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HUNGARIAN  
STUDIES

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*Volume 5*

*Number 1*

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Reviews

# HUNGARIAN STUDIES

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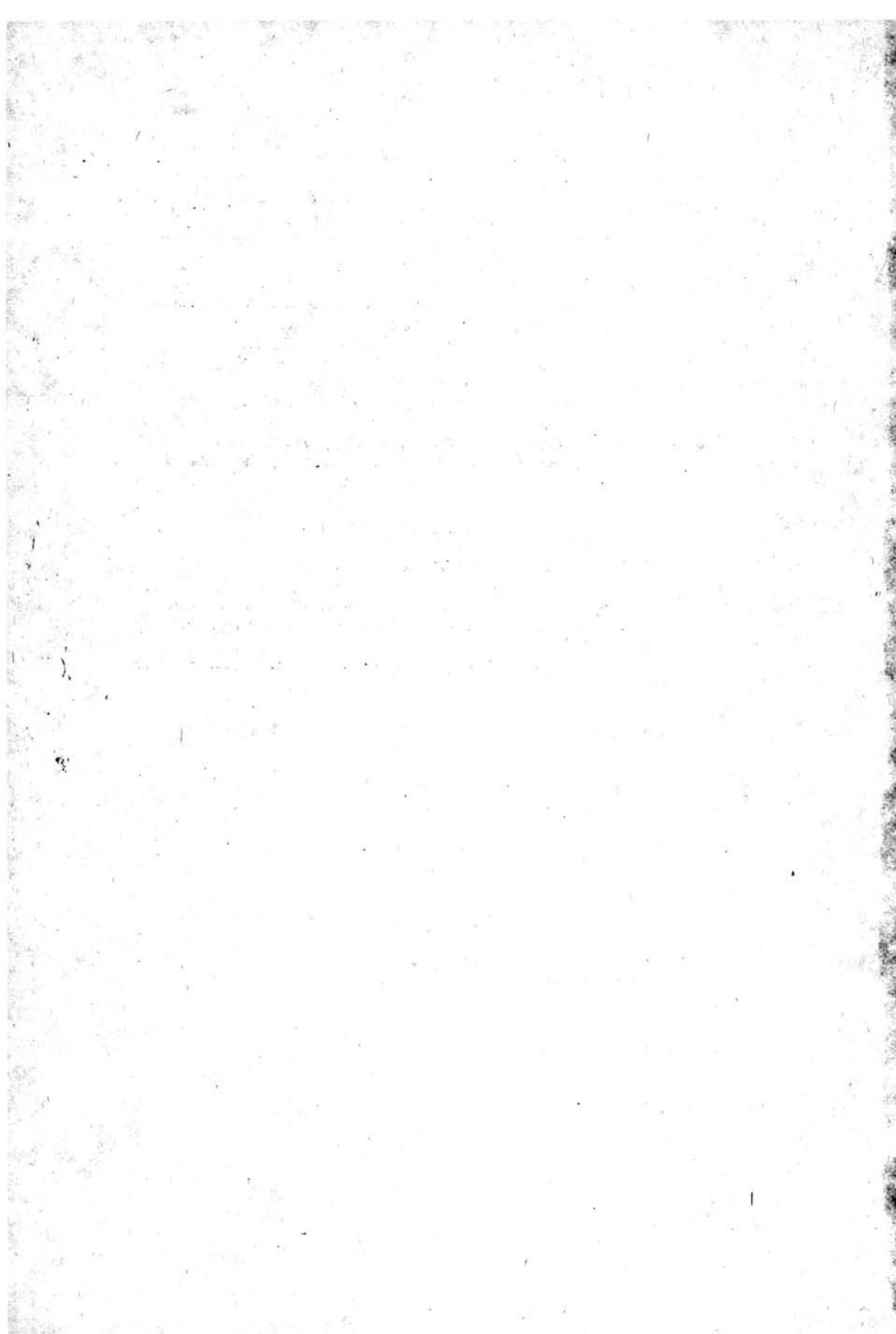
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## SOME ASPECTS OF HUNGARIAN NEOLOGY

ISTVÁN MARGÓCSY

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The Hungarian language reform that took place in the first two decades of the 19th century constitutes the first, and one of the most important, events in the intellectual history of modern Hungarian culture. Nevertheless, it yet received a satisfactory interpretation, in spite of many and detailed learned descriptions. Up until now scholars have usually tried to approach the phenomenon either through political history (or rather, through the history of ideas influenced by political history), or through linguistics, ignoring questions of ideology, the two branches of science bearing little relationship to each other. As such descriptions have not been capable of representing the *complex* character of the movement, their results are not only unsatisfactory, but, in a very natural way, almost contradictory, too. Some of the followers of the purely historical description evaluated the movement very positively (the ground of their appraisal being that in a politically rather "quiet" period only this polemic could motivate a greater part of the nation's population, the national characteristics of reasoning got gaining importance in this discussion). Others present the whole language reform as a conservative phenomenon and treat it as a nationalist manifestation of exclusively national interest. They start from the fact that the great debate achieved no *political* results in spite of the great stir, and did not even intend to achieve such results. The linguistic approach to the chain of events is also unsatisfactory because it focuses only on certain linguistic phenomena (e.g. the growth of the word-stock, stylistic changes, etc.), and only emphasized the practical side of the movement, without attempting to interpret its ideological components *within* the scope of usage.

