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HUNGARIAN
STUDIES

Papers of an International Conference at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and the
University of California, Santa Barbara, on the occasion of the exhibition
Standing in the Tempest: Painters of the Hungarian Avant-Garde, 1908-1930.

HUNGARIAN STUDIES

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ON THE COVER: Lajos Kassák, Noise, 1920, collage
and ink on paper. Lent by Kunsthalle Nürnberg.

Culture and Society in Early 20th-Century Hungary



Papers of an
International Conference at the
Santa Barbara Museum of Art and the
University of California, Santa Barbara,
on the occasion of the exhibition
*Standing in the Tempest: Painters of
the Hungarian Avant-Garde, 1908–1930.*

April 11–13, 1991

Edited by Tibor Frank



ISSUE EDITOR'S PREFACE

The present issue of Hungarian Studies offers articles that were originally presented as papers at an international conference jointly organized by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and the University of California, Santa Barbara, April 11–13, 1991. Part of Hungarian Spring 1991, a major Hungarian–American cultural festival in Santa Barbara, this conference was one of the events that were originally drawn to California by the exhibition Standing in the Tempest: Painters of the Hungarian Avant-Garde, 1908–1930. A unique tribute to the scholarship and dedication of Steven A. Mansbach, Guest Curator of the exhibition, this was probably the single most important presentation of Hungarian avant-garde art in or out of Hungary. It was also Dr. Mansbach who edited the catalog of the exhibition, now a basic handbook and, in 1993, a precious bibliographical rarity indeed. The Santa Barbara Museum of Art, then under the able and pioneering directorship of Richard V. West, was a perfect host of the exhibition and contributed to the conference in a major way.

Having served as Conference Director in Santa Barbara, the present Editor is eager to register his gratitude to the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center of UCSB which elected him a Resident Fellow and supported this project in all conceivable ways, morally, technically, and financially. Special thanks are due to Professor Paul Hernadi, then Director of the Center, who provided a much needed institutional framework and constant encouragement, and to Randi Glick for years of patient and unfailing assistance. The success and impact of the conference was largely a result of their effort.

The conference was made possible also by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Soros Foundation/Hungary of New York and Budapest. Several Departments of UCSB also contributed to this event, such as English, History, Political Science, and Psychology; Germanic, Slavic and Oriental Languages and Literatures; the Global Peace and Security Program, and the College of Creative Studies.

Included here is a representative selection of the conference papers (a few speakers refrained from publishing their text), which will contribute to the understanding of the achievement and sophistication of culture in early 20th century Hungarian society. Hopefully, the memory and example of this outstanding period will help us recreate the diversity and productive richness of Hungary's culture.

Tibor Frank

Introduction

FOREWORD

STEVEN A. MANSBACH

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The distinctive role played by Hungarian artists and intellectuals in the drama of modern art and aesthetics is today relatively unknown and undervalued. Moreover, the signal accomplishments and manifold achievements of these Hungarian figures have been largely unheralded in contemporary Western scholarship. This prevailing circumstance was certainly not the case three-quarters of a century ago when Hungarian painters, poets, designers, and scholars were creatively shaping the character, defining the meanings, and determining the implications of modern artistic expression and progressive culture. Indeed, advanced journals of the 1910s and 1920s from America to Russia were filled with articles by and about these Hungarian pioneers of modern aesthetics and art. Names of artists such as Bortnyik, Uitz, and Kassák; of critics such as Kállai and Kemény; and of dozens of poets, writers and other progressive cultural figures were common copy in the advanced periodicals of the epoch. Moreover, contemporaneous art history and philosophical debate were themselves profoundly enriched by the contributions of Hungarian thinkers who advocated in their writings and declaimed in their lectures the dynamic aesthetics (and often, politics) of their fellow countrymen. In this regard, we need only be reminded of such universally acknowledged creative minds as Charles de Tolnay, Arnold Hauser, Frederick Antal, Leo Popper, Georg Lukács among a host of others well-known in the West.

What might account, then, for this momentous shift from the ready recognition of Hungarian accomplishment early in our century to the relative obscurity today? Why is it that the extraordinary exhibition "Standing in the Tempest: Painters of the Hungarian Avant-Garde 1908–1930" on its American tour in 1991–92 and this related symposium are such remarkable and noteworthy undertakings?

First, I think we must recognize that both the exhibition and this conference are serious attempts to reclaim an essential dimension of modern cultural and intellectual history. This history, I hasten to stress, does not belong exclusively or even primarily to Hungary. Neither the artists we have presented in the

exhibition devoted to Hungarian avant-garde art nor the intellectuals we will examine here saw themselves as limited by the ever-contracting borders of Hungary. Their focus and their affinity was with modern aesthetics and culture in general, and was never limited to the societies of the Carpathian Basin. They recognized themselves as internationalists for whom their own Magyar traditions and heritage provided a distinctive perspective and unique viewpoint from which they might shape a better universal culture. Thus, the exhibition organizers and the conference speakers are collectively undertaking to reacquaint us with a crucial component of our cultural history, an essential chapter that has been for more than a half-century largely obscured from our appreciation.

To a considerable extent, we must acknowledge that the turbulence of the last fifty years has done more than merely obscure the signal accomplishments of the Hungarian avant-garde. One might well argue that the entire culture of "Mitteleuropa" has been overwhelmed by the tumultuous events of political history, to the extent that this entire region (geographical as well as cultural) has been forcibly propelled from the center of our consciousness to the periphery of Western awareness. In this violent dislocation, Hungary – like so much of East-Central Europe – had been assigned to a so-called (by the West, at least) "Eastern Europe", where until relatively recently it lost not only its direct contacts with the West but even its essential connection to its own avant-garde past. Thus, those Hungarian artists and their apologists whom we in the West know best are those who elected emigration or whose work entered early into the modernist mainstream. Those consequential figures who chose in the mid-1920s to live in Hungary – or to emigrate to the Soviet Union – have had their achievements largely erased from popular recognition – at least until recently.

It is also true that some responsibility for the subsequent eclipse of the Hungarian avant-garde and its progressive culture is due to the nature, attitudes, and actions of the artists and intellectuals themselves. Always standing in the political opposition, successively to the Habsburg Monarchy, to the subsequent revolutionary regimes, to the ultramontane government of conservative reaction, to the German occupiers, and to the post-World War II communist system, the artists rarely saw their work broadly endorsed or their accomplishments seriously recognized, studied, or celebrated. In fact it has just been in the last decade or so that the rich heritage of the avant-garde has been fully acknowledged by Hungarian scholars and its art widely exhibited to the public. Moreover, it is only now that a large, freely interpretive exhibition on the Hungarian avant-garde has been mounted in the West, namely the extraordinary exhibition organized by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art.

In addition to these issues affecting the reception in the West of the Hungarian contribution, we should also recognize that unlike almost every other contemporaneous art movement, Hungarian society tolerated, at times even appeared to encourage, diversity in style and breadth in outlook. Whereas, for example, the Dutch *De Stijl* Group or the Russian *Suprematists* insisted upon a purity of formal expression, the Hungarian adopted a much more heterogenous perspective, not infrequently promoting expressionism, futurism, cubism, and constructivism. Indeed, one finds among the Activist artists, only to cite the best known Hungarian grouping, painters representing a panoply of early twentieth century styles, though simultaneously subscribing to a relatively uniform socialist world view. With such diversity, it was always difficult for progressive Hungarian culture to speak with a single voice, despite the claims of such persuasive spokesmen as Lajos Kassák, Béla Uitz, Sándor Bortnyik, among others. Thus, the numerous texts and works of art notwithstanding, Hungarian avant-garde culture has proven to be, paradoxically, difficult to characterize easily or succinctly by historians and critics. Additionally, many of the important documents written by and about the avant-garde appeared in Hungarian, thereby interposing a language barrier between the artists (and much of their work) and the vast majority of Western scholars and public. Admittedly, most Hungarian intellectuals spoke additional languages, primarily German; however, all sought during their formative years in Hungary and later during their first years in exile (principally) in Vienna and Berlin to maintain their contact both with one another and with the motherland. And to do this, the Hungarian language was frequently employed. Finally, it should be stated that the Hungarians often acted as the link or bridge between the dynamic developments in Eastern Europe and the West. And even though their own contributions were distinctive and significant, too often these accomplishments were assigned to those other artists and movements whose work, ideas, and achievements the Hungarians were both promoting and adapting to their own ends.

It is among the principal objectives of both the U. S. exhibition and the conference, then, to reclaim the manifold contributions of modern Hungarian culture and society from the historical obscurity from which they have suffered in the West (and indirectly, in the East as well), not as a celebration of cultural or national chauvinism but as a responsible way of understanding more accurately and more fully the rich and complex history of modern aesthetics and the social values to which it gave rise. As a result, the papers presented in Santa Barbara and published here both document and assess critically the accomplishments as well as the shortcomings of modern Hungarian culture and society in order to interpret more proficiently the fundamental structures of our own contemporary social environment and intellectual life.

In order to focus on the most significant developments and signal works, we have limited this interpretive assessment of Hungarian modernism principally to the years between 1908 and 1930. These roughly twenty years embrace the period of greatest accomplishment for the Hungarian avant-garde; for it was in these years that the artists and their apologists developed a progressive means of expression and concomitant political and social world view that achieved a stunning degree of clarity and forcefulness. Moreover, it was exactly in these years that Hungarian avant-garde art engendered its decisive impact on the evolution of modern art and created an image of an ideal society. Thus, we acknowledge as our temporal frame of reference the year 1908, when a group of approximately eight Hungarian painters with emphatically progressive aesthetic, social, and stylistic tendencies coalesced, and the year 1930 by which time the heroic period of experimentation, accomplishment and dissemination had largely exhausted itself. Of course, by no means did progressive Hungarian art and social aspiration cease in 1930. Nevertheless, by this date the conditions in Hungary compelled those artists and intellectuals who had been its leading figures to re-appraise their assertive role in avant-garde activity; and many withdrew from engaged aesthetics, thereby paving the way for a new generation of artists and thinkers who would distinguish themselves by their formal experimentation. Moreover, for those members of the Hungarian avant-garde who had elected to remain abroad, 1930 marked the approximate end of their close association with their fellow Hungarian artists as joint participants in a collective movement. By this date many who had moved to the West had begun to distance themselves from a strong identification as Hungarian émigré artists and to engage their energies upon furthering their independent careers, or had become identified with other movements or international groups. As a consequence, many began to jettison (or at least to moderate) much of their ideological commitment and idealistic world view of the preceding twenty years, a fact that is also observable among almost all the pioneers of international modernist culture just before 1930. Nonetheless, the innovative formal solutions they brought to the fine arts, industrial design, architecture, and to the discourse on art and culture in general, as well as the humane pedagogy they introduced into the teaching of art betray their indebtedness to the heroic period of the Hungarian avant-garde when progressive art was perceived as *THE* potent agent of social analysis and reconstruction. Among those numerous Hungarians who returned to their homeland during the course of the 1920s, contemporary political and social conditions grew increasingly hostile towards propagating the tenets and forms of modern art. By the end of the decade, the most innovative phase of Hungarian avant-garde expression was over. Even for those Hungarians for

whom a radical social commitment remained undiminished and who sought asylum and opportunity primarily in the Soviet Union, the 1930s became a period of restricted activity, limited artistic experimentation, and frequent disappointment. The freedom and responsibility they sought to exercise in the service of socialist aesthetics proved anathema to Stalin's conception of radical art.

Despite the brief quarter-century span of mature creativity, the Hungarian avant-garde left a profound legacy which is of particular significance to an American audience. Not only was the morphology of modern art shaped by the distinctive character of Hungarian expressionism, constructivism, and futurism; but the very terms of aesthetic discourse were largely defined by Hungarian avant-garde theorists, critics, and artists. The expansive idealistic – often utopian – world view they articulated fostered a fully humanistic conception of the social responsibilities of modern art and the moral obligations of the contemporary intellectual. It is this largeness of vision and depth of humanity that we witness in the pioneering exhibition, *Standing in the Tempest: Painters of the Hungarian Avant-Garde, 1908–1930*, and which constitute the subject of the deliberations in this volume.

CONSERVATISM, MODERNITY, AND POPULISM IN HUNGARIAN CULTURE

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Sing we for love and idleness,
Naught else is worth the having.

Though I have been in many a land,
There is naught else in living.

And I would rather have my sweet,
Though rose-leaves die of grieving,

Than do high deeds in Hungary
To pass all men's believing.

(Ezra Pound: *An Immorality*, 1912)

To celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the unification of the cities of Buda, Pest, and Óbuda, a concert was given by the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra, on November 19, 1923. The three works written for this occasion were a *Festive Overture* by Ernő Dohnányi, *Psalm 55* by Zoltán Kodály, and *Dance Suite* by Béla Bartók. The first composition could be called Conservative in the sense that it was written in a tonal idiom, the aesthetics of the second anticipated the interpretation of the past developed by the Populists, the third opus was admired mainly by the supporters of the Modernist movement. The goal of this essay is to examine the interrelations among these three trends in Hungarian culture.

Between 1867 and 1914 Budapest was the fastest growing city in Europe. Its drawing power increased over this period – a drawing power that attracted not only people from elsewhere but also pulled intellectuals into urban groups and coteries. It had now become the outright point of concentration for Hungarian culture, overtaking the role of the provincial cities. Its technological face made for a sense of excitement and stimulus. Despite periodic threats of

political, social, and ethnic conflicts, not only the upper but also the middle classes enjoyed freedom and security. With light taxation, hardly any inflation, cheap food and labour, and a plentiful supply of domestic servants, many middle class families had comfortable and sheltered lives. Intellectuals were being urbanized, feeling those emotions of stability and alienation that characterize city life. By 1910 the majority of the Hungarian bourgeoisie and working class lived in Budapest; understandably, therefore, after the end of World War I, it was in the capital city where both the bourgeois and the Communist revolution had started. In view of this, it might be surprising that the hero of the most imaginative works of fiction written in this period is a Conservative aristocrat. Although he spends much of his time in Budapest, Eduárd Alvinczy, a highly respectable gentleman, ignores the twentieth century. There might be a slight touch of irony in the way the narrator treats him, but more important is the storyteller's almost unqualified admiration for this "impossibility," as a minor character calls him in *A vörös postakocsi* (The Red Stage-Coach, 1913) by Gyula Krúdy, one of the first Hungarian novels to break with the narrative conventions of the nineteenth century, by questioning the idea that the self has an intrinsic nature.

In 1919, Krúdy published *Pesti Album*, a collection devoted to the life of the capital. One of the chapters ends with the following statement made by Alvinczy:

"I am suffering from indigestion", he thought. "Salmon is no longer enjoyable."¹

It is not quite impossible to read these words as the writer's response to the contemporary situation. In any case, they indicate a distance from political and social events and might be considered a warning against assuming that the socio-economic process of modernization ran parallel with artistic evolution. While the Naturalistic *tranche de vie Budapest* (1901) – by Tamás Kóbor, a Jewish novelist now almost forgotten – was enthusiastic about urbanization, the most innovative prose writer of the same period harboured strong reservations about the loss of intimacy in the modern city. Krúdy hardly ever ceases to identify himself with the ethos of Eduárd Alvinczy, an aristocrat whose ambition is to live according to the principles of Count István Széchenyi (1791–1860), the greatest representative of his class in the nineteenth century. In the act of paying tribute to the values of the man whose ambition was to transform his country from a stronghold of feudalism into a modern democracy, he voices his own nostalgic awareness of the distance that separates him from the beliefs of pre-industrial Hungary. The past is available to him not in its continuity into the present, not as a living tradition, but as the reconstructed object of his imagination. The fall of feudalism is thus counterpointed by another story: as the wordly and vital powers of the nobility decline, so its

consciousness grows. Industrialization seems at odds with an understanding of world and self.

Linguistic isolation can be the only possible reason why the conflicts between the supporters of urbanization and some representatives of artistic modernity have been ignored by Western scholars. By way of example, I may quote the following remark from one of the best works on the intellectual trends in Central Europe in the early twentieth century: "the first vernacular poetry in Hungarian was produced among the sons of the Hungarian nobility at the leading Habsburg *Gymnasium*, the *Theresianum*."² This statement would suggest that poetry had not been written in Hungarian before Viennese influence made itself felt in the second half of the eighteenth century. The authors seem not to know that from the late thirteenth century there is an unbroken continuity in the history of Hungarian written verse. Accordingly, their idea of the Hungarian contribution to what represented "modernity" in the Dual Monarchy is based on insufficient evidence.

It might distort the picture if we view Hungarian culture from a Viennese perspective or assume that a scholar interested in the Habsburg Empire "can interpret the culture of these areas provided he is fluent in German," to quote an American publication that gives a one-sided treatment of Hungarian intellectual life in the early twentieth century by identifying it with the activity of a very small group of writers who were born in Budapest, but left Hungary at an early age, or at least wrote most, if not all, of their works in German.³

In some cases even a historian who is familiar with the language may seem to be unable to see the complexity of the interrelationships between urbanization and artistic innovation. My last example is taken from a recently published monograph aimed at analyzing the activity of György Lukács and his circle in the context of intellectual life in Budapest:

Lukács and his friends were correct to see themselves radically out of touch with the cultural realities of Hungary, where the majority of the population still lived in conditions of rural backwardness, insulated from the benefits, as well as the discontents, of modernity. But they were almost equally estranged from the progressive artistic and intellectual circles of Budapest, which were too closely associated with a complacent liberalism and a superficial eclecticism to constitute a congenial intellectual world for them.⁴

No indication is given by the author as to the meaning of "progressive" in her book, but it is safe to assume that she may have the poet and journalist Endre Ady in mind, since the term was often applied to his activity at the time she wrote her monograph. Neither complacent liberalism nor superficial eclecticism characterized the social prophecy or the tragic vision expressed in his writings.

Before attempting to examine the complex relation of modernization to literary modernity, I cannot bypass a terminological issue. The term "modern"

has been used in too many different ways. Some cultural historians, including the author of the monograph on Lukács and his circle quoted above, have drawn upon the distinction made by Stephen Spender between "modern" and "contemporary",⁵ although the English poet's book-length essay is mainly about British literature and does not claim to have theoretical value.

In any case, it is far from self-evident what Modernism denotes. I am inclined to agree with those who maintain that unlike "the terms Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Mannerist, Romantic or Neo-Classical, it designates no describable object in its own right at all", because it is a "portmanteau concept" whose referent is a wide variety of very diverse aesthetic practices.⁶ What is more, it is doubtful whether it can be regarded as a term denoting exclusively artistic phenomena. Rather, it represents a broader cultural response to pressing issues which were the consequences of industrialization. According to one critic, four variables: "secularism, individualism, bureaucracy, and pluralism" have formed the core of modernity.⁷

The idea of the modern is closely tied to a teleological concept of history. As is well-known, it was developed in the course of the "querelle des anciens et des modernes," and was defined as the last stage in the succession of Classical antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modern times. In contrast to the two other members of the triad, it implied the primacy of novelty and was based on the assumption that there were more and less advanced forms of consciousness. It became inseparable from a monolithic conception of world history and a canonical view of culture. Some followers of Hegel developed a normative interpretation of modernity. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the concept became problematic, largely due to the influence of Nietzsche. Rival conceptions of modernity were formulated. Broadly speaking, such is the context in which the Hungarian culture of the early twentieth century has to be examined.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, four new trends emerged in Hungarian intellectual life. Each was characterized by a specific attitude towards urbanization. Only two of them, the movement centered around the journal *Nyugat* and the somewhat later avant-garde led by Lajos Kassák, could be called artistic in the strict sense of the word. The journal *Huszadik Század*, started in 1900, was the organ of sociologists and political scientists, whereas the primary interest of what was to become the Sunday Circle in 1915 was metaphysics. If modernity has any sense in Hungary in the early years of the twentieth century, it must be viewed as a complex of interrelationships among these four trends. Each claimed to represent modernity, but their definitions of the goals the country should achieve were different. In 1911 György Lukács won a competition with a two-volume monograph entitled *A*

modern dráma fejlődésének története (The History of the Evolution of Modern Drama), in 1914 Dezső Kosztolányi published a collection of translations with the title *Modern Költők* (Modern Poets), and both authors published books in the series called *Modern Könyvtár* (Modern Library) edited by Jenő Gömöri, but their views on modernity were far from the same.

Although all these trends were opposed to some form of establishment, the representatives of each had a different notion of conservatism. The contributors of *Nyugat*, whose first issue came out in the last days of 1907, were creative writers. Born in the province, most of them drew inspiration from their early years spent in the country-side. Their poetry and fiction were dominated by a backward glance. To be of one's own time, as far as they were concerned, was a measure of failure rather than an achievement. Endre Ady made significant returns to his village, both in a physical and in a psychological sense, Mihály Babits evoked memories of his native Transdanubia in numerous poems and in his long novel *Halálfiak* (Sons of Death, 1927), and Dezső Kosztolányi's major works from the verse cycle *A szegény kisgyermek panaszai* (The Complaints of the Poor Little Child, 1910) to the novels *Pacsirta* (Skylark, 1924) and *Aranysárkány* (Golden Kite/Dragon, 1925) were imaginative recreations of his childhood in Szabadka (today Subotica). In Budapest they were newcomers who never felt at home in the metropolis. This may have been one of the reasons why few of them tried to experiment with dramatic genres.

The Hungarian capital had a vigorous theatrical activity, dominated by Ferenc Herczeg and Ferenc Molnár. Herczeg became a member of the House of Representatives in 1896, the year in which the country celebrated the thousandth year of its creation, and supported the prominent conservative statesman Count István Tisza, during his second term in the Hungarian parliament, between 1910 and 1918. Aesthetically, both Herczeg and Molnár were conservative, although they came from the same bourgeoisie which was the social background of most of the contributors of *Huszadik Század* and of the members of the Sunday Circle, in sharp contrast to the majority of those writers who made *Nyugat* the organ of artistic and intellectual modernity.

Oszkár Jászi, the founder and editor of *Huszadik Század*, had a better knowledge of, and a greater respect for, the past of Hungary than György Lukács, but to criticize that past was no self-torture for him, as it was for Ady, Krúdy, Babits, or Kosztolányi, who were proud of their social origin and insisted on their continuity with old, i.e. pre-capitalistic Hungary. The authors of *Huszadik Század* were convinced that they were the true representatives of modernity, yet they often found the poetry, fiction, and essays published in *Nyugat* obscure. The aesthetics of evocation and suggestion, as represented by

such poems as *A fekete zongora* (The Black Piano) by Ady or *Fekete ország* (Black Country) by Babits, was a far cry from the Positivistic ideals of the intellectuals of *Huszadik Század*. The interests and values of the two groups were different: while the sociologists and the political scientists believed that modernity meant a faith in the scientific claims to total explanation, the creative writers discarded both scientism and functionalism, and were attracted to Symbolism, *Jugendstil* (*Sezessionismus*), psychoanalysis, and other trends representing a reaction against Positivism. The philosophers of what was to be called the Sunday Circle occasionally published in *Huszadik Század* and in *Nyugat*, but they spoke contemptuously of Positivism, and their understanding of the new poetry and fiction was rather limited: Lukács, for instance, never came to appreciate the novelty of Krúdy's fiction. With the publication of *A Tett*, Kassák's first avant-garde periodical founded in 1915, the gap became even wider.

Undeniably, there were overlaps among the activities of the different groups. Béla Balázs, a close friend of Lukács, was also a poet, and Emma Ritoók, another member of the Sunday Circle, published several novels. Occasionally their work appeared in *Nyugat*, but their creative writing was far more conservative in the aesthetic sense than that of the major representatives of *Nyugat*. Some poets of *Nyugat*, including Ady, took a serious interest in *Huszadik Század*. The first issue of *A Tett* was introduced by Dezső Szabó, who at that time joined the first generation of *Nyugat*, and Kosztolányi wrote a favourable review of Kassák's first published volume of poetry, *Éposz Wagner maszkjában* (Epic Poem in Wagner's Mask, 1915). Still, the overlaps were of secondary importance in comparison with the fundamental clashes among the four movements.

For a long time the bourgeois radicals of *Huszadik Század* sought to define the purity of scientific discourse in the spirit of Herbert Spencer. This effort made Oszkár Jászi and his associates seem pedestrian and old-fashioned in the eyes of the members of the Sunday Circle, who aspired to discover a new metaphysics. *Művészet és erkölcs* (Art and Morals, 1904), Jászi's early book which had brought him a prize of the Hungarian Academy of Letters and Sciences, was a far cry from the essays of the young György Lukács and Lajos Fülep, and even from the aesthetic principles of Ady, Babits, and Kosztolányi, who had a similar admiration for Nietzsche. From another perspective, however, the bourgeois radicals of *Huszadik Század* seemed to be less conservative: they approved of industrialization, whereas the philosophers were spokesmen of what in his later Marxist years Lukács was to call Romantic anti-capitalism. With the emergence of the avant-garde, this backward orientation had become obvious even in the sphere of art. While Babits, Kosz-

tolányi, and even Ady were moving from the cult of intentional obscurity of Symbolism and the decorative, adjectival writing of *Sezessionismus* towards a greater emphasis on the verbal elements of syntax, a more Expressionistic style (Kosztolányi translated Imagist verse and discovered the paintings of János Nagy-Balogh, a working-class artist whose work resembled Cubism; and Kassák made more and more works of the international avant-garde accessible to the Hungarian public); Lukács lost his touch with contemporary art. Up to 1911 Leo Popper and Irma Seidler helped Lukács understand paintings, but after the death of these two friends, he seemed to take no interest in the visual arts. Paintings became a pretext for him to develop ideological arguments.

A telling example of his growing alienation from the art of recent decades is the value-judgement attached to Cézanne's name in his later essays. My first quotation is from an article originally published in 1918:

Simmel's historical position could be summarized the following way: he was the Monet of philosophy who has not yet been followed by a Cézanne.⁸

In 1918 Lukács may have been unaware of Monet's later work, the magnificent water lilies painted at Giverny, in which he abandoned the fundamental principle of Impressionism – the accurate transcription of observed phenomena – in favour of an emphasis on tonal harmonies. For him Monet stood for superficiality, whereas Cézanne represented profundity. Less than two decades later he made the following statement:

Die Porträts von Cézanne sind ebenso blosse Stilleben, verglichen mit der menschlich-seelischen Totalität der Porträts von Tizian oder Rembrandt, wie die Menschen Goncourts oder Zolas im Vergleich zu Balzac oder Tolstoi.⁹

It would be an error to assume that Lukács turned conservative after his conversion to the Hungarian Party of the Communists, in late 1918. The first issue of *A Tett* came out in the same year when the Sunday Circle was established. The characteristic features of the activity of the group centered around Lukács: the speculations about the nature of mysticism, the cult of erotic love, and the neo-Romantic stylization of folklore were all manifestations of an *Art Nouveau* culture. Lukács praised the poetry of Balázs, written in a style reminiscent of Maeterlinck's diction of prefabricated suggestiveness, at a time when Kassák was writing free verse in an idiom comparable to the activist language of August Stramm. The conservative taste of Lukács may have been at least partly responsible for the later conflicts between Marxist aesthetics and twentieth-century art. In any case, it was the basis of the

development of the concept of "critical realism," an ideal that made East-European theoreticians and artists reject innovations which are generally associated with aesthetic modernity.

One of the most violent clashes between the Sunday Circle and the Hungarian avant-garde occurred in 1919. Béla Kun, the leader of the Commune, called *Ma*, Kassák's second journal "a product of bourgeois culture," at a party conference. His statement appeared in print, in *Vörös Újság*, on June 14. In his response published in *Ma*, on July 1, Kassák questioned Kun's competence in art and denied that art had to serve the party and the working class. As a result, the Communist leaders withdrew the permission which made the publication of *Ma* possible. The incident underscored the fundamental disagreement between such Communists as Balázs and Lukács, who tacitly accepted the view that art cannot be autonomous in socialism, and Kassák, who insisted that human creativity was a source rather than a product of social revolution.

At the same time, two friends of Lukács departed from the path he followed. In 1920 Emma Ritoók published a small collection of verse, *Sötét hónapok* (Dark Months), expressing her strong disapproval of the Commune, and Lajos Fülep became a Protestant clergyman in a small village. There may have been personal motives behind their decisions, but their departure also expressed their feeling that the Sunday Circle alienated itself from the traditions of Hungarian culture. In the 1930s Fülep went as far as agreeing with some of the Populist writers' objections to industrial capitalism.

Since Ritoók and Fülep had been the only non-Jewish members of the group, it is possible that their attitude was also motivated by their conviction that the cultural assimilation of their friends had been somewhat imperfect. As is well-known, Lukács's father often emphasized his Hungarian nationalism, but a quotation from a book written by the son of another industrial magnate of Jewish origin may suggest that this attitude cannot be called general. In this autobiographical novel the prosperous father gives the following instruction to the Hungarian tutor of his son:

You must allow my son, Mr. Szalkay, to remain what he was born, a Jew. And if you must teach him something, then teach him to deal in business and how to make it profitable. Teach him to live here as if he were in a province where one goes to make a profit. Do you know what a *koved* is? It is the Yiddish word for a sinecure, an honourable post for which one gets no pay, or very little. I want no parliamentary representatives, judges, or professors in my family. My son should buy and sell here, but he should not sell himself, for no good will come of it... For have you ever seen a Jew who has gone after *koved* and has ended up well in this country?¹⁰

It should be noted that the position taken by this father is rejected in this novel. The author himself had chosen another path: as a critic he insisted on the continuity of Hungarian culture and joined the *Nyugat* movement. Several others followed his example: industrialists Miksa Fenyő and Baron Móric Kornfeld, for instance, made the publication of the same journal possible with their financial support.

Needless to say, what is at issue here is not ethnic, but cultural and linguistic assimilation. Another quotation may shed light on the distinction. One of the most original composers of the twentieth century made the following remark: "my music; produced on German soil, without foreign influences, is a living example of an art able most effectively to oppose Latin and Slav hopes of hegemony and derived through and through from the traditions of German music."¹¹ Schoenberg was Austrian and considered himself a Jew, but never hesitated to call his work German and even national.

One of the charges levelled at the Jewish capitalists who lived in Hungary around and after 1900 was their reluctance to learn about national traditions. It cannot be denied that Jewish capitalists and intellectuals brought up in the large cities of the Dual Monarchy had a German culture. Not only the Wittgensteins or the Schoenbergs, but also the Kornfeld and Weiss families spoke German at home. This cultural milieu may have contributed to the decision Lukács made around 1911 to stop writing in Hungarian and switch almost exclusively to German. Fülep, on the other hand, never distanced himself from his mother tongue. Their later disagreement may have been rooted in their different attitudes towards language.

When Lukács published his first book of essays, *A lélek és a formák* (Soul and Forms) in 1910, Mihály Babits reviewed it in *Nyugat*. Babits was well-read in philosophy and shared Lukács's interest in metaphysics, but his review cannot be called favourable. The young poet's main concern was the purity of diction, and as a creative artist, he found the philosopher's use of the Hungarian language abusive. Both Babits and Lukács wanted to liberate Hungary from provincialism, yet their intellectual positions were poles apart: for the poet, national tradition was a precondition of culture, and language a precondition of thought; whereas for the philosopher, tradition was international, and language a means to an end, a medium at the service of intellectual activity. In view of the fact that Lukács never made any attempt at the close reading or stylistic analysis of a lyric poem, the charge levelled at him by Babits cannot be dismissed as superficial. What the poet suggested was that the tradition behind the activity of the Lukács circle was not international but German.

For most of the writers of *Nyugat* modernity was closely tied to an escape from the influence of the German culture which dominated Hungarian culture

throughout the nineteenth century. Budapest was in competition with Vienna, so the artists living in the Hungarian capital looked for models outside the German-speaking countries. Ady translated Baudelaire and Verlaine, Krúdy drew inspiration from Pushkin and Turgenev, Babits admired Swinburne and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. The reaction against German models was also felt in the other arts: the Gödöllő school of the Hungarian *Art Nouveau* was modelled on the Arts and Crafts Movement, the painter Rippl-Rónai joined the Post-Impressionist group called "*Les Nabis*" in Paris, and Bartók discovered an antidote to the dominance of German culture in the music of Debussy.

Although the superficiality of rapid assimilation and the reaction against Germanic cultural models may have intensified the conflict between different forms of modernity, they cannot be regarded as the only causes of the tension between urban development and cultural innovation.

Capitalism led to inevitable consequences in the cultural life of Hungary. During the Napoleonic wars the country house of Ferenc Kazinczy at Széphalom, a small village in the North-East of the country, had been the centre of literary life; a century later a coffeehouse in Budapest was the meeting place where writers came to discuss politics and culture. Ironically, institutional changes and transformations in the social context of literature were not always complementary. While the consumers of art may have changed, the creative talents continued to come from the traditional classes. In the early twentieth century Hungarian art was sponsored by *nouveau riche* families, but produced by members of what had been the lesser nobility before the revolution of 1848. Many Jewish intellectuals looked upon art as a social equalizer, but with the exception of the poet, novelist, and playwright Milán Füst, none of the major Hungarian writers of modernity came from the Jewish community. The influence of capitalism may have been strong on literary institutions, but the social background of Ady, Krúdy, Babits, and Kosztolányi was not different from that of Berzsenyi, Vörösmarty, Arany, or Madách – to mention but a few poets who dominated the nineteenth century. In contrast to some of their predecessors, all the members of the first *Nyugat* generation had to earn their living, but they often felt ill at ease in the new situation. Major novelists and poets were forced to write *Feuilletons* and *Feuilletonnovellen*. These relatively new genres required a skill at extemporizing. Ady, Krúdy, Kosztolányi, and even Sándor Márai, a younger writer whose first book was published in 1918, had to devote several hours per day to journalism, which often made it impossible for them to concentrate their efforts on writing poetry or narrative fiction.

Cultural preferences were often motivated by a sense of belonging. This *Heimatsgefühl* is inseparable from the evolution of Hungarian literary modern-

ity: the works of Ady, Krúdy, Babits, and Kosztolányi had been conditioned by strong local traditions, and the art of the novelist Zsigmond Móricz was no less deeply rooted in the culture of the peasantry, another traditional class of Hungarian society.

Recent literary scholarship is marked by a growing disenchantment with certain socio-historical clichés. Paradoxically, some Western publications reiterate value-judgements which have been partly invalidated by studies revealing novel, hitherto unexplored or neglected aspects of Hungarian culture. A characteristic example is the interpretation of the role of the gentry given in a book published in the United States:

The gentry played cards, gambled away its land and fortune, drank to excess, sobbed to gipsy music, and entertained lavishly even after it could no longer afford to do so.¹²

Although there is more than an element of truth in this generalization, it is worth remembering that the devastatingly critical picture of the gentry on which the critic relies was almost entirely drawn by artists who themselves belonged to this class. Just as academic art was represented mainly by Munkácsy, a painter of German petty bourgeois origin, whereas Impressionism was started by Szinyei Merse, and Expressionism was developed by Mednyánszky and Csontváry Kosztká – three painters coming from the nobility – literary modernity was established by members of a class which often resisted modernization. Towards the end of the nineteenth century the gap between bourgeois and artist, *Kulturträger* and *Kunstträger* had widened, making it almost impossible to draw a clear-cut distinction between the anti-social attitude of innovative artists and the anachronistic values of the gentry. These facts gain added significance, because no similar opposition between artistic and social modernity can be observed in the “Austrian” half of the Dual Monarchy.

I am almost tempted to speak of the co-existence of originality and provincialism in Hungarian culture, provided the latter term is not taken in a pejorative sense. Although Ady’s poetry had been called immoral, obscure, and cosmopolitan by some of his right-wing contemporaries, a conservative literary historian, János Horváth, wrote the first book about it. In retrospect, the main thesis of *Ady és a legújabb magyar líra* (Ady and Recent Hungarian Poetry, 1910) is absolutely correct: there is an undeniable continuity between earlier national traditions and Ady’s work. The indebtedness of Babits and Kosztolányi to János Arany, the most outstanding poet of the Post-Romantic third quarter of the nineteenth century, is even more obvious; both regarded him as their master from the beginning of their careers. Instead of rejecting the

past, they reinterpreted it: while the nineteenth century viewed Arany as an epic poet, a national classic; for Babits and Kosztolányi he was the author of elegiac and ironic lyrics who anticipated modernity by a rejection of subjective sentimentalism.

Before Kassák made his presence felt in Hungarian culture, Ady had been the only major poet who sympathized with socialist ideas. Yet even his work reveals traces of a nostalgia for preindustrial values. *Hazamegyek a falumba* (I Shall Return to My Village) is only one of those poems which suggest a rejection of urban civilization. Bartók viewed peasant culture as an antidote to the *kitsch* of city life. In *Halálfiái* (Sons of Death), an autobiographical novel by Babits, the hero moves from a rural and cohesive *Gemeinschaft* to the achievement-oriented *Gesellschaft* of industrial capitalism. The local values of the writer's native Szekszárd, a small Transdanubian town, are replaced by the internationalism of Budapest. The narrator's perspective is ambiguous: the hero's spiritual education is portrayed as an inexorable process, but the organic community of his early years is presented as superior to the chaotic world of the modern city. Both *Pacsirta* (Skylark) and *Aranysárkány* (Golden Kite/Dragon), probably the best novels by Kosztolányi, are about provinciality. While the real name of the author's native town has positive connotations (the first part of the compound word "Szabadka" means "free," the second part is a diminutive), the name of the place in the above-mentioned books suggests hopeless parochialism ("Sárszeg" literally means "a site of mud"). There is much irony in these novels, but the final message is that cosmopolitanism may lead to civilization but cannot create culture. Kosztolányi was a close friend of the analyst Sándor Ferenczi and the first cousin of Géza Csáth – the author of *Az elmebetegségek pszichikai mechanizmusa* (The Psychic Mechanism of Mental Illnesses, 1912), a remarkable early study of complexes – and he relied upon the works of Freud in his sustained and consistent critique of industrialization.

As early as 1913 Kosztolányi made the following confession:

What interests me is the Hungarian country-side (...). It is the land of miracles. Those who are born there will have a wider horizon than anybody brought up in a highly industrialized capital. (...) In a world where nothing happens and life is dominated by drinking wine, playing cards, sadness, and solitude, the soul will have an inner dimension, a strange compression and intensity of emotions. Provincial life is always of purely psychic character.¹³

The correspondence with the definition of the gentry quoted above is striking enough to suggest some ambiguity in the role played by this class in the evolution of Hungarian literary and artistic modernity. It is significant that

almost no writer of any distinction was born in Budapest. One of the very few exceptions was Cécile Tormay, a conservative middle-class novelist whose ancestors belonged partly to the Hungarian nobility and partly to the German bourgeoisie. Her second novel, *A régi ház* (The Old House, 1914), suggested that the traditions of the German cities of Ofen (Buda) and Pesth could make a significant contribution to Hungarian culture only after they were combined with the rural legacy of the Hungarian nobility. Márai, one of the few writers of the next generation with a purely bourgeois background, had even more serious reservations about the relevance of the life of Budapest for Hungarian culture when he distinguished between the living law of his native Kassa and the state-made law of the capital, in his autobiographical work *Egy polgár vallomásai* (The Confessions of a Citizen, 1934–35). The contrast between the constitutive rules of a gradually developing community and the regulative formulae which serve to conceal the anarchy of a suddenly emerging metropolis is further evidence of the Hungarian writers' reluctance to accept Budapest as an organic part of their country.

In view of this, it becomes clear that Kassák's avant-garde stands in sharp contrast to both the Sunday Circle and the *Nyugat* movement. As a self-made man, Kassák could have none of the advantages of provincial traditions. For him the cosmopolitan metropolis was not a source of cultural estrangement, but the basis of transforming culture as a whole. While Ady, Krúdy, Móricz, Babits, and Kosztolányi had a feeling of not quite fitting into the age of industrialization, Kassák was in harmony with his times. His disagreement with the Sunday Circle was partly aesthetic. If we compare the connotative pseudo-symbolism of *A kékszakállú herceg vára* (Bluebeard's Castle, 1911) – the one-act verse play by Béla Balázs which Bartók set to music – with the denotative, conspicuously prosaic diction of Kassák's free-verse poem *Mesteremberek* (Craftsmen, 1914), we can understand why the leader of the Hungarian avant-garde regarded the works of Balázs as mediocre and old-fashioned. The poetry of the solitary ego conflicted with the voice of collectivity, decorative art with functionalism, Romantic anti-capitalism with a utopian belief in the unity of art and industry.

It is far more difficult to situate the Hungarian avant-garde in relation to the writers of *Nyugat*. Ady reacted with indignation when he received Kassák's first collection of verse, and Babits attacked the new movement in a long review article. No analysis can do justice to the complexity of the picture which tries to underestimate the conflict between the members of the two alternatives of Hungarian literary modernity. Although Kassák had considerable respect for Ady's messianic prophecies, he wished to distance himself from the cult of hidden meaning. For the younger poet the traditional role of the adjective had become suspect.

Kassák's approach to poetic diction was also in conflict with the intentional artificiality of the style of Babits. Both poets insisted on the internationalism of culture, but their attitudes were radically different. Babits adhered to the ideal of a Catholic tradition and spoke of *sui generis* European values, whereas the development of Kassák's Activism implied an attack on an academic, canonical view of culture, and anticipated the *Bauhaus* movement, "a Protestant Reformation putting faith in the liberating aspects of industrialization and mass democracy."¹⁴ In the 1910s Kassák's movement seemed similar to German Expressionism. It had grown of the immense shock which the war produced in the minds, and pleaded with those 'brothers' who felt that a 'new man' and a 'new society' would emerge from the war. After the fall of the Commune, Kassák's activity as a visual artist, the creation of the genre he called *Bildarchitektur* may have affected his poetic style. The Expressionistic pathos of *Máglyák énekelnek* (Bonfires Are Singing, 1920) was soon replaced by the functionalism of *Tisztaság könyve* (The Book of Purity, 1926), emphasizing the strongly moral connotations of his art. The untitled poems he composed in Vienna in the 1920s manifest an affinity with the German *Dinggedicht* (object-poem) and a preoccupation with a denotative "hardness" that is opposed to the connotative "softness" of Symbolism, decadent Aestheticism, and Secessionism. In his later years, Kassák translated Whitman and Cendrars, expressed reservations about the Romantic lyricism in some of Apollinaire's poems, and preferred the early Imagist work of William Carlos Williams to the poetry of T. S. Eliot, in sharp contrast to Babits, who towards the end of his life felt a great attraction to the Neoclassicism of the American-born British master. Kassák represented a strong reaction not only against the literature of nuance and allusion but also against the Secessionist cult of beauty. He did not seek to please; in his autobiographical poem *A ló meghal a madarak kirepülnek* (The Horse Dies the Birds Fly Out, 1922) he repeatedly used inarticulate utterances. He liked meaningless words because they were free of the associations inherited from the past. He attempted to liberate those energies of language which in his view had been repressed by poets dominated by the legacy of Classical antiquity.

Krúdy and Kosztolányi wished to raise narrative prose to the level of lyric poetry: the former made metaphor the structural principle of his style; the latter aimed at the textural terseness of the short poem. By contrast, Kassák's goal was to destroy the very concept of the "poetic", desacralize art, abolish the autonomy and institutional identity of the aesthetic sphere, and end the alienation of the various spheres of human activity from each other. These two attitudes towards the Romantic legacy were irreconcilable.

What united Krúdy and Kassák was a prevailing sense of dislocation from the past. The difference, however, was more important than the similarity

between them. Krúdy and Kosztolányi had a nostalgic view of the past, and after 1920 Babits spoke in a similarly elegiac tone about the world lost with World War I. What is more, even Ady was tempted to regard himself as belonging to the old order he often criticized. The triumph over time was conceived by Krúdy, Babits, or Kosztolányi not as a leap into the future, as for the Hungarian Activists, but as a movement into the past. Somehow or other, all the major members of the *Nyugat* circle were attached to the heritage of nineteenth-century Liberal nationalism. By contrast, Kassák preferred to call himself a European poet, reminding his readers that he saw a fundamental difference between European art as represented by Bartók and a reliance upon Hungarian traditions advocated by Kodály. Most representatives of the earlier movement supported the bourgeois revolution of 1918 but became alienated from the Republic of Councils in 1919. After the fall of the latter regime, they distanced themselves from any kind of socialism and interpreted the Treaty of Trianon as a national tragedy. Kassák, on the other hand, moved to Vienna, and never lost his belief in socialism, despite the fact that the leaders of the Hungarian Party of the Communists banned his journal in July 1919.

Kassák felt no polar opposition between the needs of the creative artist and the values of mass industrial society. He felt at home in a working-class suburb of the Hungarian capital and later wrote his most successful novel about it (*Angyalföld*, 1929), whereas Ady, Krúdy, Móricz, Babits, and Kosztolányi were less pleased with the transformation of Budapest into an industrial metropolis. Ady returned to his village Érmindszent at regular intervals. Krúdy had nostalgic feelings for the *Nyírség*, one of the most backward agricultural regions of the country. Feeling that the past was slipping away from him, Babits turned his back on the present and escaped from the capital to a house on the top of a hill, on the outskirts of Esztergom, a small town in northern Hungary. As for Kosztolányi and Márai, both lived in a district of Buda whose closed community reminded them of the intimacy of Szabadka and Kassa, towns which had been transferred to Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia after World War I. *Anna Édes* (1926), the last of Kosztolányi's novels, and *Csutora* (1930), an autobiographical novel by Márai, present this district as almost cut off from the rest of the capital.

What distinguished both the major writers of *Nyugat* and the chief representatives of Hungarian Activism from the members of the Sunday Circle was their critique of the language. Kassák's efforts, however, ran counter to the Symbolist exploration of the allusive and associative powers of language. While Kosztolányi's main interest was a kind of *Sprachkritik* and Kassák's goal was to liberate language from the overlays of literary tradition, Lukács ignored the verbal aspect of literary works. The difference between the

positions taken by the two Hungarian poets was in their attitudes towards the legacy of Symbolism and in their approaches to literary genres. Kosztolányi's ideal had links with Mallarmé's dictum that poems were made not with ideas but with words. For Kosztolányi language became a human bastion against chaos and nothingness. The world is out there, he maintained, but descriptions of the world are human creations. Where there is no language there is no truth; and we are nothing save the words we use. Viewing himself as a servant and not a master of language, he broke with the idea that language was a medium, and considered a novel to be a work of verbal art, whereas Kassák was convinced that language could be regarded as a medium of expression and style was of no great importance in narrative prose. Because of this, the older writer's fiction has more affinity with the inventions of twentieth-century fiction than Kassák's more conventional narrative works. Kosztolányi's meta-fictional stories about Kornél Esti, written in the last decade of his life, represent a form of narrative which is "about" its own making, questioning its own practices and presuppositions, and suggesting that any idea we may have of enjoying a shared meaning is sheer delusion. Because of this, they are much closer to the mainstream of the experimental prose of the first third of the twentieth century than any of the Naturalistic novels of Kassák.

As I indicated earlier, World War I, the fall of the Commune and the Peace Treaty of Trianon brought radical changes to Hungarian culture. The impact of these historical events persuaded many that the values of the national past had been touched in their very foundations. A large number of urban centres (Kassa, Pozsony, Nagyvárad, Kolozsvár, Marosvásárhely, Brassó) were cut off from Budapest. Hungary had become not only smaller, but also less open to cross-cultural influences. The character of the country had changed; the rural areas of the Great Hungarian Plain gained significance. Three of the four modern movements lost their influence after their leaders left Hungary: *Huszadik Század* ceased to appear, the Sunday Circle was dissolved, and Kassák moved to Vienna. A political and social crisis shook the middle class, which turned inward and blamed itself for the failures of the recent past. The supporters of the avant-garde movement were viewed as the adherents of a future that had not materialized. Some felt that the war had made of Modernism a spent force. The very model of urban man had become the basis of a profound ideological cultural dissent, and the belief spread that the lasting forms of culture belonged outside urban civilization. In the summer of 1919 Dezső Szabó published *Az elsodort falu* (The Village Swept Away), a parable directed against both capitalism and socialism. Since its author had published essays both in *Huszadik Század* and in *Nyugat*, and supported Kassák's Activism in the early stage of its development, his novel represented a decisive

change of direction and thus anticipated the rise of a new generation. Three years later a collection of poems, *Ibolyalévíl* (Violet Leaf), came out. Its author, József Erdélyi, was of peasant origin, and his inspiration came from the oral traditions of his class. Within a few years a Populist movement was organized which involved a strong reaction both against the *Nyugat* movement and against the avant-garde. What is more, it was bound up with a reevaluation of the past which made urbanization and artistic modernity seem to be mere episodes in the history of Hungarian culture. While *Nyugat* represented a mixture of cosmopolitanism and provincialism, and Activism a decisive turn toward internationalism, the movement that arose in the 1920s and became a decisive factor in Hungarian culture in the 1930s was bound up with a cult of local traditions.

Needless to say, there were various factors which may have helped the rise of Populism. A few of these had international implications. One of the consequences of World War I was that the belief in progress entered a crisis. Aesthetic modernity seemed to disintegrate soon after it was established. Some of the artists who were among the innovators in the first decade of the twentieth century turned more conservative in the 1910s, whereas others continued to experiment. "Die Moderne spaltet sich, formelhaft gesprochen, in Neue Musik and Klassizismus," as a musicologist wrote about the years in which Richard Strauss stepped backwards from the style of *Elektra* (1908) to the far more tonal writing of *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911), whereas Schoenberg moved further from the less radical language of *Erwartung* (1909) in the direction of atonal music by composing *Pierrot lunaire* (1912).¹⁵ As is well-known, at the beginning of their careers Bartók and Kodály worked together, but by the 1910s it became obvious that Kodály did not want to break with the traditions of tonal music. Considering the important role Kodály was to play in the Populism of the 1930s, it is important to realize that his aesthetic conservatism may have given support to the Populists who dismissed the legacy of the avant-garde.

Although it would be misleading to overemphasize the connection between the Neoclassicism of the 1920s and the rise of Hungarian Populism, there can be no doubt that the success of such poets as Erdélyi or Sinka was at least partly due to some urban intellectuals' disillusionment with the avant-garde. Babits, who was rather critical of Kassák's internationalism from the very outset, turned more conservative both in a political and in an aesthetic sense after the Peace Treaty of Trianon. Finding the ground giving beneath his feet, feeling the burden of responsibility and detachment, he gave active support to the Populist movement by giving the prize of the Baumgarten Foundation three times to Erdélyi and four times to Gyula Illyés. In his later years Babits

realized that he could be a medium rather than a charismatic leader. He was inclined to view art as recreation rather than creation – his *Jónás könyve* (The Book of Jonah, 1939) is a personal adaptation of one of the books of the Old Testament. From a Neoclassical perspective art heavily dependent upon peasant culture seemed to be more acceptable than the subversive, anarchistic spirit of the avant-garde. By the 1920s the reviews published in *Nyugat* were no more favourable to the international avant-garde than *Napkelet*, a conservative journal founded by Tormay in 1923. *Az európai irodalom története* (The History of European Literature, 1934–35), the most sustained effort of Babits as essayist, is an epitome of Neoclassical ideals, an outline of European literary traditions, with a heavy emphasis on Classical Antiquity and the Latin Middle Ages. The last chapters of this highly impressive work make almost no mention of such movements as Futurism, Expressionism, Dada, or Surrealism.

Before World War I Ady, Babits, and Kosztolányi reacted against Positivism. Later Babits and Kosztolányi went as far as rejecting the project of the Enlightenment. They had two different things to say about the way the Western world was after 1920. For Babits it seemed belated, for Kosztolányi it turned out to be contingent. Modernity involved teleology, so Kosztolányi's distrust of history led to a rejection of the idea of modernity. It is no accident that the author of the stories about Kornél Esti was to exert such a profound influence on the Postmodern writers of the late twentieth century.

Besides the reaction against the avant-garde, the reinterpretation of Hungarian past also paved the way for the Populist movement. The starting hypothesis of some was that at the time of the Turkish occupation the Hungarian inhabitants had been forced to flee the capital, and Germans and German-speaking Jews came to live in Pest-Buda after the end of the Ottoman rule, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Writers who felt estranged from the foreign culture of the city had a revival in the 1930s. Literary historians supporting the Populist cause reminded the public that as early as 1790 József Gvadányi, the author of *Egy falusi nótáriusnak budai utazása* (A Village Notary's Journey to Buda), contrasted the Hungarian cowboys, shepherds, and horseherds of the lowland with the fashionable cosmopolitans of the capital. Bourgeois liberals dismissed Gvadányi as a provincial opponent of the Enlightenment, but László Arany's declarations of hostility to the rapidly changing society of the capital in his verse novel *A délibábok hőse* (The Hero of Mirages, 1873) could not be called superficial.

There is no doubt that the origins of the Populist movement go back to the nineteenth century. In 1897 a small collection of patriotic poems was published by Géza Lampérth, a poet of no distinction. The book's preface was written

by the conservative novelist and literary historian Zsolt Beöthy, who distinguished between rural and urban poetry, and insisted that only the former was acceptable as the expression of national values. One of the last members of the old Liberal generation, the seventy-one-year-old Pál Gyulai was quick to point out that folk culture "may be one of the main sources of national poetry, but should not be identified with it."¹⁶

In the first two decades of the twentieth century *Nyugat* and Kassák's Activism seemed to invalidate Populistic efforts, but soon an undercurrent in favour of rural values had set in. In some cases the advocates of the resurrection of the Hungarian village could find support from anti-Semites who lived in the neighbouring countries. Karl Lueger allowed to deliver himself of the word "Judapest" on occasion, and the Romanian Octavian Goga made the following remark in 1913: "Die ungarische Nationalliteratur hat in der Dichtung mit Petöfi und Johannes Arany, in der Prosa mit Mikszáth ihre Ende gefunden und hat der Budapester jüdischen Nationalliteratur Platz gemacht, die in unseren Tagen herrscht."¹⁷

Although the Hungarian Populism of the interwar period was inseparable from an occasional distrust of foreign influences, it would be a gross simplification to associate the movement with anti-Semitism. Its definition must be made on a much more general basis. The Commune of 1919 and the Peace Treaty of Trianon represented not only a historical break but also a cultural rupture. The rise of Populism was possible only because the legacy of bourgeois Liberalism became discredited when it proved to be weak to resist totalitarian dictatorship. The consequences of this crisis were not only a highly convincing critique of the superficially international mass culture of Budapest and a reassessment of folklore, but also a disturbance in the continuity of artistic modernity and an unfortunate dichotomy between the values of urban and peasant culture.

The growing discrepancy between the aesthetics and the style of Bartók and Kodály is symptomatic of the state of Hungarian culture after World War I. While the composer of *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* (1936) "se situe parmi les 'cinq grands' de la musique contemporaine aux cotés de Stravinsky, Webern, Schönberg et Berg",¹⁸ as a major composer of the second half of the twentieth century wrote; Kodály could be considered a late Romantic whose works could serve as a pretext for the justification of various forms of conservatism.

The political significance of Populism cannot be questioned. In the aesthetic sense, it accompanied a revival of nineteenth-century ideals, but it had also some continuity with the developments of the early twentieth century. Three of its immediate antecedents are of special significance.

The first among these is bound up with the fact that the modernity of *Nyugat* was closely tied to the traditions of preindustrial classes. In the case of Móricz, these traditions belonged to the peasantry, so for him it was easy to turn towards a Populistic interpretation of culture in his later years. His best short story, *Barbárok* (Barbarians, 1931) is reminiscent of the style of folk ballads, and *A boldog ember* (The Happy Man, 1935) is based on interviews with a poor peasant, so it represents an attempt to make documentary acceptable as literature, an effort characteristic of interwar Populism.

The difference between the social backgrounds of the creators and consumers of early-twentieth-century modernity also involved a contradiction between the values of the bourgeois and the artist. For Ady this tension involved occasional clashes with his sponsors. The post-war generation of the 1920s viewed the problem as unsolvable. Sándor Márai's best work, *The Confessions of a Citizen*, presents the anarchism of a *Kunstträger* and the civilized attitude of the *Kulturträger* as irreconcilable alternatives.

The third of the phenomena that made the rise of Populism possible was the proliferation of cheap journalism, fiction, and drama which alienated many artists from the mass culture of Budapest. László Németh, who started his career with essays assessing the achievement of Proust and Joyce and emphasizing the artistic flaws in the novels of Móricz and the aesthetic conservatism underlying the verse of Erdélyi, soon became the most violent critic of the superficiality of the values of the Hungarian bourgeoisie. His long pamphlet *Kisebbségben* (In Minority, 1939) is an attempt to present urbanization as alien to Hungarian culture.

