprise to enterprise, depending on returns.

(3) Realization of raised living standards first and foremost through higher real wages.

The Gold Standard

Socialist political economy in the past was based on the hypothesis of the gold standard. It claimed that even under socialism money is essentially gold and that the paper money in circulation represents gold as general equivalent. Accordingly, socialist countries also declare the gold content of their currencies and quote them on a gold parity basis. In line with this, the socialist countries determine by law the quantity of gold which their currencies contain. In fixing the value ratio of their own to foreign currencies, they rely on the legally determined gold content of the latter. Exchange rates are modified only when a foreign country decides to modify the gold content of its currency.

Of late, the fact that gold currency depends for its existence on its entering into the commodity exchange process has found general acceptance. This is also the precondition for gold to function as standard of value. If a country guarantees full convertibility of its currency, this currency is capable of fulfilling every monetary function, both on the domestic and on the

international market. The one currency which can assure this is gold, since debts and other claims of a monetary order may be met by it. A fully convertible currency can be exchanged for gold or any other hard currency. The currencies of the socialist countries, however, do not possess this property. The socialist countries pursue a restricted currency policy in which gold does not figure as a means of exchange either within or beyond their boundaries. Claims within the country's boundaries cannot be converted into gold, and the export of money is prohibited or greatly restricted by law. In settling international trade deals and monetary transactions, the socialist countries, instead of their own currencies, generally use the currency of a capitalist country. In the transactions of the Comecon (or CMEA—Council of Mutual Economic Aid) the "clearing rouble" is the currency accepted for accounting, although it is not the legitimate currency of the Soviet Union but an accounting means specially set up for trade on the socialist world market, in which prices are derived from capitalist world market prices as expressed in terms of capitalist currencies.

The gold standard hypothesis is in contradiction with all other theses of socialist political economy. It presupposes a free market mechanism and, above all, free international economic relations. Such conditions, however, could be maintained—and even then no more than approximately—only in the period of classical capitalism. Already at that time the prevalence of certain elements of planning in developing productive forces led to the introduction of a centrally controlled system of paper currency that required the withdrawal—or, at least the restriction—of gold as a means of commodity exchange.

At the same time, rejection of the gold standard hypothesis is only a first step. Sound answers to the currency questions of socialist economy must also be found. To return to the gold mechanism is an irrational objective and incompatible with the regulated socialist market mechanism. But the aim of intensifying the role of money and of assuring its convertibility, even to a limited extent, is certainly realistic. The introduction of the economic reform will enable considerable headway to be made in implementing the function of money, and the new system of economic direction may pave the way towards alleviating the current obligatory methods of currency management.

According to the theses of political economy, in socialism too money acts as a means of trade, of promoting the movement of commodities. But this, in itself, does not explain the actual function of money. Money may be not only a technical means but also a regulator of economic processes. In the former case, it merely follows in the wake of economic processes that are

not governed by money relations; in the latter, money becomes an integral part of the economic process.

In the traditional system of planning, money functions most effectively on the consumer goods market. The population's demand is determined by its income. In the new system of economic direction, the role of money will increase as a result of the better satisfaction of consumer preferences. At the same time, its distributive role will be enhanced in the sphere of the means of production. Marketing of the means of production is hampered by the present system of rationing raw materials and investment goods. In the new system a considerable part of productive investments will be implemented by the self-financing of enterprises and through credits, while the better part of the turnover of raw and semi-finished materials will take place in the commercial sphere.

In the new system of economic direction, the Hungarian currency will not become convertible. It is believed by some that convertibility depends solely on appropriate gold and currency reserves and that the possession of adequate foreign credits would make it possible to combine the reform of the economic mechanism with a simultaneous currency reform. In reality the convertibility of currency depends on the economic structure and on export potentials. To make a currency convertible, the economy must be capable of regularly producing the amount of currency needed to insure its free circulation. Should it fall short of this criterion, even relatively substantial gold and currency reserves would soon be exhausted. No country can introduce such a reform without a stable and balanced system of international payments. At the same time, it is reasonable to assume that the economic reform will improve economic efficiency, promote production standards and boost the export potential, thus creating the prerequisites for currency reform at a later date.

Although Hungary is not introducing a currency reform at this juncture, she is taking measures designed to pave the way for it. Economically determined currency coefficients are being introduced in the settlement of export and import deals; administrative prices for export and import commodities are to be abolished and, with it, the levelling of domestic and foreign trade prices. Uniform coefficients for each currency will function as price regulators. Simultaneously, financial "bridges" will be built in the form of customs duties, levies, subsidies, etc., to protect the interests of the national economy—as is usual wherever the market mechanism prevails, in the sphere of international relations as well.

From what has been said above, it is evident that Hungary's plans for the future of socialist economy can hardly be judged in isolation. The problem

of the currency mechanism in a socialist country affiliated with the Comecon is primarily a problem of the mechanism of economic cooperation within the Comecon. In this respect two factors should be emphasized:

In the first place, a process of fermentation can be discerned in the domestic life of the Comecon countries, as evidenced by the transformation of their economic mechanisms. Despite differences in detail, the tendencies underlying this transformation are similar. By strengthening commodity and money relations, by more efficient utilization of the market mechanisms, by application of the profit category, etc., the Comecon countries are endeavouring to transform their systems of Government control over the economy in such a way as to improve economic efficiency. The principles and methods of trade cooperation among the Comecon countries can naturally be separated from the changes taking place in the methods of direction applied within each country. Such a policy would, however, inevitably raise numerous new problems in the realm of international cooperation.

In the second place, the significance of market forms of cooperation between the Comecon countries is increasingly recognized. The creation of a common bank, the application of certain elements of multilateral accounting, the idea of rendering the accounting rouble convertible, etc., are as many signs of the success of the main trends emerging at what is still the initial stage. However, we have not yet reached the point of realizing that the mechanism of cooperation itself is in need of an overall and thorough revision.

BACK FROM VIETNAM

by

LÁSZLÓ RÉCZEI

The city of Hanoi is built around ten lakes, and from the central lake rises a small pagoda commemorating the sword which, according to the legend, rose out of the water and helped the people of Vietnam to triumph over their oppressors. Today swords and steel spikes are rising from every lake, pond and swamp, and from every part of the jungle to take up the fight against the superior technique of the new oppressors. The people of Vietnam are battling against the superior forces of the United States with inferior weapons. Superbombers, the products of supertechnology, are slaughtering this heroic people so cruelly that we are once again reminded of the cynical attitude with which for centuries the white man massacred the "coloured" in order to impose his rule, or—as he himself preferred to say in an attempt to ease his conscience—his culture. And yet, we see now that the people of Vietnam are not going to submit to any foreign rule. They did not fight against the Japanese occupiers only to become a French colony, and they did not later shake off the French yoke in exchange for the American bondage.

Escalation itself teaches this lesson. It is not a matter of quantities. Something that 200,000 American soldiers failed to accomplish could not be accomplished by 400,000 either, and even a million soldiers would fail. Every stage of escalation is a new admission of failure—of the failure of the previous stage. The people of Vietnam are invincible in the same way that the people of Algeria were invincible: the era of colonization is over, military action can no longer maintain it. The military definitions of victory and defeat can be applied only to opposing armies: peoples who are fighting for their freedom can be massacred, but they cannot be defeated.

Anyone who has visited Vietnam and has seen through his own eyes the fighting spirit, courage and self-confidence of this people will come to the same conclusion. I have seen all this more than once. I first visited North

Vietnam after the Tonkin Bay attack three years ago in order—in my capacity as international lawyer—to inspect those traces of the attack that had not yet been removed. A feeling of solidarity with the Vietnamese made me go, and I returned full of admiration for them. They knew this attack was only a beginning and that it would be continued with increasing cruelty, yet none of them entertained the thought of avoiding the sufferings and sacrifices awaiting them by submitting to the greatest power of the Western world. Throughout their history, the people of Vietnam have always fought against superior forces, always defended their land, liberty, language and culture against overwhelming might. The prospect of again standing their ground against superior forces was no historical novelty for them.

The Town of Phu-Ly

In the spring of 1967 I saw Vietnam again—Hanoi, and other towns and villages, ruins and tombs, new buildings, new bridges and new air-raid shelters; I witnessed selective bombing and non-stop raids. In two years many things have changed, the destruction is now too large-scale and general to permit eradication of its traces. The main objective of rebuilding is to ensure continued life and work, the immediate repair of shops, factories and transport routes. Apart from that it's ruins everywhere. Had I not been warned by my travelling companion, I would never have noticed that we had arrived at the little town of Phu-Ly: four-fifths of it had been flattened to the ground, it had last been raided the day before my arrival. The only remaining target for this raid had been the Catholic church—and the attack was successful.

Many ruins, many changes. But the people had not changed: their composure, courage, fighting spirit were the same, as was their conviction that they would win. Individual attitudes had not altered: their calm, their deliberateness and their smile had not left them. If a series of conversations with individuals justifies some generalization, I may perhaps conclude that there is some change in the community: the people are more unified, more determined, they are following their leaders and bearing up under the hardships of war with even greater discipline. They do not speak about their losses, they do not complain, and they tell no stories about their feats of heroism. The present generation of fighters never knew a state of peace: they were born in war, or were so young when the freedom struggle started that they have no memories of times of peace. That is why the members of this generation do not regard themselves as heroes, and perhaps they are

not heroic, if only individual acts of courage are meant by the word. They all do the same thing. Are the girls who cultivate the rice fields with rifles on their shoulders less heroic than the boys who operate the anti-aircraft rockets? The girls too shoot at attacking planes, capture the bailed out pilots, and then go on tilling the land.

Village Memorial House

The village of Dan Phuong is a single cooperative farm to which 1,100 families belong. Is it heroism to raise rice production from three tons to six tons per hectare while heavy bombers are scattering death from above? The village of Phu Xa lives and works in the same way, but in addition to tilling the land, they are also caring for the flowers on the twenty-four graves in which their relatives, killed in a single air-raid, are buried. Eleven of these tombs cover the remains of children: the kindergarten building collapsed over them. The village was rebuilt, and the new kindergarten already satisfies the demands of "modern times": a communication trench leading out under the walls cuts across the middle of the room to permit "military targets" of between three and five to escape from the house before they are crushed to death. The new "Memorial House" preserves mementoes of the dead together with remnants of the singular instruments used to murder them. In front of the Memorial House stands "The Monument of Hatred for the Americans." This type of monument can be found wherever people have rebuilt their houses, schools and churches destroyed by air-raids: I saw it in the long-suffering town of Nam Dinh, where on one day just the main street was attacked; of the 49 dead, 15 were children.

For Hungarian observers and eye-witnesses it is very disconcerting to learn from observations of US mass media that the American people are, on the whole, aware of these facts. They have been told about the over 300 schools bombed, the hundreds of students killed and the teachers who died with them. They have been told that over Phu-Ly, which was razed to the ground, such vast quantities of bombs were dropped that there was over a hundred pounds of explosive for every inhabitant, including babies. They know about the "wide selection" of bombs that are a "credit" to and a source of extra wealth for the American war industry. They have heard about the use of napalm and white phosphorus, of bull-pup missiles, of pressure bombs, and of the dreaded lazy dog which consists of three or four hundred small metal balls each of which scatters three hundred pellets in all directions—each lazy dog, therefore, contains between 90 to 120

thousands pellets. Toxic gases and chemicals complete the list. And all these are used against the civilian population in a country where, apart from makeshift shelters, there is nothing, not even strongly built houses or cellars, to offer some sort of protection. Thanks to a few journalists and TV reporters of genuine courage, as well as to articles frequently taken over from the world press, the American people are aware of this genocide. But do they know that this ruthless extermination campaign has not brought the United States one inch closer to its professed objective?

The professed aim is in any case full of contradictions: to defend the people of Vietnam against the people of Vietnam, and, through breaking down the resistance of the civilian population, to force the government of North Vietnam to the conference table. The result, in fact, is that this aim is more remote now than it ever was; the people of Vietnam stand united behind their government and are selflessly fighting against the enemy. If the US had the military and foreign political traditions historically necessary for the rational control of its gigantic technical, industrial and military potential, it would, perhaps, be able to assign their due place to man and technology and counterbalance American faith in the infallibility of technology by respect for and objective evaluation of the moral fortitude and heroism of man. The military might of the United States is regularly, consistently and unselectively devastating Vietnam. But the people of Vietnam are offering proof—even against our own not quite unreasonable initial doubts—that technology will not prevail over man who created it. The great ideals about which we, in our own cynical Europe growing much too fond of its creature-comforts, usually speak with smiling superiority (if they happen to be mentioned), are living and effective forces in Vietnam.

Lack of Diplomatic Tradition

What American aggression in Vietnam is proving is not the impotence of technology, but the existence of aims that cannot be realized through this technology. Its application may lead to senseless massacre and genocide without bringing the political objective any closer. This is where the lack of diplomatic tradition becomes evident in the foreign policy of the United States: once dollars and force—the means regularly employed by the US in implementing its foreign policy—fail, it finds itself at a dead end. It seems incapable of trying a new policy or new methods. The modern military machine—despite its evident ineffectiveness as a means towards a purposeful end—keeps on running aimlessly as an instrument of genocide.

This is where ill-interpreted prestige comes into the picture. It is impossible to admit to a failure of dollars and of force, to admit that one of the greatest military powers of the world cannot subdue a small country, that the Saigon government cannot rule those over whom it has been set; it is impossible to admit that the armed uprising of an entire people is not a military but a political phenomenon and cannot be met by pacification, only by political settlement. At the beginning the uprising of the people of Vietnam may have seemed like civil war, as if Ky and his half-dozen quickly alternating predecessors, aided by American weapons and advisers, might win the civil war for the benefit of those who valued US dollars higher than their country's independence. But it soon became obvious that the army of the Saigon Government did not oppose the goal for which the rebels had taken up arms. The uprising lost its civil war character; it was fought for the good of the entire people and enjoyed the support of the entire people. And so the American army had to intervene. (This, incidentally, was the stand taken by Governor Romney of Michigan, prospective presidential candidate of the Republican Party, in his speech of August 19, 1967.) The army of the Ky regime has become unreliable and therefore unfit to fight, and it will remain so whatever means are used to increase its size. Official US admission of these facts and adjustment of US foreign policy to the extant situation are impeded by the American fear of losing prestige.

Prestige is like a woman's reputation. Once it becomes the subject of conversation, it is in grave danger, and as soon as it is defended, it is lost. The ruling circles in the United States are making considerable sacrifices to play down the failure of their Vietnam policy. But even greater sacrifices are imposed on the American people, who bear the burden of this policy and whose democracy is threatened by it. It was with grave concern that we followed the riots in Newark, Detroit, Chicago, Washington and elsewhere, which, since the war in Vietnam, have become regularly recurring events on the American scene. This is no mere coincidence. The billions spent on the war have to be taken from somewhere; vital domestic problems remain unsolved, and in the richest country of the world the plight of the poor, far from being alleviated, becomes a secondary issue. Europe does not measure US prestige by the number of Vietnamese casualties, nor by the amount of explosives dropped on that unfortunate country, but it does measure it by what is happening in America to the coloured people, by the success or failure of the attempts to unlock their ghettos, to raise them from cultural backwardness and relieve their misery.

European and Hungarian Concerns

Of course, it is not for Europe to establish any sort of priority among the unsolved problems of the United States. Nevertheless, aggression in Vietnam does concern Europe—and within it, Hungary too. For it is an obstacle to the sound *rapprochement* taking place between East and West in Europe and equally desired by both sides. The European systems of alliance impose military obligations on their members; moreover there are American troops and American bases in Western Europe. Europe—and in this there is no difference of opinion between East and West—does not wish to be divided into conflicting camps on account of the American adventure in Vietnam. But the war does not flow from a tap freely regulated by the one with his hand on the faucet. A local war does not stay localized at the mere wish of those who hesitate to extend it. As long as the war in Vietnam lasts, the forces working for the peace and security of Europe will therefore regard each other as potential enemies who may become involved in mutual conflict as a result of American policy. This obviously serves to increase tension instead of relaxing it; at the same time it is leading to an isolation of the United States government not only from the uncommitted countries, but also from its own allies in Europe.

Irreconcilable Contradictions

This massacre of a people carried on without a declaration of war does not only keep advanced technology busy, it also occupies the highly developed propaganda machinery of the United States. However, the propaganda is more effective in the United States than in other parts of the world. The American citizen is told that "we are fighting for freedom" or that "we are fighting because North Vietnam has attacked South Vietnam," and the man in the street may for a while accept these explanations, he may even be bamboozled into accepting the need for escalation. But Europe and the rest of the world are aware that the war is being carried on in the interests of a military clique that could not survive for a single day without the presence of American bombers and American troops. This military dictatorship aims at maintaining feudal estates and every form of exploitation and is ready to hand over to foreign interests the raw material resources of the country. That is why it receives American support and not because of any alleged mission on its part to ensure freedom for the people of Vietnam.

An outdated political concept and the failure of the means intended to implement it carries those who still insist on it into a deadlock of irreconcilable contradictions. They are fighting for freedom—and everywhere supporting dictators who oppress the people; they protect the rule of law—and steadily violate the fundamental tenets of international law, existing international agreements and the rules of war; they defend the people of Vietnam—by slaughtering them; they want to discuss a cease-fire with the Government of North Vietnam—and continue their merciless bombing of that country; and they want to discuss peace—without having declared war.

The Pretext for Bombing

Of all the acts of aggression the most futile and hence the most tragic is the bombing of North Vietnam. Moreover, the pretext for it is without historical precedent. Even supposing North Vietnam had in fact attacked South Vietnam, thereby inducing the United States to help the latter, such aid could only be given within the territory attacked. The Soviet Union helps North Vietnam, but only in the area under assault and not by attacking United States territory.

Aid to the attacked cannot overstep the boundaries of the areas where warfare is taking place. Therefore, the bombing of North Vietnam is a clear case of aggression regardless of whether or not the US can make a case for intervention and for the maintenance of armed forces in the South.

Nevertheless, the real tragedy does not lie in the violation of international law, but in the complete senselessness and failure of this ruthless aggression. One can really say of the American flyer who is shot down over Vietnam that he has died for something that was not even worth living for—he has died for the unselective murder of innocent people. Mass murder is senseless in any case, but it is made even more senseless by the fact that the spirit of the living is not thereby broken, and anyone who spends as much as a week among them will be convinced that it never will be broken. It is impossible to extort peace talks in Vietnam by such methods; the North Vietnamese Government will not come to the conference table under the duress of bombs. The termination of raids must be unconditional. Unilateral aggression most be unilaterally stopped. This alone provides the possibility for talks. Any admission that the termination of aggression could be made conditional—i.e., that the US would stop bombing North Vietnam only on certain conditions—would convert aggression into a paying proposition and give encouragement to future aggressors.

But it is one of the results of the general desire for peace in our time that even the aggressor must talk peace if he wants to decelerate the process of isolation threatening him. For this reason the stubborn and senseless war of the United States is carried on to the ceaseless accompaniment of peace slogans and peace proposals. According to Secretary of State Rusk's statistics, the US government has already put forward some thirty proposals as a basis for negotiating peace in Vietnam, but North Vietnam has constantly rejected these talks. Such statements are part and parcel of the unscrupulous propaganda campaign serving as orchestration to the massacre. The Americans bomb and bomb—and in the meantime complain that the victim does not want peace. This hypocrisy, however, throws light on the encouraging fact that the world demands peace, is actively working for peace and, perhaps most important of all, is actively opposing US policy, in spite of US propaganda. For this propaganda cannot cloud the real issue, the fact that since the conclusion of the Second World War, wherever a people are striving towards independence or fighting for their democratic rights against their class oppressors, they have to face American arms. This is what official American usage calls "policy of containment and confrontation of communism." But it is a policy that became outdated during the last decade; the most eloquent proof of this is that today it can only be put into practice by force of arms, as evidenced not only in Vietnam, but also in Ghana, Syria, the United Arab Republic, Greece, the Dominican Republic and many other instances. This policy has become a slogan trumpeted wherever progress is to be stopped by force of arms, wherever a people want to fight for freedom.

World Opinion and the American People

World opinion has already become mobilized against this policy, but there is no denying that in the US this process is advancing very slowly. This is probably not only due to the exceptional efficiency of American propaganda at home, but also to the fact that the average US citizen grows up in the belief that "it can't happen here." He cannot conceive of any reversal in the progress of events, for he is brought up in great-power chauvinism, regards American military superiority as eternal, and simply cannot imagine how things would look if they went the other way round—if his own homeland were flooded by foreign forces, if his own cities were constantly pelted with bombs. Apparently, our sense of justice does not dwell in the brain but in the skin: unless our own skin is in danger, we have a distorted picture of justice or become indifferent to it.

Nevertheless, the fermentation process has begun in the United States, and the cause of peace in Vietnam is finding increasing support there too. American public opinion would be the most effective means of bringing pressure on the US government to reach a peaceful settlement backed by principles. World opinion can influence American opinion, and the resulting threat of isolation, both at the international and at the home level, would be bound to influence the US government. The American people's sense of justice remains the greatest hope for a rapid and peaceful settlement.

Winning American public opinion over to insisting on a peaceful settlement of the Vietnam issue has become a primary objective in view of the Johnson government's obvious unwillingness to admit that its Vietnam policy has reached a deadlock and that weapons can at best delay a total fiasco. The US government does not listen to outside arguments; moreover, pressure from the outside might involve the danger of a new world war. Yet there is one kind of outside pressure that may be effective—the peace struggle—but only if it also gains expression, through US public opinion, in other words, if it becomes an issue of American domestic policy.

Bases for Settlement

It should not be forgotten that the independence and sovereignty of the people of Vietnam and the integration of their country was guaranteed by the Geneva Agreements of 1954. The United States has prevented the implementation of these Agreements, thereby provoking the whole Vietnam conflict. The struggle for peace has to be directed against the initiator of the war and has to insist on a settlement based on respect for international law and existing international agreements. Peace-loving humanity cannot support a settlement that deviates from the Geneva Agreements to the detriment of the people of Vietnam. This would only be doing a service to the aggressor and would undermine what little confidence still exists in international law and international agreements.

I believe that peace in Vietnam can be achieved if we consider some of the basic tenets of international law. The principles of a solution can be summarized in a few brief sentences.

Peace negotiations cannot be conducted in bomb shelters but only in the conference hall. The condition for this is a complete end to air-raids over North Vietnam. Armed intervention is prohibited by international law; international disputes cannot be resolved by resort to arms, and every such attempt must be condemned; the Geneva Agreements of 1954 must be enforced, and no foreign troops and bases may be left on the territory of

Vietnam. Peace must be concluded by the parties at war, i.e., by those who have stood opposed to one another in the course of the armed conflict: the USA on one side, and North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam on the other.

What objections can be made to this? The principles are simple, they lead to simple solutions. Again and again we have read in Anglo-American political literature that no peace settlement can be made "under duress." This is not the first time that the US government has used against other nations the very arguments it has rejected when advanced against its own self. Suffice it to recall—bearing in mind its renewed topicality—that in 1956 the US government condemned Israel's aggression against Egypt as absolutely contrary to international law and a violation of the UN Charter. Israel intended to "punish" alleged Egyptian infiltration by way of armed invasion instead of confining herself to driving the alleged guerillas off her soil. Could it be that now a different law applies to the United States than ten years ago to Israel, simply because the US is a superpower?

International law, when violated by or with the support of a great military power, is notoriously impotent, because in this event there is, among the various available sanctions against such violation, only one that is effective: another great military power, which means world war. But the science of international law must sooner or later realize that, in addition to the legal sanctions enumerated in the textbooks, a new and mighty protector of the international rule of law, an effective sanction against breaking the peace of the world is taking shape—and that is world opinion. The sufferings of Vietnam are beginning to mobilize this force, and numerous international and national organizations are making efforts to enforce by united action respect for law, peace and security on behalf of all of us. Many governments are encouraging this effort, authentic testimonies are keeping alive the antipathy of the world against the anachronistic atrocities of war, and conferences involving wide participation are giving a new impetus to these movements.

As a result of my visits to Vietnam I have received innumerable invitations at home in Hungary to speak about my experiences and comment on the situation in Vietnam, because there is wide and intensive interest here in the issue. I have been asked to hold lectures at numerous schools and universities, and at cultural centres in towns and villages, before people of widely differing trades and interests. My lectures as a rule have served as an opening for stimulating thought and initiating discussions. So many questions were asked and so many comments made that my reports were much closer to "public conversations" than formal lectures. Everybody in Hungary considers the war in Vietnam his personal concern.

A GIFT FROM THE STAG

(From the cycle "Capriccios")

by

TIBOR DÉRY

The stag stood on the far side of the forest clearing. It was impossible to tell how he got there. I was lying on this side of the clearing, and when I lifted my head the stag already stood there, on the far side of the clearing, between two tall maple trees, his haunches still emerging, or so it seemed to me, from the pubic-haired cleft of a thicket, while his forelegs, sinewy chest and great antlers, glistening as though still wet with the waters of birth, seemed to stand out in strong relief in the light of the setting sun. I think they were maples, the trees between which he appeared—appeared, suddenly, in the light of the setting sun. He towered up like an apparition from the old sagas, although his black hoofs, strong pasterns and glistening skin confirmed him as a creature of the real world. But were they maple trees?

How had he got there? I had been reading an English book on molecular genetics, with my green sweater bundled under the nape of my neck to prevent a flow of blood to the head. When I go to bed at night I have my pillows piled high under my head as well. Half-emerged from the pubic hairs of the thicket, he stood motionless. He stood with his head raised. Or did he only raise it on meeting my gaze? I accepted his presence. I even put my book face downwards on the grass with slow and cautious movements, so as not to alarm him. Or myself. It seemed to me he and I were already one. For a fleeting instant. The far side of the clearing was over a hundred yards from the spot where I lay, rising steeply towards the sky. I could not really have spoken informally with him, not possibly, even if he had been standing lower down.

If he had appeared in a flash of lightning, or if I had fallen asleep lying in the grass and, half asleep, opened my eyes in the fleecy mists of twilight... But of course I would address him formally, since he was not an apparition in a dream but a real stag, one you could see with your waking

eyes and feel all over with your hands. I have long stopped speaking informally to nature—for one thing, because I am getting old, and also because as I see it, I've really no right to. Above the clearing a rosy cloud floated across the sky, the sun, as I said, was sinking. Yet the stag stood motionless at the far side of the forest clearing, between the two maple trees, his enormous eyes meditatively fixed on me, his testicles and presumably the white hairs under his rump still concealed in the thicket.

The cloud floated across the sky and the clearing seemed to drift away from under me, and the trees on every side disappeared and reappeared in the river of a dusk suddenly flowing in. Hold tight to the order of the tangible world. Don't let the red-checked rug drift away from under you, nor the book on molecular genetics, drifting away with it at the same speed. Clutch in your hands these two pungent smelling purple sage bushes, standing in the grass on each side of your red-checked rug. Standing? Or appearing? Had they just appeared? In a second flowering. Held in the circulation of the ribeo-nucleic acids of the memory.

"May I address you?"

"Please do."

"When, dear sir, did you arrive?"

"Would you care perhaps to speak rather more informally with me?"

"I'm old, you know, and I shouldn't like it very much if you did the same to me."

"I wouldn't dream of it."

"Very well."

"How many branches do your antlers have?"

"Why do you ask, my dear sir?"

"It's getting dark, the far side of the clearing, which is over a hundred yards away, is lost in the twilight, and I can't count the branches of your antlers any more."

Instead of a reply, suddenly, at the far side of the clearing, which was over a hundred yards away, a fierce white light blazed up around the real stag between the two maple trees. I think they were maple trees. The nubeculae still remaining from my recent inflammation of the corneas made no difference to my sight—but I take no credit for this. Facts prove nothing if you lack faith. He might have had a hundred branches on his antlers as far as I was concerned, I should still have honoured him. I lifted my eyes once again from the ground, and looked at his black hoofs, his strong pasterns and sinewy chest glistening as though still wet with the waters of birth. What indeed was it that made it glisten?

I had long suspected, but only now did I make sure, as I lifted my eyes

still higher, that this real stag was carrying on his antlers a rosy naked babe, balancing it deftly to save it from falling to the ground and on through the ground to the fire and brimstone of hell, and from taking hurt from the branched points and gnarled bosses of his antlers. The babe, if my eyes did not deceive me, raised its two small clenched fists to the sky.

It was curious, everything was still. There was not a sound from the crickets, and all the hurry and bustle of the busy ants under the pages of my book made no rustle. At the far side of the clearing—I was lying on the near side—the bright halo of light that lifted the real stag shone with an even glow. Did it come from the back or the side? Because the clouds in the sky were a luminous rose. Could one of them have descended and alighted on the antlers of the stag? Unanswerable questions gnaw at our minds night and day, and every moment of our waking hours when we are held embraced between the thighs of dreams; but who troubles about unanswerable questions? We should be satisfied with the troubles of our daily bread and the Lord's prayer. No, the wind did not rise, the leaves did not rustle: I lay in a photographic still, the hollow murmur of the universe could not enter here. The details, it's true, corresponded—the rosy cloud in the sky and the kicking naked babe borne on the stag's antlers—but never again will I rely on a servile interpretation of correspondences. Come, let us sail off in the imaginary storm, which is more real than the present stillness. My red-check rug begins to flutter. Perhaps I might sit up? Perhaps I might even get up and stand on one of the red checks, with arms outstretched like a flying swan. Perhaps I might even reach the real stag that had appeared on the far side of the forest clearing, his haunches shrouded in the gloom of the forest, the dreamy, pitch-black gaze of his enormous, bloodshot eyes on me. The history of animals could be read in his gaze.

The babe, if my eyes did not deceive me, had lowered the tiny clenched fists it had raised to the sky. Did he want to speak to me?

"You are not surprised?"

"No."

"Good."

It is possible it was the babe that spoke in the voice of the stag or else the stag that spoke in the voice of the babe. I did not know either of them. Until then I had had no idea how ignorant and lonely I was. I looked at the heraldic device at the far side of the forest clearing—stag on a green field, bearing a naked babe on his antlers—and my heart sank. Pain, coming like the solemn feast-days, is the sieve of life. Feast-days have grown in number lately. After the sifting we become coarser or finer—as we wish. The stag stood at the far side of the forest clearing, over a hundred yards away—it

was only natural therefore that the hot breath steaming from his broad nostrils, his saliva, and the foam running down his haunches, trickled to the ground. My green sweater was bundled under my neck, to prevent a flow of blood to the head. I also have my pillows piled high under my head in bed. If only I could hear him bell! But no, never! He would stiffen his forelegs, strain the muscles of his neck, and throw his head back. But he cannot, or he would let the rosy babe slip from his antlers and it would fall straight into the fire and brimstone of hell.

"This should be enough to content you."

"It is," I said. "All my life I've been an unpretentious man."

"Truly?"

"I think so."

"What if I hadn't appeared to you now?"

"I should have been inconsolable."

"I am flattered."

"May I ask a question?" I said after a while. "How long do you intend to keep that dreamy look in your pitch-black eyes fixed on me?"

"For ever."

There was nothing to be said to that. But time passed, and I overcame my apprehension.

"Don't you think you're overdoing it?" I asked, as politely as I possibly could.

I did not hear what he answered. Maybe he repeated his earlier reply. Maybe he fixed another date. I think he stood between two maple trees. Ever since then I live in fear that he will carry out his threat. Never mind, he cheered me a little—after all, he lengthened my life by a few moments.

NEW YORK MINUTE BY MINUTE

Part III of an American Journal

by

IVÁN BOLDIZSÁR

March 16

(Drugstore and subway première) At sunset the colours of New York are exquisitely beautiful. In many of the skyscrapers the lights are already on, the sun is setting in the background and the limpid bluish-lilac translucence combines with the sharp neon green and mercury lamps to produce a strange harmony of colour. I am sitting at the window of my hotel room, trying to recall my second whole day in New York. I begin with two general first impressions, one of which proved wrong already before the day was out.

This was my first drugstore. I had imagined something more complicated, more interesting. On one side there is a chemist's shop and a parfumery together. In another corner nylon stockings are sold, in a third soft drinks and coca-cola are served, and one might be able to get a wrapped sandwich as well. On the fourth side, along a steel counter simple boiled and roast dishes are obtainable. The kitchen ("the kitchen") is along the wall behind: small gas-rings, electric cookers, barbecues. The smell of food is faintly perceptible, but it is piping hot. In greatest demand is the notorious, over-advertised and much over-rated hamburger. It is pure meat, but tastes like straw. It is not even salted. It is served with ketch-up, please flavour it yourself. I did. I did not then know that the whole of America tastes of ketch-up. If the hamburger rises in life, it is called a cheeseburger. The cheese tastes like straw too. One drugstore chain advertises it its own brand as the hamburger with a college education. Satire can never outstrip life, it might have been invented by Mark Twain or Art Buchwald. I tasted it: Dr. Hamburger could only be plain Mr. Fritter in Budapest.

Later I had another "first time": I travelled on the subway. It is really *sub* way, that is, not deep underground, but just under the road like

its contemporary, our own old baby underground in Budapest. But there the similarity ends. Nor does it bear any resemblance to the Paris Metro or the London Underground. The cars are longer and you can go from one to another. The seats run lengthwise, and they are not upholstered. Spartan people. Or are they economizing? Just on that? The most vivid impression is of a policeman rushing up and down along the train, a rubber truncheon in one hand, the other on the butt of his pistol. From six in the evening till seven in the morning an armed policeman travels with the train. There used to be daily murders on the subway, sometimes more than one; I gather the situation has now improved a little. I really ought to look up the criminal record for New York.

In the underground carriages as well as in the stations are Radio Free Europe advertisements. One of them has a *chevaux de frise* barbed wire entanglement closing the "iron curtain" and an inscription to the effect that "No obstacle can bar the Voice of Free Europe from the countries behind the iron curtain." I don't remember the text of the other, in which a despairing young girl stands half buried in the snow before a barbed wire entanglement.

They won't believe this at home. There is still a public illusion that coexistence has been warmly and immediately accepted across the Atlantic; that it is really their most ardent desire. We have flung open the iron curtain while they are still harping on it? Offensively? With that lie? Young girl in the snow when hundreds of thousands travel to the West, passport and all? When about a million foreigners visited Hungary last year? Damn it, I too seem to have been deluded by this illusion, and my anger has called up statistics.

(At the CBS Building.) The day began by my writing a letter home and then I hurried off as fast as I could to the CBS, where Betty and one of the directors were waiting for me, but at the corner of Sixth Avenue and 51st Street I lost my way between the skyscrapers. Here the whole road is covered with planks, because the new subway line is under construction, right in the open, it seems. The planks rumbled under the tyres of the cars, but the road has not been closed to traffic for a single minute. A new city centre is being built here, giant buildings everyone of them, none less than forty or fifty floors in height, and all of them innocent of mortar or brick. I think I just stood there and gaped a while: that was really the New York of my imagination, not the half low squatting, half high-rearing sort of district like the neighbourhood of 23rd Street, round the Chelsea Hotel.

I couldn't help standing and staring for quite a long time, then I lost more

time rushing round till I could find the marvellous new skyscraper of the 34 (or maybe 43) storey CBS. It is the most beautiful of them all. Both the number 51 and the "CBS" are so discreetly hidden that you only notice them on the way out. The reason for this is that it is surrounded by a sort of fosse, one might almost say a moat without water, and the entrance lies lower than the pavement.

At the CBS we talked a lot about TV, but what I best remember is the building itself. It is one of Saarinen's last works, a marvellously slender black-and-white creation. The outside walls are all glass, as in every new skyscraper, but where it is not window it is black glass or a glistening synthetic material. The rooms inside are a harmony of black and ivory. I use the word room simply from habit, because Saarinen did not design rooms. He designed large floor spaces, which could be partitioned off into rooms with ivory-coloured panels. How he solved the sound-proofing problem I have no idea. You have to descend a few steps across what I called the moat to reach the entrance, and this makes the huge building grow even taller above you.

The entrance foyer is gravely, shiningly black, with an exquisitely beautiful blonde sitting at an enormous desk in the middle and smiling at anybody who comes in. In the background stands a great giant of a Negro, almost merging into the dark walls, guarding the blonde girl and the black palace.

I arrived pretty late to meet Mr. R., one of the managers of CBS. Mr. R. was the first American businessman I met. The CBS was the first office I entered, not counting my host institution. Stepping out of the lift—sorry, elevator—I was received by—I suppose girl guide is not the word. Very strange. I first met this institution in Moscow twenty years ago. In Hungary this particular function of—what?—floor-mistress?—corridor-secretary?—simply could not get going. At the beginning of the fifties they had girls sitting opposite the lift doors at the editorial offices of *Szabad Nép* —but somehow they had no staying power, they soon faded away.

First she asked my name, then I had to write it down in block capitals on a pad of printed forms for the purpose. My coat the lady hung in a cupboard and then she disappeared. One minute, two, three: Mr. R. is waiting, would I please come in.

The first thing about Mr. R. that struck me was the faultless cut and solemn appearance of his suit. Then I noticed that it was made of a feather-light, almost transparent, slightly lustrous kind of tropical worsted or dacron, the same as my companion had worn the day before at lunch. I knew immediately why he was wearing the national undress; there was a nip in

the air, although it was sunny outside. I had also known in advance that in my habitual suit I would be sweating like the devil in a minute. I couldn't see a radiator anywhere, but when I went to the window to look out and wanted to take a snapshot of the forest of skyscrapers, a dry, hot draught came rushing up from the window-sill. Oh, yes, air conditioning cools in the summer and heats in the winter, just like the good old, pre-World-War-I Schöberl convertible bed: arm-chair in winter, bed in summer. Couldn't we perhaps open the window a little? I tried again as I had done the previous day. Sorry, couldn't be done. The windows of new buildings are not only not allowed to be opened, they are simply unopenable. But why open them? Betty asked. There was the air conditioning. Bless it!

(A fundamental principle.) In the next few minutes I made the acquaintance of two inventions. I envy America for the one. I wouldn't live there for a million dollars on account of the second. The first is a kind of thermometer in the shape of a small clock-face hanging on the wall, with a frame that twisted to meet an arrow. Mr. R. turned it a little to the left, from 75° Fahrenheit to 68°. At the time I had no idea how much that represented but I was beginning to learn that 75° was much too much for a room and much too warm for my lungs, constantly aching for fresh air, and that 68° was already tolerable. In a minute or two the air cooled. This clever little gadget is installed not only in offices but also in most flats. When I consider that in most households in Budapest carrying up the coal or logs from the cellar continues to be a headache, and the source of constant war between the generations, and that in houses with central heating pioneer Lucifers are responsible for heating the boilers, since the only temperature they seem to know is hell at full blast, whether the winter is mild or bitter, and when I think of what a red-letter day in our family it was and how peace and bliss descended on our life in winter when gas heating was installed, although the lever to control it was still in the cellar, then I am really filled with envy for this control machine which can be set to the desired temperature in each room. It will be a long time before we Europeans reach this level of comfort and luxury.

On the other hand, if the price to be paid for it is the other invention, air-conditioning in both summer and winter, then I'd rather keep on running down to the cellar and back to the end of my days. The unopenable windows embittered all the pleasures of my stay in America. Conditioned air is like distilled water. I simply do not understand how the Americans can get used to it. Air after all, has not only got a temperature, but taste, smell and movement as well, it has real breathing.

On top of that the Americans—and here I am not generalizing but summing up the experience of four months by way of a second introduction—love heat and cold equally. In winter and spring they overheat every flat and office. At the same time they overcool every drink. They fill every glass of orange juice or coca-cola half-way with chunks of ice and only then do they pour the liquid on to it. In restaurants as well as snack-bars every glass of water is served with ice. While I was swimming in perspiration in Mr. R.'s room, the corridor-guardian secretary brought in three glasses of coca-cola. I eagerly reached for it. It burnt my throat, it was so icy. And while I mopped my face and felt I was about to lose my voice, I remembered what my friend Z. had told me the previous night about waste, and I began to understand the connection. More than that, I even went further and began to formulate to myself the second fundamental principle of the American way of life. Strange as it may sound, this is connected with the weather just like the first—light clothes in winter, heavy in summer. At least so it appears at first sight. If the Americans were to save all the money which currently they throw away on overheating flats and offices on the one hand, and on making lumps of ice on the other to wet the throats that are parched by over-heating and to make up for the moisture evaporated, and if they were to give this amount to the Indian Red Cross, they could help end the famine there.

I could not resist giving this financial pearl of mine to Mr. R. "I don't think your calculation is correct," he replied. "You seem to forget that electricity is extremely cheap here."

We talked about the American television companies, about the preparations for colour TV, about soap-operas—the American equivalent to the Hungarian Szabó family serial—of which there were four currently running on the radio and five on TV. "I'd like to meet the author of one of these serials," I said. I did not succeed. The reason was not disclosed, but I have a hunch that nobody was willing. I wouldn't have been myself in their place.

Every now and then during the conversation we looked at the TV screen: the preparations for the Gemini 8 shot were being shown. The small sausage-shaped, unmanned Agena rocket had already been launched. The count-down had started, they were in the 38th minute, 228–227–226 a human voice was ticking away. I thought that in the remaining more than half an hour we would just be through with the conversation and I could watch the launching on another screen in the CBS building. But no it was not to be like that. At the eighth minute Mr. R. stood up and took me for a tour of the building, assuring me that we would be back just in time for the 60–59–58 final stretch of the count-down. It seems that every minute

counts and is calculated in the time of a business man like him. Here was the famous American efficiency, for which there is no proper word in Hungarian.

(Two generalizations.) I was so taken with the building and Mr. R. was such a good guide that by the time we got back to his room we had missed the shot. "Never mind," Mr. R. consoled me, "they have tele-recorded it and you'll see it often enough in the course of the day." And he was quite right, I watched it that night at the F-.s.

Upon my asking how the biggest radio and television enterprise of America worked, Mr. R. replied that net turnover for 1965 amounted to $700 million, leaving $46 million net profit. Dividends were $2.47 per share/stock.

I felt quite dizzy for a moment. In the first place the 700 million dollars puzzled me; if I remember correctly, Hungary had to pay a total of 300 million dollars reparations to the Soviet Union for war damage, and the Soviets had in fact cancelled half of that. And secondly, it puzzled me why the general manager of CBS should answer my question about *how* they worked by dollar figure. What I really wanted to know was how they managed to cover such a vast territory with information and entertainment? How did they manage to bridge the time gap from coast to coast? Where did they get their information about audience moods and demands? Did they keep permanent theatre groups and orchestras?

Before I could bring these questions out, Mr. R. remarked that part of their income was earned by a baseball team called the New York Yankees, owned by CBS, that is to say, CBS owned 90 per cent of the stock. In reply to my questions he then gave me a copy of CBS' annual report. I'd find everything in there, he said. He would show me anything else that was possible. Mr. R. then proposed we should meet again at 11 a.m. on April 11. It was the 16th that day of the month of March—did he know his timetable so well in advance? He could not understand the question. Why, couldn't you tell all your commitments in Budapest a month ahead?

What is one supposed to say? For the credit of the country? Always and naturally the naked truth? Yes, but if I say "no," he simply won't believe me and he'll start wondering what's up my sleeve. If I say "yes" he won't understand why I was surprised. I stuck to the truth. His face lit up: "But how wonderful life must be in your eastern countries!"

I said I rather liked it there myself, but I didn't think all eastern countries were the same. He cut in. Oh, of course, of course, he was quite aware of that. I was going to see for myself too the enormous differences that

existed between the different States in the United States. The deep South was quite a different world. California was the dead spit of Europe. That's what you meant when you said that eastern countries were not alike, didn't you?"

No, it wasn't what I meant, but where would it have taken us if I had settled down to give him a detailed explanation right there and then? Later it turned out that I couldn't shirk this explanation, because every American, with the possible exception of a few professional "politologists" and Kremlinologists, talked as if the "eastern," that is, the socialist countries, were all one and the same. He simply could not get it into his head that in a small area about the size of three American states greater differences might exist than between, say, New York and San Francisco. And even those of them who were more informed in these matters, because they had studied recent developments in the socialist countries, didn't seem to be able to form a clear picture of it for themselves. Clearly all this was not merely a question of politics and propaganda; people here really did have different notions of distance and space. In the first days I only guessed this much. Later on, however, I was to see for myself how soon experience was digested into consciousness. But of what was *near* I had a lesson that very night when I made an excursion to F., "here, not far away."

And in this connection I have to add another observation, essentially very similar in character, which I made in those first days, although I was only first aware of it in the morning of the third day, at my first talk at a University; but from then on I was to meet it day in day out for four months. It is on a difference which is historical rather than geographical; but, like the other, it begins with geography. If Eastern Europe came up in a conversation, everybody nodded—yes, yes, things were going better there now, he'd heard it, yes, of course. But from his subsequent questions, or remarks construable as questions, or from his statements and sometimes pronouncements it appeared that he found it impossible to imagine how. Of this more later on. Here I only want to point out that the Stalinist era has burnt such deep scars into men's minds, which propaganda only widened and later prevented from healing that there seems to be no room in their minds for any other form of socialism.

(Parenthesis in Budapest.) I turn off my pocket tape-recorder and indulge in a long parenthesis, because at this point I want to tell something I learnt after my American journey, when back again in Budapest, but which rounds out the American picture. I am happy to have made quite a few American friends, and even happier that many of them took me at

my word when I encouraged them to come and visit Hungary. And that my newly acquired American friends send their countrymen arriving in Hungary to me is something that is becoming a direct American tradition. I am saying all this because I am now meeting America in Hungary as well and time and time again it is being brought home to me what petrified notions still exist in people's minds across the Atlantic.

There was, for instance, one of the editors of a well-known liberal paper whom I invited to dine with me at an old restaurant in the Buda Castle Hill district on the day of his arrival. It was a pleasant, warm summer evening and all places were occupied in the restaurant garden. When we entered everyone in the garden was singing: "She is lovely, she is lovely, and her eyes are sparkling blue..."

My friend stood in the entrance. He looked at me in surprise.

"Is this a Hungarian song?" he asked.

"It is," I said, adding that Bartók and Kodály had arranged more beautiful and characteristic melodies.

He replied, almost irritably. "It's not Bartók I'm asking you about. Tell me, are these people Hungarians?"

Now it was my turn to be surprised. He noticed it and added right away:

"I mean they're not tourists? Because it's so unexpected. What are they so gay about?"

I could do no better than ask back: "Why shouldn't they be?"

"I didn't know anything like this was possible under socialism."

He believed, because that is what he had always read, that in a socialist society people were exclusively cheerful as and when licensed by authority; they had no time or mind to enjoy themselves, everybody was tired and afraid. Later he was even surprised that there was plenty of food. He took the trouble to thread his way among the tables with me to convince himself that it was really Hungarians who were eating there, and that they were not all of them well-to-do foreigners. At the back of his mind socialism for him still spelt the barrack life and the ration card.

"My dear friend," I said to him when he had drowned his first surprise in a glass of apricot brandy, while I myself, with a wink to the waiter, was sipping mineral water disguised with a drop of wine, for with us no one fancies hard drinks before a meal, especially not in the hot weather, "my dear friend, you are, aren't you, the editor of a liberal paper. You discuss and profess the ideas of understanding, cooperation and coexistence. How could you conceive such a barracks atmosphere? Even though it used to exist..."

He interrupted me. "I am aware that things have improved. I heard that now you had more consumer goods. But that it should have made you gay like that was beyond our imagination."

I wanted to help him and also show him the absurdity of his thinking. "All this consumer goods view of things is the triumph of vulgar Marxism in the biggest capitalist country in the world. But it is something quite different. Look, you were surprised and astonished just now because you heard people singing in a Hungarian restaurant on a Saturday night. What if I said that this meant precisely nothing? That with all this singing the prisons could still be full and people still trembling and grovelling; that with this singing the people in the villages could be queuing up for bread while everybody was having it hammered in their ears that the standard of living was rising?"

My friend eyed me dubiously; he did not understand a thing. Perhaps he even thought I might be pulling his leg, while the truth was that I didn't feel in the least like joking. "What do you mean by that?" he asked.

"Just what you hear. Nothing. Or everything." That the peace of the world depends on how the Americans see the world. Which is what I had vainly tried to make my new friends understand throughout my stay in America (and in fact what is wrong in the socialist countries is not what they think is wrong there.) To quote a saying from the days of dogmatism we would say they are a pamphlet behind. What do I mean? If I begin to explain you will get a little closer to a correct view. Not much: just an inch, whereas the divergence can only be expressed in ells. You Americans are one historic beat behind and even those of you who genuinely want to join in the symphony of human survival only make for disharmony by coming in a bar late.

And isn't it true in reverse too? I do not deny that. Only too often people in the socialist countries imagine England not only through the glasses of cold war propaganda, but through Dickensian spectacles, and America through the eyes of Gorky and Kafka, that is, through pre-First World War lenses. And there are quite as many who want to see nothing of America but the glamour, the wealth, the cars and Hollywood. I often lectured on this subject during my American tour under the title "The Image of the United States in Hungary." When I reach this point in my journal I will write about it. Now I am talking about American political astigmatism. As I said, what is wrong in the socialist countries is not what they think is wrong, and they have no idea of the real difficulties, and if anybody tries to explain they let it go in one ear and out of the other. My friend was as polite and well-mannered in conversation as most Americans whom I met

there and here at home. Most, I say, because the minority is just the opposite. It is an injustice to the American people that in Europe they are often judged by this minority. I could see that my friend would have liked to take me at my word and ask what the difficulties were but politeness led him to swallow his question. He had no need to ask, in fact because I was going to tell him anyway, as I had done so often in New York and Schenectady and other places. Perhaps that is why I feel the keys of my typewriter urging me to talk about our mutual image right out of chronological context at the beginning of my diary, because all through my American tour it was that image, those preconceptions, dreams and nightmares I found myself comparing with the reality.

I had set out on the journey telling myself firmly that I would not discover America. In vain. As soon as one sets foot in America one becomes a Columbus. I do not claim to have discovered America in those hundred and twenty days I spent there, but I did discover myself all over again, and the land I had come from. The adventure of discovering America means for the traveller from the Eastern part of Europe the discovery of his own self, it means personal and social introspection.

So I told my American visitor that what was wrong with us at the present time came from outside, and if I were not bound by considerations of hospitality I would say from where. When amidst so much misfortune and fratricidal strife—as our national anthem has it—the people and the authorities have came as close together as has rarely happened in the course of the centuries; when those invested with power who are themselves of the people could declare that those who were not against us were with us, thereby grafting a small Biblical shoot on the tree of Marxism; when the coexistence of the two halves of the world was beginning to become every day reality and that every day in Hungarian socialist society meant that today we felt better than yesterday and had every reason to think that we should be able to plan confidently for tomorrow and five years ahead, I say, at this historic juncture the escalation in Vietnam began; even though it could not stop further progress entirely, it did arrest and retard and put obstacles in its way. All Hungarians, communists and non-communists, asked themselves whether it was not only we who had taken coexistence seriously? Had we been too naive? And for this reason distrust started up once more: that, for instance, was one thing wrong with us today.

The difficulties we face are also quite different from what American visitors imagine them to be. They do not arise because people are longing for the return of capitalism, but from the fact that they want socialism but a good, efficient, productive socialism. I might perhaps put it this

way; this being the most progressive form of economy and society, it should be the most modern as well. Hence the labour and pains of the new economic mechanism. But how should Americans, even the co-existentialists, be expected to understand the new mechanism, if they could not get the old into their heads?

For the whole point is, as I told to my friend in the little garden with the gipsy music playing behind us, that they were unable to conceive an idea of our life. I asked him to italicize mentally that last word. I also added that I would be the last man to blame them for it. I know how you feel, I said, for in the winter of 1946/47, when I was the first Hungarian writer visiting Moscow, I simply could not imagine what life was like in a socialist society, how offices and shops worked, who earned how much and why, what people's ambitions were and how they satisfied them, and I myself had imagined life there to be much more regimented than I found it, even though those were in fact the years of Stalinism. Twenty years, however, have gone by since then. Stalinism is over, the world has entered the nuclear age, and the necessity of coexistence is recognized even by those who still regard it as a political four-letter word. It is not only necessary but it is also possible now to know and get to know about life in a socialist country, or for the sake of simplicity and authenticity, let us restrict ourselves directly to Hungary.

The Americans now seem to believe that Stalinism is gone, but they simply cannot conceive of an economy which is not based upon free enterprise, nor a political set-up which is not based upon parliamentary elections. Even if it is not as appaling as they had come to know during the cold war. It is true that it is not easy to understand that there is no terror in Hungary any more but that the regime still calls itself a proletarian dictatorship. I believe even the so-called Kremlinologists have not tried to come to terms with this. Every Hungarian, for instance, visiting the West has to be a little suspect: he has to be a favourite of the regime if he has been granted a passport.

"Do you know," I turned now to my guest, "that since 1962 there has been what is known as a tourist passport in Hungary?" He did not know. "What's that?" I told him that between 2–300,000 people travel to western countries as tourists every year. "Did you know that the Hungarian National Bank gives them a foreign currency allowance?" He did not know. He seemed rather reluctant to believe it. Of course, I continued, seventy dollars was not much to a western traveller, it would seem ridiculous to an American, but to a Hungarian longing to travel abroad it was Croesus' wealth after twenty years of isolation. Living in a modest hotel or camping,

$140 after all for two persons for a fortnight was not all that inconsiderable. And then every Hungarian had some relative, friend, former school mate; one could always count on an invitation or a little emergency aid.

In vain the music played, in vain we ate delicious Hortobágy pancake, in vain did I hope that I was bringing him a little nearer to the truth, that we would be able to come round to our real problems in the course of the conversation: I was disappointed. I was reminded once more that throughout my American journey I had asked everybody, but really everybody I met, if they had heard about this passport thing. Not one of them had, except of course the Hungarians living there. I had taken the trouble to look through the files of the *New York Times* and *Time:* neither had mentioned it. So the fact that the State Department had asked the foreign editors of papers not to use the "iron curtain country" phrase remained a political gesture because the iron curtain remained in their minds. Certainly I told my friend, travel facilities could well be freed a little more, but I had the suspicion that he did not believe I meant it either.

For the real fact of the matter is that they do not want to believe it. If the Americans are to see the rest of the world correctly they have to see themselves correctly in the first place. And most Americans, the so-called liberals not excluded, are convinced that the only good, correct and tolerable way in the world is the way they have it. They use themselves as the only measure; the more simple souls measure everything to their standard of living, their comforts, their mechanized households; the more intellectual to their social and political institutions. Everything that is different cannot be as perfect: witness life in France or Holland. Everything that is not their exact plus is a minus—regimentation, prison, darkness, hell below.

This is roughly the way I put it. Less coherent certainly, and with longer pauses in between, since after all we were sitting in a restaurant garden and the notes of sentimental melodies came floating on the air, and in a further room the cymbalom player was strumming "Oh the lily of the valley." "Isn't that true?" I asked my friend, but told him not to answer right away, before I had the chance to add how much more respect I felt for him as well as all other liberal Americans, because of their stand for cooperation with the socialist world even though themselves abhorring it.

To this, without waiting for a prompting, he answered with a "Yes, it's true."

Here I close the long parenthesis, at least for the time being. Since besides the main question, what Americans were like, all the time in the United States was most intrigued by its companion-question—what we Hungarians were like in their eyes. I now return you to New York and 51st Street.

(Who built the George Washington Bridge?) The CBS neighbourhood is the most sky-reaching quarter I had so far seen in New York. It is all thirty-forty-storey-contemporary, that is, glass. Mr. R.'s room looked out onto the New York Hilton Hotel, opened last year. Opposite CBS, almost obstructing the view, is the rival NBC building. Through a narrow gap there is a prospect of the Hudson River and the George Washington Bridge over which, though I did not then know it, I was to pass later that afternoon. Nor what my mentor of Hungarian origin told me that evening, casually, with customary Hungarian modesty: "It was built by a Hungarian engineer." I believed it and even felt proud. A couple of days later I was walking with an Italian-born university man on the Hudson embankment. He pointed to the bridge: "Did you know it was designed by an Italian engineer?" I was nonplussed. "Are you sure it wasn't a Hungarian?" He stared at me, laughed. "You Hungarians are really odd! D'you think you've made everything in America because your Edward Teller helped to invent the hydrogen bomb?"

