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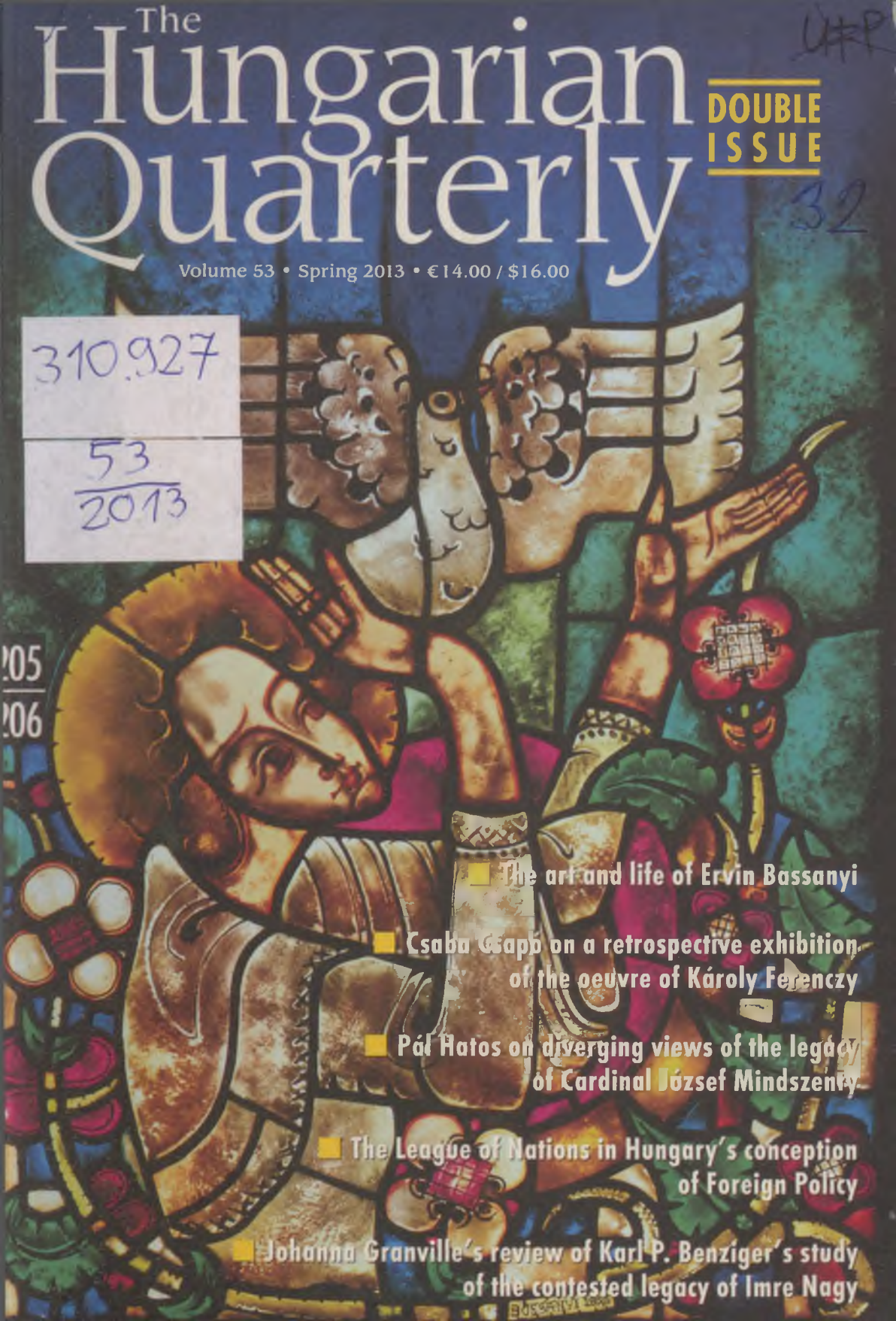

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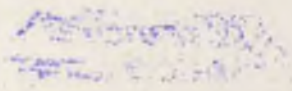

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Csaba Csapó

Anniversaries in Hungary I

The Retrospective Exhibition of the oeuvre of Károly Ferenczy (1862-1917) at the Hungarian National Gallery from 30 November 2011 to 17 June 2012

What seems to be remarkable in Hungarian culture is that anniversaries of writers, poets, composers, and artists are usually commemorated with some cultural events. This year, Károly Ferenczy, an influential representative of Hungarian Impressionist painting, would be 150 years old. To mark the 150th anniversary of the painter's birth, the Hungarian National Gallery opened a unique retrospective exhibition that can be seen in the "A" building of the Gallery. The most outstanding paintings by Ferenczy were last exhibited in Hungary in 1940, so both art lovers and the directors of the Gallery have good reason to celebrate.

Earlier the Gallery organized exhibitions of works from the oeuvres of József Rippl-Rónai, László Mednyánszky, Tivadar Csontváry Kosztka, János Mattis-Teustch, and János Vaszary in order to present the various trends in modern Hungarian painting. This time the works of art have not been arranged in chronological order, as is usually the custom at exhibitions, in order to draw attention to different stylistic periods in the artist's development. Instead, the exhibition is intended to present his oeuvre from the perspective of specific painterly motifs. The material is arranged into eight large thematic groups and further divided into even more refined subgroups. These include the following main themes: 1) Self-Portraits; 2) Early Genre Painting; 3) Prints, Placards and Illustrations; 4) the Nagybánya Landscapes and Portraits; 5) the Artist's Studio Paintings; 6) Biblical Compositions; 7) the Ferenczy Family; and finally, 8) the Creative Process along with Prints and Drawings. The artworks belonging to the last category are on exhibit now for the first time to the general public.

The Ferenczy exhibition represents the culmination of three years of research, for when the painter died at the age of 55 he left behind a relatively small number of pictures. Art historians were familiar with approximately 400 pictures, but in its permanent exhibition the Gallery displays only 150 paintings and 30 drawings, along with the rough sketches. The artworks for this compilation, which are not in the possession of the Gallery, are on loan from twelve museums outside of Hungary, ten public repositories, and more than

sixty private collectors in Hungary and abroad. In addition to works of art by Ferenczy, some fifty items of documentary and artistic value are on display, including photos, letters, placards, catalogues and books illustrated by the artist. Another distinctive feature of the exhibition is that a painting on loan from a private collector in London shows a view of the sea, which is rather rare in the artist's oeuvre. This large and rich compilation offers a more nuanced view of Ferenczy's art, showing it in all its complexity.

For most Hungarian art lovers and art historians, Károly Ferenczy has been closely associated with the artists' colony of Nagybánya since its founding in 1886. The city of Nagybánya today is part of Romania, its present name is Baia Mare. As an influential representative of Hungarian impressionism and an outstanding artist and leading member of the artists' colony, Ferenczy has rightfully been considered one of the establishers of modern Hungarian painting. It is in no small part thanks to his renown that the name of the city of Nagybánya became synonymous with a notion of style and ultimately changed the nature of Hungarian painting.

It is worth pausing for a moment to summarize Ferenczy's principal artistic periods. At the beginning of his career, he was attracted to "subtle naturalism," as he called it, an approach that he later excluded entirely from his art, claiming that at the time he had not been mature enough to understand either life or art. He did his first oil painting in this naturalist period, *Portrait of Ede Kallós* (*Kallós Ede arcképe,* 1889).[1] Genre pictures that combine naturalist depictions of objects with synthetic decorative views also belong to this period, such as *Girls Tending to Flowers* (*Leányok virágokat gondoznak,* 1889) and *Boys Throwing Pebbles into the River* (*Kődobálók,* 1890).[2] Between 1893 and 1896, years he spent in Munich, he developed a pantheistic view of nature, which was influenced by symbolism and secession. The most outstanding pieces of this style are the paintings *Bird Song* (*Madárdal,* 1893), *Orpheus* (*Orfeusz,* 1894), and the one in which the influence of secessionism is the most salient, *Archeology* (*Archeológia,* 1896). Ferenczy also spent three years in Paris, during which time his pictures came to be characterized by a kind of mother-of-pearl tinge, lighter colors, more refined drawing, and more descriptive rendering. His encounter with the landscape and people of Nagybánya in 1896 constituted a significant experience for Ferenczy. Influenced by his pantheistic view of nature, he strove to synthesize the spectacles actually seen in nature with his own artistic vision, and he captured the natives of the town as well as the surrounding countryside, along with the magical light and colors of the setting. The Nagybánya paintings constitute the most considerable part of the artist's oeuvre.

One of the most significant features of Ferenczy's conception of art

1 ■ I use the English titles that are commonly used at the National Gallery or in catalogues. I include explanations of the English translations when necessary.

was the very deliberate nature in which he approached composition, in other words the deliberate nature of the manner in which he analyzed the themes he intended to put onto canvas. In his first years in Nagybánya, he used a lyrical formal language to give expression to his pantheistic reception of nature, but later his intuitive experience was followed by a more scientific approach. Ferenczy was more skillful in plain-air painting than his contemporaries, such as Simon Hollósy, János Thorma, Béla Iványi-Grünwald, Oszkár Glatz, or István Réti, because Ferenczy consciously faced the artistic and technical problems of plein-air painting. His contemporaries also experimented with technical issues, but their attempts should be regarded as "artificial plein-air," since they practiced painting outside only when making sketches. In many of their pictures they replace the black of the shadows with smooth grey and dark blue nuances. For example, having already broken away from the academic and romantic clichés concerning nature, Hollósy himself analyzed the nature of the light that shone through the window of his atelier, as is obvious in paintings such as The Troubles of the Country (*Az ország bajai*, 1893) or Zrínyi's Charge on the Turks from the Fortress of Szigetvár (*Zrínyi kirohanása*, 1896).[3] In contrast to his contemporaries, Ferenczy studied the problems of painting the light outdoors, not in the atelier. The pictures painted in this period are dominated by the vibration of disintegrated and scattered light, as can be observed in paintings such as Summer (*Nyár*, 1902), Winter (*Tél*, 1902), and Brook II – Summer Day (*Patak II – nyári nap*, 1907). It is interesting to note when one takes a look at Summer that the artist painted male nude pictures only in open air, whereas his female nudes were done in the atelier and open air. In Brook II – Summer Day, what catches one's eye is the absence of the nude male figure; it is a subtle game originating from the spectacle of the male hat and gown that bring the picture into motion, and one recognizes that there should be a male figure somewhere, but the implied bathing man is somewhere beyond the frame of the painting.

Ferenczy's view of nature during his Nagybánya period became more objective, and he concentrated on formal matters with greater precision than he had before. He aimed to do more than simply render the spectacle, because while composing the spectacle, he changed it in an aesthetic way, that is, he analyzed the relationship between the points that had to be reduced to the plain of the canvas. Furthermore, he considered also the possibilities of contrast and harmony between these points. He achieved his aims, and Ferenczy's late Nagybánya period is characterized by excessive use of colors and closed compositions that are centered around a main motif, such as The Woman Painter (*Festőnő*, 1903),

2 ■ The original title could be translated into English as "Pebble Throwers."
3 ■ The original Hungarian title of the painting is much shorter because for Hungarians the historical reference is clear.

Evening in March (*Márciusi est*, 1902), October (*Október*, 1902), and Morning Sunshine (*Napos délelőtt*, 1905). In these paintings the excessively intense patches of color do not primarily represent the natural motifs. Rather they become part of a painterly reality, the components of an autonomous aesthetic world.

Most of the Nagybánya painters were influenced by Károly Ferenczy from the outset. Ferenczy's artistic legacy is far too complex, however, to be analyzed merely from the perspective of his influence. In the long process through which modern Hungarian painting emerged, the diversity of Ferenczy's artistic oeuvre opened new vistas for his followers, as did the versatility of his personality, the exemplary nature of his approach to art, and the dedication with which he pursued his professional career. The exhibition gives little sign of the influence Ferenczy had on other Hungarian painters, but it was so significant that it should not escape mention here.

Two extraordinary features of the 2012 exhibition merit particular mention. The first is the manner in which of the development of the artist's creative process is presented, the second the inclusion of photographs of members of his family, along with items regarding his relationships with them, such as letters, portrait paintings of the Ferenczy children, and the children's paintings of their parents. The artist examined his own paintings with strict self-criticism, as is apparent if one looks at different versions of the same painting. The exhibition enables visitors to see how specific paintings developed. On one wall one can see how the artist repainted a picture, or how he worked simultaneously on the same theme with small variations on different canvases so that he would be able to choose the one that in his view was the best. The exhibition also displays paintings that used to be parts of other paintings and pictures that were intended to be parts of a larger composition. It is interesting to be reminded in the context of an exhibition that works of art are never discrete objects per se, but rather always the result of a creative process, and this retrospective exhibition offers viewers insights into the origins of specific paintings and the ideas and approaches with which the painter was experimenting during the creative process.

Ferenczy grew up without a mother (his mother died soon after giving birth to him), so family was very important to him as an emotional and intellectual basis. An artist's family is always an interesting topic, because often one is tempted to compare artists within one family. Many times one is sad to learn that one member of the family had given up the pursuit of art because another member seemed to be more talented. As one learns from this exhibition, Ferenczy's brother, Ferenc Ferenczy, had wanted to become an actor, but his father did not consider him talented enough and dissuaded him. Nevertheless, he wrote dramas which were performed at the National Theater in Budapest. Initially Károly had also been dissuaded from becoming an artist and had studied law, but his encounter with his future wife, Olga Fialka, gave him the last impulse to study the fine arts. When Ferenczy met Olga, she was

already an acknowledged painter whose works had been on display in several exhibitions. After their marriage, Olga gave up painting because she wanted to devote herself entirely to her family. Their first-born son, Valér Ferenczy, followed his father's vocation and became a painter first, but later he studied copper engraving.. Their next children were twins, Noémi Ferenczy, who became the founder of the art of Hungarian Gobelin, and Béni Ferenczy, who pursued his talents in fine art as well, becoming an influential figure of 20th century Hungarian sculpture.

The final room of the exhibition is dedicated to the family of the remarkable artist. It includes not only paintings of the family by Károly Ferenczy, but also a picture by Olga Fialka, paintings by the Ferenczy children, a sculpture by Béni Ferenczy, and a Gobelin tapestry by Noémi Ferenczy. It also contains letters, photographs, and personal belongings, offering personal insight into the life of the artist's family as well as the love and artistic relationship between them.

Before one leaves the exhibition, one passes the "Wanted Wall," a brilliant idea on the part of the curators that has proven a great success with visitors. The wall displays reproductions or photos of missing pieces of art by Károly Ferenczy. The original aim was to familiarize visitors with the lost pictures by the artist, but it has taken on another role. As a result of this wall, five missing pictures have already turned up from different parts of the world, one of them from Australia. The exhibition is accompanied by a lavishly produced catalogue, in which Ferenczy's life and artistic periods are discussed in detail by art historians. It also contains a comprehensive list of the artist's paintings, prints, and drawings, complete with reproductions and bibliographical information. The curators of the exhibition were art historians Judit Boros and Edit Plesznivy.

The curators proved how a retrospective exhibition of an artist's work can be organized differently and more provocatively than in the conventional manner. The concept behind the arrangement of the pictures and the various objects included in the exhibition give a nuanced view not only of the artist and his work, but also his significance in the development of Hungarian painting.

Zsuzsanna Tóth

An Iconological Approach to 19th century Hungarian History Painting

In order to help a non-Hungarian overcome the difficulty he or she faces when attempting to comprehend 19th century Hungarian history painting, one could begin by offering some discussion of the strongly politicised character of this Romantic genre. Beyond simply having some knowledge of the contemporary political context, including revolutions from France to the Habsburg lands, one would preferably also have some grasp of the national symbolic values of the people depicted, such as Louis II or László Hunyadi. How are representations of the monarchs, nobility and common people of a repressed nation endowed with national symbolical value? In this essay I address this question using the categories devised by György E. Szőnyi with reference to paintings by Sándor Wagner (1838-1919), Viktor Madarász (1830-1917), Bertalan Székely (1835-1910), and Gyula Benczúr (1844-1898), four painters who were active between the period of Neo-Absolutism in the 1850s until the 1870s, including the Austro-Hungarian Compromise in 1867. Specifically, I attempt to answer the question as to whether, following the defeat of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, history paintings themselves possessed recognizable political power or whether they were simply regarded as ornaments of high aesthetic and artistic value. Could these images have represented any potential danger for the Austrian regime, and could they have been vessels for the subsistence of the Hungarian national

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cause? I borrow from the ideas of William J. Thomas Mitchell, whose poststructuralist iconology provides an analytical perspective for a nuanced understanding of the interaction between artwork and its interpretive audience, offering insights not simply into the secular and religious expressive power of these paintings, but also the roles of spectatorship and demonstrativeness in the public sphere. In other words, rather than consider these works of visual art from perspectives of composition, tonality or brush work, I examine them as visual embodiments of world views, customs, and cultural representations. As Mitchell has noted, iconology is "not just the science of icons, but the political psychology of icons, the study of iconophobia, iconophilia, and the struggle between iconoclasm and idolatry" (Mitchell 1986, 3), and what distinguishes the iconologist from the art historian is "the willingness to contemplate the 'impure' image in all its forms" (Mitchell 1986, 158). In other words, images speak about the emotional, ideological and political *motives behind their creation*, in a broader sense, about the way in which their interpretive community viewed the world. My intention is to further an understanding of the Hungarian mentality and self-image by attempting to link focal points of Hungarian history in the time that saw the birth of modern Hungarian society (the Romantic period) with some of the symbolic artefacts with which those moments of history have been commemorated.

An Age of Uprisings: Contemporary Hungarian Politics and Art

The 19th century was not a tranquil period in the history of Europe: there was a series of political upheavals across the continent known as the European Revolutions of 1848, in other words the Spring of Nations. Going back to the ideas of the French Revolution of 1789-1799, the overall aims were to subvert feudal absolutism, strengthen capitalism, and form nation states based on bourgeois democracy. Not surprisingly, this 1848 revolutionary wave primarily concerned the German states, which were seeking German national unity, and the Habsburg Empire, which was compelled to confront the fact that its territories, including Hungary, were launching desperate struggles for national independence, all of them approximately at the same time.

The Hungarian Revolution of 1848 was defeated by the Habsburg Emperor Franz Joseph I (1830-1916) with the help of the Russian Tsar, Nicholas I (1796-1855). The Habsburg rulers' reaction to Hungary's struggle was immediate, harsh and merciless. In the autumn and winter of 1849 the mourning country was governed by a military dictatorship led by Julius Jacob von Haynau (1786-1853), nicknamed 'the Hyena of

Brescia,' in the years referred to as the Period of Retribution. Beginning with the execution of the first prime minister of Hungary, Lajos Batthyány (1807-1849), and the thirteen generals of the war of independence,[1] there were altogether at least a hundred executions and over 1,500 long term imprisonments (Kontler 1999, 264). In the next period, called Neo-absolutism, Alexander von Bach (1813-1893), Austrian minister of home affairs, governed Hungary with attempts to centralize and force the adoption of German. Finally, the Austro-Hungarian Compromise was reached in 1867. This was followed by the period referred to in Hungarian historiography as the "boldog békeidők," or "happy times of peace," roughly the half-century between the signing of the Compromise and the outbreak of the First World War. Hungary was transformed from "an underdeveloped agrarian country into a relatively rapidly developing agrarian-industrial one" (*ibid.*, 303).

Art and intellectual life in the latter half of the 19th century was still dominated by the ideas of Romanticism, one of the last movements the influences of which were felt across the continent. Nationalism was one of the key issues in Romanticism, and it influenced conceptions regarding the roles of intellectuals and artists and forms of expression and meanings, in particular through its focus on the development of national languages and folklore, the value of local customs and traditions, and the movements that led to calls for the "self-determination" of nationalities and ultimately would redraw the map of Europe. As a movement that began to take wing politically in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, National Romanticism was manifest in the arts of European countries or regions of Europe that once had been subjected to foreign artistic or political domination (such as Catalonia, parts of the Habsburg Empire, Germany and Belgium). For this reason, this form of nationalism arose in reaction to dynastic or imperial hegemony. In the case of 19th century visual art, while in the 17th century realistic painting had become more and more dominant and a growing number of artists had come to consider the symbolic function of images a burden, during the era of Romanticism "symbols and allegories flooded everything" again (Białostocki 1997, 241). Instead of religious heroes and martyrs, Romanticism introduced national, social and artistic personages in art through political and moral parables.

One of the distinctive genres in the fine arts of the period was history

1 ■ The thirteen martyrs of Arad were Arisztid Dessewffy (1802–1849), Ernő Kiss (1799–1849), Ernő Poeltenberg (1814–1849), György Lahner (1795–1849), Ignác Török (1795–1849), János Damjanich (1804–1849), József Nagy-Sándor (1804–1849), József Schweidel (1796–1849), Károly Knezich (1808–1849), Károly Leiningen-Westerburg (1819–1849), Károly Vécsey (1807–1849), Lajos Aulich (1793–1849) and Vilmos Lázár (1815–1849).

painting, the dominant form of academic painting. From the Renaissance until the middle of the 19th century history painting was universally accepted as the noblest form of visual art,[2] the aim of which was "the imaginative expression of important intellectual ideas or great human passions and emotions through subjects drawn from either classical history, classical mythology or the Bible" (Wilson 1979, 24). The Hungarian version of this genre was in full flower in the second half of the 19th century. The 19th century golden age of Hungarian art history came into being from tragic depths, as an opposition to the absolutist terror following the defeat of the 1848 Revolution, with a voice frequently reminiscent of a cry for help (Végvári 1971, 3). The historical paintings of this period were "conceived as elaborate symbols and allegories, the central motif being always the death of a hero or heroine who had fought and perished or a victim who had been unjustly executed" (Szabó 1985, 28).

Looking back on the Past: Cultural Memories on the Canvas

The inherent role of national remembrance in the form of stories is to preserve the identity of an interpretive community, in this case the identity of the Hungarian nation during the era of absolutist terror. From an anthropological viewpoint, an interpretive community's narrativity, fictionality, self-reflectivity and self-representation constitute its identity. Clifford Geertz defines culture as man-made and conventional symbol systems providing "human beings with a meaningful framework for orienting themselves to one another, to the world around them, and to themselves" (Geertz 1973, 250); in other words, "the ensemble of stories we tell ourselves about ourselves" (*ibid.*, 452). Maurice Halbwachs, Aby Warburg, Pierre Nora and Jan Assmann have characterized cultural memory as the effort to preserve the identity of historically, politically and socially marginalized communities or nations (such as the Jewry of Europe, Native Americans in the United States or Hungarians under the Habsburg regime) in the face of threats to their existence through the ability to interpret, adapt to and resist hegemonic cultures. Accordingly, the more acute the crisis, the greater one's connection to cultural memory and to past generations (Rodriguez and Fortier 2007, xii).

As the members of a community remembers their past, they do not objectively observe history, but embrace it and build it into their identity as historical or political symbolical values. According to Szőnyi, in order to comprehend this process of symbolisation it is extremely important to

2 ■ The others in descending order were: portrait; genre (scenes of everyday life), landscape, and still life ("History Painting" 2012).

understand the motives underlying the creation of an image, motives which must be conveyed to non-Hungarians if they are to share in the cultural memory of the interpretive community (Szőnyi 1999, 102). Szőnyi has defined five symbolic values operative in Hungarian history and each associated with a particular period: King Stephen and modernisation, King Matthias and national success, Hungary as the shield of Christianity, wars of independence and internal fights, and the difference between the urban and the rural. Each of these themes has become a constituent of Hungarian national consciousness (Szőnyi 2006, 178-180).

The interdisciplinarity of cultural memory involves not only textual but also pictorial traditions. However, according to Mieke Bal, pictorial narrative can become a secret code, because "the law before which the telling of forbidden stories will be punished is largely verbal, as is the practice of jurisdiction. Pictorial narrative, in such circumstances, is a counterdiscourse" (Bal 2004, 1290). Although in Hungary from the 1850s to the 1870s literature played a role in the fight for national freedom and the development of the middle class, due to germanisation and military surveillance in the Bach regime, the official use of Hungarian was restricted, while the interpretation of images did not require the knowledge of a given language. The main themes of National Romanticism, the instructive events of Hungarian history, could be best evoked through the medium of painting (Végvári 1971, 4).

The history paintings of Bertalan Székely, Viktor Madarász, Gyula Benczúr and Sándor Wagner, which are among the most well-known works of art by the most prominent 19th century Hungarian painters, served as a means with which to remember and moreover recreate Hungary's alleged past glory, despite Austrian censorship. Hungarian history paintings were often made with the declared aim of influencing members of the public by appealing to their emotions. The ideas of 1848 lived on in the fine arts, for instance in the choice of theme and the representation of the national coat of arms or other emblems (Dercsényi 1980, 325). After 1848-49 overtly political art at first was "destroyed, statues and graphic leafters were burned, thinkers and artists had to emigrate or were imprisoned" (Szabó 1985, 22), but gradually censorship became less and less strict. As a result, painters were soon given commissions for portraits, even by the Habsburg royal family itself, genre-paintings and religious compositions (Dercsényi 1980, 325). At the same time, even if this kind of censorship meant that Hungarian culture was "compelled to develop methods of encoding politically delicate messages" (Kontler 1999, 266), sometimes the meanings of the works of literature and the visual arts were hardly concealed, for instance in the case of Mór Jókai's (1825-1904) historical novels, the poetry of Mihály

Vörösmarty (1800-1855) or János Arany (1817-1882), and, of course, the historical paintings of Madarász, Székely and Benczúr (*ibid.*).

Kings, the Nobility and the Common People: Reflections on National Heritage

There are several interpretations regarding the intended meanings of 19th Hungarian paintings. From another point of view, the message of an image, according to Mitchell, is the claim it makes on us, the viewers, and how we respond (Mitchell 2005, xv). Scholars such as Dezső Dercsényi have argued that these paintings represent, in addition to the Romantic appeal to the glory of the past and a critique of contemporary society, secret, silent resistance (Dercsényi 1980, 325), which was led by Ferenc Deák (1803-1876), whose name became a "byword for Hungarians as a symbol of their passive resistance" (Deák 2003, 29). Lajos Végvári contends that these artworks gave examples of heroism and noble self-sacrifice (Végvári 1971, 4). The essence of these paintings is also said to have been an analysis of the causes of the failure of 1848 Revolution. Not surprisingly, Hungarian public opinion and society lived through the failure of the Revolution as an enormous disappointment. People had believed that a just cause, the struggle of a nation for what were seen as natural and God-given rights, would always prevail (Katona 2009, 10). A typical Romantic explanation of the causes of this failure was that God was punishing the Hungarians for being divided and treacherous, and engaging in internal fights instead of concentrating on external enemies. This emotional attitude was embodied in the text of Hungary's national anthem, a poem by Ferenc Kölcsey (1790-1838).

One of the tendencies of National Romanticism, in its attempts both to glorify the past and forge national unity, was to cast rulers of the past as repositories of the fate of the country. The virtues and strengths of a king were seen as sources of harmony, while weakness and transgression put his people in danger (Pál-Újvári 2001, 275). Regarding the role of images in this tendency, Nicholas Mirzoeff says

> in order to compensate for the weaknesses of individual kings, political theorists developed the notion that the king had two bodies. One was his personal frame, (...). The other was a mystical notion of the king who never dies, held to be eternal and beyond the reach of mortal weakness and failings (Mirzoeff 1995, 59).

Moreover, "in its denial of the natural body, the Body politic became entirely dependent upon visual representations" (*ibid.*, 60). Two images representing two Hungarian kings as the embodiments of their nation spring immediately to mind in this context. One is Gyula Benczúr's paint-

ing, *The Baptism of Vajk*, from 1875 (fig. 1), which represents the confrontation between heathen Hungarians and Christian missionaries. The other is Bertalan Székely's 1860 painting, *The Discovery of the Corpse of King Louis II* (fig. 2), representing the moment when the young king's body was lifted from the water, accompanied by the spontaneous tribute by men of all ranks. Important historical and national symbolical values are connected to Stephen I (cc. 967-1038) and his successor Louis II (1506-26). The former gave Hungary its Western orientation, its Christian church, and its state organisation. Among Hungarian political symbols, Stephen I possesses an extremely significant status: he stands for modernisation and compromise, for the foundation of the Hungarian state depended on the reconciliation of a strong sense of eastern origins and a wish to be identified with the West in order to survive (Szönyi 2006, 178). The death of Louis II, together with the loss of the battle of Mohács in 1526, was a mortal blow to the Kingdom of Hungary. Its territory became the battlefield of two empires, the Habsburg and the Ottoman, for over 150 years. The memory of Mohács belongs to the theme of the Turkish Occupation in Szönyi's categorisation of ideologically charged historical symbolism (*ibid.*, 179).

In delving into Hungarian history, one can often have the impression that the greed and narrow self-interests of the Hungarian barons and nobility caused serious domestic strife, both for the monarchs and the common people, but also to the country itself because of their reluctance to prevent foreign invasions. Consequently, every significant king, such as Charles Robert of Anjou (1288-1342), was forced to confront and restrain the Hungarian barons and nobility first before realizing their long-term ambitions, which could be beneficial for Hungary. According to the report of Charles V's ambassador to Hungary,

> everyone is seeking his own profit and, if he can, lives on the fat of public property. (...) Though they feast together as if they were all brothers, surreptitiously they fight each other. (...) They are haughty and proud, unable to command and to obey but unwilling to accept advice. They work little as they spend their time with feasting and intrigues (Sinor 1959, 144 in Cartledge 2006, 75).

Not surprisingly, one of the primary aims of the April Laws of the 1848 Revolution was to further civil democratic development and transform Hungary from a feudal state into a parliamentary one.

However, in the true sense of the word there had always been a few outstanding noblemen who did their best to fight for the survival of the Hungarian nation and state, sometimes at the cost of their personal wealth and even their lives. There are two families prominent members of which were sacrificed in internal political fights and who came to pos-

sess symbolic importance for Hungarians: the Hunyadi family and the Zrínyi family. Gyula Benczúr's 1866 painting, *László Hunyadi's Farewell* (fig. 3), depicts the Hungarian nobleman before his execution. The theme belongs to the Hunyadi mythology, and has folkloric overtones: János, the father as the symbol of lost struggle against the Turks; his elder son László, the victim of the feudal fractional struggles that divided the country and led to its defeat and the subsequent Turkish invasion; and the younger son, Matthias, who was not only the last Hungarian ruler to lead victorious wars, but also as a Renaissance king in medieval Hungary embodied the recurring problem of isolation or integration, modernisation or tradition (Szőnyi 2006, 178-9). Viktor Madarász's 1864 picture, entitled *Péter Zrínyi and Kristóf Frangepán in Prison in Wiener-Neustadt* (fig. 4), expresses the well-known theme of how the divided Hungarian nation is doomed to fail (*ibid.*, 179).

At the time of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution, through the ideological incorporation of every layer of society into the concept of Hungarian nation (for the very first time), the modern Hungarian nation was born. The status of the Hungarian peasantry, which had been granted virtually no political rights until 1848 (Cartledge 2006, 74), had held the development of Hungarian society in check for centuries. At this time in the Western countries the gradual fall of serfdom constituted the basis for later national embourgeoisement. Parallel with the emancipation of serfs, attention turned to the poorest layers of society, and this in turn led to the discovery and appreciation of folklore by both compatriots and foreigners.

The victories in two of the most important battles in Hungarian history, Belgrade and Eger, depended on the self-sacrificial struggle of the common people against the Ottoman forces (which were vastly superior in number), without the help of either the royal or the baronial armies. Their courage and self-sacrifice became topics in the arts as they were given the status of the "pillar of the nation." Sándor Wagner's *The heroic death of Titusz Dugovics* from 1859 (fig. 5) appeals to the virtues of patriotism and heroism, a call that was especially important during the years of absolutist rule following the defeat of the Revolution (Dercsényi-Zádor 1980, 344). Although Hunyadi's victories secured eighty years of unity and independence for Hungary, they also "confirmed Hungary's status as the leading defender of Western Christendom" (Cartledge 2006, 56). This explains the popularity of a special national Hungarian myth according to which the country served as the shield of Western Christianity against pagan conquerors, a metaphor that derives its pathos from the 150-year period Turkish occupation (Szőnyi 2006, 179). This myth also gives evocative significance to Székely's monumental painting, *The Women of Eger*, painted in 1867 (fig. 6). The painting foregrounds the role of women

in the struggle, who took part in the fight to defend the city. The battle of Eger was the first siege in which the Turkish forces were defeated in Hungary, and it became a symbol of the undying spirit of the Hungarian nation (Tóth 2005, 194).

The Political and the Religious Power of Artwork

With regard to the political power of images, Mitchell notes that

> Power is not something one 'has' but a relationship one enjoys or suffers. If we want to understand the power of pictures, we need to look at their internal relations of domination and resistance, as well as their external relations with spectators and with the world [my emphasis] (*Mitchel 1994,* 324).

The way in which a visual message influences the behaviour of the target audience can determine the strength of its power. Moreover, considering the fact the artist was looked on as a prophet in Romanticism, he or she also bore great responsibility regarding what was to be preserved and passed on to the next generations of a given community. Taking the form of a pledge, warrant or promise, a representation of how things are or will be, the responsibility of the artist is representation, and vice versa (Mitchell 1994, 421). Consequently, the way the artist and the audience treat an image determines its fate, even its existence. Therefore, a distinction is necessarily made between the secular political power (on the basis of Mitchell's theory) and the religious power or aura (on the basis of Hans Belting's research) of the images under discussion here.

The responses of the Austrian authorities to 19th century Hungarian history painting depended on the content of the pictures. Mitchell's argument regarding the production of "political horrors" and the production of "truth, beauty, and excellence" all converging on the questions of representation (Mitchell 1994, 3) is obviously valid in this case. For instance, in one version of Székely's painting of the execution of Péter Zrinyi and Ferenc Frangepán, the Austrian Coat of Arms, a two-headed eagle, can be seen in the background on a window. Although the censors did not permit this version to be exhibited at the time in Hungary, the audience nonetheless had no doubt about the anti-Habsburg meaning of the image (Szabó 1985, 32). Whether and with what degree of severity the Austrian regime censored a history painting depended on the attentiveness of the artist in the representation of obvious signs, such as coats of arms, or conventional or distinctive representations of the human body.

The representation of the human body is one embodiment of the political meanings of images. According to Mirzoeff, in a representation the body appears not as itself, but as a sign representing both itself

Gyula Benczúr, *The Baptism of Vajk* (1875)
Oil on canvas, 358×247 cm. Budapest, Hungarian National Gallery

Bertalan Székely, *The Discovery of the Corpse of King Louis II* (1860)
Oil on canvas, 140×184 cm. Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest

Bertalan Székely,
The Women of Eger (1867)
Oil on canvas,
227×176.5 cm.
Hungarian National Gallery,
Budapest

Gyula Benczúr, *László Hunyadi's Farewell* (1866)
Oil on canvas, 146×120 cm. Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest

Viktor Madarász, *Péter Zrínyi and Kristóf Frangepán in Prison in Wiener-Neustadt* (1864)
Oil on canvas, 177×237 cm. Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest

Sándor Wagner, *The heroic death of Titusz Dugovics* (1859)
Oil on canvas, 168.5×147 cm. Budapest, Hungarian National Gallery

and a range of metaphorical meanings which "the artist cannot fully control, but [which he or she] only seeks to limit by the use of context, framing and style" (Mirzoeff 1995, 3). He calls this complex of signs the bodyscape. Although Western art has sought one perfect method of representing the human body in order to overcome the weaknesses of the physical body, this effort resulted in failure. To deny this failure of representation, he explains, "Western visual culture has evolved several icons to represent the perfect body, whether spiritual or political, which can only be known as visual representation" (*ibid.*). One could consider, for instance, the manner in which the body of Louis II is idealised: an aristocratic young man without scars or bruises in a bright, clean, white royal costume, instead of a rotting corpse in muddy armour, feasted on by worms, flies, crows and other scavengers.

Concerning the question as to whether 19th century religious issues had any influence on the content of these artworks, the answer seems to be no, but only at first sight. Taking the political side of the religious situation in 19th century Hungary into account,

> there was a significant Hungarian artistic heritage (monuments, statues, pictures) mainly in those parts of the country which were Catholic by religion and thus belonged to the 'culture of the senses;' but there were also large territories which, having been protestant for centuries, belonged to the 'culture of the word,' and thus lacked a flourishing tradition of cultivating the visual arts (Sármány-Parsons 2005, 71).

However, the argument for Church unity on nationalistic, linguistic, aesthetic or historical rather than theological grounds was an obvious sign of secularization (Kósa 2000, 95), and "the Protestant sense of identity acquired an extra dimension in viewing itself as the historical representative of national independence and social progress" (*ibid.*). Although religiosity came to be seen as identical to morality, the widespread awareness of this process only took root in public opinion after the failure of the 1848 Revolution. Accordingly, during the ensuing period of absolutist rule, civil disobedience became a virtue, indeed a patriotic deed (*ibid.*, 96).

In fact, some historical characters of Hungary can be said to possess the religious significance of saints. Hans Belting argues that historical persons can fulfil the pre-existing ideal of a saint (Belting 1996, 13). However, "if the person of the saint did not fit the traditional patterns, there was a need to formulate the ideal that the person did embody" (*ibid.*). A few medieval Hungarian kings, such as Saint Steven (c. 969-1038) and his son, Saint Emeric (c. 1000-1031), offer outstanding examples, even though their canonisation in 1083 was more the result of the

political acumen of Andrew I (1046–1060) and Ladislas I (1040-1095), who were keen to consolidate the prestige of the dynasty, than the actual saintly qualities of the two kings (Cartledge 2006, 17). As saints they have been considered not only ethical models, but also heavenly authorities whose aid has been sought to address earthly needs.

Reoccurring Christian scenes can be identified with the historical scenes in these paintings. At the centre of Székely's composition Louis II appears as a saint resisting the natural laws of decay, and as Júlia Szabó has noted, the mourners paying their last respects are arranged in groups and depicted in poses resembling the people mourning Christ in Pietà compositions (Szabó 1985, 27). Regarding the painting by Madarász, a depiction of a frightened youth (Ferenc Frangepán) and a more resolute man (Péter Zrínyi) exchanging ideas in a long dialogue before their deaths, she contends that the precursor from religious painting was the parting of Saint Peter and Saint Paul before their martyrdom (*ibid.*, 212), which was a favourite subject among painters of the early 19th century.

Spectatorship, Demonstrativeness and the Location of a Work of Art

Whatever message a painting may have, it can only achieve its goal if it can be viewed by its target audience. The place where images can be seen is one of the conditions of their power, which is defined as the public sphere: "an openly visible place or stage in which everything may be revealed, everyone may see and be seen, and in which everyone may speak and be heard" (Mitchell 1994, 364).

Were 19th century Hungarian history paintings created to be public works of art? Looking at the messages of these images, the answer is a definite yes. Not only because the carefully chosen themes appealed to a large public, but also because "the more complex the political, social message, the greater was the attempt of theatrical gestures, and the more heterogeneous the character" (Szabó 1985, 61). Mitchell claims both that "art that enters the public sphere is liable to be received as a provocation to or an act of violence" (Mitchell 1994, 372) and violence may in some sense be encoded in the concept and practice of public art (*ibid.*, 381). These notions are valid for the images of László Hunyadi, Zrinyi and Frangepán, which can be interpreted as hidden representations of violence. Moreover, if Mitchell is correct in his contention that the importance of critical public art lies in its capacity "to awaken a public sphere of resistance, struggle, and dialogue" (*ibid.*, 395), then it makes sense to state that both the pictures about Titusz Dugovics and the women of Eger by Wagner and Székely respectively were intended to kindle new passions in the people of the Hungarian nation.

Regarding the actual location of these paintings, they include museums and art exhibitions, and more rarely private collections. Painting in Hungary became a very significant branch of the fine arts in part because "from 1830 onwards more and more exhibitions were organised, and more and more paintings were bought for public buildings and private homes, and also acquired for the newly established museums" (Szabó 1985, 62). Since the mid-19th century, various large public exhibitions called world fairs or Universal Expositions in Western Europe were essential conditions for the publicity of both the painters and the paintings themselves, as well as a good opportunity for Hungarian painters to gain international fame, especially at the turn of the century (Révész 2012).[3] In connection with museums, Charles R. Garoian has characterized the relationship between the museum and its visitors as a dialogic process that enables a play between the public narratives of the museum and the private narratives of the viewers (Garoian 2001, 234), by which the institution becomes an integral part of community life (*ibid.*, 238). In addition, following the 1867 Compromise, the political leadership tried to encourage art institutions and the national collections to "fulfil their dream of 'catching up' with the more advanced West-European 'cultural nations'" (Sármány-Parsons 2005, 72).

What were the intended target audiences of 19th century Hungarian history painting, and who has in fact seen these works of art? In all likelihood, these pictures have been observed more or less by defined social classes: the intellectual stratum of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, who "acquired affluence relatively suddenly" (Szegedy-Maszák 2000, 130). Therefore, history painting falls into the category of high (elite or dominant) art as distinct from the products of popular (folk or mass) art, which could be seen by anyone. This hierarchy of culture within European nations was created during the course of the second half of the 19th century (Lury 1996, 57). It is not surprising that today each of the paintings mentioned here can be found in the Hungarian National Gallery in Budapest, the most significant Hungarian art gallery.

3 ■ The first Expo was held in London in 1851 under the title Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, and the first international exhibition to give connoisseurs a cross-section of contemporary European fine art was the 'Exposition Universelle des produits de l'Agriculture, de l'Industrie et des Beaux-Arts' [World Exhibition of the Products of Agriculture, Industry and Fine Arts] held in Paris in 1855 (Németh 1975, 10).

Conclusion

After the defeat of the 1848 Revolution, the general resistance of the Hungarian nation against the absolutist rule of the Austrian authorities was embodied in the revivification and reinforcement of their national identity and consciousness through a return to national roots and heritage. This process of turning to cultural memory also included desperate struggles to preserve the ideas of 1848. Despite the (gradually milder) Austrian restrictions on self-expression, the national-political symbolism of historical events and characters gave 19th century Hungarian history painting a subversive power. The mutual interaction between image and audience was characterised by the politics of patriotism and opposition to Habsburg rule. It was supported by a strong religious ideology, namely the reconciliation of Catholic iconophilia, the love of images (represented by the attribution of saintly characteristics to historical figures and secular compositions that bore significant resemblances to Biblical compositions), with the belief in Protestantism as the denomination that stood for national independence.

While the politically dangerous nature of these paintings varied according to their content, date of composition, and site of appearance, for the Habsburg regime they did not meet with the same disapproval as contemporary political literary texts. Several 19th century Hungarian history paintings were considered mere ornaments, but they won high praise for their aesthetic and artistic value, which in turn enabled a few of these images to call international attention to Hungary's fate at museums and world expositions.

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Nóra Terján

Painters of Light: The Birth of Art Photography

From Pictorialism to Modern Photography, 1889-1929
The Budapest Museum of Fine Arts

After the highly successful exhibitions *Soul and Body (Lélek és test)* and *Lucien Hervé* 100, the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest welcomed the spring of 2012 by again providing space for photographic art. One of its intermittent shows, entitled *The Birth of Art Photography—From Pictorialism to Modern Photography, 1889-1929,* offers more than 200 images, beginning with a highly influential publication in 1889 and concluding with the 1929 exhibition Film and Photo, illustrating the changes that took place over the course of the four decades between the birth of pictorialist photographic art and its modern incarnation. The exhibition has come together with the assistance of more than ten cooperating institutions, including the Musée d'Orsay, the Pompidou Centre in Paris, MOMA and the George Eastman House in New York, the Ludwig Museum in Cologne, the Albertina in Vienna, and the Museum of Hungarian Photography in Kecskemét. It features works by Austrian, German, French, British and American photographers and artists, such as Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Steichen and Man Ray, but also a wide array of outstanding Hungarian photographers and artists of the era, such as André Kertész, László Moholy-Nagy, József Pécsi, István Kerny and Rudolf Balogh. The diverse assemblage of works offers viewers the opportunity to trace early stages in the growth of photography as it developed into a distinctive, mature branch of the visual arts.

Pictorialism emerged in the 1890s in Austria, Britain, France and Germany almost simultaneously. Those who adopted the trend strove not just to create an accurate representation of reality, but to capture it artistically. They aspired to produce artistic effects similar to those of painters. In the spirit of Impressionist painting, photographers created images using soft-focus objectives and what some called "ennobling" processes. The common feature of the latter was that by exchanging the image-forming silver for some other medium (e.g. bromoil transfer or processes using gum dichromate), they enhanced the painterly effect. The photographers also linked themselves to painting with regards to the subjects of their creations: nudes, still lifes, landscapes and townscapes. The "combination printing" tech-

niques of English-based Swede Oscar Gustave Rejlander and Englishman Henry Peach Robinson combined individual elements from multiple negatives, carefully fitted onto one another to form a single, new image. The result was a surface that permitted the texture of the carrier to be seen in a manner resembling the softest strokes of brushwork. The first International Exhibition of Photography was held by the Club der Amateur-Photographen in Vienna in 1891. The following year a group of photographers in London became associated as The Brotherhood of the Linked Ring. In France Constant Puyo and Robert Demachy were among those at the vanguard of a new style, while in Germany Alfred Lichtwark, the director of the Kunsthalle Hamburg, embraced the new artistic initiative, the major merit of which was that it raised photography to the status of art and got both the general public and critics of the age to accept it, a powerful influence which lasted until the 1930s.

The exhibition offers visitors the chance to view the development of various styles in chronological order and in juxtaposition with one another. Thus, photographs by Puyo and Demachy, for example, which have a lyrical tone, were placed opposite the industrial themes of Alfred Horsely Hinton's pictures. Hinton, a member of the Linked Ring, was a recognized landscape photographer who became fascinated with industrialisation, which at the time was rarely a subject of photography. Wilhelm von Gloeden, a German who worked mainly in Italy, took open-air portraits of young Sicilian boys, males nudes that at the time were considered pornographic.

The tendency on the part of photographers to emulate the genre of painting proved both an advantage and a drawback. Photographers failed to exploit the possibilities offered by the documentary nature of photos. Turning the focus away from the pictorial style, photographers began using their pictures as a means of representing the realities of ordinary everyday life, even pictures that could only be produced with the devices of photography. The turning-point came with Alfred Stieglitz's 1907 *The Steerage*, a shot of lower class passengers on the bow of a ship. From then on photographs begin to look like photographs. In the early 1920s Stieglitz moved towards working in what was called "straight photography," a style which had first emerged in 1910 in North America and used the camera as a unique medium for capturing reality. Alongside Stieglitz, photographers like Edward Steichen, Paul Strand, and later Edward Weston created a pure, objective pictorial language.

Meanwhile, following the First World War, a style evolved known as Neue Sachlichkeit ("New Objectivity"), which was set up in opposition to Expressionism, the reigning artistic school at the time. Its representatives strove for objectivity. Karl Blossveldt, for instance, created an entirely new genre with close-ups of plants and living things. The style soon became associated with the Bauhaus school of art, which operated in Weimar in Germany from 1919 to 1933. The Hungarian László Moholy-Nagy introduced the concept of the "New

Vision" in 1925, becoming one of its leading proponents. This represented a departure from the pictorial manner of looking at things, as one can see in the pictures of the Austrian Heinrich Kühn, who used a combination of a gum bichromate technique and photogravure to yield plays of light and shade and a purely photographic manner of depiction. Some of Man Ray's photos were instrumental in bringing surrealism into the art of photography.

The period from 1889 to 1929 constitutes a revolutionary era from the perspective of both artistic and social changes. Each of the major historical and cultural events of those 40 years has found a place in the exhibition, offering the layman a kind of overview of the development of photography from its birth into an independent branch of the visual arts. By the 1920s photography already constituted something of a separate branch of industry with its own range of genres, such as photomontage, collage and the photogram, sometimes also referred to as camera-less photography by the most distinguished practitioners, like Moholy-Nagy and Mann Ray with his rayographs.

Representation of the human body was one of the subjects of visual depictions that was reinterpreted during the First World War. Pictorialism had never been prepared to show anything other than the beauty of the female body, but now there was a growing interest in more realistic approaches to the human form. There was a proliferation of photographs depicting members of the lower strata of society, for instance André Kertész's *The Blind Musician* (1921). The art of movement, as typified by dance, also became an increasingly popular subject. József Pécsi, for example, built up an extensive collection of photographs of Flóra Korb, one of the famous Hungarian dancers of the era. The influence of realism, the war and growing industrialisation, however, drew artists' attention to the beauty that could be perceived in machines: the Bauhaus style came fully into its element, as did the use of modes of representation that went beyond narrow definitions of composition, with a new dominance of light, shade, space, mass, and drawing. This is palpable in the photoplastics (or photosculptures) of Moholy-Nagy, which were part of the exhibition.

In the first half of the last century a series of exhibitions met with considerable success in taking on the subject of the New Vision. The organizers of an event entitled *Film und Foto (Film and Photo)* in Stuttgart in 1929 encouraged amateurs to grab a camera and contribute to the making of works of art. The last room in the exhibition contains numerous photograms by André Kertész, Man Ray, Eugene Atget, Steichen and Moholy-Nagy, giving a glimpse of the encounter between photography and film and leaving the visitor to wonder, for instance, at the alternations of moving spirals ("rotoreliefs") and shots of text in Marcel Duchamp's Dadaist work *Anemic Cinema*. This short film is a further elaboration of the artist's earlier optical experiments and represents the end of a road that led from plein-air photography through seemingly haphazard compositions and plays of light and textures to the birth of a new and independent branch of art. ❧

Deborah Kiszely-Papp

Biography at its Best: Family Letters of Ernő Dohnányi

This comprehensive volume of personal letters by Ernő Dohnányi (1877-1960) represents a long-awaited, welcome contribution to the scholarship on an important composer and pianist whose long life and illustrious career are topics of potential interest beyond the musical community. Compiled and edited by Éva Kelemen, custodian of the extensive Dohnányi collection at the National Széchényi Library, Budapest,[1] it is the fruit of many years of painstaking work. Publication of the volume is the result of a cooperative effort by three institutions: the National Széchényi Library, Gondolat Kiadó publishing company, and the Institute for Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

In recent decades, Dohnányi's letters have been quoted with increasing frequency as researchers have sought first-hand information about his oeuvre, his multifaceted career, and the difficulties he faced as a musician whose life was gravely impacted by the Second World War.[2] Here, for the first time, 195 family of the approximately 1,500 total letters in the composer's bequest at the Széchényi Library are presented in

1 ■ The Ernő Dohnányi Estate in the National Széchényi Library, Budapest is the most extensive collection of autograph manuscripts, letters, and original documents relating to his life and work, including 18 bound volumes of autograph details of his concert career, thousands of concert programs and newspaper clippings gathered and annotated in many cases by family members, photographs, certificates and other identification documents, as well as personal memorabilia. See Kelemen Éva: "Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár Dohnányi-gyűjteménye", *Dohnányi Évkönyv 2002*, ed. Sz. Farkas Márta (Bp.: MTA Zenetudományi Intézet, 2002), 149-60.

Dohnányi Ernő családi levelei

[Ernő Dohnányi's family letters]. Compiled and edited by Éva Kelemen. [Budapest]: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, Gondolat Kiadó, MTA Zenetudományi Intézet, 2011; ISBN 978 963 200 594 2; 332 pp., hardbound; in Hungarian with English translation of the introduction and biographical timeline; contains brief summaries in English of the content of each letter; illustrated with facsimiles and autograph drawings; features a CD insert: "Dohnányi Ernő a zongoránál" [Ernő Dohnányi at the piano].

their entirety, with detailed annotations and identifying information added by the editor. For the remaining third of the volume's contents, Éva Kelemen went beyond the vast number of documents at her fingertips to include family letters from other important collections: 74 from the Library of the Institute for Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 17 from the Dohnányi Archives (IMHAS), 7 from the British Library, one from Florida State University, and a "mystery letter" the whereabouts of which remain unknown but part of which has been published in English.[3] Of the total 295 letters, 281 are by Dohnányi. The remaining 14, written to Dohnányi by family members (his father, sister, children, and one by his childhood teacher), have been included in an appendix for any of several reasons: their content relates directly to the composer's letters; they contain information of biographical relevance; and/or they serve to make up for the lack of letters by the composer from the years in question.

The incorporation of correspondence from diverse collections is indeed an asset because the geographically dispersed nature of Dohnányi's legacy has hitherto made it difficult to gain an overview of his life and work. The letters in this volume span nearly 7 decades—from 1887 to 1955—in two periods: age 10 to 40, and age 65 to nearly 82.[4] The more continuous chronological flow achieved by the inclusion of additional letters compensates somewhat for the inevitable gap caused by the hiatus of family correspondence during the period between the two World Wars. Moreover, the various letters are frequently interrelated, like pieces of a puzzle that have been assembled to form a whole. A clear example of this can be seen in Letters No. 111 and No. 112 from the British Library Collection and the Széchényi Library, respectively, the former being incomplete and the latter missing the heading and date. As the editor notes, the matching stationery and related content suggest that these are two halves of the same letter.

The chronological arrangement of this quantity of correspondence was no simple task, especially considering that, according to Kelemen, Dohnányi was often haphazard in his dating of

2 ■ Excerpts of Dohnányi's letters and selected entire letters have appeared in print in the biography by Bálint Vázsonyi, *Dohnányi Ernő* (Budapest: Zeneműkiadó, 1971, 2 Bp.: Nap Kiadó, 2002); numerous articles in the *Dohnányi Évkönyv* series, e.g. Szlabey Melinda: "A Szeher úti Dohnányi-hagyaték" [The Dohnányi Estate on Szeher Street], *Dohnányi Évkönyv 2002*, 137-48; Maria Eckhardt: "Briefe aus der Nachlass Ernst v. Dohnányis", *Studia Musicologica* IX/3-4 (1967), 407-20; a cross-section of letters in the N.Sz.L.B. Dohnányi Collection from his later years edited by Éva Kelemen in a four-part series: "Kedves Mici... Dohnányi Ernő kiadatlan leveleiből, 1944-1958", 1-4., *Muzsika* 45/8-11 (2002), 6-12, 20-25, 10-16; and several American and Hungarian dissertations and theses.

3 ■ Letter No. 32, pp. 58-59, Ernő Dohnányi to Frigyes Dohnányi, Budapest, February 10th, 1895. The portion published here in Hungarian appeared in the biography in English by Ilona von Dohnányi: *Ernst von Dohnányi: A Song of Life*, ed. James A. Grymes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 205.

4 ■ Not including letters 174-176, 3 postcards from 1922-23 written by Elsa Galafrès to Dohnányi's mother when the family was on summer vacation, and several letters from his children in the appendix.

family letters. The editor was aided in many cases by the careful dating and remarks later added by Dohnányi's sister Mária (Mici, or Miczi), the person to whom the composer wrote the great majority of the letters in the volume. Along with postmarks on envelopes, the content often served as a guide. This was best facilitated when the exchange of letters was available for research, as is the case with the late correspondence between Mária Dohnányi and Ilona von Dohnányi, the composer's third wife. Cross-referencing between concert programs, newspaper articles, and other documents was also necessary. Many of these details have been provided in the indices at the back of the book. Beginning with a brief overview of his immediate family, data from the letters is organized thus: a catalogue of sources; a list of Dohnányi's compositions mentioned; a chronological list of concerts cited; other compositions, books, and scores referred to; an index of names; and a geographical index. Although the sheer amount of data presented increases the chance of error, proportionately speaking the number of mistakes remains relatively small.[5]

The format chosen for the presentation of the letters is both creative and practical, with the 692 editorial notes appearing alongside the main text in smaller print, in close proximity to the place in the text to which they refer. These notes contain a wealth of information to assist the reader, including translations of portions of the text that were written in other languages, explanations of idioms and language not familiar to the modern reader, and brief biographical information about the people mentioned. Much of the latter in particular could not be found easily elsewhere, if at all. Reproduced within the letters are occasional autograph illustrations as they appear in the original document, such as diagrams of Dohnányi's room, segments of music that he wrote on hand-drawn staves, riddles, schedules, and a large church. One such drawing from the composer's earliest childhood letter published here also appears on the outer cover of the book, depicting an amusing figure perched atop the photograph of Dohnányi himself and creating a charmingly humorous effect. Facsimiles within the volume illustrate the composer's calligraphy as well as that of his father and his sister.

