

# The Canadian-American

## REVIEW

### of Hungarian Studies

István Bethlen and Hungarian Foreign Policy, 1921-31

*THOMAS SAKMYSTER*

The Rákóczi Insurrection and the Disruption of the Grand Alliance

*LINDA FREY and MARSHA FREY*

A Woman's Self-Liberation: The Story of Margit Kaffka (1880-1918)

*DALMA H. BRUNAUER*

A Hungarian View of the World, Expressed in a Faustian Tragedy:  
Some Considerations upon Madách's *The Tragedy of Man*

*ESTHER H. LESÉR*

Gyula Illyés' Poetry of Hope

*KÁROLY NAGY*

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**CONTENTS**

**Articles**

István Bethlen and Hungarian Foreign Policy, 1921-31 ..... 3

*THOMAS SAKMYSTER*

The Rákóczi Insurrection and the Disruption of the  
Grand Alliance ..... 17

*LINDA FREY AND MARSHA FREY*

## Papers\*

- A Woman's Self-Liberation: The Story of Margit Kaffka  
(1880-1918) ..... 31  
*DALMA H. BRUNAUER*
- A Hungarian View of the World, Expressed in a Faustian  
Tragedy: Some Considerations upon Madách's  
*The Tragedy of Man* ..... 43  
*ESTHER H. LESÉR*
- Gyula Illyés' Poetry of Hope ..... 53  
*KÁROLY NAGY*
- Hungarian Language Research in North America:  
Themes and Directions ..... 63  
*ANDREW KEREK*

## Review Article

- The Poetry of Contemporary Hungary ..... 73  
*ENIKŐ MOLNÁR BASA*

## Book Reviews

- György Száraz. Egy előítélet nyomában In the Wake of a  
Prejudice ..... 79  
*PAUL VÁRNAI*
- Leslie Charles Tihany. The Baranya Dispute 1918-1921:  
Diplomacy in the Vortex of Ideologies ..... 83  
*EVA S. BALOGH*

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## István Bethlen and Hungarian Foreign Policy, 1921-1931

Thomas Sakmyster

Of all those who helped shape Hungary's foreign and domestic policies after the political turmoil of 1918-20, Count István Bethlen was undoubtedly among the most influential. Prime Minister from 1921 to 1931 and throughout the 1920s a trusted advisor of the Hungarian head of state, Regent Miklós Horthy, Bethlen was in the position to establish guidelines in the formation of foreign policy that would have a lasting impact. His imprint is thus to be found not only on Hungary's foreign policy in the "Bethlen era," from 1921 to 1931, but also in the later years up to and including World War II.

A member of one of the great aristocratic families of Transylvania, Count Bethlen seemed destined to play an important role in public affairs.<sup>1</sup> As a member of the Hungarian Parliament before World War I, he gravitated to the political camp hostile to the *Ausgleich* with Austria. In the revolutionary events after the war he assumed direction of a counterrevolutionary Hungarian group in Vienna called the Anti-Bolshevik Committee. In this position he made vigorous efforts to bring Hungary's plight to the attention of Entente representatives,<sup>2</sup> an activity he continued as a member of the Hungarian peace delegation at Paris. Finally, after several short-lived governments, Regent Horthy appointed Bethlen prime minister in April, 1921. This post he held for over a decade, more than sufficient time to mold Hungarian political life along the lines of his conservative political philosophy.

Bethlen brought a considerable reservoir of experience and intelligence to the task. Having entered Parliament in 1901 at the age of twenty-seven, he had had the opportunity to observe the possibilities and limitations of that historic body. Extensive travel through Europe had added a touch of cosmopolitanism. Above all, Bethlen was a most effective representative and interpreter of traditional Hungarian conservative thought. Highly suspicious of the notions of social and political democracy that the French Revolution and the upheavals of the nineteenth century had produced, and confirmed in this suspicion by the results of Mihály Károlyi's republic of 1919, he sought, as did other

Hungarians of his social and political background, to return to pre-war conditions. On only one major point was he amenable to change. The breaking of the bond joining Hungary to Austria he regarded as irreversible and desirable. Other changes, particularly those involving broadening of the franchise or land reform, he accepted only with utmost reluctance and trepidation. Yet it was one of the characteristics of his successful career that he invariably sensed when changed conditions made a certain position untenable. When this occurred, he would work with consummate skill to minimize the ground that had to be conceded.<sup>3</sup>

The long-term program envisioned by Bethlen was bold in conception: the establishment of a great and powerful Hungary, with the Magyars once again in their rightful place as the dominant nation in the Danubian basin. Here he was at one with virtually all politically active Hungarians in the period between the wars. But Bethlen, in contrast to some of his colleagues on Hungary's radical right wing,<sup>4</sup> saw the true implications of Hungary's defeat in war. Surrounded by the hostile Little Entente, confronted by a powerful alignment of Great Powers supporting the status quo, and enormously weakened militarily and economically by the war and revolutions, Hungary, in Bethlen's view, was totally incapable of conducting an active, dynamic foreign policy. This was the blunt message to his countrymen in his maiden speech to the National Assembly in 1921.<sup>5</sup>

Bethlen's scheme for Hungarian recovery involved a patient, long-term effort by a united nation, and it was based on the conviction that the "prerequisite of a correct foreign policy is a correct domestic policy."<sup>6</sup> Unity — this was the concept he extolled above all in the first years of office, and it was the keystone in what he considered a "correct domestic policy." It implied, above all, the gathering of all the national energies and the rejection of extremist, disruptive movements of any kind, whether emanating from the Right or the Left. To achieve this aim Bethlen fashioned a political system of remarkable inconsistency: true liberal practices were tolerated as well as occasional terror and political oppression.<sup>7</sup> Although the political process precluded all but the "government party" from forming a majority, and the authorities were not averse to the sporadic use of telephone surveillance and electoral intimidation, there nonetheless lingered the legacy of a kind of Whig-Liberalism that allowed for the maintenance of a parliamentary system embracing parties of the Left as well as the Right. With the vital stipulation that the fundamental tenets of the counterrevolutionary regime were not to be called into question, a relatively open expression of political ideas and thought was permitted in the press and literature.<sup>8</sup>

Once order and authority could be reestablished at home, Count Bethlen was prepared to forge a foreign policy predicated on the realities of Hungary's exposed position. The goal, restoration of a large and powerful Hungary, remained constant, but the tactics were made to correspond to the extent of Hungary's recovery and changes in the European balance of power. But as early as 1921 he made it clear to his colleagues that only one approach was conceivable for Hungary: she had to cling tenaciously, if at first unobtrusively, to her demands until a more suitable European diplomatic constellation arose. Underlying this perseverance was the familiar belief, deeply embedded in the thinking of Hungarian statesmen, that the Magyars were predestined by geography to play the leading role in the Danubian region.<sup>9</sup>

This assumption naturally led Bethlen to deduce that conditions in East Central Europe were artificial and transitory. All the new countries, not only Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, but truncated Hungary and Austria as well, were incapable of prolonged life. Thus, Bethlen argued, it was senseless to seek a *rapprochement* with Hungary's new neighbors. They would use all the resources at their disposal to defend their new gains, and even in the unlikely event that minor territorial revision were offered by one or another of the Successor States, this would have to be refused, since it would make it all the more difficult for Hungary to achieve more extensive gains at some future point.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, Bethlen rejected all schemes for a wider collaboration, such as a Danubian Confederation, which, he averred, would merely lead to Hungarian submission to Slav domination.<sup>11</sup>

Yet at the outset Bethlen saw no alternative to a "policy of fulfillment" of the Treaty of Trianon. Hungary simply could not achieve the desired financial stabilization and economic recovery without the support of Western Europe and the resumption of normal trade with the Successor States. To lure badly needed capital investment into the country, Hungary had to demonstrate to the satisfaction of Western bankers and statesmen her acceptance of the peace settlement. Disruptions, such as anti-Semitic excesses or armed band activity in the Burgenland,<sup>12</sup> could no longer be condoned. Blatant violations of the military clauses of Trianon had to be avoided, and Hungary would have to promote her political rehabilitation by gaining admission to the League of Nations. An assiduous effort along these lines by Bethlen produced fairly rapid results. In September, 1922, Hungary won admission to the League, after having been rejected in its first bid a year earlier. In early 1924 the support of Great Britain enabled Hungary to secure a badly needed loan and a moratorium on reparation payments.<sup>13</sup> In return, Hungary, at the insistence of the Little Entente, was compelled to promise "in accor-

dance with the stipulations of the Treaty of Trianon, strictly and loyally to fulfill the obligations contained in the said Treaty, and in particular the military clause, as also the other international engagements.”<sup>14</sup>

Bethlen’s strategy proved highly effective. Hungary’s currency was soon stabilized, Western capital began to flow in vigorously, and, buoyed by high world wheat prices, the economy by 1928 was flourishing.<sup>15</sup> Even Hungary’s radical right-wingers, who had opposed Bethlen’s “policy of fulfillment” as a “sell-out” of Hungarian interests, were silenced by the speedy recovery.

Bethlen’s successes were widely admired in Great Britain as well, even though most Britons, if we are to believe a popular jingle of the 1920s, preferred to

“let the hairy Magyar  
Stew in his horrid juice.”<sup>16</sup>

Sentiment in the Foreign Office was quite favorable to Bethlen, who came to enjoy a reputation as a “straightforward, honest, intensely patriotic man . . . with whom it’s easy to do business.”<sup>17</sup> A measure of his acceptance by the British political establishment was the granting of an audience with the king in 1930, thus making him the first leader of a defeated Central Power to be so honored. Bethlen carefully nurtured this image of a responsible and moderate statesman by frequently affirming his respect and admiration for England<sup>18</sup> and by giving public and private assurances that, though he regarded eventual revision of the Treaty of Trianon as essential, he would employ only peaceful methods to achieve this goal.<sup>19</sup>

The assiduous efforts of Count Bethlen to ingratiate himself with the English political and financial establishment might lead one to conclude that he believed that among the Great Powers Britain was the most likely and most important champion of Hungary’s revisionist cause. Yet the evidence would not sustain such a conclusion. It is true that Bethlen, like so many of his contemporaries of similar social and political background in Hungary, was an Anglophile and naturally would have been delighted to accept a British offer of help in redrawing the borders of Danubian Europe. Yet Bethlen was nothing if not a realist: though at one point he seems briefly to have indulged in wishful thinking about a radical change of course in London’s continental policies,<sup>20</sup> in general he harbored no illusions about the possibility of direct British support for Hungarian revisionism. It was quite clear to him that the pro-Hungarian utterances of former prime minister David Lloyd George, the newspaper magnate Lord Harold Sidney Rothermere, and a small but vigorous contingent in the House of Lords did not count for much in the



arena of international relations.

Far more significant was the fact that the British government, wedded as it was to the status quo and the concept of collective security, could not in the foreseeable future openly champion, or even acknowledge the validity of, Hungary's territorial claims. At no point in the 1920s did London ever express even limited approval of Hungary's efforts to undo the Trianon treaty. Lord George Curzon, British foreign secretary in the immediate post-war period, had enunciated in 1920 a principle that remained at the core of Britain's Danubian policy for most of the interwar period. Hungary's hope for prosperity, he had asserted, could be based only on the "abandonment of such dreams as Hungarian political parties seem freely to indulge in of recovering the position that Hungary formerly held in Central Europe."<sup>21</sup>

Of course, this "dream" of restoring Magyar hegemony in Danubian Europe was fundamental to Bethlen's foreign policy in the 1920s. That he continued to court the British government in spite of the bleak prospects for any concrete dividends reflected not only his recognition of the key role that Western capital had to play in Hungary's economic recovery but also a political pragmatism that formed part of his Transylvanian heritage. A review of Transylvania's rather successful diplomatic balancing act between the Turks and the Habsburgs in the 16th and 17th centuries may well have suggested to Bethlen that a skillful, realistic foreign policy that left open a multitude of options could bring remarkable rewards for a small and essentially weak East European state.

It was this tradition that seems to have enlightened Bethlen's policy toward France and the Anglo-Saxon powers in the 1920s. Though to many Magyars it seemed unlikely, some day in the future, in a diplomatic context that statesmen in the 1920s could hardly envision, one or more of these more remote powers might be persuaded to champion Hungary's revisionist cause, or at least to give tacit approval to territorial changes in Danubian Europe. Thus, Bethlen apparently reasoned, nothing should be done unduly or capriciously to alienate the British or French; no opportunity neglected to erode, however imperceptibly, the commitment to the status quo; no compunction be felt about offering assurances of Hungary's pacific intentions, even though secretly the use of force was far from ruled out. It was in line with this thinking that Bethlen's foreign policy retained sufficient flexibility so that there always remained a possibility of a *rapprochement* even with France, the main buttress of the peace settlement and the patron of the Little Entente.

In the mid-1920s, however, when the Allied military control in Hungary was reduced and the opportunity for Hungary to pursue an "active policy" seemed to be unfolding, Bethlen's search for allies among the Great Powers led him not to Paris or London, but to Rome and Berlin. The first tasks on the agenda, so Bethlen wrote to Horthy in 1926, were to escape from the diplomatic isolation that had been imposed on Hungary and to split the Little Entente. This would be the prelude to a liquidation of Trianon, a task that, in Bethlen's optimistic estimate, could possibly be achieved "in about four or five years."<sup>22</sup>

It was obvious to Bethlen that overt support for the program he was sketching could hardly be expected to come from France or England. Indeed, it would have been highly injudicious and self-defeating to inform the chancelleries of Western Europe of his goals. Since 1925 the French and British had been urging Hungary to follow Germany's example and join her neighbors in a kind of "Eastern Locarno" pact, whereby the countries of Danubian Europe would pledge to resolve their differences peaceably and enter into a new era of reconciliation and fruitful cooperation. In response Bethlen had stated, somewhat disingenuously, that he favored "some sort of conciliation" in Danubian Europe, although he believed that formidable obstacles impeded progress in that direction.<sup>23</sup> For the specific idea of an "Eastern Locarno" the Hungarian leader had only disparaging words. It would be wishful thinking, he asserted, to believe that Hungary might negotiate an agreement with the Little Entente similar to that which Germany had arranged with France, in which Berlin had been required to renounce revision on her western but not her eastern frontiers. Germany was a powerful country, Bethlen pointed out, and France had made an agreement with her out of fear. But Hungary's neighbors made it absolutely clear that a Locarno-type agreement in Danubian Europe was possible only if Hungary renounced forever revision of any of her frontiers. This, of course, was impossible, since "the Hungarian nation would nail to the gate any statesman who would sign a second Trianon."<sup>24</sup>

Given the assumptions and objectives of Count Bethlen's "active policy" of the late 1920s and the realities of European international relations, it was only logical that he should solicit support from those countries and political groups that were dissatisfied with the Paris peace settlement and might be willing to contribute to its disruption. Like the pragmatists in the German Foreign Ministry, Bethlen's initial thought early in the 1920s was to pave the way for Hungary's emergence from isolation by a pact with the pariah of Europe, Soviet Russia. But the stubborn anti-Bolshevism of Admiral Horthy stymied all efforts in this

direction and the less spectacular aim of undermining the Little Entente by wooing away Yugoslavia was undertaken. With Horthy's approval, negotiations began in 1925 and continued through the next year.<sup>25</sup> The unexpected result was a pact concluded in 1927 with Italy, not Yugoslavia.

Hungary's interest in a *rapprochement* with her southern neighbor had drawn the attention of Mussolini, who at the time was seeking to counter France's position of strength in Eastern Europe by staking out an Italian sphere of influence in the Balkans and along the Danube. The Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation thus admirably served the interests of both parties: Italy gained an East European ally around which an anti-French bloc might be built; Hungary, for her part, succeeded in demonstrating that, though weak and reduced to the status of a pawn, she could still play a role on the diplomatic chessboard. Though the clauses of the treaty were quite innocuous and were similar to those Italy concluded with Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey during the 1920s, in a secret and simultaneous exchange of letters, Bethlen and Mussolini pledged to cooperate closely and consult beforehand on "all questions that might in any way touch on the present cordial relationship."<sup>26</sup> The treaty of 1927, the only bilateral agreement Hungary was to make with a Great Power until her adherence to the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1939, opened an era of intimate relations with Italy that was to extend to the final years of the next European war.

The treaty with Italy was the major diplomatic triumph of Bethlen's career. It won for Hungary the important, if somewhat boisterous, support of Mussolini for the revisionist campaign. A dutiful patron, the Duce did not fail to make ebullient references to Hungary's cause in his speeches and pronouncements. In concrete terms, the forging of close Hungarian-Italian ties greatly increased Budapest's room for maneuver in such matters as military rearmament and efforts to disrupt the Little Entente. However, there is much evidence to support the argument that though Bethlen valued the support of Italy, he doubted that the treaty of 1927 could alone serve as an adequate framework for a successful Hungarian revisionist policy. Perhaps, like many Hungarians, he could not completely overcome a fundamental distrust of Italy as an ally, a distrust stemming from what could be regarded as Italy's perfidious conduct during the Great War. More likely, Bethlen simply shared the skepticism of some other prescient European statesmen about Italy's ability in the long run to sustain the role of a Great Power in Europe.

In any case, Count Bethlen made it clear privately, though never publicly, that the natural and necessary complement to Hungary's treaty

with Italy was a similar arrangement with Germany.<sup>27</sup> Both powers were desirable allies for Hungary, he argued, since each, albeit for different reasons, was disenchanted with the status quo and desirous of certain revisions in the peace treaties. In fact, it seems most likely that of the two possible partners, Germany loomed as the more important in Bethlen's calculations. As early as 1921 he had justified his temporary "policy of fulfillment" by explaining that only a rejuvenated Germany could provide the "favorable European constellation" for a successful revision of the Trianon treaty.<sup>28</sup> Once Italy had been won over to the support of Hungary, there thus remained the pressing task of enlisting Germany's assistance as well.

Because evidence pertaining to the most secretive elements in Bethlen's foreign policy has become available only in recent years, Western historians have generally erred in their interpretation of Bethlen's policies in the 1920s, especially on the question of Hungary's relations with Italy and Germany. Bethlen himself greatly obfuscated the issue when, in later years and in a greatly changed Europe, he suggested that his pact with Italy had been aimed "even more against Germany than against the Slavs."<sup>29</sup> Such less than candid statements served to buttress the widely held notion that it was one of Bethlen's successors as Prime Minister, Gyula Gömbös, who was the author of a Hungarian foreign policy based on a Rome-Berlin "Axis." Yet, even while Gömbös was toying with this idea in an obscure Hungarian journal, Bethlen as Prime Minister was attempting to set the foundation for a Hungarian foreign policy based in part on this orientation.

In 1926 Count Bethlen told a confidant that "the axis of my policy is mediation between Italy and Germany."<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, after conclusion of the treaty with Italy the Hungarian leader worked assiduously, though in vain, to facilitate an Italian-German *rapprochement* that would set the stage for a German-Italian-Hungarian alignment. Although on several occasions in the 1920s Count Bethlen emphasized to German diplomats his belief in a "community of fate" between their two countries and the need for collaboration in a revisionist program,<sup>31</sup> a close political relationship between Berlin and Budapest proved elusive. Economic and ideological differences, as well as friction over the treatment of the German minority in Hungary, prevented the forging of intimate political ties.<sup>32</sup>

Yet Bethlen was not daunted; indeed, it seems that when he spoke of a community of interest between Magyars and Germans, Bethlen was referring not so much to those Germans who had created the Weimar Republic and remained committed to it, but rather to those, particularly of the National Right, who in spirit were hostile to the political and

social reforms enacted in Germany after the war. It is characteristic that the German with whom Bethlen seems to have maintained the most cordial relations and discussed his most secret plans was not Gustav Stresemann but General Hans von Seeckt, Chief of the Army Command until 1926. Moreover, several German political groups antagonistic to the Weimar experiment, most notably the Stahlhelm, were the beneficiaries of fairly substantial subsidies from Budapest during the Bethlen era.<sup>33</sup>

It is from the records of Bethlen's candid conversations with General von Seeckt and Mussolini (and, to a lesser extent, Ignaz Seipel, the Austrian chancellor, and Mustafa Kemal, president of Turkey) that the outlines of his ambitious revisionist program may be discerned. This evidence suggests that he believed that once the proper diplomatic constellation was formed in Central Europe (the nucleus of which would be Germany, Italy, Austria, and Hungary, with Bulgaria, Turkey, and Poland playing supportive roles, and Great Britain a neutral but benevolent observer), an opportunity would arise for the dissolution of the Little Entente and for significant territorial changes in Hungary's favor, though not necessarily a complete restoration of the Kingdom of St. Stephen as it existed before the war.