Populism made an undeniable contribution to Hungarian culture by its criticism of mass culture. It raised folklore to the status of high art and modified the concept of literature by making non-fiction a canonical genre. It also changed the wider context of Hungarian culture by calling attention to its similarities with the cultures of other nations in Eastern Europe. Németh reproached Babits for his exclusively Western concept to culture, in his review of *The History of European Literature*. His criticism was absolutely justifiable. The modernity of *Nyugat* was inseparable from the idea that Hungary belonged to Western Europe. Ady occasionally spoke of common sorrows of Slavs, Romanians, and Hungarians, but for Babits tradition meant mainly the legacy of Western Europe. The Peace Treaty of Trianon, the loss of more than two thirds of the country, and the emergence of Czechoslovakia, the Southern Slav state, and a greater Romania that included Transylvania made intellectuals aware of the Eastern neighbours of the country.

Yet the new focus proved to be not only broader but also narrower. None of the Populists could compete with Kosztolányi's polylingualism; for them

the usable past was much more local, both in time and space. The loss of old illusions also involved the creation of new ones. Some Populists were inclined to believe that Eastern Europe could follow a path different from that of Western urbanization. Among the models to be rejected were the legacy of the avant-garde. Having returned to Budapest in 1926, Kassák found himself in a changed world. After some unsuccessful attempts at continuing his activity, even he made a compromise with the spirit of the times. His more traditional verse, written in the 1930s and later, represents not only a stylistic change but also an artistic decline.

Undeniably, there were some attempts at a synthesis of modernity and Populism. Attila József learned not only from Kosztolányi and Kassák but also from Erdélyi, but he was an exceptional and even solitary figure. No other major literary talent followed his suit. In music, the decline was conspicuous: hardly any original composer emerged until Communism outruled the very possibility of innovation. In the visual arts discontinuity may have been somewhat less obvious, although the institutionalization of the avant-garde was delayed by almost half a century. First the Neoclassicism of the "Roman School," after 1945 the eclectic style called "Socialist Realism" was supported by the political Establishment, so continuity with Kassák's Activism could be reasserted only in the form of a counterculture.

Although the Populism of the 1920s and 1930s was not without antecedents and significant achievements, it led to a fatal division between urban and rural values, high art and popular culture. By the time of World War II Hungarian culture seemed to be more archaic than it had been before World War I. In poetry and in the visual arts there was some continuity, but culture as a whole had stopped on its way towards becoming an institution supported by the bourgeoisie. Bartók had no successor in music, and the initiatives of Krúdy and Kosztolányi were not taken seriously by other prose writers, so that the representative Hungarian novel of the twentieth century remained unwritten. *Tündérbert* (A Garden of Fairies, 1922), by Móricz, or *Iszony* (Revulsion, 1947), by László Németh, are fine works but are marked by Conservatism in the aesthetic sense. The former is an attempt to revive the tradition of nineteenth-century Realism, whereas the latter is a somewhat belated example of the psychological novel. The narrative prose of the avant-garde and the Populist movement is second-rate by comparison. Kassák's Expressionistic novel *Tragédiás figurák* (Tragic Characters, 1919) or Sinka's autobiography *Fekete bojtár vallomásai* (The Confessions of a Black Shepherd, 1944) represent the outmoded view that language plays a far less important role in prose than in verse.

After 1945 Communism increased the gap between Hungary and Western culture. The artists active in the decades following 1956 could not rely on a

consistent tradition of modernity; their task was not only the restoration but also the creation of the tradition of the modern. Péter Esterházy, the most significant literary talent born in the Communist era, is not only a representative of the Postmodern condition but also a follower of Kosztolányi, the best Hungarian writer of the early twentieth century. The distance between these two writers is smaller than that between the significant artists of the early and late twentieth century in France, Britain, Germany, or the United States. This would suggest that notwithstanding the significant achievements of the early twentieth century, it is hardly possible to speak about a consistent tradition of modernity in Hungarian culture.

Notes

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14. Charles Jenks, "Postmodern vs. Late-Modern," in Ingeborg Hoesterey, ed., *Zeitgeist in Babel: The Postmodernist Controversy* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 12.

15. Carl Dahlhaus, *Die Musik des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1980), p. 282.
16. Pál Gyulai, "Első könyvem", *Kritikai dolgozatainak újabb gyűjteménye* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1927), p. 375.
17. Julius von Farkas, *Der Freiheitskampf des ungarischen Geistes 1867–1914: Ein Kapitel aus der Geschichte der neueren ungarischen Literatur* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1940), p. 208.
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Modernism in the Making

EUROPEAN ART CENTERS AND HUNGARIAN ART (1890–1919)

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Among the art centers of Europe, Munich, Paris and Berlin had the greatest influence on late nineteenth and early twentieth century Hungarian art.¹ Hungary's neighbor, Vienna, and Italy, which was the cradle of Neo-Classicism and Central European Romanticism, also served as inspiration for artists who visited them for longer or shorter periods of time.² As early as the 1840s young Hungarian artists began to visit places as distant as London, but British art could also be seen at exhibitions in Paris, Munich, and Pest-Buda, later Budapest. There were some attempts to travel to Russia – Russian literature was widely read in Hungary – but only one or two artists reached St. Petersburg and Yasnaya Polyana, the Tolstoy estate. Instead, Russian, Finnish, Lithuanian and other East European contemporary art was studied in Munich, Paris and Berlin, and sometimes also in Budapest.

Visits to European art centers and places of “holy solitude” were accessible to Hungarian artists of all social ranks. Painters of aristocratic background such as Baron László Mednyánszky³ often paid visits to Vienna, Rome and Paris, while the artists of the nobility and middle classes preferred Munich, whose art academy was well known to them, and whose artistic atmosphere was more liberal than that of Vienna. Tradesmen and artisans had their own well-travelled routes in Europe from the beginning of the Middle Ages. (Up to the end of the nineteenth century in some respects artists were considered artisans.) In the second half of the nineteenth century the Artists' Society of Hungary paid for the travel of poor painters of lower social origin, like Mihály Munkácsy to Vienna, Munich, Düsseldorf and Paris.⁴ Daily newspapers, literary and art periodicals sent their poets, writers, illustrators and painters to Paris and other places. This was how the great Symbolist poet of the early twentieth century Endre Ady, or the Secessionist-Expressionist painter József Egrý and others could afford to stay abroad.⁵

In spite of all its social conflicts, Austria–Hungary was rich at the turn of the century, had a good, steady currency, a society in development. For instance, the Hungarian art critic Lajos Fülep was able to exchange the

Austro-Hungarian crowns he received for the articles he sent back home from Paris for French francs one-for-one.⁶ This in fact made it possible for him to arrange for an extended stay abroad.

Great individual talents such as the painter Tivadar Csontváry and the poet, art critic, and later painter Lajos Kassák all found their own way to the great European art centers. Csontváry, when he decided to be a painter gave up his job as a pharmacist and rented his shop out so he could travel throughout Europe and the Middle East, following the way of his Orientalist predecessors,⁷ while in 1909 the young proletarian poet Lajos Kassák went to Paris on foot, like the vagabonds and apprentices of old times who wished to gain more experience and more skill in their trade.⁸ They were the true aristocrats of the spirit.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Munich was the main art center of Central and Eastern Europe. From 1869 onwards, not only Academic Historicism survived there, but Naturalism and Naturalist Symbolism were born alongside. A new sensualism emerged in the ateliers of young painters – among them was a Hungarian student of Piloty, Pál Szinyei Merse.⁹ They followed the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer and later Friedrich Nietzsche, who were read not only in Munich, but also in the intellectual circles of small Hungarian towns and Protestant colleges. The music of Richard Wagner, which revolutionized music in Germany, was also played in the private music chambers of certain Hungarian noblemen. Wagnerian music created a new, non-Academic approach to past cultures and mythologies. His influence, together with the writings of Schopenhauer and the early lectures of Nietzsche helped Pál Szinyei Merse to create sensitive mythological sketches and free, emotional *plain air* paintings. Pictorial influences, however, came to Munich from Paris. Exhibitions of the works of Gustave Courbet, the Realists of Barbizon enchanted many pupils of the Academy.¹⁰ Naturalism was already taught in Munich's free schools in the 1880s. One such free school was lead by the Hungarian painter Simon Hollósy,¹¹ who admired Jules Breton, Jules Bastien-Lepage, and read Zola, Murger, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky.

Thus, news from Paris and from other literary and art centers of Europe arrived to Hungarian art circles via Munich. A longer stay in Munich, studies at the Academy and at the free schools were the first steps to a revealing journey of discovery to the French capital. The art of Wassily Kandinsky might serve as a parallel example of this kind of indirect influence.¹²

The Naturalist-symbolism of Munich, created by Max Klinger, Arnold Böcklin and others, was highly appreciated and followed in an individual way by many Hungarian painters, of whom I would like to point out Pál Szinyei Merse, Károly Ferenczy and János Vaszary. They belong to different gener-

ations and represent different attitudes. Munich's *Jugendstil* also found followers in the 1890s in the works of István Csók, János Vaszary, Ferenc Helbing, Frigyes Strobentz and others.¹³ Franz Stuck's celebrated painting *Sin* (1893), was awarded a gold medal in 1899 in Budapest, and its eroticism had an echo both in the series by István Csók entitled *Vampires*, and in the nudes of János Vaszary.¹⁴ Thus, Stuck's sensual Symbolism, along with his use of relief-like composition, flat planes of color and ornamental borders, had Hungarian counterparts.

The appearance of *Jugendstil* can be seen on the covers and in the reproductions of Hungarian art reviews – but the strong critical, liberal spirit of the *Jugend* and *Simplicissimus* did not secure a footing in Hungary until 1906, and even then, it shocked conservative Hungarians for years to come.

The same happened with Viennese modern art. In the late 1890s Vienna was the town of Gustav Klimt and of *Ver Sacrum* – it was the age of sensuality and passion, of the liberation of the subconscious. Gustav Klimt's *Judith* (1901) is the sister of Stuck's *Sin*, while illustrations and paintings by the young Oskar Kokoschka and Egon Schiele show great variety in the depiction of pleasure, sorrow, and suffering. The eroticism of life and death expressed in a fine line-color structure is very rare in Hungarian painting and graphic art. Only Lajos Gulácsy understood the psychological allusions of the Viennese *Secession*.¹⁵ The Expressionist Lajos Tihanyi¹⁶ followed Oskar Kokoschka and Paris-Gütersloh in an individual way, subordinating their influence to that of Cézanne, André Derain, and Chaim Soutine. The Expressionism of Kandinsky and the *Blauer Reiter* was appreciated and followed more directly by one or two Hungarian painters and sculptors. Among them, one of the most original was János Máttis-Teutsch.¹⁷ He also went to Paris – this was in 1906 – to become acquainted with the works of Paul Gauguin, Matisse, and other masters of the new approach to color and form. In spite of all these experiences, Máttis-Teutsch could preserve and represent the spirit of the Munich *Secession* and Expressionism in the avant-garde of Berlin, Budapest, and later, even Bucharest.

Through their travels to Munich and Paris, the first Hungarian moderns also discovered John Ruskin, William Morris and Walter Crane. Around 1900, the Pre-Raphaelites were welcome in Budapest. Walter Crane visited the Hungarian capital and had exhibitions and lectures, while Ruskin's books were translated into Hungarian.¹⁸ Medievalizing English modernism could be made to harmonize with the historical orientation of a national art, the persistent tradition of the nineteenth century. Researches on popular art were considered as the highest ethical and historical task of a small nation like the Hungarian. "If I think of the German or Austrian *Secession*, and if Stuck comes to my

mind, I am shocked," writes a zealous admirer of the Hungarian Pre-Raphaelite colony of Gödöllő as late as 1981. "I cannot find anything in them which can be called human – not to say the same of Egon Schiele who created a noble art... The Hungarian *Secession* was a movement of a higher (ethical) rank – and this is the art of the Gödöllő colony and not that of János Vaszary and József Rippl-Rónai."¹⁹ In short, a distinction was made between two kinds of Secession in Hungary: the sinful, cosmopolitan French- and German-influenced art of Vaszary and Rippl-Rónai, and the English oriented, "holy" art of the artists' colony of Gödöllő with its pursuit of arts and crafts *à la* Ruskin and Morris.

The artists of Gödöllő were also influenced by the Russian writers, first and foremost Leo Tolstoy, and by a Hungarian-born German philosopher, Eugen Heinrich Schmitt.²⁰ They were inspired by past and present, by Western and Eastern cultures alike. Socrates and Shakespeare, Maeterlinck, Anatole France, Gorky and Gogol were read at their tea parties in the original languages. Akseli Gallen Kallela, the Finnish painter who was an appreciable presence in the modern art circles of Munich, was later a guest of the Gödöllő colony. When he came, as a symbolic gesture of the need to be rooted in a common Finnish-Hungarian past, he presented the members of the colony with Finnish skis; what is more, when they met during their long winter ski-walks in the hills, they greeted each other with the word "Suomi" in remembrance of their common ancestors and what they perceived as their special task in the world.²¹

It was also in Munich, from where Gallen Kallela had come to Gödöllő, that Kandinsky, Ciurlionis and other East European artists joined contemporary movements, where Bavarian *Hinterglasmalerei* and Russian *ljubok* was esteemed, where the art of such hitherto unknown European nations as the Finnish, Latvian, Lithuanian and Hungarian was discovered.

A similar approach to the motifs of folk art, to the modest, puritanical life of peasants and artisans is present in the art and way of life of the Gödöllő colony in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Their aims correspond to the research work of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály in folk music.²² Their rustic and family oriented way of life was more attractive to the Hungarian public than the spiritual self-liberation of *Jugendstil* on the one hand, and cosmopolitan Parisianism of a painter like József Rippl-Rónai on the other. The artists of Gödöllő also visited Paris, studied at the *Julian Academy*, saw the exhibitions both of the Post-Impressionists and the Pre-Raphaelites, but at the end they chose the latter as their ideal. Their modest modernism was further advanced by their journeys to Italy. Italy always had a special significance for Hungarian painters. Among the Hungarian artists visiting Rome, the survival of Romanticist-Historicist religious art was promoted by a

Hungarian historian and clergyman, Vilmos Fraknói, who opened a Hungarian House for researchers and artists.²³ Here, Nazarene thoughts lived on even in the 1890s and 1900s. Other painters and art critics went to Florence and lived there for a longer or shorter time. Admiring the Italian past, the poetry of Dante and the great masters of the early-Renaissance, great individuals like Lajos Gulácsy (who was a poet, a writer, an art critic and the master of drawing and painting) and the later members of the Gödöllő artists' colony could easily discover the precursors of the British Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

After their extensive tours abroad, Csontváry, Mednyánszky and other artists regarded Italy as their true spiritual home. After his Munich years, Pál Szinyei Merse always dreamt of a longer Italian stay so that he could live near Hans von Marées and Arnold Böcklin, the "*Deutschrömer*", the German moderns of Rome. Unfortunately, he was never able to realize his dream.²⁴

Southern colors, lights and moods often appear even on the canvases of later avant-garde painters. During his visit in Italy, Béla Uitz²⁵ learned from the compositions of the great Renaissance masters and from the aggressive colorism of the Futurist painters at the same time. Imre Szobotka,²⁶ an early Cubist painter of Hungary, after his visit to Rome in 1909, had some Mediterranean traits in his later Parisian Cubist and Orphist paintings.

The Paris of the period under discussion had many different faces. In the 1880s it was still one of the chief centers of Academic eclecticism (*l'art pompier*), but it was also that of Realism and Naturalism and the birthplace of Impressionism and Symbolism. In the 1890s *Art Nouveau* was created here, and Orientalism enjoyed a renewed popularity. In about 1905, the *Fauves* launched a visual attack against any traditional colorism, while at the same time Henri Rousseau created a naive-Academic modernism. From 1908 to 1912, trends like Cubism, Futurism and Orphism appeared in Parisian exhibitions and ateli-18ers and the revolution of vision had been accomplished.

Which was the face of Paris that the majority of Hungarian artists discovered for themselves? Around 1870 the ordinary Hungarian artists admired the art of the official Salons. Only Mihály Munkácsy, László Paál, and later Géza Mészöly and László Mednyánszky appreciated the art of Gustave Courbet, Theodule Ribot, Millet and the School of Barbizon.²⁷ The latter was only one or two meetings for Munkácsy, followed by majestic, Realist landscapes, but László Paál, Géza Mészöly and László Mednyánszky became important artists of that school and followed in the footsteps of Daubigny, Theodore Rousseau and Camille Corot. But, for instance, Mednyánszky also followed the more conservative Isidore Pils, the master of dramatic war paintings.

The conservative background of early Hungarian modernism is based on Romanticism, Realism and Naturalism. The career of Tivadar Csontváry is a good example of this tendency.²⁸ From the small country town where he lived, he travelled to Rome to see the paintings of Raphael, the ideal of the Academic tradition. His second journey was to Paris to meet Mihály Munkácsy, his countryman whom he admired for his theatrical, religious panorama paintings and realistic landscapes. After collecting enough money for his studies, Csontváry followed the usual Hungarian pattern and went to study art at Munich. But in Munich he attended the private school of his countryman Simon Hollósy, a Naturalist academy. After a short presence at the Academy of Karlsruhe Csontváry returned to Italy, then went again to Paris, where he studied at the *Julian Academy* for a short time. Being urged by the spirit of travel, he looked for ideal places and motifs in Greece, Italy, the Mount Lebanon, the Holy Land as well as in Egypt and Central Europe. He followed the examples of European Romanticist-Orientalist painters, but he was also intimately familiar with the discoveries relating to color and light of the Naturalists and Impressionists. His first exhibition opened in Paris in 1907 in a World Fair pavillion, which stood near the Pont Alma.

It was not mere chance that Csontváry's second exhibition was planned for Berlin in 1910,²⁹ since his method of composition and principal aims had very much in common with the philosophical heroic landscape painting pursued in Germany. However, lacking any support from his home, Csontváry's Berlin exhibition never opened, though its catalogue was ready.

Nevertheless, from 1909 onwards, Berlin became more and more important for Hungarian modernists, though it made its influence felt fully only in the years preceeding World War I, and especially after the war, in the Twenties.³⁰ But before discussing this, let us turn back to Paris for a while, because it was here that the very first modern Hungarian painter worked for more than ten years before 1900.

József Rippl-Rónai³¹ was at first a pupil of Munkácsy, but as early as in 1889, he discovered the works of Paul Gauguin, Paul Sérusier, and Cézanne, and consequently became a member of the *Nabis*. He made friends with Bonnard, Vuillard and Aristide Maillol – all of whom were either despised or simply ignored by Munkácsy. Beside his French ideals, Rippl-Rónai also tried to follow the style of James Whistler's elegant, withdrawn silver-gray and darkbrown portraits and landscapes. This was the first instance, in fact, of the influence of modern American art on a Hungarian painter *via* Paris. Some years later, Rippl-Rónai created his own *Art Nouveau* style with unmistakable lines, colors and forms, exhibited in the *Bing Salon* and the *Salon des Champs des Mars*. He was also a member of the *Artistes Intelligents* of the *Revue*

Blanche. According to contemporary art critic Lajos Fülep, Rippl-Rónai "was the Cézanne and Gauguin of Hungarian painting rolled into one, as well as the representative of what could be called Impressionism in the best sense."³² In the catalogue of his first Hungarian one-man show of 1900, Rippl-Rónai also called himself an Impressionist and continued to do so, even though his stylized colors and contours had typical Post-Impressionist and *Art Nouveau* qualities. He admired Japanese art and his never to be realized dream was a ship academy on the sea, where painters could study the waves, the clouds, and the lights. In the background of this dream there are the sea-paintings of the Japanese, of Courbet, Monet, and of Rippl-Rónai himself. Rippl-Rónai painted the sea near Ostende, then once he passed along the shores of Sicily, when he wanted to visit the ruins of the ancient Greek theater of Taormina, previously put on canvas by many European Neo-Classical and Romanticist painters and also by his countrymen Csontváry, Mednyánszky and Vaszary. But there was a great storm on the sea, and he could not land.³³ This story is symbolic, it indicates the unaccomplished character of his experiments. Rippl-Rónai was not a fanatic of distant lands like Paul Gauguin, nor was he in love with passion and excitement, as was Vincent Van Gogh. Nor was he interested in finding new associations between the past and the present, as Paul Cézanne was. He never sought escape, he was a society man, both in France and in Hungary. He painted elegant, impressionistic portraits, interiors and still-lives, intimate and musical, like the poems of Francis Jammes. Both in his Parisian years and after his return home in 1900, he remained closer to the worlds of Bonnard, Vuillard and Maurice Denis, who represented the second division of French modernism. Sometimes he was not far from the landscape and portrait painting of the *Fauves*, yet he never became a revolutionary modernist himself.

When in 1906 the works of Rippl-Rónai enjoyed their first great success in Budapest, a great many painters, and critics from Hungary had already discovered not only the Paris of Gauguin and Cézanne, but also that of Henri Matisse and the *Fauves*.³⁴ By that time, a group of Hungarian painters began congregating at Parisian cafés and at the exhibitions of the *Salon des Independents* and the *Salon d'Automne*, later to continue their artistic activities at home as the Neoimpressionists of the Naturalist-Symbolist Nagybánya School and as the avant-garde Group of The Eight.³⁵ Their art critic György Bölöni wrote about the growing enthusiasm toward new Parisian trends as follows: "Express trains transporting Hungarian artists to the West stop in Vienna and Munich, but nowadays nobody bothers to get off before Paris, the capital of modern art."³⁶ In the 1910s, and even before, not the traditional art schools and exhibitions, but the school of Henri Matisse and the shows of the *Fauves* and later those of the Cubists were the places most often visited by young

Hungarian artists. On the other hand, it is true that the classical heritage of European art preserved in the Louvre and the noble medieval, Renaissance and Neo-Classical architecture of Paris also offered great examples of composition, proportion and balance, which were echoed in the works of József Nemes Lampérth, Csaba Vilmos Perlrott and others.³⁷ Townscapes with wild colors, done in small cubes and Orphic light constructions appeared in the views of small Hungarian towns, like in the painting entitled *View of Kecs-kemét* by János Kmetty, done in 1912.³⁸ By that time it was usual to paint the houses and towns in fire-red, violet, and deep green, like the southern landscapes of Matisse, Vuillard, and their companions.

Between 1907 and 1913, the Parisian connection was especially strong. There were several French art exhibitions, and the Hungarian Parisianists, too, created groups and exhibited their French-inspired oils, watercolors, and sculptures. In the 1890s, the *Nabis* had just one Hungarian among them, while between 1905 and 1914, several Hungarian artists exhibited their works among the *Fauves*. Four artists also belonged to Cubist circles. Some Hungarian artists were *Fauves* and *Cubists* by instinct, others, like Károly Kernstok, who had studied art in Munich, and Bertalan Pór, who admired Ferdinand Hodler, embraced a mixture of French and German traditionalism and modernism.³⁹ Hungarian art critics and philosophers such as the above-mentioned Lajos Fülep and György Lukács, and theoretically inclined painters such as Károly Kernstok and Robert Berény, were well versed in German philosophy. They were mostly Neo-Kantians or Fichteians in the early 1910s, and were influenced by Benedetto Croce's aesthetics and Henri Bergson's theory of perception only later.⁴⁰ Their conceptions of modern art were therefore derived from German classical philosophy. Within this theoretical sphere Impressionism was superfluous and inferior to the new Neo-Classical Post-Impressionism, which was seen as the true continuation of the art of Cézanne.⁴¹

Thus, during the period under discussion, Hungarian art was equally influenced by French and German trends. Modern German literature and art reached not only the Hungarian capital, but the major towns as well, where German was the second language of the middle classes. Frank Wedekind's *Frühlingserwachen*, which was shown in 1908 at the *Theatre des Arts* in Paris, enjoyed great success in Budapest the following year. August Stramm's lyrics, books by Fritz Burger, Wilhelm Worringer and Wassily Kandinsky appeared in bookshops all over the country. *Der Sturm* and *Die Aktion* of Berlin did not only have a Hungarian readership, but also Hungarian contributors – writers, poets, and later, artists.⁴²

The appearance of Hungarian modernism in Berlin dates back to 1910, when an impressive collection of Hungarian art was displayed in the Palace of

Secession.⁴³ Such shows were fostered by Hungarian cultural policy, too, which never happened in the case of Paris, except for the World's Fairs. The Hungarian avant-garde artists who called themselves The Eight, and who followed the Fauve and Cézannist tradition, were all on view while three years later, the Expressionist and Futurist works of the Berlin avant-garde were exhibited in Budapest.⁴⁴ It is true that the most modern works of the German, French and Italian avant-garde had a poor reception at first in Budapest, and only about the end of the war were they followed in the paintings and graphic art of the Hungarian Activists, who, similarly to their German and Russian contemporaries, amalgamated Cubism, Expressionism and Futurism in their early period, which lasted from 1915 to 1919.⁴⁵

During the years of the Great War, Berlin continued to preserve its position as a leading light of European Pacifist and Activist modernism. Paris had closed her doors to German, Hungarian, and other "non allied" artists. Some of them, including the Cubists Imre Szobotka and Ferenc Bossányi, were interned in camps: others, such as József Rippl-Rónai, were arrested and released only after long months of detention.⁴⁶ And so, naturally, Hungarian artists turned to Berlin for inspiration, now more than ever. In Berlin, strong anti-war, anti-imperialist protest was present everywhere: on the pages of literary and art reviews, on the stage, and at art exhibitions. Egon Schiele's sad drawing of the fallen French poet Charles Péguy, the poems lamenting the early deaths of August Stramm, Franz Marc and others on the battlefield, all these reported on the pages of *Der Sturm* and *Die Aktion*, made a deep impression of the young Hungarian Activist artists. No wonder, that when in 1919 this first non-Academic, non-traditionalist avant-garde movement in Hungary was looking for a name, it took its cue from the periodical *Die Aktion*, and called what it was doing *Activism*. The Activists published periodicals—entitled *A Tett* (The Action) and *MA* (Today) — similar to *Der Sturm* and *Die Aktion* and had an equally clear-cut program in politics and the arts. They were radical revolutionaries, they called for peace and for social change in Central Europe. They elaborated a new poetic and artistic vocabulary following the dynamism of Futurism, the elementarism of Expressionism and the new formalism of Cubism. (The new experiments of pre-war Paris were forgotten neither in Berlin, nor in Budapest. Apollinaire's *Les peintres cubistes* was translated and published by the Activists, and reproductions of the works of Pablo Picasso, Umberto Boccioni and Robert Delaunay also appeared in their publications.⁴⁷ But interest at this time continued to focus on Berlin. Those who could afford it — as János Máttis-Teutsch, who was born in the half Hungarian, half Saxon Brassó (today Braşov) in Transylvania — visited the offices of *Der Sturm* regularly and attended its theater and the Berlin cabarets.

Expressionist poetry and graphic art became his chief sources of inspiration. The example of German coherence in creating a synthesis in Cubism, Expressionism and Futurism was clearly appreciated by Activist art critics⁴⁸ and was championed by Lajos Kassák, the head of the movement, who was a poet, writer and author of avant-garde publications before he began to paint and produce graphic art in the early 1920s. Kassák did not actually visit Berlin until 1922. At this time, though, he also visited Prague, for he was already familiar with Czech Cubism – a French offspring, yet also distinctly Central European.⁴⁹

As the highly respected theoretician of the Hungarian avant-garde, Lajos Kassák tried to create something similar to German Activism, French and Czech Cubism, Russian Suprematism, and Constructivism. His open letter to the political leader of the Hungarian Republic of Councils of 1919 was the first publication in which Russian Futurists were mentioned with enthusiasm, though the Burliuk brothers and Goncharova had been exhibited between 1903 and 1913 in Budapest alongside Kandinsky and Jawlensky. A poem by Kandinsky, written in German, was translated and published in 1915 in the first Activist review *A Tett*.⁵⁰

These events meant the end of a development that had begun in the 1890s in Munich, continued during the first decade of the 1900s in Paris, and was kept alive in the 1910s and even later in Berlin, Prague, and Budapest.

Notes

1. Lajos Németh, *Modern Hungarian Art* (Budapest: Corvina, 1972), Lajos Németh, ed., *A magyarországi művészet története 6. Magyar művészet 1890–1919*. (The History of Art in Hungary. Vol. 6. Hungarian Art 1890–1919), (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1981).
Judit Szabadi, *Hungarian Art Nouveau: Painting, Sculpture and Graphic Art* (Budapest: Corvina, 1989).
2. Gyula Fleischer, *Magyarok a bécsi akadémián* (Hungarian Students in the Art Academy of Vienna), (Budapest, 1938).
Géza Jászai, München und die Kunst Ungarns 1800–1845. In: *Ungarn Jahrbuch*. Mainz, 1970;
István Genthon–Éva Bodnár, *Magyar festők Itáliában* (Hungarian Painters in Italy). Catalogue of the Hungarian National Gallery. (Budapest, 1967.)
Julia Szabó, *Painting in Nineteenth Century Hungary* (Budapest: Corvina, 1988).
3. Ernő Kállai, *Mednyánszky László* (Budapest, 1943).
4. F. W. Ilges, *Michael von Munkácsy* (Vienna, 1899).
Lajos Végváry, *Munkácsy Mihály élete és művei* (The Life and Work of Michael Munkácsy), (Budapest, 1958).
5. Endre Ady, *The Explosive Country*. A selection of articles and studies 1898–1916. Introd. transl. and annot. by G. F. Cushing. Selection Erzsébet Vezér (Budapest, 1977).

- Lajos Németh, "Le peinture de József Egry," *Acta Historiae Artium. Acad. Sci. Hung.* VII (1961), pp. 303–335, Sándor Lánicz, "József Egry", *Acta Historiae Artium. Acad. Sci. Hung.* XXV (1979), pp. 143–159.
6. *Fülep Lajos levelezése I.* (Correspondence of Lajos Fülep I.) ed. Dóra Csanak. Publication of the Institute of History of Art, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Budapest, 1990).
 7. Lajos Németh, *Csontváry* (Budapest, 1964), English version 1971.
 8. Éva Körner, "Kassák, the Painter in Theory and Practice," *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, 1966. N.21.54. – Bori, Imre–Körner, Éva: *Kassák irodalma és festészete* (Kassák's Writing and Painting), (Budapest, 1968, 2nd ed. 1988) – T. Strauss, *Kassák Ein ungarischer Beitrag zum Konstruktivismus* (Köln, 1975).
 9. Anna Szinyei Merse, *Szinyei Merse Pál élete és művei* (The Life and Work of Pál Szinyei Merse), (Budapest, 1990).
 10. Eugene Muntz, "Exposition Internationale de Munich," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 11 (October) 1869. p. 308. See also: Gabriel P. Weisberg, *The Realist Tradition. French Painting and Drawing 1830–1900* (Published by the Cleveland Museum of Art in cooperation with Indiana University Press, 1991).
 11. Lajos Németh, *Hollósy Simon* (Budapest, 1955).
 12. Cp. Kandinsky in Munich 1896–1914. (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1982).
 13. Szabadi *op. cit.*, Note 1.
 14. Gyöngyi Éri–Zsuzsa Jobbágy, *A Golden Age. Art and Society in Hungary 1896–1914*. With essays by Iván T. Berend, Lajos Németh, Ilona Sármany-Parsons. (Budapest, Corvina/Barbican Art Gallery, Center for the Fine Arts, Miami, 1990), pp. 128, 159, 161.
 15. Judit Szabadi, "The Life and Art of Lajos Gulácsy". In: *Acta Historiae Artium Acad. Sci. Hung.* Tom. XVI. (1970).
Béla Szijs, *Gulácsy Lajos* (Budapest, 1979).
 16. Robert Desnos, *Tihanyi. Peintures 1908–1922* (Paris, 1936), Krisztina Passuth, "La carrière de Lajos Tihanyi," *Acta Historiae Artium Acad. Sci. Hung.* Tom. XXII. (1976), Fasc. 1–2.
 17. Hans Máttis-Teutsch, *Kunstideologie* (Potsdam, 1931; Second edition with the introduction of Mihai Nadin and Elisabeth Axmann, Bucharest, 1977). – Julia Szabó, *Máttis-Teutsch János* (With a bibliography and a German summary) (Budapest, 1983).
 18. Aladár Körösfői Kriesch, *Ruskinról és az angol praeraffaelitákról* (On Ruskin and the English Pre-Raphaelites), (Budapest, 1904). – Katalin Gellér–Katalin Keserű, *A gödöllői művésztelep* (The Artist Colony of Gödöllő), (Budapest, 1987).
 19. Péter Polónyi, *Emlékezések a gödöllői művésztelepre* (Memories about the Artists Colony of Gödöllő: Jenő Barcsay), pp. 2–3.
 20. Katalin Gellér, "Elements symbolistes dans l'oeuvre des artistes de la colonie de Gödöllő," *Acta Historiae Artium Acad. Sci. Hung.* Tom. XXVIII. (1982), pp. 131–174.
 21. P. Polónyi, *op. cit.*, Note 19, pp. 12–13.
 22. Katalin Gellér–Katalin Keserű, *A gödöllői művésztelep. Városi Helytörténeti Gyűjtemény.* (The Artists' Colony of Gödöllő), (Gödöllő, 1981), (With English summaries).
 23. Cp. the catalogue: *Die ungarische Kunstgeschichte und die Wiener Schule* (Hungarian Art History and the Viennese School of Art History), 1846–1930. Ernő Marosi, ed. (Budapest, 1983).
 24. Cp. Anna Szinyei Merse, ed., *A Majális festője közelről.* Szinyei Merse Pál levelezése, önéletrajzai, visszaemlékezések (The Painter of the Picnic in May. The Correspondence, Autobiographies and Recollections of Pál Szinyei Merse), (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1989).

25. Sándor Kontha, "L'art de Béla Uitz," *Acta Historiae Artium Acad. Sci. Hung.* Tom. XIX. (1973), pp. 305–328. Éva Bajkay, *Uitz Béla* (Budapest, 1974, enlarged ed. 1987)
26. Imre Szobotka, *Olii, acquarelli e disegni* (Oils, Water Colors and Drawings), Exhibition from 15 March to 30 April 1973). Galleria dell'incisione, Milano.
27. Géza Perneczky, *Munkácsy Mihály* (Budapest, 1970). Julia Szabó, *op. cit.*, Note 2.
28. Lajos Németh, *Csontváry emlékkönyv* (Csontváry Memorial Book), (Budapest, 1976), p. 115. His catalogues are preserved in the collection of the Institute of History of Art, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest.
29. According to a printed catalogue in German the Csontváry exhibition would have been in Berlin, Kochstrasse 18. Cp. Lajos Németh, *op. cit.*, Note 28. pp. 119–120.
30. See the article of Krisztina Passuth in this volume: pp. 127–138.
31. F. Gachot, *Joseph Rippl-Rónai* (in French) (Budapest, 1948),
A. Humbert, *Les Nabis et leur époque* (Genève, 1954),
J. Szabadi, "József Rippl Rónai et l'art nouveau", *Acta Historiae Artium Acad. Sci. Hung.* Tom. XXVI (1980), Fasc. 3–4. pp. 285–316.
Patricia Eckert-Boyer, *The Nabis and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (New Brunswick and London, 1988).
32. Lajos Fülep, "Rippl Rónai József," *A Ház*, 1910. No. 10. New edition in: Lajos Fülep, *A művészet forradalmától a nagy forradalomig*. I. (From the art revolution to the great revolution). Articles and studies (Budapest, 1974), pp. 210–214.
33. The event is mentioned in Mária Bernáth, *Rippl-Rónai József* (Budapest, 1976).
34. Cp. Joanna Drew, ed., *The Hungarian Avant Garde. The Eight and the Activists*. Hayward Gallery from Febr. 27 to April 30, 1980. See Chronology of the events.
35. Krisztina Passuth, "Les Huit, le premier groupe hongrois de tendance constructive," *Acta Historiae Artium Acad. Sci. Hung.* Tom. VIII. (1962), Fasc. 1–2. and *op. cit.* in Note 34.
36. György Bölöni, *Képek között* (Among paintings) (Budapest, 1967), pp. 472–473.
37. Zsuzsa Molnár: *Nemes Lampérth* (Budapest, 1967),
Ottó Mezei, *Nemes Lampérth* (Budapest, 1984) (with French and German summaries).
Máriusz Rabinovszky, "Perlrott Csaba Vilmos," *Ars Una* (Budapest, 1924, pp. 8–9.
38. First published in the catalogue quoted in Note 34.
39. Iván Dévényi, *Kernstok Károly* (Budapest, 1970).
For both Kernstok and Pór see *op. cit.* in Note 34.
40. Árpád Timár, "The young Lukács and the Fine Arts," *Acta Historiae Artium Acad. Sci. Hung.* Tom. XXXIV (1989), pp. 29–39.
Georg Lukács, *Karl Mannheim und der Sonntagskreis*. Eds Éva Karádi and Erzsébet Vezér (Frankfurt am Main, 1985).
41. Lajos Fülep, "Écrits sur Cézanne," *Acta Historiae Artium Acad. Sci. Hung.* Vol. XX. (1974), Nos 1–2, p. 107.
42. Miklós Bartha–Carl László, *Die ungarischen Künstler am Sturm*, Berlin 1913–1932 (Basel, 1983); H. Gassner ed.: *Wechselwirkungen. Ungarische Avantgarde in der Weimarer Republik*. Catalogue (Kassel-Bochum-Marburg, 1986).
43. *Katalog der Ausstellung Ungarischer Maler* im Ausstellungsgebäude Kurfürstendamm 208/209. Berlin 5. Febr.–3 März 1910. (Catalogue of the Exhibition of Hungarian Painters in the Exhibition Hall Kurfürstendamm 208/209.)
See Elek Petrovics, "Magyar festők a berlini Secessióban," *Hungarian Painters in the Secession of Berlin. Művészet* (Budapest, 1910), pp. 218–222. It is a summary of the German reviews on the exhibition.

44. *A futuristák és expresszionisták kiállítása* (The Exhibition of the Futurists and Expressionists) with an Introduction by Béla Déry (Budapest: Nemzeti Szalon, 1913).
A Művészház nemzetközi posztimpresszionista kiállítása (The International Post-Impressionist Show of Művészház), Budapest, 1913. Introduced by Károly Kernstok, János Vaszary and others. Cp. Julia Szabó-Marosi, "The Exhibitions of the International Avant Garde in Budapest, Vienna and Berlin." XXV. *International Kongress für Kunstgeschichte*. CIHA. Vienna, 4.–10.9.1983. Vol. 4. pp. 127–206.
45. Róbert Berény, "A Nemzeti Szalonbeli képekről," *Nyugat*, 1913/I. p. 197. Lajos Kassák, *Egy ember élete* (Life of a Man) written in the 1920s. (Budapest, 1983) Vol. 2. p. 118.
46. József Csáky, *Emlékek a modern művészet nagy évtizedéből 1904–1914* (Recollections from the great decade of modern art, 1904–1914) (Budapest, 1972). – *Szobotka Imre emlékkiállítása* (Memorial show of Imre Szobotka). Budapest, Magyar Nemzeti Galéria (Hungarian National Gallery) Aug.–Sep. 1971. – E. Solymos, *Bossányi Ervin (1891–1975) emlékkiállítása*. Magyar Nemzeti Galéria – Türr I. Múzeum, Baja (Memorial show of Ervin Bossányi 1891–1975) Hungarian National Gallery and Türr Museum, Baja, 1980.
 József Rippl-Rónai, *Emlékezések* (Recollections), (Budapest, 1911), Published by *Nyugat*.
47. G. Apollinaire, *A kubista festők* (Budapest, 1919). A *MA* kiadása. Translation of G. Apollinaire, *Les peintres cubistes* after its 1912 Paris edition.
MA irodalmi és képzőművészeti folyóirat (MA literary and art review), Budapest, 1916–1919, Vienna 1920–1925. Ed. Lajos Kassák.
48. Iván Hevesy, "Túl az impresszionizmuson" (Beyond Impressionism) *MA* (1919) No. 4. and other works of the same author. New ed. I. Hevesy, *Az újművészetért* (For modern art) (Budapest, 1978)
49. Kassák became familiar with Czech Cubism either in Budapest where Czech Cubists were exhibited in 1913, or in Kecskemét, where a Czech paintress, Maria Lanow worked for a longer time. After a stay in Kecskemét Kassák chose Vincenz Benes' Cubist linocut for the title page of his review *MA* Vol. 1. (1961) Nov. 16.
 Lajos Kassák: Levél Kun Bélának a művészet nevében (Letter to Béla Kun [Head of the Hungarian Republic of Councils in 1919] in the Name of Art). *MA*, Vol. 4. (1919) June 15, and in a separate in 5000 copies.
50. Wassily Kandinsky's *Fagott* was published in *A Tett* (The Action) Vol. 1. n. 9. (1916) translated by Pál Szines from the volume of verses and graphics W. Kandinsky: *Klänge*, München, 1913
 See also J. Szabó-Marosi, *op. cit.* in Note 44.



*Fig. 1. László Mednyánszky (1852–1919), Head of a Soldier, 1890–1900.
Oil on cardboard, 48.5 × 38 cm, Székesfehérvár, Municipal Gallery.
Dénes Deák Collection.*

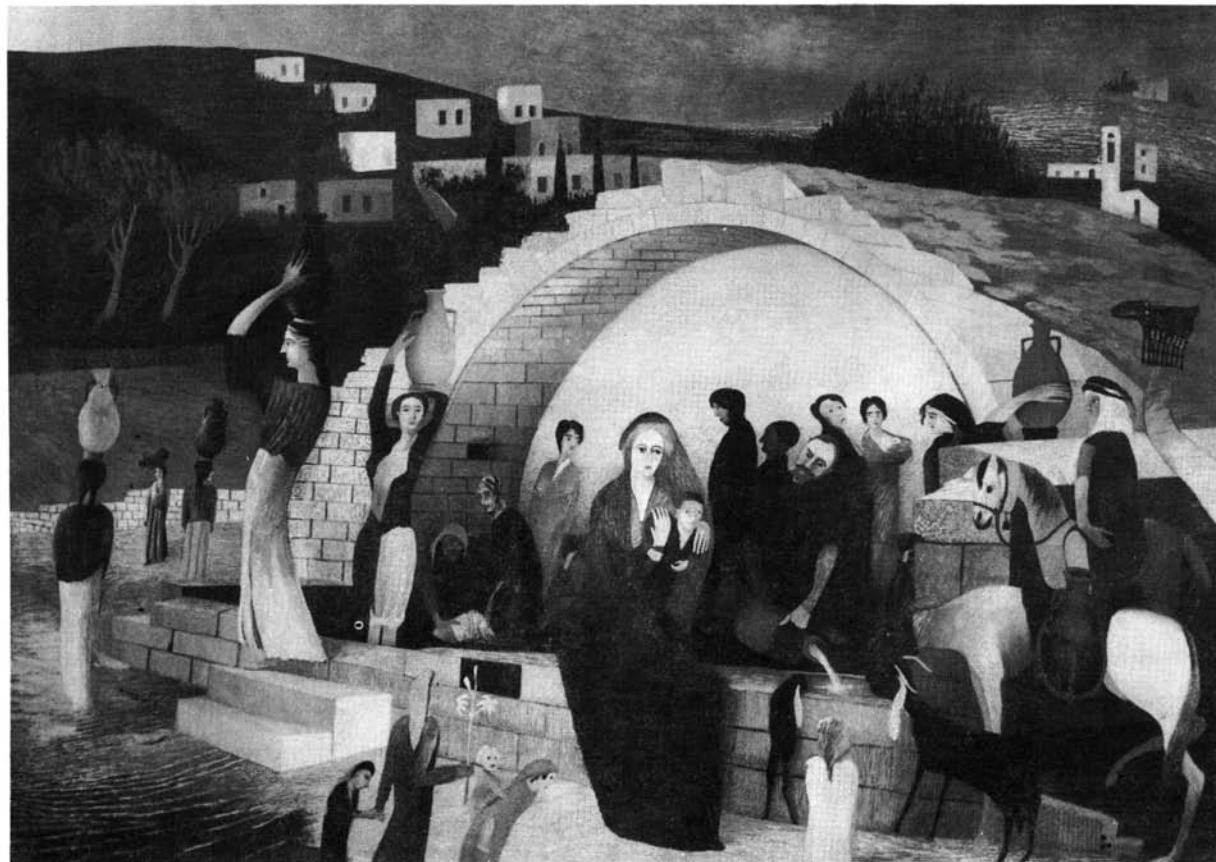


Fig. 2. Tivadar Csontváry (1853–1919), *The Well of the Virgin in Nazareth*, 1908.
Oil on canvas, 362 × 516 cm, Pécs, Csontváry Museum.



Fig. 3. József Rippl-Rónai
(1861–1927), *Lady in a White Robe*,
1898. Oil on canvas, 178 × 76 cm,
Budapest, Hungarian National
Gallery.



Fig. 4. Sándor Nagy (1868–1950), *Three Figures in the Garden in Gödöllő*, about 1910. Oil on canvas, 37 × 43.5 cm, Székesfehérvár, Municipal Gallery. Dénes Deák Collection.



Fig. 5. József Rippl-Rónai, Sorrow, 1903. Oil on canvas, 67.5 × 49.5 cm, Budapest, Hungarian National Gallery.



Fig. 6. Lajos Tihanyi (1885–1938), The Portrait of Magdolna Leopold, 1914.
Oil on canvas, 72.5 × 59 cm, Székesfehérvár, Municipal Gallery.
Dénes Deák Collection.



Fig. 7. János Kmetty (1889–1975), *View of Kecskemét*, 1912. Oil on canvas, 92 × 72 cm, Budapest, Hungarian National Gallery.

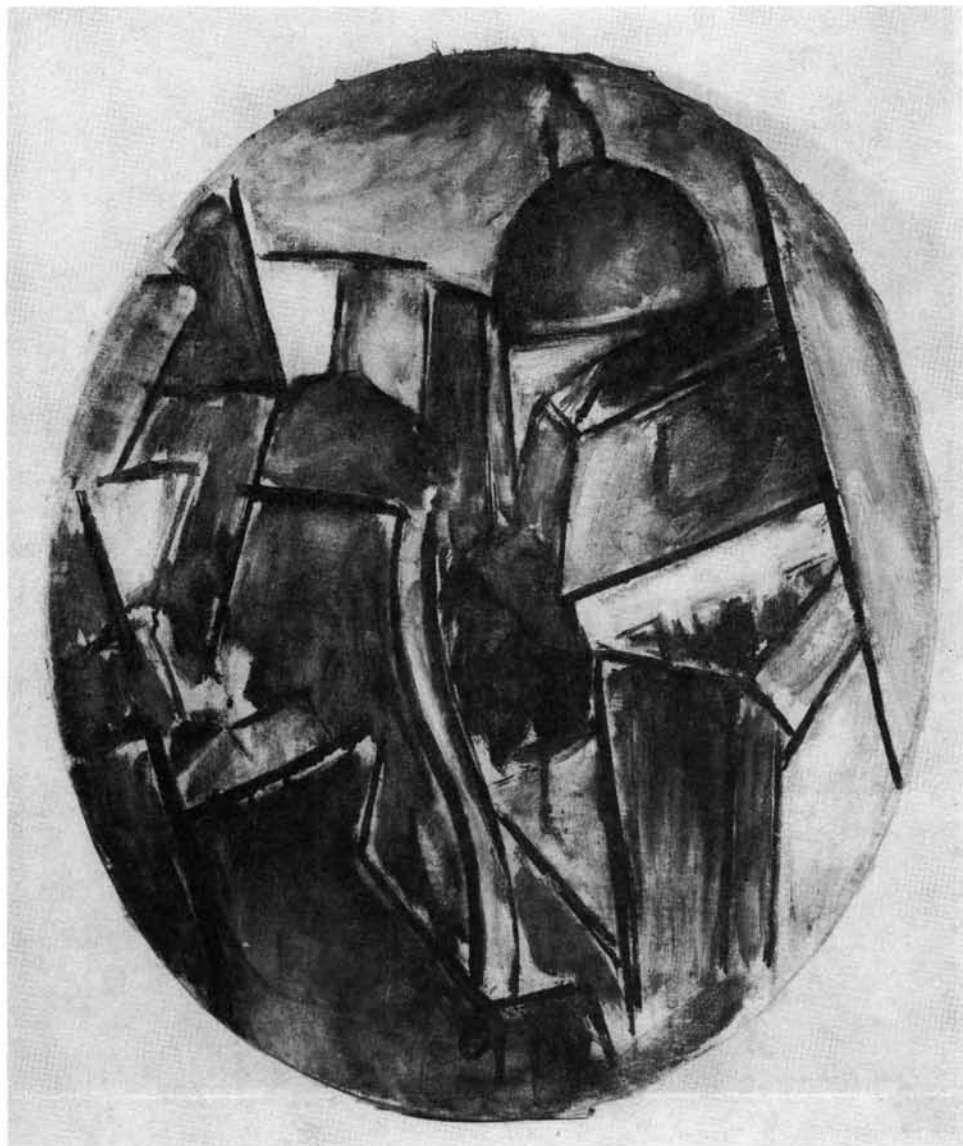


Fig. 8. Valéria Dénes (1877–1915), Street, 1913. Oil on canvas, 55×46 cm, Pécs, Modern Hungarian Gallery.

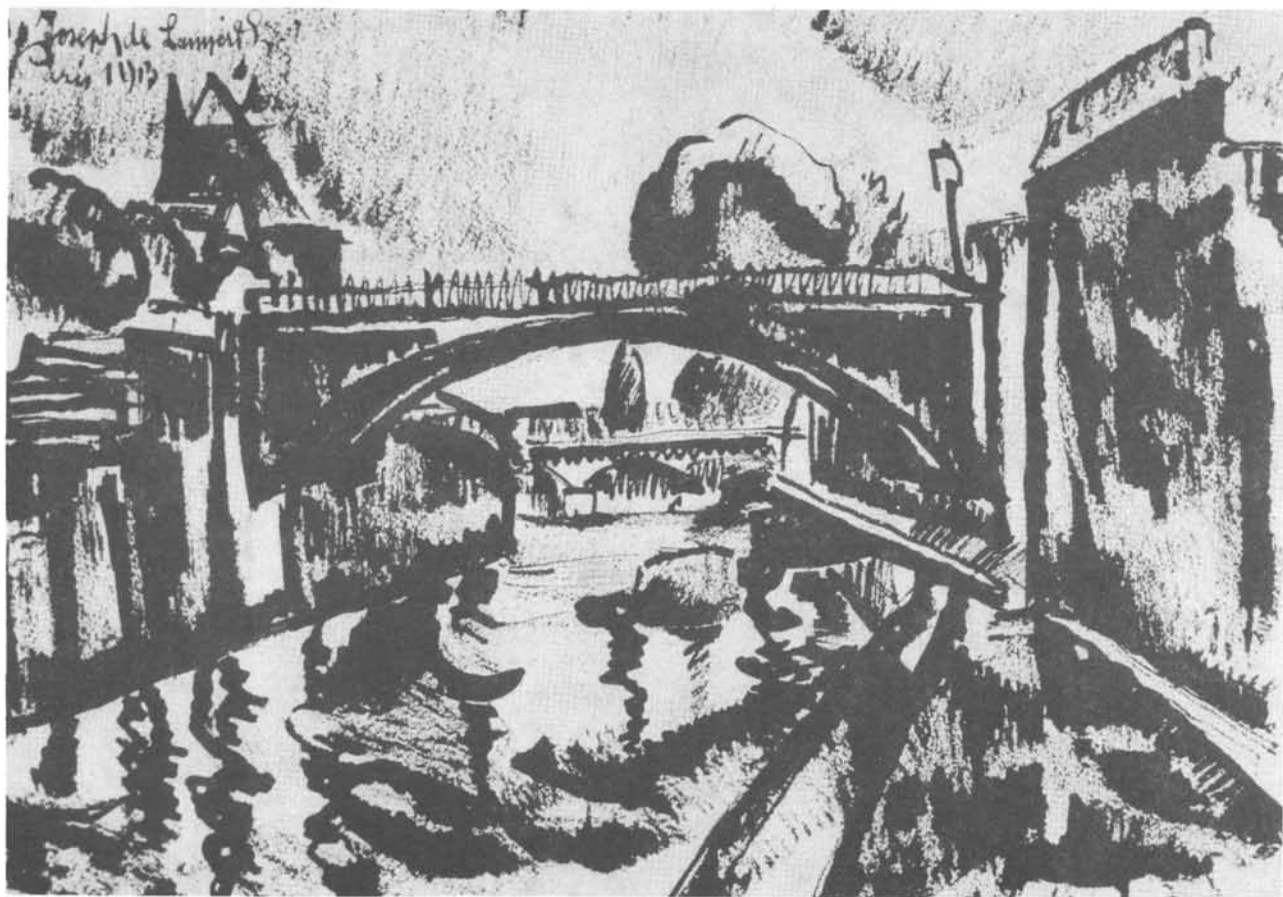


Fig. 9. József Nemes Lampérth (1891–1924), *Bridge on the Seine*, 1913.
China, brush on paper. 36 × 48 cm, Budapest, Hungarian National Gallery.



Fig. 10. Lajos Gulácsy (1881–1932), *The Garden of San Servolo in Venice. II. (Garden with Figures)*, 1914–1915. Chalk on paper, 600 × 420 mm (with the inscription: The Decoration Art Format). Budapest, Hungarian National Gallery.



*Fig. 11. János Máttyis-Teutsch (1884–1960): A Clear Landscape, 1916.
Oil on cardboard, 40 × 49 cm, Pécs, Modern Hungarian Gallery.*

MODERN SOCIOLOGY AND MODERN ART IN EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY HUNGARY

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It is very difficult to notice when the crisis of a society, of a political system or regime begins. After the collapse, or when the crisis reaches its climax in some other form, newly emerging politicians loudly declare that as early as... (and they name some very early date) they had already known what would happen but they had not been in a position to present these views to the wider public. The more reliable observers of the state of affairs are very often social scientists, writers and artists whose works, for those who have the eye and ear to understand the message, are warnings, reports on the vulnerable spots of their society. Those examining the body of the Hungarian society at the beginning of this century could easily discover the major illnesses: both those arising from the country's constitutional position within the Habsburg Monarchy and those rooted in the internal social tensions (e.g. the miserable living conditions of large sections of the peasantry, the question of national minorities, urban poverty, etc.).

This paper gives a short survey of the mutual relationship of two most outspoken and radical critics of the early twentieth century Hungarian political system: the group of young sociologists associated with the review of the symbolic title *Huszadik Század* (Twentieth Century) and the representatives of modern arts and literature (the group of creative artists around the review *Nyugat* [West], modern painters and musicians).

The major question to be met in this respect is quite obvious: is the emergence of modern social sciences, the appearance of the elements of contemporary British, French, German, American social and political thought a parallel process with the breakthrough of modern arts and literature in early twentieth century Hungary? Can we speak of some kind of "modernisation" of Hungarian intellectual, cultural life in which modern social sciences and modern arts are two sources feeding the – not very wide – river of the modernisation of Hungarian cultural life? Are sociologists and modern writers and artists mutually loyal, natural allies; are they independent of each other – or perhaps even rivals?

During the late 1890s arts and literature were natural fields of interest for the young law students at Budapest's Pázmány Péter University who showed more interest in recent trends in the philosophy of law than in the antiquated Hungarian civil law and in 1899 decided to launch a review dedicated to their sociological interests. The one or two hundred people who joined together in 1901 in the Society for Social Science shared the interests of the editors of this review, *Huszadik Század*. Divergent as their educations, social backgrounds, political ideas might have been, what bound them together was a conviction that behind day-to-day politics the general laws of social development operated and the recognition of these was a precondition of successful politics to any purpose. In the embryonic phase Hungarian sociology – that the new review and society wished to help come into being – was more a bid to rise above politics than to identify itself with a particular political trend. Trying to cure the illnesses that gnawed at the body of Hungarian society with the medicine of modern sociology (first of all Spencer, but also modern French and American sociology and historical materialism) was what they considered to be their main task. They hoped that this would be the fastest and least painful treatment which would help backward Hungary to recover, to catch up with Western Europe. Quite naively, but most sincerely, they believed that modern sociology would be able to rise above national, social, political bias and prejudices. Within a few years they had to realize that this was a vain hope. Not only did they have to struggle bitterly against the accusation of being aliens, even traitors to the national interests but they were split by internal conflicts of opinion as well. The differentiation led to a final parting of the ways in 1906 which made the review *Huszadik Század*, and the Society of Social Science the fora of a quite homogeneous ideology. This can perhaps be best described as radical democracy – though most experts on the topic prefer the term “bourgeois radicalism”. For most external observers this ideology with its emphatic demand of universal, equal suffrage and radical measures in the field of social policy, with its most outspoken attacks on the feudal elements of Hungarian agriculture was more or less identified with socialism; sociology and socialism often being taken for synonyms. This was, of course, a fatal misunderstanding – in spite of their occasional cooperation, socialists and radicals represented basically different reform-programs for Hungary.

