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*The New
Hungarian
Quarterly*

The Spirit of Helsinki — *János Nagy*

Changing Conditions and Expectations in the Economy
— *Károly Németh*

Science Policy and Management — *György Aczél*

Miklós Borsos at Seventy — *Viktória L. Kovásznai*

Culture, Community, and Society — *Tibor Huszár*

Time Budget Research on Women — *Sándor Szalai*

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CREATIVE DISCONTENT

Attentive readers will no doubt recall that "Creative Discontent" was the title of a piece published in No. 63. It was written by György Aczél, and essentially based on an address he gave to the general meeting of the Hungarian Writers' Association. Creative discontent is much more than a good title, I venture to say that it is typical of Hungarian political life as such, in the broadest, original sense of the term. More particularly it refers to that dynamism which can be experienced in the world of the intellect. It was for that very reason that so much space in the last number was devoted to observations made, and reasonings expounded, concerning cultural policy, at the meeting of the Writers' Association, and that is why the present issue contains the address which György Aczél gave at the general assembly of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. György Aczél is a Deputy Prime-Minister, and as such responsible on the highest government level for science and cultural policy. It is thus his job to ensure that the recognised and oft-referred to openness of Hungarian art, science, and literature continue in such a way that the desire for socialist democracy should find fulfilment and also, and this primarily concerns the article we publish, that the direction and organization of science be treated as the joint business of scientists, the Academy of Sciences, and the State. Keeping one's ear tuned to the style of this discourse will I think repay the trouble. There is at least as much criticism as praise, and sins of omission and commission figure as prominently as achievements. Argument and criticism are part and parcel of the style of Hungarian public debate.

Not only works, research, and results speak for Hungarian science and culture to the world, but a policy as well which, particularly owing to the Helsinki "third basket", has found itself in the forefront of attention this year. Public opinion is suffused by the spirit of Helsinki, as another article in this issue, by János Nagy, a Deputy Foreign Minister, reports. On the

occasion of the first anniversary of the signing of the Final Document János Nagy surveys the road travelled since, draws certain consequences, and attempts to sketch the main line of further development. He points out that security and cooperation in Europe, symbolized by Helsinki, cannot be thought of as something apart from the world situation, which, in the seventies of this century, is defined by the desire for détente, security and peaceful coexistence, and the principles which govern them. János Nagy casts a cold eye at the year that has gone by, and his argument is cool and unambiguous. He mentions that détente and coexistence were disputed by many in the U.S. and Western Europe long before Helsinki, pointing out that the argument has flared up since. Nagy looks at the reasons why, examines the various manifestations, and once again clearly puts on record the principles on which Hungarian foreign policy is based. The article originally appeared in the journal *Társadalmi Szemle*. AFP, DPA, and UPI provided a fairly detailed account for their subscribers and *Die Presse* of Vienna concluded from the tone that the propaganda of socialist countries directed towards the West was getting tougher. Reading the article in full, rather than in extracts, tends to suggest this opinion is erroneous.

Creative discontent can be evoked also by an article by Károly Németh who, as the Secretary to the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, is responsible for economic matters. The title, "Changing Conditions and Expectations in the Hungarian Economy", in itself suggests a certain creative discontent. The article is based on an address given to "insiders", a meeting of the Society of Economists held in Zalaegerszeg, a town in south-western Hungary, early this summer. For two days economists discussed the changing requirements of a changing situation. Károly Németh gave the opening address, and Rezső Nyers, head of the Economic Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, was the first to speak in the discussion. Creative discontent ruled the atmosphere of the discussion all right, and there was no shortage of critical remarks. Their essence was that there must be rigorous attention to the given situation for a start, but as the conditions change, what these changes demand must be satisfied. Károly Németh argues to start with that economic growth in Hungary is a qualitative category. He goes on to point out that economic growth resulting in commodities that are not marketable is worthless, and only produces growing surplus stocks. This is a warning heeded by all, since economists and the public experienced much that was unfavourable in this respect in the 'fifties. Károly Németh also touched on the reform of the system of economic guidance and management. For some unaccountable reason the Western press has chosen to refer to this reform as NEM,

suggesting to uninitiated readers that the abbreviation was in use in Hungarian economic literature. Could be that those who took it over were not even aware of it, but can there be any doubt that whoever thought of it in the first place wished to remind of NEP, thinking that, with this allusion, he had actually said something relevant about the Hungarian reform. Károly Németh refers to the reform, thus offering an occasion to set this small mistake, or distortion, right. But let me return to an earlier point. I quote: "The need to make some changes in just that kind of situation, and to improve the relationship between production and demand was one of the things that triggered off the reform in the system of economic guidance." Németh goes on to discuss rates of growth, the relationship of central direction and enterprise initiative, the proper use of the work-force, standards of management, investment and R&D, and finally the problem of changing the structure of production, an issue uppermost in the minds of Hungarian economists at this juncture.

*

I should really make my excuses for including a number of articles that exceed our customary length. In general we try to stick to the usual proportions though length does not frighten us off if an important question requires study in depth, be it because it is at the centre of interest outside Hungary as well, or because it helps to provide a broader and more thorough picture of the situation in the country. The two longish articles I have in mind satisfy both criteria. Professor Tibor Huszár is chairman of the Department of Sociology at the University of Budapest. His "Culture, community and society" contributes to the elucidation of the notion of the democratization of culture, one of the most important and most talked about questions of the age, while Professor Sándor Szalai, who spent some years in an executive position with Unitar in New York, writes on the position of women and their social role, a question of perhaps equal importance. Tibor Huszár is an expert on Hungarian social development, specializing in mobility, and he discusses what the Unesco programme calls access to, and participation in, culture. Sándor Szalai's paper sums up the results of many years of international research. Statistical tables generally do not make light reading, and this journal tries to avoid them. In this article however the figures themselves are interesting and even exciting. The work done by men and women is quantitatively displayed.

In what remains of the paper, the reader enters a sort of historical and

contemplative hall of mirrors. Iván T. Berend, a historian, compares contemporary socio-economic phenomena and historicity, using a Marxist methodology and the latest results of Hungarian historical research. A section of his article which displays and examines the negative aspects of consciousness is particularly worthy of attention. István Gál has a considerable reputation as a student of Anglo-Hungarian relations. When sorting the papers of the *Hungarian Quarterly*, our predecessor, published in the late 'thirties and early 'forties, he found letters by Arnold Toynbee to József Balogh, the editor who perished in a fascist extermination camp. These letters allow one to peek behind the scenes in the pre-war period, referring as they do to attempts that proved abortive. László Országh writes on László Kéry's *Angol írók*, a scholarly work on English writers recently published in Hungary, from Shakespeare, Defoe and Swift to James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Anthony Powell, and William Cooper. Sándor Maller uses old English travel books as an occasion to describe the Hungary of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. The Bicentennial of the U.S.A. is the occasion for Katalin Halácsy's piece on Benjamin Franklin's Hungarian reputation.

Péter Nagy looks at the place of Hungarian dramatic writing in the minds of experts abroad. What he has to say is not always rosy, but it is true to reality.

*

The rest speaks for itself. Perhaps I ought to mention the memoir on Robert Capa, the Hungarian born photographer, written by György Markos, his friend. On the very day this personal and moving piece was sent to the printers' news reached us that György Markos had died. He was known to many, and loved by all who knew him, be it as scholar-geographer, politician, member of the resistance or revolutionary. Imre Csatár's memoir of Markos follows Markos' memoir of Capa.

István Bart's customary survey of the press deals with the "cashew nuts" debate. Until recently the word itself was unknown in Hungary. Now everyone knows it, and uses it, even those who have never tasted this delicacy imported from India. Cashew nuts and the arguments they gave rise to are an interesting, sometimes amusing, but really serious pledge of the critical and self-critical attitude and love of discussion of Hungarian society, perhaps even of its creative discontents. It would be pleasing indeed if readers familiar with the tart taste of the nut became aware of the debate it triggered off in Hungary.

THE EDITOR

THE SPIRIT OF HELSINKI

by

JÁNOS NAGY

The capital of Finland was last August the venue of a historic event which has since been acting on the European situation: the signing of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Public opinion in all countries follows with great interest the implementation of the principles and recommendations laid down in the Final Act as well as the dispute and struggle about it. At one year's distance it is worth looking back upon the road traversed thus far. This may make it possible to draw some conclusions and outline the main course of further development.

*

Just as in the past, security and cooperation in Europe cannot now be thought of as apart from world developments; the interdependence is evident. Many factors have an effect on international affairs. The socialist countries lay stress on the long-range factors. Determinant among them is the shift in power relations in favour of socialism. This is the firm foundation which ensures that the process of *détente* becomes irreversible. The same basis allows for a strengthening of realism already shown by responsible opinion in the capitalist countries.

The international situation, however, is acted upon also by short-range factors, such as unsettled or newly arising centres of tension, the economic and power crisis of the capitalist world, the actions of imperialism undermining national independence and social progress in different parts of the world. They all require unremitting attention and vigilance. Otherwise they might grow into factors influencing more strongly than before the issue of international peace and security. Special care is needed to watch and study the campaign that has recently been initiated in Western capitalist countries against the Soviet Union and the socialist countries, against *détente* and the

Helsinki Final Act. It is a campaign which, unless it is stopped, may have a direct impact on Soviet-U.S. relations, and European security and cooperation, exerting an adverse influence on the implementation of the provisions of the Final Act as well.

It is known that the policy of peaceful coexistence has from the outset given rise to violent disputes and controversies in the United States and other developed capitalist countries. This dispute has gathered in strength since the foes of international peace and security have taken fright at the rate of progress of détente, and at the fact that it has become increasingly substantial. There are influential people in the capitalist countries who wish for a return of the Cold War and are still pretty strong. They declare détente to be a "trap" that is one-sidedly advantageous only to the Soviet Union and the socialist countries. They have taken aim at the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and are striving to bring it into discredit, belittling its political importance.

The group of the critics of détente and the Helsinki spirit is made up of the most diverse political forces which, to achieve their aims, make use of the sense of crisis, changes in home politics and the overheated atmosphere of election campaigns. This is especially conspicuous in the United States where candidates who attack from the right the foreign policy pursued until now have managed to place the issues of détente and peaceful coexistence right at the centre of the electoral campaign. Meanwhile the administration sometimes yields to pressure, making concessions to extreme views. Statements on Soviet-U.S. relations and the policy of détente have become more guarded. True, election campaigns in capitalist countries always present a distorted picture, and what is happening in the United States these days is the reflection of a policy that is in a certain sense temporary. But one may ask with good reason whether what is at stake is not more than mere gimmicks in the contest for votes.

The answer cannot be unambiguous. It is certain that the causes which have generated the dispute between the opponents of détente and those forces which show readiness to accept the realities of the world situation—the invigoration of those with an interest in the arms race, the fiascos of imperialism in Vietnam, Angola and elsewhere, the internal economic and social tensions—are not temporary, and thus the dispute on the policy of détente will not stop with the elections but will continue. The lasting tendencies, however, which have compelled the main groups of the ruling classes in capitalist countries to take a turn towards détente remain valid and will continue to be so. Considering the situation and the power relations that have developed thus far in the world, therefore, Hungarian foreign

policy circles have every reason to expect that the forces disposed to accept basic realities will enforce their views also after the elections in the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany.

It cannot be left out of consideration either that the decisive majority of public opinion in the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany and other developed capitalist countries are in favour of détente and normalized international relations, and are opposed to the efforts of the extremists speculating on the return of the Cold War atmosphere. This manifests itself, for example, in the fact that, in spite of the pressure it is subjected to, and its own partial concessions, the Ford administration in the United States has not lost sight of the possible consequences which a return to confrontation would entail for the United States. This administration is unable to offer any kind of more acceptable alternative than the pursuit of the policy of peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union and the socialist countries; as a specific demonstration of this, the President of the United States, on May 28 this year, signed the Treaty between the Soviet Union and the U.S. on underground nuclear tests for peaceful purposes.

All things considered, therefore, including contradictions, counteractions and momentary stoppages, it can be safely said that, in the long run, factors promoting the consolidation of détente and the full implementation of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe will prevail.

*

The year that has elapsed since the signing of the Final Act has already provided certain lessons. The Helsinki Conference, as an important stage of the striving for a security system in Europe, has strengthened the political and territorial realities that have taken shape in Europe. It summarized as it were the results attained in the practical implementation of peaceful coexistence on our continent. Nobody expected that still unsolved questions would be settled overnight with the signing of the Final Act. It is obvious that the Final Act is a long-range programme of action, and its implementation is a matter not of months, but of years or rather decades.

If we take a closer look at the practical implementation of the Final Act, we find that the positive elements are predominant though interspersed with negative phenomena on the part of certain capitalist countries. Just by way of illustration let me now point out some of these.

● Some of the member states of NATO and the Common Market, unlike other Western countries, wish to single out certain provisions of the Final Act; they insist on a few passages only, while paying no attention to

other sections, and respond to the proposals of the socialist countries with subterfuges. Obviously this conduct is inadmissible and cannot be regarded as aiming at a *bona fide* implementation of the Final Act. The Final Act is an organic whole and should be implemented as such.

● In the course of the campaign against the Soviet Union and the socialist countries, and against détente and the spirit of Helsinki, the media of capitalist countries, and in some places even office holders, more and more often raise the question of the ideological struggle. They stimulate the socialist countries to a sort of "ideological peace", while they themselves intensify the ideological struggle. They proclaim that the solidarity of the socialist countries with peoples fighting for freedom is a violation of the Final Act; on the other hand, they claim that the export of counter-revolution is compatible with the Conference on Security and Cooperation. The NATO journal *Revue de l'OTAN*, for example, published this in April 1976: "It seems that the principle of sovereign equality and non-intervention does not prevent the Soviet Union carrying on the ideological struggle in the Western countries and does not hamper the efforts of the Soviets to prescribe the strategy and tactics of Western Communist parties or to direct subversive activities in some Western states." (Translated from the Hungarian.) This assertion, primitive as it is, shows clearly the real intention of the authors. The Hungarian position on this issues is well known: peaceful coexistence fixes the principles of relations between states with different social systems and the forms of cooperation, and does not apply to the ideological sphere. Ideological confrontation is an objective necessity which follows from the difference of social systems.

● Connected also with all this is the question as to how extensively the public in socialist and capitalist countries can get acquainted with the full text of the Final Act. The Final Act has been published, at a price that everyone can easily afford, in about twenty million copies in the Soviet Union and in hundreds of thousands of copies in smaller socialist countries, Hungary among them. Unfortunately, in the case of many Western countries, the editions have shrunk to a few thousand, on the pretext that "there is demand just for so many". There is an instance where in April this year the document had not been published yet on the pretext that it was "under translation". Bourgeois newspapers or magazines which have published in full the text of the Final Act are few and far between. On the other hand, there have appeared no end of articles "explaining and interpreting" the Final Act and reproving the socialist countries. Under such circumstances it is no wonder that the major part of the public in Western countries does not know what exactly is in the Final Act and what the leaders of the

participating states agreed upon at Helsinki. This makes it easy to provide for a manipulated presentation falsifying the actual situation with regard to its implementation.

Information conforming to reality ought to emphasize the favourable effect which the birth of the Final Act and its implementation thus far have had on the shaping of the situation in Europe. In his statement made immediately after the Helsinki summit meeting, János Kádár said: "The international atmosphere after the Conference is different from what it was before, and those who support peace and security can now resume the struggle in a new situation and under better conditions than before the Conference." Since August 1, 1975, a number of events in Europe have supported this view, that is the correctness of the striving of the socialist countries for the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe to adopt a document of a political character. The practical implementation of the arrangements adopted at Helsinki has begun.

The period since the summit meeting has shown convincingly that the spirit of Helsinki prevails increasingly in international relations, that states which took part in the Conference generally keep on the agenda the implementation of the provisions of the Final Act. Nowadays one can hardly find a responsible politician who speaks about the situation in Europe without mentioning in some way or other that the process of détente strengthened and developed further, thanks to the all-European conference and the implementation of the Final Act.

During this past period the participating countries have developed an intense political and diplomatic activity. A number of high-level visits, bilateral and multilateral talks have taken place. As far as Hungary alone is concerned: meetings on the head of government, deputy prime minister or foreign minister level were held with fifteen (West European, North American) countries; meetings between government members and discussions between Foreign Ministry officials became more frequent. Important documents and agreements were signed, which all reflect the Helsinki arrangements and their spirit. In those instruments, this time within the framework of bilateral relations, countries with different social systems repeatedly undertake to adhere to the principles of interstate relations formulated at Helsinki, to develop mutually advantageous co-operation.

The Hungarian People's Republic has from the beginning stood for the full implementation of the Final Act. Highest Hungarian party and government bodies have expressed this in decisions and declarations made after and since the Helsinki summit meeting, most recently at the April 1976 session of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

The foreign policy of Hungary concentrates its efforts on the consolidation of détente and on the implementation of the Helsinki document. Questions of security and co-operation hold a prominent place at talks with other states. Large-scale surveys have shown that Hungary is in a favourable position with regard to the implementation of the Final Act, that Hungarian practice goes in many respects beyond the scope of the Helsinki document. This makes it possible for Hungary to take the initiative in international contacts. All this takes place first of all within the framework of bilateral relations. This way is believed to be the most promising in the enforcement of reciprocity. The measures taken to broaden cooperation are inconceivable without special accords between the governments of the countries concerned. Hungary is ready to open talks for this purpose with all the capitalist countries of Western Europe and North America, and to arrive at agreements envisaging the concrete implementation of the Conference, arrangements in their bilateral relations. It is hoped that Western countries will act in a similar manner and the bilateral measures agreed upon by way of reciprocity will help to give content to the process of détente.

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Strict compliance with the principles guiding relations between states is regarded as a decisive factor in the strengthening of peace and security in Europe. As is laid down also in the Final Act, this only can be the basis of the implementation of other arrangements. Only by respect for the inviolability of frontiers, non-intervention in internal affairs, sovereign equality, equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and other such principles is it possible to consolidate détente and broaden all fields of fruitful cooperation.

International power relations in general act towards the enforcement of the principles listed in the Final Act. This is not done automatically of course, and this is not even so in every case. Contrary to this principle is, for example, the fact that two states which have signed the Final Act grossly and openly interfere in the internal affairs of the socialist countries, one by supporting with public funds, and the other by tolerating in its territory, the existence and functioning of the broadcasting station called Radio Free Europe.

Here is a critical remark in connection with the 10th basic principle. In it the participating states undertook to fulfil in good faith their obligations under international law. As is known, the nine member countries of the Common Market have signed the General Agreement on Tariff and Trade

(GATT) and Hungary's instrument of accession. Thereby they have undertaken, in relation to Hungary, not to increase, or rather to repeal gradually, discriminating quota restrictions which are contrary to GATT provisions. This, however, has up to now been done only to an insignificant degree, and in some cases the situation has even become worse.

The application of the confidence-building measures recommended in the Helsinki document goes on satisfactorily. With a view to strengthening mutual confidence, the Hungarian People's Republic has given prior notification also of military manoeuvres whose magnitude was way below the limit fixed in the Final Act. In the future, just as in the past, the socialist countries, in conformity with the provisions of the Final Act, will implement the confidence-building measures.

The new atmosphere that has developed in Europe has had a favourable effect on economic cooperation both in a bilateral and on a continental basis and on the broadening of scientific and technological contacts, but it is to be noted all the same that all possibilities have not nearly been realized as yet.

In the past year the socialist countries have concluded a number of new agreements with developed capitalist countries. The volume of trade, without counting cyclical fluctuations, has expanded, and the number of active industrial cooperation projects has grown. The conventional basis of economic cooperation has broadened helped by new long-term agreements on cooperation in economics, industry, science and technology but, paradoxically, has also narrowed since Common Market member states are unwilling to conclude bilateral trade agreements with Hungary. It is evident that the implementation of the chapters of the Final Act concerning economic cooperation is hindered by discrimination applied against the socialist countries by the Common Market countries and the United States. In Hungary's economic relations with the "Nine" and the U.S. the relevant provision of the Final Act is less effective than in the case of other Western countries. The sooner this situation changes, the better.

The chapter of the Final Act dealing with questions of economic cooperation provides good opportunities for multilateral cooperation as well. The socialist countries take the initiative in this respect as well. Great attention is paid to the proposal of the socialist countries for an agreement between the C.M.E.A. and the Common Market. The Soviet proposal for the holding of all-European conferences on energy resources, environmental protection and transport has been received with wide interest; the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe has lately declared itself in favour of a study on the preparation of such conferences. It would be useful and im-

portant to hasten the convening of such conferences, giving concrete form to the business to be done in this connection.

The putting into practice of arrangements contained in the third chapter of the Final Act concerning cooperation in the fields of culture, information and humanitarian affairs has begun and is going on ever more intensively. The basis for progress in these matters can be the improvement of the general political atmosphere, respect for the principle of sovereignty and non-intervention in internal affairs in the future as it was in the past.

Although the possibilities for cooperation in these fields are practically limitless, this is where attempts at intervention and undermining are made most often by some Western countries. As if they had forgotten what the Final Act said concerning cooperation in this field which should show full respect for the principles guiding relations among participating states as set forth in the relevant document. It is invariably there that Western countries use the greatest efforts in their action against the socialist countries. They also try to pick and choose the "third basket": they press only for emigration and family reunification and the circulation of Western bourgeois papers, exaggerating beyond measure the importance of these issues in the development of peaceful coexistence. They pay far less attention to the exchange of genuine cultural values, to the extension of relations in the sciences, education, the arts and sports.

This kind of approach, of course, makes it difficult to achieve a constructive implementation of this chapter of the Final Act. The effect of the Helsinki Conference nevertheless makes itself felt. The areas of contact between the socialist and the developed capitalist countries are increasing, holiday travel in both directions is growing steadily, the flow of reality-reflecting information is becoming more powerful, journalists who take their mission seriously can do their job unhampered, cultural exchanges are expanding. Since the Helsinki summit meeting the socialist countries have taken a number of unilateral and bilateral measures to speed this progress. This is only natural, for when the socialist countries insist that the Final Act must be fully implemented, they mean thereby all the provisions of the third chapter as well, to such a degree and as they are laid down in the Helsinki document. But they cannot accept the notion of *détente* as being confined to the "humanitarian" field.

Leading bodies of the Hungarian People's Republic have declared as their position that they attach great importance to the reciprocal carrying out of the arrangements concerning humanitarian questions. Neither in this nor in any other part of the Final Act is there any single provision which Hungary does not honestly carry out.

It is common knowledge that travel, emigration and family reunification are handled in Hungary according to the law, by taking into consideration the humanitarian aspects, to the full satisfaction of the vast majority of those concerned. Of course, it may happen in an insignificant fraction of the cases that the wishes of one or another person are contrary to the law. If the Western countries expect Hungary to show understanding for their laws regarding immigration, residence, employment and citizenship, then Hungary as well has every right to demand respect for the country's laws. In the recent past unilateral steps have been taken on the Hungarian side to further facilitate holiday traffic.

Today, when hundreds of thousands travel from capitalist to socialist countries and *vice versa*, the matter of access to information arises in ways that differ from Cold War practice. It is not a political question whether an objectively disposed bourgeois paper sells a few hundred copies more or less in Hungary. But it must be understood that in this country there is no demand for publications which cast slanders upon its system and its internal situation, or which intend, from the outside, to explain to the Hungarian public how things stand in Hungary. Foreign correspondents in Hungary have so far received every assistance enabling them to do their work efficiently, and this will be so in the future as well. Correspondents accredited to Hungary have been granted multiple entry visas.

The third chapter of the Final Act touches upon a number of issues concerning cooperation in connection with which, in order to ensure reciprocity, the Western countries ought to revise their practice.

- Hungarian holiday-makers travelling to capitalist countries expect to obtain their visas as easily as Western ones can when visiting Hungary. As regards most countries this is not yet the case. A couple of Western countries have already granted minor facilities, but progress is very slow.

- Those countries of Western Europe and North America where persons whose mother tongue is Hungarian live in large numbers are expected to promote the sale of periodicals from Hungary, to allow their circulation to be augmented, which is now only a fraction of the number of copies of the papers from those countries distributed in Hungary.

- It is well-known that, in respect of cultural presence, even in consideration of the obviously different dimensions, there are disproportions to the disadvantage of Hungary. The socialist state of Hungary uses many ways and makes considerable material sacrifices to promote interest in outstanding works of Western culture, rendering them easily accessible to the masses. Hungarian cultural values, notably works of literature, plays and films, do not find themselves in a similar position by a long way in most

Western countries. One way to change this situation might be for the competent agencies of capitalist countries to enable the large masses to familiarize themselves with the productions of Hungary and to promote this trend by purposely awakening the interest of the public, providing greater financial support. This problem cannot be dismissed with the answer that in the West all this is a matter of business enterprise. The question was broached also by Prime Minister György Lázár during his Paris talks last May.

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The issue of the follow-up to the first Conference on Security and Cooperation was at the centre of interest during the all-European consultations. The agreement arrived at is contained in the Final Act. The main point is that it creates the possibility of continuing the multilateral process initiated at Helsinki and that, though making no provision for the establishment of a permanent body, it ensures continuity. The participating states agreed to convene new meetings at Belgrade in 1977 to discuss questions of European security and cooperation.

The meeting that will take place in the second half of 1977 will consist of an exchange of views on the strengthening of European security and the development of cooperation, the continuation of the process of détente, the holding of further consultations, and also on the possibility of convening a new Conference on Security and Cooperation.

Preparations for the meetings to be held in 1977 have already started, related questions are important subjects at the frequent talks between participating states. With the passing of time the details of the meetings become more clearly outlined, and the related concrete and practical questions are being elucidated.

During talks held thus far several countries have categorically emphasized that meetings to be held in 1977 might not be made "grievance days", a scene of mutual accusations, but beside evaluating the work done so far, they will have to deal with the further prospects of détente, new proposals concerning the strengthening of security and cooperation in Europe, such as the Soviet proposal for the convening of all-European conferences on energy resources, environmental protection and transport. The socialist countries will do their best to ensure that the Belgrade talks will promote the cause of security and cooperation in Europe.

Despite all difficulties and obstacles those who wish to strengthen security and cooperation in Europe can be rightly satisfied with the results attained so far. The deepening of détente is now subject to two basic conditions: the

provisions of the Helsinki Final Act must be fully implemented, and political détente ought to be complemented by a military détente. The Soviet Union and the socialist countries can take credit for doing all they can to make sure that these two important conditions are fulfilled. They thereby contribute to the struggle for social progress, to the attainment of national independence, and also to the efforts of the progressive forces of capitalist countries.

Hungary does her share in this big enterprise. We are convinced that the socialist countries, in close alliance with one another, and with the progressive forces of the world, in an effort to establish cooperation with realistic circles of the capitalist countries, will overcome all difficulties and bring to success the Leninist policy of peaceful coexistence, and the full implementation of the provisions of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

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CHANGING CONDITIONS AND EXPECTATIONS IN THE HUNGARIAN ECONOMY

by

KÁROLY NÉMETH

This meeting is doing something most important and timely in this, the starting year of the 5th Five Year Plan, when it set as its objective to survey resources and factors making for growth, including the changes therein, thus in its own way, helping to clarify what has to be done. Deliberations are closely linked to an understanding of economic policy and to the implementation of unity of action. Incentives have to be worked out which will aid a more efficient exploitation of the sources of growth. This will have to be properly founded by economists, a highly responsible task for both those specialising in theory, as well as economists who concentrate on practical questions.

The Party has always devoted special attention to economic growth. This was done, and continues to be done in the awareness that there is no part of social activity that does not closely depend on performance in production. Economic performance naturally is influenced in a crucial way by science and scholarship, that is the standards reached by economics of training and education, political and professional skills: to put it briefly, that of social activity as such. Economic plans are therefore part of building a socialist society.

The 5th Five Year Plan, in keeping with the resolutions of the 11th Congress, declared the sort of dynamic growth to be the major objective of economic policy which will be the result of a forceful improvement in social productivity. Economic growth is a question to which close attention is being devoted. This makes sense since economic growth is one of the most tangible elements of economic development, one of its quantitative exponents, and a condition for satisfying needs at a higher level. It is obvious

Address delivered by Károly Németh, Secretary to the Central Committee and member of the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party at a meeting of the Society of Hungarian Economists at Zalaegerszeg, July 1976.

therefore that socialist society is vitally interested in dynamic economic growth, both from the political and the economic aspect.

It would be a great mistake however to oversimplify things, treating the growth rate as a quantitative index; becoming spell-bound by the desire to score high at all costs. Economic growth is a qualitative category, the synthesis of various aspects of economic activity, and the common expression of their degree of efficiency. Economic growth must be ensured in the long-term, the creation of new resources must if possible be done at a steady rate, in such a way that the relationship between production and the satisfaction of requirements should meanwhile improve continuously. Growth that found expression in unsold stocks would not get us anywhere. The experiences of an earlier period have their own cautionary tale to tell. The need to make some changes in just that kind of situation, and to improve the relationship between production and demand was one of the things that triggered off the reform in the system of economic guidance. The performance of that reformed system largely fulfilled expectations in that particular field. Speaking with hindsight one can say that if the economic reform had done no more than significantly improve the conditions under which production could be coordinated with demand it would have accomplished a great deal to improve the quality of economic growth. It ought to be said, however, that its favourable effects were very much greater and much more far-reaching.

The realistically attainable order of magnitude of economic growth thus has severely circumscribed limits. The relationship with developmental equilibria is very close, and this goes for production as well as for consumption, international economic relations, investment and credit arrangements. It would be wrong to try and achieve a fast rate of growth at the expense of economic equilibrium.

The quality of growth also largely depends on the nature of investments, on growing resources being deployed on improvements in the structure of production that are necessary, and in keeping with the nature of available facilities, that is on the degree to which development is effective, resulting in a rise in technological standards and labour productivity.

The relationship between economic activity in the narrow etymological sense of the term and economic growth is very close. That is, it really matters how well resources, the labour force, equipment and material are husbanded.

The order of magnitude and rises in consumption are also essential. It is no secret that consumption spurs on economic growth. What must be done therefore is to operate all the sources of economic growth at maximum

pitch, coordinating the factors involved in an optimum manner. That is the way to maintain the dynamism of economic growth.

The 5th Hungarian Five-Year-Plan prescribes an annual growth of 5.4–5.7 per cent in national income terms. This fits in well with the process of economic development, carrying on an established trend. For fifteen years, between 1961 and 1975, national income grew at an average yearly rate of 5.8 per cent.

The growth rate

The figure prescribed does not significantly differ from that of earlier years. What then can be said to be specific of the years to come, looked at from the growth angle? The answer is that the rate can only be maintained at the expense of much greater efforts than before. Conditions can be expected to be much tougher, and productivity must be improved considerably if there are to be results. All this requires work of a qualitatively higher standard, and it does so throughout society.

At the time when growth factors were being considered in the course of preparatory work for the 5th Five-Year-Plan directives, the conclusion was reached that essential changes had occurred in these factors and the conditions of growth at home and abroad.

A growth in the work force ceased to be an important factor. It can be increased by no more than 2–3 per cent a year. Various industries will have to improve labour productivity considerably in order to produce 30–32 per cent more national income within five years than they did in 1975, with unchanged numbers, in some places even employing fewer than before. Growth will be fed almost exclusively by intensive factors: technological progress, improved work performance and more efficient management, as well as a competent transformation of the factors of production; in other words essential improvements in economic efficiency.

Changes in the world economy also demand more from the Hungarian economy. The rise in the price of raw materials and the resulting shift in relative prices caused a major absolute loss to the Hungarian economy, which was further increased by gaps in economic management, this is a weak link in the Hungarian economic structure causing lower standards of economic efficiency than justified by the limitations imposed by what is possible. Outside markets apply a stricter measure to Hungarian products than heretofore. The ability to adjust to such requirements and demands must be improved.

Changed world market conditions lend their own specific features to investment and development policy. The share of fuel, raw materials and mining industries in general is increased, and these demand large investments that do not show quick returns. Relatively less than earlier can be spent on processing industries and agriculture. This is an essential cause of tension in the 5th Five-Year-Plan, and efforts must be made to ease it. Ways must be found to extend the financial sources needed to ensure faster growth in the processing industries, and even more so in agriculture and the food processing industry. Basic economic and political interests are involved. Tight credit facilities not only make it all the more important that investment activities be efficient, but it becomes increasingly imperative as well to make most efficient use of existing factors of production, to exploit all reserves, and to show the greatest possible discipline in operation.

A growth rate like that of the recent past can only be achieved if decisions are circumspect and based on sound economic considerations, if management is more efficient, and if the structure of production can elastically adjust itself to changed conditions. Much more must be done, and in more diverse ways than heretofore in order to maintain the existing dynamism of economic growth. One might ask though, and with some justification, to what extent the here outlined conditions of progress are new, and whether some sort of new idea is needed to help cope with all that lies ahead. The answer is unambiguous. Changes in the conditions of growth and development were present earlier as well—even apart from the transformations the world economy has undergone—and were largely predictable. It is just ten years ago that the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party declared in its resolution on the reform of the system of economic guidance that the sources of extensive economic progress were about to be exhausted, that intensive factors had to be stressed and that the role of foreign trade in economic development was increasing. The need to improve the system of economic guidance was declared to drive precisely from changes in these circumstances.

The increasingly determining role of intensive factors of growth was thus recognised, and not merely recognised, they were successfully exploited, though not to the extent that was possible or necessary. Labour productivity improved by more than 6 per cent over the past five years, and yet productivity levels fell behind both what was possible and what was achieved by countries of similar developmental standards. Progress was made regarding the structure of production. It was modernized and made more adaptable to changing needs, but there again what was done was done

more slowly than necessary or possible. The structure of production does not take its cue from the world market as quickly as it should. The organization of production has improved but there is scope for a great deal more in this field as well, and there are facts and figures to back this.

The responsible authorities worked out a proper economic policy for the intensive stage of economic growth. It is still valid and future work will be done on that basis as well. What is specific for the years to come is that the role of the intensive factors having grown further in importance, they have to be made effective with greater weight, together, in a more coordinated manner, more quickly and systematically than heretofore. The country's economic policy must be implemented systematically and effectively. This demands continued attention to economic policy, making adjustments where needed in keeping with the objectives of the 5th Five-Year-Plan and the aims included in the Party Programme.

Central direction and enterprise independence

It is absolutely necessary that efficiency in the planned direction of the economy be improved. This means both improved efficiency in central direction, and the maintenance and further development of enterprise independence, responsibility and initiative. It is most important that one get this right, seeing the job as an indivisible unity. One sometimes experiences confusion in this area, and yet it was already established by the resolution on the reform of the system of economic guidance that "on the one hand the major objectives of economic development, and their weight, would continue to be centrally decided, ensuring their implementation more effectively than heretofore by combining the appropriate instruments; on the other considerable scope will be given within the total mechanism of the socialist economy. . . . to the actual commodity relations between producers and consumers." The 11th Congress of the Party also stressed the linked up and joint development of central direction and enterprise independence and responsibility.

Directives designed to produce economic growth, improvements in efficiency and a rise in standards of management demand considerable circumspection and careful planning. Unambiguous priority must be given to the national economic interest. It naturally follows that the central planning of major economic processes is accorded a decisive role in ensuring planned economic development. National economic plans must therefore be improved, central decisions must increasingly be based on scientific considerations,

and the operation of central authorities must be better coordinated, that is economic processes must be guided in full awareness of all that is involved. In other words the sort of staff work must be improved which is required both by growth and economic equilibrium.

To interpret this as a relegation of enterprise independence and responsibility would be to altogether misinterpret the task ahead. There is central interference in economic processes in the interests of carrying out central objectives, but any action on matters of detail by central authorities that interferes with the sphere of competence of enterprises and cooperatives, is disapproved of. The national economic interest and the character of the tasks ahead demand that enterprises maintain their responsibilities for development the discovery of reserve resources and the adaptation to changing requirements. Their responsibility for decisions taken must be increased, it should be possible to rely increasingly on their initiative, and they should feel increasingly that it is in their moral and financial interest to work efficiently. A reluctance to understand this causes damages and handicaps the country in reaching its economic objectives. It is therefore opposed to the Party's economic policy.

The workforce

I already mentioned that the possibilities of increasing the labour force are limited. It is common knowledge that, over the next five years industry can reckon with a more or less unchanged work-force, numbers in the building industry and transport will increase slightly, those in the servicing industries slightly faster, while fewer will be employed in agriculture. Much will therefore have to be done to ensure that the best possible use is made of the live workforce, the most important factor of production. Job and labour-organization perhaps contain the largest reserves that can still be mobilized, that is the available workforce must be better exploited and employed in ways that accord with the requirements of an efficiently operating economy. It is therefore most important that the relevant directives within the national plan should be properly supported by enterprise plans, and concrete measures on the central and enterprise level. In this way the minimum annual 6 per cent growth in productivity would be properly backed.

Household plots

It is a basic interest to discover all hidden reserves mobilizing them in the service of growth. This can only be done if economic policy is properly defended, unambiguously supported, and systematically implemented. The recent past provided ample proof. Some deviated from the tested and correct economic policy of the Party in practice creating an unsound atmosphere amongst household plot producers, and this created tremendous problems and serious damage. Fully exploiting the potential of household plots, and increasing guarantees for production and sales are in the national economic interest, being of basic importance. Household plot production is not some sort of foreign body in socialism, on the contrary, it is an organic part of the operation of socialist agroenterprises and, thanks to the country's agricultural policy, household plot production serves the general interest of the economy and society as a whole.

Standards of management

Much can be done to raise standards of management and organization both in enterprises and cooperatives. Work has started in the field of job and labour organization, it must be continued and be extended to a nationwide scale. Inter-enterprise relations will have to be better organized. This could be a most important contribution towards raising economic efficiency, and it also deserves more attention than it has so far been given.

Investment and progress in technology

The national economic plan provides for a 26 per cent increase in investments over a five year period, that is a much smaller figure than in earlier Five Year Plans. An essential improvement of work connected with investments is thus a necessary condition for planned economic growth. Decisions must be more thoroughly considered and implementation must be better planned. There must be a better coordination all round between the interests of those who commission work, the planners, and the building contractors. Major reserves could be mobilized if new investments are appropriately prepared and implemented in a planned way, reducing the time taken. Particular attention must be given to investments that are designed to increase exports to capitalist countries, improving Hungary's

competitiveness on world markets, or to such as will economically reduce imports from that source, producing quick returns. Close attention must be given to the work of economists, and the measures that follow from it, which further all such endeavours.

The science to technology transfer has increasing importance in economic growth. R and D and production must be brought into a closer relationship and the time-spans involved should be reduced. Research in industry, and the establishment of experimental plants should be accorded closer attention. Dispersion of R and D should be reduced and an end should be put to duplications that are still frequent in research. There ought to be more concentration, ensuring that research be one of the key areas of inter-enterprise relations. The importance of licences and know-how in raising standards should not be neglected, and the potentialities of cooperation with CMEA countries should be better exploited in this respect.

The planned rate of economic growth can be considered as realistic and well-founded from the resources angle. Prescriptions presume however that concrete and coordinated measures, integrated in plans, were taken at every level of production or management to improve economic efficiency. If internal resources and improvements in efficiency produced a greater than planned growth rate in the course of implementation, this surplus would have to find expression in products of a quality and structure that allowed for an economic growth in exports, leading to greater competitiveness on world markets and, as a result, a firmer economic equilibrium.

International relations

Growing international contacts and intensive participation in the international division of labour are important factors contributing to economic growth. As far as Hungary is concerned taking part in the international division of labour is not merely a means of securing the imports necessary for a production surplus, but an important instrument in raising national income, establishing optimum scales of production, and development that is coordinated with the needs of the structure of production and international trends; not to mention a rise in technological standards and offering greater choice in consumption goods. Hungary is also vitally interested in international economic relations not merely offering direct short-term advantages. They should be stable over the long-term and lend themselves to planning. This explains why economic relations with the socialist countries, and the Soviet Union in particular will continue to have the

greatest weight. The interests of the country at the same time demand a considerable extension of economic relations with developing and capitalist countries; including cooperation in production that goes well beyond trade in the conventional sense. Greater activity is necessary in this respect, and this applies equally to relations with socialist and capitalist countries.

Changes in the structure of production

The national economic plan determined the key areas where structural changes were needed, both in agriculture and in the food-processing industry. What are needed are intra-industry rather than inter-industry changes, and the aim must be a rise in technological and economic standards of production. Those working at various levels of production and management will have to carry out what was prescribed by the plan, using the proper circumspection to carry out changes in the product-structure in the interests of improving production and sales. Allow me to repeat that such activities are the implementation of one of the most important qualitative requirements of economic growth. This is a key question in improving competitiveness on world markets and in restoring economic equilibrium.

The role of economists

Let me conclude by saying a few words about the increased importance of economists—both those doing research and those more directly involved in practice—and of managers.

The policy of the Party is based on scientific work. A fundamental condition of achievements so far, and of future achievements as well is the ability to recognize the objective laws of social development, and to bear them in mind when formulating aims and taking decisions. Creating an integrated programme of action that will mobilize social forces is crucial. It is necessary then to create conditions favourable to scientific research, including the right creative atmosphere, but it is equally necessary that policy should fully exploit what science has to offer. One can say that the Party has to the greatest possible extent created conditions favourable for scientific research in the past as well, and will also do so in the future, in turn relying on the results so obtained when formulating policy. This is exemplified by the research scientists and practical men coopted when various important resolutions on economic policy were being prepared.

At present as well several hundred economists collaborate with a number of committees that are considering economic questions.

This of course increases the responsibilities of those doing research, economists included, regarding their choice of subject. Do these serve economic policy, do they go deeply enough into the moving springs of progress, analysing the situation and the possibilities of future progress? The responsibility of managers grows as well, regarding the degree they are able to implement policy in their own fields, supporting it by concrete decisions and measures.

It is well-known that conditions of economic progress, at home and abroad, underwent major changes in recent years. I should therefore like to draw attention to certain key questions that will have to be researched.

One is the likely shaping of outside conditions over the next ten to fifteen years. Developmental trends in the socialist countries are particularly important, as well as their possible closer link with Hungarian economic developments. It is equally important to study likely changes in capitalist markets and the advantages they offer, not to mention the possibilities of extending contacts.

Conditions at home must be studied as well. The economy has reached a stage of intensive growth which is likely to last for some time. The economic structure, technological development, the use made of the labour force, and the husbanding of the factors of production must all be adjusted to the resulting requirements. Working out long-term developmental trends in the price, wages and income systems is also a most important task.

Attention will necessarily be concentrated on the tasks outlined. Ways of overcoming difficulties and contradictions will be investigated. The conditions for economic progress have become tougher. This demands more from everyone, more disciplined work of better quality. This must be remembered as much as all the work done which deserves recognition, on which future progress is based, I mention this because I am convinced that loyal socialists, including economists, know of no greater spur than an awareness that honest work makes sense and that they share in results achieved by all the workers pulling together. The work and knowledge of Hungarian economists also finds expression in the results achieved.

SCIENCE POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

by

GYÖRGY ACZÉL

The general assembly of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences is an event of considerable importance in the scientific life of Hungary. The 1976 general meeting, the one hundred and thirty sixth, proved no exception. Important decisions were taken, new members elected and office-holders chosen. The president's opening address, the general secretary's report, the lectures delivered, and an address by the Prime Minister, all contributed to make this an outstanding survey of achievements and account-taking of the present position.

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Having familiarised myself with the documents and the message of the general assembly, I should like to comment on certain facts and phenomena, achievements and shortcomings alike, chiefly on things which are related to science policy, and to public issues related to science. Politics are not secondary and extraneous to science, but are factors acting on the person of the scientist which he has to know his way about, else he cannot obtain lasting success in the study of his particular corner of reality, nor can he hope to change it.

Science must adjust itself to the requirements of the age, that is the consensus of this meeting as well. The Academy cannot be allowed to be an institution maintaining a rigid, conservative academicism out of touch with practice. Tradition and innovation must be integrated with the emphasis on the latter.

If the Academy accepts these dialectics of life, it will be able to retain what is good and reject what is obsolete and unnecessary; making room

The Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the highest scientific institution of the country, maintains and directs a number of research establishments. This year's general assembly of the Academy was attended and addressed also by Deputy Prime Minister György Aczél. We publish a slightly abridged version. (*Ed.*)

for the new. If such a way of looking at things asserts itself we can perhaps forget some of those "evergreen", but long overripe subjects, such as the coordination of research done in universities and at institutes of the academy, and their concerted better adjustment to social needs. Speaking generally: research and science instead of being introspective should, true to their role in socialist society, become more and more open. What is needed is an Academy that is increasingly sensitive to the interests of society.

General conditions in science

Every science is aware that life "regrettably" is impatient, demanding action now. We must bow to reality and happily acknowledge its impatience. The commands of reality, of this fast changing world, must be obeyed with alacrity.

It was said earlier that what science achieves is always weighed and judged by posterity, let me add something new, that the present progressing at growing speed is increasingly able to judge the performance of science. Scientists have always dreamt of their knowledge being appreciated, applied and utilised by the present, but they did not always succeed in achieving this. Today, however, social circumstances being as they are, scientific progress and practical application appear in such quick succession that the objective possibility exists for the present to be able to appreciate and, what is more important, make use of some of the results. This is the only way to look ahead. The work needed is of the kind that prepares the future and, what is more, helps bring it closer.

What has to be clarified first is the degree to which genuine objectives form the backbone of science today. Everything depends on this. What is being commissioned and how, and who chooses what sort of subject, and what do they wish to reject? This should be the approach to ways of directing scientific research as well.

The scientific bodies created by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, in the work of which scientists participate, are accorded an increasing role in the life of the country. Their working methods exert a decisive influence on the efficiency of research institutes and of science in Hungary as such. Their views are carefully considered by all who hold responsible positions in politics or economics.

This is why the responsibility of scientific bodies has increased enormously, particularly as regards creating the sort of atmosphere in which scientists do their work.

Research workers are not supermen, but since the conditions for high quality work are given, one may rightly raise ethical standards as well. There is no need to draft a code, what is more desirable is to influence public thinking so as to stop the morally inadmissible, for example, irresponsible manipulations connected with the nomination of members.

Greater social access to science would do much to help clean up the atmosphere in which scientists work. Inbreeding must come to an end, and greater attention should be given to practice and education when recruiting new staff. The gates of research should be opened to talented secondary-school teacher graduates. Social mobility must be made to apply to science as well. The scholarships system should be extended, with special emphasis on work at home, since in many cases it certainly does not warrant a trip abroad.

Training the young generation must surely figure high amongst the duties prescribed by a hypothetical moral code. Pride in being the only one in one's field is a distorted ambition. What should be a source of prestige is the number of young people one has trained to carry on the good work.

A man of outstanding talent should not be compelled to go through all the rungs of the ladder. No one is too young who possesses the necessary ability, perseverance and strength. Einstein was 26 when he formulated the special theory of relativity. In this country it is to be feared that a 26-year-old Einstein would be considered too young to present a thesis for the candidate's degree.*

One can often hear the argument that others should be given precedence owing to age, rank, or other considerations immaterial to science. And yet waiting one's turn, the principle of seniority, is difficult to put up with even in the bureaucracy, let alone in science. János Bolyai was 29 when he wrote his epoch-making work—as an appendix to his father's book. With an appendix of such modest size he would find it fairly difficult to get on today. Openness and purity in scientific life, publicity that implies control, is the best condition for talent to come through.

Research workers and administrative heads

Most of those who head research institutes, of course, also do research work and—as the Academy's review *Magyar Tudomány* recently showed—strive first of all to gain further scientific distinction. The question is how

*Candidate—A post-graduate degree, awarded by the Academy of Sciences, which ranks above a doctorate awarded by universities but below the Academy's doctorate.

far one can appreciate this, and when is it done at the expense of the collective; that is of administrative work?

How can the research performance of the head of an institute and collective research work be reconciled, and how can they be evaluated? Do not personal ambitions injure the interests of the institution and the community's interests, higher even than those of the institution?

If the subject studied by the head undeservedly receives greater support, who knows where and how this can be questioned? One is ashamed to say that this still calls for courage today. In some of the institutes a junior research worker brave enough to raise such an issue runs no small risk.

A number of other questions also arise in this connection. Such as, for example, the expropriation of large and special equipment, shall I call it personal property of objects in social ownership. Some use and exploit as private capital certain appliances and installations bought and operated at public expense. There are heads of institutes, and senior research workers who are unwilling to allow others, even persons working in the same institute, to have access to expensive and fast deteriorating equipment. They use it only for their own research even if capacities remain unexploited as a result. In some fields it has become fashionable to take possession of apparatus or equipment of great value that is a source of status. In a provincial town, for example, the heads of two neighbouring research institutes asked for central assistance in procuring for each of them the same type of large instrument, at great expense, although one appliance would have been more than enough to satisfy the needs of all those doing research in that town. This cannot be tolerated, either from the economic or from the moral point of view, it shows irresponsibility towards the people, towards those who work hard to create—to produce—the material conditions of scientific research. It costs too much to employ scientists who want to attain authority through "status" equipment rather than performance.

The proliferation of subjects, the "my subject is my castle" attitude also causes much damage. The fact is that there are no "appropriable" subjects as "private property" which strangers are not supposed to trespass on. A dividing up of the scientific territory into strips is harmful not only because it is detrimental to the efficacy of research but also because it damages human relations.

Hungarian participation in international research depends on the domestic structure of science. One of the most important conditions is that integration and cooperation within Hungarian science should be closer, and there should be far more substantial knowledge of results attained by others.

As long as cooperation among Hungarian scientists is unsatisfactory, as long as research results are not synthesised, in spite of relations abroad entertained by some, one cannot join as expected in international activities, first of all in the research work done in the socialist countries. Progress in this respect can be assured primarily by the sound public spirit of individual institutes if everybody is aware of the problems, and the head of the institute does not permit, or even demand, that his name be included among the authors, though everyone knows he has done none of the work. Since these wrongs affect the smaller part of science only it is still possible to cope successfully. It would therefore be timely to distinguish severely between normal, sound and natural personal ambitions and desires which exist in every man, and careerism. Careerism to my mind is when someone without doing any work manages to acquire title, rank and everything else that is due to man only for his labour.

Scientific schools are an important and recurrent question. Cliques are the greatest obstacle in the way of creating new schools. Either we have a school or we have a clique. A school is based on debates among members, not cliquish intrigue. It was said earlier, a trifle humorously perhaps but I think in ill-chosen words, that there is peaceful coexistence in certain sciences in this country. This is a remark that cannot be peacefully ignored.

We use the term peaceful coexistence in connection with different social systems, and this really and clearly makes sense. In world politics—if we keep the future of mankind in view—there can be no other alternative. If, on the other hand, one thinks of those who share a Marxist view of life, research scientists who have differences of opinion, the use of the term peaceful coexistence is absurd and inadmissible. Differences of opinion must be discussed, they must not be hushed up. Peace at any price in one's daily work only leads to intellectual torpor. Indulgence of this kind only causes damage. If one cannot arouse a sound and ardent debating spirit, then scientific schools will not evolve, and science will make no progress. Where no schools have evolved because there was no discussion, direction was obviously of poor quality.

Criticism and ethics

The closer to one another people are ideologically, in respect of spheres of interest and ambitions, the sharper differences of opinion concerning concrete questions of detail. That is how it should be. One should not be afraid of the ensuing conflicts, debates should be carried through to the end

with scientific rigour—this is required by the interests of science and of the country.

On the other hand, the groups which have come into being based on particular interests, that is the cliques, bar the way of worth-while scientific discussion, in which there is, and there can be, no other angle than the approach to truth.

The progress of science points to the integration of specific research, the Academy however often supports smaller groups. This is a dialectic process. There is specialisation and there is synthesis. In order to progress along the line of synthesis as well, specialists have to collaborate. Let them give, so they can take, using what they have achieved themselves to constructively criticize the work of others, thus helping each other.

This, however, can only be done if no one starts with the idea that someone might get cross because another criticizes his work. Let me repeat, scientists are not supermen, yet they have greater responsibilities which they cannot evade. In their corner of human activity commitment to truths that were fought for is not only a matter of honour but a working tool. It is up to criticism to fight against the resurrection of scientific dogmatism and not in the sense of the term used when speaking of the ideology of the fifties. The point is that there is danger of dogmatism if some try to apply mechanically, to today's reality, a truth that applied to yesterday's. It is still worse when they cling to truths that were merely imagined and described but not confirmed yesterday either.

Nor should one forget another danger: relativising the truth in a way which ultimately leads to scientific nihilism, and the self-denial of science.

Only Marxism-Leninism can really protect against all these dangers, if one's knowledge of it is sound, and it is properly applied. One often speaks, and with good reason, of the importance of interdisciplinary research, it should not be forgotten there that it is not enough for physicists to work with biologists or mathematicians, it should be clearly told as well that neither a chemist nor a historian can do successful work now without applying the scientific world outlook of the age, that is Marxism-Leninism.

A step forward must be taken in scientific criticism. Criticism is one of the most important tools of science policy, not only in the social sciences where it is indispensable owing to its ideological and epistemological function, in every science however it is its job to explore the truth and not to accept any other approach. Of course, general conditions in scientific life depend on whether the tasks at the core of science are realistic and, what is inseparable from this, whether a realistic, businesslike, objective and correct criticism prevails.

Hungarian science is concerned with significant questions of nature, society, and technology, it has won an important place both in the shaping of the way of thinking of the nation and in economic growth. The moulders of consciousness, however, have to shape and develop more effectively the socialist character of public thinking in their own fields. Does Marxist criticism prevail, as it should, in the workshops of science, are scientific debates channelled in the way they should be? One cannot answer unambiguously that everything is in order.

Scientific criticism largely depends on the inner laws of particular sciences (natural science or social science; basic research or applied research). In the case of experiments in research evaluating performance is less troublesome than in other scientific pursuits. Nevertheless it has to be said that no science can do without criticism. Exact methods can tell whether an experiment was a success or failure, but deciding whether the experiment was necessary in the first place is up to science policy. In order to answer it is not enough to examine the process of experiments but comprehensive scientific criticism is also needed.

It is especially important to apply Marxist-Leninist criticism in the social sciences, where experiments have a very limited scope, and where the objective scientific truth filters through the prism of interest relations. (This does not mean that the natural sciences are outside the pale of interest relations.)

In this sphere it is up to criticism to enforce the public interest without prejudicing objective scientific truth. Since we know that criticism is not exempt either from the interest influences exerted on the social sciences, a criticism of criticism is also needed.

Science can be said to be really public-spirited when science policy considerations transmitting the social interest increasingly coincide with its own aspirations. The ethical aspects of scientific activity cannot be examined apart from the problems of public access. The controlling function of public access in order that public opinion might judge human attitudes in accordance with genuine knowledge and requirements has ever been basic to the assertion of ethical norms. Socialism has created better conditions for such an openness. Public access to science is not without its problems in Hungary; more precisely, everything that should be, is not properly publicized, and antisocial manifestations are also given some scope, and there are others who hypocritically create an appearance of satisfying ethical and political requirements. The lives of the majority of scientists are governed by the same norms as are valid throughout society and therefore it can be said that the great majority are interested in seeing things

clearly and in the sort of publicity which action, and taking up a position, require.

I don't think that what I propose to refer to is a mere linguistic problem, it has profound implications, for politics and for a scientific outlook. I read something by Julien Benda once which Miklós Radnóti the poet chose to live by. "A badly constructed sentence is like a broken window pane". Ecclesiastical language necessarily kept people away from knowledge. Hungarian scientists are guided by different considerations, but even so it is inadmissible that good Hungarian expressions should have unreasonably been thrown overboard by some sciences, that progress be towards bookishness instead of towards knowledge, which is often given a pseudo-scientific dressing. If we peel off the pompousness and look behind the text, what we find there is often something extremely simple and simple-minded.

Looking over Hungarian scientific periodicals, I frequently experience grey tedium and professional esoterism. The inordinate use of scientific jargon makes many journals—and many articles judged to be important by their titles—unreadable and unusable. In other cases, especially in sociology which is progressing fast, it is the approach, and methodological fetishism, which provide alarming examples. There are literary studies which, analysing easily intelligible works, ultimately transform them into inexplicable puzzles. Instead of paving the way to such works, they often block it. Perhaps because they write not for the readers of the periodicals, but for the Scientific Qualifications Committee which awards scientific degrees.

No one can deny that the nature of communication varies from discipline to discipline, depending on the nature of the object. But it is unnatural that, for example, the social sciences, in the great part of which application is equal to communication, high-falutin' texts meant for initiates should be published. Science ought to become a force of production not only in the technical sense, it is also indispensable in the shaping of the principal force of production—man, with his consciousness and range of vision. For this, however, scientific publications are needed which show an awareness of this demand.

Something should be said about the desire for a research job. I know nothing about athletics, yet I read with interest that an American athlete had improved the world record for a 100-meters by a tenth of a second. I am convinced that he was not alone on the track, that he did not just race against the clock. Eight men started, all athletes of about the same standing as the world-record holder. In science, on the other hand, we try to get rid

of competitors, although he who does that diminishes himself, his own strength, depriving himself of the chance of victory.

Lenin's dream that has since come true was socialist competition which would mobilise persons, individuals, hundreds of millions of them, as against the drabness of bourgeois society, replacing the dozens or hundreds of competitors in the latter. But this competition radically differs in spirit and practice from bourgeois competition or rivalry stimulated merely by the desire for personal success. In socialist society solidarity must be the law, the paramount law, of life and work. Only on such a new basis can the sort of competition blossom in which talent and knowledge, and perseverance triumph, competition is to do one's best for the social good, and not for barren laurels.

If the striving for monopolistic positions aspiration for absolute hegemony and the elimination of rivals is murderous in its effect, then it is certainly so in science. The age of kings is over in this field, as well. Where court jesters only can tell the truth, and only sometimes, there is no home for truth.

In the building of socialist society it was not all that long ago when genetics, cybernetics and certain other disciplines of knowledge were held back by the actions of scientists in other fields that brooked no competition. This was true of certain social sciences as well and impaired the scientific character of Marxism-Leninism, making it difficult to study things how they really were.

Having learnt their lesson those responsible for science policy, and those who direct research, as well as scientists have to strive to guarantee the freedom of scientific research, discussing things in a manner democratic and in keeping with high principles, disseminating and applying scientific knowledge, thus enriching the science and ideology of Marxism.

Scientific qualifications

The system of scientific, post-graduate qualifications is one of the most important selection mechanisms. If, however, this system equally grants degrees for mediocre, superficial, far from scholarly, only apparently but not really major scientific performances, then this is an insult to those who have seriously worked for science.

There is a danger of post-graduate degrees being devalued. A stop must be put to this process and standards have to be raised.

No scientific performance, no work of value for science, can be achieved

if the only impulse behind it is the striving to obtain a post-graduate degree. It is equally inadmissible to judge the relevance of subjects by whether the applicant, using a trick or two, is able to give his work a title that allows it to be classified as high priority research. In many cases the chosen subjects are forcibly "connected up" with such high-priority fields. If someone in this country wishes to study elegies, there is no need to connect them up with the scientific and technological revolution just to lend the subject a more modern appearance, making it more marketable. A contributing factor of devaluation is also that qualifications are mostly decided without a confrontation with scientific opinions of real and common interest, that is a constructive exchange of views promoting the interests of the common cause is avoided.

A good few years ago the Academy of Sciences laid down that the work of scholars with qualifications should be re-examined from time to time, and the candidate's etc. degree might be withdrawn from those who for five to seven years have done no research. The resolution had no teeth and very little was done as a result. It suffices for someone to write a thesis, pass the necessary examinations, and he has qualifications for life. Thus nobody requires systematic scientific work, or continued intellectual presence. A single thesis enables one to obtain a title and extra allowances until death.

In certain disciplines post-graduate degrees turned into a system of allowances. Examinations have to be passed if one wishes to continue doing research work. Such examinations have become formal conditions of promotion.

If degrees are conferred on undeserving persons, this is an insult to the whole of science. If a negative precedent occurs, if someone is granted a degree for a poor performance, what moral ground is there to object to the granting of a degree for other similar work? Poor performance in this way justifies the acceptance of forty, fifty or a hundred other poor theses.

The practice of science policy is also to be blamed for this, since, for example, university appointments have been subjected to the holding of a post-graduate degree. But if we have made a mistake, let us not be ashamed of rectifying it. A person may be an excellent teacher, someone who gives a start to future scientists, without having obtained any qualification himself. A person may be an outstanding healer likewise without a higher degree. The current situation must therefore be ended. The Academy of Sciences should do its best to stop this process of devaluation, and to enforce a much higher standard.

It is also a task of the Academy of Sciences to establish at last an evalua-

tive order of collective work. We all have a duty to promote the birth of such collective works.

Let us eliminate contingency, and let there be greater responsibility in selection on the basis of experience. Let us create the possibility of preventing abuses of knowledge in such a way that rejection should not mean disgrace, appeal should be possible, but that the feudal-minded hierarchy should stop strangling science.

In addition to exercising a selecting function, post-graduate degrees ought to mirror also the organic development of science, its relation to society, and to the economy.

One important task of the executives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences might be to revise the system of post-graduate degrees it awards, enforcing more consistently the social interest against the monopolistic position which keeps particular interests to the fore.

Present and future

Before the year 2000, having entered the last quarter of the century, we have to talk more, and in greater detail, about the future, doing something about it. In many respects all of us are working for the next century. We now lay the groundwork for the new era, and it is not irrelevant how we do it.

In this work, science has to play a conclusive and qualitatively new role which is now in the making. Science and research are organically linked with all aspects of social practice, without being distinct from them, and will in future simply become the duties of a job.

One has to make use of the opportunity of shaping the future scientifically. This is why the significance of investigating future tendencies of development, and the importance of long-range planning, has increased. We have to construe realistically the role played by the scientific and technological revolution. It has vast perspectives, but distilled, lifeless technocracy can make one blind and lead to the loss of human perspectives. This is why we have to concentrate on the scientific exploration of social, conscious, individual and community relationships, on the historical formation of the active cooperation of conscious communities. For this purpose science will require active, creative collectives, and men with real personalities. The two get on well together and even presuppose each other.

What Lenin had to say is most apposite in this connection:

“The hangers-on and spongers on the bourgeoisie described socialism as a

uniform, routine, monotonous, and drab barrack system . . . Only now is the opportunity created for the truly mass display of enterprise, competition and bold initiative . . . One of the most important tasks today, if not the most important, is to develop this independent initiative of the workers, and of all the working and exploited people generally, develop it as widely as possible in creative *organisational* work."*

In connection with the 1969 resolution on science policy there has been much discussion about democracy in science. Allow me to make a relevant point.

What can democracy be really like in science?

Someone remarked that the holder of a candidate's degree can receive more money to help him in his research than an academician or a university professor and head of department. I very much hope that in justified cases this is really so. I wish there were many such cases. Provision with funds should not be made dependent on status but on the subject and the result. I should again like to refer to Einstein, who was neither a candidate nor a university lecturer yet when he formulated his special theory of relativity, and fortunately he was not required to hold a post-graduate degree, or else he may not have obtained it to this day either; he might have failed in some of his special examinations. A judgement of scientific performances cannot depend on how old the person is or on his status. There is no progress if talent is not unconditionally supported. The great scientist is glad to see those more promising than he. He owes this to his moral standards. Appreciation should be based on the scale of values and knowledge, and not on official status. This is a primary democratic requirement.

It is known that the 11th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party has dealt in detail with questions of democracy, including democracy on the job.

Well, job democracy applies to research and science as well. Without looking for a forced analogy, we have to see clearly, in the improvement of the social efficacy of research and science, democracy on the job plays the same key role as in other sectors of life.

All that I have said about criticism, the true appreciation of research and scientific results, qualifications, and the researcher's ethics, is implied in democracy on the job. One may rightly ask therefore whether research establishments of the Academy, and other research authorities have done enough in shaping a democratic, creative atmosphere of the place of employment. As I see it, they have not, certainly not yet. It is hard to imagine

* V. I. Lenin: *Collected Works* Vol. 26, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972. pp. 404-409. "How to organise competition?", 1917.

that in places of research with a sincere, creative atmosphere, where open debate, the mutual confrontation of differing views, constructive criticism are the rule, there should be research projects which are alienated from social demand, and mostly serve individual ambitions and interests, being carried out by appropriating the needed research equipment and personnel. To further develop democracy in science is one of the most important tasks of science policy. Energetic measures should be taken against monopolistic positions and ambitions. Only in this way is it possible to guarantee the expansion of talents. Whereas socialism cannot afford to waste even one man fit for creative work in vanity fair.

Further development of research management

With the current revision of the implementation of the science policy directives, by improving the management of research, what has to be achieved first of all is that science and research development in Hungary should be more closely, more organically related to social practice, to the whole of society; that they be better integrated with the international—above all the socialist—division of labour. But this cooperation cannot be measured by the number of subjects of joint research; it is more essential to follow the same direction on the principles of this cooperation, and its Marxist-Leninist foundations. With a view to this broad integration internal integration has to be strengthened as well. Science should not be a separate, self-contained sector of social activity, it should be firmly linked to the economy, culture, education, state administration, politics, to the entire movement of society. That is, beside its reality-exploring function, its role in the shaping of reality should grow as well. All this does not, and cannot, jeopardise the autonomy of science and scientists and the scientific foundation of research.

It is still a weak point of science policy that it has been little able to draw into its scope the comprehensive guidance of international relations, and to ensure that domestic research development is more closely linked to social practice. There is still much to be done in these fields.

Open access in science, scientific ethics, democracy on the job are all tasks in which progress cannot be expected exclusively from a new system of management. The solution of these tasks in part belongs amongst the duties of the scientific institutes of the Academy. Progress can be expected only from the joint activity of the whole of Hungarian science, both research workers and those in charge of them.

Research must be directed based on the social and national economic interest. Here as well as everywhere this is what management has to serve. Good management is almost invisible, being of an ancillary character in the noblest sense of the word. At the Academy this means that the effectiveness of management has to manifest itself in the concentration of forces and in the results.

While stressing this, it also has to be said that here—just as in the arts and literature—creative discontent is equally needed. Science should feel the absence of commissions from the state, it should want more and expect more, and policy also should expect more because the sciences underwent rapid dynamic development precisely at the time when enterprise prospered and the demand for commissions was great. This kind of uninterrupted two-way process must enjoy support.

One cannot of course expect wonders from the improvement of management. There exists no automatism that settles things by itself, without cooperation, enterprise and risk-taking. We have to examine our common business and do so in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, understanding that it is necessary constantly to disturb minds and constantly to reconsider what was decided yesterday. This means that change is needed, and I am convinced that this need for change today comes from the depths of Hungarian science.

The freedom which the Party and the socialist system guarantee science in the interest of the people involves immense responsibilities exercising which is difficult and complicated. The country is mature enough to make better use of opportunities and responsibilities. When there is so much talk about the management of science, this means that scientists should assist in working out the system of management, it is they who can really implement the system in the creation of which they have participated. Scientists should help to ask questions, and formulate them well, for if they succeed in this, it will naturally be easier to answer them.

Changes ripe to be made offer an opportunity which may lead to better cooperation and speedier development, and which may in future enable us to remove a few recurring subjects from the agenda and to start seeking solutions to some problems requiring further efforts.

CULTURE, COMMUNITY, AND SOCIETY

by

TIBOR HUSZÁR

Part One

The question arises whether the last seven years are characterized by stagnation or dynamic development, whether, as a result of the introduction of the new system of economic management, the conditions for greater access to culture and education have become more favourable or were such unsolved problems pushed into the background following the application of the principle of profitability over a wider range, whether economic considerations necessarily strengthen the materialist approach. Has damage been done to the values of collectivism? Such and similar questions have cropped up in turn in the course of reflections on the economic and cultural development over the past seven years.

Questions are often dramatically formulated. Progress made during the last plan period, however, was much more prosaic. Factual analysis fails to confirm the uncritical eulogists of the new system of economic management or those who feared an apocalypse. One of the major results of this period is that public opinion has become more rational; it takes into account the contradictions, that is to say the paradox, that even achievements can have their seamy side. Different social spheres do not develop at an identical pace and justified demands may sometimes run counter to one another, and so on.

Emphasis on "either—or" is as recurrent a characteristic of the analyses of a dramatic

tone as the hope that a sharp line can be drawn between light and shade. The question may be asked whether or not positive and negative beginnings are clearly enough separated in social change; whether only wrong decisions have unfavourable consequences, while *all* the consequences of well-founded ones in accord with historical necessity were "favourable" and free from contradiction.