Perhaps one of the most problematic issues in the case of the post-World War II correspondence involved determining what actually constitutes a Dohnányi letter. Ilona von Dohnányi was a prolific letter writer who eventually assumed responsibility for the great majority of the family correspondence, but her sentimental and ebullient style was in stark contrast with that of the composer. Thus, the editor's choice to include here only letters in which Dohnányi made corrections and/or wrote a portion of the text himself was a sound one. Similarly, correspondence between Dohnányi and his spouses was not included. Fortunately for the reader, Dohnányi's rela-

5 ■ E. g. the birthdate of Mátyás Dohnányi should be 1917 (p. 289); if step-grandchildren are included in the family outline, the names of Seán Ernst McGlynn's four siblings should also be listed (p. 289).

tionship with his sister was a pillar of stability which spanned his entire life – including three wives, two world wars, and long periods of geographical separation – and forms a unifying thread throughout this volume. His letters to her are candid and unencumbered, characterized by shared interests and a deep sense of trust, and thus offer the best insight into his personality.

The majority of editorial decisions in this volume serve to convey the essence of the original documents as accurately as possible. The literal reproduction of the text preserves idiomatic expressions, mixed-language spellings, and foreign words that were clearly part of the family's habitual communication or reflected the momentary geographical situation and/or the nationality of the current wife. On the other hand, the frequent use of certain editorial symbols, particularly in the childhood letters, tends to clutter the text. For example, the inclusion of crossed-out letters or parts of words marked with < > seems unnecessary. The use of [!] to indicate obvious misspellings, e.g. the inadvertent switching of two letters, while far preferable to the dreaded [sic], has not been used consistently enough. The plethora of idiosyncratic spellings and plain errors in the composer's juvenile writing makes this a virtually impossible undertaking, and it is not clear that attempting to do this serves any useful purpose. The word "batya", "bátya", "báttya", "batyá", "báty", and "bátyja" (older brother) all appear as signatures in Dohnányi's youthful letters to his sister. While presumably the last version is the correct one, some of the other variants are followed by the editor's symbol [!] and others are not. It would have made the texts more readable had the editor simply uniformly corrected the simple misspellings and at least supplied the missing diacritics. (A similar problem has been encountered in Dohnányi's juvenile compositions with misspelled musical terminology: should the editor correct the obvious spelling errors, or in certain cases simply provide the correct spelling in parentheses?)

The English translations of the letters are basically clear and concise, and non-Hungarian-speaking readers can glean much useful information from the entries. However, several errors should be corrected in a second edition. In the first letter of the appendix (p. 267), it is Karl (Károly) Forstner, Dohnányi's childhood teacher, who is sending his affectionate birthday greetings to his former student, and not vice versa. In Letter No. 37 (p. 62), the text should read: "He is likely to receive the scholarships he has applied for." The proper English translation for the word *erdélyi* is "Transylvanian" rather than the German term, *Szekler* (p. 276, Letter No. 8). A more disturbing problem results from confusion between the actual dedications of Dohnányi's compositions and his characteristic practice of giving autograph manuscripts as mementos to those with whom he was close many years later. Several of the dedications listed in the index beginning on p. 299 are incorrect, as are some of the dates and other details: the Op. 32b *Ruralia hungarica*, composed for orchestra in 1924, could not have been dedicated

to Ilona Zachár (later Ilona von Dohnányi), who only met Dohnányi many years later. (The Op 32a *Ruralia hungarica* for piano also dates from 1924.) The dedications listed here to Dr. János Bókay of two operas by Dohnányi, *A vajda tornya* [Iva's Tower] (Op. 30) and *A tenor* [The Tenor] (Op. 34) also fall into the category mentioned above: gifts given later, designated by a handwritten note on the manuscript. Neither of these operas has dedications, nor do any of his stage works. In the case of the Op. 30, the confusion is due to an autograph manuscript in the Bókay Estate that bears the following note at the end: "Bókay János professzor úrnak hálája és szeretete jeléül, Dohnányi Ernő Bp. 1919 ápr. 19" [To Prof. János Bókay as a token of my gratitude and affection, E. D.]. The single bifolio contains excerpts and earlier versions of two arias from the opera, and Dohnányi may have written it specifically as a gift for his friend. Dr. Bókay was also given the autograph manuscripts of the Op. 11 and the Op. 14 well after these works were composed, the published versions of which both bear formal dedications to other people.[6]

The complexity of Dohnányi's personal life and public profile caused him to be the subject of misunderstanding, and biographies about him have been problematic for various reasons. Bálint Vázsonyi wrote his monograph on Dohnányi with a mission to clear his beloved professor's name of the false accusations that had compromised his reputation, and in so doing placed him on a pedestal.[7] The books written by Dohnányi's second and third wives are colorful narratives, but are nevertheless limited by their individual perspectives.[8] His own words to those in his close-knit family of origin[9] – and particularly to his sister Mária – offer a more realistic view of him in his everyday human relationships. The most frequent topics include financial details, travel plans, news about various people, and descriptions of places. In particular the youthful letters contain frequent musical references, including plans for and descriptions of concerts as well as information about compositions in progress. These accounts are often rich in historic details, for example one in which the composer gives an eyewitness report to his father of the concert scene in America at the time.[10] As time passes, the letters assume a more serious tone as he relates the dilemmas surrounding his decision to divorce his first wife, Elza Kunwald, and legal battles with Bronislaw Huberman, the first husband of Elsa Galafrès, who became Dohnányi's second wife. The

6 ■ The Op. 11 *Vier Rhapsodien for solo piano* (1903-04) was dedicated to Dohnányi's piano professor, István (Stephan) Thomán. The Op. 14 song cycle, *Sechs Gedichte von Victor Heindl* bears a dedication to the poet. See also Deborah Kiszely-Papp: *Ernő Dohnányi*. Hungarian Composers Vol. 17, series ed. Melinda Berlász (Bp.: Mágus Publishing, 2001), pp. 27-34 for a catalogue of Dohnányi's compositions.

7 ■ See fn. 2

8 ■ In addition to the biography by Ilona von Dohnányi cited in fn. 3, see also Elsa Galafrès: *Lives, Loves, Losses* (Vancouver: Versatile Publishing Co., 1973)

9 ■ See the family photograph on p. 288.

10 ■ Letter No. 110, pp. 117-18, E. D. to Frigyes Dohnányi, New York, March 18th, 1901.

demoralizing effects of the outbreak of war and the unavoidable reality of conscription are also candidly discussed. His attitude toward the struggles he faced was pragmatic at times, perhaps necessarily. "Now it's become clear just how much we [artists] are luxury commodities. Humanity has greater need for cobblers than for us. And if I didn't feel that with my compositions I can perhaps contribute something to humanity, I would trade the miserable piano-playing [career] for a more honorable profession."[11]

Dohnányi composed indefatigably amidst these problems, and occasionally he described the compositional process to his sister, especially when he encountered an obstacle. This apparently only occurred with large-scale compositions. Works that are mentioned or discussed in greater detail in the letters include the opera, *A vajda tornya* (1915-22), *Variations on a Nursery Song* (Op. 25, 1913-14), the earlier *String Sextet* (1893-99), and the *Piano Concerto in e minor* (Op. 5, 1897-98).[12] On the other hand, compositions for solo piano rarely receive more than passing mention, if any. Other works are not discussed at length, but important details about them are brought to light. It is through a letter that the reader learns, for example, that Dohnányi had originally planned to dedicate the Op. 27 *Violin Concerto* to Bronislaw Huberman.[13] In a later letter, he confided to his sister his feelings about composing the complex polyphony of the *Stabat Mater* (Op. 46, 1952-53): "The *Stabat Mater* is realistically in six parts, all six of which are confined to the range of two octaves (g to g), which is not an easy task, but it brought me great joy because no one forced me to undertake something so complicated."[14]

Chronicled in detail in these letters is the much more grueling struggle Dohnányi faced when his relationship with Elsa Galafrès deteriorated. This marked the beginning of an agonizing period of personal loss for the composer. The material and moral losses that he suffered after fleeing his homeland amidst the havoc wreaked by the Second World War far beyond anything he had deemed possible. If "all is fair in love and war," as the saying goes, then Galafrès took this adage at face value, presumably selling Dohnányi's piano and disposing of portions of his library without consulting him. Meanwhile he had become a displaced person after the war, and des-

11 ■ "Most látszik csak, hogy mennyire luxustárgyak vagyunk. A czipészre nagyobb szüksége van az emberiségnek, mint reánk. S ha nem érezném, hogy kompoziczióimmal talán mégis valamit adhatok az emberiségnek, a nyomorult zongorázást felcserélném tisztességesebb pályával." Letter No. 166, p. 152, E. D. to Mária Dohnányi, Berlin-Charlottenburg, September 28th, 1914.

12 ■ This does not include works that were discussed in detail through correspondence with others, e.g. publishers, librettists, and colleagues, such as the pantomime *Pierette's Veil* (Op. 18) and the comic opera, *The Tenor* (Op. 34).

13 ■ Letter No. 166, p. 152 (see fn. 11)

14 ■ "A *Stabat Mater* reálisan hat szólamú, mely hat szólam 2 oktáv keretében (*g*-től *g*-ig) van szorítva, ami nem könnyű feladat, de nekem óriási örömet okozott, hiszen senki sem kényszerített ilyen komplikált feladatra." Letter No. 266, p. 249, E. D. to Mária Dohnányi, Tallahassee, after January 16th, 1956.

perately sought a source of revenue to be able to pay for his divorce and thus finally settle his family circumstances, which prevented him from being able to remain in England. In addition to the deaths of both of his sons, he lost the love and admiration of his adopted son Hally (Johannes Huberman), who eventually turned his back on his stepfather after he realized that Dohnányi had left his mother. These words were written by Hally in a heartfelt letter in 1939, after fleeing Hungary as he prepared to leave Europe: "I can't describe this in words, but Atta [Hally's name for his stepfather] will understand anyway what a comfort it is to know that as an adult I can continue to fight for human values – for truth and honor for humanity and for personal integrity – with the person who guided me through youth and who was my ideal, even if Atta does this on a different continent than I."[15] Compare them with the portion of a letter from 1948 which Dohnányi copied out in a letter to his sister (p. 210), in which Hally stated that he had assumed possession of many of Dohnányi's books and scores and intended to keep them.[16]

One of the great ironies of the close relationship between Ernő and Mária Dohnányi was the fact that they never saw each other again, despite Ernő's determined attempts to make every arrangement necessary and to assume all financial responsibility: "With all my heart I hope that after these many years of separation you will be able to pay me the visit for which I long so much."[17] In one of Dohnányi's last letters he wrote: "Dear Mici, When someone is a bad letter-writer it is doubly painful if his letters are lost. Over the years many, or at least some of my letters – and long ones at that – never reached you. I hope you receive these."[18] Surely numerous further insights could be gained if any of the lost letters were to be found. Meanwhile, laying some minor proofreading problems aside, this volume of Dohnányi's family letters is the best "biography" of him available to date. Hopefully Éva Kelemen will continue to publish further volumes of the Dohnányi documents in the National Széchényi Library, including the letters by Mária Dohnányi and Dohnányi's professional correspondence. ❧

15 ■ "Nem tudom leírni, de Atta így is meg fogja érteni, milyen jó érzés ha azzal, aki ifjúságunkat irányította és annak ideálja volt, felnőtt korban ismét emberi ideálokért lehet küzdeni: – még akkor is, ha Atta más világrészben teszi, mint én: az igazságért, becsületért az emberiségért és az egyéniségért." Appendix, Letter No. 12, p. 280, Johannes Huberman to E. D., Zürich, February 22nd, 1939.

16 ■ Letter No. 228, p. 210, E. D. to Mária Dohnányi, Beaulieu sur Mer, after February 17th, 1948.

17 ■ Letter No. 270, p. 252, E. D. to M. D., Tallahassee, May 22nd, 1957, in English and Hungarian. This was an official, notarized letter of invitation sent to the Hungarian authorities.

18 ■ "Kedves Mici, ha valaki rossz levélíró duplán fájdalmas ha levelei elvesznek. Az évek során sok, legalábbis több levelem – még hozzá hosszúak – nem érkeztek Magához. Remélem ezeket megkapja." Letter No. 276, p. 259, E. D. to M. D., Tallahassee, July 30th- August 10th,1958.

Graham Avery

Art and Exile: the Work of Ervin Bossanyi

Review for Hungarian Quarterly
Jo Bossanyi, Sarah Brown (eds.) Ervin Bossanyi Vision, Art and Exile
Spire Books, Reading, 2008, 295 pp. 261 colour & 92 b/w illustrations

Ervin Bossanyi (1891-1975) was an artist who emigrated from Hungary to Germany in 1919 and then to England in 1934. He worked in various media, but it was with coloured glass ('stained glass') for windows that he made an international reputation, creating works that can be seen today in museums, churches and public buildings in Germany, England, America and South Africa.

He was born in 1891 in Regőce in southern Hungary (today Riđica in Serbia) to Jewish parents who moved to Baja and then to Budapest, where at the age of 14 he entered the Országos Magyar Királyi Iparművészeti Iskola (National Hungarian Royal School of Applied Arts). At this institution, which was housed in the Iparművészeti Múzeum (Museum of Applied Arts), the newly-constructed masterwork of architect Ödön Lechner (1845-1914), Bossanyi's fellow-students included the future artists Imre Szobotka (1890-1961) and Mihaly Biro (1886-1948); among the tutors was Géza Maróti (1875-1941) who was linked to the artistic colony at Gödöllő. Thanks to a travelling scholarship from the Ministry of Commerce, Bossanyi visited Italy, Paris and London, where he encountered new movements in European art such as Cubism, and arts of other continents. In Paris his friends included the sculptor József Csáky (1888-1971) and the Indian poet, writer and visionary Inayat Khan (1882-1927), founder of the Sufi movement in the West.

After being recalled to Budapest in 1911 to assist in preparations for the Hungarian pavilion for the International Exhibition in Turin, Bossanyi made his military service in 1912-13, but when war broke out in 1914 he was again in Paris, and with Imre Szobotka he was interned in Brittany as an enemy alien. Returning after the war to Hungary in 1919, full of enthusiasm, he was discouraged by the White Terror and the repression of the Horthy regime and—with the

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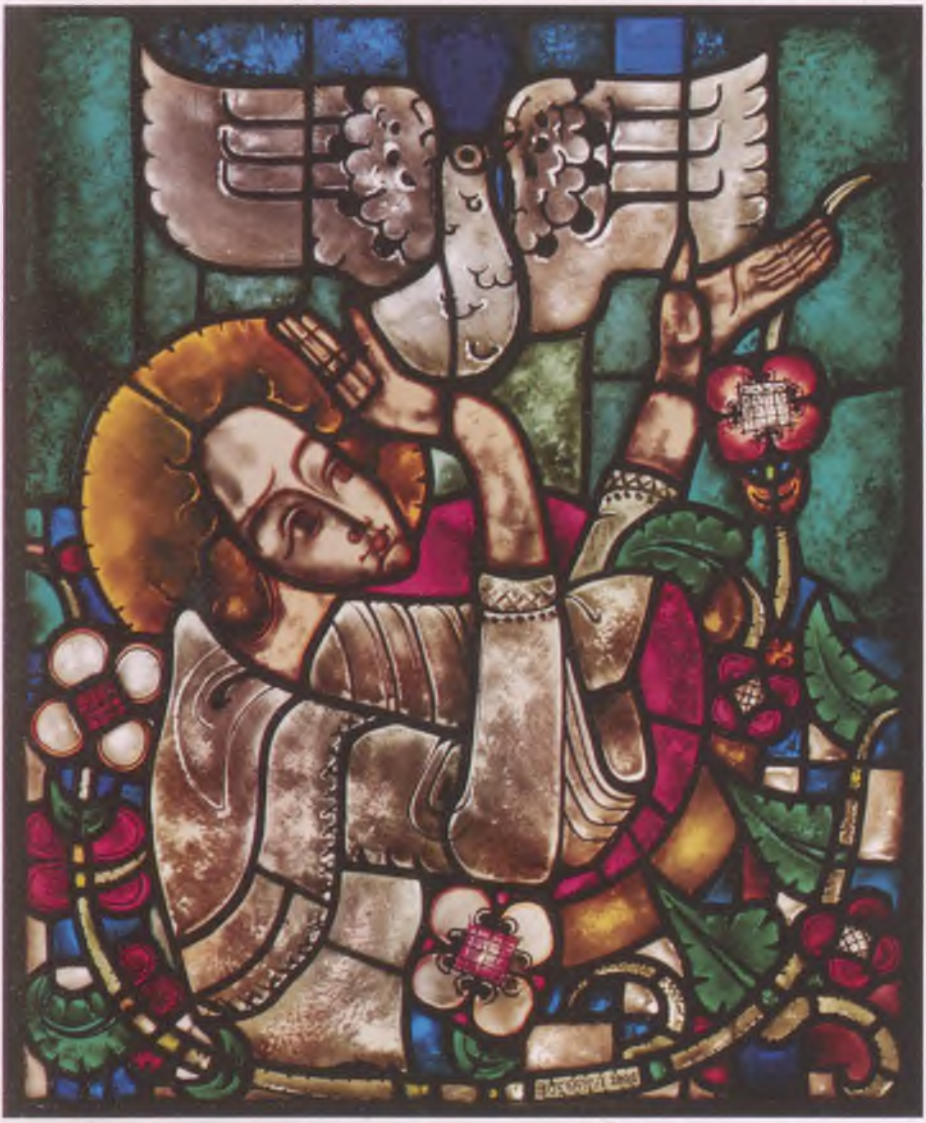
Ervin Bossanyi – *Noli me tangere* (Touch me not) Victoria & Albert Museum, London



Ervin Bossanyi, *Musik fliegt von ihren Fingern* (Music flies from her fingers)
Victoria & Albert Museum's store at Blythe House, London

◀ Ervin Bossanyi, *In His Hands the Seed Will Grow*. St. Peter's College, Oxford

◀◀ Ervin Bossanyi, *An Angel Blessing the Washerwomen of Chartres*.
Tate Britain Gallery, London

Ervin Bossanyi,
St. Francis Frees the Caged Birds
Chapel of St. John's College, Oxford

encouragement of his parents—he left for Germany. He spent ten creative years in Lübeck, making murals, tiles, metalwork, paintings and drawings, and learning the techniques of stained glass in the workshop of Carl Berkentien, and then he moved to Hamburg where his career prospered with further commissions, including windows for the crematorium at Ohlsdorf, the biggest non-military cemetery in the world.

Although Bossanyi' parents were Jewish, and he was a deeply spiritual person, he was not interested in organised religion. When the political situation in Germany became difficult for Jews, he thought of returning to Hungary, but the Hungarian consul in Hamburg warned him that he would encounter poverty, too many artists, and fascism on the rise. Bossanyi's applications for asylum in Switzerland and France were refused, but Britain accepted him, so in 1934 he emigrated with his wife and son to London. There they made their home in Eastcote, Middlesex, and Bossanyi found sufficient admirers and patrons to rebuild his career as an artist—precariously at first, but later achieving national and international recognition for his work in stained glass.

The book 'Vision, Art and Exile' gives the first comprehensive account of his life and output. It is edited by Sarah Brown (lecturer in stained glass at York University) and Jo Bossanyi (the artist's son, born in Lübeck in 1924, now living in Oxford) who together with eight other authors, some of whom worked with Bossanyi, analyse various periods of the artist's career and aspects of his work.

Although Bossanyi was for most of his life an exile, his Hungarian roots were important to him, and from that point of view the early chapters of the book are particularly interesting. The Hungarian countryside, to which he returned for extended journeys in the 1920s, was a source of inspiration for his paintings, in which he depicted a kind of Arcadia where men and animals live together in an unspoilt world. He wrote from Hungary in 1920' it is wonderful here—real country life. At least, no-one here is concerned with art at all. It's not because this is my homeland, but because I feel a profound affinity with these still unspoilt and sun-bronzed country people'. In 1935 and 1937 he returned to Hungary with his wife and son during the summer months to visit his mother in Baja and to sketch and paint in the villages of the region.

The book's first chapter 'A Biographical Outline' by Jo Bossanyi situates the family in its historical and social context, with a fascinating description of life at the end of the 19th century in Hungarian and Serb villages and the town of Baja, illustrated by photographs taken by the artist in the 1930s, and later by his son in the 1980s. Jo Bossanyi argues that his father's admiration for country life in southern Hungary was not 'peasant romanticism': he regarded it not merely as picturesque but as 'the most perfectly balanced way of living for the attainment of human happiness and serenity'. He recounts how in later life his father, alone in his studio in England, would happily sing folksongs from the Hungary of his youth, and if things went wrong in a

painting or design, the artist would swear colourfully in Hungarian.

The second chapter 'The Early Years 1905-1913' by Peter Cormack of the William Morris Gallery in London and Katalin Geller of the Hungarian Academy's Art History Research Institute in Budapest, traces the influence of Hungary's political and artistic life on Bossanyi's development. The authors describe the curriculum and teaching methods of the School of Applied Arts; its yearly bulletins document Bossanyi's progress, and it evidently formed a good basis for skills which he later employed in a wide variety of media. Although he must surely have encountered the upsurge of Hungarian nationalism in political and cultural life that led to the quest for a national 'Magyar' art, he was attracted by other artistic trends, more broadly European in outlook and opposed to nationalism.

In 1906 took place the event generally regarded as marking the emergence of 'modern' art in Hungary—an exhibition of the work of József Rippl-Rónai, who had studied with painters in France—and in 1907 another exhibition brought to Budapest the works of Paul Cézanne and Paul Gauguin. Local artists formed the groups known as MIENK (Magyar Impresszionisták és Naturalisták Köre – Circle of Hungarian Impressionists and Nationalists) and Nyolcak (The Eight) whose creed was articulated in the journal Nyugat (West). Bossanyi would have been aware of these developments, and was probably influenced by them, for his early paintings have an 'expressionistic' and stylised character; when his work was first exhibited in Paris in 1914, it was reported in the pages of Nyugat.

It was not only Hungarian artistic trends that influenced Bossanyi's style: oriental models seem to have inspired the expressive faces and stylised gestures of the human figures that appear in his work. As a student in Paris he was exposed to the arts of India and the philosophy of Sufism, and he later wrote 'I have to confess that I am not a European ... I should say I am an oriental who went astray'. In 1938, asked to design windows depicting the life of the warrior ruler Shivaji for a museum in the state of Mahararashtra in India, he made three full-scale preparatory drawings with colourful Indian figures, but the project was overtaken by the war. After Bossanyi's death in 1975 an obituary commented on 'his tenderness, his passion for flowers and flower-like faces, which he associates with young women and all children; his delight in flowing water and dappled light'.

The book 'Vision, Art and Exile' has many illustrations and offers an invaluable conspectus of Bossanyi's output, including a detailed checklist of his principal works and their location in museums, churches, institutions and elsewhere. In Hungary, the Türr István Múzeum at Baja has some of his paintings. In Britain his work in stained glass can be seen in many places including London University, London Underground's Uxbridge Station, Canterbury Cathedral, York Minster, a synagogue in Bayswater in London, and a church in Port Sunlight near Liverpool. Other windows by Bossanyi are in churches in South Africa and in the United

States in the National Cathedral, Washington D.C.

To illustrate his work I choose examples in Oxford and London, the places where I first encountered it. In Oxford you can see windows by Bossanyi in the chapel of St. John's College ('St. Francis Frees the Caged Birds' Plate 1) and another in the chapel of St. Peter's College ('In His Hands the Seed Will Grow' Plate 2) where his designs for the windows in Canterbury and Washington are also on view. In London the Tate Britain gallery has 'An Angel Blessing the Washerwomen of Chartres'[1] Plate 3 and the Victoria and Albert Museum has two important glass panels.

In the two panels at the Victoria and Albert Museum the artist conveys messages of a deeply personal nature. 'Noli me tangere' Plate 4 depicts a mother and child with two doves. It was made by Bossanyi in London in 1946 when he learned that his mother, Ernesztine Bossanyi, had been deported from Baja in 1944 at the age of 91 and died on the way to (or at) Auschwitz. He wrote 'I wanted in this glass the symbols of motherly and filial love, the building of the family home and the deep relationship between the human child and all beauty and grace nature produces and which must not be hurt or destroyed'. It is in this sense that the work's Latin title should be understood: 'Noli me tangere' ('Touch me not') were the words spoken by Jesus to Mary Magdalene when she recognised him after his resurrection.

The other panel 'Musik fliegt von ihren Fingern' ('Music flies from her fingers') Plate 5 depicts an angel, surrounded by stylised roses, raising his arms towards a dove. It was made by Bossanyi in Lübeck in 1926 as a birthday present for his German-born wife Wilma Maasz, an accomplished pianist, and it was originally displayed in her music room. The dove's plumage is dappled with musical notes, and one of the roses contains Wilma's name.[2]

This book, with its wealth of images of Bossanyi's art, offers a delight to those who have not previously discovered his work, and its historic photographs and scholarly commentary provide a new resource for students of Hungarian art and artists. ❧

1 ■ This window, presently located in the stairway leading down to the cafeteria of Tate Britain, is seen by at least a million visitors each year, but since it has no label, few visitors can know the artist's name. When giving permission for the rebuilding of this part of the gallery, the Planning Committee of the City of Westminster stipulated that "The Bossanyi window shall be carefully removed and reinstalled in a location to be agreed by us in consultation with English Heritage. This new location is to be within the Tate Britain site in a position where it can be viewed by the public"

2 ■ This important early work of Bossanyi was chosen by the publisher as the image for the book-jacket of 'Vision, Art and Exile'. It is presently located in the Victoria & Albert Museum's store at Blythe House, London, and I am grateful to Terry Bloxham, Assistant Curator for stained glass, for showing the work to me there. One must hope that the Museum will one day have the means to transfer this magnificent panel, dedicated to the artist's wife, to its public gallery so that it can be seen alongside the panel dedicated to his mother.

Erzsébet Bori

About People

Bence Fliegauf: Just the Wind *(Csak a szél)*

"In Hungary, between 2008 and 2009 a group of perpetrators carried out a series of murderous attacks against Roma individuals. Sixteen residences were attacked with 11 Molotov cocktails; 63 rounds of cartridges and bullets were discharged from firearms. Five of the 55 persons who were injured suffered light or severe wounds, and six were killed in the attacks. Criminal proceedings are currently in progress against the suspects. Although this film was inspired by this series of attacks, the plot is not directly related to the actual events and does not follow the facts that have been brought to light by the investigation."

Just the Wind kicks off with this text, a mere list of the brutal facts. The film, however, is as much a work of inspiration as it is a work of documentation, as evident not so much in the plot or story, so much as the director's psychological and moral motivation. On screen one sees neither murder nor murderer face to face, but Hungarian audiences are bound to know about the events, which became part of public consciousness as "the Roma murders," because this provides an interpretative frame to the sense of terror evoked by the banal, humdrum stories (see Zoltán Tábori: "Guns, fire and ditches: A report from Tatárszentgyörgy on the Roma killings," HQ 196 2009, pp. 97-109).

As an outsider it is hard to believe, and as an insider hard to admit that such severe antagonism could have reared its head in Hungarian society, meeting with near-universal condemnation, indignation and horror. Seen from that point of view, the prologue is actually misleading. It offers a retrospective perspective, a reconstruction of events, knowledge of which neither the general public nor the filmmaker was in possession when the idea for the film was first voiced. Homicide is a fairly rare occurrence in Hungary, and first-degree murder even more so, while serial killers are normally only seen in the cinema. Molotov cocktails and

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instances of almost indiscriminate gunfire, all occurring in the most impoverished, eastern extremities of the country, seemed to be local affairs the most likely explanation for which was either family feuds or threats by extortionists. Initially it was not clear that these were racist acts, as the occupants of one of the houses that was attacked were not Roma. Indeed it was only after the trial began that people realized that in the case of the third incident, which took place in September 2008 in Tarnabod (a village in Heves county), the people who were attacked had simply been victims of circumstance. The perpetrators had been too scared to approach the homes of the families they had intended to terrorize and instead had hurled petrol bombs and shot at the windows of other houses inhabited by poor families, but as it so happened not members of the Roma community. Only those concerned and their immediate neighbours (including teachers in the village school and local councillors, who stood up for the communities with heroic fortitude) knew that they had not become victims of the attacks on account of any misdoings on their part. They were not believed by the public at large, however. One month later a turning point was reached, both in the eyes of the police, which until then had treated the incidents at a purely local level as isolated cases, and the public at large. In an attack in the village of Nagycsécs, south-east of Miskolc, a 40-year-old woman, Mrs. Tibor Nagy, and her 43-year-old brother József Nagy were shot and killed. Four months later, in February 2009, another double murder broke the dam. A father who was trying to rescue his children from their blazing home was shot together with his five-ear-old son. Until then public opinion had been unwilling to acknowledge that this was one of a series of racially motivated killings, and preferred instead to regard the fears of the Roma community as exaggerated and deny the victims any empathy. In the end empathy came from an unexpected quarter, for the genre of the documentary film was remote to independent film-maker Benedek Fliegauf (who with the making of this film began to use the shortened form of his name, Bence). While he had achieved considerable success at international film festivals, he had not yet worked on topics related to contemporary social issues and conflicts.

In point of fact, the young film director (in Hungary anyone still in their thirties or even forties counts as young) had had a fairly unconventional career as it was. In 2001 a short film entitled *Talking Heads (Beszélő fejek)* won a prize for best experimental film at the 32nd Hungarian Annual Film Week, and the following year Fliegauf's film *Vast Forest (Rengeteg)* won the Wolfgang Staudte Prize for the best first feature at the Berlin Film Festival. His next feature, *Dealer* (see HQ 174, Summer 2004), won the Critics' Prize in Berlin the following year and a Golden Athena at the Athens International Film Festival. In 2005, at a mere 29 years of age, he was awarded the Silver Cross of Merit of the Hungarian Republic, and his seven short films and documentaries and two feature films garnered a host of national and international awards. In 2007 he also made *Milky Way*

(Tejút) as part of a coproduction. In each case he worked with a minimal budget, which meant a small production crew and the exclusive use of amateur actors. Fliegauf is in fact an auteur himself, not only in the sense that he both writes and directs the films, he also does the special effects and contributes to the composition of the incidental music. His jack-of-all trades mentality was not compatible with big English-language international production, the 2010 film *Womb*, which starred professional actors, but he was still unwilling to relinquish the role of musical editor, co-composer, and performer of the film score (in fact Fliegauf has a "second job" as a musician and is about to release a recording).

Just the Wind is a return to the low-budget, non-professional casting style of film-making. The auteur-director had control of the entire creative process, including music, design, and casting. As director, he called again on the services of Zoltán Lovasi, who has a reputation primarily as an outstanding photographer in documentary films and with whom he previously had worked on Vast Forest and several short films. Regarding the subject of this film he commented, "I was always stimulated by the idea of reflecting in some manner on social questions. The case upset me, as I imagine it did most compassionate people, and I felt I ought to do something." Nevertheless, *Just the Wind* is not about the murders of members of the Roma community, nor is it even about the social milieu in a broader sense in which such a series of racist killings could take place, or at least only very indirectly. It is an anthropological popular-science film about a community that appears to be unaware that a series of dreadful crimes has been committed against it, too, a trauma that it has yet to process.

Naturally, it is about Hungarian society, and Hungarians, and the film endeavours to heal the scar by presenting the mundane lives of people living as part of a marginalized, "exotic" ethnic group. The "unknown" group in question is that of the Roma, a community (or communities) with which majority society in Hungary (and elsewhere) has always had an uneasy relationship. As it began to consolidate its hold on power in the early 1960s and managed to create a sort of unwritten social contract with the Hungarian population, the Kádár regime based its sole claim to legitimacy on a progressive rise of living standards. As long as the system functioned, enough welfare "trickled down" to allow members of the Roma community to clamber up to the lower reaches of the minimum subsistence level of the times. This still involved quite a clamber. The bulk of these communities lived in isolation in the least developed parts of the country, where they suffered from illiteracy and a general lack of education and training. This was the subject of the classic 1962 documentary film *Cigányok (Gypsies)* by Sándor Sára (the definitive cameraman of the 1960s) and István Gaál. State socialism with a human face, with its soft (or rather semi-hard) dictatorial methods, succeeded in dragging the Roma population of Hungary out of the third world into the second over the course of roughly two decades, compelling

them to accept gainful employment and pursue education and training in return for the guarantee of a workplace, residence permits, and medical and social provisions. The success had its darker side as well, as shown in a number of powerful documentary films, such as Pál Schiffer's 1970 *Black Train (Fekete vonat)* and the 1978 feature-length colour film *Gyuri Cséplő (Cséplő Gyuri)*.

There is a widely held view according to which the Roma were the biggest losers in Hungary's transition to a more democratic form of government in 1989-1990, an assessment to which a few reservations should be added. During the 1980s the regime got trapped in a growing debt spiral and economic crisis, as one workplace after another was eliminated in construction, heavy industry, and mining, which employed large numbers of low-skilled workers in poorly paid and inefficient jobs. This process has also been the subject of documentary films. Tamás Almási produced an impressive series of films about the industrial town of Ózd in the north-eastern part of the country, including *Caught in the Grips (Szorításban,* 1987), *The First Hundred Years (Az első száz év,* 1988), *Slow-down (Lassítás,* 1991), *The Factory is Ours (Miénk a gyár,* 1988-1993), *Steel Clasp (Acélkapocs,* 1994), *Barren (Meddő,* 1995, *Petrenkó* (1995), and *Helplessly (Tehetetlenül,* 1998). These films documented the decline of one of the country's emblematic centres of heavy industry with particular regard to the human costs. The process accelerated dramatically after 1900. By 1992 one-third of the earlier workplaces had been eliminated, and nationally unemployment had risen to one-million in a country of ten million. Furthermore, discrepancies between the different regions of the country had grown dramatically. As for the minority ethnic groups, long-term unemployment had grown to 70-80 percent, even among highly skilled Roma workers. This has caused serious social tensions, which in some areas are increasingly intolerable and volatile, as the national employment statistics become ever worse and the downward slope from west to east ever more precipitous.

In Hungary nowadays the world "cigány," or "Gypsy" has become increasingly generic. In the eyes of the strata who are themselves often struggling to earn a living, those who have fallen behind appear to form a single homogeneous, threatening mass. The poor and dirt-poor, the unemployed poor and the Roma, the derelict and the homeless all wash into a faceless mass of zombies living off social welfare, causing the fabric of society to fray and depriving those who are allegedly more deserving of state assistance.

The on-going economic and financial crisis has further eroded solidarity and invigorated extremists. In this situation, *Just the Wind* is an artistic espousal of a cause, but it is not a propagandistic plea on behalf of the "defenceless." Simply by portraying a Roma family as a normal, poor, but not completely hopeless Hungarian family constitutes a positive gesture. The film shows a single ordinary day for a mother, a grown-up daughter, an adolescent boy, and a grandfather—a day for which there will be no

tomorrow. They do what they have to do, what they are able to do, moving around the natural setting of the world of the countryside in Hungary, with Roma moneylenders, public workers, unemployed layabouts, alcoholics who are either aggressive or in an almost catatonic stupor, "harmless" everyday racism, and passions stretched to breaking point. Every now and then a black SUV with tinted windows shows up, the unseen occupants of which have killed five families in the district.

It was a prudent decision on the part of the director not to set the film in an exclusively Roma community, which might have come across well in an American TV drama series such as *Treme*, but which in this context would have resulted in little more than a sort of in-your-face portrayal of Roma stereotypes. Instead it is set in a small village in which social tensions and squalor exist alongside decent, honest, hard-working poverty. The film is heir to the fine documentary traditions of the Budapest film school, with an amateur cast and authentic scenes of interactions shot on site. This all contributes to the creation of a convincing vision of reality, produced without the use of fancy devices of the trade. The judiciously edited film confronts the audience with the clear vision of the director and his personal views regarding the world he portrays, views which in this instance are subordinated to a larger, communal, even national goal, namely that of offering a nuanced depiction of the tensions that actually lie at the heart of the crimes.

Just the Wind is not without its faults, but it avoids the most common failings of works addressing topics of this nature, always maintaining authenticity as its priority. The cinematography, the use of a hand-held camera, and the tight cutting, which shows the perspectives of the characters, all contribute to the creation of an atmosphere of distress and menace, as does the minimalist music, which is really little more than sound effects and the occasional chord. ❧

Nóra Terján

Rethink/Re-button 2.0: Hungarian is the Mode

In February 2011, the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, Design Terminal Nonprofit, and the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design (formerly the Hungarian University of Arts and Design) announced a new competition, *Rethink/Re-button! Hungarian is the Mode*, in which designers were asked to draw on historical and traditional motifs of Hungarian dress and rewrite them into contemporary forms following contemporary fashion trends. Organised as a priority cultural event of Hungary's EU Presidency in the spring of 2011, the competition drew hundreds of entries, and not only from talented young domestic designers but also several top-flight international trademark design houses, such Artista, Anh Tuan and Je Suis Belle, each of which is familiar to fashion enthusiasts in Hungary.

Of the almost 450 works of design that were submitted, 35 were selected and put on display on a walkway set up in the Renaissance room at the Museum of Fine Arts. The articles of clothing represent the fusion of traditional folk dress with contemporary fashion. The basic idea of the organizers was very simple: to demonstrate that traditional and contemporary motifs and tastes are compatible. The feedback from last year's event not only launched several talented young designers on their paths towards success in the market, but also drew the attention of important organs of the international media to creative ventures in Hungary.

Indeed, the initiative proved so popular that the 2012 competition has grown into a one-day event located in one of the buildings of the Millennial Park in Budapest, which can seat some 3,000 people. It included a conference and two fashion shows. This year's entries were solicited in two categories: a Contemporary Clothing Design contest, in which designers could make their own choice of historical Hungarian dress motif to restyle into contemporary forms of clothing, and the Design and Tradition category, in which contestants had to submit individual items of clothing based on ready-made designs by young Hungarian fashion designers but made either with traditional techniques or materials.

In Hungary one often hears that there is no demand for and even no interest in domestic light industrial products or luxury items made by

Hungarian designers. This is in fact to largely the case. If they are lucky enough to be able to lay the necessary foundations of their own enterprises and brands, recent young graduate designers of the country's universities are in a position to address only a narrow segment of the market. How did this come about, and how can it be countered? Could a campaign similar to *Rethink/Re-button! Hungarian is the Mode* kindle interest in traditional forms of dress and thereby nurture knowledge of a part of cultural history that has been largely obscured?

Following Hungary's transition to a more democratic system of government in 1989-90, all big state-owned factories and enterprises were privatized. By the mid-1990s the domestic clothing and textile industries and the commercial networks that had depended on them had effectively ceased to operate. They were replaced by multinational companies with which the smaller boutiques, which had flourished in the 1980s, were unable to compete. Not surprisingly, gradually these smaller enterprises were compelled to close their doors. At the same time, there were fewer and fewer employment opportunities as industry relocated to the Far East, with China becoming a world centre for mass manufacture with its cheap labour and huge export trade. The situation altered drastically as the up-and-coming generation in the Hungarian garment trade sought to remain in the marketplace with their own independent, exclusive brands. The names Márta Makány, Katti Zoób and Tamás Náray, who thanks to their tenacious work managed to develop a profile, come to mind. With the emergence of strong branding as a strategy of crucial importance in the fashion trade, this individualism has come to play a more important role in the new millennium, as shown by the successes of designers like Nanushka, Dóra Mojzes, Je Suis Belle or Dóra Konsánszky.

The programme was launched by Péter Szűcs, managing editor of the Hungarian Marie Claire and editor-in-chief of Fashion Issue, who served as the moderator of the conference *Dress Code: Business*. The conference began with a presentation of *A Magyar Divat 1116 éve – 1116 Years of Hungarian Fashion*, a blingual (Hungarian and English) book that was one of the fruits of the *Re-button* project. The book provides a survey of 1,116 years of fashion in Hungary, generously illustrated with images of fashion sketches, photographs, posters, works of art, and museum pieces. Co-authors Ildikó Simonovics (a scholar of the fashions of the post-war socialist era and the fashion of our own age), art historian Katalin Földi-Dózsa, Judit Szatmári (a scholar of the history of costume and dress culture), and Péter Szűcs offer a history of folk and national clothing culture and fashion, including discussion of moments when Budapest served as a centre of European fashion and the uses of fashion as an instrument of ideology in the socialist era. Árpád Papp-Váry, Head of the Marketing Department of the Budapest College of Communication and Business, held the second presentation, a talk on the evolution of the idea of branding, a sensitive issue in marketing and many branches of the applied arts.

The programme offered visitors time between the morning presenta-

tions and the events scheduled for the afternoon to look around the *Vasárnapi Művészeti Piac* (WAMP, or Sunday Artists Market), a moving fair held at least once a month (and often more frequently) in order to bring together designers, artists, gallery owners, and of course casual enthusiasts and tourists. This was followed by a show held by the invited speakers. The first to take the catwalk were models wearing garments from the latest autumn and winter collections for 2012/2013 from Kata Szegedi, Nóra Sármán, Dani Benus, Dóra Mojzes, Dóra Tomcsányi, Sándor Lakatos, Dóra Konsánszky, Artista and Kepp. Renáta Gyöngyösi, the designer of last year's wining creation, presented her new INER brand. In 2011 her collection Metallic-Folklore, consisting of a fusion of folk dress from Somogy county and provocative elements of punk culture, won first prize. This year, garments from the collection by Dóra Mojzes were again characterized by an identifiable formal world and everyday wearability. Nóra Sármán presented a collection of works using lace, and Sándor Lakatos offered rakish men's suits and textiles in the colours of the Hungarian flag (red, white, and green).For the closing event of the one-day fashion show, which drew a crowd of 3,000 (perhaps in the future the event should be held in a stadium), the contestants for the main prize presented their collections. This year the designers were more daring and broke with clichés and folksiness more distinctly. The stronger of the two categories in the contest was Contemporary Clothing, while the smaller, less spectacular group consisted of the short-listed candidates for the Design and Tradition category. This year wearable and show clothes were on display together (some of the entrants in the competition went for show clothes that were unsuitable for day-to-day wear). Gergely Erdei offered works as part of a collection called *Charleston matyó*, which consisted of garments that blended elements of the fashions of the Roaring Twenties and folk motives characteristic of the traditional garments of the "Matyó," inhabitants of a region known as "Matyóföld" (Matyó Land) famous for its distinctive folk garb. The sensational creations of Fanny Cséfalvay and her sister Lilla, which looked almost as if they had been made out of paper, were actually meticulously worked textiles. Lilla Demeter and Zsuzsanna Szabó's collection *Boldog kötődés* (*Happy Knitting*, a title that plays on the word "kötődés," which means both knitting and banter or raillery), with its use of salmon pink, reflected present-day trends, and the red and white heart décor of Sára Bálint's *Szerelem, szerelem (Love, love)* brought a winter-by-the-fireplace mood to the catwalk. This year there were more accessories, from crocheted net stockings to stitched leather handbags, richly decorated belts, and jewellery that mimicked embroidery.

The jury of renowned experts, including the likes of Kossuth Award-winning folk singer Márta Sebestyén, Florence Deladriere (chief fashion editor of Marie Claire International), and László Zsótér, Deputy Rector of Budapest's Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design (MOME), awarded the main prize in the category Contemporary Clothing Design to Anett Farkas and her collection entitled *Zsindely*

(Shingles), one of the basic elements of traditional Hungarian architecture. She is currently studying architecture at the Széchenyi István University. She had never studied fashion design before, and this was her first collection, one inspired by the unmistakeable symbols, such as the wing and the face motifs, of architect Imre Makovecz (1935-2011), who died last year. Farkas worked with small wooden slats sewed onto clothing in a highly individual manner, but the collection will soon also be made available in a version using leather that has been adapted for everyday wear. In the Contemporary Category for Best Accessories, the winners were MIMM, which is to say Móni Nagy and Ilona Hendzsel, who in 2011 established a design the garments of which cite the formal world of gingerbread houses and painted eggs. Alett Somogyi, working with the blue, red, and yellow tricolour, won the Design and Tradition category for individual items of clothing, and Anna Vitányi won in the category for best accessories. Thanks to the good offices of the sponsors, a number of additional prizes were also awarded, and several businesses were able to support some of the talented designers by giving them an opportunity to sell designs through their outlets.

During the discussion at the conference Péter Szűcs posed the question as to whether Budapest might be able to re-establish itself as a centre of fashion and play a role similar to the one it had in the interwar period. Katalin F. Dózsa pointed out that there was no dearth of talent, but one has to be able to sell it. We will begin to see the works of Hungarian designers win prominence at the international level when capital recognizes that there is potential to make money off of Hungarian fashion. The conditions have changed, and investments cannot be recouped instantaneously. A great deal of money is needed to finance the production of a collection, and both money and PR are tight, leaving the bulk of Hungarian designers in a very tricky situation. So far no brand has had an investor who is looking at the long term, nor has a system of patronage evolved in Hungary, at least not for the time being. The potential is there, however, as is the enthusiasm.

Winners of the Contemporary Clothing Design competition received 1,000,000 Hungarian forint and will have their work presented on the front page of Marie Claire's five-year birthday issue and at the Marie Claire Fashion Days. The winners of the Design and Tradition contest received cash prizes of 400,000 Hungarian forint and will spend six months as apprentices in the workshops of the Katti Zoób and Attitude brands. The total expense of the event was roughly 150,000,000 Hungarian forint. According to a press release by the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, the Under-secretary of the Ministry responsible for communications will meet the costs of the framework contract for communication to the general population in 2011. Bell & Partners had been selected as Communications Agency. (Last year's competition was organized by the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, with a total expenditure of 100,000,000 Hungarian forint as an outstanding cultural event marking Hungary's term in the presidency of the EU.) ❧

"I intended to integrate architecture and fashion." Hungarian is à la mode?

An interview with Anett Farkas

HQ: You are pursuing for a master's degree in architecture. How did you get involved in fashion design?

Anett Farkas: I entered the world of fashion when I heard about Rethink/Re-button. Until then I had mostly taken part in architectural projects. Though it's true that prior to this contest I entered competitions involving street furniture or object design. At university I have experimented with a lot of things, for example I participated twice in a European workshop hosted annually by different countries. At the first workshop in Manchester we built interactive robots. The second time I took part as a tutor. We made a public playground by interweaving bicycle inner tubes. The common denominator of the workshop was architecture, but the participants came from a variety of fields.

What is your main focus as an architect?

At the moment I work for an architectural studio, and the majority of our projects involve interior design.

The fashion show Gombold újra, or Rethink/Re-button!

Hungarian is the Mode (the Hungarian is a pun based on the phrase "gondold újra," or "rethink it"), which was organized this year for the second time, met with tremendous interest and excitement. The show offered young Hungarian fashion designers the chance to introduce their collections to both the lay public and a committee of experts.

Anett Farkas, the designer of the winning collection, drew upon the rich heritage of Hungarian folk architecture patterns to create her collection, "Zsindelyes," or "shingled." The young fashion designer, who is a student of architecture, says there are many young talented Hungarians in the profession, and it is hardly surprising that their work attracts interest, even the interest of prominent international film stars.

Did you take up fashion design without having had any previous experience?

I dove into fashion design somewhat at the spur of the moment. I had never before tried either sewing or designing. I attended the first Rethink/Re-button fashion show as a spectator. At the time the idea of entering the contest never crossed my mind. I went to a high school in which we specialized in foreign languages, and I was more into the humanities, and that did not have much to do with architecture either. I took extra elective courses in Hungarian literature and history and it was only in my junior year that I decided to work in design, so I decided to attend art classes. My mother is an art teacher, so I had the background. I was thinking if I enrol in architecture I would learn how to design a building or a chair.

Why did you choose the Rethink/Re-button contest?

I found the announcement for applications very interesting, the idea that applicants would have to submit a contemporary garment that drew on Hungarian traditions.

How did your classmates and friends react when they learned you had entered the contest?

My friends were not terribly surprised, because they knew I experiment with lots of unusual things. It was only afterwards that I showed them my sketches, but they loved them and were very encouraging.

Do you mean you simply sketched your design and submitted it?

It may sound unbelievable but this is in fact what I did.

Out of one thousand contestants you were among the thirty-five finalists who had the opportunity to put themselves to the test in a fashion show.

The contest was organized in three rounds. For the first one the sketches had to be submitted. Based on these sketches, approximately 120 applicants were selected to participate in the next round.

Did you pin your hopes on qualifying for the second round?

I held secret hopes. Many contestants came from the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, not to mention fashion schools, and there were people who already own their own studios and work in fashion design. But then I was notified that I had been selected for the second round and the committee was awaiting my collection. I received a letter that I was to make my sketches a reality.

Your dresses may have attracted attention because you used rather unusual fabric.

While making them I hesitated as to whether to use real wood or maybe try to use leather as a substitute. Since I had no experience I requested the assistance of a workshop in executing the designs. The workshop is owned by a friend's mother. They helped me; they prepared the pattern designs and did the sewing.

Many people have noted that your garments draw upon architecture. In connection with your designs frequent mention is made of Imre Makovecz, the recently deceased architect who had a sort of organic style.

I was primarily inspired by Hungarian folk architecture, its forms and materials. I should definitely mention Imre Makovecz, I borrowed some of his symbols. These symbols served as show effects at the fashion show. However, when I started working on the project I did not begin with Makovecz. My goal was to integrate architecture and fashion. Since Rethink/Re-button is based on folk traditions and draws upon folk art, turning towards folk architecture seemed a self-evident way to begin. Personally, I prefer modern architecture. I spent two years in Belgium and a summer in the Netherlands working for various architectural studios.

How were your dresses made?

If the wooden layer is removed from the garment, what remains is an absolutely conventional, textile garment. I used a sewing machine to pin the shingles onto it. The wooden shingles are 0.4 mm thick, so they are thinner than any harder leather. This way the dress did not turn out too heavy.

What was the fate of the collection? Where are the dresses now?

At the moment two of the dresses are on display in the city of Veszprém. This past Sunday they were exhibited at a fashion show. They will be on display at numerous places, for example in September they will be part of a roundtable in the Hungarian Institute in Brussels. They will also be exhibited in Design Terminal in downtown Budapest, and people have made several requests to use them in photo shoots.

As part of the prize you were also given the opportunity to show your dresses on the covers of fashions magazines.

I was delighted about the Marie Claire and Octogon Magazine cover pages. Octogon asked if they could do an interview with me, and it was

exactly at the time when the photos of the dresses were completed. They liked one of the pictures so much that they asked for it for the cover of the magazine. I was very happy because Octogon is essentially an architectural magazine, but they are very open to other fields. The magazine carries several articles on artists, Hungarian design themes, and it always includes articles on design. The issue included an interview with architect Mihály Balázs and the proprietor of Monofashion, the founder of the NUBU fashion brand.

Are you planning to adapt other architectural styles, or was it only a one-time idea?

I believe that just as architecture influences fashion, fashion has an impact on architecture. When I see architectural trends, I realize that some of the materials, fabrics, and patterns that one finds on buildings could be used on garments as well. I have often encountered collections inspired by Bauhaus, and nowadays parametric architecture is very popular, represented for example by Zaha Hadid, and it influences many fashion designers. I saw a Dutch fashion designer's dresses clipped out by laser and made with a 3-D printer.

Whose work did you like among the finalists of Rethink/Re-button?

The dresses by Lilla Cséfalvay and Fanni Cséfalvay reminded me of parametric architecture. We exhibited on the same stage in the finale. They made a dress out of Vetex material that resembled a bee hive. I liked it very much. I think the show was a great success, the visual effects and live music added a lot to it.

Are you still in touch with any of the members of the professional committee that you met at the contest?

Unfortunately no, but I am planning to work on this. For example Emília Anda, one of the members of the committee, has a degree in architecture. It was only later that she graduated from the Moholy-Nagy University of Arts and Design. There are several foreign and Hungarian architects who became fashion designers. However, I have never met a fashion designer who chose to become an architect.

Do you follow trends or do you follow your own promptings?

I do not think one necessarily has to follow trends, since a designer's personality will permeate his or her collection. Dóra Tomcsányi just had a collection for which she used perplexingly coloured textiles. They looked wonderful, like a painting.

Who among Hungarian fashion designers do you follow?

I love the dresses by Nóra Sármán, she is a very young fashion designer who also competed in the Rethink/Re-button show. I also like the works of Dóra Mojzes, she was the fashion designer of the year in 2012. There are a lot of talented young designers in Hungary, and they seem to be gaining prominence, more and more people pick up on and buy their clothes.

Are visually startling clothes a must in order to be noticed?

Although I have not studied the profession, I realized that fashion designers attempt to win people's attention by using designs the general public would not wear in the street. But people do wear simplified variations of them. Shops do not carry the extravagant pieces, but rather the simpler ones.

Are you working on your own collection or brand?

Yes, I am, and my dresses will come out in August in Monofashion. In addition to the Marie Claire cover photo, the Rethink/Re-button first prize also gave me an opportunity to present at Marie Claire Fashion Days and participate in the WAMP design market. These opportunities all inspire me to continue fashion design and work assiduously. I will partially finance my next collection using the monies I was awarded, and I will also use the money from another prize that offered online marketing publicity.

Would you rather make popular everyday clothes or unique garments?

I will come out primarily with sample pieces that are more exclusive. Some elements of the shingled collection will be detectable in them, and they will represent the style of dresses one would wear to a party. It will be a fall-winter collection, and just as black, brown and earth colours dominated in my shingled dresses, this new collection will also be characterized by natural colours. I would definitely want to continue using this shingle texture, but in a more reserved style, rather as a kind of decorative motif.

Did wood work?

No, it was only an experiment. Wood is not very practical, for example you cannot wash it. But it will be included in some accessories and jewellery.

Do you work alone?

The same workshop I worked with for Rethink/Re-button will make the dresses, where there are both models and designers.

Have you completed the degree in architecture?

I still have to complete my degree work, but it is definitely going to be something related to wood. My first planning project was a building made entirely of wood, inside and outside. I used an interesting conservation technique, fire-treated wooden panelling, and I built a little pavilion this way. I would love to study fashion. After I graduate in architecture, I may pursue another master's degree in fashion. I'll see what I will find time for.

In your view is it possible to work exclusively for the domestic market? Is the Hungarian market sufficiently strong?

As far as I can tell, Hungarian designers first naturally start to build up a brand in Hungary. This in itself is not easy, but the real move is to the international scene. However, it is very difficult to enter the international world of fashion by relying on one's own resources. I believe Hungarian designers represent a very distinctive style, they make clothes in limited series, thus we may not come across a NUBU dress, let's say, on every corner.

What are the leading Hungarian brands?

I would mention the young designers: Nanushka, that is Szandra Sándor, Dóra Tomcsányi, or Kata Szegedi. Also, there is Emilia Anda, who is an acknowledged fashion designer, both in Hungary and abroad.

How do you think the economic crisis affects the creative industry?

I mostly have experience from the point of view of architecture. In fashion I believe the core of the problem is that cheap, mass-produced brands have flooded Hungary to the detriment of smaller studios, though there is still a need for handmade work produced using unique techniques, and people would like to buy these.

