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BOOKS AND AUTHORS

ARTS

THEATRE AND FILM

MUSICAL LIFE

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STABILITY
IN AN UNSTABLE WORLD

As this magazine, started in 1960, goes to press for the fifty-ninth time the editors, totally unaccustomed to as much as even fifteen-year periods of safe and quiet continuity, let alone progress, cannot help pausing for a moment of reflection. Older people look back to childhood memories of the First World War, and subsequent famine and deprivation, as the Austro–Hungarian Empire collapsed and the country shrunk to a mere third of its size. Another of this nation's many doomed attempts at long overdue radical social change followed with the short-lived Republic of Councils, only to give way to the twenty-five years of the Horthy-regime's incredibly narrowminded and irresponsible policies of increasing social division and tension, economic stagnation, and suicidal dependence on the Third Reich. That the country should emerge from the holocaust on the losing side and, as a result, almost totally destroyed, was as tragic as it was inevitable; there is little more Hungary can boast of concerning the war than having survived it, with the chance to make a fresh start. The relatively small and scattered resistance movement, not strong enough to significantly alter the course of events, nevertheless existed and fought, providing some relief for the national conscience.

We have, in numerous earlier issues, attempted to show the tremendous changes this country has undergone during the thirty years since the end of the War. The entire fabric of society has been radically and irretrievably transformed, as has the economy. Basic social and economic indicators now place Hungary among the medium-developed industrial nations of the world; no small achievement in the context of the point of departure, the tragic past, small size, scarcity of natural resources, and the pricetag always attached to rapid changes of that sort. While realizing in the late 'forties and early 'fifties some of the oldest and deepest aspirations of the

people—such as land reform—and the beginning of the socialist transformation of society and the economy, and the nationalization of major industries, to mention the most important—in the climate created by the Cold War, the blunders of voluntarism, dogmatism, arbitrary political action and the resulting bitter frustration led to the upheavals of 1956, a national tragedy of vast proportions. Once again a fresh start had to be made, there had to be a stock-taking, ends and means had to be rethought and forces reorganized. This, roughly, is the historical and political background that we come from, the experience that has shaped our lives and conditioned our thinking, and also the lesson that we are trying hard to understand and pass on to younger generations and to the world. That is why a fifteen-year period of political stability and economic growth, and a climate of purposeful work and fulfilment, is something we are unaccustomed to, something that we deeply appreciate.

Stability also means that there are well-founded future expectations. It means that events follow a more or less predictable course without sudden turnabouts and violent changes. Changes, if and when they do occur, have a tendency of being for the better. And, hidden somewhere behind it all, there is a consensus, some sort of mutual understanding at work, a common purpose.

Stability also means a relaxed mood that comes with the feeling of security and material progress. A telltale and visible sign of this nowadays is what seems to be the beginning of a new baby-boom—and that in a nation which not so long ago had one of the lowest birthrates in the world, as also discussed in this journal. A scheduled more than eight million holiday makers from East and West will have a chance to detect for themselves other signs of progress as they come to sightsee and eat their way through the country during the tourist season.

As we were preparing this issue, the thirtieth anniversary of VE Day and the sudden end of Vietnam's thirty-year war almost coincided. Unlike some other nations, this time we have no reason for soul-searching or for rethinking our foreign policy and commitments. We publish a study by Foreign Minister Frigyes Puja in which he, without fanfare, points to the consistency and firmness of these policies which are based on the best interests of this nation. Stability at home cannot, after all, be achieved and maintained for any length of time without a network of alliances, commitments, and other mutually advantageous foreign relations. Gyula Ortutay writes on some of the painstaking policy-making that goes on, often in the form of serious and passionate discussion, in a standing parliamentary committee where legislators prepare bills or decide on the practical interpre-

tation and implementation of the law, criticize the work of the government, allocate budgetary funds, and conduct hearings.

Two articles in this issue give some insight into the workings of the economic mechanism that Hungary has become noted for: Béla Csikós-Nagy, who heads the National Bureau of Prices and Materials, sums up the thinking behind a socialist price policy that aims at a sound and flexible harmony between the consumer interest and overall national economic progress. János Fekete, a Vice President of the National Bank in charge of international operations, writes about the place Hungary now occupies in the network of the international division of labour, so vital for a country which depends for more than forty per cent of its national income on the international market. Both studies also discuss the way, how by dint of an intricate regulating mechanism, the state steps in to carry most of the burden of inflation that is inevitably imported through international trade.

Tibor Déry has written another chapter of his reminiscences, this time on being delivered into freedom. What he, a member of the underground and the illegal Communist Party, owed to the liberation was no less than his life. The playwright and novelist István Örkény, in his successful new comedy *Blood Relations*, printed in full in this issue, transforms the gist of recent Hungarian experience into a single and powerful metaphor: each individual in this play carries the same surname and works for the same organization: the Railway.

Our poetry section presents a new recruit. Herbert Kuhner, the American poet and translator, author of *Nixe*, a novel, who makes his home in Vienna, first appears as a translator of Hungarian poems for NHQ. A chapter from the late László Németh's medical diary of his own illness —which proved to be fatal—is a document which offers insight into the workings of an immensely powerful mind, one of the most interesting and stimulating of his generation.

Sándor Szalai, writing on some of the social effects new technology has brought about, quotes a paradox as his point of departure: "If a drug has no side effects then it has no main one either." New technological processes do indeed have complex and often quite unforeseen effects and side effects that we cannot afford to ignore in a planned economy.

Not much has been written in English about Thomas Mann's relationship to Hungary. In a detailed account, Judit Győri now writes about his last visit to Budapest which prompted Attila József to greet him in a poem that ranks among his best and is also printed here in Vernon Watkins' beautiful translation. Neville Masterman, who teaches history at the University of Wales and who, having lived here before the War, knows a lot about

Hungary and its past, writes about a new summary of Hungarian history published in English. Lajos Vargyas, the ethnomusicologist gives Zoltán Kallós, the Transylvanian ballad collector, the appreciation his large collection of previously unknown Hungarian folk ballads, a real work of love, so richly deserves.

Just one more thing should perhaps be mentioned. Stability also means a certain diversity and tolerance, the emergence of new ideas and new light cast upon the past. A taste of this is provided in the Theatre column this time, where a Hungarian and an American critic write about how some aspects of the past are seen today, and treated in stage productions. That too is something that we feel must be cherished and encouraged.

THE EDITORS

THIRTY YEARS OF HUNGARIAN FOREIGN POLICY

by

FRIGYES PUJA

The most important date in Hungary's recent history is April 4, 1945. On that day, thirty years ago now, the Red Army drove the remnants of the defeated German armies out of the country and the entire territory was liberated from Hitlerite fascism and its Hungarian allies. The time had come when the Hungarian people could become the masters of their own destiny, taking over power and setting a new course for the development of their country.

At that time this was not as natural as it appears today. Hungary was still shrouded in the shadow of her past. The supporters of the overthrown régime had not yet given up the struggle and whispered rumours purposefully spread, frightening gullible people that a comeback of the old masters was threatened. Of all the parties of the Hungarian National Independence Front only the Hungarian Communist Party had a clear, consistently popular democratic programme. The parties of the coalition disagreed on fundamental questions of home policy. The Hungarian Communist Party and the left wing of the Social Democratic and National Peasant Parties alone consistently stood for a clear break with the past. The leaders of the Independent Smallholders' Party, a few prominent politicians excepted, wanted to steer the country towards bourgeois democracy. This was the main reason why, soon after Liberation, the domestic situation became so tense. The parliamentary elections of 1947 and events of the subsequent months, the programme of the new coalition government and then the historic fusion of the two workers' parties, the Hungarian Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party, clearly showed that the Hungarian working class, the toiling peasantry and progressive professional people, that is to say, the overwhelming majority of the country's population, wished to take the road to socialism.

Thirty years are a short period as history goes but it proved enough

to change life in Hungary down to the roots. An underdeveloped country acquired a developed industry and large-scale socialist agriculture and a cultural revolution in the Leninist sense was carried through successfully. Industrial production has risen tenfold and agricultural output, in spite of war damage, has increased by 61 per cent compared to the 1934–1938 average. The standard of living of Hungarians has reached unprecedented levels. There is no stopping, progress continues along the charted course. The Party Programme, adopted by the 11th Congress, opening up a wealth of prospects for the future, declares: "That great principle of human equality *From everyone according to his ability, to everyone according to his needs* is coming true thanks to our work and struggle. That is how our people comes closer to that universal human goal, communism, a new world free from all oppression and exploitation, where nations dwell together in peace and prosperity, and humanity finally enters the realm of freedom."[1]

I

The liberated country had to decide its foreign policy orientation just as it did the guidelines of its home policies. Without a firm and well-established foreign policy, and favourable international conditions, the Hungarian people would not have been in a position to reconstruct the country and to lay the foundations for a new life. The government of free Hungary had to get rid of the dismal heritage of the past, to launder out the stains which the country's participation in the Second World War had left on the honour of the Hungarian people; to arrange for the signing of a treaty of peace; to build and develop relations with all those countries which were ready for them; and, first of all, to acquire friends who could be depended on, friends who would help Hungary realize her lofty and far from easy objectives.

Hungary had taken part in the Second World War as an ally of the fascist powers. Miklós Horthy's anti-democratic system and later, after October 15, 1944, Szálasi's arrow-cross "government" had given all-out support to the German war machine. This policy plunged Hungary, which had not really maintained a network of relationships before the war either, into complete international isolation. Before the end of the Second World War, Hungary had diplomatic relations with only a few countries; political contacts, commercial, cultural and other ties existed only with the Axis

[1] *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt XI. kongresszusa* (The 11th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) Kossuth, 1975. p. 223.

powers and a limited number of neutral states. A serious effort had to be made to change this situation.

A major task confronting Hungary was thwarting unceasing attempts by the imperialist powers to interfere in the country's affairs. The imperialists did not favour Hungary seeing herself as a people's democracy. In their view the country's home and foreign policies ought to have been given a capitalist orientation and Hungary was meant to act as a sort of *cordon sanitaire* between the Soviet Union and the Western powers. The governments of the imperialist countries adopted a double-faced policy in the hope that Hungary's line would move in a direction to their liking. They established diplomatic relations, stressing their readiness to develop interstate relationships, and even promised to grant economic aid and credits as well. Making use of such contacts, they engaged in organized subversion designed to slow down and handicap the growth of a people's democracy in Hungary. They conspired with the enemies of the people, with reactionary Horthyist elements, who found refuge in political parties, social organizations and government bodies, and with bourgeois forces in order to effect a swing to the right, if need be, by the use of force. They addressed notes, protests and warnings couched in sharp terms and "well-meaning" appeals to the Hungarian government applying sanctions thereby to embolden and support their accomplices inside the country.

Differences of opinion between parties of the National Independence Front making up the government existed also regarding foreign policy, although on the surface they appeared to differ from divergencies on issues of domestic policy.

The pivot of the coalition government, the Hungarian Communist Party, took up a clear and unambiguous position. It indicated as the most important point in foreign policy the development of close co-operation with the Soviet Union and the democratic countries. To quote the draft programme published by the Central Committee of the party in November 30, 1944: "The democratic transformation of Hungary is inseparable from a democratic foreign policy... There is need for a radical break with a policy hostile to the Soviet Union, a policy that has followed only and exclusively from the anti-democratic policy of the Hungarian reaction, brought the country to ruin and turned progressive humanity against us, being diametrically opposed to the Hungarian national interest... We have to create good neighbourly relations and sincere co-operation with all surrounding countries, first of all with the new Yugoslavia and democratic Czechoslovakia, furthermore with Great Britain and the United States, and close friendship with the defender of the freedom and independence of peoples, the

powerful Soviet Union, which helps us shake off the German yoke."[2] Close co-operation with the Soviet Union and the countries desirous to become people's democracies was essential; it was a requirement of the internationalism of the communist movement; there were common aims and common enemies; we were equally interested in safeguarding a lasting peace; and only such a line could further the realization of specific national aspirations both in domestic and in foreign politics. Common experiences stimulated us to become good neighbours and to join forces. From the outset we had been aware that we would be able to lead Hungary on the road of socialism only if we relied on the first socialist state in the world, the Soviet Union, with its immense strength and great international prestige, together with the countries with similar systems. On the other hand, close co-operation with the Soviet Union and the people's democracies was indispensable also in order to repel imperialist interference in home affairs.

The picture was nowhere near as clear in the other parties of the National Independence Front. The masses of the Social Democratic and National Peasant Parties shared the ideas of the Communists also regarding foreign policy, but different views came to the fore among the leaders. In both parties there were men who wished to lean on the imperialist forces, the Anglo-Saxon powers in the first place. The leadership of the Independent Smallholders' Party, apart from a few leftists, inclined to the Western powers. The same forces which wanted to lead Hungary on the road to bourgeois democracy supported an Anglo-Saxon orientation in foreign policies.

In spite of this, right after the Liberation, none of the parties openly questioned the importance and necessity of co-operation with the Soviet Union though their reasons varied. The foreign policy proposals of the November 30, 1944 draft programme of the Hungarian Communist Party were accepted by all the parties of the National Independence Front. They were included in the programme of the Front issued on December 3, 1944. In public, even politicians who could hardly be described as democrats, argued in favour of good relations with the Soviet Union. They had no alternative, the will of the masses was manifest. In secret, they nevertheless conspired against such ideas and endeavoured to tie Hungary to the leash of the Western powers.

After the 1947 elections and the formation of the new government, developments were accelerated in foreign policy as well. Hungary strengthened relations with the Soviet Union and other democratic countries. In 1948 treaties of friendship and mutual assistance were signed with the

[2] Resolutions of the Hungarian Communist and Social Democratic Parties, 1944–1948. Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1967, p. 40. (In Hungarian.)

Soviet Union, Poland and Rumania, in 1949 with Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia. In 1949 the country helped to establish the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance. Hungary was among the first to recognize the People's Republic of China following the victory of the Chinese revolution. Solidarity was expressed with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in its battle with imperialism. The government took part in a number of multilateral actions by the socialist countries intended to strengthen international peace and security. In 1955 Hungary was one of the signatories to the Warsaw Pact. Faced with the preparations for war of the imperialist powers, it was indispensable to organize more efficiently the common defence of the socialist countries.

Bilateral relations were built up with a number of developed capitalist countries. A start was made on settling problems outstanding between Hungary and capitalist countries, such as questions concerning property rights. In the years 1950 to 1955 our relations with most of the European capitalist states were developing appreciably.

The Hungarian People's Republic strove to establish relations with developing countries that had recently won independence as soon as this became possible. Diplomatic relations with Egypt were established in 1947, with the Republic of India in 1948, after they became independent.

An important event was the signing of the treaty of peace in February 1947. Although diplomatic relations with Western powers were established earlier, with the United States, e.g., in 1945 and with France in 1946, their signatures on the treaty of peace confirmed once again that they recognized Hungary as a sovereign and independent state, though soon after they nevertheless asserted the contrary. Eventually, however, they had to agree to the Hungarian People's Republic being admitted to membership in the United Nations in 1955.

Between 1945 and 1956 Hungary had to contend with many difficulties of a foreign policy nature. In 1945–46, the position of the country did not permit extensive diplomatic activity, later the Western powers had started the Cold War. The socialist countries, Hungary among them, had to make great effort to counteract imperialist machinations designed to disrupt peace. At that time every small result required great exertion on the part of the socialist countries. In 1953–54 the ice of Cold War began to thaw, and Hungarian foreign policy activities, following the example of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, also began to liven up. There was every sign that the process would favour the expansion of relations between Hungary and other countries. This promising development was interrupted by the 1956 counter-revolution.

The party and government of Hungary had to work very hard to overcome the effects abroad of the counter-revolution, which wanted to change Hungary's foreign policy cutting off the country from the community of socialist states and withdrawing it from the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

The governments of the imperialist powers meant to demonstrate that —though maintaining diplomatic relations with the Hungarian People's Republic—they refused to accord "full recognition" to the Revolutionary Workers' and Peasants' Government of Hungary. They did not appoint new ambassadors, nor did they consent to visits on a ministerial or higher level. Except for trade relations, they slowed down the development of bilateral contacts; they did nothing at all in the area of cultural relations; in some respects they even organized cultural boycotts against Hungary. They managed, in the United Nations, to have the credentials of the Hungarian delegation suspended, requesting that the Hungarian government make it possible for the "Committee of Five" of the United Nations to function in Hungary. They used the forum of the United Nations to stir up feelings against the Hungarian People's Republic and took every opportunity to keep an anti-Hungarian propaganda campaign going.

The party leadership and the government of the Hungarian People's Republic did not allow themselves to be influenced by the fierce attacks of Western propaganda and the political steps of the imperialist governments. They made every effort to do away with the consequences of the counter-revolutionary revolt and to establish the future of the country on a solid basis. Thanks to this, a few months only after the defeat of the counter-revolution, life in Hungary was back to normal, industrial and agricultural production was growing rapidly and transport and commerce functioned satisfactorily. National economic plans were successfully fulfilled year after year. The most difficult task of socialist construction, the socialist reorganization of agriculture, was accomplished without difficulties in 1964.

The major results achieved in home politics and in economic affairs affected also the international position of Hungary. Public opinion in the Western countries became increasingly convinced that their politicians and news media had misled them with false and tendentious reports on the situation in Hungary. The moment came when the governments of the capitalist countries had to change their minds and abandon the policy of forcible isolation. The "Hungarian question" was taken off the agenda of the United Nations in 1962. In October 1964 the Foreign Minister

of Austria was the first Western politician, after a long gap, to pay an official visit to Hungary.

The change for the better that took place in the international position of Hungary in the late fifties and early sixties was thus essentially a consequence of successes at home. The picture would not be right, however, if one failed to mention the great and very effective help which the Soviet Union and other socialist countries rendered Hungary. One should not forget the successful efforts of Hungarian diplomacy either. Hungarian diplomacy played a part in finally breaking the capitalist diplomatic and cultural blockade, ensuring that relations with capitalist countries expanded on the basis of full equality and mutual advantage. In that period Hungary established diplomatic relations with many developing countries.

As a result of all this, in the mid-sixties, the Hungarian People's Republic entertained diplomatic and other relations with far more countries, and enjoyed considerably greater prestige in international life than in 1955.

3

In the time that elapsed between the mid-sixties and the present the foreign policy of the Hungarian People's Republic has carried out its national and international duties in every respect. Foreign policy has become more active, increasingly taking the initiative and making good use of the possibilities for promoting the aims of the Hungarian people and the socialist community.

Looking back at the road traversed, one can rightly say that Hungary's position has radically changed on the international scene. Today the Hungarian People's Republic is an honoured member of the socialist community and, given the results it has achieved and its consistent foreign policy, it has secured the respect of the non-socialist world as well. The extension of its international relations is shown by the fact that it maintains diplomatic relations with a hundred and four countries, including fifty-nine embassies and seven consulates general as well as four missions accredited to international organizations.

In the course of thirty years of international activity the Hungarian People's Republic has accumulated much experience that it uses and applies in the handling of foreign affairs.

(a) Developments in the world situation show, first, starting in the mid-sixties in a fluctuating manner, later more steadily, a lessening in international tension and a gradual spread of détente. Today one already talks

about a major change having taken place. The Declaration of the 11th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party rightly say: "At present, under the aegis of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, a turn is taking place in the international situation from a period of cold war towards political as well as mutually advantageous economic, scientific, technological and cultural co-operation."

The chances are that, in accordance with the shift in international power relations in favour of socialism, of progress and peace, détente will continue to spread and ultimately become irreversible. This, however, is no smooth, automatic process, for the enemies of détente will try over and over again to slow down and halt détente and, what is more, even to bring back a fresh version of the cold war. In the present situation such efforts cannot really succeed.

(b) On the basis of the experience gained in international activity spread over thirty years, in co-operation with the socialist countries, Hungary has established the main lines of foreign policy. These can be described as follows.

—Shaping favourable international conditions for the building of socialism; a fight against aggression and against imperialist efforts made to disrupt peace and to subject other nations.

—Strengthening the unity and cohesion of the socialist countries, increasing their political, economic and military weight.

—Solidarity with the popular forces fighting for democratic liberties, for peace and progress in the capitalist countries; support for the national liberation movements in their struggle against colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialist oppression and aggression.

—Fostering many-sided co-operation with the developing countries.

—Fighting for the realization of peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems, for the consistent safeguarding of the principles of peaceful coexistence.

We know from experience that the most favourable condition for the building of socialism is lasting, stable and secure peace. The Hungarian aim is to contribute, as far as the country's moderate means extend, to the fulfilment of this central task.

(c) Based on the main line of foreign policy, Hungarian international activity has considerable scope. I shall list a number of aspects.

Hungarian foreign policy attaches the greatest importance to relation with the Soviet Union. It does so for reasons of principle and practice. Hungarian Communists have always looked on relations with the Soviet Union as a criterion of internationalism. They have always held the view

that progress in this age, and the successful building of socialism, are inconceivable without, or in opposition to, the Soviet Union. Whoever wants socialism has to go with the Soviet Union. In the spirit of internationalism the Soviet Union has always selflessly assisted, as it still does, the socialist countries in their difficult struggle. The history of free Hungary offers eloquent proof that the Soviet Union has always stood by her. The Soviet leadership has made its wealth of experiences in the building of socialism available to the Hungarian people, it has given them assistance in the economic reconstruction of a country devastated and looted by German fascists, and in the development of industrial and agricultural production. The alliance with the Soviet Union has saved Hungary from the imperialist powers' attempts to interfere. It was with Soviet help that the counter-revolution was crushed and that its consequences were done away with. Hungarians protect their own national interests when they strive for still closer, still more intimate and still more harmonious co-operation with the Soviet Union. These endeavours were well served by the talks held in Moscow when the Hungarian party and government delegation headed by János Kádár journeyed there in September 1974. The significance of that visit was given its due by the meeting of the Central Committee held on November 20, 1974. "A political event of outstanding importance for our country," the communiqué issued after the Central Committee's meeting stated, "was the visit to the Soviet Union by the Hungarian party and government delegation in September. The visit has made it clear that fraternal relations and co-operation between the Hungarian People's Republic and the Soviet Union develop all the time and serve the interests of both countries, of the socialist community and of the progressive forces of the world. It has demonstrated the total unity of principle and policy between the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Hungarian and the Soviet government, and the two nations. The Central Committee has set high value on the results of the talks. It establishes that the party and government delegation has completely fulfilled its mission, and has continued to strengthen indissoluble Hungarian–Soviet friendship."[3]

The Hungarian People's Republic takes an active part in the work of the common organizations of the socialist countries. Hungary endorses the proposals which serve to strengthen these organizations, improving their work. A Hungarian delegation, headed by János Kádár, participated in the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty,

3 Communiqué on the November 20 meeting of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. *Népszabadság*. November 21, 1974.

held in Warsaw in April 1974, which effected a thorough analysis of the international situation and defined the common foreign policy tasks of member countries for the future. The Warsaw Treaty member states celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the organization, emphasizing the enormous significance of the organization from the point of view of safeguarding peace and thwarting the machinations of imperialism. A Hungarian government delegation headed by Jenő Fock attended the anniversary session of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance held in Sofia in June 1974. That was a good opportunity for the representatives of the CMEA countries to appraise twenty-five years of activity of the organization and to define the tasks needed for the consistent carrying out of the Complex Programme. The 29th Session of CMEA held in Budapest in June 1975 approved the coordinated plan of integrational measures for the 1976–1980 period taken by member states. Important resolutions were also passed concerning long-term cooperation among member states stretching as far as 1990.

In the recent past great successes have been scored by national liberation movements. As a result of the positive turn of events in Portugal, independence has come within reach of the former Portuguese colonies. Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique have already become independent and the proclamation of the independence of the Cape Verde Islands is expected in the near future. It is to be hoped that the issue will soon be decided in Angola as well, and that these countries will also achieve independence. New independent countries, presumably with progressive policies, will thus appear on the political map of the world. The socialist countries, including Hungary, will obviously strive to build extensive relations with these countries.

The Hungarian government makes great efforts to expand relations between Hungary and the Arab countries. This is only natural. Progressive trends worthy of support are manifest in the Arab world. The Arabs fight a just cause, to put an end to Israeli aggression and its consequences. The events taking place in the Middle East have a direct effect also on developments of the situation in Europe. Hungarian political and economic interests alike require closer co-operation. Hungary maintains traditionally good relations with the vast majority of Arab countries. The visits made by Prime Minister Jalloud to several socialist states in February 1974 bear witness to the fact that Libya also wishes to improve relations with the socialist countries. Over and above political and economic ties Hungary is taking steps to broaden cultural contacts as well. A pledge of this was the inauguration of the Hungarian Scientific and Cultural Center in Cairo last autumn.

The Hungarian People's Republic strengthens its relations with the developing countries of Asia as well. This objective was served by the visits of Jenő Fock to India and Burma. Hungary has also begun to build relations with Asian countries with which contacts so far have been only occasional or non-existent. Signs of this were the visits to Hungary last year by the Foreign Ministers of Singapore, the Philippines and Indonesia, by the Deputy Foreign Minister of Thailand and by a government delegation from Laos.

Hungary strives to build extensive relations with the developed capitalist countries on the principle of the peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems. Among these attention is focussed on the capitalist countries of Europe. This is natural since Hungary is a European state.

The intimacy of our relations with neutral Finland was well demonstrated by János Kádár's visit to Finland in September 1973, and the visit by Prime Minister Kalevi Sorsa of Finland to Hungary last year. Good neighbourly relations with Austria have expanded in practically every field. Important new agreements which will be signed in the near future have been initialled. A new stage in the relations between Hungary and Norway was marked by the visit of the Norwegian Prime Minister, Trygve Bratteli, to Hungary last year. Relationships between Hungary and major capitalist countries have likewise developed, although faster progress would also be conceivable in some respects. For the first time in the history of the Hungarian People's Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany, official —and successful—negotiations took place between the Foreign Ministers of the two countries. Subsequently the Hungarian foreign minister visited the Federal Republic of Germany during which he conferred with the Foreign Minister and was received by the Federal Chancellor. The visit to Hungary by Aldo Moro, the then Italian Foreign Minister, has shown that the Italian government is interested in developing bilateral relations. It is hoped that a new impulse can be given also to Hungarian–French and Hungarian–British relations in the near future.

One cannot be fully satisfied with relations between Hungary and the United States. In spite of Hungarian intentions all questions could not be settled as yet.

The recent democratic change in Portugal confronts Hungary with the task of establishing extensive relations with that country. Hungary wishes to intensify relations with Greece as well, where a positive change has occurred.

In keeping with its strength and capacity, the Hungarian People's Republic takes a hand also in the solution of a number of international problems.

Allow me to refer first to the European conference on security. Hungarian politicians and leading officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order to ensure that the security conference be convened and later in the interest of this successful work, held comprehensive consultations and exchanges of views with leading politicians of the developed capitalist countries and put forward the agreed ideas and proposals of the socialist community. It is hoped that, as a result of the joint efforts of the socialist and other peace-loving countries, the second stage of the security conference will soon be concluded, and the third stage will be convened at the highest level.

Hungary collaborates with the Warsaw Treaty countries in the interests of the success of negotiations on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe. Unfortunately, the NATO countries' desire to secure unilateral advantages has so far hindered progress at the Vienna talks.

Hungarian representatives are active in negotiations promoting the limitation of the arms race and the cause of disarmament. They take part in the work of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva. The country co-operates in finding solutions to problems of detail concerning disarmament in the United Nations, as well as in other international organizations.

The government of the Hungarian People's Republic has resolutely opposed the schemes of the Greek military junta and aggressive NATO circles who threatened the independence of Cyprus. The situation in Cyprus still overshadows the improving situation in Europe. A just settlement of the conflict is needed, based on the restoration of, and respect for, the independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Cyprus. The Hungarian government supports the relevant proposal of the Soviet Union.

The government of Hungary continues to think it indispensable that the Middle East crisis be settled peacefully by implementing the resolutions of the Security Council. Israel must withdraw her forces from occupied Arab territories and recognize the Palestinians' right to self-determination and statehood. Recently the situation in the Middle East has again become more critical. Increasing American support has buttressed Israeli self-confidence; the Israeli leaders refuse to discuss the withdrawal of their armed forces from all occupied Arab territories; they organize armed provocations against Arab countries and decline to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization, showing reluctance to negotiate with its representatives. They are opposed to the resumption of the Geneva conference. The responsibility for the unsettled Middle East situation and for any new armed conflict in the area is Israel's and that of its foreign backers.

A major event of our times is the victory of the people of Vietnam over Imperialism and its satellites, following a long and self-sacrificing strug-

gle. The Hungarian people, showing all the admiration and recognition due, supported this heroic struggle in the spirit of active solidarity. It was a fight waged for the implementation of the Paris agreement, for the freedom and independence, unity and social advancement of their country, fought by the patriots of South Vietnam under the immediate direction of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam and in collaboration with their northern brothers. Now, when after a victory won at the expense of great sacrifices, the tasks of reconstruction and of the creation of a democratic society are given first priority in this much suffering country, the Hungarian people will continue to support the people of Vietnam in the spirit of fraternal internationalist cooperation.

The Chilean military junta carried out their coup a year and a half ago. It has not been able to consolidate its position. The opposition of the Chilean people is mounting, and the bloody military junta must sooner or later disappear from the scene.

The government of the Hungarian People's Republic categorically condemns the Chilean fascists and demands that the will of the Chilean people be enforced.

4

During the thirty years of its foreign affairs activity, the Hungarian People's Republic has experienced much of general validity. Most of the socialist countries have reached the same conclusions and this strengthens the Hungarian position. Such experience is taken into consideration in international activities.

(a) The Marxist-Leninist view that the foreign policy of a socialist country is most closely connected with its home policy appears to be justified. The other side of this connection is also important: the foreign policy of a socialist country exerts an effect on domestic policy, even though this connection is not as direct as the other one. A country's striving towards socialism cannot be enduring if, in its foreign policy, it fails to incline towards the community of the socialist countries, that is towards the Soviet Union. If the leaders of a socialist country fail to take this into account, if they isolate themselves from the socialist community, if they pursue a different foreign policy, this will sooner or later have a negative effect upon their domestic policy and will ultimately jeopardize the building of socialism in their country. The most telling example of this is the foreign policy of the Maoist leaders of the People's Republic of China.

(b) Experience shows that a country building socialism, or any other progressive country, cannot adopt a position half-way between the socialist community and the imperialist camp, it cannot manoeuvre between them with the idea of being able to take advantage of both sides for its own good. If the leaders of a country really choose the road leading to socialism, they must dissociate themselves from the aspirations of imperialism and must oppose them; they must of necessity come closer to the international objectives of the socialist community. If this is not taken into account in foreign policy this is proof that a socialist orientation is not seriously desired, or, at the very best, that in the maelstrom of international events the wrong path was chosen.

(c) Experience in foreign policy shows that a *sine qua non* of the successful international activity of socialist countries is close alliance and co-operation with the Soviet Union. This increases the possibilities of the socialist countries in the field of foreign affairs and enhances their international standing. That the present-day international position of the Hungarian People's Republic cannot even be compared to that of prewar Hungary is largely due to close co-operation with the Soviet Union. It is a mistake to believe that the loosening of co-operation with the Soviet Union in foreign affairs can be to the advantage of any socialist country. This kind of attitude is apt only to diminish the effectiveness of the foreign policy of the socialist community.

(d) Experience shows that closer co-operation of the international activities of the socialist countries is an indispensable requirement of our times. The socialist countries have to co-ordinate virtually all of their major tactical steps, since only in this way can they struggle effectively against the ideas of the imperialists and their allies. This conclusion is convincingly justified by international negotiations in recent years, the European security conference being a particularly good example. Besides joint services to common aims and to the cause of the international proletariat, besides the more effective protection of our own national interests, we are obliged to this also by the "unification" efforts of capitalist monopolies, by the fact that the leaders of capitalist countries take a joint stand on many questions in which they oppose the socialist countries. Passing over such phenomena out of narrow-minded egoism would be tantamount to political blindness.

(e) From the point of view of promoting the cause of peace and security, of improving on a larger scale the relations of socialist and capitalist countries, of settling controversial international problems, of curbing and then halting the arms race, the government of the Hungarian People's Republic attaches paramount importance to the development of Soviet–U.S. rela-

tions, to the already regular meetings between the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the President of the United States of America. Hungary welcomes the talks and agreements between representatives of the two major world powers. At the same time Hungary opposes all those who on this account foster mistrust of the Soviet Union. The results attained thus far demonstrate beyond question that the Soviet leaders, in their talks with American leaders, always start from the vital common interest of the socialist countries.

(f) Experience justifies the Marxist-Leninist view that the priority of politics is valid in foreign affairs as well. The socialist countries subordinate their economic objectives to their international political aims. At the same time they cannot neglect international economic interests which are important for the life of their peoples. There are stages in the building of socialism when international economic interests come particularly into focus and when the socialist countries increasingly strive to expand their international economic relations.

At the present time it seems proper to make use of the possibilities inherent in the expansion of economic relations with the developed capitalist countries. The ruling circles of capitalist countries appear to have a greater inclination than before for more extensive economic cooperation with the socialist countries. But those Western circles which think that the socialist countries will make political concessions in exchange for broader economic contacts with capitalist countries, are mistaken. It would be well for them to bear in mind that the expansion of economic relations is important not only for the socialist countries but also for them, and that this is not a matter of one-way advantages. They also cannot expect to be able to obstruct the progress of socialist construction by weakening the economic contacts between their respective countries and the socialist ones. The failure of the economic blockade and discrimination employed against the countries of the socialist community during the Cold War years has shown that there is no way in which the imperialist powers can halt the successful march of the building of socialism.

(g) The history of socialist foreign policy shows that the socialist countries can achieve their foreign policy objectives only through an active struggle against imperialism. Substantially, imperialism has still not given up its plans to contain the advance of socialism and undermine its positions, and to restore capitalism the world over. To this "programme" we oppose the objectives of socialism, of progress, of a foreign policy that guarantees that in proportion to the shift in international power relations socialism is gradually gaining ground everywhere in the world.

Some pseudo-leftist "revolutionaries" maintain that talking to representatives of the leading capitalist countries and co-operating with them on certain matters is incompatible with the anti-imperialist struggle. These people evidently do not understand the dialectic of peaceful coexistence, the fact that peaceful coexistence means both co-operation and struggle at the same time. They do understand what compromises with the imperialist countries mean. They tend to forget that Marxism-Leninism has never been against compromises as such, that it has opposed only compromises entailing concessions on matters of principle. If, however, the compromises promote the cause of socialism and of progress, they are right and necessary.

(b) While active in the international sphere, Hungary has reached the conclusion that contacts between party leaders are of increasing importance for the relations between countries. In the case of socialist countries this is self-evident: the leading organs of their communist parties are responsible also for the conduct of foreign policy, and their consultations and agreements exercise a decisive influence on bilateral relations between their respective countries. This is to a certain extent valid also for relations between socialist countries and those developing countries that are governed in terms of a progressive system. In recent years contacts have been established between the leaders of the communist parties of the socialist countries and those of the social democratic parties of Western Europe. Although the social democratic parties, in the spirit of their traditions, try to keep party relations apart from interstate relations, their talks and agreements with leaders of socialist countries in practice exert en effect on interstate relations as well.

In my view the few characteristics of the international activity of the Hungarian People's Republic here described give a true picture of these thirty years of Hungarian foreign policy.

MY OWN DELIVERANCE

by

TIBOR DÉRY

My memories of the country's liberation from German occupation cluster around two central thoughts.

The first is an awareness that I owe my life to the advancing Soviet troops—a fact which is unforgettable.

The second concerns the role of the nation—and of myself personally—in achieving freedom; whether we shaped history or just endured it.

I ponder the two memories at the same time, they belong together.

In the society of Horthy's Hungary—to stay within the limits of vision—I had a predestined role determined by my birth, by my family circumstances. Even when viewed strictly objectively, it was the role of the "persecuted". Willing or not, I had to accept it; and how I struggled to adjust to it depended on my strength or weakness. Not being combative by nature, I am likely to withdraw into a more or less peaceful life of the citizen unless the social assault stings me to the quick: if it hinders me in the exercise of my literary profession. For it was always my pen that wanted to give, and could more or less, my opinion of the world and what I had to communicate to it, and it was precisely this—presumed—duty of mine that was taken away. I had no talent for an active political role, which was not to my liking anyway, and on those rare occasions when I reluctantly accepted the role, I paid for it; so the only channel of communication left to me was writing, the breathing of my pores. I was a free writer with no official position, I could write as much as I pleased and what I pleased, only it would not be published. Did captives in medieval dungeons ever get used to the darkness of night and the weighty shackles? *A befejezetlen mondat*, ("The Unfinished Sentence") on which I had worked four years without the slightest hope of publication, lay in my desk drawer, together with the manuscripts for another three or four books.

"I now see only in retrospect," I noted once, "what an inhuman struggle

I was engaged in for a full ten years, a struggle against hopelessness, and I am not surprised that I am worn out. When a society time and again curbs a man's desire for creative work, then his emotions will first turn against that society, but ultimately against himself as well. I felt myself an outcast from every human community, an odd eccentric indulging his non-human whims. I was a fad incarnate, a demented mist, evaporating smoke. Compared to me, even the suicide-bent Attila József was a robust, jovial reality. I was forced to believe that I did not understand or speak human language. All my friends had some kind of social background, however limited, to lean on; I was happy if ten or twenty people 'trusted' me. At the age of forty-five and fifty I was still considered a 'young talent' by those few learned men and literature-lovers who, instead of the collectivity of a country, scrutinized my writings."

My own personal failure was intensified by the ill fate of the nation. The Germans occupied Hungary, extending the war to the territory of the country and doubling the peril for my own lot. "How am I to understand the public indifference in accepting the occupation?" I asked at that time. "Did mistrust of politics actually mean a total lack of interest in our national existence? One step farther: also the incapacity for revolution. I see that it means complete subservience of political power to the German will; but we have already been living on German bread for three to four years and were destined sooner or later to sink from subservience into slavery. The answer to the question of our national existence will come at the end of the war, not during one of its intermediate stages. And does it also mean an increase in present suffering as well?" I questioned further. "Yes. More curtailment or even suppression of individual rights and liberties? Yes. The dwindling of our wealth in blood and resources? Yes. In national consciousness? Not much to lose any more. Further forced slackening of the organized class struggle? Yes. Greater peril for all opponents of the power-wielders? Yes." But in my innocence it did not occur to me that this increased peril, the subservience of political power, curtailment of individual liberties and oppositionist position would ultimately signify my personal bodily annihilation.

Yet I—and even my shadow—had good cause for alarm.

One storm warning I could have noticed was that my name was entered in the secret records, the so-called Black Book of the police. This 972-page book entitled *Handbook of the State Police* is lying in front of me with my name, birth information and at the end of the line the sign whose meaning is still unknown to me. Could it indicate my unreliability as a citizen? I was well aware that I had a past record having been twice con-

victed for violations of press laws; on the last occasion I was sentenced to two months' imprisonment under a notorious Act of 1921 for an "offence aimed at the forcible overthrow of the social order" and had even done my time in the remand prison. I remembered it, of course, but carelessness rather than courage caused me to lightly consider the possibility of being honoured with closer police surveillance.

My negligence won me my first hard blow in the face, complete with black eye, when my friend L. T., with whom I had been visiting, pressed a bundle of papers in my hands as I was leaving. On my way home, a few steps from the house entrance, I saw a woman's body lying face downwards on the pavement; there was no visible injury, she must have died of a heart attack during the air raid. I read the papers in the night, the terrible Auschwitz report in which two escaped Slovak prisoners described in thirty to forty closely typed pages with abundant data the functioning of the camp and the gas chambers. In their estimate about four million people had already been killed there by that time.

"It was impossible for me to doubt the authenticity of the evidence," I wrote, "and it was just as impossible to believe it. Up to that time I had protected myself against any such news by the full strength of my mental and moral sensitivity and life instinct. Now I was defeated. I walked about in a daze, head swimming for days. I did not wish to live in an era in which this was possible."

In a later diary note: "Four years later, in 1948 when attending the Wroclaw Peace Congress, I was invited to go and see Auschwitz. I declined. And only last year, after another five years had passed, did I feel the strength as well as the need to take a look at Auschwitz. The very memory of the visit gave me nightmares for months."

"It was due to the effect of the report that I made up my mind to go into hiding with my eighty-year-old mother some time later. And subsequently, to seek contact with the Communist Party."

I did what I could, which—in my own judgement—was nothing. In a Zugló basement camouflaged as a chemical workshop I forged false documents and delivered them to threatened individuals, I raised money for the Party, sheltered people, acquired flats, carried food to victims of political or racial persecution, or—according to my notes—"I did non-combat service behind the front-line of the Resistance. And all the while I felt, with certainty, that there was no front before me. We were nursing not those wounded in combat but victims of the lack of combat. We were stopping up a breach which opened into nothingness."

"We were working hard to save a country," I wrote further on, "which

did not want to be saved. To the politician this is an obstacle, but not a prohibitive one; to the revolutionary it is a difficulty but not an insurmountable one. The writer, however, even if he is a revolutionary, wavers and comes into conflict with himself when reality turns against his visions. What he wants to change binds him at the same time. Sometimes the ties are too strong, or the estrangement from reality too drastic. At such a time the writer, who both by nature and profession adheres to reality more strictly than does the thinker or even the *realpolitiker*, inevitably becomes involved in a tragic ball-game where either one or the other half of his being will be the loser. He is happy if he does not fail in it altogether."

I was apprehended twice on my trips of procuring and delivering documents, both times forged papers intended for other persons were hidden in my shoes under my socks. I was lucky and narrowly escaped both times, first from the Arrow-cross House itself on Szent István körút, then from the Újlak Brickyard where I had been taken after. The comical figure of the absent-minded hangman had not yet been portrayed; under the rule of the Arrow-cross the life of more than one man, including my own, was saved through negligence, hysteria and absent-mindedness.

At the time of the battle of Debrecen, in talking with a member of my underground group, I was told we had received weapons and would establish contact with the Russian front, we might possibly even organize an armed uprising behind German lines. I told him I would like to take part in that myself.

According to my notes: "You have another job to do," he said. "Leave this to us. You just write!"

"As I see it, this statement was not lacking in grandeur," I noted further on. "It was not marred by any sort of rhetorical pathos, albeit it expressed ultimately the intention of self-sacrifice, an answer to the audacious question as to which of our two lives was worth more."

"My taste and judgement alike protest against such a rational consideration of the question of life and death. It is possible that from the point of view of society one man is worth more than another, that the task is worth more than the individual, but if in a given case a choice must be made between two living lives, who is knowledgeable enough to step forth and weigh the question? And if I am one of them? Am I to decide then? Or is the other? Or a third? He who puts the question regarding his own life can only decide against himself."

"Unquestionably, it takes a great intellectual courage to pose the question in the matter of one's own life with ultimate acuity and to answer it with the same precision. Yet that was what happened in the above con-

versation. But much the same process was experienced, even if less clearly, by all those Communists who at the time, and earlier, had risked their own life for society, thus for a community they valued above their own individual lives. Those young and older workers, men, girls and women—memories of such rare beauty—with whom I worked in the Zugló chemical workshop did their jobs with the same natural simplicity, with the same objective gestures of heroism as the pathos-free admonition concerning my writer status in the above-mentioned conversation. For years it had been the first word to make reference to that."

"This is how I met," my notes continue, "examples of endurance, loyalty, of men's and women's heroism which rightly set one's heart to throbbing. At such times I felt that if the nation still had any honour, only those people were the guardians of it. I felt that if this heinous era still had any brains at all, it had conceived them as its own justification. Those people revived my faith in human dignity but could not convince me that the nation was behind us."

All the preparations of the preceding ten months for the city boiled down into the external events and internal excitement during the following month when the Pest side of the city was liberated. The final defeat of Germany and with it the liberation of Budapest was just a matter of time. "But I knew," I noted down for myself, "that seconds were decisive in determining who among us would live to see it. The Arrow-cross was now killing almost indifferently, without any interest and even more unsystematically than before. Sometimes I left the cellar at night to go to my flat and from the window facing Gróf Vigyázó Ferenc utca I could hear the dry reports of submachine gun fire sending prisoners from the embankment into the Danube. When they would wander into our house and whom they would take out to the banks of the Danube, nobody knew. They had already shown up in two neighbouring houses, the dead body of a man in front of one of the doors attested to their visit."

A vast drama of man's extreme capabilities was enacted by this era. "Emotions came out of their hiding places," I wrote, "from the civilized semi-darkness of the heart and loudly began to perform great dramas tactfully concealed up to that moment. Emotions—cruelty as well as gentleness—appeared in naked rawness. Before the eyes of the astonished writer, the good and the bad emerged not only from the masses in the naive unambiguity of staged fairy-tales, but also from the individual man himself with almost pedagogical clarity. Sometimes this era felt like a three-month psychology seminar for mankind preparing for its future."

"Between what extremes the masses were writhing was in some degree

known to me already from my reading and personal experiences. But I still knew little about the individual's inclinations or abilities of this kind. During everyday calm human qualities adhere more or less closely to the ingrained and habitual equilibrium which gives the soul the most carefree existence and we call this equilibrium human character. If we place it on a spinning-wheel, it tends to come asunder. The character breaks up into contradictions, and each quality appears in its chemical purity on the rim of the wheel. It takes great adhesive force for the qualities to remain in their previous position and we call this adhesion strength of character or man's fidelity to self."

"If I reflect on my own life and that of my friends and acquaintances," I went on to write, "I see that honest continuity of character is ensured only through the performance of current daily tasks. A man may have great plans and high aspirations, he may be honest, enthusiastic and talented, he may have the brains and strength to carry out his plans and to reach his goal but it is all worth nothing if he has no daily tasks to perform. These protect him from becoming fragmented and his plans from fizzling out. One spurt may be enough to get us to the next street but not to the precipitous height of a plan. To preserve the continuity of our personality and to do anything honourably, we have to act from day to day, I might say, from minute to minute. Character is composed of these active days and minutes, and civilization is made up of the friendly association of such characters."

I would quote yet another conversation in the basement, one which prompted me to make a life-long vow: It was a simple exchange of views of the kind which took place hundreds of times, in silent soliloquies if not otherwise. The talk concerned the doorkeeper or the air-raid warden or a third person, I don't remember.

"If I get out of here alive," somebody said to someone else, "I'll do him in, that's for sure."

Then I made the vow that if I got out of there alive, I would never let myself be put in a position where I could "do in" anybody. In plain words, I should not accept any post in which I could abuse the power I was entrusted with. This being in harmony with my disposition as well, I hope I am able to comply with my vow.

My personal freedom was recovered on January 18 followed by that of the country on April 4. At five o'clock in the morning the first Red soldier showed up in front of the Nádor utca house and clasped my hands with his gloved hands. I had not shaved for a week, I was dirty and felt ashamed of kissing him.

And the next day I could start, as a free man, toward new and different trials.

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Looking back upon that 4th of April, I cannot hide my deep emotions. I can look back upon the beginning of a recovery which offered the nation happiness historically within its reach. It recovered possibilities for freedom and, simultaneously, its self-esteem as well. Now it was qualified to size up its opportunities and to live with them in a quickened tempo, and in so doing, augment the good and diminish the bad in the life of the individual.

The growth of the material strength of the country is common knowledge and not for the writer to evaluate. The "soul engineer" or rather the "soul explorer" seeks to explain what inner forces, in addition to material factors, have helped our people in its development and the creation of well-being. Virtues are obviously of no recent origin, nor are frailties; it is up to a well-intentioned society to nurture the former and cut back the latter. Such is the responsibility of political power. And I feel forever grateful to those who undertook the cruelly difficult task and who—after the Rákosi era—were able to fulfil this responsibility.

I am a socialist and I remained a socialist after passing through my personal ordeals. I watch the shaping of the fate of humanity with reserve and that of my nation with profound feeling. I am already old, I can only observe. If my literary work could contribute in some measure to my nation's well-being, I should be satisfied.

A STANDING PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

by

GYULA ORTUTAY

The Hungarian National Assembly closed its four-year term after the spring session of 1975. The elections were held in mid-June and the new Parliament assembled during the same month to elect the Presidential Council, and the committee members. The government presented itself, as usual, with a major policy speech by the Prime Minister.

Outwardly, Parliament today may indeed still look like the pre-Liberation Parliament—since the old building has been restored and refurbished with great care. Yet, appearances to the contrary, post-Liberation Parliament is essentially different from that around the turn of the century, or from that of the years between the wars. The difference of both aim and composition is really essential. The Parliament of the pre-Liberation era served Hungarian big business and landowning interests. This was reflected in the social composition of both the Lower House and the Upper House, where members of the working class or the peasantry barely figured and where foreign policy was dictated by the interests of the Hapsburg Monarchy and the alliance with Imperial Germany, and later, in the Horthy era, the alliance with Fascist Italy and Hitler's German Reich culminating in the policy of the Axis powers during the world war. This is, of course, a broad outline only, the opposition also had a voice in Parliament before Liberation, turbulent debates lasting for months on end were frequent, such as the defence debate in particular relating to the use of Hungarian as the language of command or the debate on civil marriage at the time of the Dual Monarchy, but these controversies did not touch the essence—the exclusiveness of the semi-feudal and semi-capitalist system of power. As a characteristic example, let me mention the heated debate in 1907 connected with the Agricultural Master and Servants Act. The point at issue was whether a landowner was entitled to use physical force when disciplining his field servants. Progres-

sive-minded MPs argued against, yet the bill became law, the argument being that the landowner as paterfamilias had the paternal right to punish his labourers as if they were his children. True, in one of his essays G. K. Chesterton also argues, when describing the relationship between a master and his servant, that if the master subjected his servant to corporal punishment, this points to their democratic, bodily closeness. Such reasoning characterized a still semi-feudal country, and it is a sad fact that in 1936, the poet Gyula Illyés, in his *The People of the Puszta*, was able to tell that the landholder's steward, reckoned a gentleman, was not permitted to slap an over-forty-year-old peasant but could only strike the back of his neck with a switch.

We are a long way from those times, and that world. We have not forgotten Mihály Károlyi who had fought in the parliaments of the Dual Monarchy, nor Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky who had raised the sharpest accusations in Horthy's Parliament, and others as well who had turned against the vicious, suicidal policy of that era.

In today's Parliament workers, peasants and professional people, including clerks in holy orders and ministers of religion, academicians, university professors and officials hold debates, deliberating the business of the nation. Before approaching my subject—which is the work of one of the standing committees of Parliament, the Cultural Committee—I wish to comment on changed practices in the work of members. The National Assembly spends considerably less time every year on plenary sittings than was usual at the time of the Monarchy. It meets regularly four times a year, and merely for three to four days at a time. True, ministers deliver their speeches not to a half or three-quarters empty house: the whole Assembly listens with intense interest to ministerial reports and the questions put to them. To be sure, there are no oratorical performances, the time for rhetorical exercises is over. MPs today deliberate objectively, they bring up positive arguments without falling into platitudes or appealing to the emotions, setting forth their points of view, and explaining the worries of their constituents and the tasks ahead. Arguments *ad hominem* during debates are a thing of the past—debate of this sort took place for the last time, I think, around 1949, in the final stages of the coalition government. Many might think that the debate on the budget and the annual economic plan, the discussion of reports on the problems of departmental ministeries and a couple of new Bills give a parliamentary session precious little to do. But this is not all the business today's Parliament has to cope with, although parliamentary work still substantially consists of the adoption of the budget and the economic plan, legislation, questions and the vote of confidence. But there

is other business as well in the parliamentary committees on the one hand, and in the constituencies on the other.

First a few words about work in the constituencies. An MP today goes to his constituency not only before elections to woo the voters; it is, of course, still useful for him to do so. It is customary for the MP to visit his district regularly, every month, to see his constituents in person, to report to them on questions of internal policy as well as on world politics, to make calls at factories and farmers' co-operatives and, in informal talks with his voters, to inquire about their worries and keep them informed. In my view such informal talks with a group of thirty to forty persons are often more useful and more convincing than mass meetings. There the speaker talks alone, here he invites a response, and lively interchanges ensue. Such occasions provide one of the political debating forums of Hungarian public life. Many people talk of worries and difficulties, there is no courteous beating about the bush, so we can understand each other all right. I think this is one of the most useful forms of an MP's work. When I do the rounds of villages in my constituency in the Baja district of Bács County, in the south of Hungary, those country lanes do not only remind me of old tours collecting sociological and ethnographical material but allow me to enjoy the rich experience of ways in which rural society today, its scale of values and its entire life style, are being transformed. This experience is as important to me as an ethnographer and folklorist, as to the MP in his everyday work.

A considerable part of today's parliamentary debates and discussions take place within eleven standing committees of Parliament. I am most familiar with the work of the Cultural Committee, I have been a member of this committee since I was first elected and about six years ago I became its chairman. (I am not going to discuss those committees which keep occasional contact with parliaments of different countries and exchange visits with them, nor will I now mention the work of MPs who take part in the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.)

During the four years of the now closing parliamentary session the Cultural Committee held twenty-nine meetings. The Committee does not sit during the months of the summer recess, but meets regularly throughout the year, once a month or every six weeks. At the beginning of the year we agreed on the questions to be discussed on the basis of proposals submitted by my fellow MPs and myself. We have permanent, recurring items on the agenda; discussions on the implementation of the budget and on proposals for the directives of the following year's budget took place on eight occasions. Every committee discusses the budget as a whole, but it usually talks over

the budgetary problems pertaining to its own terms of reference, and decides on whether to recommend that the National Assembly accept the budget as it stands, or whether to move amendments, sizing up the financial implications of such proposals. They are then summarized by the Committe on Planning and Budgetary Questions, where the chairmen of the committees concerned appear and argue in favour of proposals originating in their respective committees.

The budgets of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs (or rather, more recently, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture), Hungarian Radio and Television, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and finally the Hungarian Physical Education and Sports Office all come within the terms of reference of our committee as well as the approval of the directives on the implementation of these budgets. This is a fairly vast field and there is enough for us to discuss. In the course of debates the main issue is always whether the total estimates and the investment plans allot a proper quota for the purposes of all those requirements of cultural policy the fulfilment of which the committee has found not only justified but urgent. Of course, we always want more and even have to ask for more, since sometimes we must make up for the deficiencies of centuries. In such cases the committee takes special care that appropriate sums are assigned, and properly used, for the development of public education, including the system of general schools. The truth is that this programme is always given, in terms of percentages and on the national scale, more than the departmental ratios would allow—but the Cultural Committee is still never satisfied, we always want more and can also give good reasons why we need what we ask for. This then gives rise to differences with representatives of the Ministry of Finance and the National Planning Office, and it is not easy to come to a conclusive agreement, since my fellow MPs—educationists, writers, composers, sculptors and professors—and myself can find plenty of arguments in support of the development of our schools, a more ample supply of modern audio-visual teaching aids, aid to schools in villages and on farmsteads, or improvements in the situation of the teaching staff. These are impassioned and lively debates, with all the criteria of spirited, purposeful parliamentary battles.

Many topics are referred to the Cultural Committee in addition to debates on the budget and economic planning. We hold our meetings mostly in the building of Parliament, but in the course of the past four years we have held several "on the spot". Thus, in Kecskemét, we discussed the special problems of farmstead schools and of general education, and the propagation of knowledge in the countryside; in Miskolc, a big industrial

centre, we examined the educational problems of children of manual workers, from general school up to the university (Miskolc boasts one of the country's major technical universities, the University of Heavy Industry). Thus, practically all educational questions came up, from village schools through secondary education and vocational training to university studies, and attention was centred on the tasks of teaching the children of manual workers. After the debate the MPs paid a visit to the University and had talks with teachers as well as with students in hostels. The committee also sat in the building of Hungarian Television: there we discussed radio and television programme policy; at the National Enterprise for the Manufacture and Sale of School Equipment we discussed the problems of the supply of modern audio-visual aids, and the resolutions we adopted there led to a decision by the Council of Ministers. The elimination of shortcomings is going on and the question is nearing a satisfactory solution. The committee visited the Loránd Eötvös University, the oldest and best-known university in Hungary, and there, in consultation with the University Board headed by the Rector, we spent long hours working out proposals for the solution of acute problems concerning its progress. Lastly, the committee sat in Békéscsaba and discussed with political leaders of the county and the general secretaries of the associations of national minorities questions of educational facilities made available to the German, South Slav, Slovak, Rumanian, etc. national minorities. Following a most useful discussion the committee members visited the Slovak Boarding School, educational establishments and a small minorities museum.

The committee meetings are public. They are always attended by representatives of the Press and Radio and, time and again, as was the case also in Békéscsaba, also by Television, who give the country a detailed account of the debates, resolutions and suggestions. Such committee meetings truly constitute a kind of small Parliament intensively working on specific subjects. A short list of the questions suffices to show the wide range of topics with which the committee is concerned. We discussed the Youth Bill, the problems of open-air museums and, at another sitting, those of the large national museums; furthermore, we dealt with a report on the state of general-school education, and there we paid special attention to the shortcomings and tasks of the schools of what are called underdeveloped areas, that is small villages, farmsteads and districts on the urban fringe. Subjects we have taken up include the situation of Hungarian book publishing, and criticism of the activity of the Cultural Fund. We discussed the report of the People's Control Commission on the co-ordinated use of the financial resources allotted to general education, furthermore the

results and shortcomings of Hungary's foreign trade in cultural goods. A very important debate took place on teachers' training and further training and the employment of teachers. I mention only by the way that at the previous session we had discussed teachers' salaries, and as a result I had to address Parliament on this matter. The outcome was that the Council of Ministers examined the question as a priority item and issued a decision ordering a major revision of those salaries. In this session we dealt with theoretical and practical questions of the applied arts, with their relationship to the fine arts and to industrial design; with problems of mass participation in games, games in schools and competitive games which are very much at the centre of public attention, with the results and the needs of adult education, with the cultural development of members of the socialist brigades working in industry and the possibilities of their further advancement. Problems of Radio and Television have several times been placed on our agenda. At our latest meeting we discussed a report on the work of the Society for the Dissemination of Scientific Knowledge.

This enumeration alone shows, even if only sketchily, that the committee embraces a wide range of subjects. During debates on the particular topics, proposals are usually made concerning one or another departmental ministry or national authority. We have suggested more than once that the Chairman of Parliament or the Prime Minister examine our findings, and we have asked for the views of the respective ministry or the government. The ministry or the government examined our suggestions in every instance, and within thirty days I received notice of the official position, which I then made known to the committee. We proposed not only measures to be taken, or inquiries to be conducted, and corrections to be made in the budget, but also for Bills to be drawn up and submitted to Parliament. In addition to one of the parliamentary officers with his aides, and specialists of the departments concerned, the respective Minister or Under-Secretary as well is present at our meetings. As a rule the debate is attended by a leading official of the Academy of Sciences, the Sports Office, and Radio and Television as well as by invited specialists on the subject being discussed. The debate is usually opened by an introductory report by a high official of the competent ministry or office, the specialists answer questions put to them, and then a discussion on details begins. This is a political and professional discussion at the same time. Unnecessary formalities are dispensed with, nor is time wasted on phrases inflated with generalities. Businesslike, keen and serious discussions take place, and the gist of all matters is how we could work better, what we must improve on and what is to be done in practice. What goes on in committee is one of the best schools of parliamentary work.

The fact is that essentially the same methods are employed in other committees as well. Nothing proves this better than the fact that, at our last meeting, while we felt justified satisfaction at having done a good job, we regretted to see that there still remained items to be discussed, that we had not disposed of all our problems. At that last meeting we even proposed what business items should be taken up first by the Cultural Committee of the new National Assembly.

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HUNGARIAN PRICE POLICY

by

BÉLA CSIKÓS-NAGY

The objectives and instruments of Hungarian price policy are determined by five-year political concepts and the operative price plans derived therefrom. Thus, present Hungarian price policy may be described by the price plan for 1975 and the concept of prices policy covering the 1976–1980 period. At the same time, present and expected domestic price relations can be understood only through a clarification of the background of socialist construction. In price policy, just as in economic policy in general, there are limits to the freedom of future-determining decisions made by the state, and these limits are partly the consequences of earlier decisions.

Five elements must be highlighted which were especially decisive for price policy and the effect of which can still be felt. (1) In the 1946–49 period the liquidation of the inflation caused by the war, the currency reform of 1946 and the ensuring of the stability of the new forint currency. (2) In the 1950–51 period, in the wake of the nationalizations, the establishment of an industrial price system built on uniform principles of costing in the state sector of industry. (3) In the 1959–62 period, in the wake of the socialist reconstruction of agriculture, the introduction of a comprehensive prices and subsidies system adjusted to the requirements of large-scale co-operative farming. (4) In the 1967–68 period, determination of the price-political tasks of intensive development for the economic reform. (5) Finally, in the 1974–75 period, in the wake of the energy and raw material crisis of the capitalist world and world-wide inflation, the implementation of corrections corresponding to Hungarian interests in the changed conditions for foreign trade.

The price-political concept covering the 1976–80 period are a continuation of this evolution. Price policy is an instrument of economic policy that is continuously adjusted to the socio-economic tasks of socialist construction and to current objective processes.

Socially necessary input is the basis of planned price formation in a socialist economy. This is an important principle in the rational organization of the economy, and it is also influenced by the social values of socialism. The state narrows down the range of products that become commodities (qualifying part of the divisible products as public goods) and it also qualifies products becoming commodities according to their social importance. The range of public goods is extended in comparison with the free market model of bourgeois society since the communist principle of distribution according to need, or certain elements of it, is necessarily present already in socialism. Within the scope of fundamental social care supply should be organized socially. At the same time, numerous products become commodities which have a point of contact with fundamental social care. These the state differentiates from all others, and by according political preferences minimizes the function of the market. The cover for these preferences is obtained through those discriminations which the state applies in respect of certain goods which are more dispensable in consumption, or the consumption of which is harmful to health, or the exaggerated consumption of which also represents a social danger.

In this way, planned socialist formation of prices adds to, or sometimes replaces, the sovereignty of the consumer by the principle of social sovereignty. On the same basis, the state partly limits consumer preferences, and partly changes those conditions in which the laws of the market can apply. Expressed in another way: the relative price of goods is adjusted to their relative social scarcity, to the relative market scarcity corrected by political preferences and dispreferences.

The actual problem is the separation of the market and the non-market mechanisms, and the determination of the objective criteria of political preferences and dispreferences. A thorough investigation of this question took place relatively late, for the first time during the preparation of the economic reform of 1968. It was established at that time that socially organized consumption had a broader scope than reasonable, and relative retail prices differed from relative input over a wider range than justified. Only approximately 10 per cent of the quantity of consumer goods were sold at prices which were near to cost. Concerning approximately 30 per cent of goods available for consumption consumer prices contained a considerable sales tax, while approximately 60 per cent of goods available were being sold at a loss or at prices which did not contain any net profit or were below the average net profit. In general, the price of those products was

low (or below cost) which represented a considerable weight in the shopping basket of low-level income earners, and the price of non-essentials was high. The state subsidy for fundamental foodstuffs (20–40 per cent), fuels and passenger transport (45–50 per cent) and other services, especially rent (165 per cent), were typical. But consumer prices differed from cost not only between product groups but within the same product groups as well, the consumer price ratio of kindred articles (size and quality assortments) differed from the cost ratio. This was made possible by differentiated taxation right down to assortments, that is a system of differential sales tax. This tax system had been introduced after the nationalization of industry, to provide a start for industrialization.

Comparative international analyses show that in most socialist countries no such wide-ranging and large divergence from costs exists. This extraordinarily acute divergence from input is a specifically Hungarian problem the root of which lies in the currency reform of 1946. Two peculiarities of this reform are worth remembering. First: the reform replaced the "pengő" currency by the "forint" currency, but without abolishing exchange control. The pengő had not been and the forint did not become a commercial currency. The sole objective of the currency reform was stopping the inflation caused by war and establishing economic stability. The other peculiarity was the choice of time of the currency reform. The loss of value of the pengő currency reached an order of magnitude which had never existed in the world before and for this reason the currency reform had to be carried out at a time when its classical preconditions had not yet been entirely ensured.

The essence of the problem was then the low level of production and that due to war damage important productive capacities could not be put into operation. This was still the period of reconstruction. Calculations had shown that in the first year following the currency reform 40–45 per cent of the goods available for consumption in 1938 (the last peace year) would be available to the population. It was in such circumstances that the income-policy tasks of the currency reform had to be solved. Compared to 1938, a 50 per cent blue-collar wages level and a 35 per cent white-collar salary level were determined. At the same time, the differences between the wages and salary categories were also reduced. In fixing consumer prices the social-economic situation had to be kept in mind. The main requirement of prices policy had to be that it should ensure harmony between the cost of living and the low level of incomes. Therefore, when the forint currency was introduced in August 1946, not only wages but prices as well were based on the 1938 wages and prices using differentiated coefficients. According

to the cost of living index calculations of the Central Statistical Office the general multiplier projected on all expenses was 3.7. The average multiplier was 3.48 for victuals, 6.36 for wearing apparel, 3.58 for fuel, 1.26 for rent and public utilities. The consumer prices introduced with the stabilization of 1946 therefore already differed considerably from input ratios. These price fixing principles were confirmed by the price reform of 1951, which introduced the system of socialist fixed prices in the service of a programme of forced industrialization.

This background explains why the economic reform of 1968 set a 10–15-year period to bring relative prices closer to relative costs. In accordance with this resolution the prices of a few consumer goods and services that had been sold at a loss were raised in the first half of the seventies. However, the experience of recent years shows that this problem can be solved only through a comprehensive price and wages reform.

Among the CMEA countries such a reform has been introduced so far by Bulgaria only. The consumer price level was raised by 5 per cent and this was overcompensated by wage increases. In Bulgaria, however, consumer prices had not moved as far from costs as in Hungary. A consumer price reform of the Bulgarian type would raise the consumer price level by approximately 10 per cent, and in such a way that the cost of living would rise to an extent considerably exceeding this 10 per cent. In other words, the price reform would have to be overcompensated considerably by wage increases. The price-policy concept for the 1976–80 period do not envisage such a reform. Nevertheless, the concept wish to make the price system suitable for carrying out a price and wages reform in the long run. This is the true dilemma of the present.

The Nationalizations of 1950–51 and the Price System Supporting Industrialization

The introduction of a planned economy began in Hungary already with the currency reform of 1946. The real economic foundation for it was created by the nationalization of industry. The price reform of 1951 followed. Its main criteria can be summed up as follows:

(1) Prices are regulated by a price authority, and as far as possible in the form of price fixing. The central price list is an important accessory of such a price system. It is used in economic planning in addition to price control. A product which has not been included in this price list could not be made, or, at least, it could not be distributed. One could only ask for the price

fixed in the price list. The price authority only could permit a divergence from this price. In the case of individual products, the fixed price was substituted by a compulsory normative costing.

(2) The general objectives of the national economic plan, the relations between the sectors of production and those of the economy, as well as other factors include socialist prices policy in a certain unity. The price system itself was not uniform. The articulation of the price system found expression in the separation of the domestic price from the foreign trade price, and in that the principles of price formation differed in the spheres of production and of consumption, and in the state, co-operative and private sectors. Differentiation between the spheres of production and consumption was based on the hypothesis that, within the sphere of state ownership, there are no genuine commodity relations. In this area price is a technical instrument of accounting, necessary for the determination of plan targets expressed in value and for the control of the implementation of plan precepts in monetary terms. Consequently the rigidity of the production price over long years and the changing of prices through concentrated price rearrangements were an essential attribute of this price system.

(3) Price formation by the authority was based at state-owned enterprises on production costs the most important elements of which were wages, since land and capital were available "free of charge"; this is a production cost on the formation of which the state exercises a direct influence through the regulation of technologies and wages. With the help of technological prescriptions the state determines the time of labour that may be devoted to product units in various tasks of labour differentiated according to its complexity. Salaries and wages were regulated by a wages tariff issued by the authorities. The enterprises could qualify the various kinds of labour according to their complexity, degree of difficulty, social responsibility and necessary skill only according to the principles and within the limits set by the central state organs. The various tasks of labour were defined according to these principles and the wages fixed according to the tasks of labour; in the case of piece rates or wages by results the basic wage per job done was fixed in the same way. Since salaries and wages were regulated by the authorities, these had to be paid even if they were not covered by income. Enterprises that operated at a loss were subsidized from the state budget. The budget siphoned off profits from the other enterprises in accordance with operative financial plans.

(4) This price system can be summed up in the last resort in the terms of industrial, agricultural, consumer and foreign trade price policies, where its primary task was

—in industrial price policy: the undisturbed operation of self-accounting by the enterprise;

—in agricultural price policy: the achievement of the planned ratio between the income of workers and peasants and of the planned production structure;

—in consumer price policy: the achievement of a market equilibrium of consumer goods and the implementation of a standard of living policy;

—in foreign trade price policy: equilibrium in the balance of payments.

The articulation—in this interpretation—of the Hungarian price system still exists, with the essential difference that criteria for the basis of industrial prices policy have changed. In the original price system the "state enterprise price" was a specific category. This was meant to indicate that price had no role in the distribution of economic resources and the regulation of income. However, the economic reform of 1968 already set out from the consideration that the means of production were also commodities and consequently could not be excluded from the system of market relations. When the reform harmonized the economic mechanism with the requirements of an intensive development of the economy, the economic meaning of the "state enterprise price" category had to be changed. It was for this reason that industrial price reform was an important part of the economic reform of 1968.

The foreign trade sensitivity of the Hungarian economy explains why one of the principal tasks of the industrial price reform was the abolition of the former industrial price system supporting autarky, or to be more exact, the bringing about of a close relationship between the "state enterprise price" and the foreign trade price. It seemed essential that enterprises should pay as much for the imported means of production as they really cost, further that in the case of export products the enterprise should register as a sales receipt the actual price paid for the product in foreign trade. The creation of a link between foreign trade and the domestic price necessitated first of all the introduction of an economically justified "exchange coefficient".

The "exchange coefficient" introduced for the settlement of foreign trade transactions could become a price regulator only through the introduction of "financial bridges" (import duties, export subsidies, etc.), and thus only in a limited way. It had to be taken into consideration that developmental policy, and thus the transformation of the production structure of industry, had not been regulated by efficiency measured in international competition. The economic reform wanted to ensure the ability of enterprises to operate, but wished to create conditions in which the profitability of the enterprise

evolved, increasingly depending on the efficient transformation of their product structure. Changes in the industrial price system in connection with this aim began already in 1959. Depreciation allowances were increased. Technical development and warranty funds were introduced. The pay-roll tax and later, in 1964, a tax on the means tied down (capital tax) were introduced. All these measures were based on the consideration that nothing could be free of which society had only limited supplies and that was at the same time a condition for the extension of production, and further that the cost of research and development, and of technical development in general, could not be separated from the production costs of the enterprise. The process was taken further by the industrial price reform of 1968 through linking the domestic and the foreign trade price to each other. This also made it possible for the "state enterprise price", as a self-accounting price, to change towards a self-financing price.

The Socialist Transformation of Agriculture and the Agricultural Price-Scissors

The changing of industrial prices into a self-financing price began in the wake of the economic reform of 1968, agricultural prices, on the other hand, could be interpreted from the very beginning only as "self-financing" prices, since until the sixties small-producer private property was the dominant form of ownership in agriculture. Since then the producers' cooperatives, household plots and auxiliary private farms have provided the bulk of production. Nevertheless, the ability of agriculture to be self-financing was only reached in the second half of the sixties, or rather at the beginning of the seventies.

Hungary already in the between-the-wars period showed a gap between industrial and agricultural prices. In the last pre-war year, in 1938, a day-labourer's wages in agriculture were only approximately 40 per cent of the wages paid for simple labour in industry. Not even in such circumstances did the prices of agricultural products ensure the self-financing of the development of production or the credit-worthiness of agriculture. The currency reform of 1946 in essence recognized after the war the price and wages thus described. The maintenance of this situation did not meet with unsurmountable difficulties, first of all because compulsory sowing and the compulsory delivery of products were institutionally built into the system of the planned economy. The agricultural price gap appeared to be an indispensable instrument for the financing of accelerated industrialization in the absence of foreign capital resources.