Sharp lines of distinction can, of course, be drawn in history. For instance, the interests of capitalists and workers act as a watershed. It is also beyond doubt that the political and ideological positions of imperialism and socialism are fundamentally divided by antagonistic contradictions. It is much more complex a venture to classify phenomena if, under the conditions of socialism, the different aspects of our own development and strivings are examined, if the sharp line of distinction is drawn in the day-to-day activities between phenomena, decisions or institutions. What is "good" or favourable and what is "bad" or unfavourable often occur simultaneously, they are intertwined and do not appear as unambiguous. It is the duty of the political leadership to study the nature of contradictions making full use of the social sciences, analysing the reactions of public opinion and trying to understand in what respect and to what extent negative implications are symptoms accompanying new institutions and relation

not to mention finding out their underlying causes. It must be borne in mind that everything is dependent on degree. In certain cases negative features might grow stronger at such a pace that intervention, that is a change in the original decision, proves to be necessary. On other occasions, however, tension remains within legitimate bounds thus serving as an impetus.

Basically criticism of the new system of economic management ignores such aspects of development. It does not reckon with the given historical circumstances, with the peculiar overlapping of past, present and future. It looks for that unambiguity offered so readily by Utopias even in places where contradictions render phenomena ambiguous. Thus it was supposed that each decision stimulating the development of the national economy directly serves culture. If, however, it disappoints expectations, the disillusioned reverse their position. Prominence given to the material needs of the workers drags them off their pedestal, since an appeal to individual interests makes people selfish. In reality the relations between the economy and politics and intellectual life are not as simple as all that. It is true that in the final resort it is life that determines mind (or ways of thinking), but life does not develop along straight lines. Changes become perceptible in the mind through a wide variety of refractions.

One of the characteristics of Hungarian development (which has not as yet been analysed adequately) is that prime consumer demands emerge simultaneously and intensively which have already been successfully satisfied by the bourgeoisie in capitalist countries with highly developed industries. At the same time such needs relating to social and cultural values arise as are connected with the essence of socialism and can only be met in a socialist society. The whole question of access to culture and the part played by the community in transforming its structure must be looked at in the light of this contradiction.

2

Culture under socialism needs an active and thinking public; the demand for knowledge, man taking an interest in things and wanting to know more are its preconditions. The question arises whether the new system of economic management has stimulated or weakened the demand for education and whether the cultural indices of the past seven years show a step forward or backward.

There are several intersecting tendencies. Over the past seven years the stress has been on qualitative indices alongside their quantitative counterparts in virtually every aspect of life.

The new system of economic management introduced new incentives on which it increasingly relies. Wages and other income are more directly attached to performance, and the indices reflect the efficiency and profitability of labour more tangibly. Although the possibilities in this respect are far from exhausted, the changes have made workers and members of the cooperative farms more interested in the progress made by their factory or farm. During the period of socialist construction the extent to which opportunities are exploited (another point at which the qualitative factors come into prominence) is dependent on how well-informed and educated those working in a certain factory or farm are, how wide their horizon is and what managers know of their rights and duties.

The structure of consumption has undergone remarkable changes. The proportion of durable consumer goods increased in family budgets. The number of refrigerators, washing machines and TV sets per one hundred households rose. By early 1974 one family in twenty owned a car.

Growing savings bank deposits show that many have major purchases in mind. Since this trend has coincided with the gradual introduction of a five-day week and increased leisure there is good reason to

assume that all this points to improving living conditions. A mechanized household releases energies to be devoted to fun and culture; television offers relaxation while providing information. Saturdays off allow growing numbers to attend theatres and functions arranged at local houses of culture.

Such consequences are undoubtedly present as well. Development, however, has not been, and could not be, free from contradictions in this field either. The historical background cannot be ignored. Intensive industrialization needs skilled workers, who are well educated and whose training continues in service. The number of those who completed eight grades of the general school has grown over the past thirty years; slightly over half of the population over the age of 15 have done so. Dynamic growth took place in the number of those who completed secondary school, college and university courses. In 1930, 2.4 per cent had completed secondary school and 1.1 per cent held a diploma or degree. By 1920 the figures were 9.4 and 3.3 per cent respectively. The number of highly qualified specialists is still not as high as intensive industrial development and intensive farming demand. Attendance at certain evening and correspondence courses has dropped over the past seven years, and this though general education and specialized training are of fundamental importance for economic growth in the long run, and for plans to give access to culture to increasing numbers.

Wage differentials between unskilled and semi-skilled work are not sufficient to offer an inducement to undergo training. Skilled workers who can earn a good living and who have perhaps completed secondary school are not keen on higher education, since they believe that their status on the job or in society will not really change after hard and long studies.

The younger generation of managers and executives already hold degrees. Older ones are reluctant to do their job and run the risks attendant on tertiary studies. Special

training courses for managers are therefore provided.

Temporary stagnation appears to be due also to the present stage in social mobility. This has affected virtually every section of society over the past thirty years. Over two-thirds of present members of the professions and managers come from working-class families, and many did manual work themselves. Much the same applies to clerks. Just over one-third of skilled workers (36 per cent), almost two-thirds of semi-skilled workers (60 per cent) and more than two-thirds of unskilled workers (68 per cent) come from peasant families. There have been changes not only in property relations but also in the way of life of farmers' co-operative members. They now operate machines, work in teams where each has his own job to do, direct technological processes, and so on. Adaptation demanded enormous energy especially in the years following 1948, the year of the major turn. The new managers and professional people virtually moved from one educational institution to another, attending political courses and learning languages. A similar wave of studying was discernible on other levels as well. Thirst for knowledge suppressed for centuries broke to the surface and took advantage of the possibilities made available by the people's power. The importance of this process cannot be overestimated. It rendered void not only the cultural monopoly of the former ruling classes but it also resulted in Hungary catching up with the leading European nations in educational standards. 1969 figures show Hungary in third place after Poland and Switzerland as regards completed school years. A high price had to be paid for this rapid development. Many spent their weekends with their books. Less time could be devoted to fun or relaxation. Members of a family barely said how do you do to each other for days on end. Signs indicating fatigue were discernible in certain sections as early as in the mid-1960s. One can only suspect the extent and depth of this process.

Changes in the structure of consumption followed suit. At this point what was sound came to be combined with detrimental aspects. Past and present overlapped plastically. Rapid progress was frequently based on an excessive or at least one-sided concentration of energies. The consolidation that followed the crisis of 1956 which involved every section of Hungarian society, and the socialist reorganization of agriculture as well, produced comparative calm. An atmosphere of social security induced families to draw up long-term plans. Fundamental problems such as the home and the education of children were stressed. Some began to plan the acquisition of a car, and a holiday home, ranging all the way from a simple hut to a cottage on the shores of Lake Balaton. Realities, however, limited the area of movement in this field as well. The demand for the rapid acquisition of durable commodities characteristic of virtually every sociologically defined section of society, together with the fast expansion of requirements concerning "qualitative consumption", will for many years to come have to reckon with the backward conditions of outlying isolated homesteads, and the substantial number of one-room dwellings, poor standard wooden floors and adobe walls, a heritage that casts a dark shadow on the lives of millions even now.

The 1970 census showed a considerable decrease in the number of one-room dwellings, but their proportion, 46 per cent, is still high; there has been a remarkable improvement in the supply of modern conveniences. Homes are better equipped and supplied with public utilities, but figures show that at the moment only every fourth can be described as having "all mod. cons." Since 1960 when homes without such conveniences amounted to 80 per cent of the total it has been possible to achieve a reduction of only 20 per cent. A considerable proportion is privately owned. According to the census of 1970, 67 per cent of homes are inhabited by owners, 29 per cent by

tenants, 1 per cent by joint tenants and the remaining 3 per cent are linked to the occupation of a certain position. How to enlarge or rebuild what has been inherited from the past is a concern shared by the state and the owners of the homes, the overwhelming majority of which are manual labourers. Even if the job of reconstructing such a large number of homes is not discussed here because of the special nature of this paper, it is evident without further analysis why problems such as the building or acquisition of a new home or the enlargement of the old one, figure as key items in family budgets. It was natural for a worker or peasant and his family some thirty years ago to live in one room without any of the modern conveniences. Today this is unnatural and almost unbearable. The young insist not only on solving their housing problems within the shortest possible time but also on enjoying life. They want to travel, and go on holidays. They think of their desire for a car as legitimate, and not as living beyond one's means.

Since the mid-1960s, but especially since the introduction of the new system of economic management, the authorities have paid due regard to such demands. Supplies of building materials were improved and credit facilities expanded. But monthly incomes in the 2,000-3,000 forint range can only in a limited way finance such requirements. That is why both young and old in all sections of society do overtime, take a second job, do building work in their time off, and so on. No doubt this process involved the danger of "privatization" but the crucial element of endeavours of this kind is to provide millions with basic living conditions. One has to live in an ideological ivory-tower to identify this with the consumer mentality prevalent in the US and other developed capitalist countries.

At the same time it is beyond doubt that changes in the way of life consumed energies that had served culture in the years immediately following the liberation. Besides

the increase in the number of television viewers, the "regrouping" of energies is also responsible for the decline in theatre and cinema attendances and in the number of people looking for entertainment in houses of culture, or those who want to carry on their studies. This process does not assume the same form in different sections of the society, nor can it be judged in the same manner. A detailed examination of such processes is a major task for the years to come.

3

History set the limits of a definite area of movement not only in respect of the economic basis. Social conditions and social intercourse also bear the marks of the past.

From the point of view of the subject of this paper familiarity with development characteristics of communities, groups and associations of different character is of particular importance. The most ancient communities are based on ties of blood. Not only Gypsy clans, but Hungarian early twentieth-century society as well, based on the family as it was, showed this "natural" character.

The characteristic family of feudal and capitalist Hungary was the extended peasant family which acted simultaneously as a unit of production and consumption. It differed according of the stage of bourgeois development of the particular section of the peasantry. The family house was simultaneously home and workshop. The family looked after the children and the old, and inheritance of property was regulated by strict laws. Work and leisure were not separated and holidays were all family holidays; generally, the rites of christening, marriage and burial and religious rites as such provided a change from work. Relatives and the village were the family's range; contacts were personal and of an "I and thou" nature. The forms of communication were hermetic and strictly regulated by tradition. Considering that even

in 1940 over four and a half million Hungarians lived on peasant holdings, and that the social life of the families living in small towns was, for other reasons, confined to the cultivation of family ties, it will be evident how patriarchal and closed was the stock of experiences passed down to those who inhabited the country subsequent to the liberation.

Naturally the picture drawn here is no more than an outline, for it does not reckon with the hundreds of thousands of migratory harvest workers and navvies. The traditions of gangs of reapers, threshers and railroadmen, or of the organizations for young men and girls, the institutionally established and legally regulated communities, the agrarian socialist movements and the memories of the Hungarian Red Army, reading circles and choirs, mutual help associations and political and cultural movements of various sorts were present as well. Careful consideration of these traditions is an essential precondition for reviving or finding the community forms of collective cultural activity under socialist conditions.

The living conditions of the workers were basically different. In capitalist large-scale industry home and job are separated, there is a distinct cycle of labour and leisure; a working-class family is not a labour unit. The sphere of social contacts broadens. Working-class families outgrow a patriarchal framework; those employed in large-scale industry are aware on the job of the meaning of co-ordinating energies over a wide range and of the possibilities involved in co-operation and joint action. A capitalist plant is not a community; workers achieve community experience through struggles for higher wages and strikes, and through the work for organizations safeguarding their interests. Under the specific conditions of the Horthy régime when the area of movement of the trade unions was strictly confined, the official leadership of the Social Democratic Party was pretty academic and the outlawed Communist Party was forced

underground, the communities became a framework of life for a comparatively small section of the working class, a framework that determined their thinking as a whole and their way of life. Certain trade union district groups, those of leather workers, tailors and gold and silversmiths, workers' choirs, the Ironworkers Sports Club and the Workers Athletics Club must be ranked among such communities. These were not purely sports, cultural or trade union organizations by a long shot. Collective cultural or sports pursuits acted as the framework of the struggle for a new society; the ethos, the awareness of joint action and collective struggle provided the philosophy and the experience of belonging together. At the same time specific reflexes of collectivity came into being in these communities; leisure spent together, community singing, knowing each other and responsibility born for each other came to be an internal demand.

Communities of this kind are "alien cells" in a capitalist society. The dissolution of natural communities and the atomization of individuals are specific characteristics of bourgeois society. Under the property relations of capitalism the regulation of either production or social processes is not a communal activity. Society is a system of communities, only commodity and monetary relations are universal. Capital causes every community operating within a given system to become an illusionary community. The communities of the workers can only preserve their community features in the face of opposition displayed by the ruling régime. In the final analysis this fact explains the isolation, one of the most tormenting and unsurmountable symptoms accompanying bourgeois existence. Individualism is not simply a moral conviction but the mirror image in the mind of the actual way of existence of the bourgeois. This fact cannot be counter-balanced by the educational experiments that are otherwise very purposive and rich in ideas which, in an attempt to take the edge of the young people's demand

for a community, turning self-government into a mere game or, in the case of the Hungarian wolf-cub movement, a community in nature, using the romanticism of forest life to satisfy the demand for communal living in children.

The tensions that accumulate in society re-tune the internal life of communities that were set up originally with quite different purposes. For example, the Horthy régime established several organizations and communities that turned out to serve opposition movements, thus running counter to their intended goals. This opposition character accounted for the cohesion transforming the game into a major cause and the manipulated intention into an internal motive. The history of the Györfly College offers a particularly instructive example.

Accumulation of community experience involving hundreds of thousands took place only in the years after the liberation. They saw the formation of factors leading to the birth of community movements developing with unparalleled dynamism; they included a system of immediate and most distant objectives based on and verifying one another, historical tasks necessitating joint action and the demand for and possibility of working one one's own initiative. It was above all the "presence" in history and not simply the educational intentions of the leaders that made the branches of the Hungarian Communist Party, the Organization of the Hungarian Democratic Youth, the organizations of the Movement of the Young Workers and Apprentices of the Trade Unions and, in a different sense, the People's Colleges and the homes of the National Association of Apprentices and Young Workers into communities. The land reform, movements for the rebuilding of towns destroyed by war, the reconstruction of railways and mines, and the struggle for nationalization were the objectives that served as the "material" for community action in the years after the Liberation.

In addition to establishing an ethos of

responsibility for the common cause these organizations also provided an experience of collective action that cannot be substituted by anything else. The members of these organizations became good friends, they needed to be together and to have personal ties.

From the point of view of the present debates it is highly instructive that in those years these political organizations served also as a framework for cultural and educational work; moreover, youth organizations were sport clubs as well. That was the way in which "public activity" and "private life" or participation in political discussions and entertainment could complement one another. This helped to further the constant widening of the group of the politically conscious. To have political perspectives is a result and not the beginning. The motives prompting one to join a movement can be various. What is decisive from a sociological aspect is the identity of interests. An individual, however, can become aware of this only gradually. In the life of quite a few the workers' dramatic society or the sports section of the Organization of Hungarian Democratic Youth acted as the medium bringing them closer to politics. In the first stage one played a part only as a member of the drama group, then one started touring the countryside with the other "actors", one listened to speakers addressing rallies and became an active participant of debates. Meanwhile the range of one's horizon widened practically unnoticed and one became a collective-minded person concerned with politics. Acting together with others and the recognition that the paths of public welfare and the advancement of the individual are inseparable in the new society, became part and parcel or the essential purpose of life.

It goes without saying that the years in question were far from idyllic. The stream of politics involved hundreds of thousands, but it failed to extend to the whole of society that came to be divided in the political

struggles, or even to every section of the working classes. We know now that there was plenty of ambiguity in the unanimous objectives and that many hopes turned out to be mere illusions. There is no doubt however that much experienced in those years remains present in the Hungarian national consciousness as a living tradition both as memories and as ideals. Those members of that generation whose faith remained unshaken, justifiably demand that present reality confirm it to them.

4

Socialist society endeavours to mould the future consciously. It reckons not only with the past, and while doing so it does not simply wish to verify the present, but while examining the present it also purposively explores and discloses elements pointing to the future.

In a historical perspective the question of community is not only, and not primarily, an educational one. The community is a typical form of organization under communist conditions of production, in other words and according to Marx's concept communist society is the system of communities composed of free individuals. Such communities cannot be concocted; the citizens and institutions of socialist society will establish the appropriate forms of the community in the process of historical practice following many an experiment and at the expense of their own sweat and sufferings. This is not going to take place in a vacuum, but on the concrete historical "battlefield", with the forms of communication established on the basis of socialist property and production conditions, with the positive beginnings being further strengthened and developed.

The picture of an industrialized and highly organized society that develops its independent activities and freedom on this basis and not the visions of communities of

consumers separated and isolated from one another are what a reading of Marx will yield. Marx did not outline a detailed picture of the society of the future because of his specific methodological principles. He confined himself to indicating the necessities that were projectible from British industrial conditions in the 1860s.

The wealth of society which is a prerequisite of communist communities can only be brought about on the basis of completely automated production the standards of which are much higher than presently known. In this respect Marx referred not only to the changed role of science but also to co-operation over a wide range and high standards of organization. Marx argued that reciprocal interdependence would have to become refined before one could even consider social communities.

That is why the socialization of the forces of production is the first realistic step on the road leading to the communist society in several stages. Only social property makes it possible for exchange not to be the exchange of exchange-values but the exchange of activities that are determined by the demands and objectives of the community.

Society taking possession of the forces of production, however, is only the initial and not the concluding stage of the completion of the community principle. In order to be able to co-ordinate the diverse development of man and the demands of community production making sure that the division of labour, co-operation and the degree of organization should not act as the limits but the means of man's self-realization it is necessary for society to possess a much higher production potential than today.

To this end not only work performed by man must be multiplied; the intellectual powers of mankind have to be multiplied as well, becoming productive and regulating factors. Actual wealth is growing less dependent on the time and quantity of work invested. Science and technological progress emerge

as the principal factors. That is what makes it possible for a worker to be concerned with maintenance and regulation in his relationship to the production process.

As a result of this process not only the structure of production will be modified, but there will also be a fundamental change in its function, or if you like, in its ontological status. In the history of mankind to date production has served the metabolism of man and Nature. Man was capable of establishing a second nature inserting tools as "in betweens" between himself and the material to be worked. Capitalist large-scale industrial production already transformed the labour process into an industrial one after inserting the industry between the society and the inorganic nature. Under capitalist conditions of production, however, workers could only be a subordinated factor in the process of production. They were defenceless against employers who used the latest achievements of science and technology—within given limits—primarily not for cutting working hours but to obtain increased surplus value. Thus capitalism brought about a contradiction. On the one hand it brought to life all the forces of science, nature and social intercourse in order to make the production of wealth comparatively independent of working hours used for this process, and, on the other, the enormous social forces thus created were intended to be measured by working time and to be confined to limits that were necessary for maintaining the values produced as values. As a result, both the forces of production and their social implications (both of which are the different aspects of the development of the social individual) are taken by capitalism only as tools and they accordingly function to perform production on its own limited basis.

Communism, on the other hand, takes advantage of every force offered by science and nature, "social combination and social intercourse" for the purpose of shorter working hours parallel with a decrease in necessary working hours. A considerable

part of the labour power of workers is released. The development of the social individual becomes the end instead of the means. Workers are positioned alongside the production process instead of emerging as its principal agent. Manual labour performed by man is no longer the cardinal source of social wealth, nor is the time during which he works, but the expropriation of his own general production force, his understanding of nature and that he has learnt to rule over nature collectively. In other words, it is the development of the social individual who lives within the community and selects this community at his own free choice and who emerges as the cornerstone of production and wealth.

This leads to an increase in leisure. Considerable energies are released for self-education on a society-wide scale. What appears to be utopia today becomes a possibility, the precondition of further development at a certain stage of progress: man is no longer tied to a single form of activity.

In order to enable man to subordinate material powers to his own will again, that is to become the master of his living and working conditions, to avoid being the prisoner of a single segment of social labour and to acquire means in the community (or system of communities) necessary for developing his bent in every possible direction, it is essential to create the objective conditions for the interpretation in a new manner of social wealth and for the demand for the fullest possible achievement of this richness. These two factors are indivisible. Failure because of moralizing criticism to create objective conditions, that is the proper standards of the forces of production and their social implications, not concentrating the forces at our disposal on the systematic development of productive capacity in a country that is underdeveloped in several respects, and on the strengthening of the social approach embodied in social property will frustrate the accomplishment of the job undertaken in the same manner as if the

adaptation of the socialist goals, values and demands were neglected with an activity that is in harmony with this development and invariably sets out from prosaic reality. A criticism that condemns the present for what it has not done in accomplishing the ideals of communism, regarding the reversal of the alienation process, a diversely developed man, society as the system of communities, etc. is as much anti-dialectical and superficial as a pragmatic attitude that focuses attention on the present only, leaving objectives and community ideals for later consideration.

There is a great deal we don't know yet about communist society. The knowledge we possess at the moment, however, including the development trends of modern capitalist industry, the structural characteristics of the socialist countries and the infantile disorders that had to be overcome confirm Marx's supposition that the diverse development of man and the universality of the community form of existence based on the autonomy of the individual are its indispensable preconditions. This very brief and sketchy theoretical detour is thought to be justified in order to include the perspectives of the future with the effect of bringing home the idea that the standards of public access to culture and community institutions are not fringe symptoms and secondary elements of socialist change, but that they are related to the very essence. They simultaneously stand for the objective and become the preconditions of further progress in proportion to their accomplishment. The standards of culture and education, and the strengthening and institutionalization of communal thinking are as important measuring units of the progress by socialism as the indices of production. Moreover, at a given stage of progress, parallel with qualitative factors coming into prominence, the development of the forces of production increasingly become functions of these factors.

No one challenges the truth of this "in

the abstract". If, however, formulation is more concrete, we find ourselves in no time in the midst of the contradictions mentioned earlier.

Those hostile to ambiguity would like to end contradictions and eliminate paradoxes. History, however, does not tolerate arbitrary solutions. Taking advantage of commodity-money relations within the framework of a socialist planned economy and at the present stage of development is an objective necessity. At the same time, however, it is also true that the magic force of commodity production which is made a fetish of, and is a point described by Marx in *Das Kapital* with such plasticity, can only be counter-balanced but cannot be eliminated completely as long as communist forms of distribution have not been introduced.

That is why negative influences have to be reckoned with well in advance, and deliberate endeavours must be made to limit and counter-balance them. Verbal solutions, however, are insufficient; a criticism of phenomena conditioned by the economic situation that is confined merely to words can never be effective however passionately something is said. Comprehensive measures have to be taken along with purposive and organized support for institutions carrying socialist values and forms of intercourse. Such issues that range from the problems of social property and socialist democracy through science and educational policy to questions of health and social policy include all the elements that determine, in their totality, the socialist character of social conditions.

(To be continued)

MIKLÓS BORSOS AT SEVENTY

by

VIKTÓRIA L. KOVÁSZNAI

Miklós Borsos the sculptor was born in 1906 in Nagyszeben (today in Rumania). In 1922 the family repatriated to Győr where Borsos registered at the *gimnázium* but left after three months. He trained as a goldsmith and started to draw and paint without instruction. In 1928 he went to Florence and spent five months painting. In 1929 he entered the Budapest Academy of Fine Arts, left it six months later and wandered all over the Ligurian sea coast, the Côte d'Azur and Provence.

He had his first exhibition of paintings in 1932, and started to sculpt in 1933. In 1936-37 he became acquainted with Greek and Egyptian sculptures in Vienna. From 1946 to 1960 he taught at the Budapest Academy of Applied Arts. Besides several Hungarian distinctions he has won a prize in 1959 at the International Biennale in Carrara. His works have been exhibited numerous times in Hungary and abroad, and many of them are in collections and museums in Hungary and elsewhere.

Now, on the occasion of Borsos's 70th birthday, the Hungarian National Gallery paid homage to the artist with a one-man-show. It was a good opportunity to see his collected works and to survey his rich career.

The exhibition shows clearly that the artist's work, especially in his later years, has been guided by a vision of the organic unity of nature and art, while his method has been to conceptualize in forms. The great generation of artists before him certainly influenced his work but together with Brancusi and Henry Moore, he was also inspired by Latin culture, especially in his attraction to portraiture.

Despite the similarities, there are also substantial differences which stem from Borsos's roots in Hungarian art. For historical reasons 20th-century Hungarian history was characterized by a certain phase delay, al-

On Miklós Borsos see also illustrated articles in Nos. 10, 20 and 35 of the NHQ.

lowing more backward tastes to limit any sudden progresses of the arts. And so despite its remarkable achievements the avant-garde did not determine the direction of plastic arts in Hungary between the wars.

This, and the fact that Borsos was self-taught, influenced his outlook. His starting point was Greek and Egyptian art as interpreted by the renaissance sculptors of Florence. In his first period—from 1933 to 1947—this motif was particularly perceptible in his blocklike basalt sculptures. Basalt, being difficult to carve, determined the shape of the work. So his sculptures in that period, including *Mother* (1933), *Smile* (1933), *Mourner* (1934) and *Worry* (1933), were large unit forms without elaborate details. He carved his stone blocks only until he could give the figure the idea of an object. The movements of his figures were closed, their expression concise.

His portraits of the period were closer to the principles of art as imitation of nature. His *Woman's Head* (1942) also of basalt, is set frontally whereas his portrait of the painter Jenő Barcsay and of the art historian Károly Lyka uses position of the head as part of the characterization. The vertical position of the *Woman's Head* emphasizes frankness and security. (It is not accidental that Borsos calls these "heads" and not portraits.) The mass of hair around the face is not detailed: it forms one block with the face like the metal masks inspired by African art: the smooth surface, the eyes, eyebrows, mouth, and nose merge into one. Although all these details project seriousness, a fine smile looms on the face to give it a radiant expression. His female nudes are also block-like but sometimes they follow the architectural principles of Egyptian sculpture. (*Sitting Nude*, 1940).

His achievements offered Borsos several possibilities for further progress. Some of his works carved in white marble around 1947–48, the *Breast* (1947, A.G. Miller, New York) or his *Woman's Head* (1948) show the direction he chose following Brancusi's example in studying the early Greek Kyklad marble sculptures, in order to find the means to express the interior nucleus of phenomena and more or less peel of all extension layers. The first sign of this ambition appeared in 1934 in his small torso but he followed this up only ten years later.

Brancusi and Borsos, although mostly independently of each other, were both inspired by the idea of the unity of material and form, and by the notion that though the artist should present only one basic form of his theme, it should be done perfectly. Their substantial difference resides in their different approach: Borsos has always wanted to lead back to and identify man with nature, and his works were always close to the world of nature, whereas Brancusi had no interest in identifying man with nature.

The process started with the *Breast* was picked up only much later

because of the general stagnation of Hungarian art. The next period in Borsos's sculpture were the years from 1950 to 1958. At that time official cultural policy in Hungary kept the plastic arts within narrow bounds. While the artist had to approach his themes from a realistic angle, he still preserved the basic features of his style inasmuch as he persevered with his principal forms. But he did change his material, using mostly the softer and more malleable red marble. His *Tihany Shepherd* (1952) is more an idealized head than a portrait: an old, moustachioed, wrinkled peasant with a hat pulled down on his head. There is only a hint of his moustache and the neck of his shirt. The idealized portrait means that Borsos (who works from spring to autumn at his Balaton villa) sculpted his peasant as a specific Balaton type to represent the unity of nature and man. In his other sculptures this ideal character coincides with the classical spirit of *Demeter* (1953) or *Pannonia* (1955), recalling his earlier works only in their massive form and sensitive, finely polished surface. His two female heads from 1957, the white marble *Day* and black basalt *Night*, already foreshadow his next period both in style and symbolic content.

Borsos returned to the course begun in the forties only in 1959. From then onwards his works show increasing intellectual concentration and formal abstraction. He analysed the bases of existence, the phenomena of nature, and tried to interpret its ancient laws, units, and processes. By means of nature's forms he wanted to show nature's creative force, and he made his sculptures with nature's changing, evolving methods. His models were the suggestive forms of water-formed rocks, he carved his figures from the marble blocks only until they suggested a shape. The smoothness of his surfaces evoked the destructive and creative force of water, sun, and air.

Borsos might have shared Moore's sculptural concepts but his forms were different. Like Moore, he thought that a sculpture should have an abstract and yet organic form, recognisable within the world of human forms while showing a certain pathos and fervour. He remained close to man and human perceptibility. His forms were not fully detached from the realistic forms of nature and soil because he considered natural formations as hidden treasures of form. This principle also existed in early Greek sculpture. The ideal of beauty suggested by these works developed according to the principle of the unity of form and emotion.

While the English sculptor always preferred "open forms", Borsos, like Brancusi, stuck with "closed forms". Moore sculpted dynamic prototypes but Borsos's figures are calm, harmonious and smooth-surfaced. Like Brancusi, Borsos has a deep respect for his material and he models it masterfully. His choice of material serves the message of his work. The

direct moulding of stone and marble makes the creator identify with his material and gain inspiration from it while he is working.

An important feature of Borsos' work is simplicity, which brings him closer to the essence of things. The titles of his works may be realistic—*Bud* (1965), *Erato* (1966), *Birth* (1968), *Germ* (1969), *Seed* (1974), *Germination* (1974), but their purified message gives them a symbolic meaning. Some of his works express mysticism, he likes the world of myths as manifested in his *Heads of Mermaids* (from 1963) inspired by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's novelle, *Lighea*, and in his *Birth of Venus* (1959).

The sculpture *Birth with Egg* (1968) is a beautiful symbol of the revival and continuity of life. The form is recognisable as a bird only after some looking but then the realistic principal form is evident. Nature appears in an organic form, for the artist's aim is not the absolute form itself. The bird's body is perforated, the egg in the cavity is the symbol of birth. The surface is finely polished. Borsos has not renounced the possibility of expression offered by the reflection of light: on the marble's softly shining surface the motion of light varies according to the spectator's movements and one feels himself a part of nature. The rhythm obtained by the work's harmonious proportions evokes an almost musical sensation.

Not all works in the artist's later period express serenity and harmony despite finely worked surfaces, for they are not all smooth. His *Orpheus* (1962) and *Waiting for Godot* (1962) are rough to the touch, their surface rugged. Becket's figures express hopelessness—there is no way out by holding on to and supporting each other. Their insecurity is stressed by the sculpture's texture, though the bird linking the two has an expression of hope to project the artist's optimism. These works are a continuation of the earlier, more expressive, more dramatic and passionate works of Borsos such as the *Mourner*; at present this style is represented mainly in graphic works.

Borsos is a versatile artist: he also does embossed work and is an outstanding designer of medals. Embossing has been a lifelong activity with him and although these works complement his stone sculptures we must approach them differently. They are done by the repoussé technique used by goldsmiths; their dimensions varied from palm size to several square metres. Borsos started out as a painter, as reflected in his embossed work. The beautifully shaped figures of the *Couple* (1939) or *Love* (1939) create a monumental effect. The large unit forms of the human body protruding from the flat surface are delineated with firm contours.

The *Struggle*, a relief of over one square metre was made in 1975. Its theme is biblical: Jacob's struggle with the Angel. In this genre the artist manifested his mastery of composition. The sharp downward lines of the

Angel's wings on each side compose a triangle holding the scene, and symbolize the struggle with God. On the left side the male nude's back stepping foot and the Angel's leg create an inner triangle—these geometrical forms ensure the work's stability. The drama of the struggle is expressed by the tense muscles and the feet strained against the background, throwing the geometrical order off balance. The work's style is very much like Borsos' earlier reliefs, showing his unbroken continuity, though the *Struggle* is more like a painting, its details more elaborated.

He has been making medals since 1947 and his work can be divided into several periods. His most individual and best period lasted until 1958 when his style was quite independent of any trend or group. He relied on the basic laws of classical medalling, and worked out his style after thorough historical studies of the genre. He has appropriated everything from the almost onestroke characterization of barbarian coins and the chiseled technique of antique coins to Pisanello. Like these predecessors, he carves his works directly into the negative, hence the surface of his medals is flat, the forms composed of sharp and cutting lines. With their unchiselled background and sharp, dynamic form they create an effect of movement. (*Gyula Illyés* reverse, 1950).

The transposition of a painting onto a medal raises special problems. On his *Rembrandt* medal (1952) he adapted the scene of David and Saul but took from Rembrandt's painting only what he considered essential for his own purpose. Borsos' medal is a poetic rendering of the pacified soul, it is his confession. Despite the small size the details are abundant and every gesture and movement serves to evoke a mood of intimacy. He filled out the given circular form harmoniously by slight changes in the king's figure and a masterful arrangement of the drapery. Although I have not analysed his drawings here, they are of essential importance for Borsos's whole oeuvre is built on his knowledge and mastery of drawing.

This sculptor shows in his work that he followed everything that was happening in Europe and chose what he wanted to appropriate from it to make into an organic part of his own art. His utilization of the achievements of contemporary art has meant a great deal to Hungarian sculpture to bring it out of its phase delay. Borsos's outlook on Europe was all the more important as a contribution to that development which could come only from a combination of European achievements and domestic traditions.



MIKLÓS BORSOS: TORSO (1948, MARBLE, 53 CM)



István Petrács

MIKLÓS BORSOS: PORTRAIT IN HAT (1961, MARBLE, 58 CM)



MIKLÓS BORSOS: STARGAZER (1962, MARBLE, 43 CM)



MIKLÓS BORSOS: LIGHEA (1963, MARBLE, 26 CM)



István Petrács

MIKLÓS BORSOS: BIRD AND EGG (1968, MARBLE, 40 CM)

István Petrács

MIKLÓS BORSOS: LAJOS KASSÁK (1969, RED MARBLE, 47 CM) ►



MIKLÓS BORSOS:
REMBRANDT
MEDAL (1952,
BRONZE, 138 CM)



REVERSE OF THE
MOZART MEDAL,
(1956,
BRONZE,
MOULDED, 128 CM)

István Petrács





MIKLÓS BORSOS:
FIGHT (1975,
COPPER RELIEF,
100×92 CM)



REVERSE OF THE
ILLYÉS MEDAL (1950,
BRONZE MOULDED,
81 MM)

István Petráš

MODERN HUNGARIAN POETRY

MIKLÓS VAJDA, EDITOR

WITH A FOREWORD BY WILLIAM JAY SMITH

320 pp. 41 PHOTOGRAPHS

This unique anthology consists of poems by forty-one contemporary Hungarian poets living and writing in the postwar years. It is to date the single most comprehensive collection of modern Hungarian poetry available in English. Following rough translations from the Hungarian, the poems have been put into final poetic form by major American and British poets, among them Donald Davie, Robert Graves, Ted Hughes, Charles Tomlinson, Edwin Morgan, Kenneth McRobbie, Daniel Hoffmann, Richard Wilbur, Barbara Howes, and William Jay Smith. Culled largely from the pages of *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, the poems represent the work of Hungary's most important modern poets, including Gyula Illyés, István Vas, Sándor Weöres, Anna Hajnal, János Pilinszky, Ágnes Nemes Nagy, László Nagy, and Ferenc Juhász. *Modern Hungarian Poetry* contains an introduction by Miklós Vajda, a foreword by William Jay Smith of Columbia University, and a biographical note along with a photograph of each poet.

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LÁSZLÓ BENJÁMIN

POEM BY AN UNKNOWN POET FROM
THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY

They ranged themselves in facing lines
—switches would soon be thrust in their hands—
and we were braced to run the gauntlet
down through that pure and heartless band.

It is to induce salvation in us
that ethics swishes from both sides;
and if not by fear and humiliation,
we're bent by chronic belly-gripes.

Endless vigilance, the very virtues
thumped into my long-hunted spine
cheated me of my power to act,
that many-splendoured only-mine.

Between four-dimensioned hell and
two-dimensioned heaven, intention
is no more than a scurrying shadow,
reality a fading apparition.

The world is both a game and a role,
and anyone shouldering its truths should
turn himself to a harlequin
when sets become discarded wood.

Let him play for life and death,
play (he thinks) the man of action.
If being true's a sin, we must
pretend right through to self-deception.

The double line remains unmoved.
A man's face begins to change.
And he forgets his memory,
bricks up all his thoughts, makes strange

his decent ordinary speech
clattering like a jester's rattle:
to alienate false friends, to fool
the informer, he must do his Hamlet.

And the words from the deep!—from those born
to be industrious, born to console:
yet even they, reaching the peak,
wore holy claptrap for the cold.

I gave the age the best I had,
it made me in return the gift
of an individual's death—
and this I think should make us quits.

Since I, if I wanted to outwit
its pretty schizophrenic teasings,
should really have been Caesar, not
this faded epigone of Jesus.

Marches blare out in my ears,
armies mobilize, my name
is being called. What name is it?
Is my name truly still the same?

I know the world needs every man
to lift its burden by one shoulder.
But tell this to the one who bore
my name, tell it to that stranger.

CAVE DRAWINGS

1

A fire in a worldwide darkness.
The old folks' stories.
Through the words and the bones, over the stones,
blackhearted shadows flicker,
negatives of flames, night's
unpredictable monster-cubs,
ravening phantoms. The terrors
of childhood. The dead.
Fear lives in my skull,
in my stomach. By day it lives there,
in my dreams it lives there, I fight it,
fight death coming at me from all quarters.
Fear makes me think.
I waylay the shadows curling across the rocks,
out of the twilight, my fear carves them,
I bind them in unflickering stone.
Copies, imitations? No, but transmuted!
For these are the bold spirits, the foxy hunters,
the fertile mothers, the masters
and guardians and renewers,
the ones that shine out of the dark,
not prisoners but keepers of time.
From the rock-wall they survey their bones.

2

Under my feet the stone,
paved world of men,
hordes, petrol-stench.
Modern times!

A spade's depth under the stone
the earth's worms are swarming,
the upholders of order, the doers of justice.
And sunk in deeper, the junk:
the buckles and the bones.

The ferns, the steamy jungles,
 gardens of Semiramis, wonders of the world
 all pressed in plant-collectors' wallets,
 millennia in slivers,
 laminated history.
 Nothing but the hopes of those who were shut out
 of the promised land—salvation—age of gold—
 agnostic heaven: nothing but the future.

It's all one!—the knuckles sketch a gesture.
 No use!—the jaw shards clatter.
 The future began when
 silent death fumbled over us,
 rolled our bones in earth.
 We are advertisements for hopelessness,
 agitators for drift:
 Remember death!

3

I do remember death,
 and I commemorate the dead.
 While I am here, I carve the images
 of life, the words of life, in the stones of the city,
 in the memory of the living.
 As for that clutter of bones in the ground,
 that toothless skull,
 everything I shall come to—
 it is not that future I am concerned with.
 In case they should be buried with me, my plans
 I want changed to everyday things.
 In the present tense.
 My burdens are for no other shoulders!
 For good order, for good hunting,
 for ourselves and for the unborn
 I have sought out friendly hands,
 called to kindred passions,
 pulled hatred on my head:
 and for something more than fear of the dark.

Translated by Edwin Morgan

MIHÁLY VÁCI

THE MOST-AGE

See how we produce
with the most modern technology
for the most varied purposes
our most identical products,
in the most varied assortments—but within these
keeping a most eagle eye
on the most similar measurements
most understandably, surely, for within each group
the most minute variation
would cause the most massive confusion, this alone
must be most clearly
most understandable, must it not.

Following the most international interests
the most individual requirements
must be the most universally satisfied. Today
the most individual is what
is the most ubiquitous, and
the most original is what
is the most such-like as
the most absolutely
non-like. Everyone
would most preferably be like what today
mostly everyone is. The
most individual individual is
the most similar to everyone and the one
we can most readily be similar to. The
most original is what
most can
most readily attain. Today the
most dissident is the one who's
the most readily acceptable. The
most dissenting, to whom
most people
most readily

give assent in most things. The
 most revolutionary, whatever
 can be played with most safely
 with the most innocuous aim
 with the most meaninglessness
 for the most people.

Today the
 most
 is the
 mere.

This perhaps is
 the most understandable
 even for the most few
 and the most futile too, is it not.

Translated by Edwin Morgan

SÁNDOR CSÓRI

WHISPERS, FOR TWO VOICES

I was there,
 yes, I was there,
 a voice whispered to me between
 two faded chairs: don't go away, do you hear? don't go away!
 if you go it will be as if three of you were going!
 as if five of you were going,
 as if a hundred of you were going,
 and in the glass-splintered winter
 the trees will wait in vain
 for your caresses,
 the wheezing thrushes for your crumbs,
 do you hear? you could still become the organiser of the earth,
 the earth's best man—

I shun the cities, they yap from the distance
 like dogs,
 and shun the forests because they are plundered by owls.

I would rather run back to your hair,
 to your mouth,
 to your creaking wardrobes,
 and because you are always craving
 I would feed you with myself, my illumination,
 my madness, here you are, here is summer,
 the blossom of acacia,
 blue plum of the seas: the earth,
 and I would love you
 and I would love you.

Translated by Alan Dixon

ISTVÁN CSUKÁS

THE MACADAM ROAD REMEMBERS

The remembering macadam road rolls
 tanks in Its dream, soldiers shot in the head
 march and streamers of gauze trail after them:
 moonlight; machine-gun nests, warm as laps,
 call on It in the curves, at rheumatic milestones,
 at village-end, and It by-passes, time and again, the wrecked
 airplane and charred pilot with glittering teeth,
 and pauses for awhile at the mass grave full of scrambled bones,
 and It knows that not far off the spines of their
 murderers, like white fish-bones, lodge in a ditch,
 It hurries to find that tiny footprint
 which hurts the most; it belonged to a fleeing child
 whom the charred pilot with glittering teeth mowed down
 from behind with a machine-gun, It hurries for day is breaking.
 In winter It dreams of salt-coloured bones, in summer of scents.
 Smell of burnt flesh, stench of sweat, nauseating fume of gasoline,
 armpit odour of jasmine, lung-scent of sainfoin,
 rotting-throat scent of lavender, liver-scent of anemone.

In spring chloroform pours down the trees, a bullet-riddled Red Cross truck stinks, hyperdermic syringes rattle, white-smocked medical orderlies molder among sickly-sweet reeds smell of the beach, and officers in shorts tumble out of the dressing cabins like hermit crabs from the shell. When was it? When was it? It can remember no longer exactly and the dream washes everything together, but It knows the spot, there, where now fishing-rods hang down into the water, behind the quiet holiday home, on the river bank, the army having already marched away, two fugitives, pursuer and pursued, wrestled in silence, and one of them—pursued or pursuer—bit through the other's throat; It can still hear the gristle crack. It hurries, for day is breaking and It still has a lot to dream about, though It is but a side road with little traffic, and for some distance It follows the river, sniffs the alcohol breath of willows, tempts long-distance truck drivers to bathe and women in light sandals to have brief affairs; and while the truck waits, water in the apoplectic radiator comes to a boil. Now It shakes itself: land-mines crawl over It clumsily like smooth-bellied turtles and barbed wire barriers gallop through on knock-kneed legs, and presently It is strewn with corpses, soldiers' caps, a mess-tin is knocked about, caught, like a cow-bell, It can hear this monotonous music a long time; in autumn It dreams of sound, the cricket-chirring of volleying pistols in the eardrum-shattering silence of an explosion, trench mortars bark in throaty voices and a howitzer belches from the stomach, its echo resounds for a long time, under fraying skies the airplane gurgles, the throaty microphone sound of wild geese crackles, and It knows that autumn has come, straw carts sway, honey-sweet pumpkins shake in the forage rack, the hamster, cheeks full, stands up straight, watches gophers whistle in solitary fields, silver foil slips from the horizon: hoar-frost; the sky whitens and turns blue, and the macadam road, remembering, finds what had hurt most, the tiny footprint, and sighs. Day breaks.

Translated by Barbara Howes

CONDITIONED REFLEX

Short story

by

EMIL KOLOZSVÁRI GRANDPIERRE

Drills; vises and presses; polishing machine; preheating oven; the usual noises, the usual faces. More exactly, she had not seen Zoli for days but she had not realized it until Zoli appeared again.

"I haven't been aware of missing you," Monika said.

The young man shrugged his shoulders to shake off, as it were, the uncivil remark. He was not at his self-assertive best; he seemed rather lost in thought.

"I want to talk to you, Moni. I was just fooling around before but I'd like to talk now." He added: "Seriously."

The girl gave him a searching look from under her eyelashes.

"You already told me once what you're after. So cut it short."

They were interrupted by an old woman who came in to complain. She had the lower plate of her false teeth wrapped in a piece of newsprint and spoke with a toothless, hissing lisp.

"It keepf flipping off every time I bite."

The boss came out, washed his hands, held the plate under the tap, told the old woman to sit down, peered into the open mouth, put the plate down and took it up again, mumbled, polished, then the ceremony continued.

"Let's have lunch together," Zoli proposed.

Monika shook her head; she wasn't going to eat lunch, she was on a diet. The young man smiled as he gave the girl the once over: her body bulged in the white wrap she was wearing. A goddess of fertility or something like that. The girl was an eyeful, she was. It felt good to look at her.

"Feeding those beady little eyes of yours?"

"Then let's have dinner."

Monika shrugged and shot a glance at the boy to let him know she saw through his every gambit.

"Don't mind if I do. But I'm not available, I better tell you that right now."

They met at a corner not far from the restaurant. Monika got there a good quarter of an hour early. She loitered sleepily, gazing at the posters on an advertisement pillar, walked away, swinging her body lazily, went back to read once more what she had read already, the cast of an operetta, but her eyes could not focus on the letters. Funny, I don't feel sleepy, she thought.

"I'm so sorry I'm late."

Zoli stood before her, tall, slim, muscular—these qualities of his were all familiar to her—but he looked smart and that surprised her very much.

She smoothed down her dress mechanically.

"If I'd known."

"Oh," she said, "it wasn't you who were late; I was early. There's a real madhouse at home. Mother..." she waved. "My brother..." she waved. "The patients..." she waved. "Where's it you want to take me?"

"Wherever you want me to."

"Doesn't matter so long as it's not too far. And don't let me drink too much. It was me who mucked up the old gal's lower plate."

During dinner the young man acted self-consciously like one who is putting off doing something he has decided upon, waiting for the chance that never seems to come. He spoke about his family and the hardships and privations he had to go through before he had become a trained dental mechanic, which now earned him two thousand a month. He spoke of his uncle who had died recently; he had him to thank for getting a job and making a living; they were his discarded clothes he had worn and was still wearing to work...

"This suit you're wearing today is super," the girl cut in. "It's tailored, isn't it?"

The boy nodded.

"If it were up to me," she continued, "I'd send guys like you to staff embassies and make business deals—just nice guys like you. You can imagine what those people think of us in Paris and London when they meet one of these little big shots we have: Are the Hungarians all like these blokes? The situation's improving I'm told. But there're still too many clinical cadres around if you ask me. The right sort is the one who wipes his mouth on his ears. It's a saying I heard from my brother who brought it back from the army."

"That's a good one."

"I do like you in this rig. I like you, honest."

"I'm very glad you like me," the boy said, this time with self-confidence. "It makes it easier to tell you what I wanted to say. Shall I order another bottle of this?"

The girl shook her head with a knowing smile lurking in the corners of her mouth. Her dyed-red hair quivered.

"Since when have you been so well-behaved?"

"I told you already, I was just fooling in the beginning. When a button came undone on your wrap or when you straightened your stockings I always had to look, just to get an eyeful of your breasts, thighs, arms. And it never failed to turn me on. Your skin especially."

"We're back to your pet subject again."

"Well, it's times like those I wanted to say something or ask you out. Last time I stroked your arm . . . you remember. But then we've never been in step. That's the daftest thing you can imagine; I've given it a good deal of thought. I know I'm a fool because it never goes like that, unpremeditated. Well, it does but only if the woman is much older and she can look at you and get turned on right away . . ."

He got thoughtful, his gaze focusing in the distance. As she looked at him Monika was reminded of Balázs, not so much of his person as the way of life she got a taste of and even more the hope that glimmered briefly, only to fade just as fast:

"Let's get another bottle!"

"And you have to know," Zoli went on after ordering it, "you have to know that I lost my parents when I was young. I never knew the most natural thing in the world to you . . . what a mother and a father mean."

"Don't assume you've lost all that much. My mother and father are really good sports. You couldn't imagine better parents, as far as parents go. I'm not cynical but still it's awful. We haven't enough room for the lot of us, which makes plenty of room for falling out."

"Still, you can see you have this desire for a family. You walk into a flat and you feel something . . ."

"Now you see, that's really so. A flat's the fingerprint of a life."

She clapped her hands together and gave a ringing laughter.

"Hey, aren't I being intelligent today?"

"I've got a separate liking for your good spirits."

"Do you like so many things about me? My breasts, my thighs, my arms, my skin, and my good spirits on top of it all. So what're you waiting for?"

The boy looked at her rather stupidly.

"Can't you see how excited I'm getting? My eyes are glued to your lips, waiting for the words to come out. Do you think you've taken a nun out to dinner?"

"Would you come up to my place?"

The answer was a definite affirmative nod and a few eloquent gestures that referred to the platonic nature of the visit.

"Right-on!"

Another wave. The head waiter noticed everything in his comings and goings except the desperate arm thrashing like a man drowning and being swept away by the current. Then another bout of waving for taxis. Monika tried hard to talk the boy out of making the investment but he wouldn't listen.

A shabby, cramped furnished room, the furniture smelled of mould, dust on the floor under the bed and the cupboard, the wasted years of endless tenants.

Zoli offered the girl the only armchair in the room, he sat on the edge of the unmade bed. Scratching his head he mumbled excuses about not being able to offer her anything by way of drink or food. He bit his lip, thinking before he said anything:

"Don't think I'm loaded, I want you to understand that because things are not so simple. What you already know is that I'm going to set up shop in the country. You remember you even dropped hints that I was fooling about always asking you if you were free in the evening because I wanted to have you. This was just before I went down to the country. I didn't feel very enthusiastic about the trip; no one goes to live in the country with pleasure even if he has no flat or car or anything in Budapest. The thing is that although my uncle was the blood relation, I had his wife to thank for everything. Aunt Biri had no children, she always wanted one, and somehow or other she adopted me as her son."

"I can turn on the waterworks in a flash. Just don't forget to signal."

"Moni, don't be such an ass," Zoli entreated her, "I'm talking seriously. Let me finish it, I made a mess of it anyway and I don't know what's what in my mind."

"Aunt Biri adopted you, that's where you left off."

"To cut a long story short, I'm obligated to her. If she hadn't been there, the old man, her husband, would not have been so charitable. If you'd been in my place you'd have taken the trip, Moni, because no matter how big your mouth is, your heart is good."

"Surely better than my breasts, which are beginning to sag."

Zoli made a gesture indicating that he liked them the way they were and

the girl made a gesture in reply that she didn't doubt it. They went on exchanging a few more signals and grimaces before the boy took a deep breath and continued:

"Aunt Biri wasn't very specific in her letter and what she wrote didn't seem to hold out much hope. I took the trip resolved to stay if she wanted me to, honour bound; it doesn't do any harm if there's one more decent fellow around. And then I learnt what it was all about, I could have sunk into the earth with shame. Aunt Biri's proposal was worth more than the lottery jackpot. She lives in a house of her own in Szentlőrinc. She wants to stay there, and she doesn't want to spoil my marriage by becoming a step-mother-in-law. If and when I get married, that is. But she has a relative, a dental mechanic, who lives in a house of his own on the slopes of the Mecsek Hills near Pécs. They've agreed that the old man should move in with Aunt Biri so neither of them has to live alone and I should take over the man's shop. I won't even have to worry about a licence, they'll see about that and I'll have to pay them some amount."

Monika clicked her tongue in appreciation of such a windfall. She also remarked that Zoli also deserved such luck, being the best hand in Mr. Szabó's shop. She said she was sure that in less than a year, half of Pécs would be clacking the dentures he made; before long even the dogs would carry his handwork in their mouths.

"Why can't I talk to you seriously?"

The dispirited tone deflated her too, her face became vacant and she shrugged her lovely round shoulders:

"Listen, Zoli, if I took seriously everything that's to be taken seriously and talk seriously about the things I feel seriously about, I should have jumped out of the window a long time ago."

"It's just because, Moni. . ." Zoli struggled to express himself, "just because you're so hung up. . ."

"I can't find my place, that's all."

"Let's not squabble over words now."

The girl shook her head stubbornly.

"Damn it, I can't finish what I wanted to say if you always butt in."

"You've said it a hundred times already. You think I can't see through you. You're giving me this bullshit to lay me. But you won't. Not even if rosebuds sprout from your asshole."

They laughed, swaying their bodies, until tears came into their eyes.

"A good thing you can toss these quips and cracks of yours."

"Will you let me go on?" he asked after a while. "It won't take long now. Promise you won't interrupt me."

"I'll do my best."

"Right until I learnt about it, I hadn't considered staying there in earnest. Then I went and looked round in the old man's house. Listen. It's three large rooms—a bathroom, a small servant's room and a covered porch where one can drink at leisure in the evenings. A flower garden in front, and an orchard in the back, then a tiny vineyard that goes up the hillside. There's a little press-house up there, from which you can see the town, not all of it, mostly the uranium town, but a very nice view. The old man left me to myself saying: see it all for you, sonny. I sat down on the doorstep of the little press-house clasping my knees and I couldn't get enough of the view, and it was here that I understood that it wasn't for nothing I had worked like a slave and lived on bread and drippings, it was worth it if in the end I had a chance to live here and be my own master and could eventually buy or inherit this little paradise."

He sighed, smoothed down his hair, and his gaze was fixed on the horizon as if he could still see that landscape around Pécs. He continued more softly:

"It didn't take me long to realize that it was the chance of a lifetime. I couldn't possibly let it slip by, I must take the opportunity by the forelock as the saying is, for if I failed to do it, I'd never have the right to complain about luck or injustice or anything. So right then and there I decided that everything would be exactly as I had it all cut out for me by Aunt Biri: I was going to settle down in Pécs.

"It was then that I thought of you," he went on as he took the girl's hand, his head slightly tipped to one side, gazing at her with dimmed eyes.

"Forelimbs up to elbows, lower ones up to knees," she said in her killjoy way.

The young man shook his head as if he got some water in his ear. He still held the girl's hand not to lose bodily contact; he did not stroke it though every nerve in him prompted him to do so.

"It was then I remembered you. It crossed my mind that if I left here to live in Pécs I might never see you again and that would give me a rotten feeling. Of course I know how daft all this sounds. We've been working in the same place for more than a year, so why just then did the penny drop? I didn't search for an explanation. I've always wanted you, I knew you were there, if not today, you'd be there tomorrow. But sitting on the steps of the old fogey's press-house I felt that I wanted you in that house, in that garden, in that workshop. For without you it wasn't worth it. I had to have you there, as my wife."

As soon as he said this he let go of the girl's hand which stayed on the

arm-rest, soft and lifeless, while she sat back to see better from a further distance. Her eyebrows were arched, her mouth opened. In her limp immobility Monika seemed older and plumper than she actually was. Some invisible burden weighted her down, stooping her back and slouching her shoulders and neck. Her voice sounded lustreless:

"And now you think I'm going to take them off?"

"What?" the boy snapped irritably.

"My panties."

She hardly had time to finish it before her ears started buzzing so loud she thought she was going deaf and her face smarted with two lightning quick slaps.

"Get the hell out of here you cheap, stinking slut! Get out of here before I knock the teeth out of your dirty mouth! Get out before I kick you down the stairs!"

She rose to her feet, her handbag under her arm, her eyes fixed astounded at the boy. She turned slowly, started to go slowly, uncertain, like a sleep-walker. At the door she turned back.

"I would have taken them off, you clod. That's why I came up."

Out in the staircase she fumbled for quite a while before she found the switch. The house was asleep, the stairs, the peeling walls, the name-plates by the entrance were all asleep.

She stumbled along in the doorway absent-mindedly and the house-keeper pried into her face inquisitively.

She had barely gone a few yards when she was sized by a fit of vomiting.

Translated by László T. András

WOMEN IN THE LIGHT OF TIME-BUDGET RESEARCH

by

SÁNDOR SZALAI

Before starting on the proper subject of this article, an attempt will be made to explain the nature of the time-budget as a research tool, and some general characteristics of connected data.

As the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences explains (vol. IX, pp. 43-47), a time-budget is a log or diary of the sequence and duration of activities engaged in by an individual over a specific period, most typically the 24-hour day. Time-budget research involves the collection of numerous such protocols from members of a population to analyse main trends and subgroup differences in the allocation of time. While many social inquiries are concerned with the amount of time spent on a particular kind of activity (e.g. the journey to work, daily shopping or television watching), the term "time-budget" is generally reserved for an exhaustive accounting of a whole period of time in individual experience whatever the component activities happen to be. Information on each and every activity within the given time period is being registered in the context of all other activities performed. This permits to find out, for instance, what else it is that people who spend little time on television viewing do with the time thereby saved, or what other activities get curtailed in the case of employed women who have to take care of several children at home.

Time-budget data are presented mostly in aggregated form, that is as calculated averages based on the individual time-budgets of a representative sample of the population. For most purposes, it is useful to go beyond general averages, that is to produce statistical breakdowns showing the special characteristics of the daily activities of various groups and strata of the population: men and women; married or unmarried; self-supporting

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or dependent; professionals, businessmen, employers of higher or lower rank, tradespeople, skilled and unskilled workers, housewives, etc. All of them will show typical differences in the structure of their average daily time-budgets which reflect, after all, the differences in the structure of their daily activities. Needless to say that the as yet much less studied time-budgets of very young or very old people (e.g. school-children or completely retired persons) will again differ from that of average adults.

Formerly, time-budget research was mostly concerned with the *amount of time* allocated to various activities. Nowadays the *timing* of activities (at what time of the day or of the week they are performed), their *frequency* (how often they occur) and their *location* (where they are being performed?) have become in many respects matters of equal interest. Considerable interest is being attached also to the *company* in which people spend their time and perform their various activities. It is, for instance, an important part of the housewife's lot to be constrained to spend most of her time between the four walls of her home, alone or with little variation in her social contacts.

For obvious reasons, the pattern of daily activities is rather different on working days and over the week-ends. For many purposes separate time-budgets have to be established with reference to ordinary weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays; in general surveys a proportionate number of observations have to be included for every day of the week. There are also seasonal changes in the activity pattern which have to be taken into account.

Although we will not be able to go into technical details, the reader may rest assured that all findings and data to be discussed in this study stem from time-budget research projects which correspond to the present state of the art and in which all the necessary precautions were taken to ensure the representativeness and the reliability of data. We will introduce qualifications wherever necessary.

Aristotle defined time as a "measure of movements". Transferred to the human sphere, we may speak of time as a measure of activities. In our modern urban industrial civilization we hardly think any more of the extent to which our daily activities have become regulated by the clock. We wake up at six-thirty in the morning; we say goodbye to the children at seven-thirty when they have to leave for school; we catch the seven-fifty bus; we work from half past eight to five in the afternoon with a lunch-break of an hour at noon; we watch the seven o'clock TV news before having dinner, and so forth. We even got accustomed to wear a mechanical device on our body, a timepiece or a wrist-watch, in order to co-ordinate our activities with the great clock-work of society.

It is, however, by no means "natural" to use even-flowing physical time as a measure and regulator of human activities. In fact, this kind of measurement and regulation is a relatively new invention which came with the modern era of manufacture and industry, with fixed working hours, hourly wages, clocks in the church steeples, and wailing factory sirens.

Physical time attained its present social importance only when the working place got separated from the home and the farmstead, when breadwinning ceased to be a domestic activity shared by all members of the family capable of work, when the sharp split between working time and free time began. Until then the seasonally changing length of the daylight, the tasks to be carried out in the fields, the physiological needs of family members and of domestic animals to be cared for, and other more or less spontaneous factors of this kind determined in the main the daily rhythm of life.

Even today we, who live in the midst of urban industrial surroundings, tend to evade the tyranny of the clock in our more private moments. We lose our feeling for the passing of physical time when we are absorbed in reading an interesting book or in playing with our children; we don't check the time while making love. When engaged in such private or leisurely activities, we take a look at the watch only if we have some other business to perform in the "great society" that sets the exact time and duration of our occupations by the hour and the minute.¹

Whatever natural and cultural retreats we may still be able to maintain, urbanization and industrialization have irrevocably introduced physical time as a measuring and regulating device into the life of humanity. Even where traditional rural and agricultural conditions still prevail, the diffusion of contemporary "programmed" production techniques and the penetration of the modern worldwide transport and communication system are beginning to "set the clock".

The old adage "time is money" was once a young and rather revolutionary insight into the workings of the new industrial society. As time became more precious, so employers became more interested in the way the worker spent his time at the workplace. At first it seemed enough to "stretch the workday" as long as possible, and to check whether the worker was not idling during the "paid hours". However, as more and more complex production techniques and machineries were introduced, the employers found it necessary to commission expert "time and motion studies" in order to find out how much time the worker spends on every single movement in

¹ For a more detailed discussion of historical, cultural and psychological determinants of "time usage" see A. Szalai, "Differential Evaluation of Time-Budgets for Comparative Purposes", in R. L. Merritt and S. Rokkan, eds., *Comparing Nations*. New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 1966.

the course of his productive work and to set time norms, expressed in minutes and seconds, for all his operations. As time was thus "budgeted" by the employers, the workers retaliated with their own time-budget. In their fight for a shorter and less exhausting workday, they proclaimed in the late 1880s the famous slogan of 3×8 , meaning "8 hours of work, 8 hours of free time, 8 hours of sleep". Notwithstanding legal regulations concerning the length of the official (paid) workday, the human demand formulated in this slogan remains unfulfilled almost everywhere with respect to the overwhelming majority of the working population—and most of all with respect to employed women bearing the burden of a daily "second shift" in their own household.

By the middle of the last century, economists studying the living conditions of working people and certain laws of consumption, found it useful to establish and to evaluate so-called family budgets. How much income do working people's households have from various sources and in what proportion are the available funds spent on various commodities and services? As such investigations produced rather interesting insights into general social conditions, sociologists began to ask themselves whether a study of the ways in which people spend their *time* could not lead to still more valuable insights into people's ways of life. After all, not every kind of human activity is reflected in items of income or expenditure but undoubtedly every human activity costs *time* and the time it costs can be, in principle, measured and registered. A comparison of time-budgets might be even simpler than that of money budgets because people's incomes are subject to considerable variations while everybody has exactly 24 hours or 1,440 minutes per day at his disposal to "spend".

The real situation proved to be much more complex than the originators of the idea of time-budgets supposed. It is, for instance, not at all easy to observe and register what a person does in the course of a day, how much time he or she spends on various activities, etc. People may also perform more than just one activity at a time, e.g. reading the newspaper while riding the bus to work, or listening to the radio while performing household chores. But in spite of all theoretical and practical difficulties involved, time-budget research has become during the last decades a highly developed and much appreciated tool of empirical social research, widely used in the study of people's life, work and leisure, in the investigation of living and working conditions in households, factories and communities, in mass-communications research, in manpower and traffic planning, etc.

We shall be interested here mainly in those findings of contemporary time-budget research which throw some light on the situation of women

in society and on the difficulties with which women have to cope due to inequities and discriminative practices they meet in their social career, in society at large, and even in their own household and family.

The Sexual Division of Labour

There is probably no other social phenomenon in which time-budget research has produced such unambiguous, well-documented and dramatic insights into social reality as the sexual division of labour.

By the sexual division of labour we mean simply the way in which the various tasks and chores of everyday life are divided between the two sexes. As human beings, men and women have naturally some common physiological needs to fulfil each day: they have to get some sleep, they have to still their thirst and hunger, they have to devote some time to their personal hygiene, etc. However, for all the rest of the time men and women partake, to a typically different extent, in the various categories of individual and collective activities, especially in those to which we associate the notion of paid or unpaid work.

There is a widespread tendency to explain a great part of the sexual division of labour prevailing in our societies by referring to differences in the "natural endowments", that is in the somatic and mental make-up, in the physical strength, etc. of men and women. However, with a very few exceptions, such allegedly natural explanations given for any specific trait of the sexual division of labour in contemporary cultures is based on an ignorance of cultural variability or—more often—on simple prejudice. Take the case of physical strength. Women should be less able than men to perform tasks involving great physical exertion. Still, according to social anthropological data from George Murdock's famous Yale University Cross-Cultural Survey,² some of the most exerting types of heavy work are allocated in a great number of cultures to women. Thus, for instance, water carrying is regarded as an exclusively feminine task in 119 cultures out of 138 observed; burden bearing is regarded as an exclusively feminine task in 59 cultures out of 128 observed. There are 36 known cultures in which the building of dwellings, six in which lumbering and at least one in which mining and quarrying are left entirely to women. Laundering, which before the advent of washing-machines was one of the most strenuous tasks,

² George Peter Murdock and his colleagues set up the Yale-Cross-Cultural Survey in 1937, which covered characteristic data and documents on hundreds of contemporary cultures and subcultures all over the world. The present Human Area Relations File in New Haven, Conn., was later developed on the basis of the original survey.

remained until very recently a typically feminine job allocated to the washer-woman or the housewife practically everywhere in Western civilization. Thus, extreme caution has to be applied before attributing the sexual division of labour to "natural" factors.³

True, only women give birth to children, and where bottle feeding has not replaced breast feeding, young mothers may be hampered for an appreciable period of time in the performance of their occupational duties. However, this explains very little of the handicaps and discriminations women have to cope with in their occupational life. This is evidenced by the fact that single women or married women with no children do not fare much better in their occupational careers than mothers. Besides, what really counts is not so much the physiological fact of child-bearing but rather the *culturally* determined superstructure of motherhood and child care. Nothing in nature prescribes that baby food has to be cooked and spoon-fed or that diapers have to be changed and washed by mothers; that it is the female and not the male parent who should stay away from work and take care of the toddler if the child happens to be ill. Nor is the woman, of course, better equipped by nature than the man to carry out the great variety of tasks allocated to the housewife.

The recognition of the relatively small role of nature and of the overwhelming importance of social and cultural factors in determining the effective division of labour between the two sexes should not mislead us into thinking that this makes it much easier to change the situation of women and to ensure equal rights and equal chances to them.

The sexual division of labour which prevails in our societies has deep roots in history and some of its roots even reach back to before historical times. It is interwoven with many other structural and functional characteristics of our present social organization. It has left its imprint on some of our most deeply held ideological and moral convictions. It has become a "built-in" part of our social organization; it has become ingrained in our attitudinal and behavioural patterns. It is remarkable to what extent women cherish, share and defend so-called "male prejudices" about their own calling as mothers and housewives, about their capabilities to fulfil various roles in society, about "femininity", and the like.

In many parts of the world it may not prove to be too difficult nowadays to eliminate discrimination against women from the texts of existing laws and regulations. The elimination of discriminative practices from society is quite another matter. It requires a deep change in the aspirations, attitudes and behavioural characteristics of men and women alike. This does

³ Ann Oakley, *Housewife*. London, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1974.

not promise to be a quick process. However, no efforts should be spared to speed it up.

The prevalent sexual division of labour is reflected by the fact that in all more or less industrialized societies of our time the great majority of the adult falls under three distinct categories:

Employed men, i.e. employed (or self-employed) men involved in breadwinning occupations;

Employed women, i.e. employed (or self-employed) women involved in breadwinning occupations;

Housewives, i.e. women doing no paid work, or only a negligible amount of it, but normally involved in a considerable amount of unpaid housework and household tasks.

In developed countries and also in many others which have not yet reached a high stage of socio-economic development, normally only a small percentage of the adult population remains outside these three categories; e.g. very old and completely retired people, economically unemployed members of the labour force, invalids, loafers, and the like. (In this context it is customary to include among the "employed" people also students of adult age who prepare themselves for a breadwinning role.)

The asymmetry of this basic categorization is quite striking. There is no male counterpart to the housewife, whose days are filled with unpaid work done for the household. Being unpaid, she is not regarded as part of the labour force and therefore cannot be called unemployed, especially as she is really never out of her "job". "Male housewives", that is men performing the job of the housewives, are so few in number that no separate category needs to be established for them.

Table 1 deals with the most general characteristics of the contemporary sexual division of labour as mirrored in the time-budget of the adult population in a number of countries which represent various stages and forms of urban industrial development and also a variety of political and socio-economic systems. Although Table 1 is only a summary, some sharp characteristics of the prevailing sexual division of labour become visible:

It is true that employed women spend on the average less time on *paid* work than employed men; they are more often part-time workers than men, they try to avoid overtime because of their duties at home—also some legal regulations intervene, etc. However, if we add *paid* work to *unpaid* work done for the household and the family, (A + B + C) then it appears that the average total working time of employed women surpasses that of employed men by a full hour on *workdays* (11.6 hours against 10.6 hours) and by 2.6 hours on *days off* (6.1 hours against 3.5 hours). The

Table 1. Average Daily Time-Budget of Employed Men, Employed Women and Housewives in 12 Countries (in hours)

Activities	Employed men	Employed women	Housewives
On workdays (employed people) and weekdays (housewives)			
A. Paid work and ancillary tasks (work brought home, journey to work, workplace chores, etc.)	9.4	7.9	0.2
B. Housework and household obligations (not including child care)	1.0	3.3	7.6
C. Child care	0.2	0.4	1.1
D. Sleep, meals, personal hygiene and other personal needs	9.9	9.9	11.4
E. Free time (i.e. remaining disposable time)	3.5	2.5	4.0
Total (of which A-C subtotal)	24.0 (10.6)	24.0 (11.6)	24.0 (8.8)
On days off (employed people) and Sundays (housewives)			
A. Paid work and ancillary tasks (work brought home, journey to work, workplace chores, etc.)	0.9	0.4	0.1
B. Housework and household obligations (not including child care)	2.3	5.1	5.2
C. Child care	0.3	0.6	0.7
D. Sleep, meals, personal hygiene and other personal needs	12.2	11.9	11.7
E. Free time (i.e. remaining disposable time)	8.3	6.0	6.3
Total (of which A-C subtotal)	24.0 (3.5)	24.0 (6.1)	24.0 (6.0)

Source: This table is based on the findings of the Multinational Comparative Time-Budget Research Project which has been carried out recently under the aegis of the UNESCO-sponsored European Co-ordination Centre for Research and Documentation in Social Sciences. The project encompassed 15 sample surveys carried out in 12 countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, Federal Republic of Germany, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Peru, Poland, USA, USSR, Yugoslavia). In most countries middle-sized cities and their surroundings were included in the survey; in some countries national surveys were carried out too. Only adults aged 18 to 65 were sampled, with the exclusion of the purely agricultural population, that is of households in which not a single member does other than agricultural work.⁴

plight of the employed woman is strikingly exposed by the fact that she has to work 5.7 hours for her household and family on her "days of rest".

