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The New Hungarian Quarterly

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SURVEYS

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SIXTY

This is the 60th issue of THE NEW HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY. Fifteen years. The editor may well reflect that the magazine took him from maturity into approaching old age. He was in his late forties when he started the paper; and he could almost be said to be in his mid-sixties now, writing Sixty at the head of these prefatory notes. Never in his life has he held the same job for so long, and that is worth thinking about as well. In early youth he had taken Reinhardt's advice to heart: never stay put longer than five or six years if you wanted to get anywhere, thus making a virtue of necessity. His frequent change of jobs, loss of employment, to put it plainly, was the work of politics and war. In the past fifteen years neither politics nor its continuation by other means sacked the editor, or put an end to the paper. The real reason is part of history. These fifteen years have been one of the quietest, when development was smoothest, in the history of the Hungarian nation. It has given the editorial staff and all contributors great intellectual satisfaction to keep track of this progress, pausing at the points, expressing the results in a variety of ways: factual report and fiction, scholarly report and higher journalism, never forgetting the difficulties along the way, the sins of commission and omission, and all that remains to be done; endeavouring to make it all accessible to the great English-reading public.

But have we succeeded? Have we attained the aim we set ourselves in the very first issue in September 1960: "Could a more attractive task be conceived of than to afford English-speaking readers an insight into the life and thinking of a small but much-talked-about, and so often misrepresented nation?"

It is up to the reader to answer. The staff of THE NEW HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY feel that, given the scope of a quarterly review, they have done all they could to present, in words and pictures, today's Hungary,

socialist society, the traditions of the past, the political objectives, economic changes and achievements, literature and the arts, thus improving relations between nations, helping to dispatch the Cold War back where it belongs, into the ice-age of humanity. Though to tell the truth we also feel that our work has nowhere near attained the result we had hoped for, and still hope for. Our reputation and image change more slowly than the real place and role of Hungary in international life. The misconceptions of the Cold War survive in public opinion and in people's minds.

The staff of THE NEW HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY think they can best mark the appearance of No. 60 by examining what Hungary's image in the world is, and the rate at which it changed, even though they are well aware at the start that the tempo is a mere *andante*.

Image has only recently become fashionable in British and American journalese, French, German, Dutch and other writers following suit. In Hungary it can look back to a reputable past. Not the word, but the notion. "Our reputation in the world" has become a conventional expression, often recurring in newspaper and periodical headings, frequently as the name of a regular feature. As an editor I myself have employed it twice to head such a regular feature: first in the weekly *Új Magyarország* during the years immediately following the Liberation, and then in the daily *Magyar Nemzet*, in the early 'fifties. Recalling this allows me to show how uneven changes have been. In 1945 and the years that followed I was able to report almost week by week how much Hungary's reputation was improving, how the facts and results of Liberation, reconstruction, self-awareness were effacing the negative image of the Horthy era, and of Hungary's participation in the war. In the early 'fifties it was already more difficult to edit. Music and football were just about the only fields where good things were being done for the Hungarian image at the time. "Our reputation in the world" actually owes its birth to an essay by Gyula Illyés of that title published in the 'thirties; but being a small nation, the Hungarians have always been interested in what the world is saying about them.

Of course, the term "image" itself has been naturalized in the Hungarian language (and this small fact helps to disprove a frequently stressed negative aspect of it—that we are cut off from all information supplied by the Western world and from the free flow of ideas. . . .) There is still some difference between the two terms—good name or reputation on the one hand, and image, on the other—due not only to image being of more recent origin. It means more.

"Our reputation in the world" was born at a time before this earth shrunk thanks to mass travel and the mass media. It referred at the time

only to what appeared about Hungary in the press and an occasional book. Image is a more complex notion, it has a visual reference as well, which springs from two sources. One is bilateral travel. Never before have so many citizens of other countries come to Hungary with peaceful intent, nor have as many Hungarians gone abroad, as in the past fifteen years. (At the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, János Kádár pointed out that last year more than eight million foreigners visited Hungary and three million Hungarians travelled abroad. To this one may add that of these three million about 300–400,000 went to Western or other capitalist countries.)

Image thus means not only that indirect notion obtained by public opinion in another country from the press, but the impressions, right and misleading alike, derived from direct personal experience. This image derived from personal contact is intensified many times over by television, since even those who have never crossed the frontiers of their country can see foreign cities, countries and people on the small screen. This is a two-way truth: not only Hungarians know, or think they know, the world since they travel and watch television (in about half of the country's area the Vienna, Graz, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Belgrade and Bratislava programmes can be received as well) but the foreign visitor and television viewer also have a wider view of Hungary and the Hungarians than they had before.

There is one more factor which further broadens the concept of image, and this is that the time of the "we are on our own" slogan fashionable in the Horthy era is over, we Hungarians are not on our own, neither in the way we look at ourselves, nor in the way the world sees us. What I have in mind is that the Western half of the world applies what it sees in Hungary, to the other people's democracies and the whole of the socialist community as such. This is a very important but insufficiently considered aspect of the way the West sees Hungary and the Hungarians.

One cannot even today, after sixty issues and fifteen years, disregard in this connection a characteristic, almost conventional position taken up in the West, that is thinking in terms of an Iron Curtain or rather, being obsessed by it, something that goes with the misconception of looking on the socialist countries as a monolith. I might put it in this way: the term Iron Curtain cannot be weeded out or eradicated from Western public opinion largely because the media find the expression Iron Curtain countries more convenient than that of socialist countries, using it even in reports that argue that they did not meet with an Iron Curtain. This is a survival, in the minds of the Western public, of the period of Cold War and the personality cult. Neither those who provide the information nor those for

whom it is meant take into account that the socialist countries do have a common denominator, and that is the building of socialism, but a common denominator and an identical pattern are not the same thing. Looking even more closely at this attitude, it becomes clear that this concept is not simply monolithic but a negatively monolithic one. It is worth bearing this in mind at all times. If something is observed in any of the socialist countries that looks favourable and points to progress, no general conclusion applying to the others is drawn, but if anything negative is found in one—whether it is really there or not—it is readily applied to all.

Few reports appear of Hungarian political, economic or cultural developments when they are really taking place and palpably becoming part of the scene, but if there is any faltering or setback, or if the run of things can be interpreted to suggest one, attention is concentrated on it immediately. I have, on a number of occasions,* told that no report of Hungarian tourist passports has ever appeared in the Western press, nor have Western newspapers found the hundreds of thousands of Hungarians travelling abroad every year worth a story. Should one young man however of the half million Hungarians every year who take their holidays in Yugoslavia, swim across to the Italian shore, this is immediately reported so that a Western reader must perforce reach the conclusion that there is a permanent shuttle-service across the bays of the Adriatic shore. He is what is more likely to infer that obviously no one in Hungary is allowed to take a trip to the West, although if he himself looks around in his own town, he may well see cars with Hungarian registration numbers by their hundreds during the summer months. But the image of a foreign country and its system contains the paradox that people are more willing to trust the press, the radio, or television than their own eyes.

Three factors go to make up the current image of Hungary. There is a traditional one; a half-new one which is however, really obsolete and out-of-date; and there is a new one, but this is ambivalent.

The first, traditional, is not even bad, it is only false, and only—this time I mean "only" in quotation marks—humiliating. The traditional image is traditional also because it belongs to the days of Horthy and even to those of Francis Joseph. These are notions that serve to tickle the palates of the customers of travel agencies. I mention them since responsibility for such survivals and their proliferation rests on the shoulders of the tourist trade. According to them Budapest is the setting of an operetta and Hungary is a *puszta* peopled by wild cowboys in folk-costumes, eating *gulyás* and drinking Tokay. Hungary, they proclaim, is a romantic country where

* See e.g. No. 52: "A Day at Edmund Wilson's."

natives and visitors have fun to the tune of Gypsy violins and everyone is friendly and amiable, but should not really be taken seriously. Does this sound funny? I cannot tell it otherwise, it certainly is not a joke. Such ideas essentially camouflage Hungarian reality.

Half-new but already absolete ideas are diametrically opposed to these appetizing, traditional images, but often emerge at the same time in the consciousness of the same sort of person, what is more, of the same person. Since Hungary is a socialist country, they imagine life is grim and gloomy by order, everyday life is dull, people go in fear of one another, culture is monotonous, censorship is ruthless, and theatres present nothing but plays about enthusiastic tractor drivers and the loves of millgirls who keep on increasing their productivity. There is no need to explain that this image is a remnant of the long years of the Cold War and, in part, of the period of the personality cult.

The new but ambivalent ideas spring from the realization that, in the past fifteen years, everything in Hungarian has changed. Even though belatedly, with reservations, and high-handedly, the Western press, and media generally, nevertheless publish this, after all, millions of Western visitors have come to Hungary in recent years and they go about with their eyes open. People keep talking about life in Hungary having changed and improved, but they simply cannot imagine what it is like. In the Western world they already take it for granted that to use their terminology Stalinism is no more, but they cannot imagine what a socialist country can be like where the ruling norms are not those of the personality cult. This is why they are still suspicious.

How deeply this ambivalent image is rooted in men's minds can be illustrated by anyone who is in touch with people from other countries. Cold War propaganda has been so profoundly imprinted on the consciousness even of sympathizers, as well as socialists, and Communists that, in spite of their ways of thinking, intentions, and better knowledge, they are still prone to fall into its traps. This summer a young Party secretary, from a working-class suburb in the environs of Paris with a Communist majority, and his wife, were the guests of a friend of mine. They came to see me at the Balatonfüred heart sanatorium, and there the French guest was suddenly taken ill; appendicitis was suspected and we took him to a hospital in Veszprém. On the way there he felt a bit better and we talked. Although he knew that medical services in Hungary are free for everybody, they are a civil right, he asked nevertheless, how much I paid in the heart sanatorium where I was being treated. Although he was familiar with the statistics of household farms in Hungary, yet he asked whether cooperative

peasants really owned household plots. Although he had read that the government in Hungary granted long-term loans to support home-building, when we came to the outskirts of Veszprém, he did not believe that a row of pretty new houses there were the homes of workers as well. Taking the risk that his appendix might play up, we went into five of those ten houses, and found four of them to be the homes of workers. He was operated on in Veszprém. When I called for him a week later, he asked me to get the surgical registrar to sign a paper attesting that his parents were still peasant members of the cooperative farm in a neighbouring village with the fine-sounding name Királyszentistván.

These three kinds of attitude are to be found in every Western country, in all classes, and they pervade public opinion. Or don't they?

I have ventured on the risky undertaking of talking about public opinion in general. If I restrict the scope of the Hungarian image, limiting it to culture, to intellectual development, to literature in the first place, one more paradox confronts us. The people with whom I would argue abroad (I am, of course, speaking of the Western world) are mostly members of the public, listening to lectures or attending similar functions. Their majority have a close relationship to literature, and to humanities. Time and time again I experienced that while cooperating on certain concrete projects, engaging in joint intellectual ventures, preparing and carrying out programmes, the ideas such people entertain about Hungary and the Hungarians, about literature and the arts in Hungary, about the state of development of socialism in the country, tally with the real facts. At such times they know that the Hungarians are equal partners, generally hard working, sometimes even (if a little bragging be permitted once in sixty issues) more enterprising than their own. But as soon as we come to speak of things outside their art, or discipline, their profession, or speciality, they immediately withdraw and become ordinary laymen, average newspaper readers, who put hair-raisingly naive questions and are surprised—if they have not yet seen it—by the table of contents of The New Hungarian Quarterly.

By way of example and proof let me here enumerate four international organizations whose discussions, symposia and round-table conferences I have frequently—according to my good friends, much to frequently—attended these past fifteen years. The four are: Unesco, International PEN, *Société Européenne de Culture*, and the World Peace Council. All that I have so far said about our reputation and image does not hold good in these four organizations. Their executives and staff, the officials and permanent representatives of various national commissions, centres, clubs and councils

are fully aware of the actual state and development of Hungarian society and culture today, and many of them are familiar also with details of the country's economic development. All this, however, does not mean that, in this general picture, Hungarian literature holds the same place as it does in Hungary, and it is worth pausing at this point.

Literature in Hungary is part and parcel of the national consciousness. The same is true of the Poles and the Russians, to a smaller extent also of the Germans, but there are Western nations, for example the French, the English, the Spaniards or the Italians, whose literatures are considered great for good reasons, but they do not shape to that degree the national consciousness, or make history, as Hungarian literature does. That is why it is natural that even those foreign friends and other interested persons who have a sound image of socialist Hungary are not really aware of the importance of literature within it.

This is my answer to the often raised question why prose, verse and sometimes drama as well take up so much room in THE NEW HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY. It is unusual that a general review should devote so much space to literature itself and not only to writings on literature. We have felt ever since the paper was started and now, having in fifty-nine issues already discussed a great many social, political, and economic issues, and dealt with subjects in history, technology and many other fields, we feel even more that Hungarian reality cannot be properly presented if literature is not given its due place. In many cases it is precisely through short stories and poems that we can express what is most difficult to demonstrate: what is different, what is new, and what is socialist in today's Hungary.

While this number goes to press, we are basking under the summery climate of cooperation and *détente*, living in the days of the signing of the document of Security and Cooperation in Europe. Therefore, after this far from flattering drawing up of the balance sheet, we can rightly hope that, in the next sixty issues of this periodical, we shall be able to speak of Hungary to Europe and to the whole world with greater effect. These few words are all that appears on the Helsinki events, or the document there signed, in the present issue. The time it takes to translate, set up, print, and bind a paper like ours makes real comment impossible at such an early stage.

Earlier in this preface I used the word "virtue". It could be that this rare word has a familiar ring in the ears of our oldest and most faithful readers. The introduction to the first issue used it as well. Allow me to quote:

"It is quite an undertaking for Hungarians to edit and publish in Buda-

pest an English-language periodical intended to be read in the English-speaking world. In the audacity and difficulty of this task—and it is not only the linguistic difficulty we have in mind—there is something that the Hungarian language denotes by the word *virtus.* This term is not identical with the Latin *virtus,* from which it derives, and is only a remote relative of the English *virtue. Virtus* is an undertaking which at first sight surpasses the strength of a person or of a group, but in itself or in its aims is too significant and attractive for its challenge to be resisted."

The international climate today is more favourable, and what was only a pious wish in our first issue—mutual knowledge and understanding between countries and between peoples,—is making some progress, bringing out an English-language periodical about Hungary, a socialist country, however is still today as a part of the humanism of the twentieth century a virtuous undertaking.

IVÁN BOLDIZSÁR

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

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Frigyes Puja

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CONSTANCY AND RENEWAL

by

ISTVÁN KATONA

The most important decision of the 11th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party was to confirm the general political line. The Party has been following basically the same policy for nearly twenty years. For this period, on the occasion of every Congress or following changing circumstances, in any situation supposed or believed to be critical, the primary question at home and abroad has been: what is to become of the Party's line? Will it change or will it stay valid? For twenty years now public opinion at home has been satisfied, people feel relieved, when the Party confirms that its line stays the same. This is how a situation has arisen which has almost become a common saying. In capitalist countries the ruling bourgeois party tries to hang on to its followers with promises of change, in Hungary the masses expect the Party to stick to its policy—as was formulated at the recent Congress in a sense expressive also of criticism and self-criticism—to carry it out more consistently always and everywhere.

Hungarians cannot allow the capitalist press to set its standards, occasionally however it is worth observing how it reacts to certain questions. Prior to the Congress, the Western press had said a fair bit about the line being changed, expecting a hardening, to use their term, reporting rumours of conflicts between "hawks" and "doves". They used a different voice after the Congress, saying it would be a mistake to imagine that a radical about-face will follow in Budapest policy, or that the political climate in Budapest barely wavers, points were not switched in Budapest; the political pendulum swings with much the same momentum, to quote some of the commentators.

In Hungarian public affairs, especially since the Central Committee session in March 1974, reference is often made to the general policy line. Since then more thought is given to understanding its meaning. There are those who consider it to be the main objectives of social development,

others who regard the laws of the building of socialism as such, and others again think it implies everyday political tasks. The Central Committee in its March 1974 resolution gave an answer to the question when, requesting confirmation of the general policy tested in practice and pursued thus far, it pointed out concretely in which spheres it wished to follow that line. These are: home and foreign policy, constructive work in the economy and in culture, and living-standards policy. That is, all the important aspects of the building of advanced socialism. Accordingly, the line is the most concise expression of that day-to-day political and practical work which the Party—on the basis of the laws of the building of socialism and in conformity with the principal aim of social development—does for the building of socialism and communism. In other words, it is a combination of "what" and "how", i.e. aim and practice taken together.

It was almost twenty years ago that the Party re-established and formulated the requirements which it still adheres to as obligatory norms today. János Kádár, in 1969, in an address on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Party, looking back on the path traversed, described the situation in which the Party had begun to work out the policy still in force today by stating that "the Party did not in principle invent anything new, it simply returned to the sources of Leninism and drew on them". The return to Leninism meant first of all that the Party categorically dissociated itself in principle from dogmatism and revisionism, in practice from sectarianism and opportunism. The first thing it did was to clear up the political and ideological mess. Without doing that it would have been difficult to go about its other tasks as resolutely as it actually did.

The Party has returned to the notion that the revolutionary teaching of the working class, Marxism–Leninism, is not a dogma, but a living, evolving and progressing theory which acts as a compass for practice and a guide to action. In practice the duty of the Party is to apply the precepts of Marxism–Leninism constructively to Hungarian conditions, as well as the general laws of the building of socialism, the experiences of the international Communist and working-class movement, and to fight against subjectivism, defending its policy against every kind of distortion in a struggle along two fronts.

There certainly will be those who will expound and explain thoroughly and in detail what all this means when translated from the language of ideology into common speech. Here only an attempt is made—touching upon only a few major questions of home politics—to sum up those norms which determine the character of Hungarian policy and provide its lines and features.

The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party's conception of power and of its own role is that power is class power, the power of the working class, and not the power of individual persons. Whoever represents it has only the right, by making use of the trust received from the people, to serve the working class in power, that is the people. Though it is the Party of the working class in power, it does not rule, but serves, leads and learns in the meantime. Collective leadership, the principle of democratic centralism, prevails, the rights and duties of all are identical, and all members are equal.

It appears from what is already the traditional approach to ideological, political, economic and cultural questions, from the methods as such of the Party, that socialism is a society consciously organized on the basis of Marxism–Leninism. This means also that decisions on every issue require thorough investigation, if need be, scientific research, deliberation and objectivity. "The concrete analysis of the concrete situation"—this is the Leninist working method that inspires the activity of the Party. With one's eyes on the stars but with both feet firmly on the ground. Let us plan the future, but never chase rainbows. Let us always reckon with domestic and international realities. It is the Party's duty to look further and to be one step further ahead, in such a way that the masses may at the same time follow it because their experience is in harmony with the intentions of the Party. It makes sure that words and deeds always coincide and the masses are not needlessly exposed to the unexpected and to sudden changes. The people must be convinced of the soundness of political aims and the rightness of the idea. These should not be forced on them. The Party always means to let the broadest possible masses express their views on the most fundamental issues in the building of socialism, to make it all the more easy to understand one another when the tasks planned in common have to be carried out.

As far as the purposes of the building of socialism are concerned: it professes that socialism is the society of work where the highest social status is to be a worker. The people are not an experimental subject on which Marxism, the policy, "has to be tested". Theory exists to serve the well-being of the people. The building of socialism has to serve the advancement of the people. In its living-standards policy the Party consistently carries into effect the principle that the building of socialism—in proportion to available economic resources—has to go hand in hand with a systematic improvement of living conditions. But first work has to be done, the sharing happens later when everyone gets as much as they give. Socialism in construction, advanced socialism, communism, will be a home

for everyone; everybody must give the very best of their talent, knowledge and strength; the country expects action from man and woman.

Twenty years ago the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party got down to work in the spirit of restoring confidence. The revolutionary forces knew that first of all trust in the Party must be re-established, therefore the masses must be made to feel that the Party trusted them. The Party has based all its plans since on obtaining the agreement and support of the working class and the people. This mutual confidence is what the present and future can be built on.

Much else relies on this principled policy and on this confidence. In the first place, the fact that the relationship between the Party and the working class, that is between the Party and the masses, is strong and steadily improving. This relationship based on trust is strengthened by policy and the cardinal principles of daily practice. Allow me to mention a few. With the exception of Party functions, any other office in the Hungarian People's Republic can be held by non-Party people as well. The leading role of the working class depends in the first place not on the numerical ratio of workers in office but on how the office-holders represent the policy of the working class. Personnel policy is open, people have the right to know the opinion formed of them. What matters, as the poet said, is not where you have come from but where you are going. The endeavour is that a man should be judged by the way he works; that his worth and standing should depend on the work he does. It is not people but mistakes that should be fought. Socialist legality insists that the guilty do not go unpunished, and that the innocent do not suffer an abuse of legal processes. First you have to trust a man, there is plenty of time to change your mind after he has shown himself unworthy of your trust. How much the world has changed since distrust was in the air and it was said: "he who is not with us is against us". Now it goes without saying that "he who is not against us is with us".

To the working people, to the citizens of the Hungarian People's Republic, a policy of loyalty to principles, political stability, veracity, circumspection, tolerance and trust means, briefly, security. That is why this policy is supported, jealously guarded and defended by Hungarians.

*

Public opinion demands that the general course of policy remain unchanged, the Party promises to keep to the policy line and also to enforce it more consistently. But an unchanged policy, constancy and stability do not mean stagnant waters or rigidity. While the main policy line of the

Party remains unchanged, it is just by keeping to it, and relying on it, that progress on the road to building socialism is assured. Four milestones, which one may call historic, in the past twenty years are: the power of the working class was safeguarded, consolidated and strengthened; the socialist reorganization of agriculture was completed thereby laying the foundations of socialism in Hungary, a start being made on building it up completely; economic planning was raised to a higher level by developing the system of economic management; now, in the period of the building of advanced socialism, a programme for 15 to 20 years was marked out, which will take the country closer to the ultimate goal, a Communist society.

The political practice of twenty years proves that the main policy line, while unchanged as regards the ultimate aim, is ever changing and developing in detail. It does not repeat itself, but is always something more, ceaselessly enriching itself, surpassing the earlier level. It always adjusts itself to what it most needed at the time. The development of policy cannot be described as change but more accurately, as renewal. It indicates that the point at issue is a process, leading to development and progress. It cannot be otherwise, for the Party of the working class is a revolutionary, Marxist–Leninist party, and its guiding theory includes change, development and progress in its nature. For this very reason a fundamental criterion of the governing party's activity is how, while securing stability, it develops its policy, how it raises and solves the problems of the day, whether it finds Marxist–Leninist answers to the new questions, and how it finds them.

It is sufficient to refer to only a few major fields of domestic policy to see the harmonious process of the constancy and renewal of the policy.

*

Eighteen years ago, in the days and weeks when the counter-revolutionary uprising was suppressed, the most important task for the Party was, understandably, to safeguard and consolidate power. The measures it took in the most critical situation made it clear that the essence of policy was power. Power allows for all aims to come true and nothing can be done without it. Proof of the soundness of the Party's Leninist position is that, by holding power, it achieved political and economic consolidation so rapidly that it came as a surprise to all.

Even today power is a central political issue, and it remains so in the future as well. The 11th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party declared that in the Hungarian People's Republic power belongs to the working class, and working-class power is needed during the whole

historic period of the building of socialism. But the dictatorship of the proletariat, which from the first moment of its existence is more democratic than any bourgeois democracy, is nevertheless not the same today as it was, say, twenty years ago and will not be the same twenty years hence. Although the class character of power remains unchanged, power was different at the time when exploiting classes still existed in this country and an acute class struggle had to be waged, when there were many who could not to be allowed to come close to the levers of power, and it is different now when there are no exploiting classes, only fraternal classes of working people. The class in power itself has also changed. With regard to its numerical strength, its political and professional training, the working class is not the same as it was twenty years ago. The class basis of the political alliance has become broader, too. Today it is possible and necessary to involve the broadest possible masses of citizens in the exercise of power. It is in accordance with this that the Party has made the development of public life and socialist democratic part of the order of the day, that it has enlarged the scope of democrate action, developed the electoral system, the legislature and judicial practice, and that it continues with this policy. Accordingly the role of the highest body of the people's power, the National Assembly, in exercising control over the duties of the government is growing. The duties of the government are steadily growing in the implementation of the Party's policy, in the setting of concrete tasks and in the organization and control of work. The role and activity of local councils is increasing also in the co-ordination of the local and national interests. Socialist democracy is developing further in all major areas, in state life, in the local councils, in the co-operatives and particularly in the factories.

The vigorous development of democracy in factories is part of the order of the day, an essential reason for which, among many others, is that the decentralization carried out in the guidance of economic life has created objectively better conditions for the continued flowering of democracy at the bench. For workers, the relationship between their own jobs and the collective activity of their place of employment has become more evident. This good opportunity can and must be better utilized. It stands to reason that with the development of democracy in factories and in other places of employment, the social role of the working class as a whole grows as well.

*

The policy of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party makes it unambiguously clear that power and the leading role of the Party are two indispens-

able and constant elements of policy. The Party and the State are the two fundamental institutions. Without the Party the State of the working class could not have been established, and could not exist and function; without the State the Party as a governing party could not realize the policy of the working class and could not organize and direct the building of socialism.

In the difficult days of 1956 the reorganization of the Party and the State took place concurrently.

The shaping of the relationship between Party and State is a good expression of the constancy and renewal of the policy line in accordance with circumstances and requirements. When necessary, the Party fulfilled functions which, in normal circumstances, it is the business of the state apparatus to carry out. As soon as the opportunity presented itself—as the apparatus had become stronger—the Party immediately called attention to the necessity of eliminating duplication, and of developing proper working methods. The starting principle was that both the Party and the State should do their work according to their own functions. What was said at this year's Congress also indicates that the Party demands more and more emphatically that the state apparatus be equal to its tasks, and direct and control more effectively work requiring state intervention during the building of socialism. The Party is striving to make the entire mechanism of the dictatorship of the proletariat function as it should. As the programme states, the Party looks on the social organizations and movements as its companions in arms and supports. It encourages efforts at a better distribution of tasks, a more efficient assertion of the Party's leading role, which is a decisive political condition of social change in the whole historic period of transition from capitalism to socialism.

It could not have been described more fittingly that the Party is the party of the working class, that the working class is the leading class of this country, than was done after the 1956 counter-revolutionary uprising when the clamour of arms had barely died down. In the spring of 1957 the first thing the Party did was to sound the opinions and seek the advice of tens of thousands of workers and, having taken them into consideration, to draft its memorable resolution of 1958 on the situation of the working class. The working class has ever since been right at the centre of Party policy. In the past twenty years the Party has not adopted a single basic resolution that has not served the interests of the working class, whether this is expressed in the title of the resolution, as it was in November 1972 and in March 1974, or not.

The steady political effort aimed at the assertion of the leading role of

the working class manifests itself in many ways. It manifests itself first of all in the realization of the historic aims of the working class, in the successful building of socialism, and also in the strengthening of the functions of the largest class organization, the trade unions. This is a continuous duty as declared by a resolution of the 11th Congress. It manifests itself as well in continuous concern for the social and material situation of the working class and, if necessary, in its improvement as well. Does it serve the working class? This is the question the Party has put first for nearly twenty years, and it will do so in the future as well. What is good for the working class must be good, and is good, for the whole of society as well, even if this should not be immediately obvious. The Congress unambiguously declared that the strengthening of the leading role of the working class is no short-term policy but applies to the entire period of the building of socialism.

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The Party does not for a moment forget that the political alliance of the two basic classes in the socialist system, the working class and the peasantry, their mutual interdependence, the identity of their primary interests is the foundation upon which the entire political system is built. This alliance is not a matter of statistical ratios and wage scales. It is a political alliance. If the alliance is strong, the foundations are secure; if it were weak, the whole political system would be shaking. This is why the Party cherishes this alliance as the apple of its eye and will do so in the future as well; this is why it keeps a vigilant watch lest anyone should undermine or weaken it. The Party has no separate worker policy and separate peasant policy. The Party of the working class has only one policy: a Marxist–Leninist class policy. This expresses the interests of workers and peasants alike, because the interests and historic aims of the working class coincide with the primary interests of the whole working people. This is how it was, this is how it is and this is how it will be, equally so when political or economic problems are involved. With the planned, proportionate development of industry and agriculture the Party also strengthens and develops the alliance of the two classes.

This alliance is a constant element of policy, but its aim and its content change as required and allowed by the given situation. Eighteen years ago the aim was to safeguard power. A speaker at the Congress expressed this neatly: the peasantry does not forget that in 1946 it was the working class that defended the peasantry and their newly acquired soil against the attacks of reaction, and the working class does not forget that in 1956 the peasantry

did not let it down in the struggle waged against the counter-revolution, in defence of working-class power. A few years later the working class helped the peasantry in the great, sometimes even painful, and radical social transformation, in the socialist reorganization of agriculture, that is in the organization and development of large-scale farming. The common aim is now to build advanced socialism. This is what the two classes have joined forces for.

More broadly interpreted, this policy of alliance is a policy of socialist national unity. This is the platform on which, under the leadership of the working class, all creative forces of Hungarian society can be gathered. In this respect, too, the Party had a lot to do. It had to clarify the class character and objertive of this policy. Jingoism that wished to disregard class differences, that obscured objectives, decking itself out in the country's colours, had to be opposed being a policy fit to drag the country towards counter-revolution but unfit to unite the supporters of socialism, the forces opposing the counter-revolution, representing and protecting the genuine interests of the country. Experience shows that whoever disrupts social unity in any way, that is socialist national unity, and spreads confusion, jeopardizes smooth progress and constructive work.

For twenty years now it has been clear that the aim of the Party's policy of alliance is to serve the interests of the Hungarian people. The leading force in the alliance of the working classes and strata is the industrial working class. The foundation of the alliance is the worker-peasant alliance. The programme of the policy of alliance sets objectives which serve the interests of workers, peasants and intellectuals, Party members and non-Party people, atheists and the faithful, different generations, citizens of various occupations and social standing, all the strata of society, all creative forces united in their realization. These aims are socialism, progress and peace. This is a platform which can be accepted by anyone who wishes to establish his own and his family's happiness here, in the socialist Hungarian People's Republic, and is ready also to work for it.

The policy of socialist national unity has not only a present but a future as well. The new programme of the Party states: it is through the active acceptance of these objectives that the country is progressing, that advanced socialism is being built and that the conditions for a complete and definitive elimination of class differences are being created.

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The plan of economic construction is, one might say, the "second programme" of the Party. Socialist society has no fundamental problem, the

building of socialism has no general task, that is not in one way or another connected with the economy. To a governing party in power the organization and direction of work and proportionate economic growth are fundamental issues. Whoever looks over the last twenty years of Hungarian economic development can see the unchanged and the changing elements of policy. While the fundamental aims of economic construction remained unchanged, there were discernible ups and downs. The heterogeneous state still characterizing the economy of the latter half of the 'fifties (socialism in industry, socialist relations taking shape in agriculture where small-scale production of commodities was still predominant) had radically changed by the early 'sixties. When it became appropriate, the Party did not delay in raising the issue of the socialist reorganization of agriculture, and in a principled, political struggle it maintained the right policy against those who wished to apply coercion with a view to forcing the middle peasantry into co-operatives, and also against those who wanted to postpone this urgent job. The national economy again stood on its own two feet: after industry, socialism triumphed in the countryside as well: Hungarian agriculture has been placed on a uniform, socialist basis. Development has accelerated, the resources of labour have become exhausted, the extensive stage of economic development has come to an end, the intensive stage which is the only feasible way of the development of the Hungarian economy has started, and continues.

The change is still more noticeable in the methods of economic management. During the years when the level of economic development, as well as political and other circumstances required strongly centralized guidance, the Party applied the appropriate system of economic management. Especially in the first half of the 'fifties, however, with subjectivism gaining in influence, serious mistakes were made. But, serious as those mistakes were, one cannot because of them call into question the whole of that system of management, just as it is impossible to call into question the present one merely because of the weakness of one or another of the directing elements or because of a certain inconsistency in implementation. That was economic planning, and this is economic planning too. The present way corresponds to the present level of development and circumstances, the former corresponded to those of the time. The basic indications of the economic policy applied so far can already be recognized also among the first acts of the Provisional Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. Already on December 5, 1956, the Provisional Central Committee resolved that, with the participation of the best economic experts of the country, an economic policy suited to the new situation should be drafted as soon

as possible. This economic policy should in all respects be based on Hungarian economic potentialities and specific features. It should most effectively help the utilization of individual initiative and professional skills. In accordance with the interests of the economy, material incentives should be applied in all fields in order to promote technological development, to improve quality, to reduce production costs and to increase the productivity of labour. The importance of planning was not diminished, but its scope of application had to be changed. It should focus attention first of all on the determination of the most essential proportions of the national economy and the directions of development. The principal issue of economic policy was that in the distribution of national income and in the drafting of economic plans, primary consideration should be given to the gradual rise in the living standards of working people. These were the most essential instructions laid down in the resolution of December 5, 1956. If one did not know this to be a resolution passed nearly twenty years ago, one might well believe it had just been adopted.

As regards living-standards policy, the great historic act three decades ago was that there was bread, even though not a large slice, for everybody. About ten years ago the Party could already set as an aim the equalization of the income levels of the working class and the peasantry. These days the prevailing endeavour is to reduce the undesirable differences in family incomes while enforcing the socialist principles of distribution according to work. Thirty years ago the reason for the levelling was the pressure of poverty, now it is increasingly a more just distribution of ever more abundant commodities. This is why the Party sees to it that income and personal property relations express in a proper manner the interests of both the individual and society.

Or let's take the spring 1975 session of the National Assembly. Ten to twenty years ago it was also the aim to provide society with high-standard health and social services. This was done within the bounds of possibilities. Recently however health services were extended to all members of society, and they are now a right that goes with citizenhip. Now the Party could announce as a concrete programme its long-standing plan that the social insurance benefits to be granted to the co-operative peasantry should be identical with those of workers. And it will be a task for the future—as was stated in the parliamentary debate—that the social and health services of the entire people be raised to the level of an advanced socialist society, creating a uniform system guaranteeing still greater security, from the cradle to the grave, than are enjoyed today.

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In the handling of cultural and ideological questions, as regards intellectual life and public opinion, the Party's activity has shown certain pronounced features which will continue to remain valid. As against the voluntarist notions of earlier times the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party returned to the fundamental principle of Marxist–Leninist theory that social consciousness slowly turns socialist, that progress can only be gradual. At the same time it opposed revisionist views whose propagators denied the import and primary role of the struggle for Marxism–Leninism, for scientific socialism and a socialist ideology, and challenged the competence of the Party in the guidance of cultural, scientific and ideological work. Just after it proved necessary to bar the way of counter-revolutionary ideological confusion, the question arose in a way that differed from a situation when it became possible to start a discussion with those strata which accepted the socialist system but had different ideas about many questions, when creative freedom became ever wider, thus also establishing higher norms as for the responsibility of those doing creative work.

The struggle for Marxism–Leninism demanded that it be declared that Hungarian society is not yet ideologically unified. The exclusiveness of socialist ideology can be achieved only through long, patient, principled and persistent work, by means of enlightenment, persuasion and education. Marxist ideological criticism has become increasingly conscious, together with the great role of discussions held in creative workshops, in cultural institutions and in public, discussions upon the persuasive force of which it largely depends how it would be possible to avoid administrative interference, how the effective range of Communist ideology would broaden and deepen.

Once progress was made the need for constructive requirements, for positive answers to be given to new questions, increasingly moves to the centre of attention in ideology and culture alike. To give an example, a certain revival of petty-bourgeois attitudes and ways of thinking in recent years justified a certain militancy in response. It has been increasingly obvious that the conditions, criteria and characteristics of development of the individual living in and for the collective be elaborated. As regards national consciousness, it was necessary to overcome currents of nationalism that occasionally swell but at the same time the people's minds have to be filled with ever richer meanings, they must be imbued with socialist patriotism and internationalism. A natural and heartening consequence of progress in that the Party Congress could point out that we should be concerned not only with what we live on, but with the way we live. A realistic goal is that the idea guiding socialist brigades should

set a good example in this respect as well: let's live, work and learn in a socialist way. This should become a general social norm.

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The general policy which the Party has evolved in the course of experiencing much must be looked upon by today's generations building socialism, and by succeeding generations as well, as experience which they must cherish, since preceding generations gained it through hard work, sometimes in pitched battles, amid bitter struggles and disappointments. In political life as well the danger exists that, with the passing of time, given progress all round, when new tasks become the order of the day, principles and methods which are surely basic to policy will sink into oblivion, they might grow stale and pale, and seem less important. Not even the Communist movement is safe from the danger that rising generations, which grow up in a given period and are confronted with its problems, will not always prize highly enough the experience of those who fought the good fight. Sometimes they believe that everything they chance upon is a new discovery. They rashly disregard experience and inadvertently turn to romanticism, nostalgia is their guiding light and not scientific composure and precision. Such things lead one up the wrong road. He who has fought to the finish and suffered as the Party line took shape should not forget this, and those who did not take part in this struggle must get to know it thoroughly.

Luckily, the Party has so far been able to preserve its line and will preserve it in the future as well. This was expressed also by the Congress, on the eve of which an old militant of the Party's first generation said that for him the 11th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party would be a conference taking place in the spirit of unity and balance, and that he was proud—in the name of the first generation, too—that the delegates to the Congress were all members of a strong, unified party. The fact that the Congress really became a convincing demonstration of the Party's political unity and its unity of action, that it fulfilled the expectations of Party members, and of the working class and the people as a whole, was due largely if not exclusively to the Marxist–Leninist policy which has by now been confirmed by five successive Congresses, and in which the constancy and renewal of policy are in harmonious accord.

When historians tackle the periodization of this age, they will probably establish the starting point of this policy that characterizes the current building of socialism. One thing is certain: the principled Marxist–Leninist policy which the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party has pursued

for twenty years included in itself all that experience which the Hungarian Communist Party has gathered during more than half-century-long struggle and work, it comprises the best traditions and experiences of the international Communist and working-class movement. This was already expressed in the Central Committee resolution of December 1956, which largely facilitated developments and without which rapid consolidation would have been inconceivable. That resolution already implied, condensed in its memorable four paragraphs, the clarity, loyalty to principles, firmness and deep humanism of the policy followed. The Party Conference held in the spring of 1957 and the 7th Congress, as well as all the others right up to the latest, 11th Congress, have all maintained, developed and enriched this line.

The political equilibrium at home and smooth and steady progress are due precisely to the fact that the Party has been able to maintain and implement its policy. This does not mean that it has been smooth sailing all along for these twenty years, that there has been no trouble or failure handicapping progress. Every step forward has meant hard work and a fight. The consistence of the line does not mean that everything was self-evident at all times. On every occasion and all the time one had to fight to protect the ideological and political clarity of the line. More than once efforts, both *bona fide* and *mala fide*, and accusations coming from different corners, had to be warded off.

We shall have to work and fight for the policy and its implementation in the future as well. The conditions are favourable: resolutions are based on Marxist–Leninist principles, they are politically unambiguous and the objectives they include are realistic.

The introductory lines of this article state that the Party, when it started to elaborate a policy still in force today, did not in principle invent anything new, it simply returned to the sources of Leninism and drew on them. The most beautiful task in which all generations of the Party can co-operate—and they really have to co-operate in promoting the interests of the working class and the Hungarian people, as well as the international Communist and working-class movement—is to defend, to represent and to realize the Leninist policy. As was said at the Congress: always and everywhere.

JACQUES DE BONIS

FACE TO FACE WITH A HUNGARIAN LEADER GYÖRGY ACZÉL

What is printed below are excerpts from *En direct avec un dirigeant hongrois, György Aczél* (Editions Sociales, Paris and Kossuth, Budapest) published simultaneously in French and Hungarian. The author is Jacques de Bonis, who is on the staff of the Paris weekly *France Nouvelle*. Éditions Sociales brought out the French edition and Kossuth Könyvkiadó the Hungarian one. The book is made up of a series of interviews extending over a fortnight which Jacques de Bonis had with Deputy Prime Minister György Aczél, a member of the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

A planned television debate between György Aczél and Alain Peyrefitte gave rise to the idea which lead to this book. During the 1972 French election campaign, M. Peyrefitte, in a debate with Georges Marchais, said a thing or two that slandered the socialist countries, Hungary among them. Marchais then suggested that he argue about such issues not with him, Marchais, but with his Hungarian friend, György Aczél. M. Peyrefitte, in front of the French television cameras, consented to such a debate as part of the programme series "With equal arms" to be televised live by both Paris and Budapest, with simultaneous translations, representatives of the two television companies agreed on details including the date.

At the very last minute, Alain Peyrefitte backed out.

Public opinion, however, in both countries, maintained interest in such a frank, informal and personal confrontation, and consequently the plan of a series of long and probing conversations was proposed by French publishers.

The printed interview series cannot, of course, substitute for a live debate, though it provides a suitable platform for dispelling false notions entertained in Western countries, answering and refuting them.

It follows from the character of such a series that it cannot aim at completeness either in answering the particular questions or in encompassing all of today's social, political, economic and cultural activities in Hungary. Five characteristic passages from the two hundred page book follow. The English version was translated from the Hungarian text.

I

Conflicts and Driving Forces

Q: I put the question schematically, but sometimes one has the impression that socialism is pictured as a road that is bordered with roses. True, occasionally mention is made of

the problems of development, the conflict between the old and the new, between the past and the future. This, however, would at times seem just a manner of style, a formula always at the ready. Are there really no immanent contradictions, no conflicts arising from the development of your socialist society?

A: Well-meaning but naïve people often imagine that socialism is like Paradise, without contradictions, in much the same way as the Middle Ages took their angels to be sexless. Of course, those who entertain such ideas will sooner or later be disappointed. The trouble is that at such times they do not, in general, blame themselves but get angry with reality and the theories that have their root in reality.

A society is indeed characterized not by whether or not it contains contradictions, but by the type of contradictions present and by its ability to expose them and cope with them. The contradictions do not signal a catastrophe but are concomitants of development. If I denied their existence, I would deny existence itself. In the course of history the development of every society has had its contradictions. Since we do not place socialism somewhere outside history, we own up to the contradictions as well. They are ours and therefore we create the proper conditions that will transform contradictions into driving forces of progress, coping with them flexibly in such a way that we establish an order of priorities and always endeavour to reconcile major social interests.

The essence is that there are no irreconcilable contradictions in socialism, such as those which place working people and capitalist monopolies on opposing sides.

Contradictions exist everywhere, but the contradictions produced on the soil of socialism are not irreconcilable. Individual, group and social interests converge and differ simultaneously in the conditions under which socialism is constructed in Hungary. If the points of view of individuals or of particular sections of society are not allowed for, harm is done to the whole of society. On the other hand, it is inadmissible that particular interests be asserted to the detriment of the common interest.

As I said, contradictions exist everywhere. Even the individual is full of contradictions being simultaneously a producer and a consumer. Shop assistants, like all workers, are interested in going home earlier, looking forward to rest and leisure. As consumers it would suit them, as it suits everyone else, if the shops were open until late at night, all day on Saturday and even on Sunday. You cannot imagine how heated the debates on this issue are in our country. Incidentally, such debates stimulate the retail trade to organize its work more rationally.

Every architect does his best to ensure that his work is beautiful and

will stand the test of time. Everyone wants to build modern dwellings that are good to look at and live in. Humanly speaking, this is most understandable but it is sometimes contrary to the interests of the national economy. Unfortunately, buildings are often not designed to stand up to the challenge of centuries but only to let people live as well as possible right now, in their own home, as quickly as feasible.

Society must all the time weigh up current and future needs. If preference is given to the day, what is produced is consumed and no foundations are laid down for the future. If to the morrow only, then it only moves people to tighten their belts and live on bread and water to hasten the advent of communism. Both attitudes are absurd.

In the nineteen-fifties the view dominated in Hungary that we should tighten our belts it being our task to build socialism for future generations. The rate of accumulation was excessively high. The slogan was that we must not kill the goose that lays the golden egg. As a result there were fewer and fewer geese and, naturally, fewer eggs too, for some time after.

Of course, it is not easy to work out a rational economic and social policy that simultaneously takes into account the immediate and future interests of the working people. This must be done however, and it can be done. Practice is there as evidence. We learnt at the expense of our own skin, and we can, now, to some extent, call ourselves experienced.

Socialism for "Supermen"?

Q: When you talk about the problems of socialist development, I feel you attribute great significance to circumstances that exist independent of political, economic and social activities.

A: I was about to deal with the consequences and contradictions of our activities, but first let me remark that we think of historical conditions, as well as the contradictions, as being objective, yet no one thinks they cannot be changed or modified by our own actions. I also want to point out that serious and complex problems arise just in consequence of our actions and achievements. Every step forward, and every achievement, elicits new demands and engenders contradictions previously unknown.

What we are concerned with now is creating the conditions for a really socialist way of life based on the material wealth our society has produced. Of course, this was not the problem in 1945. At that time the people had to be fed. Growing prosperity, increasing social affluence are heartening since the Communist society, towards which we are striving, will be the society

of abundance and not a phalanstery of ascetics. Ten to twelve years ago, when there were only some forty thousand refrigerators in Hungary, some warned us against the bogy of a "fridge civilization". Today there are refrigerators in two million homes, and, believe you me, this has not shaken the foundations of socialism.

Nevertheless, now that we have just recovered from a relative backwardness, progress from time to time has a negative effect on the socialist way of living and mentality; it may lead to selfishness, petty-bourgeois vanity, excessive money-mindedness and fondness of possessions.

No hermetically sealed door shuts us off from capitalism, so whether those on the other side like it or not, capitalism is pretty much influenced by the socialist system. On the other hand, some of our fellow citizens are influenced by capitalism. One-third of Hungarians travelled abroad last year, 300,000 to 400,000 of them visited capitalist countries; and 8.2 million foreign visitors came to Hungary, 1.2 million of them from the West.

Socialist society endeavours to influence people to better them, prompting them to improve the standard of their demands. Though this is still just a trend at present, we have got beyond the stage of pious wishes.

In Hungary the percentage of privately owned home units, week-end cottages and suburban houses and plots where such will be built in the future is higher than in France. 2.2 million out of three million families own such property. The laws governing ownership make speculation and accumulation impossible. Appropriate administrative action can prevent such activities. The situation is more difficult with regard to the transformation of consumption into a socialist type. The prestige of culture must replace a prestige culture.

Elements of the future are already present in Hungary, and things of the past also survive. The transformation of man by socialism is a long and laborious process. Some still look first at the rank and status of the person rather than at the substance and truth of what was said. A man of yesterday is often present in the same person side by side with a man of tomorrow.

Rousseau was optimistic indeed when he said that man is "good by nature". A hungry man eats his bread "by nature", but what should one say about him not sharing it with others? Capitalism relies on the evil in man; socialism does just the opposite: it puts its faith in man, it opposes selfishness and individualism, and professes a morality which develops a community spirit.

Q: Those of bad faith might ask perhaps whether it wants to train a sort of socialist "superman".

A: We glorify neither Tarzan, nor Kipling's Mowgli. Human personality can truly grow and develop only as part of society, and not outside it and in opposition to all. We must not forget that a child who is born and grows up outside a human community remains an animal, a "savage". The more society is pervaded by humanism, and by a sense of community, the more opportunities it has to mould a rich and complete personality.

Capitalism endeavours to uniformize human personality, forcing it into an obligatory mould. The human ideal of socialism is a man superior in the humanist sense, who has an unquenchable thirst for culture and whose ideas of life are shaped by superior ideals.

His education and culture make sure that a peasant member of an agricultural co-operative differs radically from a peasant of the Horthy era. At that time even the more or less well-to-do among them were members of an oppressed and despised class. Of course, we have not yet overcome all the difficulties confronting us—and this in spite of the long way we have travelled since 1945, and in part also because of it. Seizing power will not lead to an automatic change in people. Moses led his people through the desert for forty years so that the new generation might live in the Promised Land. What the Bible says of him is not exactly a success story.

New Solutions Produce New Anxieties

Q: So far you have enumerated difficulties and anxieties. Is there any field where all problems have been solved?

A: Of course, there is no such field, nor will there ever be one till the end of time. I could give examples taken from areas where we were beginning to think that the worst was over, and it was only then that we found ourselves really up against it.

Before the Liberation only 34 per cent of all children were able to attend school up to the age of fourteen. It took us a great deal of work to eliminate illiteracy and to create the right conditions for all children of school-age. Ninety-one per cent of children complete the eight grades of general school now. What worries us now is the education of the 9 per cent who are drop-outs. At the same time a new problem has arisen. The number of secondary-school pupils has increased; new teachers, new schools and hostels are needed. It was difficult to wipe out illiteracy, but the new situation confronted us with more complicated tasks.

Here is another example: When people began to live better, to be more

concerned with their welfare, families shrank, many were satisfied with only one child. The birth rate dropped alarmingly, so a series of measures were introduced to ease the situation of married couples who were willing to have bigger families; they were assisted allowing them to bring up their children without undue difficulty. The measures produced results: the birth rate went up. But places in crèches and kindergartens did not keep pace with growing numbers; if the problem is not dealt with in good time, the situation in general schools will also be difficult in five to six years. The secondary-school situation will have to be reconsidered then and so will housing plans. Do you want me to continue?

Every problem that has been taken care of engenders new ones, and none of them can be put off.

The Malady of Political Subjectivism

Q: You mention objective difficulties, but I wonder whether there are no blunders for which you can blame yourselves. Were there no errors, mistakes, controversial solutions for which the government, the state, or the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party were responsible?

A: Of course there were. Only very stupid and very vain people believe they are infallible. We committed mistakes, despite all our caution and thoroughness, despite all the scientific and democratic safeguards we applied and will increasingly apply. I am confident that the likelihood of mistakes will diminish in proportion as we shall be better acquainted with the laws of development of our own society, controlling their functioning, and in proportion as the active participation of people in the affairs of the nation will grow.

Nothing can cause a Communist party as much trouble as its own mistakes. All the cunning of our foes taken together cannot do our cause as much harm as we ourselves can. For this very reason the credibility of a party can be measured by the way it reacts to its own errors.

Some of our mistakes and errors are rooted in lack of experience and preparedness, others are caused by wrong ways of tackling well-defined tasks.

In my opinion the most serious danger is what I would call political subjectivism. This is a dreadful malady. It dims sight, covers up mistakes and thus stops them being cleared up and corrected. The result is that one sees reality as one imagines it, confusing illusion and reality. The experience of many hard years has taught the Hungarian party how serious this danger is, and what should be done to overcome it.

Do not expect great dramatic scenes or continuing *mea culpas*. We do not want to repeat the excesses of the early 'fifties, when political change followed political change, and every one of them promised a clean sheet.

We therefore review what has been done as we go along, and make corrections where and when appropriate. Let me illustrate this by two examples. First, after introducing the educational reform it soon became apparent that pupils were overburdened. This was corrected without calling the reform into question.

Another example is the new system of economic management which was put in operation in 1968. A few years later the incentive system of enterprises was changed on the basis of an appraisal of results and shortcomings. The party and government continue this practice.

Q: Do you sometimes listen to criticisms and observations originating in the West?

A: If you mean those made by progressive people, the workers, our Communist comrades, the answer is yes. But this does not mean that we turn a deaf ear to what our opponents say. Though it is true that if we do not talk about our mistakes, they say we see everything through rose-tinted spectacles. If mistakes are exposed and analysed, advantage is taken of our self-criticism for the purposes of malicious and hostile propaganda, not only against us but also against their own progressive forces.

Let me add that in our part of the world the practice of talking about the difficulties of the West and so diverting attention from our own internal worries has been a thing of the past for a long time now.

There was a time when, if the small number of refrigerators had to be explained, newspapers talked about racial hatred in the United States, and Negrobaiting. We have recovered from this illness, but Western Europe hasn't. In a way it is indicative of our superiority that the opponent is now compelled to resort to tactics which we have already outgrown. No system can thrive on the mistakes committed by another. If a government is unable to offer sound prospects, denigrating the neighbour will prove useless, it will not make it more creditable in the eyes of its own people.

In the 'fifties we thought we must paint a distorted picture of capitalism to emphasize its shortcomings. Now a great number of our fellow citizens travel in the West, they are able to make comparisons in person, and this does not work out to our disadvantage. The number of Hungarians who left this country in 1956 and now return home is larger than the number of those who nowadays choose bourgeois democracy in preference to socialism.

II

Grant Us oh Lord, but Do So Right Now!

Q: Those on the extreme left who demand socialism deny its existence and even that it is being built. They assert that, though Hungarian society is not a capitalist one, it is not a socialist one either. The machinery of the state, hierarchies, a division of labour and inequality still continue. In short, the essential characteristics of socialism are missing.

A: Lenin already stressed at the time of the October Revolution that its victory cannot solve all problems at one fell swoop, it cannot wipe out all inequalities overnight—only one, only exploitation of man by man; but with this "only" it wiped out the inequality underlying all other injustices.

I mention this since using the same text, certain ultra-leftist could also ask why, using some sort of magic wand, we did not right away leap into an even higher stage, communism. The withering away of the state, eliminating differences between types of work, the removal of all social inequalities, the transition from the principle "to each according to his work" to the principle "to each according to his needs"—these are really characteristic of the Communist society towards which we strive. But the future grows out of present reality, and it is in no way realistic to measure today by the standards of the future. What else is the prescription, the so-called "extreme leftists" offer?

Take a society, a state, a country that starts with a historic handicap. Deny the facts, disguise the backwardness of ages, do not take into account the meaningful results attained at the cost of arduous struggles, but simply say: they are still a long way from their self-designated objective. Those who go about their business cunningly can even confuse a few here and there.

Some "left-wing" blabber-mouths (their tune may be different, but the song is the same old bourgeois one), for example, do not take into consideration the state in which Hungary was at the time of the Liberation following a quarter century of fascism. The country which, compared to Western Europe, had been backward earlier as well, lay in ruins; the Nazis and their Hungarian allies, the Arrowcross, rushed the gold reserves off to Germany by the truck-load; almost all rolling stock was travelling in the same direction; the majority of the country's livestock perished. The same fate overtook a considerable portion of the industrial assets; the railroads were destroyed, all the Danube bridges were blown up and one quarter of all dwellings in Budapest became uninhabitable.

Nor do they take into account that earlier the country was dominated by

a few powerful financiers and a handful of big landowners among them the Roman Catholic Church. Nearly 40 per cent of arable land was owned by big them. More than half the working population was employed in agriculture, and industry consisted of a few relatively up-to-date capitalist large enterprises and a small number of medium-sized factories, that's all. At the time Hungary was known as the "country of three million beggars". But what do they care about reality and truth. Sometimes we even hear them claim that the leading role in Hungary does not belong to the working class. Why? Because the workers do not obtain privileges for themselves? Because they earn less than factory managers or scientists? This is true. The workers do not demand a first-class railway ticket to socialism. The working class wishes to create socialism not only for itself but for the whole of society. This is difficult to understand for those who think in terms of bourgeois ideologies.

The international working-class movement had to experience the damage that can be done by extremist slogans in a number of tragical situations. Progressive governments were forced to take "radical" steps the conditions for which were still absent, thus opening the flood-gates of counter-revolution instead of straightening the way to progress.

In France as well, if I am not mistaken, ultra-leftist propaganda and action in May–June 1968 had a big share in the success of the right at the subsequent parliamentary elections.

I do not doubt that there are well-meaning and well-intentioned people in the leftist movements there, it is true nevertheless that their propaganda and activity in practice fail to serve the cause of the workers, of the people, but promote—sometimes maybe against their own intentions—that of the bourgeoisie. Waking up to this will be a true tragedy to some of them, even if the moment of truth appears in a grotesque form.

Abuse of Words?

Q: The adjective "socialist", which Hungary is proud of, is a problem to others, who do not stand on the left. For instance, to M. Alain Peyrefitte, who, in a televised debate with Georges Marchais, said: "The term 'the socialist world' is a sort of linguistic abuse, a play on words. You have monopolized the beautiful word socialism for the countries of the East, a word that is synonymous with social justice. I think it is unjust that this hope-inspiring word should be abused by countries which are unworthy to be called that."

A: Hope-inspiring socialism... I am a Communist; an inseparable part of my Communist conviction is the belief that people are able to change.

I would willingly cheer M. Peyrefitte's conversion. Unfortunately I can't do so since he, though using the term socialism, rejects its substance.

Let me add a couple of remarks nevertheless. The spokesmen of the bourgeoisie find it difficult—as I have already mentioned—to defend the capitalist theories and propagate them in their original form to the masses. M. Peyrefitte does not say, "The beautiful word capitalism that inspires hope and is synonymous with social justice". This is a fact worth noting. He refers to a preconceived pattern, to an abstract and mysterious model of socialism, and in the light of it he arbitrarily decides that living socialism is non-existent.

Does this mean therefore that the politicians and ideologues of the big bourgeoisie are ready to accept socialism of a different kind? They only "rehabilitate" the word socialism, making it part of polite usage, when they have deprived it of its real meaning. It would be a strange sort of socialism indeed which would get on well with the private ownership of the basic means of production, with the exploitation of man by man and with the power of capitalist monopolies!

M. Peyrefitte had the chance to explain to millions of Hungarian television viewers what he means by the notion "beautiful socialism". Yet he declined, he did not avail himself of the opportunity. Pity...

Socialism in Hungary, and also in the other countries where it is being or has already been, built, is not an uncertain endeavour, not an abstract moral aim, but a real, living society developing dynamically, with lapses perhaps and dramatic struggles but still showing splendid results!

Blessed Are the Just...

Q: We have talked about social justice, but at the same time we took note of the presence of inequalities. This seems a contradiction...

A: Social justice is not an abstract idea, not a ready pattern, which simply has to be applied. Social justice has a specific meaning and a time-determined standard. In the past thirty years the essence and meaning of social justice have shown considerable development in Hungary as a natural consequence of the changes that have occurred in that time. Exploitation has come to an end. The right to work and to study, together with the necessary resources, is guaranteed to all—and not merely on paper. Medical treatment is free for everybody in Hungary, etc.

In the name of abstract social justice one may, of course, demand anything at all. We have never said, and we still do not say, that we have reached

our goal. At a later stage, when work itself becomes an elementary need, each and all will have their share of social wealth according to their wants. But anyone who today makes such demands in the name of social justice is, wittingly or unwittingly, furthering injustice.

Justice and Productivity

Social justice today means that pay is according to work done, although we know that in communism things will be different—as the well-known definition has it, each will share according to his needs. Why do we think that it would be unjust to pay a conscientious, hard-working man and another who does not work in this manner on the same basis? Not simply in order to satisfy some moral precept as supposed by some, but mainly because at present the development of society demands that, in order to increase productivity, personal incentives, that is a differentiation of wages, be given their due.

There is no reason for pride in being complimented because work is still done slowly. On the contrary. But whoever has been to a capitalist factory and to a factory in a socialist country will certainly have noticed that the features of exploitation characteristic of capitalist factories are absent from socialism.

Q: Does not the mere existence of the said financial incentives involve the danger of the inequalities becoming more profound and consequently hindering the growth of that new social consciousness which follows on the socialist relations of production?

A: I have just said that differentiation according to work is a basic principle of wage policy. But one has to take into account also that wages are complemented by a widening range of social benefits in money and in kind. These grow faster than wages, and play an important part in the establishment of equal conditions. It is desirable that their importance should steadily increase.

Some wish, of course, that the indirect benefits were raised at a faster rate and right now, that higher maternity allowances were paid in the six months following childbirth, that the child-care allowance paid over three years be increased as well as allowance for large families having several children, that book publishers and theatres be granted still larger state subsidies—for all these are part of indirect benefits. As soon as it became possible, that is this year, health services became totally free for all Hungarian citizens, but how could one contemplate a further rapid increase in

indirect benefits without a concurrent increase in the production and the productivity of individual and social labour? A rise in productivity, however, is hardly feasible without financial incentives, that is given moral ones only. A handshake will be no less a sign of appreciation if the pay-packet in the outstretched hand expresses appreciation of more and better work as well.

Q: Does this mean that inequality promotes the establishment of equality?

A: To a certain extent, yes. Would it be just, for example, if in the admissions to university one failed to take into consideration the social and cultural background of young people in addition to their abilities? For obvious reasons, a worker's child who does not grow up among books, or a peasant lad living on an outlying farm, prepares for the university entrance examination under less favourable conditions than the son or daughter of a medical practitioner or a university professor.

We cannot take refuge behind abstract formulas of equity and equality as is done in capitalist countries. We cannot talk of equality when the real conditions are not yet assured. We are striving to create these conditions, but we cannot expect success overnight.

Moral or Financial Incentives?

Q: Earlier you did not answer a part of my question: you did not speak of the difference between financial and moral incentives.

A: There is an apparently radical precept. Essentially it argues: True socialists and true communists rely on consciousness and moral sensibility, while those who emphasize the need for commodities and financial incentives promote the *embourgeoisement* of public life and selfish appetites. This is an ill-considered view, which feeds on romantic pipe-dreams and not on reality.

What is wrong with your question is that it makes the two kinds of incentives appear antagonistic. Financial ones, if properly applied, are inseparable from the moral aspect: higher wages are due to those who give more to society. That is only equitable.

And this is true the other way round as well. Here moral incentives in the long run will not be effective enough if they are not coupled with financial rewards.

If the moral incentive is assigned the role of substituting for material

advantages, or of compensating at least for shortcomings in the standard of living, then it is not an incentive but demagoguery.

If, on the other hand, financial incentives alone were applied this would mean renouncing our social and ideological aims. The workers, and precisely those who do their work best of all, would reject this kind of "socialism". I do not think this has to be explained over and over again to French workers. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of them are busy working for a happier future, without any tangible reward, within the trade unions, the working-class movement and in the ranks of the French Communist Party.

Those who can visualize socialism only on this basis or only on the other, and reject "the two of them together", are in fact unaware of the conditions and practice of the building of socialism. Just like those who preach ascetism and don't care a fig for low material considerations. In this way, however, they sustain precisely the individualism of people, their selfishness and petty-bourgeois attitudes.

Hard times may occur when, in the life of every country one can rely only on the moral force of the people. Of course, this force is an inexhaustible source in the building of socialism. But it must not be abused; it is inadmissible to forge eternal principles out of emergency measures!

III

The "Quality of Life" and a Life of Quality

Q: So far we have been talking about growth, and this prompts me to ask about the links between the standard of living and the quality of life. In Western countries these two notions often clash. How do you think they are related in the socialist system? Do you think there exists a special socialist quality of life?

A: What bourgeois ideologues understand by the "quality of life" is not in conflict with the exploitation of man, with classic and modern forms of poverty, and has precious little in common with living standards. Our ideas are different and things could not be otherwise.

The capitalist world is going through an economic, monetary, cultural and moral crisis. What quality of life can one expect from such a society?

We hardly ever use the expression "quality of life", not because of fetishism but because it is vague and misleading. In Western countries this notion began to be fashionable when there was an all-out attack on living standards. At such a time contradictions engendered by capitalist waste,

more precisely by the wasting or sometimes destruction of natural and human resources, worsened as well. I don't think this temporal coincidence was a matter of mere chance.

Another reason why we hardly ever use this expression is that it makes it possible for bourgeois ideologues to filch a very essential part of life—that which people devote to their work. The quality of life, as manipulated, applies only to time spent outside the factory, the office, the farm. The Marxist position is much more sound. Life should be examined in its entirety, with all its characteristic features.

A choice between living standards and the quality of life is, I think, a sort of mental gymnastics that has nothing to do with reality. Human activity cannot be carved up. Capitalists apparently imagine that the life of working men stops at the gate of the place of employment, that only eating, sleeping and scarce leisure are reckoned to make up life.

Since man has become mortal and subjected to the biblical curse of having to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow, death has not known social classes, but life has!

For this very reason the big difference lies in how one earns one's living: by meaningful work or by meaningless, alienating drudgery. Socialism has to be a society in which people look forward not only to Saturday's off but also to Mondays at work.

When I hear "quality" mentioned in this sense, I think of respect for human life, of the unfolding of individuality. Let us try to answer the question: which society effectively guarantees respect for the human personality?

How Can Man Live a Life of Quality under Socialism?

What I mean by a life of quality is one in which the working man realizes his personality. A factory should therefore not be an alien and hostile place, where he only makes money, but be a part, an important part, of his life. This issue is closely related to the coming into being of a new morality to the creating of a brotherly and humane atmosphere suffused by social activity. This, of course, is subject to material conditions, for how could one speak of a life of quality if one cannot ensure to everyone the satisfaction of the most elementary needs. Very great care is therefore taken, by creating the necessary conditions, to guarantee freedom in the choice of occupation, by co-ordinating social needs and individual aspirations. This is one of the greatest problems facing young people in general, secondary and industrial secondary schools. Consequently it is there that

they must be given the possibility of becoming aware of their own abilities when choosing an occupation which will be a calling or vocation to them. This applies later as well, since the first occupation chosen is not always for life. Later perhaps he might change his mind, feeling ready to return to his studies. This possibility must be allowed for, since a primary criterion of a life of quality is for people to feel all right at work, working well and with good cheer.