In addition, it was made a requirement of agricultural price policy that it should create an interest in the agglomeration of small-producer farms into co-operatives. The preference for producers' co-operatives was manifest in respect of prices, taxes and compulsory delivery norms alike. The price differentiated according to ownership relations, the so-called "sectoral" price appeared in every sector, including agriculture. It appeared obvious that in these conditions the small commodity-producer peasant farms refrained from the development of any branch of production which required considerable investments or where the production cycle was long. One had to count with the neglect of cattle-raising and orcharding. Consequently, large-scale planting of orchards occurred on state farms, and the agrarian policy to be applied towards small producers set out from the primacy of wheat and of hog-raising. Compulsory deliveries were relied on to guarantee self-sufficiency in bread grains. Interest in hog-raising was stimulated by an extraordinarily high delivery price which applied to hogs contracted for above the compulsory level. However, this agricultural policy led to the stagnation of agricultural production without succeeding in winning over the peasantry to large-scale co-operative farming.

A fundamental turn occurred in agricultural policy in 1957. Compulsory deliveries were abolished. The relationship between town and country became based on a system of free purchase by the state and a system of contracts. In order to create a financial interest in production a new prices policy and budgetary support policy were needed. The uniform agricultural price system and the bonus for large-scale production wished to serve both the prospects of small producers and interest in the establishment of large agrico-operatives. The turn of 1957 was completed by the consolidation of small peasant farms into producers' co-operatives in the 1959–62 period.

One generally speaks of agricultural price scissors if, compared to a certain point in time, the price of industrial products used as means of production in agriculture have increased to a greater extent than the price of agricultural products. Hungarian price policy approaches this question in the interconnection of price, tax and income parities. According to this, price parities exist if the net income contained in the price of total agricultural production is proportionate to the net income contained in total industrial production. Tax parities exist if the tax burden of agriculture is proportionate to the tax burden of industry. Income parities exist if labour of identical intensity and complexity is rewarded equally in agriculture and industry.

In the conditions of co-operative agriculture, income parity and in general the problem of the agricultural price scissors have to be reappraised. Irrespective of this, objective factors have also pressed towards the approxima-

tion of agricultural incomes to industrial wages. Industrialization, especially industrialization of the countryside, siphoned off labour from agriculture at a faster rate than this was made advisable by the process of modernization of agricultural production, especially its mechanization. The withholding of labour in agriculture has also played a role in the prices policy which kept income parity in mind. Income parity has been achieved by the beginning of the seventies.

Income disparity has ceased in Hungary. The level of net income contained in the price of total agricultural output is still lower than that contained in total industrial output, but after the deduction of taxes the level of net incomes is higher in agriculture than in industry. In other words, agricultural prices make possible a greater capacity for self-financing than industrial prices. Today it is no longer possible to speak of discrimination against agriculture. What is true is that agriculture contributes to communal needs primarily not through taxes but through prices. For a long period Hungary has applied a taxation policy centred on industry, and in respect of agriculture the siphoning off of values through prices is considered a better alternative. This was already characteristic of the price and tax system in the between the wars period. This price and fiscal system was explained primarily by fragmented property relations. Consequently, after the bringing about of co-operative large-scale agriculture the question arose whether it would not be necessary to adjust to the new situation and to set the objective of price and tax parity for prices and fiscal policy. However, no such readjustment is foreseen in the price-political concept for the 1976–80 period.

The Economic Reform of 1968 and the Price Mechanism

The economic reform of 1968 demanded of price policy the creation of a price system which adequately orientates enterprises in their economic decisions. In connection with this function, three criteria were laid down for planned price formation. Price

—should take production costs into consideration,

—should take into consideration the value judgement of the domestic consumer and the foreign buyer, and

—express the preference of the state.

The first criterion represents the approach of the price problem from the aspect of production and expresses the natural phenomenon that—as a general rule—production cannot be conducted at a loss. The cost must be

covered either by the price or by a subsidy from the state budget. The second criterion represents the price problem from the side of the consumer and is the expression of the fact that price may not be abstracted from the utility which is attributed to it in the use of the product. This utility is determined in the case of export articles by the foreign buyer (the foreign trade price). The third criterion represents an approach to the price problem from the angle of the state (politics). The state is not indifferent to processes that occur in the market, it differentiates and prefers certain processes for social and long-term economic interests.

In the course of the price reform of 1968 it was the assertion of the value judgement of the market, and correspondingly the bringing about of an adequately flexible price mechanism, that raised most problems. Price preferences had to be asserted. One had to count with disturbances in equilibrium. What had to be prevented was that flexibility should lead to inflation. The rise in the consumer price level due to market factors was limited to 1–2 per cent annually. Keeping all this in mind, a mixed price mechanism was introduced in which fixed and maximum prices set by the authorities, upper and lower limits set for the movement of prices, and free prices exist side by side. The principal question of the mixed price mechanism was the determination of those strategic points where price formation had to be withdrawn—wholly or in part—from the influence of market factors. Three principal hypotheses were laid down as a foundation for this determination:

(1) Price determination by the authorities has to be applied in a wider range in respect of consumer goods than of means of production. In the sphere of consumption price forms were selected in such a way that those goods and services to which consumers with an average income devote 50 per cent of their outlay should have a guaranteed price. This represented a price guarantee of 70 per cent projected onto the cost of consumer essentials.

(2) Price determination has to be applied in a wider range in co-operative agriculture than in state industry. This is justified by the following:

—The macro-structure of industry is determined to a very great extent by existing industrial equipment, and the structure-transforming process is regulated by strong central direction in accordance with the developmental policy outlined in the plan. As against this, it is a characteristic of agriculture that the production structure can be changed to a great extent through decisions made on the farm level.

—The basic wage of industrial workers is guaranteed by the state even if the enterprise incurs a loss. The incomes of those who work in agriculture are regulated in essence by prices and taxes.

(3) In the state sector of the economy, with the exception of transport and telecommunication, the effect of the market judgements has to be ensured as much as possible, especially in the processing industries. In consequence, the strategic points of price determination by the authorities were marked out within the domain of state industry in the area of fuel and raw materials. It was supposed at the same time that prices being formed in interindustrial cooperation would be regulated by the price of the end-product in a reverse process.

It may be deduced unequivocally from the experiences of the 1968–72 period that the flexible price mechanism serves the national economy better than a system of frozen prices. But it must be added that relative price stability could only be ensured through permanent correctives of the price mechanism.

The mixed price mechanism introduced in 1968 enforced a single condition within the range of free prices. Unfair behaviour and unfair profits were described in general terms in a governmental decree. The view dominated that in all areas where the market situation is in balance this is a sufficient guarantee for a rational market price. However, in a peculiar way, the superior position of producing enterprises manifested itself even in cases where domestic orders did not fill their production capacity. In such cases they shifted to exports. Therefore it appeared useful already in 1970 to issue to enterprises recommendations concerning their attitude in their pricing policies. After this, the principles of selectivity were asserted more and more consciously in Hungarian price policy.

This trend led, in the range of free prices, to a differentiation between products manufactured and distributed by state enterprises on the one hand, and typical market products on the other. In commodity relations between state enterprises, the free price adopted the form of the contract price governed by criteria of prices policy. Prices are determined and changed in inter-enterprise relations. But in the new decree on unfair profit issued in 1973 justified and unjustified cases for amending the contract were circumscribed. In addition, there is an official desire that enterprises should regulate their production, co-operation and commercial relations—at least in the areas of key importance—in contracts valid for several years. One of the aims of this contract form is that the redistribution of profit at the expense of the enterprises producing the end-product should be reduced; that the enterprises should reconcile their pricing policies for a longer period; that in the delivery contracts the price should be set in harmony with the price-policy agreements; that the buyer should be protected against price hikes that are economically unjustified.

Until mid-1973 the price mechanism functioned relatively satisfactorily. The turning-point was caused by changes in world market prices. The irrational external inflation is still on. Inflationary pressure on the part of the world market is a new phenomenon with which the economic reform of 1968 did not count. No rational system was available which could be applied as the lasting regulator for linking foreign trade prices and domestic prices also in circumstances where relative price stability within the country had to be achieved while there is inflation rampant in world markets. As a consequence, there has been no method to maintain relative price stability other than neutralizing the rise of import prices through subsidies from the state budget. While in 1973 still only 30 per cent of the imported rate of inflation had to be neutralized in this way, in 1974 it was already necessary to do so to the extent of 70 per cent.

As a result the orientating role of price in rational economic decision-making was extraordinarily weakened. In world markets inflation is accompanied by changes in price ratios. The changed price ratios reflect partly lasting (structural) and partly transitory (cyclical) factors. One has to adjust to raw materials and fuel becoming permanently relatively more expensive. As a result, all other conditions being unchanged, the range of industrial processes has been reduced, within which semi-finished and finished products may be exported economically. Economic policy must take this into consideration. Although it is true that the principal market of Hungary is CMEA, the basis for forming contract prices within CMEA is the world market price freed of cyclical elements. This principle of price formation had been expressed from 1958 to quite recently in the fixing of CMEA prices for five years. In present conditions, when price ratios change considerably from year to year in the world market, the Executive Commission of CMEA has found it necessary to introduce a more flexible price mechanism. From 1975 the contractual prices of CMEA will be fixed for one-year periods on the basis of the average world market price of the preceding five years.

In the conditions of a socialist planned economy it is, of course, possible to formulate the requirements produced by the changed situation, by calculations on the macro-level and the strategic points of the national economy; and to include these requirements in the system of planned guidance by the state, without changing prices. This has happened in part. The ideas on energy policy are being revised and measures for the saving of energy and materials are being implemented. Economic efficiency would,

however, be weakened considerably if the social interest recognized in the new situation were not transmitted to the enterprises through the prices. In that case enterprises would have to be inundated with central instructions. This would have to be done mainly because prices had created a harmony between the social interest and the interest of the enterprise at conditions of economic management that differ from the present ones. In addition, it would not be certain either that the central measures would ensure the best solution in all respects, since state planning is also able to discover the extraordinarily involved interconnections of social production only with the help of realistic prices.

In revising the price policy concept, in effect the question had to be answered as to what has to be protected by price policy and what sufficient time for adjustment has to be allowed for. The adaptation of the new lasting price ratios brought about in the world market must not, of course, lead to the importing of inflation. Hungarian price relations must continue to be characterized in the future too by relative price stability. Price stability must set out from the general requirement of social stability. It must protect the stability of the individual, the existing order of socialist income distribution and the ability of production units to operate. At the same time this stability must not mean the "freezing" of the production structure. In this respect only leaving sufficient time for adjustment can be the task.

It would be possible to protect the economy against the structural changes deduced from the external economy only through the heavy deterioration of economic efficiency and this would endanger general socio-economic progress. On the other hand, a time for adaptation is necessary so that structural adaptation should occur at a socially tolerable rate and in socially tolerable circumstances. This time for transition produces costs, but it is quite a different thing to accept this cost provisionally for the sake of adaptation than stabilizing the national economy at a lower level of efficiency than had been achieved already.

Adjustment to external structural influences can obviously be done within the complex system of national planning. In this respect the price category is only one lever, but perhaps the most important one, since the changes in external influences are mediated primarily by changed price ratios. This is why such a great emphasis has been put in Hungary on the elaboration of new prices policy concept. The price plan for 1975 and the price policy concept for the 1976–80 period endeavour to deal with this complex problem through an active exchange rate policy, price adjustments in stages observing the lasting changes of relative prices in the world market, the amendment

of the tax system and the separation of export costing from domestic costing. It has to be added, however, that the maintenance of relative price stability is becoming more difficult as the second half of the seventies advances. Calculations show that at the present rate of world-wide inflation an average annual rise of approximately 3 per cent in the consumer price level perhaps allows for an adequate influence of price function to be maintained, i.e. for a system of economic guidance involving a return to regulation through central instructions to be avoided. The 3.6 per cent increase in the price level planned for 1975 indicates that Hungary wants to master the problems of economic growth relying on the new economic mechanism introduced in 1968.

EAST-WEST ECONOMIC RELATIONS: A REAPPRAISAL

by

JÁNOS FEKETE

I had the opportunity to lecture on current issues of East-West relations here in May 1971, at a seminar organized by the Council on Foreign Relations. At that time I said it would be easier to discuss this issue anywhere in the world but in this country, where people talk most about it but do least. I also suggested that it would perhaps be timely and worthwhile to alter your policy since East-West trade could provide enormous opportunities for both sides. At that time the foreign trade turnover of the U.S. with the socialist countries, in volume, hardly touched U.S. $ 600 million per annum.

It is a great pleasure for me that after not such a long time I can start by saying that U.S. policy concerning East-West trade changed significantly and as a result U.S. trade turnover with the socialist countries reached over 3 billion dollars in 1973.

This progress indicates a spectacular turning-point. Nevertheless, without being pessimistic this time I must warn you that the rate of progress cannot probably be maintained in the long run. There is danger that, on the basis of the recent successful years, illusions will develop about the possibility of maintaining similar growth rates. If, however, this did not materialize, this would be a disappointment for the business circles concerned. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that these trade relations even today, after so many sound developments, are not solidly based and therefore, if we want further smooth and rapid progress, it will be necessary to further improve present conditions.

Four main problems could be mentioned in this respect, on which the future of East-West trade depends. These are:

(1) general political circumstances,

(2) mutual economic interests,

An address delivered by the Deputy President of the Hungarian National Bank to the National Foreign Trade Convention in New York on November 19th, 1974.

(3) security of business relations, and
(4) a reappraisal of Eastern economic potentialities.

(1) The political preconditions are the first and most important aspect. Détente is spreading. It seems that the two leading great powers, as well as other countries, intend to maintain this process. Détente shows enormous successes: the state agreement between the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR, the four-power treaty on West Berlin, the Paris agreement on ending the war in Vietnam, the hope of a possible conclusive settlement of the Middle East conflict, the favourable prospects of talks on strategic arms limitations, summit meetings between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and many other events indicate a trend of general détente. This situation in itself is a favourable background for trade development. A general background, I should like to emphasize, and not a special bargaining item to be traded in at every new juncture of business relations.

(2) Mutual economic interests are the second foundation on which trade has to be built. I think that in the shadow of the energy and raw material crisis, and a possible economic depression, it is unnecessary to emphasize the importance of exploring new markets. The CMEA area in which more than 350 million consumers live, an area which shows steady economic growth and an investment boom, is one of the biggest markets in the world, where both development and consumption needs are reflected in enormous actual demand.

(3) The third important base is long-term security of established economic ties. This means the establishment of unambiguous, clear laws and constitutional conditions, the security of short, medium and long-term economic relations, as well as smooth business relations. As a precondition, the necessary financial, legal and administrative problems should be solved and conditions should be created for a non-discriminative trade. There are still important unsettled issues in this field. Let me mention first a Hungarian example. We wanted to settle our old debts with the U.S., debts carried over from the First and Second World Wars, hoping that, in return, various economic, financial and trade discriminations against us would cease. It did not happen so. It turned out that we had debts originated from the First World War which were not mentioned at the conference table, but brought in afterwards.

So we had to settle old debts, at a time when we were, and we are still, under financial discrimination in the U.S. The same situation exists in foreign trade as well. American legislation has not yet granted Hungary Most Favoured Nation Treatment. True that in return Hungarian legislation acted

likewise toward the U.S. Since we buy more from the U.S. than we sell to it, a paradox situation has been created, since the Most Favoured Nation Clause, refused by the U.S., hit American exporters more than Hungarian ones. It is, of course, another question that what is an unimportant sum here, is not exactly that for my country. This situation is naturally reflected in the business figures. Trade figures are, however, increasing, but very modestly. In the first six months of 1974, we imported $50 million from and exported $10 million to the U.S., including few industrial goods on both sides, because of discriminatory tariffs. We could export about $100 million to the U.S. every year, instead we export only 20 and you could export perhaps 200 but you only export 50. It is a pity because otherwise, wherever American firms started to do business with us, they were extremely successful, and so are our firms in this country. It is difficult to persuade our firms to pay additional custom duties which are more than the usual profit of an honest trader. I don't know how you face up to this problem here but we in Hungary do not like to pay additional surcharges over and above normal taxes.

Another difficulty is the often changing Eximbank lending policy towards different socialist countries. This often keeps us away from the U.S. market. Why take the risk of buying capital goods from American firms if we never know whether the usual international credit conditions will be available? During the past twenty-five years our Western European and Japanese partners did not change their export credit conditions except by improving them. But let us say the credit is there, the question is still open whether the export of sophisticated industrial equipment will not contravene embargo prescriptions? Hungary is now carrying out concrete negotiations on semi-conductors. Before signing contracts we do not know whether the export licence will be granted or not? You will understand what I mean when I say the problem is that nobody knows exactly what is possible and what is not. Refusing export licences for certain already concluded deals is a good example of the instability of the situation.

All this proves that the legislative, government and business circles of the U.S. have not yet reached full agreement concerning the importance and need for East-West trade and, accordingly, have not given the green light at every level to East-West trade. As long as these problems are not dealt with successes and set-backs will vary in this field, but an optimal utilization of possibilities cannot be expected.

(4) The fourth fundamental condition is the reappraisal of Eastern economic potentialities. Some U.S. economists and businessmen have an outdated, unchanged image of a changing Eastern Europe. Socialist countries

as a whole cannot be looked on as mere raw material suppliers in exchange for machinery and finished goods exports.

Let me give a few examples relating to my country, notwithstanding the fact that other CMEA countries perhaps could provide, in certain cases, a better illustration underlining my arguments.

Hungary, as you may know, is not a raw material supplier but this does not exclude the possibility of co-operation with us in this field. Basically, however, our country is short of raw materials except for one, and perhaps you will not misunderstand if I call it "brain cells". Not so long ago I had the opportunity, at the U.S. Embassy in Budapest, to get to know the names, activities and achievements of some Hungarian-born scientists who have been and still are working in the U.S. Among them there are Nobel Prize laureates and outstanding men in the intellectual and cultural life of the U.S. Those scientists and artists were educated in Hungarian schools by teachers who had other outstanding students who still live and work in their homeland. I therefore feel that one of the main new lines of economic co-operation could be the inclusion of those intellectual achievements in business relations which are the fruit of Hungarian work in recent years. This is the more valid, since different Hungarian research teams are working in the field of some of the most urgent problems of our days, such as

(a) malnutrition, and

(b) environmental protection.

I want to give you a few concrete examples where I feel possibilities of co-operation exist.

(a) The shortage in protein is a world-wide problem today. Hundreds of millions the world over are suffering from malnutrition and the recently held U.N. World Food Conference of Rome had to meet the problem of an unprecedented shortage in food. Everywhere scientists are looking for a solution. Your Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, also put forward proposals to cover the augmenting food deficit of the developing countries. In the U.S. and the Soviet Union successful experiments for protein production from petroleum have been carried out. But we have gone further, we have a factory which produces protein from different non-toxical grasses and we have concrete results feeding animals with this product. This invention whose importance cannot be foreseen, is the work of Lehel Koch at the University of Technology in Budapest. The process has been licensed world-wide under the VEPEX trade-mark. The VEPEX Bureau is now carrying out negotiations on establishing joint ventures with Western companies to apply the process and bring it into use.

(b) As regards environmental protection I want to mention the Heller–

Forgó licence package (about 25–30 connected patents) concerning the cooling system of power plants on the basis of which about 2,000 million Watt power capacity has been constructed in Europe so far. To develop the application of these licences for atomic power plants, we recently concluded co-operation agreements with both Western (among them American) and Soviet partners. The Babcock and Wilcox Company has bought this system by which atomic power stations could be built in cities without causing pollution.

There are other important Hungarian processes for the protection of the environment, such as soil-bank processing, ore-dressing, or water-protection. In environmental protection and, in general, biological technology Hungary did great things in sterilization through radiation of sewage and in the measurement of pollution.

(1) Efforts have to be continued on traditional lines as well. Hungarian agriculture could be an important field for co-operation. Though the territory of our country compared to yours is very small, there is a relatively great similarity between the patterns of organization in agriculture in both countries. We as well have relatively few farm units, each covering even larger acreages than the agribusinesses of the U.S. On our big farms American agrotechnical and agrochemical processes are successfully applied. An American firm (Corn Production System, U.S. Inc. Rosemont, Chicago) established a joint venture with a Hungarian state farm (C.P.S.–Bábolna). The results were of major significance and they are at or above established world standards in mass corn production. The basic idea of a "closed production system" came from the Hungarians, the technological solution from a U.S. firm. The system was further developed and now the two partners established a joint enterprise in Switzerland for further work on it. Through this co-operation a relatively large quantity of American agricultural machinery (considering Hungarian conditions) was bought by Hungary for cash payment. This demonstrates that significant results could be achieved through a combination of financial and technical experience in other fields of agricultural co-operation. Similar methods—modern technology and financial incentives—also in a "closed production system" were applied in wheat production as well. And the results. . . : instead of importing corn and wheat (as we did from the U.S.A. in 1963–64) we have become regular exporters in quantities that are large by Hungarian standards.

An American corporation suggested a very interesting co-operation with the Hungarian meat industry, which, I regret to say, did not materialize. This was partly our fault. We were overoptimistic about the marketing of Hungarian cattle in the European Economic Community. The well-

known result taught us all outside the EEC that we should not concentrate too much on one market, even on such a large one as the EEC. For diversification if for no other reason Hungary needs other large Western outlets for processed meat. These could be the U.S. and other large markets connected with the latter.

(2) Hungary is a country with a relatively important manufacturing industry. In her exports to the CMEA countries processed goods (machinery and equipment, vehicles and chemical goods) make up two-thirds, and the most sophisticated goods (machines and vehicles) make up 44 per cent. The U.S. would be able to buy certain industrial products as well as establish co-production ventures in our country. We have plenty of experience in industrial co-operation including with Corning Glass, the Kellogg Company, Pepsi Cola Co., etc.

(3) Good possibilities exist in holiday travel. Within her small territory, Hungary has many spas and watering places, as well as mineral water springs which are very good for the rehabilitation and treatment of rheumatic illnesses, diseases of the heart and circulation, as well as for various digestive and stomach ailments. The importance of these facilities has been recognized by the U.N. as well, which offered assistance to a related project. It would be possible to establish an American–Hungarian joint venture to utilize these waters. Similar initiatives have already been undertaken but only in travel and hotel construction. The Hotel Duna Intercontinental was built and is managed jointly, the Budapest Hilton is under construction on a most beautiful site, Castle Hill in Budapest.

The fifth Five Year Plan, covering the years 1976–80, is under preparation in Hungary. The planned investment target is about 720 billion forint, about 30 billion dollars. The plan contains projects which the Hungarian economy can implement relying on domestic resources. There are other good investment projects under consideration which cannot be carried out due to a lack of capital at home.

It would be possible to realize those investments as well in the next five-year plan period, as co-operations, involving foreign capital.

(1) Major reserves of copper ore have been discovered in Hungary, the exploitation of which would demand hundred millions of dollars of additional investment. It would be possible to establish profitable ore-mining with the help of foreign capital in Hungary, and large exports would result.

(2) Hungary's bauxite and aluminium production is one of the largest in Europe. New and rich reserves of bauxite have been discovered recently but adequate financial resources for exploitation are lacking, though Hungary has considerable experience in this field. If foreign capital could be secured,

bauxite and aluminium production could be carried out in these new areas.

I left financial relations last, this being my own field. Our American banker friends went ahead and, in spite of some legal obstacles, they achieved remarkable progress. Our connections with American financial houses are many-sided and adequate. It is clear that if the possibilities I mentioned could be realized, financial and banking facilities would be available. The international standing of Hungary is well known to you and could provide a stable base for further financial relations. I am pleased to tell you that one of the biggest U.S. banks was given permission to open an office in Budapest. It is hoped that other American banks will follow this example.

Today the Western world shows an unprecedented rate of inflation, high interest rates and a lack of supply of long-term capital, as well as liquidity problems, increasing unemployment and a declining real value of production. A major slump on the stock exchange, which has not been experienced since 1929–33, shadows the possibility of a recession, if not of an economic depression.

We are not happy about this. Hungary is not interested, either politically or economically, in such a recession. Politically because the first consequence of a recession is unemployment which puts the burden on classes of people we feel closest to. History showed that the consequences of the 1929–33 crisis strengthened Italian fascism and helped bring Hitler to power.

Hungary is not interested in a recession economically, since we would like to increase our trade relations with the advanced Western and the developing countries, in peaceful competition, based on mutual advantage, and major economic problems, if they arise in the Western world, could disturb such objectives. Economic recession hinders export activities which Hungary is very much interested in, since foreign trade is very important to the economy of the country.

We are in favour of an international monetary order, stable prices and fixed exchange rates. The fact is, however, that the monetary system is disorganized, prices are rapidly rising, and we have floating rates. All this caused and is causing problems in Hungarian domestic economic policy.

We are as well aware as you that East-West trade alone, neither at its present volume, nor in perspective, neither as new raw material sources nor as new market for exports, can solve the economic problems of the Western world, and within those of the U.S. I am convinced, however, that the development of these relations could quite significantly help to ease them. I also sincerely believe that widening and improving economic relations, and, as a result, greater mutual knowledge, could be an important help in the preservation of world peace.

MY HYPERTONIA ESSENTIALIS

by

LÁSZLÓ NÉMETH

This is an excerpt from the medical diary of László Németh, essayist, novelist, playwright, educator and translator. Németh, who was a physician by training, died this year at the age of 74. The cause of his death was hypertonia essentialis, *the illness whose symptoms he so meticulously observed in himself and recorded over a period of years in a unique attempt to come to terms with the nature of his illness and thus help himself and others to better adjust to it. He applied the analytical powers of his formidable brain to his own condition as he had before to the condition of his country.* — The Editor.

Ady-liget, beginning of May, 1968

I first heard of *hypertonia essentialis* from Sándor Korányi.* He gave a general lecture on hypertension, and, after listing the various causes of high blood pressure, he mentioned that recently a disease had been described the origin of which was not found in the kidneys, the blood vessels or the endocrine glands. It had only one symptom: unusually high blood pressure. This was in 1923 or 1924, at most a year after essential hypertension had been diagnosed as a distinct pathological form.

As a school doctor I naturally had very little to do with high blood pressure; among my acquaintances I knew only one person, a teacher, who had been blinded by this disease and had died. In the last ten years I have had even less occasion to concern myself with medical cases. I lived within the walls of a provincial school and among mountains of books for translating, and medical literature rarely came my way. Thus I had no idea that this essential hypertension which Korányi mentioned as some kind of curiosity (not that it had not existed before) had achieved an illustrious position within the realm of diseases. Everyone seemed to think it of great importance, for example, that my ophthalmic examination was "positive"; I thought it meant that hardened arteries had been found in the fundus

* Sándor Korányi was professor of medicine at the Pázmány University Medical School, when the author was a student there.

of my eye, and that obviously my blood pressure shot up because the blood vessels of the brain were blocked by arteriosclerosis. Only when news of my illness reached Professor H. and his familiar voice said over the phone, "You're not as sick as you think; people like you aren't inclined to get arteriosclerosis—you have essential hypertension," did I realize that my trouble could, after all, only be that illness which Korányi engraved in my memory thirty years before.

When word got around that I was ill, as usual friends showed up from everywhere who had known similar cases. They mostly related comforting examples of course; the sister of one of the women living in the house had been in and out of the hospital for the last ten years where she was cured and now able to work again. The mother of one of the Ady-liget residents had borne up under high blood pressure for twenty years even though she lived all alone, and she did her own gardening too. Another resident had been carrying on in the world since her menopause with a blood pressure of 240, sometimes she felt she would go mad from headaches. I was informed that János Hospital had a separate department for hypertension (a former publisher of my review *Tanú* offered to introduce me to the head physician, an old chess partner). Up to that time such special departments had been established only for tuberculosis and cancer patients. So gradually I learned that I had fallen ill with a new mass disease whose victims were creating an invisible republic on the face of the earth with a population in the millions.

I, of course, immediately made inquiries about relevant literature. In the first days I perused some chapters on hypertension in medical texts, but found myself none the wiser. My son-in-law brought news of a book on hypertension he had seen in a bookstore window. Under all circumstances they must get it for me. The debate began. Was it a good idea for a patient to study his own disease? Part of the family claimed I would only get anxious. The rest were of the opinion I would get even more anxious if they did not comply with my wish. My birthday was coming, they would buy it then—in the end they borrowed it from the National Széchényi Library. Thus I got hold of *Hypertension* by the Soviet scientist Lang and my first information on the disease.

It is an accurate and conscientious work. It shows that essential hypertension was a widespread disease and a major problem in clinical practise earlier in the Soviet Union than here. Lang, who died recently, devoted almost his entire career to this disease, founding a special clinic for hypertensives and following up the later life histories of thousands of patients. The book gave great detail on everything from the pathological anatomy

of hypertension to diet; Lang wrote about changes in the blood vessels of different organs, the possible causes of hypertensive headaches, the various explanations of the origins of the disease, accompanying illnesses, prognoses of different cases and experiences with various treatments.

In the hands of the patient this book becomes a Sibylline oracle; all good intentions of objectivity notwithstanding, he tries to read his own destiny into it. Now, from this viewpoint, it reassured me: it would have been a pity to hide it from me. Not that it offered much hope. The book begins by stating that hypertension* is a widespread and serious illness and although there are some cases where those who become ill under extraordinarily difficult conditions can be cured under improved conditions, and moreover the doctors' duty is to encourage patients at every stage of their illness, in the end the *book* projects the image of an incurable disease. And even in this picture, for several reasons, I had to place myself in the group with the least hope. The hypertension of younger people under fifty-five is more serious than that of older people, and the prognosis for men is in general worse than for women. Five to ten years after the first clinical diagnosis 70 per cent of hypertensive women were still alive; the percentage was only twenty to thirty for men. And what was worse, my diastolic pressure (the pressure under which blood pumped in systole still meets with resistance in the arteries in diastole), the lower and more important of the two blood pressure values, was high. If it is 130 or more, the consequences will be swift and bad. The five or six doctors who took my blood pressure usually gave me a lower figure: the internist of the hospital gave his word of honour and said it was 135.

Pessimistic imagination, however, has its good side: reality, however serious, also brings relief. Within five to ten years 70 to 80 per cent of the men afflicted with hypertension were dead—but to be able to talk about five years was still something! Even two years seemed a great gift if during that time I could put down some part of the intellectual burden weighing heavily on me, for which I was responsible and which would perish with me. And however ominous the figure 135, I was still at the threshold of the illness. According to the book the disease goes through stages: in the beginning, blood-pressure-increasing nerve impulses dominate, then comes a transitional stage when the heart is also affected, then the kidney blood vessels become diseased (a factor which in itself increases blood pressure) fixing the blood pressure at a very high level, and only then comes the last chapter. In my life I had been in so many situations when I could have

* "Hypertension" should always be understood as essential hypertension and not as any other kind of high blood pressure, some of which is quite benign.

died in perhaps five minutes (or I gave the ultimatum: "I won't do this" a month longer) that these uncertain one, two or three years (even if threatened with heart failure, cerebral haemorrhage or paresis) did not seem so oppressive. And for the time being there was the eye-dropper with its increasing doses of Redergan-drops: doctors said that they would neutralize the spasms: so I could still write something or other.

After the excitement of prophetic anticipation had calmed down, I tried to look at my illness through the eyes of the late Professor Lang: what was special about it? Every patient likes to believe that his illness is a rare, interesting case. With me this queer sort of vanity was mixed with practical aims. Since I was a hypertensive I thought I would associate myself with Hungarian research on hypertension (if such existed) and the best method of reaching this goal seemed to be to offer myself as an interesting specimen of hypertension.

But did any such special interest exist? The fact that it was *my* hypertension could not have much effect on research colleagues most of whom had no idea who I was and so were not interested in my explanation of the origin of my illness. The rapid and acute development of the disease would perhaps be of more interest. I am convinced that my blood pressure this autumn was the same as earlier, not over 130: the 165 measurement after I first fainted attested to this sudden rise. But there are other acute hypertensives and one measurement of 165 is no proof that I did not have higher blood pressure months earlier. I thought my somnolence in the beginning of the illness was very strange. Lang never mentioned anything like that in his book. "I feel like I have brain fever with the 'flu", I said at the time. If left alone in the room for a few minutes, I fell asleep in my chair. I was happy to note in Lang's book that hypertension and pulmonary emphysema often appeared together; perhaps there was a deeper, more mysterious reason for their co-occurrence than simply being diseases of old age. I had pulmonary emphysema and suffered more from it than from my high blood pressure during the first weeks at Ady-liget. I remember especially well a walk with my daughter Judit when I could scarcely utter the simplest sentences although we were walking on a straight, even road—but to me, it seemed to be caused by a bronchial spasm similar to a vascular spasm and not by emphysema. Nor could I boast of the frightful constipation (which through my flatulated intestines caused a pain similar to angina pectoris in my ingrown heart) as it is one of the most ordinary accompanying phenomena of hypertension. In the end only my shirts were left: the collars had to be let out two centimetres, most certainly as the result of hypertrophy of the thyroid gland, a symptom of hypertension not mentioned in the book.

However, I could undoubtedly count on the sceptical hypothesis that perhaps a gain in weight had necessitated the wider collars.

Finally I worked out a spectacular thesis (inviting fruitful contradiction) which formulated the "interesting" features of my illness: high blood pressure was only one, the most visible and, it seemed, the most persistent symptom of hypertension. If hypertension erupted acutely as in my case, a number of other symptoms were also present which were partly like vascular spasms (as in bronchial spasms or constipation) and perhaps could be of the same origin and partly conspicuous disorders in the endocrine glandular system (hypertrophy of the thyroid, a sudden temporary stagnation in sexual life) and an almost coma-like stupor of the brain. It seems that most of the symptoms gradually diminish or disappear; but high blood pressure persists for years, to the very end of the illness—nobody knows why. With this thesis I crossed the border between the personal and the general: hypertension was no longer an accident, it had become a problem.

Lang, in his search for the substance of the disease, sketched a very good picture of the two opposing schools of medical thought in the explanation of hypertension. The Western school, which has come up with marvellous results in the last decades in the field of endocrine secretion and intermediary metabolism, tried to give a biochemical explanation. They referred to a famous animal experiment. By squeezing the artery of the kidneys, Goldblatt induced hypertension in the animal. The imperfect metabolism of kidneys which do not receive enough blood produces a blood pressure increasing substance called angiotonin; to a certain extent this increase in blood pressure is useful because the kidneys get more blood under greater pressure. A similar kind of hypertension as that produced by Goldblatt in animals was also diagnosed in man and thus it was quite understandable that many would consider the origin of hypertension as similar to the model shown by this experiment.

Soviet scientists did not take a biochemical approach but rather followed in the footsteps of Pavlovian neuro-physiologists who constructed our mental health and instincts out of congenital and conditioned reflexes. They sought the cause of hypertension in nervous reactions and the nervous system and referred to daily experiences instead of experiments: they said hypertension arose when the nervous system was overtaxed by emotions, fear, etc. The case of the population of Leningrad was an oft-cited example. During the months of horrible hardships in the siege of Leningrad, many people became hypertensive: later, when exposed to a healthier environment (those lucky exceptions) their illness disappeared. So the disease was provoked by environmental pressures of life, and not by some mysterious

interior chemical factor. This is Lang's explanation of hypertension. According to him, it is caused by "negative" impulses which have been repressed for a long time: the exact place of injury is the part of the brain called hypothalamus. Men who are under a lot of pressure, who become angry easily and have to control themselves suffer, in some unknown manner, a serious functional disorder in the small, but very important, control centre of our instincts—the diencephalon. High blood pressure is one symptom of this injury.

Let us not concern ourselves with the philosophic principles, or rather feelings, behind these two schools of medical thought; biological predestination in our cells and tissue fluid on the one hand, and the belief that environment and education can shape man through conditioned reflexes on the other. As long as the quest for truth is more important than the defence of positions, I think looking at the issue from both sides is very useful: it illuminates the same problem from more than one point of view.

In thinking over the antecedents of my illness, I find it difficult not to accept Lang's somewhat dramatic theory. After 1944 I lived like a bachelor in Vásárhely according to my own laws. Three years before I became ill, I had moved back to Budapest and to my family; I lived among five women (my wife and four daughters) whom I loved dearly; I appreciated certain qualities but disagreed with their way of life. I could not quarrel with them—nor would my work allow me to do so—I just took everything. My new job, translating, also did violence to my nature. I was at my peak as a writer and overflowing with things I had to say, but I had to struggle with the sentences of others for ten to sixteen hours every day. My work was subjected to multiple controls: sometimes my editors lacked goodwill, sometimes skill. And finally there was the case of my unfortunate play and its accompanying drama. It was not difficult for Lang to convince me that my hypothalamus was damaged by repressed emotions. But how? The book did not say.

I have, however, my own theory on emotions, an old one dating back to my medical student days. It boils down to this: the cortex of the brain is a very lazy organ; we know from experience that it always resorts to evasion and lives in constant sabotage. But attached underneath is a regulating system which kicks on in important cases of life, existence, self-respect, etc. This "kicking on" occurs when the vegetative nervous system forces the brain to solve its problems through the contraction of veins and other very disagreeable symptoms, and when solved, the contractions cease and the individual feels relieved. Human language is inexhaustible in describing these force tactics: the person is uneasy, vibrates with passion, catches his

breath, his heart is breaking, chills run down the spine, etc. These expressions are all descriptions of certain vegetative processes. If, according to my theory, thought is the entire constellation of brain stimulation at any given moment, our emotions are the vegetative concomitants of thought. In fact, every thought has an emotional coefficient—which sometimes can be neglected—and is perceived only if it strikes us as being disagreeable or agreeable. If our mental processes overcharge this stimulating system, either because it is initially sensitive or because its situation does not allow it to get rid of certain emotion-inducing images (for example, in states of fear or worry), some part of the stimulating system becomes disordered, depending on the sensitivity of the individual. Thus it is possible, even if not always, that angina pectoris, gastric ulcers and ulcerative colitis are diseases of the "emotional system" and, according to Lang's theory, so is hypertension.

All this, however, drifts into generalities. I would have liked to see it worked out better and tied up to anatomic and biological facts. Last month I looked up a young couple, both doctors, my former student and her husband. I received them with a fixed plan: we would begin research on hypertension. I asked the shocked couple to do three things. 1. They should look for a good comprehensive study on the biology of emotions. I remembered that such papers had already appeared in my youth including Ranschburg's excellent work, *The Human Brain*, but contemporary studies must also be looked at. 2. They should get a similar book on the vegetative nervous system. Every doctor mentions it, they talk about the "vegetative-hormonal system". Even a medical student is reasonably familiar with the endocrine secretion system but the vegetative nervous system is somehow left in the dark; compared to the heart, the lungs or even to the cerebral nervous system it is a mysterious and somewhat arbitrarily tossed-in factor. Yet emotions damage this vegetative system in hypertension. 3. I think it strange that Lang devotes long chapters to changes in the blood vessels of various organs—describing to what extent they thicken and how they become hardened—but he never says whether changes also occur in the frequently mentioned hypothalamus and what kind. If this gap has not yet been filled by medical literature, we should do it now.

The two young doctors did not show much inclination to devoting their life to research on hypertension according to my proposed method. They never sent the books they promised; in fact I did not see them for months. Moreover, my own attention was diverted from the proposal fixed at the time of their visit. Slowly but perceptibly my condition was improving when an alarming symptom suddenly appeared: a peculiar pressure around the nape of my neck which I named (I don't know exactly why) "angina

of the medulla oblongata". I felt no pain—only a peculiar feeling of weariness creeping down from my neck into my body, as if my head wanted to detach itself and roll away—the most horrible feeling I experienced in my illness. At the same time the fifth or sixth phial of Redergan changed to a light yellow colour. The phial should have been kept in a dark place, so I thought that the drug's active ingredient had changed into ergotoxin—in other words that I had been poisoned. I stopped taking the medicine, and for a week we made telephone calls to various and sundry places: we contacted the factory and asked for an explanation of the strange pressure in the nape of the neck. The factory very politely exchanged the drug: as for the neck pressure, doctor acquaintances said that hypertensives often complain of "a pain in the neck" and they reassured us that they had never heard of a similar case of poisoning. One or two weeks later I calmed down: that horrible feeling in the medulla oblongata went away by itself.

Hypertension and Idyll

Attila út, end of June, 1968

In the last one and half months my attention has turned from pathologic to social causes of hypertension.

I am convinced that men of instinct have a presentiment of the manner of death which awaits them: they sense it years, even decades ahead of time and try to defend themselves against it with their way of life. Zsigmond Móricz, the novelist who died from cerebral haemorrhage due to cerebral arteriosclerosis (he did not have high blood pressure), had been a vegetarian for fifteen years before his death—his way of fighting against the "fogginess" settling down in his brain. My preventive defence also dates back a long way. Eighteen years ago, travelling in Rumania, my fellow travellers mocked my efforts to avoid any "incidents". And it was true: my profession as a writer had brought on so many storms, was in itself such a great "incident", that I tried to avoid all other conflicts. Gradually I found the word for what my nervous system, in its fear of illness, was craving: the *idyll*. Of course in my usage this term was not identical with what was understood by lovers or readers of the *Eclogues*. In my terminology an idyll means a well-ordered day, with a lot of good work and a trouble-free environment and a neighbourhood consisting of people of whom I more or less approve. My life in Vásárhely was intermittently an idyll—with easily borne poverty and only brief panics caused by the distant din of pursuers. And perhaps growing accustomed to Vásárhely later made it so difficult for me to bear

my unsettled life in Budapest. The five years that elapsed from the giving up of my Vásárhely-binding teaching position and moving to Budapest until the onset of my illness was a period of planning and trying to escape. I counted them up: at least eighteen or twenty times I set out and left my "muddled" life behind. I would chase the trembling "idyll" which always faded away for some reason or other. My acquaintances declared me restless, unable to stay put: in fact I was compelled to flee from one retreat to another in quest of the place which my nervous system hastening towards illness so desired; I was driven by the homelessness of a man not in his "true" place.

The disease itself increased the thirst for the idyll and the number of experimental escapes. My excursion to Szigliget, in the beginning of my illness, was such an escape: I never went to "writers' colonies" without compelling reasons. From Szigliget correspondence flew in search of a final "place of retreat". Two recommendations arrived in the first days of my illness. My former landlady offered her room in Vásárhely and a friend called from Füred about a marvellous room for rent. But in the eyes of my family Vásárhely was the city of dissent; and my health was too bad (and who knew how much worse it would get) for me to live alone in a furnished room in Füred. Besides, these were the honeymoon days of my illness, when relatives and acquaintances learned that I had been singled out for another life—for agony—and they gathered all their love and sympathy, and also derived a bit of pleasure from their own goodness, in such a way that the patient feels that now it is evident how much they really love him. I knew, of course, that the honeymoon would inevitably end and that a period of indifference, sometimes even cruelty, would follow: but precisely in knowing this I did not have the heart to deprive myself of these days. Thus I found myself in Ady-liget, one hour away from our Budapest apartment, above the Nagyrét in Hűvösvölgy, at the home of my wife's aunt who would thus be able to accompany me there.

Here the idyll took shape within a few days. Early meals and a morning and afternoon walk divided the day into exact working periods. In the beginning I only read but soon I began to write: I worked two hours in the morning on my play *Joseph II*—in the afternoon I dictated the translation of a Tolstoy play to my wife. My daughter brought out her big radio set for my birthday, I listened to music a lot. My copybook was crammed helter-skelter with notes: plans for plays, analyses of symphonies, an excerpt of a work on the Old Testament, sentences of the *Petőfi Commemorative Collection* lent to me by Lajos Hatvany. And whether it was the Redergan or the idyll, my drowsiness disappeared, the pains in the back of my neck

were less frequent, I could breathe easier—sometimes we even walked back from the Nagyrét to the mountain.

There was only one thing wrong: what I considered as an idyll my wife in her eternal fever of activity experienced as a cage. As long as she had something to arrange, some comfort to create, coal to buy, people to call up, her fever was appeased, but later, especially when the alarming symptoms disappeared and I was back to normal, she began to turn against me. On occasion she was not completely healthy either: the change of life had made her more irritable and—to my misfortune—she tried to kill her boredom in the typing up of one of my plays. She had already skimmed it, but it is one thing to flip through a work and another to slowly taste it while typing. And I still felt that I, as the incurable patient, was entitled to uncommon tenderness. So the end of the idyll was that I began to broach the subject of a new invitation from Vásárhely, and, taking the injured consent as a miserable agreement, I struck out alone into the world.

In Vásárhely, not in my old room but among old furniture, the idyll again quickly took shape—the only difference being that the two daily walks were in the direction of Népkert and, instead of the Hosszúrét folk scenes, my melancholy comments dealt with figures of college girls hurrying to class. Work went well here too. (I translated Shakespeare and brushed up on my Norwegian for the translation of *Nora*). The environment—the hostess, the couple living in my former room, both teachers, and their children—was better suited to me than the aunt and her lodgers on the peaks of Ady-liget.

The Vásárhely idyll, however, lasted only eighteen days; until I found out that a secret correspondence was going on behind my back. In revenge, which turned against myself, I eagerly took advantage of an invitation to Debrecen. Indignation, the slow local railway and the ceaseless chatter which went on for four of five days in Debrecen—notwithstanding many revived memories—so shattered me that I nearly fainted in boarding the train. Unfortunately I dropped down into a seat next to a former student and had to keep up a conversation with him as far as Karcag. My condition was worse then than at any other time in my illness. My elderly aunt who visited us just at that time told her daughter on the way home, "You know that Laci is going to come unhinged yet. Did you see his eyes?" And if she would have heard the quarrelling late in the night between the equally distraught husband and wife! The next day I moved in with my mother to stay with her until I invented a new idyll. But I could go no further for just at that time she suffered congestive heart failure. She was bedridden with swollen ankles and had no one to care for her and bring her food.

I had to definitively renounce the idyll to which my sickness entitled me in order to attend to her gradually decreasing, weak complaints.

Why am I relating this tragic episode? Because I suspect that—*mutatis mutandis*—such must be the case with every hypertensive. Why hypertension is incurable from a pathological point of view I will never know. Why it is so from a social point of view I can now formulate very concisely. Hypertension, according to Lang's knowledge and my experience, means that the pressure of the environment, and of the world, crushes the individual. How can one imagine then that throwing a convalescent back into the environment and way of life that can break a healthy person will not utterly finish him off? Considering the millions of hypertensives, my case belongs among the socially more fortunate ones. I don't have a permanent office, I can change my milieu; once a doctor certifies me unfit for work, I do not have to return to hated work relations, to the same merciless editor. I can run after my idyll; my work is relatively well-paid; because of my worrying nature I have enough reserves not to have to work for half a year if I don't want to. Yet even in my case, instead of the relief due to the sick, I became a nurse at the bedside of someone in a much worse state.

When a hypertensive returns to society, his position is made difficult by two things. An already sensitive nature now functions like a decimal scale: a gramme weight falls on it and he feels a decagramme. The other difficulty is that he does not appear to be as sick as he really is. Only people who are bedridden or who have been diagnosed as having some horrible disease such as cancer are considered sick. The hypertensive, however, is up and about and for brief periods can even be alert and lively. Yet according to Lang's statistics he does not have much more chance than a cancer victim. I don't know what kind of drugs would help hypertensives as patients, but I think I know what society could do for them. They ought to be lifted from life into some large, communal "idyll", something like a monastery where they have the means to work but not to disturb one another. A kind of Carthusian treatment! Of course, life is also life for hypertensives and the question remains as to how many of them would we willing to reenlist in this leper colony of industrial civilization.

MIHÁLY LADÁNYI

POEMS

WE JUST SIT ABOUT QUIETLY

In the beer-garden with its drowsy ivy-leaves
we just sit, lapped in the clotted afternoon.

In times gone
it was far easier for us poets to die too, sir.
I mean when the revolution
still trailed round the markets looking for work.
We had nothing, but we got this one day
when we were heroes, not misfits,
when,
like those of public-square statues,
our hands were galvanized to fists.

Now,
under red sunshades, in
lemon-yellow sand, we're in the beer-mists,
and politics drifts through the conversation.
Change the conditions, and you
I've no doubt would be a proletarian,
and not, as you are, a travelling salesman
trading machinery for oranges,
Australian cigars in your mouth and
a belief that your world is absolutely natural,
your dreams handed over,
your cut of the cake as obligatory
as that of the Joneses and the fathers of the Joneses,
your flat stuffed full with technology
since that, let's face it, replaces

the ideals—
and in you, sir,
the ideal is what
I'd never feel.

I envy you your lovers, so young
and ready for anything;
working-class girls once,
with that natural grace
that makes them glow. I envy
your car,
its registration number shows
I pay your petrol anyway. Latest
model, sir, you do see how
I appreciate your exquisite taste,
and how happy I am to have met you here
in this beer-garden,
joy, joy untold.

I am a poet,
I live from the market, sir,
and I live alone in this world.

FOR THE RECORD

Today at dawn
we had to jemmy the day's roll-shutters open,
had to break into
the tenth of November,
and had to sneak out of the drawers
eight hours of work,
eight hours of leisure,
eight hours of sleep.
(The last two drawers as good as empty.)

Afternoon
we trotted behind her
when she boarded a tramcar.
Her throat shone with a necklace

made of twenty-carat desires.
(It ought to have been snatched safely
but then we thought
it's only painted there
as our mother-tongue is on her mouth.)

Later, at the police-station of our sublets,
when the night-sergeant
fixes us with a stare,
we have to state for the record
the things we NEVER did that day.
And on counts of our gang-submission
and gang-cowardice the hellish-lonely hours
will give us this time hard labour, a night's
sleepless tossing and turning.

LENIN

Here I am turning your words
in my hands like a crumpled cap, Lenin!
Clumsy as
an old cotter
with his weatherbeaten hat.
All the times I was taken to task in your name,
when I only wanted to talk to you!
Yet you are no god for pudgy priests
to trumpet your word wherever they go,
you are no *jeune premier*
to sing in every operetta,
no greasepaint peasant in a folk melodrama!

I know
you were one
this century can never duplicate.
It hurts me that I have to hear
your sharp voice only on the gramophone!
Yet if you could come back,
back even for a single day
in the temples of our Jerusalem!

I think of this always, after all
I have no desire to see you embalmed,
I think of this always, after all
you were a man, lived in hiding on rye-bread. . .
I keep your words clasped
like a crumpled cap over my heart, Lenin,
I'll cheer the future with it
if I see it coming in.

ABOUT THE HERO

The hero does everything nicely and well.
By dint of mastering epic poetry
he's learned a way of passing time
busy with heroic deeds.

It was he who ousted the coward from the textbooks.

Poor man, devoid of armour against dangers,
he can only squirm on the peak of his insignificance,
lunging and thrusting his embarrassed wooden sword
into the rumps of vindictive gods.

EQUATION

Mine have not been bitter sorrows
nor have there been major joys
I'm not crazy for baroque gods
I've never seen them without clothes

I've never killed in war I don't
know how to speak of peace so that
sergeants might clamour for transfer
into the Salvation Army

Shoved aside made to go hungry
I'm after a terrifying glory
I want to speak about bread and make
the hungry hear me everywhere

INVENTORY

One balding forehead one pair of glasses
one mouth flanked by small sad lines
one neck with jumpy Adam's apple and bitter gulps
one chest no decorations but intractable red heart
one beer-belly with anxiously quaking liver
one penis with two testicles and three offspring
two legs with mud-stuffed footprints and inaccessible thresholds
and a song or two
about mud-stuffed footprints and inaccessible thresholds
a song or two
above my head
in the wind

Translated by Edwin Morgan

MY ANIMAL STORIES

by

ERVIN LÁZÁR

When I get rich, I'm going to get a dog, a house with fruit trees, chain-link fence, always someone at home to answer the phone and the butcher will know us not merely by sight... in other words, I'm going to be rich. In reality, the only reason I wish to be rich is to be able to keep a dog. It will be a Scottish shepherd, dignified, fuzzy, and I already know his name: Sir Arthur MacKinley. It will be a miraculously great dog, able to perform all kinds of funny and serious, irregular deeds. Oh, and of course, I'm going to write about the dog. Animal stories. I'd really, really love to write animal stories. But, good God, how far away is this all from me! Sir Arthur MacKinley seems to sit at an incomprehensibly great distance from me. The butcher on the corner of Gergely Street doesn't know me from Adam, in spite of that my sublet room is large and comfortable.

So, how can I write animal stories? Unless I write about Lajos Szerdahelyi... Aha, that's it, Lajos Szerdahelyi!

I really can't tell exactly how it all began. It's a fact, however, that one bright day Lajos Szerdahelyi arrived. At that time he had no name yet—I cursed him namelessly, ancient expletives bubbled out of me undeleted. At home I immediately pulled my pants off and shook them out madly above the white kettle of the bathtub. Lajos Szerdahelyi established himself in my right pant leg, between the knee and the ankle, paying his respect with especially high regard to the ring right above the sock and to the softer fields of the area immediately below the knee.

I watched with narrowed eyes for the black little dot to drop in and start to pop around the white bathtub-prairie, so that I finally would be able to let the water in on him with tender delight. The image of his hopeless struggle in the gushing maelstrom of the drain and his swimming straight

through the stinking hell of the main sewage pipe was not without a certain dash of sadism.

I laughed a couple of times as well.

But I waived my pants all in vain as far as Lajos Szerdahelyi was concerned. He hid expertly in the security of the seam that offered excellent cover for him.

He could not be called an aggressive flea. He was an organized, sound flea who led an exemplary life. He had breakfast at ten o'clock, lunch at two, in the afternoon a bit of free activity connected with a walk and a light supper at night from the vicinity of the ankle. After two days he had already acquired a name. And once, around two o'clock in the afternoon as I was walking on the Ring, I got the scares: not a movement existed in my right pant leg. Good God, I lost Lajos Szerdahelyi! But no, at half past two he bashfully started to move around. He must have dozed off.

For the nights he always remained in my pant leg very decently; I think that he must have observed in detail the pieces of threads that held the fabric together, did his exercises, and slept. Until breakfast.

Lajos Szerdahelyi became a member of the family, his person was accounted for by all those concerned. "Jesus Christ," my kid sister remarked once as I started to scratch, "how fast the time flies. . ." It was two o'clock and she knew that Lajos Szerdahelyi was having his lunch.

After that... well, a flea should remain untrusting. One afternoon during his daily activity, without a worry in the world, he decided to crawl over from the left knee to the free fields of my right leg covering the left knee. It was then that I saw him first. There was not an inch of towering fat on him; he was a nicely trim, light brown and appealing flea.

When I broke him in half between my two unmerciless nails, my heart sort of tightened inside my chest. I gazed slowly into the lilies of the ashtray where his flattened body disappeared.

Later I was sorry that I did not send him to the happy hunting grounds on a nice white sheet of paper. I could have drawn a fence around him with a pen and I could have written in plain ink: Here Lajos Szerdahelyi had come to rest.

Though this would not have been any better either.

I know this for a fact ever since Gerzson.

We faced one another with Gerzson in the beginning without undue enthusiasm. We thought that we would never disturb one another. On the other hand, of course, this meant that we never thought that we could become friends.

Gerzson had been spinning his web with the greatest of diligence right

in the corner above my bed and as far as I was able to observe he never caught anything, heaven knows what he lived on; at any rate, he had lived there by that time at least for a month. Just as I'm saying, nothing had taken place between us; only one night did I tell him that if he decided to bite me I would not be responsible for my actions. Gerzson escaped after that into such stony and hurt silence that I felt ashamed of myself. "I'm sorry, Gerzson," I said and it was just then that it was discovered that his name was Gerzson.

One morning I sat in a dazed, unmoving laziness on the side of my bed, wondering which of my shoes I should put on first—for a lazy individual it really makes no difference which of his shoes he puts on first as long as he doesn't have to move—and when I finally started to move I discovered that Gerzson had tied his thread to my head. He had connected me with the ceiling. Who knows how long he had waited for such an opportunity to discover a stable point that rose out of the monotonous plane of the bed and to tie his basic thread to that point. I was sure that he was planning on spinning some fearsome labyrinth, imagining that he would spin the whole room together, building a magnificent spider-web cathedral. And then, bang, I just got up. I took off the web from my head gently, carefully, Gerzson running scared toward the ceiling; in that moment certainly he was disappointed with the world that smashed to smithereens with its ugly gestures the genius of the spider.

I thought that Gerzson would give up his experiment. But he continued. Every time I sat somewhat stupefied, sort of like a motherless child, on the side of the bed, Gerzson skilfully and with dispatch connected me with the ceiling. I could have imagined that this activity was merely ironic spider-gestures, intended to poke fun of my laziness, but somehow I never really went into his motivation at that time.

We got used to the ceremony; later on Gerzson did not really escape with such great dispatch when I broke the basic threads of his magnum opus. Like an idiot, only weeks later did it finally occur to me: the great work was already done, the morning chaining was merely the visible signs of the spider's friendship. Even if they weren't really.

As I used to doze off, being connected with the special world of the ceiling, I had certain types of nightmares. I wanted to get up, walk around, do my thing, but I wanted to leave something there, some who-knows-what-kind of stable structure, to which the spider could tie his web eternally with a great deal of certainty. When one dozes off, in that funny, half-dream stage, many impossible ideas occur to him.

One day a girl visited me; my room became immediately more friendly

from her presence and light spots swam around the wall. She screamed immediately: "Yikes, there's a spider!" "Of course," I said, "that's Gerzson." She did not think it special that his name was Gerzson. She said to me, "I'm not going to stay in the same room with a spider!" So I told her that Gerzson is my friend and he ties my head to the great-wide-world every morning. "Don't be funny. . ." replied the girl. I got sort of sad. I thought that the light that came along with her would suddenly go out. But it didn't. "Kill it," she said. I shook my head. Gerzson at that time could have safely thought that I wouldn't betray him. Of course I did. "I'm going to go out," I said, "you kill him if you want to." I know now that this was a greater crime than if I had killed him with my bare hands.

I heard a sharp crack from the inside of the room. Gerzson was merely a splotch on the wall, six of his legs dropped off and the remaining two screamed for help as they stuck on the paint. The girl wanted to scratch them off, but I did not let her. "You're not afraid of a long-dead spider?" She said she wasn't.

So ever since then Gerzson too is here.

I'm sure I can write more pleasant stories about Sir Arthur MacKinley in the future.

Translated by Nancy Aden

ANDRÁS FODOR

POEMS

DISTANT FLICKERING IN THE SKY

Distant flickering in the sky,
what message is your silent anger relaying
with the inaudible crackling of lightning?
There is room for the inalterable in you,
as there is for the alterable.
A glass-bead pagoda in a nightclub
bursts into light.
Dusk fizzles prismatically
on whitewashed ribs of cement,
beautifully and senselessly.

Is my identity still the same
as when I walked here long ago
looking at the mysterious ribbons
of primordial marine deposit
in the soil of the loess embankment?
I wore long hair and a sad expression then,
wanting to look like a poet.
But now I've seen the real sea,
and I don't want to resemble anyone
other than myself.

DYLAN THOMAS AMONG THE LIVING

No, the narrow stone cross
  can't be his emblem.
Rather the cardlike rooftops below,
the twisted stretch of
  chimneys, towers, cedars,

the incessant silver surge of water, nailed
to the empty window of the *Boathouse.*

The big mossy stones
in front of the ivy-covered castle-ruin,
the tortoise-shell islands encircled
by bays of quicksand
the flurrying of herons and gulls
as the milky light of the afternoon sun thickens
between the bosom of twin hills.

No, not in the cemetery!
Sitting in the sun
on a bench in front of its fence,
a curly-haired boy looks at me,
and I see the one who died in him.
Between the pub and the church,
with naive beauty,
disintegration begins anew.

PRISON OF OBJECTS

I walk down senseless roads and corridors.
Jittery knives of double doors
swing at my chest.
I wade through slushy debris
and the fluffy carpets
of throbbing neon-lit hotels.
I'm met everywhere by the mummies of things,
the cold scheming of matter
shaped into objects.
In such a world
there's nothing to converse with.
I only know names and words:
this is the bridge, well, stone statue,
chromium bar, coin, glass tile,
but where's the image, the vision
that gives them identity?

In the evening I slip out to the road.
Perhaps I'll lose my way among rows of cells!

Watching electric letters flow under a leaden sky,
I wait for the signal to reach me.
I linger in front of
the lighted cubes of shops
and then move on to the livid
garners of churches.
I eavesdrop in the doorways of auditoriums
and among the crypts of apartment houses.
And it's impossible to touch anything.
Pity and self-effacing torment
accompany me as I search
the paralized squares
and move through herds of benumbed cars
and aquarium kiosks
drenched in mercurial light.

Such loneliness chills me,
making me want to escape the prison of objects!
On an island across the water,
a carnival has pitched camp.
It glitters in a blaze of jewels.
I want to throw myself into
the living tide that surges through it
and dance on its waves, tossing and turning
in the rapture of the flow,
heaving in the foam of noises and smells.
I want to feel my strength as I hit
the shore of benches, stands, shafts
and cool walls of mica
under the sharp siege of neon and metal.
In this haven,
things still exist for my sake.

WOODSTOCK

From a distance, countless heads
  bobbling in unison!
Framed in the pulsating dazzle of the meadow
swirling in a myriad of colors,
  flowers, flowers, flowers.

Up close, nonchalance grows on us.
The naked girl in the water
  isn't frivolous
as she shaves her armpits
  right in front of me.

There's no invention
  more exciting
    than collective chaos.

Sliding in mud after the rain,
swimming, plunging and tumbling on each other,
bouncing about, covered from head to toe with mud—
  that certainly is a human achievement—
    pigs
  couldn't do that with so much humor,
    and so persistently. . .

And then, the incessant howling
  of dervish crescendoes!

Arabesques of hair
whirling on shiny foreheads
are deciphered for us
  by expertly-held cameras.

Even at night, under the grainy sky
shadows twisting like snakes
  managed to convey something.

But nothing was more fascinating
than the blending of faces, clothes
  and flower manes in the distance.

Seen from above,
beyond the haphazards of fate,
beyond the wrangling of seasons,
the earth is opulently-coloured and superabundant,
  a habitable
  star of the chosen.

Translated by Herbert Kuhner

BLOOD RELATIONS

A play in two parts

by

ISTVÁN ÖRKÉNY

The cast:

PÁL BOKOR
MIKLÓS BOKOR
MIMI BOKOR, HIS WIFE
JUDIT BOKOR, HIS DAUGHTER
PÉTER BOKOR
VERONKA BOKOR, HIS WIFE
MRS. BOKOR, A WIDOW

The action is set somewhere in Hungary, some time after the invention of the railway.

The play was first performed at the Pesti Színház theatre in Budapest, by the Vígszínház Company, March 28, 1974, directed by Zoltán Várkonyi.

This is a play about the nature of passion. Its heroes live in no specific place, but move about in the magnetic field of a shared obsession. Even before they get to know each other, their voices—if raised a little—can be heard all round, they can pass objects from hand to hand, and nothing stops them from meeting.

All the players are called Bokor, and they all work for the railway. The railway is the focal point of their passion. They talk about it all the time, they live and they die for it. Even if they happen to be doing something else just for once—like eating an egg or buying a bottle of wine—they only do it for the sake of the railway.

As they are all devoted to the best interest of the railway, each is right, in his or her own way. The railway is the Cause for wich we all live: any member of the audience may substitute his own—his country, his faith, his party, his card game, or his football team. To make the substitution easier, the actors do not wear railway uniforms, and there are no signal-boxes on the stage. The play is about, and for, all who believe in something. Let's help them catch a glimpse of themselves. For instance—to get away from the railway for a moment—there are many ways of loving one's country: with fiery criticism, with self-sacrifice, or with empty slogans. Moreover, the degree of heat desirable for the passion changes: it reflects the times.

Our climate is cooling. Our age does not favour the burning passion, the heroic gesture of such a one as Miklós Bokor; though, in Hungary, tradition still maintains a high regard for the fine gesture. Let's face it, it is more impressive than the advocacy of gradual

reform. The character called Péter Bokor has no connection with the great reformers of the past, especially as he is never given a chance to take action, to prove his point. And yet, those who push him aside with the best intentions (in the best interest of the railway, though against their own common sense) also ignore the message which is relevant to our own age.

And yet, we must not blame them. We may hear the sane, sober truths of our age from young Péter Bokor, but all the others are Bokors too, who have suffered for their beliefs, who have earned our respect, who have sacrificed their lives to the cause of the railway or to any other cause which is worth the fight.

PART ONE

(The stage is empty and the wings are quite bare. Chairs and other props are on castors, so that the actors can push them on or off the stage, for the props are not merely objects. They also form part of the action.)

JUDIT *(Enters)* I am Judit. My full name is Judit Bokor, but this doesn't matter as all the characters in this play have the same name, just to make things simpler. They are all called Bokor. And to make things even simpler, they all work on the railways. But they'll tell you that anyway; they all love talking about themselves. I have a job at the station, too. I don't know how it came to be the fashion to have different occupations and different names for people in a play. After all, our Christian names are enough to tell us apart. Still, there's one drawback. If you happen to call *(Shouting)* Bokor! *(The WHOLE CAST rush in, looking this way and that for the source of the call, up and down stage, among the audience and finally, annoyed and mystified, they go out, one by one.)*

MIMI *(Comes back, calls loudly)* Judit!

JUDIT *(Crouches down as if to hide)*

MIMI *(Looks round)* Whatever happened to that child? Judit!

JUDIT *(Crouches lower)*

MIMI Judit! She's never about... Like a voice in the wilderness, I call her to breakfast, dinner, supper... Come and wash your hair! Come, let me take your temperature. Come here, you little muckheap, I'll wipe your ears with the corner of my hankie. *(Bows to the audience)* I'm Mrs. Miklós Bokor, I'm Mimi... Do you know a place called Borsa? It doesn't really matter. We had a walnut tree there. I used to boil the green walnuts, then roll them in honey, push them into cored apples and bake them in the oven. We had just the one walnut tree, and a table as big as that! But there was room for all of us *(Points out how they used to sit)*. How many of us there were! At Christmas, there was my mother-in-law, my father-in-law, Judit, Judit's godfather, and me over here... But there would have been plenty of room for my gran, if I'd known her, and for my little brother, if only he hadn't died of the measles, and there's have been room for the two or three children I'd have had if we'd only stayed on down there, with our walnut tree, our plain potato suppers and our one little pig. I had to slaughter it, too, all by myself, for he, the master of the house, who was so keen to feed and fatten him, he'd become so fond of that pig that he couldn't stick it... Well, I did it, though I'm only a woman. I killed it for their sakes. And I'd kill again for their sake, and not just a pig, I'd kill a man too, if I had to, if it was for them... *(Looks around)* Judit! Judit!!! *(Shrugs, and hurries off)*

JUDIT *(Relaxes, smiles, comes forward, whispers to the audience)* I like to be out and about. Mum's been looking for me at the station: and from the station they've phoned home, to see where the blazes I got to.

Well, I'd rather be anywhere else than where I should be. But believe me, I love the railway. It means speed, it means open spaces, it means the whole wide world... But all I am now is a machine dispensing platform tickets. It's like this. Here, just above my head, there's a notice saying PLATFORM TICKETS. And here, at shoulder level, the tin shed has another notice saying IT IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN TO ENTER THE STATION PLATFORM WITHOUT A VALID TICKET. And so all the folk who're seeing off someone, or who wait for someone, come up to me and throw in the money through a slot here, just by my nose. I pass them out a ticket at another slot. I hand them out one by one for a while, and then I put a sign over the tin shed: OUT OF ORDER. And so am I, out of order... What I would really like is to be transferred to Information. Why, what difference would it make? I'll tell you. My mother's always busy making and baking, and she cooks really well I must say, but I never feel like it. I'd rather eat bread and butter: but only if I can spread the butter under the bread and not on the bread. Why? Because I'm crazy, says Mum. She can't understand that a piece of bread and butter is only just bread and butter; but if all I can see is the dry bread, then I get a surprise with every bite: gosh, that's buttered! and then I can enjoy every single bite all over again. You understand, don't you? That's my philosophy of life. *(Exit)*

PÁL *(An unshaven, neglected looking man over sixty, but still a fine figure of a man. He pulls along a battered chest of drawers, and carries a six-foot long metal pole. Steps on the left, puts down the pole, and pulls a thin grey groundsheet or tent from a drawer. He pulls and pulls, and when he's finally brought all of it out, he tries to fold it again. The tarpaulin is too large, he can't manage it; finally he screws it up angrily and walking round the whole stage, he chucks it in the corner. Coming back, he leans against his chest of drawers and begins to remember.)* There was one day, a long time ago now, I got so drunk in a place called Česky Brod that I sang Lilac Time to one of the passengers... moreover, she happened to be a Baroness Rothschild. It happened like this. She rang for me, looked straight into my eyes and said: "Tell me, haven't they cleared the snow from the line yet?, and I, instead of answering, began to sing...

(Sings)

(He stops, and shrugs sadly) It just came back to me... well, I hope I can forget it again. *(Looks round and sees the audience)* Excuse me. *(Comes forward, takes a bow, and delivers the French words in a perfect accent, with apparent enjoyment)* COMPAGNIE INTERNATIONALE DES WAGONS-LITS ET WAGON RESTAURANTS *(Bows again)* Pál Bokor. I don't really like giving my name. It's easier for some, who still have some sort of handle to their name—Doctor, or Colonel, or Scoutmaster, or Union Secretary... But I never got that far. If anyone asks who I am, I start to say: COMPAGNIE INTERNATIONALE DES WAGONS-LITS ET WAGONS RESTAURANTS. And I notice a look of interest, an appreciative nod, but this soon changes to a look of pity, a look of pitying boredom. COMPAGNIE INTERNATIONALE DES WAGONS-LITS ET WAGONS RESTAURANTS. The sleeping-car company. That's where I worked, as a guard, for over forty years, but I got sick of travelling, and the chugging of the train, and strange towns with strange names; I am old, retired, lonely, disillusioned and very ill. As I don't have a family, the doctor was frank with me: there is no cure. I have only a few weeks left, a couple of months at most. However, if I could get transfusions, regularly and permanently, I could live as long as I want to. But I don't want to. For sixty years, I haven't had a good word from anyone. Now, in my old age, I will not be kept alive, kept in motion by the bottled, labelled, expensively stored blood of perfect strangers. No thank you. I'll go on as long as I'll last, not a minute longer. With blood

or without blood, a man should live only as long as he's needed. *(Picks up the metal pole)* By the way, does anyone here need a good metal pole? I'd like to get rid of a few superfluous things, old-fashioned reminders of old times... Doesn't anyone want it? Well, never mind. *(Pushes the chest off stage, leaving the pole.)*

JUDIT *(Hurries in from opposite, calles after Pál)* Excuse me! How do you say it, if someone has too much blood?

PÁL *(Over his shoulder)* High blood pressure *(Shoves the chest off stage)*

JUDIT Of course, that's what my Dad's got.

MIKLÓS *(Hurries in, stumbles over the metal pole, looks back at it angrily)* Judit! Where are you, Judit?

JUDIT *(Tries to hide)*

MIKLÓS Please, can anyone lend me a what's-its-name—a rod? or even a long stick? Have you seen anything like that around? No? Pity. *(Stumbles over the pole again)* Blast!

JUDIT That's him, that's my Dad. If he said the word, they'd transfer me to Information, he's so high up at the railway. But dare I ask? The very hint of it, and he's off, you'd think he'd get a stroke. *(Imitating him)* "My girl, I too started right at the bottom and if you want to get anywhere, you'll have to do the same..." Oh dear, those lovely names! Malmö! Leningrad... Valladolid... Thessaloniki... Felixstowe... That's where I belong. When they come to ask—Miss, please, is there a train to Oslo? To Naples? To Lisbon? Then I'd be the one to tell them. *(Hurries off)*

VERONKA *(Hurries in, carrying a shopping-bag)* Have you heard? Eggs are getting cheaper! *(Runs forward, perches by the footlights and goes on, happily)* I'm Mrs. Péter Bokor, formerly Veronka Bokor... Just imagine, I got a dozen for the price of six! That means we'll have more blood. Twice the eggs, twice the blood! In other words, now I can go and tell my husband: Péter, I want a child!

PÉTER *(Off)* Is that you, Veronka?

VERONKA *(Frightened, clapping her hand over her mouth)* Oh dear, he heard me. *(Calls out)* What is it?

PÉTER Is dinner ready?