Also the lot of the housewife is nothing to be envied. On weekdays

⁴ Alexander Szalai, et al., eds. *The Use of Time: Daily Activities of Urban and Suburban Populations in Twelve Countries*. The Hague, Mouton, 1973.

her average working time ($A + B + C$) amounts to 8.9 hours, i.e. to only 1.7 hours less than the average total working time of employed men. However, on Sundays the housewife works 6 hours, that is 2.5 hours more than employed men on their days off.

In the 12 countries surveyed, generally almost half of the adult women living on the survey sites, and in some cases a far greater part of them, were members of the active labour force, i.e. they belonged in the category of "employed women". Many married women who have to care for a big family or who have small children still prefer to stay at home for at least as long as this condition lasts; however, the proportion of permanent full-time housewives is decreasing in all modern urban industrial societies. Therefore, more and more employed men have employed women as spouses. Under such circumstances it is almost shocking to see from Table 2 what a small share employed men take in housework and household obligations—and how much they leave to their spouses who are, to an ever growing extent, their equal partners in breadwinning work. On workdays, employed women have 3.3 hours to devote to housework and household obligations while employed men are satisfied to contribute 1.0 hour. On days off, employed women spend 5.1 hours on such tasks, employed men only 2.3 hours. No wonder that employed men have on the average much more free time at their disposal than employed women: they have 3.5 hours free time on workdays and 8.3 hours of free time on days off, while for employed women the free time amounts only to 2.5 hours on workdays and 6.0 hours on days off.

Free time in the sense used here, that is the disposable time remaining after having done all the work and having fulfilled physiological and other personal needs, should not be confused with leisure time. It is a telling datum that among the many thousands of employed women included in the survey samples of the Multinational Time-Budget Project, 10 per cent reported *no* leisure time activities whatsoever on a typical workday, although virtually all employed men reported at least a little. As far as housewives are concerned, much of their free time activities and even of their typical leisure activities tend to revolve around the family and the household (needlework, embroidery, knitting, floriculture, receiving visits, etc.). The inordinately small amount of free time at the disposal of employed women and the constraints put on the housewives' life are two factors that bear a heavy responsibility for women's reduced participation in civic life, in professional training and education, etc. The implications for women's social advancement and professional career are quite obvious.

Men and Women in the Household

Those who have an interest in minimizing the household burden on women's shoulders often put forward the argument that technical development, e.g. the ever growing supply of various household appliances, of pre-cooked or half-prepared canned and frozen food, etc., will soon "liberate" women from household chores, or at least will reduce their problem to a manageable size.

Unfortunately, current time-budget data give little support to such optimism. In Table 2 we compare the situation prevailing on a number of survey sites which differ widely in the availability of labour-saving household technology.

There can be hardly any doubt that there is a wide variation in the technical equipment of the households at the six urban survey sites covered by Table 2. For example, at the time of surveys, in the mid 1960s, more than half of the households in Kragujevac and surroundings had as yet no running water and even in the old industrial city of Olomouc one household out of six was without running water. And yet the employed married women in Jackson, Michigan, spend only 0.2 hour less daily on their household than their counterparts in Olomouc. In Osnabrück, which is in a very modern medium-sized urban industrial centre of the Federal Republic of Germany, the employed married women actually spend more time on their households than in any of the three of the Eastern European provincial towns shown in Table 2.

The main explanation for the fact that labour-saving technology has led to little comparable time savings in the household probably lies in the fact that popular demands on the quality and quantity of household services have

Table 2. Average Time Spent Daily on Household Tasks by Married People in Different Urban Surrounding (in hours, all days of the week included)

Group	Kragujevac, Yugoslavia	Torun, Poland	Olomouc, Czecho- slovakia	Osnabrück, W. Ger- many	Six cities, France	Jackson, USA
Employed men	0.4	0.7	0.9	0.3	0.5	0.5
Employed women	4.3	4.1	3.8	4.5	4.0	3.6
Housewives	6.8	7.4	7.3	6.5	6.9	5.4

Source: *Multinational Time-Budget Project* (see Table 1).

risen together with the development of this technology and with general living standards. For example, under more modest circumstances of the past, the busy housewife often cooked a huge pot of food at once and this was then warmed up repeatedly to serve for several consecutive family dinners. Nowadays the family expects more variety and although the cooking-time involved in the preparation of ready-made canned or deep-frozen dishes may be minimal, the time involved in their purchase, storage and serving according to the daily changing individual tastes of the family members may amount to much more than the time needed to cook once and to warm up on several consecutive days mother's favourite *pot-au-feu*.

In the USA and in the USSR time-budget research has a sufficiently long history to permit us to examine the trends in the development of women's housework over several decades.

As we see from Table 3, in certain types of household work, especially in kitchen activities and in the handling of clothes and linen, some not too dramatic time savings have been achieved over the last few decades.

Table 3. Time Used for Household Work by Urban Home Makers¹ in USA
(in hours, average of all days of the week)

Types of activities ²	Full-time homemakers			Employed homemakers	
	1926-27	1952	1967-68	1952	1967-68
All work connected with preparing and serving food	2.8	2.6	2.3	1.9	1.6
Care of the house	1.3	1.6	1.6	0.8	1.2
Care of clothes, laundry, etc.	1.6	1.6	1.3	0.8	0.9
Shopping and record keeping	0.4	0.5	1.0	0.3	0.8
<i>Total</i>	6.1	6.3	6.2	3.8	4.5

Notes: ¹ "Homemaker" is a typical American euphemism intended to lend some professional dignity to women's work in the household. A "full-time homemaker" is simply a housewife, while an "employed homemaker" is an employed woman with household duties.

² Child care and other care of family members are not included in this tabulation.

Source: Kathryn E. Walker, "Homemaking Still Takes Time". *Journal of Home Economics*, Vol. 61, No. 8, October 1969.

On the other hand, care of the house, shopping and record keeping seem to demand more time now than American women used to devote to such activities. Paid household help, repairmen's services and the like have become a rare commodity in the USA: most of the work involved in the care of the house must now be accomplished on a do-it-yourself basis. The

increased demand for sophisticated foodstuffs and all kinds of other products needed in modern housekeeping can be easily satisfied in American supermarkets, but getting there and doing all the shopping takes time.

Table 4 reports on similar developments in the household work of employed women in various urban areas of the USSR. The 1924 survey was carried out in Moscow and Leningrad, the 1959 survey in urban industrial centres of Siberia, the 1965 survey in Pskov and surroundings.

In many respects the trends shown by Table 4 are very similar to those shown by Table 3. The time spent in the kitchen has decreased over the years. This change is even more marked in the Soviet Union than in the USA because in the early 1920s, even in Moscow and Leningrad, many kitchens were not supplied with running water, gas and electricity, not to speak of modern kitchen appliances which are now produced in great quantity by Soviet industry. Shopping times seem to have gone up in the USSR as much as in the USA—the corner grocery store has vanished there too and there is now much more to buy for the household. The total time Soviet employed women spend on their household does not seem to have gone down significantly from 1959 to 1965; compared to 1924 the change is more dramatic—but at that time, just after the end of the civil war and foreign intervention, housekeeping was really a difficult task. We may add here that the *total work load* of urban employed women in the USA and in the USSR cannot be compared directly on the basis of Tables 3 and 4 because these do not report hours of *paid* work.

This extensive argument clearly shows that whatever hopes we set on

Table 4. Time Used for Household Work by Urban Employed Women in the USSR
(in hours, average of all days of the week)

Types of activities ¹	Employed women		
	1924	1959	1965
All work connected with preparing and serving food	2.56	1.41	1.60
Shopping and time spent in queuing	0.20	0.65	0.50
All other household work	1.71	1.81	1.50
<i>Total</i>	<i>4.47</i>	<i>3.87</i>	<i>3.60</i>

Note:¹ Child care and other care of family members are not included in this tabulation.

Source: V. D. Patrushev and V. G. Kolpakov, eds. "Byudzhët vremeni gorodskogo naseleniya", *Statistika*, Moscow, 1971; and S. G. Strumilin, "Problemy svobodnogo vremeni", in *Vnerabotchee Vremya Trudyashchikhsya* (Novosibirsk, Izdatel'stvo Sibirskogo Otdeleniya AN SSSR, 1961).

the future development of labour-saving household technology, it does not promise to provide a patent solution to our problem—at least not within the foreseeable future. The gap between the small share men tend to take at present in household tasks and the burden women have to bear in the household is far too great and no technology is in sight which could reduce the burden on women to a substantial extent.

On what should we set our hopes if technological progress does not promise to relieve women of the unquitable workload they bear in the household? Does contemporary time-budget research provide any clues to the answer of this question?

Attitudes to Sharing Housework

Many findings of time-budget studies make it quite clear that much could be contributed to a satisfactory solution by *men* if they would only change their attitudes.

By what means could these attitudes be changed in order to make them ready to accept a more equitable share in household tasks? Can it be hoped that persuasion and enlightenment would have such an effect? Time-budget research can certainly not provide a direct answer to this kind of question. General experience might prompt us to say that persuasion and enlightenment do seem to have a powerful effect on people's attitudes but it takes in most cases a rather long time to change basic attitudes by persuasion and enlightenment alone. And in this case very basic attitudes, namely men's attitudes to women, to family affairs, to work and leisure, etc. are involved.

However, there are more indirect social influences on which some hopes can be set. And in this respect some findings of contemporary time-budget research seem to be pertinent.

In Hungary, for instance, a fairly large sample of urban families was surveyed in 1974 with regard to the "traditional" or "non-traditional" character of the division of labour in the household. Traditional division of labour in the household was defined as a situation in which, out of six main household tasks (cooking, dishwashing, house cleaning, laundering, ironing and shopping) at least five are *regularly* performed by the wife, and the husband only *occasionally* lends a hand in house cleaning or shopping. By non-traditional division of labour an increased participation of the husband in housework was meant. Table 5 shows to what extent the traditional division of labour in the household was found to be dependent on the socio-economic status of the head of the family.

Table 5. Traditional Division of Labour in urban Family Households
in Present-day Hungary

Head of the family	Households with a traditional division of labour (%)
Professional or executive	28
Upper white-collar worker	25
Lower white-collar worker, technician	42
Skilled blue-collar worker	51
Semi-skilled blue-collar worker	52
Unskilled blue-collar worker	57

Source: *Judith H. Sas*, Report on the Survey of 20 to 50 Years Old Family Members in the Urban Population. (Budapest, Sociological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1974), in manuscript.

The picture presented by Table 5 is quite clear: the higher the socio-economic status and the educational level, the more infrequent the traditional division of labour becomes in the household. Because urban industrial development tends to raise the average educational level and the welfare of the population, just as it also increases the proportion of skilled labour, of white-collar workers, of technicians and of professionals in the labour force, there is reason to hope that this in itself will help to reduce the number of households in which the traditional division of labour still prevails.

Even more can be expected from the increased participation of women in the active labour force. Having a wife doing full-time or even part-time paid work puts the husband under a certain moral and practical pressure to accept a more equal share in housework and household obligations. The pressure is not as effective as one might expect but it is still there. As evidence, we present in Table 6 some recent data from the London region, England.

As we see from Table 6, the fact that the wife joins the husband in *bread-winning activities* (employment) tends to produce more symmetry also in the *household activities* of the married couple. Several studies have taken note of the fact that in contemporary urban industrial societies a trend towards a "symmetrical family" seems to develop. How long such a development may take and to what extent such a symmetry may become realized is an open question. But the influence of the increasing participation of women in the labour force on men's attitudes towards women and towards household obligations is a factor to be reckoned with.

For the achievement of a more equitable sexual division of labour, attitude changes in women are as important as attitude changes in men.

Table 6. Husband's Help in Home by Employment Status of Wife
(in the London region)

Help by the husband at least once a week	Wife not working ("housewife")	Wife working part-time	Wife working full-time
No help (%)	22	17	9
Dishwashing only (%)	14	15	12
Other household tasks (cleaning, cooking, child care, etc.) with or without dishwashing (%)	64	68	79
<i>Total</i>	100	100	100

Source: *Michael Young and Peter Willmott, The Symmetrical Family: A Study of Work and Leisure in the London Region. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.*

In this context, interesting observations have been made, in a survey of Hungarian urban households, about the relationship between the educational level of the wife and the division of labour in the household. This survey showed that 79 per cent of households where wives had up to six years of schooling practised a traditional division of household work between the husband and wife. This figure compares with 63 per cent for households with wives who had 7-8 years of schooling; 47 per cent for those with wives who have had high-school education; and 38 per cent for those with wives who have had university or college education.⁶ The message is clear: the more education women get, the more they become able to achieve an equitable sexual division of labour within the household.

Preference and Prejudice in Choosing Work and Leisure

Not only do men devote much less time to housework and household obligations than women, they tend also to select those household tasks in which they are willing to participate. Pertinent data of the Multinational Time-Budget Project show, for instance, that there is a widespread tendency among men to concentrate their contribution to household tasks much more on shopping and doing errands, outdoor cleaning, occasional repairs

⁶ Judit H. Sas, Report on the Survey of 20 to 50 Years Old Family Members in the Urban Population. Budapest, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1974, in manuscript.

and other fairly diversified activities which do not bind them so strongly to the house. Such monotonous household activities as sweeping, bed making, laundering, ironing and kitchen work tend to be left almost entirely to women.

Child care has been fairly thoroughly investigated in contemporary time-budget research. Here an interesting interplay of male and female preferences and prejudices becomes visible.

As we saw in Table 1, in the areas covered by the 12-country Multinational Time-Budget Project, employed men tended to devote about half as much time to child care as employed women. Compared with housewives, men's share of child care was, of course, still smaller.

One might think that such a situation is more or less "natural". Babies have a special need for motherly care, and more than just cultural factors may be involved in the particularly strong mutual attachment between mothers and their small children. However, not all children are babies or toddlers. As children become older, practically all activities connected with their care could equally well be performed by both parents. Does the share of men and women in child care then become more equal as their children get older?

In order to provide good comparability, we calculated the overall average time spent on some types of child-care activities by employed men, employed women and housewives in families having *one child under 3 years* and in families having *one child 3 years old or over* which were surveyed in 10 countries participating in the Multinational Time-Budget Project.

This indicated that, even in the case of children beyond the baby or toddler age, fathers tend to avoid any major involvement in the basic tasks of child care. To whatever extent they participate in child care, they prefer to carry out such more free-wheeling and more pleasurable tasks as playing, talking, or taking a walk with the child, supervising schoolwork, etc. In general they only contribute a little to the other chores. Mothers, be they full-time employed women or housewives, have no other choice.

This situation would have become unbearable a long time ago, had not women adapted themselves to it. There is a whole system of feminine preferences and prejudices which has become perfectly adjusted to such a distribution of parental tasks. Traditional ideologies of motherhood and of the role of the wife in family and household have neither been invented unilaterally by men for their own benefit nor are they believed only by men. It is true that under modern conditions of living, especially under the impact of women's growing involvement in work away from the home, the foundations of such beliefs have become rather shaky. But very many women

still stick to obsolete preferences and prejudices about femininity. Those who have overcome such biases find it very hard to assert their new attitudes because so many existing institutions and patterns of behaviour in social life are still geared to traditional concepts of women's aims and tasks in life.

French time-budget researchers have found, for instance, that many child-care establishments in their country (nurseries, kindergartens, etc.) do not seem to have taken notice of the fact that a considerable proportion of French women have become part of the labour force and have to go to work early in the morning. Consequently, such institutions open their doors at "traditional" hours which are unsuitable for working women who wish to have their children in good care during the day.⁷ Similar observations have been made in several other countries.

We already had an opportunity to allude to the pride of housewives. This pride may frequently be an overcompensation of the low status and lack of recognition of their services. One of the most curious cross-national findings with regard to housewives' use of time is the fact that they tend to "stretch" their housework more or less in proportion to their husbands' working hours. In social groups and strata where employed men work longer hours, there is a distinct tendency for housewives to put more hours into their own daily housework.

Housewives spend, of course, an overwhelming part of their time at home. But employed women also are much more tied to their houses than employed men. This is a rather general finding which applies also to conditions found in many rural agricultural communities of less developed countries.

The trends shown by Table 7 cannot be satisfactorily explained merely by natural or social constraints put on people's use of time. Most employed people naturally have to go to work on weekdays; all people need several hours of sleep per day and most of them sleep at home. However, habits, preferences and prejudices also play a role in determining the amount of time people spend in their homes. In spite of the fact that housewives, especially housewives with small children, are forced to spend most of the day at home, they also show a marked preference for staying in or around the house when they are free to spend their leisure somewhere else. Even in the USSR where employed women nowadays make up more than half the total labour force (manual and non-manual workers, and professionals) and where women participate to an extraordinarily large extent in civic

⁷ Madeleine Guilbert, Nicole Lowit and Joseph Creusen, "Les budgets-temps et l'étude des horaires de la vie quotidienne". *Revue Française de Sociologie*. Vol. 8, April-June, 1967.

Table 7. Percentage of Day Spent at Home by Married People
(aged 30-49, in the London region, 1970)

Population groups	Weekday (%)	Saturday (%)	Sunday (%)
Employed men	55	66	76
Employed women	71	75	83
Housewives	87	82	87

Source: *Michael Young and Peter Willmott, The Symmetrical Family: A Study of Work and Leisure in the London Region. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973.*

activities, researchers have found women considerably more shackled to their home than men.⁸

It may sound surprising, but a similar finding was made with respect to the differential behaviour of 10-12-year-old boys and girls in Amsterdam. In a study of their free-time activities it was found that the girls spent much more time at home and around the doorway than the boys; both spent about equal time in the immediate neighbourhood of their home. However, as far as playing and strolling in more distant places was concerned, boys spent more than 20 per cent of their free time further away from home, while girls did so only for less than 7 per cent of their free time.⁹

Time-budget research has detected a strong bias in women's leisure-time orientation towards activities which correspond to *traditional* ideals of "femininity" and which are therefore not well-adapted to *modern* societies in which women share men's breadwinning tasks and want to have equal rights and opportunities in every other respect. As a consequence, it has become quite usual in contemporary time-budget studies to investigate not only how women *do* spend their time but also how they would *like* to spend it. Alas, most studies of this kind show that a very great proportion of women still have their preferences on the traditional side. Let us illustrate this with an example taken from a fairly recent (1966) Czechoslovak survey. The question put to male and female respondents was the following: "What occurs to you first if somebody asks you: what kind of things are of greatest interest in your life?" Table 8 shows the percentage distribution of the answers from male and female respondents.

As we see from Table 8 the polarization of "masculine" and "feminine"

⁸ N. Tikhomorivo, L. Gordon and E. Klopov, "Studies in the Way of Life of the Working People and Some Problems of Social Planning". *Society and Leisure*, No. 3, 1972.

⁹ W. F. Heinemeijer and L. U. de Sitter, *Buurt, Jeugd en Vrije Tijd* (Neighbourhood, Youth and Free Time). Amsterdam, Gemeentelijk Bureau voor de Jeugdzorg, 1964.

interests is still rather strong. Many more men than women have the main centre of their interest away from home. On the other hand, more than half of the women profess to have their main interest in family, home and children or even directly in housework. As it happens, these findings were made in Czechoslovakia, that is in a country which has a long history of urbanization and industrialization. Much evidence could be brought forward to support the contention that 30-40 years ago the polarization between men's and women's main interests was much stronger; there is no doubt that much has been done in Czechoslovakia to provide wider and better opportunities for women. But here again we see how difficult it is to change ingrained attitudes and traditional patterns of thought and behaviour.

We have had ample opportunity to refer in this discussion of the findings of contemporary time-budget research to the difficulties of improving the situation of women and of ensuring more equity to them. However, we were also able to show that there are strong forces at work which are slowly

Table 8. Main Interests in Life

Types of answers	Men (%)	Women (%)
Family, home and children	23.7	46.0
Professional work (paid work)	16.5	6.5
Political and social events	9.2	5.6
Literature, arts, and culture	10.4	20.3
Nature	9.8	5.6
Sport, tourism and travel	20.9	3.9
Housework and other unpaid work	2.1	4.6
Other answers	7.0	7.5
No answer	0.3	—
<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0

Source: L. Hrdý, ed. *Volný čas v ČSSR (Free Time in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic)*. Prague, Sociologický Ústav ČSAV, 1969.

but surely eroding age-old traditions. The effectiveness of these forces can be doubtlessly enhanced by a conscious mobilization of society and this may speed up the whole process. Certainly, a long fight seems to be ahead.

But however long that fight may be, women's time is sure to come. In some respects it is already here.

INTERVIEW

LIPÓT SZONDI ON HIS LIFE AND ON DESTINY ANALYSIS

The auto-diagnostic test developed by Dr. Lipót Szondi is kept on file all over the world—Hungary included—as one instrument applicable to psychological testing. However, Dr. Szondi's theory of depth-psychology—analysing destiny or the psychology of destiny—is still being debated in many quarters; a Marxist reading of it has been under way in Hungary in recent years with several articles and studies in various periodicals. By publishing this interview we do not wish to intervene in the debate; we aim only at presenting the views of an original thinker. (The interview was originally published in the monthly review Valóság, No. 11, 1975, pp. 63–72.)

The fame of destiny analysis and the auto-diagnostic test was already world-wide when fascists dragged Lipót Szondi away from Hungary in 1944. His survival of the concentration camp bordered on the miraculous; he escaped to Switzerland and lives there to this day, where, at the age of 83, he is director of the Szondi Institute in Zurich.

Q: You were once, as a doctor at the Apponyi Polyclinic, one of the first and outstanding Hungarian specialists in endocrinology, a doctor of internal diseases who dealt with the internal secretion glands. What was it that led you to the treatment of backward children?

A: The explanation is very simple, but is exactly the reverse of your question. I had already decided as a third-year medical student to go into medical psychology. At the time, I wanted to become a psychiatrist.

I went to work as an assistant in the laboratory for the treatment of backward children led by Pál Ranschburg—still as a medical student—because I was especially interested in experimental psychology, and at the time this could be studied only with Ranschburg. I became an internist, because in the 1910s there was a study alleging inner secretion origins of schizophrenia. Under the influence of this study, I first made inner secretion tests on backward children in the laboratory and later expanded my examinations. There was in fact a time when I conducted inner secretion treatment at the polyclinic, was engaged only in this question and lectured on the topic. This is why many people thought that I was a specialist of internal diseases, although the truth is that I arrived at internal secretion through dealing with mental backwardness.

Q: If I am well informed, this period was summed up in your work entitled "The Deficient Mind", which was published in 1925, and which is still considered by many as your fundamental work. How did your activity proceed after the appearance of the book?

A: Two years later, in 1927, the Ministry established a separate laboratory for me at the Training College for Teachers of Backward Children, which was called the Pathological and Therapeutical Laboratory. "Therapeutics" was included in the name because we also experimented with healing the inner secretion glands.

Q: That was the laboratory from which a great generation issued: physicians, psychologists, teachers of backward children. Whom do you most like to remember among them?

A: I should mention many names; permit me to recall now only my most faithful collaborators. I must first mention Flóra Kozmutza (Mrs. Gyula Illyés), then István Benedek, Zsuzsa Kőrössi, Vera Mérei and Ferenc Mérei, Vera Roboz and Pál Roboz, Klári Sándor, Anna Gleimann, Erzsí Kardos, Eszter Mikó and finally György Böszörményi and István Garay.

Q: What did you do in this new laboratory? What were you interested in in the first place?

A: At first we were mainly engaged in the research of family lines. I established a so-called *family book* on families in which a great number of mentally backward children were born. My true aim was to include all those families in Hungary in the register in which mentally backward persons were then born. But we were able to put together only four or five hundred family books, because the Second World War intervened; the work was interrupted and the family books all perished.

Q: What was the aim of this extensive research into family trees?

A: My primary aim was to establish the role of heredity compared to environment in the incidence of mental backwardness. By environmental causes, of course, we mean not only the result of social surroundings but also the injuries due to birth or disease. For instance, the brain injury at birth—meningitis or brain fever, bleeding in the brain connected with the birth, and so on—these count as environmental causes because when the injury occurs, the child is already here, is already alive: its *inherited stock of genes* already ready, it has its given mass of endowments.

I must confess that at that time we did not yet have a method to definitely separate inherited and environmental influences. It is a wonderful development in science—that several decades after my first attempts in

Hungary, I have been dealing here in Switzerland in recent years with the same problem, and I believe to have discovered a method by which it can be established how many times greater is the effect of heredity than the environment in the case of a certain character. I shall first present my method in September 1976 in Paris, at the 7th International Colloquy of destiny analysts, in discussing the strength of the instincts for life and death.

Q: As far as I know, you elaborated in the laboratory of the Training College for Teachers of Backward Children your auto-diagnostic test, which has taken its place under the name of "Szondi-test" among the great psychological tests used all over the world. You laid also there the foundations for your system of ideas, which became known under the name of "psychology of destiny" or "destiny analysis". How did you arrive at the idea of the psychology of destiny?

A: Due to personal experiences and also experiences in medical practice. The personal part relies on two pillars. One is Dostoevsky. I observed that Dostoevsky had written mainly of murderers and saints. Why specifically about them? I asked myself the question, and as early as 1911 I elaborated the theory the essence of which is that writers project the *hidden content* of their own *ancestors*—in other words, their inherited stock of genes and instincts—into the heroes of their works, without being aware of it. I then presented my theory to a circle of friends. Strangely enough I had the same impact as later with my books. Some were enthusiastic about the idea, others considered it chimerical.

Henry Troyat's book on Dostoevsky was published years later, and in it he demonstrated in detail that since the seventeenth century there had been many criminals—even murderers—in Dostoevsky's family. And in contrast to them, there have also been many people in his family who could almost be considered saints. For instance, one of his great-great-grandmothers had her husband killed by the butler; others were

known as saints throughout Russia. I felt that Troyat's family tree research confirmed my theory. This encouraged me to continue my research to discover the causes of human destiny.

Seeing that Dostoevsky was an epileptic, I looked up the family tree of a great number of epileptics, and found that the *morbus sacer*—as epilepsy was called—and the *homo sacer*—i.e. the saint—stemmed from the same root. I will show you a family tree which confirms this statement. Look at this: here there is an epileptic, here another one, this one is a paranoiac, but here there is a nun, here a monk, here another two monks, and again an epileptic. This shows that many "saintly" persons also come from epileptic families. This appears to be so convincing, on the basis of earlier examinations conducted at home and more recent investigations made here, that it will be one of the principal topics at the Paris colloquy: *Morbus sacer—Homo sacer*. And Dostoevsky will be at the centre of the topic. Both physicians (epileptologists) and literary historians will deliver numerous lectures on Dostoevsky.

Q: You mentioned earlier that the basic idea of the psychology of destiny stemmed from two personal experiences. What was the other?

A: During the First World War I was convalescing in a Viennese hospital when I became acquainted with a girl, who was of Saxon origin, blond, Aryan, and a teacher of languages. One night I awoke from an oppressive dream. In my dream my parents talked about my half-brother, mainly about his bad destiny. My father lost his first wife very early, but my brother was a product of that marriage. This brother of mine was also a medical student, studied in Vienna, and also became acquainted there with a woman, who was of Saxon origin, blond, Aryan, and a teacher of languages. I was not yet even born when all that happened. Finally my brother was unable to finish his studies because he was forced to marry the woman, and his marriage was very unhappy.

The thought then came to mind that I

was really going to repeat the family destiny. But I told myself: I do not want to repeat the family destiny, I wish to live my own destiny! This is the origin of my theory of *choice*, that a person's choice may have an inherited—family, embedded in the genes—foundation, but it can also have an individually formed, egothonic foundation. The first is the genotrop and the second the egotrop choice. The essence of both is: a person's destiny is determined by his choices.

Q: But according to your theory the tropism or attraction to his family instinct is the decisive one. In other words not the conscious, but the unconscious, the genotrop choice.

A: This is the more frequent, exactly because it is not exclusive! My dream in Vienna made clear to me the destiny "planned" by my family instinct genes, but my making the unconscious possibilities of my destiny conscious, I was able to change this instinct plan. Next day I reported for the service, left Vienna and returned to the front-line.

Q: Can it be said then that if the choice of the ancestors hidden in the "family unconscious" becomes conscious, the genotrop force can be influenced?

A: This does not always succeed, but man has the possibility to let the ego choose and not the ancestors. Choice due to the ancestors is always unconscious. The ego knows that it chooses, but it does not know why it chooses the path it does.

Q: We have not yet spoken of a third experience, the medical one, the medical source of the idea of destiny analysis.

A: In my Budapest surgery I was once visited by a woman who was accompanied by her husband. She complained that she did not dare to give her children any medicine or sweets, because she was always afraid of poisoning them. "Have you ever heard of such a thing doctor?"—she asked finally, wondering herself about her curious fear. I told her then that from the Uplands an old woman periodically visited me, who had the same complaint. Her husband was a

grain merchant and whenever they sold grain, the woman always had the fear that they were poisoning the customers, the village. More than that! During the First World War a woman committed suicide in the village, and she had the feeling that she had poisoned the woman.

When I got that far in my story, suddenly the woman's husband, who until then had listened in deep silence, intervened and said: "Doctor, that woman from the Uplands—she is my mother."

Q: An amazing coincidence!

A: Amazing indeed, but no coincidence. This case "too" strengthened in me the certainty that an instinctive, unconscious choice existed in which the ancestors invisibly guided our destiny. It cannot be a coincidence that the man selected exactly such a woman for his wife, someone who was pained after five years of marriage by the same fears as his own mother! Hidden—latently—this man carried in himself the diseased stock of genes inherited from his mother, and these genes guided him imperceptibly, subconsciously in the choice of his mate.

Q: We have heard two examples of the choice of one's mate, but I imagine that the thesis applies to our other choices as well.

A: Of course. Our family instinct genes guide our choice of a mate, the choice of an occupation, the choice of objects and so on, and in the case of suicide even the choice of the manner of death. *Wahl macht Schicksal*. This is the basic idea of my theory. Our choices shape our destiny. Most choices are the function of our genes, i.e. they are brought about by a genotrop influence. The egotrop choice—which is more infrequent—was outlined in me only later on, in its final form in the period of destiny analytical treatments.

Q: The aim of destiny analysis is then to assist the victory of the egotrop choice over the genotrop choice of the ancestors?

A: Yes, but only if the genotrop choice is dangerous to the individual.

Q: But for the practice of destiny analysis you first had to elaborate the auto-diagnostic test, through which the attraction of the patient to a certain choice may be established.

A: This is an error. Many people think that I first elaborated the instinct-diagnostic test, and then destiny analysis. But it happened in a different way.

When I was certain that ancestors guided one's choices, I already knew that for the analysis—i.e. for the therapy—an exploration of the family tree was also necessary. But putting together a family tree requires a great deal of time and is not always reliable. In my book entitled *Schicksalsanalyse I*, for instance, described a family tree which contains the data of more than 500 relatives, which took more than six months to put together. I therefore thought it would be possible to save time if I investigated the direction of choice of the sick individual—i.e. the inspiration from the ancestors—in such a way that I put eight portraits in front of the person to be examined, each of which has been made of a person suffering from an inherited psychiatric disease (epilepsy, schizophrenia, etc.) and ask the person to select from the eight photographs the two most attractive and the two most repulsive ones.

I put together a series of 48 portraits, which included six homosexuals, six murderers (sadists), six epileptics, six catatonic schizophrenics, six paranoiacs, six hysterics, six depressives and six manics. I place the 48 pictures in front of a person not altogether but in six stages—at each stage including all eight groups of diseases. At each stage the patient had to select two, that is altogether twelve attractive and twelve repulsive pictures. We mark his selections in a table, which contains the initials of the eight diseases—h, s, e, p, hy, k, d, m,—and twelve squares are available for each symbol or each instinctive need. This is how the patient's instinct profile is put together.

Q: How many times is this test be performed for each patient?

A: In Hungary—where we started the test, and for a long time after—we let the patient make his choice twice. Here in Switzerland, we have quantitatively expanded the examination, and today we make our patient face the choice ten times at various intervals. Instead of a two-profile test we apply a ten-profile test. The advantage of the latter is that it lays open more destiny possibilities than a two-profile test. A person has not one and not two but several destiny possibilities.

In other words, the instinct profile is a coded table. The two most difficult years in my life were spent in Budapest from 1937 to 1939 working on the solution to this complicated code. But this work had a double purpose. It turned out that the test was not only suitable for making family tree research easier—and sometimes substitute for it—but was also suitable to demonstrate the destiny possibilities of a person, lay bare his stock of instincts, his set of instincts. Consequently, my test is a complex diagnostic test of instincts and destiny.

Q: And this, if I understood you properly, may obviate the need to draw up a family tree?

A: Sometimes yes, but in the majority of cases it does not. By itself the test cannot answer a number of things. To make this more easily understandable, I will give an example and show you an instinct profile table.

This 38-year-old man was sent to our institute for investigation by the judicial authorities because he had an affair with his sister and his eleven-year-old daughter. In addition he is a burglar. His instinct profile shows that ten times he choose the "k" pictures, proving his instinctive need of possession, and four pictures he even selected twice. Pictures that healthy people generally consider repulsive. Consequently, the possessive instinct is pathologically strong in this man both in respect to material objects and sexual objects (persons). He takes possession of the body of his daughter and his sister, and commits burglaries to possess

objects. But why is the man like this? The test cannot answer this question, only the family tree can.

So we also drew up the man's family tree, and you can see it that the father of the person under examination as well as his fraternal uncle had affairs with their own daughters and his grandfather was even jailed for incest. So far this is clear. But why did the man commit burglaries? The family tree answers this question too. The mother of the man, a taxi driver, divorced her husband who had committed incest with their daughter. She soon remarried, but her new husband turned out to be a burglar, and even a son of this man's first marriage was a burglar. And although the mother conducted an ordinary, honest life all the time, her choice was nevertheless guided by her latent recessive genes, which became manifest in her son, in his (criminal) actions.

As you can see, the test and the family tree complement each other; in the majority of cases the two must be applied together. The family tree demonstrates what exists or existed in the family, and the test shows what the individual exhibits among the—sick, asocial—family instincts.

Q: We are talking about instincts but what is it in reality that we call instincts?

A: According to Freud, instinct is in part a somatic and in part a psychic phenomenon, and its aim is to lead the human being into an earlier state, and even into the anorganic world. This is the death instinct, the polar antonym of which is the life instinct. The aim of psycho-analysis is to overcome the death instinct, to teach the person to live: to love and work. I go further and say that people must be taught to live in freedom and become humanists. The ant too "loves and works". The difference begins when the human being becomes free and humane, i.e. he extends his love to every living thing.

It is a fundamental criterion of the instinct that it manifests itself in action. A sentiment, for instance, is not an instinct. For a sentiment to become an instinct, it

has to become an action. The instinct has a single objective: to be satisfied by an action.

Q: What is the essential difference between the instincts of a human being and of an animal?

A: There is a very great difference. The lower orders, for instance, have a perfect system of instincts. Their entire individual and racial life relies on a strictly defined schedule of instincts, which they must realize step by step. The second group includes the living beings that have imperfect instincts, as for instance apes. These are already able to omit certain steps or to insert new ones in the schedule: they are able to learn. Man has the most imperfect instincts, which makes man able to learn from his experience, and thereby invent individual variations to his actions.

Q: So our system of instincts is imperfect. You have nevertheless elaborated a detailed system of instincts, and the test and destiny analysis are built on this system. Why was the instinct system table necessary?

A: When at the time of drawing up the test I began to speculate about the essence of the instincts, I first adopted the two great Freudian basic instincts: the life instinct and the death instinct. But I discovered that these two were not sufficient to understand the life of instincts, there are other important instincts too, and each has its antonym. Dialectic dualities exist in us. The "destructive Cain" kills out of lust, but there exists a "constructive Cain" too—for instance Moses—who also kills, but afterwards creates moral laws. According to the Bible, under Moses the Jews were decimated in the desert, but he then constructed the state of God, and created the basic laws of humanity. Another example could be the range of "hysterical" instincts, of which the dialectic contradiction is also characteristic: the polar antonyms of exhibitionism and of hiding. The positive side of the catatonic instinct is will and the taking of possession, the *Wille zum Haben*—which also has positive and, as our preceding example shows, negative manifestations. But its contrary negative side is

the willing of nothing, right down to suicide. The paranoid exhibits the instinct of longing for ego expansion; its will to grow wrestles with the will to diminish. Another antinomy I adopted for my system of instincts came from Imre Hermann: the search for a new object and the perseverance of an old one—in other words the antinomy of clinging and separation.

Sometimes these contradictory instincts are interchanged. The impulsive Cain kills; then remorse, the will to make good, becomes dominant in him. The killer Cain becomes a constructive Cain: he heals, helps, leads.

On the basis of the above my system of instincts is built on the variations of love, impulse, egotistical and social instincts, and consists of four principal instinct ranges, eight instinct needs and 16 instinct trends.

Q: You earlier said that instinct equalled action. But only one half of the antinomies can manifest itself in action. What happens to the other?

A: It is suppressed, but it is not entirely dead, it is not wiped out. It waits to surface, for an opportunity to act, for manifestation. This is what Karinty wittily said with "In the subconscious in a little house—the instinct sits in deep sorrow . . ."

However, an instinct trend that remains subconscious is not entirely inactive because it radiates the instinct world of the individual. The suppressed instinct trends often "come to life", leading to pathological symptoms or deviations in one's character. Here, in the Zurich institute over the last three years, we have been investigating what the strength, the potency, of the hidden instinct was most dependent on: heredity or environment. We have demonstrated that the greater the suppression of the instinct, the more dependent it is on heredity.

Q: Does this then mean that in the last resort the force of heredity is the greatest in the development of one's character? Is this perhaps why many people claim that your system of ideas is fatalistic?

A: This is an error! I assert with Freud

that the influence of heredity and environment cannot be sharply separated. Both my earlier examinations made in Hungary and the more recent ones made here prove that in the manifestation of some instincts heredity is strongest, and in the manifestation of others environment is strongest.

Q: According to modern genetics, human attributes and actions are determined by many genes. You nevertheless maintain that our choices—our destinies—are guided exclusively by the instinct genes, in other words by latent recessive genes.

A: In my view, the bulk of human qualities are determined by two chief genes. Instincts, for instance, are each certainly linked to two special genes. This is called *dimer-recessive* heredity by geneticists. But these two chief genes are not independent of the other genes in an individual's stock of genes. The surrounding genes have a definite determining role as well. It is an error to believe that I build everything on a single instinct gene. First of all, I always speak of two. This becomes quite clear, for instance, from that part of my book entitled *Schicksalsanalyse*, where I describe the interconnected course of heredity in stammering, epilepsy and migraine. In the second place, I assert that the entire set of genes plays a role in the manifestation of the two special genes.

Q: In my experience, many people consider psycho-analysis as opposed to destiny analysis. What is the truth in this? Are the two concepts, the two methods really contrary to each other?

A: No. I stand on a Freudian foundation. The difference is that we also treat those who suffer from grave inherited neuroses, not just people whose neuroses were caused by some injury or trauma in early childhood.

We begin our therapy with the Freudian method, with psycho-analysis, because as a first step we have to peel off environmental influences. We have to learn what it is that the patient has brought with him under the influence of his environment. Sometimes this takes two months, sometimes five months, sometimes a year—or even longer. And then the discovery of the early traumas

are suddenly bogged down. The patient does not bring along any more dreams, "he falls into a hole", and the analysis makes no more progress. This is a warning that not only environmental factors but also ancient instinct factors may play a role.

At this stage passive psycho-analytical therapy is turned into active destiny analytical therapy. This latter is also built on the Freudian method of association, with the difference that I expose innumerable times a single word to the patient from his actual dream—repeating the same word aloud and at the speed of hammer blows. I call the method *Hammerschlagmethode*. The patient is usually unable to resist this intense pressure and expels the inherited, ancient root of his neuroses. Let me give you an example to make you better understand what I mean.

A young girl underwent psycho-analysis after a homosexual relationship with an older woman. The therapy was successful: her homosexuality ceased, she was married and had two children. But she hardly dared to leave home out of fear that if she left her children would be killed in her absence. This kept the unfortunate woman in such terrible anxiety that she finally came to me for destiny analysis. In the destiny analysis she produced ancient dreams. Such ancient dreams (*Abnenträume*) are interesting, because if there was a schizophrenic in the family, then schizophrenic individuals appear in the ancient dream, if there were epileptics, then epileptics appear. And so on.

Our patient dreamt of a girl she could not get rid off. And in the next dream the same girl was schizophrenic, and was in essence nobody but herself. But where did this dream come from? We discovered from the family tree that there were two schizophrenic women in the family, and one of them had had the delusion that she was pregnant and threw her foetus into the toilet.

When I disclosed this to our patient, the inherited origin of her fear became clear and she suddenly shed her fear that her children would be killed. In the fifteen years that

have passed, the woman has been entirely free of these anxieties.

Q: Where is the place of your destiny psychology and destiny analysis in depth psychology?

A: Between Freud and Jung. Freud disclosed the personal, individual unconscious, Jung the collective unconscious, the archetypes. My area is the family unconscious.

Q: Do the examples you have given lead to the definite conclusion that instincts can consciously be guided, if necessary be guided onto a better path and even educated?

A: Yes. Destiny analysis is but the education of the instincts. Its aim is, as has already been mentioned, that the genotrop force should be replaced by the egotrop force, and instead of the influence of the ancestors the conscious ego should decide a person's destiny. It is interesting that a number of sciences deal with education, but few have thought of the possibility of educating the instincts. Pedagogy, politics, religion all wish to educate action that has already become manifest, although the action is guided by instincts. Consequently the instincts should be educated in the first place since instincts have a centre in the brain. It is well known that in the brain aggression as well as love or sexuality have their centre. Consequently, if I influence the instinct, I also influence the brain.

The instinct-educating principle of destiny analysis is that the instincts standing behind the patient or behind the associational actions have first to be discovered; afterwards healing, making conscious, counselling and guidance of the instincts may follow. Since every negative instinct has its positive antonym, there is always the possibility of guidance, of turning over.

Q: What connection do you see between the instincts and abilities or talent?

A: Instincts too stand behind every kind of talent, and capabilities are developed—partly!—in the direction of the instincts. A man is most talented in the occupation or career towards which his instincts strive the most stubbornly to attain satisfaction.

The instincts provide the driving force of talent. But the structure of the brain also contributes to the formation of talent. By satisfying the aggressive instinct one may become a butcher, or a killer, but also an outstanding surgeon. True talent results from the lucky coincidence of instinct and brain structure.

Q: Since school shoulders a dominant responsibility in a career guidance for the young, don't you think that it too should take a larger role in the education of the instinct?

A: In my opinion, career-counselling is very important, because an instinct may become sublimed healthily in a well-chosen career, but may lead to a disease in a wrongly chosen career. In my view the system of career choice decided by where people are needed or where the family forces them, is entirely wrong. The person must be placed where—in accordance with his talent—he may fulfil his instincts and his inclinations. Let me give you two examples.

A psychiatrist found guilty of grave exhibitionism was put on probation and compelled to undergo analysis. This is how he came to me. His exhibitionism manifested itself in such a way that when he had an attack, he took out his sex organ in the street and showed it around. In the course of the examination it was discovered that this man had extraordinary manual dexterity and great imagination. During his treatment he discovered to replace this perverted manifestation of his exhibitionistic inclination. He became a sculptor and soon began to exhibit. To put it rudely—he showed his statues instead of his sex organ: the human body, but in the form of a statue. His exhibitionistic instinct continued to be active, but its manifestation was transposed—consciously!—to a socially useful, even valuable area.

Another example. A fourth-year philosophy student came to us because he had threatened his professors several times: if they do not let him pass the examinations, he will shoot them. The test my colleague

made with him showed in maximum strength the will to hide. I asked him what he did for a living, because his threats got him expelled from the university. I am a stone-breaker on a road construction site, he answered. I told him that what he did was not bad, but advised him to go deeper—to break stone or coal—under the earth. The boy almost dropped off the chair in surprise, and told me that from the eighteenth century on up to his grandfather everybody in his family was a coal-miner. His grandfather became a teacher in a period of unemployment to earn a safer living, but then committed suicide. It turned out that the person under examination was forced by his parents to enter university. But he was unable to overcome instinctive family genes; by becoming a stone-breaker and undergoing analysis he avoided the destiny of his grandfather.

That this was not a coincidence or an individual phenomenon has been proven by instinct diagnostic tests done among miners in West Germany. Carried out on a massive scale, the test demonstrated that the best miners had the strongest instinct for hiding.

Q: When I prepared for this interview, I jotted down an idea from an article by László Németh. Let me quote it, because I feel that this outstanding writer recently deceased confirms your explanations. "For the fact that a man—just as he has a sex instinct and an instinct to get along in life—has also an instinctive calling. He wants to find the occupation which suits him best and to develop this occupation. If this instinct is suppressed, it springs forth in spurious ways and, in a distorted form, becomes even more stubborn and passionate: my life may be an example of this." As may be seen, the choice of career is not easy, and may I refer here again to the fact that the burden of counselling weighs perhaps too heavily on the teachers.

A: You are right: this burden must be shared. I am convinced that schools cannot do without a school psychologist, who should make tests in order to discover the instincts

and inclinations of the child. He should give the Rorschach test, maybe the instinct test and other tests too. On the basis of the tests he should discuss with teachers and parents the choice of careers, the suitable range of fields and the direction of educating instinct and talent. In other words, the teacher must get to know the child along with the psychologist—from instincts to talents—but I wish to stress that along with the tests the child must be given a hearing too!

Since you have mentioned school, let me tell you that, in my view, every teacher who discovers some neurotic symptom in himself should undergo analysis. In the analysis he can learn and understand the psychology he really needs to truly understand his students. He is compelled to recall the experiences of his own childhood, and this brings him closer to the psychology of his pupils. With people who lack the spontaneous psychological foundation of education we often meet anxieties, inhibitions, maybe delusions. Under analysis these troubles can mostly be put in order.

And another thing. In my opinion the teachers should also have a serious knowledge of depth psychology. It is one of my old hobby-horses that depth psychology should also be included in the training of teachers. Educational psychology is insufficient, because it covers only the conscious sphere, it is the psychology of practice. Depth psychology dealing with the unconscious is also needed in education.

Q: How does the field of destiny psychology stand today in the world of science?

A: I feel that both the test and the theory have stood the test of time. A quantitative change has been made in the test. Instead of a two-profile test we now undertake a ten-profile test, which—as I have already mentioned—lays bare more destiny possibilities.

The universities have also opened doors to destiny psychology. Jacques Schotte, professor at Leuven University in Belgium, has elaborated his theoretical psychiatry on

the basis of my system of instincts. Incidentally, I have more disciples in Belgium than here in Switzerland. There my theory of instincts and destiny analysis are already part of the university curriculum. But one of the Paris universities, Paris VII, has also adopted the entire study, led by van Reeth. And for the 7th International Colloquy the gates of the old Sorbonne have also been opened to destiny psychology.

Q: Who maintains this beautiful and well-equipped institute here on the Zürichberg? And what does the picture of the bridge represent in the inscription of "Stiftung Szondi Institut"? (Some people believe it to be a stylized drawing of the Budapest Chain Bridge.)

A: The institute belongs to a foundation, which has been established by me, but the bulk of the money has been donated by the mother of one of my cured patients. In our "arms" the bridge just represents my endeavour to link up the three schools built on the unconscious—the ones by Freud, Jung and myself—into a united system of depth psychology.

Q: What are the main research topics of the institute at present?

A: In addition to many others, we deal

at present with three main topics. 1. Who consume narcotics? 2. Who are the alcoholics? But our most important research topic (3.) is how the role of heredity may be compared quantitatively with the role of the environment. We must elaborate a reliable method to establish the relative effects of heredity and the environment in a given case. This is necessary to enable us in the case of a psychiatric disease to make forecasts based on a clear picture of the instincts that can be cured and re-educated. And it is only with a reliable instinct image that we can give usable advice to those who turn to us at times of marriage, pregnancy or planning a family.

Q: You are an honorary doctor at Leuven University, yet you asked me not to use the title "Professor" in the interview. You asked me to write simply Doctor, or Doctor Szondi. Why?

A: In 1941 I was deprived not only of the directorship of the laboratory but also of the title of "college professor". Since then I have not used the title of professor.

Q: Did that still happen in Hungary?

A: Yes.

Q: Thank you, Doctor, for the time you have taken for this conversation.

GYÖRGY GYÖRI

REVIEW OF PERIODICALS

NUTS AND BOLTS

CASHEWS AND COMMON SENSE

Salted cashews are very common in English-speaking countries while in Hungary they were practically unknown until recently. Not that they did not exist in Hungarian food stores. They were on sale but very few people bought them. Today there are no more salted cashews on sale in Hungarian stores. They are sold out but now every Hungarian citizen knows them well. And in fact, salted cashews have become a household word in economics. The new concept resulted from a discussion that lasted several months in the columns of the literary and—as its title indicates—political weekly, *Élet és Irodalom*.

The discussion began with the somewhat pompous headline, "Let us produce a better public spirit" but people referred to it only as the "cashew discussion" because it all started with Bulcsú Bertha's article, "Salted Cashews", in the issue of February 28, 1976.

"Salted cashews are down," wrote Bertha. "A hundred and fifty grams used to cost sixty forints and are now on sale for thirty-two. True, the package says, 'To be sold before February 1976.' Although February was almost over I could not resist them, being of an inquisitive nature. There were heaps of unsold salted cashews in my local self-service food-store in Óbuda. I bought one package. The salesgirl stared at me, then brought a colleague over to look. They both thought I was mad."

With this introduction, the author gave a long list of "salted cashews"—and subsequent issues had other people's "salted cashews", enumerating the most conspicuous undesirable features of our economic life, social conditions and work morale: wide-ranging examples of stupidity, incompetence, irresponsibility and negligence which arouse the fury not only of every economist but also of every responsible Hungarian citizen. These were offences to common sense that fit the picturesque Hungarian expression, "the knife opens in their pocket."

"...there are many enterprises where people are unable to work because of hitches in material supply or badly organized work. Where work is well prepared, well organized and controlled, it is impossible not to perform the job. I often see bored people just hanging about. Young people play football in their overalls on public squares during working hours. Older workers play cards or drink beer in front of shop entrances. Anybody with an understanding of economics would be distressed by such a sight. But if they think or speak ill of these workers, they are mistaken. For behind each idle and loafing worker there is some shop foreman, supply-man, engineer, director, a committee or even the relevant ministry."

Bulcsú Bertha is a hot-tempered man and he is no economist. His article contained inaccuracies and reflected some naïveté;

many subsequent articles reproached him but there could be no doubt about his good intentions. (Still, some readers did have their doubts: "If Bulcsú Bertha or the Editor would sum up these flaws and reveal them in a closed or public session to a competent forum, then they would have a right to say they tried to help and indeed, achieved some slight improvement. But since they only poured the contents of this cesspool out on the helpless reader. . .," wrote somebody in an anonymous contribution included in the letter-montage with which the editors closed the debate on April 24.)

May I further quote Bertha: "Look at these salted cashews. There might be several wagon-loads of them in the country. We did not need salted cashews. A hundred and fifty grams would cost a worker half-a-day's wages. But fortunately he does not want to eat salted cashews, even now when they are 50 per cent cheaper. It would have been better to import the nuts semi-raw which, according to the technical literature, contain a juice that gnaws off corns and warts and can be used against white ants. We would have done better business with the sap of the plant, from which ink and funeral candles can be made. What did this cashew adventure cost us? What did we give in exchange—our own trash or machines, precision instruments, salami? . . . Our barter agreements would arouse anybody's curiosity. What do we give for what? People don't like us to give buses and machines for bananas, chewing-gum, elastic and multi-coloured panties. I am afraid that such things do happen. . . . These things lead also to deficits, just as much as workers who drink beer instead of working, and there is much more."

Temper and passion perhaps at times triumphed over rational consideration and competence. Many correspondents first corrected Bertha's errors and naïveté—then, of course, enumerated their own "cashews".

The first correspondent, in the March 6 issue of the magazine, was István Lázár, a journalist on the staff of *Valóság* (Reality),

the monthly social sciences review. "I can imagine the experts already latching onto the preamble of Bertha's article. Pro primo: the cashew affair is unimportant. Pro secundo: why all the fuss? (1) Cashews are a negligible part of our imports. (2) The author hasn't got the faintest idea of the complexities and ramifications of barter arrangements, 'something-for-something' deals and interstate agreements. We must purchase the traditional products of developing countries, or perhaps something happens in a formerly stable country—a natural calamity or a political upheaval—that makes us chase after our money. We are happy to get cashew nuts. Our experts could give you many answers." István Lázár then comes up with his own "cashew": "I find that the biggest problems in our development today are the unsolved or badly managed questions of incentives and regulation." He enumerates examples which I won't repeat here, just his very pertinent remark: "Salary? Often just an 'attendance fee'. At our own places of work and in our own jobs there are not enough opportunities and it is not worthwhile enough to do our best. Those who work twice as hard get just a little more but those who, instead of over-exerting themselves, have second jobs somewhere else, make good money without jeopardizing their basic salary. Therefore stricter controls on secondary employment or subsidiary occupations is only a palliative measure."

Readers outside Hungary will probably not see the fundamental theme clearly through all the capricious twists and turns in the debate. Vilmos Molnár, a correspondent from Szolnok, felt that "As in many other polemics, we are trying to find the answer to the question of how better material conditions influence people's consciousness." (April 24, 1976)

The cashew debate has indeed been about too many things to be about anything specific. At the close of the cashew discussion Zoltán Molnár, a staff member of *Élet és Irodalom*, even wrote an article "What are

Debates about?" "A critical reader wrote that when several people start to shake their heads in disapproval, others automatically join them. Another, even more critical reader, considered debates in the press as nothing more than socialist Hyde Parks. Let those complain who have something to complain about: it is more effective than the excellent products of our pharmaceutical industry. And it sells more copies of our papers."

Indeed, the journal did get more popular, selling out every week. For a few weeks every journalist's dream came true: there was a rush for the paper, as people showed how much it interested them.

Contributions from experts started to pour in. "I am one of those experts mentioned by István Lázár, and as he suspected, I got stuck at the introduction to Bertha's article. But only for a moment. It is really unimportant whether Bertha described the cashew affair accurately or not. A writer or publicist is not obliged to know the intricacies of barter or interstate agreements. From his everyday experience he selected an example he found particularly irrational, even though it really wasn't. Is he the only person to be scandalized by cashews who conjures a theory in the absence of an adequate explanation?"

These were the first lines of an article by Tamás Bácskai, an executive of the National Bank of Hungary. The answer to it comes in one paragraph of an article by the journalist, Iván Ordas: "There was a time when we were not informed about the 'production' in our country of such exotic commodities as cotton, Russian dandelions, sweet potatoes and lemons. Or to put it better, we were misinformed and told that they had a moderate success, despite the complete unsuitability of the Hungarian climate. The people were not intellectual infants; just silent. But it would be difficult to believe that we are still not adult enough to listen to the views of as many persons as possible in matters of public concern."

Endre Kovács, a young economist from Eger, wrote: "Today, three decades after Liberation and twenty years after the counter-revolution, do we still need the clichés and stereotypes that, in the past, carried the simplified truths meant for an uneducated and oppressed people?"

By the way, Tamás Bácskai explained his own "cashew", the problem of manpower, in the issue of March 13, 1976: "Is it possible, in conditions of permanent manpower shortage, to observe the same work and technological discipline as in conditions of full employment? With demand growing much faster than supply, is it possible to increase the impact of the consumer on production and supply?... If there are permanently more jobs than workers it is easy to lure anybody from one work place to another by promising him more money. This 'fee for shifting' is more potent than Lázár's 'fee of presence'; it increases tension in the market place, that is, market response."

Many people accused Bertha of incompetence. A writer, Márton Lovas, wrote in the same March 13 issue: "The article makes the basic mistake of making a mountain out of a molehill. In more exact terms it elevates exceptions into general truths and ignores the real truth. There are some hunchbacks among us but according to Bertha 'all Hungarians are hunchbacks'..." For this Lovas paid the price of being considered by most participants in the debate as the prime example of one of the most attacked tendencies. Involuntarily, he ended up as the leader of those who wanted "to play things down". Ambrus Bor, the short-story writer, attacked him in the March 20 issue: "To play down the mistakes that have been revealed is a bad method of discussion. It is bad to try to cover up mistakes by pointing to achievements: many times they have nothing to do with the mistakes, and very often they are no more than the execution of one's duties and not the result of additional exertion. To call concerned people pessimists is a bad way to argue."

Népszabadság, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party daily, had an article by Péter Rényi, the Deputy Editor dismissing the writers and the whole controversy as incompetent: "The main problem in this type of manifestation is not the answers to the questions themselves. Experts can give the answers frankly without mincing words and without shame. The real problem is that the good intentions miss the mark; they give the alarm signal where it is not necessary and disorient people when there are so many other things to worry about—and give the alarm about (not in the demagogic sense of the word, but to alert and orient people). Here I suspect a difference in timing: community-spirited artists and writers lag behind events in public life, politics and economics. This is not a good thing, even for the artists themselves. Politics and economics will not fall into confusion because of a few unfounded, offhand remarks, but the energy critics put into helping and promoting controversy will be wasted in the treadmill of justified denials..." (April 4, 1976)

Such an insinuation is unfair to the writers, who did their best to overcome anyone's questioning their competence in such matters. In this respect it was a typically Hungarian debate: writers discussing matters "which they do not understand, which are not of their concern" (at least not professionally) has occurred throughout the past five hundred years of Hungarian history.

And it is not even true that they do not understand such things. Lajos Maróti has defined his own "cashew" as cogently as any social scientist could: "...the social and technical changes in our life collapsed along with the pattern of exterior and interior drives which, in the past, determined man's relation to work with merciless effectiveness. At the same time we have not yet worked out and made people accept a new, socially effective system of motivations, i.e. we have not given living and stimulating content to the axioms of the entirely new work morale."

The discussion went on for more than

two months, jumping from one subject to another. The debate was not always on a high level; it was often superficial—as press debates generally are. But it is no exaggeration to say that while it lasted half the country was interested in "cashews".

I conclude with another passage from the same article by Maróti, which touched the heart of the debate in the most striking manner: "The sight of beer-drinking workers has become a well-known feature of the town-scape. But it no more characterizes the state of industrial production than expanses of uncultivated land reflect the efficiency of agricultural enterprises. True, the Treasury closed the year 1975 with a several billion forint deficit; but that figure is at least two orders smaller than the billions spent on consumption and accumulation in the same year. We can assume that such wealth was produced somewhere by somebody in this country—unless we are prepared to say that Hungary depends for its prosperity on some munificent Santa Claus."

CHARTING THE MAP OF A CHANGING SOCIETY

Társadalmi Szemle (Social Review), the theoretical periodical of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, printed an interesting article in its April issue by József Bálint, Central Committee member, Undersecretary of State, and President of the Central Statistical Office, on "The Stratification of Our Society and Income Distribution as Reflected by Statistics". Under the dry scientific title come such exciting questions as "the class structure of Hungarian society and its changes since 1941" and "income distribution in the major social sectors over the past ten years."

If we want to answer these questions or rather, begin to answer them, a number of concepts must first be clarified, a task that depends as much on philosophers as statisticians.

In everyday conversation we more or less

agree on the concept of "worker" or "peasant" and accept their traditional definitions. But statisticians must "label" everybody even when a classification, like for an office messenger, is not easy, and sometimes meaningless. Such things are even more complicated: since the liberation, definitions of classes and sectors have been changed to fit the objectives for which the surveys were commissioned—to show, for example, the elimination of peasants as a result of the land reform, or emphasize the dynamics of the state sector after nationalization, or the growing ratio of industrial workers as a result of industrialization, the growth of the socialist sector in agriculture and the shrinking of the private sector.

This means that the present statistical definition of social strata has itself developed and changed over thirty years. The latest survey distinguishes six basic household population groups: *workers*—where the head is gainfully employed as a manual worker in any branch of the economy except agriculture and no household member is gainfully employed in agriculture; *peasants*—where the head is gainfully employed as a manual worker in agriculture (including state farms) with no household member gainfully employed as a manual worker in any branch outside agriculture; *dual income*—where household members are gainfully employed as manual workers both in agriculture and in another branch; *intellectual occupation*—where the head has an intellectual occupation; *self-employed*—where one household member is a self-employed merchant, artisan or conveyor (but not including peasants outside agricultural cooperatives); *pensioners*—with no gainfully employed member.

According to Bálint the system's major shortcoming is that it does not take into account the growing number of dual-income households, and it does not define clearly who belongs to each social class and sector.

One of the most important events in Hungarian social science in the sixties had been the definition of the working class and

discussions about the structure of Hungarian society: what was the role of property relations in determining class relations in socialist society? How do the divisions of labour determine the structure of society? . . . Should the technical intelligentsia not be classified with the working class? It was finally agreed that they did not belong to the working class but formed a special subgroup of intellectuals.

How should we classify people like shopforemen or technicians? As a result of the debate they are considered as part of the working class.

Is there any class distinction among manual workers, in industrial cooperatives, and manual workers in state industry? Does an agricultural manual worker in an agricultural cooperative belong to a different social class than one who is not self-employed? The answer to both questions is "no".

In March 1974 the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party's Central Committee discussed the guidelines "for developing the social role of the working class and further improving its conditions". It adopted a resolution stating who could be considered a worker: (1) manual workers employed in state industry, (2) manual workers in industrial, building and other non-agricultural cooperatives, and (3) intellectually employed persons directly engaged in the direction of production in such state enterprises and cooperatives. In a political sense, former workers holding positions in the country's political, state, economic and cultural life and pensioned workers from the above three categories also belong to the working class.

The Central Statistical Office has been instructed to follow more attentively the evolution of the working class. Naturally this implies a complex study of society of which the working class forms a part, and the exact definition of social strata and classes. To this effect a Unified System of Job Classification was drafted in 1975. József Bálint gave a detailed explanation of the System together with the new problems

it raised; but the chart showing the mobility of Hungarian society from 1941 to 1973 is probably much more interesting.

"The Central Statistical Office has started to apply these class and sector definitions in statistical surveys. We have revised the micro-census of 1973 according to the present concept of class and sector structure. We reprocessed the data of former censuses according to the new classification, with an indication of the ratio of the exploiting class in the years in question. Thus we could give a unified, retrospective description of the social class structure from 1941."

What does this chart indicate? First that the majority of the population belonged to the working class as far back as in 1941 and over the last one and a half decades their numbers have steadily grown: 86 per cent of all workers are active in material production and 14 per cent in non-material production. The proportion of peasants is steadily decreasing, while the intelligentsia has increased rapidly; 62 per cent of all intellectually occupied persons work in material production.

The charts also indicate that over one-third of all working-class members live in mixed households mostly with one member gainfully employed in an agricultural co-operative; this shows the steady rapprochement of these two basic sectors of Hungarian society. (The ratio of mixed households is now 27 per cent.)

The Central Statistical Office has also examined social mobility over the past thirty years. More than one quarter of the sons and almost two-fifths of the gainfully employed daughters of manual workers before the liberation have become intellectual workers, while a considerable ratio (about one-tenth of the sons of skilled workers) hold leading posts or are technical experts. So the majority of today's leading men are of worker or peasant origin. At the same time, parallel to industrialization, half of the sons and over one-third of the gainfully employed daughters of peasants have

become workers in industry, in the building industries and in other non-agricultural manufactures. This means that almost half of today's industrial workers are of peasant origin.

József Bálint stated that "the tendency towards equalization of all incomes is an important factor in the rapprochement of social classes and sectors." He then described this process, analysed the theoretical and statistical problems of measuring incomes but here we will limit ourselves to the informative charts because they give an unequivocal answer to some often debated major questions.

With regard to per capita global income, peasants reached the same level as workers in 1968.

Until 1973 the incomes of peasants grew faster than the earnings of workers. In 1973 the per capita income of peasants was 7 per cent more than that of workers.

In 1975 the worker-peasant income-ratio more or less fell back to the level of 1970, i.e. peasant incomes exceeded the workers' by 3-4 per cent. But, wrote Bálint, there is considerable fluctuation behind this average figure and the state should influence peasant incomes in a more discriminating manner, like subsidies or taxation.

Over ten years the fastest income growth was among dual-income households (124 per cent), followed by peasants (119 per cent), workers (97 per cent) and finally intellectual workers (91 per cent).

"If we sum up the evolution of incomes by social class we can say that the ratios of the classes and main social strata show a stable enough relationship, indeed a certain rapprochement. This conforms to the objectives of socialist construction and can be considered a major social achievement."

FOREIGN POLITICS

Külpolitika (Foreign Politics) is one of the youngest Hungarian periodicals—in its third volume—with a publisher, the Hungarian

Institute of Foreign Affairs, that is also young. The review, which is concerned with analytical and theoretical studies of foreign politics, deals with such subjects as (taken from the latest issue, 1976/1): "The Final Act in Helsinki and the Norms of International Relations". The author, Péter Kulcsár, works on Hungarian Radio's broadcasts to foreign countries, and here analyses the legal status of the Act. The same issue also contains "On the Possibility of Renewing the World Economic Order" by Ferenc Kozma, secretary of the Scientific Council on World Economy, who discusses the goals of developing countries and the degree to which they conform to the interests of the Western imperialists powers. Péter Rajcsányi, who works at the Hungarian Institute of Foreign Affairs, discusses the theoretical problems in trying to evaluate the international balance of forces.

One article in the column "Review" discusses the role of the UN in liquidating the colonial system; another sums up the plans of the opposition parties in West Germany and their views on foreign policy.

The column "Life at the Institute" carries a report on a conference organized in September 1975 in Tihany, Lake Balaton,

on the subject, "International Détente and Perspectives on the Development of East-West Relations to the End of the 1970s". This was the second conference on the subject, pitting experts in different fields against the knotty complex of problems related to the given theme. I limit myself to one definition quoted in the conference conclusions: "Détente... is the process of simultaneous competition and cooperation, a particular form of the international class struggle where peaceful solutions predominate."

The issue also printed a paper by Assistant Professor Tibor Palánkai on "Great Britain after Joining the European Economic Community". The article is not so much an analysis as a summary of known facts culled from British sources.

"Foreign Politics" also prints book reviews, with synopses of the most important papers given in English and Russian. The paper's special significance is in regularly publishing the documents pertaining to Hungarian foreign policy, including in the latest number the texts of the joint communiqués issued during the recent African and Near Eastern journey of Pál Losonczy, President of the Presidential Council.

ISTVÁN BART

SURVEYS

IVÁN T. BEREND

THE PRESENT IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Historical Approach

It is not the famous Ciceronian phrase "testis temporum, magistra vitae" that I am thinking of, it is not historic examples and analogies that I wish to conjure up so that history should appear as the "witness of times", the "schoolmistress of life". It is striking however to see how the historical method is often relegated to the background in the approach to contemporary socio-economic facts, how widespread a kind of interpretation—torn out of the historic process—of these facts is; how many people are inclined to identify historical perspective with the description of the past and consider it as dead material from the aspect of the present. On other occasions, and this is not infrequent either, "historicity" appears in a distorted way, as the forced picking out of certain examples serving to support given ideas or concepts; this is dangerous, because complex historic processes can, of course, provide examples for anything and for its opposite as well. This kind of "historical approach" lightly throws about the admonishing examples of history. It seeks either "antecedents" for the process occurring in the present, "supporting" them through historical analogy, or—just on the contrary—it wants to oppose the present to the past through examples. It is even more misleading than this practice to "arrange" the events

of the past into an arbitrary sequence corresponding to some preconceived idea, while disregarding facts that are contrary to this preconception.