Hungarian is à la mode, that was the subtitle of Rethink/Re-button. Recently Nicole Kidman was seen wearing a dress decorated with Hungarian Kalocsa folk patterns, and Emma Watson, the famous Harry Potter actress, was also wearing similar patterns. Do you see this as a fashionable trend, or is it only our bias towards Hungary?

I think this trend does exist, and foreign celebrities' interest in the work of Hungarian fashion designers is a very good thing. For example, Charlize Theron wears Nanushka coats, although she could afford any brand. Hungarian designers are distinctive enough to attract the attention of foreigners as well.

In Budapest a piece from your collection was immortalized in the form of large wall painting. Has it ever occurred to you that one day you may see a dress of your own design in the street?

I can imagine it. There were very positive reactions to the first Rethink/Re-button in 2011. There are several applicants who already own their own brands, and they continue working in the style in which they were successful. Works from Renáta Gyöngyösi's collection, last year's winner, are available at several places, and her dresses carry the same patterns for which she was the award. People interested in dresses exhibited at the fashion show will look for them.

Many thanks for your time, and for your contributions to Hungarian design. ❧

English Title

Adam Bodor:
THE SINISTRA ZONE

Sinistra Zone presents a nightmarish allegory of oppression, dislocation, and dispossession set against a backdrop both surreal and distinctly Central European.

Translator: Paul Olchváry

Márton Baranyi

A Mathematician by Chance

A talk with Professor Endre Szemerédi

János Bolyai, John Neumann, Pál Erdős and Péter Lax—just a few of the best-known Hungarian mathematicians, and a list to which one might well add the name Endre Szemerédi, State of New Jersey Professor of Computer Science at Rutgers University. 71 years-old, earlier this year he was awarded the Abel Prize, an annual international prize granted by the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters and one of the most prestigious awards in the field of mathematics. A scientist who has studied problems of discrete mathematics, combinatorics, discrete geometry, and other areas, Professor Szemerédi spoke to me about these areas of interest, the future of mathematics and education in Hungary, and even the American football team for which he roots.

Márton Baranyi: *I gather you were very touched when you learned that you had? been awarded the Abel Prize, which is widely thought of as the Nobel Prize for Mathematics. Was this recognition so unexpected?*

Endre Szemerédi: I was certainly not counting on it, but I was overjoyed.

In 2008 you won two important prizes: in America the Leroy P. Steele Prize, and in Sweden the Rolf Schock Prize in Mathematics, and back then you yourself made it clear that you regarded the Abel Prize as one of the most important distinctions.

I have since come to view the Fields Medal as the most outstanding.

If you carry on at the present rate, surely that too is a possibility?

Not the Fields Medal, not unless I unexpectedly lose a few decades in age: it is only awarded to people under the age of forty.

Where were you when you got the news that you had won the Abel Prize?

At home in America. The prize was announced on a Wednesday. One of my mathematician friends with whom I occasionally work had arranged to come over and work with me that morning. I have never been in the habit of working then because I have trouble falling asleep and so in the mornings I am usually a bit zonked. He stuck to his guns, saying he would come at ten o'clock. I told him to come by all means; my wife is very pleasant and could hold a conversation with him until eleven and we could then sit down to some work. At exactly 10:30 the telephone rang. It is usually my wife Panni who takes calls, since she has a wide circle of acquaintances. I had already told her that I was not at home for anyone, at which she said she couldn't tell them that as the call was from Oslo. Like any mathematician, I knew immediately what that meant.

Does that indicate that the Norwegian plan worked out well, and you were the last to know?

The friend in question had been informed a week in advance and had the task of ensuring I was not away from home that day.

You were able to pick up the prize in Oslo, presented by the King of Norway, Harald V. What did you and His Majesty talk about?

About everyday matters: about children's education and sports. King Harald is a great sailor: with his sailing crews he won a slew of medals at World Championships in the 1980s, and even more recently in the European Championships. I'm a great fan of Barcelona, where the Olympics were a great disappointment for him, and this topic created an awkward moment for us, but then of course we soon got over that.

In his speech at the award ceremony for the Abel Prize, Ragni Piene, Chair of the Abel Committee, praised Endre Szemerédi "for the many original, innovative contributions with which he has revolutionised discrete mathematics." I hope the question is not too annoying, but what, put simply, is discrete mathematics?

Discrete mathematics, as opposed to continuous mathematics, investigates the structures of finite, or countable, sets. One could take the first 10,000 integers, for example, and ask the question, is there, in this set, a three-member arithmetical series in which the difference between neighbouring elements is constant. An example of continuous mathematics, by contrast, the impetus for which came primarily from Newtonian physics, calculus and analysis, would be an equation

for a route or the number: between any two numbers one can always find a third. Put crudely, discrete mathematics deals with finite structures. Naturally, one makes use of countless techniques that have been adopted from continuous mathematics, but then again nowadays many of the methods that were first discovered in discrete mathematics are used in continuous mathematics.

How did your work revolutionise the field?

I elaborated one or two methods and proved a number of theorems that have been of use, but I would balk at the use of the word 'revolutionise.' There were a lot of people in my wake who arrived at significantly more ground-breaking results, such as the discovery of interdependencies between discrete mathematics and other areas of mathematics. In truth others deserve the credit. In short, I don't think it was I who revolutionised discrete mathematics.

In your Abel lecture in Norway you presented a paper entitled "Order in chaos." What was that about?

Essentially my contention is that however hostile the method in which a set is given (for instance, decimals of integral numbers), it is possible to find in the set an arithmetical sequence. In this case, the decimals of integral numbers are the chaos, and they can be given in any order, completely at random. Order, on the other hand, is the arithmetical sequence, no simpler example of which is imaginable than the sequence of integrers.

Additive number theory has also been mentioned as another area to which you have contributed.

Additive number theory examines the properties of subsets of integers (i.e. natural or whole numbers) and their behaviour under addition. It is this which has yielded the Goldbach conjecture, one of the greatest hypotheses in all of mathematics, which states that every even number is the sum of two prime numbers, That has been tested up to huge numbers, but so far no one has managed to prove it beyond doubt. The 19th century German mathematician and philosopher Leopold Kronecker considered integers to be so fundamental that he said, "God created the natural numbers, all the rest is the work of man."

You have also worked in the area of theoretical computer science, and yet on one occasion you announced that you don't know how to use a computer.

Nor is there any need for me to know, particularly if one has made a

wise choice for one's spouse! Incoming emails are usually answered by my wife. In point of fact there is no need for me to know anything related to the engineering aspect of computers, the hardware. Behind programs, however, at the lowest level, there is generally an algorithm, which is to say a series of mathematical procedures. A programmer will translate that into a machine language, and from this a program is generated. To put it another way, it is not necessary for me or others who are concerned with theoretical computer science to understand specifically how a computer functions.

One might think that you use a computer to investigate and prove the various mathematical problems.

You might think so, and in point of fact you would not be far off the truth. For a long time the so-called four-colour theorem posed one of the greatest challenges to mathematics. Suppose that on a map adjacent countries are not allowed to have the same colour. Are four colours sufficient? Several false proofs of this emerged in the late 19th century, but in each case the bad solution contained the germs of ideas that set off a great many developments in graph theory and topology. About 25 years ago, two Americans, Kenneth Appel and Wolfgang Haken, managed to reduce the task to one of colouring of a finite number of maps. In the process of working on this they began to work on computers, and it turned out that indeed four colours suffice.

Could you give an example of the practical applications of your theoretical results?

I have with the theory of graphs. Both the now-fashionable social networking and the study of sorting networks are based on the theory of graphs. It is very important to be able to describe the structure of graphs. One or two of my methods may help people begin to understand them. Some colleagues and I, for instance, worked out an algorithm that is able to carry out the sorting of n objects quickly and in parallel.

Many people have worked on further refining your findings. Have you had other thoughts regarding the discoveries you have made, or do you prefer to move on to new problems?

Generally speaking, I focus on a single problem, and I am happy if I manage to solve it. I find it very hard to give up on something, which can be an advantage, but in many cases this is a distinct drawback. There are often phases when it is more or less clear that I have no idea exactly what approach I might adopt to arrive at a solution, but in

many cases I don't give up even then, which is not necessarily a good thing. When I solve a problem, I do not usually look at possible applications. Sometimes, of course, I do, such as when the solution is related to another theorem or method or another field, but in general I am a problem-solver, or that's what I am regarded as, which is not necessarily a good thing. People seem to think that arriving at grand theories is stylish.

As a young man you began studying for a medical career, then became an unskilled labourer, and it was only after that that you picked up mathematics.

The story comes across almost like a yarn. Actually, in some senses it was pure chance: I just happened to run across a school friend who had been the brightest at maths in the class, though in fact this was only because he had been late for a date and the girl had not been prepared to wait around any longer. He suggested I might have more luck if I applied to train as a teacher of maths and physics (in Hungary in the early 1960s mathematics was only taught to teacher trainees as of the third year, whereas nowadays one would start in mathematics straight away). As I said, it was pure chance: I had always been fond of maths, and at secondary school I had done fairly well in the subject.

You went on to make it as a visiting mathematician outside Hungary, and you have long held a professorship at Rutgers University in New Jersey. How do you spend your time there?

As at any university, there are two primary responsibilities. First and foremost one has to teach: I am particularly happy to lecture undergraduates and the less highly trained students. Those are big classes with 60, 80, or even 100 students. In addition, of course, one has to carry out a certain amount of research work. There is also almost a fetish for publishing papers. Everyone is always in the middle of writing an article. I fail to understand why the environmentalists are not up in arms about the waste of paper.

Despite everything, you have also kept one foot in Hungary.

More than one foot, I would say: in general I spend more of my time in Hungary. For instance, I am about to go to Budapest for a full term, and I have only been teaching at Rutgers since 1990.

Didn't you move there?

In 1990 my wife and I decided we would move to America for a while with our younger children. We lived there until 2001, though even then

we spent all our vacations in Hungary. Now we have returned and I spend only one term abroad.

"There are probably few nations where mathematics has such strong traditions as in Hungary," declared Siri Ellen Sletner, Norwegian ambassador to Budapest in the official announcement of the award of the 2012 Abel Prize. "It is therefore no coincidence that it is the second time the prize is awarded to a Hungarian-born mathematician." To which Hungarian mathematicians do you feel most indebted?

I ought to mention professor Paul Turán first and foremost: in my second year at university he gave a series of scintillating lectures on number theory over two terms. He covered a huge range of material, and he was able to lecture in a way that somehow spoke to students at every level, from the weaker ones to the best. My sense is that this represented the turning point. Later on I also attended Dr. Turán's seminars. In regard to my work I am most indebted to professors Paul Erdős and András Hajnal, both for always giving me tasks on which to work and also for working with me.

You have co-authored publications with Erdős. It is said that he frequently set a monetary prize to be awarded to anyone who proved a conjecture that he himself was unable to solve. Were there any occasions when you won?

On some occasions Dr. Erdős would offer five or ten dollars for extremely tough problems, and on others as much as $1,000. I succeeded in solving several of them, but I don't think solving one of the Erdős problems could be reckoned as particularly remunerative on an hourly-wage basis.

You were 37 when you became well known for publishing a paper in which you proved what was known as the Erdős-Turán conjecture. What does Szemerédi's theorem, as it has since been named, state?

To put it crudely, in number theory if one takes a sequence of natural numbers then it will contain an arbitrarily long arithmetic progression.

People say that when an individual is awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, it is much as if the whole country of his or her birth had received it. Might that also be the case with the Abel Prize?

The prize is a recognition both of discrete mathematics and of Hungarian mathematics. For a very long time discrete mathematics was a despised branch, but over the last thirty years it has gained in prestige with the growing importance of computers. Also, in the mean-

time it has become increasingly clear that a number of key theories and a great many proofs rely on discrete mathematical methods or thought processes.

You have been quoted as saying that mathematics is worth supporting if only because all it needs is paper, pencil and ideas. What is your vision for the future of Hungarian mathematics? Is it nourishing future Abel laureates?

I am very optimistic when it comes to educating Hungarian mathematicians. Not all that many mathematicians are needed, and we have always been able to train enough of them. There are three or four secondary schools—gymnasiums—which every year turn out 5-10 extremely talented youngsters, and on average half of them make mathematics their career. A number of those with whom I have worked are outstandingly bright and know a great deal more than I do. They are also more successful and energetic, so I have no doubt that provisions have been made for a continued supply of fresh Hungarian mathematicians. But then I could also say the same about engineers or theoretical physicists.

You have mentioned your wife at several points in this talk, and you expressed your thanks to her at the time the Abel Prize was announced. May I ask what is her occupation?

My wife is simply the best teacher of Spanish. She has students she taught at secondary school forty years ago who still coming come back to ask her advice, by now grandmothers and grandfathers. In the United States she also teaches at the State University of New York, and some of her students also phone her from there and stay in contact with her, which is quite unusual over there.

Do you spend a lot of time with your family?

A fair bit, but nothing like as much as my wife, as they are more inclined to discuss their problems with her.

One of things said about mathematicians is that they have a special connection with music. Are you a music lover?

I like it, but I have no musical ability. We sometimes go to the opera when my wife twists my arm. There are a lot of mathematicians who are well versed in music and are able to draw parallels between the methods they use and music. Others see parallels between maths and painting, these are things I am unable to decide on.

What do you do when you are not turning over a mathematical problem in your mind?

My occupations in my free time are in no way different from those of non-mathematicians: I occasionally go and see a film or I read. I watch quite a lot of sports broadcasts on TV, including American football, which to my surprise has become increasingly popular in Hungary. I would know the answer if you were to ask me the current standing of teams in various basketball and football leagues.

Which teams do you root for?

In basketball the New Jersey Nets, but sadly they are very weak at present. In ice hockey, given that we lived in New Jersey, the Devils. In baseball it's the Yankees, because they are my grandson's favourite team.

Do you go matches when you are in the States?

Sure, I do. I have gone with my grandson to ice hockey and basketball matches in Yankee Stadium, those were tremendous experiences for both of us. It is incredibly exciting to see ice hockey from close up!

Many thanks for your time, and for sharing your thoughts on your achievements and distinctions. ❧

Péter Hendi

Olympia

Translated by Annette Koreneff with the assistance of the author

There we all were in virtual reality waiting for gold ... Everyone in the street knew Uncle Aponyi, and was aware that he was a fan of FC Ferencváros who sometimes said, "We will try to get at least a draw against FC Honvéd," or that the game had already been played under the table. In 1954, one August evening, he got the residents of the building all worked up—not the adults, but us—saying that the final in Bern had been contested and maybe the game would have to be replayed, because our Puskás Öcsi had deliberately kicked the ball into the goal-post ... the one that could have been the equalizer. Play it again? My mother shook her head when I took the news up to her on the third floor. The storms of the century had taught her otherwise, and it wasn't only her sense of reality that made her say: "Never ever!" ... In addition there was Szusza Feri, who had slammed a goal in at Yassin in Moscow was and so had not been allowed to try out for the national team for two years. And there was also Károly Zsák. He was the one who had a loaded revolver at hand when he was in the goal, in case he let the ball through. No way, said my father, who knew some of the great men of the century, it wasn't a revolver, it was a clay doll which his bride had given him, and he put it at the foot of the goal at the beginning of each game. Now it sat with us, that clay doll that Károly Zsák had received from his bride, it was there with us in the virtual grandstand. Professor Doe was there too, like on the end-of-school-year photograph of class IVA. Class A means those going for gold, Class B was the street urchins, and while I'm on the subject, why didn't we call Doe Doughnut? But it's also possible that we did, I just don't remember it. It's true that in those days we had more respect. We listened to his stories about our adventures, victorious until we were badly beaten in Augsburg, and also how nations, twice or three times as populous as we, hadn't won even half as many medals in Helsinki

as we had ... And then there was that commentator from Radio Free Europe who—in 1972 or 76?—seeing that East Germany had won more gold medals than we had, posed the rhetorical question whether we would prefer to live in East Germany or perhaps, let's say in 1952—in Hungary? That commentator was there with us now, as was Laci Kiss, who had rubber boots wrapped in a blanket for a pillow, or so she told us, God rest her soul, our dear Madame Caretaker, whose dog Johnny once bit me on the ankle because I touched the enamel bowl with his food in the yard. She not only knew the intimate details of our building, but she, who asked me every day what good things my mother had given me for lunch that day, she knew everything, all along our street up to the house where Laci Kiss lived, four houses along.

One summer evening he was cycling alongside me with his upper body naked. His muscles were no longer those of a primary school pupil, as if hardship had given him a two-year advantage over us, which life has most likely taken back by now. "Come on down to the sports ground," he said, "the workers are playing against the officials." A broad smile on his face: "Fuck! The workers are already leading ten to one!!!" I was beginning to sense that sports are not simply sports, with Laci Kiss on a bicycle that he might have borrowed from one of the spectators, while on the field the workers were giving a beating to all those clever fellows ...Not every child had a bike in those days. Myself, I had a pillow under my head at night, unlike Laci, but seeing that little girl in the next street, I couldn't help following her bike immediately and running beside her, I asked her how much the bike cost. I'm afraid I'm still basically carrying this attitude with me, and it's surely still in my gray backpack, next to the laptop. It's not like a father-son relationship which explains everything, or a bad fall on the head, more like a memento which sometimes emerges when the fairer sex is nearby, not all the time of course, but sometimes, I mean in some cases. I'm wearing it inside myself, like the poet Attila József in his *Beauty's Beggar*. If it's true that sports are not only sports, then perhaps it is also true that beauty is not only beauty.

I don't know if, among the virtual spectators, anyone else thought such things, but it could well be the case, because we were all there. Below us the hammer had flown, the discus too, and had taken our breath away. We wanted the gold, the gold! Like Endre Ady in *The Pig-Headed Lord*, because they were there, both of them. Silver or bronze shine nicely too, someone said modestly, two or three rows behind us, while the pocket radio I pressed to my right ear informed me that *a Hungarian mother*—not far from us—was shooting clay pigeons. Meanwhile, my wife said something silly, such as why do I eat soft-

boiled eggs every morning. Quiet, I growled, listening to the sports commentator who whispered sweet nicknames to his cherished lady pigeon shooter, as if she were his own wife. Well, maybe she's the one we should ask, his own wife, and generally every Hungarian woman who doesn't surrender her gun or throws a bucket of hot pitch—Bertalan Székely: Women defending the fortress of Eger, on view in the National Gallery—once the gold has been won or the Turks have fallen, but who shoot, pick up the bucket of hot pitch and aim as neatly as a star crosses the firmament. I turned to my left, since I didn't have a radio on that ear, and discovered a familiar face. What a good joke: "a familiar face"! After all, I knew everybody there! Yes, but this guy I knew differently from the rest. Below us the Hungarian flag, held high on four legs and three arms, had begun a lap of honor on the track. Suddenly the national anthem was played, but nobody knew exactly why. Kayak? Modern Pentathlon? Frequent repetition made it difficult to identify, and there was that doubt as well: actually what year is it? Because on one of the screens, in black and white, László Papp appeared. We had seen how—behind his adorable moustache, with his usual modesty—he set to rights his victim's jaw. He came into the espresso bar with a woman and ordered coffee for two, but very softly, as if he were afraid he'd get his face slapped, my father told us. What do you mean, get his face slapped? I asked, petrified, from behind my semolina pudding, who would dare do such a thing??? No-one, my mother reassured me. "How can László Papp be everywhere at once?" a little boy next to me asked his father. Really, that was going through my head too. After all, before he had been sitting here with us in the virtual grandstand, and now suddenly he's in the ring, where—if I see correctly on the Internet—we got no points in his discipline this year. Shame! That's something we know all about, shame! For a few minutes the commentator from the clay pigeon shooting handed over to the swimming pool, where a colleague noted with no small surprise that a Hungarian boy—from whom we were all expecting so much—was all of three tenths of a second behind his best this year. The reason for this should be thoroughly investigated, says the commentator, although it is also possible that I merely dreamt it. Perhaps to help me wake up, I again turn left where there's no radio on my ear, and ask myself: Where have I seen this face? Got it! Switzerland, on the train, in '86 when Dětari and his team-mates in Mexico ... What's he doing here, the worthy Swiss fellow, I ask myself, surprised. He can't have come for medals? Isn't it enough for him that his country has been doing fine for centuries?

He got onto the train after Brig, when I was going home to Geneva. I mean, well, "home". The two of us were alone in the compartment for

the twenty minutes the schedule allowed us and I took the opportunity to educate him about things that might be useful for a Swiss official to know. First, I asked if he was interested in football. Yes, he said, but all he knew was that the World Cup had just started. However, I continued, tonight there will be an interesting match on television. Unfortunately, I won't be able to see the beginning because the train connection I missed in Milan means I arrive at eight something in Geneva. "What match will it be today?" my companion asked. Hungary versus the Soviet Union! And then I told him everything: the Feri Szusza in Moscow, the red water in the Melbourne swimming pool, the two huge goalkeeper errors and Rákosi incredibly missing that goal in England. It's not because I'm Hungarian, I told him, but also because what I know has a universal meaning, just as sports are not only sports. At that time, these things were not important in the same way on both sides of Europe. Just imagine the two ridiculous goals that the Russians scored against us in England in the quarter-finals—sure enough, not like our game against the Brazilians! Those two ridiculous goals couldn't even be seen on our TV in Budapest, because at that precise moment the picture disappeared—at both ridiculous goals! Well, said my companion, the potential for errors is always there, in any game. That's exactly what makes football beautiful, that sometimes you can't believe your eyes. I was very happy with this remark, because he seemed to be listening to me. We were now just one step away from my point, I mean getting him to understand what I was going to say. That when I was twenty years old, in those days we were never allowed the catharsis of defeat, because the outcome had probably been decided beforehand ... I don't say, like Uncle Aponyi, that money changed hands and so on, because these allegations do a lot of harm, especially for those who want to believe that what they see of the world is the truth. For years I've told myself that if we can choose, it's better that others should beat the Russians, because the devil never sleeps ... Even today? The worthy Swiss interrupted me, looking scared. Today the situation is different, I reassured him, now it's '86 and the winds of freedom are already eroding the Iron Curtain. Then I said to him: I think we will beat them tonight. And I envied him, because he was going to see the game from the very first minute. I had awakened his interest, the happy man told me as he was getting off the train. As for me, at the very moment I saw the Château de Chillon—where Lord Byron himself had been imprisoned for a time—from the window of the dining car I decided that I would not envy my worthy Swiss. So I got off in Lausanne to watch the match in the railway station bistro from the kick-off. Perhaps this was not my best decision that year, because arriving in Geneva after

midnight, with six goals in luggage which was heavy enough already, well ... certainly—as Villon would have said if he had known Hungarian: Happy the man who is not even trying!

On our way out of the virtual arena I saw the Swiss fellow again. For a moment, I was scared he might bring up what had happened eighteen years ago, although it couldn't be ruled out that he had enjoyed the game and it hadn't upset him. Eh, what do you care about him! We've just got a fifth gold! Everything went beautifully and above all, straightforwardly. We didn't need to subtract anything, only add up the medals. What does it matter if I miss the long distance coach, or if—so what—there's no room for me. Why not walk the twenty-two kilometers to my hotel? What can go wrong on this beautiful Greek night!

Then, suddenly, in front of the exits the crowd began to thicken. Doping tests, said Doe, and appeared not to know what that meant. Fear is infectious, even if there's no reason for it, so, relaxing, I pressed on, forward, toward the exits. My eyes were already on the buses beyond the gates, to work out in which direction the crowd was flowing. I had just caught sight of the bus with the unpronounceable name of the place where I was staying when a khaki-clad man put his hand on my shoulder. Test, he said, and seeing I didn't understand, abruptly asked me whether I spoke English, in a manner I didn't care for. If he wants something from me, he'd better stay polite and not pester. After all, it's not his bus with the flashing indicators over there. You can speak Swedish if you like, I shot back provocatively, but he didn't even flinch and carried on in English. What sort of test, I asked. Can't he see that I'm not an athlete? It's not the competitors we're checking, it's the spectators, the man in khaki snapped, and passed me on to a gorilla-like guy who pushed me into the luxury van. Before the back door slammed, I just had time to see that the full moon had risen beyond the railings, so it must have been past eleven o'clock.

Some other people were in there with me: a Pole, who picked me out immediately; two Iraqis who wanted to know where the East was; a strikingly muscular African, and many others whose nationality wasn't clear. They didn't seem to have too many medals, in any case. Then, of course, there were Americans, because they are all over the place. Everyone was thoughtfully meditating on the same questions. Except the Americans. Why are they so confident, I asked the Pole. Poles and Hungarians two good friends, he told me from somewhere back in the sixties, before answering my question as well. Why are the Americans so confident? Why shouldn't they be? A test like that doesn't bother them at all! They developed the test technology, they

know better than anyone how to avoid coming up positive. What do you mean, avoid coming up positive, I asked, dumbstruck. They won't find anything on me, I'm negative for sure. The Pole smiled as if to say: Tell me another one. Then he lowered his voice: Listen, man, nobody here is negative. Do you think we got so many medals simply by watching our favorite athletes and keeping our mouths shut tight? What does it matter if we shout or not? I insisted. And what does it matter if I drank one or two Golden Ace beers? It's not forbidden! Well, we'll see, said the Pole, and he stopped talking to me, because when we arrived at the International Inspectorate enclosure he thrust aside the iron bar with suspicious eagerness to help a jailer who was opening the metal gates.

It so happened that they kept me the longest, perhaps because they had something against Hungarians, or simply because I didn't provide sufficient material. I felt that I was making my situation worse all the time, but I couldn't help it. Suddenly all the fatigue of the day—what, just of the day? –, all the fatigue of the past three months fell on me. I couldn't get a grip on myself. And as often happens, both sides began to throw the discus, or the hammer, I mean overshoot the mark. "Where's the chamber pot?" I screamed, while they sniggered behind my back. One of them hit me on the behind and I pushed away his hand and hissed: You fucking faggot! Two of them intervened. Only it turned out that they didn't want my urine. "So what the hell?" I shouted. "You want me to shit???" "Calm down," said a remarkably well-groomed man, dressed in light blue, who hastened into the test room while the brawl was going on.

He took me politely to his office. It was immediately apparent that he had the necessary empathy, but before I grew attached to him, something whispered to me that such people are dangerous, because before you realize it you have already been manipulated. He offered me a cigarette and I almost felt sorry that I don't smoke. Our aim is not to discredit you, he began his short speech, but if you come to the Games, you must understand that the rules apply to you also. Anyone who goes against the rules can harm both his country and himself. "Just what do you mean?" I said. The Games Committee takes back the medal for which he was rooting, he explained. "I didn't go against anything," I told him, "but you must understand that I'm tired, and I didn't shout encouragement here, day in and day out, to be humiliated in the end." He broke in and apologized for any inconvenience I had suffered. I shouldn't be angry with the tester, since he's only human and his task is not easy at all. Oh, if only you knew, my dear friend, of the tricks to which the fans sometimes resort! I saw that he was trying to get me to

understand, and I wanted to ask what kind of tricks he had in mind, but another possibility suddenly occurred to me. Because as far as the punishment is concerned, not that I was afraid that my tests would be positive, but the punishment, in any event, seemed very unfair. How can you punish an entire country for a crime, however unfortunate, committed by one fan? It's not fair! "But these things happen," said the neatly shaved fellow. "Didn't you see on Eurosport? One spectator in Rome threw something at the referee's head, with the result being that the Italians lost the match." "Alright," I said to him, "but I didn't throw anything at anybody, let alone go in for doping. I'm not saying I didn't once smoke a marijuana cigarette, but thirty years ago, if not thirty-five. But that's not what we're looking for. So what is it?" He looked deeply into my eyes and said: "Your thoughts, your feelings are what we want to examine." I looked right back into his eyes as well and asked: "What is the use of knowing my thoughts and feelings?"

With a friendly smile, he handed over his business card, and as he did so, I felt that I shouldn't study the ivory-colored card I held in my hand for too long. My frown could have shown him that I knew nothing about the Organization. However, I had just time to read that he was head of a department and that his name was Andy Empathy. I felt a bit more friendly at that, not so much on account of his name as because of his position. I slipped the business card into my wallet, and would have given him one of mine but couldn't find a single one. "Damn it! This always happens," I said, showing him my empty hands. "Whenever fate allows me to meet a great man, I don't have a visiting card." "It doesn't matter at all," Andy reassured me, and he began to talk about the Organization in an extremely amiable fashion!

We love these games as much as you, but our affection is coupled with our sense of responsibility. This sense of responsibility, of course, can be of many kinds. The ancient Greek principle of a sound mind in a sound body was believed by dogmatic followers to be sufficient. Check up on the athletes and we have already achieved our goal. For the moment, let's not go into the fact that both the random control and the itemized listing of banned substances raise questions to which dogmatists can only reply that an imperfect control is better than a complete lack of control. Of course, for the time being everyone agrees that the tools we use in the struggle for clean Games should be continually up-dated. By way of example, suffice it to mention that genetic manipulation may make all the tests we apply meaningless from one day to the next. What follows from that? Well, simply that the athletes should not be the exclusive target of our fight for fairness. Taking it from there, the so-called Greens have lined up behind the

recognition of this fact. In common with movements and parties of the same name, they found that the struggle should primarily be fought for the Games' environment, since the environment, or as we call it, spectator proliferation is the main reason why the Games, which in ancient times were a useful means to bring different people into contact with one another, have today become more and more a factor stimulating mutual animosity. When Andy got to this point, one of the large testers stuck his head into the office to say they wanted to go home now, so it was about time they knew if I was going to give material or not. He's just coming, our dear fan, said Andy Empathy, and I was happy that the tester could see what good terms we were on. It might be useful when it comes to the final result! In particular, I was glad that as I was leaving the office, Andy, in a loud voice, wished me good luck and invited me to return to his office once the testing had been completed.

But the wrangling began again in the testing room. "We are not messing around," the gay fellow muttered between his teeth. Are you prepared to think? They put me in a chair, the likes of which I have only seen in films. In America, where the death sentence is still applied, the condemned person is placed in a chair like that. I was sure that I wouldn't be able to think. Or feel. They were gesticulating on the other side of the window, watching a screen to see what would happen. What rabbit I was going to pull out of my hat. On the face of one of them I thought I could lip-read the words: *I knew he was cheating*. The man was speaking Hungarian! At that I tore the electrodes off my temples and my chest and pulled off all the cables that held me to the chair. I didn't even wait for the testers to come out of their glass cage. I'm not giving them any material! I'm not even going to negotiate with them! That's enough! This was the only thought in my mind on my way back to Andy Empathy.

Everything's alright? he asked cheerfully. Nothing is right! Nothing at all! He just looked at me, stunned, and I told him that I cannot think if someone is looking at me. And feel? I cannot feel either. Oh, how sorry he was. He apologized again for the thoughtless way his men had behaved towards me. In his humble opinion, the fan is only indirectly at fault, since he is just the toxic product of a harmful process. The sports commentator should also be tested. Moreover, there was the mentality of nations, raising the self-esteem of the losers and shattering the arrogance of the winners. The national anthems could be left out of the prize-giving ceremonies, although there is still a lot of opposition to that. Not so much among the Greens, but among the dogmatists. There is still a long battle ahead, he said, and added that for him I wasn't an opponent, but a victim.

Then he escorted me politely out of his office. ❧

Tamás Koltai

Imagination and the Mundane

János Térey: *Protocol* • Péter Dóka: *Körbe K* ('Round R') • András Vinnai and Dániel Kovács: *Virágos Magyarország* ('Flowery Hungary') • Borbála Szabó: *The Whole of the Tenth Season*

There are times when a person is not ill but still feels uneasy: your life is on track, everyday matters keep you occupied, and there are seemingly no grounds for complaint, and yet you are not on good terms with yourself.

In János Térey's 2010 verse novel *Protocol*, Ágoston Mátrai is rather like a superfluous man in classical Russian literature, Eugene Onegin, say, who affects a pose of boredom and cynicism. He is a modern character and his fundamental problem is that he is suffering a "midlife crisis." Mátrai is Chief of Protocol in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a Hungarian and man of the world who is familiar with all the best restaurants in foreign lands, knows how to order their epicurean foods and wines in the native languages, strolls in all the fashionable places, and is at home in the cliques of elite artistic circles. A true habitué, he makes pithy comments at premieres and vernissages, is equally conversant with Edward Hopper's paintings, Bach's *Magnificat*, and the first night in Budapest of an opera by Haydn. He attends performances of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, listens to Schubert's *Winterreise* at home or in his car, and holds discussions with the foreign minister over whether the new ministerial chef is a Guelph or Ghibelline.

Mátrai lives in present-day Hungary, or to be more exact the Hungary of a few years ago, many allusions to which pop up in the course of the story. Specific events are mentioned that the reader may well recall, and the actor in the title role is obliged to participate in them, as his duties are related to matters of protocol, but he somehow views all this coolly, from the outside and above. Yet he strays through the everyday somehow nursing a wound and eventually comes to the conclusion that his life is futile. He travels the world, ostensibly in his element everywhere, he tends to his duties,

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and yet still feels empty. Relationships with women either do not work out or are only short term, and bring him little joy anyway. He ends up feeling alienated or distant from himself.

Térey is a distinguished member of a generation now middle-aged. With eight volumes of poetry to his name, verse novels, plays, and dramatic poems, he is one of the most prolific and distinguished writers in Hungary today. In *Protocol* Térey revives an anachronistic genre (much as he did, indeed, with his early masterpiece *Paulus*) to create a nuanced depiction of the hopes, anxieties, and frailties of the members of an emerging upper class, who are free to travel, enjoy lives of material indulgence, and explore the vapidity of their ambitions. Consisting of 22 cantos written in blank verse, the novels mixes allusions to works by Hungarian poets such as Arany and Petőfi with, of course, references to the most formidable masters of the genre, Pushkin and Byron. But Térey's erudition never comes at the cost of storytelling, and the allusions never encumber the fragile irony of his verse.

It is understandable that it was the Radnóti Miklós Theatre that arranged with the author to have an adaptation of *Protocol* written for the stage, nor is it surprising that the first performances were held here, since the play was well-suited to the theatre's profile. The text is not overtly dramatic, but that is not uncommon nowadays. Indeed it is difficult to present the epic arc and self-reflexivity of a novel at one and the same time on a theatre stage specifically because of the distinctive strengths of the genre, namely the ability of the author to indulge in a slowly unwinding narrative and to sneak surreptitiously into the text himself. This adaptation for the stage got around this by having Mátrai at times become the narrator of his own story, relating a few sentences in the first person singular to sketch out the given scene. This was less to clarify the situations themselves, which from a dramaturgical point of view could have been depicted using other means, than to preserve some of Térey's descriptive passages, which are both highly engaging and also comprise the bulk of the novel. As a solution to the challenges of adaptation, this was not bad. What is problematic, however, is that the theatre squeezes the evening between unnecessarily restrictive time constraints, not trusting in the stamina of the audience, and therefore shortening everything to an arbitrary average length. Thus all one gets is flashes and snapshots, and the audience is never given time to accustom itself to the milieu or identify with the characters. We are given a series of theatrical vignettes, as the performers gallop through Térey's narrative.

The casting for the play was superb. Guest actor Ernő Fekete has a penchant for playing splenetic intellectuals. For eight years at the Katona József Theatre he played Chekhov's Ivanov, the quintessentially ironic government official on the verge of a crisis, and he has accepted many guest roles with those characteristics, intellectual restlessness, ennui, a secret to be coolly unravelled, the typically male ailment of gross indifference. Interesting even in his impassive-

ness, his sheer presence makes him a credible cultured man-of-the-world and professional diplomat. In the play he is described as cactus-like by nature, but he is more of a clamshell turned in on himself. He is obliged to enact a "life that has no centre," from which literary reflections (e.g. frequent descriptions of dreams) have been deleted, and he even succeeds in doing it. He steps in and out of the revolving door, his impulses having a breeze of their own.

If Ágoston Mátrai is something of a poser by vocation, the characters of another contemporary Hungarian drama are likewise substitutes who have reached the Hungarian stage via multiple transpositions. The original work was Arthur Schnitzler's 1900 play *La Ronde (Reigen)*. Perhaps best known in the West through the 1950 film adaptation by Max Ophüls, in 1989 Schnitzler's play was re-contextualized to communist-era Hungary in Mihály Kornis' work for the stage, *Körmagyar (Hungarian Round)*. That in turn has now been further reworked by the young writer Péter Dóka. In their own times Schnitzler and Kornis alike both broke taboos. The sexual titillation in the original was replaced in Kornis' play with political piquancy. While Schnitzler portrayed sexual promiscuity that transgressed class boundaries at a time when this could not be mentioned in theatres without causing scandal, Kornis presented the disintegrating moral climate of power politics in Hungary of the Kádár regime at a time when such a subject could be discussed with less risk in the theatre.

The new adaptation is entitled *Round and R (Körbe K)*. Like its predecessor, it has retained the dramaturgical and sociological structure of Schnitzler's bouquet of scenes, with the dance revolving around the sexual act (as in the original), and building on the fact that one or the other of the occasional partners in each pairing moves on to the next encounter. The circle is eventually closed when the last coupling links the two most distant castes of participants. In the case of Round and R this means the prostitute and the Under Secretary of State. Clearly the play is not anything like as risqué as it was at the turn of the century, when the implied sexual act taking place on a darkened stage and the bawdy exchange leading up to it were far more scandalous than the nudity and candid vocabulary of the present incarnation.

Something far more serious is actually at stake here, for in the occasional lovemaking motives other than sexuality play a role, first and foremost the range of services that can be bought for sex and money. The question is simply who will exploit a momentary advantage and in the service of what aim. In 1989 this question had stark political implications, inasmuch as power positions were mirrored by moral relations. Lovemaking offered one an advantage, an opportunity to jockey for position. This subtext transforms the play, which may originally have seemed a frothy, frivolous comedy, into a work of deeper social significance.

Today these resonances are not as direct or strong. What remains? Simply the implication that women do not use their sexual appeal to barter without an ulterior motive?

That men are eager to prove their virility and assert their authority? One important difference is that today homosexual and bisexual acts also come into consideration, which was unimaginable 23 years ago, let alone in Schnitzler's time. The Lakmusz Group presented this and other sensitive aspects of the play with extraordinary restraint, in good taste, even somewhat bashfully. They are more playful than provocative, which is all the more noteworthy, given that they are an alternative, independent company composed mainly of young actors who studied at the Hungarian Theatrical Academy in Tîrgu Mures in Transylvania (i.e. Romania) and only recently moved to Hungary. With their performances they adapted the play to their mentality without wishing to jar the audience, which was wise and showed a sensitivity to style. They put on an actor-centred minimalist theatre, with the characters sitting on a small bench in front of the first row. The episodes are bound together by bravura interludes (a Romanian-language cooking show, an ironic pantomime, a parody of sex and the media), which underline the basic idea: people reach out to one another for casual gratification as a flight from real life, from the tedium of reality.

Typically operetta has tended towards escapism. Depictions of the world through rose-coloured glasses are very much a part of the Hungarian and Austrian traditions (one thinks of authors such as Ferenc Lehár or Imre Kálmán). Today, however, this appears to be unsustainable, at least with regards to the creation of original works. Now, for a change, a brand-new operetta has seen the light of day, a species of operetta with a three-man orchestra which is itself placed on the stage. *Flowery Hungary' (Virágos Magyarorszag)* was presented by the chamber theatre of the Katona József Theatre in Budapest.

The authors, András Vinnai and Dániel Kovács (the latter also the director), follow near-obligatory stereotypes in giving roles to a bon vivant and a prima donna, a comic dancer and a soubrette. The action takes place in a village in which a nationwide series of festivities culminates, with the closing event being broadcast on television. For the occasion the Under-Secretary for Regional Improvement, a native son of the village who, once upon a time, had been in love with a flower shop girl, drops in on his old home. The girl has created a floral tribute, a flower sculpture setting out the national emblem, which is going to be the highlight of the festivity. However, the evil-minded entrepreneur, who was supposed to have delivered the flowers, breaks the contract, thus endangering the gala. By a stroke of good luck, the influential and patriotic Under Secretary still has his heart in the right place. He sets things in motion, the stashed-away consignment of flowers is unearthed, the threat to the festivity is averted, and naturally the lovers find each other.

Over the course of the delicately mocking operetta a series of banal present-day issues are brought to light, ranging from social problems, corruption, the antagonism between town and village, even blatant racism, but in a way that works well in the setting. Even idyllically. It is

possible to view the plot through rose-coloured glasses, but also sarcastically. One can always view a performance with a touch of irony, or more than a touch. If one is a fan of television celebrities, one is perhaps more likely to take this operetta seriously, though it's quite possible that there are few fans of television celebrities in the audience in the Katona József theatre, and even so they might suspect the performance is a parody since the company has never once done an operetta since its founding. This may be why the performers did not quite meet the professional standards for such a work, as some were less gifted as singers, but then again the work is not a classical operetta but a piece "for operetta actors" in the sense once used by Peter Hacks (1928–2003), a leading dramatist in the former German Democratic Republic.

When one has trouble finding his or her place in ordinary reality, one can easily imagine oneself in a virtual world and continue living there. In Borbála Szabó's play *The Whole of the Tenth Season (A teljes tizedik évad)*, the thirty-something mother, deadened by the uneventful daily grind, has become a soap opera junkie to the point that all of a sudden she gets hooked on a sitcom series and becomes one of the characters. This set-up has been used before. In Tom Stoppard's one-act play *The Real Inspector Hound* a telephone rings so incessantly in the empty room of the theatre performance of an Agatha Christie-type whodunit that one of the two critics sitting in a proscenium box can stand it no longer and walks up on stage to answer it, thereby himself becoming involved in the plot. Borbála Szabó's heroine, Erika, seeks contact with virtual avatars because she is unable to find real people. Meanwhile she shepherds her young children on the playground and in the evenings her computer-mad husband pays no attention to her stories about having to queue up during shopping trips.

The play's virtues do not lie so much in originality as in its polish and wit. It does not seek to do too much, but what it does it achieves with near perfection. It deals in part with the atomization of relationships and in part with the proxies that act as substitutes, the virtual reality of television series. On the playground Erika is hailed by a "sitcom dealer" named Béla, who makes her dependent by supplying her with a DVD of the ninth season of a series entitled *That's Life*. Then a wish-fulfilment plastic surgery team that works on character places Erika in the tenth season, out of which she is self-sacrificingly rescued by her husband after he has also had himself smuggled into the series as a character. In the reassuring finale they find a way back to evening conversations with each other. Life, wouldn't you know, is that simple.

The entertaining play cleverly juggles real-life and fictionalized scenes, furnishing both with a delicate glaze of irony. Anyone who finds the genre of the sitcom and its laugh tracks boring will have a contented chuckle, even without the sub-textual parody, at the "live broadcast." Some members of the audience may not buy the characters, but at the same enjoy the episodes in the series (there was no

evident sign of recognition by anyone in the audience during the performance I attended at the mention of the name E. A. Poe). Nikolai Gogol's audiences also failed to notice that they were laughing at themselves. The dramatist in this case has succeeded with extraordinary inventiveness in imitating the endlessly vapid stereotype soap.

Máté Szabó, the director of the Bárka Theatre company, has done a similarly excellent job. The entertaining performance brought off the feel of banality, with the actors splendidly playing dimensionless characters, such as a simpering woman with tinted hair who flaunts herself a poetess, an effeminate dandy with his easy pleasantries, a female director who is a vamp behind a mask of masculinity, a hyper-hygienic medical student. At the beginning the real-life Erika is decent and repressed, like one of Chekhov's unhappy heroines, and only gradually does she turn into a sitcom-wallowing Fury. Her initially passive husband first has to become frantic in his desperation before he frees his wife from her Purgatory, combining the characters of Tancredi and Orpheus in one person. The Devil, in the form of dealer and his offer of cost-free sitcom dependency (he is referred to by the author as the Demon of Mass Culture), warmheartedly plies his victims with his opium of oblivion. Fortunately in the end those who have been drugged are all cured, so that here too the audience is given a happy end, one which is not an escape either, as they are allowed to grope their way back from the world of the imagination. ❧

Andros Koerner

A Reluctant Jew

A Subjective Sociology About my Identity

I often find myself sitting in my favorite armchair in my New York living room, flipping through a collection of family documents. The pile includes such diverse items as my Hungarian Jewish great-grandmother's letters from the 1870s and documents related to my family's persecution during the Second World War. Looking at this last group of papers brings back painful memories. I was only four years old in 1944, but I can recall many of the details of my life in Budapest at the time. I remember having to wear the yellow star, feeling puzzled and angry about my mother's inexplicable disappearance (I learned only much later that she had been deported to a concentration camp, an ordeal she barely survived), and being forced to endure the horrors of Budapest's Central Ghetto with my maternal grandmother and chronically ill father. To this day I feel my parents' despair, which, no matter how they tried, they could not hide from me. Their reassurances that everything would turn out well left me fearful and anything but reassured. So it is hardly surprising that in the year following the war I endured recurring nightmares related to our brutal transfer to the Ghetto. Eventually the nightmares ceased, and the focus of my attention shifted to my life at the time, to grade-school and being with my friends. As I matured into adulthood, sometimes years would go by without my giving a conscious thought to memories of the war, though in hindsight it is obvious that they remained deeply embedded in me. For the longest time I attempted to minimize their importance, as well as to dismiss the effect my Jewish origins had had on my life. So it came almost as a surprise when, decades after having left Hungary for the U.S. at age 26, I developed a passionate interest in my religious ancestors' lives and in Jewish traditions in general. For the first forty or so years of my life, I had tried to convince myself that my Jewish origins constituted no more than an autobiographical detail of scant

importance. As I grew older, however, I came to realize the extent to which those origins have always defined me as a person, whether I was conscious of that influence or not.

I first began to ponder what it meant for me to be a Jew during my high-school years. I had rather contradictory feelings about it. Some of my ambivalence had to do with certain Jewish aspects of my parents' way of life and our neighborhood. We lived in Újlipótváros (New-Leopoldtown), a large district north of the city center. Although Jews, to a large extent secularized middle-class people like us, were in a minority there, their numbers were nonetheless substantial and they lent the area a distinct character. Everyone in the city, Gentile and Jew, considered Újlipótváros a Jewish neighborhood, albeit one in which being Jewish constituted a social rather than a religious category.

My parents had lived in this neighborhood since early childhood. When they were born, the older sections of Újlipótváros were only about twenty years old, and the eventual newer sections were no more than a vast wasteland along the Danube, strewn with factories, lumberyards, and storage grounds for construction materials. No wonder my parents felt a strong emotional attachment to this part of the city: they had witnessed its evolution and it had been the backdrop of their entire lives.

Sunday mornings, while Anyu (mommy in Hungarian) was busy at home preparing our midday meal (the main repast of the day in Hungary), my father would typically take me for a walk along Szent István körút (ring street). For our Sunday morning ritual, in which my much younger siblings eventually participated, it was enough to take the short walk from our rather ugly street to this boulevard and glance at the uninterrupted rows of huge, heavily ornamented turn-of-the-century apartment buildings that lined both its sides for us to get into a festive mood. Our walk consisted of looking at the shop-window displays and watching the strolling crowds as we ambled from the end nearer our home to Margaret Bridge at the other end. There, we turned around and retraced our steps. On the way home, we would pick up a tray of pastries at our favorite pastry shop for our end-of-the-week meal. Even well after the Communist nationalization of the shops in 1949, my father continued to refer to the shops by the names of their former owners, not by the names of the newly formed government-owned retail chains. Thus I too knew where Gesztesi's pastry shop had been on Visegrádi Street, as well as where Glasner's bakery, Malvin Gelb's flower shop, and Kerpel's pharmacy used to be on Szent István körút, which my father referred to as Lipót körút well into the 1960s, even though this particular name change had been made in 1938.

I loved these Sunday walks with Apu (daddy in Hungarian). They gave me an opportunity to spend time with him alone, to have intimate talks and share the experience of observing street life together. These ritual Sunday morning outings continued until I left Hungary, and I have always cherished their memory.

Middle-class Jews, including my parents, felt at home in this neighborhood, where so many people had similar backgrounds, lifestyles, and aspirations. With affectionate self-irony they called it *Lipócia*, punning on its name by adding an "-ia" to it to make it sound like the name of a country. Nowadays this nickname has become common usage, but at the time I hardly ever heard it used by the Gentiles living there. Local Jews, on the other hand, frequently introduced themselves by saying "I am from *Lipócia*," as if they were from another country. And in some respects they were.

In addition to my Sunday excursions with Apu, there were some other aspects of our life in Újlipótváros that I recall with fondness. On the whole, however, my responses to our district included a good deal of ambivalence. I increasingly found its middle-class Jewish worldview limiting, even provincial. I longed for complete integration, and refused to recognize my longing as a pipedream in Hungary, where a large segment of society continued to view Jews with suspicion or, indeed, outright prejudice. I naively failed to see that the Holocaust, having defined all the many different kinds of Jews as one racially separate group, made the dream of successful absorption into Hungarian society more unrealistic than ever before. Only frustration with my "otherness" and my desperate desire to break out of it can explain my irrational belief that complete assimilation was possible.

As a teenager, like so many in that age group, I began questioning my parents' social habits and opinions, though all this was merely a vague aversion that I would have had trouble expressing precisely, which was probably one of the reasons I never mentioned these doubts to them. Several of these questions were about certain paradoxical features in my parents' way of thinking. For example, like most of the modernized Jews in the city, they somehow managed to reconcile their professed liberalism and tolerance with their aversion to Orthodox Jews.

They felt embarrassed by the Orthodox, who reminded them of their own ancestors' traditional lifestyle, something they were eager to leave behind since they considered it incompatible with modern life. My parents peppered their everyday speech with Yiddish and Yiddish-derived words, but they didn't know Yiddish, the preferred language of Orthodox and Hassidic Jews in a northeastern region that used to

belong to Hungary (most of which today lies in Ukraine). In a way, they were almost proud of not being able to speak Yiddish, which they associated with a largely uneducated, socially unpolished rural world. Other assimilated Budapest Jews held similar prejudices, and when they thought their children had been impertinent or lacked good manners, they frequently admonished them by saying: *"Ne viselkedj úgy mint egy pólisi!"* ("Don't behave like a Yid!"). I heard this sentence many times in other families, but never from my parents. Not that I was such a well-mannered model child, but they preferred to express their dislike of the Orthodox in more subtle ways.

Their aversion was also more moderate than that of some modernized Jews, who claimed that the Orthodox were in part to blame for continuing anti-Semitism, as their "strange" habits and insistence on a lifestyle so different from the majority greatly contributed to society's antagonism toward all Jews. Failure to see this as a false explanation was by no means limited to the under-educated. I was shocked to hear it voiced by a friend who was a renowned scholar of Ancient Greek and Latin, as well as a practicing Catholic of partly Jewish ancestry. Though I never heard my parents express an opinion like that, their palpable discomfort with the Orthodox began bothering me already as a teenager, even as their attitude held sway over me. I was truly a bundle of contradictions.

Anyu's prejudice against the Yiddish-speaking Jews was driven home to me in the 1980s, when I was recording her recollections of her internment in an Austrian concentration camp during the last months of the Second World War. The thousands of Hungarian Jewish women at the camp included both modernized Budapest Jews and Yiddish-speaking, largely rural Jews from northeastern Hungary. She recalled the latter with disdain. "There were many Finns in the camp," she told me. "That's what we called the Jews who came from the area around Munkács and Ungvár [today Mukachevo and Uzhgorod in Ukraine]. We mocked them as Finns, because when asked where they'd come from, they responded in Yiddish: 'fin Munkács' [from Munkács]. They were a shitty group. They stole things and misbehaved in all kinds of ways." But she also spoke of them with respect. "They had courage, though. When the guards weren't looking, these Munkács Jews would loosen some planks in the fence surrounding the camp and slip through the gap. Then they'd walk to the nearby village, sometimes even spend the night there. They'd fill up their bellies, then, in the morning, they'd return to the camp through the gap in the fence. Sometimes they got caught, sometimes they got away with it. But it was risky business, because if they were caught a capo had to give them 25 lashes as punishment."

Another paradox in my parents' thinking involved the outward appearance of Jews. Although I don't recall my father ever making judgments about what makes a Jew handsome, my mother had strong opinions in this regard. She never said it outright, but it was obvious to me from many off-the-cuff comments that as far as she was concerned the best-looking Jew was a person who "didn't look Jewish." She made no secret of the fact that this was one of the reasons she'd been physically attracted to my father. I also sensed her attitude in an anecdote about Apu's university years in the mid-1920s, a period when anti-Semitism was rampant at the universities. She told me that a group of my father's fellow students, not realizing he was Jewish, asked him to join their *fajvédő* (race-protecting) association, whose purpose was to curtail the rights and influence of Jews. They of course changed their minds when my father enlightened them as to his origins. It was clear to me from the way she told this story that Anyu was proud that those students hadn't been able to detect Apu's background. Another comment that exposed her feelings in this regard was a remark she made about Frigyes, her favorite uncle. "He didn't look Jewish at all. He was a very beautiful man with gorgeous blue eyes," she recalled, clearly equating male beauty with not looking Jewish. As I recall, not only she but also relatives and Jewish friends of her generation frequently used the phrase *"nem néz ki zsidósan"* (he/she doesn't look Jewish) when complimenting someone's looks. I understood this as a reaction to the period of anti-Semitism and persecution, when "looking Jewish" could have been an added burden to being Jewish, but I must say such comments and the underlying self-hatred they expressed always made me uncomfortable.

While growing up in Budapest, I was struck by a curious feature of my parents' social lives, namely that almost all their friends were Jewish. This wouldn't have been surprising had they and the members of their social circle been religious. But in fact, the background my parents shared with their friends was just about the only Jewish thing in their lives. Anyu and Apu never socialized with the two or three religious people among their acquaintances, probably because they found it awkward to maintain closer social ties with people who observed the Shabbat and kept kosher.

I'm sure they didn't consciously select friends of Jewish origin, rather these friendships sprang from spontaneous affinities and instinctive choices. In this respect my parents were typical, since most of the modernized Jews in Budapest felt more at ease in such company. Clearly, my parents were seeking the comfort of being surrounded by people with similar experiences and social responses, and with a

similar sense of humor. But also, it was simply easier to talk with these friends about current problems related to their Jewish origins, such as the legal restrictions placed on Jews in the years preceding the war, the mortal threats they faced in 1944, and questions of identity during the post-war years.

Occasionally, when my parents got together with friends the conversation revolved around famous Jewish people, including people who did not consider themselves Jewish or whose forebears had mostly been Gentiles. They never seemed to tire of the subject, and could go on for half an hour or more coming up with new names and exulting when they found a person whose Jewish descent was not widely known. They even repeated rumors that later turned out to be false, such as Charlie Chaplin's supposedly Jewish origins. Clearly they felt proud of the accomplishments of famous Jews. One could consider this as justified ethnic pride, but instead of making me feel proud, these conversations tried my patience. To me they were merely attempts to derive a questionable sense of superiority from the statistically disproportionate number of Jewish overachievers. It smacked of nationalism, and I had a disdain for any kind of nationalism, Jewish, Hungarian, or other. In principle, Anyu and Apu too had no love for Jewish nationalism, but at the same time their thinking had been affected by some milder and less obvious forms of it, such as this game of listing names.