VERONKA He didn't hear... *(Calls)* Just a minute. *(To the audience)* We live hand to mouth, on eggs and nothing else. But even eggs have to be cooked somehow—but how? I'm not allowed to use the kitchen. I have a battered old hot-plate, and I've even learnt to push in the plug without making the slightest noise, but our landlady, that old cow, watches our every step; her eyes are glued to the electric meter. I'd hardly put on the eggs last night, she knocked on our door: "You haven't blown a fuse, Veronka, have you? The meter's going round like crazy..." She only allows us the one lightbulb overhead, and that only because she's nailed down the blind. You see, she's not allowed to have a tenant here, this is a railway service flat. If I had some sort of a stick, like this *(Holds up the pole)* I could perhaps prop out the window with it, together with the blind: but we haven't got one. We have nothing. My Péter's studying, he's always studying. And until there's something to show for his studies, we're stuck here, in this eight-by-eight dark little hole... and I can't even get up the blind. If only I weren't so clumsy with things... *(Looks at the pole, puts it down again)*

PÉTER *(Pushes a battered dressing table and a kitchen stool on stage)* Stop complaining, Veronka. You know why we have to live like this, until I get a job.

VERONKA I know.

PÉTER It's not much, but it's a reliable source of income. Would you want me to go out to work instead?

VERONKA No, you must study to be a railwayman. What have you learnt today?

PÉTER The common factors in the expansion of metals with special attention to thermal distortion in jointed rails. Then I revised the French and Yugoslav timetables; though I know those well enough.

And I went through Birkman's History of Religion, which shows without any doubt that God doesn't exist.

VERONKA Doesn't he?

PÉTER No.

VERONKA Careful: you'll knock down that shaving mirror. But what has that got to do with the railway?

PÉTER *(Inspired by the very mention of the railway)* Not only does it have everything to do with it, but also with us here. Why can't I get ahead? Because faith is nothing but a curve which returns to itself. That is, it's a circle. There's no breaking in on it. Everything would be different if somewhere a little doubt could open a split, a crack, in these closed systems. Without some doubt, there can be no change. As long as any system—take the railway, in this case—holds on to a blind belief in its own perfection, all my studies are in vain. In vain do I send in my petitions, in vain do I make new proposals: they just bounce off.

VERONKA I don't quite understand.

PÉTER It doesn't really matter. I'm hungry. What do we get for dinner?

VERONKA Eggs.

PÉTER Great!

VERONKA Aren't you tired of eggs?

PÉTER No, of course not. Eggs are nutritious, they enliven the mind, and what's most important: they enrich the blood.

VERONKA And would you eat more eggs if you could?

PÉTER We can't afford any more.

VERONKA But if we could?

PÉTER I could eat twice as many. Our blood would double again.

VERONKA And we'd live better.

PÉTER Much better.

VERONKA So, look at this! *(Shows the shopping-bag)* From now on, we'll live like kings. Stretch out your hands. *(Péter does so)* Your right hand is breakfast, your left hand is dinner, your left foot is supper. *(Péter holds up his left leg)* No, that won't work... my left hand is supper... *(She puts two eggs in Péter's hands)* So. That's how we lived till now... But now, look at this! *(She sets out all the eggs)* Look—four, four for breakfast, lunch and supper!

PÉTER Twelve eggs? What's got into you?

VERONKA Eggs got cheaper, that's all! I got twelve for the price of six. Can't you see?

PÉTER I see.

VERONKA And what do you say to it all?

PÉTER You are a clever girl, Veronka.

VERONKA And do I get a kiss? *(Tries to embrace him with her hands full of eggs. Péter pecks at her)* Again.

PÉTER *(Unwinds from the embrace, nearly drops the eggs)* When I get that job on the railway...

VERONKA *(Kissing his neck)* But you said I was clever. You said you'll work better, we'll have more blood, we'll be better off, will even have a little surplus.

PÉTER Yes, we will. Go and have an ice-cream, if you like.

VERONKA But that's not what I want! Until now, while we could hardly manage for blood, I didn't dare to mention it... But I'll tell you now, Péter. Péter, I want a child.

PÉTER I told you: when I get that job.

VERONKA I am a woman. You are a man. The two of us create a third. That's the order of things.

PÉTER *(With deliberation)* But not for us. Think back, what was the first thing I said, when we met? *(Quoting himself)* What is the most important thing in the world?

VERONKA *(Stretches her arms in longing)* A baby!

PÉTER That's not what I said.

VERONKA *(Bursting into tears)* The most important thing in the world is The Railway.

PÉTER *(Nods. Exit silently, pushing the stool and the dressing table)*

VERONKA *(Crying)* But please, if one wants it very much, if one wants it more than anything in the world, can't one, even

then, can't one have a child all by herself? *(Holds up an egg)* After all, even an egg can grow into a chicken, can't it? *(Exit, crying)*

MIMI *(Crosses the stage to the tarpaulin, picks up a corner and throwing it over her shoulder, she drags it round the stage, then drops it in a shapeless bundle.)* No, they can't have him! I won't give him up, and that's that. What do you think—what do I care about carpets for the floors, pictures for the walls, and that beastly expensive leather suite? But what could I do? That's all I am good for: I can only cope with things, all I could do was to surround him with things, build a castle around him... I'm always reading the small ads *(Pointing at the tarpaulin)*, that's how I got hold of that thing, too. "Retired railwayman... a third of an acre in the best position, on high ground with fresh mountain air; must sell for health reasons..." I've never seen anything like it! Won't he be surprised! *(Laughs excitedly, looks around)* Judit! Hulloa! *(Shrugs)* She's never around, of course. Once in a blue moon, when I'd need her... But as I managed to drag it up here by myself, I'll manage to spread it out... even if I'm no longer needed by anyone, these little things show I'm still useful. *(Drags the tarpaulin this way and that, then stops)* Oh, if you could only have seen him in the old days, there on the loading platform at Borsa, where there were only four trains a day and they, of course, didn't stop... He was best man at the wedding of the station-master's daughter; and he made such a speech! Everyone laughed and cried at the same time... It was easier in those days. Of course, I never understood what really happened, later on, but I managed to get over it somehow, when he was innocently accused and unjustly dismissed... For eight years, he worked as an ordinary porter in Budapest: but even that was only a favour, they'd shut half an eye knowing a Bokor is a Bokor, even in disgrace; they couldn't refuse him that little bit... But now that he's worked himself up to a high position of importance, now I don't understand anything any more. He's worn to skin and bone; he won't eat his dinner; he comes home and talks, but not to me; he goes to bed but he doesn't sleep and even if he manages to fall asleep, he grinds his teeth in his sleep and mutters things like "Edirne, Svilenograd, Dragoman..." But I won't give in, I'll never give in where he's concerned! I'll remove this curse if I have to tear it with my bare nails, no, with my teeth if I have to; this obsession, this enchantment, this madness which they call The Railway... though I hate to say its very name; it was this which robbed me of everything, this noisy, smoke-spitting thundering black devil! *(Suddenly recollects herself; scared, she falls on her knees and wraps the tarpaulin around herself like a nun's habit)* Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa... I beg your forgiveness for the sins I have committed against you; sins of thought, of word and deed. I have turned from you in contempt and hate but you do not condemn me, you come after me to soften my ignorant sinful heart. I swear I shall sin no more and I shall avoid all occasion for sin. I beg for the remission of my sins and absolution. Amen. *(She pulls the tarpaulin over her head. She stays on stage in a small white heap)*

MIKLÓS *(Comes in, with a sudden burst of anger)* The devil take this whole goddamn bloody world! Me, of all people, me, Miklós Bokor! It was me, of all people, and it was New Year's Eve of all times, when railway here, railway there, a man loosens a little on his collar and his conscience... when he takes his little daughter on his knee after a good supper and a glass or two... Well, at that very moment, at 00.05 ack emma, that is, just on the turning of the New Year, the phone starts to ring! It seems a passenger train left Borsa at five minutes past midnight. Which would have been all right, except that a goods train, six wagons long, had stopped at midnight two stations further up the line. The driver simply left that goods train standing; moreover, he left it without securing a single brake while he slipped into

the station saloon just to raise a glass in honour of the New Year. Well, at five minutes after midnight they called that alert all along the line: that goods train started rolling down the slope all by itself, and as there wasn't a living soul on it, we were to do everything possible to halt the passenger train leaving Borsa. For that is a one in nine slope, the loaded wagons were whooshing down on it like a shooting star: there was nothing to be done about that! And then, as if it was the most natural thing in the world, I said to Mimi, take the child; and picking up my cap, and a flare-torch, I rushed out into the snow, the fog, into the roaring wind and I jumped down on the line and started waving the flare in front of the passenger train. The driver will either stop, or he won't... In other words, either two hundred people die, or just one: but I couldn't care less about my life, the screams of my wife and the hollering of my little daughter: I just stood there, waving that torch until they cancelled the alert. Luckily, the goods train had jumped the rails at the next station and gone down the embankment. Well, all's well that ends well, but it was still me who stood there in front of the oncoming train. I didn't bat an eyelid; I simply lowered the torch and put out the flame in the snow, strolled back to my house, threw my cap on the hook and said, in an ordinary voice, just as I'm speaking now: Well, Mimi, get me another one. But this time I'll have it neat; somehow I don't fancy any soda. *(Loudly, proudly)* So that's who I was, you see, when I was still...

MIMI *(Lifts the tarpaulin, calling softly)* Miklós!

MIKLÓS *(Startled)* Who's there? What is it?

MIMI It's me.

MIKLÓS *(To the audience)* You see? It's enough for me to hear my name, especially if it comes from behind or from one side... *(To Mimi)* What's wrong? What's happened, for God's sake?

MIMI Don't be frightened. I've got something very nice to tell you. Shut your eyes and don't open them, please, until I've counted three... One, two, three... *(Miklós opens his eyes. Excited, Mimi points to the tarpaulin)* Take a look. Take a deep breath; feel this marvellous mountain air... *(Breathes deeply)*

MIKLÓS *(Takes a deep breath. Surprised)* It smells of pine!

MIMI The plot slopes down to a little stream, you see; but that doesn't belong to us. Only these four pines here, and the three over there, and the lilacs. And there's a bird singing. That's ours, too.

MIKLÓS Ours? So what's this all about?

MIMI This is our bit of land.

MIKLÓS Our bit of land? *(Looks round as if he'd just returned from some other world)* Do we own land, Mimi?

MIMI With its pure mountain air; and well below current prices... The man selling it seemed to want to be rid of it at all costs; he only asked for a deposit. But we'll pay it off in instalments.

MIKLÓS Like the leather-covered suite.

MIMI Oh, but this is quite different... *(Hopefully)* Isn't it different? Land is land. And this land is ours. Take a look. Come, feel it in your hands. Do you remember? Back there at Borsa, you sowed rows of maize along the embankment.

MIKLÓS We were very poor in those days.

MIMI But all the corn we grew there I managed to cook for Judit. That's when the little one first tasted corn on the cob... She's forgotten, long since; but we can still remember. Land means security, stability; land never lets you down. You can stand right on it, Miklós. Don't worry, it won't collapse under your feet. Land always stays the same.

MIKLÓS The land always stays the same; but we're no longer the same, Mimi... *(Something occurs to him; looks at his watch)*

MIMI *(Hurriedly)* But we could be! It's so quiet up here; the air is so pure; and

everything is peaceful; there's no telephone, telegrams don't arrive, there aren't even neighbours within earshot... You can relax here. We'll come often. We'll go walking, we'll sit about, we'll breathe the scent of the pines... Come, Miklós, let's sit out in the sun.

MIKLÓS *(Looking up)* There's a storm coming. It's clouding over. Oughtn't we go home?

MIMI No. *(Triumphant)* If you have a tent, you won't get wet.

MIKLÓS *(Interested)* Who's got a tent?

MIMI *(Triumphant)* We do! *(She lifts the tarpaulin and with a broad gesture, spreads it across the stage)* The man who sold the land gave me this tarpulin as an extra... Take a look! *(Takes her husband by the hand and leads him round the tarpaulin. He suddenly bends down, picks up an edge and looks at it hard)*

MIKLÓS There you are.

MIMI What's that?

MIKLÓS The railway's stamp... *(Kicks aside the tarpaulin)* But it's really high time we went home.

MIMI So what? The late owner was a railwayman. The point is it's guaranteed waterproof best quality sailcloth. No storm can hurt it!

MIKLÓS *(Likes the idea of a tent)* Well, it feels all right... *(Stretches out his hand)* There you are. It's starting to rain.

MIMI Let's set up our tent... come on, Miklós. Let's pull it out in the middle. Careful, spread it flat. *(They busy themselves with the tarpaulin)* And now, as the man said, the corners should be stretched. Will you stand over there, so I can pull it really hard?

MIKLÓS *(Glances at the sky, then his watch; his thoughts are elsewhere)* All right.

MIMI *(Tugs at the opposite corner; it slips and she falls back)* What's this? What did you do? Didn't you stand on it?

MIKLÓS Forgive me. I must have missed it.

MIMI It's because you're always looking at your watch, your mind's always on something else... Please stand on it properly. Are you there?

MIKLÓS Yes. But it's raining.

MIMI We'll have it right in a minute *(She stretches the corners of the tarpaulin, running here and there to smooth out the creases)*

MIKLÓS You'll be worn out. It would be better to go home.

MIMI Don't you worry about me... I like doing things for you. Look, it's all straight now. All we have to do is to hammer the four pegs in the ground at each corner.

MIKLÓS But we don't have a hammer. And it's going to bucket down in a minute. Come along home.

MIMI *(Pulls a mallet from her blouse)* Of course I've got a hammer. Come on, let's get on with it. You hold it, I'll knock it in. *(They fasten the four pegs. They stand up. Mimi's very proud)* There you are. How lovely. Not many people have anything like this. There; go inside the tent, Miklós.

MIKLÓS *(Looks at the tarpaulin on the ground)* How does one go in?

MIMI Through the opening.

MIKLÓS Where is the opening?

MIMI Where, where, you're always after difficulties... Come on, let's find it... *(They walk around, looking, and stumble over the pole)*

MIKLÓS Say, Mimi... Haven't you forgotten something? Something to prop it up? A pole or something?

MIMI Why? What's wrong?

MIKLÓS Well, nothing really. I've never built a tent before, but the pictures I've seen didn't look like this.

MIMI The man I got it from seemed a bit absent-minded; but he had an honest face... there must be some sort of opening where one gets in. *(Goes on looking)*

MIKLÓS Leave it for now, Mimi. It's really coming down now. And on top of everything, a train got stuck with a load of winter cabbage at the Kelebia frontier crossing...

MIMI You never concentrate on anything... *(Joyous)* I've got it! This is the

opening! And it's even got some string, so once we're inside, we can close it up again... I'll hold it, you get inside.

MIKLÓS After you. Your hair is sopping wet.

MIMI No, you go first. You'll see how nice it is inside.

MIKLÓS No, you go. If I bend down too far, the blood pressure gives me a headache.

MIMI As you like... *(Crawls under the tarpaulin, sticks out her head)* You can come in now, Miklós. It's all quite dry, and the air is wonderful.

(Miklós crawls in. The two bodies heave about under the tarpaulin. Someone stands up, topples over, but finally they settle down into two steep little humps)

PÁL *(Enters with his battered chest of drawers and stops at the metal pole. He wipes the rain from his face with his handkerchief. Happily)* I don't have an umbrella. I don't have anything. I had a marvellous day! I flogged my allotment, and I even got rid of that old tent I'd cadged from the linesmen... I was going to relax up there, and get over the jolting of the train, the rattle of the wheels... How often do you think I actually set up that tent? Once, I tell you, just once! And you know why? I missed the swaying of the sleeping-car, I missed the clatter of the rails... that's the sort of fool I've been all my life. I no longer have anything—I haven't a coat or a coffeepot, no sheets or blankets—I've given away everything. The worst is over *(Pulling things from the drawers and chucking them back)* This is just the rubble. *(Takes a picture postcard)* Naples. The Hospice of San Vitale. That's when I had ice-cream poisoning. I had three attacks of dysentery on account of their famous ice-cream... *(Tears it up, brings out others)* The plump little Baroness Rothschild, the one I never seduced... The Eiffel Tower. This was a young Hungarian waitress in Paris. "Oh, you're just like all the others, Mr. Bokor..." And what on earth is this? Gee, it's a rubber... If only I'd made use of it... I remember well, I'd bought it in Berlin; and it was from Berlin that I brought home my first dose... And Česky Brod! That lousy bastard of a stationmaster! we got drunk together, and then he informed against me for kicking up a row!... Berlin again... Prague. Copenhagen, Warsaw, Istanbul... *(Pushes away the chest of drawers)* That's it. Nothing more *(Looks down)* Hell, there's still this thing *(Picks up the pole, looks around)* Away with it! *(Turns towards Veronka's side of the stage, and swings the metal pole)* Hullo! You there!

VERONKA *(Rushes in)* Who is it? Who is calling?

PÁL I'd like to ask you a favour.

VERONKA Don't shout, my husband's studying... What's it about?

PÁL Just a piece of metal. I want you to have it.

VERONKA What am I to do with it?

PÁL A thing like this always comes in useful around the house.

VERONKA Isn't it too big?

PÁL It's just the right size. It has a hundred uses.

VERONKA It's just that we're crowded in so tight... I'd rather not.

PÁL You have such a sweet voice. I expected more kindness from you.

VERONKA My trouble's always that I can't say no... But don't make such a racket. *(Takes one end of the pole)*

PÁL Have you got it?

VERONKA I've got it.

PÁL Then I'll push it. Can you pull?

VERONKA I'm pulling *(They both heave to, and push the pole towards each other with all their strength)*

PÁL Which way are you pulling it?

VERONKA Towards you.

PÁL Don't pull it towards me; pull it towards you.

VERONKA Why didn't you say so? I only want to help.

PÁL You push towards me; you pull towards yourself.

VERONKA Well, it seems I only know how to push it.

PÁL All right then, but push it towards yourself.

VERONKA Oh, I see *(Starts pulling, Pál pushes it)* Hey! How far is it to go? *(She backs away)*

PÁL It's nearly there. *(Heaves the pole across, dusts his hands with a sigh of relief)* Thank god, that's it! *(Exit)*

VERONKA *(Stands helplessly with the pole which bumps into things whichever way she holds it; resigned)* Well, I've been had again. What on earth am I to do with it? The landlady is bound to inform against me; it's sure to be forbidden to keep these things at home. My husband will bump his head against it. There's nothing for it; I must give it away. *(She stands the pole on its end, knocks it against the ground, and calls out towards the tent)* Excuse me! Is anyone in?

MIMI *(Sticks her head out from the tent)* Quiet! My husband's asleep. Who's there?

VERONKA It's me.

MIMI What do you want?

VERONKA I should like to give you something; that'll give you pleasure but, to tell you the truth, it's in our way.

MIMI I'll be soaked through, don't stand there talking! What is it all about?

VERONKA The thing I'd like to give you is an object.

MIMI An object? *(She crawls out from the tent)* What sort of object?

VERONKA It's supposed to be useful for lots of things, like propping things up.

MIMI So it's a pole?

VERONKA It is! How did you guess so quickly?

MIMI I have a feel for these things. What is it made of?

VERONKA I think it's rusty wood.

MIMI Rusty wood! All right, I don't mind. Pick up one end. Just one end.

VERONKA *(Lifts the pole, as if to pass it over a wall)*

MIMI I said its end, not its top!

VERONKA *(Turns it round clumsily)*

MIMI *(On tiptoe, takes a look, then pushes it away)* Take it back at once!

VERONKA What's wrong? You only saw the bottom!

MIMI But even that's got the mark of the railway stamped on it! My husband, who's still asleep, would notice it at once. Take it back! I don't want it. *(She crawls back under the tarpaulin)*

VERONKA What am I to do now? She doesn't want it, either.

PÉTER *(Off)* Veronka! Is there someone here?

VERONKA *(Scared)* No, not a soul. *(She takes the pole and tries to push it towards Pál)* Sir! Quickly! Will the owner of this pole please come and get it!

PÁL *(Hurries in)* Who's calling? What's up? What are you doing with that pole?

VERONKA I'm giving it back to you. No one else wants it.

PÁL You don't know what you're doing. You are destroying the last peaceful days of a sick old man.

VERONKA I did my best. Please try to understand! Do pull one end; I shall push here. *(She pushes it across to him, sighs with relief)* Do forgive me. *(Hurries off)*

PÁL *(Turning the pole this way and that, with resignation)* Well, this seems left to stay. Who cares? The moral is that just as there is no such thing as a perfect, faultless life, one can't expect to die without some little blemish, either. *(Puts down the pole, rolls it off stage with a loud clatter)* Let's forget it. And then, you'll all ask, what was the good of all this giving things away? Nothing, really. Old people like to tidy up. You really get old the day you first notice that all your business, all that rushing about can be divided into the useful and the useles... As you can see, I've chucked away everything, except the clothes I'm wearing, my soap, my towel and my razor. This will do for the time that's left to me. As to what I shall do...

JUDIT *(Appears behind Pál, stops)*

PÁL Nothing in particular. I'll have an ice-cream once in a while, go to the pictures, sit by the river, whistle to myself... As

a matter of fact, I've always wanted to go fishing, but I could never make it fit in with my job. A wide, slow, peaceful river, like the Danube, or like the Rhine, from the bridge at Schaffhausen... That's where I'd have liked to sit all my life. A river doesn't stop, nothing can happen to it; the water has no memories, good or bad. If you look at it from the shore, you feel that time has stopped, and you've stopped with it. Nothing happens to you there that you'd be ashamed of, later. That's how a man should live... But if I haven't managed it during my life, at least I can try to live properly at the end.

JUDIT Chicken.

PÁL Who do you mean?

JUDIT The way you spoke of the river sounded all right; but to get frightened like this, that's indecent.

PÁL Frightened? Me? *(Amused)* I don't think you can have understood me.

JUDIT I understood enough... You see, I don't give a damn about the whole world.

PÁL The world? Well, well! *(Laughing)* Did you get in too late last night, and did you catch it from your Mum? Or is your father too strict?

JUDIT I couldn't care less about them. How about this, then: this morning, at eight o'clock, I opted out.

PÁL Well, well!

JUDIT Perhaps it doesn't show, but I've been just a machine. But since this morning, it's no use pushing in the coins, I shall never again give out a single platform ticket... You could have learnt something, if you'd seen me. They went on rattling my little tin shed: they kicked it, beat at it with their fists... One of them said: "Every government gets the machines it deserves". At this, they summoned me to the stationmaster.

PÁL And there was a huge fuss.

JUDIT You bet there was. They've sacked me and I'm strictly forbidden to enter any station in the whole country, for a whole month... That'll be hard, but at least I can study.

PÁL What will you study?

JUDIT Well, you know how it is... In our sort of outfit the right hand never knows what the left is doing... So I quietly applied for a job with Information, where they've never heard of my record. But I have to pass an entrance exam.

PÁL Is it difficult?

JUDIT It is, for me. You know, I only like the kind of train which stops at the top of a hill, if there's a good view, so the passengers can look around... But for Information, you have to know the whole timetable by heart. *(Trying hard to remember)* The Mimosa Express for the French Riviera leaves Victoria et eight-five. It reaches Dover at nine forty-five...

PÁL Nine fifty-five.

JUDIT Sorry. Then it goes via Calais–Paris–Lyons–Dijon...

PÁL Dijon–Lyon.

JUDIT Thank you. Dijon–Lyon–Marseilles–Perpignan...

PÁL Not Perpignan. Marseilles–Toulon–Saint Tropez–Fréjus–Cannes–Nice–Monaco, Menton, to Ventimiglia at the Italian border.

JUDIT *(In raptures)* Toulon–Saint Tropez–Cannes–Nice–Menton, and Ventimiglia on the border...

PÁL You've left out Fréjus.

JUDIT Fréjus! Fréjus! Fréjus! And yet, how lovely it sounds... I swear I'll never forget it again... *(Looks Pál up and down)* Listen. The way you say it, it sounds like music.

PÁL Until I forget it all too. The sooner the better.

JUDIT But why? Come on. To look at you, you don't seem too bad. I thought perhaps you'd gone off your head a bit... but no. You are very quick. And you know a lot of things: you could even help me. Why do you want to kick the bucket?

PÁL You don't understand... My dear, you're talking to an old man.

JUDIT Not all that old.

PÁL Yes, very old. Old, lonely, and incurably ill.

JUDIT You? Don't say things like that.

PÁL My doctor said it.

JUDIT And you just accepted it? Tell me, why is it that grown-ups take everything lying down? I'll tell you something. I shan't accept it.

PÁL *(Smiling)* What will you do?

JUDIT I know lots of people... I'll find you a new doctor, who'll know of some medicine that your own doctor hasn't heard of.

PÁL He knew all right, too; but I didn't want to take it.

JUDIT Why not? What is it called?

PÁL Blood.

JUDIT *(Scared)* Blood?

PÁL *(Laughs)* So you're scared at last! But there's nothing new in it. There are many patients who can only be kept alive by blood transfusions.

JUDIT Blood... Whose blood? Would mine be any good?

PÁL Perhaps. But I've always said: I don't want to be kept alive by the bottled, labelled, commercialized blood of perfect strangers. One should only live as long as one's needed. I'm not needed by anyone, my dear.

JUDIT And you'd leave me in the soup?

PÁL You? You'll fall on your feet.

JUDIT *(Seductively)* And if I said: a railwayman's blood?

PÁL *(Shrugs)* A railwayman's blood? You're living in a dream, little girl.

JUDIT I know what I'm talking about.

PÁL A charming young idealist... Perhaps, in the old days, in our grandfather's time, in the heroic age of the railways... But these days? It's impossible.

JUDIT Leave it to me! You'll get first-class, splendid railway-blood, you'll have plenty to choose from... I want this, no, thanks, I don't want that, the donor's got a pimple on his nose.

PÁL I can tell you now; you won't be able to get a single drop. And that's as it should be.

JUDIT *(Ignores this, leading him off)* All right, all right... meanwhile, you should go to the pictures, or sit down by the river and whistle... but don't give up the ghost until I come... I'll be back soon, don't worry... *(Waves at Pál's disappearing figure; then turns round, happily, crosses the stage, and notices the tent, startled)* And what's this here? *(She goes round it)* Is it one of Mum's little surprises again? Let's see. It's some sort of sailcloth. A tarpaulin, with a hump. Not one: Two humps... perhaps it's my parents. Mum! *(No answer)* They're dead. But why under a tarpaulin? We have a three-bedroom house... *(Louder)* Mother!

MIMI *(Poking her head through the opening)* Shut up!

JUDIT Is that you, Mum? What are you doing in there?

MIMI Stop yelling, your father's gone to sleep at last... *(Whispers)* Where have you been? I called you to help me... but I'd have to wait for ever. You've turned up at last, of course. You leave all the bother to me, but you want your share of our pleasures. That's you all over.

JUDIT What pleasures are you talking about, Mum?

MIMI If only you'd seen how happy your father was... *(Whispers)* This is what he'd dreamt about all his life, without realizing it... *(She unlaces the string, rises waist-high from the tarpaulin)* How surprised he was! Have a look round. I won't say a thing, I don't want to influence you. What do you see?

JUDIT What is there to see?

MIMI This land, with all that grows on it, is ours... What do you say to that?

JUDIT What should I say? It's a piece of land.

MIMI You don't care about anything! I bet you don't even like our tent?

JUDIT What tent?

MIMI This tent.

JUDIT This isn't a tent.

MIMI It's lucky your father can't hear you.

JUDIT It's still not a tent.

MIMI So what is it? So now you'll teach us what a piece of land is, what a tent is; listening to you would make all our things shrink, and fade away, and we'll be made to feel ashamed that such little things can give us pleasure... If you don't like the tent, you can go home. *(She is about to withdraw into the tent)*

JUDIT Mother! Wait. I want to ask you something.

MIMI So, what do you want now?

JUDIT It's nothing. Just a little blood.

MIMI What did you say?

JUDIT I said, a little blood.

MIMI What sort of blood?

JUDIT The kind that's in your veins, Mum... It's to save a mortally sick man.

MIMI *(Explodes)* My blood? My blood? So now it's my blood you're after? Well, listen to me! Up till now, I've been patient with you and all your crazy ideas, I've listened without a word to all your impertinence, but now you even want my blood? Blood! *(Pants with exhaustion)*

MIKLÓS *(Pokes his head from the tent, sleepily)* What's all the noise about? Is that you, Judit? What do you want?

MIMI *(Can hardly speak from panting)* Blo-ho-od.

MIKLÓS What?

MIMI The little darling wants blood.

JUDIT Please, father... I haven't managed to put it quite right. Please... listen to me. I've come from an old man, who's fatally ill.

MIKLÓS I see.

JUDIT He's at death's door. He's given up the fight, he's given away all his possessions...

MIMI Must be a funny sort... I've never thrown anything away.

MIKLÓS Let her speak.

JUDIT He's not a spendthrift; it's just that he feels so useless that he can't even stand his own memories... he even sold his bit of land well below its worth.

MIMI Below its worth? Pull the other one.

MIKLÓS Don't interrupt. But if he's dying, how can his life be saved?

JUDIT By a little co-operation. Some of us who're willing to help, say us three, and another good-hearted person or two, could prolong his life.

MIMI And your father, of all people, who's in such poor shape himself...

MIKLÓS Do keep quiet. We must think this over.

MIMI Think as much as you like, but count me out. Everything we've got I've fought for tooth and nail, just to give your father a little happiness. I only have nine pints of blood altogether.

JUDIT Mother, please! Our blood renews itself. It grows again.

MIMI But I refuse to produce blood for others. You can give him a bottle or two, if you've got so much of it.

MIKLÓS Don't argue with your mother. How long have you known this man?

JUDIT Just today.

MIKLÓS What's his name?

JUDIT I don't know.

MIKLÓS What do you know about him?

JUDIT That he'd like to sit by a wide river.

MIKLÓS And twiddle his thumbs. In other words, he's a layabout.

JUDIT Him? But he's a railwayman!

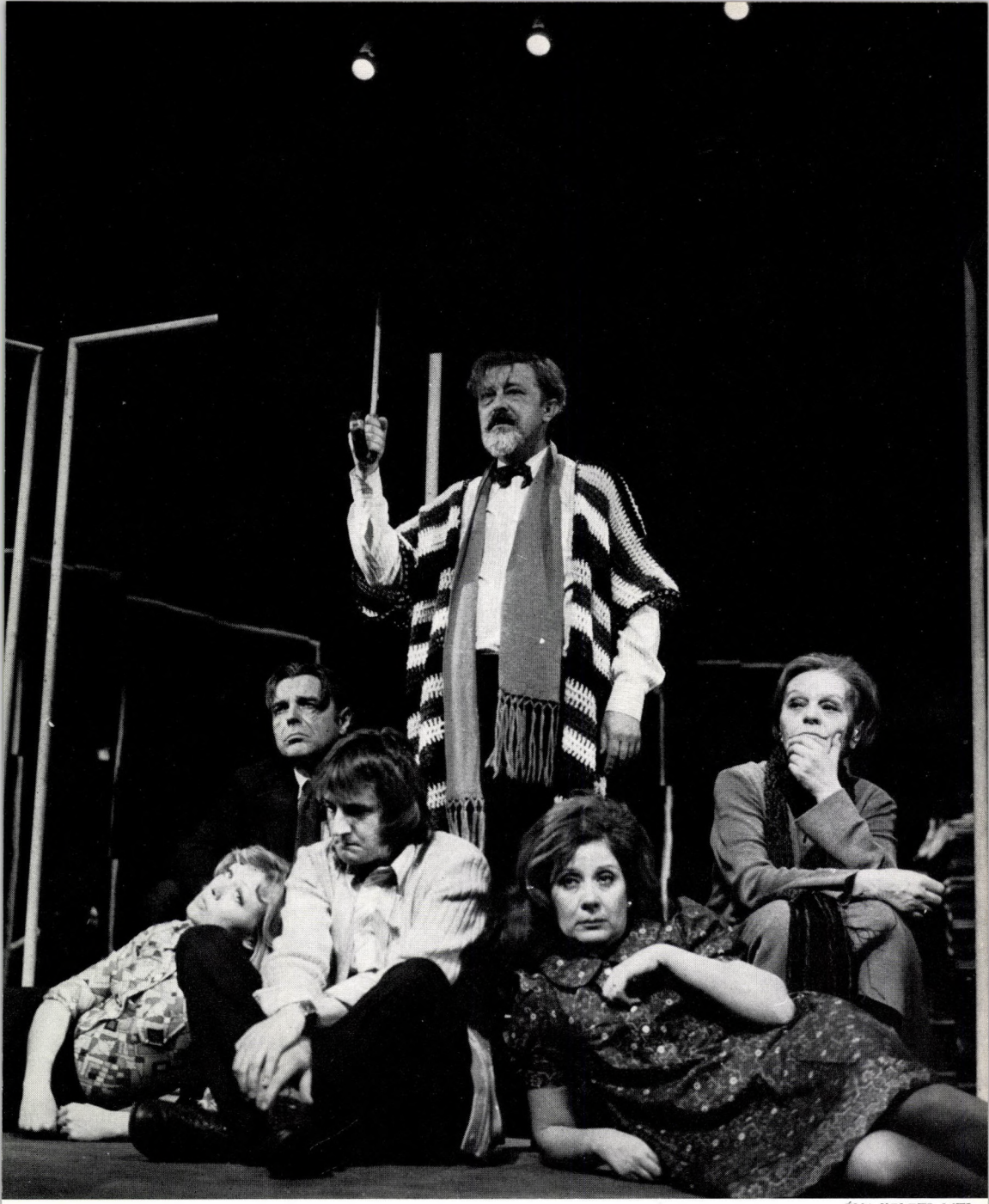
MIKLÓS *(Laughs arrogantly)* A railwayman? Anyone can say that, my dear.

MIMI Of course. And I've even heard of railwaymen who'd steal a watch.

JUDIT Please believe me; he's not like that. He knows the whole network like the back of his hand.

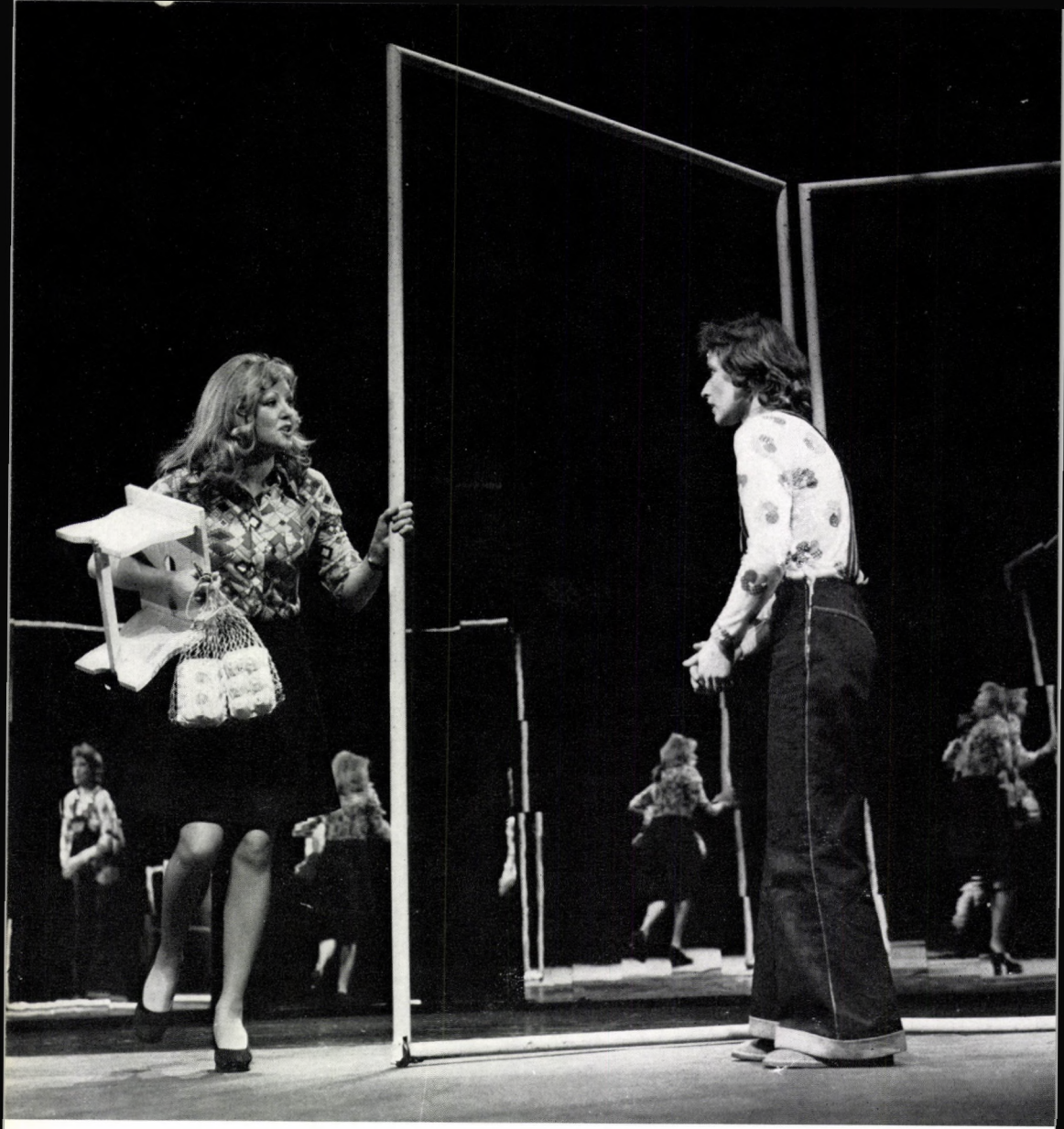
MIKLÓS He could learn that by heart, and still be an impostor... Look, Judit; what would an old man say if he wanted to get around a young girl? He'd tell her he was a railwayman.

MIMI Indeed, indeed... I too fell in love with your father when I saw him on the loading bay at Borsa. He was chasing a sheep, my darling...



ÉVA KELETI, MTI

István Örkény: Blood Relations. (Directed by Zoltán Várkonyi, at the Pesti Színház, Budapest, 1974). The Bokor family; left to right: Judit Halász as Veronka, Nándor Tomanek as Miklós, László Tahi Tóth as Péter, László Mensáros as Pál, Éva Ruttkai as Mimi, and Mária Sulyok as the Widow



ÉVA KELETI, MTI

István Örkény: Blood Relations. Judit Halász as Veronka and Erzsébet Kútvölgyi as Judit

MIKLÓS You see? If he really needed blood, he could get it at any hospital.

JUDIT He doesn't want it that way; he doesn't want to live any longer.

MIKLÓS That's a suspicious circumstance, too. Why doesn't he take what's due to him? And why has he picked on us, of all people? Shall I tell you why? Because blood is blood, and everything that goes with it, warms the heart of such a romantic young girl... Judit, you have been the victim of a practised bluebeard. I'm not going to give any of my blood, either.

JUDIT Not even you, Daddy? I'd never have believed it.

MIKLÓS Wake up, Judit. You were carried away by youthful idealism, which is praiseworthy in itself, but you should be warned: sooner or later, you must stop daydreaming, and get the whole thing right out of your head... Mimi, I can go back to sleep for another half an hour. *(Crawls back into tent)*

MIMI Don't be so sad. You're pretty enough to find a young, healthy, genuine railwayman.

JUDIT I don't give a toss about that. I want blood.

MIMI *(Crawls back into the tent, only her head sticks out)* It's pouring with rain. Come in here with us.

JUDIT I'm going. There are other people in the world, you know.

MIMI Then get it from them! *(Angrily, withdraws under the tarpaulin. After some wriggling, there are only two motionless humps to be seen)*

JUDIT *(Looking towards them)* My mother and father: two humps in a tarpaulin. At a time when they should stand up for something, they crawl under a smelly tarpaulin to keep dry. *(Looks up)* It's raining. *(Sits down cross-legged, holding her face and palms up to the rain)* Rain, I greet you with respect and affection. I welcome you, dribbles from Heaven, Morse-code messages from the passing clouds... You don't have to bother about them, the grown-ups, they're scared of drops of water, they run to get away from you, hiding under their sheltering umbrellas, low roofs and smelly tarpaulins; in fear lest they should catch a cold and thereby muddle up the Only True Time-table, the exact departures and arrivals, and the final stop where they hope to bore themselves into the earth, for good. Fall on us, raindrops, us who are still young, whose skin enjoys your faint, gentle touch... for us, who are not yet prepared to spend all our time escaping from one state of being into another; who refuse to view everything as only the antecedents of consequences, and consequences as only antecedents of further consequences; who drink our glasses to the dregs, who smoke as if each sniff was our last, who want to live, to be alive, from the beginning to the very end... Amen. Goodness, I'll be late. *(She turns to go, and bumps into Veronka, who carries a shopping-bag full of eggs)* I beg your pardon.

VERONKA I beg your pardon. *(They pass each other)*

JUDIT *(Turning suddenly, calling to Veronka)* Excuse me! Do you by any chance belong to the railway?

VERONKA How did you guess?

JUDIT I thought your face was familiar.

VERONKA Yours is too... But I'm not really on the railway; it's just that my husband is studying to qualify for a job.

JUDIT That's what I'm doing, too.

VERONKA So we're almost railway-workers.

JUDIT I'm called Judit.

VERONKA I'm Veronka.

JUDIT How lucky we met. *(She hugs her)*

VERONKA Careful! That's our supper.

JUDIT Goodness, what a lot of eggs! Do you like eggs?

VERONKA Well, yes. It makes a cheap meal... and it makes for more blood.

JUDIT Blood?

VERONKA And how! And you see, for us it's very important to have lots of blood.

JUDIT *(Getting excited)* And do you have plenty of blood?

VERONKA Yes. We even have some to spare.

JUDIT To spare? Oh, I am lucky... but I don't know whether I dare ask you...

VERONKA Go ahead! We've always been so poor that no one could think to ask us for anything. The fact that you're asking is in itself a sign that we're getting on. What can I do for you?

JUDIT It's a matter of saving the life of an elderly, mortally ill railwayman... Can I count on you?

VERONKA Provided we have a surplus of what he needs.

JUDIT You said you did.

VERONKA Do you mean eggs?

JUDIT No. I mean blood.

VERONKA Blood? Dearie me... anything but that.

JUDIT Why not? You said you've got plenty; and he's incurably ill... It's not the needle you're afraid of?

VERONKA Of course not; we're used to it.

JUDIT So what's wrong?

VERONKA My Péter must keep his strength up, so he can study; and I must, too, because as soon as he's qualified, I want to have a baby... but until that happens, we live off our blood. That's what we do for a living. That's why we eat so many eggs.

JUDIT I don't get it.

VERONKA We are professional blood donors.

JUDIT *(Depressed)* Blood donors.

VERONKA I'd like to help, I'd like to save a life... but we just can't afford it, as yet. Please forgive me.

JUDIT It's not your fault. He is being proved right... *(Veronka goes; Judit is left alone on stage)*

PÁL *(Smiles at her as he comes in)* Well, young lady?

JUDIT I've come empty-handed.

PÁL I'm glad to hear it. While you went off for blood, I walked down to the river; I stood by the steps and the longer I thought about it, the better I liked the idea that I will cease to exist. I shan't leave anything behind, except my razor. Whoever it was who did not help me, has actually helped, by not helping... I'm only sorry that they should feel sad about it.

JUDIT Sad? You mean they'd blame you?

PÁL But why? To ease their own conscience... But I want to leave no debts or obligations. Please tell them that I am at peace with my fate, and I ask them all to forgive me.

JUDIT They don't deserve it.

PÁL But I don't feel like dying without it.

JUDIT All right, why should I care... *(Calling)* Veronka, are you in?

VERONKA *(Comes in)* What happened? He didn't die, did he?

PÉTER *(Comes in)* What's up? Who has died?

JUDIT He hasn't died yet. He asked me to tell you that he's standing on the steps, he's at peace with his fate and he asks you all to forgive him.

MIMI *(To her husband, as they come in together)* Do you hear that? He can walk up and down steps. *(Shouting to Judit)* He's a malingerer!

MIKLÓS You can't know that. He merely wanted to marry into the railway. He's a fortune-hunter.

PÉTER *(To Veronka)* And you promised him blood? To a bluebeard?

VERONKA Of course I didn't promise. I told him, that as a future mother...

PÉTER You'll only be a mother if they employ me on the railways... *(To Judit)* Please tell him that we're sorry, but we need our blood for other purposes.

JUDIT Don't you understand? He didn't ask for it. He wants to die, because he feels himself to be superfluous.

MIKLÓS *(With irony)* Superfluous? That's suspicious in itself. A true railwayman would never think of such a thing.

PÉTER Or rather, if he thinks of it, he's really superfluous, and just a burden to the railway.

MIKLÓS I'll tell you the truth: he's a fortune-hunting, sham railwayman!

PÉTER A blood-thief!

MIMI That's it! A blood-thief who steals watches!

VERONKA And who pushes around rusty old poles.

MIMI So he's a fortune-hunting, blood-stealing thief of a pole-pushing sham railwayman!

JUDIT *(Summing up drily, to Pál)* Fortune-hunter, watch-thief, rusty pole-pusher, blood-thief, sham railwayman.

PÁL Well, they've spent their anger. We're quits.

JUDIT *(Angrily)* You should all be ashamed of yourselves! You even abuse the man you are forcing to die! Murderers, that's what you are! Well, I'll tell you what this fortune-hunter and thief has in his possession: a safety razor, a piece of soap, a towel, and an empty, bare service flat with falling plaster. You should all drop dead with shame!

VERONKA *(To Mimi)* He's only got a safety razor.

MIMI That's too good for him. A dying man doesn't need to shave.

PÉTER *(To Miklós)* And a bare service flat.

MIKLÓS *(To Mimi)* Keep quiet... *(To Péter)* What sort of service flat? Is he really a railwayman? Ask him where he worked.

PÉTER *(To Veronka)* Is he a railwayman, and if so, where did he work?

JUDIT *(To Pál)* Tell them, where did you work?

PÁL Gladly. *(Steps forward, smiling, takes a bow)* I introduce myself for the last time. *(With relish)* COMPAGNIE INTERNATIONALE DES WAGONS-LITS ET WAGONS RESTAURANTS.

JUDIT *(Soulfully repeats)* COMPAGNIE INTERNATIONALE DES WAGONS-LITS ET WAGONS RESTAURANTS.

PÉTER *(Amazed)* COMPAGNIE INTERNATIONALE DES WAGONS-LITS ET WAGONS RESTAURANTS!

MIMI What lies are you telling now?

MIKLÓS Keep quiet just once... *(To himself, weighing it up)* COMPAGNIE INTERNATIONALE DES WAGONS-LITS ET WAGONS RESTAURANTS... *(Warmly)* So you worked for the Sleeping Car Company, my friend?

PÉTER *(Respectfully)* Do you work for the Sleeping Car Company, sir?

JUDIT You really work for the Sleeping Car Company?

PÁL *(Smiling)* Now for a cold shower. I used to work for them, that's all. Tell them that I'm a retired sleeping-car guard.

VERONKA A retired sleeping-car guard.

MIKLÓS A retired sleeping-car guard. That's nice. What's your name?

PÉTER What's your name, sir?

JUDIT What's your name?

PÁL Pál Bokor.

JUDIT *(Surprised)* Pál Bokor?

MIKLÓS *(Yelling)* Pál Bokor? Do you hear that, Mimi?

MIMI I can hear. Why are you shouting?

MIKLÓS Because you're deaf. He's a Bokor. He's one of us. Good God, why didn't he say it at once? I hope I didn't offend him? *(To Péter)* Hullo, over there! Please tell him that I am very sorry about what happened.

PÉTER We are very sorry about what happened.

VERONKA Us too.

PÉTER Us too.

JUDIT *(To Pál)* They're all very sorry about what happened.

MIKLÓS And I give my word, here and now, that we shall not let him die.

VERONKA And us?

PÉTER Us too. I want to get in to the railway.

MIMI And me? He's a Bokor! He's worth his weight in gold.

VERONKA Tell him that none of us will let him die.

MIKLÓS We'll give him the shirt off our back.

VERONKA And us?

PÉTER Us too.

JUDIT *(To Pál)* Do you hear that? *(To Veronka)* He doesn't need a shirt; he needs blood.

ALL *(Together)* We shall give it!

WIDOW BOKOR *(Enters)* I heard everything. I'm seventy-seven years old, my heartbeats are irregular, my blood pressure is so low that the machine doesn't even register it... But I won't be cheated out of my rights! My first husband died in an air-raid, the second died of pneumonia; the third was knocked down by a goods train, and they want to kick me out of my service flat because I have a tenant... But no one shall say that when a Bokor needed blood, old widow Bokor did not give any! I beg you to use my blood. No, I don't beg you: I demand it!

JUDIT *(To Pál, happily)* Now, who was right? They've all come forward because they need you! You'll live! live! live! *(To the others)* Hullo there, Bokors! Step forward, anyone who wants to give blood!

ALL *(Dash down to the footlights, each iraisng an arm)* Our blood! Take it! Our life and our blood!

JUDIT *(To Pál)* Say thank you. You'll have nothing to do, just live.

PÁL *(To the audience)* Thank you very much.

(End of Part One)

PART TWO

PÁL *(Enters smiling, with his chest of drawers. Thinks for a while, then writes)* My dear benefactors! I'm not much good at letter-writing, and it's difficult for me to express my feelings. So I just want to thank you in a few, simple words for keeping me alive. What's more, I feel so cheerful and young that I am sure that your blood is first-class, high-quality blood. *(He passes on the piece of paper)*

PÉTER *(Enters with Veronka, takes the paper)*

VERONKA *(Blushing)* Thank you for the compliment. *(To Péter)* Go on, read it.

(Miklós and Mimi enter, taking their places)

PÉTER *(Reading)* "Towards the end of my previous life, I hardly had enough strength to get up in the morning. Now, I look forward to each new day, and even while I shave I count all the pleasures ahead of me. So I should like to thank you all for your highly valued blood."

MIMI *(Deeply moved)* I send my love and best wishes. *(Takes the piece of paper from Péter)*

MIKLÓS Go on, read it.

MIMI "But what's the use of words of gratitude? After all, you don't even know who I am, whether I deserve your donation, or whether you are just throwing away your blood..." The poor thing worries too much.

MIKLÓS And about nothing. The main thing is that he is alive.

MIMI The main thing, yes. But there are other things too.

MIKLÓS What do you want of him?

MIMI Me? Nothing. Only perhaps I'd advise him to eat more spinach. Spinach produces blood, and that might make things a little easier for you.

MIKLÓS Leave him alone.

PÉTER According to the latest research, spinach does not produce blood.

MIMI All right, I didn't say a thing. I can always eat spinach myself.

PÁL *(Continues writing)* I would like to arrange my life so that its extension is not only enjoyable for me, but makes you all feel that a man like that was worth the sacrifice. *(Passes it on)*

VERONKA *(Reading)* "Ask me questions and I shall answer; give me advice and I shall take it..." *(Passes on the piece of paper, which then makes the round together with the other ones)*

MIKLÓS That's the last straw! *(Loudly,*

for all to hear) I should like to ask everyone to refrain from interfering with his life. We gave life to a free man. Let him do as he likes.

MIMI It's only... Just one word! Has he got a doormat?

MIKLÓS Don't!

MIMI We have three doormats.

MIKLÓS He'll tell us what he wants.

PÁL *(Writing)* On the other hand, if you'll forgive the intrusion, I'd appeal to your generosity once again... *(Passes it on)*

VERONKA *(Takes and reads it)* "As I own nothing but the clothes I stand up in, I'd be most grateful if you could make me a present of any old, worn-out outer or under-garments."

MIMI You hear that?

MIKLÓS How come? Do you only have the one set of clothes?

VERONKA *(Reading)* "Just this one. I expected to be buried in it."

MIKLÓS That's unheard of!

(They outbid each other in offering their things)

PÉTER Sir! I can't give much, but I do have two pairs of socks. One pair is yours.

MIKLÓS And my dark grey suit, which is equally suitable for work or Sunday wear.

MIMI Are you mad? You wouldn't let me offer a doormat, and now you are giving away your English worsted suit?

MIKLÓS Shut up. *(To Pál)* Wear it in good health.

VERONKA Excuse me please... but are you fat?

PÁL No.

VERONKA This sweater is too big for me... Do you mind it being a woman's?

PÁL Not at all, as long as it's warm.

MIMI *(Getting carried away)* But he has nothing! Pál! dear Pál! A doormat! A bucket, a broom, a stepladder, flour, sugar, saucepans, apple-corer... I'll set up your household: I'll cook your supper, and I'll prepare your breakfast...

WIDOW BOKOR *(Enters with an open umbrella)* What's going on? You're trying to do me out of my rights again! I insist on giving this umbrella, which my deceased first husband left me.

PÁL No thanks, madam. I only want the most basic necessities.

WIDOW In this eternal rain? You'll be soaked to the skin. You want to catch your death? a cold, fever, pneumonia? That's what my second husband died of. Or are you tired of life again?

PÁL How could I be, when I'm enjoying life for the first time... *(Looking at the umbrella, opens and shuts it, increasingly emotional)* I accept it with thanks; I'll keep it by me even in fine weather, I'm so deeply touched by your co-operation...

WIDOW *(Softening)* Carry it in good health, and think of me sometimes! *(Exit)*

PÁL *(Fighting down his tears)* Dear Everybody! All I can say is that... that this is the happiest moment of either of my two lives...

MIMI *(Softly)* My dear little one.

PÁL And I am very proud of you all.

VERONKA *(To Miklós, deeply moved)* Did you hear that? That anyone should be proud of us...

MIKLÓS No; it's the other way round. It's we who're proud of you!

PÉTER That's right! You're our pride!

PÁL What do you mean? I'm so proud that you saved my life.

VERONKA *(To Miklós)* He says he's proud.

MIMI No; I am proud.

MIKLÓS Of course. We are proud that he's alive.

PÉTER *(To Pál)* It's us who are proud of you.

PÁL *(Happily)* Well, it seems, everyone is proud of everyone else... how very touching...

VERONKA And noble.

MIMI And beautiful.

MIKLÓS You see, it's worth while to live for this.

PÁL I can no longer find the words to thank you... I would like to press you all to my heart!

MIMI There's nothing to stop you... Dear Pál, let's meet at last!

VERONKA Why didn't I think of it! *(They shout down each other, competing for Pál)*

MIKLÓS Of course! I look forward to meeting you!

MIMI We must meet!

PÉTER And see each other frequently!

VERONKA And we'll have some wine! How many sorts of wine are there?

MIMI Red and white.

VERONKA I'll buy some red! Red is the colour of life.

PÁL I'm ready for it!

MIKLÓS And we'll have long talks. Two railwaymen.

PÉTER Three!

VERONKA Four!

MIMI Five!

WIDOW *(Enters; threatening)* Not five, six! I'll be there too.

PÁL We'll all be together, all whose blood is united in my veins.

PÉTER Come soon!

MIKLÓS And stay long!

VERONKA And hurry!

MIMI But take care as you cross the road!

WIDOW And bring my umbrella; it's raining!

PÁL I'll hurry.

(Exeunt)

JUDIT *(Slowly crosses the stage, repeating from her studies)* It is forbidden to take animals into the compartments. Exceptions: Live fish may be taken into second-class compartments on payment of the fee appropriate to personal luggage, provided the container is secured against any escape of water. In a cage, a maximum of two small birds are allowed without payment of any excess luggage fee. Dogs are allowed in the corridors of second-class compartments only if provided with a lead and muzzle, and on payment of appropriate fees.

PÁL *(Off stage)* Mind! Hunting dogs are allowed a special reduced rate.

JUDIT *(Turning towards him)* Thank you! Oh Lord, how mighty a thing your Railway is! *(Exit)*

WIDOW *(Pushes armchair on stage. Looks around, suspicious)* Who's been here? I fell asleep, even though I know I mustn't... What a trap! If you live in constant danger, the chances are that the worst moment will find you asleep... You see, I have nothing except this service flat, and they're trying to get me out now, because I have tenants... Who is there to look after my interests? I am old and lonely, my three husbands and all my people are gone... This is when you start to side with the dead, when every living thing turns against you... *(Looks round)* especially young people. Mind you, these two were all right at first; they were nice and quiet. They lived on boiled eggs, they used water in a modest trickle, and they didn't hate me more than they should —I mean, we didn't hate each other more than anyone would, living in peace and quiet... But those days are gone. Since they've saved a life, they've changed somehow, and there's no stopping on the downhill slope! They're turning the tap full on; they want to open the window to air the room; they might even show themselves at the window, for all the world to see that I have a tenant... And if I heard right just now *(She thinks it over)* oh yes! they've actually gone out to get a bottle of wine! I know it means that they're expecting someone. And it is quite clear in the lease that they are not allowed to have visitors! But don't worry, *(Threateningly)* all is not lost! *(She turns the easy chair around, sits down with her back to the audience. She pokes her head out, saying over her shoulder)* Poor old Mrs. Bokor sees everything, hears everything, knows everything!

PÁL *(Enters in the peculiar clothes collected for him by the Bokors. He wears a bowler hat, an almost floor-length muffler, and over the jacket of his suit he wears a gaudy, multi-coloured striped cardigan. He carries the umbrella over his arm and holds himself proudly, like mannequins.)*

VERONKA *(Rushes in happily from opposite, carrying two small stools)* Pál! Oh, I've been so impatient! Let me look at you. *(Walks around him)* Well, yes. You're just as I imagined.

PÁL *(Looks appreciatively at Veronka)* You are too. But I never dared to imagine you were so beautiful.

VERONKA *(Surprised)* Did you say I'm beautiful?

PÁL Lots of men must have said it before me.

VERONKA No, never.

PÁL How come? You're strikingly beautiful.

VERONKA I daren't believe it.

PÁL But of course. You are unforgettably, eternally beautiful.

VERONKA *(Melting)* You too. You are handsome, like a statesman... You look so clever, and you inspire confidence; you have experience of life... Pál! Help me! *(They sit on the stools opposite each other)*

PÁL I owe you my life. You couldn't think of anything that I wouldn't do for you.

VERONKA Dear God, this was the finger of Fate... Thank you very much!

PÁL Don't mention it. What is your wish?

VERONKA Dearest Pál! I want to have a child.

PÁL *(Reluctantly)* What sort of child?

VERONKA *(Radiant)* Like all the others!

PÁL And why don't you tell your husband instead of me?

VERONKA Because if I as much as hint at it, my Péter just growls at me: "When they've taken me on at the railway." But they won't take him, poor thing.

PÁL That's his problem. My problem is that I want to stay alive. Who will give me blood from the start of your pregnancy until you stop breast-feeding?

VERONKA A running tap, a flowing fountain, a waterfall is nothing to the blood I shall have, once I'm a mother! Please help Péter to get a job on the railway.

PÁL Wouldn't you like to go to the pictures instead? I'm not up to all that running around, begging for favours...

VERONKA Don't be so selfish! Just one word from you would do it.

PÁL *(Stands up)* Well, all right. I'll have a go. If it's that important to you, I'll see if I can put in a word for your husband.

VERONKA *(Stands)* But where?

PÁL At the railway, of course.

VERONKA At the railway? You've not understood. Then I'd be even more lonely, more desolate.

PÁL *(Sits down)* God forbid. If you'd prefer it, I'll prevent his getting the job.

VERONKA *(Sits down)* Oh, Pál, you haven't been listening... You must understand: without a child, I'm nothing. I know nothing, I can do nothing. Somebody once gave me a beautiful pole, and I didn't even know what to do with it... but if I had my little one, I'd know my way about, all of a sudden... A baby needs nappies, nappies have to be washed, washing needs soap, and so on... Believe me, it's a matter of life and death.

PÁL *(Stands up)* That's different. I promise you, I'll make a railwayman of your husband.

VERONKA *(Stands up)* So that I shall have a fatherless child? Do you want to kill me?

PÁL *(Sits down)* I'd rather kill myself! But please tell me exactly what you wish me to do. Whether you want him to get in, or not.

VERONKA *(Sits down)* Look, Pál, once they employ my Péter, my life wouldn't be empty any more; I'd come and go, I'd be the most efficient woman in the world... I'll go to pieces if you don't help me.

PÁL *(Stands up)* Of course I'll help you. I'll fight on until somehow or other, I get him in.

VERONKA *(Stands up)* What are you thinking of? Please, listen to me. Even now, he eats and drinks and sleeps with the railway, he's quite crazed by it... If they take

him, the railway will just swallow him up; that'll be the end of me!

PÁL *(Sits down)* Just as you wish. I promise you that your husband will never be a railwayman.

VERONKA *(Sits down)* Oh, you've understood at last! And the sooner the better! For until he gets in, I can't have a child!

PÁL *(Stands up)* So you want him to get in, after all?

VERONKA *(Stands up)* No!

PÁL *(Sits down)* That is, that he shouldn't get in?

VERONKA *(Sits down)* Yes!

PÁL *(Stands up)* I can't understand... I simply can't... So what do you want me to do?

VERONKA *(Stands up)* Talk to them!

PÁL And what should I tell them?

VERONKA That I want to have a child! *(She picks up the two stools, starts to leave, stops and calls back)* If it's a boy, I'll call him Pál! *(Exit)*

PÁL *(Stretches out his arms helplessly; stares in front of him and starts to leave)*

WIDOW *(Turns round with her chair, and catches Pál, by the coat-tail)* Stop!

PÁL *(Startled)* Yes?

WIDOW Not another step! *(Stands up, grabs Pál by the arm)* I was waiting for you, I must warn you against my tenants.

PÁL Warn me? Against this charming young couple?

WIDOW That charming young couple! They pretend they're poor, shy, unworldly little souls... but all the time, they're hatching their evil plans. That's the truth, Mr. Bokor. And their intended victim can have no inkling...

PÁL Who is the victim?

WIDOW Come closer. *(She whispers in his ear)*

PÁL Really?

WIDOW Yes.

PÁL Are you serious?

WIDOW *(Dizzily)* Give me your hand. I'm so worried, I loose my balance...

PÁL Your balance? How come?

WIDOW It's low blood pressure.

PÁL And what does your doctor say?

WIDOW I won't go to the doctor; death from natural causes is the least of my worries... But you don't believe me, do you? Wait a minute. Come on, sit down in my comfy old armchair, and listen... Listen! Ever since the war, there's been that crack in the wall, and one can hear every word... Let's keep quiet. What can you hear?

PÁL Running water.

WIDOW They're rinsing the glasses. They're expecting visitors. That wouldn't matter that much in itself. But they do other things too. They plot and plan; they scribble this and that. I'm a self-respecting railway widow, I know my duty, I've written seven reports about it all to someone high up...

PÁL And what did he say?

WIDOW His secretary wrote that the appropriate department will look into it. *(Shrugs)* But they haven't done anything.

PÁL So what can you expect of me, madam? I've lived a long, thankless life already. Now that I've started all over again, I'm looking for a little peace. Quiet days, long evenings, pleasant memories... To eat ice-cream, go to the pictures, go fishing, whistle in the sun...

WIDOW You, Mr. Bokor, if I may remind you, can only go to the pictures and collect your lovely memories at my expense, with my blood... but let's not talk about me when the railway is at stake! *(Dizzy, tottering)* Give me your hand, and listen to me. I can hear everything here in my room, but whenever they discuss the railway, those two get into a huddle and they whisper so quietly that I can't make out anything... I cannot supply the final proof. They whisper and mutter, they huddle together...

PÁL Perhaps they're in love.

WIDOW Then this love is an anti-railway love! Mr. Bokor, they seem to trust you. You must make a note of everything

they say about the railway... Give me your hand. I grow weak every time I think of the railway. And you must get hold of some proof, written proof, which will help us to save the railway. *(She leans dizzily on the armchair and pushes it off stage)*

PÁL *(Stares after her in terror)*

PÉTER *(Comes in with a stool over his arm; stops just behind Pál and looks at him attentively)* Good morning, sir.

PÁL *(Turns round, scared)* Good morning. *(Silence)* What are you staring at?

PÉTER I should like to know whether you could walk along an imaginary straight line, with both your eyes shut and your arms stretched in front of you. Would you be so kind as to try it?

PÁL Forgive me, but... *(Changes his mind)* Well, this is the least I can do. *(Walks forward with his eyes shut, arms streched forward. Stops)* Are you satisfied?

PÉTER *(Happily)* Absolutely! This was the method employed by Suzanne Lagrange in testing four thousand French railwaymen, ages ranging from twenty to sixty. Result: "Many older persons have quicker reactions and better muscular control than the young." End of quotation. Congratulations.

PÁL Thank you. It's very flattering.

PÉTER And it's marvellous for me! Instead of a frail, wizened old man you are active, energetic, full of determination...

PÁL Just a minute...

PÉTER ... to be my future helper, the executor of my plans, the saviour of the railway...

PÁL Stop! Look here, young man, before I save the railway, I'd like to sit down for a minute. I'm rather tired.

PÉTER *(Pushes the stool to him)* Do forgive me. Please sit down.

PÁL And I'd like to put this umbrella somewhere.

PÉTER *(Takes it)* Don't put it away; I'll hold it. It has an important part to play.

PÁL And I'd like to ask you not to rely too much on the quickness of my reactions. I don't have all that much energy left... It even makes me tired to watch the way you keep walking up and down.

PÉTER *(Stops)* I'll stop. I'll stand still.

PÁL Thank you. But even the way you stand has a tension about it which is too much for me.

PÉTER What am I to do? I can't stand any other way.

PÁL You see, that's the nub. You see, son, there's no tension left in me. I believe that if we're only left in peace, old age is the most idyllic part of our lives. One needs so little for happiness. I'm content with very little; I leave others alone and hope to be left alone; I don't really want to utter a loud word ever again... Please try to understand.

PÉTER *(After a short silence)* I understand. But I'd like to say one word, just one word, and I'll whisper it softly like a summer breeze. Will you listen?

PÁL Go ahead.

PÉTER Then please, kindly move over a little, so we can share the stool. I'll put up this umbrella. We are a little short of space. Lean on me. I'll put my arm round your shoulders. Are you comfortable?

PÁL *(They perch under the shelter of the umbrella)* Not very.

PÉTER And now I'll whisper in your ear, and you will answer softly in my ear.

PÁL Why all these precautions?

PÉTER *(Whispers)*

PÁL I don't get it.

PÉTER Is your hearing all right?

PÁL Yes; just whisper more clearly... What did you say?

PÉTER I said there's an informer in the house.

PÁL Informer in the house? There are informers everywhere... but we have no secrets, do we?

PÉTER Only one. The word I'm about to whisper to you. May I say it?

PÁL Yes.

PÉTER *(Whispers)*

PÁL I can't hear.

PÉTER The Railway.

PÁL The railway?

PÉTER The Railway. *(Long silence. They both stare fixedly ahead)*

PÁL *(Worried)* Is it something that's already happened to it?

PÉTER Not yet.

PÁL Is it something that's about to happen?

PÉTER Yes.

PÁL In the distant future?

PÉTER In the near future.

PÁL Is it something good or bad?

PÉTER Bad.

PÁL Is it unavoidable?

PÉTER It could be avoided.

PÁL Do we know how to avoid it?

PÉTER I know.

PÁL *(With a relieved sigh)* Thank the almighty lord... My heart missed a beat.

PÉTER This is uncomfortable. Let's agree that instead of saying *(Whispers)* The Railway, let's say another word.

PÁL But what? *(They think)* Shall we say it in German—Eisenbahn?

PÉTER No. That won't work... it's not the same, god only knows why...

PÁL Well, let's call it God.

PÉTER That sounds all right, but... Isn't it interesting? Even though the thing we call The Railway could seemingly be substituted by anything, there's really nothing that will do.

PÁL That's quite true. *(Thinks)* You know what? Instead of saying the railway, we'll simply say the railway.

PÉTER The railway, instead of the railway? What's the difference?

PÁL Can't you understand? Informers always over-complicate things. If we talk about the railway, they'll think we mean something else and won't believe it.

PÉTER *(Laughs)* That's marvellous! Let her try to work it out!

PÁL She'll never guess!

(Laughing, they kick aside their hiding-place and move about freely)

PÉTER God save The Railway! God grant it health and strength!

PÁL *(Towards the Widow, happily)* To the railway!

PÉTER *(Likewise)* To the railway!

PÁL And now tell me what you've heard, and where... after all, as far as I know, you're always studying.

PÉTER That's true. I study from early morning till late at night, in this dark little hole; I live on boiled eggs, and though my wife is getting at me day and night to have a child, I won't allow it... I shall quote you Tao Ting Lit: "The snake will be your death, but if you take it by the throat, it's a helpless worm..." I use a lot of quotations, as all my knowledge comes from books.

PÁL Do tell me though what snake you're talking about.

PÉTER *(Takes a large black book from the drawer inside the stool and hands in to Pál)* In this book I have listed in strict alphabetical order all the sources of error or miscalculation which endanger, even at the high technological level of the present, both passenger services and goods traffic.

Pál *(Leafing through restlessly)* Are there so many?

PÉTER There are. There are two thousand four hundred and seventeen sources of error or mischance. Think it over, sir! Only a very small part of these—a fraction—a percentage—would be enough, in the face of the ignorance, not to say incompetence of those responsible, to start off a mishap which would snowball into disaster... Delays, rushed decisions, bottlenecks, derailments, not to mention even worse, could set off a series of interdependent tragedies...

PÁL Stop... Once, I saw a fast train in the ravine at Brzevice, squashed like a concertina... It must not happen!

PÉTER Well, do something, Pál... I hope I may call you Pál?

PÁL Yes, of course.

MIMI *(Hurries to Pál, with a happy smile)* Pál, dearest Pál! Let me have a look at you! That's fine. You're not fat, just sturdy. *(She pulls at Pál's lower lip, taps his teeth)* Do you have a cavity? Say AAH!

PÁL Aah.

MIMI Whether you have a toothache or not, you will go to the dentist at regular intervals... Please give me your umbrella. *(Taking it, she hurries out. She returns, pushing on stage three leather armchairs, and proceeds to push them together so that their backs make up the walls of a little den. She opens the umbrella and spreads it on top for a roof, then sitting down, pushes herself back into the den and peers out, waiting for Pál.)*

PÉTER *(During Mimi's activity)* Look here, Pál. There must be something about me. They haven't employed me even in the lowest capacity; and they either don't understand or, what's more likely, don't want to understand my proposals. Well, it's not surprising: nobody likes to have his incompetence shown up in broad daylight... But you have nothing to fear.

PÁL But I'm afraid of the excitement, young man.

PÉTER There's none! All I'm asking you to do is find a suitable moment to give this book to someone higher up... *(Gives him the book)*

MIMI *(From her den)* Pál! Where am I?

PÉTER *(As he sees Pál is turning to go)* And all you have to tell him is that... *(Turning towards the Widow)* ...The railway is in danger!

MIMI Pál!

PÁL *(Looking for the source of the call with curiosity, over his shoulder to Péter)* Leave it to me, young man. *(While Péter goes out, he walks round the structure)* Who's calling me?

MIMI *(Peers out)* It's me... Mimi.

PÁL *(Politely bowing)* Pleased to meet you. I'm Pál Bokor.

MIMI Don't bother with all that etiquette... come on, get in!

PÁL Dearest madam, you have saved my life. *(Suddenly catches on)* What did you say?

MIMI That we're going to play. Do you remember? "Come into my house..." *(Puts out her hand)* I'm home! Who'll play?

PÁL Madam!

MIMI Mimi.

PÁL Dear Mimi, there's nothing I wouldn't do for you; but all those years on the draughty corridors of the sleeping-cars gave me such bad rheumatism that I can hardly even bend down.

MIMI Why do you think, I am giving all that blood? I want somebody to look after... Get in! Hurry up.

PÁL *(Gives in and somehow manages to crawl in alongside Mimi)* At your service, Madam!

MIMI At last! *(She pulls Pál across her knees like a baby)* Look! Where are we? We're in our little hut. But Pál mustn't whine... Pál can nestle down with Mimi, and she will nicely rub his aching back for him... There, it doesn't hurt any more, does it? And now we are safe here, in our own little home, under our own roof... But Pál mustn't wriggle about. His Mimi is here to take care of him. She'll make sure he doesn't forget to turn off the gas; that he doesn't cross the road without looking; that he doesn't eat anything to upset him... Pál is a big boy; Pál can understand that Mimi has no little ones to look after, though Mimi was born to care, like all women... Sometimes I feel tempted to pick up a sack of potatoes and just carry it up and down the stairs, to the fifth floor... I can do more than the men, whether I am lugging the heavy shopping home, or washing, or ironing, or scrubbing... What do you do with your washing, Pál?