One and the same history, therefore, becomes an unbroken chain of heroic and self-sacrificing class struggles and fights for freedom in one interpretation, and in another a series of defeats, compromises and surrenders. The picking out of one side of the thesis and antithesis produced by history and the concealment of the other distorts the organic process of history, since historic reality did not create a formula as a choice of either Széchenyi or Kossuth, and not even as either Kossuth or Deák; a certain period of Hungarian history was determined by all of them, i.e. the forces and efforts they stood for together; just as 1919 was the year of the victorious and of the defeated Republic of Councils, and Hungarian history and society were formed together by the 1848 Revolution and the dualistic regime, the Republic of Councils, and the Horthy regime. Picked examples do not allow one to interpret, only to distort.

However, there are numerous further tripping wires hidden in historical analysis, since in the last resort subjective misinterpretations are no worse than the kind of "objective historicity" which sees the processes that occurred "justified" in a way by the fact of their occurrence. Of this attitude,

Lenin ironically said in one of his earliest works, that pointing out the inevitability of a sequence of facts is always in danger of turning out to be an apology for the status quo.

This kind of false historicity passes over into apology, since it does not reckon with the fact that from time to time inevitable events may also be negative, and the "defence" of these deprives our attitude of true historicity. And how many people committed such an error in the economic and historical debates of recent years... (Incidentally, Lenin demonstrated convincingly exactly in the judging of a much debated important event of Hungarian history that the fact of its occurring does not justify the historic event in itself. Lenin considered the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 historically inevitable, i.e. an event which could not be "rejected", opposing to it some wished for but unrealistic revolutionary solution, and considered, at the same time, the content of the Compromise a reactionary reply to the question posed by the revolution.)

It is not my intention to enumerate the errors, but rather to emphasize the Marxian interpretation and importance of historical approach. Without undertaking the presentation of the philosophic, that is epistemological context of the question, let me refer only to the fact that Hegel already thoroughly challenged the traditional attitude when he did not call the lessons drawn from days long past the schoolmaster of life, but viewed life identifying every fact with its own history.

With Marx and in Marxism it was this discovery that matured into a fundamental scientific method.

This is linked to that often quoted Marxian maxim that every science is basically historical.

The methodical achievement of the historical approach later played an extraordinary role in the accomplishments of Marxism (and the politics based on it).

What then can the historical approach offer to the present? It contributes to the understanding of depth instead of the surface, of the whole instead of the segment, of the context instead of the fact in itself, and it ensures a viewing of the facts of the present in conjunction with the past and the future.

Let me attempt to prove this using three selected but rather important present socio-economic phenomena.

Contemporary Price Problems—in a Historical Perspective

Prices are rising. Yesterday rent, today the price of milk, tomorrow perhaps the price of meat and of other commodities. This is a subject for day by day annoyance, and day by day economic argument.

It is not easy to accept this fact although this is already the third or fourth generation that is becoming acquainted with it. More than half a century ago an incontestably gifted Hungarian Minister of Finance, Lóránt Hegedűs, had to enter a psychiatric hospital for years, because he persistently stuck to the traditional view that "the ideal state of the budget is budgetary equilibrium, i.e., the complete harmony between receipts and expenditure" and the unchanged stability of the currency, and he presented a plan for stabilization on this basis in 1920. The dominant bourgeois schools of economics of the second half of the nineteenth century saw the depreciation of the currency as a frightening breakdown of economic equilibrium. In the wake of the conservative German economic-financial school of thought of Heinrich Rau and Adolf Wagner and Lorenz Stein, this view was unequivocally dominant in Hungary as well starting with the 1890s. Economic practice which was a more exact seismograph of new tendencies in the capitalist economy than the then still backward, conservative economic theory, soon pointed to the need to correct these

views. "...due to the circumstances, these plans are no longer considered suitable for getting the country's finances out of the mire," was said, in the House of Representatives, on the stabilization plan. "They were considered as such. I did consider them as such. . . . But I can now see that a boom occurred here which serves to the advantage of the country; if we choose perhaps another road. . . . than the one suggested here by the Minister."

The discovery of new economic trends, and among these the connection between the deterioration of the currency, that is inflation, and the trend of production, i.e. the theoretical formulation of the economic problems which had been unknown before the war, was undertaken in the capitalist world only a decade later when, in addition to the experiences of the post-war years, the destructive crisis as well made the immediate need for the application of new weapons obvious. The new schools in economic theory which Keynes gave rise to already considered the earlier views on the budgetary equilibrium to be obsolete, and slow inflationary financing as a fundamental method for creating a boom became central to their thinking.

Price rises at a steady though changing pace have since come to stay. Two to three decades suffice even for the traditionally "hardest" currencies to lose half or three-quarters of their purchasing power. True, public opinion still sees this process as the endangering of economic equilibrium. A depreciation which was not even too serious in the context of today's capitalist economy, was a dangerous political weapon in the hands of Barzel and Strauss against Brandt at the time of the last West German elections.

It is not here possible to argue the theoretical aspects of this question. It would take one too far to analyse the effect of the inner laws of the socialist economy on the socialist economy itself, and the laws governing the movement of prices in the

latter. An empirical approach to the historic facts can at the most be a contribution to the research into these laws. The path of the Hungarian economy in the last quarter century certainly provides such contributions. First perhaps—let me mention one of the conclusions in advance—that the general trend of the movement of prices in the world market exercised an influence on the country's economy that could not be warded off. To illustrate the extent to which this applied, let us place the second piece of the historic mosaic, this time from approximately a quarter century ago.

At the preparatory stage of the Hungarian stabilization in August 1946, the real world prices were consciously ignored in the planning of the price system, and in order to ensure a lower price level, calculations were based on lower raw material prices. In the paper industry, calculations at approximately 40 per cent lower prices were permitted. In the case of imported rayon filaments computing of a raw material price of 34 forints was allowed, although the latter's international market price was 55 forints. In the United States the price level increased by 31 per cent between July 1946 and 1947 alone, and in the wake of the rise of world prices the price level of Hungarian imports also rose by 20 per cent.

Although a most determined price-fixing policy was applied after stabilization, and even so-called committees for protecting the forint operated all over the country and sentences of extreme severity were handed down after August 1, 1946, a slow rise of the price level nevertheless started and eight months after stabilization the price of industrial products was higher by nearly 3 per cent, and ten months later by about 9 per cent, than in August 1946. By the latter point in time the average price level of all goods had already increased by 20 per cent! A major factor in this was that agricultural prices—fixed at an especially low level—were untenable, they would have endangered production. (One year after

stabilization agricultural prices exceeded the stabilization level by approximately 50 per cent.)

It is far from true that this price movement represented merely the correction of price-planning at stabilization. The process continued, and in the two years between January 1947 and January 1949—at the time of the impressive pace of reconstruction and the spectacular improvement in living conditions—the average price level again rose by about 20 per cent.

I am not here trying to trace post-war price history. An important fact must nevertheless be mentioned. At the beginning of the fifties planning based on compulsory directives introduced the most rigid controls. Price fluctuations in the international markets were warded off by the dual price system that had been introduced, i.e., by the method of price compensation in foreign trade. This meant, in the case of imported goods, that although the state-owned import enterprise was purchasing at world prices, it passed goods on to production enterprises at domestic (in certain cases lower) prices. And the socialist countries, in their trade among each other, fixed the then world prices in the summer 1951, and from then on settled their trade at those fixed prices which in the meantime became fictitious. Free price formation was reduced to the so-called free market goods, which were quite insignificant in number. In the first half of the fifties the most substantial price rise in modern Hungarian economic history occurred—not counting the two great post-war inflations—in spite of the strictly fixed prices and the elimination of price influences from abroad. By the middle of the decade the average price level was already almost double the 1949 level! This was far from being healthy and was connected with the stepped-up investment programmes and the fact that the tensions necessarily occurring between supply and demand were consistently solved through the reduction of consumption. The causes were manifold, but the phenomenon proved

unequivocally that fixed prices themselves gave no assurance at all for price stability.

But let us not stop at events that occurred half a century or a quarter century ago, let us fit the mosaic piece of price movement in the last decade into the picture. From the mid-sixties—supported by a conscious economic policy—the gradual rise of agricultural prices and in part of services as well (and of the industrial prices connected with these) began and is still continuing. Looked at historically, what is occurring here is not simply some kind of price rise, but also the process of transformation of the Hungarian price structure. The price structure which existed until the mid-sixties was in essence a product of the 1946 stabilization and of the prices and economic policy enforced at the beginning of the fifties. It was determined by the necessities and economic objectives of the period, just as prices and price ratios are never determined economically only but historically as well. On the basis of the low level of production, a real wages level amounting to at least 50 per cent of the pre-war one had to be ensured so as to avoid—at the existing low level of production and supply (in most areas of the consumer industries the latter's production amounted to only one-third or one quarter of the prewar figure!)—excess demand which would fast drive up prices and endanger stabilization. Consequently the prices of industrial products had to be fixed at one and a half times to twice the prewar price ratios. On the other hand, agricultural prices were fixed at the prewar level, and the prices of services not demanding goods supply (for instance rents) were fixed at one-third of the prewar level, as it was here that the high industrial prices could be compensated. Thus an entirely new price structure was created, and in the given situation it would hardly have been possible to carry out stabilization with one that essentially differed from it.

This price structure suited the development objectives of the fifties. Agriculture was one of the most important resources for

accumulation which produced the major part of the national income for industrialization at the fastest possible rate. Consequently, the increase in accumulation demanded low agricultural prices. Through the separation of production prices and consumer prices, and by keeping the price of investment goods low (possibly under cost) industrial profit was to be realized in the prices of industrial consumer goods. Due to the policy of restraining consumption, the still unusually cheap services could continue to ensure the relative stability of the real wages. The formula remained unchanged: high prices for industrial consumer goods, a gap between industrial and agricultural prices, with low agricultural prices, and prices for services far under cost.

This price structure served the policy of forced accumulation, investment and industrialisation well, and had no small share in the rise of industrial production, by the second half of the sixties, to fivefold the 1950 level, and an average annual industrial growth rate exceeding 10 per cent. At the same time, it incontestably contributed to the slowness of progress in agriculture—the average growth rate of 0.7 per cent being very low even by international standards—and to the stagnation of services, including the continuing housing shortage.

Since the lag in the infrastructural domain and the slow growth of agricultural production inevitably became obstacles to economic progress, and since after the leap forward in industry the restoration of the balance between the various branches of the economy became a task of the first importance from the end of the fifties on—we had to face the need of transforming the earlier price structure.

The trend of the necessary change was unequivocal: raising the prices of agricultural products and of services, reduction of industrial prices. Just as the price disproportions were incentives to one-sided industrial development, the transformation of economic ratios was unimaginable without

a corresponding transformation of price ratios.

As may be seen, if the contemporary price problems are viewed historically, it does not only become obvious that we have been experiencing economic processes which began half a century ago and have been, so to say, independent of economic decisions that is the introduction of controls.

It is equally obvious—and this is the most decisive reason for the price movements of the present—that from the aspect of solving the most important economic tasks which have been brought forward by history (ensuring faster agricultural development, raising of standards in transport, services and housing which are lagging behind the level of our general economic maturity) we have reached a stage where transforming the price structure is inevitable.

Looking at it in a historical perspective, it would hardly be possible to proclaim a successful campaign for ensuring an unchanged price level. Such attempts, even if the severest measures are applied, can only be maintained transitorily, and in general only if concessions are made relating to other, equally important economic objectives.

All this does not however lead to the conclusion that "all is in vain, nothing can be done". Recognizing the nature of historical trends can help one to find out what has to be done, and can be done realistically—and there is a lot to do. What is the measure of price rises that are justified by the historically inevitable transformation of the price structure? To what extent have we approached a proper price structure through the price rises that have occurred? And—this being the other side of the coin—at what rate is it desirable to bring about this price structure?

All these are questions of social policy as well as of economic policy. Decisions can be made by treating the two factors jointly. Separating inevitable price rises which must accompany the transformation of the price

structure, and unjustified ones, is most difficult. One lot are in the last resort an incentive to economic growth furthering up-to-date structural transformations, i.e. they contribute to no less than an adequate food supply, secure and ample even in years when the weather is unfavourable, to improving services, to the solution of the housing problem, in the last resort to an increase in social welfare, the second on the other hand impare the standard of living and are not an incentive economically. More than once price increases aimed at easy profits are derived merely from damaging monopoly positions, an over-concentration in the existing network of enterprises, and a shortage of certain categories of small and medium enterprises and, last but not least, from supply lagging behind demand. In other words, safeguards must be found not only against certain "excesses" by enterprises or individuals, but also means for a reduction in the price of certain groups of industrial commodities. Though the raising of agricultural prices and the prices of certain services, and of some industrial goods connected with them, may undoubtedly be useful in the long run, there must be at least just as great an interest in the reduction of industrial prices which were set earlier and are still in force. One should add that this is both in the social and in the economic interest. A reduction in such prices would not only stimulate consumption and the bringing about of a more up-to-date structure of consumption, but the reduction of costs through better organization and technical development as well.

The assertion of all these interests has made a consistent stand against all hidden price increases especially important. Hidden price rises often occur and are most difficult to control, besides being unjustified price increases. (It must not be forgotten either that at the beginning of the fifties this method was officially used.) It is not easy to deal with when economic policy sets itself the task to stop such price increases,

as is the case nowadays. The adequate control of price movements, the prevention as far as possible of every unjustified price increase, the directing and influencing of the setting of prices on the basis of recognized economic laws, demand complex and most purposeful measures as well as an extensively active economic policy.

But it is no less a job to make wages policy such that it should not only balance out price rises and ensure the increase of real wages on the average, but should give expression to the often extraordinarily involved interests of various sections of society.

Negative Consciousness—in a Historical Perspective

The so-called negative phenomena of consciousness of which it is sufficient to mention the contumely of office-holders, greed, low work morale and the new craze for titles, find expression in everyday attitudes which are justifiedly castigated. These phenomena are annoying and harmful, and many people are of the opinion that their manifestations can be noticed clearly enough so as to permit a fight against them without any special analysis or examination of their causes. It is, however, possible to fight against these non-desirable, harmful phenomena as well in many ways and the choice of effective weapons depends already to a large extent on the clear understanding of these phenomena, and the recognition of the context in which they take place.

Let us then have a look at a few important aspects of historical contexts, and among these in the first place the structural model of Hungarian society in the period preceding the socialist transformation.

In the century of capitalist modernization Hungarian society became extremely polarized, this being incidentally characteristic of Eastern Europe in general. Just

over five hundred aristocratic families owned several thousand and even several ten thousand hectares of land each, and—nothing expresses the extremity of the contrast more sharply—400,000 farmhand and day-labourer families, approximately one and a half million men, women and children, were drudging on the lands of these half thousand aristocratic families. The approximately fifty families that were at the top of the industrial and banking aristocracy faced 300,000 proletarian families the bread-winners of which were employed in large-scale industry. On the one side the Eszterházy's and the Weiss family—on the other the scraping and bowing, forelock-touching farmhands in rags and the unemployed workers of Csepel. This is a well-known picture, perhaps even too well-known, which has been generalized as a widely spread image of the past by journalistic oversimplification and overemphasis. However, this was but one side of social reality. Not only polarization was especially extreme in Hungary, but the intermediate social strata filling the distance between the two poles, were also especially extensive. At the level of relative backwardness the rise and survival of the petty-bourgeois-half-proletarian, in other words: half petty-bourgeois, majority of society is another characteristic phenomenon.

Besides the workers of small and large-scale industry numbering 660,000 families and the 800,000 families of the agricultural proletariat, the independent small businessmen and tradesmen numbered no less than 300,000 families, the state officials (more or less the equivalent of gentleman as in 'officer and gentleman') enjoying a special status numbered 250,000 families, and an even more populous section were the smallholding peasantry, approximately 600,000 families, not counting well-to-do peasant farmers. And then there were the white-collar workers, professional people, army and police officers, active and retired, about 400,000 families altogether.

We less frequently mention the historic reality of petty-bourgeois-half-proletarian social majority, although 20 or 30 years ago, and prior to that for a century with not too large fluctuations, this stratum determined the character of Hungarian society.

Viewing today's common consciousness, all this must be borne in mind, since even if it represents the dead past, consciousness carries in itself dead matter more persistently than many other spheres, and this dead matter can thus remain virulent for a long time.

Following on the Second World War, the social structure was radically transformed, and in other respects as well an extraordinary social mobility got under way. I earlier referred to the effects of the century-long rigidity, let me now refer to the next aspect, to the effects of this extraordinary dynamism and change.

The changes transformed first of all the structure of society: cross-currents involving a change of place occurred, which were without example in history, and setting out from the extreme poles of society these forceful social currents carried with them also strata which were not placed at the extremes. The disappearance or sinking of the old ruling classes, of the old official middle class and of a huge petty-bourgeoisie, and the positioning of a mass of approximately one million persons (including family members) among the new intelligentsia and professional people, mark only the most extreme changes, but in the course of these the place occupied in society by nearly one quarter of the population changed radically.

In the past quarter century, however, social changes were much greater and more thorough going than this. First of all, the size of the working class rose from one million to a round two million, and their share of all those gainfully employed increased from one-fifth to more than 40 per cent, while the share of those employed in small-scale industry declined from being half that of industrial workers to a more

15 per cent. The ratio of those employed outside agriculture, less than half of all those employed earlier on, increased to approximately three-quarters. The ration of those in agriculture was reduced from more than half to one quarter. The remaining peasant families came to be increasingly of mixed agricultural-industrial occupation, there are industrial workers or other with non-agricultural occupations in 70 per cent of peasant families with more than one gainfully employed member.

All this was accompanied by a massive stream into the cities and towns: the city population increased by more than one million, and its share in the total population jumped from one-third to approximately 50 per cent. The average level of schooling has increased rapidly as well, secondary education has ceased to be the privilege of an élite and has become the education of the masses. The gadgets of civilization have fast become part of the lives of men and women; so to speak in a single decade—in the sixties—household appliances, television, cars and motor-cycles were forging ahead, making up for a lag of several decades.

These changes took place in a historically unusually short period and in a very sudden and tempestuous way. Today's generations stand under the influence of fresh and radical changes. There are a great number of people in whose lives no smaller change occurred than that they moved from village to town, became acquainted with electric lighting, and almost simultaneously with household appliances and television, a change which occurred in the history of mankind over the lifetimes of generations. The picture of the world in the average Hungarian citizen's mind became substantially broader, he disposes of incomparably more knowledge and direct experience about the world than one or two decades ago, and for great numbers drudgery for sheer existence was replaced by the vistas of material and spiritual ascendance. The consciousness of society is much more mature today than it was a few decades ago.

At the same time, these effects unequivocally positive in their last consequence, caused by changes in living conditions, hit people without any transition, and produced, so to say, a shock effect. For this reason, exactly on account of the unusual width and speed of the surging changes, the otherwise positive effects also occur in a contradictory way and often call forth temporarily negative consequences as well. I would not like to offer shallow analogies, but it nevertheless has to be said: a person who has gone through deprivation for long, long periods, if suddenly given a lot of food, obviously does not act in moderation, he eats more than he should, more than once to the extent of becoming sick. His greed in itself—disregarding the motives—is obviously an unpleasant, repugnant fact.

It is like this in many things. Even, to a small extent, literally so, since the entire nation eats more than they should. The working classes and sections of the population which had been excluded for generations from the opportunity to enjoy the good thing in life, live in the daze of their new acquisitions, since from the beginning of the war to the beginning or middle of the sixties the opportunities for consumption were somewhat restricted. Novelties—even if they are good—lie heavy in the stomach of society. An unwholesome relationship to commodities and an enhanced desire for possession is general. Just as travel, which showed healthy development in the recent years (the number of trips abroad is six times as high as before the war: over one million annually), is for the time being accompanied by some negative aspects as well. The increase in travelling does not only serve a better knowledge of each other and the growth of internationalist sentiments, but also produces hatred and kowtowing.

In order to indicate the extraordinarily involved and often contradictory effects of the all-embracing changes, let me refer to those social achievements which affect society

most directly, which are outstanding in comparison to what exists elsewhere in the world, and which are undoubtedly of historical importance, but which at the same time became sources for conflicts not only through their effect of suddenly transforming habits and ways of living, but also through a certain contradiction with the financial possibilities of the country. This includes, for instance, general social insurance (before the Second World War it extended only to one-third of the population and fifty per cent of the financial burden had to be met by the insured themselves, while the present—extended—social insurance services are entirely free for all citizens) and the system of pensions which has become general (and that at a very low age), having been a rare privilege earlier.

General social insurance has also become—as has been pointed out by the committee for the long-range planning of the standard of living—owing to the lack of sufficient financial means, the source of such problems as overcrowding in hospitals, a lowering in therapeutic standards, the turning of the physician into a “prescription-writer”, and in spite of treatment being free (or due to this) payment for individual medical services. The huge mass of pensioners, due to the low age-limit for the general pension system, has also become the source of considerable social anxiety, because of the lack of adequate institutions and, in many cases, due to the still rather low pensions.

The negative phenomena of the consciousness can be explained primarily by the still living effects of the old social structure and by the complicated maze of the peculiar—temporarily partly also negative—phenomena caused by radical social change.

It is obvious that just as it would be mistaken to take the present out of its context, it would also be wrong to deduce all contemporary phenomena simply from the past, and to explain negative behaviour and manifestations of the consciousness merely through the backwardness of con-

sciousness and the survival of the past. Behind the contemporary phenomena of consciousness and behaviour—as has been factually demonstrated by two gifted young sociologists through the investigation of a factory—are also to be found negative effects derived from present reality. The latter are, of course, also often entangled with the past.

I absolutely do not want to give the impression as if the historical method were the sole method for giving an answer to all present questions. This is only *one*, but indispensable aspect. The search for solutions can, of course, be inflected to a considerable extent through the entry of historical approach into investigations. Just as it is important to seek out and apply the best incentives, it is also indispensable to view facts historically; the truth is that the greatest impatience is needed faced with some negative phenomena, and towards others the greatest patience must be shown. The doing away with certain negative phenomena of the social consciousness can be achieved through changing conditions, and in other cases it is exactly the steadiness of the conditions that may bring results. To take the above example: the greed of the person who has suddenly received food will abate after some time—if he continues to receive food in adequate quantity and is not afraid that the old privations will return.

The examination of the objective historic processes is important, not “in itself”, but exactly from the practical aspect.

But let us pass now to the third example, which may throw light primarily on the connection between historical approach and forecasting.

The Path of Urbanization—in a Historical Perspective

The comparative examination of urbanization in the past one and a half century makes the exact definition of today's level

of urbanization possible. The entire path of Hungarian urbanization and its pace can be "measured", and through some abstraction the curve of these processes can also be drawn.

In the case of comparative historical examinations it has also become possible—in a simplified way—to place the urbanization curves of various countries (country types) over each other and recognize in this way their identical and differing contours, i.e., in our case the peculiar traits of their development in Hungary as well as their place in history.

The drawing of conclusions from historical statistics does not only make it possible to measure that as far as the share of the urban population is concerned, Hungary was in 1970 approximately on the same level as England had been in 1850 or that of continental Western countries at the end of the nineteenth century. One cannot only compare exactly where we stand in respect of the spread of urban achievements (or in a more general sense: achievements of civilization), such as sewerage, the use of running water, the telephone, electric power, housing, etc.—although these are in themselves also extraordinarily important for appreciating the present. It is not by chance then that violent debates have taken place concerning the state of contemporary urban development.

The comparative historical analysis of the urbanization processes of the modern age—if we do not stop at quantitative connections—makes the drawing of fundamental conclusions possible; or at least: correct long-range decisions are unimaginable without analyses of this nature.

The historic path of countries which in per capita industrial production and national income are two to two and a half times more developed than Hungary, and are ahead in industrialization and urbanization, shows: the decisive social process was undoubtedly, at a lower (medium) stage of development, the flood into the cities and towns (and this

inevitably influenced too fast urbanization which even in wealthy countries fell far short of satisfying human needs, and brought about the unpleasant city model characteristic of the earliest stage of capitalism with its overcrowded housing and transportation), but at a higher stage of development this situation changed. In several countries the new (and for us still to come) tendency of historical progress became, in the past decade, the stream out of the agglomerations and cities, which in the meantime had become exceedingly unpleasant.

Comparative historical examination does not only render the past easier to comprehend but gives us also a glance into the future. We know that one quarter is still a high ratio for the agricultural population, and we may reckon with it that in the next 15 to 20 years their share in the total population will be between 10 to 14 per cent. The town population may still increase considerably above the present 50 per cent, since the natural place of domicile for those employed in the secondary and tertiary industries is not the village.

Let us bear in mind what a strong weapon historical comparison has placed into our hands: we may recognize clearly that the path of progress is not necessarily to follow the topsy-turvy historic road of the countries which precede us. Through conscious socio-economic planning we may indicate short-cuts.

Why prefer the path of flooding the existing cities and suffer all its unpleasant corollaries, if we know that—historically speaking—the trend of leaving agglomerations will shortly follow? And in the meantime we tie our hands for decades with unmovable, unchangeable infrastructural constructions.

Hence, the solution to the problems of urbanization must not be sought in the cities and towns alone. In my opinion, the key to a long-term solution is partly the raising to the urban level of settlements which have not yet an urban character, and the develop-

ment of the villages, and in connection with this the considerable extension of the country's modern transportation, communication, cultural, educational, etc., infrastructure. All this is not changed by the fact that the extraordinary intricacy of reality does not make the taking of the right practical decisions easy. For instance, the Hungarian settlement network, the network of villages is obviously too dense to permit the interpretation of the development of villages as the development of every village and settlement, so the decline of some of today's settlements must necessarily be contemplated. But it is not my aim here to explain the problems of urbanization; I only wish to demonstrate the importance of a historical view from several aspects.

Being a small country—and sizes are very important in this question—in the long run Hungary may achieve a shortcut exactly through the broadly interpreted realization of urbanization. We may "meet" the trend of streaming out which will necessarily ensue later at a higher level of development, by marking out our strategy of urbanization—on the basis of historical experiences—in such a way that through developing the infrastructure and part of the existing settlements we attempt to make the settlements attractive that are not urban yet, not last the village settlements to be found within the range of attraction of the cities (ensuring

also simple good transportation), and—looking ahead develop them into attractive dormitory towns. (In Hungary the range of attraction of the 5–8 larger cities is extremely big.) The main objective of our urbanization policy and practice should not be the development of Szeged or Miskolc into little Budapests, or the further extension of the capital.

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The three examples which I have picked do perhaps draw attention to the historical view being indispensable in the examination of contemporary socio-economic processes. Historical approach assists us in a better understanding of the trends of movements prevalent in our society, and thereby not only in measuring up the realities but also in coming nearer to adequate solutions. This allows measures to be viewed with a more comprehensive historic responsibility, taking into consideration that not only do historic processes determine our present, but the steps to be taken (or to be missed) today also form history.

As Marx put it, a society, even if it has discovered the laws of its development, cannot jump across natural stages of evolution, nor can it make them disappear by pronouncing a *fiat*. And this is not little, but much more than the attempts at great jumps and leaps, which often backfire.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S IMAGE IN HUNGARY

Reports of Benjamin Franklin's experiments and inventions reached Hungary almost at the same time as news of the American Revolution. The enthusiasm the revolution aroused in Hungary was as great as in any other European country and Franklin was the European embodiment of the noble cause.

When Mihály Kovács Fabricius (1724-1779), an officer in the Austrian and Prussian armies, left for Bordeaux in 1776 with the permission of the Buda Army Headquarters, his intention was to join the patriots in America. Kovács wrote to Franklin in Paris—as so many European officers did—offering his services with a request for a letter of recommendation.¹ In fact, Franklin got so many such letters that he obviously could not answer all of them. In all probability Kovács's request remained unanswered too, as only his letter survived and there are no traces about Franklin's answer.² Anyway Kovács crossed the Atlantic, joined General Pulaski's battalion and reached the rank of colonel before he died at Charleston in 1779.

János Zinner, a professor at the Academy of Kassa and the author of a number of juridical treatises, claims he met Franklin probably through fellow freemasons³ while Franklin was staying in Paris. On October 26, 1778 Zinner wrote in French to Franklin

from Buda asking for information for two of his forthcoming books: *Notitia Historica de Colonia Foederatis in America* and *De Viris Illustribus Americae*.⁴ We have not found these works in print, but we do know that in 1782 Zinner published in German, *Merkwürdige Briefe und Schriften der berühmtesten Generale in America* (Augsburg 1782), containing material from both loyalists and patriots, English and French. Zinner's aim was—as he put it in the introduction—to provide documents for future historians and not to predict the outcome of the war.⁵ He expressed his gratitude to Dr. Franklin for having furnished him with all the material contained in the book.⁶ Among the documents translated into German were three letters related to Franklin himself: one enclosed with an engraved sword for the Marquis de Lafayette, the answer sent on July 30, 1776 to Admiral Howe's Staten Island offer of peace to the Americans, and the third, Franklin and Silas Deane's appeal to Lord Stormont, the English ambassador in Paris, about some prisoners of war.⁷ After the second letter the book gives a short biography of Franklin, showing Zinner's great respect for Franklin's capabilities, summing them up in the following words: "Such geniuses are rarely found, equally great as philosopher and statesman."⁸

⁴ *The Works of Benjamin Franklin*. Ed. Jared Sparks, Boston, 1836. vol. 8, pp. 303-304.

⁵ Zinner, p. 1.

⁶ Zinner, p. 17.

⁷ No. V: Herr Franklin überschickt einen mit Sinnbildern gezierten Degen dem Marquis de la Fayette; No. XXI: Antwort des D. Franklins auf diesen Brief; Schreiben des Admirals Howe an D. Franklin; Schreiben D. Franklins und Silas Deane an den englischen Gesandten zu Paris, Lord Stormont, wegen amerikanischen Kriegsgefangenen.

⁸ "Ein Genie, desgleichen wenige gefunden werden, gleich gross als Philosoph und Staatsmann."

¹ *Amerikai Magyar Szó*, May 11, 1972, Emil Schafer, "Egy magyar hős az amerikai forradalomban", pp. 9, 11. The article contains a Hungarian translation of the letter, the original of which is in the Library of the American Philological Society.

² Jenő Pivány: *Magyar-amerikai történelmi kapcsolatok az Amerikai Polgárháború befejezéséig* ("Hungarian-American Historical Ties to the End of the American Civil War"). Budapest, 1926. p. 16.

³ See: István Gál: "Zinner János kassai professzor, Benjamin Franklin barátja és amerikai függetlenségi dokumentum gyűjteménye 1782-ből". *Irodalmi Szemle*, 13 (1970) 10. pp. 638-644.

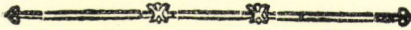
Merkwürdige
Briefe und Schriften
 der
 berühmtesten Generale
 in Amerika,
 nebst
 derselben beigelegten
Lebensbeschreibungen.

Herausgegeben

von

Johann Zinner,

Professor der Philosophie und Statistik auf der Kaiserl.
 Akademie in Kaschau.



Augsburg 1782.

bei Eberhard Neitz sel. Wittve und Franck.

*Title page of the collection of writings by
 American generals published by Zinner*

By the time Zinner wrote a second letter to Franklin on September 23, 1783, he had prepared another work in Latin which he offered to the Congress of the thirteen independent states.⁹

Although Zinner did not intend his book to be a political manifesto, it helped recruit many European sympathizers to the American cause.

In December 1790, a few months after Franklin's death, a well-informed Hungarian newsletter, published an obituary running to five pages which was full of praise.¹⁰

⁹ Library of Congress, Franklin Papers, No. 2616.

¹⁰ 1790/3, pp. 705-710 (Dec. 10), Military and Other Important News.

On July 29, 1790 another paper, *The Vienna Hungarian Courier*, informed its readers of Franklin's death saying that the free United States ordered two months of mourning for the death of its liberator, and similarly the French National Assembly ordered a three-day commemoration.

The French Revolution overshadowed Franklin's "revolutionary spirit" in the Hungarian mind as it was much closer to Hungary in space and time. Besides Franklin became a revolutionary only as a last resort. He was much more a virtuous capitalist, a cautious politician and an experimental scientist than a revolutionary. And this was the way Ferenc Szilágyi (1797-1876) depicted him in a 58-page article which appeared in the periodical *Erdélyi Múzeum* (Transylvanian Museum) in 1818.¹¹ This detailed and realistic biography offered its readers a better portrait of Franklin than had as yet appeared in Hungary, showing a man who need not be mystified to admire his personality, industry and talent.

In the first half of the nineteenth century a reform movement began in backward and almost feudal Hungary to introduce the ideas and social system of the new model capitalist society. The leading figure of the movement, Count István Széchenyi (1791-1860), considered the U.S. a modern society as he often wrote in the journal he kept all his life.¹²

Széchenyi thought Franklin to be one of the most influential characters of his time. In 1825 he purchased a small collection of Franklin's works in French¹³ and made the following note about it in his diary: "A book which will be the greatest influence in my whole life." The two statesmen had, indeed,

¹¹ *Erdélyi Múzeum* 10 (1818), pp. 20-78.

¹² See NHQ No. 60, "Széchenyi's Picture of America", pp. 149-157.

¹³ *Széchenyi naplói*, vol. 2, p. 573. The French booklet that Széchenyi bought was: Ch. A. Renouard, *Mélanges de morale, d'économie et de politique, extraits des ouvrages de Benjamin Franklin, et précédés d'une notice sur sa vie*. Paris, 1824.

some common elements in their personalities. Their industry and their critical self-examination made them strive to perfect themselves and to be useful to their countries. Széchenyi took up Franklin's idea of a "table of virtues" and noted his faults in black dots every day.¹⁴ He appreciated Franklin's style and copied down the saying: "Disputes are apt to sour one's temper."¹⁵ If he admired someone, he often compared the person to Franklin¹⁶ which he did for instance with the leader of a deputation in Parliament who spoke for re-introducing Hungarian as an official language in Hungary.

Franklin's example showed Széchenyi that one could have an industrious life and make an honourable fortune, without lapsing into immorality. In his book *Hitel* (Credit), Széchenyi strove to disseminate new ideas and fought against idle but loud nationalism; one of his most important conclusions he expressed with Poor Richard's saying that a full sack does not collapse.¹⁷

Franklin's personality made a deep impression on Széchenyi—especially the possibility of a politician and wealthy capitalist contributing so much to raising a handful of colonies at the edge of wilderness to a country of worldwide importance and fame among the progressive thinkers and people of his age.

A translation of *Way to Wealth* by Lajos Szilágyi was published in April 1848 in the city of Nagyvárad with the title *Franklin under the Name of Old Richard*. The introduction makes it clear that Szilágyi would have liked to translate the whole Autobiography and other parts of the Almanach, too, to influence his own people the way Franklin did in America. Like Hungary at the time, America had the problem of many nationalities and religions needing to live peace-

fully together. From Szilágyi's introduction Franklin appears to be above distinguishing among peoples and religions, and Franklin did stand above religions in a sense, but very few authors in the nineteenth century realized that it was a toleration based on hostility to all dogma. There is some irony in the fact that a few years later, in 1869, there was a Hungarian biography of Franklin entitled *The Life of a True Citizen* which was republished in 1927 by the Hungarian Luther Society in their series: 'Heroes of Christianity'.¹⁸ This work and others of its type pick an area of Franklin's manifold activities, and by describing it in detail, hold it up to the people, the less educated people, as worthwhile examples in every respect. Franklin's real personality is pushed into the background, and more and more a painted picture, as it were, takes its place.

Hungarians who visited the United States in the nineteenth century wrote some appreciations of Franklin in their travelogues, Sándor Bölöni Farkas (1795–1842)^{18/a} among them.¹⁹ If we put together his detailed mosaic of Franklin's activities we can get a complete picture of the American's character.

Although the first full Hungarian translation of the Autobiography appeared only in 1921,²⁰ the Hungarian public had access to Franklin's writings much earlier from the compendium, edited in 1836 by S.J., at Kassa, entitled, *Franklin's Golden Jewel-Box, or Instruction's on How to Be Industrious, Clever, Kind, Healthy, Virtuous and Happy: S.J. presents the collection to his countrymen as a very useful source of advice for both old and young, but especially the former in all ways of life*. Only one

¹⁸ Vilmos Györy (1838–1885): *Egy igaz polgár élete* ("Life of a True Citizen"), Pest, 1869.

^{18/a} See No. 63, p. 97 ff.

¹⁹ Sándor Bölöni Farkas: *Utazás Észak-Amerikában* ("Voyage in North-America"), Kolozsvár, 1834.

²⁰ *Franklin Benjámín önéletrajza* ("B. F.'s Autobiography"), Budapest, 1921. Franklin Társulat, translated by Pál Pruzsinszky.

¹⁴ Széchenyi naplói, vol. 2, pp. 716–721.

¹⁵ Széchenyi naplói, vol. 2, p. 512.

¹⁶ Széchenyi naplói, vol. 3, p. 23.

¹⁷ Béla Iványi Grünwald's introduction to Széchenyi's *Hitel*, p. 132.

with so many good characteristics could teach everybody to be that perfect. The 22-page introduction which consists of a biography of Franklin, proves that he is an example for all men to follow in every walk of life. The book itself is a random selection

Révay and Aladár Schöpflin, its name honoured "one of the greatest politicians of the United States. Benjamin Franklin was a great propagator of books and useful knowledge". The founders of the Society were thinking about Franklin's ideas



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más helyeken végre az oda való Törvény-szkek eleibe. — Másik Rendelésében, az eránt tett jelentést ő Felfége, hogy a' *Toskánai* Nagyhercegségbéli Nemesfég, maga privilégiumainak, 's azokkal járó méltóságának leg kifibb meg sértődése nélkül, viselhet Polgári Notáriusfágokat, 's Cancellariussfágokat. Ezen jelentés tellyesítését akadályoztatható minden szokásokat 's törvényeket semmivé teszen annakokáért ő Felfége; nevezetesen az 1750-dik éftzendőben, Jul. 31-dikén hozott Nemesi Törvényr. — Emli-tett Rendelése' hozására a' vitte ő Felfégét, mivelhogy a' fenn ki tett hivataloknak folytatására, józan életű, értelmes, és a' közjót buzgóan éfsközleni igyekező személyek kívántatnak, melly tulajdonságokat inkább lehet keresni a' Nemesfégben, úgymint a' mellynek nagyobb módja van maga formálásában, mint a' Nemteleneknek.

A' *Sardiniai* Udvar, következő kívánságait terjesztette a' *Római* Sz. Szék eleibe: 1.) Hogy ezentúl maga hatalmában legyen a' Királynak, tulajdon Országában Püspököket tenni. 2.) Hogy a' házasság dolgában való engedelem adásokért ne legyen szükség *Romába* folyamodni; hanem azokat tsupán az Országban lévő Poenitentiariumoknál kellyen keresni. 3.) Hogy a' felesleg való Klafstromok, Ő Szentségének meg egyvezéséből törölteszenek el.

Franklin, kiváltképpenvaló helyer érdemel az *Emberiség* Historiájában. Ezen nagy Emberről úgy írt közelébbt egy nevez-

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zetes Német Tudós (*Fischer*), hogy előadását nem olvashattuk meg indulás nélkül; 's kívántuk annak nagyobb részér érdemes Olvasóinkkal is közleni, ezen itt következő forokban:

Azon nagy gondolatok közzül, mellyekre fel emelkedhetik az emberi lélek, egy ez, tsalhatatlannul: *A' vele élő, 's utánna következő nyomnak szolgálni akarni!* és az emberi leg főbb érdemet néhány szókkal egészen magában foglaló ditsérő Beszéd ez: *Hajsznált az egész emberi Nemzetnek!* Kevesen mennek annyira gondolatjaikkal; 's még kevesebben emelkedtek fel eleitől fogva érdemeikkel elly magallan. Azok, kik erőtelen létekre, viafz szánnyakon szándékoztak fel repülni: vissza estek, és szánakodásnak, vagy tsüfolkodásnak szavával hangzott vissza nevek a' tengerből, mellybe le zuhantanak. Belső életű ereje vízi fel a' Sast a' Naphoz; a' léleknek 's szívnek belső életű ereje teszi a' nagy Embert. Való, hogy az alkalmatosság is; de koránt sem az olyan, mint a' millyenről a' kis Lelek álmodoznak, hogy tudniillik lágyabb párnákon leheffen ennek nyugvása, mint másoknak; hanem a' nagy dolgok' végbe vitelére alkalmas idő pontok; 's erőt, bátorságot, veszélyekkel való fzebe szállást, és ellentállást kívánó nehéz környüállások. Ezen úton jut ő az érdemre, 's örökké valóságra. — Egy, *Franklin* *Beniamin*, ezen Férfiai közzül az emberi Nemzetnek, a' ki valóban nem tsak egy Néphez; hanem minden Nemzetekhez tartozandó; sőt ditsőségének mértékére, 's messze ki ható vóltára nézve az egész föld' kerekése Szülöttjei közzül első. Mert bár melly méltó helyet fogjon is *Franklin*' képe mellett, a' *Frantzia* Nemzet

Győ.

Two pages from the Hadi és Más Nevezetes történetek (Military and other important news) No. 3. 1790, where Franklin is mentioned and praised

of Franklin's writing, based perhaps on the ample German compendium.

In 1873 a publishing house named Franklin Society was founded in Budapest with the aim of publishing the most prominent Hungarian writers. According to the history of the Society, written by József

when giving his name to the society.²¹ The Franklin Society lasted until 1948, when it was merged with other big private publishing companies into what is now the Szépiro-

²¹ Révay József-Schöpflin Aladár: *Egy magyar könyvkiadó regénye*. ("The Story of a Hungarian Publishing House" 1940.), pp. 68-69.

dalmi Könyvkiadó, the largest state-owned publishing house in Budapest.

Later in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries many Hungarian works on American history appropriately recognized Franklin as one of the heroes of the American Revolution. At the same time his embellished portrait was displaying the virtues of the capitalist saint, owing of course in part to the Autobiography, which concentrates on the first half of Franklin's life, and makes his hard-working self-made image so attractive. Franklin is still admired for his contributions to history and physics, not

only among professional historians and physicists, but among the general public as well. The grandpa in his hexagonal specs can still teach the younger generation the way to live an honest life, as the popularity of two recent popular Franklin biographies show—one of them in a series called "Great Men".²²

²² Sós Endre: *Aki az égtől elragadta a villámot* ("The One Who Snatched Lightning from Heaven".) Benjamin Franklin életregénye, Budapest, 1957. — Sós Endre-Vámos Magda: *Franklin vagyok Philadelphiából* ("I am Franklin from Philadelphia".) Budapest, 1970.

ISTVÁN GÁL

ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE'S LETTERS IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY

One of the treasures of my library is Toynbee's book *East to West: A Journey Round the World*, given to me by the author. When I was in London in 1963, as an eager reader and admirer of his, I asked to see him. Though he was about to move to a new flat and did not go to his office, one morning he put himself entirely at my disposal. He received me at the Royal Institute of International Affairs. His office there was marked by the modest inscription, "Toynbee's room". A man of powerful build, lofty forehead and impressive appearance, he was a remarkable figure. The main topic of our conversation was the interest he took in Hungary and Hungarian history. It was in 1909 that this attention was first directed to questions of Hungary, chiefly to the then unsolved question of nationalities. His first historical study was of the condition of na-

tional minorities in the Habsburg Monarchy, and as the youngest member of the scientific brains trust of the Foreign Office, he also proposed at the time dividing the Monarchy into national states. When the first volumes of his monumental *Study of History* came out, the liberal and radical Hungarian intelligentsia received them with great interest. His works describe in epigrammatic conciseness all major periods of Hungarian history. One of his last books, *Acquaintances*, contains a special chapter on two twentieth-century English historians who dealt above all with Hungary. In his view, great English historians with anti and pro Hungarian biases have alternated through the generations, as has recently been the case with R. W. Seton-Watson and C. A. Macartney.

Toynbee was in Hungary in May 1937,

when he gave lectures in Budapest and Szeged as a guest of the Society of the Hungarian Quarterly. In face of the policy of German national socialism to pursue conquests eastward, Hungarian statesmen and leading capitalists who were looking towards the Western democracies first founded a French language monthly, *Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie*, in 1932 and then the English-language *Hungarian Quarterly* in 1936. Behind both stood undoubtedly the cleverest figure of Hungarian politics between the two world wars, Count István Bethlen, who had put a stop to the counter-revolutionary outrages of 1920 and had achieved consolidation with the help of Western capital. After his ten years' tenure as premier, Bethlen engaged in anti-Nazi activities at home and abroad. In 1933 he lectured at Chatham House and Cambridge University.

The able executive head of the "old" *Hungarian Quarterly** was József Balogh, to whom Toynbee's letters in Hungary were addressed. He was a son of the head of the National Rabbinical College and translator of Lord Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire*. In 1919 he was secretary of the committee in charge of consolidating the three largest libraries in Budapest. In the twenties he became an internationally acknowledged expert in Old Christian literature and early medieval Hungarian historiography. As a personal friend and confidant of the capitalists backing the French- and English-language reviews, he pursued intense foreign political activity in his editor's office. Unlike the rest of the Hungarian press, these two papers were allowed to carry on correspondence with and ask articles of anyone, from Soviet diplomats and politicians of the Little Entente to leading minds of every hue of Western countries.

The review, printed in English typefaces on English paper, ran to two hundred pages in each number and had a splendid panel of contributors recruited from among leading diplomats, politicians, economists

* On the *Hungarian Quarterly* see Iván Boldizsár's article in *NHQ*, No. 1.

and historians. Nazi foreign politics looked at the review with intense hatred. The periodical existed until 1941; its numbers for 1942 could no longer appear as a review and so were published as a bulky volume entitled, *A Companion to Hungarian Studies*. The review was planned to start again on March 20, 1944, but the Nazis occupied Hungary the day before. Only one or two copies of this volume got out of the printing offices. József Balogh sought refuge in the Szeged monastery of the Jesuits, but having heard the news of separate peace with Rumania and Finland, he hurried to Budapest in the belief that the Hungarian attempts at a separate peace would also succeed. But the Gestapo caught him and took him to a concentration camp where he died. Previously, it seems, upon the alarming news of a Hitler-Horthy meeting, he had put the valuable archives of the two periodicals in a safe place. Just lately it has been found and made accessible, though only in part. The present writer has permission from the supervising authority, the Ministry of Culture, to make public the letters found in the *Hungarian Quarterly* archives of Paul Claudel, Thomas Mann, Jacques Maritain, Arnold J. Toynbee and Paul Valéry.

Two of the following ten letters from Toynbee are handwritten and eight typewritten. The letters are in the National Széchényi Library MSS. Fund I/3115. They are addressed from: (1) Ganthorpe House, Terrington, York, for letter No. 1; (2) Chatham House, London, for letters Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7; (3) Ship Street, Oxford, for letters Nos. 8 and 9; (4) Balliol College, Oxford, for letter No. 10. The first letter is dated August 23, 1935, the last one May 14, 1940. The first is Toynbee's reply to an invitation to write a book review for the proposed quarterly. The subjects of ever growing importance can already be seen from the second letter. Between January 19, 1938 and November 13, 1939, during those fatal twenty months, the letters contain, in addition to the usual terms of personal

courtesy, extremely grave historic considerations. Toynbee being aware that his letters were addressed not only to a Hungarian editor but to an institution which was in close touch with certain members of the government, formulated his messages to make what he said clear to all of them.

Of particular importance is the letter of October 14, 1938, which—since names are mentioned in it—can be called a Cassandra letter. While other letters are in typescript, Toynbee wrote this one by hand. From among the names referred to in the letter, István Bethlen and József Balogh (the addressee of nine letters) have already been mentioned. The addressee of the second letter, M. Máriássy, was personal secretary to Balogh. Mr. H. S. Lambert was the English translator of the editorial office; Owen Rutter was the review's London correspondent. With other remarks, their names occur in several places. And in the letter I call the Cassandra letter I have discovered my own name. I was still practically a student at that time, investigating the history of Anglo-Hungarian relations. It appears from the last few letters that the editors (and, no doubt, the high quarters behind them) wished to continue to maintain relations with Britain. Toynbee limited his personal meetings to the editor alone: he did not wish to have dealings with royalist emissaries.

Toynbee's first writing to become generally known in Hungary was his famous epigram during the war in Abyssinia. This much-quoted poem, entitled "Epitaph for Ethiopians and Europeans", was translated by Gyula Illyés in 1936. In recent years great interest has been shown in Toynbee's *Selected Writings* brought out as part of a series by the publishing house of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. At his death, a number of fine eulogies appeared in Hungarian newspapers.

When I was visiting with him, Toynbee wrote the following dedication in *East to West*: "For Dr. István Gál, Arnold Toynbee, with hopes that we may meet again before

long". Unfortunately I will never have the chance to tell him that his letters to Hungary, believed lost at the time, have been found and can be made public.

1

23. 8. 35.

Dear Dr. Balogh,

I wish I could accept your kind invitation to review Professor N.'s book, but I have to decline because I am under a definite pledge, in return for a grant that I am receiving, to give all my spare writing time to a particular piece of research. With regrets,

Yours sincerely,
Arnold J. Toynbee

2

19th January, 1938.

Dear Mr. Máriássy,

Yes. I am afraid you are right: the shepherdess who sings the song is Great Britain (or France, or both if you like), so I suppose the little sheep must be the smaller states of Europe. But of course the verse is not meant to be a prophecy. Who would venture to prophesy the future of Europe at this moment? What I did mean to do was to express an Anglo-French mood which may or may not prevail supposing that a first class crisis does arise. My intention was to stick a pin into the skins of some British critics of mine who had objected to an earlier volume on the Abyssinian affair because they thought (perhaps rightly) that I was implicitly criticising Great Britain for not having taken strong action. So now on the title page of the new volume I show them a picture of themselves in another dress and ask them how they like it.

I hope this answers your question and that you will not find the answer too tragic. It is not meant to be.

With best wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Arnold J. Toynbee

3

21st February, 1938.

Dear Mr. Balogh,

This is just to thank you for your letter of the 17th February. I wish I could undertake to write the political article which you have kindly been inviting me to do for some time past, but as far as I can see ahead my time will be absolutely taken up, owing to my being engaged on the double business of getting several volumes of a book of my own to press and at the same time dealing with an Annual Survey which grows bigger as events grow worse.

A great deal has happened—unexpectedly to most of us—since you wrote on the 17th. I suppose at this moment a debate, which may be very momentous, is starting at the House of Commons.

Yours sincerely,

Arnold J. Toynbee

4

29th March, 1938.

Dear Mr. Balogh,

This is just to thank you for your letter of the 23rd with the enclosure.

As regards the crisis, I suppose the point that I tried to make in my lecture for you last May is now rather a burning question of Hungarian foreign policy, but I also rather fear that overwhelming facts may take the choice out of Hungary's hands—I do hope not.

Yours very sincerely,

Arnold J. Toynbee

5

June 2nd, 1938.

Dear Mr. Balogh,

I was glad to get your letter of the 31st May and very much hope that you will succeed in persuading the Archbishop of York to come to Debrecen in October. I should certainly think that it would be a very good plan for Count Bethlen to write a personal letter to Dr. Temple direct. I will gladly do what I can myself. But I think it would be wiser for me not to write to Dr. Temple separately first, as this would

probably only draw from him a second refusal. It would be better, I think, if you would let me know when Count Bethlen is writing and then I would time my letter to reach him about the same time. I think people here are now realising the criticalness of the situation and the key position of Hungary, so that perhaps he may be persuaded after all to reconsider his refusal.

With best wishes,

Yours very sincerely,

Arnold J. Toynbee

6

14. 10. 38.

Dear Mr. Balogh,

I much appreciate your renewed invitation, but I am afraid that, still, I am not free; I have at this moment in the press (i) Survey for 1937 in 2 vols. (ii) Study of History vols. IV-VI: total, 5 vols., and I have lost time through having to rush up to London during the crisis, to do some strenuous work of another kind.

I do want, though, to contribute to the Quarterly; so when—some time during the winter—I am no longer running a race with my printer here, I will write to you and suggest a subject.

I am sorry to be Cassandra—about the *petits moutons* in general and the Sudeten question in particular.

May I remind you of the subject of the lecture I had the pleasure of giving under your auspices? Hungary is now certain of regaining half a province, but not certain that she herself may not become a province of a larger empire—as, indeed, may England and France, too: we are “all in the same boat”. You remember how, after 1848-49 the Dynasty “gave the Croats and Czechs as their reward what it had given the Magyars and Germans as their punishment”. Today this is perhaps true vice versa.

Well, what has happened certainly isn't Hungary's fault. If only the Czechs had given a “parecchino” to Hungary, and a “parecchino” to Poland, a year ago, they would at least have had only one front to

worry about. But the chief responsibility lies on us in England and France, who, since 1918, have made neither peace nor war, and have therefore brought on ourselves 1938.

Under separate cover I am sending you a paper which I read at Chatham House the Tuesday before the Anschluss of Austria: nothing that has happened since makes the picture any brighter, I am afraid.

With kind regards from my wife and myself.

Yours very sincerely,
Arnold J. Toynbee

7

February 7th, 1939.

Dear Balogh,

Here is an introduction to Ashton-Gwatkin. I certainly think he is the best man for me to put you in touch with in the Foreign Office.

I look forward to seeing you at lunch at the Oxford and Cambridge Club on Friday at 1.15 when we can continue our talk.

With best wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Arnold J. Toynbee

8

November 13th, 1939.

Dear Mr. Balogh,

You must have wondered at my delay in answering your kind letter of the 5th October. The reason is that I have been consulting, in confidence, certain other people concerned about the possibility of taking up the interesting and important suggestion that you make. I wish that I could have accepted, myself, the suggestion that I should pay a visit to Hungary in the near future. Unfortunately this is impossible for me, as I am in charge of some war-time work of Chatham House, and this ties me very closely, so that it is out of the question for me to get away. If, though, I can make some suitable suggestions for alternative British visitors to Hungary, I shall do so, as I am convinced that personal contact is more than ever useful under war conditions.

With best wishes to you from my wife and myself.

Yours very sincerely,
Arnold J. Toynbee

9

April 17th, 1940.

Dear Mr. Balogh,

I was most interested to get your letter of the 8th April. In answer to your question I should say that, if I were you, I should certainly pay your suggested visit to England for, though no doubt the journey is tiresome under war conditions, you will find conditions in London fairly normal and will certainly be able to make contact with your friends.

As you know, I am at present working in Oxford, but perhaps you would look in here, at any rate for the inside of a day.

I am very sorry to hear of Baron Prónay's death. If I can, I will write you a very short impression, but I am now less than ever master of my time, so I fear I cannot promise this.

Hoping to see you here before long,

Yours sincerely,
Arnold J. Toynbee

70

May 14th, 1940.

Dear Mr. Balogh,

I have just got your letter of the 27th April. If you arrive in England now, you will find yourself here at an interesting moment and will see the country putting its whole energy into the War. If and when you do come I naturally look forward to seeing you in Oxford.

As you know, I am not at present working at 10, St. James's Square, but I have passed on to my colleague, Miss Cleeve, what you kindly tell me about Count Sigray's expected visit to England in June.

I wish I could write you those lines on Prónay, but as you may imagine, at the present moment I am entirely occupied with other things.

Yours very sincerely,
Arnold J. Toynbee

SEX AND SEMIOTICS

Social anthropology, folklore and linguistics are disciplines interested in semiotic research work. Semiotics themselves are defined by Margaret Mead as "patterned communications in all modalities",¹ a definition including all the communication forms and signs conducive to the development or the cessation of contact between the two sexes. By means of signs the girl and the young man obtain knowledge of the intention and the feelings of one another and let each other know that sexual intercourse is possible in certain situations. The signs inform of feelings and purposes and often express the opinion of the parents about the possibilities of marriage.

The present paper includes some of my observations in this field as well as some data published in earlier ethnological literature and coming for the most part from the Hungarian culture area.

In Sárköz, Tolna County, West of the Danube, the girls go in bands to the vineyard when the grapes are ripening in autumn in order to drive off the birds by means of flappers and other noises. They are occasionally visited by the village lads, and they joke and sing together. The girls have ring-shaped bracelets of baked paste, while the lads have a stick in the hand. If a girl puts her bracelet on the stick of a lad, this is understood as an invitation for the evening to be spent in the *báló tanya*, "sleeping house" (Model I, see conclusions). The sleeping house is actually a hut in the vineyard with bed linen for the girls to sleep on. In the evening the girls and lads enjoy themselves together under the supervision of an old woman. Nevertheless, it may happen that one or more of the girls get pregnant. The old women then take care of these girls sooner or later marrying them

¹ Thomas A. Sebeok and others, *Approaches to Semiotics*. London, 1964, p. 5.

off.² The sexual sense of the bracelet placed on the stick is quite obvious.

In the Kalotaszeg region of Transylvania, the girls and lads meet in the evening at the village well. If a girl ties a bunch of flowers on her water vessel when going to the well, she indicates that her lover will be welcome in the barn or the stable. If the lad accepts the invitation, he will fill the girl's vessel with water (Model I-a). In the same region, if the girl gives her sickle after the harvest to a lad, she lets him know thereby that he may safely call upon her for an evening chat and that she will be willing to fulfil all his wishes (Model I). The next summer the lad will give the girl a new sickle if she has not married in the meantime. It may also occur that a married woman gives her sickle to a lad or a married man she is fond of (Model I). This gift of a sickle also expresses the possibility of sexual intercourse.

Parents may also engage in semiotics, availing themselves of different signs to announce that their daughter is nubile. At the beginning of this century it was still customary in Baracska, Fejér County, south of the capital, to stake a long pole in the ground before the house where a young girl of sixteen plus was living; a bunch of flowers and strawwisp were fastened on the top of the pole.³ The same custom was known also in the village Kajászószentpéter, Fejér County; when a girl had completed her sixteenth or seventeenth year, she staked a long pole in the garden in front of the house. On the

² J. Csalogovits, "A sárközi hálótanya" (The sleeping house in the Sárköz region). *Ethnographia*, 47 (Budapest, 1936), pp. 142-143; Béla Gunda and T. A. Sebeok, "Work and Cult among the Hungarian Peasants". *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 3 (Albuquerque, 1947), p. 158.

³ Á. Szendrey, "A magyar nép jelnyelve" (Sign language of the Hungarian people). *Ethnographia*, 52 (Budapest, 1941), p. 263.

top of the pole she fastened a decorative kerchief and an earthen vessel. The pole stood in the garden as long as the girl did not find a lad to her liking (Model II). It often happened that the pole remained there for five or six months, indicating that the girl was still waiting. According to folk tradition the flirtatious girl tied a red kerchief on the pole indicating thereby that she would not be opposed to pre-matrimonial sexual intercourse. In Western Hungary (Őrszentpéter village, Vas County), marriageable daughter was announced in the same way. When the daughter was of an age to marry and to receive the visit of young men, the father staked a high pole in front of the house. On top of the pole there was an iron point obtained from the village blacksmith. A decorative earthen crock was put on a board fastened under the iron point and filled with water from the well the girl regularly drank from. The girl tied red, white and green ribbons on the crock, and red maize ears were hung around the board. The pole was removed a few weeks later, the iron point returned to the blacksmith, and the crock with the water stored (Model II). On the day of the wedding, the witness sprinkled the girl's fireplace with this water.⁴

In Öcsöd, Békés County, the girl who had completed her fifteenth or sixteenth year staked a pole to the street door and fastened a hemp-tow on its top, announcing to the lads that they might visit her. The pole was left standing for three to four weeks at the street door, so that every lad of the village could see it (Model II). It should be noted here that poles and stakes were used by the Hungarians to give notice not only of a marriageable girl but also of different goods for sale. According to one source, it was customary already in 1653 to stake a long pole next to the fence and to fasten a wisp of hay, straw, or other fodder on its top to indicate that the farmer had

hay, straw, or some other fodder for sale.⁵ In the Great Hungarian Plain there are still poles with a wisp of hay or straw used to indicate fodder for sale.⁶ In the market the farmer fastens a wisp of hay or straw on a pole, such as an erected carriage beam, to indicate that he has a used carriage or tillage implements for sale.⁷ This category of signs includes a custom of the Székely, a Hungarian ethnic group in Eastern Transylvania: a flag set up before the house means that the farmer is calling on his neighbours and friends to help him with ploughing on the next day.⁸

The attention of the lads is called to the marriageable girl not only by means of poles. In the surroundings of Szeged and in other lowland regions, red maize ears are hung on the pediment of the house. In the Szeged region it is customary to string thread hoops and to hang them under the eaves on the house wall exposed to the street; this shows that the girl has already used much thread sewing her trousseau and that the young men are welcome (Model II).⁹ A remarkable custom was described in Ság village, Nyitra County. In this Slovak village the rear wall of the house is whitewashed with grey or clay-colored paint, and the housewife draws with her finger floral patterns on the wet wall, which retains her fingerprints. The floral patterns indicate the

⁵ S. É. Kiss, "Csóva, Csóvál" (Wisp, waving). *Magyar Nyelv*, 67 (Budapest, 1971), p. 80.

⁶ J. Szinnyei, *Magyar tájszótár* (Hungarian dialect dictionary), vol. I (Budapest, 1893-1896), pp. 349-350.

⁷ L. Kiss, *Vásárhelyi híres vásárok* (Famous fairs in Vásárhely), (Szeged, 1956), p. 16; A. B. Kirner, *A békési vásár* (The fair of Békés), (Gyula, 1964), p. 123.

⁸ A. Szendrey, "A magyar nép jelnyelve" (Sign language of the Hungarian people). *Etnographia*, 52 (Budapest, 1941), p. 264.

⁹ I. Tömörkény, "A tanyai világból" (The world of the ranches). *A Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Néprajzi Osztályának Értesítője*, 5 (Budapest, 1904), p. 265; I. Tömörkény, *Homokos világ* (Sandy world), (Budapest, 1910), p. 34; S. Bálint, *A szegedi nép* (The people of Szeged), Budapest, 1968), p. 119.

⁴ S. Farkas, "Tájszók" (Dialect words). *Magyar Nyelvőr*, 34 (Budapest, 1905), p. 224.

presence of a marriageable girl (Model II).¹⁰ A similar custom was known forty to fifty years ago in some Hungarian villages, such as Mohi and Újbars along the river Garam in Czechoslovakia.

These signs have probably developed in the following way. It was a general habit among the Hungarians to set up stakes and poles in order to indicate the sale of different goods. Such poles then began to be used for calling attention to marriageable girls. However, the setting up of poles for the latter purpose survives today only as a relic, although the custom is still used for indicating different goods for sale. The painted wall, the red maize ears and the thread hoops used by the parents to call attention to their marriageable daughter are probably of recent origin (nineteenth century). Maize has been known in Hungary since the 16th, and grown since the 17th century. A document from the seventeenth century (1653) leads us to the conclusion that the use of poles for announcing anything for sale has been known for a very long time in Hungary.

In Transylvania and in Gömör County a pole decorated with flowers, ribbons and bracelets is set up on the wedding day before the house of the bride.¹¹ I am of the opinion that in this case the poles calling the attention to the marriageable girl have been transferred to the wedding day and have thus lost their original function.

It is a general custom among Hungarians that old women recommend a girl to a lad and a lad to a girl. Precursors of up-to-date matrimonial agencies, they call attention to an industrious and diligent girl or lad and thus promote the marriage. The old women use certain signs to make known their intentions (Model III). In the Bihar region

(Furta village), if the old woman shuts the door with her left hand, she indicates that she was coming in order to obtain information about a girl but shall not disclose her real objective until the girl's mother shows her out the door after the visit. If the old woman shuts the door with her back, giving the door a push, instead of with her hand, the parents and the young people are aware of her intentions (Torontál County).¹² If on a winter evening an old woman—a friend of the family—comes in with the words, "I have brought you some fine baked squash," she indicates thereby that she was coming in order to recommend a husband to the girl (Panyola village, Szatmár region). The parents do not give a definite answer while chatting with the old woman, but if they take from the baked squash and offer the old woman fresh milk bread, they suggest thereby that they have accepted her offer. If, on the other hand, the old woman is not asked to stay, and when leaving has to step over two brooms lying on the floor before the kitchen door, she will know that her suggestions have been turned down (Model III-a).¹³

In several villages of Békés County the lad's mother or he himself asks an old woman of their acquaintance to gather information about the financial standing and the morals of the girl he likes. In a few days the old woman will appear in the house of the lad. She does not lose many words about the morals of the girl, but, if she holds a lime brush in her hand, it means that the girl is not virgin and her morals are lax. Forty of fifty years ago it was customary in many villages of Baranya County (Sellye, Kákics, Vajszló) that the old woman brought an empty hand-basket with her when calling upon the girl's parents for information about

¹⁰ B. Banner, *Adatok a nyitrai megyei Ság község iótjainak tárgyi etnográfijához* (Data of the material ethnography of the Slovaks of Sxg village in Nyitra County), (Békés, 1912), pp. 39-44.

¹¹ Á. Szendrey, "Lakodalmi előkészületek" (Preparations to wedding). *Ethnographia*, 46 (Budapest, 1935), pp. 50-51.

¹² Á. Szendrey, "Közvetítőik szerepe a házasságkötésben" (The role of mediators in marriage). *Ethnographia*, 43 (Budapest, 1932), p. 170; Á. Szendrey-Zs. Szendrey, "Szokások" (Customs), in *A magyarság néprajza* (Ethnography of the Hungarian people), vol. 4 (Budapest, 1943), p. 158.

¹³ Á. Szendrey-Zs. Szendrey, p. 158.

their daughter. The red kerchief in the basket indicated the purpose of the visit. In the course of the conversation the old woman commended the lad and gave some particulars about his financial standing. Neither the parents nor the girl gave a definite answer, but, if the mother put in the basket some fruit, eggs, dried apples and prunes and covered them neatly with the red kerchief, she was supposed to indicate that the lad was to the liking of the girl and the parents. If the old woman had to leave with an empty basket, she was sure of her failure. In this case she merely told the lad that her basket remained empty or simply put the basket on the table without any further explanation and without even mentioning her unsuccessful visit (Model III-a).

Accompanied by their parents, the lad and the girl pay a visit to one another before contracting the marriage in order to get more closely acquainted with the house, the farming, the order and tidiness of the other. It may even happen that the young people get to know each other only at these mutual visits, being informed thus far about each other only by the old woman who acted as intermediary. Of course, neither the parents nor the young people will speak about their intentions, nor will they expect any definite answer from their hosts. However, if the parents of the girl offer their guests some turkey meat, it is regarded as a good sign by the lad and his parents. This would actually indicate that the girl and her parents like the young man.¹⁴ Among the Palóc, an ethnic group of Northern Hungary, the visiting girl will not accept the meal she is offered if she is not satisfied with the young man. It is also a sign of refusal if the girl's parents do not eat the bread and walnuts they are offered.¹⁵

The lad may visit the girl alone, too, once he has made her acquaintance and found her to his liking. In this case the young people will express their mutual sympathy

by means of different signs. If the girl is very fond of the lad, she will take his hat when he enters the room and put it on the bed (Szatmár region).¹⁶ In several regions of the Hungarian Plain the lad offers the girl a red apple; if she eats the apple at once, it means that she likes his company and is willing to accept his wooing (Model I-a).¹⁷ The lad may express his sympathy to the girl by shaking hands with the parents, the brothers and the sisters of the girl, but not with her. This shows that he likes the girl who, in this case, will see him out as far as the kitchen door where they will take leave from one another.¹⁸ If the lad comes from another village in a carriage, the gate is opened in advance; if not he will know that he is not welcome. If the gate is not opened but the girl is in love with the lad, she will hurry herself to open the door when he arrives.¹⁹ In the Hungarian Plain, Békés County, it is a sign of the girl's love if she cleans his boots when he arrives and offers him walnuts when he leaves. If a red maize ear is hanging on the kitchen door when the young man arrives or leaves, it means that the girl likes him (Model I). However, it may happen that the maize ear is removed by some jealous or waggish pals of the young man. This may often result in a scuffle.

In the Hungarian Plain considerable distances between farms often prevent the young people from knowing each other. In such cases the first impressions are of decisive importance. The parents put two glasses of wine on the table; if both the girl and the lad drink from the wine, they like each other (Model I-a). If they refuse to drink or if only one of them drinks, there is no marriage to be expected. Both parties will then know how to act.²⁰ If the young

¹⁶ M. Luby, *A paraszti élet rendje* (Patterns of peasant life), (Budapest, 1935), p. 61.

¹⁷ Á. Szendrey, "A magyar nép jelnyelve" (Sign language of the Hungarian people). *Ethnographia*, 42 (Budapest, 1941), p. 264.