Clothes and the Man

In my way of looking at things the choice of occupation is no less important than the choice of a spouse. In socialist Hungary, there are many occupations to choose amongst, and the individual has the privilege and duty to make his choice.

The class barriers have come down both as regards marriage and occupation. You may certainly have noticed that in Hungary it is difficult to tell a research engineer from a worker or even a peasant by their clothes. And this applies not only to men but still more to women.

Q: The malicious would say they are all badly dressed.

A: This is not malice, this is sheer blindness. Several years ago this might have been true, today it is not so. It depends on what one means by well-dressed, of course. The point is, in my view, that people can buy comfortable, practical and good-quality clothes out of their normal wages. Let me say that we haven't the least wish to produce such fancy items which only the upper ten thousand can buy in capitalist countries.

The situation is the same in regard to food. In terms of per capita consumption of calories we can stand comparison with the most advanced capitalist countries, although the structure of consumption is, for the historical reasons already mentioned, still different. Hungarians eat heavier and fattier meals, more bread and pastry, though the eating habits are also changing.

If you want to call this levelling you are probably justified. There are no very rich in Hungary nor is there misery, neither palaces owned by the privileged, nor slums or disreputable areas. Do you know what surprises American tourists in Hungary most of all? It is that they can safely walk anywhere, even after sundown, though there are far fewer policemen about in Budapest districts than, say, in the Quartier Latin.

To put it briefly, there is many a field where we do not show the least desire to catch up with the developed capitalist countries.

Q: Since you have already mentioned the Quartier Latin, I ought to say that one cannot in Paris streets either tell the social class the passers-by belong to.

A: This is probably true, but everything should be judged by its own standard. If you look at photos taken in Hungary during the 'thirties, social differences can be established with absolute certainty by the clothes people wore. At that time an old peasant did not dare to look a squire straight in the face. A Hungarian writer tells that in those years he was invited by a friend to spend a few days in the village. His friend was then eighteen years old but found it quite natural that everyone kissed his hand, he was a member of the squire's family.

Forty years ago Hungarian newspapers often carried reports on persons of "worker appearance" or "peasant appearance" being wanted by the police.

IV

Pyramids and Ant-hills

Q: As you well know, freedom is a favourite subject of those who reject your system. In this connection they even say—in an effort to "explain" your economic development—that the erection of "socialist pyramids" requires, if not slaves, at least citizens kept under surveillance.

A: These would be geometrically rather odd-looking pyramids, their base is the top, since the people are in power. Of course, the idea is no odder than the statement itself which, if my memory serves me right, originates with Léon Blum.

What can we say to that? What are we to do to make ourselves understood? Should we invite a die-hard capitalist, an inveterate reactionary, to convince himself personally of the benefits of socialism? What good would such an experiment do? It would be worth more, on the other hand, to provide honest information to the millions.

Do you know Tolstoy's story of the blind man who is asked to tell the colour of milk? It is like white paper, was his answer. Does it rustle like paper? No, it is like flour. Is it as soft?. . . I will not go on, I mention the story to point out that one can form a sensible opinion only if one knows what one is talking about.

If Léon Blum in his time could have seen more clearly, he obviously would not have supported non-intervention in Spain, and would not as a result have given a free hand to Hitler and Mussolini. Then he would have understood that the top of the capitalist pyramid is fascism.

A bit of common sense and less maliciousness would do no harm. Slaves? Immature citizens, taken to be minors? Socialism might have had excesses and distortions and possibly still has them, but realized socialism can only exist when the creative powers of the masses are set free, and the initiative is theirs.

The working class has emancipated the "slaves" wherever it has come to power. It gave the land to the peasants and helped them to unite in co-operatives and procure agricultural implements. It tore down cultural barriers and restored the human dignity of the working man. Socialism can come about only through the will of free people.

A Necessity: Millions of Personalities

Q: Who is free and what is freedom good for? Hungarian society, as you yourself have admitted, is not homogeneous. It is pervaded by different currents which derive from various philosophies. Nevertheless it seems to present a homogeneous picture of sorts. Do you stifle the various ideological currents? If you don't, then what are their forms of manifestation?

A: Socialism is not an ant-hill. Quite the contrary: expression is given to an endless variety of individualities, many kinds of tastes, various modes of spending leisure.

In the capitalist system the ideal is the conformist citizen. Make no mistake: I do not say that more scintillating individuals or more first-class brains per one thousand inhabitants exist in our country. If a working man in the bourgeois world is a rich and colourful personality, he has made himself that in spite of the system. In the socialist countries the system itself helps the personality to develop. It is a necessity of life: there is a great need for millions of individuals who think for themselves and show initiative.

Differing Ideologies

In the Western world few people can enjoy the conditions in which human personality flourishes and develops. The large masses are exposed to ceaseless pressure, and this produces uniformity. In our society it is an imperative demand that everybody be somebody. You have mentioned that I have overemphasized the factors that integrate socialist society. But I have not said that this is a grey, uniformized, drab society. I have said that there are no exploiters and no exploited, and also that we strive to eliminate differences between manual and white-collar workers, between town

and village, between unskilled and skilled workers, etc. And this is a very favourable soil for individual personalities to grow.

By eliminating such differences we endeavour to create those conditions which are needed for the free development of the individual.

Having said this, let me insist that Marxism–Leninism has no monopoly in Hungary. There are those who believe in God, and nationalist and cosmopolitan attitudes can also be found.

In Hungary several kinds of ideologies exist, because there are groups of society with differing, though not opposed, interests. These are not antagonistic, but their way of seeing things contains many ideological remnants of earlier social stratification. Of course, this is far from saying that, let us say, every worker is a Marxist–Leninist and the "non-workers" to the last man profess a kind of bourgeois or petty-bourgeois ideology. One cannot draw rigid ideological lines between classes and sections of society. The interconnection between social position and outlook on life is much more complex than that.

Let me ask you how could we declare the absolute dominion of Marxist ideology in the realm of life, consciousness, thought, and sentiment when this monopoly would not correspond to facts? Non-Marxist views are superseded in proportion as the memory of old class differences surviving in social consciousness is fading, and as socialist relations develop. We promote this process, in addition to bringing the living conditions of the different sections of society closer to each other, also by teaching Marxism–Leninism. Is that an infringement on personal freedom?

Besides, it would be a big mistake to suppose that debates are possible only between people differing in their ideologies. My own experience shows that arguments can arise between people who share the Marxist world outlook and can turn out to be fruitful indeed.

Within the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, which members join voluntarily and with full knowledge of the nature of the cause, there is, of course, no room for any ideology except Marxism–Leninism. This cannot be otherwise, but it does not in the least mean that debates among us are not lively. Our slogan is not the "treuga dei". Scientific truths are established after thorough investigation, in the course of a creative exchange of ideas, but we do not accept any kind of liberalism or pluralism. We know from experience, and are convinced, that only one concrete solution of any concrete problem can be true. As György Lukács said: "The pluralism of Marxism is the Marxism of fools!"

In Hungary, I repeat, there are different ideologies present, and we do not wish to wipe them out by administrative measures.

As was to be expected, the press of the Western countries explain this variety in its own terms. If debates were non-existent, they would write that we live in a colourless and monotonous world. But since our public life is rich and varied, they say this is a sign of weakness. And we are convinced that this variety, including spirited discussion, contributes to the enrichment of Marxism. The way they put it is that we used to live under a stupid dictatorship in which—it was said—the writing of sonnets only was permitted; now that free verse is published, this is already proof of the decline of the system. . .

Freedom of Speech and its Realization

Q: We have several times touched on the way you interpret freedom of speech. Do you guarantee freedom of speech in the same manner as the developed capitalist countries do?

A: Certainly not in the same manner. It could be that a great deal remains to be done with regard to freedom of speech, but only by our own standards, in keeping with our own perspectives; the Western capitalist countries cannot set us an example in this respect either. Let us reverse the question: why don't they in capitalist countries comply with the United Nations Charter which prohibits warmongering, fascist and racist propaganda? We in Hungary do not allow propaganda of this kind. Neither do we tolerate the glorification of exploitation. On the other hand, we give full scope to any honest opinion.

Freedom of speech cannot, of course, be interpreted in the abstract. At the time of the 1789 revolution the French patriots stripped the aristocrats of this and all other rights. In 1793 they energetically repulsed the counter-revolutionary machinations of the aristocracy and of all those who supported them. I think they were right to do so.

When M. Poniatowski steps up his anti-Communist slanders, distortions and personal attacks, the Communists are free to reply, of course. Only the rejoinder to the slander is given far less publicity in the media than the slander itself.

Should I on this basis reach the conclusion that in France there is no freedom of speech? I would rather say only that it contains many formal elements, it is very much restricted, just like other democratic rights which are less willingly stressed in the West—for example, the right to work.

The French worker freely speaks his mind when prices are raised—he enjoys freedom of speech, but the prices still remain high. . .

Freedom of speech is enjoyed also by the cabinet member who in Par-

liament explains that "guided by the national interest", the government is compelled to shift the burden upon the workers. His speech is publicized by the mass media. The worker and the minister equally enjoy freedom of speech; but do they have equal opportunities, too, and can they equally make use of them?

The French bourgeoisie, rich in experience, is a grand master of the art of thrashing empty straw until some sort of result looking like grain is produced. We have neither the dexterity nor the possibility nor the intention of following their example.

In our view a right implies the real possibility of exercising it. Manipulation is utterly alien to us. Step by step we enrich a system of guarantees of democratic rights, including free speech.

Q: A question that may sound strange: is it inconceivable that Hungary should one day have something like Hyde Park where anyone is free to say anything he pleases to the curious?

A: If by Hyde Park you mean the honest, responsible, as well as entirely free and frank expression of ideas, then I reply that it is not only conceivable but we are close to having the whole country as a sort of "Hyde Park". But if you believe as I do that Hyde Park is a vanity fair good only to ridicule well-intentioned progressive ideas, helping to suppress them, then you will understand why we will have none of this sort of Hyde Park!

V

Verbs in the Future Tense

Q: A reactionary politician in France remarked recently that the speeches of Jean Jaurès were easy to recognize since he nearly always used verbs in the future tense. This tense is generally used also in the socialist countries. I have nothing against it, I only note that this gives me occasion to put a question: You have been speaking of the construction of socialism for twenty-five years now. When will it be completed? When will you be able to say that socialism has already been built?

A: There is no clock and no calender to help me answer your question. We do not board a train for the sake of the dining car. Socialism is moving towards a classless society. Communism, where plenty will be the rule and where the "man of old" will be a museum piece... The building of socialism is a continuous process. Socialist society, which we began to build a good quarter century ago, is not identical with today's society, and developed socialism fifteen years hence will again be different from today's society.

Socialism is far more than a society without capitalists. It demands a richer and more developed personality.

Socialism has to be created, not only to be built of bricks, concrete and machinery. Of course, the raising of the standard of living, an end to financial worries and also the fact that every man may enjoy the fruit of his labours, furthermore the abolishing of exploitation are integral parts of socialism.

The foundations of socialism have already been laid, we live in a new society. Our society is already socialist in its institutions and typical human relations, but we want more because socialism is constant development. We should like to reach a higher stage which is, according to our usual definition, the stage of developed socialist society.

Hungarian Youth in 1975

Q: And what about the young? All over the world they think differently from their parents, and particularly, their grandparents. Many believe this is a universal phenomenon. Are the young in your country different from those of yesterday?

A: Gyula Illyés, a Hungarian writer known in France as well, in the years before the war, asked boys and girls of outlying farms to tell what they wanted to be when they grew up. One of them said: a woman, in order to give bread to the children; another said: a rich man, for then he would be able to eat his fill; the third child wanted to be a policeman, because they made a lot of money; the fourth child wished to be a soldier, because they travel far into war... At the age of barely fourteen most of them already dreaded unemployment and the uncertainty of the future.

Children of like age today have different desires. They do not think of becoming rich or poor. One wants to be an engineer, the other an inventor, the third a doctor, the fourth a mechanic, etc.; it is natural for them that their future should be secure, they demand responsibilities, they are attracted towards an active and creative life. In this I see the essential difference between the young of yesterday and those of today. There are words which today's youth employ in a different sense than did the young of the prewar years. The term "to be out of work" has a pejorative undertone among them. It may not have occurred to you—you may not even know—that the word "peasant" in the past meant a sort of insult: "ignorant peasant" was a common term of abuse. Today one whose parents were peasants, or who was raised in a worker's family, is proud of it.

Q: When you talk about the present, you mention cares and worries, but as soon as you talk about the future, you seem to see the world in rosy colours...

A: You are mistaken. I see it in red. Life in rosy colours would be either boring or an illusion. The future means concrete real tasks, for which we shall work. In the programme declaration of the 11th Congress, our Party defined the tasks of the near future: to increase the quantity of goods, to continue the institutional development of secondary-school education, to develop socialist culture, to keep enriching the personality, to make it more varied, and all this within the framework of efficient community life.

Q: People nevertheless remain mortal for all that...

A: This is true. But life itself will be more meaningful. Socialism is the world outlook of life, not of death. I respect but cannot accept Montaigne's thought that "Wisdom is no more than knowing how to die." The wisdom of socialism is that it teaches us to live. One cannot and should not get used to the thought of death. It is necessary for one to sense the meaning of life even in one's last hour. Let me quote György Lukács, who before his death expressed this as follows: "The essential thing is not I but the cause, the fact that I might say I have added to it even one millimetre."

I think that in the critical moments of life it occurs to many what Gabriel Péri said before he died: it is only worth dying for what is worth living for—"the singing tomorrows".

Bertrand Russell was already ninety when he said that the best remedy against the fear of death is for man to become increasingly interested in what he does and less occupied with his mortal remains.

Q: Don't you think that the fate of the individual is unimportant in relation to the vast perspective that you have just outlined?

A: I don't think so. This would be a false interpretation of the ideology of socialism. No one should confuse individual ambitions and the aims of society, but neither should be neglected. Let us not, like a certain eighty-year-old Hungarian baron in the last century, ask why the first bridge across the Danube was being constructed: it would not be worth the trouble for his remaining years...

What socialism wants to create through the agency of the community is not a sort of abstract happiness but the human happiness of individual men and women.

I know there were Communists, both Hungarian and French, who talked about death with a contempt for their individual fate. I have in mind what someone once said in your country: "Death is not a tragedy to a Communist but a simple biological happening." Ordinary people for whom we Communists are fighting cannot accept the sincerity of such statements. You obviously say to yourselves: surely you will think differently when you yourself or your family are involved. This way of thinking leads to arrogance, to the disregard of the feelings and lives of others. I hold the view that he who needlessly makes other people cry, who needlessly sheds blood, who remains indifferent to the sufferings of other people, cannot be a true Communist. The lives and destinies of all men are dear to us.

Q: Yet, socialism or no socialism, one must continue to work, and death will have the last word.

A: In this conversation I would let life, the new, socialist future, have the last word. Both before death and against death. Even there socialism offers man more and something new. Great creators, writers, scientists, artists, architects, politicians, statesmen, and philosophers apparently have it easier. They may say about time, quoting Faust looking back on his lifework: "Verweile doch! du bist so schön!" It is to everyday man, to the "individual", that socialism grants the possibility, a possibility for life valid also in the face of death, and renewed every day, of feeling that he has not lived in vain; that he has taught somebody a better way to handle a tool; that he has furthered an idea; that his disciples keep quoting a pertinent saying of his; that his fellow workers remember a good word he has put in for them. The old Hungarian peasant in the story plants a walnut tree, although he knows that he will not eat of its fruit. We, socialist men, are all planters of walnut trees, not in the story but in real life, and we are proud that our class, our people, our nation already enjoy the fruits of socialist society in their lifetime.

In this sense we often do speak in the future tense as you have pointed out. But this future tense is given moral authenticity by present-day reality, by our right to use the past tense to the purpose. As regards the future, the French press uses a fashionable term: futurology. We have no use for this word, we do not need it. We can give credit only to that kind of "futurology" which, relying upon the results of the past, organically grows out of the present. And this is—so let this be the last word in our present conversation—socialism.

PHYSICS AND SOCIETY

by

LÉNÁRD PÁL

Recently there has been a growing number of books, articles and lectures which deal in a general way with the relationship between science and society as well as the possible alternatives in the future evolution of this relationship. Among these books, articles and lectures there are numerous ones that discuss the interaction between physics and society, devoting increasing attention to the discovery of the causes of tension that have arisen and to the elaboration of the contradictions.

In such a discussion one should begin by defining what physics is.

The dictionary of the Hungarian language defines physics as follows: "Physics is the science that deals with the fundamental qualities of lifeless material, its structure, the laws of its movements and changes of its shape, mass, and state."

This definition appears to be precise enough. Although it is of course much narrower than the original meaning of the word physics, it is at least wider and better than the earlier definition according to which chemistry dealt with the qualitative changes of material while physics dealt with the various qualities and attributes of materials of an unchanged chemical quality. If we take into account that the fusion of atoms, their disintegration and inner transformation are studied by the methods, theoretical and experimental armoury of physics, it immediately becomes obvious that there is no dividing line at all between physics and chemistry. The laws of physics play a determinant role in the chemical forms of motion. One may continue with the fact that for the understanding of the behaviour of live matter, the application of the methods of physics has become just as indispensable, and many other sciences cannot exclude such methods either. Today it is difficult to decide about an astro-physicist whether he is a nuclear physicist or an astronomer, and it is clear that metallurgy,

geology, meteorology, etc. increasingly make use of the achievements of physics, while all these sciences inspire physics itself.

In the past fifty years, but even more so in the last twenty and thirty physics has profoundly penetrated the areas of the most diverse sciences and initiated new technologies primarily in industry but also in agriculture.

It has—by its results—become an important factor in the technical and scientific revolution. If we view physics through these effects, we can assuredly claim that we have got nearer to physics as the ancient Greeks thought of it—the science of nature—which became differentiated only in the course of 18th and 19th centuries' evolution of scientific disciplines, in which the original science—physics—today again appears as a synthetizing force. It is able to play this new synthetizing role successfully, because a fruit of the twentieth century—quantum theory—has become the indispensable food of almost every science.

This role of physics, its manifold effect and synthesizing capability have to be pointed out, because not only in the ranks of the general public, but also among physicists themselves, one often meets the view that physics has its own separate territorial waters on which the uninitiated must not navigate. In other words, physics has, to my mind remained a more isolated science than it is in reality. The interdisciplinary role of physics has been insufficiently published, and thus many people believe and know much less about it than can be experienced day after day, due to the effect it has on various aspects of life.

Interactions between Science and Society

Although I believe that my readers know exactly what is meant by society, it is nevertheless worth spending a few words defining it.

Society is a smaller or larger community consisting of living individuals, in which—due to a constantly changing, complex interaction among individuals—laws that apply to the community as the whole are effective. Speaking of human society—and obviously we are interested in the laws of communities made up of men—then, in the definition of society, the sum of those relations among human beings takes first place—which is characterized by definite ways in the production of material goods, and by definite communal relations at a certain stage of historic evolution. This may also be expressed in such a way that, out of manifold and complex interactions among human beings, those relations and interactions are

decisive for the definition of the fundamental nature of society which are connected with the mode of production of material goods, with the condition of the forces of production and of relations of production. Obviously, many other kinds of relations and interactions are brought about in a given society, but these are all some sort of derivatives of those relations which are fundamentally characteristic of the society in question and which are related to the production of material goods.

In this abstract—and consequently simplified—way, the link between science and society, between physics and society, occurs immediately and conspicuously, since the mode of production of material goods and the condition and stage of development of the forces of production are determined indirectly, but sometimes directly, by the condition and stage of development of science. There are many people who try to oppose this view, arguing that to understand the essence of nature, and to find acceptable solutions for practical problems, are not identical activities, and in general there is not even a close link between them. It is certainly true that some scientists do not endeavour to discover new phenomena and laws because they want to achieve their practical realization but in order to participate in the joy of acquiring knowledge. However, independent of the will of the scientists, the new knowledge sooner or later finds itself in the service of social progress, and exercises in some way an influence on the production of material goods. Numerous old and new examples prove this: the road leads from the recognition of the Maxwell-equations to the network of radio transmitters covering the Earth; or from Rutherford's 1919 experiments to the atom bomb exploded in 1945. What is worth special attention is the shortening of time it takes from the aquisition of new knowledge to its practical application.

I consider it necessary to note that the joy of creation rests in the combination of known laws and phenomena in order to bring about some new—i.e. heretofore unknown—practically applicable device or process the performance of which surpasses in a certain sense the performance of earlier similar devices or processes, and thereby directly serves the evolution of the forces of production. I am not myself convinced that a sense of "uselessness" increases the joy of creation. On the contrary, I am inclined to believe that those scientists whose work is motivated by economic utility feel at least as great a joy in achieving some new result as those who are stimulated by the desire to acquire knowledge. On the other hand, this activity motivated by economic utility often discovers such shortcomings which shock the scientists hunting for new laws, and this shock may be the driving force for achieving new perceptions.

After this short deviation it appears that the place and role of science in general, and physics in particular. in relations to a given society are well-defined and clear. The actual situation nevertheless is that recently especially a kind of scepticism has become noticeable concerning the social and economic role and importance of technology and the natural sciences. I do not wish to discuss now the circumstances which have produced these views hostile to science—mainly—in the capitalist world, nor how the fear of improperly understood *(technological)* and scientific progress—which may have concrete causes in certain cases—has appeared in literature and poetry, and how all this is reflected in the minds of certain people. There are however some fundamental questions to the answers on which not only the future of science but also the evolution of society, sensitively depend. Such a question is, for instance, whether it is or is not necessary to accelerate technological and scientific progress, and if so, whether, in Hungary, this should merely mean a "trotting" after the industrially more developed countries, or whether it should involve a break-through in a limited area? It is hardly possible to give a correct answer to this question from a position that is divorced from science and reality.

Consequently, if one wishes to speak of the problem of physics and society in Hungary today and over the next five to ten years, then one must set out first of all those basic factors which determine the socialist evolution of Hungarian society in the long run. Divorced from this, guided merely by one's desires, it is hardly possible to speak of what one wishes to do for physics, or putting it the way I prefer, how we physicists may better serve social progress.

I maintain—and it could well be that many do not agree—that the role played by physics and generally by the natural sciences in socialist society must not be seen primarily in that they add to the store-house of general knowledge, but that they become more and more important—indirectly, but sometimes directly—in the process of production. A comment should be added. It does not follow that the technologies and natural sciences lack a role in the growth of culture and concretely socialist culture, but I only wish to emphasize that in the case of these sciences this role is secondary compared to the role which they play or should play in production.

I therefore wish to formulate, in this spirit, those social requirements which, in my view exist in Hungary regarding physics, and physics therefore demands no more from society than a chance to do its share in the building of an advanced socialist society not only in the short—but mainly in the long run.

The concept of the permanent evolution of socialist society also means that the mode of producing the goods which serve the satisfaction of the needs of society permanently, evolves and that the quantity of the goods produced is also constantly increasing. Economic policy, which is subordinate to general policy, deals with the questions of principle connected with the production and distribution of goods. This subordination means that economic policy is not some sort of sovereign policy, but is part of and an instrument of the policy which is called upon to serve the full construction of socialism in order to bring about the happy and harmonious life of society as a whole.

In the tool chest of economic policy technological policy is an important factor, and the latter is subordinate to economic policy just as economic policy is to general policy. The task of technological policy is—in the broad sense—to promote the spread and implementation of up-to-date scientific knowledge in order to accelerate the improvement of social productivity and of the standard of living. An important role is played there by the material, intellectual and organizational foundations of scientific research and development.

The question may be asked why I should speak of these general matters in the context of the relationship between physics and society. The reason is that in my view it is easy indeed to go astray without a knowledge of and acceptance general of these principles. We must not speak of the relationship between physics and society on a purely sentimental basis, under the charm of a prejudiced professional chauvinism. This zeal is needed, but only within the realities of the socio-economic-cultural environment in which we live and work.

Hungary is a socialist country of middling development, poor in raw materials, with a limited domestic market, for whom progress in the international division of labour is of great importance. It is a direct consequence of this situation that, in the determination of the objectives of technological policy, the decisive factors must be selection, concentration, and cooperation. The criteria of selection are provided by the goals of economic policy, while concentration must ensure the most effective utilization of research and developmental capacities for the given period, taking into account and making maximum use of the opportunities of international cooperation (division of labour).

Many are of the opinion that following the achievements of the developed industrial countries should be the main path of technical progres in Hungary.

This may be correct in general, but I am convinced that it cannot be an exclusive path.

The "openness" or in other words great foreign-trade sensitivity of the Hungarian economy demands of industrial and agricultural production that it be competitive in trade international i.e. satisfy the growing requirements of the foreign markets. This requirement cannot be satisfied if development is based exclusively on the adoption and adaptation of foreign achievements. At the time of their transfer these achievements have already lost one of their principal values, the surplus value derived from their novelty, since the most up-to-date results are generally not transferred but made the most of by their use in production. This is why I consider the most important question to be the areas where international competition must rely on Hungarian achievements. It is obvious that in these fields all types of research must be cultivated intensively. I believe that the preference accorded certain areas of research is a social interest of the first order.

Does this mean that it is necessary to declare preferences within physics too? To a certain extent it is, but not as forcefully as, let us say, in the technologies (where it would be absurd for Hungary to concentrate resources on, say the development of supersonic aircraft). The reason is simply that physics is—as I have already pointed out—an organic accessory of almost every other science. If one thinks of the outstanding Hungarian pharmaceutical industry, which relies—at least in part—on local research then it is obvious that it would for instance be a great mistake not to develop the examination of the structure of molecules or modern biophysics. If Hungarian precision engineering or the computer industry—I only mention these two industries as examples—wish to be present, if only on the socialist markets, with competitive products in the long run, then Hungary cannot do without a basic material and component-producing industry which, in certain respects, relies on its own internationally recognized new achievements. A guarantee for this is the high standard of solids research in Hungary. A considerable share of the modern material-testing methods is due to nuclear physics, and although this utilitarian function would be sufficient to justify the further development of nuclear research in Hungary, I nevertheless believe that those reasons cannot be neglected either which point at more distant potentials. I do not have to be exhaustive, and will therefore not continue listing examples to support an idea which expresses a simple truth: physics is present or may be present, nearly everywhere; consequently its development is basically in the social interest.

When speaking of the importance of internationally competitive products relying on Hungarian research, I am fully conscious that in Hungarian

technological policy those objectives nevertheless have to predominate which rely on results, licences and know-how obtained from industrially developed countries, but a research background is in this case too a condition of efficiency, since nothing can be adopted or adapted properly without it.

Before passing to the description of the long-run comprehensive objectives of Hungarian technological development, I would like to make it clear that I do not consider the effectiveness of technological policy the only manifestation of the social interest in the natural sciences including physics. I do not merely accept the importance, or if you like, the social utility, of research directly influencing productivity. If I did so I would commit a grave error; I would forget the total social value of basic research. I nevertheless wish to speak first of those expectations which the objective requirements of technological growth entertain towards physics.

The Requirements

First, I wish to deal with those requirements of economic policy which will strongly influence in the next ten to fifteen years the objectives of technological development and thus also the directions of research and development activity. One such—certainly well known—requirement of economic policy derives from the fact that labour reserves are limited and their increase cannot be expected in the future either.

Thus increase in productivity becomes the almost exclusive source of economic growth. This can only be done in the long run through the rapid and effective realization of technological and scientific achievements.

Another requirement is connected with the fact that the growth rate will mostly be determined by the increase of the share of exportable and competitive products. Let us only think of the vehicle industry. The development of the Hungarian bus industry is due, among other things, to the fact that it produces buses for foreign customers in large quantities.

Domestic requirements alone do not permit modern methods of production.

Since Hungary has to import both fuel and raw materials, which disadvantageously distort the terms of trade, production requiring little power and material but exploiting important intellectual capacities is of growing importance. Simultaneously, the increase of electric power production and raw material exploration by modern means and the scientifically founded rationalization of their utilization becomes inevitable. In brief: with a limited or rather diminishing labour force, with the utilization

of a fuel and raw material base relying partly on imports the rate and level of production must be increased so as to ensure the development of the economy and of welfare through exporting increasing quantities of internationally competitive products. This objective can only be realized through the use of the latest results of science and technology, relying on a high degree of the social organization of labour.

What are the general technological R + D tasks that follow on this objective? I am not claiming that this is a complete list, and I shall mention the most important factors only.

— The mechanization or production must be accelerated since the share of manual operations is very high in Hungary, and thus ties down considerable quantities of labour that could be made available elsewhere. The mechanization of material handling must be increased, and simultaneously research into the laws of material transport as realized in the processes of production must be furthered.

— Automation must be increased primarily in those areas where it is efficient from the aspect of the exchange of live and stored-up labour, and where a technological standard is necessary which can be achieved only through automation.

— The methods of computer technology must be spread in planning, organization, recording, process control, administration, etc., accompanied by the elaboration of models forecasting the behaviour of complex systems, and paying special attention to the development of easily manageable programme systems to ensure the effective utilization of computers.

— Standardization based on system methods must be extended and more generally applied and this may lead to considerable savings in labour input.

— The structure of power consumption must be perfected, modified and rationalized, and the share of nuclear power must be increased. Technologies that are optimal from the aspect of power consumption must be introduced, a comprehensive system of the power economy elaborated and economic levers applied that assist the introduction of this system.

— Industries producing basic materials must be perfected and considerably developed, increasing the research and developmental work improving the mechanical, electrical, magnetic, chemical, etc. qualities of structural materials. The perfection of technological processes (cleaning, alloying, heat-treatment, finishing, etc.) must be made a principal objective, through the systematic exploration of the laws determining these processes.

— The industrial introduction of new kinds of materials making possible the substitution of the most deficient raw materials and basic materials must be started, making use of foreign and domestic research.

The elaboration and application of the processes increasing durability (protection against corrosion) must be stimulated, as well as the rational utilization of waste materials and used products.

— Chemicalization must be further increased both in agriculture and in industry, because it results in labour saving and in the reduction of raw material consumption. The increase of animal and vegetable protein production must be achieved through the joint application of chemicalization and agrotechniques, taking special care of the protection of the biological equilibrium.

New materials and combinations of materials, as products of the chemicalization of industry, play an increasing role in the substitution of natural materials.

— In the training of skilled workers in secondary and tertiary education an increasing role must be given to the acquisition of scientific and technological knowledge that does not quickly become obsolete. One must try to create a culture that unites the sciences, technologies and humanities on the ideological foundation of scientific socialism.

It is certainly possible to add to this list of important and timely objectives. I am convinced that I have mentioned only the most important ones. One may well ask whether anything can be deduced in respect of physics from the general tasks here enumerated. I believe that I am not alone when answering in the affirmative. Nearly every task offers physics the opportunity for initiative and action.

Basic Research

In conclusion I would like to touch on a question which cannot be deduced directly from the task of technological policy, but which, in the last resort, has in numerous cases a determinant role in the technological and scientific progress of a country. I am speaking of basic research. Much has been said in recent years on this question I only want to touch on it from the aspects of planning and of deciding on objectives.

The methods of the planning of research are in part similar to the methods of economic planning and in part entirely different. The planning of research to be conducted for the sake of exploring still unknown laws and the formulation of such research objectives, can hardly be compared to the

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GEBAKJE
10

PÉTER KORNISS: HOME FOR THE AGED

KÁLMÁN KÓNYA: IN CONFERENCE

plans and objectives of research directed at a concrete economic goal. We would be chasing illusions if we attributed the same importance to direction in basic research as must be attributed to it in the case of research aimed at concrete economic goal.

The exploration of the unknown, the recognition of new phenomena and laws can, simplifying matters, be compared to hunting. One cannot tell whether the animal to be hunted will cross one's path, and it is obvious that experience and, more than once, intuition, help in knowing how to approach the animal. It is hardly possible however to provide a recipe. It is obvious that if somebody wants to hunt a polar bear he will not scout in the Indian forests; or speaking seriously, the fact that something is unknown does not mean complete guess work.

Those handling basic research usually know exactly in what area they would like to explore some unknown phenomenon or law, and are also able to tell what methods, equipment and instruments they need. It is possible to speak of planning only in this sense, since it is obvious to any serious person that no one can fix a time and a cost to make a discovery of which nobody had any previous knowledge. It is important to emphasize that the selection of the objectives is nevertheless not an activity guided by mere chance, but on the contrary, every period has its particularities which may make the new discoveries timely—at least within a foreseeable time. We already have sufficient experience to recognize the trends of progress, and can thus set out from these trends in the detetmination of objectives.

I recently had an interesting discussion with Professor Baldin, the well-known physicist, who claimed that those objectives should be taken seriously and be supported about which a number of scientists show enthusiasm. In his view the number of scientists that take an interest in a problem shows its timeliness and importance. I consider this worthy of attention and there is no better method I could recommend for selecting objectives in basic research. It is obvious to me that there is no reliably objective measuring rod to decide which of the future problems that can rationally be taken seriously is the most important.

The gravest danger in this area would be if there were some people who declared one problem of basic research more important than another because of their power, and perhaps this is the point where Professor Baldin's ideas lead to difficulties.

The view of the majority, some kind of vote, means the use of power in this context.

It has happened more than once in the course of history that conventional thinking called some problems of basic research senseless, and it was only

due to the will-power (or if you like stubbornness) of a scientist with deep convinctions that important new discoveries were made. Some years ago we all read with interest about the breaking of the genetic code, and I believe it superfluous to emphasize that Watson and Crick did not exactly select this exciting problem in keeping with the way of thinking of the majority.

It would be possible to enumerate many examples on the unprojectability of discoveries, and the role of intuition, but one would be committing a mistake of similar magnitude if one saw only those features. These unprojectable discoveries are also necessary consequences of the progress of science and not completely unforeseen facts which would justify the rejection of every kind of foresight and planning.

One ought to know, however that, in determining the objectives of basic research, rigidity harbours great dangers, and if anywhere then in this domain it is most necessary to give great scope to personal initiative and democratic decision-making.

This sounds simple, but becomes worrying when there is insufficient money for this kind of activity, and the number of those wishing to fight for new discoveries is larger than the quantity of available resources. If such a situation develops, then the worst attitude is if one pretends that everybody could be happy and win a battle, although nobody will be able to do so, since in this vulgar democracy will lead to an equality that means stagnation.

In any country the amount can be determined (whether well or badly is debatable) which can be spent on the "production" of new knowledge, irrespective of whether this knowledge will turn into economic profit in the near or distant future, and great care must be taken that only as many "warriors" should be permitted to enter the battle-field as can be supplied with sound weapons.

The question arises what should happen to the others, who should determine, and how, who the real warriors are? This is a question to which an answer is sought the world over, but none that is acceptable has been found as yet.

It is easy to say that the most talented should be selected, and good research conditions should be ensured for them, but such answers beg the question. What is the criterion of talent? I believe that no solution can be found that will satisfy all who are interested, and the best method appears to be nevertheless to spend primarily on teams (scientific schools) doing successful work.

In such a case there is some guarantee that the enterprise directed at the

acquisition of new knowledge will be successful. At the same time one cannot keep silent about the danger that scientific schools once successful may later get into a rut, but their old glory may continue to ensure them a great quantity of resources whereas new and recognized teams stagnate and their strengthening is hampered by the traditional ones.

In the last resort there is no precise solution, and consequently wise science policy overcomes the problem by supporting basic research to the permissible maximum—without damaging general economic policy, or to be more exact, technological policy. It does so, of course, not because it hopes for an immediate or short-term profit, but because it wishes to acquire ever new knowledge about nature, man, and society. This knowledge forms, in its fullness, directly or often indirectly, part of full human life, and wherever its importance is underestimated, creativity sooner or later flattens, and the intellectual reservoir so indispensable for practical application becomes exhausted.

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ISTVÁN SIMON

RHAPSODY ON TIME

István Simon, who died this year at the age of 49, was a member of the generation of poets, writers and artists who grew up during the war and plunged into the subsequent social revolution with great fervour. The poets Ferenc Juhász and László Nagy, both published in the West, are best known amongst them. Like Juhász and Nagy, Simon also was born in a poor, backward village and retained village life and folk poetry as important sources of his inspiration, using them sometimes as counterpoints to a rapidly and ruthlessly changing world. He was called up and sent to the eastern front during the war and continued his studies in 1947, after his return from a PoW camp.

He studied Hungarian and German at Pázmány University and Eötvös College in Budapest, and began publishing his poems in the late forties. He held various editorial positions, worked as a journalist and broadcaster, was active on the executive of the Writers' Association, and for many years represented his home district in Parliament. When a student, he was member of the People's College movement—on which we carry an article elsewhere in this issue.

All his life Simon remained firmly committed to his socialist ideals and to the concept of the public role of the poet. Sometimes his poetry suffered for it, being naive, but sometimes, when writing on broader issues, he could be powerful and convincing in a personal, refreshingly optimistic way. "Rhapsody on Time" was also the title of his last volume of poems published in 1975.—The Editor.

I

O transitory season, lightningless,
perhaps no winter ever was your back;
at autumn's end the border-marches cracked,
obliterated where pigs root and press.

A nervous countryside; a sea of grass
with periscopes that pop up, veer and tack:
the gopher weaves and sniffs, drops quickly back,
the snail retracts his horns as shadows pass.

This poem was posthumously awarded the Hungarian Writers' Association Robert Graves Prize for Best Poem of the Year 1975—an award Mr. Graves had founded out of his Hungarian author's royalties. At the time of the Graves Prize Committee's meeting on 18 June István Simon was already dying of cancer. Previous winners of the Prize were László Kálnoky, 1970; Zoltán Zelk, 1971; Dezső Tandori, 1972; Magda Székely, 1973; Ottó Orbán, 1974.—*The Editor.*

Only the weird hill junipers sink claws
into the earth and grasp it as a child
will grasp its mother's lap, by right, by fate,

saying, you too should keep your useless tears,
but seize and saddle, bit and bridle wild
time that accelerates at such fearful rate.

2
Such fearful rate! but I don't understand
what we can measure headlong life against,
for I have had the same pace, the same thrust,
since I am no longer mother-wakened.

Yet any time my automatic hand
switches the light off, I can hear from darkest
endless night: 'Oil's not for you to waste!'—
and I'm at home, that moment, in my mind.

And now again, half-choked in tears and laughter,
we start to count how many puffs I take
to blow the lamp out from my bed; and after,

I sense the warm delight achievements make,
and watch the childlike family having fun—
one movement of the hand, and this is done.

3
A gentle rain has drifted down tonight;
through it I can still feel that tomorrow
I may be able to give honour to
the old field hazels, goatee-bearded, bright

with blossom: for they've been set alight
since last year, and I only listen through
the rain-voice to dead soldiers in their sorrow,
marching into one forgetful night.

Since when? All's one. I remember the day
I sky-gazed in Thebes, at the royal tombs:
cloudless, like five millenniums away—

an image or experience to blow
the mind with a new metaphor for time:
a mousetrap that snaps man in iron jaw.

4
I stood that same season on no-man's land,
like a boat on a sandbank, gone to ground;
for that one moment, currents that swirled me round
left me, I had no law but my own hand.

On a bleak steading, under a maple-tree,
I leaned my elbow into my rifle, made
myself a living helmeted cross, the dead
were fifty million earthmen under me.

I almost wept at that strange threshold where
I flung my haversack; what is that door,
thrown flat into the mud, I stammered there,

does it mean this was the last escape of war,
or did it let in endless peace?—I swear
I've asked and asked, but no one can answer.

5
There was a time when time, stretched over space,
struck down at each of us and gave us all
musical instruments; we didn't know
it was a job of work that set the pace.

The droll and double-tongued bassoon, for instance,
fell to the lot of the poor hoarse cuckoo,
who made us shudder when we heard his cry,
hidden, announce the years we'd left to us.

Cuckoo, cuckoo... Catch him, Uncle Pista,
they used to tease my father with their pleas.
He said, if I could see him I would seize him.

Ruthless trap, your teeth are fallen away,
and no one now cries at another, they
fly from Earth to Moon through silences.

6
O transitory season, lightningless,
perhaps no winter ever saw your back;
the meadow deeps already show the track
of gopher periscopes bobbing through the grass.

Haven't the tree-rings made a great advance?—
one chatters to the sleepy snail. Don't slack!
And the snail gets to grips with the birch bark,
wiping his dandy glistening moustache.

And while the weird hill junipers sink claws
into the earth and grasp it as a child
will grasp its mother's lap, by right, by fate,

the snail says, don't forget to check your watch,
to see if I can count the rings—by miles?
I hardly feel time passing, at my rate.

Translated by Edwin Morgan

A ROAD IS BUILT

(Short story)

by

JÓZSEF LENGYEL

Coarse, hooded tarpaulin coats, haversacks, hip-boots, mosquito-netting draped over their hats, three men make their way through the forest wilderness. One of them is middle-aged and bearded, the other is young and well-built and wears glasses. They carry geodetic equipment. The third is burdened with the long red-and-white marking poles. He leads the way.

They break through the undergrowth, wade in bogs, cross streams along fallen tree trunks and traverse rivers on rafts knocked together in haste or on derelict boats abandoned there.

They take measurements and cut signs into the sides of the trees. When they use the theodolite, the third man holding the marking rod upright, the hatchet remains stuck in the belt. Then they take to the hatchet again, cutting their marks. Wherever they have passed, the dark and the honey-coloured tree trunks hold tears of resin in their wounded bark.

Where their heavy boots have trodden, mosquitoes swarm up out of the grass. If their shoulders brush the twigs of a tree, clouds of black flies descend, swarm over them, find their way under the mosquito-net, and burrow into the corners of their eyes, into their nostrils, under their shirts. The pain from their bites smarts and burns where sweat and the salt of tears trickle into the scratched sores.

They are irritable, grimy, stubble-cheeked, the blood of their squashed tormentors mingling with their own. When one of them disappears in the bush, they hoot to find him again. When he turns up, they curse him. The two of them taking the measurements manipulate their theodolite, cursing like dockers, the third man holds up the marking rod, restless, stamping his feet. At any moment, you would think, they will fly at one another. Their sallow faces twist in anger, they raise their voices or lower them to an inarticulate grumble, to appear tougher, more hardened than they really are.

At night, when the forest darkens fast, they drop their knapsacks. The hatchets are at work once more. They need wood for their camp fire.

The fire flares up, the cauldron is placed over it, and by the time supper is cooked satisfaction with the distance they have covered takes something from their fatigue.

They eat their supper. The eldest one takes some photographs from his wallet. "My children."

Then the young man with the spectacles shows a photograph. "Mother."

They wait for the third man to show them something as well, but he has no pictures on him, so he only nods. "This is the place to lie down," he says.

The young man, as if he had just been waiting for the word, tugs his sweater out of his haversack, pulls it on and promptly lies down beside the fire.

But the man who has led the way all day, carrying the marking rods, tells him get up. "No good, not that way!"

He takes the hatchet, and with every swish of it cuts down a seeping branch from the fir trees, and drags them near the fire. He divides the live ashes into two heaps, brushing them to each side with one of the fresh fir branches. Where the fire had burnt he makes up a bed from the fir branches and covers it with a blanket.

"Quick! Get undressed!"

Their clothes make a pillow. Two more blankets and the tarpaulin coats make the cover and the three men turn in under the same blankets.

"Are you from these parts?" the older man asks.

"No."

"A gold digger?" the young man with the spectacles inquires.

"Wish I had been."

"A hunter?" they go on asking.

"That, too."

"How do you mean—too?"

"Wish I'd been that too."

"If I may make bold to ask," the older man breaks in again, "what are you by profession?"

"A baker."

"Then why are you on this expedition with us?"

"Because a baker always has cold feet and a hot head."

"And are you really called Nameless?"

"That's right, Nameless."

They fall silent. The former baker gets up once more, stokes the fire

up on both sides of them, lies down again. They snuggle in, draw close. Their faces smooth out. They fall asleep.

A damp, dew-drenched morning. They wake up with chattering teeth, tired. They pick themselves up in a hurry, put out the fires, go on their way, out of temper. Bones, scraps of paper remain behind where they have camped, the sound of the swishing hatchet recedes. Ants take possession of the deserted camp. They overrun it, they clean it up, all traces of human occupation have now vanished. Only the tree trunks still flow with resinous tears.

A multitude come trekking along the resinous markings.

Saws screech, axes outclang one another, timber sighs and crashes terrifyingly down on to the earth where it had known peace throughout its life. Deer flee, wheelbarrows whine, stones roll.

The crowds of people sweat in the searing heat of the summer calm.

Sweat in the winter cold. Their feet are ready to freeze off, their shirts are soaked with sweat, snow-water melts on their faces. As soon as they stop to catch their breath icicles form from their nostrils, their stubbled faces silver with hoarfrost, they start to tremble with the cold. They must not rest. Panting, heart pulsing in the throat, the axe must still be swung, the wheelbarrow must be pushed.

Sweat in spring, too, when the saw is caught in the resinous wood and the birch pours out its abundant ice-cold sap, which you can never stop drinking.

Sweat in autumn, when a man wades endlessly through the clinging mud and his clothes rot in the rain.

Falling tree in the instant of death kicks back in vicious revenge—spine squashed to pulp, shin-bone cracking.

Slashed-down branch flies high and wide—sticks, a quivering arrow, in a human forehead.

But men are many, like ants, the downpour of rain enough to wash away the blood, the smoke of one cigarette enough to blow away fear, a tumblerful of liquor enough to empty the wage-packet.

The tortured thud of the falling trees is overshadowed by the earthquakes of the blasting.

The white-marked trees are now all laid out peacefully at the edge of the clearings. Into the rough hair of the forest a giant clipper has cut a straight parting. A long trail is visible, down dale and up hill. The road-in-being is flanked by awkward, ungainly trees. They have lost their brothers, slant sideways, stripped naked. Branches and leaves crown the tops alone.

An excavator bites into the ground. Stones and pebbles spatter down on the tree-stumps. The road flattens out, the machine shears away mounds and fills in the dips.

The road-builders' bodies are alive with lice. As if they had been engendered out of nothing, but thrive only on blood. At night the men, instead of lying down to rest, heat up stones on the fire, and roast their tormentors alive. As though they were burning witches. They watch the burnt insects crackle with savage delight: they curse and they pray. The former baker makes the rounds each night, cutting hair and beards with a clipper. Only then can the men lie down in peace and sleep in human shape, as men born of woman.

Out of one of the road-builders' camp fires flame-snakes creeping low, wriggle in the autumn-dry grass. Then they rear upright, and trees burn by the thousand, in columns of sky-high flame; as the trees topple the flames rise higher still. The crackle of fire, the thud of falling trees overwhelms all noises of men.

In the baker's hand—an axe and a green branch. He and all the others thrash the earth-hugging fire. They dig trenches against the flames. The fire recedes, driving deer and birds before it. Beside the road the forest is black, muted.

Field kitchens and disinfection units, hospital tents and doctors follow on the finished road in the track of the road-builders. Medical aides, charwomen, nurses and cooks.

Lice are put under the microscope; their image is more satanic than that of Saint Anthony's tempter, and more infernal than any evil vision. The injured get treatment; those whose legs were broken by falling timber get wooden crutches.

The power-shovels dig out a deep pit for a foundation. Near the road, where the forest burned down, a town is built and a factory. The tents and field-kitchens move further on along the newer part of the road.

But at the place where the baker is working they are still felling trees, and one of the falling trees hits him. Two of his companions carry him out of the woods on a stretcher, put him on a wagon and later into an ambulance. It takes him along the finished road to the new town's hospital.

The invalid walks in the new town, supported by his stick. He is awkward, bent sideways like the trees that survived the first onslaught.

The houses are built of stone and red brick and greyish-green cement;

the beams for the roofs are brought by lorries. On the streets holes, pools, human excrement on foul-smelling heaps of bricks, sticky clay. The door of a public house flies open, there is a brawl. A drunk, knife in hand, runs out. A scared-eyed woman runs away, dragging with her a sobbing child...

Beyond the town, the same bleakness. Where by chance an island of green survives, protected from the conflagration by bog, brook, stones—the new inhabitants cut down trees, like thieves, leaving the stumps standing high, because they did not bother to bend while sawing. Out of the stumps new wild shoots grow. The small fir trees have their tops broken off: people need them for Christmas; but the young fir can now only grow twisted, split in two... Only far, very far away, real forest is blueish on the horizon—the invalid has no chance of getting near it. There, there are tall trees, flowers, untrodden clearings, there, there is soft grass on the banks of the brook.

Nor are there any birds in the town. Clouds of mosquitoes rise from the street puddles, ever increasing in number, ever bolder. They feed on people's blood, they multiply, and since the eagles have vanished, they are now the lords of the sky.

The invalid hobbles back to the hospital, where now a mosquito is put under the microscope: the mosquito is even more gruesome than the louse.

The holes are filled and flattened out, the pools covered with sand. The streets straightened to a uniform pattern, with neither grass nor trees. Even the weeds in the road ditches vanish. But people are glad of this bleakness: it means fewer mosquitoes.

The invalid goes to a bakery: he asks for work.

But scarcely was he in front of the bread-oven when giddiness overcame him and he fell headlong.

"You'd be better selling," says the head of the bakery, and the former baker nods.

They give him a piece of paper and a pencil. He keeps track of the buns and loaves sold: the hand, used to the axe, awkwardly marks down the figures on the paper.

The one-horse baker's cart takes the loaves to the town, where there is nothing in the streets except cement shafts and wires.

But potted flowers begin to parade in windows, the pots wrapped round with coloured paper. Geraniums in front, glossy-green aspidistras behind. Women wash the window-panes to a spotless sparkle. From the panes, as they turn on their hinges, gold-glittering light flashes on the bleak street.

Three men make their way through the wilderness. Their axes cut markings, trees weep resinous tears. Two strangers, and the man with the spectacles, have grown stouter by now. They prepare for the night's rest. The man with the spectacles calls out to the other two:

"Greenhorns! Cut some good, broad pine branches. Watch me." And even as he had learned from the former baker, he divides the fire in two; sweeping cinders and ashes to either side he makes the bed on the warmed-up soil.

The bearded old engineer gets up from his desk and says good-bye to his son, hip-booted, windbreaker-clad, ready to leave.

The invalid counts up the buns. Two young fellows load up the big baker's cart. A lorry brings flour. From its top a sparrow swoops to the ground.

"Look at that!" The fellows laugh. The former baker looks out of the bakery door too.

Midday break. Girls come running from the sewing shop into the street, where sparrows are hopping about. Away from the great clatter fly the sparrows, up into their nests under the eaves; the girls dash into the stores.

The invalid baker jokes with the girls who have come to buy buns. He takes one by the hand. But the girl draws away from him; she laughs, half-startled, she runs out of the shop. Outside a young fellow is waiting for her: a pilot.

By now there are holidays as well, when even the men walk in the streets in clean clothes and lift their caps to greet one another.

After dinner the former baker knocks together a wooden bird-refuge for starlings. He brings a step-ladder along and climbs a telegraph pole. While he is hammering it up there, he can look out and see as far as the small village in which he, a flaxen-haired little boy, had built a bird-refuge for starlings among the birch trees.

In the first spring no starlings came into the bird-refuge. In the new school-yard the children break up the earth, pick out of it all the pieces of iron, stone, broken brick, the remains of the lime-pit. A young woman teacher stands among them: the first small garden is born, the daughters and sons of the forest-clearers plant the first trees.

Along the great road they plant pine saplings, thickly, in multiple rows. Not for beauty, heaven forbid! But as a living wall to protect the road against snowdrifts. Never mind if it's beautiful as well.

Young married couples plant fruit trees in front of their houses. Every patch of land is made to bear fruit. Human hands touch every clod of earth, human eyes caress every little seedling. Water is for watering plants, garbage is for compost—they can scarcely wait for time rolling so slowly towards harvesting.

The outsides of the houses mellow with creepers, the insides with being lived in and with memories—of tears that flowed in the difficult years; of waitings after sunset; of partings and meetings; of loved pieces of furniture; of letters and photographs, quietly waiting in the depths of a drawer to be taken up by a hand. The old photographs have yellowed over, but new ones are arriving.

Three men in the jungle slash out with their axes. Under a bread-fruit tree the bearded engineer's son takes snapshots. He darts in front of the camera quickly to be in the group picture as well.

A young man handles the stick in the craft that takes him through the airy sky.

On an ice-floe the pilot stands, the one that had been waiting for the girl from the sewing shop.

The new pictures come to take their places among the old. The bearded engineer, though, puts his son's photograph up on his desk. The seamstress in the shop shows the fine young pilot's picture to her friends. The mother looks at the photograph of a young lad at the stick of the aeroplane... it's dark in the room by now, she still holds it in her hand, her eyes still brim with tears.

Three men are putting up markings among stones and moss, where trees no longer grow.

The former baker and the old engineer are brought their pensions by the postman. They meet out in the street, in front of the new school fence. The fruit trees promise their first yield. The baker picks an ugly caterpillar from a jutting branch and crushes it underfoot.

"One fine butterfly less."

The old engineer nods.

They sit down on a bench, sun themselves, get talking, look over the young trees. Their thoughts go even farther than the young people looking to the first yield. They know by now, it is not merely a matter of the

first yield. Out of pear trees gold-hued chests of drawers will be made for grandchildren and great-grandchildren—from the sourcherry trees pipes, soon, next year perhaps... They know that all men are born of mothers, the soft-eyed cow is born of a mother, the trees are, mother earth is... they know that you must make your bed over the warm ashes in the woods and put a flowerbed in front of the factory.

Swallows perch on the telegraph wires...

Translated by Bertha Gaster

József Lengyel who died early this summer was born in a village, in 1896. He studied at the universities of Budapest and Vienna. Like many young Hungarian intellectuals who found the pre-First World War literary climate stifling he joined Kassák's avant-garde movement and published his first poems in Kassák's magazine A Tett *(Action). Soon, however, he found himself left of Kassák and became one of the founders of the Hungarian Communist Party in 1918. During the Republic of Councils in 1919, he was active as a journalist and party worker, and subsequently had to flee the country.*

For years he lived and worked in Vienna and Berlin, before moving to Moscow in 1930. There, besides writing his own fiction, he worked on the staff of the Hungarian emigré magazine Sarló és kalapács *(Hammer and Sickle). In 1938 he was sent to prison on trumped-up charges. When his term expired he was exiled to arctic Siberia. Rehabilitation followed seventeen years later, in 1955, and the same year he returned to Hungary and settled in Budapest, soon establishing himself as a novelist of note.* Visegrádi utca, *a novel written in Moscow in 1930, is an account of revolutionary activity in Budapest during the First World War and, like most of his later writing, is heavily autobiographical.* Prenn Drifting, *a novel,* From Beginning to End, *two short novels, and* Acta Sanctorum, *a collection of short stories, were also published in English (by Peter Owen in London). The last volume contains perhaps his best writing, the stories being mainly about the mental processes which allowed him to preserve not only his physical and mental integrity through long years of suffering but also his commitment, his unshakable belief in the eventual triumph of reason and justice in the face of all that was done to him.*

His dry, matter-of-fact style and approach, free of both illusion and rhetoric, and the wealth of his first-hand experience of the various ways of surviving great ordeals make his work an important and moving document of twentieth-century writing.

In some of his stories József Lengyel succeeded in presenting modern man amid the pitfalls of history, struggling to keep his head up and nurturing the flame of his hope and conviction, and in more than one the power and the authenticity of his presentation place him in the ranks of the truly important writers of the age.—The Editor.

LUKÁCS AND HUNGARIAN LITERATURE

by

PÉTER NAGY

We are celebrating the ninetieth anniversary of the birth of György Lukács*—but the complex and stimulating agglomeration of philosophical, aesthetic and political questions that name signifies has not been made timely merely by the anniversary or by the intention to celebrate it. It is always timely irrespective of pretext or occasion, the timeliness is forced on us by the evolution of society. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the intellectual life of a society constructing socialism is characterized and qualified by the way in which it manages the legacy of a thinker of the scale and depth of György Lukács, and by the extent to which it is willing, and able, to appropriate critically his intellectual legacy.

In the preceding sentence I should place equal emphasis on the words "appropriate" and "critical". The two taken together have a special meaning in Marxist theory and practice. The entire creative career of Lukács, and his evolution as a thinker, prove the continuous dialectic of these two words. Even his attitude as a man taught much the same. He always held in higher esteem those who debated and argued with him than disciples who simply recited what he said. If what he says in another context is true of anybody it is certainly true of him: if time and scholarship succeeded in refuting all of his propositions, he would still come out on top, since this would not, and could not, affect the truth and validity of his method and procedure. I believe that he never wished for any other life after death: only this, and this he achieved. That very exciting intellectual way which György Lukács travelled, and which spanned this century, not only in time, but

* A slightly amplified text of on address given at a commemorative session of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on 22 April 1975.—Editor.

also in its extremes of thought and thinking, could essentially be reduced to this endeavour: to a passionate and unrelenting search for a way, doing so with unparalleled intellectual fervour, of putting the questions postulated by the period in a manner worthy of it and being able to give the right answers to properly recognized questions. The searching period is no less exciting and pregnant with lessons for all of us than the discovery, when we are eing bable to give answers; but anyone who recognizes only the works of the searching period as his point of departure turns against both György Lukács the living thinker and against his intellectual legacy. If there are, in our century, any thinkers whose works are not merely an agglomeration of treatises but an organically built up life's work György Lukács' is certainly one of them; and one betrays his work as such if one does not look at this totality viewing it from its results, but tries to draw some arbitrary line across it.

Within the complex of problems which the name of György Lukács means and signifies, the links between his work, and its problems, and Hungarian literature are small in size but not in importance; this makes it worthy of closer examination and attention.

György Lukács and Hungarian literature—you can look at that from two angles. On the one hand: what Hungarian literature has given to György Lukács, the role of Hungarian literature in his intellectual growth, what Hungarian literature meant to him; but also what György Lukács means to Hungarian literature, did he have any—and if so, what—influence on its growth and development; has he entered his name as a thinker, as a critic, as a literary historian or literary politician into the annals of Hungarian literature?

Of these the first question has so far attracted most attention. The whispering campaign directed against Lukács has tried to attack him in a characteristically boorish nationalistic way, trying to neutralize his influence, and weight, by claiming that he had no organic link with Hungarian culture, that he was a "cosmopolitan" and not a Hungarian patriot. Gábor Tolnai made a first attempt to give a clear rebuttal to this attack already twenty years ago[1], providing a sketch of the relationship between Lukács and Hungarian literature; but a clear answer was given by Lukács himself when he described his own intellectual growth telling of the importance to him of Hungarian literature, mainly of the poet Ady (1877–1919)—in helping him find his identity and also his place within the Hungarian literary and political radicalism of the beginning of the century; both the agreements and the differences[2]. If there had ever been any doubt about the importance and intensity of the relationship between Lukács and

Hungarian literature, and Lukács and Hungarian intellectual life, this dispelled it. George Lichtheim and István Hermann, Tibor Hanák and Ervin Gyertyán: that is everyone who tackled the genesis of Lukács's work has to recognize—with pleasure or reluctance—that it is rooted in the social, intellectual, and emotional problems of the Hungarian early 1900s and that this extraordinary philosophic career was set in motion by the social and intellectual atmosphere of the Hapsburg Monarchy at the time, and within it of Hungary, and its capital, Budapest.

Two important pieces of work on this period in Lukács's life have already been done: I am referring to studies by Zoltán Kenyeres and Ferenc Tőkei[3], which have tried to sketch the significance and importance of this relationship. I don't think it is a source of pride for Hungarians that neither has received sufficient encouragement and support to continue and complete such significant and important work. This is an important task for the Hungarian historians of ideology and literature, which should be carried out as soon as possible if one wants to look back on Lukács's life and work with a good conscience.

We know from the prefaces in which Lukács analysed his own career that what was first an intellectual detachment, and soon became a search for a path leading to revolutionary thought and even action, had its roots in his home, in that metropolitan upper middle class environment imitating the behaviour of the gentry, against which he turned already as a child. His school and the spirit it taught, which imbued Hungarian scholarship and education at the fin de siècle, had no small role in this opposition. Already then he learned to despise the conservative idolatry of facts, called positivism in Hungary, which then dominated Hungarian scholarship all the way from Zsolt Beöthy* to Bernát Alexander** and longed for a free intellectual air, which opened a way towards totality—the totality of thinking and feeling. He unconsciously prepared himself for the cathartic influence of Ady, for a critical support of the literary revolution of the periodical *Nyugat* and even for the road which led from the absence of philosophy in Hungarian intellectual life to a philosophically richer environment, to Berlin, Florence, and later Heidelberg.

On this road a special importance must be accorded to the Hungarian *Théâtre Libre* movement, the Volunteer Theatrical Association fighting against supression by the authorities between 1904 and 1908, the Thalia Society, with which Lukács collaborated. The reason is not only that Lukács

* Beöthy, Zsolt (1848–1922). Novelist, literary historian and critic. of the conservative-nationalistic approach, professor at Budapest University.

** Alexander, Bernát (1850–1927). Professor of philosophy at Budapest University, student of aesthetics, journalist, dramatic critic, the Hungarian translator of Kant.

himself pointed out that he there saw an example of real human behaviour in the person of Imre Pethes, the actor and that he learned here that his way was not that of the creative artist but that of the critic and thinker. His encounter with the Thalia Society and his collaboration with them, which may almost be called a fighting companionship, is also a sort of prefiguration of his later road, the longing for a community, and his ability to create a community, his ambition to transplant the results of his thinking into practice, and his ability to generalize broadly the results of his practical work in philosophic terms. His *History of the Evolution of Modern Drama* (1911) was the realization of the latter. It is to this day the most comprehensive and most interesting history of the European drama written in Hungarian. Many judgements were revised by time, and even by the author himself, but the way it put questions, sociological ways of looking at things and theoretical consistency, are still exemplary. This applies also to its appendix-like closing chapter on the history of the Hungarian drama. Here too some details may need correction; but the train of thought as such is marked by high principles and consistency, and most of the critical comments have also stood the test of time.

The judgements of the young critic were stunningly steady and to the point. I am not thinking here primarily of his writings on Ady; the importance of Ady in Lukács's thinking is far removed from all that his work as a critic implied; Ady was a cathartic experience for him; Ady was the first to teach him to see the "truth" behind "reality"; it is not by chance that remembering this period Lukács himself mentioned Ady together, and on the same level with the influence of Hegel and Dostoievsky. He remained attached to Ady to the last breath of life, drawing ever new strength, new arguments, and new things of beauty.

His experience connected with *Nyugat** was parallel to his Ady-experience. There was Hungarian opposition to philosophic thinking even amongst progressive men of letters; it was his failures at *Nyugat* and the lost Béla Balázs-battle** that made him understand that, for his theories and militant insistence on his principles, the Hungarian soil was still untilled. It is not possible to enter here into a detailed discussion of these questions, perhaps there is material that remains to be explored which might throw more light on these questions (e.g. the correspondence with Babits which has been

* *Nyugat:* a literary and critical periodical published in Budapest from 1908 to 1941, a most important instrument of the literary revival. All major Hungarian writers contributed to it.

** Béla Balázs (1884–1949), who later achieved world fame as a theoretician of the film started as a gifted symbolist poet and a deeply intellectual playwright. Lukács fought for his acceptance and published a book on Balázs: *Balázs Béla és akiknek nem kell* (Béla Balázs and Those Who Do Not Like or Want Him). Collected studies. Gyoma, 1918. (In Hungarian.)

found in the Heidelberg Lukács-legacy* is extremely important evidence in this respect); but there is no doubt about the resistance of Ernő Osvát, associate editor of *Nyugat*, to the critical activity of Lukács. Despite the support that Ignotus, editor of *Nyugat*, gave Lukács, Osvát exercised a categoric veto. It was not due exclusively to the often mannered and obscure style of the young man—an editor could fix that—but to the principles concealed by this style, principles passionately and boldly opposed to all that Hungarian conservativism in scholarship and literature stood for, and with which Osvát tenaciously sought a compromise to the very last. This was what in the young Lukács was akin to Ady, his senior by eight years, and this was that isolated one, and paralysed the other, within *Nyugat*, and the reason why Lukács had to seek his fortune outside Hungary, if he did not wish to suffer intellectual change. But he took along what Hungary taught him—the social, the literary, and the philosophic; this was the reason why, in the otherwise high philosophic and to him congenial atmosphere of Heidelberg, he still felt isolated and lonely.