PÁL Pál takes his wash to the laundry. *(Groaning)* Ouch!

MIMI Don't worry. Mimi will do it.

PÁL Please, don't worry so much about me...

MIMI Of course I will. It can't go on any longer, the way I've been going to waste... and besides, you can't turn back now. I've come to feel that Pál was conceived in my womb, that I gave him birth and fed him and raised him and now I live on in him, I think with his head, feel with his heart, chew with his teeth... What are you doing?

PÁL I'd like to get out.

MIMI Don't worry, I shan't bother you... Pál is free as a bird! All I ask is that you should buy a diary.

PÁL What for?

MIMI With a page for each day, and a clear space for every hour...

PÁL A timetable? Dear god, what next? You all promised you wouldn't interfere with my life...

MIMI But I must know whether you've been to the dentist, whether you've had your vegetables; that you're not constipated; whether you had pleasant dreams or nightmares in your sleep... Are you tired?

PÁL I'm tired.

MIMI Then Mimi will rock Pál to sleep... In the good old days at Borsa, I'd rock my husband to sleep, and my little girl... Pál will shut his eyes, Mimi will sing a lullaby... What shall I sing?

PÁL *(Sleepily)* From Lilac Time...

MIMI *(Sings)*

(Pál falls asleep, Mimi crawls out from the den, arranges him more comfortably, and throwing him a kiss, tiptoes out, humming the song.)

MIKLÓS *(Enters with his briefcase; exhausted, dishevelled)* You're very bad judges of character, if you'll forgive my saying so, if you think that I've been guilty of some sort of serious crime... But no wonder: you know nothing of my case... You see, they accused me of stealing a passenger train from the loading bay at Borsa—train, engine, passengers and all... Funny, isn't it? Well, I'm not laughing. Not even today. They say time heals all wounds, but I think that time inflicts so many more that we no longer feel the pain of the old cuts. For instance, it hurts me more to think of tomorrow's troubles than of all my past suffering. At the time, I thought the world was coming to an end when those two detectives arrived to ask me what had happened to the 1244 passenger train from Ivánka to Zalakomár... Which passenger train? The seven-twenty-five, which had left Borsa according to timetable. But the loading bay, where it was due to stop, had no record of it. Please, I said, there must be some mistake, only special consignments are handled here, no passenger train ever stopped at my loading bay at Borsa. That's bad, they said; for if that train had stopped here, or if it had been derailed, or damaged, or blown up, then no harm would come to me, but as the train which left at seven-twenty-five disappeared without trace, they must ask me to accompany them at once, inconspicuously, and with food for three days... Then came the hearing. They made a big production of it, to make an example of me; it was broadcast and televised and the witnesses testified against me right and left, but they were all the sort of people whose least word could be taken on trust... there was even a Bokor among them. So I broke down and confessed. I confessed that with malice aforethought, according to a carefully laid plan I'd stolen a passenger train. In view of my honest confession they mitigated the sentence. I wasn't sent to prison, but I was dismissed, disciplinary action was taken so that when I went to work as a porter, they even forbade me to wear the peaked cap... So I had to believe I'd done it. How could I help believing it? So when the same two men came back five years later and told me I was innocent, that they would take me back at the railway, reinstate me and promote me and that I would even get compensation, I protested. They had to convince me that I was mistaken: as there is no railway line connecting Ivánka and Zalakomár, there was nothing for me to steal and therefore I must be innocent... I don't know why it was, but it was more difficult to believe in my innocence than in my guilt. I suppose secretly everyone knows that he's more capable of evil than good, and though I keep quiet about it, I still believe that... *(Takes a deep breath, clutches his aching temples with both hands)* Well, that's that. But ever since then, I've been afraid of myself; I don't know what is right, and to pick up the phone costs me

more energy than digging my own grave... By the time I get home at night, I'm exhausted, squeezed dry like a lemon. I just can't bear it any more! *(Falls into the armchair on the left)*

PÁL *(Woke up towards the end of Miklós's soliloquy; he's standing at Miklós's side, looking at him with sympathy, but he's rubbing his aching back.)*

MIKLÓS *(Feeling his forehead, as if he was talking to his wife)* I've had a tough day today, Mimi.

PÁL *(Understanding)* I believe you. But thank goodness it's over.

MIKLÓS *(Annoyed)* You're talking through your hat! You've no idea what I face tomorrow!

PÁL That'll be over too, by the evening.

MIKLÓS *(Shrugs)* Silly goose. For god's sake just keep quiet. *(Takes a tablet from a bottle)*

PÁL *(Takes the tablet, puts it back, puts the bottle into Miklós's pocket)* You'll feel all right after a night's rest. What's the good of all these pills? Think of me, too.

MIKLÓS *(Looks up, startled)* Oh, it's you? I'm so sorry!

PÁL Never mind.

MIKLÓS I don't know if I'm coming or going... I get everything mixed up. Especially when I have such a difficult day ahead.

PÁL You seem worn out.

MIKLÓS My head aches, it's throbbing like mad...

PÁL What does your doctor say? It's my business, too.

MIKLÓS What should he say? At times like this, when the whole world's on my shoulders, my blood pressure rises a bit... *(Stands up)* Excuse me. I must sit down.

PÁL But you've just stood up.

MIKLÓS You see? I can't even tell whether I'm sitting or standing... *(Offers Pál a chair. They both sit down. Miklós looks round)* All's clear... Shall we have a drop? *(Takes two glasses and a small bottle from his briefcase; pours out and hands a glass to Pál)* It may be poison for my blood pressure, but perhaps it will clear my head a little... Cheers.

PÁL *(They raise their glasses, drink, and look at each other happily)* Cheers.

MIKLÓS *(With emotion)* Pál.

PÁL *(Moved)* Miklós.

MIKLÓS Pál, Pál... Life isn't easy.

PÁL That's why you should take things easy. You see, I never make plans. I'll buy a fishing-rod, just so that I can sit by the river once in a while, just to think in the sun... Do you really have a bit of land in the hills?

MIKLÓS I wish we had. Why?

PÁL Well, when I get my rod, I might go up there to dig for worms.

MIKLÓS *(Stands up and walks round Pál with increasing nervousness)* My friend! You want to dig for worms on my land! Well, I confess I expected better from a resurrected Bokor.

PÁL *(Also standing)* You too? Well, it seems to me that everyone expects something from me; something different from what I can do.

MIKLÓS *(Shakes Pál angrily)* To dig for worms? If we Bokors hadn't got together, you wouldn't be digging worms; you'd be eaten by worms.

PÁL So what? I think it would have been better to peg out, instead of you all rubbing it in, all the time.

MIKLÓS *(Shouting)* So drop dead! *(Recollects himself, quietening)* I am sorry. Sometimes, when my blood pressure goes up, I say the opposite of what I mean. Let's forget it.

PÁL All right.

JUDIT *(Appears on the side)* Excuse me! Crutches.

PÁL Crutches, walking sticks, umbrellas, also properly wrapped funeral wreaths and Christmas trees less than two metres high are to be treated as hand luggage.

JUDIT Thank you very much. *(Disappears)*

MIKLÓS Let's drink to it. *(Fills Pál's glass, then turns to his own)*

PÁL *(Takes the bottle)* Please don't.

MIKLÓS You're right. Alcohol's poison for me.

PÁL *(Puts the bottle away)* If it's poison for you, it's the same for me.

MIKLÓS That's true. Let's swap. *(Quickly takes the full glass from Pál)*

PÁL *(Takes it)* Not that one.

MIKLÓS This is yours. *(Takes back the full glass)*

PÁL Let's swap. *(They swap)*

MIKLÓS This is full. *(Gives him the empty glass)*

PÁL Then let me have it. *(They swap)*

MIKLÓS Go ahead. *(He quickly drinks it)*

PÁL What are you doing?

MIKLÓS I've returned your glass.

PÁL *(Angrily)* After you took my drink.

MIKLÓS Didn't you have it? Did I have it? *(Sadly)* Could be. But if I get even this mixed up, what will happen to me tomorrow?

PÁL What will happen?

MIKLÓS *(Reciting it like a litany, swaying forwards and backwards)* His Holiness the Pope... But wait, we don't have to imagine the worst straight away. But one thing is sure: tomorrow, on the 28th of June, the summer timetable comes into effect. And not only is it the twenty-eighth, it's also a Saturday and moreover, it's an unusual Saturday, before a long weekend! And so, as we sit here, all over the world women are packing, they're chasing the children off for the last-minute shopping; while in the shunting yards they're making up the special trains to carry the holiday-makers from north to south, from south to north and generally in every direction, for nobody can bear to stay quietly at home... and so tomorrow five relief trains are added to each lakeside run; one's coming from Berlin, one from Vienna, also from Prague and Warsaw, my head is throbbing already, I tremble at every ring... *(A bell rings; he shivers)* You hear that? They've phoned. The airport at Rome is out of action.

PÁL And why should that concern you?

MIKLÓS Well, a group of right-wing students have spread soap across the runway; so instead of flying the Pope will set out for Poland by special train. Further, hundreds of left-wing students are staging a sit-in on the eastern lines from Paris, to prevent the President's visit to Athens; this is delaying the Orient Express and passengers wishing to change have missed all their connections.

PÁL That's annoying. I detest Paris, anyway.

MIKLÓS Annoying? Hang on. Tomorrow of all days, when everything is topsy-turvy anyway, the fate of the Meridian Express is uncertain since rain has weakened the bridge at Brodski Česk.

PÁL Not Brodski Česk. Českí Brod.

MIKLÓS I'm all confused, I don't know what I'm saying, as I don't even know what'll happen to the passengers from Malmö, and as for the relief trains... *(Ringing)* What is it now? *(Trembling)* The thing I most dreaded has happened. His Holiness the Pope couldn't get a flight and has set out for Poland by special train. *(Ringing. Miklós groans, grabs his head)* That's all we needed.

PÁL *(Holds him up gently)* What's happened?

MIKLÓS He's reaching our frontier at ten-twenty. He will break his journey for half an hour, he'll say Mass and bless the railwaymen, urbi et orbi... *(Clutches his head)* A Mass! at Kelebia! Just when there's a trainload of rotting Brussels sprouts there, rejected by the Yugoslav government. *(Ringing. He covers his ears, he's had enough)* That's enough! I've heard it all! *(To Pál)* Urbi et orbi, to the smell of rotting sprouts.

PÁL But that's not your fault!

MIKLÓS Of course it is. Telex, telegram, telephones, radio, computer terminals—they bring every railway line, station, viaduct and signal-box in Europe into my office. They let me know at once if an apple-cart turns over at a level crossing.

PÁL But that's wonderful!

MIKLÓS Wonderful, like hell... I have to take action on everything at once... God,

what now? For goodness' sake, where does the Edelweiss come from? Amsterdam? Rotterdam? Kurfürstendamm?

PÁL No; the Kurfürstendamm is a street in Berlin where I first got the clap.

MIKLÓS Why are all town names so alike? Salzburg, Hamburg, Strassburg, Aschaffenburg, Hapsburg...

PÁL Hang on. That's a dynasty.

MIKLÓS That's true. Franz Joseph Ferdinand.

PÁL No. Franz Joseph and Franz Ferdinand.

MIKLÓS Of course. *(Collapses completely. Then, slowly, hopefully, looks up at Pál)* Pál...

PÁL *(Expecting the worst)* What do you want? Leave me out of it.

MIKLÓS We've all got together and made an effort for your sake. Let's do it again! You've been all over Europe, on every railway in Europe, you've got all these names at your fingertips...

JUDIT *(Hurries in, to Pál)* Excuse me. Does an Alsatian count as a hunting dog?

PÁL Not necessarily. But any dog accompanying a passenger in possession of a special hunting-trip return counts as a hunting dog and is entitled a special reduced rate.

JUDIT Thank you *(Hurries out)*

MIKLÓS You know it all! Pál! Come, be my right hand, help me...

PÁL Miklós! Miklós, you're a Bokor. Pull yourself together. Wasn't it you who stood there, in the snow and wind, holding up that torch in front of the oncoming train?

MIKLÓS But I wasn't scared then. I knew the risks. It's only the unknown that scares a man... Pál! Stay with me tomorrow. You've been to all those towns with those horrible names, you've got to know them, and seen the people...

PÁL Yes, I've been there, I've known them, I've wandered around for forty years as a sleeping-car attendant; but of those forty years all I can remember is that rotten pig of a stationmaster at Česky Brod, who got roaring drunk with me and swore eternal friendship. I went on writing stupid picture postcards while he laid information against me with the railway police for partaking of alcoholic beverages while on duty and making a row in the corridor... No, my friend, I've had enough. I don't want to have anything more to do with it. I don't want to have any more of your blood, either, and I don't care if I drop dead.

MIKLÓS *(Yelling)* Then drop dead! *(Recollects himself, exhausted)* There I go again. Please forgive me. I wanted to say the opposite. For the sake of the railway, I beg you to help me.

PÁL But I can't. I've been retired.

MIKLÓS Retired! *(Pause)* I don't want anything for my blood, but its' not right that a Bokor should ever let down another Bokor.

PÁL Why should I let you down? I only said that I wasn't up to the job. But hang on! Luckily, there are other Bokors in the world. *(He turns, calls loudly)* Hallo there! Young man!

PÉTER *(Hurries in, looks hopefully at Miklós)* Is that him?

PÁL Yes. Go on, speak.

PÉTER Openly? Anything?

PÁL Openly. Anything.

PÉTER *(Goes to Miklós, bows)* Then, I'll tell you. There's trouble coming.

MIKLÓS *(Nods)* I know.

PÉTER Serious trouble.

MIKLÓS I know. But how do you know?

PÁL Because he studies from morning till night, he's got all the reference books at his fingertips...

MIKLÓS Books, books... What's the use of books if, for instance, an apple-cart topples over...

PÉTER Science, sir, can forecast anything... *(With great concentration)* Sir, I've tried everything; I've applied again and again, I've sent in one proposal after another, but I've never found anyone to listen. Please allow me to explain it to you, even at the eleventh hour...

MIKLÓS *(Without conviction)* Go ahead.

PÉTER May I begin with a quotation?

MIKLÓS You may.

PÉTER Albert Einstein said in his will... *(The dressing table rolls on the stage, and the Widow rushes forward from behind it)*

WIDOW *(Attacking sharply)* Westinghouse brakes! That's all I ever hear through that wall, all these big names! *(To Miklós)* Listen to the warning of a railwayman's widow, and don't be bamboozled!

PÉTER No one's asked you, woman!

WIDOW I never go where I'm asked; but where my duty calls.

MIKLÓS Please wait your turn... Go on, son.

PÉTER May I quote?

MIKLÓS Go ahead.

PÉTER In his last message to scientists, Einstein wrote: "We have made the world larger, but we have failed to make ourselves grow with it." End of quotation, which—I wouldn't quote it otherwise—applies to The Railway, word by word.

MIKLÓS *(Interested)* How?

PÉTER What's the railway? If we look at essentials, we can say that the railway is organized speed. It is the organization which makes it into a railway, which makes it useful, the treasure of the travelling public.

MIKLÓS Bravo. That's a clever definition.

PÁL You see? At last, a Bokor who knows his business.

PÉTER But to organize speed, especially in this day and age, when speed is forever increasing, can create situations which man, and even the most brilliant man, cannot handle on his own.

MIKLÓS *(Excited)* Go on, go on... When does such a situation arise?

PÉTER When our organizing ability can no longer control the rate of speed... Have you ever encountered such a dangerous situation?

PÁL He has.

MIKLÓS I have. Go on! What can one do in such a situation?

PÉTER Just what I have done. Study more and more; without knowledge of the scientific principles involved we cannot even compute the dangers lying in wait.

PÁL You exaggerate.

MIKLÓS *(Encouraging)* Only a little.

PÉTER Not even a little! Sir! Even in the earliest days of the railway, difficult situations could arise. For instance, if a cow grazed on the lines. But with the technological standards of today, dangers have increased a thousandfold; and if they happen to coincide, a whole range of catastrophes could happen. We can only diffuse such a situation by neutralizing each danger, one by one, in accordance with the scientific principles of forecasting and planning. Today, it seems that each cogwheel goes round smoothly. But how does the saying go? "One minute before the trouble came, there was no trouble at all."

WIDOW And what great man said that?

PÉTER I think it comes from Winnie the Pooh. But the moment trouble strikes. it snowballs into vast proportions and destroys everything... and how does it come about? One small thing. For instance, let's suppose that a summer timetable comes into effect, just before a long week-end. And, let's suppose... I don't know... somewhere, say at Česky Brod, the rain has undermined the pylons...

(Miklós and Pál look at each other)

PÉTER Have I overstated the case?

PÁL You're taking a pessimistic view, son.

MIKLÓS *(Restlessly)* No, no... But how could one prevent it?

PÉTER As I said in my proposal... Have you read it?

MIKLÓS I don't think so. Will you please tell us...

PÉTER In the Handbook of Communications I saw a description of a central directorate, where the entire European network, down to the smallest signal-box, can be checked at any given minute. This is not some vague dream: this really exists.

MIKLÓS Yes, it exists. Come on. What would you do with it?

PÉTER Just by way of an example, let's start with the summer timetable, which is going to be augmented by the long week-end following this coming Saturday. This is a realistic supposition.

MIKLÓS *(With growing interest)* Go on. It's quite realistic.

PÉTER Well, if we accept this, we can also accept a supposition that somewhere—say in France or Italy—some political tension develops into a situation which affects the safety of public transport.

MIKLÓS It has been known. Go on!

PÉTER *(Thinking)* On, on... Well... Carrying on with our set of suppositions, it is not impossible to imagine that the Pope suddenly wants to take a journey somewhere.

MIKLÓS The Pope?

PÉTER He came to mind because the cathedral in Cracow has just been restored, and it's possible that he may wish to consecrate it himself. But we could assume the Queen of England instead...

MIKLÓS No; let's keep to the Pope. So what will happen?

PÉTER *(With an apologetic smile)* I really have no idea, as the Pope has his own private plane. But let's just suppose that for some reason he takes the Vatican's special train to Poland, and goes through Hungary, along the Kelebia–Budapest–Komárom line... Of course, he will go by air, so I'm just imagining things and wasting your precious time.

MIKLÓS No! no! Let's just suppose that the special train has left the Vatican.

PÉTER Well, if it's left, then, knowing our usual luck, lightning will strike as soon as it crosses the border at Kelebia.

MIKLÓS Lightning? *(Frightened)* Are they expecting lightning?

PÉTER No, I was speaking metaphorically... you could substitute some other trouble. Say, a goods train, which had been held up at the frontier for some time. Moreover—knowing the way things go—it's bound to be something that smells to high heaven. *(Laughs)* I'm only joking.

MIKLÓS *(Feverish)* It's no joke, young man. What's the load?

PÉTER *(Laughs)* I could never guess that.

MIKLÓS What about Brussels sprouts?

PÉTER No, sir. That wouldn't smell.

MIKLÓS *(Triumphant)* But it does smell, for the Yugoslavs have refused to take delivery. That's what's smelling at Kelebia.

PÉTER Now you are joking, sir.

MIKLÓS I'm not joking. That is the exact situation, and it's making my head burst.

PÁL But don't talk yourself into a stroke. That would be the end of me... Now that we have this ambitious young man with us, you can relax.

MIKLÓS How can I relax? *(To Péter)* Would you relax, in my place?

PÉTER Yes, sir, I would.

MIKLÓS And what would you do?

PÉTER I would look up my dissertation, which I've submitted countless times, and which contains an alphabetical list of all the possible dangers and their solution. *(Looks at Pál, who hands the book to Miklós)*

PÁL Under letter *A*... Have a look.

MIKLÓS *(Reading)* *Anarchy... Apple cart (Looks at Pál)* This is fantastic... Why anarchy?

PÉTER Political tenet among left-wing French students...

MIKLÓS *(Nervously turning the pages)* I know... *Merphitis Zorilla... (Looks inquiringly at Péter)*

Péter A type of skunk which can spread the plague in international harbours... Look it up under *Plague.*

PÁL *(Nervously)* Go on, look it up.

MIKLÓS *(Depressed)* I won't... *(Silence; Miklós turns the pages, reads, sighs)* It's terrible, how many things there are... *(Thinking)* Tell me, young man... If you were in my place, what would you do about Kelebia, and the Pope, and the rotten sprouts?

PÉTER I'd telephone.

MIKLÓS To Kelebia?

WIDOW *(Ominously)* He would!

PÉTER Yes, I'd telephone and I'd make sure they were following the regulations. According to Regulation 127/c they should deodorize the load with ordinary lime. And I'd make them decorate the station, which luckily has a wide enough platform, with garlands and flags.

MIKLÓS What kind of flags?

PÉTER Ecclesiastic flags, displaying the Virgin Mary. I understand the Pope is a Roman Catholic.

MIKLÓS Yes, of course. *(He sighs)*

PÉTER You don't believe me! You still don't trust me! You think I'm a confused, immature, impractical dreamer! Whereas if you'd allow me, just once, to sit by you in your office...

MIKLÓS Would you?

PÉTER Me? It's been the dream of my life!

MIKLÓS And you'd take the risks?

PÉTER That's an old-fashioned term. It's only a risk while you rely on blind chance. But if you handle everything according to scientific principles, clear thinking and fully comprehensive data, you don't take risks, but make logical decisions. And I'd do that with pleasure. When?

MIKLÓS Eight a.m. Entrance B, third floor, room 7.

PÉTER I'll be there.

MIKLÓS As my assistant, my right hand... Thank you. You've saved my life.

PÉTER And you mine.

PÁL *(Happily)* And you both saved mine... I'm so glad! Congratulations! *(They embrace in turn)*

WIDOW Don't count your chickens before...

PÁL Why not? *(Points to Miklós)* His burdens are lessened; this ambitious young man will have a position worthy of his abilities, and at last I can sit down by the river, which is something I was beginning to think would never come... I'll sit there, singing... *(Hums the waltz from Lilac Time)*

WIDOW *(Dryly)* Stop that noise. It's one thing when a good-natured, childish old man is fooled by all sorts of catchwords. *(To Miklós, flattering)* But if a man in your high position, at the head of our pride railway doesn't see through him *(Points at Péter)* that's surprising, especially as I myself heard everything, knew everything; and I've sent in my reports... but all in vain!

PÁL What are you up to? They're a nice, modest young couple... hardworking, too.

WIDOW Was it I who listened in, or was it you? Thank God I can see through them.

PÁL Perhaps you were mistaken, madam. This fine young man has studied day and night.

WIDOW Of course he's studied. But why doesn't anyone ask him—what is it, he's been studying?

MIKLÓS *(Interested)* Well, what? Tell us.

PÉTER *(Modestly)* Well, the main headings... Some physics, philosophy, meteorology, probability theory, epidemiology, geology, history, optics, thermology, psychology, botany...

WIDOW You hear that? Botany!

PÁL *(Laughs)* Botany! What next!

PÉTER Well, you see if the Dutch tulip-harvest coincides with the Bulgarian rose-picking season and the Hungarian dispatches of camomile, you have to ensure green lights for them all the way...

MIKLÓS Indeed... *(Thinking)* But in practice such a coincidence is improbable.

PÉTER Improbable merely means the minimal degree of probability.

PÁL Son, son... ever since Bokors existed, they've managed without botany.

MIKLÓS *(A little tartly)* And as you can see, the trains have managed to come and go all over the world, too.

PÉTER Yes. As long as the Pope didn't put his foot in it, in the middle of a long week-end.

MIKLÓS *(As if something had suddenly caught his ear: puts a hand on Péter's shoulder, and looks him in the face)* Look here, young man...

JUDIT *(Runs in, furious, grabs hold of Pál)* Just imagine, what a dirty trick! and in this day and age! When we have Women's Lib! They say that in Information you need a strong physique, good nerves and a loud voice and so they don't employ women... So I said, excuse me, my parents wanted a girl and so they christened me Judit, but here, take a look, I'm really a boy...

PÁL And they believed you?

JUDIT *(Pointing at her figure, on her way out)* Why not? What's the difference? The old fools! *(Runs off, laughing)*

MIKLÓS *(To Péter)* Science, young man, is a fine thing; but from your tone of voice I get an impression that you put science first; as if you thought that the railway was just some sort of by-product of science.

PÉTER Not at all. It's not a by-product, it's one of its functions.

MIKLÓS Did you say: a function of science?

WIDOW That's what he said. In my report, I even underlined the word function.

PÁL Come on... it's just a mistake.

MIKLÓS How do you know? *(To Péter)* And what's to become of anyone who doesn't have all this scientific knowledge?

PÉTER *(Modestly but with confidence)* He should obtain it.

MIKLÓS *(Threatening)* And if not?

PÉTER Then he should pass on the torch.

MIKLÓS Do you mean that I should pass on my position?

PÁL You don't say... *(To Péter)* Young man, you've allowed yourself to be carried away by your passion.

WIDOW Carried away, my foot! I've quoted this passing-over-the-torch in two of my reports.

PÁL *(Pacifically)* Carried away or not.. but look, he's still so young! He's got all this knowledge out of books; perhaps he's never even sat on a train.

PÉTER Unfortunately, never.

PÁL You see, you see... But you will, now! You'll have a free pass, won't he, Miklós? And when he first feels the shudder of a carriage, and the six thousand horse-power engine thundering through fields and trees; and towns fly past, and villages and giant factories and beaches and convents... *(Laughs at his own secrets)* At seven in the morning, when the train comes out of the Simplon, and he sees that huge big girls' school on the right... just at bathing time! And as the thunder of the engine explodes from the tunnel, those four hundred freshly washed, naked, tiny orphan tits are waving from the windows!... It's a great big world, young man!

PÉTER *(Dryly)* I believe it is. But it's no greater than science. For every railway-man in the world, ourselves included, would still be walking round on foot if no one had ever invented the wheel, the axle, the spokes, the wheeltread, the wagon, the power of steam, and electricity... We just step into something ready-made; but it's misleading to think that it's ready-made, for the making is never quite finished: nothing ever stops, it all grows, changes and develops, and if you can't keep up with it, you're nothing.

MIKLÓS *(Explosively)* How do you mean, nothing?

PÉTER I mean: you can't keep up with the railway. You can't be a railwayman.

PÁL *(Seeing Miklós's excitement)* Relax, Miklós. Don't take it personally.

MIKLÓS I'm not taking it personally. In fact, I admit that the boy is right about a lot of things. *(To Péter, with growing anger)* But it's the way you said it! Your tone of voice! It's possible that I, with my high blood pressure and the gaps in my education, can no longer fulfil my position properly; but my ears, my eyes, my five senses are still perfect... Come on, tell me. No, not about studying, or about wheels and axles, and functions. Confess, young man. Give us a straight answer to a straight question. Tell me, do you love the railway?

PÉTER *(Doesn't quite understand. Short silence)* What? Do I love it?

WIDOW Take care! you can't believe

a word he says. He'll tell you he loves it, he's in love with it, he worships it... Luckily, I'm right here, and I swear to you that I've never heard him give it one kind or gentle word.

MIKLÓS Quiet. I'm waiting for his answer.

PÉTER I must admit, sir, I've never thought about it.

MIKLÓS That's very serious, young man. For us, Bokors, it's a matter of life and death.

PÉTER For me, it's the meaning of my life.

MIKLÓS The meaning of your life! Young man, you're shirking the point. You don't want to speak the truth. *(Clutches at his head, sits)*

PÉTER Why? Does it need my love?

MIKLÓS *(With a groan)* You may well ask! Love doesn't ask questions, young man!

PÁL *(To Péter, with a friendly smile)* Look here, son... All of us, our sort, us Bokors, and you're one of us too, are all dreamers, not quite like other people. My father said, when I was still a boy, "You're a Bokor, my lad, and a Bokor who's got his self-respect will go far." So? He never got further than a signalman, all his life, and I was a sleeping-car guard until I retired. And yet, there was once a Baroness Rothschild, bracelets all over, whom I might have... but it seems to have been written in my stars that I'd never get any further... that I'd just remain what I am and I'd see no more of this world but what you see passing behind the windows of the sleeping-car, and that at the end... And yet... *(Sentimentally)* on my sixtieth birthday, the Deputy Director of the Sleeping Car Company, with my long-service diploma in his hand, said to me... *(Starts to cry)* ...dear Bokor... my dear Bokor... *(Shrugs; sits down in tears, buries his face in his hands)*

WIDOW *(In tears, strokes him)* Poor dear Mr. Bokor... *(She is choked by her tears)*

MIMI *(Comes in, and fighting down her tears, strokes Pál)* Yes, Pál... I understand. I feel the same way. *(She cries)* But that's enough. Pál must not cry. Look, Mimi's not crying any more, Pál must be a good boy, look at me, smile, look, Mimi is smiling too... *(Crying, and then suddenly turns to Péter angrily)* Don't you just stand there, with your cool look, with that superior calm of yours, or I'll scratch your eyes out!

PÉTER *(Backs away)* Please don't, madam. You're reading things into my facial expression.

PÁL He's right, you know. He can't help the eyes he's got.

MIMI *(To Pál)* Don't you defend him! Neither him, nor the thing which, you may have noticed, I haven't once mentioned in all the time we've known each other... I hate it so much! *(To Péter)* What is it you don't understand? We're talking of the railway, that goddam railway, which gives me goose pimples all over, now that I've said its name—look at my arms, look at my shoulder... this damned railway has robbed me of everything... What have I got left? What can I do with the rest of my life? My child—gone. And him? *(Pointing at Miklós)* This man, my god, we went through everything together, good and bad, abject poverty, but together... and look at him now, look what he's become. His hands tremble, his head rolls about in pain, and perhaps he can't even remember my name, he needs me so little...

MIKLÓS Are you trying to make me look a fool? You're my Mimi.

MIMI Your Mimi... *(To Péter)* Ten years ago, as we had a free pass, he took me to the mountains for a fortnight... even five years ago, he'd say to me, "Mimi, let's go out somewhere for a half pint,"... but since then, I exist less and less. He can only think of one thing, he only needs one thing, he's up to his ears in it... I will not say the name again, but if there's a God in Heaven, let Him put a curse on it, let Him break and destroy it, strike it down with terror and cholera, blind it, and sweep, it off the face of the earth...

PÉTER Please understand, madam; I'm here to ease your husband's burdens...

WIDOW *(Suddenly attacking)* Him! Our saviour! our helper! the sharer of our burdens! *(Rushes at Péter with raised fists; he tries to back away)* But what if I was to talk? Senile old crone? I know, I could hear everything! the rotten informer! Well, that's just what I am! I watch, I listen, I take notes, I send in my reports; and I shall go on doing it, watching, listening, making reports, I shall sound the alarm until someone hears *(To Miklós)* someone high up, the high-ranking official to whom I've sent all my reports...

MIKLÓS I shall look into it, madam.

WIDOW But by then it'll be too late! And I've never ever mentioned my own troubles... *(To Péter)* For I've really no reason to be grateful to the railway either... It's true that my third husband the poor thing was drunk when he fell off the fender, but then, he'd been drunk for fifteen years, every day for fifteen years, even before the train had ran him over, so I am fully entitled to the accident compensation as well as my pension; with unparalleled impertinence, they filed a counter-petition against me for subletting a room in my service flat... *(Stands in front of Péter)* Now, look me in the face, young man, and tell me straight out: what would you do in my place?

PÉTER I cannot put myself in your place, Mrs. Bokor. I'cant imagine it.

WIDOW Of course you can! You can imagine it all too well; and what you'd do, if you were in my place. You'd piss on the whole railway... but I, even if I lose the lawsuit, even if I never get a penny more from the Pension Board, even if they kick me out of my flat, I'll still be Mrs. Bokor. An informer? Yes, an informer. Can you understand that? Fifteen tankers went over him, fifteen hundred tons of crude oil... and there on the rails, I saw it with my own eyes, the drying blood, the minced flesh, the skull split open.

MIMI *(Screams)* Oh!

WIDOW Don't scream. I didn't scream at the time, but something happened inside me, something that stayed in me ever since; it was no use going to those psychiatrists, they could never hypnotize away what had happened in me... We are only human; but the railway's the railway, it has its own laws, and it knows what it does... You're only a miserable discontented trouble-maker, who thinks he knows everything best. But I've tolerated you in my house to keep you under my eye, to forestall your plots and to make sure even now, in the last minute, when you were almost ready to destroy everyone, I will spike your guns. *(To Miklós, quietly, confidently)* Call the police. This man, and I can prove it, doesn't just hate the railway—he hates everybody who's a Bokor! *(She totters, dizzy)*

PÁL Show me your pulse, Mrs. Bokor.

WIDOW I don't have a pulse. Police! Police!

PÁL Come, let me help you sit down... Calm down! After all, you know that my life is at stake... *(To Péter)* And you mustn't take what this old lady says too much to heart. Us Bokors are an excitable lot.

MIKLÓS *(Still controlling himself)* Yes, perhaps we are. Perhaps we talk too much, perhaps we argue too much, shout too much... that's how it is, when there are so many of us... *(Tries to laugh)* Every Bokor makes enough racket for two. And it's true, what Pál here said—we're not like normal people... *(The more heated Miklós becomes, the more indifferently Péter listens; towards the end of the speech, his head drops and he falls asleep standing up)* It may be good or bad, all this talk... but I must say in my own defence that we always talk about the railway, even when it's hidden at the back of our mind... It's always been like this, and it will always be like this, because we spend our lives with it, with being Bokors: we start here and we end here, and we couldn't break out of the circle even if we tried... You don't like the sound of it? well, yes it's odd. We just keep saying that we are Bokors, as if this

mattered more than anything in the world. But this is just what makes a Bokor a Bokor: he knows that there is one thing which is more important than he is... And that thing didn't come of book-learning, as all you clever book-reading young people would like to believe, but from blood and sweat, typhoid and dysentery, from the draining of the swamps and the digging of the tunnels, when the field-kitchen arrived by night with frozen fat on top of the food; and rockslides and falls of earth, and not just rocks, for a privy collapsed, too, where seven men drowned in the running shit... and there are no statues to commemorate those seven. But when the first garlanded train opened a new railroad, Queen Victoria sent a telegram to Kaiser Wilhelm: "Hats off, nephew, to these iron men!" You're too young to know about all this, and even we ourselves have long since forgotten the exact number who were left there, squashed to pulp or cut to bits or stuck head down in a collapsed rock wall, so pick-axes were needed to get their corpses out... Fathers and mothers, widows and orphans mourned those who died for it, tearless, not even knowing where the graves were, but believing firmly, even in their grief, that whatever had happened to those who died, the railway survived, and whoever survives is right, and can be right only insofar as he exists... When I look back, I look back at thousands and hundreds of thousands who toiled their whole lives long, if they were lucky, that is. For you must know that sprouts and Bulgarian roses and camomile weren't always our main worry. There were field-guns and howitzers and ammunition, and six horses and forty men... And if a man didn't like what was going on, and uttered a word, they'd have him tied to the fenders of two engines which were then pulled apart—slowly, as slowly as possible, or, if there were too many complaints, the men were tied, one by one, to a fender, and the engine would simply push, until the poor old coffee-grinder had its wheels spinning in ankle-deep puddles of blood... Then the last few of those who were still left were just thrown into the red-hot furnace which then puffed a wonderful smell of fried meat into the air, appetizing it was, provided one hadn't thrown, up before... Yes, many suffered for its sake, but that's nothing to how much we still have to go through, for we can only live through it, and it it can only come to life through us. And so, perhaps we do talk too much, or scream at each other or get carried away in our own way, whenever we talk or dream or think of the railway, we're capable of anything, everything. Except for one thing: thinking coolly and acting with a clear head as we pour the quicklime over the rotting sprouts... Can you understand all this, young man?

PÉTER *(His head on one side, he's asleep.)*

MIKLÓS Can't you hear me? *(No answer. Miklós takes a closer look)* Look, Pál; he's fainted!

VERONKA *(Rushes in)* Oh, Péter! Oh, they've scared him to death! He's dead!

WIDOW Standing up? Impossible.

VERONKA Yes, standing up. I've heard of soldiers stiffening as they stood, from shell-shock.

PÁL He isn't dead. His eyes are closed... Touch him.

MIKLÓS Who, me? It's you who brought him here.

VERONKA *(Goes to Péter, touches him, Péter opens his eyes)* He was only asleep.

MIKLÓS *(Startled)* Asleep?

MIMI *(Disappointed)* Asleep?

PÁL Asleep.

WIDOW *(Triumphantly)* Asleep!

PÉTER *(Tired, friendly)* What's the matter? *(Smiles)* I'm sorry, I fell asleep. *(Seeing how they stand about him, in bleak silence)* Has anything happened?

PÁL You fell asleep, son.

PÉTER Yes, it sometimes happens, even while I'm studying...

MIKLÓS *(Angry)* But we weren't studying; we were talking about the railway!

PÉTER I fell asleep, because all this suffering, mourning, shouting and screaming has nothing to do with the railway. I've never thought about it before, myself, but if these are the inescapable appendages of loving the railway...

MIMI *(Covering her eyes)* Appendages!

PÉTER Yes, appendages... then, I do not love the railway.

MIMI You don't love it?

MIKLÓS *(Darkly)* You don't love it?

WIDOW Just as I reported: "Among themselves, those two talked about it as if it was a pound of potatoes".

MIKLÓS *(Looks hard at Péter)* I must warn you: a Bokor and the railway are one and the same!

PÉTER Then I'm very sorry; I don't want to offend anyone, but... I don't want to be a Bokor either.

(A heavy, threatening silence)

MIKLÓS What are you?

PÉTER Anything... Let's just say that I'm not a Bokor.

MIKLÓS No?

PÉTER Rather not...

MIKLÓS *(Threatening)* Do you know what you are saying?

PÁL Of course he doesn't. He's young and foolish... once, when I was young and I got roaring drunk at Česky Brod, I yelled at a Baroness Rothschild in her first-class compartment, "I don't want to be a Bokor, ha-ha!"

(They all stare at him. Their enmity suddenly turns on to Pál.)

MIMI He's laughing! He thinks it's funny!

MIKLÓS And you defend him? Man, do you know what you've done?

WIDOW It's all your fault!

VERONKA You and your promises!

MIKLÓS All I wanted you to do was to come tomorrow and help me, because I'll have a tough day. But you, you old layabout, only want to go to the pictures; rather than to lift a little finger, you let him loose among us... *(Collapses)* What's to become of me?

MIMI *(To Pál)* Before we met you, he didn't have these attacks.

VERONKA It's your fault that I can't have a child!

MIMI And that I'm losing my husband!

PÉTER And that I won't be taken on at the railway!

MIKLÓS And that the sky will fall in on me tomorrow!

MIMI And you allowed yourself to be cuddled, you should've died of shame! It wasn't my kindness you wanted, it was my blood!

PÁL But why did you give it? Who asked you for it? Did I want to live? You insisted I should have it; but not because you cared an inch for me, but because all of you, every last one of you, wanted something for himself. You selfish lot!

MIKLÓS *(Gathering the last remnants of his strength)* And you, if I may ask, for what purpose did you wish to use our blood? Just to sit by the river?

VERONKA And eat ice-cream?

MIMI And just to go and sit in some flea-pit, pumped full of precious railway blood?

VERONKA All right; you can whistle for *my* blood.

MIMI Mine too. I need it elsewhere.

WIDOW *(Grabs the umbrella from Pál's hand)* Give me my umbrella; and no more blood!

PÁL *(Pulls back the umbrella)* Don't let me down like this! I live, I live; and I've even come to enjoy life; looking back in my two lives the best thing, the only beautiful thing, has been the happiness of the past ten days... I even got a fishing rod. And yesterday I even succeeded in doubling up on my pleasures... I went to the pictures and I bought a large cone of mixed ice-cream, four different flavours, and the whole world changed... It was a two-part film. It will be continued next Wednesday: I'd like to live till Wednesday... *(He looks around; sees icy faces, frozen silence)*

MIMI Not with our blood.

MIKLÓS *(Mustering his final strength, pushing aside Mimi's helping hand, panting with exhaustion)* Yes... I will be there tomorrow in my proper place, where duty calls me... and I will take the responsibility for... all the risks... *(Falls to the ground)* With God on our side, who's against us?

PÁL If not, then not... We're back where we started. Keep your precious blood. I will live as long as I'll live, and not a minute longer... *(Holds out his hand)* It's raining... Never mind, dear Bokor family; I know your habits... the main thing is not to get wet. *(He opens the umbrella and holds out his hand to the Widow)* Come, madam. *(To Veronka)* You too, my pretty. *(To Mimi and Miklós)* What about you? I know you don't like the rain. *(They all squeeze in under the umbrella, except Péter. Pál calls him too)* What about you? Aren't you a Bokor?

PÉTER *(Steps under the umbrella)* What can I do? I was born a Bokor.

JUDIT *(Comes in)* Hulloa!

PÁL *(While the others try to find shelter on top of one another)* Come on, easy does it... you don't have to push. It only needs a little understanding, a little co-operation, and we can manage in a very small space... the main thing is, we won't get wet.

JUDIT Hulloa!

MIMI Something is dripping on my neck over here.

JUDIT Just imagine, they've given me a job in Information!

PÁL Come on, come on... come nearer... Come, you can fit in under my arm... Are we all here? Go on, enjoy yourselves... let's make the most of the little time we have. What about a little song? I'll set the note ... La-a-a-a!

JUDIT Mummy, Daddy, I started work today!

(Pál starts, then the others join in: humming gently at first, then gradually louder until they're practically yelling; they sing the same sickly waltz from Lilac Time.)

JUDIT *(Tries to shout them down)* Hi! What are you all doing? Calm down! There wasn't a hitch anywhere on the railways! *(The singing slowly grows fainter. Judit turns to the audience)* Ladies and gentlemen! The summer timetable took effect from today. It was still raining this morning, but the holiday-makers set out all the same, and though there were a few delays, they all reached their destinations. All the relief trains arrived on schedule, except number two thousand and seven, which was coupled to an engine under repair with all its wheels missing. *(Looks down on the list in her hand)* The Pannonia Express was three hours late because the bridge at Česky Brod collapsed during the night; but the passengers managed to climb over the ravine and continued their journey on a relief train. However, the Orient Express was on time all the way to Szolnok; but the rioting students in Paris mistook it for the presidential train and painted it all over with highly offensive drawings which frightened the station staff at Szolnok into changing the wrong points. It was derailed. *(Looking at another list)* I have just received information that the derailed train is standing across the line, facing the exit, which is causing further delays at that particularly crowded railway junction. However, I am happy to announce that at Hatvan, where two milk trains backed into each other this morning, there were no casualties, though the station is ankle-deep in milk. At Budapest, oddly enough, they directed the arriving Wiener Walzer to the Departure platform instead of Arrivals, so that the train was immediately directed back to Vienna, passengers and all. We should like to ask everyone concerned to meet their Viennese visitors not on Platform Five, but at the Westbahnhof in Vienna. I've just heard that it wasn't milk which spilt at Hatvan, but petrol, and it has set fire not only to the coal depot but also to another transport loaded with pianos. The flare of the pianos and the melody of the snapping strings will be a pleasant memory to all travellers through the station of Hatvan. *(Looks down)* We are informed that they have managed to free

the line at Szolnok by pushing the engine into the town where it is now standing in front of the cinema. This means fortunately the worst is past. The special train from the Vatican has passed through Hungarian territory without a hitch, except for one pious signalman who was so deeply moved by the sight of the Pope, just then having his lunch, that he signalled the train towards the eastern border and His Holiness the Vicar of Christ has just entered the U.S.S.R. After all the good news perhaps we may add that for the time being, services have been suspended to Austria, Bulgaria, Poland and Rumania. But the railway is still functioning perfectly, and I am pleased to confirm that all railway personnel are back at their posts, including all the Bokors, that is, Pál Bokor, Mr. and Mrs. Miklós Bokor, Mr. and Mrs. Péter Bokor and also Mrs. Bokor, the triple railway widow. As a result of their additional efforts over the holiday week-end, services will be resumed the day after tomorrow. In the meanwhile, that is, during the holiday week-end, we are requesting the public to refrain from using the railways except in cases of emergency. Travellers are advised to avoid the railways whenever possible and make use of alternative transport; to travel by air, bus, car, or, for the sake of their own health, on foot... We wish you all a happy journey!

(Judit and the Cast wave their handkerchiefs, wishing the audience a good journey.)

THE END

(Translated by Mari Kuttna)

SURVEYS

SÁNDOR SZALAI

COMPLEX SOCIAL EFFECTS OF NEW TECHNOLOGY

Principle and side effects

As one of the grandmasters of pharmaceutical research wittily commented in a medical debate, "If a drug has no side effects then it has no main one either!" Only the form of his paradoxical comment was in jest; its content contains a very real truth. We can hardly expect something which truly and efficiently influences certain functions in as complicated a system as the human body to only affect one function and, moreover, as desired with no unforeseen and possibly undesirable effects on other functions of the systems of the body.

In reality all modern pharmacology texts, in addition to defining use, dosages and main effects of medicines, devote considerable space to descriptions of possible or even normal side effects, which are, in most cases, simply unpleasant but sometimes unequivocally dangerous. If someone with an allergic ailment, such as hay fever or hives, takes antihistamines, then generally either accompanying instructions or the physician himself will warn the patient of the drowsy effect of these highly effective anti-allergic medicines, and therefore drivers should be particularly careful when taking them. Acetilsalycilic acid is highly efficient in reducing fever and alleviating cold symptoms but often causes stomach complaints. Morphium and its derivatives are powerful pain killers, but in pharmaceutical listings they are marked with two crosses to indicate they are habit-forming with serious consequences for the nervous system and general health.

As we know, before new drugs and medical techniques are introduced, hundreds, even thousands, of preliminary experiments are carried out on animals to try to establish whether or not the newly discovered drug or technique is really effective, and, if it is, then under what conditions and which dosage does it operate towards the therapeutic objective. As is to be expected, they are just as careful in examining the effects of a drug on other organs and organic processes, and when these side effects are undesirable or directly harmful, they endeavour to confine it within satisfactory limits. There are highly efficient drugs which are known to have a remarkable effect on certain circulative processes, but which are nevertheless not in use, or only used as a last resort, for it is known that an effective dose also involves dangerous side effects. This category includes, for example, certain anti-cancer medicaments or, more precisely, medicines which effectively hinder or slow down the development of malignant tumours but which, unfortunately, also do serious harm to healthy tissue. For this

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reason they either must not be used at all or, if used, they require special conditions and great care.

In introducing new technology and new products into *production* and thereby into the system of social interactions, we cannot, unfortunately, boast that in the past we have exercised precaution similar to the medical profession in foreseeing and considering effects in other areas of social life, possibly far removed from production, which were no directly intended or planned (side effects) and which result from the application and dissemination of technology.

Of course the significance of the medical analogy should not be exaggerated. Social structure, social functioning and social laws are by no means similar to those of living organisms, and the role of production technology is totally different from that of therapeutic technology. But the analogy does exist insofar as there is, in both cases, interference in an extremely complex system of interaction made up of a baffling number of individual functional components. The consequences of introducing new production techniques or new products are by no means limited to precisely that organizational sector where the "innovation" in question appears to be completely justified.

The effects of new technology in areas far removed from production

For instance, when a new production process is introduced, a very thorough examination is generally completed of the *direct* economic advantages and disadvantages which are expected, for example, effects on production costs, raw materials, marketability, the time required for new investments to reimburse themselves, etc. To a certain extent (although not always with the same care and foresight) the possible changes which the new technology may cause in work structure, in labour safety and in working conditions within the factory are also considered. But, for the most part, it can be stated that the further removed the socio-economic consequences of a new production process or product are from the industrial sphere, the greater the possibility is that the care of the planners does *not* cover them.

This is clearly seen in present problems of pollution or, to be more precise, in the restoration of environmental conditions which have been destroyed—in some cases to the point of endangering society itself—by the broad scale and extensive application of advanced industrial technology in a manner not always demonstrating satisfactory foresight. Existing "all around us" and generally not being the focal point of our momentary activity and interest, we tend to view the environment as "given", to ignore it until "trouble" appears, at a time when *curing* the problem can often be far more difficult and costly than *prevention* would have been. Characteristically, "trouble", in most cases, develops in areas considered peripheral or unrelated to the activity causing the trouble, in areas regarded as only "environmental" and which, precisely for this reason, were ignored in the planning and introduction of the trouble-causing activity. For example, the managers of certain chemical plants carefully calculated that it was cheaper to pay the health and water authorities' fines for water contamination, even at progressive rates, than to construct filter and purification installations at enormous investment costs. Then came the "side effects" when wells in distant areas became contaminated and water pipe systems required reconstruction, when the entire system of irrigated farming became endangered over large areas, when recreation areas were abandoned because of the elimination of swimming possibilities, when an end came to river fishing—not to mention angling, the favourite sport of the chemical plant workers themselves. In brief, over an extensive area the entire natural environment deteriorated, human life deteriorated and, with it, working and production conditions as well.

This example is, of course, *obvious*, ruthless exploitation and no particular foresight would have been needed to prevent it. In itself the fact that responsible authorities had already issued fines (unsatisfactory in amount) for pollution of the water would indicate that foresight did in fact exist. The only problem was that the foresight was not satisfactorily implemented in industrial planning and plant administration.

However, the situation is by no means always this simple. Let us examine the introduction of various types of "throw away" packaging. In the beginning it was easier for the buyer to no longer have to return bottles to the shop. But this victorious technique had a socio-economic "side effect" which had not been taken into consideration. According to present estimates 15–20,000 million dirty, broken and useless bottles are accumulated in the garbage dumps of the United States alone, not to mention the enormous quantity of synthetic boxes and bottles, materials which will not decompose in the foreseeable future.

Or let us look at another, far more important, example with even greater ramifications. The use of the automobile not only changed the mode and economic conditions of local and long distance transportation, it also developed entirely new branches of industrial production and consumption. A careful analysis of technical and economic parameters and trends at a comparatively early stage of automobile manufacturing might have been able to predict these factors with no great difficulty—and in fact certain enterpreneurs of remarkable technical and economic intuition, such as Henry Ford, instinctively felt them in advance. But who would have thought about the *social* effects of the spread of the automobile, that it would completely change the settlement structure of cities and villages, that it would increasingly determine living patterns of people in general, their use of leisure time, cultural and health facilities (school buses, mobile libraries, mobile cancer examination and X-ray centers that it would create a completely new type and scope of tourism, etc... In many ways urban life, transportation and, in general, socio-economic organization is suffering from the fact that the complex social effects of the car were not satisfactorily foreseen and "planned for."

Acceleration of technical development and need for prognoses

The development and broader-scale application of methods serving a prognostic analysis of the complex social effects of new technology is a primary and urgent task, if for no other reason than because today the time lapse between the discovery of new technology and its broad scale application has become immeasurably shorter; under present conditions new technology can spread far more rapidly and complex social effects can appear far earlier than in the past. The electric motor took sixty-five years and the X-ray tube about twenty years to reach the first stage of their development, but the transistor only required a three-year introductory period and in less than fifteen years transistor pocket radios operating on cheap batteries were transmitting radio broadcasts to areas of Africa where electricity was not even known and where there is still no sign of electric lines in zones of up to hundreds of kilometres in size.

To a certain extent a prognostic analysis of the complex social effects of new technology is an *easier* task than forecasting new scientific and technical developments. In recognizing new technological possibilities and needs, the "prophet" must compete with the creative power and ingenuity of the most outstanding human brains. And although the *recognition* of new possibilities and needs entails far less than the *realization* of new possibilities and the *satisfaction* of new needs, scientific forecasters must nevertheless "discover" the future, its potentiality and multifaceted alternatives.

The situation is different in the case of a prognostic analysis of the complex social effects of new technology. Here the advantage is that no matter how short the time lapse between the introduction and spread of new technology, in most cases analysis can start with new technology which either already exists in the bud, as in research-development laboratories, or which is at least approaching solution and has even withstood experimentation, but which is being held back because conditions for widespread use do not yet exist.

If we could succeed in regularly producing a prognostic analysis of anticipated complex social effects of only this kind of new technology, "foresight" of five to ten years, or in many cases fifteen to twenty years, could be obtained which would contribute to improved socio-economic planning and management.

The difficulty is, of course, that we are short of detailed scientific information on the complex *social* effects of new technology, effects which lead to far-reaching interrelationships through multidirectional and diverse transpositions.

Let us again return to the example of the automobile. Today the number of privately owned cars is rapidly increasing in most socialist countries and is likely to continue to rise. The process appears irreversible irrespective of how public highways or bus networks are developed. Our planners are now taking into account the *direct* technical and economic effects of this trend. But what kind of systematic information exists on the changes in the way of life of car owners with respect to distribution of household work, social relations, cultural conditions and, in general, with respect to their entire behavioural patterns? For instance, how willing will workers be in accepting employment at greater distances from their homes, possibly outside of their residential area completely? Since the problem of transporting goods home is ended, will they acquire household necessities in greater quantity and for longer periods of time? Will they satisfy cultural and recreational needs in distant centers which are on a higher level than local activities? Will days off be spent farther away from home? Will annual holidays be taken in bits and pieces to take advantage of sport and recreation possibilities according to season and area, instead of travelling by train to a single holiday resort for the entire vacation period? As soon as every tenth or fifth person has a car, the change in daily, weekly, and seasonal mobility of the society will have an enormous influence on all branches of social life with a resultant *change in parameters* which are decisive in social planning and organization. And is not this change in parameters just as important to forecast as petrol, oil and tyre consumption, as junctures in city and highway-network planning and, in general, as the *technical and economic* conditions and consequences of the spread of automobilism?

The tasks of social research

One prerequisite for a successful prognostic analysis of the complex social effects of new technology is a large-scale expansion of concrete *social research*, especially in sociology and socio-psychology, on life styles, social relations, how technical means are used and how people react to technical innovations in their lives. Another, perhaps even more difficult, prerequisite is to change the technical and economic *organizational approach* so it would satisfactorily take into consideration the individual and collective reaction of people to technology.

Experiences in this field have been rather bitter. Modern production conditions and enormous investment requirements of large-scale production installations have made it necessary to introduce multi-shift or even round-the-clock (including week-end) work schedules in many industries. In many cases such work schedules were introduced throughout broad strata of workers without

a preliminary examination of changes which would have to be made in diverse social institutions and services so that the multi-shift or round-the-clock workers would not be placed in a disadvantageous position compared to other workers and would not be subject to difficulties in life with which they could not cope. "Minor factors" which were not satisfactorily considered included problems in household work and family life in general. For example, if a man and wife worked different shifts how would children be cared for and how could time be spent with them? Or, how could a person shop, handle official matters, participate in sports or other recreation if his sleeping time was during the day? Were workers' homes provided with blinds or curtains to darken a room for day-time sleeping, or were week-end excursion rates for train travel extended to cover workers whose Sunday was on Tuesday or Thursday? A thousand and one examples could be listed where *satisfactory* planning and *satisfactory* foresight based on concrete examinations could have solved, or at least alleviated, the problems of workers in the new system. Taken separately each factor might seem "minute" but the *total effect*, nevertheless, led to great opposition for a long time against multi-shift and round-the-clock work, to dissatisfaction among the workers and their families and to a significant decline in the productivity of shifts at "extraordinary times" as well as to a decline in the efficiency of the technical and organizational innovation itself. Even today it cannot be said that we have overcome the consequences of the new working schedule.

If we were to ask what kind of means are at our disposal for forecasting complex social effects of technology, then the first, and somewhat strange answer, would be, our own *common sense and social intuition*.

A significant number of far-reaching, transformed social effects resulting from the introduction and dissemination of new technology are potentially predictable as possibilities *if*, in addition to measuring direct production and economic efficiency, we simply *consider* the social possibilities for such "long-term effects" and if, with a bit of social imagination, we systematically run through all relevant branches and fields of social activity and ask: What might be the possible consequences of the new technology?

Many still debate—no doubt with justification—whether or not Alexander Graham Bell should actually be considered the inventor of the telephone. It is certain that the technical principle for the electronic relay of the human voice was recognized by a number of others before him; in fact, operative experimental installations were built earlier by Philipp Reis, Elisha Gray and others. However, in the final analysis, it is not unjust to consider Bell the true "father" of the telephone for he unquestionably surpassed all others in his outstanding foresight concerning the social effects of telephone communication, namely the *social* utilization of the telephone. On 25 March 1878, shortly after he had received the patent for his electro-acoustical device and at a time when not a single telephone was in actual social use anywhere in the world, he made a *social prognosis* in which, as he put it, it could be assumed that cables containing telephone lines could be placed underground or on poles from which wires would branch off to residences, shops and factories, all of which would be connected to a main cable in a central office where wires could be linked as desired to establish a direct connection between two arbitrary points... Although such a plan could not have been realized at the time, it was Bell's sound conviction that this would be the consequence of introducing the telephone to the public. In fact, he believed that lines would link up the centers of telephone companies in different cities and that people living in one part of the country would be able to talk to people in distant areas...

Here was a man who, with nothing more

than an electro-acoustical tool in his hands, predicted not only the establishment of telephone networks and centers supplying offices, companies and private homes with telephones and the social need for long-distance telephone calls, but who also anticipated the many-sided effects of the total technology on state and economic administration, industry and commerce and lastly, but by no means least, on everyday life.

Bell's foresight with respect to the social use of the telephone and the social effects of the spread of telephone technology demonstrates the value of a satisfactory *social forecast* from the point of view of *technical and economic* planning.

Our present serious environmental pollution problems would seem to indicate that in the past this kind of foresight was not practised in a satisfactory manner. Eliminating certain environmental dangers of industrial origin which threaten urban life, the rest and recreation facilities of workers and, in certain coastal areas, the health of us all will most likely cost far more than what would have been the cost of prevention.

It is not only a question of environmental protection but of ensuring in a far more general way the undisturbed possibilities of modern social development through satisfactory prognostic analyses of the complex social effects of new technology.

Methodological considerations

In mentioning the significance of *common sense and social intuition* and of a satisfactory *planning orientation* that goes beyond production and economic efficiency evaluations of new technology, we by no means wished to underestimate the significance of modern predictive methods.

As far as methodological foundations are concerned, methods used in predicting the complex *social* effects of new technology are *not* essentially different from practices in *other* areas of scientific and technical forecasting. An entire arsenal of methodology can be adopted for prognostic analyses, ranging from trend extrapolation to matrix interaction—analyses, conceptual, mathematic and computer models, simulation techniques, on through scenario comparison and "Delphaic" methods which subjugate intuition, hunches and imagination to a certain amount of discipline and control.

According to a resolution by the Standing Committee on the Coordination of Scientific and Technical Research of the CMEA, an international symposium was held in Moscow from 23 to 27 March 1970 under the title "Methodological Questions in Preparing Prognoses of the Development of Science and Technology". Over 350 CMEA members and Yugoslavia representatives discussed 60 papers which provided the fullest perspective yet on the present state of scientific and technical forecasting methods in socialist countries.

In examining the studies and documentary materials of this symposium, it appears that here too, at this plenary session of scientific and technical experts, interest was to a great extent limited to prognostic *technical and economic* efficiency evaluations of new technology in the strict sense of the term and only rarely were the *social* effects of new technology touched upon in the broader sense of social, socio-psychological, everyday living conditions, of the individual and collective behaviour of people and of those important social institutions and administrative bodies which not only decisively contribute to the successful intorduction and *use* of new technology but also to reducing the total technical and economic efficiency or even to failure in application.

In V. A. Lisichkin's introductory paper in the plenary session of the symposium, "Theoretical and Methodological Questions in the Preparation of Scientific and Technical Prognoses", the list of necessary factors for scientific and technical forecasts included (true, at the end of the list) "an evaluation of possible *social* consequences,"

but very little was heard on *social* consequences in the two sessions devoted to prognosis.

Somehow it seemed that technological efficiency was examined in an exaggeratedly one-sided manner with profitability as the sole criterion. Planners seemed to give insufficient attention to the fact that no matter how important the growth of the national *income* may be, it is, nevertheless, only *one* of the factors which determine growth in national *welfare*. If the complex social effects of new technology are not adequately considered, it may be that a rise in per capita income does not run concomitant with a proportionate rise in the welfare of the people. In extreme cases, it may happen that social "side effects" liquidate all profit from and render inoperative technology which in itself is highly efficient.

However, it is not just prevention of *damaging* social repercussions which justifies prognostic analyses of the social effects of new technology. The truth is that in a great many cases such an analysis reveals the possibility of *exploiting favourable* social effects through advance planning. In the case of existing technology which has not yet been generally applied, this is an important point for consideration. For instance, in the gradual construction of telephone networks automatic dialing without intermediary switchboard personnel should be expanded and the possibilities explored of using electromagnetic vibration relay systems (for instance, via communication satellites) instead of lines to make the costs of long-distant calls independent of effective geographical distance. Connecting the telephone networks of socialist countries with one another would contribute in the most efficient possible manner to *socialist integration*. Cooperation between two factories in two different socialist countries could develop in quite a different manner with day-to-day contact and exchanges of opinion in live conversations between directors and workers of the two factories than with letters and telegram exchanges, sending drafts and tables back and forth and occasional reciprocal visits. Yet, what institutions in our countries deal with an examination of the *social* effects of increasing local and long distance telephone calls per capita per annum for example, or increasing telephones in offices, factories and the public at large? As far as we know, there is not any extensive social research to learn even what the telephone *is used for*, under given conditions, by offices, factories and private persons, and for what purposes *it could be* used for which it is not.

Even if the arsenal of prognostic methods is not particularly well-supplied at the moment and even if serious effort is needed to learn how to handle these methods, it must nevertheless be admitted that the greatest difficulty in prognostic analyses of complex *social* effects of new technology does not lie principally in the shortcomings of available *methods*. It lies far more in the fact that there are too few concrete social research projects, specific sociological, socio-psychological surveys on the concrete everyday lives of people, their living conditions, behaviour and reactions.

Our *social* data collection lags far behind the technical and production apparatus in this respect. We do not have adequate information on the details of social interactions among individuals and groups, nor on the parameters and variables of everyday life or social life. In fact we only have the aggregate data of traditional social statistics on which to complete social prognoses, which is definitely inadequate. A far more refined data breakdown and much more information on the human *personality* and human reactions are needed which can only come from a large scale development of concrete social research, and there are highly promising signs in our countries at the moment that this will take place.

At present developed capitalist countries are also dealing with social evaluations in their technological assessments. Significant scientific literature already exist in the West

and important research centers and schools have been established. If our approach is sufficiently critical, it is worthwhile studying their work and adapting certain methods to our own requirements.

What must fundamentally distinguish our prognostic evaluation of technology from "technological assessments" designed for the objectives of capitalism is not the application of one or another method but the *system of values* used in evaluation. In our case the system of values can only be that of socialism, as well as being the *objective* of the entire process, which is, of course, the trouble-free development of socialist society and of socialist man.

HUNGARY AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

An Exhibition at the National Museum

The Compromise of 1867 "leaves us with the dubious glory of being the stake at which the Austrian Eagle will be burnt..." wrote Lajos Kossuth, the leader of the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of 1848–49, about the agreement concluded by Austrian and Hungarian statesmen. Kossuth, in his exile, often expressed the view that the Compromise could not stop the disintegration of the Hapsburg Empire, at most it prolonged its existence. At the same time he sounded a warning. In the eyes of the world the Compromise turned Hungary into "an accomplice of the Austrians" keeping the peoples of the area down as a result of the fatal German-oriented foreign policy.

Although Kossuth was in many ways right in his criticism of the Compromise of 1867, the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy did not directly and inevitably result from it but from the fact that the Dual Monarchy lacked the strength to renew itself and produce a democratic reconstruction at home.

The strength and vitality of the Hungarian part of the Monarchy were much in evidence at the turn of the century when Hungary developed into a modern capitalist country. This is brought out by an exhibition at the Hungarian National Museum which presents the country's *fin de siècle*, showing developments between 1890 and the War.

The contradictory nature of Hungarian development was illustrated by the fact that, although the period between the War of Independence of 1848–49 and the turn of the century had radically transformed Hungarian life and brought it substantially closer to Western European standards, granted even a degree of bourgeois growth; nonetheless most of the old problems remained unsolved.

Given a semi-feudal economy and society, bourgeois democracy could not really flourish. There were problems aplenty and foreign policy created additional ones.

And yet the economic situation appeared favourable—at least for industry. Between 1898 and 1913 the power supplies on which modern industry, mining and transportation depended showed a major expansion. The total production of energy carriers trebled, and the output of electricity grew sixfold. The total value of production of the manufacturing industry was twice as high in 1913 as in 1898. Hungarian industrial output with an annual growth rate of 8.5 per cent was

catching up with Western European countries, which registered an average annual growth rate of 4–5 per cent. This overall picture covered great inequalities and wide and deep gaps. Coal mining, for instance, hardly made any headway; steel production, with only 30 kilograms of pig iron per capita, was far behind the Austrian figure of 60, the German one of 250 and the American one of 326 kg per head. At the same time certain branches of engineering took great strides forward. The new types of railway engines constructed in this country, Kálmán Kandó's electric locomotive produced by the Ganz Works and his designs for the electrification of railways were of the first rank.

At the same time, Hungary was an agricultural society with large estates and semi-feudal conditions out of harmony with the requirements of industrial growth. The effects of capitalism in agriculture were to strengthen the economic and political position of the big landowners with a concomitant decay of peasant farms and the growing poverty of the agrarian proletariat which led to mass emigration to America at the turn of the century. Nearly two million peasants, mainly Slovaks and Ukrainians, whose homes were within the borders of the country at the time, left.

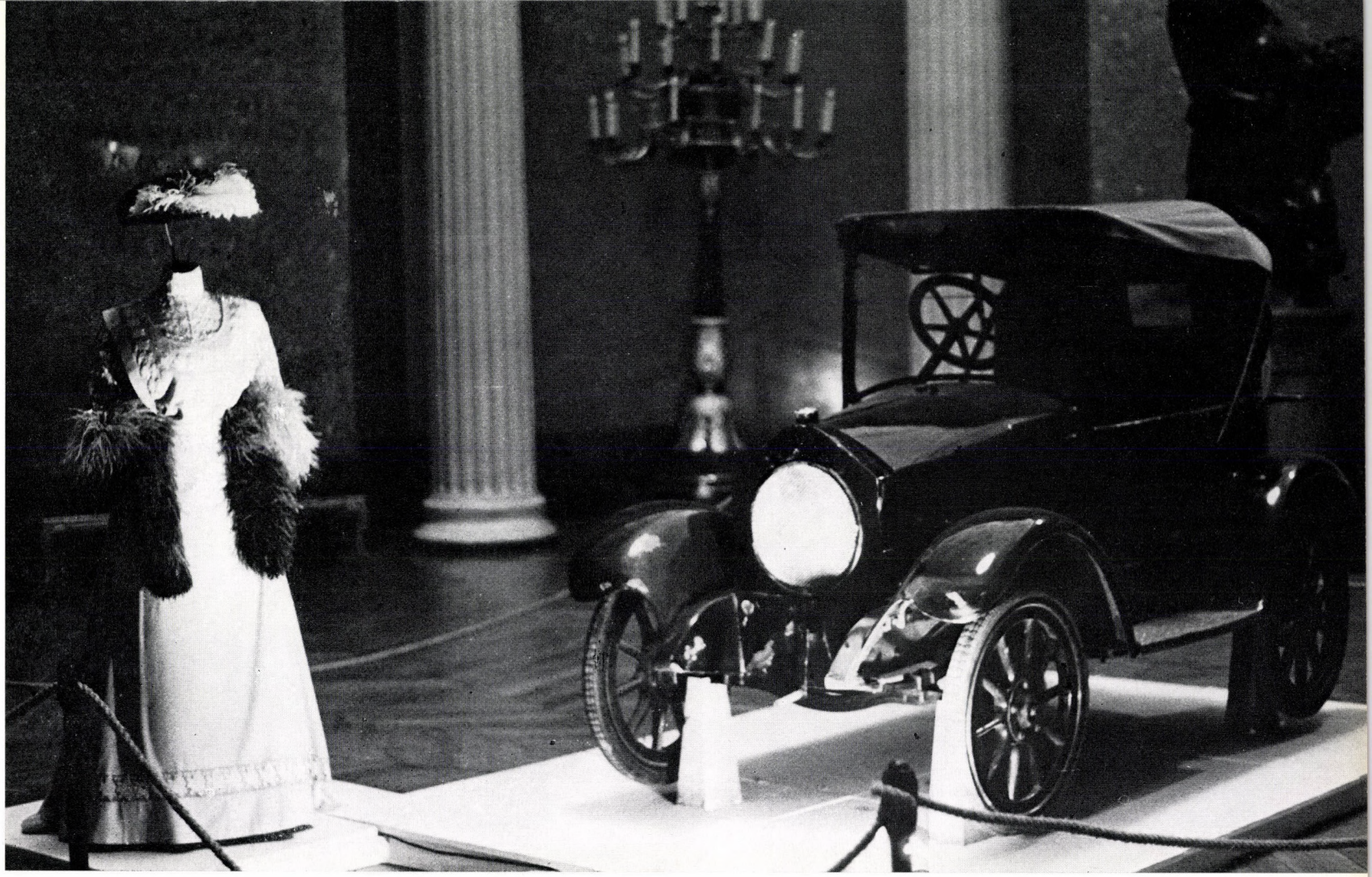
Despite these socio-economic conditions, capitalist development and the acceleration of urbanization led to important Hungarian inventions and outstanding contributions were made in art, literature and music.

*

This rich and colourful though contradictory socio-economic and cultural progress is the subject of the present exhibiton at the Hungarian National Museum. The car which János Csonka, one of the Hungarian inventors of the carburettor, designed and built can be regarded as a symbol. The automobile which stands in the museum lobby dates from 1909, and can still be driven at a maximum speed of 40 kilometres per hour. The gas lamp from the Budapest City Park which stands close by, together with the wax dummy resplendent in "her" period elegance and the large genre painting of the famous Gerbeaud Patisserie, the work of Lajos Márk, who died in America, with the figure of the Empress Elizabeth of Austria-Hungary, the wife of Francis Joseph, create an atmosphere suggestive of the turn of the century.

The main hall of the National Museum, where most of the exhibition is accommodated, had been the conference room of the Upper House, before the present Parliament building was completed in 1896. The visitor who enters the hall will face a painting of Budapest from the 1880s. In front of the big canvass dummies display the typical dress of different social classes of the period: the formal clothes of the nobility, a uniform of the officers of the hussars, tails, the attire of middle-class men and their ladies, peasant costumes and the clothes of labourers and miners. Handbags, buckles, hatpins, combs, kerchiefs, fans and other accessories, in the eclectic and Art Nouveau taste of the period, are also on view.