Although Count Bethlen dreamed of regaining for Hungary certain territories in each of the Little Entente countries, the necessity of a confrontation with Czechoslovakia seemed to dominate his thoughts from the start. As he graphically explained to Mussolini in 1927, "so long as the Czech frontier is thirty kilometers from Budapest, Hungary is not capable of action."<sup>34</sup> Having received the Duce's encouragement and the promise of Italian arms to prepare for a possible military conflict in Central Europe, Bethlen proceeded to consult with General von Seeckt about the logistical and organizational problems that the Hungarian army would face. Bethlen spoke bluntly, though it seems more in a theoretical than in a practical sense, of Hungary's firm resolve to attack Czechoslovakia and, if possible, destroy it. The goal, he explained, was the reannexation of Slovakia, where Czech rule had not taken strong roots.<sup>35</sup> In Bethlen's plans this revisionist triumph in the North was to be complemented by restoration of certain lost territory in the South. Bethlen reasoned that Yugoslavia, like Czechoslovakia, would eventually break up into its constituent parts, at which time the Magyars would press the Serbs back over the line formed by the Danube and Drava rivers. The Bánát would be restored to Hungary, and Croatia, though established as an independent state, would enter into close political and economic relations with Hungary.<sup>36</sup>

The future of Transylvania naturally remained a special concern of

Count Bethlen throughout the interwar period. From his private comments it can be deduced that the political solution he envisioned for Croatia would apply to Bethlen's native province as well. If possible, Hungary would reannex its former territory up to the historic frontier of Transylvania, but the province itself would survive as an independent state on the Swiss model, with complete autonomy for all minorities.<sup>37</sup> Whatever Bethlen's precise plans in this matter, he apparently felt that for the time being, at least, a *rapprochement* would have to be pursued with Romania. Indeed, in 1928 he suggested to Mussolini that Italy assist in the formation of a Central European bloc consisting of Hungary, Austria, Romania, and Italy. This diplomatic arrangement, Bethlen asserted, would disrupt the Little Entente and give Hungary a free hand to deal with her neighbors to the North and South.<sup>38</sup>

Briefly stated, then, Bethlen's program for territorial expansion and the reestablishment of Magyar hegemony in Danubian Europe seems to have been aimed at the eventual recovery of the Bánát, Slovakia, Ruthenia, and a strip of territory in Western Romania, all territories containing large, though not always preponderant, Magyar populations. Though nominally independent, Croatia and Transylvania would, in effect, become Hungarian protectorates. However, aside from his apparently hypothetical remark to von Seeckt that Hungary was intent on attacking Czechoslovakia, there are few clues to indicate what means Bethlen proposed to employ to achieve these goals.

It has been suggested that Bethlen's "active policy" after 1927 was synonymous with an "aggressive policy."<sup>39</sup> Yet there is no firm evidence, in the form of specific military plans, for example, to sustain this judgment. The only concrete steps undertaken during the Bethlen era, aside from a modest attempt at surreptitious rearming, involved clandestine financial and political support for separatists in Slovakia and Croatia, in the hope that civil order would be disrupted and Hungary could take advantage of the subsequent turmoil. This, of course, represented blatant interference in the domestic affairs of other countries and greatly contributed to the poisoning of the political atmosphere in the Danubian world. Still, it is worth noting that, though future disruptions of the status quo were intrinsic to the foreign policy plans of Bethlen and his colleagues, Hungary concluded no pacts of an aggressive nature in this period. The same could not be said of some of her neighbors, who at various times were willing to contemplate and plan for an unprovoked, preemptive attack on Hungary.<sup>40</sup>

In any case, sufficient time was not available to Bethlen to act on his ambitious goals. Unable to cope with the growing economic crisis, he

was compelled to withdraw from office in 1931. The legacy of the Bethlen era in Hungarian foreign policy was thus an ambiguous one. On the one hand, his rejection of a moderate revisionist policy limited to the recovery of territory in which Magyars were in the majority, his willingness to contemplate the use of offensive military force, and his emphasis on the need for Hungarian cooperation with a fascist Italy and a rightist Germany seemed to set the foundation for an alignment on the side of the Axis powers before and during World War II. On the other hand, Bethlen had imparted to Hungarian policy a strain of pragmatism that permeated his political thinking and strategy. In 1931 Hungary still seemed to have many options open to her; in certain conditions an alignment even with the West European powers was not precluded.

Though hostility toward Hungary was strong in the capitals of the Little Entente countries, there remained in London a reservoir of genuine, if usually muted, sympathy for the Magyars. Moreover, Hungary was a member of the League of Nations and was not tied by military pacts to any country. Indeed, the country's freedom of maneuver was sufficiently broad that, in the year after Bethlen's resignation, a distinct improvement in relations with France occurred, and in the early 1930s Bethlen himself, as a private citizen, several times met with the French Minister in Budapest and sketched a program of Hungarian territorial revision and creation of a pro-French Danubian bloc that could serve as a barrier against German expansion.<sup>41</sup> And when later in the 1930s Hungary began to move into the orbit of Nazi Germany, Count Bethlen, who remained quite influential in Hungarian political life, emerged as one of the chief opponents of a close alliance with Hitler's Germany. During the war he must have come to the bitter conclusion that the "community of fate" between Hungary and Germany that he had proclaimed in the 1920s did not imply the benefits and successes he had foreseen.

## NOTES

1. No scholarly biography of Bethlen has been written. For Bethlen's foreign policy in the late 1920s, see Dezső Nemes, *A Bethlen-kormány külpolitikája 1927-1931-ben* [The Foreign Policy of the Bethlen Government, 1927-1931] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1964). Nemes presented much new material, but operated within a severely restricted ideological framework. More recently new evidence has become available in a collection of Bethlen's papers: *Bethlen István titkos iratai* [István Bethlen's Secret Papers] eds. Miklós Szinai and László Szűcs (Budapest: Kossuth, 1972) (cited hereafter as *Bethlen Papers*).

2. Eva S. Balogh, "The Road to Isolation: Hungary, the Great Powers, and the Successor States, 1919-1920" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1974), p. 40.
3. C. A. Macartney, *October Fifteenth. A History of Modern Hungary, 1929-1945*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1961), 1: 37.
4. A small but vigorous radical right-wing movement had developed in Hungary in the convulsive period at the end of the war. For details, see Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera, *The Green Shirts and the Others. A History of Fascism in Hungary and Rumania* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1970), pp. 49-82.
5. István Bethlen, *Bethlen István gróf beszédei és írásai* [The Speeches and Writings of Count István Bethlen], 2 vols. (Budapest: Genius, 1933), 1: 156-68 (cited hereafter as *Bethlen Speeches*).
6. *Bethlen Speeches*, 1: 287.
7. György Ránki, "The Problem of Fascism in Hungary," in *Native Fascism in the Successor States*, ed. Peter F. Sugar (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1971), p. 68.
8. Hugh Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe Between the Wars* (1945; reprint ed., Hamden: Archon, 1962), pp. 190-91.
9. *Bethlen Speeches*, 2: 185.
10. Gusztáv Gratz, "Ungarns Aussenpolitik seit dem Weltkriege," *Berliner Monatshefte* 19 (1941): 11.
11. *Bethlen Speeches*, 1: 231.
12. Early in 1921 armed bands were dispatched by the Hungarian government into the Burgenland with the purpose of fomenting a rebellion. For details, see Katalin Soós, *Burgenland az európai politikában (1918-1921)* [Burgenland and European Politics, 1918-1921] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971), pp. 135-69.
13. English financial circles showed a marked sympathy for Hungary and proved most forthcoming in meeting Bethlen's requests for economic and political support. For a detailed treatment, see Ozer Carmi, *La Grande-Bretagne et la Petite Entente* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1972), pp. 88-115.
14. Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, 1: 63.
15. C. A. Macartney, *Hungary and Her Successors: The Treaty of Trianon and Its Consequences, 1919-1937* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), pp. 465-66.
16. From a jingle by A. P. Herbert, "Foreign Policy: or, the Universal Aunt," cited by Martin Gilbert, *The Roots of Appeasement* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), p. 122.
17. Marginal note by M. W. Lampson, a Foreign Office official, on a report of March, 1924, London, Public Record Office (hereafter PRO), FO 371, C4501/21/21.
18. In 1923 Bethlen told Sir Thomas Hohler, the British Minister in Budapest, that London was the "only capital where the Hungarian question appeared to be considered purely on its own merits and without any *arrière pensée*." Hohler to Curzon, May 26, 1923, PRO, FO 371, C9296/942/21.
19. One historian characterizes Bethlen's diplomacy vis-à-vis the Western powers in this period in this way: "Bethlen's wooing of the West represents one of the cleverest public relations achievements in postwar Europe." Thomas Spira, *German-Hungarian Relations and the Swabian Problem. From Károlyi to Gömbös, 1919-1936* (Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1977), p. 121.
20. In 1924 he told Ignaz Seipel, Chancellor of Austria, that he gained the impression while visiting England that London might be preparing to organize a new European diplomatic constellation aimed at France. Seipel's memorandum of February 8, 1924, Vienna, Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, Neues Politisches Archiv, K879/99-102 (cited hereafter as HHS).



21. Curzon to Hohler, November 27, 1920, PRO, FO 371, C11889/283/21.
22. Bethlen to Horthy, September 24, 1926, *The Confidential Papers of Admiral Horthy*, eds. Miklós Szinai and László Szűcs (Budapest: Corvina, 1965), p. 42.
23. See Bethlen's conversation with Sir Austen Chamberlain in December 1925 at Geneva, Great Britain, Foreign Office, *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939* (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1946- ), series Ia: 1: no. 137.
24. *Bethlen Speeches*, I: 198-212.
25. For the details, see Gyula Juhász, *Magyarország külpolitikája, 1919-1945* [The Foreign Policy of Hungary, 1919-1945], 2nd ed. (Budapest: Kossuth, 1975), pp. 104-06.
26. Juhász, p. 115.
27. He told the German Minister in Budapest, Hans von Schoen, that "Hungary can fulfill its future wishes only on the side of both great powers, Italy and Germany." Cited in Wulf-Dieter Schmidt-Wulfen, "Deutschland-Ungarn, 1918-1933. Eine Analyse der politischen Beziehungen" (doctoral diss., University of Vienna, 1965), pp. 408-09.
28. Minutes of a Cabinet meeting of August 1, 1921, cited in the introduction to the *Bethlen Papers*, p. 57, n. 80.
29. Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, I: 136, n. 3.
30. Extract from the diary of Miklós Kozma, as quoted in Sándor Kónya, *Gömbös kísérlete totális fasiszta diktatúra megteremtésére* [Gömbös's Attempt to Establish a Totalitarian Fascist Dictatorship] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1968), p. 125.
31. For example, he told the German Minister in 1925 that he was convinced that Hungary's resurgence could occur only in tandem with Germany. Even if the two countries for the time being could not officially become allies, nonetheless "the old 'Bundesgenossenschaft' remained firmly anchored in the heart of every Hungarian patriot." Johannes von Welczek to Austwärtiges Amt, March 6, 1925, Washington, National Archives, Germany, Foreign Ministry, Microcopy T-120, S6146/E460142.
32. For a detailed treatment of this question, see Spira, pp. 95-131.
33. For the details on this, see *Bethlen Papers*, pp. 43-4.
34. Bethlen's memorandum on his conversations with Mussolini, April 4, 1927, in *Iratok az ellenforradalom történetéhez, 1919-1945* [Papers Relating to the History of the Counterrevolution, 1919-1945], eds. Dezső Nemes and Elek Karsai (Budapest: Szikra, Kossuth, 1953- ), 4: no. 22 (cited hereafter as IET).
35. von Seeckt's diary entries for October, 1927, as cited in Hans Meier-Welcker, *Seeckt* (Frankfurt: M. Bernard U. Graefe, 1967), pp. 373-75.
36. This program Bethlen had adumbrated to his colleagues at a Cabinet meeting already in 1921. *Bethlen Papers*, p. 57, n. 80.
37. See Bethlen's memorandum of his conversation with Mustafa Kemal, November 7, 1930, IET, 4: no. 265a. For Bethlen's later thoughts on the future of Transylvania, see N. F. Dreisziger, "Count István Bethlen's Secret Plan for the Restoration of the Empire of Transylvania," *East European Quarterly* 8 (1975): 413-22.
38. Bethlen's memorandum of his conversation with Mussolini, April 2, 1928 IET, 4: no. 103.
39. Nemes, *A Bethlen-kormány külpolitikája*, p. 7.
40. For example, the June 1920 treaty between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia was accompanied by a secret military convention in which each party promised to support the other should it launch an attack on Hungary. Magda Ádám, *Magyarország és a kisantant a harmincas években* [Hungary and the Little Entente in the 1930s] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1968), p. 19. By 1934 the

military chiefs of the Little Entente formally agreed that if a military conflict occurred in Danubian Europe, the first order of business would be to attack and subdue Hungary, even if Budapest declared its neutrality. Rudolf Kiszling, *Die militärischen Vereinbarungen der Kleinen Entente, 1929–1937* (Munich, 1959), pp. 58–59.

41. See the reports of Louis Mathieu de Vienne on his talks with Bethlen in the period 1932–1934, in France, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, *Documents diplomatiques français, 1932–1939* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1963– ), series I: 1: no. 225; 3: no. 50; 5: no. 230.

## **The Rákóczi Insurrection and the Disruption of the Grand Alliance**

Linda Frey and Marsha Frey

In June 1703 Hungarians rose against Emperor Leopold I of Austria and King of Hungary (1655–1705). The insurrection, led by Prince Ferenc II Rákóczi of Transylvania (1676–1735),<sup>1</sup> lasted eight years and ended in a compromise settlement. Although Hungary had been devastated in the struggle and Habsburg power seemed triumphant in East Central Europe, the Rákóczi insurrection had grave consequences for Vienna's international ambitions during the general struggle raging in Europe during the War of Spanish Succession (1701–1714). The conflict helped to undermine the Anglo-Dutch-Habsburg Grand Alliance against the powerful and ambitious Louis XIV of France.

The alliance between the House of Habsburg and the so-called Maritime Powers, England and the United Provinces, had been forged to prevent the union of the Spanish and French realms under one dynasty. But the alliance was incohesive from the start. The allies' differing views concerning the Rákóczi insurrection enhanced the Grand Alliance's weakness, and the increasingly bitter quarrels over Habsburg policy in Hungary led to a steady erosion of confidence among its members. In particular, the Maritime Powers' attempts to intervene in the quarrels between the Habsburgs and their Hungarian subjects from 1703 to 1706 accelerated the deterioration of Austro-allied relations, and even caused the recall of England's ambassador from Vienna. As in any alliance, the misunderstandings and problems stemmed from its members' conflicting interests, goals, and strategies.

England entered the War of Spanish Succession neither primarily to champion Habsburg claims to the Spanish inheritance nor to support an abstract conception of the balance of power, but to protect its own Protestant Succession, and to ensure England's national security and trading concerns in Europe and overseas. The United Provinces entered the conflict to secure a "barrier" of fortresses in the Spanish Netherlands against France and to protect their commercial interests in the Spanish empire. Austria, however, joined the fray to secure the Spanish inheritance for Emperor Leopold's son, the Archduke Charles.

Throughout the war, England and the United Provinces consistently foiled Austria's policies and disregarded her strategic interests. The Maritime Powers ignored the Habsburgs' claim to inherit the entire Spanish empire, and they tried to barter away parts of the inheritance in Italy and in Spain to Bavaria, Savoy, and Portugal in order to gain more allies. They also begrudged Austria's preoccupation with Italy and refused to dispatch their fleet to assist the emperor's Italian campaign. More importantly, however, they transgressed the Habsburgs' vital interests by intervening in the Hungarian insurrection.

In 1703, Ferenc II Rákóczi urged Hungarians to fight for "God, Fatherland, and Freedom."<sup>2</sup> The insurrection aimed to curtail Habsburg domination by restoring Hungarian estates constitutionalism. This conflict between the emperor-king and Rákóczi exemplified the struggle between the powerful absolutist Austrian realm and its member states, which tried to retain and/or recover their constitutional liberties and privileges. Rákóczi represented the particularistic interests of the Kingdom of Hungary, whereas Leopold strove to establish a centralized empire by increased absolutist control from Vienna.<sup>3</sup> Leopold never intended to honour Hungarian constitutionalist demands; he negotiated with the insurrectionists only to gain time for a military solution. He never agreed to grant the Hungarians concessions which would diminish and/or endanger Habsburg power in the Danubian monarchy.

Leopold was indecisive, vacillating, monkish, typically Habsburg in appearance and action, a man with more faith in God than in himself. Trained for the clergy, Leopold had an unshakable conviction that God favoured the House of Habsburg. He had a keen sense of the imperial dignity and of his duty towards God, family, and empire.<sup>4</sup> He would be abrogating that commitment if he agreed to the insurrectionists' conditions. Leopold had reconquered Hungary from the Turks, incorporated Transylvania into the Austrian realms, achieved recognition of the male Habsburg line in primogeniture as the Hungarian kings at the Diet of Pressburg (1687), and ended the Turkish threat to the Holy Roman Empire. These gains would be either lost or seriously endangered if Leopold acceded to the insurrectionists' demands.

Throughout his reign, Leopold I sought to consolidate Habsburg power by extirpating Protestantism, eliminating elective monarchy, and extending his central authority. Leopold's attempt to crush Hungarian constitutionalism and to amalgamate Hungary into the Austrian state system exemplified this policy. In the seventeenth century, Hungary had been a buffer state fought over by the emperor and the Turks, who had occupied most of Hungary since 1526 and even threatened Vienna in

the 1520's and 1680's. Thanks to imperial victories from 1683 onward, Leopold was able to terminate elective monarchy in Hungary and abolish the Hungarian nobles' *ius resistendi*, or their right to remedy grievances by resorting to arms (1687). By the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) the Turks relinquished most of Hungary, along with Croatia and Transylvania. Thus Leopold held Hungary effectively under Habsburg rule; he quartered troops on the country, levied taxes, confiscated land, and persecuted Protestants. Many Hungarians became convinced that Leopold was trying to crush the Hungarian constitutional government and replace it with imperial absolutism, as an earlier Habsburg regime had done in Bohemia after the battle of the White Mountain. Leopold's subsequent attempts to amalgamate the Hungarian administration with that of Vienna only reinforced this fear. When the Hungarians finally revolted, they were exploiting Leopold's preoccupation with the struggle for the Spanish empire, the War of the Spanish Succession.

When the Hungarian insurrection began, the Maritime Powers were neutral. Allied sympathy for the rebels, anxiety that the emperor would withdraw troops from the war effort in order to suppress the uprising, and fear that the Turks would assist the Hungarians, however, prompted the Maritime Powers to intervene in their Habsburg ally's Hungarian affairs. Sympathizing with the Hungarians' loss of their constitutional and religious liberties, the Allies concurred with Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, that "a spirit of bigotry, tyranny, and of avarice" had caused the troubles in Hungary.<sup>5</sup> The Whigs in particular denounced Leopold's alleged cruelty and his persecution of the Protestants. Even a far from impartial Tory, Jonathan Swift, indicted Leopold for choosing to "sacrifice the whole alliance to his private passion by entirely subduing and enslaving a Miserable People who had too much provocation to take up Arms to free themselves from the Oppression under which they were groaning."<sup>6</sup> The English and the Dutch appreciated the growing strength of the insurrectionists, who mustered more than 30,000 men by the end of 1703, and they recognized the efficacy of France's diplomatic, military, and financial assistance to Rákóczi. They attempted to compel Leopold to accede to the Hungarians' demands and thereby end the insurrection.

The Allies feared that the emperor's dispatch of troops to Hungary would prolong the war with France. The Imperial circles of Swabia and Franconia complained vehemently that troop withdrawals left them defenseless against the French.<sup>7</sup> The ease with which Maximilian II, the elector of Bavaria, seized Passau, strategically located at the confluence of the Danube, the Inn, and the Ilz (January 1704), seemed to substan-



tiate the Maritime Powers' view that Leopold could not wage war in Italy, the Rhineland, and Hungary simultaneously.<sup>8</sup> Allied anxiety that the emperor would withdraw troops from the war effort in order to suppress the revolt, and fear that Turkish aid to the rebels might ignite another Austro-Turkish conflict prompted the Maritime Powers to intervene in Hungarian affairs.

Louis XIV believed that the Hungarian insurrection would create difficulties in the Habsburg realms and foment dissension among the Allies. Louis practiced "la diplomatie l'argent";<sup>9</sup> he subsidized Rákóczi with funds (about 30,000 livres monthly for the first two years, later increased to 50,000), and even provided officers, but not troops. Louis also tried to dissuade Rákóczi from settling with or even negotiating with the Habsburgs.<sup>10</sup> Dependent on Louis XIV, Rákóczi ignored an imperial diplomat's warning about Louis' faithlessness to his allies: "Prince, you have confidence in the promises of France: France is the graveyard of princes; you will add to their number and finish your career there."<sup>11</sup>

France also attempted to involve the Turks in the Hungarian conflagration. Louis did not accord formal recognition to the rebels, but he urged Turkey to do so. Although Ibrahim Effendi, the Turkish representative at Vienna, assured the emperor that the sultan wanted to keep the peace, Turkish involvement remained an everpresent threat.<sup>12</sup> Though Robert Sutton, the English ambassador at Constantinople, maintained that the Turks would probably not overtly assist the insurgents, he feared that the Turkish military leaders wished to intervene. Continued Hungarian success might force the Turkish government to change its policy and help the Hungarians.<sup>13</sup>

The Allies had good reason to persuade Leopold to end the Hungarian conflict. But the emperor's seeming vacillation was the result of conscious policy. The unquestionable superiority of the Maritime Powers made Leopold financially and militarily dependent on them.<sup>14</sup> He was, therefore, unable to influence allied policy decisions effectively. For the Habsburgs, this dependence often necessitated abandoning their strategic concerns. Leopold's only recourse was to vacillate or to

*Illustration on opposite page: Prince Ferenc II Rákóczi. Medal designed by Dóra de Pédery-Hunt. Photographed by Elizabeth Frey of Toronto. Courtesy of the Rákóczi Association (Toronto, Canada).*

procrastinate. By employing delaying tactics, Leopold hoped to safeguard Habsburg interests and defer accepting the unpalatable decisions which were often thrust on him, as in the Hungarian embroglio. Clearly, Leopold hoped to gain sufficient time to suppress the insurrection.