I did not say a word. As a Hungarian patriot I am not particularly proud of the invention of the hydrogen bomb. All right, if it's Italian, let it be Italian. That was all very well, but a few weeks later, coming home from a concert, I was in a car with an Austrian living in America and a visiting Pole. Do I have to go on? It was an Austrian engineer. No. It was a Polish engineer... I nobly refrained from mentioning the Hungarian engineer. But to this day I do not know who built the George Washington Bridge.

("Our Heroes") It was lunch time when I took leave of CBS. My stomach rumbled. Where to go? I set out eastwards along 51st Street in the direction of my host institution, where I was to call after lunch. All the way I looked out for a suitable restaurant but I couldn't find anything to my taste. Most of them allured me with Italian names, but I was set on eating American. In many places there were construction sites, and from the boardings wonderful giant sandwiches grinned at me. A long French roll cut lengthwise with ham, cheese, slices of sausage, salad and slices of hard-boiled egg protruding on either side bore the inscription: *Our Heroes*. I did not understand. Was "heroes" the name of the sandwich? Or of the factory? Could it be some allusion to the soldiers in Vietnam? It was a very good advertisement: it aroused my curiosity and activated my gastric juices. I ought to have one like that, I thought, it would settle everything.

I looked for a snack bar, or something similar, possibly a something like a Parisian bistro. These must be the places where these heroes were served. Or perhaps the man who could swallow one was a hero? I found

neither a snack bar nor a bistro, but in the meantime I reached Park Avenue. The March sun was shining and of course the everlasting New York wind was blowing, and from two directions at that, but it was a milder wind than the previous day so that I did not feel inclined to take shelter in doorways all the time. Not that that would have been an easy thing to do, with all the top-hatted Cerberuses guarding the gates of Park Avenue houses under awnings stretching to the curb. I assuaged my hunger with my iron rations. I had a good laugh to myself in the meantime: I do not think there was one other man in the whole of America to carry a slice of toast wrapped in a plastic bag in his inside pocket. A war-time habit, and the other is that no matter how bitterly hungry I may be I only allow myself to eat half, for I might be hungrier by the evening or the next day. I was hardly threatened by that particular danger in the heart of prosperous New York. Yet I only broke off half of it, and sitting on the curb of a little fountain in the street I ate it slowly, munching every mouthful. That held my importunate gastric juices in check, lunch could now wait, I wanted to look round.

Only then I began to take stock of the situation: how had this fountain got there in the middle of the pavement? Luckily I had with me the best city guide-book in the world, of which only the title is conventional: "Complete Guide to New York City" written by Andrew Hepburn and published by Doubleday. I have never come across a better edited, more elegantly written and more ingeniously arranged guide-book. When I think of all the clumsy, turbid, disorganized and voluble guides we treat our visitors to, I am seized with envy, all the more as I have made excursions into the genre myself.

(Briefcase-lore.) The book was too large to go into my pocket but I carried it everywhere in my small brief case. This might well be the reason why that day, as well as others, I was promptly spotted as a foreigner before I opened my mouth. The New York male either carries nothing in his hands or that thin travelling case-like contraption for which they have the distinguished name "attaché case" with a snobbish reference to the thing in which young diplomats carry state secrets behind their ambassadors. Towards the end of my stay in America a former colleague of mine, now living there, presented me with his own attaché case, one of the over-advertised Samsonite brand at that. I was very happy to have it being, as I am, a maniac for all adult toys. But I cannot use the case: it weighs eight pounds. I know this exactly because before leaving New York for Washington for the first time I bought another toy for adults. I had been eager to get it ever

since I set eyes on it. It was a small suitcase balance. I had seen its ancestor at the market in Baja when I was a child; the market-women—the *kofas*—weighed the chicken on it. It was a spring with a scale attached alongside and a hook at the bottom end for the chicken. The weight extends the spring and the scale shows how much it weighs or rather pulls. The American gadgetomaniacs—in whose ranks I count myself as an honorary member—have made the thing of chromium-plated aluminium and sell it in a red leather case. It can be used to check before an air trip whether one's suitcase is within the allowed weight limit of twenty kilograms if one travels tourist class as an ordinary civilian, or thirty kilograms if one travels first class as a peer or as a guest of the Ford Foundation. All very well, but what did these tricky Americans do? The moment I got this collapsible pocket balance they abolished the wieghing of suitcases on internal flights. Everybody can carry around as much weight as he pleases. The women of my family have since demoted the air balance to a kitchen one.

Let us rewind the ball of associations which have taken me from Park Avenue to the kitchen of my Buda flat. I did not go about New York with an attaché case, but my flat brief case which is not much larger and thicker than a wallet. In it I kept the guide, the maps, the day's copy of the New York Times to read on the subway, which I never managed to finish because I preferred to look at the people; air note-paper to write letters home while waiting somewhere; and my journal note-book and my tape-recorder. From it I now fished out the world's best guide-book—this is where we came in—and looked up the part about Park Avenue. On one side of the page is a plan showing all the buildings, numbered and with explanations for the numbers. Let's see: I am sitting on the kerb of the fountain at the corner of 51st Street, then this building here—yes, of course, I ought to have guessed, having seen a good many pictures of it in architectural periodicals and on postcards: it is the Seagram Building. The famous one, the only building in the modern world made of bronze—this is how it is referred to, though I do not know whether the old world had bronze houses or not.

(The Seagram Building.) I looked up at it with awe and expectation. I counted the storeys: thirty-eight. It is different from any other modern building I have seen either here, or in England or Italy. Darker—this must be the fashion—but dark in different way from CBS. That was glossier, this was more majestic. That was a union of iron, concrete and glass, this of bronze and glass. Saarinen had had the glass in his building polished glossy black like Chinese lacquered furniture. The man who designed Seagram's—I'd look that up in a minute too—had had the glass surfaces, that is the real

windows and the false windows, blown over with a smoke-coloured paint which made their colour like the smoked glass through which we used to gaze at eclipses. "Designed by the Chicago architect Mies van der Rohe," said my guide-book, and I was on the point of revoking my praise. Had one of the founding fathers of the Dessay Bauhaus become a Chicago architect so soon? Or is this very faculty of assimilation one of the secrets of America's vigour?

Mies van der Rohe has worked two miracles: one of them is the noble grace of the building, the other is that little space in front of it, that Italian piazza, where I sat down on the curb of one of its fountains. The price of land here is so high as to be almost inexpressible in European terms of money. As a result every square yard has to be used for building, to be let as offices in some fashionable district and so refund the cost. The other miracle worked by Mies van der Rohe was that of persuading the people who commissioned him (can I say commissioners?) to this wastefulness. Later I heard that the city of New York had made the Seagrams pay an enormous tax for "not using" valuable land. Whether it was true or not I could not check, nor did I want to: true or not, it is very characteristic of New York.

And I don't think the Seagram company had to tighten their belts over the extra tax. Seagram makes whisky as well as non-alcoholic drinks. While writing these lines, at home in Budapest, I have the name Seagram continually before my eyes, not as a skyscraper, nor yet as a bottle of whisky, but as the cardboard container in which the bottles come, an inevitable requisite of American life. They use them for the garbage in front of the houses and in restaurants, and they use them in moving. I brought home in a couple of these handy boxes the four hundred and fifty books bought or received as gifts. They are still there, partly to be handy while writing, partly because I have not yet evicted the corresponding number of European books from the shelves to make room for them.

(Adventure in the Four Seasons.) I decided that I'd drink Seagram whisky before dinner, I walked round the building and on the side on 52nd Street I discovered a restaurant dedicated to the Four Seasons. There was no bill of fare displayed outside—always a sign of high prices—but I thought to myself that after all we only live once and in all my born days only once in my life would I be the owner of multi-hundred dollars. But already in the vestibule I was seized with the apprehension that it was more a place for multimillionaires to eat than for Ford-made multi-hundredaires, when I discovered a Picasso, a Juan Gris and an abstract painting by Kane on the wall. A black uniformed commissionaire helped me off with my coat, which

was taken over by a blonde pin-up girl, who in turn handed it on to a red-haired beauty queen in the cloak-room. A fourth gentleman in morning coat graciously led me up the stairs remarking that I could also use the elevator, though it was no higher than a fairish half-storey. Here too the walls were hung with good paintings. At the top of the stairs a still more imposing cutaway received me and asked in what name my table had been reserved. I told him for no name, at which he gave a disapproving smile, then assured me that he would do everything he could for me and would I take a seat at the bar in the meanwhile. I sat on a high stool and ordered my premeditated Seagram whisky. No sooner had I given the order than there stood before me a tall, cylindrical glass with ice almost to the rim and on to it the barman was pouring the whisky. He placed a jug of water also filled with ice beside it and turned his back on me. All very well, but I like my whisky with soda. I intimated my wish to the barman which he acknowledged with disapproval. A very strict place, this. After a while, but not anything like as quick as before, he put a small siphon before me. The whisky was excellent. I had scarcely finished it when Mr. Imposing Cutaway stood before me and told me that as a result of his tireless labours I could take a seat at one of the tables. I wanted to pay for my whisky, but—the third time already—I was given a disapproving smile. I felt myself quite the country bumpkin and I compensated for it with an air of great hauteur.

The table was black, the upholstered chair was covered with black morocco leather. Mr. Imposing Cutaway did not this time accompany me as far as the table, but left this tactical job to a captain. At the time I did not know that he was a captain, because I had not yet found out about the hierarchy in expensive American restaurants. In Hungarian he is the head waiter, with the difference that you had not only to pay him, but that he also captained a small army of waiters, wine boys, waitresses and bus boys. He wore some indication of rank on his shoulders, some golden plant or flower or something of that sort.

He placed before me a thick, ornate book bound in parchment. No, no, it wasn't the guest-book of the Four Seasons, it was the bill of fare. I opened it and pretended to be studying the contents. I only pretended, because my first look—I am a Budapester, I plead—fell on the right-hand side with the set meal. I could not find anything under eighteen dollars, the price of some asparagus in butter. The choicest entrées had the bargain price of a mere twenty dollars, if the dear patrons fancied nothing else. The meat courses were all upwards of twenty-four dollars but in fairness it must added that these really meant a menu with hors d'oeuvre and dessert included in the price.

I was certain that if I ate for twenty-four dollars and added the whisky (long live Seagram!) and the wine or beer to the dinner and the tip and the cloak-room, I would not get away under forty dollars. The mere thought took my appetite away. I calculated that forty dollars was almost a thousand forints according to the most official rate possible. If I made this amount of money on book royalties abroad it would work out around 1,200 forints, and if I worked out the price which Hungarian tourists paid for dollars or francs received in Paris to the lender's mother or aunt in Budapest... no, I'd better not reckon that. And anyway it was not the money that was the main drawback. I am simply not willing to pay that much for food. I'd look ridiculous in my own eyes. No one who has had to economize all his life can throw away that much on a dinner. One has to be born to it. Or to have lived ten years in America. To do it I'd have to change my attitude to money.

The captain got tired of waiting, and mumbling he'd be back in a minute, he sailed away. He did the right thing because I could think out in peace why I should refuse to pay forty dollars for the experience, though I had several times forty dollars in my pocket. I'd have to change my whole attitude to money. Not because I like it excessively, but for the opposite reason. I have never cared about it too much, which is very probably the reason why it has not been kinder to me. Now I was in a country where every value was expressed in monetary terms, and I had come from a country where nobody dreamed of having much, but only enough, money. If I really thought much of money it would be gratifying to prove to myself that I was able to eat my fill in a restaurant like this with its forbidding prices. But since I regard money not as a measure of value but an unavoidable evil, I could not bring myself to make this demonstration.

The captain had reappeared. I shut the book and returned it to him.

"I've decided that I'm not going to have dinner here," I told him. That was the moment I felt how much Seagram's whisky had gone from my empty stomach to my head.

This time the disapproving look did not appear. "Yes, sir," he said. "Don't you find anything to your taste on the menu?" he asked.

"It's all to my taste," I answered. "It's the prices that do not suit my budget."

"Very good, sir," he said and pulled the table aside a little, so that I could leave more easily.

I did not stand up yet. "And they do not suit my principles either," I added, because I was curious to see if I could put him out of his servile and impassive countenance.

"Very good, sir," he said.

I was beginning to respect the captain. I rose. "Thank you, sir," I said to him. I was aware of what I was doing. To address a waiter as "sir" on English or American soil is an unthinkable and shocking violation of all the rules of the social game. The captain too, poor man, gave me a terrified stare. By this time Mr. Imposing Cutaway had barged up.

"Is there anything wrong?" he asked from the captain. He told him that the guest did not want to have lunch there. And with a flash of sympathy he added: "He's a foreigner." Now it was the captain who received a forbidding look. I interposed:

"Yes. I'm a Patagonian." They looked now at me, now at each other, quite at a loss. I did not give them time. I put a five dollar note into the captain's hand to settle for the whisky I had had in the bar and walked out from New York's most expensive posh restaurant with the majesty that becomes a Patagonian ambassador.

(Where is Fourth Avenue?) With all that, I had not solved the question of lunch. I was no longer hungry, but I began to have a headache: a sure proof that one's brain was rooted in one's stomach. I continued eastwards and emerged at Lexington Avenue. I had not been there before and I did not quite understand why just here an avenue should have a name instead of a number. Park Avenue itself had of course already broken the north-south logic of the streets. I had to accept the fact that there was no Fourth Avenue because it was called Lexington Avenue, and that between it and Fifth Avenue there were also Park and Madison. I fully agreed with this: logic is beautiful, when its capers brought its existence to your notice, and you missed it. Days later, when I went down to the oldest district of the town, beyond 14th Street, I made the discovery that New York was just like any other town in the world: the streets did not run at right angles. Some of them crossed at different angles, worse, some of them meandered and had civilian names. Lexington Avenue, moreover starts as Fourth Avenue and it changes to Lenox beyond Central Park. Easy, isn't it?

I turned right in Lexington Avenue and caught sight of the two towers of the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. It was not difficult to recognize it after the photographs I had seen. Another place where I was not going to eat. I went on due South—and now while writing this, I am wondering if these directions can possibly say anything to my Hungarian and English readers, or for that matter to those American readers who do not live in New York. But then I still had to find out if the cardinal points had as great a significance in other American towns as here. The European is easily led to the conclusion

that this method of finding one's bearings by the cardinal points is a relic of the pioneering age, of the compass they used on the prairie and in the Rocky Mountain.

Just beside me was a shop door, and the smell of frying meat caught my nostrils. I looked round: in the shop window I saw perfumery, cigarette lighters, an electric back scratcher, first aid dressings, children's toys, fishing bait and books. I was quite certainly standing in front of a drugstore.

(A real drugstore.) I entered, and immediately found I had to correct the first impression of a drugstore I had gained the same morning. That one was something like a grocer's shop of 1936 somewhere back on the Great Hungarian Plain, if a little shining chrome, electric cookers and refrigerators were added. I mean the particular effect of crowding, topsy-turviness and heaped trippery. This drugstore, on the other hand, was light and spacious, with everything displayed in its right place, giving the impression of a mini-store. In the eating section the counter curved in a semi-circle with stork-legged stools to sit on. I promptly found myself on one. A young man pushed a menu-card over to me. Before I started to study it I looked round: the service was all male behind the counter here, as in all the other catering places. In Hungary it would be unthinkable to find espressos, which mutatis mutandis correspond to the cafeteria sections of drugstores, staffed exclusively by men.

How reasurring it was to read this little matter of fact card after the ostentatious carte de jour of the Four Seasons. The right hand side was particularly reasurring: no price was above $1.50 and most below $1. I'd make a feast of it. I ordered half a grapefruit as an entrée for 45c, with some small unknown fish to follow for 65c. I grew hungrier. No hamburgers for me, thank you, I'd had enough of them, but I might as well try the cheeseburger. That must be the offspring of a mésalliance between a cheese and a hamburger. I ordered it. I wondered then, and during all my stay in America I had no time to find the answer, where the word hamburger came from. On first hearing one would think from the town of Hamburg, but there, as far as I know, they do not eat this minced meatball. Could there be some advertising pun behind it? Especially as the substitution of cheese for *ham* would seem to bear out this conjecture. I have gone to look it up in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, and I do not believe my eyes: it is missing. I found the word in László Országh's big as well as smaller Dictionary, but unfortunately without any etymological explanation. Oh, yes, here it is in the Addenda. It *does* take its name from Hamburg, its original name being a Hamburg steak. But the cheeseburger would be tasty

even without an etymological pedigree, since the cheese gives a flavour to the unsalted, unspiced mincedmeat. I only wished they hadn't served it with tomato and chips. The unsuspecting, uninitiated traveller might think they were edible. The tomato tasted like warmed-up vinegar, the chips like India rubber dripping with oil. My neighbours covered them generously with mustard, but I could not bring myself to follow their example. I drank coca-cola with it and I ordered coffee to round it off. I managed it under $2, and the remaining ten cents odd I left on the counter. Who would have thought that the disapproving look of the Four Seasons would follow me here? But I got it here as well. I didn't then know that if one has more than one course at a drugstore counter one must not leave less than 25c.

I got down from the high stool with some difficulty—that is when I most feel the effect of the approaching years on my waistline. I went to explore the drugstore, and the dollars I'd saved immediately began to itch in my pocket. I bought the electric backscratcher thing I'd admired in the window for $2.58. How ever could I have managed without it before. Its archetype is the Chinese ivory back-scratcher, which is a small ivory hand with curling fingers at the end of a long handle. The hand is still there, but made of ivory-coloured plastic. The handle is tin and ends in a case very like a tubular flash-lamp. It contains two batteries which drive a tiny motor. The plastic hand scratches, pats and also massages a little.

I bought two small gilded capsules joined by a chain. You clip the two capsules on to the two sides of your glasses and then you can hang your sun or reading glasses round your neck.

I bought, but I do not really know why, a long, narrow whistle, also gilded, and made of goodness knows what, with a car key ring at the end. Instructions for use were supplied, for women: if attacked in a car, blow it, it sounds exactly like a police whistle. I also bought a set of screw-drivers and wrenches each in a case. I bought a spring metal tape. You push a button: it snaps out; you push it again: it snaps back into its container.

In the pharmaceutical section I bought adhesive tape on a spool which also cuts the required length off. I bought aspirin that does not cause stomach ache. (It did.) In the drug department, the original domain of the drugstore, I bought liquids for before and after shaving and deodorant sticks. I bought—and it was the only thing I really needed—an electric plug to fit into the sockets in American buildings. The holes are closer to each other and are not circular but oblong in shape. (That night I would be able to return the borrowed plug without which I could not have used my electric shaver.)

I tried to appease my conscience for my buying spree by the thought

that I had saved twenty dollars on the lunch, but I was perfectly well aware that this was only a momentary sop to it. I bought these things, there they were, cheap, nice and unnecessary, before my eyes. That was how I found myself in the book department. This occupied the shorter side of the L-shaped shop and was relatively quiet. I was surprised by the great number of young boys and girls standing before the bookshelves absorbed in reading. There may have been six or eight of them. I went there too.

(Reading books—standing.) The books—all of them paperbacks—were displayed not on shelves but on revolving stacks not unlike those on which picture postcards are displayed at home. I stood before one, and whichever way I twirled, I only found books on sex. I picked out the first at random. It was entitled *Women*, and M.D. appeared after the author's name, but it was not a work of sexual enlightenment, written by an American counterpart of our Dr Hirschler, but, by your leave, a novel. The author, a young doctor, describes his adventures with women. I dipped into it; boring. I turned the pages and soon I found the point: the description of the precoital dilly-dallying, playing, undressing and finally the act itself, in all their crude details. Then a new chapter, insipid lead-off, another woman, more dilly-dallying, undressing, hands, legs, thighs, loins and three dots.

Three of the girls and boys were reading this book. The boys read with pink ears, the girls with reddening cheeks. Also on the stack was the Kinsey report for both sexes, in three volumes. Adolescent youth standing in a drugstore could not only learn from it how to copulate successfully, but also that homosexuality was part of a normal person's sexual development. The only thing it did not say, in a footnote, go and have a try for yourselves.

I took up the novel again. Could it be possible that the whole three hundred odd pages were filled with nothing but descriptions of the parts of the body, the sexual act and dot, dot, dot? In the next chapter the scene changes. The fourth woman acquaintance of the eminent doctor calls upon him to beat her. The doctor hesitates; the lady excites him so intensely that half-crazy he sets to and beats her up. The doctor reports that after the second blow he was seized by such a peculiar feeling of pleasure that he was unable to stop and at the sight of the first drops of blood he felt he himself reborn as a man. I read on with ears reddenning like those of the teenagers beside me, if not quite for the same reason. In the following chapter the "reborn man" attacks his next adventure without the slightest provocation and beats her until she is covered with blood. Or was this another book? I don't remember. All I know is that I dipped into all the sex novels and "enlightening" books there, masquerading in scientific robes,

one after another. There were some forty books in the stack, a good thirty of which began with the regulation sexual act followed by scenes of sadism in which the blood spurts. I found a book in which several men sit or lie around a settee with first a girl, then a boy on it, whom they torture with various instruments of the inquisition. The description of the tortures and the agonies of the victims are as full of explicit details as the straight erotic writings on the sexual act. Still worse, violence, torture, the creation of pain, become the sexual act. Love-making takes place beside a pool of blood.

I am not hypocritical and do not believe that physical love cannot be made the subject of literature. The stack also contained Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and even Sade's *Justine*. The children were not reading these because they would have to make a lengthy search through *Lady Chatterley's Lover* to find the description of physical love, and the details dealing with the attitudes and development of the characters hide it unnecessarily. And *Justine*, for all its savagery and its calling a spade a spade, has an idea in it and that no doubt acts as a deterrent. My generation also looked up the technical terms of the female body and the sexual act in the encyclopaedia. We also read a Krafft-Ebing or something similar with excitement. All that is part of adolescent life. Instruction in the technique of love-making is one of the achievements of our age. But there was something else here, something far more dangerous.

These books do not stop at pornography pure and simple; they link it with violence. They represent torture, force, blows and trigger-happiness as if they were things "just as good" as love. I had also found the other side of the medal in not a few American adventure novels, the stories of boxers, gangsters, policemen and detectives which took fighting and murder as their basic motif, here it was violence that was coupled with eroticism. The hero, the superman knocks down, beats up, annihilates and kills his opponent and meanwhile also wins a sexual victory.

I stood before the book stacks in the middle of these teenagers, boys with long hair and girls with short skirts, trying to decide whether my unhappy feeling at the sight of these books and the stimulated young readers was due to the fact that I had reached a grandfatherly age? I do not deny that I was definitely disturbed by the fact that these erotic, or rather pornographic books were so easily available and so cheap, but what I was, and am, mainly upset about is this automatic and commonplace coupling of love and violence. I had compiled a long list of things I wanted to know before I came out here, a great number of subjects and happenings of which I had heard or read and which I had decided I would investigate on the spot.

What a novice I was was proved by the incompleteness of this list: violence was missing from it. The notion of democracy has become so identified with persuasion and conviction in our European minds that I had made no exception to the rule in the case of United States democracy. I wondered whether I was not going too far in concluding on the basis of drugstore experience, that American pornography was dangerous because it educated for violence. That was something I was to find out about in the coming four months. Now that I had come face to face with it, I vaguely remembered that I had read about it, but it had not left much impression. It was only now that the question arose: what would the consequences be, in the consciousness of the individual and of society, if the ideas of the pleasure of love are connected with the image of violence in the minds of their boys and girls?

(Peace—Pax—Shalom.) Before I entered my host institution I saw a crowd in First Avenue. A great many policemen were running to and fro, and some of them were forming a cordon round the building opposite, that is, the United Nations Palace. The front flags of a procession had just emerged from 48th Street. In front came a six-and-a-half-foot Negro boy carrying the stars and stripes, behind him, a little to the side, came the blue UN flag with a white globe on it, behind it more blue flags, one with a white cross bearing the word PAX in huge letters, another—white—flag with a smaller blue cross and the word PEACE and a third one, also blue, with the six-pointed Star of David and the word "SHALOM." There were a lot more smaller flags in the procession with peace inscriptions in Latin, English and Hebrew. The procession was headed by a few Catholic priests in cassocks, a few Protestant clergymen in their familiar dark suits and dog collars and finally one or two rabbis in small caps: one of them with long earlocks, and two in dark morning dress, with only their headgear to indicate that they were rabbis.

What on earth was it? They lined up in front of the main entrance of the United Nations. By that time a queer sort of band had arrived on the scene, partly wind instruments, partly percussion played for the most part by girls. They played a march and then the demonstrators, about five hundred of them shouted in unison—"We want peace in Vietnam." Were they perhaps going to wait for U Thant to receive them? Or for somebody to come out of the Palace and acknowledge, as it were, their presence?

They waited for a while and then the Catholics kneeled and the Protestants and Jews bowed their heads. They were praying. Many passers-by also bowed their heads, two women knelt down on the pavement. Some of the

policemen were gazing intently at the asphalt. Then the brass band struck up again and they went away.

That was the first anti-Vietnam war demonstration I saw. There was something movingly naive about it, something old boy-scoutish. What was the use of things like that? I asked myself.

I got the answer two weeks later. I bought the April 9 issue of the New Yorker, this highly sophisticated literary and semi-literary paper, and I read a sympathetic and exact report of the demonstration in the most read, the most celebrated column, the one which is a blend of leader and city gossip, "The Talk of the Town." I also learned from it—and if there was any paper which I least expected to report that mini-demonstration, it was the New Yorker—that the demonstrators had assembled in front of the central synagogue, had gone from there to the Methodist church in Park Avenue and were finally joined by Catholic priests and the faithful in St. Patrick's. They prayed in all three churches. And I also learnt that one of the priests, Father Berrigan, marched in the procession in a black ski outfit.

(Macy's from inside?) Next I went to pay a short call on my host institution; the programme was under way, relax and enjoy New York in the meanwhile, was I in any hurry, and anyway, what would I like to see? What was my profession? Oh, yes, of course they knew, a writer. And editor. Right. Then they would arrange for me to meet editors of literary reviews, magazines. Thank you, that would be very nice, I said, but I could not have produced the right amount of enthusiasm, it seems, because they looked at me disappointedly. What I really wanted, I said, was to see Macy's from the inside. It was the world's largest department store, wasn't it? Yes, it was, it was. A mildly disapproving smile. "I'm not sure I get you." They suspected I had not expressed myself properly. It did not occur to them that from inside meant no more than that I thought it would be nice to find out how the salegirls and the buyers were picked; where, what and why they bought; what amenities they offered to their employees; how they protected themselves against pilfering. "I majored in French," said one of the extremely helpful hostesses, "perhaps you might say it in French." What I'd have most liked to know was what that majoring was, but let it be, I told them in French, though by now I knew where the boot pinched. And when I say boot, I mean boot; the young lady wore boots, white, of course made of some synthetic material, and she wore a mini-skirt. There's a mathematical rule applying to legs, it seems; the amount of flesh hidden in the lower reaches is compensated by the amount in the upper.

So I obligingly repeated the sentence in French, whereupon my hostess

obligingly explained, enunciating her English very clearly, each syllable distinctly enunciated for the idiot child, that all I had to do was to go in and see the place from inside, I did not need a special buyer's permit.

Did she really believe, I asked her, that with us, or in any of the other "eastern countries" (within twice twenty-four hours I was already using their expressions) any sort of special permit is necessary to go shopping? Well, no, until *now* really, she hadn't, but she could not help thinking it might be so after my request.

In the nick of time along came another young lady, in black maxi-boots this time, and asked if we wanted coffee. I needed a moment to take a long breath and think it over, and another to try and make that young lady understand one of the basic troubles of today's world, more precisely, the still divided, post-Cold-War world. People already know that everything is not so bad on the other side, but give them a minute, and they are quite ready at the drop of a hat to believe it is. All the fears and suspicions are there, lurking ready to pounce, on the threshold of consciousness.

Yes, that was true, Winnie said, nodding, but then what was there to interest me so much in a department store? After all, I was a writer who wrote books, wasn't I, and an editor who edited—and she picked up a copy of The New Hungarian Quarterly from a shelf behind her desk—a cultural magazine?

"Well, to tell the truth," I replied, not quite directly to her question, "I'd like to see the credit department of an automobile shop: what sort of people buy cars on credit. I'd like to go to a drama school. I'd like to talk to a broker. I have had invitations from universities, but how can I get in touch with non-university young people? Are there any clubs or organizations for workers? What does a painter live on when he fails to sell? I'd like to meet a bus driver because they won my admiration yesterday. And how much does a dentist earn? And I'd like to visit a farm. And to spend an hour at the production line in a factory."

Once she had regained control after the first two items, Winnie was no longer surprised, she sat diligently making notes. Yes, they'd do everything they could. But would I please tell them why all that interested me so much?

I'd have liked to answer that it was because I was a writer, but that would have sounded very pompous, even in English. "Because it's not as a tourist that I'd like to get to know America," I said.

"In such curious places?" But after that she raised no objections.

I did not want to tempt my fate any further. So I did not say what was on the tip of my tongue: that I'd like to go and see Harlem with someone

who knew the place and was known there. I reserved this request of mine for a later time, I did not want to fall on them so fast, and, more particularly, I shouldn't have liked it if they got the idea that nothing outside the Negro question interested me in America.

But why should I mind it? I cannot make an account to myself either. Perhaps because from Europe it seems as if there were no other problems than the Negroes. Once there, a couple of days are enough to make it clear that that isn't so, though in two weeks' time I thought it was. In two months' time—but of that in its appropriate place. Maybe because in the Stalinist era the recurrent rhythm, the consolation, the cynical answer and evasion was "yes, but in America they lynch the Negroes." Perhaps because in recent years, all during the civil rights struggle, the news on both sides of Europe has consisted, and still consists, of reports about the relationship between the Whites and the Negroes. I wanted to get to the bottom of the American Negro question by getting to know as much as possible about the American majority, the white population. For here in the streets I am a white just like the rest. Or am I?

IN MEMORIAM LAJOS KASSÁK

ÁGNES NEMES NAGY

FROM ODD JOB TRAMP TO AVANT-GARDE ARTIST

The avant-garde arrived in Hungary by train and in a check suit early in the twentieth century. But the (borrowed) check suit was not worn by an artist out to shock the bourgeois but by a young unskilled worker who had come up to Budapest from the poverty of a small town in Northern Hungary to try his luck. Lajos Kassák's career—which to a great extent covered and overlapped all the modern movements in art and literature in Hungary—has often been described, not without justification, as akin to Gorky. However that may be, the road trodden by the former smith's apprentice, the European tramp, the half-starving odd job man, the emigré, the prison inmate, the neglected yet influential poet, novelist, painter—in short, the whole career of Kassák—was on the grand scale. Kassák was not simply a poet and painter, a writer and editor of reviews—he was a phenomenon.

It is hard to write about him. Not only because his development was very complex, and the influence exerted on him by, and which in turn he exercised on, all the movements and the greatest representatives of twentieth-century Hungarian poetry was various and profound, but also because all his life he despised the conventionality of critical appreciation. We could do him full justice if, and only if, there was something of Kassák himself in us.

But isn't there? Isn't there in each of us something of the fifty years of Kassák's life-work? I am not simply thinking of the knowledge and experience of his poems and paintings which all of us carry within us. He belonged to the generation which had the first vision of what this twentieth-century world of ours should be. Among his fellow-artists and his mental and spiritual compeers were the great names of Picasso, Braque, Max Ernst, Appollinaire, Cendrars, Tzara. "Kassák came forward," wrote Jean Cassou, "with the inception of abstract art, in the age of the pioneers, and took his place... in the upheaval of decisive revolutions in art." This means that

when we walk the streets of today we are walking in the imagination of Kassák back in 1910. The form of our modern houses, our contemporary flats, the lines of our furniture, the designs of our carpets and dress materials, factories and machines, on the one hand, the arbitrary associations and disassociations of our thinking, our surrealist jokes, our logical somersaults, skipping the intermediate steps to leap to the conclusion on the other—all these have their origins in the imagination of the pioneer artist generation of the present century. It was they who delimited, eyes sceptically narrowed in Kassák's own manner, the inner and outer architectural space in which we have our being today.

One might be led to conclude that Kassák was in close contact with his fellow-artists abroad. Although this is true, it is not the whole truth. It is a fact that in the reviews he edited, the activist *Tett* ("Action," 1915–16) and *Ma* ("Today," 1916–25), he published the work of a number of famous authors of the contemporary world literature, Apollinaire, for instance, for the first time in Hungary, and that especially during his exile in Vienna and in his last years he had intimate personal acquaintanceship with the European avant-garde. But one must always remember that Kassák was not a "literary writer." His lines of development were not guided by knowledge or reading. It is much truer to say that he was linked with his colleagues abroad by hidden, subterranean channels, they moved, rose and fell together, as the level of underground water rises and falls, their ideas and the methods of expressing them evolving from common, inevitable necessity.

He was indeed a centre of energy. This man, with his wiry physique, the great dome of his forehead, and his fiery temperament, threw up a long series of paintings, poems and novels with the force of a volcano. The best way to make his acquaintance is through his large-scale autobiographical novel *Egy ember élete* ("The Life of a Man").* Here the reader can follow him through the steps of his development to self-awareness and maturity, beginning with an utterly absorbing analysis of the iron smith's art and accompanying him on the highways of Europe where, amidst the tramps and ne'er-do-wells in the night shelters and under the hedges, he met and mingled with an underworld unknown to him before. After the great anarchist rally in Paris and his friendship for the wood-carver with a beard like Christ, we see him slowly coming to consciousness as a writer. Equally autobiographical is his great poem *"A ló meghal, a madarak kirepülnek"* ("The horse dies, the birds take flight"), which is the foundation charter, as it were, of the Hungarian avant-garde, and which in its poetic compression epitomizes a whole period of his work. It is, of course, unjust to fasten on

* See a chapter of it in The N.H.Q., No. 19, pp. 35–46.

any particular aspect of a lifetime's labours. But it is precisely the parallel between the prose and the poetic autobiographies which raises questions on Kassák's method of creation, questions which are more or less those of all avant-garde art.

The Kassák type of innovator derived, one might say, everything from himself. He discarded a whole system of values, but in doing so he threw away a system of self-judgement. Where then did he find his criteria? Within himself. There was only one sure criterion of his creative work: Was it self-evident? Had he the sense of inevitability when taking a critical look at his own creation? In the final analysis, of course, all artists measure their achievement in this way. In the final analysis, every artist strikes out an adjective or puts another red blob of paint in the left corner of the picture instinctively. But this "final analysis" is not as simple as that. In Kassák's art, in his attitude of complete rejection and complete renewal, it comes sooner and is easier than with the more traditional type of artist. The autarchy of Kassák's art, the criteria based on the inner self, stand out more clearly than with artists in general. This spontaneity, which derives all its criteria of values (especially in the beginning, of course) from himself, has, I feel, a far deeper connection than is commonly assumed with what is known as Kassák's constructivity (let me use this expression here instead of the historically sharply defined term of constructivism). It was not simply a search for style that was involved, not merely an impulse to shape artistic form, though such motives were by no means negligible; it was equally the urge of an explosively spontaneous temperament to impose order on chaos. If anything needs constructive rules and iron discipline, it was just that resolute opposition to a ready-made world, "that breaking of barriers and dissolving of laws," which was Kassák's fundamental attitude in art.

Spontaneity and consciousness, destruction and construction acting in unison: this is what made up what we call Kassák's constructivism. Beyond and above all the factors of his life and environment it was this law-giving, ethical passion for order which led the young worker to socialism. And his political path was accompanied by clashes as grave and scars as deep as his path as an artist. With truly admirable hardihood he survived his wounds, and after two world wars, followed by many a struggle and social upheaval, after disciples had first followed, then deserted him—a long line of Hungarian poets of distinction had once been followers of his—he stood up in Hungarian literature like the classic concrete building of the avant-garde, unbreakable in his moral demands and unceasing opposition. His attitude as a man influenced those who agreed and those who disagreed, as did his artistic principles.

And yet when we ask if Kassák's work, so profoundly responsive to the disharmony of his age, has been absorbed into the movements of Hungarian art, one cannot give an unqualified yes or no. Despite the exceptional, secret influence he exerted, the absorption of his work was incidental rather than conscious. Had we made better use of the resources inherent in his work, had we assimilated him earlier and more deeply, contemporary poetry would have resounded over a wider diapason of notes than is available to it today.

There is something enigmatic in Kassák's personality. I am not referring to what are known as the obscure passages in his verse, nor yet to his challenge, so universal nowadays, to philosophical naturalism. Today, after the lapse of twenty, thirty, fifty years, all these things are mere matters of style. But we should not feel too confident that the enigma he presents has been solved. Perhaps this continuing riddle is no other than the mystery of the human personality in all places and times, the *individuum ineffabile*, speaking in the pregnant, unutterable silence of works of art. . .

LAJOS KASSÁK

JACOB THE MONKEY

(A story)

Somewhere far away at the lower end of the town a single sulphur match was struck. It struggled to life with difficulty. Then the flame gained strength, shot up, and flared until the four low walls were too small to hold it, and the farthest outlying window of the town poured out a funnel of reddish light into the dusk of the January morning.

"Hey, Jacob, you!" cried the man, twisting his head sideways.

No answer.

Outside the wild wind whistled and howled.

"Up with you! Up!"

He swung round and bounded furiously towards the rumpled bed.

"Bastard!" he exploded. "Bloody little bastard!" His long arms dug like rakes into the still-warm ragbag of tattered blankets which flew in all directions, landing with dull thuds on the dirty floor.

"Out with you! Out!"

And Jacob, the scrawny old monkey, fled in fear from the torn straw mattress. He had come to his senses in a flash. He leaped with celerity to the bedpost, to be out of reach of his master's flailing hands, and from there, making little whining noises, with a single swing flumped to the floor like a great shot bird. For a second he stayed crouching, then, as his master turned to him, flattened himself with a sudden movement. He knew the brute nature of the other only too well, his gattered head shrank defensively down to his belly.

The man, with a broad grin, lifted him to eye-level.

"Well, young sir?" he grunted between his teeth. "Well, what now?"

He slapped him in the face, and laughed.

"It's not going to be only me that has to take it. Oh, no, not only me!"

He went on laughing, swearing at the animal like an equal, then suddenly loosened his stranglehold and let him drop.

"Bastard!"

Jacob leaped back to the table with slavish compliance. Tail trailing, he crawled to the man's hard hand.

He sat down.

Obediently he held out his paws.

His master began to dress him, with slow, fumbling hands. For a long while he continued in silence. He was no longer angry, he did not abuse him, but none the less every now and then he gave the beast a nip or a sudden push, so that he swung to the side with a groan, then with a groan swung back again on his buttocks, like a lead-bottomed celluloid doll.

The red flame of the oil-lamp flickered over the monkey, outlining his body sharply against the gloom. In his little hussar's coat braided with gold and his bright paper shako he now looked like an aged, spellbound king.

The first colours of the sunrise were in the sky when they set out.

The dawn seemed deserted. Only the tall bent figure of the monkey-man gave it a touch of new, moving life, and whatever he looked at met his eyes with a good-humoured complaisance.

Somewhere the first sheep-dog barked, and here and there the smoke of a chimney went up into the vast empty sky.

A group of tousle-headed peasants were already eating their breakfast round a trestle-table when they reached the inn.

With a show of jauntiness the man pitched the dangling animal on to the table.

"Don't knock the poor bloody creature's brains out," growled the peasants sourly.

The monkey-man turned a deaf ear.

"Attention!" he commanded brusquely, swelling his breast importantly.

Jacob was already sitting upright on his haunches, and turning round to salute.

The man put a small Italian tambourine into his paws.

Crazily Jacob banged the noisy thing on the top of his head.

He was given a battered tin trumpet, and he blew.

Then he let off a salvo from a rusty toy pistol.

These were all the tricks he knew. His master put the toys back in his pocket and the monkey shuffled off on three legs, holding out his bright-coloured shako to beg.

Expectantly they made the round of the outlying streets of the town. They journeyed through the blue cutting air. The wintry emptiness echoed under the man's boots; the steep walls of the houses turned a lazy indifference to Jacob's antics. Scarcely anyone stopped to admire his tricks. But on

he went, saluting, drumming, trumpeting, letting off salvoes, hobbling off to beg with his bright shako.

At each tavern his master tossed back the coins in one drink after the other. By the time they had reached the big inn his unkempt head was reeling, dazed by the rising fumes of brandy, while under Jacob's shabby skin his bowels ground against each other.

That was the regular stop at the end of the day.

By then evening had fallen.

The low tavern, half-barn, seemed to toss like a shipwrecked brown spar on the pungent pipe-smoke. The tables were ringed with noisy heated people. Jaded lungs rasped and coughed, glasses clinked, and overhead, jammed into the carved crossbeam, two paraffin lamps glowed an angry red.

"Hi, Jacob! hi," they cried with one voice, as if released by a single spring all along the tap-room counter.

"Let's have a look at Jacob!"

"Bring him over here!"

"No, here first!"

Jacob had already dropped with a thump on to the first table, rolled over on his buttocks and saluted.

He was an ugly, haggard creature. His braided jacket rumpled from the long day's crazy work, his bright shako fallen over his eyes.

Blindly he turned and turned, saluting, turning and turning, blindly.

The figure of fun stimulated the peasants to mischief. With a cracking flick of his hand a youngster tipped the shako to the back of Jacob's head, exposing his comically miserable face.

The tap-room roared with laughter.

With a bound he flung himself across to the next table to go through the miserable begging play.

He was savagely hungry. His eyes, like small green opals, were deep-sunken in his head, the small of his back hurt, and yet over and over it began, again and again.

He was in the middle of his demented chore, banging his head with the deafening tambourine, when someone teasingly held out a remnant of bacon. As if his twitching eyes had caught sight of the golden dug of life, he took off after the mouthful of red-peppered bacon with a screech.

He pounced on it in a frenzied snatch, and the blood squirted from the back of the peasant's yellow hand.

For a second he stopped, terror-stricken.

Then made off in wild leaps, bounding from table to table, gripping the bacon between his teeth.

Ears cocked, he stood upright on the corner of the counter and as he saw his master approach he flailed at him with his two free paws, screeching.

The door opened and the bagpipe player with his awkward instrument shambled into the tap-room. He came in blowing, and the four grimy walls lightened, opened out in the harsh blare of the music.

The monkey-man was also carried away by the rowdiness around him. In a moment he was weaving among the crowded tables with wide, foolish gestures, and out of his hairiness came bellowing the flourishes of a Wallachian song:

"Hey—ya—ho! Hey—ya—ho!"

Jacob tore hungrily at the slippery, leathery chunk. From time to time he jerked his wrestling head nervously towards his master, but as the man paid him no attention he went on scrabbling at the much tattered mouthful.

He was still empty to the bottom of his belly, but he could force no more of the fatty morsel down his throat. He watched furtively, scratching.

Between the stamping feet of the peasants the fat, motherly figure of the maidservant came swaying before his eyes.

"Jacob me pet, me sweet old darling!" His ears swallowed the soft, sentimental voice, and the work-worn old woman sat down on a stool beside him.

"Where're you bin today? Go on, tell us!"

Warily, as if picking his way through flowers, Jacob crept into her lap. He lay there, his wrinkled, hollow belly upwards, and his great revolving eyes looked up into the watering eyes of the other.

With a slow, cautious movement the woman took a lump of sugar from her pocket and with even greater caution slipped it into Jacob's mouth.

Another lump followed, and another.

The flat nose of the monkey blew a drowsy peace in and out in a loud regular rhythm of satisfaction.

His name, called in a hoarse, rough voice, shocked him into awareness.

The drunken singing in the inn died down and the men got ready for bed and sleep. And there, ready for the journey too, stood his master above him.

His tousled head like an enraged bull thrust itself forward dangerously, and his glazed eyes shone with sharper brilliance than his two gold earrings.

Jacob, head foremost, with an almost imploring dread burrowed as deeply as possible into the old woman's lap.

In vain.

The blindly fumbling hands of the man found his neck and pitilessly yanked him from the warm refuge.

Jacob, blinking, waited for and took the expected blow across the face.

It was a heavy one. A merciless one.

The biting weather outside stung him to life.

He lifted an experienced ear, and the frightening swing of his master's scripbag filled him with terror. Staggering forward erratically the drunken man lurched homewards, zigzagging in great swings to right and left.

The close air in his room almost immediately reduced him to helplessness. By instinctive habit, as if his limbs moved by clockwork, he lit the oil lamp.

For a long while he stood still, his mind a vacancy.

Then, with a sharp, furious gesture, he thrust his hand into the bag and with the next movement the little wizened creature dangled before him, whining. His head shrunk into his shoulders, prepared for the leap to save himself, he coiled himself in the deadly grip like a spring.

Nerves tautened in sickly anticipation, he waited.

The man raised his fist, brought it round in a great sweep—and the bony bludgeon smashed into empty air with irresistible momentum.

The empty eyes of Jacob, as he crouched fearfully on the bedpost, followed the man, grunting in his throat, hurtling helplessly after the momentum of his swinging arm.

His hands thrashed the air as he groped for something solid to help him to his feet, but found nothing. He fell back in impotent fury, muttering oaths which slowly died away in incomprehensible mumbling.

Only his heavy breathing came in rhythmic jerks from the floor.

Jacob jumped on to the table with a grimace of malicious relief.

He moved confidently in the silence.

He looked for crumbs and found them.

His master came into his mind.

He squatted at his ease behind the lamp, and through its reddish glow peered, immobile, at the groaning, heaving man.

A crooked smile of glee suddenly contorted his face.

His paws had begun to itch with the desire to finger and play, and the unexpected pleasure ran through his whole body

He was too fearful as yet to move. He waited a little.

Then, as the other did not move, he let himself down the smooth leg of the table with the suppleness of a child.

Delicately, he crawled forward, further forward, right into the pool of light, as far as the head panting on the floor.

His aching neck brought back vivid memories of the grip the other had so relished.

The other no longer stirred.

He tiptoed round him gingerly at first, then lay flat on his belly, as if playing at stealing fruit, and stretched one of his trembling paws to touch the bare, sallow neck of the man.

Instantly he felt fire running through his veins.

He blazed.

His pains were gone.

Nimbly, confidently, he leapt lightly on to the man's labouring chest, and the nails of his two paws dug deep into the gristly dewlap with the strength of a lion. He was giddy with delight.

Unmoving, the man let himself be squeezed into death by the convulsive play of fingers.

Faithfully imitating his master, Jacob slapped him in the face with a brisk, emphatic beat.

In a rhythmic beat he drummed and slapped.

Only the spent pleasure, the marrow-deep tiredness brought him sliding at last from the livid body.

No special after-taste of the play was left in him.

He drew his breath heavily.

He drew his breath with a great, terrible relief; he felt as if all the life-giving fire had gone out of him.

He was sleepy, terribly sleepy.

Outside it was a moonlit night and the beams came softly through the tiny window and filled the room with silvery half-light.

He was too heavy-eyed even to look about him.

He felt his way to the edge of the table blinking, and just as he was, in his braided coat and shako, threw himself with a single movement on to the bed.

As if nothing had happened.

He was blind. Blind as the night, and the silence sent a shudder like a coward's shudder through him.

(1912)

LAJOS KASSÁK

MY POETRY

I should hurry to save what can be saved
but I only sit
heavy
like a slab of stone
like the huge bird
I killed when a lad and she bled to death wounded and dumb in the
willow's shade.
In silence in the deep silence of a part of the world unknown
I write my poetry which is at once this side of writing and outside
the grooves of habit
the adulation of fools.
Enough of packaged beauties
of inherited reach-me-downs—
My poetry is not born of pullulating dreams
but of the strict order of geometry
it peels off the rind of the fruit
puts objects in space
clears away the shards of the past
and promises a brighter future.
This the truth-essence of my poetry
the content of my words
the meaning of my testimony accounted meaningless
fire-fall
and tinkling of icicles

which under the law of contraries
coexist and fill
the world's
known
unknown
regions.

Not only the heart sings now
nor language alone.
The blue water of my eyes
the hard white of my teeth
the classic frame of my body
the inscrutable matter of my mind
the millions of hairs on my head
the ten fingers of my hand
ten possessed members
of an orchestra playing
all together
to give news of me
to the world.

I sing
in light
in dark
for all those born under an unlucky star
or coming to grief later in life
for the deaf
for the blind
for the ones without faith
for the victims of folly
for those who leap to death from the mountain top
and those who fear to come out of the cave.

I sing
that another
may echo it from the depths of his fate
and be strengthened to set out
for the shore

where the womb of this age is in labour
where the seed cast in the earth swells
where the door of the barn brooks no padlock
where the shepherd does not forsake his sheep
where man recognizes his brother
and takes in his hand
matter
and tools
and creates
the signs
scarlet with blood
black with pain
of the meaning of his life.

Translated by László T. András

FROM OUR NEXT NUMBERS

THE ART OF BÉLA UITZ
Lajos Németh

ENDRE BÁLINT
Krisztina Passuth

LAJOS SZALAY'S "GENEZIS"
Géza Perneczky

ZSOLT DURKÓ, COMPOSER
Imre Fábián

COUNTERPOINT IN THE FILM
Yvette Bíró

THE SPIRIT OF DIALOGUE
Miklós Hubay

ÉVA KÖRNER

KASSÁK THE PAINTER—IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

The art of Lajos Kassák came into existence in the historical conditions which were peculiar to Hungary around 1920, and was later linked with the international current of Abstract Constructivism. A considerable number of Hungarian names have been associated with this trend, such as Moholy-Nagy, Marcel Breuer, László Pári, Imre Forbáth and Farkas Molnár, but Kassák holds an exceptional position among them. Contrasted with the other Hungarians, most of whom were connected with the Bauhaus, Kassák did not form part of any foreign movement, but represented the focus of an especially Hungarian group in his capacity of *uomo universale*—poet, painter, editor, novelist and political propagandist.

The review *Tett* (Action), which he founded in Budapest in 1915 during the First World War, represented internationalist and anti-war sentiments in a savagely chauvinist world. Repeatedly harassed by the police, Kassák brought *Tett* to an end and launched *Ma* (Today). *Tett*, it is true, had given a certain attention to the visual arts, but *Ma* concentrated on them to such an extent that it became the rallying point of that avant-garde which was advocating a militant policy in the form of a political and artistic revolution. The members of this movement played a significant part in the 1919 Hungarian Republic of Councils; the most outstanding of them left the country after the collapse of the revolution.

Kassák settled in Vienna, where he continued to edit *Ma*, and where he himself became a painter. It was through the medium of *Ma* that Hungarian art, decaying in the sterility of the counter-revolutionary period which followed, came into contact with the currents of international art. It was a sign of the decay at home that this complete involvement with modern art had to take place abroad, among the Hungarian artists in exile. Names well-known for their contribution to European as well as Hungarian art—Kassák, Moholy-Nagy, Imre Forbáth, Farkas Molnár—were in exile, some temporarily, while others left their country for good. Most of them belonged to the circle of the Bauhaus for shorter or longer periods, and consequently worked in Germany. Kassák chose Vienna, a city which, though not so much in the main current of international art as Berlin, represented a strategic base from which Hungarian exiles could survey Budapest. It was characteristic of Kassák that although his views on art were international and broadly based, yet all his actions had reference to Hungary.

The first exhibition of his paintings took place in the Vienna Würthel Gallery in 1921, and was followed a year later by an exhibition in Herwarth Walden's famous Der Sturm Gallery in Berlin. His painting was abstract in style; and he coined the term "Bildarchitektur" (picture architecture) to describe it.

In a 1921 article on Kassák, Ernő Kállai, an eminent Hungarian writer on the theory of Constructivism, regrettably little known beyond his own country, declared that "the less spontaneous the social and economic order of the collective spirit, the stricter the architectural order, the more abstract and simple its forms." Discussing his own work in *Ma*, Kassák said: – 'Bildarchitektur' believes itself to be the beginning of a new world."

Kassák's abstract, non-representational "Bildarchitektur" has apparently nothing in common with the antecedents of Hungarian art and the heroic, representational type of painting it enshrined. What in fact was common to the two was the attempt to establish a law, to translate an assured concept of the world into its pictorial equivalent. The forms they took were, however, naturally, antithetical. Social and artistic development together advanced in a parallel upward progression over the period between 1915 and 1919, and were then interrupted. Social activity dropped to zero, and to compensate itself for the loss of this association, art broke away from perceptual reality like an escaping drop of mercury.

"Bildarchitektur" began again with a fresh eye, it clarified all basic assumptions. It was absolute art. Socially it rejected any compromise with the present, and thought in terms of the future. From this angle "Bildarchitektur" was akin in spirit and form to the geometric constructivism which emerged in Russia and Holland round about 1915, and formed a new branch of it. On April 15, 1920, with the beginning of the publication of *Ma* in Vienna, Kassák published a manifesto in the name of the Hungarian activists *An die Künstler aller Länder* (To the Artists of all Countries). In spite of the defeat of the Left in Hungary, his faith in revolution and in the advent of an ideal society remained unbroken.

Kassák, who had been a militant fighter in the proletarian revolution, turned by the force of events into a partisan of ultimate human victory, an abstract notion unconcerned with daily events or intermediate phases. Instead of resorting to hesitation, compromise, or withdrawal after the disaster, Kassák turned in the opposite direction, one which called upon immense human courage and reserves of strength; independent of all actual conditions or situations, he once again gave his support to revolution as such.

After the successful counter-revolution in Hungary in 1919, artists were faced with a senseless alternative. Those who remained in the country took refuge in an uneasy Arcady, a vulnerable, short-lived, mock classicism. The expatriates, on the other hand, passed their time in forlorn agonies and abortive movements: Derkovits turned to Expressionism, while Béla Uitz, rejecting his own "Activist" past, transformed his series "General Ludd" into a revolt against modern trends. A few artists still maintained their faith in a passionately desired, far-off and yet attainable, perfect future. This faith formed the theoretical basis of Abstract Constructivism, not only in Hungarian art, but elsewhere as well.

Within the great current of abstract painting Kassák's "Bildarchitektur" was based on the principle of revolutionary activity which he continued to profess, despite the defeat of the 1919 revolution. He maintained a close interest in Hungarian affairs in contradistinction to the Classicist painters who ignored all social preoccupations, Kassák remained consciously occupied with the contemporary scene, and never ceased to wage war against it in the name of the ideal society of the future.

In his article Ernő Kállai carefully analysed Kassák's first paintings: "The fact that his painting is non-representational does not mean it is escapist or romantic, still less something mystical, a transcendence of reality; it represents an unremitting, revolutionary struggle towards new laws and a new life. This is revolutionary art reduced to its most condensed and essential form: to action. It is creation, hammering the sign-posts into

the vast and featureless desert, the triumphal signs of a collective future. It provides a framework for the multitude of new things and new subjects to come." (*Ma*, November 15, 1921).

Kassák's "Bildarchitektur" is built on abstract compositions. Its geometrical forms, its cohering lines of force, its basic colours represent, as it were, the substance, the distilled essence of activist thinking. It is detached from a natural background, from a soil or climate, but its aesthetic and ethical authenticity is founded precisely on this *malgré lui* existence.

"Bildarchitektur" is a symbolic action: a symbolic realization of social revolution and social construction, of harmonious social relationships: the pure forms, the pure colours, the sometimes tranquil sometimes dynamic relations of "Bildarchitektur" symbolize a fresh beginning on the ruins of the old; they are the visual reflection of intellectually pure basic forms, pure basic relationships, discarding everything individual, accidental, or temporal. Like the straight lines, circles or planes of Plato, their beauty is not dependent upon particular standpoints or purposes, they are not relatively true; they are true absolutely.