Most people in this circle were well-educated, widely-read intellectuals who carefully followed the developments in the world of arts and literature, not only in Hungary but abroad (mainly in France) as well. The leading figure among them was Oszkár Jászi whose first major work (published in 1904) dealt with the problems of the interrelationship of art and morals. His most

important concern was the social function of arts which does not at all mean that he would have subordinated aesthetic values to the social message. In the early 1900s when the new Hungarian review proudly bearing the name of the twentieth century and the Society of Social Science made tremendous efforts to import all the values that West-European and American social sciences had accumulated during the previous decades, they also introduced scholars who had espoused sociological views in aesthetics: Allen Grant, Guyau, Ernst Grosse. Especially the aesthetically well-trained Oszkár Jászi and the later municipal politician, Ödön Wildner wrote analyses of what they considered to be the most significant works of contemporary world literature: Emile Zola, Henrik Ibsen, Lev Tolstoy. First of all Zola was respected as one who (according to the critic of *Huszadik Század*) "helped the scientific world-view gain ground in the world of aesthetic feeling."¹ Very different authors of very different backgrounds, such as Zola, Ibsen, Gorky, G. B. Shaw (his critic in a historical materialist manner is, by the way, Karl Polányi – this is Polányi's first printed article)², Strindberg, Anatole France were generally presented and praised as critical analysts of social reality. In their approach to world-literature the authors of *Huszadik Század* showed limited interest for what was really modern: the decadent *fin de siècle* French, German, English literature which was opening up new avenues to the secrets of the individual, of the human soul. In neighbouring Vienna a new generation of artists was working under the impact of impressionism, *art nouveau*, new romanticism (Schnitzler, Hofmannsthal, Mahler, Klimt). *Huszadik Század* did not take note of them. The world of unsolved conflicts, resignation, passivity was far away from them. An understanding of these trends was to begin only after 1906–1908 – after the publication of Ady's pioneering *Új versek* (New Poems) and the launching of the review which dedicated itself to integrating Hungary into the main stream of world-literature, *Nyugat*. And here we have arrived at the major issue of this paper: the relationship between Ady and modern Hungarian literature and the circle around the review *Huszadik Század*.

A journalist colleague of Endre Ady wrote in his memoirs that when *Huszadik Század* started, complimentary copies were sent to the editorial offices of most Hungarian newspapers.³ They were generally thrown, together with other advertisements, into the waste-paper basket which is where Endre Ady, in the editorial office of *Nagyvárad Napló*, picked out a copy. When his colleague also opened the green-covered review, Ady warned him: "Put it down, please! Don't read it or you will be unhappy for ever – it writes about very serious cases!" In Nagyvárad Ady was a good friend of Bódog Somló, the respected professor of the philosophy of law who had a decisive role in shaping the intellectual profile of *Huszadik Század* during the first years of its

publication. Ady and Jászi mutually respected each other; Ady on several occasions called Jászi “his leader” and dedicated a poem to him.⁴ One of the very first serious reviews of Ady’s *New Poems* was published in *Huszadik Század* by Lajos Hatvany who pointed out that Ady’s poetry had proved: “one could be at the same time as modern as Dehmel and as Hungarian as Arany”.⁵ It was also the *Huszadik Század* which gave forum to György Lukács’ analysis of Ady’s poetry – the most understanding contemporary evaluation of Ady’s significance.⁶ (He called Ady’s poetry the war-song, the trumpet, the rallying cry – the flag around which everything “progressive” can be rallied once it comes to fighting.) Jászi kept referring to Ady as “our poet”; Ady reviewed Jászi’s most important pre-1918 scholarly product.⁷ For Ady, Jászi’s book was the greatest, most daring and most Hungarian deed of the last decades. Jászi gave new content to the, in Ady’s terms, corrupted concept of Hungarian liberty by working out a well-grounded, long-term project for the transformation of Hungary. In his last will Jászi requested that the following lines of Ady on him be written on his grave-stone: “As his ways widened into a river, they attracted the haphazard tiny little streams of honest Hungarian intellectuals.”⁸ The good personal and political relationship of these two outstanding personalities of early 20th century Hungarian intellectual life is, of course, not identical with the relationship between the circle of sociologists around *Huszadik Század* and the various branches of modern art and literature. To illustrate the latter I should like to refer to the debate organized by the Society for Social Science in 1912 on the relationship between literature and society.⁹ In his introductory lecture, Ignotus, the respected editor of *Nyugat* pointed out that the emergence of modern literature and political radicalism were parallel processes in Hungary. Some shocking new ideas of modern literature were close to political radicalism – and what brought political radicalism and modern literature even closer to each other was the vehement attacks by conservatives. Political radicalism thus put also the slogan of poetic freedom on its flag. However, continues Ignotus’ argumentation, radical sociologists and politicians were bound to be disappointed by the behaviour of “liberated” literature. Writers and poets, instead of devoting their creative energies to the service of radicalism, dealt with “games of rhymes” and “the hen of radicalism that with so much courage drove away the hawk from over their heads saw in astonishment that those whom it considered as its chicks... were just conceited ducklings displaying themselves on the waters of *l’art pour l’art*”.¹⁰ But immediately after this comparison Ignotus defends modern *l’art pour l’art* writers as, he argues, unrestricted freedom is an absolutely necessary precondition for the very existence of any art. Art can have, and it really has, a political use, but only if it is allowed to exist. As the

deepest-working determinants of politics and art are very similar in the human mind – real *l'art pour l'art* is after all not possible. This approach permeates the whole discussion. A really poetic explanation of the seeming detachment of modern literature from radicalism, and politics in general, was given by Mihály Babits with a beautiful metaphor: “I believe that the poets who... retire from the disturbances of the political revolution are in fact... like huge clouds hanging from mountains bearing future lightning. They are lonely, withdrawn from parties and organizations, but still the leader is often among them. Lambs go in groups – the shepherd is alone but he has got his flute.”¹¹

The fine arts represent a far less important field of interest than literature for the members of the circle around *Huszadik Század*. Some 20–25 articles on painting in the forty volumes of the review are devoted to the social status and conflicts of artists and much less to the problems of aesthetic qualities. The artwriters of the review (first of all Lajos Fülep, the great creative artist Károly Kernstok, Géza Lengyel), of course, discover the parallels between the aspirations of the radical sociologists and the motivations of artists who initiated the splits in the world of Hungarian painting in 1908–1912 (the conflicts within the circle of Hungarian Impressionists and Naturalists; the formation of the group of The Eight). The break with an impressionistic world view, giving way to rationalism went well in accordance with the main profile of *Huszadik Század*. At the 1911 exhibition of The Eight two “literary evenings” were organized with the participation of Ady, Ignotus, Kosztolányi and Jászi – but there was no cooperation of any kind. The extremist radicalism of the activists (Kassák, *A Tett, Ma*), the other new striking phenomenon in the world of fine arts in Hungary during the later 1910s pointed in directions which were very alien to the “bourgeois radicals”.

More had happened in Hungarian music-life during the first dozen years of the 20th century than during two previous centuries – argues Zoltán Horváth, the author of the comprehensive work which first gave a fair and proper evaluation of the achievements of the “second Hungarian reform-generation”.¹² *Huszadik Század* showed little of these changes. Its limited interest in music is similarly motivated as its understanding of literature and the fine arts: Valéria Dienes, Antal Molnár, Géza Csáth deal with the social role and function of music though some of their articles shed light on some psychological aspect of music as well. It is in this context that Géza Csáth takes note of the publication of a collection of folk-songs by Zoltán Kodály and Béla Bartók in *Huszadik Század* in 1907.¹³

The new avenues opened up by *Huszadik Század* in the social sciences and politics, by the group of The Eight in the world of fine arts, by the new

Hungarian Music Association and Bartók and Kodály in music were, indeed parallel efforts. Many contemporary sources (letters, memoirs) show personal connections, mutual appreciation; but even more evidence proves that – to use Ady’s wonderful metaphor – the little streams of honest Hungarian intellectuals towards Jászi and his *Huszdik Század* did not add up to a fast-flowing river which would have been able to sweep away bastions of conservatism. I believe that the recollections of Ödön Márffy show a realistic picture of the mutual relationship of the various branches of modern Hungarian culture: “In November 1912 Bartók came to see the exhibition of The Eight. Berény invited Ady. They had not met before though by this time Bartók had already set some of Ady’s poems to music. I introduced them to each other. Ady did not know much about music – he was satisfied with gipsy-music. Bartók did not know much about painting. They just shook hands and exchanged some polite words... Ady instinctively respected Bartók – he was fully aware of who Bartók was. They spoke little – just kept looking at each other.”¹⁴

The parallel (but not joint) efforts, aspirations add up to an attempt at the modernization of Hungarian cultural life and at the same time give a true picture of the crisis phenomena of their social, political and cultural environment. The representatives of modern social sciences and the key figures of modern art and literature were reliable observers, often cogent analysts of numerous problems – but not at all the makers of the crisis of early 20th century Hungary.

Notes

The best introduction in English to these problems is John Lukács, *Budapest, 1900. A Historical Portrait of a City and its Culture* (New York, 1988).

1. Oszkár Jászi, “Zola, mint szociológus” (Zola as a Sociologist), *Huszdik Század*, 1907, II, p. 478.
2. *Huszdik Század*, 1907, I, pp. 66–71.
3. The colleague was Dezső Szűts. His recollections are quoted in Miklós Kovalovszky: *Emlékezések Ady Endréről* (Memories of Endre Ady) II, (Budapest, 1971), p. 469.
4. Cf. Erzsébet Vezér, “Ady és a radikálisok” (Ady and the Radicals), *Irodalomtörténet*, 1977, 4, pp. 814–821. and Erzsébet Vezér, *Ady Endre* (Budapest, 1977), p. 171.
5. Pál Górn, “Ady Új versek című kötetéről” (On Ady’s New Poems), *Huszdik Század*, 1906, I, p. 353.
6. György Lukács, “Új magyar líra” (New Hungarian Lyrics), *Huszdik Század*, 1909, II, pp. 268–292.
7. *A nemzeti államok kialakulása és a nemzetiségi kérdés* (The Formation of Nation States and the Nationality Question) (Budapest, 1912). Ady’s review in *Nyugat* 1912, I, pp. 835–837.

8. Ady's words cited from his review of Jászi's book mentioned in Note 7.
9. Published in *Huszadik Század*, 1912, I, pp. 666–680; 797–807; II, pp. 309–326.
10. *Huszadik Század*, 1912 (I), p. 668.
11. *Huszadik Század*, 1912 (I), p. 807.
12. Zoltán Horváth, *Magyar századforduló* (Hungarian Turn of the Century), (Budapest, 1961).
13. Géza Csáth, "Jegyzetek a zeneművészet fejlődéséhez" (Notes on the Study of the Evolution of Music), *Huszadik Század*, 1907, II, p. 592.
14. Quoted in Lajos Németh, ed., *Magyar művészet* (Hungarian Art) 1890–1919, Vol. I. (Budapest, 1981), p. 557.

**OTTO, FRANZ, GEORG:
AN EXERCISE IN THE PSYCHO - HISTORY
OF WEININGER, KAFKA, AND LUKÁCS**

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I want to treat three extraordinary figures of the Austro-Hungarian *fin de siècle*, as if they had been ordinary figures. All three of them were Jewish. Keeping in mind that Hungarian culture of the period, no less than Austrian and Czech culture, was heavily marked by a versatile Jewish contribution, I will explore what was typical in the respective backgrounds of Otto Weininger, Franz Kafka, and Georg Lukács.

To begin with, all three figures were rebellious prisoners of their familial and social situation, and in surprisingly similar ways. In fact, many thousands of Jewish-born men of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy could have given comparable testimony about the waning power of the traditional father-figure, the changed meaning of Jewishness, friendship and eroticism as well as new definitions of art and creativity in society at large.

Otto Weininger's father was the son of a small tradesman, Franz Kafka's the son of a country butcher, while Georg Lukács' father was the son of an eiderdown-maker. The fathers had all accomplished sizable upward social mobility by becoming, in turn, an internationally acknowledged goldsmith in Vienna, a major fashion-dealer in Prague, and a banker and patron of the arts in Budapest. While Otto's father had not gained Austrian citizenship until his famous son reached the age of nine, Georg's father even acquired nobility. Incidentally, not only the fathers, but their wives, too, had come from the Hungarian-ruled territories of what was later to become the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

By the eighties, the disturbing news of pogroms and anti-Semitic government measures in Russia had convinced the three fathers that the road of assimilation and urbanization on which they had started out should be travelled by their offspring. The Weiningers' social situation being the most fragile, it was here that the greatest number of children, seven were born, while in the Lukács family only three children were to sustain an already well-established family status. The Kafkas occupied a middle position with four offspring.

Now, I want to explore a family conflict also occurring in contemporary British and American upper-middle-class settings.

Fathers with well-established businesses expected their sons to go into partnership with them and, in time, take over. On the other hand, they could afford to give their sons a better-than-average education. (Incidentally, all three sons discussed here had visited non-Jewish secondary schools, the best in their respective home-cities.) Thus, there arose a generation of sons so liberally educated that they were destined to shy away from the "materialistic", "money-minded" occupations of their fathers – with life-plans entirely focussed on universalistic disciplines like philosophy, poetry, music, mathematics, theoretical physics and the like. Practically all Jewish-Hungarian celebrities listed in McCagg's pioneering study of Jewish-Hungarian "nobles and geniuses" came from first-generation upper-middle-class backgrounds.

The fathers usually put up some fight but soon realized they were better off leaving their sons to their high-flung studies while marrying their daughters to some up-and-coming business partners.

There was conflict here, but one with a built-in resolution. Gone were the stern, merciless patriarchs of Old Testament stature, only to yield their places to fathers with a growing amount of leniency and understanding.

Although tyrannical to every other member of his family, Otto's father accepted his son's rebellious choice of university without much quarrel. Far from being a tyrant, Georg's father behaved like an enlightened monarch even when Georg made it clear he only cared for his father's financial support. He even accepted without reproach Georg's marrying a Ukrainian terrorist, a scandalous wedlock by bourgeois standards. Franz's father, however, the only one of the three to have kept up some formal religion, was an extremely intolerant man, ridiculing his son constantly for his idealistic distance from the real world. In addition, while Mrs. Weininger was extremely weak and subservient to Mr. Weininger, and Mrs. Lukács was by all means the stricter parent, Mrs. Kafka was both strong and co-operative with her husband, so much so, in fact, that during his abortive attempt at a showdown with his father, Franz could call her a "baiter" for Mr. Kafka in their common hunting campaign against their son.

From among the three families discussed, it was only in the Kafka family that its head was overwhelmingly to blame for a poor father-son relation. No wonder Franz's process of breaking away from his father was the most difficult and the most prolonged. Franz had the impossible task of leaving the parental household while being simultaneously pushed away from it. The classical Oedipal situation, however, involves a wilful filial rebellion against a father who excels in many respects and tries to bind the son to himself and to all that he represents.

For the son of an excellent father it is imperative to kill the father symbolically if he is to rise in excellence himself. Georg accomplished this symbolic murder at a relatively late stage simply by transposing it onto a

public, political plane: by joining a worldwide rebellion, that of the Communists, aimed at breaking the patriarchal power of capitalism.

In Franz's hand the symbolic dagger aimed at his father was bound to tremble. Remember, if you will, Hamlet's hesitation on the brink of murdering his stepfather so eloquently analyzed in a little-known paper of 1954 by Karl Polányi. Franz's symbolic dagger also stopped in mid-air – perhaps because there would have been reason for real murder rather than just a symbolic one.

No son of a petty tyrant whose power is entirely illegitimate can bring himself to patricide: it would not establish him as a successful rival. Instead, he must thrust the dagger into himself for one cannot go on living in a world in which one is deprived of paternal dignity and guidance and thus, the chance for hard-won independence.

Suicidal entries in Franz's diary abound. But even to Milena, an outside observer, it was clear that "Franz cannot live... He is like a naked person among the fully dressed." At an earlier stage even Georg came very close to self-inflicted death but, as he noted in his diary, the mental image of his father put a brake on his suicidal drives. It reminded him of his as yet unaccomplished task: symbolic patricide.

Otto's case was different. He did enjoy a lot of paternal dignity and guidance all through his short life. His principal work, *Geschlecht und Charakter* (Gender and Character) reproduced his father's antagonistic views on women and Jews completely. Without fully realizing it, he had backed out of a decisive clash with his father, missing a chance for independence. Worse still, with his work published, he had gotten himself on record as being not only an obedient son but also a mere mouthpiece for his father. His only chance remaining was accomplishing an act he knew would be, for once, absolutely against his father's will, i.e. his own suicide, remembered for years in Viennese circles.

I want now to point out a few other common features of the growth of Weininger, Kafka, and Lukács both as men-of-the world and as men of letters. All three cultivated a close set of very intimate male friends not without traces of homosexual leanings. Weininger's deep attachment to Hermann Swoboda and, later, to Artur Gerber is no less telling than Kafka's intensive affiliation with Jizchack Lowy, a member of the Yiddish theatre company touring Prague and Budapest. Lukács was clearly shattered by the loss of his close friend, Leo Popper. For all three the accepted routines of a bourgeois marriage seemed quite as revolting as did their shameful encounters with prostitutes. Kafka's colossal inability to enjoy sex was no less characteristic than Weininger's angry rebuttals of coitus as a sin committed against the idea of mankind.

Their devastating critique of sexuality as part and parcel of the general chaos of ordinary living is, of course, anchored in Kierkegaard's philosophy

of resignation, arising in its turn from an unfulfilled love-affair the Danish thinker had had with Regine Olsen. When Lukács postulated that a voluntary poverty of the soul (*Armut an Seele*) is the inevitable pre-requisite of creating, Gand when Kafka in his diary spoke of his “fear of happiness, a leaning, nay, a command, to torment myself in the service of higher goals” – the two young men did not merely offer justifications for abstaining from sex. Rather, they formulated sophisticated principles culled from aesthetics and then raised them to the order of all-embracing ethical guidelines.

To put it simply, the Maker of art as well as of philosophy must preserve his whole being for the sake of his Oeuvre. True, Life can bring happiness but that cannot, by definition, add anything to the Oeuvre. Life, therefore, must be shunned by the Maker at all costs since, Life and Oeuvre being two spheres completely cut off from each other, by indulging in Life the Maker is inevitably leaving his Oeuvre – a prominent theme of Thomas Mann’s *Tonio Kröger*. During the creation of an Oeuvre the common notion of happiness does not even emerge. The purposes of the Oeuvre even allow for sins committed amid the general mess of ordinary living. “And if God had set sin between me and the deed I must do – who am I to shirk from it?” – this much-quoted line of Hebbel’s Judith had opened the way for the three to indulge in their particular kinds of iconoclasm: Kafka’s self-destructive reluctance to adapt to bourgeois morals, Lukács’ even more radical leap into messianistic revolutionary action, and, finally, Weininger’s accomplishment of something many thousands of intellectuals were only talking or poeticizing about: breaking the vessel of life altogether, transmuting life’s imperfection into the perfection of total denial.

Far from being their sons’ fearful judges, the fathers merely stood by and looked on in horror or amazement. With them, the historic shrinking of the father-figure took on new dimensions. What took place in the three families discussed was, in sociological terms, an intergenerational leap from *Besitzbürgertum* to *Bildungsbürgertum*, in other words, a transformation of family property into intellectual assets. But on the other hand, probably more meaningfully, we may be witnessing here the final stage of the transformation of still powerful father-figures into ones (as Tibor Déry’s or Ferenc Karinthy’s reminiscences testify) without power, authority, or even the legitimation for any such things. It remains to be seen whether new generations of Weiningers, Kafkas or Lukácses *can* come about in a world without fathers.

THE DEMONIC SELF: MAX WEBER AND GEORG LUKÁCS

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Sibyls and prophets told it: You must be
None but yourself, from self you cannot flee.

Goethe

I had long felt that some hidden springs of
tension lay behind those last remarks [of
Weber's "Politics as a Vocation"]... Weber
must have had someone in mind. Who?

*Daniel Bell*¹

At first sight, there is a look of *embarras de richesses* about the subject, Max Weber, the "greatest of sociologists"² and Georg Lukács, the leading Marxist intellectual of the twentieth century. In a prefatorial statement to his acclaimed classic, *Main Currents of Marxism*, Kolakowski said, "it is easy to see that my reading of Marx was influenced more by Lukács than by other commentators, though I am far from sharing his attitude to the doctrine".³

In the Lukács literature, the elective affinities between Weber and Lukács, friends turned foes by the cataclysmic events of the 1914–18 war and the 1918–19 Central European revolutions, has been noted and commented on.⁴ However, Weber's interpretations and even biographies are characterized by a "surprisingly high degree of selectivity"⁵ and in many instances outright silence on Lukács.⁶ Not surprisingly, we still lack a systematic examination of the relationship between the two figures either at the personal or intellectual level. Naturally, this article cannot present anything even approaching a comprehensive treatment of the Weber–Lukács relationship. Our objective is to trace and substantiate the personal and intellectual rapport of Weber and Lukács.

Weber and Lukács knew each other and each other's secret for close to twenty years, from their first meeting in 1902 to Weber's death in 1920. It is Lukács who may well hold the key to Weber's explosive ambiguity. In the "value-oriented" spheres of life, from erotic-ascetic to rational-irrational,

Lukács found himself in Weber's mind, and *vice versa*. In our view, Weber's sociology is just as much a "debate with the ghost of Karl Marx"⁷ as it is with the flesh and blood Lukács. We agree with Wolfgang Mommsen that it was "inevitable"⁸ that Weber would confront Marx's analysis of modern capitalism. But it was just as inevitable that Weber, intent on formulating what Mommsen called an "alternative position standing in harmony with his own bourgeois-liberal ideals,"⁹ would confront Lukács. For as Karl Mannheim once put it, reflecting on Lukács and Weber and his own relationship to them,¹⁰ we understand ourselves better when we enter into "existential relationships" with others.¹¹

That Weber and Lukács formed an "existential relationship" is confirmed by Mannheim. In his *Habilitationsschrift* (1927), Mannheim drew up a composite intellectual portrait of Max Weber, disguised as Gustav Hugo, and that of Lukács, disguised as Adam Müller.¹² For Mannheim, the divergent intellects of Weber and Lukács led to different roads or ways of life. Out of Weber's resignation and method of "clarification" came splendid sociology, while Lukács's radical "rebellion of the spirit" led to Marxism. Mannheim was fascinated by Lukács's "road" to Marx, whose stages included the Socratic quest for examined life; Kierkegaard's lonely, desperate "leap" to God; Nietzsche's impulse for self-creation and multiplicity of selves; Sorel's heroic bid for a myth; and Dostoevsky's haunted vision of goodness through evil.

But Lukács's most crucial stage on the road to Marx involved his close relationship with Weber. Even in the famed Weber Circle, only Lukács and Friedrich Gundolf "were able to express their ideas well enough to become independent points of interest."¹³ Weber and Lukács had a great affection and respect for each other. Weber expected a lot from Lukács and took keen interest in his academic career. On his part, Lukács counted Weber's friendship among his "proudest possessions in objective achievements."¹⁴ To the end of his life, Lukács paid homage to Weber, the "absolutely honest person" and "extraordinary scholar."¹⁵ Even in his worst Stalinist tract, *The Destruction of Reason* (1954), where Lukács demonized his pre-Marxist idols, Weber was treated fairly and with respect.

Lukács's consistent admiration for Weber bears witness to a strong kinship with another *enfant terrible* from a suffocating patriarchal home.¹⁶ While Weber despised his father,¹⁷ Lukács openly resented his father showing respect for his wife: "My father had great respect for my mother. I valued my father for his hard work and intelligence. But his high esteem for my mother offended me, and, at times, I despised him for it. In fact, we only developed a close relationship when my father, largely at my urging, became more critical of my mother."¹⁸ Friedrich Meinecke's observation that Weber can only be com-

pletely understood on the "basis of his family"¹⁹ applies equally to Lukács. The distance between a precocious son and his mother could not have been greater than it was in the Lukács family. Lukács identified fully with Weber's tormented self which, caught in the relentless pressures of competing domestic allegiance, had to survive on the untrodden grounds of loneliness and void.

The peculiar quality of Lukács's early life, a disequilibrium, unhappiness, and implacable hatred of the bourgeois, pursued him to the end. The deepening crisis of Lukács's childhood within his family set up his unsurpassable prejudices against the bourgeois. Once when Lukács complained that he found more understanding with Weber at Heidelberg than at home in Budapest, he was bluntly advised by his father to "Ask yourself honestly whether you were ever as polite and gracious with anyone at home as, no doubt, you are with your friends at Heidelberg."²⁰ To escape the oppressive family environment, Lukács developed a compulsive work-habit and fanatic will-to-knowledge, whose inner treadmill is as chilling as that of Weber.

Lukács's early masterpiece, *History of the Development of Modern Drama* (1911), reveals that he raised to its highest pitch discontent with the family. There are passages in this work that clearly show how an embittered life can have an impact on what purports to be an objective work. Lukács's analysis of Frank Wedekind (1864–1918) is unmistakably autobiographical. Wedekind, like Lukács and Weber, rebelled against his father and the philistinism of bourgeois society. "He wanted to capture and express intellectually," wrote Lukács, "the chaotic modern society."²¹ Commenting on Wedekind's tragedy, *Frühlings Erwachen*, whose theme is the awakening of sexuality of three adolescents in a stifling bourgeois milieu, Lukács wrote, "[Wedekind's drama] is about the fate of children, whose sufferings and anxieties the parents once shared, [a fate which] is incomprehensible to parents. Neither goodwill nor understanding nor reason proves to be effective. In the end, every parent stands helpless and confused when the disaster strikes."²² What experience was compressed into Lukács's image in *Modern Drama* of the family as a "symphony of divergent fates"? And what festering wounds forced him to write in that work that the children suffer under the "yoke of a meaningless" life and that the parents – the objective world – do what they must?

Much as he tried, even in his works, Lukács fell back on his own dissonant and discordant self which, enthroned on loneliness, transfigures suffering in the act of willing it. There is hardly a single element in Lukács's acceptance and transformation of suffering, in the service of icy-ideals, that could not also be found in Weber. This is hardly surprising for both Weber and Lukács were initiates of Nietzsche in the alchemy of loneliness and suffering. Weber readily admitted that the "world we live as intellectual beings is largely the world

bearing the imprint of Marx and Nietzsche."²³ Lukács also acknowledged Nietzsche's "decisive and transforming" influence on his generation. Lukács's notion and choice of values, like those of Weber, as Alasdair MacIntyre pointed out,²⁴ derived more from Nietzsche than Marx. What makes Weber's early writings complex and fascinating is that, like Lukács's early writings, they are "reverberating with the echo of ideas from Nietzsche and Burckhardt back to Goethe."²⁵ The presence of Nietzsche in Lukács's *Heidelberg Notebooks* is as overwhelming as it is in *Modern Drama* (1911). On every conceivable topic that arrested Lukács's attention – literary style, war, pessimism, Eros, religion, fate – he consulted Nietzsche, who became the radius of Lukács's expanding intellectual life. The marginal markings in Lukács's copies of Nietzsche works, notably *Human, All Too Human* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, demonstrate an intense receptivity to Nietzschean values.²⁶ Later as a Marxist, Lukács launched furious attacks on Nietzsche. Perhaps this signified a mind's growth and maturity. But, in the light of Lukács's complex denials of his past, it is more likely they were part of his effort to dethrone his youthful idols and abandon the temples where he once worshipped.

Having announced that God is dead, Nietzsche asked, "Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is more and more night not coming on all the time?"²⁷ Lukács's response to Nietzsche is forthright and revealing, "What if God died and another, a young and different kind, relating to us differently, is being born? What if darkness without purpose is but the dusk between one God's twilight and another god's dawn?... Couldn't our loneliness mean an agonized cry and yearning for the coming god?"²⁸ The vibrant vehemence and intensity in Lukács's language betrays the inward, religious dimension of his personality, which shows spiritual kinship with Weber. It is worth emphasizing that while Weber's classic, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, revolves around "spirit," Lukács's classic, *Soul and Form*, is preoccupied with the "soul". Marianne Weber not only drew attention to the "genuine religiosity" of Weber's personality, but suggested that *The Protestant Ethic*, the first work to make "Weber's star shine" again after a serious nervous breakdown, is autobiographical because it is "connected with the deepest roots of his personality and in an undefinable way bears its stamp."²⁹

Lukács's essays in *Soul and Form* are not only autobiographical, but are contemporary with Weber's essays of 1905–06 that form the second half of his study *The Protestant Ethic*. It may seem paradoxical that Weber, who valued "systematic work" and rationalism, admired Lukács the essayist. Yet the fact remains that Weber's work remains fragmentary not so much because of biographical accidents but because for Weber, like Lukács, life is a perpetual

staking of existence, a man mere "essay in existence" and understandable only because he is at once transition and value. One leading commentator of Weber, summing up his "vitality" as classic, wrote,

If we regard the essay as the art-form suited to the twentieth century, then Weber is immediately placed alongside authors such as Georg Simmel, Robert Musil and Georg Lukács, among others. They all shared the attempt to 'mediate', to build bridges, and thereby to open up new pathways. If, as a result, we regard the *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, for example, or *Economy and Society*, as large, scientific essays, or rather collections of essays, and not as comprehensive, theoretical-empirical monographs, then many sterile, interpretational disputes over the 'unity' or 'fragmentation' of the work would become unnecessary.³⁰

Despite their lyrical and metaphysical castings, Lukács's *Soul and Form* and Weber's *Protestant Ethic* share an intellectual perspective that was antithetical to materialistic view of history. Lukács, in fact, pitted the essay against positivism. As he put it, "The essay can calmly and proudly set its fragmentariness against the petty completeness of scientific exactitude and impressionistic freshness."³¹ For Lukács, the essay expresses "longing for value and form" for which rational justification may not be given. Here Lukács voiced disagreement with Weber who valued the type of choice for which rational justification can be given. For Weber, reason is the criteria of value choice. By contrast, to Lukács values are created from "within" the self. But this self, contra Weber, is not fixed or solid, but problematic and diffused. As Lukács demonstrated to Weber, the self can be divided up and distributed among a set of masks – erotic, ascetic – each of which acts out the masquerade of independent and rational self. Consequently, for Lukács, value choices are expressive of longing, rather than reason. In essence, Lukács calls upon choice to accomplish what Weber's "squint-eyed" reason fails to do, namely, to locate moral commitment among competing values. As Lukács put it pointedly, "The essayist is a Schopenhauer who writes his *Parerga* while waiting for the arrival of his own (or another's) *The World as Will and Idea*, he is a John the Baptist who goes out to preach in the wilderness about another who is still to come, whose shoelace he is not worthy to untie."³²

Lukács's essays in *Soul and Form* imply that the Weberian vision of the world cannot be rationally maintained, for it disguises and conceals as much as it illuminates. For Lukács, in the system of values, reason and longing, although do not stand side by side as equals, they "nevertheless coexist". Lukács's essays revolve around the value spheres of life, art, Eros, asceticism and philosophy – the compass points of the soul. And the latter, we know from Marianne Weber, "tugged at his [Weber] heartstrings" [*an die Brust branden*]

– moved, above all, by the fact that on its earthly course an idea always and everywhere operates in opposition to its original meaning and thereby destroys itself.”³³

In some respects, Lukács’s essays are comparable to Montaigne’s essays, wherein the self – “I describe myself” – is faced with the task of making itself at home in existence without fixed points of support. One French reviewer of Lukács’s *Soul and Form* declared him a “worthy disciple of Nietzsche and Montaigne”.³⁴ In Montaigne, for the first time, man’s life – the random personal life as a whole – became problematic in the modern sense. But Montaigne never pushes the problematic into the realm of the tragic. By contrast, Lukács’s self is framed in tragedy because the Beatrice of his soul, Irma Seidler, whose sister Emmy was married to Emil Lederer, who belonged to Weber’s circle of friends at Heidelberg, committed suicide.

Unlike Montaigne’s, Lukács’s non-egoistic instincts, the instincts of compassion, self-denial, and self-sacrifice, are uniformly gilded, glorified, transcendentalized until they assume the absolute value that enables him to deny life and even himself. And a self that turns against itself, against life, can, while longing to transcend them, flaunt the tactics of ambition, glory in the stratagems of disguise and masks, and savor the seductive pleasure of Eros. Lukács implies that there may be “masks involved” in all parts and stages of life – especially love. Lukács’s flirtation with roles – an ascetic, Faust, Silenic-featured Socrates – stood in sharp contrast to the Weberian rational conduct of life. And veils and masks, need we add, always betray moral disturbance. Lukács spoke from the fullness of his own experience.

No wonder that Lukács’s essays, focusing on the self’s cycle of sins, repentance and seeking forgiveness, impressed Weber. Confined to the “iron cage” of rationalism and unable to consummate his marriage with Marianne, Weber led a tormented personal life, torn between erotic behavior and the ascetic code. Convalescing in Italy on the eve of the Great War, Weber read Charles-Louis Philippe’s *Marie Donadieu*, and then asked his wife to send him Lukács’s essay on Philippe, published in *Die neue Rundschau* (1911), that captured the stifled grief of the ascetic self as it seeks a natural outlet or relief in sensual love. Like Nietzsche,³⁵ Lukács found no inherent contradiction between asceticism and sensual pleasure, for his ascetic ideal was philosophical, not moral.

Lukács and Weber shared the view that asceticism, self-denial on prudential grounds, provides the condition most favorable to the exercise of one’s intelligence. Like other “servants and fanatics of their own development,”³⁶ Lukács’s ascetic ideal incarnated the wish to be different, and to be elsewhere. This also amounted to a radical evaluation of life; it pronounced judgement on

life as a whole and juxtaposed alternative forms of existence. It is striking that every new, rising social force, as Daniel Bell wisely noted, “begins as an ascetic movement. Asceticism emphasizes non-material values, renunciation of physical pleasures, simplicity and self-denial, and arduous, purposeful discipline. That discipline is necessary for the mobilization of psychic and physical energies for tasks outside the self, for the conquest and subordination of the self in order to conquer others.”³⁷ Weber took keen, personal interest in Lukács’s triumph in agony as he grappled with the relationship between the erotic behavior and the ascetic code. Lukács and Weber intellectualized eroticism, and, while freezing to death “on the ice of knowledge”,³⁸ were aware of Plato’s verdict in the *Symposium* that “He whom love touches not, walks in darkness.” But Weber, like Lukács, walked in dark even when touched by love. Weber’s marriage proposal to Marianne contained this strange passage,

I say to you: I go the course that I must, and which you now know. – And you will go it with me. – Where it will lead, how far it is, whether it leads us together on this earth, I know not... High goes the tidal wave of passions, and it is dark around us – come with me, my high-souled comrade, out of the quiet harbor of resignation, out onto the high seas, where men grow in the struggling of souls and the past falls away from them.³⁹

When in love with Irma Seidler, Lukács wrote his essays in *Soul and Form* that contain Kierkegaard’s attitude of fascinated terror towards marriage. For Lukács, only Eros can draw reason out of its Platonic cave, but may, in the process, slip confusing love-notes between the philosopher’s pages. In Lukács’s philosophy there was no “nuptial bed” for love-struck souls. The erotic sphere, for Weber and Lukács, denoted the irrational sphere of values as compared with the rational everyday life. Erotic experience therefore spelled “life-fate” and, as Weber put it, freed one from “the cold skeleton hands of rational orders, just as completely as from the banality of everyday routine”.⁴⁰ Recoiling from life as if struck with leprosy, for Weber and Lukács eroticism was a gateway to life and source of value. Summing up his love-affair with Else von Richthofen Jaffe – *la belle peccatrice*, as they called her, Weber wrote, “At first our relationship was only passion, but now it represents a value.”⁴¹ Weber once asked Else to define the value of eroticism. Her response, “but certainly, beauty,” intrigued Weber and led him to read Lukács’s essays that deal with art and Eros.

Undeniably, the ascent of Eros along the banks of the Neckar left its mark on Weber’s thinking. As Marianne Weber put it, “nothing stamps a person more decisively than his conduct in this [erotic] sphere”.⁴² Weber, of course, never breathed a word to Marianne about his affair with Else. Just as Weber concealed Else in print and buried her in footnote of “Ethical Neutrality” (*Logos*, 1917)⁴³

when analyzing man's relationship with a woman, Lukács concealed Irma Seidler in his essays in *Soul and Form*. Before leaving Heidelberg in late 1917, Lukács packed the evidence of the stages of his life's way into a suitcase, and deposited it for safekeeping at the Deutsche Bank of Heidelberg. Discovered by accident after his death, it contained various manuscripts, drafts, notes, letters, and his 1910–11 diary, documenting his tragic love-affair with Irma Seidler. Lukács never told anyone about the suitcase, not even his wife Gertrud Bortstieber.

Both Weber and Lukács wove a veil of deceit into the very center of their life. Even Karl Jaspers, who idealized Weber,⁴⁴ refused to believe Weber's infidelity to his wife Marianne. Having learned in 1967 of Weber's love affair with Else Jaffe, Jaspers said the more he read Weber's works, the more he saw "a titanic trouble in emptiness".⁴⁵ Commenting on Weber's erotic side of life, Bruce Mazlish noted, "Such details would be left private and unmentioned here except that Weber's life experiences powerfully affected his sociological work. It made him more aware of emotionalism, and helped prepare the way of his deeper understanding of charisma."⁴⁶ While trying to conquer the "black shadow of marriage,"⁴⁷ Weber conceded that marriage rarely grants the continuation of unique and supreme value.

But as a neo-Kantian with a strong sense of duty, Weber was willing to make the sacrifice that marriage demands. The erotic sphere, for Weber, carries the sentiment that love transforms itself into responsibility "up to the pianissimo of old age". Although rarely does life grant such value in pure form, "he to whom it is given may speak of fate's fortune and grace – not of his own 'merit' ".⁴⁸ Lukács, however, refused to yield his exclusive self in his prenuptial maneuvers with women, because none of the great thinkers – Plato, Spinoza, Kant, Schopenhauer – were married. Weber held that anyone who does not strive toward marriage, or fails to make the sacrifice involved in it, incurs the guilt toward specific human beings, or toward the higher order which presides over all social morality. Weber knew about Lukács's guilt toward Irma Seidler, who, driven to the point of despair over Lukács's aesthetically sublimated eroticism, in May 1911 committed suicide. Irma became a black cross in Lukács's diary with the entry,

All my thoughts were flowers I brought her, they were her joy and meaning of life. All hers – and perhaps, I thought, she would notice and enjoy them... But my inability to give something of myself to her is the death sentence over my existence... I have forfeited my right to life.⁴⁹

Irma's suicide shattered Lukács's faith in the Kantian postulate of a universal morality of duty and humanism, based on respect for "reason" and

the common core of humanity. In particular, Lukács felt that Kant's moral judgement, as an expression of conformity to an objective law, fails to account for the concept of love,⁵⁰ which for Lukács spelled destination and fate. Lukács's moral and intellectual crisis, brought on by Irma's death, wrote its dark imperative: morality demands a human sacrifice. But what if guiltless sacrifice was impossible, Lukács asked, or, what if sacrifice meant the loss of human dignity? Following with great interest Lukács's concern with the sacrifice inherent in the erotic sphere, Weber wanted to know what place Lukács would assign Eros in his concept of form. "The typographical position of the erotic must be determined," Weber told Lukács, "and I am anxious to see where it will be in your work".⁵¹ After Irma's suicide, Lukács found himself, as he put it, "on the porch of Dante's hell: *non regionam di lor'ma guarda e passa*".⁵² On this porch, Lukács wrote his philosophical confession *On Poverty of Spirit*.

Max Weber and his wife were moved by Lukács's "profound artistic" essay on the poor in spirit. Marianne Weber sent the manuscript of *On Poverty of Spirit* to Gertrud Simmel, who also found it "terribly moving". Marianne Weber wrote to Lukács,

I part reluctantly with the manuscript. Perhaps you will forward me an offprint when you know us better. What you express here moved me profoundly. Will you allow me to understand its human content and what's behind it? We feel the same way about the tragedy of life. One cannot realize simultaneously perfection in doing one's duty of goodness and perfection of work. I don't wish to say more about this, for I think I understand what you imply. I am grateful for your valuable soul-to-soul gift.⁵³

Weber agreed with Lukács that Kantian ethics suffers from "poverty of spirit" and that bourgeois life, dominated by law and judicial norms, inhibits human intercourse. Lukács was reluctant to place human relations under legal rules, but felt that the ethical code inherent in a system of law should prescribe and substantiate the human communion that would terminate man's "eternal loneliness". Kant conceived of law as the expression of the universal moral law, and as a coercive confined to men's external relations. By contrast, Lukács in *On Poverty of Spirit* argues that the moral decision of the inner man cannot find outward expression in legality or the performance of duty. Kantian law, blind to an individual's particular inner moral life, cannot distinguish tragic responsibility and moral fault.

For Kant, there could not be a conflict of duties, since the very concepts of duty and practical law rule out inconsistency. But for Lukács the concept of "duty" no longer exerted any claim at all. He held that what contingently happens to an agent can force him morally to violate duty. Lukács agreed with

Weber that the sphere of erotic relations is a sphere of such moral conflict. In Weber's analysis:

This conflict is not only, or even predominantly, jealousy and the will to possession, excluding third ones. It is far more the most intimate coercion of the soul of the less brutal partner. This coercion exists because it is never noticed by the partners themselves. Pretending to be human devotion, it is a sophisticated enjoyment of oneself in the other. No consummated erotic communion will know itself to be founded in any way other than through a mysterious destination for one another: fate, in this highest sense of the word.⁵⁴

We, of course, know from Marianne Weber that her husband had in him the amoral hedonism and intellectual superiority to "ruthlessly" subject others to his ends. Nor should we be surprised that Weber, for personal reasons, took more than academic interest in Lukács's philosophical confession, which delineates Lukács's own sense of guilt for ruthlessly exploiting his love affair with Irma by placing her between erotic and ascetic spheres of life. Both Marianne and Max Weber, desperate refugees from the ruins of a failed marriage,⁵⁵ fully identified with Lukács's agonized candor on the "joyless bareness" of a man who, caught between the demonic compulsion to work and the erotic sphere, leads a tormented personal life and wrecks the life of others.

It was not lost on Weber that the ethical hero of *On Poverty of Spirit* shoots himself. This act symbolizes Lukács's own denouement as the agent of Kant's categorical imperative. At the same time, the demise of the Kantian ideal allowed Lukács to devise an alternative. When the hero of *On Poverty of Spirit* kills himself, on his desk a Bible lies open at the Revelation of St. John 3:15–16. Here the angel reproaches the Church of the Laodiceans for sheltering those who burn neither hot nor cold. With Lukács's spiritual account of epiphany and conversion of the sinner, we are in the presence of Dostoevsky's God-haunted creation, a world without tragedy. And it is hardly accidental that Weber's "dramatic change"⁵⁶ of view on the moral alternatives coincides with Lukács's own presence on Dante's porch.

In pursuit of knowledge and learning, Weber and Lukács overstepped limits of human nature and victimized others. Nobody knew this better than Marianne Weber as she reflected on the life of Weber and Lukács:

What was the value of norms that so often stifled the magnificence of vibrant life, repressed natural drives, and, above all, denied fulfillment to so many women? Law, duty, asceticism – were not all these ideas derived from the demonization of sex by an outgrown Christianity. To shape one's future entirely on the basis of one's own nature, to let the currents of life flow through one and then bear the consequences, was better than to sneak along on the sterile paths of caution hammed in by morality.⁵⁷

When Marianne wrote this she already knew the “human content and what was behind it” in Lukács’s confessional essay *On Poverty of Spirit*. It was precisely the concept of law, duty, and asceticism, standing against the erotic sphere, that set the stage for Lukács’s *On Poverty of Spirit*. His own culpability for Irma’s death forced him to examine the practical limitations of Kantian ethics. Intent on superseding Kant’s categorical imperative as the objective principle of morality, Lukács came perilously close to embracing Machiavelli’s axiom that moral evil is integral to life.

But it was Dostoevsky, not Machiavelli, who aided Lukács’s escape from the “superb prison” of Kantian ethics. Determined to lead a “pure” life, Lukács victimized Irma. And now, craving redemption, Dostoevsky taught Lukács that the “great life, the life of goodness” no longer presupposes purity. In Dostoevsky’s works, “interesting sinners” have a secure passage to “goodness.” In Lukács’s confessional prayer *On Poverty of Spirit*, the sinner does not so much repent as he uses his humility as a stage on the road to goodness. Kant defined two ends which are also duties: our own perfection and the happiness of others. But Lukács’s self-identified duty was, first and foremost, to his own perfection, which, as we have seen, bestowed tragedy on “others”.⁵⁸

By 1914, Lukács was obsessed with Dostoevsky, who pointed beyond the “problematic” European culture that failed to answer his personal and intellectual needs. However, Lukács’s references to “sacred” Dostoevsky disturbed Weber. While working on his intended book on Dostoevsky, Lukács read Weber’s *Intermediary Reflections [Zwischenbetrachtung]*, published in 1915. In fact, Lukács read Weber’s essay prior to its publication. Acknowledging the reprint of Weber’s essay, Lukács said he looked forward to the publication of all these essays in a book,⁵⁹ adding,

I have anticipated your distaste for my “Aesthetic of the Novel.”⁶⁰ However, I am anxious to learn whether the subsequent elaboration made you more conciliatory. In short, whether it induced you to make your peace with the introduction. For I cannot help believing that the work contains much that would appeal to you.⁶¹

There is no denying that Weber’s *Intermediary Reflections* and Lukács’s Dostoevsky notes, ultimately published as *The Theory of the Novel*, interacted on the forms of salvation and salvation ethics. For Weber, religious salvation presupposes God, for Lukács, worldly salvation presupposes a Godless universe. As Lukács put it, “The abandonment of the world by God manifests itself in the incommensurability of soul and work, of inferiority and adventure – in the absence of a transcendental ‘place’ allotted to human endeavor”.⁶² While Weber talks about the God-intoxicated demonic self, Lukács analyses the

“ungodly demonic self”. For Weber, religious man is granted communion with God, because he is both a “possession of God” and “possessed by God”. For Lukács, the self, confined to a world forsaken by providence and lacking transcendental orientation, assumes a demonic character and “arbitrarily” selects moments it thinks most suitable for “proving itself”. In fact, the demonic self arrogates to itself the “role of God”. No wonder that Weber minced no words about Lukács’s “sudden turn toward Dostoevsky”. He wrote to him, “I hated and still hate this work of yours” [*Theory of the Novel*].⁶³ This may well be the reason why Weber viewed Lukács as a “typical product of East European political sphere and cultural milieu”.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, it was Dostoevsky’s violent and mystical religiosity – the “new light” from Russia – that helped to shape Lukács’s total rejection of the Great War, and a reiterated renunciation of the worthless bourgeois civilization that caused it. By contrast, many of Lukács’s German friends and mentors – Paul Ernst, Thomas Mann, Georg Simmel, Max Weber – supported the war. In August 1915, Weber confessed it was misery “not to be there”.⁶⁵ And when Marianne Weber cited individual acts of war-heroism, Lukács retorted: “the better the worse”.

Undeniably, the Great War divided Lukács and Weber. As if to symbolize his own break with the “rational” Western culture, which preoccupied Weber, Lukács in May 1914 married the Russian-born Ljena Grabenko. During the 1905 revolution, Ljena carried a baby in her arms, borrowed for the occasion, in order to conceal a bomb in the blanket. Ljena’s spiritual imago is Dostoevsky’s Sonya – a harlot, outwardly corrupt, but whose soul strives for self-sacrifice. Imprisoned for terrorist activities, Ljena symbolized for Lukács the crushed, suffering humanity that, in Dostoevsky fashion, bears within its soul the undying seed of joyous resurrection. Like many Russian radical emigres turned artists, Ljena, ugly, emaciated, and neglected, drifted with the Bohemian crowd in Paris until she was discovered by Lukács’s close friend, Béla Balázs, the “Don Juan of Budapest,” whose appetite for female flesh was insatiable.

Balázs’s sister, Hilda, described Ljena to Lukács,

Dedicated to the revolution, Ljena wants to achieve something significant. Otherwise, she will kill herself. And she is not saying it for effect. She just will do it. That’s her greatest value. She is unemployed, but Ljena is a Russian. And in Paris that means she makes friends, is “good,” paints now and then without any system or method. I think she is a better revolutionary than an artist.⁶⁶

This had a hypnotic effect on Lukács at Heidelberg. He sent a train ticket to Ljena in Paris and invited her to join him on the Italian coast for vacation. From Bellaria-Igea Maria, Lukács and Ljena travelled to Venice, and then

later joined Max and Marianne Weber in Rome. Returning from Italy in the early autumn of 1913, Lukács had announced his plan to marry Ljena. His family received the news like an obituary. In the close knit patrician circles of Budapest, where chastity for girls before marriage was *de rigueur*, Ljena made no secret – *faut tre sincère* – of her casual sex affairs. Neither Lukács's father nor his sister could prevail on Lukács to give up Ljena.

Strange as it may sound, the Webers seemed to approve the marriage. Marianne Weber wrote to Lukács,

I am so happy, so very happy, that you have chosen in favor of this solution, that you have chose a human fate [*menschliches Schicksal*] with all its wonderful happiness, tenderness and its struggles... Yes, I have with innermost sympathy and emotion felt and understood you in Rome; grateful as well, that you have shown me, even though disguised, what went on inside you. I have taken to like you a lot in Rome, as it happens when one is allowed to be near the soul of a human being... Oh, how great and wonderful you will feel in this union with a woman, when you perceive her, in the deepest sense, as the complement to your self.⁶⁷

Lukács's fierce attachment to Ljena defied all reason. His father wrote him, "You have opened such an abyss between us as I have never dreamed of. I am hurt by this *fait accompli* and being told by others about your engagement." Lukács approached Marianne Weber to see if Weber could prevail on *père* Lukács. As for Lukács's "friendly request" to Weber, Marianne wrote back, "Weber was silent and made a peculiar face and at night he took a sleeping pill."⁶⁸ Nonetheless, to legitimize Ljena, Weber claimed her as his distant relative. Although deeply touched by Weber's noble gesture, Lukács's father was no fool.

Lukács's witnesses at the marriage were Emil Lederer and Ernst Bloch. By marrying Ljena, knowing full well that she was a harlot, Lukács turned marriage into a stage upon which he could rehearse his ethical role of displaying "goodness". And goodness he needed, for his marriage became a veritable hell. In essence, Lukács's marriage was a masterpiece of bitter fury; for Ljena severed his contact with the bourgeois world, where, however eloquently he may have theorized about "forms of life," he had lived in ever-restless despair. For Lukács, Ljena's singular value was her assurance that an exceptional life, though embittered, tormented, and unhappy, can be transfigured into pure spirit and ideas. The outbreak of the war found Lukács in Heidelberg, living with Ljena and her deranged lover Bruno Steinbach. Bruno, who had been confined for a while to an insane asylum, needed more help and "goodness" than did Lukács. Reflecting on his domestic inferno, Lukács wrote to Balázs, "The tragedy of an artist is that for the sake of his work he sacrifices his soul. Faith in the homogeneity of work leads to the freezing of the soul."⁶⁹

Lukács's marriage, or, more properly, the *ménage à trois* that arose from it, produced three nervous wrecks, who were treated by Karl Jaspers. Weber had warned Lukács of the dangers involved in living his "essence" through others. What worried Weber was that Lukács's demon, that was to "hold the fibers of one's life," was given free reign by marrying Ljena. Indeed, she led him to the works of Boris Savinkov (1879–1925). Under the pseudonym, V. Ropshin, Savinkov wrote *The Pale Horse* [Kon bledny, 1909] from which Ljena translated passages into German. Lukács acknowledged that it was through Savinkov that he learned and understood the "modern Russian soul". As a terrorist and nihilist, Savinkov masterminded the assassination of the Russian minister of the interior V. K. Plehve (1904), and the czar's uncle, Sergey Alexandrovich (1905). Savinkov himself fascinated both Lukács and Churchill. Churchill included Savinkov among the "Great Men of Our Age":

Boris Savinkov's whole life had been spent in conspiracy. Without religion as the Church teaches it; without morals as men prescribed them; without home or country; without wife or child, or kith or kin; without friend; without fear; hunter and hunted; implacable, unconquerable, alone. Yet he had found his consolation. His being was organized upon a theme. His life was devoted to a cause. The cause was the freedom of the Russian people. In that cause there was nothing he would not dare or endure. He had not even the stimulus of fanaticism. He was that extraordinary product – a Terrorist for moderate aims.⁷⁰

And Lukács declared:

I do not see any evidence of a disease in Boris Savinkov. I see in him a new expression of the ancient conflict between the first ethics (duty to society) and the second ethics (imperative of the soul). Inevitably, the order of the priorities produces dialectical complications when the soul embraces humanity rather than itself. Both the politician and the revolutionary must sacrifice the soul in order to save it.⁷¹

Lukács's growing infatuation with Savinkov and the "Russian soul" disturbed Weber. The "ancient conflict" between the two ethics, of "responsibility" and "conviction," that Lukács referred to, was very much on Weber's mind in his two famous lectures, *Science as a Vocation* (November 1917), and *Politics as a Vocation* (January 1919).⁷² In both essays, the presence of Lukács is unmistakable. This is all the more significant because, as Ernst Robert Curtius noted, Weber's *Science as a Vocation* is a "clearly profiled expression of his moral personality".⁷³ The background of Weber's famous lectures, amounting to his political testament, is the collapse of Germany, the rise of Bolshevism, and the chiliastic excitement of some of his former students who had trouble meeting the sober demands of the day, most notably Lukács. The

parting of Lukács and Weber unfolded against the cataclysmic events of the 1914–18 war and the 1918–19 Central European revolutions. By 1918, it seemed that the problems of the meaning and mastery of the disenchanting world, the subject of so many intense, but polite discussions in Weber's house on Sunday afternoons, defied the solution offered by the ethic of "responsibility" and the ethic of "conviction". Weber sought guidance and consolation in the Book of Job and the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, the "titan of holy invective" against the rulers of his own people.⁷⁴

The pathos of inner loneliness overwhelmed Weber, as it did Lukács. Both Weber and Lukács, whose personality can only be defined in terms of their relationship to ultimate values, lived in a world of permanent tragedy. In 1920, Karl Jaspers, close friend of Weber and Lukács, remarked that Weber was the "richest and deepest realization of the meaning of floundering in our time".⁷⁵ And at least up to 1908, as W. J. Mommsen noted, Weber used the concept of "culture" rather than "society".⁷⁶ Nothing intrigued Weber more than Lukács's critical evaluation of modern culture, as evident in Bloch's jealous query, "Just what exactly does Weber understand in you [Lukács]?"⁷⁷

Lukács acknowledged that what contributed to his good relationship with Weber was his statement, "Kant claims that aesthetic judgement is the essence of aesthetics. I say *Sein*, not aesthetic judgement, is an a priori."⁷⁸ This made a great impression on Weber who, in *Science as a Vocation*, cited with approval Lukács's adoption of Kant's presupposition about aesthetics. Weber and Lukács were critical of the "Eudämonisten" who equated economic development with human happiness. Compare Weber's repudiation of the "last men," who invented happiness,⁷⁹ with Lukács's diary entry (1911): "I am the cause of everything, or what made me what I am: hungry for happiness, unable to live without it, and yet unable to lead a happy life."⁸⁰

Aware of Lukács's growing interest in Russian collectivism as an alternative to Western individualism, Weber wrote:

One thing became evident to Lukács when he looked at the paintings of Cimabue – who painted at the beginning of the Italian Renaissance, but who had a closer relation to the Middle Ages than to the Renaissance – and that was that culture can exist only in conjunction with collective values.⁸¹

Reflecting on his relationship with Lukács, Weber said about his friend and later adversary, "Whenever I have spoken to Lukács, I have to think about it for days."⁸² Beyond all doubt, the revolutionary events of 1918–19 strained and broke their friendship. They responded differently to what their favorite poet, Goethe, called the "demands of the day." While Weber maintained an

inner, intellectual distance from the political cataclysm of his time,⁸³ Lukács seized the wheel of history. In 1916, Weber still hoped that Lukács would pursue an academic career in Germany. While visiting Budapest in May to discuss the issue of tariffs with the leading industrialists in Hungary, Weber stayed in the Lukács villa. Lukács's father implored Weber to remove his "unfortunate" son from the harmful environment he was in, and lure him back to academic life. This harmful environment included the Lukács Circle, also known as the Sunday Circle, whose cast of spiritual *virtuosi* was anathema to *père* Lukács. The ravens of gloom seemed forever to flap their wings over Lukács's circle of elect, who, in Balázs's words, were "happy in unhappiness". By late 1915, Lukács's writings were sounding the alarm over the void at the heart of Western civilization. He saw nothing but ruins: the ruins of society and the ruins of his own marriage. The circle became his life and conferred meaning on the void. The circle's Socratic air, its non-linear discourses on aesthetics and Eros, Dostoevsky and alienation, appeared to outsiders more subversive than lyrical. As Lukács's reputation grew in the circle, he was referred to as an "aesthetic pope" or "saint Lukács".