By late 1703, however, the Maritime Powers were urging Leopold to reach an agreement with Rákóczi. But the emperor wanted not mediation, but military and financial aid to terminate the uprising. Leopold's heir Joseph I (1676-1711) and Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663-1736), one of Leopold's most able commanders, had also decided to quell the insurrection by force. Notwithstanding their friendship with John Churchill, the duke of Marlborough, commander of the allied forces, they strongly resented Anglo-Dutch interference. Prince Eugene in particular regarded Rákóczi's behavior as treasonous.<sup>15</sup> Most of the imperial ministers advised energetically suppressing the insurrection. Count Peter Goes, the imperial representative at The Hague, expressed the consensus of the imperial court when he told Alexander Stanhope, the English representative, that the "interposition of any Protestant power" would make the rebels, whom he disparagingly termed mere "canaille," more obdurate than ever.<sup>16</sup> Frederick, the Elector Palatine, one of Leopold's chief advisers, considered it dishonorable for the emperor to "condescend so low" as to even treat with the "rebels." He told George Stepney, England's envoy to Vienna, that once the danger from Bavaria was past, the emperor had every right to withdraw approximately 20,000 troops from the war effort in order to quell the insurrection.<sup>17</sup> The outlook, however, was bleak; the emperor wanted to crush the uprising, but he had neither money nor troops to do so. Meanwhile, the insurrectionists' strength increased daily.<sup>18</sup>

Leopold and his ministers resented allied "meddling" in Hungarian affairs, convinced that the Maritime Powers were too partial to the insurrectionists.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, in February 1704 the emperor accepted the Maritime Powers' mediation offer because his financial and military dependence demanded it, and because the involvement of other powers, such as Poland, Prussia, or Sweden, was even less palatable. Throughout the negotiations, Leopold's belief that both Stepney and Hamel Bruyninx, the Dutch representative at Vienna, favored the rebels, obstructed progress.<sup>20</sup> Ironically, neither Rákóczi nor his close friend, the proud arrogant Count Nicholas Bercsényi (1655-1725), wanted the mediation of the Maritime Powers, whom they distrusted as the Habsburgs' allies. Rákóczi, in fact, had advocated mediation by Sweden, Poland, Prussia, or Venice.<sup>21</sup>

Under the auspices of the Maritime Powers, the Habsburgs negoti-



ated with the rebels intermittently from the spring of 1704 through Leopold's death to the summer of 1706. The Hungarians shrewdly guessed that Leopold only wanted a truce in order to rest his beleaguered garrisons and gather more troops.<sup>22</sup> The ambiguous wording of the proposed armistice instrument only augmented Hungarian fears of possible imperial chicanery. The Austrians also doubted the rebels' sincerity, convinced that they were negotiating only in order to gain time.<sup>23</sup> The quibbling over various conference sites and the wording of the assorted terms and credentials further intensified mutual suspicions.<sup>24</sup>

General Siegbert Heister, commander of the imperial army in Hungary, also impeded the negotiations. His policy of "sword, rope, and fire," and his allusion to the Hungarians' "perfidious crimes" and "detestable obstinacy" increased the insurrectionists' obduracy. His ruthless military actions, such as the destruction of the neutral city of Veszprém in May 1704, augmented Rákóczi's following and further diminished the possibility of a peaceful settlement. A worse selection as commander than Heister could hardly have been made. Although brave and energetic, he was also obstinate, cruel, and unable to cooperate with his subordinates or his fellow commanders. Heister had neither military nor diplomatic skills, and proved to be as great a scourge to his own troops as he was to the Hungarians.<sup>25</sup>

Even allied victories, such as Blenheim (August 1704), which effectively dashed any Hungarian plans for a possible Bavaro-Hungarian invasion of the empire, only increased allied tension. Once the imminent danger had passed, Leopold broke off negotiations with the Hungarians at Selmechánya (Schemnitz) and attempted to suppress the insurrection by force. Ironically, Marlborough's victories exacerbated Austro-allied relations by encouraging Leopold's chimerical hopes that the Maritime Powers would provide both military and financial assistance to quell the uprising.<sup>26</sup>

Under pressure from the Allies, Leopold and later Joseph empowered commissioners between 1703 and 1706 to negotiate with Rákóczi, and periodically to conclude truces. This stratagem enabled the emperor to gather more troops and supplies.<sup>27</sup> Leopold insisted on the abolition of elective monarchy and the right of resistance, but agreed that his heir would reside in Hungary; that triennial convocation of the Hungarian diet would be assured; that certain institutions, such as the Hungarian Chancellery would be maintained; that damages perpetrated by imperial troops would be redressed; and that salt taxes would be reduced. He also agreed to submit such questions as the expulsion of the Jesuits and

tax reduction to the diet, and he pledged that the independence of the Hungarian treasury would be subject to the Hungarian diet alone.

Rákóczi and Bercsényi wished to obtain an international guarantee of the agreement, to be secured by Poland, Sweden, Prussia, or Venice. They also wanted the various Hungarian abbeys and benefices illegally seized by the Jesuits returned, elective kingship and the right of resistance restored, all imperial troops evacuated, and Rákóczi's election as the Prince of Transylvania recognized.<sup>28</sup> Leopold thought the rebels' demands exorbitant. Rákóczi's insistence on a foreign guarantor remained the chief obstacle to a settlement.<sup>29</sup> Whereas Rákóczi had a longstanding distrust of the Habsburgs and regarded the guarantee as a necessary safeguard for the preservation of Hungarian liberties,<sup>30</sup> Leopold regarded a foreign guarantee as an open invitation to foreign intervention in the Habsburg empire. Leopold would not accept the abolition of hereditary succession, and he refused to recognize Rákóczi's election as the Prince of Transylvania. Both concessions would threaten his own sovereignty in Hungary. Should the Hungarian throne become vacant, a new election would be held, and possibly the Habsburgs would not be re-elected.<sup>31</sup> Leopold also adamantly refused to evacuate all imperial troops from Hungary, because the Habsburgs could not govern such a people who so strongly demanded constitutional government and forcefully opposed Habsburg absolutist policies. Rákóczi and Leopold castigated each other for the abortive negotiations.<sup>32</sup> The Maritime Powers deplored the impasse, blaming both sides. The Maritime Powers' insistence that Leopold grant the Hungarians civil and religious liberties further deepened mutual animosities and threatened to disrupt the precarious alliance.

Leopold I died on 5 May 1705. Throughout his reign he had always placed the interests of the House of Habsburg above all else, including Hungary. Joseph I's succession to the imperial throne raised new hopes for a Hungarian settlement. Joseph advocated conciliation; he promised to grant the insurrectionists amnesty, to re-establish the Hungarian constitution, to recognize all Hungarian laws and privileges, to assure triennial convocation of the diet, and to relegate certain grievances to the next diet. He would not, however, countenance what he termed the "rebels'" exorbitant demands; he would not sanction a foreign guarantor of the agreement, nor would he abolish hereditary monarchy in Hungary, or evacuate all Habsburg troops.<sup>33</sup> The failure of both sides to moderate their demands stalemated the negotiations.

By the summer of 1706, the Maritime Powers saw little hope of persuading the emperor to reach an accommodation with the Hungar-

ians.<sup>34</sup> The negotiations were broken off in July 1706, whereupon the emperor dispatched four regiments from the Rhine to Hungary in order to extinguish the insurrection. This action prompted a storm of protest from his allies. The Rhine front was already weak and the troop withdrawal would only give Prince Louis of Baden, the imperial commander, an excuse for lapsing into inactivity.<sup>35</sup> Count Wratislaw, an imperial minister, rather ingenuously told Marlborough that the Allies should not protest. The common cause would only be served if the Hungarian insurrection terminated abruptly.<sup>36</sup> Once the Habsburgs suppressed the Hungarians, imperial forces might concentrate their efforts against France.

The Maritime Powers' intervention only exacerbated their relations with the Habsburgs and resulted in George Stepney's recall from Vienna. From 1703 to 1706 Stepney had persistently begged to be summoned home from Vienna, "which is now the most disagreeable station we have in Europe."<sup>37</sup> His attitude in 1706 contrasted sharply with his sentiments in 1701 when he said he "would not quit this post for any in Europe."<sup>38</sup> Stepney's change of heart epitomized the gradual deterioration of the alliance. On 30 August 1706 Stepney received his letters of revocation, and on 22 and 23 September he took his audiences of congé. His recall was an ominous portent for Austro-allied relations. If any man could have united the Maritime Powers and the Habsburgs it would have been Stepney, who had an unrivalled understanding of German affairs. From September 1706 to June 1707, in the midst of a hard-fought war, England had no permanent representative in Vienna, the capital of her chief ally.<sup>39</sup>

The insurrection dragged on until 1711. Although an able leader, Rákóczi ultimately failed. The Hungarians' inability to defeat the imperial army, and vice versa, paved the way for the Treaty of Szatmár (spring of 1711). By this settlement, Emperor Charles VI (Charles III of Hungary) ensured that Hungary would remain a Habsburg kingdom. But he did agree to grant amnesty to all rebels who swore an oath of allegiance within three weeks, to respect Hungary's religious and constitutional liberties as enunciated in the Diet of 1687, and to convoke a future diet to discuss other grievances. Rákóczi refused to accept the settlement, which had been arranged in his absence, and sought exile abroad. The insurrection left Hungary devastated and depopulated: 410,000 men died of the plague and another 85,000 in battle. By 1711 Hungary's population numbered only two and a half million, reduced by more than fifty percent since the fifteenth century.<sup>40</sup>

The insurrection also fractured the already weakened Grand Alliance.

The Maritime Powers entertained unrealistic hopes by expecting the Habsburgs to accede to the insurgents' demands, and to relinquish their alleged rights in Hungary, for which they had fought many centuries. After 1706, the gradual erosion of confidence in the alliance continued. Eventually, Johann Wenzel, Count Gallas, Austria's representative in England was expelled from Queen Anne's court (autumn of 1711). The conclusion of separate peace treaties by England and the United Provinces (Utrecht — 11 April 1713) and Austria (Rastadt — 7 March 1714 and Baden — 7 September 1714), was the final blow to the fragile alliance.

## NOTES

1. For Rákóczi's life consult Émile Horn, *François Rakoczy II, Prince de Transylvanie* (Paris, Librairie Academique, 1906), pp. 1-101; François Rakoczy II, *Testament politique et moral* (The Hague, 1751), pp. 1-72; François Rakoczy II, *Histoire* (Cassovie, 1707), pp. 1-77; Albert Lefavre, *Les Magyars pendant la domination ottomane en Hongrie 1526-1721* (Paris, 1902), p. 306; Onno Klopp, *Der Fall des Hauses Stuart*, X (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1879), 291-292; George Michel de Boisliste, ed., *Mémoires de Saint-Simon*, V (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1928), 260. All dates will be given in New Style.
2. Joseph Joubert, *François Rakoczy II, Prince de Transylvania* (Angiers, 1907), p. 11; Redlich, *Österreich*, pp. 155-161; for the Hungarian rebellion up to 1707 refer to Fritz Posch, *Flammende Grenze, Die Steiermark in den Kuruzzenstürmen* (Vienna: Verlag Styria, 1968), pp. 1-277; Francis Rakoczy II, *Histoire des revolution de Hongrie avec les memoires* (The Hague: Scheurleer, 1739), pp. 80-306; Prince Eugene Francis of Savoy, *Feldzüge* (Vienna: K. u. K. Kriegsarchiv, 1876), VIII, 402-451; France, Archives des Affaires des Étrangers, Correspondence politique, Autriche, 83-86; London, Public Record Office, State Papers Germany, 105/71, 365-370, 371-372, 393-398; hereafter cited as P.R.O., S.P. Germany; Gy. Rázsó, "La situation militaire générale et la guerre d'indépendance de Rákóczi," *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, XXII (1976).
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  7. B.M., Add. MSS. 31, 132, f. 37, Raby's Circular Letter of 26 January 1704 and f. 39, Raby to Hill, Berlin, 26 January 1704; Alg. Rijks., Archief Staten Generaal 6857, Bruyninx Report of 19 February 1704.
  8. B.M., Add. MSS. 9096, f. 180, Halifax to Marlborough, The Hague, 18 August 1706, Add. MSS. 7059, ff. 180–182, Stepney to Harley, Vienna, Add. MSS 37, 351, f. 369, Whitworth to Hedges, Vienna, 16 January 1704.
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  10. Onnon Klopp, *Der Fall des Hauses Stuart*, X (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1879), 291; Arsène Legrelle, *La diplomatie française et la succession d'Espagne*, V (Paris: A. Dullé-Plus, 1892), 120–9; Jean Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Torcy, *Mémoires*, I (The Hague, 1757), 221–2.
  11. Horn, *Rakoczy*, p. 274.
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  16. P.R.O., S.P. Holland, 80/226, Stanhope to Hedges, The Hague, 1 January 1704.
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18. Redlich, *Österreich*, pp. 162–5. The Hungarian campaign cost Leopold more than four million florins annually. See B.M., Add. MSS. 37, 353, ff. 350–1. Whitworth to Hedges, Vienna, 9 January 1704; Klopp, *Der Fall des Hauses Stuart*, XI, 46–8.
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21. B.M., Add. MSS. 7058, f. 345, Hedges to Stepney, Whitehall, 13 May 1704 and in P.R.O., S.P. Germany, 104/204/263; B.M., Add. MSS. 28, 916, f. 7, Ellis to Stepney, 13 May 1704; Braubach, “Die Bedeutung der Subsidiën,” *passim*.
22. B.M., Add. MSS. 37, 353, f. 455, Whitworth to Harley, Vienna, 4 October 1704 and in Add. MSS. 37, 352, f. 280; B.M., Add. MSS. 37, 353, ff. 337–8, Bruyninx and Whitworth to Szirmai, September 1704; Add. MSS. 37, 351, f. 429, Whitworth to Hedges, 30 January 1704; P.R.O., S.P. Germany 80/28, Stepney to Harley, Vienna, 12 May 1706. For detailed discussion of negotiations see P.R.O., S.P. Germany 80/18–28, *passim*; S.P. Germany, 104/38, *passim*; S.P. Holland, 104/72; Alg. Rijks., Archief Staten Generaal, Lias Engeland 5928, 6007 and Lias Duitsland 6637, 6638.
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26. B.M., Add. MSS. 37, 352, f. 336, Harley to Stepney, Whitehall, 12 September 1704; Österreichische Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv, England, Kart. 37–40, *passim*.
27. P.R.O., S.P. Germany, 105/71/94, Whitworth to Hedges, 23 January 1704, S.P. Germany, 80/23/88–89, Stepney to Hedges, Vienna, 15 March 1704, S.P. Germany 80/24, Stepney to Harley, Vienna, 20 and 27 August 1704, S.P. Germany, 80/25, Stepney to Harley, Vienna, 24 January 1705; B.M., Add. MSS. 37, 351, Whitworth to Hedges, 3 January 1704, f. 429, Whitworth to Hedges, 30 January 1704, Add. MSS. 7058, f. 26, Marlborough to Stepney, Blenheim, 16 August 1704, Add. MSS. 37, 353, ff. 337–338, Bruyninx and Whitworth to Szirmai, September 1704; Alg. Rijks., Arch. Staten Generaal 6587, Bruyninx Memorial to Emperor of 22 August 1704 and Arch. Heinsius 919, Stepney and Bruyninx Memorial of 27 August 1704.

28. Alg. Rijks., Arch. Staten Generaal 6587, Bruyninx Report of 31 March 1704 and report of 14 April 1704; P.R.O., S.P. Germany, 105/71/325, Stepney to Hedges, Vienna, 12 March 1704 and S.P. Germany 80/22/194-195, Whitworth to Hedges, Vienna, 2 February 1704; B.M., Add. MSS. 37, 352, ff. 4-5, Whitworth to Hedges, Vienna, 2 February 1704, ff. 170-193, Letters and Observations on the Hungarian Negotiations, March 1704.
29. P.R.O., S.P. Military Expedition, 87/2, Marlborough to unknown official, Giengen, 29 June 1704.
30. P.R.O., S.P. Germany 80/25, Heinsius to Bruyninx, The Hague, 15 May 1705, Stepney to Harley, 16 May 1705; B.M., Add. MSS. 9098, ff. 58-60, Stepney to Marlborough, Vienna, 9 May 1705.
31. Redlich, *Österreich*, pp. 170ff; P.R.O., S.P. Germany, 80/23/320, Stepney to Hedges, Vienna, 14 June 1704.
32. P.R.O., S.P. Germany, 80/24, Stepney to Harley, Schemnitz (Selmecebánya), 3 November 1704.
33. P.R.O., S.P. Germany, 80/25, Heinsius to Bruyninx, The Hague, 15 May 1705; B.M., Add. MSS. 9098, ff. 58-60, Stepney to Marlborough, Vienna, 9 May 1705; Alg. Rijks., Arch. Staten Generaal 6588, 27 June 1705; P.R.O., S.P. Germany, 80/25, Stepney to Harley, 16 May 1705.
34. B.M., Add. MSS. 9100, f. 76, Marlborough to Sunderland, Meldert, 7 July 1706, f. 16, Godolphin to Marlborough, 5 July 1707, f. 61, Marlborough to unknown official, Meldert, 27 July 1707.
35. P.R.O., S.P. Germany, 104/73/120, Harley to Stepney, Whitehall, 14 June 1706; B.M., Add. MSS. 9096, ff. 174-5, Harley to Marlborough, 13 August 1706; Add. MSS. 7058, f. 58, Marlborough to Salms, Helchin, 26 July 1706.
36. B.M., Add. MSS. 9096, f. 180. Halifax to Marlborough, The Hague, 18 August 1706. Also refer to B.M., Add. MSS. 9096, ff. 168-9, Salms to Marlborough, XI, 179; Öst. Staatsarchiv, England, Kart. 38-40, *passim*.
37. B.M., Add. MSS. 7075, f. 59, Stepney to Raby, The Hague, 2 December 1706. Also refer to P.R.O., S.P. Germany, 80/18/28, *passim*. B.M., Add. MSS. 7058-9, 37, 155-6, *passim*.
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39. Sir Philip Meadows subsequently replaced Stepney. He served as envoy extraordinary to the emperor from June 1707 to August 1709.
40. Béla K. Király, *Hungary in the Late Eighteenth Century, The Decline of Enlightened Despotism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), p. 5.





## A Woman's Self-Liberation: The Story of Margit Kaffka (1880-1918)

Dalma H. Brunauer

Ellen Moers, in *Literary Women*,<sup>1</sup> commented on the importance of money and jobs in the lives of female authors. Margit Kaffka's career offers a good example of this observation. Her story also traces the role of husband and environment in the day-to-day activities of a working woman. Further, the lives of Margit Kaffka and Willa Cather, the American writer, present many similarities, although any suggestion of "Parallel Lives" is unintentional. But chiefly, Margit Kaffka's professional history reveals the crucial function of at least *one* sympathetic editor — Miksa Fenyő — and of at least *one* truly superior publishing outlet — *Nyugat (West)*.

Back in 1910, when Willa Cather was managing editor of *McClure's*, she had herself photographed. With her good figure, attractive face, poise, self-confidence, and the sumptuous hat which only a woman of the world would have dared to display, she presented the very image of the successful career woman. She was thirty-seven, and — having enjoyed a respectable journalistic career — she had authored just one slim volume of poetry and some short stories. But soon thereafter, in the spring of 1912, Cather took the plunge, encouraged by changed circumstances at *McClure's*. She resigned her position which had ensured worldly success and financial security, and staked her future on her ability to write and publish fiction. Her first novel, *Alexander's Bridge*, appeared in 1912.<sup>2</sup>

During the same period the Hungarian authoress, Margit Kaffka, endured both similar and different experiences. She had also begun writing poetry, and she continued producing short stories. Her first novel, *Színek és évek (Colors and Years)*,<sup>3</sup> was also published in 1912, though it had appeared serially in 1911. The other works followed in rapid succession; by the end of 1918, when Cather had just begun to taste success with her fourth novel, *My Antonia*,<sup>4</sup> Kaffka, who was seven years younger, had published five novels and one novelette.<sup>5</sup> She was

enthusiastically planning a *magnum opus*, which unfortunately never materialized.

