

QNH

*The New
Hungarian
Quarterly*

■ The Process of Détente and East-West Trade — *József Bognár*

■ Economic Development in the West — *János Fekete*

■ Open Gates — *Msgr. József Cserháti*

■ Transformation of the Hungarian Village — *György Enyedi*

■ Paris Round-Table on Human Rights — *Iván Boldizsár*

■ Notes from America — *Vilmos Csaplár, Ottó Orbán*

■ Verse and Prose — *Péter Esterházy, Gábor Görgey,
Endre Illés, Ferenc Karinthy*

VOL. XVIII. ■ No. 67 ■ AUTUMN 1977 ■ £1.30 ■ \$2.60

67

The New Hungarian Quarterly

EDITORIAL BOARD

JÓZSEF BOGNÁR, TIBOR HUSZÁR, LAJOS JÁNOSSY,
DEZSŐ KERESZTURY, BÉLA KÖPECZI, LÁSZLÓ ORSZÁGH,
BRUNÓ STRAUB, EGON SZABADY, SÁNDOR SZALAI, ISTVÁN VAS,
GÁBOR VÁLYI, ANNA ZÁDOR

EDITOR

IVÁN BOLDIZSÁR

EDITORIAL STAFF

ZOLTÁN HALÁSZ, DEPUTY EDITOR
MIKLÓS VAJDA, LITERARY EDITOR
ÁGNES SZÉCHY, ARTS EDITOR

Editorial Offices

17 Rákóczi út, H-1088 Budapest, Hungary

Telephone: 136-857

Postal Address: H-1366 Budapest, P.O. Box 57, Hungary

Annual subscription: \$ 10,— or the equivalent in another currency
post free to any address

Orders may be placed with

KULTURA HUNGARIAN TRADING COMPANY FOR BOOKS
AND NEWSPAPERS

H-1389 Budapest, P.O.B. 149

See also the distributors listed on the back page

Residents in Hungary may subscribe
at their local post office or at *Posta Központi Hírlapiroda*,
H-1900 Budapest V., József nádor tér 1.

Published by Lapkiadó Publishing House, Budapest

Printed in Hungary by Kossuth Printing House, Budapest

© *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, 1977

The New Hungarian Quarterly

VOLUME XVIII * No. 67

AUTUMN 1977

Confronting the Problems	<i>The Editors</i>	3
The Process of Détente and East-West Trade	<i>József Bognár</i>	8
Freedom and Equality around a Paris Round-Table... ..	<i>Iván Boldizsár</i>	26
Economic Development in the West—A personal view	<i>János Fekete</i>	40
Open Gates	<i>Msgr. József Cserháti</i>	48
Room 212 (short story)	<i>Endre Illés</i>	63
The Transformation of the Hungarian Village	<i>György Enyedi</i>	69
Swimming in the Iowa River	<i>Vilmos Csaplár</i>	87
Where Does the Poet Come From?—Canto	<i>Ottó Orbán</i>	93
The Flag—Mischievous Text (short story)	<i>Péter Esterházy</i>	100
Steinbeck and Zelk	<i>Ferenc Karinthy</i>	103
Anatomy of a Supper (poem, translated by Jascha Kessler) ..	<i>Gábor Görgey</i>	109

INTERVIEW

A Conversation with György Aczél on the Post-Helsinki Period	<i>Otto Schulmeister</i>	117
---	--------------------------	-----

SURVEYS

The Literary Revolution in Hungary around 1900	<i>Péter Nagy</i>	126
Unesco and the Social Sciences	<i>Kálmán Kulcsár</i>	132
Household Budgets	<i>Magda Hoffmann</i>	139
The Regrets of Progress	<i>Júlia Jubász</i>	148

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

- The Young Lukács's Philosophy of History *Ferenc L. Lendvai* 154
Approaches to Fiction (Emil Kolozsvári Grandpierre,
Miklós Gyárfás, Gyula Hernádi, György Asperján) . . . *Zoltán Iszlai* 163
Two Poets (László Kálnoky, Anna Kiss) *László Ferenczi* 172
The Age of Classicism and Romanticism (on a book by
Anna Zádor) *Lajos Németh* 174
"Brief Portraits from the History of Ethics" (on a book
by Ágnes Heller) *Dénes Zoltai* 178
Children's Stories? (Péter Horváth, Péter Esterházy) . . *Imre Kiss Pintér* 181
"The Boys from Kertész Street" (a book by Ferenc Lóránd) *István Gábor* 184

ARTS AND ARCHEOLOGY

- From Linocuts to Tapestry (Piroska Széky, Imre Veszprémi,
Piroska Szántó, Lenke Széchenyi) *János Frank* 188
A Generation of Seventy-Year-Olds (Menyhért Tóth,
György Kohán, Jenő Benedek) *Mária Illyés* 192
Lajos Kassák Memorial Museum in Old Buda *Éva Forgács* 196
Nature, Vision and Creation *József Vadas* 198
Hilton Hotel and Hungarian History *János Sedlmayr* 201

THEATRE AND FILM

- Six Plays—Six Passions (by István Örkény, Erzsébet Galgóczi,
István Csurka, Lajos Mesterházi, Géza Páskándi,
László Németh) *Anna Földes* 205
Happy Diversity (on films by Gábor Bódy,
János Dömölky, Pál Sándor) *Mari Kuttna* 213
Two Actor's Films (by János Rózsa, Gyula Maár) *József Tornai* 218

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

This issue went to press on May 13, 1977

CONFRONTING THE PROBLEMS

THE NEW HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY, right from its foundation, has endeavoured to present Hungarian reality as it is, in its true character, as part of a contemporary world pregnant with problems, and seeking ways out of them. That is why the NHQ always did its best to take part in the discussion of the burning issues of the day, giving voice to the Hungarian view in the international dialogue. It will, we hope not be considered immodest if, turning the leaves of bound copies, one ventures the claim that the sixty-six issues which appeared in the course of close to eighteen years make possible a survey of the more important processes of what could so to speak already be called a historical period, in a manner one could not be aware of then and there, in the heat of events and work.

No. 67 is not called on to celebrate an anniversary, therefore, optimistically leaving an account of the NHQ's history of ideas to the not all that distant No 75, these introductory remarks will be employed to draw attention to those articles which, in the autumn of 1977, contribute to the debates of the day.

A definable group takes off from the present and future of East-West relations. Delving into the past all the same for a moment, it ought to be said that the NHQ, from the early stages of coexistence to Helsinki, Belgrade and beyond, has published numerous documents and contributions that touched the most vital aspects of this burning question. Professor József Bognár's paper which leads this issue nevertheless deserves particular attention and interest. One pole of his argument is the interdependence between the political and security system which is taking shape around us, and the world economy; the other is an analysis of the contradictions between the postulates which have arisen in the course of the structural changes of recent years in the world economy, and the present

international economic order. Pointing to much that is insufficiently known, and displaying the causal springs of well known problems, the paper puts forward proposals, and works out ideas, which could give a favourable impetus to East-West economic contacts and the process of détente.

Iván Boldizsár, in these post-Helsinki and pre-Belgrade months examined the realization of basic rights which determine the quality of life in a series of articles which appeared in *Élet és Irodalom*, a literary weekly, as the proofs of this issue were being corrected. Their starting point is an East-West Round Table held in Paris, and the considerable interest they aroused on publication warrants their inclusion, only slightly amended, in the present issue, under the title "Freedom and Equality—around a Paris round table."

János Fekete, the Vice-President of the Hungarian National Bank, takes a keen look at Western economies. His informal style is due to the occasion that the article is the text of an after-dinner speech he gave to the American Chamber of Commerce in Vienna, Austria. The discerning reader will have no difficulty in discovering the thorough analysis beneath the surface informality, and something else as well: a sincere effort, important also to the Hungarian economy to further extend East-West relations on the basis of mutual advantage.

Kálmán Kulcsár, who heads the Sociological Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, was a member of the Hungarian delegation to the Unesco General Conference in Nairobi. He took part in the programme committee dealing with the social and human aspects of the international economic order. His article places the Hungarian point of view in the context of the debate concerning the tasks and future role of the social sciences.

*

There is no task more difficult for a writer or editor, or more exciting, than the circumnavigation of the *condition humaine*, reporting the changes, major and minor as they occur, all those modifications which the NHQ registered in the course of the years without being able to tell precisely when and how quantitative differences turn into qualitative ones. The title of Professor György Enyedi's paper "The transformation of the Hungarian village" is in truth an understatement since he in fact draws attention to a world-wide problem, going on to analyse its Hungarian aspects. The effects of industrialization and urbanization first made themselves felt in the developed industrial world, with a certain delay in those countries which reached this stage of development at a later point in time, and they can,

to some degree, also be discerned in the developing world as well. Professor Enyedi uses the methodological armory of economic geography to show the Hungarian village at the present stage of major social and economic change. He argues that Hungarian experience shows the decline and eventual demise of the village as a domicile and place of work, that is as a community, to be far from inevitable in conditions of accelerated industrialization. On the contrary, in his view the outlines of a new type of village which will be the home of a better quality life, can already be discerned in Hungary. This is obviously a result of the fact that the transformation took place in socialist conditions.

Magda Hoffman is a faculty member of the Department of Marketing and Market Research of the Karl Marx University of Economics. Her original intention when surveying the consumer and investment habits of Hungarians, with the aid of her students, was pragmatic indeed. The scope of her work was extended as the survey proceeded, and they probed deeply into layers which have not so far been explored in such a concrete and comprehensive manner in the pages of this journal. Júlia Juhász's "The regrets of progress" merely examines the microworld that has taken shape in a new Budapest housing estate, what she has to say is nevertheless of great importance since 1,000,050 new dwellings have been erected in Hungary in the course of the past fifteen odd years, a great many of which, for economic and town planning reasons, as part of new housing estates. A fair proportion of urban dwellers in Hungary thus live in new housing areas of the sort here described. The proportion of housing estate construction is being kept up in the housing programme, so that it is far from indifferent what kind of community life is taking shape there.

*

An article in No 66, the previous issue of this journal, by György Aczél, Deputy Prime Minister and member of the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, dealt with the relationship between the socialist state and the churches. The article which discussed the further improvement of contacts between Marxists and religious people, and the conditions for such a development under the aegis of socialist democracy and national unity, met with a considerable response at home and abroad (it appeared in Hungarian in the monthly *Világosság*). The Bishop of Pécs, József Cserháti, answered in the Catholic journal *Vigilia*. Publishing the article in the present issue surely not only informs on the position taken up by the Catholic Church in Hungary, implicitly something of note is

said about the social situation in Hungary as well. The way that shapes is clearly determined by the success of the policy of alliances initiated by the political leadership, within which the full and equal participation of religious people in communal affairs is a most important factor.

György Aczél figures in the present issue as well, not as the author of an article but as the subject of an interview with Dr. Otto Schulmeister, the editor of *Die Presse* in Vienna. Like the Vienna paper, the NHQ as well uses György Aczél's phrase: 'There is no history without contradictions' to head the text of the interview. The Deputy Prime Minister's answers bear witness to the fact that the political line he represents aims to deal with the problems and contradictions which are part and parcel of social progress in open debate, and bringing to bear the force that is implicit in ideas.

*

An anniversary must be mentioned first when it comes to the literary material contained in the present number. Endre Illés, one of the major figures in contemporary Hungarian literary life and a noted writer of prose fiction and essays is 75 this year. "Room 212" a piece of short fiction shows the hard, cool look he takes at life, and his polished style at its best. Illés has written plays and prose on contemporary and historical themes and translated Stendhal and Maupassant, in addition to being one of the guiding spirits of Hungarian literature as the manager, for close to a quarter of a century now, of *Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó*, literally the Publishing House for literature, though it is of course only one of them.

No 66 already contained much material connected with the centenary of the birth of Endre Ady, including poems, and a discussion of his work. In this issue Professor Péter Nagy's "The Literary Revolution in Hungary around 1900" tells of the revolution in sensibility, from which Ady emerged, and whose major figure and leader he then became. Photographs of Ady, and members of his family, taken by Aladár Székely, provide an added interest.

Ferenc Karinthy contributes a piece whose irony only underlines the warmth and sympathy he feels for his subject. He recalls John Steinbeck's visit to Budapest and a "dumb conversation" he had with the poet Zoltán Zelk, who is seventy this year.

The NHQ has published the Graves Prize Poem every year since Robert Graves founded the award which is financed by his Hungarian royalties. Last year's winning poem was "Anatomy of a Supper" by Gábor Görgey.

Vilmos Csaplár and Ottó Orbán were both recent participants of the University of Iowa's International Writing Program. Csaplár subtly expresses

the love-hate relationship he formed with America in "Swimming in the Iowa River." Orbán's "Canto," included in this issue, is a poem on Ezra Pound, the piece of prose published here is the text of an address on Hungarian verse which he gave to an American audience. Orbán there also refers to the anthology published by Columbia University Press which is based on poems which first appeared in English in the pages of this journal.

Péter Esterházy, a young writer who began publishing not so long ago, called his short story "The Flag" 'a mischievous text,' no doubt not without reason.

The present number offers a broad conspectus of the art of the past and present. Professor Anna Zádor, a member of the Editorial Board of this journal, and our principal advisor on all matters connected with art, recently published a major work on classicism and romanticism. Lajos Németh here reviews it. The occasion for Éva Forgács's piece on Lajos Kassák, the great Hungarian avant-garde artist is the opening of a museum devoted to Kassák, the writer-poet-painter-typographer and editor in a gem of an aristocratic country house in what has since become a part of Budapest. János Frank, Mária Illyés and József Vadas write on current exhibitions in Budapest and the provinces, and hence on contemporary Hungarian art. The text and illustrations give one a pretty good idea of what is currently considered trendy in the Hungarian art world.

THE EDITORS

THE PROCESS OF DÉTENTE AND EAST-WEST TRADE

by

JÓZSEF BOGNÁR

What I propose to discuss in this essay are the problems relating to the formation and development of European economic co-operation at a time when the intertwining of political and security questions with economic ones in both nation states and international life has assumed unprecedented proportions. This tendency, so typical of the character and future of our era, can be demonstrated by some shifts in emphasis depending on the views taken and the focus of one's way of thinking. One should point out that the weight of international economic questions has substantially increased in relation to the problems of international politics and security, and that this process is still going on. Economists are likely to stress the latter aspect of changes. If, however, one uses the term politics in its broader sense and accordingly sets out from the focus of power where decisions are taken and rational proportions of action are formed, we may describe this tendency by saying that the economic components of political decisions have significantly strengthened.

Political and security problems are outside the scope of this paper but if we accept as facts the intertwining of political and security questions with economic ones, and the proposition concerning the growing importance of economic problems, then it appears to be justified also to carry out the analysis and appraisal of the security system established, or about to be established, from an economic point of view as its character considerably influences domestic and international economic relations. That it is really justified to carry out this analysis is corroborated by the fact that fundamental changes have taken place in the position and potential of the two interdependent factors. It is commonly known that the scientific and technological revolution has radically changed the earlier conditions regarding the security of nations, of social systems and particular regions. (It should be noted in passing that the security aspects of the socio-political

systems have been playing a very important part in international affairs since the French Revolution. This tendency has been still further strengthened by the revolutions of our century, and this system of thinking and action will retain its justifiability in the world until a collective security system acceptable to all is created.)

It is evident, however, that the change of era¹ in the world economy has drastically altered earlier views on the potentialities and limitations of the economy as well as on the system of conditions governing its normal operation. It is common knowledge that the security system known as equilibrium of deterrents withdraws immense resources from economic development. It is doubtful whether economies slowing down in their growth and facing such problems as the rising costs of the factors of production, the dislocation of raw-material sources, the disturbance of the ecological equilibrium, the feeding of an increasing world population, the satisfaction of basic human needs,² price and structural changes, inflation, will be able to ensure and if so, by undertaking what consequences, the energies necessary to maintain that security system. The extremely high level of military expenditure has contributed in no small measure to the phenomena of the change of era in the world economy bursting into our life precisely now and under such serious conditions. This is an economic problem, and the greatest one that various economies have to cope with. The above-mentioned security system however affects not only domestic economies but also international economic relations.

Evidently, the indirect consequences of this security system—which incessantly add fuel to the climate of mutual suspicion—aggravate the establishment of such economic relations as are necessary in an interdependent world and which are, to a certain extent, also possible under the present world economic mechanism. They, however, presuppose mutual confidence and goodwill.

In the world economy, however, we are experiencing a strengthening of interdependence, which means, in respect of fundamental relationships, a symbiosis with nature as one of the new, guiding norms of the existence of human society but which constitutes also, in its more limited sense (i.e. within the world economy), a signal warning that the economic growth, policy and situation of a given country or integration exert a vigorous impact on the potential development of other countries or in-

¹ József Bognár: *Világ gazdasági korszakváltás* (Changes of Era in the World Economy). Budapest, Közgazdasági és Jogi Kiadó-Gondolat, 1976. 225 pp. In Hungarian.

² Basic needs and national employment strategies. — Tripartite World Conference on Employment, Income Distribution and Social Progress and the International Division of Labour, Geneva, June 1976. Geneva, International Labour Office, 1976. 195 pp.

tegrations. Economic developments taking place in one constitute an economic environment for the other country.

However, the spill-over effects of this security system expressly hamper the formation of mechanisms, regulators and forms of cooperation which indirectly promote the solution of global problems, basically affecting all those who take part in the world economy. This is because these factors presuppose a high degree of mutual trust, an active community of interest and the acceptance of the idea of reciprocal dependence.

Summing up the effect of that security system on the system of internal conditions of economic growth, one can conclude that the regular withdrawal of a substantial part of economic resources from the economic sphere increases instability, which results anyway from the change of era in the world economy.

It is, however, commonly known that given growing internal instability, "external" security is inconceivable. It may therefore be assumed that the utilization of economic energies for security purposes beyond a certain limit gives birth to greater insecurity than what might arise in the military field if the same resources were used for economic purposes.

The situations, factors and consequences connected with the decay of the system of external conditions of economic growth must be assessed with great circumspection. What causes problems is not only the fact that certain countries have a lesser share in the benefits derived from the international division of labour and trade, which, under the aggravating conditions of economic growth, is of course a serious problem in itself, but also the experience that the objective threat to the conditions of human existence makes itself felt through factors and processes whose change, or the stopping or mitigating of their dangerous elements, requires international cooperation, more economic resources and coordinated actions. Any attempt to prevent the creation of an international climate which promotes the warding off of the mitigating of these real dangers—in which a very essential role is played of course by the balance of mutual deterrence and the related system of thinking and behaviour—jeopardizes the conditions of human existence to a greater extent than it increases, if at all, the "security" of individual states or military alliances.

The conclusion logically follows from this system of interdependence between security policy and economic factors that the economy is not a passive medium merely receiving effects, but an active power which, through its operation and mechanisms, reacts on the security sphere. Every single result of cooperation, any up-to-date method and bold initiative creating a community of interest, contributes to the lessening or

dispelling of mutual distrust which, in earlier situations, led to the rise of that security system. Thus the common interests partly exert a positive effect and, beyond a certain point coming into conflict with the structure of security, partly exist side by side dooming each other to mutual impotence.

Account must also be taken of the fact that in an organized human society—and thus in international relations as well—the negative implications of the various power factors are always greater than the positive ones or, to put it differently, it is considerably easier to prevent something than to get norms of behaviour that conform to a new situation accepted as a basis of action. Thus a “complete breakthrough” is hardly conceivable on behalf of the economy since, in domestic politics, the established security patterns have greatly strengthened over the decades, while in international life the structure of security (the dominant nuclear powers) and the distribution of economic power show substantial disparities.³ As a result of this shift, the energies arising in political power are more easily and more quickly transferred to the economy than economic energies to politics. This is because, in the world today, political and military power is relatively concentrated, while economic power, even between states, is more widely spread, and some of its forms embody an original economic policy which is independent even of states. (Multinational corporations.) The change of era in the world economy, however, necessitates new decisions, partly because, owing to the deterioration of the conditions of growth, the economy can feed this security system with new energies only at the expense of living conditions, partly because the mobile equilibrium of certain factors appearing in the economic sphere represents today a greater danger than anything else, even if these dangers appear not in the classical, nation-state framework, but on a global or regional scale.

Weighing up the present situation, and the future, on the basis of economic factors and interconnections, the conclusion can be reached that, in the decades to come, we shall need security conceptions which

a) do not withdraw too much energy from the economy which suffers from a scarcity of assets;

b) do not impede (but rather promote) the formation of a system of international political and economic relations which enables mankind to solve the problems raised by the scientific and technological revolution and the change of era in the world economy. “Solution” would mean partly the avoidance of certain imminent dangers (nuclear catastrophe, major ecological disaster, the collapse of the economic system, etc.), and partly

³ Miriam Camps: *The Management of Interdependence*. New York, Council of Foreign Relations, 1974.

the launching of the implementation of projects aimed at satisfying basic human needs, a more rational distribution of economic activities and the guarantee of conditions for progress in the Third World.

It is obvious that in the light of the change of era in the world economy, that East-West relations cannot be treated in isolation, on a bipolar basis, either. These relations are part and parcel of the world's political equilibrium which means that they must also be regarded, from the point of view of the Third World, as factors influencing a growth-determining climate. The peaceful and constructive character of this climate is beneficial both from the political and the economic point of view, if fraught with tensions, however, it is harmful from both. This is because tensions tend to change local or regional problems into international conflicts, on the one hand, and they withdraw major economic resources from world economic circulation, on the other. Therefore East-West trade of a nature is needed which is both efficient enough to bring about and develop common interests, and capable of channelling such new energies into the world economy which also promote the development of the Third World.

The structure and methods of approach of this paper may have created the impression that the approach here exemplified is unjustifiably *normative*.

My subject is what ought to be rather than how things as established in practice could be further developed. This can then serve as a starting-point.

But a normative approach as a starting-point is not only right but justified and useful in cases where a change in the way of thinking which derives from given conditions is the point at issue, because a new way of thinking also implies a new system of objectives and new conditions described as optimum. The essence of the change consists exactly in the fact that in the new system of conditions something may no longer be desirable and expedient that used to be that earlier, or that such new requirements are also raised of which no account was taken before. The consequences of past pragmatic action appear today as materialized practice, but these very actions in themselves were products of some kind of conception. It is evident, of course, that the normative approach can never be the only or exclusive one, as real action derives, in its content, from interests, its "thrust" being due to economic power or power relations. If one neglects this, one may easily find oneself in the realm of Utopia.

Hence, we shall, in the following section, explore the various questions on a *pragmatic basis*, trying to draw certain conclusions in that way. The simultaneous application and circumspect combination of these two approaches will enable us always to establish the relationship between objectives or postulates and the real situation.

II.

An analysis of the processes and trends that evolved in the 1970s appears to suggest that East-West trade—amidst and in spite of the survival of some of the uncertainty factors that originated in an earlier period, and the emergence of new ones—has undergone substantial development in every respect. Earlier analyses, in the 1960s, established that East-West trade, that is trade between countries with differing socio-economic systems, was highly sensitive to political developments and changes. Setting out from this premise, one can reach a similar conclusion arguing that détente and the abatement of the Cold War have given a new impetus to the growth of trade and economic relations.

1. The appreciable rise in the volume of economic and trade relations also finds expression in the fact that, by comparison with 1970, the East-West share in world trade increased from 2.6 to 3.1 per cent. Looking at it from another angle, the growth rate of East-West trade in the 1970s—including the trough of the crisis period—has considerably surpassed the growth rate of world trade. The share of OECD countries in the external economic activity of CMEA countries has also risen. (This proportionate share, which varies of course from country to country, now fluctuates between 30 and 35 per cent, and shows a rapid growth especially in relation to certain overseas countries [USA-Japan]).

It is obvious that the vigorous expansion of economic relations—which has taken place simultaneously with the price and structural shocks caused by the change of era in the world economy, with the crisis of the capitalist economy, and the switch of socialist economies from extensive to intensive growth—has also given rise to significant problems and tensions. As a result of these phenomena that occurred as explosions, socialist countries have been unable, owing to the contraction of import markets, to expand their exports at a rate which would have been necessary to pay for their extremely high-priced imports. As a result, they have become indebted to a considerable degree, and they can offset this only by accelerating the change-over. This change-over means a consistent realization of the foreign economic orientation of the economies, that is, it requires a new strategy of external economic activity. I shall return to these problems, at this stage I only wish to mention that the indebtedness of the socialist countries is far from “appalling” in view of the present international payments situation. Price rises, that is deterioration in the terms of trade, make themselves felt immediately, while structural changes, including the stepping up of exports and making them more competitive, take time, besides, the

international monetary system and organization were not, and could not be, prepared for these changes.

The situation which has come about in this way must be conceived as a "thrust towards cooperation" which may play a useful role if the necessary steps are taken on both sides. The necessary steps will be determined primarily according to what mechanisms of cooperation we can establish under conditions of mutual dependence deriving from the world economy.

2. The impact of East-West relations on the internal economic development of countries participating in this trade has strengthened. It may be assumed that this fact is of particularly great importance in a period when the slowing down of economic growth must be taken into account.

In recent years a new view has evolved in the European socialist countries on the effect and significance of international economic relations. The objective background to this new view is provided in part by the requirements of an intensive type of growth, and is also related to the relaxation of international tension. In the period of extensive growth and the Cold War, imports from non-socialist countries were regarded simply as gap-filling and exports to those countries as an additional factor. To put it differently: no imports policy could be formulated which looked on imports as a component of rational economic structure, and on exports as a component of a policy of growth.

In the new view the recognition finds expression that international economic relations have and may have an economy-developing effect. In the course of its development the socialist economy cannot do without impulses derived from foreign economic activity (including, of course, exports).

If this view is accepted, the benefits accruing to the socialist economies from trading with the developed capitalist countries are—besides profits—as follows:

(a) The acceleration of technical progress owing to the direct and indirect effects of imported means of production. We speak of indirect effects because technical progress achieved in one industry has, on the one hand, spill-over effects and, on the other, it has powers of attraction.

(b) The extension of the markets and, as a result, the acceleration of growth (national income, production, etc.).

(c) Increase in sophisticated production techniques, especially in the case of cooperation with technologically advanced economic units.

(d) Satisfaction of certain consumption needs at a higher level, and the indirect effects related to it.

(e) Ensuring additional development resources in certain periods.

(f) Apart from the growth and development-promoting effects, a very important role has of course been played so far, and will continue to be played hereafter as well, by imports that contribute to ensuring continuous economic activity, such as imports of raw materials and semi-manufactured goods in short supply, and agricultural products and food at times of local and temporary shortages.

It may be clear from the above list that the expansion of East-West economic relations has a growth-stimulating effect from the point of view of the socialist countries.

Looked at from a different angle, this means that socialist countries and economies have a vital interest in the expansion of these relations. I am in this paper only discussing interests of an economic nature.

The positive effects on the economic growth of developed capitalist countries of trade with the CMEA countries are as follows:

(a) The expansion of markets through exports promotes growth. This effect has been, and will be, of particular importance at times of slowed-down economic growth. It is well known that forecasts extending to 1990 envisage a slowing down of economic growth, which raises a large number of social problems.

(b) Trade with CMEA countries promotes the further modernization of the economic and productive structure where imports are used to restrain the activities of certain less economic industries, or to restructure their range of products. In such cases, cooperation makes possible a saving in investments, or their more concentrated use.

(c) It furthers, and cooperation could increasingly further, the diversification of the fuel and raw-material supply. The developed capitalist countries, primarily Western Europe and Japan, but to a certain extent the United States as well, will continue to be the largest fuel and raw-material importers. A stable raw-material supply—under appropriate political and economic guarantees—will continue to remain one of the hubs of economic growth. Cooperation on their part in developing the raw-material producing capacities of the socialist countries may turn into an important aspect of the stability of their raw-material sources. Agreements of this nature have already been concluded in a significant number, and the preparation of similar agreements is under way.

(d) Imports promote the satisfaction of certain consumer and production demands on a wider scale.

The national economic effects of the expansion of economic relations were pointed out above, but I should also like to refer to the business benefits that derive from profits, technological cooperation, greater spe-

cialization and the strengthening of dynamism. The beneficiaries of these advantages are not only the big companies well provided with capital (they as well of course), but also small- and medium-sized firms which have attained a high standard in manufacturing one or another product.

The positive effects of East-West trade, however, have not been and are still not confined to the developed world only. Tripartite production cooperation⁴ covering the Western, the socialist and the developing countries has come into being, which constitutes a most constructive approach to the problems of today's world economy. It contributes to the formation of a "genuine" world economy, allowing Eastern and Western firms to accommodate to each other, promoting technical transfer and possibly speed up the progress of the Third World. Seventy per cent of cooperation agreements conclude until now, concentrate on the supply of "turn-key" plants.⁵ Most of these tripartite cooperation schemes refer to the Maghreb and the Middle East, but may well be extended to Africa South of the Sahara, India and other parts of the world.

The tripartite type of production cooperation may play an important role in the multilateralization of the payments system and in balancing the deficits arising from bilateralism. It may even promote the formation of a world economy universal in certain aspects, but in other connections made up of three blocks vigorously cooperating with each other. These problems cannot be discussed in detail within the scope of this paper because a many-sided and elaborate analysis of these intricate problems would take us too far from our subject.

In analysing the problems of East-West trade, authors often refer to the asymmetrical nature of relations. This asymmetry is reflected primarily in that the share of the developed capitalist countries in CMEA countries' foreign trade accounts for 30-35 per cent,⁶ while that of the socialist countries in those countries' external economic activity amounts to only 5-6 per cent. Asymmetry follows in the first place from the essentially diverging conception and role of external economic activity in the development of capitalist and socialist economies in the past. The world economy and world market have been a decisive driving force in the development of capitalist economies in Western Europe. Also, developments in the domestic markets only got off the ground at a time when outward expansion was impeded by factors of a political or economic nature. I use the term

⁴ Patrick Gutman-Francis Arkwright: "La coopération industrielle tripartite entre pays à systèmes économiques et sociaux différents de l'Ouest, de l'Est et du Sud." — *Politique Étrangère*, 1975, No. 6. pp. 621-655.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *L'Express*, January 16, 1977.

Western Europe because the growth model of the US has been different from the type outlined above.

In the past domestic markets have been the main driving force in the growth of socialist economies. This has determined the type of growth evolved. It follows from that difference in economic history and development that the economic energies emerging under capitalism are just about convertible energies in their very nature, while convertibility in the history of socialist economies has been the result of a further step and special effort. However, this difference in economic history and economic policy is diminishing, as in the period of intensive development the weight of external factors of growth substantially increases and, therefore, a new strategy of external economic activity is needed. The essence of this strategy lies precisely in the fact that it should make *convertible* a steadily growing proportion of the economic energies produced.

As a result, one may count on a gradual diminishing of asymmetry in the future.

3. The development of East-West relations is greatly promoted, and also illustrated by the new forms and methods of cooperation which first gained ground and were then realized with increasing frequency. This does not imply that further development of existing forms and methods or a more intensive utilization of the forms are no longer needed. These are, of course, indispensable factors of development at a time when the world economic system is undergoing far-reaching changes on the one hand, and the dimensions of East-West relations are demonstrating considerable development on the other. But even in the light of these new needs and requirements one might well say that what has happened so far in this field is far from insignificant.

Let me briefly sum up those new forms and methods of cooperation that have already led to appreciable results.

(a) The gaining ground, at a rapid rate, of production cooperation ventures. According to a variety of sources, there are about a thousand cooperation ventures, but their number is presumably higher, as Hungarian enterprises alone have signed about five hundred production contracts with various capitalist firms. I do not think I have to dwell on the mutual benefits of cooperation ventures. I only wish to stress again that what we are discussing here is cooperation between firms in countries with differing social systems. In trade and economic relations with certain countries—e.g. the Federal Republic of Germany—12–14 per cent of mutual trade already stems from production cooperation.

In addition, one should mention the growth shown by tripartite under-

takings in production cooperation as they will play a very important and constructive role in the development of the world economy in years to come.

(b) The first joint ventures have come into being, though not yet in sufficient number, but in a form accepted by the legislation of socialist countries and new forms of cooperation have also been introduced for the development of raw-material production. Both forms of cooperation have already got over their infantile disorders, but the potentialities inherent in them are still far from fully exploited. It may be assumed, of course, that in future mutually advantageous and lasting forms of cooperation will gradually develop into joint ventures. The tripartite forms of production cooperation also provide a suitable basis for the formation of joint ventures, as tasks of a more or less similar type may often be performed in several countries of the Third World. Thus a stable form of cooperation will ensure very great benefits. It is obvious that what makes the forms of occasional cooperation necessary are, first of all, mutual adaptation, the sharing of knowledge and experience as well as the creation of mutual confidence. Various forms of cooperation in the production of raw-materials are, and will be, of particular importance partly for the growing, diversified and guaranteed raw-material supply of West European countries, partly for the expansion of East European exports.

(c) Credit and financial relations are also undergoing significant development. The socialist economies have been compelled to make use of new sources in order to finance their additional imports arising partly from the sharply increasing demand for capital in the intensive period of their development, partly as a result of the deterioration of the terms of trade and of the contraction of export outlets. In addition to commodity credits it has become possible to an increasing extent to receive medium- and long-term bank credits at more favourable interest rates, or to issue government bonds.

Banks have also played an increasingly important role in establishing business contacts.

Growing financial relations have also been underpinned in terms of organization since agencies of socialist banks in the West European countries and the representatives of various big banks in the socialist countries have become general practice.

Serious troubles arise from a world problem: that, within current international financial organization, there is no institution which can suitably cope with the recent situation in international payments. It may be assumed that the merchant banks—which have long and far exceeded their original

function—will not be able in future to bridge the gap. Therefore, new solutions have to be found in which the individual states undertake an appropriate role, i.e. new international agreements have to be concluded.

(d) Substantial progress can also be registered in scientific and technical cooperation, which the various inter-governmental agreements and agreements between institutes often extend to production. In this way, not only an exchange of scientific values and achievements, but also cooperation in research have come to be materialized—developments which have not only enabled complex problems to be approached from different angles but have also established a transfer to the economy. It is also worth noting that the East European countries, which have built up a coherent system of research institutes, now have significant research capacities.

I should like to stress that by mutually reducing armaments to an economically reasonable level, great capacities can be released, which would make it possible to utilize them not only in the interest of solving national and European problems, but also to the benefit of the Third World. In the knowledge of the problems one can safely say—as has also been pointed out at conferences discussing the problems of the new international economic order⁷—that it would be absolutely necessary to take this step.

(e) A positive role has been played in the promotion and organization of cooperation and contacts as well as in the provision of guarantees by long-term inter-state agreements concluded at the top level.

We regard this fact as an *up-to-date element* of development as it stands to reason that the role and responsibility of states and governments will vigorously intensify in the promotion of international economic relations, in formulating the principles and priorities of cooperation in keeping with the new world situation as well as in shaping the internal and external mechanisms influencing these relations.

This tendency is, by the way, in conformity with the Charter on the Economic Rights and Duties of States.⁸

Hence, these inter-state skeleton agreements have fulfilled a comprehensive and very efficient economy-organizing function by determining the principles of cooperation, since the countries concerned belong to different socio-economic systems, both parties attach great importance to the formulation of these principles, whose political and orientating role is indisputable both in the public opinion of the individual countries and among economic

⁷ Reshaping the International Order. A Report to the Club of Rome. (Coordinator: Jan Tinbergen.) Dutton, New York, 1976.

⁸ Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States. New York, United Nations General Assembly, 1975. 13 pp.

experts, specifying the most important fields of possible cooperation, extending cooperation to scientific and technical fields and ensuring—according to need—guarantees by the state for inter-firm cooperation and relations. These agreements have also enriched the array of legal tools by emphasizing the organizational function of law rather than its sanctioning power. In my opinion, this trend, as the relations in question are either of an inter-state or of an economic nature, is justified and sound.

Inter-state cooperation will also be enriched by those Soviet or CMEA recommendations which are aimed at discussing certain fundamental economic problems at an all-European level.

It is, on the other hand, a highly regrettable fact that the suggestions made by CMEA for a discussion of the principles of trade policy regulating cooperation between the two integrations have so far not been accepted. The reluctance and hesitation of the European Economic Community in this matter not only makes the further development of East-West relations difficult but also hampers the realization of trilateral consultations on problems of the world economy. It is simply incomprehensible to the executives of firms, politicians and research economists who understand the serious present problems of the world economy and recognize that time is pressing that in the "era of negotiations," when any "delicate" issue ranging from the surveillance of nuclear armaments to the limitation of armed forces stationed in Central Europe can and must be discussed, why precisely the principles of trade policy have assumed a "sacred cow" character making it impossible at the very outset to approach these problems in a frank and open way.

III.

Parallel with the development and strengthening of East-West economic relations, important changes have taken place in economic policy and the methods of management in the socialist countries.

These changes are connected partly with the new requirements of intensive development, partly with the formulation of new policies of external economic activity. Reference must also be made to the fact that the principles of the intensive type of development require a new conception of external economic activity from the start. Thus a substantial part of changes would also have become necessary and rational if the set of economic phenomena here referred to as the change of era in the world economy had not emerged. These phenomena, however, require a more radical, faster and more aim-oriented adaptation.

These changes are organic parts of a reform process designed to bring about the innovation of the control system in the various socialist countries. This process is put into effect in some countries in a more spectacular, more consistent and concentrated way, while in others it materializes more slowly and with substantial setbacks. But it would be a mistake to identify the essence of the reform with decentralization as is often done. Decentralization is only one important element of the changes, but an effect rather than a cause. This is because the nature of the system of management in a socialist economy depends first of all on what significance is assigned to economic categories. The centralized system of management based on plan directives had to come into being because certain economic categories were supposed not to be effective, or effective only to a limited extent, in a socialist economy. If this premise is true, then it is evident that different but closely interconnected processes can be directed only on a natural basis, within a system of concerted directives. If however, the economic categories referred to above exert a genuine, measurable and controllable effect in a socialist economy, then it is clear that the system of control by economic categories is the most effective.⁹ It is the awareness partly of their own interests, partly of world problems as they make themselves felt in the economy which leads the socialist countries increasingly to take into account, in their control systems, the expected results, effects and consequences of processes and new developments in the world market. This is the reason why the present economic situation leads to a further improvement of the system of economic management.

In recent years, and here I have the 70s in mind and not the second half of the 60s, changes were carried out in the system of control which, in the first place, were aimed at the taking note of effects coming from the world economy, making the decision-making mechanisms more operative, accelerating rational structural changes, and developing and stimulating the marketing potential, as well as ensuring a necessary degree of flexibility. These changes strengthen the role of the economic categories, replacing such regulators that have not proved sufficiently efficient, subjecting the system of incentives increasingly to sales-mindedness, as well as widening the margins of flexibility and risk-taking in economic action. Special attention is attached, however, to endeavours to ensure that economic decisions and actions which prove necessary under the influence of the economic categories should preserve their contacts, both in content and form, with the requirements of planned growth.

⁹ József Bognár: *Les nouveaux mécanismes de l'économie socialiste en Hongrie*. Paris, Pavillon, 1969. 129 pp.

In the following, I should like to comment on a few concrete changes which reflect, with relative reliability, efforts aimed at improving the system of economic management.

(a) Since the methodology of planning evolved in a period of extensive economic policy which was focused almost exclusively on the development of the domestic market, methods had to be developed which took into account, from the very beginning of the formulation of the new policy, expected world economic trends and the potential demands of external markets. If these requirements can be successfully satisfied, then socialist planning cannot be said to have the "peculiarity" of being susceptible to thinking in terms of a closed, national model. It is in the interest of this that changes, not simply methodological ones but changes which, as shown by the method applied, can be regarded as essential, have taken place at several points.

Before the conceptual launching of the five-year plan, a forecast of the world economy for 10–15 years was available. Such forecasts are prepared by research institutes. Consequently, in analysing and weighing up the different development alternatives due account is taken from the very beginning of the possible external economic linkages, such as foreign-market commodity demands, cooperation possibilities, the use of alternative techniques, etc. In the process those aspects of an expansion of the development tasks are also examined, which may be improved by external participation. This means, in other words, that the whole development and investment policy is formulated with an eye to external economic activity.

Perhaps there is no need to mention that the various constructions, cooperation ventures and joint activities are firmly built into the national economic plan.

(b) External economic activities—especially exports—cannot all the same make do without initiative and risk-taking on the part of the productive enterprises. On the other hand, the utilization of quickly and sometimes surprisingly changing world-market situations as a guide to exports policy requires liquid resources, both financial and as regards skills, which had not been used yet in the original allocation system of the plan. Therefore, to quote one example, the National Bank of Hungary provides, precisely in the interests of expanding commodity exports, for special credit facilities, and extends them on application to enterprises making the most favourable offers. Hence, these credits exclusively serve export purposes.

(c) In economic organization, the process of taking marketing and purchasing closer to production continues. It is well known that in the first period of socialist economic development production and marketing were rigidly

and consistently kept apart. This error on the part of economic organization, a discussion of the causes would take too much space, later became the source of much trouble and difficulty. The loosening and rationalization of these rigid organizational forms has been going on since 1957, but was given a major impetus only by economic reforms. New marketing tasks are now being transferred to production, and a new system of internal and external division-of-labour relations is coming into existence (on a complex and vertical basis), complex "export systems" are being developed which help to loosen the rigid sectoral linkages of the economy.

(d) New export-stimulating systems are being introduced to strengthen the direct interestedness of enterprises and producers.

(e) New forms and methods of decision-taking are being developed which set out from the "time system" of possible partners in cooperation and potential competitors.

The problem may be raised, which I already touched on, that the changes that are to be introduced are excessively concentrated on the external economy, and therefore their effect will be more limited on the other components of the mechanism already established. Other misgivings may also arise, namely, that the external-economic enclave may possibly be built into the socialist economy.

In response to such misgivings I should like to emphasize that the economy is, after all, a unity consisting of several blocs, and changes taking place in the focus of one activity obviously influence other activities. But setting out from the viewpoint of the reform, one has to say that what really matters is not the source of a reform but its direction.

*

The world in which mankind has to live in future years is extremely dangerous in two respects. The first danger—which has already been touched on in the introduction—boils down to the fact that the immense possibilities created by the scientific and technological revolution have come into conflict with the established security system. The second danger may be summed up as follows: the new postulates and needs brought up by the change of era in the world economy have come into conflict with the established international economic system. These dangers are in themselves of unprecedented proportions, but are still more serious in their interdependence as communication between the two systems is present along a wide band.

In this world full of uncertainty and disequilibria one must find such relatively or potentially stable processes and relational systems by relying

on which one can mitigate the dangers and establish new relations. Co-operation between East and West both on security and economic questions may become such a potentially stable process and relational system.

This paper makes it clear that significant results have been achieved in developing such contacts.

Europe is no longer a focus of dangers radiating to other parts of the world, and no longer a continent unable to solve by itself even the elementary problems of developing mutually advantageous economic relations.

Much has been done in recent years in respect of a more realistic approach to the problems of mutual security and of developing economic links. Acting in this way one not only does not damage, but also helps each other the Third World, and a new approach to global problems.

New steps and new initiatives are however needed. In one way or another, one must accept the consequences of the fact that the maintenance of the established security system has become economically unbearable. At the same time one must help one another economically to an increasing extent, because the change of era has powerfully aggravated the present conditions of economic growth. One cannot thrive without cooperation nor can the necessary impulses to the development of the Third World be given. Therefore, two more things are particularly desirable: a mutually equitable settlement of the guiding principles and rules of trade policy, that is economic cooperation on the one hand, and continuous positive initiatives on the part of the responsible governments on the other. Relentless enterprise and circumspect prudence are badly needed if certain common dangers are to be recognized and prevented, and temporarily arising tensions are to be overcome. Something must be done to transfer the "centres of gravity" in government activity because immense energies are still wasted in dealing with questions which are already obsolete, or which do not derive from the imperatives of the new international security and economic situation.

Great tasks are also assigned to economists all over the world. The role of the economy is increasing in international affairs and the life of particular nations alike. But one must frankly admit that frequently in the past the economy has had negative effects as well. Economic thinking and economic development have opened up a new era in the history of mankind. They have, among other things, helped mankind, rapidly increasing in number, to take possession of practically the entire surface of Earth, have created the preconditions for making available a rapidly growing quantity of material goods. They have, however, not succeeded so far in improving the distribution system so that living conditions worthy of man could be assured to all. Economic energies amassed in the hands of a few—one of the forms of

modern power—promoted the oppression and subjugation of other states and the sparking off of a number of wars.

Humanity simply cannot afford today to live amidst such an immense waste of energy and such dangers!

Therefore, an economy will be needed in future which is able not only to create new energies and to satisfy needs, but also can—with the help of scientific thinking and political guidance—curb its own harmful effects and make available a major part of its energies to those who are still suffering from want in various parts of the world.

Scientists are expected today to be prudent in realizing that in a world differing to so great an extent it is impossible to create about a system which is universal in all its details. They have to be active in promoting a fruitful rapprochement between the different systems and in solving global problems as well. And it is they who must be wise enough today to recognize that in this interdependent world, despite its differences, one cannot live and do creative work without relying on one another.

I am referring to the special responsibilities of scientists because we are living at a time fraught with dangers and uncertainties, but which also includes the immense potentialities of rational and humanist action.

It follows from the dialectic nature of human action that the dangers and possibilities always appear in the handling, recognition, or non-recognition, of the same problems or in the attempts to solve them. In such historic periods, at times of long-term, decisive changes, the apperception of opportunities and dangers as well as the forecasting of the effects and consequences of the various alternatives of action constitute a scientific task in the first place as the significance of past experiences in the political and governmental fields are limited in this respect. Therefore, the greatest possible intellectual courage and the exclusion of emotional factors are needed.

One can only hope that everybody, scientists, economists, politicians and those in charge of the media, will be fully aware of this great responsibility.

It is only given such conditions that one can hope that Belgrade will really mean a further, and most important, step within European cooperation and through it towards the understanding and active adaptation of what follows from ours being an interdependent world.

FREEDOM AND EQUALITY AROUND A PARIS ROUND-TABLE

by

IVÁN BOLDIZSÁR

I

(*Paris, the spring of 1977*) We are trying to hurry, driving towards the rue Talleyrand, the home for some years now of the Hungarian Institute in Paris. Not a home really, just rooms, haut bourgeois pretending to be aristocratic, dating back to the age of Talleyrand, or rather one of the ages, he lived through so many, after all. The Hungarian Institute is only a tenant in what Aragon called *les beaux quartiers*, and the owner and fellow tenants do their best to let them know it. The BMA could not possibly take exception to the brass plate that tells you that the representatives of the Hungarian intellect, of Hungarian culture, occupy the second floor. It's that small. And yet more find their way there than one might imagine in Budapest or on the *bel étage* of 7, rue Talleyrand. True enough, I and my contemporaries still long for the old place. The name of the street itself, Pierre Curie, had radiated science; the house, in the heart of the Quartier Latin, had been modest, befitting a student. The doorless and roofless two-man lift, with its art-nouveau trellis reminding of the old métro entrances, evoked the Paris of the *fin de siècle*, of Endre Ady and Oscar Wilde, when the Eiffel tower was still young.

Time enough to remember aloud. We're stuck. The young member of the Institute's staff who is driving me is surprised. Usually it's easy to get there. You turn right at Les Invalides where you don't expect to get into a traffic jam.

(*Stuck in a manif*) When we reached the wider spaces we noticed that a *manif* was on, the current French for demonstration, *manifestation* with

the *-estation* chopped off. Demonstrators carrying flags and slogans, are pouring in from the bridge, and from the direction of parliament and the Eiffel Tower as well. Paris ironworkers expressing their solidarity with the iron and steelworkers of Lorraine. There are delegations from Lorraine as well. It seems funny to see the Croix de Lorraine carried by workers. The Free French emblem had long been turned into that of the Gaullist Party, but it still remained the symbol of the region. Lorraine stands for iron and steel in France. Many workers were declared redundant, as part of the Barre Plan, or rather using that as an excuse, that is why they were demonstrating, simultaneously in Nancy and in Paris. If I were not hurrying to my very own round table, I'd get out and get in amongst the demonstrators, and the police, who are there in full force.

We're late, not for the first time at my own lecture, I'm sorry to say, but fortunately the others got stuck in the jam as well. Some 'phoned, they were ready to throw in the towel. We encouraged them: we certainly wouldn't start at four. When we finally got to our places at a quarter to five I made use of Molière's sound advice: when you find yourself in trouble writing, use it as a theme. (I don't claim to have read that, I heard it from my friend Hubay, the playwright. He's responsible.) Freedom and equality is the subject of our conversation and discussion, I said. Tens of thousands are demonstrating in the street, and their banners carry these two words. Here is a rare harmony of theory and practice. Fortissimo and staccato out in the street, parlando inside.

Those around the table are not a public but participants. This is not a lecture, but a round table discussion, more precisely the continuation of one on the freedom of art and literature in Hungary, held here last year. We sat around the same table ten months ago, and with few exceptions, the same people were present: writers, sociologists, journalists, artists, historians. I was happy to see once again the President of the French Pen Club, the editor of *Nouvelle Critique*, two young teachers from Nanterre University, the Nobel Laureate chairman of the Société Européenne de Culture, the executive of the French-Hungarian Society, staff members of *Le Monde* and *Humanité*, and I feel sorry that Guillevic merely sent a letter instead: but I shan't go on, this already looks like name-dropping. Credit is due to the Hungarian Institute, it is a pledge of their reputation that those invited turned up, in spite of the Easter holidays, and in spite of the *manif*. More institutes of this sort are needed, in more cities of the West, with someone as competent in charge, now more than ever. The stake is bigger, our reputation, our honour, our credit and credibility, and the plural means more than Hungary, for we are not alone.

(*An odd proposition*) That's what I said for a start. The precise title of the discussion is "Freedom and equality in everyday life in Hungary today." Is Hungary interesting? The French are no longer notorious for knowing no geography, they know that Hungary is at the heart of Europe. For us it was the heart of the world for a long time. Amongst strangers "Extra Hungariam non est vita, si est vita, non est ita" is not a commonplace and can be cited. I go on. *Ita* and *vita*, life and how it is, that is my subject. Everyday life in Hungary is mentioned in the invitation, but didn't they all take that to mean: in the socialist countries? They nodded. A. W. interjected: "Why, aren't we going to talk about that?" Yes and no. Western public opinion, and this goes for progressive sympathizers as well, thinks of all the socialist countries as identical, and yet national and historical differences, and the differing temper of daily life, are part of a proper understanding of *living socialism*. There is no need to go into details, the words I have italicised are at the focus of current French political debate. Nevertheless, I continued, in spite of the differences, everyday life in Hungary is very much part of the image of the socialist countries.

That is, it ought to be. For there's the rub, the paradox of what the media in the West report from socialist countries: if an unfavourable event that occurs in a socialist country is reported, it gets considerable coverage, and is generalized to apply to all the socialist countries; if on the other hand something favourable from the socialist countries appears on the teleprinters of the news agencies, that is rarely published, and never generalized.

(*Public life and the shared dream*) It was this proposition that helped me establish the framework of the conversation. I proposed to talk about Hungarian experience and anxieties, doubts and achievements, about life, that is freedom and equality in everyday practice. Though a quarter of an hour of the brief two hours at our disposal had passed, I felt I had to make my own position clear in relation to these two weighty words. Freedom and equality are philosophic, ideologic, political and economic terms. There was no need to say that I was not at home in any of these fields, only that I added a most concrete one, life, to the two abstract terms. Life is the stuff of every writer's work, life and dreams. In Hungary however I said, recalling last year's round table, a writer is always a public figure as well. Our stuff and raw material is therefore public life and shared dreams, utopias in other words. The perfect relationship between freedom and equality is such a shared dream. I do not propose to discuss the philosophic, political or economic aspects of the two terms, all I wanted to say was that

it is the aim of every sound policy to find a proper equilibrium between freedom and equality, but only socialism makes this possible. I do not wish to maintain that we've reached the optimum in Hungary. That is our shared dream. What we have done is to get to a stage in every day life which is better than even our friends in the West imagine. In this respect we can cheerfully compete with any of the free enterprise countries. One has to be aware of the importance of equality in the balancing act between the two terms.

(The equality of equality) A damaging and perhaps even dangerous shift has happened, and still goes on, in this respect. The Western press and politicians have a great deal to say about freedom rights, but we seldom hear about the right to equality. And yet equality and freedom are twins in the primogeniture of human rights. There is no need to explain anywhere, least of all here in Paris, where the Marseillaise chanted by the demonstrators filters in from the street, that in the free enterprise world, in the world of the Dassault aircraft works and the sacked ironworkers, they do not mention the right to equality amongst men, why some are favoured at the expense of others. In Hungary at least they try to love both twins equally.

I then mentioned Madame Bodó, the Hungarian symbol for beating about the bush. Madame Bodó speaks about everything except the price of the wine she is serving though she eventually claims exorbitant payment. In capitalist societies equality is the price of wine. I added for good measure that though I did not now propose to speak about freedom rights I was not Monsieur Bodó. That is what we talked about last year, right here. We had nothing to hide, and in fact, I would discuss freedom as well as speaking about equality in daily life in Hungary, since the two, in keeping with their nature as the twin daughters of the human spirit, were indivisible.

An hour passed. Coffee was served as I was saying that we are living through the renaissance of human rights in Europe. The others pricked up their ears. A renaissance of human rights, and that from someone who has just come from a socialist country. At a round table one can answer unasked questions as well, exploiting the coffee-break provided a new start. In Hungary we don't think of human rights, that is of socialist democracy, as a campaign objective. I catch the eye of the Hungarians, sitting at the bottom end of the round-table, inasmuch as a round table can be said to have such a location. These French can't understand how funny the term sounds to us, they don't get the overtones our recent past provides.

For a moment my smile turns bitter. What can they in fact understand

of our lives? They are putting questions already. A clever lady journalist from *Le Monde* observes she knows I have not reached the end of my train of thought yet but she'd like to know how social equality is manifest to the Hungarian. . . . She stops, searching for a word. Citizen? Inhabitant? Comrade? She doesn't want to hear about principles but. . . .

I referred to the title of the discussion, and glanced at my notes. L. J. arrived just then and made his excuses. His car had got stuck between two columns of demonstrators. He had got out, and marched with them some of the way. The others all envied him a little, I envied him a lot. He said that the demonstration had peacefully proceeded to the Chamber of Deputies. They had stated their demands, and quietly shown their strength. Even the C.R.S., the helmeted assault gendarmerie, had behaved with restraint. They must have carefully studied the local government election results.

II

(*Monsieur Bodó?*) The day after the first section of this tripartite article appeared in Hungarian my phone rang. "Monsieur Bodó?" a friendly voice asked. I recognized it, that is why I said clearly, and in French: "Non."

"But that's who you are" he went on, as unequivocally, and in Hungarian. "You might have told the French all right why Madame Bodó changes the subject when they ask for the price of the wine, but you didn't give us that lecture on the freedom of the artist."

I always knew there was no tougher reading public than Hungarians, and this goes particularly for friends of one's own age and trade. That is why, before going on with my account of this year's round table I had to digress to last years on "The freedom of the artist and cultural democracy in Hungary." Not that I had to make excuses, a Monsieur, Mister or Herr Bodó couldn't take part in a French, English, American or German round table discussion, by beating about the bush you wouldn't even get enough credit to pay for a glass of wine. The reason I am happy to talk about the freedom of the artist is a "postposition" in idiomatic Hungarian (*képest*) which English can only render by the clumsy phrase: compared to.

(*Standards of measurement*) Last June 17th, in the Hungarian Institute in Paris, stripped to shirtsleeves and yet sweating as in a steambath, I started by telling them that, back in Budapest, when I mentioned what I would be talking about at the round table, they told me I was off my head. If you tell them there is full freedom for writers and artists you'll really

get into trouble, and if you say there are limits you'll be sitting on hot coals. I answered as I did my telephoning friend, who was of course amongst them: that's why.

There is need to speak about it midst friends and friendly opponents, and opponents who are far from friendly as well, because the notion is replete with contradictions, illusions, misunderstandings, and misinformation, as well as prefabricated ideas. My Paris listeners smiled at the double "you'll find yourself in trouble" and nodded at the rest, friends and opponents alike. Feeling encouraged I added that the freedom of the artist had lately acquired overtones, in these post-Helsinki months when Cold War winds were whistling again. The word was loaded, like a gun ready to go off. Say it, and you intend to use it to charge. Another reason why I had said: that's why.

I tried to explain that the loaded and wishy-washy use of the term concealed a misunderstanding. The freedom of the artist and writer were taken to be quantitative, but every liberty expresses a quality. What you have to ask to define it is not how much, but of what kind, in what way, and even when and where. I felt that our raft was drifting into the strange waters of heresy that is why I called on Newton for help. If standards of measurement are not properly chosen the laws of gravity cannot be proven, let alone made use of, since the sort of vacuum where they apply can only be found in theory and in the laboratory.

(*Cultural democracy*) Just because I thought of freedom as a quality I included a much less hallowed expression in the title, two words that have not been canonized by two millenia, and in the first place by the poetry of the last two centuries. Before I could say them Jean-Luc Moreau interrupted, Jean-Luc Moreau who knows, understands, translates Hungarian literature and is its apostle as well. He did not really interrupt, but only quietly quoted Petőfi, "Freedom, love" and the "snorting steeds of holy world freedom." I did not want to be found lacking so I answered with Attila József's "freedom, conceive my sort of order" and securing absolution in advance for what I was about to say, I carefully added "and let it play". Moreau helped so Csokonai would not be left out either, after all he had dreamt about Ermenonville near-by: "Beautiful liberty. . . you lessen our fardels; / When melancholy gnaws our hearts, / Give us cheer." In those surroundings the expression that finally crossed my lips: cultural democracy, was loaded the right way.

The freedom of the artist makes sense if it is not merely an ideal and

abstract term, a hallowed dream or slogan and demand, if those as well get a share of freedom, that is of the works produced, to whom they are addressed, for whose sake it is and I could have once again used a word dreamt up by poets: the people, but I merely said population, public, men and women. Cultural democracy expresses the relationship between verse and prose, fiction, plays, books, the stage, canvasses, statues, films, ballets, concerts, all the way to television games, radio programmes and happenings, on the one hand, and readers, viewers, listeners, the bored or entertained public on the other.

Did I take the morning caller too seriously, or those who rang in the afternoon, or the four letters I received à propos Monsieur Bodó. Perhaps they did not even expect me to answer in such detail? I won't all the same try and define cultural democracy in detail. In Paris I talked about what Unesco meant by cultural democracy, access to culture, participation in cultural democracy, access to culture, participation in culture as a way of life. I want to add our own Hungarian way of putting it: culture is a public cause, but I could not translate *közművelődés* properly, and perhaps there was no need, since that in fact means access, participation, and way of life. Widening access, and stepping on the gas of that process, arousing the desire to participate, and giving it wings, finding and shaping culture as the way of life of socialist man, that is what we are aiming at in Hungary, I said. I used the first person plural, speaking in the name of writers and artists, without proper authorization but not, I felt, without justification.

(*Responsibility*) We write to be read, we paint to get our work looked at, we act on the stage or in the film studio to be seen. And we write, paint and act also because, like so many Luthers Minor we stand here and can do no other. At that point I related what sounds so strange in Western Europe or North America, and so natural and obvious in Hungary. The artist, and chiefly the writer, is never a private face in Hungary. All those worthy of the name always felt pangs of anxiety for their country's fate and future, and the life of the people, and they still do now. They always played a lively part in the history of the nation at the time they were alive. For Hungarians, *Litterature engagée* did not start with Sartre, and not even with the beginnings of socialism, it became more self-aware, that's all. And more difficult too, I added, and though I only elaborated that later, I noticed that everyone took note when I said it.

First I had to seize a connected notion and place it on the table: the responsibility of art. The freedom and the responsibility of the artist are

indivisible in Hungary. A Hungarian writer cannot say," I am quoting myself literally, "I write what I like and *après nous le déluge*, perhaps because the country has been flooded too often in the course of its history." I wondered, speaking French, whether this Pompadourian tag was not unworthy of the words in whose context it found itself, or perhaps it is too grandiloquent. In my predicament I looked for help to those writers of the past whose assistance I was entitled to call on as reader and citizen. I quoted Endre Ady, did they know there was a plaque celebrating his stay there on the Hotel des Balcons, I added with national self-irony, and almost offended those present. *They* knew all right who Ady was: "in the depths of my soul nothing interested my committed poet's pencil, only politics and love." This readily warded off the question whether Hungarian poets did not write about love and pain, death and despair, joys and doubts, only public causes? Is every Hungarian poet a dull poet laureate in a non-existing kingdom? They find it so difficult to understand the relationship between writer and nation since in France every poet worth his salt since Victor Hugo—excepting only the years of the Résistance—has been modestly silent about public issues, while verse and prose alike reject words like people, nation, country, the way an organism rejects an artificial heart.

Responsibility is a tradition that walks arm in arm with freedom. The history of the Hungarian people is an uninterrupted struggle for survival, for the survival of the language as well. Petőfi was commissioned Major in the 1848/49 Revolution but every writer and poet is an officer of field rank in the fight for the freedom of the language. I almost said that we Hungarians had taken part in every war for five hundred years, winning some battles but never a war, but that would sound too pathetic in the rue Talleyrand. I could feel things cooling around me in spite of the heat. These French, they have Cartésian minds, and Jansenist hearts, they can't put up with emotions, not even collective ones. I preferred to stick to the shared raw material of all those present, the native language. I related how Ágnes Nemes Nagy, Gyula Illyés, László Kéry and I once went to Dublin, to a PEN Conference. We were met at the airport by the President of the Irish PEN. Being his opposite number, he took me in his Daimler, driving right around Dublin. He showed me Dean Swift's cathedral, the houses where Shaw, Wilde and Yeats were born, Joyce's Martello tower, and the place where Mr Bloom perved on Gertie McDowell's knickers—"he was Hungarian, but I expect you knew that"—then he turned towards me and said: "What I really wanted to ask you is what your first language is. I know Hungarian is the second language in Hungary, but what is the

first? Austrian?" He found it difficult to believe that Hungarian did not die out under the Habsburgs as Gaelic almost did under English rule.

(Τα χαλεπά, τα καλά) History got there just in time to arouse the listeners from their drowsiness. Everyone fidgeted, and I looked through my notes for half a minute. A.W. passed me a slip of paper: "You just made that up." G.C. from the other side of the table asked what then is our second language? A dead heat—I brushed off that question, since we hadn't even talked about the most important things, the terrible beauty of responsibility. *La grave beauté*—won't that be too literary fare for sensitive French digestions? How would you have gone on, my 'phoning friend? We're talking about the price of the wine now, the price of fish, if you like, about the price which every writer and artist has to pay for the heady wine of moral authority and his good name and reputation. They are taken more seriously, and their words carry greater weight than those of their western European or North American colleagues.

This is the beauty of responsibility. All artists, and writers in the first place, feel that they, are responsible to their country, to their readers, and naturally to their own art. Perhaps they are over-aware of it. I quoted Gyula Illyés, fortunately there is no need any longer to spell his name in France, not even outside the walls of the Hungarian Institute: there was a time when writers enjoyed such a high prestige that there were readers who would soonest have a writer perform an appendectomy on them. Another PEN Conference memory emerged into my consciousness. A good ten years ago at Bled we argued, as we did before and have done since, about the relationship between writers and society, and the freedom of the artist. I quoted Illyés's black witticism in his presence, then Norman Podhoretz, the editor of *Commentary*, jumped to his feet and said he could really print anything, starting with some public figure—quoting name, place and date—buggering his bitch, to . . . think up whatever you like, it doesn't matter, few read it, and noone takes the slightest notice. He'd gladly surrender half his licence for half the readership and respect Hungarian writers enjoy.

But there's the rub. Hungarian writers are considered public figures at home and abroad, they are read that way, often with a magnifying glass focussed on the space between the lines. I tried to offer an historical explanation of this status and often exaggerated public role. Except for the last thirty years Hungarian existence suffered a double oppression. Both his nature as an artist and the political situation made a rebel out of the

writer. The committedness of Hungarian literature had its roots in those times. Writers were always in the vanguard of the political struggle, always against those in power, starting with the fight for a Hungarian school and Hungarian theatre, first against Latin as the official language, later against forced Germanization, in defence of the native language, then for land reform, and against the German and fascist menace. The political role of writers had changed, but their responsibility has not lessened. Increased responsibility also meant a larger readership.

"And didn't they lose any of their moral authority?" Madame Y.B. asked, a staff writer on *Le Monde*, begging my pardon for interrupting me. (She used the French word *prestige*, I add that for the sake of credibility.)

It did not decline, I answered. Holding the golden shield of responsibility close to our chests, and wielding the silver sword of freedom we say and express whatever we like. This often increases the difficulties of writing technique but, continuing in Greek, inspired by Homer's shield and sword: *Τα χαλεπά, τα καλά*. Not wishing to lay it on too thickly I quickly added: not that Ancient Greek is one of the dead-heating second languages.

III

(*In the morning, in front of the Lukács baths*) After chewing over the third act of this tripartite Paris round-table report in my mind, recalling what I had said in Paris, and what they said to me early this morning, under the showe, and in the elixir of the Lukács's water, an ancient Gypsy crone approached me with outstretched hand, imploring me for just one forint. I gave her two, not because she addressed me as 'young man' but because she reminded me of a moment of the Paris conversation. We were talking about equality. I said there were neither rich, nor poor in Hungary. We used to call ours the country of three million beggars, and I briefly tried to sketch in the background of this saying. These days we are the country of almost two million owner-drivers.