Owing to its philosophical character, Constructivism, wherever it appeared, was a theoretical trend. It provided a theoretical basis for the set of pictorial symbols which defined the world. In an article entitled "Bildarchitektur" (*Ma*, March 15, 1922), Kassák laid down the basis of Hungarian Constructivism in the following terms:

"...our aspirations must reach as far as the superman... The artist is like the mother: pregnant with life. A new work of art is equal to a newly born human being...

"Man has once again become capable of expressing the world. Not imitating it, but recreating it. The artist of today, a man with a concept of the world, brings forth art again like a revelation.

" 'Bildarchitektur' is not 'representative' of a powerful God, of horrible war or idyllic love, it is a force which represents only itself.

" 'Bildarchitektur' does not resemble anything, it does not narrate, it does not begin anywhere or end anywhere. It simply exists...

" 'Bildarchitektur' is no more a picture, in the traditional sense of the word. It is an active partner in our life, a symbol of the universe, which for the sake of our life we must either join or fight.

"It has come as the representative of our times, and the gifts it has brought are the capacity to recognize the plane as space that can really be used, and the forms of a faith in collective life.

"Our pictures... are not *like*, they are what they *are*... our art is primordial creation, and we, as every kind of architecture, start out from our own territory—from the plane as a basis—into space, like men who no longer wish to serve the world, but to transform it to their own likeness.

" 'Bildarchitektur' wants nothing. 'Bildarchitektur' wants everything.

" 'Bildarchitektur' believes itself the beginning of the new world.

" 'Bildarchitektur' aspires to be the room, the house, your most personal life. 'Bildarchitektur' is as simple as the sole of a boot and yet it is the root of perfection.

" 'Bildarchitektur' claims to be the apex.

" 'Bildarchitektur' is art, art is creation, and creation is everything."

Kassák's abstract painting therefore has nothing to do with the art of the studios. Within the field of international constructivism, this faith in a revolution to come, this relationship to a revolution still to be fought distinguished his art from Russia, victor of a revolution, and from the socially inert Holland. While the European trend of the artist as a revolutionary withered away with the decline of the revolutionary upswing of 1918–19, the concept continued to survive in Kassák's own person, and in his circle, in the form of Abstract Constructivism.

His battle cry remained: "You must destroy to build, and build to be victorious."

The direct alliance of destruction and construction was a characteristic feature of Kassák's constructivism, distinguishing it from other trends which, having clarified the basic forms, were concentrated on the task of pictorial composition. In his first "Bild-architektur" paintings Kassák made use of Dadaist methods, he constructed them out of fragments of words, shaping them into a logical architecture of the spirit. They thus became exemplars of his theory of destruction followed by construction.

Kassák's concept of Dada was far from the totally sceptical cynicism of Tzara, Hülsenbeck, Marcel Duchamp or even George Grosz; he was neither ironical or amusing. On the contrary, it was a certain purist obsession which induced him to tear the forms of the past to tatters. This is how he evaluated the historical significance of Dada:

"...it is as if a tragic outcry of the whole life of our society, the sudden collapse of a whole social order, had shown the meaning of the decline of Cubism. What we approve of in Dadaism is the fanaticism of destruction. They, the Dadaists, were undoubtedly the foremost heroes of this age, burdened with so much searching in art: they were creative forces spontaneously sacrificing themselves to shatter the dead gods."

With a character that naturally turned to extremes, Kassák the artist was unconcerned with the practical prospects of Constructivism; his attitude remained theoretical, but in the practical work of organizing art, and as editor of *Ma*, he gave his support and encouragement to all trends connecting human and social progress in the future with technological development and the increasing wealth of the material world. In 1922 Kassák and Moholy-Nagy published "The Book of New Artists" *(Buch neuer Künstler)* in which they listed "the most energetic destroyers and the most fanatical builders." In the illustrations to the book the products of human creative work which were most practically and ideologically valuable, technical objects and forms of art, machinery, paintings, buildings, small statues were all combined in an ingenious and striking manner. In the editing of this book Kassák —whose art remained entirely abstract— came closer to those artists who coupled the spiritual conquest and material conquest of the world together; Lissitzky, Tatlin, and, above all, Moholy-Nagy. He even showed some understanding for the object-worship of artists from countries where the accumulation of material wealth had already made itself felt. Kassák accepted the *style mécanique* of Léger and Osenfant, which took objects of modern engineering to create from them the emblems of a twentieth-century popular view of the world. Kassák regarded this wealth of material objects and spiritual ideas as so much raw material, to be incorporated as arguments in his call for revolution and his demand for absolute abstraction:

"Our epoch is the age of Constructivism. Freed from an atmosphere of speculative transcendency, the productive forces... have struck the chemist's scales of aesthetics out of the artist's hand, and enabled him to demonstrate the new unity of a broader world: the architecture of strength and spirit. It is the unreserved affirmation... of a sense of responsibility which gives meaning and an almost superhuman character to the revolutionary life and primordial creative desire of our generation... Look around, and we shall see that our life has a meaning—if only to struggle—and if we fight the past, we must needs feel an urge of creation for the future." (L. *Kassák*–L. *Moholy-Nagy: Buch neuer Künstler*, Vienna, 1922).

The chief elements of "Bildarchitektur" are strict abstraction, the absence of a collective social order, the refusal of all representational art, and pure, absolute laws. An essential characteristic of this art is the creation of symbols designed to provide the framework of a new society.

*

Kassák returned to Hungary in the Christmas of 1926. What the shifting, rootless environment of the exile could not achieve was brought into being by the reality of the homeland. In the Hungary of the late twenties art was characterized by a withdrawal, by an abandonment of higher purposes, by an increasingly provincial acquiescence. In one sense this atmosphere was worse than the vacuum which followed the explosion of 1919, a climate dominated by an all-permissive uncertainty, broken, however, by a few rays of light from the exiles over the border. But by 1926 Hungarian realism had taken on a definite form; not a spark of encouragement for any kind of spiritual initiative existed in the all-pervading social, economic and intellectual stagnation. The revolutionary, forward-looking faith of Constructivism found no foothold, neither then nor in prospects for the future. Not even an unrealistic, utopian hope raised its head. The working class was as indifferent as the intellectuals or artists who remained in the country. Of the exiles, Moholy-Nagy became internationally famous, and Marcel Breuer, whose request to return was rejected by the Hungarian authorities, became one of the leading architects of the United States. Kassák, on his return, stopped painting for a long while. He devoted himself to writing and editing the periodicals *Dokumentum* and *Munka* (Work).

Editing and publishing, however, were not his sole organizational activities. The *Munka* art group became a centre for talented young artists such as Dezső Korniss, Lajos Vajda, Sándor Trauner and György Kepess. The last two left the country to make names for themselves abroad. It was Kassák who organized the "Exhibition of progressive young artists" in 1928, which created a sensation; he gathered round him the generation which was to form the real avant-garde of the thirties and forties.

Apart from typographical work and illustrations for his own poems, Kassák only occasionally took up his brush in the twenty years from 1926 on. His new period of painting began in 1946. His individual views on art and literature, his abstract style in painting, brought him into disfavour during the Stalinist years in Hungary, when he was prevented from publishing, or exhibiting his paintings. Yet the form of art he represented did not fail to have an effect. Constructivism, as the principle of composition based on order and law, permeated all that was active in Hungarian art of that time, all that found itself in opposition to the established trends of the day, the work of such artists as Derkovits, Barcsay, Kmetty, Gadányi, Korniss and Vajda in particular, i.e. those schools which are still underrated by the champions of provincial naturalism. His first exhibition after the liberation was in fact in the Budapest Csók Gallery in 1957. Although he consistently refused to follow any official position, and considerable arguments went on over each new piece of work, he was given the Kossuth Prize, the highest literary award in Hungary, and a number of articles and assessments on his work, as well as a big retrospective exhibition of his paintings, greeted his eightieth birthday this year.

This new outburst of painting went hand in hand with his later literary and poetic career. "The harmony of my inner life," said Kassák, "radiated through the red, black, blue, grey, yellow or white pigments, without allowing them to merge or blur. My colours were connected by form. The construction no longer obtruded itself into the foreground, it took its place rather like the skeleton in the human body. An equilibrium between the activities of the intellect and the senses came into being; the opposition of tranquillity and storm disappeared; they complemented one another."

This latest period in his painting has continued as an integral unity up to his death. The strict geometry, the stark simplicity of shape and colour, the rigour of the revolutionary drive which distinguished his Vienna days have disappeared in the paintings of recent times. They are bright and wide-

sweeping; the wealth of shapes and colours mirrors "the emotional and intellectual world of the artist." They do not join issue, or argue; they are not painted to achieve a goal; they are directed towards the present, and the mature accomplishment of a full life, the light of an inner harmony, are responsible for the effect they make.

Kassák's last paintings express the emotional and intellectual maturity of a man working to achieve an equilibrium. They spring from his grasp of universal laws; from an acquired wisdom not to be disturbed by the accidents of life, responsive to every new upsurge.

His latest exhibition was the Budapest exhibition to mark his eightieth birthday. Fifty-one years have elapsed since he launched his first artistic programme, forty-five since the painting of his first "Bildarchitektur." His present attitude on the process of artistic creation and on the aims of art go to show that his work, spanning half a century, forms an integral whole, and his writings on the theory of art have the same quality of coherence as his painting.

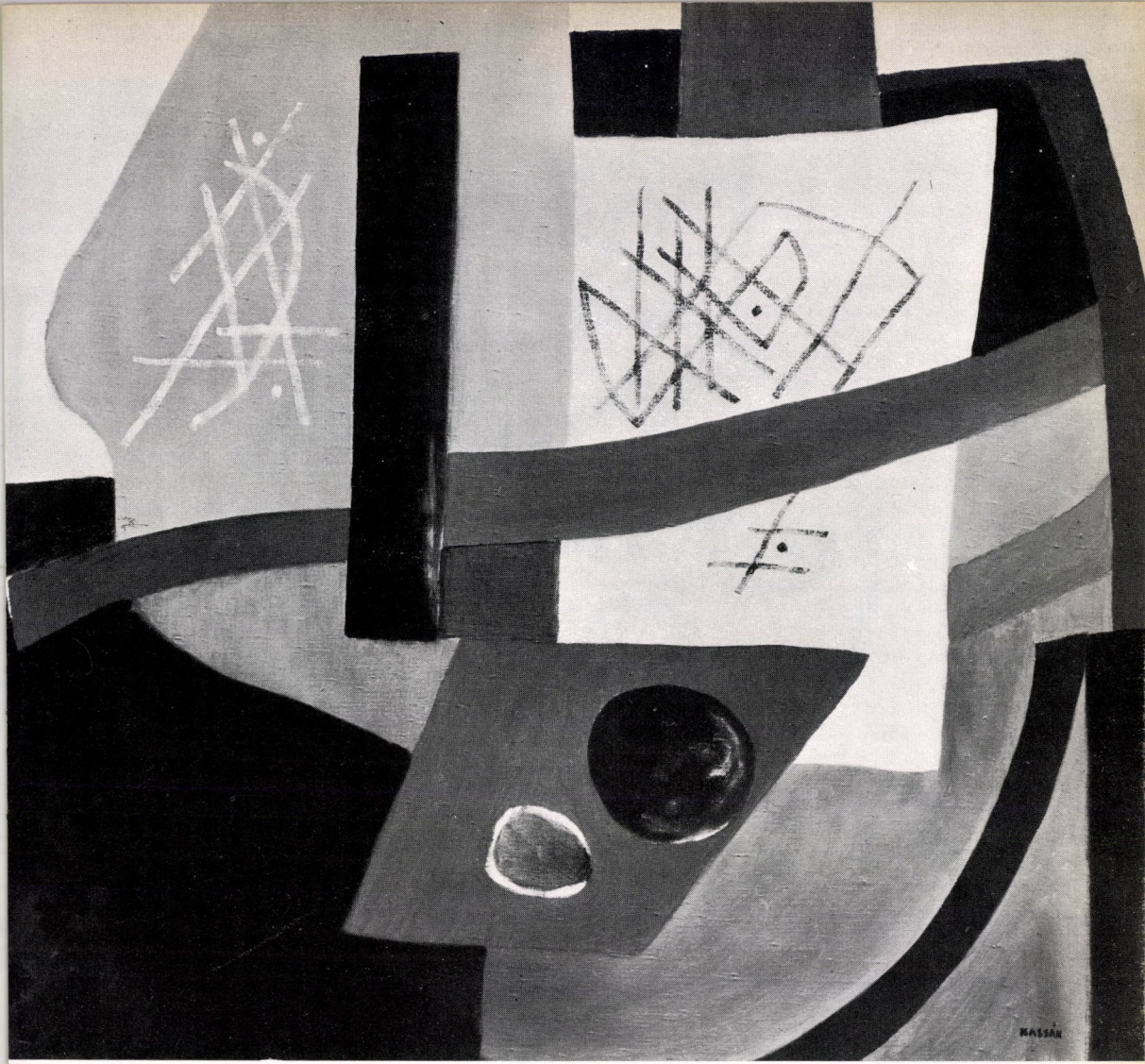
"The artist does not repudiate the colours, forms, movement or stability of nature. Nor does he withdraw into himself—he is prepared to expose himself to the utmost, from the deepest recesses of his being.

"Art is not subject to nature, but takes its content and form from the emotions, thoughts and expressive capacity of the artist. It exists through the ages according to the laws of human life, or degenerates the moment it is born; it is subject to the laws which govern, not nature, but human life.

"A good work of art represents human order and law. It is true joy for man to be able to identify himself with the organized order of a work of art.

"I wish I could say *yes* and *no* in such a way that no further explanation is needed.

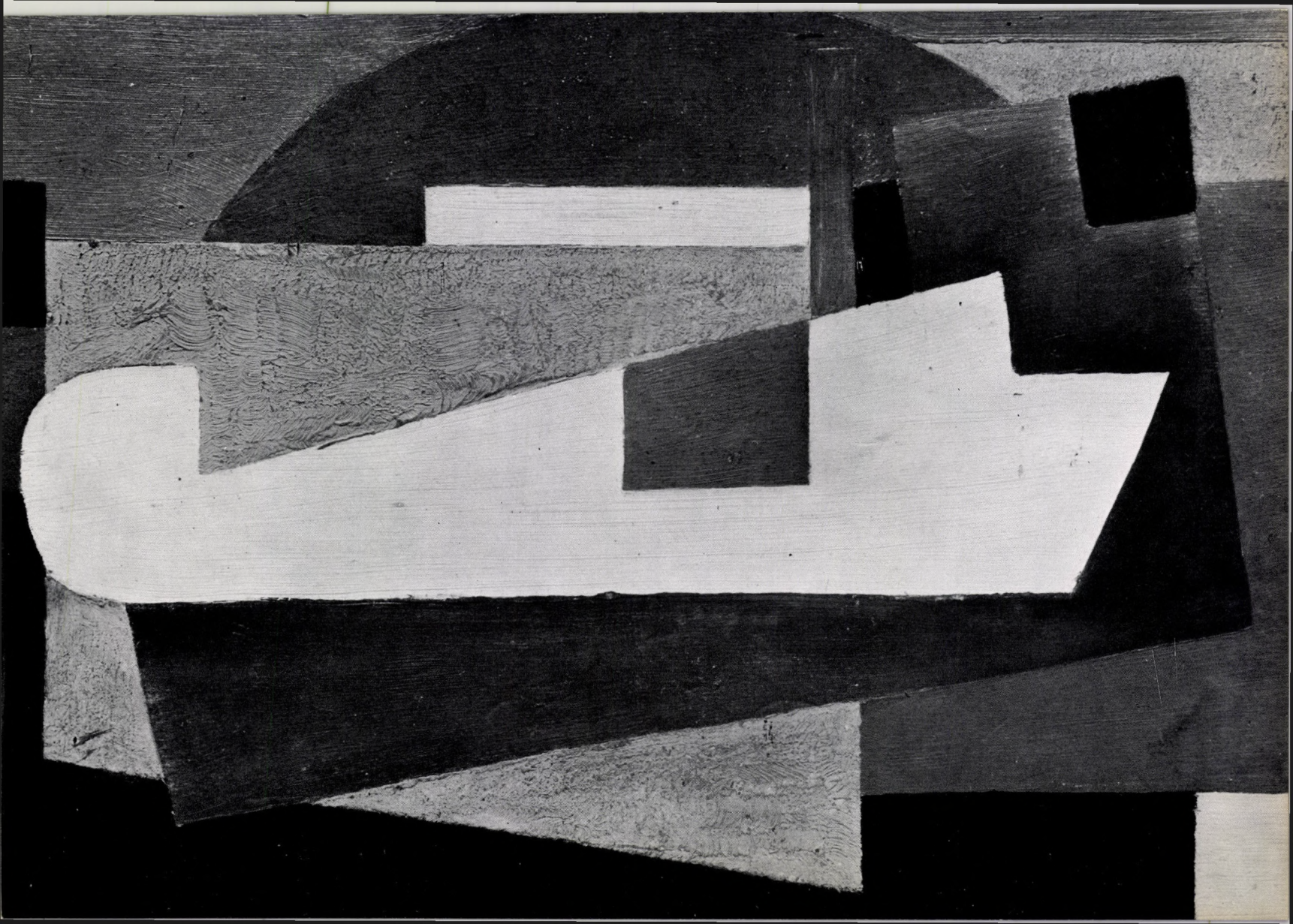
"A good work of art has a future and a unique influence on the life of the human community. It provokes questions and, by its very existence, provides the replies."

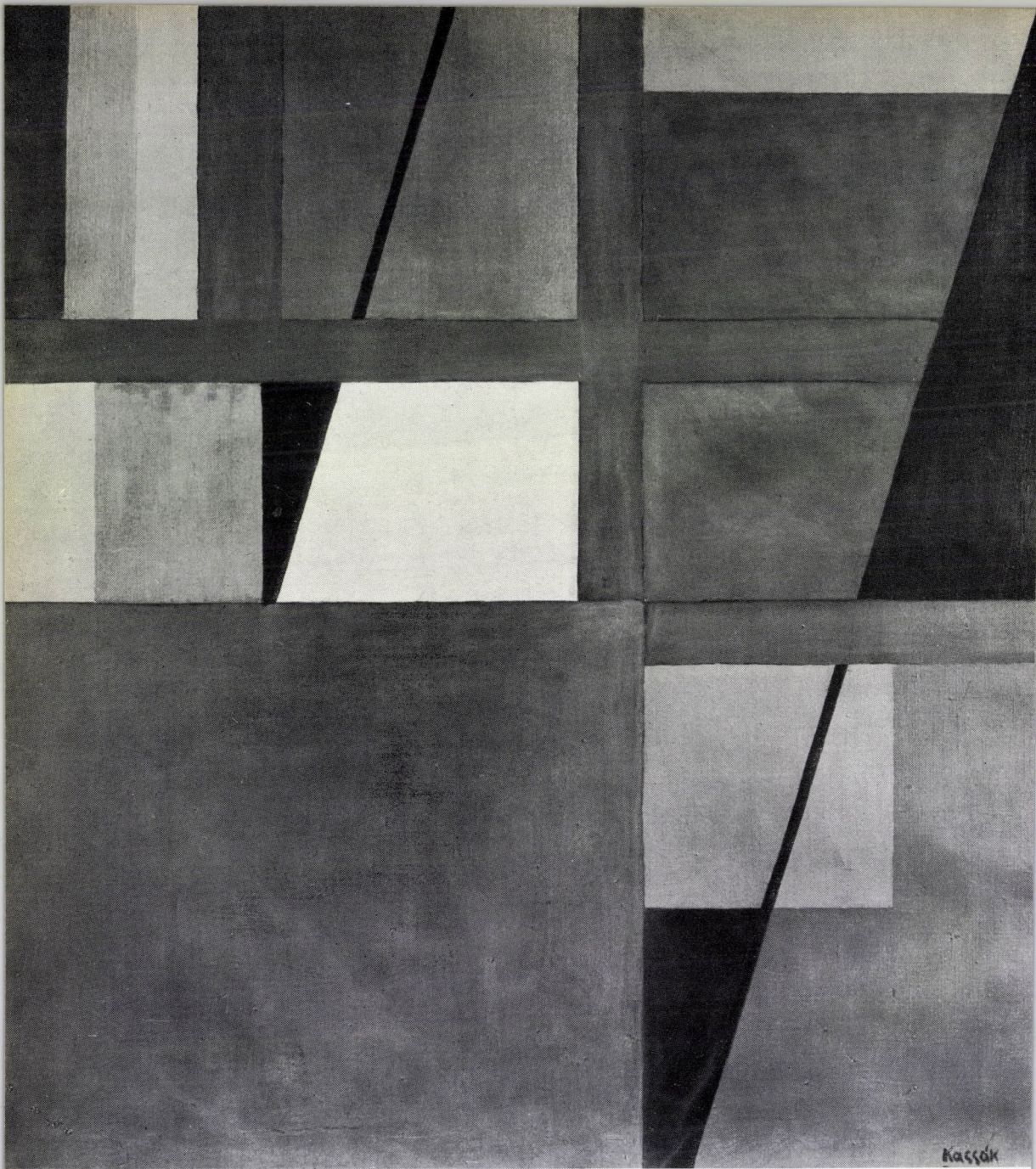


Lajos Kassák: Composition

Lajos Kassák: Collage

Lajos Kassák: Composition





Lajos Kassák: Harmonies

DAYS IN PARIS*

by

BÉNI FERENCZY

The journey was long. It is true that coming from Nagybánya we stopped in Budapest and Vienna, yet we were rather tired when we arrived at our destination. *We* were my mother, my sister and myself. The French guard looked into our compartment to report that Paris was within sight, and we should look out of the window. It was pitch dark outside, so we saw nothing. True the bright little stars that were lights were coming thick and fast in the black night all round us, but of a city there was no trace when our train at last pulled into the faintly illuminated station. The porter came and bundled us all into a taxi, the first in my life, though I remember then taking it as quite a matter of course. In those days taxis were rather a rare sight back home.

The taxi stopped at the correct address in the street called "the big thatched house" *(La Grande Chaumière)* in front of M. Brett's pension. M. Brett introduced himself as an *ébéniste* which is the French for an extra-fine sort of cabinet-maker. The expression has survived from the seventeenth century, though apparently no French furniture-maker has used ebony since the days of Boule, Louis XIV's celebrated cabinet-maker. He had dark, curly hair and a moustache and was fat—a typical southerner. The establishment not only provided meals for the residents but also for clients who came in daily, and we soon struck up an acquaintance with these people. We first made friends with two painters from Berlin. The *genius loci* took the form of two very pretty housemaids and Angelina, the stout, vigorous Negro cook from Martinique.

In all the new environment and the confusion of fresh impressions, it was nonetheless quite easy to find a place to work at art, since there were two

* To commemorate the death of Béni Ferenczy, the sculptor, who died June 2, 1967, we publish here an excerpt from the volume of his collected writings *Írás és kép* (Writings and Pictures), Magvető Publishing House, Budapest 1961. An illustrated essay on the artist's life and work by István Genthon appeared in. No. 1 of The New Hungarian Quarterly.

art schools right in the neighbourhood. The Academy, named after "the big thatched house" and the Spanish Colarossi school. I chose La Grande Chaumière because the teacher there was Bourdelle, the only well-known sculptor in the whole of Paris who gave "criticism" courses. I enrolled there and started to model straight away. The students, about forty of them, all of them women except myself and one other, a slender, black-bearded Swiss, worked in three studios. In this curious isolation the two of us speedily found each other. Both of us felt ostracized, treated almost with hostility. It was he who invented the name of Bourdelle-Bordel and I found it pretty apt myself, though the women were solidly formidable and masculine Russians, kindly, prim and proper English, haggard Scots, industrious elderly Germans, one exquisitely beautiful Greek, one talented Bulgarian —all of them women. Bourdelle came to criticize and correct our work every Thursday. On those days he arrived as early as ten in the morning and held forth uninterruptedly for two hours or more. He was followed by a troop of women wearing the long skirts that were fashionable in those days. The "correction," as it was called, could be listened to by anyone who cared to come in from the street for an entrance fee of five francs. It was surprising how many people did not think five francs too much to listen to M. Bourdelle's criticism. Frenchmen in starched collars with waxed moustaches, an official of the Imperial and Royal Austro-Hungarian Embassy who did a little sculping in his spare time—the studios were full of people. What did Bourdelle talk about? He lingered on his consonants and pronounced the vowel of "in" as "ey", referring to the oft-mentioned Rodin as "Rodeyn." All this in a solemn whisper. The audience held their breath. He was a stocky man, his long grey beard unkempt, curling dark hair falling over his shoulders from his otherwise bald head. He affected the clothes of a workman, wearing a grey shirt open at the neck with some kind of waistcoat over it and baggy grey velveteen trousers. One of the models, Piero Pavesi—we called him Monsieur Pierre—was a famous old model. He knew a great many tales about Rodin, who used him as a model for his St John the Baptist, and he had also been a favourite sitter of Puvis de Chavannes in his old age. Bourdelle would engage in long intimate conversations with this Monsieur Pierre, telling him of all his love affairs, marital intimacies, while the more bashful of the students turned away and the more emancipated stood round in a solid circle. Monsieur Pierre punctuated Bourdelle's speech with philosophical comments he let drop—"that's typical of women" or "a man should be master in his own house." The correction became particularly boring when Bourdelle read something he had written on French cathedrals or Greek sculpture or Puget, because these readings of his were

long and dull, and he had the habit of reading these eulogies of his in a soft and sentimental voice with great effects of pathos, and long pauses to allow the emotional effect to take. The audience would sit on whatever there was around him, crates and boxes and chairs or on the floor. Most of us could hardly follow him on account of his broad accent and the grandiloquent monotony of it all. Many of us had hardly got beyond a first acquaintance with the French tongue. The recital ended with a prolonged emotional silence before Bourdelle spoke again: "Supposing I were to die in ten years' time, who will then be France's sculptor?" Silence. Said an English girl naively: "Perhaps Maillol?" To which Bourdelle rejoined very earnestly: "No, no. Maillol is undoubtedly an artist, very much of an artist, but what he does is not sculpture, and what is not sculptural counts for nothing in sculpture." What his idea of the sculptural was he never said. Very likely himself and Rodin. But with that remark Maillol was dismissed.

But where did Mount Parnassus stand at that time? It was 1911. Cézanne had been dead five years. The biggest collection of his paintings was the Pellerin Collection—the Louvre had not even opened its doors to the Impressionists yet. The Pellerin Collection was open every Sunday to those who had given notice of their visit by letter. It was a wonderful collection. Pellerin's brother was a painter; the collector a stearin manufacturer and merchant, and a Sunday painter himself. Cézannes as far the eye could reach. There was *The Card-Players*, the studies of workers, the last great bathing composition, numerous still lives, landscapes, portraits and a splendid series of water-colours, all in rare, eighteenth-century frames. Among the visitors one could see Vollard, the art-dealer, Maurice Denis, the painter, Marcell Nemes, American and Russian millionaires, numerous silk-hatted, bearded gentlemen and rich elegantly dressed ladies, and out at elbow German and Russian artists.

Everything seemed to radiate from Cézanne, the point of departure for the future was fixed there. And yet Picasso and Braque had already advanced as far as Cubism. All of us believed that painting was progressing towards some new goal, some new form, and that this progress was not merely the rise and fall of the wave. The greatest praise was that "he paints differently from the way they have painted so far," and to say that "he paints quite differently" was to increase the compliment. There was only one appeal to history, and that was that the Impressionists had also been ridiculed at the time of their first exhibition. Neither the dazed bourgeois nor the ambitious young artist wanted to be left behind, and both of them lost no time in hastening to catch up with the vanguard.

I wasn't going to be left behind either, and I made such an outrageous

study of Monsieur Pierre that it shocked the whole flock of disciples. It was a bit Cubistic, in fact, but it was not much more than a piece of classwork, and all I did in fact was to exaggerate what I saw; the all too muscular legs could hardly stand upright beside each other, the enormous head of hair was larger than the thick-set trunk, but it was all modelled after nature: the imagination played no part in it. What was given to the eye was simply exaggerated, not abstracted in any way. Many of my women colleagues and the bearded Swiss, my fellow-artist, in their own discontent thought a great deal of this work of mine. Not so Bourdelle. He looked at it and pronounced judgement: "My young friend, if you carry on like this there will be a number who will admire you, and perhaps you will achieve early and resounding success along this road; but it is not the road of sculpture, these forms are meaningless. I admit they have an ingenious look, but that's not sculpture, not by a long way and ingenuity is not always a sign of talent. A thing has no especial value just because it is not like anything else that has gone before. I advise you to make a close study of nature, and proceed methodically along the wearisome yet fruitful road on which the great, Puget, Carpeaux and Rodin, have passed. *Per aspera ad astra.*"

Was he right? Who knows? At any rate I had enough of the thorny path, and wanted to get to the stars sooner than that. I sketched Gothic sculpture in the Cluny Museum, and I went down on my knees myself before Our Lady's statue in Notre Dame together with so many other young French students whom I saw there piously praying on their knees.

My father of course learnt that I had reached a grave crossroad, and ordered me back to Budapest early in the new year. He preached me the same sermon almost word for word, that Bourdelle had. As if the two of them had discussed the matter: *per aspera ad astra.* Being a dutiful son I proceeded to take the thorny path—to study from nature. Nature appeared in the shape of Ferenc Klein, an acrobat temporarily out of a job. Feri Klein came along in a black overcoat and impeccable bowler hat, neat and respectable, and he was a patient model. I exaggerated his short legs and overdeveloped arms, making the legs shorter and giving the arms more bulge. My father, who came along every now and then to see what I was doing, argued at first, then gradually took a fancy to my exaggerations, since he had always been attracted by the queer and the extravagant, which played a certain part in his own art. The stiff and nervous and critical atmosphere of his first visits became easier and friendlier, and soon we were like two colleagues. We both took delight in Feri Klein, who, when I told him, "Klein, you can relax," after a long-held pose, would leap with grace from the dais into a handstand, then lower himself with standing on his head

and then spring to his feet again with the supple twist of a fish. He and his four brothers, dressed as messenger-boys, were acrobats of some distinction. Two month later they left Budapest on a contract. I went to spend the summer at Nagybánya and continue my study of nature, so that after a while my father thought me sufficiently mature to allow me to go to Paris again in the winter of 1912–13.

*

My second stay in Paris turned out to be longer as well as more worthwhile than my first. My friend and guide was Sándor Galimberti's divorced wife, Maria Lanow, a Czech pupil of Hollósy's from Prague and an old friend of mine from Nagybánya. She was the sister of the famous bacteriologist, Lanow-Provazek, who had come to Paris from Samoa, and in Paris, on a grant from Hamburg University he had effectively found a cure for the tropical trachoma bacillus, in recognition of which the Maoris had created him a Maori "peer" amidst great rejoicings. He was stopping in Paris for a few days only; he was still a youngish man, modest and silent, who, although he was a professor in Hamburg and so accustomed to the use of German, constantly reverted to the more intimate Czech in conversation with his sister. In 1915 he fell a martyr to science. There had been an outbreak of typhus in a Silesian prisoner-of-war camp and despite all precautionary measures he caught it and died. And yet, that time in 1912, he was leaving Paris for fighting in the Balkans, where he discovered the origin of typhus. And there, despite the terribly insanitary conditions, he was spared. Typhus as a ravaging epidemic broke out there for the first time in Europe. But did we care at that time about people killing each other somewhere "down there" in a far off corner of Europe? First the Bulgarians, Serbs and Greeks slaughtered the Turks, then, strengthened by the Rumanians, the Serbs and Greeks turned against their Bulgarian allies. "*La guerre sympathique,*" the song by Fragson, the Anglo-French music-hall composer and singer, was whistled by everybody in the Paris of those days. Why were these people killing each other, asked the song, because "they are such jolly good fellows." Fragson himself accompanied his own song on the piano—I heard him in some big vaudeville theatre—he was a very tall, slender figure in tails, and he was in love with the same Parisian girl as his father. And that decided his fate. For his father, who was seventy-five, in a fit of jealousy killed the popular singer with a well-aimed pistol shot while he was shaving one morning. Three hundred thousand Parisians turned out for the funeral, and whether it was the police or the *apaches* who started it, there was disorder followed by panic, the mounted police attacked, the firemen took fright and

the funeral ended with nine people killed and seventy wounded. Paris never saw a funeral like that! I saw nothing of the whole affair, but for weeks afterwards the posters left untouched on walls displayed the cartoon of the famous caricaturist Sem, showing the singer swimming in the sea in a striped bathing costume, with the caption under it: *Fragson crossing the Channel!* For he always spent one variety season in London, one in Paris. In the same variety theatre, where Fragson used to sing his catchy tunes with that gay, impudent light-heartedness of his, I recognized André Dériaz, the French weight-lifting wonder-man from whom Rodin had made that strange, seated male figure with an almost withered lower trunk and terribly over-developed muscles on the chest and the arms. He bulged all over in his dinner jacket. How I got into the Alhambra I have no idea, since I lived in Paris like every other poor student, going to bed early in my room on the sixth floor of the hotel where a Rumanian gynaecologist had his surgery on the third floor. His waiting room was simply the staircase, and here thronged those girls and women, honest and otherwise, to whom love had somehow done more harm than good. I had my lunch and supper also somewhere in the vicinity of my hotel in Rue Vavin, and it was only on the odd occasion, when with people, that I went to a better place. On one of these occasions I happened to be sitting opposite Rodin, who was having his lunch at the next table. He was a short, very solidly built man, his greyish thick badger-hair on his enormous head as well-groomed as his square-cut beard reaching to his chest, his black jacket and striped trousers without spot or wrinkle. He was ordering with care. Entrée, fish, roast, salad as a separate course, two kinds of bottled wine and he also had a bottle of champagne opened for his meal. Two or three waiters in white aprons danced attendance on him. It was a royal feast. Worthy of a great man. I have never had much feeling for the fleshpots. Food has always been to me no more than the necessary act of eating, an often irksome duty to satisfy the demands of an importunate stomach. And so I was not a little surprised at the substantial lunch that Rodin put away all by himself.

And I relished all the more the cheese, bread, onions, bacon from home and the simple red wine from the coal-merchant across the street—there was a post-office as well by the way in his shop—these Parisian shopkeepers were most odd—with which Csáky, the noted Hungarian sculptor living in Paris, regaled me.

In the mornings I modelled in the free school of a Russian sculptor known under her *nom de palette* of Hannah Orlov. Everyone else there, except me, was a painter. The students here had, for the most part, abandoned the study of nature, and some among them were already launched into abstract

painting. Criticism was to be had from Fernand Léger at five francs a head. Not many availed themselves of the opportunity, though. I wondered if it was worthwhile for this well-established, red-haired Frenchman of Herculean build, who would never arrive on criticism days without an enormous chrysanthemum in his buttonhole, to sacrifice two mornings a week for, at most, fifty francs each. I did not find Léger a very attractive personality and I myself did not take advantage of his "criticism," his pronouncedly bourgeois deportment and appearance were probably intended to make his only too modern painting respectable. A straining after modernity, a contrived originality, characterize his pictures, but nonetheless he was rated among the best at one time in Paris in the company of Derain and Vlaminck.

From that school I moved over to another Russian school, the Russian free academy. But it was free not because there was no "criticism"—there wasn't—but perhaps because it was frequented by Russian students who did not want to notify the Russian consulate of their stay in Paris. We other Europeans—happy times!—wandered up and down Europe without a passport. Only Russians and Turks had to have passport. Paris was full of German students who came over on foot, and on occasion they begged. When in Paris I was often touched for smaller sums of money by a very well educated, but profligate, self-styled poet called Müller, whom I had known from Munich. It is strange that this shady customer, who went or rather reeled drunkenly about Paris, with a tattered red woollen scarf wound round his neck in default of an overcoat on even the coldest of rainy days, was the first man to tell me seriously that there was going to be a war. "We have to give the French another sound beating," he said. I found it hard to believe. I could not imagine such a possibility since there was peace then and all the time the politicians talked of nothing but peace. Later, in the spring of 1914, the newsreel at the Nagybánya cinema showed the thirty-four-centimetre mortars tested at the military manoeuvres in Bosnia. I happened to be standing by a gifted painter, an ex-officer, named Tóth. I whispered to him: "Why are they showing us these useless bits of iron mongery? Does anyone seriously believe they are really going to be used?" To which Tóth answered with the assurance of a soldier: "You can be certain they are going to be used, absolutely certain." Both of them, Tóth the talented artist and Müller the drunken begging poet, were shortly to die, among the first to fall "on the field of Honour." The Hungarian in the Carpathians, the German—on French soil.

The pupils of the Russian free academy were very poor. The studio was a big barn-like hall with several smaller adjoining rooms, from some of these

students emerged looking as if they had been sleeping there. What was there, I wondered? Some night-shelter? How far the place was a real shelter for them was apparent when one fine morning there appeared before them, or rather gatecrashed on them, a well-groomed, elegantly dressed, very tall, fair-bearded gentleman accompained by a very fine hunting dog. The members, for I can hardly call them students, since I had already discovered that very few of them could properly be termed sculptors, gathered round the man with the fair beard, and a long conversation which developed into an increasingly vigorous argument took place. My poor Russians smiled without appearing to yield an inch, with the blond-bearded gentleman using all his most persuasive power and finally taking leave of them in a friendly manner. I asked the one of my Russian acquaintances who looked most a sculptor and spoke some Italian (the others only knew Russian) what it had all been about. I discovered that the fair-bearded visitor was a well-to-do Russian sculptor living in Paris, and had come to offer them the czar's assistance, a regular scholarship, on the condition that they presented their passports for inspection at the Russian consulate. And they refused. I confess I had no idea why they had refused. I asked my Italian-speaking colleague. "It cannot be reconciled with their principles," he replied. It set me off wondering whether they were making bombs in that alleged sculptor's workshop. Judging from my present knowledge I would say that they were rather a mixed bag, and some of them at any rate had no passports at all or, if they had, had not obtained them legally. Politically they must have been "populists" or else rather mild anarchists.

Not very long after this incident I took my leave of them, not because I was afraid one of their amateur bombs might go off, but mainly because it was I who had to pay for the models most of the time, and the place lacked any sense of art, with people coming and going and talking, sometimes modelling, but usually, by preference, doing nothing. Once or twice I even found the place locked. Nobody was there. I waited for a while, then walked under the overpass of the Montparnasse railway station as far as the Boulevard, and sat down on the terrace of the café called "Arrival," where two tables away Picasso was sitting with Prince Dhiagilev, the tall, corpulent director of the famous St Petersburg Ballet, and his fantastically elegant dandies. They too were watching the street acrobats outside the café in the regulation white tights of the acrobats, having discarded their blue worker's overalls on the pavement, giving an excellent show, balancing alternately on each other's heads and hands. We sat watching the motley crowds of passers-by, the Zouaves in their baggy red breaches, the Spahis in their white burnouses mingling in the crowd, and the big red-wheeled

BÉNI FERENCZY:
BOY, STANDING

Overleaf:
BÉNI FERENCZY:
NUDE

carts drawn by huge white mules—how stimulating and beautiful it all was "under the heavy leafy boughs."

My other mentor and friend in Paris, Vilmos Csaba, the Hungarian painter, encouraged me to leave the art school of the revolutionaries and go to Archipenko. There different winds were blowing. Csaba was only spending a short time in Paris just then, he was *en route* to Madrid, but he found just enough time to take me to his master Matisse. After an endless tram journey we found Matisse's house standing in the middle of a well-cared-for garden and orchard surrounded by a tall stone wall. The building was pleasant and spacious, the studios were on the ground floor. Matisse received Csaba very cordially as one of his old pupils; in his white working smock he looked an elderly medical professor rather than a painter, a jovial, burly figure of a man, bald, with a red beard reaching to his chest. He did not pay much attention to us and we were free to wander through five or six studios on the ground floor, while he held forth to two very elegantly dressed young Americans to the effect that plasticity in space in a picture was only really achieved if the perspective was reversed, contrary to what had been done up to that period; that is, if the vanishing point where the lines converged met in ourselves, the viewers, while diverging further and further towards the horizon. I was reminded of Sganarelle, Moilère's *médecin malgré lui*, pouring out his diagnosis in a long speech in which he explained that a man's heart was on his right and his liver on his left. The father confesses with reverent wonder that he had been living under the illusion that the heart was on the left and the liver on the right. "No, no," says Sganarelle. "We physicians have changed all that. We are giving medical science quite a different direction." Matisse's explanation was not very convincing, even though he tried to vindicate his new-fledged theory with a just finished interior he had painted. I saw that picture again many years later in the Moscow Shchukin Collection.

Matisse, as Cézanne before him, in part really succeeded in making up for the loss of perspective by colour. But while with Cézanne there is still a range of tones, that is, the light and dark tones help to create the illusion of perspective, Matisse's colours all have the same value as far as the gradations of tone are concerned. However, at least in his landscapes and interiors he succeeded in creating effects of depth and perspective. His predecessors, Bonnard and Vuillard, the Pointillistes, and our Rippl-Rónai, who all cut down tonal value to a minimum in their painting, could still manage to make us look into airy distances through the windows in their pictures.

Two of Matisse's huge canvases hung on the wall there, which I was to see again in Moscow twenty-four years later. These were the *Dance* and the

Music. I did not like them. But in Paris in those days artists and their friends, if they happened to dislike something, never said so. They said instead, "I don't yet understand it." By understanding, they meant they should be habituated to it, with a theory to support it, the abandonment including probably the comparison with traditional art, and one rarely ever heard likes and dislikes expressed in Paris. Shortly after our visit to Matisse, Csaba took me to the Steins, Gertrude Stein's brothers. They were wealthy Americans living in Paris, who collected Matisse and other modern French painters, partly I think as investment. They had a lot of Matisses, Vuillards, Seurats and paintings by Rousseau le Douanier. The reception was rather unconventional, with the hosts and some of their closer friends and acquaintances sitting together in one of the drawing-rooms, where visitors also wandered about looking at the pictures but nobody bothered to introduce anybody to anybody, though Csaba, whom they had known for a long time, was acknowledged by a slight smile and nod. One of the visitors, an Englishman, judging by his accent, said, turning to me without introduction: "I understand already Matisse, but not yet Picasso." I replied that I either liked a picture or I didn't. I made no effort to understand it, because I was convinced that anyway an experience could not be conveyed by words, and as we habitually use words for thinking, I'd rather rely on my instincts. I wasn't quite right, of course, because there is such a thing as knowledge and even taste, which avokes a spontaneous liking, changes and is modified with time. Cézanne, however, had made a great impact on me, still fresh from Nagybánya, and so had the rosy "eosined" Renoirs we had seen in an art-dealer's shop a year earlier. So this "understanding" was a fishy business to me. It had been invented by the art-dealers for the purpose of making the buyer "understand" why Matisse or Picasso was worth as much as, if not more than, Manet or even Rubens. For I have to admit that if I stick to my likes and dislikes and renounce "understanding," the old masters make a far stronger impression on me than even Cézanne and the Impressionists. The next day I went to the Louvre, where I lingered happily in front of the masterpieces of Leonardo, Titian and Rembrandt.

But all the same I enrolled in Archipenko's school.

The painter was then in his "cylindrical" period, that is to say he was not yet quite abstract. A formation much in the shape of a stove-pipe indicated the legs of what was supposed to be an outsize nude, another still wider in diameter served for the pelvis, an inverted cone was the trunk and on that a ball was considered enough to represent the head. The students, three Russians and myself—we were only four—worked with fairly soft sandstone. Archipenko advertised his school as "a school for sculpture in hard mate-

rials." That stuff seemed rather soft to me, as in previous years, in both Munich and later Nagybánya, I had carved in wood. But not to the Russians working there. Nor would they, including Archipenko, believe that I wasn't experienced in stone-carving. "Criticism" was not compulsory. I helped my Russian fellow-students by teaching them the technique of stone-carving. Archipenko corrected the other three in Russian. I did not understand a word of it, but one day he preached me a sermon on the ethics of art, as contrary to Bourdelle's as it could be. He began by asking me why I clung to Cubism, when sculpture was taking quite a different direction those days. I was freely copying a small-sized relief which I had done while still in Hannah Orlov's school using two models, a white and a Negro girl, both nude. Why should what I was doing be Cubism, I asked. "But it *is* Cubism," he said emphatically, "and you don't share modern ideas." And he proceeded to explain at length that though he considered I was gifted, I represented an old-fashioned point of view, because I did not understand modern ideas. We left it at that.

I found myself on very good terms with the man who cast plaster casts for Archipenko, a stout Portuguese with an enormous black moustache, with whom I managed to make myself understood fairly successfully, he speaking Portuguese and I Italian. He worked with incredibly slow movements, but would go on polishing Archipenko's plaster casts with the finest emery powders and woollen rags for hours, until they shone. Meanwhile we talked. "Why did you leave Portugal, isn't plaster casting a good trade there?" "Oh, yes, it is. Much better than with this stingy Archipenko." "Then why didn't you stay at home?" "Oh," he said, laughing, "back in Lisbon they're always shooting. Bang-bang, barrikados." "What about it?" I asked. At which he: "I'm a royalist émigré, I fought on King Manuel's side on the barricades, but we were beaten. If I am ever amnestied I shall go back, señor, even if it's a republic."

On one occasion the school made ready for a great event: days before people were explaining with excitement that Apollinaire was going to lecture on modern sculpture in the studio. The stone slabs and statues were pushed out of the way along the wall, and chairs and benches brought in. I came with Marie Lanow and Csaba. The dingily lit room was slowly filling when Apollinaire took his seat behind the covered table on the rostrum, in the light of a small oil-lamp. He was an imposing creature. Tall, broad-shouldered, with a long bull's neck, a finely-boned head bespeaking exeptional bodily strength, a white skin, close-cropped fair hair, dark suit, thin bow-tie—it all made a very impressive sight, and he had a pleasant, resonant velvety tenor voice. The contents of his lecture, on the

other hand, were simply designed to shock, piling one astounding statement on the other; "the Greeks, who betrayed some talent in sculpture in the fifth century, completely misunderstood the whole point of the art," etc., etc.; the Italians, who "never betrayed any trace of sculptural talent, ruined the taste of Europe so effectively in the sixteenth century that it has been the greatest drawback to our art ever since," etc., etc., more blah; and "we French had some very gifted sculptors in the eleventh century who unfortunately served Catholicism, and since that is barbarism, what served Catholic barbarism cannot be anything else but worthless barbarism, itself, Q.E.D." etc., etc.; "we have come to recognize that since the beginning of the world the only genuine sculptors have been African Negroes freed from all barbarism, all tasteless excess," etc., etc., until "at last appeared Archipenko (great applause), who" etcetera, etcetera. Applause. Did Archipenko pay for this lecture, I wondered. My suspicion was increased by the absence of Picasso, Derain and Vlaminck or the art-dealers. It was a small audience composed mostly of elderly ladies and Marie Laurencin—Archipenko's mistress—was the only painter of any note present. Apollinaire was not penniless; he had been appearing for newspapers and periodicals, in short, he was already a well-established author. But, and this is more to the point, Archipenko's buyers were rather few and far between in those early days. In fact he used to ask me, with embarrassed references to his difficult circumstances, to pay him the monthly fee of twenty francs in advance. The only excuse for the lecture was as a publicity stunt. May be Apollinaire advertised him free of charge, but maybe he also seized the opportunity to shock, on behalf of the aesthetic sansculottes. Well, he gave me a shock to last a lifetime. The world did not exist if any of that was true! And in my mind's eye I saw the gentle outlines of the hills back at Nagybánya and our little town with its four steeples.

THE TÓT FAMILY

(Excerpt from a Comedy)

by

ISTVÁN ÖRKÉNY

Lajos Tót, respected in the community and a member of the local fire brigade, lives with his wife and Ágika, their daughter, in a small mountain village, leading a peaceful life. The one sorrow darkening their lives is the absence of their only son who is far away fighting on the Russian front.

One day joyful news arrives with the morning post. Their son's commanding officer, a major, whose nerves have given way under repeated partisan raids, has been granted two weeks sick leave, and will spend the fortnight in their house. The Tóts are happy, since this at last affords them an opportunity to do something for their son.

This is how my grotesque tragicomedy begins. The family is in a flurry of excitement looking forward to the major's visit. He duly arrives, exhausted, still obsessed with all the terror and shock of war. Then, stage by stage, as he recovers, he manages to infect his hosts with this terror. It gradually becomes evident that the guest is full of strange fads and fantastic demands and all the obsessions of a disrupted nervous system. He can only sleep during the day because he had to stay up all night at the front; he cannot stand inactivity and he presses the Tót family into a queer, almost maniac occupation. In order to earn a little money on the side the two women have been employed in making boxes for a factory producing surgical dressings. The major takes a fancy to the work, and sits through whole nights with them, cutting and folding cartons to the point of exhaustion.

At first he only deprives them of their sleep. As he becomes increasingly obsessed by his fixed idea, he robs them of their quiet, their honour and finally human self-respect. It is Tót in the first place who is a thorn in his flesh; the even temperament and sound nerves of this kindly hulking creature present a direct challenge to the major. For the sake of his son and at the instigation of the two women, Tót finds himself forced to endure the most humiliating situations—until they prove too much for him.

*

"The gods had condemned Sisyphus to roll a boulder ceaselessly to the top of a mountain. They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labour."

The words are from Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, *where the author expressed his belief that the doomed hero was sometimes relieved and happy, even perhaps smiled, when the boulder rolled down again and he was forced to return to the plain in its wake.*

I, too, have often had occasion to think of Sisyphus, especially since I survived a war and came back from the front. In my country's history there has been more than a fair share of the Sisyphean character, but perhaps never so much as in the hopelessness and dishonour of the last war.

And therefore I take a different view of my Sisyphus: I visualize him down on the plain as he begins to push the boulder to the top of the mountain again. What is he thinking of at that very moment? He is fully aware of his punishment. He knows that the boulder will roll back, again and again, until the end

of time. He knows this for certain, but it is useless knowledge, since man is more than a bundle of experiences. His instinct speaks differently from his experience; it tells him that this is perhaps the last effort needed, and once again, confidently, he begins to toil his way upwards. All of us live in the same paradox: our understanding recognizes the destiny that awaits us but our vital instincts prove stronger than our intellect. Our life-instinct protects us against death.

Tót, of course, was not the King of Corinth: he was a simple village fireman who had never incurred the wrath of the gods. Perhaps he was free from sin, unless it be a sin to live in an age when man had only one choice: to rebel or be a Sisyphus.

He lacked the courage of a rebel, and so he had to roll the boulder, which he dutifully does for two weeks, until the major departs. But the major returns, unexpectedly. This is the point I was looking for: the utter limit of man's power of endurance. The major returns because there are no trains to the front for the next three days. It is these very three days that my Sisyphus cannot bring himself to endure—he, the non-rebel, revolts, and it is he himself who sends the boulder hurtling back down to the plain. He kills the major with the guillotine-like device they called the "margin-cutter." The guest had induced him to make it, to speed up the cutting of the cardboard. If I consider the murder in isolation, Tót is a "hero of the absurd." In more than one sense. Not only because the killing of the major solves nothing, but because Tót is also completely unaware of what the audience has known for a long time: that the half-witted postman, out of well-intentioned kindliness, has deliberately failed to deliver a telegram from the Red Cross to the Tót family telling them their son has been killed in action.

To us, therefore, all the self-sacrifice and self-humiliation of the Tóts are vain, senseless and absurd, but following the laws of non-absurd existence we can still feel solidarity with the father's madness.

The excerpt that follows is one of Tót's trials, one of his uphill journeys. The major has been with them for a week and now is sleeping. The scene opens with Mrs Tót—Mariska—dictating a letter to Ágika, in which she gives an account of the situation to their son.

FROM ACT II OF THE PLAY

A neat little glassed-in verandah, green hills in the background. The POSTMAN, peering in through the open window, is waiting for a letter.

MARISKA: Now, just read back to me what we wrote.

ÁGIKA: "Thank heavens, we have only good news for you this time. The Major has put on six pounds in a week and says he has been splendidly looked after. He's even promised to have you posted to battalion headquarters where you can work under him as a clerk."

MARISKA *(to the POSTMAN):* Now, what do you say to that?

POSTMAN: Congratulations.

ÁGIKA *(continuing):* "Unfortunately the Major has got so fond of making these boxes that he goes on right through to the morning. Both of us can keep up with him quite well..."

MARISKA *(to the POSTMAN):* Because you see we've learned how to snatch our bits of sleep here and there. At dinner, for instance, while the soup cools...

POSTMAN: How clever of you!

ÁGIKA: "It's only your dear father, poor old man, who is got down by the strain of sitting up so late. It's too much for him. He's beginning to lose his sense of direction —doing without sleep like that."

(Enter TÓT, half asleep; he moves downstage; MARISKA hurries over and leads him out.)

ÁGIKA: "Only yesterday a box fell on the floor. Your father, poor darling, immediately went down on all fours to look for it under the table. When anything like that used to happen, you remember his habit of tickling little Ági's legs. Well, as bad luck would have it, he made a mistake and tickled the Major's instead, who was so offended

that he refused point blank to make any more boxes. But there's no need for you to worry, we're all keeping well and send you lots of kisses."

MARISKA *(takes letter and hands it to the POSTMAN):* Well, there you are. *(The POSTMAN exits. To Ágika.)* Come on, let's get everything ready. *(With practised movements they get out the stacks of cartons and place the margin-cutter, a small device like a bread-cutter, on a chair.)*

(Enter TÓT.)

Try and wake up, do. Come on, properly now! *(Sits her husband on a chair. She sits down. They are ready to start folding the cardboard. To Ágika.)* Go and tell him we're ready, Ági.

ÁGIKA *(tip-toes to the door; she appears both happy and thrilled):* Major! Present and ready to start, sir!

(Pregnant silence. The MAJOR fails to appear.)

MAJOR *(from within, coldly):* You can commence operations without me.

MARISKA *(alarmed):* Don't you want to come and make boxes, sir?

MAJOR: No!

MARISKA: What are you going to do with yourself, sir?

MAJOR: Nothing. *(Terrified silence.)*

MARISKA *(despairingly):* My dearest boy, my one and only son . . . *(To the others)* What's the matter this time? What have we done?

ÁGIKA: He's still offended about the tickling, if you ask me.

MARISKA: Dear, go in and talk to him. He isn't cross with you, after all. Tell him it's an old trick of your father's and he didn't mean any harm. *(ÁGIKA quickly disappears into the MAJOR's room. The Tóts watch the floor. ÁGIKA reappears, dejected; she sits down but does not speak)*

MARISKA: What's the matter, Ági? He's not offended, is he?

ÁGIKA: Of course he is.

MARISKA: With whom?

ÁGIKA: I don't like to say. *(Looks reproachfully at her father)* Or do you mind if I tell the truth? *(To her father, emphatically)* What really happened was that when daddy was under the table, he bit the Major in the leg.

TÓT: What's that?

MARISKA *(sternly):* Oh, come now, your father doesn't bite.

ÁGIKA: Well, may be not. *(Shakes her head disbelievingly)*

TÓT *(angrily):* What d'you mean? Why are you shaking your head like that?

MARISKA *(bursts into tears)*

TÓT: Haven't you got a tongue? What are you crying for?

MARISKA *(trying to control her tears):* Lajos, dear, we're only asking you to be a little more careful in future.

ÁGIKA: Yes, that's all we're asking of you. And next time anything falls down, daddy isn't to bother. I'll pick it up.

MARISKA: Yes, that would be best.

TÓT: Are you both crazy? You don't really believe all that rubbish, do you?

MARISKA: No, no, of course not.

ÁGIKA: The whole point is that daddy shouldn't have any reason to get under the table.

TÓT: What the hell are you getting at? I knocked a box down with my elbow, and got down to pick it up.