Born in 1880, Kaffka was descended, on her mother's side, from generations of by then impoverished Hungarian gentry. Her father, a lawyer of Moravian ancestry,<sup>6</sup> died when she was six. Kaffka obtained training as a teacher by exchanging a tuition-free education for promising to teach gratis for one year.<sup>7</sup> Subsequently, she enrolled at one of Hungary's finest women's educational institutions, the *Erzsébet Nőiskola* in Budapest. She obtained a certificate enabling her to teach at the *polgári iskola*, an institution designed to provide a solid, practical, secondary education to middle class children. Altogether, she devoted more than fifteen years to full-time teaching; Cather abandoned *that* grind after only five years.<sup>8</sup> While studying for a higher degree, Kaffka started writing poetry; her editor, Oszkár Gellért of *Magyar Génius* (*Hungarian Genius*), collected and published her poems, apparently without even consulting her!<sup>9</sup> A similar "trick" was perpetrated on Cather. She was a young pre-medical student at the University of Nebraska in 1891, when one of her professors, Ebenezer Hunt, submitted her essay on Carlyle to a local newspaper. The shock and pleasure of seeing her name in print as an author lost the world a female doctor but gave it a great writer.<sup>10</sup>

Soon after obtaining her advanced degree in the fall of 1903, Kaffka began teaching at the provincial Hungarian town of Miskolc. Like Cather, she was loved and respected by her students. She attracted a small coterie excitedly discovering Endre Ady, whom Kaffka had known in their native Eastern Hungary. This predated Ady's appearance on the Budapest literary scene by three years. She met and in 1905 married a young forestry engineer, Brunó Frólich, who became the father of her only child, Lacika. (In this respect she differed from Cather, who had vowed never to marry and kept her resolve.) But in the same year, Kaffka wrote a spirited essay defending a woman's privilege *not* to marry.<sup>11</sup>

That year witnessed a very remarkable event. This young woman with a demanding career, and a husband and a household to look after, might have been satisfied being moderately successful as a "poetess" of charming though rather old-fashioned lyrics. But Kaffka became obsessed with the ambition to produce better prose than had any other Hungarian woman before her — and she succeeded. Within five years, she had completely altered not only her literary style, but her lifestyle; in the process she became "liberated." This came about because her dislike of living in Miskolc prompted a move to Budapest. One of her earlier biographers described this period in her life:

In Budapest a different kind of life awaits them (her husband gets a job in the Ministry), and this life is more disorganized, hectic, demanding. They move to Újpest, because this is where she is teaching. Living in a big city brings to the surface previously hidden emotional conflicts, makes them conscious of the fact that they are incompatible. Being both intelligent, sober human beings, they separate in peace and quiet. . .<sup>12</sup>

This was all the outside world knew, all it was permitted to know until very recently. The actual process of Margit Kaffka's "liberation" was not so simple. Now we know much more about what transpired than either Ágoston or anyone else could have known then, thanks to the recently published correspondence of Miksa Fenyő, former editor of the journals *Figyelő* (*Observer*) and *Nyugat* (*West*).<sup>13</sup> After a long and productive career as a Hungarian businessman and as one of the world's most prominent literary editors, Fenyő fled the Nazi tide. In 1944, the daily papers revealed that his former home had been searched and his collection of manuscripts confiscated. After the war, in 1945, he recovered the collection but many irreplaceable pieces had meanwhile mysteriously disappeared. In 1948, he left Hungary for Paris, and eventually arrived in the United States. He wrote: "When we moved from Paris to New York, in the sixth-rate hotel, where we stayed, we were checking our luggage, when we discovered with horror that the case with the letters in it was missing. . ." "With sorrow and shame I am contemplating my loss, the loss of Hungarian literary history. . ."<sup>14</sup>

But buried among the copious notes of a recently published book was the following information:

The story of the "lost" manuscript was told in 1970 by M. Fenyő in the following words: "When we arrived in New York and were settled in the Hotel Wales, I noticed that the suitcase filled with manuscripts is missing. I telephoned all over, but it did not turn up. Three days later, we found it in the hotel basement, where there were hundreds of stray pieces of luggage. Oh yes, but by then the story had gotten out that the suitcase was lost. Then I said, "Let's keep up this myth; otherwise, once word gets out that it turned up, we'll never have a moment's peace. Journalists will come and make demands — and rightfully so — and articles will be published, all in the name of literary history. Let's leave it at this, that it is lost, and when the time comes, we'll come before the public with it." The time came (comments the editor of Fenyő's literary estate) in August of 1970. The whole collection was placed in the Petőfi Literary Museum.<sup>15</sup>

Only one side of the Kaffka-Fenyő correspondence is available because Fenyő failed to copy his own letters. Thus, we are unaware how

the letter exchange started, only that he had initiated the correspondence. She was encouraged by his letter, as her reply of June 11, 1905, suggests, but was concerned whether she would be able to write anything "good." She lamented her ignorance about getting her stories published; she had enough material for a volume. But she had absolutely no access to good books in the cultural wasteland of Miskolc and solicited Fenyő's help and advice. She signed her name, "Fröhliczné" (Mrs. Fröhlich). Most of her subsequent letters soon after her marriage were signed similarly, with a sprinkling of "Fröhliczné Kaffka Margit."

Fenyő's advice and help must have kept her ambition alive. Within two weeks, she had written three more letters. On June 27, she mentioned, as an interesting fact, that she had never been compensated for her author's expenses, such as paper and stamps, although she had published in newspapers commanding sufficient funds. "I'm doing it for the pleasure of it — but I would love to be able to buy an occasional not-budgeted-for 'silly' thing — take a coach-ride, buy a nice fan, book, or picture without being considered an extravagant spendthrift by my husband and by others."<sup>16</sup> In referring to her husband, she never used the literal equivalent *férjem* but the semi-feudal *uram*, "my lord," and sincerely, seriously, as befitted a good Hungarian wife. She described their married life as "not bad," adding, "both of us are working at steady jobs, and 'my man' (*az emberem*) is thrifty, home-loving, but still young, a beginner, and he would feel obliged to object to this sort of thing, were I to use regular funds for it. . ."<sup>17</sup> She was also upset because a submitted work of hers was left unacknowledged for a whole week! She mentioned her husband fondly, telling of their occasional walks in the early morning, his "dear, layman's clinging to beautiful and good things in spite of his being a scientifically trained person."<sup>18</sup> Apparently, he tried to shelter her from the effects of exposing her inner feelings in public, for she wrote: "My husband is right; poems written to please strangers aren't worth what they cost in loss of health."<sup>19</sup>

She continued hating Miskolc with a passion. Asking Fenyő to visit them, she wrote:

Please come, for I am so frustrated with this limited, uncouth, backward and miserable backwater (*ebbe a korlátolt, otromba, elmaradt és nyomorult Mucsába*) that I'm a nervous wreck. . . Even writing nauseates me. In the school, my colleagues, the good mummies, are always sounding off, saying that every woman writer would do better if she would pluck chickens or embroider pillowcases instead. . . Please come and bring news of the outside world. . .<sup>20</sup>

She begged Fenyő to arrange for payment *now* — she wanted to use the money for a trip “up” to the capital, trying to arrange for a transfer to a Budapest school. (Budapest is always “up” in Hungarian idiom.) She penned this revealing passage:

Your sober arguments, dear friend, did not ruin my determination, I *must* go up, and I *will* go up, whatever the cost. I'm glad I see clearly and that you were so frank (presumably trying to warn her of the possible consequences of her planned trip) but I will go up, for this here is worse. If my husband loves me truly, he will not stay here out of sheer prejudice. Maybe my fate will take a turn for the worse, but isn't life like that? An alternation of good and bad. Your part in the tragedy is an elegant one: you are the 'warner' before the crisis, making the audience believe that it is possible for the heroine to turn back. But I must take flight now, or else the door may open too late, when I no longer will have wings to fly with.<sup>21</sup>

This letter was dated January 8, 1906 — barely six months after the start of their correspondence. Apparently, in all this time, she never met Fenyő in person. As “corresponding editor” of *Nyugat*, he had become her faithful confidant, a position of honor, incidentally, which he held for many other authors as well, both male and female. And he did all this while occupying a full-time position as a member of the Hungarian business elite.

In February of 1906, she congratulated Ady on his epoch-making volume, *Új versek* (*New Poems*), and asked for a copy. On August 2, 1906, still from Miskolc, she notified Fenyő of the birth of her son. In September, she was hatching plans to further the cause of her Budapest transfer. By now, she believed that spending another year in Miskolc would drive her mad. She knew she would inevitably be disappointed, but “that's how it must be.”<sup>22</sup>

But her husband, Brunó, dragged his feet. On September 20, 1906, we read:

My dear hubby is giving me much trouble now. He has excellent connections (in the Ministry) and could easily get transferred . . . but he is hesitating, saying that in Budapest I will be even less of a wife to him than here . . . that he will lose his travel allowance, and that it makes no difference to him that *I* will make more money there. He has no inclination to reduce his own expectations of life to suit the ideas of another person, ideas which mean nothing to him — all this is natural and understandable.<sup>23</sup>

But she hated her job and knew she could not continue in it. By January 2, 1907, Brunó had decided to transfer. She hoped *he* might precede her— she was not worried lest another woman snag him in the big wicked city. Although not jealous, she was far from indifferent; she spoke fondly of him now. She wrote proudly of her little son, and discussed books avidly. By March 6, 1907, Brunó had moved to the capital.

Her last letter from Miskolc was written in the spring of 1907. She was happy to be able to work with Fenyő again. Her request for sick leave had been rejected, and she quoted the letter from a councillor notifying her of this fact: “It’s nice to be scribbling some verses, but one can’t get leave of absence while one is healthy.”<sup>24</sup> But she was *not* healthy; her difficult pregnancy and delivery had impaired her health, and she had the medical reports to support her claim. Yet her *real* need was of the soul. “How can I write? Three classes, with seventy papers in each, every two weeks.”<sup>25</sup>

The next letter came from Újpest, a Budapest suburb, in January of 1908. She was loaded down with work. She planned to write for *Nyugat*, which had just started operations. (Her previous correspondence with Fenyő was written while he was still editor of *Figyelő* [Observer].) Then in October, she complained that for the past two months she had not even taken pen in hand, partly because of illness, partly because of overwork. Anticipating Virginia Woolf by twenty-one years, Kaffka wrote wistfully: “Maybe now it will be a little better; my grandmother will come to keep house, and in the new apartment I will have four walls of my own, (each of them one meter long!) among which I can huddle with some sense of privacy. . .”<sup>26</sup>

In November of 1908, she provided the following insight into her life, presumably in response to Fenyő’s reproach that she was neglecting the journal: “As for your accusations, nothing interests me more than *Nyugat* — and the only reasons I’m not present every third day and in every other issue are household cares, paper-grading, the task of moving house, and other beauties in life. . .”<sup>27</sup>

Late in 1909, Kaffka wrote to Fenyő: “I’m so glad about my book,”<sup>28</sup> which was published in 1911 and may have been at the printer’s. Henceforth, she signed her name as plain “Margit Kaffka.” Her divorce came in 1910, but just at this time, an interval of several years interrupted the correspondence, except for a few lines written in August of 1911. Full connections resumed in March of 1913. No wonder she lacked time for letters. This was her most fruitful period: she published

two volumes of poetry, two collections of short stories, and two of her best novels, *Színék és évek*<sup>29</sup> and *Mária évei*.<sup>30</sup>

This copious output was produced — in contrast with Cather's relative leisure as a freelance artist — under adverse conditions which stagger the imagination. Kaffka left a vivid account in her poem, "Örökkön a mérlegen" ("Forever in the Balance").<sup>31</sup> Each of its three longer stanzas describes one of the three careers she was trying to pursue simultaneously, balancing them like a juggler. The first stanza evokes the soul-killing robot of her daily travel to school, teaching the unruly youngsters, and dragging herself home again in the afternoons. The second stanza records the conflict between her attempts to write and her desire to spend time with her son. The third stanza provides a moving insight into her writing career. It shows her struggling with difficult materials late into the night, until her strength gave out. The poem ends abruptly with a couplet:

*Sötét hajnalba ébresztőóra csereg.  
Robotolni megyek.*

*In the dark dawn an alarm-clock rings,  
I go off, roboting.*

In a letter to Ady, written during this period, she complained: "For five months now, I've been getting four hours of sleep nightly."<sup>32</sup> Luckily, in 1912, she was granted a two-year leave of absence at the behest of the renowned mayor, István Bárczy, of Budapest.

After four years of solitary living and caring for her boy, she met her only great love. In 1914, she fell in love with Ervin Bauer, the younger brother of Béla Balázs, one of her literary friends. The young man was a medical doctor and several years her junior. Like a schoolgirl in love, she let herself be swept away to Italy. Her next letter to Fenyő, written on July 20, 1914, from Florence mentioned her third full-length novel, *Állomások* (*Stations*),<sup>33</sup> published serially in 1914, but in book form only in 1917. Two collections of short stories had appeared in between. The outbreak of World War I a week later found the pair in Perugia.

In her poem, "Záporos folytonos levél" ("Rain-like, Continuous Letter"),<sup>34</sup> she recalled the sequence of these events:

"Most boldog vagyok!"— ott mondtam; te tudod, hogy először  
/ mondtam.

Te szeretőn betakartál, mert hirtelen zizzent hűvös szél;  
És reggelre jött a hír, menned kell, zajlik a világ,

Lavina indul, orkán zúg, delirizál az élet.  
(Lásd, szó köztünk maradjon: megmondom, mért volt az egész,  
Mert életemben egyszer én: "Boldog vagyok!" — ezt mondtam.)

"Now I am happy!" — I said it there; you know that I said it  
for the first time.

Lovingly, you covered me, for suddenly hissed a cool wind;  
And in the morning came the news, you must go, the world erupted.  
An avalanche rolls, hurricane swirls, life suffers deliriums.  
(Please, keep my secret! I'll tell you why it all happened.  
Because for the first time in my life I had said, "I am happy.")

Ervin was immediately mobilized. They returned home, married in August of 1914, but had only a few days together before he went on active duty. Twice, he was returned home wounded; on both occasions she hurried to his bedside and nursed him back to health but suffered agonies of worry. These concerns are documented in her short novel, "Lírai jegyzetek egy évről" ("Lyric Notes About a Year")<sup>35</sup> a little masterpiece much ahead of its time. Another anti-war novel, *Két nyár* (*Two Summers*), was published in 1916.<sup>36</sup>

Toward the end of the war Ervin was transferred to a Temesvár military hospital and she joined him there whenever she could. In his laboratory, where she liked to assist him, the couple had themselves photographed. The officer's insignia are protruding over the collar of his medical smock; she is gravely, expertly adjusting a microscope. (Like Cather, she was fascinated by medicine.) The white smock covers all but her beautiful, eloquent hands and her lovely, serious face. In her last letters to Fenyő, she mentioned her husband's medical discoveries in the same breath with her own plans for her last full-length novel.<sup>37</sup> Her husband was doing important work on the adrenal gland; if she sold her new novel, she would buy a good, genuine Zeiss microscope for her poor "lord." Love, money worries, concerns about obtaining food, were all blended with admiration for Mihály Babits' translation of Tennyson's "Maud." Grief over dead friends and relatives, and hopes for the coming of peace dominated her letter, but now, at last, she had some free time in which to write. She was more businesslike now; she knew her worth.<sup>38</sup>

Her last letter to Fenyő was dated April 23, 1917, a year and a half before her death. It was all hurried business about a projected collection of poems; one publisher, the best (Kner), had no paper . . . Translations of her works into German were proceeding . . . She stopped, as if for a pause — and that ended her letters to *Nyugat*.<sup>39</sup> For the rest, we must turn to other sources. We know that finally, in the fall of 1918, just a few



months before the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Margit and Ervin moved to Budapest. Little Lacika, then twelve, went to live with them. (He had been in a Transylvanian boarding school.) During this time she dedicated some of the most beautiful love poems in Hungarian literature to her husband.<sup>40</sup> Ervin was assigned to the new Pozsony clinic, but before he had a chance to assume his new duties, the Czechs occupied the city. So, torn between hope and discouragement, they anticipated war's end.

On the last Sunday of November, 1918, Aladár Schöpflin, the renowned literary critic, visited Margit Kaffka at home. She welcomed him hospitably. For the first time in her life she was approaching a "still point," her marriage happy, her son with her, the war, with its terrors, over. She eagerly anticipated the future. An ambitious novel about Josephus Flavius had been fully researched and only needed to be written. While they were conversing, Lacika complained of a headache, and his mother immediately put him to bed. Schöpflin left the Kaffka home with a wonderfully warm feeling. She was so happy, so serene. . . The next day, he and their literary friends were shocked to learn that mother and son had been hospitalized with a raging fever. It was the dreaded Spanish influenza. Exactly a week later, the sad news reached the authors assembled for the founding meeting of the Vörösmarty Society: Margit Kaffka was dead. Lacika followed the next day.<sup>41</sup> The funeral was held at Farkasrét Cemetery in the afternoon of December 4. One of the farewell addresses was to be delivered by Dezső Kosztolányi. At one o'clock he and his wife were both felled by the epidemic, which nearly claimed their lives.<sup>43</sup> Endre Ady, Hungary's great poet, was on his deathbed and died during the next month. Kaffka's funeral orations were delivered by Hungary's two most prominent literary figures who were not themselves sick, the poet Mihály Babits and the novelist Zsigmond Móricz.

When Kaffka died, Cather still commanded only a relatively small audience. *My Antonia*, eventually a recognized classic, had a poor sale.<sup>44</sup> Success was still remote, awaiting the publication of *One of Ours* in 1922, and the Pulitzer Prize in 1923.<sup>45</sup> Thereafter, Cather enjoyed more or less clear sailing. She wrote seven more novels, several more collections of short stories, and reached a serene, prosperous old age, with death claiming her at seventy-four.

It is idle to speculate what Kaffka might have achieved had she lived longer. At the time of her death she was only thirty-eight. Yet some of Hungary's most prominent writers had recognized her as their equal, and as Hungary's most talented female author. With her modern,

impressionistic style, she had re-vitalized the Hungarian novel at a time when all her male contemporaries, with the exception of Zsigmond Móricz, were still shackled by old-fashioned nineteenth-century models.<sup>46</sup> Now, almost seventy-five years after her first appearance on the literary scene, her reputation in Hungary is as solid as it is shining. Her novels have been translated into four languages, some of her stories into seven. Regrettably, English is not among them.<sup>47</sup>

## NOTES

1. (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1976), "Money, the Job, and Little Women: Female Realism," Chap. 4, pp. 67-89.
2. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1912).
3. (Budapest: Franklin-Társulat, 1912).
4. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918).
5. *Kaffka Margit regényei (The Novels of Margit Kaffka)*, (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1968).
6. The word "Kaffka," originally spelled "gawga" and more frequently "kafka," means "magpie" in Czech.
7. At a charity convent at Sztatmár and Miskolc. Her student years form the basis of her novel *Hangyaboly (Ant Colony)*. See note 37.
8. E. K. Brown, *Willa Cather: A Critical Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), p. 95.
9. *Verseik (Poems)*, (Budapest: Róbert Lampel, 1903).
10. Brown, *Willa Cather*, p. 57.
11. *Hullámzó élet (The Waves of Life)*, (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1959). That essay, her maiden effort in journalism, would do credit to any feminist author writing today. ("Azért sem az utolsó szó." "No, not the last word").
12. Julián Ágoston, *Kaffka Margit*, (Budapest: J. Heinrich, 1934), p. 4.
13. All of Kaffka's letters are cited from this edition. The story of these letters is so interesting that it will be worth a digression to piece it together here from scattered notes throughout the recent book, Erzsébet Vezér, ed., *Feljegyzések és levelek a Nyugatról (Notes and Letters Concerning Nyugat)*, (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1975).
14. He indulged in another paragraph of breast-beating. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
15. The book was published in 1975, and I was able to obtain it in 1976. There were hundreds of letters, from practically every major contemporary literary personage, but my discussion will be limited to the treasure trove of Margit Kaffka's letters to Miksa Fenyő. *Ibid.*, p. 468.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 391. His monthly salary of 80 forints was considered excellent pay for those days.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 392.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, p. 395.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 396.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 397.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 401.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 402.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 406.
25. *Ibid.*,
26. *Ibid.*, p. 409. Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* was published in 1929.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 440. Ellen Moers quotes a similarly revealing letter by Harriet Beecher Stowe. Moers, *Literary Women*, pp. 3–4.
28. M. Fenyő, *Feljegyzések*, p. 411. Presumably, Kaffka meant her first volume of short stories, *Csendes válságok (Quiet Crises)*, (Budapest: Politzer, 1911).
29. See note 3.
30. (*Mária's Years*), (Budapest: Franklin-Társulat, 1912).
31. *Válogatott művei (Selected Works)*, (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1956), pp. 52–53.
32. Jenő Dóczy and Gyula Földessy, eds., *Ady-Múzeum (Ady-Museum)*, (Budapest, Athenaeum, 1924–25), pp. 11 and 202.
33. (Budapest: Franklin-Társulat, 1917).
34. *Válogatott művei*, pp. 72–76.
35. *Nyugat* (XIX, 1915).
36. (Budapest: Nyugat, 1916).
37. *Hangyaboly (Ant Colony)*, (Budapest: Nyugat, 1917).
38. M. Fenyő, *Feljegyzések*, p. 418.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 424.
40. “Záporos folytonos levél,” “Te színed előtt,” “Litánia,” Kaffka, *Válogatott művei*, pp. 72–77 and 80–81.
41. Aladár Schöpflin, “Kaffka Margit most tíz éve halt meg,” (“Margit Kaffka Died Ten Years Ago”), *Nyugat* (XXI, 1928), 710–712.
42. Her husband left Hungary in 1919 and moved to Leningrad. His successful biomedical researches have brought him belated recognition. He disappeared during the Stalinist purges. (Personal communication to author by György Bodnár).
43. Mrs. Dezső Kosztolányi, *Kosztolányi Dezső (Dezső Kosztolányi)*, (Budapest: Révai, 1938), p. 227.
44. Brown, *Willa Cather*, p. 213.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
46. This passage was translated by the author from Dr. György Bodnár's Postscript to the 1973 paperback edition of *Színek és évek*. Dr. Bodnár, member of the Institute for Literary Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, is an authority on Kaffka.

