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The New Hungarian Quarterly

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A Contemporary Approach to East-West Economic Relations — *József Bognár*

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My Very Sole Self — *Sarolta Raffai*

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34

VOL. X ■ No. 34 ■ SUMMER 1969 ■ 11s ■ $1.50

The New Hungarian Quarterly

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Budapest VIII., Rákóczi út 17, Hungary
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Annual subscription: 33s or $ 4.00 or the equivalent in another currency
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KULTURA HUNGARIAN TRADING COMPANY FOR BOOKS
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Budapest 62, P.O.B. 149

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Published by Lapkiadó Publishing House, Budapest

Printed in Hungary by Kossuth Printing House, Budapest

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SOCIAL AND POLITICAL EFFECTS OF THE NEW ECONOMIC MECHANISM*

by

REZSŐ NYERS

Every sign indicates that the Hungarian economic reform can not be treated as a purely economic process, that it had and will have far-reaching social and political effects. In Hungary, as everywhere else, the problem of economic development is one of the principal subjects of politics. Political thinkers and practising politicians come up against economic facts and economic laws every day, with which they have to familiarize themselves, and from which they must draw political conclusions. On the other hand, the economy needs political guidance even more than earlier. Economic conditions depend to a large extent on effective political processes. It would therefore be wrong to imagine that progress in the economy could best be served by rigidly separating the latter from political forces, by the "depolitization" of the economy. It is impossible to free the economy from the influence of political forces. On the contrary, the way of thinking of those responsible for the management of the economy must be thoroughly political.

REASONS FOR THE REFORM

The reform of the economic mechanism was not made necessary in Hungary by purely economic causes only, although these were the decisive factors; political reasons were also involved, as were facts established by economic theory.

The gist of economic criticism was that in recent years economic results had in essential fields from time to time lagged behind the set objectives. The rates of growth in production and trade had slowed some-

* Slightly abridged version of an address delivered to the Political Academy of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party on 29 November, 1967.

what, economic efficiency—especially technical development and profitability—grew very slowly, and the balance of trade had not developed satisfactorily. These circumstances had a restrictive effect on the growth rate of accumulation and of consumption.

The essence of political criticism was that although social consumption had reached the maximum within the existing possibilities and was growing relatively fast, all this produced a feeling in public opinion that the standard of living was growing slowly, and possibly even stagnating in some cases or as regards certain sections of the community. In vain had social consumption grown considerably, in vain had almost all opportunities to increase consumption been exploited throughout society, it was not possible to achieve the desired political effect. This, of course, did not happen by chance, nor was it simply the result of the "false consciousness" of the workers. There were reasons, which had to be discovered and analyzed.

The essence of the standard of living problem in the strict sense was that in the last six to eight years the consumption basis of society was overburdened in two ways. First of all the especially fast growth in the number and the resulting consumption of those streaming from the country into the towns. This tied down a good part of the increasing amount of goods available for consumption, and put a brake especially on the growth of the average income of those living on wages. Secondly the least appreciated category of social benefits, the state subsidy to certain consumer goods and services, grew substantially faster than total consumption, and this increase in the standard of living went unnoticed by the masses. All this restricted the possibility to increase average wages and average incomes and caused them to grow at a slow rate. Another aspect of political criticism was the dissatisfaction of workers and managers of various enterprises with the rigorous dependence of enterprises on the state bureaucracy.

Political criticism did not, of course, for a long time claim that "the economic mechanism was bad," but that "such and such mistakes existed, why was there no effective intervention to deal with these mistakes?" Criticism gradually penetrated behind the surface, to the roots of mistakes and shortcomings, right to the economic mechanism.

The main points of scientific criticism can be summarized as follows. Marxist social and economic science is making progress all the time. In the course of this development it was gradually realized that commodity and monetary relationships have not only to be tolerated but have to be assured a decisive role in a socialist economy. It has become clear that the decisive role in a socialist economy cannot be played by methods of guidance which direct the production and exchange of goods from a centre, as use values, in units

of kind, thus eliminating the active role of money. In other words, central planning can in no circumstances disregard value, but can base planning only on the conscious perception of the latter, possibilities of departing from the laws governing value being relatively narrow and limited. The recognition has gained ground that it is possible and necessary to build up socialist economic guidance in such a way as to link central guidance with the market mechanism, in this type of economic guidance it is no longer methods of direct guidance and distribution that dominate but indirect economic levers.

Relying on critical analyses, the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party elaborated the principles and concrete rules of the new economic mechanism as a unified system; these, as is known, entered into force on January 1st 1968.

The necessity for development in socialism

The reform of the system of economic guidance demonstrates that by realizing in practice the principles of Marxism-Leninism we did not create a society which was unalterably rigid and considered perfect, but a basis which develops and which will always continue to change to a certain extent. In other words, the necessity for change exists in socialism too. We only have to recognize the changes which are necessary and carry them out relatively smoothly, now and in the future.

Our practical experience leads us to the conclusion that three kinds of change are possible in our society. The first is quantitative growth, which naturally plays a considerable part in the development of society. Whether we think of the multiplication of activities, or the expansion of institutions, industrialization or the widening of culture: quantitative growth is characteristic of all these. Small qualitative changes that make procedures either on a local or a society wide scale more rational, are the second kind of change. The third kind is social reform, qualitative change of great importance, an example of which is the economic reform carried out in Hungary. This was certainly not the first nor the last such social change. Reforms of this kind will occur from time to time as socialism develops. One does not need too fertile an imagination to visualize that we shall at some time reach a phase when essential and fundamental changes will have to be undertaken in the political superstructure, for instance in the constitution. If we change the constitution, this too will certainly be a political reform in its essence and content. Perhaps we shall not call it that, but when the character of the changes is considered, this too will be a reform measure.

The above mentioned forms of movement appear to be the categories in which the internal development of socialist society manifests itself. The party as the leading force of society has the means to stimulate development, control its direction, fix the right time and—if necessary—intervene in a political way. This happened also when the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party proposed economic reform. In a socialist society the communist party is able to view and evaluate development "from the outside too" as it were, to compare plans with ideological and long-range objectives and with experience abroad. Although scholars and scientists can also act in this way following the methods of their calling the communist party has the advantage that, from the inside, it can start off a variety of processes on a small or large scale. It would of course be wrong to draw the conclusion from all this that it was solely the "function" of the party to direct development and that this did not concern anybody else. The party must be able to fill its central function and to express the public interest effectively. If the party fails to do this, it is not impossible in socialism either that the party should be overtaken by events and become rigid, that it should act as a brake on development instead of furthering it. This, within the Communist movement, is an anomalous situation which can occur only as an exception and for short periods.

Taking stock at the end of the first year of the reform, as regards the state of the economy, the absence of a break in economic life may be registered as an important achievement; we succeeded in introducing the new mechanism and at the same time keeping up economic development and increasing the standard of living, and this too helped to keep the political atmosphere calm. National income was approximately six per cent higher than in 1967. The investment cycle continued undisturbed: the annual value of investments was four per cent higher in 1968 than the year before. Consumption by the population exceeded that of 1967 by six per cent, as planned. The level of employment was not reduced, on the contrary it increased, and average wages were three to four per cent higher than in the preceding year. The increases in the price level remained within the planned limits.

Economic reform gave a new impetus to the economy: many useful energies were freed, the economic activity of the enterprises was strengthened, this led to better organization, improvements in quality, more modern methods, increases in profitability, more elastic adaptation to the requirements of domestic and foreign markets. All this visibly confirms that the work of the enterprises now more closely coincides with the objectives of central economic policy. It was proved that through the correct combination

of central planning and the market mechanism enterprises can be guided towards centrally planned objectives with the help of economic levers too, and not only by the old, detailed "plan-commands."

It is obvious that in the Hungarian economy the remnants of an earlier system of direction still make themselves felt, and all those economic problems are still present which existed at the beginning of the reform and which in fact made the transformation of the system of economic direction urgent. The present system of economic direction has not solved and could not solve all old problems at one stroke, and problems of a new type have also appeared. Still, the new system has proved workable, and it already has a beneficial influence on the economic and political life of the country, it has proved to be a suitable tool for the realization of centrally decided objectives of economic policy, it has increased local initiative, and aided the further development of the socialist planned economy.

Social structure, system of values, reform

In the class structure of Hungarian society the workers have a decisive role, the peasantry plays a considerable part, and there is an intelligentsia which is not a class of its own but to a larger extent the intelligentsia of the first two classes. In addition there is the petty-bourgeoisie, which carries no great weight in today's Hungary, but it is not without importance. A particular system of values is linked with these class relations. The convergence and basic oneness of interests can be observed even today, and the effect of the reform has not changed this.

Property relationships do not cause any fundamental antagonism between workers and peasants. But as far as the petty-bourgeoisie is concerned, there are conflicting interests from the point of view of property rights. At the same time it is becoming clearer that the absorption of today's numerically vastly reduced petty-bourgeoisie cannot be an immediate objective of socialist policy, nor can it become the economic or political goal of the next period either. It is necessary to keep going a certain amount of economic activity on a small scale, and to ensure the replacement of those who fall out. There is need for this sort of arrangement where repairs are concerned, and services, and to some extent also in commodity-production serving small-scale or individual requirements. It would be against economic interests, political ones too, when possible effects are borne in mind, if the petty-bourgeoisie ceased to exist. If craftsmen and small retailers closed their workshops and their shops, if peasants in the producers' cooperatives stopped

working their household plots, the result would be considerable economic and social damage. The state would suddenly have to make great investments to bring about small scale instruments to replace the established small enterprises; these would be sure to be unprofitable, and would in addition in all probability fulfill the same tasks in a much more awkward way.

The petty bourgeoisie numbers today two to three per cent of the population of Hungary, and the social importance of its economic activity is of the same order. It cannot obstruct the development of a socialist society in any way that could count. At the same time it has to be supervised continuously by the state, since this is a section of society aiming to make a profit, which looks on personal profit and not the common good as its principal aim. One has to take care that this gain should not be at cross purposes with the interests of society. All this can be arranged through taxation and supervision by the state.

If we observe the class structure of Hungarian society, we find that there is still a certain difference in the way the socially relevant work of workers and peasants is valued and that there are of course certain diverging interests too. But these are not very virulent. The new mechanism will continue to bring the principal social classes closer to each other.

Let us take a look at the groups which make up the structure of society, and at the system of values linked with it. At first sight, the division of society into trades and professions is obvious. The organizational aspects of this are trade unions and the agricultural and craftsmens' cooperatives. These social groups are linked by a very strong identity of interests, especially those concerning the value society puts on their work, e.g. their wages, allowances in addition to wages, and the share of things outside the wage packet which society allots to various professions and trades. The diverging interests of different trades often cross each other, and decisions have to be taken on the basis of the social interest. This is partly the task of the National Council of Trade Unions. But the state also has tasks in this respect. The state fulfills the role of the political regulator in the assertion of different interests. This role of the state will not diminish in the future either, it will even become somewhat more complex, because these interests will, in the new mechanism, emerge in a more lively way on the surface of social and political life.

The trade unions are first of all organs representing the interests of workers of different vocations. I would not call them representatives of the interests of "labour." Labour as such is only an indirect factor within the trade unions which shows itself only as it were in a transmitted way. In the trade

unions the concrete vocation, the concrete worker, the concrete employee dominate with their particular interests. All these are of course summarized in a universal worker-employee economic interest too, that is, if the interests of different trades can be brought to a common denominator. At the same time, the workers as a class also have political interests in the development of the entire state, in the further progress of society, and these cannot always be represented by the trade unions with sufficient weight, since they can never completely abandon their particular craft interests. Therefore the Communist Party will always, and in the future too, represent the political interests of the workers best and most effectively.

Let us now look at the structure of interests in society from a second point of view. Interests in society are divided not only horizontally, according to territorial or trade groups, but also vertically. In our society the vertical division of interests is threefold. There is an individual interest, interest of collective units (the interest of the enterprises or of the councils, local government units) and a social interest, which in practice appears as the interest of the state. Under the new mechanism the vertical structure of society is modified to the extent that the interest of collective units will come to the fore much more forcefully than before. Individual interest had its part to play before today also, and this will remain unaltered in principle. The social interest also had an important guiding role, and this also remains in essence unaltered. It was the interest of collective units at the centre of the hierarchy that was obscure, and without shape; from time to time it wrongly communicated the social interest to the individual, and most likely it had a distorting role in the opposite direction too. We now have to count on a more forceful appearance of the interest of collective units than was the case so far. This in fact means the appearance of a huge new power. Society, the party, the state must be able to allow collective interests to surface and to assert themselves in such a way as to fit into the system of interests of society and to adapt themselves continuously to the latter.

In our society there is a functional division of interests too. I wish to mention a single interest here, a very weighty and forceful interest, that of the consumer. It is characteristic of the producers' interest that it is not easily summarized into a national interest, but appears mainly as the interest of collectives, while on the other hand the interest of consumers appears generally as the interest of wider sections of society. Consumers are not organized on a national scale; the consumers' interest nowhere becomes organized or summarized in a way that would permit us to say: "this, in a socialist society, is the interest of the consumer." The interests of consumers appear in three groups. The consumer interests of the lower income

groups are closer to each other, those of the middle income groups are also more or less identical, and generally speaking the interests of those with higher incomes also coincide. Since consumption as a rule takes place on a family level, it is not so much the individual but the family income that counts, when differences are considered. In addition, there exists a typically local interest too, as e.g. in certain villages where it is difficult to organize supply, or at a new housing estate, where the circumstances of supply may be special. In addition to all these, typically individual consumer interests assert themselves too, for instance in connection with the housing problem.

The consumer interest can be various, and determined by each individual case. But it has its traditional manifestations. A traditional consumer interest appears for instance when the town consumer in his capacity of buyer faces producers delivering goods to the market, and selling them there. A certain opposition of interests between producers and consumers appears regardless of which sector of the economy supplied the goods. But the traditional consumer interest also manifests itself when peasants appear as the buyers of industrial products. Consumer interests must therefore be borne in mind as an important political factor.

It is obvious that the general position of the consumer, the assertion of consumer interests, will become more favourable in the future, since the guiding motive of economic action will in the final resort be the satisfaction of demand. Man himself is the goal of the reform, beyond the improvement of the efficiency of the economy, or rather using that as a means. For this reason, more attention has to be paid to consumer attitudes, to consumer decisions, and consumer interests have to be recognized, not only by economic policy to a greater extent than has been usual until now, but also in everyday economic practice. It is however neither right nor permissible to look on consumer interests as paramount, or to make them such.

Could the profit motive not perhaps give rise to practice which is hostile to the consumer? Such a danger exists, and in certain cases this may even happen, but in the last resort the profit motive helps to produce a large quantity of available goods, which is perhaps the most effective instrument for the assertion of consumer interests. Not to mention that in the new economic mechanism the interaction between production and demand increases; a "buyers' market" will gradually be created where buyers will be in an at least equal position with sellers. The reduction of producers' monopolies, the development of rational and regulated competition, serves also the interests of consumers. Since competition between buyers will be replaced by competition between sellers, producers will have to do their best to win the favour of the consumers, to satisfy their requirements in the

best possible way. Further, it remains an integral aim of Hungarian economic policy that consumers should be able to spend their incomes in the most favourable circumstances possible, and in the most effective way.

The final conclusion that may be drawn from the examination of the social structure and prevailing system of values in Hungary is that in accordance with the nature of socialism class interests will continue to converge strongly. At the same time, the interests of different trades will continue to oppose each other; in this respect, it cannot be expected that a tendency for interests to converge will assert itself in the future either.

A strong differentiation may be expected in the domain of the interests of collective units. In the long run interests will of course always be identical, but day to day interests will usually differ. The process will be that the interests of collective units will clash (enterprises will clash with enterprises, local government units with local government units, for instance, in the question of distributing the social investment fund), then they will find a common denominator, and so on. Interests mature and develop mostly in a spontaneous way, but the resolution of conflicting interests is always made possible by the considered activity of conscious social forces. One must make certain that in the new economic mechanism individual interests should always be in harmony with that of collective units and the latter with the social interest. The interests of collective units will be the most important link between the individual and the social interest.

The extension of the independence of enterprises in itself underpins a double-sided requirement: on the one hand it makes it necessary that enterprises should themselves decide—within statutory limits—questions of labour and employment, and on the other, there must be social and legal guarantees answering a secure social and biological existence to all those who work honestly. One guarantee of this is the collective agreement concluded between the manager, representing the state, and the trade union organization within the enterprise, representing the workers. The collective agreement is a kind of link between the different interests, an instrument working for the integration of interests, and towards a systematic resolution of the antagonism between them. The collective agreement contains, based on generally applicable statutes, the rights of the management and of the trade union organization in the enterprise, rules determining the living and working conditions of the workers, more concretely the conditions of employment, working hours, safety rules, material and moral incentives, distribution of personal income, etc. Collective agreements serve also the extension of democracy within the plant. Thus e.g. when this year's contracts were drafted in the enterprises workers took part, and draft agree-

ments were discussed by various representative bodies within plants. All this really means that a new driving force is beginning to function.

The movements manifesting themselves in the system of interests of society are to an important degree linked with conditions of employment. What trends may be expected in this respect in the future? Conditions of full employment prevail in the Hungarian economy. In the period of intensive development—which we have already entered—the principal instrument of economic growth will be the increase of social productivity, complemented by the raising of the level of employment, while full employment is maintained. But the movement of labour within the economy will not cease, on the contrary, it will necessarily increase under the conditions provided by the new system of direction, in fact this is an important precondition for the functioning of the latter. Economic growth and technological development alter the employment structure from time to time, entailing a periodical regroupment of the labour force. Enterprises will endeavour to be more economical in the use of the labour force.

The flow of labour will increase not only between branches of the economy, but also from weaker enterprises to better ones. In the last resort, positive results may be expected from this. Economic levers must ensure that movements of labour, changes of employment occasioned by the subjective intentions of people, should correspond also to the flow of labour economic interests demand. In harmony with this, employment and its termination are now governed by regulations, which make it possible for the enterprise and the employee, i.e. both parties acting together, to terminate employment at any time by mutual consent. In accordance with the principle of socialist humanism, the state in its social policy endeavours to resolve problems created by the growing flow of labour, it continues to ensure the right to work and takes care that every citizen capable of work should be able to take part in the work of society.

The Hungarian economy has reached the stage where the rate of economic growth is increasingly decided by factors determining efficiency. One factor determining the efficiency of social labour is the regional division of labour and the direction in which the latter moves. At the same time the extension of the independence and powers of regional organs makes the appearance of regional interests more pronounced. The Hungarian socialist state has to endeavour—through the harmonization of the policy of regional development with the system of direction—to fit the regional interests more smoothly into the social system of value. This serves important social-political objectives. The level and rate of development of different regions has a direct effect on the living conditions of the population, and the ten-

dency towards evening out, the reduction of the social and economic differences brings the national and regional interests nearer to each other.

In the course of socialist construction considerable progress has been made in the development of economically backward regions, in the reduction of the grave disproportions inherited from the capitalist past, in the solution of social-political questions caused by the differing level of development in various regions, in bringing nearer to each other the level of economic development of different regions. The principal motive force of this was a policy of industrial location, and it is an expression of the results achieved by this policy that the industrialization of the industrially underdeveloped regions has been accelerated, their share in industrial employment rose from 17 per cent in 1950 to 22 per cent in 1965. In 1968 a central fund for industrial development and location was established for the regional direction and stimulation of industrial development. The next task now is to elaborate within the framework of the long-range development of the economy first a realistic regional development concept and then a plan which will make it possible to bring the level of development of the various economic regions even closer to each other and to make them more equal, in harmony with the general objectives of economic policy.

Economic reform and socialist equality

The process of a gradual development of political, economic and cultural equality is not stopped under the new economic mechanism either. But its principal path will be no longer the further extension of services made available free or at reduced prices, in other words the development above all of distribution of a communistic character, but the consistent assertion of the principle of socialist distribution. And this means that nobody should obtain a privileged allocation from society as part of his consumption (with the exception of social benefits deliberately given by the state to assist those in receipt of small incomes), everyone should pay what the product is worth. It is intended at the same time that there should be a more consistent differentiation between incomes according to the social usefulness and quantity of work done. Differences of a certain degree are necessary in the distribution of incomes in accordance with qualifications, the responsibilities borne and the reliability shown.

The system of distribution, wages and sharing that has until now developed in Hungary, has brought the workers' incomes very close to each other, and has created in the individual an interest in average work even if

he is capable of more. The extremely unconscientious or the extremely feeble get into a disadvantageous position today too, but the one who works extremely well receives small reward in the way of a better income, or a higher standard of living. As a consequence, individual people are not eager enough to do more useful work for society at their regular place of work. For this very reason second jobs and similar methods of complementing one's income have become more widespread. All this holds economic development back. In addition, it also obstructs the political aims of society if the average individual has limited opportunities gradually to reach the upper rungs of the social income-scale in the course of his career by remaining in his trade or enterprise and doing good work, but without obtaining a leading position. Not everybody has the capacity to lead, but every individual wants to progress in the course of his life.

A differentiation is also needed between enterprises in accordance with the efficiency with which they handle the material means entrusted to them. This may also be expressed by asking what percentage income the enterprise provides for society, given the share of public resources and the investment fund at its disposal. Under the new economic mechanism 7.5 per cent profit is determined based on the total means (fixed and working capital) of the enterprise. There are of course considerable differences between enterprises and between different sections of the economy. Of these 7.5 per cent the state gets 4 per cent for social use. Of the remaining 3.5 per cent approximately 1.5 per cent is the share of the employees. As can be seen, the entire profit serves public interests or those of the collective units. The increase in enterprise profits is today in the interest of socialist society and it would be wrong to view it as something damnable. We have made it possible for enterprises to improve their income proportionately if their profitability rises. And this necessarily leads to differences between enterprises and as a result between the incomes of their employees.

The income-regulating task of the socialist state is a double one today: on the one hand it has to open the road to a certain differentiation, and on the other it has to pay due attention to improving the position of the lowest income groups as much as possible. It has to encourage at the same time a certain extension of the income scale, as an important instrument of economic policy and all the improvement permitted by circumstances of the situation of low income groups, that being part of the social policy of a socialist state.

In the initial stage of socialist construction the principle of a social policy and the wish for equality asserted themselves strongly. Our wages policy e.g. consciously endeavoured to reduce inequalities and the disproportionate

incomes that had developed on the basis of capitalist economic conditions. However, this went beyond what was correct from an economic point of view, and unduly reduced the difference in income between those carrying out more intricate work requiring higher training, and others. The wages in the medium echelons are on the average 1.5 times the wages of workers, and those in the top leadership earn twice as much. This harmful trend of equalization was strengthened by a general mood fed by a simplified interpretation of social justice, and this atmosphere has not changed entirely yet, but is being "re-produced" here and there.

The practice followed thus far brought an exaggerated equalization of wages and at the same time exaggerated inequalities in consumption, since the consumer price subsidies had a different effect on various sections. This has to be reversed now: wages have to be differentiated, and in the domain of consumption there has to be more equality. We have reached the stage where the state should give preferences to production, not to consumption. Socialist equality is ideally realized if incomes are adjusted to work done, and if in consumption everybody has an equal chance in proportion with his income, i.e. everybody can obtain products or services at the same price. A deliberate social policy by the state is of course necessary; the state has to give consumption subsidies to certain sections, it has to pay special attention to the position of low income groups and to the smallest consumer units, the families. But all this cannot be allowed to lead to a blocking of the road leading to the growth of economic rationality.

How does the reform effect the development of the socialist state?

The present role and function of the socialist state can be taken to continue for a considerable time to come. The economic reform does not mean that the role of the state is being reduced, but that the area of direct management by the state is narrowed down and indirect management extended; the state increasingly applies political and economic delegation.

It is a characteristic trait of Hungarian economic development that in the economic and the cultural domain the socialist state intends in future to rely more on initiative within society. This is the sum of the importance of the reform as far as the state is concerned. But it would not be right to make the delegation of administrative state functions to institutions on a social basis a general or principal object. Institutions on a social basis will have a large and increasing role in Hungarian society, but not that of replacing the state.

In the area of the economy, following the reform of the mechanism, the state has withdrawn from direct leadership to the command post. This means that in future it will not concern itself with the direct preparation of the economic plans of councils and enterprises, or with the distribution of material means. All this will be done by councils, enterprises and co-operatives themselves. In other words, the state on the one hand, and the councils and state enterprises on the other, will in future divide actual day to day activity in a special way. This separation is a special one, since it is not final and it is not a separation from every point of view. The socialist state continues to be built on the system of councils and the growth of economic independence does not detach them from the state. Further, the state continues as the owner of state enterprises with the right to appoint and relieve managers, and to found and wind up enterprises.

State functions concerned with directing the economy, the direction and supervision of the putting into practice of economic aims, are amongst those which were strengthened. In this connection it will become necessary in future to narrow the structure of the state apparatus—one cannot know yet to what extent and at what rate—maintaining a system of combined functional and sectional direction, maintaining i.e. the system of state planning, of financial, industrial, agricultural, trade and transport administration. The organization of the state apparatus must be shaped not so much on a theoretical basis, but in accordance with practical considerations.

The effect of the economic reform on the development of socialist democracy

We consider democracy—in accordance with our ideology—the natural mode of existence under socialism, there is no other alternative for us. At the same time we inherited many democratic methods and institutions from developed bourgeois democracy. We make use of a large number of these under socialism. But what we want is nevertheless a radically new kind of democracy which we have to develop ourselves to correspond to socialist conditions, and this democracy is not yet ready—not even in our heads—but we are building it while looking for the way.

Socialism is unimaginable without democracy. On the one hand we want an institutionalized democracy, and on the other a real, genuine democracy of content which is not merely formal. We Communists continue to believe in the rationality of democracy, in its feasibility, and in the idea that democracy is needed by the masses and is their only genuine opportunity

to intervene effectively in affairs of state, in the affairs of the community, and in economic affairs.

I emphasize our acceptance of democracy, because all over the world democracy still has many enemies and adversaries. E.g. Western bourgeois sociologists—even sociologists who may be called progressive from a certain point of view—often show themselves sceptical towards democracy. What is the reason for this? The fast advance of technology, the technological revolution, the extraordinary widening of the range of knowledge of different sections of society, the increasing difference between professional people and the average worker or rather the masses who are on a lower level of education. The sceptics assert that for these reasons it is simply impossible to put democracy into practice. Their argument is roughly speaking that science cannot be shared out democratically amongst the masses, and since the importance of science is growing, democracy is becoming impossible. Democracy has not only bourgeois but socialist opponents as well. I am here thinking of those pseudo-radical circles—including the now dominant faction of the Chinese party-leadership—which consider the preparation for the world revolution irreconcilable with the realization of genuine democracy in the countries where socialism has been victorious.

As against all these we have every reason to trust in democracy as something feasible, and to build it into the socialist system. At the same time I wish to emphasize that we communists cannot make an idol of democracy. We cannot clothe it with mythical qualities, as a method we cannot consider it a creative force which is able to outline the objectives of development and to make sure of spontaneous progress.

What is the essence of democracy? In the most general terms we may answer that it is the particular instrument of the masses thanks to which they can guide and control social and economic processes. It includes the possibility that a citizen or a collective group of them may decide about the most important questions affecting them. It includes a guarantee that the people should freely elect representatives to representative bodies. It finally includes open and democratic control and the possibility to call to account those responsible. It represents a particular, indirect creative force, because in democratic conditions the ideas and concepts serving development can be expressed more quickly and more clearly. Democracy encourages the setting up of right objectives and fortifies the organising activity serving the attainment of these objectives. But it cannot replace the force which is able to size up perspectives, and analyze them scientifically, which is able to take the initiative at a stage when a new idea has to be made acceptable to public opinion. In every democracy a creative force is needed which

guides and leads the progress of the community. In socialism this leading force is the Communist Party.

In the last resort, socialist democracy has great advantages for us. But it has a braking effect too. E.g. in democratic conditions administration is slower. One should not believe that as socialist democracy develops things will be dealt with much faster in every respect. The matters that have to be discussed and decided democratically, will generally progress more slowly than if they were decided by one person. But we can afford this, because we are already past the period of revolutionary transformation and the period of extraordinarily speedy action which accompanies it. After all, a system of socialist democracy means that questions decided under it can count on much greater unity when the time comes to put them into effect. Consequently, those matters should be dealt with in accordance with the machinery of democracy and submitted for decision there, concerning which there is a greater interest in the unity of execution than in its speed.

Historical experiences allows that in every democracy there is a spontaneous tendency towards bureaucracy caused by exaggerated punctitiousness and also a danger exists that democracy may prove helpless against its enemies. We should not forget this, and should forestall this danger. Interrelation between the leadership and democratic institutions must be established. We have to initiate the formulation of long range objectives systematically, which will be put into practice by people and groups of people enjoying democratic rights under the leadership of the Party. And it is of great importance that the leading force, the Party itself should also function on the basis of the principle of the purest democracy.

Our socialist democracy differs fundamentally from bourgeois democracy in that the latter is a characteristic class democracy, whereas socialist democracy is characteristically of the people, extending to the entire nation. In bourgeois society the bourgeoisie is fully within the remparts of democracy, while the working class is so only in part, in what are called purely political fields (national and local elections). Economic democracy, and democracy at the place of employment are as such out of the question. Economic democracy is only possible under socialism. Even if it is realized most consistently, bourgeois democracy can therefore be only indirect, and the effective intervention of the masses in affairs is worn away in the process. In socialism on the other hand, the optimum possibilities exist for the development of a direct democracy. True not at one stroke, and we are not able to get round the difficulties of development either, but we are advancing in the direction of making democracy direct, to as great as possible extent.

Naturally we do not think of direct democracy in the manner of romantic utopians. We cannot imagine that the time can ever come when all decisions are made by the masses directly. Even after the development of direct democracy, three levels of decision-making will be left: decisions by the entire people, collective (group-) decisions and individual decisions. All matters have to be decided at the place where interests assert themselves most directly. As far as decisions by the entire people and collective (group-) decisions are concerned, appropriate representative bodies must exist which are able to take fundamental decisions at any time. As soon as personal decisions are involved people have to take the responsibility within a system of democratic control. We are therefore aware of the limits of direct democracy, but wish to work consistently on its gradual but continuous development.

What does this mean? It means that we should, wherever possible, replace the system of institutions based on multi-stage representative democracy by direct democracy. The economic reform represents, through decentralization, a forceful step on this road. The national assembly has always been elected democratically in socialist Hungary, in plebiscite-like elections, there has never been anything wrong with this, nor that as a democratic body it made laws concerning affairs of state and the most important economic questions. In the last instance, economic legislation has been democratic until now too, but exaggerated centralization made economic democracy indirect to such an extent that it greatly paralyzed the democratic activity of the masses. On the basis of democratically adopted laws enterprises were issued instructions by the organs of state administration.

Now that their rights and opportunities in the making of economic decisions have been extended, elements of direct democracy have appeared and are becoming stronger both as regards councils (local government units) and enterprises. They have their own means for the use of which they are responsible and on the use of which they decide themselves. Collective decision-making is direct in councils and in enterprises when collective agreements are concluded, the profit-sharing fund is distributed and the social and cultural funds of the workers. Democratic control by the collectives of enterprises is also direct inasmuch as it concerns matters in the sphere of enterprise management. The employees of an enterprise have so far democratically controlled the manager in vain since he received instructions from above about almost everything. They had no way of controlling him in the most essential questions since they could not extend their enquiries to the superior organs deciding key questions, the governmental organs or the national assembly. The fact that powers of decision-making

were transferred to the enterprise level, has altered the situation. Now the decision maker is present, hence democratic control can be asserted directly.

Under the new system of economic direction. a socialist enterprise functions in two capacities: as an economic enterprise, and as a workshop of collective labour. If we think of the development of democracy within the plan in a comprehensive way, it is necessary to apply democratic methods to an increasing extent in both directions. Boards of control seem to be the most suitable democratic way to supervise the activity of an enterprise; these have now begun to function at 68 enterprises. The object of the boards of control is a comprehensive evaluation and control of the economic activity of the enterprise and the elaboration of projects. They do this without passing any resolutions concerning the activity of the enterprise or interfering in its work. The boards of control are organs which suitably represent collective social ownership, the state, connected economic organizations and the collectives of the employees. The idea is that the boards of control should preserve personal responsibility for management, while exercising a collective control over the activity of the enterprise, and thus reconcile the requirements of expert management and of democracy. They may grow into institutions which can evaluate well and without bias how an enterprise has fitted in with the putting into effect of general economic aims, and those of that particular section of the economy.

The question arises: what kind of democracy is to develop in the two separate types of socialist enterprise: state enterprises and cooperatives? Our guiding principle is that cooperatives should be built on the principle of self-management, accompained by greater personal responsibility than before. A state enterprise, on the other hand, should be built on the principle of management by one person, with stronger, broader and more democratic control than earlier. The principal organ of this control is the trade union, of course not in opposition to the party organization. Political control and initiative on the part of the party organization, its activity furthering harmony between management and workers, is indispensable for the good functioning of the mechanism of democracy.

The reform has meant dual responsibility for the managers of state enterprises. Their responsibility to the state is a legal and political responsibility, including responsibility for the economic activity of the enterprise. Their political responsibility shows mainly in their ability to find means to collaborate fruitfully with the collective of workers. Their political responsibility vis à vis their employees is also considerable, though not as complete as their responsibility to the state. They are also responsible politically to the state for the correctness of the economic programme, one which they

have worked out to ensure the growth of the enterprise and for the degree to which their productive and trading activity serves the public interest. They are not legally and directly responsible to the workers (the employees) for this. If we wanted to introduce such a responsibility, we would have to hand the right to make economic decisions to the employees. But the employees (the workers) cannot decide on technical economic questions or bear responsibility for such decisions.

Two dangers have to be faced concerning the future role of managers. One is that due to the increased emphasis on the principle of individual management, and also because together with increasing rights of management they also have actual economic means at their disposal, in some places a type of manager who snaps his fingers at democracy and only issues commands may come into being, and this would be politically intolerable. However, this is only one of the dangers. In my view it would be wrong to think that this is the greater danger and that the managers may abuse their opportunities more than heretofore. Individual management is asserted in circumstances of political control by the party organization and political control practised by the masses. I therefore think it unlikely that such an adverse situation should come about anywhere.

I believe the other danger to be the more serious: there may be managers who make little use of the right of independent action, who are unwilling to shoulder responsibility, and take risks, who "wash their hands" of everything. The danger exists that in some places weak, irresolute managers will be put into, or will be left in leading positions, people who have qualities desirable from a political or a human point of view, who get along well with everybody, but have no determination and initiative and shun discussion and opposition even when they should engage in them in order to get some new idea or project adopted. The rhythm of the economy has no need of such managers, the nature of affairs cannot tolerate such management.

It will be a corollary of the evolution of socialist democracy that sooner or later representative state and local government bodies will receive greater powers at the expense of administrative ones. This is an important aspect of the evolution of direct democracy. It is a corollary of the evolution of the socialist state that more—and more modern—general legal rules should provide a statutory basis for the work of administrative state organs, the activities of the councils, the enterprises, the cooperatives, and even of associations, and also that we should have improved laws defining civil rights and duties.

The question arises, in what direction further development of councils responsible for local government should take place in the course of the

introduction of the new economic mechanism. The independence of the local councils has increased, their rights, and possibilities open to them have been considerably extended as regards economic decisions and control functions, their financial resources have become more ample. The amplification of local sources of income, and at the same time the reduction of allocations from the central budget will continue in the future. In 1969 the share of local income will be 70 per cent, and that of contributions from the state 30 per cent in the budgets of the councils, as against 59 and 41 per cent respectively in 1968. A similar trend can be observed in their development funds. All this bears witness to growth in the economic self-government of the councils. Within the activities of the councils economic autonomous management has grown and so has the role of councils in economic development, in the coordination of the regional social economic aspects of economic development, and in the establishment of the proper conditions for municipal services. But municipal self-government will not be allowed to weaken central direction, the putting into effect of the central will: in the organization of the state the principle of democratic centralism will continue to be asserted.

It will certainly be necessary for the national assembly to legislate more intensively, and the number of decrees, and ordinances will have to be reduced. In this way we will not only create a more active role for socialist legislation, but will also be instrumental in getting the national assembly to exercise more substantial political control over governmental work and the state administration. At a local council level similar widening of functions should ensue in favour of council meetings, increasing the guiding and controlling role of council meetings as political forums.

We have to be careful in the meantime that legislation and governing should not become confused, neither should "swallow" the other. What appears to be the right course is that the national assembly and council meetings should increase their legislative activity, and being political forums should exercise substantial control over the activities of governing or executice organs and bodies, as well as over the political aspect of the work of various sections of the administration.

Influence of the reform on social consciousness

In intellectual circles—especially among those on the arts side—a fear is often expressed: does the reform perhaps represent a drawing back from the principles of socialism? Does the increased role of the profit motive

give rise to the danger that instead of encouraging a public spirit it will stimulate an exaggerated interest in individual success, and individual income?

In my view: no! Profit within the new mechanism is a collective category, and will always remain so. Only the collective, through collective work, can produce more profit. Therefore, without doubt, the introduction of profit-sharing induces every thinking person who works in an enterprise or co-operative to intensify collective work, the collective pooling of forces. The interest in profits does not obscure but on the contrary makes it clear that individual work alone, let alone selfishness, cannot improve the lot of the individual; on the contrary, individuals are forged into a collective, and strongly linked together by the knowledge that they can increase profitability by working together. We have to explain the positive role of profitability, and of profit to those who allege that profit cannot be reconciled with socialism. Profit has hardly begun to act as a stimulating force, and already people in an exaggerated way adopt a defensive attitude towards the danger of chasing profits.

It is important that public opinion should become aware that the reform of the economic mechanism makes for a common road towards success. This reform is a system which conforms to socialist collectivity. It is true that to a certain extent it transfers the emphasis to a collective sense of responsibility on the council and enterprise level from a national sense of responsibility, but not altogether, and a complete transfer should not be permitted. The national sense of responsibility has to be maintained and strengthened. But this can no longer be achieved by not giving the collective common interest on an enterprise level the importance which is due to it. It is true that in the last resort the progress of each individual depends on that of the state, and therefore everybody has to feel responsible on a national scale. But the individual sense of responsibility for the common success of the state, the sense of being dependent on this, has to be complemented. The development of a sense of responsibility on the level of collective units is of great importance, it represents an indispensable step towards a growth of a national sense of responsibility, towards the development and recognition of a consciousness of national responsibility. It is therefore most important that collective consciousness should increase in our country, in the interest of the speedy progress of our nation.

The problem of an interest in individual things and morality is also often discussed. There are people who emphasize an interest in national things in such a way that they almost seem to disregard the importance of moral consciousness. From this it does, of course, not yet follow that an interest

in national things in fact violates socialist morality. But there are others who look on the factors of moral consciousness themselves, as if they were independent of economic conditions, and hold that any kind of interest in material things is in principle opposed to socialist morality. This cannot be accepted. While the above mentioned technocratic attitude does not sufficiently recognize moral factors, those who pass judgments in social or economic questions from the point of view of some abstract morality, do not differ much from the principles contained in the Ten Commandments of the church; they bear in mind many beautiful and noble moral commandments, but close their eyes to the fact that life has already made sin and immorality itself much more complicated and manifold. This mentality never had anything to do with Marxism. The Hungarian leadership professes socialist morality, expressing, defending and strengthening given economic relations.

Some seem to worry that it might lead to moral corruption if everybody strongly endeavours to achieve a higher standard of living. In my view there is no need to be afraid of our contemporary Hungarian society becoming a "consumer-society" either. In our contemporary Hungarian society the evolution of producer and of consumer consciousness occur together, and they do not get divorced in the new economic mechanism either, but on the contrary, their joint character is strengthened. The desire to acquire material goods is linked with the awareness of what the individual has to produce, what he has to offer to society so that material goods should be attainable. The time is still a long way off when we will have to feel concerned for manual workers lest they have an over-abundance of material goods. Unfortunately, a long way off indeed!

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Finally, as far as the international effect of the reform of the mechanism is concerned, it may be stated that the new economic mechanism ensures continuity in international relations, and stimulates the exploration of new possibilities in relation to both capitalist and socialist countries. It is certain to help us to stand our ground in the economic competition with capitalist countries, and to increase the efficiency of our cooperation with socialist countries. The importance of this can hardly be exaggerated if we consider that one of the principal guarantees of Hungarian economic progress and political stability continues to be close cooperation with the socialist countries.

A CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO EAST-WEST ECONOMIC RELATIONS*

by

JÓZSEF BOGNÁR

Since the early sixties economic science has made considerable headway in the socialist countries of Europe. Large sections of the population regularily discuss questions related to economic growth and development. In most countries government work has come to be focussed on economic questions.

Scientific research, discussion and economic action have turned around three decisive groups of questions:

1. Problems associated with the operation and control of the socialist economy; in other words, with the economic mechanism.

2. The forms, methods and effects of cooperation and division of labour between socialist countries; as well as the participation of individual national economies in the world economy on the basis of mutual advantage.

3. The ways and methods of accelerating general and applied technological development.

Speaking to an audience familiar with economic problems it is unnecessary to emphasize that these vast complexes of problems are closely interrelated and that their solution cannot be conceived without these close interrelations being taken into account. What factors one might ask, are responsible for the rapid development in economic science and for the growing interest governments have shown in economic questions?

Rapid progress in a science is usually due to the appearance of new conditions and problems and to the social needs associated with them. It is in the interest of governments to perceive these new tendencies which—if rational action is undertaken—can be moderated and gradually modified but which—if no such action were introduced—would react, with an elementary power, on the purposes and equilibrium of the society concerned.

* Lecture delivered at the Vienna session of the Stanford Research Institute (September 13–16, 1968).

Under socialist conditions, foresight is of particular importance; these economic tendencies, difficulties and troubles do not emerge with the same elementary force as they do in a free-market system. If unfavourable tendencies are recognized in time and appropriate action is taken, the population can to a large extent be saved from the consequences of economic difficulties. This, of course, is an intricate task since troubles emerging with an elementary force are perceived by all, whereas the significance of unfavourable tendencies making their appearance in the economic cycle of an expanding economy is often underrated.

What are, then, the unfavourable tendencies in the working of the economy observed by economists and statesmen showing foresight?

a) The growth rate of national income has slowed down in most socialist countries of Europe without a substantial improvement in the conditions of economic equilibrium. The increased share of accumulation—achieved with a view to accelerating the pace of growth—has not had the hoped for effect; what is more, grave tensions have developed on the market for investment goods.

b) Under such circumstances, the efficiency of investment has diminished and a unit increment of national income requires more material and intellectual effort than it did in the previous period. Investments have taken a longer time to yield returns, and the amount of uncompleted investment has continued to increase.

c) Production has continued to be unrelated to consumption in the market for both investment and consumer goods. This has caused shortages of some goods and unreasonably large accumulations (overstocking) of others.

d) During the past decades, socialist countries have developed advanced industries whose structural (macrostructural) changes have followed—in the form of tendencies—trends shown by the world economy. An analysis of industrial monostructures shows that—to judge from the indicators of total production in Hungary for instance—only the share of the chemical industry is smaller than in the advanced capitalist countries (about 10 per cent against some 15 per cent in the industrial countries) while the share of the machine industry is somewhat higher than in the German Federal Republic and in France and much higher than in Belgium, the Netherlands and Italy. Yet this advanced industrial macrostructure is not sufficiently effective; productivity and the per capita national income are substantially lower than in the countries listed above (except for Italy, of course).

e) Foreign trade has grown rapidly within the regional cooperation between socialist countries, yet the forms, methods and institutions of cooperation have not kept pace with requirements. Commerce is still

characterized by bilateralism, the rouble is only transferable but not convertible, and the flow of capital and labour between these countries is still extremely small.

The structure of trade with advanced capitalist countries is unfavourable; raw materials and agricultural products still head the list of exports (their share amounts to 60 to 80 per cent in the exports of some socialist countries).

Foreign trade and economic growth

Under these circumstances, foreign trade has a limiting effect on the growth of smaller socialist countries (in fact of all socialist countries, except the Soviet Union). In other words: the possible rate of economic growth is determined by the import demands and the export capacity of the expected increment.

1. When analysing the problems of economic control most economists proceed from the recognition that the efficiency of a system of control can only be assessed by the actual course economic processes take, and their results. The system of control cannot be regarded as efficient if growth is slow, if the equilibrium is frequently upset, if productivity increases at a low rate and if complex development targets (i. e. not only natural and quantitative ones) attained as a result of the economic process essentially differ from the economico-political intentions expressed by central decisions (plans). Under socialist ownership the efficiency of the control systems depends, in the first place, on how the decisions taken on the level of the national economy (on the governmental level) can be transmitted to the microeconomic sphere, i.e. to the level of enterprises. If—on account of shortcomings in the system of transmission—the economic units (enterprises and cooperatives) and the individuals act in a manner different from what has been laid down in the central decisions expressed in the plan, then troubles, disequilibrium and contradictions arise on the national economic level. An inaccurate dovetailing of the macro- and microeconomic processes is not simply one of the possible troubles but *the* weakness of the control system. Plan instructions were principal and most typical methods of economic control in the past. In compliance with the complex character of natural economic processes the intention was to render the system of plan instructions and indicators coherent and harmonious by marking out for producers the consumers (users) to whom they could sell their products and for users, the place and conditions of buying.

It is, however, a well-known fact that the activities of enterprises were

influenced not only by plan instructions. A society based on the division of labour and on commodity production embodies concrete economic relationships, such as ruling prices, a financial system, rates of foreign exchange, wage relationships, material interest, etc. These factors cannot be "eliminated," for they exert their influence whether or not they are taken into consideration by the central planning authority as a hypothetical system of effects underlying its policy. It is, therefore, not reasonable to look upon a planned economy embodying macroeconomic laws and intentions as an antagonistic alternative to a market-centred controlled commodity economy.

If the plan and the market are considered as temporarily coexisting, specific elements of different economic systems, they appear to live their own separate lives and influence the microeconomic units in opposite directions. If we do not recognize the role of the market in controlling economic processes, then the planned character of the economy will be found to be identical with the notion of state planning and not with the relationship between targets and achievements.

If, on the other hand, the national economic plan is no longer broken down in the form of binding instructions to the enterprise level, then economic factors will have a decisive say in the control of the economy. Such factors are the regulations governing collection by the state of enterprise income for accumulation and the utilization of what remains by the enterprises themselves, in this connection the regulation of wages and prices, the determination of the share of major investment and manpower training in the state budget foreign exchange policy by establishing rates of exchange, by skimming and subsidizing, credit policy, i.e. the determination of the actual conditions and directions for granting credits, foreign trade policy, i.e. the granting of import and export permits as the case may be, etc. When economic processes are regulated and controlled by economic means, the optimum is achieved in harmony with central intentions, but objectively, as a result of actual market processes. The economic mechanism—necessarily requiring correction from time to time—is considered a model which, as a whole, must satisfy certain criteria. The most decisive of these is the productive relationship between the micro- and the macroeconomy, i.e. the interests of enterprises should in fundamental questions coincide with the interests of society.

Economic problems leading up to the development of a new control system crop up in the individual national economies at different times, in different orders of magnitude and under different social-political conditions. It is evident, for instance, that countries dependent on foreign trade try

to establish a price system which gradually abolishes three separate prices for most goods (domestic prices, prices on the socialist market and world market prices). In a country like the Soviet Union, exporting some 3.5 to 4 per cent of her products, this does not seem to be an imperative requirement.

It is also quite obvious that the economic way of thinking embodied in the new system of control collides with certain earlier conceptions and, in addition, affects questions related to the social-political structure. A particularly grave situation may arise when conditions of political equilibrium are upset in the course of introducing the reform. It should be taken into account that the cooperation and mutual dependence between European socialist countries is at present more intensive in the political field than in the economic one. Hence any kind of reformist intentions promising a more rapid and efficient growth in the future yet threatening the political equilibrium in the present quite rightly produces certain anxieties. A threat to political equilibrium in our divided world necessarily raises the problem of the status quo established partly on a territorial, partly on an ideological basis. All attempts at reform reshape the power structure of a society on a new basis, and so does the reform of the economic mechanism. The line-up is particularly intricate in this respect since a considerable section of intellectuals and a section of technologists feel that the economic way of thinking is given an all too great emphasis in the reform to the detriment of a cultural or technological way of thinking.

Therefore the implementation of a new system of economic control must be looked on as a historical process of fundamental significance in the development of socialism.

Cyclic fluctuations and development

It follows that the cyclic fluctuations, accelerations and decelerations, rapid rises and relapses, which necessarily accompany development, can hardly be avoided. When the long-range dynamics of the reform movements are analysed, a permanently rising and progressing line of development can be discerned. It is common knowledge, however, that within the short or the medium term all social-political movements consist of crests and troughs. Yet, as a result of development, we get a control system in which the planning aspect relies on the controlling function of the market and economic methods predominate. In this control model enterprises make their decisions not in compliance with administrative instructions but under

the impact of an economic environment created by central authorities. In this sense the economic environment is a specific combination of economic incentives, guides and constraints. In this manner, the socialist state as the leader and organizer of the activities of society, on the one hand, and as the owner of the overwhelming majority of the means of production, on the other, can fulfil its function of controlling the economy better and more efficiently.

2. The economic policy of no country can be neutral in questions of international economic cooperation and trade. Every possible form of the international division of labour represents a redistribution of part of the national income on an international scale. This explains why the economists of socialist countries—especially the smaller ones—are so intensively concerned with questions of international cooperation.

As a consequence of their internal economic development and of international political circumstances, the international economic policy of the European socialist countries has changed in a significant way in recent decades.

In the first period, parallel with the transformation in the conditions of production, an intensive policy of industrialization was started which, at the beginning, was designed to diversify economic life. Within the economic community of the socialist countries (CMEA or Comecon), industrialization had a particular character combining the boosting of exports and a saving on imports.

In Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic and Hungary, for instance, several branches of industry were created or expanded to many times their former capacity in accordance with the needs of the Soviet market. Later, however, the industrially less advanced countries embarked on a road of development designed to save imports, building up the capacity to manufacture products they had earlier imported from other socialist countries. Unfortunately, the technological development of the industrially more advanced countries was not adapted in time to these changed circumstances, and this involved the appearance of parallel capacities. These later turned out to be serious obstacles to a sound growth of international trade.

Viewed from the angle of economic relations with the capitalist world, industrialization has, for almost two decades, had a predominantly import-saving character. (It ought to be pointed out that the notion of export-increasing and import-saving industrialization expresses only certain major tendencies since import-saving tendencies also exist in an export-oriented economy, and export-increasing activities can also be observed within import-saving ones.) Essentially this was a correct policy, although its

extent was not without certain distortions. It should be remembered that an acceleration of economic growth necessarily involves the increase of imports and a transformation of the import structure (instead of the few means of production imported until recently, there is now a growing demand for them). According to calculations made by Maizels, a British economist, making use of considerable statistical data, in the first period of industrialization the import intensity in many capitalist countries was about 1.5 to 2. Later, this naturally fell to 0.4 to 0.6, testifying to successful import-saving economic policy—and then it started rising again. It is also evident that the introduction and consolidation of new social-economic systems is accompanied by a certain degree of isolationism since such systems must consolidate norms that differ from those adopted in other parts of the world. Initial isolation is also helpful when it comes to reducing the danger of intervention by countries belonging to a different system.

It should also be taken into account that in the first period of industrialization an intensive cold war was fought, and an embargo, considerably extended under the Marshall Plan, covered 50 per cent of goods circulating in international trade.

At present, however, the smaller socialist countries of Europe must shift to a policy more markedly oriented to international trade and the world market, while for the Soviet Union the necessity for intensified international cooperation arises, in the first place, in connection with accelerating technological development.

In the case of the smaller socialist countries, an import-saving policy has led to low productivity since—owing to the small dimensions of the domestic market—a wide diversity of products had to be manufactured in small quantities, most of them in almost complete verticality. This exceeds the investment capacities of a small country, and disperses the instruments of development. It creates a broad scientific background which reaches a high standard in most respects, yet does no pioneering. In other words, it is not sufficiently productive economically. That is why the smaller socialist countries should endeavour to make a better use of their comparative advantages and pursue an intensified and concentrated investment policy built on such principles. This economico-political postulate must prevail throughout the entire mechanism related to decisions on domestic investments.

This economico-political postulate requires the modernization of the whole system and mechanism of the CMEA. Beside maintaining political cooperation relying on both a mutual respect for interests and on solidarity, the CMEA should turn from an organization for regional economic cooperation into an economic integration. Parallel to this transformation, the economic ties linking member states of this integration to the western countries should also be intensified. In this connection in addition to developing the exchange of commodities, we have in mind such forms of contact as the purchase of patents, joint scientific research, technological cooperation, contract work, wide-scale cooperation and joint enterprises. The economic contacts with western countries will not be based on firm and solid ground unless cooperation within the CMEA countries is improved. It is politically difficult to evolve such forms of cooperation between capitalist and socialist countries as are not or are merely used in the internal practice of the socialist countries. It should also be considered that almost 70 per cent of the commercial transactions of European socialist countries are carried out within this region, and that the smaller socialist countries depend for their raw materials and sources of power on the leading power of this area—the Soviet Union.

During this lecture I have made repeated allusions to the fact that every socialist country, or national economy has its individual attributes, special problems and, consequently, its specific interests and practices. Yet it is evident that these characteristics thrive and act within a framework of common attributes, interests and practices. The international solidarity of revolutionary systems and movements, the basic identity of the social-economic system, the similarity of economic targets and control systems evolving on the basis of social property, the coordination of nations concerning economic development and other similar factors are such common attributes.

The cooperative practices of the individual socialist countries are disparate at present. The Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic have concluded large-scale cooperation agreements chiefly on a state level; Rumania has achieved certain results in cooperation by relying on large investments; Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria have evolved cooperation mainly through contracts between enterprises. Although cooperation—in my opinion—is primarily a task devolving on the enterprises, the intention to develop cooperation should be connected with commercial-political targets on both sides.

In addition to the above-mentioned political and economic factors, the development of East-West contacts also depends on the extent to which we are able to give effect to contemporary principles of trade and market organization with due respect to the internal system of the partners. The traditional methods of market contacts are insufficient in a period when—parallel to the rapid development of applied and general technology—a new marketing theory and practice are in the making.

In the smaller socialist countries, the purpose of accelerating applied and general technological development is to introduce—mainly in export industries—an up-to-date technology based on inventions and discoveries instead of what I would call an adoption-based technology, and to do so in an economically efficient manner. In the Soviet Union the task is rather to transmit the technological leap achieved in the most dynamic branches to the entire field of production with the help of the immense scientific capacities available, and also that of international trade.

Both aspects of foreign trade play a significant part in achieving this task: partly by the importing of up-to-date means of production (such items constitute 60 per cent of imports into the Soviet Union today), on the one hand, and, on the other, by the gradually growing export of the products of the more dynamic industries.

In the small countries oriented towards foreign trade the acceleration of technical development is determined by specific (new) conditions. They must obviously find economic solutions embodying their comparative advantages (whose character and nature are in a state of transformation in our days) and mitigating the disadvantages of having comparatively small domestic markets. As to mass production—especially if the end products are considered—these countries can hardly compete successfully with countries possessing a large internal market.

Technology and export industries

In the export branches, however, up-to-date technology must certainly be introduced since an adoption-based technology will not enable these countries to create solid and lasting bases either on the Soviet or on western markets. The contradiction between the consequences of the dimensions of the internal market and the postulate of technical development can only be overcome with the help of appropriate economic ideas which are put into practice.

What is the essence of such economic ideas?

a) The industrial structure and the industrial activities must, obviously, be outlined by starting with demand.

b) It is not expedient to build up various and closely interrelated industrial activities in their entire verticality because in this case investment will dissipate, scientific capacities (beginning with fundamental research, right to development research) as well as general technology (organization, etc.) will be dispersed. Such capacities developed with the use of great material and intellectual energies will not prove competitive—as far as serial and mass production is concerned—with similar industries in countries disposing of greater material and intellectual forces and resources. (I should, naturally, make it clear that this statement indicates only a *tendency*; many small countries possess certain capacities that—owing to well-established industrial and trade traditions—constitute exceptions to this statement.)

c) From these two principles (to proceed from demand and not to develop the industrial capacities in their entire verticality) it logically follows that the starting-point for actual development priorities should be found in the microstructure and not in the macrostructure. From another angle of approach this means that the contemporary forms of international economic cooperation should be based, in the first place, on cooperation between enterprises and not between industries and that mutually advantageous specialization increasing productivity, should be achieved through the exchange of component parts, ingredients, semi-finished goods rather than by relying on industries and final products.

d) Industrial cooperation based on products, ingredients and component parts requires standardization. Standardization in our days is the fundamental condition not only for automation but also for cooperation.

e) In order to permit an uninterrupted development of industrial activity built on such foundations, it is necessary to create appropriate scientific capacities—i.e. scientific and technological cooperation, including joint research.

f) In order to increase productivity, special emphasis should be placed on the automation of administration, of the preparation of production and of the conveyance of materials.

g) Such economico-technical ideas have certain consequences for import policy also: in many cases importing semi-finished goods will prove more reasonable than importing raw materials. This, of course, means that both the materials and the processing thereof must satisfy certain qualitative (standardized) requirements.

h) This type of foreign trade is something more than traditional foreign trade and ensures greater stability for the producing enterprises. What

happens is that the market phenomena taken in the traditional sense of the term turn into production relationships between enterprises without losing their trade character.

This is the road to large-scale development in foreign trade in the age of the scientific-technological revolution.

For the smaller European socialist countries this kind of cooperation would be economically reasonable in a closer form and frame within the CMEA and in a looser form and frame with the advanced capitalist countries.

There is no doubt, however, that such a structure of economic cooperation raises many delicate political problems. In the present international situation, these political problems have a smaller impact on the traditional exchange of commodities. (They, nevertheless, do arise, as shown by the United States still denying the European socialist countries the most-favoured-nation clause.)

In the case of commodity exchange only a minimum of mutual trust is needed since traditional trade is carried on even amongst belligerents—through other channels. Foreign trade characterized by credit operations, by the passing of technology, by adjusting standards and exchanging ingredients (component parts), however, creates ties through which the cooperating enterprises become mutually dependent for a longer period. But the cooperating enterprises are part of different national economies, and these belong to different economic integrations. Thus the concrete forms of ideas concerning development evolved in one region of integration may become dependent on the intentions and endeavours of the states of the other region of integration.

But this indirect and limited mutual dependence (indirect, since it develops through various stages of transmission, and limited, since it relates to certain ideas concerning development), or I would say interdependence, does not involve the necessity of renouncing the fundamental principles underlying the political and social system of either party. We economists, must make this absolutely clear, for otherwise no contemporary economic cooperation can be achieved between countries of different social systems. The three planes of economic action (enterprise—national economy—integration) must always be taken into account since they not only represent reality but also embody one of the fundamental directions of development in our age.

It follows that the mutual advantages for national economies belonging to the two different economic integrations must be such that they benefit both regions or—as a minimum requirement—that they should not be

detrimental to any of them. Trade will invariably rely on the principle of mutual advantage, yet these principles must be interpreted in our world in ways which differ from what was appropriate in Ricardo's days. Nation states exert a growing influence on the economy since the fate of different political systems and regimes is inseparable from economic prosperity and from the economic conditions in which the masses live.

Consequently, trade must be advantageous—or at least neutral—from the standpoint of political power. In the age of integrations, the necessary linking up of the principle of mutual advantage with policy applies to integration as a whole. This is the case particularly when a given economic integration is bound by strong political cohesive forces.

Obviously, an integration that would welcome attempts to dissolve existing political and economic integrations through trade transacted with one of the member states does not exist.

Considering the fact that new forms of international cooperation create lasting mutual economic dependences, on the one hand, and that the new economic dependences, the new economic processes on the other also have an effect on political conditions, it would be advisable if the parties—perhaps through the medium of international organizations—were to offer each other mutual guarantees. These would refer, in the first place, to political problems associated with cooperation and to the continuity of the existing forms of cooperation.

Compared with the period of the cold war, the fact that East-West economic and trade relations can stand considerable political stresses in our days should be looked upon as serious progress. But in our age, changing and developing at dynamic speed, it is not enough to preserve what we have. True development can only be expected if our intentions and actions are governed by our interests assessed correctly and in a contemporary way, on the one hand, and on the other, by the new postulates of our age.

WOMEN'S LIFE IS ONE LONG WAR

by

EMIL KOLOZSVÁRI GRANDPIERRE

Women, women, women, everywhere women. Everywhere in evidence, everywhere a part to play. The external look of society has changed as well, because whereas before it was androgynous in character, now it is—can we say—bisexual? Our achievements include the work of women as much as our failures include their faults.

New problems, new kinds of conflicts indicate that the position of contemporary woman is different in very many ways from what it was. One of the characteristics of the "bisexual" society of today is that, with the exception of motherhood, most problems and conflicts are common to both sexes rather than specifically feminine. The women interviewed or illustrated in my survey for the most part belong to the professional world, but the conclusions *mutatis mutandis* equally apply to working-class women and women working in the country as well. The differences, if any, are of detail. If many of the problems and conflicts—careers, motherhood and so forth—confronting women in Hungary are the same as in the West, there is nevertheless one radical difference. In Hungary, by and large, every woman enjoys the same privileges and faces the same difficulties, whether she is a worker, a peasant or an intellectual, whether she lives in town or in the country.

For the facts in my account I am indebted to official statistics, except for my statements on opportunities for making acquaintances. The latter derive from my own statistical field-work.

For my purpose it is perhaps best to begin with the visual symptoms. In the old days the majority of the audience in public places—theatre, concert hall, cinema—consisted of women in their thirties. Today female audiences are mostly made up of young women and elderly ladies.

I asked a woman engineer some thirty years old or so what she thought of it.

"You mustn't think that we are less interested in music, the theatre or literature than the older age groups or those full-blooded girls whom one of our writers has called 'democratic panthers' because they are muscular, resilient, dangerous,—the children of democracy. The real point is that the decisive period in the life of contemporary women is those ten odd years which begin when they take their first job and end when they have reached their goal."

"What goal?"

"Don't let's complicate the issue with a list of the different goals. Let's stick to women of my sort, those who have chosen some kind of profession for themselves: engineering, the law, economy, medicine, meteorology, and so on. These are the ten years in which we lay the foundations of our career. There are of course exceptions, but generally speaking this period is long enough to decide who gets on and who gets stuck. Once our position is settled for better or worse we have more time to amuse or educate ourselves, or follow our hobbies."

This was a professional woman speaking. But I heard similar words from another, though she had chosen to have children and work as well. Once her children were older, she said, and the bigger ones could keep an eye on the younger ones, she hoped to have more free time to go out.

There is a third goal to complicate the situation. With the exception of a very few lucky ones, the best years of young women are consumed by the struggle for a flat, which is the *sine qua non* not only for married life, but frequently for further training to pursue their profession satisfactorily. The luckier ones apart, who start life with advantages over the majority, our young people play the same part in the same drama as young people everywhere, in a play that could be called "Flat of a Salesman."

"Because in the twentieth century," a young married woman burst out, "it is no longer money that drives society, as Balzac said, but flats. Those who have it have everything and immediately become good-looking, pleasant and desirable. If a woman has a flat she'll get one proposal of marriage after another, and if the owner happens to be a man he'd better be prepared to run like a hare any moment of the day, because one unguarded moment, and there he is, co-habiting with some determined female. A flat is the main sex appeal, it is the source of love and hatred, even of passion: Oh you three rooms with a hall, you!"

Another striking thing; Hungarian women are in rebellion against fashion. To be fair, it must be remembered that the discipline in matters

of fashion in the interwar years was exactly like Prussian military drill—wherever one looked one saw complete uniformity in hats, patterns and colours.

Today there is a file-past of twenty years of fashion on any big occasion. Because contemporary Hungarian women snap their fingers at the dictates of fashion and wear whatever suits their taste. Today it is not women who serve fashion, but fashion which serves women. Formerly a Budapest lady was a servant of fashion, today she is its queen.

My friends from abroad have called my attention to one form of this revolt. In the West women shave their armpits, they never go out without a girdle or brassière, because anyone who did would be offending against "good taste." With us only a negligible minority have adopted these particular western customs; the majority simply disregard them. This revolt, I understand, represents a considerable tourist attraction. The other day my way led past the Medical University just as a bunch of girls were streaming into the street, half of them in pullovers, half in blouses, and as they went past gaily, their every movement bore witness to the fact that they wore neither girdles nor bras. The sight would be well worth a transatlantic flight, and I understand there really are some who take it.

"The intensified mating struggle"

Emancipation also shows its effects in the field of sex. "There is an over-production in women," one young woman put it, since nowadays many more people are engaged in the commerce of love than in former days, when the practitioners of free love enjoyed a certain monopoly. As a direct consequence of the surplus in women the mating struggle has intensified. Since there are more women than men, women have to fight to get a partner and fight longer to keep him. And if the partner has a flat, then the laws of the jungle take over.

There are some who throw themselves happily into the unlimited sexual freedom of today, which incidentally is not really anything new. Others have more mixed reactions. A twenty-eight-year-old girl said:

"I successfully combine in myself the masculine sexual ethics of the women of today with the exaggerated femininity of women of yesterday. Nobody knows what to do with me, and I don't know myself."

In reaction to too much freedom quite a number seek refuge in chastity. The roots of Hungarian Puritanism go at least as deep as those of English Puritanism, and both reach back to Calvin. The girls who insist on chastity

usually choose young men of a similar persuasion for husbands. The mating of these two inexperienced persons is the same old story which has bored us to extinction in literature. Occasionally some individual experience breaks the pattern.

"I was sick of the 'flesh market'," said a woman I know, "the uninhibited making and unmaking of relationships; I was sick and tired of the promiscuity around me. Men fancied me all right, but something or other always put me off, it was either the person who made the advances himself, or the way he went about it. And meanwhile time went by, and I became quite well-known in my chosen career, I became a sort of public personality. So new inhibitions have been added to the old. If I happened to choose a man with an indiscreet tongue—and with us that's pretty certain—I'd become an object of public ridicule. Just fancy if it ever got out that a good-looking woman was in her thirties when she lost her virginity! The whole country would lick their lips over this delectable piece of indiscretion."