Hungarian neology, however, deserves special attention as an act in the history of ideas. On the one hand, it exceeded the standardizing procedures taking place in all other European literary languages in magnitude and proportions, and, on the other hand, its course of events created so wide a social stir, that it had some significance beyond the limits of general linguistic interest, in contrast with other European varieties of linguistic standardization. The cause of this particular Hungarian phenomenon might be sought in the intersection of two different courses of development. In the language reform movement two trends in the history of ideas met and mixed, which moved independently from each other in other European cultures, if they appeared in them at all. At approximately the same time emerged both a new concept of the nation, which tried to outline the borders of the nation by the borders of language, and a new concept of literature, which secured entirely different and new rights and possibilities for the writer in the usage of language. *Both* ideological phenomena were formulated *within* the

sphere of language, thus neither of them is conceivable without the other (a point which has often been ignored). We have to underline the fact, however, that both had *independent* intentions, which is why one cannot be explained by the other directly.

That linguistic process identifiable in all European languages, towards the standardization and integration of the language of speaking communities, started in Hungary in the last decades of the 18th century, and developed rapidly. Consequently, more grammars were written, together with several large dictionaries, both interlingual and unilingual (explanatory). While the "renewal" of the language did not mean more than the creation or reception of words denoting new socio-cultural phenomena (that is, the *widening* of the language), these purely linguistic phenomena did not involve serious social or ideological analysis. Polemics against neology started when the *whole* of the language was invested with special value by society, and continued when "modern" writers began to adopt a firmly subjective stance in their usage of language.

In the last third of the 18th century the political construction of the concept of the Hungarian *nation* underwent a radical transformation. In place of the old concept of nation, defined from the standpoint of politics and power, a new, culturally conceived concept of nation appeared. It would be possible to quote quite a few texts which claim that nation and language are *identical*, and that the authentic member of the nation is the one who speaks the language, and vice versa. The nation spreads no farther than the functional borders of the language. Language will be characteristic of the nation in its entirety, but at the same time *each* of its elements will carry value, because each element in some way bears certain national characteristics. According to this view language cannot be observed only in a practical way; it cannot be viewed merely as an instrument (by which we express our general thoughts), but has to be viewed in itself, as a substance: its *being* and functioning guaranteeing the being and functioning of the nation. For this reason the grammarian will appear as the representative of the "most national" science and his activity will serve the development or maintenance of the life of nation. Consequently, several, often very aggressive attempts took place to demonstrate the *unique* and true, motionless and unaltered, and thus eternally national structure of the language. This is why cultivation of literature became an overtly national, puristic action: the artist writes in Hungarian and translates into Hungarian to prove that the Hungarian language possesses the capacities which guarantee its right to create the nation. Eventually, this is why the whole concept became two-faced from the viewpoint of the development of language (neology). On the one hand it starts out from linguistic operations (grammar, translation, original literary works of art, etc.), as the basis of any analysis of language, and on the other hand it restricts considerably the possibilities of the use of language and keeps the freedom of possible innovations in definite bounds.

The general question of the creative freedom of *writers* (artists) arises at this point. It is during these decades that a certain *literary* change takes place in Hungarian literature, which can be taken as the beginning of modernity all over Europe: this is the characteristically *conceptual* detachment of belles-lettres from learned literature. This separation, which took place in other countries of

Europe earlier, coincided in Hungary with the process of linguistic standardization. In the case of greater Western European literatures the two movements might have happened independently from each other. In the periods *preceding* neology, Hungarian literature, science and fiction occur together. One of the first prominent writers of the Hungarian Enlightenment, György Bessenyei (whom we consider now mainly as a *belletrist*) repeatedly mentions *science* in his writings, even if he is writing a drama or a novel. From the viewpoint of language this attitude to literature means that scientific and artistic approaches to language are not yet separated. Writer and language scholar are the same according to this definition: the good writer is the one who knows and uses language well, and the good man of letters is the one who calls grammar into being correctly, and vice versa. He who writes is a grammarian at the same time and his performance is judged *linguistically*, too. For this reason descriptions of language and literature overlap: literary works are judged according to grammatical viewpoints and the scientific approach to language is imagined on the basis of the works of *literature*. This integrated attitude to literature considers language as means of thought in a very natural way—the literary work is nothing but a proper and grammatically correct wording of a great, true thought.

In the last decades of the 18th century, however, the idea of the autonomous linguistic work of art also gains currency in Hungary. According to this idea, a poetical work is not only correct formulation, but also an independent, creative gesture. Poetry is not only a subtype of literature in general, but a special form of manifestation, which no longer wishes to tolerate the dominance of other learned disciplines. Modern poets at the turn of the century viewed their poems as autonomous aesthetic works (or they wanted to view them as such), and according to this they wished to get rid of the strict standardization in usage and grammar, in their own usage of language. This was the point which served as basis for the great debates of Hungarian neology, for the discussions of the 1810s. The questions of the polemic were: who regulates language? Who is the judge of language usage? Opinions varied according to whether or not the answering persons approved of the movement towards the autonomy of fiction. Representatives of the grammatical side, who disapproved of the modern belles-lettres (both for its contents and its usage of language) rejected the poet's right to create language and his subjective freedom in using the language. They wanted to insist on standardization and generalization in the language of *literature*, too. The defenders of the "renewal" of language (in the first place their leading figure, Ferenc Kazinczy), however, always referred to the "taste" of the poet, the artist, opposing the dry, hostile-to-art concept of the grammarians. Although they were followers of linguistic integration and general standardization of parlance, they did not consider these demands valid in the sphere of belles-lettres, for this was viewed as individual, subjective creation. That is why Kazinczy, for example, planned to write an "aesthetic grammar", wanting to demonstrate what could be done with language in the sphere of art. Unfortunately, this work was never completed.