Like many largely assimilated Jews in Hungary, my parents didn't want to be known primarily as Jews and had no intention of moving to Israel. Their identity had deep roots in Hungary, where ever since the 19th century Zionism had attracted a smaller following than in other Eastern European countries. I eventually came to oppose my parents' prejudices against Orthodoxy and Hassidism, but I have always shared their opinions about moving to a Jewish homeland. Like them, I feel that this would be inconsistent with my life choices. The Diaspora is an important part of my heritage and I am fond of it as one is fond of a long-standing but not completely problem-free marriage. Like my parents, I prefer to live in a diverse community of different nationalities and religions. At the same time, the existence of the state of Israel means a lot to me. It was a thrill for me to be able to visit Israel and to see the pride its citizens take in the country.

Other members of my extended family felt the same way about Zionism. This was true even of my father's younger brother, who decided to move to Israel with his wife and children, the only person in my family to do so. They were secular like the rest of us, so their move wasn't motivated by religion. They simply wanted to leave the

oppressive atmosphere of Hungary after the failed 1956 Revolution, and in 1957 Israel was the only western-style democracy where the Communist authorities would allow them to relocate. Even so, they had to surrender their beautiful villa in the Buda hills to the government in return for permission to emigrate.

Keeping tabs on members of one's extended family and maintaining ties with them have been important aspects of Jewish tradition. The reasons for this included such practical considerations as maintaining a support system in business and in times of need. The Jews' outsider status in society and the dislocations typical of their history probably contributed to this interest in family history. While many Jewish families were attentive to their past, other modernized families were eager to shed the ways of their religious ancestors, and consequently showed little interest in their forebears. This was more or less the case with my father's family: his ancestors were rarely mentioned, and members of his extended family maintained cordial but distant relations.

My mother's family, on the other hand, was at the opposite extreme. Their members were inexhaustible sources of family lore and anecdotes. They were very aware of their relatives and ancestors, whether immediate or distant, indeed, even if they'd lived centuries earlier. In addition, they kept all the old family portrait paintings and photos, a big stack of old documents, as well as pieces of china, cutlery, and tablecloths, all displaying the monograms of long-diseased ancestors. We were in possession of a virtual family museum. In addition to their interest in their forebears, my mother's family was always ready for a visit to relatives or, if that was not practical, to hear the latest news about them. Anyu and her siblings might have fought a lot, and occasionally even stopped talking to one another for weeks, but once the storm blew over, they could hardly wait to get together again. This passionate cultivation of family ties was one of the few areas of Jewish tradition that survived in my family. In most other respects I tried to follow Apu's example, but even as a teenager I took after my mother and grandmother in my interest in stories about my family's past.

Of course, divorce was generally less common in the past than it is nowadays, but in my family it was practically unheard of, and the few cases of it were hardly ever even mentioned. For example, I was in my last year of high school when I first heard my father mention that he and his older brother were in fact half brothers, because their mother had remarried after divorcing her first husband. I assume the divorce must have been a source of embarrassment to mother and

sons alike, hence the secrecy. To this day, I know nothing more about my paternal grandmother's first husband, my uncle's father, than that his name was Klein.

In my family even problematic marriages tended to survive. I'm sure my maternal grandmother never considered divorce, even as she was coping with the serious psychological problems of my grandfather, who eventually refused to leave his room for days on end, eating his meals there by himself and shutting himself off even from his family. So I see my own divorce – after twenty-two years of marriage, when persistent tensions made life torturous for all of us – as a break with tradition.

While my parents did their best to ignore Jewish tradition, some details of their lifestyle betrayed traces of that background, though they never thought of those features as being related to their heritage. For example, in my childhood I couldn't understand why my mother didn't add sour cream to *paprikás csirke* (paprika chicken), one of the most popular dishes in Hungarian cuisine. What she called paprika chicken was really a version of chicken *pörkölt*, a related dish prepared without cream. I came to realize only much later that she'd picked up this method of preparation from her mother, my grandmother, who in turn had learned it from hers, my observant great-grandmother. My grandmother didn't keep a kosher kitchen, frequently cooked pork dishes, and didn't bother using a kosher bird for paprika chicken. In addition, when she cooked other dishes she ignored the religious rule of not mixing meat with dairy products. But for some odd reason she and my mother left the sour cream out of the paprika chicken and veal, so the versions of these dishes that we ate at home adhered at least to this vestige of our ancestors' dietary rules. I had little enthusiasm for my mother's bastardized versions of these dishes, and I much preferred them in restaurants, made according to the authentic sour-creamy recipes.

In general, however, Anyu's cooking resembled standard Budapest fare rather than Jewish cuisine. She rarely made cholent, and when she did she used smoked pork instead of kosher beef and goose. Indeed, she never prepared typical Jewish dishes like stuffed goose neck and the various kinds of *kugel*, or desserts like matzo fritters, *hamantaschen*, and *flódni*, a pastry with four kinds of filling in its layers. Yet, looking back I can discern typical Jewish preferences in some of her cooking, although neither of us was conscious of this having anything to do with our origins. All I knew then was that I didn't care for her overly sweet tomato sauce for stuffed peppers or her similarly sweet *tökfőzelék* (dilled summer squash). Both my grandmother and great-grandmother (as documented by her handwritten recipe

collection) were better cooks than my mother, but they too added sugar to some of their savory dishes. As a matter of fact, my great-grandmother's 1869 recipe for braised kohlrabi called for so much sugar that I decided to adapt her recipe by cutting back on that ingredient in my book about her household and cooking. Sweet-and-sour flavors turn up even more frequently in Ashkenazi Jewish cooking than in traditional Hungarian cuisine; they are among the common elements in the tremendous diversity of regional Jewish cooking in Eastern Europe. My mother, however, tipped the balance of flavors toward the sweet in such dishes, thereby following a preference common among Budapest Jews. In addition, she typically served sweet versions of certain dishes, like noodles with pot cheese or with shredded, sautéed cabbage, which in Gentile households were customarily prepared with salt and pepper instead of sugar.

Another Jewish tradition that manifested itself in my parents' lifestyle had to do with alcohol. They drank no wine with their meals and no brandy with after-dinner guests, and they never frequented pubs. Drinking with one's buddies in a pub while singing to the accompaniment of a Gypsy violinist was customary among almost all Gentile social groups, including the poor and the rich, the uneducated and the well-schooled, the rural and the urban. In Jewish families, however, especially in Budapest, this was practically unheard of. This was true even of the most assimilated Jews, those who in other respects seemed to do their best to copy the Gentiles' lifestyle. So it is hardly surprising that, unlike in the Christian population, alcoholism was virtually non-existent among Jews. A drunken Jew was a rarity indeed. Even so, drinking small amounts of wine as part of religious ceremonies was common, just as it was among Christians.

While everyone in my extended family stayed away from alcohol, I enjoyed wine and even got drunk on those few occasions when I let my guard down. "What kind of Jew are you to be drinking alcohol?!", my parents and relatives would ask me in mock horror. In hindsight this too was probably an intuitive attempt to rid myself of vestiges of Jewish tradition, in order to become a "typical" Hungarian. In one major respect, our family's way of life was not at all typical of modernized Budapest Jews. This was the frequent verbal and physical violence that marked my own and my siblings' upbringing at our mother's hands. Although biblical texts, such as Proverbs 13:24 ("he that spareth the rod hateth his son"), advocate corporal punishment in child rearing, and some medieval rabbis, for example Maimonides, at least allowed it, later it became more the exception than the rule among Jews, including those in Budapest. As I recall, children were

rarely hit in Jewish households. Even outside the family, resorting to violence to settle arguments was very rare in Jewish culture. My mother was unfortunately unable to follow this style of child rearing. During her moments of out-of-control screaming and hitting she appeared to be in the grips of the demons of her own personality, formed, perhaps, by her father's domineering, impulsive, and frequently abusive nature, which she professed to abhor, without realizing how much of it survived in her.

Trying to be less obviously Jewish, my parents wished to avoid the stereotypical mannerisms of old-fashioned religious Jews, such as talking in a sing-song manner, answering a question with a question, and gesturing vigorously during a conversation to emphasize their points. "Don't talk with your hands," they'd admonish me if they caught me at it.

A similar desire to differ from society's caricatured image of the usurious, exploitative, money-grubbing Jew may well explain my father's total lack of interest in all matters related to money and business. Here too, I was trying to imitate my father, who looked down on such things and proved a complete failure the few times he was forced to make business decisions. He was hopelessly bad at negotiating contracts, striking deals, and bargaining, an inadequacy I inherited. Clearly we were more interested in intellectual capital than in money. We also manifested our disdain for financial matters in our rather snobbish prejudice against Jews we deemed overly *anyagias* (money-minded). Ironically, our disapproval of Jewish acquaintances who emphasized making money by any means demonstrated the influence of the same anti-Semitic image we tried so hard to avoid. There was, however, one essential difference: we didn't generalize it as a typical Jewish trait.

In spite of my teenage ambivalence toward Újlipótváros and the constricted nature of my parents' social life, I now realize how much Budapest's Jewish culture, so inextricably woven into the fabric of the city, has shaped me. If a person's identity refers to his conscious image of himself, then that culture was not part of my identity at the time. Nonetheless, through unconscious absorption, it had a great influence on my personality, and I am certain many people around me have noticed as much. Indeed, however late in life I became aware of it, this part of my Jewish identity can in fact be traced to the emergence of Budapest as a major modern European metropolis in the late nineteenth century.

The explosive growth of Budapest between the 1860s and the First World War coincided with a similarly rapid increase of its Jewish population, nearly one quarter between 1900 and 1920. The crucial

influence of the large Jewish middle class on the evolution of Budapest's culture eventually became part of the substance of the city. Jewish journalists, humorists, and writers played an important part in shaping Budapest's language. Although they and the rest of the city's Jews contributed many Yiddishisms to it, this wasn't an ethnic dialect, but a modern urban vernacular favored by the entire population. All the city's inhabitants, Gentile and Jewish alike, absorbed, accepted, and participated in its unique and fascinating culture. It was the culture not of a Jewish Budapest, but of modern Budapest. This was certainly how I thought of my city.

I was the product of this urban environment, and in spite of my interest in rural traditions, peasant art, and folk songs, my emotional and intellectual attachment was first and foremost to the city of my birth, and only after that to Hungary in general. Although Hungarian anti-Semites, who view Jews as somewhat suspicious and not sufficiently patriotic, might consider my greater attachment to Budapest as proof that they are right, I doubt they would similarly question someone's devotion to a rural birthplace and its culture.

In spite of the existence of a strong Jewish culture in the city, it was frequently difficult to pinpoint the differences in lifestyle and mentality of Jewish and Gentile professionals, say, lawyers or physicians. This was not only because a profession to a large extent determines how a person interacts with others, but also because the Jewish and Gentile middle class mutually influenced each other. This didn't mean, however, that there were no differences between the strategies and preferences of Jews and Gentiles even within the same social group.

The greater emphasis placed on the value of education was perhaps the most obvious distinguishing characteristic of the Jews, not only in the middle class, but even among those with modest incomes. This was by no means unique to Budapest; it was an important feature of Jewish life in many countries. The difference between the educational strategies of Budapest Jews and Gentiles can easily be documented by statistics, which show not only that a much larger proportion of Jews finished high school and went on to study at university than Gentiles, but they also had higher grades on average. This of course had nothing to do with any inherent superiority, but with a habit Jews inherited from the constant study of religious texts, a prominent part of their ancestors' traditional life. They also inherited a sense that they needed the benefits of education and excellence in their chosen professions to compensate for discrimination against them, such as the laws curtailing the rights and possibilities of Hungarian Jews in the period before my childhood.

By the time I became teenager in the postwar years, such anti-Jewish discrimination was a distant memory. For me and others sharing my origins, commitment to our studies was no longer an adaptation to adverse conditions, a survival strategy so to say. It was simply part of an ingrained attitude toward life, a tradition conveyed to us by our parents, whether they were religious or secular. The pursuit of knowledge certainly became an important goal in my life. At the time I thought in this too I was mainly trying to follow in my father's footsteps, attempting to measure up to his astonishingly broad knowledge of literature, music, the visual arts, and of course architecture. I know from my father that he had to have the best marks in high school to be able to continue his studies, since a law enacted in 1920 severely limited the percentage of Jewish students admitted to universities. While at the university, he again needed excellent marks so as not to have to pay tuition, because his family didn't have the means to do so. These were all important reasons to excel, but I strongly believe the unconscious influence of ancient Jewish tradition was just as compelling. In my case another motivation for trying to acquire an education was to find an area where I could prove my mettle, as if to compensate for my social awkwardness, timidity with girls, and last but not least for my lack of athletic abilities. In this respect I was quite different from Apu, who had been an excellent skier, rower, and mountain climber in his youth.

Already in my early teens I was reading book after book in my free time, more or less systematically going through a good deal of the masterpieces of world literature (though with strange gaps, such as Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and other authors of long novels, for which I lacked patience). About once a week I put aside the book I was reading to visit the fabulous Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest so I could gain an intimate knowledge of the hundreds of old masters exhibited there. In addition to intellectual curiosity and wanting to keep up with Apu, I was also driven in all this by a less noble desire to show off, to stand out among my classmates with the breadth of my erudition.

During the Stalinist period in the early 1950s in Hungary, Western art books and magazines were neither sold nor available in public libraries, so art lovers sorely missed access to such publications. Those of us, including most of my friends in the art school where I studied, who didn't care for the government-mandated conservative style of painting and sculpture, treasured any books on modern art we could get our hands on. I must have confided my curiosity regarding the avant-garde to a trusted teacher of art history in school, because one day he called me into his room and, after carefully locking the door

with a key, secretly showed me a large framed reproduction of a cubist still life by Picasso, which he had hidden behind a cabinet years earlier, when all modern art, considered the "decadent" products of capitalist society, was purged from the school. Of course, I had to promise not to say a word about the matter to anyone. But this was an exceptional occurrence and involved only one reproduction. If one wanted to know a bit more about avant-garde art, initially the only way to do so was to borrow a monograph on the subject from an older friend, who had acquired it before the Communist takeover.

Sometime around 1956, however, one bookstore in Budapest that specialized in foreign-language books began importing and selling Western books on modern artists and movements, but only in tiny quantities, a dozen or two dozen copies of any particular title. Word of their arrival spread with lightening speed in Budapest's intellectual circles and they were sold out in a very short time. I visited this shop at least once a week and spent much of my allowance, along with money my parents sometimes gave me for the purpose, on such art books, which the salespeople, whom I had befriended, reserved for me. They knew me so well that in 1974, when I first stopped by after seven years had passed during which I was not able to visit Hungary because of my "crime" of having left for the West, some of the old-time salespeople greeted me by saying, "What happened? We haven't seen you for such a long time!"

In school, the fact that I owned such books on modern art and was familiar with a few examples of the latest Western literature and music earned me a certain respect among my classmates. When I showed them my latest Western art books, in which every single reproduction was in color (a novelty in Hungary at the time), my fellow students excitedly handed them around and fought to be the first to borrow them. Perhaps by having spent so much of my energies and scant money on an attempt to remain artistically up to date, I not only wished to defy the dictatorial restrictions of Communist cultural policy, but I intuitively adhered to the Jewish tradition of being ultra-sensitive to all new information and open to new ideas.

At the time my English and German were still rather shaky, but I knew enough to be able to get at least the gist of Western books. Everyone in my family spoke several languages, though I wouldn't say we were the best examples of the Jewish multilingual tradition that evolved at a time when Jews, in addition to knowing Hebrew, Yiddish, and frequently German, needed to speak the dominant tongues of their regions as well. Foreign languages never came easily to me, and I became proficient only in English. Nor were my parents great talents

in this respect: in addition to Hungarian, they spoke only German perfectly, English and French much less so. My brother alone among us had a real knack for languages: he not only mastered them more easily, he could speak them with virtually no accent. Under Communism, the Jews' typical knowledge of languages made them welcome in state-owned agencies of foreign trade, since few of the children of industrial workers and poor farmers, the regime's trusted cadres, were proficient in foreign tongues. These agencies provided a much-needed refuge for multilingual Jews, even for those deemed "unreliable" because of their bourgeois background and therefore excluded from other decent jobs. Both my aunt Klári and Apu's cousin Miklós worked at such trade agencies. Miklós, perhaps the best linguist in my extended family, had mainly his language skills to thank for his position, because, as the former co-owner of a bathroom-fixtures store, he was viewed with suspicion by the Communist authorities.

During my high school years, when I became vaguely aware of my desire to break out of the of my parents' restricted social life, I sought out friends from a broader spectrum of Hungarian society than Apu and Anyu had done. This was in sharp contrast to my behavior in grade school, where I was still following my parents' example by befriending mostly Jewish children. Roughly a third of the kids in my neighborhood elementary school were Jewish, but that in itself doesn't explain why I tended to socialize only with them. And the reason all my friends in high school were Gentiles could be that I attended an art school with students from all over the city and the provinces, so the backgrounds of the students by and large reflected that of the country in general, where Jews represented a tiny minority. But that wasn't the only reason for my casting a wide net. I believe my thinking and ideals had changed. In grade school, I didn't have the critical capacity to question my parent's instinct that Jews, secular or not, socialized mainly with Jews. Now, in high school, however, not only were my five or six best friends Gentiles, but some of them came from families sidelined or even persecuted by the Communist authorities due to their alleged "unreliability." For example, the father of one of my friends had been a military pilot and officer during the war and had fought against the Soviets. As a result, under the Communist system he first had to work in some miserable job and later weave scarves for a meager living as a home worker of a craft cooperative. So this friend and a few others not only had a different religious background than mine, they had a completely different social background as well. No doubt my choice of friends had much to do with my desire for complete integration, for breaking out of the "ghetto."

In spite of my determination to forge an identity in which my Jewish origins were not the most important factor, I had to accept being Jewish as a fact of life. I perceived it, however, as a burden, since it forced me to confront the unpleasant reality that to many I was not quite an authentic Hungarian. Indeed, I found myself wishing I weren't Jewish, so I wouldn't have to deal with these complex and emotionally-taxing issues.

Since I was not religious and had no interest in Judaism or Jewish tradition, what did being Jewish mean to me? It amounted to little more than memories of my family's persecution during the war and a resentful acknowledgment of my "otherness" in a society in which the "Jewish question" still held sway. It was precisely the persistence of this "question," however, that made me stress my Jewishness to friends and acquaintances. As long as prejudices continued, as long as there were those who didn't accept Hungarian Jewry as an organic part of the nation, I felt honor-bound to assert that I indeed belonged to that group.

The same ambivalence that characterized my feelings regarding the limited world of Budapest Jews like my parents was at the core of my relationship with Jewishness itself: affirmation coupled with a desire to keep my distance. Like many teenagers, I tried out some roles as part of the process of sorting out who I was. Occasionally this led to ridiculous results, such as when I tried to resemble a traditional English gentleman by elegantly carrying an umbrella for a few months, even in good weather. Looking back, I see this as another instinctive and, to say the least, odd attempt to distance myself from the image of the Budapest Jew.

I didn't have many girlfriends, but all of them were Gentiles, which is not surprising considering my circle of friends. Although a few Jewish girls expressed interest in me, I always found some polite excuse for not entering into a relationship with them, not because of their religious background but because I wasn't attracted to them. My first Jewish girlfriend was to become my wife, but initially I thought that she too came from a Catholic family. I'm jumping ahead here, because this happened in 1965, years after I had completed my studies and begun working as an architect. I first met my American-born wife in Alpbach, a Tyrolean village in Austria, where I participated in a gathering called the *European Forum*. Young intellectuals from various countries came to this picturesque village, located high up in the mountains, to spend two weeks out of every year discussing cultural and social issues in small groups led by highly reputable academics, such as George Steiner. Young people, however, didn't restrict themselves to highfalutin intellectual subjects at this meeting, so it is

no wonder that well-informed insiders tended to refer to it by its nickname, the "internazioneller Heiratsmarkt" (international marriage market). The invitation to the gathering and a scholarship had been passed on to me by a former girlfriend who had been unable to obtain a passport that year. This was a fairly common problem in Communist Hungary. Ordinary citizens didn't have permanent passports and had to submit separate applications for each trip to the West, which were often rejected for no apparent reason, as had been the case with my application in a previous year. But fortunately that year I had been granted a tourist passport enabling me to travel to Western Europe, and so I was glad to accept her generous offer. I was looking forward first to participating in the *European Forum* in Alpbach and then going from there to Germany and France for a month of sightseeing.

The organizers of the event were more than a little surprised when a man showed up instead of the young Hungarian woman they had expected, but they were too polite to send me away. At the gathering, someone introduced me to an attractive young American woman of German descent. We chatted, and I told her about my plans to go to Munich after the symposium. As it turned out, she and her parents lived there, and she invited me to stay in their apartment. Since I slept in the library, I had an opportunity to study the books there. Her father had been a professor at the Munich university, and many of the books were about Catholic theology. I therefore assumed that the family was Catholic. This was quite naïve on my part because I should have been able to guess the truth from their typical German-Jewish name, but in fact we were some time into our relationship when the subject finally came up. The reason for the theological books became clear to me when I got to know my future father-in-law better, a German Jew who had emigrated to the U.S. during the Second World War and then returned to Germany in 1960. Although he had never converted to Catholicism, he had a life-long interest in it and published most of his essays on philosophy, politics, social issues, and the dialogue between German Jews and Gentiles in a Jesuit quarterly.

After a two-year relationship and several visits to Budapest by my future wife, we decided to get married. Since she had no intention of moving to Hungary, I agreed to leave, although at that time this could only be done illegally. My method was quite common among people who wanted to leave for good: I claimed that I merely wanted to go abroad for a few weeks, I received a tourist passport enabling me to do so, and then I "forgot" to return. The idea of leaving Hungary wasn't new to me. Since early 1955 or so, I had had serious reservations about the Communist system. In May or June of 1956, I attended a meeting of

the Petőfi Kör (Petőfi Circle), the most important forum of the search for alternatives to dogmatic Communism. In October of that year, I participated in the demonstrations that marked the beginning of the Hungarian Revolution. In December 1956, after its defeat, I tried twice to sneak across the border to Austria. Both times I was caught by Hungarian border guards and on one occasion they forced me to spend a night at a detention facility together with hundreds of fellow would-be escapees. After such unpleasant experiences I gave up my attempts to escape for a while, even as my frustration with the Communist dictatorship increased.

Before the 1956 Revolution, membership in the Communist Youth Organization was virtually automatic. As far as I know, all my classmates were, like me, members, regardless of how they felt about the system. But after witnessing the bloody suppression of the Revolution by the Soviets and their Hungarian Communist allies, I could no longer agree even to a pro-forma membership. At this point it would have been a betrayal of the ideals that had made me enthusiastically greet the Revolution and participate in some of the demonstrations. As a consequence, I was among the students in my class who refused to join the reorganized Youth Organization. In this, as in so many things, I was inspired by Apu's example: he similarly refused to become a member of the reorganized Communist Party after 1956. During my remaining two years in school, the assistant principal periodically summoned me to his office and demanded an explanation for my not joining. It would have been suicidal to have given my real reasons – my abhorrence of the system – so I used the excuse of psychological problems (all invented on the spot) that "unfortunately" kept me from joining mass organizations. Instead of responding to my rather transparent excuse, he argued that my left-wing family background almost obliged me to be a member of the Youth Organization. I wouldn't have agreed to join in any case, but it certainly didn't help his cause that I saw him as a hypocrite. During the Revolution, when my school's normal functions had been suspended, I had stopped by to see how things were at the school and observed this turncoat playing the role of the great revolutionary. But apart from having to endure his diatribes, my stubborn refusal had no serious consequences: the school authorities didn't try to threaten me and I suffered no repercussions.

In the early 1960s, when the government finally permitted me to take a few tourist trips to Western Europe, I held the Communist system in no less contempt than I had at the time of my two attempts to escape to the West in 1956. I nevertheless chose to return to

Hungary from each of those trips instead of staying abroad for good. I returned because by that time my desire to free myself from Communist rule was outweighed by reasons that kept me in Hungary: first of all by my love for my father and the joy of being able to collaborate with him in architectural competitions and interior design projects. Now, however, my love for my future wife tipped the balance. I was looking forward to being able to live with her in New York, in the proximity of my beloved maternal grandmother and two of my aunts who had emigrated to the States decades earlier.

So I left with my tourist passport, realizing that only a general amnesty for the "crime" of all those who, like me, escaped to the West would allow me to return without facing retribution. We decided to get married in Munich while I was waiting for my American immigration visa. My wife wasn't religious at all, but her Jewish heritage had been emotionally important to her, so she thought it would be nice if we had a Jewish wedding. I was strongly against the idea, because it seemed to me that a religious rite devoid of religious convictions would be a mockery: nothing more than putting on a show. So we ended up having a civil wedding at the city registry. Today I wouldn't be so dogmatic about a religious ritual that is not backed by belief in God, but at the time I was still very much trying to distance myself from Jewish traditions.

Several years passed before it was safe for me to return to Hungary without the fear of being forcibly kept there. During those years my father finally succumbed to his illness, and it saddened me no end that I could not be at his bedside. But at least I was able to spend time with my grandmother in New York, and was at her side when she died.

We arrived in New York in January 1968 and within two weeks I found a job with a fairly well-known architect, whose work I had already known for years from architectural magazines. I quickly got used to the American system of measurements, but it took much longer before I began to feel completely at home in English. The small firm where I worked didn't have a secretary, so the draftsmen answered the phone. My boss, however, asked me not to do so because of my atrocious accent. "You make it sound as if this were the Russian Embassy," he said. The English I had learned in Hungary was by and large sufficient for everyday conversation, but I was as unfamiliar with the technical terms of architecture as I was with American slang. Jack, one of my colleagues in the office, enjoyed teaching me tongue twisters of the she-sells-seashells type, architectural terms, and last but not least slang, mainly obscenities and idioms about sex. I kept a special copybook for these words and their

Hungarian equivalents, and studied them in my free time, including while I was commuting. One day I lost the copybook on the subway, and whoever found it must have been perplexed by the strange combination of architectural expressions, such as running bond, and idioms like "up your ass." After a few months, I started to feel more at ease talking to people and rarely had any difficulty understanding them. My strong accent, however, never disappeared, and although I could write fairly idiomatic English, I felt so insecure about it that I always asked my wife or one of my co-workers to check what I had written. With time, however, these inhibitions decreased, and when I applied for a job a few years later and my prospective employer called my former boss to ask whether I could write well, he answered: "His writing skills are okay. In fact, I prefer when he writes, because at least I don't have to listen to that accent!"

Initially, my wife and I couldn't afford our own apartment, so we stayed with my aunt Klári, who had escaped to the West after the defeat of the Hungarian Revolution and had been living in New York since 1957. But by the time our first daughter was born in September, we were able to live on our own. Around that time someone wished me a happy New Year (depending on the year, the Jewish New Year is in either September or October). I politely smiled and wished him the same, all the while thinking that the guy must be nuts. Why would he wish me a happy New Year in September?

Although my wife and I remained secular, just by living in a city where even the culturally assimilated Jews tend to celebrate some of the major religious holidays (even if not strictly observing all the rules) I became gradually familiar with their basic concepts simply by hearing about them from Jewish friends and acquaintances. In fact, many Christians in New York, such as one of my best friends, an American-born architect, had a better grasp of Jewish holidays than I did. He had come from a secular Protestant family and we frequently joked that while he knew more about Judaism than I, I knew more about Lutheranism than he. I had learned about Lutheranism in compulsory religion class in grade school, where I attended the Lutheran group, since my family had converted to this faith in early 1944. My parents did this in the hope that it might help them avoid anti-Jewish persecution. It didn't.

Ever since my arrival in New York, my favorite pastime has been watching people on the street, in coffee shops, and on the subway. In all my years of living in Budapest, which is ethnically rather homogeneous, I never experienced the mixture of different cultures, nationalities, races, and languages that I observed at any given

moment in New York. I was especially fascinated by the sight of Orthodox Jews in our neighborhood, the Upper West Side of Manhattan. This was a completely new experience for me, since years could go by without me seeing an Orthodox in our Budapest neighborhood. Although the number of Orthodox on the Upper West Side was far more than in Budapest, it was nevertheless almost insignificant in comparison to Brooklyn's Borough Park, a solidly Orthodox and Hassidic neighborhood that my wife and I occasionally visited. It was one of the neighborhoods we enjoyed visiting on weekends, because we were fascinated to see how the different ethnic groups lived. For us, a trip to Chinatown, the black and Hispanic sections of Harlem, Brighton Beach (sometimes called "Little Odessa" for its large Russian population), or Borough Park felt almost like traveling to a different country without having to spend much money, sit on an airplane, or use up precious vacation time.

Taking a walk on Borough Park's main shopping street and watching the bearded men, with long white fringes hanging from under their shirts at the waist, the women wearing unmistakable wigs, and the boys sporting long, curly side locks next to their ears, was like entering a different and previously unknown world. My ignorance of these and other basic features of Orthodox life and tradition, as well as my prejudice against the Orthodox began melting away as my exposure to this lively example of Jewish culture aroused my curiosity.

All our Jewish friends in New York were culturally assimilated. Talking to them made me realize that most modernized Jews in America tend to be more aware of religious traditions than the similarly secular Jews in Budapest. They also tend to be more tolerant of various kinds of Judaism, including the Orthodox way of life. Of course, one can find tensions between the various branches of Judaism here too, but the differences rarely escalate into open strife. For example, before Jewish holidays there are a few Hassidim who come from Brooklyn to my neighborhood on the Upper West Side and stand on Broadway, stopping people they suspect of being modernized Jews, and trying to convince them of the importance of returning to religion. But even they are invariably polite and give up when I tell them that their efforts are hopeless with a committed atheist like me.

My wife and I felt some social pressure from our Jewish friends to conform to their image of a modern Jew. We had no problem explaining why we ignored Chanukah and celebrated Christmas, but our young daughters had a harder time justifying this to their friends. Both my wife and I grew up celebrating Christmas, which was a family tradition for us, as much part of our background as being Jewish.

I explained to my daughters that in my opinion traditions are not generalized things learned from books, but highly specific: cherished memories of rituals, festivities, foods, and family stories that represent our family life. They are things we have a personal connection to through experience and through stories we heard from our parents and grandparents. Since this is an individual mix that can vary from person to person, it can combine completely heterogeneous elements, such as being a Jew and celebrating Christmas and Easter at home in a more or less secular manner. I am not sure my young daughters fully understood my reasoning, but they kept nodding and continued to look forward each year to a beautifully decorated Christmas tree with presents under it.

Later, as an adult, my older daughter began observing some of the Jewish holidays, interestingly the very ones, Passover and Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur, that my grandmother used to observe. Still later, she decided to send her older son to Hebrew school one night a week to prepare him for his Bar Mitzvah. I sense a genuine desire in her for spiritual connectedness and to give her sons some background in Judaism, a thing she probably regrets not having received as a child. Her partial embrace of religiousness seems to fit a trend in other religions as well, where some members of the younger generations turn away from their parents' secular lifestyle. She hasn't become strictly observant, since she doesn't observe the other Jewish holidays, doesn't keep a kosher kitchen, and continues to celebrate Christmas with me. I see in her decision to revert to at least some features of religious life an example of Jewish assimilation, but in the opposite direction, a reverse assimilation one could say. Jewish assimilation is generally defined as a process whereby a Jewish minority adopts the values, culture, and lifestyle of the Gentile majority, but of course this is only one special case of assimilation, which in a general sense simply means that the prevailing culture tends to absorb an immigrant or culturally distinct group. Back in Hungary, the process of assimilation in my family had many aspects, but one of its most obvious characteristics was a gradual secularization over the course of some two-hundred years. Perhaps my daughter is also motivated by an instinctive and unconscious desire to conform by adopting the lifestyle of what is probably the majority of assimilated Jews in New York, those who observe at least some vestiges of their religion. Simply put, she has been assimilating into the prevailing culture of modernized Jews in New York.

Living in America, a completely different culture with different traditions from those I was used to in Hungary, has strongly affected

my thinking about many things, not the least of which is the issue of what being Jewish means to me. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, there were quite a few Hungarian Jews who were so fearful of the dangers of anti-Semitism that they decided to hide their origins. The actual risks probably didn't justify their extreme reaction, but they were not about to take any chances after their recent traumatic experiences. Some of them went so far as to conceal their Jewish descent from their children, hoping that by doing so they would make the lives of members of the next generation easier. My parents probably wouldn't have wanted to lie to me about our background, but such efforts would have been futile in any case, since I had vivid recollections of the yellow star, the ghetto, and other horrors of 1944. Nevertheless, they wanted to make it less widely known that I was Jewish. Their decision to send me to the Lutheran group in school in 1946 is indicative of that attempt.

The process of getting to know the ways in which the various Jewish groups live in New York, and seeing the acceptance of those groups within American society all had an influence on me, but equally transformative was the influence of my mother's oral history, on which we collaborated during the last seven years of her life. I was already well into my forties when I suggested this to her, secretly hoping that our joint work could improve our previously rocky and distant relationship. It certainly accomplished that, but also much more. It became another important step for me in the process of embracing my own Jewishness and sensing that I am part of that tradition. Previously I had thought that my family had been secular for many generations, but listening to my mother's recollections of her deeply religious grandmother's household made me realize how recently this change had come. This fanned the fires of my desire to learn as much as I could about the cultural and religious influences that shaped my great-grandmother's lifestyle. This new-found emotional and intellectual engagement with my Jewishness put my life up to that point in a new perspective.

As is the case in so many other countries, anti-Semitism used to be quite strong in America, where tacit residential discrimination, clubs that didn't accept Jewish members, and unofficial *numerus clausus* at some universities had been some of its manifestations. But by the time I arrived in New York, these crude forms of anti-Semitism (perhaps with the exception of a few clubs) had disappeared, and prejudice against the Jews was much less common than in the country of my birth. Since then, it has become even more unusual. In those rare cases when someone makes a prejudicial remark, a broad range of people,

by no means only Jews, almost instantaneously condemn it. There is no need for laws against anti-Semitic views, since society virtually excommunicates people who make such public comments. Although some Gentiles and Jews in the U.S. make a point of knowing who is Jewish, this custom is by no means as all-pervasive as in Hungary.

I don't intend to idealize my adopted country. Its history includes not only slavery but numerous examples of intolerance, exclusion and oppression of groups different from the majority in skin color, religion, or national origin. But with the exception of recent instances of indiscriminate anti-Muslim feelings, the tendency has been toward greater tolerance and acceptance.

This is especially valid for the situation of the Jews. Even those Orthodox who are noticeably different from the majority are generally accepted as Americans, no less so than the rest of the population. Unlike in Hungary, modernized Jews in the U.S. don't seem to be conflicted about their "otherness," since they too are seen by most non-Jews as integral members of the nation. But beyond the specifics of the current situation, the trends are different in the two countries: while in the U.S. anti-Semitism has been declining for some time, in Hungary it is increasing.

In my native country anti-Semitism is strongest among enemies of liberalism, but in the U.S. the right wing typically champions Jewish causes, providing even stronger support for the policies of the Israeli government than some Israelis do. Most of the Christian conservatives here are vocal advocates of Israel, but to the best of my knowledge this is more the exception than the rule in Hungary. American Christian fundamentalists are especially supportive of Israel, whose existence they see as one of the preconditions for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Some of them also maintain that when this happens, the Israeli Jews must either convert to Christianity or perish, but that is another story. I first came across Christian Zionism during my visit to Israel in 1996. While none of my cousins there tried to persuade me to move to Israel, a Christian volunteer from the U.S. struck up a conversation with me in Jerusalem and rather aggressively attempted to convince me to do so.

Comparing the situation of Jews in the U.S. and the country of my birth, I realized more than ever how much the past and present problems experienced by Jews in Hungary are the results of specific local historical and social circumstances, and are not the product of general Jewish characteristics, as the Hungarian anti-Semites claim.

My life can be divided into two chapters: one, completely rooted in the past, and the other, current and ongoing. But to what extent are the

decades I spent in Hungary, the first several decades of my life, a closed chapter? My American years inevitably make me see my previous life in a different light. Had I remained in Hungary, I probably would have ascribed no importance to events that now, in hindsight, appear significant. An example of this is my mother sending me to a German-language kindergarten very soon after her return from a Nazi concentration camp. She did this because, regardless of what had happened to her, she continued to love the German language once used in her grandmother's household in western Hungary. She considered German part of a family tradition, and she wanted her son to be familiar with it. In Hungary this wasn't so unusual, but in the U.S., where many Jews were not willing to speak German, visit Germany, and buy German products in the decades after the Second World War, it counted as anything but common.

My current life in the U.S. and my former life in Hungary continuously interact: my present views are influenced by my Hungarian background and at the same time I recall the past through the lens of my American experience. Had I remained in Hungary I probably wouldn't have thought of writing about the evolution of my Jewish identity, but even if I had done so, it would have been of a completely different character. ❧

Pál Hatos

Cardinal József Mindszenty (1892-1975)

Diverging Memories and Perspectives for Further Comparative Research

Religious and ecclesiastical demands for political action to shape modern society are regarded as a form of deviance by leading sociological and politological discourses, since these narratives tend to claim that the "free" sphere for a democratic public was born in the fight against an ecclesiastical worldview.[1] The common narratives and interpretations of modernity build on the theme of secularisation: religion gradually losing its place in the public sphere (and this process being regarded as natural) and facing its final and complete seclusion to a kind of private sphere of allegedly individual concern.[2]

Paradoxically, the defendants of religion and the vanguards of public action in the Church seem to accept this thesis. They legitimise it primarily by leaning on the historical memory of the "Christian" past and the onetime unity of Church and national history, which was disrupted by modern heredities, unrestricted revolutionary passions, and exaggerated efforts for emancipation. The historicized and glamourized past finds its dialectic counterpoint in the wretched and dangerous present, and the response is appropriate: flight from the disenchanting and amoral present and/or the adoption of the hopeless role of frustrated reaction, which implies constant defensiveness. This nar-

1 ■ See especially Jürgen Habermas: *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1990. [Habermas, Jürgen: The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a category of Bourgeois Society. Trans. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991.] For a critique of the haberbasian secularization-concept see the introduction of *Säkularisierung, Dechristianisierung, Rechristianisierung im neutzeitlichen Europa, Bilanz und Perspektiven der Forschung* (ed. Hartmut Lehmann, Göttingen, 1997) and Peter van der Veer: *The Moral State. Religion, Nation, and Empire in Victorian Britain and British India = Nation and Religion*. Perspectives on Europe and Asia, szerk. Peter van der Veer – Hartmut Lehmann, Princeton UP, Princeton, 1999, 20–39.

2 ■ See Steve Bruce: *Pluralism and religious vitality = Religion and Modernization. Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis*, Oxford UP, Oxford, 1992, 170–194.

rative was already well observed by Alexis de Tocqueville in his great treatise on democracy in America:

> Amid these lukewarm partisans and ardent antagonists a small number of believers exists who are ready to brave all obstacles and to scorn all dangers in defence of their faith. They have done violence to human weakness in order to rise superior to public opinion. Excited by the effort they have made, they scarcely know where to stop; and as they know that the first use which the French made of independence was to attack religion, they look upon their contemporaries with dread, and recoil in alarm from the liberty which their fellow citizens are seeking to obtain. As unbelief appears to them to be a novelty, they comprise all that is new in one indiscriminate animosity. They are at war with their age and country, and they look upon every opinion that is put forth there as the necessary enemy of faith.[3]

The greatest weakness of such a sharp approach to things religious is that unending defence easily produces the fatal impression that the fundamental underlying values have long been eroded and the reactionary behaviour serves no other goal than to cover a lack of substance.

The dichotomy thus fashioned between secularisation and reactionism is certainly suitable for dynamising concealed political intention. However, at the same time it blurs the otherwise easily discernible fact that, again to cite Tocqueville, "such is not the natural state of men with regard to religion."[4] Using the common terminology of analytical psychology, an even graver consequence is that this dichotomy, following the logic of repression, finally drives the social and actual dimensions of religious experience into the collective unconscious.

The characteristics of the Mindszenty controversy

Fundamental and still palpable tensions in the conflicting interpretations of the life and work of Cardinal József Mindszenty (1892-1975), Archbishop of Esztergom, offer a fine example of the above. The historical controversy over Mindszenty stretches back to his time as active head of the Hungarian Catholics in the late 1940s. It continued unabated throughout the period of Détente and Ostpolitik in the 1960s and 1970s, and was vigorously revived after 1990, when Mindszenty's name and fate ceased to be an untouchable political taboo.

3 ■ Alexis de Tocqueville: Democracy in America, translated by Henry Reeve, Part I., Chapter XVII. Principal Causes Maintaining the Democratic Republic – Part III. Principal causes Which Render Religion Powerful in America. http://www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/socl/politicalscience/DemocracyinAmericaPart1/toc.html

4 ■ Tocqueville: op. cit.

József Mindszenty was born as József Pehm in 1892 in Mindszent, a town in western Hungary. He came from a modest smallholder family of petty gentry origin. He came to the focus of national politics in September 1945, when he was appointed Archbishop of Esztergom, thereby becoming the Primate of the Hungarian Catholic Church, somewhat unexpectedly, since he had received the title of diocesan bishop only a year earlier. A few months later in February, 1946, he was elevated to cardinalate by Pope Pius XII. He led a very active public life from the beginning of his career as head of the Catholic Church in Hungary, and his arrest on December 26th, 1948, followed by a show trial that drew the attention of the world and ended with a life sentence, made him an emblematic and at the same time highly controversial figure of the Hungarian Catholic Church. His memory still bears this original divide. His supporters praise Mindszenty because of his incredible efficiency and indefatigable work as a pastor, or for his brave and uncompromising anti-communism (his stubborn refusal to agree to any kind of compromise with communist Hungary). They also laud his passionate vision of Catholicism blended with Hungarian national identity (the concept of *Regnum Marianum*, or "Kingdom of Mary," a name deriving from the tradition according to which Saint István, the first king of Hungary, having died without an heir, offered his crown to the Virgin Mary) and view his tragic fate as a symbol of the sufferings of the "silent church" behind the Iron Curtain.[5] But at the same time his legacy is vehemently contested because of his political ambitions (for instance his claim to maintain the constitutional recognition of the Primate's role in Hungarian public life and the parliamentary system as "Prince Primate" of the country, second in line after the Head of State), his anachronistic ideas (e.g. his well-known royalist and Habsburg sympathies, even after 1945), his unbending and intransigent attitude (which allegedly did not take into account the needs of the ordinary and feeble person of faith not ready for martyrdom), his preconciliar social-political frame of mind, and the exclusivist notion of a Catholic national identity implicit in his emphasis on Hungary as *Regnum Marianum*. In the following I explore the archetypes of this controversy: the image of the political prelate on the one hand and a positive metaphor of the "pastoring primate" in Hungarian Catholic identity on the other. Mindszenty embodies several of the cultural aspects of the Cold War. As Arpad von Klimo states, "the persona of Cardinal Mindszenty can be understood as a pivotal point in the com-

5 ■ See the films *Guilty of Treason* (1950) and *The Prisoner* (1955) starring Sir Alec Guiness as the Cardinal.

plex fabric that related different topics as distant from each other as Cold War diplomacy, changes in global Catholicism, popular culture, antisemitism, and Hungarian nationalism."[6]

The image of the political prelate: The Mindszenty of 1945-1949

In mainstream historiography, the Archbishop is still depicted as "a belated phenomenon"[7] of 20th century Hungarian politics, "the Rip van Winkle of a declined public order,"[8] who wanted to conserve an anachronistic church image for the future.[9] The image of the politicizing Archbishop is in most cases characterized as an anachronism: "The office of the primate was regarded by Mindszenty as a political role as much as it was an ecclesiastical guard post."[10] One could enumerate citations offering ample evidence that Mindszenty actively and consciously took part in politics, not only after having become a high ranking prelate but also earlier in his career.[11] However, and this is given less emphasis, Mindszenty's contemporary critics do not object to his involvement in high politics and his adoption of a specific public role so much as the content and objectives of his politics. As one reads in the indictment prepared under the guidance of the communist leader Mátyás Rákosi[12] and submitted on January 25th, 1949 during his much publicised show trial, "On the liberation of the Hungarian nation, József Mindszenty, as the holder of the highest rank in the [Hungarian] Roman Catholic Church, should have had the calling to participate as one of the first in the rebuilding of our country, which had been destroyed in the war and demolished by fascist violence and treason. There were other prelates in the Hungarian Catholic Church who identified themselves with the aspirations of the Hungarian people and

6 ■ See Arpad v. Klimo: A "victim of history": Cardinal Mindszenty and the Transnational Mobilization of Anticommunism (1971-75). [In SZABÓ Csaba (Hrsg.): Zum Gedenken an die Wiener Jahre von Joseph Kardinal Mindszenty 1971-1975, Collegium Pazmaneum, Wien am 18. November 2011. Forthcoming.

7 ■ Izsák, Lajos: *A katolikus egyház társadalompolitikai tevékenysége Magyarországon (1945–1956)* [The Socio-political Activity of the Hungarian Catholic Church 1945-1956], Századok [Centuries] 1985/2., 465.

8 ■ Gyurkó László: 1956, Budapest, Szabad Tér, 1996, 309.

9 ■ Balogh, Margit: *Mindszenty József, [József Midszenty]* Elektra, Budapest, 2002, 189.

10 ■ Gergely, Jenő – Izsák, Lajos: *A Mindszenty-per, [TheMindszenty trial]* Reform, Budapest, 1989, 19.

11 ■ See for instance Mindszenty, József: Emlékirataim, [Memories]Vörösvary, Toronto, 1974, 28, 81. I cite the Hungarian edition.

12 ■ Rákosi, Mátyás (1892-1971) was a Hungarian communist politician. He was the ruler de facto of the communist Hungary between 1945 and 1956, first in his capacity as General Secretary of the Hungarian Communist Party (1945-1948) and later as General Secretary of the Hungarian Working People's Party (1948-1956). His rule was characterised as a Stalinist dictatorship.

were among the most outstanding revolutionary fighters."[13] József Mindszenty did not follow their example, but rather ascribed to the views of the alleged supporters of Habsburg absolutism: "He did not identify himself with the desires of the Hungarian people, on the contrary, he embraced the aspirations of the foreign Habsburg dynasty that suppressed our people for 400 years." What is interesting in the indictment from the perspective of the debates concerning Mindszenty's legacy is that it formulates the Primate's implicit claim for a prominent role in political life, which in turn is the most condemned ambition of his activities as a representative of the Church. The same reproach, although in far more refined wording, is found in the work of Sándor Balogh, a contemporary historian: "Mindszenty's political ideology actually drew back on feudal times and thus he did not even know what to think about certain important ideals of bourgeois democracy. His steadfast adherence to his own principles, unbroken audaciousness and commitment would have born real value only if these resources and features had been offered to serve the rise of the nation and social development."[14]

This quotation is equally remarkable, as the critic claims that the pastoral attitude alone would not have been enough to secure a positive historical legacy for Mindszenty's oeuvre. Creative participation in "the rise of the nation" and "social development" would have been essential.[15] A similar viewpoint can be found in László Gyurkó's monograph on 1956, published in 1996: "[Mindszenty] was the first to announce the Cold War, the inexorable confrontation of ideologies and social orders. In an age when the opposing parties made a last vague attempt to come to a compromise."[16] According to historian Margit Balogh, author of the 2002 Mindszenty biography, "the resolve in Mindszenty's direction raises high, though somewhat baffled respect in later generations. Where did he end up with his strict consistency to his principles? In a cul-de-sac [...]. To run the risk of all or nothing could not be a successful option, it rather made a victim out of him. The question is whether a prelate has the right to draw thousands of believers into martyrdom,"[17]

13 ■ Gergely- Izsák, 78.

14 ■ Balogh, Sándor: *Mindszenty József, a politizáló katolikus főpap* [József Mindszenty, the political prelate]. *Eszmélet* [Consciousness] 34. (1997), 94–113 http://eszmelet.tripod.com/34/baloghs34.html#33.

15 ■ Ibid.

16 ■ Gyurkó: *op. cit.*, 307.

17 ■ Balogh, Margit: *op. cit.*, 188–189.

In her evaluation, Balogh leaves room for an interpretation according to which the demolition in 1948 of a rapidly spreading Christian democratic alternative similar to what had taken root in Germany and Italy – an alternative that constituted a kind of rival to Mindszenty's conservative political Catholicism – was facilitated by Mindszenty's total lack of confidence in the coalitional government after 1945.[18]

The Mindszenty-trial in 1949.

On December 26th, 1948, Mindszenty was arrested by the communists and accused of treason, conspiracy, and crimes against the state. In February 1949 he was sentenced to life imprisonment for treason against the Hungarian government. The Communists released what they called a "Yellow Book," a list of confessions extorted from Mindszenty by torture. On February 12th, 1949, Pope Pius XII announced the excommunication of all persons involved in the trial and conviction of Mindszenty. According to Official Hungarian historiography before 1989, Mindszenty's accusation and condemnation had been lawful, a view propounded, for instance, by Jenő Gergely: "It was clear at the time and is an undeniable fact today that Primate Mindszenty and his followers were enemies of the Hungarian people's democracy and as such had to be removed from politics."[19] These lines were published in 1989, a year of seismic changes. It is important to note, however, that in the same year Gergely was the first historian to co-publish evidence demonstrating that the Mindszenty trial had been little more than a show trial. This alone shows clearly how fundamentally taboo the subject of Mindszenty's fate remained until the dawn of political transition in the late 1980s. One comes across an almost unique view, however, in Sándor Balogh's essay, which was written well after 1990. Balogh criticises the show trial that led to Mindszenty's condemnation because the manner in which he was treated transformed the Archbishop into a martyr and thereby lent credibility to his earlier political acts and criticisms of the regime.[20]

18 ■ *Ibid.*, 163.

19 ■ Gergely, Jenő: *Katolikus egyház, magyar társadalom, 1890–1986* [Catholic Church, Hungarian Society]. Tankönyvkiadó, Budapest, 1989, 129.

20 ■ Balogh, Sándor: *op. cit.*

Another aspect of the accusations against the prelate concerned his activities during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. Mindszenty was freed from house arrest on October 30th, 1956 by a revolutionary squad. When the communists regained control on November 4th, he sought asylum in the US Embassy in Budapest and lived there for fifteen years, refusing Vatican requests to leave Hungary. During the short period of freedom his most important act was a radio speech he held on November 3rd, which was interpreted throughout the Kadar era as a proclamation of capitalist and feudal restoration intentions of the counter-revolution (rescinding the land reform and restoring feudalism and the earlier system of land tenure). According to Gergely (for instance), "[t]he speech unambiguously announces the restoration of capitalism and the rejection of socialist power and its acts and the whole of the democratic transition that began after 1944. [...] This statement by Mindszenty once again revealed the reactionism and aggressiveness still existing in the Church."[21] The ideological taboos that obstructed historical thought were eventually deconstructed in 1989, and the historiography of the past 20 years has definitely refuted these accusations, although a few historians still harbour reservations. Margit Balogh contends that, "anyone who expected guidance from the Cardinal must have been disappointed, [...] his words made it clear that he had not cast his ballot for a reformed socialism with a commitment to national values, in which, however, many believed at the time."[22] This reservation was rooted in earlier times, and it was not limited to those speaking in the name of the regime before 1989 either. According to the memoires of the Revolutionary National Guard commander Béla Király, he was listening to Mindszenty's radio speech on November 3rd, 1956 at Gyula Illyés' house[23] in the company of István Bibó[24]: "We were embittered to hear that the Primate referred to the

21 ■ Gergely: *Katolikus egyház, magyar társadalom, op. cit.* 146. See also Ólmosi, Zoltán: *Mindszenty és a hatalom* [Mindszenty and the Rulers]. Lex, Budapest, 1991, 9.

22 ■ Balogh, Margit: *op.cit.*, 282–283.

23 ■ Gyula Illyés (1902-1983) was a left-wing writer, poet and essayist and also the leading figure of the so called *népi* ("folk" or "folkish," also meaning "of the people") writers, named so because they aimed to show – propelled by strong sociological interest and left-wing convictions – the disadvantageous conditions in their native land. He had a very ambivalent attitude towards the communist regime.

24 ■ István Bibó (1912-1979) was a Hungarian lawyer, civil servant, politician and political theorist. During the Hungarian Revolution he acted as the Minister of State for the Hungarian National Government. When the Soviets invaded to crush the rebellious government, he was the last minister left at his post in the Hungarian Parliament building in Budapest. For his participation in the revolution he served a 5 year prison sentence. He can also be considered the intellectual precursor of the Hungarian political oppositional movements of the 1970-1980s.

government of Imre Nagy as 'successors of a fallen regime'. When the speech ended [...] Gyula Illyés said with the usual pessimism in his voice: 'I have always told you that our nation is damned'."[25] In a series of discussions with sociologist Tibor Huszár in 1977 and 1978, István Bibó expressed his suspicions concerning the hidden political agenda behind the speech and his resentment of Mindszenty's alleged nostalgia for the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.[26]

Mindszenty and the *Ostpolitik* of the Vatican

Other critics contend to find the anachronistic nature of Mindszenty's ideology in his response to Ostpolitik, the new policy of the Holy Seat towards the Eastern Bloc after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). It is quite likely that for very different reasons Hungary was a kind of "testing ground" for this new political interaction, both in the eyes of the Vatican diplomats and in the minds of the communist bureaucrats responsible for the success of the antireligious ideological "crusade" of the Warsaw Pact.[27] Communist leaders of Hungary not only sought international recognition less than a decade after suppression of the 1956 Revolution, but also wanted to secure long-term internal consolidation by domesticating the strongest potential challenge to their rule. After the death of Pope Pius XII, the Vatican was similarly interested in shedding the image of an unconditional ally of the capitalist West in the unmistakably leftist mood of international politics of the 1960s. So the objectives of *Ostpolitik* went well beyond the Hungarian setting, but the Holy See saw its politics pay off when the representatives of the Vatican were formally included in the Warsaw Pact appeal for a European Security Conference in March 1969.[28] In the short run it was the communist regime of Budapest that took greater advantage of the rapprochement. In September 1964 the Holy See and the government of Hungary, as the first diplomatic result of the new Ostpolitik of the Vatican, reached a "partial agreement" the full text of which (1 Protocol and 2 Appendices) is still not public. Mindszenty strongly disapproved both of the accord and of *Ostpolitik*

25 ■ Király, Béla: *Az első háború szocialista országok között. Személyes visszaemlékezések az 1956-os magyar forradalomra* [The First War Between Socialist Countries. Personal reminiscencies of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution]. Magyar Öregdiákok Szövetsége – Bessenyei György Kör, New Brunswick (New Jersey), 1981, 61.

26 ■ Bibó, István: *1956 október 23. – november 6.* Huszár Tibor interjúja, [23 October- 6 November 1956, An Interview with Tibor Huszár]. Valóság [Truth], 1989/2. 59.

27 ■ See Alberto Melloni: La politica internazionale della Santa Sede negli anni.