Lukács returned to Budapest on the eve of the 1918–19 revolutions. Talking to people Lukács often liked to mention this episode in his life as a characteristic example of the dialectic of contingency and necessity. Private problems made him return home, not theoretical considerations; but it was the imperative of society, of history and of his loyalty to himself which made him apt for philosophic revolution first and then revolutionary action. Enough has been published to allow the two revolutions to stand clearly before us; the time has come for the particular role of György Lukács in that period to be thoroughly examined on the basis of the available documents. The facts known by me—and they are certainly far from complete—show that in this period too we face a rare intertwining of principle and practice; and since, in the quarter century of the Counter-Revolution it was precisely art and literature that kept the memory of the Republic of Councils at its liveliest, it can be concluded that what the Commissar for Culture and Education György Lukács did, was responsible in no small measure. But all this requires further elucidation.

It has been proven and broadly documented that it was this period that started György Lukács on his road to his intellectual homing flight, his final and irrevocable encounter with Marxism. However exciting and important this path is, and however much it is again an example of the coexistence of theory and practice, of the dialectic unity, and of their assisting each other, this is not the place to go into detail. But it was the

* For the Heidelberg legacy, see: "Karl Mannheim's Letters to Lukács," NHQ, No. 57. pp. 93—94.

period from the end of the First World War to that of the Second, with all its successes and failures, its struggles political and theoretical, that helped transform an earlier messianic morality which foreshadowed the later messianistic sectarian, into a true Marxist–Leninist, whose work in philosophy and aesthetic was already considered by the entire international revolutionary working class movement as its common treasure and basis for reference.

It was then that György Lukács again stepped into the Hungarian intellectual current. This occurred during the Second World War when the Hungarian periodical *Új Hang* was published in Moscow. It is little known in Hungary even now that Lukács played an important, if not decisive, role on the editorial board. It was the tragedy of *Új Hang*—and of Hungarian intellectuals—that due to the war situation it had no influence whatever on the thinking of intellectuals in Hungary. My personal experience bears out that this periodical was apt to have a cathartic influence on a young man who got it regularly but there were only a few hundred of us outside the borders of Hungary.* Irrespective of its influence at the time, or lack of it, the magazine did great things. In a few years of publication it was able to work out, under the guidance of Lukács and József Révai, in editorial debate and in the articles published, those principles and that practice, which were then able to guide Hungarian intellectual life after Liberation. The work that Lukács did around and in connection with this periodical, and on which he worked and argued with József Révai, Béla Balázs, Andor Gábor**, Elek Bolgár***, Gyula Háy****, and others, made it possible for him to apply his concepts elaborated in the study of the major literatures to works in Hungarian. He was then, the first to apply the principles of the popular front policy to the Hungarian literary and artistic material of the past and the present, thereby acquiring an ideological armour and thorough knowledge of the material which made him able already in the early days after Liberation to do his work based on sound information.

Perhaps it was a coincidence that György Lukács was born a Hungarian, although these few lines may have helped to confirm that the experience and legacy of being born Hungarian was not merely an incident in his

* The author spent the war years in Geneva.—Editor.

** Gábor, Andor (1884—1953). Journalist, poet and critic, a member of the Hungarian Communist exile group in Moscow.

*** Bolgár, Elek (1883–1955). Historian, lawyer, sociologist, university professor, a founding member of the Hungarian Communist Party, who after 1919 lived in exile in Moscow.

**** Háy, Gyula (1900–1975). Playwright, who lived in Germany, Austria and Moscow after 1919, returned to Hungary following the Liberation, was imprisoned after 1956, and left for Switzerland after his release, dying there.

story; his return to Budapest on the eve of the revolutions may have been an interplay of the coincidental and the necessary; but that he came home to Hungary in 1945 was not a coincidence at all but the result of a mature individual decision. It is well-known that the German Communist Party leadership issued a very emphatic invitation to him to come "home" to Germany, to the intellectual life with which he was linked not only in youth but also by an important period of time spent as a party worker, and by a substantial part of his critical activity. He nevertheless came home to Hungary, because he was Hungarian, because it was here after all that he felt at home, because he was tied to the place by childhood memories, by the living example of Ady, and not least because he hoped that in the circumstances that existed here he would be able to practise his theories more fully, turning into live socialist literature and democratic socialist public activity what he had elaborated through the years in his political and aesthetic writings.

Post-1945 Hungarian literature, and his participation in literary life gave Lukács new impulses—I am thinking here primarily of his encounter with the verse of Gyula Illyés and the prose of Tibor Déry—, but mainly it provided the opportunity to put his theoretical convictions to the test in the context of a working and living literature. This granted him first place beyond doubt in Hungarian life and letters between 1945 and 1949, although his official position was not high at all. It has become increasingly clear that the opportunities offered by this intellectual preeminence were not used by Lukács to force his taste or judgement on living literature (although he made his voice heard on essential questions), but rather to implant firmly a progressive attitude to the past. He did much to secure acceptance for the line of great revolutionary poets, the Petőfi–Ady–Attila József line, as the high road of development, both on the part of specialists and the general public. Those who remember this period and what went before, are aware that this was far from self-evident, or a simple process; and they are also aware that the voice of Lukács contributed in no small measure to making it a commonplace in criticism and teaching.

It is known that after 1949 György Lukács was forced out of literary policy making, literary criticism—and more or less out of Hungarian intellectual life. This was an extremely important, fertile and creative period for him, but he had hardly any contact with Hungarian literature. And in the last ten years of his life, when the possibility for a more active participation was given again, he was tied down to such an extent by his great plans that his rare articles and interviews dealt with questions concerning

the new Hungarian literature and we tend to meet the re-application of his earlier ideas rather than a novel perception of new literary and cultural material. (Perhaps what he said of the new Hungarian film[4] is an exception; but this is not the time and place to discuss it.)

However sketchy this picture may be, however obvious it is that there are still many things that must be looked into, refined and further considered it is nevertheless beyond doubt that the relationship of György Lukács to Hungarian literature has been gigantic almost from the start; it was made such especially by the peculiar—but in Lukács's career so natural—fact that his relationship with Hungarian intellectual life always became lively when the situation in Hungary became ripe for revolutionary thought or action; and it turned—voluntarily or by compulsion—towards other climes when this possibility became narrow or ceased for objective or subjective reasons.

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To the other—connected and inseparable, yet nevertheless separate—question: what did György Lukács have to offer to Hungarian literature, the answer can, unfortunately, be only much more summary. This is not due to the nature of the material: I am convinced that this relationship has in no way been inferior or less important than the one discussed above. But here we are still at the beginning: if I am not mistaken nothing has yet been published except the relevant passages in the sixth volume of the history of Hungarian Literature issued by the Academy[5], which—in accordance with the nature of a handbook—summarily and sometimes academically describes his work concerning the theoretical roots of the populist-urbanist argument. It points out his merits in reconciling the two camps, putting realism into the proper focus, his throwing light on the contradictions of the culture of imperialism, the tearing apart of any theory of self-contained literature, leading to a general acceptance of the social commitment of writing. These passages break new ground, but by their very nature cannot exhaust the subject.

When Lukács started, his isolation and solitude in Hungary were conspicuous. It does, of course, still require research to establish whether this loneliness was as we now see it; whether he really was that lonely after the Thalia Society and before the Sunday Circle*? Present opinion answers

* The Sunday Circle was a society of Budapest intellectuals grouped around György Lukács in 1915–16. They met every Sunday in the home of Béla Balázs and debated social, philosophic and moral questions. The ten to fifteen who regularily attended included Karl Mannheim, Eugene Varga, the economist, and Arnold Hauser. Occasionally Bartók, Kodály and Charles de Tolnay also turned up. See NHQ. No. 57, p. 104, n. 5.

in the affirmative. This loneliness, however, with its highly-strung need for philosophy and morals, is a standard as well as a judgement.

No-one has as yet tried to find out whether the early Lukács essays had any, and if so what, influence on Hungarian essay writing; whether *The Soul and the Forms* (1910. In Hungarian) met with rejection only at home and, even if that was the case, whether there was any link with others like it in philosophy or style around that time.

The particular style of his essays and the deliberate and often overstrung abstraction of Lukács's whole initial period were the denial of the then dominant style in conservative writing on literature and philosophy, and it is almost symbolic that except for Ignotus nobody felt its essential identity with the aims of *Nyugat*. In the Hungarian intellectual medium which in the 1910's still moved within the triangle Baudelaire–Nietzsche–Ibsen, a young man who tried to use Simmel, Dilthey and Kirkegaard as his sign posts must have created a strange, even comical effect. We can merely suspect this it is up to empirical research to confirm or deny.

Something else scholars will have to do is to find out if Lukács exercised any influence in Hungary between the wars. We know that he did on György Bálint,* and Antal Szerb**, and that the Young of Szeged*** read some of his works; but all this is barely more than conjecture. There is little research on the extent to which Lukács and his works were known to Party workers at various periods of time. I am convinced that his influence—partly that of his work and partly that of his legend—was much deeper and more extensive in leftist circles—using the term "left" in its broadest sense—than one imagines today, and this had no small part in the sort of reception he got on his return home.

It seems odd indeed that little research has been done in this field and that it has not even been designated as a special field for research. It is even more peculiar that we have not yet even started to do research on the post-1945 intellectual influence of Lukács. I am speaking of hard facts; there are more than enough legends exaggerating in both directions. It seems beyond doubt that between 1945 and 1949 he had the lion's share in overcoming anticommunist prejudices among writers and artists and Hungarian intellectuals generally, in making them accept the idea of socialism, and in extinguishing, at least to all appearances, the embers of the populist-ur-

* Bálint, György (1906–1943). Marxist journalist and critic. He died during the war, in a forced labour battalion on the Eastern Front.

** Szerb, Antal (1901–1945). Novelist, essayist, historian of literature. A victim of fascism. See also: Iván Boldizsár: A Lost Generation; and Szerb's short story "Love in a Bottle", NHQ, No. 36.

*** An organization of young people in Szeged in the early thirties. Radical university students, scholars and artists were its members and it published their works.

banist conflict. Right now however we have no idea of the extent to which his theory and practice fertilized the style of scholarly writing, what effect his criticism or person—perhaps the mere reading of him—had on various writers or trends. Yet we suspect that if Lukács indeed felt at home in the last quarter century of his life, then a part was played by the fact that he too did not feel his existence at home to be without sense; and if the negative reflections of this effect were the arguments around his person, the time is here to measure up and realize the positive aspects as well.

Such an examination must also face up to the question: what did it mean—and I believe, primarily in the negative sense—to Hungarian intellectuals that Lukács was forced to withdraw after 1949? With the intellectual flexibility always characteristic of him, he was able to switch, almost without changing gear, to the literature of the world and aesthetics, not to return from there anymore—save for occasional statements. But how did this switch-over affect Hungarian intellectual life? Did it not lead—as he more than once hinted in private conversation—to a switching back to fighting trends and intellectual influences which Lukács thought of as one of the main objectives of his life? I am aware of the Lukács-debate in 1949, when his old opponent, the philosopher László Rudas, and his old comrade in arms the politician József Révai, led the attack against him. Accusing him of the dissemination of erroneous and harmful anti-Marxist views, as a pretext to exclude him from literary and scholarly activities, it was only one of the shocks—and undoubtedly one of the minor ones—which hit Hungarian society in 1949. But this too was a shock; and a scholarly examination of the effect of this shock is overdue.

Last but not least, we have still to face up to an interpretation and evaluation of his last creative period. In the sixties he no longer took part in Hungarian intellectual life with the same intensity as he had done prior to 1912, in 1918–19, or between 1938 and 1949. He expressed himself in interviews rather than in polemic or programmatic writings; and these manifest a lack of information as well as great perspicacity and a faultless sensitivity to problems, coupled with a lack of interest in questions of a new type. This was the period in which his works were published most widely, the two great comprehensive works of his life were completed and were published both in German and Hungarian. We know least of all the strength, depth and effect of these works and it would perhaps still be too early to try to estimate them. But it is of importance already to collect the material and to illuminate details.

György Lukács liked to say that he was not a typical Hungarian intellectual. There is no doubt that he was exceptional, that he was very different from

the average—even from its upper limit. But what has been said here may perhaps contribute to making it clear that he was nevertheless typical—in the sense of the word that he worked out in his ideas on realism; he threw light in an extreme way on the trends, forces and possibilities that were hidden in Hungarian intellectual life. This *too* makes it so important for us to integrate organically the works of György Lukács and what they have to teach us, into the way we see the Hungarian twentieth century, marking out his place in the history of Hungarian literature and ideology. As I have already pointed out, important and significant steps have been taken in this respect; but these are far from sufficient, and I am convinced that more, and better organized and work is needed.

First of all, the complete works of György Lukács should be made accessible in larger editions; and documents concerning him should be collected and published in an adequate selection.

A plan should be prepared for systematic and organized research involving the collaboration of philosophers, historians of literature and historians, which would concentrate mainly on those periods of his life when he was in close contact with Hungarian intellectual life. This should explore as fully as possible all interactions and draw theoretical and practical conclusions.

I should like to believe that when we meet to celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of his birth, we shall already be able to report that the bulk of these was well done. This would be the most worthy way to keep alive the memory of György Lukács, who—besides all his other virtues—was also an unrelenting example of indefatigable work—always demanding the maximum from himself—, often in very difficult circumstances. We are now able—thanks also to his activities—to work in much more favourable circumstances, than he could do for most of his life; we can really express our gratitude only by the high standards we show when doing research on his life and work.

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GULLIVER THE SECOND

(Short story)

by

GYULA HERNÁDI

I woke up at half past three, went to the bathroom and let some cold water flow on my arteries, then I came back and sat down at my desk. My head is spinning, a heart attack is pretty close today; I haven't taken any medicine for half a year and Doctor K. told me that it's bound to happen sooner or later.

I've grown accustomed to hypertension, it makes me feel active and alert. If my diastolic pressure falls below a hundred, I immediately feel as if had never slept, I'm tired and out of sorts all day long.

I feel a sharp, unavoidable pain under my sternum, I cautiously make my way to my bed and lie down. My seventy-third birthday is in a fortnight—it's not likely I'll live to see it. I'm afraid.

Funny, the pain's gone, I feel all right again. Maybe it was only rheumatic, sometimes I have intercostal pains, I'dont know. In any case I feel all right now. I'll get up.

I'm not going to call Doctor K.; I'll go in and have an ECG this afternoon.

I really feel fine.

Since I'm up so early, I'll try to work a bit.

Professor D.'s paper deals with four fundamentally new branches of industry of the twentieth century:

1. Communications industry,
2. Utilization of marine resources,
3. Plastics industry,
4. Megalopolis or world cities industry.

He is right in what he says about the communications industry. Today every institution has its own computer park, just like the time when every

big factory had its own power plant. What a waste! What's needed is central data-processing and data-storage where results could be made available to the consumer quickly and cheaply by means of a simple switch and a small control apparatus.

It's very bright though I've turned off the lamps. It's as if two or three suns were lighting up the sky. I've let down the shutter, but the intensity of the light is unchanged.

I'm sitting in the auditorium of a spherical theatre. The safety curtain, painted white, is down, and a huge cardboard poster is hanging on the right side filled with light blue letters and lines:

I. Main characteristics of data production of information originating from human origin.

1. Function of human information products in the food economy; rate of development.
2. The intensity of human breeding.
   (a) Large-scale plants take over.
   (b) The situation of workshop man-keeping.
3. Efficiency of human data production.
   (a) Net efficiency of feed stocks.
   (b) Yield of human stock.
   (c) Quality and assortment of information.

II. Production factors

1. Increase in the productivity of human stock.
2. The situation of fodder production and supply.
3. Changes in human hygiene.

I look around. Funny creatures are sitting on the chairs, their heads are hunting rifles. Maybe mine is too, or maybe I just don't see well; my ophthalmologist said I needed glasses one and a half diopters stronger.

I'm curious about the performance. This poster obviously is part of the play. First I thought it was an advertisement but now, after having looked it over, I see it's a comedy text which attempts to be funny.

My neighbour takes hold of my shoulder and turns me towards him. He a three-part face of horrifying simplicity. One is a clock-face with a single hand moving back and forth, the other is assembled from elongated black boxes, while the third is an inexpressible, affected flourish.

"Yes, sir?" I ask somewhat startled.

"Don't be afraid, you have been granted the privilege of seeing me."

"I feel honoured, but I would like to know where I am and what performance they are getting ready for."

"Wait patiently, and you'll know everything," he says and disappears.

The others in the audience have vanished too, and instead of the auditorium I now see a broad thought rolling along in front of me, beside me, over me and under me.

I get up and begin to walk on the handmade space lattices. As I reach the inverted fivefold arches, I notice my neighbour from the theatre coming towards me; he waves from afar, I bow and try to behave humbly.

"I wish you a good day. I was afraid we would not meet again," I said, and straightened my shoulders.

"I can't leave you, I'm your escort. My name is very long, and you couldn't remember it anyway, so you needn't address me but just simply talk to me. I've been translated into your dimension, that's why I'm so clumsy; forgive me if I mispronounce words or don't always find the proper expressions."

His face is becoming anthropomorphic, the metallic pointer has thickened into a nose and the gesture has condensed into a tall body inclined to run to fat. I try to be polite.

"You gave me quite a fright; I thought I was seeing a ghost."

"Do you know who we are and where you are now?"

"No, I don't."

"You're in the fifth dimension."

"Really! What do you mean by the fifth dimension?"

"The three dimensions of space, time and fzkrht."

"What is fzkrht?"

"If it were possible for you to know us, you would think we were godless angels."

"What do you mean, godless? Does that mean you're devils?"

"I see you don't understand. Never mind; the important thing is that you cannot see us and you believe that you are free agents, but in reality nothing happens against our will. We are your masters. Did you see the poster in the theatre?"

"Yes, I did."

"Did you read the text?"

"I did."

"Then I suppose you realize what it's all about."

"Well, not exactly. I thought I was going to see a comedy and that the poster was part of the fun. Why did you assume a human shape just now?"

"Because if I didn't, looking at me would blind you. I saw what happened in the theatre, you nearly went mad and that was only the first sluice chamber. You couldn't have stood it, and so I decided to adapt myself to you for this short time."

"To what do I owe this honour?" I ask respectfully.

"You are the second man I'm telling. The first was called Jonathan Swift, quite a long time ago according to your time reckoning.

"I know his works."

"Yes, they had real flavour. They were canned later and then they weren't so good."

"I don't understand," I say and shut my eyes.

"Don't worry! I'll explain everything to you, slowly and intelligibly. Our world, that is to say the world of beings living in the fifth dimension, subsists on human data. We are able to exist only by eating human data which are utilized by our organism just like protein is by yours, and the super-data which is released as a result are our life."

"Why are you telling me all this? Why have I been chosen to hear it?"

"Because I missed."

"I beg your pardon?" I ask, opening my eyes.

"You'll understand later."

"I'm afraid, sir."

"You mustn't be afraid. You'll be seventy-three soon, won't you?"

"That's right."

"Your parents didn't live much longer either."

"My father was seventy-six when he died."

"I know," acknowledges my attendant smiling.

I try to divert his attention from my age and my death:

"What you said about data is very interesting," I whisper in a scarcely audible voice.

"I'm glad to hear it," he replied.

"Would you allow me to ask some questions?"

"Of course. It might even be easier that way."

"So you say you eat human data?"

"Yes."

"How do you measure the quantity?"

"Just like you do. Human data are arrested entropy. We distinguish humans according to their I.Q.—the higher it is, the better the food, and vice versa."

"I see. And tell me, do you breed us in the same way as we breed animals?"

"Exactly. Just recently we adopted large-scale production methods. That's what you call urbanization. In towns the data output is much higher than in villages or on farms.The only difference between you and your animals is the fact that you believe yourselves to be free because of your more complicated data; you think you control your own destiny, so for us human

husbandry is more convenient in many respects than livestock-breeding is for you."

"Very interesting indeed."

"You do a significant part of the work yourselves, and we hardly even have to intervene. We only have to introduce the main breeding programme into your collective conscience."

"How do you do that?"

"In animal husbandry the model specimens are called breeding stock. In our breeding plans the 'breeding-stock' is human geniuses. They're the carriers of our will, the possibility of creating more advanced, superior human data. They implant the ideas of progress in the human race."

"Who are they?"

"All the ones you call great men: politicians, scientists, artists, outstanding representatives of the will, intellect and emotion like Jesus, Cromwell, Plato, Napoleon, Einstein. I won't go on—you know them at least as well as I do."

"And how do you extract the data?"

"Well, that's a tricky business. The technique requires two fifth-dimensional sequence-tillers and a phiostalic source of radiation. Your knowledge of physiology and molecular biology isn't sufficient to understand the process, so I'll try to simplify it. Your old people don't go ga-ga because of sclerotic cerebral arteries but because we suck out and eat all the data delicacies they have collected over the years."

"You mean to say then that arteriosclersosis of the aged is but a delusion?"

"It's what you would call a misconception."

"Tell me more—it's getting interesting!"

"What do you want to know? Go ahead and ask."

"Do you have rich and poor people too?"

"Of course we do. The rich devour the gourmet dishes, while the poor sometimes can't even afford the cheapest data."

"Doesn't the fact that humanity produces data in more than two thousand languages as well as a lot of other code and sign systems present difficulties for you?"

"Why should it? You have a lot of different companies which produce food. Different languages and semiotic systems correspond to the many kinds of productive enterprises. Your department stores have a lot of different products, and so do ours."

"I'm beginning to understand. You said that when an old man gradually becomes senile, it's because you are sucking the accumulated information out of his brain. That part I understand. But what happens if an old man dies in full possession of his faculties?"

"Information from the senile is comparable to food that has to be cooked for a long time before it becomes palatable, whereas that from those who die with mind intact resembles quickly cooked meals. *Pot au feu* and *filet mignon*—you see the difference?"

"And what then if an infant dies who could only gather few data?"

"Infantile data are eggs."

"And what about the insane? Paranoids and schizophrenics?"

"That's spoiled meat. That stuff is put into isolation stores which you would call mental hospitals. It wouldn't be economically efficient to destroy them for there's always hope that they might be disinfected and improved. Our scientists are devoting an enormous amount of energy to find effective drugs and therapies."

"And all the other diseases?"

"We actually try to prevent and to cure all other human diseases as well. As you know, we've already obtained fine results regarding the average life span. You must have seen the title of one of our main research subjects on the poster in the theatre: Changes in Human Hygiene."

"What you've told me is fantastic. I'll write a paper on it—my colleagues will be green with envy when they read it."

"You think so?"

"I'm sure of it."

"About what?"

"About their being green with envy."

"You think you'll be able to write it?"

"Why shouldn't I?"

"Because it just isn't written about."

"You obviously know more about technical literature than I do. You really mean no one has ever written on this?"

"Nobody ever."

"But you said you told Swift about it."

"Yes, but as you know, he went mad and couldn't write it up."

"It's really been a pleasure to meet you," I say and pat his face.

"The pleasure is mine. It's too bad disciplinary action was taken against me on account of you."

"On account of me? But why, for heaven's sake?"

"I'll tell you later. First I'd like to tell you some curious tidbits if you're interested."

"Don't make fun of me, please. You've given me the finest moments of my life."

"What a pity that I'm a good worker."

"I don't get you."

"I mean, it's a pity that I can only very rarely create such fine moments. I've worked for quite a long time and I've seldom made a mistake, you're only the second one after all."

"Swift and I! Great! Have you read *Gulliver's Travels?*"

"Of course I have. Your books, records and films are our canned foods. Newspapers too, but they're perishable. We don't usually eat canned goods unless there are troubles with the supply of fresh food. By the way, we also eat animal data."

"You do?"

"For us animal information is what fruit is for you. Human data are to us what food of animal origin is to you, animal data correspond to your vegetables while plant data are to us what inorganic mineral food, salt, for instance, is to you."

"Do you eat all kinds of animal data?"

"Of course not. You don't eat lucerne either. It was only many years ago, during the great famine, that we ate the data of cattle, pigs and other stupid animals. Today we only eat data of 'dessert' animals."

"Dessert animals? What are they?"

"Oh, there are a lot. The data of the dolphin, monkey and bee are really good; and you'd be surprised: the snake, too. After lunch a bit of rosed bee dance is an excellent digestive aid."

"Rosed, you said?"

"We use the data of roses for salt. I suppose you've already heard about intercommunication between plants, haven't you?"

"Fantastic! Really fantastic! You don't mind if I go on with my questions?"

"I've already told you that it's my duty to answer your questions."

"You said earlier that the egg is the information of a dead infant or child. And what happens if the dead child was an idiot?"

"Addled egg, has to be thrown out."

"Speaking of eggs, do you have any equivalent for milk?"

"Milk is human forgetfulness, that is to say the organic evacuation of data as a result of a milking process, without causing any damage."

"So cities are big stables?"

"Exactly."

"Is that why everybody heads for the cities?"

"Yes. The complete urbanization of the world is planned for the year 2500, according to your calendar."

"Are there many of you who work with us, with us animals?"

"Not many. There are what we call sociological model herdsmen, they're like your electronic cattle herdsmen. We only have to construct them, start them up and then they function by themselves. Feed storing is a much harder problem."

"Excuse me for interrupting. . ."

"You want to ask what we use, don't you? Well, I'll tell you. School systems, education, study."

"Then human data is used to fatten up human data?"

"Why, you mean, you still don't know that your race is cannibalistic?"

"Oh yes, I do. What I don't understand is why if man eats human data he doesn't produce a kind of super-data such as that produced by your organism?"

"A lion can't become a man by eating animal flesh. By the way, I'll let you in on a stupendous secret. I couldn't even tell it to Swift because I didn't know it then."

"Don't make me too curious, or I'll go mad!"

"There is a sixth dimensional world as well whose inhabitants eat our super-data and thus reproduce and maintain their own lives, the super-super-data. I'm scared too, believe me! Since I learned the secret, I've been shaking with fear. They're going to kill me."

"You're not imagining things, are you?"

"No, I know it for a fact."

"Tell me, what's your profession?"

"Well, you see, I was just getting around to that; it's a subject which might prove to be rather unpleasant for you."

"Never mind, go on and tell me."

"I'm a butcher."

"So what?"

"Look, I'll be frank; this morning at half past three I ought to have started tapping your data, that is, started making you into an idiot. But then, I was occupied all night with this sixth dimension business—my hobby is dimensionology, you know—I didn't sleep, was tired and goofed; I connected the device to your heart instead of your brain."

"So that's why I felt like I had a heart attack!"

"Exactly. And that's why they disciplined me. As punishment I have to assume a human shape for a few minutes and explain to you the interrelations between the fifth dimension and humanity."

"And what's going to happen now?"

"I'll slaughter you, of course. You've already been on the slaughterhouse docket for three weeks."

"I see. Only I don't quite see why I had to learn all these strange secrets before my intellectual death."

"It's an old, silly custom of ours, perhaps like your habit of sparing the life of a condemned man if the rope breaks. Don't worry; it won't hurt."

"Thank you, sir. Just one more question, if I may. This last piece of information which I have obtained through mercy and which you are also going to drain out, what kind of food will it be for you?"

"A very savoury dish, because it's so rare. I've got a feeling the boss is going to pounce on it at once, and it will be his lunch today at home."

NEWS ITEM

Professor H. F., 73, was taken ill; this morning he was admitted to the Borg Clinic; he is unable to hold his lecture in the Central Theatre scheduled for 4 p.m. today; tickets will be refunded this afternoon after 2 p.m.

Translated by Mátyás Esterházy

MICHELANGELO, FROM ONE CENTENARY TO ANOTHER

by

CHARLES DE TOLNAY

Has the origin of Michelangelo's genius something to do with the fact that he was not born in Florence but at Caprese? We know that twenty-five days after his son's birth, the mayoralty of Lodovico Buonarroti at Caprese and Chiusi della Verna expired and that the family left Caprese to return to their small estate at Settignano. Obviously the first twenty-five days of his life could not have left any memory of the place in Michelangelo; yet one should not exclude the possibility of his having returned there later, if only for short sojourns. A few words by Michelangelo, jokingly addressed to Vasari, testify to this supposition: "George, if there is nothing worth mentioning in my brain, this derives from being born in the thin air of your country round Arezzo..."[1]

Both Caprese and Chiusi della Verna were part of the diocese of Arezzo. It is possible, of course, that this witticism of Michelangelo's was no more than politeness towards Vasari, wanting to stress what they had in common. Even so, however, Michelangelo's emphasis on the quality of the air at Caprese is there as an actual fact, which seems to refer to a living memory of those parts and which, as Salmi points out,[2] "makes one presume that Michelangelo had actually inhaled the crisp and revivifying air of those mountains".

One might also call to mind, in favour of this hypothesis, a stanza by Michelangelo—written as a paraphrase of Poliziano's "Stanze per la Giostra" (I, 18, 19):

Text of an address delivered in Rome on 14 Nov. 1974, at the opening celebrations of the "Michelangelo Year" (1974–75) held at the Accademia dei Lincei.

1 See P. BAROCCHI, *G. Vasari, La Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti*. Naples, 1967, I, p. 5.

2 M. SALMI, *Michelangelo e il mondo della natura*. Arezzo, 1965, p. 8. Extract from *Atti e Memorie dell'Accademia Petrarca di Arezzo*, Vol. XXXVII, N. S., 1958–1964.

Nuovo piacere e di maggiore stima
veder l'ardite capre sopr'un sasso
montar, pasciendo or questa or quella cima,
e' l Mastro lor, con aspre note, al basso,
sfogare el cor colla suo roz[z]a rima
sonando or fermo, e or con lento passo,
e la sua vaga, che à 'l cor di ferro,
star co' porci in contegnio, sot'un cierro[3]

These lines, which bear no date, were said to have been written in 1556, i.e. in the last period of Michelangelo's life; this was asserted in the 1897 edition of the *Rime* edited by the best authority on Michelangelo's poetry of that period.[4] By a typically positivist procedure, the scholar in question established a direct connection between the contents of this "Stanza" and a letter of Michelangelo's dated September 18, 1556 in which he wrote about a trip to the mountains around Spoleto where he had derived "great pleasure from visiting those solitary places".

This letter, however, has nothing to do with the stanza; on account of its close poetic and stylistic relationship with Poliziano's "Giostra" and also of the handwriting on this manuscript preserved in the Buonarroti Archives, so typical of Michelangelo between 1506 and 1508, it must be dated back to the artist's youth.[5]

The landscape, in this stanza with its stones and goats, may remind one of the landscape at Caprese in whose coat-of-arms there is, indeed, a goat; so that the line in question would point to a memory of Michelangelo's birth-place.

The subjective context is even more obvious in the second part of the poem; in the figure of the shepherd who "opens his heart in his rough rhymes" because of "his iron-hearted dear one", there is something of the constrast between the lover and the beloved one, which was not there in Poliziano's lines and which tells about Michelangelo's lovesickness because of the "beautiful and cruel woman" to whom he later addressed a series of sonnets.[6]

These lines do not simply contain an idyllic description of a landscape,

3 Original manuscript in the Buonarroti Archives, Vol. XIII, fol. 171* See C. FREY, *Die Dichtungen des Michelagniolo Buonarroti*, edited by C. Frey, Berlin, 1897, n. CLXIII, p. 249; E. N. GIRARDI, *Michelangiolo Buonarroti. Rime*, Bari, 1960, p. 34, n. 67.

4 C. FREY, *op. cit.*, p. 494 ff.

5 Girardi, in his critical note (*op. cit.*, p. 227), states as well that, owing to the character of the handwriting, this stanza should be dated to the period preceding 1556, i.e., according to Girardi, to about 1534; as a *terminus ad quem*, in my view, this is still too late by about thirty years.

6 The sonnets to the "beautiful and cruel woman" were gathered in a volume by H. THODE, *Michelangelos Gedichte*. Berlin, 1914, ns. 127–171.

but recall, with precision, the Caprese of the young Michelangelo and represent a symbolic self-portrait as it were.

But the most significant argument proving the importance of his birthplace in Michelangelo's mind seems to be this fragment of poetry;

> Dagli alti monti e d'una gran ruina,
> ascoso e circonscritto d'un gran sasso,
> discesi a discoprirmi in questo basso,
> contr'a mie voglia, in tal lapedicina.[7]

These lines seem to summarize symbolically Michelangelo's whole life and destiny; the consciousness of having been born high, in the mountains, in circumstances of purity, and the "destiny" of having had to come down, against his "liking", to "that depth" of life that is "a stone desert", or "a desert of stones".

At the same time, there seems to be a record of the Roman castle "in ruins" on the peak of the mountain at Caprese and also an identification of Michelangelo with his statues, concealed and closed in a big block of marble from where, as he says in another poem, he liberates them.[8]

The same nineteenth-century scholar dates this fragment to the years between 1547 and 1550 for, at that time, Michelangelo worked at Saint Peter's and, according to this scholar, the marble blocks of the edifice had been the "stone desert" of the poem.[9] However, the blocks used for the building had been cut in rectangular shape, as can be seen in his drawings of blocks contained in a few note-books of the Buonarroti Archives. It would be difficult to put them on the same footing with "a stone desert" or "a desert of stones".

The Dantesque language in this fragment and the character of the handwriting suggest a date not far from the one argued in 1897, i.e. towards the middle of the sixteenth century. Even at the age of 75, Buonarroti felt the importance of having been born up in the mountains.

Caprese is situated on top of a fair sized hill (670 metres), surrounded by the Singerna valley, totally encircled by a chain of undulating and finely shaped hills higher than the site of Caprese, which draw a winding and rhythmic outline on the horizon.

The landscape of Caprese, solitary and abandoned in the past, recalls today, only in part and by and large, the picture that must have been

7 Original manuscript in the Cod. Vat. Lat. 3211, fol. 83a, see FREY, *op. cit.*, p. 222, n. CXXV and note on p. 477; GIRARDI, p. 131, n. 275.

8 See Michelangelo's lines: "Non ha l'ottimo artista alcun concetto / c' un marmo solo in sé non circonscriva / col suo superchio..." (Girardi, n. 151).

9 FREY, *op. cit.*, p. 477.

present in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: the crown of the hill was topped by the old castle, the small Palazzo del Podestà, and by the unassuming Palazzo Clusini, the town hall of today. The vegetation has also changed; at the time, it consisted of oaks, chestnuts and plane-trees whose roundness harmonized with the lines of the hill; today the cypress and the pine-tree dominate with their almost aggressive verticality.[10]

The neighbouring hills, of regular, horizontal lines, are not the inhuman mountains of the Alps, which oppress man with their overwhelming verticality and transcendence; these are elevations which, in their monumental solemnity, exalt the feeling of human greatness and suggest a sense of the sublime. It seems, in any case, that Michelangelo's art and genius have a high degree of affinity with that lonely, vast and a little wild landscape, a much greater affinity, indeed, than with the delicate and merry one of Florence, the latter recalling much more the art of the Florentine Quattrocento (such as Pollaiuolo, Botticelli, Filippino Lippi).

This landscape is perhaps one of the components of the "classic style" in Michelangelo's art, that is of his precious sensibility for the solemn, the sublime and the serious which lend a peculiar trait already to his first works, created still in the Quattrocento, when this style had not yet been manifest in contemporaneous works of art. This penchant of Michelangelo's for the solemn and the serious explains the impression made on him by the monumental frescoes of Giotto and Masaccio, by certain pieces of sculpture by Donatello and the antique statues and precious stones in Lorenzo il Magnifico's collection in Florence.

On the other hand, the fact of his having been born in the simple but noble Palazzo del Podestà, in the neighbourhood of the proud feudal castle and near that other one, the unassuming Palazzo Clusini, might have contributed to confirm his consciousness of noble origin. The pride which the artist expressed later by saying, "We are citizens of the noblest stock", goes to express this consciousness; the noble tone of his works, from his early youth on, testifies, however, to the circumstance of this nobility having been, above all, instrinsic, a part of his character, that is.

The second question one should raise today is: what did Michelangelo's genius mean to his contemporaries? The answer, quite briefly, is that Michelangelo brought liberation from the rigid rules of the workshops of the Quattrocento and revealed a new idea of art.

10 This attempt at reconstructing the one-time landscape at Caprese is based on the only representation of the mountain where the village can be seen, a canvas representing *L'Ommaggio a Michelangelo delle Arti Figurative*, preserved in the Casa Buonarroti as a permanent deposit of the Uffizi Gallery. An earlier panorama of the castle at Caprese can be seen on a relief on Bishop Guido Tarlati's tomb, in the Cathedral of Arezzo.

Buonarroti, as a sculptor and painter, was not only interested in the outer physical human form with all its embellishments, as for instance his master, Ghirlandaio, but also in the feelings and passions, in "the motions of the soul" that penetrate the entire body and that are displayed not only in the face but also in the movements and in the very forms, in the tension of muscles and even in the drapery that seems to be agitated by the passions of the figures. Everything starts from a sole centre which is the inner life animating the organic forms and transforming even lifeless things. Such an overall animation is most certainly rooted in the very passions of Michelangelo himself, in his rapture, his wrath, his contempt, in his struggles and loves, in his vague presentiments and suffering; at the same time, however, this suffering is sublimated in that of mankind: by grasping the individual case, he succeeded in seizing that which is universal.

In architecture as well, Michelangelo produced the same sort of liberation from earlier rules. This was clearly expressed already by Vasari. Art, Vasari said, owes Michelangelo infinite and eternal gratitude for having broken the fetters and chains to which it was subjected.[11] Vasari, however, convinced as he was that liberation from tradition opens the way to whim and arbitrariness, did not see, as his contemporaries, the manierists, failed to see as well, that, in Michelangelo's art, this liberation goes hand in hand with a new law, a law that combines and unites, on a different level, all the elements of the work of art in a coherent, living organism.

The main subject I wish to discuss today and which seems to be timely even now, five centuries after Buonarroti's birth, is the meaning for us, today, of Michelangelo's art, personality and humanism.

As regards the influence and evaluation of Michelangelo today, a strange dualism can be registered. On the one hand, in the figurative arts, his influence has been decreasing in the recent past, in literature and writing on art, on the other hand, Buonarroti's work and personality has never been as thoroughly examined and understood.

A few words in connection with modern art: since the days of Rodin, of Degas and Cézanne who still studied and copied Michelangelo's works, above all the two "Prigioni" in the Louvre, the visual arts have developed in a direction that seems to be diametrically opposed to Buonarroti's human and artistic ideals. With Fauvism, Expressionism, Cubism, Dadaism, Surrealism and Pop-Art, a rapid process of the automization and "de-humanization" of the visual arts began.'[12] Totality has been lost,

[11] See G. VASARI, *Le Vite*. Ed. Milanesi, Firenze, 1878–85, vol. VII, p. 193.
[12] See N. Berdjajew's *Der Sinn der Geschichte*, Darmstadt, 1925.

only fragments remain. The organic form of the standard ideal has systematically been destroyed and a strange and "surprising beauty" has been brought into being from the remaining fragments.

That which unites these different currents is the search for the "eccentric", experiment carried out in order to "deform" the standard, i.e. the rejection of Michelangelo's anthropocentrism and cosmocentrism, and, even more so, of the theocentrism of the Middle Ages. The return to the forms of prehistory and of childhood, the resorting to the visions of the mentally ill, to the art of primitive peoples and to folk art, express the will to make a clean sweep of the entire Renaissance tradition in order to start a new era in art.

The "de-humanization" of painting and sculpture can also be observed in architecture where the anthropomorphous elements in columns and pillars are being rejected and where pure geometric forms or "deformed forms", i.e. asymmetric and irregular forms, have come to prevail (see for the latter Le Corbusier and his followers). This "surprising form" of modern art often turns out to be a source of sensual, tactile and visual delight, but, in contradistinction to Michelangelo's art, it does not possess the profound meaning of the totality and destiny of man. It strives for fragmentary and decorative experimenting, which is, partly, highly expressive but decisively negates the "idea of art".

On the other hand, as I mentioned already, literature, through the works of great modern writers, such as Baudelaire, Flaubert, Victor Hugo, Simmel, Gundolf, Adolf von Hildebrandt, Romain Rolland, Giovanni Amendola, Thomas Mann[13] as well as in writing on art, shows an almost religious approach to Michelangelo's genius, an identification, through intuitive creation, with his personality which leads to a new way of seeing his works, trying to pick out, through form, their spiritual substance. New methods in research on Michelangelo's individual works and Michelangelo as a phenomenon in art in a historical, sociological, religious and philosophical context have also been applied. Noteworthy results have been obtained in our age from this point of view, and we know more than they did in the nineteenth century. As a reaction to this "enthusiastic rediscovery" of Michelangelo's greatness as a man and artist, sceptics began to appear who, not convinced of Buonarroti's sincerity, cannot or do not

[13] As for the writings of these authors, let me refer to the great bibliography by STEINMANN–WITTKOWER, *Michelangelo Bibliographie 1510–1926*, Leipzig, 1927; SIMMEL (1889) St. 1784; ID. (1920) St. 1785; A. VON HILDEBRANDT (1893) St. 999; ID. (1916) St. 1001; ROMAIN ROLLAND (1905), St. 1660; ID. (1907) St. 1661; GUNDOLF (1907) St. 43; RODIN (1911) St. 1653; G. AMENDOLA (1911) St. 321. As for Thomas Mann, let us refer to the latest bibliography of DUSSLER, *Michelangelo Bibliographie 1927–1970*, Wiesbaden, 1974: THOMAS MANN (1950) Dussler 1276; ID. (1950) Dussler 1277.

want to identify themselves with his works and with the feelings expressed in his poems in which they see nothing but merely conventional formal exercises.

Thanks to technical innovations, new ways of spreading knowledge of Michelangelo's works have become current in our days, such as infinitely more exact reproductions than those available a century ago. This process of improving reproductions is far from having come to an end.

Many problems, however, await a solution. We know next to nothing about quite a number of works, first of all those from Michelangelo's youth; the authentic reproduction of some of them is not even possible.

What do we know about the very first sketches and the first drawings listed by Vasari and Condivi? The head of the marble "Faun" made by the boy Michelangelo for Lorenzo de Medici is lost, and there are no exact reproductions. Thanks to an original sketch in the Casa Buonarroti and a drawing by Rubens in the Louvre, we have been able to reconstruct the likeness of the Fontainebleau "Ercole"; but we still know nothing certain about the "San Giovannino" concerning which there has been no convincing attempt at identification. There are only hypotheses about the "Cupido." Only a high-quality preparatory sketch of the bronze "David" has survived, a sketch, however, which is a first version, probably different from the statue modelled for the Marshal de Gié. We cannot, anymore, reconstruct, in its completeness, the "Battaglia di Casina". There are also considerable gaps in the story of the construction of Pope Julius II's tomb, and the dating of the "Prigioni" in the Boboli Gardens is, e.g., still a subject for discussion.

Let us compare the present-day importance of Michelangelo with that of his fortunes a hundred years ago, in 1875.

Then Michelangelo was *en vogue:* he was considered the absolute summit in the history of art. That was an eclectic age when, indubitably under the impact of the intense process of industrialization, art had almost lost its autonomous creativity; in official art, in architecture, sculpture and painting, the imitation of the historic styles prevailed, neo-Gothic and neo-Renaissance, which contained also elements of Romanticism and Realism, combined with the rhetorical ruled.[14]

It is not surprising, therefore, that in 1875 the centenary of the artist's birth was celebrated for the first time and in a most festive manner.[15]

[14] I only have French Impressionism in mind, which was not accepted yet by the general public at that time.

[15] My report is based on *Relazione sul Centenario della nascita di Michelangiolo Buonarroti, settembre 1875 in Firenze* (published in Florence, 1876) and on the report by Louis Gonse in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 1876, p. 319 ff.

Let me give a brief description of these celebrations that lasted for three days, from September 12 to 14, in Florence which has always, and justly, considered Michelangelo as her son.

It is interesting today to re-read the programme which consisted of festive processions whose participants wore formal clothes and that were accompanied by military music in the background.

The great parade in Michelangelo's honour began on the Piazza della Signoria, it continued at the Casa Buonarroti where the bronze bust above the Via Ghibellina Gate was unveiled (it is a modest paraphrase of the Giovanni da Bologna statue), and an interminable speech by the poet Aleardi was delivered. The cortège then proceeded to the Santa Croce where, in front of Michelangelo's tomb, three further speeches were delivered. In the heat of those mid-September days, they crossed the Ponte alle Grazie, reached the Porta San Nicolo and, mounting the then new stairs of Giuseppe Poggi, arrived at the Piazzale Michelangelo where, in the artist's honour, the statue that is there today had just been erected. At the four corners of a massive and heavy marble pedestal the four allegories of the Cappella Medicea are diagonally seated, with the giant David hovering above them. These five statues—all of marble in the original—were exactly reproduced, but in bronze. Between the allegories four inscriptions were placed at the four sides, exalting Michelangelo's greatness as artist, citizen and republican patriot.[16]

This somewhat heterogeneous ensemble of the Master's works of the different periods and of different proportions and dimensions seems, perhaps, an abridged synthesis of Michelangelo's entire artistic career as, at that time, the works of his old age were not yet appreciated but considered as indications of senile decadence.

It is typical of the taste of the times that the figures conceived in and born of marble were reproduced in bronze and placed "en plein air", though they had been imagined by Michelangelo in terms of a "uniform view" and destined to be placed in front of a surface provided by a building. The site chosen, one of the most beautiful views in the world, extenuates, to a certain extent, the effect of the composition which an art scholar of renown qualified, in 1875, as "indigestible".

Seven speeches were then delivered in front of the monument. Meissonier, painter of military scenes, had a particular success. In a pathetic tone, he announced that Michelangelo was "l'éternel exemple de la grandeur et du sublime".

The festive programme included, in addition, a number of official

16 The texts of these were also published in the above-mentioned *Relazione*.

receptions; of these, the one given by Ubaldino Peruzzi, mayor at that time, in his villa was particularly important. While the guests amused themselves in the garden, a certain Madame Breton rose to recite Alfred de Musset's "Conseils à une Parisienne".

In the Accademia di Belle Arti, a Michelangelo exhibition was arranged which consisted exclusively of painted copies, reproductions and photographs. In the evening, the most important monuments of the town, and the surrounding hills, were bathed in torch-lights.

In the course of the concert held in the great "Hall of the Five Hundred" in the Palazzo Vecchio, a pot-pourri of modern musical fantasies was played in Michelangelo's honour, which culminated in a Chopin Mazurka. In fact, only two of the madrigals had anything to do with Michelangelo in this programme which had been set to music by Arcandelt still in Buonarroti's lifetime.

It is strange that no such modern compositions were chosen that were closely related to Michelangelo's genius as, e.g., one or another Beethoven symphony (the 6th or the 9th).

The programme which consisted of so heterogeneous "items" was completed by an agricultural and horticultural competition, by a congress of engineers and architects, and by the ceremony of the transportation, to the Santa Croce, of the ashes of the historian Carlo Botta, as well as by a number of other functions.

Commemorative tablets in marble were unveiled at Caprese where Michelangelo was born, at the Palazzo del Podestà and in the church of San Giovanni Battista where he was baptized; and at Settignano where he lived as a child; on the house of the Via de' Bentaccordi where, it is believed, Michelangelo's father rented an apartment when his son was still a child; and on the Casa Buonarroti.

Various bronze medals bearing Michelangelo's portrait were coined—all inspired by an 1812 one by Giovanni Antonio Santarelli, a friend of Canova's and a competent neo-Classical sculptor.

"Addresses" or "festive greetings" were sent by academies, societies and institutes of various foreign countries (Germany, Austria, Sweden, Denmark) written, for the most part, on parchment and decorated, sometimes, with designs and miniatures.[17] They all praise the grandeur of Michelangelo's genius in the rhetoric style typical of the second half of the nineteenth century.

On this occasion, the Stone-carving Works of Florence made and donated

[17] In 1967 I collected and exhibited these documents of 1875 in the ante-room of the conference hall of the Casa Buonarroti where they are on display ever since.

to the Casa Buonarroti a small limestone bust of Michelangelo with a simple neo-Classical pedestal in excellent taste on which the emblems of the four arts in which the Master had distinguished himself are represented. An enormous silver wreath had been donated by German artists as early as 1859, when the Museum of the Casa Buonarroti was opened.

An avalanche of books and publications appeared on the occasion, in 1875 and in the years immediately following. Some are still useful today for a deeper understanding of Michelangelo's personality, containing as they do a series of documents published with scientific care. His letters, his records and his contracts then first appeared in a complete edition (G. Milanesi); many letters to Michelangelo were published in a two-volume—somewhat dry—monograph (Gotti). The first critical edition of the Master's poems had already been issued a few years earlier (Guasti, 1863).

Two booklets, *Excerpts from Michelangelo* and *Reminding the Italian People*, also contain important contributions to our knowledge of Michelangelo the man.

In all these nineteenth-century writings, however, the works of the Master are only considered as documents of his life and of the age in which he lived, and are not yet understood as creations *sui generis* containing the Master's most intimate confessions about his inner life and his world outlook.

Quite a number of publications abroad should be added, such as Grimm's volume in Germany published a few years before 1875, that of Springer (1878) and Wilson's monograph in England (1875). In 1876, the French published, in the honour of the fourth centenary of Michelangelo's birth, a beautiful volume under the auspices of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, comprising a collection of articles among which that by Guillaume on Michelangelo the sculptor and one by Anatole de Montaiglon on the artist's life are particularly noteworthy.

If these festivities were by far more solemn than those we are able to organize on this occasion—the scarcity of money being one of the causes—at least we hope that the celebrations in 1975 will turn out to be more coherent, their relative modesty notwithstanding.[18]

Coming back to our main subject, that of Michelangelo's reduced importance in contemporary art and of his so great significance in literature and in art history, we may ask ourselves whether, as far as these latter are concerned, we have to do with a reaction precisely to the atomized state

[18] Let me add that, in 1964, the 400th anniversary of Michelangelo's death, most solemn celebrations were held in Florence and Rome.

of the visual arts, or whether this phenomenon is the expression of a spontaneous desire to return to himan norms, the incarnation, as it were, of "nature's higher intentions", as Vincenzo Danti, Michelangelo's contemporary, would put it. Whatever the reason, this situation may constitute the precondition of a return to the norms of perfection that Michelangelo put in practice, like no one else. in the works of art of his maturity.

Michelangelo may, in the perhaps not too distant future, again become an impiration for a new "classic" art, after the deviations towards eccentricity in the course of these last three quarters of a century. This appears to confirm the views of Giovanni Battista Vico about the "turns and returns of history".

We should, however, be mindful of a paradox, viz. that modern art, so much opposed in its trends to Michelangelo's, has opened our eyes to a better understanding of certain, hitherto hidden, aspects of Michelangelo's art; thanks to modern art, we have been spurred to reconsider, from a new angle, some of the Master's works and also certain periods of his development.

Impressionism already acted as an eye-opener for a reappraisal of the values and beauties of the "unfinished" elements in Michelangelo's works (these values had, of course, already been discovered by his contemporaries Vasari and Bocchi but were then ignored by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries); and thanks also to Impressionism, the real value of the artist's quickly drawn sketches, so factitious, but so full of temperament, was rediscovered.

It is significant that the deeply touching effect of the Pietà Rondanini—a work that had thus far been considered a phenomenon of senile decadence—should have been discovered by Worringer in 1909, in the atmosphere of the first period of Expressionism and under the climate of Fauvism; and Dvořak's reappraisal, a decade later, in the atmosphere of Surrealism, of the Paolina frescoes as highly expressive works of art, falls under the same heading. Even more recently, in 1940,[19] the cosmic sense of space, with the planetary movement of the figures of The Last Judgment and of the Paolina frescoes, became more comprehensible, in part perhaps owing to the Surrealist notion of "cosmic" and irrational space.

Let me adduce an actual example: in 1941, Fernand Léger was making, in New York, a few preparatory sketches for a great composition of his, "Les Plongeurs". They were studies of movements of a group of figures

19 de TOLNAY, *Le Jugement Dernier de Michel-Ange*, in *The Art Quarterly*, III, 1940, pp. 125–146. As shown by the date of publication, my cosmological interpretation of The Last Judgment could not have been inspired by Léger's "Plongeurs" (1941) but rather by the general atmosphere of Surrealist-cosmic painting (Klee, Miro, etc.).

in water, and the artist tried, at the same time, to grasp the undulation of the water, the consequent deformation of the contours of the bodies, the sliding of the water's reflection on the bodies and of the bodies themselves which, in the liquid element, get rid of their heaviness and float like fish in an aquarium or astronauts in the stratosphere (even if, in 1941, Léger could only prophesy the era of spaceships), shaping sort of decorative water-lilies.

Precisely in 1941, Léger presented me with one of the first of these preparatory sketches, as a token of friendship. He told me a little later: "Look at the rotating movements in my composition, Tolnay! This recalls the movements of the figures in Michelangelo's Last Judgment. Don't you want to write an article about Les Plongeurs de Léger and The Last Judgment of Michelangelo?" Then he jokingly added: "Cela vous augmentera votre prestige et vous rendra célèbre!" I never wrote that article; but now, thirty-four years later, this episode in my friendship with Léger comes back to my mind, and I couldn't cite a more instructive example in support of my argument. Léger's drawing is not a copy of Michelangelo's work; in the interplay of the different movements, in the double deformation of the bodies and of their outlines it is an utterly modern work of art. But as a whole, it turns out to be a sort of paraphrase of Michelangelo's Last Judgment where the figures are moving in the air, in the endless space of the Universe, as if they swam. The relationship with the lunettes of Michelangelo's fresco is particularly obvious.

If visions, such as Léger's, are really inspired by The Last Judgment—and everything points to the fact that indeed they are—they may increase the sensibility of present-day man towards Michelangelo's cosmological ideas; owing to the interest of these studies in the motion of bodies released from the pull of weight, stretched out in endless space and subject to the solar law of attraction (Christ and the "Sol Iustitiae").

In the next version, the large canvas "Les Plongeurs sur fond jaune" (1941), Léger shows to have directly considered a detail of Michelangelo's Last Judgment: the impressive group of the condemned called "Il Disperato" after the principal figure (below, on the right of the fresco). Léger as well creates on his canvas a mass of bodies, the figure below with its head pointing downwards, and the figure above with its head pointing upwards, as they do in Michelangelo's group; and just like Buonarroti, Léger connects and brings together the bodies by means of the horizontally arranged arms. There is, undoubtedly, a direct relationship; but while, in Michelangelo's solution, the stress lies on the leaden heaviness of the mass which desperately drags the bodies towards hell, Léger

leaves his composition on the surface and lets the bodies float in order to obtain, also through the two ornamental motifs on the right and left, the effect of an essentially dceorative fresco.

If the 150-year-old Hegelian definition, according to which "Das Wahre ist das Ganze. Das Ganze aber ist nur das durch seine Entwicklung sich vollendende Wesen",[20] is true, then it seems that there is no better example than Michelangelo's. In fact, Michelangelo, in whose character the fire of a devouring passion, like the Dantesque flame, and a tenderness of the soul, a touching piety, go hand in hand, displays, in his human and artistic development, a gradual transformation in which the latter element finally prevails over the first one: the political convictions of his youth, inspired by Florentine republicanism, broaden and become purified towards the end of his life, during his stay in Rome, and become transformed in harmony with the idea of the "Christian citizen". His philosophical ideas, anthropocentric at the outset, gradually become cosmocentric; the human figure, deified in his youth and in the first period of his maturity (Vault of the Sistine Chapel), becomes the instrument of the forces of destiny (The Last Judgment). The young Michelangelo's religious feelings, inspired by Savonarola's ardent prophetic attitude, becomes transformed in Rome and refined into an evangelical Christianity based on the instrinsic faith in divine love. His art, begun in Ghirlandaio's workshop in keeping with the traditions of the Florentine artisans, quickly developed into the supreme creation of a free artist.

In this way, Michelangelo worked on himself and his moral and artistic perfection "as if he, too, were one of those rough marble blocks", to attain the goal towards which he always aspired: "I always moved towards heaven"... "To heaven I aspire."

20 Truth is the whole. The whole however is only the essence completing itself by its development.

SMILING BACCHUS

(Short story)

by

MAGDA SZABÓ

The street where he lived was narrow; the roofs of the houses nearly sprawled over one another leaving only a tiny strip of sky shining through them. It was the oldest part of the city; people had always lived here, ever since Pest was first settled.

"It isn't a very healthy environment," he thought sometimes when he got out of his car and looked around. But he could never bring himself to change flats; he had been born here, spent his youth here, become a chemist here, death had taken his parents away from him here, and it was here that he had brought Mária.

Mária's memory was so faint now it seemed as if she had never been his wife; yet she had only been dead four years. He was not tormented nor particularly disturbed by the knowledge that Mária no longer existed. He had simply got used to the idea.

The chemist had never been prejudiced against his women colleagues; there were many outstanding women in his institute and when observing them it had never occurred to him to question the quality of their work and their ability. In his early youth he had often accompanied his parents on their travels abroad, he had visited countries where women's liberation had made inroads much earlier and, moreover, the example of his own family had rid him of any bias. Both his father and mother had been chemists.

His marriage with Mária was a mistake and when it dawned on him how wrong he had been, he wasn't as angry with her as he was with himself.

She worked in his institute, was very young and appeared to be interested in chemistry. True, she never came up with anything original, but she could prepare everything skilfully, she was quiet, observant and very charming. When he began to feel he was seriously attracted to her, he was convinced he could not have chosen better. He felt that when a man gets well along into his forties it's only proper that he should marry, after

careful consideration and selection, of course. Obviously he could then work even more freely and with more energy. He married the girl.

After their marriage, he found a new job for her. They both felt it wasn't a good idea for someone to be the boss's wife. Mária worked at the other institute until she found out she was pregnant. Then she immediately quit work, drew her benefits and transformed herself into a housewife. Sometimes he was amused to see over and over again how thoroughly his wife disliked scientific work and how primordially untrue everything was that she had done as a single girl. After marriage she didn't bother to dissimulate her boredom when chemistry was mentioned, and the chemist soon chose not to trouble her with his stories about the institute. "I have a splendid housekeeper with whom I am having an affair," he observed, although not very cheerfully.

When after an insignificant and apparently successful appendectomy the woman unexpectedly died, he was shocked to realize that he had never really been particularly attached to her and had only superficially returned her feelings. For Mária did love him, there was never any doubt about that; except that, well, she loved in such a clumsy way. She tried to dictate the colour of his socks, she pestered him by asking over and over again what he wanted for Sunday dinner, she coaxed him to leave his work and go for a walk and sometimes she hid his cigarettes. She loved him in an old-fashioned way, irrationally, so he had mourned for her and forgotten her. It never occurred to him to marry again. He had a lot of friends, both men and women; the chemist was not anti-social, far from it. He visited his friends whenever he got the chance and invited them over to his funny little two-storied house to listen to music, which he loved. His love affairs were superficial, pleasant and left him enough freedom. The chemist was content, happy.

There was only one thing he hadn't counted on, that he would love his daughter in the same naive and undisciplined way that his wife had once loved him.

From the moment of her birth he was passionately attached to his daughter. He stared in ecstasy at her well-formed little head and daintly little arms and legs. He never forgot to bring her presents, was upset at her crying and couldn't work well when she was sick. On the day of Mária's burial he had been able to read a technical paper, but not when the little girl got a bleeding wound on her knee. The chemist realized that for the first time in his life he was captive of a feeling stronger than himself, and he was even happy about it. It was as though this passion somehow drew him closer to his fellow man.

Gertrud raised Marica.

When Mária died and he thought over his countless relatives, he suddenly remembered his mother's younger sister, and felt he had struck upon the solution. He had always highly respected Gertrud because she never bothered him with anything; she never asked him to use his influence to do her favours, she never invited him to name-day parties and had in fact never attempted to maintain any family relationship with him. Gertrud was a widow, living in retirement after having taught kindergarten for years. As far as he could remember she had never been a bigot or a reactionary; she read newspaper regularly and always knew what was going on in the world. One of the chemist's most impressionable childhood experiences was a visit with his mother to Gertrud's kindergarten. The little children were dancing a simple dance while he, about four years old, stood unhappily among all those strange children longing for Gertrud to nod to him to join the dance, but the nod never came, nothing.

Gertrud's husband was a teacher and died about the same time the chemist was awarded the National Grand Prize. Gertrud didn't ask him for money for the burial, and if he didn't invite her, she never came to see him. Once she was very sick and it was only by chance that the chemist learned she was in the hospital. In a similar situation all of his relatives would have mentioned his name to the medical attendant; Gertrud didn't tell anyone who her nephew was. When he went in to see her, she was annoyed and said, "You don't have time to be running around to hospitals. I'll be all right. Even without distinguished patronage, they don't kill pensioners here."

His suggestion that she take over the direction of the household and raise Marica was received expressionless and silently. Several days passed before she told him she had nothing against the idea but would maintain her own flat for a while just in case things didn't work out. She also accepted dispassionately and objectively the only condition her nephew imposed on the job.

"There is one thing," said the chemist at the end of their talk. "Of course, considering your skill, it won't be difficult for you."

The wrinkled face listened attentively.

"I don't want the child to be afraid. I don't want any vengeful god, damnation or fire and brimstone in her vocabulary. You understand what I mean."

Gertrud understood.

"And then, we have to think about the school too. I wouldn't like it if she heard something different here at home from what she will hear there."

"I am to raise her as a materialist?" asked Gertrud.

It was a strange word to come from her old mouth, especially in connection with a year old baby.

"Yes," he replied slightly irritated.

"It's up to you to decide," said Gertrud and stood up, putting her unusually large hand-bag on her arm. She looked around the room where they had been talking; she rarely came to her nephew's house. She glanced out the open window. Right across the street, scarcely ten metres away, stood the yellowing façade of a charming four-storey building with a statue of Bacchus on the top. Bacchus was naked and somewhat crippled. The modest fig-leaf had been swept away by the war and one of his forearms was missing. Like music, the chemist loved art, and for him it was an everyday, renascent joy to look at Bacchus upon rising and retiring. Beauty and joy laughed in through the window day and night and the harmony of the pleasant face made up for the god's mutilated condition.

"The child must always be taken out for walks," said Gertrud. "There's not enough air here."

The chemist did not regret his choice. Gertrud was tidy, tactful, intelligent and scrupulously carried out his instructions. The child watched noisy storms with complete indifference, she slept alone in a dark room and it seemingly never occurred to her that there might be something awful lurking in the darkness. In the evening when she went to bed, her day was not closed with a supplication to a guardian angel; she had a bath and then toddled in to her father, shook hands with him and wished him a good and peaceful night. The chemist adored her.

The funny thing about Gertrud was that as the years passed the relationship between them didn't warm up in the least. Apparently intimacy was as contrary to her nature as it was to her nephew's. On the other hand, the little girl was strongly attached to Gertrud and when she was a little bigger and in the contrary and defiant stage, Gertrud was the only one she would listen to.

The cleaning woman often complained that she couldn't put up with the child when Gertrud wasn't at home. He himself had noticed (mostly at the playground where he regularly took his daughter on Sundays) that Marica would not get out of the swing or share her sandbox toys, irrespective of requests or scoldings, until she saw Gertrud's watchful look. It distressed him. The little girl, who was the very centre of his life, opposed even his will when she felt so disposed, and if he wanted peace and silence, he had—to his shame—to ask Gertrud for help. His aunt never raised her voice, she simply whispered something, and Marica's tantrum cooled down at once and her soft lips began to tremble.

Every year Gertrud took time off at the same time her nephew took his holidays.

The chemist looked forward to these weeks. He took care of his daughter himself then, and the regular preoccupation with her was more refreshing for him than any other kind of holiday.

On Marica's fifth birthday father and daughter were again by themselves; Gertrud had gone away for a fortnight, leaving the housekeeping to Kata, the cleaning woman.

The little girl had been born in June when every walk was a special pleasure. The chemist liked loafing about, he also liked to take trams. The child needs activity and to be near people, Gertrud used to say, and so they went on foot or took public transportation; he didn't ask for the car. They wandered about in the city.

He always liked to walk in front of the Mater Dolorosa Church, because he was fond of the small Italian-type square and of the Pietà in marble. As was his habit, he stopped in front of the unusually well done work of art and again admired the still young, sorrowful face, with the Christ resting on the gentle knees in the somber mysteriousness of the dead. The child's fingers twisted in his hand. He was unable to explain to her what he wanted—to make her notice the beauty of what she was seeing. Marica turned away and, with a strange, almost startling passion, began to pull her father away from the statue.

"It's too early", he thought. "Perhaps she has to be older to appreciate aesthetic pleasures. I do hope she will have a taste for art, it would be such a loss not to have it in her life."