Others saw it differently. And it included Weber, whose two celebrated essays, "Science" and "Politics" show that he was well informed on Lukács and his circle's "sterile excitation" with the soul, and mystic flight from reality. Convinced that "man's fate today is to live in a time without god and prophet," Weber's query, which of the "warring gods should we serve?"⁸⁴ was also addressed to Lukács, who, by December 1918, wagered his salvation on Bolshevism. It is often alleged that Weber's personal and political ideals, based on rational life-conduct, are only compatible with the ethic of "responsibility," which is superior to the ethic of "conviction". But Weber, like Lukács, could not resist the lure of politics, and he confided to his mistress, Mina Tobler, that politics was his "secret love".⁸⁵

In our view, Weber's concept of value-decisions also accords legitimacy to Lukács's ethic of "conviction". It should be kept in mind that Weber juxtaposed the two political ethics – ethic of "responsibility" and ethic of "conviction" – to religious ethic. In the political variety, force and power, as Lukács argued, are crucial in determining human action and conduct. For Weber, the exercise of domination by force and charisma are legitimate. But domination, contra Lukács, stands in opposition to religious ethics. Consequently, Weber's reference in *Politics as a Vocation* to the devitalization of the soul in the interest of collective power – proletariat – is addressed to Lukács.

At the same time, Weber's preference for a politics of "responsibility" is not without an ambiguity. While warning against the Lukácsian "salvation of the soul" through revolutionary politics, Weber acknowledges that the demon of

politics lives in an inner tension with the god of love, and can, at any time "lead to an irreconcilable conflict".⁸⁶ Careful reading of Weber's essay on "Politics" not only shows that it concludes on the note of reconciliation between conviction and responsibility, but that Weber was impressed, if not moved, by Lukács the *Gesinnungsethiker* [a man guided by an ethic of ultimate ends].

This is not to deny that Weber's main objection to Lukács's politics of pure conviction was that it presented not only moral and political problems, but also aesthetic and metaphysical ones. And aesthetic judgment, as Weber knew all too well from Kant, is not a responsible or accountable action. It should not surprise us then that when Lukács returned to Heidelberg in August 1916, Weber advised him to put his "cards on the table" and forget about aesthetics, and especially Dostoevsky and the "Russian soul". Addressing the question of whether Lukács was really only an essayist, and not a systematic thinker as Emil Lask and others contended, Weber was forthright:

A very good friend of yours, Lask is of the opinion that as a born essayist you will not be content with a systematic work and, therefore, you should not habilitate... If the completion of a systematic work is an unbearable pain to you, then I recommend that you forget about habilitation. Not because you do not deserve it, but because in the end it will help neither you nor your students. Then your road would be different.⁸⁷

But Lukács's pursuit of academic career appeared half hearted, and he was frankly ambivalent about it. While assuring Weber of his intent to study sociology, Lukács insisted on lecturing in aesthetics. As for his doctoral dissertation in sociology, Lukács said it would mean at least two years of "toil" at a time when, he informed Weber, the "personal problems" of his friend [Béla Balázs] made great demands on his time. Still, Weber persisted and confided to Lukács, "I want you to become one of my colleagues as much as I have wanted anything. The question is: how to go about it?"⁸⁸

Weber's colleagues at Heidelberg, however, were less enthusiastic about Lukács candidacy. Even Lukács complete work, *Theory of the Novel* (1916), had a rather mixed reception in Heidelberg. Complaining of the book's "transcendental" topography, Jaspers said that Lukács's austere thinking makes heavy demands on the reader.⁸⁹ And Ernst Troeltsch, finding the book "full of abstractions," claimed it was very difficult to read.⁹⁰

Running into rather stiff opposition at Heidelberg, and completely worn out by the "reality" of his marriage,⁹¹ Lukács poured out his heart to his friend Frederick Antal. He advised Lukács to "terrorize" Weber by threatening to leave Heidelberg, unless he could earn his degree in philosophy.⁹² Lukács formally submitted, in May 1918, his application and supporting

materials. In his supporting statement, he said that while “none of the professors” at the University of Budapest influenced his development, his German professors – Dilthey, Simmel, Windelband, Ricker, Lask, and Max Weber – had inspired him greatly.⁹³

However, Lukács’s academic hopes were quickly dashed. His application was rejected on the grounds that the University of Heidelberg could not “admit a foreigner, especially a Hungarian citizen, to *Habilitation*.”⁹⁴ Discussing the mad hazard of German academic life in *Science as a Vocation*, Weber remarked, “If the young scholar asks my advice with regard to habilitation... if he is a Jew, of course one says *lasciate ogni speranza*.” Lukács duly acknowledged the dean’s “friendly” letter and withdrew his application. Closing his letter, Lukács added that he could not return to Heidelberg anyway because in the meantime he had placed himself at the “disposal of the Hungarian government”. What Lukács did not tell the dean is that in the “meantime” he had joined the newly formed Communist Party of Hungary.

If anything, it was the Hungarian Republic of Councils of 1919, where Lukács rose to prominence as deputy commissar of public education, that strained his friendship with Weber. Shortly before his death, in his last letter to Lukács, Weber wrote:

My esteemed friend, of course we are separated by our political views. I am absolutely convinced that these experiments can only have and will have the consequence of discrediting socialism for the coming one hundred years... Whenever I think of what the present political events – since 1918 – have cost in terms of unquestionably valuable people, regardless of the “direction” of their choices (e.g. Schumpeter and now you), I cannot help feeling bitter about this senseless fate.⁹⁵

As death was closing on Weber (June 1920), he edited and reorganized his most systematic work, *Economy and Society*, which Guenther Roth called “the sum of Max Weber’s scholarly vision of society.”⁹⁶ But as Weber worked on the galley-proofs of *Economy and Society*, he also took issue with Lukács. Weber was familiar with at least three of Lukács’s Marxist essays, notably *What is Orthodox Marxism?* (March 1919), *The Changing Function of Historical Materialism* (June 1920), and *Class Consciousness* (March 1920). These essays re-appeared, though in revised form, in *History and Class Consciousness* (1923). In his “Introduction” to *Economy and Society*, Roth specifically states that in his work Weber took issue, among others, with “the Marxism of the time.” Internal evidence in *Economy and Society* confirms that when Weber drew the line “against Marxism” in that work⁹⁷ he drew it against Lukács. Analyzing the distribution of power in terms of class and party, Weber pointedly reminded Lukács, who claimed that history had entrusted the

proletariat "with the task of transforming society consciously,"⁹⁸ that not all "power entails social honor."⁹⁹ Furthermore, to treat "class" philosophically or conceptually, in Weber's view,

must not lead to that kind of pseudo-scientific operation with the concepts of class and class interest which is so frequent these days and which has found its most classic expression in the statement of a talented author, that the individual may be in error concerning his interest but that the class is infallible about its interest.¹⁰⁰

This "talented author" was Lukács. In *What is Orthodox Marxism?* Lukács declared Marx's theory of reality as superior to that propounded by the apostles of *Realpolitik*. These apostles, Lukács wrote, swaying "like reeds in the wind, judged their actions solely by the 'facts,' changed tactics after every victory, or every defeat, and then stood helpless when they had to make real decisions."¹⁰¹ Weber was the leading "apostle" of *Realpolitik*. Indeed, Lukács's reference to Weber as standing "helpless" when he had to make decision is laced with irony. Lukács was referring to Weber, who, as member of the German peace delegation at Versailles, not only participated in the negotiations in Paris concerning Germany's responsibility for the war, but argued that the Treaty of Versailles, which he called the "treaty of shame" must be rejected "whatever the risks".¹⁰²

As a revolutionary, Lukács broke with the diabolical cycle of European power politics. But Weber, whom Friedrich Meinecke called the "German Machiavelli,"¹⁰³ whose utilitarian concept of the state combined with passionate nationalism, could never really free himself from Germany and its "old majesty". Despite the collapse of imperial Reich, Weber's political views remained unshaken. Summing it up, Mommsen wrote:

He stood by his principles and could still see no errors in the principles of political power that had guided German policy in the past (or that he would have liked to see guide it). In 1918 and 1919, at a time when there was a general retreat from the belief in power characteristic of the Wilhelmine epoch, he expressly advocated power as the means and presupposition of all policy, and sharply attacked pacifism.¹⁰⁴

Not surprisingly, Weber's *Politics as a Vocation* names three pre-eminent qualities for politicians: passion, a feeling of responsibility, and a sense of proportion.¹⁰⁵ Weber left no doubt that intellectuals who invoke the proud name of revolution lack objective responsibility. Indeed, Weber reminded Lukács, without actually naming him, that he was blind to reality because he justified the ethics of conviction by the claim that the "purpose hallows the means," when, in essence, the purpose cannot even be achieved. And yet, it is

by no means obvious that Weber embraced unequivocally the ethics of "responsibility". As a matter of fact, Roth stated, "Weber's critical stance appeared so deeply rooted in an ethics of ultimate ends that Lukács could exclaim: 'Max Weber would be the right man to free socialism from the miserable relativism' of the Revisionists."¹⁰⁶

It is also worth emphasizing that Weber's intellectual and philosophical disputes with Lukács are confined to and concealed in his most challenging and difficult works. Weber's two essays, "Science" and "Politics," comprise "rhetorical masterpieces." Yet the very compactness of the essays, with their poignant synopsis of his philosophical and political outlook, "impedes easy comprehension". And *Economy and Society* is the most demanding "text" yet written by a sociologist. This work, as Roth put it, is a "continuous challenge at several levels of comprehension".¹⁰⁷ These works of Weber, however, provide internal evidence that he was familiar with Lukács's politics of the soul. Conversely, we know that Lukács read Weber's 1918 series of articles, fraught with excerpts from the still unpublished *Economy and Society*.

The "battle of gods" unfolded in Weber's political debate with Lukács on the "future" of European civilization shaken by war and revolution. Facts alone cannot prove the truth of their respective standpoints. It was world-views and visions that collided in Weber and Lukács. Both struggled for ultimate principles and values, and exemplified scholarship and commitment. Lukács considered the Communist Party, the mentor of true consciousness, to be the final arbiter of truth and reason. To Weber, the political party, including the Communist Party, is but a "form of domination".¹⁰⁸ Party-oriented action, said Weber, involves association. By contrast, Lukács equated such action with conspiracy. As for Lukács's claim that the Communist Party resides in the sphere of morality, Weber countered with Nietzsche's observation that the pariah people's group-action is fueled by "ressentiment". The party for Lukács defined values or life-meanings, not "ressentiment". Weber, of course, insisted that rationality is the true realm of free, value-oriented action. Consequently, he saw the Communist Party as Lukács's "iron cage". Weber's lecture on socialism in 1918 was remarkable for its clear-sighted statement that in socialism organizations dominate men, a dominion which is an example of what Simmel called the "tragedy" of culture.

It has been suggested that Lukács influenced Weber's understanding of Marx. Allegedly, Weber shows a more "sophisticated" understanding of Marx in *Economy and Society* than one can find in *The Protestant Ethic*.¹⁰⁹ Apart from the fact that Weber never had a Marxist phase,¹¹⁰ there is no textual proof that Weber, battling Lukács, changed his mind on Marx. In *The Protestant Ethic*, Weber attempts to demonstrate how sectarian convictions of

a rationalist kind promoted "methodological conduct" in all spheres of life, including the economic realm. Nonetheless, he rejected monocausal explanations in *The Protestant Ethic* as well as in *Economy and Society*.

Unlike Marx and Lukács, Weber saw rationalization as the revolutionary process in Western civilization. Like Marx, Weber was concerned with the concept of change and this, in one way or another, involves analysis of class and power. Weber's believe in developmental necessity, however, was not anticipatory of the historical likelihood of socialism. The trouble with Marxism, as Weber saw it, was its fusion of natural-law beliefs with a deterministic social theory. Weber's sociology is devoid of "deterministic perspective" inherent in Marxism. And Lukács could not impart any "determinist perspective" to Weber, for the simple reason that Lukács, even as a Marxist, focused on values that inspired ethical and spiritual conduct. It is not material interests that define Lukács's intellectual core, but values, whose rational and irrational spheres play crucial role in Weber's sociology.

Just why rationality obsessed Weber, that is identified with his name, has so far, to my knowledge, eluded us.¹¹¹ Marx was not sympathetic to irrationalism, whereas the pre-Marxist Lukács was the leading proponent of the irrational spheres of life. Some scholars have traced Weber's "dread fascination" with absolutist values and otherwise irrational vectors to his suffocating family atmosphere¹¹² and his sense of "duty" in being a scholar and remaining true to his primary sources. Although there is no reason to dispute this, we believe it was also due to Lukács that Weber introduced the concept of irrational into his scholarly work. This is not to deny Weber's attempts to quench Lukács's "flame of pure intentions". In sharp disagreement with Lukács, Weber equated revolution with usurpation and non-legitimate domination. In contrast to Lukács, who dwelled on the "movement of the whole,"¹¹³ Weber's sociological focus remained the "charismatic leader". It is safe to assume that Weber had also Lukács in mind when he inserted this passage in the galley-proofs of *Economy and Society*:

Previous to this situation every revolution which has been attempted under modern conditions failed completely because of the indispensability of trained officials and of the lack of its own organized staff... See below, the ch. on the theory of revolution [Unwritten].¹¹⁴

Had Weber lived a few months longer, he most likely would have written his "theory of revolution" in response to Lukács's revolutionary politics. Unlike Weber, whose intellectual integrity convinced him that nothing is gained by yearning for prophets and saviors, Lukács made the leap of faith

into *vita nuova*. Between two Sunday Circle meetings, as it were, Lukács converted to communism. *Consummatum est*. The deed was done. Lukács rationalized his conversion by quoting Kierkegaard's saying that sacrificing one's life for a cause is always an irrational act. "To believe," said Lukács, "means that man consciously assumes an irrational attitude toward his own self."¹¹⁵

Lukács was already in exile in Vienna, and under the sentence of death in post-revolutionary Budapest, when *père* Lukács made his last appeal to Weber to rescue Lukács from revolutionary politics and entice him back to Heidelberg. In his response, Weber wrote:

The reaction here to the communist regime of the Spring 1919 is still very strong. And even I am exposed to student demonstrations. The academic world has become extremely reactionary and also radically anti-Semitic.¹¹⁶

It speaks of Weber's integrity that when strong pressure was exerted on Austria to extradite Lukács, Weber intervened on behalf of his friend turned foe. But Weber refused to sign the public appeal, "Save Georg Lukács," spearheaded by Thomas Mann, among others. As Weber explained it to Lukács, "I did not sign the recent public appeal because I had written earlier to the minister of justice in Budapest on your behalf. I also indicated that I would not join in any public action."¹¹⁷

Although *père* Lukács's appeal to Weber is understandable, it is inconceivable that Lukács would have heeded Weber's call of returning to academic life. In Weber and Lukács the "daemon" – *das Dämonische* – was present as fate, which decreed "from self you cannot flee". Weber's intellectual testament, *Science as a Vocation*, concludes with Goethe's concept of duty to meet the "demands of the day" in human relations as well as in our vocation.¹¹⁸ Accepting the Goethe Prize, Lukács, already mortally ill, also defined his life in terms of duty to meet the "demands of the day" by

...cast[ing] ourselves into the torrent of time
 Into the whirl of eventfulness
 ...It is restless action makes the man.¹¹⁹

Notes

1. Daniel Bell, "First Love and Early Sorrows," *Partisan Review*, 48 (1981, No. 4), pp. 533–51.
2. Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Boston, Mass., 1960), p. 423.
3. Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism* (3 vols. New York, 1978), Vol. 1, p. vi.
4. See especially, Lee Congdon, *The Young Lukács* (Chapel Hill, 1983); pp. 84–86, 111–13; Mary Gluck, *Georg Lukács and his Generation 1900–1918* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 184–87; Andrew Arato and Paul Breines, *The Young Lukács and the Origins of Western Marxism* (New York, 1979), pp. 116–18, 122–23; Michael Lowy, Georg Lukács, *From Romanticism to Bolshevism* (London, 1979), pp. 37–43. Among the major works on Weber that examine his relationship to Lukács, see Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *The Political and Social Theory of Max Weber* (Chicago, 1989); Wolfgang Schluchter, *Rationalism, Religion and Domination* (California, 1989); Harvey Goldman, *Max Weber and Thomas Mann* (California, 1988); Lawrence A. Scaff, *Fleeing the Iron Cage* (California, 1989); Alan Sica, *Weber, Irrationality and Social Order* (California, 1988); Arthur Mitzman, *The Iron Cage: An Historical Interpretation of Max Weber* (New York, 1969). For a comprehensive overview of contemporaries, including Lukács, who shaped, and were in turn influenced by Max Weber, see, Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel, ed., *Max Weber and his Contemporaries* (London, 1987).
5. Dirk Kasler, *Max Weber* (Chicago, 1988), p. 212.
6. There is not a single reference to Lukács in such major works on Weber as, for instance, Reinhard Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (New York, 1960); Julien Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber* (New York, 1968); Randall Collins, *Max Weber* (Beverly Hills, 1986).
7. Donald G. MacRae, *Weber* (London, 1974), p. 52.
8. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *The Political and Social Theory of Max Weber* (Chicago, 1989), p. 53.
9. Mommsen, p. 53.
10. Mannheim was only nineteen when he fell under Lukács's spell, see Árpád Kadarkay, *Georg Lukács: Life, Thought, and Politics* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), pp. 32, 73, 237–8, 293–4; on Mannheim's relationship to Weber, see Colin Loader, *The Intellectual Development of Karl Mannheim* (Cambridge, U.K., 1985), pp. 121–24; also Henk E.S. Woldring, *Karl Mannheim. The Development of His Thought* (New York, 1987), especially Ch. II.
11. Cited by Lee Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought* (Princeton, N.J., 1991), p. 276.
12. For this information I am indebted to Lee Congdon, *Exile and Social Thought*, pp. 279–85.
13. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber. A Biography*, trs. Harry Zohn (New York, 1975), p. 468.
14. Lukács to Max Weber, 17 January 1916, Lukács Archive and Library, The Philosophical Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest. Hereafter cited as LAK.
15. Georg Lukács, *Record of a Life*, ed. István Eörsi (London, 1983), pp. 175–76.
16. For Weber's unhappy childhood, see Arthur Mitzman, *The Iron Cage* (New York, 1969), pp. 16–74; Dirk Kasler, *Max Weber* (Chicago, 1988), pp. 1–23.
17. For a balanced summary of the tragic dimension in Weber's family, see Guenther Roth, "Max Weber's Generational Rebellion and Maturation," *Scholarship and Partisanship*, ed. Reinhold Bendix & Guenther Roth (California, 1971), pp. 6–33.
18. Lukács, *Curriculum Vitae*, ed. János Ambrus (Budapest, 1982), p. 12.
19. Quoted by Mitzman, *The Iron Cage*, p. 307.
20. Father to Lukács, 13 August 1912, LAK.

21. György Lukács, *A modern dráma fejlődésének története* [History of the Development of Modern Drama], (2 vols. Budapest, 1911), Vol. 2, p. 378.
22. Lukács, *Modern Drama*, 2:378.
23. Max Weber, *Werk und Person*, ed. Eduard Baumgarten (Tubingen, 1964), pp. 554–55; for Nietzsche's influence on Weber, see Robert Eden, *Political Leadership and Nihilism. A Study of Weber and Nietzsche* (Florida, 1983), especially chs. 2–3; also Eugene Fleischmann, "Die Weber a Nietzsche," *Archives Européennes Sociologiques*, 5 (1964), pp. 190–238.
24. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue – a Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, 1981), pp. 24–27.
25. Scaff, *Fleeing the Iron Cage*, p. 68.
26. For Nietzsche's influence on Lukács, see Kadarkay, *Georg Lukács*, especially ch. 4: "The Nietzschean Moment."
27. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, tr. R. J. Hollingdale (New York, 1961), p. 14.
28. Lukács, *Ifjúkori művek (1901–1918)* [Early works], ed. Árpád Timár (Budapest, 1977), p. 660.
29. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, p. 335.
30. Kasler, *Max Weber*, p. 215.
31. Lukács, *Soul and Form* (Cambridge, Mass., 1974), p. 17.
32. Lukács, *Soul and Form*, p. 16.
33. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, p. 337.
34. See F. Bertaux's review in *La Nouvelle revue française* 5 (January 1913), p. 169.
35. Nietzsche's third essay, "What Do Ascetic Ideals Mean?," in the *Genealogy of Morals* made a lasting impression on Lukács and Weber.
36. Lukács, *Soul and Form*, p. 48.
37. Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York, 1976), p. 82.
38. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 195.
39. Mitzman, *The Iron Cage*, pp. 89–90.
40. From Max Weber, p. 347.
41. Martin Green, *The von Richthofen Sisters* (New York, 1974), p. 170.
42. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, p. 371.
43. Green, *The von Richthofen Sisters*, p. 170.
44. Dieter Henrich, "Karl Jaspers: Thinking with Max Weber in Mind," in *Max Weber and his Contemporaries*, pp. 528–43.
45. Karl Jaspers, *On Max Weber* (New York, 1989), p. xx.
46. Bruce Mazlish, *A New Science. The Breakdown of Connections and the Birth of Sociology* (New York, 1989), p. 223.
47. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, p. 372.
48. From Max Weber, p. 350.
49. Lukács, *Napló – Tagebuch (1910–11)* (Budapest, 1981), p. 41.
50. It is interesting to note that among the Anglo-Saxon moral philosophers who turned against Kant, Iris Murdoch specifically states, "We need a moral philosophy in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now by philosophers, can once again be made central." See Murdoch's essay, "On 'God' and 'Good'," in *Revisions*, ed. Stanley Hauerwas & Alasdair MacIntyre (Indiana, 1983), pp. 68–91.
51. Max Weber to Lukács, 10 March 1913, LAK.
52. Lukács, *Napló – Tagebuch*, p. 53.
53. Marianne Weber to Lukács, 31 July 1912, LAK.
54. From Max Weber, p. 348.
55. See Randall Collins, *Max Weber* (California, 1986), pp. 18–27; Julien Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber* (New York, 1968), pp. 32–35.

56. Mitzman, *The Iron Cage*, p. 287.
57. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, pp. 370–71.
58. Lukács, *Modern Drama*, Vol. 1, p. 161.
59. See Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, Vol. 1.
60. See Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, tr. Anna Bostock (Cambridge, Mass., 1971).
61. Lukács to Max Weber, [December] 1915, LAK.
62. Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, p. 97.
63. Weber to Lukács, 14 August 1916, LAK.
64. Paul Vermes, "The Buber–Lukács Correspondence (1911–21)," *Yearbook of the Leo Baeck Institute of Jews from Germany*, 27 (1982), pp. 369–78.
65. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Max Weber and German Politics 1890–1920* (Chicago, 1984), p. 195.
66. Hilda Bauer to Lukács, 4 August 1912, LAK.
67. Marianne Weber to Lukács, 15 November 1913, LAK.
68. Marianne Weber to Lukács, 6 June 1913, LAK.
69. Béla Balázs, *Napló* [Diary] (2 vols. Budapest, 1982), Vol. 2, p. 173.
70. Winston S. Churchill, *Great Contemporaries* (New York, 1937), p. 104.
71. Lukács to Paul Ernst, 4 May 1915, LAK.
72. On dating Weber's lectures, see Wolfgang Schlichter's excursus in his study co-authored with Guenther Roth, *Max Weber's Vision of History* (California, 1979), pp. 113–16.
73. See Ernst Robert Curtius, "Max Weber on Science as a Vocation" in *Max Weber's Science as a Vocation*, ed. Peter Lassman, Irving Velody (London, 1989), p. 73.
74. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, p. 594.
75. Karl Jaspers, *On Max Weber*, p. 37.
76. Wolfgang Mommsen, *The Age of Bureaucracy: Perspective on the Sociology of Max Weber* (New York, 1974), p. 3.
77. Ernst Bloch to Lukács, 16 August 1916, LAK.
78. From Max Weber, p. 154.
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In Exile



BETWEEN RED AND WHITE: THE MOOD AND MIND OF HUNGARY'S RADICALS, 1919-1920

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Hungary, as is generally known, was particularly hard hit by the consequences of World War I. Not only was she associated with Germany and thus irreparably on the losing side, but the lost war released long simmering social tensions and energies, and facilitated the outbreak of subsequent revolutions. To boot, the country ultimately had to accept a humiliating peace treaty which paved the way toward Hungary's involvement in World War II. Though much of it is textbook knowledge, we may have to review some of the crucial points of Hungarian history in 1918-1920 to serve as a background to a devastating intellectual exodus that followed the post-war events.¹

The Great War was immediately followed by the 'Frost Flower Revolution' (October 31, 1918), preceding even the German armistice. Headed by Count Mihály Károlyi, a magnate and one of the few steady opponents of the war right from its beginning, the 1918 revolution was essentially geared toward a liberal transformation of Hungary from a largely feudal to a bourgeois-democratic system with well-known Radicals and Liberals including scholars and social scientists in the government. The liberal-democratic, occasionally leftist élite, the radical elements in early 20th century Hungarian politics, academia, literature, and the arts may have felt, at least for a brief period of time, that their long fight against the repressive régimes of pre-World War I Hungary for the modernization of the country had finally come to a successful and promising climax. Prime Minister turned President in the newly proclaimed Republic of Hungary, Count Károlyi promoted a much overdue land reform and cared for major social problems. He failed, however, to handle the extremely rapidly deteriorating international as well as domestic political and economic situation, and half-heartedly handed over power to the Communists, whom his government quite stubbornly and effectively oppressed until their sudden takeover on March 21, 1919.

The short-lived Hungarian 'Republic of Councils' (in Hungarian *Tanácsköztársaság*), was, indeed, a translation of the 'Soviets' and was largely imported from Soviet Russia by former Hungarian prisoners of war who spent

quite some time, eventually years in Russian POW camps during the great war where they were increasingly indoctrinated with the ideas and ideals of Communism. The 'Soviet' Republic of Hungary tried to realize Lenin's dream of a permanent, worldwide revolution: its actual leader, Béla Kun, as well as some of his associates, were in constant, sometimes even personal, touch with Lenin himself. The leaders of 1919 outdid those of 1918 in terms of radicalism, social engineering, and imported visionary utopianism, often completely detached from the realities of post-World War I Hungary. Theirs was a major social experiment turned into total disaster. Initially popular among certain groups of workers, poor people in general, and some intellectuals, the system succeeded in alienating not only the middle class but even the peasantry and ended up after 133 days with no social backing whatsoever. Its only visible success was a nationally popular effort to retake former Hungarian territories that by 1919 had become dominated by the Czechs, and its willingness to fight for Transylvania, occupied by Roumania, which used the political vacuum to move well into the heart of Hungary. By early August 1919 all was over, and Béla Kun's régime had to go.²

It is generally understood that many of the leaders in both revolutions, but particularly in the 1919 Republic of Councils, came from a Jewish background. About two third of the 'people's commissars' (as members of the government were then called) and their deputies were Jews. Jewish presence was particularly noted in the police forces and in cultural government. To appreciate and understand 1919 we must set it against the background of Jewish-Hungarian social history.

In little over two generations turn-of-the-century Hungary absorbed a vast influx of several hundred thousands of Jewish immigrants from mostly Russia and Russian or Austrian Poland. They were for the most part little tolerated or outright despised by the happier few who arrived earlier, any time between the mid-eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth century, somewhere from Moravia or other Westernized territories of the Habsburg Monarchy/Central Europe. An important part of them soon assimilated to the Hungarian traditions, learnt the Hungarian language and appreciated the dominant Hungarian culture, and became devoted to the nationalist sentiment that swept across the country during much of the 19th century. They had a very important role in building up the new Hungary of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1867-1918), her economy, her professional class, her culture and knowledge. They quickly entered politics, even Parliament, and the government. Just like their equivalents in Vienna, they received titles from the Emperor-King Francis Joseph I, entered the ranks of the nobility and some even the aristocracy. They produced and owned much of the new wealth and had very

considerable influence by the time when most of the newcomers from Galicia or Russia were just trying to make their very first move in their new country. It is almost natural that the two groups did not like each other and their internal conflicts also contributed to the end of what some like to call the 'love affair' between Jew and gentry in the Hungary of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.³

After the takeover of Adm. Miklós Horthy's white army in August 1919 and a succession of extremely right wing governments, Jew and Communist became almost synonyms. "The identification of 'the Jews' with 'godless revolution' and 'atheistic socialism,' characteristic of the Russian political class from 1881 to 1917, was now also largely accepted by the corresponding class in Hungary."⁴ Bolshevism was considered "a purely Jewish product," as Oscar Jászi put it in his reminiscences. Jews were punished for the Commune as a group.⁵ For quite some time, at least until Horthy was proclaimed Regent of Hungary on March 1, 1920, the country lived under the constant threat of extremist, sometimes paramilitary, commandos, who tortured and killed almost anybody, Jew or, often, non-Jew, who was said or thought to have been associated with the Béla Kun government, at any level or in any capacity. Intellectual leaders lost their jobs as a matter of course. Jewish students were repeatedly beaten. In Prague and Brünn [Brno] there were a lot of Hungarians, "indeed almost Hungarian colonies, of some 100-200 people" who in New York engineer Marcel Stein's memory "came away from Hungary not as Communists but as Jews".⁶ 1920 saw the introduction of a new bill (1920:XXV) which established a 5% quota for Jewish students to be admitted to universities. For anybody who was Jewish, or a noted liberal, or a radical leftist in politics, starting a career was becoming well-nigh impossible. There were only very limited ways to survive politically, economically, and intellectually; the safest way was to escape the country.⁷

On top of all this, Hungary was forced to sign the devastating Peace Treaty of Trianon (in the Grand Trianon Palace of Versailles), on June 4, 1920, which effectively transferred well over 2/3 of the territory of the former Kingdom of Hungary to mostly newly created or aggrandized, neighboring "nation-states" such as Czechoslovakia, Roumania, and "the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes" (later, as of 1929, Yugoslavia). The Hungarians of those territories, some three and a half million people, started immediately to have a very rough time. Once again, there was very little choice left to the Hungarian intellectuals or would-be intellectuals of those regions but to leave.

Budapest was frustrated, angry, and dangerous in the Fall of 1919. Leaders and members of the Radical Party felt particularly bitter and lost.⁸ A former cabinet minister under Count Károlyi and one of his few personal friends, the anti-Bolshevik, Radical Oscar Jászi⁹ had fled to Austria earlier in 1919. Jászi

(1875–1957), was a versatile and original social scientist, politician, “Minister Entrusted with the Preparation of the Right of Self-Determination for Nationalities Living in Hungary” in late 1918, professor at Oberlin College, Ohio, from the 1920s through his death; author of *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*. Jászi’s Hungarian friends included some of the best liberal and radical minds of early 20th century Hungary who centered mostly around the *Társadalomtudományi Társaság* (Society for Social Sciences) as well as its journal *Huszadik Század* (Twentieth Century) that was introduced by no less a patron than Herbert Spencer. Jászi and the *Huszadik Század* were indeed surrounded by a galaxy of outstanding sociologists, philosophers, art-historians, literary critics, most of whom left Hungary after 1918–1919 and made their reputation abroad. The spectacular list included Frederick Antal, Béla Balázs, Arnold Hauser, Georg Lukács, Karl Mannheim, Karl and Michael Polányi, Charles de Tolnay, and many others.

Jászi’s first marriage provided a good example of some of the social patterns of Hungarian Jewry. The gifted author and artist Anna Lesznai (1885–1966) came from a prominent, gentrified, upper middle class, Jewish–Hungarian family. Her grandfather was a celebrated doctor in the North-East of Hungary who distinguished himself during his fights against the cholera epidemic of 1831 and could even boast of personal relations to Hungary’s great patriot Lajos Kossuth. Lesznai’s father, Geyza Moscowitz de Zemplén was a rich landowner who gave important support to Count Gyula Andrassy, the first Hungarian Prime Minister in the new Monarchy (1867–1871) and later, more importantly, Austro–Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs (1871–1879). He received a title and was the only Jewish member of the discriminating aristocratic *Nemzeti Casino* (National Club).¹⁰ Anna Lesznai changed her name and took one from the family estate at Körtvélyes (today Hrušov in Slovakia) where she grew up. It is interesting to note that one of Anna Lesznai’s cousins was the eminent patron and man of letters Baron Lajos Hatvany.

Jászi’s sister Alice married the outstanding social scientist József Madzsar, a doctor, scholar and librarian working for the City of Budapest as well as an Adjunct Professor of the University of Budapest. Madzsar was a non-Jew.

Jászi’s own reminiscences clearly indicate his position, equally detesting “Bolshevism” as well as “the White Terror,” a critical stance typically shared by the Radicals of Hungary.¹¹ He soon came to the conclusion that “the mechanical State Communism of the Marxists cannot be a higher stage of development, as it would completely absorb the freedom and self-direction of the individual.”¹² Jászi provided the first scholarly and penetrating “critical estimate of the proletarian dictatorship” and demonstrated “the economic and

moral bankruptcy of the Soviet Republic".¹³ However, he was equally abhorred by the raging of the White Terror which he described as "one of the darkest pages of Hungarian history," and condemned the new régime, just as uncompromisingly, for "the complete suppression of popular liberties".¹⁴

The letters Jászi received in his 1919–1920 Vienna exile from family and friends in Budapest show most of the anguish, distress, and misery of the post-revolutionary period. Father Sándor Giesswein's letter to him reflected the Budapest mood in the Fall of 1919. "With us the atmosphere is like in the middle of July 1914 – were we not at the outset of Winter we would again hear the voice subdued in so many bosoms: Long live the war! This is what the Hungarian needs."¹⁵ The successful author and playwright Lajos Bíró received similar news in Florence from his friends in Hungary: "Letters from home keep telling me that everybody reckons with the opportunity of a new war by next Spring. The war is unimaginable, impossible, madness; but in Hungary, so it seems, it is the unimaginable that always happens."¹⁶ Jászi's brother-in-law, Professor József Madzsar added, "... the distant future is dark. The air is unbelievably poisoned, it feels as if in a room filled with carbon dioxide, one must get out of here, anywhere, otherwise it gets suffocating. Please write to me whether there is something toward Yugoslavia or whether or not something can be done in Czechoslovakia. There are serious negotiations here with the British and there is some chance toward Australia, the very best prepare themselves, it will be good company."¹⁷ Others also placed high hopes in newly established Czechoslovakia. Lajos Bíró, however, had a number of questions: "What do the Czechs say? How do they envisage the future? How does Masaryk? If they took an effort to give autonomy to the Slovaks, the situation would perhaps immediately ease. But until it is generally believed in Hungary, that revolting Slovakia can be reclaimed by a military gang, it is understandable if everybody is lured by the spirit that urges in fact to send that military band."¹⁸ On another occasion Bíró, with some characteristic bitterness and mockery, felt he had a bad choice in front of him when it came to Czechoslovakia: "If news about Horthy turn out to be true and he resorts to conscription and attacks the Czechs, then – then one can only shoot oneself in desperation over the fate of Hungary or else... one can volunteer to join Horthy's army."¹⁹

"To live here in [Buda]Pest today is very obnoxious, the uncertainty, that on anybody's petty accusations or charges you could get into prison, how nauseating," wrote the influential avant-garde artist Károly Kernstok.²⁰ The air was filled with fear. "Dénes Nagy resigned from the secretaryship of the Free School, *he is afraid as are most people*, he is anxious to keep his job in the [Ministry of] Public Food Supply"²¹ – an admirer of Jászi, Ambró Czakó,

informed him at the time. "I was also hit by clericalism, I lost my job (in the pedagogical institute)," he went on, "that is although the faculty nominated me three times in the first place, it was the secretary of the Calvinist department of the Christ[ian] Soc[ialist] Party who got the job. ... This is how I also remained without a job, but my backbone is uninjured and erect. ... It is a great pity, that the element which supported us in the progressive cause is – cowardly."²² "Béla Somogyi²³ was right when he said to me the other day: It is very bad that however outstanding a man Jászi is, there is no one behind him, as there is no radical bourgeoisie, only cowardly Jews. Though this is not true that way, but it does contain some truth. ... The Hungarians are indeed angry at the Jews, the clericals for Bolshevism, we on the other hand for their recent spineless behavior,"²⁴ – a reference to the lack of courage or simply willingness of Jewish intellectuals to rally against the White Terror of the Fall and Winter of 1919–20 and stand up against the "White" army of Adm. Miklós Horthy. Madzsar made the same point in a different way: "Should you return, you will find all the valuable people of the former Radical Party around you, the Gentiles without exception, ... the Jews are much more cowardly."²⁵ Anything but an anti-Semite, Jászi himself came quickly to the conclusion, "On the whole, the atmosphere of the Socialist parties is poisoned, made terribly Jewish through a grocery spirit. This should be cured in some way, as in the Church through the Reformation, since this current Social Democracy is unable to prepare the future."²⁶

The Freemasons of Hungary were also Jewish to a very considerable extent and Czakó blamed them as well for not doing anything, remarking: "[...]Balassa e.g. (for whom I have otherwise high regard!) has no courage to summon the ...s and the Symbolic Grand Lodge did not make a single step toward foreign lodges, particularly toward the French Grand Orient to support the Hungarian progressives."²⁷ Others were also giving up hope about Freemasons, and the Liberal daily *Világ* came under heavy criticism for its failing tenacity to represent basic Liberal values and its lack of moral strength. Early in December 1919 Lajos Bíró received firsthand information on Hungarian Freemasonry and the daily *Világ* when Dr. Arnold Hauser²⁸ arrived in Florence from Budapest. "I was most embarrassed and upset when he spoke to me about the tone of *Világ*," Bíró wrote. "He cannot exactly quote the articles but he says, *Világ* disavows even the revolution of October [1918]. If this be the case, it's most deplorable. The white terror does not last for ever, and how does *Világ* want to do politics later if it denies everything three times before the cock will crow?"²⁹ According to Hauser, Bíró continued, "Freemasons told him they support *Világ* only for *your* sake. That you should have a springboard also in the future... – I don't know how this stands. If it is the

case, the Masonry turned out to be much better than what I thought of it. To be frank, I expected friedrichism³⁰ [sic!] to spill over all around Podmaniczky Street, and if Freemasonry survives at all it will become one single 'Hungaria' Lodge. Had this been the case I wouldn't wonder. The opposite is a surprise to me."³¹ Bíró was so enthusiastic about the news Hauser brought from home that he seriously suggested to Jászi that by next Spring they could both return to Hungary, which was of course complete naiveté. Nevertheless, he repeated his encouraging news from Hauser to Jászi in just a few weeks. "I have not expected anything good from the Masonry. On the contrary, I expected them to become whiter than Friedrich³² and more hortist than Horthy³³ himself. Yet I was astonished to hear such news as were brought here by Mr. Hauser. There are some real men in Podmaniczky Street.³⁴ – It is a pity that only so few and it is also a pity that they are not enough to get also to Andrassy Street.³⁵ The way *Világ*³⁶ behaves is shameful and deplorable. I am afraid it will perish as a consequence of this and other things.³⁷ *Világ* made a lot of its former friends and readers unhappy". "A number of people come to me who are dissatisfied with Világ and Co, they would want a little more serious, combating approach"³⁸ – József Madzsar reported to Jászi.

The dangerous and often demoralizing ambience increasingly made people think about leaving the country. Emigration for Hungarians was not a novel idea: some 1.5 to 2 million people left the country between 1880 and 1914 for the United States. Few of these early emigrants were intellectuals, however. By 1919 the situation had changed. "Today it is good for any honest man to have a passport" – Mrs. Madzsar summarized the case in a late 1919 letter to her brother Oscar in Vienna. Many didn't wait to get a real one and used a fake: "...there are any number of people now trying to leave the country for various purposes with false passports," US General Harry Hill Bandholtz of the Inter-Allied Military Mission in Budapest reported in early January 1920 to the American Mission in Vienna.³⁹ A lot of people had little else in mind but emigration, leading Communists had no other option. Some people may have had mixed feelings about it, though, as Madzsar reported to Jászi, "Alkó (Jászi's sister Alice) is very nervous, she is terribly excited about my thinking of emigration, it is only yesterday that has value for her, and she looks forward to tomorrow terrified. And yet, this is going to be the end of it."⁴⁰ Mrs. Madzsar, however, was much more understanding. "[Husband] Józsi is strongly concerned with the idea of emigration, which can only be understood by those who went through all this, from March [1919] till now. But particularly the last 4 months. I did not believe that there could be anything which I detested more than Communism. ... Be that as it may, wherever we settle down, I only wish to live where you do. Though I can't deny, I would suffer

very much from leaving Hungary."⁴¹ The idea of emigration obsessed Madzsar entirely, this became his only dream. "There is one hope to keep me alive, perhaps one could emigrate. This is the only thing I can think of, and I start next Spring if there is just the tiniest opportunity to make a living somewhere else. I do not see this matter so impossible toward Serbia. I received some encouragement."⁴² Some of the people, like author Lajos Bíró, had already been on their way toward some unknown destination. Bíró (1880–1948), an acclaimed novelist, playwright, and journalist went on to become a success in Hollywood as a script writer for several films directed by fellow-Hungarian Sir Alexander Korda (1893–1956). Gloomy and forlorn as Bíró felt, he settled temporarily in Florence, Italy, and derived moral strength from Jászi's friendship to whom he wrote at the end of December 1919: "I am full of doubt and wavering, even my health was in terrible shape until very recently. I had unhappy and aimless weeks and in these deaf weeks I am sometimes inclined to commit moral suicides. In soul only, of course; one mentally breaks with everything, that is dear to him and says, this hopeless race, man, should be damned: he does not deserve anything else but what in fact happens to him."⁴³

Bíró was himself contemplating going over to the United States to work for Hungarian papers and discussed his plans with Jászi who harbored similar ideas already at that point. Bíró was successful and, unlike most Hungarian authors, was well-known even outside Hungary, yet, he felt uncertain about leaving Italy. "One or two of my plays will be soon shown and one or two of my novels published. Perhaps they also show one of my plays in London; if I happened to have success, that would at any rate facilitate my American trip. By any means I want to spend half a year there and want to learn English well enough to write for papers in English."⁴⁴ He just couldn't decide what to expect and kept himself open to both options: "I do believe that it will be possible to return home in the Spring (of 1920). Yet it would be good to keep the way open toward the West."⁴⁵ Others like Kernstok were also open to a measure of optimism and formulated the basic agenda with precision. "I don't see things lost myself, that is it all depends on what the great tendency is throughout Europe: *Byzantium or Rome*."⁴⁶

Bíró was optimistic about Jászi's own emigration plans, noting: "What you wrote about American plans is entirely convincing to me. That English-speaking America would give you as much as you modestly need or even a lot more is quite clear to me. My doubts concern Hungarian America. But I might be wrong even there. I think that the New York reporters would welcome me already on the ship, will write a lot of nonsense, in some sensationalist fashion, on what I may have to say; but this great reception will perhaps impress our good Hungarians to an extent that even they would behave like a man."⁴⁷ At

other times, however, writing again to Jászi, he felt "convinced that a few years would bring about the magnificent resurrection of your politics and that Károlyi would triumphantly return to Hungary but to this end, in my mind, both you and Károlyi must also choose the time when you start speaking up. For the moment, the best policy is silence."⁴⁸

Few if any of even the Liberals of Hungary could accept psychologically what had happened to the country and her borders in the treaty of Trianon (1920). Lajos Bíró's assessment of the political situation of partitioned Hungary was not just a personal one: it was, indeed, a statement for very nearly his entire generation. "I am very biased against the Czechs," Bíró admitted,

particularly because they are the finest of our enemies (and because their expansion is the most absurd). I think if I was in charge of Hungarian politics I would compromise with everybody but them. Here I would want the whole: retaking complete Upper Hungary, from the Morava to the Tisza [Rivers]. I don't know the situation well enough but I have the feeling that Hungarian irredentism will very soon make life miserable for the Czech state and that the Slovak part will tear away from the Czechs sooner than we thought. Then we can make good friends with the Czechs.⁴⁹

Bíró's vision proved to be prophetic in some ways though, as was fairly typical among assimilated Jewish-Hungarian intellectuals at the turn-of-the-century, he proved to be very much of a Hungarian nationalist when deliberating the partition of former Hungarian territories and their possible return to Hungary.

I don't know how you see the future, maybe you will consider my bias very ugly and dangerous. To me, I confess, any tool served well that would unite the dissected parts with Hungary. I feel personal anger and pain whenever I think for example of the Czechs deceiving the Ruthenland. I really think any tool is good that would explode this region out from the Czech state. I believe in general that Hungarian nationalism will now receive the ethical justification which she so far totally lacked; nations subjugated and robbed have not only the right but also the duty to be nationalistic. We must see whether or not the League of Nations will be an instrument to render justice to the peoples robbed. If yes, good. If not: then all other tools are justified. First everything must be taken back from the Czechs that they themselves took away, as this will be the easiest. Then from the Serbs. Finally from the Roumanians. This is going to be the toughest. But this will also happen, at the latest when Russia will pull herself together.⁵⁰

Nonetheless, Bíró felt personally very pessimistic about the prospects of returning to Hungary and thought, somewhat oddly but not untypically, that his Jewishness compelled him to demonstrate his Hungarian patriotism by way of making himself financially independent of Hungary.

I have settled for a long, long stay abroad. I hope I will be able to live here or elsewhere and make a living. I have a burning desire to make my personal economy completely independent from any financial source at home: I want to prove to myself that my painful love toward Hungary and the Hungarians is independent from what the Hungarian bookmarket can give me, just because I do not happen to be an engineer or a doctor but an author. – Sometimes I think that this feeling is a Jewish feeling, Ady⁵¹ might not even have such an idea. All the worse for me. To be a Hungarian is quite a problem. To be a Hungarian Jew is doubly so. To be a Hungarian Jewish author: this is the piling of pains by way of [Heinrich] Heine.⁵²

In virtual exile since before the Republic of Councils which he detested, Jászi did not feel more optimistic. In letters to Mihály Károlyi in the early Fall of 1919 he spelled this out very clearly. “The situation is undoubtedly dark” – he wrote from Prague. “Vienna is swirling again and rough. The whole of Europe is like a mortally operated man sick in fever, and poor Hungary, to boot, as Návay added, received a cadaverous poisoning.”⁵³ Jászi’s sister Mrs. Alice Madzsar made her brother particularly distressed by telling him that the “white” régime was by no means attacking Communists only.

In the University, [political] reaction is raging mostly in the school of medicine, led by Grand Master [Árpád] Bókai [Bókay]. ... The party started in the university faculty by first putting together a kangaroo-court with Bókai, [János] Bársony and I do not remember the third; the 4 professors of Jewish origin, Leo [Liebermann], [Rezső] Bálint, [Emil] Grósz, and [Adolf] Onody [Onodi] were ‘interrogated’ as defendants. [Baron Sándor] Korányi was spared with a view to the merits of his father. They voted after the interrogation and declared that the people in question are rehabilitated with flying colors except for Onodi against whom the process will continue... According to the blacklist compiled by [Professor Ernő] Jendrassik’s senior assistant Csika, the Adjunct Professorship⁵⁴ was taken from Józsi [József Madzsar], Lajos [Dienes], Pali Liebermann, Tibor Péterfi, [Miksa] Goldzieher, Jenő Pólya, [Sándor] Barron [Báron], Károly Engel and 54 people lost their job in the University. Among the Adjunct Professors as you can see there is not one Communist.⁵⁵

Madzsar himself wrote to Jászi to this very same effect about the purges in very early September adding that “their crime is mainly that they are Jews. They took my Adjunct Professorship without any hearing, and also from Pólya, Péterfi, Lajos Dienes, Goldzieher, Károly Engel and Pali Liebermann, as you can see, none of them is a Bolshevik, but this is now a good excuse to persecute all modern people”.⁵⁶ A little later, Madzsar repeated the phrase as if he found the point. “All modern people are persecuted, this company created a terrible atmosphere.”⁵⁷ No wonder that Jewish intellectuals in the Fall of 1919 were intimidated to a degree that they seemed, or, in fact became, “cowards”.

Alice Madzsar had hardly more encouraging news from other parts of the University of Budapest, "though the situation is perhaps milder than in the Medical School," she believed. "As I hear, [Manó] Beke, [Bernát] Alexander, [Géza] Révész, [Lipót] Fehér [Fejér] have to go.⁵⁸ On the suggestion of [Lajos] Lóci [Lóczy] the Hungarian Academy of Letters and Science declared that Jews can no longer be members."⁵⁹ Jászi received no better news from other intellectual quarters. "Action was taken in the [Municipal] Library against Józsi [József Madzsar], [Soma] Braun, Laci [László] Dienes, [Béla] Kőhalmi, Blanka Pikler. ... Poor Blanka, she was detained for 2 weeks, she, who just like us, despised these Communists. But at least she was not beaten. Terrible things go on in the police, in the Transdanubian area, everywhere. But you certainly know about these from the papers in Vienna."⁶⁰ Károly Kernstok was even more succinct about paradox of people with an anti-Communist record now going to the "white" prisons of Adm. Horthy's army all the same.

You know it was bad in the prison from the dirty worn out trousers to the prisoner-cap and the linen which witnessed the dream of prisoners, and from the rebuke, the kicking to the clearing of the table – [illegible word] we had a number of other pleasures like this, *pour compléter la biographie*. – Yet damn it, during the whole time I reproved the Commune, to peasant and gentleman and to Béla Kun. But you know the Hungarian country gentleman, who was reddest of them all, who remained and served the Bolsheviks, just as he did Károlyi, Tisza; this is how that country bumpkin wanted to deserve some praise.⁶¹

And yet, in the crestfallen mood of the Fall of 1919, after the fall of Béla Kun but before the consolidation of the Horthy régime, those at home hoped to get out while the émigrés hoped to get back. When Bíró tried to help his friend Jászi to find his way to the United States, he was desperate: "My heart is heavy when I write this letter. What misery and what sadness this is."⁶² And in four weeks, on Christmas Day, he added: "Sometimes I am tortured by unbearable homesickness."⁶³ This was not mellowed by some countries at all which wished to see the aliens out of their land and certainly denied jobs or other forms of livelihood. "... here in Switzerland thrusting the 'Usländers'⁶⁴ is just raging, so that a foreigner can hardly get here to some income, to boot, who is after this, will hardly be allowed in at all. ...your tendency is certainly right: emigrate."⁶⁵

The old animosities and personal, often petty, biases among the Hungarian Radicals were exacerbated and transferred even into the emigration. The Jászi circle for instance, partly at least because of its own mixed Jewish/Gentile, upper-class background, never liked the Polányis,⁶⁶ another significant group, and the division did a lot of harm to the chances of concentrated Radical-Liberal political action. The Polányi family is certainly one of the most outstanding in modern Hungarian intellectual history and a biographical note

is needed here to appreciate what follows. The Polányis have built up a truly remarkable and modern intellectual tradition. Of Russian-Jewish background, Cecilia Polányi, the mother of Michael and Karl and soon a widow, was the focus of a popular, largely though not exclusively Jewish intellectual circle. She was also an enthusiastic follower of Émile Jacques-Dalcroze and set up an "institute of eurhythmics"⁶⁷ in Budapest. She wrote for Liberal German papers in Budapest (*Pester Lloyd*, *Neues Pester Journal*), Vienna (*Neues Wiener Journal*), and Berlin (*Berliner Börsen-Courier* and the *Berliner Montagspost*). More importantly, she was one of the earliest feminists of Hungary and established and maintained, between 1912 and 1914, her own private "women college" called *Női Liceum*, which she interpreted as a kind of open university for Hungarian women. Its faculty included some of the best scholars, social scientists and artists of the day whose list adequately reflected the intellectual scope and horizon of the Polányi circle just before the Great War. The list of students indicated the social background of Mrs. Polányi's school, representing mostly rich, upper-middle-class, Jewish Budapest.

Family interests were truly encyclopaedic. One of "Aunt Cecile's" sons, Michael Polányi (1891–1976), was the distinguished physical chemist turned philosopher, first in Germany, later in Britain (*Personal Knowledge*); his brother Károly (Karl) (1886–1964), co-founder of the radical pre-World War I Galileo Circle in Budapest, became a pioneering economic historian/anthropologist in the United States (*The Great Transformation*, 1944; *Dahomey and the Slave Trade*, 1966) whose wife Ilona Duczynska (1897–1978) was also a leading figure in the radical movements of the early 20th century. Michael's son John C. Polanyi (b. 1929) received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1986 in Canada. Several other members of the family were equally interesting and active.

Nonetheless, whatever their earlier or later record, Alice Jászi-Madzsar was particularly outspoken about Károly (Karl) Polányi and his followers and warned her brother against some possible cooperation with Károly in the United States that they seemed to have considered at that point.

As far as your American plans are concerned with Károly, though I know that nobody would take care of you with such devotion and friendship in an alien world, and this means a lot to me, yet I believe from a political standpoint it is a very mistaken step. Please don't be angry that I give you advice in political matters, but I perceive the atmosphere here; in the most liberal circles K[ároly] P[olányi] has already become a notion and I listened to discussions in which it was declared that they only do some work and bring sacrifices if the company will be positively devoid of [Károly] P[olányi]. Of course they themselves do not mean Károly himself, but the many chaos-minded, ill-mannered Jews who made up his entourage. ... Couldn't you rather stay with your first plan and go with Hock?⁶⁸

József Madzsar joined his wife in seriously attacking, in a separate letter, Jászi's plans to cooperate politically with Karl Polányi in the United States.