A few trips abroad solved the problem.

Changes in linguistic usage also bear witness to sexual emancipation. I heard a girl say about a popular actor: "Oh, yes, I could have had him several times, but I didn't want him."

Under the laws of the Hungarian language, which are governed by old-fashioned rules of ethics, it is the male who possesses the female. Young women nowadays use another, more radical verb in the same active sense as once used exclusively by men.

"If I want to eff a man, I do."

Abortions

The binding and loosening of sexual ties, whether legal or—to use a *démodé* expression—illegal, have become easier. There are many reasons, but the chief?—well, perhaps that the medical committee deciding on abortion applications are very liberal in their attitude. The consequence appears to be that the birth-rate in Hungary is the lowest in the world. But due to improved measures of child welfare the birth-rate has been going up again in recent years.

What with traditional methods of contraception and the kindly services of the abortion committees, most sexual inhibitions have disappeared. Linked with this, I suppose, is the fact that many more people marry early and the number of marriages is increasing, with many of the young

living together during their undergraduate years. There is also the related fact that divorces are very frequent, since the authorities place no obstacles in the way.

Marriage and divorce

Marriage, divorce, abortion—in these matters of vital importance the parents have practically no say. Parental authority in the old sense hardly exists and the youngsters in most cases face their fathers and mothers with a *fait accompli*, not because they do not respect or love them, but chiefly because the standards are different. Under these circumstances, of all possible consequences the girls have only disease to dread, less than before, and solitude, the same as before. There are a great number of young divorced women, and women who have divorced two or three times before they are thirty are not at all infrequent. In this respect we seem to be catching up with the United States.

What acts as a brake and has a vulgarizing effect on the development of relations between the sexes are the few opportunities that exist for young people to meet. At the time of the personality cult balls and five o'clock teas were abolished, and social life came to a standstill, as in those days almost any gathering was regarded as the focus for an anti-state conspiracy. The old forms of social life were replaced by factory get-togethers and parties, to which only the workers and their families could be invited. As a consequence a certain sort of inbreeding developed in both legal and extra-legal relationships. Although the Government has done much since the sixties to normalize the situation, no real change in this respect has yet occurred. The time has been too short. Opportunities to make new acquaintances are still rather limited: the place of work, school, sport and of course the street, which does not suit everybody. Holidays at trade union holiday homes marginally widen the opportunities to meet people at the place of work, while at the home *házibuli*—the "proper do" among the youngsters, those who meet are already school friends.

Naturally both sexes suffer from the limited opportunities available; men, for biological reasons less, women being the main victims, especially the more fastidious of them, who think it matters whom they marry or who fathers their children, or who their partners are.

The following advertisement was inserted in the papers by one of my acquaintances.

"Engineer, 50, not interested in going out much, seeks for the purpose of marriage the acquaintance of a technically-minded woman able to help him in work."

Frankly, the ad. is not particularly attractive, and yet over two hundred replies were received. The youngest of the volunteers was 17, the oldest 60. Telling evidence for the solitude and frustration of women.

Office affairs have given rise to one of the parasites of our society, the attractive young woman who does no work, has no experience in any line or any ambition to learn more, and whom one of her bosses rewards with bonuses for services rendered quite unconnected with her job. I knew a girl of this description, very good-looking, who would lounge, undulating her breasts and buttocks, among her occupied colleagues, busy with a rush of work, and when somebody dropped a remark that she did nothing but loaf all day she retorted with dignity:

"I can do whatever I like in this enterprise."

Thanks to the kind consideration of her boss, she could. Until at short notice the boss was transferred to the provinces.

Equality of rights?

Since 1948 women have the same rights as men by law. But go to a swimming pool and you will soon be convinced that there is something fishy in this matter of equality. For despite the fact that a large number of young men let their hair grow to the shoulders and a large number of girls crop their hair close to the head, the wearing of rubber caps or scarfs in the swimming pool continues to be compulsory *only* for women. And other departments of life tell a similar story. The earnings of women for instance. This time let me illustrate my remarks by quotations from the *Statistical Review* ("Diploma and Earnings" by László Lengyel and Árpád Olajos, May 1967): "The rough differential averages as between men and women workers decrease if the disparities arising out of the varying composition of the sexes and the manpower structures variable between trades and jobs are discounted by standardization. Women of the same age, professional training and sphere of work, however, earn on an average about 20 per cent less, in the case of the highest qualification, and in the case of middle school certificates, 26 per cent less than men. These differences naturally do not mean that women get less wages for equal work than men."

Even though this description of the situation does not commend itself

to the reader for its clarity, there can be no question of its scientific accuracy.

As in all other European countries, more and more women in Hungary are taking jobs. The higher their academic qualifications, the more. According to sociologists, female labour is needed since the full labour possibilities of the male population are exhausted. In Budapest about 40 per cent of the women are gainfully employed and the ratio is very much the same in the country. In absolute figures this means more than two million women in employment.

The fact that almost half of the women in the total population are independent earners has given rise to a series of conflicts, some old, some new. This is not the place to go through them all, but a few must be mentioned. Since working usually requires some previous training, in school or educational courses, part of the conflicts begin with studying. A common conflict is child versus further training; another is doing a double job—for the young couple are saving up for a flat—or training; and frequently, domestic peace or training.

Successes and frustrations

Incidentally we have to make a distinction between the types of those going in for higher education. Some of them go on studying because they feel a calling to a certain career. That's all right, but the opportunity to study and the sense of vocation do not always meet, which is a source of further conflict. By way of illustration of this not exclusively women's problem let me quote here a dialogue I overheard in a swimming pool. Two girls are talking:

"Where did you apply for admission?"

"The Agrarian University."

"How can anyone be so silly as to apply to the Agrarian University?"

"*You're* silly. What does it matter where you're rejected from?"

This dialogue catches the mood of the problem which is following the latest technological revolution. The various occupations and careers are being restructured, one needing more manpower, the other less. In the United States not only automation but cybernetic developments are displacing increasingly large masses of people from their occupations and forcing them, in the best cases, into re-training within their own trade or profession, in less favourable ones into a different occupation altogether, and in the worst, into unemployment. We are still at the beginning of this process,

but the effects of the technological revolution are already making themselves felt in the selection of a career.

Some of the candidates for the university are rejected in this or that field not because they are women, but because in certain professions there is already overcrowding. Formerly women in Hungary who wanted a career chose teaching first, with medicine and the arts coming next. In those days most women looked to marriage for their career. For those who could not succeed in any other way there was prostitution, a field of unlimited scope for female failures. As an all-time occupation prostitution has disappeared, its place being taken by semi-prostitution and voluntary social work in the sexual field.

Today all professions are open to women, including all those in the technical fields, agriculture, scientific research, politics and the civil service. In the old Hungary women could at best be guest performers in these departments. The statistics show that the present division of labour between men and women is based on sensible grounds, not as in the days of the personality cult, when, in the first flush of sexual equality, women were recruited for jobs like mining and tractors driving, for which they are biologically unsuited. Today women have taken over half of light industry, transport, trade, teaching, pharmacy and the new tendency is for the law; they fill 34 per cent of the posts in the civil service. A few figures: in 1960 half of the dispensing chemists, artists, educationalists and 20 per cent of the doctors and economists were women, and a good many were employed in agriculture. Here their situation is particularly difficult, since the new intelligentsia which is taking over from the old in the provinces do not accept the male agronomists into their social life, let alone the women.

There are, therefore, the lucky ones who can study what they feel is their vocation. Some of the less fortunate whose cultural tastes would naturally lead them to the humanities at the University are forced to compromise with circumstances and choose training which does not correspond with their sense of vocation. This compromise will become doubly irksome if the woman who has thus missed her vocation is forced to accept a further compromise in the choice of a husband because of the limited opportunities of finding a suitable partner.

"Just put yourself in my position," said one of these doubly frustrated women. "I want to have children, because since I didn't marry for love and I don't work for love, I could at least find some meaning in life in motherhood. But no, my husband wants a car first. So how does one bear it all?"

Most numerous are the women who go on to higher education for economic reasons, and are not fired by any particular ambition. They do it

to supplement their husband's salary, because they want children or a car or both at once. Others feel impelled to study out of pride or the desire to be independent. They want to stand on their own feet and they choose the career which seems the most appropriate for reaching their ends. There are heroic types among them:

"It wasn't easy to get used to work. I had lived as a queen till I was forty, then my husband died suddenly and I had to support my helpless old parents. Three of us on one salary! Do you know what that means? It needs a financial genius to do it—and a lot of overtime!"

The education of women has been expanding by leaps and bounds over the past two decades. It is not entirely to the good of women or society, because, to take one point alone, the only knowledge that is socially valuable is that which does not remain private and personal, but is transformed—in however complicated a way—into a communal asset.

A typical patch of colour in the fresco of our society is composed of the admirable mass of art for arts' sake students. Some of them are impelled by the myth of matriculation. We have all known for some time that matriculation in its present form is not worth very much. It provides no special qualification for those who take it, it does not prepare them for any of the higher studies and it is extremely doubtful whether those who matriculate can claim to have acquired what is called a general culture. Yet despite this hundreds of people matriculate from the evening courses of the secondary schools—hairdressers, waiters, confectioners and so on—who all have their own trade and can expect no advantages or promotion from this final examination.

"Why not learn a foreign language instead?" I asked a hairdresser. "With the same amount of effort you could learn two languages."

"Really?" she said. "I hadn't thought of it. Anybody I talk to has just taken matric or is about to. But as I've started now I won't stop... though..."

She pondered a little and then said that the year before she had gone to Vienna, and that everything had been very nice and pleasant, but she couldn't speak a word of German, and that took some of the gilt off the gingerbread.

Those women who go in for study without any aim in life or any plan also fall into this category. They escape to study to put some meaning into their lives. Frustrated grandmothers clean day and night, their frustrated grandchildren learn. Among the art for art's sake students are married and unmarried women in equal numbers, and the family conflicts over study vary accordingly.

Little wonder that the husband loses his temper when he comes home to find, not a life companion, but a pupil in a funk over some examination or other, and no good for anything. His temper is all the more justified in proportion to the aimlessness and hopelessness of her studies.

"Hell, is this why I've married you!"

It is a marginal conflict, no doubt. On the other hand, the conflict between motherhood and career has vital consequences for social existence, because whichever the woman finally chooses, society is the worse for it. It either loses an excellent scientist, or one or more excellent children, since experience shows that there are scientist dynasties. In this or that field, therefore, counter-selection comes into operation.

The conflict itself is a necessary and unavoidable concomitant of the rapid progress of the sciences. An inquiry held recently in France came to the conclusion that the conflict starts with the second child. This conclusion probably squares with the facts. But certainly not for long. Those working in the service industries like hairdressers, catering workers and also teachers, typists, and so forth can bear more children. In medicine or engineering a doctor or an engineer on routine work is not necessarily affected by the lag caused by maternity leave. On the other hand there are certain occupations which call for complete absorption and devotion, because anyone falling behind the latest developments in such a profession will never catch up again. There was a scientist who calculated that six years would be needed to read all the literature on penicillin. True, the example is like the enormous hat that used to hang outside hat shops in the old days. It does not fit any normal person, only a Gargantua could clap it on his head. But then it is no common thing even to keep count of authors whose books are worth reading on the subject of penicillin. It also takes time to read and make notes on them. And penicillin is just one of many subjects. If I am not misquoting my informant, three thousand new drugs appear on the market every year.

I talked to a chemical research worker, considered exceptionally gifted, who abandoned her career and bore her second child not long ago. She had no second thoughts about it and wanted a third child.

"Look, specialization is proceeding at such a rate that if you're keen on your work and don't want to be left behind you have to make a lot of sacrifices. We women have to make one more than men: the bearing of children. In certain professions you mustn't be left behind, because the consequences may be formidable. Think of those five thousand limbless children—the victims of Thalidomide! Either—or."

"If it goes on like this," she went on, "mankind in the distant future will have to go over to the termite method of reproduction—procreation will be a separate occupation."

Men and women

One should not pass over in silence an old but currently sharpening antagonism between men and women. The men appeal to tradition, the women to altered circumstances. The conflict appears in one form within the family, in another within the professions.

Despite the fact that the state supports the employment of women with propaganda as well as institutions for the purpose, such as crèches, nurseries, factory canteens, etc. some men do not take their women colleagues seriously, regardless of their academic attainments, capabilities and achievements, simply because they are women. This frequently happens in agriculture. A woman agronomist, let alone a woman veterinary surgeon, must work twice as hard to gain recognition.

The other day I was in a court-room listening to a case. The presiding judge was a remarkably good-looking woman. In the interval I asked an elderly solicitor taking part in the proceedings what he thought of the way she was conducting the hearing.

"Oh, the angel cake! I just adored her as she quoted paragraphs right and left, wriggling on her darling little bum all the while."

"But it's not a job for a woman," he added waving a hand.

Being tactful, I did not like to ask him whether being a solicitor was a job for a man who listens to what's going on in court with half an ear, while ogling the learned judge with myopic eyes.

One remarkable consequence of the mass employment of women is the development of variations within the traditional western forms of the family. The ideal version is a family in which the equality of the husband and wife does not remain in the realm of theory as an attractive legal formula, but is translated into practice in an equal division of the burdens. The wife cooks, but the husband washes up, the wife does the cleaning, but the husband brings up the coal from the cellar—if district or central heating has not yet been introduced, etc. This is the form of the future, and it is spreading, though far from as much as it should. I caught a glimpse of the trend in an advertisement in one of the dailies:

"Man of such and such an age, position, income, *excellent cook,* seeks acquaintance of music-loving lady, etc." In Italy cooking courses are held

for men, evidently to enhance their chances of marriage. Sooner or later we are going to need those courses too.

Far more common than the ideal of the future are the forms which only the men can regard as ideal now. The tradition that a woman should wait on her husband stubbornly continues, despite changed circumstances. A man expects his wife not only to run the house and look after the children, but also to be his personal servant: he sits down at table, reads his paper, and waits for his wife to bring in the supper, and get up and run to the kitchen or larder as often as something occurs to him: pepper, paprika, pickles or the idea that "this would be nicer with some mustard."

"What do you mean there's no mustard?" the husband snaps. "What sort of a home do you call it where there isn't even mustard? Do you perhaps expect me to go and get some?"

The blame is put on a woman who is economically independent, works eight hours as her husband and may earn as much or more than him. But he still demands that the woman should cook, serve, put out a clean shirt and socks in the morning, etc., etc.

This is a new form of drama. It either destroys both parties in endless argument after the fashion of Strindberg or Albee, or only the woman, too weak to resist for long, who breaks, and bears the double burden as long as she can. Between these two extremes of course, there are innumerable intermediate positions.

Working women fall roughly into two main groups: the women with any sort of training and those who work in the home. The two groups consist equally roughly of the young on the one hand and of the elderly on the other. Let me add parenthetically that the employment of girls between 14 and 18 has been decreasing in the past few years with many advantages for both the community and the individual.

All this has brought about the grandmother-based family of today. Whether she works or is on a pension, her in comeis small, because she has no qualifications, and the family is therefore better off if the grandmother takes charge of the house and the children and the younger woman goes out to work. This is a historical necessity, no doubt. The conflicts here are not so various and lively as those among the younger group. Being deprived of a wide choice of possibilities, the commonest and most frequent conflict here for the grandmother is the choice between the family or solitude.

"I've brought up five children and eight grandchildren," said a rosy-faced old woman. "I'm running the house and I'm the finance minister too. I've no cause to complain; my children are good to me and they help

a lot, and sometimes they take me to the theatre. The kids are nice too. But education is a very difficult job. In my days the grandparents and the kids were united by a kind of solidarity, you know. It's not the same now, and the ties between the grandparents and the grandchildren are different from what they used to be."

I know this myself. Formerly the grandparents often took the part of the grandchildren without, of course, this solidarity being directly aimed against the parents. The grandparents were simply indulgent in order to win the children's affection. To how many childish pranks was our grandmother a silent party, without ever telling on us! It would be difficult indeed to expect the same loyal services of grandparents today. The gulf between the generations is deeper today, and two societies stand opposed to each other in both the parent-child and the grandparent-grandchild relationship. The centre has shifted from the family to collective education, and the family relationship has undergone a radical transformation. The father and the mother spend about ten hours away from home and when they come in they are tired and anyway the hour or two they devote to their children counts very little compared with the influence of the day-nursery or school.

The emotional and often financial defencelessness of grandmothers naturally leads to abuses. A woman of forty, still in good repair, with three children, fell in love with a childless ornithologist of dubious morality. At first the man promised her the world to induce her to divorce her husband, including the promise that he would take on the children and care for them. The children, however, wanted to remain with their father. At this the woman left home, dumping her divorced husband and three children on to her seventy-year-old mother. The grandmother loved the children and was on good terms with her son-in-law. She did her duty without asking, but she came very close to a breakdown in trying to meet responsibilities she no longer had the strength to undertake. The woman—now the wife of the ornithologist—was asked why she did not do something to help her mother, why she did not, for instance, pay for the board of the children.

"I've kept my mother till now," she replied with dignity, "now it's time her other children looked after her."

"She kept her mother?" an acquaintance said whom I asked in the matter, shaking his head. "Apart from actually giving birth to the children, and of course the preliminary operations, the grandmother did everything else for her. How could she have gone to work except for her mother looking after the three children at home?"

This sort of thing does not happen very often, but the argument that went with it is very common. Many daughters "keep" their mothers in this way. Sometimes so much so that the person kept dies of it. She does in fact keep her, but she forgets that this way she saves the money she would have to spend on domestic help. The working daughter earns two thousand a month, a daily help twelve hundred, the gain is eight hundred. If the grandmother does the char's work as well, the gain increases to two thousand plus the moral profit: "I keep my mother." This kind of parasitism is unfortunately not uncommon today.

Not every grandmother is an angel, one need hardly say. I know a young couple who were brought together by their mothers, who both promised them a flat. First they went to live with the boy's mother, but the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law could not get on with each other. Then they moved to the girl's mother's. Here their peace was wrecked by the continual harping of the mother-in-law: "Your mother promised all kinds of things, but it's me who does the giving." Today the couple lives in a furnished room for one-fifth of their combined salaries and bicker over their mothers-in-law.

The final conclusion: It is a fact that the socialist system has emancipated women. But it is equally a fact that women do not always know what to do with their rights and freedom, and society does not always know what to do with the emancipated women. This is a transient state of affairs, of course, which means that in many respects it will go on forever.

FROM OUR NEXT NUMBERS

THE PEOPLE AND THE INTELLECTUALS
György Aczél

THE HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY REFORM
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THE VIEW OF LIFE OF HUNGARIAN STUDENTS
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MAKING A LIVING AND MOTHERHOOD

THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN HUNGARY

by

EGON SZABADY

There are few subjects so much to the fore in the press, over the radio, and on television today as the position of women. Although the problems frequently differ depending on the kind of society in which they are found, and even the same basic problems assume different forms under different social conditions, the subject is of absorbing interest in East and West and Third World alike. People hold strong views on the question, and they are determined by individual or group interests, by conventional convinctions based on tradition, or by rational arguments which, however, only concern a part or detail of the whole, each of them generally supporting their arguments by statistics and the results of surveys which produce completely conflicting conclusions from the same data.

Demographic experts can make a significant contribution to the clarification of these problems: on the one hand, they have the most comprehensive knowledge of data and are best able to select the relevant facts and are the best equipped by experience to tell what conclusions can actually be drawn, and where valid conclusions give way to unreliable speculation on the other. They attach as much importance to differences and divergences from the norm as to the average and the typical—an attitude basic to the demographical approach—which gives greater validity to the discussion. For in the heat of argument generalizations are frequently made which hold for the majority, but certainly cannot be applied to important minorities, and such generalizations have their dangers, when they serve as a basis for socio-political decisions which are translated into law. If the facts about minorities are ignored, their interests will likewise be ignored when these decisions are made.

In Hungary the conflict between gainful employment and family is the central problem affecting women today. What was the great issue in

the early part of the century, the equality of women, has still not been completely achieved, but the obstacles are no longer legal or political, but mainly stem from the double role of women in contemporary life.

Until family responsibilities begin to take a place in women's lives, they have much the same opportunities in Hungary as men.

Women's access to different types of educational institutions has the same long history as in other countries. Just before the war a high proportion of girls were already in a position to continue their studies after completing their compulsory primary school education, but at that time they were still at a disadvantage to boys. In 1937–38, for instance, only thirty-four out of every hundred secondary school students were girls. Only the political and social changes following Liberation established equal opportunities of secondary school education for girls, and from 1954–55, above 50 per cent of the pupils in the secondary schools have been girls. In 1967–68 the percentage rose to 58 per cent. The ratio of course, differs from school to school, but it is not due to any discrimination, for the proportion of girls is higher in the grammar schools, which prepare students for college or university than the secondary school average.

Secondary schooling

Number and Percentage of Girl Pupils Attending Different Types of Schools, 1967–68

	Number of girls	Percentage of girls
Grammar schools*	87,326	67.6
Vocational Secondary Schools	32,660	55.2
Commercial Secondary Schools	4,678	82.2
Technical Schools for Industry	4,286	17.1
Technical Schools for Agriculture	1,860	25.9
Secondary Schools for Art and Music	866	58.4
Total	131,676	57.8

The number of women students still lags behind the number of male students in higher education. In 1967–68, for instance, 44 per cent of all college, university and technical college** students were women. One

* Grammar schools, vocational and other secondary schools have four-year courses for 14-to-18-year-old age groups.

** Three-year colleges are attended largely by the 18-to-21 age group.

of the reasons is that fewer girls than men wish to continue their studies after school, and another is that the girls who want go on to colleges or universities concentrate as a general rule on a limited number of subjects. As a result even girls with relatively high entrance-examination results may fail to get places in overloaded faculties, whereas boys with relatively lower marks can get into the less popular colleges and university faculties. In 1967 half of the applicants to college and university places were women, but only 45 per cent were actually accepted.

So though the opportunities are equal, the heavy preference shown by women for certain fields of study results in better chances of admission for men.

The distribution of women in the various types of institutions is as follows.

Colleges and Universities
(in percentages)

Technical Universities	20.7
Technical Colleges and Advanced Technical Schools	21.3
Agricultural University	14.6
Colleges and Advanced Schools of Agriculture	22.9
University of Economics	56.1
Colleges of Economics	67.7
Faculties of Law and Political Science	57.5
Faculties of Arts	70.6
Faculties of Sciences	58.6
Teachers' Colleges and Elementary School Teachers and Kindergarten Teachers' Training Schools	84.2
Medical and Dental Faculties	50.1
Pharmaceutical Faculty	80.5
University of Veterinary Sciences	13.8
Other Colleges	47.4
Total	44.1

Women in Gainful Employment

After finishing their eduacation, the majority of unmarried women go to work. In 1960, when the last census took place, nearly 80 per cent of all unmarried women between 20 and 24 were employed, and there is good reason to believe this proportion has continued to rise. It is simply

taken for granted today that all normal women wish to work, unless family circumstances force them to stay at home and devote themselves entirely to the family.

The present situation is partly due to the fact that under modern conditions of production women's labour is indispensable. A considerable proportion of women are in employment today, all over the world, equalling or exceeding one-third of all wage-earners.

Women in Gainful Employment in a Number of Countries (in percentages)

Country	Date of census	Percentage of employed persons	Percentage of all women
Australia	1961	25.1	20.4
Austria	1961	40.4	36.0
Belgium	1961	37.7	19.9
Bulgaria	1956	42.0	45.7
Canada	1961	27.3	19.7
Denmark	1955	33.8	32.1
Finland	1960	39.4	34.8
France	1962	33.4	27.6
German Federal Republic	1961	36.7	33.2
Holland	1960	22.3	16.1
Hungary	1960	35.1	33.2
Italy	1961	25.2	19.6
Japan	1955	39.0	34.3
Poland	1960	44.3	40.1
Rumania	1956	45.3	52.7
Sweden	1960	29,8	25.7
Switzerland	1960	30.1	27.4
United Kingdom	1961	32.5	29.6
USA	1960	32.1	24.6
USSR	1959	48.0	41.5
Yugoslavia	1961	35.4	31.1

In Hungary the percentage of women in gainful employment rose sharply after Liberation, in comparison both to the total number of women and to all persons in employment.

Year	Women in gainful employment (in percentages)	
	of all employed	of all women
1930	26.7	24.0
1941	27.8	26.3
1949	30.1	27.8
1960	36.3	37.4
1963	38.1	40.7

The change depends on the age group. In the age group of 19 and under, the number of girls in employment decreased because the period of education lengthened, but in the older age groups the proportion became significantly higher.

Women in Gainful Employment According to Age
(in percentages)

Year	19 and under	20–29	30–39	40–54
1930	16.6	35.0	23.6	25.0
1949	16.0	40.0	30.7	29.5
1960	13.0	52.0	50.4	50.8
1963	12.4	57.0	55.1	52.4

In 1930 fewer women in the 30–39 than in the 20–29 age group held paid jobs; in other words, probably because of family responsibilities, a large number of women had stopped working by the age of 30. A slight reduction in the percentage of employed women in the 30–39 age group was observable in the 1960s as well, but the drop was considerably less than the drop in the same age groups in earlier years.

These figures indicate changing feminine attitudes to marriage, childbearing and the rearing of children. The proportion of women working begins to fall at about the age of 25 after marriage, or after the birth of the first or second child when women stop working and begin to devote all their attention to home and family. This is the period when the basic problems of modern women begin to appear.

Traditional forms of family life have undergone fundamental changes all over the world and the content of family life has also altered. Many people take these changes to mean that modern economic and social development, industrialization and urbanization have undermined the family as an institution, and believe that the family will gradually lose its importance for both the individual and society. They argue that families are becoming smaller and smaller and people are spending decreasing parts of their lives within the family circle; in addition families have lost their productive function because their members carry on their productive work outside the family group. Responsibilities in the training of children are also lessening as the educational role of the schools increases. Many therefore have come to regard the family as a declining institution in modern society.

I cannot agree with this interpretation of the development of the family. The family—as all social institutions—is changing, and family relationships and family functions are changing as well. It still, however continues to remain the basic group in our society and it is of fundamental importance that it should function effectively. Proof of this can be found in the fact that more marriages have taken place in recent years than ever before among the youngest age groups.

Marriages of Single Women in the Same Age Group
(per thousand)

Year	Age Groups					
	Up to 19	20–24	25–29	30–39	40–49	50 and over
1921	66	174	159	81	29	5
1930–31	57	142	113	113	19	9
1941	58	189	139	73	23	3
1948–49	78	207	159	143	26	10
1959–60	96	270	184	182	34	16
1966	91	283	184	175	35	14

Considering the fact that during the last hundred years women have reached the age of sexual maturity three years earlier and the average age for the beginning of menstruation is regarded as 13.2 years for Hungarian

girls, the lower age of marriage does not mean the relative absence of premarital sex. The earlier age of marriage, or the higher percentage of married couples within the younger age groups, should probably be interpreted to mean that the young are not satisfied with passing affairs today, but are looking for permanent relationships.

According to tradition all the work of the household is the responsibility of the young wife. Young people today no longer hold this view. In their relatively small households, where the daily chores are much lighter than they used to be, man and wife share most of the work. Marriage does not therefore as a rule impose such heavy duties on women as to make it difficult for them to continue to work outside the home.

Motherhood and Employment

With the arrival of the first child the situation changes completely. Women are often unable to do full justice to their work during the last phase of pregnancy, and this is followed by maternity leave which means several months of absence from work. This period of absence after the birth of a child is inevitable, but rarely presents a problem. The break of a few months does not affect the quality of work after return to the job, and employers can generally solve the problem of substitution. The real difficulties begin after the end of maternity leave.

The care of infants demands the continual presence of an adult. The tasks to be performed for a baby change after its first birthday, but they still take a great deal of time, and someone has to keep an even sharper eye on toddlers than on infants confined to the cot or playpen. Obviously a woman cannot hold a job and carry out such duties as well.

There are usually three different solutions in practice. The first is when another member of the family, usually a grandmother, is willing to care for the child while the mother is working. From the woman's point of view this is generally only a half-solution, because as a general rule only part of her responsibilities are taken from her shoulders, and she is still beset by a multitude of household chores when she gets home. She has to take on responsibilities at two places, in two "shifts," and this is a burden that is often detrimental to her work, and consequently to professional advancement.

The second solution is to put the baby in a crèche and the toddler or slightly older child in a kindergarten. In such cases the working mother has less to do at home, and at least is spared worry how her child is being

fed during her absence, but she is still not relieved from the labours of the "second shift" and when she gets home, she enjoys no leisure time at all.

The third solution is for the mother to leave her job and to devote her life—or at least a period of it—to the care of her child or children. In such cases the mothers are certainly not burdened by a double responsibility, but the family income is usually reduced—although, as this will become evident further on, a recent law passed by the Hungarian government provides for the payment of a maternity allowance of 600 forints a month after the birth of each child for three years to mothers who choose to stay at home with their infants. Often even more regrettable than the reduction in the family income is the fact that the working career of the mother is interrupted, the mother no longer has an independent income, nor does she have the chance to maintain contact with a variety of people or to do work giving her creative pleasure.

It is difficult for most women to decide which solution to choose, a choice, owing to the mass employment of women, many more mothers have to make today than in the past. The fact is that the well-known drop in the Hungarian birth-rate does not mean that nowadays fewer women are willing to have children than before. The census figures in fact indicate that there are fewer childless women at present than there used to be, but that there are many more mothers with only one child. In other words the desire for children has not diminished, even though women know that the birth of a child will greatly increase the amount of work they have to do, but the women of today want fewer. According to research on fertility and family-planning conducted by the Demographical Research Institute of the Central Statistical Office in Hungary, the women who at the time of the survey had already reached the upper age-limit of child-bearing had borne an average of 2.4 children, whereas on an average those in the under-30 age group do not intend to have more than 1.9 or 2.0.[1]

Other surveys made by the Demographical Research Institute have shown that the fertility of women in gainful employment is less at every age than that of dependent women. In other words, women who want to keep working while undertaking the responsibilities of motherhood as well try to limit the number of their children. In the early sixties this trend led to such a drastic drop in the birth-rate that at that time not even the normal reproduction of the population was ensured.

What is the best solution for the problem of working mothers? Is it

[1] Egon Szabady: "*Családtervezési trendek: a magyar vizsgálat*" (Trends in Family Planning: Hungarian Research). *Demográfia*, 1968, pp. 333–346.

really possible to say what is better for the gainfully employed mother, for her child and for society: for the mother to continue working and accept all the responsibilities of a "double shift," or to give up her job and devote herself to her child?

Most people who take part in the impassioned arguments that rage over this question will very definitely favour one of these two choices—the drawback is that the solution held "universally preferable" by one camp is usually diametrically opposed to that supported by the other. The conclusions reached in modern scientific investigations are however far more cautious in character, with considerable reservations dependant on variations in circumstances and a number of extraneous factors.

Let us consider the children first. There is no doubt that the emotional ties essential for the sound development of a child's personality are most naturally formed within the family. It is an open question, however, just how necessary is the continuous presence of the mother for the growth of this kind of relationship. An investigation at Stanford University in 1957–58 showed that the gainful employment of mothers was not such an essential obstacle in itself to the development of their children as some had thought.[2] The influence of the mother's activity on the child depends on many other factors. Hoffman's studies, for instance, show that the effect of the working mother who considers her work a vocation is entirely different from that of a working mother who does not enjoy her work. The former group are attached much more strongly and deeply to their children than the latter, and the behaviour of their children reflects this. The children of mothers who are not interested in their work are often arrogantly insistent in their demands and are inclined to be aggressive.[3]

Thus, the arguments based on what is best for mother and what is best for the child are connected, moreover the reason why the mother wants to continue to work is not indifferent for the child. The motives can be of many kinds and each of them has a different weight.

Continuing work can be of very different importance for individual women; in other words, part-time employment or social benefits can or cannot offer a substitute for keeping her job.

When asked why they work, women with children most frequently answer that they do it for financial reasons. In many cases this may be a merely superficial reply, but nonetheless studies analysing the correlations

[2] A. E. Siegel, L. M. Stolz, E. A. Hitchcock, J. Adamson: "Dependence and Independence in Children" quoted in F. I. Nye and L. W. Hoffman: *The Employed Mother in America.* Rand McNally Co., Chicago, 1963, pp. 67–81.

[3] L. W. Hoffman: "Mother's Enjoyment of Work and Effects on the Child" in F. I. Nye and L. W. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, pp. 95–105.

between the decision of women to go out to work and the income of their husbands indicate that the financial position of the family does in fact play a primary role in the decision.[4]

These financial reasons differ according to her social standing. The family may be saving up for some major purchase, or the mother may want to contribute to the maintenance of a child in college, or again, the mother's earnings may be needed to meet the daily cost of living. In the last case the mother will probably be quite content to stay at home if an adequate social allowance is provided.

The wish to belong to a larger group or community is the second most important motivation. Most working mothers had worked for a year or two before the birth of their child and were accustomed to contacts with the world outside the family, enjoying the friends and acquaintances made at their place of employment. If they stay at home, their outside contacts become very limited and life soon seems dull and uneventful.

One way of coping with this problem is, I think, part-time employment. I do not agree with the writers who deplore part-time employment as contrary to the real interests of women. Andrée Michel and Geneviève Texier, for instance, object to the part-time employment of mothers primarily on the grounds that it would once again make for discrimination by sex and would degrade the position of women.[5] I hardly think that for the sake of formalistic equality one should reject a solution that would enable a mother to benefit from the great advantage of continuing in gainful employment without being burdened to the extent where it is difficult to fulfil her family responsibilities. The real problem is to arrange the social organization of part-time employment. Viola Klein's investigations demonstrate that prospects are fairly favourable for partial employment. In countries where there has been full employment in recent years, part-time employment can be one means of procuring a flexible addition to the labour force. It has been found that in certain types of work it is in fact more advantageous to employ part-time workers. Viola Klein believes that the provision of part-time employment is definitely in the common interest despite the fact that certain disadvantages for women are involved and the organization of part-time employment is not always easy for the employer.[6]

Women with children who regard their work as a career, who strongly

4 See L. W. Hoffman's summary: "The Decision to Work" in F. I. Nye and L. W. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–39.

5 Andrée Michel and Geneviève Texier: *La condition de la française d'aujourd'hui*. Edition Gouthier. Genève, 1964, pp. 172–174.

6 Viola Klein: *L'emploi des femmes. Horaires et responsabilités familiales. Organisation de Co-opération et de développement économiques*. Paris, 1965.

identify themselves with it and find a creative joy in it, make up a significant section of those in employment. There are no social or demographical signs to indicate those who feel this way about their work, for such an attitude may develop in any occupation. This kind of identification with one's work is, however, more likely to be found in the professions or in occupations which demand long periods of study. This is the general picture obtained from Katona, Freedman and Whelpton's investigation entitled "Growth of American Families." According to the data they provide the women with children who explain their reasons for continuing to work by the need for creative activity contain the largest number of college graduates—a third.[7] In such cases a break in their career may result in psychic trauma, and it is certainly reasonable to arrange the care of their children in order to free them in their occupational activities.

The decisions reached by working mothers cannot be the same, and public opinion should not consider that only one kind of solution is permissible. The experience of the last twenty years may well serve as a warning. A great deal has been done in Hungary since Liberation to ensure equal rights for women. The achievements correspond to the demands of a socialist society, a better standard of living and changed demographic conditions. But it must be admitted that the mechanical application of some of the measures passed to assure equal rights in the field of employment for men and women has led to mistakes being made. The enforcement of strict equality in employment has not been adequately considered in all its implications, and has not always been based on the proper kind of scientific study.

There are innumerable scientific studies proving that women's abilities are no less than men's, but in some respects they are different. There are the commonly known biological and psychological reasons for these differences, and to ignore them is certainly not to the advantage of women or society at large. In the 1950s women were trained for several kinds of jobs and occupations (e.g. tractor and lorry drivers) for which, as it turned out, they were not suited. The Ministry of Labour consequently passed a ruling in 1966 prohibiting the employment of women in work which might be harmful to their health. It has been suggested that there should be further investigations to determine which are the jobs which, although not physically harmful for women, are not suitable for their biological and psychological make-up.[8] The emphasis here is of course on the

[7] Marion G. Sobol: "Commitment to Work" in F. I. Nye and L. W. Hoffman, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–63.
[8] Egon Szabady: "*A nők helyzetének néhány problémája*" (Some Problems in the Position of Women). *Társadalmi Szemle*, April 1967 (No. 4), pp. 66–78.

recognition of differences rather than the superiorities of either sex. It is impossible to settle the question of female employment in a way satisfactory to women and society as a whole if these differences are ignored, just as the central problem confronting modern women, the conflict between work and family responsibilities, can only be settled by paying due attention to individual differences.

The ideal solution is to provide maximum assistance for women who regard their work as a vocation, and whose work is needed by the community at large; to help them in the care of their children by providing crèches, kindergartens and other facilities.

Paid Maternity Leave for 36 Months

The ideal conditions which would allow women to choose freely among a number of possibilities do not yet exist in Hungary, and their creation depends on the rate of Hungarian economic development as a whole. Nevertheless, with the introduction of paid maternity leave in 1967, the Hungarian government has already taken a big stride forward. This social-political measure gives a woman in employment an allowance of 600 forints a month after the birth of her child for a period of leave lasting three years.

At the end of the 36-month period her previous place of employment is obliged to take her back in a job similar to the one she held previously. Women are thus enabled on the one hand to devote their time to family responsibilities during the period their children need them most, and on the other hand to return to their job three years later under the same conditions as before.

The maternity allowance, as I said, is 600 forints a month after the birth of each child. This amounts to approximately 31 per cent of the average wages of Hungarian skilled and semi-skilled manual workers taken together in 1967, and to 27 per cent of the average monthly earning of women employees taken as a whole. Because the earnings of women average less than those of men, and young mothers on account of their age, are still in the lower-paid brackets, the difference between their average monthly earnings and the maternity allowance is usually not very great. An investigation sponsored by Central Statistical Office found that the average earnings for the last month of work of pregnant women eligible for the allowance was only a little above 1,300 forints, i.e. the allowance amounts to 46 per cent.

Nearly 58,000 young mothers availed themselves of this paid maternity leave in the one year it has been in full operation. If we consider the fact that there are a few—very few and very reasonable—conditions attached to the aid (e.g. industrial workers have to be full-time employees and cooperative farm members have to produce credits for 120 working days in a year, etc.) and consequently not all working women can claim it, it can still be said that over 70 per cent of all those eligible do take advantage of it—a proportion which shows its popularity.

The percentage of women who choose to stay at home is higher among manual workers than among intellectual and office workers, amounting to 60 per cent in the latter category. In most occupations in fact a significant proportion of women decide to stay temporarily at home and take care of their child. In terms of education, the largest percentage of young mothers (73 per cent) who avail themselves of the maternity allowance only finished primary school, but the percentage remains high among those who went to secondary school (61 per cent), and is not insignificant (30 per cent) among those who attended college or university.

Although paid maternity leave came into force on January 1, 1967, actual payments only started in June 1967. It is consequently too early to judge exactly how many women will be availing themselves of its benefits when the three-year period of the first claimants expires. It is too soon to give an exact estimate as to how many will be likely to avail themselves of the extended leave, but on to present indications the figure can be expected to be about 100,000 to 110,000, or approximately 6 per cent of all active workers in the socialist sector.

ANNA HAJNAL

SONG ON THE PLAIN

Endless your sons your daughters Lord,
we walk your slowly turning earth
under your slowly turning sky
lionkind makes its bed in the bush
mankind listens in his house
to the chatter of your rain,

and there on an island in the sea
the sunward swimmer rests on a rock
leaning at ease on walrus tusks
blinks into the sun,
and his coarse red beard is channelled
by round water-drops.

Endless your sons your daughters Lord,
split separate and fused into one and look
how they generate by their holy genders,
the woman taking the seed that will grow
to her son, male in female
and small woman too
with pleasure renewed and renewed.

And I myself as I walk alone on your plain
am forced to stop and sit on your great river-bank
by the happy thought in my heart:
I can see the triumphant warthog
as she runs through the man-high grass
with her eight piglets in a line swinging
behind her like beads on a chain.

And how good that I sonless daughterless woman
can see in the arms of everything
your surgings and your continuities.
Endless your sons your daughers Lord,
giant-eared elephant fans in the great heat for you,
marble-limbed young man
sobs in passionate pleasure as he sings to you,
and even the howling monkey
crying dumbly in vast Jurassic jaws
calls to you
for we live with you die with you world without end.

SEPARATE TIME

Broad Gulf-Stream, great stretch of time,
your silky current may be shimmering,
the shell of nothing seals my mind,
inside me a bubble-sphere is misery,
my separate time rolls separately,
you can spin my rainbow sphere at will,
but I can never step from it,
my separate time is my separate cell.

Uncouth monsters stare at me
wretched creatures, wretched men
with their weeping rainbow faces:
my separate time rolls separately.
Underneath chameleon shades
their wall-white sorrow gives them pain,
my time runs down, runs out and fades,
again I am inside, separate again.

Translated by Edwin Morgan

MY VERY SOLE SELF

Part of a play in two acts

by

SAROLTA RAFFAI

The production of Sarolta Raffai's first play, Egyszál magam *(My Very Sole Self) has been one of the most significant theatrical events of the past year. The author teaches in a remote village in the Hungarian countryside; the first production was the enterprise of a provincial company, the József Katona Theatre of Kecskemét; and the characters of the play are all provincial teachers—but, no play could be more exempt from the charge of provincialism. The set of problems this resolute, sincere and very human play sets out to tackle is far wider in range. The dialogue, the important crisis in small lives produce thoughts that are of a national, perhaps universal significance.*

The author who achieved national recognition and a literary prize with her play started her career late. Her first poem was published when she was over thirty. She is thirty-eight now, a teacher in a small village of the Hungarian Plains. Living in a somewhat secluded world, coping with daily problems, she had been writing only for herself for years—writing mainly, as she says, at night after her family has gone to bed and her tasks as a housewife and mother are finished for the day. The poems she wrote were not inspired by a desire for publicity—she was aiming at self-salvation, writing for her was an attempt to rise above her circumstances, involving a determination to accept the petty conditions of everyday life in order to express them poetically.

After some encouragement her book of poems Részeg virágzás *(Drunken Blossoms) appeared in 1966 bringing her remarkable success. Within a year her novel* Egyszál magam *was published—the confessions of a woman who is a slave to her fatally collapsing marriage.*

At the request of the Kecskemét theatre Sarolta Raffai prepared a stage version of her novel. Another peculiarity which is sure to appear incredible is that right until the play received its finishing touches the author had never seen a stage performance; she had read plays only in books.

The adaptation of novels has become a constant and characteristic source for the Hungarian theatre over the past decade. Undoubtedly, this is not the best way for an independent national drama to develop. Most of these adaptations have left the intrinsic structure of the novel untouched and made only the most essential changes to secure theatrical effectiveness. Adaptations of this kind, successful though they may have been, can claim no more than being clever illustrations of a novel.

Sarolta Raffai, however, decided at the very outset to regard her novel as a starting-point, something to draw on. This is how the play became an independent work, a play which is truly dramatic and not just a piece of writing acted out on stage. Substantial changes were made. The one-day span of the play compresses the novel's ten years of bursting energy.

Gábor Molnár has been headmaster of a small village-school for almost ten years. The talented young man coming from a peasant family was promoted to this job by the policy of the fifties while practically in his teens. His principals never doubted they made a good choice in appointing him: Molnár's school has a county-wide reputation for its discipline and its high educational standards. The private life of the

headmaster also seems to have worked out well, he has "made good," he lives a luxurious life compared with his surroundings.

All this, however, is only appearance. The showy successes of the headmaster, the winner of several awards, have not come about thanks to sensible, humane management. They are the result of the artful manipulations of a selfish, petty tyrant. Gábor Molnár had fallen in love with power, he had become obsessed with it and the plunder he could obtain from its possession.

He is a tyrant at school. He seduces his woman teachers. Those who refuse are humiliated and overburdened with extra work. Rewards and bonuses go to those only who are his unconditional followers. And he can do all this undisturbed, he has excellent connections, he plays the amiable host to his superiors from the County, he feeds them like an old-time aristocrat, he dazzles them with the efficient slave-work of his tormented staff—to make his superiors drunk with approval and blind with satisfaction. The school splits into two camps: those in favour, and the slaves. Gábor Molnár's machinations are not threatened with exposure since the complaints the intimidated staff might hand in to the County are bound to go through Gábor Molnár's friends. To leave the village, on the other hand, means material insecurity, besides, their families and homes all predispose them to stay.

Molnár is a tyrant at home. His marriage had been a love match. His wife, Anna had sincerely believed in the ambitious young man. But the power in Gábor's hands had corrupted and debauched everything. The crude liaisons of her husband had made her cool towards him, had led her to retire inside herself. She is a rebel destroying herself, she is just as defenceless as the others, even more so since she is alone. She is an accomplice too, for she knows all about her husband's dealings, but she had always been a loser in her half-hearted attempts to revolt.

As the curtain rises a bright spring sun is shining on Gábor's house. Both the living room and the garden (in the foreground) are visible, and the action periodically switches from one to the other. The idyllic mood is ruffled by the unexpected visit of István Dömök, the head of the County's educational department. Dömök is an old benefactor of Gábor's, he knows nothing about the true nature of his protégé. And he used to love Anna too. His wife has died after a long illness. An anonymous report has denounced Gábor, accusing him of fraud and theft, and alleging that he organized orgies. Gábor is furious. Dömök has no intention of conducting an official investigation, all he would like to do is talk to the staff in a friendly way to find out for himself if the charges are justified. The teachers react in different ways. Feri Pálos and his wife, Baba—still the mistress of the headmaster—maintain that the letter is a piece of slander. Eta, expelled from several schools because of sexual scandals but a "reformed character" says much the same. Sándor Balogh and his wife give a cold, suspiciously laconic answer, and a peculiar ambiguity surrounds the reply of Uncle Imre, Gábor's predecessor for a short time in October 1956. The timid Julika only corroborates the supposition that the letter has not been written by any of the staff.

It soon turns out, however, that the letter was typed on the school's typewriter. No one else but the deputy headmaster, Vidner, could possibly have access to it without being noticed. Vidner also comes of peasant stock, he used to be a stonemason before he became a teacher. He is a straightforward, good-tempered man. He is suspected. His protests are of no use, he will do for a scapegoat. Gábor insults him, and Dömök, without any evidence whatever, suspends him from his job. Anna stands by and watches the unfolding events with growing excitement. The anonymous letter had only served as a pretext for Dömök's coming, he came in the first place to ask Anna if she would like to join him now that he is free. Anna says no, as long as there is the least hope of Gábor changing his ways she wants to stay. In the last scene of the first act Anna makes an attempt to bring Gábor to his senses. She warns him, letters like this anonymous one may recur any time, they can no longer go on like this, Gábor can no longer get away with humiliating his staff—not only the leaders have a right to a human life, everyone has. Gábor seems about to agree, but he suddenly suspects his wife wants to intimidate him. But now that he has once more been confirmed in his power he is not afraid: "I stand on ground as

safe as after '56 and have at least as good prospects. I'm the master, understand? I'm the master," he says.

The second act sees the total collapse of this short-lived victory. Gábor throws a big dinner party in Dömök's honour and he invites his friends—the teachers in his favour—as well. Quite unexpectedly, with the intention—so Gábor thinks—of making peace, and apologizing, the others headed by Vidner also turn up: they have their applications for a transfer with them. They want to leave the community where their human dignity had been trampled on for long years. Their step threatens not only Gábor's standing but also the love arising between Dömök and Anna for a second time, for although Anna has decided to escape from this hell with Dömök, Vidner and his party denounce the evils of the headmaster and Dömök is forced to suspend Gábor. But as soon as communal justice is done Anna, left completely to herself, and Dömök, exhausted and frustrated, cannot help but realize that all the lies and deceit make it impossible now to live together. In the last scene Anna, about to leave, is stopped by Gábor. Anna grabs a knife and Gábor rushes straight into it.

Sarolta Raffai's play is about the distorted, terroristic form power can take and also about liberation from that terrorism. And all this on two levels: public and private. The heroine, Anna, fails —she has always been too much by herself, fatally isolated. Paradoxically, she has resorted to her husband's devices: she had written the anonymous report to frighten her husband into better behaviour. The success of the small, close community of the rebelling staff comes from their resolute, united strength.

Sarolta Raffai has written a naturalistic play which has made its point, as the enthusiastic response of Hungarian audiences proves. The play has tackled one of the more important problems of Hungarian public life without any inhibitions. Sarolta Raffai's talent, her passion and her belief in the strength of truth cannot be doubted.

The concluding part of Act II is printed below.

DÖMÖK *(in a low voice):* How much time have we got?

ANNA: Lots.

DÖMÖK: What's happened to you?

ANNA *(as above):* I'm free.

DÖMÖK: Is it true, Anna?! Or have I got you wrong?

ANNA: You've understood me all right.

DÖMÖK: Darling! That means...

ANNA: That means *yes.*

DÖMÖK: Say it again, but keep looking at me.

ANNA: Yes.

DÖMÖK: Anna! If you knew how...

ANNA: I know.

DÖMÖK: But how? Only this morning...

ANNA: I realized it would all be a stupid self-sacrifice. I can no longer save him, and you...

DÖMÖK: Say it! And I...

ANNA: And you mean the way out for me, you mean life and perhaps love too.

DÖMÖK: Darling.

ANNA: Thank you.

DÖMÖK: You're saying thank you? Whatever for?

ANNA: For understanding me, that you don't ask for more, that you avoid big words, that...

DÖMÖK: I don't know... I'd love to say something wonderful, to give you something...

ANNA: István, I've known for years that you are behind me. Even in this horrible position I've always had something to hang on to. I had no strength myself, even that came from you. What more could you give? What more...

DÖMÖK: Oh, yes!

ANNA: I'm so very happy. I feel light. I've never felt like this, did you know?

DÖMÖK: Poor little Anna.

ANNA: Up till now... *(She suddenly stops talking.)*

DÖMÖK: Yes?

ANNA *(frightened):* István! I've... I've forgotten something. Oh, God! The letter...

DÖMÖK: What letter?

ANNA *(fast):* I wrote it.

DÖMÖK: What? You didn't!

ANNA: Yes, I did.

DÖMÖK *(frightened):* That can't be true. Anna, say that you didn't, say it.

ANNA: I wish I could.

DÖMÖK: You? No... but how... no... I don't understand. I don't understand this at all.

ANNA: *I* can't understand it now. I should have known.

DÖMÖK: Known what?

ANNA: That I was the one that stood to lose. Not him. Never him.

DÖMÖK *(quickly):* Anna, pull yourself together! Talk sense, and tell me: why? Why?

ANNA: To make him afraid. To make him shake with fear. So that he wouldn't feel safe for a moment. So that I could put up with him at least. Keeping his fear alive would have been enough for me. If I could only have hoped that he'd learnt something.

DÖMÖK: Good God! What's all this?

ANNA: It's hell.

DÖMÖK: And I never... come to think of it, I never...

ANNA: You never knew anything about it?

DÖMÖK: No.

ANNA: How could I possibly mention it?

DÖMÖK: I don't know.

ANNA: Think back a little. When? Talking about it meant losing you... You would never have come again.

DÖMÖK: You're driving me mad. What did you drag me into?

ANNA: I hadn't seen you for months... I didn't know what I was doing. I thought this was the last chance. If he were only scared...

DÖMÖK: Go on, Anna! If only he were scared. But for how long? Can you build a life on someone else's fear?

ANNA: To gain time ... yes.

DÖMÖK: But for how long?

ANNA: I don't know. Till he came to his senses or... till I could leave this place.

DÖMÖK: You were hoping that he'd come to his senses, weren't you?

ANNA: I was.

(Silence.)

(Dömök walks to and fro, Anna keeps a frightened eye on him.)

DÖMÖK *(stops in front of Anna):* And what if I hadn't been put in charge of this?

ANNA: He would have been even more frightened.

DÖMÖK: And?

ANNA: And you'd have transferred him or made him resign.

DÖMÖK: And you'd have stayed by his side. It would have been your moral obligation to do so... don't you understand? You could never have got rid of him.

(Brief silence)

ANNA: Then this way too...

DÖMÖK: No. I'll clear up this matter and take you away from here, do you understand? At once, as soon as you break up.

ANNA *(relieved):* István!

DÖMÖK: Listen to me. I've got a flat. It's nice and big, it's comfortable. No one's going to take it from me. Will an ordinary teacher be good enough for you?

ANNA: István!

DÖMÖK: As soon as I leave here I'll resign. It's only two months now... Hang on! Understand? For two months. Not a minute more.

ANNA: Aren't you sorry for...

DÖMÖK: For what? The high and mighty rank of departmental head? No, Anna, I'm not sorry for that. I'm even grateful to you: you've opened my eyes. I also have... or used to have a sense of honour. Certainly a conscience. Help me to clear

this matter up without complications, will you?

(Silence.)

ANNA: I... I... I mean, do you, even now, do you want me?

DÖMÖK: Do you think I'd be doing all this if I didn't?

ANNA: Oh, God!

DÖMÖK *(softened):* Everything's going to be all right, Anna. Remember that. Everything. Understand?

ANNA: And how about Vidner?

DÖMÖK: I'll talk to him.

ANNA: What will you tell him?

DÖMÖK: The truth. What else could I tell him?

ANNA *(in haste):* I've clean forgotten... he's coming round too.

DÖMÖK: When?

ANNA: Today. The Baloghs too.

DÖMÖK: Gábor must have called them.

ANNA: No, it wasn't Gábor. They are just coming, that's all.

DÖMÖK: I don't understand.

ANNA: Neither do I. Gábor was bragging that they'd come to make it up. Gábor says that Vidner has enough sense to know it's no use fighting the bosses. It's no use...

DÖMÖK *(gives a bitter laugh):* It's a well-trained staff after all. And I... I was going to talk to Vidner straight from the shoulder! *(Stops short and then goes on in a light note.)* Never mind, I can always say something to him.

ANNA: And will you forgive *me?*

DÖMÖK: On the contrary, I can understand you too. I can understand you now.

(Silence.)

(Enter Pálos, Baba, Pista.)

PÁLOS *(loud):* Hail to the victor! What's up, have you hidden Gábor somewhere?

ANNA: Gábor's the barman... but here he is.

(Gábor coming with bottles.)

ANNA: Do sit down, I'll be back in a minute. *(Exit.)*

(The women take seats.)

GÁBOR *(to Pálos):* That's the stuff! I can see I can always count on you, mate.

(Pálos steps forward to meet him, takes some of the bottles and they put them on the table.)

PÁLOS: Of course you can.

(Anna brings glasses on a tray.)

GÁBOR: Who wants some soda?

DÖMÖK: Just plain soda for me.

BABA *(quickly):* For me too.

GÁBOR: Is this a conspiracy or something? Where do you get these funny ideas? In our place you must drink.

PÁLOS *(to Dömök):* Don't be a spoilsport. This is very light wine, it must be since you see I'm giving my wife some too... *(Filling Baba's glass.)* It's all right, have some of it, old man.

GÁBOR: A little appetizer does you good before dinner... *(Raises his glass, standing.)* Well then... *(Waits.) (They all rise and touch glasses.)*

GÁBOR: Health and strength to you all!

PÁLOS: So be it! Bottoms up!

(They all drink.)

ANNA *(to Gábor):* Can I lay the table now?

GÁBOR *(to everybody):* Are you hungry?

PÁLOS: I'm always ready for a bite, old man.

BABA *(warning him):* Feri!

ETA: Aren't we going to wait for the others?

GÁBOR *(to Anna):* Lay the table!

(Anna goes towards the sitting-room.)

GÁBOR *(sits down and exhales rather than sighs):* It's been a really hard day. It's been a hard day, I'm telling you, boys.

PÁLOS: Take it easy. All's well that ends well.

GÁBOR: I wouldn't mind that, friend.

ETA *(sniffing around):* Judging by the smells...

(They all laugh.)

BABA: I had some stuffed veal here once.

PÁLOS: Anna's a splendid cook. *(To Baba.)* You could organize an exchange of cooking know-how. *(To the whole party.)* Mother sent us a duck the other day... Oh boy, what a duck it was! Nine pounds! Just like a goose.

BABA: We're off again.

PÁLOS: Well, the wife is roasting it away the whole afternoon. I nearly perish from hunger. I sit on tenterhooks from the first minute to the last like at a football match wondering what work of art she might produce. In the end she dried it up so completely I could hardly chew it. I was on the brink of tears, honestly.

BABA: Go on, Feri...

PÁLOS: Was it like that or wasn't it?

BABA *(shrugging a shoulder):* All right, it was.

ETA *(pulling Pálos's leg):* Why should your wife bother about a duck? Bigger game's more exciting, isn't it?

PÁLOS *(irascibly):* If you're hinting at my size...

ETA: Nothing of the sort. I like you as you are.

BABA: That deserves a drink.

GÁBOR *(filling up the empty glasses):* Eta picks things up quickly. She's almost as sharp-tongued as my wife. Don't take her seriously.

PÁLOS: Seriously! Wouldn't think of it. I won't let anybody pull my leg, that's all.

ETA: Don't you?

ANNA: Shall we go on waiting?

GÁBOR: I don't think there's any need.

PÁLOS: At any rate it doesn't do any good to the food if we keep it waiting, does it?

ETA: Doesn't help Feri's tummy either, does it?

GÁBOR: Come on. Everybody hang on to their glasses and let's get a move on in to the other room.

PÁLOS *(lifting the bottles):* We've had a good pull at your wine, mate.

GÁBOR: There's more of it where that came from, I've put at least twenty bottles in the frig.

(Enter Vidner, Uncle Imre, the Baloghs, Klári and Julika.)

VIDNER: Good evening!

GÁBOR *(loudly, with forced good humour):* That's the stuff! You came just in time!

VIDNER: We don't want to disturb you, really.

ANNA: Disturbing us, Jóska?

VIDNER: I said that to avoid misunderstandings.

GÁBOR: Oh, do stop monkeying about. Have we ever misunderstood each other? We are very glad, come and join us! You'll get a wonderful dinner.

DÖMÖK: Everything's O.K., Jóska. It's decent of you to have come. There'll be no trouble here. As regards this morning's business.

VIDNER: This morning's what?

DÖMÖK: Well, it was nothing. It was a practical joke, a good bit of fun or what have you. A closed business. Business? Not even a business, we never made a business of it. It'll be better for all of us this way... there's no point, is there?

VIDNER: No, there's no point...

GÁBOR: That's it. If I don't get upset about it, no one else should. It's out of my mind for good. You know me!

VIDNER: I do.

GÁBOR *(loud):* Hey, you people, don't stand there like wooden saints, come on in.

ANNA *(steps to the newcomers):* You don't know how glad I am. *(She takes Klári and Julika by the arm.)*

(Confused, Klári turns her head away, Julika tries to move away.)

JULIKA: Anna, I... I don't really know what to say...

VIDNER *(firmly):* Don't worry, Anna. We haven't come for dinner.

ANNA *(indulgently):* All right, all right, I know. But once you're here... we're not strangers, are we?

GÁBOR: Don't insist on being asked, come on.

PÁLOS *(quickly, loudly):* Our staff is like a big family. Why all this ceremony?

VIDNER: That's just the point. We're about to leave this big family.

GÁBOR: What?

VIDNER *(unruffled):* The head of the department was looking for a chance to have

a friendly talk with all of us—that is with most of us. We'd like to take this opportunity to hand in our resignations to him in person. *(He produces white sheets from his brief-case and steps to Dömök. A frozen silence.)*

ANNA *(as in a dream):* I knew this would happen... I felt...

GÁBOR *(with contempt):* What did you feel?

ANNA *(to her own party):* Don't any of you see?

GÁBOR: You've been a fool all your life! *(To Vidner angrily.)* And you too. What sort of a silly joke is this?

BALOGH: It's not a joke, Gábor.

GÁBOR: Nonsense! The deadline was long ago. You can't put in for a transfer in April.

DÖMÖK: Certainly not five at the same time. *(Leafing through the sheets.)* Because the unity of the staff had disintegrated. What sort of a reason is that?

UNCLE IMRE: Allow me to say that we could have given other reasons.

(Silence.)

DÖMÖK: Do you mean this seriously?

KLÁRI: We do.

GÁBOR *(coming to himself): What* do you want seriously? To ruin my reputation? Or that of the staff? Or Mr. Dömök's reputation? I'll tear these bloody resignations into a hundred bloody pieces! *(Raging.)* I will! And what about the proper procedure, Mr. Vidner? I'm not going to support it, not I! Only yours. Certainly that. The rest's going into the waste-paper basket.

VIDNER: And the copies to the county.

GÁBOR: So that's what you've worked out! You want a scandal on a county scale.

VIDNER: Don't bother to go on. You were nourishing a serpent in your bosom and so on. I know it all, don't bother to carry on.

GÁBOR: Well, that's...

UNCLE IMRE: To be quite precise: it wasn't Vidner who worked it out, if I may use your own words. It's the result of talking it over and deciding together. Just to set the record straight.

DÖMÖK: I've had enough of this. You can't restore the so-called disintegration of staff unity this way. Obviously, something is seriously wrong, I can see that now. Let's talk about it. Do sit down, please.

GÁBOR *(shocked):* Here? In my home?

DÖMÖK: Yes, if you'll allow us. We can of course go to the school... I am quite willing.

GÁBOR *(ironically):* If I allow it! *(Laughs.)* Here you are, ladies and gentlemen, as you please. My garden, my house, even my neck is at your disposal. *(To Pálos.)* Feri, bring some wine! Since we're all pleasantly together why shouldn't we feel at ease? It's the custom among intelligent people, that's right, old man, isn't it?

UNCLE IMRE *(rubbing his glasses):* Something like it, if you allow me to say so. Perhaps... perhaps with a little more restraint, if I may say so. *(Everybody smiles. Gábor roars with laughter.)*

GÁBOR: Terrific! You keep on learning, don't you? What's wrong now? Even the host has invited you. So sit down.

DÖMÖK *(with a strained lightness in his voice):* You refer to the disintegration of staff unity. What do you mean by that?

VIDNER: Look, let's talk straight. We want to leave.

PÁLOS: They've gone mad, the whole lot. Have you gone mad, the lot of you? Just today... when everything's in perfect order?

UNCLE IMRE: Everything's in perfect order with you, yes. For five years. If you allow me, even before you became the headmaster's favourite everything had been in perfect order.

PÁLOS: I'll be damned if I understand a word of all this.

BABA *(crying):* No, I can't... I can't stand this any longer.

UNCLE IMRE: We've had to put up with much more than this, Madam.

BABA *(springs to her feet):* Let's get out of here, Feri! Please, please, come home with me.

PÁLOS: You don't imagine I'll leave Gábor in the lurch? Who knows what they want? Spoiling a good dinner like this... the good mood, everything. *(To Dömök.)* Why on earth do you keep them? If they want to leave, let them go.

DÖMÖK: You don't know what you're talking about.

PÁLOS: What do you mean I don't know what I'm talking about? We've been working together for five years... I know the whole lot of them.

BABA *(to Pálos):* Let's go.

PÁLOS: Not at all. I'm not going anywhere.

DÖMÖK: I'd like everybody to stay.

PÁLOS: There you are.

DÖMÖK *(to Vidner):* So, you are determined to leave.

VIDNER: Exactly.

DÖMÖK *(smiling):* A bit strange, don't you think? Only this morning you, perhaps you were right, yes, I'll accept that, you took offence. Your friends have sided with you. And now you've come here to face me with a *fait accompli.* But you know as well as I do that I handled the whole affair in good faith and with discretion. If there was something you disapproved of you could have told me straight away. *(More passionately.)* I've questioned you all. Every one of you. You didn't say anything then and now you have changed your minds! Fantastic! Honestly, I'd hate to offend any of you but... but to say the least I must look on the whole business as a case of childish defiance...

VIDNER: Will you support our applications or not?

DÖMÖK: I won't. No, even if I could. Five at the same time.

PÁLOS: I said they'd gone mad. I've never seen anything like it.

BALOGH: That's your opinion.

PÁLOS: Of course it's mine.

BALOGH: Or Gábor's.

PÁLOS: Well, that's too much!

GÁBOR *(to Pálos):* Let them be, Feri. They'll claim I'm prompting you.

ETA: In this situation there is no need to prompt Feri.

PÁLOS: And in what situation is there?

ETA *(to Baba quietly):* Take him away from here, if you've got some sense. *(Baba doesn't look up and crumples her handkerchief.)*

GÁBOR *(rising):* This is nonsense. The host has certain rights, if you don't mind... *(Approaches Julika and stops in front of her.)* I'm listening, girl. Speak up. Anything wrong?

JULIKA *(confused):* I... I only want to leave.

GÁBOR: Where to?

JULIKA: I put it down in my application.

GÁBOR: And what will Mother say about it? The big house is nearly ready. You got a loan in your name, didn't you? But it was I who supported it... perhaps we forgot this insignificant circumstance. Never mind. Well, then? Are you getting married? *(Julika sits, her head down, looking for her handkerchief. Gábor to Dömök with a wide, theatrical gesture.)*

GÁBOR: A lambkin being slaughtered. There you are.

ANNA *(quickly pleading to Vidner):* There's only two months to go until the end of the year. Hang on till then, for God's sake. Two months.

DÖMÖK: That's right. The best solution. I'll come again for the celebration at the end of the school-year and we'll have a talk.

BALOGH: And the county can discuss the transfers in May. And decide on them.

GÁBOR *(raging):* Are you making speeches! You've got a house, a good flat, old parents, you fool! Who do you think is going to believe you really want to leave?

KLÁRI: You are. And you know very well why. Very well indeed.

ANNA: Klári! I couldn't have imagined...