They also went to the Farkasrét graveyard. The chemist did not like the constant coming and going on All Souls' day, the flickering candle-light in November. So the family visited Mária's grave on the day she gave birth to Marica—the most important date of her life. The child was listless and moody and as soon as she got sight of the crypts through the fence, she began to pursue a bug on the window-sill of tram 59, with unnatural, almost affected passion. Last year when they brought her here, she was pleased with the monuments; in fact, her exuberant gaiety somewhat embarrassed her father as she ran screaming among the graves, pointing at the guardian spirits and angels of death: what a lot of stone aunties! What had happened to her unself-consciousness? Was she frightened by the proximity of death? Was she aware of where she was? But what could she possibly know about death?

As they came up to Mária's grave, the chemist's eyes filled with tears. At this moment he was filled with love for his wife; how terribly unjust,

he thought, for her to be lying here under the ground at hardly twenty-five years of age, unable to see him and her daughter. "Hello!" he greeted her more warmly than he had ever done while she was alive. Marica stood solemnly before the bare, monumental tombstone and looked at the letters she was unable to read. "Say hello to Mummy!" the words slipped out and he was immediately ashamed for having been carried away by the emotion of the moment.

The blue eyes looked up at him.

"I won't say hello, because she's not alive. She can't hear me!"

"So it's not death," thought the man with a sigh of relief. "Gertrud is clever and obedient. It wasn't the nearness of the dead which was bothering her. But what could it be then?"

They got back on the tram. Now he didn't have to remind her to sit quietly; she drew closely to him, clutching the edge of his jacket. Last year, when they got on the tram, she had immediately kneeled on the seat, staring at the tomsbtone repository and had picked out a tombstone for herself, one for Gertrud and one for her father. Never before had he felt her so close to himself, so completely united in body and soul. He cleared his throat in embarrassment.

At home, Kata had cooked kohlrabi, and Marica didn't want to eat them.

He didn't know what to do and felt sorry for the little girl. Well, if she doesn't like turnips, they shouldn't be cooked any more. She can get vitamins equivalent to those wretched vegetables some other way! And anyway: it's her birthday today, and every child has a right to his favourite dish on his birthday. It's really a farce!

Kata came in, adjusted the child's chair and saw the untouched plate.

"Eat it!" said Kata.

The child jumped down from the chair and ran to her father. The chemist felt the palpitations of her heart.

"Come back and sit down, Marica!"

The small body stiffened.

"Come back and eat!"

What big tears in her eyes! Goddamned turnips! Are any vegetables in the world worth making a child cry like this?!

"You know what will happen if you cry!"

Marica slinked back to her chair and climbed up. The chemist looked at the scene dumbfounded. "If you cry, you know what will happen!" But what? What could happen? There are no bogeymen, no devil, no Purgatory, the child has never been thrashed but has been raised by means of reasoning and explanations, with patience and common sense.

The little girl stared at her plate.

"Pick up your fork! If you don't eat it..."

Marica swallowed the kohlrabi with repugnance, her face and hands wet with tears. Kata was leaning against the sideboard; she waited until the plate was empty and then gave the child some strawberries. The chemist blushed with shame: Kata had succeeded in accomplishing with a few words what he could never do with any amount of supplication. After lunch Marica said thank you and was allowed to go play. He watched her go sullenly. Kata cleared the table and looked out of the window; it was a lovely summer afternoon even in their narrow street, the strip of sky was a sparkling dark blue. The renovated façade of the house across the street reflected the sunshine. The statue had also been repaired, Bacchus stood there intact, laughing in at them in his youthful beauty.

"She's terribly afraid of him," said Kata putting the glasses on the tray. "I told Aunt Gertrud that she had to tell me how she keeps her so well in hand or I wouldn't stay with her; she doesn't mind anybody. Small as she is, she's awfully headstrong. So she finally told me."

He stared at her. Kata nodded towards the Bacchus.

"That statue over there, that's what she's afraid of."

His throat went dry.

"Funny how terrified she is of that naked one! She's afraid of every stone idol ever since Aunt Gertrud told her that this one looks in at her all day long through the window, sees everything she does and if she's naughty, he'll bring her to heel. Whenever we frighten her with him, she's immediately as gentle as a lamb."

There he stood, the Greek god, on the rim of the house, timeless happiness on his sun-beaten face. The chemist stood up with difficulty and left the room slowly, as if he were ill. "A cheat," he thought, "a rotten traitor. What should I do? What can I do now? Marica, my poor little one!"

He knelt down in the child's room next to where Marica was playing with her building blocks, her back to the window.

"Forgive me!" said the chemist and clasped her in his arms. Marica did not understand the words but felt some extraordinary intensity of emotion and cuddled up to him.

"Forgive me!" her father said again. "You poor wretched little thing!" He kissed her, then held her at arm's length and stared at her as though he saw her today for the first time. From the unsuspecting eyes of the child the human race returned his gaze.

Translated by Mátyás Esterházy

MAIDEN

May that lovely young body of yours
leave but its bare trace of you in me!
My admiration's a straggling soldier's,
with just the sense his might be,

but I shant seize you, shant bite or eat
—that flesh of yours all so careless
and grown ripe though still so child-sweet,
where I have never been, even less

hope to come, no, how could I get there
or do anything... and all because
I've never felt my own years like this,
stunned by this moment that gives me pause—

it's hardly old age, no, the chaos
of my mere twentysix years
out of which one makes one's own shape,
too soon yielding like this to one's fears

even before one must; and just see me
putting on the cheery expression,
not the lean and hungry face when
conversation turns on passion...

Well, what you got from me was this:
a crock of crummy advice, plus
a little yearning selfpity, when
he's the one to redeem me thus,

yes he, even he should live now
for these coming few years in me,
making it worthwhile for him to step out
towards you like a soldier, free.

The nostalgia's as far as I go,
never reaching the words—you see,
the one looking at you's not this young
twentysix-year old, but only me,

older, tireder, the man virile
enough to note his tension, the wild,
secret explosion in his body
as he contemplates you, child;

but finds he lacks what it takes
to cast his avid net over you,
and hasnt learned the heroism yet
to feel his shame through and through.

LEGACY

I dont see my mother dancing—
in my thoughts she still trims vines
sprayed blue with copper sulfate
for her two bags of wheat, eight bushels rye.
I dont know if her young face
was lovely, if the other tenants
admired her dragonfly form,
or if my blonde father tethered his horse only
at our cabin on the wild Whitsun ride.
I just see her in the wintry dawn
chopping cornstalks at the stove
or patching sacks in the stilled yard;
I see her at evening in the vineyard
secretly taking flowers for my dead father.
Such memories pour into me,
and whirl me round fiercely now—

my mother, whom none could help,
in the darkness of whose flesh
the cancer spread its deadly arms,
who left her son this legacy.
This is not to blame her; not one curse
ever left her lips, I know... Only, poverty
took it all from her vein-roped hands.
Half a day she walked to find me, a hand
at some far-off farm, bringing me potatoes she spared,
spending her scant savings on my studies;
and when I scanned my first lines
at the window something silvery
glowed in her eyes—joy.
And then she was gone, never to see
the first book. I could thrust no money
secretly beneath her bolster, for a dress, for salt—
her bones in the graveyard
moldered to fat silent clay; now flowers force their roots
in summer where her forehead used to be.
And I carry her legacy for good:
on my face the mark of sorrow,
in myself humility's soundless load;
until I die I shall not forget
that world of grinding poverty—
in the field we are walking
like yoked horses together forever.

HYMN

Where should I seat you, where
should I place the vase with its shaggy bouquet,
where should I set my favorite books out for you to notice,
what say to you or hand you when you ring,
and will that once-over on the pictures do it,
won't my daughter's little hands
show up by lamplight,
how to lead round to this splendid carving,
that Roman fragment, these remarkable pebbles,

my past, my children, my mother,
and that sometimes I madly think
I've actually invented my own private theory,
though everything you see, chair, rug, mug,
stands hidden here in this mean cave, like me,
how suggest my loneliness to you,
my loves, my misery,
how reveal it all,
even my naked sobriety, when you're here at last,
darling future?

Translated by Jascha Kessler

BARTÓK AND THE ARTS

by

JÁNOS BREUER

. . . "in my art I am guided by Rembrandt-like ideas"
Bartók

The above quotation is from a 1926 interview. It could only be correctly interpreted once József Ujfalussy's comprehensive monograph on Bartók became available. "Rembrandt-like ideas" expresses Bartók's pursuit of universality, which he believed could be best explained to readers of a daily by a metaphor taken from the visual arts.

Let me quote the whole sentence: "Kassák's* lot believe that they enlisted my music in the service of their review. They are wrong because, after all, in my art I am guided by Rembrandt-like ideas."

Kassák's *Ma* had printed parts of unpublished Bartók works in facsimile, as well as works by Kodály and László Lajtha. Bartók's music was regularly performed at functions organized by *Ma;* yet he drew the line and marked himself off, not because he rejected social or artistic progressivism, but because he felt Kassák's "isms" were too narrow. Much of what Bartók said parallels György Lukács's opinion.

On the 50th anniversary of the 1919 Hungarian Republic of Councils Lukács, who had been Commissar of Education in 1919, paid a visit to the Association of Hungarian Musicians and there recalled the cultural and music policies of dictatorship of the proletariat, as well as his own relationship with Bartók, who at the time was a member of the Council Republic Music Board.

Lukács said: "I . . . flatly refused to allow Kassák the same major role which was Ady's in literature and Bartók's in music. . . I firmly protested against all attempts to recognize Kassák as the art of the régime."

This introduction only serves to explain the quotation. Bartók's interest in the visual arts, his own art of seeing, can be reconstructed from his letters, writings and the recollections of his friends, although, of course, this is not the place to exhaust the subject. True, more than a thousand Bartók letters are extant but many more were lost, remained unpublished or were never found, and whether he recorded his visual experiences or not was a matter of chance.

Much, including his compositions, allows one to infer that Bartók was highly responsive to the visual world. His first wife, Márta Ziegler, noted: "He showed the Budapest museums and galleries to my sister and me."

* Kassák, Lajos (1887–1968). Poet, novelist, activist, painter, critic, editor of the reviews *Tett* ("Action") and *Ma* ("Today"), a leading figure of the Hungarian avant-garde in literature and the arts. He helped to organize the concert where Schönberg's music was first performed in Hungary.

Zoltán Kodály drew attention, it is true, to a Bartók whose general education had been deficient at the turn of the century, and who fell upon world literature and the arts eagerly and without much discrimination, showing enthusiasm for much that was of limited value. Early letters arrest attention. The discovery of Paris in 1905 was a staggering visual experience:

"As I walk through the museums, I experience an intense delight when I recognize, one after the other, the masterpieces with which we are so familiar in reproductions; the Mona Lisa, Raphael's Madonnas, the well-known portraits of Mme Vigée-Lebrun, Murillo's Young Beggar, and so on.

I can assure you that few paintings have ever had such profound effect on me as Murillo's larger works in the Louvre.

It is possible to glean some idea of their merit from reproductions, but the actual pictures reveal a colour harmony such as you can see in no other paintings. When I look at them, I feel as if I were being touched by a magic hand... This morning I enjoyed looking at the Impressionist pictures in the Luxembourg Museum. But who could possibly describe all those things. The Bois de Boulogne ... and the Bois de Vincennes ... both decorated with squares, statues and exotic plants... The Parc Monceau — — — I must just say a few words about this park. I was wandering aimlessly along the streets when suddenly I came to a little paradise. ... Only a Frenchman could have the ingenious idea of utilizing the effects of both nature and art to turn this inch of ground into a fairyland. Hidden behind beautiful trees, flowers and shrubs, there are enough statues here to make a little spring show. To mention but a few, there are statues of Pailleron, Maupassant, Thomas and Gounod—so many poetical tributes to French art."

"On the right bank of the Seine the Champs-Elysées, Tuileries, Place de la Concorde... and the Louvre face each other so that their longitudinal axis together forms a straight 2,800 metre stretch. Napoleon's giant arch is in this axis at the beginning of the Champs-Elysées, the biggest triumphal arch, etc., and all this can be seen from the court of the Louvre in one line.

"The Tuileries, the Place de la Concorde and the court of the Louvre form one huge square enlarged by free spaces on the other bank. The impact of this largest square of the world is great. The square is flanked by many beautiful buildings and statues! Every lamp-post there is a masterpiece. You'd need half a day to have a good look at all the beauty here.

"And now the Louvre: this is the world's largest building. (One part of it is a ministry, the other the museum.) You need two hours just to walk through its halls. I only more or less looked at four to five. I saw the *Venus de Milo* and other Greek works."

The two letters were written at about the same time. Bartók eagerly looked, and without discrimination. Murillo's angels were more important to him than the French Impressionists, and the truly unparalleled beauty of the squares made the same impact as the art nouveau lamp-posts. To absorb Paris as a whole required a special eye: the ability to synthetize apparently unconnected visual experiences.

When, in 1905, Bartók looked at the Impressionist paintings he did not really know yet what he saw. Kodály, to be sure, knew. He wrote to Bartók from his first Paris trip in 1907: "...I don't delve into the details of what I have seen in Paris because here the visible is the most interesting even in things heard; by this I mean the continuous relationship between French musicians and the visible world." The title of several works by Debussy selected at random bear this out, but the important thing is that Kodály acquired for himself and Bartók the experience of Debussy's music, this visually audible art, and Bartók appreciated this as a turning-point in his development.

The other important experience, the discovery of folk-music, was also largely due to Kodály. I digress but it seems important to me to refer to what Kodály said at a conference of Hungarian and Soviet musicians in December 1963. He drew a parallel between his and Bartók's early research into folk-music in 1905 and the Russian revolution of 1905. He mentioned that he had first heard about events in Russia from refugee Russian Bolshevik students then studying in Germany, who told him about the influence of his work on revolutionary changes in Russia.

Early this century Bartók dressed in imitation of the formal clothes of the Hungarian nobility to express his hostility to the Habsburgs: he asked his family not to speak German; and called his sister Elsa "Böske", a Hungarian nickname for Elizabeth. It was Kodály who showed him the way to the music of the real people, that is the oppressed peasantry. One year before his death Bartók wrote: "Our enthusiasm was not limited to peasant music, we also admired peasant poetry, and peasant ornamentation..." In 1907, when the "better sort" would not have allowed such stuff to cross their thresholds, Bartók ordered peasant furniture from György Péntek Gugyi, a peasant joiner in Kőrösfő, Transylvania. "What joy: on all gate-posts the roses of my cupboards all the way from Hunyad to Kőrösfő." The peasant craftsman must have also been surprised when he made the furniture ornamented as dove-cotes, chests and gates are. In his delivery note to Bartók he wrote: "...everyone who saw it said that he had never seen anything like it. I truly say I never saw anything like this myself and I never made anything of this kind before, although I have made many things these past nineteen years. The writing-desk is a sort of dark red and the bed and the dressing-table are like the cupboards. They are very strong, as is the second folding table with abundant carvings."

This Székely peasant-craft studio merits some attention from two points of view; first, because Bartók used it and saw it every day for over thirty years until he left for America in 1940, and second, he had ordered peasant ornaments to be lifted from their original settings and had the tulips, roses and other flowers carved in the wood of a writing-desk intended for daily use.

Bartók's active interest in the visual arts did not limit itself to his own home. Between 1904 and 1912 the title-pages of his scores printed in Hungary—mostly designed by Ervin Voit, his cousin—reflected his intentions and were produced under his control. The musician who had admired the Art Nouveau lamp-posts in Paris and the carved roses in Körösfő wanted to see the synthesis of these so very different visions on the title-pages of this scores. This was new in Hungarian music publishing. Until then scores had been adorned with overcrowded romantic graphic fantasies. In other countries editors were responsible for designs on scores and the musicians had no say in it. Arnold Schönberg was furious because of this, being an Expressionist painter and draughtsman himself. He would have preferred to see his own drawings on the scores of his compositions but his wish was never carried out.

Bartók's first published work—the Four Piano Pieces—brought out by Bárd in 1904—was conceived in a crowded romantic style but the title-page of the *Four Songs*, also brought out by Bárd in 1904, already showed the impact of Art Nouveau.

"Dear Mr. Bárd!" Bartók wrote. "The bearer of this letter is Mr. Ervin Voit, teacher of design... He is taking the design of the title-page of my score as agreed."

Most title-pages of Bartók's early scores, designed by Voit, were a mixture of peasant and art-nouveau motifs. The letters by Bartók show what firm views he held on the subject.

In the summer of 1911 he noted, writing about his ideas for the title-page of *Two Portraits:* "*This is what I want: A vivid colour (carmine?) on light yellow (ivory) paper. It's the letters that count and only a few small drawings. The letters should also be on the small side.*

Cover of the score "3 Burlesques for Piano"

Cover of "Four pieces for Piano"

Cover of the score of "Two Portraits" "

"This should be the text:

Deux portraits pour orchestre: can be on the same line
Béla Bartók op. 5: can be on the same line as well

"The order can be reversed, first the composer's name, then the title of the work.
At the bottom in smaller lettering:
Charles Rozsnyai Éditeur
Budapest
The small drawing could be in Hungarian style. . . ."

*

The second letter is dated June 7, 1914, and refers to the title-page of his folk-song adaptations.

"... A beautiful title-page in Hungarian style with the following text:

big letters: Chants de paysans hongrois
smallest letters: pour le piano seul
smaller tetters: par Béla Bartók

"I fancy something blue on a white background like the colours of the Torda dishes (the other kind, a white design on black exists already). Of course, I don't mean ornaments like those on felt coats but some other Hungarian patterns."

This clearly shows Bartók's firm ideas on graphic design. He could express in detail what he wanted when it came to colour as well as take motifs and use them outside their original context.

After 1910 Bartók met the most progressive Hungarian painters of his time, who were members of a group known as The Eight. He played the piano at the openings of important exhibitions. The painter Róbert Berény, wrote an enthusiastic article on Bartók's music and painted his portrait in 1913. It is one of the best Bartók portraits and an excellent likeness.

Bartók's remarks on analogies between music, especially folk-music, and art are much more instructive than his personal ties with painters. He liked to draw analogies from art when explaining the role of folk-music: "...pure folk-music from the viewpoint of its impact on art music can be considered a natural phenomenon just like the visually perceptible qualities of objects are in relation to art." And: "Although analogies drawn between music and painting generally do not contribute much to explaining the enigmatic meaning of these spheres, I think the following analogy is an appropriate definition of the relation between folk-music and composed music: village music means to the composer what nature means to the landscape painter."

Bartók, basing himself on the analogy of painting from nature, considered himself a musician composing from nature although he thought of the experience of nature only as the raw material: "The thematic material in music is the equivalent of the theme, or story in literature. In music just as in literature, sculpture or painting the thing that matters is not the subject but what is done with it.

"This is the manifestation of the artist's knowledge and his ability in shaping his material and expressing his personality."

As far back as 1909 he distanced himself resolutely from cheap naturalism and a superficial reflection of the world: "I believe and profess that in all true art the impressions we gain from the outside world manifest themselvets under the impact of 'experience'.

"Those who paint a landscape for the sake of painting a landscape, those who write a symphony just for the sake of writing a symphony are in the best of cases good craftsmen. I cannot conceive works of art other than as the manifestations of their makers' limitless enthusiasm, despair, sorrow, anger, revenge, scorn and sarcasm."

The absorbing of outside natural impressions, their transformation, artistic modelling, filling with content, seeing things and letting them be seen, form a dialectic whole in Bartók's vision. Perhaps this is the "Rembrandt-like idea" in his music, the preservation of nature, impressions and expressions by their discontinuance, their rising to a higher level.

Bartók's musical attitude is a firm "no" both to primitive popular realism and to naturalism. He said: "The melodic world of my string quartets does not differ substantially from that of folk-songs, only their setting is more severe." He compared his most complex musical constructions, his most complex musical patterns and lines to folklore, to works never produced by folk-music.

In addition, Bartók thought that the most highly refined impact of folklore was produced if the composer did not quote a single note from a folk-song but folklore impregnated his musical ideas, the content, idiom and technique of his compositions. I cannot, however, here explain in detail the concrete manifestation of the impact of folklore in Bartók's music and the meaning of his remark on his string quarters in terms of their harmonies, melody patterns and rhythms. This has been done by those competent to do so.

I think it is also illuminating to look at Bartók's relation to contemporary fine arts, and get acquainted with existing documents on the subject.

His letters did not repeat the hunger for visual experience of the Bartók of the early trips abroad. This did not mean that his interest in the fine arts had faded but that he had to concentrate his correspondence on music and business, with no time left for writing about his "private" delights. There are tracks, however, leading to the Bauhaus. As far as I am aware this subject has not been treated comprehensively by anybody so far.

In 1925 the Weimar theatre performed *Bluebeard's Castle* and *The Wooden Prince.*

Erwin Latzkó, the conductor, told Bartók of the conservatism of the Weimar public and wrote that they shut their ears to the new music, adding: "Among the intellectuals, especially the radical artistic groups (Bauhaus) there are many who are greatly interested in your works and look forward to this performance with great expectation."

Bartók gave a piano recital in Dessau on October 12, 1927. Though the programme of this recital is not known, a later letter tells that he played his Sonata for Piano, first performed that summer.

The next link in the chain was revealed in a letter written by the violinist, József Szigeti, to Bartók (June 19, 1930): "Kandinsky the Bauhaus teacher in Dessau has written me about a joint recital. Klee has surely written to you on this matter. "We don't know whether Klee had written to Bartók; if he did, his letter has been lost, but Bartók's second recital at the Bauhaus was "on" as indicated by his letter of August 4, 1931:

"As for my Dessau concert, in principle I'm all for making an appearance like that from time to time. There are only two snags. The first is that, as far as I can judge at present, I shall not get to Berlin, or anywhere near Dessau, next year. The second is the problem of what I should actually play. There wouldn't be much sense in playing any of my earlier works in this *fortschrittlich gesinnt* milieu. And as for my *Sonata*, I have already played it there. True, the audience has probably changed since then and would now be composed of people who did not hear my concert at the time. And it is also true that it does no one harm to hear such works twice.

"So let us say I would play the *Sonata* (13 min.), *Improvisations* (10 min.), 2 or 3 items from *Out of doors* and a few of the 9 *Little Piano Pieces* (10 + 8 min.); that would make 41 mins. altogether.

"Anything else?

"To sum up: I cannot promise anything for certain; but if I do play, then the concert must be quite private and intimate in character, with no question of critics being present, wearing evening dress nor playing by heart."

This second Bauhaus recital did not come off, and we can conclude only from Latzkó's above-mentioned letter and from other repeated invitations to Bartók to come to Dessau that his music had some meaning for the group.

Of all the known letters of Bartók this was the only one which asked for the Dessau concert to be a "private, intimate" affair.

This request shows the intimate, friendly ties between the composer Bauhaus-performer and his public. As we shall see, the things he had seen in Dessau had a lasting impact on him.

Before coming to this allow me to mention a plan that did not materialize: Bartók's desire to publish a musical work with illustrations, *Mikrokosmos*—the 153 piano pieces in six books subtitled "Piano Music from the Very Beginnings", a collection for teaching. He wrote to Boosey and Hawkes, his London publishers, on April 17, 1939:

"I would suggest publishing it with pictures (of course only if the pictures are very good and original). With some of the pieces it is quite obvious what the picture should represent:

e.g. 'From the diary of a fly', a fly or flies (in the middle agitato section a spider's web). But in any case (as for inst. 'Quartet', 'Contrary motion', etc.) I would not suggest any theme for the picture; nevertheless I have the feeling, even there we could use 'decorative' elements... My idea is to have pictures which are more or less 'stylized'... in some cases only a few lines indicating rather vaguely this or that."

The plan of the illustrated edition fell flat. It would have substantially delayed the publishing of the work.

There are many picturesque motifs in *Mikrokosmos*, not just mere illustrative pieces such as *From the Island of Bali*, the musical landscape *Boating* or *From the Diary of a Fly*, a story told by music.

I want to mention in *From the Diary of a Fly* just one example: *Subject and Reflection*. In this piece the two parts of the melody are, almost throughout, each other's accurate reflection. In 1944 Bartók explained all the pieces in *Mikrokosmos*. On *Subject and Reflection* he said:

"Subject clearly defined and arranged... I think of those as being mirrored in water: as the water becomes disturbed the reflection becomes distorted."

The reflection of melodic lines has been applied by composers throughout the centuries but Bartók discovered that if the water was troubled and ruffled it distorted also the mirror-image of the melody: the composer had to perceive this before he could put it into music—it is possible that he had seen something similar in an Impressionist painting in 1905.

This, of course, is pure guess-work. The text of one of his lectures in America has been published recently and this reveals his thoughts about contemporary fine arts, and particularly the Bauhaus, which had a great impact on him. The lecture was entitled "Revolution and Evolution in Art", and Bartók wished to prove the following thesis: traditional elements, in dialectic unity with innovations, exist in the newest and most revolutionary art; any artistic product that pretends to be a work of art, however revolutionary, cannot consist of new elements only. "Such kind of revolution, carried *ad absurdum*, is sheer nonsense," he wrote. According to him works of such significance as Schönberg's and Stravinsky's did not belong in this category, they had both traditional and new elements. He did, however, mention some trends in music which, by absolutizing technique, threatened the expression of substance, the conveying of meaning in music, and he explained these "revolutionary" phenomena with examples from other arts.

"Similar tendencies have appeared in literature, especially in poetry, where rhythm and the contrast or similarity of word sounds (or, I would say, the musical harmonies produced by words) are sometimes more important factors than word sense...

"...These experiments finally led to the complete elimination of words and the exclusive use of single vowels and occasional consonants. I have seen a printed volume about fifteen years ago in the Bauhaus colony of Dessau, Germany, made up entirely of such kind of 'poems'!...

"In modern painting we can observe similar tendencies. First came the elimination of objects and the exclusive use of various lines, curves and geometrical forms without any allusion to external shapes existing in nature. These lines, curves, and so forth were used according to certain plans, in order to give an equilibrium and harmonious unity to the picture. Kandinsky was the first painter who tried this style and achieved considerable results. His non-objective paintings are still comparatively complicated. After Kandinsky came others who attempted to simplify the means. One of these painters is the Dutch-born Mondrian. ...I am only a musician, and I am not competent to judge paintings. But Mondrian's kind of reduction of means seems to be a rather poor device for satisfactory artistic communication."

Bartók is a composer whose artistic material only seemed to be so abstract as György Lukács, József Ujfalussy and Dénes Zoltai have clearly proved the concreteness of musical language, as a category of "undetermined materiality". This concreteness has been exemplified by him in many ways both in his music and in his writings. Here this composer explained to what extent he was able to follow the abstraction of the representation of the visible world. Apparently he spoke of technique but in reality he meant communication, the picture's intelligible message. He rejected "just landscape painting" but he also criticized Mondrian's reducing artistic expression. This was not conservatism. Bartók raised his voice in defence of the meaning of a work of art. He accepted Kandinsky's complex vision, the "equilibrium and harmonious unity" of his pictures, but he could not accept this style which was not enough for artistic communication.

I have tried to give as complete a picture as possible of Bartók's knowledge, tastes and views on the pictorial arts on the basis of available documents. At present there are more unexplored and probably unexplorable aspects than documented ones. I wanted to expose Bartók's concept of the dialectical unity of nature and work of art, folk-art and high art, concrete and abstract representation, tradition and innovation from the point of view of the pictorial arts, all the more so since the "Bartókian synthesis" is mentioned in cultural writings and talks all too often and not always accurately.

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SURVEYS

SÁNDOR LÁSZLÓ-BENCSIK

HOW DOES A MAN BECOME A WORKER?

Quite simply it seems. Mostly by being born to the job. The regular road leads through the general school and years as an industrial apprentice to the work bench. In this way one can make good average wages within certain limits, a modest, but secure income, and all of it cheaply, without much investment, fairly quickly, and without much effort. But there is an even simpler, quicker and cheaper way, though the scope is more restricted. All you've got to do is to pick an advertisement you like the look of, or make your choice amongst the notices at factory gates, or else go along to a labour exchange where you don't just find advertisements but are given general information as well, being well supplied with counsel and advice. Then you report to the appropriate personnel section, and after the necessary formalities you start work. That's how you can become an unskilled or semi-skilled worker. (40 to 42 per cent of industrial workers in Hungary are skilled, the rest lack trade training. There is no precise information since a fair proportion of skilled workers, at least 10 to 12 per cent, do not work in their own trade.) Things are arranged all the easier since, apparently, it does not make much of a difference whether a man starting on a job in this way can do any more than read and write. For years now that sort of labour has been in great demand. It is relatively easy therefore to find employment.

Things aren't all that simple all the same, not even at the start. There is a world of difference between one job and another, and the differences in the amount of money you can make are so crass that it sure is difficult to decide where one should sign up. There are places where you can sweat out your soul, and still you won't get more than the bare minimum, and there are others where you can loaf for days on end and still pocket double the average. Of course every man has different things in mind when he makes his decision. Some don't mind if there's little money as long as the job is comfortable and quiet, or if there is time and the opportunity to do something else on the side, mostly another job. Most of those I met claimed that what work you do doesn't matter, they were ready to carry shit in their own hats all day, as long as you were paid for it. The first question most people looking for a job ask is what the money is. They would sooner wash in a bucket or under a tap, and change midst nails driven into a wall, if there are a few hundred more in the pay envelope, rather than do so in a modern well-appointed place but get smaller wages. There are some who are more demanding, who would like to like

Selections from *Történelem alulnézetben* (A Worm's Eye-View of History). Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1973, 396 p.

what they have to do. So many different things are involved that the more serious you are about the whole thing, the more difficult it is to make a choice. What should one do if one doesn't want to buy a pig in a poke? How can one find the right job, a job one likes? Where can one get the information needed?

It might sound funny, but the drink shops are the best place. That's where you can even buy the better sort of jobs. The really good ones, promising big money from tips, are fixed at special pavement exchanges. I've heard of arrangements, more than once, being settled with this sort of bargain: if I make more than three thousand 10 per cent of the extra is yours. Is it a bargain?—Fortunately it is not typical or all that frequent in that form. The crookedness of it put me off frequenting that market-place a good two years ago in 1969–70 when the air began to bubble around the co-operative auxiliary works, the petrol pumps and other sources flowing with money. The temptation was there as well, though I had toughened up around the rougher edges of the workaday world by then. But by then I had also committed myself to those of whom I shall have a lot more to say later.

A more general and civilized way of obtaining information is to get it from friends and relations, making up one's mind on that basis.

That was the road I chose.

I plunged into it boldly then, and the wealth of advice was soon replaced by a wealth of experience. They first told of the passing of time, the speed at which a man is forgotten, however good a worker he may have been. I confidently mentioned the man's name who recommended me, until they asked, and who's he? Finally I found an official who remembered the old boy; they took me on as an export packer but they would have done so anyway, with a recommendation, or without it: they were glad of me, all hands were needed. As it turned out I got to the right place without any sort of pull, the best in the trade in Hungary today. A few formalities had to be fixed before I really got there.

The Labour Exchange was one; regulations had to be obeyed.

That was back in 1966 and I had to join the queue at the window. There were men hanging around at the gate, and there was a lot of jabbering there, an exchange of experiences, what was on in which factory, not the work interested them, but the money, which places were not even worth trying. A chap in a track-suit explained to us waiting there that there was no need to be in too much of a hurry, it was worth waiting for the best opportunities. I asked him for a light.

"Got a place, daddy-oh?" he asked, being friendly.

"Export packing."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"They really drive you sometimes, and the money is a gamble. Sometimes it comes in, and there are times when it doesn't."

"Have you worked in the game?"

"No. Not really. But if you want real hard work, why don't you pick roofing. Dirty work, and pretty draughty, but they pay by the square metre. You can make so much dough there is no need to feel ashamed of it."

It was my turn at the small window, and I did not have a chance to find out how to get up on the roof. One thing is certain, at the labour exchanges even total strangers are happy to give you good advice, without being asked, and their information is better, and more to the point, than the kind you get through the little window.

*

To control my memories I went along to the Labour Exchange recently, just out of curiosity. A bright, clean and roomy hall had replaced the old, ugly premises that reminded of a provincial railway waiting-room. I thought for a moment that I had come at the wrong time, that they were not

open to the public, no one stood waiting at the windows. I found out there were people there all the same, not only inside, but out in the street as well.

Cars were parked no more than three metres from the gate. Four men talked near them. There was one who at first sight looked like the chairman of some sort of wine producers' association, red-cheeked, a grey moustache, wearing a fur-collared car-coat. He saw me hanging around not knowing which way to turn, and came over.

"What kind of work are you looking for?"

A man often finds out more if he joins the game not passing the ball in this or that direction but accepting those that come his way.

"Where there's no ceiling to the money you can make and the base is at least three and a half."

He did not leave me on the spot. True enough he was after skilled workers in the first place, he was looking for edge-tool operators for a big factory, but he was willing to offer 11 forints an hour for unskilled work as well. Meanwhile the others strolled over, one of them was in private business, he needed a floor-planer.

"Twenty an hour would be yours, but you'd have to do ten a day. Ten hours."

I could have found work on a construction job, as a dye-mixer in a textile mill, or as a semi-skilled fitter, right there. It wasn't their fault that no bargain was struck. We parted friends all the same.

Meanwhile things started to move inside as well. Four people were called, three men and a woman, but they hardly spent a minute there, everyone had their job already.

I did a turn and knocked at the door of the head of the Labour Exchange.

"Can you tell me how you see things from this side of the window?"

He was suspicious of me, he asked for my papers, and since they described me as an export packer, his suspicion grew. Nor did it excite confidence that I told him that I was curious, that's all, but a conversation got going eventually all the same. What gave it a push was my saying that the change since I had myself joined the queue in front of the old window, four years earlier, had really given me a shock.

"The New Economic Mechanism really stirred up things on the labour front, you know that as well as I do, you felt the effects. But the mass of people found their proper place in the years that passed. Of course one can't really say the situation is what it ought to be, it's often just those fields that are most important for the economy that we can't supply with the necessary and right labour.

"People go where there is more money. And all the time all those things that trip us up are frighteningly misshapen. If I left my job and went next door, doing the same work, no difference, still I'd get several hundred more. Other things bother me as well. Recently they engaged a number of men. New men but they were offered the same hourly rate that those get who have been working here for years. What do you think we thought of that? A palace revolt almost broke out."

"And what is the cause of the trouble?"

"There are many reasons but the main one is the pay envelope mentality."

"If that's all there were our brigade would have dispersed to the winds long ago."

"Don't forget, the ones who concern us are not those who have more or less found their place. Other forces are at work there as well, the team, friends, the way of seeing oneself, but let's not just use words, there is habit as well, and impotence. I am not using the last in any deprecatory sense, but if someone has really familiarized himself with a job he is less likely to leave than someone who merely took a bite out of it. There is labour mobility all the same, but the people who take out more than their share of that are the sort who fill the drink-shops even in working hours, the lumpen-proletariat and the true drifters. I don't

think there are as many of them as there seem to be. The great majority, by far the great majority, work. This does not, however, solve all those difficult questions which you get in arranging for a labour supply."

"If it were up to me I'd use the pay envelope to fight the pay envelope mentality. Then a man wouldn't have to worry if it didn't make sense after all to listen to the old uncles."

"What old uncles?"

I mentioned those whom I had talked to outside the office and I asked if they knew about them. The boss went stiff.

"They don't step inside the office. In the street anyone can ask or say whatever they like. If you want to know more about them, ask them. Look, we here find a job for everybody. In Hungary today, everyone has the right to work where they want to."

We didn't talk about the fact, nor did I bring it up, that back in '66 I also wanted to talk to him, or to whoever was boss at the time, but they would not let me in.

István Heitler

. . .I was born in 1917 but my childhood came to an end when I was twelve. I've worked since then. My grandfather on my father's side was a flour miller, in the Gizella Mill, my father just did any odd job that came his way. That was still the capitalist world. There was a big carrier, a chap by the name of Rákos, he had thirty horses in Kartács utca. My father used to go there to work. My mother's maiden name was Róza Stolz. She was a washerwoman, and she kept house.

We lived here in the Angyalföld area, in the Országbíró utca. We had one room, there were eventually eleven of us in it. Nine children, I was the third in the row. We weren't spoilt, that's for sure.

The way I remember it I went to school regularly. Always did my homework, there was no trouble with me. As soon as I finished six grades of elementary school I couldn't go on, it was hard enough until then as well. I got a job at the Láng Works when I was twelve, as errand boy. I stayed there for two years, then I went to a paint store, where they sold firewood and coal as well. I had to deliver that, up to the fifth or sixth floor sometimes.

I used to have one big wish those days, I wanted to be a circus acrobat. I did gymnastics, my bones were so supple that I could touch my ankles, leaning back. I learnt to do exercises on the trapeze as well, and did well. The man who taught me wanted to take me to America, but my parents wouldn't let me go. I wasn't even sixteen then.

After two years of carrying firewood and coal I joined the Carriers' Union in Kerekes utca. I was pretty well the youngest there, in my eighteenth year. That's when I started going down to the docks, to the Danube bank, we unloaded barges. Gravel, boards, salt, logs, sometimes one, sometimes the other. It's a beastly job, anyone who can stand up to that need not be afraid of anything. Then the union fixed me up to carry cash registers and furniture. I was in that job till I was called up into the army.

It was hard work, and we all stuck together to do it. The union did a lot for the workers too. We had some big strikes and we did not let them shove us around. If we heard that scabs had got onto a lorry we went and dragged them down. We could take it, but we could dish it out as well. Scabs did not do well in our trade.

I was called up in 1939, and my father died that year. In 1942 I was sent to the front line, I suffered there for eighteen months. Then I was wounded. Shot through the thigh.

We were already between Brest and Kodel then, in the winter of '43. Things happened there I couldn't stand up to. All that destroying and being destroyed, real inhumanity. Well I had enough of that, I fired that shot through my thigh, to get out of there at last. I didn't want to fight no more. That's how it was.

It was a tricky business, but I had made up my mind. I used a pistol, and held it close, you could see the powder marks and all. There was a Junior M.O. there, a young chap from the Ferencváros, one who knew the ropes. They took me to him. Well, doc looked at the wound, then he looked at me. Do you know what you did? Do you know what this means? I said I did. Self-inflicted injury, up against the wall. Well, he said, the hell with it, if I can't get home, at least you will. There was no trouble, they put me on a train, and took me to Kecskemét, to the military hospital. They discharged me from there, and from the army as well. But then they sent me another call-up. Let them, I said, and didn't go. I shot through and became a dodger. It wasn't my war. I dodged around Budapest, hiding at my mother's or my sister's, or my brother's. They looked for me all right, of course they did, but I always managed to dodge them.

Well then when the Red Army came in and occupied Budapest, I came out as well, and began to work. I got married in 1944, my wife's name was Julianna Veres, she worked in a kitchen. We really had nothing, neither of us. The house we lived in was of the kind where the wind blew in one side, and out the other. We got a week-end house on the Danube bank, that's where we started. It was empty. We bought an iron bed on the flea-market, later a paillasse, and later still a rickety table and two chairs.

In 1945 a friend of mine and I got together and bought a cart, and I turned out to be the horse to pull it as well. The cart had ball-bearings, and it wasn't expensive either. I managed to get rubber-tyres for it as well. We did removals, from here to there and everywhere, used straps and hooks, climbed stairs, pulled the cart, that's how this work went, day after day, from morning to night, for one long year.

Later, in 1946, when things got moving at the railways, I used to go down to the Nyugati station and load and unload trucks. The way things were then, when they saw someone worked well they employed him steady. It was day-labouring, you got your money at night. One of the bosses, Gazsi Pohos, saw me at work on the piece goods. Well, Pista, this Gazsi Pohos said to me, would you like to work here steady? Yes, I said, paid for a litre of wine, and I became permanent. There were times there, at the Nyugati, when I made as much as six or seven hundred, but I had to slave for twelve hours a day for that. My wife worked at the Tarján restaurant, her weekly take home pay was as much as a hundred and twenty. That's when we started to feel a little more confident.

The "Hórukk" Carriers was later, I worked there, went through the mill as the years passed, on a lorry as well. I was not a scary lad, being a carrier is a real tough job, but I had my sure place in it. The way things were there, when a new man turned up, the foreman asked him how many kilograms he was good for. He said something, and we put him to the test. A hundred and fifty kilograms onto his shoulders: go on then, carry it! If he threw it down he got told: go back to your mother's teats and suck some more. In most of the brigades a man began to count if he was certified for two hundredweight. These days they make more concessions. I was last at the Kartács utca branch office, that's where my career as a carrier came to an end, in 1960.

Two of us carried down a cash register together, using straps of course. It had a base and the character with me had been with us three months only. I asked him which way he wanted to go, reverse or front-ways? Reverse he said. All right. We had to fetch it from the first floor, but there was an *entresol* as well. Double or triple registers are usually carried down using a sled, but the single one has to be handled by two men with straps. Well then, we kept going, got down to the ground floor all right. He in front, going in reverse, he was off the step already, and there he turned suddenly without waiting for me to step down as well.

The register turned over, I couldn't keep the balance with one hand, two hundred and thirty kilograms, that's some weight after all, well the register knocked me down, I fell, with the strap on my neck, there on the step, with my legs crossed. I only heard the cracking. There she goes, I said to myself, that's the end of my leg. Then the character with whom I had carried down the register climbed out of the strap and left me there, with the cash register on my leg. Later he said that he'd got really scared. A nice story, it falls on my leg, and he gets scared. That's how it was. By then Karcsi and the rest upstairs, all the gang, heard this dumb sound in the staircase, they rushed down and saw me there, holding myself up on my two elbows, I can still truly feel the pressure on them. Well, they rushed down and knocked the register off me. That moment my foot was twisted off, there was nothing to hold it, my leg broke into three pieces, but all the way. The ambulance came, they took me to the Jew's Hospital. There I heard, I was conscious right through, amputation, amputation, that's all they talked about. I noticed that the doctors all called one of them professor, they all explained to him that this is for real. I interrupted then, I said: Professor, save my leg, I can't make a living without it. He thought and said, all right. They got hold of me, shoved a needle into me, in my arm, and I went off to sleep pronto. I came to next day, at night. There's this professor, at my bed, slapping me on the shoulder, well there, he says, we managed to do something, I'd even be able to kick a ball. Well I haven't played football, but I can work.

The way they saved it was to transplant three pieces of bone. Look, one can tell, here's one, here's another, and there's another on the back. Here you can tell the place of the pin, it'll show for good, that's where the thick muscle split.

Well, when I was all right again a long time later, in 1962, I went up to headquarters of the enterprise. The insurance lot had asked for sit-down work for me. They asked me what I was thinking of, I knew as well as they did there was no sit-down work. Not for a labourer, he had no right to it. I raised my voice and said the accident had been on the job. I wasn't at fault, and now it happened, had I lost the right to make a living? They put their heads together and the end of it was they offered me a door-keeper's job. I asked what the pay would be. Well, a thousand to eleven hundred forints. Well, I won't work for that, they should be ashamed of themselves. Let them give me work that one could keep a large family like this on. This way and that, one to the left, one to the right, and it's me they humiliate there.

That's how scabrous men are, I knew the lot, they were all working men, carriers and packers, but as soon as they sat down in an arm-chair, they forget what it was like, they put on airs, and look down on their old workmates and humiliate them. You've turned into real gents, I can see, I said. Only after a time, and a lot of dodging around, they came out with packing. I ought to have a try at that. So that's what I've been at since then. I do my best, everyone here knows that, but I can't really lift as I used to. My left wrist has had an accident as well. A long time ago, but it left its mark. We were shifting a 32 hundredweight machine. Its tail somehow went off, and slid back, against my wrist. It mended all right, but it's weaker.

I haven't got many plans for the future, couldn't have, how could I have. There's plenty I want, but no plans. We're just simple people in this world, I know that all right. I always worked with my hands, so did my father and my mother, my wife does too, and so do the children. Magdolna my girl does unskilled work in the jute-mill, her husband is a joiner, Györgyi is a photocopier in the bolt and nut works, her husband is a driver, Erika does unskilled work in the timber trade, her husband is a storeman. Pista, our lad, is an apprentice decorator.

Well, that's the way of things, it would be good to have a quiet life, I've had enough of always being under pressure. I'm not looking for rest, I wouldn't know what to do with that, but it would be good to take things easy.

László Biró

The way things looked then was that I as well would do all right for myself in sport, like nobody's business. But I got no further than the beginning That very year, on December 8, 1944, something happened that really put me back to square one, whichever way you look at it.

That autumn I got apprenticed, as a general sort of technician, but I could not really learn the trade, the siege interfered.

Us friends from the Junior High School stuck together. We got hold of all sorts of government stuff in the 11th district, and took it home. It would be all right to trade for grub. I went for it with a handcart, me and three friends, we loaded it up, and were off. We fetched it from the Verpeléti út, the siege had reached Csepel by then, but nothing went wrong, we got the Margaret Bridge all right. Then we went towards Zsigmond utca, cutting across the courtyard of the Császár Baths, but there was such a crowd in the Zsigmond utca for some reason, we couldn't go on. There were tanks there, and cars, and horse-drawn vehicles, one on top of the other, the Germans were screaming their heads off, noise all over the place, the lot. We tried to get round it. Then I could just feel a crack, the handcart rose, the shaft first dragged me to the left, then knocked me to the right and I fell. I didn't even have time to look around and the track of a German tank was already on top of my leg, making mincemeat of my foot from the ankle down.

The Germans were towing a shot-up tank, an armoured car did the job, right through this bottle-neck. The damaged tank could not go straight, it lurched from one side to the other, crashing against a wall. That's how it ricocheted back onto the handcart, and onto my leg as well. They got me onto a tram quick smart, and took me to the Sisters of Mercy, straight into the operating theatre. Off with four of my toes, they bandaged the open wounds and said they would try and save my ankle. That was Friday. On Sunday, when I lifted the blanket, there was such a smell coming from my foot I wanted to spew. It really hurt and I ran a high temperature. They took me back into the operating theatre and took off the bandages. I could tell that the whole of my foot was black. They had to operate immediately and they amputated my leg four inches above the ankle. The pain got worse and worse, they took me back to the operating theatre every other day, but septicaemia had spread that far, I was running a temperature of 40° centigrade. They gave me shots of morphine, I screamed so much in pain. The doctors were scared the infection might reach the peritoneum and then the heart, and good-bye Charlie. Then one morning I woke up and the pain had gone, and so had the fever. But perhaps that was worst. That's when I could really think about what had happened to me. That I'd never keep goal again, not in the First Division nor anywhere else, never again. I lacked a pair of legs, all I had was a leg.

Thinking of that the bombing of the hospital was the least of my worries. The Germans had fixed a gun-emplacement in the courtyard, and they shelled the area until it was destroyed. They took us down into the hospital basement. It was overcrowded, there was nothing to eat, no light and no water. The wounded kept on coming. Fighting had already reached the Vérmező and what is Moszkva tér today. On January 20 a horse-drawn coach left the hospital which took me home as well. My mother did not even recognize me.

That's when I started to learn to use crutches. No one can know how terrible that is unless they did it. And I don't just

mean physically, though it was that as well.

The 3rd Disctrict Communist Party had a pretty big influence on the way my life shaped up after that.

Ferenc Nezvál was appointed district Party secretary. We had known him for a long time but we did not know he was a Communist. His cobbler's shop was behind our house, he mended our shoes as well. One fine day his shop was closed and we had no idea what had happened to him. We had news of him again when, after the siege, he started to organize the Communist Party there in our district.

The Party house was in Kiscelli utca. We heard they arranged a dance there every Saturday night. By that time our gang had got together again and we made up our minds to go look see. The organizers did not want to let us up, we were not Party members. Luckily Ferenc Nezvál was there, he saw us, recognized me and invited us in. We often went there after that and were given all sorts of jobs, distributing publicity material, taking part in agitation campaigns, that sort of thing. I couldn't do much with my one leg, not outside work, what I did was to help in the office.

We so to speak didn't even notice and there we were, Party members. Our whole gang joined together, the six of us, that is. We were curious as well but what really had an effect was that they spoke to us like human beings, they told us about their programmes, and we grew enthusiastic about it as well. What really got us were things like you couldn't slap an apprentice's face anymore, or just go ahead and give the sack to a working man, that we had rights as well, and not only duties.

The Party committee helped me get an artificial leg. That was in January 1947, and I had to learn to use it. For a long time I still had to use a stick. Then, by the end of March, I was doing well enough to start work. I got an unskilled job at the Óbuda Cotton Processing Works, in Lajos utca. I worked in the dye shop, getting the dyes ready for the printers. We served them.

The way I could put it is that I found myself right in the middle of hard work, without any transition. We had to be there at six and we worked as much as ten to twelve hours a day, sixty to sixty-six a week. The printers worked in two shifts, from seven to two, and from two to nine, and they had to be serviced then. in the morning and in the afternoon. Moisture, steam, 60° centigrade in the summer. But the money was good. Textile workers made sixty, eighty, perhaps a hundred forints a week, but we earned more than two hundred a week.

A thousand two hundred men were employed in the works. Production was really going up. They picked me out after a year, there was a man there, the head of the personnel section, an honest and serious executive. He looked for workers with some sense wherever he could find them, and he had them trained. That's how I got caught up. I attended a book-keeping course, then one for storemen and I was put in charge of the colour-goods store.

I naturally carried on with Party work as well. I was an agitator in the city, in the country, the lot. I attended Party schools, more than one, and I wasn't the only one. There was many a good Party member in our family and more than one of our relatives is working for the Ministry of the Interior even now, and some from that group of friends as well who were with me at the start.

I was young, I was making good money, I could say I was full of hope for the future. I got married around that time too. I met my wife at Christmas 1947, she worked with my aunt at the Standard Works. Well, how will I put it, everything went quickly. Engagement in February 1948, marriage in September.

The situation was that things had not been too good for my mother for some time, and my wife's people were terribly poor as well, all the parents could offer was good

advice. Or rather, my mother gave us one of her rooms, fully furnished. That's how we started, and in November 1949 our son was born.

Everything went along fine until 1954, and then I had some trouble.

To explain it I ought to say that they gave me special jobs in Party work as well, but everything had changed meanwhile. The truth is one did not really notice. We got a pretty tough woman Party secretary, but she was always nice to me, so things did not touch me for some time. That's when the loan subscriptions were going on. I was doing well along the Party line then, so it was arranged that I should be a model subscriber. Some of us were selected for the purpose. We were to be the decoys. We always subscribed first, several thousands, double our pay, and even more, so the bosses, engineers, managers and the rest should take their cue from us and feel ashamed to subscribe less. My name was on the posters, they announced it more than once a day, the radio did too.

This is how it was in 1953 as well, then I was also asked to arrange for subscriptions. If I remember right this was in December. I got the sheet with the list. Targets were prescribed to us. A month's pay each was the basis. Four workshops were my lot. Well then, I went there, there was nothing special about that, only when I got to the boiler-house, that belonged to me. There was an old stoker there, a shoveller of coal more exactly, and he wasn't all that old either, just one of those miserable men. He made around five hundred a month, and that was the subscription allotted to him. When I went there and told him what it was about, the old man was in despair. He almost burst into tears. He said he couldn't subscribe just then.

His wife had T.B., she was dying already, she was in hospital but they couldn't save her. They had four children, all still small. What should I do? It was out of the question that someone should not subscribe. So I put him down for a hundred. He did not object, he signed, he could not really do anything else.

Well, the Party secretary went for me because of that. What was that man thinking of, and what were my ideas? The factory was competing on subscriptions, the maximum had to be got out of everybody. I must go back straight away and talk the old man into it. Or others might follow his example. It didn't do much good explaining the problem, that didn't interest her. I went down in the end, with the spare subscription list, but I had to take it back empty. She called me all sorts of names then. Being a model subscriber saved me from getting into serious trouble, but nothing saved the old man.

When I went to work two days later, there was the old man at the gate, crying. The doormen wouldn't let him in, and they had sent his labour record down to the gate. He was not allowed to go inside. He had to wait for the wages clerk outside, to be given his pay off. Sounds funny now, but that's the kind of world it was then. I got mad, went up to the Party office, told them that wasn't the way to handle this, did everything depend on those few forint. I was told off proper. It was none of my business, seems I had got a swollen head or something. And the rest.

I later heard the old chap's wife had died. Later they brought in a funeral notice, the old chap's. His sister brought it. I've forgotten where he was from, Pomáz or Csillaghegy, it doesn't matter, the essence is he tried to get work in a few places but they wouldn't have him anywhere. They were wide awake then, why did he leave, why was he dismissed. And there was the report, that the old chap was an enemy, he wouldn't subscribe to the peace loan. That was the style then. In the end he hanged himself. Suicide. And the four children were left orphans.

I took the funeral notice and went up to that woman with it. I didn't mince words,

for sure, I put it all there. I had been a Party member since I was eighteen, in 1948, five years, but then and there, the mood I was in, I said I wanted no more of it, I was quitting. She asked me then, in a real cold voice she did, if I wasn't afraid since she could have me taken away for that. I said what should I be afraid of. I'm not afraid. Nor was I, and it wasn't because friends and relations all had Party jobs.

She did not have me taken away, but she arranged for me to lose the job as head storeman. Back to unskilled worker. Well I didn't wait for that, and after I calmed down I gave notice. I know it could only be worse for me. So I left there in January 1954.

Then friends helped me to get a job in the soap factory. The Budapest Perfumery Works rather. I was a driver's mate, I liked the place and the work, but the money wasn't enough to keep our small family, and even less so as time passed.

One of my friends in Óbuda was a furniture removalist. I always envied his pay. I couldn't go there, of course, because of my leg. Later, when packing got under way full steam, he told me, and I became an export packer in 1958.

Those days we worked somewhere else almost every day. Mornings we got together at the Branch Office, after a while they called: Biró, they fixed a work card and I dictated another three names, my mates, those days we generally worked in gangs of four, then off to the factory to which the work card was made out. There we phoned for what we needed, say 10 kilograms of nails, so much paper and the rest, let them send it. The car came, we did the job, back to the Branch Office, handed in the work card, and that was it.

Bit by bit the brigades began to take shape, after a few places I finally got to Szegvári in January 1960. I spent most of my time at the Office Equipment Works as well.

When they took me on, the doctor put on my starting card I was suitable for light work only. But I work here just like everyone else. It gives me a good feeling that those who don't know about my leg, don't even notice.

Gyula Szegvári

The Great War was still on when I was born, back in Tószeg, in 1916. My mother had moved back there from Budapest, to the Polónyi Granny, so she could somehow keep the family while my father was in the army. My father's name was Lajos Sedlmayer. He was a fitter at the railways. The railways brought out a rule in 1934, about Magyarizing names, that's when he changed it to Szegvári, and the whole family with him.

I don't know much about the family, it wasn't the fashion in ours to keep a record. I just know from talking like they emigrated to Hungary in the eighteenth century. The father of my father's father, I don't really know which, it doesn't really matter, came from Germany to the Esterházy estates as bailiff. That József Borsos, a court artist, a well-known Biedermeier painter, was in my father's family, his uncle, in fact. As far as I know there's another painter in Germany, a certain Heinrich Sedlmayer. We had some sort of relationship with Mihály Munkácsy as well, but I couldn't tell for sure, my young brother got the scent of it, that's how I know. My grandfather was still in the Esterházy service, he was forester in the Bakony woods and lived in Devecser. I hardly knew him. He died young. My father was born in 1880, he already became a worker, a fitter. He was married in 1910, he was called up soon after, drafted into the navy in 1912, in the services for almost eight years, counting all in all. While still an able seaman he was a crew member of the steamer "Elisabeth" which was attached to the Naval Academy at Fiume. He travelled the world on that. Saw many countries, got to know a great many men, all sorts of people, he counted them once, he knew sixteen languages, of course not perfectly, just like

that, a sailor's way, he could get by, that's all. He told a lot of tales of his adventures, typhoons on the Yellow Sea, strange countries, the lot, of course, being a child I didn't really appreciate his stories, I just enjoyed them, as I would fairy tales. Then war broke out and he got onto a warship, if I remember right he was already a boatswain then. They had just built a new ship, the "Szent István", he was on that too, then when they took to the high seas, leaving Fiume harbour, I don't really know what happened, did she run into a mine, or was she torpedoed, but that great big famous ship blew up and sank promptly, no more than seven or eight kilometres from the shore. They could barely save my father. Then he served on the "Novara"; 1918 turned up. In February the sailors mutinied. There's a big book about it. The Bocche di Cattaro Mutiny, my father is in too. He was amongst those whom Miklós Horthy had decimated, after the mutiny was put down. There they were lined up, numbering from the left. My father said eight. You can imagine what that was like. The Republic of Councils was next, and he was in the Red Army, he was there at the battle of Szolnok, fighting the Rumanians, then it was Miklós Horthy's lot again. They interned my father and kept him in for a long time.

We lived there without a father, in that small village. Just think how hard it was, the worries my mother had. She moved down in 1914–15, she already had my two big brothers then. My mother's maiden name was Piroska Gombos de Gombos; she was descended from a Hungarian noble family from Abony. Of course the nobility only had reality in the family tradition. Her father was the butcher at Tószeg, and they kept an inn there as well. Not a real inn, just one of those village nothings, a *csárda*. That grandfather died very young too, after a railway accident. He had nineteen children, that's why some of them had to find a place. My mother could only finish three years at school, then she came up to Budapest, as a nursemaid somewhere she met my father and they got married. My oldest brother Lajos was born here in Budapest. He was apprenticed to a joiner, became a journeyman too, but he did not even live to be eighteen. That was tragic, that was. He was a lively boy, always showing off. One day they were swimming in the Tisza, they jumped around in the water, he did a somersault, fell on his neck and died. That was in 1928. Laci was my other brother, he was born in 1914, he was apprenticed to a tailor, but he perished as well, he died in battle in 1943. Three of us were out there. Well, to take us in line, I followed in 1916, already out in Tószeg, then the fourth, Karcsi, there as well, later, in 1920. After a lot of trouble he became a painter.

My father was already working up in Budapest, while my mother was struggling with us down there. Our life was pretty simple, it was easier to make sure of the daily bread of children in a village. That's where I attended school, six classes. We're Roman Catholics, so I attended the Catholic school.

My brother's death really shook us. My mother gave up the village house and joined her husband in Budapest. We lived in the Istvántelki út, in one room, completely unsuitable, shaped like a triangle, but without a kitchen or anything else, and the five of us lived in misery there. Later we moved to Újpest, to the Árpád út. There we lived in a coach yard, they called it the Braun Court. There were always eight to ten carts, the horses, and the coachmen, what could that have been like, well we lived there, room and kitchen, that meant a big step up for us.

My father was an air-brake fitter, it was his luck that he did special work, they could not do without him, so he wasn't sacked even at the time of the depression. He made a hundred and eighty pengő a month, at a time when railway workers generally made a hundred to a hundred and thirty. The truth is that it was difficult to live on that;

my mother went to work as well, twice a week she cleaned in Heidinger's restaurant. There was great poverty then, right down the line. We led a very simple life, with the reins kept tight. Our parents brought us up very strictly, to be pious and religious. I remember well, on Sundays, church in the morning, in the afternoon the whole family went to the Liget, all the way from Újpest, an ice-cream or two, or something like it, for us. Sometimes we had a look at the cheap Lilliput Theatre, but mostly we just gaped at the booths and at the barkers. That was our fun.

Then my parents apprenticed me to a joiner. I should have liked to have become a woodcarver. One must not imagine them as carving figures, men, special things: they carve ornaments, in the baroque sort of taste, decorations, acanthus, that type of thing. Just then, around 1930, that craft found itself in a crisis as well, the furniture trade had switched to the German style, so I had to learn general cabinet-making.

We had our nose to the grind-stone, that's the truth, but we still had the time and the inclination for other things. There was the young workers' movement, I was in that when still an apprentice. We had a Communist at Szántó's, by name of József Kelemen, he brainwashed us all right. This Kelemen unfortunately disappeared later, I had no idea what happened to him. Then there was the shop steward József Gróf, a really good tradesman, he taught us apprentices to make ready. That's one part of the work, the other is finishing. It was he who organized the strikes as well, but that was much later, I was already a journeyman then. I took part in two or three big Újpest strikes around '34 and '36. We organized to get four fillérs more an hour and we managed to get two. My big brother really took me into the movement. He was a member of the MTE sports club, a good sprinter over 100 metres. He took me there, and we went to the Újpest Working Men's Home in Kolozsvári utca. They gave us books there, we took part in functions, we helped, all sorts of things went on there, we went walking in the hills, and things like that. I've been an organized worker since 1934, when I finished my apprenticeship. At that time I was a member of the Woodworkers' Union. Later, in 1946, I became a Party member as well.

Well, let's not forget it, in 1933 I became a journeyman. Well, what should I say, the world is my oyster, that's what I believed then, that I knew the lot, though the best only came later. As a journeyman I worked from seven to six every day, twelve pengős a week were my starting pay. After two or three years we got fifteen. One could go up to eighteen, twenty, perhaps twenty-two. A pretty meager living. In those days a really good tradesman made twenty-two to twenty-five pengős, but that was extraordinary. A foreman's pay rose to twenty-eight pengős, but the ordinary, average worker's was around sixteen or seventeen.

Well then unfortunately or not, it's all the same now, I belong to that section of society where what counts is not always what one wants, I had ideas as well, all the same, what I wanted or didn't doesn't interest anyone, I couldn't direct my own life. First it was the army, and then the war.

I'd say that was a special chapter in the life of every man that age. Just think, right to start with, that an apprentice lived like a lord compared to a recruit, I mean in the old army, no one can even imagine that now, and that's saying little. There a man couldn't call his soul or his body his own, and if the man in charge was a wild beast, or someone gone soft in the brain, you could not do a thing. They humiliated you just as they pleased and when they pleased. If you paid them something, you got some sort of concession.

I was called up in October 1939, went into the Andrássy Barracks. I was drafted into the horse-artillery and trained as an outrider. You had to spend a lot of time on horseback. Then I became a machine-

gunner, but in an extraordinary fashion I had a pretty involved life in the army.

We were herded into a huge pen the very first day. A gun-sergeant received us. We weren't even in uniform, yet. He started off by asking what our trades were. Cabinet-maker, I said. Right, you'll be good with the horses, he said. We were given a paillasse and asked to stuff it. There was a Jewish boy there, he offered two pengős to stuff his, so I did it. I was hardly done when a bombardier came into the room and asked who there was a Budapest spiv. I reported right away, thinking this might turn into something interesting. On the contrary, they sent me down to the stables. There was a lance-bombardier there. Good-day I said. What's that, good-day? The bombardier sent me? What's that bombardier. Mr. Bombardier to you. Right, there's the fork and shovel in the corner, get all the dung out from under the horses. He left me there with that. I was scared with the horses, but I had to start work. It was rotten there on my own. At night another recruit in civvies turned up, he told me to go and eat, he'd stay down there while I did. Well, I thought, you'll stay here longer than that, chum. I've had enough of this, and I stayed upstairs. But the bombardier came rushing in soon after that and asked who was down in the stables? So I rushed to him and said I'd been already so I wouldn't have to go again. He began to scream at me, effing this and effing that, who let me leave there? He literally kicked me down to the horses again. There I worked in the stink. I listened to lights-out there, on my own and I would have loved to have gone home. A warrant-officer turned up before eleven. I did not even know how to salute, as a *levente* (member of a paramilitary youth organization) I was always in the awkward squad, so I just politely said good evening. He, for a change, did not scream, he asked me who I was and what I was doing there. I said I was looking after the horses. All right, he quietly said good-bye, but the bombardier screamed next day again: which dummox was down in the stable yesterday? That's how things went, for a fortnight. We only got uniforms then. Without buttons, of course. The old soldiers had cut those off and they sold them for money. All right I thought to myself, we're quits. I had the two pengős which I got for stuffing the paillasse.

The war came and we were taken to the front line. I was attached to the Aszód armoured lot, that's how I got to the Don. When they gave us our send off it was all flags, and flowers, brass-band, speeches, the lot. I stood up straight, I was young and strong as a bull, at least that's what I thought, flex my muscles, they were like steel, and the bullets would bounce back. But I was made small pretty quick out there. We were there on the Don, about forty kilometres from Voronezh. That's where the whole Hungarian army perished, almost completely, the section of the line collapsed. We fled best as we could, those who were left. There are books on this, and films, everything, but I say they could not tell even a tenth of the horror we lived through there. Only those can know who were there but even those can't know truly. To think only of the winter, that Russian winter. We had warm clothes, felt boots, double gloves, double cap, a small charcoal burner suspended from our bellies, but it didn't do much good. The winter was long, terrible blizzards, that eternal greyness, and the cold that bit through everything. There wasn't much fighting or shooting on our part, the machine-guns were frost-bitten. Grease and oil stuck, you couldn't shoot with them. Half an hour out in the open and many had their noses frozen. There were a terrible lot of frost-bitten legs, and frozen men all over the snow. They sat down to have a rest, they were so tired and then they never got up again. The hearts of others did not stand up to it, they collapsed there, at my side. There was a master joiner from Újpest, I carried his stuff and his gun for a good hundred and twenty kilometres. He just

couldn't. Many couldn't stand up to it. I could, perhaps because I was younger and tougher. Generally those who had done hard work before stood up to the difficulties better. And there were plenty of those. We were surrounded, we were at the receiving end of that terrible machine-gun fire from the forests, into our flanks, men fell like flies in front of me, beside me, behind me, and I just went on. Miracle or no miracle, I was still a mystic sort of soul then, I fanatically believed that some superhuman power would help me.