Our friends have been asking for several days whether or not it is true that you go to America accompanied by Karli [=Károly Polányi]? Of course I didn't take it seriously but it affected me in an unpleasant way. ... (1) It is unfortunate that the American plan is common knowledge, you still don't know the Polányis; (2) You couldn't have worse company in America than Karli; (3) All the plans of our friends concerning the future end with the *ceterum censeo*:⁶⁹ but without the Polányis! Those who would go for you into the fire make a proviso that the P[olányi] dynasty must not enter the club. There isn't a single Gentile among us (including myself) who would be once again willing to do any common work with any of the Polányis. ... I beg you in the name of all of us who believe that your time would come again not to make our work here at home impossible, don't alienate your best allies by exposing yourself again with a member of the P[olányi] dynasty. One cannot undertake this burden after their participation in the [Communist] dictatorship, not to speak about the damage done by their participation in the Radical Party.⁷⁰

This was more than just personal animosity against Karl Polányi, this was a dedicated attempt to draw the line between the Radicals and the Communists, between the two revolutions of 1918 and 1919, and to make the Radical-Liberal position clearer, devoid of all the extremities of both the Left and the Right. This included the avoidance of people discredited during what was commonly called the Commune. This became a running theme among Radicals and Liberals and distancing themselves from the memory of 1919 was certainly rapidly becoming an integral part of the new Progressive-Liberal agenda. A friend wrote to Jászi on the necessary changes some time during the Fall of 1919:

Czakó was here and we talked about the Free School and the Society for Social Sciences. They plan to reopen the Free School but the list of speakers is not good in my mind: mostly people who played a role during the Commune. This is not right today, an updated list and possibly a scholarly, almost purely scholarly direction is needed and it is not necessary to hurry with the start. In general, my feeling is, that the world, the public sentiment has changed very considerably, those who supported Hungarian progress up to now are disturbed; on the one hand they have a certain animosity against the progressive direction, on the other hand they do not like the contemporary state of affairs either. This mood makes a new, adapted method necessary. The old, excellent, aggressive, critical voice, dating back to some two years ago, is today out of place.⁷¹

It was certainly not the White Terror that created the "Jewish question" in 1919, it was already there, deeply embedded in early 20th century Hungarian society. There were of course biases of all sorts. The Polányi circle, typically, would only relate to Jews and was often convinced that everybody was, could

or should be, Jewish. This often severed their links with potential non-Jewish political allies. As a friend put it in mid-1921 writing to Michael and his family: "There is a new tenant in your apartment [in Germany], I don't know whether or not you know him, Sanyi [Sándor] Pap, a boy from Pozsony [today Bratislava in Slovakia], and he is not even Jewish. He has never been. None of his relatives have ever been. I don't believe the whole story; there is no such person in the world."⁷²

Whatever their faith, the drive to leave was imminent and pressing for thousands of people. Jews could evidently place no high hopes into a Hungarian higher education and a Hungarian career. Foreign universities and other institutions promised a good education and also perhaps a job. Good people freshly out of the then truly excellent secondary schools of the country started to gravitate towards German or Czechoslovak universities. Several of the latter also taught in German and the Hungarian middle-class of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Jew and Gentile alike, spoke German well. They brought it from home, learnt it at school, occasionally in the army or during holidays in Austria, and it now became their passport to some of the best universities of Europe. The papers of almost every major Hungarian scientist or scholar include requests for letters of recommendation to attend one or other of the fine German institutions. Already in Germany, Michael Polányi or Theodore von Kármán, for example, had been in constant contact with each other and with some of their best colleagues in Hungary and abroad and paved the way for many young talents who were unable or didn't want to stay in their native Hungary. This is partly how inter-war Hungarian émigrés started "cohorting" or "networking" at that early stage already and gradually built up a sizeable, interrelated community in exile.⁷³ The network of exiles often continued earlier patterns of friendship in Hungary.

Curiously enough, Vienna was not necessarily tempting. With his mother in Budapest and his adored brother Michael in Karlsruhe, Karl Polányi felt particularly bad about the place. Though he was recognized as an economist of some standing and soon became editor of *Der österreichische Volkswirt*, he complained bitterly about the ambiance of the city. "Intellectually this Vienna is a salt-desert, not even loneliness removes from someone the aggressive atmosphere of barrenness."⁷⁴ And again, he exclaimed in April 1920, "The spiritual Vienna is such disappointment, which is deserved to be experienced by those only who imagine the spirit to be bound to a source of income."⁷⁵

Germany was much more challenging. With all its sophistication and excellence, it was the dreamland of many to get a respectable degree or a fine job. Himself somewhat compromised under the Republic of Councils as a politically active student, young Leo Szilard found the Horthy régime "thor-

oughly distasteful, and dangerous." "He thought he was in physical danger by staying because of his activities under the Béla Kun government." He "was... afraid to come back. He stayed in Berlin."⁷⁶ Szilárd first wanted "to continue my engineering studies in Berlin. However, the attraction of physics proved to be too great. Einstein, Planck, Von Laue, Schroedinger Nernst, Haber, and Franck were at that time all assembled in Berlin and attended a journal club in physics which was also open to students. I switched to physics and obtained a Doctor's degree in physics at the University of Berlin under Von Laue in 1922."⁷⁷

Already in Karlsruhe, Germany and on his way toward a career in Physical Chemistry, Michael Polányi was searching for a good job. He turned for help to the celebrated Hungarian-born Professor of Aerodynamics in Aachen, Germany, Theodore von Kármán, seeking his advice as to his future. Von Kármán himself came from a very distinguished, early assimilated Jewish-Hungarian professional family. Theodore went to study and work in Germany as early as 1908 and acquired his *Habilitation* there. By the end of World War I he already had a high reputation when, after a brief interlude in Hungary and some very superficially based accusations that he was a Communist, he quickly returned to Aachen in the Fall of 1919.⁷⁸

Young Michael Polányi's questions to von Kármán about a job in Germany were answered politely but with caution. "The mood at the universities is for the moment most unsuitable for foreigners though this may change in some years, also, an individual case should never be dealt with by the general principles. ... To get an assistantship is in my mind not very difficult and I am happily prepared to eventually intervene on your behalf, as far as my acquaintance with chemists and physical chemists reaches. I ask you therefore to let me know if you hear about any vacancy and I will immediately write in your interest to the gentlemen concerned."⁷⁹

Polányi's Budapest University colleague and friend, Georg de Hevesy (1885-1966) chose Copenhagen. The prospective Nobel Laureate (Chemistry, 1943) who also came from a wealthy upper-middle class Jewish family was subjected to a humiliating procedure right after the Republic of Councils came to an end.⁸⁰ De Hevesy got his Associate Professorship (the title was actually called "Extraordinary Professor") from the Károlyi Revolution and his Full Professorship from the Commune. He had a special task to perform with Theodore von Kármán in his short-lived, though influential job in the Ministry of Education as Head of the Department of Higher Education. De Hevesy tried to get enough money to equip the Institute of Physics at the University of Budapest with important new technology and materials that would also serve some other departments. Allegations were made that he used his

friendship with von Kármán to prepare the Institute of Physics for Kármán and the Department for Physical Chemistry for himself. He was charged to have been a member of the University Faculty Council during the Commune and to have received his Professorship from its government. He was dismissed and was even denied the right to teach at the University of Budapest.

In an important letter written just in the middle of his humiliating "trial" to Niels Bohr, Hevesy bitterly complained that "politics entered also the University... hardly anybody who is a Jew or a radical, or is suspected to be a radical, could retain his post." "The prevalent moral and material decay will I fear for longtime prevent anykind of successful scientific life in Hungary," Hevesy concluded and left Hungary in early March 1920.⁸¹

Others tried their luck in the German universities of Prague or Brünn (Brno) in newly created Czechoslovakia, where both good technical and regular universities were available and the language of teaching was German. Many had been natives of Bratislava (Pozsony, Pressburg), or the Slovak parts of former greater Hungary and spoke German as their mother tongue. Standards were high and the students were still closer to home. In an interview given in late 1989 in Columbia University in New York City, former Hungarian engineering student Marcel Stein vividly remembered the heated and dangerous atmosphere of late 1919 and early 1920 in Budapest. Though many continued towards Berlin-Charlottenburg, or Karlsruhe in Germany or, like the distinguished engineer László Forgó, toward Zürich, Switzerland, Marcel Stein remembered many of them to have returned to Hungary later.⁸² Though their actual number is unknown, the returnees were lured back to Hungary chiefly due to their linguistic isolation, their keenly felt separation from their families and friends, and, primarily, the gradually consolidating situation of Hungary in the mid-1920s.

Some of the best scientists, engineers, scholars, artists, musicians and professionals of all sorts, however, continued to leave Hungary in fairly large numbers in 1920 and later.⁸³ For many of them there was real danger involved in staying as they actively promoted the commune of 1919, like the future Hollywood star Béla Lugosi ("Dracula"), who left for the US in 1921, or film-director Mihály Kertész who became the successful and productive Michael Curtiz of *Casablanca*, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, and *White Christmas*. For those who were actually members of the red government at some level like the philosopher Georg Lukács or the author and future film theorist Béla Balázs and many others there was simply no choice but to leave. Though Hungary became more civilized and less dangerous in the latter part of the 1920s, under the government of Count István Bethlen (Prime Minister between 1921–1931) and some of the heated issues of 1919–1920 subsided by the end of

the decade, the Radical agenda did no longer continue to have a wide appeal and lost momentum between totalitarian régimes of one sort or the other. Even the very best people had to realize how difficult it became, in the completely and suddenly changed international and national, political and social conditions of the immediate post-World War I period, to uphold Western ideas and ideals. The liberal agenda which looked back to almost a century in Hungarian history and which embraced formerly immigrant Jews as well as the ideals of modernization through much of the 19th century, was in many ways closed off. Interwar Hungary became a thoroughly conservative, nationalist, and "Christian" country. Though uncertain whether or not to leave their native Hungary, for many Radicals and Liberals their ambivalence was resolved by necessity alone: there was no choice left to most of them.

The varied and repeated shocks of the 1918–1920 period reverberated for decades and became the fundamental historical experience of several generations. Even the much more settled ambience of the late 20s found little response among émigré intellectuals. When Count Kuno Klebelsberg, Minister of Religion and Education in the government of Count István Bethlen, visited the University of Göttingen, the famous German mathematician Richard Courant, director of the University's mathematics institute, went out of his way to praise the Hungarian mathematicians and scientists he knew in and out of Hungary including Lipót Fejér, George Pólya, Michael Polanyi, John von Neumann, Theodore von Kármán, and future Nobel Laureate Dennis Gabor, who turned out to be all Jewish. In response, Count Klebelsberg suggested that Polanyi had been invited to return to Budapest whereupon one of the German dinner-guests expressed his doubt whether or not he would accept the invitation. The Minister gave a characteristic answer that became a family legend in the Polanyi circle: "Wenn Vaterland ruft, kommt Ungar!" (When Fatherland calls, the Hungarian comes.)⁸⁴ Just at the same time, in a Sunday leading article of a popular Hungarian paper in 1929, the Minister publicly and emphatically invited the émigré Hungarian scientists, economists, medical and technical experts to return home. For most of them it was too late: his appeal was ill received. Leo Szilard and future Nobel Laureate Eugene Wigner saw and even signed Michael Polanyi's copy of the Minister's article in the daily *Pesti Napló* dramatically urging them to return. They chose to stay.⁸⁵

Hungary was about to lose one of her finest generations.

Notes

*** This article is based on archival research done in the United States between 1987 and 1991, as well as information that came down to me through my grandmother and her friends who knew most of the people presented and discussed here. Most of it is intended to serve as a chapter of my forthcoming book, *The Exodus of the Mind: Hungarian Intellectual Migration to the US, 1919–1941*. Parts of it were used in a paper presented at the international conference on “Culture and Society in 20th Century Hungary,” in the University of California, Santa Barbara, April 12, 1991. I am grateful to the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C., the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia, PA and to the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center of the University of California, Santa Barbara for their generous support. I particularly appreciate a grant by The Rockefeller Foundation that provided a unique opportunity to complete this article in its Study and Conference Center in Bellagio, Italy (May 1992).

The quotations were translated from documents originally written in Hungarian unless otherwise indicated. I deliberately tried to make the translations convey the flavor of the originals.

1. For a recent general introduction to the period in English see Tibor Hajdú and Zsuzsa L. Nagy, “Revolution, Counterrevolution, Consolidation”, in: Peter Sugar, Peter Hanák and Tibor Frank, eds, *A History of Hungary* (Bloomington–Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 295–318.
2. György Borsányi wrote compellingly on the first year of the (mainly Communist) Hungarian emigration in his article, “Az emigráció első éve,” *Valóság*, 1977/12, pp. 36–49.
3. For some brief but very succinct comments see Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States. An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (London: Methuen, 1977), pp. 389–390, 394, 426.
4. Hugh Seton-Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 399.
5. Oscar Jászi, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Hungary* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1969), pp. 122–124, quote p. 123.
6. Interview with Marcel Stein at Columbia University, New York City, November 29, 1989.
7. The first major introduction to this vast territory of Hungarian intellectual emigration after World War I is Lee Congdon’s magisterial *Exile and Social Thought. Hungarian Intellectuals in Germany and Austria, 1919–1933* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), an important book. My own research was done parallelly to Dr. Congdon’s and has a different scope and ambition, largely focusing on people who ended up in the United States.
8. On the differences between Radicals and Socialists see Imre Csécsy, ‘Radikalizmus és szocializmus’ (Radicalism and Socialism) in: *Radikalizmus és demokrácia* (Radicalism and Democracy). *Csécsy Imre válogatott írásai* (Szeged, 1988), pp. 47–49.
9. Péter Hanák, *Jászi Oszkár dunai patriotizmusa* (Budapest: Magvető, 1985); see also Hugh Seton-Watson, *op. cit.*, pp. 166–167. Cp. the rich literature by Tibor Hajdú, György Litván, Zsuzsa L. Nagy, Attila Pók, and János J. Varga.
10. Anna Lesznai, *Kezdetben volt a kert* (First There Was the Garden) (Budapest, 1966).
11. Oscar Jászi, *op. cit.*, Chapter IX.
12. Oscar Jászi, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
13. Oscar Jászi, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

14. Oscar Jászi, *op. cit.*, pp. 160, 177.
15. Sándor Giesswein to Oscar Jászi, Budapest, November 24, 1919, Columbia University, Butler Library, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Oscar Jászi Papers, Box 5. (Original in Hungarian.) Sándor Giesswein (1856–1923) was co-founder of the Christian Socialist movement in Hungary, and a courageous and outspoken Member of Parliament.
16. Lajos Bíró to Oscar Jászi, Firenze, December 25, 1919, Columbia University, Butler Library, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Oscar Jászi Papers, Box 5. (Original in Hungarian.)
17. József Madzsar to Oscar Jászi, Budapest, November 6, 1919, Columbia University, Butler Library, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Oscar Jászi Papers, Box 5. (Original in Hungarian.) József Madzsar (1876–1940) was a versatile doctor and social activist, editor and author who moved from a Radical background toward the Communist Party in later life.
18. Lajos Bíró to Oscar Jászi, Firenze, December 25, 1919, *loc. cit.*
19. Lajos Bíró to Oscar Jászi, Firenze, December 4, 1919, Columbia University, Butler Library, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Oscar Jászi Papers, Box 5.
20. Károly Kernstok to Oscar Jászi, Budapest, October 27, 1919, Columbia University, Butler Library, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Oscar Jászi Papers, Box 5.
21. Ambró Czakó to Oscar Jászi, Budapest, November 28, 1919, Columbia University, Butler Library, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Oscar Jászi Papers, Box 5. (Emphasis added.)
22. *Ibid.*
23. Béla Somogyi (1868–1920) editor of the Socialist daily *Népszava*, killed by an extremist military commando for his open criticism of the white terror.
24. Ambró Czakó to Oscar Jászi, Budapest, November 28, 1919, *loc. cit.*
25. József Madzsar to Oscar Jászi, Budapest, November 6, 1919, *loc. cit.*
26. Oscar Jászi to Mihály Károlyi, Wien, Austria, September 21, Boston University, Mugar Memorial Library, Special Collections, Károlyi Papers, Box 2, Folder 4/II/3.
27. *Ibid.*
28. Arnold Hauser (1892–1978), internationally recognized sociologist of art, author of critically acclaimed *The Social History of Art*.
29. Lajos Bíró to Oscar Jászi, Florence, December 4, 1919, *loc. cit.* Biblical reference at the end of the passage from John 13:36.
30. See Note 22.
31. Lajos Bíró to Oscar Jászi, Florence, December 4, 1919, *loc. cit.*
32. István Friedrich (1883–1958), right-wing politician, very briefly unsuccessful Prime Minister of Hungary after the Fall of the Béla Kun régime in August–November 1919.
33. Miklós Horthy (1868–1957), Admiral and last Commander in Chief of the Austro–Hungarian Navy; aide-de-camp to Austro–Hungarian Emperor–King Francis Joseph I. Regent of Hungary from March 1, 1920 to October 15, 1944.
34. Reference to headquarters of Hungarian Freemasons' Liberal Lodge.
35. Reference to the editorial offices of *Világ*, a liberal paper that apparently did not distance itself enough from the incoming right-wing Horthy-régime.
36. *Világ* (1910–1926) was the daily paper of Oscar Jászi's party and circle, the Radicals; it turned against the Left and particularly the Communists from 1918 onwards.
37. Lajos Bíró to Oscar Jászi, Firenze, December 25, 1919, *loc. cit.*
38. József Madzsar to Oscar Jászi, Budapest, November 6, 1919, *loc. cit.*
39. Gen. Harry Hill Bandholtz to Albert Halstead of the American Mission, Vienna, Austria, Budapest, January 3, 1920.
40. *Ibid.*

41. Alice Madzsar to Oscar Jászi, (Budapest), n.d. (Most probably November 1919), Columbia University, Butler Library, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Oscar Jászi Papers, Box 5.
42. József Madzsar to Oscar Jászi, (Budapest), November 19 (1919), Columbia University, Butler Library, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Oscar Jászi Papers, Box 5.
43. Lajos Bíró to Oscar Jászi, Firenze, December 25, 1919. *loc. cit.*
44. *Ibid.*
45. Lajos Bíró to Oscar Jászi, Firenze, December 4, 1919, *loc. cit.*
46. Károly Kernstok to Oscar Jászi, Budapest, October 27, 1919, *loc. cit.* – Emphasis added.
47. Lajos Bíró to Oscar Jászi, Firenze, December 4, 1919, *loc. cit.*
48. Lajos Bíró to Oscar Jászi, Firenze, November 24, 1919, Columbia University, Butler Library, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Oscar Jászi Papers, Box 5.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*
51. Endre Ady (1877–1919), generally considered the greatest poet of 20th century Hungary.
52. Lajos Bíró to Oscar Jászi, Firenze, November 24, 1919, *loc. cit.*
53. Oscar Jászi to Mihály Károlyi, Praha, October 15, 1919, Boston University, Mugar Memorial Library, Special Collections, Károlyi Papers, Box 2, Folder 4/II/3.
54. Equivalent to a German *Privatdozentur*.
55. Alice Madzsar to Oscar Jászi (Budapest), n.d. (end of 1919?). – Several of the doctors mentioned here left Hungary at some point, e.g. Miksa Goldzieher for the US, Károly Engel for Australia, Tibor Péterfi for Czechoslovakia and Germany. Liebermann committed suicide in 1938.
56. József Madzsar to Oscar Jászi (Budapest), September 3, 1919, Columbia University, Butler Library, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Oscar Jászi Papers, Box 5.
57. *Ibid.* – Emphasis added.
58. Eminent professors of the School of Philosophy, of Jewish origin.
59. Alice Madzsar to Oscar Jászi (Budapest), n.d. (end of 1919?).
60. Alice Madzsar to Oscar Jászi (Budapest), n.d. (end of 1919?). – Emphasis added.
61. Károly Kernstok to Oscar Jászi, Budapest, October 27, 1919, *loc. cit.* The same idea emerges in Jászi's *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Hungary*, *op. cit.*, p. 173.
62. Lajos Bíró to Oscar Jászi, Firenze, November 27, 1919, *loc. cit.*
63. Lajos Bíró to Oscar Jászi, December 25, 1919, *loc. cit.*
64. Swiss-German for 'foreigner'.
65. Károly Méray-Horváth, Davos-Platz, Switzerland, December 9, 1919, Columbia University, Butler Library, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Oscar Jászi Papers, Box 5.
66. Cp. Női Liceum. Magyar nők tudományos továbbképző tanfolyama, 1912–1913, 1913–1914 ("Értesítő" and "Munkaterv"), (Budapest, 1913). Ilona Duczynska and Zoltán Horváth, "Polányi Károly és a Galilei-Kör" (Károly Polányi and the Galileo Circle), *Századok* 1971/1, pp. 89–104; and Lee Congdon, "Karl Polányi in Hungary, 1900–19," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 11, No. 1 (1976), pp. 167–183; Hans Zeisel, "Karl Polanyi," in: David L. Sills, ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 12 (The Macmillan Co & The Free Press), pp. 172–174.
67. Eurhythmics = the representation of musical rhythms in movement.
68. Alice Madzsar to Oscar Jászi (Budapest), n.d. Columbia University, Butler Library, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Oscar Jászi Papers, Box 5. János Hock (1859–1936), author, orator and Member of Parliament, left Hungary after the declaration of the Republic of Councils.
69. Famous phrase from the speeches of the Elder Cato (234–149 B.C.) who often repeated them in his outbursts against Carthage.

70. József Madzsar to Oscar Jászi, Budapest, December 28, 1919, Columbia University, Butler Library, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Oscar Jászi Papers, Box 5.
71. Jenő (?) to Oscar Jászi (Budapest), n.d. Columbia University, Butler Library, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Oscar Jászi Papers, Box 5.
72. Gyuri (?) to Michael Polányi and family, Wildbad, Germany, June 12, 1921, University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library, Special Collections, Michael Polányi Papers, Box 1, Folder 14. – The perception of Jewish intellectual ubiquity was not quite a delusion or self-deception. The professional élite in Hungary had very frequently intermarried with Jewish families and the Gentile author Lajos Zilahy provided an unusual and unexpected explanation, in his unpublished autobiography: “Christian intellectuals met with rigid, almost hostile reactions from their families and relatives. This is the explanation of the fact that some seventy percent of them – beginning with Jokai, the greatest novelist in the last century up to the youngest generation in literature, the composers Bela Bartok and Zoltan Kodaly, prominent actors and painters – married Jewish girls, not for money, but for the warmer understanding of the Jewish soul for their professions.” Lajos Zilahy, *Autobiography*, Boston University, Mugar Memorial Library, Lajos Zilahy Papers, Box 9, Bolder 5. (English original.) – Mixed marriages in fact have remained a basic pattern in Hungarian middle-class and upper-middle class society and have added to its creativity and intellectual intensity.
73. Mihály Freund to Michael Polányi (Budapest), May 4, 1920; Imre Bródy to Michael Polányi, Göttingen, March 24, 1922; both in the University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library, Special Collections, Michael Polányi Papers, Box 17.
74. Károly Polányi to Michael Polányi, Küb/Semmering, n.d. University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library, Special Collections, Michael Polányi Papers.
75. Karl Polányi to Michael Polányi, Vienna, April 24, 1920, University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library, Special Collections, Michael Polányi Papers, Box 17, Folder 2. (Original in German.)
76. “William Lanouette on His Leo Szilárd Biography.” Gábor Palló in Conversation with William Lanouette, *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, XXIX, No. 111 (Autumn 1988), pp. 164–165. A missing link: Szilard received a certificate from Professor Lipót Fejér dated December 14, 1919, testifying that he won a second prize in a student competition in 1916, and he presented this document to a notary public in Berlin–Charlottenburg on January 3, 1920. This is how we know, almost exactly, when he left Hungary. Cp. *Beglaubigte Abschrift*, signed by the Notary Public Pakscher, Charlottenburg, January 3, 1920, University of California, San Diego, Mandeville Special Collection, MSS 32, Box 1, Folder 12.
77. Leo Szilard, *Curriculum Vitae (Including List of Publications)*, August 1956, updated June 23, 1959, University of California, San Diego, Mandeville Special Collections, MSS 32, Box 1, Folder 2.
78. For the 1919 incident in Hungary see Theodore von Kármán with Lee Edson, *The Wind and Beyond: Theodore von Kármán*, Chapter 11: “Revolution in Hungary” (Boston-Toronto: Little, Brown & Co, 1967), pp. 90–95.
79. Theodore von Kármán to Michael Polányi, Aachen, March 17, 1920, University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library, Special Collections, Michael Polányi Papers, Box 17.
80. The history of the “trial” of De Hevesy in late October 1919 is resourcefully reconstructed by Gábor Palló, “Egy boszorkányper története. Miért távozott el Hevesy György Magyarországról?” (The History of a Kangaroo Court: Why Georg de Hevesy Left Hungary?) *Valóság* XXVIII (1985), No. 7, pp. 77–89.
81. George Hevesy to Niels Bohr, Budapest, October 25, 1919, Bohr Scientific Correspondence, Archive for History of Quantum Physics, Office of the History of Science and Technology, University of California, Berkeley, English original.

82. Marcel Stein in conversation with the present author, November 29, 1989, Columbia University, New York City. In 1990–91 I was granted several very valuable interviews by Andrew A. Recsei, a distinguished chemist now living in Santa Barbara, CA, another former Hungarian student who also studied in Brünn in exactly the same period of time.
83. For the earliest and consequently incomplete list of important people who left Hungary in or right after 1919–1920 see Oscar Jászi, *op. cit.* pp. 173–174.
84. Mrs. Gábor (Nusi) Szegő to Mrs. Michael Polanyi, Königsberg, Prussia, May 15, 1929.
85. Count Kuno Klebelsberg, “Szabad-e Dévénynél betörnöm új időknek új dalaival?” (May I break in with the new songs of new times at Dévény – a reference to Endre Ady’s famous poem from his *Új versek*, 1906), *Pesti Napló*, Budapest, May 5, 1929.

HUNGARIAN ART OUTSIDE HUNGARY: BERLIN IN THE 1920s

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From 1920 onward, the exodus of a growing number of writers, artists and philosophers of different nationalities turned, practically overnight, towards Berlin, a capital which had never before exercised any particular attraction and which even in the 1920s tended rather to astonish foreigners by its ugliness. The only speciality it could offer as a metropolis was a remarkably highly developed, complex underground and railway system.

To a certain extent the railway network even seemed to determine the attitude of those artists arriving in Berlin, as almost all the new arrivals considered the city as a temporary stop-over from where to continue their trip, as actually did happen after a span of two to three years. The majority of the newcomers arrived from Eastern and Central Europe, principally from Russia, and had absolutely no intention of settling permanently in Berlin and even less of assimilation. In fact, after 1919, Germany was the only place in Europe where a major revolutionary movement still seemed a realistic, objective possibility. Social tensions were extremely sharp in Germany. It had a relatively strong communist party and a left-wing Independent Socialist Party. Extremists even hoped for the success of a German revolution.

The avant-garde artists awaiting a revolution came flocking to Berlin. The possibility of a revolution on the one hand, and the presence of Russian avant-garde on the other, had a profound effect on practically all the forward-looking left-wing intellectuals.

A singular feature of their presence in Berlin was that the officially delegated representatives of Soviet cultural policy (Stereberg, Lunacharsky, etc.) collaborated with those Russian artists who, for various reasons, had left the country either temporarily or for good. Naum Gabo, for example, lost faith in the Soviet system, in late 1921. He told Sterenberg and Lunacharsky that he wanted to leave the country. The two officials supported his request and enabled him to participate in the mounting of the Soviet exhibition in Berlin. By 1921, representatives of the official cultural policy were still working together with those intending to leave the country or having just done so, with

the common goal of acquainting the Western public with Russian art in its finest form and enabling them to accept these works, as another project to provide support for the starving Russian people.

The Soviet-Russian did not in most cases consider themselves as exiles: they represented the officially codified art of their country and voiced the idea of a victorious revolution. Umanskij's book (*New Art in Russia*), his articles carried in the periodical *Ararat*, which all revealed a fair amount of bias, acquainted the German intelligentsia with avant-garde Russian art for the first time. Ideas clashed not only in Moscow but in Berlin as well. Russians constituted the largest numbers among the emigrants, and so their views and art exercised the most marked effect, radiating, through Berlin, to the whole of Europe. Only the Soviet-Russian artists succeeded in having a comprehensive, truly representative show mounted in Berlin, at the Galerie Van Diemen late 1922 which further enhanced the great impact of Russian art.

This transitory state, and the sense of temporariness, stepped up existing tensions still further. All those arriving in Berlin tried to exploit their energies in the most intensive way possible during the shortest time possible and to use their time to the best account.

The first breakthrough came with the arrival in 1920 of the artist Ivan Puni, who moved to Berlin together with his wife, Kseniya Boguslavskaya. Herwarth Walden, the director of the Gallery *Der Sturm* organized his first show as early as February 1921, a year and a half before the big Russian exhibition at the *Galerie van Diemen*.

This was the first exhibition in Berlin where Western public encountered genuine Russian avant-garde works. By that time the names of Malevich and Tatlin were already known, but since none of their works were available, the real discovery came with Puni's exhibition. A costume festival held in connection with the exhibition also contributed to its success: the artists marching in the streets and hailing Puni as a true Russian artist, went a long way towards bringing him success.

In fact, these artists had come straight from Soviet-Russia, and their début brought works that represented a synthesis of the latest and most powerful trends, on the boundary between Suprematism and Constructivism, the Ukrainian Archipenko, had previously spent several years in complete obscurity in Paris. However, once in Berlin, Archipenko founded a school, and Theodore Däubler and Ivan Goll wrote a monograph about him as early as 1921, which made his name known throughout Europe practically overnight. There are hardly any artists whose work has given rise to so many monographs appearing in several languages in a year or two as was the case with Archipenko. His sculpture, both the openwork forms and the colour sculp-

tures, have become a symbol of modernism, and he himself gained extraordinary popularity. In reality, neither Archipenko, nor Puni represented the genuine Russian avant-garde. They were outsiders in a manner of speaking; their style walked a tightrope between figurative and abstract.

To the Germans it was their art which represented the Russian avant-garde, but already in 1921 in the same Berlin other Russians were present: El Lissitzky and Gabo whose works embodied the essential spirit of Suprematism and Constructivism, and yet they were much closer to what was going on in Moscow than Puni or Archipenko.

In fact, the Berlin events paved the way for the arrival of El Lissitzky, who had succeeded in getting permission for his departure for Berlin, and of Ehrenburg, who reached Berlin by adventurous routes after his expulsion from France. In 1922, the two of them presented a united front as representatives of the Soviet state, and published the review *Veshch*, Gegenstand, Objet in three languages, with Soviet state support. The last, and most important phase in the collaboration between Russians living at home and those having left the country, was the exhibition at the *Galerie van Diemen*, whose eclectic character (with exquisite works displayed side by side with indisputably mediocre and traditional ones) was also due to this duality. The Russians were followed, both in number and significance, by the Hungarians. Their viewpoints also concurred most closely with those of the Russians, as they too had brought along their revolutionary memories: the staggering experiences of the Revolutions. They had left Hungary en masse and not individually but their organizational centre was in Vienna, with *MA* (Today), the periodical edited by Lajos Kassák, as their rallying point. Although the paper was not published in Berlin, its international network of relations, the authors of the articles and the problems they tackled, and the international outlook it represented all linked the periodical directly to Berlin. This tendency was even more clearly evident from April 1921 onwards, when László Moholy-Nagy – who had been living in Berlin since April 1920 – became the Berlin editor of the Vienna-based *MA*. Moholy-Nagy selected the illustrations for the periodical and forwarded them to Kassák.

From 1920 on, Ernő Kállai, the eminent critic and aesthete, also lived in Berlin. Kállai was equally at home in German culture and journalism, and in the realm of contemporary Hungarian art. The expressive language and passionate stand of his essays and articles made a major contribution towards Hungarian avant-garde becoming an integral part of European avant-garde.

Of the members of the group of activists, Lajos Tihanyi spent a short time in Berlin, between his stays in Vienna and in Paris, and József Nemes Lampérth also stayed there temporarily, during which time he even held a joint

exhibition with Moholy-Nagy in 1920 (*Galerie Fritz Gurlitt*), before lapsing into insanity and returning to Hungary. His large-size wash paintings dating from this time convey a dramatic force of expression.

Finally, *Der Sturm* gallery helped two artists to take their place on the scene: Béla Kádár and Hugó Scheiber, whose works regularly featured in the displays mounted by Walden and on the pages of the periodical as well.

The two artists whose abilities really unfolded in Berlin, with a truly unexpected speed and impact, were both young people whose names had previously been practically unknown in Hungary: László Moholy-Nagy and László Péri. During the war both belonged to the fairly loose circle of the Hungarian activists, but beyond this they had practically no artistic past and background behind them. Both were Leftists in their views but took no active part in the events during the period of the Republic of Councils. Unlike the other Hungarian emigrés, they did not settle in Vienna but in Berlin, and this put them into an extremely advantageous position compared to the Kassák circle, who remained fairly isolated from their immediate environment in Vienna. Both artists soon identified themselves with a form of geometric abstraction close to Constructivism, and their artistic approach was mainly stimulated by El Lissitzky; in the case of Moholy-Nagy, this became evident mainly in the use of drawings, linocuts and in the case of László Péri, in a sculptural form. But at the beginning of their careers, they represented a fairly unified outlook, and in 1920–21, there was still much less difference in their style than a couple of years later. Even their techniques are related – Péri (presumably) painted on wood and canvas, and Moholy-Nagy also used rough nettle-cloth as the basis of his compositions, often leaving a large part of the cloth unprimed. Though he executed his motifs in paint (*Great Wheel*, 1920–21, *E-Picture*, 1921, *Glass-Architecture III*, 1921–22), they have the effect of being each glued upon the raw base, standing out of it like sharp silhouettes. It would be difficult to say which of the two artists was the first to develop this specific silhouette style in a period dominated by cross-currents. What seems certain, however, is that the realms of expression of Péri and Moholy-Nagy are not independent of each other, as they employed similar means in their experiments with various means of transition from the painterly to the plastic and the architectural. One of the main characteristics of Péri's art was his conception in terms of cement, walls and edifices even when producing reliefs, paintings, linocuts or photographs.

Both artists were discovered by Herwarth Walden, who exhibited their works on several consecutive occasions in *Der Sturm* gallery. Of the two, László Péri stood closer to Walden, as in Walden's eyes he embodied the ideal of the revolutionary, the communist and the constructivist artist, and Walden

devoted the same attention to Péri as he had devoted earlier to Chagall and Kandinsky. This is also borne out by the album of linocuts published by *Der Sturm* in 1922–3, with an introduction by Alfréd Kemény. (After 1920, Walden published no similar album of works by any other Eastern European artist.) The series of twelve sheets is composed in grey and black, except for the two sheets which also uses red and orange. The series embraces Péri's motivic realm practically in its entirety, and the order in which the sheets featured – which was fixed by the artist – reflects a logical artistic development. The album appeared simultaneously with El Lissitzky's portfolios entitled *Proun (I. Kestner Mappe)* and *Sieg über die Sonne* (Victory Over the Sun), but in form it is somewhat closer to Moholy-Nagy's *Kestner Mappe*, also published in 1923. This portfolio type owes its existence mainly to Kasimir Malevich's album entitled *Suprematism*.

The actual breakthrough of Puni came with the 1923 show in the *November-gruppe* section, which also bore out the avant-garde dynamism of the Berlin Fine Arts Show.

The real sensation of the exhibition sprang not from these isolated works, but from much larger-scale works.

In fact in May 1923, several artists including Van Doesburg, Péri, El Lissitzky and the Hungarian Vilmos Huszár, went in for tackling spatial problems, each after his own manner. El Lissitzky's *Proun Room* was undoubtedly the most successful and most popular piece at the exhibition, although, despite the artist's original intentions, his restricted financial and technical means compelled him to use boards instead of really durable material. As a consequence, the work has not survived. The original version of László Péri's composition was presumably made of painted canvas affixed to a wooden frame. In all probability he executed this composition in coloured concrete only later, in the 1930s, in accordance with his original concept.

Of the works displayed at the 1923 exhibition in Berlin, two were of spatial effect and two built on planar dimension. El Lissitzky's *Proun Room* and the *Interior Design* by Vilmos Huszár and Gerrit Rietveld, were both visualized – in El Lissitzky's case even executed – in space. In both works, the wall departs from its neutral supportive role of, and becomes an active part of the composition.

In contrast to the other works, Péri's *Three-piece Composition* was only displayed in one plane, on a given wall surface. The two outer elements were strictly geometrical, the two silhouette drawings complementing each other, while the central motif, being in part a round form, was emphatically different.

The elements themselves are uniform and homogeneous, and thus more elementary than those in any of the other compositions. In El Lissitzky's work,

the tension caused by the diagonal comes from the axes which link the elements, while in Péri the positioning of the forms, and their silhouette effect itself, conveys the diagonal tension.

The exhibition of 1923 was one of the most momentous in the history of the Berlin Fine Arts shows. The following exhibition, in 1924, already lagged behind it in quality, even though it was attended, in the *Novembergruppe* section, by Segal, Puni, Máttis-Teutsch and also by Moholy-Nagy.

The exhibitions, coffee-house discussions, press articles, and the constant exchange of views, gave birth to ever fresh ideas and concepts in Berlin, which are significant though never reaching the stage of realization. Delaunay's Orphistic notions became reformulated in Arthur Segal's "equivalents", while El Lissitzky's and Viking Eggeling's concepts were filled with new meaning in the Polish artist Berlewi's "machano-facture". But few concepts were so closely linked to Berlin as László Moholy-Nagy's pictures entitled *Glass Architecture*. This utopia was formulated first by Paul Scheerbart, and later by Adolf Behne, and was set out by Bruno Taut in a whole series of architectural designs. Moholy-Nagy's paintings in the series *Glass Architecture*, which he executed in Berlin, tackled the problems of geometric abstraction, experimenting with the infinite possibilities of light and transparency. But for Moholy-Nagy, as for the theoretical writers on glass architecture, this concept meant not only a stylistic and artistic task, but, beyond that, the transformation of new materials, of the new architectural, technical and scientific means and discoveries, into image and sculpture. Moholy-Nagy and Alfréd Kemény's theory of the dynamic-constructive power system was formulated in 1922. But the *Light-Space Modulator* was realized only later. In fact, Moholy-Nagy executed his idea, dating from 1922, in 1930, with the help of an engineer, István Sebők. Sándor László's *Colour Organ* also signified a breakthrough in genres, by striking the keys, the pianist also brought about a light concert, that is a simultaneous synthesis of auditive and visual effects. The same spirit gave rise to the light reliefs and light sculptures of Nikolaus (Miklós) Braun, a sculptor of Hungarian extraction, in which the very structure of the work becomes transformed under the effect of light. (Unfortunately only photographs of these light sculptures have survived.) Hungarians felt an attraction for light and motion, and for the use of new, industrial materials, like Moholy-Nagy for celluloid, gallalit, rhodoid, Péri for cement, Braun for electricity, etc.

The Berlin of the 1920s provided a shortlived and never-to-be repeated meeting point of Eastern, Central and Western European cultures. A meeting point where utopias played a larger part than realities, but without these utopias a synthesis of the foremost intellectual endeavours of international avant-garde could never have been realized, not even for a few short years.

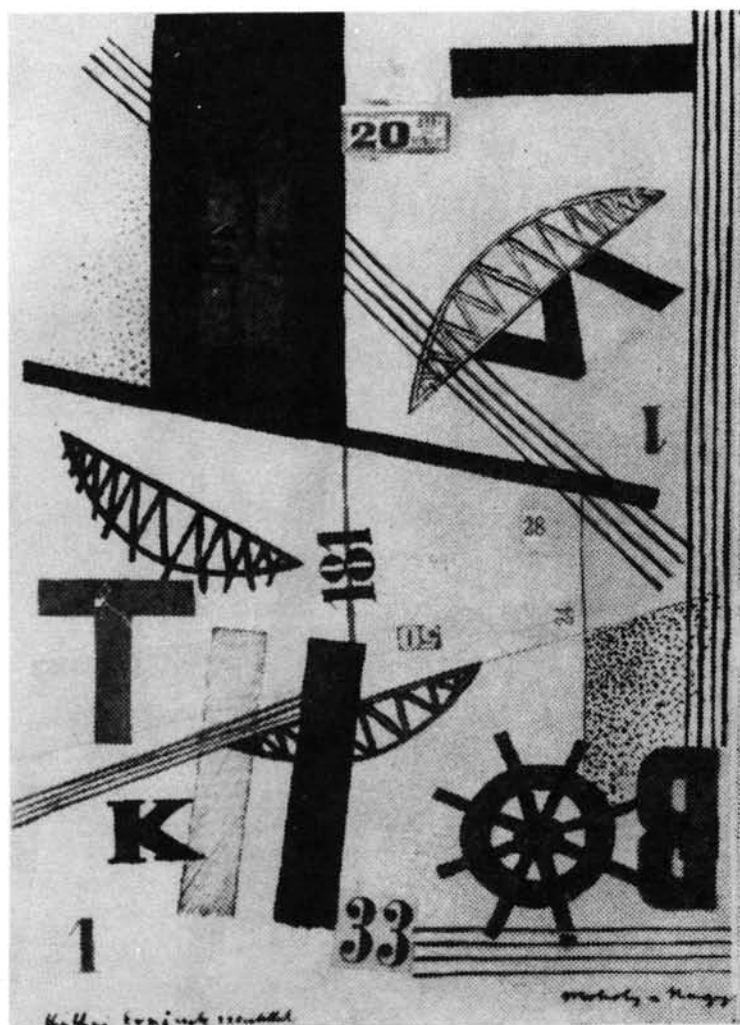


Fig. 1. László Moholy-Nagy, *Collage (IK 33)*, 1921. Watercolor, 33.5 × 23.5 cm
Nazionalgalerie, Berlin, Germany

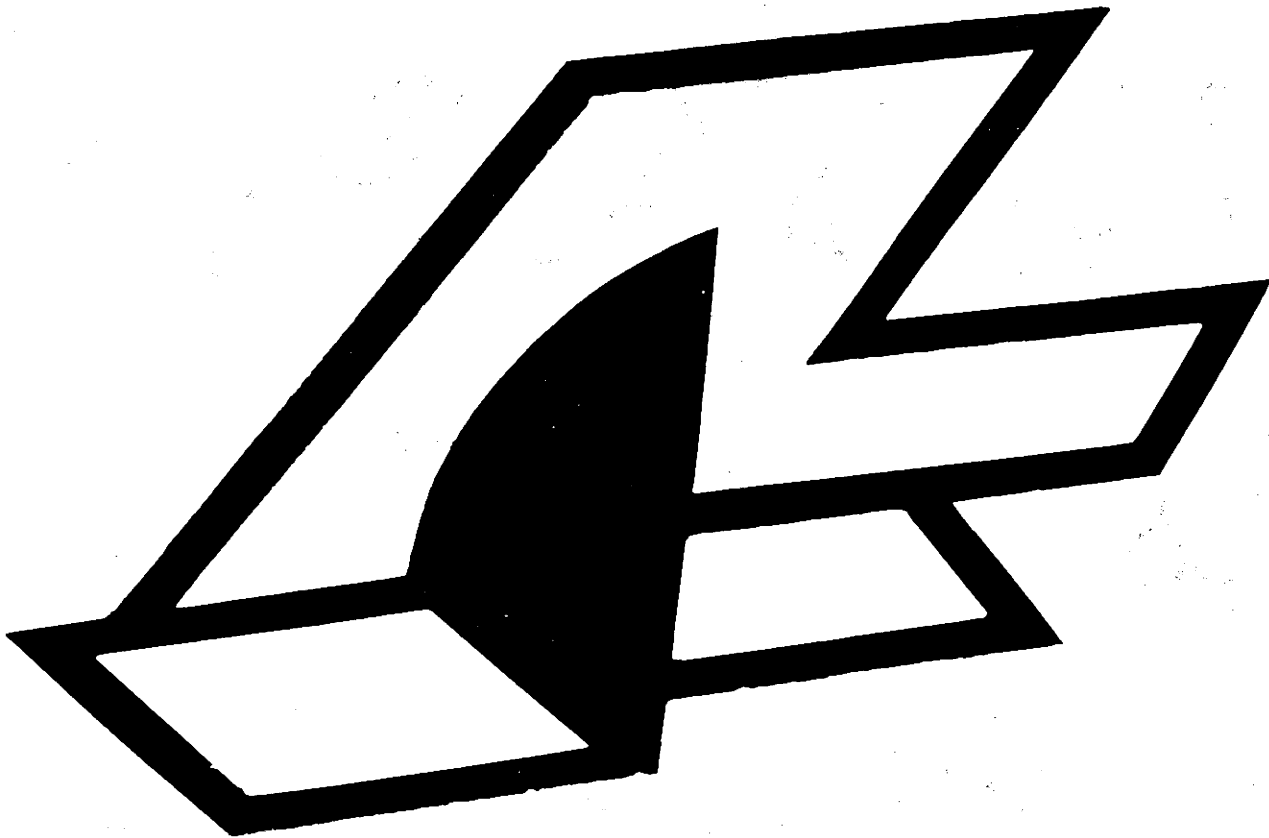


Fig. 2. László Péri, *Lino-Engraving I.* 1922–23

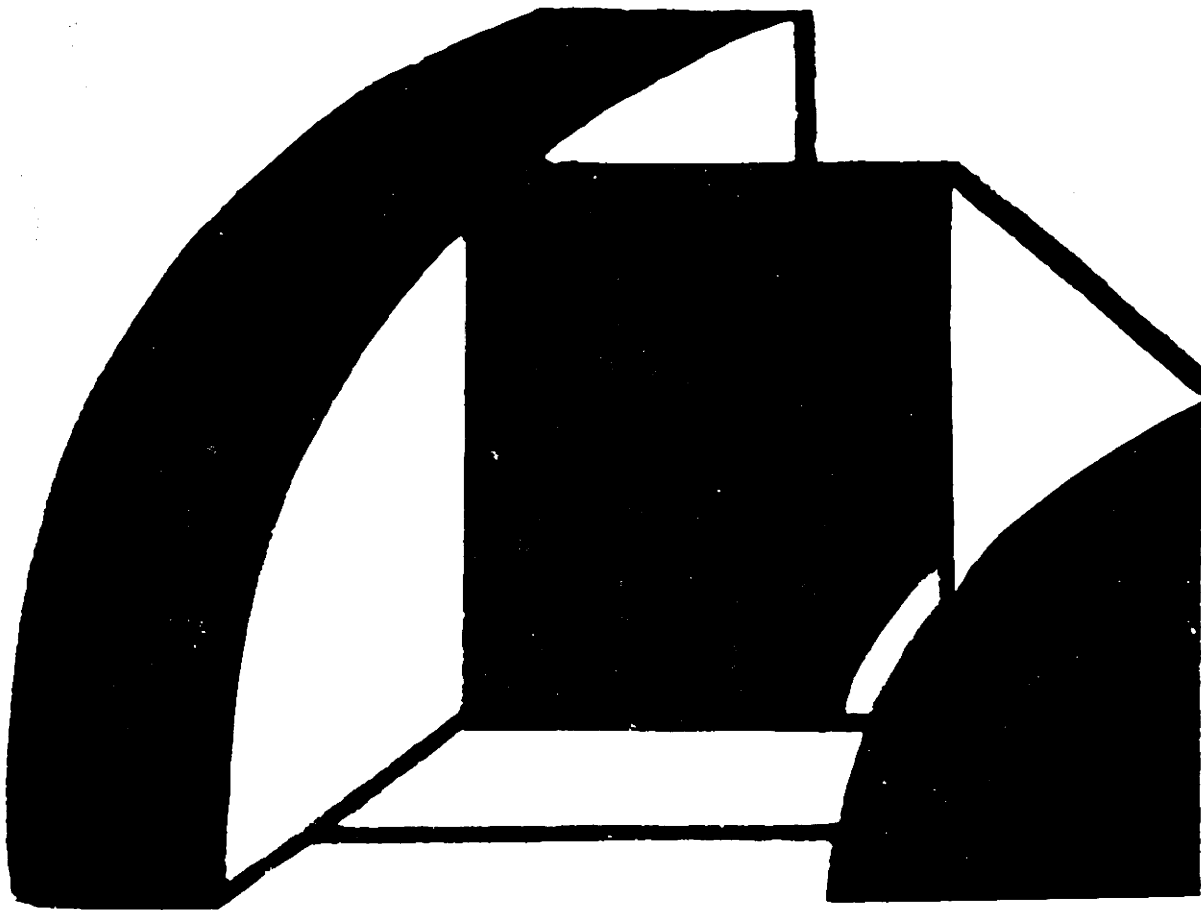


Fig. 3. László Péri, *Lino-Engraving II*. 1922–23

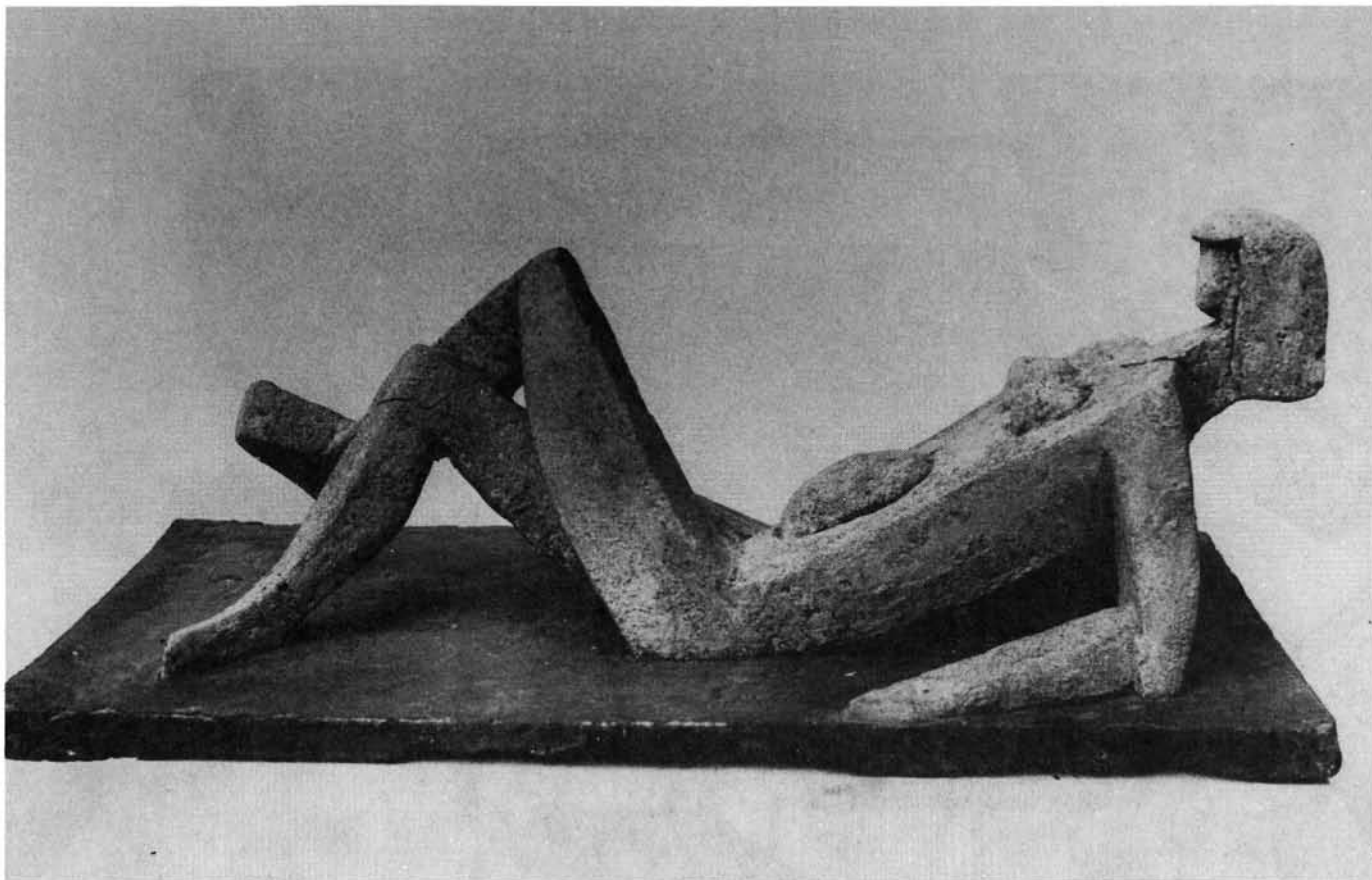


Fig. 4. László Péri, *Construction d'espace*, 1922–1930s Concrete, 80 × 56 cm.
Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest

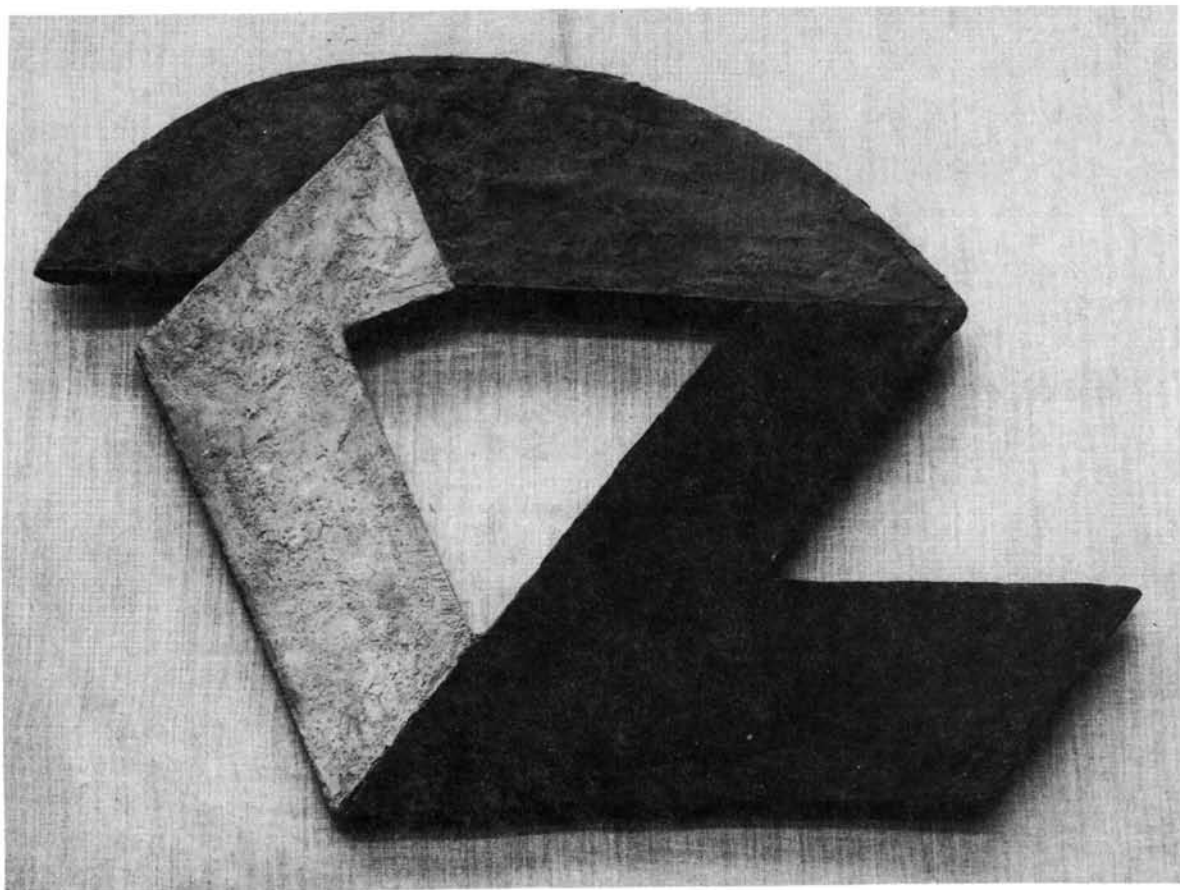


Fig. 5. László Péri, *Reclining figure*, 1920. Light and darker concrete, 23 × 61 × 31 cm.
Attila Kovács Collection, Köln, Germany

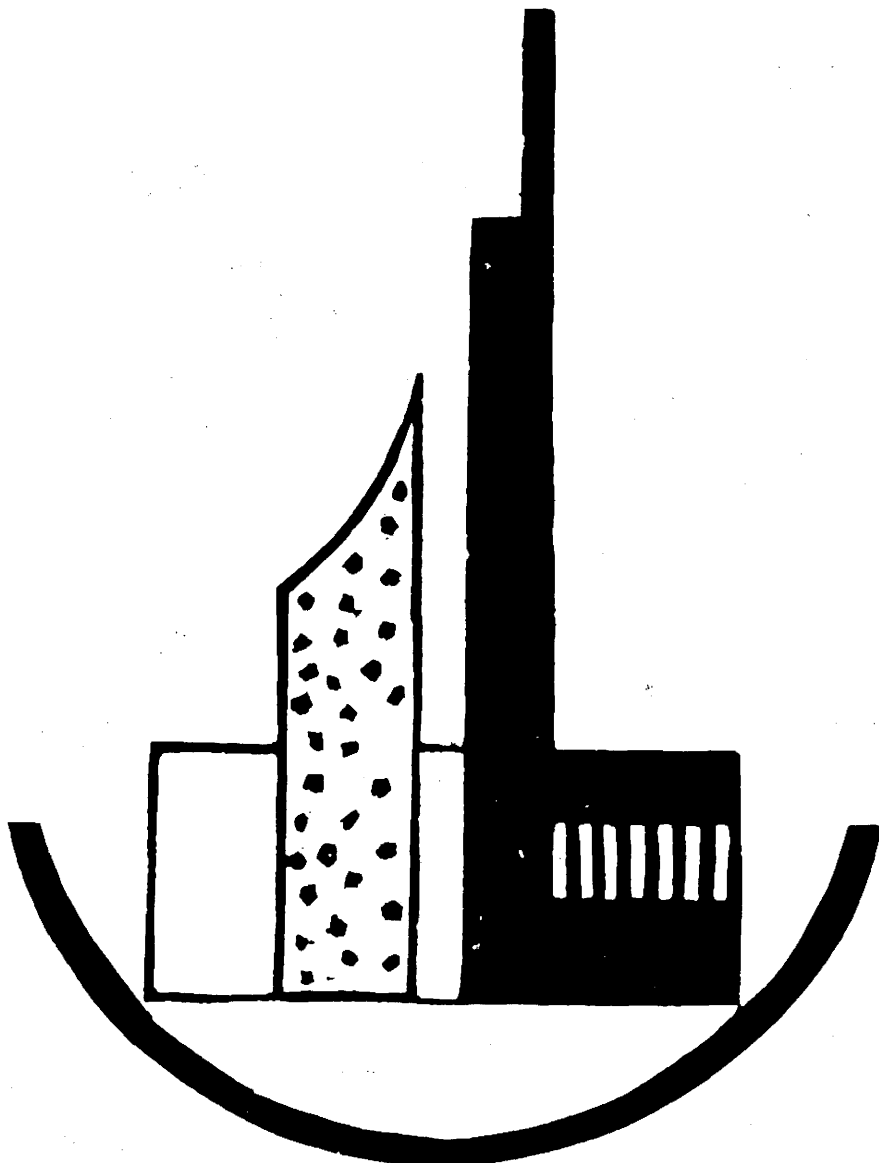


Fig. 6. László Moholy-Nagy, *Composition*
(cca 1921) Engraving

SOME TRACES OF PRAGMATISM AND HUMANISM IN MICHAEL POLANYI'S *PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE*

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Labels and names are not entirely unimportant or irrelevant to philosophy. Michael Polanyi is a good case in point, as is also the title of my paper. I wish to argue that there are some very meaningful points of commonality between his personal knowledge and the insights of the American pragmatists. Yet the term "pragmatism" rings with pejorative overtones, and so I feel compelled to qualify it with a synonym, "humanism," the same word chosen by William James after he regretted having popularized the misunderstood label and the philosophy which we call pragmatism.