ÁGIKA: Quite correct. But may I be permitted to point out that you spent a quite unnecessarily long time under the table.

MARISKA: That's true. Even I couldn't help noticing.

TÓT: Maybe I dropped off for a minute or two. But I didn't *bite* anyone.

MARISKA: I'm sure of that. Tickling and biting are two completely different things.

ÁGIKA: No one's going to say they aren't. But if I am allowed to say so, people don't usually take offence for no apparent reason. Isn't it possible that daddy tickled the Major in a way which could be taken for biting?

TÓT: No such thing. No sane person could mistake the one for the other.

MARISKA: I don't think one could.

ÁGIKA: Then may I ask what the cracking noise was?

TÓT: What cracking noise? Did anything crack?

MARISKA: I remember hearing something crack myself.

TÓT: What could it have been? *(Reflects)* Perhaps it was me crushing the box that dropped.

MARISKA: Well, I suppose it could have been.

ÁGIKA: I don't want to contradict, daddy, but it wasn't remotely like the noise a box makes when it's crushed.

TÓT: Well, what kind of noise was it then?

ÁGIKA: Of course I may be mistaken, but it sounded to me like a bone being cracked between the teeth.

MARISKA: I had the same impression myself.

TÓT: I give up! You believe... I mean you want *me* to believe... *(Stops dead and looks at them perplexedly)* Well, I'm damned! I never bit anyone in my life.

MARISKA: That's true enough.

ÁGIKA: Well, maybe daddy isn't the sort that does things like that. But if you will excuse me for raking up bygones, daddy has been known to behave in a curious way before, for no apparent reason.

TÓT *(with increasing perplexity):* Me? When?

ÁGIKA: Last spring for instance, when you insulted Father Tomaji most terribly after mass one Sunday.

TÓT: What sort of gossip is that?

ÁGIKA: But I was there myself. I was with you. I could have sunk into the ground for shame. I remember your greeting the reverend father with a bellow of "Praised be Our Lord Jesus Christ," and then you gave him such a terrific flick on the nose that it almost sent his hat flying.

TÓT: What d'you say I did? Flicked him on the nose? Rubbish. Well, I might have wanted to brush a fly off his nose... But me flick the reverend father in the face? Be honest, Mariska, what do you really take me for?

MARISKA: I'm the last person to believe ridiculous stories about you. All I can say is that the reverend father answered my greetings very coldly for a few days.

TÓT: Both of you are dreaming! It could only have been by accident.

MARISKA *(becoming excited):* Accident? Where you're concerned everything is an accident. I suppose it was an accident that the Railways fired you from one day to the next?

TÓT *(in a hurt tone):* Must you drag that up? As if you didn't know that that blasted station-master only fired me because he wanted the job of marshalling steward for his moron nephew.

MARISKA *(losing control):* All they wanted to do was give him your job? That's it, is it? I know your story. But it just doesn't happen to be the truth. What really happened was that the Italian Emperor, that little baby-faced Victor Emanuel, was paying an official visit to Hungary and his Excellency the Regent invited him to go buffalo hunting. So all the station got going whitewashing the walls, painting the benches and planting geraniums. And then, at last, everything was spick and span and all the little girls in white dresses and the boy scouts and the home reserve and the railwaymen's brass band were lined up and the signal went up that the special train was coming... and the whole staff stood in line along the track from the station-master down to the two marshalling stewards...

TÓT: I don't want to hear any more...

MARISKA *(flaring up in hatred):* You shut up! At the very moment when the special train went roaring through the station, one of the two marshalling stewards —and the poor little miserable mannikin-Emperor had never done anything to him— suddenly had to turn round and pull down his trousers and display his bare behind to the train in the most insulting way possible...

TÓT: Are you completely mad? Are we just dreaming all this?

MARISKA *(springs to her feet and points to the door):* Dream or no dream, I don't care a damn! You'd better start thinking of your son, our only son, who is going to freeze to death unless you go in to the Major and beg his pardon!

TÓT *(staggering):* What on earth am I to beg his pardon for?

MARISKA: For losing your mind and crawling under the table, and biting the leg of your son's benefactor!

TÓT *(looks round frantically, then—broken—goes into the MAJOR's room)*

(MARISKA and ÁGIKA watch the door expectantly)

MAJOR *(emerges briskly, pushing TÓT amicably before him):* Well, here we are. No offence meant, none taken, so let bygones be bygones. But before we resume the box-making operation, let me make one thing quite clear to you. I myself am only willing to get on with the job if it gives the same pleasure to all of us! And now that we have succeeded in clearing up this little contretemps of ours, my dear chap, I expect you to go on being as frank as you've always been up till now... *(Irritably)* There you go again, and I haven't even finished the sentence!

TÓT *(startled):* What's wrong now?

MAJOR: That's what I would like to ask—is there anything wrong?

TÓT: Nothing in the world.

MAJOR: Yet you looked in my direction, over my shoulder, to the left.

TÓT: Oh, that!... It's just that a butterfly has flown in.

MAJOR: What butterfly?

TÓT: One with two yellow spots and a red one.

MAJOR: And how is it that your mind is on butterflies when you should be concentrating on boxes?

TÓT: I was only looking in that direction.

MAJOR *(moves away, deep in thought; returns):* Now attention, all of you. I'm absolutely, well, you might say, in love with this box-making. But we just can't go on as we have been doing so far. If your minds are on other things, then the whole business is a waste of effort. So let's stop for a minute, please.

TÓT *(obsequiously):* I don't want to argue with you, sir, but might I be forgiven for pointing out to you, sir, that it's very difficult to stop things coming into one's mind.

MAJOR: Yes? I've noticed that this quite irrational concept stubbornly persists in people's minds, and without any real reason at all. Let me give you an example. Take nutrition. I expect you ingest food from time to time, don't you?

TÓT: Ingest food? *(Reflects)* Just a second. *(Thinks deeply)* Yes.

MAJOR: Are you saying yes without any degree of inner conviction? I wouldn't like it if you did.

MARISKA: Oh no, sir. It's only that he's been a little slow in the uptake recently.

MAJOR: Well, we can overlook that. Take as long as you like. Now, of what does the act of nutrition consist? I'll go through the various stages, one by one: eating, biting, salivating, swallowing... *(Takes a piece of cake)* Take this and eat it. The whole process consists of a predetermined chain of events which is not interrupted by anything... Or did you happen to think of something in between?

TÓT: No, nothing.

MAJOR: Aha, at long last, that's much better. Perhaps you've grasped what I'm driving at? Or haven't you?

TÓT *(worried):* Well, to say I haven't would be exaggerating. But I can't say I really have.

MAJOR: Now look here, my good people. I've had enough experience with my men out there on the front to know that doing nothing has great dangers. If a man's mind is allowed to run wild, it becomes a victim of his own idle thoughts. And then

he will do as Mr Tót did just now with the red-spotted butterfly... Still, it was only within the walls of your most hospitable home that I succeeded in discovering the remedy for this state of affairs, and the solution is making boxes!... You follow me, don't you?

ÁGIKA: It's as clear as daylight!

MARISKA: There are one or two things here and there I don't quite see.

TÓT: I can't get all the points either, sir.

MAJOR: Makes no difference. Anyway, it's no use burdening your mind with all these theoretical arguments if you're not fully up to scratch... Let's stick to making boxes! How did you make them before I arrived?

ÁGIKA: I used to cut the cartons out and mummy did the rest...

MAJOR: And what did my good friend Mr Tót do?

TÓT: Me? I just used to go for a stroll.

MAJOR: It's different now, you see. I do the cutting myself and you three do the folding, or rather you would do it if there were enough to fold. But there isn't, because, while it used to be one to one before, now I'm alone, and there are three of you... And that's why you find time hanging heavy on your hands; you either fall asleep or you let your thoughts wander!

ÁGIKA *(delighted):* Oh! I see!

MAJOR: Now look at me. When I first came here my nerves were in rags; I had nightmares and I didn't feel safe anywhere... And today I can say that I have not only recovered but I feel twice as young in this most pleasant and attractive place... I've almost forgotten what war is like.

MARISKA *(overcome with emotion):* Did you hear what the kind Major said, Lajos dear?

TÓT *(nods with some difficulty)*

MAJOR: To a large extent all this can be ascribed to box-making... no, not box-making, one should call it boxing instead! Believe me, when I get up in the morning I'm already impatient, looking forward to the evening when we can all sit down together here.

ÁGIKA: Me too!

MARISKA: We all are! *(She points to TÓT)* He is too, really! *(TÓT nods with some difficulty)*

MAJOR *(completely carried away, but softly, dreamily, and poetically):* There is something soul-inspiring, some pure and unspoilt delight, some permanently tranquil joy in this occupation... There's nothing like boxing in the world!

ÁGIKA *(deliriously):* Oh, how true that is!

MAJOR: Sometimes I think how glorious it would be if many more people could take up box-making. Perhaps the day will dawn when the whole of humanity can be won over to this noble task.

ÁGIKA *(standing up):* If only it may be so! If only God would grant it!

MAJOR: Of course, I don't think the whole operation should become standardized. Every country would make boxes of different colours and sizes. The Dutch for instance, should produce round ones like their cheese. The French could make musical boxes. Even the Russians, when we have defeated them, would be allowed to make boxes. Though of course only small ones, the size of a match-box.

ÁGIKA: If only I could live to see the day!

MAJOR: It won't be as soon as that. But if we do succeed, if this noble idea of ours is victorious, then our names will be engraved on the hearts of humanity.

ÁGIKA: Please, sir, please allow me to kiss your hand!

MAJOR: I won't permit any such thing! Only this *(Chastely imprints a kiss on ÁGIKA's forehead, then lets go of her, and gazes into the distance)* Dreams, dreams, beautiful dreams... *(Looks at TÓT; matter-of-fact)* I hope all of you appreciate my objection to this margin-cutter thing of yours?

ÁGIKA *(happily):* It's not really too dif-

ficult to understand... The real objection is that the margin-cutter is too small and his honour can't keep up with us.

MAJOR: Brilliant! Your daughter's mind is sharp as a needle! ...Now, my dear Mr Tót? The rest is just child's play, isn't it?

TÓT *(he has obviously no idea of what is expected of him):* Of course.

MAJOR: Congratulations! So what must we do?

TÓT: Do? I don't know. *(MARISKA and ÁGIKA surround him, concerned)*

MARISKA: Now, my dear Lajos, don't pretend you don't know...

ÁGIKA: Daddy, please. Look at me, please. What did I say just now?

TÓT: That the margin-cutter was far too small.

MAJOR: Excellent... And what follows from that?

TÓT: Nothing.

ÁGIKA: Oh, daddy, how awful...

MAJOR: You shouldn't talk like that. He will find out by himself.

MARISKA: Please, sir, do let us help him a little...

MAJOR: It would do him an injury if we did, my dear good woman, because we should only hurt his self-respect. Now look, Mr Tót, if your boots pinch, what do you do?

TÓT: Let me think now... I limp.

ÁGIKA: Daddy, daddy, daddy...

MAJOR: Don't press him. Don't let's hurry him... Perhaps it would be better if I moved away a bit because my presence may embarrass him. You too, Mariska and Ágika, you should not disturb him in his thinking... *(Turns away, then walks round the Tóts)*

(Slight pause. TÓT rises and starts for his room)

MARISKA: What are you doing, Lajos dear? Come back and sit down. You've got some thinking to do... *(Both women bustle round him)* Wait a minute. I'll massage your head... There... feeling better?

TÓT: Fine.

MARISKA: Can you think now?

TÓT: No.

MARISKA: Perhaps it would help him to smell a quince... *(Exit ÁGIKA)* Put your head between your knees; it helps the circulation... Any better?

TÓT *(pointing to his room):* You know what would be much better? Lying down!

MARISKA: No, no... *(Takes quince from ÁGIKA)* Take a couple of deep sniffs, Lajos dear.

(TÓT sniffs. The two women stand by)

TÓT *(pushes them aside):* The trouble is that when I start thinking I have the queer idea that something is going to hit me.

MARISKA: Shall we move the furniture?

TÓT: It's not the furniture that wants to hit me.

MARISKA: What is it then?

TÓT: The wall.

MARISKA: The wall? Should we go into the garden then?

TÓT: Not the wall here. The wall that wants to hit me is inside my skull...

MAJOR *(steps close to him; gently):* Now my dear man? Have you got it?

TÓT: Lots of things have occurred to me, sir, but I'm sorry to say none of them seem the right one.

MAJOR *(sits down):* Never mind. It used to be like that with me.

TÓT: Really?

MAJOR: Let me give you a piece of advice. Take your time, relax. Undo your collar, my good fellow. *(TÓT unbuttons his collar. The others sit down round him watching him with eager expectancy. TÓT makes a tremendous effort to think)*

TÓT *(after a few moments of silence, with subdued agitation):* Um... *(The others rise slowly, full of excitement)* Please, sir, it seems as though I am slowly getting the hang of it now...

MAJOR: Already? Brilliant! And what exactly have you got the hang of?

TÓT *(sighs, waves his hand dejectedly):* I'm sorry. What occurred to me wasn't at all

what I expected, it was something quite different.

(The others settle back on their chairs, disappointed)

ÁGIKA: Daddy, please...

MAJOR: Perhaps we shouldn't disturb him... Wouldn't you like a cup of coffee?

TÓT *(suddenly motions his wish not to be disturbed):* If the margin-cutter is too small... Wait a minute, wait... I seem to be getting an idea of it... *(The others rise slowly to their feet)* Damn, it's slipped my mind again. What's the time?

MAJOR: That's immaterial.

TÓT *(starts up, flustered):* Ah! *(Gestures sadly, sits down)* Nothing. *(Closes his eyes)* Still nothing... *(Begins to breathe heavily)* Might I losen my belt a little?

MAJOR: Of course, of course. Take your trousers off if it helps...

TÓT *(gets up suddenly. He is in great pain. He mops the sweat from his face and catches his breath. he indicates that something has occurred to him. His whole body is convulsed):* It's coming... It's coming... it's coming... *(He stands erect)* Sir! Mariska! I've got it! If this margin-cutter is too small, then we must get hold of a bigger one... Ha-ha-ha *(laughs happily)*

MAJOR: I was quite certain all along! Congratulations, Mr Tót!

(They all applaud TÓT loudly)

TÓT *(doubles up, pressing his hands on his stomach, his laughter suddenly turns to retching; he staggers to the window and leans out)*

MARISKA *(wiping away her tears of joy):* Quickly, Ági, hold his head... *(To the audience, eyes shining, tears streaming down her face)* My son... my son!!! *(She throws a kiss into the distance)* He never came empty-handed. He always brought something: cigars, salami, chocolate, even lead acetate for the curé... But we don't want anything now! Come home with empty hands, our one and only Gyula!

DIALOGUE AND DEBATE

PÉTER RÉNYI

HUNGARIAN SOCIALISM—HAMSTRUNG?

Whoever writes the story of reactions to the changes in Hungary in recent years as reflected in the Western press, will have to describe sharp and surprising reversals in attitude from 1956 on. The accounts of the process of consolidation, which writers found difficult to understand, began somewhat sporadically and timidly, but later developed more boldly. True, very few, when they realized what was really happening, were brave enough to renounce their earlier theories; they ignored them or tried to reconcile the irreconcilable by explaining that governmental policy in Hungary had fundamentally changed and was being conducted according to ideas very different from those with which it was started in 1956. That was the time that articles appeared interpreting all those steps taken in Hungary in the direction of correctly understood scientific socialism as an approach to capitalism. The struggle on two fronts, with its complicated dialectic, was seldom understood.

Nevertheless that period had its definitely encouraging side; a more objective attitude was adopted, quite a few articles were published in the Western press in which the analysis objectively reflected the true situation and only the comments betrayed bias, and some genuinely useful critical comments were made. Then came the later years—which still continue—in which Western interest was focussed on the Hungarian economic situation, partly with sympathetic interest (especially in the new system of economic guidance), and partly with a certain scepticism as to whether Hungary would be able to solve existing problems on the basis of her present policy. A number of cold-war voices, intent, as always, on poisoning and impairing international relations, mingled with them. This is understandable, since such people are always disturbed by a more constructive and positive image of Hungary.

It is of course difficult to reverse the course of things, to deny what—with few exceptions—has become accepted as true about contemporary Hungary all over the world. It is therefore necessary to invent new twists and turns on our part, to try to show that we have again changed our principles, that the regime has grown rigid and has abandoned the policies pursued at the beginning of the decade in favour of a more dogmatic outlook. But this argument is also a rather difficult one to pursue when reforms are in progress all round the place. And incidentally, if it were true that we change our policy every three or four years, how could Hungary's political development have been even and well balanced over the last ten to eleven years? What reactions have the said twists and turns provoked?

In this connection, I want to discuss the article by Gabriel Ferrand in *Les Temps Modernes* (No. 4, 1967), of which the title itself is sufficiently startling. "Hongrie—un socialisme bloqué"—socialism hamstrung.

It would be difficult to find the proper literary category for Ferrand's article. It would be long enough to be called a study, if there were any sign that the author had in fact put in any study on his subject. But what Ferrand does, almost exclusively, is to pontificate; he does not even take the trouble to make his surprising assertions plausible by producing examples, let alone authentic evidence. Nor can it be considered as a collection of subjective notes, a bouquet of impressions gathered on a trip, since they are categorical statements meant to be taken as valid generalizations. These declarations of his are meant to imply that he is stating undeniable facts which are commonplaces to those who know the subject. Yet, to put it mildly, even the best of his assertions are not more than half-truths, and half-truths, as everyone knows, never contain half the truth.

Ferrand's first argument is that the cadres of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, organized after 1956, consist of three layers: the old guard (viz. the cadres who played a decisive role under Rákosi's leadership), the careerists, who waited until the faction-fight was decided after 1956, and finally the young, who can hardly wait for the others to disappear from the political scene. This method of threefold division already indicates the weakness of the author in his love of generalizations. Reading on we discover why this division is chosen: his sympathies are with the old guard and with the young; his anger is directed against the layer in between, the "careerists." But who are they? Those who joined the "victorious" leadership after 1956, recruited from those among the old leaders who—according to Fernand's definition—"although perfectly faithful to the Soviets, condemn the rigidity, subservience and dogmatism of the old guard, and wish to correct the mistakes of the past by a pragmatic approach and a very high measure of ideological elasticity." If the reader is using his mind critically, he will be struck by this formulation. Why should a leadership as undogmatic as the Hungarian party leadership thus described by Ferrand attract careerists? Would its condemnation of subservience attract the subservient? And why should ideological elasticity attract the servile and the compliant? Isn't an explicit and individual consideration of the situation a condition of elasticity, and isn't that exactly what the careerists in any regime have never liked, independent thinking and judgement? Such questions never seem to have occurred to our author.

He then proceeds to claim that these careerists, in order to maintain their parasitic powers, rely on production experts, whether party members or not, to conceal their conservativism in other social matters. Our author is untroubled by a single doubt here as well. But isn't a certain contradiction apparent? If somebody gives enthusiastic encouragement to such a dynamic force as modern technology and production, bringing speedy changes with it, he has to be, to say the least, extremely stupid to imagine that this is a way of conserving the old conditions of society in all other respects. If his greatest worry is to protect his little privileges, why should he stimulate such far-reaching changes?

A simple example: One of the main purposes of the Hungarian economic reform is to increase the independence of the enterprises, which means that the personal incomes of the staff will largely depend on the management and collective of the enterprise. Can it be imagined that such a change in the organization of production will not be accompanied by broader social consequences? Up to the present, the enterprise followed the injunctions of the state plan, and was financed by the state. Now it will largely be left to its own devices. If it wants credit, it will have to accept the risks; it will have to decide how much it invests and in what, and if it enjoys the profits, it must also take the consequences of wrong decisions; its profit will be dependent on the salability of its products, since in future the wholesale and

retail organizations will not be compelled to accept goods which they do not require. Whoever has some knowledge of the interdependence of the economy and other aspects of social activities, whoever is aware of the central position occupied by the economy in every social system, must also know that Ferrand's logic is absurd: it is simply not possible to urge changes in the economy in order to *avoid* changes in other domains. If anyone thinks this, he is not a careerist but a fool. And yet it is clear that Ferrand thinks the careerists are very clever, very cunning fellows.

Let me add that he may have been led to this mistaken conclusion by remarking, what is no secret in Hungary, that in the present stage of development the party and state organs have been concentrating their attention on the reform of the economic mechanism, and have not pressed for other social reforms to the same extent. It is this *sequence* that Ferrand turns into a *contradiction*, from which he draws the conclusion that the encouragement of economic and technological progress is a conservative trick, a cover up; it is not the next step in the sequence of necessary changes, but a tactical scheme designed to impede progress.

But who are these extraordinary, these strange careerists? Ferrand discusses their social and political origins. These are bourgeois elements, he tells us, who joined the regime with the best of intentions after 1945 (the bourgeois parties had lost all authority in their eyes), and who were accepted by the regime because its own shortage of cadres made this necessary. Since there had been neither a revolutionary war nor an armed uprising to bring the worker-peasant stratum in Hungary forward, which the people's democracy would have needed to carry through such aims as taking possession of the means of production, it had to enter into an alliance with the bourgeoisie. And what we see today is the smouldering struggle between "these representatives of the bourgeoisie," i.e., the careerists, and the Marxist party members fighting the new bourgeois penetration... People living in Hungary who read these disquisitions by Ferrand can only feel happy that they do not emanate from Hungary, because it was only in the most oppressive years of the personality cult that it was fashionable to suspect and discredit the bourgeois intellectuals who had joined the party in this fashion, and to suggest that those who had come over from the bourgeoisie were only adapting themselves outwardly, but could not *per se* be convinced adherents of the new regime. Because this is the essence of Ferrand's case. He is arguing that the technological-productive reforms have been given prior importance in Hungary because the regime is dominated by the intellectual bourgeois careerists who hope to maintain their privileged position this way. It is in defence of these privileges that they block all other necessary social changes.

How does one reply to such a tortuous argument? From here it is only a step to Mao's claim that the bourgeois system is being re-created in the Soviet Union and the people's democracies, and elements which have worked their way into the party are restoring capitalism. There are several phrases which show that Ferrand's mind is working the same way... "The entire policy [of the regime]," he writes, "should be directed by different criteria—not the criteria of efficiency and technical progress, but some original—working-class, and not bourgeois—cultural pattern." But if efficiency and technical progress represent a "bourgeois pattern," then a "worker pattern" must be identical with economic inefficiency and technical backwardness and a neglect of production. In other words, we are here approaching the position of the Chinese Red Guards. There are of course certain signs that this is not entirely what the author means. For instance, he blames Marxist–Leninist education in Hungary for, as he declares, also "discrediting scientific socialism in the eyes of that stratum of the intelligentsia which, despite its bourgeois

origins, might be won over for the regime, but which turns away in disgust from the teaching of political economy as taken over by the preachers of a new scholasticism." So there is none the less a bourgeois stratum which can be won over, which is not automatically dogmatic and careerist? Which is so undogmatic and uncareerist that it turns from scholasticism in disgust? But then what have the author's high-flown generalizations been about?

Such statements, diametrically opposed to the logical arguments which precede them, provide little assurance that Ferrand understands the dialectics of conditions in all their unity and their contradictions. His eclecticism only makes his doctrinaire attitude, carrying him as it does to almost ridiculous extremes, even more depressing. It is not enough that the bourgeois experts in Hungary have turned education into a purely technical matter; they have even graver sins on their conscience: they have retained such vestiges of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy as a system of rigid hierarchies, the hand-kiss, and the well-cut suit. Here our author makes a great discovery; at last he can explain why "the national character has not adapted itself" to the present situation, and why the birth-rate in Hungary is so low. The country, spellbound by the technical-conscious intelligentia, stares into the monarchic past: "Its essence is the past."

The reader, rubbing his eyes over these confused assertions, unconsciously takes another look at the cover of the review in which they appear, but he has made no mistake, the article has appeared in *Les Temps Modernes*, one of the most distinguished products of the French progressive movement. If there is anything that gives us to think about Gabriel Ferrand's article, it is this. Which perhaps makes it worthwhile to explain a little further, if the Western reader is to be properly informed about the Hungarian conditions.

*

Hungary, it is quite true, is preparing for what is perhaps the greatest reform in a number of years, a thorough transformation of the system of economic guidance. To be more exact, Hungary is already involved in the process of this reform. Although the new mechanism will only come fully into force on January 1, 1968, a number of changes have already occurred. The importance of the changes, which affect the whole of society, may be measured by the reactions of the public, extending from hopeful expectancy to disquiet and doubt. Where in this spectrum is the place of the intelligentsia of bourgeois origin to which Ferrand refers? It is at all points of the compass, since they are by no means a uniform group, as Ferrand seems to imagine. Among them are conservatives who oppose the reform, as they oppose technological change and the innovations which follow, because they are afraid of every change, afraid for their familiar order of life and their peace, unwilling to risk today's safety for the uncertainty of future increments even if their present security only assures them a modest future. And there are others—at the other extreme—who, seeing problems piling up, impatiently require them all to be solved at the same time. Between the two extremes are those—and they are the majority—who are prepared to accept the gradual approach, who understand that there is no reason to rush into changes of this complexity unthinkingly, and that this is a *reform* in the true sense of the word. It is not a revolution, not a violent annihilation of the old; it is its gradual transformation into a new system, a reform that has to be carried out with as little disturbance as possible, since it is possible to do so. There are of course many transitional types between these three basic types, and in addition there are the completely hostile elements as well, though not many, who hope for the failure of the reform. But the man postulated by Ferrand, urging technical-productive reforms in order to block other social changes, simply does not

exist. I will go further; he is impossible. This is a politically and psychologically unimaginable figure that can only be created by an imagination quick to suspect all the world.

The bourgeois experts and intellectuals who have thrown in their lot with the party and who have an influence on and a word in society cannot be indifferent towards the social reforms which go beyond mere technical progress. In the first place, because technical progress itself is dependent on these reforms, and secondly, because their own future importance—within the intelligentsia—depends on them. The years in which this stratum lived in an atmosphere of suspicion are, thank heaven, over. And the people who lived through it are unconditionally thankful, and regard it as not the least important and essential condition in the situation today, in opposition to Ferrand who, it would appear, has completely forgotten those years, or that he ever reproached the old leadership for having been *too ready* in those years to accept them! The men and women who suffered from the injustices of those times—and they are not few—still, as is very understandable, react very sensitively to everything that reminds them, however faintly, of the worst features of that period.

But this also proves that they are not simply a group of careerists—though there may well be the odd careerist and opportunist among them—but people who have an interest in the development of the regime; people who have thrown in their lot with the future of this society, who fight alongside the workers and peasants against the difficulties that arise, and whose own expectations are geared to this regime, in common with the masses. Even the fact that this layer talks hopefully of the future is interpreted by Ferrand as proof of its conservatism, as evidence that by setting technical progress in the foreground they will succeed in obstructing social-political progress. ("Hungary turns towards the future, the future is omnipresent... but progress is identified with technical progress... progress is spoken of in all domains in order to take no risks with the social conditions..."). Yet if anything is characteristic of the mentality of this group, it is that the reforms already achieved and still to be achieved in production and in technology have strengthened their faith in the viability of the new social system, in its capacity to develop flexibly and dynamically, in other words, in the future of socialism.

They are in a radically different situation from the technical intelligentsia in the West in the conditions of modern capitalism. Some of these—though indeed not all of them—do in fact see the technological revolution as the antidote to the social revolution. (It may be that Ferrand has mechanically applied this Western pattern to our conditions.) In Hungary the social revolution has been carried through, the social and political structure of society has been radically transformed, and no intelligent person would doubt that this is final and irrevocable. In such conditions, technical-productive reforms primarily serve the interests of the worker and peasant masses, strengthen the people's power and the new social system and way of life. That this does not occur without contradictions, that, for instance, the individual material interests of some people—those who have been less ideologically and morally affected by the new conditions—have been accompanied by the revival of anti-social instincts, a renewal of the petty-bourgeois desire for acquisition, that from time to time, in this place or the other, atavistic sentiments are strengthened, can be regarded as an absolute counter-argument only by those who understand nothing of dialectics and the complexities of creating a new society. It is not an accident that this process requires a long period of transition, a whole historical era.

The subject-matter of one of Ferrand's "revelations" provides a good example. He has caught us trying to solve the housing problem in Hungary by building family

cottages. Here, he says, is proof that we have allowed ourselves to be bogged down in a petty-bourgeois mentality, and have lost the socialist perspective. But what does it all amount to? That the Hungarian state has insufficient means to build all, or even the greater part, of the flats needed; so it has to make use of the individual resources of the population. True, it could cut down the earnings of the workers and so find the sums required for the erection of flats. But at what cost? At the cost of reducing the personal interest of the masses in increased production, above all, that of the workers and peasants, whose wages would be reduced in this way. But we do not want to do this, because we believe that the principal and overwhelming interest of the country is in the overall development of production, and the most important element in it is to increase productivity. The state prefers to support those who wish to build their own homes by providing credits, which is certainly a more just method, since those who primarily contribute to the cost of the building will be the beneficiaries.

This of course means that the persons in question want to have a say in the type of construction for which they pay the piper, and demand the kind of flat or house which they want. And since tradition—including petty-bourgeois customs—plays a big part here, even a great many of the workers want a cottage with a garden. So what shall we do? Forbid them? Or pass laws punishing such desires? Perhaps M. Ferrand in his high-handedness could find it possible; we can't. We can do two things. On the one hand we can try to convince people that it is more rational, economical and modern to build large multi-story blocks of cooperative flats, housing settlements equipped with shops, schools, instead of individual homes. And we can adjust the credit terms accordingly; those who put their money into cooperative home units receive more advantageous terms. And we do both with increasing, though as yet not entirely satisfactory, results. Had Gabriel Ferrand taken the trouble to inform himself properly before passing judgment, he could have learnt as much at the nearest savings bank branch. It is true that his generalizations might have to be limited to a more modest scale. The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to his other example, the disquisition on tourism.

There is no need to go into another argument on tourism; it would be the same lesson as in the previous example. We have learned from practice and from bitter experience that socialism cannot be built through bureaucratic and arbitrary decisions; it is a very complex social process, in which the struggle to implement idealistic principles demands many—and often long lasting—temporary accommodations. It requires tenacity and objectivity, persistent, patient organization, and a great deal of explanation and persuasion. We Hungarian Communists are not satisfied with our work, we believe that much should be done better and more consistently than we are doing it—but we are deeply convinced that in essence, in both the direction we have chosen and the method we are employing, we should be doing what we are doing. This includes the increased production of consumer goods, which we cannot regard as a symptom of approaching capitalism, as Ferrand predicts. In Hungarian conditions this development will in the end have an opposite effect, it will strengthen the socialist element in the country, collective living and collective morality.

The aim is the same as Ferrand has outlined: "... the development of the original socialist society will in future be connected with the democratization of collective life, especially in respect of the productive collectives, i.e., the enterprises. The petty-bourgeois way of living will become out of date and will change..." This is not the objective of the young Communists only, as Ferrand asserts, but of Communists in general. Hungarian society is moving along this path.

VID MIHELICS

THIS YEAR AT MARIENBAD

Mariánské Lázne, in Czechoslovakia, better known today still by its German name, Marienbad, was the site of the third international meeting between Christians and Marxists convened in the spring of 1967 by the St Paul Society *(Paulus Gesellschaft)*, which has its headquarters near Salzburg, Austria. It was for the first time that a symposium of this character took place in a socialist country. This in itself made it an event of outstanding importance, the more so if we bear in mind that the Sociological Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences not only acted as co-organizer but sent out the invitations as well. It was thus indirectly the Czechoslovak government that covered the expenses of the conference and of the hospitality extended.

The symposium—according to its original Greek meaning a drinking feast and, later, a free exchange of ideas at a banquet—opened on April 27 and closed on the 30th. Some two hundred Marxists and Christians, for the most part university professors and scientists, sat down together from nearly all countries of Europe. There were several English and American participants, who did not, however, present any papers. The largest delegation, besides the Czechoslovak, was the Hungarian. The theme was "Creativeness and Freedom in a Humane Society," and it was dealt with in eighteen main lectures and thirty complementary statements. About seventy people participated in the discussion. Many more wished to take the floor but, for lack of time, were obliged to submit their comments in writing.

It might be mentioned at this juncture that, in the course of the preparatory talks, a certain anxiety had been expressed concerning the more delicate aspects of the theme—those that might easily bring political issues to the fore. However, the fear that this might lead to a stalemate proved unjustified, and it was possible to avoid dangerous pitfalls. In this the Christian participants from the socialist countries played an important part. With a few sporadic exceptions, the idea asserted itself throughout that a Christian-Marxist dialogue is a historical necessity in our days, if only out of a sense of responsibility for the survival of the human race. The Catholic theologian Erich Kellner, acting president of the St Paul Society, emphasized at the opening meeting: "As men of responsibility we have come to this convention for the purpose of discussing the spiritual prerequisites of a real world peace. It is our responsibility to recognize and—depending on our power and insight—to eliminate the causes that may bring a new disaster over mankind any day."

At the same time Kellner gave expression to his conviction that as long as we fail to find harmonious answers to the basic issues of human existence, we cannot cherish any hopes for the future of mankind. It is obvious that the great problem awaiting solution between Christians and Marxists continues to be that of religion, both in theory and practice.

This was what Professor Roger Garaudy, director of the Paris Centre of Marxist Studies and Researches, had in mind when he said at the first press conference that a "good fairy" had presented two gifts to the new meeting. The first was the recent encyclical letter of Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, the second the Karlovy Vary Conference of the European Communist Parties. This conference, as we know, made an appeal for the joining of forces to the Christians, "to Catholics and Protestants alike, as well as to those belonging to other religions, that base their striving for peace and social justice on their religious convictions." Garaudy said that some time ago Dolores Ibarruri, the famous "La Passionaria" of the

Spanish civil war, had composed three theses which had found general approval: 1. Nobody can close his mind to the basic changes that are occurring in the Churches. 2. The Communists, as a matter of course, are marching shoulder to shoulder with all believers who from religious conviction wish to fight for democracy and freedom. 3. The Communists are determined to devote increasing attention to the Catholics from both the philosophical and political standpoints.

The Marxist Critique of Religion

Without seeking to establish any direct connections, it may be said that the above theses also found pregnant expression in the approach of the Marxist participants at the symposium to the issues discussed. This was facilitated by the circumstance that the re-examination of the Marxist sociological critique of religion, which had already started at previous meetings, could now be further intensified. At the same time, in harmony and parallel with these efforts, the Christian side also began to re-assess the social role of religion and the tasks of the Churches, in an endeavour to clarify and make them acceptable to non-believers.

Professor Robert Kalivoda of the Philosophical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, in expounding Marx's statement that "religion is the opium of the people," expressed the opinion that, though this thesis "undoubtedly reflects a definite and real deduction from a given Christian scale of values in the life of society," it would be a mistake for us simply to cling to this statement of Marx's and use it as a "commandment" in interpreting the Christian faith from a Marxist point of view. Marxist theory should not be erected on a single sentence of its author. "It is a fact of basic importance that, on humanity's long and painful path to freedom, authentic primitive Christendom came into being as an expression of human resistance to oppression on earth; only after an arduous internal struggle did it become a church ideology that sanctions oppression. When the life and death struggle between orthodoxy and heresy flared up in medieval Europe, the authentic values of original Christendom were revived and developed at the heterodox pole of the Christian movement and became a spiritual force that assists human beings in adapting themselves to modern times. That was the second reversal. And if, in the present situation, there are real opportunities for modern Christendom to assist its contemporaries in their struggle against modern oppression and thereby to link up with its authentic tradition, this third reversal might—in view of its oecumenical breadth—immensely enrich the dialectics of the Christian movement." "There is no denying," he said further on, "that Christian radical non-conformity, which brought mankind the ideals of emancipation, of socialism and communism, and which we have briefly sought to sketch, is one of the basic features of the Christian movement during the whole of its two-thousand-year-old history."

Luciano Gruppi, director of the Ideological Section of the Italian Communist Party, stated that even today "religious conviction too may encourage one to build up a socialist society, if one takes stock of the dramatic problems of the present world." Professor Milan Prucha, of the Philosophical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, raised the question in a negative sense: "Can the antagonism between Marxism and Christianism be automatically identified with the antagonism between proletarian and bourgeois ideologies?" According to Vitezlav Gardavsky, of the Antonina Zápotockého Academy, "it can be assumed that the Church itself is to blame for the atheism of the workers' movement, but it is equally true that this atheism, under the circumstances of the period, could, in general, emerge only in its humanly unauthentic form as anti-clericalism and an ideologically nihilist viewpoint directed against religion in general."

József Lukács, of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, assistant editor of the periodical *Világosság* (Light), who delivered one of the most noteworthy lectures at the symposium, unequivocally emphasized that Marxism opposes the naive anti-theism characteristic of the rationalist-scientific outlook of the Enlightenment. The attention of Marxism "is centred not only on what circumstances made belief in the supernatural and inevitable need of Man and on how these circumstances change, but also on what were the essential elements of this religiosity and the historically variable norms derived from the transcendent." He too believes that the dynamic element in Christianity will, in all probability, outlive the static aspect characteristic of the period of Constantine the Great and "lay emphasis on Man's active role and responsibility in shaping his own social future." Therefore, now that attention is turning to the solution of concrete historical tasks rather than to the "absolute" aims of history (even if the two trends set out from different ideologies), the points of contact that afford a realistic basis for joint action can and must be found.

According to Gruppi, the encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris*, the second Vatican Council and the recent encyclical letter *Populorum Progressio* "have contributed to creating a situation in which new contacts between Christians and Marxists become possible." And in seeking to realize this possibility, Gruppi added, "we are fully aware of the importance of our transcending the old concepts on the relations between socialism and religion." Garaudy also expressed the conviction that "this new attitude which the Church displays towards Man and which is continually gaining ground since the Council, permits a profound interchange with the Marxists on the level of humanism." József Lukács said in this connection that aspirations and positive efforts within Christendom toward a diversified unfolding of the personality and towards social justice are part of the humane legacy bequeathed by the entire evolution of Man. "A world should be created in which an extension of Christian love will find support in the very structure of society." Jiři Cvekl of the Philosophical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences expanded on this idea in these words: "From the historical point of view, there can be no doubt that without Christianity, without all the traditions of European Christendom, there could be no Marxism..."

Socialism and Atheism

The theme of the symposium being a "humane society"—a society which, consequently, cannot dispense with creativeness and freedom—the Marxist participants deemed it one of their prime duties to define what they mean by socialism and socialist atheism.

Mihal Machovec, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Prague, said that Marxist atheism confronts theism to the extent that the latter represents "mystification," but it cannot be called anti-theism. (That was Lukács's standpoint too.) "Genuine Marxist atheism is not an upside down dogmatism. The non-existence of God is a methodological necessity, not a dogma." That, he added, explains why Marxists are ready to learn from those who think in terms of religious categories, without sacrificing Marxist principles in doing so. "The dialogue on our part is not based on tactical or political considerations; we regard it, on the contrary, as an existential necessity, without which Man would remain morally handicapped."

"The victory of socialism," Garaudy said, "will not come of its own accord, through some outer necessity... To say that the achievement of socialism is a necessity at the present stage of capitalism does not mean that it will materialize whatever we do." He emphasized that Marxism would be greatly impoverished if it were reduced

to the formula: freedom is necessity that has become knowledge. "The recognition of necessity is certainly an indispensable element of freedom. But human history is not merely a special instance of the dialectics of Nature. History—as Marx said in *Capital*—is made by Man and not Man by history... With the birth of specifically human labour, that is, labour preceded by awareness of its aim, history materializes as Man's creation: Man, through his labour, transforms Nature and, in doing so, transforms himself, creating for himself new needs, new horizons, new meanings." József Lukács said in the same context: "Man must fight again and again for the right solution of the problems arising, for an optimal exploitation of the opportunities that present themselves... Socialism should therefore not be regarded as a rigid, eternally fixed condition, as the ultimate realization of the human status." In underscoring the outstanding role played by ideas in motivating action, he also emphasized that the material weal socialism is striving to attain cannot mean the supremacy of material values over Man, for this would only mean a new form of alienation.

This train of thought led Machovec to the conclusion that the central issue facing Marxism in the future will be the meaning of human existence. This is not mere speculation but a fundamental question on which all activity aimed at the ideals of freedom and the complete unfolding of human abilities depends. A vulgar way of life preoccupied with consumption alone would mean a "relapse below the historical level of religion." If man fails to find a value that transcends his human self, he is bound to experience a feeling of utter loneliness in a senseless universe. His knowledge and his culture will then become an end in itself and, therefore, senseless.

According to József Lukács, the full expansion of Man's inherent capacities gives meaning to human existence. "Freedom, positively defined," said Walter Hollitscher, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Leipzig and member of the Central Committee of the Austrian Communist Party, "can only mean freedom to unfold creative forces, to enable Man to make reality in all its aspects his own." Garaudy said in this context that the Marxist side too still has to elaborate a "philosophy of Man" that does not get lost in abstractions but contains social and historic dimensions as well. In Garaudy's opinion, this might be a common task of Christians and Marxists.

In the meantime, an interesting debate developed between the Marxist participants themselves. Professor Prucha (Czechoslovakia) contended in his lecture that Marxist philosophy also must start out from the philosophy of "existence." Cesare Luporini, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Florence, contradicted him by saying that, in his opinion, the starting-point of any Marxist philosophy can only be an analysis of the "present, given society." Prucha answered that in that case a number of problems raised by traditional philosophy would have to be discarded; this is out of the question, because philosophy is a "living organism" and if it were dogmatically bound, any dialogue would be impossible. Machovec and Garaudy supported the views of Prucha.

Christianity and Social Responsibility

"Marxism," said Gardavsky, "does not regard Communism as an absolute end in the sense that, compared with it, everything else would only be means; nor in the sense that Communism will be the ultimate status of mankind; or, finally, that the future of Communism already today represents an absolute historical certainty to the point where our present active existence becomes irrelevant. For Marxists, as atheists, there is consequently no absolute future, only an open future. Open as regards all human possibilities, open also in the sense of uncertainty whether this future will ever come to pass... The decisive question for the

Marxist in the dialogue with his Christian partner is: Are the Christians—inwardly, but also in practice—unconditionally ready to share responsibility for an attempt thus motivated, including the historical risks involved?"

The answer was in the affirmative. In substantiating his position, Yves Congar, Professor at the Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Strasbourg, spoke along these lines: Despite all its idealistic tendencies, which in the past had an alienating influence for such a long time, Christianity is a religion that encourages people to change the world, for Creation in the Christian concept is not a one-time act of God, but a continuous process in which mankind takes an active part in shaping and reshaping itself during the course of history. The social structures brought about by historical evolution cannot clash with the transcendency professed by Christendom. Such a contradiction could arise only as the result of "a false idealistic perspective that denies immanence for the sole purpose of saving transcendency. Divine revelation, however, takes place in and through history, in and through an entirely human history. Its divinity does not mean that it ceases to be human. God is not a rival to Man, a rival who can stand his ground only by letting his playmate disappear."

Today's Christian thinker, according to Professor Giulio Girardi, Councillor of the Vatican's bureau for non-believers, is fully aware that Man is a part of history. Man is not just a natural entity but a historic entity as well. "The evolution of his conscience is an essential factor in defining the concrete conditions of his development... At the present stage of evolution of consciousness, freedom has become an essential component of growth. Man must realize himself as a subject. Man must be the author and the gauge of his actions, institutions and history." Professor Vincenzo Miano, principal secretary of the above-mentioned Vatican bureau, underscored that the common link between believers and non-believers is the realization that they must behave as human beings and that every man must feel the fullest responsibility for his own destiny and for that of his fellow-men.

A particularly responsible task of the Christians is to assist in overcoming those types of alienation that, as Girardi emphasized, are rooted in the very structure of present-day society: Christians no less than Marxists insist that the causes of this alienation must be eliminated. "Marxists and Christians today are convinced that the full freedom of Man includes economic freedom as well." Congar did not deny that in the course of history there were many examples of alienation in the name of religion, though the Gospel itself spoke against it. This question had been openly discussed also at the Second Vatican Council, with a view to inducing Catholic thinkers once again and unequivocally to define the link between religion and social action.

Besides Girardi, this important subject was mainly dealt with by Johann B. Metz, Professor at the Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Münster and noted disciple of Karl Rahner, who this time was unfortunately absent. Metz pointed mainly to the historical reasons which prevented classical "metaphysical theology" from seeing any problem, even in principle, in the links between religion and society, theory and practice. In Metz's opinion, they formed a unity, and he consequently applied the metaphysical interpretations of religion also to society. This unity had been shattered by the Enlightenment, but theological thinking had until recently avoided the issues then raised. Thus the dominant theological categories continued to be confined to the sphere of the individual's inner and private life, free from politics. Ostensibly, it gave prominence to charity and with it to human relations in general, but both of them could obviously assert themselves at this stage only in a private form, largely free from politics, as person to person relations, as neighbourly

contacts. In Metz's opinion, this narrowing-down explains the uncritical adherence to the Christian religion of the sociological and political ideology of the bourgeois, capitalist system following the Enlightenment. The Marxist criticism of religion, an essentially ideological criticism, justly referred to this when it presented religion as the "ideological superstructure" of given social circumstances. Hence there is nothing more urgent or more necessary than for a revived Catholic theology to define its social and political implications, for thus alone can the Christian religion avoid abuse, including its serving as a superstructure of existing social conditions.

According to Girardi, what our modern development puts to the test first of all is the central "love-thy-neighbour" commandment of Christianity. For a genuinely Christian attitude implies a revolt against the untenable and unjust conditions on earth calling for rudimental changes. "For present-day Christians the love-thy-neighbour commandment is a commandment for the liberation of Man, a militant appeal against any sort of alienation." Metz also said that Christian love should no longer be confined to strictly inter-personal relations of "neighbourhood help," but should rather be understood and asserted in its social dimensions: charity should imply "an insistence on justice, freedom and peace for others." He then appealed to us not to forget that in today's society the criticism that may be levelled against us for not fulfilling the love-thy-neighbour commandment immediately becomes a criticism of religion.

As far as I could judge, the Marxists reacted favourably to the answers given by the Christians to the questions raised. At the same time—and this was the burden of the contribution by Heinrich Fries, Professor at the Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Munich—the Christians were similarly gratified to see that today many leading representatives of Marxism assess religion, particularly the Christian faith, otherwise than they did some ten years ago.

Can a new attitude materialize in the wake of the new positive outlook evident on both sides? And can practical conclusions be drawn from all this, in harmony with the tenet that the main task is to change the world, not just to interpret it?

Social Criticism and Private Property

"In our youth, for our generation of Marxists, the word 'Catholic' meant 'enemy.' For Catholics the word 'Marxist' meant 'satanic.' And even though the latter view still inspires the state, its laws and a majority of the Spanish clerical hierarchy, the realities of our society and life have changed completely," said Professor Manuel Azcarate, editor-in-chief of the Marxist periodical *Realidad* appearing in Paris, and added: "Not so very long ago, Marxists regarded Catholicism... as having become integrated with capitalism. In this respect, a decisive change is taking place." The conciliatory work of the Vatican Council "has facilitated a crystallization of increasingly evident Catholic trends towards a formal condemnation of capitalism and support for socialist solutions in the social, economic and political spheres." Indeed, a growing number of Catholic thinkers in Spain "are posing the necessity of putting an end to the capitalist order and replacing it by another one." Elsewhere in his lecture he said: "When, a few years ago, we began talking about 'dialogue,' it looked like something of an adventure under our circumstances. Today we can testify to the richness and intensity of the contacts existing in the trade unions and in politics, in the universities, in intellectual centres, and—all too frequently—in the prisons, between Catholics and Marxists. The Spanish Communist Party has declared openly and in public that in Spain the Catholics constitute the greatest force taking part side by side with the Communists in the struggle being carried on for democracy."

The Italian Marxist Gruppi was also of the opinion that, though our world attitudes are different and incompatible, there are signs lately that Communists and Christians may agree on common values and strive shoulder to shoulder for their realization. He underscored his conviction that in the encyclical letter *Populorum Progressio* "the principal defendant no longer is communism or socialism but—even though with certain reservations—capitalism, colonialism, and the liberal conceptions that serve to justify capitalism ideologically." In the encyclical letter "the connection between private property in the means of production and natural right is greatly reduced. The possibility and, in certain cases, the necessity of expropriation and of deep-going economic and social reforms is stressed." Further on he added: "The task of the Church consists not so much in the determination of solutions as in the judgement of the realities of our time on the basis of its own principles."

On the Catholic side this change was confirmed and endorsed. Alexander Schwan, Professor at the Faculty of Law of the University of West Berlin, said that there is no uniform and compulsory Christian social doctrine on which to build a social system that could be qualified as genuinely Christian. The task of the Church in this respect is to educate its flock to social responsibility. Metz dealt with this question in detail and from many aspects. In his opinion, the calling of the Christian religion in this world is to engage in constructive criticism of contemporary society, and not to try to establish a state or economic system based on a "Christian social order" or social doctrine. A "socio-critical potential" is implied in the central love-thy-neighbour commandment of Christianity, and we must regard the Church as "an institution of constructive social criticism." These views of the Münster theologian found general approval, and Garaudy hastened to add: "This is the most important thing we have heard so far, for it has opened new doors and possibilities before us."

Subsequently, Metz expressed the view that it is precisely in the field of social criticism that cooperation between Christians and non-Christians would be most important, though not primarily for a positive definition of social processes, for a given concept of future society, because here there will always be differences. "In my view, the basis for socio-critical cooperation is a negative experience, that of threatened humanity, of the threat to justice and peace... It is this negative experience which brings about solidarity. Even if we cannot directly and unequivocally agree on what freedom, peace and justice are in a positive sense, we have a long and painful experience of what the lack of them means. This negative experience offers us an opportunity to join hands, not so much in the positive outlining of freedom and justice as in resistance to the horror and terror of their absence."

In emphasizing mainly the negative aspects, Metz remained essentially alone. Dialogue, after all, calls for a study of the ways and means of positive and practical cooperation. As already emphasized by Kellner in his presidential opening speech, "such cooperation appears very doubtful when separated from the theoretical issues that remain open between Christians and Marxists." One of the cardinal issues is that of private property in the means of production. Girardi thoroughly and unequivocally elucidated this problem to the general satisfaction of the participants.

It is fully in harmony with Christian morality, Girardi set forth, that economic assets be placed at the service of the community under an "effective control that not only precludes inequalities in distribution but also prevents the rule of man over man... Is it true that only an economic order based on private property can fully meet moral demands and principles?... It is difficult to determine whether Christianity is essentially tied to this or that solution, even if, in the course of history, it generally defended private property. If some believe

that socialism inevitably entails dictatorship, others may be convinced that the system of private property inevitably leads to economic and political subjugation. History affords enough arguments for both convictions. If some are of the opinion that the system of private property encourages transformations sufficiently profound to secure the distribution of material goods to everybody under the effective control of the great majority, others may plead that such transformation can be achieved only in the socialist system. The future will decide. Today's Christians are free to opt for either solution, on their own responsibility and without having to relate the teachings of the Church to a particular social model... Christianity only calls for principles of a general order and, in principle, may accept any economic system that guarantees their realization. In the final analysis, I think, the difficulties are not of a doctrinal but of a practical order. They are not specifically socialist difficulties, even though religious feelings have often been gravely offended as a result of them in the socialist countries."

In Girardi's opinion, Catholic thinkers must reconsider the question of property, both from a theoretical and practical point of view. "In line with these principles, all kinds of property, whether private or collective, should be re-examined primarily as to whether the material goods are placed at the service of all people, or only of individuals or a particular state... In this general attitude, there is, in our opinion, a certain concordance between Christians and Marxists... It is not without reason that neither the constitution of the Council nor the encyclical letter stresses the right to private property as a law of nature." Congar pointed out, in this context, that one no longer can speak of natural law in the idealistic and rigid manner current in the past. It would be far more correct to speak of a "natural law of developing content," a law which at a given level of culture serves as a guide to conscience and is in itself an instrument of this culture. Human nature—as St Thomas emphasized, quoting Aristotle—is not immutable as is God's nature. Natural law, accordingly to St Thomas, changes in line with varying circumstances and human conditions.

Freedom of Worship

If, as we have seen, authentically Catholic thinkers, even in the developed capitalist countries, are convinced that no objections of a moral character can be raised against the adoption of socialism as a social and economic system and that the Church itself may at best play a socio-critical role in respect to this system; if, what is more, there are greater ideological concurrences between Christianism and socialism than between Christianism and capitalism—then we may well ask: whence the reserves, even rebuffs we so often witness? According to Girardi, historical facts play a role here. They include the ingrained individualistic concept of religion and ethics, which can easily be fitted into the framework of literally interpreted private property; the mistrust of any doctrine having as its aim the overthrow, even by violence, of the existing system; above all, the anti-religious attitude displayed by Communism. In Girardi's opinion, many Christians have now transcended individualism or social conservatism, but even those Christians that are open-minded as regards social progress "cannot avoid making a distinction between the principles of Marxist socialism and its historical realization, which latter they regard as anti-religious and dictatorial."

Freedom of worship thus came to occupy a prominent place in the dialogue, and that in a more definite and concrete form than at any previous rally. Addressing himself to the Marxists, Kellner (St Paul Society) asked: "If they recognize that religion is the bearer of creative values even for human society, not just for the purpose of dispelling Man's

fear of death and decomposition, then how can they deny religion the measure of freedom it needs for effectively applying its creative force on behalf of the progress of human society?" "If we admit," said De Fries, "that there are sound human dimensions in Marxism as well as in religion and Christianity, if these dimensions call for realization along with the realization of Man, then religion and the Christian faith should be given scope for the exercise of freedom." And he went on to cite Marx's definition of freedom: Man must have the possibility of unfolding all his human qualities. So if the Marxists themselves, he continued in substance, admit that religion and the Christian faith are essentially linked with creative humanism and with shaping the future, they cannot avoid recognizing the right of Christians to live their religious faith humanly, that is in freedom. "Religious freedom," he concluded, "means that theism should have the same chances and opportunities of freedom as atheism." Jürgen Moltmann, Professor at the Lutheran Theological Faculty of the University of Tübingen, was certainly right in saying that only a "religion of freedom" may justly claim freedom of religion. "The Christians may claim freedom of religion only if they themselves stand up for universal freedom. Freedom can never be demanded to the detriment of the freedom of others."

"The same problem arises both in the East and the West," Girardi declared. "It is imperative to emphasize this, because all of us, Christians and Marxists alike, are exposed to the temptation of dealing with the problem pragmatically, that is, of citing principles when they substantiate our views and of ignoring them when they refute us. The Christians thus would like to cooperate with the Communists on a basis of equality in those countries where the latter are in power. But in the West they occasionally contest the legitimacy of cooperation on such a basis. They consider it normal for the Communist parties to be outlawed. On the other side, the Communists would like to cooperate with the Christians in the West on a basis of equality, but where they are in power they pursue a policy of discrimination."

I think the greatest achievement of this year's dialogue—a result that concerns us Christians very closely—is that all those Marxists who dealt with the subject in greater detail were, without exception, for a genuine freedom of worship based on fundamental human rights.