¹⁸ M. Luby, p. 61.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²⁰ S. Bálint, p. 147-148.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

man is not yet well known by the family of the girl, he will take it as a favourable sign if a tallow candle is lit before him on the table, instead of a floating wick.²¹ The lad may also get to know the intentions of the girl and her parents if he goes to the family of the girl and offers his friendly services for the harvest or some other summer labour. If his offer is accepted, it means that he, too, is accepted as son-in-law. Eventually the young man calls upon the girl's family with a wine bottle in his hand; during conversation he offers the girl and her parents some wine. If they accept and, when he leaves, refill his empty bottle with wine, they indicate thereby that they like the young man and that the girl is willing to marry him (Model I-a).²²

In the Szatmár region, the girl puts garlic in the pocket of the young man she does not like. It is also a sign of the girl's antipathy if the visiting lad is seated on the long seat instead of the chair.²³ In Nyitra County, Slovakia, the young man is also seated on the long seat, while the girl's father sits down at the other end. During conversation he presses so close to him that the young man is finally obliged to rise. This means that he may just as well take his leave, since neither the parents nor the girl like him.²⁴

In Komárom County, Northwestern Hungary a girl is visited in the evening by several lads; those who would like to woo her give her a brass ring. It is a matter of honour for a girl to wear as many rings as possible. She then chooses the young man of her liking. This lad will stay in the evenings when the others have left. As a sign of her love the girl takes off all her

skirts but one and goes to bed. The lad lies down beside her. In a few weeks even this last skirt is taken off, and the young people go to bed together.²⁵ Also in Komárom County the young man does not receive an immediate answer from the parents or the girl. But if they are satisfied with him, the mother will send her daughter the next evening with a strudel filled with poppy seeds and a bottle of wine to where the lad is waiting for her in the stable. They eat the strudel and drink the wine, and the girl will stay until late in the night. The next evening it will be then turn of the young man to bring a similar present. The mutual visits and gifts are thus a form of positive reply (Model I-a).²⁶

Feelings and intentions may be expressed by means of different articles of clothing. In the Palots region and in the Hungarian Plain, the lad when visiting the girl leaves his *szűr* (long embroidered felt cloak) in the kitchen. When he departs and finds the *szűr* under the eaves or hanging on a stake in the courtyard, he must know that he is not welcome and should prefer not to come any more. If he is welcome, his *szűr* is put into the clothes chest and he will come the next day to fetch it (Model I-a). It has happened that a young man killed a girl for having "put out" his *szűr*.²⁷ The lad who is frequenting a girl or woman known to be unchaste will find his hat thrown out on the courtyard or his *szűr* hanging outdoors as a sign that he is not welcome in the house of the virtuous girl.²⁸

In several regions of Hungary an older woman or a man asks for the girl in marriage in the name of the young man. If the old woman (Hung. *gyalogjátán* "pedestrian Satan") is turned down, she puts on her short fur coat turned inside out when she leaves

²¹ L. Nagy Czirok, *Pásztorélet a Kiskunságon* (Life of the herdsmen in the Kiskunság region), Budapest, 1959), p. 263.

²² Á. Szendrey-Zs. Szendrey, p. 158.

²³ Á. Szendrey, "A magyar nép jelnyelve" (Sign language of the Hungarian people). *Ethnographia*, 42 (Budapest, 1941), p. 246.

²⁴ Gy. Csefkó, "Kitették a szűrét" (Turned him out of doors). *Magyar Nyelvőr*, 71 (Budapest, 1947), pp. 110-111.

²⁵ E. Fél, "Egy palóc házasságelötti szokásról" (About a premarital custom of the Palóc). *Ethnographia*, 42. (Budapest, 1941), p. 256.

²⁶ Á. Szendrey-Zs. Szendrey, p. 161.

²⁷ G. O. Nagy, *Mi fán terem?* (What's the idea?), (Budapest, 1965), p. 303.

²⁸ E. Fél, p. 256.

(Csorvás village, Békés County). The passers-by will know thereby that the proposal of marriage was refused. A Hungarian novelist, Zsigmond Justh (1863-1894), described in his novel *Delelő* (Resting), with ethnographical authenticity, how the old woman holds a white kerchief in her left hand indicating thereby her intention to ask for the girl in marriage (Model III). Walking on the street, the old woman is stopped by her friends who ask her where she is coming from and with what result (Szentetornya village, Békés County). An aged man arrives with a big stick and a bag as a sign that he acts as suitor (Furta village, Hajdú-Bihar County).

There are most instructive signs used by a girl or woman in order to inform her lover that he is welcome and that they may safely spend a few hours together.

It is a well-known custom of the Hungarian Plain that the erect well sweep that is visible from a great distance is used for calling home the herdsmen or others working in the field. This is the signal that the midday meal is ready, but it was also the sign used to warm highwaymen that the gendarmes were approaching.²⁹ On the other hand, the erect well sweep was eventually the sign indicating that the light-blooded woman was left alone at home and her lover might safely come (Model I). As soon as the lover was there, the well sweep was let down.

In the Gyimes Pass of Transylvania, the Csángós³⁰ live in mountain crofts at a considerable distance from one another. The women or the girls are often left alone at home, since the men are working in the forest or guarding the sheep on the alps. The woman or girl agrees with her lover on a certain sign to indicate that she is alone

at home and that he may safely come. She will stake a fir branch to a well or spring near the house. A single branch means that they will have not much time since the husband, the father, or the mother are due to come back, while two branches indicate that the girl or the woman will be alone until the evening (Model I). The branch is staked near the well or the spring because the man approaching the water would cause no suspicion, since everybody would think he has come there to drink. The man pulls the sign out of the ground and takes it with him to his sweetheart and says. "I have brought your sign!" Of course, the meaning of this sign is known by others, too, but, although the sign will certainly not remain unnoticed, it is respected and will not be touched. As a measure of safety, the woman will shut the dog in the hay loft or the cow stable when she receives the visit of her lover.

In Palóc villages it often happened that women of forty or fifty established intimate relations with their sons-in-law, if their husbands happened to be sick, dead, or whatever, while the father-in-law went to bed with his daughter-in-law if the husband of the latter, his son, served in the army, worked far away, and so on. Such sexual intercourse was condoned by the family.³¹ Frequently the son-in-law was by twenty years the junior of the mother-in-law. As a sign of her sexual appetite the woman would secretly give her son-in-law some roast meat and milk bread while he was working in the courtyard. However, some women might simply say: "Let's go to bed together, Steve, you are still a young man!" At first, the son-in-law might be reluctant, but after one or two occasions sexual intercourse became quite regular. The young woman might also be

²⁹ B. Gunda, "Signal by Sweep-well in the Great Hungarian Plain," *Acta Ethnographica*, 14 (Budapest, 1965), p. 394.

³⁰ The Csángós are a small Hungarian ethnic group in some parts of Transylvania and Moldavia.

³¹ E. Fél, *A nagycsalád és jogszokásai a komárom-megyeyi Martoson* (The extended family and its legal customs in Martos, Komárom County), (Budapest, 1944), pp. 25-26; J. Morvay, *Asszonyok a nagycsaládban* (Women in the extended family), (Budapest, 1956), pp. 173-174.

unresponsive to her father-in-law but let him know by means of certain signs that she was not definitely opposed to sexual intercourse. Thus, for instance, she would clean the high boots of her father-in-law or brush his hat without being asked to do so, or wash his white linen bag. In the courtyard or in the field, when she brought him his meal, she would put the yoke pin into the yoke, so that her father-in-law might see it (Model I). Sooner or later the news of her behaviour would spread and she could expect to be accosted by some jolly fellow: "Hey Julie, when will you put my yoke pin in the right place?" The free-spoken young woman would then reply: "Your yoke pin (penis) is too small, I would not take it in my hand!" (Kazár, Rimóc, Hollókő). In the Sárköz region the woman would put a small earthen pot in her window to indicate that her lover may safely come (Model I).

An interesting piece of information comes from Szeged, dated 1809: in those times the girl's virginity and the wife's fidelity to her husband were symbolized by the wearing of a white apron, while the girl or woman not complying with these requirements was forbidden by her relatives to wear a white apron.³²

The *cégér* (inn sign) was a characteristic distinguishing mark of Hungarian inns some fifty to sixty years ago. The *cégér* was a bundle of shavings fastened to a long pole and hung over the inn door. The long shavings were planed by the joiners from conifers. The best inn sign was supposed to be made of the shavings of the larch tree, since it proved to be the most resistant to rain and snow. According to popular tradition the shavings cut from the coffin of a virgin girl were also used for the *cégér*. The bunch of shavings was bound in the middle by red ribbons; sometimes there was a bottle of wine hanging within the shavings which—according to the saying of peasants—symbolized the long

³² S. Bálint, *Népiünk ünnepei* (Feast days of our people), (Budapest, 1938), p. 77.

hair of the girls. It should be noticed in this respect that the girls employed in the inns were *szömély* (prostitutes), at the disposal of the customers. If there was only one *szömély* employed in the inn, the *cégér* was bound only with a single red ribbon, with two if there were two of them. A new *cégér* was hung over the inn door around St. George's Day, April 24, and in the week of St. Michael's Day, September 29. This "consecration of the *cégér*", as it was called, was an occasion for dancing and merrymaking with gypsy music. The innkeeper's wife and the prostitutes offered wine and milk bread gratuitously; only what was consumed indoors was to be paid for. The *szömély* paid the wine that was offered outdoors because this was "her wedding". She would wear a gaudy dress and have her face painted. This was also the day of her "consecration". From the moment she threw the wine bottle on the *cégér*, the *szömély* was considered as belonging to the inn.³³

It is a matter of common knowledge that the manner of walking is indicative of a person's character and individual properties. As shown by several folk-songs, the Hungarian peasant noticed that women's way of walking expresses their sexual behaviour, for example:

You recognize the whore,
She goes to the well late in the evening,
You recognize her by her walk,
Just like you know the owl by its hooting.

Several Hungarian poets, such as János Arany and Endre Ady, have also written about sexual behaviour expressed in walking.

'CONCLUSIONS

The present paper has described signs and gestures that express feelings, desires and intentions and that call the attention to mar-

³³ L. Kiss, *A szegény asszony élete* (The life of the poor woman), (Budapest, 1941), pp. 376-379.

riage or sexual intercourse. These signs and gestures give the parties the chance to approach one another. They pave the way for marriage and thus for founding families. There are also signs and gestures indicating the possibility of pre-marital and extra-marital sexual intercourse.

The signs and gestures make the oral expression of opinions unnecessary, and so the persons involved may avoid discussions and lengthy and ambiguous explanations. The signs are reminiscent of a social action; they finish a social action or make it possible to start one. Every sign and gesture express more explicitly and clearly an opinion or a behaviour than words would. The purpose and meaning of the signs and gestures are always factual, concrete and exact. By means of the signs the members of the peasant community take notice of an intention or action without any discussion or talk. When I was speaking with an old Hungarian woman about these signs, she said: "My son, I can grasp more by signs than by words!"

In general, these signs and gestures may have three different social dimensions: (1) An individual communicates his intentions toward another specific individual (Model I); (2) The individual communicates his intention with known and unknown members of the interested society (Model II); and (3) There are also interpolating signs and gestures, when a third person indicates

the intention of one person toward another or the action engaged from one person toward another (Model III).

These three cases may be expressed by the following symbols:

- 1. Model I: $A \rightarrow B$
- 2. Model II: $A \rightarrow B_1, B_2, B_3 \dots B_n$
- 3. Model III: $A \rightarrow X \rightarrow B$

In the first and third cases a positive or negative feed-back process may also be possible:

- 1. Model I-a: $A \rightarrow B$
 $\cdot \pm \cdot$
 $\dots\dots$
- 3. Model III-a: $\dots\dots$
 $\cdot \pm \cdot$
 $A \rightarrow X \rightarrow B$
 $\cdot \pm \cdot$
 $\dots\dots$

The signs may be implements or objects, for instance, a tallow candle or a well sweep, expressing intentions and desires and calling attention to sexual action. However, human gestures and deeds are also very frequent, as when the old woman shuts the door with her left hand, and so are the signs that persons carry with themselves, such as the fur coat turned inside out or the empty basket.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

THE SURVIVORS OF THE HOLOCAUST

I know what Anna Frank went through, and not just from her diary. As a schoolgirl I too had to laugh under my breath, while hiding and living in constant terror. On December 4, 1944, along with the adults in my hiding-place, I was driven from the concealed studio apartment to the Danube embankment, and I wondered whether—if I escaped and survived—a school test in arithmetic would ever give me the jitters again.

When I did sit again on a school bench I felt a vague and dim joy that the mornings of writing tests were as exciting as those of my previous life, only six months before. The feeling was just as strong but very different: I was an excited schoolgirl, a survivor, whose wounds had healed, but at the same time an orphan, whose scars would always be there.

Maybe this is why the new phenomenon in contemporary Hungarian literature—the novels of yesterday's children who survived the fascist hell—upset and fill me with such emotion. Their autobiographies are my biography as well.

They write because they cannot remain silent. The inherent conflicts in present-day reality, the poison of prejudices still dormant under the surface, compel them to settle accounts, not with their one-time persecutors but with themselves, and examine their place in the world.

Chronicle and Statement

It is something new in Hungarian prose, as though the social taboos and the self-imposed prohibitions in writers' workshops had been scrubbed off the walls. Since the early seventies, every year there has been some autobiographically inspired work which presents the universal Hungarian tragedy in the Second World War as a context for discussing the special sufferings of Hungarian Jews, with the purpose of displaying and analysing their persecution.

András Mezei's short novel *Kezdetben* ("In the Beginning") appeared in 1970 and won a prize at the competition organized to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the country's liberation. There was much discussion in 1972 when György Gera's novel, *Terelőút* ("The Bypass") came out and dealt with the victims' exercise of justice. Ágnes Gergely's novel, *A tolmács* ("The Interpreter") involved similar themes in the guise of a love story and was the big hit in 1973, while Mária Ember's *Hajtűkanyar* ("Hairpin Bend") undertook the same subject—and had the same success—in 1974. In 1975 several autobiographically inspired novels appeared quite unexpectedly including György Moldova's *Szent Imre-induló* ("The Saint Emeric March")*, Imre Kertész's *Sorstalanság* ("Fate-

* See a review of the novel in NHQ No. 63.

lessness"), Ervin Gyertyán's *Szemüveg a porban* ("Spectacles in the Dust"), and Pál Bárdos's *Az első évtized* ("The First Decade").

The roots of coincidence are much deeper than a similarity of topic or conformity to a "literary trend". (Knowing the conditions of our publishing and printing industry and the long time needed to get a work through the presses, we can safely say that the authors did not get encouragement or inspiration from the first successes in the genre.) Since they have been motivated by specific social, psychological and literary factors they are interesting for both who they are and what they have written.

Assimilation and Tact

Any type of literary pigeon-holing that separated the Jewish writers of any era from the body of Hungarian literature would be received in Hungary with understandable and well-founded mistrust. To start with, all classifications, even aesthetic ones, hold the seeds of discrimination and so should be rejected both in theory and practice. Moreover, if we look into Hungary's past, we see that such segregation would be inaccurate historically.

The complete and unhindered assimilation of the Jews has strong traditions in Hungarian society and literature. During the eighteenth century, in the era of enlightened absolutism, the Jews in the Carpathian Basin opposed attempts to Germanize them: they preferred to assimilate with the Hungarians. The French Revolution sanctioned further emancipation as did the Hungarian reform period in the 1830s and the anti-Habsburg War of Independence in 1848-49. The Jewish community of Pest opened a school where all subjects were taught in Hungarian. Baron József Eötvös, Minister of Education during the revolution, supported legal equality for the Jews, and the number of Jewish men who fought defending the freedom of Hungary—their own freedom

—in the 1848-49 War of Independence, surpassed all others as a proportion of their numbers in the population.

The assimilated Jews, whose numbers increased with immigration at the end of the nineteenth century, played a major role in the growth of capitalism in Hungary, as well as in the progressive movement which was opposed to it. György Lukács—on the basis of his own family and social experiences—sharply criticized the endeavours of some Jewish families to assimilate and rub shoulders with the gentry. Many progressive and revolutionary sons of Jewish middle class families were among those who rallied to his cause. Among his fellows-in-arms were Jewish writers, radical thinkers, and the pioneers of Marxism in Hungary, who widened the horizons of Hungarian literature. For twentieth-century Hungarian writers a Jewish background was significant only as a social—not a religious—environment. Sándor Bródy, one of the finest, most talented naturalist writers at the turn of the century, never denied being Jewish but never considered it particularly important either. In the first quarter of the century only a handful (and not the best) of the provincial Jews who came to the capital and became writers and journalists felt it important to emphasize their being Jewish and therefore different. For the majority the decisive factor was their national identity, with its national language and culture, making religion an incidental factor.

Only the growing pressure of fascism disrupted the gradual process of assimilation. The growing fascist mentality and anti-Semitism meant that writers' inherited religion could get them expelled at any time from the literary, linguistic, historical and cultural community into which they had been born and to which dedicated their careers. This ambivalent excommunication and search for a community was a human and intellectual dilemma to which each writer tried to find his individual answer. Some, like the very talented Károly Pap, emphasized their

Jewishness under the pressure of social and religious experiences. However, he was an exception both at the time and in the history of Hungarian literature. Miklós Radnóti and György Sárközi, two outstanding anti-fascist poets, tried at first to find a way out in Catholicism. They both died at the hands of the fascists.

The generation after the liberation tore off the yellow star, convinced that every trace of the stigma would vanish, as though they could ignore the bitter prophecy Gyula Illyés wrote in his poem "Stigma" in 1944:

"That rag (or that distinction) / will soon be removed from the clothing. / I know that a wound will remain in its place / and will really hurt then: torn open at its very roots!" (Prose translation.)

I would oversimplify the social and literary developments after 1945 if I explained it all as just the wish to avoid pain and forget. There was also a social code that made all progressive social groups assume that the equality of rights guaranteed in the Constitution would finally do away with all artificial conflicts and eliminate mutual distrust. If we only strike the question off the agenda, it will disappear. In his sensational essay *Egy előítélet nyomában* ("In the Wake of a Prejudice") (*Valóság*, No. 8, 1975) György Száraz discusses the most conspicuous manifestations of this social tact. Prior to the liberation the Jews officially called themselves "Israelites," just as for several decades after the war decent people avoided the use of the term Jew and spoke "tenderly or just with natural simplicity" of "persecuted persons" instead. Those to whom it referred did not protest; they accepted and even demanded it "as if they acknowledged forever the absurdity imposed in 1944 that to be a Jew was a disgrace."

I myself know progressive-minded parents who—for the sake of their children—thought it best to conceal the family's Jewish origins and never speak of such memories. Thus it happened in the fifties that the daughter of

a Jewish family came home from school and told her parents the sensational news that "there are even two Jewish girls in class"—not of course counting herself.

It was only discretion, but it caused a significant deformation in social intercourse and public thinking, and it had its own punishment—especially in literature where convention, supported partly by ideological and mostly by tactical arguments, prevented writers from telling the whole truth. In the meanderings of half-truths even facts lose their credibility.

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Scarcely had the din of fighting stopped in the Second World War when literature began to recount the events. As everywhere else, the indelible historical experience of the three surviving generations was poured into the literature of the following period. "Great old men" who knew two world wars were still in full possession of their faculties in 1945: Lajos Nagy wrote the first chronicle of the capital's siege, *Pincenapló* ("Cellar Diary" *). Tibor Déry had his series of short stories containing some remarkable psychological observations, *Alvilági játékok* ("Underworld Games"); József Darvas published a documentary work of national self-examination *Város az ingoványon* ("City on the Marsh"). Then Béla Illés came along, a Red Army major, who arrived not as a prisoner but as a liberator of the ghetto. Pál Szabó became the spokesman of the Hungarian peasantry, those three million beggars, now at their turning-point in Hungarian history.

The experience of the Jews did not figure large in literature, and reviewers failed to note the omission. The Communist Lajos Nagy (whose wife was Jewish) and József Darvas (1883–1974), a left-wing "populist" writer, had fewer inhibitions of the subject than those hit personally. The best contemporary writers felt compelled not to write about their own wounds and grievances because they had made common cause with

* Excerpted in NHQ No. 37.

the nation, protested against all forms of discrimination, and accepted the traditions of assimilation and the constitutional guarantees of equality.

Had it been clear at the time that these wounds had left deep marks on the whole Hungarian psyche, a more comprehensive historical account of those times would probably have come earlier. But the vacuum left by contemporary writers was soon filled by others, those whose writing was shaped only by suffering. Their works were indictments, concentration-camp novels and diaries conceived in anti-fascist protest to show and record just what they had been through. Some wanted to erect a memorial to their dead, others expected to find solace in describing the horrors or at least a memento for future generations.

Such chronicles written based on personal experience retained the verisimilitude of crude reality; it gave new information that had an elemental impact. It was documentary material that had a dramatic and emotional impact almost as intense as art itself, although it still could not really be called art. It was predictable at the time and has since become clear that these were simple, direct and crude messages not from writers but from sufferers. It is their suffering and not their writing talent that moves us. Mrs. Gábor Vidor's soul-rending book about Auschwitz, *Háborog a sír* ("Seething Grave") is one of the most moving of human documents—but it is not literature.

Then there was the generation which found its way into history as the reluctant soldiers or forced labour camp inmates wearing yellow arm-bands. They all needed years, even decades, to formulate their torments into prose. István Örkény and Tibor Cseres tried in several works and in several genres, first writing a requiem for the victims and then providing the nation with merciless self-examination. But the tragedy of the Jews and the poison of anti-semitism—these two inseparable historical traumas—appeared only on the periphery of their

works. (In this there was not much difference between Jewish and non-Jewish authors.) Some of Örkény's One-Minute Stories* condense the tragedy into a flash; his *Requiem egy hadseregért* ("Requiem for an Army") a documentary drama written with István Nemeskürty, contains a monologue for a minor character which conveys the dramatic force of events but here too disciplined modesty deforms history, as though six hundred thousand Hungarian Jewish victims did not deserve full restitution from posterity.

This self-mutilating reticence and shyness in prose and drama also left its mark on the poetry of the time.

A Delicate Topic?

The recent past, however, has brought a change, in fact, a breakthrough, with sincere confessions bubbling to the surface.

The first literary work about the tragedy of Jews was Imre Keszi's 1958 novel, *Elysium*. Like the more recent works, it takes place in a concentration camp, here focussing on one child's experience. But, unlike the spate of recent autobiographical works, Keszi is not concerned with his own generation's experience when writing of his young hero, Gyurka Szekeres. The author would be nearer in age and experience to the boy's parents. Not thus limited to personal experience, he can follow his hero to the limits of experience. Gyurka's *Elysium* is a special camp for children subjected to medical experimentation. It is a world ruled by apparently rational laws: good behaviour is rewarded and the children are kept in hand with normal pedagogic methods. Only this place itself, this hell, is irrational. Like Hansel and Gretl in the fairy-tale, the child-prisoners are guarded and trained for their own deaths. Gyurka Szekeres does not survive the camp. His martyrdom is tragic but if it were only that, we could have probably forgotten the novel by now. We remember

* See NHQ Nos. 29, 35 and 50.

it and its publisher now reprints it because Keszi was ahead of his time in putting the questions that are being asked today. His book is real literature that is as topical now as it was twenty years ago, if not more so.

Keszi's child hero does not wonder only about what happened but also why the stable world of his childhood fell to pieces. He has the courage to ask himself, "Wouldn't it be better not to be Jewish, but if I were not Jewish would I be me? How do they kill a man? What do I lose by being killed?" In following the thoughts of his adult characters, the author also raises more general questions about citizens, intellectuals, and scientists as Hungarians and Jews. Keszi saw clearly and said with some courage that the Jewish middle-class was attached to the Hungarian national language and culture; it was a fact, regardless of whether it was granted them or not. At the same time the author did not rule out or play down his heroes' religious affiliation, although this was of secondary importance compared to being Hungarian. Keszi saw this as the condition sanctioned by tradition, and the ordeals to which the community was subjected did not weaken that affiliation, rather it strengthened it. "If it were useful to be a Jew maybe I wouldn't be one by now," says Gyurka Szekeres's father, a professional linguist enamoured of the Hungarian language. This is why it can be said that the process of assimilation was broken by force. In Hungary the self-awareness and solidarity of Jews first arose when the fascists persecuted and discriminated against them; later it was nourished by the ordeal and traumas they had been through.

For a time it seemed that Keszi's story would be a unique memorial to an unforgettable but otherwise unrecorded aspect of a tragic history. For whenever somebody approached the subject from another angle, he was fully absorbed in other matters, since no community existed that had not been hit, touched or contaminated by fascism in some form or other. The survivors continued with

their lives, some forgetting they were criminals or accessories to the crime, while honest people felt responsible for their passivity. This unique, purposely concealed and patched over conflict still caused friction, clashes and even sometimes more tragedy. The first who wrote about it openly was Gyula Fekete, in his novel *Az orvos baldla* ("The Doctor's Death") written in the mid-sixties.

To evaluate this work we must start by saying that Gyula Fekete—unlike Keszi and other writers we shall discuss—has no personal connections with Jews. He writes for a Hungarian public that had been guilty of passivity, and *The Doctor's Death* is his best work to date. Gyula Fekete's Ivan Illych is a Jewish village doctor, drawing up the balance of his life at the moment of death. The courageous choice of hero leads to the conflict in the novel's most dramatic scene. Dr. Dezső Weiss, a former ghetto victim whose sons died in a forced labour camp, mourns the grandchildren he will never have. Now, at the age of 68, he fights death in the house of those who had done him the greatest wrong in 1944. Dr. Weiss is a sick man, long past retirement age, waiting only for his successor. He is fighting now for the life of a woman in labour, whose husband, he knows for certain, would have killed him, given the chance. Dr. Weiss inevitably harbours all his sorrows and grievances, but the doctor in him rises above them and, true to his oath and vocation, risks his own life and spends his remaining energies, sacrificing himself for those whom he can never forgive.

Breakthrough

In the mid-sixties the vise of silence first loosened in lyrical poetry. Young woman poets, Judith Tóth* and Magda Székely,** had been "brought up in orphanhood" and had lived through the hell of fascism as

* See NHQ No. 53.

** See NHQ No. 52.

children. They both evoked the hell they had gone through, but their realistic lyricism evolved into the poetic statement of an apocalyptic era. They consciously tried to liberate and redeem themselves but their personal loss—their mothers' deaths—and the trauma of the "hundred deaths" they had been through proved too strong. It pervades their subject-matter, images, even their silences: their poetic tone embodies the torments of their experience, the loneliness of human beings stricken with pain. Judit Tóth now lives in Paris and is a mother in her thirties, but she cannot get rid of the terrors she suffered at the age of eight. Her poems show that motherhood was the first experience that alleviated her pain but now her greatest feeling is worry for the child.

András Mezei is not much older than Judit Tóth, and at the time she was writing poetry he was writing prose. *A csodatévő* ("The Wonder-Worker") summarizes the dreams and fears of a heart-broken Hungarian Jewish thirteen-year-old set on becoming a great footballer. Joske wanders forlornly in a world of fairy-tales that turns to hell in 1944. All the time he assumes that after great trouble and injustice come miracles. And the greatest of all miracles may also come: to remain alive. Such a miracle is recorded in the sequel to the *Wonder-Worker*, entitled "In the Beginning", a poetic but realistic novella written in 1970.

"The Wonder-Worker" begins with the parable of old Lebovics, the father of Joske: "Don't sell out your sufferings my son, words do not make things any easier. Don't remind people, don't hold a mirror before their eyes, don't challenge them wantonly because they will reproach you for it... Never remind people of their past... Of things they don't like to talk about... Forget or keep to yourself the things you have seen or heard, and even this is not enough because one day they will blame you for having been a mute witness."

This warning does not apply so much to the figures in the novel as to the generation

of the author and the sharp moral and political dilemma they face. The little boy and his contemporaries, now adults, defy this bitter wisdom of the defeated and humiliated when they reawaken the past.

Those who remember and accuse are beset with many difficulties. There are complexities, contradictions and aesthetic and psychological dangers in describing the indescribable; there are the examples of their predecessors, the memories presented in works by Peter Weiss, Jorge Semprun and André Schwartz-Bart, and there are the human and political sensibilities of their readers.

But old Lebovics worried about his son without knowing much about aesthetics. His warnings expressed only the human and political experience of his own generation and its validity is not limited to the past. There are many examples from the recent past but the most characteristic perhaps is the Marxist critics' struggle with ethical compulsion and tactical difficulties to get to the truth.

Iván Sándor, a journalist, theatre critic, and member of the younger generation of dramatists, won a literary competition in 1967 with his drama *Tiszaeszlár*. *Tiszaeszlár* is an insignificant village in Eastern Hungary which is noted in Hungarian history because there in the late nineteenth century the ancient charge of ritual murder was repeated and almost brought on a tragedy. The play is really the story of Károly Eötvös, a writer and lawyer, and one of the noblest figures of the Hungarian progressive movement, who defended the innocent and fought against the unfounded charge of ritual murder.

Iván Sándor regarded the *Tiszaeszlár* trial as a prelude to fascism: his drama explores the social and political conditions which foster such attitudes and the damage it can do to human and spiritual values. The drama puts the spread and ruinous impact of fascism in Hungary in a historical perspective; and, not surprisingly, shortly after the first night, critic Pál Pándi felt compelled to

write an article in *Társadalmi Szemle*, the party's theoretical monthly, defending the presentation of the drama against those who were afraid that raising such "delicate questions" would awaken dormant anti-Semitism. Pándi did not doubt or deny that anti-Semites still exist in Hungary, with their "old conditionings and newly revived superstitions," for "although these ill-willed knights of misanthropy no longer act openly and brutally, they still experiment with underhanded indirect methods, poisoning the atmosphere and disguising their disgraceful passions." But since, he argued further, "there are incomparably more enlightened people in the country standing up to those maniacs of sinister passion," anti-Semitism can by no means be considered a "delicate question," especially for Marxists whose class-based reasoning militates against all discrimination including anti-Semitism. And they work for the elimination of the conditions that breed inhumanity with more than just liberal gestures. In his conclusion the critic praised Iván Sándor's honest and courageous though artistically not faultless play all the more for the debt he paid with it: neither Tiszaeszlár, Auschwitz, nor Voronezh had as yet been given a lasting dramatic memento in Hungarian literature.

The shyness and traditional aversion of literature and public opinion to such delicate questions were gradually overcome. Legal forms of discrimination were ended by historical change, and public opinion has been reformed through long years of education. And of course the healthy public sentiment extends to the writers who grew up after the liberation and consider themselves equal Hungarians in every respect, to the point of accepting themselves and their past.

Foreign Factors

Foreign examples and antecedents have been very important, if not decisive, in the irresistible advance of this self-consciousness.

This is especially true of American prose, which is widely read and very popular in Hungary.

But such an obvious and easily demonstrable influence is still not direct, and does not influence themes or figures, the types of stories written or the atmosphere they portray. The influence consists rather in seeing the possibilities in a literary attitude that had been unimaginable until then. The novels and short stories showing the distinct ethnic character of the Jewish family were not read in Hungary merely for their humorous glimpse of the Jewish mother. They showed in an important way that well-known, top-ranking writers could accept their Jewishness without shame or the danger of being relegated to a sort of intellectual ghetto: they accepted it as the religious and ethnic community out of which they came and developed without its making them any less American.

The works I have in mind challenge all analogies, despite our being in an era searching for its identity, where the quest after one's roots is a general, and not just an American, phenomenon. In Hungary, as I said, coming from a Jewish family has meant being assimilated for generations, and thus not belonging to an ethnic group with strong religious bonds, a common outward appearance and traditional habits. The unique social environment of the Jewish community is therefore much less important than in the works of Malamud, Bellow, Singer, or Philip Roth. There the community of immigrants remained closely knit and influenced its members' lives for generations. Here in the thirties, Jewish families in the capital or even in the provinces did not differ essentially from gentile families of the same social standing. Interesting documentation of this comes from the childhood memories of Pál Bárdos in a small Southern Hungarian town. There, as he describes in his novel "The First Decade," peasant Christmas carol singers in the late thirties and early forties considered it quite natural

to visit Jewish families while at Purim gente friends and acquaintances got their gift parcels from Jewish families. This reciprocity is all the more interesting as in those "palmy days of peace" such feasts were the prime evidence of a Jewish identity.

History—more precisely, fascism—broke the continuity of assimilation in Hungary. The theory and practice of anti-Semitism was a force compelling both the assimilationists and segregationists to follow the fate of their persecuted ancestors. Hence the decisive experience of this generation of Hungarian writers was of discrimination rather than mere differentiation. The historical experience of exclusion and persecution aroused in many a new, morally motivated solidarity, based rather on the fate of the community and their common suffering than on social origin or way of life.

The American Jewish novels and short stories played a major part in relieving Hungarian writers of their deep social inhibitions and conditioned reticence. They made the figure of the self-sacrificing Jewish mother the equal of the peasant madonnas. Memories of Evening Seder candles were by no means less bright than the lights of Christmas candles. So their first impact was to encourage an acceptance of this world, which showed at the same time that, although humane, it was a narrow and closed world, worth describing but not above criticism, as in the works of Philip Roth.

The World of Avraham Bogatir

György G. Kardos is the only contemporary writer concerned with being Jewish, not in the past but in the present and not as an adjunct to the fate of Hungary. His Jews are as ethnic as the figures in American novels, and, it is important to note, they do not live in Hungary.

Kardos appeared on the scene in Hungarian literature unexpectedly in 1968. He was not young enough to be a beginner

and had returned home after fleeing from fascism and spending several years in Israel. In Hungary he worked on the periphery of literature as a translator and literary adviser to a theatre. His first novel, *Avraham Bogatir hét napja* ("Avraham's Good Week" 1968) (Doubleday, 1975), takes place in Israel. It condenses the fate of a Jewish peasant into seven days, and is the apotheosis of all the honest little men struggling under the blows that history imposes on them. The novel enjoyed immediate, quite unexpected success with both critics and the public. The book also explores the political and historical antecedents of the State of Israel, but his brilliantly concise family story is more a deeply lyrical human portrait. It expresses with self-irony and anecdotes the pathos of Jewry in the same vein as writers from Sholem Asch to Babel and Ehrenburg. Kardos's hero could very well be a figure in a Chagall painting. When he speaks we think of Tobias the milkman. The only difference perhaps is that he argues with history instead of God. In Hungarian literature this type of Jewish folklore had no antecedents but Kardos is undertaking to establish the tradition himself—with a second novel in 1971, this time about a very different problem. The scene is still the Near East, but the characters are soldiers in the Polish refugee army living on a kind of Magic Mountain. Sick soldiers or different nationalities live in a unique world between war and peace where the characters' Jewishness is only of secondary importance.

The novel straddles the border between exotism and politics but is written essentially realistically. At the same time the universality of the work places it in a wider context that accounts for the interest it aroused in Hungary and abroad. Kardos has close affinities to the Jewish novels of other nationalities, but he created and safeguarded his individuality with his roots in Hungarian literature. For this reason, his influence on contemporary writers may be greater than normally assumed.

Not Jewish Fate but Hungarian History

Kardos is also one of those who grew up under fascism, fending for himself in his youth, but his emigration and subsequent life are exceptional.

The writers about whom I wish to speak now are somewhat younger and have shared the fate of hundreds of thousands. Their experiences are equally homogeneous and differentiated from one another: Imre Kertész survived Auschwitz while Pál Bárdos and Mária Ember were among the more fortunate ones who were deported to places (for them it was an Austrian camp) which were relatively easier to survive. Almost all Hungarian Jews living in the provinces were deported in the summer of 1944: the bulk of those who survived in Budapest were liberated in the ghetto, like György Moldova's child hero in "The Saint Emeric March."

Reading these novels one after another gives a mosaic of personal experiences mounting into a horrifying historical panorama, one of the most tragic chapters of Hungarian history that up to now had been shrouded in mystery.

Not unlike the invocation to the Muse in classical epic poetry, the introductions or texts of these accounts invariably explain just why it all had to be written down, even at this late date. The authors enumerate and refute the arguments brought against their undertaking. They make no secret of the fact that the resurgence of hatred, the brutal revival of fascism in many countries and the tenacity of deeply rooted prejudices give relevance and almost topicality to their literary mementoes. Pál Bárdos listens to the crimes engraved on his consciousness to revive the memory of other human beings in the modest hope that one man's sufferings may make another man think.

"It is as though not only murderers but also victims return to the scene of the crime . . ." ponders the hero struggling with his doubts in György Gera's "The Bypass." Mária Ember, on the contrary, warns the reader at the

outset of her novel, "The subject of this book is not the fate of Jews. The subject of this book is Hungarian history." Ervin Gyertyán confirms the point when he discusses the circumstances and motives for writing his novel "Spectacles in the Dust", arguing with his own hero, who denies the topicality of reminiscences. The author tells him openly that he is not writing about the Jewish question. "What I want to write about is a Hungarian question, German question, English question. The question of mankind. The question of socialism, if you like."

The universality in the way these questions are formulated is perhaps the essential characteristic shared by these novels written in the mid-seventies. The writers stress this universality with different devices, some of them more journalistic than literary. The new use of genuine documents is revealing. As I mentioned before, the earlier documentaries written right after the war had a uniqueness and particularity that limited their artistic effect. In the new, more literary works the documents have just the opposite function: they expand and complement individual experiences and personal fates.

Ervin Gyertyán uses documents to underpin the debates of his heroes. Pál Bárdos gives his recollections and corrects them with data called from libraries. György Gera and Mária Ember have perhaps the most striking method of composition: they draw a sharp line between the text of the narrative and the documentary material. In Mária Ember's "Hairpin Bend" the documents catalogue 600,000 people's experience, forming a backdrop of Hungarian history for the calvary of the characters in the novel. She interrupts the narrative of a defenceless child, to complete it with decrees by Eichmann, Horthy, the Arrow-Cross minister of the interior László Endre, racist articles in *Der Stürmer*, the minutes of people's tribunals held after the liberation and excerpts from new historical research.

This wealth and variety of documentation helps to revive memories that might have

dimmed over the past thirty years. It is not easy to say something new about a subject after a whole generation has passed, especially when the new one has set out on an entirely different literary and publicist course. Indeed, the question remains, how much can be recalled.

With the Eyes of a Child

The common feature of the new wave of concentration camp novels results from similarities in their authors' lives.

Show me your hero and I tell you when you were born . . .

Reading and comparing all these confessions shows one striking similarity—that everybody sees the past through his 1944 eyes. By and large members of the same generation, their heroes are small school-children or adolescents during that terrible summer. (This, of course, makes for its own differences: the nine-year-old Pál Bárdos sees and senses things and understands the world differently from Ervin Gyertyán's sixteen-year-old student whose political awareness is above average.)

This first person singular does not constitute a genre: of course having an identical narrator and hero affects the form of a work, but it is more a method, an approach, an attitude, perhaps one can say an intimacy between a writer and his material. Most important is the authenticity it lends a novel, giving it a maximum of emotional support and an unusual degree of lyricism. True, lyricism and genuine personal experience are not identical with art, but here the dramatic situations, the accuracy of detail and the supporting documentation all contribute to an overwhelming sense of artistic authenticity.

Making heroes of children is not confined to novels about concentration camps. It is a familiar device in Hungarian and world literature, with the perspective of and identification with the child reinforcing the work's emotional impact, while sharpening

the contrast between defenceless victim and the world. At the same time it limits an author's perception of the world to the pint-sized perspective of his young hero, and to overcome such limitations, using documentary material, alternating the time sequences and inserting "borrowed experiences" all round out the world the child sees. It is obvious in almost every novel that the author chafes at the disadvantages of using this kind of hero, but at the same time the writers seem to throw themselves into the world of a child's eye-view with considerable psychological relief.

It does not always work, or work consistently. Even the most intelligent and precocious child cannot see beyond the world of direct experience. He does not have at his disposal the intellectual tools to generalize, he does not have a philosophy, and emotion determines his opinions about his environment and the adults around him, thus limiting his judgement and perception of his fellow sufferers. With her experiences as a teacher and mother, Mária Ember senses the age of her hero more acutely than the others and hence manages to create the most authentic child hero. But even she had to fight against the temptation to impose the awareness and critical vision of a reminiscing adult. And yet a legitimate aspect of all the novels, and perhaps most visible in Mária Ember's "Hairpin Bend," is the horrible historical acceleration that deprived these teenagers of their childhood and turned them into unsophisticated but mature human beings.

It is characteristic of children—both in life and in the authentic memoirs—to believe in truth without compromise and watch with incomprehension as the world they took to be permanent collapses and overwhelms them with a sense of injustice. The parents and relatives whom they believed to be omnipotent become helpless and defenceless. There are hundreds of adults who could attack the few dozen armed men . . . Children understand only the numerical proportions and not that beyond the camp

the world is full of armed and unarmed slave masters. The childlike naïveté evident in almost every novel is part of a deeper truth that embodies an untainted, pure moral sensibility. This naïveté of their heroes is now linked with the authors' mature social awareness and retrospective self-criticism.

At the same time the children have specific experiences, as well as a sensitivity and outlook that have something to say to adults. I will mention just two examples from the books of Pál Bárdos and Imre Kertész.

Is it possible to be bored in Auschwitz? It seems a bizarre question, but it preoccupies the adolescent hero in Kertész's "Fatelessness." One can read a lot about the hunger, fear and humiliation of life in a concentration camp, but for Kertész the recurring word is "naturally," and the recurring experience is much more mundane and ordinary, to the point of comparing the details of one camp to another. When he gets out of the train the young hero is glad to see that the camp has a football field; he laughs at first because they eat like Robinson Crusoe, spreading margarine on black bread without a knife. Later, when he gets used to the routine, he finds Auschwitz boring. On the other hand he "came to like" Buchenwald, for although "naturally" there was a crematorium, it seemed that the large-scale death factory was not the real purpose of the place. The boy adapts "naturally" to every situation, trying at times to be a good inmate or taking two days' food ration for a fellow inmate who was already dead and thus retrieving his fast declining strength. He is never shocked by all this, neither as a teenager, nor later as an adult. It was natural, and this is precisely what shocks us now.

The dramatic climax of Pál Bárdos's book demands the author's verdict in the trial of his mother versus the community, but even as an adult he is unable to judge. The story involves an extreme moral conflict never before described in literature: Are the best seamstresses in the camp (the child's mother

and grandmother) guilty for overfulfilling their production norms in the hope of some life-saving extra rations and other rewards, since serving their captors to the limit—indirectly at least—promotes the Nazi war effort. The little boy who benefits most from his mother's "crime" must watch their fellow sufferers spit in her face, though to him she remains the best and purest of all human beings. Only a child could have such a tortured experience and only an adult could describe it so forcefully.

On a Wider Scale

At the very outset, I admitted my own bias, and this essay, beyond an unconditional respect for the writers discussed, is inspired by a sense of a new literary phenomenon in the making. Nevertheless, I do not want people unable to read these works to assume they are all great literature. I would not even contend that all the writers mentioned here always manage to cope successfully with the inherent difficulties of their topic.

These writers are not the voice of their own generation. Their writing past is confined largely to poetic, publicist or critical activity and—with the exception of György Moldova—they have little in the way of previous fictional successes to point to. They set out to give an account of their own histories and the traumas they suffered, which moulded their relation as Jews to Hungary. Although they share a common fundamental experience of being discriminated against and persecuted they persist in assimilating and accepting the fate of Hungary as their own. It is a conscious decision, expressed matter-of-factly by Mária Ember, bitterly by Imre Kertész and passionately by Pál Bárdos, but for all three, it is done with an acute awareness of their dilemma.

There is no happy end to György Moldova's novel, though at the end of the story the hero's greatest wish seems to have been fulfilled. The world is restored to sanity and

after passing a special examination, the boy is at last admitted to the Saint Emeric secondary school. But when he hears the school march again, it does not move him as it used to. The boy feels a stranger in the assembly hall because he cannot suppress the thought that his admittance must have been a mistake, perhaps a janitor or a teacher will kick him out any minute. They reassure him but the boy cannot and will not forget.

Ervin Gyertyán puts himself on both sides of the argument in his novel as two contrasting courses of life evolve in his two heroes debating matters of life and death. In the end, the author identifies himself with the hero opting for Marxism and the workers' movement: it is the course he thinks he and his generation can and should follow.

All the novels have much in common: politico-social background, historical perspectives based on the authors' generation and ideological affiliations, similar viewpoints and even conclusions, as though they all could almost have been variations within a single novel. For all of this, I should emphasize just how different in tone and approach each one is.

Ervin Gyertyán is a film critic: the loose structure and polemical tone of his essay-novel has nothing in common with the prose of the poet, András Mezei, who evokes visions of Chagall or the uninhibited, dynamic lyricism of Ágnes Gergely's writing. Gyertyán's heroes approach the reader with their minds, Ágnes Gergely's with their hearts. The difference is not just a matter of methodology. Gyertyán's heroes are almost exclusively embodiments of ideas while Ágnes Gergely's are lovers maimed by persecution and thirsty for love. Gyertyán's heroes demand agreement or disagreement; Gergely's heroes gain our sympathy and although their fate leaves us something to think about, more notably it touches and moves us.

It was no surprise that the public rushed to buy Moldova's novel. Not only was he the best-known and most popular author

among those in this new genre—his romantic (political) picaresque novels have been a great success with almost everybody for two decades now—but also his originality resulted in a unique creation in "The Saint Emeric March." His story again manages to harmonize outspoken comments on the age with dynamic and forceful romantic action. Moldova does not describe only the extreme and unmentioned antagonism of murderers and victims; in almost every turn in the story he reminds us of the idle—if not cultivated—indifference of the witnesses of history. He evokes the twelve-year-old Miklós Kóhidai's malicious and jealous class-mates, the smile of the coachman hidden under his moustache as he moves the Jewish family from its house, the unknown offender who steals from the few belongings which the Kóhidais managed to take with them, or the new tenant of their flat who threatens to call the Gestapo because of one missing key. Moldova also dares to remember that hooligans in fascist uniform aimed their guns at his hero, and the pitiable procession of old people and children who were driven to the ghetto as crowds watched silently, with hostile indifference, and even threw stones at them.

Those who experienced all this have felt the authenticity of Moldova's words reaching into their souls. They remember different faces, other gestures and other life-saving deeds, but Moldova's merciless matter-of-factness strikes at the roots of human experience—all the more so as his critical objectivity is not one-sided. The author applies the same consistent standards to unmask the cowardice and spitefulness of the Jewish bourgeoisie, which carry out petty grudges against each other even in the ghetto. Such strengths make a reviewer lenient toward other matters like the sketchiness of Miklós Kóhidai's life-saving actions at the side of a fearless resistance fighter, a figure taken partly from legends and partly from picaresque novels. The reviewer can excuse this all the more easily as Moldova's hero rises above his fellow sufferers precisely

through this social activity, this feeling of responsibility which he assumed early in childhood. Still, tensions fluctuate a little in Moldova's novel, but much less than in the books by Imre Kertész or Pál Bárdos.

The convincing force and artistic authenticity in Kertész's moving and revealing confession is limited almost exclusively to his experiences in the camp. Descriptions of his hero's life before and after this reveal the author's inexperience as a writer. Pál Bárdos in his account did not always find the balance between those scenes evoked with literary means and his argumentative, journalistic sections; often he overwrites and hence deprives his thoughts of any impact. Ervin Gyertyán's novel shows the essayist in him to be better and more original than the novelist. Ágnes Gergely and Mária Ember have

achieved greater artistic unity with their novels' closer-knit structure.

Paying off these political and aesthetic debts is more important than the individual volumes described, for they indicate a society coming into maturity with writers taking on considerable risk and responsibility.

As fewer and fewer readers have personal memories of this time, the responsibility of the survivors is even greater to—in Pál Bárdos's words—"build from their memories a bridge between those who know everything and those who understand nothing." This bridge, this literary phenomenon can be built only as creative writers solve the dilemma of belonging to a community with which they can identify without compromise, while accepting the fate of their community as their own.

ANNA FÖLDES

THREE WRITERS FROM THREE GENERATIONS

ENDRE VÉSZI: *Inkognitóban Budapest* (Incognito in Budapest). Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1976, 206 pp. In Hungarian.

Endre Vészi is now sixty: his first novel and first volume of poems, which appeared four decades ago, have since been followed by thirty more. Vészi has a fertile imagination and a versatility that extends to short stories, poems, radio plays, novels, plays and television dramas. His recent successes included *Tériszony* ("Agoraphobia") a volume of short stories, *Ketten hazafelé* ("Two People Homeward Bound") a novel, and *Távolsági történet* ("Long-Distance Story"), a television play which won the prize for best scenario in Monte Carlo.

The five short stories and one television drama in "Incognito in Budapest" show a diversity of theme and tone. The most elabor-

ate and coherent is the novella after which the book is named. A story about self-examination and flight, it takes place a few days before the 47th birthday of Jerémiás, a writer. He is travelling to an author's night in a small town where he will meet the general public as well as local artists and leading officials. These social functions follow a given pattern: questions, answers, speeches and a little celebratory dinner. The occasion, however, begins disagreeably when a man travelling on the same train as the writer dies—probably of a heart attack—and Jerémiás helps carry off the heavy body at a small station. Then, after the expected *cudos* of the evening, Jerémiás faces another alarming experience when he recognizes the wrinkled-faced charwoman cleaning the lavatory of the restaurant as his first love. In addition, he is told that tomorrow he is

expected to talk to the local student body, a frank and enthusiastic lot who do not bother about rules of courtesy, will probably ask awkward questions about art and politics, and will be a real measure of the impact of his writings.

Jerémiás decides not to risk so much at such a meeting and returns to Budapest by the first train. But not facing up to the challenge is too much for him. He does not directly go back to his home where his wife plays the role of "author's wife" and constantly pushes his career. Instead, he visits his mother, an aged but tough and independent woman who still earns a living for herself. Jerémiás expects her to provide some solace, if not a justification for his flight. The mother is happy to offer her home as a refuge, but she is not inclined to fabricate arguments for his self-justification. On the contrary, she tells him the truth straight. He has become indolent, he takes things easy, both as a man and writer, and expects the support of other people. Later Jerémiás gets confirmation of his mother's lack of faith in his strength and fortitude: she never told her son, though she knew for months, that she had cancer and had to be operated on. When he learns she is in the hospital he rushes to see her but arrives too late. In its structure and the broad presentation of theme, "Incognito in Budapest" borders between the closed world of the classical short story and the open, several-layered style of modern writing.

The other stories in the book are more limited in length and ambition, usually confined to the elaboration of one idea. *Az erkély* ("The Balcony") studies an old man living in the world of his fancies. He tacks notes on poles announcing that he wants to hire out his balcony, which overlooks the Danube, during some kind of aquatic parade. Two curious youngsters answer the ad and the old man immediately starts to recount the story of his own youth. He was a pilot in the heroic age of flying and between adventures entertains his listeners to stay longer.

When they tell him that they want to hire the balcony for a considerable sum, the old man even lowers the price for he actually does not need the money, just an audience—as the old man's family tell the boys when they arrive home and interrupt the reminiscences. The story closes abruptly: the old man, frightened by the return of his family, lies down on a couch, as his daughter indulgently discusses his whims. When she tries to wake him up, he is dead.

Death is present in almost all of Vészi's stories but has a different function in each. It is the starting-point of *A sárga telefon*, ("The Yellow Telephone"), where the employees want to mould a new managing director exactly in the image of his dead predecessor. It is on a yellow telephone that he gets information about his men and the enterprise. *Estély az Izabellán* ("Soirée aboard the Isabelle") takes place on a scrapped pleasure boat now guarded by a disabled old sailor. An unexpected visitor comes to the discarded ship in a Danube backwater—the tramp who ran off with the sailor's wife and strangled her when she turned unfaithful to him. Now he needs a hide-out. The story expands Vészi's exploration of the death motif: the sailor and the tramp hold a strange and repugnant funeral party. In their drunkenness they knock over an oil lamp and burn to death in the former pleasure boat.

Where death is just one element in the short stories, it is the basic theme of the television play, *Kapupénz* ("Gate-Money"). The scene is a cellar in Budapest under siege toward the end of the Second World War, with characters living in constant terror of bombs, police raids, and each other. In fact, the leading character is death itself.

Despite such gloomy themes, Vészi's book is not depressing: his grotesque outlook and irony dissolve the sombre shadows, while his humour dispels any gathering clouds of sentimentality.

ERZSÉBET GALGÓCZI: *A közös bűn* (The Common Sin). Szépirodalmi, Budapest, 1976, 152 pp. In Hungarian.

Erzsébet Galgóczi's twelve books are characterized by consistency and stability. They all deal with similar themes in the changing face of Hungarian village life. Her latest novel, "The Common Sin," takes place in the tense days of November 1956, when two youngsters ask a farmer for permission to spend a night at his home in a hamlet on the western border of Hungary. They stay in the stable, and in the morning the farmer finds one of them dead with a broken head, the other flown. In those chaotic weeks there were hundreds of thousands leaving the country, no police, no authority. The dead man had no personal belongings or identity card. What could they do with him? They would arouse suspicion whatever they did; they have no idea who the murderer or the victim was.

The farmer, Sokorai, has his son throw the boy into the Danube and a few weeks later, when the body is found, the police are ready to start investigating. From here the plot follows two channels: one describes the two investigations, the first unsuccessful one and then the successful one; the other tells what happens to the farmer's family. Both the excitement and the merit of the novel come from its background, the Hungarian peasant world of the fifties. The forced collectivization of agriculture from 1949 to 1953 not only led to a cutback on production, but it also caused a distortion in the relationship of peasants to each other. The village near the hamlet is ruled by a family which abuses its power and seizes all important posts while governing life in the village according to their whims. Since Sokorai's farm lies outside the village, he is not compelled to enter the co-operative but he still lives in constant terror and, seeing only a distorted form of collective farming, keeps to himself as much as possible. His convulsive efforts, motivated by fear, lead

him into a way of life that is not much better than the one he is so anxious to avoid. The duo of a despotic father and a son who dares to rebel—but only in his dreams—intensifies the conflicts. The boy finds it increasingly intolerable to be forbidden to go to the village and mix with people. The father, indignant at the unlawful acts committed in the village, contends that it is impossible to live in a world where anything can happen to you. The boy dares not answer his father but murmurs to himself that it is equally impossible to live in a world where nothing ever happens. Since the case of the concealed murder, the situation gets worse with the son feeling that "his life could not have been more desiccated, all the fluids and flavours fading from his body like a prune withering in the sun."

The author gives a lively account of the torments of waiting while time stands. The boy wanting to run while paralysed in immobility is the novel's most plastic figure. "Resting his elbows on the table with his head reclining on his palms he listens only to his interior trembling which measures impatiently time advancing by inches, like a broken watch. Imre waits. In the morning he waits for the evening, in the evening for the morning, on weekdays for Sunday, on Sunday for Monday. He would not be surprised if at dawn after a sleepless night he noticed that during his waiting he had been covered with moss like a stump kicked out of the way and just left there."

When the long investigation terminates successfully and the arrested murderer takes the detective to the hamlet to show him the stable where the murder took place, the farmer's son finds his nervousness too much for him and flees. The writer leaves open the question of where he goes and what he does. The "common sin" of the book's title comes from Sokorai, the father. When the detective accuses him of complicity in a crime because he concealed the evidence of the body, he defends himself with the novel's most bitter words: if legality is

broken, nothing stands in the way of unlawfulness—all those are guilty of this murder who allowed order to fall apart, the policemen and frontier guards who fled and the leaders on all levels who hid in their apartments during the days of chaos.

"The Common Sin" is a well-structured, well-written and exciting novel with a rare virtue which makes it perhaps even more remarkable than its aesthetic value: it is a deeply sincere and honest piece of writing.

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SZILVESZTER ÖRDÖGH: *Koponyák hegye* (The Mountain of Skulls). Magvető, Budapest, 1976, 142 pp. In Hungarian.

The crucifixion of Jesus is a much-used artistic motif with many masterpieces that explained, described and interpreted the idea of sacrifice. So it is a bold undertaking for a writer with a few published short stories to write his first novel about what had happened on the Golgotha. What can he add to what has already been written? Does he have anything special to say or was his choice motivated only by sensationalism? Szilveszter Ördögh tells the story of a man given a task that is too much for him, but he has to do it though he trembles and protests all the way. He thinks that teaching and healing are more useful than self-sacrifice. Though he feels that sacrificing his life will not give more to people, if he doesn't he would only become superfluous and so must perform a definite, irrevocable act that will compel his disciples not only to listen but also to perpetuate his doctrines. Only one means is open to him: he has to prove to the Pharisees who have so far attacked him in vain that he really wants to grab power. If he shows that he is not above them, they will feel justified in condemning him. He tries to make Judas, his cleverst pupil, understand that only the treachery of a disciple can furnish proof enough of Jesus' scheme to seize power: Judas accepts

the role of traitor because he is the only one who understands the necessity of it.

The book follows the different stages leading to the crucifixion, from the Last Supper and the kiss of Judas to the sentence and death. The characterization of the disciples is pertinent, as they are somewhat humorously exaggerated compared to the biblical figures. Simon is an old fisherman with a lot of experience in everyday life: with his gaze turned toward earthly things, he does not notice most of the celestial signs. For him the Master is worthy of respect and affection, but not the Son of God. John is the most zealous disciple, following Jesus with adoration. The attention he pays to Jesus is really only a means to stress his own importance as a disciple.

Judas is tormented and nervous; the cruel role of traitor makes him tense and in his shame he gradually comes to hate everybody else. Pilate is an average leader, experienced enough to survive and preserve his power but too undecided and inhibited to direct events decisively—he drifts with the current. Szilveszter Ördögh shows more talent in characterization than in plot building, which does not go beyond the expected. His style is lively and colourful, and adapts to the various situations—abstract and somewhat exalted when the subject is Jesus, conversational and slow-moving to introduce the disciples, and dry, matter-of-fact and severe to describe the most dramatic moments. The writer's intention not to give way to sentimentality is admirable and clear throughout.

The novel is an experiment in modernizing and de-romanticizing a myth. It succeeds where human stories are the subject-matter, but not in the philosophizing and tendency toward generalization, or in the meditations about the meaning of the Jesus myth today, which are done in the manner of scholarly essays. Still, despite its unevenness and exaggerations, "The Mountain of Skulls" merits attention, especially for its expressive language and powerful characterization.

LÁSZLÓ VARGA

ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE EYES OF HUNGARIANS

LÁSZLÓ KÉRY: *Angol írók. Tanulmányok, cikkek* (English Writers. Studies and Articles). Magvető, Budapest, 1975, 408 pp.

In the last two or three centuries British authors of one sort or another have been the staple reading for the Hungarian educated classes, mostly in translation, of course. In the field of *belles-lettres* the choice was, however, not very broad. From the middle of the nineteenth century up till about the Second World War the constantly reprinted novels of Walter Scott, the great mid-Victorian classics and in the interwar era the trilogy of Galsworthy, together with some minor figures, dominated the Hungarian book-market. Then a good twenty years ago a breakthrough came and suddenly the amount of English prose of high quality available in Hungarian translation grew and fanned out in astonishing proportions, ranging from the early eighteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries (not to mention American literature).

The intensity as well as the scope of the recent increase in interest in English literature can well be gauged by the appearance of two works of Hungarian scholarship. One, the massive "History of English Literature" by Professors Szenczi, Szobotka and Katona, published in 1972, gives an overall coverage of twelve centuries, intended both for university students and the more sophisticated general reading public. The other volume, Professor Kéry's collection of essays under discussion here, is in comparison restricted in scope but considerably more penetrating in detail and serves as a reliable guide to the taste and predilections of its author but also to what stands today in the forefront of Hungarian interest in English literature, both recent and past.

In this collection we have 22 essays and papers written in as many years by an in-

fluent critic and essayist of the middle-aged generation of Hungarian connoisseurs of English literature. While running the English department of the University of Budapest, he finds time to act as Secretary General of the Hungarian branch of International P.E.N. and manages to sit in the editor's uneasy chair of the monthly periodical *Nagyvilág*, which provides the ever-growing Hungarian reading public with a liberal selection, in good translation, of recently published representative works in verse, prose and drama, culled from the literatures of the four corners of the globe.

"English Writers"—as the title-page of this handsome volume announces, is a mixed bag, containing as it does polemical writings, full-dress analytical literary essays and reprints of introductions to recent Hungarian translations of literary classics, including prose and verse, narrative and drama by English, Irish (Joyce) and Scottish (Burns) authors. It is obviously the polemical writings that reveal the most about the critic's stance at the time of writing. The volume gets an energetic kick-off from two papers dealing with one of the critic's favourites, Shakespeare, to whom he had devoted, as long ago as 1959 and 1964, two of his best-known books, the earlier and slimmer one on the tragedies, the more amply documented as well as more substantial one on the comedies. In the present collection he takes issue with the late Marcell Benedek's somewhat conservative overall monograph on Shakespeare. That volume, published in 1957, and running to 400 pages, could not be printed at the time it was completed, i.e. in 1952, for obvious political reasons. Neither could, incidentally, Kéry's critique of Benedek get into print when it was written and it is published for the first time in this collection. While damning Benedek's book with faint praise, Dr. Kéry also disagrees with several of

his opinions such as the "time scheme" patterns of Shakespeare's dramas, the moral object, if any, of *Romeo and Juliet*, the naïveté of Brutus, and the much debated age of the Prince of Denmark. It is Benedek's ideology that is being faulted when Professor Kéry attacks his notions of the timelessness of Shakespeare's dramas as well as his metaphysically slanted disregard of the strong societal links at the base of Shakespeare's art. The Shakespearean theme is carried on in a brief but powerful paper on Jan Kott's "vulgar errors." Kott's identification of the modern theatre with the theatre of the absurd, based on the Polish scholar's existentialist philosophy, is given a lashing with the aid of a careful comparison of the unmistakable facts of Shakespearean drama with the wrong interpretations Kott gives them.

Professor Kéry is without doubt the outstanding Marxist critic of English literature in Hungary today. His ideological commitment is never concealed although more than once it surfaces only in the occasional throwaway sentence. A few papers, however, like the one on Thomas Hardy, written a quarter of a century ago, bear unmistakable marks of the rather cramped intellectual and emotional climate of Hungary in the early fifties. The essays and papers in this collection were not written for scholars and learned journals, are unencumbered by footnotes or esoteric references, but are well-reasoned and readable essays intended for discriminating Hungarians interested in hitherto little-known masterpieces of English literature. Some papers are studies in depth (as e.g. in the case of D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow*), while others are light-weight book reviews, yet firmly informative and always well rounded off. Stress is generally centred on the ideological attitudes of the authors or books with only a modicum of retracing plots and story-lines. As is inevitable with literature in translation little space could be reserved for the aesthetic analysis or verbal texture. By far the greatest number of these articles are about the major authors and

works from the seventeenth to twentieth centuries. In some instances more than one introductory essay is devoted to the same British author, as dictated by the exigencies of Hungarian publishing.

To proceed in chronological order, as the author himself does, the analysis, based on his own university lectures, of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders* presents these works as typical representatives of early bourgeois civilization. They are unintended, almost unconscious, criticisms of the chaotic world of British capitalism in its birth-pangs. The essay on Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, written as a preface to the second Hungarian translation of this classic, is a contribution of quite a different order. We are reminded of some of Austin Dobson's vignettes, tender evocations of the style and life of bygone days, the scholarship lightly worn. The centrepiece of the eighteenth-century section of the volume is the forty pages on Fielding as well as the slightly longer study of Robert Burns. This in itself is not without meaning. Both authors were very long under a cloud, and perhaps still are treated with obvious moral reserve by some overfastidious English critics. Ever since the Great Cham laid down the law concerning the psychological superiority of the totally unreadable Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding did not amount to much more than a fringe phenomenon, at least with the strait-laced. Kéry convincingly shows in his analysis, that Fielding was the greatest and most inventive creator of a variety of characters, second only to Shakespeare, and does justice to him by proving that as far as realism is concerned, he far surpassed his contemporaries.

Robert Burns, whose popularity is undimmed in Hungary, is the only poet honoured with an essay in the volume. He is presented as a Jacobite turned Jacobin, welcoming the French revolution, the last peasant bard who was also the first to raise literary populism to the international level and thereby inaugurated a new trend.

It is in the second half of the volume that we meet, among a number of eminent English prose writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Dr. Kéry's own particular favourites, three great novelists whose life-span straddles, as it were, our most recent of the century. It may be stated without exaggeration that Samuel Butler, E. M. Forster and D. H. Lawrence owe their reputation and popularity among the *cognoscenti* in this country in no small measure to Prof. Kéry's energetic efforts to have their works translated into Hungarian. What fascinates him with Forster is the contrast, conflict and convergence of everyday prosaic triviality with immediacy to Nature. Three essays trace the convolutions of these opposites as they become passionate and fantastic in Forster's œuvre—from the optimistic overestimation of the role of personal contact in resolving these antitheses in the illusion-haunted earlier novels up to the *Passage to India*, a liberal-humanist masterpiece, and even beyond, to Forster's posthumous sixth novel, a work unlikely to be translated into Hungarian owing to its taboo subject.

Another three essays and papers, comprising more than sixty pages, are devoted to various aspects of the novels of D. H. Lawrence; they appear to be the *dissecta membra*

of a larger and comprehensive critical monograph on that novelist whose art first engaged Prof. Kéry's attention some thirty years ago when he wrote his PhD thesis on Lawrence's imagery. *On revient toujours*. Kéry's new essays reveal a deep insight into the novelist's galaxy of symbols based on a sympathetic understanding of Lawrence's attitudes to the decaying bourgeois world around him. The essays abound in illuminating remarks and observations, they deserve development on a fuller scale with ample documentation.

I think it a happy idea to reprint between two covers these papers scattered in a number of publications even if Prof. Kéry is anxiously aware—as he states it in the preface of his book—that he faced the combined difficulties of translation and interpretation. To act as a guide to sophisticated literary nuances of works that were conceived in an entirely different cultural ambience and were written in a highly developed alien tongue is a daunting, almost hopeless, undertaking. Yet for us they afford valuable glimpses into a distant world, and at the same time bear witness to the author's consuming passion, his life-long love of English literature. They are fraught, as it were, with all the pains of unrequited love. But with all its pleasures as well.

LÁSZLÓ ORSZÁGH

HUNGARIAN LIFE AS ENGLISHMEN KNEW IT

AURÉL VARANNAI: *Angliai visszhang* (English Echo). Magvető Publishing House, Budapest, 1974. 193. pp.

As a result of the outstanding work of Professor Sándor Fest, his predecessors, collaborators and students, and among them notably István Gál, many subjects have been uncovered and clarified, but a synthesis of Hungarian-British historical and cultural relations has yet to be made. Diplomatic relations look back on a tradition of over nine hundred years, to the reign of Stephen I, the founder of the Hungarian state. In the Middle Ages contacts through marriage were established between the two countries' ruling dynasties. Communication between Hungary and Britain was the European *lingua franca*, but by the nineteenth century, English had gained sufficient currency to be used as the principal vehicle of communication with Hungary.

Aurél Varannai's ten essays summarize bilateral relations from the time of György Dózsa's Hungarian peasant revolt in 1514 to the 1860s. The reader is introduced to an English novel about (Frater) György Martinuzzi, a sixteenth-century Hungarian statesman; an English melodrama about Imre Thököly, a leader of the anti-Habsburg war of independence in the late eighteenth century, the tourist accounts of Hungary by Lady Mary Wortley Montague, Miss Pardoe and Joseph Andrew Blackwell; poems of Petőfi translated by Englishmen and Americans; an opera by Zsigmond János Kusser, a Hungarian living in Britain; the first Hungarian translations of Shakespeare by József Péczeli at the end of the eighteenth century; and even an account of editor István Sándor's visit to London in 1786 during which he saw *Romeo and Juliet*, with Mrs. Siddons in the role of Juliet. The author gives a fuller account of people and subjects that

are not completely unknown, but more than once he makes new discoveries and presents them in his style of remarkable ease and fluency.

Whenever Hungary's independence was at stake the news of events never failed to reach Britain, while the "precious stone set in the silver sea" appeared sometimes rather close, at other times further away, from Hungary and its landlocked isolation. At the time of the Turkish invasion, Queen Elizabeth I ordered that three prayers be said three times a week while Hungary was engaged in the defence of Christianity. English volunteers even contributed to the struggle against the Turks with her majesty's permission. Sir Philip Sidney, the model of English chivalry, who went to the Continent to learn foreign languages, included Vienna in his itinerary and then went to Pozsony in the autumn of 1573. The trip was scheduled to last only three days, but he ended up staying in Hungary several weeks. No doubt, he was primarily interested in looking over Hungarian fortifications, but his *Defence of Poesie* also takes appreciative note of Hungarian epic songs with which he was entertained over dinner.

Cardinal Martinuzzi, mentioned earlier, was the hero of the novel, *Manuscript of Erdély* (1836), written by George Stephens (1800-1851) some three hundred years after the death of the politician and clergyman. The novel was no doubt successful, for it inspired a sequel, Stephen's tragedy in verse, *Martinuzzi, or the Child of Hungary* (1841). Still, as Varannai notes, Stephen's picture of sixteenth-century Hungary and Transylvania failed to achieve widespread recognition and remained unknown in Hungary.