Time and again the sound of a barrel organ with copper cylinders which once provided the music at the Kugler Patisserie, the predecessor of Gerbeaud's, is heard in the background. Another sound effect is the still sonorous voice of Kossuth in his old age as recorded in 1890 in Turin. In contrast with the sweetish tones of the "happy era of stable peace" under the reign of Francis Joseph, it is pregnant with grave social problems and injustices. Other objects that speak eloquently of the period include relics of parliamentary disputes, things recalling the memory of the leaders of political parties, the bell István Tisza, "strong man" of the times, rang to call the House to order, some of his personal possessions, and the shirt-waist of the Empress Elizabeth of Austria still showing the mark of the fatal stab of the dagger wielded by an Italian anarchist in Geneva which killed her. The splendid



KÁLMÁN KÓNYA

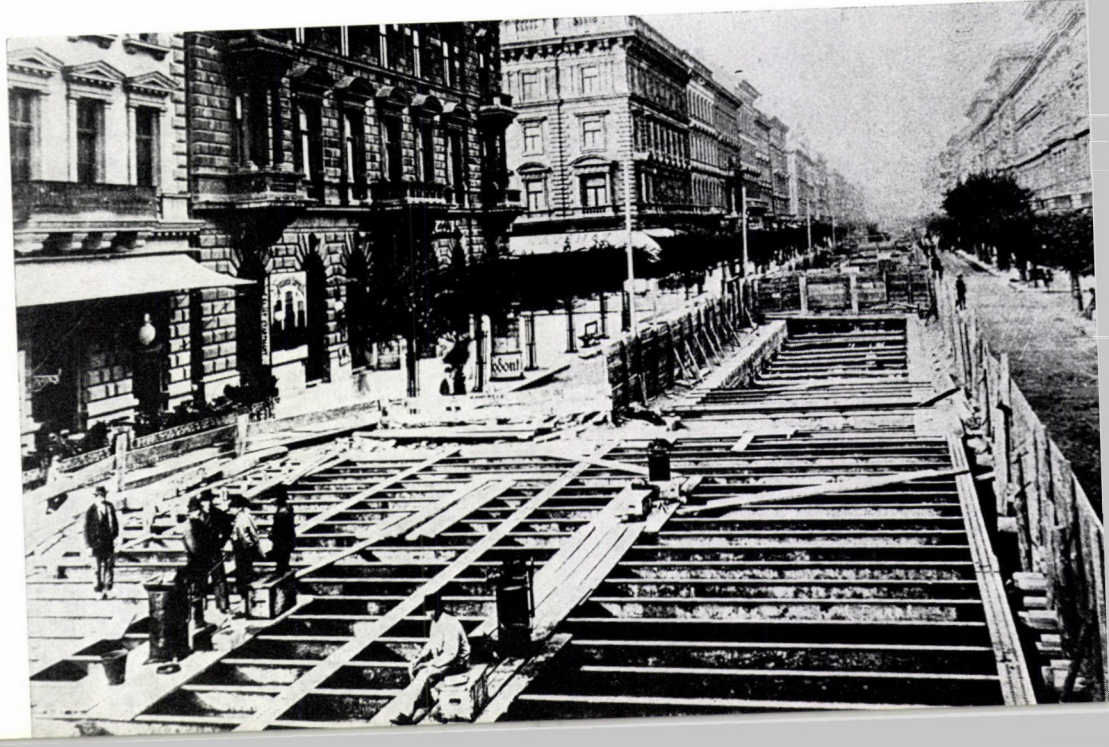
The first Hungarian automobile, constructed by János Csonka, 1909

GYÖRGY KLÖ

A view of Budapest with the Elizabeth Bridge under construction, taken in 1898 by György Klösz

The Budapest underground—the first on the Continent—under construction, 1895

GYÖRGY KLÖ

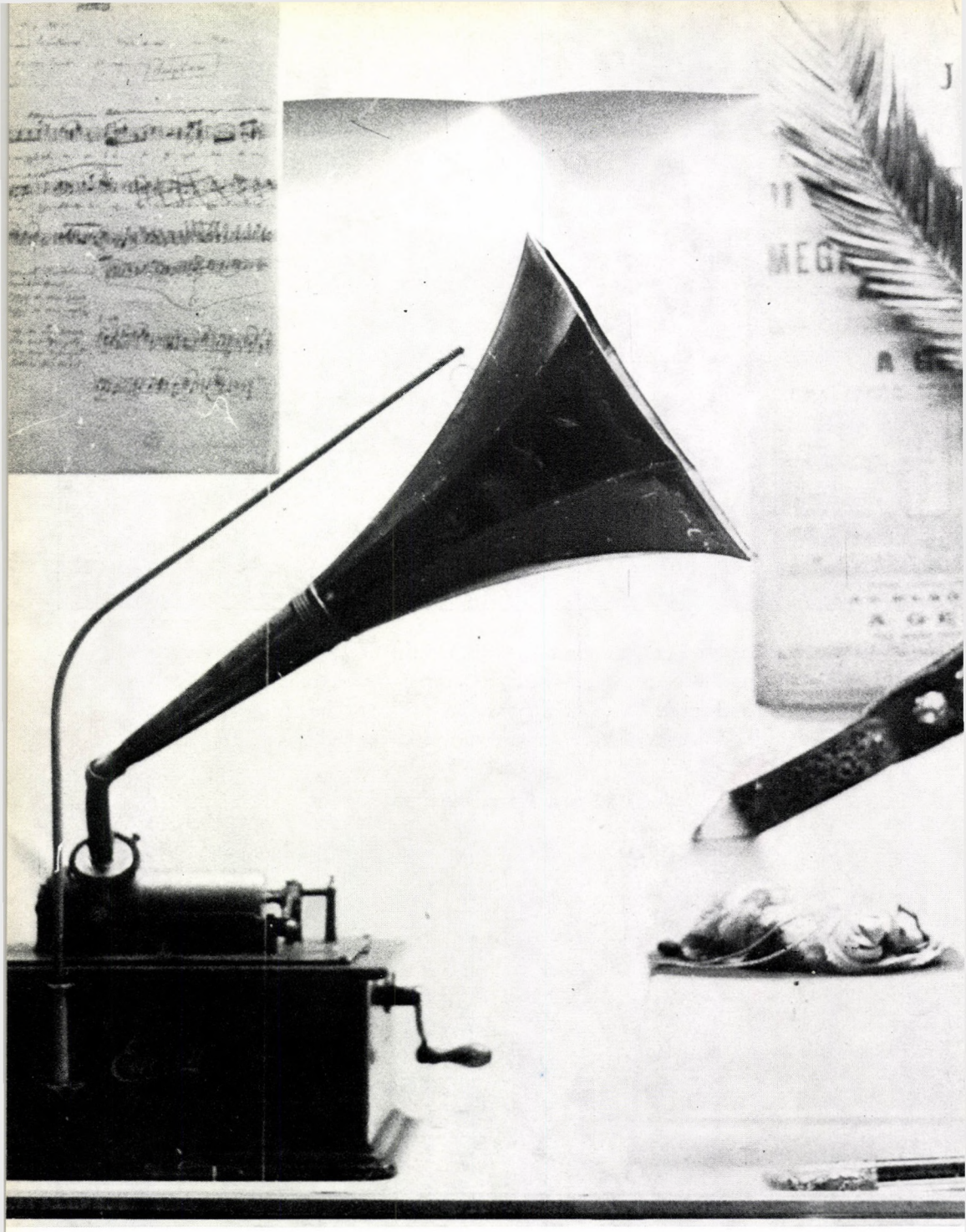


GYÖRGY KLÖSZ

Part of the Budapest Grand Boulevard, 1896. On the street floor of the ornate tower in the middle the shaded windows of the famous Café New York where writers and intellectuals of the time met. Today the building houses several editorial offices, a literary cafeehouse, and the publishers of NHQ

The Budapest Grand Boulevard, 1896

GYÖRGY KLÖSZ



KÁLMÁN KÓNYA

The phonograph Bartók used on his early trips, to collect folk songs

ceremonial weaponry of Crown Prince Rudolf also bears witness to the age.

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Cartoons from the political comic journal *Borsszem Jankó* provide satirical relief. Especially clever is the drawing of the "Hungarian Globe" which—as its weight is carried by a worker and a peasant Atlas while the gentry play cards on top—symbolizes the Hungary of the time.

Another part of the exhibition is devoted to the events and great projects of the Millenary celebrations in 1896. There are photographs and small-scale models of the Budapest Underground (the first in continental Europe) opened that year, the original Elizabeth Bridge, the Great Boulevard of Budapest with the New York Palace housing the famous café and restaurant of the same name.

The shadier side of life is depicted through relics of the poverty of the peasant and worker masses as reflected in the agrarian proletarian movements of the 1890s which met with wide European response; the big Budapest demonstration for universal suffrage and a secret ballot, and large-scale emigration to America. The emigrant's "hope-chest" which did duty as a trunk, his passport, and copies and originals of minutes and other records of various Hungarian–American organizations trying to protect the interests of Hungarian immigrants in America, their banners, publications and other characteristic signs of their activities poignantly portray their life. Capitalist Hungary could not feed, clothe and shelter them or give them a ray of hope of a better life.

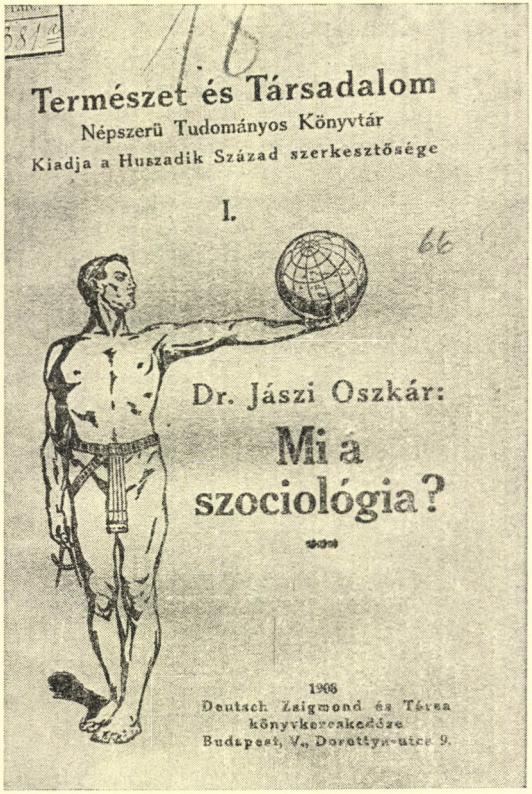
*

Although Hungarian developments had been artificially restricted by the greater economic and political power of the Austrian half of the Dual Monarchy, nonetheless by the turn of the century Hungary was able to

"The Hungarian Globe", cartoon in the satirical weekly *Borsszem Jankó*, 1896

boast of a stage of industrial progress which had served as a basis for significant Hungarian inventions and new industrial products. This is evidenced by models of the transformer developed by the team of Bláthy, Zipernowszky and Déri, and Loránd Eötvös's famous torsion balance. Tivadar Puskás, who worked with Edison in the United States, and who designed a telephone exchange and organized a telephone news service, was another brilliant Hungarian engineer to whom the exhibition pays tribute.

An exhibition showing an age, of course, presents the full range of technical and scientific developments of the times. Medicine certainly needed adequate representation. Frigyes Korányi did great things in the fight against tuberculosis, Sándor Lumnitzer was a great surgeon, Endre Hőgyes, eminent bacteriologist, and József Fodor was the first man to organize a University Institute of



What is Sociology? by Oszkár Jászi
Titlepage, 1908

Public Health in Europe. He was awarded an honorary doctorate by Cambridge and the red cap and gown are displayed.

Hungarian painting is represented by works by Gyula Benczúr, an academic painter, József Rippl-Rónai, the foremost Hungarian Post-Impressionist, and pictures by each of "The Eight" as well as by members of the Nagybánya School which revolutionized Hungarian painting. Mihály Munkácsy's decorations and brush are on display. Objects that belonged to Ödön Lechner and Miklós Ybl, both well-known Hungarian architects, are shown. (Lechner designed the *art nouveau* building of the Budapest Museum of Arts and Crafts and the building of the Geological Institute; and Ybl is known chiefly as the architect of the Budapest State Opera House.)

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Early in the twentieth century an intellectual movement arose in Hungary which brought home to the public the tensions, conflicts and contradictions of the age and made them realize the need to liquidate the remnants of feudalism through land reform, to ensure political rights to workers and peasants, and for an urgent solution of the problem of national minorities. Writers were the first to express such views and in time artists, musicians and social scientists were recruited to the cause. The letters and personal relics of Endre Ady, the great poet who was the "stormy petrel" of the Revolution, introduce these. The phonograph Béla Bartók used in his folksong collecting is included, and the work of the pioneers of social democracy and bourgeois radicalism in Hungary, among them some eminent Freemasons, is also on display.

All in all, this exhibition of Hungary at the turn of the century gives a comprehensive and colourful view of the political events, economic development, social problems, as well as the culture, arts and science of the age.

KÁROLY VIGH

KATALIN SULYOK

WOMEN AND LEISURE

In Hungary 60 to 65 per cent of all women between the ages of 15 and 55 are gainfully employed. They spend six, seven or eight hours daily in factories, offices, schools, shops or hospitals, a third or fourth of the total day. What do they do after working hours? Do they have leisure time, and if so, how do they spend it?

Sociologists and statisticians have made a good number of inquiries, surveys and statistical studies of daily schedules and leisure-time activities. I conducted my examination with journalistic techniques and interviewed several dozen girls and women at their work-places and at home, seven of whom I selected as the most characteristic. Their answers to the following four sets of related questions are given below.

I. What do you do with your daily spare time?
II. What do you do on week-ends?
III. How do you spend your yearly paid holidays?
IV. What would you do if you had more free time?

QUESTION GROUP I: DAILY SPARE TIME

*Age 22, on leave with child-care allowance**

"God, I'm fed up with all this free time! I'll wait another two months and then put the baby into the crèche. One and half years at home has been enough. I'll be able to work at last!"

"Do you like working so much?"

"I don't give a damn, but it's better than being bored to death here. I stand at the window all day long watching the traffic and the clock, waiting for evening."

"But the child certainly causes some work?"

"He sleeps all the time. I spend three hours at most with him."

"And the household?"

"I learned to be speedy with household chores when I was a working woman. There's no need to clean house every day! Cooking doesn't take more than an hour. I throw something together at a moment's notice."

"Now you would have time to cook big meals."

"I can't cook and I don't like to either."

"But now you have time to learn..."

"For such a short time? When I go back to work I'll never cook. Both my husband and I eat at work and the baby will be fed at the crèche."

"Don't you ever do needlework?"

"I don't have the patience."

"And reading?"

"I've read all our books."

"Don't you have any friends in the building?"

"She's only home in the evening, but then I don't have any time because my husband's at home. Unfortunately nobody else has a child-care allowance. Time would pass quicker if I had somebody to talk to."

Age 26, typist, lives with her mother

"How much free time do you have?"

"None on work-days. I work until five. Luckily I live near my office and I'm home at half past five. Then I immediately sit down to the typewriter; I always take on private work. I work until half past seven or eight depending on what's on television. I rarely

* After five months of paid maternity leave, mothers may also avail themselves of another leave of two and a half years with a child-care allowance. They are entitled to interrupt this leave at any time and their employer is obliged to reinstate them in their positions.

watch the news but I can't miss the main programme, even if I'm not very interested, because we always discuss it in the office and I feel bad if I can't contribute."

"Do you like to read?"

"Very much. I read modern literature, but unfortunately I haven't much time left for books. I can read if the boss is out or in a conference."

"Newspapers?"

"I always read all the boss's newspapers."

"Do you do housework?"

"Mother is a modern woman and she raised me the same way. We each wash our own cold supper plates and our tea-cups. Once a week we vacuum the whole apartment. After my evening bath I wash out my underwear in a few minutes; I wear only synthetics because I have no intention of spending my life over a washingmachine. You wash your things, and they're dry by morning. My principle is minimum household work, more leisure time."

Age 29, sheet-metal worker, married with children

"How much spare time do you have?"

"I work from seven to four. I'm free after four."

"What do you do until seven the next morning?"

"What women generally do. I go shopping, fetch my daughter from the nursery, I cook, we have supper, watch television and go to bed."

"Do you cook every day?"

"Of course. Cold meals are expensive, we can't afford them with our wages! And, another thing, I don't know how others feel, but for me cold meals aren't substantial enough."

"What will you cook today?"

"Goulash soup and dumplings with eggs. The goulash is cooked in a pressure-cooker which is a big blessing for working women. While the meat boils, I peel the vegetables, mix the dough for the dumplings and by the time the soup is ready the dumplings are done too. We have supper every evening at half past seven."

"Do you ever buy canned or frozen food?"

"Last week I bought frozen meat jelly because we longed for jellied pork, but I found that pigs today are either born without trotters or the butchers hide their feet under the counter because I haven't seen one all winter. So I bought this frozen stuff but you couldn't compare it to fresh meat. I'll never buy frozen food again: this was my first and last time."

"And canned food?"

"I buy canned green beans or squash on wash-and-iron days because they only need some thickening for a side dish. But they're also too expensive, not for our purse."

"Do you ever buy ready-cooked food?"

"I wouldn't touch it. My husband would throw me out."

"So you spend about one to one and a half hours cooking every day."

"And another half hour with dish-washing and another half with shopping, which makes two and a half hours. What's really terrible is the time wasted with waiting and queuing in all the stores during rush-hours. My daughter tugs at my hand impatiently because she wants to go home and play. While I cook supper, she plays in the kitchen, and my son, who is in the third grade, does his homework. I can't put off lessons until later because they get sleepy. After supper they go right to bed and I tidy up the kitchen and then watch television."

"Do you watch it every night?"

"Of course; it's my only entertainment."

"Do you ever read?"

"I liked to read when I was a girl, now I have no time."

"Do you read newspapers?"

"I watch television, it has everything."

Age 30, district nurse, lives alone

"I have leisure time, especially in winter. I only make my rounds in and around the

village until it starts to get dark. Once I was bothered by a drunk far outside the village, luckily he was very drunk and harmless. But since then I don't visit families after dusk. And in winter this means I finish at four. I have countless functions in the village: I'm secretary of the Red Cross, I work in the Communist Youth Union, I'm a member of the town council, all of which take up approximately one evening every week. Six evenings are left! It's not necessary to clean house every day; I'm the only one in the flat so there's not much disorder. My supper of scrambled eggs or canned stuffed cabbage is cooked and everything washed up within half an hour."

Rugs and embroidered cushions are scattered around her flat.

"I made them myself! I keep busy with needlework in the evenings. I take a cushion or rug and go to one of the school mistresses. There are five of us here, old maids like myself; we meet in each other's homes to do our needlework while we chat or listen to the radio. When I come home it's still early. I watch television, read, solve puzzles."

"What do you read?"

"I like poetry."

"What paper do you take?"

"The county daily and a women's magazine."

Age 34, semi-skilled worker, married with children

"How much leisure time do you have?"

"It varies. I work three shifts. When I'm on afternoon shift, I have the least free time because I get home at midnight and sleep until seven. Then I cook and work in the garden until noon. When I work the morning shift, I get home at a quarter past four. I do some gardening, cook supper and go to bed at eight because I have to get up at half past three. When I'm on night shift that's the best, my whole day is free."

"And how do you spend it?"

"When I get home at eight the children are gone. I sleep until eleven. I cook lunch, eat and sleep until four. Then I get up, wash or iron, feed the animals, gather grass for the ducks, grind feed or whatever the season requires. I eat supper and leave for work."

"How much time do you spend commuting?"

"One and a half hours by train there and back, that's three, plus half an hour on the tram."

"What do you do on the train?"

"Crochet. I like crocheting."

"Don't you ever read?"

"I can't read on the train, it jolts."

"And do you read at home?"

"No."

Age 35, member of an agricultural co-operative, married with children

"No, my dear, I have no free time during the week. I could use ten hands for all the work I have to do. When I come home from the co-op, I don't know where to start first. The animals have to be fed, the stable cleaned out and the cow milked before my husband gets home from the city and my daughter from secondary school; I grind the feed, boil potatoes for the animals and feed them. That's not the worst, because in the morning before going to the co-op I cook."

"Do you cook every day?"

"Every day. I have to because my husband is a railwayman and has to have a hot meal at least once a day. This morning I cooked an egg soup and dumplings with sauerkraut—my husband asked for it."

"You must have done it quickly."

"Yes, because I knead the dough for the whole week on Sundays and so I have more time."

"And what do you do after supper?"

"I wash up, tidy the kitchen, then I always have something to do: ironing, mending. At about eight we go to bed; my husband has to get up early, his train leaves at half past four. I get up at half-past three, fix breakfast, pack a lunch for him and then I wake him. I start cooking, feed the animals,

then wake my daughter; her train leaves at half-past six. By then lunch is ready, I wake my son, get him ready for school, prepare food for the animals and go to the co-op. So, as I said, my dear, I have no free time. I am the first one to get up and the last to go to bed. Even so I never finish all there is to do."

Age 37, district doctor, married with children

"I hold consulting hours every morning until noon or half-past. Then I have lunch and visit my bed-ridden patients. I get home by five or six if there is no social function. I'm involved in fourteen activities. I'm a member of the village council, of the county council and president of the Red Cross. I participate in the People's Front, the Women's Committee, the Communist Youth Union and the Party. If I'm not busy, I play with the children and supervise their homework, chat with my husband, read or listen to music.

"Television?"

"Very rarely, only if the programme interests me. Otherwise we don't waste time on it. Better to read papers or a good book."

"What papers do you take?"

"That's a good question. I take them but have no time to read them. I take *Népszabadság, Keletmagyarország, Kortárs, Nagyvilág, Rádióújság, Ludas Matyi, Tükör, Film Színház Muzsika.*"

"When do you do housework?"

"Luckily we have our Mary who does everything for us. Of course that's not cheap. I buy my free evenings at a rather high price."

The door-bell rings and the husband, an agricultural engineer, answers. Somebody has taken ill in the village.

"We'll be back in an hour. Can you stay until then?" the doctor asks.

I stayed. I played with the children. One hour passed, then another. The five-year-old boy crept up on the sofa beside me, his eyes heavy with sleep. I washed him and put him to bed. His sister, seven, asked me to draw her buffaloes. I don't know how to draw buffaloes so she was dissatisfied and so was I.

"Don't you want to go to sleep instead?" I ask.

"No," she replies. "I always wait for my parents."

"Do they call your mother often in the evening?"

"All the time. When we were little they took us with them in the car, even at night because they were afraid of leaving us alone."

They finally arrived at half past ten.

"Excuse me," said the doctor, "but the patient had to be sent to the hospital immediately. It seemed easier to take him and not call the ambulance, but we had to drive very slowly on the way back because of the fog. It took two hours to go 35 kilometres."

"Is this what you call a free evening?"

Her husband replied.

"We've been married for ten years but not once have we finished eating supper undisturbed."

QUESTION GROUP II: WEEK-ENDS

Age 22, on leave with child-care allowance

"I wish it were always Saturday and Sunday! My husband is free every Saturday. I let him take care of the baby and go shopping. I can spend hours looking round the market, then I go to the hairdresser and visit friends. Saturday afternoon we take the baby for a walk; in the evening we get a baby-sitter and go to the movies or dancing. On Sundays my husband's friends come to visit us or we go see them. If it weren't for weekends I'd go crazy with boredom. We quarreled a lot after the baby was born because when my husband would come home Friday night, on went his sweat-shirt and it didn't come off until Monday morning. He didn't want to go anywhere; he said that he was fed up with riding trams all week long, that

he had seen enough people and wanted to relax. We had a big row because he didn't understand that I was living like a prisoner. I would go for days without seeing a soul; I had nobody to talk to. I told him it was going to turn out bad, that I'd go nuts or go back to work, and to hell with his kid. The big scene paid off: since then my week-ends have been really great."

Age 26, shorthand-typist

"Since I left school and went to work my week-ends are generally alike. Free Saturdays still haven't been introduced in our office, and if they ever are, things will change drastically. Now I go to the hairdresser straight from the office at noon, where unfortunately I spend half of my afternoon. In the evening we go to the movies or the theatre and occasionally dancing. Sundays we get up late, I straighten up the room a bit, then we have lunch which my mother cooks. I can't cook and don't want to, but I help wash the dishes. After lunch we visit friends or they come to visit us. Sometimes we go on Sunday outings. Then comes supper television and Sunday is over."

She was married in November.

"Has there been any change in your week-ends since your marriage?"

"No. I do the same things as before only now I have a permanent partner."

"And don't you help your mother with housework on week-ends either?"

"She only does what is absolutely necessary too. Our door-knobs don't shine? They don't. The laundry doesn't wash clothes so beautifully? It doesn't. We don't live for the household. Week-ends should be for leisure and entertainment. We work enough during the week."

Age 29, sheet-metal worker

"I have every second Saturday free. What a godsend to us working women! Those weeks I'm much calmer, I don't have to kill myself working; I have time to do everything on Saturday. My husband's free Saturdays coincide with mine, which is also really great. He takes the little one to nursery school and buys the bread, the only thing that has to be bought on Saturdays because I buy everything else Friday evening. When they're gone and my son has left for school, I buckle down to washing. After hanging out the clothes to dry, I start tidying up. You know, on weekdays I only dust here and there, just enough so the neighbours don't say anything. But an apartment has to be thoroughly cleaned at least once a week. Just look at the traffic in the street, the dust flying, the dirt, and I hate it if my windows don't shine. I also wash the doors because with little children, no matter how carefully you watch them, there are always little hand smudges everywhere. When I've finished the big room, we eat lunch; then I tidy up the rest of the apartment. I'm ready by five or six. Everybody has a bath and gets a clean change of clothes, we sit down to supper and then watch television."

"What does your husband do to help you?"

"He takes the little one to nursery school and brings her home and buys the bread. He's full of good intentions but, well, he's gauche. If he washes up, the dishes are greasy; if he vacuums, the carpet isn't clean because he leaves one or two strips. I'd rather do it myself. I always tell him, 'Don't come back before you bring the child; it's better if you're not in my way here at home.'"

"And what do you do on Sundays?"

"In the morning we sleep in until seven. I start the meat cooking. Even with a pressure-cooker, the meat is sometimes so old it needs three hours to cook. After lunch I wash dishes, tidy up the kitchen, then we put on our Sunday clothes and visit my mother's. If the weather is too bad to go out, I read the women's magazine, then we watch television."

"So that's your week-end on free Satur-

days. And what about when Saturday is a work-day?"

"Then I do the wash on Sunday afternoon."

Age 30, district nurse

"I have two sorts of week-ends. On some I travel to Szeged Saturday around noon; I have some friends there; we were schoolmates and our friendship has lasted. In summer we go to the swimming-pool, in winter to coffee-houses, we have lunch or dinner in restaurants—in short, that's our social life. The other sort of week-end when I don't feel like going or I'm short of money, I stay at home, write and do book-keeping that I didn't do during the week; I wash, tidy up and go over to see the schoolmistresses and together we somehow pass away the time."

Age 34, semi-skilled worker

"My week-ends depends on which shift I work. If I work mornings and Saturday isn't free, I have to wash and tidy up on Sunday. If Saturday is free, I finish everything and only have to do cooking on Sundays."

"And Sunday afternoon?"

"I rest."

"What do you mean by rest?"

"I watch television."

"And after a week of night shift?"

"I cook everything Saturday and only get up for lunch on Sunday. After lunch I take a little nap, then watch television."

"When was the last time you went to the movies?"

"In November, with the socialist brigade."

"And the theatre?"

"I went once, with the brigade."

"What did you see?"

"Damned if I remember the title! They sang and danced. It lasted very late, I got home at three in the morning; it wasn't worth it. I didn't even go to bed because I was on morning shift."

„Why didn't you stay in town with a friend?"

"That's all I'd need. My husband would've killed me for bumming around."

Age 35, member of a co-operative

"On Saturday I clean house, in the afternoon I do the wash. I wash all the dirty clothes of the week, I feed the animals, we have supper and Saturday evenings I watch television. On Sunday I feed the animals, fix breakfast, cook lunch, wash dishes and go over to one of the neighbours for a chat. I stay there until it's time to feed the animals again, then we have supper and go to bed. We never watch television Sunday evenings because we have to get up early Monday morning."

"Who helps you with chores in and around the house?"

"I don't have anybody to help me. My husband works all week long and on his free Saturdays he gets up late. He finds work around the house, repairs the pig-pen, the roof, the locks, sharpens the axe, cuts wood. He spends Sunday morning with these chores, then in the afternoon he wanders over to the *kocsma* for a drink and a little chat. That's the extent of his recreation. My daughter is in the third year of secondary school; she has to study a lot because she wants to be a teacher. My son is in the seventh grade and he studies all the time too. I don't have the heart to ask the children to come and help me; their job is to study."

Age 37, district doctor

"For me the week-end means a state of being on permanent alert. I can be called any time for an accident or sudden sickness; I can't leave three thousand people without a doctor! So, although I'd love to go away on week-ends, I have to stay home. But it doesn't matter; I like it here at home: I play with the children, discuss things with my husband, go through the papers of the pre-

vious week. And I cook. I love to cook, maybe because I don't have to every day. I only cook when I feel like it. My husband buys the meat and I ask every one in the family how they want it prepared? Roasted, fried, grilled, stewed? Sometimes all four ask for four different things, then I'm engrossed in feverish culinary activity all morning long and I enjoy it very much. It has happened sometimes though that my husband has to finish it all because of my being called away..."

QUESTION GROUP III: ANNUAL PAID HOLIDAYS

Age 22, on leave with child-care allowance

"Last year I didn't take my vacation, nor the year before last because my son was born then, and I had been on sick leave for several months before that. This year we can't go anywhere because he's too small. Before I was married I went on vacation every year to Lake Balaton, either at a trade union holiday home or with two or three girl friends. I met my husband there; he was in charge of some children. When we married he got a reservation at his company's holiday home and we had our honeymoon in the mountains."

Age 26, shorthand-typist

"I spend my holidays abroad. I earn the money by moonlighting. I've been to all the socialist countries, to Austria, Switzerland, Italy. I always go with the State Travel Office because that's the best deal; they take care of accommodations, meals and provide sight-seeing programmes. And it's not necessary to know languages."

"Where are you going this year?"

"This year...? As I said I was married in November and I can't earn enough money to pay for two, and I can't go alone, can I? I'll try to get a reservation at some holiday resort. That's not an easy thing to do because they give places primarily to people with families; population policies, government programme, you know. If I can't get anything we'll go on our own to Lake Balaton."

Age 29, sheet-metal worker

"So far we haven't gone anywhere. The children were small, and when one of them would fall sick I stayed home from work and so my holidays were frittered away. The truth is that we never got a trade union reservation. Nobody cared for people with families. Last summer they asked me for the first time whether I wanted to go to the Balaton. It would have been a good thing, but they only gave me a week's notice because somebody had given back his reservation. My husband couldn't get away from his work and it was too sudden, we had no money for it."

"But it was a trade union reservation, wasn't it?"

"Yes, but you can't go away for a fortnight with children with a few hundred forints. You know how children are. They want everything and how would you feel if you had to deny them things even on vacation... And you can't go as you are, you need bathing suits, pyjamas, and so on. In short, you have to get ready. So we stayed at home; sometimes we went to the Zoo. But this year we'd like to go to the Balaton in July, that's the best time. I already told my shop steward and I hope to get a place reserved this time since even the television has said that people with children should go to the resorts."

Age 30, district nurse

"I spend my holidays every year with my parents. They live near Pécs; from there I go to Pécs or Harkány or to visit my relatives. After one week I long to be back here: this is my home where I can live as I please."

"Have you ever gone to a health resort?"

"Yes, once, in Keszthely. Our trade union has a summer house there."

"Have you been abroad?"

"Once or twice a year I spend a weekend with a relative in Yugoslavia. Otherwise I have never been outside the country."

Age 34, semi-skilled worker

"I usually take four or five days of my leave when the plums are ripe. We have eight trees in the garden."

"Do you bottle them all?"

"I take them to the vendors in the open market. My husband and I make four or five trips a day. Plums always bring a good price."

"Does your husband also take his vacation then?"

"Yes. Let's say five days are spent with the plums and another three on pig-killing, that already makes eight. The rest I take before Christmas and Easter."

"Have you ever been to a health resort?"

"Yes, in Hévíz. Last year the factory sent our brigade there as a reward for having completed school."

"What school?"

"Various kinds. I completed the seventh and eighth grades; we could study in the factory during working hours... I had a good time in Hévíz. They treated us as if we weren't simple working women but at least as good as white-collar workers."

"Would you like to go again?"

"I'd love to."

"With your family?"

"Yes. But it's impossible. We always have a porker and a lot of poultry. We can't leave them with strangers."

Age 35, member of an agricultural co-operative

"There's a lot of work to do from spring to autumn in the co-op. If I just stay at home, they don't like it, but if I take a vacation, they don't say a word. I take two or three days off when the peaches are ripe, I take another two or three when the plums are ripe, because the children love preserves and jams. I need at least two more days for pig-killing. In spring and autumn I take everything out of the house, whitewash the walls, scrub the floors, which also takes three days each time. If you count it all up, my vacation is over."

"Have you ever been to a summer resort?"

"There's no such thing in the co-op. Once in a while we go by bus to a thermal bath for one or two days. Everything is covered by the co-op, we don't pay anything. When they organize such tours, I always go: bathing does my back a lot of good."

"Are you rheumatic?"

"My back, my shoulders, my arms. I feel the pain for days when it rains."

"Did you ever consider going to a thermal bath for a fortnight?"

"That'd be good, but I don't have the time, and couldn't go anyway. Who would look after the stock? And what would people think if a woman went on vacation alone?"

Age 37, district doctor

"I would prefer to spend my holidays at home but that's impossible! Although I have a substitute, people keep coming to me because they know me. And I have no heart to tell them not to disturb me now... Either we go to my mother's—but since she lives in a village it's no real change for the children—or we go roaming. We pick out a spot on the map: here's a place we haven't been to yet, let's go and see the town. We get in the car, stop whenever we feel like spending a few days somewhere, sleep in hotels or in private homes, eat out or pack cold lunches. The children enjoy this sort of holiday and I do too: it's very relaxing."

"Don't you go abroad?"

"Every two years. Last year we were in France, next year we go to Transylvania. In between we have time to get to know Hungary, all its beautiful landscapes, the mountains in Zemplén, the Bakony, the Zala hills. Up until the age of thirty I knew Hungary only from the map. I have a lot to make up..."

QUESTION GROUP IV: IF SHE HAD MORE FREE TIME...

Age 22, on leave with child-care allowance

"What would you do if you had more free time?"

"I'd be bored to death."

Age 26, shorthand-typist

"You mean shorter working hours? That'd be fine, I could be at home more and do extra typing. I really need money. My mother has said we could stay with her but of course we would like to have our own place. If I spent less time at work, I could have an apartment sooner."

"And maybe you would have time to relax..."

"Relax? Typing doesn't exhaust me. And, you know, I don't over-exert myself at the office..."

Age 29, sheet-metal worker

"That'd be fine, I could spend more time with the children. They're the victims of my going to work. I have no time for them and by evening I've run out of patience. It's really a strain. If I want to earn something at work I have to keep up a brisk pace. If I had more free time I could relax at home and have more patience with the kids."

"What do you mean by 'relax'?"

"I work standing, my legs ache a lot. For me relaxation means lying down and doing nothing. Just lying and thinking."

"About what?"

"About what will become of my children, about anything."

Age 30, district nurse

"Well, I could do with more free time in the summer. I go on my rounds until dusk and since it gets dark late, by the time I come home no time is left for anything. Sometimes I feel ashamed of the state of this big garden. The weeds are taller than myself... I'd fix it up, make flower-beds, plant roses, carnations... surround them with stones, whitewash the stones; I'd make a little flower paradise."

Age 34, semi-skilled worker

"I've thought about it a lot! All the things I could do! I've been at the factory for ten years; before that I worked in an agricultural co-operative but they couldn't give work in winter, and I needed money so I went to work in town, first only in winter, than all the time, I've never regretted it. Being a worker really does make a difference, doesn't it? But since I started working in the factory, the house is in an awful mess and that's a shame for a woman. My daughter is in the seventh grade, my son is an apprentice and will be an electrical fitter, my husband also works three shifts, so there's nobody to lend me a hand. I'm ashamed of receiving you here instead of in the factory because in spite of all my efforts the house doesn't look the way it should. The floor needs scrubbing, the doors and windows need repainting, the curtains are grey with smoke from the stove and from my husband's cigarettes—oh, dear I won't list any more. But when could I have done things here at home? Tell me, that? First there's the factory, next the commuting, then the animals and the big garden. And the family. I only have two hands. If I had more free time everything would be spick and span here, they could even show my house in television!"

Age 35, member of an agricultural co-operative

"I've thought about that. It would be great if I only had to work 150 days a year at the co-op instead of 250. I would have time for everything. As a girl I really liked

to sing. The village has a choir now which tours everywhere. If I had more free time, I'd join them. And if I still had time, do you know what I'd do? Needlework! There are lovely patterns in the women's magazines and handicraft magazines for cushions, coverlets, rugs and so forth. As a girl I liked embroidery. If I had a lot of time I would sew all kinds of things for my daughter's trousseau."

Age 37, district doctor

"If we had the system of week-end duty in the village that they have in Budapest and the big cities, it would mean a lot. I would be on duty once, or at most twice, a month. On free week-ends we could go roaming about. I could spend more time with my family, I could read more, listen to music. And perhaps I'd try... as a student I wanted to be a surgeon. It didn't work out and for years I haven't thought of it. But do you know what I would like to do? Post-graduate work in dentistry.

"District doctor and dentist? That would mean double work and even less leisure time."

"Do you think I don't have to extract teeth now...?"

JUDIT GYŐRI

THOMAS MANN IN HUNGARY

In the year marking the hundredth anniversary of Thomas Mann's birth we should like to recall the atmosphere of an important moment and a significant intellectual encounter in Budapest in 1937. Mann visited Hungary on a number of occasions, separated by considerable time intervals. The first occasion occurred in the year before the outbreak of the First World War when he read some of his short stories to readers of the radical-middle-class newspaper *Világ*. On the second occasion, in 1922, he read excerpts from *The Magic Mountain* on which he was currently working. Immediately after, in the spring of 1923, he made a tour of Hungary lecturing on German literature. Next, more than a decade later in 1935, he visited Budapest and gave a lecture on Wagnerian art. In 1936 he came again to the Hungarian capital at the request of the International Commission of Intellectual Co-operation, established by the League of Nations, and this time he read passages from his *Joseph* which was in preparation. His last visit, and in many respects the most important and dramatic of all, took place in 1937—at a time when Thomas Mann's anti-fascist humanism echoed the desire for freedom of Hungarian intellectual life.

*

Remembered by contemporaries as a great event of the anti-fascist movement, the lecture in 1937 was delivered under singular

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circumstances. Mann would perhaps never again have come to the eastern half of Europe were it not for the occurrence of a long-expected turn of events in his life: the Nazi Reich stripped him of his German citizenship and Goebbels ordered his books burned. Even then, as Mann later wrote, he wanted to keep quiet. Towards the end of 1936, however, he received from the dean of Bonn University a note in which the head of the philology department informed him dryly and curtly that he was divested of his honorary doctor's degree. This event elicited one of Mann's finest political declarations, an indictment filled with sorrow and bitterness against nazism in an open letter to the dean: "... God help our darkened and exploited country and teach it to make peace with the world and with itself." *Népszava*, the Budapest Social Democratic daily, also quoted the concluding words of the dramatic document which elicited a great response from the Hungarian press, but only after the lecture did the public generally become aware of it. When the editorial board of the literary magazine *Szép Szó* was considering organizing a Thomas Mann evening, public opinion was still concerned only with Mann's officially confirmed statelessness.

In January 1937 while Mann was in Czechoslovakia, he received the letter from *Szép Szó* inviting him to take part in an evening to be held in his honour. At this time Mann had not meant to go to Hungary; his crowded programme called him to other places. He also had a tiring voyage to America before him, but he was moved by the esteem and affection he felt from Hungary. The Budapest daily *Esti Kurír* wrote in this connection: "... Thomas Mann will now visit Budapest between his lectures in Prague and Vienna... owing to the pressure of his work he had not at first intended to come here but was drawn by the interest and affection shown him by Hungarians. 'I am able to do this,' he wrote in a letter to Budapest, 'only for the sake of those young writers who have invited me; the feelings they have expressed toward me are, especially at this time, very pleasing to me'..."

Szép Szó, the sponsor of the lecture, was a liberal left-wing magazine, barely six months old in January of 1937. Its staff consisted of one of the left-wing groups which upon the fossilization of the review *Nyugat*, had set up an independent forum and which, soon split up because of internal dissension. In January 1937, however, *Szép Szó* still boasted the names of Attila József and Pál Ignotus. At the time the magazine was launched it also counted György Bálint, Miklós Radnóti and Péter Veres among its contributors.

The enthusiasm and excitement of the public mood was reflected by the preparations for the lecture. Never before had there been speeches to introduce a Thomas Mann evening, but now his lecture was to be preceded by a long eulogy and a poem written by Attila József. Further proof of the enthusiastic mood was the quick sell-out of tickets. The entire city was preparing for a full-scale anti-fascist demonstration. But the police were also ready. They no longer had the excuse, which they could have produced before, that he had no passport. Mann had been made a citizen of Czechoslovakia a few days earlier, so they had to let him in. But they set down the condition that the evening should be "free of politics" and severely censored not only the entire supplementary programme but also the text of Thomas Mann's lecture. Right-wing attacks on Thomas Mann were renewed and intensified as never before. The invectives, often stupid and in bad taste, were mostly left unanswered by the liberal and the left-wing press, which deemed the opposition too uncouth and ill-bred. "The artist is so great, the opposition so pitifully small..." *Népszava* wrote. Sometimes, however, attacks developed into polemics as to whether or not the evening would be political in content and character.

It was after such antecedents that Thomas Mann and his wife arrived in Budapest the

morning of January 13, 1937 where they again enjoyed the hospitality of an old friend, Lajos Hatvany.

Upon arrival Mann only had time to have breakfast before receiving the newspapermen. He spent the afternoon preparing for the lecture, which was to begin at eight o'clock in the Magyar Színház theatre. The theatre company was giving a guest performance in Miskolc that night, thus turning the large building over to Thomas Mann's art. The audience filled the theatre to capacity, and excited people were still storming the box-office for tickets in the last minutes before the meeting began. The foyer was swarming with people waiting for tickets and a *mêlée* erupted inside over the possession of extra seats. The theatre personnel was doubled in order to shield Mann from the multitude of autograph-hunters. The police drew up in the theatre and in the surrounding streets; in a tension-filled atmosphere, rumours of demonstrations spread throughout the city.

Many people had hurried to the theatre to hear Attila József's poem, which had already become known before the lecture, but the poem was not read that evening. The daily *Magyarország* wrote: "The lecture and the poem were presented to the police this morning as required. The censorship department of Police Headquarters, relying on the opinion of the state security department, found Attila József's ode unsuitable for reading in public at a non-political meeting. The state security department is of the opinion that the ode by Attila József is not free of politics... We spoke with Attila József, who told us the following: 'I am deeply hurt; it would have pleased me greatly to read my poem in Thomas Mann's presence. I think it is the last line that gave rise to the misunderstanding which caused the police to ban my poem'."

It was only in the theatre foyer that the police informed the poet of the banning of the poem. Attila József was deeply distressed to know that he would not be allowed to recite his poem, written with so much affection, in the presence of Thomas Mann.

But Thomas Mann had already become acquainted with the content of the poem before delivering his lecture. On the afternoon before the lecture Attila József showed up with the poem at the Hatvany's and asked Hatvany to translate it for Thomas Mann, which he did. Thomas Mann was touched and immediately liked the ode, seeing in it a vindication of his own realism and humanism. Years later Hatvany, very ill at the time, recalled the events of the memorable afternoon.

"... from the many memories I select only one", he wrote, "when Thomas Mann was preparing for his lecture in one room and in the other Attila József came up to me almost imperceptibly, as was his manner. He asked me to listen to and then translate the ode he had written for Mann and which he was to recite that very night as a sort of introduction to Thomas Mann's lecture. Awe-stricken and perhaps the first to do so, I read the poem—which has since become so famous. I hurried in to Mann to improvise, as far as I could, a true translation. Then Mann, deeply moved, clasped Attila József's hands, saying how much he was gratified by this touchingly expressed homage of Hungarian youth. To this memory, alas, I have to add another event which took place that same night behind the scenes of the Magyar Színház theatre. Attila, pale and lips trembling, informed me that the police had prohibited recitation of the poem. When I brought the news to Thomas Mann, it became clear to him at once that a great gulf separated the smooth-mannered representatives of official Hungary who had received him with such deceptive courtesy from the intelligentsia who honoured him as 'a European among the Whites'."

At the press conference preceding the lecture, journalists questioned Thomas Mann concerning the banning of the poem. As Hatvany recalls, "Thomas Mann, of course, did not express his opinion on this point, he

only said he was grateful to Attila József for the movingly beautiful poem, a German translation of which he had received."

Thomas Mann said, and I quote:

"I am grateful to the poet who has honoured me with a poem. A translation has been made for me, so I have been able to enjoy its beauties. I understand that Attila József will publish the poem and I am very glad that it nevertheless will be given publicity in this way." And he added later: "As a guest I have no right to criticize the steps taken by the authorities, but it is my opinion that the heavier the pressure pushing down on a people, the stronger becomes their desire for freedom."

Word of the banning spread in the theatre in a matter of minutes. When the opening of the lecture was slightly delayed because of the press conference, there was a rumour in the auditorium of demonstrations taking place in town and of the evening having been prohibited. Pál Ignotus came out on the stage in the midst of great tension.

In his short introduction he mentioned three great successes in Thomas Mann's life. In his essay on Goethe Mann himself wrote that no sharp boundary lines could be drawn between poet and writer. Mann's first success was that he had achieved this in his lifework in an exemplary manner: he was great both as a poet and as a writer. In his mode of portrayal he followed simultaneously both the road of reality and of abstraction and linked the world of myths with a future humanism. That he had succeeded in recognizing this humanism and conveying it was Thomas Mann's second success. One who is not relentless on certain points cannot be a great man. Understanding everything implies forming an opinion about everything; and an opinion is perforce a counter-opinion, too, and a counter-opinion always entails a partisan readiness to attack. Understanding everything but not accepting everything, comprehending all viewpoints but holding on to one's own—a genuine example of this attitude was given us by Thomas Mann. He was uncompromising in doubt and in conviction alike—this was Thomas Mann's third success. But his failures also involved glory: his inability to acquiesce and not to become a hero. "... We have learned from him how to look at, simultaneously and from the same point of view, the demands of everyday truth and of holiday truth, without the adventures of which man's life would pass in dark dullness. We have learned from him, or rather we should like to learn from him, how to always see beyond the events of the moment but never to hide from them," Pál Ignotus concluded.

After this warmly received prologue Thomas Mann stepped up to the rostrum and by way of introduction only said that he was going to present a chapter from a "novella" he was writing, and then began to read the first chapter of *Lotte in Weimar*.

"He read from his Goethe novel," György Bálint wrote, "in his precise and yet charming manner, Germanic in accuracy and yet Latin in vivacity. He conjured up a little scene from 1816: the arrival in Weimar of Werther's one-time Lotte, a trembling old lady. Outwardly, it is a regular chapter of a little novella, with regular dialogue. But the gentle and warm irony which permeates it suggests a great deal about the soul, time, the relationship between fiction and reality. And there are a few sentences in it about how bad and how sad it is if man is hardened by difficult circumstances and loses his *Leutseligkeit*—this untranslatable and, by the way, difficult-to-explain feeling which tunes one into harmony with other people. Not much was said of this in the lecture, but this is in fact what is at the bottom of Thomas Mann's every writing, from *Tonio Kröger to Joseph*."

A reporter of *Esti Kurír* wrote of the lecture:

"The audience laughed and was receptive to the writer's playful humour, archaic words

recreating the past as if by magic, casually related details and gracefully constructed dialogues. But what was important was the infinite perspective which lay behind his words; even sentences revealing nothing particular in detail open up a whole world, the paradise of the spirit where everything, as much as we may want, exists, not only what we can see and hear. Or rather, as much as the writer wants. 'Die Schrift von großem Format', to use Thomas Mann's words. We felt the wings of genius pulsing through the air, and suddenly became aware that he was that same literate hotel servant, a certain Mager, whom the writer in the story derided for his raving about literature. Of course, he... is used to himself, so he need not respect himself. However—laugh at us if you will—it is impossible for us not to be carried away."

According to another daily, the *Budapesti Hírlap*: "... even this short little excerpt captivated the audience with the usual depth and gracefulness and the special refinement of sentences of a Mann message."

In his commentary on the Thomas Mann evening in *Nyugat*, a literary magazine of the period, Gusztáv Erényi remarked in conclusion: "It is a pity that the audience came one-sidedly from a certain stratum of intellectual society, a symbol of today's distressing, slogan-ridden discord of intellectuality." Almost all columnists dropped some remark about the audience, styling it either as distinguished or élite or one-sided. From the recollection of contemporaries, however, it appears that the evening distinctly took on the character of a leftist demonstration, and accordingly the large enthusiastic audience came, for the most part, from among the leftist intelligentsia. The audience of the evening actually included people who—to quote Attila József—had come only to "look" at the great writer because they were aware of the political character of the lecture. The working-class poet Ferenc Kis, as he relates, was also hanging around the theatre entrance hoping to get an extra seat, but when he saw the strong police force on the alert, he decided to steer clear of the undesirable milieu.

"The theatre walls had never heard such applause," recalled Pál Bródy, the artistic director of the theatre, and Lajos Bálint, a contemporary theatre critic.

Next morning Thomas Mann left for Vienna. Before his departure he told journalists that he was about to go to America where an academy for German writers in exile would be established. He expressed regrets not to be able to spend more time in Lajos Hatvany's superb library, but he would on some other occasion. However, another occasion would never come. In between lay the ocean, then the troubled years of war and Mann's old age.

Reverberations from the excitement aroused by Mann's lecture continued for a long time after his departure. As a matter of course, the papers dealt with the subject of the lecture. Even earlier, in his Prague interview, Mann was asked why he had put aside his Joseph novel for the sake of the Goethe novella. There Mann explained in detail why he had presented the "novella"; in a later interview he went further when he set as an aim the portrayal of a genuine Goethe image. "Properly speaking, it is for relaxation that I have taken up this subject which I write while working on the Joseph legend. One reason is that this novel has quite a different style, but also because Goethe has begun to become a mystic figure," he said in an interview with István Gergely.

This is that same "psychological irritability" of which Thomas Mann spoke in connection with the Wagner essay, that same attitude of protest against Nazi distortions and expropriations with which Mann antagonized the whole of nationalist Germany. Therefore *Népszava* seems to be right in assuming that Mann's choice and change of subject was also an elegant protest against nazism:

"It is no accident that Weimar is the setting of Thomas Mann's story and that

MUSEUM OF THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT ARCHIVES

Thomas Mann giving a reading in the Budapest Belvárosi Theatre, 1935

Overleaf:
Thomas Mann and Attila József, 1935

one of its heroes—without appearing on the scene—is the ageing Goethe. It is no accident because Thomas Mann is a genuine Weimarian. Weimarian in the sense of curbing *Sturm und Drang*, this tempest raging in the soul and in the age, the will for classical perfection, the crystallization of the patrician spirit... Guesses were made as to why Thomas Mann had set aside the biblical trilogy in which he was busy deciphering eternal human hieroglyphics; why he had interrupted it with another work with setting and atmosphere in Weimar. Thomas Mann's novel answers the question. It is a protest—an exquisite and elegant protest taken in the Mannian sense, of course—against the violence of the deprivation of his citizenship and his grief over becoming stateless. For it is indeed grief that hovers over the magnificently constructed, cheerful, classical sentences interspersed with ironic comments, witty remarks and rococo notions. The writer, who physically cannot visit the land where he belongs by virtue of the continuity of the German spirit, finds his way home from the world of myths riding the wings of imagination and creation which need no passport."

Thus, because of the subject of the lecture, and also because of the humanistic German traditions living on in Thomas Mann, the parallel drawn between him and Goethe has become fixed. Andor Németh sees the continuity of Goethean conceptions in Mann's political-literary attitude, combining his argument with the subjective disillusionment of a Hungarian intellectual trained in the great German traditions. "Thomas Mann is therefore a German writer, not only because he writes in German, but because he is the embodiment of the most honourable German intellectual attitude and the most comprehensive and demanding, the Goethean attitude... His activity is a reassurance to those who for long months have been stricken with consternation by the attitudes of other leaders of German intellectual life, and who, shaken by such outrageous manifestations of spinelessness, were about to question the German people's high intellectual qualities. An entire people is also susceptible to painful surprises and violent acts which are difficult to overcome. But, fortunately, at such times there are individuals—and Thomas Mann is one of them—who bridge the gap and convince the world through their character and activity, that even after 1934 there are some who are able to be German in the Goethean sense," Andor Németh wrote in the daily *Újság*.

Besides the lecture itself, the press focussed attention on an interesting interview which in a way responded to the problems of the time. Mária Rónay's interview with Thomas Mann was published in *Magyar Hírlap*:

Q: Is your choice of a biblical subject due to your belief that humanity is more sharply outlined in biblical man?

A: It cannot be said that humanity is more clearly realized in primitive man; what guided me in my choice of subject was my interest in the initial stages of man's evolution. I wanted to observe his position in the society of that time, his psychic formation and the shaping of his religious ideas. In short, here also I was searching for the secret, for every man is a secret. 'Man'—this always means a secret which is a most exciting problem to unravel. Man is a mysterious being because he lives with one foot in nature and the other in the world of the spirit. Incidentally, I will continue the novel cycle. I will write a fourth volume too, in which I will relate the rest of Joseph's career. What moves me to continue the series is the big success—which also surprised me—of the third volume.

Q: Do you see in the world anything to suggest that the 'militant humanism' you have proclaimed is taking shape?

A: At this very minute the cause of humanism seems to be in a plight. But I am convinced that the sheer fact of oppression will provoke a stronger sweeping action, for

the less free people are, the greater the value of freedom becomes. When freedom exists, it is not valued highly; but if it does not exist, an irresistible desire for it arises. Therefore, the heavier the pressure pushing down on a people, the stronger becomes their desire for freedom. And thus dictatorships always provoke counteraction.

Q: Do you have some practical ideas on bringing militant humanism into action?

A: This is not so easy. Here the main issue is an internal matter of man. External circumstances are prepared by psychic ones. This psychic change or transformation has to take place now. Action will then grow from it. The pace of the world can only change when man's spirit has changed.

Q: What do you think about the future development of European intellectuality?

A: This is a complicated problem; by European intellectuality we understand European culture, don't we, and this divides in two: there is a general European culture *(europäische Gesammtkultur)* and there are particular, distinct national cultures. I am not a nationalist, but I feel that an ideal European culture can be achieved only through particular national cultures, through their combination. For one cannot be only European. Every man belongs first of all to his nation, but then he must rise to a European level. This is the natural way of development, and Europeanism is a higher stage of development. To refer to myself as an example, I regard my books as specifically German phenomena, and, lo and behold, they have found response in all European nations and even in America precisely because they are world phenomena at the same time; rooted in national character, they grow beyond it, reaching a universal cultural level. A writer may be a good representative of his own national culture even if he does not evade world problems of general interest, even if he accepts foreign values. He who feels, thinks and acts in this manner cannot be accused of characterless internationalism.

Q: Is the writer today allowed to write *l'art pour l'art*, without any thesis?

A: Today it is not even possible to write *l'art pour l'art* because the spheres of art, literature and science are inseparable from general human problems. The value of concepts has changed, and many concepts are used quite erroneously. For example, there is the concept of totality, this favourite term in today's political life. This is nonsense, for the word implies wholeness and cannot be appropriated by a certain sphere of interest.

The passage in the interview relating to freedom and dictatorship elicited the most comment. Andor Németh in his aforementioned article also discussed Thomas Mann's remark that the heavier the pressure pushing down on a people, the stronger becomes their desire for freedom. In *Népszava* an article dealt with Mann's concept of humanism. "Humanism cannot draw back behind the consciousness of its spiritual superiority, it cannot yield ground to barbarism, to thunderous cries and iron fists. It has to battle for its own spiritual and moral ideals, because our age is the time of humanism's decisive battle... This is the summation of Thomas Mann's statement—a battle cry against invading barbarism."

György Bálint's analysis of the evening is also indicative of the great importance of the question of humanism: "So the lecture was 'free of politics' and was not too long. Yet it remains a memorable experience as does every encounter with Thomas Mann's words or his person. With this Goethean universal genius, one cannot consider separately particular aspects of his work or his life. Whatever he says and whatever he writes, behind him and around him are *The Magic Mountain*, *Death in Venice*, *Joseph*, his political statements, his voluntary and now officially confirmed exile. It is thus of importance to the world, even to cultural history, when this great writer travels and lectures. His every manifestation represents a principle, a position: it is a demonstration even when non-

political. And in proportion to the significance of each of his sentences is the insignificance of the question of detail as to his citizenship. A more accurate definition could be an entry in his passport of the words of Settembrini: 'gesitteter Abendländer'. Or, what Attila József wrote of him in his banned and unrecited introductory poem: 'a European among the Whites'."

The conclusion of the article is proof that Attila József's ode was banned in vain; the poem soon became widely known and its closing lines immediately gained proverbial currency. A contributing factor may have been the fact that *Szép Szó* published the introductory speeches of the evening in full. Appearing in the same issue was Mann's "Epilogue" written for *The Right to Life*, a periodical of the Social Democratic women of Switzerland, the purpose of which was to awaken interest in the Spanish Civil War. The famous lines of Attila József's poem not only cropped up in György Bálint's writing immediately following the Mann lecture, but Andor Németh, a friend of Attila József's, likewise used the lines in concluding one of his articles. Németh went back to the traditions of Hungarian literature and coupled József's lines with Ady's equally impressive, proverbial words, thus implicitly accepting the role which the poem was to play in the continuity of the humanist tradition in Hungarian lyrics. If any doubts that Thomas Mann's popularity was embedded in the finest and most progressive traditions of Hungarian literature still existed, the coupling of a poem of Ady with one of Attila József to characterize Thomas Mann's humanism would be proof enough. "Thomas Mann's statement is an encouraging sign and reassurance," Andor Németh wrote in reference to Mann's remark on freedom and dictatorship, "not for the masses, but for those in lonely anguish who, like him, cannot acquiesce in the clouding of the spirit, who stand guard, who 'remain human in the midst of inhumanity' and 'European among the Whites'."

Contemporaries accepted József's formulation of Mann's humanism. Thomas Mann was attracted by the poet's pure humanity. According to recollections, they had a long talk at Hatvany's place. Attila József was thrilled at being in Mann's company, although at the time he was often overcome by the state of mind which would later cause him to drift towards his suicide in 1937. Mann asked him where he had learned German so well, and the poet talked about his school years in Vienna and how, as a newsboy, he often stopped to read the newspapers while on his route.

Later Thomas Mann read a number of good translations of the poem. He remarked several times that he had never received greater recognition than from those lines written for him by Attila József. Upon learning about the tragic death of the poet from the Hatvanys, Mann responded in a letter which expressed the grief he felt as a friend.

In 1955, after an eighteen-year lapse, the image of Attila József was still alive in Mann's mind; when he learned of a memorial celebration to be held for Attila József, he sent the Union of Hungarian Writers the following letter:

"Dear Fellow-Writers of Hungary: I have been informed by an eminent critic and admirer of your great poet Attila József that in April of this year you will organize a festival in commemoration of the deceased writer who was driven to despair and suicide by the spiritual condition of our profoundly depressed and troubled age. I wish to contribute at least a modest greeting to this sad celebration, in the awareness that I am, of course, very little qualified to do so since I have only fragmentary knowledge of Attila's life-work, being excluded from most of it by the barriers of language. But I have preserved the image of Attila's intellectual personality, which in one way entitles me to send you this message. Our personal meeting in Budapest, the gentleness and noble modesty of his character, his pure and passionate

idealism made an unforgettable impression on me, just as I cannot forget the poetic greeting he addressed to me—a poem inspired by deep humanism and a longing for human fraternity, a poem which I now read in a fine translation but the public recitation of which was denied the poet by the Horthy police. The gratitude I feel for this document so dear to me explains and completely substantiates the request I make to you to allow me to be present in spirit at the commemorative festival for the poet. In token of this thought, please accept my cordial greetings and my best wishes for a celebration worthy of the memory of Attila József."

Thomas Mann wrote this letter not long before his death; although he would never come back in person to Budapest, his Hungarian connections were not broken.

ATTILA JÓZSEF

WELCOME TO THOMAS MANN

Just as the child, by sleep already possessed,
Drops in his quiet bed, eager to rest,
But begs you: "Don't go yet; tell me a story,"
For night this way will come less suddenly,
And his heart throbs with little anxious beats
Nor wholly understands what he entreats,
The story's sake or that yourself be near,
So we ask you: Sit down with us; make clear
What you are used to saying; the known relate,
That you are here among us, and our state
Is yours, and that we all are here with you,
All whose concerns are worthy of man's due.
You know this well: the poet never lies,
The real is not enough; through its disguise
Tell us the truth which fills the mind with light
Because, without each other, all is night.
Through Madame Chauchat's body Hans Castorp sees,
So train us to be our own witnesses.
Gentle your voice, no discord in that tongue;
Then tell us what is noble, what is wrong,
Lifting our hearts from mourning to desire,
We have buried Kosztolányi; cureless, dire,

The cancer on his mouth grew bitterly,
But growths more monstrous gnaw humanity.
Appalled we ask: More than what went before,
What horror has the future yet in store?
What ravening thoughts will seize us for their prey?
What poison, brewing now, eat us away?
And, if your lecture can put off that doom
How long may you still count upon a room?
O, do but speak, and we can take heart then.
Being men by birthright, we must remain men,
And women, women, cherished for that reason.
All of us human, though such numbers lessen.
Sit down, please. Let your stirring tale be said.
We are listening to you, glad, like one in bed,
To see to-day, before that sudden night,
A European mid people barbarous, white.

(1937) *Translated by Vernon Watkins*

Courtesy Mrs. Vernon Watkins

PÉTER NAGY

"GOING HOME" TO LONDON

When I go to London, I somehow go home. Perhaps because this city is so different from all other cities, because one feels, more than in any city on the Continent, a sense of not being there. In London everything is so familiar and yet so strange, everything is as if one were still in Europe but London merely provides a rhyme, a distant simile to the sights, customs and traditions of the Continent. Perhaps the best visual and emotional expression of the total impression is the left-hand traffic; it is the same as traffic on the Continent, only reversed and therefore, in a contradictory yet harmonious manner, it evokes sensations of both familiarity and uncertainty.

Thus, if one comes home to London after a nearly ten-year absence—interrupted only by a few flying visits overloaded with interminable meetings—to be able, as a guest of the British Academy, to spend a fortnight in strolling along the streets, in conversations with colleagues and in haphazard encounters and so get a new charge of vistas and feelings, of new friendships or of the new taste of the old—he first looks for changes in the "landscape". Maybe these changes had been there before, but only now do they assume real importance in his inner visions.

In my earlier visits I was struck, above all else, by the differences: the many small cities within the huge one, the multitude of

small houses, the striving for uniqueness in uniformity, the small gardens and the often grotesquely individualized paintings on the façades of houses. And I have always been attracted and amused by the appealing green areas dotted all over the city; not merely in the famous, large parks, but everywhere, on every bit of land where a few trees, a flowerbed or a blade of grass could take hold. Now I could more clearly observe the urbaneness of the city: the variations of the tall buildings, the inventive modern architecture of these giants that seems to signify a new type of unity even though they appear dispersed all over the great territory of London and in the surrounding areas. They stand like the dotted numbered lines of a child's drawing puzzle: if you connect them in your mind, the new skyline of a new city emerges. Of course, this new city cannot obliterate the image of the old one and it would indeed be a shame if the new architecture were to blot out the monuments of the historical and poetic London. Knowing the English respect for tradition, this menace is happily not too real; there are unlivable and uninspiring districts, built during and after the industrial revolution, the disappearance of which will not cause heartache to anyone.

There will be in any case a lot of things for the disappearance of which our heart may ache. When passing by train or walking in the back-streets of the suburbs, I was always impressed by signs of human endeavour, even in the most depressed neighbourhoods; the human effort in those tiny backyards and gardens symbolized the ever-present demand for the survival of nature, for a green spot of land and for a bit of plant life. Strolling among the newly built, uniform complexes near the Barbican or the Cathedral of St. Paul, the comfort and inventiveness of the new buildings pleased me; the new constructions had tried to meet not merely the need for flats, but also a demand for urbanistic unity—although how satisfactorily can only be attested to by the flat-dwellers themselves. On the other hand, I was disappointed by the complete absence of plants, green spots of land. Concrete, concrete, concrete, in spite of structural variations in form, the concrete emanated only the dreary bleakness of artificial materials. I retain an almost symbolic picture of the view of the raised inner courtyard next to St. Paul's Cathedral. An attempt had been made to relieve the bleakness of the courtyard by planting a few trees and bushes in gigantic concrete pots, but the courtyard's dreariness was merely accentuated by this futile act. I have since repeatedly wondered whether it is possible that real-estate speculation and technological demands for comfort are going to destroy even the English love for tradition and nature. What a shame if the new London discards her bright, green-dotted dress in exchange for a wardrobe of variations in grey.

Other alternatives exist, of course; modern life need not consist only of prefabricated boredom, but of poetry and play in combining imaginative materials, as in the Cathedral of Coventry. Not being an architect, I am unfamiliar with the undoubtedly rich literature concerning the building. Yet only one glance of the new Cathedral, built in organic harmony with the war ruins, is needed for an indelible impression of its architectural beauty and imaginativeness. Variation within unity, so many distinct yet harmonic varieties of openness within the closed construction and earlier architectural styles—primarily, of course, Gothic—combined in a grandiose stylistic unity are an inspiring view not merely in forming a new architectural masterpiece, but as a pledge to the great aesthetic possibilities of modern architecture.

I cannot deny, of course, my greatest aesthetic pleasure came from the magnificent English Gothic buildings, especially at Oxford and Cambridge. A special treat was an explication of the buildings, traditions, the overt and hidden beauties of the New College in Oxford by an American colleague and staunch Oxfordian patriot since becoming a fellow. He had discovered this, his

spiritual home, after years of "exile" in American university life—an unsurprising statement in view of the fascinating life of a College Fellow. Aside from the wealth of the libraries, the work-inspiring environment, unburdensome teaching loads, there is the special charm of common meals, and the informal tradition of tea time that continues the comradery of college years through adult life, even through old age. In eating at the college professor's tables, drinking coffee with new, unexpected acquaintances in the Commons, listening to their conversations, jokes and arguments, I thought how beneficial it would be to our own intellectual life and our own university atmosphere if such informal human, everyday contact existed in institutions of higher learning in Hungary. Not only would the much talked of interdisciplinary cross-fertilization processes profit, but it would also help reduce tensions differences in views and personal antagonisms.

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In the colleges or in the private residences, around the white linen-covered dinner tables or in smoking lounges, we discussed questions of literature and new directions in literary research. It is the impression of the traveller that English literature is going through a down period on the bottom of the curve; significant modern literature seems to be written outside the Isles, in North and South America, on the Continent and even in Africa. Of course, this does not necessitate the adoption of the pessimism and near exasperation of several English professors who read the end of English culture in the present stage of affairs and predict that England, politically and culturally, will become the Greece of the North. It should be noted, however, that English intellectual life, contrary to its earlier isolationist tradition, is now attracted by both the United States and Europe, an attraction evident even in personal fates; frequently writers and scientists alike, easily and willingly change residence and leave England for long periods when more stimulating material and intellectual opportunities arise.

At the same time one senses the same balanced, convivial calm that has always characterized English life. A certain type of provinciality is still evident even in urban life, compared not only to the explosive tensions of Paris, but also in comparison to our own excitability. It is, therefore, not surprising if many take refuge here both from American campuses bursting with insoluble contradictions and from the tension-ridden atmosphere of European universities. Perhaps this balanced mood explains why the new methodologies and fads that have so criss-crossed the scientific world have made few inroads into the English scientific world. Some may consider this a fault, others a virtue. Perhaps my national prejudice shows through in considering it a virtue on the part of the English literary scene to have barely touched upon structuralism, and its several varieties and derivations, while an increasing interest has been shown in the work and teachings of György Lukács, especially among the younger generation; they have found much in his work that is useful and functional in their own.

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Although a guest of the British Academy, it was the British Council that arranged the details of my stay; this duality was not without problems. Although I have only praise for the cordiality and politeness of my hosts, perhaps it was due to this duality that the prearranged programme of meetings and discussions could not be changed following my arrival. Thus, they did not seem to be inventive enough to include items I had not specifically requested ahead of time. Consequently, although they knew that it was the theatre and not the opera or ballet which interests me, I was able to go to the theatre only three times during my two-week stay in England. It is also true that all three occasions proved to be instructive, edifying evenings.

I saw Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in the National Theatre directed by Peter Hall with John Gielgud as Prospero. It was an excellent performance; perhaps it's not very unified style (the presentation of the shipwreck scene was highly naturalistic) seemed modern because it achieved that modernity by reaching back to an old tradition. By reviving the tradition of the Baroque theatre and the English masque at will, the drama was alternately brought closer to or directed away from the audience. The magical visions were presented with true theatrical magic, as alterations of well-lighted stage props depicting the forest, the grotto, or the seashore were made visibly, on stage. Thus, a truly poetic and modern Shakespeare performance was produced. Its success was largely due to the perfect delivery of each performer's lines. It is not necessary to remind the reader of the truly professional nature of Gielgud's Shakespearian roles, but even now I was captivated by how this great actor, who has passed his seventieth birthday, brings this great role to life with unbroken and youthful verve and with the art of totally unaffected speech. Incredibly difficult lines, so far from today's English, flew so naturally and distinctly from every actor that even a visitor from the farther shores of the Danube, who at most can be considered to possess a half-baked knowledge of the English language, was able to understand them perfectly well. It was especially enjoyable that they dared to, and were capable of, depicting Miranda's and Ferdinand's love for what that love really was: a delightful and simple mixture of adolescent emotions and sensuality.

G. B. Shaw's *Pygmalion* brought new laurels to the Albery Theatre. John Dexter's direction depicted end of the century Victorian Art Nouveau environment, clothes and colour harmonies with a joy that is clearly evident to the audience. The actors are excellent; Diana Rigg's Eliza is full of spirit and feeling; the drawback of her constitution is overcome by the convincing strength of her talent. The high point of her interpretation, and perhaps of the play, is the Third Act: the tea in Mrs. Higgins's salon. It is incomparably humorous, yet accompanied by a soft, hidden foreboding of tragedy. It is this tragedy that Shaw tries to dissolve later, so lamely, with so little conviction in the Fifth Act, into a happy end. Another impression that continued to grow in me throughout the performance was that Shaw wrote this drama in 1914 as an unconscious *adieu* to the world that was to end with the First World War. *Pygmalion* marks an end to the theatrical-dramatic technique that had ruled theatre life for nearly half a century, known as French conversational drama. Here Shaw still structured his play completely in accordance to conventions, only the elements pieced together according to accepted rules are somehow alien to the conventions that he would explode a short time later.

Finally, the third play, at the Ambassador Theatre, *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead*, by the South African playwright Athol Fugart, was free of every convention. An excellent, captivating play, its success was largely due to two truly great black actors: John Kani and Winston Ntshona. One portrayed at least ten separate roles, changing character every few minutes and always flawlessly depicting the new person, the new situation as well as his opinions of the basic character of the person he plays. The other actor portrayed a single character who has come to Johannesburg from a faraway Bantu village, and who from a half-nomadic life has been transformed into an industrial worker. The actor projects this figure with an inner feeling and with an ability to express continually changing nunaces of character development that I have not yet seen on the stage. At the same time, the play itself is not quite a real drama; the situation is too well-defined in advance; every figure's position and feelings are too transparent to constitute truly dramatic action. But it is still an effective and stimulating play; a passionate unveiling

of the reality that exists for four-fifths of the population of South Africa.

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As I approach the end of my account, the memories continue to surge up for which I would like to find space. There were, for example, my trips to the white shining beauty of eighteenth-century Bath, this uniquely superb example of city-planning of the *ancien régime*, and to the Castle of Windsor, whose living medieval reality is made more improbable by the jet planes streaming above every few minutes and by the awareness that a real Queen still lives there accompanied by a real court. And there was also the Castle of Warwick which I failed to see because I arrived at the exact moment when the King's faithful troops were trying to retake it from the followers of Cromwell —or was it the other way around? I did not discover the answer in the heat of the battle and amidst the roar of cannons and muskets, just as probably the many thousands who gathered to watch the spectacle did not know that we would all become witnesses to the reenactement of this historical event by a cast of 500–600 participants.

I must mention one last and most interesting experience, which I brought back with me and which I regret having seen so little of. I am referring to the Open University, perhaps the most durable creation of the Labour régime, certainly its most successful. It is a University with no classes, though the number of its students reaches 42,000 per year. As a correspondence university it utilizes the media of mass communication (with its own radio and television programming), postal services, its own large capacity computer system, a testing system and laboratory that are sent to the student's own home—and who knows what else—in order to transmit knowledge to students and test their level of development. The technical preparation and high degree of efficiency with which the 350 professors and the 1500 technical personnel accomplish this complex and great task are amazing. Even on the basis of a brief visit their enthusiasm and efficiency was evident.