"No beggars?" a doubting Thomas, a young agrégé from Nanterre wanted to know. I answered with an anecdote, begging to be excused for intruding my family. We had travelled by car, through Italy, to see our French mother—mother-in-law—grandmother—great-grandmother. An old beggar confronted us in Florence, right in front of the house Dante was born in. My granddaughter, in fright, hid behind her mothers' skirts. What does this man want? She was afraid of him, never having seen a beggar before she did not know what he was up to. True enough, I added, she

does not frequent those few places where the remaining Budapest beggars hang out. I had also forgotten Gypsy fortune tellers, but those are not true beggars, not genuine poor.

(*Third act at the Paris round table*) Drinking coffee à la hongroise, a tit-bit in Paris, someone noted that it would be easier for me this time than when we discussed the freedom of artists, since equality, unlike liberty, was quantitative. You could measure it, "Money, money, money..." he started to hum the well-known number from *Cabaret*. Not only with money, I answered, but I could not go on at length, we had turned into a genuine round table, interrupting each other, before the introductory words were over. My Nanterre friend headed towards the far post from the left wing. Freedom is a hard nut to crack, perhaps it's not worth bothering, it's a bourgeois idea anyway, but equality, that's easy. Essentially equal wages for every worker, he said, with greater or smaller differentials, the smaller the better, and that would be the end of social inequality.

I sighed and wondered if I was growing even greyer. Again I felt a generation older, not only than this male ingenue of the social sciences but also than those my own age. How can one pass a generation's experience on to those who are just beginning to change their society? I had to postpone talking about quantity and quality, money as the unit of measurement, and quantification as such. I said that we had graduated already from that egalitarian school. There was a time when equality was levelled out downwards. Everyone made the same money, equally little. Since those few years coincided with those hundred months (no more than that?) which are called the age of the personality cult in Hungary, the objects of that cult did not play the equality game. They upset the sensitive balance of freedom and equality, the essence of contemporary living socialism, an achievement that still awaits perfection, and that must be perfected.

(*The equal and the more equal*) Lest someone tear away on the right wing and aim a kick at goal I said aloud what most Western intellectuals think about first as soon as they hear the word equality. "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others", quoting Orwell's *Animal Farm*. I asked them not to rub my nose in that, in the times I had just mentioned that sort of witticism made sense, but that was not the sort of equality I was then trying to describe. (Let me add by way of parenthesis that a friend took me by the arm at the end of the discussion. "*Cher ami*")

he said, "won't you get into hot water at home for quoting Orwell? His name is a red rag in the eyes of you know what bulls." My friend is well-informed, and receptive towards what goes on in the socialist world. More equal than the equal you could say.)

Equality can truly be measured, I said then, turning towards the Nanterre professor, but not only by money, also by homes, libraries, furniture, refrigerators, washing-machines, fitted thermostats, cars, building lots, weekend and holiday homes, yachts and collections of paintings. The list was deliberately as extensive. I wanted to show that all these goodies had their place in everyday life in Hungary today, since that was the title of the round table discussion. It worked, they took notes, and asked whether all these things were really available in Hungary today? Don't they create inequalities? Finally I did not have to answer that, since by then we had clarified what the feeling of equality meant.

That still needed a paradox on my part, that money measures equality least of all. Equality, this important human right, is acquired by individual men and women when they think of themselves as every man's equal. That's not just a matter of money. The feeling of equality is based on seeing oneself in context, and is therefore a qualitative notion as well.

(The feeling of equality) In comparison with what does a man feel any man's equal in Hungary? It does not cut much ice with an audience in the West if we argue that there are no exploiting classes, that conflicts have come to an end, that's all abstract textbook stuff to them. I tried to describe, giving examples, relating scenes and situations, with whom and to what we compare ourselves. When it comes to equality we rarely take other countries as our standard. A comparison with someone abroad of similar position, age, training and education can only be quantitative, we can't evaluate, and only barely imagine how the West German, citizen of the GDR, Austrian, Frenchman, or American who corresponds to us fits into the social or financial pecking order at home. Incomes can be compared but that means taking a Luna Park hall of mirrors for reality unless we take prices and taxes into account as well. In such a context speaking about changed class relations already reaches on more fertile soil.

We are, on the other hand, able to compare things in every sense, qualitatively as well as quantitatively, with the Hungarian past, the more distant past, and the recent past, and of course with the present. In Hungarian I need only have said 1918, 45, 56 but our historical dates mean no more to the French than the winning number of the Irish Sweep.

I needn't really have mentioned the years of the Great War since a man only compares himself, his position, his options, his successes and failures over a past of thirty to forty years at the most. Anyway, whatever the standard of comparison, a man looking at his position within Hungarian society today, and that of his family, children and grandchildren, knows that he has moved from the age of inequality across the threshold leading to equality. I told them in Paris, but there is no need to repeat, that there used to be different kinds of inequality. As one who had in his youth travelled from village to village, observing, and describing what I had seen I simply could not think of the historically rooted, simultaneously aristocratic and barbarian pre-Liberation inequalities, and the grievances and illegalities of the 'fifties in one breath. But such is human nature that the day before yesterday's precipice is more easily forgotten than yesterday's ditch.

(*The rich poor*) Today there is neither ditch nor precipice. The feeling of equality in Hungary is manifest in the first place in there being neither rich nor poor. The words hardly crossed my mouth when I amended them, lest they think incomes in Hungary are equal. No one is very rich, and no one is very poor.

That there are no very poor is of course more important, but what acts as the thermostat of the feeling of equality in an individual or family is the absence of the rich and very rich. I had to be more precise still for I was speaking to people who thought of the very rich in terms of Baron Guy de Rothschild, Yves Saint-Laurent, or the Chairman-Managing Director of a large firm. In Hungary there are no barons, no large fortunes, dress designers are not reputed rich even by local standards, and though the managers of large factories make good money, it is not enough to offend anyone's sense of justice.

Right then I felt I was losing my audience. This sort of thing happens when abroad, whenever I try to give some idea of ordinary everyday life at home, just the simple and commonplace truth. Suddenly every word seems to fall on stony ground. One of the real troubles of a Europe torn in two, which even peaceful coexistence and Helsinki could only manage to stitch together, is that those who live in the capitalist world simply can't imagine what life is like in a socialist society. Day trips or weekly tours pass by the essence, especially if they are well-decorated by folklore-gulyas-eating.

Making a virtue of necessity, *more patrio*, I mention this, and since what I had started to talk about was my audience, the slackened relationship

tensed up again. Their 'who is rich' 'who is very rich' and 'who is not' images form a closed system, they are born into it, and live it, and even those who rebel politically cannot all that quickly exchange the programming of the computer in their skull.

At this point I told the tale of the Florence beggar. I did not deny that though, in Hungary, there were only a negligible number of beggars, there being no poor did not mean that every family enjoyed a carefree life. Several hundred thousand single or deserted mothers, large families, old people, problem cases, and old-system pensioners find it tough to make ends meet, but their lot is easier to bear because they don't see the contrasts of a luxury that cries to high heaven around them. But even their position is incomparably better if they think of the recent past, or of their children.

Everyone's position is better, that of the rich poor, and that of the poor rich, because the poor are not poor in Hungary, and the rich are not rich. Right at the end I said what I should have liked to have started with: you can't measure equality with money because money does not come into it. The unit of measurement of equality, that is of human dignity, is neither the forint nor the dollar. The right to equality and the feeling of equality are moral questions. Noone in Hungary today feels a servant, because noone feels a master. I told how deeply rooted these words were in the minds of those as well who had not experienced the world of masters. Calling on German for help, that is semantically interpreting *Herr* since the French *Monsieur* has no caste overtones of any kind, I explained that addressing someone as *úr*, the Hungarian equivalent of *Herr* almost amounts to name-calling. I mentioned social mobility, what has just about become a boring figure in Hungarian, that most families are "mixed", that two thirds of professional people were born as the children of working class or peasant parents. The young don't even look on that as an achievement, but as a natural part of life, as the way to a new and socialist democracy.

I then listed those areas in which equality is more manifest in Hungary than in . . . I did not conclude the sentence as those present expected: than in the West. I try to avoid that if possible. It doesn't get you anywhere, it only prompts the itch to contradict. They start thinking hard about the way things are in their neck of the woods, instead of about how things really are in Hungary. So I said: than public opinion in the West imagines.

I went on to tell them about the security of jobs in a sense of the term that those who have grown up in the past thirty years don't know what unemployment is. I told of equality on life's starting-line, and principally in the distribution of goods. Did I sound convincing? I don't know. Perhaps next time the rock of Sisyphus won't roll back quite that far.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE WEST

by

JÁNOS FEKETE

A personal view

I

A speech delivered at a dinner must have three virtues: in the first place, it must be short; secondly, it must be optimistic in order not to disturb the digestion after a first-class meal; thirdly, it must say something new. Complying with the first two requirements seems to be quite easy if compared with the third concerning which I find myself in a difficult position. This is why I sincerely envy those economists who change their view of economic trends and cycles once a month or, at least, once a quarter, and are thus always able to produce interesting novelties. A most exciting reading matter for me were the forecasts of different institutes of economic research which, e.g. for the year 1976, first prophesied a boom, then only a moderate upsurge and, finally, outright stagnation.

Alas, I am a bore on this respect. A year ago, in Vienna, I took part in an economic discussion organized by the Danubian-European Institute where I outlined my views about the years 1976-77, views which I still hold to. However, my position is more favourable now, inasmuch as I cannot deal with 1976 as a year of the future but only as one of the past. It will not, perhaps, be uninteresting to start with my forecast of last year when I said that I considered it quite possible that

- (a) the economic upswing registered in the first quarter of 1976 will not prove to be lasting and will slow down in the course of the year;
- (b) because it is not based on solid grounds, budgetary deficits and the building up of stocks only gave it a single impetus;
- (c) inflation, on the other hand, will continue, with the rate sinking only temporarily;
- (d) unemployment will obstinately maintain itself on the high level of early 1976;

Based on a lecture delivered at a dinner given in Vienna by the American Chamber of Commerce in Austria (10 February, 1977).

- (e) therefore, people will be hesitant in buying,
- (f) and enterprises cautious in investing.

Today, I think, we can all agree with respect to the following:

- (a) the increased rate of economic activity considerably slowed down during 1976 (in the United States, e.g., it amounted to 9.2 per cent in the first quarter, to 4.8 per cent in the second, 4.0 per cent in the third, and 3.0 per cent in the fourth);
- (b) inflation declined only transitorily (in 1976, inflation in the Common Market countries surpassed 10 per cent);
- (c) the level of unemployment remained high (15 million in the OECD countries).

Alas, the situation at the beginning of 1976 has not altered, and so, when asked how I see economic development in the West, I can only repeat: it is quite possible that the outlines of a new recession will take shape by the end of 1977.

II

What is the reason for the fact that the most lasting post-Second World War crisis (of 1974-75) was followed by an exceedingly short upswing? And what is the reason for the circumstance that today we must earnestly reckon with the possibility of facing a new crisis which might be more serious than the previous one? While the 1974-75 recession started from a formerly unheard-of high level of economic activity and employment, a new recession would come about under the conditions of unexploited capacities and a high level of unemployment, involving the danger of surpassing the former in both depth and duration.

I do not wish to start a theoretical debate, i.e. to trace back the causes of these problems to the basic contradictions of social relations. I think that we cannot, and you do not want to, change the latter. Those are objective causes. However, there are subjective elements, too, which on the one hand, intensify the cyclic economic crisis resulting from objective causes and, on the other, put the brakes on rewinding the economy. To separate these subjective elements from the objective ones is important, for the former can be altered. The first of these subjective causes is inflation. Nowadays, we are facing a novel type of inflation feeding on two sources:

- (a) on the exaggerated expenditure incurred by governments, public institutions, and individuals;

(b) on the monetary insecurity that came about after the dissolution of the monetary system.

ad (a) The first source is well known. Governments that rely on small majorities or on none at all try to protect themselves against it; however, as, generally speaking, restrictions require unpopular measures, the results are not very encouraging. Nevertheless, this source of inflation can be more or less controlled.

ad (b) The real problem is rooted in the circumstance of there not being any workable international monetary system. The spectacular—and uncontrollable—increase in international liquidity, the stream of “hot money” amounting to many thousands of million dollars, the loss of confidence in paper money, constitute the reasons why inflation has become a process that cannot be brought under control. In the sixties, when the monetary system still worked satisfactorily, international currency reserves underwent a yearly increase of 2 per cent; in 1971, after the monetary system collapsed, the increase amounted to 32 per cent, and in 1972–74 to 13 per cent annually.

The increase in reserves occurred in dollars non-convertible to gold, and they rose, in a few years, from 45 thousand million to 130 thousand million. The inflation rate in the OECD countries amounted to a yearly average of 2 to 3 per cent in the sixties, while in the seventies the average became a two-figure one. It is by no means difficult to come to the conclusion that inflation and the monetary system are closely interrelated.

The second cause is the stagnation of investment activity. In the United States, 14 to 15 per cent of gross national output was spent on plant investments in 1973–74 (the figure was 13 per cent for 1975), and this rate did not change in the first half of 1976 either. In the second quarter of 1976, the real values of investments of this kind lagged behind the peak figure of 1973 by 16 per cent. (The corresponding rate in the Federal Republic of Germany was 25 per cent for 1973, 22 per cent for 1974, and 21 per cent for 1975.) A similar trend can be registered for Japan as well.

All this means that not enough money is being spent in the most developed industrial countries on technical development and the necessary structural transformation. If investments are carried out they usually only aim at economizing manpower.

The rise in oil prices aggravated the situation. Vast amounts of money flow from the densely populated, highly developed Western industrial countries—with the corresponding investment and consumption potentialities—to the sparsely populated OPEC countries. A similar situation has come about in the so-called fourth world, i.e. in those developing countries

that do not produce oil. In the OPEC countries the preconditions must be first created for investments in production through infrastructural investments. But even so, the small population will put a brake on any increase in consumption, so that, in the last resort, global world consumption will diminish, just as will the profits of industrial enterprises. Hence, long-term funds at disposal will decrease, their basis being precisely profits. And in cases where long-term capital is at disposal, those in possession of money will not be inclined to tie down their money for 20 to 30 years, quite understandably so; not only would they incur the risk of not obtaining interests; it might even happen that the interest rate does not make up for the inflation loss.

The third reason: unemployment. Without investments augmenting production capacity and creating new jobs, it is hopeless to try to reduce unemployment to a tolerable level, and this, of course, exerts an influence on consumption. This is a vicious circle indeed.

The main problem, therefore, is to keep inflation down to a reasonable level. However, in my opinion this is only possible in the framework of a new monetary system. This is why I entirely uphold my former view that there cannot be and will not be a lasting economic upswing without a new universal monetary system.

III

What can we expect from 1977? The first alternative for the Western world is the one that has been tried so far, that is to seek the solution of economic and monetary problems on its own, and by travelling the traditional road. In this case, a solution must be sought within the existing framework. I do not believe in the success of such a procedure.

The second alternative, which is being considered by many an economic expert and politician of the Western world too, would consist in a change of the overall concept. The Western world expects a new initiative from its three major industrial powers, the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Japan. However, among these three special expectations go out towards the United States, where a new administration has taken matters in hand.

It is true that, after a period of many years, the US government again finds itself in a position where it can seek, in full possession of its possibilities of action, the ways and means of bringing about a positive turn in economic development. I do not maintain that history repeats itself. In our rapidly changing world conditions cannot remain unaltered. Yet I do

have the impression there is a certain similarity between the present situation and the one from which President Franklin Delano Roosevelt tried to find a way out.

To make myself clear: one of the most important subjective elements in the intensification of the 1929-33 crisis was President Hoover's foreign and economic policy that failed to take realities into account. On the other hand, President Roosevelt, who took office on March 4, 1933, realized that only a domestic and foreign policy reckoning with international realities, and an economic policy built on the same foundations, could lead the country out of crisis, the same being the indispensable condition of a world-wide upswing. It was in this spirit that the United States diplomatically recognized the Soviet Union in November 1933; that the Federal Reserve Act was altered; that new bank laws were passed; that a Gold Reserve Act came into force in 1934; and so on, and so forth. On the basis of the Gold Reserve Act, President Roosevelt increased the price of gold, on January 31, 1934, from \$20.67 to \$35.00 an ounce, a price which remained valid for almost forty years. The convertibility of the dollar into gold was effected at this price. Thus, in the course of a single year, President Roosevelt gave the signal for a new orientation in foreign policy, and set the points for a new finance mechanism in the US on which the international monetary system of Bretton Woods was built up later. I do not intend to compare the present world economic situation to that of 1933 and so to dramatize it. However, I do believe that the Carter administration, if it wants to be faithful to the Roosevelt traditions, to which the President often referred during the campaign, could try, in 1977 already, to create a number of important prerequisites for further political détente and economic upswing.

What steps, in my opinion, would correspond to the spirit of FDR?

1. The Carter administration could suggest to Congress to do away with the discriminatory dispositions, directed against a few socialist countries, of American trade legislation; granting the most favoured nation treatment and putting an end to credit restrictions. Such a step could give great momentum to East-West trade. Integration of new markets into the world economy, as opposed to isolation and trade restrictions, could be an appreciable source of surplus demand. As it has been proved more than once, such commercial relationships represent, especially in the period of economic recession, a stabilizing factor in world trade. I think it is quite sufficient to mention in this context that, in 1975, a decrease of 6 per cent was registered in world trade while East-West trade underwent an increase of 10 per cent. US exports to the socialist countries increased by 95 per cent and almost reached the 3 thousand million dollar mark. Other countries,

too, were able to considerably augment their exports (e.g. Austria by 18 per cent). We know that the volume of East-West trade is not yet significant, and cannot satisfy the need for new markets of the developed capitalist countries. However, one should stress at the same time that the socialist countries have not yet attained the degree of participation in world trade that would correspond to their economic and political weight. Their share in world industrial output is e.g. 40 per cent, and their share in world trade 10 per cent only. There are many unexploited possibilities. The socialist countries are ready for the improvement of relationships. Let me mention, immodestly perhaps, a Hungarian example in this context. An official communiqué was issued recently by the US government saying that all outstanding financial problems between the US and the Hungarian government have been dealt with, and the US government has released Hungary from the dispositions of the Johnson Act.

2. The establishment of a new universal monetary system could be put on the agenda as a continuation of the relaxation of the international political atmosphere. Former US administrations were interested in dissolving the monetary system and in creating a new system based on the dollar. However, this system, a \$ standard, was rejected even by the closest allies of the United States. The new US administration could do a lot towards a revival of the genuine Bretton Woods spirit, the aim of which was to create a universal, international monetary system.

In my opinion, there are several prerequisites for a workable international monetary system.

- (a) The creation of a new international standard of value, of a world currency established jointly by all government concerned, one that would work as a key currency of the international monetary system.
- (b) The regulation of the gold problem, the establishment of a rate between the world currency and gold. The rehabilitation of gold as a "numéraire" in the monetary system.
- (c) The establishment of parties between all convertible currencies and the new world currency. It would be possible, on this basis, to come back, replacing floating rates, to the system of stable currency rates, with the introduction, however, of a rate mechanism that would be much more flexible than the Bretton Woods system.
- (d) Further steps should be taken to reestablish realistic currency rate relations.

To sum up: instead of the gold standard where each country took care that banknotes issued should be convertible to gold, and instead of the gold currency standard where one country undertook this obligation for the

entire monetary system, I advocate a gold world currency standard where, under certain circumstances, all participants guarantee, through the intermediary of a jointly founded institution, the convertibility of the world currency.

In the framework of the new system, a solution could be found for doing away with the bottleneck that has been a symptom of international credit relations. This is a prerequisite for an economic upswing on an international scale. As a consequence of the oil crisis, a new situation evolved in which mainly the commercial banks undertook the risk of granting medium-term and long-term credits from what were mostly short-term deposits. Let us consider that, between 1974 and 1976, the OPEC countries attained a surplus of 142 thousand million dollars, a sum that necessarily represented a deficit in the case of other countries. Of this deficit, not a cent was incurred by the three most powerful capitalist economies, that is the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, and Japan also registered a surplus—of altogether 26 thousand million dollars—in this period. A deficit of 168 thousand million dollars was imposed on the rest of the world. Of this, 50,000 million were sustained by France, Britain, Italy, and Canada; 38,000 million by the OECD countries not listed above; and 78,000 million by those of the developing countries that do not produce oil. This vast sum was directed by the commercial banks.

This is an unnatural state of affairs: in the long run commercial banks are unable to undertake this role at their own risk. The risk is aggravated by the uncertainty resulting from floating rates of exchange and the reduction in the duration of deposits. Trading banks approach a credit ceiling which they cannot possibly go beyond if they act in keeping with well-proven practice. Such a situation entails the danger of further decreasing the supply of long-term credits, while the undoubtedly existing short-term monetary excess increases inflationary pressure. The reorganization, in a corresponding institutional framework, of the international credit system would ensure the satisfaction of economically justified long-term credit requirements, and of the capital requirements of all participating countries, including those developing countries that do not produce oil.

The solution on a world scale of monetary and credit problems would also be a logical consequence of the policy of *détente*. For *détente* is indivisible. It is unimaginable that in the era of *détente* favourable relations could develop among the countries of differing social systems without the results extending to the entire sphere of economic relations. I cannot imagine that monetary, financial, and credit problems could be excluded, in the long run, from the scope of a policy of *détente*.

You might ask why I am interested in your avoiding an economic crisis. In my lectures, articles and, recently, in a televised discussion in Budapest with a French and an Austrian banker I expressed the view that the socialist countries would certainly not be pleased by the intensification of economic problems in the West. There are, in my opinion, quite a few reasons for this, including:

(a) in the first place, a crisis, closely bound up, as it is, with unemployment and with a fall in living standards, would mainly affect the working people with whom we express solidarity;

(b) secondly, as experience shows, extremist-fascist dictatorships, such as Hitler's and Mussolini's, can be the result of a crisis;

(c) thirdly, an economic crisis in the West also impairs the carrying out of our plans, obstructs our exports and so impedes an increase in output and in national income and, furthermore, hinders the rise of Hungarian living standards. We are, therefore, supporters of a dynamic development in East-West relations.

Let me refer, in this context, to a Hungarian aspect. Two months ago, an Austro-Hungarian summit meeting was held in Vienna where both parties judged bilateral relations in terms of their increasing correspondence to the principles of peaceful coexistence and of good-neighbourly cooperation of states living under different social systems, and both parties committed themselves to the further promotion of political and economic relations.

These last weeks, the Soviet Union confirmed that it wishes to foster cooperation with the government of the United States. It also expressed its readiness to further the results of Helsinki which were obtained by joint effort. A second SALT agreement, the successful conclusion of the disarmament talks conducted here in Vienna, could release important new resources for the further development of the world economy.

I am confident that, after evaluating of the experiences of these last thirty years and also after the objective appraisal of the present relations of forces in the world economy, there are sufficient arguments for us, in the East and in the West, to jointly try and find the way to economic growth, full employment, and monetary stability.

OPEN GATES

by

MSGR. JÓZSEF CSERHÁTI

“**T**he Socialist State and the Churches in Hungary” by György Aczél, Deputy Prime Minister, and a member of the Political Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party, which appeared in *Világosság* in October 1976, came as a surprise even to those who could tell from the logic of events that the relationship between Church and State and the effect of this relationship upon ordinary life were of concern at the highest level, too. That conjecture could not be wrong, since I am convinced that, for humanitarian and patriotic reasons, both the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party and the Hungarian government make earnest endeavours to strengthen democracy in society in the spirit of national unity. This must be said of the start before weighing up György Aczél’s highly important conclusion that ideological differences cannot be allowed to put obstacles in the way of work done for the happiness of the Hungarian people as a whole. As true as this is, it is just as desirable in the interest of national unity to release as soon as possible those forces that are inherent in ideological tension. Common efforts should be made to seek ways by which acceptance of responsibility combined with goodwill can already find opening and more open gates.

György Aczél’s words invite an answer. The arguments and conclusions of his sympathetic words are meant to awaken, though covertly as yet, but with the grave urgency of facts in mind, a sense of responsibility and self-criticism in all those who are bound, to share, closely or from afar, in the economic, social, political, and cultural duties. A place among those responsible must clearly be reserved for the churches as well. They have to assume responsibility only incidentally for the cultural and material progress of the people, but primarily for the achievement of national unity,

Published in Hungarian in the Catholic monthly “Vigilia” (No. 3, 1977). The text of György Aczél’s paper referred to by the author was published in English in NHQ 66.

spiritual rapprochement, brotherhood, for the nation as a whole becoming a family.

We Catholics as well profess that in the struggles and in the ongoing processes of the present the point at issue is the most sacred thing on earth: man, future man, and the new society. Man was kept at the centre of attention by the greatest undertaking of the Catholic Church in modern times, the Second Vatican Council. Never before had church documents talked so much and so profoundly about man as did the drafts of the Council, its deliberations, resolutions, and publications. The Council had two great catchwords. One was *aggiornamento*, the modernization of Christian teaching on faith and morals and the reexamination of its validity; the other signpost stressed that the key to a search for the new and the deepening of human relations can only be found in dialogue.

I feel that György Aczél's paper is a search for new ways, but at the same time a call to the churches: let us all make a fresh start, let us seek and explore together the possibilities, conditions, and real purposes of the solutions offered. The openness of the paper is an invitation to pay increasing heed to each other, to be able and also to wish to let each other share our values, and to have the courage, through each other's power reserves and weaknesses alike, to undertake with joint determination to promote the happiness of the Hungarian people, presenting and offering, to the whole world, the values of this handful of Hungarians. To quote the end: "Two things however seem certain. First, Marxists and Christians have to answer the same questions put by the same world, they have to avert the same danger of war, they have to form an opinion in their own way regarding the same capitalist and the same socialist system. Secondly, Marxism and religion will coexist for a long time to come." I see these two propositions as a conscious opening of the gates leading to an objective and profound dialogue. This is another reason why a response on our part is required.

An excitingly interesting part of György Aczél's article is the synthesis in which he explains the principles on which the relationship between State and Church must be based, its conditions and the possibilities of further development. Taking up this point, with a view to making it easier to contribute to the discussion and in the hope of clarifying a point or two, I wish to expound my views on coexistence and cooperation, as well as on reciprocity or mutual commitment.

The fact and the command of coexistence

What is at issue here is one of the basic modern principles of the political relations between nations living under different systems, that is the starting-point in practice for elimination of political differences and opposition. Coexistence is a fact and a necessity at the same time. If we want to avoid war and a still more horrible nuclear holocaust, mankind must live together and side by side. Therefore coexistence today is a political postulate, but at the same time also a moral imperative. This means mutually taking note of each other on the part of differing social systems, tolerating and recognizing each other, and cooperating on the basis of that recognition.

What György Aczél wishes to illustrate by the disintegration of the earlier homogeneous camp of the faithful in the struggle for democratic and socialist change and consequently with the inevitable giving up of their former social commitment by the clergy, notably that, as the effect of the influence of the great majority of working people amongst the faithful and of the position taken by this majority, "Church leaders who represented more modern trends of thought found themselves in closer touch with the idea of socialist and democratic national unity," is by and large true. I should like to add, however, that the church lost some of its supporters not because they saw at the back of socialist social change materialist principles irreconcilable with Christian tenets but because, on the one hand, in a more liberal and more democratic atmosphere, the process of secularization that had started earlier in the Hungarian churches now, in a more liberal and democratic atmosphere gained greater momentum; and on the other hand, because landless agricultural proletarians rejected not just the Church but the whole system of large estates, together with the old government structure, that is the past as such. There is no doubt that the Hungarian people always loved their parish clergy, on whom they looked as their own kind, and they were deeply attached to the church as a moral and educational factor. All this entailed two important consequences: the people did not condemn their church for its "old sins," and when the flames of the revolution burnt highest, especially at the time of the socialist reorganization of the villages, the church could stand at the side of the people as an understanding sound moral helper. In Hungary the shepherds never wanted to abandon their flocks, a proof of this being that during and after the war their vast majority held out in their places.

Starting with the nineteen-twenties, a considerable proportion of the clergy, especially the young priests, supported total and radical land reform,

since they had lived with the oppressive presence of the doomed, rotten old feudal system. Members of the hierarchy were to be found among the "revolutionary churchmen." György Aczél also pays tribute to the church's progressive traditions and, with reference to the current situation, goes on: "In this respect the churches in Hungary may possibly be favourably influenced, in addition to their own progressive historical traditions, by the actual transformation of the social ideas of the laity in the course of socialist construction. A role is certainly also played by international aspects, the *aggiornamento*, that historical self-examination, the signs of which could be seen in most of the great churches these twenty years past as well as in their international centres, the Vatican and the World Council of Churches. They may have been influenced by the warnings of Pope John XXIII that the faithful must cooperate with people with different ideas in the interest of the good or of that which lead to the good."

The atmosphere of coexistence in Hungary came into being only slowly but all the more impressively, and so also has the reality of coexistence which had once been met with much doubt and criticism. But the great question continues to be: How can members of the Hungarian hierarchy aver that the Church can be on good terms with socialism, that it can adapt itself to the changed socialist world?

How? In Hungary freedom of religion is a constitutional right, and a broad scale of activities is reserved for the church. These rights are always in force. The church in its mission and practice acts independently and performs its pastoral functions freely within its own domain; according to the Conciliar Church, however, this is so today in the whole Catholic world, therefore in Hungary as well, it is the common mission of the clergy and the faithful, a mission which meets the wishes and sympathy of millions. The church, in the whole of its domain is able to make effective its activities without giving up its identity. And finally the church, maintaining its own way of seeing the world, wishes to contribute the deliberate cooperation of the faithful in the service of the common good under socialism. The socialist social system in Hungary is working towards a Marxist, materialist, and atheist state, thus truly giving rise to moral difficulties: How can a Christian, while remaining within the scope of his daily work, participate in the creation of such a socialism? My answer to this must for the moment remain a mere assertion of a position. The church can carry out its Christian mission only in given real conditions, and, aware of this, it accepts coexistence with those fellow countrymen who are not believers, putting its trust in faith and hope. The possibilities of cooperation for Christians will be discussed below.

The possibilities, limits, and conditions of cooperation

Outward historical change and, parallel with it, the beginnings and harmony of the inward intellectual and spiritual processes were "a warning to the faithful and the clergy alike that the supernatural dimensions of faith cannot absolve them from the responsibility to decide here and now, from taking up a position on this earth, opposing the inhuman world of exploitation and class oppression, in favour of other, better and freer opportunities," György Aczél states.

The church as renewed in the Second Vatican Council is ready for the dialogue because, conscious of its mission, it considers it necessary and desirable. In the church the need for dialogue follows from two basic convictions: first, the constraints of a changing age; second, the inmost nature of the church, or rather the moral attitude of Christians, and commitment to a happier human future. The Council pressed for dialogue with unprecedented resolution:

"Ecclesia vera etiam atheismum omnino reicit sincere tamen prositaetur homines omnes, credentes et non credentes ab hunc mundum, in quo communiter vivunt recte aedificandum opem conferre debere: quod certe ceci non potest sine sincere et prudenti colloquio." (The Church in the World Today. 21.)

Cooperation logically follows from coexistence. But we have to draw the boundary lines beforehand: rapprochement in the ideological field is impossible, that would involve a giving up of principles or their particularly damaging mix-up. "In the ideological sense there is no peaceful coexistence. By this we mean that we cannot be reconciled to ideological indifference, or its demoralizing effect," says György Aczél too. The fields of cooperation are daily work, planning ahead, construction or, as Marxists would say, the building of a socialist society and state. In essence this aim already anticipates elements of the picture of a future society. For the constantly emphasized Marxist aim, the happiness of people, it is necessary to emancipate them and to put a stop to all kinds of alienation. Marxists are convinced that the achievement of a socialist revolutionary transformation imperatively requires acceptance of the class struggle and the hegemony of the Communist Party in the whole of society.

Marxist ideology has a somewhat material and a somewhat theoretical side. It would not be in accordance with the double reality if, in the present connection, we distinguished theory and practice, because the conceptual duality of Marxist infrastructure and superstructure implies one and the same reality: socialist man and society. The duality I have in mind is also

referred to by György Aczél when he points out: "The Marxist concept of ideology . . . is not limited to the sphere of world outlook in the strict sense: it comprises, as a projection of the social interests, all the ideas which play an essential role in the regulation of political, economic, and cultural measures. These ideas, these norms, may—with differing emphasis and a different philosophical background—be partially present in other ideologies, too." Indeed, it is the ardent desire of the church to be in agreement with Marxists, in economic and political questions, though they are opposed to religion and the religious morality. The limits of such an agreement could only be incompatibility with Christian moral norms. The agreement could extend to culture as well as to the joint stressing and assurance of the most fundamental moral requirements.

Christian morality also does not stop at a mere prohibition of moral evil. It demands positive, virtuous, devout behaviour, self-abnegation for the community's sake, and even continuing conversion. In addition Christian way of thinking on its part is always trying to do its utmost to offer pledges for the elimination of mass murder, the wholesale expropriation of the labour and property of others, of deception and the bearing of false witness. Marxist and atheist humanism places the people's true happiness in an earthly, this-worldly sphere, while Christians say: In addition to material goods, the objective truths of nature and natural science, the perfect functioning of the social system and commitment to one's fellow-men, there are goods of grace, there are personal values like love, including the love of enemies, and forgiveness, and there are obligations that can be undertaken only with self-abnegation and at the price of heroic sacrifices. The motivation of all this is, over and above the natural moral law, faith in a transcendental God and bearing witness to Our Redeemer, Jesus of Nazareth, God and Man in one person.

Certain identities between Christianity and Marxism regarding common human objectives may possibly create anxiety on both sides. They appear to support the view held by many that practical cooperation will sooner or later result in the unintended effacement of the ideological content. There are some who say: Cooperation with Marxists always involves danger and risk to the faith of believers. Their argument runs: if one starts from the fact that any practical action is the expression of some idea, then cooperation in the field of practice implies recognition of the ideology from which the practice follows.

The Marxists offer those who are not against them cooperative alliance. They presuppose that those who cooperate are not only loyal to the state but acknowledge, on the basis of a value judgement, that in socialism one has

to recognize the most progressive form of a society that is the most perfect as shown by the social sciences. We Catholics are convinced that Christianity, which has shaped European history for two thousand years, also possesses the spiritual and moral energies necessary for the better and more perfect social institutions advocated by socialists. On the basis of his religious conviction and his radical Bible-inspired conduct, Christian man is able to fight for a new, more humane future. This is why we feel we have a sense of vocation and responsibility in the present historical conditions as well. János Kádár, First Secretary to the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, put it; "I believe that there are quite a few religious people in our country. When we speak of pulling together and of socialist organizational unity, we think of them as well: we all have to stick together."

The most eloquent and most heartening lines of György Aczél's article are those in which he argues in support of strengthening practical cooperation, including establishing its basis in principle. Marxists rely on their most essential principles when striving for such practical cooperation that bridges ideological differences: "Practice has demonstrated that what is necessary is also possible: ideological differences do not preclude practical cooperation between the theists and atheists. One may have differing views regarding the creation or the eternity of the material world, the immortality of the soul, and even the origin of moral values. But this difference of opinion does not prevent the religious and atheists from coming to an agreement on all those questions the solution of which they consider necessary in the interest of their well-being and of social development."

Following the agreement of 1950 and the partial accord concluded with the Holy See in 1964, church leaders professed more emphatically on behalf of the Catholic Church that the faithful, without giving up their own religious beliefs, should conscientiously and with devotion and Christian humility join in the work of post-war reconstruction and then of the realization of a more and more clearly developing social and political system. This means that the church on its part, due to its actual and public-spirited conviction, in the awareness of its evangelical timeliness, laid stress upon the unparalleled cooperation in the common task, and in a patriotism and humanism as expressed in the service of a progressive and developing society.

György Aczél's argument would not be complete if he failed to speak of the conditions of coexistence and cooperation between Marxists and Christians, between believers and those who do not believe in the tenets of organized religion. "Socialist democracy—the development of which

has been so categorically emphasized by the latest, the 11th Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party—requires a sincere exchange of views, an effort to win over, and not to prevail over, one another, an effort by which all participants grow richer, and which leads to the deepening of human relations, to the refining of arguments and, last but not least, to a better foundation of decisions. This democracy presupposes also freedom of thought, including personal and institutional religious practice and a freedom of worship. Thus this democracy connects the circuit of collective social action with impulses coming from different sources, it releases and unites social forces for the benefit of the community."

In enumerating the principles on which cooperation should be based the Deputy Prime Minister refers to facts and results. This entitles us to talk about our difficulties also by comparing observations. We would deceive one another and the world if we were not sincere and outspoken and if we could not expect from the partner understanding and assistance to our hearts' desire. In spite of the ideological differences Christians wish to cooperate and are willing to offer their good offices in the service of the public well. The difficulties which come up in this respect are referred to also by György Aczél when he remarks: "Some might say... that different ideological bases lead to disputes not only in the philosophical but in the political and moral sphere, too. This is true, of course, but this dispute—as evidenced by experience in Hungary—is not between enemies but between people going the same way who exchange their views by starting from different ideological bases but from a common responsibility, and who themselves grow richer by the exchange of views." Even if it is true that these disputes are disputes between people who share the same political ground, the solution of the problems has precisely definable conditions without the realization of which we will continue to be marking time. Religious believers living in a socialist state can solve their conflicts of conscience and come to an agreement with those who do not share their faith on matters which their common happiness depends, only if they can always be convinced that those principles and practical requirements which are the *sine qua non* of their Christian character and existence are secure. "The application of the principle of freedom of conscience greatly promotes this (public) activity in Hungary, where citizens of different ideologies and conceptions work together in public life," states György Aczél. In this we can see the guarantee of the basic conditions of cooperation. But one has to look further ahead.

There is no need for a detailed discussion, a brief enumeration will suffice. Catholics are aware that communism means the dictatorship of the

proletariat, and the hegemony of the Communist Party is a fact. But the Communist Party wants power not for power's sake, but in the service of a better human life. This service cannot be built upon one-sided or exclusive principles of domination, its foundations can only be identical with purified humanity, human and common values having priority. For this reason we are one in deploring those administrative interferences taking place from time to time which offend human dignity, self-esteem, and the basic tenets of democracy. It is also necessary to go on reducing, or put an end to the attitude which looks on a religious person as a second-class citizen and fails to assure him work suited to his talents, capabilities, and diligence. The Church and the State have jointly guaranteed freedom of religious instruction, but it seems that the attention given to the prevention of conflicts in this respect is not quite reassuring as yet. The trouble is unfortunately due to a sort of duality which can be observed between top and local authority even now. As if there still were some who were unable to take up the position which György Aczél describes as follows: "The Marxist holds the view that the discussion of ultimate ideological questions is admissible only through the propagation and confrontation of ideas, and not through the use of force. He is led in this respect not by tactical considerations but by the position of principle which was pointed out already by Engels in his dispute with the Blanquists and with Dühring: atheism cannot be declared a 'compulsory article of faith'."

Since the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party and the Hungarian government have been striving to widen the basis of the Patriotic People's Front, and since the policy of alliances has become more than a mere slogan, trust in religious people makes itself increasingly manifest here and there in acts and in genuine human gestures. It can be observed also that one or another who is not above resorting to administrative interference, even if he upholds his opposition to religion, no longer keeps people away from collective work on account of ideological differences. Indeed, socialist democracy is only genuine progress, and more completely human, if everybody partakes of it, if everybody grows richer by it.

Future hopes of reciprocity and solidarity

György Aczél begins his summing up by stating that conditions in Hungary, including questions concerning the churches, are not free from problems, but mutual patience will help us to get over the difficulties. Then he discusses the various levels of patient cooperation.

The first, basic level of cooperation is everyday life: relationships on the job in the factories, offices, institutions, and schools. The article argues almost passionately that today there is a greater need than ever before for cooperation between religious and non-religious people, for the union of the nation as a whole, in Hungary as well as on an international scale. Conscious interdependence and union are based on the working people's objective interests and needs, the purpose of which is to promote development and to maintain peace at any price. Common historical aims can be attained only in times of peace. "...the relationship between the state and the churches in socialist Hungary is necessarily also in interaction with today's world situation, and general ideological and political conditions." Yes; but we think we have to prevent not only war, but the danger and threat of war as well. This has its guarantee in peaceful constructive work, in the pulling down of the walls of partition, in the peace of the soul, and in the creation of an increasingly firm national unity.

On the level of the people those principles must prevail which have been described as rules of peaceful, humanly open and friendly coexistence, which must pervade the entire people, their workdays and holidays as well. György Aczél also acknowledges the decisive importance of the application of the principle of freedom of conscience. I have to admit that it is good to see that the primary reality carrying history, which is the people, has come into the focus of scrutinizing attention. Yes, the question at issue is the need and the rights of the people, the great truths of their human dignity and of personal freedom of conscience. The will of the people, of the people holding religious beliefs, manifests itself also in the fact that today the religious masses, following conciliar doctrine, seek to realize more modern contents. This basis ought to underlie the activity of those who long for greater depths in religion, in the parishes, the work done in common of those who wish to penetrate deeper into the Bible, into theology and local church history, into the life of the liturgy, and sacred music.

Everywhere in the Catholic Church today, in reviews and books alike, there is much talk about what are called basic communities. The aim of these communities is not to do mission work or seek conversions but to live through faith in the course of search. The Catholic Church must study and guide this activity. It will be beneficial and fruitful if the search is guided by love and is meant to remain in harmony with the teaching function of the church; otherwise these communities can easily sink into sterile mysticism or dangerous sectarian seclusion. The Hungarian Catholic Bench of Bishops stated recently that the clergy doing pastoral duties under

the guidance of bishops can, within the bounds of the given possibilities, do valuable work in satisfying the spiritual needs of man today, in creating the community man of our age. Today it is conceded on all sides that the practice of religious life means not only worship in the strict sense of the word, but includes the stimulation of human meditation and the fostering of the human ideas required by our age.

Another plane of relations is between the state and the various churches as institutions. It seems as if we heard a conciliar expression: the people come first and only afterwards do we mention the institution. Since the conclusion of an agreement with the Vatican in 1964 we can witness a profound development which has recently made it possible to fill all the vacant bishoprics and archbishoprics. "With proper tact and patience, by striving for mutual understanding, it has been possible to reconcile the legitimate wishes of the Vatican and the competence of the Hungarian People's Republic regarding particular personal and other matters." I, for one, hold this dialogue conducted on such a high level of relations to be necessary, extremely useful and important. How desirable it would be if this official dialogue between the Holy See and the State were *ipso facto* extended to the above-mentioned relationship and cooperation between believers and citizens who hold no religious views. To ensure and unfold it church and lay leaders must engage in ongoing negotiation and strive for concrete realization through common effort.

Finally let me speak in detail about the third level of relations: the uncompromising separate world and yet a kind of productive interdependence of the antagonistic duality of ideas, of religious contents or world views, as well as of Marxist materialism and atheism.

On this plane György Aczél has really something new to say, opening up new perspectives. This seems to be the aim of the repeated openly expressed desire that Christians should accept today's *status quo* not only on the basis of the principle of "render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's," but should "undertake to render active service to the cause of the community," identifying themselves with those aims and tasks of socialism which are not alien to the gospel either. Such are the struggle for the elimination of oppression and exploitation, the pursuit of equality and of social justice. On the part of the Catholic Church we have always emphasized our loyalty: that we observe the laws of the state, that the Christian citizen is reliable and loyal to his country, and we often mention that from the moral point of view, in terms of religiously motivated frankness, self-sacrifice and humanism, religious people are above the average. György Aczél overtly demands more than that, apart from ideology:

Christians should endorse the findings of Marxist-Leninist analysis regarding the economic, political, and cultural realities, and build these elements into their own world outlook. I think this is a salient specific feature of his argument.

To demonstrate how important it is for him to clarify this central issue, György Aczél cites examples from world history, but especially from the Hungarian past. Religious people, just on the basis of their religious conviction—and this is what he expects also from the Hungarian Christians of our days—have fought in the vanguard of the struggle for progress and for a better life. It follows also for the Marxists that religion cannot be an obstacle to progress. We must not forget that this is a Marxist argument often employed against religion. It is, however, no valid argument in favour of religion or its existential necessity if György Aczél “defends” the difference of opinion between the religious ideology and Marxism because in his view debate promotes clarification and a better foundation of the work to be done. From our point of view, we have to describe such an evaluation as very useful, although we do not consider it satisfactory because it does not refer to essential requirements like recognition of the value of religion and acceptance of its community-creating moral effects. Marxist practice might sometimes be formulated as follows: religious people are needed, but religion is not. No doubt this implies a pragmatic differentiation hurtful to the faithful.

Even if there can be no agreement in respect of ideas, there is plenty to be done along this line, too. I invariably hold the view that we have to seek a human scale of values for differing ideologies, a justification for the moral principles of reciprocity and solidarity, for the incontestable validity of universal moral truths, with the accentuation and reservation of the differences of degree which in our individual wealth are concomitants of the eternal human reality. The common human base can always be the same: man's truth and moral goodness.

I am of the opinion that on the basis of humanity Christians and Marxists, inspired with the desire of cultivating humanism without prejudice to their own respective ideologies, can build a bridge on the ideological plane in a productive interaction in which each party contributes the result of its own view of man towards the portrayal of the only and general image. This is no doubt evidence of human enrichment. An ideological dialogue of the kind which had started in the West sometime in the 'sixties with the aim of talking the other into concessions has really come to a deadlock. But there is no way of evading the problems, the pressures of our fast-moving age invite everybody to answer. I am in complete

agreement with an earlier quoted expression of György Aczél: "Marxists and Christians have to answer the same questions put by the same world. . . Marxism and religion will coexist for a long time to come."

Although earlier I have spoken of ideological interaction, yet I am aware that the dialogue can be expected to produce results only on the plane of practice. But even this process may have to face dangers if we lose sight of the compulsion of the historical present which brooks no evasion and no excuse. This is referred to also by György Aczél when, speaking of the issue with negative emphasis, he says: "The ideological confrontation hinders the practical union of communists and Christians only if in the meantime they lose sight of the great, common historical goals which are determined by the current national and international social relations under the shadow of the danger of thermonuclear war." In accepting this thesis of common goals as a whole, I wish to add only that ideological confrontation would prevent in advance, and destroy, all goodwill if, with care on the highest level and with an honest, pure, and sincere will to understand expressed at the lowest level as well, we failed to respect the separateness of religious people and their often devoted work undertaken in the interest of the community. It has become perfectly clear to the faithful that it is first of all in their places of employment that they have to win respect for their faith, by their Christian and moral conduct. Neither in the past nor at the present has there been any objection raised in this connection; moreover, leaders who are responsible for the organization and effectiveness of work at higher and lower levels usually point to the willingness and hard work of religious people, to their dependability and efficiency at work.

The great aims which are being smelted in the foundry of our age, and which as "signs of the times" allow one to suspect what is hidden are: The role of human diversity and variety in a new synthesis of the unity of higher order on the basis of pluralism; realization of reciprocities and interdependences and their promotion in dialogue; and finally solidarity, "active service to the cause of the community" in the interest of creating the new man and the new society. Most recent scientific forecasts are unanimous in stating that the only hope of the uncertain and much debated future is not the improvement of automation, not the conquest of outer space, not increased and better production, not economic levelling, but a higher individual and social morality. We are increasingly becoming aware that man's real value and happiness are in his steadily progressing and increasingly clarifying moral improvement. Security and cooperation, the aim of Helsinki, cannot be built without moral foundations.

We have to believe in the results of a productive pluralism in which

ideas and differences are not concealed or amalgamated, but in which, in the interaction and mutual creative harmony of values and moral forces, we Christian Catholics may add our own to the great plan of the new society and of future of man. If we accept the definition of principle that pluralism means also the independence of the intrinsic value of individuals and groups; that by its essence pluralism always demands freedom, and always strives for a wider democracy, and meanwhile does not turn into uniformity, which in my judgement would involve violence and intolerance; then one never has to fear that, in the common action in keeping with the interests of many, we shall give up also each other's position. I profess that only conscious, powerful Christianity can take part and assist in shaping the future.

This is the source of the answer to the objection made earlier that cooperation with Marxists always remains dangerous and risky. Our Christian evangelical testimony has to accept risks and worldly temptations. We cannot deny the danger, but our followers know where the limits are; the only guarantee in this respect is the development of an intense religious life and of a Christian sense of mission. What this requires of the church is not "propaganda" but an up-to-date theology and the sort of kerygma from the pulpit and in print that is accessible to all and provides answers to the questions of the day.

A real dialogue can grow out of the soil of the principles and requirements of pluralism and bring results only if it strives for a mutual recognition and exchange of values. Why shouldn't we Christians acknowledge, and add to our image of Christian man, the values found in the Marxist image of man and the structures given in socialism which mean progress and advancement? In the same way, we think, the gospel and its teachings have a lot to say to open-minded Marxists and atheists.

I should say the main point of György Aczél's conclusion is: Mark you, the responsible politician is concerned about national unity and does not at this moment know any greater and more sacred task than to do everything possible in order to promote and strengthen this. We feel called to carry out this aim. Thanks to the Church's current intention to gain new strength, we Catholics must be doubly inspired with the great truths: it is sacrifices that must give birth to the new generation, and if we want to be true and conscious children of our country, then we can fulfil our love of this country by building the new common society in the unity of the entire Hungarian nation.

György Aczél's article has to be recognized as making it increasingly clear that a positive formulation takes shape in the appreciation of the role

of the churches. Obviously the government not only puts more trust in religious people but also expects them, in equal measure, to give more and more, as is due from every citizen. In this growing national unity fellow citizens of different ideologies also see a serious factor of the integration of economic, political, and cultural development in the readiness on the part of those who hold a religious faith.

FROM OUR NEXT ISSUES

NATION AND MANKIND

Imre Pozsgay

TIBOR DÉRY

ON EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION

(PART I)

János Szita

POET OF A NATION: GYULA ILLYÉS

László Ferenczi

SOME ASPECTS OF HUNGARIAN-BRITISH RELATIONS

Tibor Palánkai, Ferenc Szombathelyi

REFLECTIONS ON NATIONAL TRADITION

Tibor Klaniczay

EDUCATION OF ETHNIC MINORITIES IN HUNGARY

Mária Jakab, Ferenc Stark

SHORT STORIES, POEMS

Lajos Maróti, Ágnes Nemes Nagy, György Spiró

ROOM 212

(Short story)

by

ENDRE ILLÉS

On weekdays the professor always had lunch at the hospital, in his study, at a low, round table with a glass top. This day they put before him his favourite meal, an omelette of four eggs with pieces of green pepper fried with it, on which he sprinkled finely ground red pepper. Afterwards he asked for an orange salad. With it he drank a glass of dry wine.

He had a lovely room, one wall was pierced by an enormous window, from there he saw the snow covered garden in winter, in spring the trees bending in the whistling winds. A giant Persian rug was hanging on another wall, a bookshelf behind his desk. Sometimes he even stayed there overnight, sleeping on the couch.

The plates were taken away, and he had just opened an English medical journal when his secretary came in.

"Someone to see you, sir."

The professor glanced at his watch. Two thirty. It was always late before he had lunch.

"Did you tell him I don't see out-patients at the hospital?"

"I did. Neither at the hospital, nor at home."

The professor folded the journal.

"Is some relation of his a patient here?"

"I asked him. He said no."

"His name?"

"He wouldn't give it."

"What does he want then?"

"To speak to you, sir." She added, as though this had some significance:

"His wife is with him too."

"Has he been to see me before? Do you remember?"

"I don't think we've ever seen him before."

"Ask him for his name once again." The secretary returned.

"He'll only give it to you, sir." The professor sat down near his desk.

"What can we do. . . Send him in." The stranger came in. He wore a navy-blue suit, with a yellow turtle-neck sweater. His hair was turning a dirty grey, his narrow, pointed beard and the thin mustache above the bloodless lips were the same dirty grey. His wife stood behind him, tired, broken, in dark grey.

The professor looked the man over, his carved-in chest, the baggy suit on the thin body, and he could already hear his heavy breathing.

"I was told you'd like to speak to me."

The other two came forward, all the way up to the desk. Then the man spoke his name. He spoke very softly.

The professor asked him to repeat it. He had been watching him all along, but only then did he take a real look.

The dreaded man stood before him. That dreaded man who only a few years before, had held the lives of others on the palm of his hand like the severed leg of a frog, which will still twitches convulsively if hit by an electric current. The man who could know the heartthrobs of a bird tight in the grip of his hand.

"You are that. . .", the professor faltered. The stranger stared at him.

"Yes, I am."

The professor reached for the ballpoint on his desk and toyed with it.

"What is it you want me to do?"

"I am a sick man. I should like you to have a look at me."

"I think my secretary has already told you, I don't engage in private practice."

The man's eyes grew more rigid still, they were beginning to resemble marbles. He wanted to soften his voice to a pleasing, but it remained flat and dry, it cracked like dry reed—this voice could not accept any foreign material, any softer overtones.

"Yes", he said. . . "But I trust only you, professor. I can only trust you".

The professor held the ballpoint tight.

"Why me exactly?"

The man in the navy suit drew a big breath:

"I thought it over carefully, for weeks on end. Because I thought it out. . . I thought about before it all became clear". He grew almost crude. "I never had you investigated neither you, nor any member of your family. None of them, ever! . . . Although I could have done so once. . ."

He stopped—as though he could not exhale the few cubic centimeters of air which he had just breathed in so deeply a moment before.

The second, third, fourth moment too passed, and the man remained silent in a stiff cramp. In this heavy silence the professor asked:

"What could you have done to harm me?"

The spasm finally relaxed:

"I was informed that when a colleague of yours issued a press statement that the recovery rate is better during the winter in the less heated, in fact in the cold wards, than in the well heated ones, you issued orders to keep up the heat! Keep the wards as warm as they had been. Stoke up the fires. I should have had that investigated. What was behind those orders of yours. But I did not. . . ."

The professor clicked the ballpoint and doodled his name on a white sheet, once, twice, five time—this is how I would have signed my evidence then, he thought.

He looked up.

"May I ask, why you did not pursue the matter?" The man in the navy blue suit relaxed a little.

"Because I am prejudiced. I like the cold better than well heated rooms. Those who are prejudiced should maintain their objectivity." He continued in the cracked, splintery voice of the broken reed:

"I am ill, professor. As ill as the others at your hospital here. . . . Take me as your patient, you've got to help me."

The professor stood up.

"If you really are ill. . . and, as far as I can tell by the looks of you, you really are. . . I'll arrange for you to be admitted."

"But will I get a private room?"

"Naturally."

"And you will examine me, right? Only you?"

"Naturally, I will as well."

"I trust only you."

"If you want to stay at this hospital, you will have to trust everyone here. Incidentally, where are you employed now?"

There was a moment's silence.

"Are you working anywhere?"

"I am Assistant Manager at the Costume Hire Company."

"So, you are insured." The professor doodled his name on the white sheet for the sixth time, then made his decision. "You will be placed in Katalin Ivándy's care. She will be in charge of the preliminary tests. She's my assistant."

"And I'll get a private room?"

"I've already promised that."

"And my wife. . ."

"Your wife cannot stay here." He picked up the house-phone and called his secretary.

"Please take the patient to Dr. Ivándy's. I'll ring her right away."

When the man, his wife and his secretary left the room the professor smiled. But this smile could only have been caught by those who know him very well. I might as well have said: "take him out", he thought.

Late in the afternoon Katalin Ivándy reported:

"Cardiac asthma, at an advanced stage. I have prescribed Cedilanide and Diaphyllin, and Noxyron for the night."

"Right" said the professor.

Dr. Ivándy continued:

"His ECG would even justify Prednisolon."

"Let's wait with that. I'll have a look at him myself first."

"He's afraid of waking at dawn. He says that's when it's worst. He gasps for breath."

"If he can't breathe, give him extra Diaphyllin."

"He asked his name should not be on his chart." The professor smiled again.

"Open the telephone book, and take the first name that catches your eye."

Katalin Ivándy still had something to say:

"He's a difficult patient, he won't undress. Just sits on a chair. . . Complains that his window faces the courtyard."

The professor knew how his patient felt:

"Have an armchair placed in his room, with a cushion, and get him to sit in that. With his back to the window. That way he won't see the courtyard."

Before he went home, the sister on duty came to see the professor:

"They brought something to eat for number 212. The person who brought it said it was from home. Shall I give it to him?"

The professor took the lid off the two-tier meal-tote: lamb cutlet with rice and stewed apples, pink sponge-cake on the bottom plate.

"He got the same here. We took it to his room, but he wouldn't touch it" the sister said indignantly.

"He trusts them better at home" the professor assured the nurse. "For now—take him this 'home-made' . . . Eventually he'll grow to like us."

The next morning, even before the Consultant's Round, the professor went to room 212 in a state of exasperation. Dr. Ivándy and the matron behind him.

"Don't do that again!"—said the professor in a sharp, raised tone of voice.

"What, professor?"

"Giving ten forints to the boy in the next ward to take your tablets. Haven't you ever heard of adult dosage and children's dosage, and that the latter is considerably less? You could have poisoned that boy!"

Number 212 looked at the professor for a while, as one who does not wish to answer. After some time he nonetheless spoke, very quietly.

"Did the boy tell on me?"

"He did not. You were caught." The voice of number 212 now took on a bit more colour.

"Strange custom this is, professor, that there are three pills prepared for me in a small cup to go with my breakfast, I have to swallow them, and I don't even know what I'm swallowing."

"This is not a strange custom, these are hospital regulations!"—The Professor was becoming more and more exasperated. "You are at this hospital now and not somewhere else! Did you think, we wanted to poison you? We usually give treatment here."

Number 212 defended himself humbly, underhandedly:

"I beg your pardon. . . I meant no harm. I beg all of your pardons. . . But a professor must also consider his patient's peace of mind as a condition for recovery?"

"Naturally."

"Then let me ask you to please give me a prescription. My wife will pick up the drugs, and the doctor or sister can pick out each time what it is I should take. That would make me much calmer."

Before the professor could answer, Dr. Ivándy's face flushed. She asked indignantly:

"So you really are afraid we'll poison you?"

"I am afraid."

"Are you afraid of me? Your doctor?"

Number 212 did not look up at them, he was examining the linoleum-covered floor.

"I have enemies. I'm protecting myself." He only lifted his head when the professor spoke.

"If you keep this up, I'll have you thrown out of the hospital" the professor declared. He turned and walked out. Dr. Ivándy and Matron followed him.

In the corridor Dr. Ivándy added:

"This morning I had him scheduled for routine tests, X-ray and laboratory, but he didn't go to any of them. We haven't a single report on him yet."

The professor held onto the bannisters and thought.

"Let's leave him alone for a day or two. Let him make up his own mind what he wants" he said, finally.

On the third day, in the early afternoon, the professor's secretary announced number 212's wife.

"We will leave, professor."

"If that is your decision, no one will stop you."

"Please don't be angry."

"Why should I be."

"Please believe me... he didn't want to hurt anyone. It's not in his nature."

"If you say it, I have to believe you." When she was already at the door, he decided to ask:

"Why exactly are you leaving? You do know, don't you that your husband is ill. Soon his illness will turn more serious. What will you do then?" The woman turned in gratitude, in pain, at the kind words.

"I don't know professor... I don't know... Here the problem was that he got a room facing the courtyard... He began to be afraid then, right in the first half hour... Afraid of the courtyard... Perhaps if you put him in a room facing the street... then... perhaps..."

She couldn't finish and left.

Translated by Etelka Láczy

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE HUNGARIAN VILLAGE

by

GYÖRGY ENYEDI

In Hungary the external marks of the transformation of the village are often identical with those of processes that earlier occurred in Western Europe or in North America. These have developed as a result of industrialization and urban growth. They may include the transformation of the employment pattern in villages, a minority only working on the land, a drop in the village population, the development of the new organizational form of agriculture, etc. In spite of these similarities, the transformation of villages show some peculiar features in Hungary and some other East and Central European countries. One source of these peculiarities is that the changes were extremely rapid, and concentrated in time, occurring within a single generation, and consequently the modern and the traditional are mixed both in society and in the economy. Another peculiarity is that in the course of transformation the relationship between town and village shaped in ways other than in Western Europe. The social content of the Hungarian towns was different from the start; bourgeois ways were present to a lesser extent, they were only exceptionally able to use capital, i.e. not the towns produced industry but, with the exception of Budapest and a few others, post-war industrialization produced the towns, partly new towns, partly administrative centres, and towns re-born out of dying market towns. Finally it is a fundamental difference that the transformation of the village was accompanied by profound social changes. In thirty years property relations in agriculture were radically changed twice. A particular feature of change is large-scale farming (producers' cooperatives and state farms), which introduced elements into the evolution of the villages which are unknown in developed capitalist countries.

Changes in the village population
a) *The diminishing of the village population*

The twentieth century is the century of rapid urbanization. The city-centredness of social progress suggests that the sprawling cities rapidly sucked up the population of the rural areas. In Hungary urbanization was especially fast in the past thirty years, since this period included both large-scale industrialization and tertiary development. In the first two decades industry developed in a territorially concentrated way, and this resulted in large-scale internal migration. Between 1955 and 1970 the urban population increased by 900,000. Despite this, it is not possible to speak of rural depopulation, and not even of a heavy decline. On January 1, 1973, 52 per cent (in 1930, 62 per cent) of the population of Hungary lived in rural areas. The absolute numbers of the rural population hardly decreased, all that happened was that the natural increment left the villages. Between 1960 and 1970 the rural population diminished by 2.4 per cent.

There are factors which increase and others that diminish the population of villages. Natural growth is the chief amongst the first. It is generally higher than in urban areas. Negative balances are produced by internal migration. Both occur in a territorially differentiated way. In certain country areas natural growth is low, or even negative. In these relatively small regions emigration, and in certain cases birth control, is a process that has been going on for a long time, the "demographic erosion" is at an advanced stage, and the population is aging. There are some villages in which there have been no marriages or births for years, only deaths are registered. But this is rare; it occurs in small mountain villages and affects few people.

The extent of emigration also differs. It primarily depends on population size and on location. The population of small villages diminished most rapidly, villages with a population of under 500 by 12.8 per cent, 500-1,000 by 8.1. per cent, 3,000-5,000 by only 2 per cent (between 1960 and 1970). Emigration from small places is stimulated not only by the shortage of jobs but also by the low standard of services. These small villages are mostly in the Northern and Transdanubian hills, as well as in those of Southern and South-Western Transdanubia where conditions for agriculture are poor, the urban network is inadequate, and transport conditions are also unfavourable. If jobs in nearby towns are readily accessible, the village population prefers commuting to moving.

The main reason of emigration is of course the decline in agricultural jobs, a logical consequence of the mechanization of farming. The share of the agricultural population in the active earning population fell by more than

one half between 1949 and 1973 (from 55 to 22 per cent). This reduction will continue, since 40 per cent of the agricultural population are of retirement age (long-term plans reckon with an agricultural population of 15 per cent by 1985). In the years following the collectivization of agriculture, in the early sixties, those working on the land changed their jobs in droves seeking employment mainly in industry and building. Today the reduction of the agricultural population occurs mainly through the generational change. Those who retire are replaced by fewer young people. The bulk of those who complete primary school in the villages continue their schooling in towns; of these few look for a job in agriculture. It is possible that in about ten years the labour supply of agriculture will cause anxiety, since age alone will reduce the number of those employed in agriculture by half.

Numbers went down for other reasons as well. In the course of industrial concentration, numerous non-agricultural jobs were also abolished in villages. Between 1965 and 1972, 32 coal-mines were closed, and the number of those so employed declined by 40,000, mostly in small mines, the workers of which lived in surrounding villages. Before the war village crafts were important. These have in part ceased to exist, some being concentrated in larger villages. Many flour mills, distilleries, etc. and brick-yards ceased to exist already in the fifties. Service facilities also tend to form larger units and demand a higher consumer density than earlier. These functions or occupations, e.g. the four upper classes of general schools, grocers, butchers, barbers, cobblers, etc. leave small places and move "up" to the lesser centres.

The decline in the population is not characteristic of the entire rural area. The village population grew everywhere near industrial centres. The new industrial towns have not coalesced with their environment into urban agglomerations; there is still substantial agriculture near them, even in part of the Budapest agglomeration. Many moved into villages that are near towns and commute from there. This is largely due to the housing shortage in towns, but this is not the only reason. A move "in two stages" has been typical of the twentieth century, especially due to the agricultural nature of the outer areas of towns. New workers often tried to go on working on the land, after working hours, or on annual holidays.

It occurs less frequently that the increase in local jobs also increases the population. There are new jobs in agriculture as well, repairing machinery or food-processing. The decentralization of industrial development, which has made great progress in the past decade (especially after 1968), also improves the village employment situation. The new system of economic

management (since 1968) has ensured considerable autonomy to industrial enterprises, which have often chosen the larger villages—with their abundance of labour—as the site for their new investment projects. The rise in the standard of living—and thereby the higher demand on consumption and services—meant the “migration down” of earlier urban functions to larger villages, such as the specialist retail trade, the repair of household appliances, etc. This growth of jobs is seldom of sufficient size to attract people from elsewhere, but it can certainly result in reducing local emigration. An increase of jobs, and even immigration, may be caused by the development of tourism and its growing regional coverage. The seasonal population grows in attractive country areas. The owners of holiday cottages spend a longer time at their temporary village dwelling places. The number of Hungarian and foreign visitors amounts to c. five million, and these provide the local population with substantial, even if only seasonal, employment.