"It may be said," Prof. Cvekl (Prague) stated, "that of all previous philosophies, Marxism is the most comprehensive and most radical theory, and the most thoroughly planned realization in practice of the emancipation of Man. Marxism is, nevertheless, subject to the contradictory nature of human action as a result of which there is no predictable harmony between motive and aim, intention and result, means and end. The Marxist teaching, aimed at the total liberation of each and every human being, had to create a collective movement in the course of warfare and social regulation, with a strict, even military discipline so tight that its means in the past, and at times still today, often became independent, leading to a reversal of ends and means." According to Cvekl, "Christianism in its Catholic form gave shape to the social, political and historical life of the people, especially in the Middle Ages, while Marxism has today become the transforming social and intellectual force in the socialist countries and one of the two perspectives every country is facing. But it is precisely this claim to totality and universalism that has also led to an intolerance that represents not only loyalty to principles and respect for the aims set, but also a doctrinal deformation whose absolutism and destructive consequences becomes dangerous at a certain stage. Both Christians and Marxists are aware of this ever recurring, hidden danger inherent in their doctrines. That is why they strive for self-clarification, for a balance sheet of their relationship to

the present world and to life, for a reparation of the tragic one-sidedness symbolized for Christianism by the Inquisition and for Marxism by the anti-humanistic practices of Stalinism."

"The abolition of class oppression in the developed and developing capitalist countries is the fundamental precondition—according to Marxism—for the masses on this earth to gain more freedom," Hollitscher said. "I must add," he continued, "that, in the struggle against capitalism and in the course of building socialism, the claim to liberty was violated to an extent that cannot be justified by the requirements of this struggle. Though historically conditioned, these violations were historically unnecessary." Azcarate voiced a similar opinion: "One may talk about this or that discrimination in this or that socialist country... The historical framework within which these socialist countries came into being was very different from the present one. To forget this is to close one's eyes to all the new possibilities which yesterday did not exist, but may arise today." He went on to express the Marxist view that the transition to socialism will bring about "an expansion of human freedom. This, of course, will entail a guarantee of religious freedom and of worship, the right of religious instruction, etc., in brief, the same freedom we Marxists claim for our atheist views." Further on, Azcarate said: "We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the religion which encourages many Catholics to fight against the Franco dictatorship, for democracy and against capitalism is 'no longer an opiate but an objective leaven of progress.'* The fundamental philosophical divergence on transcendence remains, of course." Elsewhere in his statement he said: "The question is whether we shall be able to respect each other's philosophical or religious convictions, mutually to guarantee the full freedom of our faith or convictions, to prohibit all persecution and discrimination motivated by religion or philosophy." Machovec answered this question by saying: "Christianity is in the process of transformation, and we Communists must change as well. Both sides should break with fanaticism, scheming and Machiavellism."

* Quoted from a book by Santiago Carrillo, hortly to appear in Paris.

The Ideological Neutrality of State Power

The advance of neo-Christian and neo-Marxist thinking was reflected in the debate on the "ideological" or "philosophical" neutrality of state power. This issue, so widely discussed in 1966, had its logical source in the stand taken at the symposium in favour of freedom of worship. The overture to the discussion was Prof. Moltmann's report, in which he argued that "no social class, group or party is entitled or in a position to define for others what they must regard as essential to their own happiness, the public weal or the true nature of their humanity." On behalf of the Marxists Kalivoda answered: "I fully agree with you on this point: the happiness of Man cannot be regulated by decrees."

Prucha's remarks on the subject were singularly precise: "It goes without saying that a state bent on building Marxist socialism and committed to fight against bourgeois ideology will emphasize those ideas that are linked with the birth of Marxism. It will devote its attention to the philosophical trends that seek to elucidate the historical dialectic of the origin and development of socialism, and to lay the theoretical foundations of sociology, etc. Ideological preferences —characteristic, incidentally, not only of the socialist countries—afford no basis for elevating some philosophical trend to the state's official philosophy and for carrying on a cultural struggle against other ideological viewpoints, and setting up a monopoly that would only harm the interests of both the state and philosophy."

It was not so much his own viewpoint as

the official stand of the Italian Communist Party which Gruppi disclosed in quoting from Luigi Longo's speech at the Party's 11th Congress: "We are of the opinion that the safeguarding of religious peace may represent a concrete aid to the development of a socialist society by enabling all the faithful to participate, loyally and fruitfully, in the building of a society free from exploitation. It is evident that we are for a genuinely and completely lay state. We are against a confessional state just as we are against state atheism. This means that we oppose every advantage the state might give to an ideology, philosophy or religion, just as we oppose supporting one culture or artistic trend to the detriment of others." Azcarate, after pointing out that the Marxist position was not simply a question of petty tactics, spoke in favour of "ideological pluralism and a free confrontation of ideologies."

As a matter of fact, one can hardly talk about a debate in this context, because on essentials there was a full understanding between Christians and Marxists. Thus Kellner summed up the view of the St Paul Society as follows: "The modern state should recognize neither state religion nor state atheism. Religion and atheism must be afforded the same opportunity for convincing people. The state should not even save religion from foundering in the event that the latter fails to imbue its adherents with enough faith to stand their own ground in society." "A revolutionary ideal which is authentically human," Girardi said, "need not be uniform, either uniformly religious or uniformly atheistic... Believers and non-believers must be able to strive after their goal without mutual discrimination. This is possible only in a state that is neither Christian nor atheistic... It must be simply human; believers and non-believers must be assured of an awareness of themselves as human beings in every respect... Christian monolithism brings about Marxist monolithism, and *vice versa*. This is one of the most dramatic aspects of our thinking... Once we understand the problems, we shall find the road to their solution." Miano added, as a basic requirement, that atheists and believers should have the same opportunity for expounding their views in the press and through other mass media.

Opportunities for Cooperation

The preceding pages, I think, clearly show that the atmosphere of the Marienbad dialogue was one of frankness, friendship and reduced tension. "To bring about a new atmosphere through dialogues and cooperation between Catholics and Communists," Azcarate said, "is one of the great opportunities of the historic times we live in."

"We are convinced," said József Lukács, "that Christians of good will, who are truly inspired by the ideals of peace, justice, progress and charity, can and must find the road to a patient ideological debate and joint action with non-believers, despite all ideological differences. Both parties are equally responsible before history, and their opportunities too are the same. Posterity will ask how we availed ourselves of these opportunities." "Presumably," said Prucha, "the world is little interested in the contradictions of our principles and dogmas. It will rather ask how we put these principles and dogmas into practice."

Speaking of peace as the greatest problem of our age, Girardi, on behalf of the Christians, said: "The problem of survival today coincides with that of building a better world... The Council has unequivocally asked the Christians to cooperate with all other people, including non-believers, in building up a more humane world and bringing about lasting peace." Miano confirmed this when he said: "The purpose of the dialogue with non-believers on the part of the Church is not to afford it an opportunity for pursuing its mission, i.e., the preaching of the Gospel, but rather to intensify the contribution of the Church and

its members to planning and building a more humane world." "Christianity," Kellner declared, "must commit itself actively to the universal problems of mankind, those of freedom, of hunger abolished and of peace in the world, to name just three of them."

Speaking of the future evolution of civilization, Cvekl said: "We believe this process may open up new vistas to Christianity as well, while also bringing home to it the necessity of understanding its own historicity and of preserving for mankind those values without which human existence would lose all meaning in the future as well." Metz, as if to answer him, emphasized: "Theology is making major efforts to give serious attention to the historico-social dimensions of religion that have at all times greatly influenced the contemporary Church structure." At the same time, he noted with satisfaction that Marxism is devoting more and more attention to human personality and to individual freedom, without limiting itself to the replies prescribed by ideology.

Since both Christianity and Marxism are now displaying a readiness for research, Girardi expressed the hope that the questions raised and the criticisms mutually levelled will serve to increase their loyalty to themselves and enrich their dialogues. "This confrontation is by no means barren," Garaudy stated, "for neither of us can grow unless he carries in himself the challenge that is also borne by his partner... It may be that our atheism and your faith are only two approaches to this intense and constant experience of creation, some of us striving mainly not to lessen the autonomy and greatness of him who is engaged in creating his own self, while others seek to raise man to the replica of an utterly different absolute, because—to quote Father Girardi—Man is too great to be sufficient unto himself."

*

Catholic periodicals in the West are understandably devoting much greater attention to the most recent symposium of the St Paul Society than to the two previous ones. And though I regard some of their comments as inaccurate or tendentious, all of them without exception treat the dialogue as a positive event, thus bearing out Kellner's opinion that the symposium has revealed the opportunities inherent in open dialogues between East and West in the world of today.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the co-organizers, the Sociologial Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, particularly to the head of the Religion and Sociology Section, Mrs Erika Kadlecova, to whom a Catholic theologian expressed the thanks of the participants when handing her a bouquet of flowers at the closing session.

"From Herren-Chiemsee to Marienbad the distance is no more than 200 kilometres," said Garaudy in his closing speech, "but the fact that the Congress has, for the first time, met in a Communist-ruled country marks the crossing not only of a boundary but of a threshold too. The Neanderthal-men, in their dialogue, pelted each other with the most disgusting elements of each other's theory and practice. The highbrows, in their dialogue, efface the frontiers and agree on everything. In a true dialogue the boundaries set permit each side to learn from the other and adopt what is good in the other's doctrine. Nobody will leave the present dialogue in the state of mind he entered it."

The lectures delivered at the symposium do not necessarily express the views of all Christians or all Marxists. This was emphasized by the spokesmen at the last press conference. "The Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences," said Erika Kadlecova, "is, of course, a state institution. But it is a scientific and not a political body and cannot commit the government. In this respect we are free and can say unrestrictedly what we think. On the other hand, we are active members of the Communist Party, though we are not entitled to speak on its behalf. There is a diversity of opinions in the party on theoretical issues, and what we are expounding here represents our own ideas and

the results of our own research." Kellner said in this context: "The St Paul Society has neither an official mission nor an official function... The experience of the last few years has aroused the interest of the Church authorities, but they do not exercise any censorship. We seek no Church guarantee and receive no subventions from the Churches." "The Western Communists," said Garaudy, "have come here with the concensus of our Parties, not just of some trend. But we are here as searchers, we do not speak in the name of the Party, and what we say here obviously cannot bind the members of the Party."

The next Marxist-Christian symposium is expected to take place within the next two years, either in France or in Hungary.

MARY EDWARDS

DIALOGUE WITH CLIPPED WINGS

Pacem in Terris II.— Geneva, May 28–31, 1967.

When two years after their first conference named after Pope John's encyclica (in New York in 1965), the American Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions decided to hold a second Pacem in Terris conference to consider the threats to coexistence, they can hardly have bargained for the sharp-hooting criticism that was to come in from almost every possible quarter.

In the United States they were accused of openly consorting with members of communist countries; the possible application of the notorious Logan Act was hinted at and then dropped. The more militant sections of the peace movement complained that too large a proportion of the participants represented official views. The rank and file activists for peace, particularly from the Western countries, felt that the theme of coexistence was inadequate in the present critical situation. To list the intervention in Vietnam merely as one of the threats to coexistence (the second on the programme was that of confrontation in Germany) was, they felt, to detract from the seriousness of the war and thus to weaken the discussions from the outset. Finally, they felt that to set out with the object of a dialogue only, without any aim of arriving at decisions, was to evade any practical consequences that might emerge from such debate and might confuse rather than clarify.

Immediately preceding the conference, the Middle East crisis blew up and further problems emerged. A number of intending participants were recalled to their countries, one of them being Arthur Goldbloom, who had been designated to present the American viewpoint in a debate following one in which the Soviet viewpoint was to be elucidated. Furthermore, it became clear that the planned debate on Vietnam would not be possible in the form intended. The organizers had decided to invite participants from North Vietnam, the National Liberation Front and the Saigon government, but with the proviso that, should one side not accept, the invitation would automatically be annulled. After some uncertainty, North Vietnam announced that in view of the new US escalation a debate would not be profitable and no delegates would attend. The NLF sent no final reply. Saigon obviously did not take the proviso seriously and sent their representatives direct to Geneva, where they were informed that in view of the North Vietnam

decision, they could not take part though they might be present in the hall as observers. This they refused in a huff, organized their own press conference in Geneva and distributed a statement. At this stage, on the eve of the opening, the Soviet participants wired that in view of the non-participation of North Vietnam and the NLF and the designation of Arthur Goldbloom which implied official US interference in the conference, they must withdraw their participation. At this point the German Democratic participants, already present at the conference buildings, also announced their decision to withdraw.

All this left the organizers in something of a quandary. The debate on Vietnam was deprived of its main components; the two debates on coexistence to put the US and Soviet views respectively were likewise without their main speakers. And it appeared that the debate on Germany would have to take place without anyone from the GDR. At this point journalists—who turned up in vast numbers from both East and West—asked the organizers if there were any point in continuing and whether under such circumstances any genuine dialogue was possible. To this Mr Harry S. Ashmore, Executive Vice-President of the Center, replied that the organizers felt there was sufficient representation of all viewpoints from among the over 300 present to make a real dialogue possible. In this atmosphere of rather dubious optimism the conference opened in the Palais des Nations on May 28, with speeches from the Center's Chairman, Mr Robert Hutchins, from representatives of the Swiss government and the Geneva municipality, a reading of a message from Pope Paul and a message delivered live over satellite TV by U Thant. But official openings and star speeches and messages do not make up a dialogue, and the start of the debates was awaited with some trepidation and the feeling that events and withdrawals had provided such obstacles that the debates were likely to be of a somewhat halting gait.

But on the first day a tone was set which was echoed and mounted in the days that followed. It was sparked off by M. Roger Garaudy who said that while he could not speak for those absent, he could understand that the representatives of North Vietnam and the NLF might interpret this conference as an alibi so long as the obligations of the Geneva Agreements were not respected. "The effectiveness of the United Nations Organization," he insisted, "depends first on the carrying out of agreements already entered upon. It is the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam that are at stake." And he insisted that the real responsibility and guilt must be appreciated or there could be no dialogue. He was backed in this a little later in the day by Mr. Sonn Voeunsai, Cambodian Ambassador to France, who pointed out that the war in Vietnam "was born from the violation of the Geneva Agreements by the USA" and added: "The only condition for an end to the conflict is the unconditional stopping of the bombing of North Vietnam, which must be final and unconditional."

To the surprise of many press correspondents, who had expected the large US representation and the many officials present do defend the US position on Vietnam with some show of strength, this was the note that was maintained—despite a passionate plea by the Foreign Minister from Thailand who out-Americaned the official American viewpoint, despite an intervention by a Philippines representative who was so incensed at the turn the debates were taking as to find courtesy difficult to maintain, despite a last minute attempt on the final day by two or three Americans and by Sir Thaddeus MacCarthy, a judge from the New Zealand Court of Appeal to turn the tables and allow the official American viewpoint to emerge unscathed. It was simply not to be. One speaker after another, including the large majority of Americans attending, felt that the American cases just did not hold water. From Senator Fulbright (who spoke for the solution put forward to Congress the week

before by Senator Clairborne Pell), Senator Pell himself, through to the even more forthright views of Dr Martin Luther King, Professor Linus Pauling, Dr Martin Niemöller and many others—US action and intervention was indicted and the USA called on to stop the bombing of North Vietnam forthwith and open the way for negotiations.

"How can the war in Vietnam be brought to an end?" asked Linus Pauling in a report he gave on behalf of the scientists present. "The scientists here are unanimous in believing that it should be brought to an end... The first step, the cessation of the bombing and other acts of war against North Vietnam, must be taken by the United States... I believe that to end the war could not damage the image of the United States, but would improve it..."

"The war in Vietnam has played havoc with the destiny of the entire world," said Dr Martin Luther King, who was met with prolonged applause when he stated: "If in my remarks statements are made that are critical of my nation's foreign policy, this must not be construed as a rejection of my country. I criticize America because I love her and because I want to see her stand as the moral example of the world."

Another Christian scholar, Professor Hromadka of Czechoslovakia made the same point: "I personally am terribly distressed by the war in Vietnam," he said. "But I do it with a sense of solidarity with the people of the United States. I have the feeling that the war in Vietnam is destroying the moral authority of the people of the United States."

The Rev. Dr Martin Niemöller emphasized that, as yet, the Vietnamese people had not turned against the whites as in other parts of the world. "The Vietnamese people," he said, "cannot be made to obey by force of arms. They would rather be destroyed than obey to such terms. They now regard France as a friend. When the Americans leave, it will be possible to regard them as friends too."

It was this formidable wall of criticism of US policy by Americans and others that carried the day and prompted Professor Galbraith to note the "almost overwhelming majority" of critics of US policy, adding "I have in the past shared in this criticism." This attitude was appreciated far less by an ultra-defensive editorial in the *New York Times* which complained that "at the Pacem in Terris conference Vietnam almost seemed to monopolize the picture," and which attacked the "verbal war against the Americans, who had few defenders and many critics." "The often strident tone of the denunciations and the unwillingness to listen to the American arguments before attacking them," it asserted, "created an atmosphere that was neither academic nor judicial." This hypersensitive reaction perhaps conveys best the real mood of the conference on the Vietnam war.

But while Vietnam dominated the debates, it was not the only topic. A lively little debate by a panel of speakers on "Confrontation: The case of Germany" got off to a flying start with the news that the German Democratic Republic delegation had decided to return to take part in the conference and that Mr Gerald Götting, Deputy President of the State Council and President of the CDU, would put his country's point of view. His very able, well-argued and quiet-toned contribution contrasted well with the first speaker, Mr W. W. Schütze (German Federal Republic), who scarcely rose above banalities and mouthed rich-sounding phrases about the need to establish committees to decide the points of agreement and dissent between the two parts of Germany. Mr Götting made him face up to the issue of recognizing the present frontiers and abrogating the Munich Agreement (which Mr Schütze averred was a matter primarily for the signatory powers).

Mr Karol Malczuzynski, Foreign Policy Editor of *Trybuna Ludu* (Poland) clarified the issues further. Friends of his in West Germany, he said, told him that Poland and

others were exaggerating the influence of the neo-nazis who were insignificant. Almost in the same breath, however, they told him that any West German politician who came out openly for acceptance of the Oder-Neisse frontier would be committing political suicide. They cannot have it both ways, Mr Malczuzynski said. Either these forces have no influence, or their influence is strong enough to be able to kill off politicians who openly accept existing boundaries. But it was Sir Geoffrey de Freitas (Britain) who put the cat among the pigeons by stating that he believed there were many people in Europe and the world who slept more soundly in their beds just because there were two Germanies. This brought Mr Schütze to his feet in a passionate appeal. How, he queried, could one demand sovereignty for all states, yet expect Germans to sacrifice it for people to sleep more soundly? He was scarcely calmed by a comment by Mr Malczuzynski to the effect that he could imagine a situation when all Europe might sleep quietly in their beds with a reunited Germany—under certain conditions. Nor did he seem happy at the suggestion by Huber Beuve-Méry, Director of *Le Monde*, who said it was difficult to believe that Federal Germany had really given up its claims to its former boundaries of 1937. (M. Beuve-Méry incidentally caused some amusement when he described how he had not been permitted to take a copy of his own paper with him to an international conference of journalists in East Berlin, an example he used to urge more détente and understanding.) All in all, an interesting little debate that made one regret that so short a time was allocated to it.

Other fascinating and in many respects very rich debates included the question of interdependence, with the stress on multilateral rather than unilateral aid to dependent countries, and without strings. There was a general consensus that all countries were developing countries, though some in advance of others; and that what the less developed among them needed was technical know-how and the means to develop their own resources. Mr Paul Hoffman, who led this discussion with great ability, cited an unnamed developing country that imported timber while being one of the richest forest-owners of the world. He referred, too, to a poll sent out to these countries which showed that, according to their own estimates, only 20 per cent of natural resources and 10.8 per cent of their labour was being used to full capacity. There was also general agreement that agricultural development must at least go along with industrial development if these countries are to catch up and their peoples to live a life of dignity.

Two unplanned debates were fitted into the three days. One was by a panel of judges, including three from the International Court at The Hague and chaired by William O. Douglas, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, on the question of international law. It was stressed that, as against normal procedure, in international law *both* sides were required to agree to put their dispute before the court at The Hague before it could be considered. The unfortunate decision on South West Africa was referred to as having undermined the authority which the International Court needed if it was to play the role designed for it. The second unannounced debate was on the Middle East crisis (which included a statement by Mr Rols Bennet of the UN explaining the reasons that had led U Thant to withdraw the UNEF forces from the Gaza strip). This debate, however, has little significance in view of the sharp escalation of events that followed the conference, but it showed the very wide divergence of opinions on this subject by people in agreement on other matters.

One of the most interesting features of the whole conference was the initiative taken by scientists on the one hand, and theologians on the other. Both met in groups during the conference and agreed reports that were read out in the final session. Professor Pauling

spoke for the scientists, while five theologians were present. One of these, the Right Rev. C. E. Crowther, Anglican Bishop of Kimberley (who had his return visa to South Africa refused on account of his attendance at the conference), spoke on the evils of racism in South Africa, in the United States and other parts of the world and the resultant dangers to world peace. "I cannot coexist with the racist because he will not coexist with me," Bishop Crowther said. "I cannot live within a status quo which denies to me the right to be what I am because it denies to my brother what he can become." Another report, by the Rev. John McLaughling (USA) dealt with the responsibility of the citizen to refuse military conscription if he is "clearly convinced that a war is morally indefensible."

What then was the outcome of this attempt at dialogue? To what extent were the criticisms levelled at it justified, and how far did it achieve what it set out to do? For the thoughtful participant there was a full platter of witty and qualified comment on many of the issues involved. On the Vietnam war the mood was that it was an aggression by the USA, which must stop it. Much that was interesting was said on coexistence, on interdependence and on dangers to peace. In this sense there was a dialogue. But genuine dialogue was hampered because too many subjects were treated in full sessions in too limited a time. A more thorough examination of these in smaller commissions would have allowed a real study and have yielded more tangible results. Resolutions are these days unpopular. They have been over-rated and misused too often. In that sense probably no tear was shed over the fact that no attempt was made to agree any resolution. But it was only on the private initiative of the scientists and theologians present that any real summary of agreements were presented at all, and only these two groups urged that action must be taken (with Bishop Pyke of the USA rather nicely calling for these views to be taken out and propagated at "grass root level"—his phrase!). A further limitation was indicated by the British scientist Ritchie Calder, who criticized the average age of participants as far too high, and reminded them that youth were completely disinterested in maintaining any status quo, and their protest must be listened to.

The only attempt to summarize the discussion was made by the Center's Chairman, Mr Hutchins, who leaned over backwards in an attempt to placate all and bring the different views under one common denominator. But he neither succeeded in this, nor in expressing the real majority view when he said, "The war in Vietnam is, at best, a mistake." Many participants expressed to me in private discussions their regret that the Soviet Union had not been present at this conference in which the representatives of those People's Democracies present (Poland, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Rumania and Yugoslavia) had spoken so excellently. All in all, it was a genuine attempt at dialogue, despite some drawbacks and many hindrances.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

A KEY TO THE KINGDOM

Long ago, in 1913, the poet, novelist and essayist Mihály Babits, who played somewhat the same role in twentieth-century Hungarian literature as T. S. Eliot played in England, wrote a long essay—*Magyar Irodalom* (Hungarian Literature). "In this essay," he began, "I want to look at our literature through the eyes of world literature. It is a difficult thing to do. Guests never visit this dark little boxroom of ours in the big palace of the human spirit, and the guide-books rarely refer to it. A good many books have been written about Hungarian literature, but the chapter on it in the big book called World Literature still remains to be written."

And he ends:

"So the final account of Hungarian literature in world literature runs like this:

great strength—
few works of merit,
and, in fact, almost no success!"

The situation has changed radically since that time—for which we must thank heaven and not ourselves. An increasing number of people come to visit this "dark little boxroom" of ours, and although the chapter Babits wanted has not yet been written, we are now entitled to hope it will be written one day. D. Mervyn Jones's book* is a step on the way, a key to the kingdom of Hungarian literature.

* D. Mervyn Jones: *Five Hungarian Writers.* The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1966, 307 pp.

Five Hungarian writers: Zrínyi, Mikes, Vörösmarty, Eötvös and Petőfi. The selection of the authors suggested an expert, the name of the publishers was a guarantee, the look of the book was reassuring; yet I took it in my hands with a slightly uneasy feeling: perhaps it was just my luck to run up against another of those works patronizingly regarding the peculiar animal of Hungarian literature with all the ossified complacency of western superiority. But no, Mr Jones's attitude is disfigured by no such defects.

The author explains in the preface that this book was not intended for the specialist; that his purpose was to introduce the educated reader to five of the major figures of Hungarian literature before 1849. To this end, he writes, "I have prefixed to the essays an Introduction sketching the history of Hungarian literature to 1849," since "individuals cannot be discussed without some reference to their background."

In this volume, indeed, Mr Jones has done something for English readers that I do not think has been done before. He has taken these five writers and written a long and distinguished essay on each of them, in which a lively and vivid account of their lives, of the historical, social and personal background of each of them is woven in with an account of their literary development, a discussion of their unique excellences and contributions to Hungarian literature, and

summaries of the stories of the more significant poems and other works. He has used a large number of translations from the poems and plays, modestly designed to provide "what I understand to be the meaning"—but always accompanied by the originals in the footnotes—to make a point or illustrate a tendency; quotations from pamphlets and minor works and letters of the writers and their intimates cast light on the workings of their mind or character. Only too often English-speaking readers who cannot read Hungarian originals are given somewhat abstract philosophical accounts of the works of Hungarian writers, or discussions on styles and tendencies which leave their basic ignorances no better served than before. Here these poets and novelists spring to life: young Zrínyi scribbling his epic by the camp fire, twenty-five miles from the enemy Turks; Mikes writing to his imaginary aunt in the boredom of his lifelong exile in Turkey—"just running through the pages of a book from morning till night"; the strolling player who was to become one of Hungary's greatest poets travelling over the Hortobágy plain. I think it fair to say that for many English-speaking readers this lively and eminently readable book will throw wide the door to the little dark boxroom only glimpsed before, tiptoe, through the heavily leaded panes of the tiny window.

The brief, concise introduction is exemplary of its kind. It is not confined to the inevitable—and inevitably monotonous—list of names and works; it also touches upon the special problems of Hungarian literature, such as the effect the defeat at Mohács in 1526 and the tragic depopulation which followed, and the executions and prison sentences following the Jacobin plot headed by Martinovics in 1794, which "destroyed almost a whole generation of Hungarian poets," had on the intellectual lives of their times, or the renewal of the language which began at the beginning of the nineteenth century, successfully and effectively giving the interested reader a background for an understanding of the essays themselves.

Every essay provides proof of the wide range of the writer's knowledge. If there is nothing surprising in the fact that he has a profound knowledge of his subject, that is, Hungarian literature, nor in his presentation of the writers always against the narrower or wider background of their environment, nor even by the way the impulses given by English literature are carefully borne in mind, it is extremely impressive to see that his knowledge extends to the smaller neighbours of the Hungarians as well. He draws a parallel, for instance, between Vörösmarty's "To a Lady of Rank" *(Az úri hölgyhöz)* written in 1841, and the "Letter to the Comtesse de Noailles, Princess Brincoveanu" by the Rumanian poet Octavian Goga, written in 1913. Such parallels demonstrate not only his breadth of knowledge but also his wide-ranging interests, and the associations conjured up in his mind. For the stature of an intellectual mind, whether of a writer or a scientist, can be seen in the connections, the associations which facts and ideas arouse in him. And it is a tribute to the author's accuracy that I could not find a single misprint in the huge number of Hungarian quotations.

The work of foreign scholars on Hungarian subjects can sometimes enrich our own literary learning, even where they do not widen our existing knowledge, through some lucky discovery in archives or library. Mr Jones's book provides no new information or ideas, but nonetheless, while making use of the results of Hungarian literary research, he relies primarily on the works themselves, and since his learning and intellectual training is different from ours, his point of view on occasion does not correspond with ours. He sees with a different eye what we see through long tradition, or do not see at all.

The Epic

This is how the essay on Miklós Zrínyi begins:

"The defence of Szigetvár, in south-west Hungary, by Count Zrínyi against Suleiman the Magnificent in 1566 is one of the greatest among the many actions which stand as symbols of the Hungarian resistance that defended Europe from the Turk in the sixteenth century. The Sultan had launched what was to be his last expedition against Hungary, to prevent the Emperor Maximilian II from gaining control of Transylvania. In spite of the danger, the Imperial generals would not move; their armies stood by while the defenders of Szigetvár faced the Turks alone. Inspired by Zrínyi's leadership they resisted for over a month, accounting for some 20,000 Turks—eight times their own numbers—before resistance became impossible and Zrínyi led all his men into a final sortie."

Here in a nutshell is the event in its historic context.

The epic of Miklós Zrínyi, the defender of Szigetvár, was written a hundred years later by his great grandson, Miklós Zrínyi the poet. "Zrínyi's theme presented exceptional difficulties," writes Mr Jones. "First, he was writing from the point of view of the vanquished. Certainly in the *Iliad* we often see events from the Trojan point of view, our sympathies are often with Hector; but the subject of the *Iliad* is not the fall of Troy. Zrínyi's theme, however, is the action itself, the successful Turkish siege of a fortress which had defeated the enemy on a previous occasion. Secondly, although the Sultan had died during the siege, the Hungarian resistance had not immediately altered the course of events; indeed in the eighty years that had elapsed the situation had remained in essential the same. How, then, could the poet exalt the defeated above their conquerors, and also give his subject a universal significance?"

The answer lies in religion. God Himself sends the Turks against the Hungarians, who have sinned; the Hungarians die, but they are victorious before God.

What made the theme topical at the time was that with his magnificent historical instinct Miklós Zrínyi the poet, who was at the same time a military leader "who had fought the same enemy in the same country as his ancestor," and a political figure, felt that the Turkish Empire, apparently, in the seventeenth century, at the apex of its glory, was in fact crippled by internal weakness and that the time for the liberation of Hungary was at hand. Zrínyi the poet, would have preferred to lead the campaign against the Turks himself; it was in Vienna's interest, however, that the Turks should be driven out of the country not by a Hungarian, but by an Austrian army. That is the reason why even a hundred years later the Hapsburgs failed to seize the favourable historic opportunity. And this also explains the mysterious death of Miklós Zrínyi. Zrínyi is said to have been killed by a wild boar while hunting, but rumour had it that there was a musket in Vienna with the inscription: "This is the wild boar that killed Zrínyi."

A point of interest about this heroic epic is that it sprang from the mind and heart of a political and military leader; it was born on the battle-field, in plain sight of the Turkish enemy, as it were, and not in the comparative security of a prince's court like the *Gerusalemme liberata* on which it was modelled, or the *Orlando Furioso*. The theme is not a literary theme for Zrínyi, something selected from a storehouse of subjects according to his fancy, but a deeply personal experience interwoven with his own life. "Hero, writer in one," says Mr Jones, and this is in fact the most characteristic feature of his writing. He is not a witness, a chronicler, an onlooker reporting on the events, but a man of action who knows everything he has to tell from his own experience. Mr Jones calls attention to the fact that the viewpoint of the military leader is also revealed in the description of the battles: "Zrínyi. . .

wisely decided to abandon the town and transfer all his forces to the fortress. This also solves the problem created for the poet by the long series of repeated Turkish attacks of which the historical siege consisted; he avoids the monotony and gloom inherent in their detailed narration, while yet remaining true to history, by describing briefly their results, *after they have taken place*... It is a grimly majestic art, and this is the point where it differs from the spruce and smartened heroic epic of Baroque times, so intensely aimed at formal perfection."

Letters of an Exile

The next writer of the five is Kelemen Mikes. "Austrian rule in Hungary," Mr Jones writes, "proved to be in many respects scarcely less brutal and oppressive than that of the Turks, and Hungarian discontent grew steadily in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Active resistance, however, remained sporadic and disorganized; only in 1701 did it find a natural rallying-point, when Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II escaped from an Austrian prison, in which he had been held for a year, as a result of the interception of a letter of his to Louis XIV."

This concise introduction of two sentences summarizes two historical periods, each lasting for one and a half centuries. Placed as they are at the beginning of the essay they go far beyond their verbatim meaning, for they link the Austrian oppression with the sufferings under the Turkish occupation mentioned in the previous chapter.

"Rákóczi," writes Mr Jones, "only gradually came to accept his position; but eventually his pity for the sufferings of his people forbade him to hold back any longer, and in 1703 he formally raised the standard of rebellion against the Austrians; four years later the Hungarian Diet proclaimed the dethronement of the Hapsburgs and elected Rákóczi Prince of Hungary. The Prince succeeded in destroying the class hatred which he had inherited, and achieved an unprecedented national unity; but his ultimate failure was made virtually certain by Marlborough's victory at Blenheim in 1704. When Louis XIV withdrew his previously generous financial support, and Rákóczi failed to find other allies, his fate was sealed..." He first went into exile in France, and in 1717 he accepted the invitation of the Sultan Ahmed III and went into exile in Turkey. With him, among others, went Kelemen Mikes, who was seventeen when he entered the service of the Prince as a page. He was 24 when he left the country, and he died at the age of 71 in what the Hungarians called Rodostó [now known by the Turkish name of Tekirdağ], one of the last of the Rákóczi exiles.

After outlining the historical background with masterly concision, Mr Jones gives the floor, so to speak, to Kelemen Mikes himself; one excerpt is followed by another, and the life of the exiles comes vividly before the reader's eye. Mikes's home in Adrianople: "My house consists of four stone walls; it has a window of wooden boards, where the wind can enter from all directions; if I block it up with paper, the mice and rats get through the paper for their dinner. My furniture consists of a small wooden chair, my bed is made on the floor, and my house is heated by a little coal in an earthenware dish. But do not suppose, after all this, that I am the one most deserving of pity; ten of us have no wooden chair, no bed such as I have, nor even wooden boards in their windows. Flurries of snow can come in on to the beds—but can you call it a bed, a coarse blanket spread on the ground? Well, it's in palaces like these that we're living, but hope being very necessary to man, and as necessary as food, as we are in bad houses now, so we hope that we shall yet move into good ones. Shall we ever live to see that? But we have lived to see the arrival of the Spanish Ambassador"...

The quotation contains the whole writer:

the stoic endurance of a miserable lot, the devout but self-deceptive hopefulness, the sudden transitions to sanguine expectation to avoid facing the truth. This time it was the coming of the Spanish Ambassador which served as a pretext for hope.

The exiles left Yeniköy for Rodostó in a galley. Mikes gave a detailed description of the galley and the life of the galley-slaves. It is followed by a description of Rodostó and his words about the local customs there seem to foreshadow the isolation and monotony of his future life: "You can't go for walks or wander in the fields all the time; but friendship with the people here is impossible. No foreigner can visit anyone in his home; the Armenians, especially, are more afraid for their wives than the Turks. I have not yet seen my neighbour's wife; I have to pass by the gate ten times a day, and if she happens to be there, she runs away from me as if I were the devil, and shuts the gate... There are Turkish lords, but paying a visit to a Turk is a boring business; for one thing, I don't know Turkish; then if you call on him, first it's 'sit down,' then he gives you a pipe of tobacco and a cup of coffee, says a few words—after which he'd stay silent till ten, if you waited."

There is no need to continue; a whole life of exile is implicit in the words. This is how Mikes's long life passed away: rootless, eventless. This sociable man forced into loneliness, read and translated to kill the time, and wrote letters in his misery to an imaginary aunt, to have an imaginary partner for the conversation he lacked. That was how the "Letters from Turkey" *(Törökországi levelek)* were born, which in all probability have been revealed for the first time to foreign countries by Mr D. Mervyn Jones.

Mikes is a paradoxical writer, as he was a paradoxical exile; as a writer because he introduced the easy conversational tone into Hungarian prose, he who lived a life without conversation in a depressive loneliness almost beyond the imagination of a western man. He is paradoxical as an exile, because he took no active part in the Rákóczi War of Independence, and there was nothing that especially forced him to choose an exile's life. Nor was he spurred on by a youthful sense of adventure; no trace of it can be found in his writing. He did not choose exile because of his convictions; he was uninterested in politics; he admired Rákóczi as a Prince, and as a great soul, but not in the least for political reasons, or because they shared identical feelings. His letters give no indication why he sacrificed his life. He is the hero of useless self-sacrifice like Peregrinos, the cynic-Christian philosopher, on whom Montherlant wrote so moving an essay. Literary history depicts him as the pattern of fidelity. His fidelity was at best to his religion and to his own passivity, and yet he was not unfaithful to anything. Mikes is one of the most mysterious figures of our mysterious literature.

From Classic to Romantic

The first two essays contain faithful portraits of Zrínyi and Mikes, but they also summarize almost three hundred years of Hungarian history and literary history so concisely and economically that it would be worth translating them into Hungarian.

Equally concise and economical, from which an experienced critic could open up the whole literature of an era, are the two sentences with which Mr Jones introduces Vörösmarty.

"To win fame by a Virgilian epic is a paradoxical opening to the career of a Romantic poet; and perhaps still more surprising is the fact that the fame which Vörösmarty won when his epic appeared in 1825 was above all a tribute to the man who had fulfilled the literary hopes of a nation. For the Hungarian classicism was not a fortress of established tradition to be assailed, but rather a foundation upon which he hoped to build a lasting literary revival and so save his culture from the extinction with which

foreign pressures threatened it." Yet in spite of the fact that Mr Jones knows everything that a scholar ought to know about Vörösmarty, this is the least successful of the five essays. Why? Obviously, the difference in temperament between them is one reason; and another is the fact that it is more difficult to get close to Vörösmarty than to any other Hungarian poet. Every Hungarian who loves literature knows and admires his greatest poems, but there are gems scattered through the rest of the enormous mass of his half-successful work which must be patiently dug out.

There is however another reason, easier to grasp: method. "In selecting my quotations," explains Mr Jones, "I have tried above all to illustrate the writer's development, even at the cost of excluding much that an anthology of his best work would have to contain."

As a result Mr Jones conscientiously considers all the works representing different stages in Vörösmarty's poetic development. Although not a single significant work escapes his attention, yet he frequently gets sidetracked. For however excellent this method is with Mikes, who wrote a single book, or with Zrínyi, Petőfi and Eötvös, whose work is more or less homogeneous, the more impracticable it appears as a guide for the reader wanting to find his way in the jungle richness, highly-coloured complexity and confusion of Vörösmarty's works. Mr Jones observes, for instance, that the title of the epic, "Flight of Zalán" *(Zalán futása)* [Zalán being the Bulgarian leader of the resistance to the incoming Magyar tribes] "reveals Vörösmarty's unconscious sympathy for the beaten foe" . . . "the Hungarians, on the other hand, tend to be monotonously idealized warriors. When we first see Árpád, only his external appearance, his mighty form, is described; though invested with all the virtues of the perfect soldier and leader, he remains a somewhat shadowy figure."

The figure is so shadowy—let us develop Mr Jones's idea further—that it does not in fact even take an active part in the conquest of Hungary, although it is Árpád's work, his victory, and the historic proof of his gifts as a leader. If this example of the manner in which epic material becomes anti-epic, and the epic hero becomes in the hands of the author a man incapable of action, was peculiar to Vörösmarty, it might be simpler. Not every writer is capable of painting the ancestors who conquered a new homeland in their individual human characteristics or, in general, of creating heroes in action. What we have here, however, is not something individual to Vörösmarty. In one way or another it is the biggest problem of Hungarian epic poetry and indeed the novel as well. In most cases the writers are incapable of creating heroes in action, who would advance the plot themselves; they resort to tricks of structure to give the illusion of action—use verbiage as a substitute, or turn the whole thing into a pre-surrealistic fairy tale as Petőfi did in "John the Hero" *(János vitéz)*.

Mr Jones concludes that "*Zalán* is poetry, but not epic," but at the same time he also sees that in the faery world of Vörösmarty "a new poetic diction is born," which, we should add, is not only unique but had no successor in Hungarian literature. Until the appearance of Endre Ady, who revolutionized Hungarian poetry in so many ways, Hungarian poetry had been as closely accompanied by an excess of delicacy, or prudery, as a man by his shadow: not a faint autumnal shadow, rather the dense black shadow of high summer; an overwhelming weight of prudery. It barred Vörösmarty from the open expression of his deepest feelings, as it did not, to some extent, bar his contemporary Petőfi; at the end of his life he made a personal confession about himself through the voice of "The Old Gipsy" *(Vén cigány)*,* one of the most powerful poems

* This poem was published in 1962, Paris, under the title *Le Vieux Tzigane* in 15 different French versions by 15 different contemporary French poets. [Ed.]

in the Hungarian language. This excess of delicacy, however, if we may describe it so, went so far as to lead him to conceal his mother's identity in "The Poor Woman's Book" *(A szegény asszony könyve)* behind a neutral title. In the faery world of some of his poems, however, the inhibitions disappeared, and he described the bathing Hajna in the "Flight of Zalán."

"She sprinkled the hurrying foam over her face and neck. Her hair unbound fanned out over her gleaming shoulder, arm and the round nipple that reddened like an opening bud."

These four lines were almost as bold, poetically speaking, at the time, as the political boldness of Petőfi's famous poem "Hang the Kings!" *(Akasszátok föl a királyokat!)* at a later date. The faery world invoked in the "Flight of Zalán," the "Island of the South" *(A délsziget)*, "The Valley of the Fairies" *(Tündérvölgy)* and "Csongor and Tünde" *(Csongor és Tünde)* represented, in a greater or lesser degree, escape for the heart bathed in blood and flame.

Mr Jones devotes a separate chapter to the plays of Vörösmarty, and of course touches upon the influence of Shakespeare. In the dramatic field, in which he had no experience, Vörösmarty began by following in Shakespeare's footsteps; then, after a relatively long deviation, he returns to the Shakespearian inspiration in his last plays; the influence of Shakespeare on the poet, indeed, deserves more detailed study. Mr Jones's judgements are, as usual, sober and reliable. Discussing another of the poet's plays, "The Secrets of the Veil" *(A fátyol titkai)*, Mr Jones writes that "Vörösmarty has composed the individual episodes without regard for the scale and cumulative effect of the whole, and has created a maze of complications in which he himself does not always appear quite sure of the way," a statement that is valid for the body of Vörösmarty's work. This is undoubtedly what it deserves.

At this point the reader is inclined to believe that Mr Jones is not as independent in his judgements as he generally shows himself to be throughout the whole of his excellent book, and that to some extent he has given way to the Hungarian literary fashion of underestimating Vörösmarty's plays. It is all the more surprising because he characterizes "The Exiles" *(A bujdosók)* as "poetry but not drama," and declares that "the tragic atmosphere is excellently maintained in the 'Blood Wedding' *(Vérnász)*." In my view, all of them, I believe, are poetry for reading. Incidentally I believe a literary historian has rarely more to say about a play than what it is like to read; he should refrain from detailed discussion over its suitability for the stage; this can only be decided on the stage itself. Personally I was also one of those who thought "Czillei and the Hunyadis" was a confusion of episodes impossible to follow; but the play was recently put on the stage, with one of the many sub-plots left out, and some of the episodes re-arranged, and the tragedy that was thought to be unperformable became one of the major successes of the 1966–67 season. The performance showed that although Vörösmarty's tragedy is well below the great tragedies of Shakespeare, it compares favourably with his historical plays. It is not so dramatic, not so thickly textured; not so concise as Katona's *Bánk Bán*, our national tragedy, but in terms of poetry it is better.

Mr Jones again follows the general traditional line of Hungarian literary critics in the brief section of his book he devoted to Vörösmarty's love poems. He quotes a couple of lines from the poem "To the Pensive One" *(A merengőhöz)*, but fails to mention that the poem is one of the most outstanding pieces of Hungarian philosophical poetry, a genre in which Hungary is not particularly rich. The inclusion of the epigram "To Laura" *(Laurához)*, Vörösmarty's young wife, twenty-five years his junior, would have helped to complete the picture, not only of the poet, but of the man.

"Will you not grow tired of smiling at me when I lose heart, and tolerating my

whims when troubles unbalance me? The task before you is a heavy one; it is to make the virtue of your young heart my sun over the shade of my broken life."

I could continue to discuss the questions Mr Jones has or has not raised in his analysis of the works. One thing, however, is certain. Such an irregular and incoherent literary career as Vörösmarty's can never be neatly dissected and anatomized by the intellect, because the total of the parts will always remain less than the whole. In this tremendous but disorderly life-work, in his major poems, in the faery poems, the blood-freezing stories of romance or in the plays, certain common features emerge, based on a sense of patriotic responsibility.

If we want to discover their unity and ultimate meaning, we must approach his work from two aspects, attitude and style, and two poems, "A Call" *(Szózat)*, which ranks as a second national anthem to the Hungarians, and "Thoughts in a Library" *(Gondolatok a könyvtárban)* provide the key. In "A Call," says Mr Jones, "speaks one who faces the future," but in the reflective "Thoughts in a Library" "the poet faces a final pessimism" because of the gulf between the ideal and the real. A few lines later, however, this final pessimism is resolved, for although there is every reason in the world to be pessimistic—the "crimes of the animal, man," "bloody rebels, false judges and tyrants," "loyalty, friendship, base, treacherous perjurers," "hideous falsehood everywhere," "the world is vile," and so on,

"Yet we must strive"—says the poet.

And a couple of lines later:

"Is this destiny, and will there be no end to anything?

"There is not and there will not be, until there is no life on earth."

And then:

"What is our purpose in the world? to struggle
With what strength we have for what is noblest.
The fate of a nation lies before us."

The conclusion is the same as in "A Call": "here you must live, here you must die." For the Hungarian romantic patriotism included all the ideas of responsibility, humanity, morals, and religion, and was the object of life. Words—sceptics may argue. Yes, but words fulfilled in a life. This philosophy of active pessimism in connection with Vörösmarty is discussed by Antal Szerb in his "History of Hungarian Literature" *(Magyar irodalomtörténet)*, where he points out that the same stoic outlook is to be found in Madách's great dramatic poem, "The Tragedy of Man" *(Az ember tragédiája)*. Vörösmarty does not turn lamentingly to the past, take refuge in elaborate poetic diction, or the hopelessness of an age-old inertia. These feminine attributes are not for Vörösmarty, his lyric poetry is masculine, not self-delusive, but a poetry which looks the facts in the face; this is the root of his unremitting consciousness of death.

To call him a romantic poet, to insist he is the greatest master of the Hungarian language, can easily lead to false conclusions. He is not intoxicated by colourful words and striking similes; he is not among those drunk with their own verbal gifts. Vörösmarty is again masculine in that he dominates words instead of being dominated by them; he uses them exclusively for his own poetical needs, to express his purpose. In contrast to Dickens, for instance, who—as Taine has shown—endows inanimate objects with life —"ten thousand responsible houses surrounded him, frowning heavily"—Vörösmarty endows thoughts with life. The thought is given substance as an object, an image or an action, and at the same time, a symbol. The romantic notion of "the death of the nation," which haunted men's minds, becomes in Vörösmarty's hands the image of the grave into which a nation has sunk, surrounded by the peoples of the world. This is the kind of image that the imagination cannot realize in fact, that is to say, it is imperceptual; but it is nonetheless

vivid and tangible. This is fundamentally different from the other, more frequent method, which relies on similes or metaphors. The poet uses different parallels, analogies and affinities to clothe the thought itself, to give it intelligible substance. In Vörösmarty's poetry the image is the thought.

Novelist and Statesman

The fourth excellent essay is entitled "Eötvös (1813–1871), novelist and statesman," and the title is descriptive at the same time. "A man's achievement often contrasts with his family background," the author points out at the beginning of the essay, "but seldom more strikingly than that of Baron József Eötvös."

"Perhaps the first Hungarian novelist whom we honour as a master rather than as a pioneer, he was born into an exclusively German-speaking home; outstanding among Hungary's liberal reformers, he was the son and grandson of pillars of Austrian rule who were not only conservatives but also brutes."

One of the traditions of Hungarian literature is that writers should play an active part in politics in some form or another. József Eötvös is the only Hungarian writer who did so at statesman's level, who managed to reach a position where principles are translated into action, and he was at least able to attempt to carry out some of his political ideas. If we consider that concept of Hungarian romanticism which requires writers to take an active part in politics, which is, *mutatis mutandis*, the same that applies today, Eötvös will be found to have come closest to the ideal.

According to Mr Jones, Eötvös is characterized by "practical common sense," a comparatively rare feature in Hungarian literature. The mature Eötvös is a conscious and consistent realist in his theoretical works, his political practice and his private life; which is why his work is all of a piece, why the politician can be identified with the writer and the writer with the man, and each activity supplements the other. His book "Reform" began with the sentence, "Our country cannot remain in its present condition"; and went on to explain that in Hungary the necessary conditions for progress did not exist, there was no balance between order and freedom, etc.

His masterpiece, "The Village Notary" *(A falu jegyzője)* "had portrayed a system which must be changed" if Hungary was to advance along the road of progress. In "Hungary in 1514" *(Magyarország 1514-ben)*, however, Eötvös pointed out as a warning "what may happen when the victims of an evil system set about changing it by force."

Together with the activities which Mr Jones does or does not list, Eötvös took an active part in the theoretical preparation of the 1848 Hungarian War of Independence. Eötvös's ideas played an important part in the overwhelming majority of the laws passed during the War of Independence, particularly in the Public Education Act, which, although it had passed into law, could not be implemented because of the defeat of the revolution. He was a member of the Batthyány government, but once the independence movement had developed into a revolution, he left the country, saying, "Heaven did not make me a revolutionary," a statement which shows an extremely high degree of self-knowledge. He followed the advice given by Lőrinc in his great novel "Hungary in 1514," and "reserved himself for the future."

While in exile he continued to work, and wrote, among others, "The Dominant Ideas of the 19th Century and their Influence on the State" *(A XIX. század uralkodó eszméinek befolyása az államalomra)*, a study fertile in ideas, in which he was one of the first to adumbrate the idea that justice in Europe will never be assured on the basis of nationality, and that the nations must prepare for peaceful coexistence. This term, which, thank God, is so often in use today, was first coined by Eötvös.

He returned home in 1851 and from that time forward worked with Ferenc Deák for an agreement with the House of Hapsburg. The Compromise with Austria, which was reached in 1867, was largely based on his ideas, and he became Minister of Religion and Education in the new Government, as he had been in 1848. And he took up the work where he had left it nineteen years before, with the Education Act, which was one of the best of its kind in contemporary Europe.

Mr Jones controls the enormous material at his disposal with a firm hand, and his system of giving short summaries of the novels is worth special notice. Sometimes he quotes, sometimes he describes the action in his own words. Mr Jones writes clearly, briefly, objectively; Eötvös expresses himself in elaborate rolling sentences; yet the summary manages to retain the atmosphere of the original, which is a real *tour de force.*

Revolutionary

"In February 1844 an unsuccessful young actor of twenty-one, who dreamt of fame as a poet, found himself facing total destitution. 'After a week's painful wandering I reached Pest,' he wrote. 'I did not know to whom to turn... a desperate courage seized me and I went to one of Hungary's greatest men, with the feeling of a card-player staking all he had left, for life or death. The great man read through my poems; on his enthusiastic recommendation the Circle published them, and I had money and a name. This man, to whom I owe my life, and to whom the country owes any service I have done or will do her—this man was Vörösmarty.' Vörösmarty thereby showed not only insight, but magnanimity; for these poems represented a revolution in the Hungarian lyric."

This vivid picture of the poet which introduces Petőfi to the reader also foreshadows the nature of this revolution. "Petőfi," Mr Jones writes, "strikingly exhibits the effortless simplicity of genius." And he continues with a quotation from Wordsworth—"there neither is, nor can be, any *essential* difference between the language of prose and metrical composition," and ends with the following conclusion: "The characteristics of Petőfi's fully developed style may appear negative," namely, that the poet consciously turned against the fashionable tendencies of the day, especially against romanticism. In his first poem, "The Wine-bibber" *(A borozó)* which appeared in *Athenaeum* in 1842, he struck the informal, spontaneous tone which was to characterize his poetry as a whole. Remnants of the romantic conventions of his day, however, still lingered in it, such as "where the scorpions of so many torments have rent my heart," or the concluding line—"and with a laugh I plunge into thy bosom of ice, O grave!" He never rid himself entirely of the influence of romanticism. It sometimes disrupts his most beautiful poems with inapposite images.

Petőfi also revolted against the traditional prudery and excessive delicacies of Hungarian poetry—although, here again, not entirely. He wrote about his father, his mother, his friends and his own feelings more freely and informally than had ever been done in Hungary before. He was also revolutionary in singing of his married happiness, since Hungarian prudery had included a ban on references to intimate relations such as this. Sándor Kisfaludy was the first Hungarian poet, in his volume "Happy Love" *(Boldog szerelem)* to refer in public to experiences—of a completely light nature moreover—in his married life. Petőfi devoted a number of poems to his wife and their marriage; the tone of the poems is informal but the genuine experience is replaced by the feelings of the nineteenth century petty bourgeois. Scarcely ever is he real in his love poems.

"My sweetheart's a stubborn little girl, and I myself don't bow my head at every word; our blood is a fiery brook, but still, somehow we get along."

In Mr Jones's opinion the turning point in

Petőfi's poetry was in 1846, and he very convincingly analyses how important in his development were the poems "I have left the city..." *(Elhagytam én a várost...)* and "World-hatred" *(Világgyűlölet)* "because they mark the maturing of the absolute spontaneity which his best work presents. In his first period the disproportionately large output of drinking-songs suggests that the coincidence between his literary self and his real self was not yet complete, and in 1845–46 his bitterness, though it originated in his own state of mind, had tended to be generalized into a conventional Romantic misanthropy, largely under the influence of his reading." For although Petőfi called Werther stupid, it did not prevent him being affected by the Werther *Weltschmerz*. The next development referred to by Mr Jones, but not discussed, is perhaps even more important: "But recovery from his 'world-hatred' meant no passive acquiescence in the existing state of affairs, no contemplation of a calm and uneventful future." The sterile "world-hatred" had been transformed into a fervour for "world freedom" which gave birth to perhaps the poet's greatest and most magnificent poem "One thought torments me..." *(Egy gondolat bánt engemet...)*

"One thought torments me—to die in bed, ... Give not such a death as this, my God..... When every enslaved people, tired of its yoke, enters the lists with countenance aglow, with glowing red banners, and on the banners this holy watchword: 'World Freedom!' and this they trumpet forth... and tyranny clashes with them: there may I fall, on the field of battle..."

Many writers have expressed similar thoughts in poetry and prose, but the young man of twenty-six meant every word he wrote. He joined the revolutionary army and fell on the battle-field at Segesvár in 1849.

It is one of the great merits of Mr Jones's work that the picture he draws of Petőfi is very sober and restrained, yet he makes clear how this "gay extrovert"—as he calls him—who writes with such deceptive simplicity, worked so hard, and faced complications and difficulties to achieve that rarely to be achieved same simplicity.

In recent years the monograph has become fashionable in our country. It has its advantages, but perhaps its most dangerous defect is that the author tends to study the "background," the "environment" to the detriment of associations and connections which, although closely related to the environment, are not the same. In addition to its other merits, the great value of Mr Mervyn Jones's book lies in the fact that it indicates a host of connections and associations between writer and writer, between writer and literary tendencies, and that as a result he finds something new to say about things on which we believed we knew all there was to know.

"Only connect, connect," said E. M. Forster. Take Vörösmarty's epic poem *Mák Bandi*, for instance. In some respects it is the prototype of Petőfi's "Mad Istók" *(Bolond Istók)* which in turn is the prototype for János Arany's "Mad Istók" *(Bolond Istók)* also inspired by some extent by Byron. *Mák Bandi* ends with—

"He ploughs and sows [the field] with his beautiful wife,

And the little house is filled with many little children."

Mad Istók, in Petőfi's poem, ends with—

"The young wife spins and sings: her grandfather and husband play with the two sons.

The storm of winter howls outside...

The spinning wheel whirls and the song resounds merrily inside..."

What is this if not the Hungarian petty-bourgeois version of Voltaire's *mais il faut cultiver notre jardin*, which, in accordance with the ancient traditions of our literature, has replaced the garden by the family?

I did not take this connection from Mr Jones's book, but his outlook, his method, helped me to find it. And this serves as an additional reason for waiting impatiently for the second volume.