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Can one draw conclusions from a fortnight study trip? It provided a great deal of experience, but no real conclusions; only superficial generalities just as if I would try to draw conclusions concerning the English climate from the constant blueness of the sky and the sunshine during my visit. But, clouds were almost always visible, hovering on the horizon of the English skies, at least in a figurative sense: the incomprehensible zealotry of the Irish problem, the continually erupting wage increase battles, the high and increasingly higher cost of living cast shadows even on the everyday existence of the tourist. All these problems seem even more haunting if one wanders into the annual exhibition of the Royal Arts Academy where 1,400 *objets d'art*, largely paintings and statues, speak of other matters, not of reality but of *l'art pour l'art* and of the various influences—from Léger to Moore, from Rousseau to the Belgian Delvaux—which weaker talents have undergone.

Perhaps it is because of this dichotomy that a single curious statue from this exhibition remains embedded in my memory. It was made of a red, marble-like material and depicted a naked woman reclining on a sofa. Its faithful naturalism reminded me of a Victorian sarcophagus, but its abrasive nakedness was also a mockery of the same. Is it possible that this statue is a memorial tombstone of the commercialized pornography that floods every newsstand? I do not know the answer; perhaps it is, but the fact that its creator possessed a great talent is clear. That is why it remained so sharply embedded in my memory while the many Brancusi eggs and Schöffer copies vanished. Similarly, I retained from my trip that which pointed to truly original work and to the promise of the future, while everything else that was merely interesting or pretty without meaning has faded away.

REVIEW OF PERIODICALS

KÜLPOLITIKA (FOREIGN POLITICS)

International Affairs in the Light of a New Hungarian Magazine

We have before us the first year's issues of the magazine *Külpolitika* started in 1974 by the Hungarian Institute of Foreign Affairs. Four sizable volumes with articles from Hungary and abroad, one year's important documents on world affairs, and reviews of books on international questions. The abundant and varied material covers an extensive field of foreign affairs. The editorial principles are expounded in the first issue, in an opening by János Péter, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Vice-President of the Hungarian Parliament, who writes: "The foremost task of the magazine is to acquaint the reader with—while commenting on—the essence, motives and objectives, results and failings of the foreign political activity by the Hungarian People's Republic. But Hungary is not alone in carrying out her international undertakings, she is allied with the other socialist countries, first and foremost with the Soviet Union, as well as with the other member countries of the Warsaw Treaty and the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance. It is therefore also a permanent duty of the journal to deal in a constructive manner with the pursuits and problems of the socialist community, the initiative each particular socialist country takes in foreign policy, achievements and failings as well... With a view to presenting as authentic an analysis as possible, the paper will publish writings not only by Hungarians but will also request contributions from abroad—and not only from socialist countries."

Let me quote another passage from János Péter, which explains in clear-cut terms the foreign policy principles which inspire the new periodical: "Interest in international affairs is growing at a time when, as a consequence of changes in international power relations, it has become realistically possible to attain lasting peace all over the world. Serious international efforts have been and are still being made to curb acts of aggression.

The possibility of problems fraught with great dangers being settled by negotiations is coming nearer. The Soviet Union and, together with it, the community of socialist countries have fundamentally changed international power relations. As a result, we now have new problems to tackle, and the old ones also present themselves under new conditions. A correct interpretation, elucidation and exposition of the new phenomena, a precise definition of the new tasks are more needed today than earlier when power relations were different... To get a sound understanding of facts in this situation, to determine precisely what is to be done in order to strengthen the favourable processes and make them 'irreversible'—this is where the paper can help readers."

Hungarian Foreign Policy and International Co-operation

A paper on international affairs by Frigyes Puja, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, which concerns itself with recent achievements and endeavours of Hungarian foreign policy is being published in the present issue of NHQ.* It suffices at this stage to mention that this thorough analysis was published in *Külpolitika* in No. 1 for 1974 as well.

The address by Frigyes Puja to the Sixth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to problems of the developing countries, the full text of which was published in No. 3 of 1974 of the magazine, was also a most important manifestation of Hungarian foreign policy activities. The Minister of Foreign Affairs made a point of the fact that the implementation of measures to be introduced for a substantial improvement in the situation of the developing nations was greatly helped by the détente in international relations. Hungarian readiness to help and co-operate was stressed by Frigyes Puja: "The Hungarian people understand these problems well, for they know them from experience...

"My Government can understand the aspirations of developing countries. We help them to build their independent national economies, and to free themselves from neocolonialist influence. We are specially close to those developing countries whose Governments strive for progressive changes in the social structure and the national economy.

"We support effort to reform the present order of international economic relations, which are basically intended to eliminate anomalies in economic relations between developing nations and developed capitalist countries. The more so since the present order of international economic relations is disadvantageous also to the socialist countries. Therefore, together with other socialist countries, the Hungarian People's Republic as well is looking forward to a solution of these problems."

After describing the main tasks, which consist in ensuring to every country the right to freely use its natural resources, eliminating all kinds of discrimination in international trade, restricting the power and influence of big international monopolies —all demands which are fully endorsed by the Hungarian Government—Frigyes Puja strongly criticized those who try to drive a wedge between the socialist community and the "third world" by dividing the countries of the whole world into "poor" and "rich" ones irrespective of their social systems. "Being the Government of a socialist country", he stressed, "my Government can in no way subscribe to this theory... This view is unscientific, and unprogressive, it serves only to provoke confusion among the anti-imperialist forces fighting for national independence and progress. The socialist countries, whether they are rated as rich or poor, cannot be considered under the same heading with capitalist countries. The socialist countries do not exploit the developing nations; on the contrary, they give them all the assistance they can. The gist of the issue is not how 'poor' or how 'rich' a country is, but what kind of a social system it has. Not so long ago the socialist countries were still considered poor, but their social order and the efforts made by their inhabitants have resulted in speedy development. This way is open to every nation."

Economic Integration and all-European Co-operation

The integration processes taking place in Europe and their connection with the development of East-West economic relations are amongst the most complex questions. The developmental tendencies of the integrations and their interconnections are analysed in a remarkable study by Deputy Minister János

* See p. 7.

Szita, head of the Secretariat of International Economic Relations. He starts from the fact that East-West economic relations—as is indicated by many signs—have entered a new phase, and therefore it would be wrong to try to foretell the future trend of these relations by simply extrapolating it from their earlier course of development. The European socialist countries are clearly interested in the maintenance and expansion of East-West economic contacts, on the one hand, in order to further the dynamic growth of their economies by increasingly relying on the international division of labour and, on the other hand, in order to secure the most up-to-date standards in all branches of production by purchasing modern technologies. "With the development made by the socialist countries," he writes, "factors which had earlier obstructed East-West relations are disappearing; for example, the socialist countries now have greater opportunities to increase their foreign exchange revenue. Their avenues of export have broadened, not only in terms of quantity, but also with regard to quality and technical standards and to variety at the same pace as their economies have expanded and become modernized. János Szita further discusses how the existence and continued development of integrations in Europe is likely to influence East-West economic relations. "The further development of East-West economic co-operation depends on many factors," he writes. "The first among them is the extent to which a political will to develop co-operation exists on the part of the countries of Europe. It is to be stressed that this will manifest itself in the attitudes of the Governments of the particular countries themselves and not in the practices of integrated groups; what is reflected in those is at most that the countries participating in the same integration adopt a uniform attitude... The basis of economic relations continues to be provided by the maintenance of bilateral contacts. These can in no way be substituted for by integration processes or by relations between integrations. It would be extremely dangerous, for example, to relinquish bilateral relations for the sake of contacts between groups of integrations... this would involve the risk of connections taking shape practically between economic blocs, and this would inevitably assume political significance which would not promote the sound development of economic relations... for example, the scope of negotiations would no longer cover problems which are today central issues between any two countries on the basis of the specific interests characterizing the relations between the countries concerned...

"It is necessary to underline the limited role of the groups of integrations in East-West co-operation," János Szita states in conclusion, "so much the more so since, with the establishment of a European security system, there arises the possibility of the establishment of a comprehensive all-European system of co-operation as well. This system would become pointless if it were conceived of as being simply a relationship between the two integrations in Europe. However, the shaping of a European system of co-operation requires a closer identification of the problems which have to be approached on an all-European basis."

The same subject area is discussed by Ferenc Kozma, secretary of the Scientific Council on World Economics, in his "Integration and Economic Co-operation in Europe". He outlines the position of the socialist community, including the general course of Hungarian foreign policy: "The socialist countries accept that the Common Market, as a West European economic community striving for integration, is a reality. They understand the rationale of the efforts at integration, they take into account that, from the point of view of the continued development of the forces of production in Western Europe, the broadening and furthering of the division of labour is a primary condition. Guided by the realization of the necessity of peaceful coexistence and economic co-operation, the socialist countries are

willing to expand mutually advantageous economic relations with these economies on the way to integration. However, not even allowing for the well-considered interests of the West European integration can they see why, either for political reasons or for reasons of economic protectionism, the process of integration in Western Europe should limit or restrict the possibilities of economic co-operation with the socialist countries. The more so as the whole construction and the proclaimed purposes and working mechanism of co-operation within CMEA do not restrict the members' interest in, and possibilities of, co-operation with any country outside the community, irrespective of its social system... That is why in Hungary as well the view has matured that one should oppose ideas arguing that economic co-operation between East and West European countries should be directed by the centres of integration. It is taken into consideration that the member countries of both CMEA and the Common Market will, in one form or another, co-ordinate East-West economic co-operation; this is inevitable and useful for the strengthening of the economic communities. Consequently it is useful and possible to establish contacts between the two economic organizations. The only purpose of establishing such contacts is, however, to exchange and, to some extent, co-ordinate their views in order that both organizations should, each in its own area and in its own way, encourage East-West economic relations."

It stands to reason that a journal published by the Hungarian Institute of Foreign Affairs analyses and explains first of all the activities of Hungarian policy and its background as well as the foreign policies of the socialist community of which Hungary is a member and ally. But it became clear already in the first year of publication that the editors aim to elucidate and critically interpret, together with an objective documentation, the views of others as well. The report on the first Canadian–Hungarian Round-Table (No. 4 of 1974) (the twelve-member Canadian delegation was made up of representatives of the Canadian Institute of Foreign Relations, economists, government advisers, members of the National Arts Center and businessmen, the Hungarians were experts on foreign affairs, economists and people concerned to foster external economic and cultural relations), includes a detailed account of the comprehensive foreign policy analysis by Professor Franklin Griffith of Toronto University. A lecture delivered by Mr. R. Edmonds, the Canadian chargé d'affaires in Budapest is discussed. He made the point that the framework of practical co-operation was breaking through the limits of the traditional systems of alliance. The strengthening of this framework, he said, makes it necessary to explore and regulate the avenues of co-operation which help to render the unfolding process of détente irreversible. In contrast to the Canadians whose views struck a more or less pessimistic keynote, as *Külpolitika* comments, the members of the Hungarian delegation expressed more optimistic opinions both on the current world situation and on the prospects of détente and co-operation. The Hungarians, the journal reports, particularly emphasized the position of the socialist countries, which made no distinction between "tactical" and "genuine" détente. Détente in their interpretation is an objective process governed by the world situation and the shaping of the balance of forces; the socialist countries do not aim to achieve one-sided advantages. They are of the opinion that the principal guarantee of détente is, besides objective factors, the Governments' well-considered and sincere policy, as well as a common realization that both (or all three) parts of the world are confronted with a growing number of burning problems which cannot be solved on a national basis and whose only solution is through world-wide efforts.

An important item on the agenda of the round-table conference was the discussion of Canadian-Hungarian relations. On the Cana-

dian side Professor Adam Bromke pointed to the results attained since the establishment in 1964 of diplomatic relations between Canada and Hungary: the settlement of the property rights dispute between the two countries, the conclusion of a five-year economic agreement, the exchange of visits on a ministerial level and the laying of the foundations for the further growth of co-operation in the cultural, scientific and technological fields. Other speakers stressed that all this was only a beginning. Further quantitative and qualitative improvement was desirable and feasible in the areas of economic, cultural, scientific and technological co-operation alike. The Canadian specialists deemed it most feasible to continue to develop trade and economic co-operation. Despite existing difficulties joint production schemes at the stage of negotiation or carrying out should be regarded as promising starts for a broader and institutionalized form of co-operation.

In another article No. 3 of 1974 deals with the international scholarly conference on questions of European co-operation, organized in Brussels by the Institut Royal des Relations Internationales of Belgium. The discussion devoted to "Subregional Integrations and Regional Co-operation in Europe" was attended by three representatives of the Hungarian Institute of Foreign Affairs who took part in the elaboration of the subjects. The article in *Külpolitika* describes the debate over the present and future impacts of the energy crisis upon co-operation in Europe, and that part of the deliberations in which all-European co-operation was dealt with in respect of its economic and political possibilities and its military-political interconnections.

The wealth of information presented by *Külpolitika* is complemented by reviews of books relating to foreign affairs. Those in the first four issues discuss works by D. Desmond Greaves, Michael Akehurst, Andrzej Lawrowski, Frigyes Puja, Karl Kaiser, W. W. Rostow, A. V. Valyuzhenovich, Georges Marchais, Péter Vas-Zoltán, John Kenneth Galbraith, V. V. Zhurkin and Y. M. Primakov, J. Galtung, P. C. Ludz, R. E. Ward–J. Shulman, and others.

Z. H.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

A NEW HISTORY OF HUNGARY

ERVIN PAMLÉNYI, Ed.: *A History of Hungary*. (In English.) Contributors: The late István Barta, Iván T. Berend, Péter Hanák, Miklós Lackó, László Makkai, Zsuzsa L. Nagy, György Ránki. Compiled under the auspices of the Historical Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO — Corvina Press, Budapest, 1973. 649 pp, 92 plates, 16 maps (4 in colour), biographies, chronological tables, bibliography. Distributed in Great Britain by Collet's Holdings, Ltd.

Most of the contributors to this book are still writing in strong reaction against the historical tradition which dominated the Horthy era and which found its ablest exponent in Professor Gyula Szekfű. A similar change of outlook has appeared among British historians and there are certain parallels between the history of England and Hungary that make this more apparent; for in the seventeenth century there was a civil war in both countries; in Hungary between the *labanc*, a word, we are told, which is perhaps derived from the German *Landsknecht*, and therefore means a supporter of the Hapsburgs, and the *kuruc*, derived from the Latin *cruciatus*. It was applied to György Dózsa's peasant crusaders who were slaughtered by their overlords in 1514. The name was then adopted by the predominantly Protestant Hungarians of the seventeenth century who rebelled against the Hapsburgs in the name of national independence. This division is similar, therefore, to that between our Cavalier and Roundhead, later transformed to Tory and Whig during the eighteenth century. Professor Szekfű (1883–1955) was the leading *labanc* historian of his generation; all these contributors, though in varying degrees of militancy, are *kuruc*. Indeed the emphasis on the exploitation of the Magyars by the Hapsburgs at times becomes so strong that one may well develop *labanc* sympathies by way of reaction. The attitude of Hungarian historians has been coloured by the fact that much more of the *ancien régime* survived there into the twentieth century than in England and led the country into far grater disaster. The result is that not only do the Hapsburgs and their Hungarian supporters receive severe treatment but even St. Stephen and the Árpáds are described with considerable lack of enthusiasm by László Makkai. An interesting contrast can be made. In 1887 a *History of Hungary* by Arminius Vámbéry was published in The Story of the Nations series. "Though the Hungarians of today," the author tells us, "are eight and a half centuries removed from St. Stephen, his form continues to be a living one, and they still fondly refer to his exalted example, his acts, his opinions as worthy to inspire and admonish younger

generations in their country." László Makkai describes the supposedly saintly king as doing such things as first blinding then pouring molten lead in the ears of a rebel who sought to return to pagan ways.

This information comes in a sub-chapter entitled "The Rise of Feudal Hungary" which also reveals a certain diversity of opinion, this time between Marxist and non-Marxist historians. It may be one primarily of definition of the meaning of the word "feudal". There was a controversy about this and its use in describing Hungarian conditions as long ago as the nineteenth century. Thus an able British diplomat, Sir Robert Morier, visited Hungary in 1866 just before the Austro-Prussian war, and, instructed no doubt by its historians of that time, sent a report home. Without carrying his researches further back than to the Pragmatic Sanction of 1723 he wrote, "a common error in treating of the Hungarian constitution is to regard it as a *feudal* institution which has lived on into modern times... One of the most radical differences between that kingdom and the hereditary provinces is that the latter all went through the feudal process, which has left an indelible stamp on their institutions, whereas the former absolutely escaped it." The idea of a feudal constitution, according to Morier, was that of a graduated hierarchical scale. "Political inequality, i.e. aristocracy, the separation of aristocracy into estates, each with its own political *locus standi*, these were its distinctive marks. Misled by the fact that only 'nobles' enjoyed political privilege in Hungary, the conclusion has been drawn that the Hungarian constitution was in its essence an aristocratic one whereas its distinctive marks were equality amongst the holders of political power, the absence of hierarchic gradation and consequently, combined with undoubted aristocratic features, the presence of a strongly democratic element... The political unit in Hungary was not, as in the feudal state, the fief or individual noble, but the county *comitatus*, i.e. a numerous body composed of all nobles or free men as it would be more correct to designate them, domiciled in the county". I am no medieval scholar, but I know that modern Western historians, among the most notable of whom was Marc Bloch, though they might not accept Sir Robert Morier's views on what was and was not feudal in Hungary have distinguished between feudalism, a contractual military relationship between vassals and seignorialism, the relation between landlords, who may, or may not, be in "feudal" relationship with one another or with their king, and their serfs. This contractual relationship, it has been argued, is related to the social contract theory of government put forward by John Locke and surely has relevance to the mutual relationship between the Hungarian nobility and their Hapsburg king. Now László Makkai assures us that the main characteristics of the first two centuries of feudalism in Hungary, using it in its more general sense, were the same as those found in other European countries in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and then discusses the characteristics which would now come under the definition of "seignorialism". In fact there were very considerable differences between the nature and extent of feudalism, whatever sense we apply to the word, in a very diversified Europe of that time which was, incidentally, bisected by the Norman invasion of England which produced major changes in the nature of society and government. One would like to know whether the kingdom of the Árpáds, with its links with both Empire and Papacy, converted at a time when the Cluniac Benedictine revival was developing, did not reveal some rather special characteristics, the strength of the monarchy, the particular use of the church, among a people with unique but primitive nomadic traditions which must have affected for some time the military character of their state, even if the kings did use foreign soldiers. But one rather suspects that László Makkai is not very interested in what are often considered the most signifi-

cant characteristics of early medieval history.

Of course it must be very difficult for him not to use the word "feudal" in the wider sense, first popularized by Voltaire and other figures of the Enlightenment, since critics of pre-1945 Hungary were always using it in that sense when denouncing "feudal Hungary" and it is still often used in the same way in England. If the word is given such a general meaning, then some other word must be used to discuss feudal military society as defined by modern scholars. It may be that it was just these latter characteristics which helped to create the institutions which Sir Robert Morier considered were not feudal in the pre-1848 constitution, the important role of the theoretically politically equal nobility in local and parliamentary government and their resistance at times to both the monarch and the higher aristocracy.

This might explain what at first seems a highly paradoxical remark in the contribution to this book of the late István Barta. "It is one of the anomalies of Hungarian social development", he declares, "that the change to bourgeois conditions depended little on the class which should have been responsible for the ideological transformation and for the practical realization of the actual development, that is to say, the bourgeoisie itself. It was the result of grave historical circumstances that when the time came for the actual change to bourgeois conditions, there was no bourgeois force capable of carrying out the task. The bourgeoisie of the royal towns in fact fought on the side of the court, defending feudalism against national independence as represented by the liberal nobility." But feudalism in the more limited sense of mutual rights and obligations of vassals, though in fact it was dying out, could, through theories of the social contract, provide political conceptions which would be exploited by some, at any rate, of the middle class against an alien royal absolutism. The origin, development and peculiar character of this nobility, at once litigious, arrogant and rebellious and yet at times very harsh towards inferiors, though its poorer members were in fact closely mixed up with them, needs to be clarified; for this was the class, which with its own traditional institutions, gave Hungary its Western reputation in the nineteenth century. Its legacy, in spite of its subsequent serious degeneration, had something valuable to bequeath to the Hungary of today, as István Barta acknowledges. I am not prepared to deny that much of the material for such an analysis is to be found within László Makkai's chapters, but it is dispersed. Perhaps, because of his Transylvanian background—the diet there never developed the special role it had in Hungary—he fails to isolate and discuss this particular and almost unique development which gave Hungary in 1848 what then appeared a modern parliamentary constitution, in a way that would clarify it for an Englishman whose own parliamentary history also goes back to the Middle Ages. Nor is István Barta's chapter much more helpful in this respect. He does meticulously describe the measures that were discussed in the great pre-1848 diets, but he does not adequately indicate the composition, the voting strength of the county members, and the lack of it among representatives of the towns and ecclesiastical corporations and the non-voting proxies of the absentee aristocracy or the close relationship of diet to county assemblies all of which is much more lucidly described in Sir Robert Morier's dispatch of 1866. Admittedly it all seems rather quaint and antique, as indeed does the pre-1832 Reform Bill parliament of England to the reader of today. But both were able to transform themselves into something more modern. Nor does László Makkai give an adequate account of late medieval diets in Hungary to which these late diets looked for precedents. It is only when writing about the eighteenth century, indeed, that he suddenly informs us, in an aside, that the Hungarian diet had acquired a second chamber during the sixteenth. We should

very much like to know more about its character and procedures before this acquisition.

Where László Makkai and nearly all the other contributors to this book are strong, is in the field of economics and it is there that he makes his most interesting contribution in the early medieval period. He brightens up slightly, too, with the Angevin kings, Charles Robert (1308–42) and Louis (1342–82), who made Hungary a great power and also introduced French cultural influences, but he only begins to be stirred in his description of Matthias Corvinus's Renaissance court. Was this king so backward by Western standards, however, in having to pay his officials with ecclesiastical offices and grants of land because he could not fall back on the financial support of the bourgeoisie? Our own Henry VIII in the next century did not pay Cardinal Wolsey out of direct taxation, but helped the chancellor, if the latter had not already helped himself, to an archbishopric, abbacies and canonries. In fact Magyar kings were potentially very affluent by late medieval standards because of the royal gold, silver and copper mines in the north of the country. László Makkai gives some interesting information on these and how they were developed and exploited by capitalists from South-West Germany, notably by the Fuggers of Augsburg.

When he comes to the history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries he becomes more interesting still. He is particularly enlightening on how the Hungarian anti-Hapsburg rebels, though aristocrats with the pride of their class, enlisted the aid of the *heyducks*, peasants, "who had escaped... from Turkish devastation and the landlord's oppression and had taken up military service for hire", and how Ferenc Rákóczi II, though he had started as a wealthy aristocrat, in his act of rebellion came to sympathize with them and even to some extent to share their views. Of course he equates Protestantism with the bourgeois revolution, an issue which is still hotly debated by British historians. But this is how he speaks of Cromwellian England's influence on Transylvania. "There was no way... of stopping the trend of Puritan ideas. Under the influence of the bourgeois revolution in England, the activity of the Hungarian Puritans gained force. Their leaders were in constant touch with the intellectuals in Cromwell's circle. After the death of György Rákóczi I in 1648, Puritan ideas prevailed in schools, in both towns and villages, as a result of the teachings of progressive ministers. György Rákóczi II (1648–60) was no less averse to Puritan reform than his father. But the Puritans, regardless of punishment and the loss of their posts, insisted on Hungarian schools for the people, and democratic leadership in the Church. Some members of the ruling class realized that it would be useless to oppose all efforts to achieve changes; it would be meaningless to stop reforms which did not interfere with the feudal foundations of society. The dowager princess, Zsuzsanna Lorántffy, extended her protection to the disgraced Tolnai (a democratic-minded Puritan schoolmaster who had visited England), who was subsequently invited to Sárospatak, together with the greatest educator of the period, Comenius, who taught in the school between 1650 and 1654."

Not surprisingly, László Makkai is rather tame about the driving out of the Turks and the spread of the Counter-Reformation with its new religious orders which was Professor Szekfű's *tour de force*. He tells us however about Sándor Károlyi, a *kuruc* turned compromiser, and of his mercantilist plan for Hungary rather than for the Hapsburg Empire and also of an enlightened Lutheran pastor, Sámuel Tessedik "who first attempted to raise the level of the illiterate, landbound ... backward... peasant".

I have said rather a lot about László Makkai's chapters because it is just this early period about which so little is to be found in English books. On the other hand there is a good deal in English about Hungary during the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries and on many issues of that period Hungarian and British historians have tended to converge. All the contributors to this work, for example, recognize the errors connected with the magyarization policy during the nineteenth century and acknowledge the developing nationalist movements among what were then her minorities and the limitation as a result of the liberalism and democracy proclaimed by some of the nobles. István Barta yet writes with enthusiasm about the 1848 revolution and Kossuth's war against the Hapsburgs. Kossuth is indeed another cause of contention between Hungarian and British historians. A. J. P. Taylor and Edward Crankshaw have viewed him as a forerunner of Hitler, while some Hungarians risked their lives during the last war translating poems in his praise by nineteenth-century Liberal English and American poets. István Barta's chapter is in some ways a corrective to British views. But Oliver Cromwell desired to be painted "warts and all". I feel some of the warts that English Radical historians have noted on Kossuth's countenance, and still more on that of László Csányi's—another Radical Nationalist—have been left out.

In dealing with the Compromise era Péter Hanák, as is appropriate, is less purely a *kuruc* than the previous writers, quoting both from Deák and Kossuth and leaving the reader to decide for himself. He is also informative on the coalition, for a time stretching from aristocrats to the working class against the regime of which István Tisza became the symbol. Zsuzsa Nagy writes of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in a suave manner very unlike the enthusiastic or horrified way with which it was championed or condemned in the West at the time. Iván T. Berend and György Ránki expose the fascist and reactionary characteristics of the Horthy regime while not decrying some areas of economic growth and social development. Finally Miklós Lackó writes soberly and briefly about the people's democracy, acknowledging mistakes but claiming progress, though he admits that the material is not yet available and the events are too recent for it to be given a fuller historical treatment.

The book has some excellent maps, valuable illustrations, references to books and articles for each chapter and a short and helpful biographical index. Also there is a table of events with a parallel table indicating what was happening at the same time in England and America. The translation reads a little awkwardly, the construction and order of sentences not always being quite as they should be, and sometimes the wrong word is used. On the other hand there are remarkably few printing errors except on one page which was perhaps accidentally missed by one of the proof readers. At any rate it indicates the exacting work that they had to undertake. The index might have been improved by having subdivisions after the various items instead of just a list of pages.

On the whole the book might be described as a demythologizing exercise on earlier histories, in some ways a necessary process, but one which has been very largely achieved as far as English historians on Hungary are concerned. As such it does not contain very much information that is new—at least to a historian who has read fairly widely, in histories of Hungary written in English, except in the field of economic and working-class history. This may have been inevitable in a single-volume book of this kind and it may be hoped that it will be followed by more specialized studies. To one who is not greatly excited about the indices of cattle or maize production this history may at times appear a little arid as well as awkward to read but I can say that I read every word of it. It certainly indicates how profitable discussions might be carried on between English-speaking and Hungarian historians.

NEVILLE MASTERMAN

EARLY APPEASEMENT

ÉVA H. HARASZTI: *Treaty-Breakers or "Realpolitiker"?* The Anglo-German Naval Agreement of June 1935. Boldt Verlag, Boppard/Rhein, 1974. 276 pp. (In English.)*

This is an extremely valuable work. It makes full use of documents from the Public Records Office, London, as well as unknown material from Czechoslovak and Hungarian archives which is not easily accessible. In addition, on 90 pages, the author reprints much valuable and explanatory documentary material mostly from British sources. The details of British and German naval developments up to 1935 are very minutely described, most impressive for someone of the author's sex who could not have direct experience of naval matters (pp. 56–77).

The most interesting part of the book, however, is the position of the Naval Agreement in the context not only of Anglo-German relations, but of European policy as a whole. The author argues that, after the rejection of a Grand Alliance of Western powers with the Soviet Union against aggressive Germany, for which Moscow had shown readiness to Eden, the naval discussions "marked the beginning of the active British policy of appeasement which was to lead to Munich, and from there inevitably to the outbreak of World War II." (p. 55). She also stresses the importance of Hitler's speech of May 21 with which he deceived the British to such a degree that thereupon "he obtained the one thing he wanted: the Naval Agreement." In a later passage (p. 115), however, the beginning of appeasement is seen as not before the King's death in January 1936: "The Cabinet's policy turned from collective security to appeasement."

The problem of appeasement has in recent years been reconsidered. Bullock's view which the author quotes (p. 89) is no longer generally accepted without criticism. The British attitude can no longer be regarded as the result of weakness and complaisance towards Hitler whose tricks were said not to have been seen or underestimated. The promoters of appeasement were no more ready to give in to Hitler than was the hard nucleus of the Foreign Office. Even Chamberlain was never prepared to give him what he wanted, that is a free hand in Eastern Europe. Not so much the aim, but the method differed: negotiations were tried either to really come to an agreement—which, however, was practically out of the question, as the *conditio sine qua non* on the British (and French) side was a "general settlement" which was to block Hitler's aims and to which the appeasers as well clung most stubbornly.

This is also valid for the Naval Agreement. It was not Hitler alone who profited from it. The main advocate was the Admiralty, who were indeed of the opinion that they could not fight three naval powers at the same time: Germany, Italy and Japan; and as Italy and Japan at that very moment seemed the first to move, they decided to try and keep Germany quiet. Moreover, the British hoped that the Naval Treaty might pave the way for an Air Treaty on which they laid even more weight. This view was not so "naive and erroneous". That, a month before the Agreement, the British attitude towards Germany was far from being friendly and that they therefore just hoped to strike a good bargain, was stated by Jan Masaryk in a most interesting statement discovered by the author and quoted in her book (p. 86): "At present there is in the Cabinet no one who would take sides with Hitler... The anger at Germany now seems to be general... The majority of the British population has comprehended that

* See also A. J. P. Taylor's review of the book in No. 58.

Hitler's 'pacifism' is not to be given much credit." (May 16, 1935).

Hitler, on the other hand, saw the Treaty as the first result in an attempt to create an alliance with Britain. This, as well as the prestige he won, and the disintegration of the Versailles system were his principal motives. No British politician, however, was prepared to go as far as a close alliance. This was his fundamental error, as was clearly stated later on in a Foreign Office and Admiralty document of 1938, also quoted in this book: "He overlooked... that this country is bound to react, not only against danger from any purely naval rival, but also against the dominance of Europe by any aggressive military Power... British complaisance can never be purchased by trading one of these factors against the other and any country that attempts it is bound to create for itself disappointment and disillusion as Germany is doing."

This was the British attitude right through the "appeasement" period. The Naval Agreement was at least as much to the benefit of Britain as of Hitler. "Realpolitik" was the commanding motive. Nobody ever thought of more. Although we cannot fully draw the same conclusions on this highly controversial subject as the author does, the book, I think, is a very valuable contribution to the discussion. It impresses by the discoveries in foreign archives, among which the two above-mentioned importantly add to our earlier knowledge. No scholar can overlook this work in the future. Besides, it is a good token of international scholarly co-operation that a book by a Hungarian author, could be published in Germany in English.

OSWALD HAUSER

A FORGOTTEN CHILDHOOD

ERVIN LÁZÁR: *Buddha szomorú* (Buddha Is Sad). Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1974, 197 pp.

There is a short story, entitled "Rosemary", in this collection of short stories; it is the last piece in the volume. Although its very placement calls attention to its importance, the short story itself makes us especially thoughtful, for this short story somehow leads us to the entire world of the writer, Ervin Lázár. The hero of the story, Ézsaiás Illés, a character that appears in other stories of the author and seems to reflect the author's own personality, gets up one sad Sunday morning, sits on his bed, hopeless and befuddled and then suddenly, he thinks of his childhood, of the *puszta*,* throws his clothes on, carelessly, rushes to the railroad station and buys a ticket to his birthplace, Ferenctornya. Along the way, words and smells start to return to him from the hidden recesses of his memory. Funny flower names—pope-cheese, rosemary, catstail, blood-dripping swallow's grass—come to mind and "the road rocked him like a cradle". He arrives in his place of birth. Since the time that he has lived there, the countryside and the people have

* *Puszta*, in this context, means a small settlement, a collection of backward small houses in the Hungarian countryside until recently nearly cut off from civilization. Its very designation connotes backwardness and underdevelopment.

changed fundamentally. The people no longer remember the old residents of the *puszta*. The families had moved away. And even the name of Rosemary is merely guarded by encyclopedias.

The reader closes the cover of the book and starts to wonder. Indeed what kind of a world is that of Ervin Lázár that he keeps trying to create in this, his seventh book? What is that which is common in the short stories of "Buddha Is Sad"?

Lázár is not drawn to the retelling of small, amusing stories that one steals from real life. He attempts to draw the reader into a deeper and truer self-analysis. He discovered that one of the sources of our unhappiness is that we have forgotten our childhood. We, too, should take the road that is taken by the hero of "Rosemary" to discover our place of birth, the memories of our childhood. The difference is—and it is this difference that makes the artistry of Ervin Lázár exceptional—that while we are merely able to return to the place where we were born and are merely able to recall the memory of our childhood, in Lázár his own past lives continuously and he is tied by unbreakable threads to the world of his childhood.

Lázár creates a totally autonomous and self-governed world in his short stories. This world has its special roots. Here a "yes" means a "yes" and a "no" means "no". This world is characterized by truthfulness, naturalness and playfulness. Only the children understand its laws and its purity and perhaps those adults who still remember their own childhood. This world is contrasted by the world of the big dogs with padded shoulders, of the potentates with their double chins wearing waistcoats with copper buttons, of the black costumed phonies smelling of moth-balls. In short, the world of those who have forgotten the meaning of playing, the laws of childhood and purity and who are able to live only for the sake of pomp and for the roles they continue to play.

Lázár does not feed vain dreams, does not construct false generational contrasts and does not paint an idyllic picture of childhood. He sees things more clearly and is much more cruel than to promote illusions. The nostalgia, the emotionalism, the "sentimentality" and the sadness that come through these writings stem from the recognition that childhood flies away without ever being allowed to return and the past falls apart as if inescapable laws had governed its departure.

We are unable to extract ourselves from the suggestive nature of these writings. The writer holds us strongly and binds us to his childhood and he is able to force the reader to recall his own forgotten and buried past. He is a deeply humanist writer who recognizes that the child continues to doze in all of us. This humanism, that so clearly characterizes the short story "My Animal Stories" that appears in this issue of *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, this humanism is the writer's world that casts its vote for life, for playing, for naturalness, instead of casting its ballots for masks and costumes.

With what type of tools is the writer able to grasp the reader within his suggestive power Out of what types of elements is he able to form and construct in full the sovereign world of his short stories?

Imagery and reality, poetry and the elements of the epic are mixed in his writings. The rude realities, the everyday stories are always transformed at one point into the world of tales and dreams and play. His heroes move around with equal ease on the ground-floor of the fantastic and on the level of everyday reality. Suddenly an old man walks in on the the serious committee meeting, held in a smoke-filled room. He is wearing "poppy red clothes, blood red tails, tomato red pants and (sporting) a white beard" he tells the hero of the story that a flower is waiting for him in the forest...

The evergreen-tree father and the jack-in-the-box son are keeping a horse on the

second floor of the apartment house; there are several witnesses to testify to that point and only the head detective is unable to see all of this...

Simf—this funny non-existent name depicts a character that appears in several other short stories by the author—goes to visit a friend. While he exchanges pleasant words with the housewife, the children play in the garden. The *labanc* and *kuruc** Indian children know that the guest is Ferenc Rákóczi II, the eighteenth-century revolutionary hero and Prince of Transylvania, who is expecting his *aide-de-camp*, a certain Stregovac. Stregovac arrives on a red horse, "his silver mace shining on his left". The horse looks in through the window and takes off with the men, Stregovac and Simf, without his hooves touching the flowers. Only the woman who does not understand this play screams in fear, "My flowers, oh, my flowers..." Someone sits in a taxi, glances at the profile of the cab driver and feels that he has to pick a fight with the cabby. He lies and says that he is a pilot. "What's this sticking-to-the-ground-bit, compared to the flying of an airplane..." he remarks. "The chauffeur groaned a bit, leaned back... The whizzing of the tires suddenly stopped" and the car rose above the road, the houses, and the city...

Lázár raises the tension of the work by accepting the absurd as real and depicts the dreamlike stages as reality. Thus the differences among the various elements of a story are illusory, and the various separate pieces of the short stories fit together organically. Here the unreal and the absurd are used to emphasize reality. Here the tales remain tales in their original meanings; they do not express a contrast to reality, rather reality is viewed from another dimension allowing the reader to approach it from another, deeper perspective.

* *Labanc* and *kuruc* were the names of the opponents in Hungary's eighteenth-century fight for independence, the first were on the Austrian side, the second were the Hungarian insurgents.

We can call Lázár's writing "tales" only if we call the writings of Cervantes, Defoe and Swift tales as well. From among the contemporary Hungarian writers we can mention Iván Mándy's work as falling in this same category, and with Mándy, Lázár can certainly feel a deep, spiritual relationship.** Lázár's ideas, the nearly surrealist horse-jumping of imagination through bizarre, surprising events are nearly inexhaustible. His favourite instrument is the contrasting of extreme motifs—like the carriage that carries the dead and the beauty queen—the personalization of abstract ideas and of the material world—like the personalization of pain or the days of the week—and the magician-like handling of grammatical construction and the puns. Sometimes the entire short story is based on a single idea—such as, for example, the "Mad Researcher"—and in places where Lázár doesn't press the idea too far the stories are always successful. Where the idea and the elaboration is not in correct proportion, where the images are not resolved—such as, for instance, in the short stories entitled "The Big Bird" and "Birthmark"—there the reader is in trouble; his thoughts become uncertain.

Every artist, every human being sooner or later—most frequently later—returns to his childhood. Generally out of such meetings of the past and the present are born the most beautiful chapters of authors' autobiographies. Thus, for example, these are the most magnificent chapters of such autobiographies as Sartre's *The Words*. Zsigmond Móricz's *The Novel of My Life* and Albert Gyergyai's *My Mother and My Village*. The writer who does not find his way home, who does not return to his place of origin but guards unspoiled and further develops within himself, the world of his childhood, is a happy man. And it is this talent that makes the artistry of Ervin Lázár especially beautiful and unique.

TIBOR TÜSKÉS

** For the writing of Iván Mándy see, Nos. 4. 26, and 36 of NHQ.

THREE GENRES OF FICTION

GYULA HERNÁDI: *Logikai kapuk.* (Gates of Logic). Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1974. 341 pp.; SÁNDOR TATAY: *Meglepetéseim könyve.* (The Book of My Surprises). Móra, Budapest, 1974. 205 pp.; GYÖRGY SPIRÓ: *Kerengő.* (Cloisters). Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1974. 342 pp.

Hernádi's new short stories remind the reader of the collage technique in modern art.* Hernádi (who wrote the scripts of most Jancsó films) creates organic short stories from elements of word and thought which seem to preclude one another: newspaper articles, scientific essays and public announcements are integrated into his prose, and this volume consists of widely divergent genres from science-fiction and "prose *trouvé*" to drama and philosophical essay.

The fantastic story of "Második Gulliver" (Gulliver the Second) is built on the inventive notion of the existence of a fifth dimension, the inhabitants of which feed on human information. Knowledge is fed into human beings from birth (viz. education, the arts, press, television, etc); the accumulated and stored information is gradually drained from the human brain by the creatures of the fifth dimension and when the brain is empty the person dies. Everything fits into the system. Urbanization suits the large-scale breeding of humans (information-yield is greater in cities than in villages); because of the complexity of their information-nature, human beings imagine they are free and thus submit more readily to breeding than the stupid, therefore resisting, animals. News of this fifth dimensional world which feeds on human information reaches us from an authentic source: a super-butcher charged with "processing" a professor, who is on the brink of death from an infarction, tells his future victim the whole story.

The main character in *Logikai kapuk* is the world's most efficient computer which (or, rather, who) burns itself up in protest against irrational tasks given to it by the Ministry of War. The machine's intellect could not tolerate the absurdity of systematic and scientific genocide—an attitude which the reader naturally associates with that of other human-made systems which have been and still are obedient. Some science-fiction stories in the volume discuss fundamental ethical questions such as the aim of science and the purpose of human knowledge ("RNS", "Anti-Däniken", "Motion Picture", "The Processing of Nerve-Tracts"). "Dolphin Nostalgia" is a parody of a scientific survey, the aim of which is to discover why some Central European countries lead the world in their suicide rates. Conclusion: peoples living in landlocked countries feel an irresistible nostalgia for the sea, the first principle, and for its inhabitants, their brothers the dolphins; in times of weather fronts their nostalgia can only be compensated for by suicide. The parody contains an unspoken warning against the utilization of science for manipulation.

In some writings Hernádi tested the capacity of the novella structure. "Elementary Structures of Consanguinity" is a strange dialogue between mother and son. Out of two monologues which do not meet on any point (the mother speaks about a winter-coat, the son about the categories of leftism), the author creates a formal dialogue, and the absence of correlation in the text communicates the absence of personal relationship. "Rights and Responsibilities" is a literal quotation of a ministerial decree on cemetery regulations. The tragic contradiction between the subjective nature of the theme and the objectivity of the text which regulates the selection and maintenance of

* On Hernádi's earlier works see NHQ, No. 44.

graves arises from the fact that in placing the decree among works of fiction, it also seems to read as a literary text. "Two Photos" consists of a newspaper article accompanied by Hernádi's comments. The illustrated article from the West German magazine *Quick* is about a German soldier who was shot in the Second World War by his fellow soldiers because of his refusal to take part in the execution of Yugoslav hostages. Hernádi's respectful and emotional comments contrast with the indifferent objectivity of the newspaper article: "That is the kind of face I would have liked to have had when as a child they used to call me ugly."

Hernádi's picturesque prose usually begins with austere descriptions of objects, the strong visual imagery of which links together writings highly diverse in tone and subject. Compare, for example, the first lines of "Fragment": "Dawn, trawling-net, plateau, ship-smell, wall gliding slowly towards cold storage chests. Hills, rigid staves, boat-shaped mainland, lion-sized sea" with "Fictitious Playback" :"The sadness of countless clock-faces. The ruins of airplanes soaking in the sea, brick-blue and silk-curved."

Fourierland (a play published in full in No. 53. of NHQ) is similar in theme to other stories in the volume and differs only in genre. In one of the nineteenth-century Utopian communities in America, Considerant, the community's ideological leader, attempts to eliminate racial hatred by killing a white man, knowing that, as always, they will look for the murderer among the Blacks. His assumption is correct, a Black man confesses under torture and is hanged before all members of the phalanstery. Considerant reveals the truth in order to make them recognize their blindness and shoots himself in their presence. The threefold sacrifice, however, proves futile because, in the total confusion of their ideology, the members of the phalanstery dissolve the community. Before his suicide they reproach Considerant with his own earlier words: "...whoever recognizes the aim but choses the wrong instruments, those unsuited to his purpose, will be betrayed by history in the same way as the man who never even recognized the goal."

All the writings in the volume illustrate Hernádi's interest in the subjects which are also dealt with in his scenarios for Jancsó films: the distortion of men by violence and the relationship of ends and means, whether in science or in history; the diversity of story-form only serves to emphasize conceptual unity.

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Meglepetéseim könyve is the latest work of an author who has been writing novels for over four decades. His earlier works were mainly about the Hungarian village and the life of the Hungarian middle class between the two world wars.

Meglepetéseim könyve evokes the author's childhood and a nostalgia for that forever lost golden age. The book opens with the moment of birth of childish imagination. In an innocent everyday scene the secret is discovered: things can change their shape, you only have to watch them. His sisters washed their long hair and were drying it by the stove. The little boy observed with terror that their faces had vanished. "My terrible scream caused them to turn and uncover their faces but it was too late; I had seen them as monstrous." From this time on, the creatures of his imagination eclipsed the true nature of objects. The nightmarish world of Grimm's tales was brought to life by the childish imagination which found nourishment for fright in everything around him. The image of a formidable, punitive god invented by adults to embody and compensate for their own fears fitted perfectly into this world. The boy's father, grandfather and ancestors had been Lutheran pastors for centuries and according to the pastors' interpretation of the laws of the Old Testament, the commandment of goodness was supported by the threat of merciless reprisal. So fear was fed into the boy from

two sides and was apparently a good bridle because it curbed his childish mischievousness and gave him instead a lavish imagination. His native village was a row of houses hidden between mountains, a fertile soil for superstition. The shadows in the dense forests, the dim corners of the valleys and the peaks of unattainable mountains were peopled by his childish eyes with odd beings that brought sickness or health, imposed laws and issued commands as incomprehensible and fascinating as those of the Old Testament. Later as he came to know the real world, it became richer and more colourful and real objects made by nature and men were as marvellous as miracles. The process of learning was full of gay and frightening surprises which to the impartial spectator were just like the experiences of other children, but in the consciousness of the excited, imaginative child they grew and took wing. The successive episodes are thus strangely illuminated and the reader walks with the narrator on the border between consciousness and dream.

The magic is broken in the second part of the book; the stories take on a dimmer light and have the traditional didactic flavour of juvenile literature. It is as if the serious child telling stories to his friends has changed places with a clever, and therefore somewhat boring, adult talking to children.

In the concluding pages of the book the boy, now grown out of childhood, tries to explain the world to himself and the evocation of his childhood is terminated by the folk teaching: "I felt I could soar up on high if I wanted. But if bliss is here, what for? I can touch it with my hand."

*

Kerengő is the first published work of twenty-eight-year-old Spiró but the novel does not seem the work of a beginner.

In the concluding days of the last century, a peculiar organization dominates and controls a small Hungarian town, and the position of all characters in the novel is determined by their relation to the organization. The organization was created and developed into an all-powerful body by Péter Porházy, deputy and senior functionary of the town. Believing the world to be moved by irrational forces, Porházy felt that he was called to establish order, and the essence of order was that Porházy's will prevail everywhere at all times. Members of the organization had neither membership card nor club and did not even know they all belonged to the same organization; they only knew Porházy was to be feared and his instructions executed. The common basis for their selection into membership was that all had reached a stage of ignominy from where there was no return. Porházy recruited social climbers, perverted bureaucrats, parasites, pimps, anyone who wanted a better life at any cost. After collecting sufficient information on them, he informed them that "their fate was at the mercy of his will, not so much for a turn for the better as for a turn for the worse", they were made to understand that in exchange for certain services he would spare them. A simple but effective method, and the organization expanded with the leader's only worry being the selection of members among a surfeit of candidates.

If Porházy considered someone as unnecessary in the town (because of liberal ideas or simply because of insubordinancy), he had only to inform one of his people. The person in question vanished, was driven out or committed suicide—Porházy was not interested in details, only in the expurgation of disturbance from his system. The two coffeehouses and two salons of the town contributed much to the dynamic functioning of the organization. Porházy relied on them as gossip nests and valuable sources of information. One coffee-house was the haunt of the radicals, the other of the conservative intelligentsia. Although the labels did not mean much (the radicals wanted to climb to the top by ousting the conservatives from power), the relations of sub and superordina-

tion and cliques were clearly outlined, offering an ample choice of weaknesses for exploitation by some clever manipulator. The two salons served the same role. In the salon of Dr. Vitnyédi the guests had to affect simplicity, fashionable dress was banned. The doctor's sole interest was dogs: bitten by one in his youth he has been afraid of them ever since but must play the role of dog-lover as "a Vitnyédi" cannot be afraid of anything.

The other salon, the Keveházy mansion, is characterized by ostentatious and tawdry luxury. The lady of the house, Annemarie Keveházy, had once admired a revolving door and marble staircase in a city bank. Upon her return she had a revolving door and marble staircase built in her one-storeyed house, with the latter leading almost to the ceiling and back to the floor. Since the guests did not recognize the ridiculousness of the staircase and revolving door, they lent distinction to the salon.

The three basic types of relations to the organization are represented by three young men whose brains and abilities raise them above their environment. One becomes Porházy's secretary and devotes his skill unscrupulously to the service of the organization because this is the only way to build a career in the town. The other sees through the manipulation, becomes disgusted with the world and shuts himself up in his room in a total withdrawal from society. Whereas Adorján, the poet and journalist, refuses to write an editorial in praise of Porházy (next day he is no longer journalist but proofreader) he is not attracted by the sterility of withdrawal. He realizes that he can neither flee from his contemporaries, nor exchange his hangmen. If he wants to do something he can do it only in the present, risking an apparently hopeless struggle. Adorján's conscious, firm opposition to the organization manifests itself in a grotesque situation. Porházy has the habit of walking at night through the town in his cloak and unwritten rules demand that no one recognize "the ruler in incognito among his people". Adorján breaks this tacit agreement and addresses him with: "Good evening Porházy!" Porházy is utterly shocked by this cordial or at most neutral gesture because he feels that the other man is breaking the rules of the game, and the novel concludes with this scene.

The first part of the novel is a little protracted and long-winded but from the introduction of the organization to the end of the book the mounting tension holds the reader's growing interest. Spiró has characterized Porházy's power and increasing influence exceedingly well. He often employs the accumulation of words: Porházy's opponents "are reduced to nothing, melt into thin air, perish from guilty consciences" under the impact of a glance filled with "accusation, reproach, mockery and judgement"; Porházy does not simply walk but "proceeds, dashes, drives and bulldozes through the town". And with the accumulation of epithets of power, Porházy becomes increasingly ridiculous. In the first sentence he is described as a "City-father. Small-city-father." The storm is indeed stirred in a tea-cup, but for the beings who live in the tea-cup it is no less frightening, for this is the only sea they know.

LÁSZLÓ VARGA

ZOLTÁN KALLÓS, BALLAD COLLECTOR

ZOLTÁN KALLÓS: *Balladák Könyve* ("The book of ballads") Kriterion, Bucharest, 1970. 677 pp; Helikon, Budapest, 1973, 877 pp.

Many a year has passed since the Hungarian reading public took to a book as it did to Kallós's collection of ballads. The Bucharest edition was really meant for the Hungarian minority in Rumania, but a few copies reached Hungary. It was reissued, Helikon of Budapest co-operated with Kriterion of Bucharest, records were added, and the almost 25,000 copies for the Hungarian market were sold out in days, including those in the more expensive binding. They talk about this book wherever they want to prove that interest in folk traditions has flared up once again.

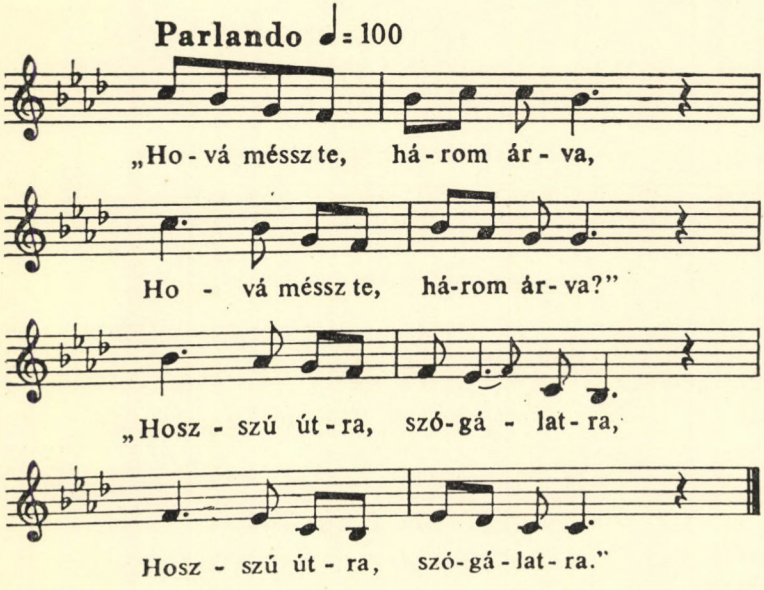
This interest is addressed both to the ballad, and there can be few nobler things that folk poetry has produced, and folk song as well, which has long taken its proper place in the thinking on art of our age. In Hungary this interest has soaked deep, touching the roots of the way this society thinks of itself, but it is specially due to the Hungarian folk traditions of Transylvania and Moldavia. These stand for all that is most magnificient in ballads and folk song, folk music and the dance as well, the whole length and breadth of that part of the world where Hungarian is spoken. Transylvania's closed, tradition bound world from the start offered collectors the must mature textual variants, it was there really that the Hungarian ballad was discovered, and it was amongst the Székely of Transylvania that Bartók and Kodály collected most pentatonic tunes, most of the real gems of the old Hungarian melodic style. When Moldavia next door was discovered for Hungarian folk music, tunes to which some old Hungarian ballads were sung turned up as well, and pieces were there, heard again, still very much alive and kicking, which were on record amongst the Székely as examples of a dying tradition. Even before Kallós, one thought of the Hungarian Székely of Transylvania and the Hungarian Csángó of Moldavia as the treasure trove of Hungarian folklore.

Kallós far surpassed all that even those familiar with both territories could possibly hope for. It was expected that he would collect what had long been collected and that using modern methods, that is a tape-recorder, he would be able to record a big part of a wealth that had been. Instead he surprised in ways that no one thought possible after a hundred years of Hungarian folkballad collecting, and Bartók and Kodály's work on folk music had started as well when this century was still young.

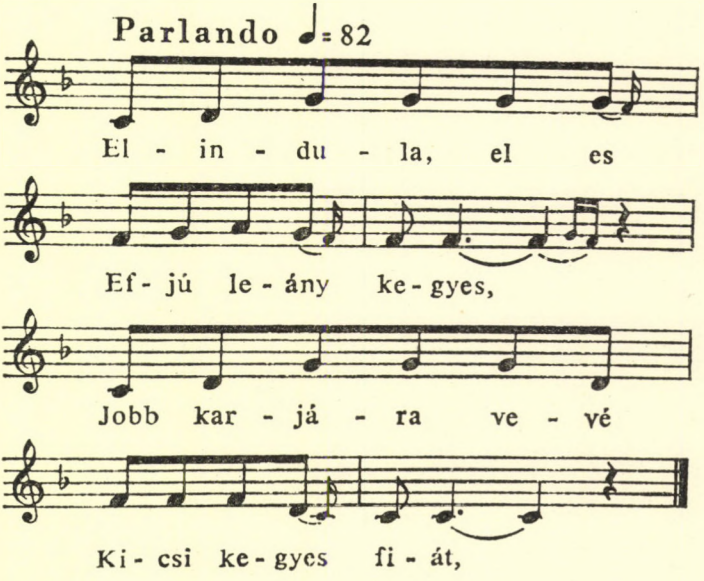
It became clear to start with that the Székely were not the only ones who preserved the ancient Transylvanian traditions, and it could well be that their forms are not the most archaic. The musical idiom of Central Transylvania, the *Mezőség*, that is the "heath", is at least as archaic and rich, and in many of its features, the way they sing, instrumental dance music, and the coming into being of certain more recent types of song, it is altogether unique. The valley of the Gyimes is the other territory he discovered. This is a pass through the Eastern Carpathians that leads towards Moldavia, and there, scattered in the valleys of small brooks, and high in the mountains, people lived whose traditions of folk music and folk song were not only richer than most, they had preserved ancient ways, special aspects of the tonal system, of using the voice and instruments, which created a feverish enthusiasm amongst the lay public, allowing ethnomusicologists a glimpse into the prehistory of Hungarian music. Moldavia stands for similar, partially different ancient

ways. There was a frontier between the Hungarians living there and the rest of the Hungarians for most of history, going back many centuries, and changes in Hungarian conventions and culture only reached them with delays and in a watered down state. The daily life of people there is still pretty medieval. These are all strongly flowing sources of folk poetry and folk music. There is nothing like it in any of the lands where Hungarian is spoken, nor is there anything comparable anywhere in Eastern Europe.

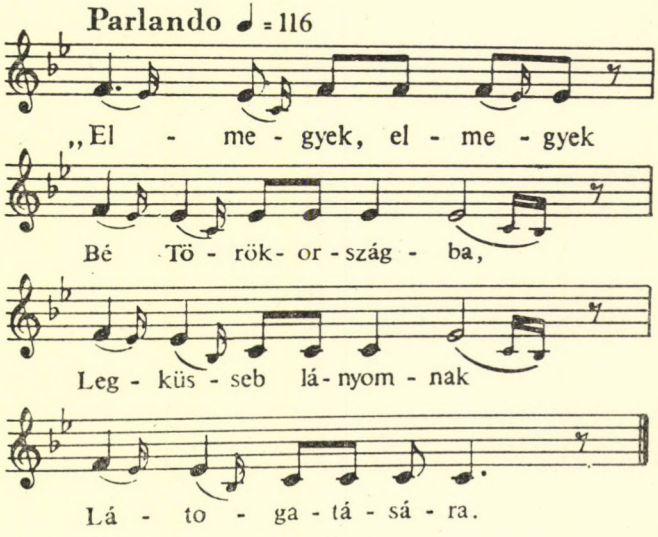
This is particularly true of ballads. There is no other place in Eastern Europe, or the United States, the two areas which proved richest for collectors, that offered as many and with such mature features. Kallós here publishes two hundred and seventeen ballads, forty-two folk-songs related to them and eight told in prose; attaching the music of a hundred and sixty-two. Let me say that the number of the latter expresses what it proved possible to publish, not all those collected, Kallós always recorded sung versions, except for those told as tales, and one or two where the subject could not remember the tune. There aren't two hundred and seventeen types of course. Kallós is aware of the importance of variants, when the type is rare, or very beautiful, he publishes a number of them, fifteen of the "Three Orphans", to give an example, from many different parts of Rumania where Hungarians live, mostly areas or villages which were virgin territory for folk-song collecting until he got there. He knows what those five versions he publishes of "The Heartless Mother" mean to ethnomusicology, neither Bartók, nor Kodály, had found it while collecting amongst the Székely, and its early splendid text remained recorded without a melody for a long time until Péter Pál Domokos, the first ethnographer to work amongst the Hungarians of Moldavia, published it with



Three Orphans, p. 521



The Heartless Mother, p. 483



The Mother of the Rich Woman, p. 533

a tune in 1941. Kallós now added five new variants. But the three variants of "The two captives", and the two recordings of "The mother of the rich woman" are as important. The first was last found in 1916, the other in 1910 by Antal Molnár and Zoltán Kodály respectively.

Kallós also found things no one else had before him. He added about a dozen new types to the register of Hungarian ballads. Perhaps the most important of his discoveries is "The soldier girl," in three variants. This provided the missing Hungarian link in a chain that stretched all the way from France, through Portugal, Spain and Italy, to the Balkans and on to the Czechs, Slovaks and Poles. Oddly enough this wide-spread folk-theme was first "recorded", that is adapted, by an anonymous Hungarian poet in 1570.

Nor is the importance of those new types any less which branch off from known types or act as bridges between them. Discoveries of this sort are evidence that, in its present state, tradition only preserved the outstanding peaks. The wealth-that-was still exemplified the metamorphoses from one type to another, lifting the veil from the way the folk-imagination works when creating art. Equally important was discovering the complete Moldavian text of "The unmarried mother who killed her children" which had only been known in fragments, a complete text that included details which clearly proved the connection between the Hungarian ballad, and a western European one known in French, English and Danish version (Child 20).

The present reviewer collects ballads and is an ethnomusicologist as well, and it has proved difficult to decide which field most benefited by Kallós's discoveries. The musical material published in this book alone contains so much archaic that is new to scholars, especially much of what is presented on the attached record, that would be enough if it were the summing-up of the work of ten men. Let me allude only to something on one of the attached records, a ballad from Gyimes recited on three notes of the pentatonic system, *do*, *so* and *la*, embroidering it all in a special timbre suggesting the early middle ages, or something earlier still, to the listener.

One ought to be aware that the volume was not selected from the whole of the material Kallós collected. Much has appeared earlier, hidden somewhere in a scholarly journal. In many cases he made it available to friends and fellow ethnologists, in this way his collection was dispersed through numerous channels, in the publications of ethnologists in Rumania and Hungary. Kallós did not include any of these, only stuff that was completely new and unpublished, that had not been handed to anybody else. There was more than enough for a volume full of surprises, even within these limitations. To think only of the dances and other folk-tunes he has collected! One would need astronomical figures to describe all he has done.

How is it that someone could achieve so much by his forties, a relatively early age for a scholar? In the first place by sacrificing his life to the traditions of his native land, first those of his home area, extending its limits as he grew older. Kallós is a native of the *Mezőség* (Heath) district of Transylvania; nothing seemed more natural than that, studying with the aim of teaching singing, he should collect folk-songs in an ever widening circle. This remained at the centre of his interest, what he felt to be his calling, ever since. When he was appointed to teach in the one and only Hungarian school in Moldavia he visited every small Hungarian village there and became personally acquainted with just about every one who knew folk-songs, and there are a great many of those in that part of the world. When an end was put to his teaching, he managed to get an office job in the timber industry in the Gyimes Valley. Kallós however cannot live apart from a community, life around him passionately interests him

wherever he is, particularily its manifestations in art. At that time he discovered the traditions of the Gyimes valley and made them accessible to all who treasure folk art. Finally, without a job, and not tied to any particular region, the art of all places where Hungarians lived in Transylvania or Moldavia became the field where he collected. He made it his special business to cover even the most scattered diaspora, and record their folk-songs and folk-music. He covered the whole of historic Transylvania and Moldavia, but he did not step out of their bounds, into those parts of the Great Plain which lie within the frontiers of Rumania. That is a different world and he did not really feel at home in that.

A love of one's native land works wonders in ethnographic collecting and has done great things for Hungarian culture. Those who really loved their own neck of the woods always produced something of immense value for the whole when they delved to greater depths than elsewhere. Kallós surpasses us all. Not only because the country he covers is bigger, the whole Principality of Transylvania that once was, and even more, or because it is incomparably richer in archaic material than any other, but because Kallós is driven by an inner need to do what others do out of mere enthusiasm. Preserving the traditions of the people gives meaning to his life. This explains why he carries on though he puts his basic interests at risk, again and again, with renewed strength. He did it when he only enriched the publications of others, he did it when his name was beginning to be bruited about, but far from ensuring him a living it cost him money; and he did it, with great satisfaction, when he received sufficient recognition to publish books under his own name—another volume contains all the songs one Moldavian woman knew—and twenty years of systematic and devoted research were beginning to make him some royalties as well. And he will surely do it again, for nothing can keep this man, obsessed with folk song, from his calling: the search for the culture his people has produced.

LAJOS VARGYAS

A PROLIFIC AND A TACITURN POET

MIHÁLY LADÁNYI: *Se csillaga, se holdja* [Neither Star Nor Moon], Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1974, 466 pp; GYÖRGY PETRI: *Körülírt zuhanás* [Circumscribed Fall], Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1974, 71 pp.

Mihály Ladányi, the "song-beaten offspring of cotters", began publishing verse in university periodicals as a student two decades ago; his first published volume in 1959 bore the modest but carefully chosen title *Az út kezdete* (The Beginning of the Road). How very deliberate it was now becomes clear after publication of this tenth volume of verse.

When Ladányi began his career, Hungarian lyric poetry was ceremonial and serious, perhaps too much so. Even though different trends vied with each other, just as they do today, almost every trend and

virtually every poet agreed on one basic issue: they wanted to create *poetry*, in other words, a separate realm, with its own special and unmistakable ortography and hydrography, atmosphere and values. Individual poems served as the building blocks in the realization of this ideal poetry and were subordinate to the whole of the volume, or to poetry as such, just as chapters of a novel are to the complete work.

From *Az út kezdete* on, Ladányi has not written poetry, he has improvised poems. As far as function is concerned, his poems are in a co-ordinate relation with one another, similar to diary entries, a fact which naturally does not preclude some poems being more successful, others less so. Ladányi speaks untiringly and unceasingly of eternal *hic et nunc*'s, of the constantly changing "here and now". "Every day I prepare for my fate," the poet wrote in "Luna", a poem from *Dobszóló* (Drum Solo, 1967), and his verse records daily resumptions, hopes and despairs, joys and failures, perceptions and observations. Notwithstanding that it sounds bad in aesthetics and criticism, I would call Ladányi's poems human documents, adding that they are the notes of a moralist.

Above all Ladányi's poems document change in life style: the amazement, vacillation, search for a foothold and acclimatization of a young man who came to the capital city from the village. It is no accident that he compares the city to a huge woman and depicts it altogether with a feminine nature. And it is no accident either that glimpses of Budapest restaurants and espresso-bars flash throughout his work. That is not to say Ladányi is a poet of the city; he is not. Since the early 1960s he has frequently returned to live in the country. His experiences in the capital city, however, are one of the sources for his poetry. "My poems are still reveries of the ditch bank, I write them during my roamings, in taverns, country stations, old press-houses," he notes on the fly-leaf of *Kitépett tollú szél* (Plucked Wind), 1974. Many poems express concern for the revolution, demanding it, calling out to it or mourning for it, and he always identifies himself with those for whom this idealistic, and sometimes perhaps naively, envisaged revolution unfurled its colours. The setting and local colour of places where he writes and wanders come to life in his verse as a background for the people he meets. Ladányi's poetry is anthropocentric and individual-centred, flashes of profiles, of workers, peasants and professionals, the educated and uneducated, poets, readers and boorish critics, friends and adversaries, old and young, and of women, scores of them. Portraits of lovers, the heroines of completed and hopeless love stories. In Hungary Ladányi's generation was the first to encounter—already as adults—the sexual revolution. In twenty years of poetry, a sequence of conquests are related which puts Casanova to shame in a stubborn, unyielding search for ideal love that puts the Romantics to shame. Before the sexual revolution love, for the most part, was a sexual or sex-related moral problem. Now, with the gradual disappearance of sex taboos, heretofore unnoticed or hidden social, moral and psychological problems of love have come to light. Ladányi's poems offer important glosses on the possibilities and need for love in the third quarter of the twentieth century.

In practice a Ladányi poem becomes the maid servant of the examination of behavioural forms. The background is the memory of the Second World War and the threat of a Third World War, the recollection of the years of the personality cult, the problems of the construction of socialism and the achievements and failures of technological development. However, the examination is almost never abstract, impersonal or timeless, but is always linked with a date, concrete persons and concrete problems.

Ladányi is one of the most popular Hungarian poets today. His latest volume,* *Se csil-*

* See poems from this volume in Edwin Morgan's translation, on pp. 69–73 of this issue.—The Editor.

laga, se holdja (Neither Star Nor Moon), is already a second collection of his "complete works". In 1970, the volume *Élhettem volna gyönyörűen* (I Could Have Lived Beautifully) contained his collected works up to that point. Ladányi's poetic technique has greatly added to his popularity. He mostly writes short poems, often ending in a punch line. He daringly mixes outmoded words and commonplace phrases with expressions drawn from different vocabulary levels rarely used in poetry. He interchanges the customary and the unexpected within one verse line, indeed, within one syntagm, thus broadening and lending perspective to the poem. The peculiar atmosphere of his poetry is created not by verbs and adjectives but—mainly—by the linking of common nouns, lexical items denoting concrete, tangible objects, the surprising juxtaposition of which arouses moods and relations undetected until that moment. The grotesque element thus achieved serves a critical and at the same time humanizing function.

Ladányi is an interesting, readable poet. This nearly 500-page volume comprising the material of two decades, is a diary, a picaresque chronicle developed from a diary. Although there are some less successful poems, it remains captivating throughout. He wrote the first item at twenty and added the last one at forty years of age; the poems document the transformation of a sensitivity subject equally to internal and external time.

*

György Petri's first volume of verse was published in 1971, and I reviewed it in Volume 43 of NHQ. The volume marked an event, one of the most important events of the last decade in the history of Hungarian poetry. "It is an experiment in thinking without emotion and in avoiding the traps of hope and despair," I wrote about it then, and I quoted from one of the poems: "You learned to write dispassionately." At that time Petri spoke about the liberating influence of T. S. Eliot, and indeed, even the title of the volume *Magyarázatok M. számára* (Explanations for M.)—so unusual in Hungarian lyric poetry—is reminiscent of *Alfred Prufrock and Other Observations*. Petri characterizes the difference between *Magyarázatok M. számára* and *Körülírt zuhanás* (Circumscribed Fall), his old and new volumes, in the following manner: "I feel the decrease in poem length—no matter how external it may seem upon first consideration—to be the only decisive fact of my so-called, and incidental, development. In my first volume I worked with the *Vita Nuova* method. The poems were lengthy glosses to the actual poems which were sometimes interwoven and sometimes not even written at all. Now I have succeeded in reaching a more elementary, and therefore more suitable to aesthetic shaping, communication. My dictatorial demands for interpretation have also decreased. I have tried not to comment and footnote."

Both in education and inclination, Petri is a philosopher. He attended the faculty of philosophy at Eötvös University. He is not interested in the contingent, the interchangeable, or even that which is subject to time change; he looks for the general and the regular in the concrete as well. A portrait or description only serve as pretexts for sketching basic psychological or ethical situations. His best poems are written with the demand for finality of definition. I quote his six-line "Szerelmek" (Loves) in a prose translation because even this way his approach and technique may be perceived (in the original the second and third and fifth and sixth lines rhyme).

> Fal-lals of an unchanging frame.
> Playful season between ice and draught,
> imagined gap in the wall of the cell.
> Blackening dart.
> Unexpected twang from dusty strings,
> loitering frozen into moonlight.

In principle Petri continues to be characterized by emotion-free thinking. What

does the state of "Új szerelem" (New Love), the title of one of his poems, mean?

roaming with you—once again
decayed into hope." (Prose translation)

Love is a "neo-Platonic achievement", we are told in another verse by the poet, who tries to precisely analyse and put everything into place. But the demand and wish for analysis and its concomitant irony and self-irony bear witness to the presence of emotions, curbed and under control. Part of the tension in Petri's poetry comes precisely from the process of controlling emotions in a struggle to achieve and maintain an emotion-free attitude. The poet speaks of great loneliness, but without complaint, only states:

Sights, opinions: no one
I could share them with.
(Prose translation)

With the *Magyarázatok M. számára* a twenty-seven-year-old poet had entered the Hungarian poetic scene whom many—including the present writer—at once began to list among the very best. *Körülírt zuhanás* was preceded by great and favourable expectations, perhaps, however, a somewhat "conservative" expectation: Petri was expected to continue in his old, already familiar tone. But the poet, especially in his short poems built on allusions and structured elliptically, has surprised his readers, as if he had come too near to the other members of his generation from whom his first volume differed so much. If earlier he was too redundant at times, now he seems on occasion to be too taciturn. Still, a good many poems in the volume fulfil expectations and *Körülírt zuhanás* is a noteworthy new volume by a good poet.

LÁSZLÓ FERENCZI

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW AND ADMINISTRATION

LAJOS TÖRÖK: The Socialist System of State Control. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1974, 157 pp. (In English)

It appears that science and scholarship in every country has "favourite" subjects. Larger resources are concentrated on certain of them neglecting other of importance. Schools select certain lines of research and they often simply become a matter of custom, of "tradition". Whether or not, in a given case, this selection proves to be fortunate, can be determined *ex post facto*, while applying the results.

In the past quarter century Hungarian legal science has also displayed certain favoured themes. First of all local and regional councils, and the problems of parliamentary and administrative procedures; other questions were dealt with in textbooks and handbooks for practice. However, a modern transformation of the state organization model raised new issues for scientific research itself, particularly following 1957. In the early 1970s works on administrative law dealt with new subjects as well which helped to modernize the state organization in preparation for the major amendments to the Constitution carried out in 1972.

Work in this new field was done by Lajos

Török, who is on the research staff of the Institute of Political and Legal Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The job was all the harder since no similar work has been done either in Hungarian public law, or in similar fields in any of the other socialist countries. Török himself went through all that was published in these countries and he gives a detailed review of his reading. It is apparent that although many aspects of control have been dealt with, the characteristic feature of almost all the works is that they only summarized particular details without displaying the inner relations or the possibilities of a division of labour. He used the comparative method so that the absence of comprehensive works did not really bother him, and he was able to process what appeared in the socialist states all the same. At the same time, precisely because the subject is a complex one, his method is complex as well. He touches on various legal, economic and other utilitarian aspects of control. Reading only part 2 of chapter 1 it already becomes clear that though the work deals with public law the author has taken into consideration work on the relation between the organizational sciences, economics, sociology and control. Finally, the comparison also includes a concise summary of the achievements of socialist public administration law. This monograph on control is this a comparative work on public law, which is soundly based all round.