KLÁRI: I'm sorry, Anna. We've got nothing whatever against you. It was you first of all who we considered while we kept

silent... you said two months. All right. But I'll come out with seven long years and put them under your nose, because it's precisely seven years that I've been suffocating in your dustbin. Seven years precisely!

DÖMÖK: What on earth is she talking about? Why didn't she write *this* into her application? *(To Klári.)* I'm sorry. Try and understand me—I didn't mean to be so rude. But dustbin! What do you mean by this?

PÁLOS: It was they who defended Gábor in '56. Together with Vidner. And against whom? Against Uncle Imre. You see? They stick together. What a crowd.

DÖMÖK *(slowly, almost in separate syllables):* Defended? Who defended him? Nobody did to my knowledge.

GÁBOR: And you're right!

UNCLE IMRE: Let's leave the past alone, if I may make a sensible suggestion.

DÖMÖK *(gesturing him to stop):* Anna. Did they defend your husband or not?

GÁBOR: And how beautifully!

DÖMÖK: Anna, I asked you. Is what Pálos said true?

ANNA: Yes. They did defend him, whatever he may have told you about it...

GÁBOR: Anna!

ANNA *(at Gábor's face, shouting):* It's true. And let me tell you once and for all I'm not going to tell lies for you any longer!

DÖMÖK: Anna! Are you mad?

(Silence.)

GÁBOR *(to Dömök):* Well I must say... everybody's drunk here, can't you see? Do you think they know what they're saying? You don't imagine I'd try and put a fast one over you?

DÖMÖK: Shut up!

GÁBOR *(trying hard):* They didn't defend *me*. The hell they defended me! They attacked the old man. *(To all of them.)* Just remember. Don't you remember?

(Awkward silence.)

UNCLE IMRE: Well, since we're on it... well, yes. They attacked me. *(To Dömök.)* They attacked me because among other things I included Gábor Molnár's party membership in his list of crimes. Foolishly and crudely enough, unusually crudely for me, I must admit. It was an inexcusable blunder.

DÖMÖK *(turning towards Anna):* You've never mentioned these things, if I remember correctly. *(From this moment on he watches only her.)*

ANNA *(bitterly):* Me! My superiors very rarely ask for my opinion. I'm appointed to this school just like the others. *(She points at Vidner and his party.)*

GÁBOR: I'll kill that woman, I will.

ANNA *(to Gábor):* How many times more?

GÁBOR *(to Dömök):* I told you she was not normal, I told you!

PÁLOS: Well, I don't understand any of all this.

VIDNER *(holding his head):* Because one doesn't speak about certain things. Family, honour, peace... *(He laughs.)*

GÁBOR *(shocked):* But you trample on mine, don't you? You can walk in and ruin my family, can't you? You've made a nervous wreck out of my wife and here you come befouling my own house...

UNCLE IMRE *(sharply):* Your own house. We hear that very often, Gábor, all too often. If I were you I'd...

GÁBOR: You grudge me it, don't you? You all grudge me my house. That's what it's all about.

DÖMÖK *(with anger):* Now, this is all really a bit too much. First of all, I demand that you all explain orally the reasons given in your applications. Stop shouting and making personal accusations, all of you... if it can't be avoided, everybody will have to explain what they are complaining about. But it must be done here, in front of each other, and in a civilized way.

PÁLOS: That's right. Absolutely correct.

DÖMÖK: Well then, I'll accept the applications if I think they're justified... or we can help in some other way. There's always, always a way. Go ahead now.

BALOGH: I'm very sorry that we got

carried away. I'd like to talk about one thing only. You probably know, but you may have forgotten, how defenceless people like us are in the countryside. Should the headmaster have good connections up there, or should he have the reputation of being an able worker, he acquires an almost unlimited power over his staff. If he happens to be human—well, there's nothing better than that. But if he gets drunk with his power—it's pure hell for us. One can endure a lot, of course. You can always change schools in a town and that's that. But can you do that here? No. You just grin and bear it for a while and then you break down. You take no interest in your flat, home, friends, parents, relatives, nothing, you only want to get away. Get away! Even if into a rat-hole... naturally, by the time you get to this state you become a wreck. Well, that's what's happened to us.

DÖMÖK: Let me sum up. You want to leave because, allegedly, Gábor has been abusing his power.

BALOGH: That's right. Exactly.

GÁBOR *(to Uncle Imre):* And me not letting them transfer me somewhere else. What a fool I've been. What an utter fool!

PÁLOS: That's is the literal truth.

DÖMÖK *(to Vidner's party):* You must admit that the whole affair remains... to say the least, obscure. Blaming someone without actual evidence—well, that's not my cup of tea, I'm afraid.

VIDNER: All right. You wanted it. Here it is. Gábor has been abusing the power given him to a degree quite beyond imagination.

DÖMÖK: You can say that about any leading official without running the slightest risk. It's the fashion these days. Nothing easier than to proclaim that he's abusing the power bestowed on him. But you haven't proved anything by just saying that.

KLÁRI: Isn't it enough if so many people...

DÖMÖK: No, it isn't enough. My inspectors outnumber you and they're saying just the opposite. I haven't noticed anything of the sort myself although I've been quite a frequent visitor here.

VIDNER: I'm sorry to interrupt you but you could have done.

DÖMÖK: Does that mean you're blaming me, me personally...

VIDNER: Well, if you take it that way...

DÖMÖK *(quickly):* All right. You're right. Well then, what could I have noticed? What exactly?

VIDNER: Partiality in the first place. Let's take the division of subjects. He keeps shifting us *(pointing at his party)* from class to class each year. Do you realize how much extra work this means?

DÖMÖK: All right, I do.

VIDNER: Let me go on. We never get overtime. *(Pointing at Pálos's party.)* Any money on the side belongs to them.

PÁLOS: We don't get it free, do we?

VIDNER: Someone else would be happy to work for that money.

GÁBOR: Now this is ridiculous.

VIDNER: It *is* ridiculous indeed. As a matter of fact there is absolutely no need for evidence, for the school-registers prove everything. Everything can be found in them from time-tables to lists of persons preferred for bonuses, extra lessons, everything.

DÖMÖK: I'll admit these are mistakes. But they're easily repairable mistakes. Everything will be the other way round next year and the result will be to equal things out. I don't really think Gábor had any ulterior motives.

VIDNER: Don't you? This has been his system ever since he came here. For ten years.

DÖMÖK: Come off it, where were you ten years ago?

UNCLE IMRE: *I* was here. And many others who left for similar reasons.

GÁBOR *(ironically to Uncle Imre):* Do you really think your word's worth anything?

VIDNER: You're forcing me to extremes, Gábor.

GÁBOR *(sarcastically):* You can see how I'm stricken dead with fear.

BABA: I'd gladly change classes with you Klári.

KLÁRI: No, thank you, there's much more at issue.

BALOGH: The thing at issue was why we're leaving.

GÁBOR: You're not leaving, my friend. Neither you nor anybody else.

KLÁRI: Whom could he scream at if we left? He's got to take revenge for today. We'll pay for it and then we can go. *(Jumps up.)* We can go our ways, can't we, but... only one by one. So that it won't be noticed. No need for witnesses. Whoever can prove anything can go. Let's stand in a queue.

GÁBOR *(with contempt):* Hysterics!

BALOGH *(warningly):* Klári!

KLÁRI *(to Balogh):* I knew it wouldn't be smooth. But you... *(Quickly to Pálos.)* Now, listen to me, you benefactor. I've been teaching here for seven years. You know that, don't you? According to our beloved headmaster I'm a wonderful teacher. What's more, we're all *(pointing at her party)* wonderful teachers. Did you know that?

PÁLOS *(stammering):* Of course, but...

KLÁRI: Well, hang on to something so that you don't fall: for seven years none of us has got a bonus. Not once.

PÁLOS *(astonished):* That can't be true.

GÁBOR: I protest against all this!

KLÁRI *(to Gábor):* Just you wait your turn, will you? *(To Pálos.)* So, that can't be true. Why not?

PÁLOS: But we got bonuses each year...

KLÁRI: And no one else did. Only you. Always you. Our beloved headmaster presents the bonuses in private. *(She steps nearer to Pálos, in a lower voice.)* Now tell me, do you split even?

PÁLOS *(indignantly):* How dare you? How dare you...

GÁBOR: Bitch!

DÖMÖK *(in dead earnest):* Gábor, I warn you. There's evidence for this.

GÁBOR: Come off it, I don't keep the lists after a couple of years.

DÖMÖK: You're supposed to. *(Threatening to Gábor.)* You won't get away with it without disciplinary action, you know. Madman.

GÁBOR: I can't understand you, how can you...

DÖMÖK: Can't you? All right. *(To Vidner and his party.)* Well, I hope we can close the matter with this.

VIDNER: It all depends on you.

DÖMÖK: Me?

VIDNER: Yes. Let us leave your district, all of us.

DÖMÖK: Please try to understand. I can't. I see that Gábor has made a series of mistakes and they must be corrected. I know we can correct them. Please leave it to me.

ANNA *(pleading):* Jóska! Trust him. I ask you...

VIDNER: And what'll happen then? What'll happen now?

KLÁRI: Just what's been happening so far. Say a word and please report to the headmaster's office. You can even be called a whore if the boss feels like it.

GÁBOR: She's lying! She needs a witness to prove *that*.

JULIKA: There *is* a witness. There is! *(Starts crying.)*

(Frozen silence.)

GÁBOR: It's a dirty conspiracy! Dirty...

(Pause.)

ANNA: For two months... Only two months. Hang on...

VIDNER: And then, Anna? Where's the safeguard...

ANNA: For me.

VIDNER: However much I think of you, forgive me... *(With pity.)* She's more defenceless than any of us.

GÁBOR *(springs to his feet, rushes up to Vidner and shakes him, quite besides himself):* Have you ever been kicked out of anywhere? You dirty bastard, haven't you had enough?

Cunning crooks, the lot of you! Shit, everyone of you. Let me wave a hand and you get the hell out of my office. Where do you all get the courage now... to slander me, to do dirt on me with your own dirt... bastards, all of you. Each one of you! Ah! *(He waves, lets go of Vidner and turns away.)*

UNCLE IMRE *(stands up slowly, very pale):* Who's the crook, Gábor Molnár? Balogh? Vidner? Or me? It's you who do the stealing, the cheating, it's you who fake the documents and the bills.

GÁBOR: What did you say? How dare you?

BALOGH: Your house, Gábor Molnár. What did you build it on? You've built it out of the demolished estate granaries—instead of extending the village schools. Try and deny it! When did you buy firewood or coal last? Ten years ago. You steal from the school's supply each year. Each bloody year!

GÁBOR: That's a dirty lie! You...

VIDNER: Look here, Gábor. It's always the same man who brings the supply... But it's no use wasting words on it. How much do you earn? A house, like this, a car, first-class furniture and everything, in ten years... No, you get the shop-assistants to make out the bills and you take away something else instead.

DÖMÖK: What can you prove?

VIDNER: Everything.

GÁBOR: It's not true!

VIDNER *(to Dömök):* Gábor's the best headmaster the district's got. It's this school that does the best work. He knows only too well why he makes us work, don't you fear. Ever since he was appointed there's been no item-to-item financial inspection here.

DÖMÖK: Why not? What do you mean?

UNCLE IMRE: Only occasional and partial inspections, if I might say so.

GÁBOR: You piece of shit. You're the filthiest, most disgusting old bastard in the...

UNCLE IMRE: Excuse me, except yourself. In my time as a headmaster I didn't rape women... you did. With your staff. When you're fed up with them you marry them off like Baba to Feri Pálos.

PÁLOS: What... what?! *(Strides towards Gábor, Vidner holds him back.)* You scum, you dirty bastard, you...

GÁBOR *(jumps at Uncle Imre):* I'll kill you, I will!

VIDNER *(jumps between):* Watch it, he has a knife!

GÁBOR *(shouting):* I'll kill him, I'll kill him!

(The men hold them back, only Pálos stands, frozen. Gábor sinks upon a chair, looking at the whole party with hatred.)

VIDNER *(to Dömök):* We didn't mean to bring this up. Partly for Anna's sake, partly for other's...

GÁBOR: I resign. *(To Vidner.)* Go on, take over now. Since you wanted that so much.

VIDNER: Your behaviour is beyond words.

DÖMÖK: You are all behaving unspeakably. If... if anybody's interested in my opinion at all. *(Pause.)* Whether you are or not I tell you that I'm not going to transfer a headmaster during the school-year. Gábor's received several high awards. His school is the best in the district. I cannot help believing an emotional breakdown like this must give an unreal picture about his possible mistakes. I can't accept these allegations without evidence. But I can see that his nerves are worn out and that he can't control his emotions. He uses an inexcusable tone towards his staff. My suggestion, therefore, is the following: Gábor Molnár can go on sick-leave, I'll inspect the school files myself, the bills and the book-keeping will be examined by accountants. Should a fraction of the things I've heard here be proved true I'll suspend the headmaster and start the usual disciplinary procedure. *(Pause.)* But should the inspection produce insufficient evidence all five of you must accept the possible consequences of

a suit for slander. I think that's clear enough. There's nothing more I can do in this matter for the time being. *(Vidner and his party stand up without a word, ready to leave.)*

PÁLOS *(beating his chest, desperate):* But what about me? Who's going to compensate me?

(Vidner's party leave.)

What about me? *(To Gábor.)* You've ruined me, you've robbed me, you've cheated me! And I've unselfishly...

GÁBOR: Unselfishly? I've paid you well enough.

BABA *(crying):* Gábor, for Christ's sake!...

GÁBOR *(sarcastically):* I owe nothing to any of you.

(Eta flies to the door without saying a word, overtaking Vidner and his party.)

PÁLOS *(dragging Baba out):* Come on, you... Come on, or...

(Vidner stops at the fence.)

DÖMÖK *(his voice cold, beckoning towards the sitting-room):* Come on!

GÁBOR *(follows Dömök, sighing. The sitting-room is dark, they disappear).*

(We can see Anna and Vidner near the garden fence as at the opening of Act II.)

VIDNER: Take it easy, Anna... you're an honest person. We *had* to go through this to feel human.

ANNA *(bitterly):* People always look after themselves when they find the game's beginning to cost too much.

VIDNER *(stepping forward):* Anna!

ANNA *(stops):* Yes.

VIDNER: Something's happened here. You've noticed precious little of it, I'm afraid. We've... we've got tougher, we've been, well, forged together. No one can force these people to submit any longer. They're no longer afraid. Do you understand it now?

ANNA *(stands speechless, does not answer).*

VIDNER: Do you understand now why we had to?

(Front of stage darkens, the lights go up in the sitting-room.)

DÖMÖK: Tell me now, what am I to do with you?

GÁBOR: Why do you ask me? Nothing.

DÖMÖK: We're alone. I want the truth.

GÁBOR: They're a dirty gang. Do you understand? They've got together to do me in.

DÖMÖK: And the women. How about them?

GÁBOR: Is it my fault if my wife is as cold as ice? Is it? You think it was I who made a pass? They hang around my neck... you've never seen the like of it.

DÖMÖK *(ironically):* All right. I don't either.

GÁBOR *(suspiciously):* What do you mean?

DÖMÖK: I don't believe a word of what you say. That's what I mean.

GÁBOR: Are you mad?

DÖMÖK *(shouting):* That's what I've been hearing all day. Everybody's mad here except you. You're the only normal person around, aren't you? Now, look. You lied to me in '56. I realized it today. You lied so that you'd be a martyr. Persecuted! So that you'd have safe ground for your dirty little dealings. But some people have seen through you since then, my friend. Unfortunately for you, for me too.

GÁBOR: If you believe all this about me...

DÖMÖK: More than that. Everything!

(Sits down, getting ready.)

(Pause.)

(Walks down to the bench in the garden at the front of the stage. Confused, softly.) Anna...

ANNA: Yes.

DÖMÖK: Listen, Anna. It's hurting me like hell but I can't... right now I can't...

ANNA *(interrupts him):* You needn't.

(Pause.)

DÖMÖK: Did you realize everything? Did you know everything?

ANNA: Just about. Perhaps not everything, but...

DÖMÖK: Don't you think that...

ANNA *(raises her voice):* You don't have to be afraid. I'm no longer here, I'm dead, it's finished.

DÖMÖK: I'm not afraid, Anna. At least not of the thing you have in mind.

ANNA: You've no reason to after all, have you?

DÖMÖK: Anna!

ANNA: Can't you see? We dragged you into all this dirt as well, you too.

DÖMÖK: I'd have resigned anyway.

(Pause.)

ANNA: I've been clinging to you so much... I wanted to escape... I believed you would save me...

DÖMÖK: I'm sorry... but once you knew about everything you could have tried to do something about it.

ANNA: When I realized I couldn't help being considered an accomplice in the eyes of the law?

DÖMÖK: That is how he kept you on the leash. That is how he tied your hands.

ANNA: It doesn't matter how. It's all the same now.

DÖMÖK: You didn't love me, did you? You never loved me?

ANNA: I didn't want this love at the beginning, don't you understand? But now that I've no right, no courage to do anything but look back... I wish I'd wanted it! It'd die quietly, softly, like the wind... But not even that's been given me... Only twice these ten years have I felt as a full human being. When my daughter was born and while I could love you. You two, yes, you two have brought me such pain I hardly survived. You know that yourself. I could only escape to your purity—I was hoping for pure love—the right to it. What became of it? You can see. It's been killed, it's been rolled into mud, dirt and sin!

(Brief pause.)

And even you suppose now... you ask, have I ever loved you? If it makes you calmer... if it gives you peace in yourself—all right, then think that I deceived you, think that I never loved you. You didn't love me, you loved another, an old Anna... but she's gone. She's no longer here.

DÖMÖK: I don't know yet...

ANNA *(sitting stiff).*

DÖMÖK: Are you angry with me?...

ANNA: No. Why should I be?

DÖMÖK: You suddenly became like a total stranger. As if I was seeing you for the first time.

ANNA: That's right. You see me for the first time.

DÖMÖK: Anna. I know that we two can never... never...

ANNA: So you know it too now.

DÖMÖK: Can it go so suddenly, just like... Don't you feel anything?

ANNA: I'm cold.

DÖMÖK *(looks as his watch):* The train only leaves in an hour but... I think I could use some fresh air.

ANNA: All right, go.

DÖMÖK: I'm not sure I can leave you by yourself...

ANNA: You can leave me by myself. Forever... Go. You and him, everyone. Everyone.

DÖMÖK *(helpless):* Forgive me. When his anger's gone we could see each other again.

ANNA: Go! Nothing, never! Go!

DÖMÖK *(starts off, disappears towards the street).*

ANNA *(alone, motionless).*

(Gábor steals in on tiptoe, straight into the sitting-room, enters. Anna winces with a sudden stroke of hope, then disappointed with the knowledge of certain defeat shuts her eyes in horror. She had been expecting Dömök.)

GÁBOR *(loud):* The good friend's gone. He has escaped... I saw him. What a coward. Would you have believed it? Eh?

ANNA *(looks at Gábor, disgusted):* Coward?

GÁBOR: Impotent. I could have silenced the whole gang in his position. Silenced them all. Understand? All of them. And what does he do? What does he do instead? He lets

them do dirt on me. With one word. One word. One wave of the hand! *(Walks to and fro, kicks his jacket out of the way.)* You could say something, though. Don't you think you should?

ANNA *(quietly):* Oh, yes. Something.

GÁBOR: Come on then.

ANNA *(as above):* You're so low that you can't even conceive...

GÁBOR *(he looks at Anna's face for the first time, attentively, startles and tries again from a height, waving):* Low. You ought to know.

ANNA: I do. You can't even rot by yourself. You've infected, you've stained everyone... even him. Even him.

GÁBOR: Him?

ANNA *(with quick resolution and growing despair):* Who do you think will believe he isn't your partner in your dirty deals?

GÁBOR: So he's been complaining.

ANNA *(looks at him, speechless, disgusted, but she does not turn her face away).*

GÁBOR *(greedily):* He's been complaining, has he?

ANNA *(bitter):* You've brought a strain on him... we've all done it. But he's not that much like you for all that.

GÁBOR: What's the fuss then? If he hasn't done as much as a little complaining?

ANNA: You were afraid he would, weren't you? That's why you ran away.

GÁBOR *(with lifted arms, theatrically):* My God, is this a wife? A wife? She's worse than a prosecutor... worse.

ANNA: You'll have your chance to make the comparison.

GÁBOR: What?

ANNA: Dömök's going to resign and the inspection will be started.

(Gábor astonished, obviously losing his sense of security.)

(Pause.)

GÁBOR *(feebly):* It's not true.

ANNA *(doesn't speak, looks at him with disgust).*

GÁBOR: Anna! Tell me it's not true.

ANNA *(cruelly silent).*

(Pause.)

GÁBOR *(broken down):* Anna. I... I can't go on any longer. I admit it—to you. I can't. I feel very dirty.

(Pause.)

I thought I'd resign. At once. First thing in the morning.

(Pause.)

(With sudden anger.) Now you're silent. Why don't you speak now? You've always wanted it. Here you are. Take the chance. I'll resign.

ANNA: I'm sorry, Gábor. It's no longer my business. It doesn't even interest me.

GÁBOR: What do you mean? You're my wife. And I know that with you, by your side I can...

ANNA: You're wrong.

GÁBOR: Is this revenge? Now? Anna. Why now?

ANNA *(smiles bitterly).*

GÁBOR *(pleading):* Anna. You can't expect me to like all this... All right. I'll endure what I'll get... I deserve it. But without you... you're strong and pure. I know. You've always helped me.

ANNA *(bitterly):* Helped you! I wanted to help myself—to stay on the surface at any cost. If you feel I've been a help you can thank me now. This is how far you've got with my help. Look at yourself.

GÁBOR: What else do you want? I've admitted that...

ANNA *(cruelly):* Have you? You've admitted. You've confessed. Into my ears. My ears. Great. Well, why didn't you stammer all this out in front of the others? Why didn't you admit it at once when they turned up with their applications? You're counting on acquittal from the court even now. All right, try and get it.

GÁBOR *(passionately):* I *will*, yes. Yes, I *will* try. You know too that I've always had a certain kind of personal charm.

ANNA: I believe that in this country it's sincere words and not persons that have an appeal.

GÁBOR: Are you so stupid? *(Abruptly stops talking.)*

ANNA: There's only yourself to thank for the jam you're in.

GÁBOR: You're wrong. You're very, very wrong. Not that you haven't hit the nail on the head lots of times but in this case... Yes, I do know what to do now. I do.

ANNA: Wonderful.

GÁBOR *(rejoicing, self-assured):* Of course. It's all a question of flexibility. I can wind the whole gang around my fingers like...

ANNA: Your filthy fingers, eh?

GÁBOR: Anna!

ANNA *(not to be stopped):* The chief attraction of Gábor Molnár or Sir Violent Brute. His Excellency the Headmaster is about to make a sincere confession. He humiliates himself. With terrific personal charm! So big that he can't trust anyone but himself. But he *can* trust himself. To the greatest extent. What did he need to make a career? Dine and wine his superiors. Nothing else... nothing...

GÁBOR: Stop it!

ANNA: Do you know what we've been living in? Do you?

GÁBOR: If you don't shut your mouth...

ANNA: I won't! No. What we're living in, what we've built around us is... shit!

GÁBOR: Shut up!

ANNA *(shouting):* Shit! Shit! *(Loses her strength.)*

(Brief pause.)

GÁBOR: Anna. *(Comes near.)*

ANNA *(jumps away):* I feel sick. I-feel-sick!

GÁBOR: Of me, don't you? You're not at all sick of your flat, the furniture, the fine dresses, the good food, the cakes, you aren't. You never had it so good in all your life.

ANNA: That's right.

GÁBOR: Anna. We've got to get out of this together. Dömök can do as much as that for us. We'll get away with it, don't you fear, Anna. He'll smooth things over all right, leave it to me.

ANNA: He has no other choice. *(Watching Gábor's face.)* He's forced to smooth things over... after all, he loves...

GÁBOR *(with fresh hopes):* We've been friends for ten years, damn it. Ten years is something...

ANNA: He loves—*me.*

GÁBOR: What?

ANNA: Or used to love me. And I used to love him.

GÁBOR: What are you talking about?

ANNA: You heard me.

GÁBOR: It's not true. You're saying this... you're afraid... you're...

ANNA: Oh, don't stutter. If Vidner and the others had waited two months I'd have gone away with him.

GÁBOR: It's not true.

ANNA: Only two months... and then... then...

GÁBOR: Tell me it's not true!

ANNA: Why should I spare you? It was you who dragged him into the dirt, you ruined him... and me too, with him.

GÁBOR: Good heavens! So you're just like any other whore. So you'll never be able to...

ANNA: To save you or help you. No. So much so that it was I who denounced you. I wanted to keep you scared so that I could hang on for two months.

GÁBOR: What are you talking about?

ANNA: I wrote it. It was a bit too much of a success.

GÁBOR *(besides himself):* I've got you to thank...

ANNA: You've got me to thank for everything.

GÁBOR *(about to leap at her, calms down afterwards):* I don't believe a word of all this.

ANNA: Don't then. But I'm starting packing at once.

GÁBOR: What?

ANNA: I'm leaving you, my dear.

GÁBOR: Rubbish, where can you go?

ANNA: To a doctor. To my mother. On sick-leave: Or work in a factory. It doesn't matter. Only away from you. If only

I don't have to look at you. You can remain the lord and master *(points around, as if embracing the whole house)* in your own private socialism.

GÁBOR *(with hatred):* You're mistaken. You can't crawl out of here. I know very well what you're up to... A few years of quiet, am I right? Pure life and the rest, eh? And then getting under Dömök again like a mare on heat...

ANNA: Shut up!

GÁBOR *(coming nearer):* No, my dear. You're *my* wife... although you've given me away, you've cheated me. You'll pay for it, just wait and see. *(Becoming furious.)* The icicle, the wild apple! You've kept your heat for someone else, haven't you? Now then...

ANNA: What do you want?

GÁBOR: What do you think I want? *(Anna steps aside from the approaching Gábor. She picks up a knife from the table and escapes into the far corner of the room. Gábor turns round and gets closer to Anna again.)*

ANNA *(holding the bare knife in front of Gábor):* Don't you dare come any closer! Don't you dare!

GÁBOR *(with hatred):* You're not going anywhere. *(Points at the couch.)* That's where you belong!

ANNA *(shouts):* Gábor! Don't touch me!

GÁBOR *(approaching):* I'll teach you where you belong... I'll teach you what your duty is...

(He is quite close now.)

ANNA: No! *(Holds the knife stiffly.)* Let go or I'll kill you...

Curtain

FROM OUR NEXT NUMBERS

POEMS
Endre Ady

IMPORTANCE AND INFLUENCE OF ADY
György Lukács

ENDRE ADY
Dezső Keresztury

ONE-MINUTE STORIES
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THE POETIC "I"
István Eörsi

GYULA KRÚDY'S WORLD

by

GYÖRGY SEBESTYÉN

In that year 1913 in which the 42 year old Marcel Proust published the first volume of his *A la recherche du temps perdu* at his own expense, after a long and vain search for a publisher, in that last year of peace, the first part of *The Crimson Coach*, a novel by the 35 year old Gyula Krúdy, appeared in Hungary. This coincidence seems strange today, and the *inner* relationship between Krúdy's life's work and Proust's great novel is as difficult to understand, indeed to start with, it appears to defy explanation.

It is not the stories, the figures, the points of view or the way the two writers structure their work that are similar but the manic and fruitful poses they take up which are essential to their writing and which invite stylization and self-stylization, and then principally the way both men feel about time, the true subject of their epic. Both men liked to give the impression they were amateurs, and both experienced time in a sort of centripetal way, and not as a linear series, in the manner of earlier epic writers.

André Maurois tells that those who knew Proust welcomed the appearance of *Swann's Way* with the question: "Marcel Proust? The little Proust from the Ritz?" Krúdy's drinking companions and various large-hearted ladies asked similar questions whenever the subject was Krúdy's literary activity. Both writers thought it unworthy of a gentleman to take part in the business of literary life; both needed the pose of the amateur as a stimulant which, given an extreme degree of concentration, ensured ease, and a state of extreme sensitiveness, in other words the ability to apperceive visions, to form them, and to formulate them. It seems to be the case that there is some sort of connection between this peculiar relationship to literature and a sovereign way of perceiving time, which is linked with the rhythm and inspiration of memory. "My book is perhaps a treatise on 'novels of the unconscious'. I would not hesitate to call them 'Bergsonian novels' if I thought them that; but this would not be a precise description." Proust said. And Krúdy noted on a piece of paper: "Our times are like a small railway station, in whose waiting-room, on a cold night, we, freezing, sick, leaning on each other for support, await a train that got stuck in a blizzard. And the train just doesn't want to arrive... Why then should we write about this time spent half asleep, half dreaming, crowded together, and jostling for space? When the days will have long departed, and today's calendars will have faded, present joys and sorrows will have become faint, then I too will surely find something among the withered flowers of these years, which I will pick up with awe, like an old love, and think about, as one falls into thought when one reads that someone is no more whom one

has loved once, long ago. As the present turns into the past we shall even be able to count the buttons on a waistcoat better than now when we are tête-à-tête with its greedy, hungry bones," (*Krúdy világa*, "Krúdy's world," Budapest 1964 p. 214.)

Beginnings

Gyula Krúdy de Szécheny-Kovács, an advocate in Debrecen, member of a family which in 17th century documents is on occasion also called Crudi, fought in the Hungarian Honvéd army during the fight for freedom in 1848/49, was promoted to captain, and moved to nearby Nyíregyháza, where the former Honvéds of County Szabolcs chose him to be their chairman. His son, Gyula Krúdy, later advocate in Nyíregyháza, fell in love with his parents' parlourmaid. Her name was Júlia Csákányi, and she was the daughter of a butcher, who did not even own his own shop let alone a family tree. The union of the young gentleman and the servant girl was, on October 21rst 1878, blessed by the arrival of a healthy male child, also named Gyula Krúdy, which was not altogether right, being illegitimate he should have borne his mother's name, at least till 1895, when the couple were married after all. Nine more children had followed the birth of the first son, and this had persuaded the good advocate that his misalliance had a delicate permanence.

When Gyula Krúdy, the third of his name was born, Nyíregyháza had 24,102 inhabitants, a County Court, an Inspectorate of Taxes, an Office of the Tobacco Monopoly, and a Grammar School. The man who taught Hungarian literature at that institution also published a newspaper which, in 1892 printed a short-story "Why did Cain kill Abel," by his talented pupil, and there was other evidence too, proving the extraordinary maturity of this fourteen year old lad. "At the time I loved those angel-like creatures amongst women who did not have to be wooed too much. I was a hefty lad and already in my earliest youth I used to lay flat cooks who weighed a ton, to give them evidence of my devotion. A favourite passtime of mine was to lie in wait in woods and cane-brakes and ditches like some apprentice-highway man, and pounce on passing pettycoats, and on vagrant Gypsy women of whom there were still quite a few in the Nyír, in those days. On moonlit nights I used to climb into other people's courtyards. There were some who were astonished that I wasn't beaten to death" (*Krúdy világa*, p. 7.) Thus Krúdy wrote on his fiftieth birthday. He fought his first duel at the age of sixteen, against the Town Clerk of Nyíregyháza, who, at a dance had dared to make arrogant and tasteless remarks about the young man. That same year Krúdy sent a few short stories to a respected daily in Debrecen, who invited the author—the honourable chairman of veterans, they imagined—to contribute regularly. A beardless youth appeared instead of the ancient captain, but the newspaper world in those days had not yet succumbed to deadly seriousness, and thus the school-boy turned into a journalist. On the morning of his grammar-school leaving examination Krúdy returned to Nyíregyháza in a large peasant cart filled with boon companions, and there after passing his examination with C throughout, and a B in literature he was declared officially mature.* Shortly afterwards he worked for a paper in Nagyvárad (Oradea) which sent him to Budapest to report the Millenary festivities.

The eighteen year old lad trod the pavements of the Seat of Government and Royal Residence in the 1000th year of Hungary's existence, in the midst of romantic festivities, and that same year his first book appeared "Elopement from the barracks and other stories." That's if it ever appeared. Right to this day noone has been able to lay

* The Grammar School leaving Certificate is called Certificate of Maturity in Hungary (The Editor).

his hands on a single copy of this collection of stories, and a scholarly biography places it in the world of Krúdy legends. But the next year's volume "The Nest is Empty and other stories," was reviewed in a number of papers. 113 books followed. Many Krúdy-ologists claim to own 126 first editions. Sceptics like to mention 80. Krúdy, who raised Budapest gossip to the level of legend, of vision, of Dionysian literature became a legendary figure himself, thanks to Budapest gossip, this sweet and childishly all-knowing chatter in a most resigned manner.

Around the time when Krúdy moved to Budapest the papers of the capital published a number of pretty short stories, signed Satanella, a young schoolmistress whose real name was Bella Spiegler, and who was not only well-educated, clever and charming, but also relatively small, dark, soft and plump. Krúdy stayed true to this type all his life. In 1899, aged 21 he married Bella Spiegler who was seven years older than he, thereupon his father disinherited him, but this did not in the least worry this self-confident young man. He was getting good money for books for the young, and this made him feel all the surer of his worth as a writer and gentleman, "Gyula Krúdy is a modern writer, but in spite of his modernity he has acquired a large public and he is sure of the love of his readers," a critic wrote in 1900, and another compared him to E. T. A. Hoffmann, when he was still only 25.

Visions speak with tongues of Angels

Krúdy was 6 ft 3 inches tall, slim and powerful, noticeably silent, he could hold his liquor, he was always well-groomed, often a spendthrift and even more often broke; he used to carry his head slightly inclined to one side; as mentioned he did not take part in literary life, first of all because though he was interested in books that he liked to read, especially Pushkin and Dickens, the same reason meant that he was well-educated, he nevertheless looked on his craft, writing, as a cumbersome means which served to formulate certain images so that the vision could so to speak be enjoyed with the palate, and then be sold for as high as possible a fee, and secondly because he was far more appreciative of a solid piece of beef, an understanding waiter, a quantity of wine of good quality, and especially the happiness, which ladies gladly keep ready for men with Krúdy's capacities, than of soft sentiments, literary fashions of any sort, and all wordy male enthusing of a spiritual kind. Krúdy knew as little of true friendship and of the feeling of love in general as of an abstract humanism, and he was indifferent to the world as such. "He wanted to make money and he wrote masterpieces instead," Antal Szerb noted in his *History of Hungarian Literature* and Krúdy himself put the following words into the mouth of one of the figures in *The Crimson Coach.**

"Literature is a terrible poison. If men and women of the middle class taste it, they become syphilitic. Writers are all impostors. They proclaim their toil a royal profession, the most glorious of all. Yet strictly speaking no one needs literature. People would be far happier without it. They would go on getting born and dying. Life, great and glorious, has nothing in common with small, serried rows of letters. Writers, like some secret conspiracy, have been poisoning the souls of people for centuries—so that they could make a living themselves. Their tales and songs are only fit to cause uneasiness and confusion in the human soul. And if the sweet poison of literature has invaded a family, unhappiness is sure to follow, the wives of writers are all unhappy women."

He was not concerned with literature when he was not working, nor other abstract things. He played cards, he went racing, he payed court to women and even

* Cited from Gyula Krúdy: *The Crimson Coach*, translated by Paul Tábori, Corvina Press, Budapest (pp. 130.)

more often he let them pay court to him, he lived with an intensity that ate him up, he was linked to the world of things by an almost instinctive interest, he was uninhibited in arrogant observation and in action, and uninhibited in the way he put things into words.

Thanks to his extraordinary constitution Krúdy was capable of noting the most curious occurrences in hours of massive drunkenness, occurrences which moved on the borderline of reality and dream, but not only the visions, the process of work itself, the application and self-discipline without which that astounding life's output could never have come into being were possessed by a mysterious demonology. Nietzsche's words about the Dyonisian being the eternal and original power for art are confirmed by Krúdy's example, but a sentence by the unjustly almost forgotten Johann Georg Hamann brings us closer to an understanding of the way Krúdy worked: "To speak is to translate from the tongue of angels into the tongue of men, that is thoughts into words, things into names, images into signs which can be poetic or curiologic, historic or hieroglyphic and philosophic or characteristic." Krúdy who was free of any ties to a linear perception of time, at the centre of his experiences which mirage-like had taken off from the earth's surface, so that, distorted into the magnificient, no longer subject to the force of gravity, they should float free as dreamscapes, as timeless worlds in which a romantic courtesy rules, and tragicomic figures blow about, who don't feel wild pain or unrestrained joy, that Krúdy "translated" in precisely the sense meant by Hamann. In other words, his novels and tales don't derive from any intention to proclaim anything in parables, let alone directly, nor do they follow aesthetic principles, or a will to compose. In Krúdy's art there is a more direct connection between vision and form, which could only come about because the teller of tales left it to language, the only material of his craft.

Krúdy's sentences are often incalculable adventures which are subjected only to the laws of syntax, the rhythm of speech, and free association. According to Antal Szerb, when Krúdy is off on a trip whose aim cannot be guessed by starting a sentence with for example: "So that——" the reader too is off on a journey in his own memories. Thus Krúdy begins to describe a lady, he reaches her eyes, and suddenly the sentence expands:

"A curious longing was in her eyes, as in those of a dreamy respectable housewife who, in her youth had been payed an unforgettable compliment by a drunken prince, who, exploiting her inexperience had suddenly embraced her in a funny way at midnight mass, stroked her and kissed her, and by the time the inexperienced spinster might have screamed because of the unexpected attack, only sleighbells could be heard from outside, where it was snowing." *

Or, a self-absorbed melancoly couple in love, goes for a walk in a wintry landscape:

"Those days of love are the unforgettable ones when neither knows for sure what is happening right around them. Black hands on clocks move as fast as windmills on the horizon. One can see people only from afar, the way a librarian living amongst his folios in a medieval castle could see them through the leaded windows;—there is a fair somewhere and people hasten to the fair along the winding highway. Beggars in rags of many colours, rich gentlemen in fancy clothes: oil and wine merchants with their two-wheeled carts; fat, rouged women in coaches who with eyes befogged by desire and mouths dripping at the corners stare at a slim tightrope walker; horse dealers in velvet trousers and red waist-coats, swear and pour brandy into their miserable nags; an evil-eyed grey haired thief carries a large loaf of bread on his back; while a young

* *Őszi utazás a vörös postakocsin* (Autumn Journey in a Red Mail Coach) Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, Budapest 1963. p. 249–250.

pickpocket, in particoloured trousers, strides along playing with the feather in his cap; young women lower their eyes as noisy soldiers pass, thinking thoughts, for which the friar would consider countless Our Fathers insufficient punishment.

Sometimes those in love see life this way, a long way from themselves, and it does not even occur to them that street urchins are making rude signs straight behind their backs." *

It is truly not surprising that the historians of literature cannot classify Krúdy's work. Attempts were made to compare him not only with Proust and E. T. A. Hoffmann, but also with Gogol, with impressionist painters, and lately also with Herzmanovsky-Orlando; he was called a precursor of Giraudoux, of Virginia Woolf, and of Julien Green; some time ago he was also considered a somewhat opinionated imitator of Kálmán Mikszáth. It is certainly true that Mikszáth, that sarcastic teller of anecdotes from the turn of the century whose bitterness shows through his cosiness, had an initial influence on Krúdy. But the angel-tongue of his vision is audibly there in his first major novel: *The Podolin Ghost*, published in 1906.

Splendour and Misery

Five years later *Nyugat* (West), the publishing house linked with the respected literary journal of the same name, brought out the first volume of those stories which have Sindbad as their hero, the Arabian Nights' seafarer, an adventurer in the Krúdy manner of course, who does not rove the high seas but the highways of a dreamt up stalwart philistine world, in coaches and on foot, who sighs and pants while he worships real and imagined women, who has a special liking for good cooking, who meditates on life at the tables of old inns, who acts foolishly, repents and then does it again, finally he parts from life, changes into a mistletoe and then, even from the hereafter, he visits various ladies.

If the bibliographers have not lost their way amongst the Krúdy legends then we must look on *The Crimson Coach* as Krúdy's fiftieth work. He, who belonged to no literary clique, a rogue elephant who until then was considered as writing gentleman of some talent, an eccentric whose physical strength and syntax, whose ability to hold his drink and literary style, whose mastery of the art of love and epic talent, whose ability with a sword and feeling for language, all deserved recognition, was now enthusiastically welcomed by the new literature. Endre Ady, the lyric poet, whom much divided from Krúdy, wrote in *Nyugat:*

"What a lachrymose, dear, splendid book this is all the same, just as he wrote it, he who wrote it, a magnificent lyrical witness to the fact that dreams make a modern Casanova passive. And if it's not a novel, well then it isn't, but a brilliant X-ray of the psyche, taken at one of the most ornate stages of that illness which is called youth. A diagnosis of the soul of the artist, and a somewhat sweetish memory, full of the heart-ache of our lives in Budapest ten years ago, our emotionalism, and of the nights through which we dragged our youth. It is the work of an amorous, strong poet, whose nobility makes him stand out, and this alone ensures him a long life in the esteem of all those who want to find their vanished youth." (*Krúdy világa*, p. 138.)

An understanding public shared the opinion of the critics, within a year 15,000 copies of the novel were sold and eight new editions have been published since. The second part of the work, *An Autumn Journey in a Red Mail Coach* was published in 1917, meanwhile Krúdy, who neither took part nor any interest in the war, but retired to the wine-cellars and his dreams, as an alleged war-correspondent, had published twenty more books, amongst them *The City of Buda-*

* *Őszi utazás a vörös postakocsin*, pp. 353–354.

pest in the year nineteen-fifteen whose title-page showed a one-legged invalid pursuing a lady with the help of his crutches. That year Krúdy received the Francis-Joseph Prize of the city which was the Seat of Government and the Royal Residence, which is only worth mentioning since it was not given to him to receive any further public honours, except the Baumgarten Prize, and the Grand Prix of the PEN Club, which were in the giving of writers, and given to someone who in those years was already mortally ill, and as poor as a church mouse. *The Autumn Journey in a Red Mail Coach* received just as much recognition as the first volume. "Periods and continents have no limits in Krúdy's writing, everyone of his characters lived always, and everywhere" (*Krúdy világa*, p. 442.) was one opinion, but towards the end of the war the public was occupied with other and much more questionable things than ghosts, and love affairs, with murder and flight, with two revolutions which Krúdy observed with calm and occasionally active benevolence, a counter-revolution, the establishment of a new political order which led to the disappearance of the sets and costumes of the Krúdy small world-theatre. Krúdy took no notice. True he had finished the *Autumn Journey in the Red Mail Coach* but he continued to dream one or the other theme of the vision and, travelling along adventurous roads, he returned to some of the figures of *The Crimson Coach*, already in 1921, in a novel *A nagy kópé* (The big scoundrel), then also in *Őszi versenyek* (Autumn races) and another novel *Az utolsó gavallér* (The last beau) and finally, two years before his death in *Hero of the blue ribbon*.

Meanwhile the marriage with Satanella of exemplary suffering, which had long ago become hollow, rotten and nonexistent was formally dissolved too, and Krúdy had married again, a young and charming lady whom he had got to know already when he had wooed her mother in a tempestuous but not exactly sane manner. The young woman was touching and heroic, but to no avail. Krúdy habitually lived in a hotel. He stayed true to a way of life, and to a type of woman, but not to any one woman. Wine, solitude, the freedom of a robber-baron, the devotion of boon companions, and the certainty not to have to depend on anybody's love, or friendship, or even gentleness, that's what he needed for his work, besides his family had received their patent of nobility already from the kings of the House of Anjou. Three children stemmed from his first marriage, and the young woman too brought a child into the world. Krúdy who in those months temporarily lived with his wife on Margaret Island, in an old house which had once belonged to Archduke Joseph, and which was therefore considered a palace, drove to the hospital and then returned to the island. When he was asked the weight of the new born girl, he answered, sitting high in the hansom-cab "Four liters and three tenths."* As befits a legendary figure. Nevertheless he wrote book after book in those years, amongst them strange and beautiful works. *Hét bagoly* (Seven owls), then *Boldogult ifjúkoromban* (In my late youth), and the beautiful stories in the volume *Az élet álom* (Life, a dream). A dream book also appeared, meant for practical use, completely useless, but formulated with accomplished poetic power, besides other, older books, again and again. They brought in some money. Krúdy badly needed it.

How he could lose his readers, of whom there had been so many ten years earlier, and with them the benevolence of publishers and editors, with such terrifying speed, how he was suddenly left alone, and not just as a writer, that is a question to which possible weaknesses in Krúdy's work are not an adequate answer. They were not there, or rather they were visible only in occasional articles and children's books prompted by the need for money, but not in the im-

* Customary units when ordering wine (The Editor)

portant works he wrote at that time. What is a more adequate explanation is that the sociological changes of the twenties produced new interests, and split the public in a bigger half, those who as part of the "neo-baroque" as the historian Gyula Szekfű called it, preferred rural and courtly idylls, and best-sellers imported from the West (which Hungary by the way avenged with many comedies written for export, and with the invasion of Hollywood), and a lesser half, which preferred modern writing, such as that which came into being in Hungary under the patronage of *Nyugat*, or which was imported with a fanciful conscientiousness. There was no room for Krúdy between Cronin and Gide, or between Herczeg and Babits.

Viennese Interlude and the End

There was still one period in his life when he had a good time: his sojourn in Vienna, in the Empress Elizabeth's Villa Hermes, in the midst of the open woods of the Lainz nature reserve. Baron Lajos Hatvany, really a writer but more of a literary man, and man of the world, whose share of a sugar-refinery inherited from an earlier generation that had established it thanks to a tremendous effort of will, had made him more than independent financially, had emigrated to Vienna to escape the tasteless counter-revolution and had leased the Villa Hermes, to which he had invited Krúdy, out of friendship and because a patron is always conscious of his duty. Krúdy came. The Baron took Krúdy's MSS to Paul Zsolnay, the publishers, who at first could not make up their mind to bring out the work. (Forty years have passed since then, and they have not been exactly hostile to Krúdy, as the appearance of *The Crimson Coach* appears to prove.) The Baron also payed the drink bills. He meant well. And it was the right thing to do. But it was simultaneously that famous drop which all of a sudden makes the cup overflow. Krúdy returned to Budapest after jolly days in Vienna, this time really to his wife, since he was ill. It is a matter of common experience that one cannot have visions without paying the penalty. They had been fetched from the Dionysian hereafter, and forced to appear in the clumsy, and common environment of human corporeality, so they took revenge and attacked the necromancer's stomach and liver, and also his heart. Krúdy was forty-eight. There are secret reasons why that is the classical time of life when those who do not reach a great age begin to die. In the following year, 1927, a single small volume by this permanently indefatigable writer appeared, a new edition of a legend of that St Margaret who, in the 13th century, had founded a nunnery on that island on which the Krúdy family still lived in a fake palace. The times had gone when Krúdy said to a lady who was a cashier and an enthusiast and who therefore begged that her lover should spend at least a whole night with her, the times then when Krúdy took leave after an hour of love, with the following words: "A gentleman has business at night, in the Orpheum, for instance." That's when she jumped out of the window, the poor soul. Krúdy lay in hospital, was patched up somehow, two years later he had a stroke which led to hemiplegia, recovered and wrote and wrote. In 1931 he published his last volume, *Az élet álom*, he acted as his own publisher, and payed the printer who produced the thousand copies of the book with the sum of money which had been given to the sick Krúdy as the Prize of the Hungarian PEN Club in order to help him over his greatest financial needs. The money was supplied by that Lord Rothermere, who once upon a time had a Krúdy-like dream in which he became King of Hungary.

All the same Krúdy could not pay his lightbill on Margaret Island. He worked by the light of countless thin candles. Then he moved into a small house in Óbuda, and while there he payed regular visits to Kéhli's,

a simple restaurant familiar to him from earlier excursions. On May 11th 1933 the government press-chief asked him to call. That man, small also in body, upbraided him for having published an article "Race with the Moon" in an Hungarian language paper published in Prague. In the opinion of the government Krúdy had not acted as a patriot, the press-chief said, whereupon Krúdy, extremely agitated, stormed out of the room furnished with the childish good-taste demanded by protocol. That afternoon he went to bed. He still spent that evening at Kéhli's. Before going home he asked them to fill a liter wine-bottle and then went to the lavatory, was woken by young Kéhli who kept sneezing powder for that purpose, took his bottle, reached his bed safely, and died. Young Kéhli who payed a call on the dead towards noon the next day, took a note that the bottle stood at the foot of the bed, empty.

At the funeral the Sárai Gypsy Band, played two tunes: "Lehullott a rezgőnyárfa ezüstszínű levele" (The aspen lost its leaf) and "A menyasszony selyemágyát most viszik" (They are carrying the bride's silken bed). Krúdy's mother, Júlia Csákányi, the butcher's daughter and former servant girl, was present, she cried out loud, and cursed all women the world over, since it was women who had driven her handsome son to an early death. In addition to debts, Krúdy left the following items: "Two white linen suits made from sheets, a scarf, a silk handkerchief, a pair of white kid-gloves, one of a pair of grey spats, three pairs of buttoned boots with gussets in grey suede, six pairs of socks, a grey herringbone overcoat, two pairs of black striped trousers, a black jacket and waistcoat, a short sheep-skin waistcoat, brown pullover, six pairs of underpants, four night-shirts, nine handkerchiefs, a a navy blue shirt, and a set of formal evening clothes." They were the formal evening clothes which the pawn-brokers had refused to take because they were outsize. He was buried in them.

Art and Life

Since provided that we ignore the deceiving possibility of an hereafter which can still be grasped by human senses and which because of a surfeit of happiness may perhaps prove deadly on a second occasion, all that is human finds a comforting end in the grave, this attempt to characterize a gentleman whom I do not know with the help of his transmitted texts and sundry gossip that came my way, should now he concluded, but perhaps a reader who is so inclined may all the same discern the cold fork of lightning of pure envy in all this rapture which attempts to be objective but which can hardly be throttled. And the author of these lines must provide an explanation for this yellowish-blue light.

His somewhat enthusiastic admiration derives, one must say, from the fact that he does not know any writer—excepting Goethe—neither personally nor by repute, nor thorough reading his works, who has as fruitfully mastered the double task of living intensely and writing intensely, as Gyula Krúdy. There have been many wonderful writers who completely committed themselves to their calling, and who grew like Michelangelo who, balancing his slender body on unsafe planks, lying on his back, covering his curly beard in sticky colours, completed the fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, a fresco mind you, in other words with no possibility to correct anything later. And there have been men of the world, who wrote on the side, some very well, like our dear Oscar Wilde, of whom we don't know to this day whether he perhaps only used the pose of a man of the world as a stimulus. But Krúdy managed to live and write, to be call and echo, shape and shadow, body and mirror-image. Here life is turned into art, and art into life again, a last and highest possibility of manly existence is intimated and a titanic standard set. We did not speak of "vision," "the demonic," "the titanic" and other such

things because of laziness or a preference for the formulae used by times past, but because facts are involved which have not lost their validity though a Spartan silence may envelop metaphysics these days. A phenomenon like Zola, who writes books following patterns and who is stuck with the wish to be socially effective, or an occurrence like Walt Whitman can be grasped in the most touching way, but even reading these good writers one suspects that somewhere in the world where Mithras defeats the dark bull, there must be a second plane where the bright spirits meet. Gyula Krúdy is also amongst the illuminated like E. A. Poe, and Dostoevsky, like Proust and Kafka. He was favoured by the demons, a man who saw the Middle Kingdom, and who could describe, with an appearance of small-town philistine comfort, sometimes even gaily, what is present in all men beyond common experience and speculation, though they may not know it. The world in which Krúdy moved—not as a man since the corporeality from which he derived his joy in visions is transient—lies in distant heights, beyond what can be ordinarily sensed, and when Krúdy's heroes get a piece of boiled beef between their teeth then angelic gourmets are chewing a metaphysical cow.

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SINDBAD'S AUTUMN JOURNEY

Short Story

by

GYULA KRÚDY

There was a time, when he was only a hundred and three years old, that he had plenty of time to spend his days and nights evoking memories of women, the new, the never-known, the superficially known, gliding silently by like the great American river on the cinema screens; or to change the simile: like the bird's feather one notices from the fourth floor window as it circles floating over the street and wonders how a magpie's feather came to swim in the atmosphere of a big city since the magpie lives in the country for choice, alights on hedges, and peers into yards where comely, full-blown peasant girls and young girls who swing as they walk cry: "We're going to have a visitor!" For that is what a magpie in the hedge means. The tramcars chimed their loudest, and Sindbad, following the dance of the feather with absorbed eyes from the window of the hotel (where he had retired in his old age), was already secretly, quietly, in the country, the day: early autumn, wasps buzzing in the reddening leaves of the wild vine and empty barrels being rolled up from the cellar, their hollowness resounding like the voice of the Puzdor Calvinist minister. So before long he set out on a journey to look for the magpie whose feather had drifted by his window, to look for the echoing barrels and a big room smelling of cigarette smoke where the hunting gear hung on the wall, where the skin of a fox with the red eyes made of glass lay before the divan, and at the round walnut table Málcsi sat all day rolling cigarettes for the two mistresses of the house and their visitors.

He had been a student when he had last been down to Puzdor, the down-at-heel little village ruled over by the Miss Zatureckys. Early in the morning the students had arrived in carts with a Gypsy band from a May fête and the elderly Miss Zatureckys almost burst for joy when the band struck up in the yard and the students invited the ladies to dance.

All that was a long time ago when Málcsi—their poor and distant relation—was still wearing short skirts as she rolled the cigarettes for the Misses. Exchanging family kisses with the Miss Zatureckys Sindbad never left Málcsi out. The students and the Gypsy band had moved on, because there were other gentlemen's houses in the neighbourhood, but Sindbad had stayed behind, and while the Miss Zatureckys had been slapping cards down on the walnut table playing with the Calvinist clergyman, he had walked at sunset with Málcsi in the forsaken and sorrowing garden, where under the forlorn willow trees a brook slipped stealthily by as though it were a poor relation of the house like Málcsi. Hard by the sad-and-wistful water was hidden a small bench where the shy and gentle Mr. Zaturecky used to retire when his lady daughters were in one of their tempers in the house, and there he would sit for hours stirring the water with his stick until called in to supper. On that bench Sindbad and Málcsi had finally vowed eternal fidelity to each other. For many a year after at snowy Christmas time a frozen hare would arrive at Sindbad's address, and a box of fine cigarettes, or a note remembering a birthday would be his reply. On the letters which the Misses wrote a faint M indicated that the little brook was still rippling at the bottom of the garden.

It was early autumn then, the pleasantest time for a journey, when Sindbad thought women smelt of mellow fruit, and in his mind's eye he began to see a pair of nut-brown arms, sad-and-wistful eyes and heard ripened poppy heads rattle in the wind from the vegetable garden; the time when the self-important magpie in particoloured dress struts on the boughs of the stripped fruit trees and announces with a loud chattering that a visitor is coming.

Sindbad had not been down now for about ten years, and when the ramshackle coach went bumping through the village he found himself silently agreeing with his mother's saying that nothing ever changes in the world, not even toddlers. Yes, even the overfed nag which had once carried the excise commissioner on his journeys still cocked his ears as though he wanted to know whether the visitor had brought any money with him or not. The coachman, a gruff old man who seemed to take no interest in anything in the world except the perverse conduct of the one horse, intent on shifting the burden of the coach to the other, and ill-tempered on account of this knavery, muttering to himself during the whole drive, suddenly swung his well-waxed long locks, stiff like a crow's wings about his ears, round towards the visitor on the back seat.

"The harvest was bad. The Misses are short of money."

And from then on Sindbad seemed to hear the words repeating themselves

in the rumble of the wheels, the squeaking of the springs, even in the swing and creak of the boughs on the wayside trees, "Yes, yes, the Misses are short of money."

In front of the smithy stood the smith sturdily beside his anvil, arms crossed before him as if ready to defend the Misses. But the real truth appeared in the man looking like a parish choirmaster in a greenish threadbare coat and rimless bowler hat, who mopped and mowed jeeringly after the passing coach, shrugging his shoulders, pointing with his stick at the visitor and explaining to an invisible companion that the newcomer was going to be disappointed by his visit to the Miss Zatureckys as there was no money to be had there.

Only by the green-painted tumbledown church (looking like a picture cut from some old illustrated paper showing it on All Souls' Day when the bell swings in the squat tower) stood a young peasant woman in scarlet skirts with a friendly face who looked out at the stranger from her cornflower blue eyes with a certain lively interest. She was plump and red-lipped, her bare legs peeped white from under the skirts. "Mm-m," Sindbad murmured, for when he had not set eyes on peasant skirts for a long while he thought more of them than the dress of the smartest actress.

The only change in the Misses' residence was that it had grown somewhat smaller. With its ochre walls, tiny windows and sandstone pillars at each corner it no longer appeared the mansion it had once seemed. Sindbad was slightly apprehensive lest the crumbling stone crest enclosing the Z of the family initial fall on his head. But in all other respects the house was neat and genteel; the stained glass was even intact in one window and a green ball mounted on a whitewashed pole stood in the middle of the yard among wilting verbenas. A tall, lean lady with a faint moustache on her upper lip stepped out on to the verandah, her greying hair parted on one side, her withered face the colour of a long-used tobacco pouch. She held a long cigarette between her lips and her bony hands were covered with innumerable antique rings.

"You are welcome, Sindbad," she said without a trace of surprise. "Your moustache's grown as big as the Puzdor minister's."

She shook Sindbad's hand and her bracelets clinked, and gathering up the skirt of what must have once been a riding habit she pulled deeply at her cigarette.

"Though I hear that smart gentlemen about town have stopped growing moustaches now. In terms of cleanliness that tuft of hair is quite superfluous. After all it's only the Puzdor minister who can have any need of it. Having nothing else."

There was the old cigarette smoke in the drawing-room, only the fox before the divan had lost its eyes and some of its hair. The portrait of a purple-cheeked gentleman holding a scroll of parchment still hung on the wall. A large horn was all that was left of the hunting gear, with paper bags of dried flower seeds sticking out of its opening. In one corner stood a long rifle with a bayonet, there was a fly-whisk, and some brownish tobacco lay spilt on newspaper on the round table.

"My sister? She's at church, at the Papist church of course, because she's changed her faith," Miss Zaturecky said, seating herself on the divan.

Sindbad looked round absent-mindedly.

"Has she?" he asked.

"Stupid, Karolin is," she resumed in a rather stern voice. "She's always having difficulties with her faith. She's been Lutheran as well, but when the Lutheran minister preached in the town church in Slovak she turned her back on them. Now she's Catholic again. But she never stops running their priest down. He doesn't preach to her liking, you know. We've written to the bishop asking him to appoint a new priest in his place. All that the one here does is preach against sinful people. Now where on earth are the good people? You come to hate life when you're having the seven cardinal sins hurled at your head all the time."

"So you left the Calvinists?"

"We did," she said and energetically flicked the cigarette stub into the corner after lighting a fresh one from its glowing end.

"Yes, we did," she repeated. She cast about for a while before the right word occurred to her. "Corporately."

"Did Málcsi, too?" Sindbad demanded and glanced at the purple-cheeked gentleman on the wall.

"Yes; she goes and does the confessing for us as well. I wouldn't dream of going to that fool of a priest to whisper in his ear like the peasant girls do. The idea of it!" she said, straightening her back.

A sound of loud voices came from the yard. "Has he come?" Karolin, coming up the steps, was asking. "Has he arrived?" Now gaily, now sadly, now as if angry, she was asking someone: "Has he arrived?" Then, accompanied by Málcsi, she entered.

Karolin wore a grey hat topped with blue feathers like country women wear going to market. Her stout figure bulged in her tight-fitting, old-fashioned green dress and because she had remained on the fat side Sindbad could still see a resemblance between the old Karolin and the one he now saw. Around her mouth there still played that half melancholy, half mischievous smile about which the students used to write verses. There

was no telling whether she would cry or laugh the next minute. It was a pity that her eyes, which used to look out into the world with a droll good-natured smile, as if concealing some laughable, humorous secret, were now lack-lustre and sometimes stared with apprehension and bewilderment at an invisible point in the air. At such times she fell dumb and seemed to need an effort to wrench herself free of its spell.

"Has anybody spoken to me?" she asked on entering the room.

"Don't go to your Black Mary so often, Tini," the other Miss Zaturecky replied severely. "You'll lose your wits if you go on and on praying like a fool."

Málcsi, for whose sake Sindbad had made the journey, stood unmoving in the doorway, dressed in black, her hands by her sides, her head drooping a little. Sindbad saw her at that moment almost as he had always seen her when he daydreamed of his past, of the men and women of other days. He used to imagine Málcsi as a pining, sad-and-wistful creature like the long autumn afternoons when the sun comes only as a brief visitor to the claret-coloured vine leaves of a pergola where a man with an aching heart sits reading a long, sad romance. He pictured her to himself as a lonely cottage far from the town where the wind rustles through the bushes, but inside the house the rosemary scent drift through the room and the sound of a violin is heard of an afternoon. In his day-dreams Málcsi always lived beside the longings that every now and then drew Sindbad away from the great city to quiet little provincial pastry-shops, to girls sewing in an old house in a darkling bystreet and to vaulted stone bridges where the river glides dreamingly while distant doves circle round the whitewashed church tower. The grandfather clock in the corner, striking the hours musically, the weather-box with the friar, and the forsaken garden with its reddening hedge—all this Málcsi brought up for Sindbad who gambled, drank, philandered with actresses at night and only cared about women who wore silk stockings. And yet Málcsi was alive and hardly a day passed without Sindbad thinking of the skittle-alley where one could play a game of bowls with the schoolmaster and the minister and the village notary.

"Perhaps you don't remember Sindbad, our nephew?" the stern Tini asked.

Málcsi quietly turned her gaze to where Sindbad was sitting. Her brown eyes were fixed on him with gratitude, with something of submission, as if Sindbad had been the first and last man she ever saw. Her face was pale and clean-featured like the images of the saints, her hair sleek and parted in the middle, her breasts and her chin were round, her hands in

an old pair of riding gloves once used by one of the sisters. On her shoes the bows were tied with meticulous care, like the bows tied on children's shoes lest they come undone at play. Under her striped stockings her ankles were firm, her prayer-book was small and well-worn. A moment later she slipped on a black apron and slid a bunch of keys in the pocket. The keys shone like Málcsi's eyes.

"Put that hat away," said Tini as Karolin remained standing by the table, a little embarrassed, casting strange looks at Sindbad.

Málcsi gently took the hat out of her hand, and after placing it carefully in the wardrobe went up to Sindbad and asked him in a soft quiet voice as if talking of a secret:

"Do you like hare? We are having hare for dinner." Then, composed, and with long serious steps, she went out of the room.

"Just fancy, we can't get her married off!" Karolin exclaimed suddenly, as if coming to herself again. "We've bought her a bedroom suite and her trousseau. All men are scoundrels, we all know the only thing they want."

"Come," Tini cut in coldly. "What would we do without the girl?"

Karolin blinked, confused, signifying agreement with a wave of her hand. But then she struck one fist into the other and repeated with childish obstinacy:

"I still say that a girl's life is to get married to a decent man. Let her husband be her lodestar, her happiness, her dream, as he would have been all these things to me had I married."

Tini only waved her hand and muttered a little later to herself:

"I'll get that priest transferred, you see if I don't."

It was only in the afternoon that Sindbad found an opportunity to be alone with Málcsi. According to their custom, the Misses sat down to play cards. The whole world ceased to exist for them at such moments. They were fanatical players, they flung scornful remarks at Sindbad when he declined to play.

"Your uncle made his fortune out of getting exemptions for recruits," said Tini contemptuously. "And that's what his family looks like."

It was only after some searching that Sindbad found the little visiting brook, though how often had he thought of it. There was a decaying plank instead of the bridge and the small bench had almost sunk into the ground, as though weary of standing idly under the willow trees. Here Sindbad sat down, for he was certain that if Málcsi could not find him in the house she would look for him there.

Málcsi came, soon enough. She kept looking back warily, then slipping quickly past Sindbad she caught his hand with unusual animation.

"Come away from here! I won't sit in this place."

She hurried ahead beyond the brook—when she crossed the plank Sindbad gave her ankles a good look—and stopped at a place where stunted, long-dead willow trees lay fallen across one another as if weeping over their past life. "I have been here before," Sindbad thought at every step, "I wonder if the trees remember me?"

Hitching up her skirt a little Málcsi sat down on a felled tree trunk and taking Sindbad's hand into her own looked up at him from under her eyelashes, warmly, wonderingly and as intimately as if they had parted only the day before.

"I thought I'd never see you again in my life, and look, here you are! What put the idea into your head to come and look us up, now that we have become poor since you were here last?" Málcsi went on speaking as if she could still not believe her eyes that the person she beheld was really the Sindbad of long ago. She even felt the material of his clothes, nodding approval at its fine softness.

"I didn't come for money," Sindbad began.

Málcsi gave him a strangle smile.

"All right, but the aunts will never believe it. In the past few years we've had a lot of visitors who all began the same way: 'I kiss your hand. I haven't come to ask for money, oh, no, not at all,' but in the end they all touched the Misses for money, because somehow or other the whole world thinks they are fools. There was a teacher, too. He was a handsome, fair-haired man and he made eyes at Karolin for quite a while. In the end he took himself off with the hunting gear. And then that chap, that relative of ours, Beretvás! That one serenaded Tini, though he had grown-up children. And what do you think he was after? Nothing but the family documents! That's the way it is here with these men. The minister, that barrel-voiced Mályvai, was the first."

Málcsi had an odd way of speaking, quick, and blinking every now and then as though she had long wanted to unbosom herself of all that was now rippling off her lips.

"Why, what happened with the minister?"

"Oh, didn't you hear that? Well, that was why we changed our faith in the first place. That was why we first turned Lutheran and prayed in Slovak, then we went Orthodox and sang in Russian. The aunts grumbled and cursed that one couldn't stick to one's own faith. Recently we went Catholic. But we shan't stick to it for long. After confession the priest is always after me to go with him beyond the garden. We've about had enough of the clergy."