28 ■ Barberini, Giovanni: L'Ostpolitik della Santa Sede. Un dialogo lungo e faticoso. Bologna, Il Mulino, 2007, 325-331.

as a harmful compromise that legitimised the communist persecution of the Church. But as historians Jenő Gergely and Lajos Izsák wrote, "the aging and ailing Cardinal became more and more isolated from reality and the world around him."[29] On the basis of the 1964 agreement between the Holy See and communist Hungary and at the request of Pope Paul VI, Cardinal Mindszenty reluctantly left Hungary for good on September 28th, 1971. After a brief visit to Rome he settled in Vienna, Austria. Over the course of the next few years he made several trips to visit Hungarian emigré communities, both in Europe and overseas. After having left Hungary, he was allowed by the Holy See to remain the de jure head of the archdiocese and was listed in the Pontifical Yearbook as "fuori sede" (absent from his See). But in February 1974, despite Mindszenty's stubborn refusal to resign, Pope Paul VI declared the archdiocese of Esztergom vacant. This move entailed the dismissal of Cardinal Mindszenty as archbishop of Esztergom and Primate of Hungary. Historian Zoltán Szatucsek refers to this in the ironic title of his 2002 study, *Makacs öregúr vagy nemzetmentő vátesz?* (An Obstinate Old Man or the Redeemer of the Nation?). He concludes that Mindszenty's removal from the position as Archbishop of Esztergom was the climax of his tragedy, which transformed him from the protagonist into an episodist in his career as a politician and Church leader.[30]

The image of the "pastoring primate" in Hungarian Catholic identity

In a stark contrast to the above, post-1989 Catholic historiography emphasises the image of the pastoring prelate. As a matter of fact Cardinal Mindszenty was an active and energetic priest in his days as vicar in a small municipal town in South-Western Hungary. In October 1919, shortly after the collapse of the short-lived Hungarian Commune, he was assigned to the parish of Zalaegerszeg in western Hungary, only a few years after having been ordained priest. In 1927 he was appointed administrator of the Zala region of the diocese. He contributed dynamically to furthering pastoral activity in many areas of social and political life by founding new places for priests and establishing schools. Later, as bishop of Veszprém in 1944-1945, he visited all the parishes of his large diocese and also managed to complete a

29 ■ Gergely - Izsák: *op. cit.*, 33. See refutation by Ólmosi: op. cit., 103–105.

30 ■ Szatucsek, Zoltán: *Makacs öregúr vagy nemzetmentő vátesz?* [An Obstinate Old Man or the Redeemer of the Nation?]. *Közel-múlt. Húsz történet a huszadik századból* [Near Past: Twenty Stories from the Past Century]. eds. Majtényi, György – Ring, Orsolya, Magyar Országos Levéltár, Budapest, 2002, 20.

full series of canonical visitations in the Esztergom Archdiocese. Catholic historiography saw him and his proclivities for politics as a modern embodiment of the image of the Good Shepard who had been sent to tend not only to the spiritual and cultural needs of his flock, but also its social, economic, and political interests.[31] This image, an ethical justification of the undeniably political aspect of Mindszenty's acts, can also be considered a reaction to the exclusively political approaches of the earlier Mindszenty-narratives of the period between 1945 and 1990. The underlying argument of all Catholic apologetics concerning Mindszenty was that his public defence of core national and moral values, in particular religious liberty, and his claim for a strong moral order were not political acts, but gestures of civic virtue and "social responsibility." "Mindszenty's politics is antipolitics in the sense that he did not follow the practices of common politics. Rather, he defended a comprehensive ethical worldview."[32] This statement, found in a historical textbook published in Budapest in 2001, is similar to the opinion of Jean Cardinal Lustiger, who once said that Mindszenty represented eschatological politics.[33] For some historians the dilemma of the double role of the pastor and the high-ranking churchman closely involved in worldly affairs can only be solved if lay historiography considers the strictly ecclesiastical and religious aspects of Mindszenty's activity as of secondary importance.[34] Recent documents from the US State Department concerning Mindszenty's correspondence during his 15 year-long stay in the US Embassy in Budapest confirm the thesis for some Catholic historians according to which even long after 1956 Mindszenty remained firm in his view that as Primate of Hungary he was the preeminent political representative of the repressed nation under foreign rule.[35] Others, primarily political essayists on the left of the post-1989 political spectrum, virulently oppose the post-1989 Catholic ambitions to elevate Mindszenty to martyrdom and sainthood in the context of a totally demonized version of 1945-1990 Hungarian history and to create a myth of the uncompromising opponent of totalitarian regimes, both fascist and communist, without a thorough analysis of his real historical role. Recently some historians have contended

31 ■ Kőzi Horváth, József: *Cardinal Mindszenty: Confessor and Martyr of Our Time*. Chicester: Aid to the Church in Need (UK), 1979. Introduction.

32 ■ Kahler, Frigyes: *III/III-as történelmi olvasókönyv. Adalékok az emberi jogok magyarországi helyzetéhez az 1960-as években* [Historical Textbook for the Study of the History of Hungarian State Security Services]. Kairosz, Budapest, 2001, 26.

33 ■ Lustiger, Jean-Marie: *Mindszenty bíboros* [Cardinal Mindszenty]. Vigilia 1992/3., 206–209.

34 ■ Gergely: A Mindszenty-per, *op. cit.* 8.

35 ■ See the editorial note of Ádám Somorjai Osb to the Letters to the Presidents. Cardinal Mindszenty to the Political Leaders of the United States, 1956-1971, Budapest, METEM, 2011, 11.

that Mindszenty's opposition to the national socialist-type Arrow Cross regime and his stance during the Hungarian Holocaust were not as clear and unambiguous as is generally believed, and he is accused of having based his rejection of the policies of the extreme right more on the political and social position of the Catholic hierarchy than on principle and belief.[36]

At stake in these controversies is the fact that the memory of Mindszenty is a cornerstone of post-1989 Hungarian Catholic identity. In an interview with the Catholic weekly *Új Ember* (New Man) in 2000, the then Primate and Archbishop of Esztergom László Paskai singled out Mindszenty's reburial in 1991 in the Basilica of Esztergom along with John Paul II's pontifical visit the same year as the two most important contributions to the Catholic revival after the fall of communism.[37] According to Paskai, Mindszenty's memory underpins the renewal of Christian life, the strengthening of Hungarian national identity, and an ethical vision of the future of Hungary. This declaration clearly shows how Mindszenty's canonized image as pastor and national hero in the official Catholic discourse serves first and foremost as a symbol of the sufferings of the Hungarian Catholic Church under Communism. Although the same Paskai was overtly critical of Mindszenty's politics as late as 1987, his reappraisal of Mindszenty's role in the Catholic Church in itself is not surprising. Beyond the often expressed pro-regime stance of the Catholic hierarchy, the continuity of a deeply conservative attitude akin to Mindszenty's own views had always prevailed, as illustrated by the homily of László Cardinal Lékai on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of the dedication of the Esztergom Basilica in 1981. In this homily, the pro-regime Lékai praised the paternalistic pro-Catholicism of the Habsburg Emperor Francis Joseph, who in 1855 went against the liberal current of his times and concluded a Concordat with the Holy See, an unveiled allusion to the equally absolutist religious policy of the Kádár regime, which also reached an agreement with the Vatican over Church issues.[38]

Although the Hungarian Catholic Church had no role whatsoever in the burgeoning oppositional movements of the late 1980s, nor did it

36 ■ Holzer, Loránt: *Mindszenty vitatott hónapjai Veszprémben* [Mindszenty's Problematic Months in Veszprém]. *Beszélő* [Speaker] 2004. July-August. http://beszelo.c3.hu/04/0708/11holtzer.htm.

37 ■ *Beszélgetés Paskai László bíborossal,* [An Interview with László Cardinal paskai] Új Ember [New Man] 2000. augusztus 20. http://w3.datanet.hu/~jalso/tal/003400.htm.

38 ■ The concordat of 1855 with Austria gave vast rights to the church and confirmed the political and financial privileges of the Catholic Church. The Concordate was later abrogated for the territory of Hungary by the establishment of the regime of the dual Monarchy in 1867. The Austrian government also abrogated it upon the proclamation of papal infallibility by the First Vatican Council in 1870.

have any role in inspiring the roundtable talks that led to the so-called "negotiated revolution" of 1989-1990, in the years following the fall of the Communist regime it remained, alongside other Christian churches in Hungary, perhaps the most accepted social institution of the country and has maintained its public and political importance up to the present day. This explains the recurring intensity of the conflicts related to the high public profile of the Church. It remains to be seen how the conflicting legacies of the relationship of the Church to public life can be reconciled, the former religion of the state on the one hand and the victim over the course of the past two centuries of Josephinist absolutism, anticlerical or indifferent liberalism, and later communist persecution on the other.[39] This blending of the memory of the former greatness of the Church and the narrative of its victimization suffered for a long time from the fact that the Protestant identity in Hungary acquired early on an extra dimension as the historical representative of national independence and social progress, while the Catholic hierarchy was accused of excessive loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty throughout the 19th century. The Catholic Renaissance of the early 20th century, led by the charismatic theologian, orator, and bishop of Székesfehérvár Ottokár Prohászka, did a great deal to challenge the "whiggish" image of Hungarian nationalism and champion a Catholic alternative of the "true" representation of Hungarian nationality. This trend continued unabated during the interwar period. Both ecclesiastical and lay authors of the Church emphasised the Catholic features of the state to a far greater degree than they had in the era of the Dual Monarchy, drawing legitimation from the enhanced demographic strength of their followers in post-Trianon Hungary and also from the generally anti-liberal climate of the times. Mindszenty combined this heritage, the heritage of his own formative years of the first decade of the 20th century, with an extremely skilled and powerful use of democratic politics and mass media of his time. He belonged to the new generation of bishops and prelates who came to the forefront of the Church hierarchy in the 1930s-1940s, due partly to the weakening of the jus patronatus (the royal prerogatives over the diocesan appointments, investiture to church benefice, and the disclosure of papal decretals) in the interwar period. When he became the head of the Catholic Church somewhat unexpectedly in 1945, he seemed to be able to galvanize the Church even more, despite the difficulties the county faced in the aftermath of the war. He was able to express the mourning and

39 ■ Mészáros, István: *Panonnia sacra. Mindszenty-tanulmányok* [Pannonia Sacra. Mindszenty Studies]. Kairosz, Budapest, 2002, 7.

yearnings of a vanquished society in the wake of a catastrophic defeat. He reached out beyond the Catholic community and ultimately justified his actions and his unbending attitude through his show trial. This is why the assertion that Mindszenty stood for a very specific understanding of Hungarian Catholicism, a particularly conservative, reactionary, nationalist Catholicism, is only one side of the coin and misses an essential feature of his thinking. He thought himself responsible for the democratic representation of an authentic Catholic policy, using the tools and media of modern mass democracy and the politics of the "majority." This entailed an acceptance of the antagonistic view of the other and had fateful consequences, since he dismissed all alternatives but martyrdom in the face of the totalitarian menace. He gave new meaning to the concept of the *Volkskirche* by putting this tradition in the center of Catholic preaching, and he created a lasting legacy with his uncompromising and heroic resistance. Neither his tribulations following his arrest and condemnation in one of the very first show trials against a high ranking Church leader in a communist country nor the international climate of the early years of the Cold War (in which he was depicted as a hero in the fight for freedom behind the Iron Curtain) would have been enough to make him a unique figure of modern Hungarian Catholicism without his strong commitment to the Marian nationalism, a Catholic theology of national identity, which he had not invented, but which he enthusiastically adopted and forcefully represented during his short public career and later through his telling absence in the long years of prison and exile as a symbol. It is this symbolic status, which he had attained well before his death in a Vienna hospital in May 1975, that seems also to have immortalised the antagonistic views surrounding his historical memory. This mirrors a more general framework of interpretation between a dogmatic modernism and a defensive conservativism, in which Mindszenty is a hero/anti-hero of religious discourse, which has been vanquished in a secularised world.

Perspectives for Future Research

What are the perspectives for future research on Mindszenty? It has been demonstrated that many of the Mindszenty's critics had a hidden agenda: to show that the Church-State relationship from 1956 onwards can be interpreted as a break with the earlier Stalinist stance and that it followed the path of transformation from a hard-line totalitarian regime into "the happiest barrack in the Communist camp." It is generally understood that there was a gradual liberalization of the regime, at least

from 1962 on, when Kadar famously uttered the motto of his Realsozializmus, "anyone who is not against us is with us." What has this liberalization meant? This was a fluid and indefinite amalgam of the absence of liberty in general with access to some smaller freedoms.[40] Many commentators include in this process of *Détente* the religious policy of the Kádár régime. However, new studies clearly illustrate that apart from making some minor concessions in 1956-1957 (such as the reintroduction of the day of Christmas as a public holiday and allowing radio broadcasts of religious services once a month), János Kádár brutally and consistently broke all voices of dissent.[41] A party resolution in July 1958 shrewdly differentiated between "ideological struggle" and "clerical-reactionary" political opposition and forced the hierarchy to return this with a declaration emphasising that the mission of the clergy was the care of the souls, while the temporal well-being of the people belonged to the prerogatives of the state. Nevertheless the use of coercive means and measures remained widespread, and this included waves of show trials and lengthy prison sentences against members of the clergy and churchgoers (members of disbanded religious orders were particularly targeted) over the course of the next 20 years.[42] Most importantly, the bold and innovative reorganization of feudal jus patronatus according to the concept of so-called state supervision over all major ecclesiastical affairs ensured an almost total and sophistically institutionalised submission of the Churches up until 1989.[43] It should be noted that the agreement with the Vatican, which in principle acknowledged the right of investiture of the Holy See, de facto sanctioned, via the right of veto of the Hungarian State, a practice of nominating exclusively persons with tested and trusted loyalty to the communist regime. The episcopacy was compelled to confront paternalistic traditions familiar from the Josephinism of the 19th century. From this perspective the period during which Mindszenty served as an active head of the Church in the second half of the 1940s was exceptional: a short and feverish moment in which religious mobilisation flourished in a ruined country under the control of a new occupying force with a distinctively antireligious stance. His career is also instructive since it demonstrates how the Catholic Church as a distinctive denominational culture func-

40 ■ Kontler, László: Millenium in Central Europe. A History of Hungary, Budapest: Atlantisz Publishing House, 1999, 434.

41 ■ See Szabó, Csaba: "Grundlinien der Kirchenpolitik der Ungarischen Sozialistischen Arbeiterpartei nach der Revolution von 1956 am Beispiel der katholischen Kirche." *Wie die Träumenden?* Peter Maser, Jens Holger Schjørring. Martin-Luther-Verlag, Erlangen, 2003. 161–176.

42 ■ The last political prisoner to be released from jail was a Catholic priest in 1977 who was freed in the wake of the reception of Party Premier Kádár by Pope Paul VI.

43 ■ The Governmental Decree was promulgated in 1957. See Ólmosi: op. cit., 29– 33, 197–198.

tioned as a powerful social vehicle and elevated people of modest background, like Mindszenty, into high offices. Mindszenty was also important in the international context. His was the most spectacular and internationally the most closely followed post-1945 show trial against Catholic prelates in the Eastern Bloc, from Budapest to Warsaw. Many Hungarians still believe that Mindszenty was regarded unanimously as a hero of religious liberty beyond the Iron Curtain. In fact he had his critics from very early on, particularly in Catholic countries like France and Germany, where the papacy of John XXIII and Paul VI unleashed strong hopes of a lasting modus vivendi with the communist regime.[44] In this respect Mindszenty and his opposition to the new administration of the Vatican's Ostpolitik is often seen as a generational conflict: Mindszenty remained the prisoner of an old mind-set framed by the rigid policies of Pius XII. In the wake of the sweeping revolutionary upheaval that shook Europe after the Bolsheviks took power at the end of the First World War, Pius XII is reproached for having made "no effort to understand the fears and illusions on which communism was feeding."[45] Mindszenty's tragedy was that much like his revered Pontiff, he also knew no alternative to the old-fashioned legalistic injunctions against the spread of communism. His inflexible resistance even suited the communist strategy of crafting stark polarizations with regards to the issue of religion. That is why his Polish counterpart Stefan Cardinal Wyszynsky generally has a much less equivocal reputation in comparative perspective. Unlike the heroic Hungarian Primate, Wyszynsky was ready to believe that communists were open to forms of persuasion like anyone else. As historians Jonathan Luxmoore and Babiuch Jolanta have observed in their comparative study of the confrontation of the Catholic Church and communism, "[Wyszynsky] was prepared to study every decision in minute detail, acknowledging promises kept as well as condemning those broken, never prejudging and never allowing himself to be pushed into the straitjacket of committed opposition."[46] Of course history is also the work of providence. The Czech Josef Cardinal Beran had intentions very similar to those of Wyszynsky, but he failed, for he lacked the historically and demographically powerful reservoir of Polish Catholicism. His case serves as a reminder that the aim of comparative research is to explore differences, not pass judgment. ❧

44 ■ One of the earliest critics was the West German journalist Hansjakob Stehle, who in his books spoke very critically on Mindszenty. See his *Die Ostpolitik de Vatikans 1917-1975*, München, Zürich, Piper, 1975 and *Geheimdiplomatie des Vatikans. Die Päpste und die Kommunisten*. Zürich, Benziger, 1993.
45 ■ Luxmoore Jonathan – Babiuch Jolanta: The Vatican and the Red Flag. The Struggle for the Soul of Eastern Europe. London, Geoffrey Capman, 1999, 66.
46 ■ Luxmoore-Babiuch: op.cit., 46.

Géza Balázs

Hungaropessimism? From Turanian Atolls to Double Negativities

From time to time one comes across the notion that Hungarians are pessimistic by nature. This pessimism, allegedly, is reflected in their literature, their everyday communication, their linguistic tics, and indeed many purportedly destructive habits which are similarly forms of communication. Many myths have sprung up, handed down from generation to generation and picked up every now and then as a subject of political discourse. Even nowadays surveys are frequently circulated claiming to provide an index of national mentalities (a kind of happiness index). Hungarians are always somewhere at the bottom. This paper will be devoted to the topic of the pessimistic nature of the Hungarian national character, or Hungaropessimism, as it has been termed.

This expression, Hungaropessimism, is in itself highly significant, as it traces its origins to the time following the country's change to a more democratic order in 1989-90, when a need was felt to give a name to a phenomenon that had been recognized (or at least alleged) for several centuries. The word "Hungaropessimism" is thus a neologism, first cropping up, for instance, in newspaper reports. For example, in an article in the February 12th, 1996 edition of the daily *Magyar Hírlap* (*Hungarian Herald*) one reads, "Prime Minister Gyula Horn declared that the time has come to replace 'Hungaropessimism' with 'Hungarorealism' as a term to characterize Hungarians". And in the November 5th edition from the same year one notes the contention according to which, "before the label 'Hungaropessimism' stuck there was an attitude of 'Nothing-Ever-Works-For-Us'".

The current timeliness of the expression is shown by a recent, fairly acerbic announcement by Imre Kertész, a Nobel laureate for Literature, which lends itself to self-flagellation: "Hungary is a destiny for which there is no sense or explanation, and it is unique in Europe.

Hungarians stick rigidly to their fate. In the end they will unquestionably come unstuck and will fail to understand why" (Florence Noiville, "La Hongrie est une fatalité," *Le Monde*, February 12th, 2012). I myself have to confess that if I think of the concept of linguistic relativism (according to which language shapes thought), even if the Hungarian language is perhaps not quite as determining as Whorf's hypothesis may suggest, it certainly exerts an influence on the way we think. Dr László Ravasz, a prominent bishop of the Reformed (Calvinist) Church in Hungary, made an intriguing remark on this very point: "It is not a matter of our language being like us, more of us being like our language. In other words, the mother tongue is the determining factor. That much is quite sure, assuming that it is our mother tongue and that we see the world through spectacles of knowledge and experience coded and preserved in our mother tongue."

Nonetheless, I have never seen any credible evidence indicating that any given people or nation is more pessimistic than another. Perhaps it is more the case that certain stereotypes become associated with a culture, or a culture formulates stereotypes about itself, and these stereotypes then take wing and lead a life of their own, becoming self-fulfilling prophesies.

Literary records

There is no evidence of early records of everyday communication ascribing a pessimistic outlook to Hungarians in general, so I turn instead to literature. The earliest incriminating skeleton dates back to the 14th century. It is followed by a 16th century work from the era of the Reformation in Hungary, which bore witness to the partition of the Kingdom of Hungary into three regions and the occupation of the central region by the Ottoman Turks. The emblematic expression of Hungaropessimism is a 1547 poem by András Szkharosi Horvát bearing the title *Az átokról* (On the Curse), in which the poet enumerates the curses of Moses, including the enslavement of the Israelites by their enemies (Deuteronomy 28.48, see Klaniczay, 1964, 346).

Ever since the composition of this poem, Hungarian literature has been replete with references to corruption, the death of the nation, a guilty conscience, the sins for which the nation must seek atonement, and the misfortunes that have befallen it. In several of the finest poems of the Reform Era (roughly the period between 1825 and 1848) this developed into a veritable national myth, with the word "átok" (curse) being used no less than 464 times in a selection of works by 50 classic

Hungarian poets (cf. *Verstár* '98, or "Compendium of Poetry, 1998," part of the Arcanum database). It is the title of a poem by Mihály Vörösmarty, in which the leading poet of the Reform Era explains the troubled fate of the country as a consequence of a curse dating back to the very arrival of the Hungarian tribes in the Carpathian Basin in the 9th century:

"Men!" announced the baneful god of Pannon memory
"I give to you a joyous land; yours to fight for, if necessary"
So great, brave nations fought determinedly for her
Until the Magyar finally emerged as the bloody victor
Oh, but discord remained in the souls of the nations: the land
Can never know happiness, under this curse's hand.

Another of Vörösmarty's late sardonically pessimistic poems is *Keserű pohár* (A Bitter Cup) from 1843. In point of fact it is a drinking song, an example of how the Hungarian gentleman "sirva vigad," or "makes merry in tears" (a phrase used most often to characterize maudlin but at the same time festive songs considered part of the tradition of Gypsy music):

Just drink, my friend, just drink, I say!
The Earth itself must pass away,
must like a bubble effervesce
and burst to empty nothingness!
(transl. by Watson Kirkconnell)

Ferenc Kölcsey's 1823 poem *Hymnusz* (Hymn) offers perhaps an even better example, given the prominence it has assumed as the text of the Hungarian national anthem (put to what one might call appropriately maudlin music by composer Ferenc Erkel). It consists of eight stanzas, two of which give the framing story and concern past glories, while the other six deal with the historical calamities that befell the Hungarians as consequences of their trespasses (the Tartar hordes, the century-and-a-half of Ottoman suzerainty, internecine strife, the loss of independence to the Habsburgs). The word "balsors" (ill fate), which occurs twice in the poem, has become part of contemporary everyday speech (a December 16th, 2005 article on dual citizenship in the Hungarian periodical HVG, for example, was entitled "Mint a balsors a Himnuszban," or "Like ill fate in the Anthem"). Kölcsey's poem is in fact a supplication in which he calls on the Lord to give the Magyars his blessing, given the terrible sufferings they have endured (though the last two lines of the first stanza contain the somewhat paradoxical contention that the Magyars merit the Lord's favour

because they have atoned both for sins of the past and sins of the future). Kölcsey prefaces his list of the tribulations of history with a plea for bountifulness and good spirits. In other words, alongside the references to ill fate, Kölcsey also seems to believe that Hungarians are in general downcast.

In many respects Hungaropessimism is connected with a passiveness, which is also allegedly characteristic of Hungarians. Passivity and withdrawal in Western eyes have at times been seen as Oriental attributes (the notion that fluster and bustle are pointless and misguided), but in the case of Hungarians they could also be said to be a product of historical experience. Sándor Petőfi's poem *Pató Pál úr* (Paul Pató), a description of an idle, apathetic countryman, offers a depiction of this passiveness that can be seen as a caricature of the Hungarian. The last stanza expresses the poet's frustration at what he seemed to perceive as a national attribute:

> And so he loafs along through life,
> And though forefathers all took care
> To see that he would never want,
> He hardly has a coin to spare.
> But one can hardly fault poor Paul,
> For he's Hungarian, born and raised,
> His homeland's watchword says it all:
> "We've time for that some other day!"

Pedagogue and philosopher Sándor Karácsony considered passive resistance, seemingly a negative response but at the same time a means of survival, a consequence of this kind of procrastination. In his view, Hungarians would always be essentially passive. If they were to rise up, their fervour would be only momentary.

Waves of guilt

Epidemic pessimism and waves of guilt and bitterness can be seen as responses to historic reversals of fortune, changes of regime, defeats in battle, disasters of war, oppression, and poverty in general. This is perhaps particularly true of the historical changes in the fate of the Hungarian nation, which included Ottoman occupation following the defeat in the battle of Mohács in 1526, the crushing of the 1848-49 War of Independence against Habsburg Austria, the 1920 Treaty of Trianon (seen by many as a kind of second Mohács), the post-war occupation of the country by Soviet forces, and the defeat of the uprising against Russian occupation in 1956. Indeed the perception that Hungary

remains something of a losing country persists to the present day, as can be sensed in the general mood of disappointment following the changes of 1989-1990. The term that has come into common use, "regime change," is emblematic of this. It implies not an actual qualitative change, but merely a shift in regimes, i.e. a shift in rulers, from one clique of overlords to another.

In the Reform Era the notion of the death of the nation became one of the primary concerns of public life. Its roots lie in what is known in Hungary as the Herder prophecy, a reference to a prediction made by the German philosopher in his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschchte der Menschheit*, 1784-1791 according to which within the space of a few centuries the Hungarian language – surrounded on all sides by either Slavic or Germanic languages – might well disappear. In fact this sombre prediction was in all likelihood borrowed by Herder from the writings of Ádám Kollár, who in 1763 published an edition of medieval historian and bishop Miklós Oláh's Hungária. In his explanatory notes Kollár contended that Hungarian might well meet with the same fate as the Kun language, in other words might vanish as Hungarian speakers adopted one of the languages of the surrounding peoples. Whatever its origins, the notion had a significant impact on Hungarian culture. Literary journals and societies were founded and a series of poems were written celebrating the nation and its history. Moreover, the idea gave considerable momentum to the movement for language reform, which had begun in 1772 and would last almost a century.

Sándor Karácsony also saw in this Turanian curse respect for (indeed adoration of) foreigners. The slavish imitation of foreigners can be traced in the way fads for certain foreign words flare up. In the 19th century this applied primarily to German words, though today English has largely supplanted German. Russian words, by contrast, were only rarely favored or accepted. For more than fifty years from the late 19th century elements of German could be spotted, some of them blatant, in virtually every linguistic innovation. During the period of Soviet occupation there was certainly pressure to adopt words with Russian roots, but very few such words actually became part of everyday language since Russian never exerted a major influence on Hungarian. Today objections are most frequently raised against the use or adoption of English words, though this is not peculiar to Hungary, but rather is part of the larger concern of many of the peoples and languages of the world regarding the growing influence of English.

Some typical Hungarian political slogans of the 1990s can be readily linked to the allegedly pervasive Hungarian sense of pessimism. In its

regular reports one economics research institute was fond of metaphorical statements such as "we cannot see the end of the tunnel" and "we have not yet reached the bottom of the pit." Political commentators have been unanimous in their contentions that the campaigns for the 2006 general election in Hungary were marked by unprecedented negativity, including the often heard slogan according to which, "We're worse off now than we were four years ago!" This slogan, with its depressing overtones, took hold among the citizenry to such an extent that it gave rise to a series of ironic witticisms re-emerging in distorted forms, such as "I'm worse at putting up planking than I was four years ago," and other variations.

Thus one might argue that history, literature and political rhetoric have fostered and continue to foster a form of pessimism that is peculiar to the Hungarian mentality. Where do the origins of this pessimism lie? One could offer an easy answer simply by referring to the stereotype of alleged "Hungaropessimism." It is used as the explanation for three specific and statistically demonstrable phenomena, namely the high suicide rate, high rates of alcoholism, and a shrinking population. However, as is often the case, the statistics on which conclusions regarding these phenomena are based are only partly true and of value more for publicity and possibly for mythopoesis. Comparative studies have established that as far as Hungary is concerned the country was only a top-ranking country for suicide in certain periods and in certain areas. At other times other countries have led the statistics (cf. the contribution made by Kopp-Skrabiski to the poll conducted by Solymosi, p. 40).

For many decades Hungarians as a nation have been considered particularly inclined to take their own lives. After a drop in the numbers of suicides in the 1990s, suicides and suicide attempts have recently been on the rise again. Reportedly six individuals attempt to kill themselves every day in Hungary. The idea that the number of suicides can be tied to ethnic origin is underlined by the fact that in Romania the rates of suicide are highest among those of Magyar ethnicity living in counties in which there are significant Hungarian majorities (specifically Harghita, Covasna, and Braşov counties). There are also data indicating that in Los Angeles the suicide rate among those of Magyar origin is much higher than among those of Mexican, Korean or for that matter native American background. During a period when Hungarians led the statistics for suicide, researchers noticed that the chain of conspicuously high numbers of suicides in the southern Great Hungarian Plain or Lowlands (Alföld) did not break at Hungary's post-Trianon border with Romania. Rather, similarly high suicide rates were

also found around the city of Szeged, in the south-west corner of Hungary, and across the border in the Serbian province of Vojvodina. These data suggest that historical and even "ethnic" factors are relevant to the discussion of this phenomenon. However, since the phenomenon varies both geographically and temporally, it is hardly a solid foundation for the stereotype of the self-destructive Hungarian.

The same goes for alcoholism. Several locutions in Hungarian might well give one the impression that alcohol consumption is rampant, such as, for instance, the greeting "pálinkás jó reggelt," or "a brandy good morning." To my knowledge, this is peculiar to Hungarian culture, as none of the surrounding languages of the region contain a similar greeting. However, again the phenomenon, high alcohol consumption, varies geographically and temporally. While there have been periods when Hungary topped the world list for alcohol consumption (Balázs 1998, 145), this is no longer true today.

The third phenomenon is the recurrent image of the specter of the nation dying out. In the 19th century, in order to avoid dividing an inheritance, with increasing frequency Hungarian families began having only one child. This trend spread during 20th century, raising fears that the nation would dwindle and vanish. One could cite at length works by the so-called Populist writers of the 1920s and 1930s, or for instance the writings of reform Communist sociographer and journalist Gyula Fekete. Regarding Solymosi's survey, Fekete noted, "in the most tragically aging society in the world pessimism can be considered an authentic attitude to life" (9). The population decline of the 1930s can be explained by inheritance laws (the desire not to break up property into smaller plots), unnecessary family assistance granted at the end of the century, perennially inadequate housing, and even the small floor area of residences. It is a staggering fact that Hungary's total population has been dwindling by the size of one of its smaller towns every year and recently dropped below the psychologically important marker of 10 million. On the other hand, it is also a fact that there is a considerable decline in population in many other, highly developed and well-off European countries. Thus it would be premature to ascribe population decline in Hungary to a few simple reasons or factors.

Pessimism in a linguistic guise

Mention is often made, in discussions of the pessimistic attitudes of Hungarians, to their use of profanity. In my view, this too is more a matter of established stereotypes. There have been no reliable comparative investigations on the subject. It is intriguing that even

with regards to profanity many people have claimed to discern historical causes. The contention is made that the Hungarians learned to swear from the Turks, or at least as a consequence of widespread military campaigns during the century-and-a-half of Ottoman rule (Györffy, 449). This hardly holds up to scrutiny, as profanity is an anthropological attribute present in every language. As to whether Hungarians swear more volubly or more elaborately, no precise, scientific surveys have been done.

Thus a range of possible answers have been given to the question regarding the roots of Hungarian pessimism. The phenomenon of Hungaropessimism – to the extent that it is a phenomenon and not simply a self-fulfilling stereotype – has most often been explained with reference to historical events and cultural and politico-economical influences. Some cultural anthropologists have delved more deeply and sought explanations in the Hungarian language and modes of communication, taking as their starting-point the proposition that language is a representation of a culture. To start with what is called disgruntled behaviour or communication, foreigners soon observed a striking phenomenon, namely that Hungarians were constantly complaining. In English the mundane greeting, more a question of courtesy than curiosity, "How do you do?" is usually met with a simple response, "could be better" or "fine, thanks." In Hungarian one often hears the reply, "megvagyok," which means little more than, "well, I am," as if mere survival were in and of itself an accomplishment. Other answers to the question that are indicative of a pessimistic humour include "like a pauper in a rich town" and "like ploughing with a single horse." According to psychologist Béla Buda, "in Hungarian culture it is not permissible to speak about a positive event. ... One always feels compelled to complain, lest fate be envious of what one has. A typical communications algorithm is to discuss who is doing worse, who earns the least, whose financial burdens are greatest, who has a more uncertain future." It might perhaps be worth noting, whereas English children's stories tend to conclude with the phrase, "they lived happily ever after," Hungarian children's stories end with, "they lived happily ever after, until they died."

In one of his articles the writer and essayist János Sebeok provides a precise description of the phenomenon of banal complaining and its motives: "We complain about how everything is rotten. Everything is rotten, it goes without saying. The weather - always; neighbours and the minister of finance - ditto; to say nothing of the mother-in-law! Complaining in this country, an EU member state but still somehow different, in any case has its own rituals. If there were no complaints

we would jerk our heads up: 'Hello! What's this silence, then?' Complaints, irrespective of gender, the woman's prattling on around us. Because we menfolk moan frequently. We are by no means as tight-lipped as we ought to be in principle." But what is the purpose of complaining, when it comes down to it? Sebeok offers his own anthropological explanation: "Complaints tie people together, raise hopes and emphasize: we're on the same side. A complaint from the hostile world immediately creates a sense of home around us, pitches a tent over us. ... By complaining we are saying that the ugly world is outside and beyond us. We could be just fine, and indeed where we live, lousy people cannot enter."

According to one study negativity is coded in the Hungarian language. Translations of Dante's *Divine Comedy* into various languages were examined, and it turned out that the greatest number of negative forms were present in the Hungarian translation. In Hungarian there are double and indeed triple forms for a simple negation, such as "senki sem tudja meg" ("no one knows," "senki" meaning "no one" and "sem" meaning "nor") and even "soha senki nem tudja meg," which adds the word "soha" ("never"). The researcher in question (a psychologist) vaguely hints that the negation hidden in a communicative act can also function as an explanation for the negation of an action, since according to his findings in speech samples of people in suicidal crises the grammatical, semantic and pragmatic criteria relating to negation are generally predominant (Kézdi 1987, 87). He concludes, "the more negative a language, the greater the possibility that it is the vehicle for a world view of transience (mortality) and expiration. ... If so, then we have made progress in our understanding of the Hungarian vicious cycle related to suicide" (Kézdi 1987, 89).

In a later work, Kézdi compared his speech samples of people in suicidal crises with a control group and established that the incidence of the grammatical, semantic and pragmatic criteria relating to negation did indeed dominate. The regularity of the findings was shown by the negative nature of suicidal utterances in a grammatical sense: "in the Hungarian language it is impossible not to negate when it is a matter of suicide. ... The culture represented in our language prefers denial, which is a deliberate response to the historical situation and tendency . ... For an individual who has acquired that culture, an 'invited' death is a natural [mode] ... of ending the anguish that ensues from the culture. Prior to his own suicide Count István Széchenyi wrote, 'I would rather die a Hungarian than live in any other way'" (Kézdi, 1991, 181, 183).

I myself have carried out investigations similar to those of Kézdi. As my subject I chose the phraseology, which perhaps better reflects (is more deeply 'coded' by) the mentality, cultural traditions and values. I examined the richest conceptual categories (i.e. conceptual domains as reflected by utterances) that can be found in an already published glossary of Hungarian idioms (Bárdosi). I concentrated on those for which there were several pages of examples (clusters of examples). The most extensive conceptual domains of the most recent glossary of idioms were as follows:

becsmérel (becsmérlés); beszéd; beteg (beteges); bírál (bírálat); bizonyos; biztat (biztatás); buta; csodálkozás (csodálkozik); elégedetlen; elismer; ellenkezés, elutasít; értéktelen; eszik-iszik; fél (félelem); fenyeget; figyelmeztet; fut; gondolkodás; gonosz; halál; harag (haragos); haszon; házasság; hazudik; helyváltoztatás; hiába (hiábavaló); hitetlenkedés; ideges; időjárás; igazságszolgáltatás; ígér; jó (jóság); jólét; kellemetlenkedés; közöny; kudarc; külső testi jegyek; lehetőség; leint; lemond (lemondás); munka; nehézség; öltözet; öntelt; öreg; öröm; őszinte; pusztít; pusztul; részeg (részegeskedés); segít; siker; szándék; szegény; szemtelen; szerelem; szexualitás; szitkozódás; szomorkodás (szomorúság); tagad; távozás; téved; túloz, ver (verekedés); veszély;

disparage (disparagement); speech; ill; criticize (criticism); certain; reassure (reassurance); stupid; (amazement (amaze); dissatisfied; recognize; opposition; reject; valueless; eat and drink; fear; threaten; warn; run; thinking; evil; death; anger (angry); profit; marriage; lie; change of place; futile; incredulity; nervous; weather; administration of justice; promise; good (goodness); prosperity; nastiness; indifference; failure; external physical marks; possibility; gesture to stop; resign (resignation);work; difficulty; clothing; self-satisfied; old; joy; sincere; destroy; be ruined; intoxicated (intoxification); help; success; intention; poor; impertinent; love; sexuality; abuse; grieving (sorrow); deny; departure; err; exaggerate; beat (fight); danger.

I hypothesized that the conceptual clusters threw light on much deeper, anthropological, cognitive elements than would simple lexical statistics. It is noticeable that the more common conceptual clusters generally embrace pessimistic, negative concepts: disparage, ill, criticize, reject, valueless, etc. There are more than a few instances in which a negative wording is evident even when the conceptual group is fundamentally positive. Thus, under "prosperity," for instance, there is, "he's got money

under his skin," "he keeps his brains in his wallet," "he's got as much money as rubbish," "he makes stinking pots of money," etc.

Overcoming Hungaropessimism

As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, the word Hungaro-pessimism was first used in the early 1990s. It is not a Hungarian word as such, and any Hungarian hearing it for the first time still will smile wryly at its unusualness, though as a phenomenon (under various names) it seems to date back more than half a millennium. All the same, it might perhaps be overly hasty to consider it distinctively Hungarian. Pessimism is perhaps a manifestation of a general human fear, and at one and the same time also a driving force of culture. The peculiarity lies in the fact that in Hungarian culture this general pessimism seems to be a bit more palpable or omnipresent. Of course part of this may be the phenomenon of the self-fulfilling prophecy.

If there is a way to overcome this Hungaropessimism, perhaps it lies in fostering awareness of it as a process. Whether it is part of reflexes embedded in the language, an attempt to assert a form of community, or part of a culture's response to its (perception of its) history, this pessimism is hardly the only aspect of the Hungarian mentality. A Hungarian may sometimes be sad, but she is happy at least as often. In other words, there is such a thing as Hungaro-optimism, just as present in our culture, our everyday lives, and our language, but we have become accustomed to failing to acknowledge it. Hungarian folklore is full of poems, ditties and customs that are cheerful, brimming with life. New jokes are made every day. There are numerous Hungarian idioms expressing joie de vivre, but we do not dwell on them. If pessimism is in part a cultural construct, then Hungaro-optimism can be as well, as Mihály Csíkszentmihály, a master of positive psychology and himself of Hungarian birth, has said. It is perhaps worth noting that one of his more successful books, *The Evolving Self* (1993), was published in Hungarian translation in 2007, indicating an interest in the power of positive thinking among the Hungarian reading public. So next time I too will write of this phenomenon instead Hungaro-optimism. ❧

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Rolf Müller

Liberalism and Patriotism: Conflicting Creeds

Liberty and the Nation in the Political Thinking of Gusztáv Beksics

Gusztáv Beksics (1846-1906) was one of the most productive publicists and important political thinkers of the second half of the 19th century. His works, however, are not well-known today. Like many of his contemporaries, he combined the intellectual heritage of the great Reform Era with positivist doctrines, and he thought it was necessary to connect state intervention and classical liberal philosophy. He always formed and developed his program according to the needs of Hungarian politics. As he wrote of his life and philosophy in his 1884 book, *Legújabb politikai divat* [Newest Political Fashion], "the author of these lines is liberal through and through; but if liberalism and Hungarian interests are in contradiction with each other, then he would sacrifice the former for the sake of the latter without a moment's reflection." This creed shaped his entire career, in the course of which he was able, as a publicist and an intellectual, to give an external critique of the Hungarian system. At the same time, he had the chance to participate in the practical realization of ideals, since he was also a liberal representative and a member of Parliament.

An intellectual career at the end of the 19th century

Beksics, who was born to a family of teachers with southern Slavic roots, pursued an education in both ecclesiastic and law schools. Upon completion of his studies, he attempted to lead the life of an independent liberal intellectual. In his early years he was very drawn to literature. He first won recognition for his translations of Spanish poetry, short stories and plays (in 1880 he published a novel entitled *Arthur Barna*). His interest in literature brought him into the world of journalism. He began working as an assistant to novelist, politician, and essayist Zsigmond Kemény at *Pesti Napló* [Journal of Pest] in 1869.

Here he was introduced to centralist doctrines, but as he worked around people such as Jenő Rákosi, he also learned about the ideas of some of the young intellectuals of his own generation (including Ágost Pulszky, László Arany, Károly Keleti, János Asbóth and István Toldy). The group was small, but through its cultural and political influences it became significant. Its members sought to become independent from constitutional politics. Beksics began to work with them at a short-lived periodical entitled *Reform*, and they strove to promote the cause of civil progress under the influence of the ideals of Romanticism and Positivism.

Since he felt at home among journalists, Beksics joined the editors of the liberal periodical *Ellenőr* [Controller] after the fusion of the oppositional left center party and the governing party (lead by Ferenc Deák) in 1875. Zsigmond Bródy offered him a position at the *Neues Pester Journal* in 1880, a periodical that supported the cause of independence. He engaged in numerous debates as a publicist, but his name was better-known by the end of the decade thanks to his thorough discussions of law and history. Between 1877 and 1885 he also worked for *Magyar Igazságügy* [Hungarian Justice], a periodical that strove to draw attention to contemporary pressing legal concerns. In addition, he published works on history, which showed the influences that his former master and the centralist ideology had had on him. He had a very wide range of interests and was something of a polyhistor, which helped him strengthen his position as an intellectual.

As an intellectual active in the inception and spread of new ideas, Beksics soon learned how difficult it could be to put ideals into practice. Like many of his colleagues, he also chose to "take part," in other words to assume a role in politics and state affairs. From 1881 on he wrote editorials for *Pesti Hírlap* [Pest Herald], the periodical of the Légrády brothers, and beginning in September of the following year he began working for *Nemzet* [The Nation], a newly emerging government periodical that came into being with the merging of *A Hon* [The Homeland] and *Ellenőr*. Beksics summarized the ideas he published in his editorials from time to time, and also in his essays, volumes and pamphlets (he published more than thirty original works over the course of his life). The period he spent working at these various organs of the press constituted a milestone from a bibliographic point of view. It was during this time that he met and began to work together with Mór Jókai (who was the chief editor of *Nemzet* at the time), a relationship that lasted almost two decades. Also, like many of his contemporaries, he began to become more prominent in politics. Thanks to the fact that he was on good terms with Kálmán Tisza, he

got a seat in Parliament as the representative of the Sepsiszentgyörgy district in Transylvania (today Sfântu Gheorge in Romania). Beksics thought that "the general" would be a worthy successor of Deák, and in his view the modernization that followed the Austro-Hungarian Compromise under Tisza's rule constituted the first great effort of the unified nation. In his assessment the advancements were inseparable from Tisza's strong personality, and he would have entrusted the Tisza government with the reform ideas he had been articulating for several years. Though it is true that he became the representative of a Transylvanian district in spite of the fact that he had no family ties to the region (this was not unusual at the time), he nonetheless devotedly tended to the problems facing those he represented and developed a program with the intention of addressing their concerns that he had published in *Székely Nemzet* [Székely Nation], a local paper with ties to the government, in order to give voters a chance to familiarize themselves with it. The fact that he was still very active as a publicist showed that, in spite of the role he played as a member of parliament, he considered the press the proper space for the discussion and development of political ideas.

As of 1892, he urged the creation of personal and institutional conditions necessary in order to realize the ideas to which he gave voice in his editorials. He suggested to the Wekerle Cabinet that it let representatives of "science and knowledge" work in the administration. His views won so much appreciation that he was appointed to serve as ministerial adviser in 1894, a position that had not existed before, but rather had been created specifically for him. Beksics' goal was to cast light on the external and internal issues of Hungarian constitutional law, and he was convinced that the only way to do so was to found a so-called "information department" that would work together with the ministers. Beksics' old friend Dezső Bánffy assumed the position of Prime Minister after the resignation of Wekerle. The majority of Beksics' writings at the time were attempts to calm the tensions in domestic politics and the international tensions to which they were giving rise. Beksics believed that Hungary needed to present itself to Europe as a unified, consolidated country, which is in part why he published numerous writings in foreign languages. Some of his books were even published in Paris. The millennium also presented a good opportunity for him to write about the need to improve the image of the Monarchy, the prestige of which had fallen across Europe.

However, his views were less and less acceptable to Bánffy's government, so he returned to journalism and the Parliament in October, 1896. He began to popularize his own reform system with

renewed enthusiasm. In addition to publishing in his old newspapers, he began working for *Budapesti Napló* [Budapest Journal], where he published articles for a year. It is also worth noting that in the middle of 1897 he wrote several leading articles that were published in Ambrus Nemény's *Pesti Napló*, a periodical that favoured the ideas of Apponyi. With the research he had done as a historian during his time in office, he became part of the most significant scholarly undertaking for the commemoration of the millennium (the thousand-year anniversary of the arrival of the Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin), the publication of a several-volume history entitled A *Magyar Nemzet története* [History of the Hungarian Nation]. Beksics agreed to write the section of the tenth volume dealing with the years following the defeat of the Revolution of 1848. In 1899 he was appointed by Kálmán Széll to serve as one of the chief editors of the new semi-official periodical *Magyar Nemzet* [Hungarian Nation] (the other being Mór Jókai). After Tisza's resignation, Beksics found his "leader" anew. He viewed Széll as the second leader whose personality would be inseparable from the cause of national advancement. He was optimistic, and not without reason. His efforts to initiate reform showed promise, and numerous elements of his political ideas were made part of the government's policies.

Beksics' views could not take root in the political atmosphere of the turn of the century, however. He was devastated by the death of his wife in 1903, Krisztina Bogdanovish, a woman who had begun as an actress, but later had become a belletrist and an editor of a periodical. With the resignation of Széll his political career came to an end. He could not identify with the politics of the new generation (represented primarily by Kálmán Tisza), and in January 1904 he resigned from the position of chief editor at *Magyar Nemzet*. His attitudes towards politics had changed, and he began taking a renewed interest in playwriting. In 1905 he lost an election against the candidate representing Bánffy's New Party. In all likelihood, this event and his disappointment over it influenced his decision to accept the position of chief editor at *Budapesti Közlöny* [Budapest Gazette], a periodical that was somewhat peripheral. He endured an even greater shock than those he had suffered in his personal life when he began to see the foundations of the system crumble. Beksics wrote numerous anonymous editorials in *Budapesti Hírlap* (a paper that had become the main voice of "national resistance") to protest the unconstitutional orders of the soldier-government (the name given to a short-lived government that was hastily elected following the king's decision to dissolve Parliament in 1905). In 1906, he believed that the time had come to re-evaluate the political processes that had unfolded following the Austro-Hungarian

Compromise, but he died on May 7th, 1907, leaving this work unfinished (his *A Szabadelvűpárt története* [The History of the Liberal Party] was published posthumously).

Beksics in the secondary literature

Following his death, the memory of Beksics, who had been widely known and acknowledged, faded surprisingly quickly. Scholarship, however, has not forgotten his work or his ideas, though the assessments of his contributions have varied given the trends and tendencies of the historiography of the past century. In the middle of the 1930s Gyula Szekfű mentioned Beksics' career in his discussion of the reasons for the social decay that allegedly took place following the Treaty of Trianon. In his political articles, which were the foundation of his scholarly work, Szekfű made concrete references to Beksics, describing him as "the head of liberal journalism," who played a significant role in hampering the attempts to organize the social and intellectual forces of his time by continuously attacking conservative movements in his writings. In *Három nemzedék* [Three Generations], one of his most important works, Szekfű contends that figures like Beksics contributed to the fragmentation of society following the tragic collapse of state power by undermining its cohesiveness. In other writings Szekfű compared Beksics to Béla Grünwald and Dezső Bánffy, and presented him as one of the main figures of "forceful nationality policy," but he interpreted Beksics' views regarding the empire as an unambiguous symptom of a sick and declining society. Szekfű presented Beksics as an influential ideologue of the crisis of the post-Compromise era, a child of those who lived in the nation-state illusion, and he likened him to two other political thinkers of Hungarian imperialism, Pál Hoitsy and Jenő Rákosi. Gusztáv Gratz examined the ideas of these three thinkers in a similar context. He regarded the plans for a "Greater Hungary" (an independent Hungary the borders of which would be the borders of the medieval kingdom) as a typical phenomenon of the era, essentially an embodiment of the wishes of the common people. In his view it was impossible to understand the political movements of the turn of the century without a grasp of their ideas. In 1944 an essay was published by Károly Pikéty, the first person to present Beksics' complete oeuvre. His desire to offer a nuanced overview of Beksics' entire career prevented the young student of the university in Cluj from crafting a misleading portrayal of Beksics as a man who spent his life chasing imperialistic illusions. The portrait of Beksics was made even more subtle with the inclusion of a discussion

of his ideas for reform, and unlike others who had written on the topic, Pikéty acknowledged his historical significance. He reached the conclusion according to which the notion of a Hungarian empire was an indispensable precondition of the survival of the Hungarian nation. One should of course note in this context that this was less a distinctive view of history or the product of the influence of one of the proliferating schools of historical thought as it was simply part of the intellectual atmosphere of the war years.

Following the Second World War, Marxist criticism of what was viewed as bourgeois historiography influenced assessments of Beksics. In the mid-1950s Zsigmond Pál Pach, writing for instance in the 1955/1 edition of the periodical *Századok* [Centuries], attributed in part to Beksics the prevalence in his time of a view of the 19th century characterized by a hypercritical response to the 1848 Revolution and a relatively positive assessment of the Compromise of 1867. In 1961 in *Magyar Századforduló* [Hungarian Turn of the Century] Zoltán Horváth referred to Beksics as an "ultra-chauvinistic" publicist, whose work he saw as a counterpoint to the progressive spirit of the turn of the century. A major turning point in the reception of Beksics came when Zsuzsa L. Nagy published her extensive study of Beksics' career and views in 1963. Nagy clearly perceived the untenable nature of the approaches that had been adopted by Pach, Horváth, and others. In her essay, which was published in the 1963/6 edition of *Századok*, she offers a convincing portrayal of the steps that Beksics took, as a reform-minded politician who sought to promote bourgeois society, from "liberal nationalism to the Hungarian imperialism characteristic of the age," as well as the process by which this line of thinking slipped from unconditional support of the nation state to expansive, imperial ambitions. Over the course of the following decades historians made increasingly frequent mention of Beksics' oeuvre. Miklós Szabó, for instance, who wrote essays on the political thinking of the era, regularly discussed Beksics' social platform. In the early 1980s, in his book *A burzsoá állam és jogbölcselet Magyarországon* [The Bourgeois State and Philosophy of Law in Hungary] Imre Szabó, a scholar of jurisprudence, alluded to Beksics' achievements. In the middle of the decade András Baka compared Beksics with Béla Grünwald. *A magyar sajtó története 1867–1892* [The History of the Hungarian Press: 1867-1892], a monumental enterprise, is also worth mention. Edited by Domokos Kosáry and Béla G. Németh, the compilation includes essays by major historians, such as András Gergely, János Veliky and Géza Buzinkay. The authors of the volume not only give an outline of the contributions that are most illustrative of the characteristics of each

journal, but also offer a sample of the ideas of the journalists whose voices carried the most weight in their time. This compilation is all the more significant, since in the case of Beksics one can discern the parallels between his work as a journalist and his endeavours as an ideologue, and thus the volume offers particular insights into various elements of thinking and worldview.

In recent years, the assessments that have been made of Beksics in the secondary literature have proven remarkably diverse. György Kövér has discussed Beksics' views (which gave a considerable boost to the debate over the gentry) as characteristic manifestations of the concept of the middle classes in the long 19th century (*Századok*, 2003/5). Marius Turda presents Beksics' conceptions of "national superiority," revealing and contextualizing the relationship between nationalism and the racial theories of the fin de siècle, which were deeply rooted in Social Darwinism (*2000*, June 2004). László Tőkéczki's collection *Magyar liberalizmus* [Hungarian Liberalism], published in 1993 as part of a series on modern ideologies, deserves particular mention. Tőkéczki offers a selection of the writings of liberal thinkers from the Reform Era up to the 1930s, including some of Beksics' articles. He thereby situates Beksics, who had been almost completely forgotten by the wider audience, in his proper place, in other words in the company of other liberal thinkers. I myself had the same goal when I published a compilation of Beksics' articles and speeches in 2005 as a contribution to the Hungarian Pantheon series (*Gusztáv Beksics*, 2005).

Beksics' ideals and political program

Beksics' political career began in 1867, in the intellectual milieu of the post-Compromise era, when Hungary was forming its own constitutional system. He and those who shared his inclinations were trying to find ways to keep modern ideologies alive under Dualism.

Partly as a consequence of his knowledge of and interest in legal theory, he soon turned his attention to issues relating to human rights and basic freedoms. He was also influenced by the fact that the question of how freedom and democracy are related had probably never been as much in the center of political thinking as it was in the last third of the 19th century, during the decades that followed the suppression of the many revolutions of the mid-century. John Stuart Mill's work attracted considerable attention across the continent, and there were many analytic works authored by Hungarian writers. Beksics was among those who crafted reasoned explanations of their views (alongside

authors such as József Eötvös, Béni Kállay, János Asbóth, and Ágost Greguss). Analysing the evolution of the Hungarian legal system, he considered the privileges of nobility posed in the Tripartium (in the 16th century) to be a uniquely Hungarian source of liberties, since due to the extension of the law everyone in the country was entitled to these privileges. He was also interested in the assertion of individual freedoms in the contemporary legal system. In 1879, before the Csemegi Codex had come into effect (laws named after their author, Károly Csemegi, which among other things codified some of the basic principles of legal precedence), Beksics criticized the lack of regulation regarding judicial and police work in cases of arrest and house searches. Statistical data convinced him of the necessity of building a system that guarantees liberties. In his plans for judicial reform, he took the imperfections and achievements of the West European court into consideration, and in his preliminary investigation he pointed out the changes that he felt were necessary, including the principle of the proper process of prosecution, in other words the clear division of the roles (prosecutor, judge, and defence), and furthermore transparency, openness, the importance of oral proceedings, and the equal rights of the defence. In his view it was essential to make a clear distinction between investigatory and preventive imprisonment, and he would have allowed bail only in cases of milder crimes. He considered individual liberties the foundation of liberalism, even though he knew that restrictions were necessary in certain cases. He agreed with Mill's views on the question of freedom of action, meaning that it is only applicable for people over the age of majority, as determined by law. This is why he insisted that culpability was only a question in the case of someone over the age of twelve. He also thought that it shouldn't be permissible for the individual to cause confusion in the lawful functioning of the state, so he refused resistance against legal proceedings by a public authority. He argued that slander in the press was an infringement against the individual's privacy, so he wished to renew the institution of common jury (which had been founded in 1867) regarding affairs of the press. He acknowledged the theoretical benefits of the common jury in criminal proceedings, but since such a jury would have to be monolingual, he felt the institution was inappropriate in the case of Hungary, since it would have been imprudent to deprive an institution that was so essential to the peace of the country of its Hungarian character, particularly in territories inhabited by linguistic minorities. At the same time he also did not want to excite passions among the nationalities, which he realized might have unforeseeable consequences, by making knowledge and use of Hungarian obligatory.