The idea of the modern, autonomous, linguistic work of art is very strictly connected with the problem of the substantiality of linguistic expression. The poet, who does not only *compose* his general thoughts, but also *expresses* his

special ideas, which are characteristic only of himself, manipulates language in a radically different way. In the hands of the poet the language ceases to be a common instrument, and becomes an individual, *non-recurring* speech-act. The distinctive sphere of poetical language is created this way. This sphere the poet considers to be grammatically uncontrollable: his usage of words, his novelty—if it is considered to be *beautiful*—is valid, even if it violates the rules in general. The poetic quality of the poetic work (its autonomy) is guaranteed by its non-recurring and subjective nature.

It is here that the basic trend of linguistic ideology and the attempts of literary innovation clash. With regard to political ideology, both the followers and the adversaries of neology agreed: all of them wanted to re-formulate the Hungarian nation in terms of the substantiality of language—they conceived of language as the sign of national being, national substance. But neologists went on to widen this substantiality. While the adversaries of neology rendered valid the specific nature of the usage of language *only* for the *whole* speaking community and emphasized features that are manifested in the *whole* in comparison with the special features of other languages, the followers of neology (that is, those who stood for the separation of the poetic use of language) went on with specification *within* the community and gave *each* manifestation the right for separation. Hence, the ideology of the substantiality of the language created a paradoxical situation in Hungary: within the scope of national ideology it reproduced the starting dichotomy. For instance, those great grammarians (Miklós Révai and his partner in debate, Ferenc Verseghy), who displayed all their activities according to the spirit of the ideology of linguistic substantiality, return to the old thesis (which defines linguistic expression as the means of thought) when they experience the signs of the subjectivity of the writer's freedom.

This paradoxical intertwining is well-illustrated by a pair of quotations of almost anecdotic interest, which at the same time illustrating the history of the reception of Herder, who was one of the thinkers who had great influence in Hungary at that time. One of the quotations comes from Ferenc Verseghy, the grammarian, who was very much against neology, and the other one comes from Ferenc Kazinczy, the leader of the neologists. Both of them quote the same thing to prove their case, yet interpret the thought they repeat word for word in radically different ways. Verseghy was one of the first to propagate the thoughts of Herder in Hungary. In his *Proludium*, which appeared in 1793 and contains a grammar and theory of language, he translated into Latin and published with approval the basic thesis of Herder's theory of language from the *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*. Language and scholar, language and culture are connected by the fact that the words of language do not mean things themselves, they are only *names*, which express the abstract characters of things, not their objective fundamentals. For this reason, if a name (word) is missing from the language of the linguistic community, then the nation does not possess the idea (or the thing). When a nation does not possess a word, it does not possess the idea or the thing that it represents. ("Ein Volk, das das Wort nicht hat, hat auch die Idee und die Sache nicht.") In the next decade the same statement is made by Kazinczy in its original German form, almost as the motto of neologist movement.

The alternative interpretive context of the quotation and the two kinds of practical conclusions derived from it are fundamentally different. Verseggy admits that the ideas of the words of national languages differ from each other, so-taking a hypothetical and absolutely valid system of signs and ideas as a point of departure—they might bring about incertitude. He wishes to secure the unity and constancy of ideas according to the rational system of his grammar and insists on creating a perfect *dictionary* to remove differences. That dictionary would preclude the differences in thinking deriving from differences in languages. It would fix the meaning of words, widen the mass of words and in so doing (and in enlarging the sphere of ideas) it would support the universal education of the nation. On the other side, Kazinczy emphasizes the freedom to create names (words). According to Kazinczy, the words of the language are not defined and standardized by the hypothetic order of ideas, but by the aesthetic intention of the writer, which is unique and cannot be systematized. The linguistic gestures and manoeuvres of the word help not only the cultural approach to the universe of ideas, but can also create new qualities and new ideas. Verseggy, being attracted by rational systems, closed the routes Herder had opened and put an end to the motions of the world of names (ideas) in his dictionary. Kazinczy uses the opportunity offered by nominalism to strengthen the subjectivistic nature of linguistic creation and to separate an aesthetic preoccupation with language from grammar. To summarize: Herderian ideology is valid both for the grammarian and the writer as an *external* guarantee, but only the writer allows it to penetrate *inside* the scope of language. Finally, it is necessary to interpret Hungarian neology on the basis of the joint movement of three factors. These met and effected (sometimes by weakening, sometimes by strengthening) each other in the demand for a re-formulation of the concept of the nation, in the changing of the theoretical attitude to language, and in the slow process of becoming independent on the part of literature. Neology might be considered to be integrated from a *political* point or view: each participant, without regard to his position in the debate, was the supporter of the new concept of the nation, which produced the theoretical background and framework of the polemic. The different aspects of literature and attitudes to language in themselves cannot be evaluated from a political point of view. From the standpoint of the history of ideas and mentality, the supporters of neology were right for the most part, even if unfortunately, they could not prove their demands for the autonomous aesthetic work of art by high-toned works. This great debate on neology stirred up and clarified for the first time the route for the slow and not always sensational development of modern literature, in the course which, those forces seeking to prevent the development of the literature of subjectivity slowly withdrew. Presumably, the greatest value of the Hungarian neologist polemic was that it removed the remnants of the old-fashioned concept. In this light all those insufficiencies in the theoretical arguments or in the suggested stylistical devices can be neglected. The most important illustration of the whole process is given by the attitude of Ferenc Kölcsey and the young writers of the 1810s. When in the middle of the decade the neologist movement was attacked by a pamphlet which aimed at the linguistic characteristics of neology, they used *literary*, and not *linguistical*, parody in their rough reply. In so doing, they refuted not the style of their adversaries, but their aesthetic attitude.