As may be seen, the increase in jobs may stop the diminution of the population in larger village settlements. The population of villages with over 5,000 inhabitants is on the increase. Since in more than one half of Hungary large villages are typical, the decline of the village population is far from general; it is more precise to speak of regional restructuring of the village population rather than depopulation. A sharp line can be drawn between areas with a dynamic, and those with a declining, population.

b) *The social and occupational transformation of the village population*

It is difficult to rid oneself of the habit of thinking villages and agriculture as identical. In Hungary today villages and towns are equally important parts of the economic space, though with a different function, economic dynamism is not the prerogative of the towns, villages as well have a future, and the backwardness of living conditions in villages is not the consequence of economic laws but the relic of the past. In Hungary there is no longer any fundamental difference in the social content and occupational structure of villages and towns. Fifty-eight per cent of active earners in villages have non-agricultural jobs, mainly in industry. For the great majority of these the village is only a domicile, they work in the towns. The number of commuters in Hungary is around a million, 20 per cent of the total active earning population. In 1930 it was only 141,000. A large proportion, 300,000, return home only once a week or once a fortnight, living in workers' hostels. (The bulk of the intermittent commuters work in the building industry.) Commuting has many enemies in Hungary. An increase

in housing construction in the towns is often urged in order to diminish it. Commuting certainly has its drawbacks. In the case of daily commuters the loss of time, for weekly commuters the absence from their family. But the bulk of the commuters—due to the attraction of the village way of living—do not want to move into town. It is much simpler and cheaper, as well as more beneficial in its perspective effects, to improve transport facilities, reducing travelling time, rather than settle, say, the 200,000 commuting to Budapest in the already overcrowded metropolitan area. The situation of the weekly commuters is undoubtedly more unfavourable, and their number must be reduced by increasing industrialization of the areas where they live and by settling some of them in the towns where they work.

Suburbanization is still practically unknown in Hungary. Dormitory towns of the American type will obviously not be built. In Hungarian towns there is no social class segregation, the town centre is in a much better technical condition and is being reconstructed everywhere, public safety is good, etc. Nevertheless, the moving out of part of the urban population to villages nearby is imaginable, there are already signs of this in several urban agglomerations. This should bring the social structure of town and country areas even closer to one another.

It is an important aspect that the agricultural population cannot in their totality be considered to be peasants any more. There are few small commodity-producing peasants of the old type, only 25,000 individual peasant holdings in the country on which 45,000 active earners obtain their living. These account for less than 2 per cent of the active village population (2.6 million). The largest number work in producers' cooperatives, followed by the state farms, and then by forestry. Those working on state farms are workers just as workers in state-owned industry. Cooperative ownership is also changing: e.g. the symbolic private ownership by members which was expressed by the land rent is disappearing, members' position in the work organization and the forms of their income gradually approach the forms which exist on the state farms. Some do clerical work, and 20 per cent of the manual workers of the agricultural cooperatives are engaged on expressedly industrial or transport jobs. Large farms often fulfil the role of integrator in the vertical integratory process of the agrobusiness, they engage in trade and food-processing as well, transport their own produce, have a construction section, etc.

To sum up: according to the 1970 census, 55 per cent of the village population were workers (46.6 per cent non-agricultural and 8.4 per cent agricultural workers), 29.3 per cent cooperative members, 11.4 per cent had professional, administrative or other (non-worker) occupations, and

only 4.3 per cent were independent: individual peasants, craftsmen, or small-traders.

Comparing this picture to the occupational pattern of towns, the difference is insignificant in respect of workers; approximately one half of the workers employed in both the industrial and the tertiary sectors live in rural areas. It is natural that those in agricultural jobs live in villages, and there is a great difference in the ratio of the professional people too in favour of towns. A further difference—not shown by the quoted statistics—is that the village families are not uniform. Not only adult young people still living at home work outside farming, but it is also frequent that husband and wife do different types of work. This is the reason why the share of women is generally high among the members of cooperatives near towns. In larger villages becoming industrialized it is the women who tend to work outside farming, since light industry, employing mainly female labour, has increasingly settled in villages.

It is of great importance in the coming closer together of town and country that the working class has ceased to be confined to towns. It follows that the development of villages is also part of a policy aimed at improving the situation of the working class and strengthening its leading role. This is seldom done in practice. The living and housing conditions of urban workers are being examined and improved—and consequently half the working class are forgotten.

Changes in rural functions

The occupation restratification of the population indicates the substantial expansion of rural functions and the change of their pattern.

The concept of rural functions and the way of their expression are not unequivocal. Some people call only those activities village functions, which can be found *only* in rural areas and which cover a large surface. These include agriculture, forestry, water storage, national parks, etc. These are mostly expressed through the structure of land use.

In my view, *all* functions performed in country areas must be examined. Among these, some such as those enumerated above are *special* village functions. But in examining the transformation of the village, the village servicing, dwelling, transport, and even industrial functions cannot be disregarded. These functions cannot be expressed by the extent of land use. The village is a socio-economic organization, which cannot be expressed by the two dimensions of the surface.

a) The most characteristic economic function of country space is farming. Farming dominates land use also when the agricultural population is already in the minority. Hungarian agriculture is undergoing fundamental changes forced by social, economic, and technological motives.

The altered property relations are the basis of the social changes. Collectivization and its effect on the living and social conditions of the peasantry are familiar facts. What I want to do here is to outline the influence of collectivization on the organization of rural space. Although specialization within producers' cooperatives gathers strength only slowly, due to the shortage of capital and the requirement to employ relatively ample labour, and to the strength of peasant traditions, a territorial concentration of production has been established within cooperatives.

In recent years—between 1968 and 1976—the simplification of the production pattern has gathered speed, while—in the course of the merger of cooperatives—the size of farms has been considerably increased (in 1973 the average area of cooperatives was 2,200 hectares and that of state farms 5,700 hectares). Consequently, all types of agricultural production are on a large scale there. This territorial concentration has considerably modified the relationship between home and job in the village as well as the relations on the job.

Prior to collectivization two types were known:

- in the case of homesteads the job and home locationally coincided;
- in villages, which were in the majority, and had several thousand inhabitants on the Great Plain, peasants went to work on their own land travelling some distance from their homes. The farmyard was also a “workshop,” mainly employing family labour, in animal husbandry, and in certain regions, as orchards and vegetable gardens. Prior to collectivization peasant holdings were small, and consisted of a number of strips, and those going to work spread over a large area.

Agricultural produce as well moved between the place of work and the home. Farming was substantially of the subsistence kind, small quantities of produce being sold on nearby markets, to wholesalers or directly to consumers. After Liberation, the collection network of compulsory deliveries, and then the procurement network of contractual production generally took delivery in the village of domicile. Consequently, the produce moved from the land, or from the farmyard only to the village collection place. The distance reduced compared to the pre-Liberation practice.

In large-scale farming the movement of both labour and products changed. The production is territorially concentrated, and labour needs are therefore also locationally concentrated. All production functions of the common

farm are divorced from homes. The labour requirements of crop-growing have been reduced due to the progress of technology. But gardens, nurseries, stables, machine-repair shops, dairy plants, etc. employ large numbers permanently. These workers go to work in groups, often using public transport vehicles. A peculiar movement has evolved to and fro between homes and jobs of the agricultural population, which—in the villages of the Great Plain—sometimes means travelling as great a distance as commuting to town. The homestead dwellers mostly go individually to their job, the distance covered by them has increased, and the direction of their movements is focussed on one goal. Some people doing agricultural work, mainly technical and professional staff, approximately 150,000, 15 per cent of Hungary's commuters, live in town and commute from there to the villages.

The third focus is the centre of the village, where the population meet. In several villages a double—or multiple—centre has come into being. The traditional institutions forum: the market place, church, and places of entertainment, have lost some of their importance, new institutions have sprung up, such as cultural centres, but besides them the centres of the co-operatives are also there, often on the village fringe or even isolated in the fields. The latter centres of guidance do not only organize work, but the various meetings of cooperative life—the general meeting, group conferences, youth club, etc.—are held there. Movement is thus generally less dispersed, and there are new directions as well.

A considerable amount of produce also flows within the rural area. The large farms equipped for commodity production sell large quantities of goods, part of which they store and deliver to the commercial distribution centres themselves. Much material is moved within the farm: fodder to the animals, fertilizer to the land, agricultural products to the processing plants of the cooperative, etc. All this develops a new internal spatial arrangement on the large farms, which is quite specific and differs from the internal order of any earlier large estate. The optimum spatial arrangement is achieved only after a time, on many farms by trial and error, and less frequently thanks to designed plans. The existing road network—which used to serve the small-holdings—is an important impediment. The construction of a service road network is a costly but indispensable task. The trouble is that the present situation of the road network does not express the rational requirements of spatial arrangement, and the organization of production has to be adjusted artificially to the inherited road network. Due to its poor quality, the most economical road vehicles cannot be used. The rainy autumn of 1974 highlighted the position. Not only machines

sank in the mud, but vehicles as well. I do not believe that the losses so suffered and the high costs of running an out-of-date vehicle park would be dwarfed by the costs of road construction.

Social peculiarities mean that economic changes in Hungarian agriculture are also specific. A number of features have already been mentioned. The basic characteristic is provided by the fact that vertical integration characteristic of modern agriculture occurs within the framework of large socialist farms. These large farms are—at least in part—able to fulfil the role of the integrator.

In developed capitalist countries the role of integrator generally devolves on wholesale chains or huge food corporations in opposition which dwarf individual producers who become unequal partners. Not only sales but the production process as well come under the influence of the integrator, which e.g. supplies improved seed and prescribes the technology, and thus *the range of farming activity* is narrowed down, some traditional agricultural activities—e.g. the improvement of plant and animal species—pass into the scope of activity of the integrator. Consequently, these activities are sited in a geographically more concentrated way and linked to urban that is industrial and commercial activities.

In Hungarian large-scale farming the opposite process takes place. A single large farm produces such quantities that it can itself engage in processing, storage, and sale, or can at least contract as an equal partner with the state wholesale chain or food-processing plant. The large farms have absorbed activities connected with the technical preparation of production, and as machine repairs, or the implementation of their own building projects, sometimes including technical design and applied research. This attracts urban jobs to villages, consequently the “agrobusiness” is sited in greater geographic dispersion. The breadth of the activity of the large farms depends on the system of economic decisions, but generally socialist agriculture attracts activities that were earlier called urban. This is an important factor in the transformation of the village occupational structure.

The technical transformation of agriculture, new species, and production systems occur as functions of the above-mentioned social and economic changes. The interaction is obvious: technical changes too contribute to the appearance of new village occupations, and of the new spatial elements of the village (airstrips, fodder-mixing mills, etc.).

Technical progress has changed the relationship between farming and the geographic environment. Modern agriculture adjusts well to geographic endowments, more easily overcomes unfavourable effects, and more fully exploits favourable endowments. In this way, the influence of the natural

environment is transformed. It does not primarily determine the mere possibility of production or the magnitude of the yields, but rather the necessary inputs and through this the profitability of production. Although this effect occurs indirectly, in the economic sphere, it is no less important than the earlier direct technical-production effect. Natural resources continue to represent an important element and their economic evaluation is indispensable for planned development. Modern farming makes intensive use of the geographic environment and sets into motion an increasing number of destructive processes as well. The rational use of the geographic environment demands the ensuring of the possibility of restoring the imbalances caused in nature. Consequently, modern agriculture realizes within the rural space also the location of systems and functions of environmental protection.

Small farms still play an important role in the shadow of large-scale agriculture. These small farms are also specific elements of Hungarian agriculture. They are almost exclusively of an auxiliary nature (of the 1.7 million small farms on record in 1972 only 24,000 were independent farms), but they have a major role in feeding those who work them, and in the case of certain goods even in commodity production. Eighty per cent of the village population, one half of that of Hungary, disposes of such a small plot (generally around $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ hectare in size). These small farms had an output valued at 38,000 million forints in 1971, i.e. twice as much as the state farms (19,000 million), and an important quantity even compared to that of cooperative farms (53,000 million). According to estimates, 230-240 million working days were spent on small farms in 1972, which produced 30.5 per cent of Hungary's vegetables, 58 per cent of potatoes, 46 per cent of fruit, 40.3 per cent of wine, 32.1 per cent of cattle products, 57.8 per cent of pig products, 47.7 per cent of poultry products. Their output is designed in the first place for consumption in the owner's household but even so they contribute considerably to commodity production (e.g. 44 per cent of eggs, 38 per cent of pigs for slaughter, 32 per cent of potatoes, and 30 per cent of the fruit sold). The household plots of the cooperative members and the farms of the members of the specialized cooperatives account for less than half of these small farms. The household plot (on an area of 0.5-0.7 hectare) is linked organically to common farming, since it makes use of services both in production and sales. Territorially it is only important for grapes or fruit. Numerous animals are kept on household plots. The land area of the household plot is of course insufficient for satisfying the fodder need of the animal stock. In my estimate approximately 40 per cent of the common fodder growing area of the cooperatives serves

household stock. The national economic importance of the household farm consists in making use of the earlier small peasant sties adjoining dwellings and of family labour, including work done in time off by family members working in industry, etc. On the average, one half of the income of the Hungarian peasant families is derived from household plots.

Approximately one million auxiliary farms are in the hands of people not employed on the land and they make up 40 per cent of the total industrial etc. labour force. At the sweat of their brows they produce most of the food consumed in their households, but also sell 30 million dozen eggs, 45,000 tons of poultry, 50,000 tons of vegetables, 130,000 tons of fruit, 450,000 hectolitres of wine, etc. every year.

b) The importance of forestry has, in the past 30 years, grown and become more versatile among village functions. Forests are regularly tended and replanted, they are certainly not primeval. Timber is not the only function, and its relative importance is losing ground. The forests have an important role in the protection of the natural environment, being planted also for the improvement of the environmental conditions (e.g. on quicksands, bare mountainsides). Those close to towns have been transformed into natural parks with picnic grounds, paths, etc. Game has turned into an economic activity.

The forests cover 16.5 per cent (1938: 12.8 per cent) of Hungary's territory and are handled overwhelmingly by state forestries. In Hungarian hilly country forests are the main form of land use, determining the nature of jobs as well. Farming and forestry are traditionally intertwined, and together they provide a living for the peasantry of the area. Modern silviculture is ensured by state ownership. Cooperatives left without forests cannot maintain themselves by farming in unfavourable natural conditions, and therefore need substantial state support.

c) Industry is growing in villages, and so does, therefore, the number of locally employed industrial workers. These are mostly small factories and often were handicraft cooperatives. Rural industry uses 22 per cent of industrial labour. The main sources of the industrialization of the countryside are:

(1) Industrial activities (machine repair, processing of food and timber, etc.) attracted by agricultural integration and technical progress. In order to achieve an economical size, these factories are often of more than local importance.

(2) The modernization of the living conditions in the villages and the increase of purchasing power forcefully expand service industries in the village.

(3) "Decentralized" industry: factories established in the villages by urban industrial enterprises. In recent years the main attraction of industrial location in rural areas (disregarding the huge central investment projects) has been the availability of labour. This was often more easily found in large villages than in the small towns.

Industrial enterprises obtain state support for investments in rural areas, but only in certain designated ones. It is desired to divert industry in this way to settlements defined as industrial in the long-term regional development plan. The majority are large villages which have also modest central functions and may develop into towns. Regional development policy wishes to avoid the exaggerated dispersal of industry, and wishes to establish dynamic industrial estates. This is not always successful, the location of factories and workshops—especially in the textile and clothing industries—is too dispersed. The small factories employing mainly unskilled female labour mitigate the local employment worries, but their future is unclear. It is dependent on the interests of a distant enterprise, mostly located in Budapest, and not on local needs.

From the aspect of regional development, a certain concentration and coordination of industrial location would be more useful. The development of the small industrial centres is sound only if links are established between various industries and new industries can be attracted so that they support each other's growth. This logical viewpoint is not sufficiently stressed when industry is located in villages or even on relatively large farms.

The growth of rural industry has been rapid. Between 1959 and 1974, 130,000 new jobs were created in villages. The growth rate of industry has been at least as fast in villages as in towns. One should add that in the fifteen years mentioned numerous large villages were granted the status of towns, and the number of workers there was deducted from the number of village industrial workers. Industrial activity on the farms does not figure in industrial statistics.

It is well-known that the enterprises often shift to country factories outdated production lines and obsolete, written-off equipment. Such factories have, of course, no future. It would be a mistake to believe—as public opinion in the towns is often inclined to do—that antiquated "sweat-shops" are typical of rural industry. Many modern small and medium factories are located in villages—and Hungarian industry has a great need of them. On the average, rural industry hardly lags behind urban industry. Rural industry employs 21.8 per cent of the industrial labour force of Hungary, with 23 per cent of power used (in kw), 20.4 per cent of fixed assets, 20.6 per cent of equipment value.

Rural industry plays a great role also in the further development of the settlement network, i.e. in helping large villages to achieve the status of towns. Of the 33 towns proclaimed since Liberation, ten owe their existence exclusively to industry, these are the "socialist towns": Dunaújváros, Komló, Kazincbarcika, Leninváros, etc.; in a further 20 villages industry had a decisive role, and only the basis of development was different in three new towns (Balatonfüred, Keszthely, Siófok). There are 49 villages in Hungary which fulfil a more or less important regional organizatory function. One-fifth of rural industry is sited in these. New towns will obviously grow out of these, relying on their considerable industrial function.

The appearance of industry does not modify only the occupational structure and the way of living and of course the morphological picture. It establishes new contacts:

- the flow of industrial products between the village and the distant supply district or market;
- industrial-commercial organizational ties between the centre of the enterprise and its factories;
- territorial connections with the surrounding villages in the supply of labour, and possibly raw materials.

The appearance of industry in the countryside generally spreads in waves from generating centres. In Hungary it has two forms of localization:

—moving out to the neighbourhood of an industrial centre (especially larger city): this usually sooner or later turns the country area into part of the agglomeration. Budapest plays a primary but not exclusive role there;

—location where there is ample labour, which affects mainly the northern part of the Great Plain.

(4) The exploitation of the territorially dispersed mineral wealth is a traditional village activity. Coal-mining was the most widespread, mainly in the North Central Hills, where many small mines operated. Coal-mining showed a similar settlement pattern in North-western Transdanubia, and bauxite-mining did so in the Bakony Hills. In recent decades the number of jobs has been considerably reduced in mining, and the concentration of mines meant also a geographic concentration.

At the same time, the new miner housing estates were mostly built in nearby towns from which the miners commute to work in order to assure supply of a higher standard. The activization of the population of housing estates built near mines that have been exhausted or closed down for reasons of efficiency has required considerable economic efforts.

d) Holiday-making is a relatively new economic function of the country-

side. In Hungary this has become substantial in recent decades only. At present this is strongly concentrated geographically (Budapest, the Balaton region), but even so it covers mainly village areas in the Balaton resort region and the secondary recreation centres (Lake Velence, Mátra Hills). Territorial decentralization is certainly desirable, and there are many—mostly unexploited—opportunities. Hills have considerable powers of attraction, mainly for Hungarians. This could lead to small, dispersed holiday resorts. The usually scant snowfall does not allow for large winter holiday resorts. The exploitation of the therapeutic springs offers great possibilities. The first steps only have been taken. There are valuable therapeutic waters in areas which are still unexplored. Finally, the quiet and silence of hill villages may also be attractive to city-dwellers.

However, the exploration of the possibilities presents many problems. These are partly of a financial nature: the construction of accommodation is expensive, the infrastructure of the majority of the villages is not of a sufficiently high level, consequently subsidiary investment would be needed in water works, sewerage and road construction, which would surpass even the cost of hotel construction. An even more important problem is perhaps the relationship between Hungarian holiday-makers and foreign visitors. With the rising standard of living, travel usually grows, and this is the situation in Hungary too. But the bulk of recreation takes place outside the tourist industry organized by the trade unions or the employer enterprises. Hotel prices adjusted to the international price level are too expensive for Hungarians. Consequently there is a division in organization. True, this is not a Hungarian peculiarity. The situation is similar in Southern Europe, but Hungary has no sea, the tourist season is relatively short, consequently Hungarian holiday-making must provide the foundation on which foreign tourism can be built. At present this is difficult to do.

In the longer run one can in any case count with the spread of village holidays. This may produce an important economic boom, especially for the hill villages which are poorly endowed for farming. But one can only count on tourism becoming a supplementary source of employment and income. Turning depopulated hill villages into resorts is impractical, since recreation is unimaginable without a servicing population and developed infrastructure. If county councils have the financial means available for road building, water supply, etc., they should make use of these before the permanent population leaves the isolated small villages—and in this case they would certainly not become depopulated.

e) Important transport processes occur within the village areas. The level of the transport infrastructure is inadequate. At present only those transport

processes receive attention which lead through the village areas, being transacted between towns; and in the second place those which link certain village areas to particular towns. Movement within the village area is still difficult, although there has undoubtedly been progress and every settlement with a population over 200 has been connected to the long-distance coach network. "Village isolation" has not been overcome sufficiently. This has a detrimental effect on living conditions and induces emigration. There is no doubt that one of the main sources of the backwardness in the villages is the low standard of transport. In this densely populated small country servicing centres of a higher level are only a short distance away, but at present the time distance is far too high in many cases. Since the location of servicing centres has of course an efficiency threshold based on the density of consumers, such services cannot be opened up in every settlement. The worst and most hopeless solutions are tried that is the moving of the inhabitants of the small settlements into the lower-grade centres. This costs many times more than the improvement of transport. In addition, older people have neither the inclination nor the money to move. Those who move do not wish to go to lower-grade centres but to larger towns.

The future of the village

After this outline of the changes that have occurred in the past thirty years I wish to deal briefly with the future trends of the changes, and the future development of the country areas. Opinions of all sorts circulate concerning the future of the village. There are romantic views that idealize the traditional village; these hardly need scientific critique, since they are based on sentiment rather than on reason. The following sounds reasonable and is generally accepted: the growth of the share of the city population is a world-wide phenomenon. The most dynamic elements of socio-economic progress are linked to urban spaces. The developed industrial countries show a high proportion of city-dwellers. The difference between town and country living conditions cannot be abolished if the present settlement network of villages is maintained, since institutions satisfying modern demands cannot be sited where consumer density is low (i.e. small villages). And large villages—where the population of small villages moves to—can be developed into towns, consequently the difference between town and country disappears. The small number of those who are employed in agriculture—by the end of the century 5–6 per cent of Hungary's population—could commute to work from small towns.

This idea has several weak points. These are worth pointing out, because some of them form part of the official ideas concerning regional development too.

First, one has no reason to assume that the Hungarian model of town development must follow that of the "developed industrial countries." Speaking of developed industrial countries one always think of the West European and North American developed capitalist countries. The very high proportion of urban dwellers in those countries produced a number of factors which are lacking and will continue to be absent in Hungary. The most important among these is the animosity between town and the village. The towns are the power centres of capitalism, the centres of the oligarchy of finance, although there are capitalist elements in the villages too. The highly organized bourgeoisie of the towns oppresses and exploits the villages that are dispersed into small economic units. This is the fundamental cause of the backwardness of villages and not simply the disadvantages of economic scale caused by smaller number. The network of towns of the developed capitalist countries have grown big not only fed by their own country regions of attraction. Their area of attraction covered the entire capitalist world economy. The commanding posts of the economies of the developing countries are mostly also in the developed countries, and this world political or world economic organizing function employs no small part of urban dwellers. The largest metropolises of the capitalist world do not even have particularly important industry! The fabulous industrial agglomeration of the Great Lakes of the United States could produce only the third largest city (Chicago). The first two (New York and Los Angeles) are the products of business. But it is not only the town network that is different in the developed capitalist countries—the village network is different too. In Western and Northern Europe, as well as in North America, village group settlements are a rarity. The limits of group settlements proceed in Europe through Central France, the Rhine region and Central Germany. North of this line, due to the early evolution of the private ownership of land, there are only dispersed agricultural settlements. The situation is the same in the main farming areas of the United States—where the land was put under cultivation already in capitalist circumstances. It is obvious that in the midst of dispersed homesteads a settlement of 1,500—2,000 inhabitants already fulfils town functions. This is why the proportion of towns is so high in the developed capitalist countries. In Hungary there is no town with fewer than ten thousand inhabitants, but there are villages with over ten thousand inhabitants. If one applied the criteria of French settlement statistics to Hungary, the proportion of the town population

would be 72 per cent. This too indicates that the proportion of the urban population is an imperfect indicator of economic development. It is often a question of arbitrary statistical decisions. It is obvious that the high number of large villages in Hungary is the consequence of the lateness and distortions of capitalist development—but in the future this may be turned to advantage. In the course of socio-economic progress some functions which used to be town functions—e.g. commercial and repair services, attendance by specialist doctors—may move “lower down” on the steps of the hierarchy of settlements, to the larger villages. But in the U.S.A., for instance, they have nowhere to move, there being no villages. The town functions remain in the towns, exercising a huge attraction effect on the population of the country area. No industry moves into these areas, since there is no labour force available there.

I could go on giving examples. I believe that it is already clear: nothing speaks for the adoption of the town and country development model of developed capitalist countries.

This would, of course, not in itself exclude the possibility of similar development due to other factors. It is obvious that the most dynamic elements of a developed socialist society are indeed tied to towns. The towns will continue to grow in the future too, and the village population may somewhat diminish. But this paper as well has tried to show how many dynamic functions are linked to village areas—large-scale agriculture, village industry, tourism, etc.—which are capable of development in the longer run too. Agriculture, for instance, which can exploit excellent natural endowments and is able to produce a considerable surplus, will obviously be more important in twenty years in Hungary than it is today in Belgium or in Britain.

As far as the disappearance of the difference between town and country is concerned, this applies to the social structure and the living conditions. From the angle of the geographer, the basis for the difference between the village and the town is functional; they play a different role in the geographic division of labour. And this difference will continue. Some central functions have settled in certain settlements, which supply the population of others too. These are the towns—and the settlements making use of the special services are the villages. In the villages only everyday requirements and basic supplies are ensured. This much is the difference. Backwardness, a poor infrastructure, low educational standards are not criteria of village life but only remnants of the past, which are slowly disappearing.

But can the basic supplies corresponding to the requirements of the times be ensured in every village? Including small villages of 300–400 inhabitants?

And does this basic supply satisfy the village population? Will they not endeavour to move to towns looking for supplies of a higher level?

The basic supply cannot be ensured in every village, and it is to be assumed that some small settlements will become depopulated. But the overwhelming majority of small villages are situated very close to larger settlements from which their supply can be assured. In this densely populated small country there is hardly any settlement not close enough—30-40-50 kilometres—to a town offering many kinds of services. In the regional development programme endeavouring at bringing living conditions close together, one should plan not only for services that can be provided locally but also for those which can be made available within, say, thirty minutes travel. And, of course, also that within thirty minutes it should also be possible to cover 30-40 kilometres.

The development of the transport network is of huge importance from the aspect of a healthy ratio between village and town, and from the aspect of regional-economic proportions in general. The Ministry of Transport primarily develops main roads and railway lines, which seems logical enough in consideration of the constraints of the Ministry. This makes the present lines of regional development rigid, it forces the economic development of the future onto these main lines, and in the last resort does not serve ideas of regional development. If the majority of the villages continue with the present bad transport conditions, their depopulation can hardly be stopped. The distortion of the balance between town and village may distort the development of the towns too. If the country area withers away, there is no healthy background for the development of the towns.

Since 1959 Hungary has achieved notable results in regional economic development. One of the conditions of this success has been a strengthening of the network of country towns and the formulation of a draft of urban development. Now one must deal seriously with the future of country areas and the formulation of a long-term relationship between town and country. This should not be put off; a delay may cause later losses.

SWIMMING IN THE IOWA RIVER

by

VILMOS CSAPLÁR

The Iowa is slow. It won't float me downstream, I have to swim, but I can easily make it upstream even in the middle of the river. There are leaves on the surface. The flora is much the same as in Central Europe, only wilder, with harder skins. Here the yellow leaves are more yellow, the rusty brown are reddish like our overcoloured films, and the sky is a heavy dark. As I was walking down to the river, I saw a familiar beetle, making its way on the gravel, hurrying with its seemingly numberless legs. I never asked its name, and the only thing I know about it is that I used to stamp on them when I was a child, as I did again. Then I lifted my foot. It waited for a few seconds, then ran on its way.

I had to stamp on it three times till at last it cracked and died. Back at home it was enough to step on such bugs just once. Here I had to do it three times over and this fact was somehow related to the harder skins, the overyellow, the rusty brown, and the dark blue colours. I started to swim, fast strokes, wildly kicking the water, until I felt numb and cold. Then I turned on my back. I noticed my hotel, the *Mayflower*. That was the name of the ship that brought the Puritans from England to New England in 1620 where they founded New Plymouth, working with the devotion and fanaticism of men and women driven from home for their convictions. I turned on my belly again, I had enough, and made for the shore. I don't like the way I keep thinking about history all the time. I dawdle about beetles in the land of Western heroes. I didn't expect myself to do just that.

"Is your country full of savage people like you?"—an American asked me when I produced my own knife at a dinner, instead of the cutlery provided, flicking it open.

Vilmos Csaplár was a member of the International Writing Program of the University of Iowa in 1975/6. — The Editor.

Did it all start at that dinner? I am not sure. Anyway, wherever I was invited later, I always took my flick-knife. At a certain moment, when conversation stopped for some reason, and people reached for their knives and forks, there was nothing but the clicking of a knife in the silence. But I had carried and used it earlier as well. What has changed? I like swimming in cold water, where other people do not dare to take a dip. I soon had enough of the small swimming pool at the hotel, with its lukewarm and chlorinated stuff. It was with a feeling of latent disgust that I let my body go into it, not at all the objective of swimming. Soon I sized up the Iowa river, and there I was swimming in the water of the Indians. When my American friends learned that I did so regularly, they were astonished. They kept telling me it was dangerous even in summer, let alone when it was colder. The calendar showed the second half of October. A couple of years before hidden rocks had slit open someone, a foreigner as well. I had no intention to give up the river, naturally. I swam like a savage, kicking the icecold water.

Cars made the greatest impact on me. It is a long story. When I was a kid, an Opel, thirties vintage, stood in a friend's shed in our street, taken to bits, ready for the good times. In those days no private persons except perhaps doctors could keep cars in Hungary. Our gang who used the open lot opposite the house, a future generation of car owners, often sat in the chassis of the Opel, day-dreaming in the dark, of unknown racing down the street, and the bodies of women. We also wrote to car factories, to get "real life-size" cars, at least as photographs on sales material.

Then the situation gradually changed. Hungary also started to fill with the smell of petrol, and the screeching of brakes. There was no need to ask for photographs to see real cars, one just had to walk to the parking lot of Gellért Hotel. Later I had my own driving licence. But I never had the money to buy a car. As ever larger numbers got over the first acute excitement of being car owners, I somehow managed to retain a childish, romantic relationship with automobiles. That bubble broke when it turned out after my arrival that my scholarship could pay for a second-hand car. "I'll buy a car," burst from the first flow of impressions, and the confusion of idleness. I bought some papers, and I went through the ads daily, then systematically called on the car dealers. I tried huge Chevrolet Impalas which only a few years before flashed on the roads with high-ranking state officials, Buicks, Fords, Toyotas, Datsuns, Volkswagens. I also drove various American makes, practically unknown in Europe. Slowly I began to feel sorry that the day would come when this temporary trying out of cars would end, not allowing me any more to try out the differing cars on the

market. A fastback Ford Mustang offered for sale by a young married couple proved to my taste, so much so that I hardly felt like getting out of the car at the end of the trial run.

In a short time the Mustang roared through different parts of the town. I raced the 8-cylinder, 6,000 c.c. car any place I could. Most times starting, it either bucked or the engine cut out. "Another crazy student"—local residents may have thought, as they looked out of their quietly purring cars, and heard the thundering engine, the screeching of brakes, and saw me turn into a side-street. I use a flick-knife eating, swim in the river in late October, and race my car all over Iowa City without any special goal, or speed along on the nearby superhighway, and move around the rooms at social get-togethers. Is something wrong with me? Sometimes I go to great lengths to explain things, open up my mind, apparently it is very important to me to see what I explain, then I go into details, and even let my feelings show. I am trying to look into the eyes of those I speak to, but they've passed on, and smile at others behind me. Sometimes my answers are too short, my gestures stiff, rejecting, almost hurting. I feel the response shows an accusation of ignoring the fundamental rules of social behaviour, and I am aware that I should defend myself somehow. Anyway things are going their usual way. I would want the opposite to happen, and instead I turn them all the more against me with my lack of attention, rude manners, and mistakes, for which I despise myself to a certain extent, until I turn abruptly around to show: That is me! That is what I think of you! Subarticulate signs, made more cunning by drink, tell me I am a stranger, an inferior thing in their eyes. But they are tolerant. They smile, that American smile, concealing everything, that foreigners can so soon learn. That's when I leave.

If I return after a while, I flick my knife open, to answer a girl-friend's questions, stick it into a steak, take some vegetables and bread, and start eating.

I am unable to catch the mood of the overcrowded beer-cellars and restaurants full of students. I drop in and then I leave. Where am I hurrying to? Or is it that I just get bored? If so, why do I keep coming back? Just to move on in a hurry? All my sentences are categorical, and definitive. What makes a Hungarian so cocky?—the eyes of those I'm talking to suggest. At other times it is just the contrary: my opinion is like a shroud of doubt. It is all too complicated. They merely wanted to have a talk. They pour wine into their glasses, and pet their girls. Now I reject, and dissect the philosophic common places of the Western average man. I talk too much history, or even biology. Something about some "process". They

don't understand. Suddenly I turn silent: the knife is flicked open, or I stand up and leave them.

These people with their habits, codes of manners, girls and wives, looking out of a bastion of well-defended and honourable thoughts, giving me the once-over with their disinterested generosity will long have pardoned all my foibles: they will tame me into an anecdote (. . . And then that Hungarian with the flick-knife, driving his Ford Mustang, began to explore America. . .), paint me up into a legend, downgrade me to a consumer article and I am still unable to explain whatever happened to me, what goes on inside me. Yes, what is happening?

I would like to be here just like that without complications but I just can't. The US is not one of those countries which you just decide to visit. If a man goes to the great, legendary and successful United States, from a land such as the one I have come from, a country that has dragged onwards through the centuries with failure after failure, then he does not step on unknown soil. Even the very first time, it seems different: as if he did not see the houses, the streets and people never before seen, for the first time. All those books, films, picture postcards mean a *déjà-vu* arrival. One seems to remember a former stay, I have felt at the start, when I caught sight, from the plane, of the skyscrapers of Manhattan towering over the ocean mist. My thoughts and my wishes had already been here: how much I have had to think about this country if I wanted to understand my own, Europe, and how long I have wished to come here. The streets of New York arise from novels. The red, blue, brown colours of the West, the way I saw them when the riders appeared on the screen of a small movie theatre in Budapest. Hollywood, Los Angeles. Nothing is sure as I pronounce the names, and yet I see all kinds of things, as if I remembered them. San Francisco I remember from a long poem, and an American girl (she came from that city) with whom I once spent two days in Budapest, and whose address, jotted down on a slip of paper, and kept for some time, I lost a long time ago. The Country of Racing Cars from a prospectus that I had received as a child. And now I am here. Will I be able to relive this America.

Every day that passes is a lost illusion. My passport gives me 130 days. I don't know yet if I will ever return to America. At the same time I hate myself for this romantic yearning for imaginary adventures. And yet I feel the need in me to turn the America of my imagination into a living reality somehow. The reason for our desire to go places is that we have never been elsewhere. Our desperateness that we fail to live our own lives, comes from the fact that our illusions remain hurting, choking illusions, without us being able to solve them. If a man cannot satisfy his natural needs, they

grow big, and if later some of those needs are somehow satisfied, what a joy it causes to have something better than the worst, nothing will ever be enough. We are born to have everything and go everywhere, and the one life we lead, can only be too little. The question is what is the minimum that can make us relatively happy in a lifetime? What is America to me? Is it really America when I say "America," or is it me?

The headlights of an approaching truck flash on the windscreen of my car. I am mad at the driver for failing to dip his lights. On an impulse I also turn mine up. We rush by each other, but my anger will not fade in a matter of minutes, anything that catches my eyes becomes the object of fury: the billboards in the corn patches that my headlights flood (what do they advertise? motels? drinks? restaurants? cigarettes?), the motels and restaurants with their red, yellow, blue, white spots and strips of light, their blinking letters, their loftily circulating light frames in the yellow light of the towering lamp-posts at the exits of the superhighways, the incessant flow of cars, trucks, and the road before me that is leading somewhere, anywhere for all I care. The night becomes an unending source of fury. I probe the darkness with my lights. I remember women. But it is in vain that I hold tight a laughing, tossing, screaming American girl. It is no use that a Chinese girl sinks her nails into my flesh, softly breathing, in vain do I smell their bodies, and irradiate in the spicy haze of my brain, proclaiming in a strange tongue at the moment of a mutually laboured joy that I have come. I step on the gas pedal. 70 miles, 80 miles, 90, 100. I have overstepped the speed limit by far, but I don't care about the police who are right behind me, flashing their lights, wailing their sirens, chasing me on the screen of my fear ready to break into panic, somewhere along the nape of my neck. Why did I come here? I want to feel it. What is that? I wind down the window, and the wind blows on my cheek. The engine thunders and rattles, with the petrol swishing underneath. Why is the night so empty?

Am I entitled to possess this America, a reality mixed with my fantasies, when it hardly follows from my earlier life that I should come here? For a young man whose childhood and adolescent personality was formed in a room and kitchen of a cottage in Újpest, on the Budapest fringe, who lodged in what had been the servant's room in Budapest flats, and lived in a fantasy world, it takes a lot of energy to feel the great and swift change to realize that I am really here. Did I come too late? Am I unable to do what I had thought I would, and should I draw the necessary consequences in the future? But what should I really do for the truth to come out? One day is just like the other here as well, and while I don't believe that

I am where I am, I have already got used to my daily activities, my new friends, my car. And nothing ever happens.

I wonder what I felt at nights when I rode the tram home, and under my closed eyes I thought of what lent form to the good, incorporeal truth of my imagination. That something that counterbalanced the Saturday nights, the 10 forints pocket money, the stony, slippery factory cultural centres and dining halls where I used to dance to the music of Hungarian groups imitating the English and Americans, to the girls with some of whom I fell in love. I knew it was only a submissive immersion into the present, a consolation that nothing would last.

Why can't I feel it now? And if I no longer feel it because that imagination has broken down, and its pieces have been incorporated into that something that has become my personality and fate, why do I want to feel it? Why do I want to relieve that which has passed once and for all, and if it has passed, why is it still inside me? Why do I want to enjoy something which can no longer be enjoyed, however hard I let myself go? Why do I keep insisting on having it back, if I realize its futility? Do I think that if I succeeded in satisfying my then demands, then I could eliminate the consequences of my then hurts, and fruitless longing? I, who sense the things of the world in the past from the creeping insects to human history and on to the phenomena of cosmic space as a process carrying with it all that is in its path, a process, although alternative at every moment, keeps moving from one spot to another unstopably, and with all things in close correlation with one another, nobody and no one having an equal chance at two different points of time, should rebel against such a process?

WHERE DOES THE POET COME FROM?

by

OTTÓ ORBÁN

“**Y**ou are so Anglo-Saxon,” said the tall, Swedish blonde. She was young and bright, her longish hair shimmering in the Finnish midsummer sunshine. She was a reader of a Stockholm publishing house hunting for East European authors in the mob at the Lahti Writers’ Reunion. She was obviously proud to find a Westerner among the writers of the East.

Mr. Otto East-West faintly smiled. He was doubtful about his Anglo-Saxon attitudes. He was even doubtful about his Eastern attitudes. He was even uncertain whether his attitudes, if he had attitudes at all, could be connected with any of the four cardinal points. Being a damned realist he was after a certain story, a sort of mystery that started to happen to him in the least Anglo-Saxon place of the world: a dark, noisy and stinking cell under a heavily bombed Budapest apartment house.

There were, however, Anglo-Saxons in his story. During the shorter and shorter intermissions between two air-raids he usually sat on the yellow pavement of the ground floor and anxiously listened to the heavy silence falling like rain from the sky-high battlefield. Up there just a few minutes before the Anglo-Saxons were circling with their eagle-like, silver bombers; every time they came the sky was going to blow up because of the thunderstorm of barking machine-guns and roaring engines. Not to mention the London Symphony Orchestra of falling bombs. “EEEYOUUU,” they started to whistle somewhere in the high regions, and then came the down-the-earth contrabass of thundering explosions.

It was the fourth week of the siege and he was used to all these sort of things. His natural instincts more than his mind figured out the obvious explanation. It was just the normal war-routine, the only possible way in

Text of a talk given to members of the International Writing Program, University of Iowa, in November 1976.

an impossible life. He was already a well-trained survivor. He tasted roasted horse; its meat, too sweet, could however be eaten. He heard the crazy shouting and screaming in the dark cell after the Chain Bridge was blown up. The Chain Bridge was—when it existed—just two blocks away. It was detonated by the retreating Germans. Explosion, the unearthly mixer started to shake the old apartment-house as if it had wanted to invent a new kind of cocktail, Blood on the Rocks. Nonetheless it failed, nothing out of the ordinary had happened. Just candles fell down, and people, mostly women, shouted and screamed. Him not at all. He was too tired to be upset. Really, in his own rather exceptional way he was not only Anglo-Saxon, he was also Danish. He wanted to die, to sleep, the same thing Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, did centuries ago. He was an old, old man. He was nine.

Not that one could say the war didn't have its own humour. It was rather cruel, but it was humour anyway. Perhaps that was what saved him from falling into the deepest depression. In spite of being an old man at nine he—or somebody else, a different person hiding in him—desperately wanted to live. He was stunned but listening. Listening all the time to what was going on—it was the mood of the would-be poet, an unconscious way of survival.

And nobody could say he didn't have material enough for a lifetime. On the third floor was living an upper middle class woman, a sort of a lady, a lawyer's wife. She was accustomed to having her daily bath which was a rather luxurious demand considering the circumstances of war. To mention just one of the numerous difficulties, there was no water on the third floor at all. She was, however, stubborn and rigid in her customs, and conceived of a rather risky bath operation. She took a big pot and went downstairs. On the ground floor there was a water tap, and sometimes water came out. This time she was lucky. At a painfully slow pace she filled her pot with water. She was in a hurry to get to the third. Somehow she made a fire in her kitchen and waited for the water to get warm. Finally she poured it out into her bathtub. That was the moment when one of our daily air-raids began. The sirens started wailing crazily and she escaped to the cell.

By that day our apartment-house had already been hit by two bombs. Magically, both of them failed to explode. In our apartment-house there were two courtyards. One, the bigger of them, on the front side, the other in the back. It was ordered that both be kept filled with piles of sand in case of fire. The bombers both times took off from Alice-in-Wonderland Airbase, and the fairy-tale bombs hit only the piles. First they were whistling and then came an unexpected silence. It was a famous story. All the neighbouring buildings were in flames or in ruins; we escaped unhurt.

Obviously and simply we were lucky. And lucky again on the day of the Lady's Bath. The sirens were already wailing the off-sign; it was the shortest raid in four months.

The lawyer's wife ran upstairs; she strongly hoped the water would be warm enough to take a bath. She threw open the bathroom door and found the third bomb in the bathroom comfortably situated in the more or less warm water. For a life-long second she simply could not move, then she panicked, and ran out of her apartment to the open corridor of the bigger courtyard.

"O Jesus, a bomb is *sitting* in my bathtub!" she screamed, and fainted.

Perhaps that was the moment when I became a man of letters, if not more correct to say "a man of words," because this impossible word, the erratic usage, was what I never could forget after that. A bomb *sitting* in a bathtub. It was not the lawyer's wife who had said something wrong. It was human language that went bankrupt after not finding a correct expression for a totally inhuman situation. Language is simply not made for that. There is not a word for a bomb in a bathtub. There are not words for wars. Of course there are. Studied and pious ones without any reference to the hidden and destroying essence that was in that very case a bomb in a bathtub. An iron symbol embodying the frightening fact of basic uncertainty in human values and moral standards, since almost everyone of them proved to be too fragile. Even the most ordinary people easily changed from one day to another into either monsters or victims, often both at the same time, among the extraordinary circumstances in the fiery wartime hell. The explosive Christmas gift—it was late December—failed to explode. It didn't fail, however, in putting the most uncomfortable question to me. That was—and always is—the question of the human condition in this humanized-to-inhuman world. As a survivor I inherited two things, memory of a dead father beaten to death with rifle-butts near the western Hungarian border, and an urgent pressure to answer the question that had been put to me by the wash-it-yourself bomb in a middle-class woman's bathtub. Trying to figure out what to answer I had become interested in everyday life. Then I had become interested in contradictory philosophies. All in all I had become interested in history.

Almost ten years later I came across T. S. Eliot's poem, "The Waste Land." Reading through the second and third sections, entitled "A game of chess" and "The fire sermon", I was simply shocked. I felt as if I had read them before. Everything was so familiar. It was like our life in the cell, the same mixture of banalities and pathos with one minor exception—that the characters were not identical. Nevertheless their style was the same.

Ahenobarbus, a character in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, appears surprisingly on the earthly stage of Eliot's poem to recite a crazily high-spirited love-monologue that seems absurd when juxtaposed with the copulating clerks; two days before my father had started to march on a long route for a concentration camp (which he never reached because he was killed before), we got a desperately pathetic postcard from him. "Sure," he wrote, "God is good and will take care." He mentioned several times "our lovely little son": it was me. On the same postcard, however, he wrote that he was concerned about some pieces of textile and asked my mother if she could look after them. Previously he had been a high-ranking employee in a textile factory. Business and religion, commonplace instead of business and you are coming to the studied and elegant world of Mr. T. S. Eliot. That was what I did. And doing so I was caught by an invisible trap. Sooner than later I had become interested in learning the most different kinds of poetic methods. I was going to become a translator. And becoming a translator I obviously had to have as many differing personalities as national identities. Phony ones of course, just to smuggle some foreign poetry into Hungary. From time to time I changed to an Anglo-Saxon, a Spaniard, a Russian, a Czech, an Icelander, sometimes even a Chinese. However, among my several national identities the Anglo-Saxon was dominant.

There is a press clipping on my desk. A letter to the editor was published on January 14, 1976, in Paris by the *International Herald Tribune* under the title "Laurels to Swift."

Dear Sir,

A couple of weeks ago, while I was writing an introduction to an English-language anthology of modern Hungarian poetry to be brought out next fall by Columbia University Press, I came across Waverley Root's piece on the laurel. It contained a quotation—allegedly by Swinburne—which came very handy in my essay: "Say Britain could you ever boast | Three poets in an age at most? | Our chilling climate hardly bears | A sprig of bays in fifty years"—which I used to point out that in our historically and geopolitically much chillier climate we have always had an abundant and continuous crop of poetic laurels, at the expense of other genres—whereas Britain could also boast of the novel and the drama, to say the least. Introduction finished, I showed it to a friend, Ottó Orbán, not only a brilliant poet but, as most of our best poets in the last four hundred years or so, also a prolific and excellent translator. "Wait a minute. Nonsense: that's not by Swinburne," he exclaimed when he reached the quotation. He got out his own volume of selected translations and showed me the quotation—in his own Hungarian. It was in "On Poetry—A Rhapsody," by Jonathan Swift. — Signed: Miklós Vajda.

Nice guy, nice story. The Case of the Brilliant Poet and the Alleged Quotation.

Really it wasn't so nice. It was a long, long day. It was cold, the wind blowing heavily, and the Army wanted to see me. Just to see how nice a guy I was. Spending a whole day in the open air is fascinating for impressionists; I wasn't one of them. Back at home I felt like frozen chicken in a huge refrigerator. By the way, I had a strong headache. I took a bath, drank half a bottle of vodka, and got slightly drunk. It was 9 p.m., time to sleep for all brilliant drunkards who had not arranged an appointment for nine-thirty. Unfortunately I had. The matter was urgent, one of my friends needed some philological help or whatever to complete his English language anthology of Hungarian poets. He needed to post the proofs for America on the next day; our meeting couldn't be postponed. Screw all the poets, I thought. Screw all the proofs, footnotes and publishers. That was the moment when the doorbell started to ring.

After working at least an hour I became tired of dates of birth and volume titles and decided to read his introduction. On the very first page I reached the quotation. Something had moved in me, a sort of beast of prey. It was the same old monster I felt living in my body the first time when the lawyer's wife found the fabulous bomb in her bathtub. Just to listen, that was the beast's ethic. And in fact it was listening even beside my dying mother's bed. There was nothing to be done, its nature was the old wartime blend of human and inhuman, identical with my character, formed by those months in the cell. Even drunk I was a professional criminal, a poet. "Wait a minute," I moaned faintly. "Nonsense: that's not by Swinburne."

Soon after, the answer came. The *International Herald Tribune* published Mr. Waverley Root's reply; he was apologizing. Justice was done to everybody: Jonathan Swift was given back his laurels; Swinburne was free again to deal with ancient Greek metres recited by the ebbing sea; and as for laurels I succeeded in getting my own too. Only one person involved in the case wasn't named. It was, of course, the lawyer's wife; even I forgot what her name was. After those unhappy months she disappeared; I never met her again. During the war she was about forty. Perhaps she is not alive anymore. One can easily imagine her as taking her bath in the infinite black bathtub and switching the faucets of uncertain stars.

Now we have the moral. It's not Anglo-Saxon at all. It's not even Hungarian or, in a more general sense, East European. It is the moral of suffering mankind facing an unrecognizable yet desirable future. It is just human, if such a shaking moral can be called human at all.

OTTÓ ORBÁN

CANTO

I had wanted for years to translate Pound
not that I felt close to him far from it
I was intrigued by the puzzle of personality
Wit and Violence
which is the position of the intellectual in this century
where the classical serum has proved ineffective against the viruses
of damnation
and of course the poetic balloon could have done well for a weight
with the hidden medium of this spiritual conjuration: America
its scandalous vistas strain the eye enough to call up the infinite
the mirror on which tact can't smear to a blur
the depressing ghost story of reality
as it does in the elastic memory of countries inured to defeat
THE POET IN THE CAGE is a parable and test
even allowing for the bankers' revenge
We must decide which way our sympathies should go
to the wild beast locked in the cage who teaches art to the
black N.C.O.
or to the N.C.O. who speaks the "ain't no nothing" language
but carves a table for the shivering old man
Clearly all this is the basis of a new poetics
unity of place and time in the age-long emergency
the what-how-and-when and chiefly the what-never-at-any-cost
clashing in occasional dialectics
for what does it matter if one is not wicked oneself
but smells the stench of carcasses as though it were the fragrance
of violets

My disappointment in the text then grew deeper and deeper
 nowhere the key a reference an explanation
 unless the swooning snobbery of the nouveau riche is taken for that

The verse overflowed with Florence the chronicles and Messrs
 So-and-So

and any number of Chinese sages

Tradition as art relic leaves me cold
 in the outskirts where as a boy I was often beaten
 there were the Celts the Huns the Romans of old
 and each has left something behind

mostly a village burnt to the ground
 Reared where I was and at forty
 one peels roughly the apple called poetry
 and is curious about the hidden kernel
 beneath the ornaments the phrasing the intonation
 and what is he to do if all the lesson of a bloody story is this
 that Forgiveness Is With The Gods and Let's Love Each Other
 Folks

Sure I'd say with all my heart

but what about the troublesome details
 O liberty who are often yourself a prison guard
 and perpetrate nasty acts and are not always the loyal lover

of beauty

but even when speaking in black skin and with the faulty grammar of strong
 dialect

are the only possible hero of every poem worth the name
 in the cage of the world where wrapped in the cloak of flesh shivers
 the imagination

whose exploding nucleus is always the workaday
 I have survived a siege what else could I believe in Under
 the barbed wire of years a tin can and a jack-knife are poetry itself

Translated by László T. András and William Jay Smith

THE FLAG

MISCHIEVOUS TEXT

by

PÉTER ESTERHÁZY

It is easiest to see through the matter, straight, in all its undistorted refinement, from the flags' point of view. Let us therefore examine it from that perspective.

I do have in me the proper combination of compassion and reserve, because (for example) though I do occasionally ruminate over which flag-stand shows me off to my best advantage (assuming I am facing the street, otherwise the matter is more complex), and I might discover that the stand on the left (or the right, I've forgotten) is more comfortable for me as an object, since it is somewhat wider, that is, better scooped out, so that when I lower myself into it, I don't scrape the metal edge, and the rust does not drizzle downward like heavy rain, still, for all that (on the other hand) I do not overrate my ratiocinations: my handle is dry wood, so what if it's a bit too tight—anyway, I am qualified to speak.

Let's start from a corner: for if there is no holiday—and it happens that there is no holiday—they put me in a corner, or more accurately into the inaccurate fit of a closet and a wall, where I am furled into my self-same self, a state which makes my flaghood rather dubious: so, I exist intermittently, but I suspect that is true of all of us whether we admit it or not. My formal logical capabilities are considerable, thus on the day when they took me from my corner—and there was no holiday—I knew what the story was, I did not panic, but continued to fade and gather dust most dependably in those few so-called uncertain moments.

Outside it was raining. Or the sun was shining. In any case, there was weather. Mistress Elizabeth, the concierge, knocked and asked for the flag. I don't (much) understand women, I can only repeat what my owner (loose usage, I'm state property) occasionally comes out with:

—What weirdos!

My owner handed me over with an ostentatious gesture, as if to show I was some sort of symbol, for my owner's wife blushed; Mistress Elizabeth

righteously grabbed my handle, and I could probably have discerned her pert and provocative glance at my master, and how their gazes became insipidly entangled—but I was more concerned with myself: a rough, but pleasantly warm womanly hand held me round, and I could tell she was not indifferent toward me, for I felt her muscles twitch with excitement from time to time, if I were partial I would say she trembled, and my splinters snuggled close to me contentedly (whereby they were no longer splinters). I was being taken to be washed. Here I will insert a break with a devilish din, somewhat incidentally, but still altogether purposively, so that thereafter we may proceed to the matter at hand with all deliberate speed. My past is clean: my spine has only been handled by clean hands, my handle still leaves a mark I altogether attribute to a low-quality wood-stain. I'm prattling, let's proceed.

Perhaps it was all that detergent (harmful to my colour, incidentally) or perhaps the relentless spinning of the washer that made me so woozy I only came to during the manoeuvre whereby they fussed me into the flagstand, where I at once bent forward, over the street, proudly, protectively, doing what comes naturally. The torment which accompanied my nestling in signalled that Mistress Elizabeth had switched me in the wash, and now I was fluttering away (proudly, etc.) on the left side of the shared balcony. To the right, where I noted my companion's stand rusting emptily, I could hear my ex-owners' voice.

—Come hell or high water, I will still enter in the standard hen category.

—Alright, alright, don't get excited. You're the best pigeon-breeder in the district. Eight across. Was it Goethe, German jack of all trades, died in 1832?

—Die, he did. Poor Goethe*—whines my master, the pigeon-breeder in response, as he rushes onto the balcony in great agitation. (Here I can see that he's agitated.) I flutter at him suggestively. From that his head grows red: we look good together.

—Hey, mother. This is a mafia. Those nuts there in the union want to do me in. They don't let me enter in standard hen, and now they even took the red flag from me.

—They did not. That goose switched it. Anyway, what does it matter?

—So what do you know about politics? Obviously, the neighbour is their man.

And so began something I would rather not recount in great detail. (It may be that there is simply no wind, but more likely it's sorrow that's making me hang limp.)

My ex-master storms over to my current master and makes a racket about

* May he rest in peace! (Kind communication of Dr. Csaba G. Czákó)

why my present master steals, and I sympathize when my new master protests this, but his tone of voice and that dry joy lurking between his words suggest there is an old feud being renewed, one that began somewhere (and we could find words aplenty for this too) with the illicit exchange of a doormat—my master does not yet bring up the doormat, he argues that if people come from the right they should see me first, to which my present master responds quite reasonably that people come from the left too, what's more the people that come from the left are probably the same as those who come from the right since our street is a dead-end street, and he begins to haw-haw, whereupon my old master loses his head and immediately calls his neighbour a fascist, all the more reason why he shouldn't have a red flag, why? the other is OK? retorts my present master promptly in the moment's pause for breath, and what is more, continues my old master, he even switched the doormat.

It may be found odd that I'm so sensitive, but let us consider the fact that a flag is not simply coloured cloth. Why mince matters, I am intelligent (this by no means fills me with pride, I had plenty of time to become that), and so, first-rate stupidity irritates me in the first degree, then makes me listless. (If I were a dame, oldish, I could say: I become nervous and depressed.)

The two wives slink out onto the (shared) rickety balcony to size each other up, but—as their glances slide over my handle in some embarrassment, making me feel I am not superfluous—they decide that this is the men's affair, and for all that they can still. . . They lean against the railing, the relevant portions of their stomachs perfectly filling the hollows of the wrought-iron scrolls, this, for some odd reason is not disgusting, but very dear. From the window below Mistress Elizabeth's cumbersome bun leans out.

—Look, she's expecting someone.

—Pierrot.

—Pierrot, the wild boar?—And they both laugh aloud. Now, this is disgusting. (And such intimations! Perhaps the author is in on the game?)

I regret I spoke so little of the matter itself, and then only in such desperate mumble-jumble. Perhaps it is understandable, why. Still, I may not get another opportunity, for, judging from my old master's faltering voice, he may soon have a stroke, and then there will be a black flag in my place anyway.

But no matter: for now, the wind's still flourishing my silky cheeks.

Translated by Etelka Láczy

STEINBECK AND ZELK

by

FERENC KARINTHY

I don't remember the date, let the scholars hunt for it, they must also make a living. I remember only that Steinbeck was coming from Moscow and that it happened before his much-discussed trip to Vietnam and connected statements, and only a few years before his death. A reception was given in his honour and a meeting with his Hungarian colleagues was arranged in the premises of the Writers' Union.

As usual the informal conversation somehow could not get going, the guest looked sleepy, perhaps he had too much to drink, he sat in his place of honour with eyes drooping during the long-winded welcoming addresses and presentations in Hungarian and English. He must have been past sixty: a great big man with a limp and a trimmed beard, gruffly chewing his pipe. He looked like a sailor on dry land on his day off. An ancient lighter was on a string round his neck, so he would not lose it, his pipe needing constant relighting. Two Hungarian PEN officials were on right and left, like the two thieves, farther off, behind the table sat his wife, a likeable unassuming American woman about his age dressed with conservative elegance.

With the welcoming addresses over the time had come for the informal talk. At the sudden silence Steinbeck woke up with a start and looked around him somewhat bewildered, he probably had no idea where he was out that moment. This was perfectly understandable, we had heard that the recent Nobel Prize laureate had travelled all over the place in recent months and he was a long way from home right then too. He mumbled something in his beard, even those who knew English well found it difficult to understand him, something about being glad to be here and that he would answer anybody's question about anything. His only request was to leave *The Grapes of Wrath* well alone, that was a long time ago and he had written much since. Then he stoked his pipe and sank back into slumber.

After awkward minutes of encouragement and prompting the first question, probably prepared long in advance, was finally put: what were the experiences on which *The Grapes of Wrath* was based? The second and third interlocutor probed the same direction. László Kéry, the General Secretary of Hungarian PEN then repeated Steinbeck's wish: the meeting went to sleep. A youngish aesthete, eliminating the interpreter, addressed Steinbeck in English. He tried to be witty, he told jokes, but the great writer either did not fancy Budapest humour, or else the language in which our young friend told his jokes and that in which Steinbeck dreamt, did not coincide, the points he made did not elicit as much as the batting of an eyelid.

Unfortunately my recollection of subsequent events are dim. Steinbeck must have woken up later, and, with one movement of his huge paw, he swept off all idle questions and began to tell a tale of recent travels, mumbling and swallowing half his words. He told us that at one of his visits he had made friends with some poets who had taken him on a trip to the woods. They rode in six or eight cars, roasted an ox, ate and drank, there was a barbecue and singing in the best of spirits when it suddenly occurred to Steinbeck: where are the drivers? Awkward silence. But where in hell could they be, they brought the whole company, why are they not with us? His companions tried to explain that the drivers would hardly want to be with them, they would not feel at their ease in their company, they were having lunch somewhere else. Well, said Steinbeck, he certainly would not like to be a Negro in America but if the Black drivers were excluded like this they would smash the whole picnic. . .

This was approximately when Zelk came in. He was late, worn out, stricken with grief, deeply bent under the weight of the burden of his life; his tragic face was even more lined than usual. He must have had a black day on the race-course. His marching-in was so grave and dramatic that for one moment everybody was struck dumb, including the guest of honour. He stared aghast at our friend and turned to his neighbour, Iván Boldizsár, the President of PEN, with a questioning look. Boldizsár answered in a whisper. For a long time Steinbeck was unable to take his eyes off Zelk, then he suddenly lost interest again, he must have reached the end of his powers. He mumbled that he did not want to go on speaking, would the dear Hungarian writers please tell him how they were, what they are working on, what's new in Budapest.

I don't know whether he meant it seriously. From the depths of the hall a voice said that Pál Szabó had completed his new novel. This was translated but in vain. Steinbeck remained absent, it must have been one of his off-

days—someone said that he had been ill and in hospital in Vienna—even this piece of news failed to electrify him.

Luckily somebody turned to his wife and asked her to tell something about their family, their children. She seized the opportunity and talked happily and without inhibition—but unfortunately I have forgotten the details of her story.

After the successful meeting Zelk asked me to give him a lift. He felt ill and dizzy, and could not suffer being jolted about in a bus but had no money for a taxi. Impossible—I tried to excuse myself—I was invited to the farewell dinner and had to take others as well.

“Where is that dinner?”

“Up on Castle Hill, in the Fortuna Restaurant.”

“I have never been there. You could really arrange for me to be invited as well. I think this is the least you could do for me.”

“But Zoltán dear—I am not the organizer and I was only told today. And you don’t understand a word of English.”

“Then I’ll just sit and watch him. I can’t eat anyway, with my stomach. But even this is better than sitting alone in the empty flat staring at the bare walls.”

I caught Kéry in the cloak-room.

“Of course, with pleasure, but PEN only budgeted for ten and we are twelve even without Zelk.”

“I promise that he will not eat much. A little soup perhaps and boiled potatoes. He is not allowed to drink at all.”

Kéry shrugged and told me to talk it over with Boldizsár, who said he liked Zelk and was sorry for him, but finance was Kéry’s business. I went back to Kéry and told him that Boldizsár had no objections if he hadn’t. Then I went back to Boldizsár and told him that Kéry had nothing against the idea if he hadn’t. This is how things are done here.

In the Fortuna we found a splendidly laid table with plenty of plates and glasses for everyone, silver as well, and flowers. At their sight Steinbeck, oddly, came to life instantly, there was no trace of his earlier weariness, his eyes shone brightly and greedily and he said he was as hungry as a shark who had fasted for forty days. He thoroughly studied the German text of the voluminous menu, he could get by in that language. He ordered paprika fish soup with roe and seasoned it with an extra helping of hot paprika. Soon his face turned as red as the paprika itself. For an *bors d’œuvre* he asked for cold goose liver fried in its own fat with toasted rolls, then, on our advice, he went on with choucroute à la Kolozsvár with sour cream and dill, smoked side of pork, and spare ribs and sausages. He liked it

so much that he used bread to wipe the plate clean. There were drinks, of course: Bloody Mary for an apéritif, Burgundy with the fish, later an Eger White with chilled Parád water. After that he only wanted a light dessert, so he asked for ewe-cheese dumplings of which they brought a huge pile with steaming hot sucking-pig crackling on top. He finished with ice-cream—he always did, he said—black coffee and whisky. Kéry's ears were already crimson thinking of the bill to come. We, of course, egged the old chap on, it's never too expensive for a bystander, we told him to have some more, and what would he like? But he didn't want any more, he covered his plate with his shovel-sized hands and said that the right thing to do was to stop before you got that feeling of fullness in your belly.

Zelk ate his meal at the other end of the table: he very modestly ordered some pike-perch plain and steamed vegetables. The guest pointed at him with his fork:

"Why does our friend only pick at his food?"

He has bile trouble, we said, and other ailments as well. But he is a great poet, a really great poet.

"Rich? Making plenty of money?"

"No. You couldn't say that."

"Don't they publish his poems?"

"They do now. They are published again these days. But poets in general are not rich. Ours is a small country, the Hungarian-speaking world is small. It's difficult to make a living if one only writes verse."

"Same in America. This is why many poets teach at college. Doesn't he?"

"Doesn't he what?"

"Teach at a university. Isn't he a university professor?"

"Zelk? No. Anyway, not for the time being."

"Wasn't he asked? Or doesn't he feel like it."

"Somehow it never cropped up."

"Poor man."

"He has suffered a lot. Fascism, poverty. He spent some time in prison."

"What does he write?"

"He has just finished a beautiful poem. The Sea-gull."

"The sea-gull? Like Chekhov's play?"

"Only the title is the same. The work itself is very different: a magnificent, poignant mourning dirge."

"Has it been translated into English?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"It should be translated."

"Sure thing."

"Wouldn't he say one of his new poems? I only want to hear the rhythm, the music. Or do you think he would be angry if I asked him?"

I transmitted Steinbeck's request. Zelk did not affect reluctance, he started to chant in his dark, ringing baritone:

*"Kútba ugrott cselédlányok,
bugyborékol még a szátok,
békalencsén átszivárog,
fölbhallatszik a nótátok — :
Szomorú vasárnap. . ."*

"Beautiful", nodded the guest. "Very beautiful. More, please!"

*"Túlvilági Józsefváros,
ingyen méri a kocsmáros,
keszeg stricik, édes kurvák
gázlámpafény alatt fújják — :
Szomorú vasárnap.*

*Szöke Maca legkövérebb,
ott is bámulják a népek,
de már kontyán glóriával
sétál elvetélt fiával. —
Szomorú vasárnap. . .*

I tried to explain, as far as that is possible, what the poem was about, what the song, Mournful Sunday, had meant and with what virtuosity Zelk has conjured up the old trashy song, how he elevated and worked it into his splendid metaphors, and so on. The guest found all of this fascinating, he took his pipe out again and ordered whisky for the poet and for the whole company.