He consistently applied his principles, which were founded on his perception of national interests, with regards to political rights and liberties as well. He emphasized the distinctive character of Hungarian development, in other words, the significant role of the nobility, the roots of which lay in the weakness of the middle class. In Beksics' assessment, the origins of this phenomenon lay in the laws regarding inheritance of property. He presented the institution of entailment as a set of rules that is aristocratic in its goals but democratic in its results, since it contributed to the impoverishment and proliferation of the nobility and predisposed it to the principles of equality. In his view, examples of history affirmed his contentions. He believed that democracy, unlike individual liberty, was not the product of a desire innate to all humans, but rather was the result of concrete social and economic affairs. Beksics' ideas about democracy can be considered unique because of his notions regarding the borders of political freedom. First and foremost, he referred to the importance of "saving the race," a concept that was used against radical changes in politics and society which in his assessment gave too much room to foreign elements. This process started mainly due to external pressures to conserve the constitution. On the other hand, he also emphasized that this restriction did not constitute a repudiation of liberty, since it was not mutually related with the concept of equality. On the one hand, with his typical historical point of view Beksics justified the political system of his age ("royal democracy"). On the other, he created a kind of background for his ideology. These were the grounds on which his liberalism and political views of national interests were founded. With reference to the relationships between the nationalities in Hungary (the linguistic minorities and the Hungarian speaking majority), Beksics' politics of national interest, which became increasingly strident, brought the notion of democracy into a less threatening framework of equality based on individual liberty.

Beksics found the support of "the powerful public spirit" wanting while he was developing his program of modernization. He made an attempt to motivate what he perceived as a stagnant society that had already sunk into indifference regarding law and politics towards an overall national goal. In order to achieve this, Beksics intended to articulate a dynamic platform that would radically transform the stagnant state of affairs, the origins of which lay in the insistence on "conservation." Eventually, he managed to awaken the public spirit by pursuing a Magyarizing (that is, Hungarianizing) policy, and at the outset he saw the long-term establishment of "grammatical unity" as a means with which to achieve the participation of society in the

realization of his political goals. At this time he was content with the assimilation of the Germans and Jews living in Hungary, and he shared the optimism of those who believed that the smaller, fragmented nationalities would similarly assimilate and become part of the Hungarian nation. He was, however, less optimistic about the cultural occupation of the Slovak and Romanian territories. In his platform he attached primary importance to cities as influential centers of Hungarian culture and language. Thus, he urged the necessity of Magyarizing the major regional centers, and he considered essential the creation of educational and cultural societies as institutions that would facilitate social participation. With this end in mind, he took an active role in the efforts of the Hungarian Educational Center of Transylvania [Erdélyrészi Magyar Közművelődési Egyesület], and initiated the establishment of the Transdanubian Cultural Society [Dunántúli Közművelődési Egyesület] in 1890.

In the middle of the 1880s it was mainly due to Beksics' efforts that the debate over the position of the gentry, which had had a long history, got a considerable boost. Beksics believed that the civic middle class would play an essential role in the cultural and above all moral reformation of the society of his time. And yet, he acknowledged that at that time the middle class was not powerful enough to shoulder the task and become the leading social force of a policy that was organized on the basis of national interests without the aid of other social classes. He deemed the role of the gentry, which was traditionally in a leading position, generally continuous, primarily because the bulk of the civil servants of the era were members of this social class. To some extent, however, he shared the opinion of those who complained of the decay of the middle class. Taking all this into consideration, he drew the conclusion that none of the classes were strong enough to address the needs of the moment. In the course of time, Beksics indulged in fantasies about a social "amalgamation": the biologically constructed élite of his dreams would be simultaneously novel and of a national kind. Novel, because it would be characterized by a spirit of enterprise and a love of work that was generally ascribed to the bourgeoisie and the newly emerged landed class, who were the innate champions of modernization, and at the same time national, since it would also be characterized by the patriotic mentality of the Hungarian gentry, who had cherished a centuries-old devotion to their homeland. Despite its receptive traits, however, Beksics' platform excluded the aristocracy and the prelacy, the members of which he considered antidemocratic by nature. This attitude was reflected in his reform conceptions regarding the Upper House of the Hungarian Parliament as well:

Beksics claimed that the Hungarian Upper House would not meet the requirements of the age unless the sovereign also appointed representatives of capital, science, public administration, justice and the military as members of Parliament.

Beksics' reform ideas evoked immediate and violent reactions, which were obvious signs of the fear felt by the conventional political élite when it perceived a threat to its social status. Similarly, the contemporary spread of New Conservatism led to an overall criticism of civil transformation, Beksics' tenets included. Beksics turned against the ideologies that favoured specific social groups primarily because he saw them as threats to national interests, the basic pillars of his liberal ideas and the social reconciliation of 1867. He was greatly concerned about Ultramontanism (the attitude within the Catholic Church that emphasizes the prerogatives of the Pope), as well as supporters of agrarianism and the aspirations of the nationalities, who he saw as their allies. His intention was to defend the middle classes that were taking form by giving utterance to his disapproval of the Deutscher Schulverein, which proved to be a champion of Germanization, and of the anti-Semitism that was becoming increasingly overt in political circles. Although at first he considered the socialist movement that emerged in Europe a "mere" theoretical question rather than an immediate threat, he nonetheless condemned it alongside anarchism. He had a more direct experience of the agrarian-socialist commotion taking place in the Great Hungarian Plain, so he considered it important to understand its causes.

Beksics believed that the state could provide an antidote to the maladies and developmental irregularities that were causing the fabric of society to fray. He launched a broad national platform in 1889, in the course of which he combined the Liberal concept of the "state founded on the rule of law" with the goal of the "nation state," thereby ringing in the era of "national politics." Beksics was one of those who claimed that an efficiently working public administration plays a primary role in the consolidation of the state and the appeasement of various conflicting nationalities and social groups. He built his platform on the threefold basis of state power, self-government and legal defence. However, he adjusted these notions to the aims of the national principle. Consequently, his ideas were somewhat controversial in their nature, as the strengthening of the power of the commissioned Lord-Lieutenants implied that the elected sub-prefects had their hands tied, while the increased authority of the administrative committee led to the limitation of the general assembly's independence in decision making. Thus, his decisions simultaneously provided the excessive

regulation of the long-established administrational tradition of the counties and recent ideas of modern self-government. Nevertheless, Beksics' program had its merits, such as his suggestion for establishing an administrative court that later became an important institution of the state founded on the rule of law. His reform theory was framed with consideration of both western models and Hungarian traditions, but national interest (or his perception of national interest) was always paramount. One can discern this in his refusal to include territorial divisions that would have resulted in the creation of further counties with a non-Hungarian majority.

The nationalities question in Hungary and the relationship between the linguistic minorities and the Hungarian speaking majority left their marks on Beksics' conceptions concerning public education as much as they did on his liberal notion of freedom. He suggested that the educational system in general should be raised to a higher level in favor of those who hoped to excel. At the same time, he looked to the state to preserve and extend the Hungarian nature of secondary and higher education. The novelty of his reform ideas lies in the fact that they were deeply rooted in the general assumption that language has a central role in the dissemination of culture and the advancement of assimilation, as well as in the idea that language would serve to promote the polishing of an intellectually and emotionally committed intelligentsia in a nation state.

During the period that bore witness to conflicts regarding ecclesiastical policy, Beksics demanded steps from the government. He discussed the strengthening of the sovereign's rights of patronage and supervision (exercised by the government at that time) and ecclesiastical independence from the influence of Rome. Nevertheless, he refused the idea of terminating the historically established ties between the state and the Roman Catholic Church, and ultimately his scheme did not include more than a restricted Catholic autonomy. He insisted on the introduction of general state registration and mandatory civil marriage under the aegis of a unified matrimonial law, because he felt that this act would convince the Jewish population, to which he assigned a central role in the process of Magyarization, to support national aspirations. He sought to strengthen the fabric of the nation by tightening bonds with the liberal notion of freedom. The introduction of these legal measures, however, only gave further impetus to the emergence of political Catholicism, a process that Beksics considered destructive, both to the hegemony of the Hungarian nation and the structure of public law.

In the 1890s, Beksics became increasingly anxious about the contemporary political trends. As a representative of Sepsiszentgyörgy, he had direct experience of the backwardness that was characteristic of both the Székely Land and the rest of Transylvania in comparison with other parts of the country. Although Beksics made allowances for political realities, it proved to be particularly distressing for him that some of his suggestions for the advancement of this region were not realized, such as his earlier attempts at limiting the proportion of the entailed properties in the course of the debate about restricting the open inheritance of real estate, or his hopes of promoting an economic policy that would favour industry and commerce, which he intended to achieve with the active participation of foreign investors and experts. He created a plan of action for the fortification of the "eastern stronghold" of the Hungarian(-izing) nation state. He was convinced that the principal aim should be to provide economic aid for the countryside, which excelled in domestic industry, but had no large-scale industry whatsoever, to develop a practicable system of loans, and to establish a financial institution. Furthermore, he demanded the founding of trade schools and the improvement of the railway system. He reinforced his argumentation by talking about the perils of alleged Russian and Romanian attacks and the traditional strategic significance of the Székely Land.

In the early part of his career Beksics had had to use data from the Statistical Office, and he himself also did statistical research in the form of surveys and carried out modern comparative analyses. His subsequent use of ethnography and demography meant a further broadening of his methods and tools. His thinking was permeated by the spirit of Social Darwinism, and he was convinced that with the help of the sciences one could construct the system of evolution and regression in which the nations (and what he called "races") naturally found themselves (according to racially motivated Social Darwinism). He integrated the irreconcilable Hungarian-Romanian antagonism with his vision of the global conflict of races and demonstrated that an eastward cultural and intellectual mission led by the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy would be entirely justifiable given the circumstances of the time. Furthermore, Beksics also was convinced that religion and nation are notions that can create unity among the various races, and he also regarded independence as an essential factor in the history of peoples. Towards the fin de siècle, in parallel with the spread of Spencer's evolutionist doctrines, Beksics' opinion about assimilation also underwent a transformation. As he realized that assimilation based on language was only limited in its results, the nation state of his visions

no longer functioned via the means of linguistic cohesion. He expected unqualified loyalty to the Hungarian State and its national aspirations, irrespective of people's command of the Hungarian language or their national sympathies.

Beksics hoped to counterbalance the momentum of the Slav and particularly Romanian national movements at the turn of the century with the numerical superiority of the Hungarian speaking population, so he paid considerable attention to problems that were of a demographic nature. He was perfectly content with the birth rate among Hungarians as a national average, but the radical decline in the number of births in Transdanubia and the Great Hungarian Plain upset him, and since he saw the reasons for this decrease in the traditional division of the lands and estates, he suggested an expansive economic policy in the hopes of reversing what he perceived as unfavourable tendencies. His aim was to encourage population growth among those working in agriculture, which he meant to achieve by parcelling out a certain part of the state-owned and communal lands into allotments and by transferring the entailed properties. He also made plans to increase the population in the southern Hungarian and Transylvanian regions as well. His plans for population growth were also part of his vision of the transformation of the middle class. He hoped to enrich it and reinforce it morally with the addition of new elements, in part in order to compensate for the decline in the wealth of the medium landowning class and the intelligentsia. In order to achieve these goals, he called on the increasingly wealthy peasantry for help.

In several of his works Beksics mentioned the extent to which his reform ideas and indeed the country itself were embedded in the history of constitutional law. The terms that were significant to him as political concepts included historical legal continuity based in his view on the Pragmatic Sanction, 1848 and 1867, the notion of the community built on dual solidarity, the essence of which was transfer of rights and respect for the law. Beksics saw the Austro-Hungarian Compromise as complete from the perspective of public law, a clearly defined foundation. In his view the only possible and desirable path for further development was through the principle of the nation, which opened ever broader perspectives. He was increasingly certain that Austria was incapable of resolving its internal problems, so towards the end of his life Beksics suggested that Hungary should take over rule of the empire. Beksics thought it feasible that a Hungary that had become economically and commercially independent could gain demographic superiority. His long-range predictions included a Hungarian nation of twenty-million people. It is not by chance either

that Beksics, who was sensitive to the lessons of history, found the historical archetype of Hungarian aspirations for political dominance in the policy of King Matthias, who had forced Vienna to surrender to him in 1485. Using history as a basis for further predictions, at the dawn of the new century Beksics prophesized either the status of a great power for Hungary or a vision of inevitable decay.

Beksics' intellectual orientation bears the marks of one of the most representative philosophical movements of the second half of the 19th century. He began his career under the spell of the notion of individual freedom, supported the creation of state institutions founded on the rule of law, and hoped to further a modern bourgeois society with a strong middle-class. Having recognized the powerlessness of the Hungarian middle-class, however, he could not devise any solution within the framework of Liberal thinking and turned instead towards étatism, which in turn in the long run resulted in a loss of balance between the state and society. Although he did not share the conservative views of his contemporaries concerning the debate over the position of the gentry, he was strongly attached to the historicizing tendencies of the period. Beksics' program for the modernization of the middle-class conforms to other social reform theories of the age, as did his schemes for assimilation, which were rooted in evolutionary theories. Like the majority of Liberals, Beksics also initiated a platform with the theme of modernization that increasingly led towards nationalism and nationalistic phantasms. Consequently, subsequent generations of historians ranked him alongside politicians such as Jenő Rákosi or Pál Hoitsy. ❧

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Gábor Megadja

Rationalism and Ideology

It is important to have some understanding of the intellectual climate in which immense social changes take place. Rationalist philosophies and political ideologies are two distinctly modern phenomena, the roots of which lie in mechanistic philosophies and the Enlightenment. In this essay, I will offer an understanding of rationalism and ideology as it was understood by a few prominent émigré thinkers of Central-European monarchies.

In order to understand the emergence of rationalism and ideology, one must take some changes in the general approach towards human reality into consideration. First, one should note the influence that the natural sciences had on the social and political sciences. In this process, the classical distinction between *opinio* and *scientia* disappeared. Second, the former religious explanations were replaced by ideologies. As I am going to demonstrate, these two components may converge, as indeed they have over the course of the last two centuries. I describe both of them as recurring attempts to achieve the conscious control of human progress and design of society. For the émigré scholars, these phenomena were of vital importance, since both ideology and rationalism contain totalitarian potentialities. Not only did they arrive at complete control of the state, they also undermined the moral foundations on which free societies were based. Consequently, the works on which I am focusing here have a certain degree of anti-rationalist and anti-ideological flavor. The main argument against rationalism and ideology, however, was that they both result in moral relativism *and* planning, which means the *elimination of freedom*.

Objectivism and the Primacy of "Facts"

The success of the natural sciences encouraged people in the fields of the social sciences and humanities to treat social phenomena as "objective facts," i.e. as given entities that are independent of our inner ability to perceive actions and relations in the outside world. The ever increasing importance of the natural sciences put their methods in a generally authoritative position, which at the same time meant the identification of rationality with the philosophy of Newton.[1] As Friedrich August von Hayek put it, the "whole history of modern Science proves to be a process of progressive emancipation from our innate classification of the external stimuli till in the end they completely disappear."[2] In this concept, an "objective" or "positive" fact is one that does not need any affirmation of personal belief.[3] These ideas run through the whole era of modern scientism and found political expression in modern mass movements and ideologies. The concept can be found in Comte's positivism, Durkheim's notion of "social facts", and the "class consciousness" of Marxism.

However, both Hayek and Michael Polanyi claimed that such facts do not exist at all: Hayek directed his criticism against the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the social sciences,[4] and Polanyi denied the possibility of objectivism even in the natural sciences. Polanyi's argument goes as follows: all scientific communities have certain implicit presuppositions according to which the results of scientific inquiries are judged, that is, whether they are accepted as true or false.[5] The observer cannot step outside his own body as if he or she were viewing things from a "non-human," external position. The very possibility of understanding processes depends on the inner capacity of humankind to direct his attention to any object and to choose which observed things are of relevance. Therefore, as Polanyi claims, any scientific investigation must necessarily rely on personal beliefs and also the tradition and authority of the scientific community (that is the reason why a scientific community does not accept any explanation based on sorcery). Polanyi proves his claim with an example. He mentions a discovery made concerning the relationship between gestation periods

1 ■ Eric Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, p. 24.
2 ■ F. A. Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science*, p. 33.
3 ■ Michael Polanyi, *The Logic of Liberty*, p. 11.
4 ■ See also Voegelin, *op. cit.*, p. 146.
5 ■ The argument that our knowledge is socially made was also put forward by Imre Lakatos and Thomas Kuhn. See Imre Lakatos, *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes*, Cambridge University Press, 1980, and Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, University of Chicago Press, 1996.

and the multiples of the number p. The table of figures showed a strong coherence between the multiples of p and the periods of pregnancy of different animals.[6] Yet, not a single scientist would ever admit that there can be any relation between these two variants. The description of a relationship like this would be called untrue and irrational; however, this judgment is based on personal convictions and not on some "objective" standard, independent of personal views. According to Polanyi, the absurdity of the positivist theory is manifested in this example because if it were possible to free ourselves from personal beliefs, then the connection between the periods of pregnancy and the multiples of p would have to be regarded as a real and true relation. The fallacy of scientistic objectivism, as Hayek argues, is that two objects that appear to be alike do not necessarily have to be alike in any objective sense.[7]

In the social and political sphere, this attitude is particularly dangerous because it disregards any possibility of real personal achievements and does not consider any "qualitative" phenomenon valid or real. According to Hayek, this objectivism is also collectivist, for it treats entire societal concepts as given objects.[8] It is, of course, not the same as political collectivism, although it serves largely as its intellectual basis.

The error resulting from this line of reasoning is exactly what the ardent positivist wants to avoid. He mistakes for facts what are merely models constructed by the popular mind and, consequently, he becomes a victim of the fallacy of "conceptual realism." [9] It is the same false consistency of the positivists, as Hayek argues, that leads them to postulate such metaphysical entities as "humanity" conceived as a "social being." Yet, it was the very aim of positivism and scientism to discard all metaphysical concepts with regards to reality.

In contradistinction to this apprehension, in reality "wholes" are always constructed by the mind. They are an amalgam of distinct individual events. It is the perfectionism of all forms of scientism that seeks to do away with the fragile, dispersed and incomplete knowledge that fills the scientistic mind with anxiety. Even the idea that social institutions are the result of several different acts – that are not necessarily directed to achieve one certain end – makes the adherent of scientism uneasy. Yet, as both Hayek and Polanyi argue, institutions, scientific discoveries, general welfare, morals, language, etc. are largely due to a spontaneous order that arose from the distinct actions of multitudes of people who were aiming to achieve varied and different ends.

6 ■ Polanyi, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.
7 ■ Hayek, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
8 ■ Ibid., p. 93.
9 ■ Ibid., p. 95.

The attempt to do away with this spontaneous accomplishment and to replace it with one planning and directing authority is the outcome of what Hayek calls *Scientistic Hubris*, which, contrary to its initial purpose of removing imperfect individual reason, now places all faith in *Reason*, i.e. in some sort of individual "supermind" that is armed with absolute knowledge.[10] This "supermind" is something like an observer from a distant planet – a favorite vision of progressives from Condorcet to Mach.[11] However, simply because it is true that institutions are man-made, it does not necessarily follow that they are the result of conscious, directed design, as Hayek points out. The monetary system, language, morals, etc., enable people to achieve many varied goals even though they were *not* specifically designed for that very purpose. Nevertheless, the scientistic mind concludes that we have the power to refashion them in any way we wish.[12]

Reason and knowledge, for Hayek and Polanyi, exist only in inter-individual relations. What they call "collective wisdom" is not some sort of individual supermind but the result of the intersubjective knowledge embodied in social institutions.[13] Consequently, it is a failed attempt to "plan" institutions, economy and science, for what we see in them is not consciously designed and cannot be foretold.[14] If we want to direct the growth of reason we only put limits on its growth.[15] Discrediting personal beliefs and "personal knowledge" (Polanyi) in the social sciences overlooks the only viewpoint from which social relations and human action can be understood:

> So far as human actions are concerned the things *are* what the acting people think they are.[16] (...) The facts of the social sciences are merely opinions, views held by the people whose actions we study.[17]

As rationalism emerged in European thought, all formerly accepted truths came to be regarded as mere "opinions" and a new principle needed to be found on which to found our understanding of the world around us. Because opinions could not be maintained in the face of the new discoveries of science, a certain "positive" knowledge had to be the new principle:

> The struggle between spiritual and temporal powers is the guiding principle for the understanding of Western Christian history. But these are powers of "opinion."

10 ■ Ibid., p. 90.
11 ■ Ibid., pp. 103-104.
12 ■ Ibid., pp. 147-148.
13 ■ Cf. Voegelin, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.
14 ■ Polanyi, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
15 ■ Hayek, *op. cit.*, p. 160.
16 ■ Ibid., p. 44
17 ■ Ibid., p. 47.

> When the "opinions" are purified, that is when people cease to believe in the claims of popes and emperors, we enter a new period of increasing truth and reason.[18]

The natural consequence of this process is that since they cannot stand the test of the new rational-scientific criteria, all institutions, authorities and traditions are to be regarded as matters of personal evaluations. This leads to *subjectivism*, the problem that scientific objectivism produces in the field of morals. Subjectivism is only seemingly in contradiction with objectivism, in fact, it is its logical conclusion, as Polanyi claims.

I. Moral Inversion

The progress of modern science, which both Eric Voegelin and Hayek conceived as a constant dismissal of anthropomorphic concepts, is coupled with the constant emancipation from authority. In order to understand the effect of the ideas in the past two centuries, Polanyi offers an explanation that he calls *moral inversion*.

According to Polanyi, modern chaos and totalitarianism are the outcome of a self-contradictory concept of liberty which brought about its own destruction. The doctrine contains two formulas: an anti-authoritarian one and one of philosophic doubt. The protagonists of this doctrine in the Anglo-Saxon world were Locke and Milton. They based the anti-authoritarian formula on their own experiences of religious wars and they demanded tolerance so that truth could be discovered. The philosophic doubt principle was closely connected to the anti-authoritarian one, and it required the freedom of thought because one can never be certain about the truth of one's opinion.

However, the same principles hold true in the case of Continental thinking, according to Polanyi. Therefore, the question is, why did freedom collapse in Continental Europe and why was the Anglo-Saxon world able to preserve freedom, even though it adhered to the same principles? Polanyi's answer is that the Enlightenment was a more *radical* and definitely anti-religious expression of these thoughts, and it took these principles to their final, logical conclusions.[19] Therefore, the Anglo-Saxon liberals basically remained religious and did not even

18 ■ Voegelin, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

19 ■ Nearly the same argument is put forward by Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, who connects this difference to the basic religious outlook of the Continent and the Anglo-Saxon world; while Continental Europe is predominantly Catholic and thus thrives on the absolute and is predisposed to draw the logical conclusions of the premises, the Anglo-Saxon world is Protestant and ready to make compromises. See Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Liberty or Equality*, Ch. V.

20 ■ Polanyi, *op. cit.*, p. 117.; See also Voegelin, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

entertain the possibility of extending the principle of doubt to the field of morals and religion. When he was arguing for tolerance, atheists were a notable exception for Locke.[20]

The doctrine holds that we should not impose our beliefs on others if our views are not demonstrable. The problem arises for Polanyi precisely when we apply this to ethical principles – as the philosophy of the French Enlightenment did:

> It follows that unless ethical principles can be demonstrated with certainty, we should refrain from imposing them and should tolerate their total denial. But of course, ethical principles cannot be demonstrated: you cannot prove the obligation to tell the truth, to uphold justice and mercy. It would follow therefore that a system of mendacity, lawlessness and cruelty is to be accepted as an alternative to ethical principles on equal terms. But a society in which unscrupulous propaganda, violence and terror prevail offers no scope for tolerance. Here the inconsistency of a liberalism based on philosophic doubt becomes apparent: freedom of thought is destroyed by the extension of doubt to the field of traditional ideals.[21]

One finds the same line of argument in Hayek, who maintains that simply because traditional morals are not the result of conscious design it does not follow that they are useless or false.

This process created a vacuum into which new "moralities" penetrated. It was necessary to find substitutes for universal standards. Polanyi sees the attempts made to attain this end in four basic steps.

The first substitute is to be found in Rousseau's *Confessions*, in which he makes the romantic individual the only valid judge of his own actions. There are thus no universal standards of judgment that transcend the individual. According to Polanyi, this idea was extended to the actions of nations as well. This supremacy of uniqueness served as the breeding ground for Romanticist nationalism. The most important variant, however, was that of the combined nationalist and Romanticist-individualist approach, which found its clearest expression in the concept of the national leader.[22]

However, Romanticism was not a systematic philosophical program. The appearance of the latter came with the Hegelian dialectic, in which "Hegel took charge of Universal Reason, emaciated to a ghost by its treatment at the hands of Kant, and clad it with the warm flesh of history."[23] Thus, Reason's position was made immanent in history, as well as its driving force.[24]

21 ■ Ibid., pp. 120-121.
22 ■ Ibid., pp. 123-124.
23 ■ Ibid., p. 124.
24 ■ Eric Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, in: CW5, pp. 290-292.

In the works of Marx and Engels the remainder of the task was completed; all ideals, such as truth, justice, etc. were transformed into projections of "class interests," having little claim to the status of standards of judgment. According to Polanyi, with this decisive step the way was paved for the most harmful synthesis: Romanticist nationalism and Marxist materialism merged, and nationalism was transposed into materialistic terms. That is how the "class struggle" can be utilized in the case of nations, where nations are called "haves" and "have-nots" (Hitler, Mussolini). Thus the Marxist "class war" of nations is set. Since all ideals of truth, justice, piety, etc. are mere representations of class interests, the only dictum that can be considered valid will be the contention according to which what benefits the nation is right.[25] Consequently, "romanticism had been brutalized and brutality romanticized."[26] In this moral inversion, finally, man liberated himself from all obligations imposed upon him by truth and justice. He himself became the master of his own ideals, as opposed to earlier, when he had only been their "servant."

However, this picture is far from complete. Polanyi argues that several other elements play important roles in this subversive chain of events. The first is what he calls Nihilism, a fundamentally modern phenomenon. He finds the characteristic figures of Nihilism in Turgenev's Bazarov and Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov, as well as in the ideas of Nietzsche and Stirner. These Nihilists are non-political individualists without faith or morals. Nevertheless, having liberated themselves from any obligation to public morality, they find their way to a narrow political creed. For example, the German Youth Movement is, for Polanyi, one of the embodiments of this Nihilism. Still, one more component is needed to describe the moral inversion in its entirety, and that is the messianic moral passion:

> The morally inverted person has not merely performed a philosophic substitution of moral aims by material purposes, but is acting with the whole force of his homeless moral passions within a purely materialistic framework of purposes.[27]

This purely materialistic framework, so Polanyi's argument goes, is the reason why modern totalitarianism is more brutal than other authoritarian systems of the past that were based on some rigid spiritual creed. This is so because every authoritarian system recognizes other standards and principles that transcend its own.[28] Without these

25 ■ Polanyi, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-126.; For a critique of this Benthamite utilitarian principle in connection with National Socialism see also Erik v. Kuehnelt-Leddihn [under the pseudonym Francis Stuart Campbell],. *The Menace of the Herd: or Procrustes at Large*, p. 290.

26 ■ Polanyi, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

27 ■ Ibid., p. 131.

transcending boundaries to power, freedom and law disappear. This is why Polanyi saw the only future of Western societies in the upholding of the transcendent ideals of truth, justice and mercy:

> The downfall of liberty which followed the success of these attacks everywhere demonstrates in hard facts what I had said before: that freedom of thought is rendered pointless and must disappear, where reason and morality are deprived of their status as a force in their own right. When the judge in court can no longer appeal to law and justice; when neither a witness, nor the newspapers, nor even a scientist reporting on his experiments, can speak the truth as he knows is; when in public life there is no moral principle commanding respect; when the revelations of religion and of art are denied any substance: then there are no grounds left on which any individual may justly make a stand against the rulers of the day. Such is the simple logic of totalitarianism.[29]

Neither in science, nor in morality can we question or doubt our basic presuppositions. They are responsible for maintaining the principles of truth and justice, as well as facilitating new discoveries. The same argument is advanced by Hayek:

> It is essential for the growth of reason that as individuals we should bow to forces and obey principles which we cannot hope fully to understand, yet on which the advance and even the preservation of civilization depend. Historically this has been achieved by the influence of the various religious creeds and by traditions and superstitions which made man submit to those forces by an appeal to his emotions rather than his reason. (...) The rationalist [...] who despises all the institutions and customs which have not been consciously designed, would thus become the destroyer of the civilization built upon them.[30]

II. Political Gnosticism

Since the old explanations and understandings of the world, which were pre-eminently religious, gradually disappeared, new ones had to be invented. We will follow the terminology of Eric Voegelin and Hannah Arendt and use the concept of *Political Gnosticism* in order to attempt to explain ideologies. By modern Gnosticism, Voegelin means a potpourri of movements, such as "progressivism, positivism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, communism, fascism, and national socialism."[31]

28 ■ Ibid, p. 133.; This statement of Polanyi resembles that of Hannah Arendt, see her *What is Authority*, in: *Between Past and Future*, Penguin Books, 2006, particularly pp. 96-97.; See below the subchapter "The Meaning of Totalitarianism".
29 ■ Ibid.
30 ■ Hayek, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-163.

In accordance with the new philosophies, previously accepted frameworks of reality were rejected. As a consequence of the penetration of rationalism, Divine Providence is no longer given credence and all religious symbols are relegated to the status of "myths."[32] Nevertheless, people always need symbols that represent the reality surrounding them, and the philosophy of modernity chose *knowledge* (gnosis) as that symbol, according to Voegelin. The political ideologies provided "keys" for understanding the world, and, as suits the Age of Reason, they presented certain "laws" through which the *eidos* of reality could be discovered, whether one thinks of the *eidos* of the Law of Nature (National Socialism) or the *eidos* of the Law of History (Communism).[33]

The gnostics were essentially heretic Christian sectarians who promised salvation through hidden knowledge, through a knowledge that penetrates deeply into human existence and thus uncovers the "real" or "truer" meaning behind visible reality.[34]

Voegelin argues that there is a historical continuity of Gnosticism.[35] The difference is that in antiquity Gnosticism was religious, while modern Gnosticism is *political*.

For a general outlook of the Gnostic, we have to enumerate the six basic characteristic features that Voegelin considers descriptive of the phenomenon: 1) the Gnostic is dissatisfied with his situation (which is, of course, not that peculiar); 2) if something is not as it should be, the fault is to be attributed to the wickedness of the world; 3) the belief that salvation from the evil of the world is possible; 4) the order of being has to be changed in a historical process; 5) this change in the order of being is possible through human action, and salvational acts are possible through human effort; 6) the Gnostic will henceforth construct a formula for self and world salvation through *knowledge*.[36]

Because perceived relief from this world (a world that is alien to the Gnostic) is seen as possible, the Gnostic attempts to destroy reality. In this sense, ideological thinking becomes "emancipated from reality,"[37] but this destructive attempt will "only increase the disorder in society."[38] Voegelin and Arendt argue that ideologies construct a second reality in which they feel at home. However, this *second reality* by

31 ■ Voegelin, *op. cit.*, p. 295.
32 ■ Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, p. 21.
33 ■ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, The World Publishing Company, 1962, p. 472.
34 ■ Ibid., pp. 470-471.
35 ■ Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, in: CW5, p. 297.
36 ■ Ibid., pp. 297-298.
37 ■ Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 470.
38 ■ Voegelin, *op. cit.*, 256.

necessity clashes with reality as such. And here, Voegelin describes a component that was missing in the antique form of Gnosticism – namely the prohibition of questioning (Frageverbot).[39] Anyone who wishes to question the premises of the Gnostics is denied that possibility. As a tool with which to safeguard the dogmas of the ideology, a "system" has to be created. This logic is, of course, circular. The system is "justified by the fact of its construction" and the "possibility of calling into question the construction of systems, as such, is not acknowledged"[40] – much as the possibility that the premise might be false is excluded a priori. The dogmatic systems of ideologies are true only by merit of having been constructed.

For Arendt, *ideology* literally means what its name indicates: "it is the logic of an idea."[41] It understands events as logical outcomes of a premise, of the content of the idea itself. The course of events is thus understood as an unfolding of the mechanism of certain "laws." These laws always imply constant movement and this movement is always explained by the "idea."[42] This provides the "inherent logicality"[43] of ideologies which are, of course, only true in the second reality.

Voegelin traces the roots of modern (political) Gnosticism back to the 13th century when Joachim of Flora broke with the Augustinian conception of Christian society and applied the symbol of the Holy Trinity to the movement of history. The first period of history, according to the Joachitic speculation, is the age of the Father, the second the age of the Son, and the third – coming – age will be the Third Realm, the age of the Spirit.[44] In Gnostic construction, the Augustinian notion of history also takes a turn: while Augustine saw *progressio* in sacred history and the rise and fall of empires in the profane, Gnosticism interpreted progress as a profane process, or, to use Voegelin's phrase: it *immanentized the Christian eschaton*.

The three phases of Joachim's speculation are also preserved and can be observed in almost all modern ideological movements: the three stages in Comte's philosophy, from the theological through the metaphysical to the final, positive phase; in Voltaire's phases of enlightenment from the extinction (Fall) through the renaissance (Redemption) to the Third Realm of spiritual perfection (Voltaire's own age); in Marx's succession of phases from primitive communist

39 ■ Ibid., p. 261.
40 ■ Ibid., p. 274.
41 ■ Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 469.
42 ■ Ibid.
43 ■ Ibid., p. 472.
44 ■ Voegelin, *op. cit.*, p. 301.; From Enlightenment to Revolution, p. 3.

through bourgeois class society to the final realm of communism; and the National Socialist idea of the first (until 1806), second (until 1918) and the final, Third Reich.

The immanentization contains two elements: a *teleological* and an *axiological*. The first means constant progress, movement, while the second means the goal of ultimate perfection.[45] The ideologies in which only the teleological part is vivid are to be called progressivism, whether Kant's version or Condorcet's. The other variant is quite clear about the ultimate goal and the perfect state of society, though it is not evident how we are to arrive at it. Voegelin mentions Thomas More's *Utopia* as an example.[46] The third type is, nevertheless, the most important one, in which both elements are combined and put into a philosophy of history. According to Voegelin, these are variants of *activist mysticism*, like the philosophies of Comte or Marx.[47]

The speculations thrive for the de-divinization (*Entgötterung*) of the world and fulfill their tasks in re-divinization, the divinization of man. The divinized man is without all institutional bonds and obligations[48] and is also free of the imperfection of the world. Voegelin observed here the perfectionist attitude of ideological thinking, which aims to bring "Heaven to Earth."

From the Joachitic symbolism the vision of the community of spiritually autonomous persons is also carried over. This means a community without any mediation of any institution, whether it be it state, church or other. This vision is profoundly present in modern mass movements that imagine the Final Realm as such a community, and this symbolism "is most clearly recognizable in communism, but the *idea of democracy* also thrives not inconsiderably on the symbolism of a community of autonomous men."[49]

But since the old meaning of history is lost, a replacement has to be found. The cure to the disease will be the recipe of the secularist intellectual, who knows what turn world history will take and is able to predict the future.[50] The idea that history is known as a whole is at its best a contradictory notion, at its worst it is nonsense, as Hayek claims:

> To speak of a mind with a structure fundamentally different from our own, or to claim that we can observe changes in the basic structure of the human mind is not

45 ■ Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, in: CW5, p. 298.
46 ■ It must be pointed out, however, that Thomas More's Utopia is conceived as an ironic picture of utopian visions. Cf. Erik v. Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Leftism Revisited: *From de Sade and Marx to Hitler and Pol Pot*, Regnery Gateway, 1990, p. 85.
47 ■ Voegelin, *ibid.*, pp. 299-300.
48 ■ Ibid., p. 303.
49 ■ Ibid., p. 304. [italics added]

only to claim what is impossible: it is a meaningless statement.[51] (...) Historicism [...] cuts [...] the ground under its own feet: it is led to the self-contradictory position of generalizing about facts, which, if the theory were true, could not be known.[52]

The meaning of secular history cannot be found, according to Voegelin, since that presupposes that we know history from the beginning to the end.[53] Without the meaning behind the chaotic events of earthly history, the sacred Christian one, the meaning of historical and political existence is lost. The remedy of ideologies will be to "rewrite" history and make history a "history of the masses", that is, to find new entities into which the "sacred" meaning can be put: Voltaire's *espirit humain* transforms the *corpus mysticum Christi* into *corpus mysticum humanitatis*.[54]

In Voegelin's view, with the enclosure of the spirit within transcendent reality the spiritual substance of man has vanished. A new principle as the motivating factor of human existence has to be found. The object of deification can be seen in the descent from Reason to the technical and planning intellect, and in a downward spiral to the economic, psychological, and finally the biological structure of man.[55]

Ideologies move away from reality, but this in and of itself does not constitute a real danger. Ideologies, for Arendt, Voegelin, and the others, become dangerous if they couple with mass movements – as they did in the previous centuries. The threat represented by ideologies is the attempt to force the "second reality" on the first one and to transform reality according to a plan or an idea.

The attempt of ideologies and rationalism is, thus, to do away with *contingency* in human action. By contingency we mean the inescapable uncertainty in the political and human world which always compels the individual to *think, act, and decide*. In these instances, the choice and decision[56] of the individual is indispensable, and in this decision, his or her personal knowledge, conviction and culture are necessarily involved. The individual can never be certain that his or her decision will lead to the desired result. Rationalism and ideology want to provide a universally valid form for the *once and for all* solution of all political and human problems and perplexities. By aiming at the removal of this contingency, these attempts destroy personal and public freedom.

50 ■ Ibid., p. 303.
51 ■ Hayek, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
52 ■ Ibid., p. 137.
53 ■ Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, p. 8.
54 ■ Ibid., p. 10.
55 ■ Ibid., p. 13.
56 ■ The problem of decision and authority was brought "back" to political thinking primarily by Carl Schmitt. See his *The Concept of the Political*, University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Summary

The point of criticism in the works of the émigrés under discussion here is the intellectual climate of the modern age. Hayek and Polanyi both see the problem in the "scientific objectivism" of modern science, which has been transposed to the field of social sciences and humanities. The result of this change, as they argue, is that traditional morals have been undermined, and with them, the very bases of freedom has disappeared. Their traditional individualism notwithstanding, they put their faith in the "collective knowledge" safeguarded in social institutions; this knowledge is dispersed in society, and it cannot be replaced with a single institution or authority.

Voegelin and Arendt were concerned with the phenomenon of modern ideologies, and they both found the roots of ideologies in Gnosticism, i.e., the approach which sees the salvation of society and the world in "certain knowledge." Nevertheless, so their argument goes, ideologies cannot find such knowledge, but instead create a second reality, which will be forced on reality as such.

The arguments put forward thereby represent an attitude towards modern democracies, which, in Hayek, Arendt, Polanyi, and Voegelin's view are rationalistic, ideological, and relativistic. This rationalist attitude strives towards the *overall-control* of circumstances and actions, but this control, according to the émigrés, dissolves the remaining foundations of freedom. ❧

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László Szende

The Fate of the Hungarian National Museum during the Russian Siege of Budapest, 1944-45

The siege of Budapest in 1944-1945 was one of the longest and bloodiest sieges of any city during the Second World War. 102 days passed from the appearance of the first Soviet tank and the point at which the Russians finally gained control of the city's Castle Hill. Due to the length of the struggle, the press of the day was in the habit of referring to the tragic events as a second Stalingrad. It is perhaps particularly tragic that the fighting took place around some 800,000 civilians, and the population suffering major loss of life and limb.[1] Virtually every building in the city, big or small, was hit by gunfire, and many were completely destroyed.[2] The fighting caused considerable damage both to the edifice of the Hungarian National Museum and to its collections. At the same time, compared with other public buildings, the Museum in fact suffered comparatively little damage.[3] In this essay[4] I examine the vicissitudes in the fate of the main building of the National Museum during the winter of 1944-45.[5]

1 ■ Krisztián Ungváry: *Battle for Budapest. 100 Days in World War II*. London & New York, 2005 (hereafter: Ungváry 2005), p. xi.

2 ■ Ungváry 2005, p. 330.

3 ■ Based on a review done on March 29th, 1946, the official technical adviser János Nemerkényi ascertained a sum total of 13% damage to the building. This compares with the following figures for the proportion of other public buildings that were damaged: National Archives (40%), Museum of Fine Arts (10%), Museum of Applied Arts (13%), Ethnographical Museum (20%), Zoological Cabinet (12%), Botanical Cabinet (40%), Ferenc Hopp Museum of Oriental Asian Art (12%), György Rath Museum (14%), National Szechenyi Library (Eszterházy St) (18%), National Riding School (80%) (see MOL = Hungarian National Archive: K727 MNM MO 34/1946).

4 ■ I acknowledge here the assistance given by Mrs. Gábor Bándi, Melinda Berlász, Béla Debreczeni-Droppan (National Museum), and Zsuzsanna Schellinger.

5 ■ In that era the term Hungarian National Museum was understood as comprising a number of institutions, including the Hungarian Historical Museum, the Hungarian Royal National Archive, the National Szechenyi Library, the Hungarian National Museum of Fine Arts, the National Natural History Museum, and the National Inspectorate of Public Collections.

The Museum building on the small Ring Street of Budapest was home to many organisations of the day, with the Board of the Hungarian National Museum and the Finance Office constituting the upper tier of management. Here space was given to the Historical Collection (Department), the Archaeological Collection, and the Medal Collection of the Hungarian National Historical Museum, several sections of the National Széchenyi Library, and the Mineralogical Collection, as well as the Geological & Fossil Collection of the National Natural History Museum.[6] Some expansion of the time span of this purview is justified since, for one thing, preparations for acts of war had already been put in hand well before the siege, and for another, the fate of the Museum continued to take an adverse turn after February 3rd, 1945, which is generally regarded as the last day of the siege.

In reconstructing the events I have endeavoured to examine all available sources, but in all likelihood there remain some I have not uncovered. The archives of the various institutions represented an important starting point.[7] The documents they contain consist primarily of the registers of various surveys, but they also provide definitive data regarding the work that was done to restore the properties after the war, which in turn allow one to draw conclusions regarding the earlier devastation. Another source of a very different type was the journal of the siege kept by Nándor Fettich.[8] On October 18th, 1944 he was charged by Bálint Hóman,[9] president of the National Museum, with the task of tending to the duties of Deputy Director in the absence of Director István Zichy.[10] So far only fragments of the noted archae-

6 ■ István Boros: "The Tragedy of the Hungarian Natural History Museum," *Annales Historico-Naturales Musei Nationalis Hungarici*, 8 (1957) 491.

7 ■ Magyar Országos Levéltár. Vallás- és Közoktatásügyi Minisztérium [Hungarian National Archive, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Education] (MOL XIX-I), Országos Magyar Gyűjteményegyetem [Hungarian National Universe of Collections] (MOL K 726 OMGYE), Gazdasági Hivatal és a Műszaki Osztály [Finance Office and Technical Department] (MOL K 727 MNM GH, MNM MO); Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Történeti Adattára (MNM TA) [Historical Archive of the Hungarian National Museum], Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Irattára (MNMI) [Hungarian National Museum Archive]; Magyar Természettudományi Múzeum Tudománytörténeti Gyűjtemény (MTTM TTGY) [Hungarian Natural History Museum, Scientific Historical Cabinet]; Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár Irattára (OSZKI) [Archive of the National Széchenyi Library].

8 ■ *Fettich Nándor ostromnaplója. 1945. január 16 – február 19* [Siege diary of NF January 16th – February 19th, 1945]. Ed. Mrs. Gábor Bándi. Budapest, 2000 (hereafter: Fettich 2000.) Nándor Fettich (1900–1971) was an archaeologist, who was given a post at the Hungarian National Museum in 1923. From 1930 on he was the curator of the Museum's collection of items from the Age of Migrations and later Head of the Archaeological Collection. During the Second World War he was dismissed from his posts, and for a time took on work as a physical labourer before he eventually managed to return to an academic career.

ologist's entries, which cover the period between January 16th and February 19th, 1945, have appeared in print. The diary contains exceedingly valuable data relating to the mundane affairs of the Museum during the war. Naturally sources of this kind should always be handled with a critical eye, but the author nevertheless captured a great many facts that one would look for in vain in official documents. In addition, I also conducted an interview with Jenő Berlász, who used to work for the National Széchenyi Library.[11]

The Second World War brought some significant changes to life in the Hungarian National Museum. On May 11th, 1942 the Board of the Museum sent the Minister of Defence some basic information relating to air-raid precautions for the Museum's constituent institutions.[12] Great emphasis was placed on organising a 24-hour watch, which was mainly the job of employees who took up quarters in the building. At a Director General's board meeting held on April 12th, 1944 the decision was made to strengthen the permanent air-raid watch.[13] Four employees—Chief Engineer Lajos Kalotay (the Air-Raid Commander), natural historian András Tasnádi Kubacska[14] (Deputy Air-Raid Commander), archaeologist Sándor Gallus,[15] and physical anthropologist János Nemeskéri—moved into the building.[16] To boost numbers at night seven additional men and two NCOs were ordered to be on duty from 2:00 AM to 7:00 AM and from 8:00 PM to 8:00 AM on Sundays and holidays. Those in charge were seeking to ensure that there would always be a team of 13 or 14 people keeping a 24-hour air-raid watch on the main building of the Museum.

9 ■ Bálint Hóman (1885–1951), historian and politician with a particular interest in educational affairs. Appointed director of the National Széchenyi Library in 1922, and from 1923 to 1932 he was the director of the Hungarian National Museum as well as a lecturer at the University of Budapest. Between 1932 and 1945 he was a parliamentary representative, serving two prime ministers as Minister of Religious Affairs and Education 1932–38 and 1939–42. After being captured following the end of World War II, he was sentenced by a People's Tribunal to life imprisonment for war crimes. He died in prison.

10 ■ István Zichy (1879–1951), historian, painter and graphic artist. Headed the Hungarian Historical Picture Gallery of the National Museum of Fine Arts (1913–19) and was then Honorary Keeper before being appointed Director of the Hungarian National Historical Museum (1934–44).

11 ■ The interview took place on October 31st, 2009.

12 ■ MOL K727 MNM GH 144/1942.

13 ■ MTTM TTGY 50/1944; OSZKI 103/1944.

14 ■ András Tasnádi-Kubacska (1902–77), a geologist and palaeontologist, was Secretary to the Directorate of the Hungarian National Museum and from 1941 Keeper (First Class) of the Natural History Museum.

15 ■ Sándor Gallus (1907–96), a historian and archaeologist, from 1931–45 was a Fellow of the Hungarian National Museum and Head of the Department of Palaeontology from 1944–45. He left Hungary after the war.

16 ■ János Nemeskéri (1918–89), physical anthropologist, worked in the Ethnographical Collection (1939–45) then the Archaeological Collection.

In addition to the general provisions for air-raid defence, the management also devoted considerable attention to the most effective possible means of guarding the irreplaceable artefacts. At a Board meeting held on September 12th, 1942 basic rules were laid down for air-raid precautions. The most valuable articles were to be moved to the ground level or the cellars, which were considered bomb-proof.[17] In the wake of the meeting the most important artefacts were gradually moved to places of safety, among them the codices belonging to the National Széchenyi Library, in particular those that had been produced for the library of King Matthias Corvinus. Further measures were taken in 1943.[18] Exhibitions were dismantled and the more valuable articles were placed in storerooms on the ground floor and in the cellars. In the case of the cellars, due attention also had to be taken to guard the artefacts against damage from dampness and mould. Cylinders with air-tight seals were made for the gobelins and tapestries. According to the National Széchenyi Library's Annual Report for 1943, their operations were already hampered by the war. Irreplaceable volumes had been withdrawn from circulation.[19] As the members of the staff were unable, due to shortages of materials, to place shrapnel-proof iron sheets over all of the apertures, they had to fall back on the tried-and-tested method of sandbagging.

Safety measures also carried over into the following year. Going by the Annual Report for 1944, all of the collections spent much of the first half of the year attempting to protect the materials in the museum against the threat of air raids. Indeed the better part of the time devoted to the work of running a museum was spent fulfilling this task (selection, packaging etc. of the more valuable artefacts).[20] Sixty-two boxes of valuable items from the Mineralogical and Rock Cabinet as well as the greater part of the library of Geological and Fossil Cabinet were stowed away for safe-keeping in the cellars, together with the drawers containing the Hungarian Fossil Vertebrates.[21] Even before the siege had commenced 400 boxes of items were removed from the Ethnographic Cabinet building on Könyves Kálman körút (one of the less central locations),[22] while four cases were relocated from the

17 ■ MOL K727 MNM GH 302/1942.

18 ■ MOL K726 OMGYE 89/1943

19 ■ "Due to the increased risk of air raids, the most valuable 8,143 volumes of the stock were withdrawn from circulation and placed for safety in 143 soldered wood-lined, rolled-zinc cases. Important areas of bibliographic research were thereby compelled to come to an end ... With the war in its current phase, it is impossible to write any dissertations and other academic treatises concerning medieval and Old Hungarian subjects that draw on the library's material" (OSZKI 73/1944).

20 ■ MOL K726 OMGYE 190/1945. (November 14th).

21 ■ MTTM TTGY 56/1944 (May 18th).

Ferenc Hopp Museum of Oriental Asian Art to the Museum[23] buildings on the small ring street. Other institutions, such as the Transylvanian National Museum and the Society of the National Music Conservatory,[24] also sought to safeguard their irreplaceable treasures.

There are data on a number of private individuals who entrusted the Museum with the safekeeping of valuable documents that were in their possession. Among those worth mentioning are Mrs. János M. Révai, who deposited the manuscripts of 16 novels by Mór Jókai.[25] Béla Zolnai, a university professor and head of the French Institute in Cluj (or Kolozsvár, a city in Transylvania which due to the changes of borders following the Second Vienna Award of 1940 was part of Hungary at the time), sent a copy of manuscripts relating to Prince Ferenc II Rákóczi.[26] Imre Miskolczy and his family lodged the MS of poet Ferenc Kölcsey's poem *Himnusz* ("Hymn," the words of which became the text of the Hungarian national anthem).[27] Viktor Hammelsperg transferred a sealed patent of nobility in a metal case, a silver medallion of St. George, and a medal dating from the time of Emperor Leopold.[28] Jenő Berlász placed in the Museum's custody 22 original letters of Count István Széchenyi that had been in the possession of Countess Frigyes Sylva Tarouca, along with two packages of documents from the Sina family archive.[29]

Above and beyond protection of the works of art, the management also ensured that the personal property of their employees could be stored in suitcases, crates or in sealed packages in the various sheltered places.[30] Eventually an attempt was made to implement some restrictions, for instance by insisting that the amount of storage space

22 ■ MNMI 146/1945 (September 27th).

23 ■ János Herepei, the Head of the Transylvanian National Museum, deposited the so-called Ápor codex at the National Széchenyi Library, where it was packed away in the cellar shelter (OSZKI 126/1944. 20 April). Among other things the codex contains passages of the very earliest Hungarian translation of the Bible; it happened to be in Budapest due to the printing of a facsimile edition in 1942.

24 ■ Géza Kresz, Director of the Society of the National Music Conservatory, placed one of the most valuable of the institution's holdings, a letter written by József Eötvös to Franz Liszt, in the National Museum's safekeeping (OSZKI 133/1944).

25 ■ OSZKI 107/1944.

26 ■ OSZKI 111/1944 (May 1st).

27 ■ The family also made an announcement in which they clarified in detail the family connection they bore to Kölcsey, doing that "in order thereby to place beyond doubt, authenticate and prove the bona fide origins of the *Himnusz* MS, which are in any case visibly attested to by Kölcsey's well-known characteristic handwriting" (OSZKI 149/1944, July 24th).

28 ■ OSZKI 260/1944 (December 11th).

29 ■ OSZKI 236/1944 (November 6th).

30 ■ That was probably true only in principle. The answer given in response to requests made by several of the research workers was that the document in question was inaccessible because the stock had been packed away.

needed had to be specified in advance or by requiring that an inventory be made of the items placed on deposit. On November 16th the Museum's Board made a renewed attempt to regulate the storage of personal effects.[31] A precise record had to be drawn up by November 23rd of all boxes and packages (including the owner's name), and József Fitz, Director of the National Széchenyi Library, issued a special instruction regarding the information that was to be listed.[32] No responsibility would be assumed for any objects of value, and it was stated that if in the course of events the authorities were to order that the objects be surrendered, this order would be complied with. A number of employees availed themselves of the opportunity.[33]

While most people considered the Hungarian National Museum a secure place to find shelter, there were those who held the opposite view. On receiving news of the approach of the front line, between November 29th and December 4th, after the suspension of the contract of deposit, Prince Pál Esterházy transferred the treasures that belonged to his family to his palace at 7-13 Tárnok Street on Castle Hill in Buda. In January 1945 the Esterházy palace was hit by a bomb, and the crumbling debris crushed the chests and their priceless contents.[34]

Hits to the main building of the National Museum occurred for the first time during an air raid on September 13th, 1944, causing a fire to break out on the north side of the roof. In their efforts to put out the blaze the Museum staff was helped by the inhabitants of the house at 4 Baross Street, led by Dr Pál Sztrilich, who arrived on the scene first - ahead of the fire fighters. Sztrilich made a report of what happened: "we first went up into the attic. We were unable to approach the fire from there, however, so we took up stations in the large hall on the

31 ■ MOL K726 OMGYE 343/1944; OSZKI 1944/244.

32 ■ Specifically: 1. Designation of the building; 2. Designation of the locality; 3. The name of the owner of the private effects that were to be placed there; 4. The shelf number of the material; 5. The manner of storage (package, suitcase, crate, mothproof bag) each separately itemised; 6. The owner's declaration as to what each package contained.

33 ■ Bálint Hóman: 8 nailed wooden chests, 2 boxes marked D. I, 1 wicker travelling basket, 1 locked wooden box, 1 antique clock alabasters; Borbála Hóman, librarian: 2 nailed wooden chests; Ilona Hubay (1902-1982), librarian: 1 Wertheim coffer, 2 parcels; Gyula Ortutay (1910-1974), ethnographer: 2 packages; László Tokody (1898–1964), Director of Mineralogical and Rock Cabinet: 1 suitcase of clothing, 2 rugs; Viktor Zsivny (1886–1953) retired collection director: 2 suitcases of clothing, 1 chest of clothing, porcelain figurines, 1 chest of ornamental pieces.

34 ■ Éva Békési: "Twentieth-century Upheavals and a New Renaissance," in András Szilágyi (ed.): *Hungary's Heritage. Princely Treasures from the Esterházy Collection.* London, 2004, pp. 60-62. Relics of the palace were unearthed in the course of clearing rubble between December 1948 and January 1949, the restoration of which continues to the present day.

35 ■ According to contemporary documents Bálint Hóman was among those who took part in directing the fire-fighting (MOL K726 OMGYE 261/1944).

upper storey,[36] into which burning embers and rafters were continually falling though the two glass roofs ... With the aid of spark beaters, shovels and buckets of water the burning material that rained down was successfully put out. We had to watch out, naturally. Because burning rafters and the parts of the walls tumbling down from the two storeys presented a constant threat. In the meantime motor driven hoses were used to extinguish the flames and reinforcements arrived, and when the all-clear was sounded the fire was quickly localised."[37] No precise information is available about the extent of the damage.

Following this air raid, on October 6th, 1944 the National Museum Board issued a new nine-point ordinance.[38] Rezsõ Schiller, Director of the Finance Office, was designated leader of anti-aircraft defence, with responsibility for supervising personnel who took part in air-raid defence. Kalotay and Tasnádi Kubacska retained their posts, with the latter being responsible for maintaining continuous watch on the main building.

Soviet troops pushed their way into the National Museum on January 16th, 1945. Nándor Fettich's log of the siege gives a graphic account of the occupation. A few details of the events are worth mention. Fettich did a great deal in the effort to organize the Museum's defences. Although on the pages of his diary he was modest regarding his role, Tasnádi Kubacska acknowledged the significance of his contribution.[39] Since he knew Russian, he was able to make himself understood by the soldiers. He translated a huge amount of material, above all the texts on IDs and signposts and various applications, though he himself noted that "none of these was exactly a masterpiece of Russian style."[40] In his diary Fettich mention the names of several individuals who helped him in his work. He was highly appreciative, for instance, of the contributions of Tasnádi Kubacska[41] and referred to the archaeologist István Méri as one of the pillars of the Museum.[42] An attempt was made to arrange with Major General Chernishev that the Museum be granted a permanent guard and an exemption document.[43] One

36 ■ In all likelihood this was what is known as the Ceremonial Hall.