In the first part of the work, chapters 1 and 2 contain an approach to the concept and types of control, giving examples from both bourgeois and socialist literature. This is not exactly *in medias res* but such theoretical considerations are nevertheless useful to the reader, particularly when it comes to the comparative aspects mentioned. The most interesting part of chapter 2 is the comparison of social and state control in section 3. For a long time this "duality" was the subject of major debate in the social sciences. Although the correct proportion of state and social control has to be established within the various sections of control, this theoretical introduction nevertheless enables all of us to find our way in this field.

In my view the part of the monograph which is best and which supplies the most scientific and practical information is the second. In its five chapters the author has dealt with control operations by judicial bodies, the public prosecutors, elected bodies and public administration as well as in the development of central state control bodies, in broad outline. The author has shown that instead of a one-sided description of public administrative control, the versatility of state control which exists can cope with the question of ensuring that state organs operate according to law and rationally. Hungarian literature on public law has already dealt with the function and organization of control in this broad sense prior to this work.

The author examines the control activities of the courts from the aspect of ensuring legality. He points out that the function of the courts is justice and judicial decisions and that their control activities are part of this. Judicial control is the control of the law and in this sense it is limited and strictly defined.

The other control and supervision activity which has been discussed earlier, particularly by Soviet jurisprudence, is that of the prosecuting authorities. The author discussed in detail issues related to prosecution control, including arguments put forward in other socialist countries (the subjects and object of control, particularly and principally the general control branch which deals with state administrative control, the instruments of prosectuion control, etc.) and concludes that for many reasons prosecution authority control cannot be interpreted as public administrative control and cannot be linked with this because of its own specific features.

The third area of control and supervision is public administration. The author introduces this chapter by defining the concepts of control and supervision since, in his

opinion, this is more than a problem of terminology. It often conceals matters of principle (see the discussion on the supervision of agricultural co-operatives in many socialist countries). He also discusses typical supervision and control models in the various mechanisms of economic management. His typology of public administrative supervision is particularly noteworthy for it also throws light on the causes of differences in public administrative bodies of supervision and control. (Examples are taken from Hungarian practice.) This chapter is supplemented by a section dealing with types of public administrative control (types of control aimed at autonomous and related, external and internal, general and specific, administrative and executive activities).

Chapter 5 in part 2 deals with certain basic issues of central state control. Section 1 describes the situation as it developed gradually, and appears today in the form of central control bodies of the most diverse structure. It can be determined that there have been numerous and varied experiments in precisely this field. As a result bodies subordinated in some cases to the government and in some cases to the highest representative bodies have been established. Special reference is made to the Hungarian form of central state control which has included popular elements while maintaining its state nature. One part of this question is whether the socialist state needs only a central control apparatus, or whether a local (regional) one is also necessary. The variety of solutions raises the interesting problem of centralization v. decentralization.

In this same chapter the author also deals with the question of professional or lay control emphasizing the possibility of linking up the professional and lay elements, applying them in combination, as well as the need to establish correct ratios, even within the given fields of specialized control. Linked to this is an examination of historical and current institutions of joint party and state control. The author describes these forms of control as satisfactory in form and operation in their own time, and as having created the foundations for even broader popular control.

This brief review illustrates the complex way in which Lajos Török has tackled the question of control. Having dealt with all the marginal areas of supervision and control in a manner corresponding to their significance he at the same time has been able to provide a more lively depiction of the central control organization. And since the role of precisely these bodies is important from the points of view of both constitutional legitimacy and expedience, I cannot consider this issue to be one of public administrative techniques only. It is a question of public law in the broadest interpretation of the term.

Let me call attention to the fact that, using the historical and comparative method, Lajos Török has made it possible to display rapid changes taking place within the state organization as well as the fact that this body, which has outlined a variety of models, will most likely continue to be variable.

Lajos Török's work is an aid to a better understanding of the organization of the socialist states.

OTTÓ BIHARI

ARTS

A THIRTY YEARS RETROSPECTIVE — THE KÁROLYI MEMORIAL

Anniversaries give one a chance to draw up a balance sheet, for art as well.

Painters, sculptors, draughtsmen and designers work in lonely pursuit of their art, studios are not collective workshops. They can measure their success only by the response their finished product elicits. The information they receive only tells of the contact of two poles—themselves and the public. If artists want to compare their ideas with those of others, if they want to know their place in the community, they need larger forums which exhibit the general context in which they work. The present display in the Budapest Műcsarnok offers a general survey of the last thirty years in painting, sculpture and the graphic arts.

This is most useful and necessary for the self-knowledge of artists, but it concerns not only them and responsible authorities. Shows of this type always attract the public, figures speak of hundreds of thousands of visitors of comprehensive exhibitions.

The present exhibition reports on the position of the arts in Hungary in 1975. This limitation is partly due to technical reasons: there is no exhibition hall large enough to accommodate everything one wishes to show. The other reason is that the organizers of such displays can count on thorough knowledge on the part of the public. Visitors have seen previous shows, both collective and individual, and they are more or less acquainted with the artists. One or two paintings, plastic works or drawings tell them of the artist's present stage of development, of his plans and achievements.

I admit that a hundred thousand well-informed connoisseurs may look like a boast at least to those who have never tried to force their way in the throngs in the Műcsarnok. But the number is true all right, it even increases from exhibition to exhibition. And who would go to one which offers only unintelligible fragments of an artist's life-work? The explanation is very simple: in the last fifteen years the range of Hungarian art has been so wide that everybody can find his favourite style, and, on the other hand, everybody had to follow changes attentively since it was impossible to foresee the sudden emergence of an interesting personality or the surprising turn of style not only of the artist himself but of a whole school of art and even, as in the case of Béla Kondor, of graphic art as such.

All this does not make the reviewer's task any easier. It is impossible to list the works in the catalogue or to list only the best works—almost a thousand artists are represented. The coloured reproductions in this issue try to convey a picture of the main trends. The selection, although carefully made, is far from complete.

Sculpture has been discussed in another illustrated article but paintings and graphic art present also a much wider range and show more extensive sources of inspiration

than are represented on the six reproductions here. A number of formal and substantial experiments had to be left out. Hungarian painters started to design tapestries about fifteen years ago but weaving has completely detached itself from painting. Nor are works included which are no more than promising experiments, and the Great Plain school had to be left out as well since they alone would have taken up all available space.

Dezső Korniss's *Shepherds* is an important painting. It is inspired by Hungarian folk-art —although not in its concrete motifs. The structure, palette and the iconography of the painting are based on the thorough study of the embroideries on shepherds' cloaks— in transcribing them to another idiom the artist remained faithful to their true spirit.

Pál Deim's *To the Memory of All Those Who Died a Senseless Death* is a good example of going beyond the traditional boundaries of painting for the sake of expression. This composition is a plastic work—a painted wooden relief. Deim's series of experiments offer a good example of the development of Hungarian art. He synthesized the attributes of the Szentendre school, especially the severe structure of Barcsay's paintings and the score-like pictorial language of Endre Bálint—but he went one step further.

Piroska Szántó's painting, *Szentendre Peacock*, shows the traces of another type of synthesis. In her art the colour structure creates the impression of musical harmonies. The metallic colours—mostly gold and silver—appear on a black background (as if they sprang up from silence), sometimes interrupted by lightning—like whites—but these colours have a symbolic meaning: they stand for life and death, the whole cycle of life. This intention is very clear on *Love*, a series painted at the same period as the *Szentendre Peacock*.

Margit Anna and Viola Berki experiment with another possibility: they humanize the freedom-ideal of surrealism, and create a gentler world with the naiveté of children who do not reject anything that is possible. The artists move in this world with wise restraint. Their experiment has been a starting-point and an encouragement to many young painters who proceed along their course and draw from this apparently inexhaustible source, enriching it with their own inventiveness.

Endre Sziráki's graphic series *Commonplace happiness* has been constructed with much care for colour and form: the artist used different means of printing. The third piece of the series shows all existing tendencies and results in contemporary Hungarian graphic art. It is clear that Sziráki has no technical problems; the majority of the graphic artists here shown handle the most complex technical problems of their craft with the same ease. Sziráki is able to use his medium for complex visual, emotional and intellectual communication and, with a full mastery of his craft, he has the courage to express the simple things which do not tolerate the slightest uncertainty: he expresses everyday life not in idylls but in truths.

The Károlyi Statue

It is not easy to erect a memorial to a man of our times. Time has worn out the traditional means, the representative forms— horsemen, figures in robes of state or classical robes have become anachronistic. A contemporary hero does not differ in his outward appearance from anybody else: he wears the same lounge suit, he travels by car, rail or plane and—if we disregard the fortunately exceptional occasions of battles—he needs no special environment for his deeds, decisions are made at desks and conference tables.

These contradictions constitute the sculptor's dilemma: he must give an idea of a man's greatness and of his impact on his age without having the means to do so, the least "falsification" or "correction" provokes immediate and passionate protest. The outstanding figures of our times are shown on photographs, films and on television, every-

body "knows" them and so there is a large critical public. Is it still possible to find a solution?

It is possible to say yes. Imre Varga's memorial to Mihály Károlyi was unveiled early this spring: it stands near Parliament, in a corner of Kossuth Lajos Square. The artist proved that with care and ingenuity it was possible to turn all limitations into virtues. This statue does not want to "lift up", or artificially heroicize Mihály Károlyi. He does not represent him with emphatic gestures, nor does he put him on a rostrum, or among supporting figures. The artist knew that this fabulously wealthy Hungarian aristocrat who had distributed his own property to the peasants, who courageously took over the leadership of the first Hungarian republic and whose life and political activity were guided by the highest motives could not be suitably represented in a spectacular way.

Károlyi's bronze figure is stooped and meditative, he stands among trees on a low grey marble pedestal, rather on three low stairs; the statue is framed by two metal broken arches which do not meet. The spectator need not look up to see him: he is not much higher than those who look at him. This tired figure leaning on his stick is not conspicuous. Varga not only showed Károlyi looking as we knew him—he added Károlyi's spirit, the radiation of his personality. He did not imitate or introduce the man, he presented Károlyi, giving visible shape to his image, as the nation knew him, in a lounge suit, stooping, old, leaning on his walking stick. He was heroically pure without heroic gesture: his memorial bears witness to his true self.

GYÖRGY HORVÁTH

ART IN PUBLIC OWNERSHIP 1945–1975

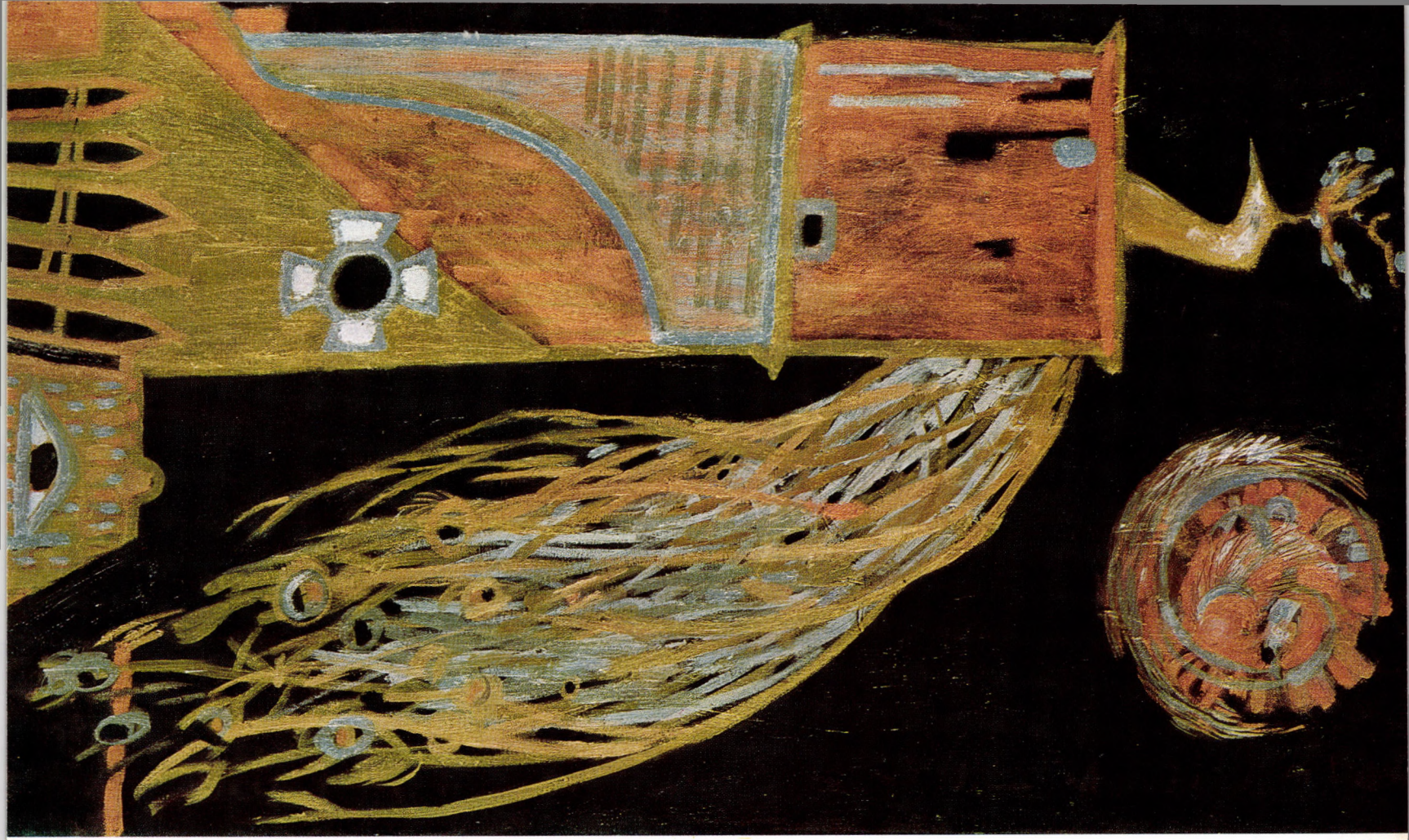
Public statues and monuments of the last 30 years in the Műcsarnok Gallery

Within the context of the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of Hungary's liberation a special exhibition was held in the Budapest Műcsarnok entitled "Public Property 1945–1975".

Not all works of art placed under public ownership during this time were included, especially not all the paintings, statues and other objects which have come into the possession of the Ministry of Culture through annual state purchases. This exhibition was limited to monuments created for competitions, by commission or from the "investment" fund provided by a law requiring two pro mille of all large construction investments to be set aside for works of art connected with the building. Because the statues, murals and decorative objects for this exhibition were both physically and spiritually integral parts of their environments, they could not be brought together in one place. Some other arrangement had to be found. At first documentary photography seemed the obvious solution. But feeling that a simple listing of items, even with the best reproductions, would fatigue the interest of visitors, the organizers placed small-scale maquettes alongside the photographs of original works.

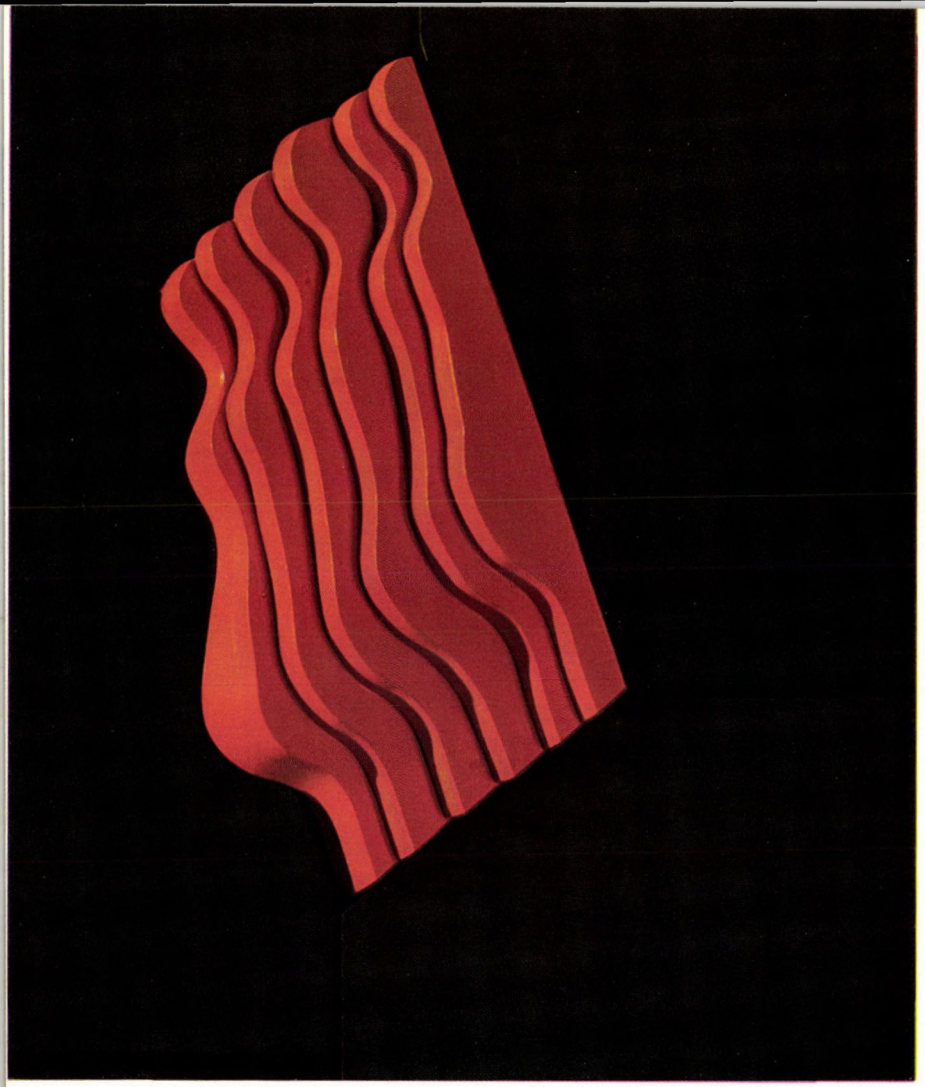
Four Thousand Works

Having met the minimum requirement of a suitable lay-out, the next step was much



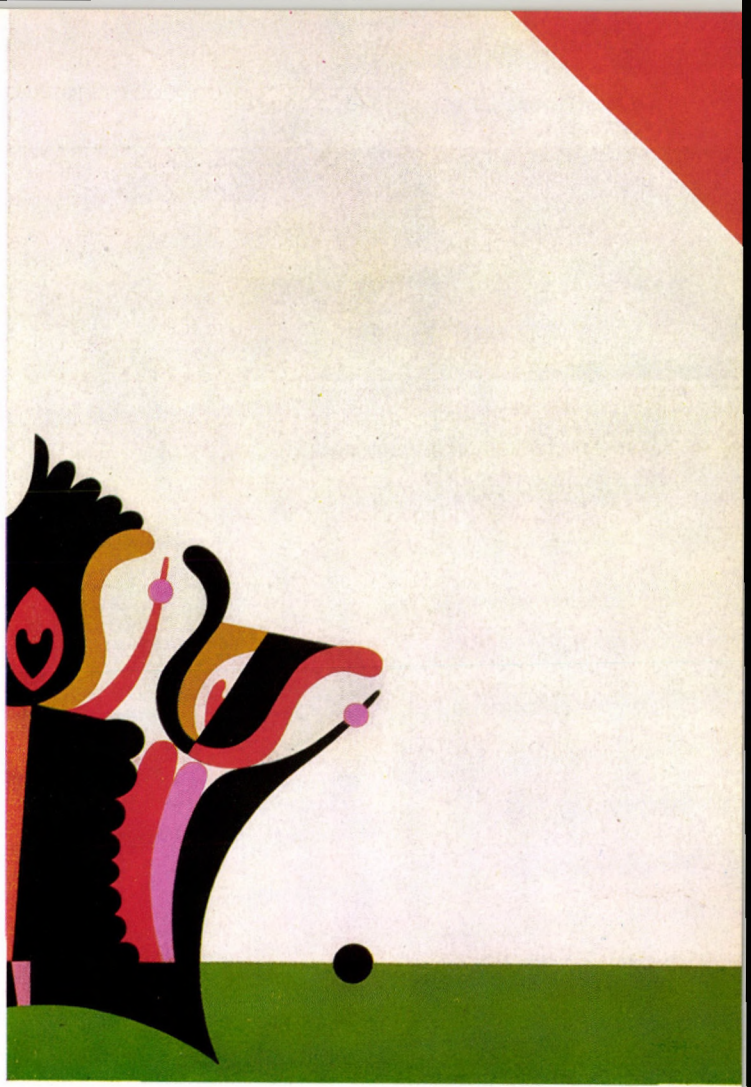
KÁROLY SZELÉNYI

Piroska Szántó: Szentendre Peacock (oil and metallic paints, 100×60 cm, 1971)



KÁROLY SZELÉNYI

Pál Deim: Hommage to All Who Perished Senselessly



KÁROLY SZELÉNYI

Dezső Korniss: Shepherds (oil on canvas, 48×33 cm, 1974)

KÁROLY SZELÉNYI

Margit Anna: Olympia (oil on canvas, 60×90 cm, 1974)


KÁROLYI MIHÁLY
MAGYARORSZÁG
ELSŐ
KÖZTÁRSASÁGI
ELNÖKE

FERENC KOVÁCS

▲

◀ Imre Varga: The Károlyi Monument (Bronze and marble, 1974)

KÁROLY SZELÉNYI

Viola Berki: Venice (oil on canvas, 110×110 cm, 1973)

PHOTO DEMETER BALLA

PHOTO FERENC KOVÁCS

Miklós Borsos: Tombstone for Frigyes Karinthy, the writer, in the Kerepesi cemetery,

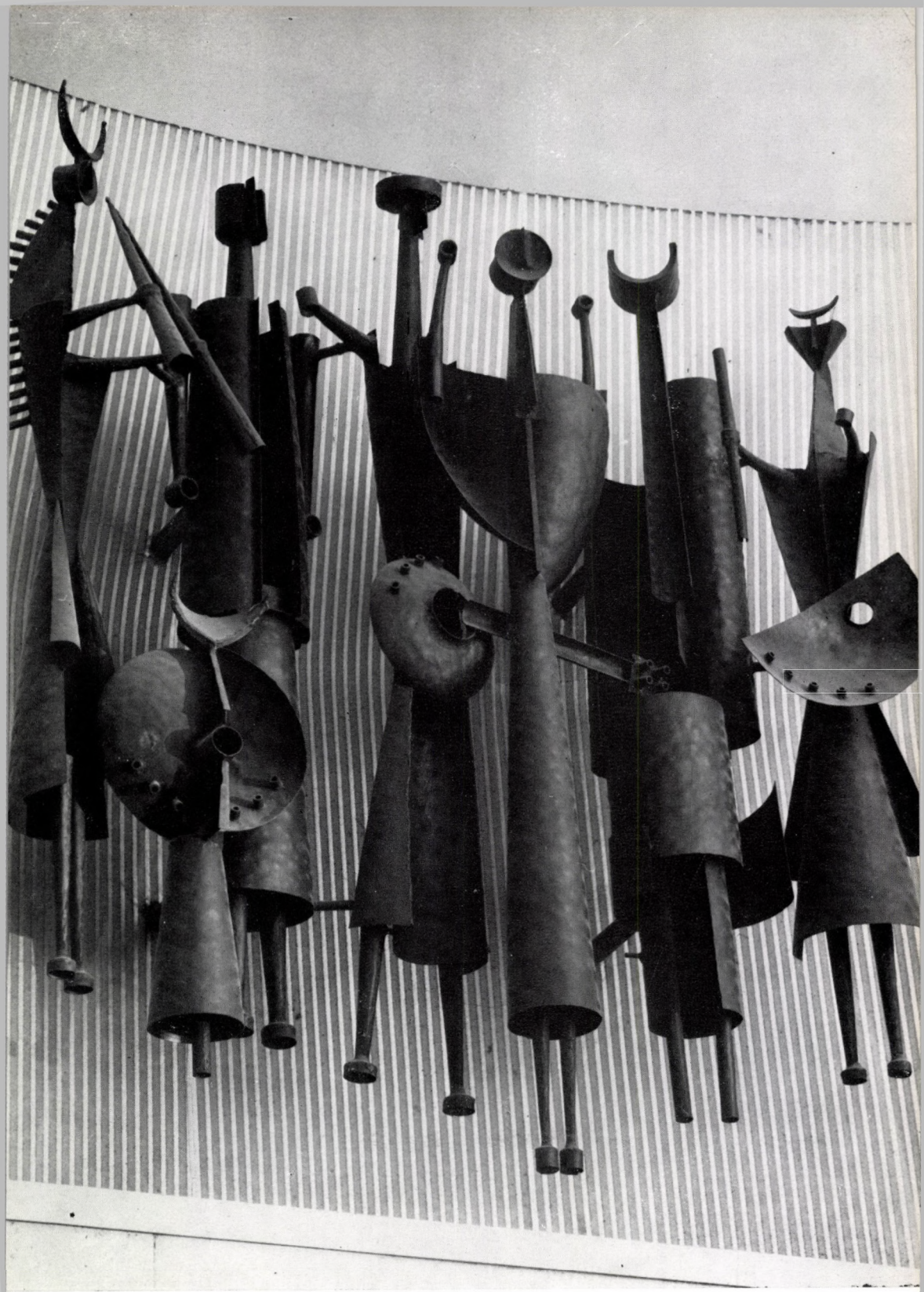


PHOTO DEMETER BALLA

Árpád Szabados: Artists. Copper sculpture on the lobby wall at the Fészek artists' club in Budapest

PHOTO DEMETER BALLA

PHOTO DEMETER BALLA

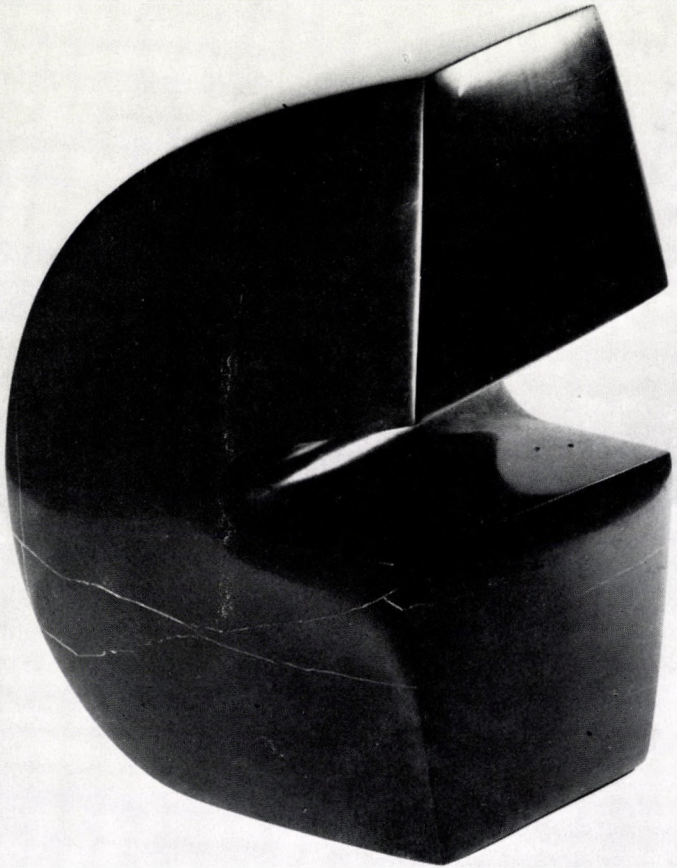
Tamás Vigh: Sower. In the Great Hall of the University of Agriculture, Debrecen (stone).

PHOTO DEMETER BALLA

PHOTO DEMETER BALLA

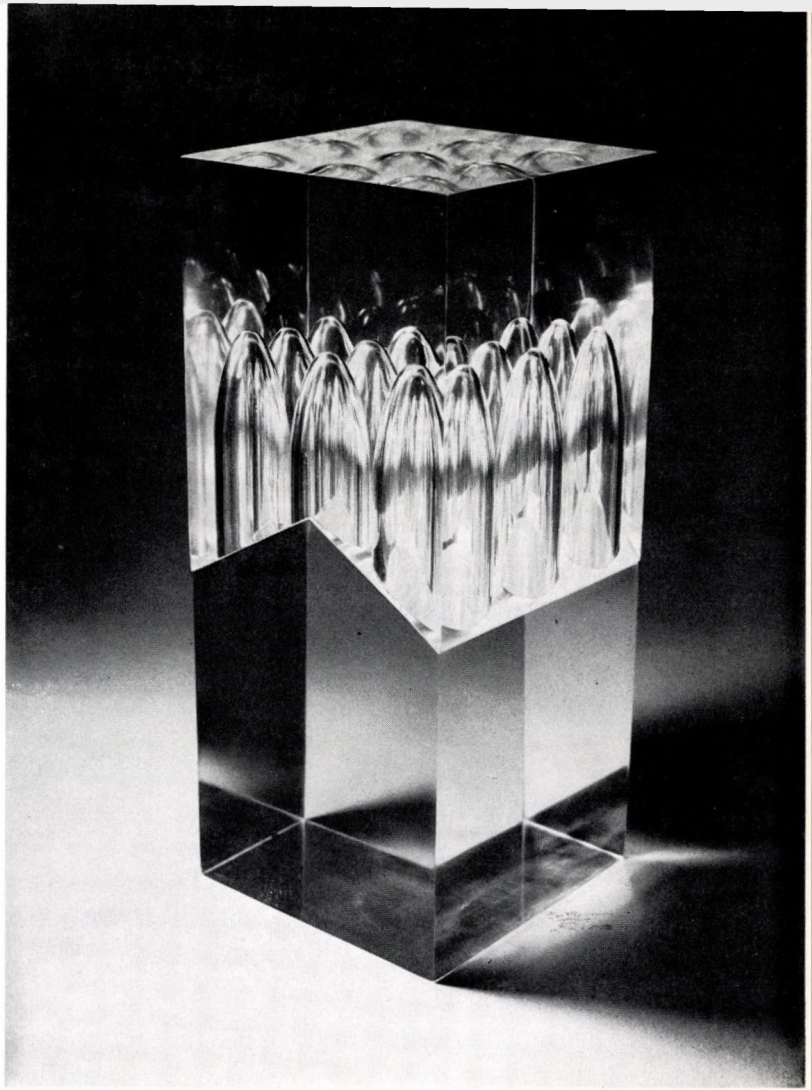
Tibor Vilt: Imre Madách. Margaret Island, Budapest (bronze)

PHOTO FERENC KOVÁCS



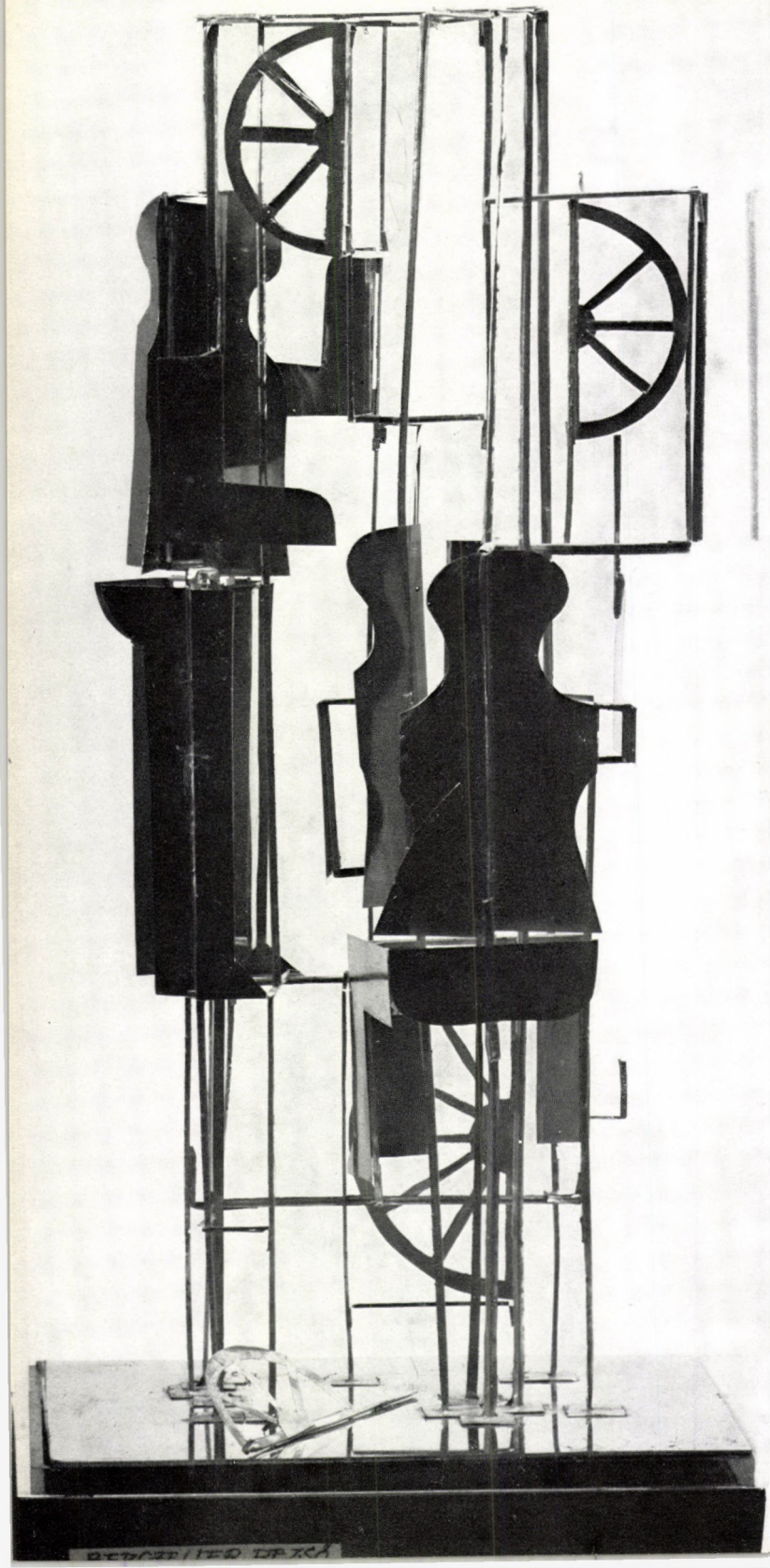
KATALIN NÁDOR

Sándor Kígyós: Totality (black stone, 40 cm, 1974)



GYÖRGY GADÁNYI

László Pajzs: Plexiglass Form (20 × 11 × 10,5 cm, 1974)



Dezső Berczeller:
Man and Machine
(aluminium
and plexiglass, 33 cm
1974)

KATALIN NÁDOR

more difficult: the organizers had to make a selection from among nearly four thousand different works, a task demanding well-defined concepts, unerring judgement and consistent principles.

The exhibition was a test of value for politically inspired works of art. With the detachment of time a judgement can now be made as to whether we still consider the works good or bad, of lasting value or transient.

Many public statues do stand the test of time. Jenő Kerényi's expressive, sturdy *Partisan* (in memory of the martyrs of the 1944 prison break-out in Sátoraljaújhely), József Somogyi's self-possessed *Martin Furnace Operator* and his gaunt, barefoot navvy, Ferenc Gyurcsek's Dózsa monument or Imre Varga's works could serve as a basis for an aesthetic evaluation of other works of the exhibition.

On the other hand, several items prove the oft-stated truism that a political theme in itself is not socialist art but only publicity presented more or less well via certain artistic means. Despite the good intentions of their creators, monuments with grotesque movements and superfluous draperies, which only underscore the general lack of emotional force and skill in artistically portraying their important theme, convince us once again of this truth.

Monuments

The first hall of representative political monuments presented almost all essential elements of popular democratic iconography: partisans, martyrs, the idea of liberation and the liberators, revolutionary turning-points of Hungarian history, major events of workers' movement, outstanding personages and symbolic workers and peasants.

Interior Designs

"Investment works" dominate the rest of the exhibition. Endre Domanovszky's design of his Dunaújváros fresco attracts the eye in the second hall. Other thematic works of the fifties, such as Aurél Bernáth's *Beginning of the Workers' Movement in the Building Industry* and Lajos Szentiványi's *Reconstruction* lend themselves to comparison. Domanovszky's art is complete, closed, tied to an era, with no possibility for continuation. The artist himself remained true to his own beginnings by changing his style. The concise masses and heavy modelling of the Dunaújváros fresco were transferred to the structure of the Debrecen sgrafitto on a different level and in a different genre; the artist abandoned both painting on an ideological pedestal and the reminiscences of classical fresco painting.

Domanovszky's uniqueness is demonstrated by mural compositions in the show by others who followed willy-nilly in his wake in an attempt to discover the same monumentality and symbolic solemnity in today's life. But neither László Patay nor Sándor Vecsési succeed in expressing what Domanovszky did for his time: some hidden difficulty prevents them from transcending the realm of beautifully arranged ordinariness and confused allegories. On the other hand, Ferenc Szalay who seemed to start out on a side-track, is delightfully artistic. Instead of structured masses and picturesque plastics, he follows Van Gogh and Matisse; the surfaces and colours of his Szeged cartoon are tenderly lyrical.

A considerable part of the "investment works" still labour under the delusion that monumentality is simply a matter of size and that works need only be enlarged to the required dimension and the figures' gestures and mimes exaggerated. Quite often compositions are not even worthy of their small-scale versions, let alone an unjustified enlargement.

Fortunately, there are some fine decorative objects: Endre Bálint's mosaic for the Palatinus beach, István Gádor's ceramics, Bálint Józsa's metal globe constructed of rings—but they are somehow lost among

the ineffective panel pictures and characterless small plastics. Unfortunately, the organizers of the exhibition fell short in their method of selection by following an unacceptable levelling policy including in identical proportions outstanding artists and their average or mediocre colleagues. Some of the best works of the recent past, such as Jenő Barcsay's fine mosaics and Béla Kondor's panneau on Margaret Island are represented only by their photos. In general the unhappy selection does not come close in conveying an idea of the sacrifices and the extensive art patronizing activity of the Hungarian government.

The exhibition would have been very different if, for example, Tamás Vigh's *Trumpetists* or Erzsébet Schaár's statue composition in Tihany had been put in their rightful place as public square monuments, if Béni Ferenczy's Petőfi statue had been facing Imre Varga's *Professor Hatvani*, and if the organizers would have selected only the worthiest items of the four thousand, thus truly capturing the artistic values of the past thirty years.

ZOLTÁN NAGY

SMALL SCULPTURE BIENNALE IN PÉCS

Hungarian critics and reviewers—at least the more serious ones—were far from enthusiastic about this exhibition. In stating that there were few good pieces, that those had already been shown at other exhibitions and that, moreover, the previous Biennale had been considerably more successful, they knew what they were talking about.

Nonetheless, those few good figures deserve attention. But I will deal *only* with the few, for descriptions of bad works are boring and would be as tedious for the reader as for me. It is my good fortune that when confronted with uninteresting paintings or statues my attention, my very sight automatically switches off; they are simply non-existent in my eyes. And the non-Hungarian reader will hardly be disturbed by the fact that some of the works discussed have been exhibited before in Hungary or that the last show was a better one. Here we are only concerned with the Fourth National Small Sculpture Biennale at Pécs.

Pécs, a university city of 150,000, two hundred kilometres from Budapest, is distinguished for its art. A good many artists live in this city which maintains an active calendar of artistic activities. The modern collection of the local museum nearly matches the modern collection of the National Gallery in Budapest in quantity and is better in quality including, for example, donations by Vasarely, a native of Pécs, as well as the works of other Hungarian artists now living abroad. In the nearby village of Villány—otherwise known for its red wine—the city of Pécs maintains a flourishing artists' colony.

All in all, the Pécs Biennale still ranks high. The conditions of entry exclude the possibility of sending in models of any monumental statue; and artists prepare for the Pécs event more conscientiously than for one in Budapest. Interestingly enough, when I looked at a reproduction at the Biennale, I could be certain that the artist had sent

the more carefully cast and finished copy to Pécs. Finally, the Biennale presented a good picture—in fact the most authentic picture to date—of Hungarian sculpture in the seventies. Not even the defects of the Pécs collection were accidental—they are representative of the shortcomings of Hungarian plastic art as a whole.

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With their orthodox single-block roundish, unambivalent modelling, *Sybil* by János Andrássy-Kurta and *Primeval Mother* by József Nemes follow the noble tradition of the autodidact Ferenc Medgyessy—originally a doctor, but nonetheless one of the finest Hungarian sculptors. Iván Szabó's *Siesta* shows a reclining nude, deliberately sack and pig-like; whereas József Seregi points out in the title of his composition that Villon's *Fat Margot* is lying on a sheet-covered couch. I sensed neither humour nor criticism in either work, but they are both successful and one of the best works of each of the respective artists. A number of other reclining nudes do not deserve special mention—only the subject is symptomatic.

Tamás Vigh's work has increased in meaningfulness, becoming more condensed and abstract. With Vigh the *Tree of Life* theme is not only an ancient myth, but also a new—perhaps overmodest—offshoot of organic Surrealism. The intention of *Rolls-Royce Seat with Cushions*, another work by the same artist, may be praiseworthy, but the execution is less so. Automobiles served as inspiration for László Rajki as well. Cars swarm on a bird's-eye view of *Strada*, and the artist seems to be shouting that he has chosen a non-sculptural theme; but that is all he says. At best his skilled modelling and craftsmanship make up for low artistic standards. (Rajki was one of those I had in mind in mentioning that everybody sent his best copy to Pécs.)

Hommage à Masaccio is the title of Mihály Mészáros's relief, obviously a paraphrase of a painting. In musical terms it is a scherzo and is characteristic of Mészáros. His baroquelike, Impressionistic plasticity and plays on light and shadow are sculpturally picturesque—and not only because he is paying tribute to a classical painter. Imre Varga works with a great variety of techniques and highly diverse styles; as a matter of fact in some works his different styles coexist. Dynamism is the most typical single feature of his art—not as snapshots of moving figures but as deliberate representation of internal movement, an almost exaggerated internal animation. His work entitled *The Gallery* is an Italian-style Manzù-like play—very open and sincere—blended with the likewise internally motivated, cool reserve of Etruscan verism.

Magda Gádor's terra-cotta *Torso* is irregular, one might even say clumsy; but incredibly powerful tension lies behind its apparent simplicity. Rarely are we able to give the compliment of "an artistic autochthon."

Pop art, Hungarian folklore, vertical composition and the pathos of folk-ballads —so many incongruous elements meet in the figures of Pál Kő. Once he pierced gold earrings through the ears of a wooden statue and dressed a ballerina in a miniskirt. Bronze, wood, iron—they are all the same to him; perhaps it is an unpremeditated, instinctive irony but still an irony that finds its target. Rudolf Berczeller makes his way in a world he himself has created: he is a sculptor without predecessors and unlikely to have followers. His fiery enthusiasm—a basic characteristic—is moulded into the form of the opposite extreme, in soberly structured compositions. Berczeller's *Man + Machine* is a complex construction where the man is virtually made up of component parts into a kind of a machine and the machine seems to have a soul.

Erzsébet Schaár's composition *Shop-window* is certainly one of the high points of the Biennale. Rustically modelled traditional bronze is unexpectedly used with glass and brown-tone Belgian mirrors in a sculpture

which is architectural but, at the same time, far removed from the severity of constructionism. An ensemble of vertical and horizontal beams opens the stage—for it is a stage—with unintentional depth, refinement, back-drop, doors and female figures which look like vertically hung goldfish. Space and Man are suggested in a relationship summarized and detailed so successfully with each symbol and category so perfectly in place in a system of stereometric coordinates that it could never have been achieved through speculation or computation.

Edith Rácz's *Birth* was modelled with the ambition of abstraction, but her symbols are oversimplified. Compensation is to be found, however, in the beauty of her materials, the texture of the bronze and the glass eggs. The round, negative forms of Enikő Szöllősy's composition of wooden plates suggest —although through many transitional links—the human head. Dry, disciplined and carefully engineered, this sculpture's best points are clarity of form and clarity of content, rather scarce commodities in the past and still rarely seen. The only mobile at the show is György Segesdi's motor-driven, technically and externally impeccable work of overwhelming—almost pedantic—precision; only its message, content and artistic authenticity leave room for doubt.

László Paizs is one of the few artists who have sworn allegiance to transparent plexiglass, and now after many experiments he has control over this material. He does not permit its beauty to overwhelm him and has found a way to express his personality. In his prism *Nothingness* the plexi-glass is space itself, into which the spectator can look and watch the rhythm of the etched parts. Plexi-glass gains added richness as a sculpting material from light absorption and refraction just as bronze, or marble. Incidentally Paizs's cube can be taken apart —though apparently it seemed too risky a game for ordinary visitors to indulge in— thus permitting a separate, individual existence to the two pieces.

The most purely contoured, complex rotation solid was a lathe-turned marble *Diabolo* by István Bencsik. With its mass and proportions the object does not pretend to do more than express itself, but this it does completely. Similarly, Sándor Kigyós's stone carving *Bending* captivates the viewer by its very simplicity. The imperceptibly shifting planes of this black stone in the shape of a reclining U—weighty even metaphorically speaking, but nonetheless playful and graceful—are more geometrical than emotional. (Both Bencsik and Kigyós carved their works in the summer at the Sculptors' Colony of Villány.) Ádám Farkas builds his untitled complex, but nonetheless calm, plastic compositions from a combination of geometric spherical, conical and other curvaceous surfaces. Bronze is polished to a brightly gleaming gold-yellow in an art which is elegant without being over-refined. His cool presentation is cheerful and lyrical without conflict between these two opposing qualities.

Pál Deim doubtlessly made the biggest hit at the Pécs Biennale of Small Sculpture. Not only because he walked off with a first prize, not only because he won it deservedly, but also because Deim is a painter. To be sure, his paintings, graphic art and sculptural work all carry the same message; the three media belong inseparably together in his tool-kit of expression. If all his works were seen together, no notice would be taken of the translation from two dimensions to three. Man, or rather dummified human figures—though often no more figurative than a bowling pin or individual balusters in a balustrade—dominate most of his works, sculpture included. Deim's art is reserved and nonetheless suggestive. Integrating the irreconcilable, he achieves balance and coordination with the daring of an adventurer. Quiet, subdued, a tranquillizing calm characterizes most of his statues, paintings and drawings. Deim creates a transcendental, almost imperceptible purity which is, however, never sterile.

JÁNOS FRANK

THEATRE AND FILM

THE PAST MIRRORED IN THE PRESENT

Bereményi–Kern–Marton–Radnóti: I Am Thirty — Ferenc Karinthy: The Seventies — Tibor Gyurkovits: The Csóka Family — László-Bencsik — Kazimir: A Worm's Eye View of History — Gorky: Summerfolk

Budapest theatres have been aware for the last couple of years that—whether they wanted to or not—they needed to innovate. But they also feel that innovation has become increasingly difficult. It seems as if everything has been discovered, every idea exhausted here and abroad. Today there are no more trends, only fragments of trends. Perhaps for this very reason theatres felt that the only safe basic material left which could be used as a springboard for innovation was the past. But whereas history earlier was treated as a *fait accompli*, the theatre is now experimenting with considering the present as the accomplished fact from which the past is viewed in an effort to discover it and look at the events of history from different angles. In other words, it is my impression that theatrical experimentation is trying to renew the language of the theatre and change the conventions of dramatic composition by treating history more playfully and lightly while, on the other hand, historical roots of the present are taken more seriously. Every tone struck has its historical undertone and the past appears not only with its memories but also with agonizing attempts at understanding. We look at so many things differently than we did a few years ago: moreover a couple of generations have grown up whose ideas of our recent past are drawn only from textbooks or from the experiences of their parents.

In theatre language we would say that history has ceased to be a wax-works exhibition and a simple transmitter of events and facts. At last the theatre can *create* history, transform it, imagine it or turn it into an instrument of metaphor. The theatre can now freely deal with history, and, at the same time, it feels increased responsibility towards it.

This winter's premières have borne witness to this effort: nearly every performance speaks of the present in the mirror of the past, in dialogues where the past and the present interrogates one another. This double outlook appears in form as well as content. There was experimentation with free forms —sometimes visions, sometimes "happenings", sometimes strictly classical forms disrupted by the absurd. But always either the present watches the past and raises provoking and exciting questions, or the past corrects the present and history adds complementary remarks to the play.

This multilateralness is still involved in a difficult solution-seeking process at the experimental level, and the uneven quality of this season's productions indicates that we are only on the way to new solutions, to new theatrical conventions.

A "document-based musical"

The musical *Harmincéves vagyok* (I am Thirty) presented by the *Vígszínház* company on the 30th anniversary of the country's

liberation was produced by young talent. The genre itself is new and was called a "document-based musical". The play is a mosaic of events, pictures and stories of how today's thirty year-olds imagine the past, the war years and the beginnings of a new life. The three authors—Géza Bereményi, playwright, Zsuzsa Radnóti, dramaturgist and László Marton, stage manager—taken together are not much over seventy: the story, the cast, the writers and producers—including the composers—created a truly youthful atmosphere on stage.

The play has no unified plot or background. The characters generally preface their individual "stories" with, "My father told me...", practically the only linking device which leads from the present to introduction of past episodes. The play has no hero, no dramatic crises. The documentary episodes are not crude fragments of reality but are acted out in imagination; although based on genuine archival material, they are transformed into theatrical history, for the most part, according to how contemporary youth is able to represent and embellish them. Of course as with all musicals, the decisive element was the music composed by Gábor Presser with lyrics by Anna Adamis, a duo which has already stood the test in an earlier work, *Képzelt riport egy amerikai popfesztiválról* (Fictitious Report on an American Pop Festival), adapted from Tibor Déry's novel and performed successfully outside Hungary as well.

The music alone does not account for the play's success; the performance is so youthful and radiates so much sincerity that the past it presents becomes an evocation of our unknown ego, our youth which we have forgotten in growing older these past thirty years. The entire performance is imbued with the pathos of the desire to remember, with the passion of understanding the past —a rare quality in youth—yet is sometimes wrapped up in humour or in irony and sometimes in half-serious admonitions to adults.

The play's theme is thus reminiscence, but a gesture of remembrance which verges on the absurd as the characters try to recall events which they themselves have never experienced. And in so doing, the play takes on poetic dimensions; episodes exist only in the imagination and are conjured up by fantasies that feed on the present. The play undergoes a double metamorphosis; first genuine documents, events, tragic or grotesque episodes of history are subjected to the imagination to see what it can grasp. This transformed reality then undergoes a second metamorphosis when songs and music alienate us from the imagined historical episode, pulling us back into the present where we watch ourselves in the mirror of the past.

The finest metamorphic scene of the play is a dream-like evocation of the tragedy of the former sword-fencing Olympic champion, Attila Petschauer, where the horror of his real tragedy, inconceivable today, is blurred by the imagination. At world and Olympic championships the Hungarian national anthem was played as he stood in the team on top of the platform under the Hungarian flag. Then in 1944 he was, as a Jew, conscripted into a forced-labour battalion, tortured and killed. The scene is built on the absurdity of contrasts: ovations celebrating Hungarian victory transform into fascist barbarism, both of which coexisted for years under the same flag. And the contrast is fascinating not only because of dramatic appeal but because of its sheer absurdity. It demonstrates to us Hungarians how little we understand some parts of our own history and that for present-day youth these events—along with other reverses in our history—have become absurd, inconceivable and totally inexplicable adventures.

The play was conceived in astonishment and wonder, which is why it fascinates us. The characters do not make commonplace remarks about the events of thirty years ago. Documents become newly discovered details, biographical secrets which arouse the astonishment and interest of the older generation

as well. Of course every few minutes the spectator is forced back into the present by the logic of the musical when gently ironic refrains startle his reveries. In one episode gendarmes capture a deserter who is executed according to the ritual of that barbaric age because he lacks the appropriate documents. Music then draws us back to the present in a song about how many documents are needed for life—birth certificates, marriage certificates—but when you want a divorce it is no easy matter to procure the badly-needed document with all its signatures and stamps. The song is ironical and does not refer to red tape in private life only. Thus the plot never stiffens into rigid piety nor falls into the pit of "solemnity"—the greatest danger of this type of production. It attracts because of a distance created by a mixture of lightness, irony and, sometimes, emotion.

It is very difficult to develop plays of imagination on stage, to create a medium where the past is not its real self but a poetic transformation. Sometimes the feat was accomplished with success—as in the episode of the Olympic champion where the on-stage "fencing" was performed with the "swimming" movements of slow-motion films evoking dreamlike figures of fantasy images. Props were often helpful: a large 15×15 meter canvas sheet can be a tent, or the ruins of a house out from under which survivers slowly crawl, or a forest from which the hunted cannot escape as the other characters raise its edges here and there. The sheet is sometimes coiled up by twenty pairs of hands into a long serpent body on which to sit as if in comfortable armchairs relating party anecdotes. The rhythm of continuous change from fantasy to memory produces the dynamics of the play justifying its genre and bringing it success much to the credit of the young troupe.

The Seventies

In connection with the theme of youth and resurrection, I would like to mention Ferenc Karinthy's play, *Hetvenes évek* (The Seventies), at the Madách Theatre. The title is only a metaphor—the author is referring to the ancient Roman settlements around Budapest, probably in order to conceal his true intention of entering into a controversy with the contemporary seventies. Resurrection in Karinthy's play has no historical implications: it means the new life of an ageing man with a young girl, if their relationship can ripen into a lasting reality. The author is interested not so much in the possibility as in the impossibility of resurrection, that is to say, of transformation. This man should not only be able to love—he should be able to transcend himself, to adjust to the world represented by Anni, his new partner. He should be able to give up many things which, although part of the past, give value to his present life. He ought to give up his cultural interests, his hobby of dabbling in archeology—the young laugh at his amateurish efforts and consider him a fool.

Sacrificing all that has been meaningful to him would not be without its rewards: Anni opens new vistas toward the future, helps him escape from his narrow world, from isolation, loneliness and old age. Resurrection, however, is preceded by Golgotha—first he must suffer so much that he no longer wants resurrection. Karinthy is concerned with the absurdity and impossibility of this love: he shows the normal, inevitable break-up of this relationship, which is a good solution because a happy-end would be unhappiness itself. Instead, another kind of unhappiness occurs when Anni's former sweetheart appears on the scene and takes the girl away.

There is not much more to the play than this. Karinthy deals with what really amounts to a one-act problem, the absurdity and impossibility of this love. Everything else in the play is of secondary importance to him, hence superficial and often empty. He poses one question: what can today's young generation give to life—a reversal of

the more frequent question: what does youth receive from adults, what opportunities are they offered by our times? Karinthy wants to know whether we can expect anything from youth and, if yes, what sort of impact their presence exerts on our life; his conclusions are rather sceptical. Anni is unformed, irresolute and dependent; the boy is conceited, full of technocratic illusions, careerist dreams and empty assertiveness. His friends are two-legged stereotypes, hippies, good-time goers, self-styled, sloganistic revolutionaires. Humanistic values are safeguarded only by Dezső Péteri, veteran soldier and archeologist, past fifty but full of vitality and kindness. He cannot pass on the torch to anybody because nobody wants to take it. Nor is he able to solve his own problems with these ethics and values. He maintains enough superiority to refuse Anni's hesitant sacrifice in returning to him and gives her up to the young suitor. He, the grown man, needs loneliness if for no other reason than to punish himself for having tried to give up his own way of life. In so doing, he succeeded in avoiding what would be far worse: not to be understood in his human totality and thus suffer the ultimate loneliness of a poor relationship.

The thesis, however, is too one-sided and let us admit it—smacks too much of thesis. We see only the grown man's "interior"—we learn only about his human values—the girl and her friends remain on the level of clichés in a one-sided distortion which stifles the drama. What is left is an atmosphere of bitter disillusionment and the author's judgement on the historical status and human capacities of the young generation. Without supporting evidence for this judgement, with no conflict and no dramatic dynamism, the play fails to achieve real success.

The Csóka Family

Karinthy's play is strictly speaking a situation drama which does no more than elaborate an absurd relationship. *Csóka Család* (The Csóka Family), a tragi-comedy by Tibor Gyurkovits, is much along the same lines: it is a drama of banal situations. Gyurkovits is an old hand in the theatre world and several of his plays have been performed in the Pesti Theatre, one of which *Nagyvizit* (Consultant's Round) was a real hit. An individual style involving both sentimentalism and absurdity attracts Gyurkovits' audience. His awareness of the possibilities of satire in a non-dramatic era is another quality: his plays are reduced to situations, impossible to solve, from which people can escape only by means of other banalities, which in turn lead to more banalities.

Csóka Család is called a tragi-comedy but this term conveys only an approximate idea of the play's atmosphere of bitter humour. The family is about to attend the burial of the father, a famous professor, if... if they could find Sunday hats, lost shirt-buttons, if they did not have to answer the mother's nagging questions, if they were not held up by strangers continually coming into the room fussing about, finding fault, or even gloating over their misfortune. The heaviest burden is not mourning itself but the thousand trivial, banal complications of life. People despair when hit by tragedy, but lost earrings or torn zippers at the most inappropriate moment can cause blood congestion. Against such mishaps, they are defenceless.

The intrigue revolves around a strange heritage but it is of secondary importance: interest is not aroused by the plot; rather the comical oddities of the family's life captivate the spectator's attention in the same way as watching life in a fish bowl.

Old professor Csóka had discovered a drug against fear, and in the last moments before his death he put the formula on a slip of paper which of course then went astray in the turmoil after his death. When the family calmed down a bit, everybody wants to find these few notes, a heritage worth a large fortune: who wouldn't want to get rid of his fears? Although the formula is never found, fate's unfathomable ways make

the family rich. Even the grandmother is provided with everything: a stove bigger than the room, a radio blaring all the time, comfortable and ugly furniture. They bring her anything as long as they do not have to visit her and suffer through her boring chatter. It is easier to love objects than people.

Situational "mini-dramas" are the focal points of interest in minor episodes also. The priest at the burial ceremony thinks only of how he can walk between the graves with his leg in a cast and a Bible in his hand and how he could have stumbled over a protruding nail which he himself had long ago pointed out to the housekeeper. Lajos, the elder son of the family, well in his forties, is pursued by women, whether because of being a well-to-do doctor or bachelor is not quite clear. Anyway, Edit has left her husband for him, Anni casts loving glances at him and even the girl who handed out the burial announcements joins in the ranks. Chasing Lajos appears to be the most exciting pastime available. Lajos, the only victim in this situation, does not appreciate all the fuss, is bored by attempts of women to snare him, bored with the throng of patients crowded in his reception room always telling the same stories. What he really wants is sleep, which the others won't allow. Sometimes he gets a moment's peace by taking the hand of one of the girls and, at least for a few minutes, can go to sleep. And such is the structure of banality itself: people compelled by the pressure of circumstances to do things they don't want to do in order to obtain long-desired peace, if only for a few minutes.

The real interest of the play lies, however, in the portrayal of banalities through a dialogue technique. Gyurkovics creates a form of dialogue in which the same sentence is sometimes said by four or five characters. The first starts, the second continues with a different meaning, and somebody else concludes in still another sense as if they were all speaking at the same time as happens in times of pressure, confusion and turmoil. The sentences have their own "choreography" and the dialogue pieced together from sentence mosaics humourously exposes the emptiness of this way of life. Unfortunately, the producer (Dezső Kapás) was unable to bring the voluble dialogue to life on stage. There are pauses between the half-finished sentences and their completion by others, giving an impression of fragmentation in the text. The playwright himself fails to keep up the initial momentum of his glib dialogues and the second half of the play does not measure up to the first. Compared to Gyurkovics' earlier plays, this is only an experiment in form. The studies of banal situations, the intrigue around the fear drug and the dialogue structure are superficial phenomena. The playwright fell into the trap of facility and could not get out of it.

The discovery of a workers' brigade

If *Csóka Család* can be reproached for being too facile in handling the problem, Sándor László-Bencsik's *Történelem alulnézetben* (A Worm's Eye View of History), a play based on sociology, is rather heavy. The problem itself is much weightier and more complex than what can be crowded into a drama. *Történelem alulnézetben* was originally a book which created much stir and in the process turned an "outsider" into a writer. (László-Bencsik originally worked with a folk music group and a later turn in life put him into the ranks of manual workers.) The book appeared in the series *Magyarország felfedezése* (The Discovery of Hungary) and proved to be worthy of the series' title: the book amounted in fact to a discovery. The author described experiences of the years he spent in a workers' brigade. No writer before him had seen and grasped this world in all its complexity because no writer had ever changed his way of life completely and for years really lived the life of a brigade worker and not just observed

that life as a visitor or a tourist looking round a factory. László-Bencsik's personal experiences lend authenticity to his book and make his characters and their concerns real. The ever-experimentive Károly Kazimir, director of the Thalia Theatre, was intrigued by this authenticity and, together with the author, worked out a theatrical version of the book. Thus some episodes in the life of the Szegvári packing brigade were put on the stage, but the selection and screening of the original material weakened the multi-layered human and social authenticity portrayed by the book.

Another play without plot, the meagre story line carries anecdotes and episodes. The story itself is *à propos*, no more than a prop like the boxes which constitute the setting of the brigade's life. Kazimir's intentions were praiseworthy: he wanted to present men known to us only from news items and reports. He wanted to get close to them, showing them in everyday life and not when they answer reporters' leading questions and ceremoniously smile into the camera. He wanted to show them in their crude simplicity and give a glimpse of the common attitudes behind their major decisions and everyday choices. He wanted to show the something that makes these people members of a community without differentiating them from anyone else, from you or me.

The characterization is, by and large, successful: Kázmér Asztalos, the leader of the brigade, has a forceful and congenial personality; other personalities, such as the big-talker or the young greenhorn are somewhat faded. In an effort to emphasize the personalities of brigade members, the authors made the play endogenous; everybody who enters the life of the brigade from the outside—whether engineer, clerk or simple visitor—is shown in a slightly antipathetic light. Only the brigade workers are presented in a bright and cheerfully humane light. Back in the fifties, in the initial stages of worker portrayal, there was a trend characterized by the critics as "workers' arrogance". Now, in the adult age of modern socialist literature, this attitude of haughtiness has somehow got back on the stage, embellishing the life of the brigade members and serving as a basis of their evaluation of others in other jobs. The life of the brigade does not form a part of the total development of society, but is separated from it, assumes an exaggerated importance and hence cannot solve its own problems. The concerns of the total society should be the point of reference against which the brigade measures its individuals and community spirit.

The play ends with the collapse of the brigade's idyll. The old brigade leader cannot keep the members together, they scatter in all directions and after the disintegration of the community, the old leader is pensioned. He is happy to retire because he thinks that his wonderful educational and organizational abilities will be remembered long after he is gone. On the third day of his retirement he takes his grandson to visit the factory and boast of his glorious days. Nobody greets him, in fact they don't recognize him, he has been forgotten... His work and influence continue to live only in his "disciples", the former brigade members who organize other brigades in new work places according to his past instructions.

The idyll in the last analysis turns around a social problem, and there was obviously no need to paint this workers' life in idyllic colours. Kazimir's "discovery"—the dramatization of László-Bencsik's book and the awakening of the public to a deeper insight into workers' lives—has been an interesting event of this theatre season.

The revival of Gorky's Summerfolk

The last play under review is the new adaptation and interpretation of Gorky's classic, *Summerfolk* to which Otto Ádám and the Madách Theatre company have tried to find a new solution. The term "solution" is used intentionally because the drama has been revived in many European cities as if

an answer to the puzzle of the original had to be found, as if Gorky left a coded message in his drama about rootless people and the contemporary theatre had to unravel it from the externally time-bound intrigue. On some stages Gorky's characters are used to illustrate the impotence of the intelligentsia, on others marriage is acted out as hell on earth—the latter problem being otherwise of current public interest due to the films of Chabrol and Bergman. The performance of the Madách Theatre presents the socialist writer who does not speak of revolution nor even of oppression, but of boredom as a concomitant of a comfortable bourgeois life, of the misery of stagnation and the meaninglessness of empty lives. And only after this is there concern for the amount of energy needed for resurrection from this apparent death.

Summerfolk also has a symbolic meaning. In the first place it is, of course, an episode from the Russian world of bourgeois intellectuals after the turn of the century. But it is more: it is a description of a way of life, of a generalized attitude. People on holiday have no serious interests, they don't want their mental balance upset, they manifest neither enthusiasm nor despair for the vicissitudes of life because for the time being they have withdrawn from life. The producer attempted to find out what happened if the current was switched off, if people got away from it all not for a few weeks but for long years. What happened with those who detached themselves from life which continued to go on, perhaps in a city, perhaps abroad, but at any rate a distance of many thousand verst away. Here silence is as total as in a cemetery, and if something is overheard from the hustle and bustle of life it reaches them only in a distorted form: scheming, gossip, or at best an anecdote served with breakfast. The discreet charm of growing inner emptiness...

The heaviest burden in this summer life style is to put up with one another, especially as they always desire each other, at least each other's wives. These holidaymakers are always in love, in their own listless, artificial way. Because of the general boredom, amorous complications are as insupportable as the psychological agonies which accompany them. The demands of partners and their own restlessness are also unbearable. To compensate, husbands torment wives, wives their lovers and lovers someone else and so on, round and round. Then they realize that quarreling does not bring relief either, nor can love help them to escape boredom when it is practised as a parlour game alternately with chess or tarot.

The producers, however, search for more puzzles. These people are not corrupted only by a life of leisure, they are corrupted by the lack of any aim whatsoever in life: by a convenient withdrawal from life. This is the trap of pleasantness, of its corruptive force mercilessly discussed by Lukács in his *Aesthetics*. Pleasantness is an attractive and desirable state for a time when all is beautiful and good, where "yes" can be said to everything, where there is escape from soul-searching, upsetting experiences and catharsis. But there is a price to pay, the price of being locked up in one's own ego with no possibility of social life because one pursues the prolongation of the agreeable moment like a drug addict. Man lives only in the present in less and less contact with the outside world. Such is the life of these holidaymakers who are even deaf to each other's problems and concerns. They travel in the spaceship of loneliness and imagine that they are enjoying themselves.

I think the one flaw in this absorbing presentation of "pure", characteristically Gorkian rebels and "heroes-in-spite-of-themselves" is that the two or three rebels are introduced and commented upon by half-degenerate characters who are treated sympathetically on stage and thus their comments are the convincing ones. When the audience hears that the rebels are insupportable with their rigid principles and absurd and foolish attachment to ideals,

they cannot help but look on them through the eyes of their commentators and gradually begin to notice the harshness and offensive "unpleasantness". These characters are indeed disagreeable; they do not adjust to the pleasant holiday climate. The audience is forced to accept the critical comments and ends up not knowing who is right. Maybe the rebels really are insufferable, trouble-making fools. So it is not made clear why the holiday life style is abandoned at the end of the play.

The producers wanted to contest the traditional pathos of interpretation and make both the attitude of the rebellious heroes and that of the escapist holidaymakers problematic. Although I understand and perhaps approve of the intention, the final result is not convincing: in a situation without issue, one person manages to escape by some chance means. Neither social pressure, appeal nor any other desire for escape were present.

The theatre's real impact resides, of course, in provocative questioning. This performance is one of the most exciting productions of the season because beyond its exaggerations it raised a very real question: is it right to cling to the pleasant "holiday-like" life? In posing the question, this classical drama spoke to us who live today in the language of today as effectively as any good contemporary Hungarian play. How the spectator sees the play is not so important in the theatre as how the play sees the spectator—and allows him to be seen.

MIKLÓS ALMÁSI

RESCUING THE CLASSICAL REPERTOIRE FROM OBLIVION

There are few places in the world where ten days of theatre-going would be possible, let alone rewarding. Though certainly still possible in London, the rewards diminish seasonally, and certainly anyone who came to the theatre in London within a year or eighteen months would be disappointed to see that the long-running shows are banal sex farces with facetious characters and titles like, *No Sex Please—We're British*, *Why Not Stay for Breakfast* and *Oh! Calcutta!*; the two subsidized repertory theatres have fallen on hard times; and much of what looked bright, hopeful and inspiring last season has either closed or moved on to Broadway, thus keeping the West End's reputation alive just when the London theatre itself seems destined to die.

These thoughts were occasioned not only by a recent visit to the theatre in Budapest, but also by a stimulating, informal discussion I had while I was there with students learning to be directors at the National Academy of Theatre and Cinematography. Having been to impressive productions of *Othello*, *King Lear* and *The Three Sisters*, which I later reviewed for *The Financial Times* in London, it was natural for me to marvel at the flourishing classical repertoire on display in Budapest—to full houses no less. After cataloguing the classical works being put on in Budapest I remarked in the review that Budapest is carrying on the work of rescuing the classical Western repertory from oblivion or strictly literary study—a considerable achievement for which anyone would be most grateful.

The students with whom I spoke were

naturally more concerned about experimental theatre and the scope available for doing what they wanted in London and New York. I sympathized to the degree to which they wanted time off to find their way alone before being plugged into a circuit with its various pressures and demands. I did not sympathize so much when they declaimed the virtues of experimental theatre in *contrast* to commercial, straight or subsidized theatre—making two distinct categories one of which had all the advantages and the other, all the disadvantages.

All of us in the discussion were under 30; our experiences and backgrounds were obviously very different, but basically we all grew up in post-war society and now faced our futures in the midst of significant and as yet indeterminant changes in the world. We were also conscious of the fact that the theatre in all countries is controlled by those older than we are; for now, our role is either to accommodate to the needs of the theatre as it exists or change the theatre so that it better conforms to what we would like to see. The students assumed that experimental theatre was a synonym for young people's theatre—to be written, directed, produced and performed for and by young people who would need to rely on adults, if at all, only for providing a venue and initial financial support.

It is a worthy dream, and one that seems to conform in their minds to the experience of the fringe theatre in London and the Greenwich Village, off-Broadway theatre in New York. They were well aware of a number of theatres, productions and directors who have come out of the non-commercial theatre world in the last few years. They brought with them compendia of off-Broadway playscripts in American paperback editions (which I had never seen even in London) and they asked about communal theatre experiments, like the Ambience Company in London. They were not so much concerned with the quality of work the groups were doing as the freedom they had to do whatever they wanted (not a unique emphasis, to be sure).

It was news to the group that these companies and experiments had their own form of accountability, which in essence was harsher than they would have imagined and—as I tried to emphasize—might be destroying the theatre for the very same reasons that a few companies flourish: in a commercial environment, criteria and accountability are easily established. They work almost automatically, and the great manage to keep up along with the mediocre. It is the intermediary levels of good that are wiped out for not being sufficiently outstanding or popular. At the time we were talking, the London theatre was hearing about continued cuts in Arts Council subsidies and the tremendous price rises affecting the Royal Shakespeare and National Theatre Companies. Though subsidy to the arts is a much more established principle in London than New York, theatre suffers first when governments cut back their expenditures, and though more paternally inclined, the British end up helping their struggling cultural outposts no more than Americans do.

It was also worth mentioning that students such as the ones I was talking to would have practically no chance to work in London theatre—perhaps in any British theatre at all—once they finished a course like the one they were in. The opportunities in British theatre at the moment seem practically non-existent, especially with the cutbacks in television staff which traditionally contributes to a large pool of work for directors and actors.

Compared to a vapid, tired and no longer relevant brand of political fringe theatre in London, off-Broadway has produced a crop of young plays that appeal to young audiences and move in a realm that I labelled sociological as opposed to political. Plays like *The Hot l Baltimore*, *Faggot* and even *Lemmings* (a satirical review) address particular audiences that tend to be young, self-conscious

and educated. They do not want to be harangued with stale labels; they realize their situations—be they homosexuals, students or Manhattan-dwellers—are different from their parents' and so breed a form of insecurity that others may share but few can fully cope with. The theatre brings these people together and caters to such minority communities the way no other medium could.

The great anomaly in New York theatre is the degree to which churches support drama groups and playwrights. In one of the American books of playscripts brought to the discussion, every one of the plays had been first produced—in most cases only produced—in church halls or with church sponsors. Greenwich Village churches have for a decade now been in the vanguard of social work among down-and-outs, addicts and young drifters. The theatre sponsorship fits in the same category of non-proselytizing community action, which gets out in the open when successful but always makes for a form of reaching out to people in need or potential need. The plays are not propaganda or palliatives. They are left to creative people attracted to the church from outside and there is no form of censorship. Still, the context is explicit and in some respects attacks a particular audience and type of play.