General Veress had to give up Novy Oskol. That's where I was wounded, in the course of a reconnaissance, I copped a machine-gun bullet in my leg. We were completely surrounded then. They washed and bandaged my wound on the Belgorod main road. Well, what next. There was a real tough captain there. He collected a lot of men, we'd try to break out at night. Either we managed or we didn't. I went with them as well, in spite of being wounded. Well, we managed, we went out at six at night, in the middle of a great big barrage, got hold of an engine, assembled a train, that didn't even have a side. And all under terrible fire. That way I got a tetanus injection at Gomel, but one of those cross-backed lice bit me there, and I got typhus. By Minsk I was running a real temperature. Well, I thought, that's the end. I managed to survive the fighting, the rout, the retreat, the bombs, and now this. They brought me home with a big detour, Brest-Litovsk, then Vienna, and Debrecen, to the Epidemics Hospital. From Debrecen they took me to Budapest to the 10th District Home Guard Hospital. After I recovered I did duty as a medical orderly. I tried to hang on, I could survive the war there. But when it was all over, well that's what a man is like, I went and voluntered for the democratic Hungarian army. And we were off to the front line again, on April 4, 1945, towards Austria. Second line was our lot, clearing up, guarding supply lines, reserves, that sort of thing. That's when I became a sergeant. I was demobilized in December 1945. They wanted to send me to an officers' training school, for instructors, but that was too much for me. Enough was enough. I did not want to stay a soldier forever. By January 1946 I was home in Budapest.

Well they say these days those were the times. Well, they were. I was young and newly married then, our wedding was in 1945. I had known my wife for some time, she lived opposite. She was married and had a little girl, but her husband died. I met her again when I was in the army, and after a little while we married. Let me say straight out that it is mainly due to her that our marriage is as well-balanced as it is, and has always been that, even in the worst of circumstances. There were difficulties aplenty all-right. Her parents were really poor peasants from Csát, she made buttons for Sternberg, in Újpest. That's when I got discharged after all those years in the army, she had no income, no dowry, nothing, and there was I with nothing as well. In other words we started from absolutely nil. We had no home of our own for a long time, we sometimes stayed with my parents, sometimes with hers. Then the children, Marika was four then. Karcsi was born in 1946, Klári in 1949. We only managed to rent a pretty poor place of our own later, a room and kitchen in Rákospalota. We had to carry the water several hundred yards. If someone wanted a wash the others had to go out. The privy was right at the back of the yard, out in the open. You had to hurry in the cold, like chickens in the snow.

Well, then, it was tough. My wife could not go out to work because of the children. When they got a bit bigger she found a place in a button-making co-op. She is still working there. So there was only one income. I managed to make ends meet by putting in a claim for waste timber, and I bagged it and sold it as firewood. From time to time, on holidays or my holidays, I went to work for a cabinet-maker in business on his own. The

children got everything humanly possible. We tried hard enough. They had a better childhood than ours.

My father died in 1948. He was sixty-eight. Pneumonia carried him off, just like that.

Well then, when I left the army I began to look round. There was nothing, my trade, cabinet-making, was nowhere yet, no chance of a job there. Finally my friends, the Janza brothers, helped me get a job with the Gyurják Carriers. We started there as packers, first the three of us, then another carpenter joined us, We worked out in the Csepel Free Port, so there I plunged straight into the middle of the packing case world. You're a timber trade man? Can you drive in a nail? I can all right. Saw? Know anything about timber? Right. Then you'll get the hang of cases as well. And so it was, but the truth is we became packing-case experts while working, we learnt on the move. A case was wanted for something. We nailed it for a fortnight, and it took us another fortnight to take it apart, we tried and tried until it fitted. When we made cases later, say for the Ganz Crane Works, for one of those five-ton cranes, well that was something to look at. A case as big as a house, the sled with five 20×20 rollers, it took four to four and a half cubic metres of timber, but it was stable and safe, and beautiful to look at. The bosses came and just gaped. They hadn't made packing cases on that scale before. Of course, a job had to be done before we got that far.

ZSUZSA KOROKNAI

THE PEOPLE'S COLLEGES

Legend and Reality

"The liquidation of the cultural monopoly of the former ruling classes" is a conceptual commonplace of contemporary Hungarian cultural history. In the second half of the 'forties, after the end of the war, however, it was a very real part of the class struggle involving the future of people's democracy in Hungary.

Many talented, intelligent working-class and peasant youth drifted, some because they had no money to study and nothing to live on while studying, and some because the spirit of the secondary schools and the universities was foreign to them. The educational system as such was essentially unfavourable to those who had grown up in difficult circumstances suffering serious cultural deprivation.

It was for these promising young people that, in 1946, the National Association of People's Colleges *(NÉKOSZ)*, a mass movement, was formed. It relied on the initiative and experience of Györffy Collegians. The Györffy College was established in Budapest in 1939 and named after an outstanding ethnographer. Its primary aim was to make possible the higher education of peasant and working class lads whose homes were not in Budapest. From the beginning, it opposed the educational policies and the social system of the Horthy régime. During the war, it became increasingly radical, but

was able to survive at the cost of great hardships until the German occupation of Hungary in March 1944. At that time, theCollege disbanded and a majority of its members went underground, taking part in the resistance movement. After the Liberation, the Györffy collegians had a major part in every democratic movement throughout the country, especially in the implementation of the land reform.

On a national scale, the People's Colleges were formed with the aid of the various democratic parties and mass organizations, above all the Communist Party and the Peasant Party, the unions and the socio-political organization called National Aid. Today we would perhaps call the colleges student hostels. Yet each of them was much more than what is understood by a student hostel. These colleges cannot be compared to English colleges either. They were distinguished from the latter, first of all, by their plebeian character, as well as by the fact that instead of the preservation of tradition, they thought their task to be the disruption of conservative traditions and the creation of new conventions which would be in accord with revolutionary changes then taking place in Hungary. The People's Colleges provided their members with board and lodging free of charge, and sometimes with clothing. Especially in the beginning, they lived under conditions that are hardly imaginable today. But more important than these basic necessities, they provided a collective, a circle of friends, the secure feeling of unity, and the feeling of responsibility and discipline freely undertaken for the sake of a common cause. Beyond this, they provided generally highcalibre economic, political and ideological lectures and heated intellectual debates which expanded the horizon of the collegians, helped shape their world-view, augment their cultural background and, since at that time there was often great need for this, supplemented and corrected what the collegians were taught in school.

Such an enumeration may seem prosaic. In a relatively short article it is unfortunately difficult to bring to life the atmosphere of that era. It was probably with exaggerated self-confidence that the collegians sang to Ferenc Jankovich's words: "By tomorrow, we shall turn the world upside down." It is true that at that time, the world moved fast indeed in Hungary, and that it was moved by powers better organized and more knowing than the collegians. Nevertheless, it is indisputable that the collegians, too, participated in the revolution, in their own cities, counties, schools, or colleges. Being themselves a product of revolutionary change, the Colleges existed at the centre of revolutionary change. They were a thoroughly political and politicizing community; their members knew that they had to act, and they felt that they could act. At times, they did not recognize the most efficacious method for action. They did many naïve, impatient, excessive things. But who did not do such in Hungary at that time? And yet, the three fleeting years of the People's Colleges are not merely a precious memory for most of the former members. For them it has remained the experience of a lifetime.

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After almost thirty years, the movement of the National Association of People's Colleges is slowly but surely turning into a legend. These days, those in their twenties and thirties listen to the accounts of former people's collegians as if they were great myths—the way they listened in their youth to stories of great battles in the First World War, or to the half-probable stories, already coloured by fantasy, of the Hungarian revolution of 1918–19.

This is not merely due to the passing of time. In Hungary today, a great deal is spoken and written about the history of the recent past and yet, we cannot really share our experiences with the generation after us. True, that overly harsh criticism from its major supporter, the Communist Party, which overtook this dynamically developing

movement in the autumn of 1948, and its subsequent atrophy and termination in 1949, also contributed to the formation of the legends surrounding the People's Colleges. At that time, the people's collegians did not understand, and could not understand, what had happened. Though most of us tried to find an explanation for ourselves, we realized only at a much later date that the reasons had a significance far beyond the youth movement itself. They were a sign of the expansion of dogmatism and of a new political rigidity. It followed that for years, it was not "advisable" to speak of the People's Colleges. The entire business was surrounded by vague, but definitely tangible, suspicion; and there was no chance for a realistic appraisal of the movement since it simply ceased to exist as an experience which could be critically re-evaluated and improved. It lived on only in the at times suppressed, at times open nostalgia of former collegians and their friends.

Imperfect knowledge and an almost exclusively subjective approach are, by their very nature, a sure breeding ground for legend. For this reason, the picture presented by Miklós Jancsó's much discussed film, *Confrontation*, also turned out most strange. Jancsó had a vision of a never-never-land, fairy-tale, song and dance revolution into which, as a matter of course, were built the motifs, themes and nostalgias of his own People's College past. It also echoed the high, distant waves of the Western European student movements which were contemporary with the making of the film. But the film as a whole was not about these. Rather, as far as I can judge, it was a personal, surrealistic vision manifest in a series of very beautiful pictures. And yet, the greater number of critics did not see or discuss it as such, but rather, as a historical film. At the same time, the general public almost exclusively thought of it as a film about the People's Colleges. Many of the former collegians protested and offered rectifications: that's not how it happened: we were't like that at all! Younger people, on the other hand, were surprised: how do you like that, these people's collegians were actually beatniks, or even more so, the forerunners of the hippies!

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Jancsó's film is, clearly, not a historical document but a sovereign work of art. The people's collegians, and generally progressive Hungarian young people of the years 1945–48, can in no way be compared to the beatniks, that all-denying generation without hope which moved out of society with such vehement indignation. And even less so can they be compared to the quietly passive flower-children. There were many strange ideals then in the minds of the people's collegians—from a peasant-romanticism to a whipped-up Marxism, as yet undigested, oversimplified, and therefore often thoroughly misunderstood, from a naïve Messianism to a no less naïve anarchism, from the influence of dogmatic religions and religious sects to a primitive and impatient atheism, all the way to dreams of various educational and socio-political utopias, from an illusory belief in the immediate brotherhood of nations, to a nationalism crammed into us from elementary school onwards under the Horthy régime. At first, we were terribly ignorant. However, there were two things that the people's collegians did not have to learn. First: that they cannot "withdraw" from society but must change it; after all, personal betterment is dependent on social change. Second: that the essence of life, and especially the lives of the poor, is never just meditation, but a hard, often bitter struggle. And they *knew* all this. From the first moment of their conscious lives, they daily *experienced* it.

By 1946, after the radical land reform which fundamentally transformed property relations in the villages, the membership of the People's Colleges, at that time growing fast, was as follows: the parents of 7 per cent were landless agricultural workers, 16 per cent were dwarf-holders, 30 per cent were small

and medium-peasants, 26 per cent were industrial workers, 4 per cent village teachers and 8 per cent were village tradesmen and shopkeepers. If I'm right, this amounts to 91 per cent. Out of ten thousand people's collegians, the membership in the hey-day of the Colleges, there were 9,100 young people of whom almost everyone had known want, and if the liberation hadn't come, only a few hundred among them would have had the opportunity for further education; and that only at the price of great privations and even greater compromises.

It is hardly debatable today that the history of the People's Colleges is part of the history of Hungarian democracy and socialism, and as such, it is a subject for worthy historical research work. Fortunately, the first product of such treatment work to come before the public is a documentary volume about the educational principles, system and practices of the People's Colleges. It appeared in the spring of 1975 in Budapest under the title of "The Education of Truth and Reality" *(A valóság pedagógiája)*, edited by Ferenc Pataki. The educational principles and practice of the People's Colleges are valuable as part of the tradition. It was the first mass socialist educational experiment in Hungarian history. It is also valuable as a stimulant to thinking and is especially instructive in the search for new methods in academic work. The book is also interesting as a source of information, though in this regard I have some reservations.

The entire volume is made up of original documents. It has a short preface and introduction, and short explanatory notes at the head of some of the chapters, followed by a mass of material often with scant regard for chronology: selections from the contemporary press, the bulletins of the movement, excerpts from lectures, from conferences, personal letters, college work-schedules, examination papers, records and notes. There is little commentary, which makes it attractive. It mirrors the original openess of the People's Colleges, that tradition that there is no need to force any kind of conclusion on anyone, it is more important to provide the materials to stimulate thought. It is, however, difficult for those who were not alive then or who were very young in the years immediately following the liberation to understand material presented in this way. There are many in their twenties and thirties, who would be interested, and among whom there are not a few teachers and youth leaders. It appears even more problematic that the documents refer too much to the internal matters of the Colleges. Those public actions external to the Colleges in which the collegians took an active part and which contributed greatly to their education and the development of a collective spirit are accorded a disproportionately small place.

Hopefully, the succeeding volumes will make amends making the documents all the more valuable. They cannot, however, provide a synthetic-scientific, analytic and critical evaluation of the educational and political experience of the movement, for which there is great need, as there is generally for such a treatment of the recent past.

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Not being an educationist either in theory or practice, I would not dare to attempt such an undertaking on the basis of this volume. Yet, I would like to call attention to what I consider exceptionally timely.

First: collective education, probably the most timely legacy of the College Movement. The People's Colleges were based on the ideal of collective education. A large college or collective was subdivided into smaller communities, called co-operatives, which were mostly made up of eight to ten self-chosen members. They usually lived in one room, or adjoining rooms, faithfully divided their meagre food among themselves, organized common programmes, accepted common tasks and mutually helped each other in their studies. However, under normal circumstances, the co-operatives did not become isolated from the college as a whole. This organizational structure was by the

various committees (educational, cultural, sport, etc.), whose members were delegated by the co-operatives. Above all, there was the college general assembly, and the college nights in which the entire membership took a regular and active part.

The internal democracy of the Colleges was even more important than these organizational structures. Every office-holder, with the exception of the principals and resident instructors of colleges on the secondary-school level, was a collegian. They were appointed by the college general assembly, were directly responsible to it, and if the collegians felt that one of them did not carry out his duties, a meeting was called and, after a democratic debate and vote, he could be recalled. All members of a College were of equal rank; they could debate any issue and take a part in any decision. Though at times there may have been overheated arguments bordering on rudeness, there was no sarcastic comment of mistakes. (This was especially important to help overcome the inhibitions of the less educated, and the religious students.) Each College had a chosen disciplinary committee as well, which took serious measures only in the most exceptional cases. Yet college life was not disrupted. As far as I remember what I experienced I can say without reservation that the internal discipline of most Colleges was much more stable and strict than that of any overregulated school or dormitory. Community control was largely responsible for this.

One of the most fruitful lessons of the mass education in the People's Colleges was that a good collective can evolve only through work, and through meaningful work at that. We need not think exclusively of world-shaking tasks. Let me cite from personal experience. In the summer of 1946, during the foundation of the Béla Bartók People's College in Debrecen, "turning the world upside down" started with the founding members—mostly future leaders of the College—cleaning out the incredibly dirty premises which the as-yet bomb-damaged city gave us, and which, for years, had served as the temporary quarters of soldiers, P.o.W.'s and refugees. We got hold of some DDT and started spreading it. Was this meaningful work? Without a doubt it was. In post-war Hungary, poor and in ruins, it was indispensable. (We had to live somewhere; it is not healthy to live in filth; and unpleasant among bed-bugs.) It was doing this far from exalted work that the nucleus of the College became friends and developed a team spirit. It was they who later, without any difficulty, took care of the admission of new members and organized the life of the College, undertook agit-prop work in the villages and the most backward districts of Debrecen, organized cultural programmes, took an active part in the political life of the city and its environs, took a leading role in all the progressive movements of the College, and in the meantime (this was obligatory) finished their studies with good results. And besides all this, everyone helped carry the pot of thick brown soup, breakfast, from the kitchen of National Aid over to the College.

(I think it worth mentioning that many of these collegians have since become college teachers, nationally recognized scientists, writers, journalists, teachers, doctors, chemical engineers and political and social leaders.)

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The second problem area that I find especially timely is the question of the so-called deprived students. Today we would doubtless call the large majority of the people's collegians deprived youths. Those involved still object—and with reason—to this discriminatory appellation. We would surely have rebelled against it then. We didn't feel our situation to be deprived in the least. On the other hand, we felt the serious lack of culture. And we fought against it not the organization of teaching within the College. True, the younger ones, especially those in the lower, secondary-school classes, were often helped, mostly by being taught how

to study, but the major form of intramural teaching consisted of college evenings and seminars, to which we invited outstanding college and high-school teachers, theatrical people, musicians, musicologists and politicians to deliver lectures and lead discussions not only on the problems of narrow fields of specialization, but on all that we didn't know, yet had to learn: history, art history, mathematics, world literature, geology, music theory, the fine arts, the different schools of philosophy, the basic problems of Marxism–Leninism, the social problems of Debrecen and the Hajdú Region, public health, and the current problems of national and world politics.

That's how it was in most of the Colleges. The documentary volume which serves as the occasion for this article, contains the work schedule for 1948 of the József Attila College in Budapest, as well as the national programme of the Colleges of the various arts. These programmes were based on an exchange of views with the best known intellectuals and artists of the time, and on independent reading, research, and the acquisition of knowledge. In numerous Colleges, they also put heavy emphasis on the learning of languages. In most, the systematic study of at least one language was compulsory, but in the more distinguished ones, such as the Györffy College, they recommended two: one major language, and the language of one of the neighbouring nations. (The language courses were organized by the college itself; they were free, of course; and most of the instructors—usually members of some supporting organization—taught without payment.)

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Can these traditions and those similar to them—the thorough, multi-stage admission system, for example—be adapted to meet today's greatly changed circumstances? If so, then in what form? I don't know. This is somethcing worth thinking about.

However, I do not wish, under any circumstances, to create a new legend of the People's Colleges. Our College was far from being an idyllic place. It was full of inner tensions, with the at times heated conflicts of collegians who came from diverse backgrounds, were of various ages, had different plans and nursed different ambitions. Besides its good points, the movement also bore the marks of the infantile disorders of the age. The criticism which touched upon the cliquish introversion of some of the Colleges was justified. György Lukács was absolutely right when, as quoted in the above mentioned volume, he objected to the lack of intellectual ambition among the majority of the collegians. During the decline of the movement, bureaucratic tendencies also emerged. (First of all, in the elaboration of a kind of inflexible, dogmatic "system of norms" for the Colleges, and in the attempt at an expanding centralization.) One cannot tell whether the movement would have had enough strength to outgrow its own mistakes, to learn from its positive experience and to renew itself in the midst of new social conditions. No time was given to it. For this reason, if no other, the drastic induced atrophy of the movement of the People's Colleges became a particularly sensitive loss for the theory and practice of socialist education in Hungary. A revival and re-evaluation of experiences could still produce significant benefits today.

IN MEMORIAM IMRE VAJDA

Imre Vajda, a noted economist and militant veteran of the Hungarian and international working class movement, was as old as the century. His name is inscribed in the annals of twentieth century Hungarian history, part of the great and proud story, but with a place as well in the tale of mournful years.

He had not left school yet when he joined the Galileo Circle, that gathering focus of young progressive Budapest intellectuals, and later the Social-Democratic Party. At the time of the 1919 Republic of Councils he was first a member of a Worker's Council, going on to command a company in the Red Army. Following the suppression of the dictatorship of the proletariat he took refuge in Vienna. There he was active within the *Világosság* group of the Hungarian Social-Democratic Party as well as the Austrian Social-Democratic Party. He took part in the February 1934 Workers' Rising in Vienna. Working underground he did a great dead towards creating unity of action within the working class movement. He was prosecuted, convicted and told to leave the country, but he only returned to Counter-Revolutionary Hungary when SS boots were already goose-stepping on the Vienna pavements. Back home in Hungary he helped guide a group of workers and intellectuals in the Social-Democratic Party who urged working class unity even at the time of the domination of the Peyer-led right wing.

Following the Liberation he worked for the reconstruction of the country, both in politics and in the economic field. He was a prominent member of the left wing of the Social-Democratic Party, one of those who most systematically urged working class unity. When the Communist Party and the Social-Democratic Party merged to form the Hungarian Workers' Party, Imre Vajda became a member of the Political Committee of the united party. In 1945 and 1947, as well as in 1949–1950 he took part in the formulation of trade policy, holding the rank of Under-Secretary. Between 1947 and 1949, as the first president of the National Planning Office, he helped lay the foundations of a planned economy in the country. He was arrested in 1950, and trumped up charges secured his conviction. In March 1956 he was rehabilitated.

A new stage in Imre Vajda's life started in 1957. Right up to his retirement in 1965 he taught at the Karl Marx University of Economics. His theoretical knowledge and experience of politics and economic affairs there bore fruit. Two of his text-books "International Trade", and "Socialist Foreign Trade" helped train a generation of economists. Imre Vajda's articles and papers, collected in two volumes under the titles "Hungary and World Trade" and "International Division of Labour and Economic Reform" arrested the attention of economists at home and abroad. Many of his ideas have not lost any of their validity to this day. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences awarded him a Doctorate in Economics in 1963, and elected him a Corresponding Member in 1967. He also became a member of the Economic Theory Team of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

Foreign trade, the international division of labour, economic policy, and the direction of the economy (macro-management) were at the centre of his interests. Learning from past experience he stressed how important it is for the Hungarian economy to be able to react elastically to trends in world trade, and that all the resources of socialist integration and East—West trade relations be properly

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exploited. He drew attention to the kind of domestic conditions needed to allow for this to be done.

Imre Vajda was an economist, but in his hands economics was not the dismal science of study and library. He passionately participated in the discussions and debates where the country's foreign trade policy was formulated, castigating errors that handicapped progress, systematically urging improvements in economic policy and the system of economic guidance. He knew no rest as a teacher, and he used not only words, but also the example of his deeds. He taught a new generation of economists, and he expected much of them, but he taught at Party functions as well, and in works and factories, explaining and persuading wherever his duties and interests took him. He helped reorganize the Hungarian Economics Society, being elected its President in 1963, and as such did much to secure recognition for the profession, helping to make Hungarian economics known on the international scene as well. He often took part in international conferences at the request of the UN, the International Society of Economists and other international bodies. He lectured in many places, and argued, debated and discussed in more. He died in harness, during a lecture tour, in Vienna where he had spent so many years in active exile, in 1969.

His life and struggles provide a moving example of life-long commitment to the cause of the working class, working class unity, the socialist revolution and socialist construction. He was an example as well of that indissoluble integrity—found only amongst the very best—of political commitment and a passionate quest for scientific truth. A loathing for social injustice and the barriers erected in the way of progress were organically moulded into his soft-spoken, modest and thoroughly humanist personality. His memory and his works will last a long time yet, and all readily accord the honour and respect due to them.

TAMÁS FÖLDI

BELIEFS

Interdisciplinary Conference at Visegrád

The term "belief" has lately acquired a special meaning when used by social scientists, one accorded a crucial role which some expect to unpick every lock like some sort of skeleton key.

The interdisciplinary conference which the Mass Communication Research Centre together with the Institute of Ethnography of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences organized at Visegrád, some 25 miles from Budapest for three days at the end of April 1975, expressed the attention which is given to current intellectual trends in Hungary. It attracted some hundred and twenty sociologists, psychologists, ethnographers, philosophers, linguists, historians and literary people. No lectures were delivered: all the papers (nearly 50 in number) had been submitted to the organizers well before the meeting and distributed to all prospective participants. A number of papers were translated into Hungarian for the occasion, including work by P. Berger, J. Hintikka, V. A. Jadov, T. Luckmann, B. F. Porshniev

and M. Rokeach. A bibliography was also compiled, including work by contemporary foreign and Hungarian authors on related topics, as well as Marx and the major Marxist classics.

After words of welcome by Gyula Ortutay, Director of the Institute of Ethnography, Béla Köpeczi, then General Secretary of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, addressed participants on what he called "The System of Everyday Consciousness". There is no single notion which is likely to express all mental or cognitive phenomena discussed by the meeting, Béla Köpeczi emphasized, as well as the social relevance of the problems. Professor Sándor Szalai, Member of the Academy, who took the floor afterwards, remarked on the interrelation of "Beliefs, Knowledge and Social Communication Systems". He drew attention to two remarkable broadcasting-panics studied by Hadley C. Cantril and Karl Erik Rosengren respectively, referring to the panic in this sense as a summarizing event which he considered the only socially manageable type of information for mass communicators. "The more complex the character of social processes and social media, the greater the need of event-summarizing formulae," Professor Szalai concluded.

Seven discussion sessions followed. Seven sessions—seven approaches, as was indicated both by the character of the papers presented and the person of the chairmen. The first, chaired by Ferenc Tőkei, Member of the Academy, endeavoured to provide an overall philosophical and systems-theoretical background. A major aim of the session (just as that of the conference as a whole) was to try to consider "belief-systems" in terms of Marxist social theory and thus to attempt a critical reappraisal of this current trend in social anthropology. Attila Ágh of the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy approached the problems of "social consciousness" from a systems-theoretical angle: Vilmos Voigt of the Department of Folklore of Eötvös University, Budapest, gave a structural interpretation of beliefs with special reference to their "paradigmatic and syntagmatic axis". An ambitious model of belief-systems was put forward by Albert Hajnal and Mihály Hoppál (the latter, who is scientific secretary of the Institute of Ethnography, helped to organize the conference).

The nature of the papers differed to a great extent, but one could hardly fail to recognize their common aim to insert the notion "belief" into some sort of theoretical framework. Many participants in discussions referred to the immense terminological difficulties as well and some even questioned the right of philosophy to speak first rather than last.

Remarks of a more concrete nature were helpful, though particular aspects generated much controversy. A lively discussion on the speech-act theory, based on papers by Csaba Pléh of the Department of General Psychology of Eötvös University on semantic memory and knowledge, and of István Faragó-Szabó of the Department of Philosophy of the same University on the controversial issues of "knowledge and belief", was chaired by György Szépe of the Institute of Linguistics of the Academy and introduced by Katalin Radics of the Institute of Linguistics. Appreciation was expressed for the efforts of a group of students of Eötvös University (headed by the author of these lines) which carried out a comparative analysis of the English word "belief" and its Hungarian near-equivalent *hiedelem*.

Papers by social psychologists served as the starting-point for a discussion chaired by Ferenc Pataki, Deputy Director of the Institute of Psychology of the Academy. Several papers had aroused great interest, including those by György Hunyady of the Mass Communication Research Centre who presented his views on consistency, which he considers the organizational principle of beliefs. Other members of the centre's staff, Magdolna Barcy, Sándor Erdősi and Katalin Pörzse, dealt with important aspects of attitude theory and measurement. Ágnes

Hankiss discussed the "mythological reworking" of one's life story and the possible models of interpreting self-development, thus initiating a particularly committed debate. Talking about his experiences in child psychology, Ferenc Mérei of the National Institute of Psychiatry interpreted the building up of theories with children as a particular source of *fausse conscience*. The psychological aspects of nationalism and ethnocentrism induced a somewhat sharp debate, provoked by a paper by László Halász of the Institute of Psychology on "prejudice and communication".

The sociological discussion was perhaps less coherent. Professor Szalai, who acted as chairman of the session, pointed out that divergent though views might be, they all tackled the relation of public beliefs to public affairs, to politics and policies. The formation of public opinion and the character of socialist publicity were key issues, Ferenc Görgényi of the Institute of Philosophy of the Academy and Tamás Szecskő of the Mass Communication Research Centre taking a prominent role in their discussion. Zoltán Jakab of the Mass Communication Research Centre reported on his research which helped to reveal mercantilist economic thinking in contemporary everyday thinking. Miklós Tomka from the same Centre presented empirical data concerning specific aspects of religious thinking. These findings by the Mass Communication Research Centre confirmed the importance of the results of public opinion and communication research in Hungary.

A separate session was devoted to the arts and artistic creation. The relationship of art and myth was discussed first. Experts on the theory of the film, such as András Szekfü of the Mass Communication Research Centre stressed that mythical structures serve as organizing principles even in contemporary art. An opposite trend is also present: works of art can act as myth-creating forces in everyday thinking. Elemér Hankiss of the Institute of Literature of the Academy of Sciences, the chairman, asked whether or not a statement contained in a work of art is of factual or rather of belief-like character. As a possible escape from this dilemma it was suggested that works of art might act on more than one level, where there are two or more *illocutions* beyond the actual locution appearing on the surface.

Important issues emerged in the ethnographic discussion as well. Folk-beliefs are a characteristic mental pattern of the rural population throughout the world. Professor Tekla Dömötör of the Department of Folklore of Budapest University took the chair in a session which also allowed social scientists of various sorts to discuss the relevance of ethnography today. Some scholars questioned the approach of folklorists and considered their methodology outdated. Some of the papers presented showed that ethnography has a special contribution to make to the humanities and its basically descriptive approach does not necessarily lack theoretical implications. It was particularly interesting to hear of the social characteristics of Hungarian folk-customs concerning death, reported by Ernő Kunt of the Ottó Herman Museum of Miskolc, or to read a paper by Professor Béla Gunda of the University of Debrecen describing the appearance of television in Hungarian folklore.

Historical problems were discussed during the penultimate session. Research fellows of the Mass Communication Research Centre (Róbert Angelusz, Mária Dankánics and Zoltán Jakab) reported on empirical investigations concerning knowledge of certain aspects of history by various sections of society and different age-groups. Professor László Makkai of the Institute of History of the Academy, the chairman, observed how little is known of history although both the school system and the mass media do a lot to spread information on the past. Methodological problems were repeatedly given attention in this context as it turned out that research projects do not take into consider-

ation the specific, "subhistorical" nature of the mental patterns studied. This was also underlined from a different angle by papers by Imre Katona of the Department of Folklore of the University of Budapest and László Kósa of the Institute of Ethnography who discussed peasant views and opinions on history. The latter set up a typology as well. Two studies investigated psychiatric case-sheets from the Habsburg period from the viewpoint of the psychiatrist and the historian respectively, and pointed to the relevance of these hitherto unexploited sources (Ferenc Pisztora of the Department of Psychiatry of Miskolc Hospital and the present author of the Mass Communication Research Centre).

Three scholars undertook the difficult task of summing up. Miklós Szabolcsi, Director of the Institute of Literature of the Academy of Sciences, Tamás Szecskő, Director of the Mass Communication Research Centre, and Iván Vitányi, Director of the Institute of Popular Culture, did their best to channel all the useful theoretical, practical and methodological information brought up into three different directions. Professor Szabolcsi considered the problem of beliefs a key issue in the study of literature and arts. Iván Vitányi pointed to a number of tasks for those active in the field of culture arising from what had been said, while Tamás Szecskő analysed whether belief-systems are destroyed or created by propaganda. A head of one of the two organizing institutions, Tamás Szecskő also closed the meeting by formulating a number of research proposals made during the conference.

One of the greatest merits of the meeting was perhaps that it served as an exchange for ideas, where—and this is equally important—the majority of both traders and customers were young. It has almost become a convention to arrange interdisciplinary meetings in Hungary, discussing fundamental issues of contemporary social sciences. It was perhaps not mere flattery on behalf of the participants of this particular gathering that this year's was better organized and more productive than any earlier ones and that it set an example for the future.

TIBOR FRANK

ISTVÁN GÁL

SZÉCHENYI'S PICTURE OF AMERICA

István Széchenyi's wide international contacts, his foreign acquaintances and his knowledge of foreign literature have been discussed in a number of works. More than one specialized study has been published on the British, Greek, Italian, French, South Slav and Czech contacts of this great Hungarian statesman (1791–1860) who was a leader of the "Age of Reform" aiming at the modernization of backward, feudal Hungary. But Széchenyi' interest in America, his knowledge of United States history, and the effect of American ideas on his thinking have so far received little attention from historians working on international relations in the Age of Reform. Yet not only in his own age, but up to the present day, no Hungarian statesman or political thinker has been so absorbed in the birth and survival of the United States, its social and ethnic com-

position, its position in world history. From 1817 to his death he investigated, commented and criticized the realization, development, advantages and difficulties of independence and democracy in America. For over ten years in the 1820s he exerted every effort to leave Metternich's Austria and cross the Atlantic, in order to check his opinions and information personally, and when he was refused permission by the authorities, he verified his image of America through conversations with diplomats and trade and technical experts, and later with American travellers. Throughout his principal works and his diaries we find many interesting and important comments and judgements expressing his views. Their relatively large number over the years, when put together, add up to a picture of America in which all its problems are considered.

A plan to visit America

Between 1818 and 1832 his diaries are filled with a desire to visit America. These —sometimes only fleeting—notes indicate by their repetition the deep interest he felt in such a journey. His first reason was to escape from the luxury and ennui of life in Vienna, and his second, disappointment in love, followed by his slow advancement in the military hierarchy, difficulties with his estates, the hope of making a fortune after a few years of farming in America, and finally —after his entry into Hungarian public life—the same purpose that guided him in visiting neighbouring and far-off nations to study and adopt everything which might benefit his country. Behind all this was the romantic image of pre-Jackson USA: "The land of independence, liberty, equality and unlimited opportunities."

He was satiated with the Viennese aristocratic way of life, and dreamed of a world of primitive, uncorrupted men struggling for their livelihood in the simple and primordial conditions of nature, where he could begin a new life. Between 1730 and 1830, and especially after the 1814 Congress of Vienna, a sense of the "twilight of the West" overtook the intellectuals in the capitals of Central and Western Europe. Byron, Heine, Mérimée, Musset, Shelley, and de Vigny all expressed this revulsion against civilization and a longing for the unknown beyond the seas.

As early as 1819 Széchenyi was already entertaining the idea of an American journey: "Hail America," he wrote on August 2, "you'll see me soon!" The idea of leasing out his estates and emigrating to America, for a few years, for as long as thirty years, occurs again and again. This desire to travel was encouraged by an Austrian friend, Rudolf Sardegan, from whom he heard accounts of his experiences in his overseas journey. On June 25, 1825 he met Humboldt, the great German explorer, at Rothschild's. The Austrian Ambassador in London, Prince Paul Eszterházy, drew his attention to the importance of the fact that the states of South America had now acquired their independence. To his Vienna acquaintances he spoke so enthusiastically of America that a woman friend of his, as he noted on March 6, 1821, nicknamed him *the American* ("der Amerikaner"). So wrote Miklós Wesselényi in his diary, in explanation of his intention to travel to America with Széchenyi: "The tang of the air of the glorious home of liberty still uncontaminted by servitude, filled us with enthusiasm." Széchenyi's mind was obsessed by thoughts of his American journey even while he was taking part in army manœuvres in the Great Hungarian Plain. In Debrecen, on August 4, 1821, he noted that "I am always thinking of America". On October 17, 1821 he noted that all his thoughts drew him there. "My mind is now fully occupied by America."

In order to realize his purpose, he applied to the President of the War Council on October 20, 1821 for permission to resign from the Army. "Bellegarde received me kindly. I suggested two years' leave—he un-

derstood; then I mentioned England—he was startled—finally I confided to him about the United States! He: "Ah M. le Comte, c'est une fantasie que je désavoue, à moins que vous ne revisez la Constitution—car sans cela je l'avoue—je ne vois qu'un caprice—etc. etc."—By God, there are people who cannot understand that one would like to visit a free country!—Realized that either I will never be more than a captain, or will never see Boston in my life time. Well, can I choose? My mother took this journey to America so intelligently that I have to count her among the most sublime women that ever lived." In spite of the intimidation he did not abandon his intention, although he knew how hazardous the American journey could prove for him as a serving officer in the Imperial army. "Whether I go to New York or not, I hardly know myself; I certainly would have to report it, if I do not wish to risk being hanged in effigy." (October 27, 1821)

He wanted to go, even if it meant not simply temporary leave but his final resignation from the army. "If I do leave the service, who can guarantee that I get permission to travel—and to go to the United States?" (November 8, 1821) He regarded his military career as becoming more and more impossible, he was in truth escaping from it to America. "My journey to America means that I shall not rejoin my regiment as a captain." (November 18, 1821) "I am quite determined to go to the United States in 1823. I shall not change my resolution of leaving the service." (November 9, 1822) "Today I am again thinking of leaving the service. To America." (February 24, 1823) On November 14, 1823: "America!" On November 24: "America". On February 27, 1824: "Resignation—journey to America, etc." On February 24, 1826: "I have been thinking intensely the whole day whether I should shoot myself!—America." January 8, 1827: "1829—or 1830—to the great island!" In the course of 1828 he reminded himself three times to take the planned journey; on May 8: "In the coming winter I want to go to America"; on June 25: "I am thinking of going to America." As he became more and more occupied, his American journey became more and more of a dream. On April 4, 1831: "I am overcome by the longing to go to America next September." His plan to travel to America increasingly took on the aspect of a patriotic duty, a study tour of importance to the nation. On November 6, 1828 he wrote: "Oh, how much I want to be of use to my country; in mid-summer I shall go to America." Metternich's news on America more than explain why Széchenyi failed to receive a passport for America, even after ten years of trying: "Those United States of America..." wrote Metternich, "condemn by their shameful declarations the most respected institutions of Europe, the principles of its greatest rulers... Wherever they appear, they foment revolutions, regretting when they do not succeed, and aiding them when they have succeeded... and thereby strengthening the apostles of secession and rekindling the boldness of every conspirator... What will become of our religious and political institutions, the moral strength of our governments and the conservative system which have saved Europe from complete dissolution?" (Halvdan Koht: *The American Spirit in Europe. A Survey of Transatlantic Influences.* Philadelphia, 1949. p. 32.)

Washington and Franklin

The two giants of the American War of Independence remained ideal figures for him, accompanying him throughout his life. In appraising the outstanding, important, or remarkable personalities in both world history and of his own age, or, as he called them, its master figures, he found that the characters of these two men increasingly shone by comparison.

On March 21, 1824 he wrote: "Master

figures among people are those who generate a turning-point, a crisis in the customs, ideas and attitudes of the peoples of the world in their manner of living and their tastes—as long as I live, I shall consider the following as master figures: Napoleon, Rossini, Congrève, Lord Byron, Washington." "If one compares nations to human beings four ages can be seen", he wrote on May 22, 1824. "The noblest and most beautiful characters develop in childhood and youth—as the history of the Roman Empire and of Greece remind us—as in America Washington, Franklin, Bolivar, Iturbide, St. Martin, etc. speak for the truth of my argument." On June 30, 1824: "The master figures in my lifetime are—Bonaparte, Washington, Franklin, Pitt, Byron, Goethe, Bolivar." On January 23, 1826: "The list of remarkable men: Franklin, the Duke of Orléans, Napoleon, Byron, Mr. Wilberforce, Cobbett, Sir Walter Scott, Lafayette. Important men: Benjamin Constant, Bolivar, Rossini, Lamartine, Mavrocordato, Trelawny, Humboldt, Béranger, Franklin, Washington, Lafayette, Cobbett." On June 8, 1826: "What a confusion of ideas and enlightenment streams through my head reading this declaration. I do not think that Socrates, Zeno, Epictetus, Cato, Scipio, etc. would be very fashionable.—Quel Siècle d'esclavage, de petitesse, des préjugés—!. Nor would Franklin or Washington be considered smart by such people—nor Bolivar—except that at one time you could see ladies' hats on the boulevards in Paris that were called à la Bolivar." He placed Franklin with Confucius, Galileo, Bacon and Newton among the great scientists and philosophers. "Reason is power, and consequently reason is happiness. Let us only look at the principles and foundation of the greatest discoveries and we shall see as clearly as on a summer morning how much of all that is admirable infiltrated the world from the human brain alone, from the brains of Confucius, Bacon, Franklin and innumerable others!... Nobody entrusted Galileo with the task of discovering the rotation of the Earth or Newton with the discovery of the laws of gravity: and in the same way nobody commissioned Franklin to do what his memory and his glorious biography demonstrate: *eripuit coelo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis.* But they trod their immortal way with no title, no support in high places, no payment or the like—and without any commission to do it from other people; and it appears that their call to enlighten humanity came from a higher place than any high place that exists on this earth." (*Hitel*, p. 132)

Among the greats of world history, Franklin remained his ideal throughout his life. He bought his first volume of Franklin at Montpellier on August 4, 1825: "I have bought a little Franklin—compiled by the lawyer Renouard. A book which will have the greatest influence on my whole life." On August 7, 1825, in Marseilles, on the 17th in Piemont, on the 27th in Venice and on the 28th on the road to Trieste he read the story of Poor Richard and was making up dialogues in his style. On May 1, 1825 he planned to follow Franklin's example and draw up a life-plan for the conduct of his life: "A plan and rules for life, like Franklin." Every day from the 1st to the 21st of March 1826 he assessed his virtues and shortcomings according to Franklin's tables for the examination of one's conscience. Investigating Bentham's influence on Széchenyi, Béla Iványi-Grünwald, a Hungarian historian who later lived in England, first balanced the respective views of Bentham and Franklin in their influence on the personal and national programme of Széchenyi. According to Bentham freedom was one of the constituents of happiness; according to Széchenyi it was an instrument for the perfection of human morals. "He wants to adorn the inhabitants of the country with the civic virtues conceived by Franklin," wrote Iványi-Grünwald in his introduction to the 1930 critical edition of Széchenyi's *Hitel* (Credit), in order that they should realize for themselves that liberty is one of

the treasures of human existence. Although this wording differed from Benjamin Franklin's thinking, it played an important role on the formation of his ideas. The conclusions of the great English philosopher on individual existence were applied by the soul of Széchenyi, perhaps unconsciously, to his nation." On September 1, 1829 he again expressed his admiration of Franklin's greatness and simplicity: "Read Mémoires sur la vie de Benjamin Franklin—in two parts. —I was already acquainted with all of them—and yet I read them with renewed interest. The truly great and simple never tires one."

In addition to the names of Washington and Franklin we frequently find those of Jefferson, Lafayette, Bolivar, Penn, Pizarro and Cortez. Széchenyi met Bolivar's fiancée, the Duchess Belgiojoso, in Paris. He followed with interest the fate of Confalconieri, Pepe and Ypsilanti, the champions of freedom who were supported by the Americans.

American diplomats

No other Hungarian politician knew as many important statesmen, rulers, politicians and diplomats of the first half of the nineteenth century, as did Széchenyi. At the Congress of Vienna he talked with many of the participants, his English journey bringing him primarily into contact with personalities in English politics. He knew all the Foreign Secretaries personally; the names of Castlereagh, Canning, Aberdeen and Palmerston appear frequently in his diaries; he was on intimate terms with the English Ambassadors to Vienna in his age. On the journey he took in connection with the construction of a bridge over the Danube linking Buda and Pest he met American diplomats in England, and from around 1835 up to the Hungarian War of Independence in 1848 he remained in contact with the American Ambassadors and Consuls in Vienna. The most important American diplomat whom he met in England was Francis Barkes Ogden, himself a mechanical engineer, an acquaintance of Fulton, the aide-de-camp to General Jackson from 1812 to 1815, who went to England in 1817 to contact James Watt, and whom President Jackson appointed consul in Liverpool in 1830. He later lived in England as American consul in Bristol for over twenty-eight years. He continued his engineering activities during that period, was a pioneer of steam shipping, the inventor of the screw-propeller, and the builder of the first American man-of-war with a screw-propeller.

Another American diplomat in England whom Széchenyi knew was Alfred Vail, the American chargé d'affaires in London, who, like Ogden, was on friendly terms with several English writers, including Campbell, Hallam, Scott and Southey. One of Széchenyi's most immediate collaborators, and a member of his closest circle on the Chain Bridge Committee, was the Pest merchant Frigyes Kappel, for whom the United States, in December 1840, requested the first exequatur as American consul in Pest. But the Viennese government rejected the request with the argument that between the city of Pest and the United States there was so little contact that the establishment of an American consulate was unnecessary; that if America wanted to open a consulate, Fiume was a more suitable location, where contact could be established across the sea. This occurred during the time of the first American envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentionary to Austria, Henry A. Muhlenberg.

The second American envoy to Vienna, from 1841 to 1845, was Daniel Jenifer, who went on a trip to Pozsony and Pest in June 1842, where he met the leading Hungarian politicians of the period. He sent a valuable report on his trip to the American Foreign Secretary Daniel Webster. He first met Széchenyi in Pest on June 5, 1842, as a note in the diary witnesses, and following this we find three further notes about their meet-

ings. On June 5, 1842 Széchenyi entered into his diary: "The American envoy." On November 11, 1843 he dined in Vienna with the American Ambassador: "Dinner guest of Jenifer's." May 25, 1848 he took a long walk with him in Vienna: "Take a walk with Jenifer in the Prater." Three days later he is invited to dinner by Jenifer with young Englishmen: "Dined with a few young Englishmen at Jenifer's—Minister from New York."

He also knew the next American Ambassador, who was an eyewitness and chronicler of the Central European and Hungarian revolutions of 1848. On the April 4, 1846 William H. Stiles was his guest at Pest: "Stiles and Fleischmann—American minister and politician—dined at my place." Stiles, an enthusiastic admirer of Kossuth, regretted that the patriot he held in such esteem, the fiery leader of the opposition, had become a conservative. George Sumner was also on a Danubian fact-finding mission in 1843, and on April 8, 1849, he wrote to Pulszky about his meeting with Széchenyi: "Six years ago I had occasion to tell Széchenyi that less than ten years would pass before Kossuth would become the head of the Hungarian government. Széchenyi was disbelieving; the events confirmed my prophecy."

The changing image of America

From 1818, almost to his death, i.e. over the best part of forty years, Széchenyi's interest in America continued, and he tried to define its historical place and role among the great nations. He was stimulated by the basic ideas which had led to its independence, meditated on the fact—which he admired—that some force kept the multi-national population together, and increasingly appreciated the continuation of European achievements in the contemporary developments of American technology. But from 1825 to 1855 he was seriously concerned with what he considered the greatest problem of the United States—the slave and the Negro question.

The principles of the American Declaration of Independence—through Belgian, Swiss and English works—exercised a considerable influence on the young Széchenyi. On April 9, 1819 Széchenyi wrote: "The countries of the past are Egypt, Greece and Rome. But for us the country of the future is America." "America is the country where the rights of mankind are most equal, where the constitution is the best—and I consider it my duty, since I have devoted my life to such a noble cause, to seek out the source from which this essence of justice springs." In 1831 he wrote: "Despite its sparse population federated America with its enormous territory has already carried out so many admirable things, which are entirely new and heretofore unknown phenomena among mankind." (Bridge Report, 1834, in Hungarian)

Széchenyi, as Vice-President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, on June 10, 1833 replied to the letter from the Governor of Pennsylvania of January 5 in a solemn letter stressing the importance of scientific contacts between the two countries: "Although it was only recently that the angel of enlightenment was able to settle in the virgin forests of America, he has nevertheless directed his rays on those who for centuries have suffered under the most lamentable conditions and are hardly able to drag a foot out of the abominable feudal troubles which humiliate humanity, and especially our country."

In his debate with Kossuth he pointed out: "In many ways it is a good thing to follow the examples of England and America; yes, because just as the discovery of the new continent enriched the old world with gold, so does a treasure more valuable than gold flow to the continent from America and Britain." (*Kelet Népe*, 1841, p. 168)

He considered toleration and natural rights the basic principles of the earthly paradise envisaged by Sándor Bölöni Farkas,

who was inspired by the ideas of Tom Paine: "Only federated America had the luck—but also the wit to take advantage of the luck—to follow the experiments frequently tried out elsewhere; following examples and models of others, without the slightest internal disturbance they could immediately and calmly make use of liberty." "This, as can be seen, does not bring wide-ranging and enduring success to the Federation alone, but is of great benefit to the whole of mankind. And it consequently had the greatest influence on us Hungarians as well. But do we Hungarians fail to perceive the example of such a calm way of acting and adapt it to ourselves and our conditions? This does not depend on America, or on the whole world, but on ourselves alone. Our national activities can turn to better or worse only in so far as, and to the extent which we, in greater or smaller numbers, with greater or less goodwill and wisdom, understand the world's experiences with liberty and turn them to use. In federated America, for instance, almost everything that is of most interest to us and is the object of our envy, is only the superstructure. As a result, the day has not yet come for us to share in it, and that day can never dawn on us as long as the foundation-stone of toleration and natural law have not been laid here. But the day has been with us for a long time, and is almost dimming into sunset, which would enable us to do that to which America owes its present position: namely, to know and apply in all sobriety the experiences of other nations." (*Hunnia*, 1835, p. 246)

He is interested to discover the secret of America's rapid progress, and discovers it not in its geographical situation and natural wealth, but in its inhabitants: "The discovery of America produced a situation in which civilization sped from East to West—says someone. True! But why didn't the Greeks, the Carthaginians or the Romans discover America?" ... "What is it that makes one country flourish, although all the conditions are inauspicious, and makes another wither away, although the conditions are all favourable? Where is the secret of this hidden, the secret of life or death of a country? In the inhabitants!!! The wise man will create a garden from rocks, and science will give charm to the sands of Palmyra! But the dullards cover the most smiling landscape with a funeral pall and transform even the flowery fields of Arcadia to a melancholy desert." (*Világ*, 1831, p. 338.) "Even if perhaps we cannot calmly take over the example of the United States of America in everything, due to the great differences in our situation and age, we could nonetheless adopt—and the sooner the better—its wise toleration in matters of languages, religions and the different structure of its parts. There one man does not trample on the private property, national origin, or human soul of the other: each passes the days of his life in tranquillity, takes over his national heritage from his predecessors and passes it on to his sucessors in peace: and what is infinitely more important, adores his God according to the best light of his soul. Instead of all the theoretical republican experiments by which many amongst us aspire to reach the heights of America immediately, let us rather take as an example the toleration of America, by the blessings of which we could in time grow increasingly in strength." (*Hunnia*, 1835, p. 246) In his Döbling solitude in the 1850s, as the conflicts over the national minorities in the Monarchy grew sharper and constitutional crises more frequent, Széchenyi gave a great deal of thought to the assimilation of the American population of different origins. He was puzzled by the problem of immigration and wondered how it happened that the German emigrants remained Germans in Europe but became Americans in America, and the massive settlement of the Irish in America also interested him. (*Literary Remains of Döbling*, III, pp. 328, 368, 487, 139, 714, 717)

He pointed out that the cohesive force binding the multinational federal state together was the idea of liberty: "Even if the

United States of America are indeed broken into many heterogeneous parts, and each of these turns on its own axis, the happiness of delicious freedom and a tremendous future is an unbreakable link which holds them firmly together." (*Ibid.*, II, 487)

Great as was the spell cast on him by what in those days appeared to be the most perfect realization of bourgeois democracy, he regarded slavery, the American Negro problem, or as he called it, the unsolved fate of the American Moors, with sadness. On the 21st September, 1825, we find him wondering whether the capitalist plantation-owner cared for his black slaves out of selfishness or love: "The American sugar-cane planter feeds his black slaves well, he does not mistreat them, etc.—but does he do so out of love of them or love of himself?" As long there was no emancipation of the blacks, it was almost impossible to speak of a perfect republic: "I trust in the spirit of perfectionism, that countries will one day reach the height of morality and reason, when all the members of a national family stand at an equal distance from the temple of fortune and glory, and each of them can enter who rises to it through his inner worth... But how far from this is humanity still! All republican attempts have failed so far, for no other reason than lack of intelligence; they are only regarded as free republics because the voice of the thousands of helots, Roman slaves and American Moors crying to heaven has not yet resounded with enough strength in the ears of those who despise mankind: 'the terrible lie!' " (*Stádium*, 1833, pp. 36–37)

When in 1853 Harriet Beecher-Stowe's novel appeared in a Hungarian translation, he considered the fate of Uncle Tom similar to "the poor Hungarian outlaw, if he is given amnesty and not persecuted or hunted, as this is so beautifully painted in the Uncle Tom book... The picture painted there fits Hungary so perfectly." (*Literary Remains of Döbling*, III, p. 487)

One of the central problems of the Hungarian Age of Reform concerned of the judicial and prison systems. The young Hungarian politicians who visited England saw the Pennsylvanian or Philadelphian system that had already been introduced there, and in place of the mass misery of the Hungarian prisons the corrective system of individual cells. Széchenyi approved of the realization of every individual reform, but instead of this or that piecemeal improvement he held that the reform of the whole of society was necessary: "While shunning all the diseases that came with the gold of the New World, and no less the not infrequent eccentricity that accompanies anglomania, let us also establish here more than one Kindergarten, more than one educational society! But let us do this only—and this is the crux of the matter—when we stand where the English and the Americans stand now! And let us do today what they did when—in terms of their national situation—they were approximately where we are today. It was through this sober logic that they rose to where they shine today." (*Kelet Népe*, 1841, pp. 310–316)

In the 1820s he still said to Wesselényi that he should have been born an Englishman or an American daring everything and working for the good of his country. He examined to the end of his life what the Hungarians could learn from America, what the difference between the two countries was, and how unlucky Hungary was compared to the USA. He saw that: "The carrying of equal burdens and the practice of equal rights does also presuppose rare and imprecedented public reason. The United States of America are not entrenched behind the walls of obsolence as are we Hungarians." The role of the United States in world history, which he first formulated in 1824, he repeated in the course of the 1850s: "First there was Phoenicia, later Venice, Genoa, then came Holland, Britain... now it is the turn of Yankee America." (*Literary Remains of Döbling*, II, p. 417) In his Döbling solitude watching the development of America that he had admired so much in his youth, he bitterly wrote about the backwardness of

the Hungary of the day: "Hungary with the population of America could now be in the course of full development."

Széchenyi pondered a great deal, especially in the last years of his life, over the connection between national independence and the federal state and, in particular a federated monarchy. In the spring of 1848 he considered the national aspirations of the peoples of the Monarchy as realizable and in the case of the South Slavs even regarded the formation of a South Slav Federation as justified. His respect for the historical Slav nations, and especially the parallel development of Czech history, suggested to him the granting of autonomy to all peoples of the Monarchy. This is revealed not only in his numerous notes, but also in the long letter which József Eötvös wrote to him in 1859, reflecting their exchange of ideas and arguments. In 1842, Széchenyi expressed his fears in his speech to the Academy that Magyarization enforced by fire and sword would end in a sea of blood. With the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution, this was confirmed by the expressed feelings of the leaders of the national minorities at that time, and so he saw it all come true. From autumn 1848 to 1857, almost entirely isolated from the world, he was in all probability unaware of the negotiations of the Hungarian exiles over a Danubian Confederation and especially of Kossuth's draft of a nationality constitution following the example of the USA. But the tyrannical police rule of the 1850s finally drove him to the same conclusion as the one reached by Kossuth in spring 1849: the theory of natural right of the Enlightenment, which holds a national uprising justified against a tyrannical monarch attacking the people with arms.

In describing the ideas of the American Revolution and War of Independence, Széchenyi used phrases and definitions that often coincide, almost verbatim, with the writings of the French Encyclopaedists, Turgot, Condorcet, Volney, the Russian Radishchev, the Italians Alfieri, Mazzei and Mazzini, the Belgian De Lolme, the Dane Clauson, the Swede Svedelin, the Swiss Ochs and Iselin.

Széchenyi ranks with his numerous statements among such great Central and Eastern European writers on American democracy and federalism as the two leading political thinkers of the Russian Decabrists, N. M. Muraviev and P. I. Pestiel, the Pole Adam Czartoryski, the Czech T. G. Masaryk, and the Greek Adamantios Koreas.

REVIEW OF PERIODICALS

WHEN THE RECENT PAST TURNS INTO HISTORY

Anniversaries always prompt retrospection and recapitulation and the thirtieth anniversary of Hungary's liberation offers an especially tempting occasion for stock-taking.

One of the most interesting articles among the numerous writings on the occasion of the anniversary is by Iván T. Berend, an economic historian, on thirty years of development of the Hungarian economy. It was published in the December 1974 issue of *Társadalmi Szemle*, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party's monthly.

Post-war economic development in Hungary differed from that of the industrialized West insofar as the main emphasis was on the search for a way out of relative backwardness through industrialization. However, it was obvious that a simple start on the road followed by more developed countries, even if it had liquidated old backwardness, would have immediately led to new deficiencies in relation to new levels of development.

"The 'filling in of gaps' could be carried out only within the new requirements... thus the most important measure of development is whether it has followed the progressive economic tendencies of the century ...the standard of the world economy cannot serve as a measure for 'catching up'. The broad and thorough-going unfolding of socialist relations of production and the creation of an appropriate structure of distribution and consumption, however, require a high-level development of the forces of production. Without such development the egalitarian ideals of socialism cannot be realized either."

"...in more than one area twentieth-century trends of economic development were realized completely differently in the first years of socialist change than during the latest period." Let us take, for example, the growth of industrial productivity: in the early years the number of those employed in industry grew by an annual 5 to 6 per cent, while the increase in industrial productivity was less than 4 per cent—from the mid-sixties on, however, the yearly average increase in the number of industrial workers has been less than 1.5 per cent, while the annual growth in productivity has approached 5 per cent, a ratio which corresponds to world economic standards.

One of the most characteristic features of economic development in the twentieth century has been acceleration and a sustained rapid growth rate. In evaluating the thirty years of Hungarian economic development it is particularly important to ask whether the country has kept abreast of the current pace after starting at a great disadvantage thirty years ago. "Between 1914 and 1944 accumulation amounted to only between

5 and 6 per cent of national income (up until 1914 it had been 10 to 15 per cent), and investment activity showed a mere 3 per cent increase as against the 41 per cent rate general in Europe; the economic growth rate was 1.5 per cent... After the Second World War it was necessary to achieve a growth rate with enough initial speed to overcome the law of gravity of relative backwardness."

Therefore investments had to be carried out. Now the rate of accumulation is only 20 to 25 per cent, but during the first ten years it was much higher, all of which unquestionably marked a turning-point in the development of the Hungarian economy and has played a great part in the acceleration of progress. But it has not been the exclusive factor. "...the reshuffling of labour forces was also of great importance. During the period of socialist transformation up until the present the number of active wage-earners has been increasing by a yearly average of 0.8 per cent—compared to a population increase of 0.5 per cent—within this figure, however, there has been a 3.5 per cent growth in industry which means that the number of industrial wage-earners has more than doubled." Berend's figures only give an inkling of the nationwide landslide this has entailed. Equilibrium has still not been fully recovered after this large-scale operation, a fact attested to by the attention given to settlement policy in the press.

István Bakos states in his "Relation of Villages and Towns in Hungary": "Taking into account both descent and first employment, nearly half of today's working class are of peasant origin and nearly 60 per cent of the breadwinning village population earn their livelihood from non-agricultural sources. Large numbers live in villages and work in towns or live in towns and work in villages and many workers have temporary lodgings in towns. In 1960 the number of workers whose domiciles and places of employment were located in two different communities totalled 600,000; by 1965 this figure increased to 900,000 and by 1970, to 1,000,000 which means that one-fourth of the wage-earning population have become commuters".

The 8 per cent annual average increase in industrialization during the past thirty years—in other words the fact that Hungary has reached modern economic standards—has brought new problems. In considering the sources upon which this development has drawn, the drawbacks also become evident.

One of the disadvantages, for example, is that as long as extensive resources for development were available they were drawn upon much too one-sidedly—due essentially, of course, to the basic socio-political principle of creating full employment and a secure living for all. "During the period as a whole, the seven-fold increase of gross industrial production did not for the most part originate from increasing productivity since per capita gross production for industrial workers increased less than three-fold."

The picture was much more favourable in agriculture where gross production was doubled only because per capita production shot up more than four-fold. However even this rate did not reach the agricultural productivity growth standards of some other countries, at least not until the mid-sixties, "...when as against the 1 per cent average annual growth rate in Hungarian agrarian productivity, the corresponding figure in Western Europe was 3 to 4 per cent and 4 to 5 per cent on the American continent." True, the annual growth of around 6 per cent achieved since the end of the sixties indicates a definite change.

A basic condition for catching up has been the socialist transformation of the structure of the Hungarian economy.

The change in the property relations in itself has significantly furthered modernization. Besides doing away with the great burden of outdated small plants, there has been rapid concentration in industry. "During the years under consideration, the ratio of workers employed in factories with more

than a thousand workers increased from 39 to 45 per cent. It was also within the framework of a socialist planned economy that the century's basic achievement in factory management was introduced in Hungary: namely, the separation of operative management from long-range development decisions."

Similar processes also occurred in agriculture, although here the transformation of production and technology has lagged behind structural changes. The reason is very simple: "Through the price system, or rather the exchange rates of agricultural and industrial goods—at least until the mid-sixties—part of the national income produced by agriculture serve as an important source for industrialization, a fact which was especially evident in the investment figures of the first ten years. For quite some time, agricultural investments only sufficed to partially replace manpower losses, but no major developments could be undertaken. In the years of stepped-up industrialization the first five-year plan period, agricultural production still lagged behind the 1934–38 level by some 6 per cent." It is understood that these years were not an untroubled period of Hungarian history. The periodically recurring, characteristic myth of Hungarian, or perhaps East European, history of the conflict between village and town cropped up once again. István Bakos writes: "...relations between village and town were marked by compulsory produce deliveries as well as by the fact that at that time agriculture provided a great portion of exports and reparations as well as the manpower demands of industry; finally, the capital needed for rapid industrial development was produced mainly by agriculture."

This pseudo-conflict had deep roots in the country's consciousness; a whole period of Hungarian literature—between the two world wars—is usually characterized by this conflict: the conflict between the "populist" and "urban" writers. A year ago when this conflict last re-emerged, Gyula Illyés, the grand old man of Hungarian poetry, who at that time had been considered one of the "populists", pointed out that the alleged ideological conflict actually came from an impulse to defend the nation by striking out in the blindness of common misery. "...It was not a split but a sad confusion, a kind of vortex on the verge of panic, which sweeps through inadequately prepared troops at the approach of danger... the two camps were smashed together under a non-literary force, the rightly alarming and terrifying Hitlerite boot." Nevertheless, the conflict has been an important symptom in Hungarian history just as was the smoothing over of it around the time of the caesura in the last thirty years of Hungarian economic history, by and large twenty years ago, when the actual catching up with the world began. Gyula Illyés's above-quoted article in the July 21, 1974 issue of *Népszabadság* continues: [such as] "the patient effort with which prudent common sense ensured socialist superiority in our intellectual life in such a manner that true value should be its strength. Wounds not easily curable, gangrenous wounds, were soon healed in an enviable atmosphere of creative work. Do I have to overcome my vanity in order to avoid even the appearance of kowtowing to those above? But, after all, it is a question of a cause and service to it: of an attitude which marks the road towards great human goals in such a manner that all Hungarian artists can agree in following it. Even writers, although those engaged in service had the hardest job precisely with them—with us. With whom was it the more difficult: the populist or the urban writers? Let me just recall the very first painful lesson imposed by this service: in our first encounter in the spring of 1957. The two principal populist disturbers of the peace—László Németh and yours truly—indefatigably lobbied in the highest places to secure clemency for writers whom general opinion had in a sense mistakenly earlier classified as urban writers, foremost among them Déry and Zelk."

What did actually happen?

Berend says: "Collectivization was carried out on a socialist co-operative large-scale basis and the national economy, having undergone the basic phase of industrialization, could liberate great resources for agricultural mechanization and other agricultural investments. From the second half of the 1960s a significant transformation of price ratios has enabled agriculture to be increasingly relieved of the burden of financing industrialization."

At the same time, the structure of industry also underwent a change. "Heavy industries made fast headway. By the mid-sixties their share—including that of chemical industry went from 37 per cent to 63 per cent; and it is especially noteworthy that 25 per cent of all industrial production was due to the engineering industry."

As a consequence, some 40 per cent of national income—as in other small, industrially developed countries—has been realized by foreign trade. This fast industrial growth could be achieved only by a 1.5 to 2 per cent increase in foreign trade for every 1 per cent of production growth.