In the longer prose genres, the Hungarian literature of the turn of the century reached only an experimental stage. . . The true turning point in this genre (the novel) was represented by Zsigmond Móricz, simultaneously with Margit Kaffka. I want to anticipate the charge of hairsplitting, and my witness is Zsigmond Móricz himself who received *Színek és évek* with the enthusiasm of a brother. He was the first to declare about it, “A critic of society can draw many more conclusions from it about the workings of society than from life itself.” Thus, the steps taken by these two in the writings of novels must be considered a contest among comrades, not antagonists. In this spirit, we can state objectively that *Színek és évek* was preceded (among the novel of Móricz) only by *Sárrany* (1910), retained in memory as an immature masterpiece. The first full-valued novel of Móricz, *Az Isten háta mögött*, appeared in 1911, at a time when Kaffka's great novel was already published serially in *Vasárnapi Újság*. . . Of course, the value of *Színek és évek* is not determined by its chronological precedence — that

would merely ensure it a place as a pioneering historical document. Even a reader who is ignorant of the context of literary history recognizes this novel as one which is both rich and perfect (pp. 239–240).

Nothing was further from my mind than to imply that Kaffka was a better novelist than Móricz. Móricz was the most illustrious novelist Hungary produced in the twentieth century — possibly ever. I was merely stressing Kaffka's chronological precedence.

47. An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Hungarian Educators Association at the University of Indiana, Bloomington, Indiana, in April, 1977. The following questions regarding Kaffka have been asked of me since:

Q 1 /What work or works of Kaffka ought to be placed into the hands of the English-speaking reader first? A. The ideal solution would be a modest volume, *The Portable Margit Kaffka*. This should include, first and foremost, *Színek és évek*, in a good translation, followed by the other members of the trilogy, either *in toto* or in generous excerpts (*Mária évei*, *Állomások*). Secondly, absolutely essential is *Lírai jegyzetek egy évről*, a pacifist and feminist document of the first order of magnitude. The other short novels are optional. Thirdly, I would include her free-verse poems — or at least some of them — and perhaps a few others in the traditional modes, for comparison. Lastly, a number of short stories and a few essays. . . a much needed volume.

Q 2 /With what other twentieth-century woman writers can she be compared? Specifically, which of her works would most nearly parallel which works of Cather? A. There is — to my knowledge — no twentieth-century woman writer with whom Kaffka could be compared without doing injustice to both. The references to Cather were made to provide contrast as much as to provide comparisons. Cather was so much more *fortunate*, having lived in America, than a Hungarian, before and during an eventually lost war. Specific comparisons between individual works may be made, always keeping in mind the differences, however. Of Cather's books, the one closest to *Színek és évek* would be *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* (1940). Only toward the end of her long life did Cather reach back into the history of her family — mother, grandmother, great-grandmother — ; Kaffka did it in her first book. Consequently the effect is very different. Cather's is the final note of summing up, Kaffka's the clarion call, the hoisting of the flag. Similar comparison-contrasts may be made with *The Song of the Lark* and *Állomások*, and several other pairs of works as well.

## **A Hungarian View of the World, Expressed in a Faustian Tragedy: Some Considerations upon Madách's *The Tragedy of Man***

Esther H. Lesér

Olvasd újra művét, s úgy fog hatni reád,  
mint valami véres aktualitás, korod és  
életed legégetőbb problémáival találko-  
zol; szédülten és remegő ujjakkal teszed le  
a könyved. A versek, amik nehézkesek és  
avultak voltak megírásuk napján, frissek  
ma, mintha tegnap keltek volna.

Mihály Babits

For someone desiring an objective insight into the Hungarian mental climate, Imre Madách's *Az ember tragédiája* is an ideal choice. Its translation into various languages has proved its wide appeal, and Hungarian scholars have acclaimed it as one of the masterpieces of their country's literature. This work conveys the spirit of the Hungarian *Geist* admirably, while simultaneously it reflects Western European cultural trends. It typifies, to some extent, Western literature involving one nation's absolute rule over another with an independent cultural heritage of its own. Both intellectually and spiritually, Hungary has belonged to a Western world which seldom thought of it as a member of its cultural body. This study will attempt to show that Hungary has been part and parcel of Western culture for some time, by analyzing the connections linking Madách's *Az ember tragédiája*, Goethe's *Faust*, and Hegel's "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte."

At the start of the nineteenth century, Hungary floundered in backward conservatism, a situation unrelieved by the spate of revolutions in 1830. By 1837, when Madách began his studies in Pest under the tutelage of the progressive professor, Antal Virozsil, the spirit of modern enlightenment<sup>1</sup> and nationalism had gripped Hungary's young intellectuals. They were influenced by three leading figures of this movement:

Count István Széchenyi, Lajos Kossuth, and Ferenc Deák. Each disagreed on the means by which Hungary should reach its goal of independence. The aristocratic Széchenyi believed in a spiritual revival, opposed radicalism, and attempted to raise Hungary's social, economic, and cultural levels. Kossuth, a member of the middle nobility, was an unusually gifted orator and became the trusted idol of both the intelligentsia and the peasantry. He demanded Hungary's unconditional freedom from the Habsburg monarchy. Deák, a member of the lower nobility, advocated passive resistance, while he worked toward reestablishing Hungary's constitutional rights within the monarchy. Deák's goal was achieved in 1867, whereas Széchenyi succumbed to pressure and committed suicide in 1860. Kossuth died an exile in 1894.

Madách felt most at home among Kossuth's followers. Devotion to Hungarian independence, the most pressing concern of his life, was reflected in his poems and student works, "Csak tréfa" and "Csák végnapjai." He began to practice law in the early 1840s under István Sréter, who shared his views, and married what he thought was his "ideal woman," Erzsike Fráter. He believed she did not subscribe to the "marriage market" mentality typical in small-town society, to which he alludes in the London scene of *Az ember tragédiája*. Madách was to be bitterly disappointed in Erzsike, a blow which deeply influenced his artistic concept of woman.

The brief and tragic revolution led by Kossuth's followers in 1848–1849 was defeated through Russian intervention. Haynau, called the Hyena of Brescia because of his atrocities in Italy, executed Count Lajos Batthyány, the prime minister, and thirteen officers in Arad on October 6, 1849, a day of Hungarian national mourning ever since. The incarceration of more than a thousand officers reintroduced Habsburg despotism. Others, Kossuth among them, fled into exile. Madách's poetry burned with emotion at this time; he had not fought, but he had been jailed in 1852–1853 for protecting a participant, János Rákóczy. Madách's family was shattered by conflicting loyalties. When he emerged from prison, his estranged wife Erzsike rejected him. During those bitter days in prison Madách studied Goethe's *Faust*.

Madách was a writer with varying strains in his literary heritage. He qualified as a Romantic, though his Romanticism was not modelled on the neo-Platonic school of Novalis. Madách was firmly rooted in this earth, though his fiery emotionalism suggests the *Sturm und Drang* poets of the preceding century. He also knew the major Western writers, especially Shakespeare, Byron, Hugo, Lamartine, Dante, Schiller, Goethe, and Hegel; among the contemporary German poets he favoured Heine.

During the writing of *Az ember tragédiája*, in 1859–1860, Madách was ill. Depressed about the fate of his country, humiliated at her defeat, and separated from his wife, he urged, along with Kossuth, that Hungary not yield an inch from her 1848 demands to Vienna. He dispatched his finished manuscript to the greatest contemporary Hungarian poet, János Arany, who returned it with nearly one thousand corrections and praise. *Az ember tragédiája* was first published in January 1862.<sup>2</sup> It was presented on stage in 1883, nineteen years after Madách's death.<sup>3</sup>

At first glance, the work resembles a Faustian tragedy. Elements of the God/Devil/Man perspective; the theme of human striving; Man's relation to Woman; Man's wandering through the universe; as well as God's positive intervention at the end, all seem to indicate that the work was structured on the model of Goethe's *Faust*. Indeed, Madách did not hesitate to adapt materials from other authors. The heavenly choruses; the jewel motif in the London scene; the secondary plot of Lucifer and Eve analogizing Mephistopheles' and Martha's scenes, are indeed all derived from Goethe's *Faust*.<sup>4</sup>

Close examination reveals, however, that these similarities pertain mainly to setting and method of presentation rather than to substance. Madách's concept of the theme and expression of his message differed greatly from Goethe's. First, the *Weltbild*: in *Faust*, the three-dimensional God/Man/Devil trilogy closely resembles the central concept of a mystery play. God is obviously omnipotent and omniscient regarding His creations, including Man, and even Mephistopheles. But Mephistopheles is a higher creation than Man; he has wider insight than Faust; Mephistopheles is the catalyst who challenges Faust's free will. In Goethe's work, Faust's surviving capacity for love is of the greatest importance, whereas Mephistopheles has rejected love and is thus incapable of love, God's principal quality. Goethe shows God addressing Mephistopheles as follows:

Nun gut, es sei dir überlassen!  
Zieh diesen Geist von seinem Urquell ab,  
Und für' ihn, kannst du ihn erfassen,  
Auf deinem Wege mit herab,  
Und steh beschämt, wenn du bekennen musst:  
Ein guter Mensch in seinem dunklen Drange  
Ist sich des rechten Weges wohl bewusst.

(*Faust*, p. 18, 323–9)

This passage in Goethe's *Faust* shows man's position; although he is mortal and incapable of seeing beyond his human boundaries, he has

God-given capabilities which enable him to meet Mephistopheles' challenge, a challenge that is simply an appeal for fair play:

Solang' er auf der Erde lebt,  
Solange sei dir's nicht verboten  
Es irrt der Mensch,  
Solang' er strebt.

(*Faust*, p. 18, 315–9)

Faust's final attainment is unselfish love, the means of gaining eternal life. The existential theme and setting in Goethe's *Faust* are aimed at the three dimensions of the Divine (Heaven), the Mephistophelian (Hell), and the Faustian (Earth).

In *Az ember tragédiája*, after the introductory chorus of the angels, the scene between God and Lucifer reveals a basic difference between Goethe's and Madách's work; here Lucifer is "a tagadás ősi szelleme," and is actually one of the components of God's nature itself; Lucifer's existence is the negative aspect of the Divine. God's responses to Lucifer are rather unconvincing arguments. He appears as an oppressive, absolute ruler rather than as an omnipotent Lord. Lucifer defines his own nature:

Győztél felettem, mert az végzetem,  
Hogy harcaimban bukjam szüntelen.  
De új erővel felkeljek megint.  
Te anyagot szültél, én tért nyerék,  
Az élet mellett ott van a halál,  
A boldogságnál a lehangolás,  
A fénynél árnyék, kétség és remény.  
Ott állok, látod, hol te, mindenütt,  
S ki így ösmérlek, még hódoljak-e?

(*Az ember tragédiája*, I, p. 14)

Lucifer's negative, cynical character and his spirit of rebellion in many ways parallels Adam's — and/or Madách's — view of the world; Lucifer addresses God:

Nem úgy, ily könnyen nem löksz el magadtól,  
Mint hitvány eszközt, mely felesleges lett.  
Együtt teremténk: osztályrészemet

and he goes on:



Fukar kezekkel mérsz, de hisz nagy úr vagy —  
S egy talpalatnyi föld elég nekem.  
Hol a tagadás lábát megveti,  
Világodat meg fogja dönteni.

(*Az ember tragédiája*, I, p. 15)

Typically, God has no rebuttal to this; it is the faithful angels who sing out their curse on Lucifer to end the first scene.<sup>5</sup> Since Lucifer represents negation and is part of an original element of the universe, his significance is quite different from that of Goethe's Mephistopheles. Madách's Lucifer represents a dialectic antithesis to God the ruler, having an equal chance to rule the synthesis of the outcome of existence.

The yearning of the two heroes also bears examination: Goethe's Faust is an elderly scholar who has learned all he could from books, yet who years to learn more: "Dass ich erkenne, was die Welt/ Im Innersten zusammenhält" (*Faust*, p. 20, 382-3). To attain this goal, he places a bet with Mephistopheles:

Weird' ich beruhigt je mich auf ein Faulbett legen,  
So sei es gleich um mich getan!  
Kannst du mich schmeichelnd je belügen,  
Dass ich mir selbst gefallen mag,  
Kannst du mich mit Genuss betrügen,  
Das sei für mich der letzte Tag!  
Die Wette biet' ich!

(*Faust*, p. 57, 1692-8)

This passage parallels God's earlier dialogue with Mephistopheles. No marvel may ever overshadow Faust's God-given capacity to strive; in each phrase, Faust's striving, however unconscious, encompasses the three dimensions of God's Universal Creation.

Since Faust was a human and an earthling, Goethe did not have to make his God face the embarrassment of being betrayed by man in Paradise, and so Faust never rebels against God directly. Madách's Adam, however, was full of ambition for knowledge and eternal life. His eagerness was so intense that Madách failed to invest Eve with her traditional role as temptress. Like a rebellious Prometheus, Adam grasps the apple, the first tool of independence, without intending to share it with anyone, not even Eve. He desires self-identity, and the right to live or die as he wishes; he never repents his sin against God; all he demands from Lucifer constantly is his rightful share of wisdom.

Here, the traditional God is crippled by the existence of Negation (Lucifer), and is consequently half disabled in all his manifestations. Actually, Adam's character stands closer to Negation (Lucifer) than to God, because of his desperation over his own limitation as a man. He is unable to give or to receive love before having achieved self-liberation.

Goethe's God said of Man, "Es irrt der Mensch, so lang er strebt." "Ember: küzdj' és bízva bízzál!" were God's last words to Madách's Adam. These lines show the basic difference between the two works: "streben" means "to strive" — "igyekezz" in Hungarian means honest endeavour whereas "küzdj" means "to fight and struggle." Adam's desperate struggle must be carried on, chaining him to an endless earthly existence because, limited by the hopelessness of his task, he stubbornly focuses upon the sole issues of self-liberation and identification. This passionate desperation has much in common with Lucifer's, except that Adam is not pure negation, as Lucifer is. Hope, even against all logical odds, remains a dialectically extant possibility for Adam. Goethe's *Faust* therefore offers a conclusion, a restful final message, whereas Adam's restless spirit is constantly present on earth, dramatically pursuing his yearning.

Madách's Eve does not parallel Adam's qualities. Representing the fluctuation of the human mob, she declines into subhumanity in scene 14 with the rest of mankind. In 1857, years before composing *Az ember tragédiája*, Madách wrote to his friend Szontagh: ". . . és Ádám a teremtés óta folyvást más és más alakban jelen meg, de alapjában mindig ugyanazon gyarló féreg marad a még gyarlóbb Évával oldalán."<sup>6</sup> His contemporary Károly Bérczy quoted Madách: "Anyámnak köszönheti Éva, hogy kihívóbb színekben nem állítottam elő."<sup>7</sup> Still, Eve is limited to strictly sexual and maternal roles, and these clearly do not resemble the role of Goethe's Gretchen.

The formal presentations of *Faust* and *Az ember tragédiája* are similar; the protagonists wander in the universe with the "Siebenmeilentiefeln" of the Romantics, and the reader is able to visualize the message of each actor by the various episodes. Goethe retains neither chronology nor historical authenticity in his scenes. He maintains the same limitless focus as does the whole God/Mephistopheles/Faust complex. The logical and historical chronology of the visions in *Az ember tragédiája* focuses upon its own hidden message, which is completely unrelated to and even unconcerned with the universal message of Goethe's *Faust*.

Madách's depression over personal and national problems, combined with his reading of Hegel, especially the "Vorlesungen über die Philo-

sophie der Weltgeschichte,” reinforced his ideal about the unification and liberation of a nation through a strong leader. But he did not accept Hegel’s notion of the leader’s loss of individuality by immersing it in the *Volksgeist*. A summary of these Hegelian concepts is germane here:

Kant’s Republic of Wills, the English concern with individual rights — all this betokens for Hegel the fragmentation that is the death of a culture. . . . Individualism is for Hegel a symptom of a nation’s decline.

The greatness of a nation begins with its unification as a nation — that is the only way it can acquire a *Volksgeist* with which to participate in the development of World-Spirit. Such a unification is possible only with a strong leader . . .<sup>8</sup>

Madách’s refusal to accept Hegel’s formulations completely was expressed throughout his entire life and work. One Hegelian point he found most incompatible was the rejection of Kantian individualism. This is indicated very strongly in the phalanster scene of *Az ember tragédiája*. Whereas for Faust people gain importance in his last moments of life, Adam is intensely involved with people in all scenes, from four through fourteen, and he strongly expresses his disdain for the mob. Adam’s feelings here echo Madách’s own, since he and his friends felt paralyzed in their attempts to help their people owing to the lack of popular support. He wrote: “Gyáva nép, megvetlek, átkozott! Szégyen fejedre. Te igának születéltél, igában görbede fejed, midőn először láttad a napvilágot, én veled többé semmit sem akarok. Elhagyva állok, híveim sehol.”<sup>9</sup>

Some Hegelian concepts were nonetheless deeply rooted in Madách’s mind; he preferred the qualities of the crowd to the virtues of the leader, in terms reminiscent of the Hegelian dialectic. This pattern gives meaning to scenes four through fourteen, as well as to his concept of the triangularity of the God/Lucifer/Adam relationship. Madách’s, or Adam’s, fervour also evokes Hegel’s reference to the leader’s ardour in liberating the *Volksgeist*: “So müssen wir überhaupt sagen dass nichts grosses in der Welt ohne Leidenschaft vollbracht worden ist.”<sup>10</sup> This line, translated into Magyar, repeatedly occurs in Madách’s personal writings. This urge toward achieving self-identity and to bestow identity on his characters became both Madách’s goal in life and the message of his art. In a speech, “A nemzetiségek ügyében,” written in 1861 but never delivered, he said,

Minden újonnan feltűnt megítélésében tehát, vajjon a kornak vezéreszméje-e és, mi értelemben, egyedüli mértékül annak képessége szolgálhat, a szabadság ügye előmozdításában.<sup>11</sup>

Madách's concept of "haladás" (progress) is also dialectically stimulated toward a synthesis of achieving "szabadság" (liberty); he explained in a letter to János Erdélyi:

Ádám mindenütt megbukik ugyan . . . de bár kétségbeesve azt tartja, hogy eddig tett minden kísérlet erőfogyasztás volt, azért mégis fejlődése mindig előbbre s előbbre ment, az emberiség haladt, ha a küzdő egyén nem is vette észre. . . . Az Eszme folyton fejlődik s győz, nemesedik.<sup>12</sup>

This idea conforms to dialectical logic only if the concept of Hope is kept credibly relevant.

Madách thus sees that "küzdés" (struggle), having the goal of "haladás" (progress), ultimately equals "szabadság" (liberty). He defines "szabadság" in these terms: "A szabadság alatt értem hazám minden beolvasztástól megóvott integritását." Whereas Goethe, the Westerner, permitted his Faust to consume his entire existence by traversing the three dimensions of the Universe, Madách, the Hungarian freedom fighter, knew that such an approach would be aimless before attaining the initial platforms of self-identification and self-liberation. Thus he dispatched his Adam on an aimless, paradoxical earthbound life-voyage, with only the words of a distant God to sustain him: "ember: küzdj' és bízva bízzál!" This trust or hope was to be the source of his strength in his determination to struggle onward.