EMIL KOLOZSVÁRI GRANDPIERRE

HUNGARY IN ENGLISH DRESS

A book catalogue is a bore or an enchantment, according to taste. Or a frustration. Like the backs of books seen en passant in the libraries of Stately Homes, inaccessible to itching fingers. Enchantment—always enchantment—for me, from the day my father brought home from Hodgsons the bundle of tattered fairy tales I had surreptitiously but not very hopefully marked with a small cross in the catalogue margin.

More than ever when the catalogue specializes in some subject of interest to me. Like the one under my hand this minute. It is Hungarica, a catalogue of the English books, prints and publications connected with Hungary which were collected by a Hungarian scholar, Béla Iványi-Grünwald, during the twenty-seven years he lived in England before his death in 1965.

When Iványi-Grünwald began to collect the time had long gone by when Count Apponyi, whose great collection of Hungarica in foreign languages is now in the Széchényi Library in Budapest, could roam up and down the Charing Cross Road, picking up bargains for a song. But the collection listed here is some evidence that even to-day a man with great love and no money, a man who will spend hours haunting bookstalls and turning over prints, can still amass a remarkable library in his chosen subject.

He was not at all strictly selective in his choice. If it had anything to do with Hungary, and his small means could run to it, he bought it. So this collection of 1,130 items has something of everything in it, from Kossuth to cookbooks, from Deák to dancing. It has all those familiar titles smelling of the backrooms of secondhand bookshops in country towns—"Hungary Old and New," "Rural Gleanings," "Haps and Mishaps in . . .," "A Wayfarer in. . .," "Wanderings in . . ." It has those portentous titles of the twenties—"Europe at the Parting of the Ways", "Whither Europe?". And it has above all the ubiquitous English traveller, travelling all ways at once—"On Horseback through. .," "On the Track of . . ." (the Crescent, in this case), "With Pen and Pencil. . .," "With a Fiddle. . ." (pre-war form of).

Above all "on" the Danube. They went by steamer. The Marquis of Londonderry went to Constantinople that way in 1840. And wrote a book about it. The Marchioness seems to have gone to Constantinople with him. She also wrote a book, though she dignified it with the more elevated but still familiar-sounding title of a "Visit to the Courts of. . ." Mr. Snow went to Constantinople. Also by steamer. Apparently the same year. And also wrote a book. Could they have met on the boat? Did the prospective authors glower at one another from afar, or did they play one-upmanship? "*We* shall be staying with the Ambassador of course." "Well, as a matter of fact I shall be staying with the Bektashi dervishes in a tiny monastery in . . . oh, you wouldn't have heard of it." Or did they unite to disparage the book of Mr. Quin, who had scooped them with *his* steam voyage to Constantinople down the Danube seven years earlier. What would be the 1840 version of "Quite unscholarly, you know. Most superficial."

They went by Thames Gig; they went sailing, they went leisurely. And Mr. Bigelow, in 1892, embraces them all as he "paddles and politics" down the Danube—oh blissful years when one could do both and return to tell the tale.

There are odd names that catch the eye. Bessie Parkes, that intrepid fighter for women's rights before she settled down and became the mother of Hilaire Belloc, seems to have written a book on Hungary. Israel Zangwill visited the Millenary Exhibition in Budapest in 1896 and wrote an article on it. And Elinor Glyn went to Hungary too. Did

she, was it possible, that she met a mysterious Transylvanian princess there? How long did she stay? Three weeks?

But the serious interest sharpens as one delves further. Although most of the travel books are of the 20th and especially the 19th century, in which as a professional historian he specialized, he managed to pick up quite a number of fascinating volumes of earlier travellers to Hungary in the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries. Experts will of course know all about them, but the amateur is charmed to discover an account of the travels of the tenth Earl of Pembroke in Hungary in the eighteenth century, to meet familiar names like Lady Mary Wortley-Montagu, John Evelyn, Englishing a history of the Grand Viziers Mahomet and their wars in 1677, keeping his hand in, as it were between one treatise on forestry and another on prevention of smoke in London, Sir Henry Wotten and Sir Henry Blount. There are a few first editions, such as the travels in Hungaria of Edward Browne, who turns out to be the eldest son of the great, the beloved "Urne Burial" Sir Thomas Browne, and there is an entry of an anonymous journal, with an account of Pozsony and Eszterháza, crowned with the accolade of every true collector—"Not in the British Museum." Henry Blount, who stoutly defended the virtues of coffee and tobacco, probably only skirted the confines of the Hungarian kingdom in Dalmatia on his trip to Gran Cairo via Venice in 1637, but what was Samuel Brett doing in 1650 at the Great Council of the Jews, and what was the Great Council of the Jews doing examining the Scriptures concerning Christ on the plains of Hungaria? The imagination boggles at the vision of a great circle of venerable and befurred rabbis sitting round the camp fire on the Hortobágy, with S. B. dashing round taking notes on Isaiah eleven and fifty-three.

Yet this not inconsiderable collection of traveller's accounts of Hungary forms only a minor section of the library as a whole. Béla Iványi-Grünwald, the son of a Hungarian painter well-known before the First World War, was a historian by profession. It was the irony of history that brought him to England to study the activities of the 1849 exiles ninety years later, in 1939, the year that made him, like them, a refugee from his own country.

The greatest part of his collection, consequently, is devoted to publications in the English language on Hungarian history, and particularly nineteenth century history. There are a large number of books on the Kossuth period, general histories and specific studies, some 165 books on the 1848 War of Independence and Kossuth and the exiles alone, 85 on the Transylvanian problem, with standard English works like those of Macartney and Seton-Watson, a number on minority problems, on the Treaty of Trianon and its consequences, and a certain amount of Iron Curtain stuff. But he also managed to lay his hands on several rarer works dealing with earlier periods, particularly the Turkish wars, such as the 1600 English translation of Martin Fumee's "histories of the troubles of Hungarie, containing the pitifull losse and ruine of that kingdom," the first English book devoted exclusively to Hungary, or Melvill's "Historical description of the glorious conquest of Buda" of 1686, and a history of Hungary and Transylvania called "Florus Hungaricus" of 1664.

What in fact this catalogue reveals is that there is a much larger literature on Hungary in English, and far more translations, that I for one had imagined. To take one example. Kossuth's life, letters, memories of exile, speeches, in translation, were only to be expected, given the wave of sympathy for him in England and America and the tumultuous reception he received in both countries in 1851: and in the light of that same enthusiasm journals and memoirs of lesser Hungarian leaders like General Klapka, or Count C. Leiningen-Westerburg, the relative Queen Victoria unsuccessfully tried to save from execution afterwards, or even of volunteers in the glorious struggle, are not

surprising. Nor even the personal account of Baroness Wilhelmine von Beck (pseud.) of her missions under the orders of Kossuth dashing to the different posts of the Hungarian army during the contest—(what a time she must have had!). What is surprising is that "My Life and Acts in Hungary in the years 1848 and 1849"—the self-defence written by Artur Görgey, the general who finally laid down arms in the War of Independence and whose reputation has been fought over in Hungary ever since, should have been translated and published in New York as early as 1852.

Literature is far worse served. Odd novels of best sellers now passed into obscurity. A couple of books by Kálmán Mikszáth, one by Kosztolányi, and a whole spate of novels —twenty-two of them—testifying to the widespread but transient popularity of Mór Jókai, published with a few exceptions between 1896 and 1901, some of them running into three or four editions. Hungarian poetry, also, practically nowhere. There are a few anthologies, mostly, I imagine, unreadable today. "Gems from..." is enough to warn us off today, just as "Physico 23" will most certainly warn off our grandchildren. What Iványi-Gründwald did however manage to find was the volume with the first poems of Petőfi translated into English in 1847 by that remarkable radical Sir John Bowring, who knew ten languages before he was thirty and tossed off Hungarian and Arabic and Chinese as an afterthought, who ran a business and a Parliamentary constituency and a literary review and a couple of colonies and overhauled the whole system of Government financing and accounting and who deserves, someday, an article to himself. And another—irresistible—volume of the prose and poetry of Petőfi by one Major d'A. Blumberg which modestly includes a play, prose and poetry to keep him company by no less a poet than Gustav d'A. Blumberg himself.

Other pleasurable discoveries, out of many? That Bajcsy-Zsilinszky is not a street but an author; that a book entitled "The Seventh Vial; being an exposition of the apocalypse, and in particular of the pouring out of the Seventh Vial with special reference to the present revolutions in Europe," does not, as one might expect, date from 1645 or thereabouts, but from 1848; that an early forerunner of all the technical delegations that annually flood Europe was the Essex farmers' party which visited Hungary in 1902 to study its agricultural industry and education, and—most rewarding of all—that there is actually a book in existence—"What to read about Hungary"—by Klára Szőllősy, which tells me what else there is in English. And two little nagging queries. What *was* the "Hungary water" for which a receipt is given in "The Toilet of Flora" of 1784, and, as the title asks, who *was* "the king of Hungary that is now a suitor in the English court of Chancery?"

There is one thing more to say. The catalogue is a model of what such things should be. There is a short, living and very moving biographical note by the editor, a bibliography of the writings of Béla Iványi-Grünwald himself, followed by all the entries in alphabetical order, each with the appropriate information, appendices of the manuscripts, maps, music and prints respectively, and an excellent subject index.

This partly because the editor, Loránt Czigány, knows his job inside out. And partly, one feels, because it was also a work of piety, a labour of love to the memory of a departed friend.

It would be a pity if this valuable, and indeed almost unique collection, were to be lost. I know how difficult it is to find easily accessible English material on Hungary outside the British Museum. Is it Hammersmith Public Library, or another, which specializes in Hungary in the division of subjects in the London public library system? Could not some effort be made to secure this collection for it before it is dispersed and such an opportunity lost, probably for ever?

BERTHA GASTER

TWO SHORT-STORY WRITERS

Endre Illés: A Hundred Stories *

What Endre Illés thinks matters in Hungarian literary life. And this in spite of the fact that he has not written reviews for years, and in fact today he considers the years he spent as a professional critic as a parenthesis in his career. Not that this has reduced the weight of his critical comment, for as managing director of the most important Hungarian publishing house, *Szépirodalmi Kiadó*, he remains an active critic of Hungarian literature.

And criticism still needs him. All he has done is to expand the frontiers of the subject. In the old days he criticized by means of articles, essays and theatre reviews, now he does it in his own plays and short stories.

His literary career began at the Medical University in Budapest. He has often said that he wanted to be a doctor in order to be a writer. And he went on doctoring—flesh and spirit alike, using his medical experiences, as Somerset Maugham used his, as the raw material of literature. Doing an autopsy one day on the body of a young girl he stopped dead, the dissecting knife still in his hand. He had suddenly seen that the laughing muscles of the body had atrophied. Case histories turned into themes, patients into characters for short stories. At the University Hospital he learned from Professor Sándor Korányi, the famous medical professor of the time; in literature he learned from Lajos Mikes, the patron of all young writers. After reading some of his short stories, Mr Mikes, who was the editor of the popular *Est* papers, offered the young doctor a permanent job. Between the contrary pull of hospital and editorial office, the latter won. But he still spent his mornings with Professor Korányi.

What did he learn in the wards? That no two patients are alike, and consequently no two cases are alike. That healing begins with diagnosis, with the asking of questions. That hospital and literary school begin with the recording of case histories, the purposeful and concentrated asking of questions, the appropriate grouping of observations. They are his major virtues as a short-story writer.

This initial period of his literary career produced about two hundred short stories. He has never allowed them to be collected and reprinted. Something in them—he says—is lacking, perhaps the active intervention of the writer; the power to generalize from given cases was missing from these short stories in the first place. They may have accurately reflected surface reality, but they went no deeper. Elsewhere he has described these early short stories as a prolonged error in method, a mistake made for years under the spell of another discipline—the drama.

He began his career as a critic with sharp self-criticism. He judged that his work did not meet his own strict standards, and stopped doing original work. He became a critic. Literary periodicals of the time were happy to publish his reviews, and as the editor of the literary supplement of the *Budapesti Hírlap* he made a whole new generation of writers welcome. In the meantime he continued to learn, collecting experiences and people, shading and polishing his own expressive style. Sharpening his pen on the works of others, he spent nine years preparing to take up original work again. It began to come out in the forties: plays, essays, and again short stories. Versatility may not be his most characteristic attribute, but it is certainly one of them. When he won the Kossuth Prize in 1964 reviewers quarrelled among themselves whether to award precedence to the dramatist, the short-story writer, the critic, the translator of Maupassant and Stendhal, or to one of the key personalities in Hungarian publishing. They finally compromised on "man of letters."

* *Száz történet*. Szépirodalmi Publishers Budapest, 1966.

Even when he was a critic, the short story was still near his heart. He claimed that Maupassant expressed his vision of the age, not as in novels, but in the single entity made up of his short stories seen as a whole; Illés in fact thought in terms of the whole span of a life-work, as expressed in the collected short story. In addition to Maupassant he was a keen admirer of the short stories of Zsigmond Móricz, edited several collections of classical and modern Hungarian short stories, and has missed no opportunity to assert that the short story is the most suitable vehicle for characterization.

"A Hundred Stories" would suggest it even if its author had not put it in so many words. The volume is a collection of the experiences, the diagnoses, X-ray photographs, autopsy and reports of thirty years of writing. 1937 is the date of the first, and 1965 the last.

*

Some time ago there was a wild literary argument about the anecdote. It was a cancerous growth on the body of Hungarian literature, said some. Endre Illés, who preferred to centre his work on man and men rather than on principles or abstract theory, defended the possibilities of the anecdote. He insisted, however, on a single—essential—qualification; that the aesthetic justification of the anecdote and the story is that it must be characteristic of the times it recalls. Although it was never Endre Illés's purpose to expose the course of history in its fullness, or even to illuminate in passing some great moment or conflict of the time, his short stories (with a few exceptions) are nevertheless characteristic of their time, they place their characters in the time and space, in the genuine environment of their period.

The moral disintegration of the world of the gentry, the lesser nobles, the squires, is a theme that has haunted Hungarian literature from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards, and continued to be tragically true into the next. It forms a background to many of Illés's tales. Poverty-stricken squires and lesser gentry, clinging desperately to outmoded privilege and a rapidly decaying—though still effective—way of life, can be seen as through a distorting mirror. One of Illés's characters jumps into the water fully dressed—not, as one of his gentry ancestors might have done, as a flourish, a gesture, but for money—80 forints is the price.

The majority of these pre-war short stories deal with figures of contemporary life. They lived in the best residential districts of Budapest, wore dresses and suits made to order, and gossiped and made amusing remarks and loved and murdered. Toward the end of the thirties an air of uneasiness came over the upper middle-class drawing-rooms and the homes of the intelligentsia; it could be felt in the hotel lounges and on the long automobile tours they used to take; an uncertainty, an emptiness in human relationships. Several of his stories deal with this human insecurity. A pair of married acrobats, placing all their hopes on a publicity stunt and willingly flirting with death for their daily bread in "Crow Soup"; the doctor in a hospital who endures constant humiliation from his superior because all the hierarchical dependence of the system, demand it, in "Cruel Comedy."

In one of the best-known short stories of his career ("Reminiscence, 1923"), Endre Illés mentions Professor Korányi, his former teacher, who used to hold Tolstoy up as an example to his medical students, Tolstoy, who in "War and Peace" described the symptoms of a then unknown disease contracted by soldiers with such careful accuracy and minute observation that his description foreshadowed the later scientific discoveries on the subject. The example given by his teacher made Endre Illés, at the very beginning of his career, aware of the responsibility of the writer. "We must be so passionately true, so accurate and faithful, we must know the essence of things so thoroughly, that our reality will still stand even

when new elements are added to the old. The present must be described so as to suggest the unknown future. The three-dimensional world becomes real only through an awareness of the fourth dimension, the future." A good many stories in the volume are evidence that he acted on this principle. The writer is lord over his own test tubes and beakers. His own theory and research directs the line of research, varies and alters his stories. The subject of research for Endre Illés to this very day has been the chemical reaction of the gold of human character subjected to the corrosive chemical action of lies. He sets up the optimal conditions for the psychological experiment, influencing it by internal or external factors. The tradition of the Hungarian short story is emotional, somewhat lyrical, largely anecdotal, and, this method seemed unusual and even callous. He was labelled as Maupassant had "been labelled," *impassibilité* was regarded as his virtue and his crime. Illés picks up the glove in defence of his master to prove that there is as much feeling in Maupassant's almost ostentatious detachment as in the rhetoric of Victor Hugo or the syrup of Bourget. In place of explicit comment the juxtaposition of the elements of the story and their inner rhythms express the irreconcilable scorn and anger of the writer: "Maupassant is always, untiringly, on the offensive. Not with the heavy rattle of swords; those tactics he leaves to others. The sounds he makes are small, narrow, thin-lipped. Very little blood seeps from them. But his rapier always hits the vital organs."

Illés wreaks havoc on his own victims. In the wake of his stories lie the dead, convicted of hypocrisy and lies. The petty bourgeois woman pretending to culture and distinction, every clumsy gesture betraying her invincible mediocrity; the chocolate-box artist; the greedy bourgeois asking for more even in the size of his coffin. The map of little local lies aggregating into a system. With Illés good taste is a moral category, and fidelity to the truth is a question of good taste. But this extreme consciousness of morality which has become the vital element in which he lives is in effect the other face of his passionate search for truth. Except that he makes no overt attempt to arouse the same passion in his readers by direct appeal; he relies on the force of the tale alone to awaken an emotion of equal intensity. Perhaps not each of his short stories is capable of doing it. The volume contains some real little masterpieces—"Crow's Soup," "Shame," "Epilogue," "The Verdict," "Andris," or "Ladies in Vienna"—which can produce the desired emotional effect through their intellectual and suggestive powers, but there are others too weak in tension (such as "Idyll," "Visit," "The Superfluous One"), where the coldly told story leaves the reader equally cold.

Once in a while Illés, the accomplished diagnostician, takes his white coat, and injects the poison in the syringe of the short story into his own veins. These are usually the times when he rebels against experiments on man, when he is more interested in the attitude of the experimenters than the objects of the research, as in "Guinea-pigs" and "Abyss." One of the best short stories in the volume, perhaps the only tale with lyric, emotional overtones in the collection, is "Parallel Circles." Parting and conflict between father and son is no new theme; there have been innumerable versions on the battle of the generations. Equally with Endre Illés father and son reach the point of no return; each shut in his own circle, impervious to the other, loving yet unable to communicate, where all omissions become irreparable. As if Kafka's defenceless fear of his father were here reversed; a relationship, atrophied in the depths of the soul, which seems more unbreakable on the threshold of death than ever before. "Parallel Circles" is a little gem of dramatic construction; so, in various ways, are most of his short stories. A long exposition, on the point of irritating us, leads inevitably, at the right moment, to an effective climax; "The Slap," one such tale,

could have been constructed in no other way. Plots turning on a single thread, contemplative portraits, jottings half in essay form —these are typical of the careful culture of his writing, cultured in a double sense, and they lend formal unity to the volume. For there is a world culture implicit in every word he writes. Not only the accumulated anatomical and biological knowledge of a medical training has defined his artistic vision, but also his familiarity with literature. I am not thinking of literary elegance or ornament, but of the fact that world literature has been his inspiration and his yardstick: it is in his blood, it stimulates his associations. Life leads to associations of art, and art to associations of life.

His style is determined by a driving accuracy, concentrating on what is relevant. He avoids high-sounding words and adjectives, his sentences are lean and spare. The language his characters speak reflects their personality, education and state of mind. Not only when a *déclassé* army officer enriches his own insignificant language with the army German of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, but also when the strange accents of the words catch the liar out, as in "Epilogue." The speech of the partially paralysed father in "Parallel Circles," for instance, echoes his personality, based on the observations of doctor and writer. The doctor in Illés is aware that the syntax and grammar of the stricken man is correct, he fits the words precisely to each other, but slips between the syllables the peculiarly slurring "a" sounds which make his words difficult to understand. The writer in Illés hears them, puts them into words, describing the sounds as queer, hollow, moist and fat. And any attempt to help the father to the words failed because "they toppled over directly like badly-made toy soldiers."

Illés prefers nouns and verbs to adjectives to give force to his meaning. His aversion to ready-made adjective becomes at times noticeable; he prefers to modify verbs, similes and associations to get what he wants; "the man was as defenceless as the inside of football"—for instance.

This two-volume selection from Illés's work is a valuable contribution to modern Hungarian prose. In the introduction the author modestly defends himself from the associations suggested by the title, and solemnly declares that the title only means what it says, a hundred stories about people, their lives and times. Yet it is not just a hundred stories; in its way it is also a historical and social encyclopedia of human nature and character, or, if you will, one kind of Hungarian Decameron covering the past thirty years.

Ferenc Karinthy:
*Above Water—Under Water**

For the sons of immortal fathers it is not easy to reach Parnassus. It is easier for them to begin; but with only emulation of father to inspire them, they more easily fall on the steep and rocky way. Ferenc Karinthy—a son of Frigyes Karinthy,** the outstanding Hungarian writer, satirist, and thinker of the twentieth century, equally significant in prose and poetry—made up his mind, as soon as he had a mind of his own, that he would not follow in his father's footsteps. With that name, he thought, a pale imitation was the most one could hope to become. Nonetheless he could not remove himself entirely from the world of literature. He studied philology at the University and wrote his doctor's thesis on Italian loanwords in Hungarian. But the pull of literature was too strong; like Dumas fils, Klaus Mann, and, in Hungarian literature, Sándor Hunyadi and Virág Móricz—Ferenc Karinthy also became a writer like his father.

He wrote his first novel practically as a

* *Víz fölött, víz alatt.* Szépirodalmi Publishers Budapest, 1966.

** See: "Frigyes Karinthy—Humorist and Thinker" by Miklós Vajda, in The N.H.Q., No. 6, and also a selection of Karinthy's writings.

game, an intellectual test. It takes years before even the greatest are referred to simply by their surname. For the son of the great writer, abandoning his Christian name was the start; the publishers, with an eye to business, advertised the first, not particularly significant, novel of the young linguist, "Don Juan's Night" simply as by Karinthy. During the ravages of war, to mitigate the idleness forced on him by the siege of Budapest, the young scholar, cut off from libraries and his filing cards, once again began a novel. He put down on paper his adolescent experiences and the break with the parental home. And this really decided his future. This confession, erupting from the depth of his being, became a fashionable and somewhat irrational novel. The autobiographical hero, the scholarly linguist, has already been transmuted into a more distant novel hero by the third volume. In the ironically and nostalgically constructed figure of Iván Ősi, the scholar-hero of the novel, which was called "Centaur," and published in 1947, it is not very difficult to recognize Karinthy's ideal of a way of life, and appreciate his picture of a drawing-room scholar, pampered and cosseted over long years. The figure gives evidence of a lyrical strain in Ferenc Karinthy not very usual in a writer of prose.

He later tried to break away from the limitations of his own personality. After the Liberation he dived with a romantic enthusiasm into the new themes offered by a new world. Like the writer-hero of his short story, "Monster in the Mine," he also tried to gain an insight into proletarian life, very little known to him, by occasional trips as a journalist. His talents as a reporter, his own sense of reality for a while helped him through the obstacles. He wrote popular articles, and his volume of stories entitled "Beautiful Life," largely dealing with factory setting and themes, earned recognition and success in 1949. A later novel (*Masons*, 1950), dealing with a similar background, became a text-book example of the platitudinous, over-simplified literature of the period. Whether this novel was worse than any of the others published at this time is difficult to say. At any rate its failure shook him to the core, and he cast about for new ways. More accurately, he returned, both as a short-story writer and novelist, to the personally experienced reality of the material of his own life; and when literary conditions changed, he dug more closely and deeply into life, in his capacity as a journalist as well. Instead of impressions he now collected sociological material; instead of illustration, he became attracted to the documentary. He began to search with increasing earnestness for the meanings behind what he heard and saw.

"Spring Comes to Budapest," the novel he wrote in this period, was considered a significant literary feat despite certain weaknesses, for Karinthy was the first to give an inside account of personal reactions to the siege of Budapest, its liberation, the tragedies men experienced and the intellectual and moral stimulus of a new beginning, seen through the eyes of a character largely modelled on himself. The romanticism of recovered illusions sets the basic tone of the novel. There are flaws, of course, blatant colours and conventionalized characters that mar the harmony. "Spring Comes to Budapest" has nonetheless survived many other books on the subject. The secret of its success probably lay in the fact that Karinthy described history through the story of a tragic love, in a well-paced, interesting and highly readable novel.

It was characteristic of Karinthy's development that in the first ten years of his literary career short stories were only a side-product. In his new volume of collected short stories: "Above Water—Under Water," all but seven of the thirty-three short stories, selected from the harvest of twenty years, were written after "Spring Comes to Budapest," in fact the short-story writer developed *pari passu* with the novelist. His short stories make a suggestive beginning somewhere on the crossroads between precisely detailed realism and fabulous absurdity—with a close-

up of the office workers of the former regime, sentenced to petty bourgeois poverty. Then came his childhood experiences of sport—a subject always dear to Karinthy's heart—and then in 1948, not much later than his second novel, again a highly subjective theme: the young linguist in "Freedom" entrenched behind the barricade of his filing cards in his ivory tower, encountering reality.

The chief character in this short story is obsessed by his research into old Hungarian linguistic records; and understands very little of the present of the Hungarian people. Even the siege of Budapest only means an impediment to his academic work, separating him from the quiet of the Institute of Finno-Ugrian Studies, and from the filing cards containing the results of several years of work. This blow not only disrupts his way of life, but shocks the young scholar out of his accustomed passivity. He abandons his ivory tower at the first call, joins in a piece of sabotage organized by the anti-fascist resistance, and continues to take an active part in the movement. This course of action, belying Iván Ősi's character and earlier attitude, is barely justified in terms of his intellectual and emotional development. The sketchiness of the picture unfortunately strips his part in the resistance of its political and moral content, and reduces Ősi's attitude to an *action gratuite*, or at best a form of romantic flight. The basic question, namely, what intellectuals who find themselves buried under the debris of their ivory towers should do—is not answered in this short story. It is probable that Karinthy himself was aware of this deficiency, and that is why he attacked the theme for a third time when he wrote "Spring Comes to Budapest."

After a period of unanswered questions, came the era in Hungarian literature when no questions were asked at all. During the subsequent thaw, however, Karinthy was among the first who reworded the questions, putting a bolder and more incisive edge to them. The first peak in the volume, which encompasses the work of twenty years, is a *rapportage* of this kind, "A Thousand Years." When it was first published, in 1953, it stirred up a storm. It was something new in theme and approach. It dealt with a trial where two child-killers were in the dock; an abortionist midwife and Júlia Farkas, herself an unwed mother and the mother of an illegitimate child, who wanted to spare her younger sister her own calvary and for that reason arranged for the abortion of the unborn child. The trial and the case itself only provided a framework: in effect Karinthy, recalling the facts, accuses the real criminals. He exposes not only the indifferent, cynical seducer of the unwed mother, but also the cruelty of the rigid abortion law of the period—and beyond it, all the ignorance, the emotional and spiritual bleakness of a thousand years, the intellectual and emotional poverty of the characters, which precipitates tragedies of this kind. Writing with such passion behind it has rarely been seen since then. "A Thousand Years" became an indictment—a point of reference in journalism and sociology. The accused have long ago served their term, and today even the abortion law of those times is no longer valid, but "A Thousand Years" has remained a significant report of lasting value on an era.

Short and dramatic stories are inspired by experiences of genuinely dramatic intensity. The second outstanding story in the volume is dated almost ten years later and again recalls the war years. In "An Old Summer," a story which almost assumes the proportions and stature of a short novel, the relative peace of the world far behind the battle-lines, the amusements of soldiers on leave and civilians left at home, provide the framework. The drama lies in contrast. The chief character of the story is closely related to the scholars of the Karinthyan drawing-room who suddenly encounter reality. In this particular case the chief character is an art historian who in the tempest of history, in the bloody tide of the massacres at Novi

Sad, breaks out from his normal inhibitions and his normal personality. Iván Ősi is swept by the tide of events into heroism, the officer in "An Old Summer" to murder. And he kills the very woman whom he had first saved from among those bound for death, and then forced to become his mistress. No false ideals inspire him, nor fear, nor an impulse of self-defence; only shame —the feeling that he is no better than the others. To be a murderer among murderers— that demands no heroism. And the military machine which feeds on human flesh, which crushes the innocent, sooner or later takes its toll of its own servants: physical annihilation is not the only kind of death. Karinthy's short story owes its dramatic tension just to this lack of any final catharsis, to the fact that its hero undergoes none of the sufferings of remorse; and the pleasure of an apparently carefree assignation later on indicates that people whose conscience has been murdered are not even disturbed by the memory of their victims. The story, which is built up with a repudiation of all the romantic commonplaces of the subject, is designed to shock. The austere precision of every detail, the tension of the dialogue, and the sharp shifts in situations pushed to extremes all serve this purpose.

"Literary Tales" is a series of tales and anecdotes from Ferenc Karinthy's childhood, nurtured in the atmosphere of literature generated by his famous father. Vignettes of well-known people and effectively told stories call to life the literary circle and Bohemian poverty of the father, Frigyes Karinthy. These short stories are more than literary gossip, and more stimulating than any history of literature, but some familiarity with contemporary Hungarian literature and public life, or at least a reader's attachment to the heroes, is probably a prerequisite for their enjoyment. The absolute subjectivity of the writer is at once the charm and the limitation of these short stories.

In a tone, in humour and in the poetic touch, closely related to these stories are the range of stories about sports and sportsmen. Sports have played a very important part in the life of the 46-year-old author. This student of the arts, brought up in purely literary surroundings, a square-built giant of a man, is in fact very much of an athlete, and as a young man played in one of the most popular water-polo teams of Hungary, and is still connected with it. His knowledge and experience of sport is therefore just as first-hand as his knowledge of literature. In the second case, however, sport has become completely transposed into literature. The short story which lent its title to the volume is, for instance, an excellent picture, more the natural history of a star's career than a sports report. Here water-polo is really only the background, used to bring out the character. For Karinthy sport is not a subject but a setting. An environment to which not only the experiences of his youth and emotional threads tie him but also a unique knowledge of it. This argument is put into words by a sports journalist called Béla Tóth in the title story: "Those who have written of sports up to now really don't know what it's all about. Neither those who, considering themselves adepts in the world of intellect, look down upon sportsmen, nor those, like modern American writers, who fall flat before an ox of a boxer and adore him as a god. They see it from the outside, and do not understand that sports are just as strong a need of our times, as the Crusades were for the Middle Ages— opium for the century of civilization. The earth has been circumnavigated and explored: what was at one time Magellan's great adventure is today a luxury voyage. War is a technical matter, there is no individual heroism; the struggle for existence has turned into a plodding drudgery, it needs no physical excellence and less and less intellectual talent. So instead of all these there is football and rugby as an outlet for leisure human energies bent on adventure—that is why it is just the twentieth century which has rediscovered sports and turned it into a drug

for the masses. The legal successor to the Hectors and Rolands of old, the hero and ideal of our times, is the centre-forward, for there is no one else with whom the millions can identify themselves, whom they can invest with all their dreams of beauty and grandeur. All this is very logical, just as it should be, even the kids kicking a ball on a patch of vacant land are intensely aware of it..." And probably Ferenc Karinthy is aware of it also, for this explains why he looks to the world of sport so often for the subjects of his stories.

Literature, sport and love. Probably this is the order of the writer's emotional attachments. For love returns in innumerable variations as a short-story subject, but Karinthy seems to regard love merely as a means of squaring accounts with romanticism. In these short stories the basic formula of any possible relation between man and woman are reduced to flare of desire, a moment of pleasure in physical contact, and disgust—an isolation which no embrace can bridge. Never has one read more male-centred love stories. They can hardly be called love affairs—the woman lies, the man is disappointed. Intellectuals, artists, sports stars, cultural hangers-on, professional beauties, professional prostitutes chase each other on the non-stop merry-go-round of sex. The writer sidesteps the dangers of sentimentality, but his dry acerbity cracks on occasion, and the disillusionment with unromantic love becomes something very nearly romantic.

One single short story, however, in the volume claims absolution for the rest. This is the brilliant double-play of the tattoed woman who picks men up at the Gellért Baths. The man accepting, enjoying, tiring of and recoiling from his passing mistress, the babe of the baths equally convincing as the village innocent and the city vamp, is such excellent literary sport that the reader is happy to be led, and in fact misled, in the labyrinths of the tale.

The effect of Karinthy's *jeux d'esprit* and intellectual games depends largely on the magic of their first impact. And this wears off easily.

Dissatisfaction with the book stems in the first place from the recognition of Karinthy's undoubted literary powers. We have a right to expect more of the short-story harvest of twenty years than a first, brief enjoyment of tales, most of which are already well-known. It is just this extra weight that Karinthy's collection lacks. We are forced to be satisfied with what he has given us; pleasant, enjoyable reading, an easy, well-written style; wit, with many good stories and plenty of atmosphere evoking the genuine feel of Budapest. This would ensure success for the volume if there were not, as well, a few significant and even really brilliant stories in the collection.

ANNA FÖLDES

HOW ART THOU TRANSLATED?

Hundred poems—or thousand?

At the very height of the war, in 1943, a pleasantly produced book was published in Budapest—and sold out within days. It bore the title "Hundred Poems." The selection had been the work of Antal Szerb, one of the most original and highly cultured novelists and literary historians of that period, who was to be murdered by the Nazis within a year. He took the material of this bilingual anthology from Greek, Latin, English, French, German and Italian poetry. The introduction began with these words: "The

present writer still remembers the times when, on festive occasions, young girls used to be presented with an elegant little album in which to copy the poems they fancied most. This small volume is, basically, a book of the same sort. It contains those poems which the compiler—were he an old-fashioned young girl—would carefully copy into his little red velvet album with the silver clasp. There is hardly a poem in it which would not remind him of a very personal emotion; nearly each one of them has comforted him in a solitary or sorrowful hour, or aroused in him secret and inexpressible intimations of the deeper and eternal interconnections of the universe."

A hundred poems. Nowadays we are too sophisticated—probably also too nervous—to fill up little red albums with clasps, or maybe it is sheer laziness that prevents us from copying the verses which are near our heart; still—consciously or unconsciously—everyone carries such an anthology within himself. Who could determine how large it was to be? A hundred—or a thousand poems?

Today we have fewer and fewer delicate maidens day-dreaming in manorial houses and copying their favourite verses in the-album-with-a-clasp, but we have an increasing number of young and not-so-young people eager to know the world, the cultures of distant continents, the far-off echoes of their own emotions and beliefs. In other words: eager to find their kin. And they have more ways of doing so than ever before. Such knowledge may become a necessity for anyone who wants to face his personal problems and the world's. Long, long gone are the times when Monsieur Brotteaux relied on a single book, night and day, carrying in the pocket of his puce-coloured topcoat his favourite leatherbound Lucretius!

Tropics, constellations, stars

A single book is not enough, be it ever so great a masterpiece. This is not said in derogation of poor, innocuous M. Brotteaux, whose Lucretius gave him no one-sided views, and who had no intention of forcing the views of the Latin poet—or his own—on everyone. Such pious single-book men are not dangerous. Both earlier and later, however, there have been more formidable single-book men, of whom St. Thomas Aquinas has taught us to beware: *Timeo hominem unius libri.*

Thirteen volumes of poetry.* Picked from the number published in one year. As if we wanted to prove that Hungarian public and literary life is no longer exposed to the

* *Modern olasz költők* ("Modern Italian poets"). Chosen and edited by György Rába. Magvető, Budapest, 1965. pp. 412. — *Mai német líra* ("Contemporary German Lyrical Poets"). Chosen and edited by Gábor Hajnal. Európa, Budapest, 1966. pp. 492. — *A modern szlovák líra kincsesháza* ("Treasury of Modern Slovak Poets"). Chosen and edited by András Zádor. Európa, Budapest, 1966. (In eight small volumes.) — *Észak-amerikai költők antológiája* ("Anthology of North American Poets"). Chosen and edited by Miklós Vajda. Kozmosz, Budapest, 1966. pp. 540. — *Klasszikus orosz költők* ("Classical Russian Poets"). Chosen and edited by Pál Fehér and László Lator. Európa, Budapest, 1966. pp. 1382. — *Bolgár költők antológiája* ("Anthology of Bulgarian Poets"). Chosen and edited by Péter Juhász and László Nagy. Kozmosz, Budapest, 1966. pp. 396. — *Kövek. Újgörög líra* ("Stones. Modern Greek Lyrical Poetry"). Chosen and edited by Dimitrios Hadjis. Európa, Budapest, 1966. pp. 290. — *Németalföldi költők antológiája* ("Anthology of Dutch Poets"). Chosen and edited by István Bernáth. Móra, Budapest, 1965. pp. 342. — *Énekek éneke* ("The Song of Songs"). Chosen and edited by István Vas. Magyar Helikon, Budapest, 1966. pp. 722. — *Égövek, ábrák, csillagok* ("Tropics, Constellations, Stars"). Chosen and edited by György Rónay. Európa, Budapest, 1965. pp. 564. — *T.S. Eliot: Válogatott versek. Gyilkosság a székesegyházban* ("Selected Poems. Murder in the Cathedral"). Translated by István Vas. Európa, Budapest, 1966. pp. 326. — *Vítezslav Nezval: Az éjszaka költeményei* ("Poems of the Night"). Chosen by László Dobossy. Magyar Helikon, Budapest, 1966. pp. 300. — *Dylan Thomas: Összegyűjtött versei* (Collected Poems). Edited by István Géher. Európa, Budapest, 1966. With illustrations by Béla Kondor. pp. 294.

danger of "one book." "Modern Italian Poets," "Present-Day German Lyric Poetry," "Treasury of Modern Slovak Poets," "Anthology of North American Poets," "Stones —Modern Greek Lyrical Poetry," "Classical Russian Poets," "Anthology of Bulgarian Poets," "Song of Songs" (collection of love poems), "Anthology of Dutch Poets," and "Tropics, Constellations, Stars," an anthology of world literature grouped according to the subject. In addition there are volumes of poetry by some of the major twentieth-century poets: T. S. Eliot, Vítežslav Nezval, Jules Supervielle, Dylan Thomas, Lucien Blaga, Marina Tsvetayeva. The list is, of course, incomplete: not only do the decisions of publishers, but also individual choice, limit the selection.

Which does not detract from the truth: the books are not printed for the stockpile, but for the public. Hungarian book publishers have advanced to the point where they are capable of assessing the readers' interest, of whetting public appetite, and of satisfying it; they are giving a more comprehensive picture of the art of great nations and great poets, not entirely unknown, on the one hand, and focusing attention on undiscovered masterpieces on the other. The list we have given seems to prove that such demand is being increasingly satisfied.

It would be fascinating to know the effect these anthologies and complete editions have on the Hungarian public and on Hungarian literature. It would be an interesting piece of historical research to trace back and link Hungarian attitudes with trends in world literature. A history of this aspect of the humanities would probably yield not only aesthetic but also political conclusions: where, how and who were the people whose interest centred respectively or mainly in French, German, English or American literature. And again, which tendency in which literature became, at one time or another, a living and effective force in Hungarian literature itself? Today, at any rate, the new anthologies and collections prove that nowadays this interest has many facets, embracing as it does diverse geographical regions of the world. We have deliberately limited our list to books of twentieth-century poets; among the authors in the "Song of Songs" we find the names of Auden, Tuwim, Boris Pasternak, Louis MacNeice, Patrice de la Tour de Pin; among the poets of "Tropics, Constellations, Stars" we find Dylan Thomas, Osip Mandelstam, Fernando Pessoa, Federico García Lorca, Ivan Goran Kovačic, Paul Éluard; and the volume Classical Russian Poets includes the greatest Russian poets of modern times: Pasternak, Mandelstam, Tsvetayeva, Mayakovsky, Yesenin and Zabolotsky.

Kaleidoscope

Some readers may have explored these anthologies in the hope of finding what "modernism" means. If so, they must have been surprised and struck by the variety. Having read "Stones" (the anthology includes, among others, the poetry of Kostas Varnalis, Konstantinos Kavafis, Jeorgos Seferis, Jiannis Ritsos, Nikiforos Vrettakos), the large and outstanding volume of Eliot (selection and translation by István Vas), the collection of present-day German lyric poetry, and the anthology of North American verse, the reader will still find it difficult to define modernity. Between 1949 and 1955 knowledge of international literature had been restricted to a very one-sided view of things. These were the years in which the force of circumstances led to highly confused ideas and information as to what constituted the modern movement. Today the reader is shocked to realize how difficult it is to grasp this concept, how much more complex it is than prejudiced opinions—right and left—had imagined, and how many contradictory appearances it presents.

Each of these volumes help to build up a picture of the modern in poetry, although within any single nation examples contradict one another, indeed even within the work of

a single poet. Each anthology brings its own surprise. One of the revelations—perhaps the biggest—is the anthology of North American poetry. More than half the volume is made up of twentieth century poems, and at long last due attention has been given, in good translations too, to such poets as William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound, Archibald MacLeish, Robert Lowell, W. D. Snodgrass or, among the more recent, Ferlinghetti, Kerouac, Frank O'Hara, Gregory Corso and most of all, Allen Ginsberg. To dissect the virtues and failings of the anthology would be a task for the professional critic. What interests me most is that the howl of the beat generation has at last reached us; it will certainly find an echo. Will? Those who keep an eye on current Hungarian literature will have noticed that this painful howling, this seemingly shapeless and undisciplined poetry which is, however, built up around a firm nucleus linking free associations into an intricate whole, is present—*mutatis mutandis*, of course—in the verse of young Hungarian poets as well, even in the verse of those who have never read Ferlinghetti or Ginsberg. As if a new kind of romanticism were emerging in a particular modern guise. The shivering solitude of a "Supermarket in California," the diffidence with which the young American poet tries to conceal this solitude, the desperate invocation of his great predecessor, Walt Whitman, what are all these but a characteristic, up-to-date re-statement of the eternally romantic attitude to life expressed with exceptional poetic power? Ginsberg, naturally, is a disciple not only of Apollinaire, but, through him, of Whitman as well, taking over what he most values in them; in the words of Miklós Vajda, who edited and introduced the volume, "opening new possibilities in lyric poetry by his cascading lists of words, carrying along with them hunks of reality and with this—sometimes counterfeit—neo-barbarism." On the other hand Whitman's faith and democratic zeal says nothing to him; as his character and maybe historic destiny made inevitable, nor does Apollinaire's search for harmony, his gaiety and curiosity—he has returned to the romantic wolf-like solitude of the outcasts of society.

That this is one of the paths of modern lyric poetry is one of the lessons of the North American anthology. One of them. But the only one? Nearly every poet makes us aware of other possibilities, of different choices.

Another great poet has been late in coming. But now, when he has arrived in Hungary, notes similar to his own are already chiming in Hungarian lyric poems. He is Konstantinos Kavafis. Dimitrios Hadjis, the Greek novelist and critic living in Hungary, wrote about him: "The music and form of his verses are characterized by a deliberate brevity. His epigrammatic imagination refuses all the traditional poetical elements and ornaments." (This, we may add, applies first and foremost to the absence of poetical images.) "His poetic language, again consciously, is not based on the savour of the living language, but is rather a kind of anti-poetic admixture of living and ancient Greek, of pseudo-Atticism and officialese. Out of this desert of language and form there gushes forth a poetry of exquisite beauty." This is exactly what shocked the Hungarian readers of Kavafis who had previously only known him from odd reviews and periodicals: the infinite austerity of his verse, in which he deliberately renounces all resort not only to ornaments and images, but also to any attempt to raise the spoken language into literature—the great achievement of modern poetry. I was inclined to believe—together with so many French critics and literary historians—that Baudelaire marked the end of genre painting in lyric poetry. Yet Kavafis need no more than describe a historical event, a scene, a mere situation—without colour or comment, and "Thermopylae," "In a Village of Asia Minor," "Waiting for the Barbarians" come to our minds, painfully significant and utterly contemporary in feeling. One is inclined to feel that this great

poet on occasion even eclipses his remarkable compatriot Seferis, the Nobel Prize winner. He has shown that the revival of the anecdote, the genre-picture, by no means presupposes a return to nineteenth century or even earlier styles, marshalling the facts with a cunning simplicity is enough to open up new paths.

With these volumes new vistas open; like a central square from which not merely a dozen but hundreds of avenues radiate. And our wonder grows to see all these experiments and achievements echoed and repeated in Hungarian writing, shaped by utterly different historical and social attitudes and possibilites. This brief review would fall short of its purpose if it failed to draw attention to the crystal clarity of Nelly Sachs's lyrics ("there is some kind of fundamental salvation in her language"—wrote Hans Magnus Enzensberger), to the brilliant Enzensberger, anger of Blaga, the essence of humanism educated by expressionism, or Nezval's light-hearted courage combining the tradition of surrealism with the convictions of a social revolutionary.Then there is the commitment of Laco Novomesky, hiding under allegorical forms ("he, more than anybody, has recognized the two main currents which compose the twentieth century: pain and hope"—wrote Aragon), or the bold yet precise imagery of Osip Emilevich Mandelstam, the great classicist of Soviet-Russian poetry, or Mayakovsky's eruptive force.

These volumes seem to be part of the books on the shelves of modern poetry in the museum which Enzensberger tried to condense into a single volume years ago. When, however, in his excellent introduction he attempted to define modern poetry, he remained cautiously aloof: "It is, of course, impossible to define *a priori* the poetic principles of modern poetry, at most it can be analysed in a descriptive manner. However, this is the duty, not of the museum, but of its visitors and users. Before we attempt to describe its principles, we should first make ourselves fully acquainted with its texts."

This is what we are doing—though a bit late.

From acquaintance to conquest

To get acquainted with these texts, however, is not as simple a task or easy an amusement as visiting a museum. The whole body of work of a foreign poet will always remain *terra incognita* to the reader who only understands Hungarian until an effective translator is found for him. This is even more true of the modern than the classical poets; the translator often needs a new idiom, not to be drawn from the poetic traditions of his own country.

Perhaps this once one is not guilty of national boasting (one of our failings) in asserting that the standard of Hungarian translation-literature is very high indeed. Of necessity. It is conditioned by our advantages and by our need. The Hungarian language is naturally adapted to assimilating all sorts of alien prosodies, tonic and metre systems: this is luck. On the other hand, it is of necessity—a most advantageous necessity—that Hungarian literature has always been wide open to world poetry. Our poets have more often than not, turned to the work of western and eastern poets to gain the strength and encouragement their own lives, conditions, or history has failed on occasion adequately to provide. So the great of all periods and countries became our poetic "liberators": Shakespeare, Baudelaire, Apollinaire, Pushkin, Aristophanes, Hölderlin. For seven centuries now the hungry sheep have looked up and been fed by the greatest Hungarian poets with the finest fruits of world literature thus enriching the fare of their own national poetry. The high level of accuracy they maintained both in form and content acts as a standard and a challenge to our present-day poet-translators. The best living poets of Hungary consider literary translation as part of their job. It is through their lips that Dylan Thomas, Eliot, Kavafis and Celan speak to the Hungarian public.

There is a modern Hungarian theory of translation dating from the nineteen-twenties (developed by the greatest poets themselves) which somewhat curiously affirms that the translation of poetry into Hungarian is the most national, most patriotic (!) of all literary categories. Once translated, they claimed, that work can only be enjoyed by the nation into whose mother-tongue it has been transmuted. Or, as Lucian Blaga, the outstanding Rumanian poet and translator of *Faust*, wrote: "To translate means to conquer. Any nation can conquer another if it transposes the latter's literature into its own language. What a magnificent, what a noble form of conquest! The conquered nation loses nothing while the conqueror grows in perfection."

True enough, the conquered *nation* loses nothing but is it true for the words of the poets? That depends on each individual case.

The critics devoted a lot of attention to these books. In more than one case they argued whether the selection and the translations were appropriate for the poetry of a given poet, or age, or nation. It was the anthology of contemporary Italian poets which aroused the most heated controversy. It is true that scholars have as yet not done much work on this subject: the Italian critics themselves are arguing about the respective merits of these poets. Hungarian critics were unanimous in recognizing the merits of György Rába and Géza Sallay, as editors, but several of them felt that not enough attention had been given to futurist poetry. Although this school had not produced many outstanding, and much less enduring sympathetic poets, nevertheless—they argued—it was the only Italian school of poetry in this century which had become part of the mainstream of international literature. (Marinetti was obviously a less significant poet than Ungaretti, to say the least, in terms of his political and human career, but through his poetic achievements he is probably more alive in modern poetry than either Ungaretti or Montale.) This point of view might be contested, and strongly contested, but the problem is interesting and important. Others objected that the youngest generation was not adequately represented. They would have exchanged the *crepuscolare* poets and even the futurists, for a few of the younger ones: Munari, Socrate, Ciattini, Vollaro, Salvatore di Giacomo. They also regretted the absence of examples of the popular and neo-popular movement of Italian poetry. György Rába, answering these criticisms in a witty and convincing article, explained that the poets referred to did not represent the latest trends —far from it. He also pointed out that really impressive poets of this movement had still to be born. The argument was continued (though probably quite unwillingly) by Paolo Santarcangeli, an outstanding Italian connoisseur and translator of Hungarian poetry, in the periodical *Fiera Letteraria*. He praised the anthology, and declared that he found some of the translations very much better than the original. (Such things do happen, but it is not always good when they happen.)

The anthology of contemporary German literature, edited by Gábor Hajnal, presented a selection of the poetry of the two Germanies. The material has not been grouped according to state boundaries, but according to the different generations. Personally, I approve of this method. The oldest poet in the collection was born at the end of the last century, the youngest in 1937. The anthology gives a picture of the divergent trends of twentieth century German poetry, from Bertolt Brecht to Sarah Kirsch, from Hans Arp to Hans Magnus Enzensberger, from Gottfried Benn to Peter Hamm. The guiding principle in the selection was to choose the poets who continued to exert an influence after 1945, regardless of whether they are still alive. Which is why the critics objected to the omission of Bergengruen, the manuscript of whose poem "Dies irae" is powerful evidence that in the last years of nazism the poet had made a clean break with his own past and gone into opposition to Hitler's

Germany. One of the critics observed that the more characteristic poems of Marie Luise Kaschnitz and Günter Grass were not represented. While recognizing the general merits of the translations, he also called attention to a few mistakes and inaccuracies.

The "Treasury of Modern Slovak Poets" in eight small volumes contains poems by thirteen Slovak poets. Most of them are already known in Hungarian translation, e.g., Smrek, Lukač, Novomesky. The anthology was compiled by András Zádor, who is also the author of the notes in the respective volumes. Reviewers have objected that these notes give no picture of the development of Slovak literature, nor of the antecedents, literary evolution or general work of the poets discussed. The Slovak surrealists, it was claimed, were not given their proper place in the anthology, though it was generally admitted that Slovak proletarian literature was well represented and on a high level.

Commenting upon the anthology of Netherlands poetry, Mr. Antal Sivirsky, lecturer at the University of Utrecht, gave it the highest praise, declaring it unique even by international standards, and praising the work of István Bernáth who was responsible for the selection and editing. He thought the modern section of the book very good indeed, but that the medieval Catholic and later Protestant mystics were not given adequate space. Frisian lyric poetry, on the other hand, was given more space, he observed, than it merited.

Reviewers of the Bulgarian anthology, selected by László Nagy and Péter Juhász, stressed that former collections of Bulgarian poetry had given a very one-sided picture by putting all the emphasis on political and revolutionary trends, the present anthology provided a far more complete picture, giving Hungarian readers a taste of their nature poetry and some of the love poems of the greatest among them: Christo Boteff, Smirnenski, Geo Mileff and Nikola Vaptzaroff.

The volume of poems by Blaga, the Rumanian poet who recently died, deserves special praise if for no other reason than that the compiler, Sámuel Domokos, is editing his posthumous Kolozsvár papers. As a result some of the poems have appeared in Hungarian translation before their publication in the original Rumanian text.

I could go on... The reader will scarcely be interested, however, in details of prosody or scholarship, or the general problems of outlook these volumes involve. What is more interesting to him, as I have tried to indicate, is the sort of criticism they got, and the conclusions which emerged. All the comment and discussion, as I see it, goes to prove that Eliot and Nezval, Ginsberg and Supervielle, Ritsos and Dylan Thomas have become part of Hungarian literary consciousness.

The man-of-many-books

This assimilation into the background of Hungarian literature is probably the most important single point connected with these books. Yet let no one fear an undue influence on ourselves and on Hungarian literature in general. We do not have to be afraid of the effects of good modern poetry on our own. Hungarian poetry has always and inevitably taken the great problems of our national existence as its starting point. It is tied by a thousand threads to our history and our realities. That's how it was, that's how it still is. But it never slammed the door on the currents of world literature from the outside. "Would Hungarian poetry have ever been capable of attaining what it did attain but for the tentacles through which it absorbed the achievements of European poetry?"—asked Gyula Illyés. The answer is obvious. It achieved what it did because of its capacity for assimilating contrary influences.

Nicholas of Cusa, Renaissance cardinal and scholar, whose memory lives in a beautiful poem by István Vas, a modern Hungarian poet, called the world: *coincidentia oppositorium*, the meeting of opposites. If he, high priest and heretic, astronomer and

scholastic, linguist and mystic, saw himself and the universe in this light, how much more do we—particularly in terms of cultures and national traits. Within the pages of these books we find opposing attitudes, voices and ideas. They are united only in the search for truth and beauty. The gift of finding, of comprehending these qualities belongs to the man of many books who shall dare to brave the *homo unius libri*.

PÁL RÉZ

SHELLEY PLAIN

"Tennyson, whom I met at the grand Garibaldi party in April, is a very kind man, and his decorations are owing to his excellent and beautiful poems."

Alas, that is all Jácint Rónay finds to say. Jácint Rónay was a Benedictine monk, a chaplain in the revolutionary Hungarian army of the 1848 war who afterwards, like many of his compatriots, lived as an exile in England for over eighteen years. Count Gábor Károlyi, the cousin of the Count Lajos Batthyány who was executed by the Austrians after the Hungarian defeat, was another. Lajos Kossuth himself was a third. They, and other Hungarians, a traveller and orientalist like Ármin Vámbéry, Ferenc Pulszky, Kossuth's emissary in England, Felbermann, who later became the editor of a number of English reviews, met many of the great and the distinguished of Victorian society. They described them in their essays, entered them in their diaries, mentioned them in their letters or memoirs. Only too often, like so many of those who once "saw Shelley plain," they can only record; too frequently they lack the gift to illuminate. Rónay accompanied the Duke of Wellington on several occasions from Apsley House at Hyde Park Corner to the Crystal Palace, which was then being built. "I have on many occasions seen the lucky leader march under his glory," wrote Rónay in his eight-volume memoir of later years, written when he had returned home again and was tutor to the ill-fated Crown Prince Rudolf and secretary to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. "He was serene, deep in thought, and unconscious of the fact that his way to Buckingham Palace or the Houses of Parliament took him through the Marble Arch. People take off their hats to the hero of Waterloo, a habit normally alien to the English."