"What was the matter with all of them?"

"Until recently the trouble was only with one clergyman, the one here in Puzdor, called Mályvai. He was a widower, perhaps you remember he always helped us to draw the wine from the barrels in the cellar, though in those days his wife was not quite dead. He had a deep, throaty voice and a moustache, and his knotted stick clattered so loudly on the pavement that we could tell he was coming from a long way off. He was a great card player, he used to close one eye looking at his cards and he'd fix the other on Aunt Tini and almost stab her with his stare. He would stay for dinner and for supper and he would even lie down for an afternoon nap on the divan, because at that time he was going to marry Aunt Tini. And then one evening when the minister had gone the aunts had a bitter quarrel. Aunt Tini even snatched the rifle from the wall and we had a lot of difficulty wrenching it from her hold. Why? It was always loaded. Then Aunt Tini said to Karolin:

"'I'm finished with the minister. Take him and the Devil can take both of you!' "

"She locked herself up in her room for a week and during that time Karolin and Ferkó Mályvai got on to very good terms with each other. So now it was Karolin whom the minister was going to marry. They all went on playing cards; the only difference was that now he closed the other eye. There was an occasional quarrel between the aunts, but there was no cartridge in the rifle. I had made sure of that."

"Then one day the minister turns up and he doesn't say to me, 'go and get some wine from the cellar, ugly duckling!' but 'my dear, dearest Málcsi,' 'my little plump sweetikins' he says, and things I had never heard him say before. The aunts locked themselves up in the room and went at it hammer and tongs. I overheard what they were quarrelling about. They were blaming each other and saying that now the clergyman ought to marry me, as otherwise all the time, the food and drink he had had in the house would have been wasted. At first they turned their heads away when the minister stroked my cheek, but later they themselves encouraged me to walk with him in the garden... that's why I didn't want to sit on that bench with you. I sat there with Ferkó Mályvai."

Sindbad listened to the girl's confession with drawn breath. The words came pouring from her lips, only now and then did tears dim her eyes, chiefly when she spoke of her aunts' frightening altercations. Poor dear creature, even then it was her aunts she felt sorry for.

"What happened then?"

The girl dropped her head and with both her hands clung to Sindbad.

"Then we turned Lutheran—corporately—as Aunt Tini would put it. The clergyman married the widow of a solicitor in a neighbouring village."

"Were you in love with him?"

"I don't know now... He spoke so nicely to me—he was a great rogue. For a long time I would wake up at night sobbing and choking with tears. 'Don't cry in front of the servants,' Aunt Tini would warn me. So I cried where nobody could see."

"But your dear little heart is not aching any more, is it?" Sindbad stroked the girl's firmset neck where the hairs sprang with a natural curl.

He bent over the girl and caressed the curly hair at the nape of the neck. Suddenly he remembered the tobacco-scented racy magazines he used to steal from his father's office and read in secret. Yes, in those magazines the women had curly hairs like hers. Passionate desires began to tingle through his fingertips. On an impulse he brushed a kiss on the back of her neck.

"Did you come down for that?" Málcsi said in a low voice, her eyes closed. "How curious that I have been thinking of you a lot lately too. How lovely it would be to have you here. And here you are!"

She made no resistance. She bowed her head as one who knew her fate. She put her arm quietly around his neck.

"We mustn't be seen," she said softly.

The ladies were still slamming their cards on the table when Sindbad announced his intention of moving on.

"What a pity," Karolin said, and looked long and embarrassedly into Sindbad's face with the brown eyes that had once held a yearning look.

"We have a comfortable spare room," Tini interrupted her, almost brusquely. "I can have some wine brought up."

But Sindbad did not want to stay. He got into the battered coach, with the horses cocking an eye as if to spy on the visitor.

He caught a last glimpse of Málcsi in the corner window. She stood there quietly, smiling, only one of her eyes seemed to squint a little. Perhaps she had been weeping, perhaps she was about to weep.

Later, whenever Sindbad smelt ripe fruit, memories came flooding back of the pleasant provincial house, of the brook hurrying by on a visit, and of curly-haired Málcsi. Then he went on living his life. Never again would the magpie's feather dance before his window.

(1917)

ARS MATHEMATICA

by

ALFRÉD RÉNYI

An Ars Poetica has been written by many a poet, but nobody ventured as yet to write an Ars Mathematica although it is well worth while to meditate on the vocational secrets of the mathematical profession and on advice "old-timers" could give young mathematicians. It's the way of the world—and this applies to mathematicians as well—that success depends on being able to reconcile and hit upon the right equilibrium of opposed requirements. To hit upon the right equilibrium is easier than to establish it actually, in spite of this it might not be quite futile to make an attempt to collect those conflicting requirements, those dilemmas mathematicians have to face in the course of their work. Without aiming at completeness, ten such dilemmas will now be listed and short comments added to each one.

1. *Study or research?*

The university can provide at best basic knowledge that enables a graduate to acquire by himself the knowledge he needs in the course of his subsequent work. The university can by no means provide that store of knowledge a qualified mathematician will need during his future work. Thus, it is an essential requirement that mathematicians should continue their self-education. This refers to both mathematicians who have taken their degree recently and to the older generation, particularly in view of the rapid development of mathematics! However, he that puts off research on his own until he has learned "everything" others have attained hitherto, will never achieve individual results.

2. Extended or profound knowledge?

On the present highly differentiated level of mathematics it is quite out of question that anybody should be equally conversant in all of its branches. It is an outstanding achievement if a research worker is positively in command of a larger domain of mathematics. Nevertheless in addition to his special field a scholar must survey the related spheres and, to a certain extent, more distants too. Just in the last decades it turned out that considerable results have been achieved and new lines of thought often came into being in marginal areas or by becoming aware of interrelationships between seemingly distant provinces of mathematics.

3. Self-criticism or self-confidence?

To embark on a problem without confidence in one's ability of being able to solve it is a rather hopeless matter. Thus, self-confidence is indispensable, but if it is not coupled with strictest self-criticism it will lead to self-complacence and end in failure.

4. Individual or collective work?

A new idea always starts as something that occurs to one man and is, therefore, as a matter of course, an individual creation. One man, however, usually cannot get very far single-handed. Mathematicians are gregarious men, collaborative efforts considerably increase the efficiency of their work; collective work, however, only means synchronization and coordination of *individual work performances* (at least as long as no technical facility for directly interconnecting human brains has been invented).

5. Theory or application?

M. V. Keldish, the eminent Soviet mathematician, has written the following on Chaplygin: "It was characteristic of his research work that he always kept in view the practical application of a method while working out the general rules. On the one hand, he ceaselessly aimed at translating his general theories into practice, on the other he never had recourse to stereotyped methods when he was engaged in investigating some new

mechanical phenomena, but established new, original and most suitable methods, and when he wanted to get somewhere mathematical difficulties could never deter him. For this very reason Chaplygin's results were widely applied and used as a starting-point for many scientific investigations by others." The dilemma of "theory and practice," is closely connected with another one: whether in the choice of the subject one should be led by one's own scientific interest or follow practical requirements. As a matter of fact, this, too, is a false contrast, for the practical bearings of a problem make it the more interesting. Without beeing keenly interested in one's problem research work is inconceivable. The eminent Hungarian mathematician, Pál Turán, was asked how he was able to work on mathematical problems under the most adverse conditions (even on top of a telegraph pole)? "To be really interested in mathematical problems is all there is needed," Turán answered.

6. *Mathematical precision or intuition?*

In the same way as a man needs two feet for walking straight, both precision and intuition are indispensable for successful research.

7. *Should new fields be opened up or rather the unsolved problems of the traditional domains solved?*

There is no doubt that development takes place at the fastest rate in the new domains. However, it should not be forgotten that in mathematics there are no problems that can be regarded as finally settled and concluded. The new results react upon the fundamentals, strengthening them or vice versa. An appropriate example is the work of the eminent French mathematicians, publishing their text books under the pseudonym "Bourbaki."

8. *Conciseness or lucidity?*

Obviously, both redundancy and talking in riddles should be avoided. It used to be fashionable in the seventeenth century but is not done in our days—thank goodness! (For example, Newton informed Leibniz of his discovery that integration is the opposite of differentiation by means of a charade.) Pascal said that he generally found out what he should have

begun his work with, after having finished it. This, in fact, often happens when mathematicians write papers. In a similar case neither trouble nor pains should be spared and the whole paper rewritten.

9. *Individual point of view or impersonal objectivity?*

Leopards cannot change their spots nor man his nature. Thus whatever one does is done to some extent in a personal way. There is certainly no such thing as the only salutary way to a theorem of a theory, however, a new individual approach is justifiable only so far as it is watertight when confronted with impersonal objective criticism.

10. *What is the secret of success: industrious, painstaking work or inspiration?*

As a matter of fact, in mathematics both are needed; however, ingenious thoughts usually only burst forth on a soil where assiduous preliminary spadework has been done previously. Contrary to common experience gained in other spheres, in mathematics fortune, generally, smiles upon those and only those who deserve it.

To sum up the matter, it can be said that in all ten dilemmas the word "or" should be replaced by the word "and." In the last analysis this is what Ars Mathematica boils down to.

FROM OUR NEXT NUMBERS

NEW BELGIAN POETRY
István Sőtér

THE STUDENT SON IN LENINGRAD
Gábor Vályi

TEN YEARS WITH THE SZABÓ FAMILY
István Forgács

DEVOLUTION IN SCOTLAND

by

ZOLTÁN HALÁSZ

There are not many places in Europe which are further from Hungary than Scotland. And yet there are few where a Hungarian feels at home as quickly and as easily as the northern third of Britain. I could give many reasons, beginning with the clean air pouring down from the Grampians, which has an almost continental brillance, and which lungs from the Carpathian basin breathe like a familiar friend after the softer climate of England, and continuing with the bridges spanning the Doon, the Dee, and other rivers, which call up memories of home. Why? Because Scottish bridge-builders, established what might be called a school in nineteenth century Hungary, as in other parts of Central Europe. The Chain Bridge, linking Buda and Pest, which was the first permanent bridge across the Danube, still stands as designed by two Scots engineers, Tierney and Adam Clark, and was first built with the help of 600 Scottish skilled workers. But the main reason why Hungarian visitors to Scotland feel at home is not to be found in the look of the countryside or the towns, nor in its air and weather, but in the human and personal climate, and the Scots themselves are responsible for that.

COUNTRY FOLK

I am sure no one in Scotland will feel hurt by my belief that both Scots and Hungarians have a little of the countryman about them. On the contrary, they will consider it a compliment. "Scratch an Aberdonian and you will find a countryman," as the old Aberdeen saying has it, and the citizens of many Hungarian and Scots towns can say much the same thing, though indeed Scottish, as Hungarian, urban life has a long and distinguished history behind it. The touch of countryman in both of us comes

out in that we not only like to eat and drink, but we know something about it—haggis and whisky on one side, gulyás and Tokay on the other, and again in our slight excesses in this worthy cause. For us is the fact that *neighbourliness* has still kept some of its original meaning, against us that, blunt and direct, we do not always respect the privacy of our fellow men. None the less, I am always more than ready to accept the sort of "intrusion" which happened to me in Perth. A slightly tipsy old gentleman knocked at the door of my room in the hotel. He declared he could not support the idea that someone should be hammering away at a typewriter in solitude, while they were having a good time below. "So come and join us downstairs" he cried. They were celebrating a wedding, and he was the father of the bride. The wedding party was drawn from three continents, relations had come from America and Australia and from many towns in the British Isles. I alone represented the "Continent," which was not an easy task, since I had to clink glasses—with a "slanthe"—with each of the member states of the Commonwealth present.

Being a small people . . .

What gave me special pleasure in Scotland was that they are a small people, just like the Hungarians, and yet, in their own way, they are not. Scotland has barely 5 million inhabitants, but more than 15 million Scotsmen live outside the Scottish borders, all over the world. 10 million people live in Hungary, and as many Hungarians again live in neighbouring countries and on distant continents. And Hungarians and Scotsmen who left home for economic or other reasons, often with a bitter taste in the mouth, are bound to their homeland by a special sort of nostalgia. By some sort of a miracle they will sometimes remain Hungarian or Scots for generations. This may explain how—if I may exaggerate a little in a good old Hungarian—and Scottish—way, they have come to put their individual stamp on the whole world. They say there has not been a British Cabinet since the 18th century without at least one Scot in it, not to mention Prime Ministers, or the Bank of England, which was founded by Scots. On the other hand the "invasion" of Britain by Hungarian social scientists has been going on since Karl Mannheim first landed there, and Hungarian physicists moved over to the United States during the same period, with Leo Szilárd leading the way. I am not going on with the list for the very good reason that an English humourist by the name of George Mikes has been over this ground before me.

Both Scotsmen and Hungarians like to speak about these "invasions" with a certain self-irony, but, listen carefully, there is an ungodly pride in their voice when they talk of the dispensation of history which almost always gave them the role of underdog. One cannot help feeling that the fact that we were "related" at a shining period in both our histories has a special importance. Margaret, the queen of the great King of Scotland, Malcolm III, was born in Mecseknádas, a small Hungarian village which still exists today, and was the grand-daughter of St. Stephen, the first King of Hungary. Margaret's father Edward fled to the Continent when the Danes invaded his country, and it was only natural that he should have sought the support of Stephen I, of Hungary, one of the strongest and most respected rulers of Europe at the time. He married the daughter of the Hungarian king, and the fruit of their union was to be that Queen of Scotland who, due to her labours in the spread of Christianity and Christian civilization, has become known to history as St. Margaret of Scotland. The chapel of this Scottish–Hungarian queen still stands at the highest point of ancient Edinburgh Castle. Standing at the balustrade before the chapel one looks down at the beautiful Georgian New Town stretching out below, and which, eight centuries after St. Margaret, suggested to Count Széchenyi how the Hungarian capital ought to be replanned.

Castles and lairds

Most of the castles and country houses in Scotland have not merely preserved their outward appearance intact, or nearly intact, despite the viccissitudes of centuries, but the interior of the buildings and the furnishings have come down to us largely unscathed, although perhaps a desire for comfort, and the changing taste of generations, have altered things here and there. A Hungarian eye looks at them not only with admiration, but with a certain amount of envy. After the Turkish wars, and the demolitions carried out by jealous Hapsburgs fearful of Hungarian intransigence, all that remained of our castles were their burnt-out walls, not to mention the medieval palaces which, serving as sources of building material, were more thoroughly destroyed by the neighbouring inhabitants than by the ravages of history.

The first Scottish castle which my friend F. took me to see was the exception that proved the rule. It was not one of the Scots castles that had

survived relatively intact; like a Hungarian castle, only its ruins stand... The remains of Kildrummy Castle still rise above the Aberdeenshire hills, burnt and ravaged by a series of sieges. That as much is left, after all the happenings of the Middle Ages, not to mention that it was the headquarters of the 1715 Jacobite rising, is due to its last private owner, James Ogston, who finally ended the vandalism which had for many years treated these historic ruins as a source of building material. Ogston indulged his passion for archaeology with commendable restraint. Though there was plenty of granite in that stony region, he was content to *preserve,* he did not reconstruct. The result is enthralling. History itself comes to life within the stormbeaten walls of Kildrummy, which also provides an instructive comparison with the reconstruction of certain castles in Hungary, where a similar self-restraint has not been practised, and the temptation to add to the building not always resisted.

Craigievar Castle belongs to the other category. This castle has survived with so little damage that even the stocking-dryers belonging to William Forbes, the first laird, and to Marjorie Woodward, his wife, still hang on the walls of the big room on the third floor. William Forbes himself, the first laird, led an adventurous life. He made his fortune in the Baltic trade, and owed it to wild speculations and rash enterprises. He cared nothing for comfort; within those thick walls there was only one source of heat, an open fireplace in the great hall on the ground floor. The rooms above were only warmed by the hot air rising up the chimney.

I stress this point because not only did Craigievar survive undamaged, but is still inhabited today. At first I thought the special attraction the place had for me was the homogeneity and perfect state of preservation of all the furnishings and interior decorations. Neither in Fontainebleau, nor in Versailles, nor looking at Hungarian historical monuments did I ever feel the past to be so vividly present, with such vitality, even though the furnishings and general surroundings were equally genuine, of the period, and maintained with scholarly care. Only a little while later I discovered the reason for the difference in atmosphere.

The charming, grey-haired, fragile lady, who conducted me through the halls of Craigievar, and who herself bore the name of an ancient Scots clan, informed me that the house was still in the occupation of a descendant of the original Forbes family. For some time now Craigievar has been the property of the Scottish National Trust. One of the Forbes, however, still lives there, and only a few months ago one of the young nieces of the Forbes' was married from there. It is said that they also invited a family ancestor to the wedding festivities, the ghost of Red Harry, a "large-natured" man,

according to family tradition. Unfortunately Red Harry, who is in the habit of "coming home," did not report at the due time. The next day the postman brought a telegram, in which Harry presented his excuses. On the night of the wedding he had been detained on duty in a castle exported to the U.S.A.

Jokes aside, I must congratulate those who hit on the excellent policy followed by the National Trust, by which either the donors continue to live in the house, or, in certain cases, the smaller houses are let to tenants who undertake their upkeep and keep the house open to the public. And those who undertake the not always comfortable task of keeping ancient castles and houses alive also deserve their meed of praise. I already mentioned the heating a moment ago, I might add that electricity has not been installed in Craigievar: in order to maintain the historical atmosphere the place is still lit with candles. The final result seems worth the sacrifice of a certain degree of comfort. Elsewhere (as for instance at home in Hungary), more than one enormous historical monument, restored and maintained at tremendous cost, finds a new use as a museum, and at best provides a home for institutions which greatly differ from its original purpose. The solution which I saw in Scotland undoubtedly retains the authentic living character of a historical monument far more effectively. I am not here concerned to criticise the reconstructions undertaken in Hungary which sometimes go a little further than the facts warrant. It is certainly the lesser of two evils to make use of such witnesses to history, repaired and fully maintained, as museums, rather than depend on visitors through the nervous thrills of lions in the home park, the price of the entrance fee entitling them to travel around the historical place in a car protected by iron bars. The restoration of this or that country house, on the other hand, as a holiday home for workers is undoubtedly worth certain reasonably thought-out concessions for this purpose. The Scottish solution of maintaining all the historical and artistic associations of castles and country houses while at the same time keeping them lived in and animate is one I should like to see in Hungary, adapted to our own conditions.

Whisky

There are plenty of examples of Scots inventiveness to be seen, from Master Crab's crane, which dropped stones each weighing a hundredweight on to the heads of the besieging English (one square piece of stone is kept by the piety of successors in Aberdeen in *Bon Accord* Square—nomen non est

omen), down to James Watt's steam engines and Scottish football, which a Scotsman brought to Hungary at the turn of the century. Its most pleasant expression, most calculated to warm the heart, is Scots whisky. I affirm that the full taste and flavour of the original, uncounterfeitable malt whisky of the Scots can only be truly appreciated, in its finest distinction, in the country of its birth. I am not for a moment denying the merits and pleasures of exported whiskies from world-famous firms, in all the complex beauties of their blending. I only want to voice a certain modest opinion of my own, that the consumption of the most distinguished blended whisky is one thing, and sipping malt whisky in the distillery itself, on Scottish soil, quite another, no less than the difference between a bottle of Hungarian wine in a Budapest restaurant and Tokay from the barrel, piped off in the rock-cellars of Sárospatak.

The G. distillery which I visited lies almost exactly on the Highland line hypothetically dividing Scotland in two, in one of the wooded valleys of the Campsie Hills, in that part of the country which was once Rob Roy's home. Not far from a water fall foaming over granite rocks lies the cleft which was Rob Roy's favourite refuge. According to tradition the hollow trunk of the old oak-tree with twisted branches still standing high on the side of the hill served as a hiding place against his pursuers.

The clear, soft water of the waterfall today forms an important element in the distillation of this particular whisky. That from another, small spring, caught drop by drop in a marble container, is worth a king's fortune: it is used to dilute the distillate, and gives the finished whisky its special smoothness.

R., who is in charge of the distillery, is a young man, probably still under thirty. But he started here as an apprentice, and here he returned after years and courses of further training, as confirmed and passionate a whisky distiller as Hungarian cellar-men are passionate vintners. Explaining everything expertly, he took me through the various stages in the preparation of whisky: we began on the second floor where they cleaned and ground the malt, we followed it through pipes into huge tubs, to the enormous copper vats where it was repeatedly distilled until it reached the required strength.

They call whisky the "wine of Scotland," and I was constantly reminded of the preparation of Tokay by the traditional rules which prescribe each step in the distillation and fermentation of whisky with hair-splitting accuracy. Tokay *aszú* became one of the best wines of the world when the chamberlain of Zsuzsanna Lorántffy, the owner of big Hungarian estates in the seventeenth century, discovered the improvement effected by leaving the grapes to shrivel on the vine until December, then covering

the best raisins with grape-juice and new wine, and finally leaving the "aszú" or "shrunk" wine to mature in small "Gönci" barrels ranged in low narrow cellars cut out of the rocks, for years, even decades. Since that time the vintners of Tokay have not departed a hairsbreadth from the ancient tradition, however tempted on occasion by the latest achievements in wine-making. And I felt very much at home in G. when R., meditatively and devoutly, swirled a mouthful of the whisky on his tongue, "mixing" what he had distilled on the basis of his own taste and instinct.

Meetings in Aberdeen

There are few places where the Central European traveller meets town-scape so unfamiliar to his eye as in Aberdeen. The colours are different. The houses are built of granite (the quarries of Aberdeen, it is claimed, provided Peter the Great with the granite for the pavements of St. Petersburg), and the granite walls of the houses rise in a dull blue-grey towards the sky, clean, without a trace of dirt, unlike our Budapest houses, built of brick, plastered with mortar, and covered with soot. The slate roofs (they use a special slate, quarried in the area) are greenish, the sky is steel blue, and the lawns and trees of the parks have a fresh greenness only rarely seen at home. And all of it is framed so magnificently by the North Sea that those who arrive from a sea-less country are delighted and amazed.

This city in its otherness, its special cold beauty and seeming aloofness, soon changed and became friendly to me, on the one hand through F., who as the representative of the British Council, and also as a Scots patriot to the bone, worked heart and soul that I should not only learn to know but also to like this most Scottish of Scottish cities, and on the other through Burns, with whom as it happened I had my first "personal" contact precisely there in Aberdeen.

The reader can hardly be expected to know that for us Hungarians Burns is not only one of the great figures of world literature. He is much more than that, for he inspired our poets at a decisively important historical moment, in the beginning of the 19th century, when the greatest of our lyric poets were given an impetus by the poetry of Robert Burns towards a popular vernacular verse, expressing, like Burns, the attitudes, hopes and endeavours of the people, so that they could "let the people come to power in poetry." Burns was part of the great forces which influenced our whole spiritual life, indeed, our whole national development, and so was Scottish popular poetry, for which he acted as an intermediary, an influence which

can be seen in the ballades of János Arany. This influence can be seen in another way as well. From Arany in the beginning of the 19th century, to Sándor Weöres, in our own time, spanning a century and a half, generations of poets following in each other's steps have translated the works of Burns into Hungarian. The achievement of József Lévay, for instance, is perhaps unique in world literature. He translated and published all of Burns' poetical works, the whole gigantic *œuvre*, with the exception of an altogether insignificant number of smaller works. The influence of Burns is still felt today, since every schoolboy learns his poetry at school, and consequently his works form part of the contemporary Hungarian literary background.

My fellow journalists who work in the editorial offices of the *Press and Journal* in Aberdeen could hardly have been aware of the specially strong ties which link us Hungarians to Burns, and they were probably rather surprised when in the middle of an interesting conversation on the position of the paper, which was now part of Lord Thompson's world-wide organization, I suddenly fell silent, and then jumped up from my seat to inspect an etching hanging behind me.

The etching—the work of an Aberdeen copper engraver and illustrator named William Smith—illustrated the moment when Robert Burns spoke to Chalmers, the proprietor and editor of the Journal, in the editorial offices, precisely 180 years before I was there.

Understandingly the event is part of the historic past of the *Press and Journal*. G., whom I regard a colleague not only because he is a fellow journalist, but because he is also interested in cultural history, gave me an impromptu account of that memorable meeting. Burns, by the way, travelled as many roads in Scotland as our own Petőfi travelled in Hungary; no matter where one goes, in every town or village one comes across remembrances of their sojourn. One Sunday he rode into Aberdeen on horseback from Peterhead, and put up at the New Inn in Castle Street. Chalmers gave him a sympathetic welcome. Burns first looked him up in the editorial offices, and later they had a few drinks at the New Inn "in the company of a number of citizens interested in Scots music and verse."

The *Journal* commemorated Burns' stay in Aberdeen in a two-line news-item, and Chalmers' diary entry for the day only states that Burns spoke with great respect of the poetry of John Skinner, whose son, a bishop, was also present at the meeting in the New Inn. John Skinner later wrote a poem which he called "Familiar Epistle to Robbie Burns the Ploughman Poet," when he received his son's letter reporting the conversation that had taken place with Burns.

G. collects unconsidered trifles about the history of Aberdeen with the same passion as I snap up anything about the history of Budapest. From then on we walked around the town looking and talking and finding the same things engage our attention. In the university library (its modern steel shelves which can be pushed close together, or the space between opened out with a single movement, permit an unparalleled exploitation of space) we came across Andreas Dudith's work on natural history amongst the books of special Scots interest exhibited in a show-case. The author—András Dudich, to give him his Hungarian name—travelled round Europe as a humanist scholar and finally found himself in Scotland, where, at the court of Mary Stuart, he became Reginald Pole's confidential advisor. In the university we came on the tracks of the Hungarian students who had studied at Aberdeen, one after the other, for three uninterrupted centuries. As the result of a 17th century foundation a scholarship gave two Hungarian students at a time the opportunity to study at Scottish universities; they made use of it, too, down a long and unbroken series of generations, until, during the Second World War, this touching and interesting relationship came to an end. Not that it is quite ended yet. I met the last of them in Aberdeen, still alive, still vigorous. K. was studying at the university on this age-old Scottish–Hungarian scholarship when the Second World War broke out. He stayed on in Scotland and became a British subject. But he still speaks his Hungarian mother tongue effortlessly and with purity, and though he is a "technical" man down to the marrow of his bones (he works in the development section of an electronics factory) he spends his spare time translating contemporary Hungarian short stories, and on one occasion he was successful in organizing a "Hungarian literary afternoon."

He is not a young man. In recent years his wife died, and his son moved south, together with his family, and he stayed on alone in Aberdeen. All the same, he won't leave Scotland.

"This is the only place where loneliness is not oppressive," he said. "One never really feels on one's own. The human community which elsewhere has grown old, and no longer exists, has largely survived amongst the Scots."

The faces of Glasgow

Four years ago I spent no more than a few hours in Glasgow—I had actually taken the trip from London to see Cumbernauld, the satellite town then in process of construction. So I only really became acquainted with

Scotland's greatest industrial centre on this occasion. It was a few months after the great teen-age gang warfare reported in the papers and on T.V., and all the argument which followed Frankie Vaughan's "armistice," so I was naturally interested to understand something about its background, particularly as it is a problem not confined to Glasgow alone.

My first "guide" was R. He is a modern historian and sociologist, thoroughly informed in the social forces at work in the Scottish industrial belt. We walked together all over the town. No one would guess from its appearance that according to reliable and convincing information Glasgow is one of the six toughest cities in the world. Glasgow, New York, Mexico City and Bogota together head the list for the greatest number of offences against the person per head of population, and even amongst them it leads in the field of juvenile delinquency. None of this can be observed during the day, especially in the inner parts of town, interwoven with the green oases of Glasgow Green, Queen Park, Rouken Glen and other parks. The average Glaswegian, moreover, is most visibly an expert in making the most of his breezy and open parks; bowling goes on all day on the splendidly laid out bowling greens, the overfed wild ducks on the waters of Kelvingrove Park are threatened with obesity, and the number of people taking dogs for walks is truly astronomical. The picture changes, everything dilutes, grows pallid and grey as one passes from the elegant inner parts of town to the Gorbals. The slum problem is one of Glasgow Corporation's major headaches.

In one of the vacant spaces, in the middle of the dirt and the rubbish, two boys of around fourteen stood in hurried discussion, oblivious to the world. R. spoke to them. The boys quickly hid something in their pockets, and slowly, making us aware of their reluctance, came closer. I found it difficult to understand their dialect. R., in a simple sentence here and there, summarized the substance of the conversation.

First he asked them about the "Cumbies." This district was the sphere of influence of the Cumbies gang, he explained, turning to me.

The answer was a shoulder-shrugging silence. "No one is a Cumbie during the day," R. murmured.

Then he changed the subject, and began to ask them about the "Tongs." They were still silent, but with less conviction. A packet of cigarettes walked out of R.'s hand into that of the bigger lad, and finally broke the silence.

The Tongs, it appeared, operated in Carlton and as competitors and grim foes could not be trusted. The two boys, now interrupting each other, babbled on about them. There are a great number of them, perhaps several hundred. They usually moved around in gangs of ten to fifteen, at the

pictures, or the dance halls, or the pubs, demanding—and getting—protection money.

Did they come over here too, to the Gorbals?

The two boys looked at each other and begin to laugh.

"Oh, no"—they said. That would not be at all advisable. And they told us of a certain event during the summer, when the members of two opposing gangs had met on the beach, and such a violent fight had broken out that the whole of the public fled in panic.

"Do you know where the name Tongs come from?" R. asked.

They knew, of course they knew. There had been a film on, a bull-baiting crime film, which was called The Terror of the Tongs. That gave the Carlton gang the idea.

R. glanced at me, then asked the boys:

"Have you got razors?"

Both boys at once denied it.

R. was not satisfied. He took out another box of cigarettes.

"Just show them, and you can buzz off," he said. "You can see by looking at us that we are not policemen." And he handed over the second packet of cigarettes.

The bigger one took it, and in a flick of a movement faster than imagination the razor lay there, flat and half-concealed, in his left hand.

"Why should we run away?" he asked quietly, without passion, and a hard light shone in his eyes. "We're not afraid of anybody here in the Gorbals."

Nevertheless they slipped off soon after.

The thin, featureless children's faces, the razor used to "chib" (sic), the almost subservient manner of these lads in the daylight away from their gang, and the wildness that lit up inside them at the slightest provocation, belong to a Kafka world. Or not so Kafkaesque after all? I thought of E., the woman psychologist from Stockholm, who told me that there was a school of thought which believed that an itch to fight based on an "ancestral Viking ethnic heritage" was the explanation of the "teen-age" revolt in Stockholm a few years ago. Later, however, when psychologists had analyzed the matter more thoroughly, basing themselves on penetrating questions put to several hundred of the young people who had taken part in the disturbances, it appeared that the despair of the young did not have those sort of mystical roots, but was most realistically based on their environment. The monotony of the new housing estates where uniformity had been carried as far as it could go, the indifference of parents who settled down to their television sets afternoons and evenings, forced the young,

since no one thought of providing leisure facilities for them when the new estates were built, to roam the streets and squares. I thought of the "playgrounds" which, better late than never, have been brought into being in many parts of Budapest by the Municipal Gardening Enterprise and which provide a great variety of opportunities for skill and sport. They have produced good results, especially in the "problem" districts, for even though there is no gang warfare at home, there are still plenty of problems connected with the young.

R. next took me to the "adventure playground," as if answering my unexpressed thoughts, which an enthusiastic married couple, both educationalists, had created on a waste space as a form of "private enterprise." This waste space was surrounded by bare, blind house walls, and the first impression was by no means attractive, but about thirty-five to forty children were playing there, obviously very happily. The two educationalists told us that they paid for the first crude material and the first pieces of wood, tools and bits of apparatus out of their own pockets, and in the beginning they took turns supervising in their spare time, but now they had got a yearly subsidy from Glasgow Corporation, which covered their labour costs. What they get is not much, of course, but they do not complain, it is very useful. They said that the children were from the neighbourhood, and were already pretty well used to going there. Since no one interferes with their games or movements, incidents and disturbances happen often enough, which is not surprising, considering their background. All the same the children who come to the playground slowly lose the habit of going about in gangs, and that is the main thing.

Why devolution?

When a word becomes a notion knocking round in political circles, when, if you like, it changes into a slogan, its meaning is modified, sometimes enlarged, but changed. I think that this to some extent has happened to *devolution* in Scotland. Everyone when he hears it interprets it more or less according to his own ideas, hopes, and ambitions. A man from abroad, therefore, must be especially careful in trying to place the new concept —i.e. one appearing in a new context—within the framework of his habitual way of thought. No dictionary nor explanations can help very much; he has to put it together like a mosaic out of the small bits and pieces provided by his own observation and understanding.

For me this was at once easy and difficult. Easy because the Scots example

had its analogies in Hungary. Difficult because many of the problems are unimaginably complex, branching out in many directions.

The problems of the Highlands, for instance, were familiar to me, since they resemble Hungarian problems, which are partly historical and partly still with us. The sparsely populated Highlands, lacking industry, from which the population migrates southward in search of work is the step-child of Scotland as the Trans-Tisza area used to be the stepchild of Hungary. As late as between the wars labourers in their thousands moved to more fortunate parts of the country looking for work, and even after a whole series of industrial enterprises have come into being it is still an under-developed country compared to more developed Western Hungary. Far be it from me to equate these two areas, so far from each other, and whose landscapes are so different, but the parallels nevertheless cannot be denied, since, owing to the Clearances, the Scottish Highlands even have some sort of corresponding resemblance to the Hungarian *Puszta*. For my friend, F., who spent many years serving Great Britain in Africa, and then returned to his native country, devolution means in the first place industrialization of the long neglected Highlands, and the transformation of their agriculture along contemporary and up to date lines. And also some form of autonomy.

The diversification of industry in Scotland, and some assurance of its ability to survive, was the other demand which I often heard mentioned in connection with devolution.

As in Hungary, it is nothing new to Scotland that the issue of industrial development has grown beyond an economic matter into a question of social significance. The Scottish Council (Development and Industry) was formed around 1930, mainly with the purpose of encouraging a healthy and diversified development of Scottish industry. Today it continues to function as a purely independent institution, one of the most honoured and influential in Scotland. The conversations I had in the Council's Edinburgh headquarters with young, enthusiastic experts was interesting, instructive, and, if I may use such a term in connection with such a dry subject as economics, more than a little moving. They quoted facts and figures to show how, in a relatively short time, they had succeeded in setting up of a large number of factories and persuading a large number of enterprises to settle in Scotland. In recent times, of course, this trend has been accelerated by the policy of the Government in declaring most of Scotland a "development area," and consequently making certain tax and loan concessions available. But they made no bones about declaring this was "not enough by a long shot," nor indeed was it an unambigous blessing. Most of the new Scottish factories are branches of big international companies, and as a result a good many

factories "assembled" rather than "manufactured," in fact the tendency was increasing. Nothing was more characteristic, they said, of the dependence of Scottish industry on outside forces than the 1967 report of the President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, according to which only six of all the factories employing more than 200 people in the whole of Scotland were under Scottish control. These young technocrats, and many others as well, mean a healthy and diversified economic development and one that serves the interests of Scotland when they say devolution.

M. and I talked about the demographic situation which could not be described as rosy in either Scotland or Hungary. But while in Hungary the birth rate has gone up considerably as the result of various social arrangements, without altering one of the most liberal birth-control systems of the world, and the ageing which threatened the population has lessened, the whole weight of the problem still oppresses Scotland. According to the Government Actuary's Projection the population is expected to rise by 87 thousand altogether in the twenty years from 1962 to 1981, and 81 thousand of these will be an increase in the numbers of those over 60. This all is largely a matter of the standard of living; many in Scotland expect circumstances to improve, and that there will be a change for the better in the demographic picture.

I need not go on. I certainly do not want to create the impression that the Scots think of devolution as some sort of miraculous cure-all. As a member of another small people, I hope that they will find the sort of solution with their bigger neighbour and partner, which will assure them prosperity, economic development and national identity in conjunction with each other. This would be a development which would give us all hope.

SURVEYS

IVÁN BOLDIZSÁR

ADVANCED UNESCOLESE*

(Our own brains and those of others.) It was very nice to spend four weeks in the French capital, the only trouble was that for a month I hardly saw anything of Paris. I spent the four weeks between the four or rather four hundred walls of the Unesco headquarters, the Y-shaped building (one of the three architects who designed it, Marcel Breuer is—of course—a Hungarian) has as many walls as a small town. I can say, however, that I spent the four weeks in a school of international understanding, and not at secondary school level, either. (This gives me an opportunity to act as a barker for Hungarian poetry as so often before. These few words: "...not at secondary school level"—have become a household word in Hungarian, though they were written no more than thirty-odd years ago by Attila József who, had he been an architect, would now be as well known as Marcel Breuer, or, had he written in English, as W.H. Auden. He was still a student when he wrote "On My Birthday." That year, following the publication of one of his poems, an influential professor had told József that he would see to it that József would never be employed by a Hungarian secondary school. József's answer were the lines "I shall teach the whole of my people, and not at secondary school level.") For a whole month I was obliged to think and speak bearing in mind that I was one of the delegates of 125 Unesco member states and had to make sure at the same time that the others were aware that the man who was speaking was a Hungarian and a delegate of a socialist country.

That was a lot but not all that was expected of me. One also had to think and speak and act in terms of an international conference, that is in such a way that—at a third level—one should bear in mind this particular international organization as such. What raises Unesco above other international organizations is that in the course of a few weeks agreement was rached on most issues, in fact on all the important ones. What's more in the majority of cases the decision was unanimous. In those four weeks the idea that this international parliament of culture was really a prototype of an age to come in which men, peoples, states and groups of states will at the same time think with each other's brains and be also parts of a common brain, occurred to me just about every day.

In these four weeks of deliberations, which following an all-night sitting some of us, who all had a classical education and who were all equally exhausted, called *cum sede pro cooperatione nationum*, we discussed problems of education, science, art, literature, mass communications, and let me

* The title of this article may ring a bell to old readers of The New Hungarian Quarterly. Six years ago, in No. 10, I described my reunion with Unesco in "Learning Unescolese" after sixteen years of absence.

continue, human coexistence and the future of the human race itself. We listened to opposed points of view, we did our best to understand them, and reach appropriate decisions. In this way what was at first merely bearable, became interesting, then exciting and finally we all became passionately involved.

(Man and his environment.) I realize now that I have raised my voice too high; let me give an example before I go hoarse. It might sound surprising to many that Unesco deals with questions such as family planning. Unesco naturally did not propose to develop new contraceptives nor did it mean to recommend them. The idea was that member states were to be supplied with the literature on the subject on request and, if needed, experts were to be sent to developing countries. This is part of activity in the social sciences. A wide variety of views were voiced in the discussion. The delegates of the North European states welcomed the proposals. The Swedes went as far as offering to send out working committees at their own expense. Delegates of southern European states emphasized how difficult the Catholic Church's attitude in this complicated matter made it for the State to act. The United States delegate said it was not for him to take a stand, it was everybody's own business. A number of delegates brought an imposing biological and demographical knowledge to bear on the subject and drew attention to the dangers and potentialities involved in the population explosion.

Generally the opinion of the subcommission—it will presently appear what subcommission—was that there were too many human beings and families just had to be planned. I shall not forget what the Indian woman delegate said about the roots of the problem being primarily social and economic, the housing question, for instance. "Put butter next to the oven and it will melt." And who of those present can fail to remember the remark of Unseco's Deputy Director General Malcolm Adiseshiah about overpopulation being the result of a lack of cultural facilities? He gave a surprising example: in the summer of 1966 the New York birth-rate took a sudden leap upwards which lasted just one week. The notorious black out had happened nine months earlier. In the absence of cultural entertainment, people... Finally the delegate from the Cameroons said that he had listened to the discussion with interest but their problem was not that there were too many, but that there were too few people, they had huge empty areas in that large African country of theirs. Therefore let the subcommission please reformulate its proposal in such a way that it should be quite clear that family planning could also mean more children.

In the end we were able to reconcile the various points of view, attitudes and demands and fit it all into one of Unesco's vast programmes in the social and human sciences which will employ the scientists, politicians, educators and artists of many countries for ten years or more and which is called: Man and his Environment. I am well aware that I am guilty of a slight exaggeration when I call the Unesco General Conference a great school of international understanding but no greater one than one is guilty of whenever one becomes deeply involved in a serious matter. I am after all one of the "founding fathers", I took part in the 1946 first General Conference in Paris, the present one was the fifteenth. I should like to give an account of it now, not a report of proceedings and decisions but rather an account of the type of thinking that was done. What I have to say will surprise some people in Hungary and if my experience is anything to go by also in many other small European and non-European countries, since in the public mind Unesco, even in the twenty-second year of its existence, is looked on as a kind of UN-uncle, a dollar-daddy resident in Paris, good for scholarships, a provider of modern equipment for this or that institute, and chiefly as someone who will organise a trip for you, and cover your expenses. Unesco does do that kind of thing

too, but this is a long way from being its essence; besides instead of dollar-daddy one could call it rouble- or jen- or forint-daddy just as well since the Unesco budget is not fed by American sources but by contributions from all member states. Moreover most member states are not satisfied with what they get from Unesco. The Afghan delegate expressed this, compressing the images of the Arabian Nights and the modern gadget-age into one sentence: "You cannot kill a dragon with Fly-tox."

The General Conference discussed Unesco's two year plan, which they call programme, and its budget in four subcommissions corresponding to the four letters of Unesco. The ESC in the name abbreviates three words only (education, science, culture) to which another C was added in the past few years: Communications. The highest and most ceremonial organ of the General Conference is the plenary session. It is here that the heads of delegations, including Hungary's Endre Rosta, explain their governments' point of view, criticize or approve Unesco policies or some part of them and discuss the proportions and priorities of the seventy-seven million dollar draft budget. The first and most important business of the 1968 general conference was the election of the Director General. Nobody conversant with "Unescolese" could have been in any doubt that René Maheu would be re-elected for a further term of six years. Some speak of him as "Mr. Unesco." This identification is doubtless an honour but it does not do justice to the man. It is true and common knowledge that Unesco grew to its present size and importance under Maheu's direction, that besides important day to day activity, he is responsible for work of a historical importance, such as the literacy campaign and the saving of Abu Simbel. All the same René Maheu's significance is not exhausted by his leadership or organizing ability, the key to his personality is the philosophy which he calls the idea of the universal. This sounds a little awkward in English, Maheu not only expressed it in French: *l'idée de l'universel*, he thinks as a Frenchman. One could call it the humanism of the twentieth century.

The detailed discussion of Unesco's activities takes place in the subcommissions. I was a member of two of them, that on culture and the other one on communications. Thus I can speak about ideas which engaged the attention of the one hundred and twenty-five delegations and dozens of observers, more precisely two sets of ideas. In addition to the official delegations, every important organization of the world's intellectual life was represented, for example, those of musicians, actors, architects, educators, television experts and many others. As a writer I was annoyed that no one was there to represent the organization writers.

(When an old African dies.) What was particularly interesting was the way in which everyone became aware of the importance of society when discussing culture. To appreciate this one should know that Unesco had for some years carried on useful but in some ways one-sided cultural activities. It had supported international cultural organizations, it sponsored studies on various problems and aspects of education, art, literature, music, always guided by the idea of international understanding and the desire that nations should know as much about each other as possible. The East-West Major Project is a good example in which East and West were not used in the customary political sense but in a geographical and historical one, that is the culture of Europe and America on the one hand, and that of the Near and Far East on the other were treated in large-scale comparative studies. What Unesco had done in the field of collecting, studying and understanding unrecorded literary and artistic traditions in Africa is particularily important. What is truly new about these studies is that Unesco scholars have unearthed an ancient world. One ought to add the study of the ancient culture of the peoples of Latin America, followed by a

seemingly paradoxical development—the culture of present day Latin America was made known to the world, literary works were translated and comparative studies were prepared. What sort of unexpected problems may crop up in the course of this work was shown by the speech of the charming young Jamaican woman-delegate. She said they envied not only the European peoples but those African peoples and tribes too who knew where they stood, since her people, the people of Jamaica, was so new that it lacked an identity. What they needed was not so much a recording of the traditions of the various races who lived there, but someone to help them find their identity as Jamaicans, regardless of their origin. Could Unesco be of any assistance?

The significance of this can be really grasped when one listens one by one to the African and Latin American delegates, all illustrating the concept which students of culture, particularly the fashionable and important structuralists, call *culture vécue.* The delegates of Mali, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Dahomey spoke of their oral culture as we would of Bálint Balassi or Béla Bartók. Where there are more than a hundred and twenty delegations, totalling often two or three hundred people, in a conference hall, not all are always listening and there is continuous whispering and talk. But when the Mali delegate said that every time an old man died in Africa a library burnt to cinders the hum suddenly stopped. We all felt we still had a lot to learn in the school of international understanding.

(The public and the anti-public.) The notion of society made its appearance in two ways. I here consider society primarily as the receiving, comprehending and processing end of culture. In Unesco's programme and activities society appeared through the introduction partly of the concept of the public, partly of the tasks of cultural policy.

One of the most exciting intellectual discoveries made by the meeting was that the notion of society entered the minds of the members of the one hundred and twenty-five delegations and of the two thousand strong secretariat via two major detours. One of these touched the past, the other the future. The starting point of one was a recognition that there was a public in Africa. At first all that could be seen was that the African and together with it the South-East Asian and partly the Latin-American public represented what is called the anti-public or non-public by the sociology of culture. This is what Assistant Director General Mahdi Elmandjra talked about when introducing the discussion. His point of departure was *culture vécue*, a term he used in French throughout evidently because he was one of those who did not find the English expression satisfactory, although he, in the true spirit of the universality of Unesco, delivered his opening address repeatedly switching from French to English, to Russian, to Spanish and to Arabic—his own native language. From *culture vécue* the train of his thoughts led straight to the public and thence to the notion of the non-public.

The other point of departure—I almost said the opposite one—was the recognition that electronic means of communication have been and are democratizing the public and will go on democratizing it. I should like to add, and at the same time to bundle up another part of the intellectual results of the Unesco General Conference, that these means of communication are simultaneously channels of long distance information, entertainment, and education and means of expression and creation in art. Their presence is one of the coordinates determining the age we live in, the other being of course, if I may be permitted the play at definitions, the release of nuclear energy.

With the help of the detour winding its way through the past it became clear that the notion of an anti-public and non-public was not applicable to Africa. In Africa and in the developing countries in general, the artist and his public have not yet parted

company in the way they have in industrialized countries. We were also made aware that universal culture could only offer something to the developing nations if the concept of the public was clarified both as it applied to developed countries and to them. In this way it was better realized that the real non-public was to be found in the industrialized and industrializing countries where, even worse, there was a whole section of the population—the anti-public—which rejected art, science, all the spiritual values, which are as it were delivered to their homes. Pierre Moinot the French delegate quoted Voltaire as an excellent counterargument: "Le luxe est une chose nécessaire."

(Aesthetic literacy.) After much thinking and stimulation from many parts of the world, geographical as well as spiritual, it was recognized: spreading literacy in the developing world was not enough. What they needed no less was literacy in the arts, which was often refered to at the Unesco meeting as aesthetic and musical literacy. It was a pleasant experience for the Hungarian delegates to hear the names of Zoltán Kodály and György Lukács again and again. At the conference they spoke of Kodály's music teaching method as an established and familiar concept.

A few more mental steps had to be taken before everyone became aware that it was both worthwhile and necessary to launch a campaign against artistic, musical and literary illiteracy in the developed countries too. In short, Unesco cannot afford to be the world organization of the educated and of the intellectual elite, it must become increasingly that of the masses. It was at this point that the notion of cultural policy as part of planning the Unesco's programme was raised.

I have yet to examine the road of the detour that touches the future. If a Unesco balance sheet is perhaps drawn up, let's say on the fiftieth anniversary, and someone writes a commemorative article about it in The New (or Newest) Hungarian Quarterly, which will no doubt be sent out to subscribers on postage stamp-size microfilm or beamed to pocket-size portable TV sets, or possibly recorded on to a suplementary computer brain without being tangibly materialized; or, to return from the world of science-fiction to Unesco's plans, this will be relayed by the organization's telecommunications satellites, which were discussed at this very conference—the balance sheet will presumably give equal credit, among the many cultural merits of Unesco, to the literacy campaign and the fact that the men in charge of Unesco were among the first to recognize the new role mass media could play in art. At a time when in most countries writers, composers, scholars etc. drew back from television, treating it as it were as a kind of circus turn, as clowning unworthy of serious attention (in Hungary there are still people like that), Unesco was busy analyzing the relationship of traditional and new means of artistic expression at round tables and symposia and seminars, and devoted dozens if not hundreds of studies to the exploration of the potentialities inherent in the latter.

This activity had turned Unesco's programme towards the future and this is where the kind of specialists in culture who until then had done their best to keep the notion of society away from Unesco, found themselves face to face with it. The first mass media, the radio, is principally a medium employed to spread information and knowledge, and a source of entertainment and to a lesser extent an instrument in the service of education. With the second, television, if not Unesco itself, then certainly all three or four of its capital letters: education, science, culture and communications, visibly and audibly entered people's homes, sat down at their tables and almost literally got into their beds. The tasks have grown enormous in a very short time, like Jack's beanstalk in the fairy tale.

It was via these two detours which, to continue the simile, were just as thrilling and

eventful as the adventures and travels of fairy tale heroes, that the men in charge of Unesco came to recognize the necessity of a cultural policy. Without immodesty we may add that in this recognition they were helped by the experiences of the socialist countries and also the proposals, studies and contributions of scholars, educators, artists, writers and others working within the scope of the Hungarian National Commission for Unesco.

(The Gutenberg era and the electronic age.) This vast mental material, extending from folk tales and African oral traditions, through the pentatonic scale used by the Quechua Indians in their songs, to the Unesco satellite, was discussed in the various Unesco commissions and subcommissions. And if one tries to think with the other fellow's brains, as I put it at the beginning of this article, one discovers the opposite of detours, a number of short cuts from one culture to an other. Let me give one example only. African, South-East Asian and Latin American delegates told us that transistor radios had a better chance of reaching their societies than books. What possibilities are offered by this situation! Professor Richard Hoggart of Birmingham, one of the wittiest and most argumentative members of the conference expressed this by saying that electronic culture reached certain peoples half a thousand years before the printed one. Or, if I may juggle with the jargon of Marshall MacLuhan, the Oswald Spengler of the communication age, the mass media age preceded the Gutenberg era.

The task which Unesco, and I might say every responsible intellectual, faces is no less than finding the equilibrium between the Gutenberg era and the inception of the electronic age, and then write, think, act and work in a manner that the whole of society should get their rightful share. A cultural policy is indispensable for this. There was at first a certain reluctance to accept the idea of a cultural policy in the groves of the Unesco building, if one might call the glass-and-concrete walled work rooms groves—or the conference halls equipped with the little imaginative toys of the electronic age. They could only see it as some sort of regimentation, as interference from above. We had to come a long way via the two detours before they were in a position to recognise certain important facts.

It was interesting to hear in the discussion how a cultural policy fitted into the universality of Unesco, that is, into a new kind of humanism; how it complemented international educational programmes and international scientific cooperation by giving them purpose and meaning.

Unesco is still looked on by many people in Hungary as a "western" organization. There is no denying that French, British and Americans predominate in its staff, but the universality of Unesco and the influence of the socialist countries were felt every hour of the four week long discussion. The introduction, for instance, of the document summing up the objectives of cultural policy lays it down that it is no longer adequate to implement measures which promote merely the exchange of persons belonging to the cultural elites. "Nor is it sufficient if the specialists acquaint each other, and mutually learn about and assess the extent and achievements of neighbouring cultures. The whole population has to have access to a cultured way of life and take an active part in it."

Unesco incidentally always speaks of cultural policies, not cultural policy. By this it wishes to emphasize that it does not aim to give itself guidelines or to offer recommendations to member states on the way they should manage their cultural affairs, but it aims to give assistance on how to implement the cultural policy each state adopts and determines by itself and to suggest ways they can use the experience of other states. However, Unesco means not only a discussion centre and study factory but action. In the two year programme now adopted a place was found also for a study to determine what the role of public power

is in the cultural advancement of humanity, and in the shaping of the new relationship between creative artists and the public. For this purpose they are going to convene a conference of the world's ministers of culture and education, a world première of its kind. An exchange of experiences on an international level on the subject of cultural centres, houses of culture and clubs is also on the agenda. The dress rehearsal for this kind of conference was held in Budapest in the summer of 1968. Above all the new programme provides for a study of the way literature and the arts affect the new public, that is, the public which it is hoped will be led to the appreciation of high quality work by the new means of expression and communication.

(The communications revolution.) Why revolution? Why not merely technological progress in the spreading of information and in communications? It is a revolution precisely because its concern is more than just information and communications.

The word communication is a hard nut to crack for the non-English speaker. As with so many other concepts it is easier to explain it with the help of its opposite. This is what happened in the Unesco debates. Incommunicability expresses the lack or impossibility of contact between people, groups or nations. It is one of the main themes of modern literature. All Beckett's works are chiefly about this. *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* say what cannot be said. Two persons do not, or cannot, understand each other. They have no contact or they are unable to establish one; or if it has been established they make a mess of it. I am writing this after having seen two plays about incommunicability, one in Budapest and one is Paris. The Budapest play is called *Hot air* and was written by Ferenc Karinthy. I could call it incommunicability à la hongroise. Two men sit side by side in the hot air chamber of a Turkish bath. They start to talk and get involved in a conversation which kills them both. The one-act play is one long bitter laugh from start to finish. The Paris play, Marguerite Duras' *L'Amante anglaise* has a tragic point of view. It shows, by way of a pseudo-thriller, how a married couple find it impossible to understand each other, though theirs is what is called a happy marriage. Incommunicability in the latest plays and films, and here I could also refer to Pinter or Godard and Clouzot, in particular the latter's *La Prisonnière*, has become something essential not unlike the custard pie in silent films. Every director of any note feels that this is just what the public wants.

Communication is the opposite of this negative: a successful contact, established and maintained. International understanding of which Unesco is one of the schools. Only three General Conferences, that is, six years ago there was linguistic in-fighting between the French and the Anglo-Americans over the word communication. Though the words are spelt the same way in both languages, the French had it translated by *information*. This was the exact dictionary equivalent but the meaning has outgrown the dictionary. By the recent General Conference session the French language had taken over the English homonym and is now using it with a broad meaning.

Assistant Director General Tor Gjesdal put it well when he said, opening the discussion, that the planned Unesco communications satellite would appeal to people's fancy more than any other programme, but the real point in the communications revolution was not technological advance but the new possibilities it offered for human development.

(Writing for viewers and readers.) With this thought he expressed the doubly revolutionary character of the revolution in the mass media. One is that electronics, mostly through television, have achieved within a decade or two a quantitative as well as qualitative change in understanding, in establishing contacts, in meeting each other. I have already alluded to the other revolution: communication has also become a creative activity. The

communications revolution affects not journalists alone but writers as well. What is even more than that, it is a challenge to, and an extension of the previous traditional methods of artistic creation. In the age of the communications revolution one has to write in a different way—or at least in a different way *too*—because readers, who are also spectators, read in a different manner. I know well, and I said so in the discussion in the communications subcommission of Unesco, that every intellectual piece of work begins when one faces a sheet of blank paper, or if one is technically minded and keeps up with modern developments, one may use a tape-recorder. There will never be literature without books. The communications revolution does not mean that Gutenberg's way has come to an end, no, it means that it is just now that it has widened into a galaxy, into that Gutenberg Galaxy about which MacLuhan wrote a book(!) and which has since become a catch phrase.

(Mankind's new nervous system.) It is to the credit of the recent Unesco meeting that it called attention to a third, in all probability the most important, aspect of the revolution. I am thinking of its social implications. I shall try to follow the train of thought as a result of which Unesco managed to recognise this, and I do this not merely for the sake of historical fidelity. It is rather because I feel that neither writers, nor politicians have come anywhere near to a correct assessment of the real significance of the communications revolution and there are some people who continue to belittle it.

Unesco starts out from what has become possible. A series of inventions triggered things off, but what they offered soon transcended merely technological significance. It is possible now to spread information *instantaneously*, *simultaneously* and *ubiquitously*, and here, needless to say, the word information is used not only in its journalistic sense but as knowledge and things to be known. The notion of diffusion is also extended by the new technology, in the direction of participation and sharing in the experience: the most widely separated communities and persons can simultaneously share the same information, or to extend the meaning of this further, the same artistic experience. The technical, cognitive, educational and artistic opportunities strengthen each other like a chain reaction. Let us think of the flight of the Apollo-8 spacecraft, in particular of the landing operation, TV pictures of which were shown simultaneously in all parts of the world, or Soyuz-4 and 5, linking up a few days later, in space, and on the small screen in millions of homes. Or let's think of other things of a very different order—and such grimaces are part and parcel of the opportunities given—how the pop song "Girl at the Piano," which is anti-information and anti-value, spread instantaneously and in many places at the same time in Hungary, or of the immense popularity of soap-operas in America and Coronation Street and its fellows in England.

The new electronic networks, these veritable new nervous systems of mankind, hold out opportunities for human initiative scarcely dreamt of even in science-fiction. The human intellect has been challenged. Here is an opportunity to overcome all limitations. It seems that in a relatively short time the communications revolution will knock down those barriers which have so far blocked progress or helped to maintain ignorance and mutual misunder-standing.

(The change in society.) At this point the train of thought reached society. Speakers from the floor and written proposals submitted to the conference argued that this revolution affected and enriched education, the sciences, and general culture itself (the main sections of Unesco), but the most important task facing Unesco in the future was to assess and partly to expound in studies, partly to express in action, those changes that were taking place in society owing to the revolution.

The recognition of the role of social change was welcome support for one of the

suggestions tabled by the Hungarian delegation. We proposed—the idea itself had come from Sándor Maller, the secretary general of the Hungarian National Commission for Unesco, and the duty to elaborate it and submit it devolved on me—that Unesco should work out the basic principles of communications policy using cultural policies as a model. As late as the last General Conference this suggestion would have been sure to be defeated, not so much because the potentialities of mass- and telecommunications media were not then sufficiently appreciated, but chiefly because at the time Unesco was scared of thinking in terms of society. Now on the other hand the Hungarian proposal was appreciatively received and discussed and was included in the final comprehensive resolution on future programme, which in Unescolese means business. We recommended to the Organization that it should, in the following years, study the roles of society and the public power in the development of mass media. This new activity may bridge the gaps and resolve the contradictions of the communications age as between the instrument and the substance, technology and content. The problem is that the brilliant instrumentality, technical and technological progress overshadow the substance. The vehicle appears sometimes more important than the freight even if the freight is human and spiritual. This phenomenon may have lured Marshall MacLuhan to coin his most famous of all his so often quoted watch-words, the Medium is the Massage.

I don't in the least want to enter into an argument with Marshall MacLuhan. And even if that were my intention, I could not, first because in his *Understanding Media* he used that term as the title of his first chapter but then he almost proved the contrary, and secondly because at the International P.E.N. meeting in New York two years ago, he stated at the height of an argument that what he expressed in his books was not his opinion—only his observations. Thus the apostle of the communication age became a vehicle himself, a danger one should avoid. The Hungarian delegation also raised the question: whether this most comprehensive cultural and scientific organization in the world was able not only to announce that there was a revolution in mass communications and to refer to this in various programmes, but also to think in a revolutionary way? I was honoured by being elected chairman of the working group which was entrusted with the elaboration of the long term plan—"future programme" in Unescolese—in the cultural and sociological field. One theme which often recurred in the discussion was the relationship of traditional, that is, written, printed, painted, acted literature and art to the new electronic arts entering our homes and living together with us. By the time I had my opportunity to raise the question of the revolution in communications the ground was well prepared for my ideas concerning the new reality, the new imagination and the new relationship of reality and imagination.

(The second reality and the new imagination.) The three most important mass media: film, radio and chiefly television, have made people the witnesses of simultaneous events and thereby created a new, second reality. The broadest masses today live on two planes: one which is that of their everyday personal and common lives and the other is the one they see, hear and share with other people when they watch TV or listen to the radio. This second seeing, hearing, experiencing may become, and often does become, more important than the first and original reality, because it is more concise in expression and more condensed in time; and because millions and tens or perhaps hundreds of millions experience the same secondary reality at the same time. There exists, therefore, a new, more deeply lived reality and a collectively experienced one at that, there has come into existence a new, continuous and shared experience for mankind. This is the most essential and least explored field of the revolution in communications.

(To create new creators.) The new kind of reality has brought in its wake a new kind of imagination. Let me demonstrate the existence of this too, if not by its reverse but from a negative side nevertheless, by refering to the already existing influence which it is exerting on written reality. The main difference separating 19th and early 20th century fiction from that of today is that description has withered away in the latter. The ground was prepared by writers such as the young Hemingway and his friends. The reason why that way of writing did not end in a highbrow fashion but took roots and became popular is obvious. The reading public does not require a detailed description of what a New York skyscraper or the Champs Élysées look like, nor even what the palm-tree-lined avenues of Dakar or the new university quarter of Mexico City look like. They have seen them so often in the cinema in both films and newsreels, but chiefly in the last decade on the small screen in their own homes, that a word spoken is enough to recall a picture of what had to be described in detail by the writer to stimulate the imagination of their fathers and grandfathers. Therefore the reader who today is also a viewer, in one word, the public which was an anti-public yesterday, today demands new nourishment for his imagination. To discover this new nourishment, to produce and give it artistic form, is what the communications revolution is about.

The new means of expression and the new public call for new creators to come on the scene. One of Unesco's great tasks is to create new creators. Could it be that we are living on the threshold of a new Renaissance?

ISTVÁN VAS

THE CHANGING IMAGE OF APOLLINAIRE

Apollinaire has been dead for fifty years. He died the day the Germans laid down their arms in the Great War, in which Apollinaire had been a gay and despairing soldier. He lay dying in the Boulevard Saint-Germain, not far from the place where now stands the bronze head, which Picasso made of him, beautiful and characteristic in its abstract form. The sound of the shouting crowds marching under his window carried to his attic room: "À bas Guillaume!"—they cried, meaning of course the Kaiser. Guillaume Apollinaire turned in despair to those about his bed: So the people of Paris wanted his death? Could he have been so naive and credulous? Why, yes, quite possibly, especially in his death throes—for he had been that naive and credulous in life. But I think it more probable that even at the point of death he was jesting; that it was of those jests that had been scattered through his life and his poetry alike—jests which later gave rise to much theorizing and many academic hypotheses. On the other hand, it is also true that even in Apollinaire's irony, his touch of the grotesque, even in his most savage jests and the games he played even in his most far-fetched trickeries had been an authentic authority—an indication of the rich, varied, conflicting yet personal quality that Apollinaire brought to world poetry.

This exuberance, this prismatic personality of his is probably one of the main reasons for the fact that he has continued to live so rich and varied a life after death. Apollinaire has been dead for fifty years—a longer period than his life, for, weakened by a head injury received during the war, Spanish flu killed him at the age of thirty-eight. During these

fifty years how many excellent and even great poets among his contemporaries in Europe—including Hungary too—have died to the world—one hopes only for a period—have lost their powers of attraction and the sense of excitement they could once arouse! The most obvious evidence of Apollinaire's after-life lies in the condition of all life—change. And how much has Apollinaire changed in these fifty years! How much he has represented, how many people appealed to his authority, and on how many different grounds!

Some of these changes—the change and development in Apollinaire's image—could be seen in Hungary, due in the first place to Lajos Kassák, who had published Apollinaire's "Le musicien de Saint-Merry" as early as 1915 in the first number of his review *Tett* (Action) and who had acclaimed him as the greatest living poet. This was a unique moment in time; Hungarian lyric verse had never before, and has never since been so attuned to world poetry. Kassák discovered him almost before the French critics did, and we, to whom Kassák had given the Apollinaire legend, did not even realize the significance of his perception, for we were not aware that at the time Apollinaire was only the leader of a small comparatively unknown group. We were convinced—through Kassák—that when in May 1904 an unknown young Spanish painter—Pablo Picasso—was joined at his table by a similarly unknown stoutish poet of Italian–Polish extraction named Wilhelm Kostrowitzky—then already Guillaume Apollinaire—editing, among all his other preoccupations, a minor financial review, that this meeting was the immediate overture to the spectacular and triumphant march of the intellectual life of France down the Champs Elysées. We would never have believed that "Le chanson du mal-aimée"—this singularly haunting miracle of love poetry, and one of the foundations of modern verse, which he must have sent to the *Mercure de France* just about that time—had lain for five years in one of its editorial desks, and had only been rescued from the waste-paper basket because Apollinaire later made friends with the editor. Or that Duhamel could have said, after the publication of *Alcools*, that his poetry was like a junk shop. It was Kassák who taught us to see him as Picasso's pencil had seen him during his lifetime: the high priest of everything modern.

In Hungary Apollinaire lived on in another life; he solaced our miseries, spurred us on to better things, and was an ally in our struggles. We—Miklós Radnóti, György Rónay, and I—began to make a systematic translation of his works when, in the thirties, the first signs of the isolation, or, to put it bluntly, the time-lag in Hungarian poetry began to appear. We needed to revolutionize and renew our poetry, and we turned to the West and Apollinaire. But our dissatisfaction had two aspects; we were dissatisfied with our own conservatism, but also with the early avant-garde movement in Hungary which failed, even surreptitiously, to draw any sustenance from either our own Hungarian poetic heritage or from the poetic traditions of Europe. That was when we discovered, behind the great innovator, the resourceful guardian of tradition, who reached back beyond Rimbaud and Baudelaire to the older traditions of early French poetry and gave a new validity to that in the troubadours and the Pléiade; free from the bonds of form and time is cousin—no surface relationship but in voice and substance—to Villon; and in whose poems the old French *chanson* and even the German *Lied* continue to breathe, and come again to life, with all the imagery and associations of the past history and religions and mythologies which formed part of his poetic store. Perhaps it was this which Duhamel called Apollinaire's junk shop...