During Hungarian wars of religion and independence, which often went hand in hand in Hungary, English Protestants expressed sympathy for this easternmost Pro-

testant cause, and the names of its leaders, above all Gábor Bethlen, a Transylvanian prince of the early seventeenth-century, appeared frequently in the contemporary British press. The Puritans' reaction was even stronger: Milton mentions Transylvanian scholars' visit to England in his *Areopagitica*. Prince Imre Thököly maintained frequent but fruitless contact with British mediators in the war of independence he led against the Habsburgs. And since the time of Dryden, the Whigs as radical opponents of the Conservatives were sometimes nicknamed Tekelites in honour of the Prince who became a well-known figure during the Restoration period. As late as 1805, T. E. Hook (1788-1841) achieved remarkable success on the Drury Lane stage with the musical melodrama, *Tekeli, or the Siege of Montgatatz*, which unfortunately contains a great distortion of the actual facts, as described by Varannai.

In general, Hungary seemed more distant to English travellers than England did to Hungarians. From the northern side of the Channel, a trip beyond Vienna appeared to be a dangerous venture along untrodden paths. It was assumed that mud would envelop the axles of vehicles, or that the country still looked devastated by the Turks and in almost any weather required sled runners attached to the wheels of a carriage (as was indeed the case with Lady Mary Wortley Montague who in 1716 and 1717 travelled through Hungary with her husband en route to the Turkish Sultan's Court.) Varannai's description of Lady Montague's journey is one of his best studies, capturing the spirit of a woman with sharp and penetrating eyes, an excellent letter-writer reflecting with profundity on sights and events, while rebuking those who had tried to frighten them out of the trip (among them, Prince Eugene of Savoy). The arcade of the building that hosts the annual Ann's Day Ball at Balatonfüred has a marble tablet that recalls to this day her daring journey.

Varannai noticed that in "Traveller," Oliver Goldsmith's poem written in 1764, there is a metaphor based on the peasant uprising led by György Dózsa. It is true that Goldsmith makes a mistake with Dózsa's Christian name, but this error did not escape Dr. Johnson's sharp eye, as recorded by Boswell.

Last century's Hungarian reformers and their predecessors came to regard the British isles as the model of independence, economic development, and industrialization while they attempted—and not without success—to eliminate Hungary's centuries-old backwardness. Strangely enough, owing to the mediation of Vienna, and in spite of considerable delay, especially among certain writers, English literature was also a model for Hungarians to follow. Translating Shakespeare into Hungarian was the principal inspiration for several Hungarian writers and poets. Varannai gives the example of József Péczeli, the first to undertake, as far back as 1790, translations of Shakespeare's "most wonderful plays" into Hungarian—at the same time that Kazinczy's translation of *Hamlet* was about to be completed "at almost any minute." Péczeli would have translated Shakespeare's work from English, as he had done translating Young's *Night Thoughts* into Hungarian in 1787. Unfortunately, Péczeli's early death prevented the realization of their plans of publishing selected works of Shakespeare.

Curiosity motivated English interest in Hungary with its attempts to gain independence and develop its economy. Its language, however, was unintelligible and its literature remained almost inaccessible even after the publication in 1830 of *Poetry of the Magyars*, an anthology by Sir John Bowring. In terms of the political and cultural influence they exercised at home, there was a remarkable difference between the Hungarians visiting Britain and the Englishmen coming over here. The Hungarians who went to England were those leading the nation's awakening self-consciousness, while people of similar

position, or intention, cannot be detected among the Britons visiting us. Neither Joseph Andrew Blackwell (1798-1881), a diplomatic envoy, nor journalist Julia Pardoe (1812-1862), two figures mentioned by Varannai, possessed an influence at home commensurate with their counterparts over here, who introduced them to every Hungarian worth knowing. Being English, their devotion to the Magyars was enough to open to them every door and the heart of every patriot.

Blackwell stayed in Hungary on and off from 1843 to 1849 and virtually fell in love with the country in which he served. He was more than familiar with Hungarian conditions before coming here, and the reports he submitted are useful even now, though they are not sufficiently consulted these days for an understanding of contemporary Hungarian conditions. He was taught Hungarian by Fidél Mayer, the editor of Bowering's anthology. His close friendship with Bertalan Szemere, who later became Prime Minister during the 1848-49 War of Independence, dated back to the Hungarian politician's previous stay in London. And he tried to win Count István Széchenyi over to the idea of overseas export, but this effort gained little if any success.

The leaders of a rather isolated country were only too grateful for Blackwell's reports, in which he proposed that Hungary, his second homeland, be given a greater part to play in maintaining the political balance in Europe as espoused by the British. Although he enjoyed Viscount Palmerston's support, he could not rival the influence of Sir Robert Gordon and then Lord Ponsonby, the successive British envoys in Vienna. Once "Szózat", a patriotic poem by Mihály Vörösmarty was printed in English in the London *Metropolitan Magazine* (in March 1850, less than a year after the defeat of Hungary's War of Independence), Blackwell even lost the chance to be chief consul in Budapest.

Blackwell tried to popularize his political ideas in a play about the Beleznyay family, *Rudolf of Varosnay* (1841). It is not the only drama written in English about Hungary, but like the others, this one soon faded into oblivion. One of the characters, Count Frigyes Modor, is based on István Széchenyi. In England, the play was regarded as Hungarian even if written in English, and most certainly, his opinions that the Hungarians are "the Britons of the East" and English men "the Magyars of the West" were much more frequently quoted in Budapest than London.

Miss Pardoe's travel book written in 1839-40, *The City of Magyar, or Hungary and Her Institutions*, runs to three volumes and reflects extensive and careful research. It is the most complete and most authentic account of contemporary Hungary in English, for she describes the people, their history and literature, all with understanding and no reluctance at times to be critical. She criticized the vanity of the nobility, the excessive pride they took in their lineage, their helplessness in commercial affairs and their habit of paying out more than their income to keep up appearances while they left the peasantry to maintain the roads on which they expected to travel. She did not want to hurt or mislead anyone; she only wanted to arouse her compatriots' interest in and sympathy for Hungary. The influence she exercised at home was far from proportionate to her goodwill; nevertheless her courageous and outspoken opinions were extremely useful in combatting the malevolent picture spread by the Viennese from time to time. One of Hungary's greatest poets, Mihály Vörösmarty, wrote in her work: "What should a nation still waiting to be born ask of England, that stands so high? . . . Be the right example to mankind at home and abroad, so that this small people of ours will learn to fight and live in your footsteps."

SÁNDOR MALLER

ARTS AND ARCHEOLOGY

RUDOLF DIENER-DÉNES 1889-1956

"A real painter spends all his life searching for painting," Paul Valéry wrote in one of his letters. If we want to grasp the essence of the attitude that has characterized Rudolf Diener-Dénes throughout his life, we could scarcely find a more apposite description.

He was born in 1889 in Nyíregyháza, eleven years after another famous son of the town, the writer Gyula Krúdy. It may not be mere coincidence that both writer and painter shared a certain gaiety, humour and nostalgia, not to mention what was called then a taste for Bohemianism. Their art does not lack common features, though their aim first of all is to achieve a certain poetic re-formulation of reality.

From the age of 13 Diener-Dénes had to support himself. He worked for a hairdresser, a printer and later for a maker of ornamental gold braids. With his savings he left for Budapest, and started to learn drawing at the School of Industrial Design and then attended evening courses at the School of Arts and Crafts. For a short time he was a student of Károly Ferenczy in the Arts School, but in fact, he taught himself the basics of art and as such he continued. After a year in Vienna he joined a colony of artists centred around Béla Iványi Grünwald* in Kecskemét. Thenceforth his name

* Béla Iványi Grünwald (1867-1940) painter, one of the founders of the Nagybánya School.

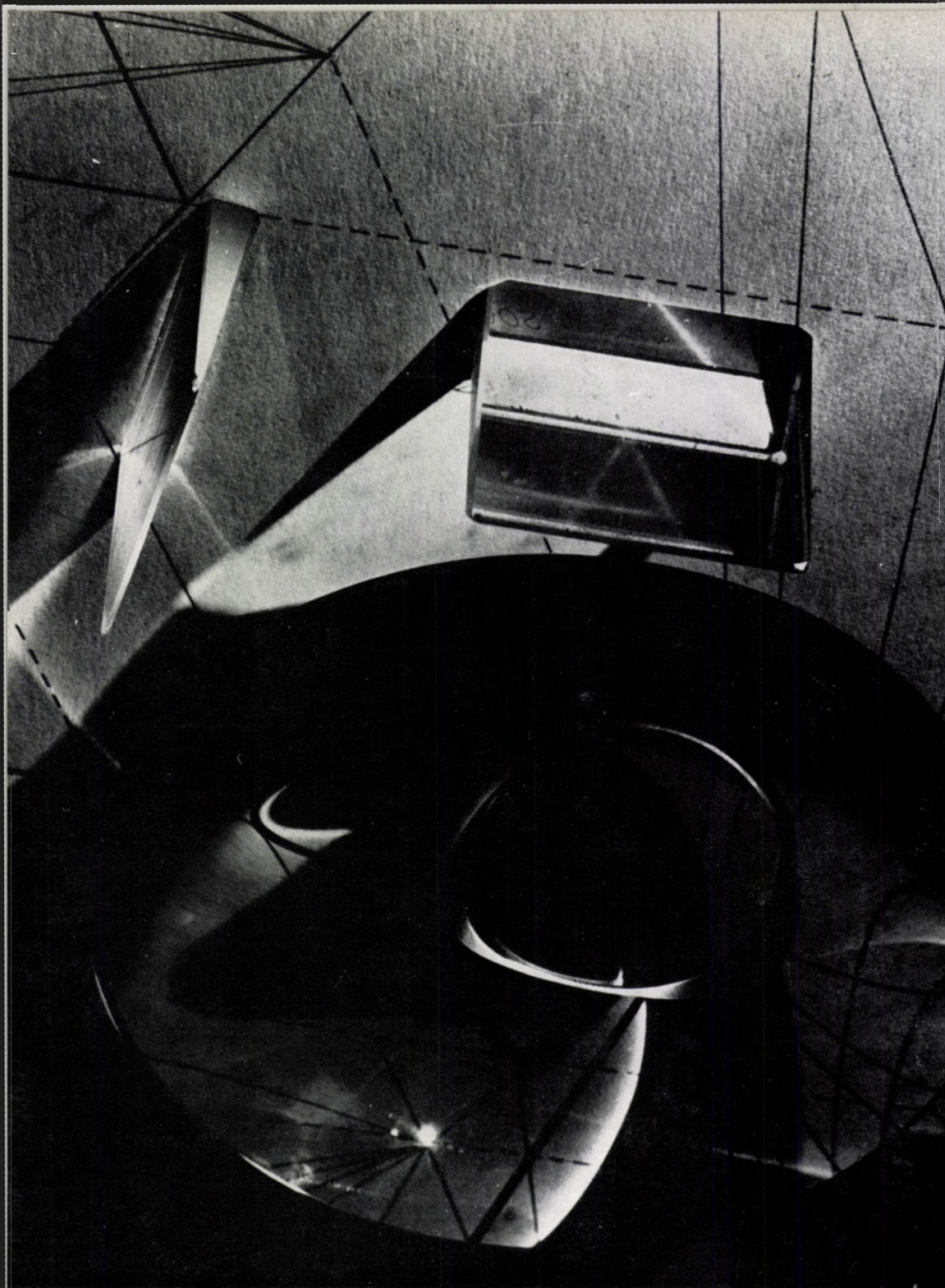
was associated with numerous artistic events, including the exhibition of the National Salon in 1914, the Exhibition of Young Artists in 1917 and the Demonstrative Exhibition of the famous *Ma Circle*** in 1918.

His first one-man show was on display from March 16 to 30, 1924. It is noteworthy that sixteen papers covered the exhibition and their critics noted that the artist already carried the most prominent characteristics his work would show throughout his life.

In the same year he left for Paris, where he stayed until 1931. At that time Paris was still the European and universal capital of modern art—the town where the living tradition of the Impressionists, continued by the Nabis, the Fauves and the Cubists, spread from atelier to atelier, café to café, in the Dôme of Montparnasse or the Rotonde, amongst the artists streaming in from all over the world. It is easy to imagine what the young artist, so sensitive to the influence of such an artistic atmosphere, experienced in the gangle of theories, trends and statements. His senses could perceive every vibration, even if at the beginning he was somewhat excluded from the movements themselves.

** *Ma* (Today) a periodical founded and edited by Lajos Kassák, was a centre of avant-garde art and writing. See also Nos. 28 and 54.



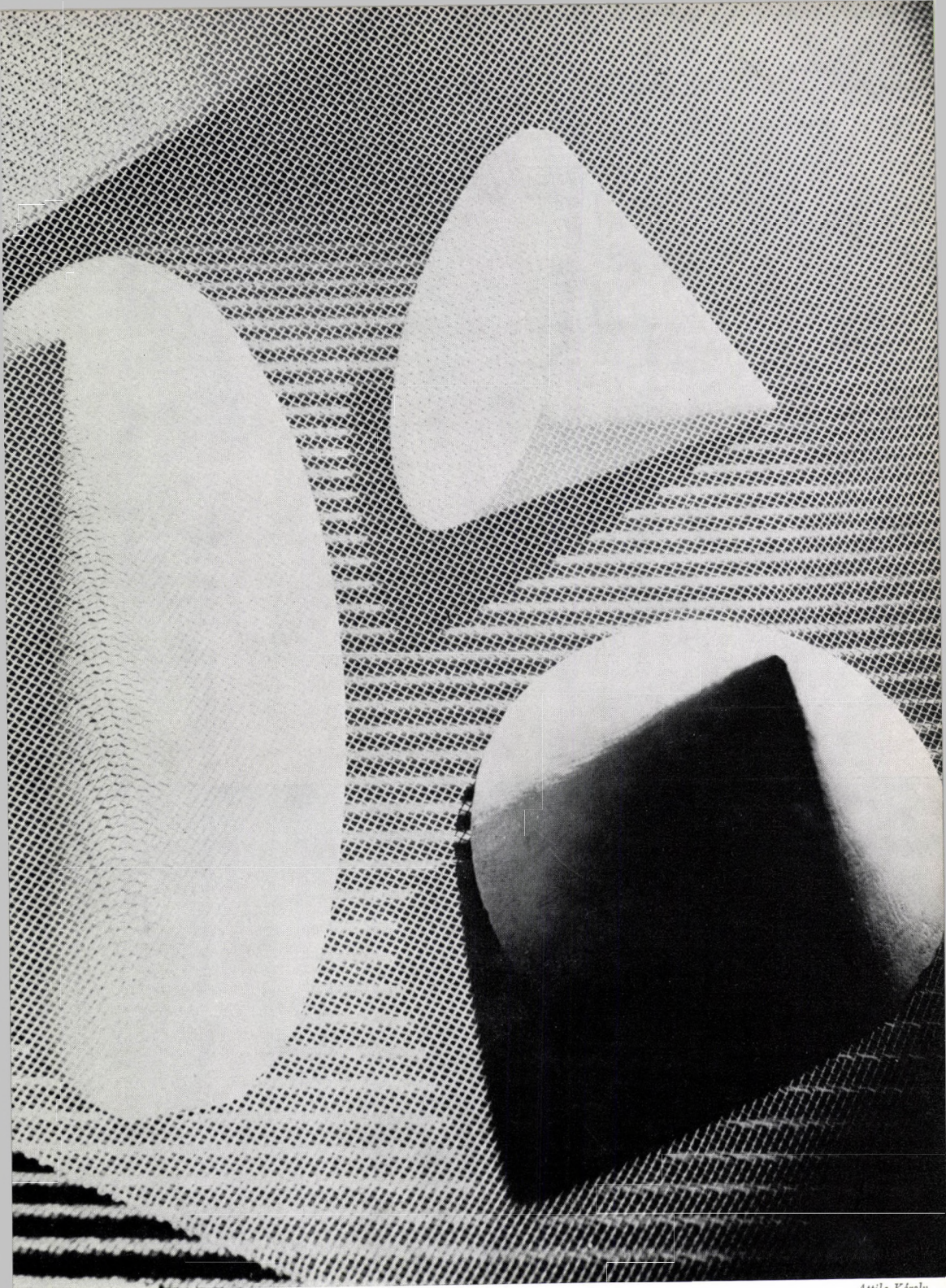


Attila Károly

GYÖRGY KEPES: LIGHTS ON GRAPHY (1965, 40×50 CM)

Alfréd Schiller

◀ RUDOLF DIENER DÉNES: LANDSCAPE
(1918, OIL ON CARBOARD, 37×50 CM)



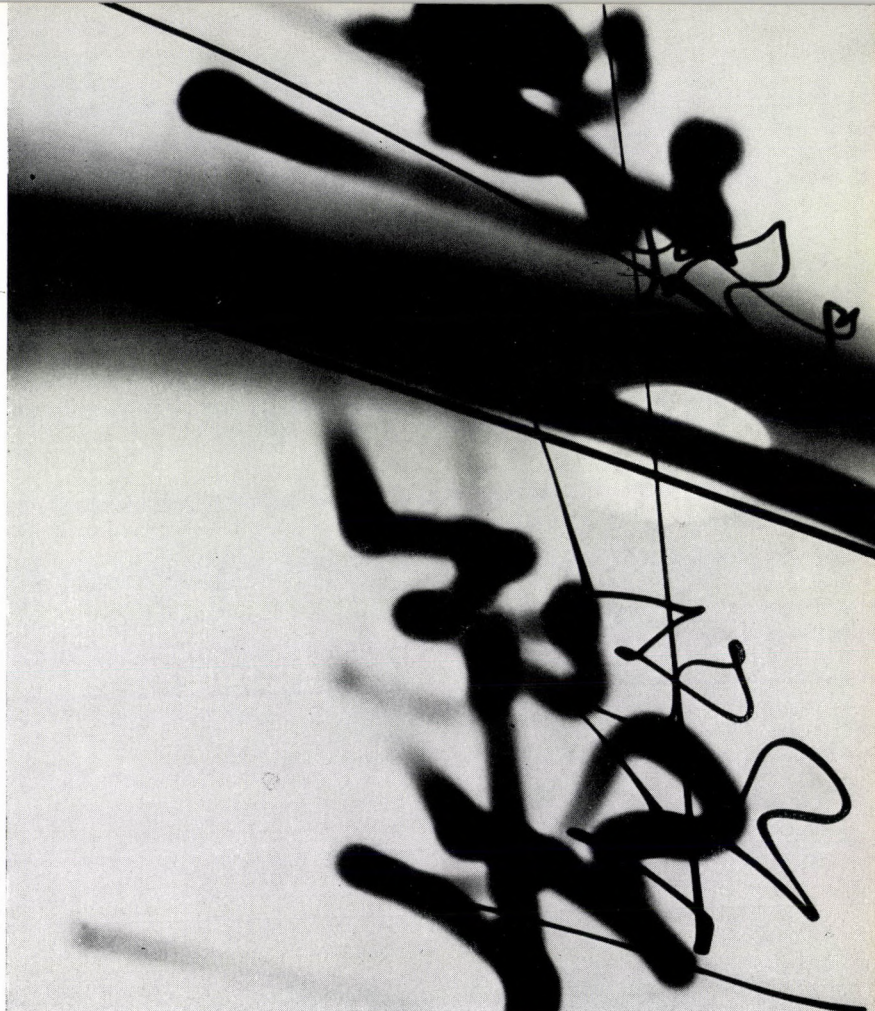
Attila Károly

GYÖRGY KEPES: PRISM AND LINES (1947, 40 X 50 CM)



GYÖRGY KEPES: PHOTO—GRAPHY

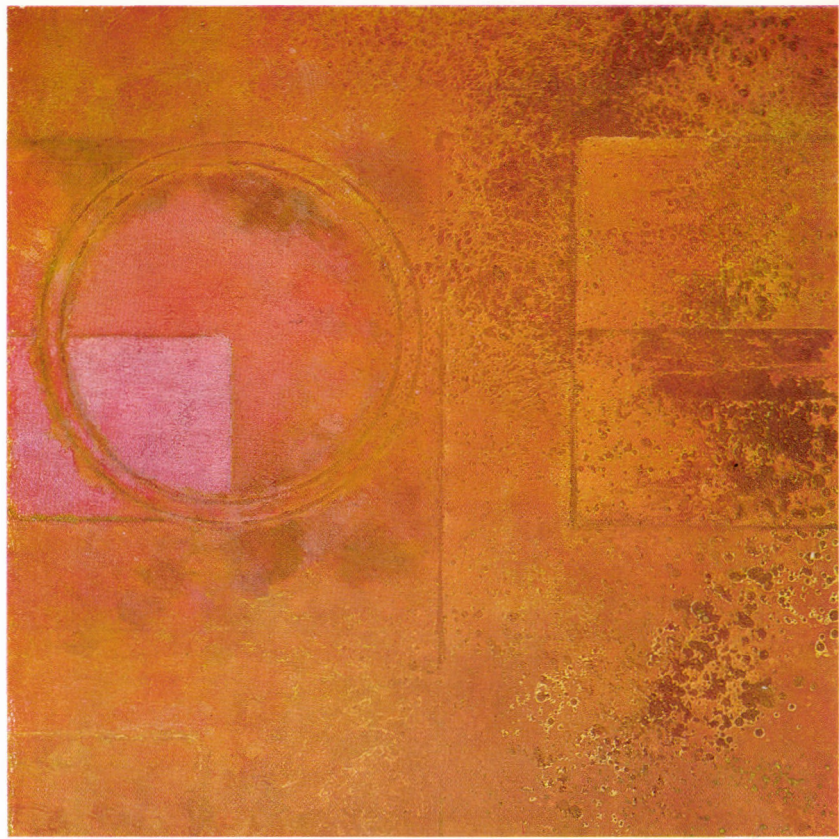
Artila Károly



GYÖRGY KEPES: PHOTOGRAM



GYÖRGY KEPES: ANALOGIES (1971–1972, OIL, 122 × 122 CM)



Károly Szélnyi

GYÖRGY KEPES: PIGMENTS (1975, OIL, 102 × 102 CM)



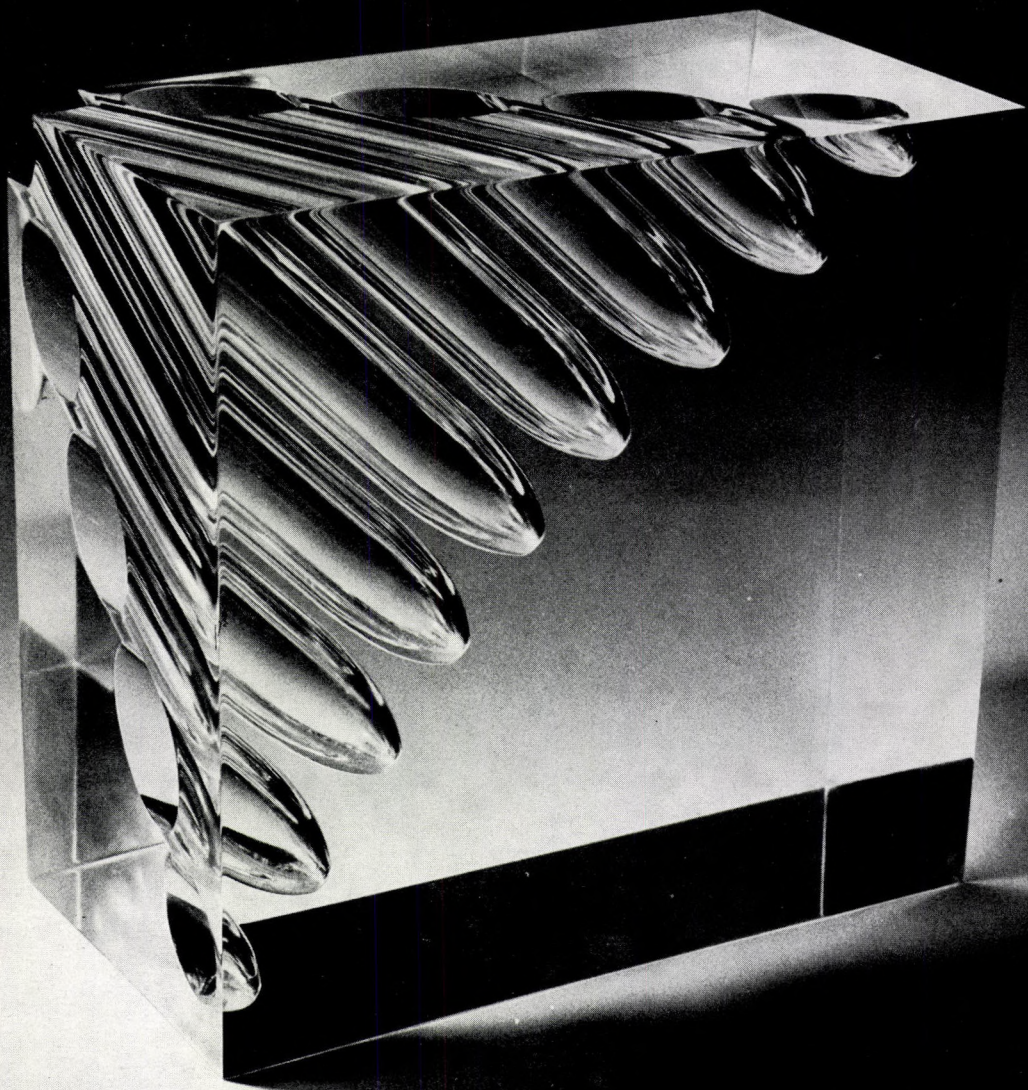
Ferenc Kovács

ENDRE BÁLINT: *Merde la Chaise*
(WOODEN OBJECT AND PHOTOMONTAGE, 1974)

ENDRE BÁLINT: MAD WOMAN
(WOODEN OBJECT AND PHOTOMONTAGE, 1976)

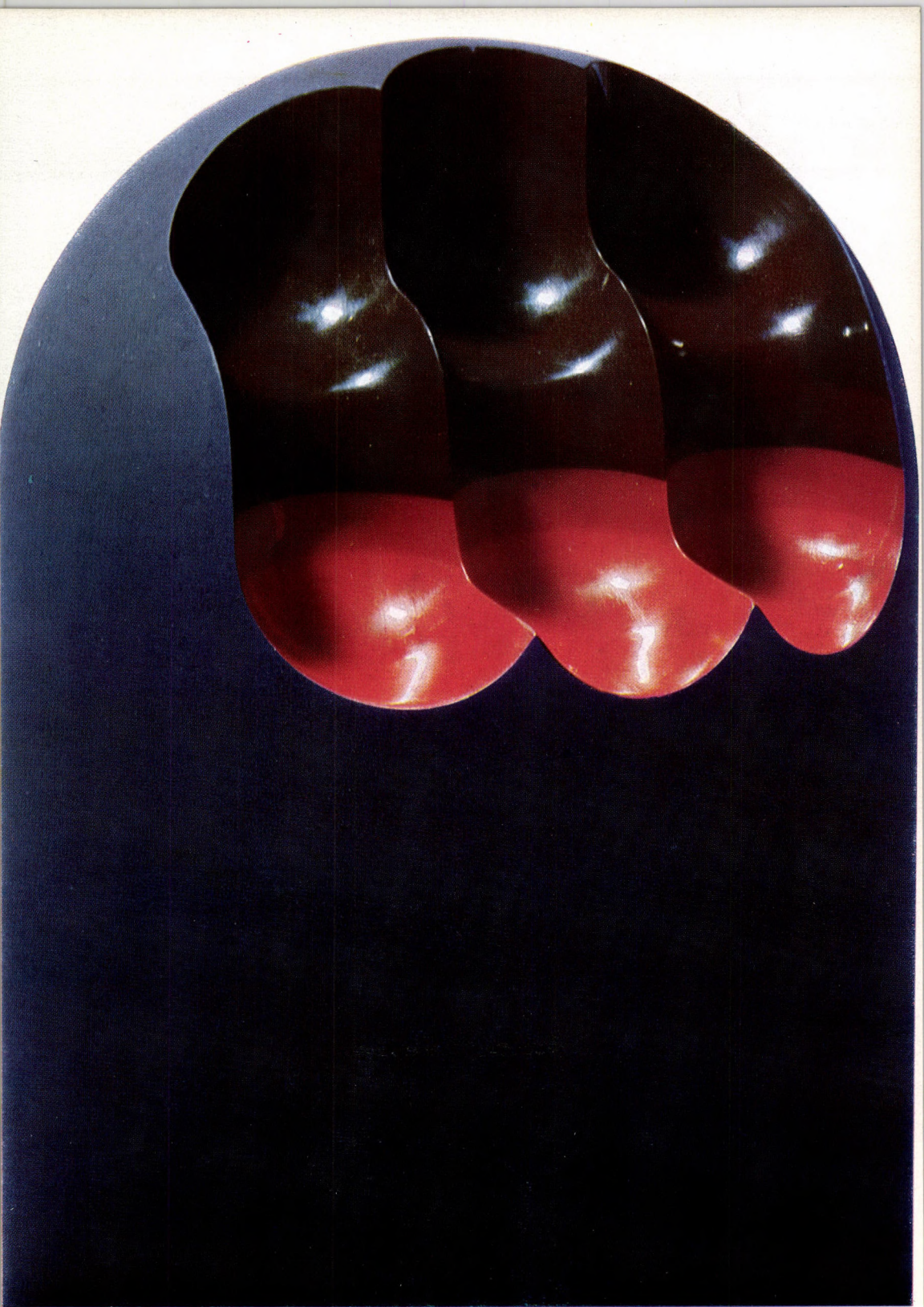


ENDRE BÁLINT: SELF-PORTRAIT (PAPER PULP, 1938)



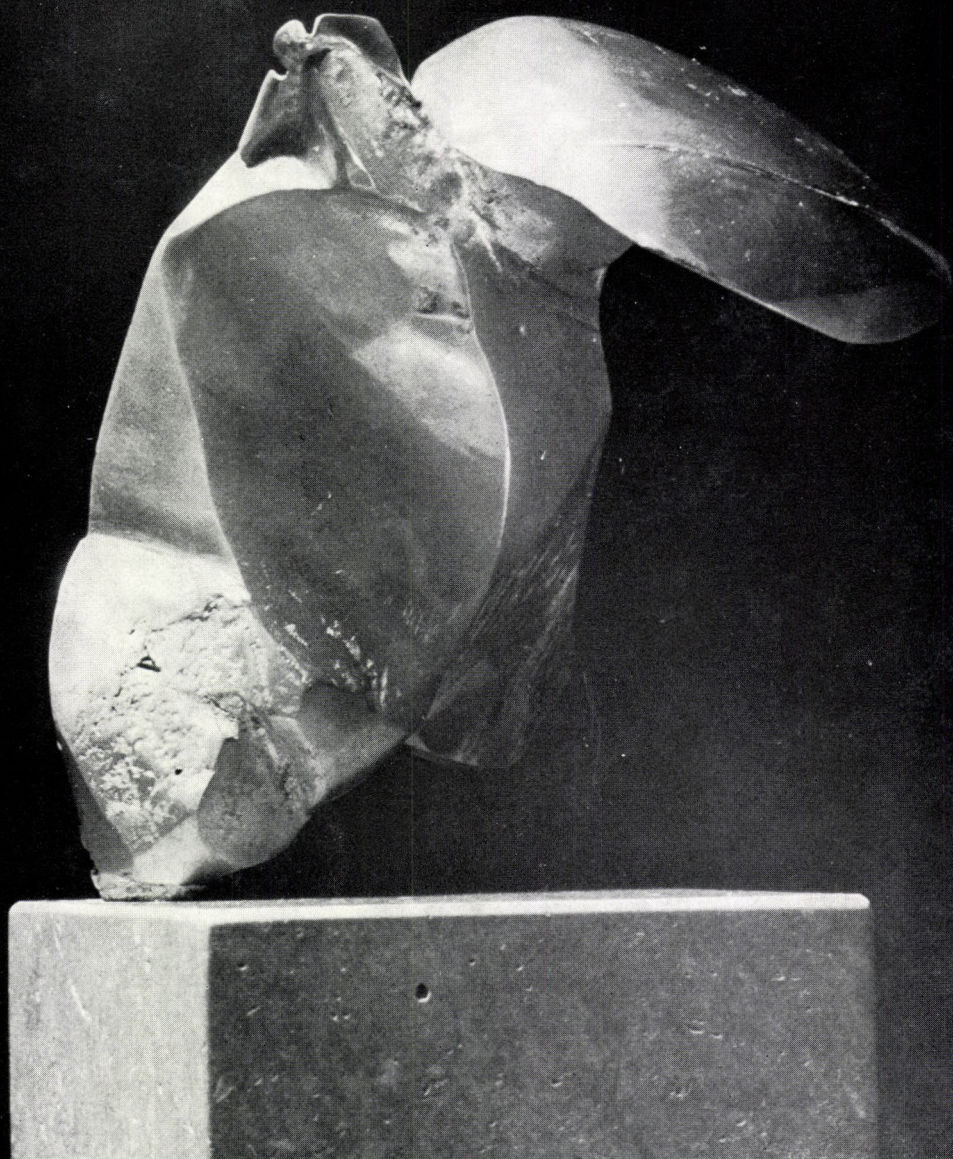
György Gádányi

LÁSZLÓ PAIZS: PLASTIC (PLEXIGLASS, 23×23×12 CM, 1972)



LÁSZLÓ PAIZS: PLEXI PLASTIC (110 CM, 1975)

György Gadányi



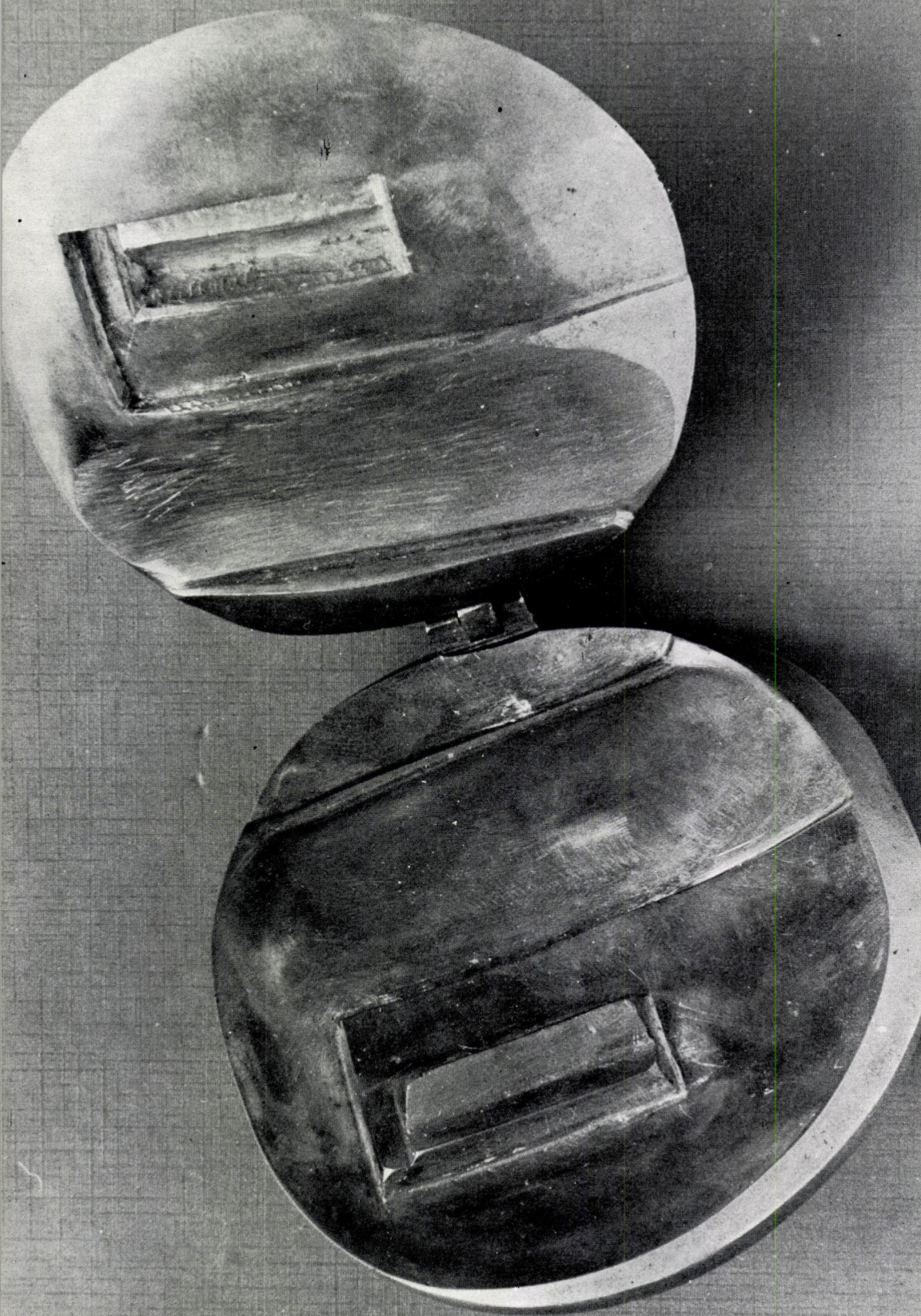
Kálmán Könyv

ANDRÁS KISS NAGY: SMALL FIGHTER III. (BRONZE, 12.5 CM, 1971)



Kálmán Könyv

ANDRÁS KISS NAGY: TELEMARK (BRONZE, 35 X 26 CM, 1972)





Kálmán Könyö

ANDRÁS KISS NAGY: DANTE (DETAIL) (44 CM, PLASTER OF PARIS, 1975)

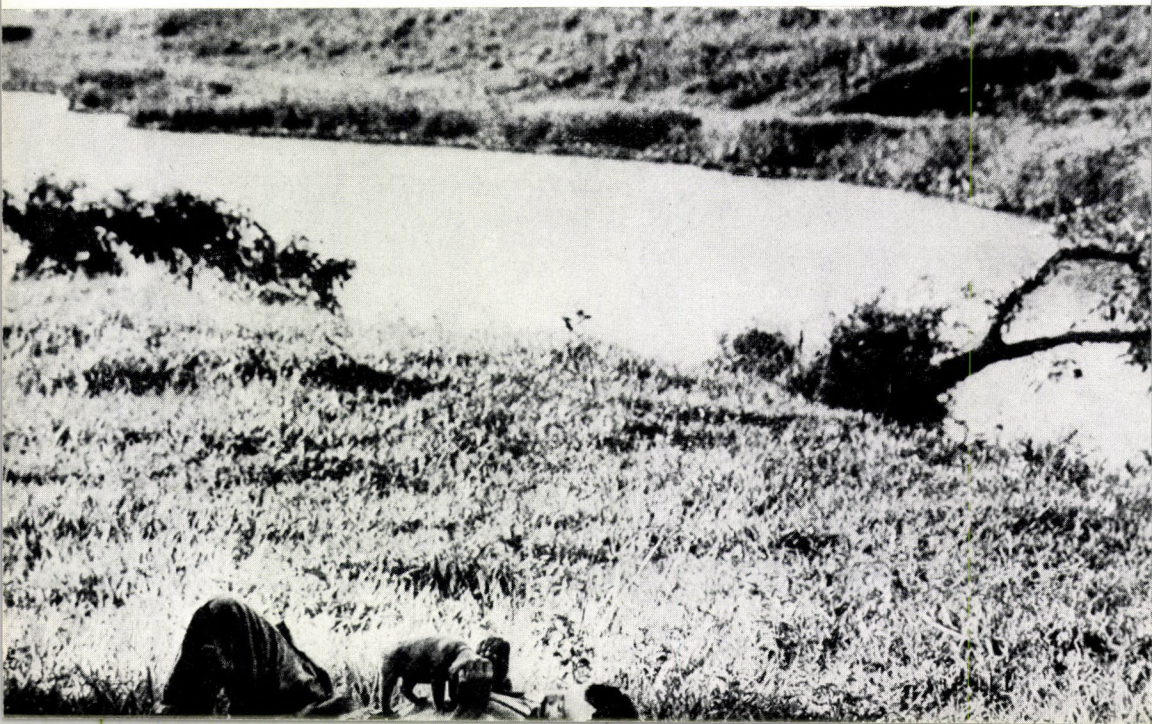
Kálmán Könyö

ANDRÁS KISS NAGY: PANDORA'S BOX (BRONZE, 2 X 2 X 5 CM, 1972)



BERLIN, 1945

САРА: A BREAK IN FIGHTING (INDOCHINA, 1954)



Diener-Dénes soon ceased to be an outsider, as shown by his one-man show organized in 1925 at the Le Nouvel Essor Gallery in rue des Saints-Pères. Yet, in his seven years in Paris he sold only two pictures. It was a Hungarian restaurant in rue Huchette called the Little Pipe that enabled him to maintain himself, waiting for better days. Still, the few oil-paintings from that period show his great power of expression, though missing the mellowness that later was so characteristic of his art. The paintings show a certain stiffness coupled with cold colours, burnt like sienna, cinnabar, ultramarine and orange. These he later carefully softened, as in a nude figure which he did in a Montparnasse painting school, or a landscape of Fontenay-aux-Roses, where the marked strokes of the brush, placed side by side, combine to make up a gay vortex. He was also attracted to the embankment of the Seine, where he made several charcoal drawings of the structure of the bridges. To evoke the atmosphere of a small Paris street, he uses China ink and chalk, much different from his interpretation, in aquarelle and pastel, of glittering visions of the world. Yet Paris also afforded him an opportunity to deepen his view of art with frequent visits to the Louvre as well as other museums and exhibitions to familiarize himself with the old masters and those of the moderns he was especially fond of. Besides its advantage to his own art, scrutinizing the works of the masters brought antiquarians and collectors to consult with him about their purchases.

When, after several years in France, he returned to Hungary for good, he would have liked to mount an exhibition of the works done in Paris. Although a few well-informed fellow-artists did show an interest in his art, 1931 was still a long time before his talent and originality were recognized. And financial difficulties did not cease either.

However much be appreciated the artistic activity in Hungary and the beauty of his

homeland, it did not make up for the teeming intellectual life and creative inspiration he had had in France, nor for the sights he had become so fond of, like the Seine, Normandy, Brittany. It was not until the World Exhibition that he saw Paris again.

*

From 1936 the name Diener-Dénes started to become known within the more advanced circle of Hungarian artists. In the spring of that year he had five pictures in the group exhibition "Ausstellung der ungarischen Maler" which was organized by the Austro-Hungarian Society under the auspices of the Hungarian Legation in the Neumann und Salzer Gallery in Vienna. In July he again took part in a group exhibition in Vienna and at the Frankel Gallery at 8 Mária Valéria utca in Budapest. The three pictures he entered in that show—*Still-life with Flowers*, *Child* and *Interior*—can be regarded as precursors to his subsequent success. That success started with a one-man show at the same Frankel Gallery, which was the focus of Hungarian art at the time. The show opened on January 10, 1937 and included no less than 36 works, all of which proved the maturity of the painter. As for the catalogue introduction, it was written by Ernő Kállai,* who also did the introductions for the two exhibitions mentioned above. Many painters have noted the lasting influence that Ernő Kállai had on them.

"In the pictures of Diener-Dénes," wrote Kállai, "the fine details of shades and flickering nuances are imbued, densely and directly, with a heartfelt warmth of temperament, Gently subsiding, ardently drifting; serenely contemplating or at the pitch of excitement; transported or feverishly doleful. A long time ago Monet painted various versions of the same object, as dictated by the ever changing effects of sunlight. Diener-Dénes, to, frequently produces different pictorial

* On Ernő Kállai see p. 175 of this issue.

versions of identical or closely related motifs. Yet with him these variations reflect his own changes of mind. The representation is dependent more on mood than object. It is loose and approximate, sometimes suggestive more than revealing, so as not to hinder the evocation of the mood."

Indisputably, those who saw this exhibition, found it a veritable discovery and substantiation of the artist's reputation. Several critics noted the connection between Diener-Dénes and French post-Impressionism. Lajos Kassák reported on the exhibition in the January 1937 issue of *Munka*, giving evidence of his own exceptional perspicacity: "The painting... of Diener-Dénes is so peculiar that it is an integral part of the progress of art as a whole, enriching as much as it is enriched by others. Though not a discoverer or pioneering personality, he is a consummate painter, expressive and full of colour."

Among his paintings of that period considered significant are *Tea*, which is now in the collection of the Hungarian National Gallery; *Woman Dressed in Pink*, *Darning Woman*, *Blonde Little Girl*, *Little Girl Dressed in White*, *Flowers and Fruits*, *After Rain*, *A Street in Szentendre*, *Line of Cellars* and *Green Hills*.

It is worth mentioning that after the exhibition the Szinyei Society, at its general assembly on January 30, 1937, awarded Diener-Dénes the Szinyei Landscape Prize for *The Hills of Szentendre*, thus recognizing a painter who so often had shown his own appreciation of the streets and environs of Szentendre.

Like Krúdy with whom, by the way, he was on friendly terms suffered from neglect for a considerable period after the Second World War. In 1946 the painter was awarded grand prize of the Szinyei Society and in 1947 he mounted an exhibition in the Centre of Popular Education of Budapest. Thereafter, though, he was surrounded by almost complete silence until the commemorative exhibition of 1968. Only the Pro Arte medal he received from the Minister of Education

in 1949, on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, prevents our saying he fell into obscurity in that period. But now, 18 years after his death, nothing prevents our paying tribute to his art, and surveying his creative activity, which after all lasted for half a century.

*

At a remarkably early age he showed an ability to draw the outlines and features of objects with a single quick stroke. Once when the painter had discovered that his overcoat had been stolen, he told the police that he could not describe a suspect but he could draw him. A few hours later the thief had been apprehended on the basis of the drawing and the artist got his coat back. Within the space of a few moments, Diener-Dénes could grasp the characteristics of a person seen a short while before. It reminds me of the advice that Delacroix gave to a young man, as recounted by Baudelaire in his lengthy obituary of the painter in 1863: "If you do not have the skill to sketch a man in the time it takes him to fall from a fourth-storey window, you will never have the skill for large-scale works."

As times changed, Diener-Dénes, along with the Impressionists and their followers, stopped trying to create "large-scale" works. He could quickly grasp the features of the segment of reality he set out to represent. To achieve this he always chose his media—charcoal, China ink, pen-and-ink, sometimes with water-colour added—in order to fit the motif that caught his eye. He was always drawing: in cafés, in the country, in the Városliget Park, at home, while talking with his family, in the company of his friends; and he drew on whatever he could lay hands on, a sheet of paper, a piece of cardboard, or even the lid of a box. It is true to say that his thoughts were always on art; the attraction of forms and colours; painting, his own, and others'; and the discovery of common features between a new perception or mood and one of his own works.

In this respect there is the touching anecdote recounted by Mihály András Rónai in an obituary. "In October 1944, Hungarian Nazis with submachine-guns were pushing a mass of people to be killed along the highway. Whoever could not keep up and dropped behind was shot. Diener-Dénes was my partner in the line. We plodded along for hours on end without exchanging a word or looking at each other lest a revolver go off at one of us; even then he wore the small beret he had brought back from Paris. All of a sudden he began to speak, pointing to a scruffy shrub on the side of the road. He said something incredible. I did not understand, and asked him: "What? What do you want?" And he repeated the words, making signs as before: "Just like Corot!"

"He looked indignantly, with innocent annoyance, all the time making signs in my stupified face: "Don't you see?" and pointed to the shrubs: "Quite like Corot, just like Corot." (*Művelt Nép*, August 5, 1956.)

Let us return to the epithet "post-impressionist," which has often been applied to him, even by Kállai and Kassák. We have seen that Diener-Dénes formed his own style as far back as 1924, that is, before his departure for Paris. The only reason it is necessary to emphasize his indebtedness to certain masters of French painting is that Diener-Dénes—just like the French—adopt-

ed, instinctively and spontaneously, some of the fundamental principles that had for centuries been incidental to the art of painting, and were first brought out between 1874 and 1925 by the French.

Diener-Dénes was unmoved by the grandiloquent orations with which the propagators of new artistic theories are wont to appear before the public. He himself scarcely ever spoke about his views on painting; he was averse to obfuscation and generalities; he preferred to listen to others' debates—he himself did not take part, except when the conversation turned to technical questions. At such times he was glad to speak his mind, even at the meetings of the colony of artists in Szentendre. He focussed all his attention on his creative work, and strove to be a painter in all ways. The object to be represented was for him of minor importance; he well knew it was just a pretext for the work, a branch from which to swing to get to his world of colours and forms.

Diener-Dénes often failed to sign his works in oils on canvas or cardboard, his aquarelles, crayons and drawings. I believe it was not so much forgetfulness as a feeling that was derived from the moment of creation. In that solemn state his conscious working powers expanded so much that the picture itself became the only signature of the whole being of the painter.

FRANÇOIS GACHOT

ONE-MAN SHOW OF GYÖRGY KEPES IN BUDAPEST

György Kepes's one-man show in Budapest in May 1976 was the artist's Hungarian *début*. The fact that there was such an exhibition pleased all of us who are convinced that artists, who, for some reason or another, have left their native soil still create Hungarian art (or at least to some degree Hungarian art), since a native country is not just a question of venue. It is a particularly relevant consideration to Hungarians, for the number of Hungarians living on the globe at present is fifteen million, with one-third dispersed across the face of the earth. This ratio makes it impossible for us to renounce the art created so far—or to be created in future—by Hungarians abroad.

The motives of Hungarian artists who left the country of their own accord or under the pressure of necessity, do not, and in the majority of cases, could not, in any way be considered a "malicious abandonment" of the home country. Their decision was influenced by the greater chances of self-realization and success that the West offered and still offers to those searching after something new—the experimenters, the cultivators of the avant-garde of all periods.

After the collapse of the first Hungarian socialist revolution in 1919, staying at home was actually impossible for the very people who later rose to prominence or had already achieved it in a Hungary that had not yet experienced counter-revolution, reaction and the drift towards fascism, when cultural policy cut off any possibilities of further artistic progress. World-famous Hungarian artists who lived or are still living abroad include László Moholy-Nagy*, who left the country in 1919; Marcel Breuer, in 1920; Victor Vasarely**, in 1930; and Nicolas Schöffer, in 1937. Someone not

working in the visual arts, Béla Bartók, was compelled to leave Hungary for the United States in 1940 because of a direct and unconcealed danger to his life. And what was true of the artistic elders living abroad was equally true of the minor, younger Hungarian artists, who had just started or were just on the way to artistic development and self-realization and are now achieving their first real success.

This conviction led to the 1970 exhibition, "Twentieth Century Hungarian-born Artists Abroad" which unfortunately was not entirely devoid of shortcomings, as it included not only truly prominent artists but also almost anybody who wanted to participate and was a Hungarian living abroad. Still, it succeeded in proving the artistic value of Hungarian art produced outside of Hungary.

The process started with that exhibition fortunately continues. In November 1975 the first Moholy-Nagy one-man show was held in Budapest; in April 1976 a minor Schöffer show, something of a token piece, took place in Eger; early in June, Pécs opened a museum to honour its native son, Vasarely; and in the meantime in May, György Kepes's first one-man show opened in Budapest.

Although György Kepes is at least as well known abroad as in his native country, it will not go amiss to give some of the most important details of his career.

Kepes has just turned seventy, having been born in 1906 in Selyp, a village of Northern Hungary. He spent his childhood there and later in Budapest. After secondary school he studied at the Budapest School of Arts under one of the first practitioners of Hungarian plein-air painting, István Csók (1865–1961). On graduation a joined a group of young, progressive artists chiefly noted for Lajos Vajda*** (1908–1941) and

* See Nos. 46, 57

** See Nos. 25, 58, 48

*** See Nos. 16, 23, 45 of NHQ.

Dezső Korniss* (b. 1908). At the same time—in 1928—he was admitted to the circle centred on the periodical *Munka* (Work), led by the prominent Hungarian avant-garde poet, writer and constructivist painter, Lajos Kassák** (1887–1967).

In 1929, he first gave up painting and started with the more dynamic, newer art form, the motion picture. It was obviously in this connection that in 1930 he entered into correspondence with László Moholy-Nagy. That relationship gradually developed into friendship and was a decisive factor in his art. He was invited to Berlin by Moholy-Nagy yet the trip did not take place until 1934. As, however, the Nazi régime paralysed any attempts at progressive art in Germany, he soon left the country and followed Moholy-Nagy to London, where in 1936 he became a member of the master's studio. And in 1937, when artists started going to the United States, both Moholy-Nagy and Kepes, along with Gropius and Breuer, crossed the Atlantic.

It was in that period that Moholy-Nagy founded the New Bauhaus in Chicago to continue the programme of the Bauhaus of Weimar and Dessau. Within its framework Kepes was entrusted with conducting the "light group", and when after a year the New Bauhaus ceased to exist, both artists continued their work in the Institute of Design.

It was from that period that Kepes's work in theory and practice grew to full proportions. In 1943 he resigned from the institute and two years later, in 1945, accepted invitations to conduct courses in visual design, first from Harvard University and then, in 1965, from the architectural faculty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology—the American School of Breuer and Gropius.

And now we have to limit ourselves to a few facts from his manifold activities.

He organizes large-scale—and for the most part, representational and didactic—

art exhibitions throughout the United States. For example, he organized the first significant exhibition in 1949 of the artistic remains of his friend and master, Moholy-Nagy, who had died in 1946. In 1956 he opened an institute for scientists and artists to discuss the increasingly common questions raised by the various disciplines. It resulted in a six-volume series, "Vision and Value", edited by Kepes and published in 1965 and 1966. Beyond his important theoretical works and writings, his practical activity is represented by murals, photo frescoes and light-walls made for renowned American architects and individual pictures, photos and paintings.

Only numbers can give an idea of the richness of his theoretical and practical activity. The bibliography of his Budapest-exhibition catalogue contains the titles of sixty-five books and studies written or edited by him, not including his reviews. (The list of his works is probably only a selection of writings, as the enumeration of one-man shows and group exhibitions is certainly only a selection.) Between 1939 and 1974, Kepes had forty-six significant one-man shows, not only in the US but also in Holland, Italy and Canada. The one in Budapest is the forty-seventh. The number of group exhibitions that included works by Kepes is even larger, fifty-six, and they were held in every part of the world.

In 1952 Kepes was elected a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; in 1966 he was awarded the gold medal of the International Conference of Art Critics and Art Historians; in 1968 he was elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters in the US; between 1970 and 1972 three American universities conferred honorary degrees upon him. And in 1974 he was appointed honorary professor at the Applied Arts School of Budapest.

At the Budapest exhibition of György Kepes, held in the Art Gallery, fifty-one (mostly large-scale) paintings, twenty-three photos, graphs—more precisely, photo-

* See Nos. 22, 39, 59 of NHQ.

** See Nos. 28, 54

graphs—and a dozen colour slides were shown.

I have to mention in advance that I for one—and perhaps I am not alone with this opinion—regard Kepes's art best realized through photography, demonstrating, as they do, theory projected with the force of successful practice.

That theory, professed by the prominent representatives of the avant-garde, the predecessors of Kepes (especially Moholy-Nagy), is based on the realization of the eternal essence of the relationship between art and science. In the absence of adequate tools, science was limited to natural and superficial cognition of phenomena, as art, too, had to rest content with limited possibilities, systematizing these observations and formulating their lessons by means of an "external vision" of reality. Thus naturally it could only work with the materials and tools of painting and graphics, fulfilling its eternal functions by imitation, reproduction and—through visual reflection—an instinctive or conscious shaping of the visible world. Eventually, with its ever improving tools, science got far beyond the surface reality and rested more and more on the epochal discoveries of "internal vision" and so art could no longer content itself with moving on the surface of things either.

Art, too, has had to realize that reality is much more complex and variegated than the world that can be perceived by the naked eye. Therefore it became necessary to utilize the achievements of science more and more consciously in art, without reproducing or imitating them but—through their visual reflection—employing them in the process of artistic cognition with forms evocative of new associations—forms capable of affording a new kind of aesthetic pleasure. Hence art cannot rest content with the materials and tools of old genres but has to create new genres, with new materials and new tools. Photography is such a new genre of art, with materials and tools capable of depicting internal visual experience. Light

and the sensitized plate have an all but magic quality, capable of revitalizing, magnifying and investing an aesthetic aura even on those internal processes of reality hidden from the naked eye.

The theory of the visual arts, as tentatively formulated above, shares the general limitation of theory: in the relationship of theory and practice, practice is always the decisive factor. And the practice of Kepes, with his black and white photograms and colour slides, supports his theory, adding that extra tension which makes art and gives evidence of movement and development.

The paintings, however, are, in their own way, different and hark back, way back, to 1929 in Hungary when Kepes, as has been mentioned already, gave up painting with its traditional tools and devices to take up the art of the motion picture. More than twenty years had to elapse until in 1951 he resumed painting, and the majority of his pictures shown at the Budapest exhibition date from the past five years. But even these bear the stamp of a new beginning and have only an indirect relevance to Kepes's long-nurtured theory. The surfaces of the pictures (for the most part large-scale works) are completely filled in with the carefully and artistically done backgrounds, using meticulous brushwork and a few softened colours to figure in and resolve the simple principal motifs—while rendering them rather tangential. Sir Herbert Read once wrote that these paintings stand for an escape from the mechanical world into that of sensibility. I should say that every sort of escape is, at the same time, a sort of turning back. I do not see any need to escape from that art of Moholy-Nagy or György Kepes which is derived from the world of machines. This art still has much to offer Kepes and his followers. However refined and beautiful the paintings here shown may be, they do not fit in well with my image of Kepes which owes most to Kepes's theories and photographic practice.

MÁTÉ MAJOR

FROM PICTURES TO OBJECTS

Endre Bálint's Exhibition in the Museum of Applied Arts

Endre Bálint is a significant figure in the European School of painting, as discussed several times in NHQ.* His latest exhibition in the state-room of the Museum of Applied Arts starts with a pirate story narrated on 12 parquet blocks. Bálint found the pieces in his favourite place, the Artists' House in Zsenyze, where they were discarded during renovation. The cracks and fissures on the much-used blocks stimulated the artist's imagination, with pieces that evoked and at the same expressed his vision.

Those who saw Bálint's show in Szeged two years ago were in a much better position to appreciate his paintings, drawings, photo montages and object compositions, since they stood one beside the other in the same place and gave an insight into all aspects of his œuvre. Thus, it was much easier to interpret the artist's different periods and appreciate the function and limitations of his diverse modes of expressions. His object compositions were the subject of heated arguments at the time: though the paintings and photo montages were—at least as a genre—accepted by the public, many people felt that the compositions represented an abnegation of Holy Art, a scandalous heresy. In view of the fact that both conservative good taste and petty-bourgeois prudishness revolted against his art in Szeged, the painter decided to formulate his intentions clearly before the Budapest exhibition and thus at least try to avoid some of the inevitable misunderstanding.

"As far as I am concerned, when I playfully mock objects it is because they take themselves too seriously; sometimes I abuse the already unrewarding role of match-maker and produce nice little *mésalliances*: I marry objects of noble origin and fine material with bones of barnyard fowl; play-

ing such tricks satisfies me... I met the archetypes of my objects in the Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris, in that wonderful city of crypts, where I stayed to jest with death instead of grieving over the ephemeral nature of life. I could finally rest my unruly bones on a garish blue rose-ornamented water-closet rim bearing the inscription 'Merde la chaise'... Please don't misunderstand my intentions; I only wanted to get something more intimate out of the things that fell into my hands, out nothing pompous or world-shattering. By 'intimate' I mean something like two adults telling each other off-colour jokes or two children who forget everything around them and spend the afternoon using a lot of rubbish to build a world of their own."

"Père Lachaise", "Merde la chaise" and similar jokes and puns in the exhibition illustrate the basic playfulness which, like surrealist metamorphoses, twists the original meaning of things, the original function of objects and puts them into a new context, sometimes diametrically opposed to their previous situation. Thus a pair of dentures and a piece of rope turn to irony in "He Bit the Dust;" a peaceful carpenter's tool becomes the instrument of a witch-hunt or Holy Virgin statuettes from Lourdes become the descendants of the burghers of Calais.

Persiflage, perversion and turning things around are only one and by no means an exclusive aspect in Bálint's relation to objects. The painter who mocks them playfully takes them at the same time very seriously. Indeed, he is able to mock them with heart-warming laughter or hidden bitterness just because he takes them seriously. Such an attitude goes back to a period much earlier than that of any composition on show; it is connected with his background and the first stages of his becoming an artist.

Like many of his other characteristics,

* See Nos. 18, 2, 52

Endre Bálint's cult of objects can be traced to Lajos Vajda. Almost all his motifs come from broken horseshoes found by the wayside, bits of furniture taken from dusty attics, old sign-boards and a vast amount of popular or artisan objects stored on his shelves and in his memory. These objects reflect a lost world of "unspoiled community life united with nature": on his paintings they appear as clean geometric patterns which have almost lost their quality as objects.

By the sixties the poetic world of his pictures had crystallized: in his recent works the impact of folk-art and artisan objects did not limit itself to theme: it also influenced style. He had started a process of using raw boards or parquet blocks to combine the traditional picture framework with handicraft, then discard the picture entirely and replace it with objects. "The Pirate Story," with its illustrated raw boards hanging from chains, is on the borderline between picture and object. In this process of transformation, most object compositions still preserve the associative system of paintings and their outward appearance, at least insofar as they have frames.

This interpenetration of the picturesque and the objective demonstrates the differences between the two spheres very clearly. On the paintings the lyricism irradiating from the colours elevates the dreamlike, dim meanings of the motifs into a higher, symbolic dimension. The objects, although divested of their original character, remain

objects and preserve their concreteness. Because of their triviality they can be made to express only simple, direct messages grouped around a verbally and conceptually comprehensible nucleus. This language, although unable to rise to elegiac heights, can have a strident satiric or epic meaning. So apart from the mischievous ideas expressed by photos, wood and scrap metal such as "Personality Cult," the row of letter-boxes all bearing the inscription "Endre Bálint," or the absolutely different "Twins," there are also more narrative, meditative or even dramatic themes, such as the motifs of the trip to Rome, the concentration camp or the walk in Zsennye and the Spanish cemetery.

The spectator walking round the exhibition may meditate on the reasons and influences which produced these bitterly frivolous or wisely ironical object compositions. Without pretending to explain their origin I refer to the words of the artist himself for a possible motive:

"Luckily today there are already many who explain why I do what I do... The 'anguished child,' 'painter of dreams,' 'folk art,' 'surrealist,' 'lyricist,' 'painter of Szentendre' and other labels and attributes would bind me hand and foot and hamper all further development... I felt that I had to sweep myself off the table where I lay as an outspread aesthetic formula, and offer myself to the formulations of new-fangled aesthetics."

ZOLTÁN NAGY

CARVING LIGHT RAYS

The Art of László Paizs

Not long ago, I found in the well-illuminated room of an exhibition an excellent trio worth photographing: Korniss-Paizs-Deim. Hanging on the walls were paintings of the classic avant-gardist Dezső Korniss and the young constructive Pál Deim, while a "sculpture" by László Paizs, closely related in spirit to the other two, stood out in space. The photo was developed, it was a clear, "three-dimensional" shot, only it seemed as though support for the Paizs statue was entirely absent. In fact, it is of transparent plexiglass; the statues Paizs makes are invisible, he seems to carve nothingness.

László Paizs studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts; for five years he had been painting whatever the official art trade asked him to in a post-impressionist style within a certain tired constructivist framework. He grew weary of it, and in 1967 started experimenting in new media: smoked leather pictures. Since 1969 he has been interested in plastics and approaches the new form enthusiastically. His first one-man show, held in the Adolf Fényes Room in 1971, was organized by a fellow-painter and included somewhat orthodox pop-art-like works.

Paizs called these conscious fossils; into transparent blocks of plexiglass he casts plants, insects, newspapers, clothes-hangers, old clothes, and Second World War military decorations. Time and again he shows his plexiglass pieces at exhibitions while he is also engaged in making plexiglass mock-ceilings, partition elements and illuminated walls for hotel interiors. He has just mounted an exhibition of works of half a decade at the István Csók Gallery. The opening speech was delivered by the same Pál Deim who was his "neighbour" at the exhibition I spoke about at the beginning.

For his new mode of expression Paizs

has had to study a trade and learn something about chemistry. Nobody could teach him since no other sculptor in Hungary deals with similar problems; nor could factory engineers advise him. "They told me," said Paizs, "that it was impossible to pursue this kind of work outside a factory. Indeed, I work with medieval methods; I had spent a lot of money and energy before I worked out how to cast plexiglass. Chemists did not know what kind of catalysts to use to get such thick blocks of plexiglass: but I found out. I found out what to do to prevent the material from cracking while cooling and I learned that it is not irrelevant where one puts the decimal points; I had blown my studio up a couple of times by then."

In Paizs's simple cellar-studio there is no marble or bronze; nothing there is conventional. One's clothes and shoes get encrusted with a fine powder. The cellar is apt to catch fire; it is full of unhealthy, if not poisonous, chemicals with unpleasant and caustic smells. "Whoever gets liquid plexiglass in his eyes," says my host, "no longer needs an oculist." The artist tells me that plexiglass is heavy, while polyester is light. The form it takes a week to get from polyester takes two months with plexiglass. He makes use of compasses and rulers to plan his statues. He pours the liquid plexiglass into an ordinary plastic petrol can. He then takes the "skin" off the can, and roughs the block with a polisher. Then he takes it to a craftsman, who uses turning-lathes and milling-machines similar to those for wood and metal-work. The artist also had to design the profiles for the machines. And it is not enough to give the craftsman the plans—this is not designing; the artist is there from first to last, improvising also being part of this art. And finally, he himself burnishes his pieces to give them their final gloss.

I am averse to pathos, yet I have to say

that it is a heroic struggle, the way this young man—without money—created, as it were, a whole enterprise all by himself, merely of his own satisfaction, to be able to convey his personal message. Paizs is a pioneer, he is the only one in Hungary to deal with plastics sculpture, at least at this level. Even where we encounter plexiglass in the works of other artists, the parts made of plastics are the work of Paizs. Among such are the works of Marta Pan, who was born in Budapest, but is now a French artist. In 1970 we were privileged to admire her plexiglass compositions at a Budapest exhibition of Hungarians living abroad.

The first group of László Paizs's works consists of plexiglass objects; the material itself is extremely attractive, but, more important, because this is often the most difficult thing to do, the artist is able to control it. His plexiglass pieces take the form of a prism. The playful, vivacious and dynamic polished planes are juxtaposed to the static rhythm of milled forms. One of his favourite and recurrent motifs is a kind of prism, into which he etches a set of diagonal, parallel cartridge forms. The composition is even more complex when he fits horizontal cylindrical facings into his prism and then puts into the cylinder mills tiny, parallel discs, suggesting a string of pearls; the same sort of "string of pearls" is the decoration of his dismountable prisms. Paizs composed this so that the two pieces fit very closely together in a V-formation, that assemble into a larger whole. Yet when taken to pieces (unfortunately the public was not allowed to play with it) the two parts make finished works in themselves, capable of having their separate lives.

One of the artist's recent works is a tall cylinder made of plexiglass, with only the accessory on its upper third of the negative form of horizontal, parallel grooves. In its smooth limpidity, this piece is perhaps more transparent than glass or water. It is a true sculpture in the round and was appropriately set in the centre of the room.

This glassy property of plexiglass exposes everything inside the statue; its material is not plexiglass, or even "nothing", but light. Paizs's work in fact consists of the natural or artificial configuration of incidental, refracted and reflected rays. Its vital element is light, and it is rendered mobile by light. The sun's wanderings make a constantly changing play of light and reflection. The statue has a thousand faces; if we pass by it, and view it from different angles, we always see something different.

Recently, the artist has turned to polyester sculpture. It is not only in composition and density that polyester differs from plexiglass, but also in message. Paizs's polyester pieces are in part prismatic and in part curved-surfaced rotating bodies. Into them he casts claret, scarlet and red layers.

The black surfaces of these objects are mat and lustreless, and it is not only because of the intensity of the colour that the interior, milled, or "bitten-off", parts of the iridescent red are so high; the sculptor—in order to double the effect—has mirror-polished the reds. The red shines forth like the inside of a bottle-green water melon or the flesh of a rusty brown, ripe fig.

We can find the polyester pendant of the plexiglass cylinder in this recent works—the spheres. Black spheres, with red insides; the sphere is always the same yet the margins of the reds glimmering through as decoration show a certain development: on the first there is only one simple and deep notch; on the second a Greek cross pattern with an arched terminus. The following pieces show the reverse: a red field and black island while with the last one, which is likewise entirely symmetrical, there is the most complex, with a foiled, Gothic design.

I think to myself how noble these novel materials are, capable of allaying prejudice in anyone. It would be ridiculous to imagine his sculpture in any other form; like high-wrought bronze, Carrara marble or even granite.

Last year Paizs once came up to my flat.

"I offer you no drink," I said, "knowing you came by car. Will you have a cup of coffee?"—"No, thanks, it doesn't agree with me because of my heart."—"Some sweet, perhaps?"—"I couldn't get a bite of food down, I'm so excited. My one-man show opens in six months!"