Dinner with Queen Victoria

But sometimes there is the odd flash, the interesting fact, the moment of illumination. These odd reminiscences, taken from old periodicals gathering dust in libraries, and from forgotten books, cast a small light on personalities and people of the era; provide in some sort footnotes to the history of the time that are worth collecting and recalling. Ármin Vámbéry, for instance, the famous Hungarian orientalist and traveller, who lived in England for several years and acted in some unspecified capacity as adviser to the British Government, was invited to Windsor Castle on May 5, 1889 on a two-day visit to "see the library and the sights of the Castle." "A royal carriage," he wrote, "awaited me at the station, and I drove to the Castle, where I was received by the Lord Steward, Sir

Henry Ponsonby, an amiable and noble-minded man, who greeted me warmly and conducted me to the apartment prepared for me... The crown jewels never dazzled me to such an extent as to force me to worship their wearer. But everyone must agree that the natural simplicity of Queen Victoria's manner, her rare amiability and kindness of heart, and the way in which she knew how to honour Art and Science, had a most fascinating effect on those who came into contact with her. It is a great mistake to imagine that this princess, placed at the head of the monarchical republic, as England may be called on account of its constitution, was only the symbolical leader of the mighty State, having no influence on its wonderful machinery. Queen Victoria had a remarkable memory; she knew the ins and outs of every question, took a lively interest in everything, and in spite of her earnest mien and conversation, sparks of wit often lighted up the seemingly cold surface and reminded one of the fact that she was a talented princess and a clever, sensible woman... Queen Victoria has often erroneously been depicted as a woman cold in manner, reserved, and of a gloomy nature... This idea is quite incorrect. She certainly was a little reserved at first, but as soon as her clever brain had formed an opinion as to the character and disposition of the stranger, her seeming coldness was cast aside, and was replaced by a charming graciousness of manner, and she warmed to her subject as her interest in it grew... What most surprised me was that she not only retained all the strange Oriental names, but pronounced them quite correctly, a rare thing in a European, especially in a lady; she even remembered the features and peculiarities of the various Asiatics who had visited her Court, and the opinions she formed were always correct... The knowledge that the most powerful sovereign in the world, who guides the destinies of nearly four hundred million human beings, stands before you in the form of a modest, unassuming woman, is overwhelming."

Professor Vámbéry later met Lord Palmerston, who had originally been reluctant to receive representatives of the Hungarian Government in 1848–49, but later made friends with a number of Hungarians. These meetings were obviously a little livelier. Vámbéry recorded that "of all the leading statesmen of the time I felt most attracted towards Lord Palmerston. I recognized in him a downright Britisher, with a French polish and German thoroughness; a politician who, with his gigantic memory, could command to its smallest details the enormous Department of Foreign Affairs, and who knew all about the lands and the peoples of Turkey, Persia and India... and what particularly took my fancy were the jocular remarks which he used to weave into his conversation, together with *bon mots* and more serious matters. In the after-dinner chats at the house of Mr Tomlin, not far from the Athenaeum Club, or at 15 Belgrave Square with Sir Roderick Murchison, where I was often invited guest, he used to be particularly eloquent. When he began to arrange the little knot of his wide, white cravat, and hemmed a little, one could always be sure that some witty remark was on its way, and during the absence of the ladies subjects were touched upon which otherwise were but seldom discussed in the prudish English society of the day. I had to come forward with harem stories and anecdotes of different lands, and the racier they were the more heartily the noble lord laughed."

Dickens and Thackeray

Vámbéry also knew Dickens "whose acquaintance I made at the Athenaeum Club, and who often asked me to have dinner at the same table with him. Dickens was not particularly talkative, but he was very much interested in my adventures, and when once I declined his invitation for the following evening with the apology that I had to dine at Wimbledon with my publisher, John Mur-

ray, he remarked, 'So you are going to venture into the Brain Castle, for of course you know,' he continued, 'that Murray's house is not built of brick but of human brains.'"

Another Hungarian who met Dickens was Ferenc Pulszky, diplomat, art historian and archaeologist, Foreign Minister in the 1848 Government, and an exile until the Compromise of 1867 when, like many others, he returned, to become the director of the Hungarian National Museum, and the founder and administrator of the Museum of Fine Arts and the Museum of Applied Art. "Dickens has always been courteous to us," he wrote. "You could not see him very much in society, he lived secluded in a separate little group made up mainly of the contributors of his weekly paper. He spent most of the year in France and disliked what was known as English society."

Thackeray, however, according to Pulszky, "was quite unlike Dickens. You could often see him at parties given by the aristocracy, or at the Garrick Club, where actors, friends and patrons of the theatre and many writers met in the evenings. His humour never failed him. On one occasion Lord Ellenborough was the subject of the conversation, and Hayward, who liked to boast of his acquaintances among the aristocracy, threw off that he was going to lunch with Lord Ellenborough on Friday. Thackeray remarked how fortunate that was, for he too had been invited for Friday, and they could both go together. Hayward was silent for a minute. Then, as if he had just remembered, he said, 'No, it wasn't Friday, I was invited for,' upon which Thackeray drily remarked 'Nor I.'"

His reaction to Macaulay was very much the same as many of Macaulay's English contemporaries. "Macaulay was not popular in society. He was a good speaker, he liked the sound of his own voice and was used to admiration. As a result he monopolized the conversation, and when he was there no one else could get a word in."

A Promoter of Reform

Ferenc Pulszky's wife, Theresa Walter, the daughter of a Viennese banker, had been a lifelong friend from childhood of the wife of Lord Lansdowne, and it was consequently Lord Lansdowne who introduced him to English political and social life when he arrived in London in the spring of 1849 as Kossuth's emissary. "Lord Lansdowne," he wrote, "seemed to me the model of the English aristocracy. The traditions of the English aristocracy were embodied in him; he believed that an aristocrat can only maintain his influence in politics when he is governing the country in the interest of the middle classes and not in his own, and Lord Lansdowne was therefore in every respect a friend and promoter of reform. As an old friend and a follower of Fox he never abandoned the flag of civil rights and relir gious freedom, and socially he knew that the glory of the English nation had not only been brought about by its generals and statesmen, but that writers had had their fair share in it, that Shakespeare, Sir Walter Scott and Byron mean the same to England as the Duke of Wellington, and this is why Lord Lansdowne gave his support to literature as well as to writers, both socially and financially."

That fiery old pagan, Walter Savage Landor, had been a devoted supporter of all the Independence movements on the Continent since the French Revolution; his first article in favour of Hungary was written only a week after the outbreak of the War of Independence, on March 23, 1848.

On October 6, 1849, thirteen Hungarian generals of the defeated army were hanged at Arad in the bestial oppression that followed. Some years later Landor wrote an article in an English paper on the anniversary of this event. It called forth an article of homage from Lajos Kossuth himself—the only article, incidentally, that any Hungarian statesman of importance has written about an English poet; it was written in the English language

which the Hungarian patriot had learned in prison from reading the English Bible. "No usurper, no invader should be permitted to exist on earth," says W. S. Landor. "The Briton with the soul of ancient times, the words of whom I quote. He, who well can imagine how the Brutuses may have felt, and how a Demosthenes spoke, *he* remembered the 6th of October. I call from him the honour of being allowed to offer him herewith a public homage of my heartfelt gratitude. May the best blessings of Heaven be with him! Amongst millions of Britons he alone remembered publicly the day on which Francis Joseph of Austria—then yet a boy in years, but more than a Nero in cruelty—revelled with fiendish ferocity in the blood of the bravest and the best of my country, and gloated upon the agony of a heroic nation."

Darwin on the Sex of Children

Count Gábor Károlyi, a cousin of the Count Lajos Batthyány who became the President of the first representative Hungarian Government in 1848, and was barbarously shot by the Austrians after the failure of the revolution, made the acquaintance of Darwin during his long exile. "Darwin came to our parties four times," he wrote. "He never talked about his scientific discoveries, but preferred to chat with my wife. He had a sweet temper and he was very modest, but his knowledge was unlimited. He knew a hundred times more than is included in his books. But however rich his mind was, he still enjoyed my wife's small talk. I often wondered at this man with his great forehead, piercing glance, and his thick curling hair. Once the conversation turned to Darwin's special research on the origin of the human species. It was neither me nor Ameli who brought the subject up, but one of our guests. In the course of this conversation we suddenly began to discuss why a mother gives birth to a son at one time, and a daughter at another, and why one child resembles the father and another the mother. Darwin smilingly joined in the conversation. This was his territory. My wife turned to him, and said 'Dear Mr Darwin, will you tell me whether, when we have a baby, it is going to be a boy or a girl, and whether it is going to look like me or Gábor?' 'Even if I do tell you, dear Countess,' said Darwin, 'my fortune-telling will be of no more value than anyone else's. Though I have devoted a great deal of thought to the subject. It seems to me that all children ought to be boys and they all ought to resemble their fathers, as the germ of life comes from the father. Why it is not so, I cannot tell. But I believe that you, Countess, will have a son and he will look like his father. You are so vivid and observant, and you notice everything, even when you are in the middle of a great company and engaged in animated conversation, that even when you are pregnant you will not be absorbed in thinking, meditating and daydreaming, and consequently will not neutralize with brain work the natural development of the father's germ'. My wife laughed. 'This is very elevated wisdom for me, dear Mr Darwin. If you won't take it amiss, when the time comes I shall consult a fortune-teller as well.' Darwin laughed and answered: 'It is possible that the fortune-teller will know it better.'" And in the light of modern genetics, maybe he was right.

In the years these often penniless Hungarian refugees were living in London, a Hungarian boy, surrounded by all the advantages that wealth, position and security could give him, was growing up not half a mile away. At the age of fourteen young Sándor Apponyi, the son of Count Antal Apponyi, Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to London, came home triumphantly to his father with the first old Hungarian book he had picked up in a London bookshop, and thus began the lifelong pursuit which ended in the most perfect collection of Hungarica from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries in existence, which is today a part of the

National Széchényi Library in Budapest. As a young man he met Carlyle, and found him "a good-looking handsome man, whose face and whole appearance suggested great intelligence." Carlyle, he found, "spoke loudly, with a strong Scottish accent, declaiming powerfully and energetically," and for some time Apponyi found him difficult to follow. "The first time," recounts Apponyi, "before I had ever heard him speak, I heard a loud flow of words from the other room, and asked who was reading the *Nibelungenlied* in there. I was told it was Carlyle reading something in English."

A Last Meeting with Trollope

Henrik Felbermann, whose long life extended from the middle of the last century to well into the thirties in this, was a journalist of Hungarian origin and became the editor of a number of English periodical. He was a friend of George Sand, Renan and Zola, and numbered George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, Charles Reade and George Moore among his friends. "George Eliot," he wrote in his memoirs, "to whom I had a letter from Ernest Renan, also received me very cordially. I spent many an afternoon or evening at her house. We often drove together to Richmond, and while the carriage waited for an hour or two at the Star and Garter, where we afterwards had tea, we had long strolls in the park. When I first saw her, she was working on *Daniel Deronda*, her last and longest novel, with a Jewish subject, in which, with a prophetic eye, she visualized the Zionist movement. It was Jewish history and literature that formed the main topic of our conversations. By great fortune I enjoyed the friendship of the two most famous women writers of the day, George Sand, with whom I collaborated in Paris for about a year and a half, and the author of Adam Bede, and in both cases it was their deep interest in Jewish literature that led to our close connection."

Felbermann edited a review called *Life* —long before its American successor—in which Anthony Trollope's novel *The Land Leaguers* was being serialized. One day Trollope arrived with some proofs. "He seemed very low-spirited. 'Mr Trollope, you seem to have the blues,' I said laughingly. 'Why,' he answered. 'I have just come down from Harting, where I have been riding my horses to death.' 'Are you going to remain in London today?' I inquired. 'Yes,' he replied. 'I wanted you to join a few friends I shall have at my house to dinner.' 'Who are they? Do I know them?' he asked. I mentioned among others the Hungarian Minister, Trefort, who was just then staying at my house, the Austrian Archduke Ludwig Salvator of Tuscany and the Maharajah Duleep Singh. When I named an eminent Austrian, Trollope brightened up, and exclaimed: 'Is he in London? Why, if there is anyone I wish to meet again it is he, for I could never thank him enough for his courtesy and cordiality to me whilst I was travelling in Austria. I shall apologize to my brother-in-law and will come. What time do you dine? As usual at eight o'clock, I suppose. I will be punctual.' My guests had been assembled for some time, a quarter past eight had struck, but no Trollope. Another quarter passed, and I thought something must have happened, for it was so unlike him. Just then a telegram arrived from his son, Henry, which brought me the sad news that his father had been struck down with paralysis. Naturally our evening was spoiled. After lingering a few weeks the novelist breathed his last."

"Dear at two guineas a week"

Not even the best of editors can always recognize the dazzling butterfly in the grub, as Felbermann was quick to admit. "I engaged as second secretary George Moore. *Esther Waters* and other works of his that made him famous had not yet seen light of day, and I thought him rather dear at two

guineas a week. Of George Moore, who had previously walked the pavements of the Quartier Latin, the prognostications of the Bohemian litérateurs, with whom he had come in contact during his Paris days, were anything but flattering. I shall never forget with what amazement Catulle Mendès asked me one day if it could be true that Moore had actually written a book which had made some stir, as he did not think him capable of expressing two ideas coherently."

Another Hungarian journalist who made his home in London for many years was Kálmán Rozsnyay, the London correspondent for a number of Hungarian papers at the turn of the century. Rozsnyay met Ruskin for the first time in Walter Crane's Kensington house. "Along the wall of the library, covered with tapestries, hung a line of rusted armour. The spring sun shone through the painted glass of the narrow windows designed by Burne-Jones. There was an old man sitting in the corner. He looked a perfect picture with his silvery head and ruby-red velvet jacket. He looked like a living Rembrandt: Professor Ruskin. I caught my breath. That demigod! The person who taught Rossetti, Holman Hunt, Millais, Turner and Madox Brown! Naturally we talked of art, and then of modernism. Then we spoke about my country. 'I hear and read a lot about the artistic development of the Hungarian nation. Unfortunately I do not think I can go and see it in person. Not that I feel I am old, as I am only four times twenty, but I have much to do. I have heard that all the material of the Kensington Museum national competition was exhibited in Budapest, and I was glad to hear that your Government had bought it. These are good works, good examples.' " Ruskin once visited Rozsnyay's apartment: "In my study hang portraits of Munkácsy, Jókai and Mme. Blaha. 'I know Munkácsy. He is one of the best in the world! I like Jókai and have just read *Pretty Michael*. Jókai is the Hungarian Dickens... If you come with your friend next time you will be welcome.' We did indeed go to his cottage. But by then Ruskin was lying there cold and rigid in an austere, simple coffin of walnut wood."

ISTVÁN GÁL

THE ARGIRUS ROMANCE*

In the garden of the fairy king Acleton there grows a mysterious tree whose apples ripen every night, only to disappear by dawn. Filarinus, a certain soothsayer, prophesies to his Majesty that only one of his children will be able to save the fruit. However, this action will cause the king immense sorrow and result in his sons being exiled.

It so happens that two of the three princes fall asleep under the tree, whereas the youngest son, Argirus, succeeds in staying awake. Suddenly he spies seven swans descending from the sky, one of which he manages to catch: the magnificent bird turns out to be an equally beautiful maiden, who tells him that she is none other than the fairy princess who planted the tree for Argirus. Argirus and the fairy princess fall in love with each other, and consummate their love beneath the mysterious tree before falling asleep.

At the king's command an old woman is sent to cut off a lock of the fairy princess's

* *The Argirus Romance*. By Tibor Kardos. Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences. Budapest, 1967. 415 pp.

golden hair. On waking, the young maiden notices the theft and is forced to take leave of her lover. She has to return to the city of blackness, the "changing place," as it is called.

Argirus, accompanied by his servant, sets out to find his beloved: he chances upon the cave of a one-eyed giant, at whose command a cripple guides them to the city of blackness. An old woman provides them with shelter and bribes the servant in the hope of trapping Argirus, whom she considers would be a fine husband for her daughter.

Argirus eventually succeeds in finding the fairy garden watered by the river of copper at the "changing place," where his loved one lives. The servant, however, with the aid of a potion, drugs the young prince three times, causing him to fall asleep when the young princess comes. She cannot come a fourth time and Argirus, realizing that he has been betrayed, kills his faithless servant. He succeeds in acquiring magic shoes together with a magic cloak from three quarrelsome hobgoblins, and after countless adventures he reaches the castle where the princess lives. There he enters a glorious garden with a temple to Venus in the centre. It is here that they celebrate their happy marriage.

The story was put into verse in the 1580's by a Hungarian poet who entitled his romance "The Story of a Prince Called Argirus and a Certain Fairy Maiden." All we know about the poet is his name, Albert Gergei, spelt out by the initial letters of the first stanzas—the rest is silence. The work itself, a narrative poem consisting of 243 four-line stanzas, enjoyed great popularity upon its appearance. Between 1749 and 1849 some 23 editions of the work are known to have been published, and in the latter half of the 18th century, it is said, it was like a bible to the Hungarian people. Folk songs and folk literature derive from it, and the 19th century Hungarian Romantic School, primarily Vörösmarty and Petőfi, drew a great deal of material from the same source.

In his recent monograph devoted to the Argirus Romance, Tibor Kardos, Professor of Italian Literature at the Loránd Eötvös University in Budapest, has summarized the results of more than thirty years' research. The monograph follows a series of studies and papers on humanism in Hungary and Italy by the professor, his treatise on medieval Latin culture in Hungary, ancient Hungarian traditions, research into the relations between Hungarian and European folk poetry and literature, the major figures and movements at the time of the European Renaissance as well as his work on the theoretical problems and social background of humanism. The story of Argirus has interested Professor Kardos from the outset of his scholarly career, and he has now succeeded in setting the Argirus Romance within the context of global cultural traditions and the ancient and medieval history of Europe. In this work he reveals the significance of the romance in world literature as well as the reasons for its particular interest to Hungary. The uninterrupted chain of tradition handed down from antiquity through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and surviving to the present day, is here considered in the light of one particular example—the drop that reflects the colours and changes of the ocean.

The point of departure for this book has been provided by the 16th-century Hungarian poet himself, when he indicates in the very first stanza that he has read a great deal about fairyland and even translated his work from Italian chronicles for the delight of his readers. This was the first clue, and one that had not been missed by earlier students in their efforts to determine the sources of the Argirus legend. Previous research, which was more or less well founded on certain points of detail, did in fact successfully trace down a number of related legends. It was however Professor Kardos with his immense scholarship who had the breadth of scholarship needed to adventure further. He has attempted to present a full reconstruction

of the fifteen-hundred-year-old history of the Argirus legend. The Greek names of the characters had led earlier students to believe that Albert Gergei's reference to translations from the Italian was perhaps mere fiction in accordance with a contemporary fashion, that the poet had in fact adapted a Greek myth that had reached his country via the Balkans. Professor Kardos's extensive knowledge of Italian literature enables him to demonstrate, by means of an analytical survey of the Italian verse romances, that the Hungarian Argirus legend had certain characteristics in common with the Italian genre. Structural details, method of presentation and innumerable other similarities revealed scores of fully identical themes and phrases typical of both.

This examination of the Italian romances paved the way for further revelations. Certain definite connections between the tale of Argirus and the Italian Leombruno story had been pointed out by earlier students, but Professor Kardos was able to give a new impetus to research on the subject when he showed that the Argirus story has a large number of other close relatives in early Italian literature. It has now been established that the Argirus and Leombruno legends are linked to a common source rather than by direct ties, as was earlier assumed. The author found justification for this theory when surveying the Italian occurrences in the story. With the aid of Guiseppe Rossi-Taibbi's new recordings of Greek tales in Southern Italy, the extremely important research conducted by G. Rolfe among the Greeks in Southern Italy and other material and sources made available to him through the kind cooperation of Professor Guiseppe Schiro, Professor of Byzantine Studies at the University of Rome, Professor Kardos was able to reconstruct the Italian versions of the story, and establish that they can be traced back to two manuscripts of Cypriot origin, which in turn stem directly from Greece. Of these the second, originating before 1570, provided the foundations on which the Hungarian Argirus legend was based. G. Pitre's investigations suggested a possible Byzantine origin for the Sicilian variations, and Kardos's research now indicates that the Greek narrative chiefly found its way to Italy via Venice. In the Professor's opinion his theory is substantiated by the frescoes painted by Paolo Farianati and his sons towards the end of the 16th century at the Villa Nichesola in Pontone, which he identifies with the paintings a Hungarian officer recognized on a visit to Pontone in 1700 or thereabouts as being traditional pictures depicting the garden of Argirus.

Professor Kardos furthermore establishes the original Byzantine Greek text in verse as dating from the period between the end of the 12th and the middle of the 13th century. This is, however, by no means either the end or indeed the beginning of the story. Adventuring further than any previous paper on the subject, Professor Kardos sets out to trace the classical foundations of the Byzantine tale. This section of the book, which is most stimulating and abounds in new problems and ideas, constitutes some two-fifths of the volume, and leads back to the history of the ancient world. A closer analysis of the story of Amor and Psyche as bequeathed to Apuleius convinced the author that the Argirus story takes its final origin from a sacred story (hieros logos) of the first centuries B.C., which might have been originally connected with some Cypriot mysteris, and received its final antique form in the second or third century A.D., a period when the Roman occupation of the Middle East and new social conditions, marked by the meeting of thousand-year-old religions and Greek culture, gave rise to many of the syncretic faiths. In this section the author devotes as much attention to Frazer's pioneer work as he does to the standard authorities on the Greek romance of the imperial era—particular attention being paid to Károly Kerényi's *Griechisch-orientalische Roman literatur* and Merkelbach's *Roman und Mysterium in der Antike* a recently published study that has been

widely discussed. The author also makes several references to the stimulus he received from the modern research trend in ancient religions associated with the name of Angelo Brelich, Professor of the History of Religion at the University of Rome. Professor Kardos is of the opinion that the ancient mystery romance was handed down through the ages in two ways—orally and by the written word. The tradition that survived in these differing versions on the isle of Cyprus through the Middle Ages came to new life at the hands of a half-cultured poet at the end of the 12th century when Middle Greek poetry and romances flourished, to inspire further adaptations of the tale in turn. Only the Hungarian Argirus poem preserves the text of this lost medieval Greek romance.

This reconstruction is supported by K[illegible]dos's extensive knowledge of world literature and the history of religion. He has drawn abundantly on the results of his outstanding studies of poetry and his widespread and detailed researches are supplemented by his comments on the social implications of the Argirus Romance and by his theories on the history of Hungarian literature, with special reference to Albert Gergei's influence on Hungarian folk poetry and written literature. There is no doubt that several of the author's contentions will give rise to valuable discussion, indeed the author himself repeatedly refers to a number of points which he intends to study further.

GYÖRGY JÁNOS SZILÁGYI

FROM OUR NEXT NUMBERS

STABLE COOPERATION IN AN UNSTABLE WORLD
József Bognár

EAST-WEST ECONOMICS
Gunnar Myrdal

THE TWO MYTHS OF TECHNOLOGY
Ágnes Heller

HUNTING PARTY AT EISENSTADT
Bertha Gaster

DANUBIANA
Zoltán Horváth

FINNO-UGRIC PEOPLE ON THE SALISBURY PLAIN
Péter Hajdu

AN EARLY BARTÓK-LISZT ENCOUNTER
István Kecskeméti

INTERVIEW WITH LUKÁCS
Naim Kattan

ARTS

THE NATIVITY IN HUNGARIAN MEDIAEVAL PAINTING

The story of the Nativity, as described in the Gospel, took on many iconographic variations in the course of the centuries: it gained in significance, its content was modified, and its composition followed a number of forms. The theme, because of the special importance of the event, is one of the most frequently represented themes in art. The scene of the worshipping shepherds is closely linked with the birth of Jesus itself, the two images can scarcely be separated from each other. The subject—treated with formal symbolism in the beginning, and descriptive realism later—had developed into a solemn scene of adoration in the Gothic period, exemplified by the shepherds on their knees before the Manger. Of the two aspects of the event, the human and divine, it was the latter which gradually came to prevail, notwithstanding the touches of genre which bob up now and again, and the earlier more varied portrayals of the theme were later replaced by paintings with a more solemn and ceremonial approach.

The first known representation of the theme has been preserved for us in the faded fresco painting, dating back to the 3rd or 4th century A.D. in S. Sebastiano's catacomb in Rome. Among other scenes from the life of Jesus the Nativity is to be found in some twenty of the early Christian sarcophagi of the 4th and 5th centuries. The Nativity is also to be seen, among other subjects, on one of the tombs in the Lateran Museum. Others recognizably include the Baptism of Christ, and the Resurrection of Lazarus. Here the Nativity is not yet the subject of an independent scene in its own right because only the swaddled child and the heads of the ox and the donkey can be recognized among the other pictures. This is more in the nature of a symbolic allusion to the Nativity, or rather the Infant is only an attribute of the Gospel, with whom it begins.

Differences in the treatment of the theme matured during the early Middle Ages and blossomed into different forms in the Romanesque and Gothic periods.

It is possible to systematize the various forms of representation in various ways; the most obvious method is to classify them according to the background and the number or activities of the persons appearing in the work. Written sources refer to a grotto as early as the 2nd century; in the 6th century the scene of the Nativity definitively becomes the grotto and remains so until Giotto. After that it is the stable. The Nativity however is also represented against a plain, neutral background, in a closed interior space, in which the solemnity of the event is emphasized by the broad, formal flow of drapery. (Cf: the 13th century ivory carving in the Louvre; Roger van der Weyden); or the background can be the depths of a forest—an allusion to the mystical aspects of the Nativity—with God the Father and the dove of the Holy Ghost in

heaven, beside the figure of St. John the Baptist (Fra Filippo Lippi). Here the scene of the Nativity became a peculiar representation of the Holy Trinity.

The Holy Virgin lies in bed in the grotto with her child in the cradle, the star and the angels can be seen above the grotto, in the background are the shepherds hearing the happy tidings, in the foreground Joseph meditates, and attendant women are preparing to bathe the naked Infant Jesus (the 12th century mosaic of the Chiesa della Martorana in Palermo), or are bathing him (on a 13th century ivory tablet in the Ravenna Museum). At a later period the Child can be seen in a shirt instead of swaddling-clothes, and on the knees of the Holy Virgin instead of in a manger. The bathing of the Child has disappeared, and the dove of the Holy Ghost hovers in the ray of light from the Star. (The 14th century fresco of Santa Chiara of Assisi.) At the same time as these works were being created, wrought with considerable profusion and using a number of figures, more intimate representations were also being conceived, with only the members of the Holy Family. The Holy Virgin lies in her bed hung with draperies, with the Infant Jesus, wearing a shirt, on her knees, and St. Joseph sitting in the right corner. (On a 13th century ivory carving in the Louvre.) At the end of the 14th century, in an open stable, Joseph offers the Child to the reposing Virgin, (The Master Bertram), or, early in the following century, fans the fire to mitigate the cold of the night (Konrad von Soest); in other paintings again he removes his stockings to make a cover of them for the new-born Child. This, however, is only one aspect of the iconographic development of this theme, in which the human motif prevails; the other aspect, in which the divine character of the event is stressed, predominates.

After the 14th century the Holy Virgin is shown leaving her bed and sitting before the Crib surrounded by the shepherds. Over the Crib, in which the Child is lying, the Dove and the angels hover. (Taddeo di Bartoli.) Later again the Holy Virgin kneels before her Child while high in the air the true father, God the Father, appears, which is perhaps the reason why the appearance of Joseph, as the foster-father, seems to be superfluous. (Meister Francke.) The Nativity thus gradually changed into a scene of adoration which, despite the sporadic re-emergence of the older types of representation—with the Holy Virgin lying in bed and little Jesus in the Crib (a terra cotta relief in S. Anastasia of Verona)—became general in the course of the 15th century. Jesus the Child lies on the ground naked, surrounded by a halo or *mandorla* (Giovanni di Paolo, Sano di Pietro), while the other figures in the picture are gathered there to adore him. In the foreground, together with the Holy Virgin, St. Joseph—earlier a secondary character—also goes down his knees. (Meister des Albrechtaltars), together with the donor, also in a posture of prayer and veneration. On occasion the donor, who still appeared in such paintings in the 14th century, might be observed humbly withdrawn in the background. (Vyssi Brod—Hohenfurt.) The choir of music-making angels (Piero della Francesca) is sometimes increased by a host of rejoicing angels (Botticelli) so that the whole scene, gathering the heavenly powers above, and the human world below, is filled with solemn figures. (Hugo van der Goes, Dürer.)

Many more variations of the theme could still be enumerated, but these are enough to give an impression of the variety in content and composition of representations of the Nativity. The Hungarian treatment of the scene forms part of this richly coloured iconographic ensemble, which covers the whole field of mediaeval Christian art, and provides evidence that the art of the Carpathian Basin developed alongside the art of Western Europe as a whole and drew its impulse from it.

The first Hungarian representations of the Nativity date back to the 12th century.

MASTER P. N.: NATIVITY (1450-1460; MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BUDAPEST)

Unknown Master: Nativity (Early 16th century;
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest)

The relief in Pécs, dating from the middle of the 12th century, is badly damaged and parts are lacking, so that its original composition can no longer be reconstructed with any certainly. Judging, however, from the size of the carving, it is certain that this outstanding work of the stonemason's shop of Pécs contained a number of figures and can be classified, from the figures of the shepherds which remain, among the more elaborate types of representation. Only a part, also, of the 12th century fragment of a fresco from the apse of Vizsoly church is still in existence. The Holy Virgin lies in her bed, (as was the custom in that period, and as the missing Holy Virgin of Pécs might also have been), and two angels hover above her. The rest of the painting has perished. The main characteristics of this type of painting live on in remains from the 14th century. Against a plain neutral background, the Holy Virgin also lies in her bed in the Hizsnyo (Chyzne) fresco of that period; behind her can be seen the swaddled Child in its cradle, and the heads of a donkey and an ox bending over it. The exquisite miniature picture in a missal painted in 1341 (National Széchenyi Library, Cod. lat. 214) deserves more attention on account of its peculiar ornamentation and its wealth of decoration. The couch on which the Holy Virgin lies is enclosed within traceried Gothic arches, and in the background, which is unusual, unconnected with the habitual scene of the Nativity, are three more traceried Gothic arches, with the heads of the donkey and the ox in the right and left arches and a six-pointed star in the middle one. The Holy Virgin also lies in bed in the late 14th century fresco of Almakerék (Malamcrav), and against a neutral, gold-patterned background in the early 15th century panel relief on the altar of Alsóbajom (Boian). The later version, against a plain background, is represented on the wall of the Ludrofalva (Ludrova) church; in it the Holy Virgin and St. Joseph are already kneeling and adoring the naked haloed Infant. Within the confined space of a more compactly composed illumination in the Palocz Missal (National Széchenyi Library, Cod. lat. 359, 1423–1439) no room could be found for the two traditional animals. In a miniature in another missal of 1426 (National Széchenyi Library, Cod. lat. 218) the group of figures is still further restricted; there are only the swaddled Infant on the stable floor and the Holy Virgin kneeling before it.

From the first third of the 15th century onwards, influenced by the triptychs dispersed over Europe, the Nativity became one of the most frequent subjects of Hungarian art. The variety of the themes decreased, but the complexity of the composition increased, together with the emotional impact of the event—owing to the realistic style of the late Middle Ages—and there was a greater differentiation in the atmosphere conjured up by the whole picture, or in certain secondary scenes within the whole, or in the individual characters. The number of figures in the painting, the position of the secondary scenes, the background, the environment, and the figures all in turn indicate iconographic values in the theme.

One of the most gifted painters of the mid-15th century, Master P.N., set his scene within a colonnade. The young and slender Virgin is on her knees before her Child—Joseph is absent, as in earlier works—and on the hillside in the farther distance can be seen two shepherds with the angel who brought them the message; in the middle distance they are seen approaching the colonnade, about to view the holy scene. It cannot be mere chance that half a century later, in 1506, the greatest of Hungarian painters of the late Middle Ages, Master M.S., painted the Nativity—though with a larger number of figures and in a more elaborate fashion—in essentially the same manner. Here again the scene is laid within a graceful colonnade—but here Joseph appears beside the kneeling Virgin. Here, too, the Infant reposes on a drapery of white byssus

with three angels behind him, and in this painting as well two shepherds have heard the message. They have also begun their journey to the Child, though they are considerably nearer than on the picture by Master P.N., in fact they can be seen kneeling beside the parapet surrounding the colonnade. The composition of Master P.N. thus developed about 50 years later, in a more elaborate and mature design, in the panel of the brilliantly gifted Master M.S. although the same theme was still treated by other painters in the more simple form with fewer characters, as could be seen on the fine panel of the high altar at Kisszeben (Sabinov) before 1516.

The Nativity on the high altar at Németlipcse (Partizanska Lupca) was painted about the same period as the Nativity of Master P.N. Behind the Infant surrounded by a *mandorla* three delicious little angels are kneeling, glorifying Jesus from a parchment roll. On other occasions the cherubs worship the Infant in silence, as in a panel of the high altar at Kassa (Košice, 1474–1477), and in other pictures they fulfil a variety of other tasks. On the relief at Alsólendva or Felsőlendva (Dolnja Lendava, 1500–1510), two angels are busy beside the Infant Jesus; one of them gently lifts the hem of the Virgin's mantle on which the Child reposes. On the panel of the Master of Szepesváralja (about 1490), three small angels support the mantle under the Infant, and on the painting of the high altar at Lőcse (Levoca, 1494) one of the kneeling cherubs raises the Infant in its white byssus wrappings on high, the other two helping by holding the edge of the linen.

These are only minor variations of the same iconographic theme. They do not change the essential impression, the atmosphere of solemn adoration, they only give it a more elaborate and more colourful effect. These paintings lead onwards to the popular works, the finest of the mediaeval Nativity paintings in Hungary, which form the culminating point of this line of development. The iconographic maturity of these works is indicated not only by the theatrical profusion of their composition but also by the central place given them in the retable. The Nativity Altar at Bártfa (Bardejov, 1480–1490) devotes almost the entire tabernacle to this subject, and indeed the importance of the Nativity in the Christian faith can be only be compared with that of the Crucifixion. All the other events in the life of Christ were painted in places of less importance on the predella (The Visitation, The Adoration of the Three Kings, The Annunciation) and on the side panels. The Holy Virgin kneels in the foreground of the *tabernacle*, with the Infant surrounded by a halo before her, and five worshipping angels. In the foreground, on the left, stand two singing angels while turning over pages of their book, just on high two hovering angels sing from a parchment roll; in the background, to right and left, a heavenly messenger communicates the happy tidings to the shepherds. In the middle the two shepherds approach together, and can be seen arriving behind the ruined stable wall.

From this altar of Bártfa it is possible to get an idea of the iconographic surroundings of the exquisite Nativity relief of Galgóc (Hlohovec) which, judging from its size, must once have adorned a tabernacle. Small angels clustering about the Infant Jesus hold the hem of the Holy Virgin's mantle, like their companions on the Szepesváralja (Spisske Podhradie) painting. Below the shepherds approaching from the hillside in the background can be seen two women greeting each other, suggesting the Visitation. The Bártfa altar also provides guidance on the possible identity of the figures which are missing in one of the finest remains of late Gothic sculpture in Hungary, the Nativity group of Lőcse (Levoca, 1500–1510), and perhaps also as to its original function, before a few Baroque figures were added and it was placed within the framework of a 18th century altar (1752).

The theme of the Nativity runs through

the developments of mediaeval art in Hungary as in Europe. Because many historical monuments have perished in the storms of history, fewer types of the representation of the Nativity have been handed down to us in the Carpathian Basin than in the art of Italy, France, or Germany. It is none the less certain that, taken as a whole, the representation of this theme in Hungarian art was much more diverse than surviving works would suggest, and that several types of the mediaeval representation of the Nativity perished in the course of the centuries. No analysis of representational painting can ignore the fact that the works still extant can only help us to evoke those days of plenitude and brilliancy through the use of foreign analogies and by conclusions reached after careful examination. Just as the study of Nativity paintings in Hungary is incomplete without its Trans-Carpathian analogies, so the overall picture of the Nativity in art cannot be complete without the evidence of the surviving works in Hungary.

DÉNES RADOCSAY

FRANZ ANTON MAULBERTSCH

He usually spent the winter months in his Vienna studio, painting altarpieces, preparing the designs for forthcoming works, submitting preliminary drawings to his patrons for approval. Then, in the early spring, he set out, and until late autumn was incessantly on the move, painting frescoes in Austrian country houses, in Hungarian cathedrals, in Moravian churches, in Bohemian monastery libraries. He worked in the capitals of the Austro–Hungarian empire and in places so small they can hardly be found on a map. He painted for the Emperor and for kings, for Hungarian and Czech-Moravian bishops, but the Viennese *petit bourgeoisie* and religious societies hurried to ply him with commissions as well. It is reckoned he painted about 40 frescoes and 80 altarpieces, and several hundreds of his oil paintings, sketches and drawings are preserved in museums as far apart as Moscow and Chicago.

Franz Anton Maulbertsch was undoubtedly one of the most versatile painters of the eighteenth century, and recent research has cast increasing light on his value and importance. More is now known about the beginnings of his career, his student years, and his connections with Paul Troger, the leading painter of the late Austrian Baroque; the identity and authenticity of a good many of his works have moreover been authoritatively established in recent times. His career was full and varied, and spanned the great leap from late Baroque to Classicism. He was first and foremost a painter of frescoes, of gorgeous decorations for ceilings and walls, but we also know tiny genre paintings, portraits and imaginative engravings which were works of his. Quite a number of his frescoes—among them some of the best—have been preserved in Hungary.

Maulbertsch was born at Langenargen on Lake Constance in 1724. His father, a painter of modest talents, was his first teacher. At the age of fifteen he found his way to Vienna and for six years he studied at the Vienna Art Academy, at one time under the painter Le Roy. From the late forties onwards he worked as an independent painter and under Troger's influence, his developing personality already made itself felt in his early works.

Although he was formerly thought to

have visited Italy, there is no evidence to this effect. Probably, however, through prints and engravings and, in the first place, through Troger's teaching, he came to know the masters of the Venetian Settecento, and the influence of Pittoni and Piazzetta can be clearly traced in his development. But essentially he followed in the footsteps of the eminent painters of frescoes of the late Austrian Baroque, and primarily Troger, who had been responsible for the teaching at the Academy. Unfortunately there is no information about the beginnings of his career, but recent research has succeeded in identifying a number of hitherto unknown paintings on the basis of certain signed and established works of his young years, as, for example, the St Walburga altars of Ulm and Eichstätt. Some of his earliest work was also done in Hungary (e.g., "The Adoration of the Magi" in Kolozsvár, "St James" in Sopron) or found its way there. In the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts alone there are half a dozen of his works from between 1745 and 1755.

There is a singular, fairytale atmosphere, an enchanting wealth of colour and a gay liveliness which characterizes two paintings from Maulbertsch's youth recently discovered in Budapest, and now in the Museum of Fine Arts there. He has used a fanciful approach, glowing oranges and reds, and magnificent accessories to adorn the Biblical subjects of "Rebecca and Eliezer" and "Joseph and his Brethren." The slender and graceful Rebecca, her head turbaned in white, resting her pitcher against the edge of the well, seems to have stepped straight from the Arabian Nights; from the mysterious depths of the background camels and camel drivers appear behind the shaggy traveller, Eliezer. Joseph, too, on the steps of the columned throne room, as if on a stage, is resplendent in the robes and turban of Oriental rulers. A rod in his hand, surrounded by his Moorish servants and warriors, he stands in dramatic contrast to his brothers, humbly bowing before him. The pictures, like so many of his other works, bear the characteristic Maulbertsch signature: the mulberry tree—the "Maulbeer"—a play on his name; in style they appear most closely related to the paintings which can be dated as between 1749–1750. The elongated figures of the St Walburga altar of Eichstätt, the stone steps and columns on the Kolozsvár "Adoration of the Magi," and the piquant face of the Judith in Moscow are nearest to them, but the same types and forms as in the Budapest paintings can also be found in the small works on both biblical and secular themes of the early fifties.

Maulbertsch has generally been exclusively regarded as a painter of great frescoes and of mystic-religious compositions, and earlier books on art have confirmed this impression. A good many representations of secular subjects have, however, recently turned up, as well as small canvases on biblical themes, treated in a highly secular and even slightly ironical manner, as, for instance, "Company Making Music," both the one in England and the one in Stuttgart, as well as "The Studio," now in America. By the early fifties Maulbertsch had succeeded in overcoming the difficulties facing an artist at the outset of his career, had freed himself from traditional restraints, and had created for himself an eloquent and imaginative pictorial language. An easy and lively fancy, animation in the lines of composition, a warm colouring, are all characteristics not only of these small paintings but of the frescoes of this period as well; they can be observed in the murals and ceiling paintings in the chapel of Ebenfurt Castle, in the parish churches of Heiligenkreuz-Gutenbrunn and Sümeg, as well as in the Archbishop's Palace at Kremsier.

Maulbertsch painted his first great fresco, the ceiling of the Piarists' Church in Vienna, in 1752, at the age of twenty-eight. Although at that time the young artist was practically unknown, his very first enterprise was crowned with success, and from that time on Maulbertsch was one of the busiest and most

popular painters of frescoes in the Monarchy. It was at the age of thirty-three, in 1757, that he was entrusted with his first important commission in Hungary by Márton Bíró, Bishop of Veszprém, to decorate the parish church of Sümeg. The magnificent Sümeg fresco, covering the whole interior of the building, is one of the finest eighteenth-century paintings in Hungary. The altarpieces, surrounded by painted frames, consist of scenes from the life of Jesus, painted with idyllic tenderness and dramatic emotion; heavenly visions in blues accompany the sequence on the ceiling.

Unlike the contemporary painters of southern Germany, or his Austrian predecessors, the peculiar architectural illusionism of the Baroque plays a relatively lesser role in the frescoes of Maulbertsch.

The whole emphasis is on the human figure. Whether he paints scenes from the New Testament—as at Sümeg—or the heroes of Greek myths or Christian legends—as at Nikolsburg and Ebenfurt—or revives the historical past—on the ceiling of the Feudal Hall at Kremsier—Maulbertsch is always intent on *la comédie humaine*. The intimate expression, the intense experience, the stress laid on the specific and individual rather than the abstract and general is common to all his works, and small popular details, bizarre and realistic episodes, are to be found far more frequently than in the work of other contemporary Austrian painters. Like Mozart's music, the paintings of Maulbertsch are particularly rich in feeling, in their sense of the human world and in their gentle irony. What the critic of the period wrote of *Don Giovanni: "Bei Mozart kommt jeder Ton aus Empfindung und geht in Empfindung über"* (With Mozart every tone springs from emotion and turns into emotion) holds equally for Maulbertsch. His range of expression is also exceptionally wide. It changes with the subject; the artist brings an equal eloquence to the sufferings of martyrs, visions of the other world, idyllic sublimity and the crudity of everyday life. Unearthly flashes light up the vision of the cruel torture of the Apostles Jude and Simon in the Schottenstift in Vienna, but a friendly, intimate atmosphere surrounds Christ visiting the kitchen of industrious Martha, painted on the ceiling of the refectory in the Piarists' House in Vienna. A dramatic intensification of expression, a perfect harmony between the means and the end, are to be found in the work of Maulbertsch, who reached the zenith of his career between 1760 and 1770 with the frescoes of Kremsier, Mistelbach and Székesfehérvár.

Although Maulbertsch's art is best seen in the fresco, and particularly in the groups of murals produced in the fifties and sixties, he is more likely to be enjoyed today through his drawings, which are more easily accessible. Studies for the big compositions, sketches in colour, preliminary designs submitted for approval to the patron commissioning the work—are all important parts of the work of Baroque painters. These lesser works, indicating the process of creation more directly, have recently attracted the increasing attention of experts and collectors. Museums, galleries and private persons compete for the drawings of eighteenth-century Italian, South-German and Austrian painters—including those of Maulbertsch. The happy inspiration of a moment, the enchantment of a swift spontaneous impression are of course more vividly expressed in the sketches than in the completed works, which are the result of long labours and affected by a number of other extraneous considerations. The vision itself, the imaginative restlessness of the artist, inform his small drawings for altarpieces, as for instance the picture representing the "Apotheosis of a Saint" in the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts, and his water-colour sketches. The best of the latter, like the "Allegory" in the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts—a fine piece of bravura—or the drawings for the ceiling of the Parish Church of Schwechat, near Vienna, destroyed during the war, show the extent to which Maulbertsch designed, felt

and thought in terms of colour. It is the colours which give life to his forms, volume to his bodies and depth to space. In these small works the colour schemes are brilliant, with bold contrasts and gentle transitions, broken, like shot silk, with clear light and delicate shadows, and a radiance over them all.

His pictorial language, fitted to an overflowing imagination, to an inexhaustible wealth of feeling and experience, ravishes, for it appears improvised on the spot. Sober objectivity loses more and more of its importance and with it conventional forms, and more sensitive and dynamic means of expression emerge.

Whatever the given theme demands, Maulbertsch supplies—as if by magic. Nobody since Dürer and Rembrandt had been able to put such feeling and fascination into scenes from the New Testament. None of the monumental and magnificent apotheoses of the Baroque era could achieve so enchanting and poetic an effect as his winged allegories and his sweeping historical panoramas.

From the late sixties and early seventies onwards Maulbertsch's painting showed signs of increasing sobriety and steadiness. The great murals he painted at that time in Győr, Innsbruck, Mühlfraun, and so on are essentially similar in composition to late Baroque ceiling paintings, but there is a greater lucidity in the arrangement, the attitude steadier, the line pursued more definite. The composition is clearer, better balanced, and the structural elements, set parallel with the plane of the picture, are given a markedly more important part. The sharp diagonals and the restless angularity of form in the early works are replaced by larger masses and rounder shapes. The lighting, to correspond with the even modelling, is more measured, the colours paler and cooler. The same change can be seen in the choice of subject: the chief stress is laid upon the narrative, and historical episodes take a more prominent place.

The change in Maulbertsch's style of painting was in fact only keeping pace with the change overtaking the whole period. The bourgeoisie was growing in strength; the enlightenment produced its effect on literature and visual arts alike. With the shift, even if only in part, in the social patronage of art, aesthetic demands also shifted; Classicism gradually ousted the declining Baroque and disintegrating Rococo. Huge, monumental paintings went out of fashion, and small canvases, easily accessible to everybody, easier to enjoy and to acquire—historical paintings, genre paintings, landscapes and portraits became more and more popular. The change in taste and artistic demand had a profound effect on Maulbertsch's career and activities. He was obliged —at least to some extent—to yield to the incoming tide of Classicism. As his letters to his Hungarian patrons show—to Károly Eszterházy, Bishop of Eger, and János Szily, Bishop of Szombathely— in his late works he attempted a lucid, easily comprehensible presentation of his subject, and gradually abandoned the more personal and dramatic effects of late Baroque and Rococo ceiling decoration. In point of fact his sweeping buoyancy and his great power of expression were crippled by the new classicism, and the frescoes of his latest period, the murals and ceilings of Eger, Pápa, Szombathely and Prague, cannot compare with the great work of his earlier period, the paintings at Sümeg, Kremsier and Nikolsburg.

The number of commissions for murals in Austria fell considerably in the seventies and eighties. During this period the aged master worked almost exclusively far from his home, and mostly in Hungary. Commissions swept him from one bishop's see to the other; no sooner had he finished the ceiling of the chapel in the newly-built palace of the Archbishop of Esztergom at Pozsony than he had to deal with the commission of the Bishop of Győr to paint the ceiling of the rebuilt Győr Cathedral. The paint had hardly dried on his last strokes there before

Anton Maulbertsch: Gideon
(Sketch of a fresco painting, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest)

Overleaf: Anton Maulbertsch: Rebecca and Eliezer
(Detail; Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest)

he was off on his next great assignment, the decoration of the Parish Church of Pápa, at the demand of one of the most exacting patrons of the period, Bishop Esterházy. The work at Pápa, which took him several years to complete, was followed by the frescoes in the great hall of the Archbishop's palace at Kalocsa, representing the history of the diocese, and now unfortunately destroyed. While staying at Pápa, and then at Kalocsa, Maulbertsch was besieged by commissions from the Bishop of Szombathely; it is no wonder that the painter almost desperately begged for a little patience—"if I am not to be overwhelmed with worry."

In accordance with the spirit of the age Maulbertsch often painted historical scenes in these late murals—in Szombathely, for example, he painted scenes from the Roman past of Sabaria. In general he adhered as strictly as possible to historical truth. Following the requirements of his patron and the rules of Classicism he now eschewed violent movement and the expression of tempestuous feeling in favour of "light and the reassurance of order." Until about 1765 his work had been distinguished by a fluid grace, and infused with poetic emotion. But now it changed: majesty and dignity, logic and sobriety became the order of the day. The course of the tale told in the different scenes as in the legend of St Stephen at Pápa, is logical and easy to follow, even in the ceiling paintings, reminiscent as they are of separate canvases. The wild movement of figures and the passionate expression of their emotions has been muted to a becoming gravity, the details are more plastic in shape, lines more definite.

Up to his last years, when over seventy, Maulbertsch continued to work on large murals, as in the chapel of the Eger Lycée or the monastery library of Strahov in Prague; by that time, however, he was accustomed to pass on an increasing amount of the work to his pupils and assistants. Indeed it is not so much the murals but small canvases, genre pictures, allegories and sketches of enchanting beauty that are the most significant harvest of this period. After seeing the drawings for the Strahov murals on a visit to Vienna the printer and connoisseur Johann Ferdinand von Schönfeld wrote to Prague in 1793 that however old Maulbertsch was, he still painted far better than any younger artist. These small, late paintings display great technical mastery, the use of brilliant colours and fluid handling of paint. Among them there are a number of genre pictures, biblical scenes in which the influence of Rembrandt is manifest, and mythological subjects on classical models. The late drawings, such as for example the "Holy Trinity" in the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts, also testify to his untiring creative power and his unabated powers of invention in his old age. He was working on the designs and colour sketches of the ceiling fresco for Szombathely Cathedral when he died in August 1796 at the age of 72.

"It was with deep sorrow that I learned of the death of the famous artist and brave and decent man Herr von Maulbertsch," wrote János Szily, Bishop of Szombathely, who had given him his last commission. "The death of so good a man grieves me not only on account of my church but also, and indeed especially, because I really appreciated him." Closely following Maulbertsch's designs and sketches the great work, the painting of the dome of the Cathedral, was completed by Josef Winterhalter, the master's best pupil.

"Herr Maulbertsch is a modest, honest and amiable man," said Baron Sperges, and in general his contemporaries spoke of him not only with admiration for his work but with a great affection for his human qualities. He lived modestly and quietly in a suburb of Vienna; his life was devoted to his work and seems to have been smooth and uneventful—an unbroken series of working days. We know little of his private life and friends and family, though his second marriage with Katharina Schmutzer, 32 years his junior, who was the daughter of a fellow-artist, an engraver, may contain a hint of the

romantic within it. We know practically nothing of his circumstances, and it is with astonishment that we see from his will that Maulbertsch, after so many years of unflagging work and artistic success, died with very little money to his name, in fact, practically none at all.

In the portrait he painted of himself towards the end of his life now in the Österreichische Galerie in Vienna, we see a reflective visage, the face of an introvert, looking down at us. There is an earlier likeness he painted of himself, in which a cheerful round face and inquisitive eyes peer out into the world from the fresco in the organ gallery at Sümeg. The self-portrait of himself in his old age is, however, the only known existing independent self-portrait he painted.

Of its kind it is a small masterpiece, one of the most revealing disclosures of a man's innerself—in paint—of the eighteenth century. The straight-backed and yet somehow broken figure of the old painter sits in an armchair in the foreground before a half-drawn curtain. He has a drawing block in his left hand and a pencil in his right, and is on the point of committing to paper the features of his little son. His clothes are homely and casual, the posture is simple and natural. Nothing in the portrait is meant to impress, nothing is addressed to the outer world. The tired features in the haggard face, the sad and comprehensive gaze from the sunken eyes carry a reminiscence of the old and lonely Rembrandt, the still existing intensity an echo of Goya, the explorer of new ways. Yet abandonment and isolation are implicit in the picture, which is the old artist's last glance at himself and a world that had changed.

KLÁRA GARAS

THEATRE

THEATRE REVIEW

In earlier issues we talked about three of the important legitimate theatres of the Hungarian capital: the National Theatre, the Vígszínház Theatre, and the Madách. We now come to the most topical and most modern of them all, the Thália, which is not a whit less interesting than its time-honoured sister institutions. They have buildings which have become landmarks and companies which have given stars to the Hungarian stage; the Thália has a young director, Károly Kazimir, who provides it with a landmark of its own.

Károly Kazimir began his theatrical career young, as an actor in the travelling companies of the provinces. Later he went from the Section for the training of theatrical producers at the College of Stage and Screen Art to the National Theatre. He got his first job as director in 1954 when he shared the honours with Tamás Major, then manager and director of the National Theatre, in a production of Ostrovski's *Storm*. The next year he produced a new Hungarian play, again in conjunction with Mr Major. He seems to have been involved in a series of joint directions throughout his career, and it has left its mark on his professional development. The independent direction of the French one-act play *Maître Pathelin* ended this early stage of his career for next season he was appointed chief director of the Miskolc Theatre, one of the most important provincial theatre in Hungary.

Here Kazimir was able to make the most of his gifts, his originality, his receptive attitude to new developments and his unconventional and enterprising spirit. Besides directing three Hungarian plays at Miskolc, in January 1956 he put on *Antigone*. People unaware of the situation prevailing in Hungary at the time will find it difficult to understand what this meant. In those years Zhdanov's name and ideas dominated art and criticism and aesthetics in Hungary as in other socialist countries, and under this crude political theory of art, antique Greek drama had a difficult time; both the form and content were difficult to convey an acceptable way. Kazimir decided to put on Sophocles and made no bones about interpreting *Antigone* as an outcry against tyranny; in this production, morever, he broke away from the naturalism which was regarded as socialist realism. The production also revealed some of Kazimir's recurring weaknesses as a director, such as a tendency towards exaggerated effects, vulgar oversimplification, and occasionally over-stressing the topical element. But nonetheless he managed to produce a stimulating and challenging *Antigone* and make Sophocles into a box-office success.

A courageous and consistent Communist

The political events of 1956 revealed the young director as a courageous and consistent

Communist who maintained his convictions in the darkest and most dangerous days. His fidelity as a Communist has never faltered, but he is foe to all sectarian prejudice and conformity, both political and artistic. Another admirable aspect of his character in that difficult period was the deep humanism and sense of justice he displayed. Some of his colleagues in the company found themselves politically suspect and were brought to court. When he believed they were basically honest and well-meaning, Kazimir attended court on their behalf, and gave evidence for the defence. After they were released he did not hesitate to re-employ them—by now no longer at the Miskolc theatre, but at the Thália in Budapest.

Some time elapsed, however, before Kazimir returned to Budapest at the Thália. While still at Miskolc he directed Machiavelli's *Mandragora* and the best-known national classic of Hungary, József Katona's *Bánk Bán* (here again jointly with the manager-director), and finally Ferenc Molnár's *Liliom*. He returned to Budapest the following year, in 1957, as director of the Petőfi Theatre, then regarded as the worst in the capital. Here Kazimir produced another sensation to follow up *Antigone:* he directed Vishnevsky's "Optimistic Tragedy." This was the first production in the avant-garde style in Hungary, where in any case experimental plays had been few and not particularly successful, and experimental productions even fewer. The subject of the "Optimistic Tragedy" was the damage wrought by counter-revolution in the human spirit, and the courageous endeavours of the Communists to heal the wounds. Communist critics in consequence praised the production for its content, but that they were not very happy with Kazimir's avant-garde direction was shown later when they criticized some of his subsequent productions. The non-Communist critics, together with the whole of the literary and theatre-going public, still at that time very conservative, quite openly pulled it to pieces. The fact that Tovstogonov, an important Soviet director, who had himself put on a remarkable "Optimistic Tragedy" at home, came from Leningrad to act as artistic advisor for the Hungarian version provided an opportunity for hostile critics to claim that what little of art could be perceived in it was due to Tovstogonov. Despite all the criticism, however, the impressive production exerted a tremendous influence not only on the Communists, but the sincerity of its tone, the tragic resolution of the struggle for the advancement of the people in the face of overwhelming odds, had a profound effect even on those who did not share Kazimir's political beliefs. The play was in fact a vast success.

It was followed by a rather indifferent Hungarian play, and the young director, ambitious for more challenging tasks and a better company, transferred to the Vígszínház.