This creative relationship with the past was omitted in the Apollinaire image of the Hungarian avant-garde including Kassák, they missed his rhymes, they stifled his

melody and made nothing of his allusions. So much so that when twenty years later Radnóti and I joined hands to present him in a voluminous translation, Kassák and other critics of the old guard protested at first asserting that our translations falsified and tamed Apollinaire into a conservative, though of course, some of our younger contemporaries found the old electrifying and stimulating sense of a new world opening in these same translations.

The product of our joint efforts, the first Hungarian volume of Apollinaire, came out the very day when the Germans—in the next war—marched into Paris. It contained Picasso's drawing of Apollinaire in his army uniform with his head bandaged, and his poem on that wound, which ends: "Comme au cœur du soldat il palpite la France— Et comme au cœur du lys le pollen parfumé." In our simplicity we looked on the book as some kind of retaliation and atonement, an *act*, the best we could do. It appeared in a small edition of five hundred copies, but its effect was disproportionate to its size, especially ten years later, when the rare volumes could only be obtained with great difficulty in a hole-and-corner fashion, for an obsession officially institutionalized for several years considered much that was already classic in modern art as a harmful influence from which the Hungarian people had to be protected. But it was impossible to protect Hungary completely from Apollinaire; the best poets of the new generation drew courage from his words and found in him a secret ally in their struggle for the liberation of Hungarian poetry.

Then the tutelary walls which had fenced Hungarian literature from the world suddenly fell. Since those days three editions of the works of Apollinaire have been published in Hungarian, each fuller than the last, the latest, Pál Réz's admirable piece of work, almost as complete as the Pléiade edition. The somewhat unprepared young Hungarian public was, moreover, also confronted with a whole influx of post-Apollinaire modern literature in all its most advanced trends including the later avant-garde writers, who turned their back on the original social implications of the group and turned Apollinaire's brilliant eye on the world into introverted visions of the mind.

But by this time we had become conscious of yet another image of Apollinaire emerging, a gayer, more ribald image, between "le flâneur des deux rives" as he called himself, the omnivorous, the avid, the man of intemperate curiosities and appetites. Even his modernism was avid; he was greedy for everything, and whatever he saw and heard, the teeming life and the whole décor of the big cities, and down below the workers who "manufacture reality at so much an hour" (fabriquent du réel à tant per heure), hymns to peace, and "the marvels of war" went into his poetry: "Nothing is beautiful unless it is true," he protested, when he was classified among the poets "fantastiques." In his case audacity of form went hand in hand with audacity of content: "Quand l'homme a voulu imiter la marche, il a crée la roue qui ne ressemble pas à une jambe. Il a fait ainsi de surréalisme sans le savoir." In other words, after the Apollinaire who followed in the footsteps of Nerval and Rimbaud, we discovered Apollinaire the grandson of Walt Whitman on the Latin side of the family—the family-tree, we later found, also included Mayakovsky. The man who in his preface to *Les fleurs du mal*, after he had paid due homage to the author, so brusquely rejected "le dolorisme" of Baudelaire. This is not of course, to admit that he was necessarily right in his objections to Baudelaire, but that he was right in his objections to "dolorisme"—which Baudelaire himself defined when he said that "une beauté où il n'y ait du malheur" is suspect, something still often accepted as a valid aesthetic principle, in the practice, of course, of artists more decadent than Baudelaire. Apollinaire, on the other hand, stressed that the

Esprit Nouveau—the new movement in literature and art—expressed above all love of life and faith in man. "I am a Goethian spirit," he said and indeed, his singularly sound poetic constitution does almost recall something of Goethe, in its stability, and even something of our own Petőfi—without German pedantry and Hungarian torment.

This image of a robustly modern Apollinaire, and the abundance of good translations now available in Hungarian, have greatly contributed in Hungary to the stability and good standing of the twentieth century revolution in the arts, in a period when the inflated and debased currency of so much of modern writing—worn and discoloured in its passage from hand to hand—has discredited the gold standard of poetry.

Yes, the greatest paradox in the fifty years of Apollinaire's after-life may be that he, who once appeared to be—and indeed was—in life and poetry the great master of jesting and high spirits, and on more than one occasion of tomfoolery and carefree mystification, is today a powerful witness and surety of the enduring, consistent "gold standard" by which all poetry, and especially modern poetry, is measured, and at the same time a guarantee that the revolution of art which began with the meeting between Apollinaire and Picasso at the bar of the Gare Saint-Lazare is still not finally doomed to a final academic sclerosis, but is still capable of regeneration.

By the same token it seems that in France, for instance, the direction of Apollinaire's influence is changing once again. Some of the young poets there no longer admire complex "simultanisme" and the strange and new obscurities of his verse, as we did in our youth, but—however extraordinary this sounds in Hungary today—are discovering in it a way out—in fact, a way back—from pretentious poses to the *chanson*, to innocence, to simplicity. They regard him in fact, as a shining example of the poet drinking new life and inspiration from the primary spring. Does this have a bearing for us, is this new way back feasible? It is hard to say. It is easier to predict that this is not likely to be Apollinaire's last word or last lesson. On every path which opened between 1905 and 1920 in French art, one could see his shadow, wrote Maurice Raynol. We might add: elsewhere, too, and after that time. Practically everything that has occurred in modern art since his death continues a project, a quest of Apollinaire's, sometimes *ad absurdum*. But Apollinaire was not a set of qualities, he was an integrated and indivisible whole inseparably unifying radical extremes. For this very reason the greatest and most seminal characteristic of his poetry is the overwhelming personal quality that shines through it—and in these days, in this period when the impersonality of lyric poetry is so widespread, it is the hardest quality to acquire.

PÉTER NAGY

INDIAN PALETTE

A World in Itself

My first impression came from New Delhi, which is at once typical and atypical in its city districts scattered through uninhabited large spaces, with that colonial architecture which expresses itself in the overcrowded blocks of tenement houses as well as in the bungalows hidden in gardens vast as parks, in the confusion of house numbers, which developed independently of the street names, and are

incomprehensible by any rules of common logic, in the pullulating animation of the streets—particularly in Old Delhi—or in the rigid divisions and hierarchy of labour and trades, dominated by religious precept.

To me the most typical and memorable cities of India, however, were the two big Asian ports of Calcutta and Bombay. Calcutta was one of the keys to the Bay of Bengal and to British power in Asia. It is in fact a lively metropolis which the English built in the ugly image of their own industrial cities in order to house some one and a half million people. Today the number of its inhabitants is between six and eight millions, the British port and industrial town is surrounded, by a wide belt of crumbling tenement blocks and makeshift huts of matting. As a matter of fact a significant part of the population can hardly be called *inhabitants*, for there is nothing they inhabit; they live in the streets, they sleep, eat, work, do business, wait for work in the streets, they play cards, chat and chew betel in the streets, squatting on their heels, and there they procreate and there they die.

Overcrowding and mass poverty are more obvious and more repugnant in Calcutta—not only because that was the city I saw first and its sight burnt a raw wound into my social sensitivity and emphasized my impotence, but also because it is the consequence of a sudden irruption into the town, an increase in the population against which all administrative action is helpless. The masses who live in the streets are part of the hundreds of thousands of Hindus who swarmed here from East Bengal, when India and Pakistan were partitioned, and here they have remained ever since, reducing any efforts to improve sanitation or even establish a few public utilities to impotence.

But over on the other side of the continent, on the coast of the Indian Ocean, the picture of another metropolis of many millions—Bombay—differs only quantitatively but not qualitatively from Calcutta, where the streets function as a permanent refugee camp. The bird's-eye view of Bombay is perhaps more beautiful than that of Calcutta, seen in the bright sunshine with the vast bay surrounded by hills, above which hover and swoop the clouds of vultures which provide the sanitation service, and the off-shore islands with the far-off dots and dashes of hills. One of them, Elephant Island, has preserved the finest masterpieces of Hindu cave sculpture, although badly damaged by drunken Portuguese soldiers in the sixteenth century. Nevertheless the streets of the two cities, with their milling crowds, the agglomeration of ragged beggars living in the streets, the stench of filth and decay over everything, the hundreds of holy cows which freely roam the streets and, near starvation, often chew scraps of paper, the frightening hordes of stray dogs and insolent rats, the crowded, horn-sounding congestion of cars, rickshaws, cycles, ox-carts, and tumbledown hansom cabs jamming the way, are essentially the same. This essential similarity seemed to provoke some deeper reaction in me on which it was not easy to lay my finger; wandering around this Asian city I could not overcome my haunting sense of *déjà-vu* until I realized that I was in a great city of present-day India, and at the same time I was revisiting the yesterdays of the great capitals of Europe, the Paris of Cardinal de Retz and Diderot, the London of Pepys, Fielding and Hogarth—the feeling that in the Indian present monstrously magnified to inhuman proportions we can gaze on our own European past, which does not necessarily mean that their tomorrow will correspond to our today.

Despite the differences and contrasts to be found in this vast country, its congestion and its desolation, the wide countryside and the big cities, its splendid luxury and miserable destitution all speak of the same thing—the different events and occurrences repeated themselves to me in different words and different keys, to the same single tune, that Asia is a world in itself from

which Europe and America are equally distant and appear equally small, for it is their own hopes and difficulties which are real to them and not the things we tell them; and that all the chaotic economic, political and social features of their life, their wants, their poverty, their splendours, their wisdom and knowledge and their appalling mass ignorance, all the things we can only recognize as "negative," that this real negation—this "nothing," is pregnant with the anticipation and possibility of "everything." This dialectic antinomy of "nothing and everything" surprises one at every turn—flicking us on the cheek, hitting us over the head: the ultra-modern atomic pile, attractively designed, and the women collecting cow-dung for fuel along the road, to slap in flat cakes for drying on the walls of their huts, or the middle-aged Hindu on whose forehead vertical lines of white and red paint testify that he has said his daily prayers and offered his sacrifice to Shiva's "lingam," boarding the smartly appointed and lightning-swift Boeing of Air India.

Men and Faiths

This badge of religion worn on the forehead is, as a matter of fact, a most peculiar and striking thing. There are hundreds of religions in India—and often a number of sects within each religion—but none of them are content with the merely spiritual process of salvation or redemption, but require some kind of physical badge of faith from their adherents. Buddhist monks in saffron coloured robes, followers of Shiva with vertical lines and followers of Vishnu with horizontal lines on their brows, beturbaned Sikhs whose hair has never come in contact with scissors—Moslems with varied types of turbans, naked Sadhus with their hair matted and twisted like a shaggy sheepdog—not to speak of those with wild bushy hair and those with heads completely shaven, men in a wide variety of dress and in all degrees of hairiness parade like a fashion show before the astonished spectator. But this "fashion parade" is only inexhaustible and somewhat incomprehensible in its variety, seen in the simultaneous space of today; seen through the centuries, in the historic progression of time, a certain consistency of dress and appearance is observed; an almost identical reproduction of some combination of headdress and garment may suddenly appear on a thousand-year-old frieze in some museum or temple.

What is strange to us is that almost without exception this wear is a declaration of faith, an indication of adherence to some religious sect. (And once again the Hungarian traveller pauses to meditate: was not this the role of dress in his country too, a few centuries ago? Could not Catholics and Calvinists unmistakably recognize one another by their badges and attire, and indeed by their style of hair-cut and their moustaches, an aid to mutual help and a considerable assistance in killing each other with greater certitude?) And all this is worth a thought or two, not only because it indicates that faith requires such external signs—this can be taken for granted, the same thing exists in a somewhat modified form everywhere; what is really interesting is that it is so alive and evident in practically every section of Indian society.

For although it is true that I have met quite a number of Hindu intellectuals who could be distinguished from English or other European intellectuals only by the colour of their skin and the slightly sing-song intonation of their English, but not by their problems or their approach to them, or their habits and customs. But there were quite as many who had retained their dhotis and their sandals, and all the traditional affirmations of their traditional faith.

And if the traveller is astonished at the great variety of religions, even though he had read or heard of them before—or at least of the more significant ones—how could he help his surprise at the great variety of

languages and literatures there, which immediately raises doubts on the whole question of national unity, and of whose existence he had probably never had any inkling before he set foot in India?

On this part of the earth, almost a continent, the nearly six hundred million people speak fifteen main languages—and according to my informants within these at least three hundred different dialects. True, these languages divide into two principal groups, the Aryan and the Dravidian, but they are only a matter of linguistic definition, without in any way assisting in mutual comprehension between any one and the other; not to mention the fact that the Aryan and Dravidian languages are no closer than, say, Hungarian and German: there may be loan-words in each of them, but the structure, vocabulary and spirit of each are entirely different, and the only links are their regional proximity and certain cultural relationships through shared religions.

These fifteen different languages mean fifteen distinct literatures—each with different traditions, at a different stage of development and with a different social status. Since I am no expert on India and have no knowledge of even one of the fifteen Indian languages, it would be presumption on my part to pronounce any kind of judgement on them or to make any attempt to describe their relative positions. But one thing is certain; whenever I met the men who spoke any of these languages, whether Hindi or Marathi, Panjabi or Bengali, Urdu or Oriya, Telugu or Kanarese, Tamil or Malayalam, whether it had an uninterruptedly living history, or whether it was declining after a great past, it was always immediately clear that practically each of these literatures has taken on a new life and a new consciousness since Indian independence; that even though the problem of a common secondary language provokes passionate disputes and political mass demonstrations, though the most passionate adherents of regional languages in their own homelands still insist, for both linguistic and political reasons, on the maintenance of English as the common secondary tongue, yet practically all of them will agree that Indian literature written in the English language is doomed to extinction, and will disparage or condemn those who continue the practice.

This belittlement or contempt for "English Indians"—for they were the elements which had championed assimilation to the ruling colonial power—is natural and inevitable among nationally-conscious Indians. But the relation to the English language is far more complex. It is true it is the language of what was for many years the occupying power; but it is equally true that English is an international language which facilitates contact with the world for the peoples of India, and is in fact the only means of such contact. It is also true that the fact that higher education is almost entirely conducted in English does slow up, even impede the development of the separate languages of India, but then, on the other hand, its use makes the distribution and exchange of teachers and students among the various language areas of the country possible. The English were the colonizing power for over two hundred years; the visible evidence of this former power has disappeared from the land of India; it is the English language they left behind which exerts a unifying influence in the spread of culture and knowledge. The substance of the language dispute therefore, which can be expected to remain a source of argument and tension in India for several years more, accompanied by considerable violence and with unexpected developments—is primarily a political and not a linguistic or cultural issue.

But this very fact only emphasizes to the foreigner the special situation in India. And here I am thinking not so much of party and power struggles in current politics—although these are often interesting, typical and even picturesque, and even enlighten-

ing in terms of social history—but rather that this linguistic consciousness accompanies or is accompanied by contests for power among the different language groups, and even by a struggle for linguistic supremacy. Linguistically, culturally—and consequently politically—the states of India live and contend against the strange, often incomprehensible and rarely explicit dialectics of divergence and consolidation.

Under British rule the political organization of India solidified within the traditional feudal framework, which as a rule disregarded religious and linguistic boundaries. The division of the country on religious lines, which involved an enormous amount of suffering and bloodshed when the subcontinent was partitioned into India and Pakistan, did not even provide an adequate solution to the religious problem, and was certainly not concerned with questions of language; at the time when religious issues were predominant, linguistic differences were not a political problem. This occurred later, in the early 1950s, when, under Nehru's leadership, the new structure of states was set up, largely following linguistic boundaries, within the Republic of India.

This development of course inevitably increased linguistic consciousness, and the demand for linguistic separation; the same process—this growth of a national consciousness—took place in Europe, under different forms and conditions, between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. An erstwhile colonial empire, first cemented into political unity by the fact first of colonialization, then of independence, began to develop according to the intrinsic laws of its social organization and existence. The forces of consolidation and cohesion are very strong; not only are the public utilities and services, such as the post, the railways or the army run in common, but also traditional features like the hostile but still coexisting religions, the memory of a great common history and culture, and the sometimes conscious, sometimes instinctive admission that India can make itself felt in world politics only if it is united—are to be found in every region.

At the same time the forces making for separation are realistic and not necessarily regressive. Along with the ambition of the different languages to fulfil their "national" vocation and role, almost everywhere one encounters the determination of individual states to develop their own economic and political self-government, relying on their own resources to achieve an autonomy unrestricted and uncurbed by the intervention of the federal power. The interplay of personal and social factors is highly complex, and the tourist travelling over large sections of India will inevitably notice that certain areas get a greater share of federal funds than others. A partial and by no means insignificant consequence of this fact is that there are wide and ever-increasing differences between the economic, and therefore political, development of the different states of the Republic; that in the West Bengal, for instance, where heavy industry has made considerable progress during the last twenty years, political activities are more and more clearly assuming the shape of a class struggle, whereas in the states of, let us say, Madras or Mysore, one is chiefly aware of a growth of linguistic and national consciousness, and the struggles aroused by these problems.

The great and disordered variety and disparities in the picture of national development as a whole, when viewed at close range, is probably one of the main reasons why one finds a disorientated attitude, a lack of purpose and ambition among the intellectuals—as I found among the writers, students of literature, and university teachers, with whom, by fate, practically all my contacts and conversations took place. The enthusiasm which impelled Indian society forward in the forties and the early fifties, both on the all-Indian nationalist side of the Congress Party and on the Communist class-conscious side, had, it seemed, spent itself by the mid-fifties or even a little earlier.

The aims and policy of the Congress Party in fact spurred them on only as long as that party was the spearhead of the struggle for independence; once independence was achieved the original momentum, the gravity of the immediate tasks ahead and the immense personal magic and authority of Jawaharlal Nehru continued to carry it forward, but even under his leadership the initial zeal had begun to slacken and antagonisms and conflicts had sharpened.

The decrease in public prestige, though not necessarily in impact, of the Communist Party is due in part to disputes and conflicts within the working-class movement, but above all to the disruptive activities of the Chinese Communists and their adherents. These difficulties within the Indian working-class movement are an essential reason why, for instance, the Progressive Writers' Union and the Indian Peoples' Theatre Association, which in the forties contributed a great deal to the intellectual climate of India and provided a school for artists that fostered their growth and consciousness, have by now lost a great deal of their authority and influence, or even, like the Theatre Association, have disappeared.

This situation has led to a number of further consequences, from the lesser parties proliferating like clouds of midges to the lack of any sense of direction among the intelligentsia. Of course, it was this latter with which I most frequently came into contact. I noted two particular forms which this lack of direction and purpose took; a fashionable artistic snobbery, and disillusionment. The first of these hardly needs any explanation; I will only mention two episodes.

In the course of my visit to the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi the thing that most astonished me was that whereas in the nineteenth century Indian painters had painted Indian themes—though largely in the European manner fashionable at the time—this was no longer the case by the turn of the century. In the Impressionist and Expressionist-inspired drawings and paintings of Rabindranath Tagore at the beginning of the twentieth century, and later in the intimate and colour-sensitive post-Impressionist art of Amrita Sher-Gil, a trend appeared which was Indian in inspiration but did not lose touch with contemporary painting in the West, which was modern in European terms; without breaking with the realities of the Indian world, either in theme or tone, and which made no concessions to academic conformity in its manner of presentation. A sound attitude, an independent initiative was very evident in his work; but today this current has ebbed again, if not completely disappeared. I saw hardly any contemporary paintings or sculptures whose creators had succeeded in producing really modern work which was rooted in their own world—the most remarkable of these was Hosein. The work of most of these artists, even those which gave indisputable signs of talent, could have been done anywhere in the world—Paris, Budapest, New York or Tokyo.

I went to a party, a gathering of poets. The Sahitya Academy is the All-Indian Academy of Writers, and in addition to the award of prizes does some really efficient work in spreading knowledge of the literatures of India among each other and in the wider world. One of the governing body invited me to his house, where young poets meet. While we ate richly spiced cakes and drank strong and fragrant tea, six young poets, writing in the Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi tongues, read their poems, and my host translated them into extempore English for my benefit, with a great command of the language. They were certainly gifted and interesting poems, but apart from their slightly oriental imagery, the ears of a foreigner could not discern in them any sign of Indian origin: these young poets, coming from the crowded homes of the extended family system of India, sang of solitude, as if they were lodged in isolation in Greenwich Village, and lamented their alienation,

although living in the heart of a seething society in permanent movement.

The second, and complementary, sign of their general disorientation is their disillusion, lack of purpose, and downright despair, a hopelessness and sense of impotence which would in fact cripple anyone who experienced it. A young writer and critic in Delhi—as a matter of fact one of the few who has absorbed not only the best of English but also a great deal of French culture—explained it most articulately to me, in its most extreme version. The literary intelligentsia in the India of today is, he believes, an ornamental plant which Indian society does not need and cannot endure; it is not only superfluous, but downright harmful, since in conjuring up beautiful visions it actually diverts the attention of the people from vital an essential problems. A tremendous explosion was imminent in Indian society, he said; and explosion which would occur very shortly and would blow to pieces everything we called art and intellect today.

As far as I could see, these two extreme but in fact complementary views are the most widely held. There are only a few artists or intellectuals who clearly see their own dilemma and in fact try to take effective action in the direction they think necessary and useful. Such small-scale but ambitious and promising undertakings include the National School of Drama in Delhi, directed by E. Alkazi, which is making an effort to create a theatrical culture and tradition in a conglomeration of states which do not possess a single permanent theatrical company. Alkazi did not grow up in the working-class movement. He was educated at Cambridge and later went to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London; he began his career by acting in and directing the most modern American and French plays. In his opinion, however, the purpose of his school is to train students, with the help of the Greek and Sanskrit classics, Brecht and the modern Western dramatists, to understand their own position and responsibilities. In his view the task of his school and students is to "hold the mirror up" to their own reality, and—practically—to give performances in factories and villages which would help ordinary people to recognize their own situation. I only saw one production: the dramatization of a short story by Premchand, one of their best-known writers, which fascinated me primarily by its candour and authenticity, by its unvarnished picture of village life. This is no small merit and achievement in a world where films and the theatre devote themselves to the search for sentimental effects or effects without sentiment.

Past and Future

As in every region that looks back on a culture going back several thousand years and attempts to break out of aeons of static existence, both the inhabitants and visitors experience the feeling that the puny present is being ground in impotent agony between the powerful millstones of past and future. And yet the immensity of the past is only an illusion of perspective, an illusion which reduces centuries into one single sweep of history. Only tiny fluctuations in this mighty sweep were experienced by individual lives, just as our present tentative gestures are only the first indications of the high deeds hidden in the future. And these smaller fluctuations and greater convulsions point toward the future, toward new progress in India as well.

Not only the gigantic projects, like the iron and steel works of Durgapur, to which I was able to pay a hurried visit, and the other dozen scattered throughout the subcontinent which I never saw, are signposts to the future. In point of fact there is a good deal of quiet or vehement argument going on over them. Was it right to spend all the available financial resources of the country on the development of heavy industry when,

for the time being, these works are not operating at full capacity? Would it not have been wiser to continue along the lines advocated by Gandhi and invest in agriculture, so that a few more mouths could be fed a little better? It must be a brilliant scholar indeed of the Indian past and the Indian present, and a skilled economist to boot, who can take part in this argument; Indians, despite all their kindness, are traditionally keen in debate, and will show scant mercy to any one who comes ill-equipped to the discussion.

These giant modern projects are like a chain development throughout the world, which seems to follow a more or less uniform pattern everywhere. The observer with no keen interest in technology will rather observe the change through the medium of small, sometimes slightly grotesque episodes.

How far away lies the period of the maharajahs can be gauged from the fact that during my stay in India they formed a "union" to protect their interests. The democratic press of India laughed, and yet at the same time considered it the beginning of a new offensive on their part. In my own untutored mind I thought it a hopeful sign; they cannot feel very secure if they feel compelled to enter into this kind of association. And my informants—official and otherwise, whether deliberately or in passing—equally convinced me that the position of the former landowners is now very shaky and that they have lost most of their power. It is true that the land reform was rather half-hearted and the land itself was not expropriated—with the exception of the estates of the biggest landowners—and only gave permanent protection to the tenancies of the peasants without abolishing rent. The peasant, however, who is actually cultivating the land, is now safe on his strip. But the power of the landlord who collects a nominal rent has been replaced by the small village capitalists who lend money at usurious rates and collect capital and interest by tough-man tactics with the help of gangs. Their position is strengthened by the fact that the peasant believes that this loan "assists" him in his need, and his hatred is still directed against the landlord who draws land-rent without doing a hand's turn for it.

Although the traditional pageants and festivals are still held—I myself saw a dazzling celebration at Benares in honour of the birthday of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion—the maharajah, as the earthly deputy of the gods, takes his seat on the back of the elephant less and less frequently. "Gods die, man lives on," wrote Babits as his old beliefs faded and new aspirations began to arise. And time and again India proves a living witness to his words. Though indeed the gods of India are very tenacious of life. There is no need to produce further examples... and there are plenty.

Religious faith and self-sacrifice in the hope of salvation in the next world have produced astounding works of art. The cave temples and monasteries of Ajanta, Ellora and Elephanta, their sculptures and paintings and the monolith-temples and statues carved out of the rocks are evidence enough, as are the temple and gigantic rock-relief of Mahabalipuram standing out boldly on the seacoast, the "gopurams" of the temples of Kanchipuram, visible from far away, or—leaping across time and space—the minaret of Kutab Khan full of grace despite its impressive solidity, that wonder city of stone lace, Fatehpur Sikri, the slightly obvious and over-accented harmony of the Taj Mahal, or the never-conquered fort of Dauladabad which is a miracle of architecture—to mention only those I saw with my own eyes.

The Hindu, Buddhist and Jain religions, despite differences of doctrine, all teach self-redemption and indifference to the world and mankind. The traveller, looking at the unbelievable extent of poverty and misery around him, at the magnitude of the problems facing society, is tempted to give himself over to despair, and to believe that this

indifference is the only possible defence against the curse which seems to lie on this gentle people, contented with so little much more than nothing—until, in the next moment, the same poverty and misery, perhaps a group of begging lepers, or the sight of a child whose body has been suitably mutilated for begging purposes, shocks him to his senses and sets him searching for the springs and levers of change.

Obviously it is not the casual traveller who will discover these springs and levers, and it is equally evident that there is a growing determination in Indian society, accompanied by practical experiment, to discover and make use of them. I think that in the specific social and intellectual climate of India we should regard the great vogue for French existentialism which recently sprang up and has been spreading like prairie fire among Indian intellectuals, as clear evidence of this. If I am not mistaken, no one up till now has made any serious sociological investigation as to when and why existentialism took hold in different societies at such different times. My own modest observations in this field, which have however been pursued for about a quarter of a century, lead me to conclusion that existentialism—in the first place—comes into fashion when the intelligentsia of a nation consciously or unconsciously finds itself confronted with a crisis; at a time when existentialism has to a large extent declined in Europe, becoming one more of a number of philosophical trends, it has flared up like an epidemic among the intellectuals of former colonial territories. Last year I met it in Egypt, this year in India.

Is perhaps the atheism of existentialism the new god of modern Hindu intellectuals? To some extent it may be so; but the philosophy of the "empty sky" has not emptied the blue skies above India. Let me relate an experience I had, which perhaps illuminated the state of mind of the Indian intellectual most strongly for me.

By chance I arrived at Benares on one of the most important Hindu religious holidays of the year, the Feast of Winter. This is the day when the gods wake from their sleep during the monsoon and resume their functions. To bathe in the Ganges on this day is considered an especially meritorious act. The crowds swarmed in their thousands to the ghats, to the flights of steps leading down to the Ganges, to bathe ceremonially in the sacred river. There were thousands there bathing, young and old, healthy and sick, and side by side with them were the dead bodies brought from distant parts of India being immersed in the water before being laid on the funeral pyres along the shore, while dirty clothes and cooking utensils were being washed, at the same time, in the same water. Three lecturers from the Hindu University of Benares (the city has a Sanskrit University as well) had come to fetch me, two of them being lecturers in literature and one in philosophy. We took a boat and as we passed along the river in the hot late November sun, staring at the crowds busy praying, singing, bathing or plunged in the mysteries of yoga, they asked me questions about existentialism. While I was preaching in these unreal surroundings on the differences between German and French existentialism they turned to address one another in Hindi, and suddenly, dipping their hands into the waves, all three of them sprinkled the water of the Ganges on their heads, and let the drops trickle into their mouths. They tried to persuade me to do the same because the joint effect of the day, the time and the holy water, they said, would be most beneficial to my salvation too.

The Earth Is Quaking

Shortly after my arrival in Bombay strong tremors repeatedly shook the city and its surroundings, causing considerable damage and alarm. This earthquake came as a complete surprise to geologists, for tremors had never been registered in this region, and

there had been theories based on the assumption that the unique rock formations in the area made earthquakes impossible. This earthquake not only brought down a few rickety houses but the theory as well.

But even to my less geologically-oriented mind these sudden and unexpected tremors assumed a certain symbolic value. The special stratification and rigid traditions of Hindu society and the Hindu spirit would seem to rule out the possibility of great convulsions. Yet is this only a theory which the great shocks of the near future will bring down as well?

Religious conflict, not so long ago, convulsed India to its roots. Although today Hindus and Moslems certainly have no love for one another and live in somewhat segregated communities, it is unlikely that their differences will again erupt in the mass hysteria of civil war. The real antagonisms now emerging—national and class conflicts—are social factors which may lead to very different results, in very different forms, at very different times, and with very different aims in each of the different states. The forces of the national-bourgeois and proletarian revolutions are slowly maturing, even as the forces of bourgeois and feudal counterrevolution are gathering, and in each individual state a large variety of solutions, some of them probably eccentric and peculiar, can be expected to succeed, either temporarily or more permanently.

The human and social position of women is changing decisively in India today. Their position has been determined not so much by Hindu tradition as by the harem attitude of the Moslems and the puritanism of former English domination, at least in the "middle class" which ranges from the minor officials and small merchants living on a semi-proletarian level to the university professor and the capitalist. Above that level, and below, things may be different; I could get very little information about it, though the influence of this important "middle class" is probably very strong on the other classes. In this middle class women are now beginning to break away from their subordinate position: the older women are still only active within the house and family, but there are a good many women about forty years of age or so who hold important places in public life, and those under thirty already take university study, university degrees and the social role and status that go with them for granted. There are of course many obstacles still frustrating these developments on a mass scale; high university fees stand in the way, and still more the institution of arranged marriages, which is still practically universal over the whole of India, a state from which the only escape is not a love-marriage, which is practically unknown, or divorce, which is just as unthinkable, but simply a refusal, a decision to opt out of the whole institution. Among those women of India who desire the kind of life in which they can enjoy all human rights and freedoms there is a latent social force which has not yet assumed definite form. Once it finds an outlet and is aware of its power it may have a decisive influence on the Indian world of women—and through it on the rest of the world.

A trip to India is a great piece of good fortune and broadens one's knowledge, information and experience. But the first lesson it teaches is humility; one is brought face to face with a great world following its own laws of development according to its own unique pattern, whose immense problems and possibilities reduce our own difficulties and prospects to comparative unimportance. Paul Valéry once said that Europe is an insignificant peninsula of the continent of Asia. A *bon mot*, may be, but behind it is a real, a fundamental truth: in the next fifty years the fate of Europe and the world will be decided in Asia, more than anywhere else; this is something left firmly impressed in the mind and memory of the traveller to India.

ZÁDOR TORDAI

SARTRE AND MARXISM

There is scarcely anybody among living philosophers whose name is as well known as that of Sartre. True, this is only partly the merit of the *philosopher* Sartre, to a higher degree it is due to the committed writer, and to the man whose stand in the socio-political struggle has always had an echo. However, we ought not to be surprised that the debates and storms provoked by his attitude have also affected the evaluation of the philosopher, since no rigid dividing wall exists between Sartre's social activity and his philosophic works. Nor can we be surprised that in regard to his works the most contradictory evaluations and opinions can be read and heard. But then these differences arise not merely from the varying points of view of the persons making these judgements, frequently they result from superficial knowledge and erroneously generalized opinions. It is a fact that Sartre's most recent philosophical writings are valued more highly by Marxist criticism whereas bourgeois ideology would like to bury them at any price using for this purpose the now fashionable structuralism. In our country those opinions are most widespread which are a false extension of an evaluation developed in the forties, and Sartre is simply considered an existentialist philosopher. At the same time more and more Marxist critics (both in France and in the people's democracies) look on Sartre's present philosophical writings as Marxist ones.

All this, though by itself it does not prove anything, justifies the need to evaluate Sartre's philosophy in a more differentiated way. And this differentiated evaluation has to consider both those changes which took place in his philosophic views, and that continuity which holds together the various stages. Thus if we see the oneness in the very shaping of an inner contradiction, the changes within that continuity can best be illuminated by unearthing the stages of development.

In my opinion three developmental stages can be discerned. Stage One included the works which may be grouped around the book *L'être et le néant*. The end of this era is marked approximately by the play *Les mouches*. Stage Two lasted from 1943 till the beginning of the fifties, and this I would call the avant-garde era. The development ensuing in Stage Three (whose significant product was the work *Critique de la raison dialectique*) lasts in essence till the middle of the sixties. This could be called, most justly, the "Marxisizing" era.

From the subdivision outlined above it appears that only the Sartre of Stage One might be called an existentialist. But even then existentialism was not a feature within Sartre's philosophy which explained everything. Since however, within the bounds of the fundamental duality determining his role and his place, it had a dominating character in shaping his entire conception it seems justified to call the Sartre of that time an existentialist. His philosophy expounded in that era may be judged the most negatively. It is well known (and this is the truth) that that existentialism was a bourgeois philosophy in opposition to Marxism, i.e. fighting against it. For its characterization let us take those central problems that interested Sartre most at that time. In my opinion here we have three interweaving ranges of problems: idealism and materialism, the dilemmas of determinism and indeterminism, and the question of the relation between the individual and society.

Sartre's characteristically existentialist attitude is formed first in the dilemma between idealism and materialism. It is significant that just this becomes a dilemma. One should know that those concrete forms in which the alternative mentioned arises for him are

basically *passé*. He sees idealism in its abstract, more or less Platonizing form, and materialism in the evolutionistic (but simultaneously with that in an essentially mechanistic) form of the nineteenth century. Unable to accept either of them, when trying to break with this form of idealism in the belief that he was abandoning idealism he cannot side with materialism but, arriving at an idealism of a more hidden nature, he continues to remain within its bounds. This peculiar duality is expressed in denying the existence of the spirit as an independent substance, but at the same time, since he is unable to link it to the kinetic forms of matter, considering consciousness to be the Nothing. The essence of consciousness, according to Sartre's view at that time, is the negation of material and real things, a delimitation from them. Accordingly he holds that the ego is merely the awareness of the connective character of continuous and consecutive states of consciousness (which thus is not identical with either a state of consciousness nor does it represent a separate such state). According to Sartre the essential form of the activity of consciousness is the negation and "break" which appears in the choice. He expounds that choice as breaking (more precisely, as abandoning) means such a self-determination which decides not between alternatives contained in the possibilities offered by reality but breaks with this very reality becoming a self-determination (actually moving on the level of ideas), a "plan" which interprets reality at the same time. "Choice" according to Sartre is the break with the circumstances and the individual past of the chooser. Consequently, Sartre's choice theory is the expression of an openly formulated indeterminist attitude. Thus at this point the dilemma mentioned to be the first turns into the second one.

One of the horns of the latter is represented by determinism as common in the bourgeois way of thinking of the nineteenth century. According to this conception the sum total of present conditions determines, completely and in advance, the full series of conditions to come, and thus a strict determination chain (linear determination) is asserted. This is the strictest conception of determinism possible: it wants to explain the world of man on the basis of a model of mechanistic interrelation chains imagined as unidirectional. In our century, however, it has become more and more obvious that it is impossible to describe the human situation, nay even the world of nature on the basis of an eighteenth-century type mechanistic theory. This inadequacy (which at the same time is also the inadequacy of mechanistic materialism) has given rise to numerous endeavours to break out of it and solve the connected problems. Sartre adopted an opposite theory: indeterminism. But this is just as one-sided and rigid, essentially mechanistic, as the (linear) determinism mentioned above. The foundations of the position taken by Sartre were thus in essence identical with the mechanistic determinism negated by him. This means that in this case Sartre escaped from the horns of the dilemma not even to the same degree as from that of idealism and materialism, he did not even succeed in giving the appearance of escape.

As to the essence, in both cases this concerned the fact that Sartre wanted to break out of the bourgeois world of thinking of the nineteenth century. There where he seemingly succeeded in transcending the dilemma he actually did nothing else than to adopt or to shape a more recent form of bourgeois thinking. But on the ground of the appearance resulting from the new forms (and his own intentions) Sartre thought he had succeeded in turning against bourgeois ideology, and breaking with it. This essentially dualist standpoint and conception is due to Sartre's social attitude which points toward a deeper hidden dualism. For Sartre would have liked to negate the bourgeois world; he criticized it, turned sharply against it, yet despite this he still remained within the world of the bourgeois point of view

and way of thinking. In the conflict between the negation of the bourgeois world and the asserting of the bourgeois view at that time the latter played the dominant role: this was expressed in Sartre's existentialism.

This appeared particularly sharply in his position in connection with the relation between the individual and society. When Sartre wanted to turn against bourgeois society he did so not only in the name of bourgeois ideals (this still would not have mattered) but also in such a way as to identify bourgeois society with society in general. By this he gave the bourgeois world a myth-like character, thus his own criticism became foggy and myth-ridden, too. For Sartre absolutized the specific bourgeois form of the conflict between the individual and society and rooted it in alienation in such a way that at the same time he confronted the individual absolutely with society. This confrontation is expressed (though not directly) also in that he denied the unity and structural character of society. To him society was merely the standing side by side of individuals, their mechanic sum total. Accordingly, the confrontation of the individual and society "merely" meant that the individual is of necessity in conflict with all other individuals. By this he arrived at a conception which barred the road towards solving even those real problems (i.e. the perceiving of this road) which Sartre did recognize due to his anti-bourgeois attitude. It was inevitable that this existentialist theory of the individual would finally impede also the understanding of the individual. In the end Sartre's existentialism was an attitude opposing the bourgeois world, thus it was the inner counter-pole of his own attitude distoring even the radicalism present in his conception. Still, this radicalism did exist, and it even offered a possibility for Sartre, as a result of the experiences made during the war and the German occupation, not merely of joining the Resistance but of becoming aware of man's social responsibility. The social effects strengthened the very counter-pole concealed by existentialism and so they resulted at the same time in the beginning of the disintegration of existentialist philosophy. In this way it came about that Sartre's existentialism (from 1943 onward), through gradual transformation, started to decay. (This decay took place during the very period when Sartre's existentialism had become the fashion and one of the essential weapons of bourgeois ideology in the fight against Marxism.)

In the following period Sartre's humanism and his idea of commitment were the subject of many discussions. A whole number of critics doubted his humanism stating that his philosophy was a flight from commitment. On the question of humanism they referred, e.g., to certain parts of his novel *Nausée*. In this Sartre fiercely attacked abstract (and essentially bourgeois) humanism but rejected it in a form identified with humanism in general. Many of his critics, due to an ill-considered adoption of this attitude, did not perceive the elements of actual humanism hidden behind it. Thus when Sartre, after the liberation, professed himself already a humanist they did not perceive that he had not accepted bourgeois humanism but that his old criticism had appeared in a novel and positive form.

In regard to commitment other problems arose, too. For the way this concept appears in *L'être et le néant* means being embedded in the world. (The French word allows for both interpretations.) At that time Sartre, with the aid of this concept, formulated this attitude in such a way that it did not mean active social commitment. The world is merely the background and opportunity for choice, and man commits himself not to the world but only to a personal integrity, and in the interest of that. Still, with Sartre this embeddedness in the world is a new point: it takes the place of the essentially complete isolation before the war. Due to inner contradictions the concept finally proved to be merely a transitionary form. During the war and in the

period following it commitment meant for Sartre already the fact of on obligatory participation in the social struggle deriving the postulate of a conscious and responsible attitude from it. Thus in regard to the early period the critics were right but it is worthwhile mentioning that in his third developmental stage Sartre considers commitment and the participation in the social struggle no longer an unavoidable evil but sees in it the form of changing the world, or society, or rather, the means to do this. Accordingly, responsibility receives a new content, too: it becomes concrete and is interlinked with the postulate of effectiveness. It no longer concerns attitude and intention but action and its results. It can be seen that the third stage develops in a natural way from the first one, thus the second stage must be considered, to a certain degree, to be a transition.

For Sartre's second stage is characterized partly precisely by the ever stronger disintegration of his existentialist philosophy and also by a parallel searching for a way out. I have called this stage the avant-garde but the use of this term requires an explanation so as to avoid misunderstandings.

Avant-garde is the name usually given to certain trends in art, stretching from futurism to the socialist avant-garde (e.g. Mayakovski). These trends, or at least the majority of them, are characterized by a given social attitude hidden behind the artistic questions of art; this attitude reaches from protest to open rebellion appearing, in the case of some of them, in a hazy form while with others this is precisely formulated. Roughly speaking, this is an occasionally petit-bourgeois, mostly intellectual social attitude, appearing chiefly on the ideological level, which is in most cases interwoven with placing the individual, and personality to the fore. The attraction of socialism is undoubtedly not infrequently considerable. The rebellion of the intellectual type however, due to the qualities mentioned, mostly assumes the forms of an exaggerated radicalism which is of a contradictory nature. Only rarely are its representatives able to break out from the bourgeois world of ideas.

Sartre's social attitude may be compared to that concealed behind the artistic avant-garde, at least from that moment on when due to the experiences of the war he turned toward social action, when his earlier abstract anti-bourgeois attitude ripened into an attitude demanding a struggle, i.e. from that point onward when he practically abandoned the introversion characterizing his existentialism. Likewise based on his experiences in the Resistance movement and in continuation of his earlier (somewhat theoretical) leftism Sartre oriented himself toward socialism and the communist movement. But his endeavour is not to join but to look for an ally and for cooperation; here his individualism plays a decisive role. However, in the strained cold-war atmosphere of the forties, in the rigid hardness of an individualism tending toward the left became less and less tenable. In the given situation he who wants social action and demands effectiveness was forced to join either this or that side. Sartre was prevented by his sincere anti-bourgeois stand, and by his negation of the capitalist system, from siding with reaction. On the other hand, his individualism, his bourgeois reservations and his bourgeois way of looking at things prevented his joining the communist movement. His position was still more complicated by the fact that his justified criticism of the dogmatic, sectarian theory and practice then prevailing within the communist movement objectively also became a criticism of Marxism.

At that time Sartre tried to fight on two fronts: to criticize the communist movement, and simultaneously to attack the bourgeoisie, too. This in-between attitude (which would have liked to see itself as leftist) was shifted by the logic of the social struggle, the class struggle more and more toward the right, allotting him a negative, reactionary role. Sartre therefore drifted into

more and more debatable positions, his situation became more and more isolated, at the very time when bourgeois reaction used the bourgeois character of his existentialism to a greater extent and the dualism and dubiousness of his then attitude so as to form them into a means in the fight against socialism and progressivism. A deeper gap opened up between Sartre's intentions and the practical results of his socio-political attitude. The dubiousness of the leftist attitude of the avant-garde became more and more obvious. It is Sartre's merit to have perceived this, and to have drawn the proper conclusions: at the time when the cold war raged wildest he openly stood up for the cause of communism and the day to day struggle of the communist movement. Thus with him (as with many avant-garde artists of earlier times) a turn towards progressivism ensued. This was expressed by the play *Le Diable et le bon Dieu,* the series of articles "The Communists and Peace," and in a certain sense also by his adaptation of *Kean.*

Sartre's existentialist period was characterized by his isolated individualism, his egocentric attitude, and this also meant the absolute negation of the world, expressed by the notion of breaking away. In the avant-garde period the appearance of actual radicalism was produced by new and continual breaks. The "breaking force" appearing in the various absolutized and intensified negations, and in the disavowal of his own previous attitudes: i.e. the intention and the desire are more important to him than the actual withdrawal and negation. In *Les Mots* Sartre writes: "...at the age of ten I had the feeling of cutting through the present like a ships prow, and breaking out of it; since then I always raced along, and am still racing. In my eyes speed is best indicated not by the distance covered in a given unit of time but rather by the force of tearing away." However, it is understandable that just this concealed—principally from Sartre himself—the lack of a real break with his past.

In opposition to this the essence of the change taking place at the beginning of the fifties was that then Sartre really tried to break with his own bourgeois past. And this cannot be done without facing the issue: this was why he started to write his autobiography. From that same time onward he studied Marx and Marxist literature seriously and more and more profoundly. Thus the shifting to the left of his social attitude involves also his philosophical transformation. The result is twofold: he gets even further from idealism, and Marxism continues to break into the world of his thoughts. Sartre sees and announces clearly the truth of Marxism, above all the correctness of historical materialism. This development is realized not in the form of increasing positives and decreasing negatives but by way of contradictions, the contradictory opinion-complexes are transformed in their entirety. The forms of the interwoven and contradictory existence of Marxist and individualist avant-garde views have changed, and in this way also the inner contradiction was transformed. A good example of this is the *Critique de la raison dialectique* where, besides the individualocentric view, and interwoven with that, the relation between individual and society stands out as a problem. Within that the valuable analysis illuminating the structure of social movements is linked with speculative contemplations which attempt to span the unsolved inner conflict. In a similar way appear, for instance, the correct analyses regarding alienation together with the renewal of an alienation theory of a Hegelian type. But the main thing is that in this work Sartre has touched upon a subject which is one of the most topical questions of Marxism, and one more or less still unsolved: the problem of individual actions united into social action. Because of this the book is remarkable even where it does not succeed. (More than one Communist critic considers the *Critique de la raison dialectique* a Marxist work.)

This stage in Sartre's career is undoubt-

edly characterized by his approach to Marxism, its increasing effect, and due to that one may speak of a Marxisizing period. Its completion may be linked with the point where openly and unambiguously Sartre professed to be a Marxist. This came about at the beginning of the sixties.

The outlined periodization does not include the characterization of Sartre's present philosophical conception. In my opinion this is justified for several reasons. Sartre's development has been fundamentally contradictory throughout his entire career, and this always affected his activity on the public scene to a decisive degree, his social and, in the narrow sense of the word, political activity. Though just the inner contradictions lead Sartre, following the pressure of social struggles, toward Marxism, yet the fact of contradiction admonishes us to be cautious. And how could we form an opinion when in recent times no major philosophical work written by Sartre has been published? (Only parts of the vast essay on Flaubert are known. That much can be determined from these that in Sartre's analyses the Marxian method and concept of German ideology plays a decisive role.) And whether Sartre is a Marxist, and if so to what degree, that to my mind is not a subject worth arguing about.

We can however form a much better outlined picture of Sartre's present socio-political position. As a result of his clear anti-imperialism and his susceptibility to vital international problems the significance of his activity has undoubtedly become greater. And in this sphere the Marxist view gradually pushes the exaggerated radicalism characterizing his earlier avant-garde attitude into the background. From his stand provoking the greatest echo I would like to mention that even before the outbreak of the war he visited both Israel and Egypt so as to collect many-sided evidence for his periodical. His activity in organizing, following the initiative of Bertrand Russell, the Special Court dealing with American aggression in Vietnam where he presided as Executive Chairman, is also well known. On this occasion, stating the reasons for the activity of that Court, he referred to Marx on correct grounds of principle. When defining as his goal that the law as created by the Court of Nuremberg must be made effective in the present (this purpose was meant to be served partly by the Russell Court, too) his activity became interlinked with the fight of the most progressive forces of the world.

However, an estimation of Sartre's positive social and political struggle cannot replace the immediate evaluation of his philosophy. This is all the truer since there is always some distance between Sartre's socio-practical and his philosophico-theoretical activity. One form of this is that besides his concrete practical activity (and despite it) his theoretical works have always remained within the bounds of a philosophy of a descriptive and explanatory type. However interesting and useful certain philosophical writings of his may be, these, in their contents and in the way they are argued out are never linked to social action, to the immediate problems of practice. (Certain writings of the avant-garde period still showed such a connection, though of a negative kind.) Even the best among his philosophical works have remained on the level of abstract societal ontology, they do not lead to the theory of a changing society, still less do they represent a conscious part of that.

The road Sartre has gone is instructive and meaningful; it is the road toward Marxism of a philosopher who objectively opposed Marxism and temporarily openly criticized it. His career is that of the thinker struggling with the problems of our time, and with himself, that of the leftist intellectual, a life similar to which we may find in the case of avant-gardist writers but one which is unique among philosophers. It is valuable evidence of the strength of Marxism.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

ESSAYS IN AN EXPANDING WORLD

LÁSZLÓ KÉRY: *Shakespeare, Brecht és a többiek* (Shakespeare, Brecht and the Others).
Magvető, Budapest, 1968. 375 pp.

PÉTER NAGY: *Táguló világ* (An Expanding World).
Magvető, Budapest, 1968. 598 pp.

Both collections are the work of university lecturers which—in a fortunate case—means that the approach is thorough and properly based on the available evidence. It may also mean that the critic, rather than try to drape his own preconceptions over realities, will draw conclusions from the very matter at hand.

László Kéry, Professor of English at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, introduces his volume of theatre criticism with the following words: "Around the middle of the fifties it became an everyday occupation of mine to follow up the most diverse, at times uncertain and confused, directions of Shakespeare criticism... Very soon it became clear that I could considerably lessen the danger of getting lost if I did not lose sight of the living theatre... One of the ways to achieve this was writing reviews of plays... Another inspiration came from Brecht... With the modest means at my disposal I tried to hasten Brecht's Hungarian 'breakthrough'... As to the 'others'—they are mainly foreign playwrights, English and American in the first place... The reader may find a certain balance as against this emphasis in the last chapter of this collection which evolved from the regular reviews of one Budapest theatrical season..."

The volume, therefore, focuses on Shakespeare. Can one write anything new about Shakespeare at all? Kéry has no illusions regarding this. He says with some resignation that the limits of literary discoveries are finite both in time and space. The critic, however, can do one thing. He can do the specific "homework" alloted to each period: he can take a look at the relationship of that particular period to Shakespeare. There are quite a few "time-bombs" in Shakespeare's work—the critic can take a look at explosions retarded by history or the receiving medium. And this is exactly what Kéry is concerned about in writing about *King Lear*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* or the guest performances in Budapest by the Royal Shakespeare Company *(Lear* and *The Comedy of Errors).*

Kéry is essentially a pragmatic critic. He does not tolerate cloudiness, or witticisms unless they serve the illumination of the subject or its thorough discussion. (Kéry had started his career as a short-story writer, this is perhaps an overcompensation.) He rarely

pays a compliment and he never offends, he regards his own sentiments as a private matter and he does not burden the reader with personal preoccupations. His tastes are characteristic yet he never bores the reader with those that can be justified only personally. Indeed, when he seems to err—which can always happen to a practising drama-critic—he appears to be misled not by his passions but, rather, to have revealed only a part of some homogeneous logical concept. If read in one volume, these fragments come very nicely together as if complementing, explaining and motivating each other. They add up to make a whole. This is no "colourful" book of criticism, neither in the more artistic, nor in the more relaxed, journalistic sense of the word. It is no personal account either. It is a guide to a country which has been marked for exploration with great economy and caution—the country comprising many works both classic and modern, both foreign and Hungarian.

Kéry expounds his critical doctrine in a separate essay. His principles of criticism are extremely clever and plausible which does not mean of course that others are unacceptable. "The critic is in fact a form of the audience's participation in the creative process," he writes and goes on to say: "The theatrical critic is just one man in the audience differing form it only in his training, determination and the *idée fixe* of his vocation. He is obsessed with the idea that as well as having to speak out his likes and dislikes he must also declare the reasons why he likes or dislikes a particular production. He must raise his aesthetic experiences to the level of consciousness even if their good taste is obvious to him. To be able to do this he must resort to observations and analytical investigations which the average theatre-goer hardly ever thinks of." Kéry works according to these critical principles, though he does not stick to them rigidly. His approach to the theatre is reliable, if at times a little pedantic and drily academic —resulting in well-founded and thorough reviews which are well worth re-reading between hard covers.

Behind the bulky and complex volume of Péter Nagy, too, we find a literary authority, the professor of Hungarian literature at the same university. He has devoted most of his energies to the history of twentieth-century Hungarian literature as well as the novel, being the author of two important monographs on the latter subject. A writer is hidden behind the lines of this book. (I wonder how this sounds in the case of a scholar, anyway, I have meant it as a compliment.) He is akin to Kéry inasmuch as he faithfully does his duty to the subject at hand. He dips into it without any difficulty and he usually finds the thing for which he has descended with the first move of his hand. His only problem seems to be to get his truths across for in the last phase of the critical process, in the "finish" as it were, he often stiffens a little bit, his movements become jerky. He often seems content that his truths—whether real or presumed—*will* get across to all who have paid sufficient attention once he himself has grasped them.

The more "regular" part of the volume does not, however, detract from the creative passion of Péter Nagy—he sets out to paint a spiritual portrait of himself. Kéry remains objective through resolutely, if elegantly, holding back his own personality whereas Nagy remains so through making it seem objective, as if it were the model of a real world. The relationship between Kéry and his object is usually constant, it hardly ever takes us by surprise whereas Nagy changes his angles and distances frequently, his stress on this relationship is greater. Kéry maintains a fastidious distance between his readers and himself whereas Nagy approaches them with passion and abandons them with irritation; he never teaches his imaginary partners, he discusses with them. This, of course, is not a question of style, it is rather a matter of approach. Péter Nagy conveys no visions, he is far from being a writer

of belles-lettres. He is not even a flawless stylist. He is a writer in his sinews—right to the depths of his personal preoccupations and interesting, if sometimes cumbersome, conceits and passionate statements. His passion plays a major role in his choice of subjects. It is his passion to discover and share what he has discovered as well as to deal with controversial matter, to take a stand in polemics or start out on an as yet untrodden road. His vigorous essays on such truly divergent writers as e.g. T. S. Eliot and Paul Eluard, Richard Wright and Sartre, Nelson Algren and Roger Chateauneu give evidence not only of his own intellectual ability to be thrilled, the certainty of his judgement and the width of his range of interests but they also convey that eager interest with which the educated Hungarian public today follow up and consume contemporary foreign literature.

It seems that Nagy has made his selection more extravagant than would have been necessary, or, for that mater, fitting. He has made up one volume out of stuff sufficient for at least two. The multicoloured quality of the volume comes to mind as one reads the headings under which similar essays are printed: "Paths and Labyrinths," "On the Roads of Modern Drama," "The Landscapes of the Film," "To Strangers—About Us," "Leaves from a Notebook,""Perusals." The subject-matter of the volume spans from *Crime and Punishment* to Tati's *Mon Oncle*, from Maeterlinck to C. P. Snow, from the plays of Sean O'Casey to Ferenc Molnár's *The Boys of Pál Street*, from Simone de Beauvoir to Shaw, from William Faulkner to the Hungarian reception of Swiss literature—to bring all these things, distant in space as well as time or character, together is an ambitious venture. Thus ones reads the long essay investigating with much fervour and even more detail the problems of novels-into-films which gets down even to the more technical problems of production with some surprise—and yet one does not really mind: the points made by a historian of literature may be not only useful, but, in this case, entirely justified; his critical remarks are also relevant even if the whole business belongs to the *coterie* of film-people. At the side of László Kéry's *menu* which has been compiled with a relevancy both gastronomic and hygienic Péter Nagy's *à la carte* is equally rich. To eat through it is impossible. One just has not the capacity for it. But it leads the reader into a territory where plenty provides freedom.

BÉLA ABODY

A WHALE'S BACK IN A SEA OF PROSE

These days I read less and less for pleasure. The slow antiquated prose styles of this or that grand old writer bore me and the mannerism of the committed modern writers annoy me. I am afraid the desire to see sense in them has weakened and grown lazy, and is unable to overcome my deep-rooted reluctance. On the other hand there are writers of my own age, and younger, whose every word I read. Not because everything they write is good, but because I feel that they are trying to say something which is important and true and which no one else can say in their place. Naturally they seldom succeed in fully expressing this personal, and therefore total truth, but I expect every line they write to show at least a shadow of it. Is it chance that they are not excessively prolific, that though they are more or less well-known, they are not much talked of; that the unwritten official championship table often, mostly by chance,

forgets to list them; that on the other hand certain private tables, such as mine, put them very high on the list? They differ in the way they look at things, and in fact they do not resemble one another, except in their common search for the truth as each of them sees it. Three of the authors of the four volumes discussed below belong to this category, and perhaps the fourth, Péter Zimre—this is his first volume—will too. I don't think any of the books are really good, but all four confirm my conviction that they are written by good writers.

ERZSÉBET GALGÓCZI has been near the head of my list for many years. She was a peasant girl, she began as a writer on peasant subjects, and in my opinion her best short stories show her to be still a peasant girl today. She chose the most difficult way of all, or rather her restricted and harsh temperament as a writer forced her along it. Twenty years ago peasant writing so dominated the Hungarian literary scene that young budding writers from the city tried, at any price, to find themselves roots there. Today hardly anyone writes on peasant subjects, a number of elderly authors excluded. It is true that the peasants are in a slow process of transformation, but literature abandoned them before the transformation began. The classic age of the East European peasant as a subject of literature is over, and neither Giono's nor Ramuz's romanticism can take its place. The answer to the intellectual and emotional questions which most writers ask today, is difficult to find in the village.

But not impossible. Erzsébet Galgóczi is an intellectual peasant writer, and as such she is amongst the first in Hungarian prose. Especially in her short stories of childhood, inspired by her own life, and which are probably her finest work. The continuing subject of her obstinate and stubborn interest, however, is the village and the social order, the conflict between the village and the representatives of changing law; the village leaders which the state, wisely and unwisely, chose to head the village, the generally heavy-handed servants of a certain kind of law, whom the changes in political life destroy morally and socially. General questions of morality and power are discussed, orders and their implementation; these stories have a peasant background, but their degree of consciousness and dramatic power go beyond these limits. These short stories are also, to a certain extent, autobiographical. Their raw material can in part be discovered in the clever, highly controversial articles which Erzsébet Galgóczi has written about her village and its surrounding district.

In the introduction to her latest volume (*Fiú a kastélyból*, "The Boy from the Manor House," Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1968) Erzsébet Galgóczi writes that she is trying to break out of the cage of autobiographical writing, and that she knows that very much depends on it. I think that every autobiographical writer now and then makes a determined attempt to move beyond himself; it may be he feels freer so, it may be the world assumes wider dimensions. But at this moment I cannot think of a writer of this kind who was successful in such an attempt.

Erzsébet Galgóczi has not succeeded either. There is, for instance, a short love story in this volume. A mother writes letters to the soldier sweetheart on behalf of her flighty daughter. The boy falls in love with the writer of the letters. This Cyrano romance does not end well, although, fortunately, neither does it end in tragedy. Another longish story seems to have been written with an eye on the cinema. It deals with a young public prosecutor, devoted to the idea of justice, and who is driven to suicide by his beautiful, ambitious wife with a not entirely irreproachable past. The subject might have been a new one when Maupassant wrote. It is not new now because Erzsébet Galgóczi has chosen it,

not even though she has set it in modern Hungary, not even though it exploits so many fascinating angles of contemporary life.

Again, there are two tales of peasant life written in traditional style. An exquisitely told story of a mother who persuades her lover to kill her husband. Imprisoned for many years, one day she returns unrecognized to her daughter and grandchildren. The other is a dramatic television drama of a bitter woman still defiantly waiting for her husband, reported missing, fifteen years after the end of the war, jealously guarding and protecting his small property, who turns on her only son, and almost kills him when he wants to join the collective farm, and take the land in with him. Both are worth reading, they are excellent pieces of work, but a good writer, changing the circumstances here and there, could have written them thirty or forty years ago.

There are, however, two short stories in this volume which I feel have the true Galgóczi touch, and they are exciting, dramatic and very individual. One deals with a village council chairman, who was given his position in the fifties, and who executes the law with an iron hand. The village hates him and hurts him at his most vulnerable point, through his wife. As council chairman he can revenge the wounds inflicted on him as husband, but though he remains faithful to his principles when times are dangerous, it is all in vain; the village continues to reject him, and eventually the State rejects him too, in expelling him, and the double rejection leads him to arson.

It is a harsh, dramatic story. It describes the evils and wounds of one political generation, with a vivid picture of power finally abandoning its own representative to the snares of private life. The other, "A Million Miles from Budapest," deals with the astonishing career of a peasant rogue and Don Juan. These two short stories compare favourably with the best writing in Erzsébet Galgóczi's earlier books.

ISTVÁN GÁLL, like Erzsébet Galgóczi, is an obstinate cross-examiner of history. He is a communist. What interests him are the rules which determine the behaviour of Party members, the changes in these rules, "who's in, who's out," who rises and who falls, and how, as a result of these changes. He pursues his search usually through the same set of characters, a family of miners, the Magos, from Transdanubia. The grandfather was already a communist as far back as 1919. He only lived for the day when, gun in hand, he would be able to finish off the bourgeoisie. It is precisely this attitude that led to conflict, soon after the take-over, with which the system he identified himself, since the new order could not be born as Magos saw it, brutally, immediately, with arms, but politically, through compromise.

His son, a high-ranking officer, obviously represents Gáll's own attitude, and there is a certain identification between them. He went to prison in the fifties, though a loyal communist, but he has never lost sight of the standards set by a humane, commonsense attitude (this was not all that usual amongst the political leaders of the time). He is no fanatic, it is not dogmatism, but human insight and a human consideration which govern his judgement. But the world, in the course of time adopts laxer, more comfortable attitudes. So at the age of fifty-five the son finds himself relegated to obscurity. Not because he had misinterpreted the workings of history, but because his earlier, correct attitude had become an error, a sin, in the new dispensation, just as old Magos's earlier; his age and his fate push him towards work of unimportance and an early retirement, in the system to whose birth he had given all he had. Even his son, old Magos's grandson, totally uninterested in politics, turns against him. "We simply want to live. We want to forget everything. The war, lawlessness, politics, you too. Grandfather also saw everything in black and white. I know I am wounding you with my words, but in my place he

would probably have shot you. We and the old fellow agree over one thing. We judge emotionally. Simply. I like it, I don't like it. He is the earth, I am the sky. And you float weightlessly between us, weightlessly and as heavy as lead. You are a transitional formation."

The Magos family are also the heroes of Gáll', new volume of short stories (*Rohanók*, "The Headlong," Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1968). Before Liberation, immediately after it, in the horrifying madness of the early fifties, and in our own days. Slowly, through his various volumes of short stories, Gáll has created a family saga. He is a rare creature not only because he has concentrated his attention so consistently on a single, localized and nevertheless so to speak universal theme ever since his first appearance as a writer, but also because in spite of the difficulty and delicacy of the subject, he has always succeeded in maintaining his integrity as a writer. When he speaks with his authentic voice he tells what he alone can tell, and being a good writer, he usually interests and convinces. But his latest book seems to contain merely the chippings left over from the old. We have read it all before, with the possible exception of the provocative revolt of the youngest Magos generation. An amusing play for radio and another, a parable of ants, indicate that Gáll also feels a desire to break out of his autobiographical, or in this case, localized and rather personal cage he has built himself, and that like Erzsébet Galgóczi he has failed. The stories are good, but anyone might have written them. This bright and clever work, on occasion descending to cheap devices, would not lead one to read every word of Gáll's short stories as I do; it is the unique Magos stories that compel and hold me.

MIKLÓS MÉSZÖLY'S obsession is different. It is more literary and more abstract. Erzsébet Galgóczi and Gáll are moralists, Mészöly is a psychologist; the first two seek explanations for the history of their country, Mészöly for his art. He is one of the small group of modernist writers among Hungarian novelists and essayists, most of whom follow traditional forms. His masters, sometimes, unfortunately, chosen without much discrimination, are the contemporary French. To work out for himself the only possible mode of expression for the whole of what he has to say he has accepted the role of the black sheep in the Hungarian flock, which in this part of the world does not mean publicity, but grim non-acceptance, relegation to the periphery of literary life, and minimal earning power. His best work so far, *Az atléta halála* (The Death of an Athlete),* appeared first in French and only after many years' delay in Hungarian. His new work *Saulus* (Saul; Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1968) is the first which has, at least to a certain extent, been favourably reviewed.

A reviewer is in a difficult position if he feels obliged to criticize a "non-conformist author," one who has suffered much contumely and injury, especially if he truly considers him a good writer. (One of the quotations at the beginning of *Saulus* is taken from Camus: "Why, tell me why did you shoot at a body stretched out on the ground.") And it is even more embarrassing to attack him at a time when he is finally achieving a certain amount of recognition, when he has been almost accepted. But I must confess that I did not like Mészöly's novel. It is confused, unintelligible, and is affected and literary as if written by an unwitty Oscar Wilde. The subject of the novel is the conversion that made a St. Paul out of Saul, or rather, a description of the psychological changes that preceded conversion. Mangled scenes, memories, sententious dialogue, the continuous vacillations of the soul, all of which I found unintelligible, a rambling wordiness

* *The Death of an Athlete* was discussed in Anna Földes's book-review in No. 23 of The New Hungarian Quarterly, p. 184.

that borders on the wanderings of an idiot and which appear to possess some special significance, go to make up the process of transformation. Mészöly's Saul seems incapable of acting like a normal human being, and though he is deep in cogitation throughout the process he appears unable to express a single clear idea or formulate a moral problem. His thoughts and sayings are generally produced in the form of poetic maxims, which for the most part I find either unintelligible or self-evident. "Sin and transgression are always open and frank. They are sin and transgression, nothing else. Mistrust on the other hand must be ambiguous, however fervent..." "Down at the fountain darkness was already complete; light can be as complete as this at the centre of a flame. Can things so absolute differ?" "It is a cunning nobility to forgive that for which we could not forgive ourselves."