# PERSPECTIVES ON COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN BRITAIN AND HUNGARY AS SEEN BY ENGLISH TRAVELLERS IN THE 1830s

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"I am deeply interested in the welfare of Hungary, and I have thought that one great means of promoting it would be to extend the knowledge of that country in the west of Europe, and more especially in England,"<sup>1</sup> wrote John Paget in the introduction to his book published in London in 1839.

His book, *Hungary and Transylvania with Remarks on their Condition, Social, Political and Economical*, published in two volumes, was not the only, but certainly the best known among the writings partly or wholly dedicated to Hungary in this period.

John Paget committed his experiences to writing for the love he felt towards his later wife, Polixena Wesselényi, the liberal politician Miklós Wesselényi's cousin; however, other English travellers too had journeyed to Reform Era Hungary and their number included some who later published their impressions not from some emotional fancy, but rather from economic or political considerations.

Until the 19th century the number of written accounts which were published in England and in Western Europe by Englishmen who had personally made the long journey to Hungary was few and far between, and thus the increase of visits beginning with the 1830s is highly conspicuous.<sup>2</sup>

This growing interest can—to a greater or lesser extent—be traced to the twists and turns of the political situation in Europe, to the incentives for wider travel offered by the development of the road and railway network, as well as to the liberal sentiments of the English public that made it sympathetic to the cause of the revolutions in Europe.

Following the Napoleonic wars, British industry underwent an extraordinary development reflected by an increase in the volume of exportable goods and, concomitantly, a growing demand for processable raw materials.

The industrial scene was still dominated by the textile industry; its supremacy was only challenged by the machine industry in the mid-century. In the first half of the century the bulk of exported textile commodities was still directed to the Continent and North America. A good 60% of cotton goods was absorbed by these markets, whilst other countries only received about 40%. In 1848 only 29.5% were traded in Europe and North America, in other words, the withdrawal of British cotton goods from the European markets can be dated to the twenty years between 1820 and 1840.

Britain was, at the same time, the greatest consumer of international trade. Between 1815 and 1845 70% of her import consisted of raw materials—that were later exported after processing—and about 24% of various foodstuffs.<sup>3</sup> While the

textile industry still dominated the scene her major imports were wool and, to a lesser extent, raw cotton. Australian wool only ousted Europe from the British markets much later, from the 1840s.

The changes in the direction of the export and import can be primarily traced to the turns in the economical-political situation in Britain.

After the close of the Napoleonic wars Britain could not yet boast her later markets even though shadowy outlines of her later empire could already be discerned. During the 20s and the 30s the Cape of Good Hope, lying on the southernmost tip of Africa, was just another port of call on the journey to India, and albeit Australia was nominally already part of the British Crown, British colonist had in fact only gained a foothold in and around Sidney. The New Zealand Company was only formed in 1837 and only as late as 1839 did the Durham Report, outlining the political framework of the later empire, arrive from Canada. The organisation of the British Empire had begun in earnest, but the process itself and its ultimate result, the establishment of the British colonial empire had not in the 20s and the 30s really taken root even in official political thought. At that time British trade and capital turned its attention to the European markets, even more so since advances in communication, the establishment of a railway network had, on the one hand, made accesible regions that had formerly been unreachable in terms of overland transport, while on the other hand, incipient industrialization offered excellent possibilities for investment. These regions included Eastern Europe and the Balkans, and their importance increased considerably after Russia, Britain's former eastern trade partner introduced a system of protective duties to encourage her industry in 1824. The establishment of trade relations with Eastern Europe could replace lost markets owing to roughly similar natural resources.<sup>4</sup>

An awakening to the significance of Eastern Europe and the Balkans was, however, not brought about by economic considerations, but rather by the so-called Eastern Question. Even though the foreign policy charted by Castlereagh and Canning dissociated itself sharply from the absolutistic regimes in Europe, from the policy of the Holy Alliance formed in 1815—and with the exception of the Greek Question it cautioned and withdrew from an active participation in the political turmoils of Eastern Europe—it was nonetheless the Treaty of Adrianople drawn up in 1829—coercing a reluctant Turkish acceptance of Greek independence and closing the Greek War of Independence supported by Britain—that signalled the first warning of the growing success of Russian expansionism.

The expansionist policy initiated by Catherine (1792–1796), aimed at seizing control over the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, the Mediterranean, and the Danubian countries of Eastern Europe scored its first major victory in the seemingly peaceful period following the Napoleonic wars.