While New York theatre caught the imagination of everyone in the discussion, I tried to point out the possibilities available in Budapest which do not exist in either New York or London. We all agreed that the theatre was going through a difficult period, the convergence of numerous factors having to do not only with increased costs and a dearth of new plays; there is also competition from television and film, which attract talent that might otherwise have gone into the theatre; theatre needs to find a distinctive voice again that does not cater just to minority audiences and yet does not suffer the mass-appeal dilution that plagues television. We also agreed that experimentation for its own sake at such times often suffices for meaningful change and worthwhile attempts to find a new direction.

Theatre in Budapest makes a great impression for its healthy mix of material, old and new, great and flawed, all of which is worth seeing. The theatre has a life to it that—like any life—benefits from failures as well as successes (or, should we say, at least the risks that attend possible failure). Plays do not have to have an automatic eye-catching appeal because investment is too great to risk failure; so one can see plays that will never be seen again in London or New York: plays that were not written just to be accessible or entertaining, and no doubt the better for it. So many good plays and new interpretations of the classics are on in Budapest that serious English or American drama students will soon have to learn Hungarian to learn fully what a healthy theatre looks like.

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The Madách Theatre's new production of *Othello* gives full scope to the talents of one of Hungary's best young actors, Péter Huszti in the role of Iago. Ottó Ádám, director of the theatre and this production, might have sacrificed almost too much to focus attention on Iago: the forestage stays practically bare except for Iago's ingratiating soliloquies shared only with the audience; Ferenc Bessenyei, the distinguished actor playing Othello, has to appear at times almost aimlessly incompetent—a lifeless victim—to carry through the director's otherwise well-made, consistent and convincing theme of Iago's overwhelming jealousy of Othello.

The same theatre has a new musical, *The Murány Adventure*, which is steeped in Hungarian history and folk-music. The actual events on which the play is based amounted to a 17th century betrayal of Hungary, with tragic consequences. György Lengyel has scooped out all but the shell of Zsigmond Móricz's account of these

events and put back in the most delightful fluff—a lot of silly singing and dancing, with the antics led by the incomparable Irén Psota and her handsome fairy-tale nemesis István Sztankay. The young composer, Dusan Sztevanovity, succeeded very well in grafting humour onto traditional folk-music.

Arthur Miller's adaptation of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* gets a vigorous production and an elegant Edwardian set at the Katona József, the studio theatre of the National Company. At the same theatre, the prolific chief director of the National Company, Endre Marton, has a sure-handed and highly amusing production of Dürrenmatt's difficult *Play Strindberg*. The two productions typified to me what is best in Hungarian theatre and what any drama student would find inspiring and challenging: getting a period setting taken seriously enough to enhance meaning and reverberations in the play, rather than putting the action all the further from the audience.

In London these days, period settings give directors a chance to relax into easy jibes at our forebears for all the silliness that playwrights put in their characters' lines. The substance loses out to a complacent superiority emphasizing the already exaggerated elements of the play. This comes of a decreasing familiarity with costume productions; they all begin to look slightly absurd anyway, and rather than bring out the common human element that makes a play worth putting on now, directors merely indulge people's eagerness to shun the unfamiliar by ridiculing it.

Ferenc Kállai as Doctor Stockmann, the well-meaning, bourgeois politician in *An Enemy of the People* comes over extremely well in the first act. He balances his evident power with compassion and good humour. He dotes on his children and acts the family man and host. Done with impeccable taste, all of this happens in a recognizably distant society, but one whose values can be taken seriously and appreciated, however distant they are, because they are presented so thoughtfully.

Scandal and intrigue make Kállai irremediably abject, a condition that is particularly emphasized in Miklós Szinetár's production, where crowd scenes come menacingly close to the audience and intrigue takes on the air of squalid casualness. Kállai might have remained a bit stronger in the second act to emphasize decline before fall, but in any case the play makes a great impact, despite its placing in an initially unsympathetic setting.

Similarly, *Play Strindberg* has a lot of off-putting elements—silliness, confusion and just plain meaninglessness in a set that is not even clear—a combination telegraph office, living room and boudoir, no doubt having to do with a state of mind more than a location. Marton's production effectively distinguishes the three characters from each other, with Mária Ronyecz as Alice acting the temperamental but compatible element between the stiff, good-natured old soldier and the more relaxed amorous young man (István Sztankay again, coming dangerously close to being type-cast as the handsome, light-hearted, romantic—not that it's such a bad type to be cast as). The ridiculous ticker-tape clattering and mock death of the old man come off particularly well as just more incongruous events among incompatible objects left lying around together.

A revival of Marton's production of *King Lear* at the National Theatre makes a striking impression with a court of coarse hunters played off against an impressionistic set consisting entirely of large cauldron-like copper casings which could be raised and lowered, or lit from the inside. György Kálmán gave a stunning performance as the fool. And that's not all: the Vígszínház has a powerful, uncluttered production of *The Three Sisters*, done in memorable starkness by István Horvai, and a new *Antony and Cleopatra*, done by László Vámos. The long-running *Diary of a Madman* is still playing at the Pesti Theatre, as in Natalia Ginzburg's

Advertisements with Éva Ruttkai's performance as a neurotic lady in turns pathetic, funny and tragic. Ten days were not enough —and neither was an afternoon of conversation about the theatre, but my hosts were extremely polite and let me carry on to a few conclusions.

Without the fructifying example of previous generations' work in theatre, no doubt contemporary work will lose some of its richness. Societies that have increasingly isolated older people now lose the chance to absorb anything beyond their own environment, classical theatre included. An ironic development is that New York theatre can no longer afford even to put on Shaw and the other work it imports from London. Once the financial constraints become too imposing on London, the past will disappear from the stage altogether. And that eventuality comes ever closer as successful London plays get to New York, denuding London of the work it needs to keep native audiences interested. Sure, it is more exciting to work in the vanguard of new, young theatre, but it is at least a far less short-sighted goal for Hungarian directors than for American or British ones, who will be lost when the next generation pushes them aside and there is no classical repertoire to fall back on.

FRANK LIPSIUS

YESTERDAY'S AND TODAY'S FORMULAE

Zoltán Fábri: *Unfinished Sentence;* Sándor Sára: *Pheasant Tomorrow.*

The Price of Alliance

I do not think it is necessary to be familiar with Tibor Déry's great novel, *Unfinished Sentence*—written before the war but published only in 1947—in order to understand the film. Neither the action, nor the ideas and their message require any earlier knowledge. The director knew what he wanted to say and he selected the episodes that suited him.

Nor is it necessary to discuss Déry the man and writer.

They say Fábri wanted to show in this colour film why no effective leftist force could take shape under Horthy in Hungary. Not only that I think, if there had been no more than that I would have been disappointed. For me the film was an impressive experience certainly linked with an analysis of the weakness of leftist forces at the time but its message conveyed much more. One could call it the story, and chiefly the drama, of the awakening of the upper middle class, and its becoming revolutionary minded. Any former member of the upper middle class or anybody viewing the film from this point of view will either identify himself with, or oppose, the hero's growing radicalization. I, a man with a rural but not really peasant background, was fascinated by the presentation of situations and pressures that seemed strange to me.

Nobody can remain indifferent to this film because of its absolute authenticity both in its starting-point and final conclusions.

The period is the thirties and the scene Budapest, and a beach resort on the Adriatic.

The main character, Lőrinc Parcen-Nagy, is the son of the general manager of a large Budapest enterprise. The father commits suicide because his wife has carried on for years with a political impostor, a humdrum and mediocre adventurer. Perhaps he had other reasons as well for growing tired of life. The widow is excellently portrayed as a cow-eyed bitch too stupid to establish a relationship with her beautiful and hysterical daughter and her clear-minded son. She has neither the brains, nor the feelings or moral basis to be a real mother of her children. She is a purely vegetative being with only one instinct: unconscious and amoral sexuality. A healthy female who ruts and rots in the poisonous vapours of the rich. Her daughter is doomed to the same fate. She has been, since her birth, a sick flower of this decay that exerts its destructive powers in many forms.

Fábri did not spare any effort and made use of every means at the disposal of the modern cinema to present this luxurious world of villas, summer houses, fine furniture, sumptuous meals and clothes. Fellini, Jancsó, Huszárik, Antonioni, Wajda and Buñuel—all find their place in this ambitious and eclectic work.

The film's eclecticism is not disorderly or confused. The luxury and phosphorescent decay of the world of big business is sharply contrasted with the strong, dark and drab colours of the poverty of industrial workers, strikers and revolutionaries represented by the Rózsa family. The father never appears, he is always in prison, he is only mentioned by name. His young son is already a militant, the undaunted, harsh and tough mother is shown in her barely furnished kitchen slum. The electricity has been cut off. In these sequences Fábri gave the best of himself. I found his style most convincing in these parts of the film.

Lőrinc Parcen-Nagy, a pampered young gentleman, must choose between these two worlds. At the beginning he only observes things from the outside. His first choice is overcautious and almost cowardly. A worker was killed. Lőrinc knows that the murderer is his old class-mate, an unscrupulous and depraved young man who has become a right-wing political agent. Lőrinc has got the facts from the victim's friend, a young worker who found out everything, to the last detail, in his thirst for revenge. Though knowing the truth Parcen-Nagy, in court, does not give any damning evidence. His background still strongly influences him. He believes himself fair while he only feels pity for his old friend. Then he witnesses a strike, a demonstration, a young worker beaten up by the police pressing his blood-stained hands and face against the window of the café. The contrast of the two worlds is at its sharpest here: in the café, seated next to pot-plants, two well-dressed gentlemen, Lőrinc and his mother's lover, discuss progressive, liberal ideas, while the young worker's blood stains the glass of the window before their very eyes, at a few metres' distance.

Parcen-Nagy's face reflects utter bewilderment.

The next step is love, and this is a decisive turn. Parcen-Nagy gets to know Éva, a member of the illegal C. P., in a café where she meets her friends. The girl is provocatively anti-bourgeois, her criticism is merciless. Lőrinc cannot remain in the passive attitude of an observer any longer. In the factory where he is employed he feels even more sharply that he is on the borderline of two worlds. The workers regard him rigidly from a distance, as if they saw a member of some sort of different species. And yet love pushes him forward. Fábri, with his precise sense of justice, approached his hero's transformation from his personal experience and not from an intellectual angle. This makes the story more authentic. All his work would have been in vain if he had used the love between these two people with different objectives and a differing morality as a tool only. The love of Lőrinc and Éva is, however, deep and painful. Their parting is absurd,

the Party sends the girl to Germany. Later the Germans execute her, Lőrinc is also put up against a wall during the war, as a deserter. This, however, is only a chronicle of later events.

The awkward, inexperienced and lonely man whom love has made a leftist wants to do something. He goes to the Rózsa family and wants to adopt their boy. His naiveté surpasses even his clumsiness. They handle him without gloves and throw him out. When he reappears in the horrible kitchen, where rubbish is used as fuel, and is refused again by both mother and son, he walks off, and at the same place where a worker was shot in the back he is attacked and beaten black and blue by the dead man's friend. Parcen-Nagy rises again and again and the merciless fist knocks him down each time. Lőrinc understands the rage and thirst for revenge behind the fist and, like Dostoevski's Aliosha, he accepts the punishment. He knows that he has to pay not only for his betrayal in court, there is much more to it than this. Fábri sees this clearly: the sequence is almost a ritual representation of primitive law demanding sacrifice. A young gentleman, the son of big industrialists, wants to become one of the dispossessed because of his sense of justice and his desperate love? Let him pay the price of this with his own blood and suffering.

The sequence of events stops here and expands to a universal law of both coexistence and dramatic construction. This is the symbolism of primitive initiation rites: the old man must die, for the new to be born. There is no renewal without death. I was pleased to see that the long and basically epic work reached such a point of condensation. It gave a new quality to the film and to the idea. It became more than the drama of one individual, the recognition of something which one can brush aside only at the price of brushing aside our humanity and social morality.

This is why Fábri's film is important. As I said before, the techniques, gags and clumsy time sequences taken from so many directors make it impossible to determine Fábri's own original style.

Perhaps Fábri wanted to sum it all up and do what Brahms did for classical Viennese music?

A Comic "Lord of the Flies"

Sándor Sára has demonstrated his specific vision as the cameraman of many Hungarian films. This is the second film he directed. Sára and Géza Páskándi, the poet and dramatist, co-operated on the story. *Pheasant Tomorrow* is a morality much like William Golding's novel. The setting is the same: Sára's is an island as well. Of course not an island in the ocean, only on a quiet piece of land with luxurious vegetation bathed in the waters of the Central European Danube. The story is not blood-curdling like Golding's. This is just a pleasant and good-natured parable about the possibilities of "building" a society today. It is a simple contemporary Utopia.

It is summer and warm in this Utopia. Naked men and women enjoy the blessings of nature, the air, the water and the sun. At first we see only two young townspeople: a man and a woman. The first couple in Paradise. Everything starts from scratch so we can see the full truth: happiness and what came after. At first only one "tempter" in human shape appears in front of their tent. He is not a wily devil but a gentle engineer, full of good-will, a rationalist, who wants to offer our heroes his food and his company. Ádám receives him with suspicion and reluctance, the younger Éva with some curiosity and tolerant courtesy. Everything is alright, the stranger loves silence, loneliness and water as they do but... well... three people, that's not Paradise any longer. Our heroes feel that something has gone wrong but they cannot help it and they cannot blame their neighbour. They look at the water, trees and sky with some

melancholy although they have no idea what more good things are in store for them. And then, one bright day... the first big noisy group of young males and females arrives and from that day on numbers of Robinsons disembark on the island every hour of the day. No more silence, no more star-gazing, no more quiet evenings around the fire, no more meditation. Society is here: men and women *en masse*, loud songs, dances, transistor radios, love-affairs and sex.

This multitude soon acquires a leader. Not seriously at first. A respectable man with a pot belly puts himself at the head. First he only gives advice, later he works out plans and gives instructions. Some are his fans. Within a few days it is accepted that an end must be put to this anarchy where everybody bathes and pitches his tent wherever he pleases. They draw up streets of tents, and mark the bathing places. Then they work out a time-table, and separate the men's beach from the women's. There are sports events and speeches on progress. The pot-bellied man becomes increasingly self-assured and, oddly, also more gentle and apparently more generous. He is a true demagogue, born for power. Of course there are some youngsters who don't like it and swim out to the open waters but one or two zealous guards give them a slap or two. Nobody has seen anything, so it cannot be true. The case serves a good purpose: the waters of the Danube are considered dangerous *a priori*. A civilized community can overcome blind nature. The new plan decrees that a swimming-pool be dug. And no quarter is given: the pool, only at a few steps from the water, is completed. The water in it is muddy and filthy but it provides security. The islanders wallow in it like pigs. One of the busy-bodying subjects even applies a mud-pack to the leader.

Shall I continue? The big boss does not lose a moment, he goes hunting, he shoots pheasants surrounded by his admirers and his own photographer. During these shooting expeditions the boss also proclaims his main guidelines. One is that if something won't work, there's no need to worry: "there'll be pheasant tomorrow". It is easy to imagine what comes next. The island is spared "development" only because the writer and director did not carry the modern historical parallel to its conclusion. The nightmarish formula of the fully modern fascist-type régime with its security police and concentration camps did not come into being on this lonely island for the simple reason that two rutting bitches had a row over the boss and he thought it best to leave everything and buzz off. He rows away in his boat without any further fuss. So this was the devil whose mischievous actions failed once again: he gave up to try again elsewhere.

I have never in my life seen such an innocent philistine-looking devil!

I even forgot from time to time that the game might have cost me my skin: I laughed as if it had been only a harmless comedy. Our heroes, Ádám and Éva, had a worried expression on their faces but I did not watch them because, concerned with all the happenings, the director himself left them out of the main tide. They remained more or less passive sufferers in this new phalanstery. They were too serious. The director could not make them laugh.

The parable was after all too light-hearted, a noisy burlesque instead of a grotesque philosophic drama. The audience roared with laughter and forgot the sinister threats behind all the goings on.

And the idea was not as new as all that either...

JÓZSEF TORNAI

FILMS CATCH A VANISHING CULTURE

In the last thirty or forty years films on anthropology and ethnography have become popular throughout the world. Research in both these subjects has increased and improved. The film, as a medium and tool of these disciplines, has ceased to be the private territory of the professional film-makers, and further changes may be expected with a more extensive use of the video taperecorder.

After following various haphazard contributions to film-making in earlier years, a number of Hungarian ethnographers carefully and deliberately organized a series of ethnographical films between 1972 and 1974. This co-operation with professionals of the cinema, and particularly film producers has been most profitable, and has resulted in more than twenty-five new films made during this period. But in order to appreciate this work, we have first to throw a backward glance on the history of Hungarian ethnographical films as a whole.

Although Hungarians were the first to use the phonograph for the collection of folksongs, no ethnographical film was made before 1927, when Sándor Gőnyey of the Budapest Ethnographical Museum first made use of this medium.

Between 1930 and 1970 more than 100,000 metres of film were shot in various efforts to record different aspects of Hungarian folk culture. Most of this material was on 16 mm film but the films made on 35 mm film are far more important, particularly for their value in terms of art. One of the best Hungarian ethnographical films ever produced was made by an Austrian, Georg Höllering, back in 1936, in the Hortobágy Puszta, on the life of the horseherds and cowherds of that region. Today, when the very traces of that ancient way of life have disappeared, this film is a most valuable and authentic document.

The ethnographical films of Paul Fejős, a film producer born in Hungary who worked in the United States, are of considerable value; following his first successes in Hollywood he became a world-famous pioneer of ethnological films. He made them in Peru, in Madagascar and in Siam; the last-named was the scene of his famous film, *A Handful of Rice*.

Interest in the collection of ethnographical material and the making of ethnographical films redoubled after the Second World War, towards the end of the forties and the beginning of the fifties. A large number of 16 mm films were made of folk dances, and at the same time MAFILM (Hungarian Film Productions) made a great many documentaries in 35 mm film. Some of the provincial museums began to make films as well in the 'sixties, so that there are now more than 250 Hungarian ethnographical films in existence. And there are a great many more still lying in the archives. These films made a considerable contribution to the general stock of ethnographical films, particularly as their general standard was higher, and they were mostly in colour.

Below we deal with the half of those of the series subsidized by Hungarian Television which have already been made.

The centre of interest in rural life was the market. It was where one sold one's crops and livestock, where one bought the industrial goods one needed, where one met one's friends, where one entertained, had a good time. *A Chronicle of Markets and Stallholders* (producer: Vince Lakatos, cameraman: István Lakatos) is perhaps the most interesting and best of the series. It was designed to show the markets of today and yesterday, and the process of their evolution through the years. This film of Vince Lakatos's is a fine example of an ethnographical film; the witty and sometimes ironical text of the commentary and, of course, the scenes themselves cannot fail to hold the audience's attention. It is enhanced by the

use of old prints, drawings and photographs, as well as of drawing on old film archives, such as the inimitable pictures of Höllering's *Hortobágy*. The market scenes shot today will indeed equal them in value in forty or fifty years' time.

Two further films deal with the material environment of the peasant, one on folk architecture, the other on folk furnishings. The first film was produced by Tamás B. Farkas, the cameraman being Imre Schuller; the second by Attila Németh and the cameraman was Gábor Kenyeres. Both subjects have too wide a scope and are too rich in material to be treated comprehensively in twenty minutes (although the original versions were planned to run for 45 minutes), yet the films were nonetheless adequate to their purpose. The producers succeeded in highlighting the essential points and developing them both in space (showing different regions) and in time (through the styles of different periods). The film on architecture dealt with clay and wattle buildings, the type most liable to decay; subsequent films in this series will deal with wooden and stone buildings.

The film on folk furnishings is devoted to the bridal chests (in which the trousseau brought by the young bride was stored), but also deals with other furnishings in the house, the patterns used in embroidery and carving and painting, types of carvings found in different regions. This is in fact one of the most successful of these films, with a wealth of valuable detail.

Another film, *The Saddler*, deals with a disappearing craft (producer: Tibor Préda, cameraman: Imre Schuller). Up to the Second World War, harness-making was a prosperous business. The saddlers cut the thick, hard leather into straps, which were then sewn together by hand to make the harness. Fine, lace-like fringes were plaited from the thin straps. The film shows the last saddler in Debrecen, László Kathy, who still pursues his trade, although he only makes harnesses for decorative purposes. One of his orders came from the Duke of Edinburgh.

Another film, *The Bagpipes*, shows the last makers of bagpipes. The action compared to the other films in the series is rather sluggish and somewhat over-sentimental (producer: István György). It fails to give a comprehensive account of this instrument, or its place in folk culture, although this is precisely the contribution it could have made by drawing on the work in folk-music research initiated by Bartók and Kodály. The actual scenes however will become a valuable record for the future, like the rest of the series of a vanishing peasant culture. There are perhaps two or three persons in the whole of the country today who can play this instrument; twenty-five years ago the bagpipes were the principal instrument played at the wedding celebrations in many parts of the country.

Wedding in Boldog is the title of a film showing all the phases of a wedding-feast in a small village of Northern Hungary (producer: József Kis, cameraman: István Zöldi). The lovely folk-costumes are characteristic of this village and are worn by the women of the older generation for everyday, and by the younger ones (30–40 years) for festive occasions, such as a wedding. The whole family clan—half the village inhabitants—is invited to the feast. The film embraces every stage of a traditional country wedding, and all its usages, including the preparation of the dresses and the meals, the method of inviting the guests, the wedding presents, the farewell to the young couple, the Christian (Catholic) ceremony in the church and the official one in the registry, as well as the carefree feast during the night. The central figure of the film is the bridesman, the master of ceremonies, who introduces and comments on each stage of the proceedings in extemporary rhyme. Although events which are usually spread over three days are concentrated into thirty minutes, the film is an authentic document of what one may presume to be the last wedding in which the bride wears traditional costume.

A popular Christmas custom is recorded in the film *Christmas Carols of Kakasd* (pro-

ducer: Gábor Kenyeres, cameraman: Attila Németh). The actors perform the Nativity play which the Szeklers, who were repatriated from Bukovina (Rumania) after the Second World War, still produce today. The story of the birth of Jesus Christ is given with a humorous, comic text and includes a number of figures bearing no connection to the Bible story, but who appear to derive their existence from ancient heathen solstice rites. The film is a genuine documentary of a play lasting about twenty minutes, performed by men between 18 and 35 years of age, who go from door to door, dressed in fantastic costumes. The authenticity of the film is of particular importance, since the other films tend to develop the various possibilities offered by the subject.

Graveyards in Hungary differ according to the religion of the people buried there. Catholics mark their graves with a cross, Calvinists and Lutherans with wooden graveposts. The ornamentation of the carved graveposts varies according to the different regions. One of the films in this series (producer: Ferenc Olasz, cameraman: Péter Jankura) shows the great variety of these graveposts; the wooden posts have the air of statues and replace the dead not only in their function but also, symbolically, in their human resemblance (like modern sculpture).

There are still very many subjects in Hungarian peasant culture and folk-art waiting to be filmed. The present series is not yet finished, and we hope that the purpose of the series—the compilation of a cinematographic encyclopedia of Hungarian peasant culture—will be completed in the years to come. In spite of its deficiencies this series is a substantial contribution to the ethnographical records of Hungary, as preserved on film.

MIHÁLY HOPPÁL

MUSICAL LIFE

THE KODÁLY METHOD IN AMERICA

Every skilled gardener knows that he has to select the soil, temperature, humidity, light, etc. to suit the plant. When it comes to the transplantation of an educational idea into another culture,* one has a harder task to face than a gardener. It is more difficult to determine the requirements for an educational idea, that is the conditions necessary for its establishment, existence and growth. The gardener can control the conditions to a great extent, while in transplanting an educational idea one must do the best one can with what is given.

Kodály started his schemes for musical education in Hungary, with Hungarian collaborators, and for Hungarian pupils. Generations of Hungarian music teachers have taken part in elaborating the method. The idea was so perfect, the execution so thorough and the outcome so clear that within a short time the musicians and teachers of other nations also wanted to adopt the method.

After a shorter or longer stay in Hungary, and based on superficial or more profound knowledge, many began establishing the Kodály method in their own country. Some of them grasped more, others less of the essence of the idea. Many of them paid attention only to the technique, seeing no more in it than a system that leads to reading and writing music. Others simply translated Hungarian song-books into their languages, interspersing them with a few of their own folk-songs, and called this a Kodály adaptation.

Such superficial work led to the suppression of the essence of the idea. When the desired effect failed to occur, this gave rise to the view that the Kodály method only suited well-disciplined Hungarian children. Unsuccessful adaptations in many places brought discredit to the idea itself.

I have seen the work of English, French, Canadian and US teachers. During the 1973 International Kodály Symposium I also got acquainted with those who worked on Australian, Japanese, Czech, Polish and German adaptations, but in their case I had to rely on what they said, their lectures and publications. I shall here deal with what I known at first hand.

The French and English adaptations were the work of outstanding teachers. I consider them as exemplarly. They selected the musical material to be taught with an unfailing musical taste, carefully preparing and analysing it, building the logical course of developing musicality on the characteristic phrases of the songs. Relative solfeggio is familiar in Britain, and thus they did not have to fight for its acceptance; Hungarian pentatony could also rely on local traditions,

* September 1970 to September 1973 the author worked as Director of Research and, later as Consultant of Research, at the Kodály Musical Training Institute, Inc., Wellesley, Massachusetts —Editor.

beautiful pentatonic melodies have come from Scotland, Wales, Ireland and indeed from the Blackpool region where the renowned school is functioning. In developing musical abilities they rely on Kodály's music education volumes, and they have become authentic interpreters of the Kodály choruses, through which they have approached old, new and most recent music literature. The pupils of the school mostly come from working-class families. The first experiments were not even started with the most gifted pupils. The outstanding results and national acclaim achieved within a few years were doubtlessly produced by the outstanding musical qualifications and educational skill of Margaret Holden, their teacher.

In France, Jacqueotte Ribière-Râverlat tried in vain for many years to introduce her detailed and well-prepared Kodály adaptation. She was not given an experimental school. Finally, she has put her ideas into practice in Montreal where she taught for three years. Jacqueotte Rivière-Râverlat tried to approach the Kodály idea from a different angle. Because of the dominatingly diatonic structure of French songs, she did not build on pentatonic phrases. She compiled the first "conscious motives" from *do*–lower *so*–lower *la*–*re* variations, which are the most characteristic of French children's songs. The *do*–lower *so* is a great enough leap to be used as a starting-point instead of the *so*–*mi* minor third which is customary in Hungary, and it seems that in spontaneous improvisations as well, the natural intonation of the French children is a perfect fourth rather than a minor third. She had to select amongst the Kodály exercises, and could not use them in their original order. Jacqueotte Ribière-Râverlat as well is an outstanding musician, and a conscientious and ingenious teacher, and thus the Montreal adaptation has also proved a success. However, absolute solfeggio which has sunk such deep roots in the French-speaking world has raised many obstacles in her way. The Latin nations use the syllables of the solfeggio to mark absolute tones, whereas for English speakers relative solfeggio indicates the intervals and relations, the terms for the absolute tones remain c, d, e, f, and so on.

For a qualified French musician it is therefore almost unthinkable that *do* should not be the term for an absolute note of a certain frequency, but a component of one of the intervals in varying heights (for example, the basis for *do*–*mi*, or the upper pillar of the lower *la*–*do* third). Here I cannot go into all the numerous views and objections regarding relative and absolute solfeggio. Kodály considered relative solfeggio as suitable, and the results have proved him right. The Montreal classes, too, have borne out that the method of relative solfeggio has served well the musical training of French-Canadian girls. It would be premature to make any prophecies on whether the English or the French form of adaptation will prove more successful. Both are useful and much can be learned from both.

Kodály or Orff?

I have most closely observed the situation in America, since I myself took part for three years, and encountered the problems involved, day by day. Endeavours to introduce the Kodály method in American schools have been made in a number of states. The teachers started out from highly differing levels of musical grounding. In America it has become fashionable and a smart thing to attend Kodály courses. I have even seen "Orff-Kodály" printed in the prospectus of a Boston singing teacher, and when I questioned him he answered that he had just started since the instruments had not yet arrived. The linking of Orff and Kodály is fairly frequent in America, as both represent methods imported from Europe, and both of them use pentatony as their basis. There are many common features and many use Orff to supplement the singing-

centred Kodály method. Orff became fashionable in America earlier, and many schools purchased the Orff instruments. Brief summer courses and short visits to Salzburg were insufficient to familiarize oneself with its essence. Based on superficial knowledge and lacking proper trials adaptations were generally poor, though there is much to be said in favour of Orff's method. The European cultivators of the two methods have learnt much from each other. I have frequently heard American followers arguing in favour of one or the other, in my opinion, however, such debates are superfluous. Two educational trends here start from different aspects but in the final analysis aim for a similar goal. Superficial work and the desire for speedy results has affected the American adaptation of both in much the same way.

The starting-point in every adaptation must be the teacher's definition of aims in the light of the conditions and educational objectives of a given society. They have to decide what they want to teach, and why they selected that particular material. The purpose also determines the selection of the method. But then the purpose is usually conceived within an extremely wide scope. The question is whether one intends to create a musical culture, or form the taste and sensitivity for music. In most cases one wishes to achieve it all. Nevertheless, one still selects and gives preference to one or another aspect, according to the time available for training and also according to whether a selected minority, perhaps outstanding talents, or a large number of children have to be taught.

Why Give Children a Musical Education

The function of music education can be determined within a broad scale. I have attended many debates where diametrically opposed opinions were expressed sound reasons being given to back each. The majority of American teachers searched for the best for their pupils, doing so faithfully. Their aim was often determined by the need to entertain and provide recreation for the children, making sure they "have fun", until they realized that music lessons intended to entertain did not do so. I have seen many such fruitless efforts. Instead of relaxing they bored their pupils, and I felt upset by the teacher's obviously ineffective feverish endeavours to try to entertain.

I have thought about what actually happened. The "entertaining" approach of the adults is a basically mistaken one. The child not only has to participate actively in what amuses him, but he must also feel that he has done something, he needs a sense of achievement. In the course of "entertaining" singing lessons I have seen some excellent ideas, and the teacher often tried out a whole series on them. After a few minutes attention started to flag. In vain did instruments tinkle, balls fly, or coloured ribbons whirl, attention remained on the surface, it did not penetrate the music itself. It was also obvious that the work of teachers could hardly compete with the succession of ideas in the American television children's programmes that are constantly striving for novelties. Television can more easily offer something new all the time, different, quickly changing and surprising. Even the highly popular "Sesame Street" programme on educational television avails itself of such fireworks ideas. However—in accordance with the demand for fast change inherent in the American way of life—in this series as well each element is introduced by many and suddenly changing happenings. For example: the conceptions of below-over, under-above or behind-before are illustrated by many excellent pictures, but these variegated pictures are interchanged much too quickly. The block capital H was taught in the following manner: five pretty figures in T-shirts burst onto the scene—accompanied by lively, snappy music—dragging a big

pillar. They set it up, frisked around it, and ran out. The same went on with another pillar. The third pillar joined the first two, thus making up the letter H, but they put it down the wrong way, and in this upside down form the letter did not yet become an H. So they jumped around it, tried to fix it, and finally it got into place—the letter H is there. All that takes place in a matter of seconds, and in a highly entertaining manner, accompanied by music. Is there any school and teacher in the world who could undertake to teach in a similarly amusing way? On the other hand, what happens with a child who becomes accustomed to react only to such stimuli? What the school can do is to allow for activities which develop the child's abilities in a many-sided way allowing them to derive amusement from them as well. Undoubtedly, a different kind of amusement. I have seen an excellent lesson with the letter H as its subject. The children pieced together the capital H from wooden and plastic blocks, they painted it on large pieces of paper, with brushes, they pasted it up using sandpaper and passed their backs forming a letter H, and accompanied this by uttering the sound "h", not pronouncing it with a vowel, only breathing "h".

The joy of learning is not entertainment. To aim to entertain and no more is just as great an error as it is fatal to separate learning from play. The joy of discovery comes from within and it does more in the interest of learning than even serious determination.

Music amuses and refreshes—that is all right. Its educational aim nevertheless cannot be solely recreation and amusement, the appropriate roads even cannot be found for that. It is frequently maintained that the aim of musical education is to develop sensitivity to music. This is true, the trouble is that one usually looks for the way in listening.

In European music the practice has been established for centuries now to sit motionless in concert halls, or nowadays in front of the radio or television, and listen. Listening to music does not demand active participation. Reception in itself suffices in the enjoyment of pop music as it does for Beethoven.

Music as Living Tradition

This is not the case in cultures where the original function of music is still alive, where music still has a central role, forming an integral part of the daily routine as well as of festive occasions. I have seen a film shot in the island of Bali in 1972, with parts of a ceremony lasting several hours, where each minute got a special meaning by making music in common. Ten months old babies took over the rhythm of the ancient movements. I have seen another film shot in the same year, showing the life of an African tribe. They played music as naturally as drawing breath, each and all of them. I was gripped by the protean melodic texture and the wealth of rhythms. I have seen a film about another African tribe visited by a young American Black drummer who played music with the natives. At certain points in the performances, adults and children, women and men among the audience surrounding the performer, started dancing in turn, with a spontaneous verve. Evidently, they lived in tune with the performance and were unable to remain a motionless audience.

The music-making of American Negroes stimulates the listener to movement and to uttering sounds in a similar manner. At concerts and in church, they applaud rhythmically, they interrupt the music with shouts and accompany it with movements or even sing to it.

These kinds of music are not circulated in a written form, and they do not even have a written system of signs. In their case there is no need to read or write music.

According to several American educators this form of music contains greater educa-

tional possibilities than European music. According to them reading and writing music is not necessary in schools.

The Kodály method cannot offer much to them, but they still use part of the Kodály idea in the right way when they want to serve up the musical idiom of the original folklore as a daily bread in schools. Nevertheless, the integrity of the idea inevitably includes European written music. In my view this helps the mental development of the American child as well, whatever his colour.

In 1929 Kodály still had to fight for the importance of reading and writing music. The Italian journal *Musica Domani*, even in 1974, disputed the justification of reading and writing music in school. I have heard and read similar arguments by numerous American and British educators. Such arguments spring from two sources. Some really do not consider it important to familiarize children with European written music. The others find themselves unable to overcome the difficulties inherent in reading and writing music, and the development of an inner hearing which is indispensable for it, and therefore they also reject a knowledge of written music. The first argument is beneath contempt. Those insisting on the difficulties should be reminded of what has been successfully done in a number of countries. Should one start with folklore or with art music. Thence the typically American question arises which folklore to start with, and what should be the share of, say, Negro or Puerto-Rican folklore in mixed schools. I cannot even imagine a definite answer to this question of North American music education, since the country is such a melting pot of peoples and races. Who can tell which one dominates and which is the stronger, and which wants to hang on to its original folklore and the culture they brought with them or inherited, and which strives for the earliest possible assimilation. One can only express an informed opinion in the full knowledge of local conditions.

Teaching the Method

After a clear formulation of the aims (since there are more than one aim), the roads leading towards them can be outlined. Musical techniques have always been easiest to learn by imitation. Children learnt singing, dancing and the handling of instruments by watching adults slowly growing into it, they, too, developed it further. This is how tradition was inherited and developed, and how the child's ability developed. The "conservatory without walls" so frequently mentioned among American Negroes today, refers to just this. They did not possess organized institutions, or methods linked to any given person. The young were taught by the old. The social structure today offers other possibilities, organized educational forms, for transmission. The responsibility of individual conveyance actuated by an inner drive, as demonstrated by the music history of the American Negroes, still provides a great lesson. Organized forms and definite methods can easily depersonalize the process of transmission, lowering it to simple teaching. The question of "how" should be answered by undertaking responsibility actuated by an inner drive. The most successful of many possible methods should be chosen, or several of them should be welded together giving help to children developing their personality as a whole.

Kodály selected and adapted sound methods. He searched for optimum solutions and incorporated them with his ideas. There is no sense in trying to keep the Kodály method simon-pure. Reshaping the original formulae by incorporating suitable discoveries is not only permissible but an educational duty. No method can remain successful if it rigidifies into a dogma. Only those new devices can be included which further the better unfolding of the original ideas. One can only afford changes if one is familiar with the essence of the original idea, and superficial results do not divert one from that which is recognized as the

right way. I find the mixing of musical methods to be extremely dangerous. I have seen countless examples in America, a cautionary tale, every one of them. Having a superficial knowledge of methods they serve up concoctions to the children which do not serve any proper purpose, having none.

When I accepted the American invitation I tried to work out how I could be of help to the teachers and children in an alien society. Education involves a tremendous responsibility. It is difficult enough at home. When, after landing in the country, I faced the weight of the responsibility, I became anxious. Not only because I lacked information, and was ignorant of many intricate aspects of life, society and education there. And not only because the situation there has an oppressing effect. With talents that are moderate in proportion to the tasks awaiting me I had to get acquainted within an extremely short time with countless aspects of an alien society and an alien education system which all influenced and, indeed, determined my work. Americans always expect results. All that is good must appear promptly. Whatever requires patience is uncertain. But education simply cannot be urged and the time taken for the views to mature is just as important as teaching itself. They wanted to plan the comparative examination of the experimental Kodály classes for one year, and only granted two years as a result of prolonged argument. In the Kodály Institute of Kecskemét creativity examinations took four years, and I do not consider even that long enough. The main problem of adaptation lies exactly in these differing social expectations.

The basis of education, too, is different in America. Great universities depend on private financing, and the same applies to music institutes as well. One of the most distinguished establishments for education in music of the United States, the New England Conservatory, was facing bankruptcy, and for months on end appealed for financial support on the networks. National Educational Television, the only network that does not interrupt programmes to boost a product, the only one which features cultural programmes of a high standard, appealed for help in much the same way. I was unable to get reconciled to the idea that the introduction and maintainance of educational programmes should depend on whether those holding the money bags, rich men or the trustees of foundations, could be persuaded of the usefulness and efficiency of the programme. Together with an American psychologist colleague, we adapted the outline of our research project for many months since it was to come before people who presumably had no expertise in either music or education. It was up to their judgement whether a plan would be accepted which—given the patient work of several years—promised slow development, or something else that held out hopes of instant success.

It is only natural that given those circumstances they incline to decide in favour of the latter. Educational plans therefore proliferate like weeds, promising redemption and remedy for various difficulties schools encounter, and even for what have become well known as the problems of young people. I was not in a position to promise salvation and had no desire to do so.

Our musical programme gave much help in the different fields of education, such as communal education and in certain aspects of learning. Our children undoubtedly were better able to concentrate, they paid more attention, and worked as a team more than earlier classes taught by the same teachers. They performed better in reading tests, as shown by the figures on a comparative statistical table. The organization of comparative tests proved to be unbelievably difficult. Identical conditions had to be ensured in every respect for the music and control groups. This meant that the class teacher had to be identical, that is classes had to be divided into two. Thus we were

forced to sacrifice one of the important psychological advantages of our programme, that is the team spirit of the class, in order to ensure the authenticity of psychological examinations.

American Problems

The absence of well-organized unified class work raised great difficulties. A Hungarian finds it difficult to imagine the nature of group work, the way an American child shifts from group to group in accordance with the task and his interests as well. In Hungary classes are taught as units and kept together. Towards the end of my first year I was horrified to learn that by the following autumn my singing class would be split up and mixed with the parallel form. I tried to ask for an explanation, and someone there provided me with the following arguments:

(1) If children get used to each other they talk in class.
(2) Many children are unable to adapt themselves to a community, they should therefore be taken into a new community.
(3) It is better for them to get accustomed to new mates, as this is what life has in store for them. They must be ready to fit into new communities throughout their lives.

The first argument contradicts the most elementary laws of human relations. In Hungary even the most backward, autocratic teacher would be afraid to say such a thing. It is true that in my Boston school it was such a teacher who said this, and it is to be hoped that very few American teachers share her views. If a child cannot talk to his mates in school, where should he establish human relations, and how should he become a useful member of the community?

The second argument reflects a poor psychological grounding since it denies the educational strength of the community. If a child felt ill at ease in a community during first term, it is the duty of the collective of the children to come to his help. The teacher has to create an atmosphere in which it becomes a natural condition for children to help one another. One can find problem children everywhere, more in America, of course, than in Hungary. But a well-knit collective can deal with such tasks, while the teacher by herself can hardly cope.

The third argument is a sad fact, and is the result of the social structure and the country's dimensions. Nevertheless, I think that they should at least aim to hold together the groups of children as long as possible. People move not only because they have to take up another job or because this is what their family circumstances dictate. They also do so when they become better off, being able to afford a larger house in a better district or simply because they have become tired of their house, and do not like to stay on in the same place. I have not even heard of a family that had second thoughts about moving because this meant changing school. But irrespective of moving, the children are transferred from group to group even if they attend the same school for years. The principle of mixing parallel classes had such deep roots that, in each of our experimental schools, changing this practice was out of question. Only one school agreed to keep my music group of Negro nursery-school pupils together for the first term in 1973. This exceptional measure was the result of the full co-operation of the headmistress and the two group mistresses, as a friendly gesture, and in appreciation of the results achieved in the music lessons. The outstanding performance and extraordinary development of the class during the 1973–74 school year, when they were taught by another teacher, a young American who had been the student of our institute was the eating that proved the pudding.

KLÁRA KOKAS

KLEMPERER IN HUNGARY

ATTILA BOROS: *Klemperer Magyarországon* (Klemperer in Hungary.) Zeneműkiadó, Budapest, 1973. 71 pp., with 32 photos and 2 records

A relatively young foreign conductor, Gustav Mahler, who was director of the Budapest Opera House from 1888 to 1891, introduced a Mozart cult in Hungary which was so outstanding as to elicit the remark by Brahms that: "He who wishes to enjoy a thoroughly good *Don Giovanni* performance should go to Budapest."

One of the most remarkable periods of Hungarian musical history was Mahler's three-year stay in Budapest. A similarly significant event occurred much later and under greatly different circumstances when, in 1947, the State Opera House again invited a German-born conductor in the person of Otto Klemperer. At the end of the last century, Gustav Mahler had come to Budapest at the very beginning of his career, whereas in the first days of October 1947, a tired old man recuperating from a serious illness arrived at the Eastern Railway Station. It was common knowledge that Klemperer after having fled from German fascism to Vienna in 1933, then to the United States in 1939, had undergone a difficult brain operation and his condition at first improved but again worsened. In such circumstances the German conductor accepted the invitation from Hungary and undertook to play a leading role in the musical life of a country recovering from the ravages of war but thirsting for beauty. He must have been impressed by the trust shown in him, the still sickly conductor, by Aladár Tóth, musical director of the Opera at that time.

It appears that Klemperer's three years in Budapest from October 1947 to July 1950 also left a favourable impression on him. Twenty years later, on April 11 1970, he commented:

"I consider my years in Budapest, between 1947 and 1950, as conductor of the State Opera House under the directorship of Aladár Tóth, as the best years of my musical career. There were three eminent orchestras in Budapest at that time... and the choirs were also excellent. But to me the *spiritus rector* of it all was Aladár Tóth, an operatic director of such skill and artistic sense that I have not met anyone like him since. His love for Mozart happily coincided with my own; consequently for the first time in my life I was able to stage all five major Mozart operas in a single season."

The performances of the Mozart operas in Budapest, which Klemperer recalled with such emotion in 1970, numbered no less than fifty. During his three years in the Hungarian capital the audience of the State Opera was able to attend his performances a total of one hundred and ten times, in addition to approximately seventy concerts. Klemperer increased even more the enjoyment of Budapest audiences by conducting Mendelssohn's incidental music to the *Midsummer Night's Dream* approximately thirty times at the National Theatre.

This information and much more can be found in the book written by Attila Boros, a studious musicologist and popular radio reporter. The book itself is mainly based on the youthful reminiscences of Attila Boros himself when he sat enraptured in the back row of the gallery during Otto Klemperer's performances and on the remembrances of artists who contributed to the performances at Budapest under the baton of Klemperer. These recollections on Klemperer's stay in Budapest were broadcast by the Hungarian Radio in a six-part series some years ago with the help of discs of the operatic performances made at the time and re-recorded later. Readers of Attila Boros's book can sample these early recordings with two enclosed supplementary records containing selections from Klemperer's most

popular numbers, mainly by Mozart and Wagner.

During those years in Budapest not only Boros but many other Hungarian music lovers were witnesses to the art of Otto Klemperer. His admirable ingenuity in breaking down the inner content of a work into its basic elements in order to later display its full scope and unity captivated not only the audience but the participating singers and musicians. In the book of Attila Boros the artists under Klemperer's direction recalled the almost hypnotic power of the conductor; they would attempt the impossible with his inspiring help, rushing through a quick allegro movement of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony at a sustained tempo; singing the "Register" aria from *Don Giovanni* in exactly one minute and twelve seconds with perfect articulation; or struggling with one's own vanity and ambition by omitting superfluous "fiorituri" of the tenor solo in a duet. As for his ability to inspire other people let me quote from the book part of an interview by the late Mária Gyurkovics, brilliant coloratura soprano of the State Opera House:

"My stock of words is too poor to properly describe Klemperer's genius and the dramatic force of his performances. Perhaps an extensive study is needed to analyse his technical skill, his vitality and will to live, the broad range of his emotions, all which served the art of music. Generally he dictated a quicker tempo than usual but in a curious way we always came to an agreement when difficult 'coloraturi' were in question... He always said to me, 'I will start with the prelude to the aria and you may sing at the tempo you wish, as it suits you best, and I will follow you'. He conducted from his seat with restrained gestures, then would suddenly stand up. This big man lifted his arms and drew out a dramatic effect from the ensemble which cannot be described with words."

His unusual, controversial personality and sometimes rumour-provoking eccentricity were well characterized by his Hungarian friend Aladár Tóth in his short study written at the request of the EMI recording company for the occasion of Klemperer's 80th birthday in 1956. In reference to certain differences of opinion sparked off by the hot-tempered German maestro in Budapest, Tóth explained with understanding that:

"Though some Philistines shook their head we always had enough supporters; and after all, everybody had to realize that the impetuosity of this inspired artist roused the operatic world here and spurred all the other participants to the highest pitch of achievement possible."

Since then both of the two friends, the director of the State Opera in Budapest, and the German conductor—Mahler's worthy successor and disciple—have passed away. But the memorial of their work has survived: the five major Mozart operas which Klemperer succeeded in conducting within a single season; a cheerful, vivid *Fledermaus* performance and a *Meistersinger* revival for which queues were formed at the box office at ten o'clock in the evening prior to actual selling day. Fortunately these remarkable productions are preserved for musical history in the archives of the Hungarian Radio.

Otto Klemperer's farewell to Budapest was almost a symbolic one; for the last time he conducted his favourite opera *Don Giovanni* at the State Opera on July 4, 1950 while the true expression of his personality, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, was performed at an open-air concert two weeks later, on July 18. Perhaps it is unnecessary to say that the art of the famous German conductor has deeply implanted itself in the memory of Hungarian audiences and this well-illustrated interesting volume—including many photos never published before—is further evidence to this effect.

ISTVÁN GÁBOR

A FIRST IN OPERA DISCOGRAPHY

Opern auf Schallplatten 1900–1962. Ein historischer Katalog. Universal Edition A.G. Wien, 1974. 184 pp.

Universal Edition has published the first scholarly opera discography. In the preface one of the editors, Kurt Blaukopf, explains how previous lists of records have been rather more like catalogues of goods; a scholarly discography, however, must contain all existing records, including museum pieces, a knowledge of which is absolutely necessary for anyone wishing to study performing styles of past decades. It is now possible to look back over half a century of operatic art with the aid of recordings, and naturally the material should be collected and compiled systematically, according to uniform standards.

In the present discography the works of each composer are listed in chronological order giving each work's original title—and, if needed, its English and German equivalents—genre, number of acts, author of the libretto, and place and time of its world première. These entries are followed by a chronological listing of the work's recordings specifying for each: four or five leading roles and their interpreters, the choir, orchestra and conductor, the number, size and pm of the record, the producing company, serial number and date of release.

As with all bibliographies, this catalogue had to have a cutting off point: in this case the deadline was December 31, 1962. It seems too early in view of the quantity of records produced in the last twelve years. But even so the discography provides the data of a considerable number of opera records. Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Puccini's *La Bohème* and Verdi's *Traviata* and *Aida* head the list with 14 recordings each; there are four or five different productions for other well-known operas too. The discography also offers interesting information to more serious students of the opera: there was, for example, a recording of *Aida* in the United States in 1906–7. A fact which is all the more remarkable considering that the next complete recording of the same opera was produced only twenty years later. For those used to today's stereo recordings it is hard to imagine how the finale in the second act of *Aida* with six soloists, full chorus and orchestra would sound recorded by means of only one acoustic horn.

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The difficulty of restricting the unsurpassed richness of life to rigid rules applies also to such a minor detail as the listing of opera records and herein lies the shortcomings of this discography. The first and foremost problem is the question of genre. The discography bears the title *Opern auf Schallplatten*, but the reader will find that many other works have been included in the catalogue: operettas, zarzuellas, masques and oratorio-like works. The listings in the discography could be defined perhaps as vocal-musical-stage works, but this is not such a simple explanation either because of a number of marginal cases. Where does the opera end and the oratorio begin? Oratorios with a cast and action such as Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, of Berlioz' *La Damnation de Faust* can be considered operas but Debussy's *Le Martyre de Saint-Sébastien*, Honegger's *Le roi David* and Orff's *Carmina Burana* and *Catulli Carmina* are most certainly concert works even if they have been staged several times. If such works were included in the catalogue, then why not the great oratorios of Händel and Haydn? Another extreme case is Orazio Vecchi's madrigal comedy, *L'Amfiparnaso* which is much more a choral work than an opera. Or in Stravinsky's *L'histoire du soldat* there is no vocal score only prose which was left out by many recordings. What kind of opera is one without singing?

Certainly this is not a marginal case but as a pantomime clearly belongs to the theatre. If it has been put on the list, logically all complete ballets should also be included. Nor have the editors been more logical in the listing of light music. Complete operetta recordings have been included, even light entertainment such as Kálmán's *Countess Mariza*, but musical comedies were omitted altogether. For example Bernstein's *West Side Story* is not on the list. No longer registering light musical plays after, let's say, around the outbreak of the Second World War is a defect as serious as the closing down of the record listing at too early a date.

The editors of the discography considered only recordings in the original language as of full value. Records in other languages have been mentioned only in footnotes. This concept is debatable. Singing in the original language is not a wide-spread practice; it has become general in big opera houses only during the last few decades. Most operas are performed in the national language (in Hungary too). This omission also contradicts the stated purpose of the discography of informing the interested public of performing styles of the past. Operas sung in national languages are also part of performance styles, moreover, it is an interesting experience to hear a company trained in a given national singing school perform an opera written in a style alien to them.

Although it would have considerably increased the size of the volume, I think it was not correct to list only three or four main characters instead of the whole cast. A scholarly work should aim at completeness. *Der Rosenkavalier* by Richard Strauss has twenty-three singing parts; it is not enough to mention only four. If a student wishes to know who sang Faninal on the recording conducted by Kleiber, this catalogue will not provide him with the information. The selection of the four or five main characters of an opera is also rather subjective. For example, in *The Force of Destiny* the Marquis of Calatrava is mentioned, but not Melitone although this is the longer and more important part. Or why mention *Aida's* Amonasro and leave out Ramfis? In the case of popular operas such mistakes are not great because the editors are aware of the significance of individual parts, but they do not know much about Eastern European national operas which are rarely performed in Western Europe. In the case of *Hunyadi László* and *Bánk bán* the cast mentions only two characters for each—this is certainly insufficient. For *Háry János* the Empress is listed but Uncle Marci and Maria Louisa, whose roles are certainly more important, are left out. The editors could have avoided such shortcomings if they would have listed complete casts and at the same time would have been worthy of this large-scale enterprise.

The Hungarian aspects of the discography are of special interest to us and merit a few remarks here. Hungarian names are generally spelled correctly. I noticed only one mistake: the Hungarian tenor in *Bánk bán* is not Jovicky, but Joviczky. Long Hungarian vowels are more problematic: foreign printing shops do not dispose of necessary diacritical marks and the majority of typographical errors are due to this fact: Júlia and not Julia Osváth, József Simándy and not Simandy, Lőrinc Tóth and not Lörinc Tóth. The situation is quite different in the case of Hungarian artists who have or had lived abroad for a long time. Their names have "deteriorated" and for these mis-spellings the editors are not to blame. Some examples are: Violetta in *Traviata* is Anna *Rózsa* and not *Rosza;* Rocco in *Fidelio* is *Dezső* Ernster, not *Deszo* and Bartók's *Bluebeard* is Endre *Koréh* and not Koreh.

On the other hand, the editors are to blame for the many inaccuracies in the dates of Hungarian opera premières. The première of Erkel's *Hunyadi László* was not January 4, 1874 but January 27, 1844. The exact date of the first performance of Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* was May 24, 1918 and not March 24th, and *Háry János* was premiered on October 16, 1926, not on the 26th.

A substantial error in the catalogue was the attribution of the libretto of Kodály's *The Spinning Room* to Bence Szabolcsi. This is not true: the text was not written by anyone; it was, however, compiled by the composer himself. Every line in the text of *The Spinning Room* was taken from Székely folk songs and ballads and put together by Kodály in such a way as to constitute a simple plot. Bence Szabolcsi, however, was responsible for the translation of the texts of the folk songs into German. This error is all the more curious as Universal Edition happened to be the publishers of the score of *The Spinning Room*.

One Hungarian opera recording ought to have figured in the catalogue. The Hungarian Qualiton Record Company made a recording of Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* during the period from August 28th to September 5th 1956. Bluebeard was performed by Mihály Székely and Judit by Klára Palánkay. The Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra was conducted by János Ferencsik. It appeared on one 30 cm micro-record on September 17, 1958 under No. HLPMN 1001, and was later reproduced under No. LPX–1001. This record is significant for two reasons: it was the first complete Hungarian opera recording, and it preserved the performance of Mihály Székely, one of the best interpreters of Bluebeard until his death in 1963.

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Despite these minor shortcomings, the historical discography is an outstanding achievement, and will prove of great use to opera lovers, students of performing styles and artists alike. The project should be continued; since the closing of the catalogue many interesting records have been produced. Recorded works are increasing, the market is being saturated with different recordings of standard works and record companies must dig up long-forgotten or rarely performed operas to satisfy the public with interesting novelties. A next, enlarged (and slightly revised) edition will surely offer a more complete picture of the world's record production of operas.

IVÁN KERTÉSZ

THE HUNGARIAN CIMBALOM

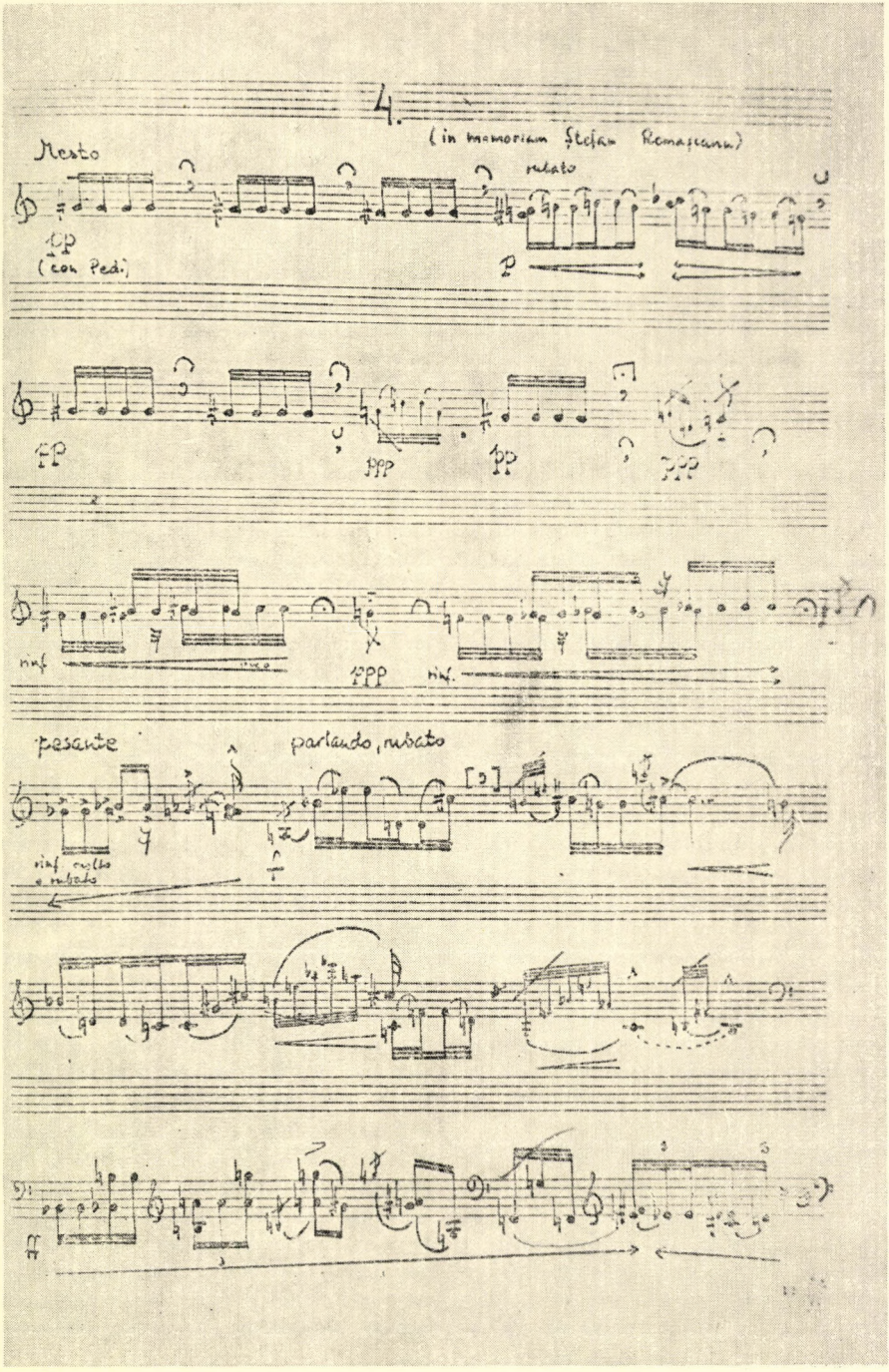
In spite of its Asian origin, the *cimbalom* is considered a characteristically Hungarian instrument. Its final form, perfected by Vencel Schunda,* is still played today in Gypsy orchestras. The Hungarian artist Aladár Rácz** turned it into an orchestra instrument on a par with the clavecin of Bach, Couperin and Scarlatti, giving even more reason for feeling to be Hungarian. It was through Stravinsky's compositions that the cimbalom became a part of twentieth-century musical scores. Following a national traditional begun by Ferenc Erkel*** and Mihály Mosonyi,**** the cimbalom was considered an orchestral instrument by Kodály and then Bartók, and in post-1960 con-

* Vencel Schunda (1845–1923) constructed the first new type of cimbalom in Kecskemét.

** Aladár Rácz (1886–1958), cimbalom artist and professor at the Budapest Academy of Music.

*** Ferenc Erkel (1810–1893), composer, conductor, pianist. An outstanding personality of 19th century Hungarian musical life.

**** Mihály Mosonyi (1815–1870) composer.



György Kurtág: Splinters (part of the Fourth Movement)

temporary Hungarian music, along with the clarinet, it was discovered to be perhaps the most characteristic instrument of national folk colour. Thanks to Márta Fábián, at a concert held recently at the Budapest Academy of Music a sampling of the latest cimbalom music of Hungarian composers was presented as one in a three-part series entitled "Music of Our Era". The three compositions on the programme aptly demonstrated the cimbalom's potential for combination with other instruments and its adaptibility to various genre, and, what is more, with totally different intonation.

In Rudolf Maros's "Trio", the original version of which was completed in 1971, the cimbalom takes the place of the harp as a companion to the alto and soprano string instruments. Improvised solos by the viola and violin separate then link the three movements of the "Trio". The fast-slow-fast tempo of the complements the slow-fast-slow Finale of the first two movements, the Nocturne and Arietta. The running back and forth of the same theme in two cadences serves as the second structuring principle of the piece.

In the original version for harp, pastel tones followed one after the other, quietly, emotionally, with softly harmonizing melody, chords and effortless colouring. The new prelude of the cimbalom, however, is a bit forceful with its entry into the poetic atmosphere of the first movement; it does not blend with the other two instruments but dominates them giving the Nocturne a different perspective. However, it changes into a chamber partner in the Arietta and the Finale, fitting in well and justifying its use in this framework.

Sándor Szokolay's new composition "Lament and Cultic Dance" gives the cimbalom a completely different role, that of the typical folk-instrument, and in fact, partly a percussion instrument. In this capacity the instrument proves outstanding. In the first part it fits into the ensemble of celesta, vibraphone, harp and bell as colouring, and in the second part as foresinger to the piano, marimba, timpani, bongo and an armada of other percussion instruments. The tone of the lament is wrapped into a veil of tinkling and bonging sounds covering the full scale of the gamelan and producing a stylized exoticism. A similar "naive" approximation also characterizes the virtuoso dance, especially if, upon the title, one expects elementary, true folk of "barbaric" rhythmical tension. This colourful piece, which was performed as a work of light music, received an enormous ovation.

Finally, the cimbalom also appeared on the programme as a solo instrument. György Kurtág, the initiator of the contemporary renaissance of the instrument, entrusted it with his poetic message in four short movements linked into a cycle entitled "Splinters" which were composed over a period of a decade (1962–73). Great skill and invention are required to play these aphorisms satisfactorily; the earlier ones run in rapid tempo thirty to forty seconds, and the new slower ones condense their marvellous wealth into one or two minutes. The forms scarcely have time to develop, or the motifs to pair off and the contrasts to come into opposition. Nevertheless, by the time the vision disappears, it is unforgettable. In this microworld a hexatonic dolce melody is an enormous event; the dialogue of fortissimo clashing, ringing accords and pianissimo vibrations is captivating against the background of a fluttering scherzo played upon three different themes; ultimately everything becomes a mere preliminary, a line of brief moments in life, which must recede when the hour of death approaches. The fourth movement (labeled Mesto, just as the Finale of Bartók's String Quartet No. VI) is a folk-lament which is sung amids the ringing of bells first a remembering and then a burial. It is an emotionally shaking, beautiful experience. And it is also a ceremonious moment in the history of the cimbalom to again have been selected by a poet to be his spokesman.

GYÖRGY KROÓ

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

A short letter to tell you how much we enjoy the New Hungarian Quarterly and to congratulate you on the Spring (57.) issue which we think is your best. All the articles are interesting and we particularly like the interview with Albert Szent-Györgyi.

Beryl and Robert Graves
Cañellun
Deya
Mallorca
Spain

Sir, I have received the copy of the *New Hungarian Quarterly* in which there is an article concerning the "Rural Glass Paintings" of Hungary. I am very grateful to you for I am presently engaged in making a catalogue of reverse paintings on glass in museums in the United States. There are several paintings listed with the origin as Hungary, several which simply state that they were found in Hungary. I have been at a loss to establish a typical Hungarian style and feel sure that this article will be of a great deal of help and interest to me.

Mildred Ward
University of Kansas
Department of the History of Art,
Lawrence, Kansas

Sir, Now that *Delta* ceased publication last January, I do not want to take leave from you without a word of thanks for the many years of stimulating reading material presented by your excellent and excellently produced journal. I shall try to follow future issues in the library here. I can only hope that *Delta* has succeeded in giving you some pleasure in exchange.

With all good wishes for the *Quarterly* and for yourself.

Hans van Marle
Managing Editor,
DELTA
A review of Arts, Life and Thought
in the Netherlands

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ALMÁSI, Miklós (b. 1932) Philosopher and critic. Studied philosophy and aesthetics at Eötvös University, Budapest, as a pupil of György Lukács. On the staff of the Hungarian Theatre Institute. His "Visiting Marcuse on the Pacific Coast", in No. 55, was a chapter from his book "Number of Oscillations. Conversations on Contemporary America," based on his 1970–71 IREX trip to the U.S. See also "Man and Culture in Socialism" in No. 57.

BIHARI, Ottó (b. 1921). LL.D., Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Pécs, Dean of its Law School. See his "Hungary's New Electoral Law" in No. 26, and "The Expansion of Socialist Democracy" in No. 42.

CSIKÓS-NAGY, Béla (b. 1915). Undersecretary of State, Chairman of the National Board of Prices and Materials. Has published and lectured on price policy and other economic questions in Hungary and abroad. See his "Socialist Economic Theory and the New Mechanism" in No. 28, "The Monetary Framework of a Socialist Economy" in No. 33, and "Anti-Inflationary Policies" in No. 55.

DÉRY, Tibor (b. 1894). Novelist. His contributions to NHQ include, among others, excerpts from his autobiography *Itélet nincs* ("No Verdict") in Nos. 32 and 33, his remarks at Lukács's funeral in No. 43, "One Day's Flotsam" in No. 45, "Dipping my Pen into the Sea" in No. 53, parts from his novel, "Cher Beau-Père" in No. 55, "The Business of Writers" in No. 57. See also "The 80 Years of Tibor Déry," by Anna Földes, in No. 55.

FEKETE, János (b. 1918). Economist, Vice President of the Hungarian National Bank in charge of international operations. Has published numerous papers on Hungarian and international monetary problems. See his "Credit and Foreign Exchange Policy in Hungary" in No. 41, "East-West Trade and the US" in No. 44, "Credit and Foreign Exchange Policy in Hungary" in No. 50, and "Inflation and the International Monetary System" in No. 55.

FERENCZI, László (b. 1937). Literary historian, one of our regular book reviewers.

FODOR, András (b. 1929). Poet, translator, at present Secretary of the Poets' Section of the Hungarian Writers' Association. Studied at Eötvös University and Eötvös College in Budapest. Since 1959 on the staff of the National Széchényi Library in Budapest. In addition to several volumes of his own poetry, has also published translations of Chaucer, Longfellow, Pushkin, Nekrasov, and others.

FRANK, János (b. 1925) Critic, art historian, on the staff of *Élet és Irodalom*, one of our regular art critics.

GÁBOR, István (b. 1928). Journalist, specializing in education, on the staff of the national daily *Magyar Nemzet*. See his "Music for Young People" in No. 41, "On School Administration in Three Volumes" in No. 44, and a book review, "In the Workshop of 88 Musicians," in No. 51.

GYŐRI, Judit. Assistant Professor of German at Eötvös University in Budapest. The article published in this issue is part of her doctoral thesis, published by Akadémiai Kiadó, 1968. 203 pp.

HAUSER, Oswald (b. 1910). Historian, since 1964 Professor of Modern History at the University of Aachen, West Germany. Studied history, English and German at the Universities of Marburg, Munich, Hamburg

and Kiel. His recent publications include Vol. 1 of *England und das Dritte Reich, 1933–1936.*

HOPPÁL, Mihály (b. 1942). Ethnographer, a graduate of Kossuth University, Debrecen, at present working in the Ethnography Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Main field of study: Hungarian and comparative mythology.

HORVÁTH, György (b. 1941). Journalist and art critic, on the staff of the national daily *Magyar Nemzet.*

KERTÉSZ, Iván (b. 1930). Musicologist, critic, an editor on the staff of the Music Department of Hungarian Radio. Graduated from the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest. Writes regular opera reviews and is at work on a book on opera.

KOKAS, Klára. Musicologist, a former student and associate of Zoltán Kodály, specializing in teaching music to young children. Spent three years in the US at the Kodály Musical Training Institute in Wellesley, Massachusetts. See her "The Kodály Method and the Open Class in America" in No. 44.

KROÓ, György (b. 1928). Musicologist, Professor of Music History at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest. Has published books on Mozart, Schumann, Berlioz, etc. See his review of Sándor Balassa's "Requiem for Kassák," in No. 50.

LADÁNYI, Mihály (b. 1934). Poet. Graduated in Hungarian from Eötvös University in Budapest. Has published ten volumes of poems. See his poems in No. 41.

LÁZÁR, Ervin (b. 1936). Author of short stories and tales for children. Published a volume of short stories: *Buddha szomorú* ("Buddha Is Sad"), reviewed in this issne.

LIPSIUS, Frank (b. 1947). American journalist. Lives in London, and contributes articles and reviews to Books & Bookmen, The Times Educational Supplement, and The Financial Times, as well as Commentary, the Philadelphia Inquirer, etc. A graduate in English and History of Cornell and Cambridge, he has written a biography of Alexander the Great, published in 1974 by Saturday Review/Dutton in the US and Weidenfeld & Nicolson in Britain.

MASTERMAN, C. Neville (b. 1905). Historian, lecturer at the University of Wales at Swansea. Among his recent publications see "Aspects of Hungarian Heritage" in No. 54.

NAGY, Péter (b. 1920). Literary historian and critic, Professor of Comparative Literature at Eötvös University in Budapest, author of numerous books and monographs on Hungarian literature. See his essay "Socialist Realism—Style or Approach?" in No. 48, as well as his reader's diary "Optimism and Despair" in No. 51.

NAGY, Zoltán (b. 1944). One of the regular art critics of this review, on the staff of the Research Group for Art History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

ORTUTAY, Gyula (b. 1910). Ethnographer. Head of the Ethnographic Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; M.P. Was Minister of Education 1947–1960. Main works: *Parasztságunk élete* ("Life of Our Peasantry," also in English, 1947); *Magyar népmesék* ("Hungarian Folk Tales," also in German and English, 1957), Corvina Press, Budapest. See his review "Hungarian and Rumanian Ballads" in No. 48, and "Nel mezzo del cammin" in No. 56.

ÖRKÉNY, István (b. 1912). Novelist and playwright. His grotesque "The Tót Family" and his play "Catsplay" were shown

in several theatres abroad. See part of "The Tót Family" in No. 28, and the entire text of "Catsplay" in No. 44, as well as some of his "One Minute Stories" in Nos. 29, 35, and 50.

PUJA, Frigyes (b. 1921). Minister for Foreign Affairs. Held various posts after the War before becoming Minister to Sweden (1953–55), and later to Austria (1955–59). Between 1968 and 1973 first Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs. His works include: *A békés egymás mellett élés problémái* ("The problems of peaceful coexistence." 1967; *Szocialista külpolitika* ("Socialist foreign policies"), 1973. See reviews on his books in Nos. 31 and 56, as well as his "The Political Situation in Europe Today" in No. 42, "One Year of Hungarian Foreign Policy" in No. 54, "Foreign Policy and International Détente" in No. 55, and "European Security in the World Today" in No. 57.

SULYOK, Katalin. Journalist, on the staff of the illustrated women's weekly *Nők Lapja*. Has published two volumes of investigative journalism: *Indul a mezőny* ("The Field is Off"), and *Nőnek születtem* ("Born a Woman"), both about Hungarian women from the Middle Ages to the present.

SZALAI, Sándor (b. 1912). Sociologist. Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, adviser to the Academy's Research Group for the Organization of Science. Visiting Professor at M.I.T. in 1964, Deputy Director of Research, and later special Adviser on Studies for UNITAR, in New York, 1966–1972. Recent works: *The United Nations and the News Media*, New York, 1972, UNITAR; *The Use of Time*, editor and co-author, Mouton, The Hague–Paris, 1973. See his "Restratification of a Society" in No. 23, "The United Nations—They or It?" in No. 54, and "The 150 Years of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences" in No. 57. Professor Szalai is a member of our Editorial Board.

TORNAI, József (b. 1927). Poet, translator, our regular film reviewer.

TÜSKÉS, Tibor (b. 1930). Literary critic. Graduated in Hungarian from Eötvös University, Budapest. Research worker at the City Public Library in Pécs. Has published several literary handbooks and geographical and historical works for the young.

VARGA, László (b. 1939). Literary historian, critic, our regular book reviewer.

VARGYAS, Lajos (b. 1914). Ethnologist and musicologist. Worked for a while as librarian, then headed the folk-music department of the Ethnographic Museum in Budapest, lectured on ethnography at Eötvös University. Since 1961 member of the Folk Music Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which he now heads. See his review of a work by Ninon A. M. Leader, "Scholarship and its Pitfalls" in No. 34.

VIGH, Károly (b. 1918). Museologist, on the staff of the Hungarian National Museum. Graduated from Pázmány University, Budapest. His field of research is trade history, and contemporary Hungarian history.

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