Polanyi's philosophy has been variously characterized as "personal knowledge," "post-critical philosophy," and "heuristic philosophy". But for the purposes of this paper I prefer to call it a "new world philosophy," and by this to suggest that it shares deep affinities with American pragmatism. I do this because I believe that the only meaningful historical context within which we can locate it is the cartographic revolution of the 16th century (the *novum mundus* of the cartographers), and the cosmographic revolution of Copernicus and Galileo which also emerged in 16th and 17th century Europe. These two transformations of thought and experience, the cartographic and the cosmographic, are hardly isolated and unrelated incidents. They are dimensions of the same identical breakthrough (along with the Reformation) in the 16th and 17th century experience of human life and its place in the terrestrial and celestial universe. Polanyi's philosophy is an effort to take this breakthrough with utmost seriousness and to work through all its implications.

I would also add that there has always been more interest in Polanyi in the U.S., in the New World, than in Europe. It seems to me to be quite clear that he belongs in a central way to an American philosophical tradition as represented in the work of Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey. This tradition represents an attempt to construct a new paradigm and a new set of philosophical metaphors in the light of the 16th century transformations of human experience.

It is to me more than a curiosity that he opens his *Personal Knowledge* by discussing the humanistic impact of the Copernican revolution which was, he

tells us, "as anthropocentric as the Ptolemaic view, the difference being merely that it preferred to satisfy a different human affection".

As human beings, we must inevitably see the universe from a centre lying within ourselves and speak about it in terms of a human language shaped by the exigencies of human intercourse. Any attempt... to eliminate our human perspective from our picture of the world must lead to absurdity.¹

It is precisely this angle of vision within human life, in the new Copernican perspective, which generates American pragmatism. The American philosopher, John Herman Randall, is remarkably similar to Polanyi in his understanding of the anthropocentrism of Copernicus who had really elevated the terrestrial globe to the status of a star:

We are accustomed to think of Copernicus as lowering the dignity of the earth and of man by removing them from the central position in the universe, as reducing man to a tiny speck on a third-rate planet revolving about a tenth-rate sun drifting in an endless cosmic ocean of nothingness. Far from it! Such an emotional reaction is the product of Romantic Weltschmerz and the fin de siècle wailings of the last generation; it has no counterpart in the seventeenth century. Then men thought the earth had been raised immeasurably in value, made equal to those noble stars, the planets... As Galileo put it,

As to the earth, we seek to make it more noble and perfect, since we succeed in making it like the heavenly bodies, and in a certain fashion place it almost in Heaven, whence your philosophers have banished it.

Randall concludes that "the whole impact... of the Copernican revolution was humanistic, and pointed to a new glory of man in this world".²

Polanyi tells us that he turned to philosophy as "an afterthought" to his career as a scientist. The turning point occurred in 1935 in a conversation he recalls having with Bukharin, the leading theoretician of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union. Bukharin told him that "pure science was a morbid symptom of a class society; under socialism the conception of science pursued for its own sake would disappear, for the interests of scientists would spontaneously turn to problems of the current Five-Year Plan".

The irony in this statement struck Polanyi. It amounted to a denial of the very existence of pure science in the name of a "scientific socialism" which derived its claim to validity from the source it was denying. "The scientific outlook appeared to have produced a mechanical conception of man and history in which there was no place for science itself."³ This was a "self-immolation of the mind" and threatened to undermine the freedom of thought and the foundations of a free society.

It became clear to him that there was an urgent need to rethink our understanding of scientific knowledge, and that what was needed was nothing short of what Richard Gelwick calls "a general epistemological reform" if "the institutions of a free and human society" are to survive.⁴ His philosophy of personal knowledge must not be construed as a narrowly focused epistemology, but a wide ranging reform of our understanding of human knowing in relation to every significant aspect of human life.

Polanyi's initial venture into this program of philosophical reform occurred in 1936, in a short paper in which he addressed the importance of ambiguity and imprecision in science. "The mere fact," he writes, "that there is no absolute security for the validity of what we consider exact natural laws should lead to the conclusion that these laws are only valuable in combination with the element of uncertainty in them."⁵ By acknowledging the value of the inexact ideas in science Polanyi took the first step toward the radical reformulation of the foundations of all human knowing, a program which, as I will argue, occupied a central place in the work of the American pragmatists.

Polanyi's personal knowledge

The philosopher-mathematician, Alfred North Whitehead, tells us to seek simplicity, but then to distrust it. This is especially good advice for studying Polanyi's philosophy, for it is deceptively simple on first inspection, but becomes increasingly complex and profoundly rich as we probe it more carefully.

His philosophical odyssey begins with the famous paradox in Plato's *Meno*:

MENO: How will you inquire, Socrates, into that which you do not know? What will you put forth as the subject of inquiry? And if you find what you want, how will you ever know that this is the thing which you did not know?

SOCRATES: I know, Meno, what you mean; but just see what a tiresome dispute you are introducing. You argue that a man cannot inquire either about that which he knows, or about that which he does not know; for if he knows, he has no need to inquire; and if not, he cannot; for he does not know the very subject about which he is to inquire.

Polanyi's answer to Plato's paradox is a deceptively simple statement: "We know more than we can tell." He proposes that there are two types of awareness: one which is *focal* (this awareness is public, objective, and explicit); and the other which is *subsidiary* (an awareness which is personal and private as opposed to public, subjective as opposed to objective, and implicit as opposed to explicit).

There is no knowledge which is wholly focal (i.e. explicit) that is not in some way related to that of which we are only tacitly aware.

The ideal of a strictly explicit knowledge is indeed self-contradictory; deprived of their tacit coefficients, all spoken words, all formulae, all maps and graphs, are strictly meaningless. An exact mathematical theory means nothing unless we recognize an inexact non-mathematical knowledge on which it bears and a person whose judgment upholds this bearing.⁶

So we do not know, in an explicit sense, what we are looking for, and yet we do look for it because we have clues to what it is in our subsidiary awareness.

It was Gestalt psychology that first demonstrated for Polanyi that there is indeed a tacit dimension to all our knowing. We know a whole by integrating our awareness of its particulars without being able to identify the particulars. But Gestalt psychology commits the error of assuming that our perception of the Gestalt is a passive experience. It is an active thing. The knower is active and participates in the act of knowing. Polanyi describes the theory of knowledge which he draws from this reinterpretation:

I am looking at Gestalt... as the outcome of an active shaping of experience... This shaping or integrating I hold to be the great and indispensable tacit power by which all knowledge is discovered and... held to be true.⁷

This active shaping of experience is a central theme in the pragmatism of William James:

In our cognitive as well as in our active life we are creative. We *add* both to the subject and to the predicate part of reality. The world stands really malleable, waiting to receive its final touches at our hands. Like the kingdom of heaven, it suffers human violence willingly. Man *engenders* truths upon it.⁸

This active shaping of experience, moreover, occurs in an act of empathy, or indwelling. Every act of knowledge is a form of indwelling in the object known. There cannot be a Cartesian dichotomy of mind and body, for it is through the body that we know and dwell in the object. Polanyi speaks of "the bodily roots of all thought".

Our body is the ultimate instrument of all our external knowledge... In all our waking moments we are *relying* on our awareness of contacts of our body with things outside for *attending* to these things. Our own body is the only thing in the world which we normally

never experience as an object, but experience always in terms of the world to which we are attending from our body.⁹

For both Polanyi and James, then, the very essence of knowing is relational. James, in *The Principles of Psychology*, asserts that "knowledge of a thing is knowledge of its relations". Polanyi specifies this knowledge in terms of a from-to relation. We know something from a subsidiary awareness of its particulars to a focal awareness of it as an object of our understanding.

When we make a thing function as the proximal term of tacit knowing, we incorporate it in our body—or extend our body to include it—so that we come to dwell in it... Indwelling, or empathy, is the proper means of knowing man and the humanities.¹⁰

To return to Meno's paradox, if all knowledge is explicit, i.e., capable of being clearly stated, then we could never know either a problem or its solution. But we do indeed know problems, or to be more precise, we do indeed *have* problems. And we look for their solutions with a tacit sense of clues which are yet to be discovered. James also acknowledges the existence this tacit dimension and regards it as having the utmost importance. To illustrate this, he asks us to consider how we strive to recall a forgotten name:

The state of consciousness is peculiar. There is a gap therein; but no mere gap. It is a gap that is intensely active. A sort of wraith of the name is in it, beckoning us in a given direction, making us at moments tingle with the sense of our closeness, and then letting us sink back without the longed-for term.

There is an ineffable dimension to our knowledge which we cannot account for in terms of the clear and distinct ideas of René Descartes. In his essay on "The Stream of Consciousness" James gives an account, of mental life as an ongoing, processive "stream" in which the connections between various states are "sensibly continuous". The result is an outright rejection of Cartesian clarity and distinctness as any kind of measure of authentic knowledge:

It is, the reader will see, the reinstatement of the vague and inarticulate to its proper place in our mental life which I am so anxious to press on the attention.¹¹

In like manner, so also does Polanyi put Descartes behind him:

Strictly speaking nothing that we know can be said precisely, and so what I call 'ineffable' may simply mean something that I know and can describe even less precisely than usual, or even only vaguely.¹²

The tradition of American pragmatism

American pragmatism seems to have suffered the reputation, especially among European intellectuals, of having a split philosophical personality. On the one hand it is regarded as a serious attempt to deal with some of the central issues of classical modern thought from Descartes to Kant and Hegel. Both continental phenomenology and the British analytic school express some regard for the work of Peirce and James.¹³ So long as American pragmatism could be tied to a European intellectual tradition, it was and continues to be taken seriously. I believe this to have been the case with Polanyi. He certainly acknowledges throughout his work that he had read and gained much insight from Peirce, James, Dewey, and Whitehead.

But on the other hand, much of the work of James and the other pragmatists tends to be regarded as superficial and trivial, a "practical, strenuously optimistic, all-American dismantling of philosophical pretensions to higher authority and truth... an effort to sweep away the cobwebs of theory and speculation with the broom of experiment and everyday experience" as one writer recently put it.¹⁴ Such works as *The Will to Believe* and *Pragmatism* are dismissed as popularizations of profound philosophical questions. They were written for a popular audience – a sort of philosophy-made-easy for the common man. There is a widespread belief that it is a method of philosophizing which glorifies action for its own sake and elevates it to an end in itself.

This is perhaps why Harry Prosch warns us that we should not confuse Polanyi's thought with that of the pragmatists:

It is true enough that [Polanyi] shared with Dewey the notion that significant thought begins with problems; but the impetus propelling a mind toward both a recognition and a solution to its problems was not for him the itch to restore ongoing activity, but rather a passion to attain comprehensive and meaningful wholes... The psychology from which he took his bearings, in other words, is quite different from that from which the American pragmatists took theirs. Instead of seeing organisms as primordially blind activists... he saw [them] as primordially meaning-seeking centers, already oriented toward the goal of finding or attaining structural ordered holistic entities both within and without themselves.¹⁵

But Charles Peirce reminds us that "the pragmatist does not make the *summum bonum* to consist in action, but makes it to consist in that process of evolution whereby the existent comes more and more to embody generals," i.e., a body of rational tendencies or generalized habits. There are two commonly committed errors concerning pragmatism, according to John Dewey.

It is often said of pragmatism that it makes action the end of life. It is also said of pragmatism that it subordinates thought and rational activity to particular ends of interest and profit... But the role of action is that of an intermediary... Pragmatism is, therefore, far from being that glorification of action for its own sake which is regarded as the peculiar characteristic of American life.¹⁶

If there are affinities between Polanyi's personal knowledge and the insights of pragmatism, then we must look for them in the most original and creative contributions of both. Whitehead is especially instructive here. His work in mathematics led him to the same conclusion as Polanyi, viz., that "logic... is struggling with the discovery... that every set of finite premises must indicate notions which are excluded from its direct purview".¹⁷ He argues that philosophy never starts from the explicit systematization of thought. It starts from what he calls assemblage. And there are, according to him, "four great thinkers whose services to civilized thought rest largely upon their achievements in philosophical assemblage... Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, and William James". Of James, Whitehead has this to say:

The essence of his greatness was his marvellous sensitivity to the ideas of the present... He systematized; but above all he assembled. His intellectual life was one protest against the dismissal of experience in the interest of system. He had discovered intuitively the great truth with which modern logic is now wrestling.¹⁸

It strikes me that truth is precisely what Polanyi had discovered in his doctrine of personal knowledge. I do not think it is presumptuous to characterize Polanyi as an "assembler" in the same sense as James. For his insights are as seminal as those of James, and they take philosophy in a new direction. If there be validity to this assertion of Whitehead, then some commensurate place should be made, I believe, for Polanyi if only because he worked, independently of James to be sure, but from a remarkably similar standpoint, and moved the general themes of a post-Copernican New World Philosophy in dramatic new directions. No less than Peirce, James, and Dewey (or Whitehead, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein for that matter), his work may be viewed as an attempt to rethink and reconstruct the very foundations of the modern mind.

In the history of philosophic thought each major epoch begins with a cosmology, in the broadest sense of this term, as a unified world view, a *Weltanschauung* in which science, philosophy, religion, art, and mythology come together to create a new image and a new way of understanding the universe and the place of human life in it. Most especially does a cosmology in this sense propose a theory of correspondence between the macrocosm, the

world at large, and the human live creature. It is at this cosmic level of a new paradigm for the universe and of human life that we find the deepest meaning of the philosophy of pragmatism as espoused by Peirce, James, and Dewey. And it is at this level that Polanyi's personal knowledge meets this tradition.

Both pragmatism and personal knowledge represent nothing less than an attempt to construct a new theory of truth and of meaning within the context of the major historical shift which occurred in the modern world, a shift from a pre-Copernican and pre-Kantian universe which was finite, fixed, and essentially finished, to a universe which is in all its important dimensions infinite, unfolding, and still in the making. When read from this point of view, Polanyi joins company with the American pragmatists. Together, they constitute a group of cosmologists, or assemblers, who are essentially concerned with the relationship between the human live creature as a self-initiating purposive agent as we find him in the *novum mundus* of the 16th century cartographers and cosmographers. This New World is a cosmic wilderness: unfenced, unfinished, and to a considerable measure still largely unpredictable.

Human experience brims over with non-explicit factors in this cosmic wilderness; it abounds with "the dark and the twilight" (Dewey's words) with "the vague and the inarticulate" (James), and with the "tacit dimension and the ineffable" (Polanyi).

Nature, far from being all distinct, explicit, and evident as scientific positivism would have it, teems with novelties, hidden possibilities, ambiguities, obscurities and all those qualities which make things lovable or odious, beautiful or ugly. When we define the items of our experience exclusively in accordance with the prescriptions of clear and distinct and explicit knowledge, we are compelled to deny the existence of these other qualities which nevertheless inhere in the objects of our ordinary experience. In denying their existence we commit what James called a "vicious intellectualism": "The treating of a name as excluding from the fact named what the name's definition fails positively to include." Polanyi found this fallacy at the heart of the scientific ideal of objective knowledge. And James summed it all up in his characteristic manner, in this inimitable, eloquent statement:

All "classic," clean, cut and dried, "noble," "fixed," "eternal," *Weltanschauungen* seem to me to violate the character with which life concretely comes and the expression which it bears of being, or at least involving, a muddle and a struggle, with an "ever-not-quite" to all our formulas, and novelty and possibility forever leaking in.

Qualitative thought and personal knowledge

To illustrate the commonality of attitude and outlook between Polanyi and the pragmatists, we may look at the striking similarities between the principal characteristic of personal knowledge and what Peirce and Dewey characterize as qualitative thought. The most obvious feature of our ordinary, commonly shared human experience is that it is qualitative. For Dewey, "the world in which we immediately live, that in which we strive, succeed, and are defeated is pre-eminently a qualitative world."¹⁹ This is a most direct, simple and immediately accessible truth. But at the same time (like Polanyi's "we know more than we can tell") it is elusive, complex, intricate, and profound.

The most effective way to approach the richness and complexity of the idea is to begin with a distinction which Dewey, Peirce, James, and Polanyi implicitly share: the distinction between experience and discourse. The universe of experience is a precondition of the universe of discourse. Whatever meaningful discursive utterance can be made by anybody about anything must ultimately be referred to and located within a universe of experience as the commonly shared context from which the utterance will derive its final meaning.

To illustrate this point, in his essay on "The Sentiment of Rationality" (a title with a Polanyian ring), James supposed that one could describe a Beethoven string-quartet as "a scraping of horses' tails on cats' bowels".²⁰ But this banal discursive utterance falls infinitely short of the qualitative experience of *music* which gives a Beethoven quartet its meaning. To cite another example of this point, Dewey asks us to consider

the difference between movement as qualitative alteration, and motion as $F=ma$; between stress as involving effort and tension, and as force per unit surface; between the red of blood issuing from a wound, and red as signifying 400 trillion vibrations per time unit.²¹

Similarly, Polanyi tells of an incident which occurred to Professor Richard Pipes who, in an essay, wished to express the idea that intellectuals in the Soviet Union have a yearning, a craving, for the truth. On the advice of friends Pipes omitted the passage because it sounded "naive" and "unscientific". Four years later he changed his mind, but the "truth" which the Russian intelligentsia craved for was defined by Pipes as "the right to surrender to one's impressions without being compelled for some extraneous reasons to interpret and distort them". Polanyi calls this a "labyrinth of subterfuges [and] involuted words". Like James's "horses' tails and cats' bowels" these words "do not begin to express what is actually taking place in Eastern Europe".²²

There is a commonly shared world of experience and a common-sense way of apprehending that world. There is, in other words, a universe of experience which is qualitative. Physical science belongs to the universe of discourse as a mode of abstract thought. It transcends the universe of experience; it prescind from quality in its pursuit of abstract objectivity. As Polanyi says, the ideal of knowledge for physical science is completely explicit and objective. But he also adds: this is nonsense. Common sense refers to a type of thinking "which has to do with objects involved in concerns and issues of living".

What, then, does Dewey mean by quality? And how may it help us better to comprehend tacit knowing? In addition to the traditional distinction between primary qualities (which inhere in the object) and secondary qualities (which reside in the perceiving subject), there are tertiary qualities of which the first two are but dimensions. A tertiary quality pervades an entire field of experience; an entire experiential situation takes on a qualitative character. The situation itself may be described as tense or relaxed, as cheerful or somber, as exciting or tedious.

It can never be articulated in any explicit way, for it is always there, taken for granted as the integrating principle which gives to an experience its coherence, its direction, its shape. It allows for the possibility of discursive thought because it enables us to fix our attention on a particular problem without at the same time having to make the entire context problematic. We are aware of situation "not by itself but as the background, the thread and the directive clue in what we expressly think of". [Cf. the clues contained in the tacit dimension whereby Meno's dilemma is solved by Polanyi.] Dewey remarks that James's use of such metaphors as "fringe" and "penumbra" in describing the underlying qualitative character that constitutes a situation is unfortunate because these terms convey the meaning of something that is a distinct and additional entity. This is surely the reason why Polanyi is careful to insist that the tacit dimension, or "subception," should not be confused with the "Jamesian fringe of awareness".

What is most distinctive about the fringe of awareness for James, what is its most striking or salient feature, is its indeterminateness, "the indeterminateness of the margin". Dewey says that we are never "wholly free from the sense of something that lies beyond". The margin of our field of experience shades "into that definite expanse beyond which the imagination calls the universe". When we turn our attention to this marginal life we call it "dim and vague". But this is because it is a function of the whole field of experience and not of any specific part. Dusk is a meaningful quality of the whole situation we call twilight. Only when it prevents us from viewing some particular object clearly do we call it dim and vague. And yet its function is not to render any object

visually acute. The sole purpose and meaning of dusk is to be found in the way in which it binds together all the defined elements of our world, at the time of day when night approaches, into a qualitative whole.

In a certain sense, the dim and vague do have their proper place (to paraphrase James), for they constitute the stable context of every experience and are, in Dewey's words, "the essence of sanity". Without a sense that there is an indeterminate setting not needing our attention to determine it, all our experiences would be uprooted out of context and would float in an incongruous and chaotic vacuum.

For Dewey, a work of art performs the very special role of putting us into contact with this qualitative whole by eliciting and accentuating a vivid awareness of its presence. It arouses in us a "sense of belonging to the larger, all-inclusive whole which is the universe in which we live". He is worth quoting at length on this point:

We are, as it were, introduced into a world beyond this world which is nevertheless the deeper reality of the world in which we live in our ordinary experiences. We are carried out beyond ourselves to find ourselves... Only one frustrated in a particular object of desire upon which he had staked himself, like Macbeth, finds that life is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. Where egotism is not made the measure of reality and value, we are citizens of this vast world beyond ourselves, and any intense realization of its presence with and in us brings a peculiarly satisfying sense of unity in itself and with ourselves.²³

It would be misleading to think of a quality as some kind of ethereal or mystical force. To the contrary, it is as tangible and outstretched as the items residing in the foreground of the experience which it embraces. The quality is there in all its concreteness in every enumerated item of the experience, as the ubiquitous stuff or subject-matter of which that particular experience is made. It is not an object of knowledge; it is never directly known. But the quality is immediately grasped *as* experience.

The affinities between Polanyi's personal knowledge and the American pragmatic tradition are too numerous and too profound to go beyond the brief illustrations which I have offered. But, having made an initial investigation of this topic, I am convinced that his philosophy not only possesses these affinities, and that to uncover them will enable us to probe more deeply into his thought, but also that his work truly belongs to this tradition and deserves to be called a New World philosophy, a humanistic philosophy. Michael Polanyi gives us a glimpse of a post-Copernican, post-Kantian, post-modern world that is just now beginning to unfold before our eyes.

Notes

1. *Personal Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1958), pp. 3-4.
2. John Herman Randall, *The Career of Philosophy. From the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), pp. 309-10.
3. *The Tacit Dimension* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), p. 3.
4. *The Way of Discovery. An Introduction to the Thought of Michael Polanyi* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 46-47.
5. "The Value of the Inexact," *Philosophy of Science*, Vol. 3 (April 1936), p. 233.
6. "Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading," *Knowing and Being. Essays by Michael Polanyi*, ed. Marjorie Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1969), p. 195.
7. *The Tacit Dimension*, p. 6.
8. *The Writings of William James*, ed. John J. McDermott (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 456.
9. *The Tacit Dimension*, pp. 15-16.
10. *Ibid.*
11. William James, *Psychology: Briefer Course* (New York: Crowell-Collier, 1961), p. 179.
12. *Personal Knowledge*, pp. 87-88.
13. Husserl considered the *Principles of Psychology* an important influence in the development of his thought, and Wittgenstein was reported to have no other book in his study except the *Principles* which he recommended to his students.
14. L. S. Klepp, *The New York Times*, 2 December, 1990.
15. Harry Prosch, *Michael Polanyi. A Critical Exposition* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), p. 8.
16. "The Development of American Pragmatism," *Philosophy and Civilization* (New York: Capricorn, 1963), pp. 15-16.
17. *Modes of Thought* (New York: The Free Press, 1968), p. 2.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
19. "Qualitative Thought," John Dewey *On Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, ed. Richard Berstein (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1960), p. 176.
20. *The Writings of William James*, p. 325.
21. "Qualitative Thought," *op. cit.*, p. 177.
22. Michael Polanyi and Harry Prosch, *Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1975), pp. 26-27.
23. John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Capricorn, 1934), p. 195.

OSCAR JÁSZI IN EXILE: DANUBIAN EUROPE RECONSIDERED

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Oscar Jászi was born in 1875 at Nagykároly as the son of a provincial doctor. Oscar studied philosophy and political science at Budapest university and became an official in the Ministry of Agriculture. Unable to agree with the reactionary agrarian policies of the department, he resigned his post and became one of the founders and most active leaders of the Hungarian Sociological Society which R. W. Seton-Watson compared to the Fabian Society in England. He edited its journal, *Huszadik Század* (The Twentieth Century) which was a monthly review that soon acquired a high reputation for its thorough analysis of social and economic problems and its courageous advocacy of political reform.

Jászi and his group fought for justice for non-Magyar nationalities of Hungary and the fullest possible linguistic and cultural liberty in local administration, education, and justice. On the very eve of World War I, Jászi and his friends founded the Radical Party, whose daily organ, *Világ* (The World) acquired increasing prominence as a focus of Hungarian pacifism. It first seemed to advocate the ideas of a "Mitteleuropa", which was supported by the Germans in 1915. Jászi, however, was not interested in the imperialistic and Pan-German ideas of Friedrich Naumann. Instead, he focused on the idea of a peaceful confederation of races on the Danube.

According to Jászi, Count Károlyi denounced the Dualistic system on the eve of World War I and called for a rapprochement with the Slavs. In his own article in the liberal daily *Világ* on July 19, 1914 Jászi wrote just prior to the outbreak of hostilities, "It is not true that sympathizers will be found in the ranks of working Hungary and thinking Hungary against Serbia. Outside the feudal class and high finance, the whole public opinion of the country is for peace."¹

In the October Revolution of 1918, Jászi entered the Károlyi government as the Minister of Nationalities in an attempt to win non-Magyars to a policy of radical and linguistic equality. The policy of "Hungarian Switzerland" rested on federation, free trade, and democracy. In 1918, Jászi devised a

Danubian Federation that would be a pentarchy or federation of five kingdoms. These would include the following national groups: 1) Hungarians, 2) German/Austrians, 3) Polish, 4) Czechs, 5) South Slavs. The member states would form a customs union and would have a united defense and foreign policy. There would be a single "supreme court" for federation.

By this time, however, Hungary had advanced to a territorial rather than a federal solution and Jászi was unable to implement his Danubian plan. There was no possibility of any serious progress in the nationalities question because of the arbitrary partitioning of Hungary. He resigned his post as Minister of Nationalities saying, "I hope to be in a position to work more successfully for the furtherance of my plan for a Danube confederation."²

After World War I, some Hungarian intellectuals sought refuge from the repressive regime of Admiral Horthy in the United States; among these was Oscar Jászi. He was the undisputed leader of Hungarian émigré scholars in the interwar years. It was during this time that he came to the conclusion that the federal solution was the only one that could solve the problems of Danubian Europe. Prior to the First World War I, Jászi did not see this as the only alternative to friction and fratricide but after the inequitable treaties of Paris he did.

In *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Hungary*, Jászi states that he never gave support to Naumann's militaristic "Mitteleuropa" but rather to a democratic and pacifist union of all people living in the Danube basin. He saw this as a prelude to the stage where a United States of Europe would be formed. He also discusses how Michael Károlyi, president of Hungary at the time, drew up a plan which was essentially in agreement with Louis Kossuth's well-known federalist plan. Jászi notes that this is important because this statement was made at a time when no one had discussed something like this or even similar to it. He wrote in the introduction that only a democratic Confederation could really solve the question of national minorities in those states and achieve any real economic reconstruction (September 1923, New York).

The treaties of Paris, he felt, were inequitable for the people of Central and Southeastern Europe because national boundaries were drawn in such a way that was to exclude a lot of people from their homeland and make them minorities in foreign lands. This was especially visible in Hungary. After the treaty of Trianon, Hungarians were living as a minority population in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Rumania. Historic Hungary had lost two-thirds of its land to these countries.

According to Jászi, the solution to inequity would be the formation of a Danubian federation. He looked to others in the past such as Lajos Kossuth

to show that plans for cooperation rather than discord have existed in the past and could exist in the future if only the peoples of Danubian Europe would stand together. He felt that the danger came from without rather than from within which was the more popular view in interwar Europe. Even such democratic leaders as Czech Thomas Masaryk looked toward a national rather than international solution during this period.

Jászi felt this solution was misguided and spent a lot of his time trying to prove so. Settling down to a career in America as a history professor in quiet Oberlin College, Jászi nevertheless remained active in the political ideology of his time. Jászi's advocacy of reform and democracy made him a critic of contemporary Hungary. He especially felt that Hungary's nationality problem had to be dealt with in a more humane, constructive fashion. Repression and forcible assimilation had undesirable consequences because it increased tensions among nationalities and was self-defeating. Jászi felt most importantly that the fundamental needs of each nationality had to be guaranteed. This should include good schools, good government, and a good judicial system. Jászi believed that each nationality had a right to express its own culture. This he believed could only be achieved in a democracy. For this reason he was pessimistic about Hungary's future in the interwar years.

Jászi believed what was needed was a party of reform which, in the interest of peace and intra-national reconciliation, would unite all in its ranks. Cooperation among nationalities would facilitate economics and social progress. A Danubian Federation would be able to offer this.

When discussing the development of nation-states and nationalities, one of his beliefs was the evolution of larger and larger states over time. For this reason the idea of Danubian Federation seemed to be a natural progression. He wrote, "Any one of the nations in the Danube and Balkan regions is too small to have an entirely independent economic and political life and the daily struggles and rivalries among them make them all easy victims of foreign imperialistic schemes... the only road to self-determination, national independence, and economic prosperity lies in the direction of a free trade Danubian Confederation."³

Jászi did not believe that a territorial solution was the best because it would dissolve the economic unity of this region. He believed that the Carpathian Basin should indeed comprise one unit. By disbanding this unit commerce would be hindered as would the free flow of traffic and ideas. This would in turn make political and economic progress more difficult. He, also, believed that the rivalries among succession states would make them easy targets for becoming vassals of foreign aggressors.

Jászi ascertained that a political unit such as a confederation would solve the economic problem and the nationality issues and therefore eliminate the

danger zone. He constantly stressed that the Danubian Region constituted a "danger zone" in Europe. The peace settlements, he argued, failed to solve effectively and permanently the problems of this area. Though the area had been de-feudalized and the local peasantry had been allowed to enter the mainstream of political life, the peace settlements had disrupted the region's economic unity, embittered race relations and created new and strong irredentas.

Jászi believed that in spite of Hungary's small size, the Hungarian question is intimately connected with the general condition of the neighboring states. Therefore, Hungary must discontinue her recent state of despair and dreams of revenge in order to work for serious reconstruction and establishment of an equilibrium in the Danubian countries.

Jászi then went on to describe his theory of the "danger zone" which according to him was made up of the Dual Monarchy, the Balkan States, and the Russian empire which were all, in his opinion, unfinished units. Therefore, they presented a danger zone because the role of national consciousness was usurped by armies and dynasties. The national language and class were created to the detriment of the subject races. This, in turn, produced strong irredentas and the Slovaks, Rumanians, and Yugoslavs of Hungary met in secret organizations with their kindred nationalities both within and without the Monarchy. Unfortunately, Jászi states that all such efforts were futile against the wall of Hungarian feudal privilege.⁴

He also discusses the breakdown of economic units which were linked together by ties of cultural intercourse and free trade that are now broken to pieces. He believes that the military and customs barriers that were set up could only be detrimental because they divide rather than unite. He makes an analogy between these units and living organisms. These artificial changes stopped the natural blood flow according to him and, therefore, produced a falling off in production and the result were famine and misery.

This is all linked in his mind with the peace treaties which Jászi called short sighted and unjust in many respects. He believed that the treaties inflicted unnecessary hardship and humiliation upon the losers. This in turn helped to stir up national and racial hatred to levels way beyond the prewar ones and he thought that the new irredentas building up were much more dangerous than the old ones.

This all led him back to his original thesis which was the establishment of a democratic federation to solve these problems by having all national groups live in harmony. He states, "the only possible cure for Europe's ills is a democratic confederation of democratic peoples - this would lead to a peaceful and rational cooperation between countries for the common good of all. The fundamentals of this system are to be found in two basic units: free trade

between all the parties to the confederation and a system of honest national and cultural autonomy for all national minorities living within the boundaries of the confederation.”⁵

Jászi went on to say that the territories of the Danube and the Balkans are linked together by powerful economic, geographical, and cultural ties. Therefore, peaceful cooperation seemed like the best solution for future happiness. Jászi, like Kossuth before him, thought that any one of the nations in this region was too small to live entirely independent economic and political lives and the struggles among them would make them easy targets for foreign imperialistic schemes. In this case he was quite prophetic as this would indeed become a growing reality when the nations of Eastern Europe fell under the shadow of first the Third Reich and later the Soviet Union.

Hungary, Jászi felt, had turned the wrong way. He spoke bitterly against the conservative regime of Horthy while at the same time being enthusiastic about the newly established democracy in Czechoslovakia. Hungary he said needed to be 1) defeudalized 2) demilitarized 3) introduced to democracy and 4) obtain a program of agrarian reform. Also he stressed the necessity of good relations with one's neighbors.

In *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Hungary* Jászi wrote, “that only through a thorough-going democratization of Hungary and loyal and intimate relations between this democratized Hungary and the new states could such an atmosphere be created in central Europe as can cure the greatest evils of the present situation and clear the way for a democratic confederation of all small nations which are not tormented by the dogma of national sovereignty.”⁶

In the meantime, Jászi continued to be a member of Oberlin College's faculty and published his best-known English language book in 1929, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*. Early in 1935, Jászi visited Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia. It became evident to him that the new states were plagued by the same problems as the old Habsburg Monarchy. This only helped to reinforce Jászi's conviction that the only possible solution to the region's problems was a federal structure which combined cultural and administrative autonomy.

Although every economic rapprochement and extension of free trade would have resulted naturally in a better division of labor and consequently in a more natural exchange of products, the mere application of such a proposal would not solve the immediate problems of these countries according to Jászi. He states that only a general European Customs union could dispose of the surplus of the agrarian states.

Only a regenerated agriculture could bring about a higher standard of living of the population. This would be a necessary step for the union of the

Danubian countries in the form of a confederation. Jászi was being more realistic and critical in the mid-1930s than he had been in the immediate post-World War I era. He saw that certain economic steps need to be taken before political aspirations could be attained. He went on to say that only a prosperous and cultured peasantry could break down agricultural and industrial monopolies which were closing down the door to Danubian cooperation. This regeneration of agriculture that should lead to a political cooperation which be the main task of the Danubian countries.

The economic and political expropriation of the former ruling classes in Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia creates an unbridgeable gap between past and present. The tension was further aggravated by the competition between middle classes of the ruling nations, and those of the national minorities. This was only partly due to distrust between the various races; it was caused to a large extent by the general economic crisis. The disastrous effects of economic nationalism and the continuously growing war budget made the future outlook of the middle class practically desperate.

He went on to discuss each of the succession states and why the Treaty of Trianon was cruel and unjust.⁷ He stated that it naturally has led to discontent among the various nations and could be alleviated only if they would joined together in a confederation where they would be working for the common good rather than against each other. The economic crisis of the Danubian states was just too great to be left alone.

Jászi divides the Danubian states into two categories – those that were agricultural (Rumania, Hungary, Yugoslavia) and those that were industrial (Austria, Czechoslovakia). The first three suffered overpopulation which led to an immediate agricultural crisis. A backward agriculture meant a backward consumption of industrial commodities. The general poverty of the countries prevented this from changing and, hence, the never-changing spiral further into poverty. Austria, on the other hand, had a highly developed industry. However, it lost its markets in the aftermath of dismemberment and had to contend with competition from the artificially fostered industries of the neighboring states. Even Czechoslovakia, whom Jászi calls “the rich heiress of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy”⁸ because she inherited the most productive agricultural territories and industrial resources, also, was living under increasingly adverse economic conditions because of taxation and increased military expenditures.

Jászi, also, noted problems with infrastructure such as the deterioration of the possibilities for cheap transportation. This occurred because the new governments often changed the routes of transportation. For example, main lines were converted into secondary ones and *vice versa*. Also, the states in

their intensified rivalries introduced competitive traffic systems and measures which impeded movement between states. Therefore, the unity of the Carpathian basin was lost and the succession states suffered because they refused to cooperate in any coalition that resembled their Habsburg past. Jászi saw this as foolhardy and contrary to progress.

In the beginning of World War II, Jászi again pushed forward the idea of a Danubian confederation. He talked about a Czech friend of peasant origin who expressed the hope that the liberated peasants of the danger zone would create democratic federations among themselves; Danubian, Balkan, and Baltic federations would put an end to the prevailing system. He concluded by saying, "Such democratic federations would mean the isolation of the great capitalistic states which without vassals and exploited colonies could not uphold their traditional diplomatic rivalries and militaristic intrigues."⁹

The problem, according to Jászi, was that the leading statesmen of the victorious Entente had not had conception of the fundamental nature of the problem. Their only concern was how to keep humiliated Germany subservient. Therefore, the liberation of the various nationality groups was carried out on the basis of power politics establishing artificial frontiers, new strategic lines, new dominant and subjected national groups as chattel and pawns in the imperialistic game. Instead of furthering the beginnings of a new democratic life, the conservative statesmen of Europe supported the former oligarchies.¹⁰

However, a democratic federal structure could provide the necessary stability. The prerequisite of such a plan would be a genuine Bill of Rights, complete national autonomy for all the minority groups inside the various states, the final elimination of the feudal estates and the creation of a progressive and cooperative peasantry which alone could eliminate the problem of overpopulation and slow starvation. Again as in the 1930s, Jászi emphasizes building things up upon the peasantry. His maxim being that a prosperous, contented peasantry lays a foundation for a country with similar characteristics.

As time progressed, Jászi became more strident in his opinions. He states that the only solution to put an end to Danubian anarchy is the establishment of a confederation. It is necessary as a bulwark against new imperialistic aggressions. However, he believes that a Danubian federation under the protection and leadership of a democratic world union would not solve the problem of a permanent peace. "The burning problem of the Danube and the Balkans cannot be solved without the cooperation of an enlightened and friendly Germany."¹¹

Jászi encouraged the creation of a Danubian and Balkan federation (possibly two separate federations) under the leadership of the federal union of the victorious powers which could carry out with unhesitating energy the

process of political democratization, the expropriation of feudal classes, and the creation of a modern cooperative peasant economy. Again he reiterated the importance of a stable and prosperous peasantry.

He also advocated the breakup of the existing countries into smaller units like Slovakia and Croatia. This is especially relevant in our day since these groups are advocating their freedom and discussing the dissolution of a centralized federal structure in favor of a looser confederation. In a way, Jászi was quite prophetic because he offered a solution before the problem even occurred.

In 1945 the nations of Eastern Europe embarked on a policy of expelling undesirable minorities from their territories. The policy was pursued even by Czechoslovakia – a state which Jászi had admired in the interwar period. These events deeply affected Jászi and he condemned them. To him these policies destroyed the spirit of cooperation which would have been absolutely essential for a federal reorganization of the region. He concluded that the expulsion of Hungarians from Slovakia and the Germans from everywhere, destroyed hopes for a Danubian and Balkan Confederation.

In the post World War II era he attained a better opinion of his co-nationals and describes them as a sober, hard-working, extremely intelligent ethnic group. He stated that it was their situation that impeded them. He went on to say that the Hungarian people at their first fully free elections proved that their natural intelligence and sense of decency showed them the correct political path. He saw no reason if political freedom lasted for them to behave differently from their counterparts.

Jászi continued to speak out against injustices against minorities and condemned the expulsion of 420,000 Germans from Hungary in 1945.¹² In the spring of 1945 Jászi urged the Danubian countries to get rid of certain nationalistic and class prejudices and work in the interests of solidarity. A system of local federations needed to be developed, he said, as a part of a larger European Union. In effect, he was predicting the events of 1992. His ideal aim was the federal organization of the whole Danube–Vistula region consisting of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Greece, and Bulgaria. It would include a territory of about 540,000 square miles with more than 100 million inhabitants.¹³

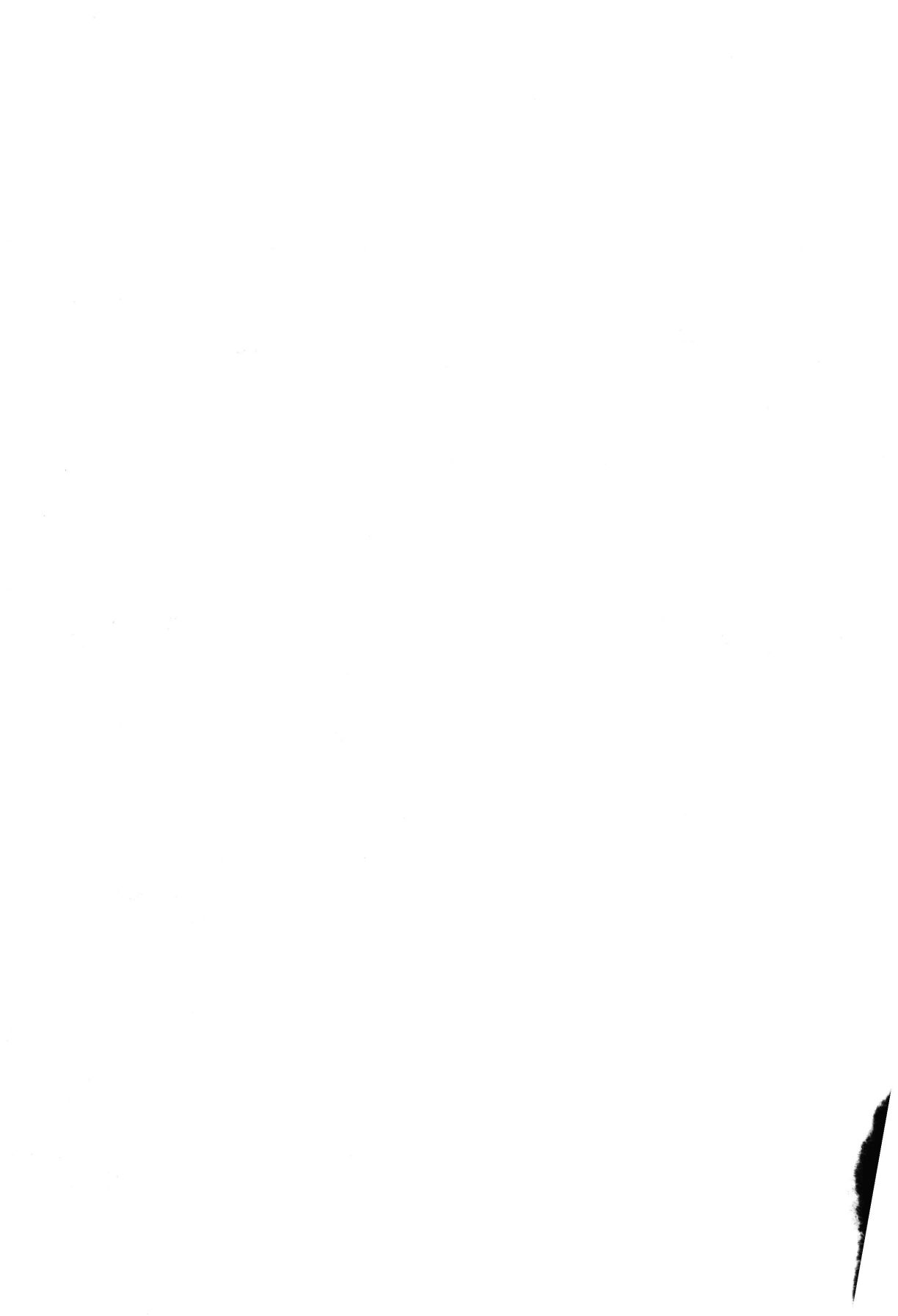
In reintroducing his idea of “Eastern Switzerland”, Jászi stated that human nature is essentially the same everywhere and an economically reconstructed and federated Central-Eastern Europe would lead inevitably to the solution of the nationality problem.

Notes

1. Oscar Jaszi, "Dismembered Hungary and Peace in Central Europe," *Foreign Affairs*, December 1923, p. 273.
2. Oscar Jaszi, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Hungary*, Howard Fertig, New York, 1969, (1st edition, P.S. King and Son, 1924), p. x.
3. Oscar Jaszi, "Dismembered Hungary and Peace in Central Europe," *Foreign Affairs*, December 1923, p. 281.
4. Oscar Jaszi, "Dismembered Hungary and Peace in Central Europe," p. 272.
5. Oscar Jaszi, "Dismembered Hungary and Peace in Central Europe," pp. 280-281.
6. Oscar Jaszi, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Hungary*, p. xi.
7. Oscar Jaszi, "Neglected Aspects of the Danubian Drama," *Slavonic Review*, July 1935, p. 65.
8. Oscar Jaszi, "The Economic Nationalism of the Danubian States," p. 109.
9. Oscar Jaszi, "The Future of Danubia," *Journal of Central European Affairs*, July 1941, p. 128.
10. Oscar Jaszi, "The Future of Danubia," p. 129.
11. *Ibid*, p. 142.
12. Oscar Jaszi, "Choices in Hungary," p. 463.
13. Oscar Jaszi, "Central Europe and Russia," p. 3.

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7. Jaszi, Oscar, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Hungary*. London: P.S. King and Son, 1924.
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Interwar Politics

AMERICAN-HUNGARIAN RELATIONS IN THE 1920s

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World War I left Hungary practically alone, without allies or friends whose interests coincided even slightly with her own. The neighboring states were created partly at the expense of Hungary and their very existence required an anti-Hungarian policy. They were forcefully backed by the French, who showed ample evidence of their hostile attitude toward the Hungarian state; the dealings of the Károlyi government with Franchet d'Esperey in November 1918 or those of the Berinkey government, but practically of Károlyi's, in March 1919 with Lt. Colonel Vyx bear evidence of the unfriendly behavior of the French. The notorious Vyx memorandum, which eventually brought down the Berinkey government and made Károlyi appoint a government of Social Democrats and Communists on March 21, 1919 surprised even the allies of the French as well. Nicholas Roosevelt, a member of the Coolidge mission who arrived in Hungary on March 17 and who later became the U.S. minister to Hungary between 1930 and 1933, states in his memoirs that he was asked to attend a meeting between Vyx and Károlyi in the Royal Palace. He declares that he knew nothing about the memorandum because poor telecommunication facilities kept him from getting in touch with Professor Coolidge in Vienna, who acted as a contact between him and the American peace delegation in Paris. "It was not until a year later that I learned how this astonishing decision had been put across," he continues his recollections.¹ It turned out that Professor Charles Seymour and Professor Day of Cornell, as members of the subcommittee of the Paris Peace Conference concerned with the study of the Romanian affairs, received from the French a proposal to change the armistice line in Transylvania. They thought it too important to be approved by themselves and suggested the Supreme Council decide the question. A few days later General Tasker H. Bliss, the American representative on the Supreme Council, asked for a briefing about it and was told that the measures proposed were too harsh and should not be accepted. Still later the bewildered Americans saw the general's signature on the document prepared by the French and Bliss did not remember having signed it. Actually,

notes Roosevelt, "Bliss had signed the minutes unaware that in doing so he was, in effect, sanctioning this action which he opposed".²

The episode, besides testifying to the hostility of the French, also bears witness to the almost fatal amateurishness and indifference of the Americans in matters relating to Central Europe after World War I. Hungarian politicians, however, overlooked these – and other revealing – facts and believed, because they wanted to believe, that the Anglo-American powers would be the saviors of the country. On balance, the US seemed to be the most likely country to help Hungary in some way or other. American relief did arrive in Hungary: the organization headed by Herbert Hoover sent foodstuffs into the country – so long as the Hungarian political situation suited his ideals; the shipments were delayed or altogether canceled during the days of the Hungarian Republic of Councils. Right after the Communist takeover, Lieutenant Haynes, the representative of the Hoover food mission, left for Vienna via Laibach by train on March 22, accompanied by Nicholas Roosevelt. The latter went directly to Paris where he briefed Secretary of State Robert Lansing, General Tasker H. Bliss, Henry White, ambassador to France and Italy, Professor Coolidge and William Bullitt about the situation in Hungary. He was also asked to offer his solution: "As a twenty-six-year-old army officer it struck me as incongruous to give a solution for dealing with such a serious international crisis. I replied that I felt it was up to Paris to offer a solution, and added that the British and Italian representatives in Budapest had suggested military intervention. Both Bliss and Lansing rejected this as impractical."³ The Americans dropped the subject and let the French find a solution to the problem. And find one they did: the Romanian, the Czech and the Serbian-Croatian armies were mobilized against the "Reds" in Hungary. The problem was that the Allies in turn found it quite difficult to control the mercenary armies in Hungary, as General Harry Hill Bandholtz, the American representative on the Inter-Allied Military Mission (set up during the first days of August 1919), describes in his *An Undiplomatic Diary*. The main goals of the mission were (1) to keep the Romanians under control (as they supplied the main force in the occupational armies) and to force them to leave Hungary as soon as possible; (2) to prevent atrocities and to build up a police force in Hungary; and (3) to help Hungary establish a responsible government and to force the country to accept the new boundaries and to sign the peace treaty. Obviously, the first task seemed to be most urgent as the relations between the "liberators" and the liberated were rather strained: the former thought they had been given a license to do anything they wanted to in Hungary and they gained for their purposes willing accomplices in the French. The American general's diary is full of complaints and bitter – and frequently rather sarcastic –

remarks about the behavior of the Romanian authorities in Hungary, but he does not spare the – more often than not-self-appointed – Hungarian “saviors” of the country either, like Archduke Joseph, Prime Ministers Friedrich and Huszár, and so on. The Inter-Allied Military Mission enjoyed an exceptional status in the political life of Hungary: during its roughly four-month existence, it acted as the supreme decision-making body in Hungary – on the surface. In reality, it only transmitted the Supreme Council’s wishes and its activities were greatly curbed by the double-dealing of the French leadership, which repeatedly let it be known to the Romanians that they did not really mean the very last ultimatum which demanded that the occupying forces leave Hungary immediately.⁴ Meanwhile, the task of the reorganization of the Hungarian police was handed over to Colonel Halsey E. Yates of the US Army on September 5, 1919, and he completed his job in six weeks by organizing a police force of six thousand men. The reported/alleged atrocities in the country were also investigated by American representatives: Colonel Nathan Horowitz was sent out to make a report about the persecution of Jews in western Hungary. He concluded that there was certainly anti-Semitism among the people because so many leaders of the Bolsheviks were Jews, but he saw no reason to worry about the situation.

The US Senate definitely rejected the Treaty of Versailles on November 19, 1919, and the American commission left Paris as a result of this decision. As the Romanian army had already left Hungary during the first half of November, the police had been reorganized and a responsible government had been established as a result of the Clerk mission – or at least one that had been accepted by the Supreme Council – the Inter-Allied Military Mission was dissolved within days. General Bandholtz, however, remained in Hungary until the US minister, Grant-Smith, did not arrive in February 1920. The Hungarian delegation was to appear in the French capital in January 1920, but before it left Hungary, Lord Bryce had advised the Hungarian government that it should get into contact with the US Administration as the latter was not bound by the Romanian-Allied Powers secret wartime treaty. Count Albert Apponyi, the head of the Hungarian peace delegation, talked with General Bandholtz several times before the delegation left for Paris in January 1920 and after it came home with the proposed peace treaty later that month. The Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Somssich, pursued the question of some sort of American participation in the negotiations concerning Hungary with the new American minister to Budapest, Ulysses Grant-Smith. The American diplomat suggested that the Hungarian government ask the State Department to participate in the debates over the Hungarian peace conditions. Of course,

the recommendation was totally useless: in the contemporary political climate in the US, it would have amounted to a political suicide for anyone to raise the question of returning to Paris. The Hungarian delegation attempted to make a breakthrough with a "frontal attack" as well: Apponyi raised the question in Paris but Georges Clemenceau instantly rejected the idea and accused the Hungarians of trying to delay action over the boundary issues and the peace treaty in general. It was in Paris that the slogan "Justice for Hungary" was born; actually, an American journalist suggested it when upon visiting the Hungarian delegation to get some material, he was given a huge stack of paper containing charts, maps, statistics, etc. He advised the Hungarians to win the Americans' heart by using some simple, short phrases like "Justice for Hungary" because otherwise they could not count on much support among the Americans. The problem cropped up a year later when Count Pál Teleki visited the US: the scholar-politician had been invited to give lectures and they, together with his interviews in *The New York Times* and other papers, were also beyond the understanding of the average listener and reader on account of the various and numerous figures, references and data regarding Hungarian history, geography, ethnic conditions and the like. It happened on this visit that Teleki met Nicholas Roosevelt at Williamstown, Virginia. According to Roosevelt, Teleki told him the background of the *coup d'état* of March 21, 1921, in Hungary when King Charles IV attempted to regain power for the first time. The former Prime Minister, who had to resign as a result of this event, accused the French premier Aristide Briand of having instigated Charles IV's return because he wanted to discredit the last Habsburg king in this way.⁵ When Teleki first got news of the former ruler's appearance at Szombathely, he was just staying with Grant-Smith at Count Antal Sigray's county estate. The Hungarian leaders were deliberately seeking the goodwill and favor of the American representatives. The US concluded a separate peace treaty with Hungary only in July 1921 and though the Americans reserved all the rights given to them in the Treaty of Trianon, there was one significant difference between the two treaties: the borders of Hungary were not mentioned in the American-Hungarian treaty and this fact was made much of in various Hungarian circles. There was a constant flow of eminent Hungarian politicians and clergymen from Hungary to the US in the early 1920s who were supposed to win the American public's support for the Hungarian cause. Teleki was followed by Apponyi in 1923 and was preceded by Lóránd Hegedűs; the Catholic Pater Béla Bangha, the Calvinist Bishop Dezső Baltazár and the Jewish Ferenc Székely were also among the prominent personalities of contemporary Hungary to visit the US. A similar number of American clergymen arrived in Hungary in 1920, including the representatives of the

Evangelical Church of the US, the Methodist Church and the American Christian Church.⁶ A counter-propaganda campaign was carried on by the Károlyis: the Countess Károlyi arrived in the US in late October 1924 and her husband followed her when she got ill some weeks later. Mihály Károlyi's visit gave rise to a heated debate in the American press and it became a bit of a scandal because Károlyi had been asked not to give interviews and not to deliver public speeches while staying in the US. It was the Hungarian government in general, and the Hungarian envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary in the US, Count László Széchenyi, in particular, who were supposed to be behind this action; Széchenyi had exceptionally good connections with certain financial and political circles in the US through his wife, Gladys Vanderbilt. But the most outspoken critic in the US of the contemporary Hungarian regime was Oscar Jászi, who directed his attacks mainly against the proposed League of Nations loan to Hungary. The American public interest was turned towards this issue in late December 1923 when the first news broke about appointing an American businessman to supervise the transaction. Actually, the Hungarians themselves asked for an American representative. The reasons were quite obvious. The presence of an American businessman in this capacity would attract a large amount of American capital, while the underlying political idea aimed at a long-range goal. Moreover, the Hungarian leadership still cherished the hope of drawing the Americans somehow to the side of revisionism. The loan question was connected with reparations payments and the relief bonds. Széchenyi asked the American government to suspend the priority provisions of the relief bonds during the period of amortization of the reconstruction loan to be given to Hungary, that is, for twenty years.⁷ Secretary of State Hughes notified the Hungarian Chargé in Washington, D.C., János Pelényi, that "this government... would not waive in favor of the proposed [international] reconstruction loan the priority enjoyed by the relief bond which holds, unless satisfied that its relief bond would at all times be entitled to priority over reparation payments in accordance with the original agreement under which relief advances were made to Hungary..."⁸ However, the US eventually gave its consent that the priority of the relief bonds be subordinated to the new international loan. On May 23, 1924 the House of Representatives approved and authorized that the settlement of the indebtedness of Hungary to the US be funded into bonds in the value of \$1,939,000 – and Hungary made a cash down payment of \$753.04. The bonds were to mature serially on each December 15 in the succeeding 62 years and were to have expired in 1985.⁹ The Debt Funding Agreement was signed by Count Széchenyi and Secretary of the Treasury Andrew W. Mellon on April 25, 1924, was modified by

agreement on May 27, 1932, and revived after World War II on March 9, 1948. Besides this agreement, the two countries concluded another one concerning the claims against America and Hungary on November 26, 1924 (it entered into force on December 12, 1925) and one of Friendship, Commerce and Consular Rights on June 24, 1925, which was later terminated by the US on July 5, 1952, pursuant to notice of termination given a year earlier. Previously two former treaties were revived in 1922: those of the Extradition Convention of July 3, 1856, and the Copyright Convention of January 30, 1912.