The peace treaty closing the Russo-Turkish war of 1828–29 weakened the Turkish Empire that was struggling with internal crises and was exhausted by the Greek War of Independence. In the Treaty of Adrianople, the mouth of the Danube was handed over to Russia who thus came into possession of the only navigable channel of the Danube, the Sulina channel; Moldavia and Wallachia, which had formerly belonged to Turkey, were granted nominal autonomy, but

in fact came under Russian suzerainty, and Turkey was forced to open the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles to Russian ships.

The next victory of Russian ambitions was the treaty negotiated at Unkiar Skelessi (1833), another major step towards assuming control over the Mediterranean. One antecedent of the treaty was that the hitherto anti-Turkish Russian policy clothed in the guise of liberalism, became fearful of the weakening of her influence and now, in the hope of various advantages, took the side of Turkey against the threats posed by Mohamed Ali of Egypt. The Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi explicitly stated that Turkey should allow the passage of Russian ships through the Straits even in times of war, whilst the naval route would be closed to other nations.

It was this Russian expansion that turned the Balkans, that had under the long centuries of Turkish overlordship been of little or no importance, into an important factor of European politics.

In the course of the lively diplomatic activity that began in the area agents and diplomats representing British interest made their appearance in this hitherto unexplored region. The checking of Russian expansion and the safeguarding of Levantine trade and the British trade routes leading to India became a question of vital importance for Britain. One possible course was the support of Turkey. The political importance and natural resources of Moldavia and Wallachia that for the time being stood under Russian influence did not escape the notice of British politicians in their wishing to cure "the sick man of Europe" through the benefits of trade, and an appraisal of the transport possibilities between Britain and Turkey called attention to the Danube, a major waterway that flowed, for the greater part, through Austria and also to the raw materials and markets of the Danubian provinces, exactly at the same time as regular steamship service was founded,<sup>5</sup> and when Count Széchenyi of Hungary began devoting a considerable portion of his energies on rendering the entire section of the Danube navigable.<sup>6</sup>

The political and commercial factors and interests gradually intermingled; David Urquhart, the diplomat who later officially represented Britain in Constantinople, and who since 1833 had travelled extensively in the region on a secret assignment in pursuit of possible markets, urged a definite anti-Russian political course as a precondition to the establishment of commercial relations, and considered a more extensive trade with the Balkans and Eastern Europe as a necessary preliminary to a more favourable political situation.<sup>7</sup>

To all appearances Lord Palmerston who followed Canning in the Foreign Office was unable to grasp the significance of the Eastern Question. His answer to the opposition calling for an active stand against the Treaty of Adrianople was "that the peace of Europe and the honour of England were not to be sacrificed on account of unpronounceable fortresses on the Danube."<sup>8</sup> In 1832, at the time of Mohamed Ali's attack, the Porte turned to him for help in vain, Palmerston was apparently exclusively concerned with Western Europe. The diplomats and agents who had travelled to the region tried through series of pamphlets, reports and books to focus the attention of Palmerstonian foreign policy—that was by all means liberal in comparison to the regimes of the Holy Alliance and that endeavoured, as far as British political interests would allow, to cherish its ideals in European politics—to the dangers menacing British interests and, at the same

time, called for urgent remedying. The British political attitude that now took shape bore its bitter fruits for the Hungarian cause in 1848–49. Palmerston, who was acting as foreign secretary, feared the weakening of Austrian power that had until then been able to check the Russian expansion, and refused to support the Hungarian revolution in spite of his obvious distaste for the methods employed by Austrian absolutism.

But by the 30s, the British public had, either through the official straining of the Eastern Question, or from the reports of British travellers who journeyed to Hungary personally owing to the lively interest towards this region, become informed for the first time in the course of long centuries of the very existence of Hungary, had become acquainted with Hungarian Reform efforts and even though there had not been established trade relations as intensive as those envisaged by travellers to Hungary, the sympathies aroused towards Hungary nonetheless resulted in that in 1848, in contrast with Palmerston's policy, the British public mostly took a stand on the Hungarian cause.

Of the British travellers who had visited Hungary in the 1830s John Paget is undoubtedly the best known, although scholarly research has tended to analyse his work from a literary and cultural viewpoint, rather than in terms of his political objectives and program.

The scholarly English doctor, John Paget, spent one and a half years in Hungary in 1835–36. In 1837 he married Polixena Wesselényi; he was an *aide-de-camp* to Bem, a Polish general in command of the Hungarian army during the 1848 revolution and for this reason he was compelled to return to Britain in 1849, but then again moved to Transylvania in 1853. He died there and his grave lies in the Házsongárd cemetery in Kolozsvár. His book was published in 1839 in London. The first edition of his book has a portrait of István Széchenyi on the frontispiece. The political sentiments of the author are set down clearly in the introduction. "Why or wherefore, I know not, but nothing can exceed the horror with which a true Austrian regards both Hungary and its inhabitants. I have sometimes suspected that the bugbear with which a Vienna mother frightens her squaller to sleep, must be a Hungarian bugbear; for in no other way can I account for the inbred and absurd fear which they entertain for such near neighbours. It is true, the Hungarians do sometimes talk about liberty, constitutional rights, and other such terrible things, to which no well-disposed ears should ever be open, and to which the ears of the Viennese are religiously closed."

One objective of Paget's book was to stimulate the establishment of trade relations between the two countries by eliciting sympathy towards Hungary and also to pave the road for the negotiation of a British–Hungarian (British–Austrian) alliance. He seized every opportunity to stress the liberal nature of the Hungarian reform movement, but not necessarily always with propagandistic aims.