While they drank to his health Zoltán also turned on.

"Tell him that I say that he is a great writer."

"You are a great writer. That's his opinion." (English in the original. The Ed.)

"And a big man. A big strong man."

"A big man, a strong one." (English in the original. The Ed.)

"He is very pleased to meet you." (English in the original. The Ed.)

"And I like him a lot."

"He likes you." (English in the original. The Ed.)

They embraced. Although they could not have exchanged two more words without an interpreter a kind of deeper understanding come into being between them, like remote celestial bodies which, across the void, capture and grasp each other's signals in the absence of a carrier medium. I would even say that at that table with all the people chattering noisily in English the American had the closest relationship with Zelk who sat mute most of the time.

It is not necessary to evoke all the details of that night. Gipsy music, funny stories from Budapest, New York and California, and uncounted rounds of whisky. When the restaurant gradually emptied and we also swarmed out, Steinbeck discovered in the lobby that there was a night-club in the building, the Fortuna Bar. He suggested a drink there, he did not want to go home yet, it was too early to go to bed. Kéry spread his arms, that's all, we had exhausted the whole year's budget anyway, let the devil take the world and the PEN with it! . . .

We got a table in the corner. In the cosy twilight and to the accompaniment of discreet jazz music Steinbeck turned talkative. He spoke of the dolphins who, according to the latest research, had a language of their own, in which they communicated with each other. The scientists were working on to prove this hypothesis phonetically and semantically, trying to decode their peculiar, clicking, grumbling and screeching sounds. He would like to write about the dolphins' talk, it was sure to be much more interesting than human chatter.

Later he danced with his wife and left the stick which he used because of his bad leg leaning against the table. He looked like the gold-diggers in a bar in a Chaplin film. We drank and drank, and suddenly his face went grey, he got a little dizzy, his big head tilted a little to one side, or rather backwards, against the red wallpaper: perhaps death passed through him like a flash. Only Zelk seemed to notice, he made an awkward movement towards him, but Mrs. Steinbeck took his arm immediately:

"Come John, let's go."

We had to wait a few minutes for the bill. Earlier, when our guest expressed his wish to go to the night-club, Kéry had been busy arranging the dinner-bill. Now the two bills were presented together and with all those drinks we had in the bar added. I don't remember the sum, or the prices at the time, but it could not have been a small amount with so much food and drink for so many people at that fashionable place. It must have gone into thousands. When the headwaiter approached our table bringing the bill on a plate discreetly covered with a napkin I managed to direct him to Zelk with a glance that suggested that Zelk was the competent person to settle it.

"What's this?" asked our friend uncomprehendingly.

"The bill, Sir."

Zoltán lifted the napkin, cast a fleeting glance on the long row of figures, then pushed it away with a contemptuous gesture:

"Only that much?"

GÁBOR GÖRGEY

ANATOMY OF A SUPPER

Translated by Jascha Kessler

He. Can't exactly be named.
That is, can be called whatever,
any name hits the nail on its head,
he being there even in what's not he.
What's not he is in other words also he.
Everything, everyone
reducible in the end to this. *He*

before. Before what's unknown as yet.
Mere expectancy, as at a crucial
press conference,
reporters' and disciples'
lipwatching
to apprehend exactly before what this *before*

willingly, not picked up by force,
though this too he let come according
to ritual procedure. Millennial
convention of warrant for arrest. Stooges' hide-and-peek.
Ideotheology of corporate
interests. Sadistic orgy
of those in need of succor. But just because
he let it come, that is *voluntarily*

turned in. What? Exhibit A?
Enemy's letters
of commission? Espionage kit?
Reports in disappearing ink?
No doubt something had to have gone down
if he delivered it up. Though what? *Turned himself*

This poem was awarded the Hungarian Writers' Association Robert Graves Prize for Best Poem of the Year 1976—an award founded by Mr. Graves out of his Hungarian author's royalties. Previous winners were László Kálnoky, 1970; Zoltán Zelk, 1971; Dezső Tandori, 1972; Magda Székely, 1973; Ottó Orbán, 1974; István Simon, 1975.

in, no code,
 no hidden transmitter, no gun,
 but all he had:
 corpus mystidelecti. Right there, *himself*

to torment, though if there's anyone who
 can set the stages of death by torture,
 who might that be? Who, weeping, looks
 hectically for logic
 in the story's baffling chaos,
 moreover, dispensing
 useful advice
 while his guts are shoved about.
 Giving it all *to torment*,

saintly, put it like that, another name
 for the unnamable.
 Who, supping with premonitions,
 at that measure in the treacherous
 overture when
 the unseen conductor raps for
 tomorrow's anticipated nausea,
 when the family physician's
 going to declare: cancer!—even then the *saintly*

and venerable, like some
 prophetic old man,
 despite the foreshadowed teleological terror
 flickering over his young man's face
 every time he looks at
 workable lumber,
 mortised and tenoned,
 full of potential splinters,
 though he gets it together again—
and venerable

took into such hands his own
 biopsy like a surgeon,
 that smear torn from his own body,

slidemounted, indicating its
global metasthesis, *took into such hands*
some bread, bloodless flesh,

broke it, and it seemed bones
crunched in it, sinews,
fiber, bread veins
tearing away in his gentle pressure
as he *broke it*,

gave it to his disciples, who, waiting,
perplexed, would have preferred
falling to finally, famished,
only today somehow
it's all different, something's up,
he too's fussing
too much,
and what is more embarrassing
than your stomach rumbling
during solemn, softspoken words, and he really
gave it to his disciples,

then said the blessing, not giving thanks for
getting away with it again,
wriggling unscathed out
—unlike the others haha—of the cataclysm
with a joyful song, caressing his precious life
for the totalscanning, omnipotent
Giant Radar Screen,
not for that, but for the buffeting
on its way, *said the blessing*

and spoke, articulating precisely,
in words sans panic,
masking terror's sweaty fetor,
though the droning
of the desert shaman
was even then slowly ascending to the brain,
but he
drove it down in its pit, *and spoke, saying:*

Take it, while the taking's good,
 don't pass up the chance,
 don't wait, because tardy hands
 will stir and cram the void
 into the empty dish,
 all chatting away like the crowd
 at an embassy affair,
 therefore now *take it*

and eat, some of this unsleeping kitchenmaids'
 transubstantiated kneading
 in a desperate dawn,
 some of this bodily warmth
 from a bakery glimmering away into the stratosphere,
 take it easy *and eat*

all of you, that is each one of you,
 hence everyone, which means no exceptions,
 I mean all of you
 who are and will be,
 no conditions, quota—
 no, no, yes—*all of you*

since this is my, not that I actually know,
 this is strictly speaking foreign matter,
 still, mine own thing, so had to get used to it,
 easy it wasn't, but finally I made it,
 though naturally now that success arrives
 I must part with it
 (which is the way it goes,
 that much I've caught onto here)
 parting with it, *since this is my*

body (no more of this for now,
 yes, I grew used to it, yet anyway
 I have some doubts, far-out type,
 take that time in the desert when he . . .
 but let's let that drop, suffice it that:
 you almost had me fooled there) *my body*,

for you, for you alone,
 for endless links of your greatgreatgrandchildren's
 grandchildren, since I've included
 all future chromosomes
 down the ages, theirs the food
for you

given, not because that's the way it is,
 not apportioned and not trimmed to fit
 the bed your soul makes and not like
 dropping a donation in either, and you owe
 nothing if you take some,
 purely and simply this: *given.* (Silence.)

After supper the geological panorama
 of shifting bowels, slaughterhouse
 of razed villages and towns
 laid over the peristalsis
 reconstituting the world,
 a wafer of moon swimming
 slow through the dark sky
after supper

the same way (same way exactly?
 there was no foot to shove
 the table further off?
 plates didn't slide?
 did the hand move from this place to this same place?
 didn't the hallway of air leading from the edge of the table
 change from beginning to end?
 and was it a hand unchanged?
 what where those eons in the relative minute doing
 during the metabolism of cells, toxins, scleroses?)
 let's say however: *the same way*

he took it
 (ibid., cf. above, repetition)
he took

a cup, plain prototype
of any number of museum specimens, or, maybe
a wooden beaker
smelling like a cask soaking
wine up forever
and holding it till it rots apart
or is tossed on the fire,
the way the body holds its blood, moisture
and smell permeating it
(well, if we reduce it from
the goldsmith's triumph, we're merely
complicating matters) *a cup*,

and again these reiterations,
as though it's always the same,
even if nothing's ever the same,
but the spooky dreamlike déjà vu
goes on haunting,
because somewhere something sometime
as though over and over, *and again*

said the blessing, whatever he could
out of the desert interior greened

and, yes: and, world-conjunction,
the honeyed ands of similitudes,
the one-phrase lingo of kids
gabbling beatific ands,
this everything's-everything's semblance,
metagrammaticphysics
jargoning essence and chronicity: *and*
said, as he himself might have expected,
had he not spoken but been spoken to,
thirsty for some big
meaning—but now abandoned
on solitudes' lunar vistas, *said*:

Take, that identical "take" once more,
but I've been around some since,
I've logged vast distances on my selfinflicted

sidereal stationary pilgrimage,
but anyhow again that *take*

drink, it'll be hard work
belting enough to wash this supper down,
I know it's the wrong moment,
something's squishing round like
an inky squid in your bellies
and needs to be flushed,
and it's not the broken loaf
but some older food in there,
I say, *drink*,

all of you, that is each one of you,
hence everyone, which means no exceptions,
I mean all of you
who are and will be,
no conditions, quota—
no, no, yes—*all of you*,

because this is my, I'm forever confused
by the grounds of my proper dominion,
because I could never actually be pervaded
by what's mine
and what is not,
in all the wealth of creation
happiness for me is a
perfect flaying,
which is just why I tell you, *because this is my*

cup of blood, could be it's also just one more find,
some mystical dimension turning up
for analysis in the universal lab,
though it's pretty much come down
right from the maternal side, a red and white
corpuscule-combination adapted to
Asia Minor's climatic/nutritional requirements,
so here is this *cup of blood*

which for you—get it?—for you

is poured,
 the will-be-broken, the poured-out
 are just words, but then
 at that moment, alas, the body
 shall reveal what a body is,
 what power unbeatable
 its frailty,
 yet somehow I'll cope
 when it's *poured out*

sins, whatever can those be, naturally it would be nice knowing,
 every age frames
 different offences,
 now this, not that, constituting deadly sin,
 yesterday's deadly sins creditable today. However,
 I could care less for brokers
 on the morals market,
 the law not counting for me,
 my measure making blessed the sorrowing,
 since my one concern's
 universally tilted towards *forgiveness of*

sins. (Pause. Those who can,
 drink.) Then:

Do this, no more,
 moreover no matter what comes
 of it, do only
this
in memory of me.
 (I desire no more,
 no tombstone, no pantheon.
 On my grave unseen
 a pebble's enough, a thought
 of me by anyone.)

INTERVIEW

A CONVERSATION WITH GYÖRGY ACZÉL ON THE POST-HELSINKI PERIOD

The Vienna daily Die Presse in its issue of February 19-20, 1977 published the interview with György Aczél under the heading: "No history without contradictions," and with the subtitle: György Aczél on the post-Helsinki period: East-West, Dissidents, Eurocommunism. We print the text below.

The future of communism as an ideology and as Soviet power is again a centre of attention all the way from "dissidents" to "Eurocommunism." How are these problems seen from the East? The opportunity for an answer was presented by a prolonged conversation with György Aczél, the Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister, a member of the Political Committee, a good friend of János Kádár's; he is married to a doctor, and has two daughters and three grandchildren. Aczél is responsible for cultural policy in Hungary, and he is passionately interested in literature and art.

*

We sit in the room of one of the Deputy Prime Ministers, the walls are covered by bookshelves, the window overlooks the neo-Gothic façade of the Parliament building. The table is richly equipped with mineral water, fruit juice, coffee and cigarettes. Around it a wreath of officials, including an interpreter and a stenographer. She was relieved by another girl in the course of a conversation that lasted nearly four hours. But the dominant personality is György Aczél. He will be sixty this year. He is of stocky build, his face is dominated by vivid eyes and a bushy moustache, and he presents himself as a jovial man, temperamental, an intellect, but also one well aware of the meaning of power. A high-

ranking official who right from the start impresses one as somebody who has not lost a human touch because of that.

It is this which adds spontaneity and a certain gaiety to the to and fro of question and answer, even where one has the feeling that the real answer is missing and one prefers to change the subject. This is a game, according to the rules of the question-and-answer game, in the course of which the guest does not forget for a moment that he faces a member of the Political Committee and a Deputy Prime Minister, and still he is not overcome by the usual boredom of a rhetorical exchange of chess figures. Is this the frankness of one who has been severely tried surviving even in a senior member of the Party apparatus? Or the host's charm? A physiognomical talent? Communists are dangerous; ruling parties, as they are called, even more so, it is said, isn't it? And, again in the East, personal comments and personalized comments are not appreciated, since they might give rise to misunderstandings. Every apparatus likes the impersonal, the abstract.

Well then, let's get down to business! Dissidents, the Prague *Charta 77*, are talked about everywhere, as is the declaration of solidarity from Hungary. What does the Deputy Prime Minister has to say to that?

Aczél: "You ask me why there are many dissidents? Ask me to walk down the Kärntner or Mariahilfer Strasse in Vienna with you and in half a day, with my gappy German, I'll collect three hundred signatures either for or against keeping dogs. Who is so stupid as to think that everybody here in Hungary agrees with what the government does? You expect us to recite the most boring monologue in the world. But we work, we get results, we fail, and we have also made mistakes." With reference to Anatole France, he adds: "It is difficult even for the best of ideas, for we are fallible men."

And he goes on:

"Creative discontent is a normal state for man. I am of the opinion that a series of confusions in men you call dissent are a normal state. The late György Lukács, whom I think very highly of, said: 'What ought to be done I can't tell, nor can I say how it ought to be done. All I can say what sort of things are wrong and what the ideal to be striven for should be. Everything else is up to politics.' I'll give you an example. Lukács came out for prices fixed according to value, and yet when I asked him what would happen if we raised the price of bread fivefold, he said: 'I hope you'll turn out smarter than that.' And he added: 'It is your business to act in such a way that the people do not rebel because of the high price of bread.'

"But let's get back to the original issue. I don't think dissidents are serious people. When the situation was really difficult—in Hungary,

I mean—dissidents did not exist. At that time my wife did not know for years whether I was alive or not. Today they give telephone interviews, and nobody stops them. One of them rang up an acquaintance of mine and wondered why though he had signed, no administrative measures had been taken. Nothing will happen, and his book will not be published in the West. This is the way they hope to get an international reputation.”

The Deputy Prime Minister, who had remarked earlier that, if he was well informed, the letter in support of the so-called *Charta 77* had been signed by thirty-four in Hungary, but fundamentally that did not interest him, now went over into a counter-attack.

Aczél: “Gyula Illvés, Tibor Déry, István Örkény, or Professor Szent-ágothai, the best Hungarian physicists, chemists and mathematicians taken together, are not talked about as much in the West as a bad poet or a not untalented but not too productive philosopher. What a cultural scandal it is that Déry was considered for the Nobel Prize only as long as he was behind bars. In the sixteen years since his release he has written more books than in the preceding fifty. With a bit of luck, being amnestied six months later, we would now have a Nobel Prize laureate in literature.”

A follow-up to the Helsinki Conference is scheduled to take place at Belgrade in June this year to examine how much of the agreements there has been fulfilled. Discussions are already in full swing. They are as much about the situation of dissidents as about the counter-argument that in Helsinki “non-interference” was agreed upon, the Western rejoinder being again that all of the agreements reached at the time are of equal importance. To this the East replies that, well, the West also has shortcomings to make up for in the humanitarian field, and so forth. Which in turn gives rise to the question whether and how the Helsinki agreements on détente can lead to better mutual understanding.

Aczél: “Yes, the spirit of Helsinki is haunting Europe, although there are far from few who would like to handicap it in its progress. But I wonder whether the forces were not more powerful and more numerous which tried to obstruct the way of another spectre, which Marx and Engels wrote about in the *Communist Manifesto* more than a century ago. Of course, there are essential differences between the two spectres so I shall not force the simile. One thing I can say, however, is that the absence of identity does not mean that the two spectres are entirely independent of each other. In spite of the exertions of its opponents the spirit of Helsinki is gaining strength because it has solid foundations in international power relations, in the interests of the nations, in the instinct of self-preservation of mankind and our continent.”

Peaceful, but not ideological, coexistence

"The peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems is needed for mankind not to be ruined. But does this negative argument really tell the whole truth? We think the distribution of the world's raw materials resources, the development of the means of production, the scientific and technological revolution, the responsibility of the developed part of mankind for the underdeveloped or developing countries, the energy situation, the victualling of the world, the protection of the environment provide just as many arguments for the necessity of peaceful coexistence."

Peaceful coexistence, a proposition put forward by Lenin which has been powerfully elaborated by Moscow in recent decades, does not imply ideological disarmament; quite the contrary, it presupposes the sharpening of the struggle against "bourgeois ideology": the ideological coexistence of socialism and capitalism is impossible. Does not perhaps disillusionment of a sort felt in the West after Helsinki find its explanation in the misjudgement of this position? However, the events in the East have elicited sharp criticism even in the camp of the communist Parties of Western Europe. How do you explain this criticism?

Aczél: "Reading the bourgeois press, I find there, for example, bourgeois manipulation of 'Eurocommunism'; it is proclaimed that there is a 'schism in the church', there are 'Eurocommunists' and there are conservative, 'Eastern' ones. Oddly enough, these manufacturers of spectacular theses always overlook facts which might disturb their theories. They then fail to refer to those statements of theoretical value by leading people in the socialist countries which, in addition to the uniform positions taken with regard to fundamental issues of social progress, point to the specific differences and shades in the development of all countries, that is in the socialism of the future. The communist parties of France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece obviously analyse the immediate questions of social progress given their own facts and conditions. Why do not the bourgeois journalists who are keeping their fingers crossed for a split in the communist movement cite also the views of leaders of the Italian Communist Party regarding 'Eurocommunism'?"

The objection made by the guest is quite obvious. In talks recently with communists in Rome and Madrid these have made it quite clear that the type of cultural policy existing in the socialist countries is unacceptable to them.

Aczél: "Who has asked them to take it over?"

The Deputy Prime Minister evidently shows little inclination for an

administratively guided cultural policy, but is it therefore possible to speak of intellectual freedom? All the same, his name was mentioned in Rome, where somebody said that in Budapest there was György Aczél who years earlier had already argued in the Moscow *Literaturnaya Gazeta* for the hegemony but against a monopoly of Marxism in cultural policy.

Aczél: "This is the policy of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, not just mine."

When the guest points out that some people in the West think the change of course in the East has affected among others also the dissenters, the reply is emphatic.

Aczél: "This is an error, something different is involved. World views, attitudes, and tastes differ. Yet I can say that the overwhelming majority of this people agrees with the main line of this policy in all its major points. Whether they are of the same mind when judging a painting or a statue is indeed not so certain. But who demands that? And why? What need have we of it? No man can be forced to like something, nor can he be saved against his will. I am therefore convinced that it was madness in the 'fifties to say that Marxism had a monopoly in Hungary. Marxism has a leading role."

Monolithic unity is not much mentioned these days. Pluralism is the watchword used to describe modern democracy. If such a sharp distinction is to be made between hegemony and monopoly, does this mean that there are different Marxisms?

Aczél: "One law covers gravitation . . ."

The guest interjects to ask whether Marxism is physics, or maybe metaphysics.

Aczél: "No, it is not metaphysics, but a social regularity. It is just as impossible to create ideal conditions for gravity which are precisely fitted by Newton's law. There is no absolute vacuum, and so the formula depends on the resistance of the air. All sorts of deviations are therefore possible."

The world is in a state of rapid change; much which still seemed unshakeable yesterday is already doubted today, or no longer valid. The communists of the Mediterranean countries say that their friends in the East have not changed fast enough. What have you to say to that?

Aczél: "Our Italian and French friends, I think, will play a great part in shaping the destiny of mankind once they are in power. Imagine the case in reverse. Let us say it would be noticed that we elected the chairman of the bench of bishops, the Cardinal Primate, to the Presidium of the People's Front, and thereupon three socialist countries allied with us would address an open note to us warning us against good relations with the church."

What would *Die Presse* have to say about that? I imagine it would be that this was a case of rough and rude interference.

"The highly esteemed Herr Willy Brandt feels anxious about what goes on in a socialist country, but cares little about the way Federal Germany interfered in the internal affairs of Italy. Why is he unconcerned about this? This is to shoot at one goal only."

The conversation gets its hooks into the rejoinder "interference." Who defeated Károlyi's bourgeois democracy? And the 1919 Republic of Councils? This is how the first quasi-fascist power in history, the Horthy régime, was established. But could it be that the people had nothing to do with that?

Aczél: "There is an anecdote about Sándor Bródy, a noted Hungarian writer of the early part of the century: In the 'twenties he gave an address in an artists' club. He described with great verve that the habit of wearing long underpants was typical of the provincial backwardness of Hungarians. He sat down and crossed his legs, so his audience could see that he also wore long underpants. 'Now, what is that?' they asked. 'These here?' he replied, 'they are not even my legs.'"

Socialism boasts of a revolutionary culture. How can it be that so much about it in the eyes of the West at least, including socialist realism, perhaps precisely that, seems petty bourgeois?

Aczél: "I am a lucky man, I always had acquaintances, friends, and comrades, who took charge of the young man I was and taught me the love of culture. It was not easy for me either. I had to listen to Bartók many a time before I recognized the beauty of his music. I knew Gyula Derkovits, the great painter. He explained a lot to me, at first I did not understand his paintings. But this is no sin, you cannot force that on people.

"You know that I am fond of Attila József, but what sort of a world was that where only 130 copies of his last book of verse could be sold in more than a year before his suicide? Or where Béla Bartók gave his last concert in Budapest in a half-empty hall? By now about a million and a half copies of Attila József's works have been published."

Quantity does not tell you anything about quality; quality is culture, perfection is art. If the works of a great poet are selling well, does this mean that they are read by so many people?

Aczél: "In this respect I am a minimalist. It may be that somebody has bought the book only because he is a member of a socialist brigade. But I think that if he takes a book home, in the course of time he or his child will certainly pick it up some time."

As far as can be observed, people in Hungary read much, but no one

can tell whether reading tastes in the future will be higher there or possibly in Austria. Wherever does this sense of assurance come from? Or is the Deputy Prime Minister an entirely "bourgeois type" of man with a cultural ideal of the Goethe kind?

Aczél: "But things are different in Hungary. Gorky wrote in 1926: 'Do you imagine that, when people have once eaten their fill, when they have a roof over their head and can afford to put on warm clothes against the rigours of the weather, their life also becomes simpler? It is then that it becomes really complicated! Because until now hundreds of millions in world history have kept asking: What shall we live on? When we have attained our aims, the question will come up for the first time: Why and how shall we live?'"

"But you used the expression 'petty bourgeois'. It would make me happy if we agreed on the meaning of the term, for indeed this is the basis of serious discussion. By petty bourgeois I mean a man who takes the means needed to make life beautiful and turns them into the ends themselves. For an ordinary socialist man a car should be a means of transport enabling him to see as much of the world as possible. More than half of our families own a plot of land. But the man who bought a building lot only to show others what he has got, that's a petty bourgeois.

"We fulfil Kodály's dream who was neither a Marxist nor a communist. For we think of how much richer the life of a man is who is able to taste the joys of Beethoven or Mozart."

But how come that, with such an ideal programme and so much social progress, Budapest and Vienna, though with diametrically different social systems, still after decades unfortunately jointly share the lead in world suicide figures?

Aczél: "I am no expert in this matter, but I wish to recommend an excellent book by a Hungarian psychiatrist, Miklós Kun, to you. I think it also appeared in English. And there is something else which I cannot explain to you precisely: it is strange but true—you should not draw erroneous conclusions from it!—that in gaol and in war-time the number of stomach ulcers, schizophrenics, heart attacks, and suicides declines."

Such observations prompt to raise the question whether socialism does not have a sense of the tragic, of failure and the erosion of fine ideals, which characterize man's path throughout world history. Is socialism perhaps synonymous with optimism, with humanism?

Aczél: "We have magnificent objectives, but no theology, just aims, since these all turn into a long road ahead! Can I be asked to account for what will only be fifty years hence? Our grandchildren will have to account for

that. The childhood of socialism, the period of short-term campaigns, is over."

In the West there is talk of a slackening, even exhaustion, of the utopian force, the change of times is experienced as a conflict of generations. Psychotherapists diagnose it, individually or collectively, as an identity crisis. During the conversation György Aczél announces the title of a new book with the declarative title: *Socialism—the Present and Future of Freedom*. Certainly, life evolved through contradictions, but bearing in mind what freedom in our world has to put up with, are doubts all that unreasonable? Why then does the youth rebel?

Aczél: "My younger daughter was born during the counter-revolution in 1956. She is a third-year history student. She studies 1956 in the same manner as, let us say, events of the time of Leopold II. To her all this is history.

"Many of my friends and comrades tell young people over again: We hungered and froze and you go and sit in a well-built nest. And then they are surprised if their children have nothing in their heads. I, however, tell young people: We were worse off, but life will be far more complicated for you. Socialism will cover the world all the way from Vietnam to the most developed capitalist countries, and you all will first have to worry about giving meaning to the lives of people who have never known the pain of hunger.

"Socialism is the only social system—I already pointed out this paradox at a Central Committee meeting—which wants to convey to every citizen a sense of his irreplaceableness, and to bring home to every leader the consciousness that, as a leader, one can do without him."

Therewith the conversation comes to the problem of the aged which, parallel with the youth problem, is a preoccupation of our days both in the East and in the West. But the Deputy Prime Minister once again reverts to his special province, to what he thinks is "one of the greatest problems" of socialism.

Aczél: "In culture there is no selection, no sieving. A bad painter in our country, once he has obtained his diploma, can live off it—and fairly well at that—to the end of his days. And so will a bad poet. At the general meeting of the Writers' Union I told them I would be unable to sleep if I always thought of the amount of mediocre or weak writing that is printed in literary reviews. Reading really bad poetry makes one take notice; that is still better than mediocrity. Unfortunately, socialism has not yet found the proper ways of selection. This is not only a problem of literature, it causes similar worries in other intellectual fields as well."

The host refers to a heap of newspaper clippings he reads every day. He also studied Dr. Kreisky's article on cultural policy in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*. He thought it his only task not to do anything, not to meddle in anything. Well, Aczél also admitted that culture cannot be organized, and much less can it be ordered about. Something can nevertheless be done, of course. For example, major works from Petöfi to Attila József might, as a sort of "Hungarian Library" and in the best possible translation, be made available to the German-speaking public. The Austrian Minister of Education Fred Sinowatz was expected in Budapest in the near future, so there will be every opportunity for him to acquaint himself with the old and the new reality, as well as to get an idea of what separates us.

Aczél: "There is no history without contradictions. A state devoid of contradictions can exist only among angels who, as is known, have neither sex nor metabolism. Let it exist there. But I need not add that I am in no way longing for such a paradise."

OTTO SCHULMEISTER

SURVEYS

PÉTER NAGY

THE LITERARY REVOLUTION IN HUNGARY AROUND 1900

Endre Ady's genius has often, and for many, obscured the fact that he was *primus inter pares*, that his performance could achieve the importance it did only because he rode on the crests of the wave of a social and artistic tide. This is reason enough to speak of that period again and again, even if there were no Ady centenary. The period is, of course, also important for having already been integrated into the Hungarian literary heritage though, unfortunately, not in that of mankind. There is another more direct reason for showing an interest in it and that is the continuing and growing attention paid the world over to the *fin de siècle* and the beginnings of this century looking for the roots and justification for later developments; and also, the recently growing interest in marginal literatures which until recently had been neglected, but whose best work is being discovered sometimes with surprise, sometimes with irritation to be essential for the self-awareness of the European mind.

In Hungary, at the beginning of this century, a true literary and artistic revolution took place. Like most such coinage, "revolution" or "artistic revolution" has been cheapened by inflated use perhaps even profoundly compromised. Journalese allows historic events to occur bi-weekly at least, and those writing on art, using more high-falutin' language do not allow a month,

and certainly a year, to pass without the arts, and especially literature, being revolutionized by the appearance of some work which, a few years later, passes into oblivion, being buried, as such works inevitably are, under the rubble of successive "revolutions" and "discoveries."

When are we genuinely entitled to speak of a revolution in art? Certainly not in the case of an isolated work, however unusual, and very rarely in the case of an isolated artist, however great. To paraphrase one of Lenin's maxims, there is a revolution in literature when writers can no longer write as they did, and when readers no longer wish to read the same things. This kind of radical and massive change does not occur often: in France such a revolutionary change occurred at the time of Ronsard and the *Pléiade*, again with the arrival of Romanticism, and then with the beginning of Symbolism and Naturalism, whereas in English the same changes may be said to have happened in the Elizabethan and then the Romantic period—to stop at the threshold of the twentieth century. In Hungarian such turning-points occurred with Humanism and Romanticism. This latter soon changed into a period national classicism strongly flavoured by a Romanticism and Populism of extreme vigour and tenacity, which extended its hegemony from the 1840s to the beginning of our own times.

What we call the literary revolution of the beginning of this century was a revolt against precisely these rigid, petrified ways which, it must be remembered, were themselves the product of an earlier revolutionary movement.

This explains the strange fact that work belonging to the new trends, the Russian or English novelists, Flaubert as well as Baudelaire or Verlaine, were mentioned and often even published in translation by conservative Hungarian reviews or anthologies soon after their first publication, without infringing in the least on this closed, obsolete world, which, as the adherent and representative of an out-of-date morality, could do nothing better than thunder against "immorality" and "decadence." Neither the aim nor the limits of this article allow me to go deeply into the problem of the relationship between this critical attitude and the social conditions of the country; let me mention nevertheless that it is relatively easy to trace the relationship between the social forces and the aesthetic views of the period, and that the transformation of an avant-garde art theory into academicism preceded, rather accompanied, the changes in the gentry—who were especially important in Eastern Europe—turning them from the carriers of the revolution into a pillar of the Compromise with the Habsburgs.

*

There was no lack of malcontents, or rebels during the half century of the reign of academicism, but their fate—almost without exception—was incomprehension, isolation, even persecution. There is no other period in Hungarian literary history when so many gifted writers and poets broke under the weight of "circumstances", yielding to drink, to madness, or suicide. Contemporary scholars have done much to uncover the forgotten values these broken men of talent created; they have established a precious inventory of themes, of subjects,

of formal initiatives which preceded, often in a surprising way, what the following century was to bring forth. And yet one cannot really say that ample light has been shed on this period, that its values, which were hidden under a trash-heap of banalities, have been given the place they deserve. But even when we arrive at the end of this labour, the fact will remain: although in the last third of the nineteenth century there appeared many talented men in search of new themes and new modes of expression, the conspiracy which stifled them was generally successful: criticism met them with hostile incomprehension, the public with rejection, the newspapers with lack of interest: editors and reviews relegated them to the provinces, to private editions, or to the simple oblivion of the unpublished.

And all this occurred in Hungarian literature at a time when great changes were taking place in Hungarian society. The last third of the century, following the 1867 Compromise with the Habsburgs, was the period of massive investment, when industrialization took giant steps forward, and the large estates turned increasingly towards intensive agriculture; when technical progress and its economic and social consequences gave birth to the proletariat, and a large part of the small peasantry lost its land and was turned into an agricultural proletariat; a period which saw the birth of the organized socialist movement and of agrarian socialist movements which became more and more radical under brutal police oppression.

But the public, the consumers of literature, remained a small and provincial group, consisting mainly of members of the professions in the provinces, who were great defenders of established norms, and whose conventional taste was reinforced by the high priests of the universities and of criticism. Many town-dwellers, middle and working-class, still spoke German, and had no Hungarian cultural ambitions or needs, those who had already become consumers of Hungarian culture, strove fervently to be-

come assimilated in their way of life, their taste, and their judgement, to the ruling class, the owners of estates, aristocrats, and gentry.

Nevertheless, and in spite of everything, the signs of change became more and more frequent in the closing twenty years of the nineteenth century, and became even stronger in the early twentieth. This clearly went hand in hand with the birth of a new middle class of Hungarian parentage and the progressive assimilation of immigrants or members of national minorities. Modern metropolitan life created a clerical middle class in the government service and the liberal professions, who were rooted in provincial and patriarchal life, but forced into new types of conflicts by the new situation. This new middle class produced new reactions and projected new perspectives—although at times their very lack of perspective gave rise to a new sort of resentment. Those forerunners of the movements whose talents were cut off in their prime came almost without exception from this new middle class: it was they who carried to success certain others who deserve to be mentioned.

Kálmán Mikszáth was the most popular writer of fiction of the time; a critical realist of powerful imagination and free of illusions; but he clothed his criticism in so genial a humour that for the contemporary reader the criticism often appeared to stand for an abetting wink. József Kiss, a poet of Jewish birth, was the first to write verse in Hungarian with the village Jew as his subject, calling on the memories of his own childhood, and the urban scenes and sentiments around him; this prosody was, however, wholly traditional, and he did not reject the established morality. Great preparatory work was done by minor poets (Jenő Heltai, Emil Makai), part writers of chansons, part accomplished versifiers, whose ambiguous situation and generally jocular, frivolous style automatically excluded them, at least in the eyes of their contemporaries, from the "holy" domain of literature proper.

And there was Sándor Bródy, accorded the accolade of forerunner by the revolution to come, a man who looked on his "sons" with goodwill, though sometimes with jealousy. Bródy was the first to introduce, abruptly, the terminology, though not quite the method, of Naturalism, and to exploit as a subject the misery and servitude, the conflicts and distress of this middle class in the making, which was on the way to becoming conscious of itself; but in spite of his avowed naturalism and certain verbal and thematic audacities, due to his romantic and often sentimental vision, his art did not, in fact, get off the beaten track, and rather represented a modernized version of accepted methods and points of view.

*

It was in such a situation, after such feeble antecedents, that a literary revolution broke out in Hungary in the first years of the century. This revolution is marked by two names: that of Endre Ady, who quite on his own created a complete *bouleversement* of values, methods, and attitudes; and that of the review *Nyugat* (West), which printing Ady's verse became from its first number the propagator of the new art and the new values.

Endre Ady was one of those who continually surprise their contemporaries, as well as posterity. A poet of genius, he was both a great journalist and a great critic. A member of the petty nobility distinguished by a family tree but no property, son of a father whom only the way he saw himself distinguished from the well-to-do peasants of the backward countryside, Ady was all but predestined to become a pillar of the established order as his younger brother did. A prodigal son before his genius had become evident; watching him wander back and forth between provincial editorial offices and the local cabarets, with an alert spirit and facile pen, living a disorderly life, one might have sworn that he would be drowned,



ENDRE ADY (1907)

Aladár Székely



THE TWO LEADING FIGURES OF THE 1900 LITERARY REVOLUTION,
ENDRE ADY AND MIHÁLY BABITS (1917)

Aladár Székely



ADY'S LAST PHOTOGRAPH, TAKEN AT CSUCSA (1918)

Emil Isac



MIKLÓS MELOCCO: ENDRE ADY (BRONZE, RED COPPER, 43 CM HIGH, 1970)

like so many others before and around him, in the morass of backward social and economic conditions, before being able to show his mettle. If his fate was different, this was certainly due to his genius and the strength of his calling, which carried him through all vicissitudes; but also to the fact that he arrived at the right moment, at a time when truth as it was lived and truth as it was written were separated by a widening gulf, and when an ever growing number of intellectuals expected new words, a proclamation and poetic transfiguration of their aspirations both instinctive and conscious. Ady was the man able to provide all this and as a true artist—he was able simultaneously to forge a new poetry, to overturn the established norms of taste, art and morality. And all this, as his contemporaries saw straight away, and Ady was the first to be conscious of, and to proclaim, was not the gratuitous rebellion of the artist; his rebellious conduct, his provocative actions and words had an object and a precise meaning in the social and political context.

Deliberately turning his back on the narrow and provincial nationalism and chauvinism of the ruling clique, this rebel whom academics and officials, including the all-powerful Prime Minister, treated as a decadent, perverted and rootless cosmopolitan forged a link with the revolutionary traditions of the people and of literature. Was he a Radical touched by Socialism, or a Socialist unable to free himself from the vestiges of bourgeois Radicalism? The question remains open, but does not lead far; Ady was at the same time a vitalist in the sense of Nietzsche, an outspoken individualist, and a political thinker who saw clearly that the future of mankind and of his country lay on the road of Socialism; a man who was moved by this conviction in spite of the incomprehension and pertiness which he met on the way to seek an alliance and cooperation with the masses and with their party.

*

If Ady had been only this, we would respectfully commemorate him, but we could not speak of a literary revolution led by him. His novelty did not consist so much in his ideas which were not yet commonplace, but were certainly not so rare as a quarter-century of counter-revolution would have liked to believe, but in the form his ideas and sentiments assumed. The first genuine symbolist in Hungarian poetry, Ady was directly responsible for creating a specifically national and personal symbolism.

This symbolism surpasses the French school mainly through the creation and use of a personal and national mythology—applied most frequently through evocative allusions—which need historical knowledge to be understood, something the foreign reader is rarely able or inclined to acquire. In this sense—but only in this—Ady's symbolism has something in common with Irish symbolism, especially with that of Yeats. In his political verse Ady was the heir of the bards and chroniclers of the sixteenth century, the *kuruc* popular revolutionaries of the seventeenth, the elegiacs of the eighteenth, and of Petőfi's revolutionary muse, but imitating from a distance the manner of each and often amalgamating them, his prophetic voice does not compare the present distress to a glorious past, but flays both the past and the present, projecting into a happy and glorious future the image of a popular and democratic Hungary.

In the elaboration—or rather in the revelation—of his political convictions, his journey to France and his experience of French society played a primary role; a much larger role than the influence of any foreign poet, French or other. In France he became aware of the truths of liberal democracy, he could feel its attractions and limitations. His experience of French social and political life convinced him that Hungary must aspire to democracy—of which she had known only a caricature in Austria—Hungary—and to surpass it immediately towards Socialism.

His Nietzschean philosophic convictions were inseparable from his political ideas and passions; but the poet was just as revolutionary in his personal feelings. He carried his experience, with crude words and rhythms, into the mawkish atmosphere of the salons: the experience of sensuality, of the brothels, of love as the struggle of the sexes, the sex act as a foreboding of death, and death as the transfiguration of carnal love. The lyricism of Ady still surprises us with its modernity, which is only slightly veiled by the gimcrackery of *art nouveau*. These new themes and sentiments were clothed in a new language accompanied by unprecedented rhythms. Ady invented a prosody specifically his own which he continued to refine until the end of his career through a crossing of the classical, mainly iambic, measure with traditional, rhythmic Hungarian verse.

*

Endre Ady was himself a revolutionary fact; but arriving as he did at a moment when the whole of society was fraught with change, his appearance acted as a catalyst. Literature again became a public concern, something passionate, seductive and repulsive at the same time. He divided the public into opposing camps, and opened the road for an entirely new literature. The first volume, in which he appeared in his full stature, came out in 1906; *Nyugat*, began to be published in 1908. These two dates marked the beginning of the revolution which radically changed the Hungarian literary scene, not only through the talents it revealed, but also and mainly by the effect of their revelation: everything that preceded and still surrounded them, became flat, colourless, *passé*. At that moment modern Hungarian literature came of age: from a literature showing almost half a century's time-lag it became at one leap contemporary.

One may doubt the correctness of this statement. To feel the influence of Baude-

laire, of Verlaine, of Jehan Rictus and such English poets as Browning and Swinburne, or of the Parnassians themselves—at the very moment when Western art was being shocked by the manifestos of the futurists—can this be called catching up? Is it not rather another demonstration of the chronic lag from which East European art suffers in general, and which represents the main obstacle to its entry into Western consciousness?

Yes and no: the lag and the handicap are obvious; but society, the generator and recipient of this literature, was itself lagging; timeliness is decided only in and by the social context. As I have already pointed out, foreign poets and prose writers were almost immediately mentioned and translated in Hungarian; but they began to have an echo only when kindred souls in the country itself responded. And this moment of resonance, which was at the same time the moment of the highest originality, was also the beginning of a modern autonomous Hungarian literature—a literature open to the four winds and closed to all simple imitation.

I have alluded several times to the gifted writers and poets who formed a group around Ady and *Nyugat*. I have also underlined the dominant fact of French and English influence. And this influence was authentic for each of them: for the young men of the turn of the century, to detach themselves from the predominance of German culture and turn instead towards the other countries of the West represented an act of independence or even rebellion, even if a number of them obtained their first Western modernist impressions from the artists of Vienna. The very title of the review implied this meaning, without exactly expressing its extent. The review itself, the importance of which in Hungarian literature can be compared only to that of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, which, incidentally, was founded in the same year; or to *Criterion* in England many years later did not offer to provide a precise explanation of its name.

It stood for social progress, large cities, democracy—modernity and modernism in all the accepted meanings of these terms. The editors—Ernő Osvát, enthusiast of liberalism in art; Ignóty, the refined critic and undefeatable polemicist of the review, who united artistic and political liberalism; Lajos Hatvany, a fervent admirer and supporter of Ady and a gifted critic—did, in fact, accept this meaning, and were unwilling to impose any limitations other than those of quality and achievement.

This explains the diversity of the talents and tendencies revealed in the review. Of the poets the names of Mihály Babits, Dezső Kosztolányi, and Árpád Tóth must be mentioned. Of the three, Babits was certainly the most important: from a brilliant imitator under the influence of Wordsworth and Swinburne, among others, he became, thanks to his sensibility, a poet of refined simplicity and intricate philosophy. Kosztolányi, the most versatile talent, whose prose perhaps surpasses his verse, was the most impressionist and the most impressionable of the three: he began by showing in succession the marked influence of half a dozen poets of different languages, and in the end arrived at a highly personal musicality and a clear and warm humanity. And Árpád Tóth, who willingly took to French decadence with all its distortions, devised a melancholic yet vigorous poetry in his attachment to progressive ethics.—And there are others who must be passed over, poets as important as Milán Füst, claimed by the moderns of our times as their ancestor, and Gyula Juhász, who after a brilliant beginning faded out embedded in the dullness of provincial life and the fevers of his own neurosis; and there are still others who might be mentioned as well.

Among prose writers the range was perhaps even wider. From the naturalism of Zsigmond Móricz, whose fictions covered practically the whole of society, depicting in the open light of day the antagonisms, conflicts, hates, and loves of the time, to Gyula Krúdy and his world iridescent with

nostalgic dreams and subtle irony; from the picturesque, provincial and metropolitan verve of Tersánszky to the grotesque humour, touching early the possibilities of the absurd, of Frigyes Karinthy, the contributors of the review, and members of the movement had a great and indelible importance.

It is impossible to here describe in detail the contribution of each of these writers. It is necessary to emphasize first the importance of Ady, who through his entry on the literary scene helped others to know themselves, and who enabled them to have their own personal voice by demonstrating by his example the possibility of artistic originality. Following this, one must stress the social and political importance of their movement and of their creative work. Few among them possessed the political clear-sightedness of Ady; not a few were apolitical, or had conservative inclinations. Their work and their movement had nevertheless a highly progressive political value: by throwing a new light on the world they helped their contemporaries to become conscious of their situation, and stimulated their desire to change it.

In this way, this literary movement created and carried simultaneously the dialectic of the truly great movements of the spirit: originating from the conditions and disturbances of society, assisting through its work and formulations in the birth of consciousness in the intelligentsia, it contributed indirectly but actively to the establishment of a revolutionary movement which helped to bring about the revolutions of 1918–19. Endre Ady, who had been gravely ill even during the war, died during the revolution, hailed by the latter as its poet and prophet; the poetic movement, the literary revolution ended when the arms of criticism were transformed into the criticism of arms.

The movement of the years between 1906 and 1918 had a decisive importance for Hungarian literature: this claim is recognized by all who know it whatever their politics. But I should like to hazard the guess that

the importance of this movement exceeds by far the limits of the Hungarian language. On the one hand, towards the East, the influence of Ady, has been decisive in the literatures of the neighbouring countries: Miroslav Krleža, Octavian Goga and others

have spoken of it with deep emotion. And for the West, the movement may be a useful lesson: the period and the movement demonstrate spectacularly and convincingly the interrelation between social forces and literary trends.

KÁLMÁN KULCSÁR

UNESCO AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

In the spring of 1974, Unesco convoked a conference of distinguished political scientists for the purpose of discussing major world problems, and how it might contribute to their solution. The resolutions adopted by the panel were then included in the middle- and long-range programme drafts prepared for the 19th general conference of Unesco to be held in Nairobi, in October-November 1976, in a considerably concretized form, indeed shaped into research and action programmes. It was in this form that they became the subject of debate in the various committees of the assembly.

The basic concept of these resolutions was the broadening of the new economic order into a new international "socio-humanistic order." This consideration had already appeared among the resolutions of the 18th general assembly in the following form: "...The establishment of a 'new international economic order' depends not only on political and economic factors, but also on socio-cultural factors, the role of which in development is constantly growing, and which are crucial in the struggle of

peoples against all forms of domination."¹ This formulation contains genuine problems of course, for taking account of the social, et al. relations of the new international economic world-order is not equivalent to striving for the establishment of a new economic *and* social order.

But—relying partially on the document prepared by the above-mentioned panel, which talks of a new social-human order, and that on the basis of social justice—the documents of the Unesco general Conference also speak of the expansion of the international economic order into an international-social order. That deserves serious consideration.

The documents unfortunately do not discuss just what this new international social order should consist of; nor do they discuss, for example, how it should relate to contemporary practice and the developmental goals of late capitalist and socialist societies. Nor is there anything on how the problems of keeping the peace—problems basic to any international economic or social order—are related to the efforts that Unesco wishes to support.

¹ See 18C/Resolution 12.II

I

In my realistic appraisal, there are two activities that might devolve on Unesco as a result of the efforts to actualize the "new international economic order."

The first has already appeared to some extent in the earlier resolution which I have previously referred to, and in some other Unesco documents as well.² It is to cooperate in the exploration of the new international economic order's social, political and cultural contexts and related factors and phenomena, as well as to point out the problems to be expected. For without a doubt, the establishment of the new international economic order is not merely an economic problem, even if the economic aspects will be predominant, for obvious reasons. If, as one Unesco document convincingly argues, "the future is not under control and the rational approach to socio-economic matters, to which programming and planning were tending, is being defeated by the hazards of the situation and the complexity of the factors involved in change,"³ then we must understand this complexity to include the present social and economic problems which are not merely "accidental" consequences of the situation, as well as the various "rationalizations" of the various social processes and actions the integration, or more accurately, the syncretization of which would be the genuinely "rational approach."⁴

The other possible task would seem to be simpler at first sight, but in reality it is much more complicated. For the establishment of the new international economic order can be conceived not only as an end, but also as

² For example, "Moving toward change: Some thoughts on the new international economic order." UNESCO, Paris, 1976.

³ *Ibid.* p. 15.

⁴ K. Kulcsár: Social planning and legal regulation. International Conference on Sociology of Law and Legal Sciences. Balatonszéplak (Hungary), September 20-25, 1976. The Institute of Sociology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, 1977.

means. One Unesco document, for example, states the following: "The very purpose of a 'new international economic order' goes beyond the economic sphere proper; it is directed not only to making the best use of things and sharing them out more fairly, but to developing all men and women, and every aspect of the individual, in a comprehensive cultural process, deeply permeated with values, and embracing the national environment, social relationships, education and welfare."⁵ If, however, the international economic order is called to the service of ends then we must work out those ends, or that system of ends whose accomplishment it is supposed to serve as means. And this is no simple task, precisely on account of the various countries' divergent social structures, social relations, values and the political aims appropriate to these, etc.

The problems of the world are manifold, of course, and even if we start from the above-mentioned premise of the exploration of the social, political and cultural factors presupposing the establishment of an international economic order, there would still be need for thematic selection, and even more for determining the specifics of Unesco activity in the social sciences.

Even if we entertain no illusions about the role of the sciences, including the social sciences, in the solution of the world's problems on the one hand, nor about the adequate possibilities or complete feasibility of the Unesco programmes on the other, we are nonetheless happy to see in the Unesco documents evidence of the increasing international awareness of the role of the social sciences. We are likewise glad to see Unesco's apparently ever more successful efforts to determine its own place among the international organizations, and its intentions to delimit its own proper social science activity. The most important, although not yet consistently applied, aspect of these efforts is the intention to treat the by and

⁵ *Moving toward change*, p. 19.

large multidimensional problems as integrated wholes. This circumstance is especially important if we consider that a significant portion of the problems discussed in Unesco's working papers also preoccupies UN itself, or some of its other specialized organizations. The problems of the development of rural areas comes under FAO, problems of population growth under the Population Council, human rights or the condition of women under other appropriate UN committees. The task of Unesco is evidently not to compete with these organizations and committees which are competent in their own areas of specialization, and can often mobilize great financial and intellectual forces. Unesco can approach these problems "in their world-wide context and in the light of their interdependence," that is, with an "integrative" perspective. It can point to their complexity beyond their immediate area of expertise, it can place them in a social context. Actually, this is simply recognition of the fact that every problem emerges in a social context, and can only be solved in social conditions with attention given to the effects of society. Such a complex social perspective can indeed become the special feature of the "Unesco approach," it can genuinely distinguish it from other UN organizations, and can circumscribe Unesco's characteristic profile and tasks. And here I would like to point out that this complex social perspective cannot be replaced by the moral, or even by the educational emphasis which is still a temptation in the formulation of Unesco documents. The sphere and tasks of morality and education must be considered just as much part of the complex social whole as any other phenomenon or problem.

If we approach the tasks of Unesco in this manner, and—I repeat—the documents and debates of the 19th general Conference showed definite signs of such an attitude, then economic and social planning together become significant for development (and auspicious signs of this are manifested in the

socialist countries). This circumstance further increases the significance of the social sciences, whose task is specifically to recognize and discover the phenomena and processes of that very reality which preconditions all problem-solving, decision-making and planning.

II

In view of the above, it is entirely proper that development—which justly occupies the central position in Unesco's relation to the social sciences—is treated in every document as a complex problem, that is, in addition to its economic aspects, its social and cultural bearings are also considered. It is also evident from the above that the so-called "western model of development"—as the middle-range working papers prepared for the 19th assembly have pointed out (and as a number of the assembly speakers have also emphasized)—are by no means universally applicable. On the other hand it is hardly realistic to say that this western model of development is simply identical with over-industrialization, and the statement of the middle-range programme draft to the effect that in the course of industrialization the social-humanistic aspects of development have been everywhere neglected could also be argued. Such a formulation of the social-humanistic aspects of development would seem in itself to be overgeneralized, a somewhat moralizing, undefined "humanistic" concept of this sort does not follow even from an anthropocentric conception of development. As history shows, there are a number of paths to economic development even if industrialization is at the base of it. The socio-historical context in which development takes place is by no means neutral when it comes to governmental or political frameworks of development, or its social consequences, or the way these are "handled." (The position briefly indicated here—but which has been voiced at the meeting—vis à

vis this section of the middle-range working papers, was supported in the debate by a number of speakers, from the USA to Nigeria.) But the "proper path of development" became a central problem of the assembly—with even greater emphasis than the middle-range working papers evinced. Beyond the generally accepted view whereby development must primarily be based on the exploitation and development of the individual countries' internal resources, the idea of safeguarding cultural identities was also justifiably raised—as it had already been at the previous assembly—and the problem of tradition also came up in a new form. In the director's introduction to the 19th General Conference middle-range working papers (the C/4) we can already find the following thought: "Inasmuch as it is rooted in tradition, culture has sometimes been regarded as an obstacle to modernization. But far from being a drawback, the fact that countries refuse to lose their identity by accepting alien models should be welcomed both from the national and from the global point of view." The new approach to the problem of traditions and of traditional cultures can be understood in two ways. One possibility is to take into consideration the traditional culture along with the other social qualities in the process of "modernization," which is essentially equivalent to realistic planning within the historically evolved social context as given, to forming this social reality in a manner which takes into account the conditioning forces of social and cultural relations. (For example, the attempts at modernizing the Ethiopian legal system clearly showed just how powerful these conditioning forces can be.⁶) Those Unesco programmes which approach the problem in this manner are truly realistic, as for example, the programme "on the conditions pertaining to public administration and management bodies for develop-

ment to the various socio-cultural contexts." (Let me add: it would be most important to also research this problem in terms of how legislation and the application of law contributes to furthering development.) But there is another possible approach as well and that is the integration of the traditional elements into the modernization process. This consideration then provides for the utilization of the traditional ties, values, etc., for the benefit of modernization, which would thus simultaneously preserve those elements most characteristic of the national or cultural identity. According to the Benin delegate, economic development cannot be divorced from a society's moral and spiritual growth and so, he said, his country must rely upon its own values in working out its own socialist developmental model. Although I consider this formulation extreme, the integration of certain traditional elements, or certain aspects of them into modern development, and the preservation thereby of a national, cultural identity—for every nation and people has produced in the course of its own development certain timeless, universally significant values—is a genuine concern of modern development. The question here is the critique of traditional elements, and that from two aspects—what is properly a culture's own value, and what is worthy of preservation even in the course of modernization. For it serves no purpose to preserve certain traditional values—values which could correct the obvious dead-ends of the "western model"—if the effort to preserve them leads only to the idealization of tradition. Problems of this sort are not new in the modernization of the developing countries—they have also come up from the second half of the nineteenth century on in the countries of East-Central Europe—although I will not expand here into a discussion of what possible solutions they might have produced. The problem appeared in Hungary too, in a number of areas, from law to architecture, and a certain type of experimental solution was worked out in

⁶ See Beckstrom, J.: "Handicaps of Legal-Social Engineering in a Developing Nation." — *American Journal of Comparative Law*. 1974.

the "Bartók model," which however has not yet been realized in its social dimensions.⁷ But this problem is much too broad for me to analyse here in an article which has Unesco's relation to the social sciences for its topic. I merely wish to call attention to one possible area of Unesco activity.

III

The integrated anthropocentric development naturally requires the solution of a multitude of problems, the majority of which are discussed in the middle- and short-range working papers of Unesco, although they are not generally discussed in relation to developmental problems, but as separated matters of detail, and not in terms of their most important features. Nevertheless, a somewhat more realistic picture emerged during the debates of the general assembly. A number of delegates stressed, for example, that the problem of developing the agricultural areas of the developing countries should be given priority, as a number of factors which significantly contribute to the formation of social inequalities—illiteracy, the disadvantages of women, overpopulation—are most serious in the rural areas, where technical and intellectual underdevelopment jointly contribute to conditions of cumulative disadvantage. Unfortunately, neither the working papers nor the debate dealt with this key question of rural areas

⁷ Let me here quote the words of Ferenc Erdei, Secretary-General of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences who died a few years ago, on Béla Bartók, or on the potentials of the Bartók model: "He is... the augur of coming prospects. He managed somehow to synthesize the ancient and the modern... He showed that this is where the age, the fate of humanity progressing in its history must be grasped... I am convinced that the genius of Bartók is the perspective, the way out, the potential release from fate for the Third World as well. Bartók is valid for the whole of the underdeveloped world."

in a sufficiently sensitive manner. The C/4 Document did recognize the necessity of the integrated development of such areas, and this is indeed the appropriately modern approach. But it would be a mistake to identify without further ado villages with the traditional, and cities with the modern, as was implied both by the working papers and by the comments at the assembly. Villages are a settlement type which fulfil many functions, some of which can be modern and dynamic, while the city also has some "declining" functions. The integrated development of village areas therefore should be based on their dynamic functions. This consideration is related to that partiality of the Document whereby it treats agriculture as practically the sole economic pursuit of rural areas and does not mention other economic activities (such as mining, industry, transportation, tourism, etc.). Another important consideration is the fact that agriculture itself is rather different from country to country in its structure, its technical development and possible growth. That village populations may expand their occupational potentials by commuting to work in a provincial centre was only brought up on account of other related problems, and then only in its problematic aspects. Nor was the establishment of a network of institutions to ensure the quality of supplies to villages discussed. And yet it is clear that the economic development of these areas has a decisive role in the creation of a comprehensive system of socio-political goals. Thus the complex planning of these areas' development and the establishment of its bases could be a most important part of the programme. But the presuppositions and the programme itself are one-dimensional in that they ignore the social environment and the differences that spring from it which characterize the village areas in particular countries. Yet the objectives and the means for their accomplishment as well as their mere potentials depend very much on the characteristics of the given social structure.

In a certain sense, the new approach to peace and human rights in the middle-range documents and in the course of the debates during the 19th general Conference also indicate the improving position of the social sciences. The problems of strengthening the peace and human rights has occasioned large-scale debates at previous meetings, rarely however touching the merits of the case. The delegates of the developed capitalist countries generally considered it to be a political question beyond the scope of Unesco, while the socialist countries treated it as a special problem, and emphasized primarily its political aspects. This offered few opportunities for understanding or agreement, especially since the developing countries—with their own particular priorities—showed little interest in these problems.

The 19th general assembly showed a fortunate change of direction in these questions as well. The programme and the majority of delegates recognized the fact that the question of peace and of human rights touch all Unesco activities, but also the fact that peace and human rights are primarily social problems to be studied scientifically where Unesco is concerned. As the Soviet delegation formulated it in the course of the debates, Unesco's efforts toward the strengthening of peace must manifest themselves not in abstract political principles, but in concrete research plans and action programmes. And truly, in the whole approach to the subject one could already feel that the determination of the tasks related to keeping and strengthening the peace would also have to be derived from the new profile of Unesco as I have drawn it above. Let me quote from the director's introduction: "In stressing the social and cultural aspects, there is no intention whatsoever of committing Unesco to some sort of superficial idealism which would lead only to ineffectiveness or to what might be called 'other worldliness' that leaves the various facts of economic life

out of account." Of course, this perspective is to be applied in the course of approaching any subject, thus questions such as peace or human rights are also not to be thought of separated from the economic order. That is, a truly effective approach to the problems of peace is related to the thorough analysis of international economic relations, phenomena and processes. But this perspective did not sufficiently assert itself in the programmes either theoretically or in the concrete objectives, nor did the debates alter this situation. True, the need for sociological research into conflicts was stated, as was indeed the fact that the problems of peace are related to the "unequal distribution" of potentials, but it was also emphasized by contrast, that it is precisely the disclosure of the facts of "unequal distribution" which most affects the policies of the individual states, and so, science has no easy task. But on the concrete agenda—whether it meant the development of international law, or its adaptation to new international economic and social relations, or the initiation of the international peace-research programme (Interpeace), international cooperation, the development of a joint information and documentation centre, that is, educational programmes to aid international understanding—on all these points there seemed to be general agreement. Research on the problems of peace—for which Unesco has already done much, and continues to make significant efforts—must indeed be coordinated. It is important to keep track of the results, but it is also necessary to orient these researches in the exploration of the economic aspects of peace on the one hand, and of international conflicts on the other, with special attention to the problems of the emerging economic order which organically embraces the entire world.

Although not in the working papers—which contain a considerable amount of dispersed ideas and programmes of lesser significance—but in the debates on human rights, there also appeared a new Unesco

activity's special feature. This can perhaps be stated in the following way: that research and action meant to guarantee human rights should not treat man apart from his social relations, divorced from his role and place a particular section of society, in his habitat, in the relations of settlement, etc. (The same views were manifested in the debates on the position of women as well.) From this it would seem to follow that attention should be concentrated on the social dimensions, on the social problems associated with the assertion of human rights, therefore, not primarily on its legal aspects, and not merely on education alone. That would be appropriate to Unesco's profile as interpreted above. We pointed this out in the debates, as also the fact that Unesco's narrower profile as a cultural-educational organization, therefore its narrower "professional" competency calls for its participation in the problematics of cultural rights, that is, in the elaboration of these rights, and of the problems and guarantees of their enforcement.

IV

The working papers, the reorganization of the Secretariat and the assembly debates all show that Unesco intends to emphasize the development of the social sciences to an even greater extent in the future. This clearly manifested effort—in which the member states more or less generally shared—can be traced back to the recognition that the politics which expresses itself in the formation of societies cannot be effective in the context of today's social relations without a sound foundation in social-scientific research. Yet—as a number of the delegates at the 19th assembly have pointed out—the progress of the social sciences has not kept pace with the development of science as a whole. On all counts, therefore, it is an important duty to develop the social sciences as "academic" disciplines—this was the general opinion of the Conference—be-

cause only in this manner can the preconditions be created for their practical application, that is their assistance to politics

Both in the documents and in the comments at the assembly a generally accepted basic premise was expressed that Unesco's activity should include propagating the use of social-scientific research and results by the policy-makers of the various member states. The further tasks related to this were defined in the following.

There is no need for Unesco to organize large-scale social-scientific research (excepting the continuing area studies in the developing countries), rather it should aid member states in the formation of their own appropriate social-science policies, and in the organization of effective social-science research centres. The various regional social-science centres already in existence should be further developed, or aided in their development (as, for example, the Viennese Centre in Europe, the activity of which was held in generally high esteem), so that with their aid, social-scientific research activity could be supported in the individual countries, and especially in the developing countries with bibliographies, and documentation and statistical services. Another important task is the development of methodology, especially the elaboration of possible comparative methodological tools, indices, etc. As a first step, unified indices must be worked out then, integrating these into a comprehensive system, a unified data system would be developed for all aspects of social progress (economic, social, cultural) and, based on this, applicable techniques of model-building would be elaborated. In this last the social-scientific application of dynamic systems-analysis could be particularly useful, gaining the co-operation of the Laxenburg-based International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, which is supported equally by the socialist and the capitalist countries.

In addition to the development of the research bases and tools for the social sciences,

another important task for Unesco can be designated as the further strengthening of international relations among social research scientists. For, although in the course of the debates it became a generally accepted premise that every country's social problems can be best understood by the social scientists working within that country, and due to this Unesco should primarily support their work in order to solve those problems, still—as the debate on development considered important the integration of the experience gained from individual paths of development—so it seems equally necessary to share and evaluate together the various countries' experience in social-scientific research. Unesco—with the aid of the various “non-governmental organizations” (by and large international scientific associations)—must provide more and more opportunities for the mutual exchange of information on research activity (for example, through the development and improvement of the work of the *International Social Science Journal*), as well as more opportunities for conferences and meetings among researchers, and opportunities for open debate.

Finally, one last thought. The working papers had little to say on these questions, but the problems and conditions for the utilization of social-scientific results were raised in the discussion. Some delegates pointed out, for example, that the results of social-scientific research are not infrequently “unhappy” from the point of view of governments, therefore their utilization is highly problematic from the outset. Therefore, the terms of reception should be investigated and mutual understanding promoted, perhaps through open debate between researchers and those who would eventually utilize the results of their efforts. For truly, if Unesco hopes to promote the cooperation of the social sciences in policy-making—and considers this its key task—it would be most realistic to approach the job from both sides: working toward strengthening the social sciences in the individual countries, helping to elaborate a social-science policy appropriate to the needs of scientific social and political formations, but also contributing to the exploration of the conditions of reception, that is to understanding between researchers and the utilizers of research results.

MAGDA HOFFMANN

HOUSEHOLD BUDGETS

Economists have always taken a keen interest in the financial management of households as a help in forecasting demand. The Department of Marketing and Market Research of the Karl Marx University of Economics in Budapest initiated with the support of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences a three year project examining a representative sample of households in order to obtain information on consumption, way of life, standards of supply, family plans etc. The aim of research was to obtain more

detailed and more complete information than available in published statistics, since the subjective and human factors that exercise great influence on the ways in which the living conditions of families change are only indirectly reflected in the data of production and sales.

In addition to studying factors of household management the structure of expenditure, the proportion of spending money and savings have also been examined. The results of household management are represented in

the experiment in the form of the quantity and age of durables, housing conditions and ownership of cars. The successes and failures of income use are dependent, among other things, on attitudes towards financial management.

The 1650 households involved represent different social strata. When considering income, the families' gross intake in money and the substantial and regular social benefits paid to them in cash (old age pension, child care allowance, etc.) were reckoned with.

Family income

The position of the family head in the social division of labour is no longer the sole factor determining differences in income. The examination showed the families of professional people to have the highest income. Workers' households had 12 per cent less income than those of professional men but they earned 5 per cent more money than white collar workers. The figure for peasants was virtually identical with that for workers. Families in which the head is not an active earner, were found to have the lowest income of all. The wife makes a sizeable contribution to the higher income of professional family since, in most of the cases, she also holds a degree or is well-paid white collar worker. Non-working wives are rarest among members of the professions. Almost one third of the wives of workers stay at home and the rest usually do not earn much. In 20 per cent of the families where the husband is a white collar worker his wife looks after the home. Thus even if the husband's contribution in a workers' family is more substantial than that of a white collar worker, the latter's wife more or less makes the difference.

Children of professional men are rarely in employment in spite of the fact that differences in numbers of children are small. The children of professional people generally attend full-time educational establishments

and most of them leave home fairly early with the financial support of their parents. More working class and white collar children earn their own living. About half of the women in rural areas look after the home and household plots. Half of the children earning their own living live at home. In rural areas parents do not rely on their children's income; they can do without it and let then save up for their own homes and its furnishings. In Budapest and in the provincial towns the families are harder hit when a child in employment leaves the parental home.

It became apparent that the income of the head of the family is the most decisive in the financial standing of the family—this applies, in particular, to rural areas—for his share, on the average, of the total income is around 50 per cent (plus or minus 10 per cent), while the rest of the money is provided by the other members of the family.