37 ■ Report by Pál Sztrilich, November 14th, 1944 (MOL K726 OMGYE 261/1944).

38 ■ MTTM TTGY 262/1944; OSZKI 215/1944.

39 ■ MOL K726 OMGYE 8/1945.

40 ■ Fettich 2000, p. 90. A few of his handwritten documents survive to this day. One contains his request to the city's Soviet military commander to allow the delivery of six cabinets back to the National Museum (MTTM TTGY 28March 1945; no file number). Under the typewritten Hungarian text is a Russian translation.

41 ■ "He is the soul of the Hungarian National Museum" (Fettich 2000, p. 79).

42 ■ Fettich 2000, p. 144. István Méri (1911-76), archaeologist, worked at Hungarian National Museum from 1933 as a restorer and then, after finishing his university studies, as an archaeologist.

solution that was proposed was that the French citizens who were domiciled in the cellars should designate the main building as the prospective site for a consulate, and to underline this the French tricolour was flown.[44]

None of the steps that were taken served to halt the Soviet troops. Units came and went, and the newly arriving soldiers were always intent on pillaging. None of the civilians was able to put a stop to the looting. The Soviets "took anything they needed." Fettich was relieved of his watch, a pocket knife and a razor,[45] but at the same time those who were "inhabitants of the cellars" were still provided with food, and those who rendered service for the Soviets were given special provisions.[46] It was reckoned a major accomplishment that as far as we know none of the women on the grounds of the Museum were raped, even though "the Russians systematically violated women in the palaces in neighbouring Reviczky Street."[47] Part of the solution, apparently, was simply directing the soldiers to a brothel.[48]

A number of reports were done on the damages that had befallen the Museum. The first, dated February 3rd, provides a sketchy outline in three points.[49] The next one, prepared by Tasnádi Kubacska on February 16th, gave a four-page account of the fate of the institutions within the Hungarian National Museum over the course of the previous three months.[50] It included only the most essential information.[51] The third document, which may be regarded as the first detailed list of damages, was drawn up on February 28th, 1945 by János Nemerkényi, the technical adviser,[52] who then proceeded on March 9th to assemble a "brief summary report."[53] The Soviets themselves also prepared estimates of the damage, with Fettich personally guiding the commission that was dispatched to deal with the matter.[54]

43 ■ Major General Chernishev was dismissed at the end of February on account of the untenable conditions in Budapest. He was replaced by Lieutenant-General Ivan Zamertsev, who discharged the duties of military commander until 1948.

44 ■ Fettich 2000, pp. 28-29 and 40. Jenő Berlász also had a vivid recollection of the tricolour.

45 ■ Fettich 2000, p. 38.

46 ■ Fettich 2000, p. 49. For instance bread and sugar in return for fetching water.

47 ■ Fettich 2000, p. 32 Lajos Bédy was given 20 kilograms of beans for "procuring" the women.

48 ■ Fettich 2000, p. 52.

49 ■ MOL K727 MO 1/1945

50 ■ MOL K726 OMGYE 8/1945.

51 ■ It touched on the management problems of the National Museum, briefly described the destruction that had been wrought to the building and its interior, and summarised matters relating to the personnel.

52 ■ MOL K 726 OMGYE 23/1945; MOL K727 MNM MO 4/1945 (Brief summary report of damage to the structures of the Hungarian National Museum).

As the damages to the building were being assessed, a survey of the various collections was begun and efforts were made to put them to rights. A resolution to that effect was taken at a Board meeting on March 4th, 1945.[55] Tasnádi Kubacska moved that "each collection immediately begin taking stock of the damage to their inventory and submit a report to management every month on how it is being handled." The various units set about preparing their inventory, but the work was complicated by the fact that some of the employees, for various reasons, were absent. On April 3rd, 1945 the Board decided that this should be remedied as a matter of urgency.[56] Firstly, upper management ought to compile lists of the spheres of activity attended to by their employees, and specifically by those who were missing, but secondly they needed to address the shortages of manpower (these were overcome mainly by using refugee teachers). Thirdly, the working hours of employees who had long commutes were regulated, and on Fettich's suggestion it was decided in the end that each case would be judged individually. An appraisal of the situation issued on May 12th provided a fairly detailed report on the damage and the work that had been accomplished.[57] Assessment of the damage that had been incurred to the materials in the collection took much longer, as official documents on the subject were still being produced in 1946.[58]

A summary was also done of the damages that had been suffered by the National Natural History Museum. A preliminary report was written by Tasnádi Kubacska, the acting managing director, on April 3rd, 1945.[59] He prepared an inventory of the destruction to materials in the collections in the following order: Botanical Collection, Mineralogical and Rock Collection, Zoological Collection, and Fossil Collection. The Finance Office made an inventory of the damages that had been done to moveable property (furniture, implements), and a dossier containing the other documents was submitted to the ministry on July 19th, 1945.[60] The records are extremely detailed; in the case of the Historical Collection and the Medallion Collection the losses are listed room by room.

The reports endeavoured to record the traces of damage as accu-

53 ■ MOL K727 MNM MO 5/1945.
54 ■ Fettich 2000, pp. 119-121.
55 ■ MOL K726 OMGYE 35/1945.
56 ■ MNM TA Főigazgatóság 15/1945.
57 ■ MNMI 16/194.
58 ■ MNMI 50/1946.
59 ■ MTTM TTGY 5/1945.
60 ■ MTTM TTGY 5/1945.

rately as possible. Nevertheless there were some marked differences between the data in the individual reports, for which there are two possible explanations. For one thing, military action still occurred after the very first report of February 3rd, and the Museum was seriously hit by shells right up until February 13th.[61] With the passage of time and the cessation of combat it became possible to measure the extent of the damage more thoroughly. In presenting the damage done to the main building of the Hungarian National Museum I shall proceed from the outside inwards, starting with the Museum's garden down to the damages that befell the collections.

The Museum garden, which was one of the most popular public areas in Budapest,[62] had been damaged in several places, as was made very clear by a draft report drawn up on February 11th, 1946.[63] The area had been used for anti-aircraft defence purposes, and a concrete basin for water storage had been set up alongside a statue of poet János Arany.[64] Several hundred cubic metres of earth and rubble had been removed from the pit and the rear part of the garden had been turned into an eyesore by a huge embankment.[65] The gardener's house had become unusable and uninhabitable, and one of the guardhouses by the entrance gate onto Múzeum körút also had to be demolished. The prevailing state of the garden is well illustrated by the fact that in the course of the work that was done to put it in order some 1,377 cubic meters of earth was shifted.[66] What had added to the destruction, over and above the bombing, was the fact that the open area had been used for military operations, with the Soviets setting up mortars on all sides and beginning to use them on January 22nd:[67] "This morning, for hours on end, the Russian artillery rained an extremely heavy barrage on Buda [i.e. the opposite bank of the Danube]. The whole building shook due to the many mortars that had been set up in the garden."[68] As a result of the fighting, much of the vegetation died, and even the trees were not

61 ■ February 10th: "At around 7 a.m. the Museum took two direct hits by shells: above the library and the very front of the façade roof" (Fettich 2000, p. 111).

62 ■ Béla Debreczeni-Droppán: "A forradalom kertje. Százotven éves a Muzi" [Garden of the Revolution: the Museum is 150 years old]. In: *Budapest*, 29. March 9th-13th, 2006.

63 ■ "Unfortunately, the garden suffered a lot during the siege, losing the majority of its massive, old trees" (MOL K727 MNM GH 111/1946).

64 ■ The basin had become cracked in several places and had collapsed during the siege, as a result of which the technical committee recommended that it be dismantled (MOL K727 MNM GH 758/1946 (28 November).

65 ■ MOL K727 MNM GH 111/1946.

66 ■ MOL K727 MNM GH 523/1946.

67 ■ Fettich 2000, p. 38.

68 ■ Fettich 2000, p. 49.

spared by the Soviets. The four biggest ones along Múzeum körút were cut down because they interfered with the use of the mortars.[69]

There were few public park areas in the Inner City, so the garden also became a cemetery.[70] For a long time the body of a Soviet soldier lay in Hóman's room, until in the end it was buried by five Hungarians.[71] On February 1st, in the presence of the high command, three Soviet officers were laid to rest next to the statue of Arany, and the following day two more were buried beside them.[72] On February 13th, 11 Soviet and German soldiers died near an artillery post. They were buried in two separate graves.[73]

After the siege the employees put together plots for vegetables in the Museum garden,[74] given that this manner of acquiring foodstuffs was seen as completely normal in the capital at the time, with many digging up their own gardens so as to meet at least part of their needs. In the summer of 1945, for example, some 35,000 vegetable growers were registered in the XIVth (Zugló) District alone.[75]

The first report had already established that the main building of the Hungarian National Museum had not suffered catastrophic damage and had not been harmed from a structural point of view. The source of greatest danger was the harm that had been done to the roof. According to the initial report,[76] the roof had been damaged in some 25 places, three of which (caused by aerial bombs) could be considered severe. The extent of this is indicated by the fact that frescoes of scenes from the mythological prehistory of the Magyars by the 19th century painter Károly Lotz in the Ceremonial Hall also suffered damage.

The gables of the building had taken several hits. A major part of the cornice mouldings of the attic on the Esterházy Street façade had been ruined.[77] All the windows had been shattered by the shockwaves. The situation was worst in the storage rooms of the second floor, as the glass roof had been totally wrecked. The part around the third window in Hall II and above the door leading to Hall III (which had been damaged by fire), the heating and the bulk of the ceiling plasterwork had

69 ■ *Ibid.*

70 ■ "We went in through the small gate on Múzeum Street; where we walked, in the garden inside, we had to take care not to stumble over the many Russian corpses because our grim-faced escort did not shine a light on our way..." (Fettich 2000, pp. 31).

71 ■ "It took a whole day for them to dig a grave in the frozen ground" (Fettich 2000, p. 60).

72 ■ Fettich 2000, pp. 86-87.

73 ■ Fettich 2000, p. 119.

74 ■ MOL K727 MNM GH 180/1946 (March 26th).

75 ■ Ungváry 2005, p. 302.

76 ■ MOL K727 MNM MO 1/1945.

77 ■ Nowadays this part is situated at the rear, overlooking Pollack Square.

fallen down. The glass roofing of Hall V was badly damaged. Hall VII had taken numerous hits, and much of the third wall had collapsed. The locations in the central building of the National Széchenyi Library had been scathed, with bomb or shell damage to the Manuscript collection, the Széchenyi Hall and the Todorescu Hall.[78] The Medallion Collection had suffered especially serious damage. The ceiling of the second-floor corridor of the Fossils Collection had tumbled down in several places and everything was covered in rubble. The water, electricity and central heating networks had been disrupted,[79] and the lavatories had also been destroyed.[80]

In practice no locality in the Museum had escaped damage, as the sort of inventory done by the Financial Office makes clear.[81] The headings that feature in the list are varied, including linen tea cloths, wastepaper baskets, brooms, wall mirrors, library catalogue cabinets, reading tables, typewriters, stands, chairs, instruments, carpets, table lamps and clocks listed among the missing items. It is telling that many of the locks needed repair or replacement. The destruction of the central photographic laboratory represented one of the prominent losses, made worse by the fact that the list of missing devices included machines that had been on loan. The majority of the instruments in the laboratory of the Mineralogical Collection had either disappeared or been damaged.[82]

Of the museum pieces in the Historical Collection,[83] the textiles and weapons suffered the most since they had been placed on the ground floor (rather than in the cellars) due to the risk of problems from moisture. Thus rugs and embroidery from Transylvania, embroidery that had belonged to the wealthy, garments of historical interest, tapestries, and draperies from the throne of King Matthias Corvinus had been packed away in a room thought of as safe, and the windows had been blocked with sandbags and the doors locked. Nonetheless the room had been broken into and the textiles were ruined. The throne draperies had been taken out of their cylinder, which meant that they had been exposed to moisture and had become dirty. The

78 ■ OSZKI 2/1945 (March 5th); 9/1945 (March 12th); 17/1945 (March 30th).

79 ■ MOL K727 MNM MO 31/1946 (February 25th).

80 ■ In May 1945 orders were placed for two washbasins and eight toilets in the main building. As justification the following was written: "the quantity ordered makes up only a small part of the full operational needs because many of the materials needed for such rooms have been destroyed" (MOL K727 MO 59/1945 (19 May).

81 ■ MOL K727 MNM GH 79/1945 (July 18th).

82 ■ MTTM TTGY 184/1946.

83 ■ Report by Magda Oberschall dated April 20th, 1945. A finalised record of the damage, dated February 16th, 1946, was sent to Lajos Huszár (MNMI 38/1946).

display weapons, which had been moved to another room in the hopes that they would survive the siege, fell victim to rust, and many simply vanished.

The museum staff had also used offices on the ground floor to store some objects, though admittedly items of less historical value. A few of the more modern works in the clock collection had been stolen. An embroidered blue velvet attaché case which had belonged to Lajos Batthyány, the Prime Minister of Hungary during the 1848 Revolution (who was executed by the Habsburgs), was also lost, together with an Oriental silk scarf that he had worn in prison. A small part of the so-called Cimeliotheca material was destroyed: some 12-25 German examples of silverwork and eating implements.[84] The fire that had gutted the Lapidarium had caused serious losses, including the collection of wrought-iron, pewter, faience, and several wooden folk sculptures. The furniture of dramatist and poet Imre Madách's room in Alsósztregova (now Dolná Strehová, Slovakia), the wooden furniture of the workshop of a 17th century gold and silver smith, and the parts of a choir stall from the village of Ádámos (Adămuş, Romania) which had not been on public display.[85] Several 19th century ceremonial garments, fur caps worn by the freedom fighters under Prince Ferenc Rákóczi in Hungary's War of Independence in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, and a pair of 18th century felt boots all fell victim to the flames, as did a collection of woodprint portraits of foreign rulers by painter and illustrator Mihály Zichy.

Antique furniture was placed in a storeroom on the 1st floor. It suffered considerable superficial damage, but the collection of musical instruments (which had also been stored there) had a much worse fate, in particular the smaller, fragile instruments, such as flutes, mandolins and harpsichords.[86] From the perspective of historical scholarship the losses were also significant, as the information regarding the various artefacts was often destroyed. Finds from early medieval cemeteries in the communities of Sorokpolány, Mosonmagyaróvár, Oroszvár (Rusovce, Slovakia), and Sopronbánfalva, for instance, were scattered.[87]

84 ■ MOL K726 OMGYE 726/1945. The Cimeliotheca material' a substantial holding of Hungarian and foreign numismatic and non-numismatic items that had been established with a donation by the Museum Count Ferenc Szechenyi and first catalogued by the Museum under the title *Cimeliotheca Musei Nationalis Hungarici* (1825).

85 ■ Katalin Kormóczi: "The Furniture Collection." In: János Pintér (Ed.): *Two Hundred Years' History of the Hungarian National Museum and its Collections*. Budapest, 2004 (hereafter: Two Hundred Years'), p. 247.

86 ■ Klára Radnóti: "The Musical Instrumental Collection," in: *Two Hundred Years'*, p. 304.

87 ■ Erika Simonyi and Mária Wolf: "The Medieval Collection (1000-1301)," in: *Two Hundred Years'*, p. 88.

The losses from the Archaeological Collection were also notable, in particular the anthropological and Roman materials, the Palaeolithic specimens,[88] and the photographic negatives. Some 5% of the library was ruined, as was 1% of the material from the Age of Migrations.[89] Harm to the fittings was not as significant, since the incoming shells caused damage primarily to glassware, but the corridor devoted to the Roman storerooms was almost totally annihilated.

The Numismatic Collection[90] suffered little damage. The major loss was due to dampness in the modern German emergency banknotes. Other parts of the primary stock did not show appreciable damage, although a series of roughly 1,200 Roman *denarii* minted during the imperial period did disappear, and some 100 coins were mislaid, but the greatest problem was that of identifying the widely scattered coins, as eight volumes of the *Corpus nummorum italicorum* from the reference library were consumed by fire.

The Mineralogical Collection proved fortunate, as only items of less value or interest were damaged.[91] The Fossil Cabinet was left virtually intact, and no losses of scientific significance were suffered.

The harm was caused primarily by shells, though the human factor cannot be ignored. Soviet soldiers did not leave the collections or the premises untouched. The latter were transformed into stables that were then crowded with horses. Fettich paints a vivid picture: "I would never have imagined that my room in the Museum, into which so many scholars of world renown had stepped and where I had conversed about so many scholarly and artistic subjects with friends and colleagues and others, would be turned into a stable! The corridors around the Archaeological Cabinet and Historical Department, and not least the rotunda in front of the Lapidarium, are crowded with horses. The situation is the same in some of the office rooms of the library."[92] The rooms of the Finance Office were to all intents and purposes used as bathrooms. Water carried in from the outside basin was heated on a fire made from whatever furniture and any remnants of doors could be found in the rooms. Carousing and drunken revelries were commonplace, with the furnishings[93] tending to be the hardest hit. The abovementioned photographic and chemical laboratory was

88 ■ Tibor Kemenczei: "The Prehistoric Collection," in: *Two Hundred Years'*, p. 34.
89 ■ Éva Garam: "The Migration Period Collection," in: *Two Hundred Years'*, p. 59.
90 ■ MOL K726 OMGYE 726/1945; Lajos Pallos: "The Numismatic Collection," in: *Two Hundred Years'*, p. 173.
91 ■ MTTM TTGY 5/1945 (March 30th).
92 ■ Fettich 2000, p. 54.
93 ■ Fettich 2000, p. 61.

carried off over the course of three days by one of the majors in the Security Command.[94]

Soviet soldiers also stole from the collections, having a particular penchant for antique weapons, shiny objects, clocks and 18th century ammunition and boots.[95] The circumstances in which a crozier from Feldebrő came to light are indicative of pillaging.[96] Soviet soldiers often showed their gratitude for a woman's favours by presenting her with museum pieces.[97] Only rarely did the Soviets attempt to sell the objects.[98] The museum staff endeavoured to obstruct looting, and their efforts were occasionally crowned with success.[99] In the end, everyone quickly realised that it was pointless to attempt to impose order; the best defence was to leave everything higgledy-piggledy.[100]

Regarding the damages suffered, the question inevitably arises regarding the extent to which the museum staff did a thorough job packing the artefacts away. Fettich in his diary did not have a high opinion of his colleagues in the Historical Department, and he wrote in terms far from flattering about Mrs. Magda Obserschall Bárány[101] in particular. In his view she did not exercise due conscientiousness in saving articles. More specifically, she did not manage to save some of the jewellery in the collection.[102] It further extraordinarily complicated things that Mrs. Bárány offered no assistance in the initial phases of restoring order. Jenő Berlász recalled that, "there were items that she had not packed away well." She made an appearance in the institution

94 ■ Fettich 2000, p. 121.

95 ■ Fettich 2000, p. 43; Klára Radnóti: "The Horological Collection," in: *Two Hundred Years'*, p. 310.

96 ■ Long-sought after, the article was found in 1954 in a prehistoric vessel (János Makkay: *Két öreg múzeumbarátom. Appendix: A magyar nyelv isten szavából* [My Two Old Museum Friends. Appendix: The Hungarian Language About the Word of God]. Budapest, 1998, pp. 18–20.

97 ■ "In the morning Russian soldiers brought two women from one of the neighbouring houses into their room. On departing the women received a carpet as a 'present' from the soldiers" (Fettich 2000, p. 60). That type of Soviet generosity is corroborated by other sources. Report by the Hungarian Royal Police Force on February 7th, 1945: "In more than one place the Hungarian women developed close friendships with Soviet soldiers, and the soldiers brought them food as well as other objects" (Krisztián Ungváry: *Budapest ostroma* [The Siege of Budapest]. Budapest, 1998, p. 227.

98 ■ To Zoltán Felvinczi Takács, Director of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Oriental Asian Art, on October 15th, 1846: "I was shown two Japanese Buddhist paintings that had been placed sealed in an iron along with 60 other articles. At the time the two paintings were the property of a Russian officer" (MNM TA 269/1946).

99 ■ One of the Russians had filched a marvellous ormolu clock with enamel decorations and wanted to leave with it. Fettich was only able to retrieve it with the help of three Hungarian soldiers belonging to the liberation committee. The clock was found in one of the Russian's boots (Fettich 2000, pp. 35–36).

100 ■ "It is better if everything is left as it was; dirt, a state of disorder, and open doors are much better protection for us than locking gates and doors" (Fettich 2000, p. 61).

101 ■ Mrs. Magda Obserschall Bárány (1904–85), an art historian, from 1927 an employee of the Hungarian National Museum, from 1939 head of its Historical Department. She left Hungary in 1946.

on January 27th and a serious row broke out between the two parties. Mrs. Bárány contended that silver articles held in some of the cabinets were worthless. Fettich,[103] himself a gold and silversmith, insisted in vain that he knew what he was talking about. Not long after that scene, additional articles, including an ancient golden necklace and a handful of golden buttons that had been found lying in the corridor in front of the Historical Department, were handed over to Fettich. There is no way of ascertaining the truth, but in her report of the damage suffered by the Historical Department Mrs. Bárány emphasized the alleged worthlessness of the objects.

The greatest damage was incurred in the wake of the fire in the Lapidarium on January 28th. Further spread of the blaze was prevented thanks to the prompt intervention of a well-organised effort. This was indeed an extraordinarily hazardous operation, since according to Fettich's report there were boxes of ammunition only a few feet away.

Once the fighting ended efforts were soon made to restore order, and the building's importance as a historic monument was kept in the forefront of everyone's mind. As the wrecked roof was continually letting in rain and melting snow, the most important task was to plug the gaps, which required 400 square metres of tiles and 1,100 square metres of tin. Around 400 square metres of the glass roofing, which supplied natural illumination from above, had been destroyed. An estimated 30 square metres of hewn wood and an additional 50 square metres of boarding was needed. Repairs to the walls and windows were a primary concern in order to prevent further exposure to cold, damp air. The jobs of clearing away the rubble and tending to the building exceeded the capacities of the Museum, so on a number of occasions the city police was asked to send work details consisting of prisoners who had been part of the Arrow Cross government. The detachments, of varying strength, duly arrived, and in each case steps were continually taken to prolong their stay.[104] In fact in the end it was they who carried away the heap of rubble.[105] In a resolution dated July 2nd, 1945 the Board of the Hungarian National Museum put Tasnádi Kubacska in charge of ultimate oversight and direction of the

102 ■ "we saw with horror something we would never have imagined in our worst dreams: Mrs. Bárány left a whole heap of golden chains for fastening pelisses, pendants, and many other gem-studded and pearl-decorated jewels in a softwood safe" (Fettich 2000, p. 36). "we brought approximately 30–40 kilograms of scattered silver odds and ends and other items ... down into the cellar" (Fettich 2000, p. 60).

103 ■ Fettich 2000, p. 63.

104 ■ MNMI 51/1945. The size of the detachment varied from as few as 8 to as many as 40 men.

105 ■ MOL K727 MNM MO 103/1945 (July 21st).

repair work on all the buildings within the remit of the Hungarian National Museum. The Technical Department was obliged to seek his opinion and he became the link between them and the Managerial Board.[106] János Nemerkényi was asked to give technical advice. In the interests of effective organisation of the work, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Education established a Building Restoration Committee. The first session was scheduled for August 3rd, but the official plan was not adhered to. Instead of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Education, other authorities took part (the Metropolitan Council of Public Works, the Government Construction Committee, the Ministry of Industrial Affairs), though the ministry with responsibility for the Museum insistently requested that the official plan be observed.[107] A shared kitchen was established to feed the workers and the museum employees.[108]

Life was slowly restored to the Hungarian National Museum. Step by step the members of the staff assumed their duties, brought order to the scattered collections, and began to prepare the first exhibitions. Newer, primarily political tribulations lay in wait for the Museum, however, but that is another story. ❧

106 ■ MNMI 82/1945 (July 7th).

107 ■ MOL K727 MNM GH 54/1945.

108 ■ Fettich 2000, p. 134. In December 1946 a vigorous complaint was raised regarding how the kitchen operated. Cooking was being done in the workshop of the restorer of the Archaeological Cabinet, where animal carcases were cut up on one table and entry was permitted to strangers (MNM TA 74/1946).

Miklós Zeidler

The League of Nations in Hungary's Thinking About Foreign Policy[1]

Birth of the League of Nations

The question at the heart of this study is: How did Hungary maintain relations with the League of Nations? To be more specific: What was the thinking behind Hungary's policy towards this new body on the world political stage; how did Hungarian foreign policy adjust to it; and to what extent were attempts made by the Hungarian government to use the League in order to further its own goals? Before one can begin venturing answers, it is first necessary to clarify what the League of Nations really was and offer a few words on the origins of the idea of a supra-national political body.

From the Middle Ages onwards there were a great many plans to create lasting peace between the sovereign states of Europe. Initially, moral and religious considerations had predominated in the reasoning, but from the Age of Enlightenment onwards notions of rationality and public utility gradually came to prevail.[2]

The project of creating a "world state" established on a representative basis and independent of the papacy was first propounded by the 14th century political figure Marsilius of Padua in his pioneering treatise *Defensor pacis*, written in 1324. In the treatise *Querela pacis*, published in 1517, Erasmus of Rotterdam cautioned contemporaries that even the worst peace was better than any war, which he pilloried as an instrument of oppression. Erasmus recommended that the resolution of conflicts between princes should be entrusted to a council elected from the ranks

1 ■ My studies to study Hungary's policy stance towards the League of Nations were supported by grants from a Hungarian State Eötvös Scholarship (2002, 2005) and a János Bolyai Research Scholarship from the Ministry of Education (2003-2005).

2 ■ The precursors to the idea of a league of nations were examined by Walters (1952: pp. 5-36); a catalogue of efforts to achieve international peace going back to the Classical Age is provided by Lloyd & Winner, 1944.

of the Church secular and feudal superiors. In a work entitled *Le Nouuveau Cyné*, which appeared in 1623, Émeric Crucé cited Cyneas, a minister of Thessaly and friend of King Pyrrhus of Epirus, who in proclaiming the peaceful settlement of international disputes attempted to convince his lord of the futility of war. In 1638, French statesman the Duc de Sully (Maximilien de Béthune) outlined his vision of a United States of Europe, the so-called Grand Design, published as chapter 30 of his *Memoirs*. According to his plan Europe would function as a cooperative community of 15 states with more or less equal rights, protecting itself against external enemies with a common army and resolving internal disputes through negotiations.

Other plans did not urge a unification of forces on an explicitly theoretical basis, but rather more as a response to the political situation at the time, generally underlining the importance of defence against outside threats. Pierre du Bois, for instance, in writings prior to and after 1310 urged the leaders of Europe to set aside their differences and form an alliance to liberate the Holy Land. In the 16th and 17th centuries numerous similar experiments were undertaken to establish a coalition of Christian states against the Ottoman empire.

From the period when the modern state system of Europe was emerging one should mention William Penn's 1693 work entitled *An Essay toward the present and future peace of Europe by the Establishment of a Diet, Parliament or Estate*. Penn proposed creating a European parliament that would sit annually or triennially, and also urged leaders to settle conflicts that were not resolvable by diplomatic means through the intercession of a judiciary founded on proportional representation and reaching its decisions by secret vote. In 1713 Charles-Irénée Castel, a French political and economic theorist of the early Enlightenment (known as the Abbé de Saint-Pierre), completed the final version of his peace plan entitled *Projet pour rendre la paix perpétuelle en Europe*. Castel envisioned the resolution of conflicts of interest between states and rulers by entrusting decisions to a standing committee. The text was republished in abridged form by Jean Jacques Rousseau in 1761, but in contrast to the moral thrust of the Abbé's arguments the latter endeavoured to underpin this with reasoning that was centred more on the self-interests of states and rulers. By the time Jeremy Bentham finished *A Plan for an Universal and Perpetual Peace* in 1789 (it was published only posthumously in 1843), the underlying reasoning of the argument was entirely utilitarian. In order to overcome sources of potential conflict (for instance recommending that colonies be surrendered and army headcounts reduced), decisions should be reached by a judiciary consisting of representatives of the states and sitting in public. The 1795 work *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical*

Sketch by Immanuel Kant drew its conclusions from the principles of the independence and equality of the rights of states, seeking to alter the system of international politics in regard to the abolition of standing armies, the annulment of armed intervention, and the formulation of an international constitution to be brought into being by the community of states.

None of those projects was ever realised, however, but represented rather literary predecessors to an institutional framework that was gradually taking shape over the course of the 19th century. At the 1814-1815 Congress of Vienna, which concluded the Napoleonic Wars, two varying recommendations were made for the preservation of the status quo. Claude Henri de Saint-Simon and Augustin Thierry wished to set up a bicameral European parliament to reinforce the new European order, but it was the rigid system of the Holy Alliance of Russia, Austria and Prussia envisaged by Tsar Alexander I that won the day. In his *Essay on a Congress of Nations* (1840), the American William Ladd proposed the creation of a world body that would in itself comprise a parliament of nations and an international adjudication committee. Following the Crimean War, Frenchman Gustave de Molinari in 1857 wished to uphold the peace and synthesise earlier pacifist views by promoting international sanctions passed by an international judiciary. Towards the end of the century, these increasingly modern ideas, which had increasingly practical foundations, were presented at international conferences of scientific and philanthropic organisations and also in the programmes of more than one left-wing association. The Institut de droit international (founded in 1873) and L'Union Interparlementaire (Parliamentary Union, founded in 1889) pressed for a permanent international judiciary. The Fabian Society in Great Britain urged the establishment of an international government, while the Socialist International (the First International) made preparations to issue a condemnation of war.

In the 19th century social organizations, which were quickly proliferating in numbers and had increasing access to capital, recognised the catastrophic effects of war and the boon of cooperation, and several institutional devices were developed for doing away with war and promoting cooperation. Of course, those efforts met with little success, but while the world of politics continued to be dominated by regional alliances of interest, major progress was made towards the creation of more expansive links in economics, trade, and communications. From the 1870s onwards, international law, the beginnings of which were marked by the publication of Hugo Grotius's *De iure belli ac pacis*, advanced ever more apace on the road to codification, in no small part due to the progressive ideas of Johann Caspar Bluntschli. The important results of this were codified by the Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907, with the creation

of a Convention for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes and the establishment of Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Meanwhile a series of international associations and bodies were formed to meet various practical goals. The International Danube Commission (1856), the International Committee of the Red Cross (1861), and the Union Télégraphique Internationale (International Telecommunication Union,1865) were among the first of these, though naturally they had no direct influence on political strategies.

In the years running up to the First World War the pacifist ideal spread rapidly in European public opinion, but was unable gain traction in diplomatic circles. In his acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize, Theodore Roosevelt proposed the establishment by the great powers of an official League of Peace that would not only guarantee concord within its own ranks, but would also forestall other armed conflicts. In the same year Léon Bourgeois, former Prime Minister of France, published a collection of earlier pacifist speeches that he had given entitled *Pour la Société des Nations* (Bourgeois was himself to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1920 for his promotion of international relations).

Thus, it is clear that by the turn of the century the idea of a League of Nations had won influential spokesmen in each of the leading Great Powers on both sides of the Atlantic. The breakthrough, however, came with the devastation wrought by the First World War. In May 1815 a League of Nations Society was established with the public support of Prime Minister Herbert Asquith and Foreign Minister Edward Grey. One month later in Philadelphia a League to Enforce Peace was formed under the founding presidency of former US president William Howard Taft. The speakers at a congress of the League in May 1916 included Republican Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and Democrat Woodrow Wilson. In August 1917, Pope Benedict XV (Giacomo della Chiesa) invited the warring countries to peace negotiations at which he advocated a reciprocal reduction of armaments and obligatory international arbitration.

As the war went on the number of believers in the idea of a league of nations began to spread in diplomatic and political circles as well, which earlier had tended to reject it. Indeed in January 1919, at the opening of the Paris Peace Conference, supporters of the idea formed a significant majority within the delegations of the victorious 'Big Four'. It was recognised that such a league might offer an opportunity for the members to achieve their aims at the cost of only relatively slight compromises, and that they might thereby gain public support among their own citizenries for this. It seems, however, that the underlying motive for the foundation of the League of Nations in June 1919 was less a desire to promote peace than to defeat and isolate any (potential) aggressor, and also to defend the new

world order. In other words, it took the unparalleled human and financial losses of a world war to induce the leaders of the victorious powers to establish an institutional system for peace and international cooperation.

Unsurprisingly, the founders were playing a double game. By emphasising peace policy and widespread cooperation, they strove to win over public opinion and thereby present themselves as standard-bearers of humanity and progress, while however continuing to engage in classic power politics. Thy endeavoured to maintain or strengthen pre-War power positions that ensured their influence in world politics.

On the part of the United States Wilson and Edward Mandell House regarded foundation of the League of Nations as the highest priority, but this was not merely due to their alleged liberal pacifist and altruistic ideals, but also to their goal of ensuring that the United States, which by then had indisputably risen to the rank of a Great Power, would acquire a greater say in world politics (European affairs above all). Washington stipulated that there be no curtailment on its influence on Latin America, which it had exercised for almost a century on the basis of the Monroe doctrine. Wilson sought to establish the newly codified rights of national minorities in the Covenant of the League, but the leadership of the American delegation was strongly divided on the issue.

In Great Britain, a delegation led by High Court judge Walter Phillimore, the first Baron Phillimore, worked on the project of a world body. The delegation proposed that in the event of any international dispute a judgement should be reached by an international court of arbitration or a conference of the Contracting Parties, which in the event of a refusal to comply would be enforced by joint political (and, if need be, military) pressure. In the British delegation at Paris, Robert Cecil and Jan Smuts were committed supporters of the idea of a league, and had the backing of British Foreign Minister Arthur Balfour, who was seeking to please the Americans, while Prime Minister David Lloyd George was less taken by the idea. They all agreed, however, that Britain needed to preserve its colonial position and, as best possible, retain its traditional balancing position in Europe.

For France a committee led by Bourgeois worked on the plans for a league. The government politicians were motivated by traditions of *grandeur* and *sécurité*, which meant primarily a determination to gain continental hegemony and a need for safety to counter expected German efforts to seek revenge. Accordingly, the French proposal emphasized the establishment of an armed force to be commanded by an international collection of chiefs of staff. Paris also made strenuous efforts to ensure that the world body not interfere in its own creation of a system of alliances in western and eastern Europe.

Ambitious regional powers Italy and Japan looked for recognition as great powers by gaining inclusion in the league's governing group. Both states saw the acquisition of colonies and spheres of influence as a possible means of addressing problems caused by increasing populations. Italy wanted to acquire economic and political positions in Central and south-east Europe, asking for a place in the distribution of territories that were to be mandated by the League. Japan strove to expand in the Far East, hoping that the Great Powers would accede to this endeavour if it undertook a constructive part in the promotion of the League.

These varying aims, unsurprisingly, sometimes brought the victorious states into conflict with one another, yet despite the divergences they did agree on the basic principles: the encouragement of peaceful settlement of conflict, joint intervention against those who broke the peace, the reduction or restriction of arms, and supervision of the promulgation of international treaties. On these foundations, thanks to protracted labours (above all the talents for codification and intermediation shown by House and Cecil), it became possible to reach a compromise which, ultimately, was satisfactory to all the delegations. France had to abandon the idea of a joint armed force. Great Britain tacitly understood that it could not alone hold a balance of power over continental Europe. The Americans accepted that they would not have an appreciable influence on issues of European power. Italy and Japan accepted that they would be unable to play a role in the administration of mandates or in the League's apparatus similar to that played by the British or the French. To Wilson's chagrin the provisions for the protection of ethnic minorities were omitted from the League's Covenant. In order to address this question the Great Powers subsequently entered separate agreements with the newly established or enlarged states. As a result, on April 28th, 1919 a plenary session of the Peace Conference accepted a League of Nations Covenant consisting of 26 articles and two Appendices.[3]

Among other things, this provided for the creation of a Council (with a permanent Secretariat) that would act as the instrument of the world organisation (Article 4).[4] One of its aims was to ensure, in the interests of promoting international peace, the reduction of national armaments

3 ■ On the history of the formulation of the Covenant see Walters (1952, pp. 28-38) and Scott (1973, pp. 15-39).

4 ■ Under the Covenant representatives of the five victorious Principal Allied and Associated Powers (i.e. Great Powers) were to become permanent members of the Council together with representatives of four other Members, who were to be selected from time to time by the Assembly at its discretion. Since the USA in the end did not join the League the number of permanent members was reduced to four, and in 1923 the number of temporary members rose to six. When Germany entered the League in 1926, it was also immediately made the fifth permanent member of the Council and the number of temporary members grew to nine, and then in 1933 to ten.

to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations (Article 8). Member states undertook to protect the independence and territorial integrity of all other members (Article 10). It was also declared to be the "friendly right of each Member of the League to bring to the attention of the Assembly or of the Council any circumstance whatsoever affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends" (Article 11). The member states committed themselves to submitting the matter of any dispute likely to lead to a rupture either to arbitration or to inquiry by the Council, and they would only resort to war if the dispute could not be settled peacefully. In that event Members reserved to themselves the right to take such action as they considered necessary for the maintenance of justice (Articles 12-13, 15). The Covenant enjoined the Council to prepare for the establishment of a new law court, the Permanent Court of International Justice, which was to be competent to hear and determine any dispute of an international character which the parties might submit to it and also be ready to give an advisory opinion upon any dispute or question referred to it by the Council or by the Assembly (Article 14). The public image of diplomacy was served by the stipulation that required all member states to register with the League's secretariat every treaty or international engagement into which it entered before it became binding, and also obliging the secretariat to publish it as soon as possible (Article 18). Preventative goals were served by Article 19, which authorised the Assembly to intervene to do away with international conditions the continuance of which might endanger the peace of the world. In the interests of consolidating the new system of peace and boosting the League's role Article 20 declared that the Covenant abrogated retrospectively all international understandings that were inconsistent with its terms, and each member undertook not to enter in future into any engagements inconsistent with its terms. At the same time, nothing in the Covenant was deemed as affecting the validity of existing international engagements, such as treaties of arbitration or regional understandings aimed at securing the maintenance of peace, and the Monroe Doctrine was mentioned specifically (Article 21). Article 22 provided for former colonies that were not yet able to establish competent governments. They were to come under the temporary administration of one of the Great Powers acting as Mandatories on behalf of the League. Finally, the Covenant made a stand for the enforcement of human rights, freedom of trade and universal spread of health regulations, and also condemned the trafficking of women and children, opium and other dan-

gerous drugs. Finally, it entrusted the League with the general supervision of the trade in arms and ammunition (Articles 23-25).[5]

Nine months later, on January 10th, 1920, when the Treaty of Versailles came into force, the League of Nations also came into existence in an international legal sense and a new political body appeared in world politics. The aim of the League was the preservation of peace and the promotion of complex international cooperation. It sought to achieve this through the peaceful settlement of international disputes, an enhanced role for international arbitration, and wide-ranging cooperation on economic, employment, cultural, health and refugee affairs. Furthermore, the League of Nations also had the task of guaranteeing and supervising international treaties to protect minorities in the wake of the First World War.

The League of Nations, or at least the ideal of a League, represented the one flexible element in the strict and rather rigid structure of the system of the Paris Peace Conference, which fixed the global political framework in the wake of the War, including the new state borders drawn on the basis of strategic considerations. Any state that was able to identify with those goals and wished to promote them gwas able to join, providing the already accepted member states agreed.

Hungary's accession

I return now to the basic question of this essay, namely the extent to which the concept of a League of Nations harmonized with the political thinking that prevailed in Hungary. Indeed, one must first begin by asking how Hungary fit into the League, the offspring and guardian of a new peace regime, and how, as a loser of the Paris Peace Conference, its accession fit into its own foreign policy calculations, since Hungary itself condemned the system of peace that had been established. The simple reply would be with great difficulty. In truth, neither the progressive ideas underlying the League of Nations nor the goals of the League itself, set as they were by the victors, brought about a rapprochement between Hungary and the world body. Over the previous century and a half progressive thought, whether it appeared in the guise of the Enlightenment, liberalism, leftism or internationalism, had never been able to gain a determining role in Hungarian political thinking. On top of that, the League of Nations became a genuine institution at a time when Hungary, then at the peak of counter-revolutionary sentiments, was least susceptible to the kind of thinking on which it had been founded. The ideal of cooperation between nations

5 ■ Subsequent modifications did not essentially alter the Covenant's provisions.

represented a break with what was considered backwards nationalism, but in Hungary at the time nationalism (in admittedly various and often divergent forms) remained the dominant intellectual and political trend and exerted a decisive influence on foreign policy. Hungary had "functioned" for a good century in terms of the notion of the nation, and the experiences it had lived through over that period (Austro-Hungarian relations, the matter of national minorities, customs wars, a world war, and finally the Treaty of Trianon) did not exactly offer convincing evidence to Hungarians of the triumph of understanding between states and nations.

On the other hand, people had to take into account the fact that merely having a presence in and as far as possible also taking part in the affairs of such political bodies was of crucial importance in the world of diplomacy. Those who directed Hungarian foreign policy realised that were they to remain outside the League, the country would deprive itself of the opportunity to return to the community of recognised states or be present at the discussions regarding decisions that would directly affect it. As a new institution, the League of Nations offered all independent states this chance, and the majority chose to take advantage of it.

For small nations membership in the League of Nations offered only advantages. It guaranteed them a forum, created a possibility to be in the proximity of leaders and policy makers from the Great Powers, permitted them to gain a more accurate assessment of global political events and processes, and formally granted them equal rights within the organisation. What was difficult, however, particularly for overseas nations, was the great distances and the additional costs stemming from membership fees and diplomatic activity.[6]

Even the Great Powers could rarely permit themselves the luxury of dropping out. For the most part they saw the League as a source of difficulties. The public face of politics impeded the predominance of classical, "traditional" diplomacy, so they were unable to cut themselves off from problems that were brought into the public eye, which happened far more often than it had before. At the same time they were forced to bear part of the blame for many of the failures in the League's

6 ■ Until 1923, European small states, following their post-war consolidation, all acceded to the League of Nations (Turkey only did so in 1932). The process through which a many of them (Austria in 1938; Albania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Spain and Turkey in 1939; Romania in 1940) withdrew from the League under pressure by the Axis powers began in earnest only in 1938. There was more fluctuation in the case of the Latin American states. Mexico, Argentina and Ecuador held themselves aloof on points of principle for more than a decade. Brazil left in 1926 as the League of Nations was unwilling to recognise it as a Great Power. Others resigned from the body out of financial considerations and on account of being left out of matters relating to world politics. The first was Costa Rica in 1925, followed by another eight states between 1935 and 1939.

handling of conflicts, given that they were permanent members of the Council responsible for its functioning. Indirectly, however, it was useful to them to be able to defer the fulfilment of some political promises or simply pass delicate problems on to Geneva, while still remaining able to assert their Great-Power status within the framework of League representation. The United States was alone in electing not to join, as Woodrow Wilson's team proved unable to persuade legislators that American commitments that had been undertaken in the political and financial domains would be offset by the anticipated gains.[7] Even the states that had been excluded, Germany and the USSR, soon endeavoured to gain admittance to the League (even though this was antithetical to the accusatory slogans of the latter's campaign against Western imperialism!).[8] The Great Powers that later withdraw from the League of Nations (Japan and Germany in 1933, Italy in 1937) left because the League obstructed their expansionist ambitions.

Of course, none of this could be foreseen in early 1920, though it was beyond doubt that Geneva was going to play a major role in world political processes. The questions were therefore posed as to whether Hungary would request admission to the League, whether this would assist it in achieving its foreign policy goals, and whether the obligations stemming from membership were offset by the advantages it offered.

In regard to the Covenant the contents of Articles 8, 10, 11 and 19 were particularly intriguing. Article 8 predicated mutual disarmament to a minimal level consistent with maintaining the peace, which Hungary naturally supported, since it had had to disarm in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Trianon. If the League were to manage to assert this principle in practice, then the vast military superiority of the neighbouring states (which had 15 to 20 times as many arms as Hungary according to calculations at the time) would not have weighed as heavily on it. Article 10 protected "the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League." That was advantageous to Hungary in the short term, as in the event of an external attack it would be able to rely on the assistance of other member states. Longer term, however, it obvi-

7 ■ In 1919-20 both Woodrow Wilson and the isolationists, who were opposed to joining the League of Nations, engaged in massive national campaigns. The Democratic majority in the House of Representatives accepted ratification, whereas the Republican leadership in the Senate did not manage to secure a majority. On March 19th, 1920 the senators voted 49 to 35 to accede to the League, under certain conditions, but as those in support did not obtain 60% of the votes, they did not reach the necessary majority. See Gibbons (1992, pp. 12-13) and Walters (1952, pp. 69-71).

8 ■ For the USSR the final push was given by the withdrawal of Germany (and Japan). The Soviet Union had no allies and was only able to conclude pacts of neutrality. In that position the League of Nations guarantees given under Articles 10-11 were important to Moscow. See Walters (1952, p. 579).

ously made border revision more difficult. As noted earlier, Article 11 allowed any member state to bring to the attention of the League "any circumstance ... which threatens to disturb international peace." Since Hungarian foreign policy makers regarded the anti-Hungarian stance of the Little Entente and even the Treaty of Trianon itself as threats to international peace, they often made reference to that Article.

Hungary pinned great hopes on Article 19, which gave the League of Nations Assembly the right to "advise the reconsideration by Members of the League of treaties which have become inapplicable and the consideration of international conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world." This provision seemed to suggest the possibility (and not just according to Hungarians) of reconsidering and even modifying the peace treaties through international legal and diplomatic channels. However, any revision would have required the agreement of all affected parties, which for the victorious Great Powers and their allies would have constituted an admission of their own mistakes (in other words a serious loss of prestige) and a weakening of their power positions.

Membership in the League of Nations also offered possible advantages from the perspective of defending the newly created Hungarian speaking minorities in the surrounding countries. The Covenant, as has already been indicated, may not have provided for the rights of ethnic minorities, but in principle the League did offer guarantees for international treaties that made provisions for the protection of the rights of Hungarians in the annexed territories.[9] The initiative lay on the side of the victorious Great Powers, with the aim that national and religious minorities that found themselves under the authority of a foreign state as a result of frontier changes following the First World War be able to integrate harmoniously with the majority society. As far as Hungary's neighbours were concerned, the various treaties (in the case of Austria the Treaty of St. Germain and in the case of Czechoslovakia, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and Romania a series of separate treaties) guaranteed the protection of the rights of the individual ethnic minorities. They were founded on the same basic principles (traditional liberal notions), and for the most part the texts were identical, though there was some variation to account for local differences. They were signed on September 10th and December 9th, 1919, and in 1920-21 the League also approved them, thereby offering its guarantee, and from that point on complaints could be submitted to the Council in the event of any infringement.

9 ■ An excellent analysis from the perspective of international law is given by Mrs. Szālay (2003), pp. 34-148. On the Hungarian aspects of the matter, see Zeidler (2003).

10 ■ For the history of Hungary's admission into the League of Nations see Ormos (1957).

All this meant that the League might be able to play an important role in preserving the independence of the Hungarian state, both as a global forum for political consultation and as the supreme institution for the handling of international crises. It could also have a role in furthering each of Hungary's three revisionist foreign policy ambitions: modification of borders, the right to rearm, and effective protection for minorities. So while Hungarian diplomats on the one hand pursued the most diverse paths in their attempts to address the grievances they felt Hungary had suffered as a consequence of being on the losing side in the First World War (for instance the idea of a Hungarian-Romanian personal union, secret talks with the French aimed at border change, offers to participate in an intervention against the USSR, a plan to join with extreme right-wing circles in Germany and take military action against Austria, Czechoslovakia and Romania, and armed resistance by western Hungary), it became increasingly clear that without any appreciable military force or allies Hungary would have to accept and attempt to become part of the international political regime.

Hungarian politicians, public figures and diplomats who were better versed in foreign policy were in favour of acceding, and on February 12th, 1920, one month after the formal foundation of the League, the Hungarian government resolved to join the organisation as soon as it had signed the peace treaties.[10] On April 18th, at the founding session of the Hungarian Society for Foreign Affairs, the chairman, Count Albert Apponyi, leader of the Hungarian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, encouraged rapprochement with the League of Nations. On May 23rd, 1921 the government of Prime Minister István Bethlen officially requested Hungary's admission to the League, though he entrusted Apponyi to proceed with the negotiations, even though only a few weeks earlier, according to the Hungarian secretariat accredited to Geneva, League of Nations circles would have preferred to have dealt with Count Pál Teleki, who was deemed a Francophile.[11]

When the League held its annual Assembly in September, however, Hungary's accession seemed hopeless. The states of the Little Entente opposed Hungarian entry, while Italy and Bulgaria, states that Hungarian diplomats had hoped would support their efforts, were also not keen on the idea. In vain did Apponyi negotiate with the most influential French politicians. The principal objection was that Hungary was not fulfilling the terms of the Treaty of Trianon in that it had not demobilised its army and it had not ceded territories in western Hungary that had been annexed to

11 ■ Ibid., pp. 233-239.

Austria (the Burgenland). The claim of Charles IV of the Habsburg House (also referred to as Charles I of Austria) to the crown of Hungary also gave cause for rancour, especially for the states of the Little Entente, for which any attempt at restoration seemed an overt attack on the new system of peace (Miklós Horthy was installed as Regent in March 1920, and while Charles IV was not allowed to fill the vacant throne, he was also not officially deposed). These reservations were not unfounded, and on September 24th, in order to avoid an open rejection, Apponyi requested a postponement of the talks on Hungary's request for admittance.[12]

By the spring of 1922 the international climate was more favourable. In League of Nations circles it was acknowledged with satisfaction that one year earlier Hungary's National Assembly had passed a law to dethrone the Habsburgs (Law XLVII:1921), and by reaching an international consensus the government had closed debate regarding the Transdanubian question. The first results of consolidation in Hungary were also slowly becoming apparent. In general the government's accord with the Social Democrats, with the foundation of the Unity Party, and its intervention against extremist political movements were generally well received. On seeing the improvement in perceptions of Hungary, Bethlen's government renewed the request for accession, though Bethlen also saw the need to win over public opinion back home with regard to the League, as much of the citizenry was highly mistrustful of the new international body.

Of the two extreme interpretations of the role of the new political body, most Hungarians thought Raymond Poincaré, President of the French Republic, was astute in calling it, with magisterial exaggeration, a "club of victors," while Woodrow Wilson's notion of its being "the first experiment to assure the permanent peace of the world" was or simple naivety.[13] Elek (Berei) Nagy, a Budapest lawyer (not to be confused with diplomat Elek (Verseghy) Nagy, who went on to become accredited resident minister to the League of Nations in Geneva) whose entire literary oeuvre was devoted to fighting freemasonry and promoting a Turanist (i.e. crypto-Fascist) transformation of Hungarian society, contended that the League of Nations represented a "racially Jewish-Freemasonic piece of craftiness." The League of Nations itself, in Nagy's view, "both in the origin of today's dispositions and with regard to its means and goals, is wholly a Jewish-Freemasonic creation, and the situation of Hungary

12 ■ Ibid., pp. 238-248.

13 ■ Some have suggested that had Wilson presented the League simply as an alliance intended to serve the interests of its members (and not a selfless organization intended to promote peace and harmany), the USA might have joined. This interpretation is worth some consideration. See Scott (1973), p. 49.

today is the result of the deliberate and purposeful work of international racially Jewish-Freemasonic craftiness."[14]

Even those who supported the idea of a League of nations in principle, like international jurist Albert Irk, were uncertain as to whether in practice the League would be able to live up to its exalted objectives. In the preface to his book about the League, published in 1921 but completed in January 1920 (i.e. at the time of the birth of the organisation), he contended that it was not yet possible to know whether the League was "just the first station on the way towards a more perfect inter-state organisation or an inaccessible prison in which to clap vanquished peoples in shackles."[15] In 1922 his colleague Ödön Polner was sharply critical of what he perceived as the discriminatory intentions of the founding states, allegedly implied in the Covenants, and he urged immediate revision of the peace treaties: "the League of Nations, which guarantees provisions of the peace treaties that are in contradiction with law, justice, and equality, cannot function after such antecedents and with such intentions and partialities as an alliance for peace and cannot ensure lasting peace."[16]

At all events, when Prime Minister Bethlen delivered a speech on May 8th, 1922 in the city of Debrecen in which he offered an overview of the short-term goals of Hungarian foreign policy (the restoration of economic equality, deferment of any decision over war reparations, protection of Magyar ethnic minorities, an end to interference in Hungarian internal affairs), each of the aims he mentioned was closely related to the League of Nations.[17]

On August 2nd the League's English Secretary-General, Sir Eric Drummond, notified Hungary's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Miklós Bánffy, that the Assembly was going to debate the matter of Hungary's admission. On this occasion the Hungarian government was represented in Geneva by Bánffy, as Apponyi's and Teleki's behavior at the time of the overthrow of the Habsburgs ruled them out. Bánffy had good press abroad and was held to be suitable to represent Hungary. With ingenious tactics he managed to get the Assembly to vote unanimously to admit Hungary without insisting on any further promises or demands.[18]

Three months later, contemporaneously with his resignation from his post, Bánffy prepared a detailed memorandum on the details of the process of accession for Regent Horthy.[19] He did not conceal the fact that

14 ■ Nagy (1921), pp. 14-15.
15 ■ Irk (1926), p. 1.
16 ■ Pollner (1922), pp. 13-14.
17 ■ Ormos (1957), pp. 232-233.
18 ■ Ibid., pp. 253-260.
19 ■ For the text of the memorandum to Horthy, see IET (vol. 2, No. 111).

many people, some of them eminent politicians, believed that "in the final analysis the League of Nations is an alliance of the victors in which Hungary is never going to be able to find justice." In addition, membership was pricey.[20] It could be regarded as disadvantageous from the viewpoint of revisionist aims, Bánffy went on, that Article 1 of the Convention required a member state to have fulfilled its international obligations up to the time of its withdrawal, and Article 10 guaranteed the territorial integrity of all member states. On the other hand, he emphasised that the League averted threats of unexpected attack (in the autumn of 1921, at the time of the second dethronement of Charles IV, the Little Entente had threatened to overrun Hungary) and could assist in the normalisation of conditions and offer international legal protection of minorities. Later on, however, "by purposeful, tenacious work, Hungary will be able to contribute to a gradual transformation of the spirit of the League of Nations and in time it may make use of the League of Nations in the attainment of its own goals."

Others laid stress on Article 19, which addressed the question of treaties that had become inapplicable and the examination of conditions that might endanger the peace of the world. The decisions that had been reached at the Paris Peace Conference and by the Council of Ambassadors and the League of Nations had a significant influence on many aspects of the life of the newly independent Hungary, including state sovereignty, the matter of rule by a king, determination of its borders, the protection of minorities, home defence, reparations and questions pertaining to prisoners of war. It was under the circumstances quite understandable that those who argued in support of Hungary's membership in the League repeatedly insisted that it would simply be foolish to remain distant from forums where discussions were taking place that affected the fate of the country and the nation.