John Paget, who advocated and honestly believed in the possibility of establishing commercial relations was convinced that the economic and political changes necessary for these would eventually take place, in other words, he believed that the Reformists led by Széchenyi would eventually triumph. His two volume book contains a detailed description of Austrian economic policies blocking trade, the laws ensuring feudal privileges and their consequences: the road conditions making transport extremely costly, the lack of capital, the

primitive state of trade—but he was nonetheless convinced that the reform generation would brush these obstacles aside.

In the chapter on trade Paget lists the natural resources of Hungary and Transylvania that could be sold on the British market and then goes on to describe trade relations:

“We have already said so much of mines and mining, that it is scarcely necessary to state here how extensive the veins of gold and silver are which run through the whole country. It has been stated by Beudant,<sup>9</sup> that there is more gold and silver found in Hungary than in all the rest of Europe besides. The privilege of working the mines is open to every one on the payment of a tenth of the produce to the Crown; the only other restriction being the obligation to have the precious metals coined in the country, for which a small per-centage is charged. From the number of places in which we have seen iron hammers, it must be evident that iron abounds throughout extensive districts; but hitherto the iron mines have been very badly worked, and the iron so ill-wrought as to be extremely dear. For the erection of the new chain-bridge at Pest, it has been found cheaper to have the iron-work cast in England, sent by water to Fiume or Trieste, and from thence by land to Pest, than to have it manufactured either in Hungary or in any other part of the Austrian dominions. Such is the advantage which commercial habits and scientific knowledge give over cheap labour. I have heard it stated that the iron of Hungary possesses qualities superior to that of any other part of Europe, except Sweden, for conversion into steel; yet it is so badly wrought that worse cutlery cannot exist than that of Hungary. Hungarian iron is quite unknown in the English market.”

Aside from precious metals, he mentions copper, sulphur, lead, potash, salt, soda and alum.

“Coal, as I have already said, is found in several districts, and I believe it is the only coal in Europe which can contest the field with that of England for the use of steam-engines. That is at present as dear as English coal imported via Constantinople is entirely attributable to bad, or rather dishonest management.

Of wood, Hungary, and the neighbouring countries, Bosnia and Serbia, are capable of furnishing vast stores. At present, England receives a large portion of her timber from the Baltic, which might as well be obtained from these countries by Fiume or the Black Sea, and the navy of England would then be no longer dependent for its supply on the country which is most likely to place itself in rivalry with her. The forests of Hungary, particularly the Bakonyer, are almost entirely composed of oak, which is of two kinds—the red, quick-growing soft wood, of little use except for firing; and the white, a firm lasting timber, well adapted for ship building, or other purposes requiring durability. In those parts of the country where the roads are too allow of the transport of large blocks of timber, the wood might be cut into staves, for which there is always a great demand, and so conveyed to the coast in smaller loads for exportation. A considerable trade is already carried on in this article between Fiume and Marseilles, most of the staves being procured from Bosnia and brought by land-carriage to Fiume. [...]

Another article connected with our shipping interest, to which we have already alluded, is hemp. All the hemp used in the navy is of Russian growth, and it is

one of the chief of our imports from that country. The hemp of Hungary is both cheaper and better; and instead of taking it from a rival, we should take it from a safe ally.

Hides and tallow are also articles of Russian commerce in which Hungary might prove a formidable rival. [...]

Horse-hair, bristles, gall-nuts and rags, are all articles of Hungarian commerce; and of the latter very large exportations to this country already take place annually." According to Paget Hungarian wine, especially if prepared with more care could be another article sold on the British market.

"Wool is at present one of the chief articles of Hungarian commerce, chiefly because its exportation is untaxed. It is scarcely twenty years since the Merino sheep have been introduced into Hungary, and the quantity of fine wool now produced may be judged from the fact, that at the last Pest fair there were no less than 80,000 centners offered for sale. The greater part of this wool is bought by the German merchants, and much of it is said to go ultimately to England, after having passed by land quite across Europe to Hamburg. Of late years a few English merchants have made their appearance at the Pest fairs, which are held four times in the year; but I have not yet heard of any wool being sent to England by the Danube and the Black Sea. Besides the Merino wool, there is a considerable quantity of a long coarse wool grown, which is chiefly sold for the manufacture of the thick white cloth worn by the peasants, and which might be found very serviceable for our carpet fabrics.

A still more important article of Hungarian produce is corn, and it is one from which, it is to be hoped, England ere long, by the abolition of her corn laws, will enable herself to derive the full benefit. At present, the quantity of grain annually produced in Hungary is reckoned at from sixty to eighty millions of Presburg metzen. This calculation, however, is of little importance, as at present scarcely any is grown for exportation; but, were a market once opened, it is beyond doubt that the produce might be doubled or trebled without any difficulty. I have heard it stated by one well able to judge, that at the present time one quarter of the whole country is uncultivated, although the greater part of it is capable of furnishing the richest crops at a very slight cost. The wheat of Hungary is allowed to be of an excellent quality. Where the land has little or no value for other purposes, and the labour costs nothing, it is difficult to see how it can be produced any where at a cheaper rate than here."

Paget envisaged trade in terms of contemporary British practice that had evolved in consequence of the high level of British industry: Hungary would supply raw materials and would purchase finished goods—cutlery, agricultural implements of iron and brass, china and fine earthenware. He was convinced that it would be unwise for Hungary to develop her industry in view of her situation: a low population and fertile tract of land.