The novel, I am told, is about loyalty and treachery, recognition and transformation. Unfortunately I was unable to excavate any of this information from the novel myself. All I could discover was that Saul's road was scattered with signs and portents sent neither by the Lord nor the human soul nor the human mind but by Mészöly the literary writer, signs which have one thing in common—they are arbitrary—an arbitrariness which I would attribute not to the character, but to the writer himself if they were not in any case so artificial and manufactured.

At the age of eighteen I was completely disillusioned with Aldous Huxley when he arranged for the body of a fox-terrier to be thrown from an aeroplane on to a couple making love on a terrace. I managed to stick to Mészöly almost to the end of the novel. Then I came to the following passage: "First I walked around the place where we camped, then I wrenched off one of my sandals and bit into the sole like a dog. In doing so I discovered that what I craved was to tear off the strip of leather inside that had crumpled and been hardened by walking. The dirt and the dust and my saliva clotted to a mash in my mouth, but since I had begun I continued. Later I noticed that the four asses had turned and were attentively watching what I was doing. I went over to one of them and let him sniff at the sandal. The red stone dust settled around his moist nostrils, as if he had been sniffing bloody meat. I tried to wipe it off, but he jerked his head aside. I then bent to his eyes so that my lashes touched his eyeball; he no longer jerked away his head, but the skin all over his body stiffened. For a moment I thought he would speak. I began to retreat with care.

"Could it be that this was the first step?

"When can a man say: my sheep, or my ass, or my goat has changed? When can your sheep, or your ass, or your goat say that you have changed?"

I could not take any more. Or only if I thought of Saul on the edge of conversion as a man sick in mind, mentally ill.

I think that in his novel Mészöly has tried once again to explore what has always been his central theme, the final and impotent defencelessness of man. But he has become drunk with the sound of his literary voice, and, drunk, he has attempted to write something that should be astonishingly beautiful, unexpected and profound. Yet not the truth, or what he believes to be the truth. He writes so well that he has seduced himself. Perhaps the above long and—to me—annoying passage will hint, even in translation, at how elegantly and movingly he can write.

PÉTER ZIMRE's first volume *Napágyú* (Sun Gun; Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1968) contains four short novels. On the strength of this book one cannot of course count him among those who determinedly and obstinately work towards a chosen goal —those to whom I am greatly attracted. What is clear is that his work is built from genuine material and experience. Every one of these short novels deals with the young,

his own age-group; it may well be that they are partly autobiographical. It pleases me that he does not write about something he does not know much about, that these wild, sometimes raw lines make no attempt to embellish or simplify; they describe the insecurity, the indifference, the restless search of a generation, or to be more precise, of those who will be the future intellectuals and artists of that generation.

The tale I consider most successful recounts certain bewildered and confused days in the life of a young couple. The girl, Julika, is preparing for a musical competition. She is nervous and tense, and in any case a little inclined to hysteria. The young man is a free-lance script writer, most of the time out of work. They have no flat, but they are saving for it. Julika plays extremely well at the concert, but fails to get into the finals. They sit around at home, listless, disinclined for anything, until an idea occurs to the young man. Why not bust all their savings and play at being rich for just one day? They hire a Fiat, they buy books, expensive cigarettes, and a bottle of French brandy. They have breakfast at the best restaurant, and then—suddenly—they discover that they are bored by it all, that they feel ill at ease. On the way home they lunch on a pound of plums and corn on the cob. When the young man wants to open the bottle of brandy, Julika remembers that it is her father's birthday the following week, and suggests they put it aside for him. They begin to laugh, then the girl bursts into tears.

Zimre appears to be interested in the relativity of the moral order, the border area separating the honest from the dishonest, the sensible from the crack-brained, the normal from the absurd. But it does not really separate them. His characters repeatedly step across it, their momentary decisions being determined by mood, boredom and caprice. The step has no dramatic or moral consequences, their instincts soon draw them back to their original position, not because of anything they have recognized or lost, but because they feel ill at ease in the strange situation, ill at ease like Julika and her husband, ill at ease in Zion.

Zimre still lacks artistic discipline, the readiness to edit and prune, and a full consciousness, which is why his tales are not really good. The raw material which is often enchanting, floods into whole scenes without selection, organization or economy. He is discursive and frequently what he writes is superfluous. He is not yet in command of his means, he has not yet learned the demands of discipline, and the slow interior process of the artist's labours. But the craft can be learned, and in the final analysis it is more important that a young writer should have something to say, than that he should say nothing with competence and assurance.

Imre Szász

GUILLEVIC'S HUNGARIAN POETS

GUILLEVIC: *Mes poètes hongrois*
Corvina Press, Budapest, 1967.

"It all started with the French poets' *Hommage* to Attila József," Guillevic writes in the introduction. "When László Gara asked me to participate in *Hommage* with an adaptation of some of the poems I hardly saw what it all would lead to."

The enterprise has had a number of important consequences. It meant "all" not only for Guillevic; it was nothing less than the "debut" of Hungarian poetry in France. Encouraged by a successful first attempt

László Gara, a man of mild but obstinate persistence—of a "burning industry," as the Romantics put it, and an irresistible enthusiasm for the good cause—organized a host of French poets into a "work-brigade" to interpret Hungarian poetry both old and new. Also, in a curious way—which the French have, not without admiration, called quite miraculous—Gara managed to stir up an interest in translation of poetry and its theoretical problems relating to rhyme and rhythm: problems that French poets (with one or two rare exceptions) have never been curious enough to investigate. Anyone who moved among Paris poets at the time of the preparation of Seuil's Hungarian anthology was immediately and inevitably spellbound by this peculiar "Gara-fever": by the influence of a man reaching far beyond himself, by the passionate excitement which he stirred around himself, the waves of which spread wider and wider into various departments of French literary life. Anthologies were made following the example of the Hungarian one more and more in accord with the rules of the game of translation. These rules were discussed at meetings and "round tables" and in the meantime the significance of translation outgrew its limits: it had become the occasion, the pretext for, and the vehicle of, something more important: the mutual recognition of poets, cultural exchange and the formation of a new humanism, a new kind of literary society. We must never forget how much this was due to the devoted work of László Gara, and what an effect he still has posthumously.

Without László Gara, after all, the Hungarian anthology by Guillevic could never have come into being. It is not really an anthology, of course; Guillevic makes this point at the very outset: his work has evolved as a result of chance excursions arising from occasions and friendships and also —as he states with his known charm—from "a desire to please himself," sometimes a certain mutuality is at work ("translate my poetry and I'll translate yours")—and the result is a volume of Hungarian poems in French.

Excursions of this kind, however, once one has taken to them, are very hard to abandon. The fortuitous reconnaissances are followed by a more systematic conquest. The interpreter is trying to give "a less fragmentary picture of Hungarian poetry," or more exactly: of contemporary Hungarian poetry and that of the immediate past beginning with János Arany in whom the remarkable skill of Guillevic recognized the "new," the "transition from the Romantic to the Modern" (probably better than any Hungarian poet could have done) and finishing with the youngest who can be said to be one of the most significant and mature members of the latest generation, Judith Tóth. Guillevic had not striven for "completeness" which is borne out by the title: not *Les poètes* but *Mes poètes hongrois*.

In the beginning, then, there was chance, it was followed and complemented by merit ("X deserves to feature"—and we know what an exacting care and splendid skill has been brought to bear upon the material by Guillevic to detect this "merit"); with the personal preferences of the poet as the deciding principle. No other considerations, whether historical, political or protocol, have played any part.

Without a knowledge of the language it is, of course, very hard to find one's way around poetry even if one consults the best guides, let alone in one so very recent, contemporary and constantly changing in its "balances of power." Under these circumstances, then, it would be in bad taste to ask what the selection is like? We can safely ask that question in this case though, for the selection is good. Partly because the translator has been obviously well informed, and partly because he has an exquisite skill in getting around in practically unfamiliar country. Those who know him will agree: he is directed by something which is more immediate than instincts: an extraordinary, often unmistakable sense of smell, a tre-

mendously sensitive touch. It's quite a mystery at times how he can, without knowing Hungarian, detect the specific quality of a poem or a poet so aptly.

The same instinct has directed the translator through the inevitable evils of translating from literal, raw prose.

As to the translation itself: Guillevic is perfectly aware of each problem facing him. To start with the problems of translation. He is, by the way, perhaps the best scholar of these problems in France. A practical scholar, I would say—one of those people who talk about things from experience of actual practice, not with a laboratory kind of scholarliness referring to the testimony of instruments. He is, therefore, one of those people whose talk is useful, as in the introduction of his Hungarian poets, as on the role and importance of the "raw-translator," the *co-traducteur* (for obviously it is much better to translate Hungarian poetry from a rough translation than not to translate it at all) or the necessary decisions, the "either-ors" of the translator when it necessarily comes to leaving one element out for the sake of something else which he feels is more intrinsically essential for the poem (good translations, therefore, are also interpretations in a way)—or on the preservation of original forms, the consequences of the differences existing between the various verses and prosodies. Or, finally, on *"il faut être poète pour traduire un poème"* which has never really been a problem in Hungary. Our translators have always been poets whereas in other literatures, like the French, this is still a new thing for in France translating foreign poetry, not without exceptions, of course (let's just remember Baudelaire's and Mallarmé's Poe or Bazalgette's Whitman) has much rather been a work of philology or even the hunting-ground of dilettanti. (Valéry Larbaud was perhaps the first to draw attention to the "dignity" of translation in his attractive humility and conscientiousness.) It is quite obvious, then, that poetically accurate (the greatest accuracy which we can hope to achieve) translation started only when poets tried their hands at it. And it was then only that the material interpreted no longer became dead philological stuff but live nourishment that could find its way into the circulation of another poetry and universal poetry at the same time.

What are Guillevic's interpretations like, then? There are some pieces which have become famous in their own right like the French version of János Arany's ballad, *"A walesi bárdok"* (The Bards of Wales). There are also some other places where the Hungarian reader sighs and says: Oh, well, this business *must* be hopeless after all. *"Fier de son velours vert, sous un nouveau diadème— Le mont Gellért a l'air un peu gêné quand même":* these lines depict the banks of the Danube at the beginning of Arany's poem, *Vojtina Ars poeticája* (The Ars Poetica of Vojtina), and even though one finds that Guillevic *has* responded to the irony of the poem, now open, now latent (and it is admirable of him to have discovered this hidden intricacy at all) the two kinds of irony are so very much different in quality, colour, tone, "historical whereness" even, that the one could hardly cover the other, not even with the utmost possible approximation. (Translators of poetry know only too well how much easier it is to translate pathos, it being less varied than irony, and how very much easier it is to translate the "sublime" than the "direct.")

But here is a counter-example picked out also rather at random while leafing through the volume. This one seems to show that the success of translation depends on "inspiration" after all, on a kind of "one-ness" with the message of the original which can be a guarantee of success, and just about the only guarantee at that. I am thinking of the French version of Babits's *"Esti kérdés"* (An Evening Question). One problem of the translation of *Vojtina* is relevant here as well: this poem has also been written in 11-syllable iambics and the French version naturally transposes them into Alexandrines—obviously the

two prosodies are far from being the same. Still, how very well Guillevic manages to save what is Babits in the poem. After the first three or four lines Guillevic has defeated all our suspicion and possible resistance; this Alexandrine of his is somehow *totally* the same as the iambics of Babits; the French poem has a tremendous sweep, the *same* sweep as the original, the same kind of nostalgic energy, right up to the final and only seal of a full-stop.

And this is not the only daring feat in the volume. We could enamerate the Lőrinc Szabós, the Gyula Juhászes, the Attila Józsefs and the only, but delightful Jenő Dsida (how very finely Guillevic has sensed in him the "angelic poet") or the most contemporary voices: Sándor Weöres, Ágnes Nemes Nagy, János Pilinszky, György Somlyó, Sándor Csoóri, Judith Tóth.

Mes poètes hongrois—is title of the volume. But there is something else in that title. Guillevic is prepared to accept responsibility for the new Hungarian poetry he presents to his compatriots. This is no small thing. Is it over-confidence on our part to feel that new Hungarian poetry deserves Guillevic's attention? The readers of the volume will judge. What we know is this: we could not possibly have got a better interpreter, a more faithful and artistic mediator than Guillevic.

György Rónay

A STIMULUS TO FURTHER RESEARCH

If we are not to be dazed by the often fantastic forecasts of "futurology," the key to the future has to be looked for in the present. In order to avoid that the nightmares of mankind should be haunted by the dehumanized prospect of supermen, engaged in interplanetary fights, in order to prevent our progeny, the human species of coming centuries as people for whom even in everyday life robots act, computers think and decide (and perhaps even feel),—we must take note of new phenomena whose appearance in the advanced countries already foreshadow the future. This is what has been done in the last decades by all those authors who—having become aware of certain excesses, distorsions and incongruities in present-day American society, as well as of three clearly observable symptoms of a threat that man might become dominated by technology—draw attention to new problems which will have to be solved in the future.[1]

Radovan Richta and the group of his collaborators are inspired by the same ideas, although their intention is principally to explore and uncover the specific opportunities that socialist society should avail itself of, an the dangers it should avoid, amidst the new potentialities created by "the scientific-technical revolution."[2] All authors who wish to contribute to the development of up-to-date forms of training, vocational and professional education are endeavouring thereby to prepare man and society to stand up to the challenges of fastly changing new situations engendered by the stormy pace of technical progress.

György Ádám's *Új technika—új struktúra* (New Technology—New Structure)[3] is no futurology, nonetheless it discloses more of the decisive human and social problems

[1] In this context it may suffice to refer to the dangers outlined in Robert Jungk: *Die Zukunft hat schon begonnen* (Rowohlt 1963), or to mention J. K. Galbraith's book *The New Industrial State* (Houghton-Mifflin, Boston, 1967).

[2] Radovan Richta et al.: *Civilizace na rozcesti* (Praha, 1966).

[3] "Új technika — Új struktúra", Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, Budapest 1968 (420 pp.).

facing us than many authors who are crystal-gazing or take into consideration merely the most advanced countries and industries, emphasizing their most spectacular achievements.

György Ádám deals first of all with some significant indices of technical progress (such as research expenditures and investment in automation and afterwards with problems of employment and unemployment in the United States, thereafter reviewing the same phenomena in Britain, the German Federal Republic and France. He presents the most important statistical data, pinpointing structural changes. His tables and charts plus a multitude of revelant facts, carefully selected from the enormous available evidence are interpreted in a way permitting an overall picture which makes it possible to cast a glance at the future.

György Ádám discards guessing, does not prognosticate nor does he make projections, what he does do is to present facts in an unbiassed, dispassionate way and to outline the most characteristic trends. He surveys the different stages of automation, the differences in the advance of modern technology without overrating the latter or neglecting the inherent complications of the process. In distinction to many works treating the same subject, the decisive change is rightly seen by him, not so much in the rapidly increasing productive potential of automatic machinery nor in the abundance of goods it is supposed to produce, but in the basic transformation taking place in the division of labour, in job contents and *the nature of human activity*. His main concern is always: how technical progress affects man and his environment.

Whenever changes in the occupational distribution, characteristic shifts, as regards the share of agriculture, manufacturing, extractive and the service industries, the proportion between manual and intellectual workers subject to permanent fluctuation are surveyed, our attention is invariably drawn to the extent it affects the human condition. It is man with his altered conditions of subsistence who is in focus whenever the unskilled, able to do only work claiming exclusively physical effort, the extraordinary high rates of unemployment among untrained youth, the lack of security of highly qualified but "overspecialized" manpower in their forties and fifties are described. It is a "man-centered" approach throughout from which his socially most relevant message becomes evident when he outlines how the traditional definitions of blue-overall and white-collar work are becoming untenable, the distinctions between the two gradually becoming blurred and beginning to fade. In this context particular attention is given to the changing structure of the working class implying constant alterations in the social status of its different strata.

How the big corporations are doing their best to "integrate" their skilled workers, to induce their employees, particularly highly trained professionals (scientists and engineers) in industry to side with management: how despite all these endeavours a *new structural nucleus of the working class* is coming into being is shown. Following this development the trade union movement breaking through its traditional limitations renders the new objectives of labour both possible and necessary.

The analysis of the crisis of Labour in the U.S. (Part I.), is built upon an imposing array of statistics and factual data; the demonstration of how the labour movement in the most advanced Western European countries (Part II.) finds ways and means to organise and mobilize highly skilled workers as well as white-collar workers, how here and there even scientists and engineers are becoming conscious that they too are exposed in their working life to the same or similar vicissitudes as were formerly believed to apply to manual workers only, has been matched only by few works that appeared recently in Eastern Europe.

After all, nothing reflects more faithfully the new, specific contradictions in the socio-

economic life of the advanced Western countries than the new features which developed in the last decades in the strategy and tactics of the labour movement.[4]

It is public knowledge that wage demands were recently supplemented (mainly, but not exclusively, in the U.S.) by a fight for guarantees of job security, as new technology—particularly automation—when it started to spread, appeared to increase the danger of unemployment—beside these aspects—meaningful work, the humanization of production and consumption are to an increasing extent becoming an important demand of organised labour. The actuality of this trend is substantiated by some—partially successful—battles for co-determination and/or workers' control in Italy and recently in Western Germany and Britain. Important milestones in this process are the fight waged throughout Europe—from West Berlin to Rome—for the democratisation and modernisation of higher education, the revolts of students who do not want "battery farms for broiler technicians."

New Technology—New Structure is not merely a stimulating survey and analysis but also a challenge, in the first place to the scholars of socialist countries. On the one hand some socioeconomic problems engendered by new technology and automation are bound to emerge—above a certain level of development—in socialist countries just as they did under conditions of monopoly capitalism. On the other hand, socialist countries have a better chance to avoid many or most of the snags outlined in the book. This stems mainly from the fact that the short-term profit-incentives of capitalism do not render possible timely adaptations as far as the human factor is concerned (e.g. as regards training and education), nor the purposeful development of the required infrastructure.

As an author, György Ádám, tends to restrict himself to the facts he presents and the ideas he exposes. Having read his book however, it becomes evident—although he nowhere states it explicity—that he aims to make readers realize their specific tasks. Hungarians also must become aware that the development of the new structural nucleus, a change in the structure of the working class is taking place in that country too.[5] We cannot help taking cognizance of the ongoing transformation of the traditional concept of skills and that—as time marches on—the time-honoured classifications and categories applied to manual workers are rendered obsolete, as partly new, partly higher skills are required. Our universities must also cope with the need for a new kind of education which, instead of narrow specialization—subject to relatively quick obsolescence—puts the emphasis upon broad training and independent thinking, and intellectual versatility. Maybe instead of immediately expendable professionals we too have to go over to interdisciplinary teaching and in fact we may be already a bit late in our training of advanced faculty staff needed for this new type of higher education.

Even more important is the inference, the after having introduced the new system of economic management, we too must expect that our highly skilled workers, technicians and engineers, called upon to carry out sophisticated tasks, will not be satisfied by mere material compensation but long and

4 André Gorz: *Stratégie Ouvrière et Néocapitalisme*, Seuil, Paris, 1964. — Pierre Naville: *Vers l'automation sociale; Problèmes du travail et de l'automation*, Gallimard, 1963. — Serge Mallet: *La nouvelle classe ouvrière*. — Peter von Oertzen: *Analyse der Mitbestimmung — ein Diskussionsbeitrag*. Heinz Rocholl, Hannover, 1965. — Aktionsprogramm des Sozialistischen Zentrums. Die andere Zeitung, Febr. 15, 1968, No. 7. pp. 9–10.

5 This growing awareness is testified to by an article "Discussion of the Concept of the Working Class" in the January 1968 issue of *Társadalmi Szemle*. The point of departure of the article is: "Throughout the world *big changes* have taken place in the size, structure, social function and political activity of the working class, which is the principal actor in the world-wide transition of capitalism into socialism; the assessment of these chages makes it necessary to *rethink the statements of the classics of Marxism in the light of present-day reality* (p. 70).

strive for creative jobs. The spread of automation may bring about in Hungary too circumstances apt to lead to an increase in alienation. We are, however, in a position not to have to create living and working conditions worthy of man in struggles which labour unions in the West have to wage with capitalists; the development of socialist democracy offers adequate scope and takes care of that. György Ádám's book calls upon us to be concerned more intensively, in a more unbiased way and more consciously with the future of our society.

MÁRIA HOLLÓ

IDIOMIC THOUGHTS

"We have heard his speech, but we are none the wiser." (p. 175)

The English language, laid end to end, would provide enough wool for 50,000 grandma monkeys, on 50,000 knitting machines, to make eye-mufflers for all the scholars who have ever lived. To be more precise, the quantity of English language textbooks, starting with the 1,700 complete courses, through dictionaires, teach-yourselfs, pattern books, drill books, grammar books and finishing with Your Visit to England in countless number is sufficient to make the intelligent learner suppose he needs a course in textbooks before he can safely embark on the language itself. What I have to say here concerns only a small part of this mass, namely the ever-increasing do-it-yourself supply of aids, How to Say It in Englishes etc., which the untrained learner may mistake for the real thing. The recipe seems to be standard: take a good English dictionary, a thesaurus, a dictionary of quotations, a dictionary of idiom and slang and a bilingual dictionary; stew them together for a short time; and then dish out as big a helping as your publisher will allow and your market stand.

One favourite theme is the elusive phenomenon called the *idiom*, without a perfect mastery of which a foreigner will never be mistaken for a slipshod native speaker. Naturally, the English are very proud of their idioms, and proliferate them all the time, so that the learner's task is endless. But it would be a good idea to put ourselves in the learner's position as he faces the latest of these superproducts, and see what he gets out of it. The work is called "Anglicisms,"* and its author advises us to taste it, swallow it, and occasionally to chew and digest it, after the manner of Bacon.

The definition of an anglicism, an idiom, is culled from the *Winston Dictionary:* "An expression which, understood as a whole, has a meaning entirely different from that of the joined meanings of its component parts." Let us therefore dip at random into the work to see how this works out in practice. On page 145 we find "liar" = *hazug ember*. In the sense of the definition above, what are the component parts of a liar? Philosophically, the liar is a dualist who has a truth at his disposal and gives it a "meaning entirely different." I am not quite happy about this example as being wholly in accordance

* KUNDT, Ernő: *Anglicizmusok. Angol kifejezések gyűjteménye. Tanuljunk nyelveket sorozat.* Tankönyvkiadó, Budapest, 1968. ("Anglicisms. A Collection of English Idioms. Let's Learn Languages Series." Textbook Publishers, Budapest, 1968. 312 pp. Sixth, revised edition.)

with Winston's definition however, though it is very nice not to have to look up in a dictionary what *bazug ember* means. Let us take another example. On page 137 we learn that "knowledge is power." We students are all philosophers, and quite surely dilettantes at that, but I am sure Hobbes and Marx would have had something to say about this idiom. What are the parts of this sentence, and how can we be sure its total meaning is altogether different? Is it not rather a Teutonicism than an Anglicism?

At any rate, this is a great thought. There is incomparably more life in it than learning "John is a boy, Mary is a girl" from English in Easy Stages. We are on the way to the essentials of something. And I think at this stage it is time for us students to have a coffee break. In the words of the author's idiom (p. 144), "Let us have a cigar" (It should be pointed out that this book is for adult learners only). The question in hand seems "not so difficult after all," as we read under *so*.

While we are puffing away at our cigars, let us consider the position. As students of English, we are something more than dilettantes when it comes to language. (Pardon! I was going to offer you a drink, or rather "Let us have a drink," but wasn't quite sure whether the parts of *drink* which are different are the same as those of *cigar*, linguistically). We know something about Mr Eckersley's *Essential English*, can make our way about Mr Fries's *Pattern Structures*, and have acquired an addled idea of how Mr Chomsky in America is developing a new grammar generating machine for infallible language production. How does this new book bear on them then? 1) It has a bit of everything, including idioms 2) it saves us using the dictionary (unless the word we want doesn't happen to be in it) 3) it contains both great thoughts and practical suggestions, if we exclude that drink trouble 4) it contains a useful definition of "idiom." It is thus a synthesis of the previously mentioned books and our desire for something meatier. That is why we are convinced it can show how language works.

How then does language work, linguistically? Firstly it is very complex. Next, it involves all sorts of people all over the place—I's and shes and yous and Mr Hills and important business transactions. In short it is a cultural spectrum. If we may judge from our author's investigation of one part of it however (the idiom), language has three fundamental aspects. In the first place, it is alphabetical, starting with A and finishing with Y. Z is such a useless letter that it is not worth including where anglicisms are concerned. It is there merely for the delight of etymologists and pedants. Thus we start with an easy sentence like: "He has cut the price so fine he will not abate a penny of it." Here *abate* is the key that unlocks the door of its meaning which is quite different from the sum of its parts. Language at this stage is long-mouthed and materialistic—someone wants something and is not prepared to pay for it, which causes him to try to abate its pennies. Compare this with what we reach after 312 pages of study: "You seem to grow young again"—positively a mystic idiom. We have grown old in the course of learning, and language, with its climax of youth, renews us. We are knocking at the doors of Faust's eternity here.

The second basic fact about language is that it is always grouped around a key word, for easy reference, so the author tells us. Thus: "We go to the cinema tonight" (p. 174) palpably vibrates with the sum of its parts. "Tonight" is not like any other night, it is cinema night, and deserves a rising intonation and subtle stress to bring this out. It suggests the darkness and potential evil a native speaker would lend this idiom. Or again: "Sometimes I went to see her" (p. 260). Without this sentence we should never have realised the difficulties the word *some* must bristle with for the foreign learner. This is something we never learnt in Essential English.

The third fact about language is that it

is made up of long and short sentences, ranging from the pithy "horse-power!" (p. 126) to the novelistic "He pays his addresses to Miss Hill; he pays her great attention; he makes love to her; he is courting her" (p. 11). I can't help thinking however that the hero of the novel shows scant regard for propriety in putting the third item idiomatically before the fourth. The polite anglicist would surely reverse the order.

So that's how it is with language. But what are we language learners to make of all this? We are dreaming perhaps of how we too might write a book like this and advance the frontiers of science. In other words, have we grasped what the essence of the English idiom is? Are we better and better linguists? Can we go out with *The Times* under our arms and masquerade as Englishmen?

The best answer to these questions will be to include an extract from my forthcoming anglicised version, idiomic if you like, of a well-known play. I have refused any help but that of *Anglicizmusok.* Here it is then, the old-fashioned speech in the new-fashioned way.

Enter Hamlet. It is as dark as the inside of a wolf's mouth. Hamlet told his footman he was at home to no-one, and his remark went home. The hour before he had been at a meeting, and an hour later he was at the theatre.

Enter Polonius.

POL. Well met, (my lord). Be of good cheer.

HAM. Has the postman been yet?

POL. (My lord), cast away your prejudices!

HAM. My behaviour admits of no excuse, I warrant, but today I am giving my eyes a holiday, because you look a curious object. You are failing rapidly. Upon my oath, so it is! Have you any objection to my plan? It occurred to me, we met in an odd sort of way. Notice this particularly. I will not abate one jot of my demands. Gentility without ability is worse than beggary. For further particulars, apply to the king.

POL. (Sir), give me fair play. Fall in with my suggestions.

HAM. There is a rumour far and wide you have a daughter. How does your son fare abroad? This news is too good to be true. I had a fancy he gave his money to the dogs...

Polonius draws breath with difficulty. He looked at the prince with an evil eye, but no kind word escaped his lips. He raised the following question:

POL. You study philosophy, (my lord)? To what end? Please mind your p's an q's. I have a pretty well-set up boy. He has sharp eyes and sharp ears. The boy you mention is quite another pair of shoes. He does not live in single-blessedness...

PAUL ASTON

SCHOLARSHIP AND ITS PITFALLS

NINON A. M. LEADER: Hungarian Classical Ballads and Their Folklore, Cambridge University Press, 1967.

Interest abroad in Hungarian folk ballads has grown livelier in recent times. The results of Hungarian research have drawn the attention of experts to this little known sphere of European folk poetry. Most recently this 350-page book appeared in English. It endeavours to acquaint the British scholarly world with the Hungarian ballad and its problems. For this purpose the author quotes 43 texts in literal translations, making no effort to retain the verse form, so that she could adhere all the more faith-

fully to the original expressions. This procedure is proper in an informative work that is not intended for the general public. Thus the very best in ballad poetry (disregarding two exceptions), almost every important and beautiful type is now available in English. The significance of this fact can be appreciated if one bears in mind that outside this book Hungarian ballads in English can only be found in a book published by the author of this article in 1967—23 types and five motives—but translated in full only in exceptional cases, and mostly given only in details or as a narration of the contents. At the present time, therefore, Mrs. Leader's book is the only one through which anyone interested who has to rely on the English language can become familiar with the Hungarian ballad in all its reality. A further great merit of the book is that the author always quotes in detail divergencies in the corresponding sections of the texts of her examples from the variants she holds in evidence. If we add that in the introduction, and in the discussion of the individual ballads she offers information on the whole of Hungarian ballad folklore, based on research carried on until the present, we can say that a work of comparable significance has never yet been published on the Hungarian folk ballad in a foreign language.

But for the very reason that we are concerned with such an important work which offers an initial impression, it is our duty to review it carefully, because mistaken information may for a long time influence the foreign reader who is not in a position to verify his facts. We must offer information about all elements in the material and the material and the apparatus that are presented to the non-Hungarian reader without expressing the consensus of Hungarian scholarly opinion.

As far as the authenticity of the material is concerned, this is quite beyond reproach on the whole: faithfulness of text, the authenticity of the selected texts (with the exception of two), their beauty, the designation of the original source, leave nothing to be desired. The two examples to which we take exception are -The Prince and the Princess" (p. 291) and "The Little Maple Tree" (p. 342). The first stems from Kőváry's entirely unreliable collection. It stands alone in the Hungarian heritage, its composition is literary in character—as noted also by Ortutay, from whose anthology the author took it: and all signs indicate that this is also one of the imitations that Kőváry and a number of "collectors" of the last century included with examples of genuine folk poetry. It is true that the author of this review had himself referred to a Kőváry text in his comparative study, but there also existed along with it, noted down among the people, a text in Hungarian that was close to it, as there was also among our neighbours. Even on this basis I had indicated only motifs in its content as "possibly usable," noting that its text was transcribed in this instance also. Under no circumstances would I have quoted its text as a specimen of our folk poetry, let alone in a collection and without comment, and let us add: in translation, where a divergence in style becomes entirely imperceptible. The other—"The Little Maple Tree"—has been recorded amond the people in a few scattered instances but its new pulp publications type formulation departs completely from the style of the true—especially the old—ballads. Since the author has left a number of excellent ballads, on the basis of their new, but folk tone, for a following volume—including even some whose kinship with others in Europe bears out their antiquity—it is hard to understand why she made an exception with this new one which is not even in the genuine folk style. In my opinion in a Hungarian ballad anthology it should only possibly be included in the Appendix.

A similar inconsistency is to be found in the enumeration of variants. Right at the first type—among the variants of "Clement Mason" which tells of a building sacrifice—she lists under "G" the text of Kerényi's

popularizing booklet entitled *Madárka* (she mistakenly mentions No. 4 instead of No. 83)—but such a text does not exist. Kerényi ran together two variants—and he also quoted two separate tunes—and the sections of text belonging to the different songs were also differentiated, one of them with two-line stanzas, and the other with four-line ones. The latter is identical with the text quoted under "Q" by Mrs. Leader, whereas the other is a Kodály unpublished notation. It is a strange contradiction that while she adopts evidence from such a popularizing publication which gives no indication of its original sources, she is so reserved with regard to other, scholarly publications. In connection with "Clement Mason" she leaves out of consideration eight published variants, even some that were certainly available to her: in *Ethnographia*, the Bartalus collection, the *Néprajzi Közlemények*—of which she makes use several times—and last but not least, in the *Jahrbuch des Österreichischen Volksliedwerkes*. In the case of the latter doubt was clearly responsible for her failure to quote a "Clement Mason" collected in Nyitra County (Czechoslovakia), although she could have read in the 1961/1 issue of the *Néprajzi Közlemények* the newer collector's detailed account about the authenticity of this variant. And the "Miraculous Dead" originating in the same region, even more certainly authentic, and also omitted by her, also verifies what Kodály had long ago established in connection with a few melodies, that in the Zobor region of Nyitra County traditional elements have survived which otherwise can be found only in Transylvania. On this basis there was no justification for the omission of the aforementioned two variants and the observation that the two types of ballads were known only in Transylvania and Moldavia. Her failure to include the notation by Bartalus was the consequence of a misapprehension she entertained about him, as noted on page 3, that in a musical respect he was unreliable. No such assertion has been made about Bartalus: he was a trained musician and music historian, of course he never penetrated the most ancient stratum of folk song to the same degree as Bartók and Kodály; and if he did occasionally, he was unable to record the rubato rhythm as accurately as they, that is, at times he compressed it rigidly into bars. But what he wrote down is authentic, and "Clement Mason" was precisely one of his ancient pieces. (It is true, of course, that he quoted the text in only the first stanza, and since it was identical with Kriza's throughout, he settled the matter with the reference: "see Kriza." Naturally one cannot quote it on such a basis, but one can certainly refre to it.)

In other respects she is pedantic in the extreme: she "painstakingly collated" the forms found in the Ortutay and Csanádi-Vargyas anthologies with the initial publications. On the one hand this was easy to do, for both quote the sources of their texts, and on the other hand it was superfluous, because both had carefully made their own comparisons. Of course, there is never any harm in exercising caution, but there is no indications that she might have come across inconsistencies.

The grouping is strange and inconsistent: Group I, "Important Ballads," Group II, "Less Important Ballads." Did she judge them on the basis of their beauty and significance? Then "Ladislas Fehér," "Ilona Budai," "The Mother of the Rich Woman," etc. etc., cannot be considered less important! We learn that the types discussed by scholars in the West were included in Group I. But then "The Asp" and "Poisoned John" also belong among them. She included in Group II what can be regarded as secondary descendants of other Hungarian ballads—this claim can be applied to hardly more than one or two songs—or what turned into a new style from ancient elements—in that event about ten more types should have been listed here which she omitted completely from her volume. Strangest of all, however, is the fact that a whole group of themes has

also been included among the "less important"; such as that of family conflicts, which is a most typical group of ballad themes. It is my impression that the "important" was where she felt inclined to go into the details of comparison, and where she did not, that became "less important." On what basis were the "Miraculous Dead" included among the "magic ballads"? Did according to her people once believe in the "magical" mother who conjured up a mill that ground gold and money, and a tower reaching to the skies and the Tisza, in the way as they did in incantations and love potions? Were they not merely used as a stylized and playful image connected with feigned death, as a way of producing greater intensity?

In her Introduction and the explanations to the individual ballads she revives Solymossy's view, which was already obsolote in its time, that our ballads originated in the seventeenth century, because that was when our serfs received such surnames as Kőműves, Kerekes, Kádár, etc. One could have known from historians already at that time, and more certainly today, that this process began in the fifteenth century and became quite general in the sixteenth. More important is what Mrs. Leader did not notice, just as Solymossy didn't, that nearly as many variants preserve the memory of an earlier stage: "Kelemen kőmíves," "Kelemenné asszony," where, therefore, the occupation is not yet a name. (The proportion is 7 : 11 out of 40 where the rest mention only the chief mason, or are only fragments.) What every folklorist has asserted for a long time is clear from this also that such elements—name, geographical place, etc.—are the most mobile elements of the heritage, they can change at every subsequent "actual application" and they reveal nothing at all about the age of the text as such.

In connection with dating I am compelled to correct a quotation of my own point of view. She states (p. 41, Note 2) that I put the origin of "Clement Mason" in the twelfth or thirteenth century, when we had common frontiers with the Bulgarians, whereas according to my emphatically expressed final conclusion it was in the period of Louis the Great, and the establishment of the Bulgarian banate, when Hungarian garrisons and perhaps settlers lived in Bulgarian territory, in the middle of the fourteenth century that I placed the adoption, and also the development of the Hungarian ballad. So much so that in the theoretical chapter I place the development of the ballad in the whole of Europe in the early fourteenth century, and I argue that the genre could not have existed earlier. I cannot see how this could have been misunderstood to such a degree.

The dating of ballad elements produce peculiar contradictions in her work. On the one hand she wishes at all cost to link our ballads to the seventeenth century, and she uses even such facts as evidence as that "Clement Mason" preserved the most brutal form of the building sacrifice (on this basis we should really set it in the pagan epoch), that the power of the mother is expressed so forcefully in them (which is held in evidence as a medieval feature by international ballad research, and there is no reason to regard it as otherwise in our country, either), that "language, imagery and rhythm" also render this probable (naturally the language in them belongs to the nineteenth and twentieth century, but it preserves antiquities, among them some that are expressly from the Middle Ages. Among all their characteristics I know of none that would specifically set them in the seventeenth century). On the other hand she endeavours to link the Hungarian and Danish formulation of the "Three Orphans" with each other on the basis that "pre-Christian magic" can be found in both: the tears, the striking of the grave with a rod to resurrect the dead. (N.B. are we to suppose that magic disappeared from popular belief with the spread of Christianity?) And if a ballad incorporated tale elements within it, then this allegedly places it

with the oldest ballad style—as if it were not just the newest, the individual, the corrupt, the fragmentary variants that for the most part incorporated such elements! (For example, the variant of "Clement Mason" quoted under "Q," which she notes as "the only ballad with a happy ending," only she fails to add that this ending resolves the poem in a prosaic story.) Like the name "Mason," the involvement of a "Turk" is also a time-determining factor for her, because only at the "time of the Turkish conquest" "could they have sold the girl to Turks," and in quite a singular fashion she sets this in the period between 1526 to 1710. However, following the battle of Mohács, Suleiman—after burning Buda—withdrew from the country, and there was no occupation until 1541, the fall of Buda; on the other hand, between 1686 to 1688 the entire area of the country was liberated. It is true that the Turks remained our neighbours even after that, but in that case we could set the time from when on we were constantly at war with them on our frontiers at around 1400. But this is not even the main issue, but the fact that the "Turk" could also be a later substitution, since he is not even represented as an enemy at all, nor is the German—the "later enemy" according to Mrs. Leader—but only as an alien. And here the ballads always mention the neighbour, in our case Turks and Germans, occasionally—in Transylvania—Moldavians, in Moldavia, Poles—just as the French ballads speak of the Spanish or the English.

But I pointed all this out in my previously cited study (*Ethnographia*, 1960, 250), which can today be read in English also, on page 106 of the "Researches into the Medieval History of Folk Ballad." Since the latter is just as readily accessible to English-language readers as Mrs. Leader's work, I shall not argue with her about matters that can be found there also. I would rather point out aspects in which a lack of knowledge of the Hungarian evidence makes it impossible to determine that the information is incorrect.

The chapter on "Bards," for example, places a very complex question with a vast literature in front of the non-Hungarian reader without separating facts from conjecture, moreover, not even from her own offhand conclusions. Otherwise the aim of this chapter is meant to be "to shed light on the composition of the old-style ballads." However, we know not a single line from our Hungarian bards, and we only know of their having existed from meagre evidence, hence this whole chapter adds nothing to our existing body of knowledge.

If she had not based herself only on my book published in collaboration with Imre Csanádi in 1954 (occasionally adding to it my comparative studies in the *Ethnographia*, 1960–62), and had taken into account later works as well, she would not have had to argue with me about my mistaken standpoint in connection with "The Virgin Mary Sets Out." In the Seeman *Festschrift* (*Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung* IX, 1964, pp. 77–79) I pointed out its German origin. (The text by the way came from Transylvania, and not the Great Plain.)

Taking it more briefly from here on, I want to draw attention to only a few striking mistakes. The person of the Virgin Mary found its way into the "Three Orphans" during the seventeenth century, because allegedly that was when reverence for her was supposed to have reached its peak? But St. Stephen, the founder of the Hungarian state, had already dedicated the country to Mary in 1038, since then the Patrona Hungariae has always been an evident fact, and evidences of the particular reverence for Mary in Hungary are the special names of holidays that originated in the Middle Ages: Feast of the Assumption, Feast of the Holy Virgin's Nativity (whose Hungarian names—*Nagyboldogasszony*, *Gyümölcsoltó Boldogasszony*, etc.—indicate fusion with some pre-Christian being), the Feast of Annunciation, and the Visitation—the start-

ing day of the harvest. But then reverence for Mary was widespread throughout the whole of medieval Europe, one need not turn to the revival of the Regnum Marianum in the baroque era for the explanation to such a phenomenon. Scottish–Hungarian "ballad kinship" is not a commonplace in Hungary (p. 320); the sentence quoted from the Csanády–Vargyas work means only that this was the way we had indicated in a popularizing text the elements of content and style that are common with the French and the Scots. The formula mentioned on page 96: "cut my heart six ways" does not appear even once in this form, but only as: "take out my heart..." and then the analogies mentioned lose their basis. Almost none of her observations in connection with the melodies are correct: that overwhelmingly pentatonic melodies with "irregular" lines make up the ballads, that they go back to the Ugrian community (the author of this review endeavoured to demonstrate this in connection with another style group, but this cannot be found in Kodály's quoted work), that a later volume of the *Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae* will allegedly discuss the melodies of the ballads as "exclusive matter" (in these volumes publication is proceeding only according to musical types), that in Transylvania the ballad style gained ground musically (pp. 4–5); Béla Vikár did not do his collecting at the beginning of this century, but between 1892 and 1898; Vargyas later than Domokos, Lükő and Veress, and the song quoted on page 50 was not collected by Vargyas, but by Béla Vikár. The Hungarians of Bukovina are not called Csángós, but Székelys, but the Csángós have lived in Moldavia from the thirteenth century onward. The battle of Kenyérmező of 1479 (in Transylvania) mentioned in the chapter "Bards" is not identical with the place mentioned in South Slav heroic epic, Kossovo (Rigómező in Hungarian), where the Serbian state fell in 1389 to the Turks, and where later Hunyadi also fought a losing battle in 1448. Child 20: the balled corresponding to The Cruel Mother is not our Ilona Budai, but the infanticidal Vilma Szabó. The "*Szálláskereső Jézus*" ("Christ searching for a lodging") is not a Christmas song, but a pilgrim's hymn, and it was noted down among children as an Advent season greeting on a single occasion, and not on the Great Plain, but in Transdanubia. And lastly Buják is not a locality on the Great Plain, but a Palóc village in the upper country generally known because of its traditional costume.

This enumeration does not mean that these were the only errors in the book, but that they are of this kind. Yet with a little care most of them could have been avoided. In other words, we ask the reader to approach this scientific work with caution, particularly where unverifiable Hungarian connections are concerned.

Nevertheless, we are pleased to welcome the fact that a whole series of our ballads are presented to the world in a reliable translation, that the variant deviations and the variant listings permit a more precise examination of Hungarian ballad material than any so far. With this the gems of Hungarian folk poetry—even if not in the beauty of their original form—at least showing values of their content, begin to penetrate the English-speaking world.

LAJOS VARGYAS

THREE FOLK BALLADS

THE TWO ROYAL CHILDREN

—Harken unto me, O Princeling,
Come into my spinning-room!
—I will not come for it is dark,
Dark indeed and filled with gloom,

And I shall fall into the sea,
Down into its very heart,
O I shall fall into the sea,
Down into its deepest part.

—I will light my golden candle,
Thou canst follow in its gleam;
I will light my golden candle,
Thou canst follow in its gleam!...

Late beneath the midnight moon
The prince went to the spinning-room,
And down he fell into the sea,
Down into its very heart.

Down he fell into the sea,
Down into its very heart,
Down into its deepest part,
Down into its deepest part.

How sore the princess weeps, how sore,
Weeping as forovermore;
How sore the princess weeps, how sore,
Weeping as forevermore.

Comes and asks the princess' mother:
—Why weepest thou, O Daughter mine?
—How not to weep, O my Mother,
My crown of pearls I cannot find;

Down it fell into the sea,
Down into its very heart,
Down it fell into the sea,
Down into its deepest part.

—Weep not, weep not, O my Daughter,
For I shall give thee one of mine!
—I would not take that one of thine,
I long for only what is mine.

To seek and find the pearly crown
A diver then was paid to go.
He found not that when he went down:
It was the prince he saw below.

Came the queen herself and said:
—Pull him out upon the shore,
Up to the palace carry him
And lay him on the readied bed;

Have then a coffin made of stone
And let the bells be made to drone,
Out to the crypt then follow him
And shed there three tears over him.

Translated by Eric M. Johnson

THE MAID WHO WAS CURSED

A widow's daughter, fair and ripe to wed,
And wed she would, against her mother's will.
The maid hath heeded not her mother's word
And from her mother's lips this curse hath heard:
"Go take thy vows, but shiver then with fright;
They soul shall quit thy body on that night!"

The younger bridesman was the first to cry:
"Oh noble lady, woe, the bride is faint!"
"If she is faint, so be it, she is tired;
You've brought her from afar, perhaps that's why!"

The elder bridesman was the next to cry:
"Oh noble lady, see, the bride is ill!"
"If she is ill then let her poor head lie;
You've brought her from afar, perhaps that's why!"

The bridgegroom then was heard himself to cry:
"Oh lady, Mother mine, the bride is dead!
"My coachmen, go! And as you go do mourn!
Mount up and fetch her mother from afar,
But not as if to see her daughter wed—

To bury, rather, her whom she hath borne,
The maid who had a curse upon her head.
And to that daughter, dead beneath a spell,
Not cakes, but shroud and coffin have her bring!"

The noonday bells. They do not ring, they knell.
They're placing now my daughter in the earth.
Oh leaves, I beg you, fall and hide me well,
For I have slain my daughter with a curse.
Oh stars, shine forth, shine forth as bright as day,
Come guide my darling daughter on her way.

Translated by Eric M. Johnson

THE PRETTY LASS OF KOMÁROM

Down flows the Danube water, down flows the Tisza—
On it goes a glorious galley, on it goes a golden galley,
On the galley is a pasha, is an ugly Turkish pasha.

Down the path, down the path goes a pretty lass from Komárom,
In her arms two pitchers, to the Danube waters.

"Give me now, give me a drink, pretty las of Komárom!"
"How could I give you, how, ugly Turkish pasha?
You are on the Danube's back, I am on the Danube's bank!"

She stretches out the pitcher; he snatches her white arm,
Drags her to the galley, to the deck of his galley.

"Give me a hug now, pretty lass of Komárom!"
"The devil of hell hug you and keep you company!"

"Give me a kiss then, pretty lass of Komárom!"
"The wild lion come and kiss you and cuddle you!"

"Lie down beside me, pretty lass of Komárom!"
"Let Hungarian steel lie close to your side!"

The bed of the Danube is the bed of my coffin,
The sides of the Danube are the sides of my coffin."

He slapped her face with his iron glove.
The red blood poured from her mouth and nose.

"White is my shroud with fleeces of the Danube,
My coffin is nailed with fishes of the Danube.

Little Danube fish, you will be my mourners,
You, little birds, will sing my last solace.

Fishermen, Fishermen, Danube fishermen—
On Thursday at midday fish up my body,
Fish up my body and also bury me!

My dresses, my dresses, my prettiest dresses—
Drop from your pegs, crouch close together—
To tell the story of my sorrow to my mother!"

Translated by Edwin Morgan

ARTS

AN EARLY MASTERPIECE BY MIES VAN DER ROHE

Hungarians have always had something a little bit extra, something faintly proprietorial, in their interest in the Bauhaus, since a surprising number of its members were Hungarians; László Moholy-Nagy, Alfréd Forbát, Farkas Molnár and Marcel Breuer are all well-known names today, as well as painters such as Sándor Bortnyik or Gyula Pap, who returned to Hungary and are still living there. Many of them, inspired by Bauhaus principles, were architects and interior decorators, designing furniture, textiles, glass and silver as well. Marcel Breuer, for instance, flung himself into the argument over tubular aluminium furniture, and this brings us to Mies van der Rohe, who also had strong opinions on the subject, and who is the subject of this article in an indirect way.

For it was Mies van der Rohe who built the Tugendhat Villa in Brno in Czechoslovakia in 1929–30 for a wealthy couple with a great deal of discrimination and judgement, for though their own taste was naturally conservative, they gave the revolutionary architect a free hand. Nowadays photographs of the villa are rarely missing from comprehensive works on modern architecture. When he built it Mies van der Rohe was already over forty, with considerable experience behind him, and he already had a name in advanced circles. Yet not much that he had designed had been built, and what he had built by that date has not survived. The German Pavilion at the Barcelona Exhibition of 1928—the immediate predecessor of the Tugendhat Villa —was dismantled when the Exhibition closed down, and its sections, taken to Germany, have disappeared. The houses built by Mies van der Rohe at the Weissenhof-Siedlung near Stuttgart were first altered by the Nazis and then badly damaged during the war; his Rosa Luxemburg–Karl Liebknecht memorial in Berlin was demolished by the Nazis, with the result that Tugendhat Villa in Brno is not only one of the few surviving early works by Mies van der Rohe but one of the very few to survive in Europe at all. And with the exception of the Corbusier building in Moscow it stands furthest east than any example of this period of modern architecture. The Villa was a turning-point, not only in Mies van der Rohe's work itself, but also in the development of modern architecture, like the Villa Savoye built by Le Corbusier in Poissy.

The small building of the Tugendhat Villa stands on one of the main streets of Brno, in a what is now a completely built-up area of small houses and bungalows. Seen from the street it appears as a single-storey villa; but it is only the top floor we are seeing. The ground in fact slopes steeply down towards the back, and from the garden side it presents three floors in all, basement, first floor, and top, bedroom floor to the view. The ground floor or basement con-

tains the boiler-room and the caretaker's flat. The first floor—where the main emphasis is centred—is wholly given over to a single spacious living area; upstairs are the bedrooms and the usual offices. This relatively small house, with its emphasis on horizontal lines, is practically rooted in the slope of the hill.

This created certain problems, but it also provided opportunities. The front façade of the house towards the street is modest and unostentatious, with a low horizontal line, but all round the other three sides of the house a wide terrace has been built up on which the house appears to rest, and which gives a wide, free-ranging view over the surroundings, and allows the house itself to stand out from the hillside. The entrance to this villa is along the side, by a path giving access to steps to the terrace and the "front" door, and this simple, oblong, closed block grows into a graceful spacious villa, three floors high as the visitor moves round into the garden. The most immediately striking features are the glass walls of the first floor, completely occupying two sides of the main living area, and a section of the third. Mies van der Rohe filled this whole wall space with clear glass; the 30-metre long window-wall facing the garden, offering a magnificent view of the city, was designed to roll back in fine weather, abolishing the distinction between indoors and outdoors, between the human habitat and the natural environment.

Every aspect of the building the fine general proportions and the validity of every detail from the simple steps leading up from the garden to the broad band of cement above the glass wall that forms the parapet of a recessed balcony before the bedrooms on the top floor, contributed to the strict architectural integrity of the whole. The total building is a translation of the spatial principles underlying the Barcelona Pavilion to domestic purposes. The Barcelona Pavilion was for display, to set out selected exhibits in suitable surroundings. Its great interest lay in the fact that it was not treated as a closed architectural unit; it merged with nature, blending into the terraces and pools encircling it. TheTugendhat Villa, with the same principles in mind, was designed for a childless couple, to meet the normal requirements of everyday living.

The long rectangle of the whole, open-plan main floor—slightly L-shaped in fact—is extended on its narrow side by a terrace and, along the front facing the street, by a staircase also oblong in shape. The stairs mount in a semicircular sweep within a glass-walled well, and the whole ground plan of the floor is so intricate that it can only be made out after careful observation. All the different parts of the architectural unit, small and great alike, are beautifully articulated in space: the simple lines and exquisite proportions have a rhythm and flow which were punctuated and stressed—never broken—by screens or dividers, carefully scaled and placed to indicate the different uses of the different areas. The dining area, for instance, was partially enclosed by a U-shaped divider of macassar ebony; another straight divider of highly polished marble, showing delicate veins of onyx and reflecting the play of light along its surface, marked off the smoking corner, liberally provided with seats, from the music-room and library areas, which were again separated by curtains that could be drawn at pleasure. Another curtain could be drawn along the glass walls, shutting in the room to evening intimacy. The whole was defined and given perspective by slender cruciform chromium-metal supports running down the room. These supports, or fine pillars, take up practically no room and in fact add to the general impression of space. Thus, while the room was separated into areas for dining, reading, music-making and general living space, yet the whole was open, producing a remarkable impression of dignity and lightness at the same time. When, moreover, the large glass wall was open, the whole architectural space within was assimilated to the terrace and the

light and air and natural environment of the garden beyond.

At the time of building—in 1930—the structure, the material, the proportions were something new. So were the wide spaces of the room, the glass walls reaching the ceiling on three sides, the green world "looking in" from the garden, and the sense of freedom as the eye roamed through the room to the garden and the further distance. The sunlight streamed into the room to light up the few pieces of furniture, each of them personally designed by Mies van der Rohe himself. The colours were fairly muted; the floor was covered with white linoleum, the curtains were deep yellow, the upholstery was in black and green, all revealing the careful deliberation and sobriety of the designer's taste. Mies van der Rohe did not as a rule like bright colours, he preferred "framing the greens shining in from the garden in white"—as he once said himself.

Although the architect dealt with the principal floor in a new and original way, carefully thought out in every detail, he adhered to the traditional long, rectangular plan when designing the bedrooms on the top floor. Bathrooms, wall-closets, and other conveniences were disposed to ensure the greatest possible comfort.

Although this small gem of a building suffered only minor damage in the war, it has been greatly changed. At the time of the Occupation the owners left the country, and the villa passed into German ownership. I was unfortunately unable to discover what had happened to the original furniture. Nothing has remained and no information as to its present whereabouts has as yet been obtained. At present the villa is an institute for medical physiotherapy. In the process of repairing the war damage many changes were made in the interior, stripping it of its former beauty. In recent years there has been a vigorous movement, particularly among Czech architects, for the complete restoration of the Tugendhat Villa to its former appearance. It is well within the bounds of possibility that this little masterpiece of modern architecture may soon regain its original form, though alas, in all probability without the original furniture.

Both the exterior and the interior of the building are greatly changed owing to the fact that the large unbroken surface of glass has been replaced by small panes like a greenhouse wall, some of which can be opened. This has given the place a peculiar formlessness, the air of a glasshouse, a certain out-of-date meanness in place of the former unbroken lines and sense of breadth and light. Structurally nothing has changed, but the overall effect is quite different. Nothing could more effectively prove that the great glass surfaces were not simply the sum of so many unframed windows but genuine walls of glass standing in a strictly defined and rigorous relation to the parts not made of glass. It also goes to show that the best creations of modern architecture are not simply façades, broken by rows of windows, or adorned with lavish glazing as extraneous decoration, but that the relation and proportion between the glass and the wall are essential to the design, and are based on the same rigorous principles determining the relations of windows and openings to columns in façades of earlier times. It is impossible to modify the relation and proportion of the glass surface to the solid wall surface without ruining the aesthetic effect, and for this reason any restoration envisaged must first and foremost replace the original glass walls.

But looking at the building today it also becomes clear that all the smaller details, the dividers and their placing, the colour and quality of the furniture, the floor, and even the positioning of the movable objects are vitally important. With no separations of the area, with the red painted floor, the large room is like a bleak gymnasium, and it is almost impossible to imagine its dignity and intimate beauty in its original form. One realizes that all these accessories were not simply furniture; they made up the interior architecture, organically connected with the

external shell, an interior architecture which included fabrics and colours, built-in and movable furniture, all inextricably related.

And the relationship between the building and nature indicates an even more complex relationship. In the course of these forty years—irrespective of the unkempt network of garden paths which are obviously of later date—the trees and shrubs have grown enormously, the original atmosphere of light and air in the garden, the fine vertical accents of young saplings, have been ousted by a thick and luxuriant mass of green. The garden environment is now crowded and dense, the sense of air and light which appeared a spatial continuation of the interior has gone. It makes us aware that in such a homogeneously composed creation as the Tugendhat Villa time itself as a significant dimension has to be taken into account in establishing the relationship between architecture and nature. The ordinary laws of growth in nature may in themselves change the proportions and mar the original effect; nature, in fact, cannot be left to itself. Somewhat like the formal French gardens of the eighteenth century, the garden in such a composition must be treated architecturally, pruned and shaped as part of the whole design. The changes, the rank luxuriance observable here in a relatively small garden on a steep slope, naturally make themselves more strongly felt than they would with a building standing in spacious flat surroundings. But it is not only the garden view which has deteriorated. The unkempt garden and heavy, rank growth hide the fine proportions of the building itself, blurring the carefully designed details which make its simple exterior so very attractive.

One last point. The point so often raised regarding the preservation and protection of architectural monuments. During the period in which it has been put to a different use than that for which it was originally designed, the Tugendhat Villa, like many other modern architectural monuments, has undergone great changes, practically all of which have been harmful. To restore it to its authentic appearance, and in the interests of the overall aesthetic effect, many of these changes will have to be removed. But one must ask oneself whether the authorities responsible for the protection of architectural monuments have to undo all these changes regardless of other considerations. For the essential thing in my opinion is that this should only be done if the maintenance of the building in its original state can be properly guaranteed, that is, if a suitable use is found for it. There is no point at all in insisting on restoring a building to its original state in every detail, if, after restoration, no use is found for it. Even a temporary use for the wrong purpose is better than no use at all and the decay and ruin that must inevitably follow.

Mies van der Rohe is one of the architects who claims that the original functional value of a building was of no essential importance, since as a rule the building survived its user and its original purpose. To create a building that was an integral work of art itself was more important, he thought, than anything else; it would then satisfy any requirements of a changed function and purpose. It is the emergence of such a new purpose for the Tugendhat Villa for which we must devoutly hope, since it is a milestone in modern architecture, not to mention its role in the work of Mies van der Rohe as a whole.

ANNA ZÁDOR

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

The past years have seen the beginning of a vigorous restratification process in Hungarian fine arts. Although the main trends of this development cannot as yet be fully defined, some of its characteristic features are already recognizable.

A characteristic of contemporary Hungarian art is that most of the artists practising today belong to the 1930–1940 generation who finished their art training at the beginning of the 'fifties and who, towards the end of that decade, had broken through the post-impressionism which was still predominant in the art world and naturalistic and academic trends as well. This generation, represented in the main by Tibor Csernus, Ignác Kokas, Béla Kondor, Lili Ország, Imre Varga and Tamás Vigh is freer in its approach, has assimilated certain surrealistic elements and is looking for a new symbolism. Although it also includes a number of non-representational painters most of its members have tried to achieve some balance between naturalistic trends and the artistic outlook of modern West European movements.

This generation has now been followed by a still younger generation, in which more and more artists abandon the earlier Hungarian heritage and have flung themselves wholeheartedly without any intermediary phase—into the latest Western trends, op art, pop art or *informel*, and during 1968 this tendency could be examined more closely in several of the current exhibitions.

Studio 58–68

The largest of the exhibitions, held in the Műcsarnok—or official Exhibition Hall—was the jubilee "Studio 58–68", showing a selection of the work done by the "Studio of Young Artists" in the last ten years. The Studio was founded in January 1958 and was designed to help young artists at the outset of their careers by arranging competitions, scholarships and exhibitions. It is clear from this jubilee exhibition that there are hardly any artists between thirty and forty today who have not benefited from the Studio in one way or another.

The Studio however was not limited to giving ideological and material support to young artists: at the beginning of the sixties it acted as a leaven in the whole of Hungarian artistic life; a whole generation organized itself around the Studio and a restratification process began in the late fifties and the early sixties which has reached its full development in the course of the last few years.

The jubilee exhibition had a difficult task to perform. Its twofold purpose was to present developments over the last ten years—the most remarkable works of that period—and the latest achievements. It offered a selection of both the works of former Studio members—now between 35 and 40 years old—and the present members, i.e. the youngest generation. The exhibition in fact included every sort of style—from lyrical impressionism through surrealistic influences down to op art. Since the number of pictures shown was very large each artist was represented by only a few works and the visitor did not get a comprehensive picture of the individual styles. On the other hand he was given an opportunity to view certain successful works from earlier Studio exhibitions a second time, such as the graphic works of Gyula Feledy, Arnold Gross, Liviusz Gyulay, Béla Kondor and Gábor Pásztor, the "Fugitive" by László Lakner—with pop art elements—the sculptures of Andreas Papachristos, etc. The most exciting experience was however provided by new works which have not yet been shown in Budapest exhibitions, such as the monumental and decorative composition of

ERIK SCHOLZ: COUPLE (TEMPERA, 60 × 80 CMS, 1968)

Ilona Keserü: Mirror Image (oil, 140×110 cms, 1968)

László Lakner: Repetition (oil, 212×124 cms, 1968)

Overleaf:
Erik Scholz: In the Forest (tempera, 110×90 cms, 196

János Orosz "Sun, Sand, Sea" or the picture of Ignác Kokas "Marked by the Sun", which represented Hungary at the 1968 Venice Biennale 1968. Others worth mentioning are Viola Berki, maintaining her original naiveté of approach but avoiding any repetitive sameness, Ilona Keserü, combining a sensitive and poetic abstraction with the severity of op art, József Németh with "Snow melting," Csaba Fejér, at once poetic and controlled, Ferenc Kokas with his rich pictorial appreciation; but the average level is by no means impressive. Hungarian painting at present is still derivative; in many paintings an impressionist view of nature is intermingled with various tendencies of constructivism.

Two one-man shows and a group exhibition

During the autumn season there were also a number of one-man shows and minor group exhibitions which—precisely on account of their restricted scope—demonstrate the latest tendencies in Hungarian art even more clearly.

The in-between generation was represented by Erik Scholz and Magda Varga. Both ended their studies towards 1950, and consequently began their career when naturalistic-impressionistic tendencies dominated the scene. In recent years both have attempted to break through these barriers, the one with help of surrealism and the other through symbolism mixed with mysticism. The result is contradictory. The influence of nature remains decisive in the art of Scholz —he remains a landscape painter, changing nothing but the scale. The landscape appears as a fragment, not as *veduta*. Isolated fragments of trees and river-banks appear on the canvas; seen from very close range, the objects have obviously lost their material character, reminding one almost of the *informel*. At the same time, real objects were stuck on the pictures, with a reference back to pop art. So we find, for instance, a pebble, a piece of cockle shell or of wood on the river bank. But these natural objects are not meant to introduce a touch of the "absurd," nor do they make a fetish of the objects in the sense of pop art, they are precisely the instruments enhancing naturalism. So Scholz, in fact, remains in essence within the framework of naturalistic painting.

Magda Varga paints in a variety of styles and has not yet managed to find a mature individual style of her own. A number of her canvases and her illustrations and calligraphies series seem to indicate pretty clearly that she is on the way to a certain type of Symbolist painting which includes elements of surrealism.

The recent works of Scholz and Magda Varga are good examples of the difficulties confronting the "in-between" generation—the contradictory process by which it attempts to solve the problems of modern art. Another one-man show and another group exhibition, on the other hand, presented a vivid picture of the attitude of the youngest generation, uninhibitedly following the line of the Western avant-garde. György Kemény, up to the present known as a commercial graphic artist and poster designer, showed works in the pop art style. The tone of these constructions is witty and ironical, and they represent almost every typical trend in international pop art. It leaves the impression that the style was not the consequence of an inner, organic urge, but a conscious desire to work from consciously received fashionable trends.

Eleven young artists

The exhibition arranged by eleven young artists in the hall of the central architects' office also aroused considerably mixed feelings. "Op art," *informel*, "new abstract," "pop art," and "abstract impressionism"—were all represented, some of them frankly and exclusively derivative, others enriched

by individual invention. The decorative rhythm and the exuberantly coloured op art compositions of Ilona Keserü and the strict composition of László Lakner's monumental picture were excellent in their quality; the chief attraction of the exhibition, however, was not the quality of the exhibits, but the passion with which the painters there insisted on their non-conformism. This rejection has not yet led to any rounded and independent expression, has not yet developed a style and form of its form, and must certainly must still be considered, in the work it produces, as a stereotyped copy of international fashionable trends; it is nevertheless necessary. The young artists must ask themselves the question: do they want to identify themselves with the international movements of the last ten to thirty years, rejecting all national tradition and development, and filling the galleries with standardized work? Or are they willing to undertake the more difficult task of creating a modern art corresponding to the realities of the Hungarian environment just, as problems of their own environment are expressed in the work of Rauschenberg, Escobal Harisol or Zoltán Kemény. This is a problem, however, not exclusive to these eleven young artists—and here the originality of Ludmill Siskov and the pictorial responsiveness of Tamás Hencze deserve a mention;—it is one for Hungarian artists as a whole as they embark on new and radical developments.

LAJOS NÉMETH

HUNGARIAN PEASANT FURNITURE

In Hungary, as in a certain number of other European countries, cottages can still occasionally be found furnished in the old manner, with pieces according with the traditional taste of village folk. Thus the usages and custom that formerly determined the form and decorations of peasant furniture can, as it were, still be studied *in situ*. In most parts of Hungary indeed, traditional peasant furniture continued to be made until the turn of the century, in fact, up to the First World War. Since then the number of homes furnished in the old manner have grown increasingly scarce, and it will not be long before such furniture can only be seen in museums. The museums are aware of this, and make every effort to collect and preserve examples wherever possible. The Budapest Ethnographical Museum today possesses nearly 3,000 examples of peasant furniture, forming the biggest collection of its kind in Hungary.

Hungarian peasant furniture is on the whole basically homogeneous in style. The manner of life lived by the Hungarian peasant was much the same throughout the country, and Hungarian peasant cottages were more or less identical in their design. The cottage door opened into the kitchen, through which one passed to the living-room, or on occasion to the rooms serving as living quarters. Separate bedrooms or sleeping quarters were only to be found in few districts; in most areas the bed and the big family table formed part of the same room.