The pros and cons of membership were debated in the National Assembly in January 1923 in the discussions of the parliamentary bill to approve accession. All of the pro-accession speakers emphasised aspirations to secure revisions of the peace treaty, which, in their opinion, the League of Nations, as a consultative forum and operational institution, was in a position to promote. Géza Daruváry, a Minister of Justice tem-

20 ■ The total annual membership fee changed continuously. The trend of the fluctuations is indicated by the typical values (in gold Swiss francs) over subsequent years:109,000 (1923); 78,000 then 67,000 (1924-25, which were years in which finances were stabilised); 96,000 (1926 the end of stabilisation); 267,000 (1932);178,000 (1939, the year in which Hungary withdrew). When the entire world was in financial crisis, Hungary, like many other countries, called for a moderation in membership fees and a rescheduling of payments. In accordance with the new calculations it paid less (the exchange rate of the Swiss gold franc at the close of 1931 was roughly 4 CHF?1 USD).

porarily charged with heading the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1922-24, in succession to Miklós Bánffy) espoused the view according to which, "the Hungarian government cannot expect miracles from the League of Nations, as it is aware of the deficiencies of its composition and the great difficulties with which it must still contend." Nonetheless, in his view, if Hungary hoped to gain recognition for its claims it would have to look on the League with some measure of trust and confidence.[21] In a detailed debate the next day, Albert Apponyi summed up the views in support of accession. The League, he contended, constituted "an impartial forum, a body that has been established for the prevention and rectification of disputes, and which truly acknowledges and lays down complete equality for the whole of the states of the world." For Hungary accession to the League of Nations did not imply acceptance of the Treaty of Trianon, "but rather means first and foremost that we follow a peaceful path in our efforts to address the injustices that have been done to us."[22] A plenary session on February 1st voted for accession, which passed into the statute book as Law1923:XII.[23]

Hungary in the League of Nations

Scholars of the history of the League of Nations tend to agree that in the first decade of its existence it functioned successfully, achieving a great many successes in the fields of preserving peace and promoting international cooperation. This included a rapid rise in the number of member states (with Germany's entry the number member states rose

21 ■ For Daruvary's January 30th, 1923 speech to the National Assembly see NN (1922-27), vol. 9, pp. 218-216. Cf. Nagy (1930), p. 9.

22 ■ For Apponyi's January 31st, 1923 speech to the National Assembly see NN (1922-27), vol. 9, pp. 226-231 (the quotes are from p. 227 and p. 230).

23 ■ On the ministerial justification for the law, "Hungary... pursuant to Article 10 of the Covenant is able to regard the integrity and political independence of its present territory as secure against any external aggression, and may speak on any questions which pursuant to Article 8 are referred to the League's sphere of authority regarding the general reduction of national armaments and international disarmament... As a member of the League, Hungary, via its delegates may be allowed to address the Assembly and thereby take part in the League's activity.... Pursuant to Article 11 of the Covenant, Hungary has the friendly right to bring to the attention of the League any circumstance affecting international relations which threatens to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends. Under the same Article if any danger of war were to threaten Hungary, the League is obliged to intervene, and should Hungary request it a meeting of the Council should be summoned forthwith ... It is also important that if, henceforth the Council of the League of Nations were to discuss any matter which relates to Hungary, then pursuant to Article 4 of the Covenant Hungary would be invited to attend any meeting of the Council during the consideration of matters specially affecting its interests.... Those advantages bound up with membership of the League possess particularly great significance from Hungary's point of view with regard to questions relating to the protection of national minorities." See MT (1923), pp. 109-110.

to 54[24]), settling the delimitation of borders, creating active military inspection committees, assessing war reparations, taking care of hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war and refugees, creating a range of associated international institutions (International Labour Organisation, the League of Nations Health Organization, Permanent Court of International Justice), the financial consolidation of several of the defeated countries, addressing several international disputes (the Polish-Lithuanian, Italian-Greek, and Greek-Bulgarian conflicts), integration of Germany as a partner into the new international order, and making pacts for the purpose of preserving the peace.

At the same time, Latin American and Asian states were less active than had initially been anticipated, and their lack of representation caused problems. Geneva also proved powerless in the face of forcible French intervention at the time of the Rhineland conflict, and the process of disarmament faltered in its initial phases. From the 1920s on there were worrying signs. The leading powers increasingly avoided plenary consultation for restricted talks, which gave the smaller states legitimate grounds for discontent. The world body dithered for a long time in its attempts to address and alleviate the problems caused by the global economic crisis. The resolution of Latin American border disputes dragged on for many years. The League failed to keep aggressively expansionist Japan and Germany within its remit. Its prestige and room for manoeuvre declined steeply, as indicated quite clearly by the fact that between 1933 and 1942 some 21 countries vanished from the ranks of member states, and those that remained frequently ignored the Council's resolutions.[25]

Hungary's assessment of the League of Nations largely followed the same curve, with the difference merely that the strong mistrust that it nourished towards the League from the outset turned more quickly to disenchantment. Since, its hopes and endeavours notwithstanding, Hungary was less able to assert its interests, as early as 1925 critical voices were already beginning to push for withdrawal,

The first matter in Geneva that was of major relevance immediately set Hungary on the accused bench. Jewish organisations based in London and Paris submitted a petition to the League of Nations against the

24 ■ 29 of the 32 founding members listed in the Covenant and each of the 13 "invited" states had already acceded in 1929, but Ecuador only ratified accession in 1934 and the USA never did. Hejaz (which existed as an independent kingdom from 1916 to 1925), which also delayed accession, was swallowed up by Saudi Arabia. Between 1920 and 1926 a further 4 countries won admission to the League, whereas only Costa Rica (in 1925) and Brazil (1926) left, while Argentina, though not formally leaving, did not take part in the League's work until 1933.

25 ■ On the League's history, see Zimmern (1936),Walters (1952), Scott (1973), Bendiner (1975), Birn (1981), and Northedge (1986).

Numerus Clausus Law XXV:1920, which restricted the entry of Jewish students to Hungarian universities. The League's Council found the complaint well-founded, and at the end of 1925 it called upon the Hungarian government to modify the law. On repeated urging from Geneva, in January 1928 the Hungarian National Assembly finally accepted an amendment to the existing statute, but this hardly compensated for Hungary's loss of prestige.

In the meantime, petitions submitted by the Hungarians to protect Magyar ethnic minorities outside the country (by the end of 1925 some 30 such petitions had been submitted) did not achieve the anticipated results. The diplomats charged with scrutinising them judged the bulk of complaints to be unfounded, and in almost all the remaining cases they accepted the explanations of the Czechoslovak and Romanian governments. There was only one case in which the endeavour met with success, namely a complaint regarding the unlawful expropriation of properties from settlers in the Banat region of southeast Hungary that had been annexed by Romania in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Trianon, though the plaintiffs regarded the 700,000 Swiss francs offered as compensation by the Romanian government as insufficient.

The affair of a loan made by the league of Nations in 1924 also stirred up considerable controversy. The use of the funds that were made available to the Bethlen government by the League in order to help stabilize the Hungarian *korona* (crown) and reduce the national budget deficit, and furthermore to promote Hungary's reintegration into the global economy, was under the supervision of a commissioner sent to Budapest by the League, who also had oversight over the state incomes that were supposed to serve as the security for this loan. His office was seen by many as interference in internal affairs. In a session of the National Assembly the racist opposition party, Racial Defence Party (*Fajvédő Párt*), led by Gyula Gömbös accused the League of tyranny and Bethlen of having compromised the independence of the state.

At the same time the so-called optants debate was taking place. The debate concerned the question of the expropriation of real estate from people who owned properties in territories that had been annexed by one of the surrounding states but who had chosen Hungarian citizenship after the changes in sovereignty (the optants). The Hungarian government requested a ruling from the League of Nations' Council in the dispute between Hungary and Romania. The Council, however, did not wish to take on the case but rather urged bilateral talks. This was seen by Hungary as malicious discrimination and favouritism towards Francophile Romania for political reasons, and helped convince Hungarian diplomats that rather than taking their international disputes

before the League of Nations, which had political alignments, it would be better to take them to the Permanent Court of International Justice, which in principle was bound by international law.

In October 1925, in the National Assembly Pál Teleki, by then an ex-prime minister of Hungary, encouraged Bethlen to leave the League, which had proven unable either to protect minority interests or to enforce disarmament. Bethlen took the view that withdrawal would be unavoidable if any attempt were made to make border revision, in principle made possible by Article 19, impossible through some sort of agreement or if any attempt were made or a resolution were passed that made the inequities created by the treaty perpetual. For the time being, however, Bethlen felt that Hungary could still hope for more results by staying a member state than as an outsider as, after all, "les absents ont [toujours] tort," or "the absent are always in the wrong," as Destouches wrote. Bethlen also placed great expectations on the imminent accession of Germany, which was more effective in its pursuit of protections for minorities. He knew that if Germany were to become a permanent member of the Council—as indeed it was expected to—petitions submitted to the Council on behalf of minorities would have a better chance of winning support.[26]

In contrast, in the preface to a second edition (July 1926) of his aforementioned book on the League, Albert Irk finally abandoned his hopes and wryly observed, "the resurrection of the idea of a league of nations by the statesmen of the Entente during the War was first and foremost a tool in the service of propaganda aims." The organisation was "not a league of nations but an organisation directed at securing the cooperation of certain states, an alliance of the mutual objectives of certain states." It represented "not an embodiment of the centuries-old idea of a league of nations, but an organisation of the victorious powers to ensure the spoils of victory." The League of Nations "was a pathologically conceived sick organisation," the "pathological condition of which interfered with all its operations."[27]

In the end Germany's accession in fact did little to improve the success of petitions submitted by or on behalf of the Hungarian minorities, thus justifying the pessimistic expectations many had had. Furthermore, when Germany finally gained admittance on September 8th, 1926, following long and delicate adjustments, and also became a permanent member of the Council, the five seats for temporary members reserved for Europe

26 ■ For Teleki and Bethlen's speeches to the lower house of the Hungarian National Assembly (October 29th, 1925) see MN (1922-1927), vol 35, pp. 250-257 (the quote is from p. 257). Cf. Nagy (1930), pp. 44-45.

27 ■ Irk (1926), p. 21, 30 and 156.

were filled by Belgium, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Romania, all of which were also members of the French network of alliances. The latter three states had objected from the outset to the idea of making the protection of minority rights an international concern.

Ferenc Mengele, first secretary to the Hungarian embassy in London, also looked on with displeasure as "France and the successor states that had profited from the war" gained ground in the League. In 1927 Mengele had published an extraordinarily informative book about the mechanisms of the League of Nations. In his view, the League, the sole surviving point of Wilson's programme, was founded on peace treaties that flouted the law. It represented "the sole endeavour of the peace conference that was not destructive but rather aimed to build the future." It was nonetheless undeniable, according to Mengele, that "the Covenant of the League of Nations is not the product of the universal work of humankind, but rather the creation of the victors." With the accession of Germany, there were three power centres present in the League. France was interested in preserving the status quo, Germany in revision, and Great Britain, on the other hand, on peace by any means possible (whether on the basis of the status quo or revision). In that constellation of Great Power interests, "with regards to the League of Nations Hungary cannot take up a position based on a standpoint of unreserved approval, but neither would unconditional seclusion be justified... What must be regarded as definitely risky is any surrender of national sovereignty until a reordering of the present situation has taken place on the basis of justice and national freedom. It is not necessary that the League of Nations win supranational authority by curtailing the existing freedoms of states, but that via the League of Nations the rights and justice of those national formations (ethnic minorities) that have not attained self-determination and autonomy can be asserted... If the League of Nations is closed to evolution then it will not only lose contact with the Hungarian perception, but also its very raison d'être."[28]

In his disappointment over the decision taken in the optants affair, István Czakó gave an even more disparaging assessment of the League. The "Genevan miracle, along with all its courts of arbitration, is the greatest human lie that a professorial mind could ever have dreamt up." "The nihilist holy alliance's ... past is not honest, its present is not encouraging, and it has no future at all," he wrote in the Szeged-based journal *Szephalom* at the end of 1927.[29] Czakó was a relatively prolific publicist at the time, as indicated, for instance, by the fact that he later became a staff

28 ■ Mengele (1927), pp. 50-53 and 368-372. In order the quotes are on pp. 368, 32, 50-51, 370 and 372.
29 ■ Czakó (1927), p. 420.

member of the highly reputed *Külügyi Szemle* (Review of Foreign Affairs). Given his prominence, a man by the name of Zoltán Baranyai, who had won a position as honorary university lecturer (*Privatdozent*) of French literary history and at the time was the accredited diplomat of the Hungarian Representation in Geneva, considered it important to publish a response. In a lengthy article he tried to clarify the League of Nations' activities and importance and, at the same time, dispel the impression, prevalent in Hungarian public opinion, of "total chaos" and "bad and lazy formulas." "The League of Nations has no existence, no reality, *outside* of the member states," Baranyai pointed out. The intentions of the member states were manifested in its decisions, so there was no sense to such superficial formulations as "we have subjugated ourselves to the League of Nations with our reconstruction loan," "the League of Nations regularly neglects the complaints of Magyar ethnic minorities," or "the *lords* of the League of Nations want something from us." In Baranyai's view, people in Hungary had been misled by exaggerated claims according to which the League was against Hungarian interests. He made the following points: 1) The League of Nations was an association of states for the attainment of specific goals (primarily the maintenance of peace and cooperation); 2) as a consortium of states, the League of Nations faithfully reflected the prevailing conditions of force and power relations in world politics; and 3) the League of Nations was just *one* of the methods of permanent occasional cooperation between states. He also made the following observations regarding what the League was not: 1) it was *not* an assembly of pacifist consortia or *private* persons, nor was it an association of irresponsible people or a club of fanatical idealists, neither was it an omnipotent supreme council standing *above* states; 2) it was *not* an academy in the service of idealistic goals, nor was it an autodidactic circle or a foreign affairs association; 3) it was *not* an ideology, doctrine, mentality, or craze.[30]

There was unquestionably a dash of officiousness in Baranyai's argument, yet it was still closer to the truth than any of the conspiracy theories that were being bandied about. Czakó stood his ground, however, and replied by citing the critiques of eminent politicians.[31] For instance, György Lukács, a former Minister of Culture and a leading member of the Magyar Association of Foreign Affairs and the Hungarian Revisionist League (not to be confused with György Lukács, literary and Marxist the-

30 ■ Baranyai (1928), pp. 141-142 (emphases in the original).

31 ■ In addition to Baranyai, who incidentally, being a public official, wrote his article under a pseudonym (Lőrinc Szegedy), Gábor Szamosvölgyi was also critical of some of Czakó's assertions (see Szamosvölgyi, 1928). It is not hard to recognise behind this pseudonym Baron Gábor Apor, the newly appointed head of the Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

orist and Minister of Culture under the short-lived regime of Béla Kun) contended that "the League of Nations is a body the frail structure and politically biased mentality of which render it impossible to find a remedy for the enormous grievances that have befallen us." Czakó cited Prime Minister István Bethlen's view according to which "the Council of the League of Nations acquired unsurpassable perfection in justifying of resolutions of a delaying nature." Amplifying these attacks, Czakó heaped insults on the League, referring to it as "the gloom of Geneva," "a misshapen monstrosity," "a hall of intellectual hurdy-gurdies," "a witless Pharisee botch-up," and "a Pantheon of humanity's greatest lies."[32]

Nonetheless, the Hungarian government was represented at the League throughout at a high level by outstanding individuals and did its best to participate in the work of the international forum. Alongside Bethlen, Teleki and Apponyi, the Hungarian foreign minister also went regularly to Geneva when the Council and the assembly were in session, along with numerous economic and military experts, and high-ranking, recognized diplomats were always at the head of the permanent Representation. The government's efforts to get larger numbers of Hungarians within the League's apparatus were unsuccessful, however (although these officials in principle were not allowed to represent their own country and were obliged to work "in an international spirit," all members states strove to have as many of their citizens as possible on the League's staff). Usually there were only two or three Hungarians on the lists of personnel, with one or two assistants, and they would only be in service for a few weeks or months. Among them, Pál Makay and Elemér Radasics filled the most important posts. The former was a financial administrator in the Internal Control Office of the Permanent Secretariat, the latter worked in the Communications and Transit Section. It would be a mistake to think that this disproportionality was directed against Hungary. Rather, those who spoke one of the League's two official languages and/or were citizens of one of the states paying larger fees were overrepresented, while the losers and smaller countries were given fewer positions than might have been expected. Thus, in 1930, for instance, of the League's 630 employees (office clerks and officials), 183 were Swiss, 142 were British, and 104 were French, whereas there were only 20 Germans, 12 Poles, 6 Czechoslovaks, 6 Yugoslavs, 6 Austrians, 3 Hungarians, 3 Romanians, and one Bulgarian.

As far as territorial revision was concerned, the Bethlen government for a long time shied away from putting the question before the League without appropriate political preparations. Hungarian diplomats did note

32 ■ Czakó (1928), pp. 302-303.

that they considered the dismemberment of historical Hungary under the Treaty of Trianon unjust and ultimately threatening to peace. They thereby put themselves in an especially awkward position when in August 1928 the Kellogg-Briand pact was signed, according to which the signatory states (including Germany, France, the UK and the USA) promised not to use war to resolve disputes or conflicts of any nature. Hungarian diplomats perceived that "it was not possible to make a pro-war protest by refusing to sign [the pact] at a time when states were making a demonstration for peace by signing it." The government therefore appended a separate declaration to the document registering Hungary's acceptance of the pact in which it asserted that the elimination of war from international life would only be successful "if another effective method were found for the resolution of complications arising from unjust or unnatural situations," as Lajos Walko, Hungary's Minister of Foreign affairs, wrote in his account of the events to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Upper House of Hungary's National Assembly on October 17th, 1928.[33]

In the New Year's address given to the Unity Party on January 15th, 1929 Bethlen continued to reply to the criticisms he faced for not having raised the question of revision by insisting that until the international constellation had changed he was not willing "to make this nation a scandal to the world merely to please overzealous patriots."[34] One month later, in response to a question in the Assembly, he said that it was only permissible to bring the Hungarian question up in the League of Nations if the forum had been properly prepared.[35] However, in September an unexpected opportunity arose when Wu Chaoshu, Minister of the Republic of China to the United States, pushed to make Article 19 of the Covenant more effective. He thereby sought to change old contracts that were paralysing Chinese commerce. One of the members of the Hungarian delegation, General Gábor Tánczos, however immediately as the relevance of this gesture from the perspective of the Treaty of Trianon and declared: "it was precisely Article 19 of the Covenant that had given the moral foundation of our accession to the League of Nations; Article 19 was an indispensable complement to the Covenant."[36]

According to unpublished memoirs by Pál Hevesy, the Hungarian

33 ■ Walko's instructions to the Representation in Geneva (October 19th, 1928) (MOL, 1905/1928 K 107, Appendix 69, 76/1, Nos.1-2).

34 ■ Bethlen (1933) vol 2, p 215.

35 ■ Hegedüs (1929), p. 277.

36 ■ Tánczos cites his speech in Committee No.1 of the Assembly: László Gajzágó's report to Walko (September 1929). MOL, K 107, 23. 21/c/1, unnumbered. Cf. Nagy (1930), p. 132.

resident minister to Geneva, in early 1926 Horthy asked him whether "it would be possible to achieve revision of the peace treaty via the League of Nations." Hevesy did not think it would, but he contended that it might be possible win over the League's cooperation in expediting a long-term, peaceful arrangement. He imagined that in the parts of the country that had been annexed the sovereignty of the successor states might be suspended for ten years, with foreign affairs being entrusted to an elected committee of the League, after which the matter of the destiny or autonomy of the territories might be decided by referendum.[37] Five years layer Hevesy renewed that proposal under the title "Revision and Shared Customs Territory." Taking into account the problems that had been caused in the meantime by the global financial crash, he had added a plan to create a shared preferential customs system. The notion had its adherents, but neither Hungarian nor foreign diplomatic circles embraced it, so it quickly fizzled out.[38]

In the end, the question of changes to the borders of Hungary was never part of the agenda of any of the bodies of the League of Nations, although Hungarian delegates did sometimes bring it up. No appreciable improvement was achieved on the matter of Hungarian minority rights either. In the League's Assembly on three occasions (1924, 1925, 1930) Apponyi put forward the idea of reforming the procedure for conducting petitions. He sought greater transparency and public scrutiny in the matter of judging petitions, and furthermore hoped to make discussion of complaints and regular hearings for plaintiffs mandatory for the Council. He also sought the involvement of the Permanent Court of International Justice, but the political will to make the proposals a reality was lacking (after Apponyi's first speech on September 9th, 1924, Paul Hymans, the Belgian chairman of the Council, declared explicitly that the Council was not able to accept the proposals because by doing so it would be capitulating to a Hungarian politician).[39] By the late 1930s

37 ■ OSzKK, Fol. Hung. 3283, 571. Clearly, the notion for the plan had been given by the example of the Saarland. In 1920 the region had been placed for 15 years under the administration of the League of Nations, but it belonged to France from the point of view of customs, and France was allowed to exploit the yields of its mines. After the 15 years had passed a referendum was to decide where the territory belonged. The viability of the plan was vitiated by the fact that whereas a population of altogether only 750,000 lived in the 2,600 sq. km. of the Saarland, the sum of the territories annexed from Hungary amounted to 190,000 sq. km. and its population was in excess of 11 million. Its ethnic structure had also undergone a major transformation. The proportion of Hungarian speakers had dropped considerably due to mass emigration and the influx of other nationalities.

38 ■ Hevesy's letter of February 16th, 1941 to Count Sándor Khuen-Hédervàry, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs: see MOL, K 64, 468, 68. 1931, unnumbered. pp. 10-15. On Hevesy's idea, see Ormos (1969), pp. 55-56; Pritz (1982), p. 18.

39 ■ Baranyai's letter to Khuen-Hédervàry, head of the Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (draft dated 13 October 1924: MOL, K 107, 12. 16/2, No. 924/1924.

the League of Nations' system for protecting the rights of ethnic minorities had become dysfunctional, with petitions by minorities increasingly becoming tools for political skirmishing between states, while the minorities themselves were left without legal or political protection.

Apponyi continued to remain an apostle of reform. On January 28th, 1933, he delivered a speech in Vienna to the Austrian Völkerbund about the crisis in the League of Nations (at the time nobody could have known that this was to be his last speech; he died ten days later in Geneva). Apponyi gave voice not so much to his expectations as his hopes when he pointed out that the most important lesson of the notion of a league of nations was that "the principle and spirit of mutual cooperation takes the place of struggle for precedence." Under the circumstances, he regarded the formation of the League as premature, since "it had been founded at a time when the mentality with which it should have been imbued had not yet matured; when precisely the opposite mode of thinking, the imperialistic mentality, atavistically strengthened and intensified in the dreadful paroxysms of world war almost into a delirium, had likewise staged orgies." The forces of world politics "have created the form before humanity has become capable of giving it appropriate intellectual content." In order for this to happen, the League would have to be strengthened and reformed, and this would be the duty of the Assembly. The faults would be addressed, Apponyi believed, and "with time they would completely disappear. I repeat: I believe in the League of Nations. Not in its present form, but in the form it will someday take."[40] The hopes that he pinned on evolution, however, were never realised. The League's framework became ever more rigid, and this continued to hamper the realization of any of Hungary's foreign policy interests.

Much as Hungarian diplomats were able to gain little ground in the areas of revision and protection of minority rights, in the matter of disarmament (and more specifically, proportionality in disarmament) they were similarly unable to achieve any noteworthy successes. After five years of study, the League of Nations' Preparatory Commission scheduled a Disarmament Conference for February 1932 in Geneva. The Hungarian stance was clear: every state should have the right to maintain an armed force necessary in order to safeguard its own security. Its delegation therefore decided that "it was not going to enter into any arrangement that did not meet the need for equality of rights, not just in theory but in practice," as Walko reported to the Committee for Foreign Affairs of

40 ■ Apponyi (1933), pp. 242-252 (the quotes are taken from p.242, 29 and 252, respectively.
41 ■ For Walko's instructions of August 14th, 1932 to the Hungarian Representation in Geneva) (copy), see: MOL, K 107, 69, 76/1. unnumbered. (1915/pol.-1932) Appendix.

Hungary's Upper House in August 1932. This attitude won Hungary a place alongside the defeated powers and Italy.[41] Due to the sharp divergence in the interests of the participants, the talks soon foundered. Once Japan and Germany had withdrawn, the Conference had essentially lost its purpose, and it finally wound up its work, having failed to achieve anything substantial, in July 1934. Two years later, on October 29th, 1936, in a report to the Upper House the new Foreign Minister, Kálmán Kánya, was pessimistic in his pronouncement about the work of the expert panel that was dealing with disarmament questions. According to Kánya, "given our disarmed position, there is in practice no sense in our engaging in sham negotiations in which as a negotiating party we sit opposite states that are already heavily armed, and the rearming of which, in large part, is being vigorously continued even as we speak."[42] The Hungarian government therefore continued to pursue the programme of rearmament that had begun in 1928, without any international authorisation, but also without any substantial interference.

By then Hungary's policy in the League of Nations was strongly influenced by the logic of its alliances. This had already become evident during the debate regarding the League of Nations' sanctions following the Italian aggression against Abyssinia. Rome's allies, Albania, Austria and Hungary, were the only countries that abstained from taking measures to penalize Italy. As László Velics, the Hungarian legate to Berne and Geneva (and also a member of the delegation to the League's General Assembly) put it: "neither our friendship with Italy, nor the country's economic situation, which is closely aligned to the Italian market through our agreements with Rome, nor even Hungary's views regarding the proper tasks of the League of Nations in principle allow it to take any part in anti-Italian actions."[43]

When Benito Mussolini's Italy left the League of Nations in December 1937, four years after Hitler's Germany had withdrawn, the question was not if but rather when Hungary would follow suit. The moment came on April 11th, 1939, in the wake of the first Hungarian successes in border revision, when Germany and Italy arbitrated in Hungary's dispute with Czechoslovakia (First Vienna Award) in November 1938 and then, on March 15th, 1939, Hungarian army units began to occupy Carpathian Ruthenia. Two days later, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Count István Csáky made a statement to a combined sitting of the Committee for Foreign Affairs of Hungary's two Houses of Parliament. He said that the

42 ■ For Kánya's instructions of 31 October i936 to the Hungarian Representation in Geneva (copy), see: MOL, K 107, 69, 76/1. unnumbered (3521/pol.-1936) Appendix.
43 ■ 'League of Nations Review,' Külügyi Szemle [Review of Foreign Affairs], 1936, January, p. 71.

League of Nations had not lived up to the hopes Hungary had pinned on it. Nor could it have done so, as it had been established in the 1920s "in the service of the cult of the *status quo*," while in the 1930s it had been used "for the purposes of one-sided propaganda pursued in the interests of so-called anti-Fascist and anti-Nazi ideology." Thus, Csáky argued, it had not been able to fulfil its goals. It was not capable of guaranteeing the security of little nations and effectuating treaties to protect ethnic minorities. "On the contrary, the entire apparatus of the League of Nations... had displayed astonishing collusion in the interests of having the minorities question vanish into thin air." Proportionate disarmament had also not been achieved, which had been no surprise, as the defeated states had not been granted appropriate representation in the bodies of the League of Nations. While the League had looked after the *status quo* in the sense of Article 10 of the Covenant, it had not been mindful of Article 19, which offered the possibility of rational and equitable revision. "Through its own fault the Genevan institution is damned to total impotence with regard to upholding world peace and influencing world-shaking events, and it is now farther than ever from accomplishing its actual goal," the minister closed his argument. He did note, however, that Hungary would continue to take part in committees of a non-political character, as well as in the work of the Permanent Court of International Justice and the International Labour Organisation.[44]

Thus in the end, in the case of Hungary the League's intransigence as an organization that ultimately served to defend the status quo as established in the Paris peace treaties made it little more than a tool of the victorious states and their allies. Hungarian diplomats represented what might seem a voice of dissent, but also could be perceived as a call for more genuine forms of cooperation that would have been better suited to address the interests of the defeated powers and thereby might better have alleviated tensions that were sources of instability throughout the interwar period. Alas their efforts did little to impress upon the rest of the international community the long-term implications of Hungary's grievances for all of the countries of the region, a lesson that would have been well-learned on the brink of a war in which Nazi Germany was easily able to exploit the conflicts that set the nations of Central Europe against one another. ❧

44 ■ For Csáky's instructions of April 15th, 1939 to the Hungarian Representation in Geneva, see: MOL, K 107, 69, 76/1. unnumbered (2018/pol.-1939.) Appendix. The quotes are taken from p. 3 and 9.

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English Title

Noémi Szécsi:
FINNO-UGRIAN VAMPIRE

"Reader, do not doubt the truth of my words, for the tale I tell is a lie from beginning to end. It is often said that the only way to tell the truth is through telling lies. But in my view reality is wholly devoid of interest. Yet every word of this tale is true."

Translator: Peter Sherwood

A. Ross Johnson and Eugene R. Parta

War Broadcasting: Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. A Collection of Studies and Documents

(Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2010)

Radio Free Europe (RFE) has had an especially potent impact on Romania, where jamming stopped and more people tuned in regularly to hear their beloved anchorman Noel Bernard than in other East European "captive nations," despite a shortage of radio receivers. Romanians expressed their love affair with RFE in anecdotes. According to one told by Nestor Ratesh: Ceauşescu decided one day to visit a remote village. The villagers didn't seem to recognize him, so he asked them if they knew who he was. "Nope," they said. "But surely you know me," Ceauşescu remonstrated. "I am the one who speaks to you often. Here in your village you can hear me on the radio." "Good gracious! Of course we know you! Welcome to our village, Mr. Noel Bernard." (217) Ratesh, former director of RFE's Romanian Service, along with other radio veterans and scholars, presented their research at a conference at Stanford University's Hoover Institution in October 2004. *Cold War Broadcasting: Impact on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*, edited by former RFE/RL officials A. Ross Johnson and R. Eugene Parta, is the published result. The volume consists of three essays detailing the goals and history of Voice of America (VOA), RFE, and Radio Liberty; four essays about jamming procedures and audiences in Bloc countries; six essays about Western radios' impact on Eastern Europe; and three essays about the radios' impact within the former Soviet Union. The appendix contains fifty-one archival documents: seventeen from Russia, thirteen from Poland, eleven from Bulgaria, four from the Czech Republic, four from Hungary, and one each from Romania and former East Germany, respectively. "Lacking until now," the editors wrote, "are studies of the impact of Western Cold War broadcasting, on both societies and Communist regimes, that draw on archival material from the other side of the former Iron Curtain" (xi). In truth, this volume contains more information about communist

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regimes' perceptions and countermeasures against Western broadcasting, than it does about the responses of the *population* as a statistical whole. We can now document the fact that the communist leaderships assiduously monitored the broadcasts of Western radios such as VOA, RFE, Radio Liberty (RL), the BBC, Deutsche Welle, and others. According to Vladimir Tolz and Julie Corwin, Stalin was informed of radio broadcasts, both in the form of "Special Private Letters," or OZP [*Osobye zakrytye pisma*] and as part of TASS Information packets (278). According to István Rév, director of the Open Society Archives in Budapest, the Hungarian News Agency (MTI) had a secret monitoring department located in Gödöllő, outside Budapest, where the reception was better. It regularly transcribed broadcasts of a host of foreign radios as late as 1995, distributing "Daily Confidential Information Bulletins" to party elites (246). Rév even believes the party leaders were "far better informed about the programs of the RFE than the most devoted subversive, anti-Communist private listeners" (248). The Ministry of the Interior ardently transcribed the full broadcasts based on letters sent to the radios by Hungarian listeners. These helped authorities monitor public opinion to some extent, according to Rév. In chapter thirteen Jordan Baev explains that as early as 1948, the special "Radio Intelligence and Radio Counterintelligence" unit in the Bulgarian State Security Directorate began "Rositsa," a secret operation to collate "imperialist radio propaganda against Bulgaria" (260). Romanian leader Gheorghiu-Dej read and annotated the transcribed RFE broadcasts of the late 1950s and early 1960s (211). Sometimes regime leaders used the radios to their advantage. Professor Jane Leftowich Curry, who interviewed Polish leader Wojciech Jaruzelski, found that the latter used RFE broadcasts on the Katyn Massacre to force the Soviets to admit their guilt (157). Ceauşescu's Securitate, on the other hand, went to extra lengths to discredit RFE by forging letters containing false or slanderous information, signing them with the names of dead people. Romanian agents hoped the letters would be read on the air and thus provoke libel suits and damage RFE's credibility, according to Ratesh (211). In addition to transcribing broadcasts and trying to discredit the radios, communist authorities jammed the radios continuously, spending more than $800 million annually, which was more than the global budgets of VOA, RFE/RL, and the BBC combined, according to Alan Heil, a former VOA deputy director (27). It should be pointed out that communist authorities' efforts to jam Western broadcasts do not in themselves prove that citizens were tuning in en masse, any more than large U.S. cable providers' longtime refusal to carry Al Jazeera English (AJE) signifies that massive numbers of Americans want to watch it. Soviet jamming efforts only reveal the anxiety authorities felt about the possible effects of Western broadcasts. Since jamming was dependent on the broadcasters' choice of frequency, however, the jammers were usually on the defensive. As George Woodard explains, jamming was also less

effective at certain times of day. Americans soon learned to circumvent Soviet jammers with techniques such as "simulcasting," i.e. broadcasting on several frequencies simultaneously (59).

Research by Amir Weiner and Vladimir Tolz further confirms what Western analysts suspected earlier: that communist authorities were most worried about the Western borders of the USSR, where citizens were especially susceptible to Western broadcasting. While Western radios did not advocate "direct action," they evoked memories among the Poles of Ukraine's Lviv oblast', Hungarians of Transcarpathian Ukraine, and citizens of the Baltic States of "unsolved issues of postwar border demarcation" and former sovereignty (288, 299-300, 305, 317). Both Weiner and Tolz detect in archival documents an expectation prevalent among these citizens—who viewed the Soviets as recent occupiers—of a "chain reaction" or imminent world war that would dislodge the Soviets and liberate their territories (289, 304).

Measuring the radios' impact on the mass populations within the Soviet Bloc is problematic, however. As Rév explains, the main method by which Western researchers could learn in the 1960s and 1970s about the radios' impact on target audiences was by reading letters from listeners and by interviewing travelers from the Bloc countries: recent immigrants, unsuspecting tourists, volunteer helpers, and undercover agents (240). This skewed the earlier studies toward urban, educated, middle-aged males who were most likely Communist party members (68-9). The difficulty for Soviet sociologists, on the other hand—as Elena Bashkirova notes—was in obtaining honest answers from Soviet citizens who responded to their surveys, since listening to foreign radios was illegal and viewed as an anti-Soviet activity (104). Nevertheless, the research findings of both Western and Soviet analysts concur, namely that younger, better educated people tended to listen the most often, that more people listened in the 1960s and 1970s than in the 1950s, that they listened to obtain objective news and for enjoyment, and that VOA was more often listened to than RFE/RL because it was less jammed (109-110).

Data constraints remain, despite the opened archives. We lack in-depth public opinion polls of Bloc country citizens over intervals, beginning in the 1950s, to show how listening to Western radios actually *changed* their world views. As Weiner observes, Soviet archival documents are usually police reports complaining about isolated "troublemakers"; they were not public opinion surveys (299). Even if they had the resources, communist authorities probably lacked incentive to conduct such studies about their citizens' listening habits. Such polls would only give more attention to the abhorred "foreign voices," which they hoped would cease. As Ratesh informs readers, the Ceauşescu regime in particular never conducted such surveys; it simply hired Carlos the Jackal to bomb the RFE/RL headquarters in Munich (1981), and murder key RFE anchors, hoping to intimidate future ones (214). Three consecutive directors of

RFE's Romanian Service mysteriously died of cancer in less than seven years (e.g. Noel Bernard in 1981, Vlad Georgescu in 1988, and Emil Georgescu in 1985), and Ratesh himself received a death threat (218, 220, 225-6). Founded in 1942, the goal of Voice of America (VOA) was primarily to reflect the United States to the world, whereas Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, established in 1949 and 1953 respectively, aimed to "keep alive the hope for freedom," serving as surrogate radios for the citizens within Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, whose own media was heavily censored (4, 26). However, it is impossible to speculate that the radios' messages always "imparted hope" to all listeners, given the absence of candid, comprehensive public opinion surveys during the high Cold War years. Some of RFE/RL's imaginative programs praised living standards in the West and explained the latest medicines available there for diseases still considered incurable within the Soviet bloc. For the average listener, with no prospects for emigrating to the West, and with no advanced knowledge that the communist empire would implode in 1989-1991, could understandably become *depressed*, not hopeful, by listening to such broadcasts.

To be sure, VOA and RFE/RL achieved a lot, and the contributors proudly enumerate the radios' successes. Despite harsh anti-communist rhetoric in the beginning, mainly due to McCarthy's charges of being soft on communism, the radios later formulated guidelines for more objective, professional reporting. Policy rifts were overcome between Polish émigrés in New York and Munich over whether to exploit Polish defector Światło's revelations, between post-World War II Russian nationalist émigrés and later Jewish refusenik émigrés in the 1970s, and between CIA officials and U.S. diplomats. According to Weiner, VOA "beat the Soviets to the punch" in some regions by airing its Russian-language evening news broadcasts half-an-hour before the Soviet "Latest News" (p. 310). Western radios widely publicized issues like the Soviet break with Tito's Yugoslavia, Stalin's death, the replacement of Mátyás Rákosi by Imre Nagy, the Światło affair, and Khrushchev's reconciliation with Tito. As Weiner reveals, Western Ukrainians wondered why the Secret Speech had not been published in 1956 in their own newspapers. They were also surprised to hear from the radios that Khrushchev had not resigned due to old age, but instead was ousted (301, 311). They first learned of Khrushchev's visit to the United States, the "shoe incident" at the UN, and the construction of the Berlin Wall from VOA and Radio Liberty. Citizens' letters to the Central Committee, the State radio committee, and to propagandists also "revealed a population informed by Western broadcasts" (309). By 1953, according to Paul Henze, RFE "became a key contributor to the U.S. government's intelligence" database on Eastern Europe, without even resorting to clandestine methods (10). To enhance credibility, VOA and RFE/RL broadcast Nobel laureate Linus Pauling's denunciations of U.S. nuclear testing in 1962, as well as

negative aspects of the Vietnam War, Watergate, and Nixon's resignation, which convinced Soviet dissidents like Lyudmila Alexeyeva that the United States was truly a free country (21, 35, 48). Western broadcasts often served as Soviet and East European citizens' sole source of unbiased news during such crises as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, martial law to counter the Polish Solidarity movement, the downing of the Korean airliner in 1983, the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, the East European revolutions of 1989, and the August 1991 putsch attempt.

A triumphalist tone pervades some of the essays in this volume, to the effect: the West won the Cold War, and Western radios played a key role in the Soviet empire's collapse. Other factors, of course, contributed to the collapse (e.g. Gorbachev's decision not to use force to retain East European satellites, the communist empire's internal weaknesses, the European nuclear freeze movement, and human rights movements within the Soviet bloc). Political conditions color academic reports. If the communist empire were still intact, the tone of studies about the impact of the Western radios might be more sober. As revealed in documents from Austrian archives (not included in this volume), some citizens in the 1950s and early 1960s were irritated by RFE's broadcasts, fearful that the Soviets, who were accusing Austria of violating its oath of neutrality, might reoccupy eastern Austria. Incidentally, although the chapters by Henze, Rév, Weiner, and Heil touch on the subject, there are no documents in the book's appendix about the Western radios' role in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. This is rather surprising, given the editor A. Ross Johnson's earlier study, ambitiously titled "Setting the Record Straight: Role of Radio Free Europe in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956" (2006). In this study, as Herbert A. Friedman has noted, Johnson ends up making the same arguments of those he supposedly debunks. Despite RFE's strict policy guidelines to avoid inciting a revolution and taking sides, Johnson concedes that there were "many derogatory and vituperative RFE Hungarian broadcasts about Imre Nagy" at the height of the revolution.[1] He reiterates what others wrote earlier, namely that "RFE" (as others in the West) labored under the misconception spread by Communist Party chief Ernő Gerő that Nagy shared responsibility for the initial

1 ■ See Herbert A. Friedman, "Free Europe Press Cold War Leaflets," http://www.psywarrior.com/RadioFreeEurope.html. Also, A. Ross Johnson, "Setting the Record Straight," Woodrow Wilson Center Working Paper, 2006. http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/happ.OP-3.pdf. Published in Hungarian as "A Szabad Európa Rádió szerepe az 1956-os magyar forradalomban," AETAS, vol. 22, no. 2 (2007). http://epa.oszk.hu/00800/00861/00037/pdf/147-173.pdf.

2 ■ Documents about RFE's role in the revolution can be found in the papers of the RFE/RL Research Institute located in Budapest's Open Society Archive, as well as in the RFE/RL Broadcast and Corporate Archives, located at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. See also Csaba Békés, Malcolm Byrne, and János Rainer, The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: a History in Documents (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2002), as well as selected documents on the OSA archive website, http://www.osaarchivum.org/digitalarchive/hoover/index.html.

decision to 'request' Soviet military assistance against the rebels and impose martial law.[2] Certainly, RFE planners learned key lessons from the tragic events in 1956, and became more circumspect thereafter.

In short, *Cold War Broadcasting* is a vital research tool, and will no doubt pave the way for further archive-based studies about the Western radios' impact on the populations behind the Iron Curtain. It should be read in conjunction with books by Richard H. Cummings (*Cold War Radio*, 2009); R. Eugene Parta (*Discovering the Hidden Listener*, 2007); Arch Puddington (*Broadcasting Freedom*, 2000); Gene Sosin (*Sparks of Liberty*, 1999); and Michael Nelson (*War of the Black Heavens*, 1997). ❧

English Title

László Krasznahorkai:
SEIOBO THERE BELOW
[Paperback]

The most recent novel from "the contemporary Hungarian master of apocalypse who inspires comparison with Gogol and Melville." (Susan Sontag)

"I put down my crown, and in earthly form – yet not concealing the contours of my face – I descend among them, to seek out the prince of Chu, King Mu, for I was constrained to leave the infinite planes of Heaven, the Empire of Radiant Light; compelled to leave that realm, where form shines, abundant and emanating, and thus all is replenished with nothingness, I had to make my descent below yet and yet again, for I had to flee the purity of Heaven, I must step across into a moment, for nothing ever lasts longer...."

Translator: Ottilie Mulzet

Johanna Granville

Benziger, Karl P. Imre Nagy. Martyr of the Nation: Contested History, Legitimacy, and Popular Memory in Hungary.

New York: Lexington Books, 2008 (2010 paperback). Pp. 201.

"Nothing fixes a thing so intensely in the memory as the wish to forget it," the French Renaissance writer Michel de Montaigne wrote. The 1956 Hungarian revolution and murder of Imre Nagy ranks high on the list of historical world events that has remained, throughout the Cold War period, the object of intense, state-sponsored forgetting. As Karl Benziger, a professor of history at Rhode Island College, points out in *Imre Nagy. Martyr of the Nation*, the "counterrevolution" was not even mentioned in Hungarian history textbooks until 1961 (87). Many textbooks simply stopped with the end of World War II in 1945. Because students could be expelled from school and doomed to lifelong manual labor for saying or writing anything that threatened the communist regime, many parents sought to protect their children by refusing to speak about 1956 to them (91). Although already unmarked, the graves of the slain Hungarian prime minister Imre Nagy and his supporters Miklos Gimes, Géza Losonczy, Pál Maleter, and József Szilágyi in Plot 301 were regularly plowed over. "On All Souls Day [Halottak napja, or day of the dead], June 16, March 15, and October 23, the guards wouldn't let you anywhere near the plot," said Imre Mécs, one of the founding members of the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ) who had been imprisoned after the revolution (89). Ironically, "the state's negative interpretation of the Revolution and its official acts of prohibition," Benziger writes, actually "helped sustain the Revolution's memory in both acts of passive acceptance and passive resistance to the state's interpretation." (89) Thus, although a poll taken in 1988 showed that over fifty percent of Hungarians in Budapest construed the revolution as a "counterrevolution," just one year later, on June 16, 1989, thousands of Hungarians flocked to the respectful reburial of Nagy and his

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comrades in Budapest's Heroes Square (91).

Clearly, the post-invasion regimes' efforts during the Cold War to erase memory had failed. But how does one proceed to write the new, more accurate, history for future generations? How does one treat controversial figures like Nagy, especially when disparate political parties governing the country in coalition cannot agree among themselves whether or not Nagy was a worthy hero who fit their political platforms?

Originally published in hard cover form in 2008, Benziger's book addresses these and other questions. The book is a welcome addition to the growing body of literature about the processes by which former communist countries have grappled with their pasts.

The book is composed of nine concise chapters. In chapter one, the author discusses the politics of commemoration and the role of kegyelet (piety, or "duty towards the dead") in Hungarian history (7). Chapter two is devoted to the ceremonial reburial of Nagy on June 16, 1989. In chapter three, entitled "An Unlikely Hero," Benziger explains the difficulties the former communist party (renamed the Hungarian Socialist Party or MSZP), as well as center and right parties – such the Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ) and the Christian Democrats (KDNP) – had in wholeheartedly embracing Nagy as their hero. Chapter four outlines Nagy's actions during the revolution, characterizing him as initially a hesitant revolutionary who in the end made a "fatal gamble." Chapter five covers the Kádár regime's process of "demobilizing" the revolution and the various coping methods of history teachers and professors. In chapters six and seven the author fast-forwards to the 1980s and 1990s again, outlining the economic decline leading to the resignation of János Kádár and the political debates that led both to the ceremonial reburial of Nagy and to the Imre Nagy memorial bill of June 1996. Chapter eight analyzes how new textbooks used in high schools in recent years cover the subject of the 1956 revolution. Finally, in chapter nine ("Epilogue"), Benziger analyzes the fiftieth anniversary demonstrations in September-October 2006, which "betrayed deep divisions within the polity rather than a sense of national solidarity" (152).

Chapter eight is one of the more interesting chapters in the book. Here Benziger shares his findings from his interviews of high school teachers in Budapest, Debrecen, and Szeged in 1998. The Kádár era textbooks had constructed a counter-narrative with Nagy as the key villain. Benziger quotes one teacher who confessed that it was very hard for teachers to "empty their heads overnight" (p. 140). Many teachers were confused by the events in 1989 and had to learn about the 1956 revolution alongside their students (141). Benziger generally finds that textbooks written after 1989 generally portray 1956 as a noble "war of independence" and Nagy as a national hero (127).

In contrast to the textbooks, there was little consensus about Nagy among the feuding political parties. It is true, as Benziger points out, the ceremonial reburial of Nagy in June 1989 did temporarily unite the politi-

cal opposition groups. As early as 1986, opposition figures like Mécs had asserted their right to kegyelet by attempting to light a candle and lay flowers at Plot 301 (103). Guards prevented Mécs, and he was later fired from his job. Similarly, communist authorities confiscated the film and notebooks of BBC journalists and crew filming Plot 301 for the documentary "Cry Hungary" on June 16, 1986 (103). The turning point leading to the reburial was the publicized statement on January 28, 1989 by Imre Pozsgay, the reform-minded Central Committee member, namely that 1956 had been a popular uprising. The Historical Justice Committee composed of dissidents and the victims' families then demanded a proper burial for Nagy. Their logic was: if 1956 had not been a counterrevolution, then Nagy had not been an anti-Soviet, counterrevolutionary leader and should be honored (99). All opposition members had attended, except Károly Grósz, then the General Secretary of the communist party after Kadar's resignation.

Soon thereafter, however, in a process similar to those in other former bloc countries, once the common enemy was eliminated, unity among the opposition parties evaporated and they fought amongst themselves. (The communist party lost its monopoly in a historic session of Parliament on October 16–20, 1989 and the country was renamed the Republic of Hungary.) It was no longer enough to be "anti-communist"; one had to define one's proactive platform for reform.

As the author explains, the idea itself of the Hungarian revolution and the symbol of Imre Nagy initially served all the opposing parties in 1989 as a "political lever" (102, 118). However, Imre Nagy's biography later put each of the parties – including the new socialist, or former communist, party – in a quandary. West-leaning, reformist parties liked Nagy for his earlier ideas about land reform; his withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact; his refusal to compromise with the quizling Kádár regime; and his espousal of the Bandung principles of national sovereignty and external non-interference. On the other hand, they found it difficult to downplay Nagy's role in establishing the Hungarian communist party and police state in the first place; his belief in pluralism within a one-party socialist system, rather than in a full democratic, capitalist system; and his initial hesitation during the revolutionary events in 1956 (166). Another unpalatable issue – which the author barely mentions – is Nagy's probable collaboration with the NKVD in Moscow during the 1930s.

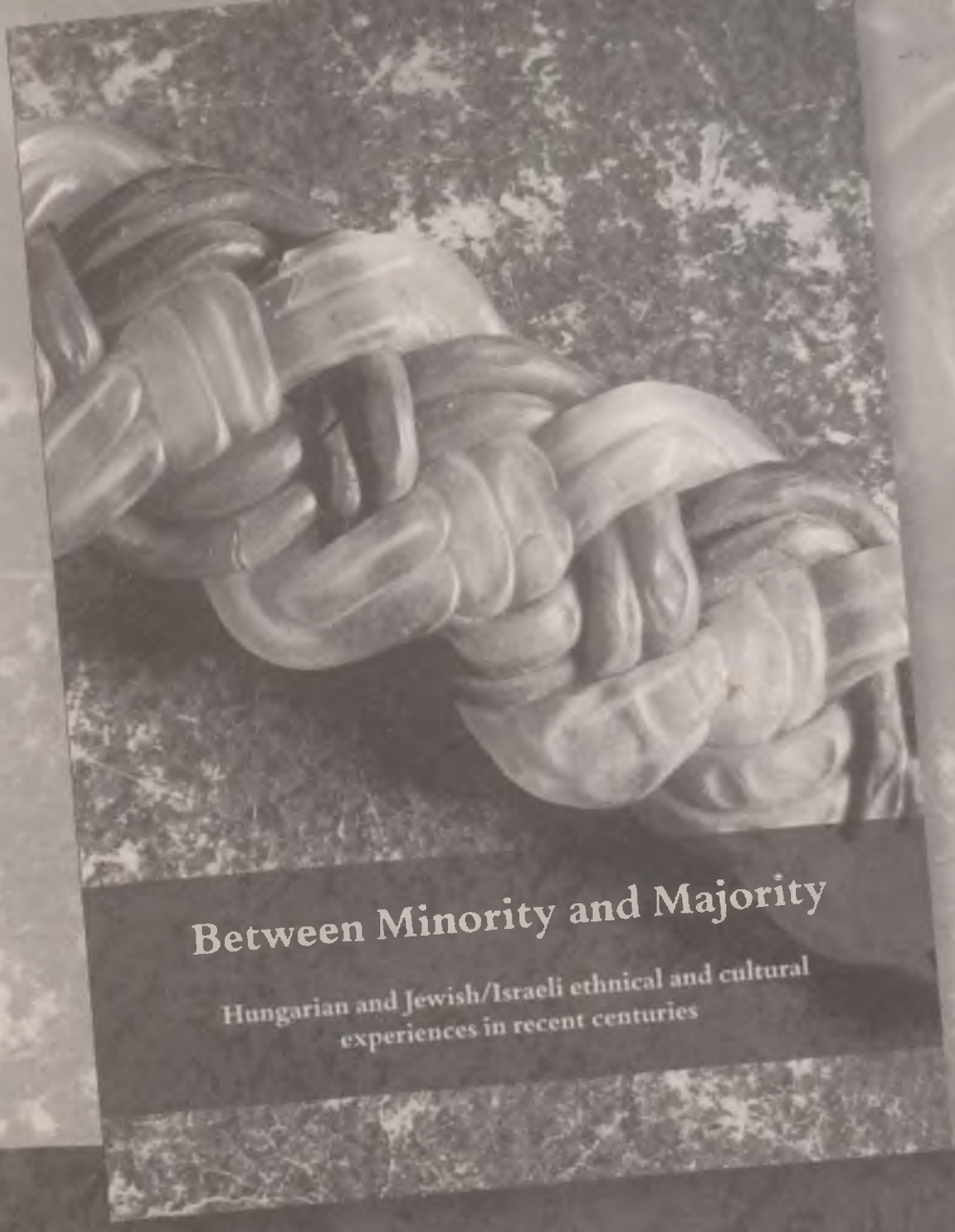
Although it was the socialist party that proposed and passed a memorial bill on June 26, 1996, declaring Nagy to be a national martyr, the socialists and former communists also found Nagy unpalatable (120). After all, Nagy had gone over to the side of the revolutionaries in 1956. He had declared Hungarian sovereignty and neutrality, had withdrawn from the Warsaw Pact, and had appealed to the West for aid. Moreover, the Hungarian communists had executed Nagy and buried him in an unmarked grave. How could they now embrace him as a martyr?

Opposing parties such as the Free Democrats and individuals like

Jenő Fónay of the Political Prisoners Society opposed the Nagy memorial bill, averring that such a "compromise" represented further "surrender of the goals of the Revolution" (120-121). Ten years later, on the fiftieth anniversary of the revolution, in September and October, 1956, conflicts arose again between the Socialists and FIDESZ coalitions. After a secret tape recording revealed that Socialist Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány had lied about the state of the economy, FIDESZ boycotted the official government commemorations (151).

No book is flawless. Given Nagy's status as national martyr, Benziger appears rather timid in his treatment of the issue of Nagy's collaboration with the NKVD in the 1930s (34, 50). Acknowledgement, at least, of the KGB archival documents released in 1989 (intended, of course, to discredit Nagy) and some objective analysis of them, drawing on the thoughtful analysis of scholars like János Rainer and Charles Gati, would be better than simply citing Hungarian historian István Rév, who tends to downplay their significance, especially since Rév himself stated in his book *Retroactive Justice* (2005, 15) that some of the KGB documents were, indeed, original. Whether "willful denunciations" or not, Nagy's willingness even to hand over to the NKVD in April 1939 a list of 150 of his personal acquaintances is itself a form of collaboration with Soviet security agents. Moreover, Benziger provides useful background sketches of the parties in "Appendix C," but this information probably should have been incorporated in chapter seven to help readers make sense of the numerous acronyms. The non-chronological sequence of chapters could also confuse readers.

Nevertheless, *Imre Nagy. Martyr of the Nation* is well worth reading, and encourages reflection on the evolution of Hungarian historiography. Apart from Rév's abovementioned book and János Rainer's excellent studies of Imre Nagy, other stimulating studies on history and memory include Katherine Verdery's *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial And Postsocialist Change* (1999); Maria Bucur's and Nancy Wingfield's *Staging the Past: the Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present* (2001); and Terry Cox's *Challenging Communism in Eastern Europe: 1956 and Its Legacy* (2008). ❧



Between Minority and Majority: Hungarian and Jewish/Israeli Ethnical and Cultural Experiences in Recent Centuries Hungarian-Israeli Conference Historians, a book based on the proceedings of a conference held in 2011 by the Balassi Institute in cooperation with historians from Hungary and Israel, contains essays on questions regarding the history of the Hungarian and Jewish diaspora and the shifting meanings of notions of Hungarian and Jewish identity. It can be purchased or ordered at all major bookstores in Hungary and from distributors online.

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Although Bossanyi was for most of his life an exile, his Hungarian roots were important to him, and from that point of view the early chapters of the book are particularly interesting.

The Hungarian countryside, to which he returned for extended journeys in the 1920s, was a source of inspiration for his paintings, in which he depicted a kind of Arcadia where men and animals live together in an unspoilt world.

He wrote from Hungary in 1920 "it is wonderful here – real country life. At least, no one here is concerned with art at all. It's not because this is my homeland, but because I feel a profound affinity with these still unspoilt and sun-bronzed country people".

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