It is not quite clear what exactly he meant by this from his work, but a study on Hungary in the 1837 issue of the *Portfolio*, whose contents and composition make it likely that it was written by Paget anonymously, shed more light on this matter. The number of Hungary's inhabitants is so low as only to be able to cultivate about one-half of the arable land. Industrial production, by withdrawing

manpower from agriculture, would undoubtedly bring catastrophe upon this country that is basically endowed with agricultural potentials.

According to John Paget the major obstacle to trade is the Habsburgs' economic policy, and even more damaging is the law ensuring the inalienability of land since it practically makes the collection of debts extremely difficult or even impossible for the creditor or the tradesman, and thus both Hungarian and foreign entrepreneurs are understandably most reluctant to enter into business. Then too, British tradesmen know little, if anything, about Hungary.

"The ignorance of English merchants on the subject of Hungary is by no means a trifling impediment to their engaging in commerce with that country. The productions of Hungary are almost unknown, except in Austria and some parts of Germany; travelling in the country is difficult, and believed to be even more so than it is. The German language is as yet but little known among our merchants; and the reports which they hear from the Germans, who are anxious to keep the trade in their own hands, are so discouraging, that few have the courage to make a personal examination of their truth."

Apart from this, Austrian politics betrayed signs of rapprochement with Britain and the Diet, sitting at Pressburg proposed the appointment of an official consul for Hungarian trade in Britain, and thus Paget thought it most timely that the British Parliament should pay serious attention to this matter. The last few sentences of his book are in fact addressed to the government: they should establish a consulate in Pest, and the consul should be officially authorized to enter into contact with the British consulates along the Danube. In his opinion the relations established through trade would also prove useful politically and economically: this area could replace the Russian market for Britain and would also offer British economy some measure of independence from the markets of other countries that would sooner or later appear on the scene as potential rivals to Britain. His main objective was political in nature: the weakening of Russia, alternately referred to as Britain's rival and enemy, and the forging of a basically anti-Russian Austro-British political alliance that would be further strengthened by economic ties. Paget thus expected his country to engage in trade with Hungary and to enter into alliance with Austria; in other words, to support Hungarian reform efforts and to condemn Austria's absolutistic policy, while at the same time suggesting Austria as a possible ally to a liberal Britain. In 1848, however, it proved impossible to support both parties, and Britain, who apart from her sympathies with liberalism, harboured no political or economic interests towards Hungary, tacitly supported Austria, since her policies required the survival of the Austrian *status quo*.

Peter Evan Turnbull published his book entitled *Austria* in 1840,<sup>10</sup> part of which had already been published anonymously under the title "British Diplomacy and Turkish Independence" a year before. He was a member of the Royal Society and in 1836 he spent several months in Hungary during which time he also met with the initiator of the reform movement, Count Széchenyi. Little more is known about him for the time being.

We have no idea whether he came to Eastern Europe on an official assignment, but his opinion and outlook definitely range him among the critics of Palmerston's Eastern European policy. Similarly to David Urquhart, a Member of Parliament,

and his other colleagues working on the *Portfolio* series that was primarily concerned with the political and economic situation of Eastern Europe, Turnbull considered the only course towards the defence of British trade interests to be an immediate and resolute British political action against the rival Russian expansionism. In his opinion Britain could rely on one single ally in Europe: Austria who appeared to be most threatened owing to her geographic position and who had adopted a pro-Turkish stand during the Greek War of Independence.

In his book on Austria he strove to present an unbiased and accurate picture of a country that enjoyed a fairly bad reputation in Britain and was also considered to be unreliable politically.

There is no single chapter devoted to Hungary, but the sections reviewing the economy, finance, internal political structure and foreign policy of the empire often digress on the Hungarian situation. The chapters on internal and external trade also contain remarks on Hungarian trade relations. As regards the abundance of natural resources and the excellence of the arable land, he shares Paget's opinion: no other country in Europe can boast such a wealth of natural sources and other products. Nonetheless, in contrast to almost every other "traveller" and the authors of the articles published in the *Portfolio*, he rejects not only Austria and Hungary, but also other regions of Eastern Europe belonging to Turkey as possible trade partners to Britain. He considered Austrian export to be insignificant on the whole, stating that as a consequence of the backwardness of her industry, Austria can at the most hope to satisfy her internal demands only. Of her exported goods he only regarded cotton wool—even of inferior quality—as being of more significant volume. According to his data Austria exported cotton wool to the amount of 36,589,205 Viennese pounds, i.e. 297,473 cwt (cca 15,171,123 kg), and he had been informed of an expected increase in this amount. 12,000,000 of the 20,000,000 sheep in the Empire are to be found in Hungary and Transylvania—a considerable number to be sure, but only in continental relations. He cannot resist a comparison of data: Wales and Britain could, already in 1800, count 19,007,607 sheep.

He sees three basic reason for the backwardness of the industry: the unfavourable geographic endowments of the country, the trade policies pursued by neighbouring countries and the economic policy of the Austrian government. He illustrates the latter with a specific example: at the beginning of the 30s the export of timber through Fiume showed such an upswing (a fact also mentioned by Paget) that by 1835 89 shiploads of timber were transported to the other countries. As a consequence, Vienna not only wished to increase its duty, but also proposed that its amount should now be fixed by weight; moreover, only about one-half of the raised duty would have reached the Treasury, the other half would have been used to cover the expenses of weighing. According to Turnbull, it was exactly this shortsighted tax policy thinking only of the immediate benefits of the state that would eventually stifle this branch of industry that had just begun to develop with its high duties, and in spite of her mercantile policy directed towards the industrialization this policy renders Austria unable to engage in significant trade in the near future. (At the same time Turnbull also wished to illustrate the economic policy pursued by Austria in Hungary by choosing this example.)