Next to the door stood the big stove which heated the room, built of clay, or tiled; in the corner diagonally opposite stood the table, with benches behind it along the walls. The table corner was considered the place of honour—it was not proper for a stranger to approach it until invited—and the wall behind the benches was usually

decorated with a shelf on which ornamental plates and jugs were ranged, or with a small cupboard in the corner. With Catholic families this cupboard was transformed into a small shrine with little statues for worship and other devotional objects in it; but Protestants also used the cabinets as a receptacle for the Bible and Book of Psalms, with calendars, books and pamphlets and broadsheets bought at country fairs piled beside them; the brandy bottle and patent medicine would be kept there as well. The armchair, only for the head of the family, stood by the table. In the other two corners of the room the two, sometimes three, beds were placed, with benches or chairs alongside. Ranged along the other walls were chests and cupboards for clothes. The furniture in the ordinary living-room and in the best, the "clean" room, was always arranged in exactly the same way. The "clean" room, however, contained the more elaborate furniture, the more intricately carved chairs and the benches with a richer ornamentation.

This arrangement of the furniture goes back to medieval times, when homes with similar features were to be found in other parts of Europe as well. Beds in the living-room were common in England too at that period. Excavations on the sites of Hungarian villages destroyed by wars have revealed earlier versions of the same arrangement in existence as early as the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. The form of more than one piece of furniture or an element in a pattern still in use today dates back to these early times, although the actual furniture itself and even the examples in museums are not themselves very ancient, and hardly any are earlier than the eighteenth century. By far the great majority date from the last century. And yet with their help we can trace not only the changing styles of the different centres of furniture-making in the course of the last two to two and a half centuries but even of earlier times.

Some indications of the earlier forms of Hungarian peasant furniture are provided by ancient records and pictorial representations. One of the most important written sources for Hungarian ethnography, the record of the investigations preceding the canonization of Margit, daughter of the Hungarian king Béla IV, who became a nun—the Margit of Budapest's Margit Island—contains the evidence of miracles put forward by several Hungarian village families and reveals that village homes in the thirteenth century boasted of tables and cradles, and that in the well-to-do homes the head of the family had a chair, placed near the window, a special sign of authority, for the rest of the family sat on benches and stools.

From contemporary pictures we can deduce that certain forms or types of furniture spread in popularity from one part of Europe to another. A certain kind of carpenter-made bedstead, for instance, with high posts at the four corner—an early example can be seen in the *Benedictionale Sancti Aethelwoldi* made in England between 975 and 980—seems to have been greatly admired in Hungary in the fourteenth century, and survived in some rural parts of Hungary as late as the nineteenth century. In a copy of the chronicle of Hungarian kings made by order of the king between around 1370 one of the royal personages has such a bed, and half a century later, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, a relief adorning a great Hungarian cathedral shows such a bed in a royal bedroom. But sixty years or so later the fashion had changed. In the altarpiece behind the high altar of the same church, painted between 1474 and 1477, this type of bed is shown by the artist as a hospice bed for the sick poor.

If, therefore, we want to take an informed look at the many examples of peasant furniture scattered through museums and private homes in Hungary today, we should first turn our attention to those pieces which either in form and pattern refer back to earlier designs, or to the quite considerable

number of medieval pieces still extant. They include stools with dowelled legs, low tables, round or square, high trestle tables, tables set on X-shaped supports, chairs with backs and arms of thin lathes of wood, hanging cupboards with long, narrow, and occasionally latticed doors.

From the Scrinium to the "Tulip" Chest

In the areas inhabited by Hungarians the most important single item, with a long tradition behind it, was the carpenter-made chest. It was made from boards fixed to four corner posts, which also served as feet. In some parts of Hungary such carpenter-made chests were still being made in the second half of the last century, and indeed, in some regions, up to the First World War.

The original Hungarian name for these carpenter-made chests was *szekrény*, a word deriving from the Latin *scrinium*, a clear indication of its antiquity. Chests are of course to be found all over Europe: in England a great many fine thirteenth-century types of chests still survive. The Hungarian type, however, stands somewhat apart, and is more closely related to Central, Eastern and Southern European models. These Hungarian chests are usually made of beech, although oak is used in some places. The decoration is incised, made with a special chisel. The surface of the decorated wood was stained a reddish or brown colour, mostly with vegetable dyes, as for instance infusion of the bark of the alder, or by curing the boards. In earlier times certain patterns were picked out with a bluish-black dye as well, giving further variety to the surface. As a rule the decorations follow the line of the structure: vertical up the corner posts, and horizontal along the side boards of the chest; they cover the whole surface like a carpet pattern. The front of the chest or at least of the lower board is frequently adorned with a large rosette in the centre. The patterns of these carpenter-made chest are mostly geometrical; flower and foliage designs are later in date, and then rather rare, mainly dating from the end of the nineteenth or beginning of the twentieth centuries. Formalized human figures—mostly with upraised arms—are, however, quite frequent. Presumably not only this special type of chest but also the small figures in this position are very ancient: late successors of the praying figure of early Christianity. Nor can it be chance—although the inhabitants of the villages where these chests were made could not possibly be aware of the significance of the figures—that you can still hear it said that such figures can only be used on bridal chests, since they are not suitable for chests used to store grain or fodder. On the other hand, those who used them—and who, of course, knew nothing of the original meaning of such ancient symbols—seem to have re-invested them with their own religious beliefs. In the Catholic village of Mezőkövesd for instance, such a figure, if presented alone, was called the Infant Christ; if in a pair, Adam and Eve or Mary and Joseph.

Carpenter-made chests have been produced in Hungary from early medieval times. There is documentary evidence from the thirteenth century onwards that they were common objects in village homes. Fourteenth-century documents referring to the widespread violence of the times record the rifling of *scrinia* belonging to serfs, as in a text of around 1370, reporting towels, tablecloths, clothes and other valuables were stolen from the *scrinia* of the women who took refuge in the village church. Fourteenth-century deeds mention the fact that the carpenters who made the chests sold them at fairs. Texts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries referring to "Bakony-type" chests indicate that the various centres in wooded regions producing these chests had developed certain formal and decorative styles of their own recognizable to outsiders. Some of these centres—comprising all the inhabitants of a

village or even a group of villages—continued to function for several centuries. Four or five of the larger centres were supplying wide areas—even several counties—with carpenter-made chests as late as the nineteenth century.

The chests made of hewn boards popular in the county-regions of Baranya and Somogy are perhaps the most interesting, for they have most faithfully preserved the shape and structure of antique wooden sarcophagi, and the decoration is also of an archaic and rigid character. The carpenter-made chests of Gömör County on the other hand, used by the Palóc ethnic group of the northern hills, and by the people of the Great Plain, slowly rid themselves of the dead hand of tradition, and show increasingly elaborate and detailed decoration, and a wide variety in the use of motifs. The decorative elements themselves, however, remained essentially unchanged, and the traditional approach to the human figures in the design is most faithfully maintained.

Chairs

Geometric patterns, of course, were not exclusive to carpenter-made chests; in many regions villagers had a particular liking for such designs on the pieces of furniture they made and carved for their own pleasure. In contrast, however, to the experienced craftsmen who produced the slabbed chests, the unschooled villagers used the geometrical motifs with a different technique, cutting them into the wood with knives and producing an effect like cuneiform writing. Particularly beautiful are the stools from the Kalotaszeg area in Transylvania with this type of pattern. These small stools were given to the girls by the young men who courted them, as footrests in the spinning room. Such a gift was considered a confession of love. The stools were made with painstaking care; they often bore the name of the girl—occasionally that of the young man, or both—and the date of the year in which they were made. The example illustrated here is particularly interesting because it gives a rare glimpse into the creative process of folk art. The unknown carver—whose skill can be seen in the marked assurance of the design and the composition on the upper surface of the seat—made preparatory studies of the pairs of birds carved on one of the edges, on the under surface. Comparing the preliminary designs and the completed frieze it is clear to the observer that the simplification of the bird forms is the result of conscious creation, though following a traditional line and appropriate to the ornamental style.

Painted Furniture

So far we have discussed the work of homecraft artisans and untrained home workers. But in recent centuries it was not their work, but the work of craftsmen and professional joiners that was mostly to be found in the homes of the Hungarian peasantry. Furniture made in a professional manner of sawn and planed boards, nailed together or glued, or the joints mortised and tenoned, gained ground in Hungary—as in other of Europe—from the Middle Ages onwards, when saw-mills first came into existence. The first known reference to saw-mills in Hungary dates back to 1393, although it is known that as early as the thirteenth century chests made by carpenters and joiners were in use, at least by the members of the royal family. In the course of the fourteenth century such chests became popular with the county nobility and finally from 1516 there is evidence that they were in use among the peasants as well. From that time there is increasing information about chests made by joiners and owned by serf families, and original peasant chests of this kind, beginning in the seventeenth century, have come down to us. Exactly when other items of furniture

made by professional craftsmen began to be added to the joiner-made bridal chest in rural cottages would be difficult to state, but among the objects now preserved in museums or private homes, dating from the first half of the seventeenth century onwards, all the shapes and forms characteristic of peasant furniture of the nineteenth century can be found.

Most of this joiner-made Hungarian peasant furniture was made of deal and brightly painted in many colours. Painted furniture existed in Hungary in the Middle Ages, as can be deduced from carpenter-made beech chests decorated in bright colours surviving from the fourtheenth and fifteenth centuries. Some of these medieval beechwood chests are adorned with figures, on occasion pointing to the wreaths held in their hands, but animal figures in a circle, reminiscent of the design in Byzantine silks, or the Alexander the Great carried to heaven by eagles—also composed in a circular field—likewise occur.

The painted carpenter-made chests of more modern times have practically no connection with these earlier medieval chests, for most of them are decorated with flower designs, under the influence of the Renaissance. An inventory of a Hungarian burgher's home dated 1587 mentions an "armchair painted green with Italian jars and carnation." Here "Italian jar" means a vase with two ears and makes the origin of this characteristic decorative element clear. Jars of branching flowers play an important, indeed the principal, part in painted peasant furniture of a later date. In fact, a characteristic of carpenter-made Hungarian peasant furniture is the virtually exclusive use of flower and plant patterns. The bridal chest, for instance, is still known in Hungarian as the "tulip chest," or the "rose chest," now only to be found in country speech, though the phrase can be found in a 1587 document. Practically no motifs other than flowers are to be found on painted Hungarian peasant furniture; at most a bird or so. Pictures of saints, so popular in Catholic countries west of Hungary, are almost completely absent, and so are religious symbols.

Symmetrical compositions filling the whole of the available surface similar to those on Italian chests are quite often found in earlier examples; in chests of a more recent date, however, due to the spread of German influence from the seventeenth century onwards, a composition with two fields is much more common. Designs in painted niche-shaped frames were particularly popular up to very nearly the middle of the nineteenth century at Hódmezővásárhely, a famous centre for the making of Hungarian painted furniture.

In the course of time an individual style distinguishing the joiners in each of the larger towns emerged. These centres supplied the furniture for fairly wide regions around them. And, from the evidence of surviving pieces, during the period that wooden church ceilings with multicoloured painting were in fashion—they were particularly popular with the Calvinists—that is, up to the beginning of the last century, itinerant church painter-joiners painted furniture as well. There are chests on which the characteristic emblems of church painters can be seen beside or among the designs, in other cases the style of the decoration indicates their hand.

In most regions the peasants did only painting and it was not accompanied by carving as well, but there were certain districts where the two can be found together. The painted design, however, was often enclosed in a carved frame, and sometimes a part of the pattern in the central design might be carved as well. This was a practice of the famous joiners' confraternity of Komárom, on the Danube, whose work found its way beyond the Hungarian frontiers, carried by vessels plying up and down the river.

Whereas chests were almost always painted, even in districts where unpainted, carved hardwood furniture was popular, painted

chairs were rare. Joiners were seldom commissioned by the villagers to make chairs for them along with the rest of the furniture; in very many districts chairs were ordered from villagers who specialized in carving, though they were not professional craftsmen. In Transdanubia, for example, there were several chair-making centres each with a style of its own; and whole villages famous for their carved chairs.

Two types of chair were popular in Hungary: one, the older, with a framework of thin wood, the seat interwoven with rushes, straw or the leaves of corn husks, the other inspired by the Italian Renaissance. The more popular type, the Renaissance chair, was introduced into Hungary through the intermediary of South Germany, and became widespread in the seventeenth century. It has four thin legs and a back with mortised and tenoned joints. Chairs supported on slabs of wood or board, suggesting a direct adaptation of the Italian *scabelli*, are also to be found among the Székelys of Transylvania.

Chairs with mortised and tenoned joints generally coincide with backs of solid boards pierced with a variety of heart-shaped openings, serving as a handy hold. In some regions, or among poorer families, the cut-out design in the back was the only decoration; in some, however, the whole of the back was carved in relief. Very seldom was paint used to decorate; although on occasion chairs with pierced backs have been found which were painted as well. Inlaid chairs are occasionally encountered but marquetry played a less important part in Hungarian furniture, though it was something of a speciality in Veszprém County, where not only different coloured wood, but different coloured waxes were used as inlays; many of these pieces, the framework mostly in the style of Louis XVI, adorned with bouquets of flowers, have come down to us from the first half of the nineteenth century.

The chairs were generally decorated with flower and plant designs, with a nosegay in the centre; some chairs bear the insignia of guilds or are decorated with coats of arms, others with small scenes, the swineherd with his rootling pigs, or a huntsman levelling his gun at a bird.

Pierced or Carved Examples

Country jack-of-all-trades or villagers skilled in carving were not, however, everywhere content to confine themselves to the making of chairs. In spite of strong opposition from the guilds, jealous in the arts of their craft, many of them watched and learned the professional techniques of the joiners by covert observation. In the depth of the country the villagers who worked for themselves and their immediate neighbours mostly confined themselves to as close an imitation of the joiners' models as possible, even following their particular decorative style. Deliberate deviations from these models were on the whole exceptional. All the more interesting is the pierced decorative style developed by the village carvers, most of them herdsmen, among the Palóc people in Nógrád and Heves Counties, a style that was only really developed in the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

The furniture made by the Palóc carvers, above all their benches, and to a lesser extent, their chairs, shelves for plates, tables and cradles, were mostly made of deal, which served as a framework for the hard pierced panels. There are simple pieces in which the same flower or plant design is repeated on the panels but a great number of more elaborate pieces of furniture, usually decorated with designs embodying human figures, have also been produced. Only rarely are these figures isolated, with no connection; in general they are part of a subject, illustrating the lives of country folk, peasants, herdsmen, hunters, or men doing their military service, and they all reveal the

pleasure the maker took in narrating his stories. The arms of Hungary are usually carved in the centre of the bench-back in a primitive, individual manner, and are flanked on either side by different scenes. On other objects, simpler ornamental panels separate the figures. All these pieces, however, are eloquent of the independence and self-confidence of the rural carver, emphasized again by the fact that, unlike the anonymous professional joiner, they often signed the splendid pieces of furniture they had made with their full names.

Klára Csilléry

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FROM OUR NEXT NUMBERS

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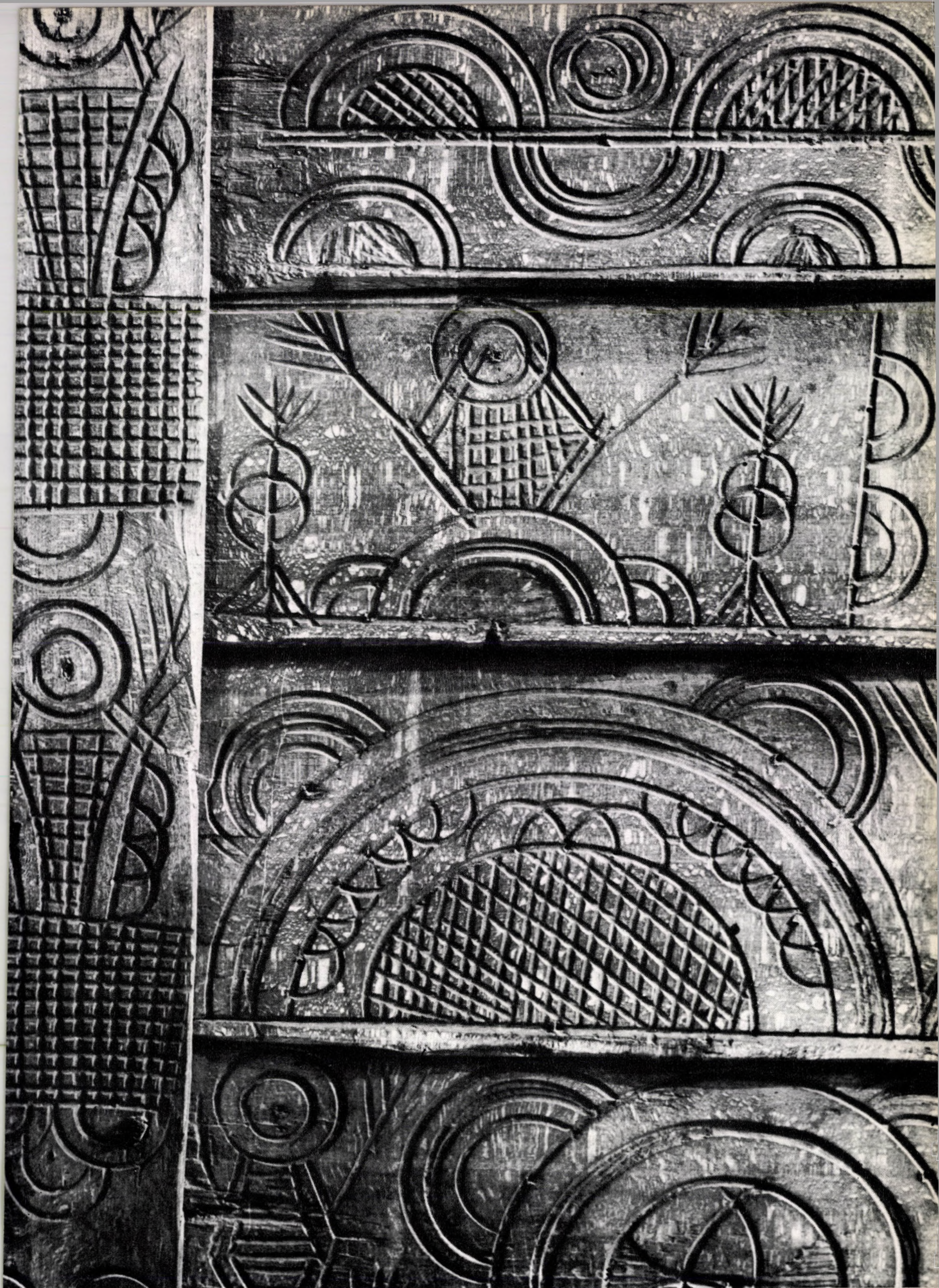
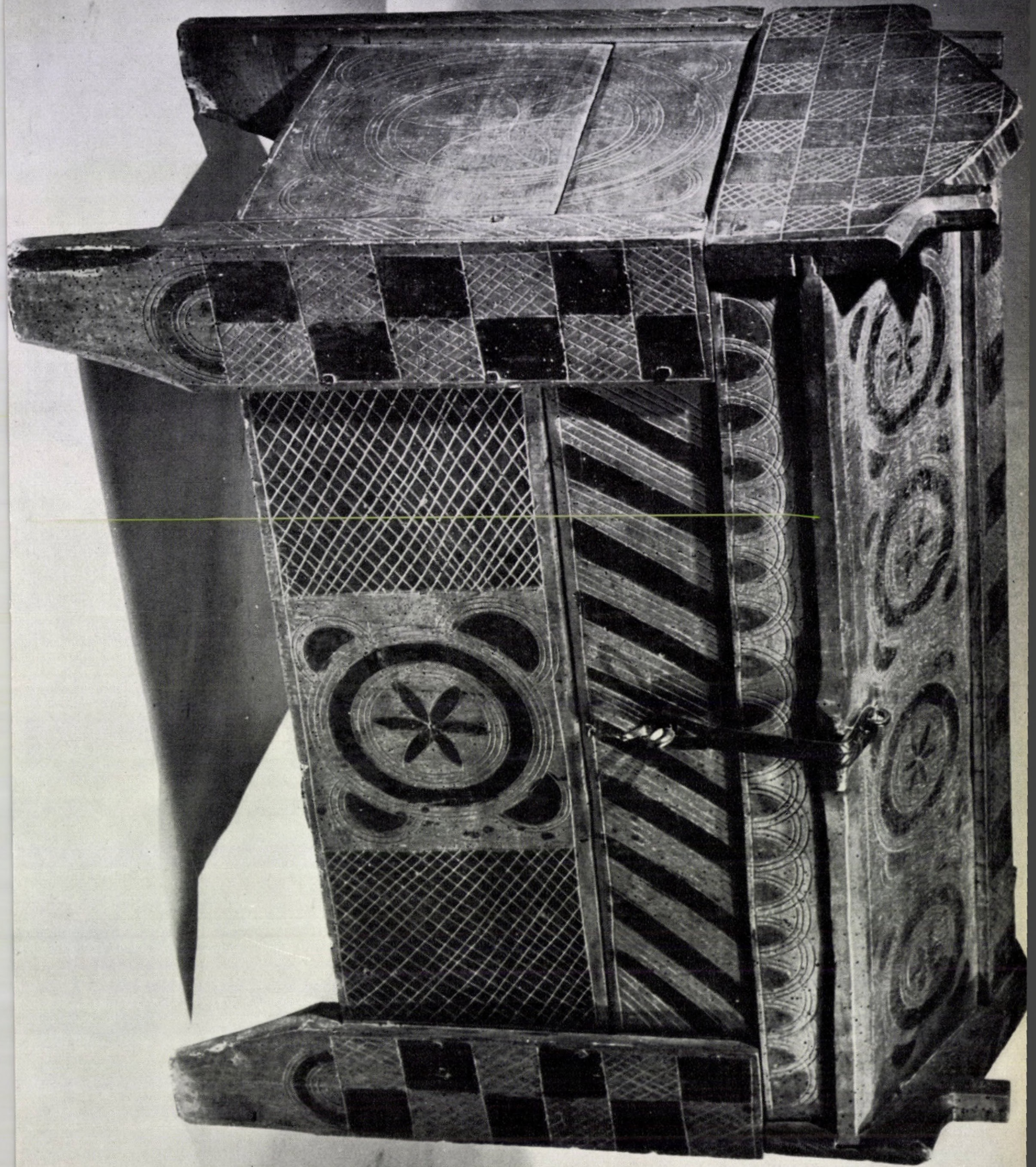


Detail from a chest (County Nógrád, 1896)

Back of a chair (Nyúlhegy, County Győr, 1766)

Back of a chair (Great Plains, 1785)

Overleaf:



THEATRE AND FILM

THEATRE CHRONICLE

The Good Old Days

It is not mere chance if plays of a certain period or a certain type vanish from the repertoires of the theatres simultaneously, or, likewise, if plays of a certain period or a certain type appear prominently at about the same time. This idea occurred to me when a few years ago actors in Paris theatres put on again and again the uniforms and costumes of Tsarist Russia in Chekhov's plays or in dramatic versions of novels by Dostoevski and Turgenev. In the fifties the fashion for Mediterranean comedies (those of Lope de Vega and Goldoni, and Molière too might be included) prevailed in Hungarian theatres. After 1956, the Mediterranean comedy entirely disappeared from the Budapest stage for years. After 1958 ancient Greek tragedies and comedies, none of which had been performed in Budapest after the Second World War, were put on more and more often.

It is, of course, easy to provide an explanation for this symptom and people who are fond of unsophisticated explanations will be set at their ease by some superficial answer, for instance, that the public was, obviously, fed up with this mass production of Mediterranean comedies and required something else. Yes, this is obvious and doubtlessly true although it does not explain why of all types of play just Greek drama succeeded the Mediterranean comedies the public had got tired of, nor to what the latter owed their popularity? Was it chance that a revival of fratricidal Greek tragedy and of Aristophanes' demagogy appeared in so many theatres? Wasn't what counted that the theme of so many of these tragedies is that one generation commits a crime and the delinquent is therefore rightfully killed, then the subsequent generation rightly kills the murderer and this goes on and on through the whole range of tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, until the gods, for example after the murder by Orestes, stop the series: enough! put an end to fratricide and live at peace. And the comedies by Aristophanes that were performed (*Lysistrate*, *Thesmophoriazousae*, *Peace*, etc.) in which he asks his compatriots to put an end to the fratricide—do they not deal with the same subject?

Brecht's St. Joan

Absorbed in such kinds of thought I shall now cover a number of first performances that took place in the Budapest theatres in the recent past. It is striking to what extent the number of plays that originate in the nineteen-twenties increased during this short period, works that were written at that time and reflect the age or its view of life. Let us take the National Theatre first. Tamás Major, the principal director, put on *St. Joan of the*

Slaughter-Houses, a play written by Brecht in 1929.

Dramatic critics do not consider this play one of Brecht's most successful ones for his programmatic propaganda sounds somewhat insipid this time, the description of the capitalist mechanism, the detailed review of exploitation and the struggle of the capitalists for power is over-emphasized, whereas human relationships are insufficiently shown. Brechtian notions of alienation are presented so consistently that, according to some malicious critics, they almost alienate the audience from the play itself.

Thus, it was a difficult task for Tamás Major, the director. The critics who argued that Hungarian audiences of our day were not interested in the play were justified by the lack of interest shown by the public. But—one might ask—why? Has capitalism perhaps changed meanwhile? Don't Brecht's maxims hold good any more? It is true, the mechanism of the capitalist economy has also changed considerably, but why shouldn't Brecht's true statements about that age not still be valid? Molière's bourgeois has also greatly changed since the times of the Roi Soleil and, yet, the power of his comedies has remained unchanged up to the present. Some of the critics mentioned that the Budapest audience has learned so much in schools and seminaries about this kind of schematic mechanism of exploitation that Brecht does not tell them anything new. Then why was *Arturo Ui*, Brecht's other play concerned with the same mechanism, successful everywhere? I think that this naive sort of description of an age sounds strange and hard to understand to today's public. Indeed, things that happen, such as, for example, that soap is made out of a workman who fell into a cauldron, are hard to believe today, and this play abounds in such elements. First and foremost, however, there is the childish naivety of Johanna Dark, the chief character, who in accordance with the taste of the times might perhaps have been considered charmingly naive in the twenties. When she preaches to the unemployed that they should be worthy of God's Paradise, and not try to bring about an earthly one, someone rushes in with the news that a job is available in the fifth workshop. Thereupon three unemployed leave their soup behind and run to apply for the job. Johanna's reaction is: "I say, you three, where are you running to? When one speaks to them about God! Now then, don't you want to listen to that, well, I never!" One cannot present that to today's public without irony or in a grotesque sense. Brecht himself possibly became conscious of that because in *Arturo Ui* all this appears in an ironic and grotesque form. (For this very reason he abstained from putting workmen on the stage.)

Therefore Major's attempt was not very successful. There was a big abstract rotating tubular frame-structure on the middle of the stage. The efforts of the director to produce spectacular sight by placing crowds on the stage did not solve any problems. He tried to put an ironic complexion on Mauler, the capitalist's piety (this role was played by Lajos Básti, an experienced actor), however, the true heart-beat of Mari Törőcsik, a most competent actress (she was the heroine in Zoltán Fábri's film: *Merry Go-Round*) dominated over Johanna's pitiable naivety. It did not succeed in arousing interest in Brecht's play although it was performed in Hungary for the first time.

Kafka, America and Budapest

Not much later, the Budapest National Theatre produced Kafka's *America* in the Jean-Louis Barrault stage adaptation. The hero of both the novel and the play is Karl Rossmann, an innocent naive young boy, who makes some people think of an American David Copperfield, or one might say a male Johanna Dark.

As a matter of fact, there is a certain similarity between the Brecht and the Kafka

play. The similarity is of course not one in their general attitudes but in the sort of literary view of man and America which was usual after the First World War. Kafka's hero, too, is a young person without talent but eager to fight, and he fails. In the Kafka too, Johanna Dark's America, the "kind-hearted" but in fact cruel, egoistic and depraved rich, the defenceless poor and unemployment close in on Karl. (Theresa's story about her mother dying in the cold New York winter might have been an episode in the frosty, snowy, mass-poverty scene of the unemployed in *St. Joan of the Slaughter-Houses.*) The naivety of Karl Rossmann, his inability to adapt himself to circumstances corresponds to the Brechtian situation.

Of course, the similarities are only due to the public opinion of the age. The differences, however, are more important: while in Brecht's world everything is rational, it is not that in Kafka's. Brecht's characters are social types, Kafka's are symbols. For Brecht everything, even inhumanity is human, whereas for Kafka everything human is alienated. Brecht's representations are exaggerated in order to give his message a positive form, Kafka's style is concrete in every particular and what he has to say hovers in a kind of uncertain anxiety.

In socialist countries Kafka is not looked on as entirely unproblematical; the discussion on whether or not Kafka can be given a place within socialist culture, are notorious. This discussion is over in Hungary as regards publishing his works, his works appeared one after the other in Budapest. The theatre, however, is different, for there it is always more difficult to raise such controversial issues. This was, in fact, the first proper Hungarian performance of the stage adaptation of any Kafka work. (The Barrault-Gide adaptation of *The Trial* in 1966 was only produced on the tiny studio-stage of the Thália Theatre.) Endre Marton, the director, tried to prove that Kafka is after all not as remote from the socialist mentality: in the way he directed the last scene he made an idyllic interpretation of the controversial, much debated role of the Oklahoma Theatre impossible. The problem is known. Kafka is always pessimistic and yet, in this case, he all the same allows his hero's dreams to come true. In Kafka's symbolism it is difficult to unravel what is to be understood by ideal working conditions where everybody finds a job. Marton considers the ending of this uncompleted work of Kafka's which was only published posthumously, ironical, and has it played ironically. However, this also shows the difference between the performance and Kafka's attitude. Kafka is interested in the individual, in his anxiety-filled alienation under the pressure of the incomprehensible, frightening objectivity of the material world. The performance staged by Mr. Marton concentrates more on the "unmasking" character of the play, the wickedness and harmfulness of the outside world. The detailed, almost pedantic description of the material world in the novel, in which important and insignificant matters are blended, suggests, so to speak lyrically, how the many impressions and details of the outside world which surround young Karl Rossmann weigh heavily on him although they are no concern of his except that they confuse him. Mr. Marton's *mise en scène* is not lyrical but "dramatic": the outside world is rational and fraught with conflicts. In this way the original function of the characters becomes imperceptibly—or maybe not even so imperceptibly—distorted. The helpless stoker somewhat resembles a class-conscious worker and the uncle, a foreign senator, is the well-known evil capitalist, etc. Even the scenery does not point to a Kafkaesque world. Designed by Mr. Vychodil, from Prague, Kafka's compatriot, the vast and complicated tubular frame-structure resembles—accidentally or not—the setting of Brecht's *St. Joan of the Slaughter-Houses* we had recently seen on the same stage rather that a Kafkaesque vision. In the immense sets—which do not rotate in this

case—the actors have to keep running to and fro which surely does not reflect Kafka's world which consists of tiny jigsaw observations of the subject.

The performance starts with a young man engaged in acrobatic stunts who keeps moving about at full speed, he jumps about wildly, climbs up and down the tubular frames here and there and then runs again until he comes to the stoker's door. Kafka describes a narrow and closely circumscribed scene whereas on stage there is one large, open construction without any enclosed space. Kafka seems to have no luck in Budapest. In the 1966 performance of *The Trial* in the Thália Studio, the actors were also running hither and thither. In spite of this, Endre Marton succeeded in introducing a number of interesting features and in producing some memorable scenes. The actors, however, showed that the director did not seem to know clearly what he wanted.

Earlier Hungarian Plays

The Budapest Madách Theatre has recently produced two plays in succession which were written in the years that followed the First World War. *Lila ákác* ("Lilac Acacia") by Ernő Szép—was the first. Ernő Szép who died in 1953 was a gentle-voiced poet, a modest subject in the realm of Hungarian literature that abounds in poetic talent. However, the young are discovering his plays, which were not very important at the time they were first produced, now, and they feel that his lyrical, grotesque and ironical tone, full of love and sentimentality, is very contemporary. Imre Kerényi, the young and talented director of the Madách Theatre, put on *Lilac Acacia* larded with passages from other works by Ernő Szép. The hero of the story—what a coincidence! —is again a naive young man whose name: Csacsinszky already discloses his character. (*Csacsi* in Hungarian is a dear little donkey.) This childish young man falls in love with a lady of the world who has many beaux and considers the nice boy a passing fancy. Meanwhile a young and poor girl becomes infatuated with Csacsinszky who in turn takes no notice of her. Of course, the young man must sooner on later become aware that the grand lady does not love him and he is only a plaything to her, whereupon he becomes interested in the poor girl. However, she, too, rejects him and secures an engagement abroad as dancer in order to help her family. The production had added musical numbers and the audiences are lulled into dreaming of the "good old days," the climax of the performance is a genuine rowdy party with Hussar officers having a night out.

The Madách Theatre also put on another old play: *Catullus* by Milán Füst* who in his time was a more significant writer than Ernő Szép. This was thanks to Géza Pártos who is now a director, but who was earlier, for twenty years, a prominent actor at the Madách Theatre. He can look back on many a success—and failures too, of course—lately, however, he set himself a very interesting task: he produces discarded, never previously performed plays by both living and dead writers.

Milán Füst, an important, lonely figure in Hungarian literature, was born in 1888, he was a leading contributor to *Nyugat* (West), a literary journal, right until it ceased publication. Between the two World Wars he travelled a good deal but after the Liberation he lived and worked in Hungary. His poems are characterized by sombre, biblical Greek discontent, and bitter humane unrest. He was one of the creators of the Hungarian free verse. "His poems represent a sensual ghostlike world. The attitude and tone characteristic of Milán Füst is created out of the grotesque contrast and unity of descriptions that are exact in every particular. He withdraws from the excruciating

* See: Two Poems by Milán Füst, and György Somlyó's article on the poet in No. 31 of *The New Hungarian Quarterly*.

external world and takes to a strange dream-world, to suffering and sorrow," writes one of his critics. The Hungarian Literary Encyclopaedia commented in 1963 on his prose written in the twenties: "His works are to some extent related to Franz Kafka's." His dramas were also written in the twenties, though never put on until Géza Pártos undertook the task.

Géza Pártos started by first producing *Boldogtalanok* ("The Unhappy") in 1963, and although the public was not very interested it was highly praised by the critics. The following year another play by Füst, *Henry IV*, was produced. This performance was a great success for Milán Füst the dramatist, but in the first place for Géza Pártos, who directed the play. Miklós Gábor, who a few years before was thought to have reached the peak of his career with his Hamlet, now played the part of Henry IV and again had a huge success.

Unfortunately, Milán Füst did not live to see the performance of *Catullus*. It is the story of the great Roman poet's love for Clodia. Although Clodia hates Metellus, her husband, she does not really love Catullus either. The suicide of Metellus does not produce the desired solution, the poet continues to remain alone with his hopeless and senseless love. It appears that the plot is by and large the true story of Catullus, at the same time, however, the essence of the play seems to be autobiographical, at least in its spiritual aspect. The truth one way or another, either or both or neither interpretations, unfortunately, do not influence the value of the drama. It is of loose texture, consisting of a chain of distressing, dreamlike, prosaic and yet unreal conversations in the characteristic tone of Milán Füst, which sometimes becomes passionate. As a drama it is not able to sweep the audience along. This was also felt by the director who tried to endow the play with some interesting features by shifting the costumes and the setting into the *dolce vita* world of today's Italy. However, even this wasn't much of an improvement. This time not even the acting of Miklós Gábor (Metellus) nor the conscientious interpretation of the role of Catullus by László Mensáros, another experienced actor, could ensure the success of the play.

Several other plays from that period were part of the repertory of Budapest theatres during this season.

József Czímer

A HUNGARIAN FILM HISTORY*

It is an absorbing experience to read this book which, among so much else, describes the early careers of certain Hungarian filmmakers whom I came to know subsequently in England, notably Alexander Korda, and his brothers, Vincent and Zoltán. The tragedy of Central Europe, which came primarily through Hitler, led to the dispersion of so much outstanding talent—not only Hungarian, of course. But the loss to Hungary (under Horthy) and to the other countries affected by the widescale fascist and Nazi purges led to the enrichment and diversification of film-making in the countries where these talents remade their careers. In Hollywood, for example, there was, as this book shows, the dawn of a new career for the directors Mihály Kertész (Michael Curtiz) and Paul Fejős and for the actor Béla Lugosi, while in Britain, in addition to the Kordas,

* István Nemeskürty: Word and Image—History of the Hungarian Cinema. Corvina Publishing House, Budapest, 1968 *(in English)* 238 pp.

the writer Lajos Biró came to work. Certain other talents, not mentioned in this book because, perhaps, they only matured abroad, came from Hungary to Britain, among them John Halas, the cartoonist, who was to become a world leader in pioneering the development of advanced techniques in animation, and who has been working in Britain for some thirty years.

What is there to be learned from this valuable book? First of all, the importance to the *international* development of cinema of the multilateral development of the film *nationally*, both in the early years and now, in our own times. Without the density of national production and exhibition throughout Europe and the United States—to say nothing of its early extension into other prolific areas, such as India and Japan—the cinema would have developed only patchily, instead of on a broad, many-sided international front. The early Hungarian cinema (from, say, 1910 to 1930) like that of many other countries, including Britain, was not greatly distinguished, but it established a popular demand for the film and a genuine feeling for the medium. It has to be recognized that, without this popular, fully-established demand for film entertainment provided on a regular, continual basis there will be no screen upon which the occasional work of genius, once it arrives, can receive exhibition. Just as there had to be a popular (and often low quality) Elizabethan theatre in London before Shakespeare could write and produce his plays, so there had to be a popular Hungarian cinema, however poor in general quality, to provide a platform for film-makers and theoreticians of talent, such as the actor-director Michael Curtiz, the journalist who turned director Alexander Korda (whose first articles on the art of the film appeared as early as 1911) and the critic and aesthetician of the cinema, Béla Balázs.* Hungary, it would seem, was one of the very first countries to develop the initial phase of film aesthetics, primarily through the writings of Balázs (who was forced to go into exile during the Horthy régime) and, later, of Iván Hevesy.

Secondly, one can learn from a book such as this about artists whose work one has never seen—in my own case, that of the actor Gyula Kabos. Here the importance of the various national film archives emerges, and the need to search for and preserve not only the early films but the later ones also. As the history of the cinema is gradually being pieced together, country by country, in a reasonably scholarly way, we are able to discover the gaps in our film knowledge, and in consequence urge that these gaps be filled as far as ever possible by acquisitions to the representative international collections of film held in the various national archives. The description of Kabos's work given in this book has determined me to try to see his best films, preferably complete, or in Pál Kertész' compilation of his screen performances.

Thirdly, and most important, one arrives in this book at a much clearer understanding about the phases of development through which post-war Hungarian film-making have passed since the nationalization of the industry in 1948. When I visited Hungary early in 1968 and attended an extensive series of screenings I gained by direct experience a valuable perspective in the successive phases through which Hungarian cinema has progressed during the last twenty years—the phases designated in this book as the period of the direct, schematic propaganda of the early 1950s, and the later (and still current) phase, which might be called that of a more broadly, "humanist" character. On my return from Hungary, I wrote in the British journal, *The Humanist:* 'The position of the writer, dramatist of film-maker in the Eastern European countries is obviously as delicate as it is influential. As in the West, the responsible artist tends to be a forward-looking person, a "progressive", highly

* Balázs's book, *Theory of the Film*, was published in Britain in 1952. As far as I know, nothing by Hevesy has appeared in English.

responsive to his particular society's strength and weakness realized in human, emotional terms. He is, in fact, the protagonist of the humanist outlook in the widest sense within his society, and there has never been any denial of his importance even during the sternly repressive years of the Stalinist period. The artist is as privileged a member of society as the scientist, the senior executive, even the government official himself. And up to a point his very individualism is encouraged and anticipated. His problems begin, however, when the form of individualism he develops becomes what the officials responsible for the supervision of the arts and public comment hold to be irresponsible... revealing (it might even be suspected) reactionary tendencies in the nature of his criticism of a society whose goal is the realization of a fully communist community.

The films belonging to the newer, responsible, humanist phase of contemporary Hungarian cinema begin with the widely-appreciated films of Zoltán Fábri, and were followed by those which are currently gaining a world reputation for the group of newer directors headed by Miklós Jancsó and András Kovács. The fine films made by these two very different directors which I saw in 1967 and 1968 in Venice and Budapest were supplemented by the encouraging work of directors whose films I had not previously seen—István Gaál, István Szabó and Péter Bacsó. In all these films the individuality of the director shines through his concern for the humanity of his characters. And this, in the end, East or West, is what men and women of goodwill are most concerned to see develop.

Mr. Nemeskürty's book is also written from this true, humanist standpoint. It is excellently translated and well illustrated by stills from films representative of all the principal phases in Hungarian film history. It becomes, therefore, a most valuable addition to the gradually widening book-shelf of national film histories written by historians who have a genuine knowledge of and feeling for the cinema.

ROGER MANWELL

THE BOROGROVES WERE VERY MIMSY

*Impressions of the Underground Film**

Some years ago Cocteau predicted that film-making would only truly become an art when its technical requirements were as cheaply available as pencil and paper. If he was right, then American film-making is on the threshold of a revolution which can only be compared to the coming of sound.

In America today you can already get a 16 mm. movie camera for 45 dollars, and much more cheaply than that at one of the frequent sales. The price of a short film, plus the cost of developing and printing it, amounts to about 25 dollars, and for as much again you can get a usable tape-recorder as well. Nor are projectors all that expensive. I am quoting figures recently published in *Time* magazine. In more than a hundred American universities and colleges film-making has been a normal part of the curriculum for some time. Young people think of film-making as the most dynamic modern

* This is the second of two articles on the American film scene originally published in *Filmkultúra* (Budapest) in 1968.

art form, and educationalists looking for new methods consider the making of films as the most effective form of self-expression for young people. According to *Time* the time when film-making will be a common technique of public education is not far distant.

In many American high schools they already teach the fundamentals of film art. In Lexington, Mass., a woman called Yvonne Anderson runs a film club in a school for children between 5 and 12. The children themselves write, act and direct 4-minute films. They film nursery rhymes and fairy tales, but they also make films which are a combination of science and fantasy. Walt Disney himself, the writer of the *Time* essay claims, would have marvelled at their style, the rhythm and the humour. There are high schools in which everyone makes a compulsory short film a week; they are then criticized and analyzed by the class. The most outstanding works are shown every year at a nation-wide festival of studenc films, where they are judged by a jury consisting of well-known film professionals. The University of South California, whose campus is not far from Hollywood, has provided high level specialist courses in film-making since 1929. They are fully equipped technically, some of the best Hollywood directors take part in the teaching, and they have several hundred students. Film-making has also been taught for some time now at one of the New York universities. At the time of writing a new studio designed to accommodate 300 students and costing two and a half million dollars is being built on the Los Angeles campus of the University of California.

There is no doubt that the effects of the law of great numbers can be seen in the world of art as well, particularly if the great numbers are preceded by a dollar sign. But the massive wave of everyday people which is rolling towards film-making in America, and obviously in other wealthy countries as well, does not really seem to alter the basic artistic principles of film-making. Lyric verse has not changed in its essence since Sappho, the invention of printing has not affected it, nor the spread of literacy, and *pace* McLuhan it is likely to stay what it is even it the age of electronic tele-communication. The future of the film is now likewise determined; its gestatory period was very soon over, and when, still young, it spoke up and started to talk, the basic principles of its own art were immediately established; certain factors might change, but the basic principles themselves are a given assumption.

The technical requirements that Cocteau thought so important are of course among the changing factors. What can be achieved on the pencil-and-paper level by a technique of film-production which can be said to have reached a point of general film-literacy, does not promise higher artistic standards than what we already have, but it promises a more dynamic, varied and more democratic film art, and therefore one of a more universal validity, if for no other reason then because of the law of great numbers. As it is today, the relation of the film-maker and his public is still very much that of the conjurer and his audience; absent in the flesh, he continues to pull bits of pre-treated life out of his magic box, conceal himself behind the myths and rites of an arcane profession, in fact—keep the tricks of the trade to himself. Who wants to know the workshop secrets of lyrical poetry? For the price of a pencil and a piece of paper anyone can enter the race for the immortality stakes, and as for the rest, the poetry is very much a matter of luck. What the public admires today are the makers and the making of the visual-collective arts.

But the massive wave is rolling on; millions are on the point of picking up a camera; the first generations to be taught the rudiments of film-making as naturally as they learn the rudiments of their mother tongue are on the way; and the great wave will wash away the foundations of Hollywood. The monopoly will disintegrate, and not only in the economic sense of the

word; the art of our age will at last stand completely exposed.

All this of course will affect the art of the film in a great number of different and complex ways. In the first place a new public is being educated; demands increase and techniques progress. I suspect that the polaroid ciné film, which rolls out of the camera in magic colours, seconds after it is taken, only needing cutting, cannot be all that far off. A wide choice of do-it-yourself manuals, elementary primers on direction, acting and cutting, is already available. And as selection becomes based on a wider and more democratic choice, it is natural that more talent will be available, though probably film-teaching on the highest level will produce no more great film-makers than world's Arts faculties have produced great poets. But certainly many new types of film, new variants and hybrids, with new things to say, new voices and styles, new attitudes and techniques, will come into being. The professional and commercial film industry, although its monopoly position is already undermined, is still capable of a great deal before it is finally forced to yield up its present entrenched positions. The reels made by trained amateurs, laid end to end, already stretch as far as the moon; they will stretch to the most distant constellations within the predictable future. In schools the aura of ridicule which surrounds debating society poets will soon be eclipsed by the arc-light aura of film dilettantes, and the film societies will equally develop their own patterns after the obsolete mannerisms of the classics. In ten years time the daily round of family life, so pitifully banal on the screen, will be reproduced on sound film by Daddy, who got First Class Honours in Film Making, on the basis of Mummy's competent scenario. Even today, visiting an average American family, you are hardly likely to escape without submitting to a Technicolor version of their summer holidays. And there is a great deal more that Cocteau's prophecy, now coming true, has in sto. for us.

Do-it-yourself film

The underground film came into being arround the middle of the fifties, at least that is when it first aroused interest, perhaps as one of the side effects of the Beatnik movement. It is the first product of the mass wave which has begun to affect film-making. It is also the first occasion in film-history that a social movement, such as the beatniks—or the hippies today—however lacking in organisation or ideology, has led to the making of its own films, outside existing social and commercial categories, which in both content and style also appear to be completely independent and detached. Since then an underground press has also come into being, (more than 50 such papers appear in the U.S.), there are underground theatres in New York's off-off-Broadway, there are underground novels, there is underground art, there are underground restaurants, cookery books and fashions, and there are underground radio stations too.

I do not know the precise origin of the term. It may refer to the underground railroad by which, before the Civil War, slaves escaped from the slave-holding South, it may refer to the speakeasies which functioned secretly underground during Prohibition, even possibly to the European underground anti-fascist movements. In any case its meaning is "secret, illegal". The word has to a certain extent, and not without reason, fused with pornography.

In the permissive society of the present decade the whole movement is gradually losing its illegal and underground aspect. Anyone who wants can buy an underground paper at a corner newsstand, and anyone can go and see the films. Though as far as anatomical detail or sexual pathology is concerned a section of the underground films, under the justification of art, goes far beyond commercial pornographic films, at least as far as one can go with a hand camera. The underground film has surfaced, and is well

on the way to the inevitable fate of ultra-advanced art modes. One of the signs of this is that it is clear today that money is to be made out of it. Film-critics of the most respectable establishment papers and magazines review underground films—the worst they do is to tear them to bits, the main names in their production are familiar to everyone, and—the final guarantee of respectability—the fashion papers have picked them up as well. There is even a serious book on underground films, and essays, statements and declarations of principle by underground movie makers have been published in an anthology.

Non-representational film

The first underground films were shot at a time when Hollywood ruled supreme, towards the end of the Cold War, when American film-production was rigid and constricted. Being a movement of the young, mainly of students, it started as a form of protest and rebellion. Its subject-matter challenged—and challenges—the taboos of the American puritan tradition and what passes for good taste in Hollywood, stressing sex, perversity, intoxication with narcotics, alienation, the beatnik and later the hippie way of life, outlook and philosophy. In the course of the years the movement has centred on two principal cities, San Francisco, the hippie capital, and New York. The total production of the movement, since it largely consists of ten to twenty-minute cheaply-made short films, is enormous, and impossible to survey. Among the underground cinemas I visited in New York one was located in Wooster Street, which is one of the ugliest streets in Manhattan. It was in a sort of boiler-room, full of pipes and cisterns, with folding-chairs and benches ranged on platforms. The projector whirred away beside me, with a hippie adorned with Christ-like beard in charge of it. You paid a dollar fifty to go in, but there was a notice saying that anyone short of money need pay no more than a dollar. The poster gave notice of performances where films brought along by whoever wanted to would be shown and discussed. That day's programme, and just about every underground film I saw, bore the stamp of that *whoever*, a complete absence and abandonment of any principle of selection. Not even an idea is necessary; on the contrary, the absence of an idea, regarded as a negative thing in itself, is reason enough for an underground film.

The first item, Paul Sharit's *Ray Gun Virus* already made this clear. Nothing at all appeared on the screen for the whole ten minutes of its showing. Accompanied by the whirr of a mechanical pump, now louder, now more softly, the screen merely changed colour. The whole surface was first a uniform blue, then pink, then brown, green, red and so on, then for a while just blank; then again it glittered, and changed colours, sometimes very slowly, then accelerating, but still without any regard to tone or pattern. Then it stopped. We had reached the end. For one or two minutes I was amused; you could feel a provocative impertinence, which raised one's expectations and recalled the aggressive confidence tricks of various modernist art movements, but on later consideration I decided it wasn't the same thing at all; the film was uninteresting, it was simply boring. After all the intention was quite clear by the third minute, there was no need to wait longer; even the most primitive means of creating an effect by surprise were rejected, so the only question which remained was how long one would have to sit it out.

It is clear that what was going on in this—let us call it non-representational—film, could not be judged in terms of art. It could not be analyzed, no recognisable artistic principle was involved in bringing it into being; it seemed more the offspring of a semi-educated brain wishing to show itself different, confusedly and negatively expressed. The analogy in painting is a

framed blank canvas, or one covered with a single colour. There are dozens in every major collection of modern works.

Representational abstraction

Marie Menken's *Arabesque* led up an altogether different blind alley. The sounds of a guitar are heard, and the 16 mm. camera rushes nervously round and over the details of some sort of Moorish, decorated, mosque-like building. Blue skies, clouds, beautifully coloured mosaic patterns, light sieved through a pattern of window panes, a fountain, swooping pigeons, people walking about, columns, The End. It was like a sentence in an unknown tongue that must have had meaning, logic, connection, mood, emotive overtones, but which said nothing to us. Its technique suggested expertise, even routine expertise, and the dedication in the title ("For Kenneth Anger") suggested that perhaps it referred to some common, private experience, that it contained a personal message comprehensible only to the person to whom it was addressed, a secret conversation between one underground film maker and another.

Kenneth Anger was represented in this programme by his already well-known *The Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome.* This, due to its subject-matter, its style and its *art nouveau* colours is the underground film *par excellence*, and has already had its imitators. It opens with a narcotics party full of mystical abracadabra and ritual, everyone wearing Eastern clothes. A voice reads out Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, the chief character, using the "I-am-now-creating" pantomime typical of amateur players, acts out the taking of the drug. His visions follow, suggested by the director in superimposed pictures, tricks of montage, the intermingling of colours, a nervous variation in the angle of vision, and sudden cuts from one image to another. It appears that the dream apotheosis of the "turned on" addict is a ballet of naked *fin de siècle, art nouveau* Ex Libris nymphs, kissing and caressing symbolic and real male organs. The whole thing was very like a suburban *Walpurgis Nacht* by the local amateur company.

Ron Rice's *Senseless*, dedicated to Jack Kennedy, was more interesting. Some sort of documentary intention could be discerned. Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* gave some sort of cohesion to the confused documentary mixture. A huge piston; a boat moving in a swamp, in it a bearded man, photographed from below. A statue of the Virgin, then a pair of scales. Demonstrators on the march. Worms pullulating on a human skull. An engine moves, turns, works. A demonstration in San Francisco in front of the building of the American Atomic Energy Commission. A man looking at a huge Walt Disney poster. The piston again. A man in a white hood praying in front of an idol. A ballet lesson in a school. Children in gas-masks jumping around in wrecked cars on a waste lot and playing with flags. A huge parade in the street. Suddenly, a South American landscape, and a bull fight. The head of a statue, a fountain, a kissing couple. The bull-fight, but this time as a negative. This is a surprisingly successful moment, with a white bull-fighter and white bull chasing each other on a black background. Bartók plus chanting, and street urchins eating; sad sounds on a guitar, and singing. A church, a crucifix, a statue. A car moving in a long black tunnel. Someone behind a window blowing first soap-bubbles, then blows his nose. Suddenly, the film becomes grotesque. An ancient train puffs along, gangsters play, and stop it. A profane wedding on a beach between a big-bellied pregnant girl and a hippie. "Jesus was a beatnik," runs the caption. Tangled film, pipes. A large white gull flies in the dark, the Bartók *Concerto* swells up, The End.

I have copied the notes I scribbled while the film was playing. The producer had apparently attempted to convey a public, communicable feeling, made up of memories,

emotions and responses, by taking pieces of reality from his environment and running them off in piecemeal succession. They did in fact round off into some sort of image, which might, by stretching, be apprehended as art, but in the absence of any selection, intensification or emphasis, finally fell apart into its elements, and remained something private to himself.

Millard Maas's *Geography of the Body* played with the possibilities offered by perspective. First the camera works its way along the extended body of a middle-aged, naked, moustachioed man, approaching closer and closer, then we start a journey of discovery along the not at all attractive body of a woman of about the same age, while a voice reads a text by George Barker. (Could it have been George Barker, the English poet?) The text seemed to be a parody of the effusive, patronizing commentaries of those educational, instructive films for the masses we all know. The film was not designed as pornography, I am sure. Close-ups from certain angles of a hairy chest, a huge ear, a foot lazily moving its toes, a tongue swimming in bubbly spit between shiny, hairy lips like convulsive worms are a more shocking and frightening spectacle than any pornography. Only the eyes keep their secretive beauty, even in a close-up; Maas's brilliant camera technique sought to destroy them without success. No doubt the film had hit on something new, and if it had been presented in a more intelligent way, making use of the opportunities for contrast provided by perspective, it might have been something really worth while. But the contrast was not exploited, and the two fat, deformed bodies simply repelled, both from near and far.

Even apart from its sexual aspect, the human body is one of the favourite themes of the underground film. It is the most cheaply available material, and the most personal too. It is alive, and there is always some new aspect to discover. There are underground films which photograph it with an X-ray camera, others through a microscope. This cult of the body has its humorous aspects. We have all heard of the naked-bottom film, which might be said to reduce the art to its bare elements.

Happiness is Warhol

I saw three full-length underground films. Two represented the worst kind of amateur work in the underground world. One was a parody of a silent film, full of clumsy witticisms, switching at the end with no transition to surrealism, mixing the methods of the animated film with a traditional naturalist style. The other dissected the pains and humiliations of a miserable fetishist in naive and naturalist detail, discarding the grotesque human drama implicit in the theme, magnifying the pitiable, perverted passion to make it repulsive. The third was Andy Warhol's new film ****, the underground film sensation of the season.

Andy Warhol is the leader of the underground movement. He is surrounded by a huge camp following of fans and disciples. He first became known as a pop art painter, and he had an idea which made his name familiar throughout America. For a long time Campbell soup tins, which rival Coca-Cola in popularity, were his only subject. He copied the tins with perfect, photographic accuracy; a canvas sometimes showed one, sometimes six, sometimes twenty, the number and the composition varied, but not the subject, nor the style. Just as the content or the quality of Campbell soup never varies. The idea proved successful, Warhol became fashionable, and later rich. His canvasses are worth thousands of dollars, I saw more than one on the walls of galleries and museums. When he changed his subject matter later he had an even better idea: he painted photographically perfect portraits of film-stars in series. They were unbelievably chocolate-box beautiful, painted on silvery silk, most of them portraits

of the two super-sex bombs, Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor. Then he changed to films. Just as in pop art his films also display bits and pieces lifted directly from life. One of his films, which runs for eight hours, shows the Empire State building. The camera does not move, it stays rigid for the whole of the eight hours. Nothing happens, time passes, that's all. Warhol seems to imagine that a selected piece of reality becomes a work of art, simply because he directs his camera towards it. The real thing remains the real thing, nothing is added. The creative intention is satisfied in taking the object of interest, as an object, and transferring it to celluloid.

His later films are more complex and more sophisticated. In the earlier films a building, a sleeping human being, the process of haircutting in itself made up the subject. Now the subject is enriched by the juxtaposition or superimposition of details. This latest film took exactly 25 hours to make, and was originally scheduled to run twenty-five hours. New York papers reported that most of the audience heroically sat through the première. From time to time free coffee was served and members of the audience went out into the foyer to sleep on the carpet. When I saw it in December 1967 it only lasted two hours. Business interests had defeated Warhol. He cut the film, and it turned out that the elimination of 92 per cent made no difference, which gives a very clear impression of its structure.

These two hours are filled by the slow, colourful swirl of the hippie world. The hippies come and go, they sing, someone makes a speech about romantic love, a girl is raped, finally relapsing with a happy giggle, another injects narcotics into her thigh, a young lad tells of his homosexual adventures, bodies making love roll about, twist and pant, young people argue, eat, scratch, stand up, sit down, the owner of a hippie-boutique soliloquizes and curses the police, a gay orgy develops, and finally comes disk on the sea-shore, and the hippies join in a strange happy dance. The End. The film is in colour, the colours change, the rhythm is sometimes the natural rhythm of life, sometimes it is accelerated, sometimes significantly slowed, seeming to stress something important, but what, one cannot tell. The camera moves competently amongst the hippies, nearer, away again, all with hints of a concealed significance, and the sound effects, varying in pitch, seem to have the same purpose. Sometimes we see the same film of the same couple embracing, projected at the same time, but presumably by several projectors, running one or two seconds behind each other, and in different colours, then the background disappears, the screen is covered by flames and twisting mists, and a row of teeth, biting into an apple, cracks like exploding rounds of ammunition. The hippie way of life, the ritual vegetative existence of a primitive community, snug on a stone-age group marriage level, radiates from the screen in all its warmth, smelling a little of sweat, and at the same time it exhibits the cramped tension and the astounding self-confidence of a talented, intelligent, but paranoid artist.

Warhol, who by the way was dangerously wounded the day before Robert Kennedy died by five revolver bullets fired by one of his mentally ill hippie acolytes, finally broke all restraints still surrounding the underground film. Theories are built on his films. He gives his actors resounding names. International Velvet, Viva, Ingrid Superstar, Ondine, Ultra Violet, Allen Midgette, Vera Cruz, Octavio Electro Manuelo, and an authentic film star cult has grown up round them, principally of course in the underground them, principally of course in the underground press. It is difficult to tell whether they are actors at all, let alone good actors. Before Warhol's cameras they are not actors. They are directly themselves adopting no other personality, representing nothing, with as much artistic purpose as the Empire State Building.

The underground film, with Warhol at

the head of it, has now surfaced. I thas proved a box office success in a commercial cinema in 42nd street, in the Wurlitzer Building, and in other places as well. These days Warhol owns his own underground film-distributing organisation. The movement itself though, as much as I could see of it, is still a long way from the point where it is worth taking seriously. It does not as yet provide any valid alternative to professional cinema; it does not indeed desire to compete with it. This it could only do if they used a common language. Today the underground film-movement is still in a pre-experimental stage. It is looking for subjects and for methods. Sooner or later it will reach a point where the restlessness and protest, the malaise, the nihilism, the desire for something different in society, and the politics of the film-makers will be expressed in a more precise way, one that can be judged by the critical standards applied to works of art. Today it is at the stage where it is satisfied merely to exist, and the films obviously give more fun to those who make them than to those who view them.

Many of us went through the same sort of thing in our childhood. We tried to invent a nonsense-language which did not resemble anything that ever existed earlier. It did not make sense, but it amused us, it belonged to us alone, no one else understood it. Of course, we didn't either, but who cared?

Miklós Vajda

MUSICAL LIFE

SÁNDOR SZOKOLAY'S HAMLET

To attempt to set Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to music is a rash and daunting task for any composer to undertake, as those, like myself, who witnessed the version that the English composer, Humphrey Searle, wrote for the Hamburg State Opera last spring, well know. The world première of the Hungarian operatic version, by the 37-year-old Sándor Szokolay, which had its first performance at the State Opera in Budapest on October 19, 1968, met the challenge no less brilliantly and, oddly enough, in somewhat similar vein. I must say at once, however, that though Szokolay's version pleased my ear far more than Searle's, what I saw on the stage in Budapest was inferior to what Hamburg had to offer in more than one respect.

Szokolay is quite obviously a countryman of Bartók to whom he owes a great deal, if only indirectly. His direct debt to other composers, like Stravinsky, Honegger and the entire modern Viennese school is even greater. That is to say that he makes few concessions to an audience that has been bound by tradition but takes the plunge unhesitatingly into the turbulent waters of dodecaphony and atonality. But funnily enough he draws the line at strict mathematical serialism and its chromatic demands. A skilled weaver of sounds, he writes music that felicitously expresses what is latent in the tragedy and does not shrink from the occasional use of passages of charming tunefulness. He makes frequent use of *leitmotifs* and exploits the diatonic scale harmoniously and melodiously. Above all he has found a consistent solution to the age-old problem of marrying speech and song: the way he tackles this contradictory challenge becomes important when the music alone is quite unable to do the job of conveying either the sense or the spirit of specific key passages unaided. Then he unashamedly fastens the Shakespearean text on to the main stream of his musical invention and allows it to speak for itself.

A good example of this is the "To be or not to be" soliloquy. Hamlet begins by speaking the first line, since no possible combination of sounds or rhythms can replace the philosophical content of the question. Then, convincingly and naturally, he drops into a form of declamatory singing, a cross between *Sprechgesang* and parlando. Here the composer's uncanny feeling for atmosphere and the character's uttered doubts are effortlessly transmitted to the audience and the emotional conviction is harmoniously harnessed to ravishing sound. At other times, as in the Play Scene, Szokolay boldly backs up the action with diatonal accompaniment, in this case in a sort of choral madrigal that is taken up by the Danish court. Ophelia's mad song, too, is a robustly delivered diatonal rendering of the melody that is familiar from stage performances of the drama.

This said, exception must be taken to certain elements in the composer's adaptation of the János Arany translation (it is divided

into three acts and lasts two hours and forty minutes not counting intervals) and in András Mikó's production. A modern music drama, such as this is, presents a unique opportunity for staging in the contemporary manner, particularly for open-staging, with the soliloquies placed out front in the Elizabethan manner. That such an approach is both possible and, as far as Budapest goes, prepared for, is proved by László Vámos's production of *Hamlet* at the Madách Theatre, of which I wrote in these pages five years ago.* Though not whole-heartedly in the modern manner, it did at least make a genuine attempt to break through the convention of the baroque theatre and its limiting proscenium-arch and adapt the convention of the intimacy and directness of the Shakespearean style to the twentieth-century playhouse. Of course the State Opera is not a modern opera house (as the Hamburg State Opera is, where the attempt to mould the shape of Searle's opera to contemporary staging methods was, to say the least, laudable). It is clear that the director and his designers (Gábor Forray, for the sets, and Tivadar Márk for the costumes) found it difficult, if not impossible, to shake off the shackles of nineteenth-century traditionalism. The opportunity was allowed to slip by. And that was a great pity.

Despite the Craig-inspired stepped terraces and the stylised set-pieces that dropped and rose to different levels and preserved an ingenious continuity in the action of the opera, there were too many stylistic contradictions, not least, for example, in the projected opening and closing naturalistic cloud-effects (*Moses* by Imre Madách at the National Theatre proved that this could have been vastly improved on if the designers had been so minded). The realistic drabness of many of the costumes, too, hampered the nobility of the conception. For the costumes of the principal characters were, on the whole, stylistically convincing.

* "Shakespeare on the Stage Today." The N.H.Q., No. 13.

Szokolay has expressed in print his indebtedness to the Olivier film of *Hamlet*. This, no doubt, explains why he decided to omit not only Fortinbras from the cast but also the entire background of war, threatened invasion, revolt and *Realpolitik*, from the play. By reducing the opera of *Hamlet* to the personal dilemma of a single, wavering and helpless individual at odds not with the whole world but only with the fragment of it that Szokolay selects, he undermines the grandeur of the Shakespearean tragedy. Or so it seems to me.

The Hungarian State Opera achieved the seemingly impossible task of presenting the work on two consecutive nights with alternate casts (with the one exception of poor Rosenkrantz, who had to do double duty). The big guns were out on show on the opening night. On the following evening, the younger members of the company showed their paces and frequently, to my mind, outshone the others in voice and certainly in youthful looks (which probably matters less in the opera house than in the dramatic theatre). Both Ferenc Szőnyi and Sándor Palcsó sang the tenor title-role with commendable fire and agility: the former carried greater weight (in both senses of the word) and surprisingly enough appeared in a goatee beard! The latter certainly carried his years more gracefully on his agile shoulders. Éva Andor, who partnered him as Ophelia, had the dual advantage of dazzling vocal timbre and astonishing good looks and both these qualities helped her to score over Erzsébet Házy's greater firmness of tone and experience. The most commanding performance came from András Faragó's lustrous Claudius on the first night: his is a baritone that one would like to hear again and again, even when Szokolay sometimes gives him a succession of unlovely sounds to put across. The two conductors were Géza Oberfrank and Tamás Pál. They seemed to fulfil their allotted task with ease and authority.

Ossia Trilling

BARTÓK AND WAGNER*

"Die Epoche der Weltliteratur ist an der Zeit"
(Goethe to Eckermann, Jan. 31, 1827.)