Ideology, Attitude, Way of Life

According to different levels of consciousness and objectivation, as well as various groups and sections of society, social awareness assumes various outward forms—there is such a thing as the attitude one brings to bear on everyday events and ideology proper. Both play a role in setting the order of importance of needs and values, as well as of actions. They orient the attitudes of groups and sections of society. Attitudes, on the other hand, exert a decivise effect on shaping the way of life, which, furthermore, is also determined by locational, economic and social factors. Thus the ideology, way of life and attitudes constitute elements of the same system, mutually determining and postulating one another. At the same time they are also social conditions. Béla Köpeczi, Deputy General Secretary of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, has undertaken no less than to survey this sphere of problems. His outline—the space available to him did not allow it to be more—appeared in the monthly *Világosság* for April 1975. It is part of a longer study—to be published later—that will evaluate the past thirty years of culture in Hungary.

Since virtually each paragraph of the article touches on issues that in recent years formed the centre of press and scholarly debates and, indeed, debates having a bearing on Hungarian policy as such, I will now confine myself to the most important issues.

In Köpeczi's definition equality means social mobility which changes the composition of the classes and sections of society. He goes on to call attention to the fact that the basis for decreasing inequality lies not only in the transformation of the relation of production, but also in diminishing income differences. "The fact that differences in the income of skilled workers and that of factory managers, or even political leaders, do not surpass a ratio of 1:5 signifies that we have ensured the economic conditions for the gradual assertion of real equality... Servility which... conserved certain customs not even of the bourgeoisie but of the feudal ruling class... has ceased to govern the relationship between the leaders and the led... There are diverging opinions about equality. According to some people the principle of 'equal wages for equal work' is not properly effective, but at the same time there are others who maintain that one should strive for greater egalitarianism, and that even the existing differentiation of incomes is improper."

The same issue is tackled by Mátyás Tímár, then one of the Deputy Premiers since appointed President of the Hungarian National Bank, in "Glosses on the Living Condition Trends of the Hungarian Working Class", published in the 1975/2 issue of

Társadalmi Szemle. "We have made great progress, yet we cannot say that chances have become equal for all in all respects, even if this is the real situation legally and the daily endeavours of the leadership are directed towards this goal in actual practice. First of all, in a considerable number of cases—depending on the place and conditions—the less favourable study and cultural conditions of young peasants and children of unqualified workers make it more difficult for them cross the initial boundaries when starting out in life."

On the cardinal question of wage relations Mátyás Tímár writes: "If one compares present income dispersions in industry with those before the liberation, it becomes apparent that while in the past technical staff made three times the income of workers, and clerical staff earned 2.4 times as much, today the average income of technicians is only 44 per cent higher, and that of clerical staff 6 per cent less than average workers wages. To compare the 2,550 forints average wages of workers with the income of executives: in 1973 general managers and co-operative chairmen earned 7,700 forints, and factory middling executives 3,800 forints on a national average. During the same period the average wages of industrial skilled workers came to 3,000 forints. At the present level of economic development the levelling up of incomes involves not only advantages but disadvantages as well. This is evident partly in the fact that excessive levelling up has also affected certain categories of staff with higher qualifications —here I am thinking of teachers and other professional people—and the same applies also to workers."

To get back to Köpeczi: he goes on to examine the spread of the scientific world outlook, pointing out that "Today one could hardly find any thinking person in Hungary who would imagine the historical events of recent years to be the manifestation of some kind of a mystical force and who would not presume those real socio-economic and political factors to have been responsible that did in fact determine events. The history of socialism also includes critical periods, and at such times these recognitions may fall into the background, but it admits of no doubt that by now the categories of dialectical and historical materialism influence public thinking." Of course, not in every sphere. The further removed we get from the economic and political spheres, the more contradictory this influence becomes: "Moral or aesthetical awareness, for example, may contain many elements even in the case of professed supporters of socialism, which are alien to Marxism."

Such an element, for example, is nationalism which "...becomes manifest not primarily in historical awareness but in the relations to other countries, or in the judgement of the international standing of Hungarians. Many survivals of past stereotypes can be found even in the minds of educated people in the images they entertain regarding the character of particular nations. And as far as the place occupied by us in the world is concerned, there are many who overestimate our possibilities..."

Or let us take cosmopolitanism: "...it appears first of all in the form of idolatry of the West, which might also include an expected return of private property, but most frequently it means a desire for the Western way of life. From the point of view of living standards and conditions of civilization the cosmopolite compares Hungary with the highly developed capitalist countries, and he objects to a lagging behind according to the standards of the petty-bourgeois consumer of today and not those of the cosmopolitan of old. Bourgeois propaganda about individual freedom rights also finds a certain response mainly amongst intellectuals, although the effect of this—just because of the growing personal experience abroad—is increasingly diminishing."

Another such element is the "New Left": "...its revolution of the way of life is mainly felt in its cultural aspects, in which

it is often a discontent with petty-bourgeois phenomena that is voiced in a distorted manner."

Petty-bourgeois mentality is a very real danger. The petty bourgeoisie formed a fairly large segment in prewar Hungary, and though its economic base for the most part has ceased to exist, its view of life has survived and exerts an influence even today. It is a strange somersault of history that it is felt precisely among the masses which reached the former "petty-bourgeois standard of living" in the years following the liberation. "Someone with a petty-bourgeois view of life often works himself to death, together with his family, even today, only not in the factory or the co-operative, but in taking on extra work or on his household plot. All this means that he lacks interest in community matters—unless he wants to use them as a springboard for his career—and he withdraws to the cultivation of his own garden."

Petty-bourgeois ways of thinking are one of the most complex problems in present-day Hungary. All its variants try to adjust themselves to the conditions of socialist society; whenever we discuss issues of the way of life—which we do most frequently nowadays—it is mostly a question of this, even if in an implied form only."

Crime statistics always provide a most illuminative shadowgram of society, and thus Köpeczi does not omit this aspect either. Here are some typical figures: over a period of 10 to 15 years some fifty to sixty thousand people were convicted annually, about five to six thousand of them minors. On the basis of court sentences, the annual distribution of the various kinds of crime shows the following picture: from the end of the 'sixties onwards, the number of offenders against public security and public order varied between ten and twenty thousand, those against the person, between eight and nine thousand, and those against private property, between eight and fourteen thousand. Let me add that the number of vagrants and prostitutes is not negligable either. "Compared to pre-liberation times, there has been a drop in the number of criminal offences, and a change in the ratio of the various kinds of crime. Today most of those offending against public order are convicted for being drunk and disorderly. It is characteristic that the number of prosecuted criminal acts committed in connection with alcoholic drink has increased since the 'fifties, and by the beginning of the 'seventies it amounted to 40 per cent of the convictions of adults and 17 per cent of those minors."

How We Live

Béla Köpeczi's article provides the resultant, as it were, of the debates on this subject, and thus it should be of interest to review some articles by scholars and journalists who pose the issue in more trenchant terms than Béla Köpeczi. In his writing "Leisure and Culture" (*Kritika*, November 1974) Ákos Szilágyi sums up the position: "Our greatest difficulty today arises from the fact that while one of the limitations—capital—has been liquidated, the other, that which is inherent in the division of labour, has not been, and could not be removed at the present level of the development of the forces of production. Today work is still very much 'the natural endeavour of a specifically trained force' and not 'scientific and at the same time general work', where the worker finds himself so to speak at the side of the process of production. Thus, for the great masses who work at specialized machines and at the assembly line, leisure continues to be the equivalent of 'freedom' and 'happiness', and work means a plague or a necessity undertaken with ascetic self-awareness. Here one really has to be content with continuously increasing the amount of time off and—by ensuring adequate material means, extending the system of services and creating facilities for entertainment of a high

standard—promoting its conversion into valuable leisure." This aspect of the problem has been raised by the relatively recent introduction of Saturdays off. In order to find out how we exploit this increased amount of time off, and how we are living in general, surveys have been initiated on such a vast scale that they became a proper subject for the satirical weekly, *Ludas Matyi* (October 10, 1974). The cartoon shows a group of terrified walkers running from a necktied figure who appears on a hill with an attaché case. "Come on, let's scram! A sociologist of leisure is on our tail. . . !"

How does one live in Hungary today? Köpeczi quotes figures from the survey conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics—*Twenty-Four Hours of the Day*. "In 1963, 10.8 hours were left for recreation, that is sleep and care of the person, in 1972, 10.1 hours. In 1963, 10.2 hours were spent on work, including transport and work about the house, and this figure dropped to 9.8 hours by 1972. Leisure amounted to three hours in 1963 and to four in 1974. Of this, 0.7 and 0.4 hour respectively was devoted to reading and study, social relations took up 0.8 hour in both years, 0.4 and 1.2 hours were spent watching television, 0.4 and 0.2 hour listening to the radio. As becomes evident from this list, a minimum of time was left for sports and other forms of entertainment."

Many of the problems which have come to light, primarily from leisure research, cannot be really grasped statistically, and though they should be discussed under the heading of way of life, they actually feature in each paragraph of the Köpeczi article.

What has happened, for example, with the "liberated" Saturdays? According to another study: "Culture consists of an array of time and means-consuming activities, and if the hours at people's disposal can be better 'sold' today, then many of them will be unwilling to 'invest' the precious minutes into culture for the sake of an abstract cultural demand that can be utilized only in the future". (Köpeczi: "According to a survey, 17 per cent of those questioned round off their income with some regular secondary occupation; it is, however, most probable that the proportion of those undertaking work in their spare time is much higher than that.")

Young couples are under the greatest pressure. Many of them are new-comers to city life, with a freshly acquired trade. They want to obtain a home, and furnish it, in not too many years, while they also have to reckon with the financial consequences of possible children. The minimum level of demands which has developed in the past ten odd years is much higher than before them. There has been a rise in living standards, in per capita income and in the level of supplies as well. . . At the same time the field has also become drawn out: a relatively broad segment is struggling to establish themselves and solving their housing problems, while, right there in front of their eyes, is another group which has already entered or is on the verge of entering the 'car and a week-end house' stage. It is clear that those wanting to keep up and enter the race concentrate on goals within their reach, and want to satisfy their realistic demands at all costs. If need be, they work overtime, they take on extra work during the week-end or sacrifice their leisure time. (Miklós Szántó: "Leisure and Way of Life". *Kortárs*, 1974/3.)

"The alarm-clock rings at five in the morning, it is still pitch dark. I go to work, then I come home, it might be around three, I don't even know what to start with, shopping, cleaning; by the time we sit down to the TV I would often rather go to sleep." (Mrs. J. Sz. hairdresser)—Ferenc Halmos and Ákos Szilágyi report ("Thirteen-houses", *Kritika*, April 1975) about an old tenement in a Budapest working-class area.

Television has been the most important single factor in the transformation of the way of life in Hungary over the past ten years. ". . . in all the boxes of the surveys on workers' Saturdays off ('what they do most

frequently', 'what they enjoy doing most', 'what they consider entertainment', 'for what they have more time left with the introduction of Saturdays off') television leads hands down, with the cinema fluctuating between 8th and 14th place, and the theatre in most cases not even making the list." (György Fukász: "The Effect of the Introduction of Saturdays Off on Workers' Week-End Activity." *Szociológia*, 1973/4.)

Naturally not everybody despises television viewing. Éva Katona's "From the Basement to the Upper Floor" (*Élet és Irodalom*, June 7, 1975) quotes an angry engineer: "Nowadays, for example, much is said about the cultural level of the working class. There are complaints that they do not go to concerts, are torpid intellectually, etc. My answer is: very well, culture has to be urged. But let me ask: if a village woman enters work in our factory because she needs the money, and one day we see that she is not slovenly any more, she cares about her appearance, takes care of her nails and hair, throws away her shabby dress and stands at the machine in a smart overall—isn't that culture? Is culture made up only of books and the theatre and writer-reader meetings? Are the radio and television not culture? Only because they are cheap? A bathroom, running hot water, lovely table-ware, decent sheets, aren't they culture? And why is it that if the scientist drives his car to tend his garden on a Sunday, that is reckoned a laudable hobby, but when the poor do the same thing, walking there, then this means having no standards?"

"Alienation" was mentioned by Köpeczi when speaking about the petty bourgeoisie, others list it as damage produced by urbanization but all agree on it being somehow or other also related to rising living standards. To quote once again from the report "Thirteen-houses": "In former times? Misery brought people together. But what has developed now is no good either, the tenants just keep coming and going: good afternoon-good afternoon." (S. K., electrician.) "No, I don't know anyone here. We have been living here for nine years. I have no interest in the other tenants. Everybody should live his own life. Only because I live in the same house with someone, I don't have to be friends with him." (A. Sz., turner.) "On the first free May-Day after the liberation there was a big ball here in the courtyard. People danced and made merry till the morning. They even brought a piano from somewhere. We collected the food, laid a huge table in the middle of the yard. There was everything, even though we didn't have much. There were many, very many of us, no one stayed at home in his own four walls. Now, people sometimes come together, for tenants' meetings. But the young people aren't interested even in this. And the old folks cannot undertake anything, they've grown tired. Everyone is occupied with themselves, caring about their own business." (A. Cs., retired dressmaker.)

Returning to Köpeczi's article and summarizing the most characteristic types of attitude and ways of life of the workers: today the old, town-dwelling skilled worker of working-class descent for the most part is in charge of a gang, or some other hind of foreman. "Their way of life is characterized by soberness, and a firm family framework—they save pertinaciously, they 'settle down' and in most cases intend their children to have careers in professional engineering." (Miklós Szántó: "Thoughts about the Changes in the Way of Life of Workers", *Társadalmi Szemle*, 7/1973.) Skilled workers who moved in from villages aim at security, they want to sink roots in the working class, and their style of life after forty is traditional, often conservative. Their children mostly become semi-skilled or skilled workers. Working-class commuters want to get settled, getting work near their village or acquiring a home in town. A considerable part of them are unskilled and semi-skilled workers, the wage-earner's awareness lives most strongly in them. They are strongly consumer orientated and want to copy city conditions in

their place of residence. This treble division naturally does not exhaust possible classification stratification possibilities of the Hungarian workers, but whatever the break however more we would break it down, one basic fact would strike the eye everywhere: the various strata have drawn their reinforcement from the layer one below them. And the first generation still carries in its bones the way of life and ideals of the earlier layer as well. To somewhat simplify matters: some one and a half to two million smallholders and cottars have become industrial workers. It is hardly surprising that the shaping of the new way of life entails so much tension and unfulfilled hopes.

"The forms of the village population —just because of the transitory position of the village—are extremely varied. In the outlying areas, and detached farmsteads, backward families can be found whose style of life is reminiscent of the old peasant ways. This involves some 500,000 to 700,000 ... By now one cannot speak about a merely-agricultural or mainly-agricultural population in the villages, since only 42 per cent of active wage-earners here work solely in agriculture, and 37 per cent of them are engaged in industry and construction. Many of them draw double incomes, or looking at it from the aspect of their mode of life, are commuters. From the point of view of outside influences it is characteristic that in 66.7 per cent of the village families there is at least one industrial wage-earner, and 17.5 per cent of the families have one member working in the professions."

White collar workers. The most characteristic feature of this section is the great change that has taken place in its composition: 42 per cent of the white collar workers of the 1960s already were of worker descent, 24 per cent came from peasant families, and only the rest had a professional or other family background. (From Mátyás Tímár's above-quoted article.) Regarding their attitude Köpeczi writes as follows: "...one has to establish that the types of attitudes and modes of life to be found among white collar workers also range from conservative bourgeois, through apers of the ideals of the consumer's society, to gentry-type showing off, and old and new Bohemians. The most common type is the white collar worker who likes his job and does it with a sense of duty, but takes relatively little part in public affairs. The section which shoulders both tasks is smaller. Descriptions of white collar workers are rather scanty and thus this generalization is offered with certain reservations."

At the present moment Hungary is a transitional society, as this is also made clear by Béla Köpeczi's study. The shaping of the "style" of the new personality has only started. "We hope", the Deputy General Secretary of the Academy concludes his article, "that the road of socialist culture in Hungary throws light on certain possibilities of mankind's future as well."

István Bart

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

SZÉCHENYI IN 1848—THE AGONIES OF A REFORMER

GYÖRGY SPIRA: A Hungarian Count in the Revolution of 1848. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1974, 346 pp. (in English).

When I first went to Hungary in 1938 to teach in the Eötvös Collegium, I had a vague idea of writing something about Ferenc Deák. It was Count Pál Teleki, not then Prime Minister, who urged me to read about Count István Széchenyi, a person, I regret to state, about whom I then knew nothing. Later I learnt how the Conservative, Roman Catholic historian, Professor Szekfű, had revived an interest in Széchenyi as an alternative hero to Lajos Kossuth. Széchenyi, he argued, was a more genuine Magyar, with a true understanding of Hungary's role within the Habsburg monarchy. His establishmentarian family had risen to greatness as a result of its allegiance to the dynasty and to the Counter-Reformation. An archbishop, several court chamberlains and army officers were among his forebears. His fat her, Count Ferenc had been noted for his Catholic piety and for his association with the Redempt orist Clement Maria Holfbauer, and with Friedrich and Dorothea Schlegel, converts from Lutheranism, who hap formed a circle to develop an Austrian romantic catholic ideology opposed to that of the French Revolution and Napoleon. This catholic romanticism encouraged a kind of conservative nationalism. As a dashing young hussar officer in the Austrian army István Széchenyi had distinguished himself by astonishingly daring exploits at Győr (1809) and Leipzig (1813) against Napoleon's armies. After the war he had travelled widely and in particular developed an admiration for Austria's ally, England, for its constitutional government, its industrial achievements and its utilitarian outlook. As a result he took the lead in transforming the social and economic, rather than the political, life of his country, notably by inviting British engineers to build the Chain Bridge linking Buda and Pest. For this purpose he tried, not entirely unsuccessfully, to enlist the support of Prince Metternich for some of his plans, Metternich's third and Hungarian wife, Melanie (née Zichy), being the sister-in-law of Széchenyi's brother, Pál. Unhappily, according to Professor Szekfű's view, during the eighteen forties, Széchenyi lost support in Hungary as a result of the emergence of Lajos Kossuth, who advocated an increasingly anti-Habsburg Radical chauvinism, which was quite alien to the true Magyar character, but, since it was imported from abroad, was calculated to appeal to Protestants, Freemasons, Jews and other undesirable types.

The first reaction of those opposed to what was sometimes magniloquently called the neo-Baroque era of the Horthy régime was to say to its supporters "You may have Széchenyi", but they soon came to feel that the picture of the Count as a pillar of con-

servatism was a travesty of the original, who had in fact reacted strongly against, without being able entirely to throw off, his father's hot-house piety and had felt, for example, great sympathy for the Decembrist revolutionaries in Russia in 1825 and was indeed far more of an enlightened cosmopolitan Liberal than the Conservatives were prepared to admit. A kind of scholarly tug-of-war therefore took place between progressive and conservative scholars in Hungary with Széchenyi as the rope.

Now a more adequate delineation of his career seems possible. A pioneer work in this direction has been written by George Barany*, a Hungarian scholar living in the United States, *Stephen Széchenyi and the Awakening of Hungarian Nationalism* (1791–1841), (Princetown 1968). This book has already revealed that Széchenyi's views were often much closer to those of Kossuth than had been supposed, and that the latter's were of course as deeply rooted in Hungarian history as those of Széchenyi. Both, though Széchenyi was ten years older than Kossuth, were influenced by the enlightened Western Liberalism of the time.

György Spira's fascinating study has a similar judicious character. It deals with only eight months of Széchenyi's life, during a time of stress, the 1848 revolution and unlike George Barany's book is focused almost entirely on the Count himself. Such detailed treatment is possible because Széchenyi kept a diary, wrote many letters and memoranda, and was much discussed by his contemporaries. But without an appreciation of his previous life and the background of Hungarian history, it is difficult for the ordinary non-Hungarian reader to appreciate the value of this book, where Széchenyi, in his diary confessions especially, hardly appears at his best, but to be agitated and at times timorous and ends up unhinged if not mad. Some of the necessary background information is given on the cover but a little more needs to be said on the role of Lajos Kossuth about whom, no doubt, every Hungarian reader is well informed. Suffice it to say that, after having been imprisoned by the Austrian government in 1837–39 the court had found very little reason to revise their opinion about him. Kossuth had become a Radical newspaper editor, an agitator for a protective tariff against Austrian goods, then finally, after a sensational election in Pest County during 1847, the dynamic leader of the Radical nationalist opposition in the Lower House. Immediately on hearing of the revolution in Paris which sent Louis Philippe into exile and proclaimed the Second Republic, he had given tongue to a tremendous denunciation in the Hungarian parliament, "From the charnal-house of the Vienna system," he had declared (March 3), "a poison-laden atmosphere steals over us which paralyses our nerves and bows us down when we would soar. The future of Hungary can never be secure while in the other provinces there exists a system of government in direct antagonism to every constitutional principle. Our task is to found a happier future on the brotherhood of all the Austrian races and to substitute for the union, enforced by bayonets and police, the enduring bond of a free constitution."

This speech had an electrifying effect on the whole Hapsburg Empire. It was printed in Vienna and appeared to have produced the revolt there and the overthrow and flight of Prince Metternich into exile, an event in the 1848 revolution which A. J. P. Taylor has perceptively compared for its significance to the taking of the Bastille in the earlier French one of 1789.

Now previous to these events, as György Spira points out, Széchenyi had been growing more and more violently hostile to Kossuth and his supporters, whom he saw as threatening Hungary's very existence by their turbulent nationalistic agitation for reform, which, he believed, could only produce revolutionary anarchy followed by greater Austrian oppression. As a result

* See NHQ No. 42.

Széchenyi had supported a conservative administration under Count Apponyi with a reform programme of its own. This angered most Hungarians by introducing administrators to control the county assemblies, the centres of Hungarian nationalist opposition to the Viennese government. Széchenyi even stood for election to the Lower House to withstand Kossuth's bid for power by agitating against the Austrian policy.

But then came the 1848 revolution throughout Europe and the Viennese government had to cope with movements in Italy and Bohemia as well as in Austria and Hungary. A parliament was to meet at Frankfurt to form a united Greater Germany. Széchenyi, incidentally was far less enthusiastic about this than many of his colleagues. Nevertheless for him, too, the 1848 revolution implied a very different role for the Hapsburgs and for Hungary, the ancient realm of St. Stephen, of which they were the kings. In these new conditions therefore Széchenyi appeared to make a complete *volte face*. He now revealed what György Spira claims he had really desired for Hungary, but which he had previously felt was quite out of the question. The first chapter of this book opens with a vivid description of Széchenyi as one of a delegation on the steamer, *Franz Karl*, on its way to Vienna to obtain the consent of his monarch to the setting up of a Hungarian ministry, responsible to a Hungarian parliament. On the steamer also was the former leader of the opposition in the Upper House and now to be the first Hungarian Prime Minister, Count Lajos Batthyány. Széchenyi in a private note had recently analysed the latter's character as "Devotion 5; hatred of Apponyi 45; thirst for power 50". The triumphant Lajos Kossuth was also on the steamer; but it was Széchenyi who now suggested that the delegation should draw up the rescript of reforms for the monarch to sign, and that the royal power should be transferred from the king in Vienna to the Palatine in Pozsony).

György Spira has a remarkable gift for selecting quotations and incidents which vividly reveal Széchenyi's changing moods and supplies a most perceptive commentary, which displays an extraordinary insight into Széchenyi's complex character and dilemmas within a changing situation. "We have lived through miracles," the Count wrote to a friend on returning from Vienna (March 17). "It seems as if the heavens have opened to us Hungarians... My policy was certain but slow... Kossuth staked everything on one card and has already won more for the nation than my policy could have produced over perhaps twenty years." With a true aristocratic recklessness, Széchenyi, the former establishmentarian supporter of the court policy, decided, too, to stake his entire future and that of his country on Kossuth's single card.

Yet this book reveals that, in spite of his mood of exultation, Széchenyi was from the first tormented by the thoughts of the danger of the course on which he was embarking, and still aware of the difference between himself and most of his colleagues. He realized how unacceptable a government led by Lajos Batthyány (later to be executed as a rebel with thirteen generals who were hanged at Arad), with Kossuth as Finance Minister, would be to Vienna; but he was also equally alarmed by the threat, especially to himself, of the mounting revolutionary radicalism within Hungary. Thus, in a different mood from the previous quotation, he said to Ferenc Deák (March 25), "one thing is certain: we shall be hanged either up there (i.e. in Vienna) or down here." Again he saw himself basically on the side of law and order against the revolution with which he yet sympathized and thought he would get into its history "as Pilate got into the creed".

Yet the last quotation, by itself, gives a false impression of Széchenyi's role. Western historians have tended to make Kossuth on the Hungarian side, exclusively responsible for the breach between the ministry

and the Austrian government. György Spira shows that Széchenyi went much further with him than might have been supposed. Thus Széchenyi, not only approved of the March laws, giving Hungary her independent ministry, but also, with Ferenc Deák, he supported the ministry's refusal to take over any of the Austrian debt, as the Hungarians argued that they had not been consulted on the financial measures that had produced it. Széchenyi also went a long way in supporting a Hungarian ministry of defence and a separate Hungarian army under it. Furthermore his position was a much more important one than is generally realized, as, at times, he acted as Prime Minister when Batthyány was away negotiating with the court. In this position Széchenyi often, unhappily, had to accept decisions of which he did not approve.

What especially delighted him, however, was that, as Minister of Transport, through Kossuth's sympathy and proposed financial measures, he now had the opportunity to implement long ago matured plans for an extensive programme of railway, road and canal construction, a necessary first step to the industrial development of the country, something the Viennese government had been quite unprepared to offer. Indeed Chapter 4, with its vivid contemporary description of Széchenyi, in his hastily constructed ministry, planning a new Hungary, is one of the most attractive in the book.

Where Széchenyi revealed more insight and humanity than Kossuth, but also his establishmentarian limitations, was in his attitude towards the other nationalities within the realm of St. Stephen, particularly the Croats. Kossuth did not comprehend the implications of his March 3 speech, and Deák, to Széchenyi's annoyance, though less aggressive, was often equally obtuse. But Széchenyi understood and sympathized with those who were not Magyars. "*De jure*", he wrote in preparation for a discussion on the subject (July 4), "Croatia is a dependency—but they are right according to the sentiment of nationality which has awakened in them... I don't like the idea of waging war against nationality. One nation more is beginning to emerge; so much the better for humanity—Kossuth, if he were a Croat—what role would he play then?" But, in contrast to Kossuth, Széchenyi viewed the threatened intervention of the other nationalities in Hungary with terrified alarm, partly because he was unable to envisage any effective resistance by the Magyars to the Croats and Serbs who, rebelling against the Magyars, naturally allied themselves to the dynasty; and he was plagued by the thoughts of wild Serb guerillas entering Pest. Spira brings out, by suggestion rather than by discussion, that this fear was partly due to the fact that, as an establishmentarian, Széchenyi was equally afraid of the radical chauvinist Magyar revolutionaries whom Kossuth knew well how to rouse to battle in an inter-racial, but, at first not unsuccessful, war. Széchenyi described 10,000 of these Magyar volunteers as "largely scoundrels... robber gangs who will cut our own throats". One is not surprised to learn from György Spira that, torn by conflicting emotions in the disturbed Hungarian situation, in spite of his devotion to his wife, Crescence, Széchenyi sometimes sought recreation from his anxieties and tensions in the embraces of the *demi-mondaines* of Pest, blissfully unconcerned with, to him, insoluble problems.

Meanwhile threatened at first on one side and then on the other, but gradually gaining ground, though sometimes losing it again for a time, the court was continually seeking to undo the concessions which had been wrung from it during a period of weakness and to return to a more despotic régime. Széchenyi became more and more aware of this fact and indulged in his vein of detached black humour which is repeatedly revealed in György Spira's quotations. "We are like lobsters," he declared, "purchased by the cook and deposited in the

cellar; they are quiet for a while, then they get restless and think, 'Well, well, we want some water.' The cook comes, picks them up and puts them into a pan full of water. They think, 'Oh now we feel fine,' but then the pan is put on the fire and the lobsters realize that 'they've got such a funny feeling,' until the cook takes the pan off and lifts the lid and the lobsters murmur, 'Oh we feel fine again,' and this goes on again until the lobsters are cooked red."

Why, one may ask, does György Spira, whose sympathies are with those Magyars who were still more Radical than Kossuth, yet describe, the dismayed, divided and often querulous Széchenyi during this phase of his life as "my hero" Széchenyi, who at one moment wished to join forces with the Croat Ban, Josep Jellačić, a Hapsburg officer as he had once been, to put down the Magyar revolutionaries and at another, to the dismay of the latter, spoke in favour of retaining corporal punishment in the army? Firstly, because though Széchenyi did turn against Kossuth's increasingly Radical chauvinism, yet, according to György Spira, he could not continue to do so when, at the end of August 1848, it became transparently clear to him that the Austrian court, now recovering its power, would not accept the March laws, in spite of suggested modifications by the Hungarian government, but demanded unconditional surrender. After this realization Széchenyi, in a mood of complete despair, could no longer use Kossuth's anti-Hapsburg rebelliousness as a justification for the court's behaviour. But even then he was less critical of the court than of himself for having started the Liberal National Hungarian movement and for accepting the March laws, as he foresaw disaster for the Magyars, due to the Czar's intervention, even if they succeeded against the Habsburg armies and those nationalities which were the latter's allies. Subject to a rather superstitious form of Christianity, he concluded he was damned. He became so distraught that he was finally taken into a mental asylum at Döbling before the final struggle (in which Kossuth repudiated Habsburg rule) between the court and Hungary had begun.

But in spite of his acute sense of sin, Széchenyi passed through a purgatory of penitence and came to praise Kossuth, "that immensely noble man", and blamed himself for not co-operating with him, before the revolution, to produce peaceful reforms. Furthermore, in 1851, Széchenyi recovered his sanity and now, strongly hostile to the denationalizing authoritarian, imperial régime, smuggled out of the asylum his *Ein Blick auf den anonymen Rückblick*, a scathing political pamphlet in reply to the Minister of the Interior, Alexander Bach's memoirs. Molested by secret police and disturbed by further oppression against the Magyars, Széchenyi, soon afterwards, at the close of the worst period of oppression, shot himself in 1860. Because of his *Ein Blick*, György Spira seeks to dissociate Széchenyi's name from the peace party and to see him as one of those, like Kossuth, who were responsible for the collapse of the Dual Monarchy in 1918. This is surely rather a long shot. If György Spira means by the peace party the Old Conservatives, who were content to return to the pre-1848 state of affairs, this is true. But surely Deák, Eötvös and, with considerable reservations the ex-Kossuthist Andrássy, responsible for the Compromise of 1867, were Széchenyi's heirs. But György Spira has little sympathy for these. He is not content to see Széchenyi as, perhaps, a belated martyr for upholding the March laws. For him the court and its allies are reactionary villains with whom any kind of *modus vivendi*, as Széchenyi sometimes believed to be possible, from the first, was out of the question, so that the Magyars had to prepare themselves from the start to fight "to the last drop of their blood" against the Habsburgs and the nationalities whom he tends to view as traitors to the Magyar revolution. Holding such views, he loses his perceptive and judicious attitude

when he discusses such figures as Jellačić, the Archdukes John and Stephen and others, who had their own dilemmas, and reveals a certain narrowness of vision. What is so remarkable however is that a historian who, admittedly, himself has lived through revolutionary and counter-revolutionary régimes, who writes about the 1848 one in categories of the most orthodox Marxist–Leninist point of view should, in this fascinating study reveal such an intuitive understanding of an establishmentarian count, who became responsive to the ideas of a new Liberal national humanitarian and industrial age, but was yet also to some extent still thinking in terms of his traditional Hapsburg-orientated background.

Even the defects of this work are in some ways of interest to Western scholars. Like some of the latter he does not carry his admittedly extensive learning very lightly and has developed the scholars' disease of over-lengthy footnotes which at times occupy more space than the text itself. He often exposes with unnecessary cantankerousness the errors of previous, mostly Conservative, scholars, many of whom are now dead and who would otherwise be unknown to most of his Western readers. It might be argued that the space acquired by the elimination of some of these notes could have been filled for the non-Hungarian reader with more background information and in particular with more discussion of the different roles of Széchenyi and Kossuth. There is one quotation, from Széchenyi's diary in 1848, known to many Western scholars, which György Spira does not use. "There rings incessantly in my ears what Metternich said to me twenty or twenty-five years ago. 'Pull out one stone of the structure and the whole will crash'." Széchenyi believed that this applied to the realm of St. Stephen and the Magyars within it, as much as to the Habsburg Empire as a whole. Kossuth did not feel this was the case because he had great faith in help for the Magyars from a largely mythical unitary Western revolution. Indeed his ideas throughout his life, whether one is sympathetic towards them or not, had one defect, they were never quite in accord with reality. György Spira would hardly accept this verdict and sees Széchenyi's middle-of-the-road position during the 1848 revolution as an impossible one. His scholarship is thorough and honest, however, and he certainly leaves nothing out which might tell against his "hero" Széchenyi, and thus allows the reader to form his own conclusions. Furthermore something should be said of the many excellent illustrations, some of them contemporary cartoons, which help to evoke the atmosphere of the year 1848, one of the most dramatic and significant in Hungary's history and also in the life of the fascinating character who is the subject of this excellent book.

NEVILLE C. MASTERMAN

1848, AS CONTEMPORARIES SAW IT

GYÖRGY RÓZSA and GYÖRGY SPIRA: *1848 a kortársak szemével.* (1848, As Contemporaries Saw It.) Képzőművészeti Alap Kiadóvállalata, Budapest, 1973. 573 pp. (in Hungarian).

1973, the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the great poet, Sándor Petőfi, saw the publication of an outstanding book. It presented a vital event in the modern history of Hungary, the 1848 revolution and War of Independence, seen through the eyes of contemporaries. The authors, György Rózsa, an art historian, and György Spira, historian, declared in the introduction that "we tried to combine two conflicting approaches, which—for this very reason—rarely appear together. One was to look at the past as closely as possible and to investigate it—in this case the events of 1848—through the eyes of contemporaries. The other was to regard 1848 from a distance, as contemporaries never could see it."

The basis of the book is a collection of pictures illustrating both the events and the personalities of the time. The pictures are supplemented by texts of the period, mostly from printed material, for the sake of easier reading, but manuscript documents are also included to help to bring the character and style of living of the persons concerned to life.

The artistic value of these illustrations to the 1848–49 Hungarian revolution varies considerably; the techniques include engravings and the once very popular lithograph. A certain number of oil paintings were also produced during the eighteen months of the revolution, but no pictures of these revolutionary events were painted until the end of the nineteenth century. This does not mean that great Hungarian painters were not inspired by the events of 1848, but because the actual period of the events and the time the pictures were painted did not coincide, the authors could not accept them as direct contemporary witnesses. The art of the Hungarian revolution is discussed in an excellent chapter "1848 in Contemporary Art" by György Rózsa at the end of the book, in which he gives an account of the work of Austrian painters and graphic artists who dealt with this subject.

Naturally the value of the picture material as art is of secondary importance in the book. All these lithographs, woodcuts, cartoons, battle scenes and genre paintings help the reader to get to know the leading members of the various groups of pre-revolutionary society, the spots where these historical events took place, the battles and battlefields, streets, bridges, the arms factories, national guards, soldiers and politicians, as well as the main participants, the military and political leaders of the Revolution. Some of the illustrative paintings, such as the portraits of Sándor Petőfi, Lajos Kossuth and Mihály Táncsics, were painted by the well-known contemporary artist, Miklós Barabás, and these portraits date from his most mature period.

The seven chapters of the book take the reader from the events which led to the outbreak of the Revolution in the March days of 1848, through the fighting, to the capitulation at Világos and the execution of the martyrs of the revolution at Arad, and include the liberation of the serfs and the final victory of the Habsburgs. The course of the change-over to a politically bourgeois state, and the men who led it, are well-documented in the accompanying text, the captions under the pictures and selections from contemporary sources in each chapter are logically connected by the content. The leaders of the revolution were the liberal group among the Hungarian nobility, prepared to abolish the feudal system based on serfdom in order to introduce the capitalist system of farming on their estates. But to obtain the necessary

capital Hungary had to be freed from its subordination to the Habsburg empire, for which they needed the support of the serfs and to obtain this support, they should have emancipated them earlier. To break out of this vicious circle these nobles needed to appeal to both foreign and domestic interests. Around 1845, the Liberal movement, with its programme and party, came into being, and liberal publications appeared. The development of this movement, however, was influenced by its fear of peasant revolts, such as the cholera uprising in Northern Hungary and the peasant revolt in Galicia in 1846.

The course of the revolutionary movement in Hungary was essentially affected by the attitude of the peasants, by far the largest social group in the country. By the end of 1848 the old, outdated feudal system was in fact already in ruins. The farm bailiffs kept writing letters to their landowner employers—who were engaged at the time in discussing Parliamentary bills at Pozsony (Bratislava)—informing them that the peasants refused to fulfil their feudal obligations and it was impossible to force them to carry them out once they had heard about the revolution.

The Parliamentary session of March 18 passed a law emancipating the serfs, and postponed the question of compensation. The "March youth" of the city of Pest played a very important role in this decision. After news of the revolution which had broken out in Vienna on March 13 reached Pest, they adopted the twelve demands of the bourgeois Liberal Party programme as the revolutionary ultimatum of March 15. The crowds of people in Pest for the Joseph day fair took the news of the revolution back to the villages. Since in these days information was disseminated by post and by street bills, the government announced the new laws and the emancipation of the serfs by means of pamphlets and wall proclamations. But there was considerable confusion in the countryside over the originators of these measures. In Pest County alone 55 villages out of 187 refused to form units of the national guard in the spring and summer of 1848 because they were afraid that the army was plotting against the good king, and it was after all the landlords who were their enemy. But when in September 1848 the war against the Hapsburgs began, more than a hundred thousand people were already under arms. These events are all illustrated in this volume which, besides including the history of the "Twelve demands", provides pictures illuminating many a detail, such as the process of recruiting, the episcopal letter addressed to the peasants against the expropriation of estates by force, the declaration issued by Lajos Kossuth on December 18, in which he announced measures against these seizures of land, the demands of the disillusioned landless peasants, and the question they asked: Should peasants without land fight?, together with the characteristic answer: Yes. Even if they have no land, they have a country.

The book also makes clear the identity of the real enemies to the bourgeois advance. They were the aristocracy, the clergy and some of the national minority movements supporting the Hapsburg dynasty. The strength of the revolutionary movement is reflected in the political activity of the "March youth" and its consequences, in the actions of Kossuth and the Defence Committee, and in the co-operation between the left wing, soldiers in the fight for freedom and the radical and liberal forces of the Revolution. The enemy of the Hungarian bourgeois revolution was the Hapsburg régime, which represented those desirous of maintaining Europe as it was. The collapse of the Hapsburg empire was necessary for the creation of a bourgeois, democratic Hungary and consequently, owing to unfavourable international conditions, the Hungarian Revolution was bound to fail.

We understand today that the failure of the revolution was inevitable, but the pic-

tures and documents before us, illustrating the last months and weeks of the war, reveal the practical steps which were taken in an effort to make peace. These were the decisions of the Parliament at the end of 1848 (December 31) to move the headquarters of the government from Pest to Debrecen, and the proposals for peace, which were refused by Windischgrätz on January 3. The heroic determination to fight, on the other hand, is exemplified in the message of General Bem, the Polish-born military leader of the Hungarian army. "All men of the National Guard are equal without discrimination on grounds of religion or status; they have an equal right to become officers if they serve the country faithfully and honestly, and if they possess the necessary ability. Those who fight for the freedom and liberties of the country will be given important posts regardless of birth if they can prove their qualifications and their courage. Those disabled in the war will be cared for by the country during their life. The children and widows of those who fall on the battlefield will be placed under the protection of the country. Although the Hungarian language has been accepted as the language of Parliament, all the other nationalities in Hungary are entitled to preserve and use their own tongues in their own affairs." And the reader will cast more than a glance over the section dealing with the Parliamentary law on elementary education passed in April 1849. "The public authorities will be responsible for establishing schools in every locality, even, in so far as it is possible, on the Plain. All parents and foster-parents are required to send their children, apprentices and young servants to school unless they can provide education for them in the house or in private institutions. Boys must attend school from the ages of six to twelve and girls must attend school from six to ten. Those who fail to comply with the law will be liable to fines or, if need be, imprisonment. Elementary education will be free of charge in all public institutions, and elementary education will be given in those subjects which are needed in civil life, with stress laid on a basic education for the children rather than all-around knowledge. Special subjects will be: reading, writing and arithmetic. Natural history and the description of nature based on the life and type of country from which most of the children come. History and geography of the homeland. A knowledge of civil rights and duties. Gymnastics, with a view to military training. Singing. The language in which the lessons are taught will be decided according to the majority of the inhabitants."

This book would be worth translating into English, Russian, German or French, in which case additional notes and clarifications would be necessary.

It might be interesting to include in an English edition drawings and jokes from the contemporary *Punch*, dealing with the events in Hungary.

ÉVA H. HARASZTI

EARS AND EYES AS FICTION

TIBOR DÉRY: *A félfülű* (The Boy with One Ear). Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1975. 113 pp. IVÁN MÁNDY: *Zsámboky mozija* (Zsámboky's Movie). Magvető, Budapest 1975. 330 pp.

Kidnapping, a fashionable crime in the 'seventies, does not appear a source for humour at first sight. In "The Boy with One Ear" Déry nevertheless chose kidnapping to prove that the world that brings forth such situations has moments galore that can serve as a model for caricature. That the author regards himself as part of this world may not be news to readers of NHQ, who read a part of Déry's self-ironical novel, "Cher Beau-père" in No. 55.*

The story itself is based on well-known events: the 16-year-old grandson of an American multi-millionaire, who has been loafing around in Rome, was kidnapped and kept for five months in the caves and huts of the Calabrian mountains. During this time the kidnappers tried several methods to obtain ransom. To no avail, however, as the grandfather considers the bargain "uneconomic". To hasten the negotiations the kidnappers cut off the boy's right ear and they send it to the family as a "Sample of no value". Their speculation proves to be right as the multi-millionaire, afraid of a scandal (it would most certainly damage business if he were blamed for the loss of his grandson) pays and the boy is set free. Déry's novella is well-structured and his wit knows no mercy. The work itself is three-layered: immediate communication by the author, the memories of the boy and the questions and answers of the investigation after the boy's release are intertwined in a way allowing them to complete each other formally, while meanings are counterpointed. The series of events of the boy's captivity, for instance, form an entity partly from the interpolated details of the investigation material. This investigation adds ever fresh data to the picture of the period of captivity. However, more and more funny, but also frightening details become known about the colonel who superintends the investigation and the apparatus headed by him, the impotent and corrupt gendarmerie as well as about the multimillionaire family whose only care is business. In this way the seemingly clear-cut function of the plot (relating events) undergoes a subtle change and becomes a special kind of evaluation (its components are but negative, ridiculous "values").

The framework of a novella permits but a roughly outlined characterization. This, however, proves to be the strength of Déry's writing: his figures are shown in witty, compact, aphoristic pictures. The most amusing is the grandfather's portrait: a strict moralist, who works day and night (buying and selling on the Exchange), who opens a book twice a year, on Christmas Eve and Independence Day. He refers so often to the "hard work" done by him that he already believes himself it made him the richest man in the world. The mother, whose only activity is to step from one marriage into the bonds of the next, has never been in Calabria, "most probably because of the lack of English tea and buttered toast for breakfast", is sorry for what her son had to endure "because, poor boy, you must have been in the society of people who don't know how to dress". The head of the kidnappers is a strapping woman, past her prime, who has motherly feelings for her prisoner; to prove her goodness, and her soft heart, she lets him decide as to which ear should be cut off. The suffering protagonist, George Hamilton jun., obviously appreciates this gesture as his sole worry after his release is whether he will be

* See also: Nos. 10, 20, 28, 32, 33, 43, 45, 47, 54, 55, 57

able to wear sun-glasses with only one ear left.

Déry treats his own role as narrator with a grain of irony. What he tells he tells cautiously, in an uncertain tone, far from omniscient narrative prose. The first he tells us about his hero is that he emerges from the Forum Club in Rome, "most possibly with an elastic step". That is according to (narrative-social) convention, this type of play-boy most probably walks with an elastic step, but how could a novelist in Budapest, familiar with humanistic studies only, know that for sure? The sentences informing the reader, containing enumerations, are mostly cut off with an "etc. etc." turn, thus diminishing the seriousness of the information, adding a humorous look to gloomy or lofty parts of the text. To show, for instance, the fact that the Forum Club is a distinguished place, the names of half a dozen film stars are mentioned who are all habitual visitors, but even this enumeration is cut off with "et al."—that is the story, the novel and its message can go on.

Déry's sceptical, moralist conceptions of the universe can be felt behind the extreme horror story and an interpretation not lacking in cynical and ironical elements, indicating that he did not chose an extreme subject-matter of his novel, but a characteristic and even typical one. George Hamilton jun. is knocked out to facilitate the kidnapping. After regaining consciousness the boy, bound hand and foot, cannot understand in what way he offended his captors. The only fact against him seems to be his origin. This recognition, however, makes him reflect on the sense of his existence: was he only born to be knocked on the head? Déry's commentary: the answer is not stupid, though its general meaning cannot as yet be understood by the young boy. The boy's favourite book was the memoirs of an oceonographer until the moment he found out that the author "despite his enthusiasm for the sea, is the main stock holder of a harpoon factory, which makes a 20 per cent dividend on the fat and bones of murdered whales".

The derisive conclusion of the story is formulated towards the end of a conversation between the boy and the Italian colonel heading the investigation: "Were these people robbers or guerillas?—It does not make any difference to the ear I've still got whether they were robbers or guerillas.—But Humanity! One ear of humanity!—That is but like the tail of a lizard. It grows out again."

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The great myth-maker of our century, the cinema, turned to literature in the beginning for encouragement, later, an increasing reaction could be observed. Iván Mándy (whose works and their criticism frequently appears in NHQ*) tried to create a synthesis in "Zsámboky's Cinema". It is a special and original book that evokes the imagination and the memories of his persona: Zsámboky, the newspaper man. In this fantasy-cinema he conjures up movies and movie stars of old times as if they were real characters and part of his life. Mándy, whose so to say basic writer's experience were films made in Hollywood seen in his childhood, places the reader into the dual world of the movie audience: a realistic environment and the evoked world of the cinema. By constantly interspersing the two layers, the boundaries between them disappear, the reader, or better still, the audience trying to find its equilibrium between them is toppled from one to another, as the author, with the help of this back-and-forth change, keeps moving the internal and external story. Mándy's technique follows that of the movie, the time relations of the book are determined by the concentrated time of the movie, description is substituted for by display.

What calls forth this "projection" are some star-photos on the wall in Zsámboky's room. "He is looking at faces, Pearl White,

* See short stories by Iván Mándy in Nos. 4, 26, 36, and 51.

Clara Bow, Douglas Fairbanks, Kay Francis, Nancy Carroll. He is staring at the wall, and the projection begins. The films, obscure, frayed, constantly tearing frames, start to whirl." Figures of the heroic age of cinematic history come to life, but, for Zsámboky, their existence, together with their commonplace features, seems reality; a movie princess with an alluring smile, the cowboy known for his hard knuckles, the burlesque hero who stumbles about, the lady of destiny, who plays her role even in private life. They come and go about in Zsámboky's apartment in a completely unaffected manner, sit on the arm of a worn armchair to ask for his advice regarding a contract or disappear with a hurt face behind a curtain if he does not follow with sufficient attention their rambling narrative about some ancient success.

In Zsámboky's movie-house, movies and stars have a local value and this is not in accordance with the hierarchy of cinematic history. An unforgettable moment, or a funny emphasis, gives mediocre actors a bigger role here than Greta Garbo's "with her distant, impassioned face" or that of the egoist Chaplin, who had an "overwhelming self-confidence". With a single, pertinent sentence, Mándy can bring into the limelight a half-forgotten film star. Mae West, the man eater, turns up at the side of a swimming pool: "Different bathing costumes are there, green and red striped ones, black, brown, light yellow ones... spread out on the stone: men's swimming trunks, but the men had been soaked out." Some chapters of the book are real bravura pieces, written in the mode of the avant-garde pictures of the 'twenties, as, e.g., is the scene assembled from the portrait of two actors: "The faces approach each other with a slow, wavelike motion. Robert Young's chin dissolves into Robert Montgomery's front. It dips beneath his chin to reappear behind his ears. Hair parted in the middle covers hair parted on the side. It slips along an inch as if to ruffle it a bit. Then it covers it again. Undulating mouths. Opened set of teeth. Loosely hanging lips. Sorrowful ears."

The success of Mándy's experiment and of his book can be attributed only in part to the style that enables nuances and moods to materialize. The deeply hidden cause of this success lies in the metamorphosis of the evoked film heroes. The film stars here do not appear in the light of their success on Zsámboky's screen but mostly as forsaken figures, swept aside, grown old and forgotten. Men and women, once admired by the public as success-surrogates, now changed roles and found in the always possible and in their case already experienced failure a friendly partnership with the author as audience and the readers who dreamed them back and brought them back to life.

LÁSZLÓ VARGA

CANADIAN MOSAIC

ZOLTÁN HALÁSZ: *Keresztül-kasul Kanadán* (Travelling in Canada) Kossuth, Budapest, 1975. 220 pp.

"...Desolation and loneliness everywhere. True, the sea is infinitely rich in fish and the fishermen who sail as far as here are lucky. As soon as they cast their net it fills itself with fish. The country is hilly and wooded. There are many conifers... the old fallen trees make the forests almost unpassable. In other places the grass is high—not in the least like the grass at home... I don't know whether there is settlement beyond the forest. The fishermen who stray this way don't know either... and there is no one else I could ask. As I said, it is almost impossible to penetrate the woods. I have not been able to establish yet whether there are ores in the mountains. Their appearance makes it likely..."

This is the country around St. John, the capital of Newfoundland four hundred years ago. The author, István Budai Parmenius, was a young Hungarian humanist who travelled all over Europe and, of course, also reached Oxford. From there, as a member of Sir Humphrey Gilbert's expedition, he sailed to Newfoundland where he landed in August 1583. On the way home the good ship "Delight", sprung a leak in a storm, and sank. The captain, Maurice Browne, did not leave the ship and Budai Parmenius stayed with him. The tragedy was reported by Captain Hayes of the "Golden Hind", also part of the expedition, and included in Richard Hakluyt's book of famous voyages and discoveries which appeared in 1589.

The diary of Parmenius did not perish in the brine. Moved by caution or premonition he entrusted his manuscript to the captain of another ship. His report, written on parchment, survived and thanks to the research of Professor David B. Quinn of Liverpool, now, after the oblivion of centuries, scholarship considers Budai Parmenius as one of the discoverers of Canada.

The reader will find it unusual and maybe improper that while reviewing a contemporary Hungarian author's book on Canada I have dwelt at such length on the work of another Hungarian who lived many centuries ago. I did this with a purpose: I wanted to attract attention to the excellent and congenial approach of Zoltán Halász in his *Keresztül-kasul Kanadán*. These facts are taken from his introduction. They are a suggestive demonstration of his method as a writer and editor. The format is small, the lay-out is sound and the photographs are neatly selected to serve their purpose. The threads cross and recross but the construction is evident throughout. There is information on Canada today and at a given point, where this is necessary, the reader is made to witness the Battle of the Heights of Abraham which concluded the struggle for dominance between the British and the French. We delight in the colours of autumnal Canada and without even knowing it we follow the tracks of the travellers of old. By linking the present and the past and thus creating the necessary perspective we become acquainted with the story of the Canadian Pacific, the Riel rising, the chronicle of the Saint Lawrence Sea Way, the birth of the Quebec movements, the foundation of the dominion, the antecedents (or lack of antecedents) of Canadian "identity", the prehistory of the term "Canadian mosaic", originally a fashionable political expression which has become a concept and a reality, etc. Zoltán Halász writes for Hungarian readers so he often compares Canadian facts, social history and sometimes even colours and townscapes to Hungarian ones. Being a historian of culture he feels and manages to convey to his readers the mutual impact of processes within Canada, resp. on the continent. The chapters

discussing the roots of the differing social and cultural development of French and British Canadians are fine examples of conciseness and plasticity. This evaluation is true although the author, very reasonably, has availed himself of existing analyses.

In this context his evoking István Budai Parmenius in the introduction is very logical. It is generally accepted that in Hungary historical turning-points and changes have become starting-points for waves of emigration. About 150,000 Canadians are of Hungarian origin, and a Hungarian author could easily be tempted to indulge in the facile observation that "everybody is Hungarian". Zoltán Halász has refrained from this to such an extent that his account about Hungarians in Canada did not come up to the expectations of Hungarian readers interested in that subject. Instead he delved deeply into the story of Parmenius and described his role in detail because he did not consider it as of concern to Hungarians only but as part of the universal communication of intellectual values; he viewed it as a Hungarian performance which should be dear both to Hungarians and Canadians.

Halász demonstrated his journalistic curiosity and reporter's zeal, and at the same time contributed to a better understanding of the Canadian situation. In chapters which describe the newspaper office where Ernest Hemingway once worked, give a lively account of a discussion at the highest level about the dominant role of American capital and allow us to listen to conversations with René Leveque, Trudeau and Tim Buck, who has died since, and tell us of the Indian problem which, despite much good-will, remains distressingly unsolved.

Readers concerned mainly with contemporary political and economic problems of Canada can find a great deal of interest, much that acts as background information to printed or broadcast news items. The information is offered on two levels: on that of the past and on that of the present. The author's style makes good reading and he handles his material economically.

In the telling of his tale Halász often uses the term Canadian "mosaic" which is purposefully and deliberately employed by Canadians these days in contrast to the American "melting pot". I think this word conveys much more than many volumes of explanations. It is expressive, conceptual and descriptive, a pledge for the present and the future. It hides a great deal too, and this function makes it a favourite term in establishment usage. The stress is on ethnicity and attention is diverted from a class society and class power. This civilized and pleasant eyewash already meets with opposition in the academies, witness the success a few years back of John Porter's *The Vertical Mosaic*, six hundred pages of sociology.

This is not said to challenge Halász. I only wanted to complement what he has to say about the mosaic. Readers with personal experience of Canada will look for a confirmation of their own impressions. This is very natural and let me say that Halász's starting-point is sound in this respect. He described his shock at the difference of his first impressions at his two visits to Canada. First he came from Detroit, the second time direct from Europe. On the first occasion he found the country typically European, on the second typically American. The author of these lines experienced the same confusing ambivalence and this confirmed his confidence in the book. This Europe, or America, is the genuine Canada.

LAJOS KOROLOVSZKY

FROM THE BUDAPEST ARCHIVES

Források Buda, Pest és Óbuda történetéhez, 1686–1873 ("Sources of the history of Buda, Pest and Óbuda") Vol I. Ed. Vera Bácskai. Budapest, 1971, 331 pp. *Források Budapest történetéhez*, Vol. II. 1873–1919 ("Sources of the history of Budapest"). Ed. Mária H. Kohut. Budapest, 1971, 522 pp. *Források Budapest történetéhez*, Vol. III. 1919–1945 ("Sources of the history of Budapest). Ed. József Szekeres. Budapest, 1972, 646 pp. *Források Budapest történetéhez*, Vol. IV .1945–1950 ("Sources of the history of Budapest"). Vol. V. *Sources du passé de Budapest*, 1868–1973. Rédacteur Ágnes Ságvári. Budapest, 1973, 122 pp. Editor-in-chief of the series: ÁGNES SÁGVÁRI.

Following a request by the Budapest municipal authorities the Budapest Archives published a selection of important documents from the history of the three sister cities on the Danube: Buda, the former royal capital, Pest, the free royal town, and Óbuda, the market town with Margaret Island, on the occasion of the centenary of the unification of Budapest. The documents extend from 1686, the expulsion of the Turks, to 1950, the birth of Greater Budapest. Something like a thousand written, printed and statistical sources are included in four volumes, most of them hitherto unknown.

This is almost the first recent Hungarian historical publication which has been made accessible to those as well who do not read Hungarian. The introductions and registers of the four volumes were collected, translated into French, and published in a fifth.

The books were published rapidly and exactly at the right time, between 1971 and 73; the jubilee celebrations extended over 1972–73. The municipal authorities wished to awaken interest in local history by the publication of these unknown sources, and they also commissioned a six-volume historical monograph on Budapest. The first two volumes appeared for the centenary; this major enterprise, the first complete history of Budapest, will of course take some years to complete. A Budapest Encyclopedia, a Budapest Handbook and a number of smaller books were also published for the centenary in Hungarian.

This rich harvest raises the question why it was necessary to publish documents, whether contemporary sources offered more to readers than their interpretation. The editors selected the documents according to the principle that they should not only illustrate the main events and aspects in the city's history, but also convey a feel of everyday life, the particular atmosphere of the times, and even its oddities. In these sources we directly confront the past. The old papers, letters, reports, speeches, articles and statistics are so vivid that they almost shock.

The attractiveness of this type of publication lies in their matter-of-factness. The documents tell their story straight, while a historian living later cannot help being subjective. Readers who look at the original sources are in a position to form their own opinion of historical events, phenomena and personalities and can place them in the evolution of Budapest, in the changing and moving pattern of the entire Hungarian society. The volumes which contain more recent original source-material enable the young of today to confront reality with stories and myths about the past which often embellish things.

The structure of the four volumes is identical. A brief historical introduction for a start that narrates major events and developments in country and city at the particular period. Documents are published in chronological order, with explanatory notes. The last two volumes also include an index of names and biographical data. All four volumes contain a calendar of events.

The first volume discusses the development of the liberated sister cities after the expulsion of the Turks in 1686. The history of human settlement in the area stretches back several thousand years. Under the Romans Aquincum, where Óbuda is now, had been a well-known town, a centre of the province of Pannonia. Later Attila's host was encamped here. The Hungarians reached the Danube basin in the tenth century. The leading tribe headed by Árpád, the founder of the first Hungarian dynasty, settled in the Budapest area. Between the eleventh and fourteenth century both Pest and Buda were places of some importance. Following the devastations by the Mongols in the thirteenth century they were rebuilt on a larger scale. The castle of Buda has been a royal residence since the reign of Sigismund of Luxembourg, king of Hungary and later Holy Roman Emperor at the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth century. Under King Matthias Corvinus Buda was the country's capital. This growth was interrupted by the Turkish invasion. In 1541 the Turks occupied Buda and stayed for 145 years.

National collections and archives contain many documents of these centuries. They are, however, remote from the public interest and tend to attract specialized rather than general interest. The editors therefore concentrated on the beginnings of new life after the expulsion of the Turks late in the seventeenth century. This new period of almost 300 years culminated in the proclamation of Greater Budapest, a city with over two million inhabitants, in 1950.

The first volume ends in 1873, with the unification of the city. During these almost 200 years the twin cities were reconstructed after the horrible devastations of the long siege, they overcame the obstacles created by the Hapsburgs, and from the 1790s on they developed rapidly and again became the economic, political and cultural centre of the country. The documents describe how the ruined and deserted cities were peopled and rebuilt and how their administration was restored. Economic life recovered slowly. The documents show the life of various sections of society and political, social and cultural conditions in the reborn cities. The efforts of the Vienna government in wanting Germans to settle are revealed. Those in charge of the Hapsburg empire found that it was in their political interest to have a reliable nucleus of German burghers living in the midst of Hungarians. The documents show how this attempt failed since a policy of economic discrimination and attempts to turn the country into a colony led the indigenous German bourgeoisie to support the independence of Hungary. In the first decades of the nineteenth century people whose native language was German in Pest and Buda identified themselves as Hungarians, and political assimilation preceded the acquisition of the language.

The documents which show how the two cities became major centres in the first half of the nineteenth century are most interesting. The political history of the independence movement was linked with Buda and Pest since the 1800s. The March revolution in 1848, which put an end to feudalism in Hungary, was started by the youth and intellectuals of the two cities. The War of Independence started there and when it was crushed the national resistance against Austrian absolutism was strongest there. Buda and Pest were centres of the new Hungarian art and literature.

These years revealed the interdependence of capital and country, and national opinion grew under the guidance of the capital. The volume ends with the birth of Budapest, Hungary's unified capital, after the Compromise of 1867, when Hungary became partly independent.

The second volume discusses only about half a century (from 1873 to 1919) but during this short period Budapest grew into a metropolis and the counter-pole of Vienna within the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy not only because of the size of its population

and its outward appearance; it grew at the same time into the centre of a Hungary which had a decisive role and presented a most spectacular advance in modern capitalist economic history. The characteristic cityscape of Budapest was formed during those fifty years. In the course of the forty years of peaceful development after unification a 250,000 population grew more than threefold, large-scale industry was born and progressed in the outer areas, the urban and suburban communications network was constructed at tremendous speed, and so was a system of public utilities. Budapest became the first and major city of the country not only from the legal point of view, it was first in all aspects of life.

A cross-section of half a century's urban history gives an interesting picture of policy and development: building, trade, commerce, financial life, prosperity, culture, public, education and the working class movement. The documents emphasize the importance of the years when István Bárczy was Mayor and the liberal and democratic parties were influential, when bourgeois Budapest was in its full glory. Major enterprises undertaken under Bárczy: municipal initiative in a number of economic fields, the building up of a network of educational and cultural establishments, and urbanization in keeping with the times are here illustrated. Documents concerning the Democratic Party led by Vilmos Vázsonyi are also most interesting. In Hungary the Democratic Party was the first to organize citizens as a political factor and to represent the special interests of the inhabitants of Budapest. This helped the party to make itself independent of the traditional parties in Parliament. The sufferings and heroic efforts of Budapest during the First World War and the revolutions in 1918–19 are also presented in these volumes.

The documents reveal the serious housing problems of what has been called the golden age, the miserable conditions of workers and their families on starvation wages and the worsening of living conditions for millions during the war years. The liberal town leadership which had earlier produced considerable results failed after the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy lost the war and collapse became imminent. It could not avert starvation, economic failure and the deterioration of public morality. The events of the October 1918 bourgeois revolution and the first Hungarian proletarian dictatorship in March 1919 are presented. Statements by famous authors and simple Budapest workers reveal the true causes of the post-war breakdown and of the two successive revolutions.

The third volume deals with the history of Budapest from August 1919, when the Hungarian Republic of Councils was crushed by foreign armed intervention, through the counter-revolutionary period supported by the Entente Powers, up to February 13, 1945 when the capital was liberated from the terrorism of the German Nazis and their satellites, the Hungarian Arrow-Cross Party. During this quarter of a century Budapest remained the only large city in a Hungary reduced to one-third of its territory by the Treaty of Trianon. This further increased the importance of Budapest. One-eighth of the country's population and 60 per cent of all workers lived in Budapest and its suburbs. Budapest produced almost two-thirds of the country's industrial products. Economic life and all central institutions of state power were concentrated there. The history of the country's capital and its political, social and economic centre was in these 25 years closely linked with the country's history as such. The contradictions of the Horthy régime were accentuated in Budapest, since the city acted as the centre of progressive groups and the working class as well.

The documents illustrate especially the policy of those times when the successive governments under Horthy endeavoured to limit, and then to eliminate, the capital' autonomy and its democratic administrative institutions. The struggles and policy of

progressive forces are described. The Christian Communal Party, led by Károly Wolff, took over the leadership of the municipal council. This party, on the extreme right of the reactionary-conservative counter-revolutionary spectrum, had nothing in common with other Christian parties in Europe except its name and phraseology. Miklós Horthy, the former Austro–Hungarian Rear-Admiral, the military leader of the counter-revolution who was "elected" Regent in March 1920, introduced into Hungarian political phraseology the phrase "Guilty Budapest—the guilty city". The Wolff party took over and propagated it while it tried to submerge the dynamically growing city and its administration into drab provincialism, turning urban politics into a scene of doubtful speculations and personal enrichment. The volume shows the failures of these attempts, the struggles during parliamentary and municipal elections which resulted in the come-back of the liberal opposition and the first appearance of the Social-Democrat caucus, the legal representative of the working class which, although not without mistakes, tried to express the workers' demands. Here, for the first time, documents and papers about the illegal Communist movement and the working-class movements are published. The documents reveal the sufferings of the population when Hungary entered the Second World War (1941) and its resistance to the totalitarian war effort. The last pages describe the armed struggle and siege by the Red Army.

This period in the life of Budapest was characterized by the lost First World War, crushed revolutions, foreign military occupation and the disastrous effects of the 1920 Peace which provoked terrible poverty. The slums called Tripolis, Chicago, Valeria, Zita, Jerusalem took shape. Refugees from former Hungarian territories lived in railway carriages shunted onto some side-track. Tuberculosis called *morbus hungaricus* killed tens of thousands every year. The government and the municipal authorities doubled pre-war taxes. Many pawned their precious possession and lacked the money to redeem their pledges. Streets were filled with beggars and gaols were crowded. On the city's rubbish dumps destitute men and women fought for the right to scavenge, and they could not even dwell in peace in their miserable huts, if they did not pay the rent they were evicted, as those who lived in the Ferencváros grove were. In the best years, towards the end of the 1920s when the boom was at its height people crowding for soup-kitchen queues were a common sight. An age which proclaimed an illusory prosperity came to a tragic end in the autumn of 1930 when a large number (at least 150.000) went to demonstrate in the inner city. Many were jobless, their numbers being increased by those locked-out because of their participation in the demonstration.

