

## CHRONICLE

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### LAJOS ZILAHY; A BIBLIOGRAPHY

#### Introduction

At the end of World War I, the Hungarian kingdom ended, and a republic of Hungary was formed. This political transition was somewhat paralleled in Hungarian literature. Now the lower classes joined the nobility in being published, and being popular. And so, during the two world wars, there was a burst in activity in Hungarian letters.

As elsewhere during this internecine period, the primary literary expression was the novel. Among noted novelists were József Darvas; Tibor Déry; János Kodolányi; Sándor Márai; József Nyírő; Pál Szabó; Áron Tamási; Péter Veres, and Lajos Zilahy. However, few of these novelists were well known outside of Hungary, and in the West. One who was well known was Lajos Zilahy (1891–1974).

He was born in the Hungarian town of Nagyszalonta. He fought with the Austro-Hungarian forces on the Russian front during World War I (and was wounded, and taken prisoner). After the war, the pacifist poetry he wrote while recuperating was published, and he remained in Hungary. He then began working as a play reviewer, reporter, and writer for Budapest newspapers. Independently he wrote novels and plays. In 1932 he was the representative Hungarian author at the League of Nations, and wrote the play, "The Twelfth Hour" regarding it. However, the Hungarian war ministry prohibited its performance. Nevertheless, he still wrote essays, novels, plays, and poems.

During World War II, the Germans tried to arrest Zilahy, but by hiding he survived. Then after the war in the 1940s, he moved to New York City, and continued writing. Of his novels, eight were translated into English and reviewed in the outstanding journals and periodicals in the United States and Great Britain (those cited in this bibliography). His stories were not political, but rather about individuals whose lives were upset by wars. In *Two Prisoners* (1931), for which he became famous, a marriage is destroyed by the events of World War I. Another well known novel, *The Deserter* (1932) is another war story. *The Dukays* (1949), and its *The Angry Angel* (1953), are tales of the waning of an aristocratic family.

Two of his nineteen plays, "Firebird" and "Siberia" were performed in New York City. Another play, "The General" (retitled "The Virtuous Sin") and "Firebird" were made into Hollywood movies in the 1930s. In 1974, while filming one of his stories in Yugoslavia, Zilahy died at the age of 83.

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*Cathe Giffuni*