Anyone who is familiar with Bartók's scholarly and literary work is aware that he wrote only rarely about himself, his works, his plans and "workshop practice." When he did, he usually concealed his own person behind expressions such as "modern music," "certain contemporary composers," etc. Knowing this we may confidently accept Bartók's following statement—without denying its general validity—as his own personal point of view, as an analysis of his own activities:

"The early part of the 20th century was a turning-point in the history of new music. The exaggerations of late romanticism were beginning to grow unbearable; certain composers were beginning to feel that it was impossible to go any further on this road; there was no other solution here but to turn completely against the 19th century." ("Influence of Peasant Music on the New Art Music," 1920–1931.)

This same thought, elaborated in greater detail, at the same time referring to the relationship between his own music and ancient folk music, appears in another study by Bartók:

"In my view we can find two common characteristics in all the modern music of our times which are closely related, one might even say, as cause and effect. One is a more or less radical departure from the music of yesterday, especially of the romantics. The other is a striving to approach the musical style of earlier periods. In other words, a loathing for works of the romantic period became common and consequently a search for modes of expression that were in the greatest possible opposition to the romantic one. Composers turned—half deliberately, and half unconsciously—to the works of earlier periods that truly represented this antithesis." ("Hungarian Folk Music and New Hungarian Music," 1928.)

The question arises: could there have existed, after this, any kind of relationship at all between Wagner, the outstanding genius of the century of romanticism, and this "antiromantic" master of the music of our century? Naturally I refer to a spiritual relationship, any other was out of the question because of the chronology involved (Wagner died in 1883, Bartók was born in 1881). Although according to the usually reliable evidence of Bartók's mother, music was already playing a part in the little boy's life at the time of Wagner's death, his first meeting with Wagner's works had to wait for a good ten years. But from then on, the middle of the 1890s, for forty years a verifiable spiritual relationship existed between Wagner and Bartók, a many-sided, passionate relationship that manifested itself at times in wonder, at others in rejection and often in direct influence.

The scene of the above-mentioned "first meeting" was presumably Pozsony (Brati-

* This study appeared originally in a German version, in the "Parsifal" programme of the 1966 Bayreuth Festival (editor: Wieland Wagner). This enlarged English version is published by courtesy of the "Verlag der Festspielleitung, Bayreuth (Herbert Barth)."—I am quoting from the Hungarian edition of Bartók's articles (ed. András Szőllősy), his Autobiography (ed. Denijs Dille) and his letters (ed. János Demény and Klára Cs. Gárdonyi).

slava) then part of Hungary, where Bartók spent most of his time while at secondary school (1892–1893, 1894–1899). "Since I had begun to compose small piano pieces already at the age of nine and in 1891 (actually in 1892) I had already made a public appearance as a composer and pianist at Nagyszőllős (Vinogradov)," Bartók writes about these decisive years in his life in his *Autobiography*, "it was very important for us to move to a larger town. Among the Hungarian provincial towns at the time the liveliest from a musical point of view was undoubtedly Pozsony, and thus I had an opportunity, on the one hand, to take piano lessons from, and study harmony with László Erkel, the son of Ferenc Erkel,* until I was fifteen, and on the other hand, to hear a few—although not very good—orchestral concerts and operatic performances. Opportunities for practising chamber music were not lacking either, and by the time I was eighteen I had a pretty good knowledge of musical literature from Bach to Brahms. Where Wagner was concerned I had got only as far as Tannhäuser. In the meantime I had been composing industriously under the influence of works by Brahms and the young Dohnányi** who was four years older than I."

The last but one year of Bartók's secondary-school education coincided with the brief period when Bruno Walter, who later became world famous as a Wagner interpreter as well, worked at the Pozsony National Theatre. In 1898 Bartók—by this time he had been a regular performer at the town's various concerts for two years—played the piano transcription of the Tannhäuser Overture.

After finishing secondary school Bartók continued his studies at the Budapest Academy of Music (1899–1903). Here his teacher in composition was Hans Koessler, and his piano teacher was the one-time pupil of Liszt, István Thomán, a highly cultured man who first went to Bayreuth with his teacher as a youth. He acquainted young Bartók not only with the traditions of the Liszt school, but also stimulated his interest in Wagner, and placed a number of scores at his disposal.

Without a doubt Bartók's most important experience during the first year of his studies at the Academy of Music was his acquaintance with the Wagner works he was not yet familiar with. His letters to his mother who remained in Pozsony were filled with reference to Wagner. He ended his letter of January 12, 1900 with the *Rheingold* motive and a question relating to it. On January 21, he wrote that he had received the score of the *Valkyrie* from Professor Thomán. On February 18: "Last Monday, in one of the rooms of the Academy I studied the score of the *Rheingold* (legacy of Ferenc Liszt). I found many enlightening things in it (that I had never seen before...)." Then he dwelt at length on the instruments used in *Das Rheingold*. Somewhat later in a letter that has survived only in fragments: "Now I am studying the *Valkyries (sic)* this is much lovelier than the *Rheingold* (tell Aunt Mari, and that when I come home I shall play the "Ride of the Valkyries" for them)." The letter ends with four lines of music, sections of *The Valkyrie* obviously quoted from memory.

The 1899–1900 school-year ended with experiences at the opera, dominated by Wagner: "This week I went to hear *Mignon*, *Bärenhäuter* (Siegfried Wagner's opera), *Don Giovanni* and *Hamlet*. Today I'm going to *Tannhäuser*, tomorrow to the *Barber of Seville*, *Lohengrin* and *The Valkyrie* (certainly that). They are closing the opera season with *The Valkyrie*." (June 3, 1900).

Bartók's experience of Wagner was so

* Ferenc Erkel (1810–1893), composer, wrote the first significant Hungarian operas and composed among other works, the Hungarian National Anthem. His son, László Erkel (1844–1896), was active as a conductor and music teacher.

** Ernő Dohnányi (1877–1960), pianist and composer, teacher at the Budapest Academy of Music and later its director.

powerful during his first year at the Academy of Music that he recalled it in his *Autobiography* nearly two decades later: "Immediately after my arrival I flung myself with great effort into the study of those works of Richard Wagner that were still unfamiliar to me (the *Ring*, *Tristan*, *The Mastersingers*) and Liszt's orchestral works." His world grew more complete with his getting to know these works, but he was hardly able to draw any composing inspiration from them. He did not yet understand Liszt's significance, on the other hand he felt Wagner's art—this is revealed in a later study—precisely because of its perfection, to be a closed world, a round whole from which there was no road in any direction, and which could not be continued. "My creative activities... in this period were left entirely fallow," the composer recalled. "I have got away from Brahms's style. Not even through Wagner and Liszt was I able to find the new road I looked for. (I had not yet understood the significance of Liszt from the standpoint of the further development of music. I saw only superficialities in his art.) Consequently for about two years I worked on practically nothing and I was really known at the Academy of Music only as a good pianist."

The first Budapest performance of Richard Strauss's symphonic poem *Also sprach Zarathustra* pulled him out of this creative crisis. "...at last I glimpsed the direction that carried the new in its womb. I hurled myself into the study of Strauss's scores, and again I began to compose."

It was under the influence of Richard Strauss—and the Hungarian romantic art music heritage—that Bartók's symphonic poem *Kossuth* was written, whose Budapest first performance in 1904 suddenly turned him into a nationally famous artist in Hungary. Curiously it was Hans Richter, who had conducted the *Ring* when it was first performed at a Bayreuth Festival in 1876, who paved the way for Bartók's international reputation when he conducted *Kossuth* in Manchester in 1904. The first meeting between Richter and Bartók—on June 27, 1903—was arranged by Karl Gianicelli, a faithful friend of the Wagner family who lived in Budapest, a teacher of the double bass at the Academy of Music. And it must have been Gianicelli again who made it possible for Bartók to go to Bayreuth in the summer of 1904 with the help of a Wagner scholarship.

We know little of the details of his stay in Bayreuth. In 1904, in addition to *Parsifal* and *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, *Tannhäuser* also featured in the programme of the Festival Theatre. In his only published account of it Bartók wrote merely about *Parsifal* (he must have seen it with either Michael Balling or Karl Muck conducting), but as a Bayreuth scholarship holder he undoubtedly received tickets to several performances. The fact that in Bayreuth he again met Hans Richter and played his new work for him, the Scherzo written for piano and orchestra, makes it quite probable that he was also present at the performances of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* conducted by Richter.

He wrote to his Hungarian poet friend, Kálmán Harsányi, on August 21, in Regensburg, already on his way home:

"I am writing these lines under the effect of *Parsifal*. It is a very interesting work, but it did not have as tremendous an impact on me as *Tristan*. Anyone who has the slightest bit of religious feeling in him is greatly moved by the story. I was disturbed by the constant praying on the stage. Despite my expectations I found much that was new in the music. It is remarkable that a 70-year-old man could have written such refreshing music as the temptation song of the nymphs in the second act—and without repeating himself. But then I shall write something about Bayreuth. I would only like to know, would you like to come here next year for a couple of performances? I played my Scherzo for Richter, according to him this is a scherzo *von und zu Übermenschen*."

His letter to Harsányi of September 18 indirectly informs us of the means Bartók used to yet get to Bayreuth:

"I found out in Bayreuth that those Wagner scholarships could be held not only by musicians, but also by writers, poets, etc. Perhaps you could apply for one as well. If you do not receive a full scholarship, then perhaps tickets for six performances (in view of the fact that the price of one ticket is 20 marks, this is not to be scorned either). The application has to be made by the end of Jan. 1905 to a Count Festetics, whose address I have already forgotten. It would be best if you turned to Professor Karl Gianicelli... at the proper time for information. A committee of four made up of the two previously mentioned gentlemen, Jenő Rákosi and Mihalovich, makes the decision."

The cold, objective tone in which Bartók writes about Bayreuth shows that Wagner was no longer in the focus of his interest. But it is curious that even in his "Strauss period" Wagner remained the yardstick of a composer's greatness for him. "Here I am studying all five branches of the art in complete solitude," he wrote on March 17, 1904 from Berlin to his Viennese friend, Dietl. "I have got to know some splendid Strauss songs. Yes, yes indeed, I can tell you: we have not had such a great master as Strauss since Wagner."

Bartók's Strauss period did not last long. His discovery of ancient Hungarian folk music, and his acquaintance with modern French music soon forced the influence of Richard Strauss into the background. And there was one more "encounter" of decisive importance in those years, in the first decade of our century: a meeting with Liszt's main works. "I began to study Liszt once more," Bartók wrote in his *Autobiography*, "that is his less popular works, such as, the *Années de Pélérinage*, the *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, the *Faust Symphony*, the *Totentanz*, etc.—and these studies, across a few, to me less sympathetic, external features, led me to the core of things: the real significance of this artist was revealed to me, I felt the importance of his works to be greater from the point of view of the development of music, than that of Wagner or Strauss."

After that Wagner's name always occurred together with—or more precisely: in contrast to Liszt's—in Bartók's writings. The year 1911, the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Liszt, provided an opportunity for the first time for Bartók to present his views on the two of them to the public. "It is curious," Bartók wrote in his article "Liszt's Music and the Contemporary Public," "what a large proportion of musicians, I could say the overwhelming proportion, is barely able to make friends with Liszt's music, despite all its novelty and splendour. I do not speak of those who *eo ipso* have an aversion to everything that is new and unfamiliar. But there were in Liszt's time, in fact, even today there are great, strong musicians who happen to abhor this master, or who have accepted him only very conditionally, or rather they just tolerated him. It is incomprehensible that while, for example, in our country they hardly dare to utter a word against Wagner, or against Brahms, although there are some things here and there that are objectionable, Liszt's music is wide open to attack."

In connection with Liszt's B minor Piano Sonata Bartók observed: "Liszt was the first to express irony through music. His Sonata was completed around 1850. Similar notes in Wagner *(Siegfried, The Mastersingers)* can be found only much later—perhaps precisely under Liszt's influence."

One of the most interesting sections of the article—and not devoid of exaggerations in its passion either—discusses Liszt's and Wagner's relationship, their relations as creative artists and friends. "It was not given to every composer," writes Bartók, "that like Beethoven, he should conquer all the difficulties by himself and achieve perfection in every single work. Only one person was worthy of the difficult office of

being Liszt's critic, and that was Wagner. But Wagner repaid Liszt's affection with indifference, it was all the same to him whether things went well for Liszt or not, yet though from no one else, Liszt most likely would have accepted advice from Wagner." (We must not leave unmentioned the fact that in the depths of this conclusion there exist certain autobiographical references that the reader will understand at once when we compare it with a few lines of Bartók's article "Zoltán Kodály," written ten years later: "...I esteem Kodály as the best Hungarian musician not because he is my friend, but he became my one friend because he is the best Hungarian musician. The fact that I enjoyed the better part of the fruits of this friendship, and not Kodály, once again proves his splendid capabilities and sacrificing generosity... I can thank his amazingly accurate and quick judgement for the final, much better than original, formulation of any number of my works.")

One of the special characteristics of Bartók's compositions is that they contain large numbers of hidden autobiographical elements, lesser and greater quotations from his own and other composers' works, from Bach to Stravinsky. What is peculiar about these quotations—I discussed them in detail in my study "Quotations in Bartók's Music" —is that they were not addressed to the general public (as for example the *Tristan* quotation in Britten's opera *Albert Herring*), and can be revealed as a rule only as a result of penetrating analysis. But there can be no doubt about their being quotations. In his opera *Bluebeard's Castle*, for instance, Bartók quotes an ostinato motive from Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. At the end of a scene, the *B-A-C-H* motive appears as a "scientific reference." Another example: in 1910 a French critic described Bartók, who was giving concerts in Paris, as a "young barbarian." Bartók's ironical reply was his famous piano work the *Allegro barbaro*, composed in 1911, which was based on one of the motives of a French composition—Ravel's *Scarbo*, that had appeared in 1909. And a final example: he composed his Third Piano Concerto in the last months of his life, with declining physical strength but unbroken enthusiasm for work. The title of the second movement—a singular example in Bartók's oeuvre—is Adagio religioso. In the light of our knowledge of Bartók's ideology this "religious slowness" would be an insoluble puzzle if the music itself did not "reformulate" a movement of a Beethoven string quartet, the movement called *Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit...* (from the *A minor Quartet* op. 132).

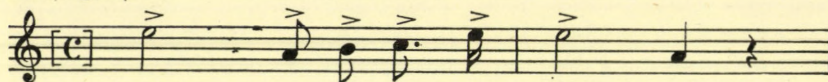
What induced Bartók to quote in this way? For the most part certain historical, psychological and positional identities or similarities, with the evocation of which Bartók—one of the most solitary creative artists of the century—extended a hand to predecessors and contemporaries with whom he felt a spiritual kinship. (There are numerous examples of this gesture in his writings as well.)

In his music—and not all in the compositions of his youth, but in his mature works—we come across several references to Wagner, Wagner quotations; and what is more natural than that these are mostly just in his stage works. (Here and there, however, in his instrumental compositions also: in a statement made in 1941 Bartók himself calls attention to the "Wagner recollections" in his First String Quartet.)

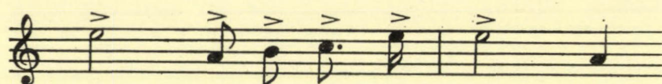
Bartók's first work for the stage was his one-act opera *Bluebeard's Castle* composed in 1911. The work's libretto—by Béla Balázs—reconciles Maeterlinck's symbolism with the imagery of the Székely folk ballad, whose few words say a great deal and allow one to suspect a great deal more. The familiar tale deepens here into a tragedy of Man and Woman: Judit, the last love of the lonely Prince Bluebeard, seeks to know every secret of the man's soul. What she seeks she learns, but she loses her man forever. This dramatic situation refers in its roots

to Wagner, to the conflict between Lohengrin and Elsa. And at one point, at one of the dramatic turning-points of the Bartók opera, this is what the music does as well. Here Bartók's music reminds us of Lohengrin's words: *Nie sollst du mich befragen...*

Lohengrin:



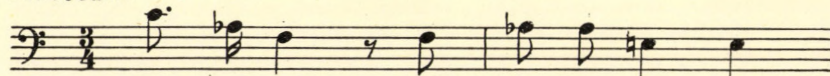
Nie sollst du mich be - fra - gen,



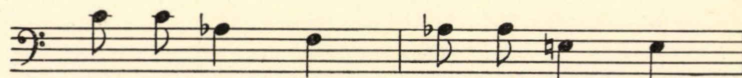
noch wis-sens Sor - ge tra - gen

Wagner's theme circumscribes a minor triad, starting on its highest note and ending on the lowest, and repeating all this for greater emphasis. Bartók does the same, only his melody—to use the term applied by Ernő Lendvai—stems from the decomposition of what is called the "hyper-minor" chord:

Bluebeard:



Seh'n sollst du, doch nim - mer fra - gen,
Lát - ni fogsz, de soh - se kér - dezz.



Was du sä - hest, nim - mer fra - gen.
A - kár - mit látsz, soh - se kér - dezz!

The Wooden Prince—Bartók's ballet which was completed in 1916—begins with a picture of nature painted with broad brush strokes. This prelude expresses nature coming to life, "the beginning of all things"—with almost the same effect, and with the same means as Wagner used in the orchestral introduction to *Das Rheingold*. The principal difference here, too—as in the previous instance—lies in the tonal system. In Wagner's music the first five harmonics corresponding to a major triad are heard, and they swell into a tremendous wave. In Bartók's opening music—this again is "a single tremendous chord"—two more harmonic notes join the first five (in the instance of C basic note: f-sharp and b-flat), which modifies the major scale, or chord, into the "Bartók scale," the "Bartók chord."

This is the beginning of *Das Rheingold:*

pp

sempre pp

etc.

And the 20th-century "reformulation" of Wagnerian music: the beginning of Bartók's ballet, *The Wooden Prince:*

ppp

espr.

p

etc.

Bartók's last work for the stage, *The Miraculous Mandarin*, is set in a den of robbers in the big city. Three ruffians force a prostitute to entice men up to the den, whom they rob. The first climax in the music: in response to the girl's enticing music a peculiar, mysterious figure steps into the robbers' den; a Chinese mandarin. He is the representative of a remote, alien world, his feelings are pure and natural, and his appearance in a decadent, modern big city has the same effect as that of the hero of Wagner's last stage work: *der reine Tor*, Parsifal. In Bartók's pantomime the temptation dance of the girl held captive by the forces of evil is reminiscent of *Parsifal*, of the scene of the flower girls, that part of the second act that had such a great impact on the young Bartók in Bayreuth. Despite the identical atmosphere, and the resemblance in the means employed, the listener does not feel Bartók's stage music to be Wagnerian, not for a single moment. Nature—which both adored equally—said different things to each of them. And who would be reminded by the nocturnal magic of Wagner's music of the mysterious dread of Bartók's nocturnal music? The heroes, the human relationships are revealed in entirely different aspects in the work of the two composers. One hardly finds an example in Bartók's compositions of an alien power's redeeming grace. His dramaturgy refers rather to Dante and the folk ballad: "whoever wishes to become a piper must descend to hell." In Bartók's words: "What is important is not the origin of the theme we elaborate, but rather how we elaborate it. It is in this 'how' that the artist's skill, his shaping and expressive power, his individuality are manifested."

After that Bartók dealt with Wagner's person and his works on only a single occasion: in 1936 in his inaugural lecture on Liszt at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. These few splendid thoughts are a summary, as it were, a deeper revelation of his earlier views:

"I had once written somewhere: 'I feel that Liszt's significance in the further development of music is greater than Wagner's.' And I still hold this. I do not want to say that Liszt was a greater composer than Wagner. For in the works of Wagner we find greater formal perfection, a richer spectrum of expression, and a greater uniformity of style. Yet—Liszt's works had a more enriching influence on the succeeding generation than Wagner's. Let no one be misled by the great mass of Wagner imitators. Wagner solved his task in its entirety and in all its details with such perfection, that he could only be slavishly imitated, but one could hardly receive any inspiration from him towards further development. And all imitation is sterile—dead matter. On the other hand Liszt touched upon so many new possibilities in his works, without himself exhausting them to the full, that we were able to receive incomparably greater inspiration from him than from Wagner."

This was how a synthesis was born as the result of the clash between homage and rejection: the just and wise decision in Bartók's four-decade-long discussion with Wagner. From another of his statements we know that Bartók regarded the development of music as a single comprehensive process in which each epoch necessarily influences the succeeding one. Following Bartók's words written about Wagner, the references in his music to Wagner, the similarities that show through the differences in their times and personalities, perhaps finally it is no exaggeration to say: the two men are two links, not so far removed from each other, of one and the same tremendous historical chain.

FERENC BÓNIS

RUDOLF MAROS
AND POST-KODÁLY ATTITUDES

Chamfort once said that in both art and politics only he who was born at the right moment and for whom the way was paved could become a great man—not that that is a highly original idea, for everyone knows it. But it is certainly not true of Rudolf Maros, who was born in 1917 and is therefore over fifty. He was privileged to study composition under Zoltán Kodály at the Budapest Academy of Music, but nonetheless the genius of Bartók and Kodály and their life work, which paved the way for him and his generation, was an embarrassing heritage which weighed heavily on their development. As a young composer in the most successful era of Hungarian music he had every right to consider himself partner in and direct heir of a flourishing national musical culture. A number of years had to pass before Maros—seeing the Kodály succession sinking into academicism and provincialism—realized that he had to re-evaluate this heritage if he wanted to hold his own as a composer. This was the most vital moment of his artistic development, and it is Maros's credit that from the moment he became a dominant leader of the movement looking for new ways.

Maros completed his studies as a pupil of Kodály in 1942. During his formative years he played the viola in the Budapest Concert Orchestra, the best practical school for a composer starting on his career. His practical commonsense and the thorough grounding he received also proved very useful in the following years. He became a teacher at the Pécs Conservatoire when Jenő Takács, an excellent composer himself, was director there. Maros was chiefly drawn to Pécs because of Takács; in his first year there he became the leader of the students' orchestra and organized a string quartet. He made friend with writers and painters and this creative atmosphere was a great help is his development. After the war ended the musical life of Pécs speedily revived and Kodály also stayed there for a while. In 1949 Maros became the director of the Conservatoire, but only for a short time, for soon after he was appointed to a teaching post at the Budapest Academy of Music.

Although he attended Alois Hába's composition class at the Prague Academy of Music in the summer of 1949, the influence of Hába's theories only bore fruit in his musical development considerably later. At that time Maros was still definitely of the school of Kodály, and following his way of thought. What might be called a "Hungarian musical style" flourished in the early fifties, a kind of folklore-romanticism which exploited in a secondrate manner the really valuable and creative ideas of Kodály in an attempt to achieve an easy popularity. This trend in Hungarian music was similar to the post-Wagnerian *Neu-deutsch* school in Germany at the end of the last century.

The "String Symphony" and the "Wind Quintet"

Maros was quick to see its dangers. In 1956 he composed his *String Symphony* and a wind quintet, the *Musica leggiera*. The former was published by Mills, the British music publishers, in 1964, and the recording of the work achieved considerable success. Commenting on the recording, Ulrich Dibelius declared that a true evaluation of this composition can only be made in the light of Maros's further development. This symphony in three movements already foreshadows Maros's later orchestral works, despite the fact that it is still strongly connected with direct Hungarian musical tradition. The String Symphony moved Arthur Cohn to write in the American Record Guide: "Rudolf Maros is truly a find. His

music is heated, cussedly magnificent, and exciting. His Symphony for string orchestra is nervous even in the repetitive rhythms that are constantly employed... the approach is fresh and no wrinkled face of academicism appears..." Reading these lines from a distance of ten years this criticism is particularly flattering. The influence of Honegger, as well as certain Hungarian predecessors, can be seen in the String Symphony; Honegger deserves special mention not only because of his string symphony but because of the deeper similarities between Maros and Honegger, and first of all in the intimate, profoundly emotional humanity imbuing the works of the French composer. There are as a matter of fact many French and Latin characteristics in Maros's make-up; there is a certain noble elegance about his mind; he delights in mental gymnastics, and once said that "composing is a splendid game, but a game worthy of an artist, one can go on playing it for a lifetime." One can understand the admiration Maros feels for the ever-young Stravinsky, from whom he has learned so much. It was only at this juncture that the years of really creative study for his present career began.

The "Ricercare"

In 1957 Maros went to the Warsaw Autumn Music Festival; later he related how he experienced one of the greatest musical "shocks" of his life there in making the acquaintance of the most important compositions of Anton Webern. Two years later Maros went to the Darmstadt "Ferienkurse", the centre of the avant-garde after the war. Webern and the Viennese school gave a new impetus to Maros's musical style. Up to that time the work of the Schönberg school was scarcely known in Hungary. Freed from the dominant German influence Hungarian music developed its own individual national style at about the turn of the century. In the first half of the twentieth century, there was, understandably, little interest shown in the works of Viennese composers, for they represented precisely the danger from which Hungarian musicians had only recently managed to extricate themselves. In the second half of the 'fifties, however, that danger no longer existed; Hungarian music—thanks to Bartók and Kodály—had "come of age." Maros flung himself wholeheartedly into the study of the Viennese masters. For a time he devoted himself to his teaching and to study, in order to assimilate the new experiences and be in a position to make use of them in later compositions.

From 1955 to 1960 Rudolf Maros became the acknowledged leader of the "new Hungarian music"—the way I would like to describe all the Hungarian avant-garde which maintains a close connection with tradition. His mental alertness, his readiness to re-adjust, to take on new horizons is an excellent example to the younger generation. Maros is one of the most European-minded of Hungarian composers. There is nothing in him of that insular, often earth-bound, parochial spirit and unsophisticated mentality which has blocked the way into the outer world for many of our outstanding talents. And this without in any way disavowing national ties, which continue to be an individual and inalienable element in his music.

In the autumn of 1959 Maros completed "Ricercare", an orchestral composition that might be considered the starting-point of a new creative period. The work is in serial composing technique, and was performed at the Warsaw Autumn Festival in 1959. The composition, which strikes a new tone in Hungarian symphonic music, was later also played with Dean Dixon conducting.

The Five Studies

In the following year Maros published five orchestral pieces entitled "Cinque studie", which embody, as he himself point-

ed out, the fruits of his studies up to that date. The first thing the listener will notice in these orchestral studies is the strong influence of Bartók: they were composed at a time when all the more eminent Hungarian musicians were successfully engaged in a revaluation of Bartók's work. The orchestration of the "studie" is more differentiated and subtler, representing an experiment in tonality which took on its true significance later in the three Eufonies, his most mature compositions. The "Cinque studie" undoubtedly still fluctuate between Bartók and Schönberg to a considerable extent. I feel they are definitely transitional in character: Maros had to work these influences out of his system. These uncertainties of style however, did not detract from their domestic and international success: they were frequently broadcast and performed at concerts. But it is precisely his later compositions which mark so clearly the transitional character of these orchestral studies.

Miner's Ballad

In 1961 Imre Eck, the most outstanding of Hungarian modern choreographers, asked Maros to compose music for a ballet. This was the genesis of the "Miner's Ballad," symbolizing the treasures in the bowels of the earth which, yielding to the will of man, are brought to the surface to serve mankind. I must admit I was not attracted to the story from the outset; Eck's choreography moreover failed to fascinate me when the ballet was performed at the Budapest Opera House, nor did Maros's music really impress me. Entitled "Musica da ballo", Maros proceeded to produce a suite from the music of the ballet. Having expressed my own attitude to it, let me now quote Arthur Cohn in the "American Record Guide": "The five-movement suite taken from the score for a ballet, consisting of a Preludio Ostinato, a scherzo and nocturne, followed by still another pairing of scherzo and nocturne, and completed by a Danza Generale, the latter rivaling the movement in Ravel's Daphnis et Chloé with the same title. The scherzi are no mere rhythmic sprees, but skeletal fantasy pieces akin to speedy nocturnes; the nocturnes themselves like slowed-down, smothered scherzi. The effect is truly special, a marvel of discovery".

The Two Laments, composed in 1962, and the three Eufonies, composed between 1963 and 1965, are evidence that Maros has consistently followed the path he mapped out for himself. Both dirges, composed for soprano and chamber ensemble, are based on poems by Sándor Weöres: the first is a Papuan funeral dirge and the second employs the style of mediaeval hymns. The sharp brilliance of the music, the variety of sounding and in particular the frequent use of percussion instruments is especially worthy of note. Although there are certain conventional elements in the melodic design which prevent the chamber ensemble from achieving a more advanced mode of expression *in toto*, in the Two Laments Maros has found the tone best expressing his personality, and which came finally to full maturity in the three orchestral Eufonies.

The Eufonies

Before entering into a closer analysis of the three Eufonies, which represent the climax of Maros's activity up to the present and are the most important creations of contemporary Hungarian orchestral writing, it may be worth quoting something Maros once said, after he had successfully shaken off the threatening shadows of uncreative imitation in his relation to traditional music, and the long way he has come. "In Hungary it is perhaps not even known how important are the characteristics of the Hungarian school, or more precisely of the Kodály school, in the music of Central Europe. In this context I do not only refer to the national characteristics from which

the post-Bartókian generation will never be able to escape, and which are at the core of Kurtág's, Durkó's, Bozay's and my own works, or of Ligeti's who lives abroad, but also, and primarily, to the thorough grounding and skills given to Hungarian composers by the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music. And yet I believe that an even more important factor still is the sense of form of Hungarian composers. Strict adherence to form is the greatest strength of the Kodály school and it is this discipline which enables composers to retain their sense of proportion when, enraptured with new revelations, they are tempted to certain effects. My early works inevitably reflect the influence of the two Hungarian masters, because during and immediately after the War it was not possible to learn of other trends. Of course, I stand by these compositions as well, and recognize them as my own... Study and the changes it later made in me can be seen in my works in my use of dodecaphony, first of all in an orthodox way but later in a free and freer interpretation."

When Maros started to compose the three orchestral Eufonies he had already renounced serialism. The three works have to be scrutinized together, because apart from representing the most modern trend in Hungarian orchestral music-making, they have several musical and structural relations in common. The composer himself planned the three pieces as a self-complementing tryptich whose title also reflects it; Maros is here looking for the principles, the ideal of modern orchestral euphony, the possibility, indeed the necessity of achieving harmony and beauty in our troubled times. They may thus be regarded as the expression of Maros's musical ideals. The three Eufonies complement each other in their orchestration as well; composed in 1963, the first Eufonia is orchestrated for seven harps, strings and percussion; the second, dating from 1964 and performed at the international congress of the ISCM in Madrid in 1965, for two harps, percussion and wind instruments, and the third, completed in 1965, unifies the ensembles of the two earlier compositions. After the BBC broadcast of the Eufonia Stephen Walsh wrote in "The Listener": "The Eufonies are something of a dinosaur, big, sprawling, vulnerable, but beautiful and exciting as no dinosaur ever was, and certainly no remnant of a past age."

The Eufonia are the most modern Hungarian works as yet composed, with a treatment of the orchestra and a musical texture which adopts most up-to-date devices and modes of expression. Maros was certainly influenced by Ligeti's "Atmosphères" and Lutoslawski's "Jeux venetiennes" when he composed the Eufonia; these influences, however, only provided a general inspiration and left no mark on the profonudly individual expression of Maros's original contribution. Some of the critics, listening to the melody and then again the rustle of some of the sounds in the Eufonies, have referred to Trakl and George. I myself look to Sándor Weöres, the Hungarian poet, whose poetry also contains the same new spirit of expressive impressionism which is so characteristic of Maros. The first Eufonia is a series of free variations. Hovering over "clusters of chords" the harp and timpani introduce a motive that might be taken as the theme of the following variations. This "quasi thema" in semitonal displacement is followed by the concertino of the xylophone, the vibraphone and the harp, as a first variation. The subsequent variation develops from the flageolet tones of the strings. In the next section the colour combinations of the percussion instruments dominate, whereas in the fifth passage the quarter tones, condensed blocks and rustling sounds of the strings arise as independent variation. The fifth part relies on a playful variation of dots and lines, snatches of melodies and motives and dot-like sound-patterns. The seventh part, called by Maros "catalogue", resumes all the principles and techniques used up to that moment. The second Eufonia consists of four essential movements, two of which,

called Ecloga, include two Nenies, i.e. dirges. The third Eufonia consists of a single large movement; an expressive melody and its reflection, "hommage à Bartók", appears in its middle part. The formal build-up, the dynamic line of the piece, is a single wide-arched crescendo-descrescendo, and after the central part, the musical material of the first large passage is repeated inversus, in crab-like order. The massiveness and the second mighty sweep of the winds in the third Eufonia is reminiscent of Varèse, and the monumental Ionisation.

After this brief analysis it might be appropriate to deal with the features the three pieces hold in common. The material in terms of music and motive of all three pieces is characterized by small ambits, the chromatic progression of lesser and major thirds, and closely knit, blocked patterns. In Maros's peculiar polyphony a texture of voices often unite with the strictness of a canon, producing that hissing sound so characteristic of the Eufonies. Concertant characteristics can be found in all three compositions: in the first Eufonia, one of the variations is explicitly built on a concertino, but the solo-like prominence of some instruments or groups of instruments within the larger whole can be seen in all three compositions. The broad crescendo-decrescendo treatment of form in the third Eufonia can be found in the formal-dynamic build-up of all the pieces; a "swell" followed by a subsequement "ebb" in the dynamics is a common structural device in these orchestral works. The treatment of the espressivo melody like the curve of an arch, which—judging from the central part of the third Eufonia—can be considered as "hommage à Bartók" has the characteristics of traditional musical material and should be regarded a quotation inserted into the style of the three compositions. I refer to the viola melody in the first Eufonia as well as to the arch-like melody played in the second Eufonia on the alto-flute and the clarinet, and in the third also on the flute and the clarinet, and which come within an ace of violating the unity of style. Maros, presumably, felt this too, and gave it the definite character of a quotation in the last Eufonia. The third Eufonia seems to climax the series, as if it were resuming the first two in terms of the effects and techniques employed as well as content. Maros concentrates the essence of his whole development to that time in the Eufonies, and he goes no further in his more recent works. Following the Third Eufonia, he composed "Musica da camera per 11" in the summer of 1966, on the request of Mario di Bonaventura, the head of America's Hopkins Music Center. It was performed for the first time at the Dartmouth Festival, which was directed by Bonaventura. In this composition of three movements the musical world of Eufonia transposed for chamber music, although in a less radical style. The formal arrangement of the three movements (Serenata, Rondo, Notturno) is unambigous and follows tradition: the first movement is a three-part setting, with its central part containing a heterophonic display of the wood winds; the second is a regular rondo, whereas the third is a great crescendo on the model of the Third Eufonia. In this composition for chamber orchestra Maros had to face and solve the problem of composing a fast movement for a small ensemble by making use of the elastic rhythmic qualities of modern music. The expressive melodic nature of the music, known from the Eufonies as "hommage à Bartók", also appears in the Musica da camera, and as it were frames the composition; it can be heard at the beginning of both the first and the third movement.

After the series composed for a large orchestra, Maros became interested in the chamber orchestra. Following the Musica da camera he composed a trio for harp, violin and viola and completed it in November 1967. This, too, springs from the same world as the Eufonies. Apart from the violin-cimbalom duos by György Kurtág it is, I believe, the most concentrated and

accomplished of Hungarian chamber music works (with the exception of Hungarian quartet writing which contains some very valuable pieces composed by Hungarian musicians in recent years). In the Trio, too, the small ambit consists of progressing chromatic patterns, and the work, in five divisions, closes with a free presto without bar lines. The melodic quality described as "hommage" appears here as well; it seems to be Maros's characteristic way of expressing poetic feeling, sometimes verging on romanticism.

In 1968, Maros completed two works: "Gemma" for wind instruments and a string ensemble of six, and "Monumentum", composed for a large orchestra. His further plans include compositions for smaller ensembles, flute-clarinet duos and a cycle of songs. He is in addition contemplating the composition of an opera.

IMRE FÁBIÁN

MAGYAR ROSES

The great strength of Hungarian musical education is its integration. No one travelling as I did in the countryside visiting schools in various cities and towns could fail to appreciate this. The anxiety most parents feel in Britain when moving house say from London to Manchester regarding their children's musical and general education would not be the same worry to Hungarian parents—as Grade 4 Solfège class in Pécs is very little different from Grade 4 in Eger. This is not in the least to say that the teaching is boringly alike, but standards are high everywhere, and the splendid foundation of musical teaching is built step by step upon a carefully graded selection of folk song, beginning with the building of the oldest scale, the Pentatonic. Owing to the research work done by Zoltán Kodály, Béla Bartók and their helpers, each step of education is planned to tally with that stage in folk song evolution. This is impossible in the West as much of our folk heritage has been allowed to disappear, in spite of splendid work done by individuals such as Cecil Sharp and Marjory Kennedy Fraser. No earnest research has ever been done in sorting out the songs discovered in order to find the oldest, the not so old, etc. I understand that in several countries of the world (other than Hungary) serious work is proceeding, grading all folk song and discovering links between them in age, key and form. Hungary had the luck, if one can use such a word, to have a fresh start so a really national method could be organized. Owing to her history of occupation by other powers the folk songs remained intact like bees in amber until finally the right men at the right time used them in the correct way. This makes Hungary unique and certainly an example to other nations.

The sincerity of her teachers is the first point to strike the visitor, and the careful preparation of the lessons with the example of various kinds of music on tape and radiogram all entirely relevant to the subject being discussed is striking. The music of other nations plays a large part too in the curriculum. It is difficult not to wax lyrical about the children themselves, their appearance, intelligence and keenness, etc. I particularly liked the six-year-olds in the First Grade of a music Primary School, amongst whom were some really desperate characters. I called them the "First Row Terrors." Béla, at the slightest provocation disappeared under the desk, so all we saw

was Bottoms up, and Tibor, who had a predilection for falling asleep! Absolutely splendid! It is difficult to pick out one school from another but Komló is a place I hope to revisit. The warmth of the welcome quite overwhelmed me, especially as the bus journey from Pécs on a very warm day had been anything but comfortable loaded as we were with handbags, tape recorders and camera. No one apparently wanted to get out of the vehicle, but everyone in that part of the world had an obsessive desire to board it! However a Hungarian prince in a miner's outfit gave me his seat so I was in luck. But on arrival at Komló and on hearing the singing of the school choir discomforts were soon forgotten.

The excellent vegetable soup followed by eggs and pumpkin in white sauce is still remembered by me as one of the tastiest meals I have ever enjoyed, and where else would a fifteen-year-old boy give roses to a stranger with a smacking kiss. No wonder I christened the children "My Magyar Roses."

In a misty dawn we left Pécs, that charming university town in Southern Hungary, to make a journey to Kecskemét, the birthplace of Zoltán Kodály. As we passed the vine-covered hills and saw a smiling landscape, I was reminded of our lovely county of Sussex, England. Slowly the mist rolled away and the rising sun warmed our chilled selves. It was sad to leave Pécs with her mosque and minaret, and her perfectly splendid brass band which played us music from the church tower during the previous evening. However, as we crossed the Danube and saw the flocks of geese nestling in the reeds, one looked forward to new experiences, knowing that as far as Hungarian musical education is concerned, it would be a revelation—it was! No one could visit the music school at Kecskemét without being impressed by the building and equipment available for teaching. It was here I heard a class of the Sixth Grade. I have never seen more brilliantly intelligent children. Their singing at sight of an English round written on the board by myself at the request of the headmistress was perfect. The only imperfection was my poor writing of staff and notes on the blackboard. Musical notation is carefully and meticulously taught in schools and I felt my example was a poor one, and that I had let Great Britain down nearly as much as the devaluation of the pound!

I heard a choir rehearsal taken by Ilona Andor, and this was surely a great privilege. Several times I taped a song, only to find that she still regarded the ensemble to be imperfect. Gradually the balance began to please her and some voices were removed altogether as being not quite up to standard. 1½ hours later I saw these young people still weeping in the corridor! So much does it mean to them to sing under this wonderful woman. This gives some idea of how seriously these young people take their music and says more for all the teaching in the schools throughout the country than I could ever say in this short article.

The grades for instrumentalists and singers who do not wish to enter the music profession impressed me very much. I heard several young people in their first grades (the whole course consists of five grades) and found the standard high. To hear the "Black Key Study" of Chopin and a Bach Prelude and Fugue was very impressive.

The chance to see a nursery class at the Liszt Academy which illustrated a previous lecture by Professor Szőnyi was instructive and charming. The rhythmic and vocal exercises demonstrated by these young children obviously astonished the audience which was international and Mrs. Szőnyi's explanations were very helpful to me, a stranger. It was interesting to hear that Professor K. thought that doh—lah (lower) was the first interval probably sung unconsciously by a child as it amuses itself, and this ties up in the learning of the Pentatonic scale in later study. I could have listened and watched here for far longer than I was able to do.

TRIO

FOR HARP, VIOLIN AND VIOLA

Rudolf MAROS

(1) Notturno (♩ = 60)

Vl

Vla

Harp

f acc mf mp mf suoni FLUIDI f col palmo della mano

fp p

Hb, Gb, Cb, D#

ord. p

Sul pont.

p

Sul pont.

pp

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accel. - - - -

poco a poco ord!

poco a poco ord!

cresc. -

cresc.

f

f

a tempo

3

3

5:4

p

15

fp

mp

mp

mp

C♮ G♮

5
4

f pp

p

pp

suoni FLUIDI

ord.

p f

8

② Cadenza

Vla

pizz. arco

p f mf p

f

p f

Then a morning at the Béla Bartók School in Budapest was another highlight. The atmosphere here as these young people honoured me by playing to me was very good. Their fellow students listened intently—and were obviously appreciative of each other's work. What a high standard! I heard all the five grades which lead from the beginning of the course in a Secondary Music School to the Liszt Academy, and certainly some of these youngsters will become well known beyond the borders of their country. I shall watch for their names with interest.

I was disappointed not to have been able to hear young instrumentalists other than pianists, but since my visit I have had the opportunity of hearing on gramophone records the playing of the Hungarian Wind Ensemble (recent winner of an international competition) and was most impressed by their obvious high standard of professionalism. In addition the Bartók String Quartet have recently visited London and received splendid Press notices, and general acclaim. I understand some of these young players were trained at the Béla Bartók School.

Might I now allow myself the privilege of remembering some little vignettes of my visit? The first view of Castle Hill, now so beautifully laid out and landscaped, on a certain shining Sunday morning. The combination of old and new gives an unforgettable impression. A splendid lunch at a famous restaurant, and on leaving seeing several old ladies in black sitting under a nearby archway, gossiping and watching the passersby,—this mixture of naiveté and sophistication I found most attractive—the little streets of Buda at night where mysteries of the most exciting kind lurk behind every wall and window. (I could write about these for ever!) The Opera House floor, some of which creaks in a most friendly fashion (I noticed this first in 1961). The absolute mountains of *marron* I managed to eat on all occasions and the welcome sight of taxis, with their smart checked sides. Lastly, how I miss the Hungarian jokes, which my friends were always telling me, and lastly (forgive me) how can you learn a language in which *nyolc* is not nine but *eight*. Really! But still my favourite relaxation is to turn on the tape recorder and listen to Bach's *B minor Suite*, the Kabalevsky *Sonatine*, and the *Jeux d'eau of the Villa d'Este* played to me once more by the pupils of the Béla Bartók School. The latter piece inevitably brings to mind the magnificent portrait of Liszt which hangs in the Academy he helped to found and finance. His hand touching his beloved piano, his eyes looking out proudly on the Magyar Roses, who are so nobly following the tradition of virtuosity he set for them long ago.

ADELE FRANKLIN

ECONOMIC LIFE

THE POLITICAL POSSIBILITY OF WORLD ECONOMIC PLANNING

A Symposium at the Vienna Institute for Development

The first Development Decade—a review, the second Development Decade—a preview, those were the themes of an international conference, a symposium, which was held in Austria in June 1968. The purpose was to discuss the problems of the developing countries, and the sponsors were the Vienna Institute for Development.

The conference was inaugurated in Velden on the Wörther See by a speech by Mr. Bruno Kreisky, as president of the Vienna Institute for Development; Mr. Kurt Waldheim, the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, on the other hand spoke at the closing ceremony which took place in the Vienna Auersperg Palace.

Participants at the Conference included some from less developed and others from developed countries, some from the East and some from the West, some sent by governments, national and international agencies, universities or newspapers. The socialist countries were represented by delegates from Hungary, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

Fiasco or success?

Will the first Development Decade, lasting from 1960 to 1970, meet with success or will it turn out a failure? As is well known the declared aim of the United Nations is that the annual growth rate of the developing countries taken as a whole should reach five per cent in the nineteen sixties. According to this notion the developed countries will contribute to realizing this target by making available one per cent of their national income in the form of aids and credits.

Mr. I. H. Abdel-Rahman, the Executive Director of UNIDO, opened the discussion and dealt with the situation of the present Development Decade. Some of the speakers pointed to the fact that the results achieved lag behind the targets, and examined the serious though unforeseeable problems that have arisen during the years that have already passed. Others again emphasized that it succeeded in approaching its aims. It is true—said some of the speakers—that the Development Decade draws to a close, it has, however, not come to an end yet and, therefore it is possible to turn the experiences gained hitherto to good account. Other opinions pointed beyond the time limit of the First Development Decade and looked into the future: new conceptions and practical suggestions were put forward regarding the subsequent Development Decade that will cover the nineteen seventies.

The contributions concerned with the first Development Decade concentrated more on quantitative aspects. According to data, the rate of increase in the developing countries taken as a whole amounts to about 4 per cent on the average, although this

differs considerably from country to country. Rumours have it that in some of the developing countries it reached 4.9 per cent in 1967 because of the bumper harvest. This means that by the end of the first Development Decade the planned rate of increase will, perhaps, materialize, although this does not mean that it will consolidate.

It is true that a rate of increase of four per cent is not negligible either, particularly if it is taken into consideration that in the 19th century, and even between the two World Wars, the rate of increase in European countries amounted to only about 3 per cent. However, in the case of developing countries, the population explosion is also of some importance and, as a result, the increase per capita is considerably lower. The quick growth of population particularly aggravates the foodstuff situation. Thus, the Development Decade is inseparably connected with the campaign against famine, which was passionately stressed by Mr. René Dumont whenever he took the floor. On the other hand, Professor Samir Amin emphasized that economic development is not the only yardstick for measuring the rate of increase because it also depends—particularly in the case of developing countries—on the transformation of the economic and social structure.

Dealing with the criteria applied for the evaluation of development, Professor Kolontai (Soviet Union) pointed out that the global data referring to developing countries as a whole are not always characteristic, for the real results of development can only be sized up in the light of the interconnections of concrete conditions in single countries. A period of ten years, moreover, is not long enough for all social and economic results of a government's policy to be achieved. Prof. Kolontai also mentioned the economic and political motivation of the population of the developing countries, in the broadest sense, because personal involvement is an essential factor in a development policy.

The discussion on the plans for the second Development Decade focussed around a paper prepared for the Conference by Professor Tinbergen. Some of the speakers emphasized the importance of the fact that comprehensive plans covering the world economy are now being drawn up for the first time in the history of mankind. Others again were sceptical as regards the feasibility of directly carrying such plans into effect.

"Orbi-economic" planning

Professor József Bognár, a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences analysed the political aspects of world planning the paper he submitted to the conference: "Problems of Plan Implementation on the Macro- and Orbi-Economic Levels." The attempts to achieve some sort of planning on a world basis were the very reason that induced Prof. Bognár to suggest the introduction of the concept orbi-economics in addition to, or rather over and above the terms hitherto used, microeconomics and macroeconomics. Dealing with the question of plan implementation, Professor Bognár writes in the first part of his paper: "It has become obvious that it is easier to prepare plans than to implement them." Questions concerning plan implementation are proper subjects for research. The study on the implementation problems of economic plans prepared for UNCTAD on the occasion of the New Delhi conference by the Centre for Afro-Asian Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences under Prof. Bognár's direction was an attempt to contribute to the foundations of a discipline on the macroeconomic level, similar to the one that has long been represented by business management on the microeconomic level.

Prof. Bognár explains the concept of orbi-economics in the following way: I would call the world-economic level which contains some elements of planning the "*orbi-economic*" level, in contrast with a world economy constituted by a mere conglomeration of

self-contained macro-economic units. Such an orbi-economic outlook is also represented by Jan Tinbergen's world development plan, as well as by the "world indicative plan" put forward by him for this conference."

In the following Prof. Bognár then proceeds to point out a few of the implementation problems on the orbi-economic level. Of these problems those of a political character seem to be very serious. It is common knowledge that the political sensitivity of the macro-economic model is considerably greater than that of the enterprise (micro-economic) model. The sensitivity of the orbi-economic model is necessarily even greater. In view of the great sensitivity of the orbi-economic model, it would be unwise to aim at completeness and uniformity of method. It seems therefore appropriate to introduce as a first step such an "indicative" (or rather predictive) planning system which, on the one hand, makes it possible for each national economy to reckon with certain processes expected to take place in the other national economies, and on the other hand ensures the strengthening international organizations the possibility of taking stock of all relevant developments.

The concept of orbi-economics, introduced by Prof. Bognár, is a new economic aspect which may exert a fruitful influence on the further development of world economic planning if only because of lines of thought suggested by analogies with the micro-economic and macro-economic levels.

The papers and contributions to the debate by other participants at the Conference e.g. Mr Paul Bomani, the Tanzanian Minister for Development, Professor Jacques Austruy, El Imam, the director of the Egyptian Institute for National Planning as well as by representatives of a number of international organizations (UNCTAD, FAO, World Bank and EEC) threw light on the problems and possibilities of practical development. Economists submitted papers on important technical questions (for example, Mr G. Krull's study on the mobilization of savings) or chose subjects within the domain of economic aid (e.g. Mr Gustav Papanek). "The Development Decade of the UN and the international monetary reform," the paper the writer of these lines submitted to the conference, argues that in his view it would be a just and above all feasible solution if the developed countries would offer twenty per cent of the special drawing rights due to them within the reform of the international monetary system for development purposes and pay down these sums to an international or regional financial institution, explicitly for the said purpose. This contribution would have the character of a non-recurring improvement tax, an analogy which could be said to be its economic justification. The same course of action could be taken in the case of an occasional rise of the gold price.

At the Conference interesting arguments were put forward for increasing public understanding and support fo the Development Decade. When this question was discussed publicists and political writers took the floor. For example, Colin Legum, from "The Observer," pointed out that the poverty of the developing world is no lesser an evil than the danger of an atomic war, hence, the fight against it involves governmental responsibility similar to that against non-proliferation. Public opinion can do much to awaken the conscience of governments. Tibor Mende, the director of UNCTAD's information service, a well-known political writer, emphasized the usefulness of the practical argument that developing countries are important potential markets; however, in order to make this potentiality effective their purchasing power must be increased. Development aid, then, is indispensable for this kind of economic growth. A paper by Frank Judd, a member of the British Labour Party, "Notes on the Role of Non-Governmental Agencies in Development" was also concerned with the course of action organizations representing the public could take. Frank Judd declared: "Enlightened self interest demands action in order to

promote both world purchasing power and international stability." A remark pointed to the fact that, nowadays, development assistance seems to have a peculiar kind of priority: whenever public expenditure is reduced it starts with foreign aid.

In addition to its many connections and organizing experience, the Vienna Institute for Development contributed to the success of the Conference through an introductory study produced by the research team of the Institute under the guidance of Mr Arne Haselbach, its administrative director.

The Final Statement sets out from the fact that the world cannot hope to continue for long in a condition where more than half of its inhabitants face starvation while the rest enjoy increasing affluence.

The sum and substance of the debate on the evaluation of the success of the First Development Decade is that despite the progress in the 1960's the First Development Decade was not without its failures. The fact that a process of mutual disenchantment has taken place hinders the continuous increase of effort. There are those who doubt that the less developed countries are sufficiently committed to development or sufficiently competent to bring about an acceptable rate of per capita growth. There are also those who doubt that the developed countries are committed to the provision of adequate support.

The experience of the last decade also provides more specific lessons:

—in a number of countries considerable structural transformation is required to assure development over the longer term;

—every developing country that takes the task of nation building seriously must recognize that significant achievement is only possible with the active participation of its own people and a proper mobilization and utilization of its own resources.

The Final Statement points out that many national development plans contained insufficient amounts for investment in agriculture in the First Decade.

The second Development Decade should be a long-term programme of coordinated international action to promote more rapid economic development in both industrialized and developing countries. A coordinated programme of international monetary reform, trade development and aid is a precondition for obtaining satisfactory results.

The Final Statement, then, gives a general idea of the possibilities inherent in the special drawing rights, regional banks, exports and regional cooperation. It also points out that with regard to the specific features of the developing countries the World Bank group should break away from its historic reluctance to assist state-owned industries and state-owned banks for financing development. In particular, a review of the constitution of the International Finance Corporation is essential to enable this World Bank affiliate to support any viable enterprise, regardless of the degree of state participation.

The second Development Decade should stress the enlightened self-interest of the developed countries in overcoming socio-economic backwardness in developing countries.

A UN Planning Committee has been established to propose plans for the second Development Decade. The main point to bear in mind is the need for creating the necessary pre-conditions and establishing responsibility for implementation of a programme of action inside and beyond the United Nations.

By way of conclusion the Final Statement emphasizes that the single most important issue is to create a more stable world, with less tension and more security. The UN declaration has created great hopes and expectations; it prompted people to new initiatives; it must now be made into an action-oriented programme whose performance can be seen and which can influence the trends of cooperation in the world among all countries, regardless of their stage of development or their political system.

EGON KEMENES

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ABODY, Béla (b. 1931). Writer, essayist and critic, TV personality. Works on the staff of *Élet és Irodalom*, a Budapest literary weekly. Has published a collection of—mostly satirical—short stories and two volumes of essays and criticism. See his book review in No. 10 of The N.H.Q.

ASTON, Paul (b. 1942). Lecturer in English at Kossuth University in Debrecen, Hungary. Studied German and Art History at University College, London, and also acquired an Institute of Education diploma in the teaching of English as a foreign language. Has lived in Hungary since 1965.

BOGNÁR, József (b. 1917). Economist, M.P., Professor at Karl Marx University of Economics in Budapest, President of the Institute for Cultural Relations. 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, 26, 28, "Stable Cooperation in an Unstable World" in No. 29 and "Economic Reform and International Economic Policy" in No. 32 of The N.H.Q.

BÓNIS, Ferenc (b. 1932). Musicologist, head of a department at the Bartók Archives in Budapest. See his portrait of the composer Pál Kadosa in No. 15, and his concert reviews in Nos. 25 and 27 of The N.H.Q.

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FÁBIÁN, Imre (b. 1929). Musicologist, musical editor of *Film, Színház, Muzsika*, an illustrated weekly devoted to film, theatre and music. Also works for television. See his "The Composer Endre Szervánszky" in No. 19 and "Zsolt Durkó, Composer" in No. 30 of The N.H.Q.

HAJNAL, Anna (b. 1907). Poet and translator, an outstanding member of her generation. Has published nine volumes of poetry, several books—both verse and fiction—for children, and two collections of verse translations.

HALÁSZ, Zoltán (b. 1914). Journalist and author. Deputy Editor of The N.H.Q.

HOLLÓ, Mária. Economist and chemist. Worked as a chemist for many years and published several articles as well as a book on research in corrosion. Collaborated on a book "The End of the Economic Miracle" written by her husband, Ferenc Jánossy, an economist, soon to be published in the United States.

KOLOZSVÁRI GRANDPIERRE, Emil (b. 1907). Novelist, short story writer and essayist. His novels and short stories are brilliant analyses of contemporary intellectual and middle class life, written with sharp and elegant irony, a strong psychological insight in an effortless style that reproduces the ephemeral slang of the day. See his short stories, "Christmas Celebration" in No. 8, "The Swing Door" in No. 21 and "A Key to the Kingdom" in No. 29 of the N.H.Q.

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NÉMETH, Lajos (b. 1929). Art historian, our regular art reviewer.

NYERS Rezső (b. 1923). Secretary of the Central Committee and member of the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, MP. Apprenticed as a typesetter (1938–41). Employed in a printing office until 1945. Meanwhile he completed his studies at the University of Economics. He entered political life in 1940 when he joined the Social Democratic Party. He became a member of the Hungarian National Assembly in 1947. In 1947 and 48 he participated in the movement of leftist socialists and had an active role in the political preparation of the fusion of the two parties. He was elected a Candidate Member of the Central Committee in July 1948 at the first congress of the united party, then, in 1954, he became a full member. He has been a member of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party since 1957. In 1962 he was elected to be one of the Secretaries of the Central Committee, in 1966 he became a member of the Political Committee of the Party, keeping also his office of Secretary. His duties lie mainly in the field of economic affairs and he is the Chairman of the Party's Economic Policy Committee. He was Minister of Food Production 1956 to 1957, also Chairman of the National Federation of Cooperatives, also Minister of Finance 1960 to 1962. Publications: *Szövetkezetek a Magyar Népi Demokráciában*, ("Cooperatives in the Hungarian People's Republic") Budapest 1959; *The Cooperative Movement in Hungary*, Pannonia Press, 1963 (a revised version of the Hungarian work); *Gazdaságpolitikánk és a gazdasági mechanizmus reformja* ("Our economic policy and the reform of the economic mechanism") (Speeches and articles) 1968.

RÉNYI, Alfréd (b. 1921). Mathematician. Holds the Chair for Probability Theory at Eötvös University in Budapest, is Director of the Mathematical Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Has done important work in probability theory. His main achievement in number theory has eased the way to the Even Goldbach Conjecture. Has published, among numerous other works, "Probability Theory," in 1954.

RÓNAY, György (b. 1913). Poet, novelist, essayist, translator. Was engaged for a time in publishing and as editor of literary magazines. Both in his poetry and in his novels he expresses a modern Catholic outlook. His book on classicism, his many essays on French writers and a volume on late nineteenth century Hungarian poetry, display and impressively learned mind. Has translated a number of French poets, the poems of Michelangelo, Novalis, Hölderlin and Rilke as well as prose works by France, Aragon, Malraux, Sartre, Goethe, Kafka, Turgenyev, Virginia Woolf, etc. See his article on László Bóka's poems, "Without Anger," in No. 17, and "The Statue Says," a poem, in No. 23 of The N.H.Q.

SEBESTYÉN, György (b. 1932). Hungarian born Austrian novelist. Studied at Eötvös University in Budapest, wrote literary and theatre criticism for various Budapest papers, since 1957 lives in Vienna, where he fought his way into the front rank

of young Austrian writers. Two of his novels were especially successful: *Die Türen schliessen sich* ("The Doors close") and *Der Mann im Sattel* ("The Man in the Saddle") His essay on Krúdy appeared as an introduction to Krúdy's "Crimson Coach," published in German, in Sebestyén's translation, by Paul Zsolnay Verlag, Vienna–Munich.

SZABADY, Egon (b. 1917). Demographer, vice president of the Hungarian Central Bureau of Statistics, secretary of the Research Group in Demography of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; Editor of *Demográfia*. See his "International Demographical Symposium in Budapest," in No. 11. and "Population Changes in Hungary" in No. 21 of The N.H.Q.

SZÁSZ, Imre (b. 1927). Novelist and translator, our regular book reviewer.

TORDAI, Zádor (b. 1924). Philosopher, literary historian. A research fellow at the Institute of Philosophy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Has published numerous studies in periodicals as well as two books: *Irányzatok a mai polgári filozófiában* ("Trends in Contemporary Bourgeois Philosophy,"), written in collaboration with György Márkus, 1964) and *Egzisztencia és valóság* ("Existence and Reality," 1967).

TRILLING, Ossia (b. 1913). Author, drama critic and journalist. Educated at St. Paul's School, London and St. John' College, Oxford. After editing *Theatre Newsletter* for a number of years after the war, he became theatre correspondent for a large number of papers and periodicals the world over. A frequent contributor to *The Times*, he is on the Council of the Critics' Circle and Vice President of the International Association of Theatre Critics. Publications include *International Theatre*, 1948. See also his "Shakespeare on the Stage Today" in No. 13 of The N.H.Q.

VAJDA, Miklós (b. 1931). Essayist and translator, Literary Editor of The N.H.Q.

VARGYAS, Lajos (b. 1914). Ethnographer and musicologist. Was director of the music department of the Ethnographic Museum 1952–61; lectured in ethnography at Eötvös University in Budapest, 1952–62. Since 1961 member of the folk-music study group at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His numerous books deal with problems of folk music, balladry, prosody, modern Hungarian music and ethnography. See his "Kodály's Role in Folk-Music Research" in No. 8, and "French Folkballads in Hungary in the Middle Ages" in No. 16 of The N.H.Q.

VAS, István (b. 1910). Poet, author, translator, one of the outstanding personalities in contemporary Hungarian writing, a member of the Editorial Board of this review. His recent publications include a volume of collected poems, parts of an autobiographical sequence, *Nehéz szerelem* ("Troubled Love," 1964), and a collection of shorter translations from foreign poets, *Hét tenger éneke* ("Song of the Seven Seas," 1962). See also his poems "The Via Appia" in No. 23, and "Gods" in No. 29. of The N.H.Q.

ZÁDOR, Anna. Art historian, professor of Art History at Eötvös University in Budapest, member of our Editorial Board. See also her "A Stroll Through the Carpaccio Exhibition in Venice," in No. 14, "Among English Historical Monuments," in No. 17, and "An Austrian Architect in Hungary: Melchior Hefele," in No. 27 of The N.H.Q.

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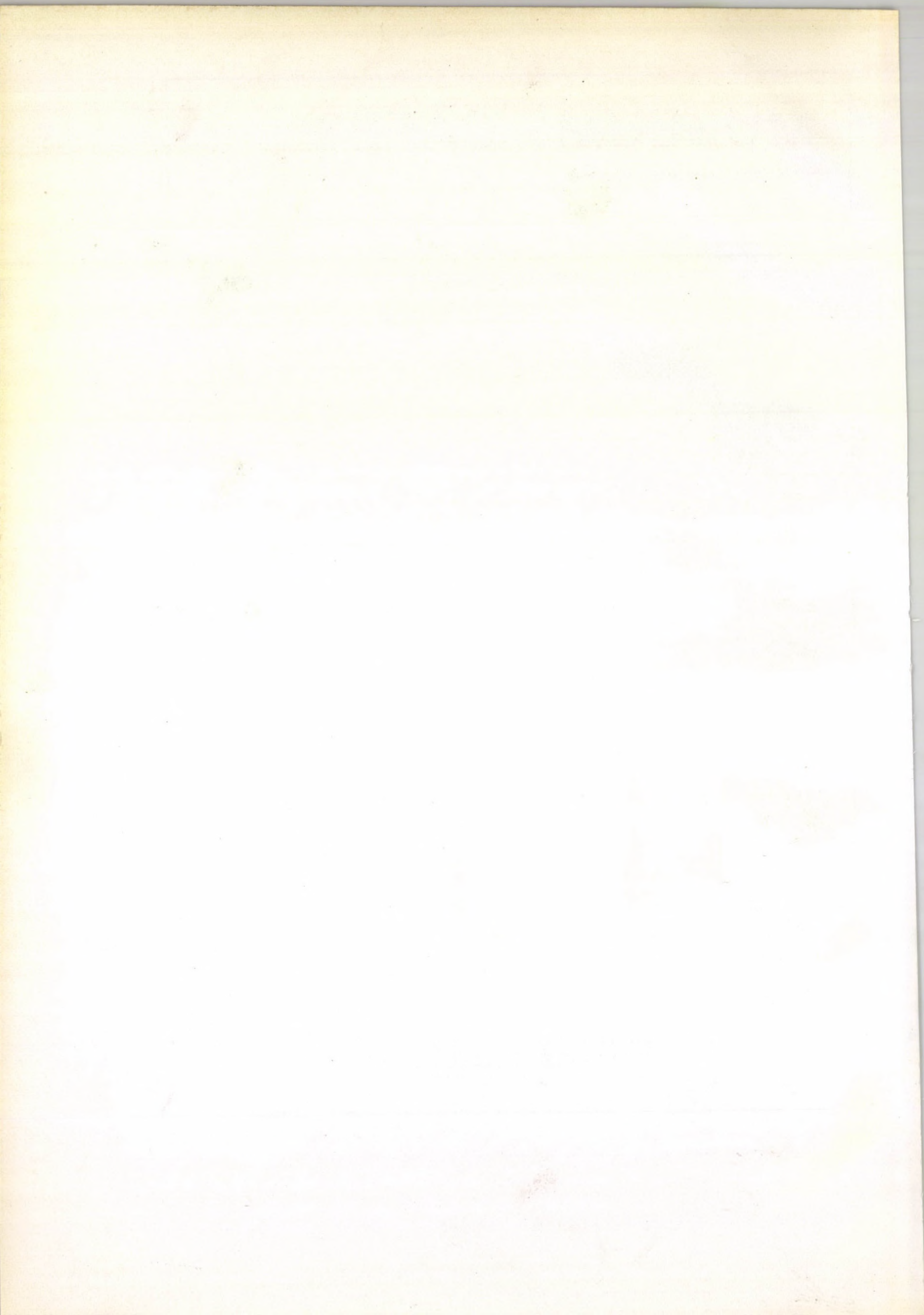

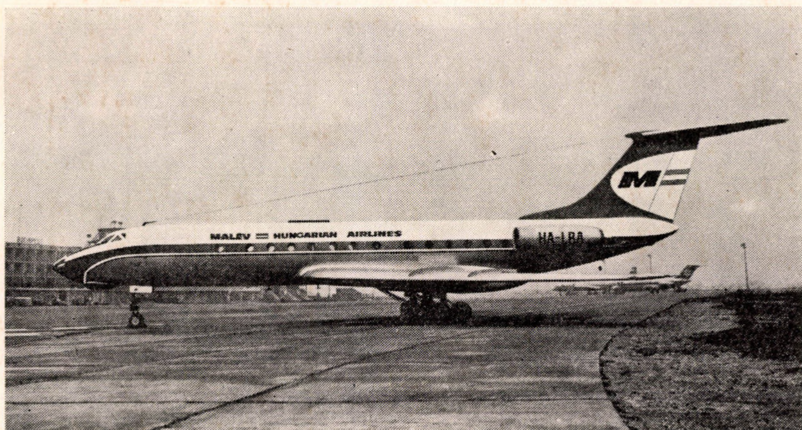

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