The main virtue of László Paizs's art is, I think, the radical contrast between an outward form expressing the artist's fanatical, tense excitement and the tranquillity, conveyed by the sedative light, producing a serene euphoria, together with spiritual and external order.

JÁNOS FRANK

THE SCULPTURE OF ANDRÁS KISS NAGY

Exhibition at the Veszprém Cultural Centre

András Kiss Nagy enjoyed the unique, dual background of growing up in the country and discovering his country's—and his own—immense cultural heritage late in life. It influenced him perhaps more profoundly than others of his generation for the very reason that he did not owe it to his birth but to his own discovery. Surprisingly he found in this heritage the same ethical position and system of norms that he did in the poor peasant environment of his childhood. His shawled Hungarian peasant women enter with complete naturalness the world of Greek mythology.

He started his career in the late fifties, at a time of great change in sculpture. Though the art of Henry Moore was still the prevalent mode of those years, there were already the strivings of a generation that would be opposed to Moore's formal order and ideal of beauty. They would soon sweep in triumphant success at international exhibitions with metallic sculpture (Chadwick, Chillida, Paolozzi, Mastroianni, Somaini), a rough handling of materials, a brutal and emphatically anti-aesthetic manipulation of forms. At the same time, however, Pop Art arrives along with Schöffer's *I*umino-dynamism as well as various forms of kine-

tics. Thus, on the one hand, sculpture breaks with figurative pretences in order to be no less and no more than matter, structure, movement and light, while, at the same time, it joins the world of useful objects.

Hungarian art did not take cognizance of all this until much later, when a whole gamut of various influence arrived simultaneously. The first Budapest exhibition of the works of Henry Moore was organized in 1961, and it was not until then that the Hungarian public at large, and even the majority of artists, got acquainted with his work. But then ten years later, at the First Biennale of Small Sculpture, almost all trends in contemporary sculpture were in evidence. The various exhibitions gave a great impetus to modern Hungarian sculpture, which assimilated the aspirations of international art according to its own particular circumstances.

The greatest influence on Hungarian sculpture at the beginning of the twentieth century were Hildebrand and later Maillol. Aside from them, the most decisive factor was a brief expressionist period. A number of the excellent sculptors of the international avant-garde were of Hungarian origin (Hajdu, Csáky, Beöthy, Kemény, etc.), who

carried their work beyond the frontiers of their native country. Hungarian sculpture between the two world wars attained an especially high standard in portrait and miniature work, where the chief achievement lies in deep psychological representation. Expressly abstract work appeared only sporadically, and never did become widely disseminated. The central theme of Hungarian sculpture was, until the mid-sixties, the human figure. It was the framework of a whole variety of experiments in new techniques, new materials, new interpretations of form and space.

András Kiss Nagy was born in 1930. After Art School he started his career in the best traditions of Hungarian sculpture. He made statuettes and medals, exploring the potentialities of bronze, and beyond that—the nature of sculpture itself. His statues of the first ten years were very small indeed, varying between 4.5 and 20 centimetres. He focused attention on building up figures and connecting various plastic blocks. The head and hands are entirely sketchy, the faces are undelineated, like those of ancient idols. It is not in finely-wrought detail but in the order of abstract forms and the dynamic contrast of blocks that the statue reveals something about people, human relationships and situations. Even today his art is characterized by those principles which he worked out in the early statuettes.

For him the statue is a close unity of positive and negative forms, which placed in a given section of space "expel air". Such a traditional interpretation of the notion of mass and quantity fits in with the classical system of proportions. Not only the subject-matter but also the scale and measure of his statues is man.

He nurses one or another of his sculptural projects through several variations; hence his work comes in series. The main theme of his earlier statues is the family (like *Recumbent Woman*, *Sitting Woman*, *Bending Figure*, *Meeting*). These figures represent the same type of woman, comprised of solid blocks, with

an energetic build and broad hips embodying mature feminine life and fecundity.

From 1965, a new sculptural idea started to evolve, as the sculptor explored the relation and balance between the human figure and an external object. The female figure stands next to an object which is closely connected with it. The object is usually an open umbrella, with a fanned-out arc that makes for an ingenious contrast of forms, as in the variations in *Figure Carrying an Umbrella*. In the standing work *Figure Carrying an Umbrella* the umbrella takes the trapezoid form of a cloak; in the sitting figure *April* a fanned-out skirt takes the role of the umbrella; the female figure in *October* holds the umbrella down as she opens it. The plastic "foil" is supplied by a shawl covering her head and arms. And the *Composition*, which makes no pretence of showing any kind of action, has a contrast of perpendicular forms with a concave arc above.

In the series *Little Fighter* the umbrella becomes a shield. The shield and the fighter express the struggle of opposing forces, with a figure as a positive core and an object as its negative. This is realized fully in the series *Nascitas* reminding one of deep caves and curving hills, while bursting seed husks express birth and germination.

A series of sitting figures shows the artist exploring repetitive blocks. In *Homewards*, a mother sits in a tram holding her child in her lap, a clear return to an earlier family theme. *Birdgranny* revives childhood memories of shawled, aged countrywomen sitting on benches in front of gates, here shown to be awe-inspiring, yet a little pathetic too. Such too are the *Parcae*, reeling the thread of our lives, allotting each our portion. The peasant couple in *Commemoration* are revived in the statue *Latins*, where two human figures fit together in a configuration as familiar in Etruscan sarcophagi and Roman sepulchral stones as in Hungarian popular art. It seems a timeless symbol holding ages and peoples together in conjugal fidelity.

Some of Kiss Nagy's statues are connected

with particular events or experiences. *Tele-mark* is a monument to the memory of the heroes of the Norwegian resistance movement. The bell-formed figures of the partisans show sorrow and acquiescence along with catastrophe and rejoicing. A recent statue in honour of Dante expresses man's recurring encounter with the infinite in an attempt to classify the relation of man and the universe.

András Kiss Nagy entered several pieces in the 1972 Venice Biennale. A number of museums bought his statues, and Italian papers wrote of his works in an appreciative way. In recognizing his keen artistic instinct, his high standards and the beauty of his works, they also seemed to detect in his work the influence of Moore. It is an unavoidable attribution insofar as the generation after Moore had already absorbed as basic to sculpture those formal innovations which he had implanted in the public consciousness and even, we might say, in the history of art. All those not diametrically opposed to his ideal of harmony and beauty speak, to a certain extent, in his language. Yet different sculptors, of course, have their own accent. This is evident in the art of András Kiss Nagy.

Half of his works are medals, an art which is allotted a separate chapter in the history of Hungarian sculpture. A number of the problems and formal innovations of modern art which appeared in this miniature genre did not win acceptance in large-scale sculpture until much later, if at all.

András Kiss Nagy makes his medals in two different techniques. Following the methods used in Greek coins negatives are cut in plaster of Paris. The cutting gives sharp, pointed and hard forms, making a sharp distinction between the basic plane and the artist's work. The series *Polyushka* celebrates the vigorous rhythms of galloping

riders. The other method, used in cut and tooled medals, is the result of impressing tiny objects in the mould as in the series *Time Broken in Pieces*, made in 1965. The first piece has the small accessories—hands, dial-plate and cog-wheels—of a dismantled clock. The pieces follow the passage of time, while broaching the subject of the finiteness of human life and the infinity of natural existence. In a new context the objects take on a new meaning. Such a use of objects shows a distant relation to Pop Art as though a lyrical projection of it.

With their manipulation of soft plastic forms, the medals often give mysterious atmospheric effects, making the round medal a palm-size universe. The series *Natura* celebrate nature, not only in the generous handling of forms but also in the very beauty of the material—bronze. The artist does not patinate his works but colours the metal by heating and burnishing. We thus get a whole variety of hues from cold, bluish tints to a mellow gold. His two series entitled *Metamorphosis* start with scenic experiences in different parts of the day and end up, in the second series, with an exact order of spaces, one passing into another.

A familiar part of old Hungarian peasant houses is the *tornác*, the porch. It is the plastic quality and rhythm of the porch with its geometric elements dividing and connecting spaces (doors, windows, pillars) that are evoked by the plastic contrasts in these medals. The positive and negative variation of the self-same form have different meanings, from openness and depth to inclusiveness. The forms are strictly interlocking, and connected—even in *Pandora's Box*, which is completely different from its predecessors. It is like a personal object, an ancient covered mirror or a finely wrought casket, which still hold many a dear secret.

ILDIKÓ NAGY

ERNŐ KÁLLAI: THE ART CRITIC OF A CHANGING AGE

Though now almost forgotten, Ernő Kállai was one of the most prominent Hungarian art critics of the twenties and thirties of this century. Born in Szakálháza in 1890, he travelled to Britain, Scandinavia and the United States immediately before the start of the First World War. He came home and served on the Carpathian front, he was later demobilized because of a serious wound. Even at that time he wrote book reviews and after the war taught for a short time in a Budapest workers' settlement school. In 1920 he first applied to the Minister of Education for a study leave; later he moved to Germany and soon became editor of the *Jahrbuch der jungen Kunst*. His writings were also published in *Cicerone*, *Kunstblatt*, *Das Neue Frankfurt* and *Offset-Buch und Werbekunst*, to mention just a few of the papers.

Living mostly in Berlin, he was prominent in the art life there; people argued with him in various papers, he was the recipient of open letters, and some of his dicta were passed around in artistic circles. Aside from Hungarian and German papers, he wrote for journals in Switzerland, France, Holland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia, and was a contributor to the prestigious *Weltbühne*. He was associated with the groups of refugee Hungarian artists living in Vienna after the overthrow of the Hungarian Republic of Councils in 1919, notably Kassák's circle around *Ma* (Today). In the meantime he sent reports and studies to art publications in Hungary. His book on contemporary Hungarian painting (*Új magyar piktúra—Neue Malerei in Ungarn*) was published simultaneously in German and Hungarian in 1925. Being bilingual, Kállai could pursue his particularly useful undertaking of comparing international and Hungarian painting with the purpose of establishing the connections between them.

His close ties to Dutch and Russian Con-

structivists brought him recognition as a dedicated critic of Constructivism—so much so that in 1928 Hannes Meyer invited him to be editor of the Bauhaus journal. The "Baubausbücher" series was to include a book jointly written by Kassák and Kállai on the *Ma* circle. Kállai edited *Bauhaus* until Meyer resigned in 1930. Meantime in 1929, he tried publishing a paper of his own, marking the acme of his career. Even Kandinsky wrote a study for his paper, *Der Kunstnarr*. To escape the Nazis, Kállai returned to Budapest in 1935. Later he learned that his writings had been included in the 1937 "Entartete Kunst" exhibition as an example of what not to do.

His return home brought new problems. Though he was conversant with art life in Hungary he was much astonished and saddened by the slackness, passivity, corruption and mediocrity that he found when he arrived. Still, he helped organize exhibitions for a few galleries, some that even had modern works. He wrote critiques and studies for practically all liberal and non-academic papers, steadily and bravely defending those talents ignored by official cultural policy. He was conversant with recent trends in European art, and he could present Hungarian art in a European context, distinguishing intrinsic value from provinciality, the universal from the cultish. He consistently encouraged Czóbel, Egry, Barcsay and Bernáth; was amongst the first to recognize the greatness of Lajos Vajda and first presented Mednyánszky to the general public in Hungary. He continued to write for a whole range of art publications, and according to written reactions to his critiques and reminiscences of contemporaries, his writings played an important part in shaping public opinion. This influence was further enhanced when he became a contributor to the important German-language daily in Buda-

pest, *Pester Lloyd*, of which he was art editor from 1940 to 1944.

After the war he set about organizing Hungarian art life with the enthusiasm of one who knew the time had come to spread genuine values among the public. He mounted a successful modern exhibition for workers, joined the European School, and opened a gallery called "The Four Cardinal Points". Until 1947, he was the leader of the Visual Arts Section of the Art Council, the supreme forum of art life at the time. He resigned when he felt his opinion was continually being disregarded. Between 1946 and 1948 he taught aesthetics at the School of Industrial Art and was reputedly a spellbinding lecturer. His lectures, as transcribed by students, were published in 1948 as the book *A tárgyformálás esztétikája* (The Aesthetics of Shaping the Object). He was dismissed the same year and thenceforth lived quietly in Óbuda, supporting himself by translating Hungarian literature into German, while his wife, who was a Russian by birth, did translations into Russian. He died in 1954 as an outcast from the cultural life of the period.

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We know from Kassák's reminiscences and Kállai's early articles that during the years of the First World War, for ideological reasons, he considered Expressionism the most worthwhile style in the visual arts. Instinctive reactions seemed pitted against the dispassionate machinery of war, like a shriek bursting from the nerve ends against the cool rationalism of the supreme command, so incomprehensible to the individual. It had staggering credibility at the time. This, however, was swept away in the revolutions of 1917, 18 and 19, with their idea of a new, communal society. Kállai left Hungary when the revolution was suppressed and in Weimar Germany invested all his talent in the search for the artistic form that would adequately express the collective ideal to be realized after the world revolution. For

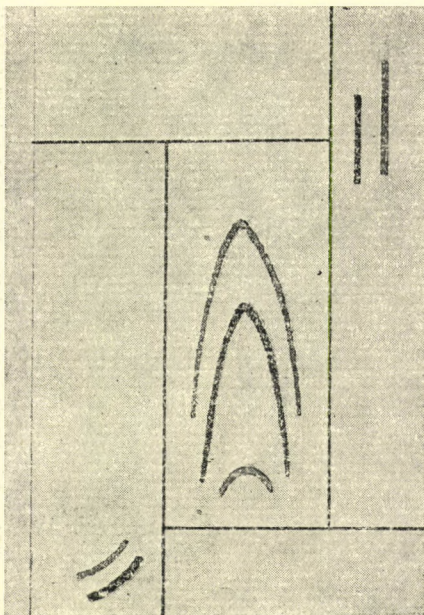


Lajos Tibanyi's selfportrait, cca 1920.
Inscribed "To Ernő Kállai with love,
Tibanyi, 1936, Paris."

this, however, he had to bend his thoughts to the future utopia and adjust art to that vision.

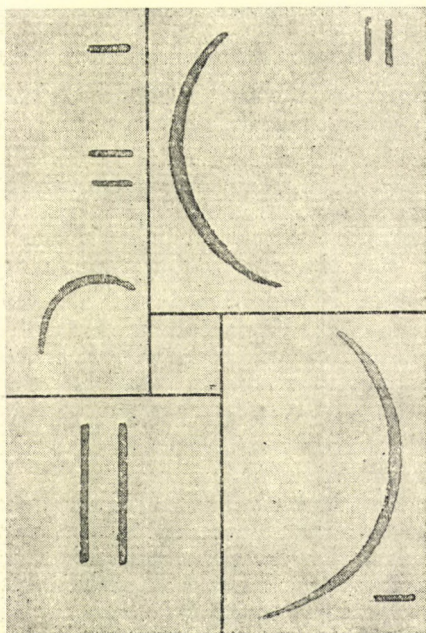
"We fight for synthesis and style in society, *Weltanschauung* and Art," wrote Kállai in 1921, thereby formulating the programme for the Constructivists in the twenties. Kállai was not a philosopher: he was interested in the relationship of form and *Weltanschauung* from the perspective of actual works of art.

Since his point of departure was the idea of collectivity Kállai first of all turned against Expressionism as an expression of individualism. In order to express his opposition to all that which is individual and



G. Vantongerloo: *Fonction*, 1938, Paris

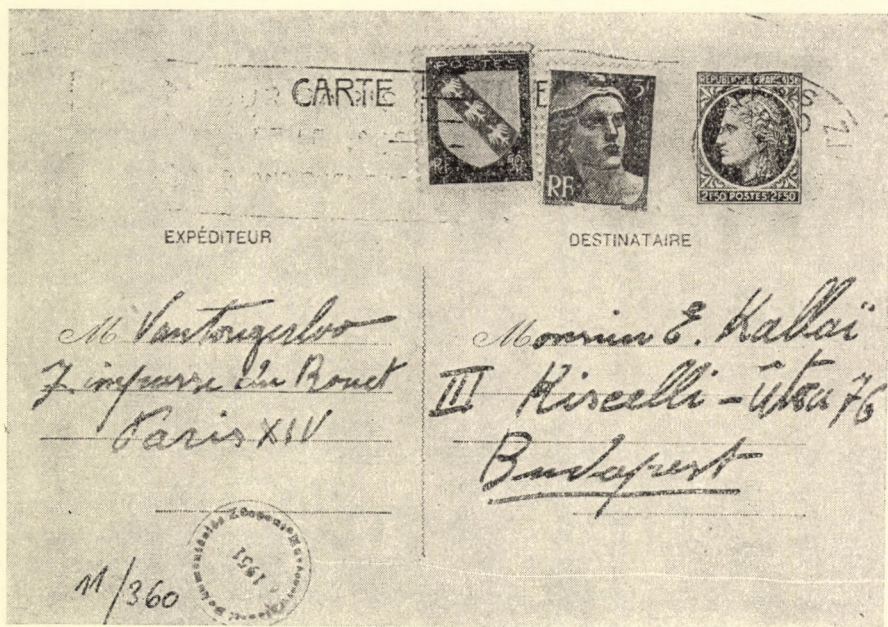
G. Vantongerloo: *Courbes*, 1938, Paris



subjective, he first called the art of the new world "objectivism". It replaced personal features with well-formulated structures and discipline: the work itself was to be a social model, a figurative description of the visualized social system. At the outset (as when he analysed the pictures of Moholy-Nagy) Kállai describes an open, dynamic system the elements of which are loosely connected to some focal point (but not only one focal point!). He modified this conception into free-swinging forms, with aerial spatial constructions giving over to the monumental façades of pictorial architecture—a static, solemn picture-plane in a static system. He assigned Constructivism its proper place in contemporary art, tracing its descent to Cubism's way of building a picture up from small elements. Yet he pinpoints the differences as well. He regards the structure in Cubism as aristocratic and accessible only to over-refined, individual taste, while the lack of objects in Constructivism is meant to eschew all objective representations that would so much as remind one of individual content. At this point he reconciles Kassák's pictorial architecture with Russian and Dutch Constructivists by noting the clear harmony and closed universe among all abstract work springing from social and revolutionary thought, though each follows its own rules.

Kállai follows with discerning sensitivity the alterations of the revolutionary thought through the period of euphoric ecstasy to the nadir of disintegration. After 1922–23 his social utopia and the picture he had of its artistic shape rapidly falls apart: in his writings dating from 1924 he writes matter-of-factly, devoid of illusions, about the withdrawal into privacy, the necessity of building commodious apartments, in which the sober, healthy and modern petit bourgeoisie, no longer dreaming of monuments, can live free and private lives.

Between 1924 and 1927 he deals intensively with Hungarian art. It was the period in which he wrote his bilingual book (*Új*



Postcard written and sent by Vantongerloo to Kállai (1946)

Paris, 30 nov. 1946.

Mon cher Kállai.

J'étais très content de recevoir de vos nouvelles. Merci pour vos félicités. J'espère vous revoir bientôt à Paris. Ça sera plus facile pour se parler. J'ai bien à votre égard un attendent de vous voir. Ah, mon cher Kállai, à bientôt, j'espère. Je vous souhaite une bonne nuit et mes amours mes souvenirs les meilleurs.

P. Vantongerloo

magyar piktúra—Neue Malerei in Ungarn), yet he keeps on searching for the possibility to act. That was how he got interested in the Bauhaus, which had by now abandoned a large-scale utopian thinking (as represented by the *Grosse Bau* in 1919) for mass-produced industrial design for daily use. They sought to reconcile modern technology with free personal artistic activity in the spirit of the slogan "Art and Technology: a New Unity". Understandably, Kállai turned with his own sensibilities to the seemingly irreconcilable conflict between art and technology, individual fancy versus disciplined manufactures.

Once more, and this time more quickly, Kállai became disillusioned: in 1928 in the *Bauhaus*, in the *Tér és forma* (Space and Form) as well as in Kassák's *Munka* (Work) he is found praising Hannes Meyer's new and many-sided humanism; yet by 1930, he is writing an article in *Weltbühne*, assessing the previous ten years of Bauhaus in which he foresees a situation inspired by the Bauhaus, when artists and engineers will come into irreconcilable conflict.

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It was presumably the emergence of Surrealism that brought about a change in Kállai's critical method. We cannot assign it an exact date, but it was sometime after 1920 that the lucidly arranged structures and rational form of Constructivist work devolved into more amorphous, organic configurations, as non-figurative Surrealism was perfected in technique.

In order to understand and judge these, Kállai had to choose his starting-point and unravel the *Weltanschauung* from the works themselves. In contrast with Constructivism he followed a procedure whereby he studied the work as a deduction from the *Weltanschauung*. Here the material reality of the work was a point of departure, and he had to reveal what was behind it. At last Kállai could rely on his most sterling quality: intuition, which was ever reliable. As with

all notable art critics, this was his most important endowment: discernment, an instinctive knowledge of the visual laws, and consequently, a capacity for empathy and an intense personal identification with the works. When guided by this talent he is in his element, and it is exactly this trait that sets him apart from theoreticians: he starts not from the thought but from the sensation. It is his subjectivity—his taste—that systematizes the objects of reality, and not the other way round.

Non-figurative Surrealism inspired him to rephrase the Bauhaus question of "Technology and Art". He tried to detect in the works springing from the wells of collective consciousness the same forms that are microscopically visible in the "deep-world" of nature. Kállai surmised that the consciousness of man beyond individual features would have exactly the same elementary forms as the elementary components of nature. The relation of non-figurative Surrealism to nature is precisely the same as Constructivism to an ideal society: it is a model of its elementary form and system. Thus Kállai thought elementary forms reflected the structure of the world. He illustrated his idea with such examples as the striking similarity of certain Surrealistic works to, say, a cut-up cabbage, a photograph of lightning or the cellular structure of a tree-leaf as seen under a microscope. It was in 1932 that he first used the term "biromanticism". Though the word has an ironic, questionable ring to it, Kállai never abandoned it and eventually published his thoughts on the subject in 1947, in a small book entitled *A természet rejtett arca* (The Hidden Face of Nature).

*

Erő Kállai's most durable and significant work is on Hungarian art; his *Új magyar piktúra* (New Hungarian Painting) has never been superseded as a comprehensive and interpretative look at contemporary

6-8-1952 b/p

herrn ernst kallai
kiscelli-uca 76.1.2
budapest III ungar

lieber ernst kallai,

herzlichen dank für ihre nachrichten. jakob hat daran vor allen
viel freude gehabt, ich bin eher betrubt über alle ihre verluste
aus der hitlerzeit.

ja die 3-teilige einheit hat auch ein mathematisches gesetz zu
grunde gelegt. ich habe es jedoch erst nachträglich für die aus-
führung gefunden und entwickelt. ich sende ihnen davon eine foto.
die plastik wurde bisher meines wissens nie gefilmt, mit ausnahme
eines streifens der gedreht wurde an der eröffnung der ausstellung
pevaner-rantongeri-100-bill in zürcher kunsthaus wo ich den gästen
die plastik erkläre.

ich sende ihnen als drucksache noch einiges das sie interessieren
dürfte, vor allen den prospekt aus ulm. ich mache dort die bauten
und übernehme die leitung des ganzen.

sie werden wieder von uns hören, indessen sende ich ihnen unsere
herzlichen grüsse

Max Bill
(max bill)

*die zerlegung von dreiteiliger einheit ist auch
während der auführungsarbeit entstanden. die
centen der karte liegen auf den rücken
des pfeilspitzen, rechts (2.4.15)*

Two letters by Max Bill (1952)

architekt max bill
jenischstrasse 10
zürich 2 / schweiz
telefon (051) 237237

11/294



18-6-1952 b/p

herrn ernst kallai
kiscelli-uca 76.1.2
budapest III ungar

lieber ernst kallai,

vor urzeiten habe ich ihnen geschrieben und zuletzt hatten
sie mir noch briefmarken gesandt die jakob mit begeisterung
in seine sammlung verstaute. ihr brief von damals, er ist
vom 30.2.51 datiert, scheint unbeantwortet geblieben zu
sein und nun möchte ich ein wenig berichten.

sie fragten damals nach einer foto der "dreiteiligen einheit"
in chromnickelstahl. ich besitze davon keine gute foto in
der definitiven ausführung. ich sende ihnen aber dieser tage
noch eine postkarte mit einer entsprechenden abbildung. diese
plastik habe ich auf der "I. biennale in san paulo 1951" aus-
gestellt. sie wurde mit dem ersten preis ausgezeichnet und
angekauft vom modernen museum in san paulo. ich habe sogar
das geld bekommen, es war ein ansehnlicher goldragen. dann
müchte ich letztes jahr die schweizer abteilung an der trien-
nale in mailand. ein sonderdruck darüber soll an sie abgehen.
weiter war mit ausstellungen wenig los. ich hatte dafür keine
zeit, weil die "hochschule für gestaltung" in ulm, mich sehr
in anspruch nimmt. alles was damit zusammenhängt hat sich
masslos verzögert. alle leute interessieren sich nur noch
für "sicherheit und rüstung" die kultur und lebensstandard
können dabei vor die türde gehen. nun sind wir jedoch gerade
soweit, dass wir ernstlich die bauten planen können, zu deren
bau wir allerdings die mittel noch nicht endgültig bekommen
haben. ich werde ihnen von unserem kurzen programm, das in
nicht allzulanger zeit erscheinen wird, eine copie senden.

ich habe noch ein anderes anliegen: sie schrieben seinerzeit
einen längeren artikel im "kunstblatt" über den sowjet-maler
kasimir malewitsch, ich bin auf der suche nach einem ver-
zeichnis der seinerzeit von ihm ausgestellten werke und theo-
retischen tafeln. ich kann kein solches finden. der katalog
der "grossen berliner" von 1927 nennt nur "malewitsch, kasimir,
leningrad, 308, sonderausstellung". dann noch ein kurzer
aufsatz über seine leistungen und eine abbildung. wäre es
möglich, dass sie eine art "spezialkatalog" von dieser aus-
stellung besitzen? oder präzise notizen? so etwas wäre für
mich von unschätzbarem wert und ich würde es mit aller grösster
sorgfalt behandeln.

wir alle hoffen, dass es ihnen gut gehe und wir senden ihnen
unsere recht herzlichen grüsse

Max Bill

* verzeichnis

(max bill)

The most distinguished conservative theoretician noted that the book omitted the names of the eminent naturalists and realists of the period, and, moreover, "a significant percentage of the artists" whom Kállai wrote about "were madmen"; he summarized the book curtly: "...in view of the fact that there is little prospect of these groups surviving, we deem it useful that an unquestionably competent writer undertook in the eleventh hour to give so fine an analysis and interpretation of the more hidden features of these moribund aspirations."

*

In 1945 Kállai was overcome by terrific enthusiasm, as though the world revolution he had been dreaming about since 1920 had actually arrived. He undertook all kinds of

work to propagate popular interest—lectures, exhibitions, reviews and interviews as well as statements on public affairs in numerous daily newspapers and weeklies. He was trying to establish contact between the modern abstract and surrealist artists and the masses. He sought to give the general public an understanding of those artists, who, to the best of his judgement, were in the widest sense progressive and expressive of the spirit of the age. He soon realized that he was not being appreciated amid the increasingly dogmatic cultural policy of the country. As late as 1948 he published a book on Picasso, and taught aesthetics at the School for Industrial Art; yet in 1949 he found it difficult to make ends meet. Max Bill and a few other old friends kept up with him, but he had long ceased to exist in Hungarian cultural life when he died in 1954.

ÉVA FORGÁCS

MY FRIEND CAPA

Endre Friedmann, whom friends called "cápa" because of his big mouth ("cápa" means shark in Hungarian), was arrested by the police at the notorious demonstration on September 1, 1930 in Budapest. After his release he could do nothing but apply for a passport and emigrate. First he tried his luck in Germany, then in Denmark where he took his famous photo of Trotsky, and finally ended up, naturally, in Paris. I got to know him there.

*

I had come to Paris leaving Hitler's Berlin and was working to help others get out of Germany. With all possible conspiratorial caution I had a German comrade to find at

a given address. Two young men were talking in the porter's lodge of the house, and in my mixture of Budapest-Berlin French I managed to stammer out the object of my visit. These two turned out to be Hungarians and one of them was Capa. Although not yet a big shot he was already considered a promising young press photographer, we became inseparable friends.

The development of the French Popular Front, stormy workers meetings, street rows and battles fought in hallways were all subjects for the ubiquitous Capa, and striking photos were published ever more frequently. The outbreak of the Civil War in Spain in

The Budapest *Műsarnok* showed a number of Robert Capa's photos in the spring of 1976.

1936 was his golden opportunity. Pál Aranyossy, a friend and patron who, under the name Falus, edited the French weekly *Regards* commissioned work from Capa and a few weeks later, he published Capa's first photos from Spain. This was the real Capa, always taking shots at close range with absolute disdain for caution. I remember one photo in particular, a house crumbling as it was hit by a bomb or grenade. Later Capa told me he never intended to photograph the house, he hit the trigger instinctively, a reaction of fear.

Another horrifying picture brought him world fame. Franco's troops were advancing north toward Madrid. They met the Republican army at Talavera. But what an army! Absolutely untrained men who could barely fire a gun. Moreover, with typical Spanish individualism and particularism, every fighter obeyed only his own organization. FAI (Federación Anarchista Iberica), CNT (Confederación Nacional des Trabajadores, National Workers Confederation), socialists, communists all obeyed their organizations or parties and not their commanders. The few professional officers who, out of conviction, fought on the side of the Republicans had no easy jog of it.

At Talavera the order went out to lie flat, hold fire until the enemy came within gunshot, and then shoot only on command.

The situation was maddening. The *militianos* did not understand why they had to lie on their stomachs or wait for the enemy without firing. One of the *militianos* cried out in a nervous rage:

"The officers betray us!" Another, a worker with the fierce blood of a Spanish hidalgo, picked up the theme:

"A hero does not crawl on his belly, he stands up and faces his enemy!"

At this he jumped up and ran toward Franco's Foreign Legionnaires. He got the first bullet and Capa was there in the front-lines to capture it.

The world had never seen such a war photo. "The *militiano's* death" circled the

globe and made Capa world-famous. From then on Capa was no longer dependent on *Regards*, he began to appear in the popular mass press.

After a short trip to Paris he went back to Spain, this time with his love and companion, beautiful fair-haired tiny Gerda Taro. She was also a photographer and had emigrated from Germany. And she, of course, was always in the front-lines with Capa—unfortunately. During one advance she lost her balance, fell from the running-board of a truck and an oncoming armoured car crushed her frail body.

Capa came back to Paris grief-stricken. He raged and drank. One day we tried to reason with him.

"Capa, you cannot go on like this, you will go mad and destroy yourself; you have no right to do it. You are needed, you have great things to accomplish."

"Yes, yes," he muttered, "you are right, I must do something."

And he did, in his own way.

He picked up the phone and announced to one or perhaps several papers that he was going to China to photograph the Japanese-Chinese war. He asked for authorization and an advance and booked a plane ticket. Suddenly he was purposeful and active. The next day he disappeared. Within a few weeks his photos were already in the papers. One was more horrible than the last: children with protruding bellies, pregnant mothers in blood and filth; Chinese digging their own graves under the supervision of Japanese soldiers; Japanese soldiers practising bayonet assaults on living Chinese.

So Capa went in search of death but it was never his. Not yet, anyway.

*

One day, when autumn had just come to Paris, we met on the Boulevard St. Michel.

"Hey, man! Here in Paris and you didn't get in touch?"

Capa was sun-tanned. With his usual

florid gestures he told me he had arrived the day before. That was the last I saw of him for a while because I had been ordered out of France. God only knows where he roamed; the *drôle de guerre* certainly had no work to offer Capa. Then, of course, things started to happen and Capa was back in his element. He was everywhere, El Alamein, the disembarkation in Sicily, Normandy where he landed with the first assault, taking snapshots with water up to his waist.

After another ten years we met for the last time, this time in Budapest. The first three-year plan was in progress. I directed Capa to places I thought he would find interesting though not war sites.

He took some photos in the Ganz Shipyard. (Alas only one remains.) Then we set out for Békés County, because he wanted to see a Hungarian rice harvest. He sat sleepily and listlessly in the car and never turned around to look at anything. When we crossed the Tisza Bridge at Algyő Capa asked us to stop for a moment. He looked around and said with a smile:

"Well, I have gone around in the world, seen the Elbe, the Seine, the Rhine, the Po and the Hoang-Ho, but this is the first time in my life I've even seen the Tisza."

We rode on and arrived at the rice-fields where girls in overalls and skirts over their trousers harvested the rice with a rhythmic swaying movement. It was a cloudy and rainy day. Capa took a few shots and we started back. The following afternoon he paid us a visit. He never spoke much about the horrors he'd seen, just, the funny things. He told the story of an American air squadron which had to parachute behind the German lines in Italy. It was an opportunity he could not pass up! So Capa jumped with them but never landed because the cords of his parachute got stuck in a tree and he just hung there helplessly. He did not know whether he was behind the German lines

or not. His cameras and bottle of whisky were suspended from his neck, and since he dared not move he spent the night drinking the bottle around his neck and the next morning, the Americans finally cut him loose.

He also told us that Roosevelt had received him towards the end of the war and asked him what he could do for Capa. Capa answered simply, "A passport". Since leaving Hungary, he had been a "displaced person" without nationality, travelling around the world with a Nansen passport.

"And what will you do now?"

"What can a jobless war reporter do? I'll travel around wherever I can."

"So you are looking for adventure? Do you admit deep down inside that you are an adventurer and need the excitement of war?"

"You're crazy! I hate violence and the thing I hate most is war!"

*

That afternoon I saw Capa for the last time. We were already in the period of cold war and hot peace; indeed some hot wars had already broken out. Capa disappeared as suddenly as he had come. The dirty war was already in progress in Vietnam. This time his horrible and shocking photos for the world press came from there. From the front-lines, as always. He advanced in a jeep. He saw something and jumped out to shoot it at a better angle from the roadside. A mine blew him to pieces.

The French army buried him with the honours reserved for high-ranking officers. They put on his grave the highest French military distinction. More appropriate would have been the epitaph that Géza Gyóni, a Hungarian poet who died in the First World War, wrote prophetically for his own grave:

"Bloody fights spread his fame,
But here lies a soldier of peace."

GYÖRGY MARKOS

GYÖRGY MARKOS — A MEMOIR

He was a retired university professor, doctor of geography, honorary member of the Hungarian Geographic Society and retired senior fellow of the Geographical Research Institute, a geographer and economic geographer of considerable reputation, just as reported in the press on the morrow of his death. Fellow geographers could enumerate the documents—his books, publications, lectures—but these do not complete the image and certainly do not explain the personality of György Markos who left us in his 74th year. When news of his death spread Tuesday afternoon somebody said: "I didn't know him personally but my son whose teacher he had been worshipped him." Nothing could have been more natural: György Markos as university professor remained what he had been all his life, a revolutionary. He fought for the truth without respect for persons. He was a plain speaker and his soul kept the receptivity and ardour of youth.

Nobody knows today how a politician's son, a young gentleman to whom all careers were open, happened to choose a hard and harassed life. He himself did not say much about this, probably because he never contented himself with appearances, he always sought the causes and connections of things and if he found them, he wanted to do something about them. In 1922-23, when, as a student in Vienna he fought against the reactionary students somebody remarked: "Wherever Markos happens to be, something is bound to happen." Quite so.

These few lines cannot describe all events in which he had been "involved" and everything that happened with and around him. A Communist organizer with young workers and students in Budapest who had to flee from the police; "political adventures" in Austria; expulsion back to Hungary; gaol; emigration to Dessau. In Berlin he became a commercial artist and designed propaganda posters as a sideline. Then he had to flee

from the Nazis, with his family, across three frontiers. He spent five years in Paris, worked first for Barbusse's *Le Monde*, then *L'Humanité*. After the collapse of the popular front he moved to Switzerland but was forced to leave and returned home in 1939. One storm led to another. In those years Markos' activity was part of the intellectual resistance, the fight against fascism. Sándor Pethő, editor of the daily *Magyar Nemzet* whose favourite pupil he had been, published in his newspaper his articles and designs. These discussed the balance of forces in the world economy with an unmistakable tendency. Markos' diagrams and charts managed to outwit censorship for a long time. A similar series of articles, including a full ten-page one on the planned economy were printed in the daily *Népszava*. The climax of all these, however, was his book on "Russian industrial development from Peter the Great to Stalin" which could be published in Hungary in that winter of 1940-41 when everything was in a state of suspension while Molotov negotiated in Berlin. The book included the first economic-geography of the Soviet Union in Hungary. The impact was sensational, as had been that of his little brochure on "100 Years of Hungarian Industry", a document written in defence of Hungarian industry, and also as press propaganda for the emerging independence movement.

Difficulties increased with the years. Markos did everything the nation's cause required. In his "Wandering Penitentiary", his poignant, fascinating and true "adventure story", he described the characters who took part in the different enterprises, tragic heroes, people who gave their lives for their country, those who found each other in resistance, others who had never learnt anything and also the vile riff-raff who drove Hungary to its doom. Markos, one of the organizers of the resistance and the Independence Front who had been through many hells,

wrote in this book about the fate towards which Hungarians appeared to be moving, and against which he had rebelled all his life.

I remember that day in the early spring of 1945, when skin and bone, he burst into the newspaper office. He was still the Markos whose hot passion had excited the young ironworkers. "I am alive. We survived. We came from hell and drifted downstream on the Danube with Rajk and others." He was full of hope and energy. I remember our nights of endless discussions, his later outbursts and doubts. I remember the many things he did although he found them difficult. He was journalist, economist, university professor

and scholar, participated in drafting the first three-year plan, he worked always for the better life of Hungarians. I remember a scene in Munich in 1965. A well-known industrialist sat in front of us and boasted of his war-time experiences. "I heard that you, Professor, had been a partisan. What would have happened if we had met at that time?" "I would have shot you"—replied Markos. "What militancy for a man your age!"—the German exclaimed. "Once a fighter, always a fighter"—retorted Markos and this ended the conversation.

Yes, once a fighter, always a fighter. He kept on hoping until death, trusting and fighting for something better.

IMRE CSATÁR

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

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POEMS BY LAJOS KASSÁK, ANDRÁS MEZEI, GÁBOR GÖRGEY

MUSICAL LIFE

FOLK-SONGS OF HUNGARIANS IN RUMANIA

JÁNOS JAGAMAS and JÓZSEF FARAGÓ: *Romániai magyar népdalok* (Folk-Songs of Hungarians in Rumania), (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1974). 475 pp. In Hungarian.

The Hungarian reading public has just been presented with a book that has been anxiously awaited since work began on it in 1954 by the then Kolozsvár (Cluj) division of the Bucharest Folklore Institute. Today the institute is an independent body of high academic standing, known as the Ethnographic and Folklore Division, and the book presents part of a project that will eventually provide a complete collection of the folk-songs of Hungarians living in Rumania. Those who know the work of Bartók and Kodály will understand what such an undertaking means to folk music research, especially since the present work covers the music of the wealthiest but most backward regions of all Hungarian-speaking peoples.

Besides the Székely regions explored by Bartók and Kodály, the collection includes songs from the middle section of Transylvania, known as *Mezőség*, and from Moldavia which is here explored in more depth and detail than at any time since the 30s. The publication includes over 10,000 pieces and brings together material that was relatively inaccessible to Hungarian research. No wonder we have been waiting impatiently for the work, and without appearing to be unappreciative, we must say that, since col-

lecting stopped in 1955 (when the Institute's doors were closed to the public) the book would have had that much more of an impact had it been published by the end of the 50s. Nevertheless, individual initiative, official exchanges and joint collecting projects did make it possible over the years to remain in touch with the folk-songs and dances of the Hungarians in Rumania. Even more important, this same period produced the extremely important book of Zoltán Kallós.*

Thus, song material which in the 50s would have been quite sensational is today for the most part already known and accepted as an integral part of Hungarian culture—this is especially true of the songs of the Hungarians living in the high valleys of the Gyimes region in the Transylvanian Carpathian mountains. Individual research is always quicker, and this project suffered from particular institutional hazards including the musical editor János Jagamas's decision to leave the institute during the time of preparation, while the institute itself was reorganized—and renamed—three times.

Still, 20 years' delay has not made the collection superfluous. Though late, the volume is meticulously done and provides important information about the traditions of folk music and folk poetry of the Hungarians in Rumania. It contains 350 songs all carefully recorded, which was not an easy

* See the same author's "Zoltán Kallós, Ballad Collector," No. 59.

undertaking with the songs from Transylvania and Moldavia where the characteristic free, rubato style has a richly ornamented effect that requires work of great skill and immense patience to provide detailed and accurate recording. This work can hardly be appreciated by any but the Hungarian experts in the field, for (since Bartók) work of such detail is rarely done by anyone but Hungarian folklorists.

The volume is of great significance, not only for the choice of songs, but also for the attempt to indicate the complete material from which it was chosen. The most important types of songs were selected—those that are either variations on a very rare song or, on the basis of new research, are considered relatively well-known in a region but were not part of the earlier collections of Bartók, Kodály and Lajtha. For the most part the volume is comprised of these types of songs, not the widely known "Székely songs."

Perhaps even more important are the footnotes detailing the range covered by each type of song, as well as such detailed information as the number of versions in the archives, the range, and the differences that can be described without reference to the musical scores. The footnotes also provide information as to the specific "function" of a melody: whether it is sung at a wedding or used for ballads, or perhaps for only a single ballad.

There are also separate notes about the texts, for which József Faragó, the director of research in Hungarian balladry in Transylvania, was responsible. In this area, since folk poetry cannot claim any outstanding researchers of the likes of Bartók and Kodály, the editors were forced to find their own way. Whereas musical notes can be condensed almost to a formula for clear and precise information for musicians, Faragó was forced to give only general information. He was able to rely, though, upon some previous ballad studies, which proved to be very important, since the Transylvanian and Moldavian treasure house of contemporary

BÓG A BÁRÁNY A NAGY HEGYEN
Lakodalmas

Rubato ♩ = 192

(m) Bóg a bá-rány a nagy hé-gyén, (m)
Bóg a bá-rány a nagy há-gyén, (hej de)
Vi-szik a ró-zsá-mat kéd-den, (m)
Vi-szik a ró-zsá-mat kéd-den,
1) A 2. ver-sen:
(de) Bú-csú-zak el u-lu-já-ra.

2. S megyek a siratójába,
Meyek a siratójába,
(høj de) Búcsúzzak el utójjára,
(de) Búcsúzzak el utójjára.

Magyarlapád, Mg 113c. Ez.: B. Sipos Márton 31 éves.
1955. V. Szl.

"The lamb cries on the mountain"—
wedding song

Hungarian ballads includes numerous, important versions of classical ballads. The descriptions of the range and variations of such works are essential information on the history of the ballads.

The main advantage of this publication compared to other collections of folk music is that it elaborates melody and text together and with the same emphasis. Another advantage is that there are various kinds of musical signs (according to form and meter, cadenza, scale) with the help of which the musically inclined folklorist can find and identify any type of song within minutes. It is indeed a volume of the old and new folk music of the Hungarians in Rumania that is both comprehensive and convenient.

Furthermore, comparing it with similar

KASZÁRNYA, KASZÁRNYA

Rubato ♩ = 118

1. Ha-szár- (á)nya ka- szárnyya, sű- rű ab-lak(lá)van raj- la sor- já- ba?

2. sű- rű jáb- lak van(lá) raj- ta, de sor- já- ba.

3. sű- rű jáb- lak lá, hi- ceg (á)szél(á) fű bé raj- ta, bé raj- ta.

4. sű- tél (á) az éj- szá- ka, sé- hol sé- ta- lá- lom a ba- bó- mat.

(1) AZ vsz- ban: 2) AZ vsz- ban: 3) AZ vsz- ban: 4) AZ vsz- ban:

(ál) (lál) (lri) (lri)

2. Zöld erdőben jártam(á), gyöngyvirágot láttam, de sorjába,
(sá) Barna kislány gyomlálgatja magát.
Gyomlád, kislány, áldjon meg a Téremtő, Téremtő,
Téerted halok meg, némsokára jelzár a tétető.

Béltányosváralja, Mg 70d. E.z.: gúz. Jancsó Sándorné Orbán Róza 30 éves.
1954. VIII. JJ.

Soldier's love song

collections from 50 or 60 years ago, we can see certain important cultural processes at work, like the gradual spreading of "betyár" songs from Hungary to Transylvania and Moldavia. This process can be precisely dated to the second half of the last century. At the time of the first collections such songs could hardly be found at all in Transylvania, and in Moldavia they were absolutely unknown even in the 30s. Today they are commonly found throughout Transylvania and in parts of Moldavia.

There has also been a wider dispersal of a few tunes characteristic of the Hungarian Great Plain. Thus, the songs and the newer genres originating in the central portion of Hungarian-speaking areas—the Great Plain and Transdanubia—continually flow through

the river valleys into mountainous Transylvania and, further, beyond the Carpathians to Moldavia. In Transylvania the new songs are usually set to either a marching or dance rhythm and sung in the ornamented, slightly rubato manner of the older songs, thus preserving their own traditions.

"Archaicized" in this way, the new songs often have a special beauty in the old style of singing, although it comes at the expense of their original nature. The "new" music of the day always develops from the center and gradually reaches more distant lands where it mixes with the native traditions that will probably adapt forever. This volume shows the process at work with "old pastoral songs" from Székely villages, places where Bartók and Kodály found the most beautiful pieces of the old Székely folk music, but never any of these songs because they are originally from the Great Plain.

At the same time, the authors can only speculate about similar processes that might have taken place in the past, and are by now fully assimilated. Ballads of the Great Plain might have spread to outlying regions in the 14th and 15th centuries, and then began to die out in their place of origin, in the face of new tastes and new genres, while the more durable Transylvanian traditions then preserved this "old" music as its own. Luckily there are also newer, clearer processes that reveal kinetic laws of popular folk traditions, and these too can be traced in the new collection.

In sum, it is a book that follows the best traditions of Hungarian scholarship—well-selected, excellently edited and thoroughly researched. It is an indispensable aid to research and a priceless treasure for culture in general—especially that of the Transylvanian Hungarians. For this we can be extremely grateful to the editors, their colleagues, Kriterion Press in Bucharest and to all who had a hand in its preparation and publication.

Lajos Vargyas

ZSOLT DURKÓ ON THE CONTINUITY OF MUSIC

Zsolt Durkó was born at Szeged, southern Hungary, in 1934. He started to study musical composition in his native town, and is now one of the most distinguished and best known of the group of Hungarian composers called the "Thirties". The group takes its name from the fact that the composers were all born in the 1930s, they pursue common goals and appeared before the public virtually simultaneously.

They succeeded a generation of composers that were muzzled by the dogmatic cultural policy of the years following the Second World War. These older composers came rather late to the new European musical forms and objectives, to which some could adapt more easily than others. In any case, the generation of the "Thirties" embarked on careers under more fortunate circumstances. With fewer restrictions, they orientated themselves more freely to the traditions of both their own country and the whole world.

At the Budapest Academy of Music where he is now professor of musical composition, Durkó was first a pupil of the excellent teacher and composer Ferenc Farkas. From 1961 to 1963 Durkó studied at the masters' school of Goffredo Petrassi in Rome. In Italy he became familiar with the most important musical currents of the time. With this exposure and a thoroughly professional training he found a form of expression, an individual approach, which very ably combines Hungarian national traditions with European influences.

Durkó's music is rooted in the Bartók tradition, without being heavily overshadowed by the great predecessor. His compositions are always suggestive; his construction bespeaks the work of a skilled professional. His attachment to traditions, however, is not simply a continuation of the Bartókian heritage: Durkó strives to re-create the art of old Hungary. This tendency makes itself

felt not in some archaic tone, for it is a conscious creative process: it is developed as a Hungarian tradition, modern in tone and European in idiom.

The tradition is not even always genuine: the poetic world born of Durkó's imagination comes to life so vividly and with such persuasiveness that it seems as though it really existed. The clue to such tradition-creating is that the composer relies upon authentic fragments of Hungarian history and old Hungarian literature to build and shape his own world, thus practically reconstructing an imaginary primitive musical tradition. He works hard to resuscitate the voice of the very first experiments in such a way that his dreamt-up forms sometimes become virtual continuations of the roots he has also imagined and brought to the surface.

Durkó is a prolific composer whose works indicate a uniform conception executed in different ways. His technique ensures the realization of his ideas through a synthesis of orthodox materialism and an aversion to puritanical expression. His artistic, one might as well say, chiselled music is technically perfect; yet his work is not overwhelmed by technique to the detriment of poetic equalities of thought. Characteristic of his method is to integrate a proliferation of microorganisms into larger musical units. Once having found his own technique, he ever more freely and consciously builds on Hungarian ideas in his music. To use a definition by the critic György Kroó, his banner bears the motto "*musicien hongrois*", and he gradually renders his own international idiom into Hungarian. This Magyarisation appears not only in such concrete titles as, *Una Rapsodia Ungherese*; it is evident not just in his emphasis on instruments like the clarinet and the cymbalom, but, most important it is embodied in the compositions and in the heart of the musical tradition.

In Hungary Durkó is counted among the

prominent personalities in contemporary composing. His pieces are performed at international musical competitions, and commissions from outstanding Hungarian and foreign ensembles help to propagate his more recent works. His compositions are made available to the concert halls of the world through joint publication by Boosey and Hawkes and the Hungarian publishers, Editio Musica.

His string quartet No. I was awarded third prize in 1967 at the international composers' competition in Montreal, and his string quartet No. II placed second at the Béla Bartók international competition in Budapest in 1970. He won first prize at the Unesco composers' tribune in Paris in 1975 with his oratorio set to the music of the oldest continuous, written Hungarian text, *Halotti beszéd* (Funeral Oration) dating from about 1200. The same composition which follows the form and inflection of Bartók's *Cantata Profana*, won the double prize of the critics and the public at the 1976 new musical competition sponsored by Hungarian Radio.

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To Durkó we put the question of whether the new Hungarian music has any distinctive features, and whether one can hope that a Hungarian school of composers will be recognized internationally.

He answered in his vigorous way, "Woe betide the people without poetry! To this I should add: further woe unto them if they have no folk music of poetic value, or if all they have is folk music. What is more, all this is even more true the other way round: a thousand times woe if music and poetry have no receptive medium, no audience. Folk music is only part—though a very important part—of the music of the community. This music, below the superficial layer, is still fertile enough today to exert an influence on the Hungarian musical art. Our musical community is held together not

only by linguistic and art-music symbols, but also by common features of the folk-music substratum as a latent ideal beauty. Despite this effect the new music is multifarious. It comes from the radical innovator-composer and a few musical friends on the one side, and a public at least fifty years behind the times on the other—this is as plausible an explanation as any.

"If today's music developed further under such simple laws that composers were interested only in things that were radically new, they would have too easy a time of it. The only trouble is that nowadays radically new music from the fourth or even the tenth wave is immediately understood by a relatively wide public circle. If the public rejects it, it does so not because it is modern, nor even because of its peculiar national stylistical characteristics, but because it is empty... If it is accepted, it is for the musical experience, the public listens to music just for the sake of that experience. Regarding national characteristics in terms of style, their value comes through in the work of art, as the relationship between mother tongue and artistic poetry."

Q: Thus there are indeed peculiarly Hungarian characteristics of musical composition, which are shaped by the common experience of folk music among other things. But I am asking whether the community of Hungarian composers does or can fit in with contemporary music around the world.

A: By all means. More accurately it preserves its individual features—the common musical fertiliser bred on a common folk-music and historical tradition—the greater is its active force; of course it depends on the individual talents of the composers concerned. Malraux's comment can be applied to music as well, that the artist imagines that there is an ideal museum which preserves practically all works of art of the past.

Q: In modern music there are trends which seem to ignore this imaginary museum; like the research which has explored

the music of past centuries in order to make it accessible to all.

A: Very true. *Weltmusik*, the idea of one universally valid musical style, stresses its independence of linguistic and national communities. The new technical and almost technological perspective of *Weltmusik* composition avoids any contact with music traditions. Central to its scheme of composition is the constant and total renewal of the musical material. It stresses its distance from existing music and in fact criticises all that European music has produced up till now. The orchestra as an apparatus is considered obsolete, electronical musical equipment is also no longer adequate. Compositions are no longer worked out in detail, it is sufficient to provide a blueprint. The guiding principle is that music is no more than order itself. As far as I'm concerned, however, this is a mistake: order—strict and precise order—does exist in music, but everything that is orderly is not music.

Q: These endeavours result, on the one hand, in happenings that push music to the background and, on the other, in compositions that last for hours but go nowhere. Hearing such works makes one afraid sometimes that the traditions of European music are now lost.

A: Fortunately, there is also a trend in modern music that emphasises continuity, organic development. It also produces a unique new music which has nothing to do with the conservative, dusty ways of thinking of the past. Its modernity lies in the modernity of development. But behind this there lives the formative force of musical traditions

both in this country and abroad, in the course of the history of music and at present, too.

Q: A few years ago composers and critics alike sought and evaluated the use of new techniques in the art of composition. Quite lately this aspect of appraisal has changed: it has become of secondary importance, while attention has been focused rather on the work as a whole.

A: The mass of musical information has practically killed our interest in technique, and today we are no longer surprised at anything, not even if the effect is as obtrusive as a new toothpaste ad. It is as though we had lost our intellectual susceptibility as a result shock treatment. No musical moment, however interesting, can compensate for the lack of construction. The continuity of European music is the continuity, among other things, of musical construction itself: a claim for detail to build up the whole work and, conversely, for the whole work to contain all the details organically.

Q: So you believe in the importance of construction?

A: Music without construction is boring. The viable trend of Hungarian music has always found a spiritual affinity with the dynamic qualities of other European music. I find that realisation is even more true today than it may have been in the recent past. It is natural therefore that aspects of appraisal have also changed. Going through the rich cycle of musical intonation, the works which speak to the fullness of human life still do so in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

MÁRIA FEUER

BÉLA BARTÓK JR. ON HIS FATHER

Rákoshegy, at present Budapest's District XVIII, was half garden-city and half village at the beginning of the century. This was where Bartók lived in the 1910s, and where Béla Bartók Jr. spent his childhood. The younger Béla Bartók, the composer's son from his first marriage, was an engineer with the Hungarian State Railways, worked in the Designing Office UVATERV and taught at the Technical University in Budapest. He is now retired.

*

Béla Bartók jr.: At the time we moved there, Rákoshegy was a holiday settlement of the community of Rákoskeresztúr. The family of the violinist Vecsey* lived in the community. It was from them that my father got the idea of renting a house in this quiet settlement surrounded by gardens. When I was born—in 1910—our home was on the Teréz körút, today Lenin körút.

Q: What was the arrangement of the rooms in the Rákoshegy house? How did the family live here?

A: One of the four rooms—which we could also enter from the verandah—was my father's study. This was where he wrote a few very significant works, and my mother, Márta Ziegler, copied his music manuscripts here. My father was quite fond of the verandah, as well as the garden that belonged to the house, and its environment. He frequently worked out in the open, he loved the sunshine, and took great pleasure in it. . . . Some of the pictures which we have seen and spoken about here were taken by Zoltán Kodály, and have already been published in Bartók picture-books.

Q: What kind of father was Bartók? How did he bring you up?

A: He seized upon every moment to

* Ferenc Vecsey (1893-1935) one of the famous Hungarian violin virtuosos of the period.

teach me. It was always most important to him that a person should never learn mechanically. He liked to demonstrate everything, to make it understood. For instance, when he worked out in the garden, and I was playing close by, he always called my attention to some interesting, unusual beetle, or some other phenomenon of nature. He always talked over my reading material with me; he took out maps when I read Verne books, for example, and together we traced the journeys of the characters.

Q: Who visited you at Rákoshegy? For example, whom do we see in this picture?

A: My parents and Mrs. Zoltán Kodály, and one of the two children is me. This photo was taken by Kodály.

Q: Was the conversation between Madame Emma and Mrs. Bartók, Márta Ziegler, about music?

A: Not so much about music, but rather about people's problems, because the war greatly depressed everyone. It was difficult to get supplies because of the ration system. My father went only twice a week to the Academy of Music with quite some difficulties, but Kodály was there constantly, so that he was almost his "local representative", and whenever there was any kind of ration stamp, or boot sole distribution, Kodály took care of it, and saw to it that my father also received his share. . . .

Q: In your recollection who visited there most often?

A: Egisto Tango*, for example, came out several times, particularly when the two stage works, the opera and the ballet were being written. Tango enjoyed himself here, and my recollections of him are pleasant,

* Egisto Tango (1873-1951). Italian conductor, was a conductor of La Scala in Milan and the Metropolitan in New York, and between 1913 and 1919 of the Budapest Opera House. He conducted the Budapest premières of *Bluebeard's Castle* and *The Wooden Prince*.

too. For instance, I received a large paint box from him which I still have today. Once Márk Vedres, the sculptor, was out with his family. We were together a number of times with Béla Balázs, with whom my father liked to take walks. On the occasion of such strolls he would indulge in his passion for collecting insects.

Q: When Bartók went on his walks did he take with him an insect or plant handbook?

A: No, not that, but he took considerable equipment with him. First of all an insect catching net, and then a box into which he placed the animals or insects he captured. He always killed the insects with chloroform or some other kind of drug; he was very careful not to cause it any kind of suffering. He loved animals very much. Here at Rákoshegy we always kept a cat. My father would often entice the little kittens before the mirror to watch them as they looked for what was behind the mirror. We went to the Zoo every year. In 1914 folk-song singing Rumanian peasants from Hunyad County were here as his guests at Rákoshegy, and he also took them once to the Zoo, where they looked with aversion at animals they had never seen before. My father found great enjoyment in being able to show such things to his guests.

Q: Those were the years in which the two Bartók stage works were written, when Béla Balázs came out to visit, and for which he wrote the texts. Did they also work on them here?

A: It is certain that out here they talked over what was to be done. They would have to wait with *Bluebeard*, it was completed earlier, but its first performance was later. The preparations for *The Wooden Prince* were done here, Balázs came out to tell my father about the problems and difficulties. In memory of his acquaintance with me Béla Balázs* dedicated one of his puppet plays to

* Béla Balázs (1884—1949), writer, poet, film theoretician, author of the libretto of *The Wooden Prince*. See No. 11.

me, "The Fisherman and the Silver of the Moon", which appeared in one volume with the text of *The Wooden Prince*. That was the first time in my life my name appeared in print. This was around 1916. Naturally he dedicated *The Wooden Prince* to Bartók. The drawings of "The Fisherman and the Silver of the Moon" puppet play were done by Róbert Berény. In those years my father sat as a model for Róbert Berény, which was rare. Three pictures were done of him in this way. The Berény picture is now in America, but there has been discussion about trying somehow to regain it for Hungary.

Q: What role did Béla Balázs play in staging the ballet?

A: He worked a great deal on it, and he found in Tango an excellent help. They succeeded in staging the work in such a way that in fact my father won acknowledgment from the press and the public in the years after the première. It was a source of fresh encouragement for him, that he was not working in vain.

He had great esteem for Tango, he sought to assist him in every way, not only as a conductor and musician, but also as a foreign citizen endangered by the outbreak of the war. Tango might have been interned as an Italian citizen, since Italy and the Monarchy were in a state of war. My father also helped Tango obtain Hungarian citizenship, and thereby avoid much harassment and danger.

Q: We know very little of this kind of help by Bartók. This is one instance of it. Not long ago we unearthed information that he had also helped Schönberg obtain exemption from military service.

*

Q: Did the family know just what composition Bartók happened to be working on?

A: Yes. Although I was still a small child, even I knew about the stage works. This was where he composed *The Miraculous Mandarin*, he only did the orchestration somewhere else. I also knew he was arranging folk-songs.

On the one hand, I listened to his talks about them, and on the other, sometimes performing artists visited us, to whom my father showed his recordings.

I knew quite certainly that the members of the Waldbauer String Quartet were here separately, and also together. I recall Waldbauer and Kerpely were here in uniform, being on war service. The Second String Quartet was completed on the occasion of a visit like this.

Q: What did the family see of the process of composition?

A: We had an opportunity to observe the writing of the scores, because owing to the poor lighting and other circumstances caused by the war I wrote my lessons at the same table where my father worked on his manuscripts. We had the illumination of two or three candles, which were themselves not easy to obtain, and were of poor quality. This left such a deep impression on my father that around 1935, when the Second World War was imminent, he bought a large quantity of candles so that if a war broke out again he could avoid difficulties of this nature.

Q: Bartók went from here to the Academy of Music to teach several times a week. Didn't the war years make it even more difficult for him to commute?

A: Yes, it was only possible to commute by train, but train transportation steadily deteriorated, and because of this my father would often stay in town for a day or two, either with my mother's parents, or with the Kodály's. I have kept an interesting memento, a verification, which was made out by the station-master of the Rákosliget Station on September 10, 1917, which reads: "We hereby verify, that train No. 1513 was so crowded that it was impossible to board. Rákosliget, signed Madarász."

It was typical of my father's meticulousness that he asked for such a verification. I don't believe he was ever asked to produce it, unless it was for conscription or some such matter. That is possible because my

father was called up for military duty three or four times during the war. But in the end he was never conscripted, because he was found unfit on account of physical weakness. His weight was around fifty kilogrammes, sometimes not even that much.

Several people remarked, it is unbelievable how a man with a bird-like, light physique such as his could play the piano so robustly.

*

We are continuing our conversation at the Academy of Music, where Bartók taught from 1907 still 1934.

In Room No. 14 of the Academy of Music, in the so-called Bartók Room, the instruments are not the same, but their arrangement and the view from the windows remain much as they were in the past. Béla Bartók jr. has brought a few art objects here, so that with their help he might describe, or show what Bartók's features, his appearance was like.

A: In my opinion he was different from these representations. I have such subjective recollections of my father that I observe these works of art first and foremost from the standpoint of the extent to which they portray the man with whom I lived for thirty years. In my view Géza Csorba succeeded best in this. I have brought this statue, done in 1930.

Among the other statues, a large part of which were done after my father's death, here is the figure by Dezső Erdei. I received it a few years ago from the sculptor's widow. This, too, is quite life-like. I also sat for some statues because I resemble my father very closely.

A major shortcoming of every statue is that the eyes are always to some extent blind. My father's eyes were so characteristic of him that if they are not portrayed true to life then the whole work is alien to me. His eyes were brown, not blue, as some people claim. In the Council Room of the Academy of Music there is also a painting

of him, unfortunately with blue eyes. This is a mistake, because he had brown eyes.

Q: We have spoken about one painting, that of Róbert Berény. Please tell us something about the others, too.

A: ...István Vendrődy's work was finished in 1905, and a painting by Ervin Voit, a teacher at the Industrial Drafting School, my father's first cousin, was done in 1921. Ervin Voit was about the same age as my father, they were together much of the time in their childhood. He saw in my father not only the model, but also the man. The focal point of his painting—from whatever angle one viewed it—was the eyes.

Q: Ervin Voit not only painted a representative portrait of Bartók, and not only designed lovely, interesting title-pages for his early works, but he also painted the insects Bartók collected.

A: Yes, a picture like this was painted for my father as a gift around the middle of the 1910s, and then, when in 1931 at the age of fifty my father received the French Legion of Honour, Ervin Voit again drew two, also humorous, pictures: he portrayed my father as a knight, in French dress.

Q: These were caricatures within the family, but numerous other caricatures were made and published about Bartók. Was he fond of humour?

A: Yes, he liked it, and caricatures, too, interested him. In general he had a far greater sense of humour than was thought by people remote from him. Even if he did not immediately tell jokes to strangers he met. This was shown, among other things, by the caricatures, and every manifestation that made life humorous. My mother told me that once at the Opera—which they rarely attended—they saw a performance of *Cavalleria Rusticana*. My father disappeared from the box, and when the large crowd of extras came onto the stage, to my mother's great surprise she suddenly saw my father among them in a red cap... When my father had gone down, he saw that the extras were gathering for the scene and he simply

walked in with them, and spent a few minutes on the stage. This also shows that he did indeed have a sense of humour...

Q: What did you think of Bartók's mathematical knowledge, and generally of his interest in the exact sciences?

A: He always had excellent grades in mathematics and physics, in contrast to languages, although his grades were never less than good in these, either. He loved to play chess. ...All the technical discoveries which began to accelerate with rushing speed in our century, already in his lifetime, interested him. For instance, the structure of the airplane, the technique of flight, and even radio ...not only as art, but also as technical equipment.

Q: What kind of literature did Bartók give his son to read?

A: At quite an early age he gave me books which in some way developed my knowledge. This picture-book, for example, he gave me when I was four, on Christmas Day, 1914. I have preserved it for more than six decades. The book is written in German, and besides German, the names of the animals are also given in Latin. Where he could my father also wrote the Hungarian names. On each Christmas, and on any occasion whatever, he always bought books, I hardly recall any other kind of gift... He had the series Hungarian Master Writers, which he later gave me as a gift. He had a high regard for the modern poets—among them first of all his contemporary, Ady. For example, on my 20th birthday I received Ady's complete poems. My father always marked birthdays with special care. He did not pay much attention to other dates, but he did to Christmas and birthdays. I received the last letter from him in 1941. It was one he wrote for my birthday, by which time he was in America.

Q: How much time did Bartók have to follow the new Hungarian literature growing up around him? Ady was practically their banner, for both Kodály and him. Béla Balázs was close to him. But meanwhile the

generation of Mórícz and Babits grew up, all of whom would have sought the road to Bartók.

A: My father subscribed to *Nyugat* from the beginning; he was also in contact with its editors and a few of its contributing writers. Thus, among others, with Zsigmond Mórícz, whom we also visited once at Leányfalu. My father bought every book by Mórícz, and Babits's books, too, I received the *Stork Caliph* and other Babits works.

Q: Might we hear something about this, your father's connections with religion?

A: My father was born a Catholic. He attended the Catholic Secondary School in Pozsony, where after the graduation of Dohnányi*—Dohnányi also attended the same school—he played the organ in the Cathedral, the Pozsony Coronation Church, at student masses. He felt the religious duties to be rather rigid. He displayed an interest in the most varied spiritual trends at the beginning of the century; among other reasons, this was why he strove to become a free thinker, and he also strove to convince those in his environment of this. Later he became an adherent of the unitarian faith, primarily because he held it to be the freest, the most humanistic faith. In the everyday sense of the term he was not at all religious, one could say rather that he was a nature lover: he always mentioned the miraculous order of nature with great reverence . . .

Q: What can you tell us about his patriotism?

A: He never gave up his patriotism. He served the brotherhood of all peoples—as an ideal of a higher order. He understood brotherhood to mean that the Hungarians should not be in last place among peoples. Wherever he could help the Hungarians in any way, or heard that the Hungarians

* Ernő Dohnányi (1877–1960), the pianist and composer, music director of the Budapest Academy of Music. He went abroad in 1945, and died in the United States.

achieved anything at all in the world, he was more pleased than if it was news about any other people. He regularly subscribed to the periodical *Magyarosan*** . He fought against everything that was un-Hungarian. At his Academy inauguration when he read his paper on Ferenc Liszt, among various themes he emphasized Liszt's Hungarian character as the most essential—the fact that Liszt was Hungarian, and everybody had to acknowledge it, despite the fact that Liszt did not speak Hungarian. In America he did not feel at home; the Concerto and elsewhere many features indicate his nostalgia for Hungary. He wanted in every way to come home and finish his life here, because he did not emigrate—despite all such legends. He left all his belongings here, and went abroad only for a year; it turned out later that he had to stay longer, and finally he could never return.

Q: What has been your experience, how has Bartók's name grown throughout the world?

A: On my journeys abroad reactions to my name have been varied. For instance, I have been to the United States three times. The first time in 1960, I spent three months in a number of places there, and my name practically never attracted any attention. Five years later I was there with my wife; then I was asked several times whether the name had anything to do with my father's. In 1973 I was on a lecture tour again in the United States, and then, almost without exception, everywhere—even on the Hawaiian Islands—the name seemed familiar. In Japan, in 1964, for example, a minister in a provincial town, after glancing at my call card, immediately remarked: "You have a composer by this name!"

Q: In your home you have preserved many valuable Bartók documents, and even more valuable are those which you preserve in your memory. What plans do you have for these documents?

** Language reform periodical between 1932 and 1949.

A.: Men such as Dezső Keresztury, for example, who recently began a memorial saying that unfortunately he never had an opportunity to know Bartók personally, are rare... Most people say that yes, indeed, they knew him, in fact he was their "friend", and this is the way many legends are born. I would like to refute these legends, and possible erroneous information. I would like

to start a day-to-day account, in which I would write a few lines about every document I possess, stating what period this and this dates from, and if possible accurate to the day. I would like to publish a collection of documents of value as source material, from which musicologists could work for a long time to come.