Family expenditure

It became obvious in the course of the survey that the international categories of expenditure would have to be adjusted to the structure of Hungarian consumption. That is why amounts spent on a car, building lots for homes, or holiday cottages and on short term loan repayments (hire-purchase) were considered recurrent expenditures. This is the way in which the maintenance costs of the major investments are rendered measurable. The movement of the share of income described as freely disposable, which is indispensable for the determination of expectable demand trends can be followed appropriately if non-primary needs are also reckoned with. The following categories of expenditure were established:

1. general expenses, rent or monthly repayments of housing loans, heating, electricity and gas, transport, kindergarten contribution, costs of schooling, television and radio, telephone, insurance and so on.

2. food luxury and hygiene items, detergents, washing and cleaning.

3. maintenance, short term hire-purchase and expenditure on gardens and building lots. In addition non-fixed expenses were also included such as money spent on clothing, entertainment, furnishings, looks etc. The money deposited in the savings bank is also here classified.

The structure of expenditure is subject to the influence of a host of factors. Here I shall confine myself to the way the structure changes in the event of an increase in income. In this case there is, as a rule, a decrease in the proportion of the money spent in the first two categories in favour of the third. (There is little if any difference in the amount of the income allocated to category 1. between high and low income households, a fact attributable to the Hungarian housing policy) this corresponds to international trends; in other words, simultaneously with the rise in a country's national income and the development of the forces of production, a decreasing proportion of higher household's income is spent on food, and a rising sum is spent on meeting secondary requirements. This is illustrated in the following table:

Apart from the figures for services, the structure of expenditure in Hungary is most similar to that of the Netherlands, even the trend of changes is identical.

The ratio of services is low in Hungary. They are subsidized for social policy reasons. That is why the costs born by individuals amount to some 50 or 60 per cent of the actual expenses. The changes that have taken place in the structure of expenditure in countries richer and bigger than Hungary serve as a forecast of what can be expected in this country. It must also be added that the inflation of recent years has most certainly had a major influence on the spending of people. It is likely that in the near future price rises in Hungary will delay the transformations under way; less dynamism can be reckoned with although the intensity of savings did not slacken in 1976.

Group No 3. was given an important role as the increase exercises an effect on non-fixed expenditure. This sort of spending is constant only in high income families.

A detailed examination of group No. 3 reveals differences among consumer structures of various sections of society.

The car and holiday home plots figure high in the spending of professional people,

The structure of expenditure

	Hungary		Britain		The Netherlands		USA	
	1965	1975	1961	1970	1963	1958	1969	
food	40.0	32.3	24.4	20.2	36.3	26.2	26.3	21.3
clothing, etc.	13.8	13.4	9.7	8.5	13.0	11.2	8.5	8.1
consumer durables	7.5	8.9	8.0	7.4	9.8	9.9	7.8	9.7
services	12.1	12.2	23.3	26.1	38.0	46.0	38.6	39.6

Sources: *Háztartásstatisztika* 1965/1975 KSM Budapest (Household statistics 1965/1975. Central Statistical Office, Budapest)

Britain: Social Trends. 1972. London.

Netherlands: Statistical Yearbook of the Netherlands 1973.

USA: Cochran-Eldridge: Employment and Personal Consumption Expenditures. Monthly Labour Review. 1972/3

their place being taken by building plots in the case of workers and peasants. In this section of the family budget professional people spend least on monthly instalments. This is ascribable either to the fact that they are appropriately equipped or that they pay in cash. Peasants take maximum advantage of the instalment plan—this is a new custom—and the instalment obligations of the working class are not insignificant other.

According to international experience the families are generally in the habit of spending the money released after meeting the last instalment on buying durables, that is to say again make on payments.

The extent to which keeping a car influences consumer spending was one of the problems raised. Owning a car is not necessarily typical of high income groups. However, in families where running a car accounts for a comparatively large proportion of spending very small amounts are spent on food, there are few or no instalments to be paid, and the ratio of income allowed for covering non-fixed expenses is the highest. The average costs of keeping a car however will not influence the structure of consumption of families with an average income.

The part of the income free to be disposed of is spent on group 3. and on the category of non-fixed expenses. The proportion amounts to some 22 to 25 per cent of income and in this respect there is no great difference either among the different sections or those with different incomes. In order to make appropriate demand forecasts it is useful to know changes to be brought about in the proportion of freely disposable money by an increase in income.

In general, the growth of the ratio of the first two groups of spending is smaller than that of income and families find it increasingly easier to pay for industrial goods. The ratio of the freely disposable amount grows at a lower rate, but normally it follows that of the growth of income. This rate corresponds to the way in which classified needs are

satisfied. The way of life becomes more modern, more money is spent on clothing, entertainment, travelling and buying new household goods. Smaller sums are spent on food and more on services. All this constitutes additional burden in group 3. and, as a result, the rate at which freely disposable money accumulates is slower.

Equipment and standard of provisions

The extent to which people are provided with homes as well as the composition of durables in terms of their type and age are two of the major components of the standard of living. In this field there are several reasons moulding and modifying the ranking list of requirements. The most essential is the home which is undisputably of No. 1. priority. The home is of a dual nature for it restricts and calls for new purchases at the same time. The results obtained by this research project are identical with those of the 1973 micro-census. 71 per cent of households own their own homes. In Budapest, almost one third of the population own their home, two thirds of the people in provincial towns do so, 92 per cent in rural areas. On January 1st, 1974 some 20 per cent of the owners still had instalments to pay. Over three quarters of the homes with no instalment to be paid were purchased after 1945.

Diverse examinations of the stock and age of durables show that in spite of the detectible differences there is a trend of levelling up which is determined rather by the magnitude of and increase in income than social affiliation. Those earning middle incomes take the standards of the higher income group as an example to be followed while they in turn act in much the same way for those with low incomes.

Since 1960, the supply of durables can be regarded as adequate. During the 1960s Budapest households acquired half of the durables they have at their disposal today;

the population of provincial towns purchased 40 and village people 30 per cent. It follows that washing machines, for example, are now often fairly old and their replacement is overdue, the demand for vacuum cleaners and refrigerators is growing with constant intensity. The television set is obviously the most popular of all. The level to be reached in 1975 in terms of households being equipped with washing machines and TV was exceeded in 1974.

To facilitate comparison data from some West European countries are given in the following table.

*Forms of the family attitude
towards money management
and savings*

Ways in which income is used differ from family to family and they are dependent on attitudes towards money management, the methods of savings and of distributing income, the forms of handling money and the character of plans for new acquisitions. For this reason there are differences in the level of equipment which bring about differences in the way of life in most of the cases. 57 per cent of the families have savings. On December 31st, 1976 savings deposited

The number of some important durables per 100 households in Hungary

	white collar			worker		
	households					
	1965	1970	1975	1965	1970	1975
radio sets	100	150	177	95	126	150
TV sets	59	83	96	46	79	93
washing machines	70	81	89	54	80	90
refrigerators	21	65	90	9	45	79
motorcycles	10	13	14	13	17	22
cars	7	15	33	2	5	14

Sources: Háztartásstatistika (Household Statistics) 1965, 1970, 1975 KSH (Central Statistical Office) Budapest.

The number of essential durables per 100 households

	Netherlands		West Germany		France	
	1960	1970	1962	1969	1963	1970
TV sets	87	115	40	80	27	70
washing machines	75	70	—	—	31	57
refrigerators	86	83	60	90	41	80
cars	75	80	30	50	39	58

Sources: Statistical Yearbook of the Netherlands 1973. Wirtschaft und Statistik 1969/9. Annuaire Statistique de la France. 1972.

with the National Savings Bank amounted to 92,700 million forints. Different sums are saved in different ways. The question of "how" exercises considerable influence on "how much". The methods of saving are hardly dependent on the social affiliations of the head of the family. 14 per cent of households reserve a fixed sum of money for future investment each month while the majority save up as much as is left after meeting current expenses. In general, people managing their finances on the basis of the principle of "what is left" do not get as far as the others, for their average annual savings are smaller than those saving on a regular basis. There are people saving when the occasion arises (random savers), for instance, they can reckon with a larger amount of money in addition to their normal monthly income or they obtain a sum unexpectedly. This applies to high income group and rural people, persons whose income is composed of a constant and varying amount of money. This sort of random saving is most common amongst virtually all sections of the rural population presumably because they sign contracts for fattening livestock or sell their goods on the market. Most certainly the professional people and workers living in rural areas also obtain extra income periodically, but even if they do not, the village environment they live in exercises a pull on their attitude towards saving. On the average, village people's annual savings exceed those of inhabitants of provincial towns or Budapest; even if those saving regularly are fewer in number in the rural areas, per family they save more money per month on the average than those living in other communities.

Research revealed a mixed type of saving. For example, a family deposits a certain amount of money with the bank, thus saving money towards a car or a home. Once they acquired the object of concern they form into random savers, a type they must have been before saving money for a specific

target. Families can be educated for different forms of saving, a sort of training that can be promoted by improving the readiness to buy things on hire-purchase. According to our observations once a family embarked on a savings programme for one reason or another, let us say they tie down a certain proportion of their income for a longer spell of time in instalment payments this form of money management came to be so closely associated with the family in question that they continue to save even after.

Hire-purchase or cash?

It is common to every economic activity that needs desires and ideas, however realistic they might be, cannot be met overnight. An exception to this is the almost unbelievable case when someone wins one or two million forints in the pools or inherits a large sum of money. But even in cases like this the time factor comes into play since the building of a dream villa or purchasing a dream car and the structure of supply all raise obstacles in the way of acquisition. Thus the time factor may well prolong the fulfilment of demands on which an influence is exercised by the magnitude of the freely disposable amount or that of savings. Creating a more comfortable, cultured and civilized way of life is a healthy demand common to every human being. In satisfying this demand the income at disposal plays as important a role as the highly complex individual factors.

In the attitude of Hungarian households steering clear of debts is a predominant factor even today though objective conditions no longer appear to justify it. A person managing her household properly can safely rely on loans for the accomplishment of her ideas; she is not forced to postpone meeting demands till cash becomes available.

The possibilities of acquiring things on hire-purchase and the range of goods obtainable under favourable conditions widens

every year. It is beyond doubt that advertising as well as the simplification ease with which credit can be obtained makes people more inclined to buy goods on hire-purchase. Nevertheless empirical data are evidence to the effect that the population fail to take advantage of this science for meeting their requirements, to the degree warranted by income.

A considerable proportion of people are still reluctant to undertake the obligations of paying in instalments just because of past negative implications though the magnitude of the interest and the debt, with the interest amounting to 12 per cent on the average, depending on the term of the expiration of the loan, may also constitute a certain barrier especially in the case of low income groups.

There is no doubt about the truth of the very general and human attitude that once a certain standard is reached this is an inspiration for further improvements and for satisfying new demands. Better conditions, as a rule, induce more rational management, making it possible at the same time to run with greater ease. Poorly equipped families are overly cautious in taking a decision, they tend to be more ready to make compromises in their requirements and since their actual experience concerning a more comfortable and cultured way of life are of too limited a range they do not consider the lack of certain articles and services which they have not yet experienced as a sacrifice.

This state of affairs, however, is only of a transitional character and the elimination of differences at a faster rate is not only necessary but also possible. One of the means to this end is the improvement of the readiness to buy on hire-purchase which is simultaneously an important factor for a more systematic management of the households.

Over the past years the hire-purchase scheme has been considerably widened in the case of certain products. For example, in the year of this research project 61 per cent of television sets, 32 per cent of washing

machines and 39 per cent of refrigerators were acquired on hire-purchase. This several times over exceeds 5 or 10 year old figures, but there are still certain sections that do not take advantage of this opportunity. The families expressed an opinion on their own management. Half of them were satisfied 81 per cent considered their system to be good because they had no debts. The rest are satisfied because they do not spend money unnecessarily, they are quite well off their living conditions continue to improve and the way they manage money is exemplary. Only 6 per cent of the subjects thought of their financial conditions as poor, another 7 per cent was of the view that they did not know how to manage their household and only one per cent complained that there was something wrong with the way they managed money.

It is difficult to interpret the argument that money is not spent unnecessarily. What is unnecessary for one person may well be a daily necessity for another. In Hungary women bear most of the responsibility for household management and the ways in which income is spent. This can be traced back to economic history. Before the liberation the division of labour within the family made it necessary for the wife who, did not earn or if she did, was badly paid, to make her contribution to the upkeep of the family by appropriate management of the resources in addition to performing housework.

Today more people within one household earn their living than before. It is easier to manage a joint income and to set up a ranking list for the demands of the household and the requirements of individual family members. In 80 per cent of the households income is managed on a collective basis. In spite of this, however, one person carrying the can for the way money is used. In the majority of cases the wife has to do this. The wife of a professional man tends to be reluctant to bear this responsibility since in most cases she is also the holder of a degree or well-paid herself. On the other hand, the

wives of workers and peasants undertake this job without a single word of complaint and the reasons given by both the husbands and wives are that the woman has to bear increased responsibility for money matters because this is a long standing family tradition; spending calls for thorough consideration and women are superior in this field; husbands are more comfort-loving, that is why they delegate this duty to the wife; they have confidence in the considerate management of the women; wives what's more are generally more resolute and can take decisions easier on problems relating to the management and allocation of family incomes. The point is that usually women are ready to bear this sort of responsibility and at their own free will. They feel responsible for catering for every possible aspect of the family. Normally, they are more practical and are more adequately prepared to play this role. Moreover women think that handing money combined with the results of emancipation achieved to date strengthens their position within the family.

The research done has naturally disclosed a host of useful information as to the so far hardly known or only assumed aspects of household management. It assists in reviewing family consumption in its width and depth and in obtaining a more complete picture of what characterizes the Hungarian way of life.

Finally, it must be said that the 1650 families selected for the programme were

visited and interviewed in three successive years. The interviews were carried out by students of the Department of Marketing and Market Research of the Karl Marx University, Budapest with the aid of printed questionnaires. Very simple methods were adopted for establishing confidence. The interviews were made carried out at the end of January each year. The target families were told of the visit to come in Christmas and the New Year greetings mailed by the Department. It is attributable to this that only an insignificant number of the selected families (their proportion is too low to be expressed in figures) refused to cooperate. In general, they sent back word that they would be pleased to see the students and in many cases they suggested a date that would be most convenient so that the interviewers could not twin up in vain.

The fact that students who are popular were the interviewers in a large measure accounted for the readiness to cooperate. Normally, the behaviour of university students does not run counter the norms of the society in Hungary. There is no record of the students' behaviour conflicting with social norms in a way causing damage to their image.

Since these students were future economists and marketing specialists, they participated in the project with enthusiasm doing reliable work. It meant both practice and the chance to earn a not insubstantial fee.

THE REGRETS OF PROGRESS

Six years ago the Budapest Municipal Council started work on a large housing project at Újpalota, on the north-eastern fringe of the metropolitan area, about 10 kilometres from the centre. The aim was to build 15,000 flats and the necessary facilities, schools, kindergartens, food and other shops within five years.

The 15,000 flats were completed at the appointed time and 63,000 persons, something like 3 per cent of the Budapest population, went to live in those 1.36 square kilometres. They poured in from all over the city. One should add that new housing projects are continuously in construction, though few are on the Újpalota scale.

Újpalota is as big as a town but it has no past and the population is heterogeneous. The new residents brought with them their old customs and ways, often of a rural nature—and their clash with modern conditions has been the source of many conflicts since.

After the Second World War Budapest suffered a serious housing shortage. Nothing had been built during the war, 10 per cent of the existing stock had perished or became uninhabitable and 16 per cent suffered serious damage.

A great many dwellings had, what is more, been substandard well before the war. More than half of the flats in Budapest had only one room in addition to the kitchen, 25,000 consisted of a single room, 37,000 had no convenience and no running water. Subtenants made up 23 per cent of the population. Tens of thousands of families lived in miserable hovels, basement flats and slums.

Rents were high and many could not afford them. After the war the situation was reversed: low rents meant that everybody wanted to move into a larger and better appointed home.

The country's financial conditions did

not allow for the satisfaction of these needs and tension between the possible and the desirable grew.

In addition, the population increased excessively in the post-war years whereas housing construction did not get off the ground till the sixties. Consequently housing shortage became a serious social problem.

Since the early seventies tremendous efforts have been made to alleviate it. Throughout the country large-scale housing projects sprung from the ground. 280,000 persons moved into new, up-to-date flats between 1971 and 1975 in Budapest alone—but another 140,000 are still on the waiting lists—and their claims are as legitimate. (The total population of Budapest is 2 million.)

Municipal Council forecasts predict an end to the still oppressive housing shortage in Budapest between 1980 and 1985. But already in the ongoing five-year plan period 90,000–100,000 flats will be built for 320,000–350,000 persons. This means that in the ten years from 1970 to 1980, 600,000–650,000 persons have moved and will move into a new home built either by the state or by themselves. But even this does not give a full picture of what is happening. Mobility is greater because new tenants move into obsolete but still habitable houses in the place of those who have moved into a modern flat.

As I mentioned, the majority of the population had been doomed to involuntary and miserable stability because of the existing poor housing conditions and therefore the impact of this swift change on their living conditions is all the more spectacular.

The urgency and dimensions of the housing programme require large-scale methods. Therefore free spaces had to be selected where the prefab high-rise buildings

could be erected without the need to by-pass old houses. Such free areas existed only on the outskirts of the city, and in the beginning the new housing estates were all built there. Later, however—as the distance from the city centre grew—the building up of these areas proved to be increasingly difficult because of the shortage or total absence of public utilities.

Then new housing estates were built in certain central parts of the town where the houses were 80–100 years old and deteriorating to slums or where they were dilapidated and had no architectural value. Pulling them down made room for new buildings.

Such ideas were contested since they meant a diminishing of the housing stock because the inhabitants of the demolished houses had to be accommodated in new flats. Nevertheless, the Budapest reconstruction plan was accepted and soon demolition work was under way. The decisive argument in favour of this plan was that the necessary public utilities existed, and that these houses were ripe for the pick-axe.

Újpalota is an example of building on free space in the outskirts. These were open fields with relatively few dilapidated houses. The composition of the population is in many respects different from that of earlier housing estates. There are relatively more from lower income groups and more large families. The latter is mainly the consequence of the government decree stipulating that large families must be given adequate homes as a matter of urgency.

These families who, in their majority, had lived in unhealthy one-room-kitchen or one-room flats without any convenience have now climbed 3–4 steps at one leap. This arrangement, as we shall see, had not only positive results, it became also the source of conflicts.

The other special feature here is that families who had been living in small cottages with gardens, their own or rented, found themselves suddenly in modern high-rise flats. Most of them did not find themselves

in Újpalota as a culmination of their dreams. Their small houses were pulled down. For them adjustment to the new environment was a great shock just because they had not chosen it.

About 35 per cent of the families in Újpalota belong to this category.

When studying the impact of mobility on ways of life one should concentrate on these 20,000–25,000. Changes in living conditions are most conspicuous in their case. These people have preserved their desire for human contacts, and their nostalgia for the old, more intimate social relationships is still alive after some years in their new homes.

*

Slummification in Budapest has certain special aspects. Owing to the enforced stability of the population due to housing shortage physical deterioration was not always followed by moral degradation. In some districts where physical deterioration was almost complete the population's composition, attitudes, and morality were identical with or only slightly different from those of the average, in some slums however lumpenproletarians tended to fill the dilapidated blocks. There is a wide range between these two extremes; hence, however narrow the earlier circumstances of the newcomers may have been, there is a marked difference between them depending on their earlier way of life.

The 8th district, Józsefváros, close to the centre of town, did deteriorate into a slum. The proportion of lowly paid people and of retired labourers is high and half the population are recent immigrants from rural areas. There are areas with a high proportion of Gypsies and lumpenproletarians.

A few years ago a sociological survey*

* Ferenc Nemes–Iván Szelényi: *A lakóhely mint közösség* (Domicile as Community). Akadémiai, Budapest, 1967. Part II. *Lakásvizonyok és lakóelvárások a Józsefvárosban* (Housing Conditions and Expectations in the Józsefváros), pp. 163–201.

was conducted in the "outer" Józsefváros, that is the area beyond the Great Boulevard. It was ripe for demolition already then.

One of the questions put was whether the subject wished to move from the crowded district and its obsolete houses and if so, where to? The answers were surprising: although most people were dissatisfied with their home only a minority was dissatisfied with the environment. Those who had moved in from villages were especially attached to it. The district's deteriorated state motivated dissatisfaction but there were also factors of attachment: the district's central position, its friendly atmosphere and closeness to the job.

The answers to the question where they would like to move showed they dreamt of a house and garden but most people opted for the crowded centre—especially labourers, the retired amongst them—and all sections of society put new housing estates last on the list.

This showed that the later aversion had its root, to some extent, in earlier prejudice. People had a preconceived idea of a vast agglomeration of concrete where people lived in isolation and were detached from their familiar community.

The other type of cleared slums were the tenements and "temporary" hut-agglomerations built for the needy between the two wars. The Great Depression, unemployment and pauperization had driven 40,000–50,000 who were unable to pay the high rents to such slums.

The largest developed in the 9th and 10th districts. Some had been pulled down long ago, but the notorious Sing-Sing, e.g., survived until recently in the 10th district on Bihari and Ceglédi streets. 5,000–6,000 human beings lived there in 960 flats in inhuman conditions.

The inhabitants had belonged to a defined social group even before the war including a number of lumpenproletarians: nevertheless, the main factor had been the force of circumstances which left no other choice but the slum to most.

After the war things changed. Younger workers with qualifications, in regular employment, left and even in the worst periods of the housing shortage migration was quite strong here. Respectable families however preferred having no flat of their own rather than live there. So those who had gone away were replaced with drifters and the sort of village families who lacked any notion of civilized life. Delinquency soon spread.

Thus institutional help contributed to further deterioration so that finally the only solution was razing the buildings to the ground, something made inevitable by their state of preservation as well.

In the course of reconstruction so many families had to be moved from one part of the town to another that it was not always possible to take into consideration all aspects in the distribution of flats. As far as possible demands, needs, and financial resources were taken into account and the most disreputable families at least were excluded from the new housing estates and rehoused elsewhere. However there were other families who had ways that are a long way from what can be called civilized. But they passed through the sieve and many of them were accommodated in new housing estates.

Two hundred families from there moved to Újpalota: mostly decent working people who had accepted to live in the slum because they had no other choice at the time—but a number of them had spent all their life in that environment and this has left a mark on their way of life.

The new flat offered these families a chance to change their way of life completely. The flat was larger and modern and the whole environment was changed. In their old homes their relations with neighbours had been intolerably noisy and disordered. They had no emotional links with their old environment and were happy to come to the new place.

Nevertheless, the change was a heavy trial for them and five years were not enough for adjustment in the case of many families.

According to a survey the inhabitants feel that about 5 per cent of the families in Újpalota belong to this category—of course they did not come all from the 10th district slum but many came from a similar environment. Their negative impact on the community, on order and cleanliness, and on moral conditions is much greater than their proportion would warrant.

All these people from different places pass each other like strangers and even acquaintances do no more than exchange greetings when they meet. Points of conflict begin to develop especially where those who cannot or will not abandon their former disorderly conduct disturb their neighbours or prevent them from evolving a new style of life in the new environment.

The main points of conflict are dirtiness and noisiness. Criminality is on the metropolitan average, thefts occur, but only a few persons were convicted for rowdyism, three-four for criminal assault. There have been no murders so far. Nevertheless, the prevailing opinion is that these people have to be feared.

Most of the inhabitants of Újpalota had met such people in their former homes but there they managed to put up with their presence. Here they are ostracized because of their dissonant way of life and breach of the peace—their noisy quarrels are communicated to everybody in the house via the heating pipes which act like telephones.

Those who are often looked down on become increasingly sensitive. Many families who had arrived with an open mind, hungry for a new way of life and better human relations, retired into their shells at the first sign of unkindliness or rebuff. Others do not care for the judgement of their neighbours and continue their noisy, chaotic and bullying way of life. This conflict seems for the moment insoluble. One family of this type can disturb the peace of a whole house.

The situation is very different with those who—owing to miserable conditions, bad housing, chaotic conditions in the family

and the environment—have had no opportunity to learn to lead a civilized life. In their case rapprochement, acceptance, and closer familiarity with the ordered life of other families would be the first step forward—but in general no such initiative comes from either side. The “it’s none of my business,” “why should I bother” attitude seems to erect impregnable walls.

The sporadic well-intentioned attempts also fail because such experiments do not and cannot bring instantaneous and spectacular success. This is then put down as a proof that they are past help.

As a result even those who had come to Újpalota with pleasure want to get away and many move to an environment where the people are more like themselves because they can put up with quarrels and bullying more easily than with contempt.

*

Some people use this as an argument to prove that it was a bad idea to place these families in modern flats thus skipping several steps with one leap. Others argue that it was both humane and useful. Time is on their side—although it may be slow or fail altogether in the case of adults; there are the children to be considered. Clean, orderly flats, civilized surroundings, contacts with children of respectable families will exert an impact also on those children who are subject to a very different influence in their own families.

From a certain viewpoint this process had started even before these families moved. Many who, in their earlier substandard homes, could not have dreamt of interior decoration and consequently had no related requirements, were ashamed to take their old stuff into the new homes.

“We have thrown out or given away the old trashy furniture. Now we have everything including a pouf—the only thing we still need is an upright lamp. We got the television set last year, my father has

bought a chandelier now, he promised a tape recorder for next week. We used to sleep three to a bed, now every child has his own couch and pouf, and a shelf for school books. My dad works a lot to help us get a beautiful home, he has made the shelves himself. And he changed the wallpaper because he didn't like it. And mum's knittings and embroideries are everywhere."

These were the words of a 13-year-old girl, member of a large family that had come from the most notorious slum. Her story is a precise account of what is happening today in many Újpalota homes. The change in attitude and mode of life appears at first mostly in exteriors but this is one step towards a civilized way of life which carries in its wake changes in other things too.

Furnishings cost money. New furniture, household appliances, must be bought and paid for. The rent is also much higher here. Although at the housing estate management they said indignantly that they had to send out 20-30 letters every month for back rent, this is only a negligible fraction. With very rare exceptions all families pay the higher rent regularly including those who had formerly paid only pennies and to whom this new obligation is a real burden.

This indicates that even those who had been used to a hand-to-mouth existence economize their money, husband their resources and have learned to think also of tomorrow.

People who used to change their jobs frequently are compelled to work regularly; many work overtime and do moonlighting to meet the costs of their new life.

There are also many who then lose all sense of proportion. The apartment is already beautiful but why should it not be even better? The necessary things have been bought why should we not cram in more objects which look so nice in the shop? Useless bric-à-brac fills these apartments. *Kitsch*, of course, was not born here but they replace their earlier trash, artificial

flowers, paper decorations, and needlework with more expensive stuff in the same taste.

*

When we moved from the old tumble-down house to this marvellous flat, a working woman said, "my two daughters were wild with joy but my husband was ill with grief. He longed for the old neighbourhood, the old house where he was born and where he grew up, where his parents had died and his children had been small. Every morning he told me that he would go and see whether the old house still stood and every evening he came home and said that he had changed his mind and had not gone there—he was afraid of what he would see. When at last he made up his mind he told me almost in tears: fancy, mother, they have pulled it down, there is nothing but a big hole in its place!

I myself had got there later and so I was not homesick but I also felt it kind of funny to live here for a long time and I am still not quite at home.

To be sure, the flat is a hundred times better than the old house was, and everything is so comfortable: in the old place I cooked on a fuel stove, here I have an electric range. In the old house we washed in the kitchen—here we have a bathroom. We have three times as many rooms as before. The difference is enormous but you see, I miss something: people. Or better said, I miss the togetherness we had in the old place.

If you went out to the yard there was always someone to talk to. And they listened too—they were interested in what I had to say. If a neighbour went shopping she asked me if I wanted something. If you forgot things like salt or pepper you did not run to the shop but borrowed some from your neighbour. The people in the house looked after the children of working mothers! I always had three or four kids playing in my flat.

If you were sick you were not alone. If

I felt unwell I had only to knock on the wall or shout out of the window and somebody was sure to come in. She helped, called for the doctor and dropped in at noon with some soup. Are such things outdated? I don't think so. In the next street where they have not pulled down the houses people continue to live like that.

There was also anger and irritation of course, quarrels, gossiping, sometimes envy—but these you forget and you remember only the good things. This unity and cohesion was a good thing: it is unforgettable and it is very difficult to live without it.

Here everybody closes his door. Let me tell you something: I close it myself. I have changed. People say a few things to each other in the lift and when we empty the garbage—and everybody rushes back to his flat. Why this is so—I have no idea."

*

The woman's words reflect a general feeling. Some people say that this is better because nobody peeps into their pot but half of those who live in Újpalota—as proved by earlier surveys—feel that the neighbourhood relations they had in the past were something valuable. Especially older people suffer from their absence if they had lived their whole life in one place and loved it as their home: now they are oppressed by loneliness.

In the Józsefváros, as I mentioned, most people were dissatisfied with their homes and with the deterioration of the district—but they liked its central position, its closeness to their job and especially the intimacy born of familiarity and of the near-identity of conditions. The reverse is true in Újpalota: people are satisfied with their flat and with the general state of the housing estate, but dissatisfied with its remoteness and the distance from work, and especially with the unfamiliarity of conditions and the lack of human contacts.

Homesickness is dominant among those

—according to earlier surveys and interviews I carried out myself—who have come from a *rus in urbe* area, where much the same sort of people lived and the region had its own rich past and traditions.

The first amongst them are those from the cottages of Rákospalota which belongs to the same district as Újpalota. They miss the garden, peace, and silence, and particularly the intimacy with those who lived in the same street. They miss the street where everybody knew everybody and people greeted each other when they came home from work. These people wrote in the questionnaire that these old relationships had been partly neighbourly, partly friendly and they defined their present conditions as isolation.

People who had come from Óbuda miss other things. They miss the halo of the district's 2,000-year-old past still alive in its monuments—during the Roman Empire it had been a military camp—they miss the magic of the romantic surroundings and, of course, the old familiarity which attached them to brick and mortar that was centuries old. People who lived in dangerously dilapidated houses implored officials to leave them there but if this was impossible, at least move them to another house in Óbuda.

According to the answers to the questionnaire these do not feel such a great difference between their past and present human contacts. In their old place the pole of attraction had been the environment and not people.

In Újpest both factors played a role: although it is only about a hundred years old, the district is socially homogeneous—most people are factory workers—and the feeling of unity and cohesion is very strong, enhanced also by the traditions of the working-class movement and the relatively important antifascist actions waged during the war.

In the past Újpest had been a separate town. It became part of Budapest when the metropolitan area was extended after the

war. The population preserved its unity to a certain degree and Újpest maintained its character as a small provincial town despite the development of public utilities, shopping, and cultural facilities.

One-storied houses, with their yards, invited people to sit down and have a yarn, children could play in these yards, there was room for flower and vegetable beds and for chickens.

The familiar streets were a good setting for cultivating neighbourly and friendly relations. Such conditions can never be created in high-rise prefab housing areas.

By the end of the century only a small garden suburb will remain of the present Újpest—this is as it should be. The old houses can tumble down any day, their demolition is inevitable.

Everybody knows this, including those who yearn for the old. They would never go back to live there but they mourn it.

In the questionnaire I asked for "the meaning or use of good neighbourly relations." Six concrete alternatives were given, most people answered "yes" to three out of the six, and there was not one who did not find at least one timely and useful.

They answered "yes" to:	
baby sitting from time	
to time	16 per cent
in case of illness	48 per cent
for a good yarn	69 per cent

give or ask advice	37 per cent
mutual help in minor	
matters	83 per cent
social life in a shared place	20 per cent

This indicates that the demand for social contact and mutual help has not died out but isolation is typical of actual relations.

Young people are exceptions. They wanted to make friends from the outset and they found each other and formed groups. Given the absence of community rooms and places for entertainment the youngsters gather in the street, in squares and staircases—their liveliness has provoked many conflicts with their elders—but they passionately fight for youth clubs and are ready to work for them. Young people have planted trees in front of several houses, with their help benches and tables were put up to provide a setting for social life. In the nearby wood adults joined forces and piled up a small hillock for their children to slide down on their sleighs in winter. They also built small groves and places for barbecues.

The schools now try to keep contact with leavers by creating clubs, organizing dances and discussion evenings.

All these are only sporadic attempts. The big question is whether society will be able to develop them further and turn the longing for the old social life into a source of the new, modern style of life.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

THE YOUNG LUKÁCS'S PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Those who divide twentieth-century Marxism into Western and Eastern Marxism make a somewhat strange impression when they present György Lukács as one of the founders of "Western" Marxism and try to play him off against the "Eastern" Lenin. For, even if we leave out of consideration all his later work, the evolution of the young Lukács unequivocally proves that his œuvre is deeply rooted in Hungarian, or more broadly, in Eastern European reality—the concrete spatial-temporal circumstances of a theory's *genesis* do not necessarily influence its general *validity*. That the revolutions of 1918–19 found him in Hungary, Lukács himself later referred to as accidental, he only considered his 1945 decision to settle in Hungary a conscious decision. While this may be so—the surviving documents which are kept at present by the Lukács Archives and Library show that in the 1910s Lukács vacillated between the idea of settling in Heidelberg or in Budapest; but many others had found themselves in Hungary during the events of 1918–19 just as "accidentally," who were subsequently completely separated from the stream of Hungarian culture in emigration, and for whom, therefore, the idea of returning to Hungary in 1945 did not even come up.

What is decisive for a thinker's national affiliation is the environment from which the problems of his creative work have

grown, and to which they are linked, the cultural totality of which they form an organic part. Already in the first theatre critiques of the young Lukács—where, for example, his analysis of a play entitled *The Soil* becomes an analysis of the Hungarian land question—it is evident that their author did not contemplate the problems of Hungarian society and Hungarian culture as an outsider, but discussed them with profound passion. The young Lukács, rebelling against the pseudo-culture of feudal capitalistic Hungary, had a contradictory relationship to the Western world throughout: he affirmed bourgeois progress, but he also grasped its contradictions and criticized it; while later—sensing well the difference between the periphery of Eastern Europe, already in closer contact with, more dependent on the West, and its still relatively intact core—he increasingly saw in Russia and in the possibilities of Russian social progress, the realistic path which could lead out of the bankruptcy of bourgeois culture and society, that he had experienced and investigated from the beginning.

1

In the study he wrote on Ady in 1909, Lukács characterized the situation of the Hungarian progressive forces in the follow-

ing manner: "Everywhere," he writes, and he is obviously thinking of himself as well, if not primarily of himself, "the Hungarians are the 'most modern'. In a lamentably grotesque way they are in the most radical forefronts of every new artistic and philosophic movement. . . . Because there is no Hungarian culture in which they could join, and because the old European culture is meaningless in this respect, only the distant future could bring forth for them the dreamed of community." In this situation the poetry of Ady becomes a new mythology, which embodies the revolutionary spirit deprived of revolution: "Endre Ady's Hungarian poems are of this world of the revolutionary spirit deprived of revolution. . . . he needs the revolution. . . . that he may live, that he may plant his rootless love somewhere, that he may pass on the values dying with him to someone, to some place. His life must find form somewhere. . . . Endre Ady's socialism is: religion. . . ; a voice crying out in the wilderness, the drowning man's scream for help, a convulsive clutching at the only available possibility." By contrast, in Russia the revolution and the revolutionary movement are realities with realistic perspectives: "The situation of the Russian intellectuals is similar, but they at least have their revolution in which their longing for culture can thus find form, and this 'fulfilment' lends form and weight to all their creative work, even when it is not directly social and political." ("Endre Ady". In: *Hungarian literature—Hungarian culture*; Gondolat Publishing House, Budapest 1970, pp. 45-47. *)

This contrast also returns later and unfolds more and more. In 1918, analysing the success of *Andor* by Ferenc Molnár—who had also achieved popularity in the West—Lukács provides a striking characterization of the mentality of a suddenly, but somewhat rootlessly, developing Budapest at the turn of the century. He demon-

strates in it the coupling of sharp cynicism with the whining sentimentality that substituted for true, noble emotions, "both signifying the refusal to take cognizance of morality, the fateful domination of moral insanity." And he notes: "I believe there is hardly any metropolis which is worse than Budapest in this respect." By contrast: "If Tolstoy and Dostoevsky feel that the majority of people living today are unhappy and aberrant, and if their moral corruption and depravity can only be broken through with true Christian love: they do not attempt to undercut the imperturbable foundations of moral values or even of moral judgements, but regard the love that sees all, understands all and forgives all as the only path that could lead the depraved back to this morality."

2

The thoughts of the young Lukács on the philosophy of history are mostly to be found in his writings on genre-theory. From the very start his attention was focused on the drama and especially on tragedy as the great drama specifically suited to the total art of theatre. The young Lukács spent years on his voluminous work on the theory of the drama (*The History of the Development of the Modern Drama*, vols. 1-2. Franklin Publishing House, Budapest, 1911), and he also thought about publishing the work in German. In the course of the years a number of people were considered as possible translators, but while Lukács translated or had translated the essays of *The Soul and the Forms* into German practically without any change, he intended to make considerable changes in his book on the drama: he sketched the planned German version in a considerably abbreviated and structurally modified form. (The sketch survived on the back of a letter written by Lukács's father to his son, dated November 24, 1910—now in the possession of the Lukács Archives and Library; out of the work itself only some

* See also NHQ 35.

excerpts were finally published in German.) This radically different treatment of the two works written almost at the same time also indicates that Lukács considered one of them—*The Soul and the Forms*, written in a heavily Germanic Hungarian and criticizing Western culture from within—to be indigenous to the Germanic realm of thought; while in the other—in the book on the drama—he took the position of the Hungarian sociologist of art, contemplating the development of nineteenth-century European bourgeois culture with the cool interest and attention of an outside observer. In his sociological analyses of art he made extensive use of the ideas of Simmel, and through his mediation, those of Marx to some extent as well.

Concerning Western European bourgeois society, the phenomena of alienation and reification, we read the following summary characterization: "Even if we only consider the most superficial externalities, it must immediately become apparent how standardized the life which produced this theoretically most extreme individualism has become. Transport has become standardized; the occupations (bureaucracy and mechanical factory work. . .) have become more uniform from the workers point of view. The essence of the modern division of labour (from the individual's point of view) is perhaps that the worker always strives to keep the work independent from his irrational and thus only qualitatively determinable capabilities and to order it according to objective criteria of expediency existing outside himself and having no relation whatsoever to his individual personality. . . . Through the capitalist economy an objective abstraction, capital, becomes the real producer, and it has hardly any organic link left with the personality of its contingent owner, indeed it is entirely superfluous that the owner be a person at all (joint stock company). . . . The entire organization of the state (electoral system, bureaucracy, today's form of the army, etc.), all the phenomena

of the economy (the ubiquity of the monetary system, the credit system, the stock exchange, clearing accounts, etc.) demonstrate the same trend: depersonalization. . ." (Ibid. Vol. I. pp. 145-147.) In a characteristically East European manner, Lukács is optimistic: he sees his generation heading "towards a great drama." But he sees the beginnings of this great modern drama—and here he participates in the Western European attitude—in the formal classical dramatists Wilhelm von Scholz, Paul Ernst and Richard Beer-Hofmann, the poets of heroic resignation to the world's inevitable alienation.

At the same time however another possibility had also occurred to the young Lukács—for the time being only as an abstract possibility—the possibility of the "social drama." Naturally, at this time the young Lukács referred to the social democratic view as "socialist," still, his sure instinct discovered in Gorky the socialist artist *par excellence*, and that not in the author of the *Petty-bourgeois* and the *Lower Depths*, but in the author of *The Mother*. But, this work is a novel, indeed an epic novel: "This is why the 'tragic' heroes of Gorky's novel are not tragic, rather their 'fall' is surrounded by a deeply reassuring, clearly epic atmosphere. We feel: this fall is not their real life, it is only an episode in it; perhaps it is necessary, perhaps not; perhaps it is beautiful, perhaps not—but it is by no means the essence of their lives. Their life lies altogether somewhere else: in that infinite rhythm which carries them towards an unknown goal; a goal they know they will not reach, a goal whose infinite distance in relation to them dwarfs the significance of the small portion of the road left uncovered on account of their fall. This collapse is only an episode for them, because they feel their entire life to be an episode in relation to the great goal. In this sentiment only the whole is a whole, and every portion, every individual fate can only be an episode, it cannot be dramatic. 'Die Bewegung ist alles', says Bernstein, and an infinite movement can never be dramatic

and tragic; all that appears 'tragic' in it, is only an episode, because it is only a part, because it is a fragment, because its 'tragedy' is only temporary." (Ibid. Vol. II, pp. 162-163.)

Let us disregard the name of Bernstein (the more so, since—characteristically—the "goal is nothing" portion has been omitted from the quotation), let us heed the problem instead. Because according to this, Marxism cannot have a drama, just as Christianity cannot, since their essence is similar. And indeed we read: "Marxism, the system and ideology of socialism, is a synthesis. It is perhaps the most cruel and most rigorous synthesis—since medieval Catholicism. To express it, when the time comes for it to receive artistic expression, only a form as rigorous as that of the great art of Catholicism (I am thinking primarily of Giotto and of Dante) will be adequate. . . . Today even the truest socialists are that only in their thinking, in their political and social convictions, etc.; the forms of their life not directly connected to these could not have been transformed by their ideology as yet. For instance, only a very few among them recognize today that their views on art can only be dogmatic. . . . That their art can only be the art of the grand order, the art of monumentality." (Ibid. Vol. II, pp. 156-157.) Later—seen from the perspective of his conversion in 1918—this abstract possibility was to receive a decisive role in the life of the young Lukács, who was also predisposed by the crises of his personal life to search for a religious ideology. In his diary dated 1910-11, the following is written: ". . . is there, indeed a deeper side to the vision of the world than the dramatically tragic? The religious perhaps?" And later, in the same place, after the deaths of Irma Seidler and Leo Popper: ". . . da ich als Mensch nie aus der ethischen Sphaere herauskommen kann—wie kann ich das Höhere gestalten?" (since I can never get out of the ethical sphere as man—how shall I be able to create the higher?) (Lukács

Archives and Library, file 218). His notes books (see *ibid.* file 255) show that he was studying the works of Dionysios the Areopagite, Meister Eckehart and Anselm of Canterbury at the time.

3

His first attempt to deal with the problems of narrative is a work first published in 1916 (in the *Zeitschrift für Aesthetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*), *The Theory of the Novel*, which as shown by the subtitle, approached the problem of the narrative from the angle of the philosophy of history. This comprehensive study—originally the first chapter of a planned book on Dostoevsky—shows both continuity and discontinuity with the book on the drama. The coordinates of genre-theory remain essentially unchanged, the objective, sociologically inspired analysis of the alienation of modern bourgeois society also continues; but the subjectivistic, existentialist critique of culture, and its transformation into an eschatological vision still present in the essays of *The Soul and the Forms*, is no longer there. Certainly the characterization of Greek culture in terms of the philosophy of history no longer follows Simmel and Marx, but Hegel and Marx; the modern era is not so much characterized in terms of the Kantian categories than in those of the philosophy of Kierkegaard; and finally, Simmel's critique of culture yields here to Dostoevsky's critique of culture.

In this period the interest of the young Lukács—inspired by Dostoevsky—turned increasingly towards Russia: for the time being towards a mystical-religious Russia, viewed in the manner of Moeller van den Bruck, as the abstract antithesis to Western decadence. Characteristically, Lukács reviewed two books on the topic. One by T. G. Masaryk: *Zur russischen Geschichts- und Religionsphilosophie*, vols. 1-2 (E. Diederichs. Jena, 1913). This work did not at all satisfy

the young Lukács. Masaryk, he writes, "sees clearly that the problem of Russian culture is a religious problem, but his Feuerbachism, tempered on Kant, prevents him from a decisive, in-depth penetration." (See: *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*: 1914. p. 871.) Evidently, Lukács hoped to penetrate the sources of Russian mysticism through his review of Solovev's selected works (*Ausgewählte Werke*. Vol. 1. E. Diederichs. Jena, 1914; vol. 2. *Die Rechtfertigung des Guten*. Ibid. 1916). In the first part of the review he expresses his high expectations: After the inspired self-analyses of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, is it important for us to become acquainted with the theories of Russia's mystical-religious revolution—the first and, thus far, the only conceptually relevant representative of Russia's rejection of materialism and positivism—not only for the sake of the philosophy of history, but also because knowledge of Solovev's position *vis-à-vis* socialism, Tolstoyanism and theocracy, as well as his utopian philosophy of history and his teachings on the god-man, are all equally indispensable for a genuine historical, sociological, or philosophical understanding of Russian problems. (See: *ibid.* 1915, p. 572.)

Already here he may have felt some disappointment, as he deplores the "somewhat arbitrary selection," but his expectations were probably directed primarily to the second volume, the "principal work on ethics and the philosophy of history." But, as the second part of the review shows, this too occasioned genuine disappointment. Not that he disagreed with Solovev's objectives; these coincided very much with his own: "Solovev, he writes, "just as his contemporaries, the world historic poets of Russia, desires to overcome 'European' individualism (and the anarchy, despair, and godlessness that follow from it), and, starting from the innermost, he wants to grow beyond it, and replace it with a new man and a new world." But Solovev is unable to

implement this programme: "In short: the disappointment which the European reader certainly feels with Solovev lies in the fact that he would expect a philosophic-visionary objectivity, which would correspond to and complement the poetic objectivity of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky (just as the metaphysical vision of German idealism stands beside the poetry of the German classics and romantics), but he can hardly find more than a noble and refined eclecticism of antique and modern idealistic philosophies." But this disappointment induced the young Lukács to seek further; if not in someone else, then he had to find in himself that "philosophic-visionary objectivity" which would correspond to the poetry of Dostoevsky as he perceived it. And—which would also correspond to the world depicted by Dostoevsky—as evidenced by the interest he shows at this time in the Russian revolutionary movement and terrorism. In a letter to Paul Ernst, dated April 14, 1915, he writes: "I am interested in the moral problem of terrorism and I am considering the book (by Savinkov-Ropshin) not as a work of art but as a document; . . . an acquaintance of mine . . . has translated a small selection of memoirs from the great Russian revolution of 1904-1907, . . . in my opinion a new type of man appears here whom we must get to know . . . We must continually stress that we alone are the real essence . . . The state indeed is a power, but must it be recognized as existent on that account, in a utopian-philosophic sense, in the sense of a genuine ethical action at the level of essences? I do not think so. And I hope that in the non-aesthetic part of my book on Dostoevsky I shall be able to protest against this energetically." (*Publications of Division II of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences*, No. 20. 1972, pp. 283-284.) About his planned book on Dostoevsky Lukács wrote in March 1915: "the book will contain much more than Dostoevsky: the bulk of my—metaphysical—ethics and of my philosophy of history"

(*ibid.* p. 285). In the draft of the planned book, written in German (manuscript in the Lukács Archives and Library, file 262), we can read points such as the following: "Russian mysticism—community. Russia and Europe..." According to the sketch, the book would have treated in some detail the topics mentioned to Paul Ernst, as well as Marx's theory.

The published section, *The Theory of the Novel* (1914–15) first elaborates the "antiquity-modernity" confrontation which has been present in Lukács's writings from the beginning in a triple historico-philosophical comparison (the Greeks—modern age, childhood—adulthood, age of the epic—age of the novel); it then characterizes the age of the novel as "a world abandoned by God," the surpassing of which, however, is not yet indicated by "the philosophical-historical position of the world clock."

In the end, he declares his rupture with Western bourgeois culture and commits himself—if only in an abstract, conceptual manner—to the revolution of the East—imagined in a similarly abstract manner—whose basis he sees in a Russia tenaciously holding on to its natural-organic communities, and in its great new culture, primarily in the writings of Tolstoy and of—a reinterpreted—Dostoevsky. "Only the greater proximity to the ancient, natural-organic conditions (*organisch-naturhafte Urzuständen*), "given" to the Russian literature of the nineteenth century as an emotional and creative substratum, makes a creative polemic of this nature possible." (See: *My Road to Marx*. Magvető Publishing House, Budapest, 1971. Vol. I. pp. 167–168.) The first great representative of this creative polemic is—according to the youthful author of *The Theory of the Novel*—Tolstoy. "A merely formal investigation—which, particularly in his case, would be unable to grasp the essential features of his vision and of the world created by him—must see in him the end of European romanticism. But in a few rare, great moments of his works,

which we can comprehend only formally, only in relationship to the whole created in the work, only subjective-reflexively, a concrete, clearly differentiated existent (*existente*) world is sketched, which, if it were expanded to a totality, would be completely inaccessible to the categories of the novel, and would demand a new form of representation: the renewed form of epopoeia." (*Ibid.* pp. 174–175.)

At these points in Tolstoy's works, a man of a new social reality manifests himself who leaves behind the ancient natural-organic conditions and passes through the present level of Western civilization (as he must) without, however, surrendering the intimate life of the soul. He clashes with Western civilization and, manifesting his qualities of soul at certain points, demonstrates the possibilities for its evolution. Just as Tolstoy represents the end of disillusioned romanticism while he announces the coming of a new world, so Russia represents the end of the European process of capitalization while also embodying the possibilities of surpassing it: Russia goes through (as she must) the socio-economic stages of the European capitalization process and the corresponding political changes, that we have come to know from the West, but preserving throughout her ancient natural-organic conditions, which "if they could be expanded into a totality" could later become the embryo of a new world. This is the sphere of the pure, genuine reality of the soul (*Seelenwirklichkeit*), in which man will manifest himself as man, in which, once it is present in its naïvely lived self-evidence as the only genuine reality, the new and rounded totality of every possible substance and correspondence inhering in it may be constructed. But art will never be able to accomplish this change. The novel is the form for the period of consummate guilt, in Fichte's words, and must remain the dominant form as long as the world is under the rule of this constellation." (*Ibid.* p. 175.)

The paradoxical position of the young Lukács between East and West is shown here at its most acute stage. Following the lead of Fichte and Hegel, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche he experiences the crisis of Western bourgeois culture from within, but he expects the solution, the coming of the "new world" from the East. At the same time, however, since his viewpoint is from *within* Western bourgeois culture, for the time being, he can only grasp this "new world" in a mystical form, the form of the "reality of the soul." In his opinion this new world is depicted in Dostoevsky's works, who "did not write novels, and the creative sensibility which manifests itself in his works has nothing to do—either in the affirmative or in a negative sense—with nineteenth-century European romanticism and the equally romantic, numerous reactions directed against it..." (see: *ibid.*) In Fichte the period of consummate guilt (*vollendete Sündhaftigkeit*) is followed by a period of the beginning of reason (*beginnende Vernünftigkeit*), and he sees his own era as a transition between the two. At this time, Lukács sees his own age in the same way.

In this manner, Lukács arrived at a triple division of the philosophy of history: the world of the epic, the closed culture of the Greeks is followed by the world of the novel, the period of mature manhood and consummate guilt, which, in turn, must be followed by the new world of the new epic, the kingdom of the "reality of the soul." Before long, he will recognize the materialization of this negation of the negation, through a radical change in his position, in the communist revolution: a later theoretical evidence of this recognition, written at the beginning of the thirties, is his essay entitled "Der Roman," in which he compares the transition from Tolstoian realism to Gorky's socialist realism (there is no mention of Dostoevsky here) with the transition from the bourgeois democratic revolution to the proletarian revolution. The struggle of one social form against the other, the collective

heroism of the working class, and the necessarily positive hero of the proletarian class struggle: these are the moments in which Lukács sees the new rapprochement to the epic. (The German original of the manuscript is in the possession of the Lukács Archives and Library—file II/42.—published in French: *Écrits de Moscou*, Éditions sociales, Paris, 1974.)

4

In 1917–18, while revolutions broke out in Russia, in Austria-Hungary, and in Germany, Lukács saw no possibility for a revolution realizing his own ideals. For his ideal was—naturally—not a political, but a social revolution; consequently, although he—most certainly—agreed with the bourgeois democratic revolutions, he—just as certainly—did not expect the realization of the prophesied new world from them. "Because the political institutions," he wrote in an article entitled "The Republican Propaganda" (*Világ*, November 10, 1918), "are only functions and instruments of social and economic reality . . . we want the internal, economic and social rebirth of Hungary; . . . we must realize that the large estates, big capital, and the irresponsible bureaucracy are the real enemies of progress." In this domain, he could only hope in the Russian October Revolution: but he did not take a stand on it for an extended period of time, when he finally did, it was a decisively negative stand; and by the time it appeared in print, its author no longer agreed with it. Lukács wrote his article entitled "Bolshevism as a Moral Problem" (*Szabad Gondolat* [Free Thought], December 1918) from the perspective of a socialist who had to choose—politically—between Bolshevism and Social Democracy. But his choice is motivated by ethical considerations: "the decision . . ." writes Lukács, "is of a moral nature, its immanent clarification is a most timely task precisely from the perspective of a moral action." For Lukács

the problem arises in the question: whether goals may be realized only with the agreement of the majority, or whether an enlightened minority may force its will on a majority which does not recognize the situation—including its own real interests within it: what is at issue here is the ethical problem of goals and means, the political problem of democracy and dictatorship. On this basis, the dilemma is then outlined in the following way: "Either we grasp the opportunity and realize (the final goal), then we must take the position of dictatorship, terror, and class oppression, then we must replace previous class rules with the *class rule* of the proletariat in the belief that—driving out Satan with Beelzebub—this last and by its very nature most pitiless, most undisguised class rule will annihilate itself and thereby all class rule. Or we must insist that we shall realize the new world order by new means, with the instruments or true democracy (for true democracy has so far existed only as a demand but not as a reality, even in the so-called democratic states), and then we take the risk that the majority of humanity does not yet want this new world order, and, not wishing to act against its will, we must wait, we must wait teaching and spreading the creed until humanity produces, out of its own self-determination and free will, that which the fully conscious have wanted all along, which they knew to be the only possible solution." It is evident from the way the dilemma is formulated that its writer will choose the second alternative, at least temporarily: for although he speaks of social democracy, it is actually Dostoevsky who speaks through these lines, the Dostoevsky who condemns violence, who proclaims "arise friars and preach swiftly." And indeed, Lukács refers to him when he writes: "bolshevism is based on the metaphysical assumption that good may come from evil; that it is possible, as Razumikhin says in *Crime and Punishment*: to lie ourselves through to the truth." ("Bolshevism as a Moral Problem"; see:

History and Class Consciousness. Magvető Publishing House, Budapest, 1971, pp. 11-17.) Therefore, from his original critique of culture and society, Lukács has arrived on the *aesthetic* plane, searching for the great art, at the dead-end of the lyric poetry of "spiritual reality" and on the *ethical* plane, searching for social change, at the dead-end of "spiritual revolution."

Lukács's essay of 1910 entitled "Aesthetic Culture" was one of the most decisive crossroads which finally led to this dead-end. In the spirit of the Nietzschean critique of culture the author raises the problem here: "The proletariat, socialism, may hold the only hope. The hope that barbarians will come and with their rough hands tear to pieces every over-refinement..." (*Art and Society*. Gondolat Publishing House, Budapest, 1969, p. 77.) But he continues: "However, what we have seen so far does not bode well. It seems that socialism does not have that soul-filling, religious strength which primitive Christianity had. The persecution of the arts by early Christianity was necessary for the art of Giotto and Dante, Meister Eckehart and Wolfram von Eschenbach to be born; early Christianity created a Bible, and the art of centuries was nurtured on its fruits. And since it was a genuine religion with a Bible-creating force, it did not need art; it did not want and did not tolerate it alongside itself, it wanted to rule the human soul alone, because it was capable of ruling it. Socialism lacks this strength, and it is therefore not the real enemy of the aestheticism grown out of the bourgeoisie that it would like to be, that it knows it should be." (Ibid.) It is clear that by "socialism" social democracy is meant here—it is characteristic that in the book on the drama, as we have seen, he mentioned Gorky as the example of the possibility of *religious* socialism—and it is also clear that if the author of these lines now defends social democracy, then he has arrived at the farthest possible point from his original position. The destruction of civilizational

values is not a consideration in his article on bolshevism, just as it is not in the essay on "Aesthetic Culture"; the revolutionaries "know that an exchange of values on such a world-historical scale cannot occur without the annihilation of old values, and their will to create new values is sufficiently confident that they will amply compensate future humanity for what has been lost" (Bolshevism as a Moral Problem," *ibid.* p. 12)—although undoubtedly the emphasis here is somewhat (and characteristically) different: the point of view in "Aesthetic Culture", is the cultural critique of concrete society, while here the point of view is that of abstract moralizing; there the coming of the barbarians is a genuinely desired purgatory, here the destruction is a practical, necessary evil. In his 1918 lecture entitled "The Debate of Conservative and Progressive Idealism," Lukács still forcefully emphasized the revolutionary-practical character of Kant's and Fichte's categorical imperative (see: *My Road to Marx*, vol. I, p. 177); still, here an ethical formalism appears to dominate him. We know that in the end this was not what happened: the question then is why and how his position changed once again into its own opposite.

5

We might say that Lukács was able to hold on to his negative attitude towards bolshevism as long as the events did not prove in practice the impossibility of every other alternative. On the aesthetic plane he could delude himself by waiting for Paul Ernst and Béla Balázs to produce works on the scale of Dostoevsky, but on the ethical plane, in the acute social-political circumstances of the day, such eternal anticipation proved to be impossible. The *individualistic* mysticism, messianism and eschatology advocated by Lukács in the mid-1910s was only an apparent solution to the demand for a *society-forming* religion. The spiritual

form and the revolution occurring *in the soul* only appeared to be a solution for the form and the revolution which had to occur *in reality*. In the intense situation he had to realize that while he was moralizing and advocating the "either—or" in terms of *the means*, history did the same in terms of *the goal*. Lukács had always rejected formal bourgeois democracy. But the transitional period of the turn of the century, with its attempts at synthesis, its crises and its search for solutions was over; a new period had begun, in which a *decision* had to be taken: the twentieth century. Some went from this position, from a Nietzschean cultural critique, to *pre-fascism*. This road to pre-fascism, and through it to fascism, was open to Lukács as well, but such a course would have contradicted what he had been seeking for fifteen years—the overcoming of "decadence"—nor did it promise any *fundamental* change in the socio-economic base.

The Kantian categorical imperative, which formed the foundation of Lukács's earlier negative decision, formally solves the task of metaphysically grounding ethics; but Kant, in his ethics, finally concludes that the moral command, the categorical imperative, according to which we must consider ourselves and all other human beings as ends, and never merely as means, in all our actions, can only be realized in a community, in an "empire of goals," where every member wants to realize and to follow such a norm. Since Kant knew full well that such a community did not in fact exist, the categorical imperative must remain with him an abstract ideal, or can only be realized under the assumption of the postulates of transcendental idealism, i.e. the existence of God, the immortal soul, and free will. But Kant's solution could not satisfy the young Lukács: he wanted to assert the demands of the moral command in the present; and if history is moved forward by dialectics, by the struggle of opposites, so that the development of some-

thing is only possible through the loss of itself, as Lukács—under the influence of Schelling, Hegel and Marx—well knew, then the question of the choice comes up in an entirely new way. Was not Kierkegaard's Abraham, "the knight of faith," a common murderer to the non-believer? Were not the heroes of Hebbel and Ernst, so admired by the young Lukács, beyond ethics?

In his essay entitled "Tactics and Ethics"—still on a moral plane, but already from a new perspective—Lukács now defined the alternative as follows: "Consequently everyone who at the present moment commits himself to communism is ethically responsible for every human life which is destroyed in the struggle fought for it, he bears the same *individual* responsibility as if he had killed each of them himself. On the other hand, everyone who joins the opposite side, must feel the same *individual* responsibility for the continued existence of capitalism, for the destruction to be caused by the imperialistic wars of revenge that will surely come, for the continuing oppres-

sion of nationalities and classes, etc." (*My Road to Marx*, vol. I, p. 149.) And he quotes the words of Hebbel's *Judith*: "And if God had placed sin between me and the act commanded to me—who am I to shirk it?" The studies in *Tactics and Ethics* (1919) anticipate in every essential question the messianistic-sectarian position of the studies in *History and Class Consciousness* (1923). Remaining in the position of bourgeois "democracy," Lukács could not believe in anything, but his faith had to choose between rising fascism and communism;—and the Russian Civil War which had been raging for months, the struggle between the revolutionary and the counter-revolutionary terror proclaimed to him in a new way: *either-or*. His joining the Communist Party and his firm resolution to remain a faithful soldier of this Party to the very end, meant for him the solution for all his theoretical and practical problems. In December 1918 Lukács made his decision, and he persevered in that decision thereafter to the end of his life.

FERENC L. LENDVAI

APPROACHES TO FICTION

*Emil Koložsvári Grandpierre, Miklós Gyárfás, Gyula Hernádi,
György Asperján*

Emil Koložsvári Grandpierre (see short stories in NHQ 8, 21, 64) is a prolific writer. The mere enumeration of the titles of his novels and short stories would fill many pages and it would be quite a bibliographical task just to take stock of their number. His autobiography *Tegnap* (Yesterday) published in 1942, was a portrait of lasting value of Hungary's middle-classes between the two world wars. In the sixties the book was enriched with additional

recollections and autobiographical material of various genres and expanded into a cycle.

The action of his *Szabadság* (Freedom)—whose third edition came out in 1976—takes place in Paris and Pécs in the prewar years. Here the author gives an account of his youthful experiences, and his impressions as a university student, in a style characterized by mixed chronology and essay-like inserts. *Az utolsó hullám* (The Last Wave) 1973 recalls in colourful and witty

images those memories of his childhood and student years which determined his maturing into a writer. The mosaic-like, self-ironical panorama of his mental-spiritual development, deals with "the formidable consciousness-shaping power of a mode of life," as the author put it, with frequent valid generalisations for our own lives. *Táguló múlt* (Expanding Past) published in 1975, contains three short novels of personal significance. The title story revolves around the author's eccentric great-grandmother. The essay-like short story *A könyvtár* (The Library) is sketch of the writer's intellectual development; it deals with his youthful reading, and the formation of his world-view. In the third story of the volume appears the renowned figure of the self-made man uncle who was later to become a central character of a family novel published in 1977, which the author introduced in his lengthy preface as the fifth volume of his extraordinary autobiography.

A szerencse mostobafia (The Unlucky Son of Fortune) Magvető Publishing House, 1976, 407 pp, is indeed an extraordinary autobiography. (Kolozsvári Grandpierre, turned 70 in 1976.) The author introduces himself only here and there, he hardly ever appears as an active character. This is a rather unusual method for an autobiographical writer but attractive since it gives the reader the enjoyment of a genuine novel. It is also a good novel, because its explicitly drawn characters all revolve around a solitary true, active protagonist. They all contribute to the unfolding of his character. Nowadays, when we are increasingly compelled to view the minor figures from the angle of self-analysing or self-adoring, passive characters, we are all the more grateful for a par excellence storyteller's—instead of a well- or ill-concealed lyric poet's—accomplishment of objectivation. One becomes fond of prose writers who present stories with down-to-earth plots, reflecting a broad yet unified world.

The book, free of any forced modern

contrivances, continues the older traditions of novel-writing; it strives to represent a full human life. And since that life abounds in events, the writer can boldly follow his wandering protagonist in his adventures. Luckily, he does not refrain from employing truly picturesque elements either.

The central character—György Klatrobecz, changed to Kőváry to sound more Hungarian—is an enterprising tradesman manufacturing bristle and paint-brushes; the uncle of Emil Kolozsvári Grandpierre. His story extends from 1898 to our own days. Since the model of the story enjoys good health, his story continues in real life. The time-frame of the story covers the first 75 years of the 20th century—flashed to the reader in a somewhat hurried manner. The plot also embraces quite a few thousand square kilometers geographically as it takes place in Hungary, as well as imperial Austria and the Rumania of the pre-Trianon frontiers. Its autobiographical character is chiefly manifested in the fact that—in the process of spinning the manifold events, à la Fielding—the author often winks at the reader: and shares with him his ironically objective opinions, which are not scandalized by anything human, on brave enterprises, changing epochs and epochal changes.

As in nearly all of Kolozsvári Grandpierre's works, here too, girls and women move about at their—and let us add—to our pleasure, freely manifesting themselves in word and deed. The brisk and often frolicsome presence of tremendous numbers of women in the plot is not one bit forced. For György Kőváry's is an extraordinary professional performance, in his work as well. In his passionate and profound searches for love he also gives himself and his partners for the most part intense and repeated pleasure.

Before the brush-maker reaches a happy and blissful haven, he fully tries out the unproblematically pleasant or painfully complicated variations of the female nature, which never fail to enrich him with worth-

while experiences. As a foundling-house orphan he experiences early the impact of the tradesmen's wives' big hands on his cheeks. He also came into contact at an early age with the fists of brothers protecting their little sisters.

Along with his first wife, the butchers' gentle daughter Erzsi, he is simultaneously overwhelmed by the passion of a temperamental sister-in-law. Through her unselfish and enlightening activity the sister-in-law soon brings our man to his first divorce. At the time when his brush business flourishes in Rumania—during the twenties—he finds an ideal business woman for a companion. But his temperament urges him on to a second divorce. His third spouse proves to be the joint mistress of love and money spending. But it is still not the squandering of this fiery Armenian girl but the world economic crisis which brings his prospering brush business to the brink of bankruptcy.

After all this the Bucharest years begin for György Kőváry. At the age of 35—due to a surgical error—he turns completely deaf. The circumstances of his inner silence, endured with great moral strength, are presented with sympathetic authenticity and psychological care by his relative, the author. The second part of the work—parading only two wives—compensates for the slow erosion of outside events with vivid depictions of the protagonist's reflections. The description of his convalescence and recovery turns into an engaging eulogy of unbreakable willpower and optimistic confidence without any trace of pomposity.