The reconstruction loan was mainly financed by American firms. The American representative of the League of Nations, Jeremiah Smith, had excellent connections with the American financial circles and partly through his influence the banking houses were attracted to the project. Baring Bros. and Co., Rothschild and Sons, J. H. Schroeder and Co. issued bonds in the nominal amount of £7,902,700, while Speyer and Co. of New York offered bonds for £2,276,801. The total amounted to £14,386,583 and it is obvious that the major fiscal agents were the British and the Americans.¹⁰ In April 1925 J. H. Schroeder and Co. of London formed a syndicate to buy a large block of shares of the Hungarian Commercial Bank of Pest. The US and Foreign Securities Corp. and J. H. Schroeder Banking Corp. also participated in the deal.¹¹ The Italian-Hungarian Bank and the National Central Savings Bank were holding relatively large deposits of American banks, like those of Hornblower, Miller and Garrison of New York, Olehn and Ganter of New York, Hines, Rearick, Dorr, Travis and Marshall Corp. of New York, etc.¹² The capital imported by Hungary between 1920 and 1931 totaled \$488,856,928 and the greater portion of this money came from the US. The oil industry of Hungary also attracted American firms. Standard Oil of New Jersey and the Wortlington Pump and Machinery Co. had subsidiaries and branches in the country. The bulk of the newly issued shares of one of the most important factories of the Hungarian electrotechnical industry, the Ganz Works, were bought by General Electric; the telephone factory section of the Hungarian Egyesült Izzólámpa és Villamossági Rt. was made independent and developed with American capital under the name of Standard Villamossági Rt.¹³ As for the Ganz Works, it even penetrated into the American market with galvanometers devised by Ottó Bláthy. Another great beneficiary of the American capital was the Rimamurány Ironworks. It alone received three million dollars by several American firms, with Liessman and Co. being the most important contributor among them.¹⁴ The new industries were also developed by mainly American firms in Hungary: Eastman Kodak Co. played an important role in the Hungarian film industry through its European subsidiary, while MGM and

20th Century Fox were associated with several theaters, especially in Budapest (Royal Apollo, Forum, Capitol, Corvin, etc.).¹⁵ But the trouble was, among other things, that "among the European countries only the Balkan states displayed a higher percentage of the population engaged in agriculture (80%) than did Hungary (55.7% in 1920),"¹⁶ and the distribution of capital was anything but useful and logical. Of the sums received, 50% went into federal and communal investments and 40% went to agriculture, where a large proportion was absorbed simply in the division of property rights. The "official" relations between the two countries in the 1920s were complemented and completed by the Arbitration Treaty on January 26, 1929, and the conciliation Treaty of the same day.

The relations on the personal level were also good and friendly; the two nations did not have conflicting interests at large and the US carried on a sort of friendly indifference towards Hungary. The charity activities of the American Red Cross after the First World War helped a great number of Hungarian families: the child feeding program organized by Capt. James Pedlow, chief of the American Red Cross Society at Budapest, and Capt. George Richardson, chief of the American Relief Administration in Hungary, fed around 100,000 children a day in Budapest in 1920 with the help of Mrs. Clare Thompson of California. The Red Cross also supplied medicine and bandage. General Harry Hill Bandholtz became an adviser and a friend of many Hungarian politicians and families, while Jeremiah Smith, the League of Nations' representative in Hungary in the mid-1920s, established a Jeremiah Smith Foundation with \$100,000, that is the sum he was to be given during his stay in Hungary; it enabled two students a year to study in the US. The Hungarians, in return, celebrated July 4 every year with orators of high standing; Count Albert Apponyi, Baron Zsigmond Perényi, Bishop István Zadravetz were among the speakers. The celebrations usually took place at the George Washington statue in the City Park and were organized by the Hungarian-American Society, which was founded in 1921. It sometimes managed to invite guest speakers from the US as well; in 1922 it was Robert La Follette, ex-governor of Wisconsin and one of the best-known Progressive politicians in the US, who delivered the commemorating speech. Political relations were somehow revived at the end of the decade, partly due to the campaign started by Lord Rothermere, the British owner and publisher of the *Daily Mail*, on behalf of "Justice for Hungary". The issue was picked up by the Hearst papers in the US and they put the question of the peace treaties and revisionism into the focus again. One of the staunchest isolationists, Senator William E. Borah, also repeatedly gave voice to his dissatisfaction with the peace treaties, which fact made him a kind of hero in Hungary. A steady flow of Hungarian

journalists (who were mainly financed by the Carnegie Foundation) visited him from 1927 on. Borah regarded the US morally responsible for the peace treaties and expressed his hope to George Ottilik in 1930 "that their revision would put your continental peace upon a considerably safer basis".¹⁷ By this time, however, the senator from Idaho had already lost much of the influence he had had during the early 1920s and his verbal support did not amount to much in the official relations. These were defined by the well-meaning, though rather ineffective, ideas of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which Hungary – reluctantly – joined in 1929.

The highest ranking American personality to visit Hungary at the very end of the period discussed – in fact, the highest ranking visitor in the whole interwar era – was General Douglas MacArthur. The American chief of staff visited a number of countries in 1931 and 1932, including Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Romania and Turkey during his second tour in Europe. He came to get acquainted with the armies of these countries and observed military manoeuvres. He went out of his way to be agreeable to the Hungarian military and political leadership and his visit contributed to the generally good relations between the two countries. The 1930s, however, brought new issues, new faces and new priorities in both the US and Hungary, and although the relations between the two countries did not altogether die, they just "faded away". In general, relations were minimal, on occasion downright hostile until the end of the 1980s.

Notes

1. Nicholas Roosevelt, *A Front Row Seat* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), p. 104.
2. *Ibid.* p. 105.
3. *Ibid.* p. 110.
4. Harry Hill Bandholtz, *An Undiplomatic Diary* (New York: AMS Press, 1966), p. 125.
5. Roosevelt, *op. cit.* pp. 119–123.
6. Cp. Mark Imre Major, *American–Hungarian Relations 1918–1944* (Astor, Fla.: Danubian Press, 1974), pp. 84–85.
7. 864. 51/222, Széchenyi's Aide Memoire to Secretary of State Hughes on January 2, 1924. *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1924* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939), Vol. II, p. 325.
8. *Ibid.* p. 326.
9. *Statutes of the United States of America* (First Session of the 68th Congress), 1923–1924. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1924), H.R. 8905, Public No. 128, p. 136.
10. The figures are taken from V. N. Bandera, *Foreign Capital as an Instrument of National Economic Policy* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), p. 27.

11. Robert W. Dunn, *American Foreign Investments* (New York: W. Huebsch and the Viking Press, 1926), p. 152.
12. Major, *op. cit.*, p. 184.
13. Iván T. Berend and György Ránki, *Economic Development in East-Central Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1974), pp. 234–235.
14. *Ibid.* p. 225, and Dunn, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
15. Frank A. Southard, Jr., *American Industry in Europe* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1931), p. 145.
16. Iván T. Berend and György Ránki, *Hungary: A Century of Economic Development* (New York: David and Charles: Newton Abbot–Barnes and Noble Books, 1974), p. 150.
17. Quoted by Major, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

ETHNIC CONFLICT AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS: THE CASE OF TRANSYLVANIA, 1918-1940

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In the years 1919-1920 a relationship was established between the newly created League of Nations and the Hungarian population of Transylvania, ceded to Romania by the Paris Peace Conference. Through the Covenant of the League, Article 12 of the Romanian Minorities Treaty, and Article 47 of the Treaty of Trianon, the Council of the League of Nations theoretically served as the protector of Hungarian minority rights in Transylvania. Count Albert Apponyi, the head of the Hungarian delegation in Paris, expressed a certain optimism in the League's supreme body: "The composition of the Council of the League of Nations is not unfavourable and it cannot be denied that there is... some evidence of good intentions to make improvements."¹

However, the adoption of the Tittoni² Report on October 22, 1920, reserved the automatic right of highlighting minority problems for members of the Council only. This excluded both Hungary, not admitted to the League until 1922, and the Hungarians of Transylvania, from directly submitting complaints to the Council; but a provision was included whereby non-members of the Council and private citizens could report infractions of minority rights through "petitions". These petitions would be discussed by the Council and subsequently acted on, if they were deemed "receivable".³

At this stage then, the League of Nations served as the only effective vehicle through which Hungary could assure the freedom from persecution of the Hungarians of Transylvania. In June 1922, Hungary requested British support in bringing the subject of minorities in the successor states⁴ to the agenda of the next meeting of the Assembly of the League.⁵ But British political opinion was reluctant to champion Hungarian claims alone, and Sir Eric Drummond, the first Secretary-General of the League of Nations, stressed the need for Hungary to use the League as a whole, without relying on one particular member. Indeed, Drummond believed the Hungarians would have a good case, based on Paragraph 2, Article 11 of the Covenant, and suggested that the Earl of Balfour might hint at this to Apponyi.⁶ The importance of the League for

Hungary was recognized by Apponyi in a speech before the Council in 1923, where he drew international attention,

to the difference between the position of a strong nation [Romania] and that of a weak [one] which can count only upon the League of Nations, and which therefore has only one recourse, namely, appeal to an institution which you yourselves established.⁷

The violation of minority rights in Transylvania concerned the League through two distinct cases: the issue of the "optants" or those Hungarians, predominantly living along the new frontier with Hungary, who had "opted" or chosen to retain Hungarian citizenship; and the case of the Székelys, the ethnic Hungarian descendants of the Habsburg Empire's Eastern frontier guards, who occupied a solid area of population in South-Eastern Transylvania. Both cases came before the Council of the League in regard to the controversial Romanian agrarian reform.

In July 1922, a Hungarian delegation pleaded the case of the optants before the League, regarding the expropriation of Hungarian-owned land as "a permanent cause of agitation," which, "promoted friction between the bordering nations,"⁸ of Romania and Hungary. The somewhat ineffectual response of the League was that it would "observe" the situation, and this set the standard for the international response to the problem of minority rights in Transylvania. From 1923 onwards, a number of petitions were submitted to the Council specifically regarding the expropriation of the Hungarian optants' property in Transylvania, and the effect this policy was having on relations between Hungary and Romania. A British Foreign Office Memorandum of February 1923 concluded that, "successive Romanian Governments have contrived to alienate all the elements of Transylvania, including the Romanians,"⁹ but by April it was believed that, "the Hungarians have weakened an otherwise convincing case by their incurable partiality for rhetorical effect."¹⁰ Drummond expressed his own views in a note for the British representatives at the Council on the issue of the optants:

The conclusions which our people who have been in Brussels have come to are that the Hungarians have really a weak legal case... it seems pretty clear that a clever lawyer, such as the Romanian Government possess in M. Titulesco [sic!], could make out a fairly strong case. At the same time the fact remains that the Hungarians *are* discriminated against unfairly by the agrarian law, inasmuch as the law is applied in a much severer form in Transylvania than in Old Romania... While recognising the above, and desirous of doing our part as regards holding Romania to her treaty obligations, we do not wish to appear as protagonists on behalf of big Magyar landlords.¹¹

Both Hungary and Romania maintained that the dispute reflected a violation of Article 11 of the Covenant, which authorized League intervention in the event of a threat of war between League members.¹²

The extended case of the optants was also notable for the lengthy and articulate debates between the Hungarian and Romanian delegates to the League, Apponyi and Nicolae Titulescu. Apponyi's basic argument was that conventional or international law should preside over national law. This was the basis on which Hungary had had to comply with the settlements of the Paris Peace Conference. Similarly, Romania had agreed to abide by international jurisdiction in the field of minority rights. "The Hungarian Churches," argued Apponyi before the Council in July 1923, "are great reservoirs of Hungarian culture in Transylvania," and Romanian culture, represented as it was by the state, was substituting itself in the region, in a "nationalist agitation to the prejudice of a minority and to the exclusive benefit of the majority Romanian population".¹³ Titulescu replied that any international discussion of the matter would question the Romanian social structure itself, and this represented an infringement on national sovereignty. In this matter the international treaties were not compatible with Romanian law, and Titulescu did not accept what he saw as an assault on "the interests of the Romanian peasant in defending the national soil".¹⁴ Exacerbated by the stalemate, "there was a widespread feeling... that it would be futile for Hungary to remain a member of the League if the League did nothing to safeguard Hungarian minorities beyond the frontiers".¹⁵ For British Foreign Secretary, Sir Austen Chamberlain, "this was not a question between Hungary and the League nor one in which Hungary had any *locus standi*; it was a question between the League and the Romanian government".¹⁶

In 1927 a Mixed Arbitral Tribunal upheld the Hungarian view that the expropriation of land in Transylvania constituted a violation of the Treaty of Trianon. However, the League could not compel the Romanian state to comply with its decision.

Fundamentally it was the familiar conflict between national and international law as well as a conflict between treaty obligations and national legislation and between the juridical and political method of handling an international dispute.¹⁷

A sombre Apponyi reflected on the position in 1928:

The extension of Romanian rule to the territories alienated from Hungary will obviously and necessarily result in a catastrophic decline in the standard of government, and, owing to the natural desire of the ruling race for speedy equalisation, in oppression, if not destruction, of the higher culture.¹⁸

Transylvania remained high on the agenda for the League of Nations. Both Drummond and Erik Colban, the Norwegian Director of the Minorities Section of the League, visited Romania in 1923. In May 1924, Colban once again visited Romania, including Transylvania on his itinerary. Throughout the trip, Colban was accompanied at all times by Romanian officials, and his only meeting with a representative of the Hungarian minority took place in Cluj (Kolozsvár, Klausenburg), with the Unitarian Bishop Ferencz.¹⁹ In the same city, Colban lectured at the Romanian University, where he stated that, "according to the League of Nations, the best way to escape conflicts in connexion with Minorities questions is a *sincere collaboration between the Government and the League of Nations*".²⁰ He appeared to be relatively unsympathetic to the plight of the optants, and one colleague, Charles Upson Clark, recalled how, following a visit to Transylvania, Colban "expressed to me afterwards his feeling that the government was handling a difficult situation with tact and fairness".²¹

By 1925, relations between Hungary and the League were strained to the extent that even Apponyi, the arch diplomat, was contemplating a more extreme policy. Lord Cecil, the British delegate to the League, recalled how "he said that his people... would never rest until they had righted their wrongs, if necessary by force of arms".²² However, Hungary had not given up hope of relying on the League. *The Times* of London published a statement of policy by the Hungarian Prime Minister, Count Bethlen, in June 1927:

The Hungarian Government did not intend to withdraw from the League of Nations, but would fight for their rights within the League... Hungary demanded that the League of Nations should fulfil the duty laid upon it by the Treaty of Trianon.²³

It was not until the Paris–The Hague Agreement of 1930, that the issue of the optants was resolved, albeit partially, through compensation for the expropriated land. By the terms of the agreement, an agrarian fund was established, partly through indemnity payments by the defendant states, partly by the war reparations payments of Hungary, and partly by the contributions of the Great Powers. Out of this fund, and on the judgement of the Mixed Arbitral Tribunal, the owners of expropriated land would theoretically be compensated. A sample diplomatic report from this time, however, reveals that ethnic conflict continued to characterize the fortunes of Transylvania:

There has been, in recent months, a deterioration in the relations between the Magyar and Saxon minorities and the Romanian authorities... at the bottom there is the racial, cultural, historical antipathy and this... will not be quickly overcome by any number of examples of local improvement and conciliation.²⁴

The question of the expropriated Székely land differed to that of the optants, in that it did not involve large properties. Moreover, the Székelys were subject to direct discrimination, as the property of the descendants of the Romanian frontier guards was exempt from expropriation. The government justified its actions on the grounds that the Romanians had full property rights, whereas the Székelys only possessed the right of usufruct or use of land belonging to the state.

As a consequence, a dozen petitions were brought before the Council, the first being submitted in October 1925. As with the case of the optants, the issue was not resolved for a number of years. Indeed, in a rare move in 1932, an international committee of jurists was appointed, which concluded that the Romanian courts could not adequately address the problem, and the issue would remain under international discussion.

In late 1932 Pablo de Azcárate y Flores, the new Director of the Minorities Section of the League, visited Romania, and included a meeting with Székely representatives on his schedule. After hearing his report, the Committee of the Council decided, in 1932, to adopt a compromise solution which returned, in part, some of the Székely land and property.²⁵ This compromise pleased neither the Romanian government nor the Székely community, and the League had further demonstrated its ability to provide a short-term answer which only prolonged the long-term problem. For Azcárate, the problem had been solved by the 1932 decision:

No new petition was submitted on the topic, which makes it reasonable to assume that the compromise was accepted as practical and reasonable not only by the Romanian government, but also by the interested minority, and even the Hungarian government.²⁶

However, Azcárate had misread the situation. In particular, the Hungarian government, far from complying with the 1932 compromise, had begun to move away from the League. The following year, Count Bethlen, not in office but "popularly regarded as the power behind the scenes in Hungarian politics,"²⁷ reflected Hungarian opinion of the League on a visit to Britain:

The protection of minorities has not the slightest sanction, since the guarantee of the League of Nations is worth even less than any written sanction. The League of Nations, in order to safeguard its prestige, had much better declare openly that in its present composition and structure it is not in a position to fulfil its duty in this direction.²⁸

Bethlen concluded that the League was, "incapable of dealing with the great and difficult problem of revision," and further,

it is the Covenant and the by-laws of that body which... practically entirely prevent the solution, or at least an adequate or just reconsideration of any problem arising between two or more States.²⁹

The Hungarians of Transylvania continued to suffer the full effects of an aggressive policy of Romanianization, and the failure of the League to offer adequate protection accurately reflected Bethlen's argument. By the mid-1930's, with the advent of Hitler, the whole European system was changing. There was no room for failed Wilsonian ideals in this system. Poland's denunciation of minority obligations within the League, in 1934, signalled the end of League of Nations authority in the minority affairs of East Central Europe.³⁰

The League of Nations never fully resolved a coherent policy of minority protection, and this contributed directly to its own downfall. The League failed to take account of the extreme polarization which existed among the communities of East Central Europe. Although Azcárate acknowledged the fact that "in general the Romanian government never made any real attempt to foster in the local authorities... a spirit of cordiality and collaboration with the minorities," and that, "the Hungarian population very seldom enjoyed that fair treatment which... was demanded by the Minorities Treaties,"³¹ he also maintained that "it is nevertheless a fact that such injustices were neither so great nor so serious as to be of any real political interest."³²

At the heart of the problem, lay the increasing refusal of Romania to comply with her international obligations. In many respects, the League was no more than a vehicle for the Great Powers. Without the force of Great Power interest, the League had little sanction. In the increasingly polarized world of the 1930s, Hungary turned to Nazi Germany to recover her lost territory, and the Second Vienna Award of 1940 returned in part Transylvania to Hungary.

One observer of international human rights had concluded that, "the League System satisfied neither the interested nor the neutral parties concerned with the general issues of minorities,"³³ and if this was, indeed, the case, then one can only conclude that the "democratic" League had failed, and Transylvania was both symptomatic and emblematic of this failure.

A simple *recognition* of the rights of minorities is not enough in modern society. This was most forcibly demonstrated in Transylvania during the interwar period. There must be an active promotion of minority cultures and overall, any improvement will be measured through compromise, concession and, above all, mutual respect.

Notes

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3. For a full explanation of the procedure, and its subsequent modifications, see Oscar I. Janowsky, *Nationalities and National Minorities* (With Special Reference to East-Central Europe), (New York: Macmillan, 1945), pp. 185–192.
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5. The Earl of Balfour to Mr. Hohler (Budapest), Foreign Office, July 7, 1922, C/9534/7925/21, in Christopher Seton-Watson, ed., *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print*, Part II, *From the First to the Second World War*, Series F, *Europe 1919–1939*, Vol. 1, *Central Europe, 1919–1922* (Baltimore, Md.: University Publications of America, 1990), p. 350.
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9. Memorandum respecting Minorities in certain Central European Countries, Foreign Office, February 1923, C 3667/3667/62, in C. Seton-Watson, ed., *Confidential Print*, Series F, Vol. 1, p. 19.
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11. Note for the British Representatives at the Council of the League of Nations on the Question of the Expropriation by the Romanian Government of the Property of the Hungarian Optants, Foreign Office, June 27, 1923, C 11257/164/37, in C. Seton-Watson, ed., *Confidential Print*, Series F, Vol. 2, (1923–June 1930), p. 45.
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13. League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 4th Yr., No. 8 (August 1923), pp. 886–890.
14. *Ibid.* pp. 895–896.
15. Sir C. Barclay to Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Budapest, November 6, 1923, C 14270/13131/62, in C. Seton-Watson, ed., *Confidential Print*, Series F, Vol. 2, p. 171.
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17. Joseph S. Rouček, *Contemporary Roumania and Her Problems: A Study in Modern Nationalism*, Reprint of the 1932 ed. (New York: Arno Press & The New York Times, 1971), p. 160.
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24. From Mr. Randall (Bucharest), commenting on a report by Mr. Elphick (British consul in Cluj), August 21, 1930, PRO FO371, 14434, C 6724/843/37, p. 382.
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30. Edward Chaszar, "Trianon and the Problem of National Minorities," in Béla K. Király, Peter Pastor, and Ivan Sanders, eds, *War and Society in East Central Europe, Vol. VI: Essays on World War I: Total War and Peacemaking, A Case Study on Trianon* (Brooklyn College Press: Social Science Monographs; New York: Distributed by Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 486.
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MODERNITY VERSUS DEMOCRACY: THE POLITICS OF ALBERT SZENT-GYÖRGYI, 1945-47

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The subject of this paper falls safely outside the domain of biochemistry. Vitamin C, myosin, actin, and the like will all be in short supply on the pages below. I am afraid, my presentation will be disappointing even to those who expect a contribution to the hagiology that has developed around the person of Albert Szent-Györgyi, "the militant humanist".¹

For the intents and purposes of the present discussion, biography is but a method of studying questions concerning the profound changes that took place in the organization of science and in its integration with other major institutions of society in the first three years of postwar Hungary. I will try to identify and assess some biographical facts relevant for a better understanding of Albert Szent-Györgyi's postwar politics as this was manifest in the debate over the modernization of Hungary's academic regime.

The so-called university reform and the sovietization of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1948/49 were the corollaries of the political system established in the country soon after the first Cominform meeting in Szklarska Poreba. But Hungarian Science had serious internal problems too, making it even more exposed to the totalitarian menace. From the very first days of Budapest's liberation from under fascist rule, the academic elite (the membership of the Academy of Sciences) was divided into two major camps. The conservative and the radical reformers adhered to conflicting views as to the place and role of science in society and, consequently, as to the desirable status and tasks of the Academy itself. The opinion they held in common was that reforms were necessary in order to adjust the whole institution of Science to the needs of modern research activity and to secure improved access to public funds in an age of increased fiscal dependency. What divided them was, in essence, the issue of the future relationship between Science and Politics, and the role of the latter in introducing the necessary modernizing reforms.

The *conservative reformers* wished to preserve the academic autonomy intact and, accordingly, they could only conceive of changes initiated, designed, and introduced by the academic community itself, within the domain of autonomy.

Impressed by contemporary movements in Western (especially British) Science, by the propaganda of Soviet Science, and also by the encouragement from the parties of the political left, *radical reformers* were ready to allow an increased role for Politics in academic matters. They went so far as to ally themselves with outside politics in trying to impose their modernizing reforms upon the rest of the academic community. Their major concern was with the needs of modern, resource-intensive natural science research. And they were aware, Science had to accept some degree and form of public accountability if a generous public funding of research activity was to be secured. For similar considerations, they would have consented to the introduction of planning in Science, though they preferred to see it confined to logistic functions and exercised only in cooperation with the scientists themselves.

To the detriment of the academic community as a whole, the division between the two groups was further enhanced by the fact that it went along the borderline between the two major sections constituting the empire of knowledge: advocates of conservative reform belonged home, without exception, in the humanities and social sciences, while the radical reformers were, again without exception, natural and technological scientists.² Conservative reformers had an understandable bias for autonomy, while an improved bargaining position for Science as against other institutions and activities dependent on public funding was not ranking among their highest priorities. Radical reformers, on the other hand, were alarmed by the backwardness of Hungarian as compared to Western Science in terms of technical equipment and economic capacity to promote development. Unlike the representatives of the humanities and social sciences, radical reformers could see no other way of catching up with international front-line research than by a trade off with the political power: they were ready to redefine the criteria of autonomy and to assume a new position strongly in favor of "applied science" in exchange for an increased and regular fiscal support towards scientific endeavour.

Albert Szent-Györgyi initiated, organized and led the offensive of the radical reformers. His calculation seems to have been, that he, with a new academic leadership behind him, would be able to tackle any political encroachment upon the scientists' sovereignty over academic matters. This calculation would have probably failed even if he had put it to any serious test, which he did not, for when such defence was most needed he had already left the country. But the most counterproductive or tragic feature of his politics as an academic leader was his alliance with the communist party and his reliance on the latter in pursuing his objectives in science policy, instead of trying to come to terms with the conservative reformers, such as Gyula Moór, István Hajnal, or István Bibó, and to find a solution uniting rather than dividing the academic elite.

I have elsewhere related the details of Szent-Györgyi's activities as the leader of radical reformers within the Academy.³ What follows is just a brief review of the main initiatives and manifestations indicative of his alliance with the communist party. Szent-Györgyi put forward his proposals for a radical renewal of the membership and organization of the Academy already on the first postwar meetings of the Academy's assembly in March and April, 1945. His suggestion was that everybody should resign and 30 members of the "greatest professional merit and the most progressive outlook" should elect new members thus creating an activist elite organization of science that enjoyed the confidence and support of the emerging new political regime. The plan was rejected almost unanimously (only Zoltán Bay supported Szent-Györgyi's idea). But in May, 1945, the Academy's assembly decided to set up a Reform Committee to consider and develop proposals as to a more active role for the Academy in the management of science and as to changes in the statutes enabling the Academy to rid themselves of members who had nothing to recommend them for continued membership and who failed to prove their "moral and civil integrity" during the war and prewar years. Szent-Györgyi himself was elected into this Committee, but he did not participate in its work and gave it no chance to reach any workable conclusion. Instead, he left for the Soviet Union and when he returned he let the leaders of the Academy know that he no longer believed the Academy was able to renew itself without outside (political) intervention. While in the USSR, he initiated the establishment of the Hungarian-Soviet Cultural Society. Having returned to Budapest, he held several public lectures in which he depicted Soviet institutions in general, and the organization of Soviet science in particular as the most up-to-date ones in the world and as the models to be followed by Hungary. In the end of July, 1945, he launched his break-away Academy, the Academy of Natural Sciences. He showed little interest in finding a negotiated solution preserving the unity of the "old" Academy and he resigned from his membership in November. He saw to it that his resignation took the form of a spectacular public scandal: he published, among other things, an article entitled *The Crisis of the Academy*, in the communist party's daily, the *Szabad Nép*. In this he contended the Academy borne a great deal of the responsibility for the catastrophe the nation suffered in the war. It took almost two months of negotiations and all the diplomatic skills of the arbitrating Minister of Culture, Dezső Keresztury, to re-unite, by mid-1946, the two academies with Zoltán Kodály as president and Szent-Györgyi as second or vice-president. Even after formal unity had been restored, by and large upon such bases as were demanded by the radical reformers, Szent-Györgyi could still be found aiding a communist action exposing the Academy to a humiliating blackmail:

it was he who brought to the Board of the Academy and lent his support to György Lukács' list of 15 scholars from the humanities and social sciences whose election in lump sum into Academy memberships the communist party demanded. To make the Academy comply, the payment of the modest monthly support the Academy was entitled to from the cultural budget was withheld. Around this point of time (in February 1947), however, Szent-Györgyi was forced to make one of his life's truly bitter discoveries: he understood that the generous support promised to enable modern state-of-the-art research would never be forthcoming from Rákosi and his party. In February, 1947, the National Assembly discussed the new Budget. It allowed for less than 50% of what was spent by the much abused Horthy-regime on higher education and science in 1937-38. Szent-Györgyi's sharp critique delivered in the National Assembly bore no resemblance to his appearance on the IIIrd congress of the communist party only four months earlier, when he rejoiced over the mutual understanding and cooperation between the working class, democracy, and science. After yet another period of four months, in June 1947, he left Hungary and her paralyzed Academy behind.

Having placed Szent-Györgyi's politics among the factors contributing to the deterioration of the Academy's power of resistance against totalitarian designs, the question arises how we are to explain his behavior in these three decisive years? The evidence from the coalition period leaves with us a portrait disturbingly different from everything we are used to believe to be the correct image of Szent-Györgyi, one of the most charming and loveable persons in modern Hungarian history. Part of the blame for this can certainly be put on the mist of hagiography surrounding this truly East-Central-European character. It is my conviction, that a fresh look at some of the most important phases of Szent-Györgyi's biography may enable us both to do justice to the complexities of his personality and to provide a plausible explanation for the origins of his ideas concerning the modernization of Hungarian Science and of his "Faustian Deal" with the communists.

Born in Budapest, in 1893, Albert Szent-Györgyi came from a "titled" family on his father's side. His determination, however, to try and become a research scientist had been motivated rather by the maternal background. He had more regular contact under his upbringing with his mother's brother, Mihály Lenhossék, than with his own father. Lenhossék, a man of international horizon, professor of anatomy at the Budapest University, represented the third generation of one of Hungary's most distinguished scientific dynasty traceable back to the late 18th century.⁴ In a way it was his uncle's making that Szent-Györgyi, as if to defy Lenhossék's rather low opinion of his nephew's talents, embarked upon the career of a research scientist. Though, as

Szent-Györgyi himself wrote, he “started science on the wrong end”, as a proctologist, his first scientific paper dealing with “the epithelium of the anus”,⁵ it did not take him a long time to prove to be one of the truly innovative minds engaged in the relatively new field of biochemistry.

When the period of our immediate interest starts, early 1945, Szent-Györgyi had been Hungary’s most famous scientist. In 1931 he identified Vitamin C. In October 1937, he received the highest international distinction a scientist can be bestowed upon, the Nobel Prize. To this very day, he has been the only Nobel Laureate of Hungarian origin who, at the time the Prize was given, was also living and working in Hungary. In 1928, upon the initiative of the Minister of Culture, Count Kuno Klebelsberg, he was appointed to the Chair of the newly established Institute of Biochemistry at Szegeed University, in Southern Hungary. He took up the position in the autumn of 1930.⁶ The institute and the research activities pursued by it were to a considerable extent funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Szent-Györgyi was probably the country’s youngest professor in the 1930s. His liberal-democratic views in general and on matters of education in particular, his informal ways with the students, his openly shown contempt for the authoritarian style prevailing at the Hungarian universities⁷ and, last but not least, his outlandish manners (his tweed jacket, his smoking pipe, and the five-o’-clock teas at his institute) made him suspicious rather than popular within the country’s conservative-nationalist academic establishment. Quite a few members were said to have been against him when he was elected into the Academy of Sciences in 1935. In 1940 he became the Rector of the University of Szegeed. From the viewpoint of his career within the hierarchy of interwar Hungary’s academia Szent-Györgyi’s international fame must have been of decisive significance. The reputation of being one of the world’s leading research scientist, however, does not fully explain Szent-Györgyi’s central role in the science policy debate right after the war, and it leaves us completely in the dark if we are to understand the particular policies advocated by him in 1945–46.

At the 1926 Stockholm Congress of the International Physiological Society, Professor Frederick Gowland Hopkins invited Szent-Györgyi to Cambridge. In October of the same year, he received a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to study with Professor Hopkins and Henry Dale.⁸ The four years Szent-Györgyi spent in Cambridge, at the Sir William Dunn Laboratory, had been a formative experience. He himself told his biographer he had always regarded Cambridge as his “scientific homeland”. For Szent-Györgyi the professional possibilities, the progress he could make in his research work were of primary importance. He said, in retrospect, that it was there for the first

time he could devote himself to chemistry in earnest.⁹ But we should not lose sight of other possible components of the intellectual experience offered by interwar Cambridge. As Ralph Moss informs his readers, Hopkins and his laboratory, one of the leading international centers of biochemistry research, attracted not only the most brilliant minds of the field, but also some of “the most outspoken radicals in science”.¹⁰ Indeed, Cambridge’s contribution to the intellectual radicalism emerging in interwar Britain was quite significant. In the academic community of the university town, as Neal Wood reveals

Physicists and biochemists were the scientists most influenced by communism. Both sciences were being revolutionized at Cambridge. Blackett, Schoenberg, Nunn May, and Burhop were continuing the work of Rutherford on the atom. Bernal and others were pioneering with Sir William Bragg in the field of crystallography. The frontiers of biochemistry were being pushed back by Haldane, the Needhams, Waddington and Pirie under the guidance of Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins. Scientific innovators of this sort are individuals of great intellectual brilliance, often egocentrics who adopt unconventional attitudes in their interpersonal relations, and who are attracted by non-conformist social philosophies. Haldane, Bernal, and Joseph Needham were typical.¹¹

Moss describes Szent-Györgyi’s mentor, Sir Frederick, as a politically-ideologically neutral scientist standing “above the battle”.¹² Another and, in this respect, perhaps more initiated source, however, maintains of Hopkins, once a friend and neighbor of James Ramsay MacDonald, that “after biochemistry his greatest interest lay in socialism; his views were quite to the left”.¹³ Leslie J. Harris’ commentary to this quote adds that “In truth, Hopkins had a deeply progressive social conscience though he played little part in active political life.”¹⁴

In Neal Wood’s description

The Laboratory was a remarkable melting pot of eager and adventuresome scientists and students from all over the world. The *esprit de corps* was exceptionally high, for they were young pioneers working and living together on a hitherto unsettled and unexplored frontier. The environment was relaxed, convivial, and tolerant – intellectually stimulating. (...) What better place could there be for the free exchange of ideas, for serious conversations about the state of the world, the social implications of science, and the politics of the left?¹⁵

What is of importance to us in this milieu is the views obtaining in it on the place and role of science in society. For it was this corner of British academia from where a distinct group of scientists of radical socialist persuasion emerged with firm beliefs and norms as to the societal determination of scientific knowledge, as to the social responsibility of science, as to the rightful status of

scientists in society, and as to the need for integrating intellectual endeavour into the totality of social machinery by central planning. This group received with great enthusiasm the marxist understanding of scientific and technological development as presented by N. Bukharin, B. Hessen and other Soviet delegates at the Second International Congress for the History of Science in 1931¹⁶ just as they

accepted an account of the Soviet Union which depicted it as a society in which scientists had such high status that their outlook would be incorporated into national policies, and where fundamental science was directed in a way which enabled it to contribute to the solution of basic social and economic problems.¹⁷

The most systematic exposition of their views is J. D. Bernal's *The Social Function of Science*.¹⁸ Bernal criticized the old scientific societies, such as the Royal Society or the Chemical Society in Britain, for becoming "purely honorific in character, their only collective activity being publication". According to his normative model, the Academy should be the active leader rather than merely the guardian and archivist of science, by undertaking the responsibility for carrying on fundamental research and performing the role of "the general directing body for scientific advance as a whole". In this latter capacity, however, the academy's function would be of a "legislative, advisory" rather than "administrative or authoritative" character. As a reflection partly of the dominance of the honorary function of the academy and partly of the "politically and socially inferior position of the scientist [in capitalist society]", Bernal explained, the academies had been lacking initiative. An additional source of the inertia, Bernal contended, was the gerontocratic rule. This, he suggested, demanded reforms in the overall organization as well as in the mode of electing members in order to separate the purely honorary from the functional aspects and to secure that the academy represents "the active and responsible scientists of the day".¹⁹

Our intention is far from suggesting that Szent-Györgyi got involved in leftist politics while in Cambridge. We may, in fact, take it for granted that the experience with Béla Kun's short-lived Hungarian Republic of Councils in 1919, seen with the eyes of a Magyar gentle middle-class intellectual,²⁰ made Szent-Györgyi highly suspicious of and rather resistant to all sorts of leftist radicalism. His political aversions notwithstanding, Szent-Györgyi may very well have found some of Needham's, Haldane's, Blackett's and Bernal's proposals for a better integration of science with the rest of society and for an activist academy quite attractive. Ideas of national planning *for* research and, especially, the demand "for the establishment of a really generous national

attitude towards the needs of research"²¹ must have struck him as most appealing. And he must have been especially pleased when he discovered that these ideas so sympathetic to him were advocated not only by leftist radicals but by another movement of a moderate, reformist character, too. This latter movement found a coordinator and an untiring advocate in the editor of the internationally acclaimed science weekly, *Nature*.²² Sir Richard Gregory was for "the application of scientific expertise to the whole range of national economic, technological and administrative problems". Central planning as proposed by the radicals did not win the support of the reformists. They stood for a decentralized functional control of scientific research and they conceived the promotion of general welfare through establishing a closer cooperation within some corporatist frameworks between scientists, politicians, and capitalists for achieving a better allocation of resources and for the guidance of the development of science and technology.²³ Their movement was supported, in the 1940s, also by the president of the Royal Society and Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Cabinet, Sir Henry Dale (Szent-Györgyi's other mentor in Britain). In Sir Henry's view, the freedom of science and the integrity of scientists would hardly be endangered "by the organized application of scientific method to problems of public welfare, or by more effective access of scientists to government".²⁴

Even appreciating the fact that both the radical and the reformist proposals for a closer integration of science and politics were put forward, in a more consistently articulated form, in the 1930s, i.e. in the period when Szent-Györgyi was already back in Hungary, there can be not doubt whatsoever that a great deal of the inspiration to Szent-Györgyi's own proposals concerning the organization and role of the Academy of Sciences after 1945, had their origins in the above outlined trends within the British scientific community.²⁵ I imagine he found it especially easy to identify himself with the reformists' ideas, not only on account of their stressing quite resolutely the need of improvement of the social position and prestige of sciences and of their practitioners, but also because of their readiness "to accept the social order as it was, provided that they and their kind were given a greater voice in public affairs".²⁶

The second important piece in the mosaic of the biographical background making intelligible Szent-Györgyi's position in postwar Hungary is the political role he undertook during the war. The German orientation landing the country in the fatal military alliance with Hitler, the shift on the domestic scene towards rightist politics culminating, after the German occupation of the country, in open fascist (Arrow-Cross) rule, and the anti-Semitism that had come by the late 1930s to poison all corners of the country's public life could

never be approved of or accepted by him. In February 1943, he went to Istanbul to contact British intelligence people in order to initiate talks concerning the possibilities for Hungary to free herself from the alliance with Hitler and to secure peace with and the cooperation of the Anglo-Saxon powers. One of the motives prompting his mission was the wish to avoid an eventual and much feared Soviet occupation. Though he was not acting on their behalf, the Hungarian Government were aware of Szent-Györgyi's mission. Before leaving, on 7th February, Szent-Györgyi had talked with the leaders of the Social-Democratic, the National Peasant, the Smallholders' and the National Democratic parties, as well as with representatives of the "legitimists" (royalists). He was therefore in a position to tell his British contacts in Turkey that "except for the fascists, all the political parties and organizations would accept him as the prime minister of a new government". The plan was that, in anticipation of the launching of an Anglo-American invasion on the Balkans, Szent-Györgyi as prime minister would do everything in his power to sabotage the war efforts of the Axis. He would purge the HQ of the Hungarian Army and thus he even hoped to be able, at a later stage, to join the allied forces against Hitler.²⁷ Szent-Györgyi's mission, similarly to the contacts initiated by the Hungarian Government, was a failure in that the response to it had been negative. Nevertheless, it did cause the Foreign Office to elaborate their views on the Allies' relationship to Hitler's satellites in Southeastern Europe. In a memorandum from late February 1943, London suggested that the Allies should follow a common policy that would take account of the differences between the satellites. They maintained, Hungary had managed to preserve the greatest degree of relative independence. Much space was given to Szent-Györgyi's mission in the memorandum, for it differed from other similar missions in its having been non-governmental and because professor Szent-Györgyi, as the leading officials of the Foreign Office emphasized, "enjoys a certain amount of independence and seems to be a personality with whom it would be useful to sustain discreet contacts through proper clandestine channels".²⁸ The memorandum was sent both to Washington and to Moscow.

Due to lack of data, we are compelled to rely on conjecture in assessing the consequences of Szent-Györgyi's mission and their impact on his behavior from late 1944 onwards. I think it cannot be wrong to assume that the information given in the memorandum had been carefully considered by Moscow when they decided upon the policies to be followed in Hungary after she was taken over from the Germans. Quite certainly, the British memorandum left the Soviet leaders with the impression that Szent-Györgyi, having been a candidate for the position of Prime Minister agreeable to all non-fascist

political groupings in 1943, was a person of great potential significance in postwar Hungarian politics. A secret report produced by the Office of Strategic Services, predecessor of the CIA, on February 13, 1945, stated "Professor Szent-Györgyi enjoys great popularity in Moscow as well as in London and Washington. It is the general opinion... that Szent-Györgyi will be the first President of democratic Hungary."²⁹

Szent-Györgyi himself had been toying with the idea of going into politics ever since the early 1930s. As his biographer puts it, "like many people who become highly successful in one specialized field, he had the unshakable belief that he could excel in other fields equally well. Especially politics."³⁰ His participation in the activities of (non-communist) anti-Nazi organizations like the Hungarian Front of National Independence (1942) and in the establishment of the Citizens Democratic Party (1943) also increased the probability and feasibility of a more ambitious political engagement on his part after the war. Moscow, on the other hand, must have greatly disliked any idea implying a massive British (Anglo-Saxon) presence on the Balkans and in Hungary at the conclusion of the war on Hitler. Furthermore, we have reasons to suppose that political planners in Moscow did not at all enthuse over the perspective of seeing Szent-Györgyi in a central political position in postwar Hungary. Firstly, Szent-Györgyi had openly and rather spectacularly demonstrated his opposition to Russian great-power expansionism by publicly denouncing Moscow's war on Finland and giving his golden Nobel Medal to the Finnish Red Cross in support of their war effort against the Soviet Union.³¹ Secondly, throughout the coalition years it was the deliberate policy of Soviet-Backed communists in Hungary to prevent strong, independent personalities with a charismatic potential from coming into leading positions in the non-communist parties. Thirdly, the communists were especially eager to keep off the political scene such non-communist personalities as had good contacts and commanded some reputation in the Western world. The view that Szent-Györgyi "enjoyed great popularity in Moscow" can hardly be regarded to be more than an indication of the failure of American intelligence people to tell "popularity" from a conspicuously great interest exhibited by Molotov's foreign policy management.

It is in my view the political potentiality represented by Szent-Györgyi's person rather than some humanistic considerations or the will to save great universal (scientific) values that explain the special care extended by the Soviet HQ to him from December or early January to some time in March, 1945. In one of our sources Szent-Györgyi is said to have been brought out of hiding on January 10, 1945.³² The Gestapo had been after him for quite a long time. But he was also expecting that he would be arrested by the Soviet military

authorities. When he gave himself up to the Soviet patrol searching for him, however, he found an English-speaking (!) major who had come not to arrest but to bring him "to safety on Molotov's personal order".³³ He and his family were then taken to Marshall Malinowski's headquarters where, as Szent-Györgyi recalled, "we lived for three months with a special nice house, a servant and good food. Then after that, *they let me go back to Szeged*."³⁴ It is impossible to establish quite exactly how long Szent-Györgyi and his family were entertained as the guests of Marshall Malinowski, but the three months recalled by Szent-Györgyi himself seems to be a good approximation. There are indications that he was held at the HQ as early as around the Christmas of 1944.³⁵ His first appearances in public were made in March and April, and he assumed his duties as Head of the Institute of Medical Chemistry at the University of Budapest on 27th April, 1945.³⁶

The circumstances and, especially, the duration of Szent-Györgyi's stay in the custody of the HQ of Soviet occupying forces make a rather strong case, in my view, for the assumption that *the intention had been to insulate him from the country's reemerging political life*. He was still underground, hiding with the help of the Swedish Legation,³⁷ when the main institutions and organizations of postwar Hungary's coalition democracy resumed and/or launched their activities in the Southeastern parts of the country. In December, 1944, the Provisional National Assembly held their first sessions in Debrecen and appointed a political committee and a caretaker government. Significantly, when the Budapest executive committee of the Citizens Democratic Party decided, in early March 1945, to contact Szent-Györgyi in order "to ask him, with reference to the old Vázsonyi-Szent-Györgyi-Supka agreement, to participate in the party's work", it proved to be still *impossible* "to establish contact" with him.³⁸ It is asserted, erroneously, in Ralph Moss' book that Szent-Györgyi "was also the head of [...] the Citizens Democratic Party".³⁹ There may have been talk of appointing Szent-Györgyi to the presidency of that party. But even if that was the intention it could never materialize as he was for the party's executive committee out of reach. Count Géza Teleki, Minister of Culture and Religion of the Provisional Government, was the first president of the CDP, soon to be replaced by Sándor Szent-Iványi. In fact, there is no evidence at all of Szent-Györgyi's active engagement in the affairs of (or, for that matter, his membership in) the CDP during or after 1945. Nor do we know of any occasion when he acted on behalf of that party during the postwar years. Before leaving the country for good, he made his last remarkable public appearance (when he delivered a devastating critique of the government's budget proposals) as an independent MP, with no party affiliation at all.⁴⁰

Adding his conspicuously long (two months') visit in the USSR in mid-1945 to the three months he had previously spent as the "guest" of the Soviet HQ,

it does not seem too bold to imagine that Soviet officials had in fact used the opportunities casually occurring and talked to Szent-Györgyi about his personal plans for the near future in Hungary and dissuaded him from any political aspirations. We may, furthermore, assume that an agreement had been reached to the effect that Szent-Györgyi would abstain from the political role he could have, it appears, so easily acquired. In exchange, the communists were to accept and sanction his leadership in the Republic of Science and to give their blessing and support to Szent-Györgyi's ambitious programme aiming to reorganize and boost the scientific enterprise of Hungary. Such a tacit deal must have implied the undertaking on Szent-Györgyi's part of a certain amount of propaganda activity to the benefit of the image of Soviet-type society in general and of the policies of Hungarian communists in particular.

The third biographical development, then, which is of great relevance in our understanding of Szent-Györgyi's postwar politics and of the particular policies he advocated within the Academy is his trip to the Soviet Union.

In Soviet academic circles rumors were afloat already in April 1945 concerning a jubilee celebration soon to be held to mark the 220th anniversary of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.⁴¹ The invitation from Moscow to five Hungarian scientists (Albert Szent-Györgyi, neurologist Kálmán Sántha, jurist Géza Marton, and historians Gyula Szekfű and Sándor Domanovszky) was announced by one of the four top leaders of the Hungarian Communist Party, József Révai, in an article published on June 6, 1945.⁴² By then Szent-Györgyi had already been in the Soviet Union for about two or three weeks. The earliest known letter from him sent from Moscow was dated May 24, while his first public appearance after the trip was made on July 22. Ralph Moss had brought to publicity a couple of documents of crucial import for judging how Szent-Györgyi himself understood his position within the emerging political setting and how he related to Soviet and communist politics. During his long visit, Szent-Györgyi had or, rather, saw to it to have opportunity to contact Eric Ashby, Australia's Acting Minister in Moscow, representative of the Australian Research Council, and a scientist himself. Upon their private meetings, Ashby wrote this to Dr. O'Brien of the Rockefeller Foundation:

Szent-Györgyi is here. Brought here (this is very confidential) by the Soviet Government to 'cement cultural relations' between USSR and Hungary. You may read what you like into that expression. He very badly wants to visit Britain or the USA, but he will probably not be allowed to: Russia controls all visas from Hungary. Szent-Györgyi is even uncertain whether letters he might write to you or to the Royal Society would get through. He is not

allowed to visit British people here in Moscow, and we have more or less clandestine talks now and again. [...] I have undertaken to send Brimble an account of Szent-Györgyi's new work for Nature, and to get over tactfully that *he is still very pro-English-speaking-scientific-world and badly wants to regain contact with us.*

Moss adds to this, that

Ashby also conveyed Szent-Györgyi's request for more Rockefeller funds. He wanted the RF to initiate contact with him because, said Ashby, 'if he takes the initiative and writes to you, the Russians will probably say they can supply all this equipment, and Szent-Györgyi needn't bother to ask Western countries. *It is this isolation from the West which he is rather fearful of, and wants to prevent, if possible.*

Ashby is also quoted to have written "Russia is treating him [i.e., Szent-Györgyi] very nicely, but there may be a price for this nice treatment, in loss of his intellectual liberty."⁴³

The document suggests that Szent-Györgyi understood his position in Moscow as well as in Soviet-controlled Budapest as one of captivity. This is underlined by his main fear having been the isolation from the West, from the "English-speaking-scientific-world" due to the controls imposed by the Soviet occupation power. It is remarkable that Szent-Györgyi seems to have sensed, already at this early stage, a tendency on the part of the Soviet political management to deliberately reduce or, even, terminate his country's (and personally his own) relations with the West.

If this reading of Szent-Györgyi's desperate message from Moscow is justified, which I think it is, then it makes rather hard to subscribe to R. Moss' interpretation of Szent-Györgyi's postwar politics, of his pronounced pro-communist stance he exhibited upon his return from Moscow. Moss' explanation is that Szent-Györgyi's relationship with the communists was based on the same principle as his relationship with "capitalists" such as the Rockefeller Foundation or István Ráth (a not-too-significant Budapest businessman on whose help he relied in his efforts to provide for the financial and material needs of his Institute of Biochemistry and his Academy of Natural Sciences):

He was 'used' by all of them. He used them, too: to establish his laboratory, to finance his projects, even to work his will on the Academy. [...] Albert's relationship with the Soviet-backed government, as with the others, was a kind of Faustian arrangement.⁴⁴

If we accept that Szent-Györgyi's overriding consideration was to secure "his own freedom to do state-of-the-art scientific work" and that he cared little about "abstract political freedom",⁴⁵ how should we explain his willingness to enter a Faustian deal with a power which, he himself feared as is shown by his

message from Moscow, would restrict his personal freedom as a research scientist? However great role research work may have played in Szent-Györgyi's life, it could hardly provide a full explanation for his postwar politics. If there had been a deal with the communists at all, Szent-Györgyi must have been induced to enter it at least partly by other considerations than his own freedom as a research scientist. There are only two further motives that may be regarded consistent both with the existence of a deal and with Szent-Györgyi's message from Moscow: a) he may have been forced into an arrangement against his own will, or b) he was lured into an arrangement by promises to be aided into a top-position, if not within politics, then, at least, in the domain of science. However disappointing it may be from a hagiographic point of view, the second alternative seems to be supported best by the circumstantial evidence at our disposal.

There are, in fact, quite a few indications of his love for Power. Though not quite explicitly, this is suggested by his biographer too. Moss mentions that Szent-Györgyi found the idea of playing a prominent role in postwar Hungarian politics rather attractive. Then, he continues to reveal the following: "Albert's feelings about this were mixed. He wanted to get his laboratory going again [...] But politics beckoned, and it was heady stuff. Although he continually expressed reluctance about getting drawn into political activity, he also relished the excitement. He especially loved to be praised by those in high positions."⁴⁶ Szent-Györgyi's aggressive saint-simonianism fits well into the chemistry of a successful scientist cherishing political ambitions.

In fact, the task of the politician in the modern state – he contended in December 1945 – is nothing else than the transplantation of the results of science into life. Therefore, science and politics have to go hand in hand, and the due place of the workshop of science is there, right beside the workshop of politics.⁴⁷

The impression that he had fancied the idea of assuming a position of Power is further strengthened by a public lecture of his delivered right after his return from Moscow. Giving an account of what he experienced in the Soviet Union, Szent-Györgyi described Stalin's leadership as follows:

In a circle of extraordinarily intelligent people, all leading scientists, I raised the question: Is it true that Stalin is a dictator? Their answer has convinced me. They were laughing for about five minutes, as if intending to say 'how, on earth, a grownup person can tell such a stupid thing?' I realized, Stalin was indeed no dictator. He is the father of his people, a man of grand style. What gives an impression of authoritarianism in Russia is partly [the fact] that democracy for them does not mean that everybody interferes with everything, but it means that *they raise into supreme authority the one who is most fit and*

*he governs as long as he is trusted by the people. This is the healthiest form of government because there are questions that cannot be solved by discussion. This is an old thing, that there can be no two captains on the same ship. In Russia, every institution is like a ship, entrusted to one person: as long as you do a good job, you may do it.*⁴⁸

The most important thing about this argument is, of course, not that it shows Szent-Györgyi's involvement in pro-Soviet propaganda. The way in which Szent-Györgyi presented Stalin's personal power position is of greater significance as it reveals his own authoritarian stance which sanctioned *meritocratic* pretensions to hegemonic positions undermining the most elementary norms of democratic control. This sort of "democracy" he considered as a model for solving the problems of the Academy too. And there can be hardly any doubt who in his view could serve best as the "Captain on the Ship of Hungarian Science"... He was apparently disappointed in 1946, during the negotiations restoring academic unity, when he had to admit that in the eyes of the public it would be rather dubious if he was to take the presidency after having so fiercely attacked the Academy for more than a year. Even as he resigned to the idea of only becoming second in rank, he tried in the last seconds to prevent Kodály's appointment by presenting an alternative, physicist Zoltán Bay, one of his friends.⁴⁹

The unhappy combination of his personal power aspirations, his unwillingness to listen to and consider other interests than those of the natural sciences, and his heavy reliance on the cooperation with outside (communist) politics proved to be equally disastrous for Hungarian Science and for Szent-Györgyi's own modernization project to create a new, activist Academy. To my mind, therefore, his letter to Zoltán Kodály, from March 1948, was the acknowledgement of a failure dependent on the inherent weakness of his own enterprise rather than on a world proving too vile or immature for it:

Looking back, from a distance, upon my activities in the Academy, I can in no way regard it as successful. Thus, even if I would return home, I don't believe I would wish to go on with that sort of work. I would rather wish to be a simple member of the Academy.⁵⁰

Indeed, if there was only one lesson to be learnt from the experience of Eastern Europe during the past three quarter of a century it would certainly be that there are no short-cuts saving all the bothers with democracy and providing a highway to modernity and/or social justice.