LÁSZLÓ SOMFAI

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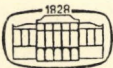
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THEATRE AND FILM

THE QUIDDITY OF HUNGARIAN DRAMA

Is there a Hungarian drama as such? Whether the question sounds absurd or insulting to a Hungarian, it seems quite natural as soon as one starts westward from the Hungarian border. I specify the West because Hungarian drama has been recognized in the East for quite some time. From Vienna to Los Angeles or from Oslo to Johannesburg, "Hungarian drama" consists entirely of one name: "Franz Molnár". The accented "a" (and its pronunciation in English) are properly Hungarian but the Franz betrays the German role in bringing Molnár his world wide recognition.

The name of a new Hungarian, encountered on the stage, in a periodical or perhaps in an anthology, may make sense to a foreigner in an international context but almost certainly not in relation to his Hungarian antecedents. Though no compliment to Hungarian drama, it may well prove to be the appropriate approach even though it results from an ignorance of Hungarian literature.

The Antecedents

For if there is something characteristic of Hungarian drama through the ages, then it is the absence of a continuity of traditions. It always had to start over again, grappling with the new tasks of every successive age

with practically no guidance from the past. Comparative folklore, popular traditions and written records are little more than tantalizing fragments, encouraging interesting conclusions, or shall I say, suppositions, about the nature of Hungarian popular drama—if we can say there was any ancient drama at all. But even if it did exist (as seems likely though as yet not verified beyond all doubt), there is no doubt that it antedates the first written drama relics to survive. This written source, which dates from the early 16th century, transcribes a 10th century mystery play written by a German nun. The transcription was copied or translated into Hungarian by someone obviously unfamiliar with the dramatic form or even with the thought that the text might be staged in his mother tongue. Thus even if ancient pagan Hungarian drama existed in the centuries of nomadic Hungarian migration or in the period between settling into the Carpathian Basin (9th century) and conversion to Christianity early in the 11th century, the church managed to extirpate its traces without introducing the normal Christian substitute of mystery plays.

The Reformation produced a fresh, more realistic dramatic form based on debates about religious belief. It took the form of disputes on theological dogma between the Roman Catholics and Protestants, while later it pitted Calvinists against Anti-

Trinitarians. However childishy abstract they appear to be today, they did represent and make more intelligible the real contemporary dilemmas that people assumed would determine their lives and immortal existence. At the same time they bore the germ of character portrayal and satire. In addition, according to present assumptions at least, they were uniquely Hungarian, for the debates on religious belief did not emerge in this form on either the German, Italian, Dutch or Swiss stage, though of course some foreign theatre, notably the Italian *comedia dell' arte*, did have an influence.

These initiatives bore immediate results: in the second half of the 16th century three new Hungarian dramas gave the people hope at the very time that the central part of Hungary, the largest area of the country, was being subdued by the Turks, who were destined to stay for 150 years. The first of the three dramas is Péter Bornemisza's *Electra* (1558), an adaptation from Sophocles, but set in contemporary Hungary. Thus the fate of the Atrides was transformed into the authentic portrayal of the decaying medieval Hungary and done with remarkable artistic power. Some ten years later (about 1565) there came an anonymous political pamphlet in dialogue form, *Comoedia Balassi Menyhárt árultatásáról* (Comedy about the Betrayal of Menyhart Balassi), which was most likely intended to be staged. The portrayal of the characters is surprisingly mature, with devastating satirical elements in it.

A generation later, at the turn of the century (1589), Bálint Balassi wrote a pastoral play, *Szép magyar komédia* (Pleasant Hungarian Comedy). The most important and talented lyric poet of the Hungarian Renaissance, here adopts the new pastoral genre that was very popular in Italy. It is in fact a successful work worthy of a real poet, pouring his lyrical ideas into the characters and reflections on contemporary life, the world and human relations.

However, all these were little known in their own age, and there is no information about whether they were staged. True enough, a country divided into three parts (Transylvania under native princes, Northern and Western Hungary under the Habsburgs and the middle of the country under the Turks) was not conducive to a flourishing native theatre, as urbanization stopped and the people struggled for their independence. All that survived for centuries was so-called school-drama in church—educational institutions and intended strictly for didactical purposes (especially after the Reformation). Hungarian drama in the Enlightenment was confined to books, rather than the stage because Hungarian professional theatre hardly existed as such at the time. The theatre was the preserve of clergymen intent on improving morals, with plays staged in church halls and acted by students.

The demand for a national drama arose only as part of the movement to protect and modernize the Hungarian language, which in turn was derived from the rise of nationalism; the professional Hungarian theatre was recognized as an important force in these new developments. The first professional Hungarian company, which was established in 1790, operated for six years in the face of enormous difficulties, including strong competition from the German-language theatre. In 1835 the National Theatre was opened in Pest, and in the 45 years since 1790, theatrical performances had spread throughout Hungary either as standard theatres or travelling companies.

This was the age of Romanticism, the first third of the 19th century; and since then Hungary has had a continuous national theatre tradition in both the stage and the literary form that feeds the theatre, i.e. the drama. Here indeed marks the source of Hungarian drama traditions, the period from which Hungary pursued the path, vogues and trends of European theatre either abreast of it or lagging at worst not far behind.

The fact is that the drama and the stage have always in Hungary been combined with the cause of the nation have meant that debates on the theatre were always part of the larger debates about the national character. That is why the arguments about stage, theatre and drama get so heated and passionate out of all proportion to the actual questions raised.

"Eternal" Romanticism

Romanticism left its marks on all of Hungarian drama. The first Hungarian classical drama, *Bánk Bán* (1815) by József Katona (1791-1830), based on a bloody event in early 13th century Hungary, is a product of Romanticism in its entire approach and depiction of characters and events. And for that matter, it was written at the appropriate time, the second decade of the 19th century. The first Hungarian dramatic romance, *Csongor and Tünde* (1830) by the great Hungarian Romantic poet Mihály Vörösmarty (1800-1855) is another stage-worthy piece even today: Still it conveys more in the reading than on stage, with its specific mixture of romantic enthusiasm and disappointment, its unique blending of several folk tale motifs and, at the same time, its philosophical heights reflecting the essence of contemporary emotions and thinking. Romanticism also exerted its influence on *The Tragedy of Man* (1860), a classical drama of the highest philosophical standards which Imre Madách (1823-1864) did not originally write for the stage. It was a philosophical poem presenting the history of man as the struggle between God and Lucifer for the soul of man. When Madách wrote it, it would have been technically impossible to stage, but some twenty years later when it had its first performance, it attracted capacity audiences and has ever since—whether presented indoors or (as has been done spectacularly) in the open air. *The Tragedy of Man* expresses in majestic dramatic strength

the disappointed Romanticism of the 1860's spilling over into positivist and evolutionist historical philosophy, as outlined and elaborated with exceptionally attractive and substantial poetic strength.

Incidentally, something characteristic of these three pieces, which can be considered the peaks of a remarkable and scenic mountain range, is the richness of thinking and emotions in contrasts to the poverty of form. It is a problem common to virtually all Hungarian drama, which since the 30's of the last century has seen a sharp distinction between "poet" and "craftsman". The unhealthy and harmful dualism has created traditions that prevailed practically to the present day. And it has been most striking in the periods when real poetry has been absent from the stage; the craftsmen are extremely good at following the latest fashion but their imitations of German or French dramas fade quickly and nothing sustains them once the novelty is gone. This applies to virtually all plays written in the last three decades of the 19th century.

However, the same period saw the development of one of the most specifically Hungarian genre—a particular combination of singing and music set in a peasant milieu with a real or pseudo-conflicts (the latter in the majority) which are always happily resolved. Opponents are reconciled, lovers united, and fathers forgive their children because, after all, in the idyllic rural world everything falls into order and peace reigns. The German-Austrian Volksstück and romantic popular comedies are obvious relatives of this sort of play. The interesting thing about them is that definite dramatic elements were evident in them from the beginning of the genre in the 1840's but disappeared after the 1849 defeat of the anti-Habsburg War of Independence. Idyllic scenes of country life supplanted everything else. A genre that would have been suitable for tackling the problems of life instead played down any difficulties as characters,

dressed in the Hungarian national colours, falsified life in gay song and dance.

It must be remembered that up to and including the period between the two world wars, Hungary was an agricultural country. The peasantry constituted the overwhelming majority of the population, and though a realistic portrayal of rural and peasant life characterised the plays of the 1830's and 1840's, they were eliminated and replaced by pseudo-folk songs sung in a pseudo-operetta style. In the early years of the 20th century the peasantry and the inherent conflicts of peasant life had to be virtually rediscovered for the stage.

The Twentieth Century

The opening years of the twentieth century, or more exactly the first decade and a half, have gone down in history as one of the unsurpassable golden periods of Hungarian literature and Hungarian intellectual life in general. This applies to the drama as well. The fifteen years in question saw dozens of exciting experiments and initiatives. Unfortunately the theatrical milieu and the theatre-going audience at the time had not as yet reached the level attained by writers and their literature. Smooth-spoken glibness had an easier time of it than real gems of unpolished talent. Thus Ferenc Molnár, a witty and gifted playwright without deeper artistic merit (and a host of followers even less talented) rose to world fame, while Zsigmond Móricz, for instance, a genius at prose, had nothing on the stage but disappointment, failure and unreasonable compromises; and Béla Balázs, one of the librettists of Béla Bartók, left a promising dramatic career, only later to achieve a world-wide reputation as a film theoretician.

The period between the wars brought a major setback for Hungarian intellectual life as a whole, and the recovery was both difficult and slow. The counter-revolution that followed the defeat of the Republic of

Councils in 1919 was also hostile to every artistic endeavour that attempted anything new or had any individuality—even if not overtly political. This kept the Hungarian theatre from any avantgarde experimentation, while the romantic costume-play considerably outlasted its natural life-span, real success went always to the slick epigones instead of the original talents, especially if the play emanated problem-free joviality and the idea of the landed gentry as the true leader of the nation. Nothing is more characteristic but the fact that in the 1930's neoromantic plays flourished on the Hungarian stage—almost half a century after their initial success in Europe and Hungary. At the same time, a new literary initiative was developing, in facing the problems of the lower social strata, above all of the village and peasantry. Especially after the 30's such playwrights as Áron Tamási tried to combine living folklore traditions, surrealist drama and metaphysics, while László Németh raised slightly abstract moral problems by putting intellectuals in historic and contemporary settings and giving them subjects of more philosophical than dramatic interest. Whether the main character was Pope Gregory VII or a Hungarian doctor in the provinces, Németh presented a great man well ahead of his age who was misunderstood in his deaf and hostile surroundings.

The liberation of Hungary in 1945 brought about a fundamental change, but at the beginning the theatre just picked up from where it had left off in the early 1940's. However, socialist realism and the theory and practice of the Soviet theatre—which both the Hungarian public and experts had been completely isolated—brought a considerable change.

Socialist realism in its narrowest interpretation as outlined by Zhdanov was the only line tolerated and brought forth only one real Hungarian play-writing talent in the 1940's and 1950's: Gyula Háty. After the war he returned home from his Moscow exile, though his first and most significant stage successes dated back to Weimar Germa-

ny shortly before the Nazis came to power.

The development of the socialist Hungarian drama in all its diversity began after 1960 and has progressed remarkably over the past decade and a half.

Today's Situation

One could muse about the fact: what brought Hungarian drama to this most fertile and colourful period in the last two decades; and why now for the first time in its history its best works are produced in major world languages—that is, how it managed to get abreast of world standards without abandoning its special Hungarian features, national character or socialist conviction: in fact it has actually given more prominence to them. Argument and persuasion replacing bans and prohibitions in the political sphere has obviously played a major part. But even more decisive seems to be the simple fact that in its long history Hungary has had only one or two such long spells of peace. It is as though the Hungarians were forced to perform more on the historical than the theatrical stage. But now sailing on smoother waters at last, they can put on the stage all the talent that was earlier confined to the bastions of forts, to barricades, or to rostrums and soap-boxes.

Less interest in concrete aspects of everyday life than in intellectual generalities is more or less characteristic of today's Hungarian play-writing. A good example of this is *Galileo*, written by László Németh back in 1953. One of the outstanding works of the period of "thaw", it presents several authentic elements of Galileo's life and scientific activities, while focussing on the more general and exciting theme of scientists' responsibility towards their age and specifically towards the power that dominates the age. Using personal pain and subjective zeal as his tools, Németh builds the more general objective argument that great spirits cannot be silenced. Force or threats cannot prevent their students from carrying on from

their teachings because history makes people perform what is necessary for *its* progress. (It is only coincidental that Németh wrote this play almost at the same time as Brecht's *Galileo's Life*; the two plays are characteristic of the difference of the two dramatists.)

Two other notable playwrights began working in the 30s: Gyula Illyés and Endre Illés. They too excelled in an intellectual approach that, while attracted to problems of power and morals, did not result in a talent for conjuring up plots and intrigues. Illyés is internationally known as a poet—in fact he is considered to be one of the greatest contemporary poets, not only in Hungary but also around the world—and especially in France to which he is attached by close and long personal ties. His play *The Favourite* (*Kegyenc*), is both an adaptation and completely original at the same time. The adaptation is from a play by László Teleki, an ill-fated Hungarian statesman of remarkable talent. A romantic tragedy, it proved to be a failure when first produced in 1841. The adaptation takes the original plot and setting in Rome in its decline. The hero has to offer up his wife in order to destroy a tyrannical emperor. He accomplishes the feat but perishes with the emperor. It is as though Camus were staging *Lorenzaccio*—Camus as a poet committed to the socialist world in which he is living. Illyés examines the problems of faithfulness and unfaithfulness, mission and betrayal, goals and the failure to reach them, all done through the multiple refraction of the costumes and history of the Roman Empire after its heyday.

The older generation has inspired a continuing interest in the questions of power and responsibility, their historical dimensions and current implications. One of the most substantial and significant Hungarian tragedies of recent years is *Csillag a máglyán* (*Star on the Stake*) by András Sütő, a Hungarian author from Transylvania. In comparing the careers of Calvin and Servet, he examines the conflict between the spirit of free inquiry

and the exercise of power, leading to questions of whether worldly power or a spiritual preoccupation best helps people achieve a better life. Sütő examines this issue with profound passion expressed through his own sufferings.

The same problem is examined by Magda Szabó, an internationally-known Hungarian novelist, who goes further back, to the time of Hungarians forced conversion to Christianity. The drama focuses on the conflict of conscience of different generations at the moment of the founding of the Árpád-dynasty, Hungary's first ruling family; that was the moment of profound changes in Hungarians' world outlook and way of life. *That Fine, Bright Day* (*Az a szép fényes nap*), as the work is called reveals in an extremely tight and modern prose the resultant tragedy and its historical necessity.

Endre Illés, a contemporary of Németh and Illyés, eschews historical disguises and demands responses from the life of today. His *Painted Skies* (*Festett égek*) takes a topical subject, the exchange of flats and then of partners in the milieu of young intellectuals today. One of the group, an engineer, is dissatisfied with his general manager also, but when, as a result of a "miracle", he becomes suddenly the manager, he is bound to act just as his boss did. Apart from the romantic entanglement and the office comedy, the real issues of interest to the playwright are the responsibility of the powerful and the irresponsibility of the powerless, along with the corresponding issues in personal relations.

Imre Sarkadi's *Simon Stylites* (*Oszlopos Simeon*) takes a much more distant view of society since the world is considered to be built from the hell of self-destruction. An art-teacher who takes himself for a genius quits his job and drives out his wife in the frenzy of his frustrated artistic ambitions. With no real feelings towards her, primarily owing to a wicked desire to destroy normal relations, he seduces the wife of the new tenant in the big apartment; later, under the influence of his evil spirit,

a charwoman, he sells his new-won mistress to a "customer." One might be tempted to say the painter has an "existentialist outlook"; everyone of his choices decides not only of his own future but on the destruction of others. Though an Evil Demon—the charwoman—manipulates him, she is also his choice; indeed one wonders whether he has not actually *created* her. Rather than existential, the play is closer to the Tolstoyan idea of "do not resist evil", which has a Hungarian equivalent in the proverb, "Now Lord, let's see what the two of us can achieve". Perhaps we could say this is the work of a Tolstoyan who holds *L'Étre et le Néant* in his either hand.

Simon Stylites does have something of a demonic captivating spirit. Its value as parable and its grotesque inspiration is obvious, while the writer also makes sure it is taken as moving strictly within the limits of reality. It is not a real morality-play even if it shares several characteristics of the medieval genre. This sort of Everyman character has become more popular in the years since Sarkadi started writing plays. Perhaps the most veiled figure of this type is in Ferenc Karinthy's *Bösendorfer*, a one-act play about people making practical jokes on the telephone. This is the surface story, for underneath is an exploration of loneliness or more exactly of two sorts of lonely people: the one who plays tricks and the one who is tricked. Here, it is a young man locked in his own loneliness and an old woman left all alone, one playing the sadist and the other the masochist.

An even stronger manifestation of this is *School of Geniuses* (*Zsenik iskolája*), a monodrama by Miklós Hubay. At first it seems to be just another successor to *Huis Clos*, or a copy of the basic situation of two convicts serving a life sentence—as in *Pitié de Dieu*, a justly forgotten Goncourt-prize winner by Jean Cau. But the final turn changes the whole structure and turns the plot into a parable of success and self-assertion. While one prisoner preparing to force his way out of jail talks only of what

he is going to do and what is waiting for him outside, the other says nothing and then with a sudden action that kills the mastermind, himself escapes.

Life as a prison

The pseudo-genius painter in *Simon Stylites* converts his own home into a prison while the action in the *School of Geniuses* takes place in a prison cell. Bösendorfer's two characters are also held captive by a loneliness as strong as any jail. Locking people up or being locked up—the threat of prison as well as seeing the cell as a protective environment—are recurrent motifs in the generation of European writers to reach maturity with the Second World War. The most complete and extreme expression of this is *The Visitor* (*Vendégség*) a play by Géza Páskándi. The play is based on a story from 17th century Transylvania and the religious conflicts and struggles of that period. An anti-Trinitarian bishop locked up in his own house with a friend sent there to spy on him; and whose spy-reports are the ultimate chance to our bishop to convey the truth, his own truth, to the outside world—and, for that matter, to posterity.

The play is outstanding in its rigorous intellectual austerity. The emotional tension involves truth and falsehood, friendship and treachery, self-destruction and self-rescue and the obligation that makes one outspoken in defiance of any sort of danger. Moreover it is presented in such a complex and exciting "jeu de miroirs" that by the end the audience cannot say whether truth and falsehood, dignity and meanness are objective concepts or just arbitrary illusions?

The 17th century provides Géza Páskándi with the means to explore the internal and external contradictions and tensions that prevail among intellectuals today both as individuals and as a social stratum. The young generation of dramatists usually treat

these questions as grotesque and humorous. One of the most outstanding of them is István Csurka who in one of his earlier plays *Fall Guy for Tonight* (*Ki lesz a bálanya*)* humorously described the self-destructive tragedy of callousness and incredulity. In one of his latest comedies *Original Location* (*Eredeti helyszín*) a movie-maker's group invades a petty-bourgeois home to shoot a film, which give Csurka scope to raise questions of leaders and followers, silence and speech, sacrifice and materialism, professional devotion and reckless ambition—among a number of other problems the writer skilfully draws from the realities of everyday life with amusement and depth.

Károly Szakonyi's *Break in Transmission* (*Adásbiba*)** takes its cue from the uneventful flow of daily events. He explores a banal situation from the depths of its very banality to raise it to a metaphysical level. At times even a television screen can act as a prison wall separating us from those sitting right beside us. The flicking pictures of the world at large makes us ignore the salvation we want and which is in our reach. This is a characteristic situation of the second half of the 20th century, a combination of Ionesco's *La cantatrice chauve* and G. K. Chesterton's *The Man who was Thursday*, could one say, if Szakonyi would not show us a solution through some young people wanting to and capable of breaking out of this deadlock. There are, he shows, other paths and possibilities for those seeking them through different relations with the society and our fellow human beings.

While Páskándi underscores the absurdity of history and Szakonyi that of everyday life, István Örkény discusses the absurdity of man's social condition in one of his latest plays *Blood Relations* (*Vérrokonok****). It is a play without parallel in Hungarian drama, for its diversity and richness make it a tragic-comedy, meaning simultaneously tragedy and

* See excerpts in No 39.

** Act II was published in No. 41.

*** See full text in No. 59.

comedy. The play's interpretation depends on the use of its key words, which are given in slogans like, "we are all like the Bokors", "I offer my blood for it" and "everyone is a railwayman". Each theatre-goer provides the slogans with the emotional and intellectual content that determines whether the result will be laughter to drown out crying or vice versa. I think the writer's bitter and acrid smile is the strongest force in the play—without excluding his cautions trust in man to cope eventually with things so that his lot can take a turn for the better.

Compared to Örkény, László Gyurkó grapples with a narrower sphere of conflict in his most successful piece *Electra my Love* (*Szerelmem Elektra*)*. He confines himself to revolutionary conflict and, with the aid of the ancient myth, discusses the topical question of what the purpose of a revolution should be. Should it, as Electra believed, apply its principles in the purest possible form so that all errors however slight are merciless extirpated or should it, as Orestes held, just benefit the ordinary people, power should serve our fellow humans, and not make of them the serfs of ideas. Though we may feel that such pairs as Electra and Orestes are inseparable, we can also see the eternal choreography: Orestes is forced to kill Electra; she in turn, has to be resurrected to save Orestes...

Common Cares, Common Means

However different the Hungarian plays are in subject matter, tone and concept, I think there is one thing they all have in common: an intellectual approach that is revealed and develops as a conflict among serious ideas. Closely associated with this is the element of parable in them, which is perhaps most apparent in *Electra my Love*, especially because the Greek myths are usual-

ly parables in the hands of modern writers. On the other hand the parable element is most surprising in *Break in Transmission*, which begins in a strictly naturalistic vein. The miracle presents itself quite unexpectedly and its allegorical presence rearranges the lines of force in the play. And so the audience suddenly realizes the overwhelming petty-bourgeois layer of our emotions, relations and attitudes.

The other property of practically every play is the grotesque portrayal of life, contemporary conditions and people. In this Örkény's *Blood Relations* obviously leads the way, for it is grotesque in every way, in his inner score, because the interchangeability in the system of slogans leads to an infinity of possible interpretations, which is grotesque in itself. All the younger dramatists also use the grotesque even if they do not go to the extremes that Örkény does. Karinthy and Hubay pick basic situations that are grotesque while Sarkadi, Szakonyi and Csurka make selected events, emotions and relations turn absurd. And even Páskándi, who pursues tragedy more definitely than the others, repeatedly laces his play with grotesque threads.

The third element common to all the dramatists is their interest in themes of power. Whether the plot is laid in an ancient myth, declining Rome, medieval Hungary, the Italian Renaissance, the Reformation in Transylvania, a jail or the flat of a petty-bourgeois family in Budapest, all sites and "human comedy" are merely a pretext and, at the same time, an opportunity to analyse the powers that bind people's hands and force them into choices of doing good or bad.

I believe it is here that Hungarian playwrights, these writers of parables, grotesques, tragedies and comedies, these manipulators and creators of myths, differ from their Western counterparts. What distinguishes these writers (apart from the differences of talent and character, of course) from Adamov, Pinter, Ionesco and Bond is much the same as distinguishes film director Miklós Jancsó

* See excerpts in No. 31.

from his Western colleagues like Ingmar Bergman and Fellini: the Hungarians have an unshakeable belief in something while suffering and grappling with doubt.

In terms merely of technique it would be practically impossible to distinguish between the Hungarian and Western plays written in the same period. The distinction lies strictly in the attitude: the grotesque may lead towards tragedy or comedy, but without exception the Hungarian playwrights fight not only against something but also very definitely and absolutely for something as well. Whether mentioned specifically or not, each has the ideal of a more human and fairer world, one more worthy of man, for which some people struggle. Some fail in this struggle. Some are disappointed by choosing the wrong path and perish with utter bitterness or close their

eyes and turn a deaf ear to the world. Though they may by this conserve their animal existence we recognize it as humanly unworthy. This is the plus they offer: the perspective of the socialist society in which they were born and on which they exert an influence. This is what elevates and separates their works from the rest of their contemporaries. That is what helps them retain at least a shred of optimism even if concealed behind utterly bitter or perhaps tragic, even helpless, events. The environment of the works bears the seeds of the future. It is verified in all the plays whether consciously or not—as confirmed by the total effect of the works described. This primarily distinguishes Hungarian drama from its Western counterparts and makes it well worth paying attention to—in outlook, message, problems and successes.

PÉTER NAGY

WHAT IS "HUNGARIAN" IN THE HUNGARIAN CINEMA (Part II)

A search for a nation

The Jancsó Phenomenon

Pessimism and defeatism become caricature in the films of Miklós Jancsó. We are basked to believe in a rigidly dichotomized world in which there are only Winners and Losers. The strong are ordained to rule. The weak are ordained to be slaughtered. Both victors and victims act out their predestined roles like marionette-show robots in a perverse parody of life. Hungarians tell me that Jancsó is "un-Hungarian." On the contrary, I see Jancsó as merely carrying

"Hungarianism" in film to its *reductio ad absurdum*.

So much has been written about Jancsó (he is a darling of international critics) that I need not characterize his films except to recall briefly that they are for the most part mythic dramas, rigidly symbolic, in which the actors play their previously described predestined roles like figures in a ballet, usually in clinically sharp-edged scenes of vast space over which battalions of figures march and counter-march to their doom.

If I seem somewhat negative toward the great Jancsó, it is probably because I suffer

from Jancsó fatigue. I don't question his great powers as a film maker, the virtuosity of his *mise en scene*, choreography, and camera work. My first Jancsó, *The Hopeless Ones* (also called *The Round Up*) was a film experience of the highest order. I was deeply moved, if not shaken, but as I continued to look at the Jancsó repertoire I began to feel an increasing irritation with his symbol codifications, his manneristic style, the deliberate mystification, the endless marches and counter-marches, the casual killings, the obligatory nudes and horses, the hermetic never-never land of parading zombies. Patrick Gibbs calls him "the master of the elegant atrocity," and one of his admirers lyrically explained to me that "his murders are so clean and beautiful." Regarding the deliberate mystification, Jancsó says, "I don't make films for primary school teachers." If the critics don't understand, they write about not understanding (that is, about nothing) or add to the mystery with their own mystifying rhetoric. I quote a sample of mind-boggling criticism from the English journal *Sight and Sound*, on *Roma Rivuole Cesare*, a film Jancsó made in Italy: "Jancsó's interest... is not so much on preserving the continuities of the natural world as a primary level of denotation in the film as in allowing the dialectic process to retain a fluency that he feels to be organic."

Jancsó's films are concerned with what I conceive to be the *leitmotif* of Hungarian films, the problem of power, but he leads us to a static and empty dead-end of Predestination. How much of this vision is Jancsó and how much is Gyula Hernádi, his usual script writer, I do not know. If we are looking however, for solutions to the problem of what Vincent Sheean called "the whole system of organized injustice", we will find no answers in Jancsó's pessimistic fatalism. In *Confrontation*, to me one of the more interesting Jancsó films, the parable has the Revolution devouring itself and then turning into another bureaucracy of oppressive power, not with a bang but a whinney.

Recently when I was watching Jancsó's *Red Psalm* in Budapest, a scene appeared in which a "liberal" young officer hands a pistol to an oppressed peasant. The young officer is, of course, killed (and symbolically resurrected), but for a moment I thought the pistol presaged some human disorder in the Jancsó world, with the peasants putting up a real fight in a slam-bang shoot-out. No indeed; my wild fantasy quickly faded. The strong (the military) and the weak (the peasants) dance happily together. Then the soldiers from a circle around the peasants, open fire, and massacre them. This, I am told, shows the ambiguities of power. Jancsó himself claims that, except for the last scene, the film is "optimistic." Then there were the compulsory nude scenes, the nude, usually female, being a Jancsó stock symbol of defenselessness and humiliation. In *Red Psalm*, however, there is a sudden switch in the symbol code and the bare-breasted girls are symbols of liberation. Feeling slightly confused and stuffed, as if I had over-indulged in *dobostorta* pastries, I slipped into the sidewalk cafe of the neighbouring Gellért Hotel and had two quick whiskies.

I am not the only one to be irritated by Jancsó. The Jancsó who once voiced suspicion that his international market was being restricted by a conspiracy of capitalist distributors said after *Elektra* (Szerelmem, *Elektra*, 1974) that the market for avant garde and art films is shrinking in the United States and Western Europe and he may now make a "genuine film." *Elektra* transports the Greek story to Jancsó country, with the usual Jancsó choreography and virtuosity, including phalanxes of horses and nude girls, some with body paint on their comely posteriors. An addition this time is marching phalanxes of nude men. Whips of Winners crack across the tender flesh of Losers; there are murders and resurrections, and the celebrated shooting of the entire film in eight "takes" of continuous action. Eventually *Elektra* and *Orestes* kill each other (with

guns), are resurrected, and whirl off the puszta in a red helicopter. Asked what he meant by a "genuine film," Jancsó replied that he meant with a more realistic and romantic story.

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Yet, does this gloom, this passivity toward inexorable defeats, this inability to cope with power, really reflect the mood and spirit of a whole people? Films, after all, are but shadows of illusion on a silver screen. They are produced for any number of reasons, to make a living, to ride with a fashion, to excite the admiration of one's peers, and many other reasons besides national self-revelation. They may be the objectifications of the private vision of a few film makers and writers, intellectuals who express their emotions in parables of irony, compassion, accommodation, or failure. This is not the visible face of Hungary that one sees moving about the country, not in Budapest, or Debrecen, or Salgótarján, or on a cooperative farm. On superficial view, at least, these are an active and hedonistic people, enjoying food, drink, music, sport, making love and the other pleasures of life as much as anyone. The New Economic Mechanism is doing well; and the standard of living is rising. Young men save their forints for their first automobile. People pursue status, or fame, and some fortune in football, poetry, pop music, or in the bureaucracies of politics, industry and agriculture.

Nevertheless, it is not difficult to see the film characters played by Hungary's competent actors, Mari Törőcsik, Zoltán Latinovits, András Kozák and others as plausible, although somewhat stoney, faces in the crowd. This is a way of stating my belief in a relationship between art and life, which I think is attested by common sense, the overwhelming evidence of all the arts, and in some limited but significant statistical data.

Psychographs of Suicide

Common sense leaves little room for doubt as to the traumatic effect upon personal and national attitudes of Hungary's turbulent history during the last hundred years. The trauma can best be explained with a visual aid: All but one denomination of Hungary's paper money carries the portrait of a national hero, and each hero is associated with a national defeat, some of staggering magnitude. The question is the character of the personal and national reaction to this historical experience. It could have taken the form of self-hate, or the latent violence of frustration, as it did after the dismemberment of Hungary in 1919. The question is particularly interesting in the case of Hungary's young film makers born during the World War II period and after who have no personal experience with the more catastrophic of the national calamities and grew up in a quite different order of society than the one that produced the horrors. This generation has responded to the historical experience, in my view, with a mood of sadness, helpless outrage, and resignation.

In regard to the statistical evidence of real-life pessimism as distinguished from the shadows on the screen, Hungary has the highest reported suicide and divorce rates in the world. The number of abortions about equals the number of live births, and the alcoholism rate is high and rising. Interpreting such data calls for caution. Not all nations are as truthful and reliable as Hungary is in reporting their suicide statistics of the United Nations. Nor is there anything new in the high suicide rate, as suicide has been popular, if I may use the word, in Eastern Europe for the last hundred years. It might also be argued that divorce, abortion and alcoholism aren't necessarily symptoms of self-disgust or disgust with life or any other deep malaise but simply attempts to find greater enjoyment of life, as by trying again (divorce), living more agree-

ably without encumbrances (abortion), or self-gratification (alcoholism).

All of these indices, however, are symptoms of evasion, the impulse to escape from something or avoid something. Of all the forms of evasion, which include emigration, the memory of Lost Edens, and escape into fantasy, the most drastic and permanent is suicide. From two to three thousand Hungarians commit suicide every year, and we may assume that many more attempt suicide of think about it. Why do they love life so little that they want to leave it?

The answer appears to have no relation to politics, ideology, standard of living, or deprivation. Indeed, there appears to be a negative correlation between suicide and hardship. During the siege of Budapest in 1945, for example, when the half-starved population huddled for weeks in cold, wet cellars, suicide, I am told, virtually disappeared (as did sexual intercourse and serious disease). In recent years when the standard of living has been rising, so has the suicide rate.

The one study in English I can find on this subject (*The New Hungarian Quarterly*, No. 42) attributes the greatest number of suicides to the stresses of family life, such as the quarrels and frustrations of husbands and wives, parents and children, or quarrels with other relatives or neighbors. The second largest cause of suicide is mental illness, followed by the disillusion or frustration of lovers. Many of the suicides are quite young, including some in their teens.

There is nothing uniquely Hungarian about hostility and bitterness between spouses, lovers, and parents and children. But kill one's self? My country doubtless shelters just as much hate and frustration, but people have handguns and shotguns and they kill each other, not themselves. The result is one of the highest homicide rates in the world. I am no psychiatrist, but I cannot help but wonder what predisposition leads people who feel frustrated and humiliated to prefer self-destruction over directing their violence against those they feel

responsible for their unhappiness, or seeking surrogate and less lethal ways of finding relief, as in the writing of bitter novels and poems—or making motion pictures.

One of Hungary's most celebrated real-life suicides, that of Prime Minister Count Pál Teleki, was both noble in motive and plausible, as he is said to have destroyed himself out of shame and humiliation when he found himself an accessory, against his will and conscience, of the German attack on Jugoslavia from Hungarian soil in 1941. Another celebrated real-life suicide was that of the poet Attila József, who in 1937 threw himself under a freight train near the shore of Lake Balaton. As József identified himself with the poor and oppressed, and railed against injustice and inhumanity, he should have been the exemplar of the suicide for good cause, the man who finds in self-destruction, in József's words, deliverance from the torrent of sorrow that is life. There is a certain clouding of motivation, however; in his later years József's was a victim of advancing schizophrenia.

I knew personally only one Hungarian suicide. This was an attractive woman who had lived in moderate luxury in what was until 1944 Hungarian Slovakia. She had been expelled and her property expropriated, and she had suffered the hardships of the Budapest siege. By 1946, however, she was in good health and re-established in a plain but comfortable apartment with her husband, son and daughter, all of whom were employed and bringing in a good income. So she jumped into the Danube from the wreck of the Elizabeth bridge. I haven't the slightest idea why she jumped, although I am sure she had her reasons. I am troubled because she gave no evidence that her leap was anything more than the whim of a raw spring day.

The question of motivation is troublesome in Hungarian films, in which suicides occur with some frequency. I have no evidence that they are more frequent than in the films of other countries, but I think the

reasons for self-destruction in the Hungarian films are significantly different from, and usually less compelling than, the reasons portrayed for suicide elsewhere. Hungary has a feature documentary on suicide, *I'm Angry for Your Sake* (Érted haragszom, 1968) directed by Marianne Szemes. A 17-year-old student commits suicide. A member of the Young Communist League goes to the hospital to investigate the affair and becomes the spokesman for the dead student as well as for a troubled young generation. It would appear the student suffered from a frustrated ego, an abrasive relationship with his father, and the indifference of his comrades, all of which suggests a morbidly sensitive personality unable to adjust to reality.

In other examples, in Fábri's *Ants Nest* (Hangyaboly), Sister Virginia kills herself apparently from humiliation and frustration. The photographer sister in Kovács's *Fallow Land* (A magyar ugaron), kills herself, I think, out of fear and fatigue, or fear-fatigue. In Bacsó's *The Fatal Shot* (Fejölvés, 1968) three young people make a suicide pact but only one goes through with it. These young people live in an amoral world in which motive and values are ambiguous. In Jancsó's *The Hopeless Ones*, the straight-jacketed hero overwhelmed by shame, frustration and despair as he watches his naked beloved being beaten to death, kills himself by diving head-first from a rooftop. However, he is doomed anyway and merely saves his tormentors the trouble of killing him by killing himself first. The working-class hero of Tamás Rényi's *Makra* (1974) is perhaps a restless seeker of some fantasy Utopia, but his real problem is banal woman-trouble, three women to be precise. Unable to cope, he goes home, drinks a bottle of brandy, and turns on the gas.

Far be it from me to denigrate the motives of people who take their own lives, who must have what seem to them to be good cause but I can't escape the impression, from the sociological study of real-life

suicides and the fictional suicides of the films, that suicide is often motivated by an exaggerated sensitivity, self-indulgence, and an introspective, morbid self-pity that needs a very slight push to send the victim over the brink. By contrast, suicides in many films of other countries are more plausibly motivated, usually by an unbearable sense of guilt because of the violation of some strict code of morality, or the intolerable grief of an irremediable loss. Before we imagine Hungary to be a nation of Hamlets teetering on the edge of to be or not to be, we should remember that Hamlet had heavy reasons for violence and self-destruction: the loss of a beloved father, a murderer step-father, and adulteress mother, and, finally, his own guilt of multiple murders.

The many suicides in Japanese films are motivated by violations of stern codes of family and social obligation. The poignant howl of the suicide in Antonioni's *Il Grido* springs from a sense of inconsolable loss, as does the double suicide in Widerberg's *Elvira Madigan*, in the latter case coupled with the male lover's hopeless obligation to his wife and children and the guilt of breaking a rigid officers' code. These are graver motives than hurt feelings and frustrated egos. Compare them with the motive of the old woman in a recent Hungarian novel by György Konrád, *The Case Worker* (Doubleday, 1974). The old woman, after several vain attempts to enter the tightly shut gate of a municipal office, goes home and hangs herself.

These impressions of a foreigner, I agree, are speculative and inconclusive when applied to a whole people. But it was a Hungarian, the poet István Vas, and not a foreigner, who epitomized one face of the Hungarian mood that I call self-pity when he lamented, "I am condemned for life to be Hungarian."

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Other motifs of evasion in the Hungarian film are the dream of Lost Edens, the dream

of affluence, and the dream of emigration. The dream of *Lost Edens* is a nostalgia for real or imagined good old days of love and laughter, wine and roses, pomp and circumstance. The nostalgia usually skips over the Horthy era, which has been demystified in films portraying the false values of a decadent bourgeois society, to the Dual Monarchy and the turn of the century. The Fábri costume films are examples, as well as the poetic, sensual images of Huszárík's *Sinbad*. The faded photograph in many films evokes the *belle époque*. In spite of the new realism and the demystification of the past, the films sometimes betray a tenacious affection for images of proud hussars, gold braid, billowing skirts and feathered hats, Franz Joseph whiskers and the champagne and goose liver of the good old days.

Less lethal evasions

Emigration is a more difficult theme, as it deals not with evasion into the memory of a departed past but desertion from the realities of the present. Two examples of the emigration theme are György Révész' *At Midnight* (*Éjfélkor*, 1957) which deals with the 1956 uprising, and István Szabó's *Love Film* (*Szerelmesfilm*). The films are similar in their treatment of a vexing problem; in both films the advantages and disadvantages of emigration are weighed and one character chooses to emigrate and the other chooses to stay home, where, my Budapest friends inform me, life may not be so affluent but neither does it have the anxieties and unhappiness that bedevil those who live abroad. *At Midnight*, I might add, has no resemblance to the fleeing bus-load of refugees in the MGM version of the 1956 uprising, Anatole Litvak's *The Journey*. References to emigration pop up in unexpected places, as in Gaál's *Desert Landscape* (*Holt vidék*), when the Hungarian who has emigrated to Canada arrives as a tourist on the village scene in a huge foreign auto-

mobile, a symbol of both emigration, affluence and showing off.

Lost Edens

The motifs of *Lost Edens* and dream of affluence come together in Makk's *Love* (*Szerelem*). An old lady lies dying. Her bed is surrounded by old photographs of braided and mustachioed officers, and her mind races back over her long life to visions of gallant levees in the elegance of the Embankment or Vienna. She envisions her son, who is actually a political prisoner in a Hungarian jail, in the early fifties as a wealthy, successful film director in America, where he directs his movie from horseback as if he were a hussar directing military manoeuvres on the puszta in 1912. The film is a lovely mixture, not a synthesis, of reality and the dreams that haunt it.

An interesting footnote to film history is that Germany and its wartime allies have produced no films of expiation for collective guilt comparable with a French film, Marcel Ophüls' *The Sorrow and the Pity*, on the shabby opportunism of the people of Claremont-Ferrand during World War II, or several American expiatory films on the horror of Vietnam, notably *Hearts and Minds*. One West German film dealing with the subject, but hardly expiatory, is *Studenten aufs Schafott!*, in which students ponder what they would have done to resist Nazism. Their conclusion: Nothing. Individual resistance would have been futile. This is self-justification, not expiation. A number of Japanese films on the war, like *The Burmese Harp*, *Fires on the Plain*, and *Under the Flag of the Rising Sun*, are not expiations of collective guilt but portrayals of the horrors of war. Most countries produced films of this genre in the aftermath of the war. Pacifism is an acceptable cliché after wars (who is for war?). A confession of national guilt is quite a different matter.

By expiation I mean to include not only

the public confession of collective guilt as a necessary step toward redemption but also a simple acknowledgement of the crimes against humanity to give new generations a true and honest account of their own national history. Only now, generations after the fact, are films in the United States expiating crimes against the American Indian and setting the record straight. The easiest thing in the world, as the Nuremberg Trials have shown, is to fix responsibility for national crimes upon "them," whoever "they" may be, while everyone else goes scot-free. This is not the way to solve the problem of power and the abuse of power, problems which can never be coped with until everyone realizes his responsibility for collective action, no matter how powerless the individual may be at any particular time to control events. I opposed the monstrous crimes of my country against humanity in Southeast Asia, and I spoke, wrote and marched against them. I know that I as an individual felt powerless to change the course of events. But I also know that I could have done more, and I know that there can be no curbing of the abuse of power until the truth about national crimes is brought home to every man, and until every man acknowledges, as I do, his responsibility.

The case of the Hungarian film is special because of the avowed purpose of the filmmakers to re-examine history, de-mystify it, make it truthful, make it answer to man, and fix responsibility. In an anniversary comment, Iván Boldizsár has written that Hungarians didn't live through World War II as "irresolute, disoriented Stendhalian anti-heroes, but as both passive and active participants." This may be true, and I don't dare to question a man who knows more about Hungary than I do, but I do not think the Hungarian film gives solid support to his judgement.

The question is what the films have to say about such matters as Hungary's entry into the war, its military record in the Soviet Union, atrocities in Russia and Jugoslavia,

the murder and deportation of Jews, the attitude of the population toward these events, and the amount and quality of the resistance. The over-all impression left by the war films is consistent with the impression left by Hungarian films generally; that is, of an essentially innocent and decent people victimized by forces beyond their control, drawn into a war that was unpopular and became detested as the tide changed against Germany, and who didn't resist because resistance was impossible. This may not be a picture of Stendhalian anti-heroism, but neither is it a picture of resolution and orientation, nor does it acknowledge either individual or collective responsibility. The state of mind revealed is essentially the same as that in *Studenten aufs Schafott!*; since we could do nothing, we are guiltless. One is reminded of the lament of Preacher Jonathan Edwards in the American colonies in the eighteenth century: "How can the people be redeemed when they have no sense of sin?"

An important film on the war years, and a very good one, is András Kovács' *Cold Days* (Hideg napok), which concerns a Hungarian atrocity against the Yugoslavs at Novi Sad (Hungarian Újvidék) where hundreds of victims were drowned through holes in the frozen Danube. My first reaction to this film was one of surprise and admiration that a film would so openly confess to an atrocity against a neighboring people. But the four men under arrest for the crime (they sit in detention and recall the episode in flashback) are portrayed not only as agents but also as the victims of a stupid military bureaucracy, against which they are impotent. They are also victims of confusion and even of the intense cold. In the end they are left to reflect on the cruelty of fate that made them sinners. This is not an expiatory film of collective guilt and not really a confession of willfully atrocious wrong-doing.

Cold Days is somewhat contrived in structure and limited to a single episode. An István Szabó film on the years, *25 Fireman's*

Street (Tűzoltó utca 25), is more universalized. The razing of an old Budapest apartment house provokes a flood of memories of the people whose lives interwove there. In the words of the prologue, "The biggest decisions of their lives were demanded from them by the war years, a period when they also faced a test of their humanity." On an oppressively sultry summer night, the ordinary people who live in the house try to sleep, a baker's wife with her sleeping pills, a lonely old watchmaker, a young man aching with sexual desire, an awkward girl dreaming of love, a janitor, a housekeeper. On this troubled night their memories run through the litany of the suffering and anxiety of the war years in scenes that mix dream and reality, sometimes elliptical and surreal and always vivid. Loneliness, fear, hunger, evocation of departed lovers and loved ones, of the dead and the missing-in-action on the Eastern front, dreams of desertion or emigration to Australia or America, police raids, gas mask drills, the humiliation and despair of those hauled off to unknown fates. There are acts of collaboration and opportunism, like the frightened refusal to hide the hunted, and also acts of kindness and compassion, like the sheltering of refugees, the safeguarding of others' property, and the clamour for testimonials of good behaviour at the war's end. It is a sad film. It opens with an explosion, which I interpret as a symbol of total farewell to the past, and the same note is struck at the end of the film when the furniture is piled on the sidewalk and someone says, "No one has to say goodbye to this house. I won't look back. I won't look back."

But Szabó obviously did look back. Like many Hungarian films this one has no plot other than the unity of the war years, which in this case is a wail of impotent suffering. A character in the film is explicit: "You know it is not our crime that is happening," and another character replies, "... We are not that strong, to be able to act independently, to do what we want. This is a

thousand year old curse. A thousand years old." Szabó has made a short film (12 minutes) on the same subject called *Dream About a House*. In the short film the memories of the house are conventionalized in a series of fast-moving images that have the quality of abstract surrealism, without the pity and sorrow of the longer film. Seeing the films in conjunction is an extraordinary experience for the contrast between the emotional profusion of the one and the restraint of the other.

Most films about the war deal with its fringes, with episodes that reveal personal inter-relationships, and not with the broader political and military history and lessons of the war. Examples are Jancsó's *This Was My Path* (Így jöttem), about a friendship that develops between two boys, one a wounded Soviet soldier, the other his Hungarian prisoner. Another example is Fábri's *Two Half-Times in Hell* (Két félidő a pokolban), in which a Hungarian labour camp football team is made to play a game with a team of German soldiers and ordered to lose. The Hungarians go ahead and win and are then murdered by the Germans, another example of injustice to the defenseless and innocent. The Hungarian film is understandably silent on such subjects as the behavior of the Hungarian Army in the Ukraine and the destruction of the 2nd Hungarian Army of 150,000 men in 1943 at Voronezh. One film that deals with military aspects of the war but which I haven't seen is Zoltán Várkonyi's *Face to Face* (Szemtől szembe). I am told that it is concerned with a question of responsibility for a needless and senseless annihilation of a Hungarian company in a military insignificant battle. Self-justification, cowardice and prejudice are revealed, but again the honesty and innocence of everyone in a legal sense is not questioned.

Atrocities against the Jews figure in Félix Máriássy's *Springtime in Budapest* (Budapesti tavasz, 1955), in which the war-time population of the city in the grip of fear, insecurity, and passive resignation. The pro-

tagonist is a young man who has deserted from the army. His Jewish sweetheart is murdered by the Fascists and thrown into the Danube, but the young man is powerless to do anything about it; in fact, he isn't even aware of the tragedy until it is over. He therefore had to meet no "test of his humanity," to quote Szabó's film. He is relieved of personal responsibility, and can only weep over the sorrow of it all.

In a Fábri film involving atrocities against Jews, *Late Season* (Utószezon, 1967), the message is that individuals make mistakes that lead to crimes, but no collective responsibility is implied. A group of amiable old men who drink beer together at the railway station decide to play a "joke" on one of their number, one Kerekes. One of the band makes a telephone call, pretends to be a policeman, and asks Kerekes to come to the police station. Kerekes recalls some words he said twenty years before that may have sent a Jewish pharmacist and his wife to a death camp. He panics and has a crisis of conscience in which atrocities against the Jews are portrayed vividly enough. His contrite friends confess the "joke," but Kerekes is unsatisfied. He demands a trial. His comrades oblige, hear the evidence, and condemn him to death, thereafter telling him again that the play-acting of a joke has gone too far. Kerekes goes to the police to turn himself in, and when the police don't take him seriously, tries unsuccessfully to commit suicide. The end of the film? The "silly joke" is forgotten and the old men go back to drinking beer and swapping stories at the railway station. Incidentally, another of the old men has served ten years in prison for causing Jewish deaths; he is portrayed as having "paid his debt to society" and no longer troubled by conscience.

Hungary is unique among the nations of Eastern Europe for its scanty production of World War II resistance films of the derring-do type that have been obligatory for film directors in the other Socialist countries. The reasons for this are that,

after all, Hungary was an ally of Germany in the war, however unwilling a one, and that there are few reported acts of derring-do resistance to make films about. From what I have been able to learn, the usual forms of resistance were of a passive sabotage nature, such as desertion from the army or workbench, and the hiding of Jews and others on undesirable and wanted lists, with, in the later years of the war, some negotiating with the Allies, especially the Western ones, with a view to softening the terms of defeat. The result was a good many martyrs but not much action for future film makers.

One approach to the derring-do type of resistance film is Márton Keleti's *I Lived Under Thirty Two Names* (Harmínckét nevem volt, 1972), in which an agent of the anti-Fascist resistance tries to obtain arms from Hungarian generals, who are portrayed as fearful of the coming defeat and trying to save themselves. The anti-Fascists are identified as miners. Much of the film deals with the arrest and torture of resisters. In the end the agent fails in his mission and is gunned down, a helpless victim of impossible odds.

Desertion crops up in a good many films. One example is Gaál's *Baptism* (Keresztelőd), when two comrades debate whether to desert the army. One does and the other doesn't, a Hungarian or Stendhalian solution akin to the solution of the emigration debate in the films I have cited. Pál Zolnay's *The Face* (Arc, 1970) is a resistance film, but in effect it is one long man-hunt for a dissident who has gone underground and is shown performing no act more unfriendly than running. Expectedly at the end he is found and killed. *The Face* has been criticized by Hungarians for its spurious reconstruction of the appearance of wartime Budapest. This seems strange to me, as I found the film not only engrossing but also the most faithful of any film I have seen to the appearance of the city when I entered it in 1945.

One wonders how long the film directors will look back on the unpleasant war years. As I travel about Eastern Europe I find that

most young people I meet, those in the teens and twenties, are indifferent to the old animosities and bitterness. They want to bury the past and live in the new and happier relationship of the present. It is an older generation of film makers in the late thirties or older, that persists in making war history accountable to man, which they do selectively, absolving their protagonists, who stand for the collectivity.

In summary, I find Hungarian film

makers, many of whom came of age after the war, re-examining the war years with strong emotions of sorrow, outrage and compassion, but also from a point of view that is self-exculpatory. In this connection, the comment of Bishop Bartha of the Calvinist Church is relevant. He remarks that the churches had done nothing to prevent the government from entering a senseless war, and "understandably I was prepared for the Judgement Day and I was afraid."

(Part III will appear in No. 65.)

THE LABYRINTHS OF CREATION AND SELF

András Kovács: Labirintus ("Labyrinth");

László Lugossy: Azonosítás ("Identification")

How not to make a film

Two films I have just seen read like confessions and, frankly, my heart goes out to the poor directors. They do their best to make us the audience, pity them. Truffaut's *Day for Night* shows that even at night the director has no peace from the worries of the day's shooting: his dreams torment him with unresolvable sequences. In addition, which also goes without saying, there are all the agonizing moments with actors, prop men, contractor, police, and deadlines.

The director's life is based solely on dread; Truffaut with befitting humility condenses it to an aphorism: "Who is the director? He is the one who is always asked and always has to know the answer to everything."

But he who suffers cannot remain silent. And so today as well directors expose their wounds. Among them is András Kovács,

who is usually thought of as someone who would rather remain silent forever than reveal even one shot about his directing troubles. Somehow I suspected, from the title of his new film, *Labirintus* (Labyrinth), that this was to be a self-conscious work. And so it is, but few were overjoyed, perhaps not even the director himself. Not long ago I wrote an enthusiastic review of his *Bekötött szemmel* (Blindfolded) (NHQ 58). Unfortunately, I am compelled to do the opposite now, and this again just strengthens my pity for the "poor director."

With this film, Kovács wants to introduce the audience to the tricks of the trade, but he knows that there is not enough material for a "real" feature film; he therefore draws it out with an analysis of his own crisis of conscience. Everything begins with the poor director discussing the shortcomings of one of his films with a few French viewers (who are furthermore radical leftists) follow-

ing a screening in Paris. Shortcomings here mean that the young French leftists object to many things, but judging from the director's indulgent smile, their objections are naive, obtuse, and not worth considering. After all, what could they possibly know about socialist reality? They are familiar with revolution only through books and newspapers. Immediately following this sequence he is seen in the midst of directing his new film: the scene is a New Year's Eve party in the apartment of the hero, who is a company executive, where the new boss leaves, promising to come back later. The hero urges his wife to talk to the departing guest, but the woman is not willing to shake hands with somebody who had driven one of her friends, her husband's former boss, to commit suicide. There is a quarrel between husband and wife in which the wife becomes hysterical when she sees that her husband's secretary is also in the room. Oh, she realizes, it is not your murderous boss that makes me furious, but your bringing your lover home. At this point the director in the film interrupts the shooting, as will happen ever more frequently later on.

During such breaks, which supposedly indicate the unendurable solitude of creation, the director tries to resolve in himself the nature of the principal conflict. Of course, this solitude has to be imagined in the midst of hundreds of people running around in a mass of studio walls, props, actors, extras, technicians, lighting people, and scenarists. It is such a whirlwind that I have a hard time even following, let alone recounting, the sequence of events. After all it is not a real film, only a sort of film of a film; it is impossible to know what is related to what, or what could have happened if, instead of having to follow the director's thorny path, we could have seen what he had to say with his finished product.

This does not mean "Labyrinth" does not carry a "message". Of course it does, which comes out when the leading actors want to rewrite the script to suit their own tastes.

They state some generalities about the actors' physical and spiritual defenselessness: for example, the heroine declares how much more love and sex do for a film compared to exchanges on social issues. Thus, the director racks his brain to resolve the conflict between social affairs and eternal human passion. The solution is obvious: he neither renounces his social criticism, nor the love scene, which by the way requires innumerable takes.

When the husband and wife finally clear things up, and the slightly aged, hysterical wife is found more interesting than the young, good-looking secretary, then real matrimonial love-making is necessary to authenticate the message (at least according to the actress, who is able to convince the director.) Finally we get something to laugh at as the director keeps altering the arms, mouths, length of kisses, or the amount of skin exposed from under the ruffled clothes of the middle-aged couple as they embrace, tumble, and on to bed.

As mentioned before, the director is the militant type, as is András Kovács himself, whose past work includes the brilliant *Hideg napok* ("Cold Days") and such truly militant fare as *Nehéz emberek* ("Difficult People"), and *Falak* ("Walls").

Meanwhile we visit the scene of the original story where the minister in charge of the film company admires, and is perhaps even a friend of the director; so he tries to convince him to play down the drama to avoid trouble. The poor director again finds himself in a dilemma. On top of this all, the actor playing the part of the company colleague driven to suicide (or at least towards it) comes bursting onto the screen demanding: "Make me die or there is no meaning to my role!" They begin to film a burning house where the honest manager is intending to burn himself to death. At the last moment an unselfish man saves him. The poor actor is compelled to repeat the scene—in flames—10 times until finally the director, exhausted from failure, gives in to

their pressure to have the man unconscious as he is carried out. The ministry and film-studio heads see the film in the making; every scene, objection and remark runs through the director's mind. His face shows that he does not give in, although he is still unable to decide exactly what to do. Film directing, like life is a real labyrinth where no absolute truths exist. Likewise I, as viewer, do not know what to think of this director's self absorption though neither do I know what to think about life. Perhaps life at least does not always turn out like this.

Much ado over one little error

I had different reservations as I sat through László Lugossy's *Azonosítás* ("Identification"). It was Lugossy's first feature film; and it is not without success. He did everything to show the stresses and distresses of his generation—the 30-year-olds.

Though I did have reservations, I also had reasons to be pleased because the film is skillfully done, and somehow fits my taste. Had the scenario been better written I would have heralded the start of a new promising career as I did with István Dárday (*Jutalomutazás*—"Holiday in Britain", NHQ 60). Here I can only praise the resolution of detail, though these almost without reservation.

We are in the Hungary of 1945-46. The war is over and the political situation has stabilized, but many things are yet unclear. Prisoners of war are pouring into the country. On one of the prisoner-of-war trains nearing the Hungarian border from the east is the group which includes András Ambrus on his way home. Even these first shots are distinguished: on reaching the border, one after another the shabbily clothed soldiers throw away the mess tins and aluminum spoons that marked their status as prisoners of war. Just imagine, freight trains still in motion, a few minutes before reaching the

first, solemnly decorated Hungarian station, mess tins, forks, and spoons clang as they strike the ground. This is a great liberation from the war—and who knows what else that is left behind. This rattling of aluminum mess tins is an admirable overture—both pictorial and musical, a perfectly joyous but embittered gesture of liberation.

The film progresses easily, but leaving something ominous in the air. At the Hungarian station, bedecked with flags and loudly resonating with the national anthem, women young and old all dressed in white await the tired soldiers' ignominious return home. Slowly the soldiers climb out of the freight cars, while the "sisters" pass out bread, apples, and a few grapes to the famished throng in uniform. The faces show everybody full of expectation, compassion, uncertainty. (The young director excels here too.) On the platform with shirt unbuttoned, the communist party secretary, small and vehement, begins to harangue the homecoming soldiers while they are still eating. Everything is now the people's, he tells them; it is theirs. After all the rather high-sounding phrases, the chief of police has the fascists and other criminals immediately singled out of the distrustful crowd. A nervous young woman passes out money and identification papers to the rest. Everything goes like clockwork. On the other side of the station's gate women and children on farm wagons wait anxiously for the fathers, brothers, and lovers. Time passes.

All at once we see András Ambrus standing before the woman administrator. Our András does not want to accept the money he has coming to him nor does he want to sign the receipt for the identification papers. They argue. The woman seems to be tired and loses her patience: "What's the matter with you? Don't you want to go home?" "It is not that," says our hero. "I want to make it clear once and for all that I cannot accept Gábor Takács's money and papers because I am not him."

With this we are engrossed in the film,

still confident all will unfold in due course. Later on trouble arises because the director has trouble tackling the change of names and the confusion that goes with it.

Standing in front of this authority figure and her register book, the tired and bristly soldier continues to insist that he is not Gábor Takács but András Ambrus. The truth is that he was an orphan raised by a kulak and joined the army, but at the time he was called András Ambrus. The name Gábor Takács was given to him after the real one escaped from the prisoner-of-war camp. "Look", cries the small woman, "does it really make any difference what your name is? The important thing is you are lucky enough to go home with money in your pocket and not be retained on some sort of charge." This, however, does not move our hero, who insists again that he is András Ambrus and not Gábor Takács. It is the film's great moment: just like Peer Gynt before the Button Maker, the man clinging to his own self.

Finally they get rid of the blithering man to whom a name is more important than freedom. András Ambrus—rather, by now Gábor Takács—has only one possibility and that is to go to the new man in power, the communist party secretary. But here, unfortunately, the film slips. This man, instead of deliberating the way authority should, reacts irrationally and sends the soldier away though, we know by now he is an orphan, a foster child with no place in the world to go. In other words, this is a man who needs the fatherly help of the new power more than anything else. The director, however, thinks differently. He decides to have his hero go through a little hell first. The solution can follow, but until that time let the poor orphan suffer. After all, he may not have suffered enough already.

The other soldiers join their families and slowly everyone retreats from the station. However, Takács orbits around the party secretary and the chief of police as if bound to them by an invisible cord. He even

implores the chief of police, but again to no avail. Once more he turns to the infuriated party secretary who forever flails his arms about for no apparent reason. For the time being he cannot (thanks to the director) understand the orphan soldier, though Ambrus even manages to produce two witnesses with whom he had worked in camp.

Since the director cannot create a real conflict over the matter of a change of personality, he steps further in the wrong direction: to my amazement the two follow prisoners of war deny ever knowing Takács. On another occasion the party secretary has the prisoner of war write down his name. Here is another blunder: after the party secretary orders him to write down his own name, András Ambrus, the soldier also puts Gábor Takács on the same piece of paper. Oh well, I said to myself, Lugossy sticks to an absurd scenario the way his hero sticks to his identity crisis.

His former fellow prisoners almost lynch András Ambrus because of his stubbornness, or more exactly, because he wanted to make his "innocent" companions assume he is making trouble for them when he calls them in to be his witnesses. Where can he go to escape this uncomprehending world? With no money or documents he turns up on the farm of his stepfather, a wealthy peasant. The peasant, too, is suspicious of Ambrus's insistence on keeping his name. He assumes he can take from the ignorant boy the land allotted to him. When it turns out he is not willing to give in, the stepfather has the famished victim, who is thin as a rail, beaten half to death by three or four well-fed lads. Picture-wise this fight or, rather beating, is a frightening sequence of pictures. However absurd the scenario, I was sitting squeezing the arm of my chair staring at the four sinister lads. After a short, fierce fight they knock the poor guy out with their bicycle pumps at the foot of a haystack, so nobody can hurry to his aid, not even his own name. This beating sequence is yet

another proof of Lugossy's talent. The many minute details and their richness here make me somewhat overlook the film's basic flaws.

What could possibly happen next? Beaten and bloody, Ambrus staggers to the party secretary, who also gives Ambrus a good thrashing in the belief that he wanted to attack him in the dark of night. He finally understands the situation and brings the boy into his house, where he washes him and puts him to bed. The absurd devil who haunts the script knows no rest and during the night induces the lad to run away. Ambrus even takes the pistol of the party

secretary, though I have no idea why. Naturally the police catch him; the pistol is a serious matter. At this point the party secretary suddenly becomes as comprehending as he was obtuse throughout the whole film: he takes responsibility for the thief, writing the necessary documents in the name of András Ambrus. But why could he not have given him the papers after the first 15 minutes of the film?—I asked myself as did so many others with me. But now I do not ask, only sigh: I could have seen a good film about a real human dilemma if only someone had set the talented director straight.

JÓZSEF TORNAI

SUPERSTITION AS FOLK ART

The last surviving specimens of even the most ferocious wild beasts are put under protection when on the verge of extinction. The most harmful or even the most commonplace thing, before disappearing totally, would shine like something of value. Billions of bacteria from the black plague are probably still preserved in hermetically sealed phials in laboratories throughout the world.

Until quite recently superstition in Hungary was considered as a harmful, soul-destroying phenomenon that had to be extirpated at all costs—perhaps because it survived longest in the villages of Central Europe. But the explosive changes of the last twenty years, with the incredibly fast spread of mass communications, finally proved too much for superstition and eventually broke its strength. Now, we are already at a sufficient distance to look at it less irritably and discover the values in it to which we were perforce blind before.

The ethnographic film-maker Domokos

Moldován* has already demonstrated in previous films an ability to discern the specific values of passing things; in his short films he gave evidence of a faultless reflex to catch what was falling. Following the Bartókian tradition, he makes use of Hungary's rich storehouse of cultural relics in their pristine state.

He finds uncommon treasures digging both topographically and psychically when he burrows into the sediment at the periphery of consciousness.

His most recent film, *Szerelmi varázslások* (Love Spells), has the superficial face of a sociological exploration into the false, old forms of consciousness, as shown up compared to socialism in the making. Progressive thought is reluctant (but compelled) to note the isolated remnants of medieval or still earlier ways of thinking; it is considered an ideological failure to be attacked as a "damnable heritage".

* See script of "You Will Die the Death of Deaths" in No. 60.

But then, if somebody replaces his ideological perspective with a more profound class sympathy, he reserves the order of values and replaces ideological with aesthetic criteria. The world of popular superstition becomes beautiful; the name-giving ceremony that ends the film becomes exasperatingly dismal, shapeless and sterile—a parody of ceremony and solemnity. The nebulous closing sequence of the film shows a supposedly festive party that proceeds in melancholy monotony and leaves no doubt that the film-maker had no other purpose than to compare older popular traditions to undeveloped, bleak, formal modern ceremonies.

Moldován may show sympathy for and even propagandize superstition but he could no more be labelled a superstitious man than Picasso could be called convinced believer in totemism for his interest in the forms of African sculpture. So-called primitive cultures, as shown by Claude Lévi-Strauss, are in their own way just as complex, consistent and even modern as so-called modern civilization. The primitive forms of consciousness are not judged as false, but appreciated for their beautiful forms.

Folk dances and embroideries, those things which are acceptable and even admired, reflect the same forms of consciousness as the magic spells in Moldován's previous film, *Halálnak baldával balsz...* (You Will Die the Death of Deaths...): mourning for the dead, or here the earth kiss, dew gathering, footstep burning. Folk music, folk poetry, and embroidery easily fit the established genres in arts, crafts, music and poetry. But a strange act or an artificial happening, let alone forms of consciousness themselves, have no established genre, or at least had none for a long time. Thus it was not an art that could be extricated from the intellectual content in which it was conceived.

Without the arrival of such phenomena as "happenings" in the second half of this century, it would have been impossible to

conceive of superstitious acts as aesthetic events; indeed, their formal beauty would have been obscured by annoyance at their obsolete futility. But anyone who has ever tried to plan a magic and festive event will immediately recognize the sometimes breathtaking audacity of composing an act that does not shrink from perversion and cruelty and displays full assurance in its selection of elements and execution.

When we hear that a cat's paw was cut off for an experimental scene in the 16-mm. documentary, we have visions of the cruelty of Artaud's theatre or bloody slaughterhouse happenings by the Austrian, Nitsch. When we hear that a workwoman of Ózd recommends a potion of menstrual blood and espresso coffee, we cannot help thinking of Otto Mühl's Vienna performances that pushed obscenity to the limits of absurdity.

To raise the ominous question of whether the performers actually believe in the efficacy of their magic results in an affirmative answer given with the same bashfulness that leads lovers to the circuitous acts called the magic spell.

A lover in the countryside does not find it useful to meet his sweetheart and tell her exactly what he wants—which is not always clear to him anyway. Instead he chooses an irrational strategy which he thinks is more in keeping with the contradictory nature of the soul. Even if he examines himself and his superstitious action he can always absolve himself from the irrevocable responsibility of the spoken word. Exposed to whirling desires which he cannot explain, he does not rest content with dreamy inaction; a helpless man rams his head against a wall. It is an active demonstration that does not bother his sweetheart too early. When he says he believes in what he is doing, this means that, like Sisyphus, he believes in the heroism of futile exertion. Bashful behaviour is in itself already a form of indirect, and not directly reasonable, tactics.

In the film in question, on the other hand, we can see a woman, almost bursting with

sensual happiness, who complains that her whole life with her husband is the consequence of a vile curse and witchcraft. Bashfulness and the preservation of sensual bonds alike demand that she cast the blame on the poppyseed honey-cake she ate before she was married. Otherwise the uncommonly strong attraction would be considered a sort of unpardonable sensuality that not only would displease others but sooner or later would also embarrass the married couple themselves. When she says she really believes that the poppyseed honey-cake is to blame for everything, she means that the depth of her love is something she would rather conceal even from herself.

When we recognize what spiritual good a charming and silly superstition can do, we realize it is nothing more than an attractive bottle: it is both functional and beautiful.

The other motif of the film, dew gathering, is also easy to appreciate functionally (though) it should not be minimized as a very effective action poem either. The gathering of dew is supposed to increase a man's sexual powers. As is well known, sexual disorders are mostly psychosomatic and as such are autosuggestive. Stealing at early dawn the generative power of the earth is excellent as an exercise against inhibitions; it is a late, gentle variety of the bacchanals. But the text has a curious element:

I'm gathering the dew of this fine
morning,

I'm gathering the dew of this fine
morning!

I take some, I leave some.

I take some, I leave some.

Why do the bustling women find it worth mentioning that they leave some? Is this perhaps the way they appease grumbling Mother Earth from whom they are stealing? Or is it just for the sake of the ditty's rhythm? This cautious phrase, in the midst of the impulsive act performed in a hurry, has a special aesthetic effect. If we look at it again functionally, it can be regarded as a constraining motif. But is not the bewitched woman's assertion that her insatiable desire for her husband is the result of being bewitched also a love-restraining motif? In both cases restraint has a role of appeasing and channeling waning energies. Thus the text works in the same context that we take to be the shape of life. Even the spring in clocks is regulated by cogwheels which regularly get stuck in order that it have a rhythm and not unwind all at once. Even the two-line ditty demonstrates one of the fundamental principles of any expansive act, which accounts for the complementary functions of force and obstacle; they in turn are reminders of the congruency of form and function.

Viewing the film, we almost regret that big-city common sense forbids us to manoeuvre in our world of emotions as candidly as the superstitious soul does.

MIKLÓS ERDÉLY

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1968 ("History and Self-knowledge"), *A cselekvő ember* 1976 ("Active man"), *Az értelmiség jelentése*, 1976 ("The role of professional people".)

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