We take our leave from György Kőváry in 1975. Even at 77 he is active. He refuses to think of retiring. Our impression is that he loved and still loves living his life. Just as his nephew also takes pleasure in the enormous, but self-chosen task: to form imaginative, vivid prose out of this human life ready to take the totality, the good and the bad equally, with an open heart.

*

Miklós Gyárfás (see his story in NHQ 42) has been teaching at the Academy of Theatre and Cinematography for 25 years. He is primarily a playwright. But his indulgently humorous, mildly satirical and thought-provoking prose has also become quite popular over the past 10 to 12 years.

In 1965 he drew the public's attention to himself with two small novels. *Önarckép jellemzben* (Self-portrait in Costume) is a Swift-like journey to the various intellectual islands of the imagination in the 20th century. *Butaságom története* (The Story of My Folly), which has also been successfully adapted to the screen—relates the story of an actress who pretends stupidity, though clever and tactful by nature—and her celebrated, though far from clever actor-husband.

Gyárfás' prose volume *Kisded játékaim* (My petty tricks) 1969 contains nearly fifty sketches: ironic character portrayals, sarcastic psychological short stories, "flash", as the author calls them. One year later he published an autobiographical novelette. *Volt egyszer egy színház* (Once upon a time there was a theatre), it recalls life in a prisoner-of-war camp in 1945 in a dynamic, colourful manner. It was the camp inmates who performed Gyárfás' first play, *A varázsló lánya* (The Daughter of the Magician). His prose volume of 1971 contained what he termed comic legends, including the short novel called *Az oroszlánidomtób* (The Lion Tamer), a symbolic story of David, a lion from the London Zoo, and a certain Captain Evans, his tamer. The lion leaves his tamer all along—in the desert. In 1975 Gyárfás published more new works with a personal background, in addition to his *Once upon a time there was a theatre*. Two such stories *Szilveszter* (New Year's Eve) and *A fiú* (The boy) are testimonies to eternally lost love and the as-yet-unsuccessful new beginning. One of the characters of his latest novel, *Papkisasszony* (The Clergyman's Daughter) is Dr. Kenessey, a professor of

medicine. Every morning on his way to the hospital, he engages in an amusing little game. On meeting people in the street, he tries to determine their character, and the motives behind their actions by observing them acutely. But he is altogether unable to cope with his charwoman Mrs Imre Balog, née Erzsébet Bata. However hard he tries, he is unable to understand what the widow is trying to say by constantly reminding him that he let her late husband leave the hospital sooner than he should have.

The medical carelessness was accidental, it happened out of habit. In Mrs Balog's opinion—unless the patients are factory managers or others in high posts, the less well-to-do hardly receive any care beyond what is compulsory, in the crowded hospitals. That is the message that Erzsébet Bata, the aging daughter of a clergyman become worker's wife, brings to the doctor consciousness of the who is, after all, a bad judge of character.

The writer, like the professor, constructs the figure of the lovable 59-year-old heroine from several pieces. The first part of his work *The copy-book* is nothing other than a framework for the woman's restless imagination. It revives the times when the small and large of the family, all seven members, lived in mutual understanding and tolerance crowded together in a tiny flat. The two old people remaining from the past: the bricklayer husband's mother, and his pawnshop appraiser relative, got on well with the three young people, the children of the Balogs' and their daughter-in-law, Beáta, who had been raised by the state.

In her memoirs the clergyman's daughter who married the bricklayer at 28 does not say it outright, but only signals that the family members, given to disagreements and family intrigues, were kept together by her worker husband's honesty, and intellectual integrity. She does not deny that her straightforward and thoughtful husband yearned for a better world and his broodings over the contradictions between an

imagined, ideal world and reality probably contributed to his untimely death.

The main character in the diary of the widowed clergyman's daughter is the dead husband, who resembles the great 19th century Hungarian poet, Sándor Petőfi. It was to record her husband's life that she took pen to hand in her old age. And as she records the images of a common past in a rather unselected and unsystematic manner, her own character also unfolds. Traits of character that indicate that she was worthy of her husband's love.

The writer, however, failed to produce an entirely individualized style for the diarist. At the same time—since he toned down his own paradoxical humour, which in fact did not suit the mild manners of Mrs Balog, this conscious suppression made *The Copy-book* somewhat monotonous and grey.

The artistically more integrated parts of the multistrata novel are the three short stories supplementing and explaining the woman's notes, where the writer himself speaks. One of the stories relates, with a goodly dose of malice, the "transfigurations" of the above-mentioned Professor Kenessei, and the positive turn of events when the professor himself finds the truth of Mrs Balog revealing in the case of other people as well.

The idyll in the Mecsek hills of a newly married couple who moved from the house of the boy's mother to the southern Hungarian town of Pécs, is a virtuosic five-finger exercise. Dániel Balog, the son, and his wife, brought up in state orphanages, discuss in this short story what they should do with their future baby, only a few weeks old in his mother's womb. The young couple, decide the birth of their baby in their own endearingly funny manner during the lovely night of camping.

The most lasting element in the mosaic novel is *Arrival*. It is a complete, well-formed portrait, even on its own. The protagonist is the youngest and most ambitious member of the family, the intelligent and determined Ilonka Balog, who works as a

hostess at a hotel. The girl marries a narrow-minded, but handsome and well-to-do hotel manager abroad. From the way she arrives in Switzerland, and sizes up the field of her future activities with her sharp judgement of people, it is not hard to tell that the persistently clever and ruthlessly elbowing girl—an unintended product of Hungarian socialism—also has a future in that country of typical middle-class affluence.

Though she has no desire to live like her parents, without expressing it she envies and respects them for the way they have lived their lives. The merit of Gyárfás' work is in presenting an exemplary way of life—making readers forget about easier literary solutions.

*

The 51-year-old Gyula Hernádi's volume of selected short stories *Az ég bútorai* (The Furniture of Heaven) is the author's tenth book. Hernádi, the screen writer of most of Miklós Jancsó's films, is also a playwright. With an economist's diploma in his pocket, he began his career as a writer with lyrical short stories after a brief period of experimentation with poetry. It may be worthwhile to take a short look at his past career since *Az ég bútorai* (Szépirodalmi Publishing House, 1976, 524 pp.) is a selection of short stories. (See his one-act play in NHQ 53, a story in NHQ 60.)

His first collection of short stories, *Deszkakolostor* (Wooden Convent), appeared in 1959. Here he already struck a different note than the majority of his contemporaries who worked predominantly in the realistic tradition. In addition to a strictly self-analytical, autobiographical, and traditional short story *Hideg van* (It is Cold) he published a number of others which testify to his early preoccupation with the problems of representing another world beyond reality. He sought the solution at the time—as some of the stories republished in the comprehensive selection show—in a sensitive renaissance of impressionistic, secessionist

traditions. His style in the late fifties recalled that of Endre Andor Gelléri, who died in 1945. (See stories in NHQ 9 and 36) (Gelléri too had an original way of reviving fin de siècle literary stylistic endeavours.) Hernádi's *Wooden Convent* is such a work, laden with implicit social, but primarily psychological tensions. Mihály Menykó, a strong, good-looking Gypsy wood cutter does not abuse the confidence of his honest chief out of gratitude. He conquers himself; overcomes his natural instincts for the seduction of women. He returns to the woodyard from beside his chief's wife, even though ill, but only to leave forever the site of his greatest moral ordeal. A similar process of self-denial is played out in the small boy of a story called *The Silence*. Here the little boy gives up playing to his heart's desire on his longed for and at last acquired drum. For during a visit to his father's dreadfully noisy factory he realises that the one thing his father needs at home is silence.

In other works of the "Wooden Convent" period it is easy to detect Hernádi's inventiveness and attraction to unexpected and unreal turns of events. An ingenious story from this slightly irrational period of his is *A színész* (The Actor) in which a jobless actor is called upon to reconstruct a crime in court. The actor has to impersonate a murderer. In a tense effort to prove his talent, he identifies with his role so much that he actually kills his colleague playing the victim. The most perfect of Hernádi's short stories which lean toward the unreal is the Chekhov-inspired *A csillagszekér kocsisa* (The Coachman of the Starry Cart). It's about an old teamster in Budapest who—after losing his horses—is elevated into a local legend and disappears in the starry heights. Full lyricism and a rich love of humans characterise all of Hernádi's short stories from this period when he put his lyrical sensitivity to good use as a prose writer.

Hernádi published his controversial novel

A péntek lépésőin (On the Steps of the Fifth Day) in 1959. In this work he already found his unmistakable individualistic style, on account of which he became the frequent target first of critics, and later of parodists. His style, sometimes truly manneristic, yet consistently maintained for quite a number of years, was characterized by two major elements.

One was the expressive description of the environment and general disposition, at times overstrained with nearly absurd associations of ideas. The second basic element of his style was a playful and philosophising, interrupted, and whimsical dialogue, which demanded the reader's full attention, yet carried relatively little information.

Through the consistent use of these two basic elements, and a system of gestures—although applied at times without a sense of direction, or mechanically—these short stories have mostly striven for shock effect and indignation in an audience kept in constant tension.

The achievements and exaggerations of the new technique are most manifest in a volume of short stories published in 1967 and in the first part of a 1966 novel, *Folyosók* (Corridors).

This selection also offers interesting and sometimes enigmatic examples of the above. We always find men and women in dialogue in the expressive short stories. At times their conversation recalls the sorrowful-easy, supercilious-affected tones of the French new wave. In two other stories *Principium Identitatis* (Principle of Identity) or in *Száraz barokk* (Dry Baroque), the man leads the conversation—presumably before, during and after coitus. The man-woman relationship is defined by the man's intellectual superiority and the woman's receptive, self-subordinating understanding, voluntary devotion, and help. The various moods frequently fade into daydreams and dreams. Later they return in a floating dialogue to everyday realities.

Apart from ambiguities of content, the

dialogues are coloured by modern witticisms, half pronounced pleasantries, clipped scientific tidbits, and finely scattered maxims. From a historical point of view the stories recall the intellectual atmosphere of Hungary in the sixties, with an underlying, existentially coloured sensation of being cast into the world, but viewed with a certain self-irony.

In the best short stories of the new Hernádi style—including the nostalgic *Hajamba fűjnak a játékkatonák* (Tin Soldiers are Blowing in My Hair) the fragmented sensation of the world is put in order. Here, the speakers'—inferable—characters suggest intellectually equal partners. From the distressing pressures of the outside world they hope to find a temporary refuge in a hidden love which means—or symbolizes—everything.

Other stories including *A hegyek* (The Hills), small incidents during a bus ride to the hills, *A várakozás* (The Waiting) a timid attempt to meet a girl or *A kirándulás* (The Trip) with its great description of a dream are high quality stories of a creative period outstanding for its intensive intimacy.

Gyula Hernádi's development as a writer broadened thereafter. His novels, *Sirokkó* (1969); which presents the training of Croatian Ustashi in Hungary in the 1930's and *Az erőd* (The Fort) 1971, which elaborates a social-utopian model of violence, both show that Hernádi is becoming more and more interested in the human moral of history, for example the historical laws of violence and oppression, the nature of defencelessness and power, and the dynamism of their structures in different, pre-socialist societies. His flair for the currently fashionable also appears at this time. And he gives himself over to experimentation with collage, or "found" texts: collecting texts from the most diverse sources on a thematic basis, and raising them to literary quality, or taking them out of their original context, and reassembling them in newer, more elevated contexts.

His 1971 collection of short stories

Logikai Kapuk (Gates of Logic) gives an account of his increasingly documentative endeavours among other things. His excellent montages and semi-montages include: *A balál környéke* (The Environs of Death), ranging from instructions for the use of burial vaults to the intellectual last will and testament of the French revolutionary Gracchus Babeuf, and *Sodoma és Gomora* with excerpts from Genesis and from Louis Bromontin's work on Lot, or *Apokrif evangélium* (Apocryphal Gospel) depicting Christ as a female.

Hernádi, a prolific writer who produced the scripts for most of Jancsó's films (*The Round Up*, *The Red and the White*, *Confrontation*, *Red Psalm*, etc.), and has also achieved success in the 70's with his own plays for the stage is most recently trying his hand at science fiction with playful inventiveness. Proof of this is his new collection *Az ég bútorai*. His volume of plays, *Fivérem a holnap* (My Brother, Tomorrow) appeared in 1976. Hernádi can even breathe new life into conventional science fiction stories. As a writer with a passion for concise composition, he does it by never belabouring ideas fit for short writings only into tiresome platitudes. Whenever he deems it is necessary, he turns on his black humour and elegantly morbid paradoxes in the style of Stanislaw Lem, so filling the lulls between playwriting with these light exercises.

Thus the circumstances of the Turkish defeat of the Hungarians at Mohács in 1526 are rewritten in a sarcastic variation in the time machine inspired *Mozgóképek* (Motion Picture) whose principal character is finally locked up in a madhouse. Another story, RNS, also concludes with a similarly striking point, showing the way towards the fantastic thriller.

And what can be done by a talented writer with an in-depth sceptical perception of laws and relations who leans on his 25 years of life experience as a prose writer—with even the most hackneyed

utopian topics—is shown by the story called *Az utolsó ítélet* (The Last Judgement). In this vision Hernádi assembles all present and past humanity on a vast chimerical parade ground before the grace of God. The suggestive, up-to-date representation of the tumultuous assembly, milling about is not simply a clever idea, but a functional, symbolic parable. It suggests: so long as there are people like Thomas Münzer among us, exceptional men of high morality, we need not fear the advent of doomsday.

*

The radio journalist and sociologist György Asperján, now in his late thirties, began his career as a prose writer with an autobiographical novel in 1975. His first book—which was awarded the literary prize of Hungarian trade unions—has an interesting title: *Vészkiáratbejárat* (Emergency exit-entrance), (Szépirodalmi Publishing House, 1975, 278 pp.). The book provoked public attention by its unusual subject and challenging form. The work, which may be described as fresh, frank, easy to read, and written in contemporary everyday language, is the diary of a young 17-year-old worker written over a year. The protagonist-narrator is a turner by profession. He works in a factory. He does not know his father, and has no sentimental ties to his mother either, since he was raised in a state home. He only relates with unconditional gratitude and trust to his uneducated, but kindly foster-mother, who lives in the country. The letters she sends to the boy, Gyula Cselák, are small literary gems.

The small, wiry boy feels he is different, superior to the others living in the workers' hostel. That is why he begins a diary. He is most preoccupied with three things: anxious fears of death, love and sexuality and his disturbing human-social experiences. These provoke instinctive opposition within him. His unsystematic reading and

disembodied longings create in him a desire to break out and move to higher realms, a Julien Sorel syndrome of sorts. Whenever he feels himself to be too cowardly and ignoble, he sets himself self-imposed objectives. To encourage himself, he keeps repeating the famous words of Stendhal's ambitious hero: "I'll do it at ten."

The need and intention of standing out from the crowd become increasingly conscious in him. He is ever less able to tolerate the petty or real injustices that happen to him. Eventually he quits the factory on whose everyday life (the relationship of workers and managers, the contradictions of words and deeds, and the confrontations of white-collar and blue-collar workers) he has drawn up and recorded his childish but critical social observations. What detracts from the seriousness of these observations is that their approach is funny and self-derisive, as Gyula Cselák for the time being is unable to differentiate the minor, personal difficulties from the more generally valid manifestations of genuine social problems.

After losing his job at the factory, he works as a hospital gardener, as a messenger boy for a private manufacturer, and at a bakery. His new jobs also fail to inspire him with much enthusiasm. He needs to realise that these provide him with even less chance of finding what he instinctively seeks: human values in which he can find an example and feel secure.

Finally, in a smaller workshop, he finds someone who perceives that he is fit for more than he has achieved. Mr. Váradi, a long-time trade unionist, persuades him to get an education: to enroll in night school. The diary-novel ends with Gyula Cselák's 18th birthday—the day he loses his virginity in a disappointing manner. What this ambitious young man—promoted to news-boy, but wanting more out of life—might later become is a question that György Asperján leaves completely open.

The work, which portrays the social

problems of young workers without embellishing them, in a psychologically correct manner, and a language that creates an authentic atmosphere, suggests in some of its self-characterizations that in the protagonist—or in the writer's own experience of life—there is the possibility of continuation: and it is worth following up the vicissitudes of his life in another novel.

In his 1977 novel, a work more intricate in its structure and more complex in its content, the writer ventures to do just that.

The novel *Vetkőzzünk meztelenre* (Let Us Strip Naked) (Szépirodalmi Publishing House, 1977, 336 pp.) is a written monologue by the protagonist in a non-chronological order. He is endeavouring to find the lost meaning of his life in a way that will also allow him to express to others the social moral of his own dubious position, thirty years after the consolidation of workers' power in Hungary, in his own thirties. In order to draw the moral of his own life, he compares his career with the life of his step-brother, who like himself, has also been raised by the state.

The narrator is a journalist for an extended period of time, working in the office of a factory newspaper. When we first meet him, he is an unskilled worker at the market-hall. His step-brother, on the other hand, a decorated miner during the fifties, fills a light, technical job having suffered serious accidents and a long illness, and lives a quiet lower middle class life in his small home. The journalist, who seems to have slipped down the social ladder, but still holds onto his need for improvement, reproaches his brother, who began from the same position, for making compromises for the sake of his relative welfare, and for not being strong enough to realize that his state is unworthy of a socialist worker devoted to community ideals. What is more: his undeveloped intellect and consciousness fail to help him realise that the enthusiasm, conviction and physical capacities of his youth were only exploited.

The idea, states the journalist, fundamentally overshooting his mark, "wants nothing more from you than your physical strength, only that your conviction make you into a beast, instead of a human being."

The step-brother does not quite understand, why he gets all the moral blame, the admonishing reproaches for the life of today's workers which allegedly lacks meaning and content. On reading the manuscript of the novel dealing with the two of them, he elaborates his counter-arguments in a long letter. In one or two things he admits his childhood friend is right, and even shares his anger. As an active member of the Party he recognizes that the Party does not always defend the simple people who are Party members, when they are the objects of injustices, and often defends those who sit close to the fire, and use the Party as an excuse. But he rejects outright the journalist's bitter measures along with his self-torturing worries. "I am asking you as a brother, to stop thinking about that blasted proletarian fate of yours, nobody gives a damn about that any more, people live their own lives, and get on as they can."

But the journalist, who finally chooses the life of an unskilled worker by way of demonstration, objects precisely to this selfish and anti-social manner of making good. He continues his daily struggle to protect the interests of workers on the ideological grounds of hoping to fill the workers' way of life with content—consciousness, pride, and solidarity.

The factory management constantly discourages his attempts, and he is pressured toward conformity. They cool his conscio-

ness of mission which draws on his past as a worker. Even his wife, a worker herself, fails to understand clearly what he is after in his sharply critical, well-meaning articles. He is beset with breaks in his private life. He drowns his despair over his failures in drinking, all the way to receiving treatment as an alcoholic while he also engages in sexual adventures, unworthy of him. Despite all his fiascoes, he insists that his morals have remained pure. Even if he stood out from the crowd on account of his education, he remained loyal to his class throughout.

This second novel by György Asperján—owing to the intricacy of the plot, the not always justified moralising and quite a few superfluous episodes—is less integrated than his previous book. Although all his words imply suffering, the words and sentences are often ambiguous and not always literary. His naturalistic, roughly drawn descriptions are occasionally mixed with sociological commonplaces: his scenes involving intellectuals are rather superficial. The overextensive love episode is unwittingly comic and creates a sultry, cheap impression. The ambiguous depiction of the humiliating love affair does not portray the hero in a favourable light as he scribbles silly love letters, and throws the superiority of his moral stance into question. At the end of this parallel biography of workers trapped in a double dead-end, the author expresses his hope that similar failures are not intrinsic to a working class situation. An adult reader is well aware of that. But he would not mind finding more convincing proof of it than he is given in this uneven novel of György Asperján, which nevertheless testifies to his talent as a prose writer.

ZOLTÁN ISZLAI

TWO POETS

László Kálnoky: *Farsang utóján (The Last Days of Carnival)*,

Szépirodalmi, 1977, 87 pp;

Anna Kiss: *Kísértetek (Haunted)*, *Szépirodalmi*, 1976, 172 pp.

"No matter if others before me have felt and will feel the same" wrote Kálnoky in "Without You," a love poem of the lonely. Everybody undergoes identical or similar sufferings and experiences in his own strictly individual way, and the sufferings and experiences of others cannot comfort us. Kálnoky writes about the most general common experiences, impressions and tragedies such as the memory of a dead mother and the awareness of approaching death and insufficient love, but his primary subject is loneliness, and its uneventful and suffocating boredom. These apparently subjective poems inspired by "personal tragedies" in the words of the poet are experienced by the reader as his own and hence they move him. Kálnoky always speaks on his own behalf, as an experienced and literate intellectual of over sixty who expects no more and no less from a poem than the perpetuation and transmission of emotions and experiences controlled by reason. "I never write down anything that comes to my mind spontaneously before having clarified its meaning for myself"—he said and added: "... a poet cannot expect a reader to understand what he himself understands only in part."

Kálnoky is probably the only contemporary Hungarian poet who has studied law. When I read his translucently clear and yet varied poems which are the summaries of sombre tragedies I always remember that their author is a man of law and not an arts graduate as the overwhelming majority of contemporary Hungarian poets are.

Kálnoky's wording is unequivocal without being simple; he does not tolerate the least laxity and carelessness, he offers the poem's finished version, not the poem in the

process of elaboration. This means that he does not leave it to the poem (and hence to the reader) to solve his problems and explain his agonies; he first tries to solve, explain and interpret them himself and only then starts to write. Kálnoky is a voluntary poet in the sense of Valéry; his approach is the classical one.

There are very few modern poets in Europe who do not create, or at least try to create, their own inner mythology. Kálnoky, outstanding as a translator, (the Hungarian versions of the second part of *Faust* and the *Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* are amongst his works) is one of the rare exceptions.

This meditative poet whose characteristic features are control over passions and a satirical view of the world speaks about the universally human in a language as little poetic and allusive as possible so that the reader can recognize his own experience. Paradoxically inner mythologies mostly conceal a poet's individual personality whereas Kálnoky's "commonplaces" render it visible and perceptible.

Perhaps because of his studies of law or perhaps due to the intimate knowledge of his craft acquired during many years of translating poetry from the ancient Greeks to the modern English, or simply because he does not care for fashion, Kálnoky is not worried by the much stressed problem of the impossibility to communicate. He believes in words, he trusts their meaning as defined in the dictionary, he trusts that his own problems, which are at the same time universal, can be communicated and transmitted to others. Although his loneliness cannot be redeemed "there is no redemption for him who bends over his

table"—it can at least be given form and expression. His best poems would be almost the same in prose. His short rhymeless verses broken into stanzas and lines differ from prose mainly by their rhythm and not by their system of metaphors, network of allusions or vocabulary. The poem allows for concentration, swiftness, the omission of detail, and the unexpected emergence of a markedly classical metre, although irregularly and at random.

Kálnoky was born in 1911, his first volume of poetry was published in 1939. Not counting his translations, *The Last Days of Carnival* is his fifth book. I wrote on his third, *In the Shadow of Flames*, in NHQ 44.

*

In his introduction of the first volume of *Mythologiques* (Le cru et le cuit) Claude Lévi-Strauss wrote: "*En effet, l'étude des mythes pose un problème méthodologique du fait qu'elle ne peut se conformer au principe cartésien de diviser la difficulté en autant de parties qu'il est requis pour la résoudre.*" When Lévi-Strauss underlined the connection, the kinship of music and mythology and when, in studying mythology, he was not averse to drawing from tales, legends, pseudohistorical traditions, rites, and ceremonies he, as it were, authorized me to label the poetry of Anna Kiss mythological if not mythology itself. And with this we have transcended the limits of the Cartesian world. Kálnoky's verse remains in the world of Descartes, Anna Kiss has made one of the bolder experiments in contemporary Hungarian poetry, i.e., to build up a non-Cartesian world.

Haunting is her third book. She writes about herself as part of the blurb: "I was born in 1939 in Gyula, all my ancestors were peasants, and artisans. . . . Although I have an aversion for boasting about one's origin, especially this origin, I think that my nature and its direct consequence, the nature of my writings is not independent

of it. . . . I cannot even list the names of all those who helped me to arrange my life and who have been my supports and examples. I have been living in Budapest since 1963. I am a teacher and so I live before the critical eyes of children. I regard this as a natural state together with the fact that I see many things through their eyes."

Reviewers have traced a relationship between Anna Kiss' poems on the pseudo-children's drawing of Arnold Gross and as well as the theatre of Lorca, they could be also compared to Bergman's film *The Seventh Seal*, or best of all to René Char's poems of the sixties. From time to time an accent or image recalls Hungarian symbolism in the early years of the century. However, these analogies are only props and they should be discarded quickly because their only merit is their conveying an idea of the difficulty of approach. A young ethnologist, himself of peasant origin, whom I asked to help me interpret Anna Kiss's poems told me that they were built on the body of beliefs and the associations of peasants which were often of religious origin and more or less untouched by scholarship. Anna Kiss collects the beliefs, customs, superstitions, fragments of legends and tales and interprets them in her own way.

One cannot expect the reader to be an ethnographer, I am a long way from being one and naturally, however interesting it may be to find the elements of which a work is built, what Eisenstein said about a third element produced out of the collision of two being more characteristic of the creator who made them collide than of the elements themselves—obviously applies to Anna Kiss as well.

Her epic or dramatic poems with their good-willed witches, forgotten saints, "beautiful candle-dipping women," speaking serpents and lilies, buffoons, mischievous donkeys and learned doctors in three-cornered hats demonstrate a double intention. One is the wish to preserve this world of beliefs and the world view or supposed

world view of a community which is threatened by the impact of the industrial and technical revolution; the other intention is to develop the writer's own personality. The poem reacts upon the poet: Anna Kiss's poems document the process of personality-building.

Like the poems of René Char, every attempt to translate Anna Kiss's verses into prose would be sterile and useless. However, one can try to describe them.

Her words, images and sentences are unusually evocative. They grip the reader almost with the dynamism of music because of the constant shifting of intonation, the frequent use of unusual words (which then evoke an unusual mood), and their mixed rhythm. The form of dialogue characterizes also her non-dramatized poems. The imaginary and the very concrete always blend in the poems. A third of the book is *The Castle*, a play in seven parts. A dramatized story or a dramatized poem? Both. The first paragraph (*Before the Castle*) starts with the description of the scene: "A round part of the castle is visible with the upflying bridge which can be pulled down also from without. Beside the castle a round spot of ice. Mountain. Road. Grove. A tin Christ on the cross."

The seventh part (*The dormitory and the*

veranda) ends with these words: "Lipót (the mischievous donkey in the list of characters) swells and swells until he swells to enormous proportions. He goes bang! The scene remains dark for several minutes. Slowly it becomes light. The castle has disappeared."

And finally: "The comedians are let down from the stage-loft. They bow." Meanwhile, between the beginning and the end the characters talk about the trivial practical questions of everyday life and about the problems of life and death. They include Princ, "the unhappy Latin-speaking lord of the castle," the itinerant yeast-peddler called Cholera, the hag, the doctors, and Looking-Glass Cathy, the beautiful swineherd-girl. A grotesque comedy? A parable about the hopelessness of existence? A ballad about trying to find our own personality? Or just a dramatized game of the creative imagination for the sake of the game?

Anna Kiss's shorter writings and even her most traditional lyrical poems are open to two different interpretations both as to their genre and concept. Whereas readers and critics are excited by Kálnoky's lack of ambiguity, in the case of Anna Kiss the many possible meanings arouse their interest.

LÁSZLÓ FERENCZI

THE AGE OF CLASSICISM AND ROMANTICISM

Anna Zádor: Klasszicizmus és romantika (Classicism and Romanticism). Corvina, Budapest, 1976, 311 pp., 241 black-and-white and 8 colour plates

A few years ago Corvina Press launched a series of books which was intended as an introduction to significant periods in the history of art. Hitherto volumes have been published dealing with Roman, Romanesque and Gothic art, and with art in the latter

half of the nineteenth century, the most recent being a volume by Anna Zádor which analyses the age of Classicism and Romanticism. The series is a result of modern research and aims at presenting works which relate directly to one another. Accordingly,

the volumes contain a wealth of data but their primary task is to show interrelations and give an overall indication of one particular period of art history in a coherent way. The main difficulty of the task lies in the fact that the author has to scan the course of developments together with the imbroglia of all the different trends and directions, at the same time conveying the structure and general character of the period. Equally important is the synchronic and diachronic presentation of the given period; the traditional stylistic method fails to make this possible, hence it is important that the various aspects of the history of culture and of the sociology of art should be considered in their own right, and that research be carried out into what the role of art actually was in the given period.

The structural layout of Anna Zádor's book ostensibly conforms to the stylistic historical standpoint as, after an extensive introduction, she deals separately with Classicism and Romanticism, categorizing in the traditional manner, i.e. examining separately the development of architecture, sculpture and painting, which is, however, only a formal division assisting the perspicuity of the work. During the course of the analysis, when interpreting the artistic syndromes, she makes note of the complex interrelationships of the era, merely making use of stylistic categories as an essential guide. She describes her method in an unequivocal fashion: "Just as Classicism is sometimes imbued with the epithet Romantic or Revolutionary Classicism, so is it customary to term Romanticism the Gothic or Neo-Gothic Revival or Romanesque (*Rundbogenstil* in Germany) depending on the historical styles it follows. If for the sake of custom and clarity we resort to these appellations, we have to recognize the fact that they are neither accurate, nor can they be generalized. It is not easy, for example, to designate as Neo-Romanesque a painting which otherwise displays numerous traits of Romanticism, or as Neo-Gothic a sculp-

ture which in its arrangement and structure is entirely Neo-Classical, but in one way or another it externally (by its garments, support, etc.) denotes the influence of Gothic art. This confirms our conviction that stylistic concepts as necessary devices can only be used in a very wide sense of the term."

Anna Zádor deserves credit for interpreting the various stages of development commencing from the Age of Enlightenment as epochs with differentiated structures, and for being able to view them as a whole. She does not oversimplify but provides a perceptive analysis of what was, in all conscience, an intricate period, fraught with contradictions, within which the rationalism of the Enlightenment and bourgeois pragmatism mingled with sentimentalism together with the divining of the boundless realm of instinct and fantasy; it was the revival period of antiquity, hence the vogue of the Hellenic-renaissance tradition, and the discovery of medievalism and the quest for the exotic. Existing values were depreciated, the hierarchy of cultural standards of the feudal-aristocratic and absolutist civilization were questioned, and a new set of values determined by the bourgeois ideology and outlook on life was instigated.

Professor Zádor examines the period first and foremost in the light of the emergence of the bourgeois set of values and analyses their propagation. Consequently she examines the way in which the function of art altered, in view of the social realignment, how far the interpretation of tradition changed, the new subject-matter of art, and the new trends of "ritual public opinion," that is the visual, plastic standards of art. A conventional aesthetic analysis of the evolution of styles would have been inadequate to tackle this complex range of problems. Hence the author also investigates the development of the artist's social status, taking into account the changes in artistic education and the realignment, according to bourgeois principles, of the institutions

of art and the institutional nature of art itself. At the same time she also discusses the aesthetic views which influenced creative work and moulded the taste of the connoisseur public. Included among the most notable parts of the book are the sections discussing the views on art theory of Winckelmann and Goethe and the influence both of these have exercised. Particularly valuable is her interpretation of Winckelmann; she recognizes not only the normative thinker in him, but also the aesthete who was amongst the first to use "the description of the work in the modern sense of the term," and "the enduring characteristic of his work is the realization that in order to express new experiences every period requires a new artistic idiom"—at the same time, paradoxically, this realization, which denotes essentially a recognition of historical quality, was blended with an anachronistic, dogmatic interpretation of the aesthetic principles derived from the study of classical art.

Apart from dealing with art theory and aesthetics, Professor Zádor also takes into consideration the shaping of the lower, quotidian plane of visual culture. The age is characterized by the literature of periodicals and almanacs, and the proliferation and widespread influence of the publication of prints and sample-books, which had gradually evolved from the former, since the most rapid method of disseminating new forms and ideas is the printed word and picture. These bring into fashion the new principles of art and convey the new tastes in art to a wider bourgeois strata as well.

According to Anna Zádor, the two main branches of the art of the period are architecture and painting, whilst the social significance and function of sculpture had diminished. Due to the economic and social realignment, several new tasks lay before architecture, such as urbanization, industrial architecture and the architectural activity involved with transforming the infra-

structure—all these gradually became practical problems. Although a number of drafts got stuck at the designing stage—e.g. the best part of the French "revolutionary architecture," which, according to Zádor, is of major importance—it was still architecture that mirrored more than anything else the development of social ideas, the modification of the representational requirements, and the unfolding of the new social symbols. However, subjectivism, a fellow-traveller of romanticism, opted for painting as the representative idiom. This is why it is important that both branches of art are analysed equally. Since Anna Zádor is an internationally acknowledged expert in the particular field of Classicist architecture, albeit she does lay stress on the ever increasing importance of the role of painting, she deals far more extensively with the development and the accompanying problems of architecture. It is chiefly in the chapters dealing with architecture that the author's talent for synthesis, her many-sided view of problems and the fascinating knowledge of her particular field manifest themselves. With just a few sentences she is able to bring to life great architects, and to locate their place in the history of art, unravelling the many interwoven influences with confidence, while at the same time evaluating and characterizing them. She does not only analyse the work of the leading masters, but makes the reader understand the general architectural activity and the significance of the minor masters as well, presenting the tension between the plans, the ideas and the actual practice and the peculiarities inherent in the age of conflict between conceptions and realizations. She provides a perceptive analysis of invention within the architectural tradition, taking into account landscape architecture, which became so significant during the period, and of the architectural novelty, the emergence of industrial architecture, and the conflict, which at that time was still latent, between so-called architectural engineering and ar-

tistic architecture, which subsequently, however, became quite open.

For the sake of easier reading Professor Zádor treats Classicist and Romantic architecture separately, she does, however, indicate their points of contact. She also looks at the problem of eclecticism in Romantic architecture from many angles.

When dealing with the analysis of painting the author shows less nuance, but sketches the main trends with a sure hand, and with a highly developed sense of proportion emphasizes the most important masters, accentuating Goya above everyone else. She likewise traces the development of English painting, but somehow the sections on the work of Blake and Heinrich Füßli and French Romantic painting have turned out somewhat less convincing. Even the arrangement of the chapters on painting is less sure, e.g. Philipp Otto Runge is included among the Classicists, while Caspar David Friedrich finds himself amongst the Romantics, and she is unable to convey the transitions, the intricate links so formatively as in the case of architecture.

It is a great virtue of Professor Zádor's book that in it she is able to comprehend the European art of the period in its entirety, occasionally referring even to American examples as well. Especially notable are the sections on artistic development in the British Isles. As a contrast to the one-sided French and German orientation, it attests in a convincing manner the important role

played by the English architecture and painting of the period, showing what an essential factor the English colony in Rome of artists and collectors was in the shaping of the new taste, how English art patronage polarized towards the classical as opposed to the cultured dilettantes who were attracted to the Middle Ages and their free use of fantasy. But apart from the leading artistic nations she also surveys the development of the art of the more backward Eastern and Central European peoples and nations which have only just emerged from the Age of Enlightenment, emphasizing what may be regarded as provincialism in art and what can be attributed to their and autochthon development.

Anna Zádor's book relies on her own research but goes on to provide a synthesis. It deals with the art of one of the most remarkable periods of European civilization. She has succeeded in creating a useful and interesting work, catering both for the expert and for the reader who is merely interested in the arts. She has hit upon just the right proportion between a historical survey and a theoretical analysis. The historical and aesthetic approach meet the requirements of the synchronic and diachronic approach. The age of Classicism and Romanticism unfolds in her book as an involved contradictory structure in which the main trends and characteristic tendencies of modern European culture appear.

LAJOS NÉMETH

"BRIEF PORTRAITS FROM THE HISTORY OF ETHICS"

Ágnes Heller: Portrétvázlatok az etika történetéből.

Gondolat, Budapest 1976, 433 pp

Although the type face is grey on a grey cover it is rare to find a book as rich in ideas as Ágnes Heller's essays on such figures of modern ethics as Hobbes, Mandeville, Spinoza, Rousseau, Kant, Feuerbach, and Kierkegaard. The volume opens with an introduction to Aristotle's early ethics, and contains also a study on the moral problems in Anatole France's novel *Les dieux ont soif*, and two essays on the young Lukács.

All these are occasional writings. They discuss a variety of subjects using different methods and sometimes on the basis of differing principles. A listing does not do justice to the abundance of thought in the book: behind the portraits, however sketchily, appear the sharp outlines of the background, the historical stream into which, although according to Heraclitus it is impossible to step twice, man changing with time has stepped many times over. And when he steps into it he does not only want to swim but also to shape the stream's bed and course as far as this is possible and as far as he is able to do it.

The historical process as suggested in Ágnes Heller's book has its limits. Her interest is focused on the bourgeois world, from beginnings to decline, with its different moral attitudes, its quest for precedents in the past, its anticipations of the future, alternatives and possible choices of values. Methodology and ideology meet here. The historical process reaches into the present. Thus when she defends the "moral cynicism" of Hobbes against the usual accusations in its unhistorical interpretations she hastens to add: After all Spinoza is nearer although not to our reason but certainly to our values and way of life. He is nearer to her on the basis of the justifiability

of a moral attitude although she appreciates the "brilliant consistency" of the Leviathan as defined by the cynical Hobbes. In other words: "we do not measure a philosophical system merely by its historical function but by its relation to ourselves, our values, our mode of life."

These statements merit to be underlined especially when it becomes evident that the concept of "our own values" needs further clarification. In writing about *La Nouvelle Héloïse* Miss Heller does not conceal that Rousseau and Diderot "did not agree on the decisive question: how one can and must live in the present age." And, of course, we, the men of today, cannot deduce a kind of consensus from the moral positions of the bourgeois philosophers. It seems the decisive question is still open. Ágnes Heller's brief portraits suggest that of course the lesson for us is not ideological relativism. But despite everything *navigare necesse est*—and this is true to this day. These essays are as many expeditions on ships equipped with otherwise traditional methods of thinking, disposed to plumb the depths of the stream, measure the coordinates, watch out for currents, possible shallows and the direction of the wind. Her portraits are at the same time historical tests: they obstinately raise the decisive question again and again: how one can and must live in this day and age? The interested reader has every reason to follow the author attentively.

This is true even when the expeditions do not always hold out the hope of new shores. Lothario, the organizer of the humane "small community" in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* is a fortunate exception: his famous declaration "America is here or nowhere! Herrnhut is here or nowhere!" finds accep-

tance. Ágnes Heller's accurate comment: in this case "America represents capitalist development and Herrnhut (the Moravian Brethren's refuge) represents the community." And she deduces with conviction and faith: "the great historical moment (namely of bourgeois humanism represented by Lothario—D. Z.) was over." But it made possible a synthesis of the values created by the ethics of Rousseau and the French materialists—especially Diderot. The new, higher synthesis of the two will be the task of an age able to transform the world into a civilized *Clarens* where the system of values based on "you are worth what you have" will be replaced by one based on "you are worth what you are." This essay on Rousseau, written in 1963, clearly suggested the outlines of new shores and that towards them *navigare necesse est*—this being the categorical imperative of the age of socialism.

Another piece, written ten years later, bears the marks of a certain resignation. As if the fog had turned thicker, and the eyes searching the shores more tired. The lyrical essay—a kind of philosophical prose poem—an analysis of the relation of the young Lukács to Irma Seidler is both stylistically and intellectually a variation on a sentence by Kassner quoted by the young Lukács in an essay on Kierkegaard. "Kierkegaard has re-written his relation to Regina Olsen." In Ágnes Heller's piece the young Lukács sets out to re-write incessantly his relation to Irma Seidler, a woman friend who committed suicide, and if I understood Dr. Heller right this is what he continued to do all his long life. According to her even his acceptance of the Marxist hypothesis of the "habitable world" can be deduced from, and explained by, this personal tragedy: or at least it can be one of the keys to an interpretation of Lukács's work. However inspired, beautiful and moving, this essay did not convince me that either Kassner, the young Lukács or Ágnes Heller were right. I felt the piece to be overstylized in form and disputable in content. I do not challenge

her rehearsing the romantic trope that it is possible to re-write life; I myself prefer Novalis to the self-exaltation of Ibsen's Hjalmar Ekdal. Only I would explain Lukács's turn toward Marxism—that much-debated Pauline conversion—in a different way. I think outside motives, i.e., history interiorized by the individual, also play a certain role e.g., in driving him towards a real catharsis. And à propos love and self-realization: the moral attitude of the mature Lukács in connection with Goethe and Spinoza's *amor dei intellectualis* was more severe and prouder (as he put it: plebeian), like that of Philine in *Wilhelm Meister* who reprimanded the over-scrupulous hero: "You are stupid, you'll never grow into maturity... I have never expected gratitude from men so I don't expect it from you: and if I love you it's none of your business." I would be happy to read Ágnes Heller's brief portrait of this, the Marxist Lukács.

I am sure that she has to say very instructive things also along these lines: her present writings demonstrate it, e. g., her exact, substantial and convincing diagnosis of the "historical function" of Kierkegaard's "either-or". Here the shore is clearly visible: the radical difference of our "set of values" from that of Kierkegaard. The author takes him at his word: either-or. According to her the same socio-historical reality has allowed for only two consistent choices: either Kierkegaardian resignation or Marxist indignation. "Either we must renounce every action influencing the world or we must find the masses, the class, the people who, through their action, can change it." In my view this is the precise formulation of the question and I feel that the resulting Kierkegaard-interpretation is authentic. "I go to prove my soul"—indeed, even Browning's programme would fit into this project: Marx has certainly not sought or found the new shores under the patronage of being losing itself, and Lukács has not done so either. I would like to read something about this on the level of this author.

I must repeat, however, that despite all these caveats the reader gets much from these portraits. If this reviewer felt the need to write about what he found lacking he feels it his duty to show at least, with the help of one example, with what sure touch and inimitable elegance the author works, why she is in her elements. Her essays are written on the basis of the concrete analysis of concrete problems of the age and the human personality. It is remarkable how she describes Leviathan, Hobbes' theoretical vision of a state described by many as Utopian. She starts with a brief portrait of Hobbes, the self-made man, who built his career with leisurely assurance in the bright world of Merry England, and who firmly believed that thinking was not a profession but a way of life. He was almost an old man when he awoke from his "dogmatic sleep" and, with a consistent rationalism in the bourgeois sense, he "deduced" the basic principles of the rational, natural and pure state order in his *Leviathan*. I could quote entire pages of this essay to show the exemplary, nuanced and easy-flowing style of this portrait, how Ágnes Heller brings out the basic elements from the philosopher's theory of the state, down to their epistemological and anthropological roots, and the resulting ethics which, for the first time in history, can be described with the epithet "bourgeois coldness," those "cynical" ethics which *already* and *still* ignore the system of norms oriented towards moral objectivation. Although well-known the fact merits consideration that Hobbes' fully authoritarian imaginary state ultimately liquidates these rights and liberties which were later proved to be bourgeois rights and liberties. It would be too obvious to condemn here and now in the name of the legitimacy of the "moral attitude" but no such verdict is pronounced. What follows is only an irrepressible subjective confession: "upon reading these analyses I am overcome with no small fear." This, in turn, is immediately followed by a warning: "We have no right to interpret all this

anti-historically, nor to detach it from Hobbes' global concept." Paradoxically enough the 17th century English philosopher never anticipated fascist totalitarianism in his *Leviathan*: the universal which is the starting premiss in the "deduction" of this "monster" freshly emerged from the chaos of feudalism, in the final conclusion does not swallow the individuals declared equal by law. Bourgeois rationalism is born here with the emphasis on "born". The eye not yet dimmed by apologetics sees its bourgeois limits in the very moment of its birth but the same eye can see also the deeper current underneath. It is certainly an affirmation of a progressive emancipation in history: the liberation of human morality from the tyranny of religion, an imagined equality and purposeful rationalism.

Ágnes Heller very properly concludes her essay with the history of the influence of Hobbes. True, this cannot be examined only on the level of the history of philosophy. English political economy, especially Petty and Mandeville (the "Hobbes of the coffee-houses") knew what they owed to, their aged master. And that "moral cynicism" which, as a consequence of his individualistic image of man, banished moral norms from its system, has indirectly inspired—e.g., through Mandeville's *Fable of the bees*—an important and still effective trend in English art and literature: *The Beggar's Opera* by Gay (and Pepush), Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Swift and—as Ágnes Heller shows—even Shaw. Briefly: she defends the cynic and does not accept the lurking accusation of a fascist-type totalitarianism. She evaluates local historical values and the system of interrelations. In short, she does not moralize.

This work first appeared in 1969—it suggests a different basis of principles than the essays in which she analysed Lukács—they were first printed in 1972–73. It seems that the "decisive question"—how to live in our age—has undergone some change and her answers to it also differ. This volume

of essays is without doubt remarkable also from this point of view. The Epilogue documents also a crisis in her outlook: a shifting of the coordinate-system of evaluation. The reviewer only records this fact, and as he himself owes a great deal to Ágnes Heller, the thinker, he records it with regret and, of course, with sincere

hope. Ágnes Heller whose name is sometimes mentioned in connection with a Hungarian "New Left" by friends and adversaries will, I hope, publish in the future not only brief portraits but also facts about the morality of a socialist world whose birth is by no means painless.

DÉNES ZOLTAI

CHILDREN'S STORIES?

Péter Horváth: Egéridő (Mouse Time—Szépirodalmi Publishers, 264 pages); Péter Esterházy: Fancsikó és Pinta (Fancsikó and Pinta—Magvető Publishers, 168 pages)

Never before has so much been written about children in Hungarian prose literature as by the newly fledged writers of the past ten years. The frequency of the subject is obviously indicative of uncertainty: for a number of reasons it is more difficult to approach the major problems of the individual or of society directly, while children, on the other hand, are always genuine and possess an essential inner identity. But this choice of subject, on the other hand, also contains a definite critical motive, since through the transmission of the children's realm, with its profuse epic paraphernalia, virtually all the writers reflect the reality of the adult world. In the end, whether nostalgically or unrelentingly, each successive generation puts its adults to the test willy-nilly. Their illusions provide the security from which they are able to pass judgement, and they are not interested in excuses or explanations.

The first books by Péter Horváth and Péter Esterházy draw us into the world of children. Horváth's protagonists regard that greater reality which limits their own sovereign microcosm with opposition and inplacability, while those of Esterházy display a growing understanding, coupled with

virtual compassion. The two books have nothing else in common, except for the fact that their authors are both in their mid-twenties, which is really considered young for a prose writer. They belong to the much-publicized up-and-coming generation which has already yielded a surprisingly large number of gifted prose writers. Of course, it would be premature to question their orientation, ideas and idiosyncrasies, but it seems as if the endeavours and long hesitation of the previous generation has not been in vain, and it is as if something were now beginning to stir once again in the field of Hungarian prose writing. It is true that Péter Horváth is still at the promising stage, but it may be said of Péter Esterházy that he is extraordinarily talented, and, along with József Balázs, is one of the real discoveries of 1976.

FACTS AND ILLUSIONS

Péter Horváth continues a theme which has by now become traditional: his young people are also left to their fate by the adults. The emotional contrast between the two worlds taxes his book with a lot of

unevenness. Horváth writes in a confessional manner which is barely concealed autobiography, actually presenting a loosely linked array of short stories which traces the progress of his protagonist, and of all of the other characters from childhood through to adulthood. A common feature among his children lies in them being left to their own devices; they are serious, almost to the point of being unbecomingly precocious. They come from similar backgrounds: divorced parents and a childhood devoid of love. Yet, this rather restricted field of motion is alive with a number of genuine tensions, desires and realities. The realm of the children is unequivocal; they still live their dreams to the full, their imagination animating objects and supplementing the gaps in reality. Sometimes their instinct is unerring (*Mouse Time*). But at the same time the imagination may also be amphibious and turn into a demon; its narcosis plunders the soul and its deceptive happiness is unable to compensate for a wasted life (*A galamb és a bõember*—The Dove and the Snowman). Where then is the limit, is there any balance and how far may illusions be cherished? For without them existence becomes inhuman. Reaching adolescence, Hápé gets to know the lure of the real world, its violence and dishonesty (*Fácánvadászok*—Pheasant Shooting), while in the following short story, as a young man, he steadfastly argues with his own moral strength, and humiliates those around him (*Feleim*—My Brethren).

I could go on listing the examples, and with all the requisites and pretexts of starting out in life Péter Horváth's characters recall universal moral dilemmas. The writer makes use of the specific possibilities inherent in childhood and the fact that in this comparatively closed vehicle problems are much more direct, and all processes become accelerated. He writes well so long as he does not transgress the natural endowments of his medium and outlines his subject precisely with a feeling for its internal laws. On such

occasions he is also able to individualize and his writings convey some of the sorrow of homelessness; his strict objectivity is mellowed by a nostalgia for the dreams which he feels still ought to be realized in some manner. His protagonists, however, do what they have to do, and even they themselves do not realize that in almost all of them there lies a latent, shy element crying out for help (*Popol a tolvaj*—Popol the Thief; *Balin; Szerelem*—Love). But Péter Horváth rarely achieves this stylistic purity, and in most of his writing the author's intention and accomplishment run on separate rails. Taken as a whole, the volume indicates a transitional phase, with its author revealing flashes of his talent but not yet having found his own individual tone and personality. Sometimes his preconceptions are indicative of a sterile teen-age naïvity (*Megérkezés*—Arrival; *Örökség*—Inheritance), and often it is the lack of self-discipline which has a depressing effect (*Jelentés egy szállodai szobából*—Report from a Hotel Room). He tends to overcomplicate, making use of pseudo-literary effects to lend added weight to his experiences; he becomes affected, weightless instead of light, and—especially in the narrative linking the short stories—highfaluting and finical instead of mysterious. But I myself do not consider these objections to be too important for Horváth was just overhasty with his book and his juveniles got stuck somewhere in it. But even so, he is appealing due to his complete openness, and because of the fact that he is still a fledgling who may develop in any direction. He will have to discover what his really important message is and then he will be able to fulfil the interest he managed to arouse with some of the very first writing in "Mouse Time".

TO SEE AND TO LOVE

Péter Esterházy is already, on the other hand, at the age of twenty-six, a complete

and mature personality, with an overwhelming capacity in the use of language. His book steps beyond the usual province of children's stories. All the motives, the particular kinds of outlook, or the epic framework which he borrows from childhood have a more important, deeper sense in that they convey, with fascinating suggestiveness, a possible inner attitude and a profoundly humane mode of life. The two worlds which are divided by Horváth, are here enclosed into a single epic situation: after all, the small child is in fact helpless in the face of the real forces and practices of the outside world, and thus his moral superiority is not a result of his own deeds, either. In this inconvertible situation of defencelessness, Esterházy, with his extensive knowledge and experience of life, together with his intimate emotion, is able to fulfil his intention with a certain devout purity.

Actually, it is a question of a manifold metathetical play, with a real little boy as the hero into whose limited vision some of the confused and strange events of Hungary in the 'fifties keep cropping up, incidentally, as it were, but still inevitably, but who only watches devotedly the two mythical characters of his life—his mother and father. It is the conflict between them which turns the world into a problem for the boy because he loves both of them equally, and the increasing discord, alienation and finally the divorce of the parents are incompatible with his love. Forsaken by the grown-ups who are struggling with more important problems, and with each other, this little boy also takes refuge in fantasy. He invents the characters of Fancsikó and Pinta, thereby trebling his own self so that in their company he would be able to weave adventures in his imagination, reconciling his parents and improving the world. Naturally, his undertaking is hopeless and yet not entirely futile, because from the very beginning the little hero is a worthy match for the world, and in the process he is actually growing up to his problems, too. The insights into his

development—which turn the array of short stories almost into a novel—also outline a delicately shaded and richly documented mental transformation. The little boy does not surrender his own truth throughout, but he finally achieves the transformation from defiance to compassion, from a modesty of knowledge to a knowledge which is aware of its own limits—from the arrogance of defencelessness to the wisdom of Fancsikó, who can "love and see at the same time".

Esterházy is a master of subtle shading, and yet he does not—or rarely, at any rate—resolve these in a lyrical way, indeed, he blends emotion with a quality which is far removed from devotion—the objectiveness of rationality. His small protagonist is highly intelligent and grows in significance by being endowed with an anachronistic consciousness by the author, in that he introduces his own sensitivity into the anthropomorphism and micro-vision of the child's way of thinking. He fits the fragments of his stories to the epical framework exactly, in order to be able to deepen and plot them unimpeded in the imaginary scenes of the mind. And with a fascinating lingual inventiveness, his imagination animates everything into sensual objects, for him all the emotions, concepts and moods become personalized. "The leaves of our conversation have fallen beneath our feet", "Fancsikó kicked the silence under the bed". The father's features "were eddying like badly wound string", mother's voice is "a sponge penetrated with tears". Péter Esterházy employs a splendid use of the Hungarian language; words to him provide a veritable gold-mine with which he can play away to his heart's content. At times, though, he does get carried away by the colours and nuances of the language, he overexploits some of his ideas, but nevertheless, in its entirety his elegance, rainbow-like in its variety, and his abundance, which demands the readers attention, evokes the clarity and sincerity of the child's mind. And true to the basic situation of the story,

it indicates the dangers and temptations of the beauty of imagination and of form, at the same time underlining the heroism with which the little boy resolutely subordinates his sparkling wit and his spiritual wealth to reality.

I feel therefore that Fancsikó and Pinta is the initiation of a good Hungarian writer. Even if some of the uncertainty inherent in a first book may still be found in it. For example, it goes in too much for technicalities—Esterházy noticeably does not present his entire personality, but rather he carries the text in the direction of colourful punch-lines with a clever use of form, and by filtering the content to an ethereal delicacy he only hints at the more "serious" matters

of life. And sometimes it is not only his abundance which is disturbing, in places his method of non-disclosure becomes the reverse i.e. unnecessarily mysterious, when in actual fact it is only a sentence or two which are required to establish the situation that are missing. His test as a writer will probably be whether he can maintain his mastery of tone and means and whether he will be able to make use of his undoubted talent to put over more profound messages within a more extensive format. Because besides sensitivity, prose writing also requires strength, and because of Esterházy's intellect and discipline he will most likely fulfil his promise.

IMRE KISS PINTÉR

"THE BOYS FROM KERTÉSZ STREET"

Ferenc Lóránd: *A Kertész-utcaiak* (Magvető Publishers, 1976, 475 pp.)

I

Dickens could have written a novel about the fate of Marci S. One of his legs is a few inches shorter than the other, a reminder of paralysis. He is quite short for his age, looks miserable and is prematurely aged with a wrinkled face. He lives with his father who fails to feed him regularly and beats him all the time. Occasionally the neighbours offer him a plate of soup out of pity. He doesn't work and has no income.

Feri B.'s life is not much easier either. He is a Gypsy child living with a drunkard father, along with eight brothers and sisters. Feri at 15 is the eldest. He works 8 to 9 hours daily on a building site. He is permanently hungry, and always looks sleepy.

One can encounter these 15-16-year-old prematurely old children in a book by Ferenc Lóránd entitled "The Boys from Kertész Street." When I started reading about this exciting experiment, an event

in England crossed my mind. Eight years ago my English host, an associate of the British Council, took me to a club in London's Notting Hill district. Youngsters having to cope with difficult living conditions spent their days from early morning until late evening at the club. Although the two institutions—the one in London and the other in Budapest—differed basically in character—the English club was established on the strength of public donation, and the Hungarian maintained by the state, or the district council—they were identical in one thing: a pedagogic experiment was being conducted within them. The London youth club was directed by a 25-year-old bank clerk who strove to encourage the youths to spend their time usefully, offering various constructive educational classes. The boys at the London club with their sad and hard life in many ways resembled those who appear in Ferenc Lóránd's book.

2

Who are these youngsters that F. Lóránd's book deals with? In Hungary school is compulsory until the age of 16 for those boys and girls who cannot complete the compulsory 8-year general school until they pass 14. But each year there are plenty of young people who, although they are 14 and have not completed the general school, ask to be excused from attending the compulsory school for various social reasons, and their request is usually granted. Let us not be hasty in condemning these schools; at times teachers save their own pupils from the over-age boys who, with their physical superiority, have an undesirable effect on their companions. These over-age boys can go to work and usually the financial position of their families means that the money they earn is much-needed. But can society be complacent when every year quite a few thousand young people who drop out of school do not receive even the groundwork of knowledge that the general school offers? Yes, evening schools exist but they are not obligatory, and an evening school never has the same punitive, disciplinary sphere of influence as a day school.

Ferenc Lóránd received his teaching diploma at Budapest University's Faculty of Arts. Later he worked as literary adviser in a youth publishing house, and edited the *Úttörővezető* (Pioneer Leader) periodical. In 1963 he accepted the post of headmaster at the workers' general school of 30, Kertész Street, in one of Budapest's central districts. It was there that he came into contact with the over-age, 15-16-year-old boys who no longer went to daytime schools. The boys, however, were unable to fit in with the older people who were undertaking considerable sacrifices in order to learn. Headmaster F. Lóránd then started a special pedagogic experiment for the over-age pupils. The point was to organize special classes for the over-age pupils.

The experiment started in the 1967

school-year, on an "experimental basis," and was only later accepted as an official pedagogic experiment, with 117 registered over-age pupils of whom only 84 attended the school regularly. Initially classes were held in four groups in the 7th and the 8th forms (grades) four afternoons a week. After 2 months the headmaster received official permission to hold the classes only twice a week. The curriculum also changed somewhat. At the beginning the textbooks of the normal-age pupils were used, but after two months time the adults' books were read. As, under the official measures, the over-age pupils were employed on a shorter-hour work basis, their classes commenced earlier than those of the adults.

This seems simple related like this, but in reality the beginning was much harder. F. Lóránd and his staff were unlucky at the outset, as the school was being restored and they had to move to another building where they were merely tolerated as strangers. The headmaster did not always have enough colleagues around to help him. Some of the teachers fled: the over-age pupils, who hardly had a harmonious private life, were often a problem to their teachers.

Four-letter words were by no means uncommon in classes. Some of the youths did not go to school sometimes on their own account or because of their parents who did not allow them to go. F. Lóránd and his staff also had the school bureaucracy to contend with. They had a hard time trying to make their colleagues understand that the working over-age pupils had outgrown the regular school, and that they belonged in a special youth school, where more than the usual number of special classes were deemed necessary for the particular educational purposes that lay ahead, etc.

3

Even if circumstances are now different to what they were at the time of Makarenko,

who a few years after the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution set up his own Gorky settlement, there are certain similarities in the social scene. If the boys from Kertész Street included one or two homeless or thieving kids, or those who played truant, it indicated that their domestic conditions were considerably worse than that of their contemporaries who had a more regular background. Ferenc Lóránd gives a sociological survey of his pupils and it shows that the per capita monthly income of the parents of the over-age pupils from Kertész Street was 400 forints less than that of an average manual worker in Budapest. The per capita monthly income of 40 per cent of the families of the boys from Kertész Street was below the level of subsistence, and a mere 57 per cent of the children lived with both their parents.

If the majority of those boys lived in such difficult circumstances, and the teachers had so much trouble right from the start, and later on as well, how, one may ask, is it that the experiment was a success?

Before going on to deal with the methods used in the experiment, let me stress the fact that it would be erroneous to believe that the teachers were successful all the time. The book shows that the boy who from the beginning best served the purpose of the school, and who was one of the stable pillars of self-rule, left Ferenc Lóránd in the lurch at the most critical moment. There were other boys as well who were a disappointment to the teachers despite all their optimism. That the others weren't to become a total failure was possible because of some organizational measures aside from the basic principles. As the boys had classes only twice a week, a study room was set up for them directed by teachers, on the days without classes. Later on a social club was organized with television, radio, and various games. But not all of the boys were allowed to partake in this; a self-ruling body was set up in every class by the community, which decided who was allowed to enter

the club. Entrance cards were withdrawn in cases of bad conduct. Study circles were also set up to make use of the boys' surplus energy, and one young TV director organized a literary circle. All these pedagogic methods were based on community education and the democratic self-government of the boys themselves. Later on the school found outside allies: first of all in the telephone factory which, due to a shortage of manpower, aimed to solve some of its labour problems with the help of the over-age pupils. Thus came about the meeting of mutual interests: the school needed a place which could employ a large number of the boys, and the time spent outside school was also easier to control. The telephone factory recognized a good opportunity for recruiting workers. Thus the two institutions signed a contract, and in his book Ferenc Lóránd mentioned quite a few workers and foremen who apart from labour taught his apprentices humanity in the best sense of the word.

4

I have mentioned before that the experiment with the boys from Kertész Street had its ups and downs while the experiment was being undertaken. The author sometimes wrote about the failure with despair, occasionally with mild malice, and self-irony. Throughout his book, though, there is not one sentence where confidence and love for the boys does not shine through. It is not an obligatory optimism but rather something the basis of which was provided by the power of education, the opportunities, by the friendly allies within and outside school, and last but not least, by the conditions inherent in a socialist society. At the end of such a pedagogic book the reader expects a happy ending. Well the book says that there is some sort of a happy ending, with some of the lives on the right track. Let us not think of extraordinary careers, but it is a fact that Zsuzsa Z. passed

her final exam at a high school, György B. successfully passed his exam qualifying him as a skilled worker—a locksmith. Kati I. enrolled into an economic technical middle school. Several of the pupils became nurses, shop assistants, or respected manual workers. What could constitute a better result than their having become useful members of society after obtaining the basis of general knowledge?

What about Ferenc Lóránd? The Balázs Béla Film Studio prepared a 90-minute documentary about him, his colleagues and the school. The film received the award of the Youth Film Days in Hungary in 1973. Ferenc Lóránd was presented with the "Outstanding Teacher Award", on Teachers' Day in 1971. On the strength of the experiences and constructive results the model of Kertész

Street was introduced in three other Budapest-based schools.

On the surface, F. Lóránd received official honour for saving some children living in hard circumstances. But in his experiment he ventured to accomplish much more: he wanted to give hope to some of his dejected colleagues and show that it is not hopeless to fight for children living the saddest of lives. And the example that the experiment showed to the young as well as the old was summed up by the headmaster of the Kertész Street school: "Who knows, maybe they'll remember us. We have perhaps achieved becoming a point of reference for many of them. Our community has become a form of human coexistence which they sometimes long for if they are discontented with themselves or with others."

ISTVÁN GÁBOR

MARKETING IN HUNGARY

is a quarterly informing you regularly on cooperation with Hungary
through studies by experts of Hungarian economy

Editor in chief: Dr. Gerd Biró

From number 1977/2

Béla Kádár:

HUNGARY'S ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH OVERSEAS
OECD COUNTRIES

Frigyes Horchler:

HUNGARIAN-AMERICAN ENTERPRISE COOPERATION

Kálmán Mészáros:

THE HUNGARIAN ECONOMY IN THE LIGHT
OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS

Rezső Bajusz:

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT IN 1977

József Jovanovits:

COOPERATION POSSIBILITIES FOR THE HEAVY INDUSTRY
IN THE FIFTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN

Ágnes Gonda:

SOME EXTERNAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS
OF THE MEDIUM TERM PLAN OF HUNGARHOTELS

Subscription: \$ 20/year at Kultura H-1389 Budapest, P.O.B. 149

Free sample copies from the Editorial Office:

H-1054 Budapest, Lengyel Gy. u. 6. Hungary

ARTS AND ARCHEOLOGY

FROM LINOCUTS TO TAPESTRY

Piroska Székely, Imre Veszprémi, Piroska Szántó, Lenke Széchenyi

Piroska Székely has always been fond of multiple graphics, but she has mainly worked with the line-engraving or dry-point methods, hence her work has strictly remained black-and-white; her style is dramatically original, almost tragic, while her ideas, if not her forms, are related to those of Edvard Munch.

For those of us familiar with Piroska Székely's art, the radical transformation that has ensued in her genre, attitude, and idiom, and which can be seen at her one-man exhibition in the Helikon Gallery, comes as a surprise and is certainly interesting. Székely the master etcher has become a lino-cutter *par excellence*. She does not have it easy, for the tinted lino is a complex technique and each and every colour has to be printed off a separate printing-block; there is no doubt, though, that the sheet does reward the pains taken, by the effect produced, while, in addition, the white of the paper (especially in the negative) can even be considered a separate colour. Although the artist continues to be expressive, it seems that she has grown weary of the sombre, for her new series is far more cheerful; it is playful, more animated, and particularly more strident than her earlier works. Her linocuts are characterized by large, broad patches with an even colour effect, and this is also to be found in the woodcut's succinct mode of exposition. She consistently keeps her forms flush with the plane, at the same time playing with the beholder: she makes the juxtaposition

of the pictorial elements seem lax and adventitious, albeit such an effect can only be achieved by strict composition. As the dramatic Székely has become more facile, her lack of colour has now been succeeded by many colours, and indeed, she employs the most assertive, intensive colours on only a few of her sheets in order to indicate a certain mood; only the proportion of colour is restrained.

The Helikon exhibition, in point of fact, consists of one work, a single cycle consisting of the *Variációk Hány János témára* (Variations on the Hány János Theme). This is "descriptive music" and a tribute to Zoltán Kodály, but it is not, by any means, an illustration, for it is linked only very loosely with the fable and the series is so conceptual. We see that Piroska Székely was not thinking of Kodály's *Hány János Opera*, which relates the hilarious tall stories of a Hungarian soldier, sort of Gascon of the last century, but of the *Hány Suite*, that is, she has chosen the most difficult route when she commenced to "draw" music and to successfully capture the intangible with her transpositions.