Notes

1. The expression quoted is the title of the latest piece in the hagiographic tradition arising around Szent-Györgyi's person: Nagy Ferenc, "A harcos humanista. Szent-Györgyi Albert a dokumentumok tükrében" (The militant humanist. Szent-Györgyi in the mirror of the documents), in: Bay Zoltán, Gábor Dénes, et al., *Szent-Györgyi Albert. Dokumentumok, riportok* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó (in the series "Egyéniség és alkotás" edited by Furkó Zoltán), 1989), pp. 38–213.
2. With more details on the composition of the Academy during the 1940s see my "Academic Elite into Scientific Cadres: A Statistical Contribution to the History of Hungary's Academy of Science, 1945–1949", *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 2, 1991, pp. 281–299.
3. Cf. György Péteri, "Születésnap ajándék Sztálinnak. Vázlat a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia államosításának történetéhez 1945–49", *Századvég* (Budapest), 1989/1–2, pp. 18–35.
4. Much of the biographical details here and hereafter come from Ralph W. Moss, *Free Radical: Albert Szent-Györgyi and the Battle over Vitamin C* (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1988). Useful complementary information were drawn from László Csernay, ed., *In Commemoration of Albert Szent-Györgyi. In Memoriam Albert Szent-Györgyi* (Szeged, Hungary: Studia Medica Szegedinensia, Tomus 11, 1987).
5. Albert Szent-Györgyi, "Lost in the Twentieth Century", *Annual Review of Biochemistry*, Vol. 32 (1963), p. 4.
6. L. Csernay, ed., *In Commemoration of Albert Szent-Györgyi*, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
7. This is the common image of Szent-Györgyi prevailing in most of the descriptions of his personality by his former students and colleagues. It should not be left without mention, however, that there are indications contradicting that image too. Professor M. F. Perutz recalls such an episode as follows: "An old friend of mine ran into Szent-Györgyi in a mountain hut high up in the Alps. After dinner, he found Szent-Györgyi dictating a scientific paper to a student with a typewriter carried all the way up the mountain by a porter for that purpose. In Cambridge, taking one's student to the mountains as a secretary would have been inconceivable; and the urge to prove one's ceaseless creativity would have been tempered by the sobering thought that after a hard day's climb fatigue might cloud the clarity of one's mind. The student was Straub [F. Bruno], who has been proposed as the next [and, by now, is] president of Hungary." (M. F. Perutz, "Two Roads to Stockholm" (review article on R. W. Moss' biography), *The New York Review of Books*, October 13, 1988, p. 22.)
8. Cf. R. W. Moss, *op. cit.*, pp. 52–53.
9. R. W. Moss, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
10. R. W. Moss, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
11. Neal Wood, *Communism and British Intellectuals* (London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1959), pp. 86–87.
12. Moss, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
13. From an article of Sir Charles Sherrington (*Lancet* 1947, /1/, p. 728.) as quoted in Joseph Needham and Ernest Baldwin, eds, *Hopkins and Biochemistry 1861–1947: Papers Concerning Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins, O. M., F.R.S., with a Selection of his Addresses and a Bibliography of his Publications* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons Limited, 1949), p. 99. Also quoted by Neal Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
14. J. Needham and E. Baldwin, eds, *op. cit.*, pp. 99–100.
15. Neal Wood, *op. cit.*, pp. 87–88.

16. The papers presented by the Soviet delegates were published at the time. With valuable additions from Joseph Needham ("Foreword") and P. G. Werskey ("Introduction"), the volume reached a second edition: *Science at the Cross Roads: Papers presented to the International Congress of the History of Science and Technology, held in London from June 29th to July 3rd, 1931, by the delegates of the U.S.S.R.* ("The Social History of Science", No. 23.) (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1971).
17. Philip J. Gummert and Geoffrey L. Price, "An Approach to the Central Planning of British Science: The Formation of the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy", *Minerva* Vol. XV, No. 2. (Summer 1977), pp. 121–122. The principal representatives of the radical movement were J. D. Bernal, P. M. S. Blackett, J. B. S. Haldane, Lancelot Hogben, Hyman Levy, Joseph Needham, C. H. Waddington and W. A. Wooster: Cf. Paul Gary Werskey, "British Scientists and 'Outsider' Politics, 1931–1945", *Science Studies*, 1 (1971), p. 71.
18. J. D. Bernal, *The Social Function of Science* (London: George Routledge & Sons Ltd., 1939).
19. J. D. Bernal, *op. cit.*, pp. 281–283.
20. Szent-Györgyi describes the communist takeover of 1919 in Hungary as a development "which meant a complete loss of all my belongings" (A. Szent-Györgyi, "Lost in the Twentieth Century", *op. cit.*, p. 5). The fact that his gentle origins constituted an important component of his identity was well reflected in Szent-Györgyi's use of the Germanic "titled" form of his name, a custom to which he apparently insisted throughout the 1930s. Cf. R. W. Moss, *op. cit.*, p. 56, and, for a later occurrence of the signature "Albert von Szent-Györgyi": Joseph Needham and David E. Green, eds, *Perspectives in Biochemistry. Thirty-one Essays presented to Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins by past and present members of his Laboratory* (Cambridge at the University Press, 1937).
21. Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins' presidential address to the Association of Scientific Workers in 1938 as quoted in J. Needham and E. Baldwin, eds, *Hopkins and Biochemistry 1861–1947*, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
22. On the views to which the *Nature* gave a forum see Paul Gary Werskey's "Nature and Politics between the Wars", *Nature*, Vol. 224 (November 1, 1969), pp. 462–471. During the 1930s, Szent-Györgyi was among the contributors to the magazine.
23. Cf. P. J. Gummert and G. L. Price, *op. cit.*, pp. 122–123. P. G. Werskey enlists among the important reformists Sir Daniel Hall, Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins, Julian Huxley, Sir John Boyd Orr and Lord Stamp (Werskey, *British Scientists...*, *op. cit.*, p. 71).
24. Gummert and Price, *op. cit.*, pp. 124–126.
25. Szent-Györgyi had, in fact, kept in touch with his colleagues in England throughout the 1930s. His biographer mentions his "dramatic appearance at the 1934 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science held in Aberdeen, Scotland" (he did, indeed, contribute to the discussion in Section B (chemistry) of the BAAS meeting on September 7, 1934; his talk was on the "Isolation of ascorbic acid and its identity with vitamin C: physiological properties and clinical uses": British Association for the Advancement of Science, Report of the Annual Meeting, 1934 (Aberdeen, September 5–12), London, 1934, p. 293). The British Association for the Advancement of Science was the organization on which, before 1938, "the Reformists concentrated most of their attention" (G. P. Werskey, *British Scientists*, *op. cit.*, p. 72). He is also said to have paid a visit in Cambridge around the "mid-thirties", when "he was offered a permanent position" (Moss, *op. cit.*, p. 73 and 95).
26. Werskey, *British Scientists*, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
27. Cf. Juhász Gyula, *Magyarország külpolitikája 1919–1945* (The Foreign Policy of Hungary), (Budapest: Kossuth, 3rd rev. ed., 1988), p. 303. ff., and the contributions of János Szilárd and Gyula Papp to L. Csernay, ed., *In Commemoration of Albert Szent-Györgyi*, *op. cit.*, p. 12 and 17.

28. Juhász Gyula, *op. cit.*, p. 316.
29. Quoted by R. W. Moss, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
30. R. W. Moss, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
31. A. Szent-Györgyi, *Lost in the Twentieth Century*, *op. cit.*, p. 11 and R. W. Moss, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
32. János Szilárd, "Remembering Albert Szent-Györgyi", in L. Cserney, ed., *In Commemoration of Albert Szent-Györgyi*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
33. A. Szent-Györgyi, "Lost in the Twentieth Century", *op. cit.*, p. 11.
34. Interview made and quoted by R. W. Moss, *op. cit.*, p. 142. Emphasis added.
35. Cf. Kovács Imre, *Magyarország megszállása* (Budapest: Katalizátor Iroda, 1990), p. 159.
36. János Szilárd, "Remembering Albert Szent-Györgyi", *op. cit.*, p. 12.
37. Cf. Per Anger, *Med Raoul Wallenberg i Budapest* (Stockholm: Norstedts Faktapocket, 1985), pp. 90–95.
38. Izsák Lajos, *Polgári ellenzéki pártok Magyarországon 1944–1949* (Bourgeois Opposition Parties in Hungary), (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1983), p. 20.
39. R. W. Moss, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
40. *Nemzetgyűlési Napló* (Protocol of the National Assembly), Session 91, February 6, 1947, pp. 145–150.
41. The most detailed description of the celebration with an extensive day-to-day account of what happened, is to be found even today in Eric Ashby's *Scientist in Russia* (New York: Pelican PBooks, 1947), Chapter 6, "Science on Show", pp. 126–145. Some complementary information may be brought from Julian Huxley, *Memoirs*, Vol. I (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1970), pp. 281–287, and Hans Selye, *On Being a Scientist* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), pp. 389–391.
42. Révai József, "Értelmiség és demokrácia" (Intellectuals and Democracy), *Szabad Nép*, June 6, 1945, p. 1.
43. R. W. Moss, *op. cit.*, pp. 146–147. Emphasis added. The source of the letter quoted is given by Moss as follows: Eric Ashby to Dr. O'Brien, RF 1.1/750/2/10, 26 May 1945.
44. R. W. Moss, *op. cit.*, p. 161.
45. *Ibid.*
46. R. W. Moss, *op. cit.*, pp. 144–145.
47. A. Szent-Györgyi, "Az Akadémia válsága" (The Crisis of the Academy), *Szabad Nép* ("Free People", the communist daily paper), December 12, 1945.
48. Szent-Györgyi Albert, "Kulturális törekvések a Szovjetunióban" (Cultural Endeavors in the Soviet Union. Talk delivered in the Free Trade Union of Hungarian Teachers, July 23, 1945), *Embernevelés*, Vol. 1, Nos. 1–2. (September–October 1945), pp. 59–60. Emphasis added.
49. Protocols of the negotiations between the representatives of the Hungarian Academy of Science and the Academy of Natural Science held in the Ministry of Religion and Education, June 18, 1946, pp. 5–6, *Régi Akadémiai Levéltár*, 48/1946 (Old Academy Archive), in the *Manuscripts Department of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Letters and Science*.
50. Albert Szent-Györgyi to Zoltán Kodály, March 13 [1948], Manuscripts Department of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Letters and Sciences, *Régi Akadémiai Levéltár*, 138/1948.

Retrospect

A SOMEWHAT SLANTED VIEW OF INTERWAR BUDAPEST

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The editor of this volume asked me to write about Budapest before World War II because I was old enough to remember at least the last years. Obviously, what follows is not a scholarly paper. It is not even truly appropriate because the last years of the activity of the exhibited artists were the 1920s and my remarks will refer, as they did at our conference, to the 1930s. The Budapest which will emerge will not be the one some other people of my age remember. Not only do years dull memories, not only is each individuals' experience and perception different, but my teens, the years about which I am writing, were anything but typical. Finally, the Budapest I remember was a small city located within a much larger one with which those living in this inner core practically never came in touch. This was typical not only of interwar Budapest, but of most large, industrialized cities whose middle classes had practically no contact with the lower social strata and those regions of the cities in which they lived.

When I was born, in 1919, my father was the manager of a private bank. We lived in a large apartment in the City Park (Városliget) district in a building belonging to a relative. My brother (17 months my junior), I and our nanny each had our own bedrooms as had the cook and the maid who made up the core of the household over which my mother presided. A cleaning woman, a washerwoman, and a seamstress came in at regular intervals to do whatever was assigned to them. Our hair was cut by a barber and our nails by a manicurist who also came to our home. I mention all these people simply to indicate that when I wrote about my experience being atypical I was not exaggerating. When my second brother was born, we moved to the adjacent building (belonging to the same relative) because an additional bedroom was needed.

My first memories are limited to the neighborhood in which we lived. We were taken daily to the City Park where we played with the children of our neighborhood who belonged to the same social stratum. A favorite pastime was sitting on a bench on Stefánia Street and watch people riding in the special

lane which, in those days, was reserved for them. The street also served those who wanted to be seen in their fancy carriages. When these were replaced by automobiles a new game was added to our daily outings: recognizing the make and year of the vehicles. On the way home we religiously stopped at the home of the well-known sculptor, György Zala, hoping to see what he was doing in spite of the fact that the windows of his atelier did not open on the street. This routine was enriched in the Summer by swimming lessons at the Széchenyi bath and in Winter by skating on the frozen lake in City Park. Once artificial ice was installed on parts of the lake, there was no day on which my brother and I did not spend hours racing around the rink and learning to play hockey. To all these activities, all centered in our small world, the City Park, one can add the Zoo, also there, which we visited with clock-like regularity. I recall vividly how disappointed I was with the size of what to me was a huge wild-life preserve when I revisited it some 45 years later.

Not everything was fun and games. Even before we reached school age we had regular music and French lessons, naturally at home, which I resented at the time, but for which I was more than grateful later. Because our nannies were always German speakers, we became trilingual rather early in life. Fun and games continued on week-ends. These had their own routine. My maternal grandparents came to our home early Saturday afternoon, and my father and grandfather promptly settled down to a Hungarian card game (*alsós*) which lasted until the rest of the family arrived for dinner. The winnings, irrespective of whose, were the first pocket money my brother and I received. On Sundays either father or grandfather took us hiking in the hills of Buda. These trips always ended with Wieners, mustard and potato salad in spite of my mother's objections whose healthier lunch we refused. Church going was reserved for Christmas and Easter, and this my brother and I resented because it cancelled our trip to the hills.

When time came to begin school, my mother was afraid of the various illnesses I was certain to bring home. As a result I wound up in a small private school run by a teacher after her regular school hours were over. Classes were about 4-5 students some of whom became good and lasting friends. At the end of every school year, I was taken to the Lutheran Elementary School on Deák tér for comprehensive examinations. My grades and official certificates were issued by this school. As our little school was only five minutes from where we lived, our world remained a small one. Budapest of the 1920s was simply City Park and the Buda hills for me. This is why my real memories all date from the 1930s.

The real change in my life occurred when the time came to go to a real school. This was the Lutheran Gymnasium located in what was then called the

Vilma Királyné út, but was known only as the *Fasor*. This was not a public school, but one of the two best private ones in Budapest. It was close enough to home to walk to it. This was already a great innovation. I think it was the first thing I was allowed to do unsupervised. Nobody knew who joined me on these walks to and from school, and among the schoolmates whom I joined, some much older than I was, were many who came from a different world than the one in which I had lived in until then. The school was excellent and added Latin and English to my collection of languages. It was also a strict school. Only about half of those who entered with me, finished eight years later. I was not a very good student, but good enough to get through the eight years with decent grades. My favorite subjects were history and physical education. I tried my hand at every possible sport the school made available for us. It was through the school and my fellow students that my horizon got broadened more than just intellectually. I visited sections of the city I had never seen before; I heard of life styles and occupations that were never mentioned at home; I learned about problems that never entered my mind earlier. I got involved in numerous activities which neither my parents nor our nanny supervised. School excursion all over the country, Boy Scout camps in a different location every year made me learn as much from life as from school.

While the school was not only excellent, but also remained sane in a growingly insane world (it graduated Jewish students as late as 1944), it was in school that I got introduced to virulent nationalism, to the curious world of politics and fraudulent elections, and to anti-Semitism and later national socialism. These issues were discussed between classes at school and reinforced the message of slogans on the numerous posters one passed all over the city. These issues and discussions became sharper and sharper as the eight years passed. Teachers were demi-gods whom one did not bother with questions like – why are there no Jewish boys in our scout troop? Mother found it below the dignity of a lady to discuss such nobodys as Hitler or his Hungarian imitators, and father was usually too busy for lengthy discussion. This must have been the problem in other families too, because it was our own circle and age group that tried working out these problems for themselves. Why was it all right to learn Spanish, but below a Hungarian's dignity to learn Slovak or Czech? The older we got, the more problems needed answers and the more confused we became.

Yet, in spite of these nagging questions life was pleasant for people like us. It remained pleasant even during the great depression. By that time we had moved away from the City Park neighborhood. My father became general manager of a large factory first and after it merged with another of the new conglomerate. In both cases we moved into service homes in the factory

complexes. These were rather luxurious one family homes adding caretakers to the number of people my mother had to manage. It also changed my life considerably. For the first time, I lived in a blue collar neighborhood, saw homes in which workers lived and played with their sons getting acquainted with their views and problems. These moves also made me more independent.

Walking to school from such outskirts as Kőbánya or the end of Soroksári út was out of the question. Every morning my brother and I were driven in the car that came with father's job to school. On the way we learned a lot of what one may call folk-wisdom from the driver whom we very much liked. From school we went to the house of an aunt where we did our homework and than disappeared, going ice skating or to dancing school (strictly a white glove affair), to be picked up again by the car to go home. The ride home was usually the time when we had our best conversations with our father who came to town every afternoon meeting other top industrialists for a cup of coffee at the Hangli, a coffeehouse in front of the *Vigadó*. There were days, usually once a week, when we stayed in town to go to the opera, the theater or some late sports event. Budapest was, in spite of the depression, a town that glittered. Mihály Székely, Imre Palló, Sándor Svéd, Mária Németh were the great names at the opera, and the Academy of Music, the *Nemzeti Zenede* were just two homes for the excellent orchestral and chamber music events of which Budapest offered more than one practically every night. The theater life was just as lively with the National Theater and the Gaytheater (*Vígszínház*) taking the lead. Operettas were just as well attended as were the night clubs, well known all over Europe, but certainly not to teenagers like I was at the time.

The depression was certainly serious and hit hard outside the narrow inner circle, mentioned at the beginning of this paper. All the cultural activity and glitter just mentioned was limited to a small segment of the city consisting only of Castle Hill in Buda, the strictly limited Inner City, the Andrassy út and the City Park neighborhood. There were nice residential districts also on the Rózsadomb and the Pasaréti út-Hűvösvölgy regions, but what life was in the city took place in the just delimited narrow confines. It was within these confines and nice neighborhoods that youngsters like myself lived their social life also, meeting the proper young ladies, attending their house parties and going out with them.

Social life for teenagers had its strict rules which I, for one, never understood. Why was it all right to go skiing (provided there was enough snow) in mixed company in the hills of Buda, but absolutely out of the question to hike there with the same young ladies in the summer? Why was it perfectly acceptable to invite a young lady to the theater or opera, but never

to a movie? Why was it all right to go to some restaurant (provided one found an open one) at five in the morning after a successful houseparty, but out of the question to have coffee and cake at Gerbaud's after the theater? I am certain that my elders also had some similarly nonsensical conventions, but these did not bother me and my contemporaries.

Completely different rules applied in Summer. Our family went either to Visegrád where grandfather's brother owned a lovely place, or to Lake Balaton, or to some spa in Austria. On "vacation" the general rules did not apply. One could stay out in mixed company and even go to the movies! Visegrád reminds me of something I should have mentioned when I reminisced about my pre-teen. Father was in Budapest working; mother took us to the country. We loved it because there we could add to our dog all kinds of other animals. On Sundays either my father or grandfather came for a visit. On one of these occasions a flea-bitten, poor, little travelling circus was at Visegrád. Grandfather promised to take us, only to find out that he had to return to Budapest before the performance began. He, therefore paid for a special performance attended by him, my brother, myself, and all the village children whom we could find and invite on our way from our house to the circus. Not all Summer memories are this pleasant. I can vividly remember being in a lovely Summer camp for boys on the Ossiachersee in Austria and fighting off the attacking Austrian Hitlerjugend who had a camp nearby and resented that our camp had some Jewish boys also.

By the time I graduated from high school certain things were absolutely certain. Ours was the best high school in the world; "Ferencváros," better known as "Fradi," was the best soccer team and Sárosi the best soccer player of all times; only Hungarians could fence with swords or play waterpolo; Hungarian women were the most beautiful in the world as proven by Erzsi Simon who won the first Miss Europe contest, and there was a certain hierarchy in the family, society and country which one did not question. One admired Bartók, but preferred Kodály's music because it was more "Hungarian." *War and Peace* and *The Magic Mountain* were books one had to read and was able to discuss, but what one really enjoyed were the novels of Lajos Zilahy. Society's painters were not members of the avant-garde, but portraitist like Fülöp László (Philip de Laszlo) and Lajos Márk. Getting drunk was frowned on, and just as smoking, was strictly forbidden, but a young man was expected to know and appreciate a good wine. In this manner everything and everybody had his/her/its assigned place, which was as it should have been.

Unfortunately not all our "certainties" were as free of dangerous assumptions as were the above. We all knew that the four statues on Szabadság tér (Liberty Square) represented not only territories taken unjustly from Hungary

at the end of World War I, but also the neighbors who took these and who were still intriguing against Hungary. They were responsible for all the ills of nation, country and society and it was inevitable that sooner or later accounts with them had to be settled. The steadily growing integral nationalistic propaganda was reinforced in the 1930s more and more by racist thinking which relegated not only Jews, but also the country's "criminal" neighbors into a group of inferior human beings which made their "momentary" superior position even less acceptable. As Hitler's star rose higher and higher, the revisionist and racist tension increased in Budapest also splitting even such a relatively close knit group as my high school class. Famous events, like the visit of the King of Italy or the Eucharistic Congress of 1938 were interpreted as indications by foreign powers and the Church that the revisionist line was the correct one.

My father was one of those who did not agree with the more and more dominant way of thinking. He believed that between 1937 and 1940 either Fascism/National Socialism will be eliminated by the Western powers or World War II will break out. He wanted his sons as far away from Hungary as possible during these years. As a result, he made me join the army as soon as I graduated (Summer of 1937), and I spent the last 18 months of my life in Budapest in the barracks of an artillery regiment on Hungária körút.

The regiment was in fact a cadre organization around which several artillery regiments could be formed in time of mobilization. Every high-school graduate was, according to Hungarian law, entitled to enter reserve officers' school once called to the colors. Each battery had a separate dormitory for these young men keeping them segregated from those whom they might command one day. In the regiment I lived in a world that was totally new to me. It was a combination of old, aristocratic and new, more-and-more racist Hungary. The first motorized batteries were assigned those high school/university graduates who were members of either gentry or noble families. Horse drawn cannon or howitzer units were the destination of people like myself. The mountain batteries whose officers had to walk just like the rest of the men were the ones to which the sons of lower middle class or even lower ranking families were assigned.

The atmosphere was both super-nationalistic and racist. We had two dogs running around and living in the barracks. Their names were Masaryk and Beneš. No noble could flunk officers' school, but not even the brightest Jewish university graduate could pass. Our officers were, on the whole, reasonable and tried to treat their men decently. They handled us, officer candidates – Jews included – as young gentlemen. The real monsters came from the rank of the non-commissioned officers. They were often sadistic, openly anti-Semitic,

but, fortunately, in most cases bribable. The two occasions when I was sent with an M. P. patrol to find soldiers in off limit places on Saturday nights showed me a Budapest I never dreamt existed. These were incredibly filthy and dingy bars in the suburbs or houses of ill repute in red light districts in areas whose names I only seldom heard previously. I heard language which was absolutely foreign to me and saw poverty compared to which even the workers' homes around the factories in which we lived were palaces. Yet, these places were Budapest, too!

When my service ended, I left Budapest on an extended business trip arranged by my father's factory. I did not have the slightest indication that this journey will lead into emigration and that I will not see Budapest for 25 years. When I finally returned, I returned to the small Budapest situated in the middle of an even larger greater Budapest than was the one I had left. At first sight nothing had changed, except the dome on top of the Royal Castle and the names of most streets with which I was familiar. I realized that the Budapest of my teens was gone as soon as I entered buildings which looked unchanged from the outside. Today's Budapest is, again, different from the one I visited in 1964. I have no right or competence to judge which of the various Budapests was/is the best. For me the little city in which I moved around as a teenager will remain the one I truly loved and appreciated.



OLD HUNGARIAN AVANT-GARDE – NEW POLITICAL INTERPRETATIONS?

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This paper is not a scholarly discussion, but rather a political pamphlet. In many respects it is an ideological type of paper, slightly provocative, ironic, critical and self-critical but certainly ideological. Ideological at least in that the Hungarian, East European avant-garde and their reception are interwoven with ideology – even if their enduring values are of an aesthetic and artistic nature. I would like to speak about political problems as well, though I myself am engaged neither in practical nor in theoretical politics. I feel obliged to penetrate this dangerous problem area for two reasons: firstly, in defence of the values of East-European art, and secondly, because the changes between 1989 and 1991 compel me to do so.

Every expert is well aware (as S. A. Mansbach explicitly expressed in his recent article)¹ that Lajos Kassák was offended by the authorities of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and later by the leading politicians of the Hungarian Republic of Councils, that is by his fellow combatants, from Béla Uitz to Emil Szittyá. (In the “Kuriositäten-Kabinett” Szittyá accused Kassák of writing “hymns” praising Tibor Szamuely – a blatant lie, incidentally.) Kassák was also persecuted by the cultural authorities, and even by the police of interwar Hungary, by the Moscow émigrés and by the communist régime which gained power after 1949. It is also a well-known fact that not long before his death, as a writer he was awarded the Kossuth Prize but as an artist he was expelled into the group of the “tolerated”. This label was the invention of the cultural authorities of the Kádár-era: In Kassák’s case the three T-s (standing for support, tolerate and prohibit, each beginning with a “T” in Hungarian) meant that he was granted the opportunity to exhibit his works only in a minor gallery after several years of waiting and he himself had to stand the costs of the exhibition. (True, he was refunded in the end.)

Even in the seventies Kassák was (and perhaps still is) considered an amateur by some Hungarian art historians, who also disregarded several activist artists, including László Moholy-Nagy, because they had worked abroad after 1919 for certain periods of time. For us today, this is an almost

unforgivable mistake in two respects. One is that in Hungarian public collections no or very few of their significant works can be found. The other one is that according to recent laws any of them could be considered a Hungarian citizen and, in turn, their *oeuvres* part of the national heritage.

Practically everybody tried to take advantage of Kassák and the early avant-garde artists for their political or ideological goals. Just to mention two extreme examples: on the one hand, I heard opinions stating that Kassák, who had arrived at art from a proletarian family living in Angyalföld, the poorest workers' district in Budapest, was the guard of Hungarian folk-lore traditions. On the other hand, with regard to his behavior, he was regarded more Jewish than those avant-garde artists who had been born Jews and he behaved this way on account of his Gentile origin.

As a matter of fact, our generation has also monopolized Kassák and the early avant-garde since the sixties. As the artists and critics of the "new" avant-garde, we wanted him to demonstrate the continuity of the socially committed avant-garde but instead, we were attached the pejorative label "neo-avant-garde". In other words, we were accused of being decadent imitators by those who, inside the hierarchy of György Aczél's cultural dictatorship, tried to defend Kassák's "true socialism" (as well as their own positions). Let me give just two examples for this type of conflict. At the beginning of the eighties Miklós Erdély, the leading personality of the new avant-garde art, was refused a passport because he had been charged with pouring red paint over Kassák's canvases in his exhibition in Düsseldorf. (*Nota bene*, Erdély never visited Düsseldorf. When he discovered the origin of this gossip, it turned out that the authorities had mixed him up for Tibor Hajas who had worked with blue paint in his own performance in Belgium. And what is more, Erdély was told: "Aren't you ashamed to tell lies about a dead artist?") In 1977 I was awarded the Kassák Prize by the Magyar Műhely (Hungarian Workshop) in Paris, whose members have been enthusiastic cultivators of Kassák's spiritual heritage. The Cultural Ministry was reluctant to let me travel to Paris for the award ceremony because the Hungarian writers and poets living abroad had just begun to criticize the official Hungarian cultural policy.

Today we are allowed to speak about anything. Very carefully, though. Partly because many of the former opponents of the avant-garde retained their positions in the new political régime in spite of the recent changes in East Europe, but also because there is an ideological danger that the "new democracies" of East Europe might accuse avant-garde art of bolshevism (cosmopolitanism, liberalism, etc.), due to its well-known leftist features, and therefore might throw them off the bandwagon.

Despite the dangerous implications, I would like to make everyone conscious of the most recent dangers. If in the newly united Germany the idea to have Bertold Brecht off the theater programs because of his leftistness can occur, if in Slovakia avant-garde artists can be accused of collaboration with the police just because they used to be interrogated by the police, if in Hungary attempts have been made to remove street signs bearing the name of the poet Endre Ady, as well as that of *European* thinker and art patron Lajos Hatvany, then better safe than sorry. The interpretations of the notion of “national value” carry not only implicit dangers but as they have become the focus of real discussions, they also imply, reviving the long forgotten debate between “urban and rural”, though new categories are attached to them today.

The evaluation of Kassák, Hungarian activism or even the whole East European avant-garde has not been facilitated by a recent hypothesis which argues that the social utopia formulated on an artistic level in Russian avant-garde paradoxically was realized in Stalin’s totalitarian dictatorship. This is one, and a very simplified, interpretation of Boris Groys’ witty book, entitled *Gesamtkunstwerk Stalin*, but a similar statement has already been implicated by Tom Wolfe’s famous or notorious criticism of the Bauhaus. In both cases post-modernists negate avant-garde. But isn’t it rather that as “leftism is the children’s disease of communism”, so is “rightism the children’s disease of post-modern thinking”? To what extent can we still accept the recognition, which used to be a revelation, then more and more a triviality, that in the structure of power and representation of Hitler’s Third Reich and Stalin’s Soviet Union similar mechanisms were functioning? Can Friedrich Nietzsche be considered the forerunner of fascism as Georg Lukács stated in his *Destruction of Reason*? It was the same Lukács who was once the patron of avant-garde, then the commissar of the Hungarian Republic of Councils, but at the same time the ideological opponent of Béla Kun and Tibor Szamuely, just like Lajos Kassák.

There are innumerable painful questions, inferior only to one question of a moral nature. What is more ethical: to change our point of view due to an assumed or real truth (or simply in the hope of survival), or to stick to our mistake?

Avant-garde art stood on a moral basis, therefore, its assessment could not dispense with a moral slant either. Post-modern thinking is neutral to values, disregards questions of a moral type and above all its interest is targeted at aesthetic effectiveness. In awareness of this, it can be understood that Socialist Realism, which has an effective repertoire, is more alive than ever, even when resorting to irony (think of contemporary Soviet art), and even if the avant-garde has invariably struggled against it to its last breath. It can also be

understood that Hungarian artists like Gábor Bachman, László Rajk and their fellow-artists, in their very effective and truly up to date art, can strengthen the elements of Kassák's activism and constructivism by means of Socialist Realist pathos. *From this point of view* it would be obvious if the oeuvres of those artists who denied their early avant-gardism (like Aurél Bernáth, Pál Pátzay, Béni Ferenczy or the writer Gyula Illyés) or those who have never been avant-gardists (like István Szőnyi) could simply be put in the category of trans-avant-garde.

But what shall we do about the oeuvre of Sándor Bortnyik, who denied his avant-garde past too late, and then, towards the end of his life – too late again – began to reproduce his early works? Or what about Béla Uitz, who never denied his major works of activism but, during the years he had spent in the Soviet Union, gradually became a convinced Socialist Realist? Finally, what should we think about Lajos Kassák who *never denied himself*?

In any case, we have to revise and re-evaluate each oeuvre. But by no means, should we do this in order to brand them again as “bolshevik” or “communist sympathizer” and condemn them “for ever”. However we have to do this because we have been given the first opportunity to be able to examine their works freely. And we must do this to understand their individual motives in their historical context. We have to understand why Moholy-Nagy was able to write that “constructivism was neither proletarian nor capitalist” and why a witness remembered so well that with Moholy's help he could save his parents' apartment from seizure in 1919. Further, why the idealist Ervin Sinkó, author of *Optimists* and *A Novel of a Novel* came to the conclusion that he couldn't trust either Western communists or the ones living in the Soviet Union or at home (in the Vojvodina, formerly Yugoslavia), and why these two novels were published only with an incredibly long time-lag in Hungary. Why Kassák's autobiography – for similar reasons – had to be published and why, the monograph of Béla Kun written by a Marxist author as late as the eighties had to be withdrawn right after its publication? Why Pál Demény (brother of Ottó Demény, a member of Kassák's circle) had to spend more than half of his lifetime in various prisons just because his compatriots, who were on intimate terms with the Comintern, did not trust him (neither did he trust them)? Why one of the most gifted filmmakers, György Gerő could be “saved” from prison, a future held for him because of his communist relations, only through his parents declaring him a neurotic (he was put into a private hospital where all traces of him was lost)? Why Béla Balázs, on returning home from the Soviet Union in 1945, had to fall out of favour (just like his friend, Sergei Eisenstein, in his homeland)? Why representatives of leftist socio-photography made genres of folk-lore, “capitalist” photos for advertisements and report-

photos loyal to the Horthy regime, all at the same time? How come that Boriska Zsigmondi, who had made shocking socio-photos in interwar Slovakia, could be mixed up in the show trial of László Rajk in Hungary? How László Péri, emigrating to England, was supported by circles of communist sympathizers and leftists? How was it possible that János Mátza living in the Soviet Union was able to preserve his position throughout his lifetime (inspite of the fact that he popularized avant-garde art)? How could Máté Major, who had belonged to the Group of Socialist Artists, and followed Bauhaus principles, in the most severe years of the fifties insist on his views even against József Révai in the debate on Socialist Realist architecture, and later, as an academician, “loyal” to the regime, could help progressive art...?

We should also understand, that those who became the experts of East European avant-garde, had partly come from the same artistic movement and they had been inspired by the leftist ideals of '68, and were opposing official art and they were strenuously driven for modernism.

I am speaking about a need for political and ideological reevaluation, but we are still in a transitional period when the future of Central-Eastern Europe remains to be seen. Over all of us who live there hangs the monster of nationalism, but we must be aware that scarcely any of the avant-garde artists were nationalists. From among the nationalist conflicts there seems to be only one way out. Which is European integration and which at the same time equals market economy, that is capitalism. However, avant-gardists were anti-capitalists. Perhaps the “bridge” which they wanted to build, a “third way” is not to be rejected as such together with their “bolshevism”.

Notes

1. “From Leningrad to Ljubljana: The Suppressed Avant-Gardes of East-Central and Eastern Europe during the Early Twentieth Century.” *Art Journal*, Spring, 1990. Vol. 49, No. 1. pp. 7–8; “Confrontation and Accommodation in the Hungarian Avant-Garde”, *ibid.* pp. 9–20.



THE TURN OF THE CENTURY IN THE PUBLIC MIND: HISTORICAL CHANGES IN HISTORICAL BELIEFS

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In Europe, and mostly in Central and Eastern Europe, whose history has been so troubled, historical ideas, references and attitudes have a very special function in public thinking. This is the case in our country, on every level and in every sphere of culture. History is the strongest discipline in the humanities and social studies; the diachronic approach still holds strong, a historical choice of subject matter is very frequent in literature, art and the mass media. It is quite unusual that in our modern democracy historical issues carry much weight in political debates, even as actual causes for political conflicts. All this has definitely contributed to historical thinking, or 'naive history' – as a paraphrase of 'naive psychology' – becoming an important area of recurring research projects in Hungary.

My readers are probably familiar with Nietzsche's brilliant essay on the use and uselessness of history. It is a true reflection of the fact that historical orientation has long roots in Europe, although it has taken various forms, functions and contents over the years. At the time of turbulent historical changes, historical thoughts and evaluations also undergo dramatic changes in their role and contents. What I am saying holds true even if we know and we feel that our thinking about society, nations and their history carries knowledge, premises and prejudices even that go back to the distant past.

My colleagues and I have been conducting repeated surveys in the field for over twenty years, using extensive samples and intensive case studies. Selecting from among the data available, let me touch upon the findings of three surveys. The first dates back to 1971, the second to 1981; the third project was launched in 1990 following the usual rhythm of ten years. The focus of attention has not been the turn of the century only, but the whole process of 20th century modern history, into which the evaluation of the turn of the century is embedded.

1. Even if party propaganda, history teaching and historical sciences gave a one-sided view of 20th century Hungarian developments for a very long time, national and family experiences were not forgotten, as they always modified the picture of the past and were available also for empirical social sciences.

Our first extensive cognitive investigations were carried out in 1971. That it was not simply an isolated initiative, is best proved by a parallel survey of public knowledge, that collected harder data to point out the limits of the Hungarian people's information and learning, both in its elements and in its totality. The research also showed the less striking differences of knowledge between secondary school graduates and the less educated. We, however, concentrated our attention on the more subjective world of often completely ungrounded historical theories and second-hand experience, on the softer data of attitudes reflecting and producing prejudices. Our starting point was the paradoxical, but conclusively proven fact that people may have opinions, notions and attitudes bridging the gaps of their factual knowledge, stereotypes replacing information, or even excluding it even if they lack very basic knowledge.

Our investigations in 1971 and later, went back to the turn of the century only. This choice had several explanations. One of the reasons was that the adult population of the country was questioned about historical periods of which they had living memories in the family or personal experience, periods that could be contrasted with the theses of official history codified by textbooks. This early research project had the term "genealogy" in its title, which might be somewhat misleading, as the focus of attention was not the history of individual families, nor was it people's personal opinion about their own fate. What we were trying to find out was the relationship between personal and social history. And this is another reason for limiting the time perspective of the project, as we intended to study the evaluation of periods that define contemporary conditions, that can be and should be seen in totality with the present of which they represent the precedents. We were interested in the past as the road leading to the present. This road had so many ups and downs, twists and turns that it is not easy to cram into the inevitably simplifying subjective perspective of the world.

The 1971 survey was the first and for quite a few years the only investigation of how the Trianon Peace Treaty was assessed in Hungary.

As part of the peace treaties after World War I, the Trianon Peace Treaty gave Hungary its independence from Austria by disannexing two thirds of its historical territories and large numbers of ethnic Hungarians from the motherland. State and economic frameworks of many centuries were thus broken. This political change contributed to Hungary's political extremes and the drive that those territories should be obtained again. This was the main reason for the country siding with Germany and Italy before and during World War II, which in turn resulted in further losses. After the war the borders were reaffirmed, tensions concerning ethnic minorities in neighbouring states were concealed by the slogan of "proletarian internationalism" for many years.

Trianon is the keystone of eras, is a symbol, reason for new eras, and is also a taboo already for Harkai Schiller and others, for the first wave of opinion research in 1945/48, for the historians of the 1950s and 1960s. It was considered seriously only in the 1980s, thanks to the many efforts of scholars and writers. Members of a national representative sample were asked to judge the effects of this historical turning point on three generations of their families. Over 70% said that their families had been very bitter about Trianon. It is not so much the emotional content but rather the open admission of this fact that strikes one. In a country where nationalism and revisionism had been regarded as literally a charge of murder, a statement like that was not just open negation of official claims, but recalled the fresh memories of threats and dangers. We even suspected that there had been a fault in the method of our investigation, that perhaps the answer offered in the questionnaire suggested a comfortable "yes", or in other words, the reply was not carefully considered.

That the finding is not simply due to a methodological error is proved by three different arguments. One is the reaction to a series of answers in the same project. Over 50% of the national representative sample rejected the fact that their families did not approve of the reannexation of Transylvania and Upper Hungary. In this formulation of the problem, interviewees were expected to say "no" in order to express the same idea. In this case it is obviously not a question of giving a comfortable answer, as the strikingly consistent finding is the result of an intellectual challenge. It was in the groups of intellectuals and peasants that Trianon caused greater than average resentment, whereas office workers and skilled workers were less aggrieved. In general, however, intellectuals are not usually more conforming than office workers, and the differences between answers by peasants and skilled workers are due to their dissimilar social and political traditions.

The third argument is to be found in research findings concerning the interpretation of the Hungarian nation. An investigation using a national representative sample in 1973 and a layered random sample in 1975 reflected a strange contradiction of the interpretation and criteria of the notion of the Hungarian nation. Over 45% of the national representative sample said that Hungarians living in neighbouring countries belonged to the nation, although only 21% said that national minorities living in Hungary belonged to a nation other than Hungarian, and only 24% thought that those Hungarians who had decided to emigrate to the west also formed part of the nation.

What we see here is logically quite incoherent, which is an expression of sympathy with Hungarians disannexed through Trianon.

It is a feeling of national belonging that tries to defy the historically developed situation. People living in rural areas and the older generations said

more frequently that Hungarians in neighbouring countries belonged to the nation. These are not undifferentiated general tendencies however: the 1975 investigation based on layered random samples revealed a polarization of adult workers and university students, the former claiming the above view least frequently, whereas the latter saying it much more often.

Another 1981 research project, to be quoted later again, found that primary and secondary school students coming from upper-middle class social and family background and having the best school results were much more sensitive to this interpretation of the nation than their peers from different backgrounds, less prestigious schools and with less outstanding school results.

All this has a number of important lessons. Firstly, in the stifled and choking atmosphere of East-Central Europe, the youngest generations are still sensitive to national issues, to emotional and theoretical conflicts effecting the future of countries and peoples. Secondly, in spite of the negative political atmosphere, the situation was not so stifling as to prevent asking questions, getting answers, measuring and forecasting clearly outlined social trends in this very delicate matter of nations.

Let us return to the starting question of the research undertaken 20 years ago on how the history of the 20th century was viewed from the double perspective of the family and the society. From the large number of data, two strongly interlinked tendencies seem to stand out. On the one hand, there is a strong consistency in judging a period, its characteristics, figures, general social situation and the family. Despite all the richness of points of view of the assessment, the general character of the picture defines the image of each period. On the other hand, the evaluation and judgement of eras are interrelated, they are the outcome of comparisons, they hide a strict hierarchy, in fact there is a social development interpretation in them.

2. People have simplified, overgeneralized, coordinated views of the turn of the century, as well as of other clearly defined ages and periods. The stereotypes concerning consecutive periods present characteristic perceptions of development.

Let us take the first trend. How was the consistent assessment of, say, the peace years lasting up to the beginning of the World War (or to use the term applied by Iván T. Berend, the long *fin de siècle* of the 19th century) manifested in public thinking?

One reflection is the harmonization and adjustment of the contents of the many different assessments. We asked our interviewees to characterize the period between 1900 and 1914 in a number of ways.

Those asked had to evaluate the life of society, the character and role of Franz Joseph, the monarch symbolizing the era and their own family's

situation on scales placed between characteristics (so-called Osgood semantic differentials). It is natural that the contents of judgements vary with the subjects and the points of view.

There are different answer scales for the questions of how peaceful (or anxiety-ridden) the time was, how educated the monarch was (or how responsible), and how much respect the family enjoyed at the given time (or how much wealth it had). All the replies, however, carry a certain negativity. If the evaluation is extracted, or compressed into a single grade of evaluation, the findings for all three questions will be surprisingly similar. (On a scale of five, the average evaluation of society is 2.26, that of the monarch is 2.98 and the family's is 3.03.)

This unifying tendency of evaluations is especially well reflected by the replies expressing the acceptance or refusal of certain social and historical claims. By way of example, let me quote that the whole sample tended to accept that "between 1900 and 1914, Hungary was an industrially underdeveloped country" (4.51) and tended to reject the claim that "between 1900 and 1914, industry in Hungary developed at a fast rate" (2.60). The example may, perhaps, show how great and strong a role the consistence of evaluations play in providing missing information, or even in defying factual information. The industrial development of the country could be a question of perspectives, but it is a positive fact at the turn of the century that the rate of industrial development was remarkably fast. Similar examples can be quoted from other areas as well, from the assessment of the national issue among other things. It was mostly accepted that "between 1900 and 1914, our country suffered from Austrian oppression" (4.32), whereas it was mostly rejected that "between 1900 and 1914, Hungarians played the role they deserved among the nationalities living along the Danube" (2.84).

In addition to related contents, another aspect of the consistence of evaluations is the concurrence of judgements, their correlation in a statistical sense. The persons and groups that saw the period concerned more positively in one respect, did so also in another; and those who had more reservations in a certain aspect, tended to express it concerning a different issue as well. Among the hard social and demographic variables, the role of age proved to be very significant: older interviewees had a more favourable opinion of the turn of the century than did those in their thirties, or in even younger age-groups. Social and occupational factors are not to be overlooked either, as skilled workers proved to be more critical of the given period of the past. In a few areas, intellectuals are also more critical than those with less education, for example, in their view of the monarch. Among the softer variables of attitudes, the role of a declared interest in politics was quite clear

in 1971. In that monolithical period, a declaration of being interested in politics meant a political commitment to the regime. And the interest in politics occurred together with a more critical assessment of the turn of the century. What is truly surprising is that it was more so from the point of the family than from that of social history. To put it in another way, those who emphasized their political commitment saw their own families in a darker light, even if as regards its long past years, than others. A very different approach, using different methodological devices as well, could be used to check the validity of the finding. We have elaborated and applied for the purpose the so-called scale of situational perception, which reflects whether a person is equal or subordinated to representatives of various levels of the social hierarchy. For example it is asked whether he/she is in a position to frequent a company where there are general managers; or whether he/she could get married to someone from a shoemakers' family. This reversed Bogardus scale has resulted in several findings: on the one hand, it has pointed to a strong social hierarchy not only in the past, but also in the Hungary of the 1970s; on the other hand, it has hinted at a favourable change for large groups of people from the situation of the fathers and grandfathers to that of the present generation of adults in the 1970s. It is a notable difference from what has been seen before that in this instance, a declaration of political interests goes together with a proud image of the past, rather than with recollections of misery and poverty. The politically committed project their better social position in the present also to former generations of their families.

3. The common man, the 'naive historian' sees modern history as the road leading to the present, thus strangely, he evaluated the precedents according to their relationship to the result or the outcome. Each period assumes its meaning in the general image of development.

According to all indications, the present state (if the survey was carried out in the 1970s, then obviously the state of the 1970s), and the way it is experienced and evaluated is closely related to the perception of the past.

It is a well-known old cliché that the perception of the past is influenced by the contemporary approach, perspective and attitudes to life, which has been known from the history of historical research and has been supposed also about public thinking. The main contribution of the 1971 project was that it revealed the various groups' image and evaluation of distinct periods in 20th century Hungarian history, as it used national stratified sampling.

Roughly speaking, the general trend was that the time following 1957, the so-called Kádár era, was put into the first place, to be followed by two marked periods following 1945, the personal cult of Rákosi in 1948-53, and then the years between 1945 and 1948, the period of political coalition, in which the strong influence of the occupying Soviet Union was already quite significant.

It does not follow the chronological order that the fourth period in the evaluation is the turn of the century, the years between 1900 and 1914, and the pre-war rule of Horthy between 1919 and 1939 is last in the order of preferences. On the basis of the average of sample, the present was preferred to all else, and its historic counterpoint was said to be the Horthy era. The agreement of replies is strongest in respect of these two periods, and the statistical scattering is most considerable as regards the periods after World War II, especially concerning 1948–53. The preference of the coalition period or the Rákosi period as compared to one another varied very much with social groups. The oldest members of the sample thought that the turn of the century had been a better period than any after World War II. It is not necessary to explain in detail that averages hide very different opinions, so much so that in about 15% of the sample, which is not a negligible minority, the order outlined above is completely different. Nevertheless, in the replies the peak of 20th century Hungarian history is the period following 1957 (scoring 4.47 on a five-point scale), and the real turning point before it is 1945. The difference between social groups is in the degree of their preference for the years following 1945 to the years preceding it.

Apparently, these 1971 results seem a bit absurd today. We cannot deny them, however. What we have to do now is to explain them. The elements of the explanation cannot be other than a list of external and internal forces, a relative satisfaction and in part, some self-deceiving hope. Let us take the latter factor first. It was Lerner, the well-known American social psychologist who introduced the interpreting principle of "the belief in a good world", whereby in naive thinking (and especially in the group of those who are inclined to look at the world in this way) virtue is rewarded, moreover it is also supposed that whatever is rewarded must be virtuous. The ideological brainwashing that human efforts result in progress, and that human society is getting more and more developed, irrespective of facts, or at least, strongly selecting and choosing from facts, is similar to what Lerner has found. Following the Rákosi era and the retaliation after 1956, at the time when neighbouring Czechoslovakia was silenced in 1968, people were filled with relative satisfaction at the calm, the modest material prosperity and the growing freedom of the 1960s and 70s in Hungary. In comparison with the direct precedents and with the social and political pressures in neighbouring countries, Hungary could be seen as an island of peace, or as a joke of the time claimed "the merriest barracks in the socialist camp". Research on the national consciousness in the 1970s repeatedly showed that people were unrealistically optimistic about the country's situation, and its modest economic successes were seen as even more important than the national consciousness. Proud national evaluation and a

self-satisfied assessment of the country were coupled with a corrupted economic mentality and the ideological acknowledgement of a balance of international power. This is how the strange fact can be explained that in 1973 and 1975 most people placed Hungary among the leading world powers in respect of its economic development, and that they seemed to be quite appreciative of the social democratism of the whole Soviet block. It may, of course, be suspected that it was not their true opinion, but that they acted and spoke in line with expectations. It cannot be denied that fears, the need for being socially accepted and respected must have contributed to those favourable opinions, but the question is to what extent and in what ways, as the elaborate points of view, the consistence of unconnected ideas, the systematic differences found between social groups and types cannot be explained simply by fear and differing interpretations of social expectations.

As it has been suggested earlier, our survey in 1971 was trying to tackle this problem consciously, placing in the focus of our attention the variable relationship and interaction between claims concerning family history and the more ideological socio-historical judgements. The periods mentioned so far were characterised also from the point of the individual's family. The hierarchy of periods was basically the same as seen before. The years following 1957 were seen as extremely favourable from the individuals' perspective, and all others were thought to be considerably less positive, especially the age before World War II. The turn of the century was neutral on average, and the Horthy era was considered more negative. In comparison with the social description of periods, differences between the extremes of the scales were smaller, or in other words, the line of development was less steep. The difference is slight, but still the years of the coalition between 1945 and 1948 were preferred to the time between 1948 and 1953.

Peasants' views differed from those voiced by skilled workers, proving to be crucially important. Though not so strongly, differences between social groups were noticeable also in the assessment of social historical periods.

(In this respect, intellectuals are exceptional, as they say that the Rákosi era meant a rise for most of their families, but from the point of social history they are more critical than any other group.) The fact that they were asked about their families and not about the relations of society in general, made interviewees consider a number of individual factors when thinking about their families, and thus weakened even further the force of supposed expectations. Consequently, the percentage of those whose evaluations were not in harmony with the hierarchy accepted by most was even larger: in this indirect order of preferences 21% put the turn of the century and a further 19% the Horthy era in the first or second place. Because of our objectives, we gave members of the

sample the possibility of consciously reflecting on the divergence of official points of view and personal experiences in the family. We asked them what they would rather believe when there was such discrepancy. 19% said definitely that they believed what the textbooks had to say, and 27% accepted totally what their families had told them. Those who preferred textbooks claimed that the line of historical evaluation was turned sharper in 1945, whereas those who preferred their families' views said the line was more horizontal, which suggests that their choice of source expressing a certain attitude had its correlation in formulating judgments on history.

4. In a longer period of social stability, despite all changes in the sample and the methods, the unbroken line of development with the place of the 1900s is virtually unchanged.

Ten years later, in 1981, another extensive survey was carried out concerning views of the history of the 20th century. This time the investigation was conducted among students, using a special stratified sample which enabled us to measure the effects of the various factors. It was found that the family background had a strong impact on primary school children's knowledge of history.

Children from intellectual backgrounds enjoyed privileges, although it is also true that the performance of weak students from families of intellectuals proved to be the worst of all. Later on, following a strict selection process of entrance examinations, the knowledge of students from skilled workers' families was better than of their peers coming from families of intellectuals, if their school results were identical. Knowledge goes together with an important psychological feature of evaluative judgements, namely with cognitive complexity. Cognitive complexity as against cognitive simplicity is characterized by rich points of consideration, by their independence, by complex assessments, by a tolerance of, and even need for, contradictions.

We required and analysed the evaluation of objects belonging to more than one cognitive sphere, finding that the judgement of historical periods is a more or less independent field; the individual is characterized by a complexity of historical judgments, even if not independently but as an addition to how complex the individual's thinking of nations, various social categories and personalities with different historical roles is. (Of the sample of about 500 we chose the two extreme types of simple and complex thinkers and tried to identify their characteristics in handling information. Let me mention briefly that one area of the many different tests was the reception of essays and the drawing of conclusions from them. One of the essays was about the precedents and outcomes of the Trianon Peace Treaty. By adopting the national perspective, simple thinkers were, on the

whole, inclined to accept historical developments, whereas complex thinkers understood and applied the different perspectives, tended to see more clearly the discrepancies of principles and methods, of conflicting interests and of intentions and their outcomes. The backbone of the survey, however, was not this, but the field of historical judgements.

This time our method of research was that we pinpointed five dates in history, seemingly at random, but in fact, they were indicators of longer periods, and we asked our interviewees to judge them from 9 perspectives by using scales. The first year was 1900, followed by 1925 and 1950, then 1975 representing the recent past, almost the present, and finally the year 2000 to represent prospects for the future. The average judgements were getting more and more positive, the years were placed on a nearly straight line going upwards without any breaks. The image of development is even more simple, more mechanical than it was in the case of the national stratified sample ten years earlier, when the first two stretches of the century were at least changed in possession of more experience and more expectations, and when interviewees were not quite certain which of the two eras after 1945 they should prefer. A decade later, among students hardly ever do we find any qualifying factor at all. Judgements made on scales hide maximum two factors, but in the cases of 1975 and 2000 they only have one factor. Students from backgrounds of intellectuals are less critical of the age of the turn of the century than their peers, and this specific feature of this group is especially marked when excellent students from families of intellectuals and families of skilled workers are compared. Within a generally negative image, it was again the secondary school students from intellectuals' families who picked out the few positive features of 1925. These and some other slight colouring effects did not influence the monotony of the picture very much.

5. A radical social switch, however, redraws the historical line of development very dramatically, changing the evaluation of the recent past, as well as the future.

Keeping up with the usual rhythm of ten years, the next stage of the series of research projects is due in 1991. And indeed, at the time of the political changeover in 1990, we started follow-up and repeated examinations, which we are planning to continue on an extensive sample of students next year, in 1992.

Understandably, one of our first questions is what has become of the illusion of supposedly unbroken line of development, that we recorded ten years ago. Last year we asked the students to judge the situation of Hungary from eight points of view, at five different times in our history.

Among the considerations there were the rate of economic progress, the standard of living, the general atmosphere, the freedom of speech, efficiency

in foreign politics, the level of peoples's culture and education. The judgements made by the students questioned ran parallelly concerning the five dates. The evaluation of the 20th century takes the shape of a U. There is a steady decline from 1900, through 1925 to 1950, and a slow rise is starting from 1975 leading to the prospect of 2000. The difference between this U-curve and the steep rising line recorded ten years ago is striking. In the former project the only deviation was that the outstandingly good evaluation of 1975 was hard to outdo on the scales of judgements concerning the year 2000. It is to be noted that the political changes in Hungary have rewritten not only the past but also the prospects for the future. It is a strange fact that a less optimistic picture of the future is matched to the darker past.

The above observations have been complemented with a few others. Inquiring about various dates, we tried to find out how definitely smaller and larger powers have "left their stamps" on our continent.

The three special dates were 1900, 1950 and 2000. Europe in 1900 was introduced as being dominated by Germany, although England was seen to have been nearly as dominant too. France was said to be the third and Italy the fourth in this order. On a scale of five, Italy together with the United States scored less than 3.00, and so did Hungary and Romania, the two countries that were also asked about. Viewing the past from the perspective of the present, 1950 is seen as dominated by the Soviet Union, to be followed by Germany, then the United States and less definitely by England and France. It is believed that by the year 2000 the dominance of Germany will have been restored on the continent, the United States will maintain its present influence, the role of England will continue to decline and reach the level of France, and finally the significance of Russia will be less than 3.00 on the scale.

Studying these quasi-time-series, the sample appear to think that the role of our country and that of Romania, a country seen with a lot of reservations, is gradually growing, although they do not acquire any real significance in the course of this century (i.e. they never score over 3.00). There we have the formula of development again, though at a slower rate.

6. The outstanding evaluation of the turn of the century will be maintained in the longer run, being a kind of historical and cognitive foothold for returning to Europe, to the European development.

What can be expected in another year, in 1991? And why does the historical change have this effect? With these questions we are leaving the domain of strict facts and are embarking on guesswork. I think that the present, its experiences, and people's attitudes to them will continue to shape the image of the past, and the lack of knowledge will continue to be bridged by stereotypical generalisations and attitudes organizing beliefs. In the eyes of young genera-

tions, the present does not suggest the illusion of unbroken development. What they see is that there is some slow recovery after having broken out of recent bondages, still with stiff limbs and fuzzy ideas. They think that after the walls were pulled down, the situation did not instantly become clear and unambiguous; survival is not easy, future prospects and distances are dizzying. The past, after a century of miseries and roundabouts, can at least offer a philosophical and emotional foothold. Every one of us sees something else in the Hungary of the turn of the century, in its form of state and its social processes, but everybody and every programme manages to find its own sources, its own roots, as well as its lost opportunities there. Therefore, I am convinced that the prestige of the turn of the century, which is greater than that of any other period over the past 100 years, will not fade. The only question that remains to be seen is whether we can recognize that the historical kaleidoscope included not only lost possibilities that need to be revived, but also possibilities that have been realised though ought to have been avoided.

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