After writing *Az ember tragédiája*, Madách became more hopeful. His last work, *Mózes*, showed a more conciliatory mood to Hegel's concept of the hero. Indeed, one passage in *Mózes* might be taken as the last message from Adam in his earthly wandering:

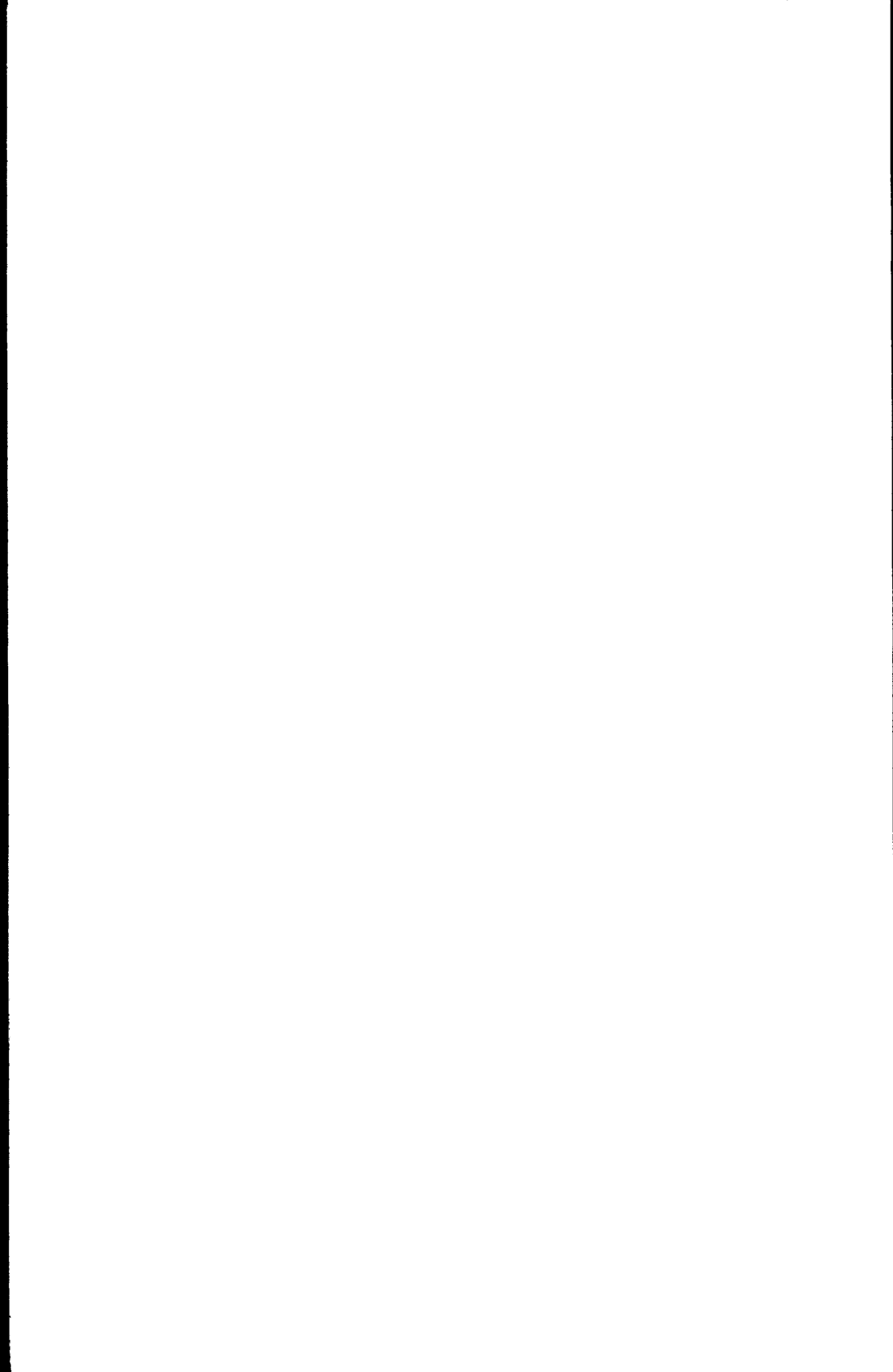
. . . kit az Úr választ eszközévé,  
Az megszűnt lenni többé önmagáé,  
S a nép szívében ver csak élete.<sup>13</sup>

Madách was a poet of ideas, but not a philosopher; a romantic with a powerful sense of realism; and a Western European intellectual continually striving for freedom. To grant him his identity as belonging to the West, means to understand in part the prototypical "Hungarian Tragedy."

#### NOTES

1. This term is often described as "liberal," but it should not be confused with current connotations.
2. This edition is dated 1861; the second edition, 1863.
3. Imre Madách, *Az ember tragédiája* (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1972) is the edition used in this study.

4. J. W. von Goethe, "Faust," vol. 3, *Goethes Werke* (Hamburg: Christian Wegner Verlag, 1964), is the edition used here.
5. Madách's best friend, Pál Szontagh, was described by Károly Balogh: "Szontaghban két tulajdonság uralkodott: nagy műveltséggel párosult értelem és a páratlan cinizmus." [Károly Horváth, "Madách Imre," *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 62 (1958): 460.] Leading Hungarian scholars have suggested that Madách modelled Lucifer on his friend Szontagh.
6. Horváth, "Madách Imre," p. 473.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Leo Rauch, *The Philosophy of Hegel* (New York: n.p., 1955), p. 88.
9. Horváth, "Madách Imre," p. 473.
10. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte," in *Sämtliche Werke*, 20 vols. (Stuttgart: Fr. Frommann Verlag, 1961), 11: 52.
11. Horváth, "Madách Imre," p. 491.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Madách, *Mózes*, I, 737, quoted in Horváth, "Madách Imre," p. 500.



## Gyula Illyés' Poetry of Hope

Károly Nagy

Gyula Illyés is only two years younger than the twentieth century, yet ever since the mid-1940s he has been considered one of the "Great Old Men" of Hungarian literature. His immense prestige and increasing world renown is due to his abilities to integrate within himself the philosophies and traditions of the East and of the West of Europe, the views and approaches of the rational intellectual and of the lyric dreamer, the actions of *homo politicus* and *homo aestheticus*. In an interview Illyés confided: "With all the literary genre with which I experimented I wanted to serve one single cause: that of a unified people and the eradication of exploitation and misery. I always held literature to be only a tool." Five sentences later, however, he exclaimed: "I would forego every single other work of mine for one poem! Poetry is my first, my primary experience and it has always remained that." (Edit Erki, ed., *Látogatóban [Visiting]*, Budapest: Gondolat, 1968). The committed, the engaged spokesman of his people coexists in Illyés with the poet. It is, therefore, the concerned intellectual leader as well as the artist who has to be considered when Illyés writes, when he articulates some vital issues in his poems.

One of Illyés' important themes since the mid-1960s has been the redefinition of human weakness as potential strength. There may be strength in the weakness of individuals, small groups, and communities. This apparent drawback may yet provide mankind with the hope of surviving absolute powers, impersonal and dehumanized institutions, even atomic annihilation. The title poem of his 1965 volume, *Dőlt vitorla* is a first attempt to define this hope of the weak:

### Swaying Sail

The yard, the long sailyard  
crackles and sways,  
it almost mows the foams  
while the bark — dashes ahead!

Look: when does the mast  
and sail fly forward  
most triumphantly?  
When it heels the lowest!

The ancient Aesopian parable about the reed which bows to the wind and survives, while the proud oak tree breaks and dies, is given an extra dimension in this poem: the boat flies forward while it heels low. Relating to the ruling power structure, surviving sometimes unbearable dictatorial pressures, being able to fulfill oneself in spite of authoritarian inhumanities, is a traditionally significant problem in Hungary, where there have been so many foreign and domestic despots to relate to, survive, and spite throughout the centuries.

A further, fuller, lyric unfolding of the theme: strength in weakness, is Illyés' *Dithyramb to women*, which first appeared in the June 1967 *Kortárs*, and then in his 1968 volume, *Fekete — fehér* [Black and white]. In this poem he contrasts the hard, enduring, sharp, monumental, and fiercely strong and proud forms of being and behaving with the fragile, the yielding, the small, the simple and softly opening forms, and finds that the latter are stronger.

### Dithyramb to Women

(excerpts)

1

Not stone and not metal.  
Not those which can weather the storm of times!  
But rush, reed, bark.  
Not the accomplices of the  
eternal-life-promise. Not the reserved ones.  
But the fragile, the yielding:  
grass, loess, sedge  
became the protest.  
Those which disappear when they've done their work.

2

Not stone and not metal.  
Not the Assyrian, not the Sumerian columns,



measuring millennia with their ringed base,  
not the basaltic pyramid roofs,  
but the dried leaves, the underbrush, wood:  
those who wave yes, already from afar.  
Not those which are hard  
but those which can be spun and woven,  
those watching the working hand  
with the eyes of a dog, —

Long, long ago  
even before all the gods —

4

The perishable ones. Seaweed, moss.  
The passing ones. Pellicle, Flax twine.  
Not the original somebodies but those who break  
yet laugh in a moment  
because they can be put together again,  
those who thus endure and do not yield.  
The peel of the branch, goat-hair, raffia  
became our fellow travellers  
Harboring, by the destiny of some distant  
— how should we say — ideology?  
future itself.

5

Long before metal and stone  
took power.  
Those who can be bent, flexed,  
the tenaciously gentle,  
the answer-giving-soft to the finger,  
those who never strike back  
gave a quiet signal — hand to the hand —  
the Earth is with us!

9

Not the fortress, built of rock blocks  
tied together only by the mortar of sheer weight.  
Not the gates of pride  
but chaff, wicker, fluff,  
the strength of the twig, wax, pen  
carried us so far —

Yes, these:  
the softly opening became the strongest.  
Like the loins and breasts  
in the bone and muscle castle  
of your bodies, women.  
Like those who overcame time.

10

Not the angles, not the edges,  
not the piercing and shooting weapons,  
not the kings and military leaders  
but the clay-mud, which became  
smarter sooner than the dog,  
fur, and hide  
became leaders, shaping the hands of  
— not the men, but those  
who have eyes everywhere:  
the women.

14

.....  
Not the thunders but the songs,  
not the swords, the sheaths, the armour,  
but the shirts, the kerchiefs, the garters,  
not the lightnings, not the volcanos,  
glowing roaring light through reddened windows,  
spitting the fury of the depths onto the skies,  
but the heroic nipples,  
protecting those running to them for safety  
bravely  
stiff, inflamed.

#### Dedication

Not the curb bits, the clangors  
but the handle on the basket;  
not the assaults, the encirclements  
but the coral chain around the neck  
and the chairs around the fireplace;  
not the storms, the stallions, the cries of victory,  
but the pats on the sieve  
when the flour curdles,

but the wordless looks through the  
wintery window from behind a curtain;  
not the snow-capped alps, icy abyss  
but the embroidering green crops on the land,  
but those who are spinning even on Sundays,  
but the swaying of infants,  
but the chattering rivulets,  
not the commands: "Charge!" and "Attention!"  
But the turned-over pillow.

In a 1972 poem about Hungarian language, the language of the faithful and the free, but also of the trembling, the old, the fearful, the oppressed, and the beaten, titled *Koszorú* (Wreath), he talks about the enduring, the "stone-biting force" of the root hairs of his beloved mother tongue. In still another poem: *Hunyadi keze* (The Hand of Hunyadi) he emphasizes:

Declare: cowardly is the people  
which is protected by martyrs alone:  
not heroic deeds, but daily daring,  
everyday, minute-by-minute courage  
saves men and countries.

This motive of quiet everyday courage and work gives new dimensions to Illyés' theme of strength in weakness, it provides content to the idea, it almost furnishes instructions on how the weak can be strong. This new dimension is further developed in another long poem, written in 1967, entitled *Az éden elvesztése* (The Loss of Paradise). This poem is a modern oratorio, a moral-political passion play about the chances of the average, weak, and powerless human individual to avoid the impending atomic cataclysm.

#### The Loss of Paradise (excerpts)

40

.....  
Exactly the unavoidable of trouble calls for a struggle against it, a struggle to the degree of self-sacrifice if needed: that is the final chance. And just because a bad power is tremendously high above me, it doesn't mean that I can't attack it, can't get to it. True: I cannot reach the top of the tower by my hands, but it's not true that I cannot get there by climbing up the stairs inside it, for example. Every power is a human creation, and is continuous. It is in human hands, in our hands too, even in the most modest of hands.

41

You are in our hands,  
conceited powers over our fate!  
It isn't true that we can't  
get to you to bend your knees,  
to ground your shoulders,  
to strike on your mouths  
to step on your fire  
to save our roofs.

42

To reach from Somogyjád, even if only to the degree of a protesting waving finger, to an all-generals committee of the U.N. in New York?! Of course it sounds absurd. But even more absurd — and inhuman — is the thought that anyone, anywhere, from any heights could decide about the fate of just one man in Somogyjád against his will. And they want to decide! Millions of wills are circulating in the World, faster than the millions of drops when the water begins to boil. Not only from up to down. Also from down upward.

48

.....

The day of fury may come,  
the atom may explode:  
but exactly in the knowledge of our fate  
let us, faltering people down here,  
do resolutely  
that more and more human work of ours  
in this wide world

because our gods are dying.

And exactly because every power  
when it petrifies into a formidable rock,  
can be broken only my miniscules  
drop-by-drop edging into the cracks;

and exactly because miniscule villages  
may have to perform divine tasks:

49

As Jonah from the innards of the whale  
we are stepping forth from death

58

from death's alarming embrace,  
and exactly because we speak  
from the wavering barge of a  
bloodlost, forsaken little nation  
do we roar an ancient message:

50

The day of fury may come,  
the atom may explode,  
but exactly because its horror  
subdues the little as well as the big  
and because pine and weed,  
the beautiful and the ugly may collapse together,  
the good and the bad may die together:  
it all comes to the same thing;  
so honor and faithfulness almost  
becomes our shelter, indeed,  
stealing a smile unto our bitter lips  
it can even be our weapon:

52

.....  
When the day of fury comes  
because it may come,  
when the atom explodes,  
because piled in stacks it waits  
for a hand here and there,  
although the atom explodes,  
on that final day,  
before that terrible tomorrow  
people, let us dare to do the  
greatest deed:  
let us being here, from the depths  
by the strength of our faith,  
step by step as possible  
but up, up, upward,  
let us begin life anew.

To offer hope to a small, "bloodlost, forsaken little nation" is a conscious act on the part of Illyés, the poet-statesman. He views his role as that of a researcher of the future. He professes allegiance with those creators, who are groundbreakers, those poets, who research with "an

ultraviolet light that will be the imperatives tomorrow.” He does this in an “ars poetica” written around 1965, titled *Óda a törvényhozóhoz* (Ode to the Lawmaker).

### Ode to the Lawmaker

(excerpts)

The Law would be good and equitable  
if we the people would be manufactured  
like brick which is turned out  
by the machines uniformly every time.

But that cannot be.

Every heart has a different will.

And since long ago we are not merely  
clay or matter!

I will be exact as the writer always is  
when the scientist or the judge writes the poem.

This is our new song.

Make laws, but living laws so that  
we wouldn't constantly collide,

so that everybody would fit his  
part-truth into the collective truth,  
and yet: so that we would stay human  
without stiffening into clay and bricks,  
without circling like atoms or nuclei;  
so that we would stand fast yet run free.

Let life, not death create order!

Give rights, therefore, to the shadings  
in which, maybe, our future is drawn  
and to the exception  
which may be the rule tomorrow;  
rights — so he could experiment —  
to the poet, the chief researcher.

Because it doesn't take greater talent  
or zeal to find the cure for cancer,  
to harness the strength of the atom

to fly through space,  
than to show what the future ripens  
in the hearts,  
than to uncover with an ultraviolet light  
what will be the imperatives tomorrow  
among us, people;  
what is that which approaches in our nerves  
from the distance of aeons  
toward the distance of aeons.  
Rights to the dissectors!  
The surface-, the epidermis-, the appearance-destructors  
who separate, minute by minute, the bad  
from the good;  
the constantly correcting reconstructors  
who show, minute by minute: from what point is  
the murderer a murderer,  
the thief a thief,  
already grotesque what's beautiful,  
beautiful which was grotesque before,  
the hero: a henchman,  
and: who really is the one who leads —  
because there is no free pass  
to progress correctly with your era;  
because there are times — and we have seen it often —  
when the mute speaks,  
the one who chases really flees,  
the harlot is immaculate,  
the virgin: filthy.  
Not every creator is such but  
they who work thus — the progressive,  
the fighter, the ground-breaker —  
are the ones I profess as examples!  
They are the ones who signal  
the direction toward a tomorrow!  
.....

---

\*translation by Károly Nagy





## **Hungarian Language Research in North America: Themes and Directions**

Andrew Kerek

The Hungarian language is popularly — and rightly — regarded by many of its speakers and supporters in North America as the main symbol of a cultural heritage that ought to be preserved and perpetuated within the encroaching English-speaking environment. Much less aware is the same public of another role that the language has played for several decades as the object of scattered yet extensive and fruitful scholarly research by linguists in the United States and Canada. Some of this work has been specifically concerned with social and cultural aspects of language survival — a notable example is J. A. Fishman's excellent sociolinguistic survey of the status of Hungarian in America (*Hungarian Language Maintenance in the United States*, 1966) — or else formed a part of, or aimed to facilitate the preparation of, effective language teaching materials, such as Hungarian textbook-grammars, English-Hungarian contrastive analyses, or studies in cross-language interference in language learning. On the other hand, many products of this nearly half a century of research have dealt more directly with problems of linguistic description, in part contributing to a better understanding of the Hungarian language itself, and in part making Hungarian language data available in published form to linguists for further analysis and interpretation.

My purpose here is to sum up very briefly the thrust of this work both by outlining the main thematic directions in which it has proceeded and by noting the individual contributions that have shaped its course. This summary is based on my "Bibliography of Hungarian Linguistic Research in the United States and Canada" (*Ural-altaische Jahrbücher* 49 [1977]), which provides a comprehensive alphabetical listing of some 250 pertinent publications, some trivial, some highly significant. By "pertinent" I mean any published material that bears upon some aspect of a scientific study of Hungarian. Given this limitation, the bibliography excludes several categories of publications or commercial

products that serve primarily as aids to language learning rather than resulting directly from research; such excluded materials may be word lists, dialogs, phrase books, readers, dictionaries, tapes, and records, as well as pedagogical textbooks, unless they supply explicit information on grammar and other aspects of language structure. The bibliography represents the works of American and some Canadian linguists regardless of places of publication or dissemination. For precise references, which will not be given here, the reader should consult the complete bibliography.

To begin with a statistical overview, the bibliographical entries reflect a wide array of "genres" that includes some 20 monographs and books (about half of them pedagogical grammars), 130 articles, 45 reviews, and about 25 miscellaneous items such as notes, films, obituaries, and contributions to encyclopedias. In addition, the bibliography identifies 11 master's theses (this figure may be incomplete), produced at Columbia (7) and Indiana (4), as well as 19 doctoral dissertations, divided among Columbia (4), Indiana (4), California at Berkeley (4), Princeton (2), McGill (2), Harvard (1), Louisiana State (1), and California at San Diego (1). These figures, incidentally, well reflect the significant role that Columbia and Indiana Universities in particular have played in stimulating academic and professional linguistic interest in Hungarian. Nearly 100 people have published on the language, with an average output of two and a half publications per author. But the average is misleading, because actually some have contributed one or two items, while a few have published extensively. The late Professor John Lotz of Columbia University, for example, authored or co-authored over 40 publications, and a further 70 pieces have been produced by just four other researchers. Finally, about 60 percent of the names listed in the bibliography suggest the authors' Hungarian ethnic background, but these have produced some 85 percent of all the books, articles, theses, and dissertations. It seems, then, that while some significant work has been done by linguists who may not have close ethnic ties to Hungarians, a sizeable majority of those with an active scholarly interest in the language have been of Hungarian descent.

In a paper presented at a conference of Hungarian linguists in Debrecen back in 1966, John Lotz cited three decisive factors to explain the American interest in the Hungarian language: the large number of Hungarians living in America, the rapid growth of American structural linguistics after World War II, and the National Defense Education Act of 1958. In retrospect, it seems that this summative review by Lotz more or less marked the end of one major phase of American Hungarian

language research and the beginning of a new one. In many ways the continuity of this tradition is of course obvious, and one can at best suggest a tenuous dichotomy. But the changing conditions in the mid-nineteen sixties did bring about something of a turning point. For one thing, to take Lotz's three points in reverse order, government support for the study of "critical" languages — including Hungarian — began to decline and was soon reduced to a trickle. The Uralic and Altaic Program of the American Council of Learned Societies, for example, terminated in 1965, after enjoying half a decade of generous funding from NDEA Title VI grants both for basic and applied research, and for the establishment of language institutes, such as at Columbia, Berkeley, Colorado, and Indiana, which included Hungarian in their programs.

Then at about the same time postwar structural linguistics was giving way to the transformational-generative school, a shift that changed the character of linguistic research in some fundamental ways and brought new questions, a new point of view, and new names into the study of Hungarian as well. And even the Hungarian immigrant community was ceasing to be the stimulating factor that Lotz justifiably claimed it to be, at least insofar as, by the latter part of the decade, the earlier active if sporadic interest in a systematic study of the community's speech patterns or "dialectal" characteristics apparently all but disappeared. In view of these facts it is not too far-fetched, then, to speak for convenience of an earlier period of research, roughly embracing the work Lotz reviewed in his 1966 paper and preoccupied with such pursuits as immigrant dialectology, phonetic experimentation, but above all structuralistic approaches to phonology and grammar, and on the other hand of a later period focusing more on phonology and grammar within the framework of transformational-generative theory, in addition to approaches to Hungarian from the viewpoint of newly emerging sub-disciplines such as computational linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and generative metrics. Some paths, of course, cut across these periods — most notably the work of John Lotz, which does not lend itself to such a division. Also, historical and comparative aspects of Hungarian, but especially contrastive studies of the linguistic systems of Hungarian and English, have been pursued throughout this history of research — the latter perhaps because of the importance of such studies in a close language-contact situation like ours in North America.