Imre Veszprémi has always had a proclivity towards the monumental. His art was, however, restricted to a certain neo-classicism which refers to Greek-Roman statuary and is characteristic of the mainstream of Hungarian sculpture, a practically problem-free serenity, and a presumedly mandatory lyrical attitude.

I do not contend that his recent work is

not neo-classic: but they are only neo-classic if looked at from the perspective of our own age. The turning-point was Veszprémi's work entitled *Kéz* (Hand) which is a stone statue with its fingers held up and close together, with the thumb at a horizontal angle—the eternal theme of modern art, requiring a simple and laconic exposition. The first alternative of *Kéz* was cast in bronze; and even in that model the tenseness was apparent, although, with its diffident elegance, it did not match the force of the second version (four metres tall already!), which was not only achieved by the increase in dimensions. The dual piece of *Férfi-nő* (Man and Woman) is barely smaller. The two stone figures are constructed on an ordinary, strong iron bar, their legs and neck are a single iron rod, while their bodies and heads are schematic and reduced on this complex to the utmost degree, whilst retaining figurativeness, and are in the form of a prism. To the negative forms, such as the costal spaces or the hollows representing the eyes, the sculptor has assigned the same kind of role as he did to the limestone "flesh." Every sculptor's ideal is to carve directly. Veszprémi has used his imagination and created possibilities for himself; he has brought what he willed to fruition and worked out the problem that he set himself. The same could also be said of the other monumental sculptures included in the exhibition, such as *Orfeusz* (Orpheus), or even the *Dózsa* compositions, which are references to the *Stonehenges*.

At the exhibition, these statues, which were destined to be displayed in the open air, did not feel hemmed in, or cramped in the 16 metres high and 140 metres square small exhibition hall of the Múcsarnok Art Gallery. The finishing touch of the one-man exhibition was achieved by way of the organization, i.e. the use of space in arranging the vast, but few works.

The one-man exhibition of painter Piroska Szántó has been mounted in three adjoining rooms in the Múcsarnok Art Gal-

lery. What has now come about by chance would also be interesting as an intended experiment, for exactly seven years ago Piroska Szántó's last one-man Budapest show was presented in the same place, in the same three rooms, consisting of the same number of pictures and organized in the same way. This is what I wrote about the exhibition seven years ago: "we can distinguish seven distinctive styles and forms of expression, which are often so dissimilar to one another that, were it not for the artist's signature, we would hardly believe them to be the work of one painter." This is what critic György Szabó has recently written about the painter: "Indeed, somehow or other, not one of the generic terms invented and used in the history of art corresponds to her work." Furthermore, the artist not only eludes these generic terms year by year, but she also changes incessantly, and is at the same time versatile even within what could be considered a "period" of hers. Her parallel themes are highly contrasting and even if two of her paintings were painted at the same time one may be garish and colourful whilst the other may well be monochromatic; this year, at least, they are predominantly black-and-silver. Taken in any given time Piroska Szántó's technique is varied and may include drawing or painting, oil or pastel, or possibly the use of metallic paint.

Her current exhibition is diverse as well, to be precise, it is divided into several series. Some, like the *Szerelmesek* (Lovers), or the *Lepkék* (Butterflies), have deliberately been intended as cycles, but there are also series where the individual paintings have sought out one another to make up a group.

It is palpable that the procedure of the Butterfly series and the pastel (*The Butterflies*) is, in fact, two series, since the artist handles the chalk in two different ways; in certain works it is reminiscent of the dancing airiness of Japanese painting (*Zubatag* = Waterfall; *Hatszemes* = With Six Eyes; *Felbőkakukkvár* = Cloud Cuckooland) and in others, for example the "Butterfly

Portraits", we see just the opposite of this exility, by way of full, lush, and compact colouring (*Bagolyképpű* = Owl-Face; *Krampusz* = Bogey-Man; *A vadállat* = The Beast). I place the flower pictures beside the butterflies, not only because the painter's manner of execution is similar in both themes, but because Piroska Szántó the realist, perhaps unconsciously, with this indication attests the harmony of flowers and butterflies.

A szerelmesek (The Lovers) are skeletons. Generally speaking, they are the bony figures of man and woman: apart from the undisguised symbolism, this series is also the purest depiction of reality. North of Budapest, on the right bank of the Danube, in Szentendre, Pomáz, or Budakalász, the district where Piroska Szántó's country house is situated, it is difficult to avoid the excavations and so not see the *in situ* collection of finds; the artist does not need to do more than shift the scene in front of him onto the canvas. Archaeology is naturally only the motive and the framework for these paintings (*Mors*; *X*; *Összeégve* = Burnt Up), because without an original meaning of their own they would be no more than a series of newspaper drawings to illustrate a report on excavations. The still shots of the skeletal finds are only a step away from the *danse macabre* (for example in the plates of the *Triptichon*), which also has the skeleton as its protagonist, but in its conception it already draws near to the regular, and conversely, less regular expression of Christian iconography. The most recent pictures also deal with death (*Atra cura*; *Napfoltok* = Sun Spots; *Hárman* = The Three), but in a different manner to the material in the rest of the exhibition, as though the need for a cubistic analysis had awakened in Piroska Szántó. A new cycle, the conclusion of which we shall only be able to see at her next one-man exhibition, has probably commenced with these few recent paintings.

The horse series (*Mézskalács* = Honeycake; *Házaspár* = Married Couple; *Katalin* = Kathleen; *Összerogyva* = Collapsed) has

no title. This again reveals a new style of the painter, and is the first time that it may be seen at an exhibition. This style is more placid and mellow, and a certain expressive impatience, always displayed hitherto, has disappeared and given way to Piroska Szántó's newer traits: an accentuated three-dimensional quality, not to mention a completeness which occupies the whole of the pictorial field.

The transpositions of this artist are not difficult to unravel and sometimes even the title of the picture helps. There are, however, such pictorial sentences of hers whose arcanum she keeps to herself. One thing, though, is certain, namely that whatever Piroska Szántó chooses to paint or draw, she always speaks about man, thoughts, concepts, emotions, play, tragedies, and situations.

The themes of the gobelin tapestries of Lenke Széchenyi presented in the Műcsarnok Art Gallery are based on a whole gamut of myths. The centre of the circular composition, the *Csillagképek* (Astral Realms), is a coloured map of a terrestrial sphere, but the latest *Föld* (Earth) (which is five metres square) is flat and depicts tilled land, hills, and sky-scrapers; this globe is held by two angels, and the sun and crescent moon orbit round a flat earth. Lenke Széchenyi is a keen participant of the new Hungarian mini-textile "movement," which is only a few years old: in the *Alma* (Apple) cut into two halves the artist depicts Adam and Eve, while the *Átváltozás legendája* (The Legend of the Metamorphosis) illustrates the miracle of the Hungarian Saint Elizabeth, in whose apron the alms bread turned into a rose; according to the *Francia legenda* (French Legend) a child enters the world in a cabbage, which in this case happens to be a gobelin-cabbage. Széchenyi's oil-paintings and drawings are not designs or colour sketches for gobelins but works in their own right. It is the special technique of her graphic prints that she draws on a regular prepared canvas stretched on canvas stretchers with black textile paint.

Lenke Széchenyi is a born gobelin-maker—and not only because she mostly weaves her tapestry herself, yet, if I study her paintings I consider her to be a born painter, while her drawings induce me to pronounce her a born draughtsman. Which, then, is the real Lenke Széchenyi? Let the artist herself answer this rhetorical question: "The yarn has never excited me. I never work according to the rules of weaving, but I weave in compliance with the independent laws of painting and drawing. Gobelin-weaving is a branch of painting. From the various coloured yarns one can blend colours and shades with exactly the same sureness as one mixes oil-paint on the palette. Why does the gobelin excite me more, for all that? When I paint I get carried away by my own enthusiasm, while the mechanics of the loom act as a control inclining one to steadier conceptualization."

The gobelin is an élite branch of the visual arts, its development is laborious and arduous, but merely by virtue of the fact that it is gobelin it does have potential advantages; it is true that it also contains more sources of error than other genres precisely for the reason that it is so entrancingly beautiful. Even Lenke Széchenyi's gobelin art is marked with the impress of her brilliant draughtsmanship and of her 'graphic mind', not only because her work is, for the most part, figurative, for she is a masterful painter, composition never having caused her much concern. In the same way that she refuses acclaim in her textile work, so she does not exalt her talent for drawing, her sense of colour or her directing ability, regarding them as merely tools or instruments.

She continually alters her idiom, being a translator of herself; I could not even conceive of a single congealed Széchenyi gobelin style. In the *Apple* she offers a paraphrase of the Romanesque, in the *Astral Realms* of the Gothic, in her project for the Sopron theatre of the rococo, while *Homokvár*

(Sand-fort) is executed in a naive-decorative style. This endless transubstantiation is a corollary of Széchenyi's discipline and humility, but the inner identification can only be enacted at this level and degree of fervency with her talent.

This unusual pliancy, however, has a deeper purport as well, such as the attitude of an, I imagine, unwitting, instinctive irony, whereby the artist says, using the language of flowers: I adore the theatre, it's such fun to play a part, but look out, you shouldn't take everything seriously, not even me. It is this modicum—or perhaps more than a modicum—of irony and play within play which distinguishes her art from more archaic gulelessness.

The sheer conception of the painter has now been promoted to an artistic level, and even the wood-print or the etched cooper sheet has become a work of art. Lenke Széchenyi has discovered how beautiful and expressive the gobelin is on the loom while being worked on, when the bare trellis-work of the weft-yarns is no more than a sustaining element of the finished design. She imitates this momentum even in the complete, finished work. The background of the gobelin is now supplanted by this tightened, plumb system of chords, this blank, open-worked form. Seeing that the threads could not support themselves, there must be something on which to stretch them. Lenke Széchenyi felt the quadratic form of tapestry and of painting to be monotonous here, which is why she makes use of rotund wooden frames. She resorts to similar elliptic effects in *Apple*, and the *Astral Realms*, and even in the composition the *Earth*. By this game of hers she has at once gained an inkling of the laws of gravitation and repulsion in space. Her mini-textiles prove how avid the artists plastic demands are, and how she longs for the possession of the third dimension as well. . .

A GENERATION OF SEVENTY-YEAR-OLDS

Menyhért Tóth, György Kobán, Jenő Benedek

In the autumn of 1976, Menyhért Tóth's retrospective attracted a lot of attention, even when the exceptional quality of the exhibitions of that particular season are taken into consideration. At last here is a painter whose work, over a thousand paintings, drawings and statues, is able to stand up to the vastness of the Múcsarnok. Laymen, and indeed most of the experts as well, have only just discovered the 73-year-old artist, although for the past ten years he has been showing regularly every two years in the provinces, particularly in his native Great Plain. The conclusion which may be drawn from this is that unfortunately the acknowledgement of Budapest represents that of the whole country, in spite of the fact that some provincial museums and galleries are one step ahead of the capital when it comes to originality and daring. The King Stephen Museum in Székesfehérvár may be taken as an example since Menyhért Tóth's paintings were shown there in 1970.

In fairness to the art world, however, it should be said that the reason for the painter's late discovery is probably because none of Menyhért Tóth's earlier exhibitions showed such a large quantity of work nor did they cover such an extensive period. Between 1941 and 1964 he had no one-man show, and in joint exhibitions the usual garishness and self-assertiveness of the other paintings overshadowed his pastel-toned canvasses. Menyhért Tóth is one of those talented and unassuming artists whose painting is not sensationalist. His world is a closed one; each of his paintings, if taken out of the context of the others, appears at first glance not to mean anything. His technique isn't ostentatious and he is not forever in search of new formal solutions. Placed side by side, however, his work follows a strictly logical pattern in both its

artistic and its human realization. During the forty years of his life as a painter, Menyhért Tóth was continually looking for the same thing, and if the talent which manifested itself (apart from the odd exception) in his early works, which were executed with his characteristic vigour, was the same as that of his later ones, then this goes to illustrate that the artist's representation of the world, also his own inner world, were both unchanging over the years.

These early works were started comparatively late, and it is necessary to know a little of the artist's background in order to find out why he kept himself apart from the art world, and also how it could come about that he was not even mentioned in the best known, and only recent, handbook on contemporary art (Lajos Németh, 1968). The Encyclopaedia of Arts (1967) only covers this significant painter very briefly in a short paragraph.

Menyhért Tóth began to paint rather late. Having to contend with extreme poverty and an intellectually and physically distressing illness, he fought his way to the Budapest Academy of Art. Amid the adverse conditions of his life he considers himself fortunate in having lost a leg: "It may sound strange, but I am very happy because now nobody can upbraid me for doing what I like best, which is drawing and painting." He was twenty-six when he became a pupil of János Vaszary, who had studied painting in Paris and was a patron of modern Hungarian art. This superior and worldly man had the perception to recognize a genuine artist in the strange country boy, and he was democratic enough to help him and to allow him to develop, in spite of Tóth's work being far removed from Vaszary's own aesthetic ideals. What then did Menyhért Tóth paint when he graduated from the Academy? Bizarre landscapes in which real-



PIROSKA SZÁNTÓ: THE HORSES OF THE SEA
(OIL, 100 × 102 CM, 1976)

Márta Réáner



PIROSKA SZÁNTÓ: X (OIL, 100 X 60 CM, 1974)

Károly Székelyi



IMRE VESZPRÉMI: HAND (TRAVERTIN, 400 CM, 1975)



LENKE SZÉCHENYI: ZODIAC (GOBELIN, Ø 200 CM)

László Lelkes

PIROSKA SZÉKY: VARIATIONS
ON THE HÁRY JÁNOS THEME, XXII
(LINOCUT, 25 × 19 CM, 1976)



MENYHÉRT TÓTH: CHILDREN'S SPRING (OIL, 39 × 45 CM, AROUND 1935–37)

László Roboz





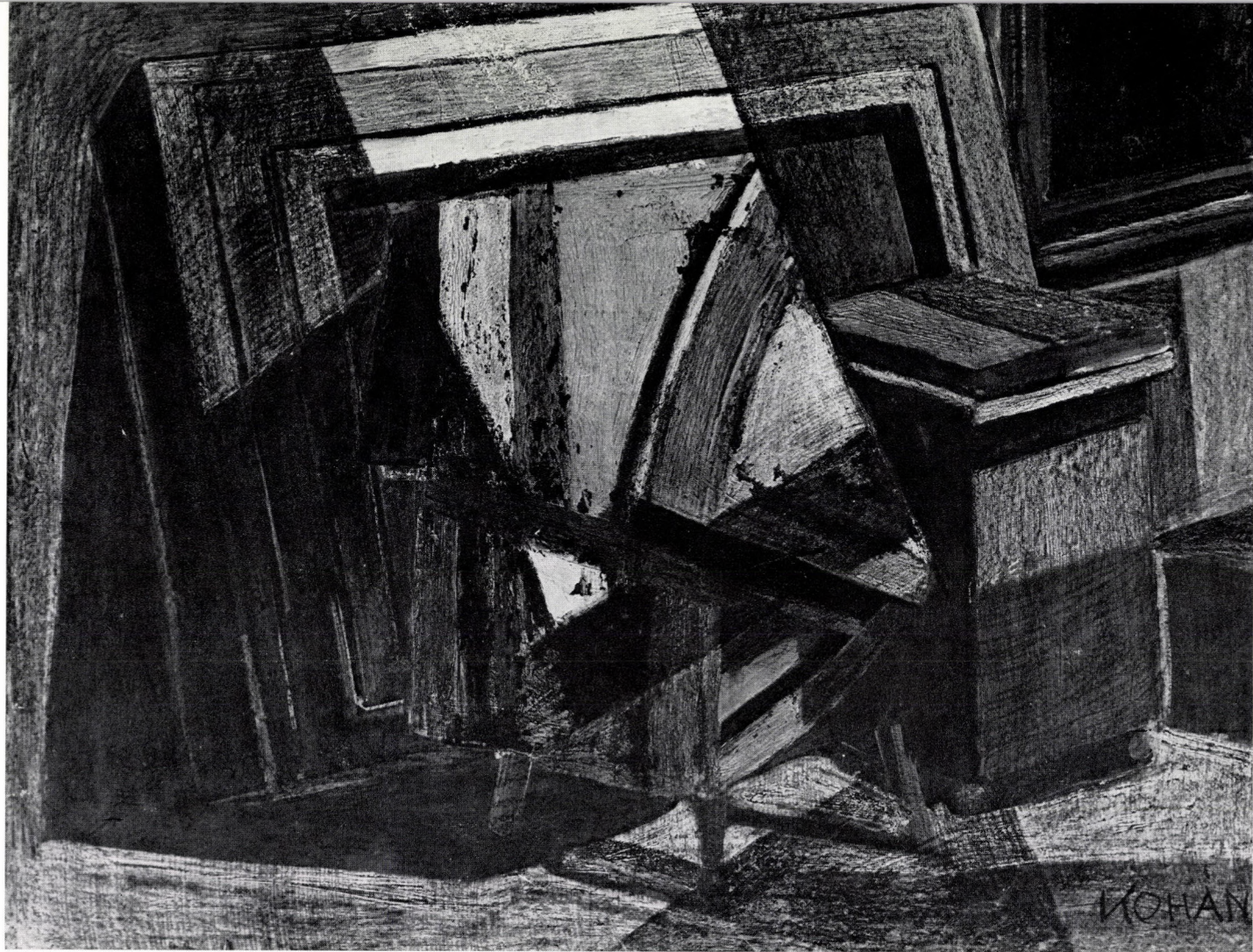
MENYHÉRT TÓTH: HEAD OF A PEASANT (OIL ON PAPER,
49 × 40 CM, 1955)

László Roboz



MENYHÉRT TÓTH: MOTHER AND CHILD (OIL ON PAPER,
69.5 × 49.5 CM, 1954–55)

László Roboz



GYÖRGY KOHÁN: FORMS IN SPACE (OIL, 1961)

István Petrás



JENŐ BENEDEK: SCENIC SHORES (OIL, 60 × 80 CM)

János Wabr

DOKUMENTUM

40

J

vagy hazájába utazik és agyonverik

AZ UJ VERS

Bilan de la vie sociale et artistique

DOKUMENTUM

É l'Art Moderne en Europe

V

B

Budapest főváros

kerületének elöljárósági

Szegényváégi bizonyítvány

A TISZTASÁG



hosszu haja alatt már kopaszodik a feje holnap holnapután báránycák összeesik



EGY EMBER ÉLETE

Kassák Lajosnak

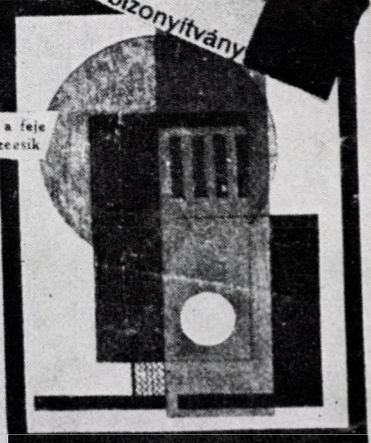
em csipetkék kimezse
öröri poharakkal játrák
delnyugatra mesz, ott is hajad lesznek a végnyel
nyakod kőrsi a gödrökbe most illeszkedik he a plati
ragokát
endel l, hogy mundekek csak nyek
ekmaros utra 28 alatt beirakozott
k, esorgodob, zirenek.
süvöndö
zant kmesitjéket tesz, hogy ujra ráleppen a hávet
ojára
elw adja a szerencsényrekeket
süvöl arcuak fala síghatfáltan
vagy arcuak fala síghatfáltan
ki idenez, az jary a jubadon
k felszólítottak, hogy zenéjének
agony, a zeneiökönk jönnék már e-ban,
hajakból esed róti, fékdeli hely
vélvebb, vagy sörvebb febet, Söktet

SIMON JOLÁN

KONYVEBOL

* A nyugat ma húsz éves és mi nem jövünk eléje fekete zászlókkal é rejtett kárörömmel Nem mondjuk, hogy meghalt a nem nyu (talant bennünket, hogy él

Kassák Lajos,
Déry Tibor, Illérs Gyula



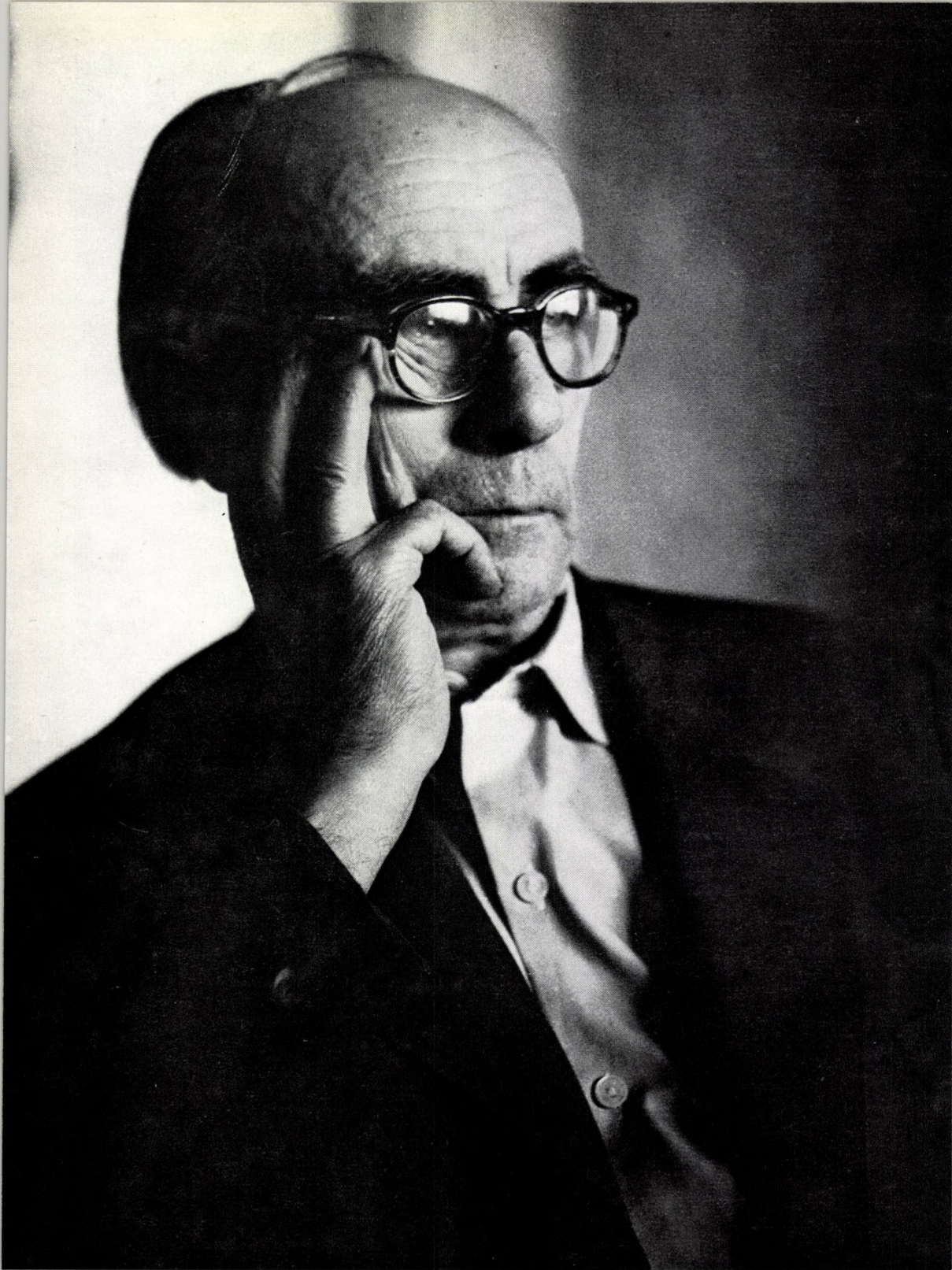
KASSÁK LAJOS

MA

Kassák Lajos
1924

LAJOS KASSÁK: COLLAGE (1927)

Courtesy Petőfi Literary Museum

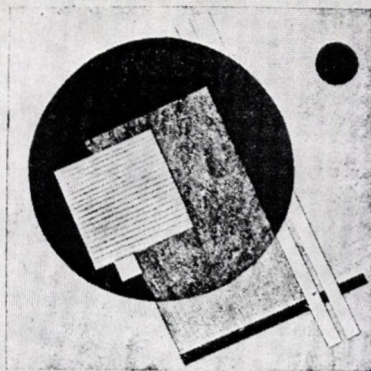


LAJOS KASSÁK (1963)

Károly Koffán

LAJOS KASSÁK:
COVER DESIGN FOR HIS
TISZTASÁG KÖNYVE
("THE BOOK OF PURITY")
A COLLECTION OF POEMS
(1926)

KASSÁK LAJOS



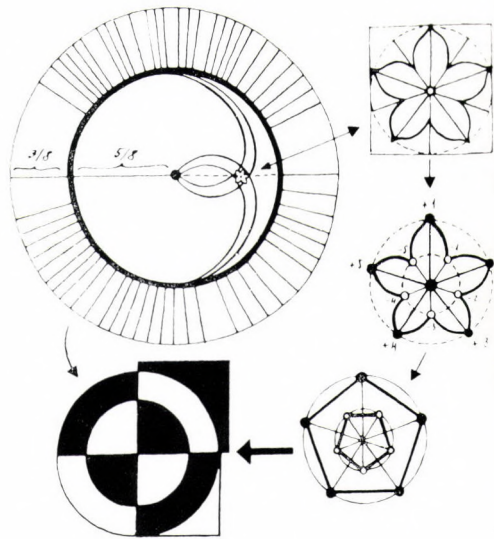
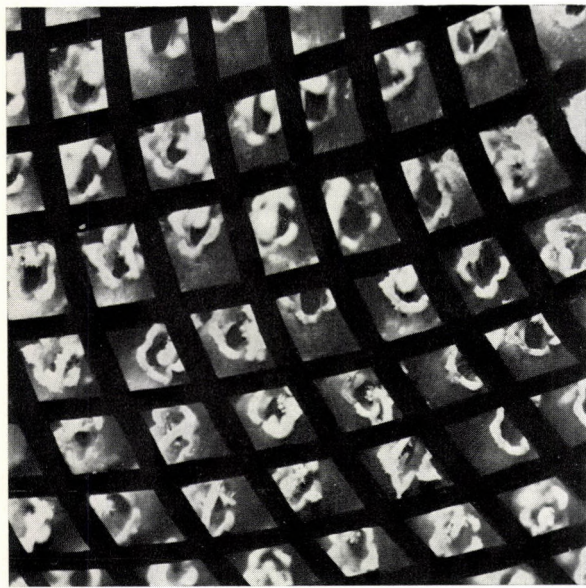
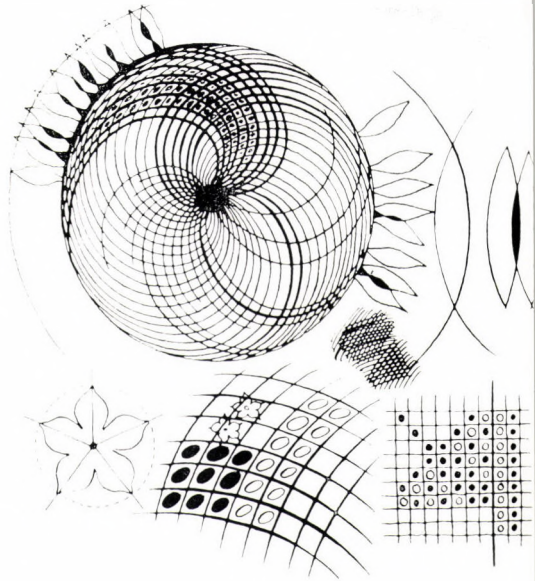
TISZTASÁG
KÖNYVE

Az új művészet az új emberé. Mi egy új kor kezdetén új tipust kezdő emberek vagyunk. A művészet, mint önmagáért való SZÉP nem érdekelt bennünket. Nem könnyű kezű cizellatók, hanem nyug-
hatatlan feltalálók vagyunk. Nem könnnyű és üveggel dolgozó építők-
művészek vagyunk, akik a könnnyű és üveggel dolgozó építők-
művészek új formáiban állítanak, hanem új formák és új formák.
nincs mérték, mellyel hozzánk és munkáinkhoz közelíteni lehetne.

István Petrács



LAJOS KASSÁK:
COVER DESIGN FOR TIBOR
DÉRY'S ÉNEKELNEK
ÉS MEGHALNAK ("THEY SING
AND DIE") (1928)



FERENC LANTOS: ANALYSIS OF A SUNFLOWER'S DISC
(PHOTO, 100 X 100 CM, 1973)

Katalin Nádor

istic elements combine with meandering, strangely shaped patches of colour and line. He might, in a painting of a village road, unexpectedly include an eagle or a parrot or some mythical creature; he might paint signs and symbols in the sky not reminiscent of anything, such as letters or numbers (e.g. "The Move", "The Village Fringe"), but which have a specific meaning. Although this makes him seem a surrealist, he has, in point of fact, nothing to do with the Surrealist Movement. His unusual combinations do not derive from his subconscious, indeed it is not even their intention to allude to the subconscious, they are part of Tóth's ideology. They show a split world and the existence of another above it, as well as the eternal conflict between good and evil. Various traditional folk beliefs have taken root in his unusual creative imagination: the magical symbols which banish corruption and ward off evil are diffused in his painting. "The Evil Man" (1961), "The Lake Shore" (1942) and "Renewed World" (1946) are practically pure calligraphy and are reminiscent of his contemporary André Masson's paintings of that period and though very likely without Menyhért Tóth knowing or accepting the principle of automatic creativity, they were done in some sort of mechanical trance.

To start mentioning names and to compare Tóth's work to that of artists abroad would be in vain since this would only serve to indicate his standard and not the nature of his painting. It is not an easy task to trace the origins of such original painting, as practically no one can be said to have had any influence on him and he was not connected with a school, nor did he found one. After his student years the artist immediately isolated himself in the country. Even if his contemporaries were aware of his microcosmos of spirited forms of colour and light, they failed to recognize its inherent boldness of expression and considered his work to be the whimsey of an eccentric, solitary man who did not belong anywhere.

The fifties saw his most realistic period. He painted figures and a fascinating series of portraits with deformed faces which suggest the suffering which Tóth himself must have been familiar with having experienced it and witnessing it in the world around him. His figures of humans and animals are grave, still and without emotion, melting into the background on the grainy, thickly applied paint. They are also grotesque, evoking not humour but horror; against the stone-like and uneven, fragmented surface they appear to be of stone themselves.

In the sixties he began to use lighter colours which merged more into one another in broad and faintly winding curves. Due to this, and in spite of the figurativeness, it is his handling of the brush and the thickly applied paint which is important. This would evoke the work of the *informel* artists if it were not for the fact that every brush stroke has a symbolic meaning. The gigantic prehistoric animals are one with the earth and with life itself.

The metempsychosis of the human-headed animals and the animal-headed humans who have momentarily assumed their shape indicates that within the cycle of death and re-birth the life of Man conforms to the same basic laws throughout. Nothing is quite so misleading as the titles of the paintings—"Peasants," "Threshing," "Woman with Bread (or Dog)," "Road Worker," "Frying Lamb," "Dancers," all suggest that Menyhért Tóth took his subjects from everyday life and not from the inner world which interested him exclusively. He gradually tended more towards using white and the myriad subtle shades of grey because, in his own words: "...I know that deep down people are white. They are intrinsically pure but have been blackened..." The artist, reminiscent of the Dostoevsky hero Alyosha, has to this day been self-supporting. He has deliberately cut himself off from the art world because in order to express what he wanted to say he required artistic freedom and absolute

spiritual isolation. A tart thought springs to mind: could it be possible in our day and age to produce great art except in such isolation and independence? Will the history of art looking back on countless theories, trends and -isms not be the story of the great that it is the great lone artists?

*

György Kohán was another great loner. He died ten years ago, and in commemoration the National Gallery recently showed his work. Kohán belongs to the same generation as Menyhért Tóth, and was even born in the same part of the country. Even though his painting received acknowledgement in his lifetime, it was never given the recognition it deserved. His retrospective in 1965 must have served as mere consolation to a mortally ill man; it could not, by then, provide any encouragement. Although the exhibitions of the two painters were given a similar reception, their natures and beginnings were very different. György Kohán was virtually the antithesis of the reserved and incorrigibly obstinate Menyhért Tóth. When Tóth was accepted as a student by the Academy, Kohán was already in Paris, and when Tóth retired to his native village of Miske, Kohán was studying in Rome. Wild and passionate forces wrestled within Kohán and his unstable sensitivity was receptive to any influence, always ready to adapt and to utilize.

His appreciators are able to perceive the development of two sources of inspiration in his art. Whilst artists generally balance and reconcile their more extreme elements in their mature work, Kohán is an exception. His earlier works show more evidence of synthesis, since at the time of their execution he was able to fit into forms taken from elsewhere, aspects which eventually divided both his art and his life. "Ironing" and "Weariness" (1938) combine both depth of tragedy and a pleasing formal decorativeness in this way recalling Picasso's Blue Period.

In "Silence" (1944) Kohán expresses much the same thing in a neo-Classical manner. In "On A Coat" and "Women" (1949) the problem of form within space is simplified into basic geometrical forms and light and dark patches. The strong contours which emphasize his symmetrical compositions and weave their way across the surface of his canvasses subduing the objects to a rigid order. The strong, decisive shading, the distinct outlines and the deep or fiery tones of colour are undoubtedly attractive. Although they are not always bright, they nonetheless refer to the sort of equilibrium which sees to it that everything finds its own place or level. Kohán never was able to reject the harmony of his systematically constructed paintings in either the fifties ("Sunflowers with Shell," "Interior with Plants"), or the sixties ("Invocation," "Form within Space"). Nevertheless, the compositions which are arranged according to colour or formal beauty no longer contain what was inherent in his early work, which was not as original in form, nor the characteristics which now broke out of him with such painful and elemental force. He could not depict tragedy or despair in a still-life of flowers or an interior.

The image of death first occurred almost by accident ("Layer-out," 1936) and gave no indication of the fearful paintings he was to turn to. "The drama lies in the fact of a living being witnessing the perishing of another," he wrote. The sight of death is shattering to him because he identifies himself with the dead, whether human or animal. We are now able to understand why he, who rejoiced in colour, beauty and life, falters all of a sudden and why the trained artist apparently "forgot" all about colour, form, perspective, and the European painting tradition. In order to put over tragedy he turned to one of the characteristic Hungarian modes of expression. This phase of his development can hardly be called beautiful: his decisively painted canvasses appear almost to be a crudely offensive

insult to the observer. They are devoid of fine colour, are not "artistic", nor are they well thought-out as compositions; rather are they fierce and angry testimonies of the anguish of death and the disappearance of a sinking world. It is possible to locate the particular trend which uses little colour, relying upon dark tones, to which Kohán's grey-black paintings are affiliated in the history of Hungarian painting. Tornai, Rudnay, and István Nagy all worked with pastel grey, jet black and dark brown, and this was not due to them having a predilection for gloom but because the Hungarian landscape is not colourful. The glaring summer sun, the dust of the Great Plain, a vast grey firmament and the dark of winter with a brilliant scarlet sunset now and then cleaving the monochrome twilight, but except for that bright colours are not usual. György Kohán's blacks and greys also derive from his immediate surroundings. Above the little whitewashed houses which gleam in the night or in the dawn, only the stars or the rising sun shed light: it is thus that humanity may form a direct relationship with the universe.

The subject of death crops up more often in Kohán's work ("Mourning," I, II, "The Dead Man," I, II, III, "Shot-down Rook," "Frost," "Eyelid,") and not only in paintings dealing directly with it, but in ordinary, everyday objects such as a window-frame seen through a mirror ("Window and Mirror," 1961) in which the window-frame is a huge cross evoking a graveyard. Finally, the artist painted his own coffin ("Night," 1965) in grey upon grey using huge proportions (350 cm. x 250 cm.). His memorial exhibition not only causes shivers to run down one's spine, but enforces the conviction that the cry *de profundis* constituted the real talent and essence of György Kohán.

Sticking to the seventy-year-olds let me

conclude with Jenő Benedek. He also comes from the Great Plain, where he was an art teacher for some years. He later moved to Budapest and at the beginning of the fifties took part in many exhibitions all over the country. The press of the time hailed him as a worthy example for other painters to follow, because of his optimistic and naturalistic paintings of partisans and soldiers. He received a Kossuth Prize, the highest recognition a Hungarian artist can receive. The István Csók Gallery presented his most recent work, which consisted of comparatively few paintings (28), but then the gallery is not very large. In style his work is very similar, so much so that in order to get a complete idea of it all one has to do is take a look at just one of his paintings. His paintings of twenty-five years ago which he did not exhibit on this occasion, merely served to fulfil agitprop purposes, and were routine work, whilst his more recent painting is uncommittal. One feels that Jenő Benedek's individuality was somehow lost between two extremes. His fast and daring handling of a wide brush in figurative work is still indicative of a technically accomplished artist. Tiny forms flash against a dark background: they lend his canvasses a certain vibrancy. Women in long dresses stroll in the shadow of tall trees, elegantly slim figures loiter, with plenty of time on their hands, before a still sea or vast horizon—silent players in a scenic never-never land. This is the kind of painting which one could easily imagine hanging on a dining-room wall. His quiet painting saying nothing and full of innocent nostalgia is especially obvious when compared with the monumentality of the other two. Benedek does not wish to offer more than he is able, which is superficial beauty and a pleasant harmony.

MÁRIA ILLYÉS

LAJOS KASSÁK MEMORIAL MUSEUM IN OLD BUDA

From his appearance in public in 1908 to the present, ten years after his death, Lajos Kassák has proved impervious to classification. He cannot be assigned a neatly defined place in Hungarian art or intellectual life. He is not, by a long shot, part of the past. This modern writer, poet, painter, designer, editor, publisher, and critic whose politics showed that he remained his own man all his life means just as vital and defiant a challenge today as at any time in his life. His gaunt asceticism and resolute stubbornness do not smooth out with time: Kassák today is the same unhewable rock he was when alive. He was a radical, revolutionary innovator, who for fifty years presented the country with never-before-seen versification, prose style, and typography, yet without being able to truly naturalize them. For a long time he was the bridge between Hungarian art and the vanguard of his time, East and West, but this either did not become a rooted tradition in the country. He did things that nobody had done before—nor anyone after him. Even today the air in Hungary is vibrant with him. How is it possible that modern European art, acclimatized in this country over and over again with determined pertinacity, could not really put down roots in Hungary? Did Kassák err, or is anything the matter with Hungarian conditions?

Lajos Kassák is somebody special, and it is understandable that this question is one that points directly to the most sensitive, the neuralgic point for all those whose concern is the gauging of Hungarian cultural and artistic values and their European relationships.

Poems by Lajos Kassák (1887–1967), in Edwin Morgan's translation, have appeared in *NHQ* Nos. 23, 54, and 65, a section of his autobiography in 31, a short story in 28, and reproductions in 28 and 54.

The poet István Vas, Kassák's son-in-law, expressed the Kassák dilemma from direct observation in his autobiography. For the generation of poets and writers maturing in the late twenties Kassák was a major figure that attracted and repelled: he helped young, modern-minded talents, and at the same time made it impossible for them to identify with his programme. This is what István Vas has to say: "But it was not the insignificance of those around him that blocked the road towards modernism for us, it was rather his significance. The force he emanated rarified the air around him, and spoilt the soil for all other varieties of modernism, Lajos Kassák, and none other, was the Hungarian avant-garde. There was a grandiose angularity even in his poetry, there were no threads between it and earlier Hungarian verse, and none ran on to help shape a future figure in the carpet. Apollinaire and T. S. Eliot continued much, Kassák nothing; while Eliot and Apollinaire could be continued, Kassák could not."* Nevertheless, though uncontinuable, his personality and works are present in Hungary today, and in the discussion concerning him real passions clash. Precisely for this reason a Kassák Museum proved a Solomonic judgement: let Kassák's work, and, as far as is possible in a museum, his personality, speak for itself.

The Kassák Museum has been given space in Óbuda in the newly reconditioned Zichy House, not far from Kassák's last home. It is strange to imagine what sort of impression the modernism of the twenties might create within the solid walls of this aristocratic mansion. In the three small showrooms, however, we can forget that we are in a hulkingly sprawling, massive,

* István Vas: *Nehéz szerelem* (Difficult Love). Budapest, 1973, p. 776.

late-medieval manor-house. We are in Kassák's field of force, be it attractive or repellent to the visitor.

The three rooms illustrate, in effect, a well-written Kassák biography, nor have the organizers forgotten to open a window on the European art which reached Hungary thanks to Kassák. There are articles from journals edited by Kassák and a first edition of Kurt Schwitters' magnificent poem *Anna Blume*.

The documents of Kassák's life are there and some of his works in chronological order. The three rooms mark off three great periods: the first extends to 1919, more exactly, to the collapse of the Hungarian Republic of Councils; the second covers the years he spent in Vienna, and his work in Budapest from 1926 up to 1945, and the third the postwar years.

Apart from the biographical documents, things are started with the first journal he edited, aptly named *Tett*, that is *Action*. Kassák was a great editor. All his life, except for the years of the Second World War and the post-1948 period, there was hardly a month when he did not edit a paper of his own. In his own words, written in 1964: "We were wolves living outside of all those cages; that we were able to howl after our own fashion compensated us for a great deal."* This "after our own fashion" relates not only to the message, *Tett*, which appeared from 1915 to the autumn 1916, until prohibited because of its anti-war line, or to the, for Hungary unusually, wide horizon, but also to the make-up and design. Kassák described in his memoirs** that as soon as he had assembled a modest starting capital and a few subscribers he insisted on the best-quality paper and a cover, typography, and make-up of his own design. Even today, stopping in the middle of the

museum, without standing near any of the displays, one can see from afar that these papers are not inferior in design to anything produced at the time, anywhere. The typography and the formal integrity of the books, periodicals, catalogues, poster-designs, paintings, montages, and sculptures exhibited are so powerful that even the seminal change from expressionism to constructivism is all but eclipsed. If there exists an unequivocally convincing document of Kassák's persistent immutability it is, before everything else, the typography of his periodicals: type-faces expressive in their disciplined simplicity, in their varying size and boldness, the well-spaced, lucidly arranged proportions, the protean page-setting always mindful of the balance between picture and text. Even if one often feels his pictures to be cumbersome or ponderous, his typography is always elegant and flexible, well-spaced, animated, and expressive.

The first issue of *MA* appeared on November 15, 1916. The name itself, "Today" in Hungarian, was a programme. Kassák also took upon himself the propagation in Hungary of *Der Sturm*, published in Berlin by Herwarth Walden, and Franz Pfemfert's *Die Aktion*. *Tett* too had had international special issues, but it was a long way from the strong, good, and regular connections abroad of *MA*, which regularly reported—especially when published in exile in Vienna—on the work in progress of Bauhaus, De Stijl, Russian constructivism, and which presented the work of George Grosz, Mayakovsky, El Lissitzky, Kurt Schwitters, Léger, Hausmann, Oskar Schlemmer, and virtually all major constructivist, Dadaist, and surrealist artists. Apart from the writings on art of László Moholy-Nagy and Ernő Kállai, Tibor Déry, Gyula Illyés, and Andor Németh were the mainstays of the paper.

When Kassák returned to Hungary in the autumn 1926 he started the journal *Dokumentum*. It contained articles in three languages and was soon followed by *Munka*, the title meaning work in Hungarian

* Lajos Kassák: *A magyar avangard három folyóirata* (The three journals of the Hungarian avant-garde). *Helikon*, 1964, No. 2-3.

** Lajos Kassák: *Egy ember élete*. (The life of a man) Szépirodalmi, Budapest 1957, 2nd edition.

Kassák founded the *Munka Circle* concurrently. The activity of this is illustrated by photographs as well. The third room is devoted to *Alkotás*,* published in 1947-48, numerous art works, and Kassák's desk, chair, and bookshelf, all of his own making.

Apart from the documentary material lucidly arranged and well-grouped over a small area, there was still room enough to give some sort of an idea of the response that Kassák's personality and activity elicited. In the first room there is a masterful Kassák portrait by Lajos Tihanyi, from the early twenties, the *Prophet*. This portrait, disciplining organic forms, using severe lines, subordinating the expression to astringent laws, is perhaps the most that has ever been said about Kassák. Overhanging the keen, thorny features of the face is a domed, radiantly enormous forehead. The fragile forms of the body are invested with a determined hardness by a fixed, unwavering gaze. In the third room there is a portrait in

* *Alkotás*, literally "creation," has none of the pseudo or arty overtones in Hungarian but refers simply to the making of a work of art. (The Ed.)

marble by Miklós Borsos. The likeness, made in 1964, tries to capture in the softly genteel lines of the marble the hardened sternness, the unyielding inflexibility, and simplicity, of the old Kassák. Likewise in the third room is Kassák's Kossuth Prize, which he received in 1965, when he was 78, two years before his death. This is where most of his art works are on display. Perhaps we would get a more authentic Kassák portrait if more pictures and sculptural compositions or montages represented Kassák the artist in this museum—but there is a shortage of space, and after all it is just a *dépendance* of the Petőfi Literary Museum. The presentation of Kassák's personal objects perhaps contributes to providing the visitor with a more personal image. Nevertheless, Kassák's presence proceeds not from the tangible propinquity of his magnifying glass, painting brushes, and glasses, but from those written words some of which are, on display, in this museum. Exclamation-marks and question-marks stream from them towards the spectator and the reader.

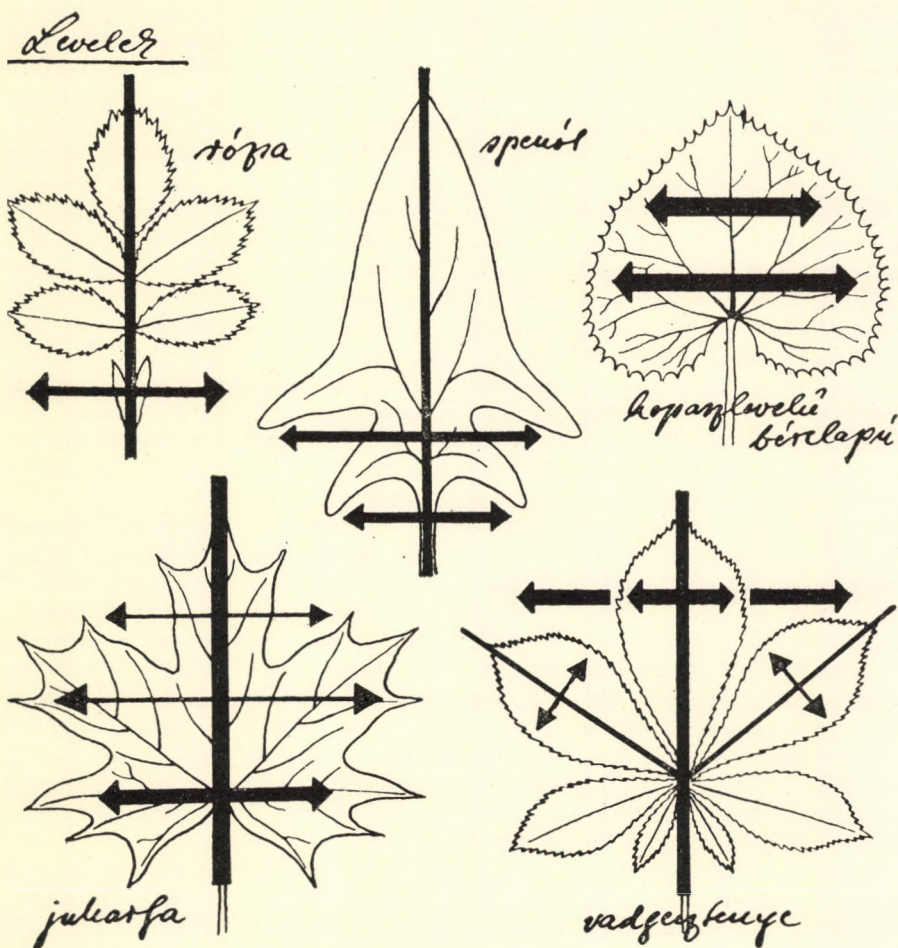
ÉVA FORGÁCS

NATURE, VISION AND CREATION

Ferenc Lantos is a painter who lives in Pécs, in Southern Hungary. Pécs is not known only as the city where the country's finest collection of modern Hungarian painting is kept, but it is the location of the Tivadar Csontváry Kosztka and Victor Vasarely Museums as well. Lantos is also a teacher, and although he has made himself well-known by the art which he has produced during his lifetime, particularly his decorative enamel works, his main interest is teaching. Lantos's prime objective is to develop the "ABC of fine art," which anyone can learn and which can enable one to see more of reality. Lantos gave an account of his work, his "visual grammar,"

at his exhibition which opened at the beginning of 1977 in the Budapest National Gallery. The exhibition, consisting of several large tableaux, begins with quotations from four creative artists and the presence of their thoughts may be felt throughout. The critic is also able to attach whatever he wants onto them.

"We create on the basis of what nature provides," wrote Béla Bartók. This statement is challenging, to say the least, especially in the presence of Ferenc Lantos's geometrical figures. It represents a challenge to the pseudo-constructionalists who only work with circles, squares and combinations of the two, and are not really concerned with



Ferenc Lantos: *Leaf Symmetrics* (100 × 100 cm, 1974)

Hungarian words in the picture clockwise from upper left:
Rose, Spinach, burdock, horse chestnut, maple

social reality or nature. But a lot of (Lantos's) Op Art forms challenge the no less dogmatic adversaries of the dogmatic constructionalists, the false realists who get their idea of reality from the last century. There are those who forget, at least in their creative work, the fact that the modern physicist works with telescopes and electronic microscopes which are mounted on satellites.

This is not the case with Ferenc Lantos. An investigation of reality has convinced him that geometry can help us to gain an even greater understanding of the world, and that by discovering the secrets of the world we will be able to create an ever-expanding geometry for ourselves. The aim of this is to demonstrate the inner structure and mechanization of phenomena. Ferenc

Lantos penetrates very deeply. This is demonstrated, on the one hand, by his merely placing simple geometrical elements next to each other and then transforming the segments of the circles and mutilated squares by creating a surface which appears to be more realistic than many paintings which strive to depict nature. The result is an artificially produced world, or, at least, each part is produced artificially. On the other hand, he directs our attention by observing nature, or by photo-documenting these observations. Nature is also "arranged" in geometrical patterns. For example, the sunflower disc, greatly enlarged, can be interpreted as a spiral constructed around a small circle. The relationship between nature and geometry is especially obvious when man-made reality is installed around it—this secondary reality, in principle as well, occupies the same space; thus man is linked as a biological entity to nature and, as a conscious being, to society.

Lantos believes in the following statement by Sándor Weöres: "The world is as spacious as a dream, and yet is able to fit into a flower." The flower has always been a favourite subject for painting, from the very first ornaments, folk embroideries and simple still lifes, through to the art of Picasso. But Lantos does not yield to temptation. He doesn't want to just paint the flower again, in a new way. He only reminds us of the facts, raises points of view, and arranges them in an interpretive way. The flower in his rose series is depicted in four different ways. Instead of endowing his tulip with aromas and colours, he discloses the mechanism of how it functions, which can also be seen by our own eyes. The flower pattern on the carved chest is a daring composition in an elaborate geometrical form.

"I will create a new world from the elements of reality, for you and for him," wrote Lajos Kassák, a poet, painter and a Hungarian apostle of constructivism, and Lantos's predecessor. Ferenc Lantos, in transcending intelligent vision, encourages

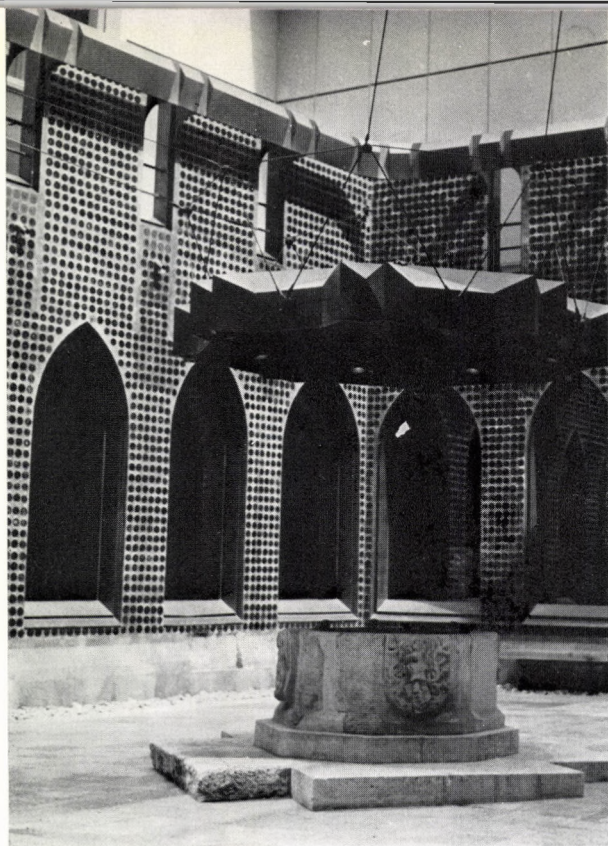
creativity. Let's imitate and construct our own reality, he says; this he does with the help of coloured paper, which, together with tables, chairs and glue, greet the visitor in the foyer of the exhibition hall.

The fourth quotation is from the aesthete Borisovsky: "The concrete has rendered hieroglyphics to be without variation, on the other hand abstraction has given a variable character to the letters." Ferenc Lantos popularizes this commonplace idea by way of this sentence, according to which the processes of art abstraction are linguistic signs which serve writing, and ultimately communication. I find this striving after exactness rather attractive, but I am unable to agree fully with Lantos's interpretation.

The relationship between the linguistic sign (the word, for example) and the artistic sign is obvious, both being the results of abstraction and belonging to a closed system. But the differences are not without any significance. The meaning of the circles, squares and triangles (that is, the figures used by Lantos) is less defined than that of words. Only the symbols, emblems and trademark figures, which can be classified among the visual conventions, have a more or less exact meaning.

Words lost their magical power long ago. A name is by no means suggestive. This is why the phonemes fulfil such an important role. The difference between phonemic pairs distinguishes between words otherwise pronounced the same but having a completely different meaning (homophones). Such dialectics of identity and dissimilarity also work in the field of visual communication, which is why we are able to differentiate between the perpendicular and the horizontal, the concentric and the spiral, and between a wavy line and a twisting one. Lantos's system discloses these visual phonemic pairs, assisting us to comprehend surrounding reality as much as possible.

JÓZSEF VADAS



*Budapest Hilton:
Medieval well in the inner yard,
with an ambulatory part
of a passage;
the wall uses the original
medieval stones
of the monastery*

Sándor Bojár



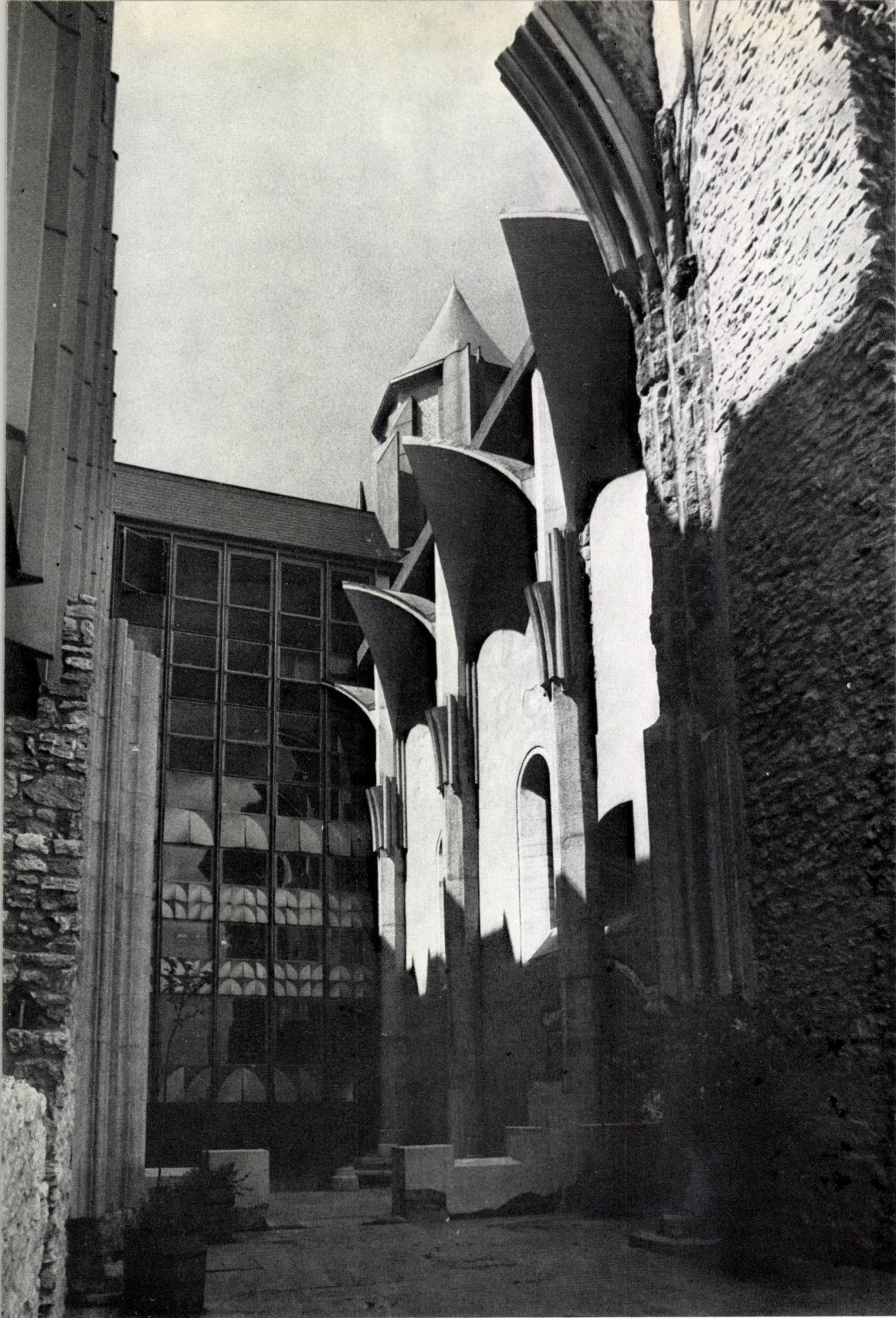


The Budapest Hilton Hotel on Castle hill, next to the Matthias Church, as seen from the Left Bank of the Danube.

Cyula Tabin



Budapest Hilton: main front and entrance between the restored Dominican Tower and the steeple of the Matthias Church Gyula Tabin



Budapest Hilton. Modern wall built into the remnants of a medieval church Gyula Tabin

HILTON HOTEL AND HUNGARIAN HISTORY

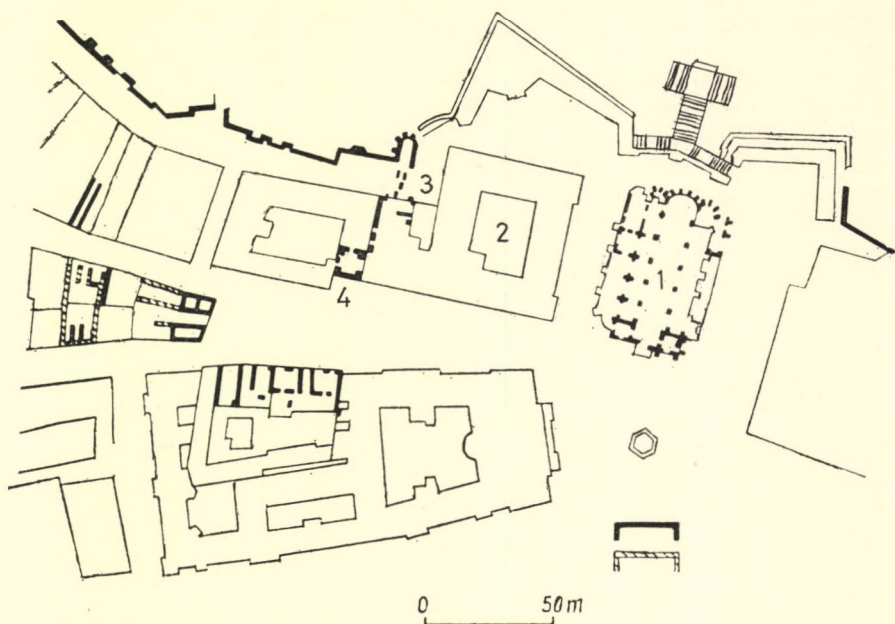
With the completion of the Hilton Hotel the building-up of perhaps the most valuable site in Budapest has been accomplished. The area had lain waste since the Second World War. Thus a long-drawn-out architectural headache, caused by a justified fear concerning the preservation of monuments, has been solved, and a conspicuous blot on the townscape has been removed. During building objectives relating to the protection of monuments were also carried out. Buried remains have been unearthed, and the most important medieval and Baroque remnants—a Dominican ambulatory and the main façade of a Jesuit college—have been reconstructed. I don't propose to tackle the problem of the new hotel only its archeological aspects.

The area within the Castle district of Buda, some two hundred metres north of the Matthias Church, was a cultural centre in medieval Hungary: During the early part of the thirteenth century—prior to the Mongol invasion in 1241–42—the Dominicans established themselves there. It was where this mendicant order which was founded in the early 1200s and thenceforward rapidly expanded, built their first convent in Hungary, along with their puritan single-aisled church, which tallied with the regulations of the order. The order, which has been succoured on several occasions by royalty as well had, more than once, rebuilt and extended its group of buildings since the thirteenth century. The Dominicans expanded towards the north, adding to their buildings, including a college with a theological and a philosophical faculty. The convent was radically reconstructed, lengthened towards the east, a polygonal chancel and Gothic vaulting were added to the church. Nicholas Tower was erected in the fifteenth century. This centre, which thrived until the beginning of the fifteenth century, was destroyed along with many other buildings in Hungary after the Turks took

Buda in 1541. The convent was never restored, and from the eighteenth century the site was occupied first by a bakery and then a school. Around 1700, south of the ruins of the Dominican church in an area extending as far as the Matthias Church, the Jesuits built a colossal tetragonal group of buildings, a seminary and a college. The early Baroque building was first reconstructed at the end of the eighteenth century, Hillebrand being responsible for the design. The southern section was demolished at the end of the last century, to give more space, as part of the restoration of the Matthias Church. The building was seriously damaged by bombing during the Second World War, when all the old buildings in the Castle district suffered.

All of the dwelling houses in the Castle district have already been repaired and new buildings now occupy the vacant sites. Placing major public buildings proved to be more difficult. The siting of the Hilton Hotel on an area covered by ruins promised a solution which, with some minor compromises, hit a double target. The international hotel has been allotted one of the most beautiful sites in Budapest, and the vacant ground, which was so difficult to cope with, has at last disappeared.

The integrating of the remains of the ancient buildings into the new hotel was given high priority, and was specially demanded by the Ministry of Construction and the National Office for the Protection of Monuments. The task included not only maximum preservation and utilization of the visible remains excavation in the area had actually increased the quantity of objects worthy of preservation. The excavations had been going on, with minor interruptions, between 1963 and 1972, under the guidance of Mrs. Katalin Holl. As the result of this work, the entire ground-plan of the Jesuit House—including the medieval college and the adjoining annexes—has become distinct.



Ground plan of Hess András-tér, in 1968

- 1 The Matthias Church; 2 The Dominican Cloister 3 The Dominican Church;
4 The Tower

The ambulatory in the courtyard has come to light, together with a late-fifteenth-century fountain adorned with coats-of-arms. Parts of the church walls still standing, fragments of works, and numerous other stonework e.g. tombstone fragments, were excavated. The discovery of these enabled those responsible to decide the arrangement of the new building above the remains, and to arrive at a solution which is acceptable both functionally and with regard to the monuments. In shaping the design these two aspects are not, in the final analysis, contradictory: the hotel is decorated by the remains of valuable monuments, whose reconstruction in turn was made possible by the new building.

One of the chief merits of Béla Pintér's design is that the medieval and Baroque remains are organically connected with the hotel as a whole, making their renovation

and display possible. Within the area of the Jesuit House the new wings surround the old quadrangle, allowing for the ambulatory to be reconstructed. Though little survived the ancient groundplan is clear. The church was left roofless, making it possible not only to complete the fragments, but also to allow everyone to sense what has been destroyed. The northern and southern blocks of the hotel were only linked through the medieval tower, thus leaving the area of the church as an undivided whole.

The manner of displaying the medieval remains was influenced by their state of preservation and also by their future function. It was inevitable that there was more "restoration" than is customary on an archaeological site. The medieval remnants were, unfortunately, extremely scanty, so that it was not even possible to preserve them unchanged in the state in which they

had been unearthed. "Restoration" was done in such a way as to make possible the preservation of as much as possible of the medieval material, with what was added being in contrast as modern elements. For this purpose forms, materials, and structures were chosen which point to the destroyed whole as well. What was added had to fit in not only with what survived but also with the architecture of the hotel.

Within the church only a minor protective breastwork and a few thought-provoking elements were added. The fragments that could authentically be made whole were added to, in a form identical to the original, artificial stones being used, to make them stand out against the older parts. Within the nave of the church incomplete sections suggestive of vaulting, and some concrete vaulting, were used, to point to the Gothic space, and the manner of its roofing. By continuing the medieval forms the height of the arch and the closed-off sedilia of the chancel were raised. As compared with the whole building, they are really insignificant, yet they give an approximate idea of the space the church once occupied.