During the Great Depression the fascist aspects of the Horthy régime became more marked. From its very beginning to the last moment of its agony the régime mercilessly persecuted and suppressed all progressive forces but resistance knew no compromise either. Miklós Horthy, when still merely a war-lord, gave the example for the introduction of murder as a political weapon. In December 1919 he issued a *ukase* to the government, demanding that those journalists who had denounced the White Terror, including Béla Somogyi, editor of a Social-Democrat newspaper, be silenced. When this produced no result he declared before his officers that he wanted to see Béla Somogyi floating in the Danube. In the middle of February Somogyi, together with another journalist, Béla Bacsó, was seized, killed and thrown into the Danube. Ödön Beniczky, Minister of the Interior, was driven to suicide because, after the failure of his plans to restore the monarchy, he published the result of the police investigation which revealed that Horthy had instigated the murder. In the middle of those "peaceful years" shocking things happened

as the documents show, such as repressive measures against members of the Communist movement. There are reports and accounts of murder through courts martial, about writers persecuted to their death and other kinds of terroristic acts.

The book contains interesting documents about events unknown or unrevealed which happened in Budapest during the Second World War. There had been attempts by the Senior Mayor and some municipal councillors to proclaim Budapest an open city, representatives of the Kállay government which took over in 1942 carried on a shuttlecock policy between the German allies and the Western Powers; there are documents about the Peace Party's activity in the capital, and the attempts of the Prince Primate Justinian Cardinal Serédi to prevent the siege of Budapest, the endeavours to save the bridges of Budapest and public utilities and resistance to evacuation orders or orders to build fortification.

The régime fell in a bloodbath, just as it had been born. In 1919 the White terrorist officers' groups had committed excesses and murders in Budapest, in 1944–45 the Hungarian Nazis, the last supporters of the régime, slaughtered many, and thus closed a period which had always been hostile to the inhabitants of Budapest. The murdering of patients in the hospital in Maros utca, the killing of the inmates in a home for the aged, the mass execution of Jews, army deserters, resisters and those who disobeyed orders, were signs of the régime's death agony.

The fourth volume includes documents of the years between 1945 and 1950. During these five years the ruined city recovered and revived and by 1950 it grew into Greater Budapest with 2 million inhabitants, under a socialist local government council system. Documents describe the dimensions of destruction, the beginnings of a new life, the clearing up of rubble, food problems, reconstruction, the situation of various sections of the political battles and election results. There are interesting documents showing the personal and political battles behind the confrontation of the Communist Party and some other town councillors and their parties. There are also documents about the atmosphere of Stalinism at the end of the period, about the balance of forces within the state apparatus and the adverse situation caused by unlawful measures. The period from 1945 to 1950 was a decisive era in the revolutionary transformation in Hungary: and the masses and workers of Budapest had a major role in it.

The publication of the main sources of the recent history of Budapest is an enterprise of a significance which goes beyond the history of Hungary. Here, at last is a documentation which shows the history of the capital, the history of an important element of the national past, on the basis of original sources, without the distortions of earlier years. Public interest was great; the series rapidly sold out; the daily papers, political, special and popular reviews and Hungarian publications in foreign languages published almost a hundred reviews and criticisms; this does not happen often with historical books. These volumes have also aroused international interest, many copies were sold abroad, and they were reviewed in important German and American learned journals, such as the *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, *Slavic Review* and *Ungarn Jahrbuch*.

JÓZSEF SZEKERES

JÓKAI'S POPULARITY IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

After the failure of the War of Independence in 1849 the Hungarian men of letters were "either roaming in foreign countries, or wandering in disguise through their native land; and the field of literature for a long time threatened to remain neglected and barren—a monument of national grief and desolation".[1]

The writers felt compelled to let their faculties lie dormant; and "the nation fell asleep, and dreamt its frozen, heavy dreams",[2] as a critic in the mid-Victorian era commented sadly.

That the Hungarians awoke from this intellectual coma was due to a certain extent to a single author, himself a fugitive in disguise in those days, whose astonishing aptitude for writing fiction remained unparalleled, and who had provided the balm for the open sores of his compatriots.

Mór—or, as he has become widely known in England, Maurus—Jókai (1825–1904) seized hold of the imagination of his countrymen in their patriotic gloom by opening up for them an escapist paradise. He wrote series of novels set in the distant fairyland of an allegedly glorious past of Hungary including Transylvania, where readers could find compensation for their present misfortunes. The popularity of Jókai—in spite of the severe criticism to which he was subjected by generations of scholars—has remained unchallenged, a testimony to his magic grip on his readers, at least as far as his native Hungary is concerned.[3] Yet, no volume of *Index Translationum* can be opened without finding several of his novels translated into languages as different as Uzbek, German or Chinese.

The one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of his birth, celebrated on February 18 this year, provides an opportune occasion to examine some aspects of his huge success with Victorian readers—shared by none of his fellow-Hungarian writers and allotted to only a handful of Continental authors—in the august days of the British Empire, when an unbroken tradition of "splendid isolation" made Englishmen attached not only to their homespun wool, but to homespun tales also; and when translations were generally despised and even the classics were thoroughly soaked in "the brown varnish of antiquity".

His first book translated into English, a selection from short stories concerning the stirring days of the Hungarian War of Independence, was published in 1854 as the first volume of *Constable's Miscellany of Foreign Literature*, an Edinburgh-based publishing house, whose owners were sufficiently convinced that "Europe alone—its more northern and eastern lands especially—offers to the hand of the selector most inviting and abundant fruits".[4] The decision of Messrs. Constable to start their new venture with Jókai signified that things Hungarian in general still possessed a high market value; books about Hungary flooded booksellers' premises, for liberal Englishmen were anxious to show their unreserved sympathy for the lost cause of the War of Independence, and in this atmosphere of unprecedented interest they lent a receptive ear to the outcry of the popular press: "Who does not want to know more of the national life of the gallant Hungarians?"[5]

That Jókai—with his "striking pictures" and "most vivid and obviously truthful description"[6] of Hungarian life—was introduced to the English public, was largely due to the efforts of an enthusiastic exile, Imre Szabad, who selected and edited these stories and provided them with a well-written introduction.

Scholarship has generally neglected the activity of Szabad, whose portrait remains to be drawn[7] and whose achievements in familiarizing English readers with Hungary was perhaps overshadowed by Ferenc Pulszky,

the revolutionary Kossuth government's able representative in London.

The success of Jókai's first volume—not only with the critics, but with the readers—induced Messrs. Constable to reprint the short stories in 1855 and 1856.

Nothing followed for more than ten years. The fervent days of Hungaro-mania (when English sympathizers willingly burnt their favourite newspaper *The Times* publicly, for it failed to show the required degree of compassion for the Hungarian cause) had passed and Jókai's initial success appeared to be ephemeral only.

Then at the time of the Austro–Hungarian *Ausgleich*, or compromise of 1867, Hungary once more came into the focus of public interest. Travellers who visited the twin-city of Pest-Buda came back convinced that Hungarian novels "of the last few years require only to be well translated to become as popular in England as the masterpieces of Scott and Goldsmith, or the genius-gifted Sir Bulwer Lytton and the immortal Dickens..."[8]

One of these travellers was Arthur J. Patterson (1835–1899), an able scholar who took the trouble to learn Hungarian, and who, after several visits, returned there to take the newly established chair of English at Pest University in 1866.

He translated the next volume of Jókai—this time it was the novel *The New Landlord* (1868).

It was a happy choice, for *The New Landlord*, describing the changing relationship of the Austrians and their arch-enemy, the Hungarians, not only adequately represented more than one aspect of Jókai's art as a great *raconteur*, but its timely publication, shortly after the Compromise of 1867, was bound to arouse interest.

After 1849, the Hungarians made virtue of their predicament and stubbornly refused to co-operate with the Establishment.

A decade later international relations weakened the position of the Austrian Empire, and politicians at the Ballhausplatz realized they could no longer afford an enemy lurking in the larger part of the Empire.

As tension eased, Hungarian politicians also realized that passive resistance led only to a blind alley.

Jókai, a born optimist, welcomed the new developments and wrote *The New Landlord*, whose hero was an Austrian general who had fought against the rebels and settled in "enemy country".

The novel was to illustrate how Herr Ankerschmidt and Squire Garanvölgyi came to terms, or rather how the upright Austrian General adopted the Hungarian way of life and, as converts often do, became more of a patriot than those who were born to the job.

The solution offered by Jókai was hardly more than an illusion, naïvely-conceived: the formative strength of the native soil would make a patriot even of its enemy; yet the colourful novel was not without redeeming qualities, quickly as discovered by its English critics.

The idea of passive resistance appealed tremendously to the British press. It not only fulfilled expectations of how a gentleman, having been defeated, should behave, but also pointed to a moral superiority "which Englishmen are best able to appreciate; bravery... steady and sustained, and resolu tion unflagging, stern, and immovably tenacious of purpose. Such qualities are so thoroughly British that it would be strange indeed did they pass unreverenced in our midst".[9]

Both the quality press and authoritative quarterly reviews gave a spirited welcome to the novel, praising particularly the depiction of the two characters[10] and forgiving Jókai his romantic excesses.

Critics felt compensated by Jókai's warm humour and by all the splendour of his descriptions.

The epic proportions of the description of the flooding of the River Tisza reminded at least one of the critics of George Eliot's similar scene in the *Mill on the Floss*.[11]

In spite of the warm reception (it was also suggested that it should be staged for it would "act admirably"),[12] Jókai's success was confined to the literati only, and no new edition or new translation followed.

Apart from feeble attempts to introduce Jókai as an author of children's fiction, his next new novel was published in 1888.

It was the celebrated *Timár's Two Worlds* which established his reputation firmly once and for all. Translated from the German and originally entitled *A Modern Midas*,[13] it was republished several times on both sides of the Atlantic until 1930. For once it was not the timeliness of the novel which captivated the English audience. Jókai created a novel full of Oriental brilliance with all the romantic paraphernalia glittering unashamedly. There was the Island, the refuge of romantic imagination, where the hero, Mihály Timár, returned every now and then for tranquillity and forbidden love with its secret delights. The escapades of Timár appealed equally to the escapist—and most of the leading Victorians seemed to possess an eminent disposition for escapism[14]—and to the tired town-dwellers of the highly industrialized urban society of Great Britain.

Yet the novel, often considered as "a masterpiece of European literature",[15] did not offer cheap day-dreaming, for the psychological problems involved in the "two lives" of Timár were skilfully presented. Jókai made him out to be a man burdened with a conscience, living in a sort of bigamy and tormented by the moral strictures of society which he was able neither to disregard entirely nor to fully adhere to. As one of the reviewers asked rhetorically: "while to Timea, his wife, to Noemi, the mother of his child, and all the world he is the great patriot, the true Christian, the exemplary husband, the father of the poor, guardian of the orphan, supporter of the schools, a pillar of the Church, what is he to himself?..."[16] The answer was worded readily by another critic for whom it was "the really strong human interest centred in Michael Timár, and the two women who provide the two worlds in which he lives his life of strange, tempestous, conflicting emotions. The story of Timár is the story of a man, strong alike in intellect, in will and in conscience, who yields to a sudden, overpowering temptation..."[17]

Jókai achieved success both with critics and readers. The former included George Saintsbury whose penetrating analysis lent respectability to many a novel.[18]

Jókai was often compared to other Continental novelists who stood for something new in the English context such as Turgenev, Tolstoy or Zola, yet he was rightly thought as essentially different with his unorthodox romanticism which no writer of less calibre could offer at a time when romanticism was generally frowned upon, both naturalism and realism being more fashionable.

The 1880s and more particularly the 1890s witnessed a new attitude to Continental fiction in England; the insular attitude of the British to literature was about to vanish quietly giving way to a taste of more outlandish flavours well provided for by the great Russians, the Scandinavians and the French naturalists.

Jókai had his own brand of special flavour among these Continental authors, as attested by the remarkable attention he received in the quality press.

From 1891 onwards, when *Dr. Dumány's Wife* was published in a transatlantic edition, Jókai was considered one of the most successful Continental authors in England.

This novel ran to more than ten printings, and Jókai now was worth serious business consideration, although the critics were not entirely happy about the novel, and not without reason. Most reviews justly regarded it as an entertainment only, without any pretence to art. Yet by the middle of the 1890s it was not possible to criticize Jókai any more.

The popular press was full of eulogy and critics felt compelled to drift with the

current of his popularity: it was not sensible to attempt criticism of Jókai for a magazine which aspired to conformity with public taste. So they often recorded the mere fact: "Maurus Jókai, perhaps the most prolific and successful of living novelists, has already become well known to English readers."[19]

It was around this time that the first law concerning the copyright of authors and publishers was formulated, and an enterprising firm, Messrs. Jarrolds, secured, in 1895, the coveted position of being the "authorized" publisher of Jókai. Messrs. Jarrolds made a good bargain, as it turned out, in the long run. While most publishers of Jókai had to rely on German translations, they found an expert on Hungarian literature who knew the language well and was keen on translating Jókai on a large scale.

This literary gentleman was R. Nisbet Bain (1854–1909), an Assistant Keeper in the British Museum and a scholar of Slavonic languages, who discovered Jókai for himself in the 1880s when rummaging a German bookstall in search of holiday reading. He vividly remembered his experience in one of his essays: "I came upon a thick, shabby looking, little octavo volume entitled *Ein Goldmensch: Roman von Maurus Jókai*. The unfamiliar name of the author attracted me, and when the obliging and erudite bookseller enlightened my ignorance by informing me that the mysterious Jókai was the leading Hungarian novelist of the day, I pocketed the volume, curious to discover what the Magyar's idea of a good novel might be. The book fascinated me from the first as much by its strength as by its beauty. It was utterly unlike anything I had ever read before. Character, environment, *technique*—everything, in fact, was poles apart from the manner and the methods of the western and northern novelists. And the dramatic intensity of the plot! Never since reading the *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* had I met with so enthralling a narrative. My only regret was that its six hundred pages were not six thousand, and I laid the book down, at last, full of the excitement of a discoverer—I knew that I had stumbled upon one of the masterpieces of modern fiction. In my enthusiasm I there and then determined to learn Hungarian for the express purpose of reading this marvellous book in its original tongue. . ."[20]

Bain's sudden enthusiasm turned out to be a steady affair with Hungarian letters and by the 1890s he became an authority in his new field. He profited by his knowledge of a language that few Englishmen ever mastered. He translated nine Jókai novels and a collection of short stories between 1891 and 1904. The English public also profited from his discovery, for Jókai's novels were now published in quick succession: *Pretty Michal* (1891) was followed by *Eyes Like the Sea* (1893) and *'Midst the Wild Carpathians* (1894). Messrs. Jarrolds, adviseed by R. Nisbet Bain, approached Jókai and requested his consent to publish his novels on a large scale but allusion to royalties was not made. Eventually the question of royalties was settled by offering a somewhat moderately generous option[21] of either a fee of £25 for each new title, or 5 per cent of the net profit, and Jókai, advised by his Hungarian publisher Messrs. Révai, accepted the former proposition. Now the novels began to appear in Messrs. Jarrolds' edition. In uniform blue, green and red binding, impressively gilded, and with a photogravure portrait of the author specially inscribed to his English readers, they were sold for the not too exorbitant price of six shillings each. Messrs. Jarrolds soon amended their right of publication of Jókai's novels to the whole of the British Empire, producing another series similarly bound and illustrated, but bearing a distinguishing inscription: "This edition is intended for circulation only in India and the British Colonies."

The firm published in quick succession *The Black Diamonds* (1896) and *The Green Book* (1897), a story of the Russian Decembrist Movement, which had to be reprinted five times in the same year, and which

proved to be Jókai's most successful book in English translation; it reached altogether twenty editions on both sides of the Atlantic. *The Lion of Janina* was published in the same year and reprinted again five times. Next year *A Hungarian Nabob* was selected, followed by *Nameless Castle* (1899) and *The Poor Plutocrats* (1899). In 1900 *The Day of Wrath* and *Debts of Honor*, followed up by *Halil the Pedlar* (1901), again in five consecutive printings in the same year; then *The Slaves of the Padishah* (1903) and *Tales from Jókai* (1904). After the death of Jókai there followed a pause in the publication of new translations. Only in 1909 were new titles published: *The Strange Story of Rab Ráby* and *Yellow Rose*, which were the last new translations. During and after the First World War interest in the Hungarian romancer began to decline: the last reprint, following a number of cheap editions in "Jarrolds Tenpenny Popular Novels", appeared in 1930 *(Timár's Two Worlds)*. The most successful decade for Jókai was between 1894 and 1904, with one or more new titles in each year and usually five or six reprints, including editions by other firms; and transatlantic joint ventures, altogether little short of thirty different titles in over 100 different printings, including "pirate editions".

It is interesting, although it has very little to do with the facts, that the peak of Jókai's popularity fell between two significant dates: starting in the year Jókai celebrated his fiftieth anniversary as a writer (1894) and finishing in the year he died (1904). Both events were remembered in the English press with an intimacy that can be the reward of an author whose novels are read by millions of readers. The *Times* correspondent in Vienna duly reported the large-scale celebration in Hungary in a series of articles, concluding his report with: "Jókai is a writer of whom any nation might be proud".[22] *The Saturday Review* warned its readers: "Englishmen who do not know their Jókai may well rub their eyes when they read of the festivities at Buda-Pesth..."[23] A literary bookseller described in his diary how excited English authors were, perhaps not entirely without envy, about the popularity of the prolific Hungarian: "Every author who has been into my shop for a week past has been talking about Jókai... he seems to be a bigger man in Hungary than Tolstoy in Russia, Ibsen in Norway or Zola in France." He concluded in a somewhat bitter tone: "Neither Scott nor Dickens ever had such a national ovation!"[24]

When Jókai died in 1904, the eminent historian H. W. V. Temperley paid a fine tribute to the last of the great romantics, who was "too passionate and poetic, too revolutionary and bizarre".[25] Temperley himself was impressed by *Timár's Two Worlds* in the same way as George Saintsbury: for them and for a great number of English readers Jókai essentially represented a uniquely exotic and rich creative talent which was, perhaps, best described in the words of his life-long admirer, R. Nisbet Bain, writing for the famous eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica:* "Jókai was an arch-romantic, with a perfervid Oriental imagination, and humour of the purest, rarest description. If one can imagine a combination, in almost equal parts, of Walter Scott, William Beckford, Dumas *père*, and Charles Dickens, together with the native originality of an ardent Magyar, one may perhaps form a fair idea of the great Hungarian romancer's indisputable genius."

It would be difficult, however, to offer an explanation for the decline of Jókai's popularity in England. Most of the foreign writers introduced around the turn of the century withstood the test of time, although I would be inclined to think that these days few Englishmen read Zola, or for that matter Walter Scott, let alone Victor Hugo.

In the inter-war period, nevertheless, most of the English public libraries were still well-stocked with works of Jókai, the worn-out volumes being discarded only in the early 1940s. His works are still widely avail-

able in the second-hand shops, fetching anything between £2 and £4 a volume. Having got tired of my research in the British Museum in the late 1950s and going out to browse in the bookshops of Bloomsbury. I met, and remember vividly, an elderly bookseller who remarked nostalgically, gazing into the sleepy, wet afternoon: "Oh, Jókai... (he pronounced it *Jockey*), he was a fine writer, I read all of his books when I was a young lad and a new hand in the trade."

The thin, tall bespectacled figure has since disappeared, like many of his contemporaries whose sixpence trays were the delight of poor students. Prohibitive rents, rates and rising service bills victimized the last representatives of this strange breed of West End booksellers, who were knowledgeable and courteous, but hopeless businessmen.

I think of the old man fondly now, for he was a member of a vanishing species, he was probably one of the last English readers of Jókai, a romancer of the old school, whom we often regard as impossibly naïve, if not outrageous, but whom Hungarians all like a little ashamedly and secretly, irrespective of their convictions or their snobbish dispositions.

LÓRÁNT CZIGÁNY

NOTES

1 Imre Szabad in Jókai's *Hungarian Sketches in War and Peace*, 1854 p. V.

2 *The Critic*, July 1856, p. 355

3 Jókai is still the most often published Hungarian author. Between 1945 and 1972 almost ten million copies of his works had been printed in over 300 different editions (*Kritika*, Feb. 1975, p. 19). In comparison to these astonishing figures the next most often published author, the novelist Mikszáth, is lagging far behind with 5.4 million copies in the same period.

4 Publishers' advertisement in Jókai's *Hungarian Sketches*.

5 *The Atlas*, Sept. 16, 1854, p. 696.

6 For a detailed analysis of the reception of Jókai's novels in England, cf. my own *The Reception of Hungarian Literature in Victorian England* (Typescript), University of London, 1965, pp. 306–434, on which the present article is largely based. (A Hungarian edition is being prepared for publication by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.) For the bibliographical details of the translated works of Jókai, including a listing of the most significant reviews, of Magda Czigány: *Hungarian Literature in English Translation Published in Great Britain, 1830–1968*, London, 1969.

7 Imre Szabad, born around 1822, was a secretary in Kossuth's government, came to London probably in 1850, but being dissatisfied with exile 'politics' went to Edinburgh. There he published his *Hungary: Past and Present* (1854), a well-written and documented social history of Hungary, with a lively account of Hungarian literature, full of apt observations and critical remarks. In 1860 he was fighting in Italy under Garibaldi, and in 1862 in the American Civil War. The diary of his captivity in the notorious Libby Prison (*Fraser's Magazine*, March 1868) created a minor sensation. He revised the Hungarian material in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (8th edition, 1853–60) and later wrote books on political theory. In his old age he settled in Galveston, Texas. He had a brilliant intellect, and in the words of Benjamin Moran, an American diplomat in London, he was "a man of parts, as Macaulay would say, and a gentleman".

8 Henry Ecroyd: "From Vienna to Pesth". *Temple Bar*, 1867, p. 237.

9 *The Sunday Times*, Apr. 19, 1868.

10 E.g. *The Spectator*, 1868, p. 438, *The Scotsman*, May 14, 1868, *The Observer*, Apr. 19, 1868 or *The Westminster Review*, n.s. vol. 34, p. 262.

11 *The Sunday Times*, loc. cit., or *The Saturday Review*, Apr. 18, 1868, p. 526.

12 *The Scotsman*, loc. cit.

13 A revised translation was published by Corvina Press, Budapest, under a new title, in 1963: *The Man with the Golden Touch*.

14 Steven Marcus: *The "Other" Victorians*, 1966.

15 *The Athenaeum*, March 31, 1888, p. 395.

16 *The Saturday Review*, Apr. 14, 1888, p. 446.

17 *The Spectator*, June 9, 1888, p. 790.

18 Saintsbury reviewed the novel for *The Academy* (Apr. 14, 1888, p. 254) where he analysed all the main characters, particularly the question of the "bigamy" of the Danube skipper, Timár, and his guilt of robbery "under trust". Years later he still maintained his admiration for Jókai. Cf. his *Periods of European Literature*, Edinburgh, 1907, vol. 12 pp. 350–51.

19 *Literature*, July 9, 1898, p. 17.

20 R. N. Bain: "Maurus Jókai". *The Monthly Review*, 1901, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 137.

21 Although a copyright agreement was duly signed in May 1894 between Great Britain and Austria-Hungary, the agreement was difficult to enforce in its initial stage. Publishers who produced books with the permission of the authors and paid royalties were running a risk of serious financial loss, if another firm also published the same book without these financial obligations.

22 Jan. 9, 1894, p. 3.

23 *The Saturday Review*, Jan. 13, 1894, p. 37.

24 *To-day*, Jan. 20, 1894. p. 11.

25 H. W. V. Temperley: "Maurus Jókai and the Historical Novel". *The Contemporary Review*, 1904, vol. 86. p. 114.

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INTERIOR FROM THE EXHIBITION OF APPLIED ARTS

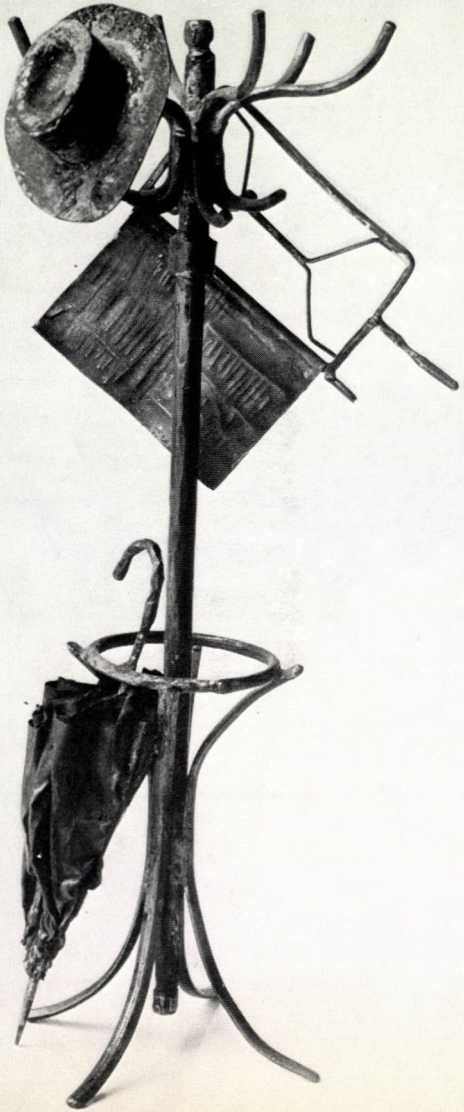
JÚLIA SZILÁGYI: PUPPETS (TEXTILE)

Photos Ferenc Kovács

ERIKA LIGETI: SZENTENDRE (BRONZE MEDAL), 1974

Photos Ferenc Ková

ERIKA LIGETI: ARMCHAIR MADONNA (BRONZE, 22 CM), 197



Tamás Fekete:
Coffee house coat-rack
(copper, 26 cm), 1974

Tamás Fekete:
A tree from Üllői út
(copper, 70 cm) 1974

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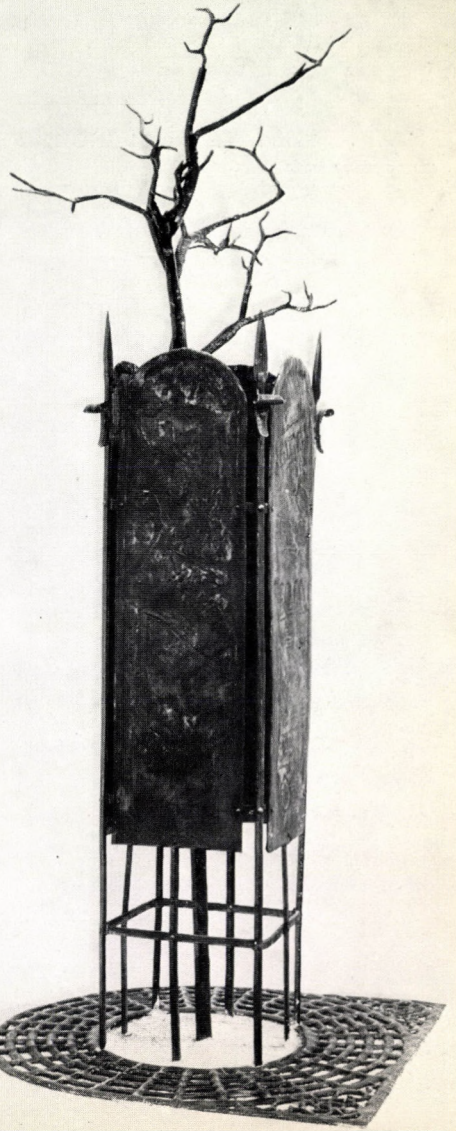

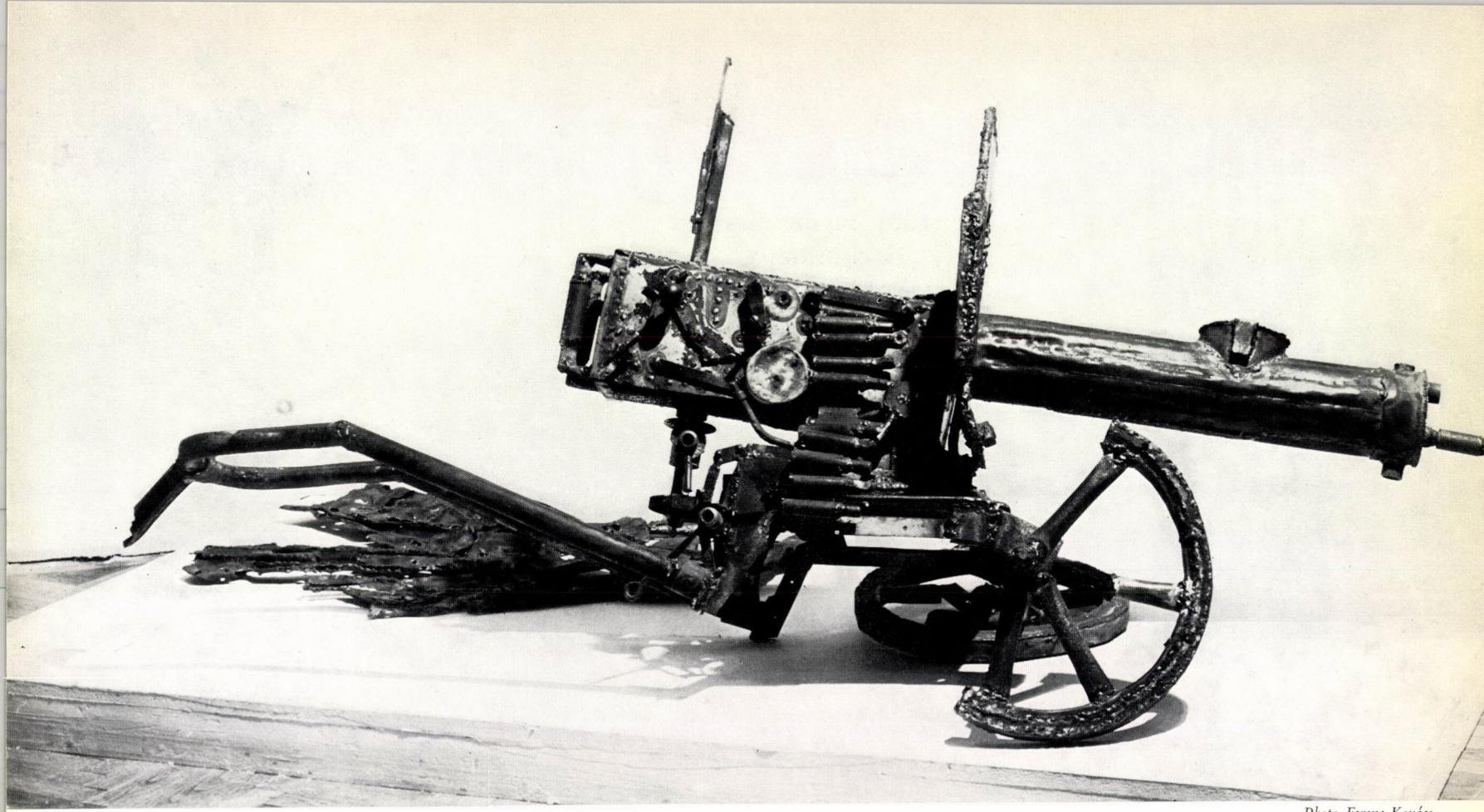

Photo Ferenc Kovács

TAMÁS FEKETE: IRREGULAR WAR MEMORIAL IN MEMORY OF FALLEN SOLDIERS (IRON, 180 CM), 1974

ARTS

DESIGN FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

An exhibition of arts and crafts

Something important has happened. The uninitiated spectator may notice only that the halls of the *Műcsarnok* are filled—unusually—with toys, children's furniture, kitchen equipment and tools for home use, and that the visitors' book is filled with questions about when and where all this will be available in the shops.

The uninitiated spectator likes all this. Familiar with the dismal-looking rough merchandise of toyshops, and walking amid puppets of cheerful cloth, pottery dolls and plain wooden trains, he feels like Alice in Wonderland; thinking of the children's furniture still in short supply, of the children's shoes of miserable quality, he enthuses over the tiny yellow boots with green linings and the very ingenious, multicoloured playpens and small tables. In the next room devoted to household goods he can survey superbly elegant plates and glasses, open (the custodian permitting) the exhibited kitchen cabinet, and marvel at the beautiful designs on terry towels, for he has thus far seen such smart modern terry towels only in Czechoslovakia near-by, and such elegant bath-room fixtures only among imported goods at best. These things are now on display at the jubilee exhibition of arts and crafts—a shapely, practical wash-basin, from which the soap-suds visibly trickle, and porcelain soap dishes which, unlike those on the market, have a hole at the bottom to stop the soap turning soft.

István Gergely, who is responsible, changed the usual run of things. Earlier Hungarian applied arts exhibitions were not like this. The emphasis was on an immense quantity of vases, ornamental pottery and drapery, tapestries and candlesticks, and additional to these stars, what was designed by artists but manufactured by industry was accorded a modest place in a smaller room. Now the proportion has been reversed. Individual works of an undeniably high standard, retreated into a single showroom, and the other eight are filled with works of everyday use manufactured, or ready for manufacturing, by industry, arranged according to subject and in a clearly defined order: "The Child" and "Household" followed by "The Home," "Industrial Design," and "Clothing".

The reverse proportion is not merely an idea of the organizer—this is where the real significance of the exhibition lies. It is obvious that anybody more frequently uses a wash-basin than a vase, that whether one's soap dish is a practical device is more important than where to put one's ceremonial candle. There is no single member of the public interested in Hungarian arts and crafts who has not in the past ten-odd years read or heard these simple-sounding arguments advanced by impatient newspapermen, restless artist-craftsmen, bustling critics and some far-seeing industrial executives. The reader who is better prepared knows the answers by rote. We design in vain, industry is unwilling to manufacture, the artists said; we would produce in vain, the trade does not order the stuff and does not accept it, the manufacturers were sighing; we

should order in vain, designer and industry are unwilling to listen to the buyers, the representatives of domestic trade complained. This is how the problem was passed on and on, through the years, and the public in whose name everybody made declarations watched the dispute somewhat apathetically.

Perhaps the public even failed to notice that in this reciprocal shifting of responsibility neither the profession of designers as such nor its spokesmen are unambiguous apostles of democratic, everyday beauty and practicality. Declarations, and the articles putting the blame on industry and commerce, may have created the impression that every single artist-craftsman who makes textile and pottery designs and who works metal in this country longs for nothing more than modern industrial design, but it suffices to inspect a single applied arts exhibition in order to find out that only some industrial artists consider it their calling to design handsome and sound children's shoes, plain crockery for mass production, good carpets and comfortable easy chairs.

That the exhibition has now turned out different is indicative of a change in approach, probably a change in the balance of forces within the profession. At last the artists and their organizations have understood what the country needs. Practical, inexpensive and beautiful things and a human environment are offered or else we wish that we could offer them. This is the message of the exhibition, and of today's Hungarian applied arts. It is very easy to see that this is a political message, a convincing message arguing in support of socialism.

The fact that we have only got so far by now, in 1975, thirty years after the Liberation of the country, has left its mark here and there upon the exhibits and can be, and is indeed, explained at the exhibition by historical reasons. To speak of telltale marks: especially glaring among the many cheerful and beautiful children's things is the clumsiness, so usual over here, of some of the children's wear; compared with the children's furniture, it is conspicuous that there is less for adults, and the display of furnishings, in the same room with a few chairs which are beautiful, proves to be dull and unimaginative. This thematically structured exhibition is well-arranged, sincere and convincing also because at last it shows objects together which are always used together. Thus it lets one see that today's Hungarian design can provide excellent table-linen to match glasses and plates, while the costume jewelry is awkward or over-sophisticated taken in conjunction with the stylishly designed ladies' wear.

All these weaknesses, just like the approach that had prevailed up to now, can be explained historically. Let us look at the starting point which led to the present situation. This can be done the more easily since, ingeniously, concisely and convincingly, the material in the first room is retrospective. Poverty and petty-bourgeois taste—this was the Hungarian heritage thirty years ago, this is presented at the entrance, very economically, by a prosaic, black cooking-stove, a self made set of kitchen shelves and a plain kitchen chair from a proletarian home of the time, and by the persuasive symbols of philistine happiness, such as the "lead-glass" vase and a painted and gilded china cup with a tawdry earthenware fruit-dish. Millions lived on the level of the bare cooking-stove and the prosaic kitchen chair, millions once desired to attain the philistine pomp of gilded chinaware and strawberry-legged fruit-plates. Before the Liberation Gyula Kaesz's easy chair that puts to shame today's furniture, and his poetically simple and practical series of tables, or Dezső Bozzay's radio set, or the pottery of Margit Kovács and István Gádor, forced into small workshops, seemed a really heroic, almost hopeless feat. This is what the first section of the exhibition has to say without words—with objects. With a few hints, with a summary of Hungary's post-Liberation applied arts, it relates also that socialist society succeeded in raising the millions living on

the kitchen-shelves level to a higher standard of living. After the Liberation, however, those millions, having risen from the level of the kitchen-shelves, often learnt to like petty-bourgeois trash. They did so on the one hand, because a sort of craving burning in them had to be satisfied and, on the other, because at the start Hungarian industry was not sufficiently prepared, and Hungarian retail trade did not have sufficient supplies to offer something better. Therefore creative design, just as before the Liberation, remained stranded in small workshops, with the difference at most that now they manufactured by the million the "individual" pieces of craftwork for the millions. After the long period of paralysis the designers, industry and trade found it difficult to understand that the rise in standards of living must needs lead to an improvement in aesthetic standards in the manufacture of cups, wash-basins, children's furniture, and the rest.

Was it difficult? Even today it is difficult to discover this simple truth, for we are just at the beginning. Hence the many questions about where to buy things in the visitors' book, actually addressed to the trade; that is why the tags on many exquisite pieces designed for mass production still display only the artist's name and not the names of both the artist and the manufacturing firm, as is usual on objects already made. The absence of factory names shows that many products have no one to take care of them beyond the artist-craftsman's studio, but the exhibition itself gives evidence of a degree of cooperation between certain industrial artists—which in the future may become the condition of cooperation between the applied arts and manufacturers, manufacturers and the trade, and the trade and the public.

An exhibition does not always show reality as manufactured in factories, or reality as it is on sale—it often shows only the possibilities. It could also be that what is offered in Budapest exhibition halls is sometimes no more than what is available in stores in other countries, with higher standards in the supply of goods. It is beyond doubt however that the exhibition displays the best that can be produced, and should be produced, in Hungary right now. Nor can it be questioned that, with this show, Hungarian design took a big step forward.

GYULA RÓZSA

MEDALS AND METALS

Erika Ligeti at the Helikon Gallery — Tamás Fekete in the Petőfi Literary Museum

The firmest point of Erika Ligeti's shows usually lies in her medals; it was not fortuitous that Iván Szabó, her teacher at the Academy said that "she is a first class sprinter, but she lacks staying power". Erika Ligeti attracted attention over the past five years, winning general recognition with coins and medals. She was born in Budapest in 1934. After completing her studies she was an art teacher in a primary school for five years; in 1964 she was granted the Derkovits scholarship for three years, and since 1969 has been a member of the Szentendre artists' colony.

For Erika Ligeti medals convey a spontaneous manifestation of life, and this,

together with her firm knowledge of her craft lend her considerable assurance within this specific medium. "I make medals because in them I can give full vent to my graphic instinct", she says, but she does not mention—what is even more important—her instinct of orientation in the world, the stirring intellectual life of one who pays heed to everything and forms an opinion about everything, the abundance of reflections which become precipitated in her artistic fertility. It is this enlivening background against which it becomes comprehensible how her medals are linked, without any posing, taking on of airs, or abstraction, with the world seething around her, by a thousand threads, and through a variety of commissions and ideas.

Erika Ligeti changes her outward forms chameleon-like, with the ingenuity of a translator, adjusting herself to the various themes and tasks with ease and a playful empathy. Her real element is variety, the epic exuberance of objects and forms, in the course of which she exhibits the whole treasury of her art. First, under the influence of Iván Szabó, she started making medals as a draughtsman would, and since then she has been using an abundance of means ranging from the most conventional to the most modern, from dotted rims to the impressions of pebbles, pencil stumps, folded tinfoil or fossilized sea-urchin and she also has been attracted by the forms of the palmprint, and the affects derived from handling the zink crumbs left over from casting and drops of plaster. On her medals portraits of Sándor Bródy, the fin de siècle Hungarian novelist, of Wagner and Apollinaire, are presented with careful formal analysis, using pre-Cubist structural-geometrical shapes. Another series of medals, which derived their inspiration from the world of children and the fantasties of fairy tales, creates exactly the opposite impression. The childishly formed lumbering animal and monster figures of the *Seven-Headed Dragon*, the *Sphinx*, the *Centaur* and the rest of the medals are far removed from constructive formal rigour, being built according to the logic of nursery drawings, out of blocks of forms joined loosely, seemingly incidentally.

Like others of her generation, Erika Ligeti cannot restrict her art to miniature work, dodging major jobs. Not that she has devoted herself exclusively to medals—from the very outset she has been interested in figurative composition as well, and her small sculptures, wood carvings and portrait statues show how succesful she is in this field. Suffice it to recall the small stone head stylized in the spirit of Mesopotamia in which she has portrayed herself, providing a wittily relentless example of that grotesque-caricaturistic approach which forms perhaps the most interesting feature of her work. Nevertheless, pieces at earlier exhibitions led people to think that the smaller her works the better, and some of the more demanding critics could not silence their reservations regarding some of her attempts to create open spaces; saying that they breathed the tedium of miscarried investment projects.

What is it that appears unchanged in Erika Ligeti's art? The traditional form of expression, spiced by invidual invention and the delicate sentiments and congenial humour of the intimate world of a close family environment. And what is it that is new in it? Perhaps exactly that consciousness which had been felt to be missing earlier, and the careful use of the formal idiom of a restricted register, a more consistent deliberation of the meaning and compositional potentialities.

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Tamás Fekete (b. 1931) was a factory tool maker in his youth. He began to study drawing after work and, having no chance of academic studies, he attended a private art school, where István Szőnyi* the painter was one of his teachers. He intended to become a painter, but in addition to draw-

* See NHQ, No. 8

ing and painting he also learned something about modelling, and finally became a committed sculptor. He joined the Young Artists' Studio (1962), and his first exhibition was organized in the Young Artists' Club (1963). His early plaques and copper embossments showed his knowledge of, and liking for, metal. In his early pieces of sculpture his artistic claims were blended with a modesty and timidity engendered by his restricted professional opportunities. Carrying on the heritage of Béni Ferenczy*, he modelled puny, fragile boys, later he protracted his figures in a Gothic manner with a spasmodic expressivity beyond the surface. In the early 'seventies he left behind this relatively traditional sphere, and became attracted to ideas not unlike those exemplified in Erzsébet Schaár's** dramatically composed scenes and Miklós Melocco's*** narrative compositions.

The exhibition in the Petőfi Museum this year shows a homogeneous period in his development. They are all objects from the Budapest of the first decades of the century, requisites of the life of the old József and Ferenc districts, where the *petit bourgeoisie* lived. An ancient kitchen stove, for example, is reduced almost to the size of a match box toy, carefully imitating the unshapely and worn out thing which once served as a reliable tool in the kitchens of our grandmothers.

A young tree fenced by an oldfashioned protective support recalls Árpád Tóth the melancholic poet of Budapest streets. Perhaps it has since grown a huge crown, if it has not been destroyed by war, pollution or vandalism. One could go on enumerating all the old shaped objects: a café hat-stand complete with hat, umbrella and a newspaper stick-handle, an ancient radio set, a wardrobe, Thonet chair, a painter's easel, all pieces with a powerful atmosphere of their own, which are lent specific artistic element and a taste of nostalgic and loving commitment by their museum character and past reminiscences. This element is coupled with a technical and artistic motif, the atmosphere of the wrought or, indeed, repoussé copper rendering a sublime air as well as an element of amusement to the most common objects.

The sculptor chooses slices of life as his subjects, things which, reckoned insignificant, used to be considered beyond the limits of art—tiny paraphernalia of our environment, banal situations of our everyday existence. The wrought-iron corridor railing (of copper of course) with a mop and broom, the opened umbrella drying in front of the magnificent old stove, the abandoned jacket hanging from the back of a chair, are not just lifeless objects but carry a meaning pointing beyond themselves. They are full of past life and create an atmosphere of reminiscence replete with the contradictory moods of lyricism and everyday vulgarity. Each object in this world tells banal episodes, it's there in the kitchen cupboard crammed with pots and pans, in the ugly bed with its crumpled linen, and in the tiny shoemaker's shop full of tools, shoes and boots.

It is the loving reconstruction of objects and their details, suggesting vitality, and their emotional transubstantiation that most distinguishes Tamás Fekete from cognate pop art which in recent years seems to have had a liberating effect on his work. But this is pop art with a difference, for it is a Central European variety of pop art, saturated with history and personal feeling.

Walking through the exhibition we can marvel at the minute constructions, readily accepting the idea of submerging in the past, but after resurfacing, we become aware of the restrictions and limits of this play. It is perhaps because of this that one leaves with a feeling of the limits of this kind of art.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, special mention must be made of one composition. It is an "irregular war memorial" a homage

* See NHQ, Nos. 1, 57
** See NHQ, Nos. 25, 40, 59
*** See NHQ, No. 48

to the fallen Soviet soldiers, made of iron, which, as against the intimate artistry of the old objects, strikes a cruel present-day note.

In one of the corners of the hall stands a disembowelled machine-gun, more than life-size, and made of iron, collapsed on one wheel, this mortal weapon which itself has come to decay, and now becomes a sad symbol of war.

The shred of a soldier's overcoat (also of iron) placed next to it seems even superfluous. The broken-down gun fulfils its function even without it.

ZOLTÁN NAGY

THE UNFAITHFUL FAITHFULNESS OF JENŐ GADÁNYI

Retrospective in the King Stephen's Museum in Székesfehérvár

The painter and draughtsman Jenő Gadányi was born in Budapest, in 1896 and died in 1960.

He served in the First World War and returned home wounded, and weakened by malaria. After his recovery he matriculated at the Budapest Academy of Fine Arts where he studied until 1922. His teacher was János Vaszary (1867–1939), his mother's brother, a gifted painter, who worked in the spirit of the École de Paris and one of the first to introduce post-Impressionist methods in Hungary. He was a distinguished teacher.

In the early 'twenties Gadányi became familiar with the French, Dutch, Russian and German art of his times (the Fauves, Cubism, Constructivism, Expressionism). The ideas and forms of the "isms" exerted a great impact on Gadányi's work and vision. Lajos Kassák's* books and essays ("Book of New Artists", "The Book of Purity", "The New Art Lives") and his reviews *Ma* (Today), *Document*, *Munka* (Work) also attracted him. When, in the autumn of 1926, Kassák returned from Vienna, where he had lived in exile, they met. Gadányi went to see the leading figure of the Hungarian avant-garde in literature and art and subscribed to the review *Document*. In later years this formed into an intimate and fruitful friendship.

In 1927 József Rippl-Rónai recommended that Gadányi be given a KUT prize. KUT, the Artists' New Society, was a grouping of progressive painters and sculptors. This allowed him to travel to France. When he had started out for Paris he was over 30 with an established artistic programme: "My most ardent wish was to express my inner world in the language of *constructive forms*. Hence 'Paris did not mould me to its own image'." He visited the big museums, shows and galleries and weighed up what he had seen. The works of Braque, Picasso, Juan Gris, Rouault, Matisse, Lèger, the pictures of the best Surrealists and abstract painters were a revelation to him.

His first one-man show was in 1927 in the Goldschmidt Gallery in Frankfurt am Main. Riefenberg, the eminent art critic of Weimar Germany, wrote appreciatively of

* See on Kassák *NHQ* No. 54

Gadányi's art in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Pester Lloyd* reprinted the article.

Later he had regular exhibitions in Budapest: in 1930 and 1935 Henrik Tamás, an art dealer and lover of modern art, presented Gadányi's work in his gallery. He exhibited also in a show of "Hungarian artists in Paris" (1938) where young Hungarian non-figurative painters and sculptors (Árpád Szenes, István Beöthy, Etienne Hajdu, Ferenc Martyn, Zsigmond Kolos-Vary) had their first group show in Hungary.

In the Second World War Gadányi served again but despite difficult conditions he continued to paint. In 1942 Kassák published his "Confession about Fifteen Artists"; one of the chapters discussed Gadányi. In 1943 six painters and sculptors (Jenő Barcsay, Miklós Borsos, István Dési-Huber, Endre Domanovszky, Jenő Gadányi and Count Péter Pálffy) arranged a joint exhibition in the Budapest Ernst Museum.

In 1945 Gadányi got to work immediately after the liberation. He joined the Society of Social-Democratic Artists and the "European School" (1945–48). The "European School" grouped the Hungarian "Fauves", Expressionists, Surrealists, Constructivists and non-figurative artists. The best artists of the times—József Egry, Ödön Márffy, Béla Czóbel, Dezső Bokros-Birman, Tibor Vilt, Jenő Barcsay, Lajos Kassák, Endre Bálint, Ferenc Martyn, Margit Anna and Piroska Szántó—were amongst the members. Gadányi was appointed professor at the newly organized Academy of Applied Arts in 1946, and in 1948 they arranged a one-man show for him. Lajos Kassák opened it.

Between 1949 and 1956, at the time of dogmatic cultural policy, Gadányi's work could not be shown, and he was dismissed from the Academy. In 1957, however, the artist's exclusion from Hungarian intellectual life came to an end. In the same year his works were shown in a large-scale retrospective exhibition in the Ernst Museum. He became a member of the executive committee of the Federation of Hungarian Artists, and Éva Körner wrote a voluminous essay about him in the April 1958 issue of the review *Studio*.

Gadányi died at the age of sixty-four, following a serious illness. István Rácz wrote a book on his work and his widow wrote a biography; both were published in 1965. His paintings, water-colours and drawings were exhibited in the Hungarian National Gallery in 1967, in the Miskolc Gallery in 1973, in the King Stephen's Museum of Székesfehérvár in 1975. His works were shown abroad as well; in London at the exhibition of Twentieth Century Hungarian Art in 1967, in Paris his friend and colleague, Endre Bálint, arranged a selection of his works in a smaller exhibition.

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Gadányi was the type who matures late. In the 'twenties and 'thirties his works demonstrated his attachment to Cubism and Constructivism: he painted *figurative* and *abstract* compositions alternately. (Examples of the figurative style: "Hungarian Village", 1927, "Self-Portrait I", 1930, "Self-Portrait II", 1931, "Horses", 1932. Examples of the abstract style: "Equilibrum around a Green Centre", "Coloured, Open Space".)

His creative period were the fifteen years following the Second World War. Éva Körner mentioned in her article in *Studio* that the artist himself thought that his "art blossomed at the age of fifty, by then his style had matured to individuality".

From the middle 'forties he started to paint his fine landscapes, still-lifes and human figures ("Békásmegyer", 1947, "Fantastic Landscape", 1948, "Woman with Speckled Rooster", 1951, "Christ", 1952, "Blue Lights", 1952, "Balaton", 1953, "Venus", 1953, "The Visionary", 1953, "Still-Life with a Melon", 1954, "Still-Life with Bunch of Grapes", 1955, "Muse", 1958, "Sparkling Landscape", 1959, etc.). In the 'fifties he made a series of illustrations for François Villon's *Le*

Grand Testament and worked out a new graphic technique ("paper etching").

His many paintings and a considerable number of inventive water-colours accomplished with an easy and sure hand showed a passionate temperament, a wealth of imagination, sparkling, lively colours, and a wide range of subjects and motifs, amazement at the diversity and animation of life, a high degree of expertise—organic composition and a sure sense of design—the full unity of the intellectual and emotional factors of artistic creation. He was not a one-sided artist: his paintings evoked the joy of life, fear, horror, grave, dramatic emotions and mystic ecstasy.

After his hesitations in the 'thirties Gadányi remained within the limits of painting after nature but his style was not that of the Hungarian neo-Impressionists, the "post-Nagybánya school" (István Szőnyi, Jenő Elekfy, etc.) who painted views and moods... Nature was only a starting-point for Gadányi: his art was essentially visionary and Surrealist; he handled the optical image, the elements of perceived reality, with much freedom, condensed, simplified or enriched them, adapted them with artistic sovereignty and raised them to the level of a vision.

The artist defined his "unfaithful faithfulness" to nature in clear and accurate terms: "I regard nature as my supreme teacher, this is the basis of my entire life's work... Nature gets my imagination going, nature starts my ideas rolling. In the process of moulding, however, I necessarily break away from direct experience... Those who look at my pictures should not wish to meet again the landscape, flowers, that is, nature 'as they are in reality'. I don't 'portray' them because I don't see the point in repeating existing things more vaguely and imperfectly... My works are not identical with the contingency of nature, because in my view different laws are applicable in shaping a work of art and in the many transformations of the shapes of nature."

Jenő Gadányi, a master of the brush and pen, tried his hand also in writing: he wrote a few short stories (one about Michelangelo and Pope Julius II, another about Rembrandt), some free verse, theoretical essays, maxims and catalogue prefaces. In his aphoristically concise notes he professed his faith in the vitality and invincibility of avant-garde art and in its ultimate reconciliation with progressive political movements and ideologies: "It is the law of social change to move forward and not backward... Art cannot turn back and cling to the past, art cannot be conservative. Art and the artist must express their own age... All true art ripens to classicism in time—our art is not an exception... I see the future of progressive art in its union with a progressive society." Although indirectly and modestly, he confessed something of his own intellectual and spiritual complexity, of his work nourished by many emotions: "The inner world of the true artist is volcanic and restless—it alternates between sunshine and storms." And: "The painter is not only a painter—he is also a permanent researcher and inventor."

Kassák's affectionate evocation of Gadányi, the man and artist, is very true: "He was a modern painter, a true artist of colour. He made no compromises, with each stroke of his brush and with his entire life he has served art."

IVÁN DÉVÉNYI

Photo Károly Kékesdy

JENŐ GADÁNYI: SELFPORTRAIT, 1952 (PASTEL, 30×40 CM)

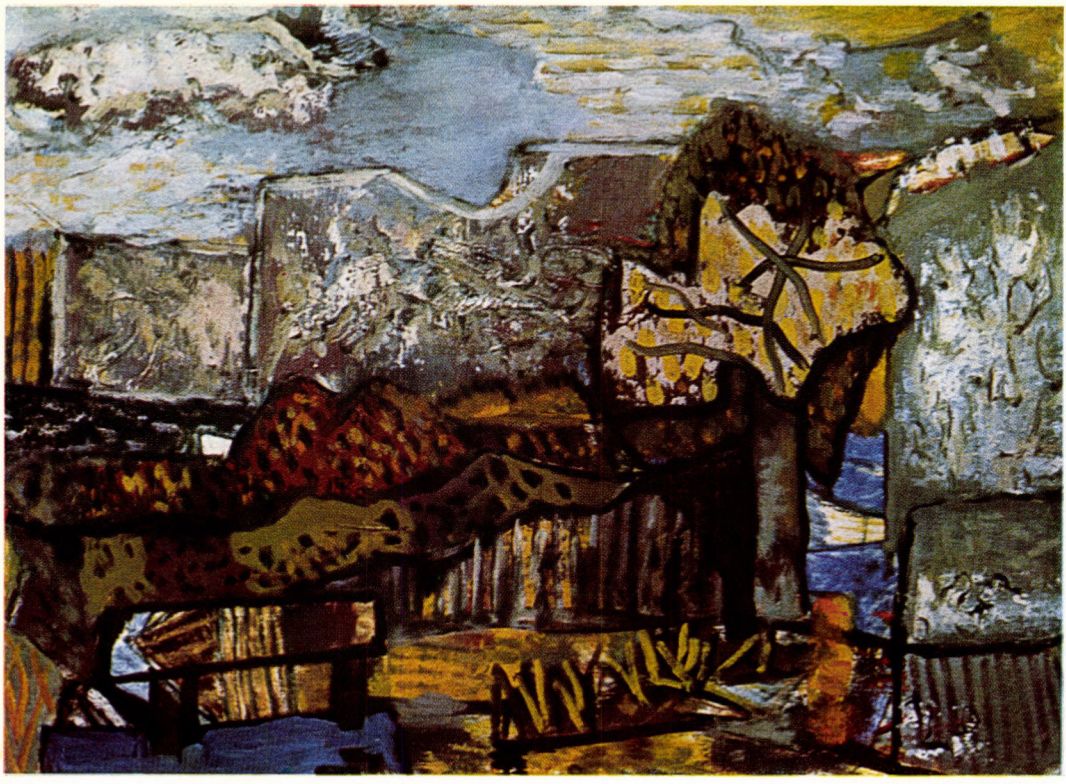

Photo Károly Kékesdy

JENŐ GADÁNYI: ROCKY WALLS, 1957 (OIL ON CANVAS, 62×86 CM)

Photo Ferenc Kovács

JENŐ GADÁNYI: EVENING STILL-LIFE WITH BIRD, 1948
(OIL ON CANVAS, 70×80 CM)

Photo László Haris

Oszkár Papp: Daphnis and Chloe, 1974 (enamel, 10×10 cm)

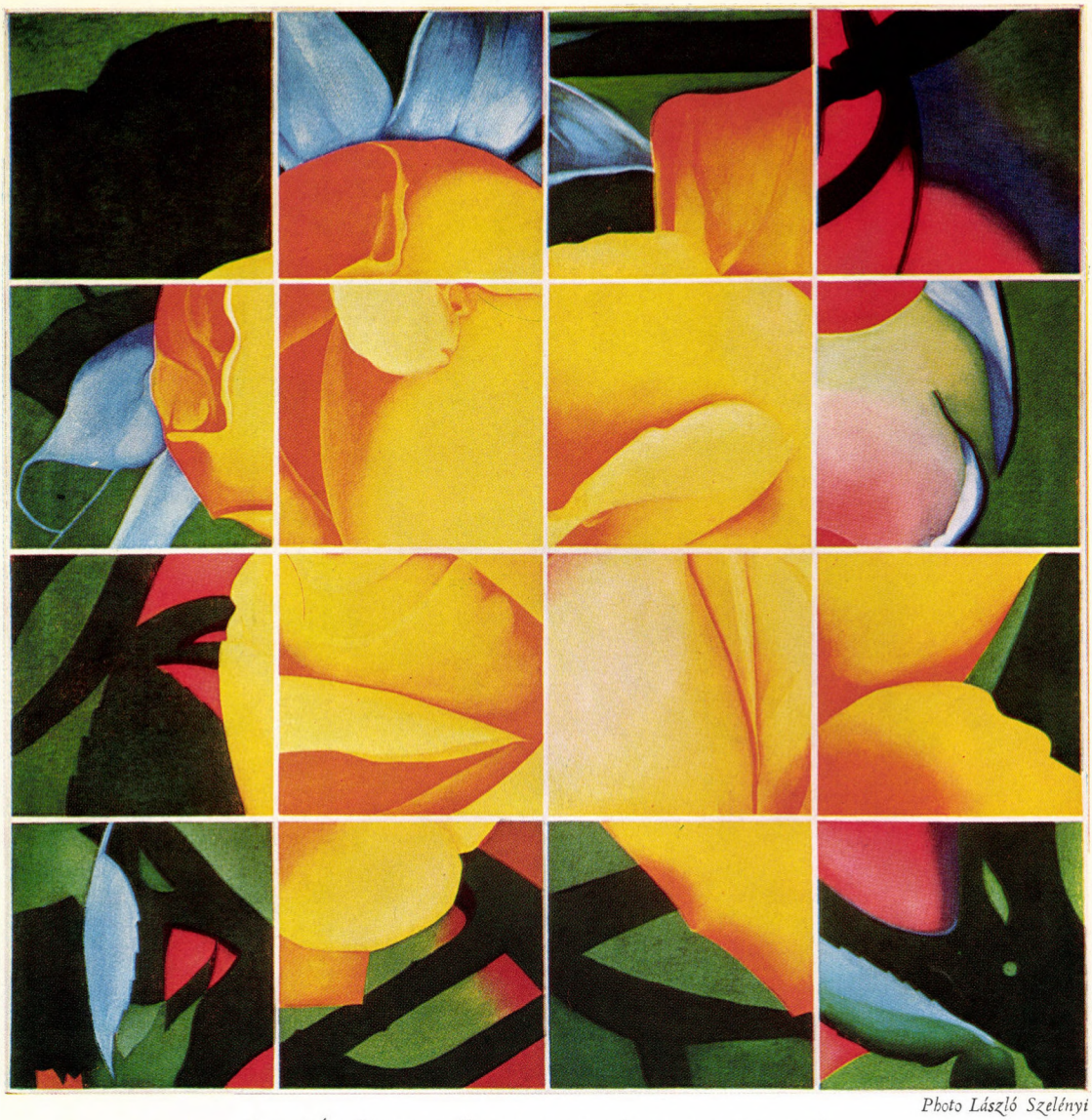

Photo László Szelényi

ANDRÁS ORVOS: ROSE, 1974 (OIL, 90×90 CM)

Photo Mihály Szabó

ISTVÁN PEKÁRY: VINTAGE, 1972 (OIL) ▶

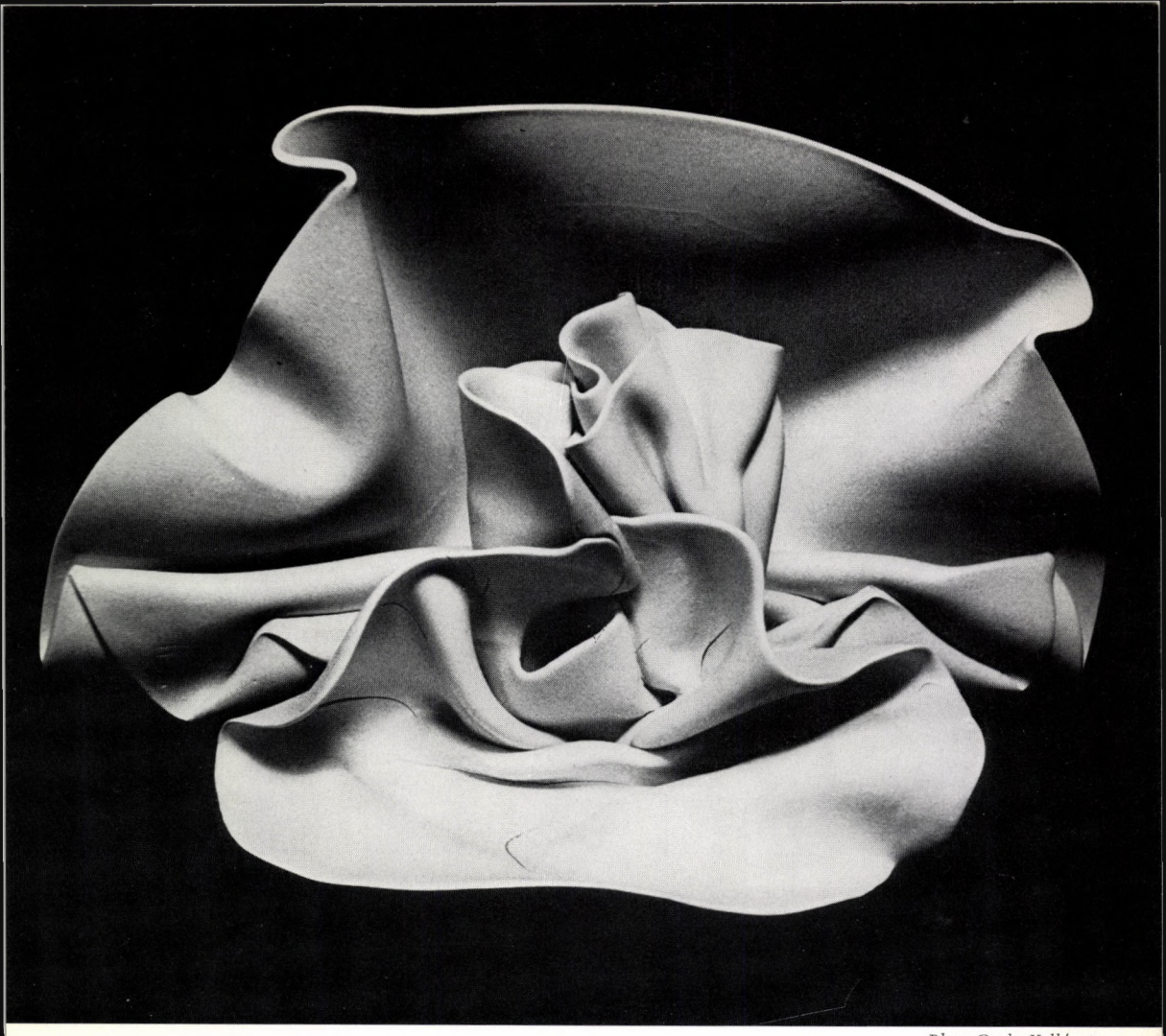

Photo Gyula Kollányi

László Fekete: Venus, 1974 (fayence, 20 cm)

Photo by the author

Sándor Pinczehelyi: Pécs, Széchenyi square ▶

Széchényi tér és Irgalmasok utczáj

NAÏVE, AVANTGARDE, POP

Exhibitions by István Pekáry, Oszkár Papp, Elena Kazovsky, András Orvos, Dezső Váli, László Fekete

For his retrospective exhibition in the Ernst Museum István Pekáry selected material from fifty years' work, including oil-paintings, tapestries and stage designs made for the Opera Houses in Rome and Stockholm and the Maggio Musicale in Florence. In his choice of subjects, the Hungarian village, Italian landscapes, harbours, fairy-tales, legends and church scenes, Pekáry's painting sharply diverges from the main trend in Hungarian painting; he might be called a naïve artist—a rare phenomenon in Hungary—though as one of the most highly trained Hungarian artists he would not willingly accept the epithet. Still, those young painters who seek after and accept the naïve attitude have chosen Pekáry as their master. In Pekáry's youth this style was called neo-primitive.