The earliest American interest in the Hungarian language was apparently limited to collecting lists of words and expressions from the dialect of Hungarian immigrants, and to some random remarks about its grammatical peculiarities, such as those included in books by G.

Hofmann (1911) and H. L. Mencken (1937). A more elaborate and systematic attempt to describe the "Eastern" variety of this dialect was made in a little-known dissertation of the postwar period by P. Szamek (Princeton, 1947), and in another dissertation, P. Nelson investigated the English speech of a small Hungarian community in Louisiana (Louisiana State, 1956). Plans for an extensive Hungarian dialect survey in the United States, publicized by E. Bakó through several forums in the early sixties, have apparently failed to materialize. Nor has, regrettably, the large corpus of taped dialect material collected more recently by L. Dégh and A. Vázsonyi in the Calumet (Indiana) region and among Hungarian settlers in Canada, as yet found its way into print. Recent papers dealing with the Hungarian language in North America are few indeed — the output by Americans barely matching, if at all, the attention given it by some linguists in Hungary (see, for example, B. Kálmán's detailed description in *Magyar Nyelvőr* [1970]); two brief studies of Hungarian place names in the U.S. by Z. Farkas (1971) and by I. Janda (1976), and a conference paper by V. Makkai comparing the forms of greeting and address among Hungarians in the U.S. and in Hungary, go a long way accounting for the American contributions. In 1966 Lotz pointed out that an all-encompassing synthesis dealing with the Hungarian-English "symbiosis" within the American "diaspora" — such as that worked out by Haugen for Norwegian, for example — was yet to appear. As of 1977, it is still nowhere in sight.

From the outset American linguists were more interested, in fact, in the standard variety of the language as it is recognized and used in Hungary. R. A. Hall's well-known *Hungarian Grammar* (1944), together with an earlier version of the same monograph (1938), was the first — and turned out to be the only — attempt to offer a detailed scientific description of Hungarian grammar using the methodology of American structural linguistics. Several early (1943) papers by T. A. Sebeok applied this approach to Hungarian phonology — papers on the vowel system, the problematic /h/ phoneme, and the vowel morphophonemics of suffixes, a topic also discussed by P. Garvin (1945). R. Austerlitz's M.A. thesis (Columbia, 1950) analyzed the Hungarian phonemic system in terms of several alternative structural approaches. John Lotz in particular, in a series of articles spanning three decades and focusing especially on questions of morphology and semantics, applied to Hungarian a different (European) concept of structuralism, one that, incidentally, also formed the theoretical basis for his significant but now almost inaccessible *Das ungarische Sprachsystem* (Stockholm, 1939).

Lotz's plans to rewrite this book from the point of view of American structuralism were stymied by his untimely death.

In his papers on Hungarian grammar, some collected in the unpublished ACLS Research Report *Hungarian Structural Sketch* (1965) and several of them written in or translated into Hungarian for publication in Hungary, Lotz dealt with a range of topics including the semantics of nominal bases (1949) and tenses (1962/1966), aspects of the verbal paradigm (1949), specifically the imperative (1960) and the implicative -LAK suffix (1962/1967, also discussed by K. Keresztes [1965]), inflectional questions of common and proper nouns (1966) and of the noun suffix -É (1968), as well as models (1967) and categories (1967, 1974) of Hungarian grammar. Additionally, Lotz was involved, directly or indirectly, in several phonetic experiments conducted in the early sixties under the auspices of "ACLS Research Projects." These projects included a tape-cutting experiment on the perception of English stop sounds by speakers of several languages including Hungarian (1960), X-ray films on Hungarian speech production (1965/1966, 1967), as well as some of the work reported by Nemser (1961).

Much like Lotz's publishing career, studies in contrastive linguistics form somewhat of a bridge between the earlier and the later phase of Hungarian language research. Lotz himself had a continuing interest in such studies, as shown by the several phonological papers he contributed (e.g., on obstruent clusters [1966/1972] and glides [1969]), but even more so by the crucial role he played in setting up the Hungarian-English Contrastive Linguistics Project, co-sponsored by the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, of which for several years Lotz was the Director, and the Linguistic Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. So far seven volumes of the Project's monograph-size *Working Papers* have appeared, under the joint editorship of L. Dezső (Hungary) and W. Nemser (U.S.). Contributions to this series from the American side include two papers by Lotz (Volume 1), a study on language typology co-authored by Nemser (in Volume 4), and most recently a lengthy study by K. Keresztes on *Hungarian Postpositions vs. English Prepositions* (Volume 7). Besides his other work in contrastive phonology (with F. Juhász, 1964) and in contrastive semantics (with E. Stephanides, 1974), Nemser's research in interference, reported most fully in *An Experimental Study of Phonological Interference in the English of Hungarians* (1971) (a revision of his Columbia dissertation of 1961), deserves notice. Other English-Hungarian contrastive studies include, besides short papers by A. Katona on grammatical difficulties of Hungarians learning English (1960) and A. Bálint on time indication

(1966), also Indiana M.A. theses by M. Reynard on English equivalents of Hungarian *már* (1968) and by L. Kazár on expressing the idea of "ability" (1972), as well as two doctoral dissertations: P. Madarász has dealt with pedagogical applications of contrastive analysis (Berkeley, 1968), and R. Orosz has analyzed the category of definiteness (Indiana, 1969). Various problems of definiteness in Hungarian, by the way, have been addressed by several others as well (S. Houston, 1968; R. Hetzron, 1970; A. Kerek, 1971).

Historical and comparative studies of Hungarian, like contrastive analyses, appear to span across the two phases of research. Such studies have been relatively immune to the theoretical upheavals in linguistics that so profoundly affected synchronic description, and consequently do not readily support the chronological division that I have suggested. Interestingly, a couple of early papers on historical topics — J. Prince's studies on Slavonic (1935) and Turkic (1936) loan material in Hungarian — appear to be the first American linguistic publications concerned with standard Hungarian. Along the same line, nearly three decades later N. Poppe wrote on Altaic loanwords (1960) and J. Lázár produced an M.A. thesis on Roumanian loanwords (Columbia, 1962). In two further Columbia theses, C. Szigeti analyzed Hungarian onomatopoeic words (1968), and G. Mészöly discussed the internal reconstruction of vowel rules (1976), elaborating elsewhere on the origins and effects of vowel epenthesis in Hungarian (1976).

Historical research of a comparative nature also reaches across the entire time spectrum. On the one hand, etymological notes range from Tihany's (1940) through contributions by T. Sebeok (1946), J. Lotz (1956), and D. Sinor (1961, 1962, 1973) to a recent paper by R. Austerlitz (1975). On the other hand, more importantly, several substantial studies spread out across the decades have dealt with Finno-Ugric affinities of Hungarian. T. A. Sebeok's dissertation (Princeton, 1945) compared the Finnish and Hungarian case systems using Roman Jakobson's descriptive approach. K. Keresztes's monograph, *Morphemic and Semantic Analysis of the Word Families: Finnish ETE- and Hungarian EL- 'fore'* (1964), was based on the author's M.A. thesis (Columbia, 1963); his doctoral dissertation on the derivation of Hungarian *-l* and *-z* verbs (Columbia, 1969) further contributed to research in historical morphology. C. Carlson's Indiana thesis (1967) explored Hungarian words of Ob-Ugric origin, and his dissertation gave a semantic analysis of Proto Finno-Ugric (1971). Essays by D. Sinor (1967, 1969, 1974) and by A. Raun (1967, 1974) have also dealt with — or touched on — historical-comparative aspects of Hungarian.

Before turning to the more recent stage of research, let us note in passing several representative examples of "textbook grammars" produced before the mid-sixties (none, to my knowledge, has been published since then). Although concerned primarily with language teaching rather than with novel linguistic analyses, such texts often discuss important points of grammar and pronunciation. A good example is C. Wojatsek's *Hungarian Textbook and Grammar*, now in its third revised edition (1962, 1964, 1974). Others include texts by L. Tihany (1942), I. Alszeghy et al. (1958), and I. Átányi (no date), as well as better known but in this context perhaps somewhat less relevant materials such as T. Sebeok's *Spoken Hungarian* (1945), A. Koski and I. Mihályfi's *Hungarian Basic Course* (1963-1964), and the volumes prepared at the Defense Language Institute at Monterey, California.

The late sixties marked the beginning of a highly productive period of research in basic Hungarian linguistics, *i.e.*, phonology and grammar, stimulated especially by the dramatic emergence of the transformational school in American linguistics. At no other time have so many contributions to the scientific study of Hungarian been generated at North American universities as the flood of dissertations, theses, and articles produced within the past decade. Phonological topics in particular have attracted much interest; though by no means are all products of this period generative in methodology, it seems that — for complex formal and technical reasons — certain interesting morphological characteristics of the language such as vowel harmony and alternations in noun and verb stems have lent themselves especially well to generative treatment. L. Rice's M.A. thesis (Indiana, 1965) discussed some rules of vocalization, and his dissertation (1967), later published as *Hungarian Morphological Irregularities* (1970), was apparently the first major study to apply to Hungarian the generative notion of distinctive features. Dissertations by M. Esztergar (San Diego, 1971) and R. Vago (Harvard, 1974) focused on the phonology of nouns and vowel harmony; theoretical questions of vowel harmony in particular, also approached from different non-generative points of view by J. Lotz (1972) and by V. Makkai (1972), have been further pursued in a number of significant papers by Vago (1973, 1976, 1977), who has also contributed on the topics of rule ordering (1974) and the hierarchy of boundaries (1977), and is writing a book on the sound pattern of Hungarian. J. Jensen's main interest, discussed at length in his dissertation (1972) and in several subsequent papers (some of them co-authored by M. S. Jensen), has been the issue of constraints on phonological theory, as well as of the abstractness of phonological representations. In a lengthy

article R. Hetzron discussed some special problems of Hungarian morphophonology (1972); some of the same questions were taken up by T. Arkwright, whose dissertation (McGill, 1974) presented a computer program for automatically generating phonetic (pronounced) forms from phonemic representations. In a joint paper with A. Kerek, Arkwright subsequently showed how his model can be used to convert Hungarian script to phonetic notation (1972), a process J. Lotz had also described in a less technical context. The consequences of speech style for phonological processes were explored by A. Kerek in a study of consonant elision in casual speech (1977). Research on the "prosodic" elements of Hungarian includes F. Juhasz's dissertation (Columbia, 1968), which, as his earlier M.A. thesis (1961), analyzed stress and intonation in a non-generative framework; these topics have been addressed also by R. Hetzron in a paper on accent (1962) and in brief remarks on the intonation of reclamatory sentences (1972). A. Kerek has approached secondary word stress both descriptively, applying the concept of transformational cycle (1968), and experimentally (with R. Gregorski, 1971).

Besides phonology, American transformational linguistics has also aroused new interest in the study of Hungarian syntax, a subject previously ignored (a rare exception: T. A. Sebeok's paper on equational sentences [1943]). The contributions of R. Hetzron to this line of research have been especially noteworthy. Hetzron has published on a wide variety of Hungarian syntactic topics, including the expletive adverb *ott* (1966), obligatory complements (1969), non-verbal sentences and degrees of definiteness (1970), presentative constructions (1971), conjoined structures (1972, 1973), rule ordering (1973), surfacing (1973), *-ik* verbs (1975), and the syntax of the causative verb (1976). M. Szamosi has been interested in complementation (1971), syntactic typology (1972), the problem of surface constraints (1971, 1976), as well as verb-object agreement in Hungarian (1974), an issue also discussed in a different context by S. Jones (1970). Finally, Sz. Szabó's dissertation (Berkeley, 1971) demonstrated the application of computational linguistics to the description of Hungarian syntax.

During this period, as American linguistics itself has branched out in numerous directions and as new sub-disciplines have emerged, research on Hungarian has been enriched by the investigation of new topics, or perhaps the investigation of old topics in a new light. For example, psycholinguistics has directed new attention to the acquisition of language by children. How Hungarian children learn to speak was the topic of B. MacWhinney's dissertation at Berkeley (1974); in several papers



grown out of this research (1975, 1976), he elaborated on the acquisition of morphology and syntax. In contrast, A. Kerek has discussed the phonological rules that characterize the speech patterns of young Hungarian children and the implications of these rules for Jakobson's concept of "sonority hierarchy" (1976), extending the topic to the study of baby talk as a source of nicknames (1977). Combining psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic interests, M. Hollos has contrasted the cognitive development (1974) as well as the logical and role-taking abilities (1975) of Norwegian and Hungarian children, and has investigated the social rules determining pronoun selection by Hungarian children (1975). S. Gal's dissertation (Berkeley, 1976) explored the sociolinguistic effects of language change on language maintenance in the German-Hungarian bilingual community of Oberwart (Felsőőr) in Austria. J. Fishman's monograph on Hungarian language maintenance in the United States has already been mentioned; a study by V. Fischer (1971) on the effects of childhood bilingualism on the educational achievement of urban Hungarian-American children fits into the same general context. Other researched topics include English-Hungarian and Hungarian-English lexicography (dictionary-making), critically reviewed by A. Balint in his Columbia dissertation (1968), as well as metrics, approached in a traditional way in a couple of short articles by Lotz (1952, 1972), and within the framework of generative metrics by Kerek in *Hungarian Metrics: Some Linguistic Aspects of Iambic Verse* (1971), based on an Indiana dissertation (1968), and in related articles (1972, 1974).

So far I have ignored book reviews, although they, too, can be regarded as products of linguistic interest; at any rate, they reflect the reviewers' desire to keep track of and call attention to relevant publications in North America and elsewhere, notably in Hungary. Furthermore, even if by publishing only reviews of books dealing with Hungarian, some linguists have at least to that extent shown their interest in the language. Here I shall merely enumerate by subject matter the authors (with dates) of the books reviewed by American or Canadian linguists, and name the respective reviewer(s): on grammars, Hall 1938 (Tihany, Szenczi, Bence), Hall 1944 (Bergsland), Tihany 1942 (Sebeok), Lotz 1939 (Sebeok), Sauvageot 1953 (Sebeok), Sauvageot 1971 (Hetzron, Moravcsik), Tompa 1972 (Vago); on semantics, Károly 1970 (Sebeok); on textbook grammars, Wojatsek 1962 (Murphy), Bánhidi et al. 1965 (Tikos, Kerek); on phonetics, Laziczius 1947 (Sebeok); on intonation, Elekfi 1962 (Juhasz), Magdics 1969 (Johnson & Hetzron, Lehiste), Fónagy & Magdics 1967 (Hetzron); on comparative linguis-

(Lotz); on onomastics, Ladó 1971 (Rudnyćkyj, Kázmér & Végh 1970, Kálmán 1973, Hajdú 1974 (Kerek); on dialects of Hungary, Végh 1959 (Keresztes), Arany 1967 (Hetzron); and on the whole language, Benkő & Imre 1971 (Jensen, Hetzron). Although not strictly reviews, we shall mention in this context non-technical summary descriptions of the Hungarian language contributed to several encyclopedias by R. Austerlitz and T. Sebeok, both of whom, incidentally, have also written obituaries, including ones in memory of John Lotz.

It is nice to be able to open up an introductory linguistics text Monday morning and occasionally have a "Hungarian problem" stare one in the face. Or to hear the familiar — if often broken — ring of Hungarian examples thrown around in heated corridor-arguments at linguistics conferences. How much of — and in what ways — the research summed up here is significant enough to advance the understanding of the Hungarian language per se, the reader — and our colleagues in Hungary — are invited to assess. Perhaps limited in scope and modest in results if compared to the extensive work carried on in Budapest or Debrecen, this research can nevertheless boast of one accomplishment uniquely its own: it has placed the Hungarian language on the professional "map" of American linguistics. If research is self-generating, then perhaps in our Monday-morning introductory classes we are already harboring a new generation of American linguists who will some day find Hungarian an exciting and gratifying language to explore.

REVIEW ARTICLES

**The Poetry of Contemporary Hungary**

Enikő Molnár Basa

*Modern Hungarian Poetry*. Edited, and with an Introduction by Miklós Vajda. Foreword by William Jay Smith. New York: Columbia University Press, 1977. 286 pp.

This anthology, comprising nearly 200 poems from forty-one authors is, on the whole, the best collection of Hungarian verse available in English. The translations are enjoyable as English poetry while they reflect accurately the original. In most instances, the problem of recreating the meter and rhyme is handled in a logical rather than pedantic fashion: the English verse aims at capturing the essential sound and feel of the original without trying for precise equivalencies which might have led to distortions of sense or of the modern American idiom into which it is rendered. The success of this approach was reflected in the warm reception of the parallel readings held by four of the poets in the anthology (Ferenc Juhász, Amy Károlyi, István Vas, Sándor Weöres) and two of the translators (Daniel Hoffman and William Jay Smith) at the Library of Congress. Even those in the audience who understood no Hungarian could appreciate the poetry in both the original and the translation as they listened, because the tonal qualities *were* reproduced.

Such accuracy is understandable if the genesis of these translations is considered. They are the result of ten years' work and are culled from the pages of the *New Hungarian Quarterly*, the English-language journal whose literary editor is Miklós Vajda. Furthermore, the work involved close cooperation between poet and translator, achieved through both extensive correspondence and personal meetings. The use of literal prose versions and of well-marked texts and tapes of the original to ensure proper sound-qualities, is one that has been found the most effective for verse translations. Thus, in the "Foreword," William Jay Smith stated, "I firmly believe that only poets should translate poets, but

how does one translate from a language of which one knows not a word? It may seem madness, and probably is; but poets are not to be put off by madness." Yet, he could conclude: "Although after several visits I still know little Hungarian, I do have the mad confidence shared by the other poet-translators of this volume that most of the poems assembled here by Miklós Vajda are of a rare beauty in the original and deserving of the best life they can be given in English."

The organization and purpose of the volume is given in Miklós Vajda's "Introduction." This clearly demonstrates the limits and even shortcomings of the anthology: all of the poems having been culled from the pages of the *NHQ*, they reflect a certain propagandistic stance. Vajda's introductory survey of the last 500 years of Hungarian history and poetry is naturally guided by these same principles. Yet, it would not be fair to condemn the book for failing to be wholly representative when such is not its ultimate aim. Nor would it be fair to condemn Vajda for a too-simplistic view of Hungarian letters since, obviously, he could not give a detailed survey in the approximately fifteen pages allotted for the introduction. On the other hand, the essay serves its purpose and does not only place the various poets in an appropriate tradition but also shows the affinities between these contemporary writers and those of the past.

It is most enlightening to become acquainted with these poems in the framework provided by Vajda. He groups the poets into four generations, though it is clear that the generations overlap considerably. Lajos Kassák (1887-1967) and Milán Füst (1888-1967) are labelled the "great forebears who were followed by the poets who began publishing before or during World War II. Still strongly socialistic in their themes are those who, though born before the Second World War, did not begin to publish until after the conflict. The political concerns of these poets (at least as exhibited in these poems) are intense and personal. The "poets who grew up under socialism" are not apolitical, yet the difference of their experiences and expectations clearly marks their poetry.

The forerunners, Kassák and Füst, are represented by both personal and political poems. "Craftsmen" (1918) from the former looks forward to better times; later poems capture personal moments. "If my Bones must be Handed Over" (1933) and "Old Age" (1940) represent the poet's attempt to come to grips with cosmic forces: life and time. Lőrinc Szabó, who died in 1957, might best represent the next group, and the poems included in this collection suggest a highly personal poet. Thematically, however, the majority of the poets included in the anthology belong here. Many wrote both before and after the war, and their themes,

outlook and preoccupations reflect the changes in Hungary during these last fifty years. It would be inaccurate to classify Gyula Illyés strictly as a poet representing the revolutionary socialism of the 1930s or to consider István Vas *merely* as a representative of a new cosmopolitanism. Above all, the selection makes no claim to being representative of the work of the individual poets, and so the generalizations stated in the Introduction should be taken with more than the usual grain of salt. These should, in short, be interpreted carefully.

To mention briefly the poets represented by one or two works, Zoltán Zelk experiments with verse forms and sounds: his free-associative verse is among the most interesting in international terms. Anna Hajnal, who died in September of 1977, responds sensitively to both exterior phenomena and her rich inner life; Amy Károlyi, an admirer and translator of Emily Dickinson, shows similar concern for symbolism and meaning in ordinary things in "The Third House," while László Kálnoky and György Rónai are represented by poems wrung from personal despair.

The nineteen poems from Gyula Illyés span a broad range of themes and represent a career of half a century. "The Wonder Castle" (1937) is a low-keyed yet all the more effective commentary on social injustice, but "Aboard the Santa Maria" suggests disappointment with the "new order" and a deadening loss of goals. The more recent "Tilting Sail," on the other hand, suggests hope sprung of compromise or adaptation. His tribute to the Hungarian language, "A Wreath," is one of the most memorable poems in the anthology.