The additions to those parts that could not be reconstructed precisely were designed in new forms and using different materials. In such cases it is even more mandatory that present work should be distinguishable from the historical, and that one should avoid the charge of falsification. The new solution decided on, however, demands not only up-to-date forms and materials, but also has to harmonize with its environment.

In the case of the quadrangle and the ambulatory only the ground-plan was unequivocal, and the system of Gothic vaultings could also be established. This, however, is far from enough for an authentic reconstruction: the construct as a whole was missing, the twenty-eight windows of presumably different design, the entrance opening on to the courtyard, and some ninety-five per cent of the carved work. The ambulatory was therefore constructed

using modern materials and in a form that differs from the original, doing no more than merely referring to what was destroyed many centuries since. The vaulting system is imitated by arched copperplate surfaces hanging down the ceiling, amongst which all the stone ribs are suspended that have been unearthed, as well as some of the bossing. The interior façade was covered with glass-elements, within which the metal-framed chinks also refer to the old row of tracery lancet-windows.

The fountain in the middle of the courtyard was restored adorned with the heraldic bearings of King Matthias Corvinus. It is protected by and brought into relief by a suspended copper roof. Tombstones are on display within the ambulatory. They and a few other stone carvings came to light during the excavations. These too give an idea of the architectural and sculptural wealth of the ecclesiastical buildings that once stood there.

A few first-floor and basement rooms open from the ambulatory. These are not only visually interesting in themselves, but they are able also to contribute to the functions of the hotel. Exhibitions and the like can be organized there.

The raising of the height of the medieval Nicholas Tower was the most difficult task. Only the lower rectangular body survived the Middle Ages, the octagonal upper part and spire have been missing for at least three centuries. The raising of the height of the tower was necessary for architectural and functional reasons; on the one hand to ensure that the tower should continue to rise above the new blocks and on the other in order to provide room for a water-bank and other mechanical fittings, so that these should not constitute new, self-contained towers which would also become part of the sky-line. An octagonal frame was raised by ferro-concrete columns, on top of which, first a strip of glass, and then a simple pinnacled dome was erected, with a slate-covering identical with the rest of the roofing.

The Baroque façade was restored to its pre-Second World War State. A sufficient basis for this was presented by the few surviving remains and available photographs. A large sum of money was spent to save the façade and before work started it had been shored up by much timber. The expense, however, did not prove superfluous. With a changed reconstruction of the wall this part would have lost its appeal and an

essential historical building would have disappeared. Because of the retention of the façade, split-level rooms were constructed in this wing.

The excavation and restoration of the remnants of the monuments served not only a scholarly purpose, the painstaking work has also contributed to a more diversified design of the new hotel. The old and the new are thus integrated.

JÁNOS SEDLMAYER

LO SPETTATORE INTERNAZIONALE

A quarterly review of international politics published in English by Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) of Rome. Each issue contains articles by Italian and foreign authors and a regular survey of Italy's position in international politics and commerce.

From recent issues:

Stefano Silvestri — *Security, the Atlantic Alliance and the Italian Question*

Joseph Sassoon — *Trends of Competitiveness and Industrial Policy of Japan in Southeast Asia*

Richard Walker — *Italy and Europe: The Political Parties 1968-75*

Editor-in-chief: Cesare Marlini

Editorial Offices: Istituto Affari Internazionali, Viale Mazzini 88, 00195 Rome, Italy

Orders should be sent directly to the publisher:

Società editrice il Mulino, Via S. Stefano 6 — P.O.Box 119,
40100 Bologna, Italy

Subscription rates: Europe — Lit. 6000 or \$ 9.50

Other countries — Lit. 7000 or \$ 11.00

THEATRE AND FILM

SIX PLAYS—SIX PASSIONS

The conspiracy of self-deceivers

István Örkény: Kulcskeresők
(The Key-Hunters)

A year after its world première in Szolnok the Budapest National Theatre presented Örkény's "The Key-Hunters." Elsewhere this would be considered quite natural but in the traditionally capital-orientated Hungarian theatre it amounted to an event. Örkény endeavoured to learn as much as possible from the Szolnok performance and, taking note of the criticism of the play's dramatic structure, he introduced certain changes so that in the new version the antecedents are enacted on stage.

The author said that the subject of his tragicomedy was failure: not universal, sublime or grandiose historical failure, but at the same time something more significant than simply the mislaying of a latch-key. He was referring to failure brought about by our own mistakes, by our ineptitude and our wrong decisions; in short, the failures which embitter our everyday life. He wanted to show how we bear failure and also to depict a characteristic Hungarian penchant for embellishing and whitewashing failure into victory.

The situation on stage is genuinely comic, dealing with the move into a new apartment on a housing estate, and all the accompany-

ing bother and annoyance. Mrs. Nelly Fóris is worn out from worrying about her pilot husband and intends to leave him; amidst the bustle of moving, packing, waiting, worrying, and decision-making, she can't find her new latch-key. Mechanics, mysterious characters and neighbours drift in through the open door. One arrives with bread, another with a coffin... then the mechanic working in the flat manages to reverse the situation: with a borrowed key he closes the Fóris's door so well that in the second half of the play nobody is able to get out. In the apartment, which is transformed into a prison, it comes to light that Örkény's play deals with, among other things, being shut up, and that the people enclosed together do not step out of their "magic circle" even if they have the opportunity to do so, for instance, when the door opens for a moment.

Fóris, the talented pilot, is the heroic failure heaping failure upon failure; he is a courageous man but unable to make decisions. Even his wife is aware that Fóris, although an excellent pilot, is unsuited to his job. Nevertheless his superiors and those in charge always excuse him and continually grant him the opportunity for further failure. The chance community in "The Key-Hunters" is coaxed into believing that his failure is actually a triumph, by the

persuasive reasoning of the Wanderer, a busybody who lives in the house, who is reminiscent of Luka, the well-intentioned manipulator in "The Lower Depth." The Wanderer professes that illusion offers not only reprieve but also solace, and as such makes life bearable.

The action, which is confined to one room, is nonetheless brisk and the play's intellectual message is all the more ramified and complex. The characters recount their own fate and at the same time express our national character and our historical concerns. At the Szolnok première the slowly mounting tension culminated explosively at the end of the play, whereas in the new version, with the intensified marital conflict of the couple and the protagonists' private affairs brought to the fore, the action is enriched but the impact of the explosion is lessened.

One of the "keys" to the play in the Szolnok performance was provided by a tape-recorded declaration of an emigré Hungarian scientist, which was read by the author. The Nobel Prize-winning visitor offered a bitter criticism based on his first impressions of his native country, where a good airplane directed by a qualified crew and an excellent pilot alighted on a meadow instead of the runway, because "in this country people don't always know what is meant for what." A hammer is meant for driving a nail into the wall and our brains are meant for producing ideas, for "when the train comes, boarding it or lying down under it are two different things." The Budapest National Theatre performance sought to find the reality and the truth behind Örkény's play primarily in the reality of its own created world on stage, but that world is in no way real. Mari Töröcsik, as the pilot's wife, did her best to find the key to the apartment, to the play, and to the performance. She had to travel the longest distance within a few hours but managed to convince the audience of the reality of her feelings and situation. Alas, in the absence of

a homogeneous company and of an adequate response from her fellow performers even she failed to conjure up any theatrical magic in a way that could be termed complete.

So the key has not yet been found in the theatre; it seems that "The Key-Hunters" cannot compete with the exceptional and universally valid profundity of "The Tót Family", nor with the fascination of "Cats-play" (both earlier plays by Örkény). Yet I do not think that this comedy on failure should itself be regarded as a complete failure.

*Erzsébet Galgóczi: Kinek
a törvénye?
(Whose Law?)*

Erzsébet Galgóczi is a born short-story writer. Under the impact of her intensely dramatic stories and novelettes, with their conflicting passions, and the authenticity of her television plays, Hungarian critics, including myself, have unanimously and repeatedly been saying for years that she ought to write for the theatre.

Her first attempt (the stage version of "The Prosecutor's Wife" presented in Kecskemét in 1970) did not come up to our expectations. We thought at the time that this was merely owing to her inexperience in writing for the theatre. But now, after her second première (the stage version of "Whose Law?"), we have our doubts as to whether the novelist can ever become a successful playwright.

The play awakened considerable interest in the city of Győr, where it was performed, not only because Galgóczi was born in a nearby village, Ménfőcsanak, but because, although full of local "patriotism," her keen insight has never been dimmed by her emotions. She knows her village and her region frighteningly well.

"Whose Law?" is a short novel which appeared in 1971 in a volume bearing the same title. Its theme is still relevant. The president of an agricultural cooperative has

reached the peak of his career: laden with honours he stagnates, becoming intoxicated by his own success and power. He becomes estranged from his friends, his electors, the village peasants, and even from his own work. He distributes privileges and retributions and it seems that he constitutes the law in the country. But there is a limit to everything, and a young ambitious constable brings him to justice, first for drunken driving, then for silent complicity with meat thieves and corruption, together with the abuse of his authority. In the unequal feud between the power-hungry president and the justice-loving constable, the president's 17-year-old daughter has a key role: she is the spoilt beneficiary of her father's misuse of his position, yet at the same time she is a willing recipient of the adoration of the young constable who unmasks her father. The villagers provide a background for the conflict: the commander of the police station is respectful of the president's corrupt law, the president's wife anxiously observes her husband's deterioration, and the members of the cooperative realize that they have been conned, and at last begin to see and to judge clearly.

The story focuses around three criminal offences: the first is the cunning manoeuvring of the meat thieves, the second is the deliberate and forcible damaging of the president's car tyres, and the third is a tragic hit-and-run accident. The victim of the third crime brings the first two to light: the zealous and ingenious constable is merciless towards the thieves and their accomplices but expresses solidarity with the arbitrary executors of the people's judgement who damage the president's car. The consistency of his attitude arouses the despotic president's hatred, and whilst drunk he thoughtlessly runs over his adversary.

The stage version is a simple dramatization and a more or less faithful rendering of Galgóczi's story. However, dramatic intensity ought to have been derived from the depths of the story because that is precisely

where the material for the drama lies, in the background to the situation; it is the drama of a leader who has become head of his community because he struggled together with and for his people, but by the time the fruit of his labours was ripe he had lost touch with them, unnoticed but almost irreversibly. The constable's partly unfolded drama is less extreme but no less topical. His is the conflict between integrity and adherence to his principles in the performance of his duty, and the chance to climb to the top by way of compromise. The honesty of András, the constable, however, is so unshakeable that there is no question of either choice or struggle in the plot.

The stage performance did not offer any compensation for missed dramatic opportunities. The subordinated epic motifs were authentic in the novel but in the play they only detracted from the dramatic conflict. The mixture of the essential and the unimportant, and the fluctuation of dramatic tension were particularly disturbing in the first part. Later on the action quickened, and the audience has less time to brood, getting more involved in the characters. The audiences in Győr were able to recognize the dictatorial presidents of the cooperatives they knew and the dilemmas of their own "constables," hence they applauded the original and political points in the text. These "props" contributed to audience identification and were useful as they helped the public, whose attention was aroused by the witty remarks, to delve deeper and to accept Galgóczi's "heavier" message.

There is a contradiction peculiar to Hungarian theatre life that the failure of a stage adaptation does not involve the complete failure of the production. This is all the more true as Galgóczi's truths and social criticism are more valid than many a smooth, contrived melodrama which has only a superficial link with the present, consisting of fluid, excessively abstract parables. Even the most severe critic and the most discerning theatre-goer must admit that Galgóczi's

world is real and has introduced life itself on stage although the rendering of it is imperfect and the author's solutions are uncertain.

István Csurka: Versenynap
(Race Day)

Marriage ads and police records consider Csurka's admitted, and unforgettably described, passion to be "harmful." Some even say that frequenting horse-races is the teetotaler's "drug." According to István Csurka: "Horse-racing today in Budapest is miraculous, sad, fateful, god-forsaken, and incomprehensible. It's a miracle that it exists, and it exists for producing miracles. Indeed, it is a miracle that we are alive and it is an even greater miracle that we are able to go to the race-course. Also, that we have anything to lose at all is downright supernatural." (From the introduction of "Just The Way You Are!"—a humorous book on horse-racing by István Csurka and Gergely Rákósy.)

"The Second World War has provided a lot of writers with recurrent themes and experience. I was only a child at the time: my principal experiences as an adult have been determined by the races, a curious war in peace-time. Its rules are much the same: you can bleed to death on this 'battlefield' too, then get up half-dead and begin a new battle," said the author a few days before the première of his play in the Gaiety Theatre.

Audiences and critics alike have considered Csurka to be one of the best Hungarian playwrights since his "Fall Guy for Tonight," and everybody looked forward expectantly to his new play. (His "On Location," a satire on the film-world, was presented last year and is still playing before full houses in Budapest. His other play, "Duds," also turned out to be a success, with several hundred performances to its credit.) László Drégely's scenery, a grandstand built on stage, and the news that had

seeped out about the rehearsals contributed still further to increasing expectancy.

The action, which is an extension of a concentrated moment of one round, is tense and exciting. In fact, even the most philistine theatre-goer in his heart of hearts envies the despised gamblers and their dreams of winning vast sums of money.

The first part of the play and its performance justified all expectations. The world of the race-course, as represented by Csurka, is a rich, throbbing exotic culture where the fatality of the passion which shapes destinies is as natural as the ever-failing efforts of those who want to rid themselves of it. The perceptive observer soon realizes that the play is not only about horse-racing. The contestants in the daily race for survival and acknowledgement, and the eternally hopeful who never win are able to recognize themselves in this representation of the racing world, together with those who prefer to watch the grand efforts of others from the sidelines.

The hero is a writer, Sándor Bakucz, who squanders his talent to no purpose on the edge of the frontier of literature; the character is partly autobiographical. Anyway the turf is where he really feels at home, finding his real self in the excitement of the race. For years, his Sundays of the races have been filled with the ceaseless whining of Oszkár Lelki, the poet, and the hopelessly repeated "never again" of Árpád Csapó, the psychologist. In the weekly ritual of rounds on race days the tipsters, bookies, and shady characters of all kinds each have their own allotted place. There is only one outsider at the grandstand: Bakucz's friend, the film director, who had been invited by the writer. Seen through the outsider's uncomprehending eyes the laws of the turf are even more appalling, the misery of the little men blowing their wives' salary even more pitiable, and the hopeless expectations of these fanatics, who have cast off their identity, even more sorrowful. It turns out, in addition, that this

passionate Sunday gambling is in reality a substitute for everyday life, to those who, for some reason, have been deprived of real action; the race meeting provides an opportunity for the eternal extras to play the lead role.

All the characters are superbly portrayed and their monologues are real gems of satire. This, however, constitutes the main fault of the play: the heroes are united only by their common passion, they strive for luck and not against each other. Owing to the absence of any real dramatic conflict, the stage mechanism triggered off by the situation halts prematurely. The second part of the play disintegrates into sometimes entertaining, sometimes moralizing solo pieces and the audience is left feeling disappointed. The favourite, the gifted István Csurka, did not quite manage to bring off a win this time.

Lajos Mesterházi:
A Prometheusz-rejtély
 (*The Prometheus Mystery*)

Lajos Mesterházi is known as a committed writer of contemporary themes; his works are praised and at the same time characterized by an epithet containing hidden reserves—they are described alternately as being topical or publicistic. So everybody was surprised when in 1973 he published his first pragmatic and ironical essay-novel dealing with the age 1300 B.C.—it would be an exaggeration to label it a historical novel. Its real world is that of mythology and its method is the reconstruction of the carefully uncovered myth by means of deductions based on Homer and the most up-to-date scientific discoveries, together with the commonsense logic of the literary man.

The mystery of Prometheus referred to in the novel and in the play has been discovered by Mesterházi. The question is what happened to mankind's greatest benefactor, bringer of fire and teacher of

handicrafts, after he had served his sentence of one million years, according to the judgement of Zeus. The annals recount that when the one million years expired Hercules came along and freed the god from the chains which bound him to the rocks where vultures lacerated his liver. The story ends here, however, and nobody has solved the riddle of why there was never a cult of Prometheus: How did it come about that nobody ever worshipped this most gracious benefactor of mankind? The Greeks never erected an altar to him and his religious cult was never developed. The god must have either done something or failed to do something—mused Mesterházi when, using facts and hypotheses as a starting-point, he tried to follow in the footsteps of his hero first to Troy, then to Mycenae. He did not wish to rehabilitate Prometheus but he wanted to understand this god who had loved man so selflessly, without expecting anything in return and had respected human dignity—and in order to obtain a better understanding of Prometheus he attempted to recreate the mythical world around him. Mesterházi allowed his imagination to probe the philological findings and let his heroes act and live according to their own laws.

The novel makes difficult reading because one has to struggle through reams of sentences before arriving at some bold and original ideas and stimulating situations. Even Cassandra could not have foreseen that this strange book would be a success and still less that it would ever be performed on stage.

This unexpected success and the absurdity of the whole enterprise were most probably the bait that lured Károly Kazimir, stage manager of the Thália Theatre, to go against the grain of his theatre's tradition, and adapt an essay-novel to the stage and present the first mythological-publicistical production in Hungary.

The plot begins where the school-books and legends end. Prometheus joins his liberator Hercules and accompanies him to

the Greek world of men and gods, because he wants to find his own way and learn to what end men have used the fire given to them at such an exorbitant price. How is the god able to adjust himself to the world of men after an absence of a million years? How does he act amidst earthly joys and laws, what is his position in the debate between the war-lobby of Mycenae and the few who follow Hercules' peace-policy? How can he remain faithful to his sublimely democratic principles, how can he reject the lip service and sacrifices of the servile? How will the public react to the return of Prometheus, the man who had atoned for a sin he had never committed? The stage version of the novel raises the same points but the answers are not given in scientific hypotheses, or by way of moralizing and politicizing (belles-tiques) arguments, but in the form of dialogues and songs.

It is now very difficult to decide whether it would have been possible to bring the dramatic elements in the novel to the surface, or whether the whole attempt was doomed to failure from the very beginning. There is certainly the possibility of dramatic material in the figure of Prometheus, as created by Mesterházi: his meetings with people after his liberation contain dramatic elements, and so does the belated offer made by Zeus that the bearer of fire take over the role of the fire god on Olympus. However, the dramatic incidents of his life as a mortal could only have been developed by means of a fuller and more profound characterization and more extreme confrontations: the real conflict ought to have been deepened. The continuing failure of the stage adaptations of novels proves that the Thália Theatre transforms everything, even more epic and dramatic material, into stage picture sequences. Still, Kazimir obstinately continues his experiments at 'genre transplantation' and he has further cross-fertilized the already hybrid genre of the stage picture sequence: the spectacle in this case could equally be called a mythological show, or a

political cabaret in costume, with just as much right as it is now known as a stage adaptation of a novel.

Both the action and the text are apt to evoke associations (indeed, quite consciously): the consumer society and Kissinger's foreign policy are present on the stage along with the unlawfulness of the "Zeusist"—i.e. personal cult and the rehabilitation of its victims. Those who like this revue—like genre with a touch of cabaret will enjoy the digs aimed at both Christian and Marxist dogmatism. The others will wait patiently for the drama to emerge; they later become impatient but still the drama does not come. At any rate, nobody has time to get bored: at least one out of two of the gag-petards indiscriminately thrown by stage managers Károly Kazimir and Katalin Kóvári explodes on the stage, and this is quite enough. All the more that in their light audiences are able to see what would have been better left out, in the name of good taste . . .

Géza Páskándi: Rejtekbely
(*The Hide-Out*)

The Transylvanian-born poet and writer, whose first volume of poetry was printed in 1957, wrote "The Hide-Out" in 1972, the year that he took the Hungarian stage by storm as an unknown playwright with his drama "Hospitality," which deals with the persecution of the Unitarian Church in the independent principality of Transylvania in the sixteenth century. Since the memorable success of his first play with theatre-goers and critics alike, Páskándi's works have been continually presented on the Hungarian stage. (He has been living in Hungary since 1974.) His comedies, verging on the absurd, and an adaptation of Molière were also performed but his true genre has been, up to now at least, the historical play. After "Hospitality," it was "The Hide-Out" which proved this to the critics most con-

vincingly: they believe in his talent un-faillingly. Páskándi does not write historical tableaux or documentary dramas: he presents religious and political polemics in historical settings. The models of existence which he creates condense the routes of Hungarian history and examine the moral attitudes of contemporary man, his possibilities of choice and also the validity and value of his choices.

In "The Hide-Out" Páskándi went beyond Hungarian history and adopted an apparently overdone theme: the mechanism of the last phase of the French Revolution. However, in the play's prologue he has already dissociated himself from those who are drawn to the "spectacular" side of the revolution and the lives of its leaders. He finds his subject-matter "behind personalities and viewing the events from this side, on the periphery."

The title can be understood on two levels: the first is the actual scene of the play—the workshop of Simon the cobbler. This Jacobin hides three outsiders of history: an aristocrat fearful of the consequences of the revolution, Dr. Guillotine, the inventor of the decapitating machine named after him, and a lively actress who wants to avenge her father's death. The hide-out in the play assumes a meaning beyond that of the actual setting of the workshop: it refers to the moral attitude of those who remain outside the storms of history and wait passively for the results of other people's deeds. Páskándi's drama condemns this kind of speculation. His feeble characters are worse than the actual profiteers who deliver paper-soled boots to the soldiers on the front because, imperceptibly, they "drill holes in the side of the boat of the revolution." These people do not put their cards on the table, but fight with cowardly and calculating passivity: they are neither for nor against the cause, their only wish being to survive. But those who want only to survive at all costs, to survive all the dangers, the heroes and their fellow sufferers, do not always ask them-

selves the question: survive, yes, but how, and for what? They are satisfied with mere life.

The three characters have been driven to the hide-out by fear of physical annihilation, but their very passivity makes them players in a game of chance. They count on both the triumph and the defeat of the revolution. Simon the cobbler is at once their saviour and their gaoler. He demands work in return for having provided a hiding-place. The three refugees are ordered to mend the front, because the lazy, ignorant, and dishonest Simon has been commissioned by the Jacobin Club to "re-educate" Louis XVII, the royal boy put in his charge, he tries to shift the whole burden of the shoe-making onto the three.

The scene of the play is the hiding-place and deals with the different phases of fear. The three survivors dread the cobbler and the bellowing royal child, whose "re-education" is achieved with the help of bullying and drink. The cobbler lives in terror of Saint-Just who can withdraw his privileges as an "educator" and call him to account. The fear embedded in the heart of people does not diminish with the abatement of the revolution: the survivors then dread the consequences.

History breaks into the closed world of "The Hide-Out" both metaphorically and via its famous representatives; Páskándi does bypass the opportunity to evoke the "sensual" Danton, the "incorruptible" Robespierre, and the "merciless" Saint-Just. His heroes do not differ from the well-known figures of history but he confronts them in an entirely new situation. Here I am thinking of Danton's interrupted rendezvous, the supervision of the royal child's educational progress, and especially of the meaningful and interesting dispute on strategics and tactics between Danton and Robespierre. The brilliant and bold polemics in the second act alone made performing the play worthwhile. Audiences held their breath at the mastery of the piercing arguments of

Páskándi's heroes, whose style is so delightful that their political duels never fade into grey publicistic argumentation. It would be a pity to oversimplify the drama with cheap allusions, for its message does not lie within half-sentences. I do insist on this, especially as the performance has attracted attention to the weaknesses inherent in the play's dramatic structure. Towards the end of the first act, the action slows down and even halts, and the ideas do not possess enough driving force to swing the drama over the impasse. The actors of the Katona József Theatre of Kecskemét struggled with the same problem in the third act, which is rather like a static epilogue although it explodes right at the very end.

It is to the credit of the theatre in Kecskemét that it has chosen and given an attentive and clear performance of Páskándi's play. The young stage manager, Imre Csiszár, was, however, perhaps too daunted by the inferior political education and sensitivity of Kecskemét audiences and, desiring to make the play easily understandable, he almost converted it into a "shrill" romantic play. He laid too much stress on the extremism of the situation, and accentuated this in the scenery and the acting: thus, the topicality of the play's message was not brought nearer to the audience, on the contrary, it receded a little.

László Németh: *VII. Gergely*
(*Gregory VII*)

This is not a new Hungarian drama, as Németh wrote it in 1937. Its world première took place in 1939 in the National Theatre, and it was revived in 1975, the year of Németh's death, when József Ruszt staged it in Kecskemét.

The drama's theme *par excellence* is passion. Gregory VII, head of Christianity in the eleventh century, had been obsessed by the power conferred on him by God. His passion lay in the service of what he con-

sidered the only true faith. He had dreamed of a crusade to conquer and convert the pagans, but ends up by having to face his opponent in Europe, the Christian King Henry IV. Gregory had to fight him for political power: the struggle started victoriously but then became hopeless. The historical structure is familiar: the excommunication of Henry IV, his going to Canossa, then the politically inevitable removal of the interdict and, ultimately, the shift in the balance of forces to the Emperor's benefit. Németh, however, was never interested in history by itself, but rather in the human character writhing in the clutches of a given historical context. "I loved truth and abhorred falsity, therefore I will die in exile," said Gregory at the end of the road when, in the deluded belief of the truth of his cause and of the selectness of his person, he stepped down from the stage of history, fallen but still proud, as a martyr to truth.

The Pope Gregory of stage manager József Ruszt and Miklós Gábor was a fanatical believer in his own assumed mission and not in truth. Hence the failure of his divine mission undermined not only Gregory's health but destroyed his faith as well. Miklós Gábor dissociated himself a little from Gregory's inner and outward struggles and played the Pope with a touch of irony, tempered with cynicism in sight of the facts, and self-irony stimulated by pain. Gábor knows, partly from experience, what Németh sensed in the threatening, tragic atmosphere of the 30s: that the Pope's passionate belief in his truth, his persistent fight for God's kingdom on Earth, and the monopolistic power of Christianity were not real truths but illusions, based on dogmas and not on reality, thus their failure was a necessary outcome of the contradiction between the political balance of forces and voluntaristic striving for power, and of means which did not serve their end. Gábor's key phrase is not the Pope's farewell, the "I loved truth," which is also the motto of Németh's collection of dramas, but a much more harsh

and bitter sentence: "What faith this century has destroyed in me!"

"Gregory VII," like most of Németh's novels and dramas, is a one-man play. Although not a monodrama its excessively condensed "one-way" structure is built so that every figure and motif serves the unfolding of the protagonist's tragedy. The performance in Kecskemét is raised to a high level by Miklós Gábor's subtly shaded acting, he unites the great man's qualities and expresses his contradictions. Unfortunately, neither his allies nor his adversaries had adequate weight as either personalities or actors to counterbalance him, and this was lacking in the play, which required this balance of forces.

Six premières are not enough for a sum-

mary but it is an interesting fact that three of the new Hungarian plays were presented in Budapest and three in the provinces. Three delve into history and three deal with our contemporary world. If we go back a few years in time to when the provincial theatres began their break-through, and remember that we complained about the absence of Hungarian plays in their repertoire, then we must find the present situation much more encouraging. That several Hungarian dramas discuss contemporary problems is also a step forward. They intervene directly in topical debates, hold the interest of the public and investigate present-day reality. Although no masterpieces have been born as yet, the general repertoire has been greatly enriched.

ANNA FÖLDES

HAPPY DIVERSITY

The Ninth Hungarian Film Week which was held in Budapest last February differed from earlier, similar occasions in its greater variety and diversification. The twenty feature films of the year can no longer be classified under three or four main headings, such as war and partisan stories, light comedies, historic epics, or problem plays on film. Naturally, these genres survive; but this year, there were more films which defy any such classification. Works like "Spiderball" (*Pókfoci*) by János Rózsa, István Szabó's "Budapest Tales," (*Budapesti mesék*), Pál Sándor's "Improperly Dressed" (*Herkulesfürdői emlék*) or "American Fragment" (*Amerikai anizs*) by Gábor Bódy are not likely to fit the pre-existent categories borrowed from literature, because they were all conceived and realized within the struc-

ture and the language of film. They do not form a "movement": this filmic quality is their only link.

In "The Sword" (*A kard*) János Dömölky achieves great formal discipline in merging comedy of character with satire, maintaining realism in details and incidents to stress the absurdity, not of a character or his actions, but of a society and its values. "The Sword" is Dömölky's first essay in the cinema, but he is an established TV director, the winner of both Hungarian and international television awards. He first became known for adaptations of literary classics like *Babel* or *Gorky*, until a break in his career forced him to think again about his commitment and possibilities. He resolved to draw subjects from contemporary life, but his works never became sociological

texts. He has a remarkable talent for psychological accuracy, for imaginative insights which, by the minutiae of closely observed detail, avoid the platitudinous or the overstated. Shortly before "The Sword," Dömölky's TV feature called "Why?" (*Miért?*) aroused much controversy. "Why?" is a fictional reconstruction of an actual incident: a factory worker, transferred to an office job on account of diabetes, is repeatedly refused a rise awarded to other employees. She has an integrity which her boss considers impertinent, and he gets his own back when, by winning a transistor radio in a private lottery she incurs charges of dishonesty. But no one has told her why her salary was reduced in the first place, nor why, after she complained to the managing director, his instructions were ignored by the wages clerk.

Judged by the practices of British television, "Why?" is a rather cumbersome treatment of a humdrum incident, but its impact was comparable to "Cathy Come Home" in Britain; the sheer ordinariness of the story established its credentials to fight for the individual's rights. In his subsequent television work, "Themes," Dömölky combined two similar documentary features with a play by a leading Hungarian playwright, István Csurka. The latter's association with Dömölky has spanned several years; their rapport contributed a great deal to the success of "The Sword" and was recognized by the Hungarian critics' prize for the best screenplay of the year. Yet it is a shortcoming as much as a virtue that for two thirds of "The Sword," the dialogue overshadows its visual impact, leaving the impression that it may have been almost as good on the stage. Almost, but not quite, for while Csurka's hip-and-flip dialogue is often deadened in the theatre, it glitters in Dömölky's casting and direction.

The sword is not just a symbol. Mr. and Mrs. Bojti notice it in an auction room in Vienna, their first stop on a holiday

abroad. It was used in 1671 to execute two Hungarian noblemen, Zrínyi and Frangepán, for attempting to rebel against the Habsburgs. Bojti (a superlative performance by Peter Haumann) feels that this historic object should be in a Hungarian museum. In vain he tries to persuade the embassy to buy it; still, they allow him to telephone the Hungarian National Museum from the embassy. Nothing can be done, no official action could be considered at such short notice: the sale is on the following day. Roused by the sense of his own helplessness, Bojti decides to buy the sword himself. Mrs. Bojti tires to dissuade him, until a hotelroom quarrel makes her realize that if circumstances keep him on a short leash, a wife must not be holding its other end. One of the film's recurring pleasures is its picture of a marriage where intimacy transcends all the inevitable quarrels and recriminations.

The sale of their car and the auction are fraught with excitement: Bojti is pushed above the estimated price, their holiday must end. They return by train, with the sword in the luggage rack. The custom officer is incredulous: who would sell a car to buy any old iron? Besides, selling a car abroad contravenes currency regulations. After a long hassle with the police, Bojti proves that he is not a crook, but the reactions of his friends and colleagues are more tyrannous than the law. Anyone who acts out of turn, on any motive other than self-interest, must be mad; at any rate, he cannot be sensible, reliable or responsible. Bojti is suspended from his management post; even his wife is sacked from a catering job in an old people's home. Worst of all, the museum's director refuses the gift of the sword, as the 1670 politics of Zrínyi and Frangepán are still under some ideological cloud, and besides, no one from high up telephoned him. . . . He tells Bojti: "Hang it on your wall as a souvenir. But don't use Brasso and don't lacquer it." Only a pretty museum assistant encourages Bojti to per-

severe—but how? He is not opposed, only ignored. The opportunism which makes his own action look suspicious nearly drives Bojti paranoid, until one night he rows half-way across the Danube and drops the sword overboard.

Then comes the deus-ex-machina: as so often in modern life and fiction, the ancient might of the gods is purveyed by the media. First the papers, then television take up the case: luckily, Sándor Bojti's name has a good, clean, Hungarian ring. . . . An elaborate dredging and diving operation turns the riverbank into a fairground with sightseers, hawkers, cameras and even a brass band. Here, Dömölky returns to the light cross-cutting of the opening sequences, with dialogue subjugated to movement, thus making the ending, with the frame freezing on a TV interview, all the more powerful.

*

Pál Sándor's debut in 1967, "Clown on the Wall," (*Bobóc a falon*), had won prizes in Chicago and Karlovy Vary; his second film, "Love Emilia" (*Szeressétek Ódor Emiliát!*) (1969) earned him the Volpi Trophy at Taormina. His fifth feature film, "Improperly Dressed" (*Herkulesfürdői emlék*) fulfils every early promise. Set around 1920, the film starts with a young boy's picture on a "wanted" poster with other revolutionaries. He is ordained to die, but the narrative tension of the film suggests that he may yet escape, against the odds. Disguised as a girl, he arrives at a small station near the border. His courage, with a dash of vanity at being so pretty as a girl, makes him boast that he will get away. A military detachment, hunting for the revolutionaries, check all papers; but he reaches the sanatorium without trouble. He asks for Nurse Zsófi. On hearing the password, Zsófi promises to take him across the border at daybreak; but he explains that after setting him on his way she must await the last and most important fugitive. That night, the military

take Zsófi away and kill her. As the only one left who knows the escape route, the boy realizes that he must be the guide.

Still dressed as a girl, calling himself Sarolta Galambos, he applies for Zsófi's job. The disguise is convincing: he is a tall, dignified young person whose smouldering eyes and sensuous mouth are balanced by the straight-shouldered poise of the independent woman. Sarolta is never epicene: when a patient, a young Italian countess is attracted, there is no sexual ambiguity: the girl is responding to an arrogant, Amazonian creature, to the obviously male emanation of Sarolta: and whether she guesses the truth or not, the Contessa is not disconcerted to find that the nurse is a boy.

The sanatorium's end of century atmosphere, with its glass domes, palms, sunken bathing pool and panelled massage parlours is that of an Oriental harem, enclosed in its autumnal park. There are two ancient Sultanas, a minister's widow and a famous actress. The bespectacled, intelligent lady's companion puts into words the disease of the spirit dominating the place, and urges Sarolta to leave. But Sarolta has a duty to fulfil, a secret peril; but in the meanwhile, she rouses another danger. The commander of the military, tired of his affair with the luscious head nurse, is attracted by Sarolta. One day as Sarolta crosses the park to an assignation with the Contessa, the officer waylays and tries to rape Sarolta. In the tussle, Sarolta grabs his gun and shoots him.

This murder takes the drama back from the sanatorium to the wider world. The military redouble their patrols, and swoop in quick vengeance: suspecting the young coachman, they execute him straight away. The grief of his pregnant fiancée, a kitchenmaid at the sanatorium, is an hourly reproach to Sarolta, who must continue to wait. When the important comrade finally arrives, and Sarolta sets out with him, they find the old ferryman who was to row them across garrotted in his hut. It is obvious that

the net is drawn, the boy must die; but in spite of this, the ending leaves some emotional loose ends.

For instance, was his death a historic necessity, was he an inevitable victim, like the young man in Jancsó's "Silence and Cry" (*Csend és kiáltás*)? The parallel comes to mind as there, too, the Communist on the run found himself exposed to women who hid him. But Jancsó only used the sexual motif to illustrate the amorality, the demoralization of the landed peasants, who were exploited by the gentry, the officer, and in turn exploited and betrayed others. In "Improperly Dressed" sex is not equated with immorality. Though not a corruption, sex is a dangerous game. On the way to the Contessa, Sarolta falls foul of the officer's lust. Was it his elaborate play-acting, his androgynous actions which caused his death; or just the mistake of straying into the house of death? Or is it a martyrdom for principles, for loyalty?

Unlike the Jancsó film, "Improperly Dressed" is not about the aftermath of the revolution; it is a precise reversal of "As You Like It." Instead of the natural, life-giving freedom of the Forest of Arden, the sanatorium is an elegant chanel house; Sarolta is an inverted, tragic Ganymede. It is no mean achievement for Pál Sándor and scriptwriter Zsuzsa Tóth that their film can stand up to Shakespearean comparisons. Furthermore, every scene shows how well Sándor has learnt his craft. The camera angles are faultless, leading the eye from each significant point to the next without the muddled hesitancy of pseudo-modernists. From the beginning, as the posters give way to shots of the train in the narrow cutting, then Sarolta enclosed in the compartment and tightly swathed in her garments, we feel in good hands: we will be shown everything that matters, empowered to read the film without strain, without interpreters. Each cut comes as the point of a take is made, with a rare lightness of touch. And, above all, Elemér Ragályi's photography is

magnificent. The light values are consistent throughout, the winter mists are never just lack of focus, the brown glow of the interiors does not obscure the actors. Above all, the camera stands where and when it should, and moves only when it must, never obtruding or crossing the purport of the scene. The Hungarian critics rightly gave their 1976 cameraman's award to Elemér Ragályi.

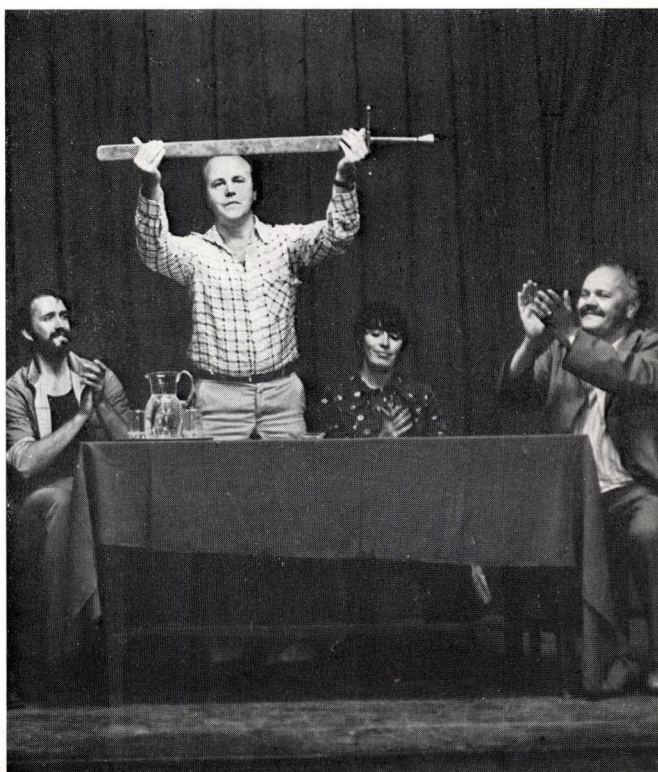
*

"American Fragment" (*Amerikai anizs*) sometimes mistranslated as "American Torso" is the first feature of a young director, Gábor Bódy, made in the Balázs Béla Studio. The BBS had been set up partly to provide opportunities for experimentation, with the advantage that should an experiment fail, it can be written off. However, it lacks the machinery to ensure distribution and so, though there was a strikingly positive Hungarian critical response to "American Fragment," it outstripped any public awareness of the film's existence.

The simplicity of the story belies its resonance. Three Hungarian officers appear, as on an old picture postcard, with Major Fiala in the centre: he is the officer in charge of reconnaissance surveys, who fought in the 1848 war of independence and then drifted into other wars of liberation, at Sebastopol in 1855, Tuscany in 1860 and finally in 1865 address as postmark, North Carolina. His friend, Captain Boldogh, is a patriot, whose homesickness outweighs the opportunities offered by America. The third, the daredevil Vereczky only lives for the thrill of danger. Tempted by Fiala's invitation to join the construction of the Pacific Railroad, if only to fight Indians, Vereczky agrees to learn map-making, but he falls to his death from a makeshift trapeze in the woods during his first survey (an incident based on an Ambrose Bierce story). The three form a contrast, but stand out even more against the others in the Hungarian Officers' Club, who re-live a mythical past



"Flare and Flicker" directed by Gyula Maár; Mari Törőcsik as Teréz



*"The Sword" directed by János Dömölky;
Péter Haumann as Mr. Bojti*



"Spider Football", directed by János Rózsa; the garre; (below) József Madaras as the Headmaster





*"Improperly Dressed", directed by Pál Sándor. Endre Holman and Carla Romanelli (above),
Endre Holman (below)*





"American Fragment", directed by Gábor Bódy

with wine, cards and the Rákóczi March played on a negro kid's banjo.

Bódy is not attempting to create an image of the past: instead, he openly fakes a historic document, he tries to construct a film which would look like the remains of an 1866 newsreel. To recreate the look of worn film stock, he uses editing and printing tricks to make the film flicker, or look as if it had been hand-cranked too fast or too slowly. There are fade-ins, fade-outs, tears, and breaks. They are all used dramatically, partly to replace ordinary technical devices like cutting, flashback, zoom, or speed control. Bódy named his most frequently used device "light-cutting," that is, instead of splicing frames directly, to stress the cut the screen flashes into whiteness: in other words, into a negative fade-out. Then, the hairlines of elevation and azimuth in the theodolite also appear in some frames: a legitimate matter, as the actors are engaged in mapping, and it fuses happily into figurative use for incidents such as troop movements or a chase by the enemy, which are shown by mapping devices instead of live action. It is a witty idea, like the light-cutting, though worn somewhat thin by repetition.

"American Fragment" is based on two fallacies, one formal and one thematic. First, a historian of style could show that making a film look like a nineteenth century pastiche would necessitate the most meticulous craftsmanship, with classical poses and groupings, like the plates of Daguerre, Nadar or Edward Muybridge. Their theatrical tableaux, reflecting contemporary taste, would seem stilted today, but they also achieved a visual clarity that it itself a stylization. The naturalistic comings-and-

goings in Bódy's film, the wobbles of the putative war correspondent's camera, the unfocussed shots do go back in time, but hardly further than Jean-Luc Godard. The second fallacy is historical, and while it may not be sharply felt by all viewers, it weakens the film's emotional logic. It needs to be explained how the swashbuckling Vereczky and the romantic Boldogh could find themselves on the Unionist side. Dramatically, Bódy needed the twist that at last the Hungarians should be on the winning side; that victory should force them to make a choice, a statement of how to live (or not) in peace. Bódy's heroes accept that the war was only about slavery, and that the South's right to secede couldn't possibly have anything to do with freedom.

None the less, "American Fragment" is an important and probably seminal work. It is not the first to avoid the literal transcription of novels on historic subjects, typified by such superficially diverse but basically similar films as "Black Diamonds" (*Fekete Gyémántok*) and "The Fifth Seal" (*Az ötödik pecsét*). There has been some reaction against this tradition in films like Gyöngyössi's "The Stag Boys," Zsolt Kézdi-Kovács's "Romanticism" (*Romantika*) which, like "American Fragment," move towards a synthesis of current film theory with a Marxist interpretation of history. Yet "American Fragment" shows a far more daring liberation from the literary forms of narrative and dialogue. It is a significant step towards the film that is something, instead of being about something. Not surprisingly it won the critics' prize for the best film by a new director, as well as the main prize of the Mannheim Festival in 1976.

MARI KUTTNA

TWO ACTORS' FILMS

János Rózsa: *Spider Football*, Gyula Maár: *Flare and Flicker*

Genghis Khan on the teaching staff

The young Hungarian actor József Madaras brought Genghis Khan to my mind. With his oriental high cheek bones, his stocky, short, yet sinewy build and his intensely emotional disposition Madaras appeared in the earliest Jancsó film (*That Was My Path*) and he played leading roles in some of Jancsó's later films as well *Agnus Dei*, *Red Psalm*, *Elektra*. In *Technology and Rites*, made in Italy, he played Attila. In János Rózsa's new film (whose *Dreaming Youth I* reviewed in NHQ 57), József Madaras has played perhaps the most important part of his life.

The secondary technical school headmaster he portrays not only resembles a Genghis Khan, he is like one in character and manners, and aims and methods as well. In the figure of the headmaster Rózsa pillorized a type of uninhibited careerist taking advantage of his position in present-day Hungary. This is exactly where the significance of the film lies: it is not about a climber and demagogue in an industrial technical school, but about a more general type who may turn up anywhere if he is allowed to do so.

As I have learnt from the film, "spider football" is a kind of gymnasium game where the children for want of adequate space, have to keep kicking a ball about in two teams whilst sitting on the floor and sliding around. Injuries are frequent and since fair play is out of the question victory goes to the most shameless, the most sneaky, and the most aggressive. In other words, to those who resemble the headmaster of the trades school where the plot is set. In the first shots we see the dais of a school festivity, and the students and teachers, but mainly the Asian-looking dark-skinned face of the small, white-shirted man with the

dazzling white teeth who spouts the most absurd banalities about achievement and results into a microphone. The school which up to now was known only by a number, has moved into a new building and been given a name. This earth-shattering advance must, of course, be proclaimed, taking the form of slogans, stock phrases, smiles, bouquets, and prizes handed out in envelopes. The headmaster is naturally the central figure of the wonderful event. Even the sudden downpour cannot put a stop to his torrent of words. Platitudes, quotations, Marxist "ideas" keep driveling from his smiling lips. The air is immediately saturated with the very best satire. Rózsa and his cameraman, Elemér Ragályi, seem to be getting ready to shoot a light comedy, whilst I, the viewer, feel the excitement mounting within me, and that some dirty work is in the offing.

In reality, the nicely set wings are gradually being exposed. The first consequence of having been given a name is that the supervisory body orders a study survey to be held at the school. The orator, the pompous and patronizing headmaster, who walks among his fellow-teachers like an omnipotent god, now gabbles about the great honour of this attention from higher up. But just like everybody else, he is well aware that the investigation hangs like a gloomy thunder-cloud above the school, since neither the teachers nor the pupils have attained even the most elementary level of knowledge. The bombastic slogans of the superman boss cannot drive away the portentous cloud, and lightning strikes. Ninety per cent of the geodesic exercises turn out to be wrong, and indeed, most of the students have not even tried to work out the assignment. The only exception is the class of one of the teachers, but he, anyway, has always been known to be an expert, and

a competent teacher. He is not even present as he has accompanied two of his students who are taking part in a national schools' competition. Our Genghis Khan talks a lot of nonsense in order to try and cover up the failure to himself and his teaching staff. Actually, the down-fall does not ensue after all, but the director owes us an answer why it has not taken place. Instead, János Rózsa introduces us to what is known as a 'student's parliament' (a kind of mass meeting in school where the pupils, led by their teachers and elected fellow-students, discuss various matters). The subject is naturally the unsuccessful exercises. The headmaster-god presides over the meeting with a smile on his face, and when he cannot avoid admitting failure any more, he characteristically applies a truly Machiavellian stratagem. "What? We sit here dealing with such an insignificant matter when a much more important issue has been drawn to my attention?" Both teachers and students prick up their ears in surprise. The headmaster, after having diverted everyone's attention from the unpleasant exercises, starts talking about a beating. He allegedly has a witness who saw one of the teachers slap a student's face in a workshop practice class. The dictator, with his face clouded over, elects an investigation committee to establish the circumstances of the grave offence and also the identity of the offender. The film then goes on to disclose the structure of modern manipulation: instead of revealing the real problem and the substandard level of the school, the mechanics of seeking the non-existing witness to a non-existing box on the ear, and the besmirching of an innocent man begins in one of the Budapest educational establishments.

This is the turning point of the film, and hereafter the events ought to gather momentum, whereas it is precisely the scenes that follow which reveal that the portrayal of a single, and not even significant, manipulation is insufficient to maintain tension for the ninety minutes of a feature

film. The search for a witness goes on in the school and for a long time they do not find him; when at last they think they have found him it turns out that he is not a real witness after all. The headmaster wants to put the blame for the slap on the competent teacher who is absent, but does not succeed in doing so. We are also shown some kind of an unlikely local inquiry. A couple, both teachers, try to oppose the headmaster's tyranny; there is much talk, little action, and the viewer feels disappointedly bored.

Fortunately this is followed by the spider soccer performance in the gymnasium, and the festival held to celebrate the victory of the incriminated fellow-teacher, whose students have won the national study competition. Genghis Khan immediately forgives the "culprit" and he would now like to appease the couple in opposition. He offers a deputy headmistress' appointment to the wife who, however, rigidly informs him that she does not wish to teach in the school any more. At this, the wrath of the tyrant turns against the husband, and he practically turns the teacher out of the staff room. The teacher flings the door open and dashes along the corridor in such an agitated state that the headmaster is frightened in case he jumps out of the window. He orders the staff to look for him. They do not find the teacher, but they see the broken window at the end of the corridor. The headmaster rushes to the window.

Here the director reveals the headmaster's disgusting careerism in its entirety, and at the same time offers the greatest acting opportunity for József Madaras. The hard, indomitable master of slogans breaks down and cries, holding his head. "He's ruined me, he's ruined me!", he whimpers. The demigod has fallen.

His tragedy seems to be so irrevocable that for a moment I, too, became frightened. János Rózsa will surely not spoil his film with an actual death? But no: the teacher believed to be dead steps out, smiling

ironically from behind a door: the whole thing was only a joke. The headmaster is forced to embrace him, and this particular moment is his end. The director finishes him off with a ruthless stab. He has succeeded in making everybody loathe his sort for ever. Where can one not encounter such civilian Genghis Khans, where do their staff not suffer from them? Even if János Rózsa's film is not an entirely successful work, we do owe him thanks for his basic courage.

Wife for Sale

Not so long ago (NHQ 62) I expressed my enthusiasm in these pages over Gyula Maár's last film, *In the Wings*—never mind its shortcomings. I pointed out that the success of the film was inevitably due to his wife, the superb actress, Mari Töröcsik. With this, Maár has introduced director-and-wife as well as director's films in Hungary. The simple procedure for this seems to be to write and to direct for your wife. The condition set by the trade is merely to have a noted and outstanding actress as your wife. In other words, one exactly like Mari Töröcsik, who is liked and considered talented by everybody, thus her name will always draw audiences to the cinema. Gyula Maár fulfills the condition, being the husband of an actress who is equally popular in Hungary and abroad for a number of her leading film roles.

During the shooting of the film the enterprising director already gave a thought-provoking statement to one of the dailies, and it was the statement which aroused my interest in the film. He said that this time he intended to put an extremely simple, almost banal situation on the screen: the protagonist would be a lonely, ageing woman who is very unhappy until she finally succeeds in marrying again. "As for the rest, we'll see", he added. "I do not want, by any means, to over-complicate the subject."

We see that Gyula Maár's plan has been

realized word for word, so much so that the poor reviewer has been left no more to do other than acknowledge the intention of the director. The story of *Flare and Flicker* really cannot be described in more detail than than an ageing, divorced woman keeps boring the audience until she finally remarries. Aside from this it is rather difficult to say anything else about the story and its message. Thus I can, at most go on about my annoyance of having spent at least a hundred minutes of my life, watching this bored woman being continually bored in her nicely furnished home. Of course, such a long time cannot be spent with impunity even by the most ingenious director. After all, the sight of the woman tipling, and walking about in her flat must be replaced from time to time by some other images. At such times a teenage boy from next door rings the door bell and repeatedly tells the woman—who is not at all surprised at this—that "I am in love with you." That's it, I thought, a bit of a sexual thrill at last. But after an innocent kiss the woman soon turns the young dream-cavalier out. But first she shows him some photographs, and since she says of one of the men that he is a globe-trotter, the director finds this an excellent opportunity to include a quick sequence of shots of his travels. What do we see? The man in the photo is chatting with an old waiter in the dining car of an old train. Next, when the boy asks the ageing and bored woman to tell him something about the war, the answer is a definite no. Still, the memories keep intruding: Russian women soldiers bathing in slips in a small lake. Then some Soviet soldiers approach and start laughing at the sight of the women. It does not become clear whose memories these might be, just as the sequence itself fits into the film in the same way as it is superfluous in it. For a few minutes even the heroine's son, a soldier, appears in the flat; he consoles his depressed mother and then leaves. A plump lady-friend of the woman also has a role; she brings her some drink for her troubles,

adding a bit of worldly wisdom, and finally singing ancient tunes.

Otherwise, the heroine has a nicely furnished flat, a piano, elegant dresses, a long cigarette-holder, and expensive lace curtains—in short everything that is needed for a complete break-down. Of course, an ageing heart can still bleed, for all that. The heroine goes to her office, invites her boss to her home, and then the miracle happens: the boss declares his love, and offers marriage. There is complete understanding. All that remains is the obligatory love-making.

One would think that the director will rest content with that: he was unable to say anything, and even what he did say was

colourless. The main thing is that the actress wife has suggested something a little more throughout, even though not an iota of it has been completely realized. We were able to see Mari Törőcsik for a long time, which is a good feeling, no matter how weak the film may be. But that the director, by way of epilogue, should have all the characters sit under trees, adorning them with fairy-tale colours and smiling and floating around like something out of a Fellini film, before finally presenting the work of the film staff as if he were a Bergman or Truffaut—I can only say that it all left me feeling rather depressed.

JÓZSEF TORNAI

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, British, and Canadian poets, among them Donald Davie, Robert Graves, Ted Hughes, Edwin Morgan, Charles Tomlinson, Kenneth McRobbie, Daniel Hoffman, Barbara Howes, Richard Wilbur, 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 Anna Hajnal, Gyula Illyés, Ferenc Juhász, László Nagy, Ágnes Nemes Nagy, János Pilinszky, István Vas, and Sándor Weöres.

Published in the United States, its dependencies and the Philippine Islands,
Great Britain and Canada by

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

Address for orders: 136 South Broadway, Irvington, New York 10533, USA
\$ 11.95 (Price slightly higher outside the U.S. and Canada)

Published in Hungary and all countries not listed above by

CORVINA PRESS

Address for orders: Kultúra, H-1389 Budapest P.O.B. 149. Hungary

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

BOGNÁR, József (b. 1917.) Economist, M.P. Director of the Research Institute on World Economy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Member of the Editorial Board of, as well as a frequent contributor to, NHQ. See among recent contributions "Changes in the World Economy and Hungarian Economic Policy," NHQ 62, "A New Civilization Model?" 63, and "The Outlines of a New System of International Economic Relations," 66.

CSAPLÁR, Vilmos (b. 1947). Author. Graduated in English and Hungarian from Budapest University. On the staff of *Mozgó Világ*, a literary monthly. Spent the 1975-1976 academic year at the University of Iowa as member of the International Writing Program. Has published three volumes of fiction.

CSERHÁTI, József (b. 1914). Diocesan bishop of Pécs in Southern Hungary since 1962. Trained in Rome, taught theology at Pécs, Győr and Budapest. Has published a great deal in the Hungarian Roman Catholic press, as well as two books on ecclesiology.

ENYEDI, György (b. 1930). Heads a research department in the Institute for Geography of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Spent a year in the US as a Ford Foundation scholar in 1966 and was guest professor at Paul Valéry University in Montpellier in 1973-74. Member of the International Geographical Society.

ESTERHÁZY, Péter (b. 1950). Author. Graduated in mathematics from Budapest University. Made his literary debut with *Fancsikó és Pinta*, Magvető 1976, a volume of stories on two imaginary children, also reviewed in this issue.

FEKETE, János (b. 1918). Economist, Vice President of the Hungarian National Bank, in charge of international operations. Has published numerous papers on Hungarian and international monetary problems. See also "Inflation and the International Monetary System," NHQ 55, "East-West Economic Relations: A Reappraisal," 59, and "Exchange Rate Policy," 63.

FERENCZY, László (b. 1937). Literary historian, on the staff of the Institute of Literary History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Regularly reviews poetry for this journal.

FORGÁCS, Éva (b. 1947). Art historian. On the staff of the Budapest Museum of Applied Art. Her field is the avant garde of the 1920s, and the Bauhaus. Has published *Kollázs és montázs* ("Collage and Montage"), Corvina, Budapest, 1976, and studies on the Bauhaus and Ernő Kállai. See "Ernő Kállai: Art Critic of a Changing Age," NHQ 64.

FÖLDES, Anna (b. 1931). Journalist, critic, on the staff of *Nők Lapja*, a weekly for women. Graduated in English and Hungarian from Budapest University. Has published two books on contemporary Hungarian fiction. See "Two Survivors of the Holocaust," NHQ 64, and her theatre reviews in NHQ 65, 66.

FRANK, János (b. 1925). One of our regular art critics.

GÁBOR, István (b. 1928). Journalist, specializing in education, on the staff of the national daily *Magyar Nemzet*. See his "Klemperer in Hungary," in NHQ 59.

GÖRGEY, Gábor (b. 1929). Poet. Has published poetry and translations from German, English and American poets. Author of numerous successful plays for the stage and television. His one-act play *Ötőrai tea* (Afternoon Tea) appeared in NHQ 27, excerpts from "Interview," a long poem, in 51.

HOFFMANN, Magda. Economist. Teaches marketing at the Karl Marx University of Economics in Budapest. Has published numerous papers and books on quality control, living standards, consumer education and protection. Spent the 1970-71 academic year at MIT and the Harvard Business School on a Ford Foundation scholarship. In 1973 and 74 served as a coach for the European Case Development Workshop.

ILLÉS, Endre, the author who is sevens-five, is General Manager of *Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó*, a publishing house of literature in Budapest. Has published numerous volumes of short stories, novels, literary essays, criticism, written plays for the stage and television. His translations include novels by Stendhal, Maupassant, Mauriac, etc. Both as a critic and as a publisher he has played an important part in the shaping of literature for the last forty years. See part of a play, "The Sand-Glass" in NHQ 7, and short stories in 3, 11, 18, 48 and 54.

ILLYÉS, Mária (b. 1942). Art historian, on the staff of the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts. Her main field is contemporary painting.

ISZLAI, Zoltán (b. 1933). Critic, on the staff of *Élet és Irodalom*, a literary weekly. Graduated from the University of Budapest in Hungarian and librarianship, was editor of *Új könyvek* ("New Books"), a journal for librarians. Has published two volumes of poetry, and three volumes of short stories. See his book review "No Happy Endings," NHQ 63.

JUHÁSZ, Júlia (b. 1927). Journalist, editor of the house journal of a Budapest factory. Has written a book on a notorious slum. See "Secondary Education of Working Class Children," NHQ 39, and "Bycicle Thieves," 44.

KARINTHY, Ferenc (b. 1921). Author. Studied linguistics at the University of Budapest. Has published several novels, collections of short stories, essays and journalism, and written plays for the stage, as well as film scripts. See an excerpt from his novel "Epepe" in NHQ 43, and an interview he made with the author Erzsébet Galgóczi in 65.

KISS PINTÉR, Imre (b. 1941). Critic and historian of literature, on the staff of the Institute of Litarary History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His field of research is Hungarian literature at the turn of the century.

KULCSÁR, Kálmán (b. 1928). Sociologist, head of the Sociological Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, member of the Sociology of Law Committee of the International Sociological Association. Published works on sociological thinking and the social environment. See "Sociology in Hungary," No. 41.

KUTTNA, Mari (b. 1934). Journalist and film critic. She was born in Hungary and grew up in Australia, studied English at Sydney and Oxford Universities and now lives in England. Contributes to "Sight and Sound," "Film," "Montage," and "The Lady." See also her translations of plays by István Örkény in NHQ 44 and 59, by Gyula Hernádi in 53, as well as "The Pécs Film Festival," 37, "Folklore in Motion," 38, "Myth into Movement," 65.

LENDVAI, L. Ferenc (b. 1937). Teacher of and research worker in philosophy at the University of Budapest. Has published stud-

ies on the philosophical aspects of Protestantism, French Jacobinism, and Prussian Socialism, and has written in collaboration with Kristóf J. Nyiri, *A filozófia rövid története. A Védáktól Wittgensteinig* (A Short History of Philosophy from the Vedas to Wittgenstein) (1974), a popular work in which the authors approach the history of philosophy as part of social history.

NAGY, Péter (b. 1920). Literary historian and critic, Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Budapest. Spent a year as guest professor at the Sorbonne in Paris. Editor of *Irodalomtörténet*, a scholarly quarterly, and author of numerous books and monographs on Hungarian literature. See among recent contributions: "Lukács and Hungarian Literature," NHQ 60, "Four English Novels," 61, "The Quiddity of Hungarian Drama," 64.

NÉMETH, Lajos (b. 1929). Art historian, critic. Member of the Art History Research Team of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Published books on 19th and 20th century Hungarian painting and on Csontváry. See "Paintings, Mosaics, Textiles," NHQ 51.

ORBÁN, Ottó (b. 1936). Poet and translator. Studied literature at the University of Budapest, but left without a degree. Has published five volumes of poems and a great number of translations. Spent four months at the University of Iowa in 1976, as member of the International Writing

Program. See a chapter from his Indian travel diary in NHQ 39, and poems in Nos. 35, 37, 46, 58. Hungarian title of the poem in this issue: *Canto*.

SEDLMAYR, János (b. 1932). Architect. Worked for years in the City Planning Bureau, since 1957 heads a studio in the National Office for the Protection of Monuments. Has worked on monuments in Kőszeg, Visegrád, Nagyvácszony, restoring castles, private houses, churches, and other public buildings. He collaborated with Béla Pintér on the construction of the Budapest Hilton being responsible for the restoration and preservation of the historical parts. Has published studies in various architectural periodicals.

TORNAL, József (b. 1927). Poet, translator, our regular film reviewer.

VADAS, József (b. 1946). Art critic. Editor on the staff of Corvina Press, a publishing house in Budapest. Writes regularly on art for *Élet és Irodalom*, a literary weekly. See "Eleven Young Artists," NHQ 57, "Zsigmond Kisfaludi Stróbl," 61.

ZOLTAI, Dénes (b. 1928). Teaches aesthetics at the University of Budapest. His main fields are the history of aesthetics and music aesthetics. Has published the first volume of a history of music aesthetics, a short history of aesthetics, and a book on Bartók.

TIME IS MONEY

You save time
by flying
to Budapest.
Direct flights
from 35 cities of
Europe
and the Middle East


MALEV
Hungarian Airlines



THE NEW HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY

may be obtained from the following distributors:

- AUSTRALIA: C. B. D. Library and Subscription Service Box 4886, G. P. O., Sidney, N. S. W. 2001
- AUSTRIA: Globus, Vertrieb Ausländischer Zeitschriften (VAZ) Höchststadtplatz 3, A-1200 Wien XX.
Rudolf Novak GmbH., Köllnerhofgasse 4. (Postfach 739) A-1011 Wien I.
- BELGIUM: Du Monde Entier S. A. Rue du Midi 162, 1000-Bruxelles
- BRASIL: Livraria D. Landy Ltda. Rua 7 de Abril, Caixa Postal 7943 . 01000 Sao Paulo
- CANADA: Pannonia Books. P. O. Box 1017. Postal Station "B", 164 Spadina Avenue, Toronto M5T 2T8
- CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Madarská Kultura, Václavské Nám 2. Praha I.,
P. N. S. — dovoz tisku, Vinohradská 46, Praha II.,
P. N. S. — dovoz tlace, Leningradská 14, Bratislava
- DENMARK: Munksgaard's Boghandel, Norregade 6. DK-1165 Kobenhavn K.
- FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY: Kubon und Sagner. 8000 München 34,
Schliessfach 68, Kunst und Wissen, 7000 Stuttgart 1, Postfach 46, Wilhelmstr. 4.
W. E. Saarbach GmbH. P. O. B. 101610. Follerstrasse 2, 5 Köln 1.
- FINLAND: Akateeminen Kirjakauppa, Keskuskatu 2, SF-00100 Helsinki 10.
- FRANCE: Agence Littéraire et Artistique Parisienne, 23, rue Royale, Paris 8.
- GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC: Zeitungsvertriebsamt, 1004 Berlin,
Strasse der Pariser Kommune 3-4.
- GREAT BRITAIN: Central Books Ltd. 37, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8PS
Collet's Holdings Ltd., Denington Estate, Wellingborough NN8 2QT
Wm. Dawson and Sons Ltd., Cannon House. 10/14 Macklin Street. London WC2B 5NG
- INDIA: National Book Agency Private Ltd. 12 Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta 12.
- ITALY: Libreria Commissionaria Sansoni, Via Lamarmora 45.
Casella Postale 552, 50121 Firenze
SO. CO. LIB. RI. Export-Import, Piazza Margana 33. 00186 Roma
- JAPAN: Maruzen Co., Ltd., P. O. Box 5050, Tokyo International 100-31
Nauka Ltd., 2-30-19 Minami-Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku, Tokyo 171
- NETHERLANDS: N. V. Martinus Nijhoff, Postfach 269. 9 Lange Voorhout, Den Haag
Swets & Zeitlinger, Keizersgracht 487. Amsterdam C.
- NORWAY: A/S Narvesens Litteratur Tjeneste, P. O. Box 6140 Etterstad, Oslo
- POLAND: B. K. W. Z. Ruch, Warsawa, ul. Wronia 23.
- RUMANIA: DEP, Bucuresti
DEP, Arad
- SOVIET UNION: Soyuzpechaty, Moscow, Prospect Mira 112-a,
Poschtamt-Import, Moscow
Pochtamt-Import, Leningrad
- SWEDEN: AB Nordiska Bokhandeln, Altrömergatan 22, 101-10 Stockholm
- SWITZERLAND: AZED AG. Dornacherstrasse 60/62. Basel 4002.
- UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: Center of Hungarian Literature, 4418-16th Avenue,
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11204
FAM Book Service, 69 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10003
Hungarian Books and Records, 11802 Buckeye Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44120
Stechert-Hafner Inc., 31 East 10th Street, New York, N. Y. 10003
- VENEZUELA: Luis Tarcsey, Caracas, Apartado 50.892
- YUGOSLAVIA: Jugoslovenska Knjiga, Terazije 27. Beograd
Prosveta Export-Import, P. O. B. 555. Terazije 16/1. 11001 Beograd
or
Kultura Hungarian Trading Company for Books and Newspapers,
H-1389 Budapest P. O. B. 149.