Pekáry's naïveté is that of peasant paintings and children's drawings. Vivid and harsh colours are characteristic of all his work. He has maintained a continuing interest in popular art, is a collector of folk-art objects and is also attracted by verbal folklore. His paintings have always been stylized, even the early ones, although at first he was more romantic and popularism was not much more than a pose with him.

Pekáry's characteristic style has not changed over the years but it has not been a constant factor. This show reveals that the mature Pekáry is dry, even acerb. His message, his playfulness and games are rather indirect and, not despite but because of his transpositions, much more unequivocal. In this era of art history research, a predecessor of today's naïve Pekáry can be found in the early proto-naïve Pekáry.

At the age of fifty Oszkár Papp continues to be an important member of the Hungarian avant-garde. He has had both a Constructivist and an Expressionist period; as a fresco-restorer he became intimately acquainted with religious art. He has not forgotten his favourite styles of the past and returns to them time and again; not infrequently he works in several styles during a one-year period. The most appropriate, but still not exact, characterization would be to call him a Surrealist. The exhibition of his works in the Fényes Adolf Gallery shows an artist who works in only one medium, enamel. The procedure is complicated and dangerous: the enamel is beautiful and sparkling in itself and there is always the danger that the painter cannot project himself into his chosen material. Papp has mastered the material and has found his true self within the limits of this technique.

Papp mixes many styles. Apart from his geometric patches and series of heads, his mythological paintings, "Phaeton", "Barbarian Mythology" and the "Daphnis and Chloe" book illustration series attract attention. He alternates cold and fiery colours, his figures are dome-shaped, and the one-side lighting effect of the enamel plates is really only a pseudo-light. With brush, sponge and spray-gun he deceives the eye: there is no real source of light on the side of his pictures.

Elena Kazovsky, a young Russian-born painter, also exhibited enamel paintings. She completed her secondary and higher education in Hungary and lives in Budapest. The time and place of her small-exhibition are interesting. Displayed in the building of the electrical engineering faculty of the Technical University, the show is open on Saturdays and Sundays at a time when the students hold beat music concerts. The sound amplifiers which increase the intensity of the music do not come into conflict with the small intimate pictures. Many of the six thousand youngsters who walk up and

down the long corridors have gone in to see the pictures in the small closet-type room.

Nostalgia for the world of the turn of the century is surprising in such a young girl and even more interesting is the extent of her attraction to it; she completely identifies with the period and derives from it a message for the present. Nostalgia notwithstanding, she looks at the dream world of the 1900s as a young person of today and calls it into account. Her enamel plates are colourful, picturesque and decorative.

András Orvos paints flowers almost exclusively, especially roses; he could be described quite simply as a pop-art painter. "In my home town (Békéscsaba, a village-like small town) everything is full of flowers, courtyards, walls, table-cloths, plates and even picture postcards. As a child I thought these flower ornaments wonderful; I found out only much later how deceitful they are. Now I intentionally seek the banality of picture postcard roses. Nostalgia and grimace, affection and parody are mixed in my intentions and in my paintings," wrote the painter about himself. Another undeniable—and undenied—intention is that roses should also evoke erotic associations. The flower pictures show much variety and their colours of chrome yellow, red, ordinary light green, sometimes blue are clear and, intensive. Although the colour effects are undramatic, the pictures are suggestive. The backgrounds—either white or geometrically constructed—are as important, and sometimes more so, than the pictures themselves. When the surface or part of it is geometrical, the emphasis is on the hard-edge technique. Sometimes his flowers seem to be cut into squares and placed on the surface in an apparently irregular order, without any composition, like a montage. The painting of the colour-fields is smooth, uniform, delicate and pedantic. The painter's specific virtue is a certain kind of clear-thinking purity. His art is emotional and yet strongly marked, personal yet objective, sensuous and puritanical at the same time. His exhibition in the Young Artists' Club projects a reassuring impression of unity with no traces of eclecticism.

Dezső Váli felt a fashionable nostalgia for the Expressionist abstract painting of the fifties, which being a small child at the time, he could not have known. Some of his new pictures in the Fényes Adolf Gallery, among others of a quite different character, make up for this non-existent period in Hungarian art. Most interesting are his oilpaintings of standing oblong panels proportionately divided in two colour fields (two-thirds to one-third, four-fifths to one-fifth, etc.) of orange-brown, orange-burnt sienna and even grey-grey. The proportions evoke some associations such as sky-earth which are also suggested by titles like "Towards the Eternal Hunting Grounds", "Yes, There's Silence" or "It Makes No Difference Anyway".

Váli is concerned with long-forgotten categories in painting: "I wish to be a 'homo contemplans'," wrote Váli in the catalogue without realizing to what extent this was true.

László Fekete has chosen a rare genre: porcelain. He completed his studies at the Academy of Applied Arts in 1974 He had the courage not to take the easy way in his craft and within the limits of his highly specialized field he tried to create significant works of art. His favourite material is faience. Instead of the usual tin glaze, he applies colourless glaze or leaves it out altogether and the whitish, dull surfaces of his faience plastics recall the marble of Carrara. The plasticity of faience offers many possibilities, and its baking at 1200°C makes it so hard that the wall of the object can be as thin as desired.

At László Fekete's first exhibition at the Fészek Artists' Club plants and animals are a favourite subject, especially the rose which evokes sensuous images as with András Orvos. His statues are of average dimensions but their proportions create the effect of monumentality. The decisive factor

in his art is his discipline his skill and his lyricism.

A collection of the works of Sándor Pinczehelyi, a young artist from the avant-garde Atelier of Pécs in Southern Hungary, was exhibited in the Janus Pannonius Museum there. His new works are clearly conceptual art. His photos are stripped bare, they are pure documents which represent the process of motion. Time is present in his stills, as in the experimentation of Impressionists and Futurists. In his descriptive efforts Pinczehelyi creates anthologies which give the impression of a selection from the frames of a film. An everyday story in twelve pictures: the bus arrives at the bus stop, people get on and off, the bus leaves. The last picture with the solitary bus-stop sign in the empty street is inexplicably grotesque.

"To the Memory of Copernicus" depicts four different times of the day by the shadow cast on the façade of an apartment house by the tower of a cathedral with a cross on its spire.

The time factor is unexpectedly indicated with one picture of an old photo of the Grand Hotel in the main square of Pécs and the same square photographed in 1974 from the same angle.

Another direction his ambition takes is to fix a self-created artificial process by varying degrees of manipulations of reality. A series on a tomb-stone surrounded by flowers overtly projects a morbid humour: the artist runs through the gamut of personal pronouns in the inscription "Peace to His Ashes" from first singular to third plural. Of course the most outlandish ideas and forms have their antecedents although Pinczehelyi may not have had Dadaism in mind.

JÁNOS FRANK

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MUSICAL LIFE

NEW RECORDS

GREGORIAN CHANT FROM HUNGARY. Medieval Christmas Melodies. Edited by Benjámin Rajeczky. Schola Hungarica Ensemble. Leaders: Janka Szendrei/László Dobszay. HUNGAROTON-LPX 11477 (Stereo-Mono).

This recording has two aims and, at least in my opinion, hits the mark, both of them, to the maximum. A specialist in medieval monody will find it just as interesting as a music-lover attracted to Gregorian chant. The former will hear interesting variations of basic material well known to him, and the latter will find great pleasure in the extremely lifelike and lively performance. This is not the place to discuss problems of scholarship associated with hymnology, I would prefer to approach this beautiful recording from the performing angle. I might mention that it was awarded the "Grand Prix du Disque" in Paris a few weeks ago jointly with another, the *Vietorisz Codex*, performed by the "Camerata Hungarica" which I discussed in this journal some time ago,* from the performing side.

The editor, Benjámin Rajeczky (the publisher of Volume I of *Melodiarium Hungariae Medii Aevi*), who is convinced and can back his convinction by documents that standards of musicianship in women's convents were high, allotted with great courage a part on the recording to a female chorus. It is to a great extent due to this fact that the recording is gloriously varied and captivates all the way; Gregorian chant is generally performed on record by male voices only. The earliest surviving examples of Hungarian polyphony were given a place there as well. Benjámin Rajeczky also emphasizes in his introduction that it is not possible to speak about a local school of Gregorian chanting. There can be no question of the equivalent in Hungary of, say, the German, Spanish, or English one. It is true, however, that the Hungarian material is organically linked up with the great Gregorian tradition itself.

As Arnold Schering (1877–1941) argued, Gregorian melodies are of a "pneumatic" character, that is articulation takes place according to the laws of human breathing. (This cannot be said of all vocal music; think of the endless melisms of Baroque arias where one must determine with utmost care where one can take a breath so the aria will not fall apart.) László Dobszay and Janka Szendrei capture this "pneumatic" character with unbelievable simplicity—the calm and restful effect of the entire sequence is due to this. One realizes at such a time how different the functions of music were during the Middle Ages. Function was tranquil uplift and a restful comfort then; starting with the late Renaissance, at about El Greco's time, it became all dramatic tension and passionate glow. How courage-

* See *NHQ* No. 55.

ously this outstanding ensemble produces the sound of direct joy, for example in the *Benedicamus-tropus* on the second side.

The last but one item, *Dies est laetitiae*, which at the end of the fifteenth century foreshadows with its unheard-of simplicity that choral singing mode dominant during the second half of the sixteenth century which the Germans call *Cantional-Satz* is truly outstanding. And finally the recording closes with the only item sung in Hungarian, a *Te Deum*.

The record plus the complete Latin text and numerous illustrations make a magnificent package. It is hoped that this recording will soon be followed by another of the same kind.

MUSIC LIFE IN OLD HUNGARY (13th–18th Century), Edited by Gábor Darvas. Musica Antiqua Ensemble (Vienna), leader: Bernhard Klebel; Chamber Choir of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, conducted by István Párkay; Male Choir of the Hungarian People's Army, conducted by István Kis; Schola Hungarica Male Choir, conducted by László Dobszay; Liszt Ferenc Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Frigyes Sándor; Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Miklós Erdélyi. Sung in original languages. HUNGAROTON–LPX 11491–92–93 (Stereo–Mono).

This is a representative album—and for the most part, the performances are outstanding, the technical work as well is generally sound.

I am overcome by an *embarras de richesse* having to give an account of a series of records containing much more than two hours' worth of music.

The pieces heard here is first of all music of royal and later (beginning with the seventeenth century) aristocratic courts, or music associated with Hungarian monarchs. Then a series of pieces clearly associated with Hungary are given a place. Finally there are a few compositions originating in Hungary. Such as, for example, by one of the greatest lute-players of the sixteenth century, Bálint Bakfark (Valentin Bakfark) who, on the title-pages of his volumes, always emphasized his Hungarian links.

The first side takes us to around the end of the fifteenth century. The first splendid Gregorian chanting is by the same choir that performed on the record discussed above, conducted by László Dobszay. This is followed by a Peire Vidal piece, the troubadour spent some time in Hungary around 1200. This piece is heard in a first-class arrangement by Bernhard Klebel (Vienna). *Ave regina coelorum*, a three-part motet by Walter Frye, a fifteenth-century English composer, is on the same side. It must have been very popular in its time—being mentioned in a Hungarian source which the archives of the Dominican Convent of Kassa has preserved for us. The *Buxheimer Orgelbuch*, the largest German collection of instrumental music of the second half of the fifteenth century, contains three different versions. (Perhaps one could have been included in the recording since all three are very colourful and richly embellished.) Josquin Desprez's (*c.* 1440–1521) *Ma bouche rit* is slightly sentimentally interpreted by the Klebel ensemble—but very pleasantly all the same. *O schönes Weib* by Heinrich Finck (*c.* 1445–1527) met with a similar fate. The Josquin cult was very strong in Hungary; contemporary documents bear this out; Finck, however, attended the court of King Matthias Corvinus.

Thomas Stoltzer (1480–1526) was more tightly linked to Hungarian history. It is very probable that Stoltzer fell on August 29, 1526 in the same battle of Mohács, as his lord and master Louis II, King of Hungary. And this same lost battle marked the fate of the country, as well as the further development of music. The Turkish occupation, which lasted one and a half centuries and which extended over the central part of the country, furthered the spirit of anarchy and destroyed everything accumulated in the

previous hundred years. Post-1526 Hungarian musical monuments are rare.

The two motets presented here clearly show the basic duality of Stoltzer's work. He remained a Catholic and as such rigorously adhered to the form of the Gothic motet; at the same time he also had a certain sympathy for Protestants. He was unable to resist the effect of the Lutheran movement and shows this musically in his later works. This is clearly reflected in a motet written to Luther's *Erzürne dich nicht* (Ps. 37).

The main attraction of the second side of the recording is the 9th lute fantasy by Valentin Bakfark in András Kecskés's beautiful rendering. (For the most precise listing of Bakfark's works—or more precisely published works—see H. M. Brown: *Instrumental Music Printed Before 1600*, Cambridge, Mass., 1967.) After 1526 Bakfarks was compelled to leave his home. Around the middle of the century he was a welcome guest at the courts of Europe. András Kecskés performs a piece constructed in the manner of an intricately woven motet with exceptional freedom and meaning. On the third side we already find ourselves in the seventeenth century. The six-part chorus *Tympanum militare* by the German composer Christoph Demantius (1567–1643) is a virtuoso piece in memory of a major episode in the campaigns against the Turks. The introduction is a call to battle, then he portrays the attack, and finally we hear the usual battle-scene of that time. (The *Bataglia* or *Bataille* was one of the most important musical forms of the sixteenth century, almost an art-form on its own.)

There are real titbits for lovers of old music on the third side. Among them Giovanni Picchi's *Padoana ditta la ongara*, which János Sebestyén plays on the harpsichord. This piece appeared in 1620. Alessandro Poglietti (*c.* 1630–1683), one of the pioneers of programme music, is represented by *Toccatina sopra la ribellione di ungheria*, which casts one of the episodes of Hungarian history, the unsuccessful Wesselényi conspiracy against the Habsburgs (1665–1671), into musical form. It is quite true that the palette is slightly naïve; there are titles such as *Allemande* (The Prison), *Sarabande* (The Sentence), and so on, but this is remarkable harpsichord music in any event, as performed by Zsuzsa Pertis. Matteo Simonelli (*c.* 1618–1696, the "Palestrina of the seventeenth century") reacts to the central problem of Hungarian history at that time, the expulsion of the Turks and the recapture of the Castle of Buda (1686), with his mass *Missa Buda Expugnata*—the recording includes the Kyrie. (I earlier reviewed the Hungarian recording of the entire mass for this journal.) Pieces connected with eighteenth-century Hungary are on the last two sides—naturally, primarily, works by Joseph and Michael Haydn, and Karl Ditters von Dittersdorf, who spent shorter or longer periods in the service of Hungarian magnates.

All this is, of course, only a random sample of the material. I cannot stay silent about a deficiency: the texts of the vocal pieces are not published, not even in the original language.

BÁLINT (VALENTIN) BAKFARK: Lute Music played by Dániel Benkő. HUNGAROTON–SLPX 11549 (Stereo–Mono).

No one should be deceived by the bullfighter-like features on the sleeve, eyes aflame with dreams of fornication, that is really Dániel Benkő, the Hungarian lutenist and musicologist, one of the editors of a complete Bakfark under preparation. For years he has done two things at the same time, he is a performing artist and an outstanding expert on Renaissance palaeography —to be more precise, lute-tabulature; in both of these capacities he does great things for Bakfark.

Bakfark (1507–1576) was an exceptional sixteenth-century man. His activities differ entirely from those of his contemporaries and colleagues, principally in that among

his compositions one can hardly find any works whose purpose it is to entertain. To put it cautiously, few such works by him have survived. Only Francesco da Milano (1497–1543) is like him in this, the other lute composers are occupied primarily with the writing or imitation of dance pieces. This high standard, of course, imposes a great responsibility on both the performer and the listener. The ten fantasies which he has left us—as I already mentioned—are works of art constructed with relentless severity and in which the logic of the melodic line still dominates when it almost comes into opposition with the instrumental possibilities of the lute. In other words, Bakfark does not serve the lute but he forces it to become the instrument of the composer's intention. It is not surprising that at the present stage of the revival of sixteenth-century music only a small number of lutanists have undertaken to perform Bakfark's works.

Dániel Benkő's recording therefore in every way fills a need. Its greatest virtue is perhaps that he can make the four fantasies he performs understandable, followable, and therefore enjoyable. He intelligently articulates the shoreless surging of the pieces, and bravely accomplishes all the changes and—very correctly—does not feel each tempo of the piece to be obligatory unity from the first to the last. Thus his performance is nowhere mechanical but lively and many-sided.

What gives special significance to his recording—strictly taken from the point of view of music history—is that we can hear all of Bakfark's dance pieces (three in number). As I mentioned, he enriches the image of the master with an interesting patch of colour. Besides the four fantasies, there are Bakfark's transcriptions of the vocal works of great composers of the age.

I am particularly curious what English critics are going to say considering that England pioneered the revival of old music. The fact that it sold out completely in a few weeks verifies the success of the recording in Hungary.

JOHANNES BRAHMS: Trio for Piano, Violin and Horn in E flat major, Op. 40.; FREDERIC DUVERNOY: Trio No. 1 for Violin, Horn and Piano; ROBERT SCHUMANN: Adagio and Allegro for Piano and Horn in A flat major, Op. 70.; PAUL DUKAS: Villanelle (1906) for Horn and Piano. Ádám Friedrich (horn), Miklós Szenthelyi (violin), Sándor Falvai (piano). HUNGAROTON–SLPX 11672 (Stereo–Mono).

Recordings by the outstanding Hungarian French horn player Ádám Friedrich can count on interest even in the country (or perhaps most of all there?) of Dennis Brain (1921–1957). It is well known that Dennis Brain did great things for this instrument. All French horn players today are his intellectual disciples.

It is only recently that we have started to understand why the great classics were so fond of the French horn; we have now only begun to recognize that it is an instrument of unparalleled beauty. The spread of the modern French horn (with valves) during the second half of the last century created great possibilities for performers serving as a handicap at the same time. For a long time it was not possible to bridge the problem that Mozart, Haydn and Brahms wrote their masterpieces for the *Naturhorn*. Today we have an instrument which is more perfect but with different tuning, and with to a certain extent, a different timbre, which needs another kind of technique than that necessary for a performance of the masterpieces by the above-mentioned masters. We knew matters of great complexity—but we fell into the trap of simplicity. (This is after all true in numerous areas of life.)

Ádám Friedrich's recording is beautiful because it endows the French horn, on the one hand, with a melody-carrying capacity reminiscent of a stringed instrument; and on the other it never falls into the mistake

frequently experienced today of destroying the characteristic timbre of the French horn through certain subtleties. What sounds is the French horn. And the French horn is capable of everything an instrument can do.

The Horn-trio by Brahms, a seldom heard masterpiece on its own, provides enough for us to be able to admire Friedrich's ability and at the same time his crystal-clean intonation and virtuosity. The lively C-major trio by Frédéric-Nicolas Duvernoy (1765–1838), timeless and ageless music, is even simpler, but it bears witness to Friedrich's brilliant knowledge of the French horn. The only shortcoming of the recording is that the violin is forced slightly into the background, for technical reasons.

The Adagio and Allegro by Schumann is an outstanding masterpiece. In the line of great masters Schumann is the first who wrote for the valve-horn, Brahms, much later used the *Naturhorn*. The French horn had never spoken with this warmth—such passion and discipline could not have been possible. Only Schumann made this possible in his two marvellous movements. The emotional, intellectual and meaningful range of his music is vastly extended here, and he includes a world which later appears only in rare and exceptional moments. The two performers accomplish the task in a masterful way; they become one while both still retain their individuality.

Compared to this, Dukas's *Villanella* is certainly not in a more flawless, sharper and purer atmosphere—but it is provided, to the point of simplicity, with all the artfulness of impressionism, with echo-effects and sound-absorbing effects, and so on. Still it remains fresh and natural, that is why it is enchanting.

ANDRÁS PERNYE

THEATRE AND FILM

HOLIDAY IN BRITAIN

A film by István Dárday

István Dárday had up to now produced only two short documentaries. These obviously helped him to refine and test his methods. *Holiday in Britain*, although a colour feature film, employs no actors, professional or amateur. Those taking parts are villagers and officials living in remote places, a long way from Budapest. Their real conditions and functions are more or less the same than those in the film.

The story is based on a real event: the district pioneer organization got orders to choose, and be quick about it, a 14-year-old boy for a 30-day holiday in Britain as an award. The parents ha to give their consent without delay. The mother only started to be contrary later, persuading her husband as well to wirthdraw the consent they had been pressurized to give. After this the pioneer organization sent an unattractive and altogether unsuitable little girl to Britain.

This was the *apparently* insignificant reality. It is after all rare indeed that minors are sent to Britain.

What did Dárday, the director, see in this story? Surprisingly almost everything which is typical of the way of thinking of ordinary folk and the methods of the official apparatus, and more than that still: historical conditioning, the individual's self-respect and self-defence against bona fide but mechanical authority. Those who think that the mother's truly instinctive opposition is the manifestation of Hungarian or Eastern European backwardness or ignorance are turning a blind eye to what the film is about. It also shows the other side of the coin: institutionalized thinking, the attitude of do-gooders, that looks down on those the institution is supposed to serve, and even more so, the way an alienated and theoretical procedure presents itself as something natural. It is as if those in charge were saying: "We always want the very best for our village, for the county and the country—why then stick to forms, why pay heed to the manners and morals of men?" In *Holiday in Britain* Dárday denies this mandarin ourlook with absolute certainty and superiority.

His method is to stick to the facts and let them grow into revelation, denunciation and a line of thought. The best examples are offered by commonplace everyday facts and events: the film's pictorial structure shows their absurdity or their truth with full weight without resorting to cheap witticisms or mockery.

At the beginning the leader of the district pioneer organization enumerates the requirements of the successful candidate for the holiday in Britain: "age: 13, at most 14; parents: industrious manual workers; not bad-looking or physically handicapped; must be an outstanding pioneer with a good school record; should play a musical instrument." This rigid definition of the "human

material" recalls the military or the specification of goods.

The hunt begins for someone who conforms to these standards. The search is, of course, as mechanical, impersonal and ridiculous as the norm. Things look hopeless then somebody remembers a boy in a village school, Tibi Balogh, who plays the guitar. A phone call to the school's pioneer leader. The 60 year old "fellow pioneer" who weighs a good twenty stone has never heard of Tibi but an hour later he calls back: they've got him. The woman leader says she is coming right away. In the village they clean, change, buy brandy in a panic. Tibi is truly the pretty competent guitarist of a group. They grab hold him and the music teacher tries to coach him in an utterly imbecile melody with an even worse text. Those is charge of school and village sit together in full regalia. The pioneer leader gets there in a big black car. Fatso pioneer uncle is sent to fetch the boy's parents from the fields. A big black car moves midst the green fields of the co-operative, searching for Balogh and his wife as if they were criminals. The zealous pioneer leader shoves them into the car without a word of explanation and leads them before the committee. This is the best sequence of the film: first comes the sun-tanned, shapely peasant woman of forty-five, barefoot, in an old dress, her hands muddy and dirty. She is followed by her husband in a worn shirt and trousers, torn shoes, his muddy hands outstretched; most likely they had been gathering beet. They are briefly told the facts, and without asking their opinion the committee gives them the paper to sign. The woman asks one question: "For how long will they take away my son?" (Peasants in Hungary still remember when in the past the children of poor folk were always taken away.)

The next day brings the dramatic turn. The husband wants to leave for work, the wife is mixing pig-wash with her hands when she suddenly cries out: "Why did they have to take me there barefoot!" It is not true that only individuals of some standing feel offended in their dignity. In this respect we are all equal. The film shows that wherever we cut into the fabric of either man, community or society we find the same contradictions, dramatic situations and unsolved problems at the bottom, in the middle or on top. They wanted to take that woman's son as a cow's calf is taken away. Most people have got used to such mechanical ways. The husband is not scandalized and the village is also of the opinion that the woman's opposition is backward and stupid. In the light of mere facts this is true but in the light of an individual's rights and the natural forms of living together the woman is right when she revolts against theoretical and rigid coercion. She is, of course, also concerned about her son. In this process the ignorant person becomes a rebel, a defender of human rights and feelings, and the supercilious revolutionary institution and distorted community become an insensitive and immature retarding force. The mother, of course, commits a dramatic error by sticking to her original opposition; as time passes she ought to realize what a lot of good such a trip would do her son. But now she is unable to change her mind: everything would have been different if she had been approached differently, and if in general the relationship between the village and district leaders and the people were different. They should have tried to find a way to slowly eliminate ancient defence mechanisms conditioned by history.

The woman district pioneer leader is enraged when husband and wife tell her that they will not let the boy go. A man in a higher position, he looks clever and sympathetic, instructs her either to persuade the parents with *rational arguments*, or quickly produce another child like Tibi. The parents of the hurriedly found substitute, a fat and silly girl, are much tougher, they have no reservations, they are willing to do every-

thing to have their vacant-looking obese offspring represent Hungarian youth in London.

The film ends with the sequence showing the celesta orchestra of the Hungarian pioneer delegation in front of the plane ready to take off for Britain. The orchestra plays the pioneer march, the fat girl is in their midst, then the plane takes off.

Imagine the story in a setting authentic in every way. A small village in Transdanubia, South-West Hungary: the human types and the way people speak are obviously local, a bouquet that unfortunately 'does not travel'. Every moment, event, action and reaction is so authentic that I began to be afraid that the director might make a slip somewhere. Nothing of the kind happened. István Dárday directed his first feature film with a sure hand, he managed to start from a simple situation and, from this point of vantage, direct his probing searchlight onto the web of contradictory forces and interests of an entire society.

JÓZSEF TORNAI

DOMOKOS MOLDOVÁN

YOU WILL DIE THE DEATH OF DEATHS

Parts from the script of a documentary film, introduced by the author-director

The film is based on my own research both in the library and in the field. The scenes were shot in the order in which they appear in the film: in autumn, winter and early spring respectively. Those taking part were always men and women from the villages where we happened to be shooting. The film consists of three "movements" organically linked to one another; each has a symbolic function in addition to that of depicting faithfully the customs of the Hungarian villages. The first two movements show the preparations for the "long journey": the weaving of the coffin and the night vigil in white mourning.*

The film, which was photographed by János Kende, had its Hungarian première in 1970. It won the Maurizio Prize at the Second International Festival of Ethnographic Films at Orvieto, Italy, 1971, and the Venezia Genti Diploma of the First International Festival of Ethnographic and Sociological Films at the 33rd Venice Biennale in 1972.

First Movement:
The Weaving of the Coffin

The title of the film is taken from the first continuous Hungarian text extant, a funeral oration freely paraphrased from the Latin and known in Hungarian as the *Halotti beszéd*. The unrhymed yet rhythmic lilt of this priceless masterpiece of Old Hungarian locates it on the borders of prose and poetry. Written in the final decade of the twelfth century in the monastery of Boldva on the River Sajó, it was found in a codex which also contains a calendar, other popular prayers and an apparently original Marial;

The original Hungarian script appeared in *Ethnographia*, Nos. 3–4, Budapest, 1973. It was also published in French, *Tu mourras de la mort des morts...*, in the ethnographical proceedings of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, *Acta Ethnographica*, 1974., No. 1. Budapest.

it seems likely that the Hungarian rendering was the work of a monk of Hungarian origin who had been educated at the universities of Northern Italy and perhaps in Switzerland.* The opening lines of the oration are followed in the film by a funeral song dating from some five centuries later; *Death Is the Reaper on This Earth* comes from János Kájoni's *Cantionale Catholicum*, a collection of funeral songs from Csiksomlyó, published in 1676.

Wood suitable for making coffins must have been hard to come by in those areas of Hungary once regularly subjected to flooding, and in other boggy and marsh areas, too, such as Sárrét by the River Tisza; indeed, goods made of sawn wood were always an expensive item for a poor peasant. It was easier by far to make a coffin from bulrushes than to try to obtain the wooden planks necessary for a proper coffin. Most of our evidence is from the villages and hamlets around Szeged and along the Tisza, where it was the custom to make both coffin and lid from willow withes, or bulrushes, as these were, especially for the fishermen, the most readily available materials.**

In a collection of short stories entitled "Travels in Underground Hungary" *(Utazás a földalatti Magyarországon)* Ferenc Móra*** wrote: "On our marshy Great Plain, the timber industry could not have been very well developed, and the nomadic people are unlikely to have brought the custom of burial in coffins from the ancient homeland. The dead were buried in the bare earth; often, however, the bottom of the carefully drug grave would be pounded and beaten until it was really hard... and in some cases, the body was wrapped in a blanket. Even more interesting is the fact that beneath the bones the 'blanket' of woven rush matting is clearly visible; its remains can even be picked up. I have not seen this in any other museum, but we now possess (in the Szeged Museum) examples of rush matting over 1,500 years old from three cemeteries in the neighbourhood. What is significant in this is that in the Szeged region burial without a coffin in rush matting was practised as recently as fifty years ago.

Second Movement

WHITE MOURNING

It is well known that some peoples of Asia and the Middle East, mourn their dead in white. Perhaps less well known is the fact that at one time white was the colour of mourning all over Europe, and that black has been used in Europe only over the last few hundred years.

Research into the history of clothing has shown that white mourning was once the privilege of the queens of France, and there is evidence from the sixteenth century that all French queens who had been widowed were known as "white queens". Later white mourning was permitted for professional mourners, too, and the custom was brought to an end by the French Revolution. François Clouet's portrait of Mary Stuart, probably painted in 1559 at the time of her mourning for her father-in-law Henry II, bears the title "Deuil Blanc"; she also wore white during her mourning for her husband Francis II. Throughout her many years of captivity she wore a long white lace-edged veil which flowed down her back to the

* Bencze Szabolcsi: *Vers és dallam* ("Poetry and Melody"). 1959, Budapest. pp. 7–32, In Hungarian.

** I found a complete stripped willow-withe coffin on a pinewood frame in the attic of a house in Szegvár, in 1970. The owners kept the existence of the coffin a secret from the rest of the village. This was a tremendous event for me, as I had been searching for something like this since 1968. It is 200 cm long; 66 cm deep at the head, 50 cm deep at the feet; 66 cm wide at the head, 46 cm wide at the feet.

*** Ferenc Móra (1879–1934), novelist, teacher, archeologist, ethnographer. In 1916 he became Director of the Museum of Szeged and conducted research into the prehistory of the area near the rivers Tisza and Maros, and excavated graves from the period of the settlement of Hungarians (ninth and tenth centuries).

ground like a bride's, and a white stiffened and peaked head-dress, that too was edged with lace; this is what she wore with her black satin dress on the day of her execution too. This custom, whose traces can be found in Hungary to this day and which must once have extended all over the country, is thus almost certainly a relic of the dress worn by the Hungarians' immediate neighbours in the period of the migration of peoples.

Folk-songs collected from many different parts of the country also show that at one time black and white mourning were both common; there is also much evidence from folk-songs that other colours were also associated with mourning, especially scarlet and lilac, but also yellow (saffron). The earliest collection of folk-songs in which these colours are mentioned is that of János Erdélyi, dating from 1840. The noted Transylvanian diarist Mihály Cserey remarked: "When Kelemen Mikes died, he was laid out in pure white linen shirt and stockings; and that, too, was how he was laid in the coffin", and the coffin itself was covered in maroon velvet.* Péter Apor, another outstanding chronicler of Transylvanian customs, described how "even strangers kept plain plum-coloured clothes for attending the funerals of lords and nobles.** Cserey, too, noted that Mihály Teleki wore a pelisse of violet-coloured broadcloth at Mikes's funeral.

Three colours of mourning dress are also mentioned in ballads and funeral songs; János Kriza's collection, for example, includes a song with the lines:

"Until noon in black, after noon in white,
Towards evening in lilac-coloured silk."

The song below is from László Lajtha's collection:

"My rose has gone
Into a foreign land,
I'd rather mourn her
Dressed in black,
In white in the morning,
In dark clothes in the afternoon,
After ten at night
In scarlet down to the ground."

Another version of the song replaces the last three lines with:

"In scarlet after noon,
Towards evening, if I have time,
Dressed in pure lilac."

Some versions of the famous Transylvanian ballad *Kádár Kata* have the lovers buried in coffins:

"For one there was made
a coffin of white marble,
for the other there was made
a coffin of red marble."

In the Sárköz area of Tolna County, too, white was the colour of mourning, and in the Paló́c region (Northern Hungary) women were buried in white wedding dress and unmarried girls were also buried in white; the women and girls bearing the coffin were dressed in the same colour. It is interesting that this custom is best preserved in Transdanubia, particularly in Somogy and Baranya Counties; in Csököly, Somogy County, it is still customary for the older women to mourn and bury their dead in a homespun white flaxen dress, preserving in its purest and most beautiful form this simple, splendid example of female clothing.

In Nagyatád, near Csököly, the following song could be heard as recently as 1950:

* Mihály Cserey (1668–1756), landowner and historian of Transylvania; his History covers the period 1661 to 1711 and was written mainly from personal experience. The Kelemen Mikes mentioned here is not the Kelemen Mikes (1690–1761) who wrote the famous "Letters from Turkey" in exile at Rodosto, Turkey.

** Baron Peter Apor of Altorja (1676–1752) was also historian and chronicler of Transylvanian history. His *Metamorphosis Transylvaniae* (1736, new ed. 1972) reveals him as a remarkable observer of contemporary society with a traditional outlook, as well as the master of a rich Transylvanian–Hungarian style.

"I'm not going, I'm not going to a foreign land,
I'd rather mourn her in mourning of three colours,
In white on Friday, in scarlet on Saturday,
In pure black on Sunday afternoon."

In the course of my fieldwork in Csököly I sought out those women who still hada white mourning dress for the "final journey" and recorded from these guardians of tradition several dozen wake songs and laments. The deceased is lamented in an improvised, half-sung and half-spoken recitative, a spontaneous expression of emotion that reaches back to the most ancient times and may be found all over the world. Yet the march of civilization has transformed everything in its path, and mourning, too, has become increasingly temperate and impersonal with the passage of time. The old women of Csököly are almost certainly the last in Hungary to mourn and bury their dead in white; white mourning, one of the last relics of the period of the migration of peoples, together with the strangely beautiful melodies of the recitative laments, is perhaps before our very eyes about to go on its own "final journey".

Third Movement
THE FUNERAL DANCE

The third movement of the film presents the funeral dance.

Whenever there was a feast or celebration at one of the villages round about, for the last ten years or so István Marcin Bán of Pajzsszeg has played the part of Death at midnight. He is a powerfully built, good-natured man, whose talent of singing, too, is amply demonstrated in this role. He wears only a white sheet; his tools consist only of a scythe and a cart-nail which in the 'game' replaces the hone-stone. His quite lengthy speech at first takes the revellers aback, as he addresses one by one those nearest to him in verse and concludes each times with a refrain not calculated to cheer up the guests:

"I'm sharpening my scythe, I'll cut off your heads,
Thus will pass away your earthly happiness!"

His speech gets more and more risqué as he approaches the table of the bride and groom. When he has had his say, the next wedding feast 'game' is the funeral dance.

The funeral dance in Hungary is a custom going back to ancient, perhaps pagan, times. After the burial in the cemetery the mourners, both relatives and friends, begin to dance by the graveside or before the cemetery gates on their way to the wake. Evidence of the widespread popularity of this custom may be seen in the 46th decision of the Synod of Buda (1279), which instructs parish priests as follows: "Do not permit dancing by the people in the burial grounds or in the church itself."

But by this time the custom was so well established that the people broke the law at every turn whenever there was a festival or celebration—such as a wedding feast, funeral wake, or pig-killing day—by "summoning Death" not only in a serious but also in a more light-hearted vein, thus preserving the rich possibilities of this custom down to our own times.

The funeral dance seen in the film bears the name of Vendel Bene, one of the famous outlaw figures of Transdanubia. Because it is more poetic and more dramatic than most versions, it is probably closer to the original burial-ground dance. It is not performed at the wake, near the scene of the burial as might be expected, but at the most joyful and fulfilling moment of human existence, at midnight during the wedding feast. Although casting a shadow of sadness and "memento mori" over the celebrations, this pantomimic inversion of the Orpheus legend is ultimately uplifting and cathartic, for the imaginative genius of the people is manifest in the triumph of love and life itself over the inexorable reality of death.

THE SCRIPT

(Excerpts)

In memoriam Zoltán Kodály

First Movement:
THE WEAVING OF THE COFFIN

(Scene: the banks of the River Kurca,
Szegvár, Csongrád County.)
Fishermen weaving willow withes,
like the Fates weaving the web of life.

Only hands and withes can be seen.

See, my brothers, with your eyes of what we are made. Verily, we are but dust and ashes. In much grace did He create Adam, our father, and gave unto him paradise for his dwelling place. And He said unto him that he might eat of all the fruits of paradise. But of the fruit of one tree did He forbid him to eat, saying unto him why he must not eat thereof: "For in the day that you eat of that fruit, you will die the death of deaths."

The men slowly finish their weaving, and place the coffin on two poles. They set off with it along the bank of the river.

Death is the Reaper on this Earth,
He cuts down all before his scythe;
Wherever that he goes,
None can resist his blows;
For him all that bloom
Are weeds without perfume;
Oh take care, sweet flower mine!

Second Movement
WHITE MOURNING

(Scene 1: a snow-covered street in Csököly,
Somogy County; then a peasant cottage
interior)

A long village street in winter, with houses along both sides. Women are coming from the houses, dressed in white mourning like so many brides-to-be. Snow still covers the street, but it is already melting into slush. There is a white, wintry mist. People gather before an old house; this is where the body

has been laid out. One woman leaves the group and walks through the garden to the end of the street, towards the forest. She meets three old women coming the other way, and they continue together to the house in mourning. The women who are to lament the dead enter the house silently, one by one, through the tiny wooden door.

Through the open door the lamentations of the women already inside is heard.

(Scene 2: the interior of a peasant cottage)

The dead man lies opposite the door on the 'cold bed', covered by a sheet. The women are sitting around him in a semicircle, while the men are gathered round the hearth in the corner of the room. In the middle of the room stands a table with two bottles of wine and a songbook on it; at the table sit the relatives. The women are bent over their prayerbooks, singing. At the end of their song, an old woman—the widow—stands up and begins to lament her dead husband.

In this world that passes by
My share of life has been ended;
In this coffin oh so sad
Lies my body undefended;
Yet I know that my joy is nigh,
By Jesus' side shall peace be mine.

In her grief her passionate gestures reach out to clasp the whole world to herself her to replace husband.
The other women also weep. The widow walks round and round the body, with a handkerchief held by her mouth, 'singing'; the words like so many wounds well up from within;
her voice falters and cracks again and again.

Oh husband, my dear husband*, dear, unforgettable, sweet good husband, so good that I can hardly say. Dear, good, hard-working husband, good to his family, good breadwinner. My dear treasure, my dear husband, I cannot forget you, I must now be parted from you, my angel. Dear husband, good husband, I can never forget you, my dear good husband. Oh my angel, my angel, I am left alone, dear, good husband, dear, good, unforgettable, dear husband. I am left like a tree by the wayside, that stands alone all by itself; bent by the wind again and again. Like an orphaned bird, flitting from bough to bough. My dear treasure, my dear husband, in the Lord Jesus' garden, my dear angel, among the dead you'll be waiting for me. May your resting place be peaceful, may your rising from the dead be joyful. God be with you, my dear treasure, my dear, good husband. I can say nothing else, my dear angel, my dearest, good husband.

Her tears exhausted, tired out by weeping, she falls down on the body, like a wounded bird.

* See the score and Hungarian text on the facing and following pages.

Coffin making from willow withes on the banks of the Kurca at Szegvár, Csongrád County

The stripped willow withe coffin in the courtryard of a house in Szegvár, made in 1947

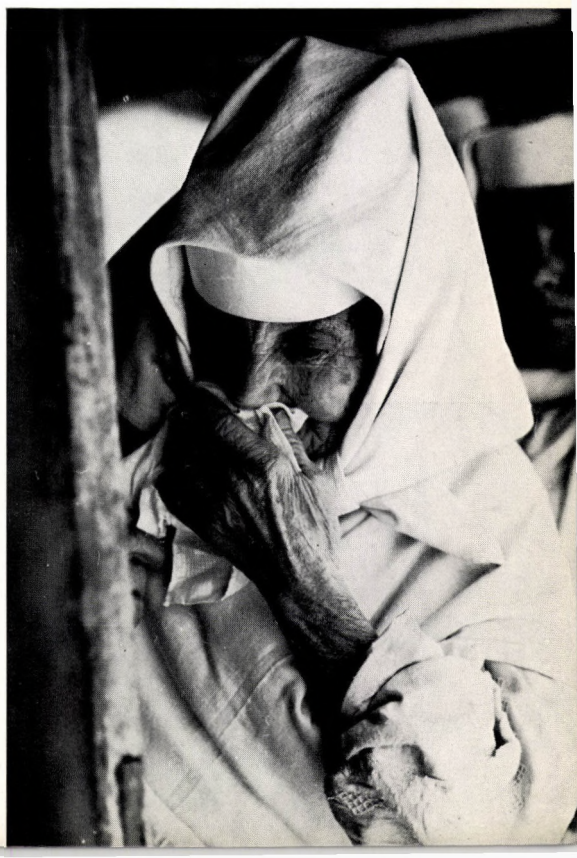
Photos Domokos Moldován

Women of Csököly village on the way to the mourning house

Wake and lamentation in white mourning

Photos Géza Szebellédy, MTI

"Deuil Blanc", a portrait of Mary Stuart in mourning for her father-in law, Henry II of France, painted by François Clouet, cca 1559



"Deuil Blanc" in Hungary. Csököly women wearing their white mourning dresses. 1970

Photos Domokos Moldován

Death in white with a scythe, appearing at a wedding.

A moment of the play: Vendel Bene is "dead", his love tries to awaken him rubbing.

The "funeral dance" after the resurrection.

Photos Domokos Moldován

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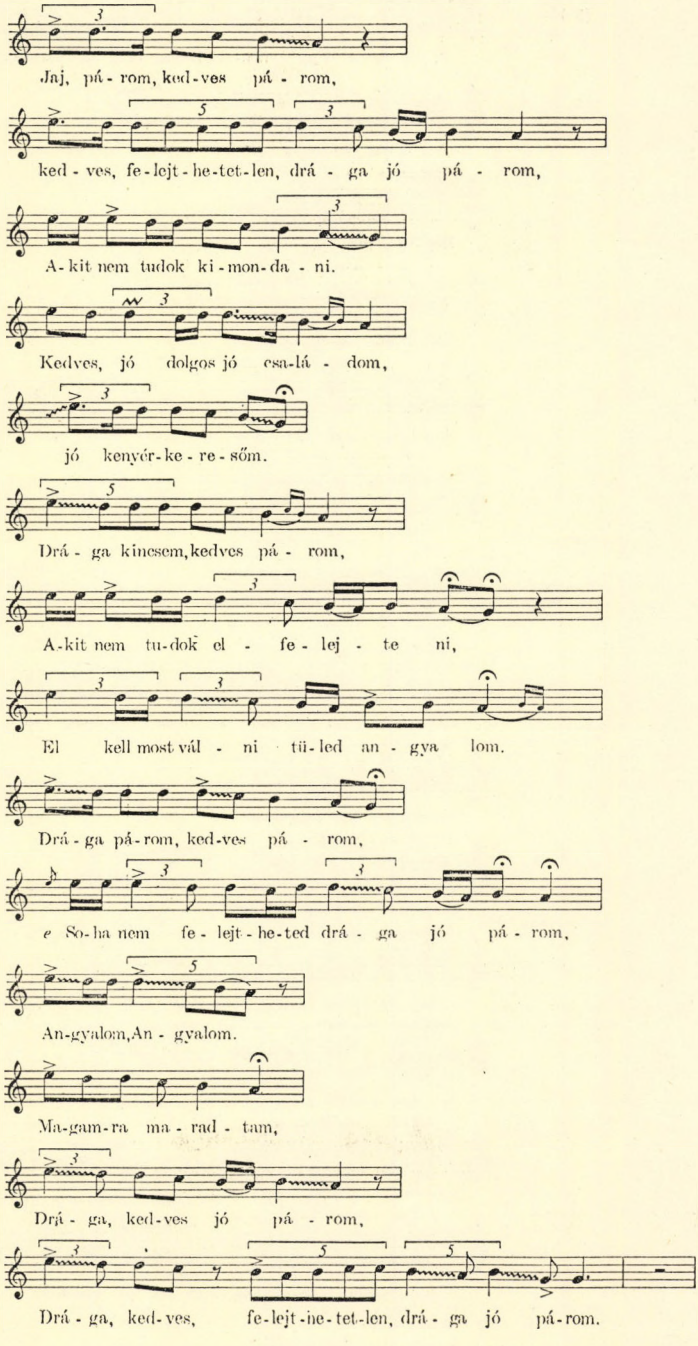
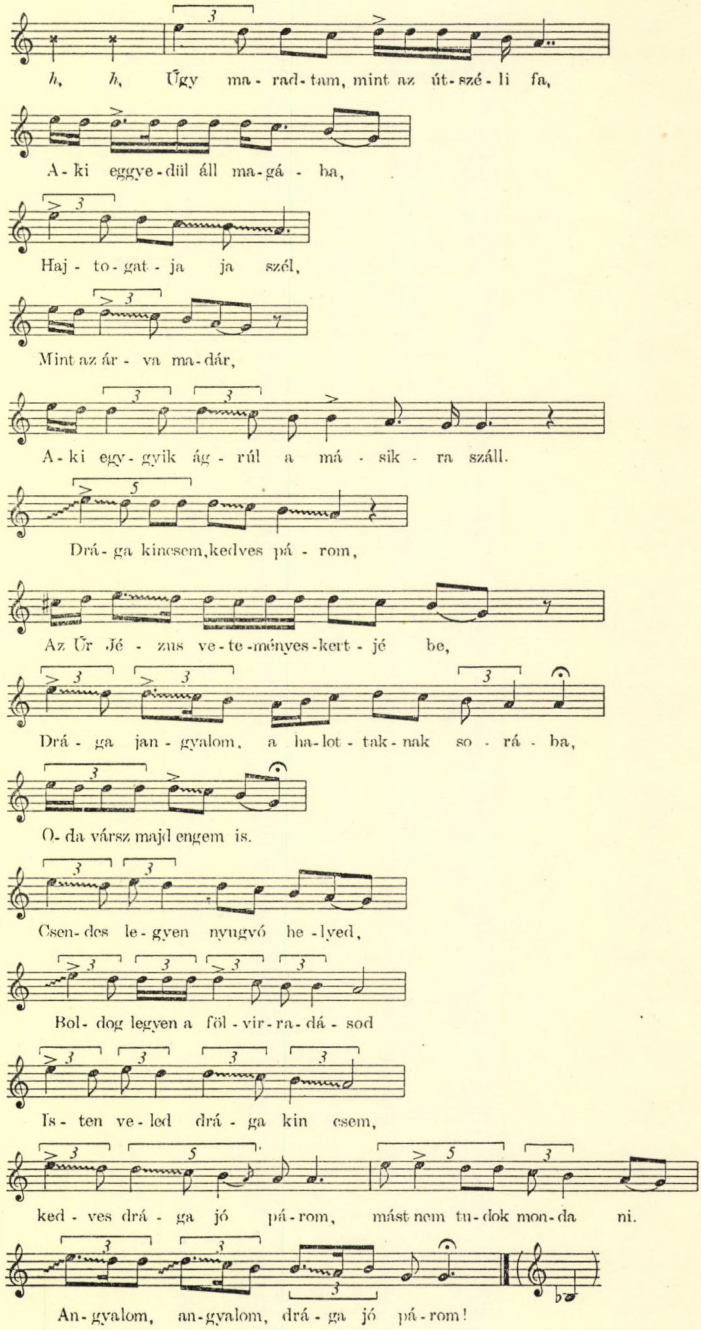

Jaj, pá - rom, ked - ves pá - rom,
ked - ves, fe - lejt - he - tet - len, drá - ga jó pá - rom,
A - kit nem tudok ki - mon - da - ni.
Kedves, jó dolgos jó csa - lá - dom,
jó kenyér - ke - re - sőm.
Drá - ga kincsem, kedves pá - rom,
A - kit nem tu - dok el - fe - lej - te ni,
El kell most vál - ni tü - led an - gya lom.
Drá - ga pá - rom, ked - ves pá - rom,
e So - ha nem fe - lejt - he - ted drá - ga jó pá - rom,
An - gyalom, An - gyalom.
Ma - gam - ra ma - rad - tam,
Drá - ga, ked - ves jó pá - rom,
Drá - ga, ked - ves, fe - lejt - he - tet - len, drá - ga jó pá - rom.

(30)


h, h, Úgy ma - rad - tam, mint az út - szé - li fa,
A - ki eggye - dül áll ma - gá - ba,
Haj - to - gat - ja ja szél,
Mint az ár - va ma - dár,
A - ki egy - gyik ág - rúl a má - sik - ra száll.
Drá - ga kincsem, kedves pá - rom,
Az Úr Jé - zus ve - te - ményes - kert - jé be,
Drá - ga jan - gyalom, a ha - lot - tak - nak so - rá - ba,
O - da vársz majd engem is.
Csen - des le - gyen nyugvó he - lyed,
Bol - dog legyen a föl - vir - ra - dá - sod
Is - ten ve - led drá - ga kin esem,
ked - ves drá - ga jó pá - rom, mást nem tu - dok mon - da ni.
An - gyalom, an - gyalom, drá - ga jó pá - rom!

When she has finished her lament one of her relatives—a woman—gets up from the table and offers her neighbour some wine. The bottle is passed from hand to hand: each drinks a little and passes it on, as if to gather strength for the night vigil and more lamenting and singing.

A woman: Drink you all.
Another: No, I'm not drinking.
A third: Do, please.

Third Movement

THE FUNERAL DANCE

(Scene: midnight and the early hours of the morning in a courtyard in Vargaszeg, Zala County; a wedding feast is being celebrated)

"Death" appears in a white sheet, brandishing a scythe, and stops amid the tables. One of the revellers spots him and cries.
The gathering is taken aback, but soon they are all singing and dancing again.

(Only the last line of the song is heard)
. . . from another village I await my beloved!

Quiet, gentlemen, please!
(Death's speech:)
Quiet, please, I've begun, silence, pray,
Quickly I shall rattle off what I have to say.

From another world come I, Death is my name,
Urgent is my business, that is why I came.
I can see all the lovely bridesmaids,
I shall not trouble them now;
I shall just put my stomach flat on theirs.
I can see in your hearts, your curiosity is great,
In the ranks of the women you would like to rate,
But this my scythe cannot allow.
Instead of a handsome groom,
It is Death that is coming your way,
St. Michael's horse is ready,
And I'm the one who'll take you all away.

He hones his scythe with sweeping, exaggerated movements.

I'm sharpening my scythe, I'll cut off heads,
Thus will pass away your earthly happiness!
Well, where are you, you young men fattened on roast pumpkin?
Stop jigging about like billy-goats.

Once more he hones his scythe with sweeping movements, turning round and round the while, so that all can see.

With my scythe I'll cut off your heads
in one go!
I'm sharpening my scythe, I'll cut off your
heads,
Thus will pass away your earthly happiness!
Now my cart is full, I'll be on my way,
All these drunks and layabouts I shall take
away.
Come on, Gypsy, pale as death,
music, if you please!
(All join in the singing:)

Behind the wicker partition, a young man is dressing; he takes off his Sunday best and dons a white lawn shirt, billowing trousers, and a little round hat: outlaws' garb. He runs to the field through the back of the garden, and lies down on the ground, "like an exhausted reveller, as if he were dead".

As Dawn rises, so the stars do lose their
glow,
Rise my love, for I have long and far to go;
Rise I will, for it is true I cannot sleep,
Saying goodbye, oh my love, does make
me weep.

The musicians notice what has happened, and begin to play Vendel Bene's tune. His beloved runs through the field and falls upon the "dead" Vendel Bene, laments his death, and then with her white kerchief begins to rub his hands, feet, and the rest of his body, bringing him back to life, as it were. The man slowly comes back to life, and stands up; his beloved walks round him, whereupon Vendel Bene puts his hands on her hips, and they begin to dance. The revellers have also risen from the table; they surround the couple, and begin to dance too. The couple dance away, more and more oblivious of the world; soon only their transfigured "dancing faces" can be seen. The dance becomes faster and faster, until the girl is almost flying through the air. They embrace wildly.
The picture freezes.

A man: Vendel Bene's dead, look!
A woman: Where's his beloved?

The Vendel Bene tune changes over to that of a fast *csárdás*.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

In the last No. of the New Hungarian Quarterly, you published a photograph of my husband Michael Károlyi and myself at the reception given to us in Budapest at our return from emigration after the second world war from London.

The caption states that this happened in 1948, which would have meant 3 years after the ending of the hostilities. This is a gross mistake as we returned in 1946 at the time of the Coalition Government in Hungary, a year after the Liberation. I therefore ask you, in view of this error, which I suppose has been a misprint, to publish this letter in your next number.

28 July, 1975

Catherine Károlyi
Budapest

Sir,

I certainly do miss my issues of NHQ and I have reread the past issues in my library. It has been difficult in these times of inflation and changing personal priorities to sort out personal goals and changed life styles. I had to decide which periodicals to retain and which to terminate. I decided to retain my subscription to NHQ. I do hope that in some new future editions you will publish how the City of Florence, Italy, had its effect on creative Hungarian minds. Florence certainly must have had some influence on the Hungarians who have visited there or came away from Florence with a new fresh vigor.

It is with pride that I declare myself to be a second generation American of Hungarian grandparents on both sides.

Jerome Frank Slezak
Lakewood, Ohio
U.S.A.

Sir,

I am receiving NHQ. It is a beautiful magazine, ably edited and elegantly printed. And judging by the little that I may know of the English language, it seems to me almost incredible that such a professionally competent magazine in English could be brought out from Hungary. The art sections, including literature, are particularly attractive, in which, occasionally, I am delighted to find mention of some of our respected acquaintances who visited India like Péter Nagy and Miklós Hubay.

Lokenath Bhattacharya
New Delhi
India

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

BART István (b. 1944). Translator, journalist, editor at Európa Publishing House in Budapest. Graduated from Eötvös University in Hungarian and English. Has translated works by Thomas Nash, William Congreve, Sir Walter Scott, Henry Miller, etc. See his review of periodicals in No. 58.

BREUER, János (b. 1932). Musicologist. Graduated from the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest. Is chief librarian of the Hungarian Musicians' Association. Has published numerous studies on modern and classical music and contributed to encyclopedias in Hungary and abroad.

CZIGÁNY, Lóránt (b. 1935). Literary historian and critic of Hungarian birth, living in London. Worked for years as librarian in the British Museum. Studied at the universities of Szeged, Oxford and London, where he received his Ph.D. for a thesis on the reception of Hungarian literature in Victorian England. Was guest professor from 1970 to 1973 at the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures of the University of California, at Berkeley. At work on a comprehensive history of Hungarian literature commissioned by the American Council of Learned Societies. See his "A Hungarian Classic and Its Victorian Critics" in No. 41.

DÉVÉNYI, Iván (b. 1929). Art critic and teacher. His main interest is twentieth century Hungarian art. Has published books on the painters Lajos Tihanyi and Károly Kernstok.

FÖLDI, Tamás (b. 1929). Economist, editor of *Acta Oeconomica*, a periodical published by the Institute for Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

FRANK, Tibor (b. 1948). Historian. Graduated in English and History at Eötvös University, Budapest. Now lecturer in the University's Department of English and scientific secretary at the Mass Communication Research Centre. See "A Leap Backwards: Leslie Stephen in Transylvania" in No. 52.

GÁL, István (b. 1912). Literary historian, an expert on Anglo-Hungarian cultural relations, former librarian at the British Embassy in Budapest. See among his recent publications "A Hungarian Contact of Benjamin Franklin" in No. 35, and "Béla Balázs, Bartók's First Librettist" in No. 55.

HARASZTI, Éva. Historian, research fellow at the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Her "Treaty Breakers or Realpolitiker?", a book on the Anglo-German Naval Treaty of 1935, published also in English by Bolt Verlag in the Federal Republic of Germany, was reviewed by A.J.P. Taylor in No. 58, and Oswald Hauser in No. 59.

HERNÁDI, Gyula (b. 1926). Novelist and playwright, an economist by training. He became well known as the script writer of almost all of Miklós Jancsó's films. Has published several novels and a collection of short stories, *Logikai kapuk* ("Gates of Logic"), from which the story in this issue is taken. His plays were performed in Budapest and the National Theatre at Pécs. See the full text of his one-act play "Fourierland" in No. 53.

KALÁSZ, Márton (b. 1934). Poet, translator. Has published five volumes of his poems as well as numerous translations of Chinese, Russian, Spanish, German and Turkish poets. Was lecturer in Hungarian at the Humboldt University in Berlin for several years before returning to Budapest in 1975.

KATONA, István (b. 1928). Journalist, Editor in Chief of *Népszabadság*, the central daily of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, member of the Central Committee of the party. A historian by training, he worked in various political posts, from 1961 in the Central Committee.

KOROKNAI, Zsuzsa. Journalist and critic, Deputy Editor of Világosság, a Budapest monthly. See "An Eighteen-Century Swedish Traveller in Hungary" in No. 20.

KOROLOVSZKY, Lajos (b. 1915). Journalist, heads the international affairs department at Hungarian television. For a time he was London correspondent of MTI, the Hungarian News Agency. See his "The Day We Went into the Forum" in No. 33.

LÁSZLÓ-BENCSIK, Sándor. (b. 1925). On the staff of the Institute for Popular Culture, Budapest. Studied linguistics and folklore at Bólyai University, Kolozsvár (Transylvania), but left without a degree to become a folk dancer and choreographer in Budapest. Later published a number of sketches, articles, stories. Went to work as a packer of industrial goods for export; there in his spare time carried out sociological surveys which served as the basis of his successful book *Történelem alulnézetben* ("A worm's eye view of history"), 1973, from which we print excerpts in this issue. In 1974 the Budapest Thália Theatre staged a successful documentary play based on the same book. See also "Seventeen Hammers" in No. 31.

MASTERMAN, C. Neville (b. 1905). Historian, senior lecturer at the University of Wales at Swansea. Among his recent publications see "Aspects of Hungarian Heritage" in No. 54, and "A New History of Hungary in English" in No. 59.

MOLDOVÁN, Domokos (b. 1943). Ethnographer and film director. Studied ethnography at Eötvös University in Budapest, and directing at the Academy of Dramatic and Cinematographic Art. In addition to the 1970 "You will Die the Death of Deaths..." (part of the script of which appears in this issue), he has made documentary colour films on two naïve painters, a ten-part TV series on Hungarian naïve painting since the 17th century, and another on potters. His latest is an "ethnosociological" film in colour: Hungarian Love-Spells (1975). He was awarded a Hungarian Critics' Prize in 1970, the Maurizio Prize in Orvieto in 1971, and the Venezia Genti Diploma, 1972.

NAGY, Péter (1920). Literary historian and critic, Professor of Comparative Literature at Eötvös University in Budapest, author of numerous books and monographs on Hungarian literature, editor of *Irodalomtörténet* ("History of Literature"), a scholarly quarterly. See his essay "Socialist Realism—Style or Approach?" in No. 48, his reader's diary "Optimism and Despair" in No 51, and "'Going Home' to London" in No. 59.

NAGY, Zoltán (b. 1944). One of the regular art critics of this review, a staff member of the Research Group for Art History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

PÁL, Lénárd (b. 1925). Physicist. Head of the Central Research Institute for Physics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and Professor of Nuclear Physics at Eötvös University, Budapest. His publications on physics have appeared in Hungarian as well as in other languages.

PERNYE, András (b. 1928). Professor of Musicology at the Liszt Ferenc Acedemy of Music, Budapest. Our regular music reviewer.

RÓZSA, Gyula (b. 1941). Journalist, art critic, on the staff of *Népszabadság*, the daily of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. See his "Hungarian Variations on Grand Art, Op Art and Pop Art" in No. 48, and "Tibor Kaján, Cartoonist" in No. 58.

SZABÓ, Magda. Novelist, poet and playwright. Studied Latin and Hungarian at the University of Debrecen, her home town. Teacher in secondary schools in Debrecen, at the same time published poems. After the war came to live in Budapest, where her first volume of poems appeared in 1947. Since then, has published numerous novels, volumes of poems and short stories and translations, has written filmscripts and plays for the stage and radio. Recent works include: *Ókút*, an autobiography, 1972; *Szemlélők* ("Spectators"), 1973; *Az órák és a farkasok* ("Time and the wolves"), a collection of her plays, 1975. Her works have appeared in twenty-four languages; in English: *The Fawn*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1963, and Alfred Knopf, New York, 1963; *Night of the Pigkilling*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1965, and Alfred Knopf, New York, 1966.

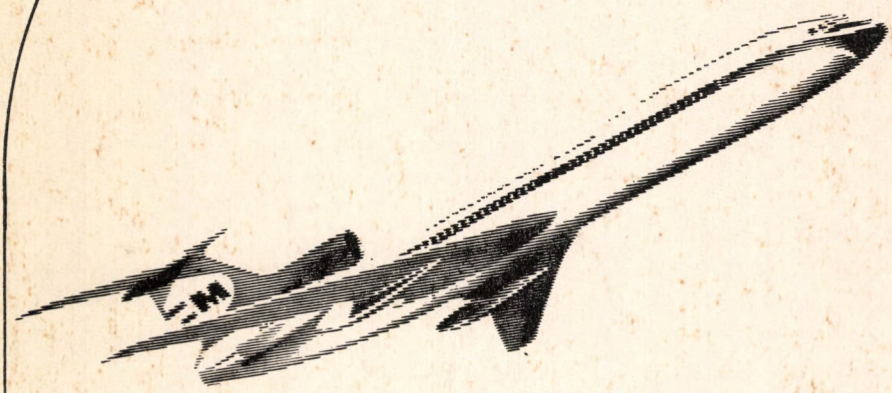
SZEKERES, József (b. 1929). Archivist. Graduated in History from Eötvös University, Budapest. Heads a department of the Municipal Archives in Budapest. His main interest is municipal and economic history. Has published numerous papers and articles and has also contributed to the four volume *Források Budapest múltjából* ("Sources of Budapest's Past", 1972) reviewed here as well as to the *Budapest Lexikon* (1973). See "How the Budapest Bridges Were Not Saved" in No. 56.

TOLNAY, Charles de, (b. 1899). The noted art historian of Hungarian birth, who lives in Florence. Was professor at Princeton University, USA, and is at present director of the Casa Buonarroti in Florence.

TORNAI, József (1927). Poet, translator, our regular film reviewer.

VARGA, László (b. 1939). Literary historian, critic, our regular book reviewer.

Articles appearing in this journal are indexed in HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS and AMERICA: HISTORY AND LIFE.



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