The cosmopolitanism of István Vas and the linguistic virtuosity of Sándor Weöres are equally representative of modern Hungarian poetry. "Budapest Elegy" (1957) is a poignant tribute to the city just emerging from the aftermath of the Revolution. In "The Etruscan Sarcophagus" Vas gives a sensitive and personal reaction to an ancient work of art which means to him the eternal validity of human values. This is the theme of his personal reminiscence, "Boccherini's Tomb" and even of the pseudo-historical poem, "Nagyszombat, 1904."

If any one poem in the collection can be called representative of the variety that is Sándor Weöres', it might be "The Lost Parasol." Through this ordinary object, Weöres creates an image of change and evolution that encompasses life, and which is, in fact, life itself. Narrative and lyrical passages alternate in this "song,/ sung for my only one." "Monkeyland" and "Variations on the Themes of Little Boys," display mastery of words: in both poems the music of the words carries more import than their meaning. It is interesting to note that even a

predominantly non-Hungarian-speaking audience at the Library of Congress was able to respond to such verbal tricks when Mr. Weöres regaled them with a selection.

Zoltán Jékely, László Benjámín, Gábor Devecseri, Imre Csanádi, György Somlyó, Sándor Rákos and János Pilinszky belong to the generation that reached manhood shortly before or during the War. Each is represented by several poems, but for once, in "Holiday-Afternoon Rhapsody" by Csanádi, the translator seems to miss both the poetry of the first stanzas and the accurate rendering of the imagery. Csanádi can also be regarded as the spokesman of the new generation who, in his "Confession of Faith" gives a somewhat grudging and reserved tribute to socialism. Metrical innovations are represented by György Somlyó. János Pilinszky is the most mystical of the poets in this book. A Catholic, he approaches the great medieval mystics in an international or supranational spirit: sin, suffering, love, grace, and eternity are his themes.

Ágnes Nemes Nagy, another important woman poet, exhibits some of T. S. Eliot's intellectuality in her poetry. István Kormos' (1923–1977) poetry is more personal, and in these selections, he laments the lack of hope in a future. This theme forms an increasingly important motif in the poems of the younger generation, and even in the more recent work of the older men. The "chroniclers" of the postwar years, Mihály Váci, István Simon, József Tornai, Gábor Görgey, Gábor Garai, István Eörsi, Ágnes Gergely, Márton Kalász, István Csukás, Dezső Tándori, István Ágh, Miklós Veres, György Petri, and Szabolcs Várady, each represented by one or a few poems, show a candid view of contemporary Hungary as they see it. László Nagy is a master of this in poems such as "The Coalmen" or "The Bliss of Sunday," in which everyday life is captured in easy pentameters ably translated by Tony Connor and Edwin Morgan respectively.

Richly imaginative poetry with no obvious "ulterior" motive is found in the selections of Margit Szécsi and Sándor Csoóri. Mihály Ladányi's poetry contains some interesting observations with a skeptical motif, yet he seems unaware of the challenge these doubts could pose to the socialist system he does endorse. Ottó Orbán recalls the war years in vivid imagery ("Gaiety and Good Heart" and "Concert"), and Judit Tóth comes closest to representing an important segment of Hungarian literature — that written abroad.\* Married to a Frenchman, her home is in Paris, and her Hungarian poems represent a gentle sensitivity which touches the essential yet small things of life. The poems included here spring from personal experience, yet they are concerned with universal

values: childbirth and children, infant death (through abortion or miscarriage), new beginnings — these are the themes ably interpreted by Laura Schiff.

Ferenc Juhász, whose highly allegorical and symbolic poetry is represented here by “Power of the Flowers,” “The Boy Changed into a Stag Cries out at the Gate of Secrets” and several shorter pieces, shows the power of Hungarian poetry when welded to Hungarian folklore. The poet’s peasant background allows him to feel the traditions yet he can also recognize the need to accept the changes which have come in the life of the village. Tradition and technology clash in these poems — yet in the end, a *modus vivendi* emerges. Because he accepts the benefits of industrialization as well as the need for it, Juhász leaves the reader with a positive attitude. Without sacrificing depth, he makes a positive statement on the emergence of a new, industrial society in a traditionally rural culture.

Several themes can be isolated by way of summary: loneliness, despair, a sense of isolation, the futility of goodness or of steadfastness to an ideal, even the vanity of suffering under a senseless horror which can be discerned in Pilinszky’s poems. There are, on the other hand, few direct references to the explicitly Hungarian themes of earlier poets (the guidelines of the selection as well as the policy of *NHQ* might have influenced this). The tone is modern, however, and historical-political concerns are obliquely treated. Often there is a sense of *déjà vu*: the injustices invoked have happened before. The poets’ reaction to these concerns, however, is one of calm resignation and pity. While anger might be expressed, hate seldom is.

Other poems reflect the beauty of life, of the landscape, or of special moments. They are intensely emotional, regardless of the particular feelings expressed. Finally, while many of the poems reflect a quest for peace, few find spiritual solace, though some of the poems hint at an eternity that is peaceful. This should not, however, be interpreted as a traditional Christian theme. Nor is it necessarily a religious Eden that these poets seek; yet, the poetry can not be called irreligious: it reflects the questioning of modern man. Above all, these poems reflect a desire *to be*. The restlessness and the individualism of modern existential man can be seen in these selections.

The supplementary material contributes to the usefulness of the book. Miklós Vajda’s introduction is generally helpful, though some of the more rabid propaganda statements (*e.g.*, a paragraph on p. xxviii) are unnecessary. The “Biographical Notes” following the text give important information on the poets’ backgrounds and interests and helpfully

cite their international achievements as well as translations of their works. Finally, both the twenty translators and ten co-translators (who supplied the literal versions to the American, Canadian and English poets) are remembered. The portraits of the poets represented enhance the reading of their works.

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\* The literature of the emigré authors, or of authors living outside the borders of present-day Hungary are not included in the anthology; this is not a shortcoming so much as a result of the editorial policy of the *NHQ* and the aims of the anthology.



## BOOK REVIEWS

*Egy előítélet nyomában (In the Wake of a Prejudice)*. By György Száraz. (Budapest: Magvető, 1976). 285 pp.

"It is a disgrace that there should be a Jewish question in Hungary," wrote Lajos Kossuth, Hungary's celebrated governor during the 1848–1849 War of Independence. The letter from his Italian exile was prompted by the infamous 1883 Tiszaeszlár ritual murder trial. In his play *Tiszaeszlár* (1967) Iván Sándor viewed the trial as a prelude to the holocaust. In his *A vizsgálat iratai (Documents of the Inquest)* (1976) Sándor argued that Tiszaeszlár and the holocaust were bred by the same manipulative technique — mass psychosis.

*In the Wake of a Prejudice* is the extended version of a similarly titled 1975 article published in *Valóság*. Száraz believed the time ripe to re-examine Hungarian anti-Semitism because his generation was the last one to have personal memories of the Nazi era, and because the Jewish question was a special issue. Száraz of course implied that the ghost of prejudice still lingered in Hungary. He therefore focused on the perennially delicate Jewish question. But "delicate is only that which is not being talked about," wrote Pál Pándi defending the performance of Sándor's play. The Jewish problem was once again current in Hungarian press and letters. That socialism had been ineffective in eradicating anti-Semitism was now admitted.

Száraz's work was inspired by Mária Ember's *Hajtűkanyar (Hairpin Bend)* (1974), one of the numerous recent novels based on the holocaust. Ember, like a number of other authors, merely chronicled events. Others, such as György Moldova, Hungary's most popular writer, proffered judgments: "Nowhere else have I seen such zeal and cruelty in the treatment of the Jews." This view, expressed by one character in *Szent Imre induló (Saint Emery March)* (1975), was challenged and moderated elsewhere in the novel by another character: "A few murderers do not represent the entire nation." Other writers have focused on the predicament of the returnee: "Do you know what persecution is?" asked Ágnes Gergely's *A tolmács (Interpreter)* (1976). "You too stayed alive only by chance. What keeps you in this country?" In other words:

why return to Hungary, the population of which on the whole tacitly supported Jewish deportations and accorded a less than cordial welcome to the survivors? In *Csodatevő (Miracle Maker)* (1966), András Mezei questioned the wisdom of saying anything at all: "Never remind people of their past, of things they would rather not talk about." In *Terelőút (Bypass)* (1972), György Gera shared the Hungarian-born Elie Weisel's attitude; he could neither hate nor forgive. The narrator, suffering the "curse of double identity," encountered indifference and hypocrisy all around.

Száráz suggested a remedy for this alienation. Why indeed should one be burdened permanently with a split personality? Why not become a Hungarian without repudiating the traditions of the old Jewish culture? Száráz's proposition appears to be a realistic alternative in contemporary Hungary because Kádár's liberal socialism permits the preservation of minority cultures.

This is the most important Hungarian work on Jewish persecution since István Bibó's long 1948 essay in *Válasz*, "Zsidókérdés Magyarországon 1944 után" (The Jewish question in Hungary after 1944).

Many observers consider Bibó to have been one of Hungary's finest intellectuals, a representative of the so-called "third road." Bibó, like Száráz many years later, addressed his countrymen on the uncomfortable subject of their share of the responsibility for the war crimes committed against the Jews. In discussing the guilt and culpability of Hungary's political, administrative, religious, and intellectual élite, Bibó pointed out that only in a sick society could anti-Semitism become a crucial social problem. He challenged the official view, readily seconded by the masses, that Jewish losses merely represented a small part of the overall sufferings of the Hungarian people at the hands of the fascists. Bibó described as "frivolous" and "dishonest" the convenient view that equated Hungarian with Jewish losses. Detecting manifestations of recurring anti-Semitism, Bibó pleaded for vigilance and a spirit of responsibility. He advocated a humane approach based on equality and free of prejudice. Alas, Bibó's remarkable essay remained a lonely voice in the wilderness. In the following twenty years or so, by mutual agreement of both Jews and Gentiles, the word "Jew" seldom found its way into print. Jews were cited tactfully as the "persecuted." Silence may have its merits but it solves nothing.

Space prohibits a detailed commentary on Száráz's historic data. He emphasized that while Jewish massacres were a common occurrence in Western Europe during the Crusades and plague years, Hungarian Jews enjoyed a relatively favoured status up to the second half of the

fourteenth century. Indeed, Hungary often served as a haven for Jews escaping persecution. In 1361, during the reign of Louis the Great, Jews were expelled from Hungary for the first time. Száraz noted the Italian — *i.e.*, foreign — origin of this king. He also observed that, although isolated charges of ritual murder were levelled against Jews as early as 1494 (Nagyszombat) and in 1529 (Bazin) the popular misconceptions and superstitions rampant in Western Europe during the Middle Ages were echoed in Hungary only at the time of the Tiszaeszlár trial. The author attributed extremism and Hungarian anti-Jewish measures to foreign elements or influences, illustrated by countless examples. In the 1848 revolution anti-Semitic fervour gripped only Hungary's German population; and a similar wave engendered by Jewish immigrants escaping Russian pogroms Száraz once again described as a foreign import.

In the Middle Ages Hungarian Jews were largely spared persecution because "backward" Hungary was slow to adopt Western European practices. But this anachronism created severe problems for Hungarian Jews later, when anti-Semitism finally arrived from the West. Száraz quoted Engels who disagreed: "Anti-Semitism is always a sign of a backward culture." Hungarian Jews became emancipated in 1867 which enabled them to play a decisive role in the development of capitalism in Hungary, a country hitherto lacking a sizeable middle class. At the same time, and, paradoxically, due to their mobility, sensitivity to new ideas, and a highly evolved social conscience, the Jews became the avant-garde of progressive ideas and culture. "They were talented and good allies of real talent," noted the author. The ill-fated Soviet Republic (1919) was followed by the White Terror, which exacted its toll mostly among the Jews, allegedly for being Bolsheviks.

The author systematically analysed the various economic and socio-political reasons for the growth of Hungarian anti-Semitism. Száraz understood that Christian ostracism prompted the Jews to adopt a "ghetto mentality;" that long years of persecution caused Jews to become hyper-sensitive, which only resulted in the development of more prejudice. Like Bibó, Száraz saw the evolution of a vicious circle, in which Christians and Jews were poisoned by mutual suspicions. The remedy for this evil rested in the hands of those in power. Száraz blamed the intensification of Jewish persecution in twentieth-century Hungary on historic forces. The aborted Bolshevik revolution followed by counter-revolution, and the spirit of Trianon all bred the Hungarian tragedy which also became the special tragedy of the Jews. Invoking Marx, Száraz stated: "A nation which oppresses others in turn becomes

oppressed." One might add that a nation itself struggling to survive is unlikely to be sympathetic to the plight of its minorities.

The most important part of this book deals with Hungary's treatment of the Jews in 1944. The author agonized: "Was this a fascist nation? No, it was not. How then could this happen? How could the 'jovial' anti-Semitism of the *fin de siècle* lead to this?" The question, "how could this happen?" emerged repeatedly. "It was not us," the author maintained. "We did not do it. The fascists did it. The Arrow Cross men. The Germans. The Gendarmes. We only put up with it. Only looked on. I know when 500,000 dead tip the scale there can be no room for argument, no room for excuses." But Száraz was primarily interested in the attitudes of the average Hungarian. "The mob. The spectators. We felt sorry for the Jews. We sheltered them or denounced them, smuggled food to them or ridiculed them, protected them or stole their belongings." István Vas, who has dealt extensively with this problem in the pages of *Kortárs*, and of whom Száraz speaks "with respect and gratitude," came to the rescue. He explained that, whereas in "more fortunate lands" the safeguarding of the country's independence coincided with democracy and the protection of human rights, in Hungary, with its tradition of autocracy and foreign oppression, the situation was not so unequivocal, and the defenders of freedom could not rise to the occasion.

It follows from Száraz's discussion of Jewish policies in neighbouring countries that, despite the severe restrictions imposed on Hungary's Jews, they were, at least for a while, in an "enviable" position compared to some of their co-religionists elsewhere. Hungary agreed to deport its Jews en masse only when the Germans seized the country in March of 1944. But with the exception of Northern Transylvania, which was re-annexed to Hungary in 1940, the Jews of Rumania and Bulgaria fared much better than Hungarian Jews. Moreover, Hungary established Jewish auxiliary labour battalions as early as in 1939-40. 50,000 Jewish men were dispatched to the Russian front in 1942. The savage cruelty inflicted on these labour brigades, resulting in a staggering loss of life (42,000 by 1944), was to a considerable extent the responsibility of Hungarian officers. Unfortunately, Száraz analyzed the degree of Hungarian complicity simplistically. He also ignored the plight of 35,000 Jews expelled from Carpatho-Ruthenia in 1941. The deportation of these wretched people, mostly non-Hungarian refugees, was initiated entirely by the Hungarian authorities. About 20,000 of them were shipped to Galicia, where about 15,000 were murdered at Kamenets-Podolsk, with the participation of Hungarian troops.

In Holland one can hear Jews praised for their role in making Amsterdam what it is. Similar expressions of appreciation are less likely to be encountered in Hungary. But Száraz did notice a widespread feeling of guilt in Hungary among those who witnessed the events of 1944. Unfortunately, guilt easily blocks reconciliation. Summing up present Hungarian attitudes, the author had to concede that a barrier separating Jews and Gentiles still remained. One manifestation was the irresponsible telling of cruel and tasteless jokes. "One can survive anything. See, some people survived even Auschwitz." The myth lives on.

Bibó wrote his essay while the survivors still mourned, while wounds were fresh, and while injuries were vividly remembered. Bibó's voice was statesmanlike and his indictment seemed harsh. Thirty years later, in a different, more consolidated Hungary, the mood understandably must be different, though neither less committed nor less passionate. Száraz's voice does compel the reader to face the shame of this "conspiracy of silence" which had made the tragedy possible.

*In the Wake of a Prejudice* is a candid and courageous book, 50,000 copies of which were sold out immediately — an unprecedented sale for a study of this kind. Száraz's work begins with the epigraph from Mária Ember's *Hairpin Bend*: "The Jewish fate is not the subject of this book. The subject of this book is Hungarian history." One can only hope that this timely work will find a sensitive and appreciative audience.

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Paul Várnai

*The Baranya Dispute 1918-1921: Diplomacy in the Vortex of Ideologies.* By Leslie Charles Tihany. Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1977. Distributed by Columbia University Press. 138 pp.

Leslie Tihany's second book, unlike his first — an ambitious undertaking encompassing the history of Central Europe "from the earliest times to the age of the world wars," concentrates on a very small, self-contained, and largely unknown episode: the Yugoslav occupation of the greater part of the Hungarian county of Baranya and its capital city of Pécs between November 1918 and August 1921. The Yugoslav troops arrived in Pécs three days after the Belgrade Military Convention established an armistice line on Hungary's eastern and southern borders. Although the Treaty of Trianon later fixed the political border between Hungary and Yugoslavia in this particular region farther south, the Yugoslavs refused to leave. It took considerable pressure from the

Great Powers to convince Belgrade that neither economic nor political arguments could change the *status quo* laid down in the final treaty. The book is about Yugoslav efforts during the three years of occupation to remain permanently in Baranya and Pécs.

*The Baranya Dispute 1918-1921: Diplomacy in the Vortex of Ideologies* is an elegantly written little essay with a well-formulated and internally consistent thesis. Tihany's interpretation of Yugoslav policy is tight and convincing. In the beginning, when a communist regime ruled Budapest, the occupying forces cooperated with the local members of the *ancien régime*, who were grateful for the protection the presence of the occupying forces offered. When, however, the Béla Kun regime fell, the Yugoslavs changed tactics; they relied on the local left which were no longer sanguine about being incorporated into a now white Hungary. Their final and desperate act, only a few days before the evacuation, was the establishment of the Pécs-Baranya Republic. Tihany's corollary thesis, however, is less convincing: the Allies took Hungary's side in the dispute because of their fear of Bolshevism and because of their strict adherence to the notion of the *cordon sanitaire*. In reality, Hungary's future borders had been decided by April 1919, i.e. during the existence of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, and the Allies' insistence on adhering to their original decisions simply reflected their reluctance to change the existing treaties (a move which would have opened a veritable Pandora's box since none of the small nations was entirely satisfied with its new borders) and their unwillingness to reduce further the size of Trianon Hungary.

Having given due praise to what is admirable in this book, one must mention its very serious shortcomings. The problem is quite fundamental: it is underresearched. To start with the documentary evidence, Leslie Tihany's claim that it was "the opening of long-sealed archives by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1972" which made the appearance of this book possible is not really accurate. All the Entente Powers were involved in the Baranya dispute, and accordingly all their archives are rich sources for the subject. The Pécs Municipal Archives have very few documents (most disappeared in the chaos of evacuation), but Tihany did not even use those which were published a few years ago in two volumes. Even more startling is his neglect of the National Archives in Washington which has considerable material on the first Allied fact-finding mission dispatched from the Allied Military Mission in Budapest. Although Tihany consulted the published State Department documentary series on the Paris Peace Conference, he failed to use

the British series on the interwar years in which he would have found the proceedings of the Conference of Ambassadors which dealt with the whole problem at length. In vain one looks for General Harry H. Bandholtz's valuable diaries during his stay in Budapest as the American member of the Allied Military Mission. If Tihany could not use the Yugoslav archives, at least he should have read Vuk Vinaver's article, "Jugoszlávia és Magyarország a Tanácsköztársaság idején," published in *Századok* (1971) which is based on Yugoslav archival material. He might also have supplemented the limited secondary literature on Pécs politics (a volume of memoirs written by one of the participants almost forty years after the events and a collection of articles by local historians) with research from local newspapers.

*The Baranya Dispute* is based on a woefully inadequate bibliography of secondary sources. For the period as a whole, the available historical literature both on Hungary and on European diplomacy is enormous, but most of the material was ignored by the author. Although one could cite title after title, perhaps enough is said if one mentions that the memoirs of Mihály Károlyi's wife is Leslie Tihany's only source for Hungary's first democratic revolutionary period. The communist interlude does not fare much better; besides a reference book (*Magyar történelmi kronológia*) Tihany bases his evaluation on a rather specialized volume in English on the role of the Communist Party in the regime's coalition government.

The research methods employed by Tihany are also questionable, and at times they lead to inaccurate data and information. A good example of this kind of problem is the first chapter on Baranya and its people. By using the 1911 edition of the *Révai Nagylexikon* instead of the actual census figures, Tihany is convinced that there was such a thing as a 1911 census. Moreover, since the 1911 edition of the *Révai Nagylexikon* was published almost simultaneously with the statistics of the 1910 census, the encyclopedia's figures — and Tihany's — partly reflect the 1900 census (for the county) and partly the 1910 statistics (for the city of Pécs). By using the census, Tihany could have avoided another erroneous statement: that the population of Baranya "was decreasing owing to overseas emigration, mostly to the United States." The census data prove just the opposite: between 1900 and 1910 the population of the county (including the city of Pécs) rose by five percent. Prior to that date the increase was even greater. The population of the county in 1910, by the way, was not 299,312 as Tihany claims, but 352,478 out of which only 1,114 people lived abroad.

It is fortunate that the Baranya dispute was rescued from oblivion. One only wishes that the rescue operation had been undertaken with greater historical apparatus. If Tihany had done so, he would have written an excellent book on an interesting topic.

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