Here he developed along the line first opened by the "Optimistic Tragedy," but more assuredly and now in less isolation. Here István Kazán, another young Communist director, who was a friend of Kazimir's, was the chief director. Like Kazimir, he was less bound by the old stage conventions and earlier conditioning than many of the older generation of producers, and although his cultural background was not as comprehensive as Kazimir's, he had the same pioneering enthusiasm, and on many occasions a better sense of theatre. In his new job at the Vígszínház Kazimir received warm support from the literary department, which advised on choice of plays and other literary aspects of theatre policy; they came to his defence with articles and arguments in various papers and periodicals.

A Taste of Brechtianism

His first production at the Vígszínház was a new Hungarian play by Lajos Mesterházi: "Budapest People." The play, which was later a success in the other socialist countries

as well, dealt with a group of seven friends —six young men and a girl—who had lost touch with each other after leaving college, and met again, in 1956 and after—some as friends, some as strangers, some as enemies—the people who were responsible for the political mistakes and people who were victims of them. Reviewers praised the play for its political content, but sniffed at it for its didactic approach. Brecht was almost unknown to Hungarian audiences at that time, and the "Brechtianism" which was a distingushing feature of the production, and even more of the direction, as a result received even more brickbats than the play, reviewers implying that Kazimir's "obstinate" disassociation from accepted tradition was simply a sign of insufficient talent masked by the itch to appear "original." But the audiences themselves reacted very much as they had done over the "Optimistic Tragedy" —they came. Kazimir's Communist passion, his comprehending humanism and sincerity, his self-irony—even his exaggeration—made the play a success. Particularly as this was a Hungarian play about problems and experiences still very much in the minds of the audience.

Kazimir next went back to the Greeks again—and to meaningful modern political satire with them. He revived *Lysistrate*, strongly emphasizing its implications for the peace struggle. It was a sparkling and entertaining performance, and finally silenced every further criticism of his undoubted talent on the part of those who strongly disagreed with his approach to the theatre.

After a somewhat abortive Hungarian revival, the next season brought another sensational success: the production of Piscator's stage adaptation of Tolstoy's "War and Peace," which Kazimir co-directed with István Kazán. The remarkable success of the impressive production disarmed even the most hostile reviewers, although their hostility was somewhat consoled by the failure of Kazimir's "School for Scandal." He did the Sheridan play in modern dress but he failed to get the situations, problems and characters of the comedy across to the audience.

At about this time the situation at the Vígszínház began to deteriorate. Management problems and personal disputes caused disruption in the theatre and among the company, making serious work increasingly difficult.

Mayakovsky's "The Bedbug" was a flop; Lajos Mesterházi's second play, "The Eleventh Commandment," a success, but a rather tired production of Tennessee Williams's *Orpheus Descending* with an unsuitable cast reflected the malaise infecting the whole theatre. So Kazimir was now ready to accept the suggestion of the Ministry of Education to become the artistic director of the then somewhat second-rate Jókai Theatre.

Over to the Thália

Strangely enough even in Hungary many people believe that Kazimir is the director of this theatre. This is not so. It is the usual practice in Hungary for the overall manager of a theatre to pick the chief director. In this case the situation was reversed. After agreeing to take the post of chief director at the Jókai —which he soon re-christenend the Thália— Kazimir engaged Emil Keres as actor-manager. At that time Emil Keres was an actor at the Vígszínház, not even considered a leading player. He is still actor-manager of the Thália—and in the meantime has also been appointed to the Central Committee of the Socialist Workers' Party. Everyone, friend and foe alike—prophesied that Kazimir would fail. Firstly, because at that time managers of theatres were frequently removed and transferred; they used to say that the close season for a director lasted a year, after that he was fair game. Secondly, compared with the other legitimate theatres in Budapest, the company at the Jókai was pretty mediocre. But Kazimir was lucky. The first problem was elmininated because the Government had decided on a policy of

greater stability. As far as the second was concerned, Kazimir's sure judgement and flair for talent dealt with it effectively. He has a radar sensitivity to the presence of talent, and only on rare occasions has he handled a play of poor literary calibre, or worked with a bad actor.

Experiments at the Summer Theatre

When he took over the direction of the Thália Theatre Kazimir was full of ideas. While still at the Vígszínház he had founded the "Theatre in the Round," which is a summer theatre, and still provides the only serious stage entertainment in Budapest during the summer (since theatres usually close from the end of June until early September), engaging actors and actresses individually for the season. The Theatre in the Round first opened on the premises of the "Theatre on Ice" while the ice company was away on its annual summer tour, and later moved to one of the pavilions of the Budapest International Fair. Kazimir was involved for two reasons; he wanted to win audiences for some of the rarely performed classics of world literature—something he could not do in a regular permanent theatre, where programme plans were determined by many considerations, and he also wanted to experiment with all sorts of modern styles of production which he found impossible on the traditional form of stage. After Sophocles —*Antigone* and *Oedipus*—one year, he put on Euripides—*Iphigenia in Aulis*—and Aeschylus —*Prometheus*—then Corneille—*Le Cid*—and in 1964—a Shakespeare play not often performed in Hungary—*Richard II.* The next summer season saw another bold and splendidly successful experiment: two Thomas Mann works—*Fiorenza*, and a stage adaptation of *Mario and the Magician* together, and then again one of the less popular Shakespeare's—*Troilus and Cressida.*

The summer productions continued to add to his prestige. They were not all equally successful. He himself, dissatisfied with his production of *Richard II* at the Theatre in the Round, put it on again with a different approach later on. These performances with the circular auditorium, however, gave a new atmosphere to some of the most difficult classics of drama, and brought them closer to the audiences.

Difficulties at the Thália

Life, however, was not easy for Kazimir at the Thália. The majority of the company, and particularly the actors, objected to Kazimir's methods of direction and choice of plays, largely on account of their conventional training, and the audiences often backed them. They claimed, with some justification, that Kazimir considered the director alone as important, and that actors and everybody and everything else were no more than tools in his hands. And they had some reason, even though it is accepted nowadays that the director is more than a mere stage manager, he is a creative artist with his own message to convey. The first season at the Thália indeed left room for criticism. Kazimir was not adequately prepared for the responsibility of establishing and directing a new theatre, and there was a great deal of improvisation. Especially in the new Hungarian plays. But his first play was once more a success. Again he picked a political play. The Soviet Pagodin's comedy entitled "Aristocrats" is about Soviet work camps after the victorious revolution. At the period when Solzhenitsyn's book was making a considerable impact, this type of comedy with its optimistic outlook might well have misfired but for the fact that Kazimir managed to fill it with a great deal of gaiety and irony. The production was a success, but the actors were dissatisfied; their parts were small and sketchy, and the director gave priority to his own ideas over the actors. That year he also produced two rather weak new Hungarian plays, one of them in

partnership with another director, and much more successfully, Brecht's *Arturo Ui*, Shaw's *Geneva 1938*, and an adaptation of Dreiser's *American Tragedy*, ending the season with another Hungarian classic. The season had been marked by a feverish and sometimes overhasty search for a definite style. The Thália itself is small, though it is one of the older and mellower playhouses of the capital. Kazimir made several attempts to adapt it to his new ideas—often in a rather forced fashion—occasionally making use of the auditorium as a partial extension of the stage, and this together with rather inadequate Hungarian plays and a lack of attention to his actors, precipitated considerable discontent and a superior attitude on the part of the reviewers.

By the next year Kazimir had learned from his errors: he only put on plays which were of a high standard in themselves and which were dependent on a high standard of acting, such as Max Frisch's *Andorra*, Racine's *Britannicus*, and finally his biggest success: the Hungarian Endre Fejes's "Scrapyard."*

Plays from Novels

This production definitively established Kazimir's position. It was typical of his attitude, and perhaps of the attitude of most of the literary advisers of the entire Hungarian theatre world. "Scrapyard" is the dramatization of a widely acclaimed new Hungarian novel by the same title. Both before and after it his greatest successes were achieved with plays which had first successfully appeared in the form of fiction, and even his most successful foreign plays often followed this pattern, as for instance "War and Peace" and *American Tragedy*. Instead of modest or unpromising original plays he preferred to take literary material not originally intended for the stage, but which had already achieved success in its own medium. It was his method of making certain of challenging content and stimulating characters, without which no really good theatre exists. Many will say that this attitude may encourage theatre of a high standard, but certainly not high standard dramatic literature, and there is a certain truth here. Shakespeare after all, who drew on other sources, did it to write not adaptations but genuine plays. With the kind of adaptation Kazimir introduced—the adaptation often being written by the original author in the case of Hungarian novels, at the request of the theatre—the aim was not to produce a genuine piece of dramatic literature, but to reproduce on the stage the success of a work of fiction. In the menatime tastes were changing; other theatres and critics were abandoning their former resistance to new methods, and Kazimir even won favour in official eyes as an exponent of the new Hungarian theatre. That same year he was invited to the National Theatre, the most "official" theatre in the country one might say, to put on an adaptation of József Darvas's "Dizzy Rain"; but in the alien and outworn atmosphere of the National Theatre, under conditions quite uncongenial to his own personality, he was unable to repeat the success of "Scrapyard."

Kazimir began the next season of 1964–65 as the head of a theatre with a firmly established character of its own. He directed four plays. The first was Sartre's *Le diable et le bon Dieu* in a very impressive production. It is by no means easy to put over Sartre in a country where a Marxist party is in control. And Kazimir, in order to demonstrate that he had put on the play for its outstanding dramatic merit and its atheist tendencies, and not to propagate its philosophy put on at the same time the play of the Soviet author, Stein's "Man and Man," a play about the revolution, ideologically unobjectionable although artistically inadequate, with a single day's interval between the two first nights. This clever piece of diplomacy paid off. After a

* See the review of the Hungarian novel, on which the stage adaption is based, in No. 12, of The N.H.Q.

few performances the Stein play came off and *Le diable et le bon Dieu* become part of the repertory, and is still running.

Kazimir also learned the hard way that no matter what pressure was exercised he should not put on a new Hungarian play unless it reached a certain literary standard. After "Scrapyard" he did not put on another, preferring instead a sort of Hungarian cabaret show. And the season closed with his new version of *Richard II.*

The next season saw his production of Hochhut's "The Deputy," and "The Fall of Mendel Krick" by Babel, a Soviet Jewish writer whose work had been in disfavour for a long time—both of them a triumph. Then, less successfully, he burlesqued a typically Hungarian genre very popular in the last century, a play with a peasant background and a very provincial and rustic atmosphere, spiced with the popular songs that used to pass for folk music—the Hungarian peasant "musical" of the last century.

The Earlier "Thália"

Today the Thália is the liveliest and most enterprising theatre in Budapest. It is not commercial in its outlook, its choice of plays, methods of production and standards of acting are extremely high in quality, modern in style, and adventurous. When the Thália puts on a Shakespeare play, it won't be one of the obvious ones, when Kazimir looks for something from the Hungarian past, it will be something worth preserving, but off the beaten track; and the same holds good for his revivals of the older Soviet plays. In this he has learned a great deal from Vilar, Peter Brook and Ohlopkov. His theatre is the prototype of what a militant Communist theatre should be, he has been awarded a high distinction by the State and—perhaps even more important—has gained the admiration and respect of his professional peers. It was a tribute to his diplomatic gifts and untiring activity that he was elected General Secretary of the Association of Theatre Art, an office he still holds. In his drive for the new and the modern Kazimir still has his foundations firmly rooted in the essential values of the past. And indeed his very choice of the name "Thália" for his theatre reveals a double significance, the eternal values of the Greek theatre and the theatre in itself, and the specifically Hungarian and progressive associations with the name. Around 1904 a Hungarian dramatic society came into existence which, although it did not even possess a building of its own, was determined to raise the standard of the Hungarian theatre and bring it closer to the masses, or, more precisely, the working class. The founders of this original Thália included people like Sándor Hevesi, the outsanding director, the most significant personality of the Hungarian theatre in the first part of the century, who was invited to England to lecture on Shakespeare; György Lukács, the well-known philosopher and critic, and László Bánóczi, who was its chairman. The fourth member, Marcel Benedek, the witer and literary historian, described the aims of the original Thália as: (1) "The periodical presentation of old and new works of art which are not included in the repertory of Budapest theatres, but are of genuine artistic or cultural value. (2) The encouragement of a modern style of acting and direction as against the prevalent pedantries of the conventional style. (3) The work of bringing the theatre to the masses, the working class." The society only flourished for a few years, when the police closed their hired premises as a "fire hazard." It is easily comprehensible that the authorities of the time saw a "fire hazard" in the Thália policy. Although the original Thália fought for what was then the modern trend of naturalism in the theatre, and Kazimir waged his own war against it, there is a natural affinity between the two as champions in their own times of the new against the old, and of the same progressive tendencies.

The new "intimate" theatre

Avant-garde theatre as such, I repeat, had no real tradition in Hungary. It was consequently extremely difficult to put on even those plays of the avant-garde which reflected Communist ideology, and our cultural-political authorities were especially averse to the modern theatre of the absurd which contained no hint of Communist philosophy. For this reason, after he had produced three one-act plays by the Pole Mrożek—not a particularly good selection, nor particularly well directed—Kazimir developed a new idea; in the rehearsal room of his own theatre he launched a new intimate Studio Theatre seating ninety people, which made a highly successful début with Beckett's "Waiting for Godot." The second play, Kafka's "The Process" in this experimental theatre was less successful; the bustle and movement he introduced was ill-suited to the atmosphere of an intimate theatre. Kazimir had put on both of these productions with the help of an associate director. I doubt whether any other director has been associated with so many joint productions. At the outset he could not, of course, expect to work independently, and later as assistant director had to be content with sharing the honours. When he finally became his own master he generally preferred to have his subordinate working with him as an associate. Kazimir himself works very hard, which is why he frequently finds it more satisfactory to work with a director. He also used to be given work in association with an established director, to enable the actual director to share the risk of an unpopular or dangerous task with a beginner, and this tendency is again apparent in his own management, where Kazimir has someone else play second fiddle.

In earlier issues I have reviewed plays put on at the Thália in this last theatrical year ("Tasso," "Fidgetty Phil" and "The Tót Family"). Of these "The Tót Family" * is the most outstanding—both as a play in itself, and in its direction, for "Fidgetty Phil" shows too much of the recurrent flamboyance of Kazimir's style and his taste for exaggerated effects.

Striking the balance, the result is to leave Károly Kazimir as the most significant personality in the Hungarian theatre in recent years. His theatre, the Thália, reflects his personality as a director, and is one of the most important theatres in Budapest today.

*

There seems to be a new vitality in the Budapest theatres this season. The Madách Theatre began the 1966–67 season with a guest tour in Italy. They took with them a Hungarian musical tragedy, "Three Nights of a Love" by István Vas, Miklós Hubay and György Ránki, and Brecht's "Beggar's Opera." At the end of the season the National Theatre took Imre Madách's "The Tragedy of Man" and Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade* to Warsaw and Prague. And the Thália took part in the Belgrade festival of avant-garde theatre with two productions.

Nora in Norwegian

In May this year Budapest audiences were able to see the Det Norske Teatret from Oslo for the first time. This fifty-year-old company has played in the Theatre of the Nations twice. Their *Peer Gynt* in 1965 aroused considerable attention, because the director, Tormod Skagestad, stripped Ibsen's classic of its sense of period, and laid the emphasis on the universal philosophy of the play. The Det Norske Teatret played "A Doll's House," also directed by Tormod Skagestad, in Budapest. Skagestad, who is himself a writer and poet, attempted somewhat the same thing in his production of "A Doll's House." This stress on the "timeless" and "eternal" in Tormod Skagestad's interpretation did not, naturally, mean a transposition of the period into modern times. Nora as a dramatic he-

* See an excerpt from the play on p. 125 of the present issue. [Ed.]

roine will not do unless in Victorian stays, her reality demands the background of the bigoted morality of the times. In modern clothes she would be no more than a rather stupid and hysterical bourgeois houswife. But as the Norwegian director approaches her, she suggests the eternal rebellion of women, the eternal rebellion of the Medeas in a man's world, in which they cannot and will not find their place.

The production stimulated a certain limited amount of interest among reviewers. The pessimism of his interpretation was not sufficiently reflected in the performance; it would in fact have gone beyond the authority of the text if it had. And again, the same pessimism detracted from the nobility of the play. Some objection was taken to the youth of the principal actors. Personally, I like my Helmer and Nora young. That the children were obviously more than seven or eight years old could only have disturbed very primitive audiences, for it would obviously have been impossible to drag small children round on a tour which, in addition to Budapest, included Warsaw, Leningrad, Moscow, Prague, Dortmund and Hamburg. Helmer's youth gave an extra tension to the play. Helmer's actions were those of a young man at the beginning of his career, wild to prevent Krogstad and his wife from ruining it. The standard of acting was high, particularly the man; the most convincing performance was not Monna Tondberg as Nora, but Per Theodor Haugen, who was an outstanding Helmer.

JÓZSEF CZÍMER

MUSICAL LIFE

MUSIC REVIEW

"All's well that ends well." The last eight or ten weeks of the 1966–1967 season seems to have ended with that sentiment predominant, in the final analysis allowing one to recover from the eventlessness of one or two of the winter months. This, of course, from the point of view of the critic, since he always has to be present, and always has to say something, even when it is obvious the performer has nothing to say himself.

Towards the end of the season a considerable stream of artists began to arrive from abroad. Not everyone remembers that it is only in the last six or eight years that we have been able to invite the great names from the West regularly. Thanks to mechanical music we were already familiar with the majority of them—records and the radio had already introduced them to us. I need hardly add that in many instances the records were misleading. It was often not the artist, but the record company which was displaying its virtuosity. And consequently the blame rests on the record companies, with their technical accomplishments, if the live performances of some of the artists with a magic ring to their names tend to disappoint, and have even on occasion prevented the critic from estimating an artist at his true worth. So if I have been unjust on this account, let me apologize here and now.

The first to arrive was Nikita Magaloff, the Swiss pianist of Russian origin.

Magaloff captivates his audience—above all—by his appearance. His graceful, delicately finished movements, his confidence and easy assurance, unbroken by stage fright, are fortunately supplemented by the kind of ugliness that is often irresistible to ladies engaged in intellectual pursuits. Magaloff, of course, is perfectly aware of the charm his appearance evokes, and perceptibly takes advantage of it; one might even say it is built in to his performance.

Sometimes a section of a work which is technically particularly difficult does not come off as the artist planned it; in that event one type of performer will show nervousness, or become confused or miserable, and another may pretend that nothing has happened. But Magaloff belongs to a third category; he glories in it. And is consequently able to baffle even the experienced musical critic, or at least confuse him. "Did I mishear that. . . ?"—he thinks, as he glances at Magaloff's bright face, beaming with confidence. And the moment the doubt arises Magaloff has scored.

A Flourishing Effect

And this was what happened in his playing of Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto* in B flat Minor. In essence what we heard was a performance played marcato, which in this case means that he executed certain sections of the work, and particularly the ends of the

movements, with great emphasis and strength—and a good many wrong notes—but finally with great effect. In the other sections of the composition I am afraid all he executed was the work.

Here and there, it is true, Tchaikovsky's Concerto does indeed border on the commonplace—when approached superficially. The Russian romanticism that has left its imprint upon the whole world of Tchaikovsky's melody might possibly strike the modern listener that way. But it is the greatest players, Vladimir Horowitz and Sviatoslav Richter, who have shown us that the emotional life of a great people pulsates beneath the surface of this music, and it is precisely this which gives Tchaikovsky's music its depth and breadth. This is immediately seen in the billowing sweep of the great chords early in the first movement, a series of broad gestures that launch the whole work, and this atmosphere dominates the main section of the slow movement as well.

In Magaloff's interpretation it all somehow shrank to insignificance. His tone was drab and somewhat lifeless. His routine was impressive, but substituted for depth in the performance instead of complementing it. In point of fact it had to cover his quite obvious technical deficiencies as well.

The Mastery of Géza Anda

Another famous pianist, the Hungarian-born Géza Anda, left us with quite a different impression. His complete understanding of every demand made by the piano, his familiarity with all the most secret resources of the instrument, the technical skill which is almost inseparable from the meaning of music, have placed him in the front rank of international pianists.

Virtuosity in instrumental playing has two levels. The first, we might say, external level is the rapid succession of notes, holding the attention of the listener even when it appears as an end in itself, that is, as pure acrobatics. But true virtuosity will meticulously subordinate the swiftest runs to the dictates of order and form. We demand of the modern virtuoso that even his most dazzling passages should take their proper place in the rhythmic framework. And finally—the highest demand of all—that every single note should sound sweet in itself. Although little is said about this in general, nevertheless the audience instinctively expects the tone of the instrumental player to be beautiful—just as it will only listen to a singer with a beautiful voice.

We may safely regard Géza Anda as this sort of master. His Chopin études were a whole academy of the pianistic art in themselves. We learned from him that *piano* and *forte* need not differ in intensity. The delicacy with which he attacks a melody is never undecided, the forte never sounds as if struck by hammers. Soft or loud, the passages soar with equal beauty, and the shimmer and brilliance of the sounds equally fill the hall.

So much for the means. But what he does with them in bringing out the substance and content of the music, its ultimate meaning, must to a certain extent be considered apart. This was especially clear in the performance of Bartók's *Second Piano Concerto*.

Most people know that when Bartók composed two of his three piano concertos, the First and the Second, he was very strongly influenced by Stravinsky, and indeed owed a great deal to him in a more general way. This does not mean, however, that their common elements of style conceal a more deep-seated identity. On the contrary, it is at this ultimate point that the paths and life-work of the two masters diverge.

The voice of nature in Bartók

Bartók possesses a quite individual "voice of nature" which dinstinguishes him from all his contemporaries. It can be seen in the slow movements of all three piano concertos,

in "The Night Music" movement of his pianoforte cycle *In the Open*, in the slow parts of the *Third* and *Fourth String Quartets*, as well as in similar parts of certain of his orchestral works. The music rustles, flickers, fluctuates, often frighteningly, hauntingly, like night noises in the wood. But the same movements very often contain a number of broadly swelling melodic or choral sections standing in sharp contrast, as if these choral sections represented the voice of the listening observer. Often the choral element dominates, it takes on greater importance than the voice of nature—as in the middle movement of the *Third Piano Concerto*, where the choral element embraces all the flickering, rustling sections.

The gay, mocking, light-hearted Stravinsky of the neo-baroque period, the ease and elegance of his *Petrushka* folk world and its glimpse of his childhood memories, were more an inspiration and a dream to Bartók than a model to be followed. The profoundly ethical character of Bartók's music and his almost frightening affinity with nature was one of its innermost and most typical features. (The circus, for instance, with its profound and decisive influence on the trio of Cocteau–Picasso–Stravinsky, meant nothing to Bartók.)

Géza Anda's interpretation of the *Second Piano Concerto* gave the right proportion and meaning to each section of this complex and composite work, which so strongly indicates Stravinsky's influence that in certain sections it could even have been composed by him. The real Bartók, however, concealed in the magical slow movement and the neo-baroque sparkle of the fast movements, made his authentic appearance at intervals, just for a few moments, especially in the finale.

But is one going too far in continually seeking some kind of "deeper meaning," instead of just being happy that someone is playing the piano in a pleasing and skilful manner? In answer one may well recall one or two of the widespread misconceptions around the turn of the century, each of which was due to a superficial attitude, a failure to look for the "hidden meaning" behind the music. Who can forget that a few years ago Mozart's music was considered "delicate as lace," "light," "rococo," and was all but relegated to the realm of light music? How many pianists in the years prior to the First World War included Bach in their repertory, though his works had long been available, vegetating for the most part as study material in music schools, and regarded by the public as dry stuff for scholars? Or one need only think of our profound re-appraisal of Schubert, from the operetta *The Three Maidens* to Richter's Schubert recitals.

The modern attitude to the history of music is precisely that it should see behind the notes. And this means that the performer's work is not ended with the most perfect possible performance of the notes themselves. He must exert every effort to explore the depths of the work, penetrate to the personality of the composer, and even more exactly, to the individual and personal core of the work itself.

And as a result Géza Anda's Budapest appearance was a great experience and provided a rare object lesson. The contemporary Hungarian school of piano playing, in its search for the "hidden meaning," is prone to forget the primary technical problems of the instrument. Yet the one cannot exist without the other, and even less can the two be considered, as it were, in opposition.

The Conductor who was a Violinist

Other events, both this year and the last, were the concerts conducted by Charles Münch.

It goes without saying that his last-concert-of-the-season was awaited with tremendous expectation. His programme consisted exclusively of the works of French composers, with Fauré's *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Roussel's *Third Symphony* in the first half of the concert.

Münch and Debussy

But the choice came as a disappointment to the Hungarian public and even discouraged a number of Münch admirers. Last year the hall was packed to hear works by Berlioz, Ravel and Debussy. This year quite a few seats were empty. Although Münch's wonderful artistry was the same as ever, the Hungarian public avoids the works of Fauré and Roussel when it can. And I believe they have good reason. Listening to Roussel, armed to the teeth with the whole arsenal of modern orchestration, one has the impression of having heard it all before, and much better, from Richard Strauss. The new element in Roussel's music is at best an advancement or development of French impressionism; it is a quantitative, not a qualitative plus.

One found oneself facing a certain conflict in trying to follow and enjoy this great conductor as the interpreter of such mediocre works. Münch, of course, gave of his best, and this compensated somewhat for Fauré and Roussel's lack of profundity. But the second half of the programme consoled us with Debussy's *Nocturnes* and Ravel's *La Valse*. Under the wizardry of Münch every individual beauty of the antique festival shone out in a flood of light, every minute, nervous shade of sound, every neurotically sensitive sigh and swell of the two slow nocturnes fell on the ear in a stilled enchantment. To know Debussy one must hear him at least once from Charles Münch, for this great conductor not only grasps Debussy's very tone, but comprehends exactly the emotional undertones in their own hedonistic beauty, understands this slightly effeminate sensitivity which can capture an evanescent, single gesture, a transient moment, in music.

Münch, Anda and Magaloff—all three of them are famous. The young singer who visited Budapest in the framework of the *Fédération Internationale des Jeunesses Musicales* is still comparatively unknown, but the future promises him much.

He is Siegmund Nimsgern, a citizen of the German Federal Republic. He is only 24, but already possesses a beautifully polished baritone voice. His performance was particularly appealing in his bold and uninhibited power of interpretation. He sang songs by Schumann, Mahler, Ravel and Debussy in a delicate—sometimes indeed, it seemed—too delicate way. His great power is in the intensity of his singing: it is its small, intimate and sensitive beauty which produced the effect. His "chamber music singing," in the strict sense of the term, will be remembered for a long time and with pleasure by whoever heard him.

An Outstanding Conductor of Oratorio

Among Hungarian musicians the one who was seen most frequently and with the greatest success, was the conductor Miklós Erdélyi, and I earnestly hope the reader will have a speedy opportunity to acquaint himself with Erdélyi's skill.

He is now 38. He began his musical career twenty years ago as a voice coach and conductor with a comic opera company. From there he went over to the Hungarian Radio. He helped to organize the Hungarian Radio Choir and served as its second conductor until 1951. Since that time he has been a conductor at the Budapest State Opera House, and frequently conducts concerts, with increasing success. Erdélyi's repertoire is imposing in its scope, even ignoring his operatic activities. In the past two or three years, in addition to countless classical and romantic orchestral works, and the first performances of modern compositions, he has conducted some half dozen Handel oratorios, Dvořak's *Requiem*, Schubert's *Great Mass* in E Flat Major, Verdi's *Requiem*, five Bach *cantatas* and the *Damnation of Faust* by Berlioz. And I may well have forgotten a couple of great monumental works on the way.

The course of his career has influenced his development and helps to explain his

versatility. That today Erdélyi is undoubtedly the best Hungarian conductor of oratorio is due to the part that choral work on the one hand, and opera on the other, has played in his musical evolution. Every musical connoisseur, for instance, will agree that choral conducting is a kind of "special knowledge" which often even the greatest orchestral wizards lack. Erdélyi makes himself understood just as easily with a chorus as with an orchestra, and his performance is infused with the "innermost dramatics" of opera, although his conducting is entirely untheatrical in its appeal. I mean by this that the dramatic tension of opera becomes as it were transposed in oratorio, more abstract, one might say, "more purely musical." The oratorio has to establish its own specific *mise en scène*, colouring and dramatic relationships and, in given instances, even the costumes of the performers. But this cannot be done by producing a form of theatrical or external-illustrative music.

One of the great musical experiences at the end of the season was the performance of the *Damnation of Faust* by Berlioz. Erdélyi approached this great seminal work with the fully rounded conception of a great artist. He boldly attacked and dealt with it, movement by movement, without any fear that it would lack cohesion and coherence as a whole. Most conductors try wherever possible to plane down the, often bewildering contrasts appearing between the individual movements, since Berlioz was not averse from breaking the accepted rules of composition and style. But by planing it down it is the very fantastic, nightmare quality of the music which is lost, which the *Fantastic Symphony*, designed as such, reveals even more brilliantly. Erdélyi did not hesitate to adopt the tone of Italian opera here, the robust German counterpoint there, the early Hungarian *verbunkos* in other places as the need arose. And the miracle came off; within and over all the varied elements of the music the full richness and depth of the work suddenly unfolded. What Erdélyi made crystal clear was that the music of Berlioz must never be levelled out, planed down, smoothed over. On the contrary, every detail must be heightened. And as a result the audience listened to Berlioz's well-known work, by now more than a hundred and twenty years old, with all the excitement of new acquaintanceship.

For Miklós Erdélyi is one of those rare conductors who with a single, enormous gesture turn the old and familiar works of art into new. It is thanks to them that the greatest classical masterpieces continue to remain original and fresh. It is they who discover to us their newer and ever newer beauties; who penetrate more and more deeply into their world.

It is we who remain humbly grateful.

ANDRÁS PERNYE

CORRESPONDENCE

Sir,

I was particularly interested in your American journal, especially as my first visit coincided with yours (though I didn't know it at the time) and my experiences were so much like yours that I at times felt that I was reading a dream account of my own arrival, settling in, taking my bearings and discovering this extraordinarily paradoxical community.

I am wild, too (to use an Americanism), about the opportunity the Quarterly gives me of keeping in touch with theatrical events in Hungary.

OSSIA TRILLING

London

Sir,

We have greatly appreciated receiving The New Hungarian Quarterly, because of its excellence. Seldom does one have the privilege of seeing a periodical of as fine quality in make up. The articles are extremely scholarly; the prose and poetry beautiful. We read it with great pleasure, enjoying it also as a representation of your interest in us, as cultural friends.

E. D. MCCAULEY, D. V. M.

Sioux City, Iowa
USA

Sir,

I have just received The New Hungarian Quarterly No. 24 and I am delighted by this excellent publication. I have studied with great interest your study "The Writer and the Dinosaur" and—of course—the splendid feature of Professor László Réczei, to whom I send my admiration.

With many thanks

ALFONS KLAFKOWSKI

Poznan
Poland

Sir,

Although I find it expensive, and sometimes wish it were printed on thinner paper, and so less difficult to carry and lend, I value The New Hungarian Quarterly highly. It gives us in Canada a very good idea of what is happening in the fields of education, art and the theatre; in farm life, among the youth—in fact, how you are building socialism.

I found very thrilling the numbers 11 and 13 dealing with Shakespeare in your country, and more recently articles by the late László Bóka as he dealt with youth and the effect on youth of the new regime which has placed responsibility on them.

NORA RODD

Toronto
Canada

Sir,

I enjoy the journal but wonder why the subject of the war in Viet Nam has not been discussed. Perhaps you feel that such a discussion would not be appropriate for the Quarterly. But there must be some angle which would fit in with your editorial Policy. The generally high standards of the publication are satisfying to someone in the midst of a sea of mediocre writing. There is one exception though; have you seen a copy of "Ramparts," the magazine published in San Francisco? It deals with social questions in a mature and lively way. Many of its articles reveal new information about their subject. These subjects include the Kennedy assasination, C.I.A. influence in universities and in student organizations, and the Muslim influence in California prisons. Let me know if you would like to receive a copy.

RAYMOND F. CHRISTENSEN

Menlo Park
California

Sir,

I am a Norwegian student of literary history, besides I write essays and paragraphs on cultural and literary subjects. I am also especially interested in Hungarian literature, for example Attila József, and some times I thought it would be nice to really learn the Hungarian language fluently, to speak, I mean. Therefore I would be very glad if you could give me some pieces of information on what possibilities there are for me to study in Hungary. I know some Hungarian people, now living in Norway, and they have told me a lot of your interesting country, also of the great educational possibilities which are to be found there.

TORE STUBBERUD

Hafslundsöy
Norway

Sir,

I wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the issue of the magazine (No. 24) which you sent. Articles which interested me particularly were on the traces of Hungarian settlement in Nubia, on "Art Nouveau" in Hungarian architecture and the most amusing, semi-satirical short story "The Invincible Eleven." There were also two by British contributors, one of them a Scot, on recent or contemporary British historians and on the art of translation. The article on the administration of justice in Hungary likewise interested me profoundly as revealing something of the difference of approach, and perhaps also of underlying philosophy, in the treatment of the citizens' relations with the state, in our two countries.

Your *Quarterly* came at a most opportunate time, inasmuch as I have recently been seeking to enlarge my understanding of Central European countries by reading more widely in the history of the former Dual Monarchy, particularly in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Biographies have recently appeared in English of two great Empresses—or, rather, since I am writing to a Hungarian, I should of course say Queens—namely Elizabeth, the consort of Franz Josef, and Maria Theresa. I have postponed my reading of the latter, which will of course carry me back a further century, until I have a little more leisure.

My interest in Central Europe was originally aroused when I was a student at Oxford by my purchase in a second-hand bookshop of a book, having no *literary* merit, but of the greatest interest, and (I imagine) rarity. It is entitled "Austria–Hungary" and is one of a series of descriptive guides, with chapters on history and social customs, to the principal countries of Europe. The peculiar interest of this book of which the author's name is G. E. Mitton, is that it was published in 1915; this of course is quite the latest date at which a book of this nature about "Austria–Hungary" could possibly have been published in Britain. The historical information is complete up to the Sarajevo assassination of 28 June 1914 but there is no mention of the subsequent outbreak of war. The book contains a number of very charming colour-plates of which several illustrate Hungarian scenes: there is one of Budapest which I have always admired greatly.

I might mention also that on a holiday in 1958 I had the pleasure of visiting some of the places described in that book. Unfortunately, my stay in Hungary was very short. All that I saw of the country was the main road from the Austrian border to the capital, and the same on the way back: but I greatly enjoyed my two days in the Grand Hotel, on Margitsziget.

RICHARD N. W. SMITH

St. Salvator's College
Faculty of Arts,
St. Andrews, Fife,
Scotland.

Sir,

You have recently sent me several copies of "The New Hungarian Quarterly." This

I appreciate very much but I have enjoyed so many of the articles and been glad to share with my friends that I should like to become a subscriber myself.

E. R. McLEOD (Mrs.)

Hallam Court,
77 Hallam Street,
London W. 1.
England.

Sir,

I received Number 22 of "The New Hungarian Quarterly" which I have found most interesting and enjoyable. I particularly enjoyed Mr. Robbe-Guillet's comments on the *nouveau roman*, as this was one aspect of the curriculum of an institute for French teachers at Garden University at which I was a participant last summer.

The *Quarterly*, in my opinion and in the opinion of my friends associated here who have glanced through its articles, is an outstanding effort towards an increased rapport and respect between East and West. I feel very fortunate to have the opportunity of reading its many and varied contributions.

KAY IVORY (Mrs.)

Spanish Fork,
Utah,
USA

Sir,

The report on the fossil remains of early man in Hungary was interesting, especially since we have been reading about more discoveries in Africa. If they find bones of men that are in strata older than any bones of monkeys or apes ever found, won't that make the evolutionists very sad?

"Restratification of a Society" by Szalai reminds me that what we have seen going on in my country is happening in Hungary, as doubtless in many other countries. Are the classifications not rather economic than social, as he calls them? Of course, the social aspect will have a tendency to follow the economic class, but isn't it a sort of socialistic or Marxian trait to equate the two, or to dignify the merely economic with a higher sounding word?

The quality of the English used in your quarterly is very good.

ARTHUR HADDAWAY

Hardwicke, Haddaway & Pope,
Attorneys,
Fort Worth,
Texas,
U.S.A.

Sir,

My 2nd copy of *The New Hungarian Quarterly* arrived and again I had the feeling that some undeserved reward had come my way. It is as if a good friend had rung my doorbell. Here in the States friendship has broadened in its connotation "you have a friend in the Chase Manhattan Bank when you come in for a loan" or "Franklin National Bank gives a loan the friendly way —with a red rose"—this over our TV commercials.

So I sit and read your *Quarterly* and the world outside with its pain does not recede with the confines of my four walls. The grandeur and limitless canvas of the continents unfolds. Atavistically I recall my earliest thoughts and wish "that no man be a stranger". With the writings of your staff and feature writers and those who have greeted the publication on their Silver Jubilee in this issue (No. 25). I want to reach out with a warm greeting.

We need more dialogue—the will and action to talk with one another, to comprehend the historical and geographical differences, for mutual understanding in the struggle for a "place in the sun" and from all quarters to build a world of peace and of dignified living.

There are moments when you believe you are living in a society which has become berserk (Vietnam war). What does it mean to say 20th Century, or highly civilized countries, or flights to the Moon when bar-

barism and killing innocent people still prevail. What means religion who teaches loving humankindness, tolerance, charity towards all—and will tolerate wars when men are more articulate than ever and can sit down around a conference table and work things out for mutual gain and good.

In all my innocence I cannot believe that our politicians and leaders walk around with blind-folds. How is it that the truth can so evade them? Have they not traveled to under-developed countries where bread and liberty are the primary search for survival? Is truth then become hideous and distortion to be fed millions of people, people who have no personal gain, no personal grievance, no personal knowledge of why or wherefore they go to combat against them (Vietnam again).

Actually I write to send congratulations on your Anniversary and to say that your publication only substantiates one's deepest and profoundest feelings that basic instincts are for love and not for destruction; that there are men in all parts of the world who anguish at the sight and existence of poverty and privation, of political chicanery, or the crushing of people's need to live with dignity and to live in a society of their own choice to fulfill their needs.

In a dark and troubled mood, one takes heart that men are thinking and articulating and crying out at existing injustices, wherever they be, and at that point one doesn't feel quite so lonely.

The writing in *The New Hungarian Quarterly* is excellent and a joy to read and so are indeed all the features contained therein.

SARA SIEGEL

New York City

Sir,

Your style of writing encourages the reader to continue his interest through the entire article. You are certainly expressive in your Diary Notes on the P.E.N. Congress which you entitle *The Writer and the Dinosaur*. (No. 24.)

I am amazed at the wealth of knowledge which you seem to contain and how you apply events to situations dealing with interests of your readers. The other articles in the *Quarterly* did not mean as much to me as your writing for after all we did have "eyeball" contact!

I have just learned that the grand old man of Hungarian music has recently passed away. I am sure you must have been personally acquainted with Zoltán Kodály who died in a Budapest hospital following a heart attack. It seems that I heard he was soon to go to London to receive an award from Britain's Royal Philharmonic Society.

ELMER S. SWENSON

Sioux City, Iowa
USA

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

MÓRICZ, Zsigmond (1879–1942). Outstanding Hungarian prose-writer of the twentieth century. Main representativ of critical realism in Hungarian literature. On Móricz's life and *oeuvre* see the essay by Péter Nagy "Zsigmond Móricz the Novelist" in No. 3 of The N.H.Q.

KRÚDY, Gyula (1878–1933). One of the masters of modern Hungarian fiction, journalist, novelist, short story writer. An extraordinarily prolific writer, he turned out more than sixty novels, over three thousand short stories, four plays and innumerable articles, sketches, tales for children, etc., and died, after a brilliant career, in the same miserable poverty in which he had begun. What makes him unique in contemporary fiction is his poetic nostalgia and an impressionist quality in his writing; he yearned for an imagined unreal past, that served as an escape from the present. He frequently abandoned the logical time-sequence of traditional novels, and dissolved moods into poetic images. His bold innovations in method and structure recall his contemporaries, Proust and Virginia Woolf, although he was completely unaware of their existence. His language, a comprehensive and easy verbal flow of unusual poetic similes and metaphors, has a musical quality that makes it very difficult to translate. A recent German translation, however, of his *A vörös postakocsi* ("The Red Stage Coach"), part of his semi-autobiographical *Szindbád* sequence, in the translation of György Sebestyén, published by Zsolnay Verlag in Vienna, has been a great critical and popular success. See also his story "Hand Stand" in No. 9. of The N.H.Q.

VERES, Péter (b. 1897). Writer, one of the "Grand Old Men" of contemporary Hungarian literature. Spent a large part of his life as a peasant manual labourer. Later become a key figure in the populist writers' movement between the two wars and was deeply involved in the political struggles of the period. After 1945, as one of the leaders of the National Peasant Party, he held various important posts in public life, including that of Cabinet Minister. All his novels as well as his long autobiographical sequence, deal with peasant life in the past and the present. His numerous essays and articles reveal a vigorous and original critic of contemporary life, literature and thought. See also "Petty Bourgeois?", "First Days on the Shores of the New Order", "St. Stephen's Day", and two short stories: "Genesis" and "A Long Day" in the N.H.Q., Nos. 12, 17, 21 and 26.

ILLYÉS, Gyula (b. 1902). Poet, writer, dramatist, and essayist; one the most important personalities in present-day Hungarian literature. In the thirties he identified himself with the populist movement and published his famous book, "The People of the Puszta" (*Puszták Népe*), now available in many languages, including English, a literary documentation on the misery of the agricultural population around his birthplace. His poetry was at first surrealist, but in later years he has produced some of the finest and most complex Hungarian poetry of the time. In addition to many volumes of poetry he has written an autobiographical novel on his years in Paris, *Hunok Párisban* ("Huns in Paris"), several books of literary sociology, a number of historical plays, essays, criticism, etc, and has won many awards at home and abroad. See "Rácegres Notebook," "Switch-Over," "Ode to Bartók" (poem), "What I brought Home from a Writers' Congress," "The Favourite" (a historical tragedy), "The Word of Music" (poem), in Nos. 1, 5, 11, 12, 13, 17, 20, 23 and 25.

BOGNÁR, József (b. 1917). Economist, MP, Professor of Economics at Karl Marx University of Economics in Budapest, President of the Intsitute 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. See his previous contributions in Nos. 7, 11, 16, 20, 21, 23, and 26 of The N.H.Q.

DÉRY, Tibor (b. 1894). Novelist, an internationally known figure in contemporary Hungarian literature. His most important novels are the trilogy *Befejezetlen mondat* ("The Unfinished Sentence"), written between 1934 and 1938 but published only in 1945 (also in German, Italian and American translations); the two-volume *Felelet* ("Answer") 1950 and 1952, also in German and Italian; *G. A. úr X-ben* ("Mr. G. A. in X", two chapters from which appeared in our No. 10; also in French and German translations); and the recent *A kiközösítő* ("The Excommunicator"), written in 1964 (see a chapter in No. 20). He has also written plays and short stories; the latter, and his short novel *Niki* (1956) have been published in a dozen languages. The short story we publish here is part of a series in progress entitled "Capriccio."

NEMES-NAGY, Ágnes. Poet, translator. Studied at Budapest University, worked on the staff of a journal of education, taught in a secondary school, now devotes herself to writing and translation. She has translated extensively from classic and modern French poetry and modern English poets, as well as plays by Corneille, Molière, Racine and Brecht. See her poem "Storm" in No. 23 of The N.H.Q.

CSIKÓS-NAGY, Béla (b. 1915). Economist, Ll. D., President of the National Prices Board. Has published numerous studies and lectured on price policy and other economic questions in Hungary and abroad. See also his "New Aspects of the Profit Incentive" in No. 20 of The N.H.Q.

RÉCZEI, László (b. 1906). D.C.L., diplomat, Professor of International Economic Relations at the Karl Marx University of Economics in Budapest. Served as Deputy Minister of Justice in the post-war provisional Cabinet in 1944–45, later headed a department in the Ministry of Foreign Trade, became University Professor in 1953, First Deputy Minister of Justice in 1957, Ambassador to India in 1960, returned to Hungary in 1963. Is a Vice-President of the Hungarian National Peace Council and a member of the International Law Association as well as a permanent member of the Pugwash Conferences, and Hungarian representative at the Europe Committee with headquarters in the German Democratic Republic. Has written a textbook on international private law published also in German. See his "The Ethics of the Diplomat" in No. 24. of The N.H.Q.

KÖRNER, Éva. Art historian. Graduated from Eötvös University, Budapest. Has written a book on Picasso (1960) and a number of essays on Hungarian art of the inter-war period. See her "Jenő Gadányi" in No. 9, "Painter on the Defensive: Lajos Vajda" in No. 16, "Studio 66" in No. 24, and "In Search of a Synthesis" in No. 25 of The N.H.Q.

ÖRKÉNY, István (b. 1912) Novelist, short story writer. His sharp wit and dry intellectual approach, his shrewd and subtle powers of observation and a tense, often ironic style, have earned for him an extensive readership in Hungary. His experiences during the war, especially his time in a forced labour battalion, form the frequent subject of his stories and plays. His main interest is in exploring human reactions at the moments of greatest stress. Some of his latest work, including the play of which we

here publish an excerpt, one of the successes of the 1966/67 Budapest season, make considerable use of the grotesque—a quality rare in modern Hungarian literature. His recent collections of short stories, *Jeruzsálem hercegnője* ("The Princess of Jerusalem," 1966, reviewed in our No. 26) and *Nászutasok a légypapíron* ("Newlyweds in the Fly-trap," 1967) were popular successes. See also his stories "No Pardon" in No. 17, and "The 137th Psalm" in No. 26 of The N.H.Q.

MIHELICS, Vid (b. 1899) Ph.D., Ll.D. Journalist, essayist and leading Catholic writer. Taught for some time at the University of Economics and at the Law School of Pázmány University in Budapest before the war. 1923–45 was on the staff of various Budapest dailies and became editor of *Katolikus Szemle*, a Catholic periodical. 1946–49 taught at the Law School in Eger, Since 1949 has been on the staff of *Új Ember*, a Budapest Catholic weekly, since 1963, Editor of *Vigilia*, a Catholic monthly. Major publications include *Világproblémák és katolicizmus* ("World Problems and Catholicism," 1934); *Új Portugália* ("New Portugal," 1938); *A Beveridge-terv* ("The Beveridge Plan," 1943); *Katolikus tanítás a tulajdonjogról* (Catholic Theory of the Law of Property," 1946).

RÉNYI, Péter (b. 1920). Journalist, critic. Assistant 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," "The Irony of Thomas Mann," and "Coexistence without Illusions" in Nos. 12, 17, 23 and 26 of The N.H.Q.

KOLOZSVÁRI GRANDPIERRE, Emil (b. 1907). Novelist, short story writer and essayist, one of the most widely read authors of his generation. Studied in France and at the University of Pécs, has been employed in publishing, editing, broadcasting, etc., now devotes himself exclusively to writing. His first novels, published before the war, gave an ironical picture of the drift towards fascism of the Hungarian middle classes. More recent novels and short stories are often brilliant analyses of contemporary intellectual and middle class life, written with sharp but elegant irony, a strong psychological insight in an effortless style that amazingly reproduces the ephemeral slang of the day. One of his novels, *A burok* ("The Caul," 1966), about the *mésalliance* between an aging chief engineer and a working class girl of twenty, was a popular success. See his short stories, "Christmas Celebration" in No. 8, and "The Swing Door" in No. 21 of The N.H.Q.

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, travel diaries and a book on cheap literature. See her book reviews in Nos. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 of The N.H.Q.

RÉZ, Pál (b. 1930). Literary historian, critic, translator. Graduated at Eötvös University and Eötvös College in Budapest in French and Hungarian. Has worked in publishing since 1951. Has written numerous essays and studies, including a book on Proust in 1961. His translations include works by Balzac, Baudelaire, Gide, Verne, Semprun, Arland, Fallada and Rumanian authors. See "Thomas Mann and Hungary—His Correspondence with Hungarian Friends" and "The Hungarian Number of 'Les Lettres Nouvelles' " in Nos. 3 and 17 of The N.H.Q.

GASTER, Bertha says: Born Paddington, London. Was recognized thirty years later as a "Paddington girl" by a Swiss scholar in Cairo. Tenth child of Chief Rabbi's dozen; against family limitation. Contrary to family impression, was not expelled from school, only asked to leave. Has taught English in Paris, surveyed households in London, sold frankincense and myrrh in Aden, written and translated all over the Middle East, East Africa and Central Europe, worked on News Chronicle and in Unesco, and is not a penny the better for it.

GÁL, István (b. 1912). Literary historian, cultural adviser at the British Embassy in Budapest. Has written numerous books and articles on Anglo–Hungarian relations: *Angol–magyar történelmi kapcsolatok* ("Anglo–Hungarian Historical Ties"); "Hungary and the Anglo-Saxon World"; *Magyarország, Anglia és Amerika* ("Hungary, Britain and America"), etc. Is now engaged in studies on Hungary's cultural contacts with 19th century Britain. See also his "Walter Crane in Hungary" in No. 19 of The N.H.Q.

SZILÁGYI, János György (b. 1918). Archaeologist, art historian, curator of the Graeco–Roman collection at the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts. Specialises in early Greek and early Roman art and literature. See his articles "Complete Homer" in No. 2, and "János Honti" in No. 20 of The N.H.Q.

RADOCSAY, Dénes (b. 1918). Art historian, Ph.D. Studied at Pázmány University in Budapest, is at present curator of the old Hungarian collection of the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts. Was for a period engaged in research into 19th and 20th century Hungarian art, but has lately transferred his main interest to Central European Gothic painting and sculpture, on which he has published numerous studies at home and abroad. Main publications are on Hungarian murals, medieval Hungarian paintings, Gothic paintings in Hungary (the latter also in English, French and German translation.)

GARAS, Klára. Art historian, Principal Curator of the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest. Specializes in 15th–18th century European and Hungarian painting. Has published books on 17th and 18th century Hungarian paintings, the Collection of Old Masters in the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts, Italian Renaissance portraits in the Museum, on Maulbertsch, Chardin, etc.

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, 25, 26, 27 of The N.H.Q.

PERNYE, András (b. 1928). Musicologist, critic and broadcaster, music critic on the staff of *Magyar Nemzet* a national daily in Budapest. Studied at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music. His special fields of study are baroque organ music, Italian romantic opera, the history of jazz, and music aesthetics and sociology. Has published numerous essays and books on these subjects.

HUBAY, Miklós (b. 1918). Playwright. Until 1949 headed the Hungarian Library in Geneva and was a delegate to the Bureau International d'Éducation. Upon his return to Hungary after the war, wrote film scripts and plays. A collection of his plays was published in 1965 under the title *Hősökkel és hősök nélkül* ("With and Without Heroes"). See his play *C'est la guerre* (published as "Three Cups of Tea") in No. 4, his one-act play "The Crocodile Eaters" in No. 14, "Authenticity of Action on the Modern Stage" in No. 22, and "School for Genius," a one-act play, in No. 27 of The N.H.Q.

GÉZA MÉSZÖLY: FISHERMEN AT LAKE BALATON

You will be well cared for on your trip

by

UTASELLÁTÓ

in Dining-Cars and Sleepers

UTASELLÁTÓ

MAKE MALÉV YOUR AIRLINE ON YOUR TRIP TO HUNGARY

MALÉV

DIRECT SERVICES BETWEEN BUDAPEST AND

AMSTERDAM	COPENHAGEN	MILAN	SOFIA
ATHENS	DAMASCUS	MOSCOW	STOCKHOLM
BEIRUT	DUBROVNIK	MUNICH	TIRANA
BELGRADE	FRANKFORT/M	NICOSIA	VIENNA
BERLIN	HELSINKI	PARIS	WARSAW
BRUSSELS	KIEV	PRAGUE	ZAGREB
CAIRO	LONDON	ROME	ZURICH

Information, Ticketing, Booking:

AT AIRLINES AND TRAVEL AGENCIES

MALÉV HUNGARIAN AIRLINES

BUDAPEST

THE NEW HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY

may be obtained from the following distributors:

AUSTRALIA: A. Keesing, G. P. O. Box 4886, Sydney, N. S. W.

AUSTRIA: Globus Buchvertrieb, Salzgries 16, Wien 1.
Rudolf Nowak, Buchhandlung und Verlag, Köllnerhofgasse 4, Wien 1.

BELGIUM: Agence Messagerie de la Presse, Rue de Persil 14–22, Brussels

BRAZIL: Livraria Bródy Ltda, Rua Cous Crispiniano 404, Sao Paulo

CANADA: Pannonia Books, 2. Spadina Road, Toronto 4, Ontario

CUBA: Cubartimpex, Apartado Postal 6540, Habana

DENMARK: Ejnar Munksgaard Ltd., 47, Prags Boulevard, Copenhagen S.

FINLAND: Akateeminen Kirjakauppa, Keskuskatu 2, Helsinki

FRANCE: Agence Littéraire et Artistique Parisienne, 7 rue Debelleyme, Paris 8.
Nouvelles Messageries de la Presse Parisienne, 11 rue Réaumur, Paris 2.

GERMAN FEDERAL REPUBLIC: Kubon & Sagner, Schließfach 68, München 34.
W. E. Saarbach G.m.b.H., Schließfach 1510, Köln 1.
Kunst & Wissen, Erich Bieber, Postfach 46, Stuttgart S.

GREAT BRITAIN: Collet's Holdings Limited, Import Subscription Dept., Denington Estate, Wellingborough, Northants.
Dawson & Sons Ltd., Cannon House, Macklin Street, London W. C. 2.
Publishing and Distributing Co. Ltd. Mitre House, 177 Regent Str., London W. 1.

INDIA: National Book Agency Private Ltd., 12. Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta
Magazine Subscription Agency, 2/23 Nanik Nivas, 91 Warden Road, Bombay 26.

ITALY: Libreria Rinascita, Via delle Botteghe Oscure 2, Roma
Libreria Commissionaria Sansoni, Via Gino Capponi 26, Firenze

ISRAEL: "Haiflepac" Ltd., P. O. B. 1794, Haifa
Library A. Gondos, Herzl 16 Beth Hakranot, Haifa

JAPAN: Maruzen Company Ltd., Booksellers, 6 Tori Nihonbashi, Tokyo
Nauka Ltd., 92–1, Ikebukoro-Higashi 1-chome Toshima-ku, Tokyo

NETHERLANDS: Swets & Zeitlinger Booksellers, Keizersgracht 487, Amsterdam C.
Meulenhoff & Co. N. V., Beulingstraat 2, Amsterdam C.
Pegasus, Leidsestraat 25, Amsterdam

NORWAY: A/S Narvesens Litteratur Tjeneste, Box 115, Oslo
Universitetsbok Handelen, Universitetssentret, Blinder, Oslo

SOVIET UNION: Sojuzpechatj, Import Dept. Prospekt Mira 112-a, Moscow

SWEDEN: A. B. Nordiska Bokhandeln, Drottninggatan 7–9, Stockholm

SWITZERLAND: Azed AG Zeitungsagentur, Großbuchhandlung, Postfach, Basel 2.
Pinkus & Co., Froschaugasse 7, Zürich 1.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: Stechert-Hafner Inc., 31 East 10th Street, New York 3, N.Y.
Joseph Brownfield, 1484, Third Avenue, New York, N.Y., 10028.
FAM Book Service, 69 Fifth Avenue, New York 3, N.Y.
EBCSO, 1st Ave. North at 13th Street, Birmingham, Alabama 35201

VENEZUELA: Luis Tarcsay, Calle Iglesia, Edif. Vittoria, Apto 21, Sabana Grande, Caracas

or

Kultura Hungarian Trading Company for Books and Newspapers,
Budapest 62, P. O. B. 149.

Index: 26843