He also took a gloomier view of the natural resources than Paget. He was of the opinion that Trieste and Fiume, belonging to Austria and Hungary respectively, shared an enormous disadvantage that both are sealed off from the arable land by practically unapproachable mountain chains. Often there is need to employ 18 to 20 horses or oxen to transport a cartload to the seaports. Thus, the cost of the transportation of a ton of cotton from Trieste to Vienna matches about that of transportation from Calcutta to Manchester. The situation could be remedied if there were a railroad leading to the Adriatic through the Hungarian plainland from Vienna, but Turnbull is sceptical that the Hungarian Diet would consent to the construction of a railway track leading to the Austrian Trieste through Transdanubia of Hungary, even if the development of Fiume would benefit from it.

Turnbull is even more pessimistic about the exploitation of Hungary's natural endowments, that was one of the main concerns of Paget. At the time of Turnbull's travels, the Danube was unnavigable between Vienna and Pressburg and between Moldavia and Cladova; and he is not convinced that the "sluggish, shallow, muddy stream" would be suitable for transporting larger amounts of cargo even if it were to be made navigable along its entire course. As regards trade policies of Austria's neighbours, Turnbull is of the opinion that they either imposed such heavy duties as to eliminate even former trade—one reason for the cessation of the export of wine from Hungary to Poland—or are on such a primitive level of development as to lack a market capable of absorbing goods, or efficient means of raw material transportation, as for example Wallachia and Serbia.

And even though Turnbull does not hesitate to dissuade his British readers from trade with Austria and the Balkans, he is nonetheless certain that a regular Danubian steamship service will have its profits—even if not for Britain, but Austria and Hungary will undoubtedly reap considerable advantages on the Balkans.

He sees the political benefits deriving from steam navigation as even greater than its trade profits:

"Through its channel [steam navigation] the tide of civilization will be gradually poured on the distant regions of Wallachia, Serbia and Bulgaria. It will introduce Hungary into the bosom of Europe. It will bring her hitherto secluded population with social intercourse with travellers from distant land. It will be the means of dispelling the clouds of prejudice, ignorance, and error, and auspicious alike to the vassal and his lord, it will improve the condition of man in every stage of society."

Turnbull thus considered trade with the eastern half of Europe unimportant for Britain, but nonetheless expected the spread of liberalism from the trade conducted by the Danubian countries among each other. At the same time, he was fully aware of the political importance of the region, and he called attention to Austria in spite of her economic and political backwardness, since he clearly saw that Britain's imperial policy in the Mediterranean was menaced not only by Russian, but also by French interests, and that Austria was the only power which, though not a rival from this point of view, was perhaps most threatened by Russian expansionism. Then, too, Britain's naval supremacy could no longer guarantee a solution to the Eastern Question: the survival of Turkey would need a strong land

army—and Austria, one of the victors of the Napoleonic wars was still considered a major military power in the mid-30s.

The contradictory reports from this region—that Britain should support trade relations to promote her own economic interests; that she should ease the way for more liberal political systems; conversely, that she should only enter into political alliance with Austria—must have caused many a headache in the Foreign Office.

Palmerston's opposition pressing for a quick and efficient solution to the Eastern Question, considered him undecided even in the latter half of the 30s. All the same, a series of negotiations had begun in 1836 and, eventually, a British–Austrian commercial agreement was drawn up in 1838 in Milan. This agreement gave rise to great hopes in Hungary: it was believed that the commercial treaty would raise Austrian trade to a higher level thus exerting fruitful influence on Hungary by means of the steam navigation along the Danube.<sup>11</sup> Its aim, as implied by its formulation, was not so much the bolstering of trade between Britain and Austria, but rather the guarantee of trade between Britain and Turkey: the agreement involved the establishment of mutual British and Austrian shipping concessions. Its fourth article immediately drew bitter protest from the Palmerstonian opposition: "All Austrian vessels proceeding from the Harbours of the Danube as far as Galatz, inclusive, as well as their cargoes, may sail direct for the ports of Great Britain, and of all other possessions of her Britannic Majesty, as if they came direct from the Harbours of Austrian; and reciprocally, all English vessels, as well as their cargoes, shall be admitted into the Austrian Harbours, and depart therefrom with the same immunities as Austrian vessels."<sup>12</sup>

According to the parliamentary opposition of the Foreign Secretary the agreement—that was wholly attributed to Palmerston by the British—did not take into account the situation that had unfolded in the Danube delta in 1829, namely that the only navigable channel of the Danube stood under Russian control: the officials of the forts disguised as quarantines stopped and levied duty from all ships carrying commercial cargoes, and purposefully hindered the ship traffic of the region. Palmerston appeared to be unmoved: his public statements would imply that he did not perceive the interrelations between the Turkish Question and the Balkanic situation, and the role the Danube delta played; and fearful of upsetting of the precarious European power equilibrium he refused to interfere with Russia's Balkanic policy, and especially not for the sake of an unimportant, practically unnavigable river that played little, if any, role in British maritime trade. Thus, to the greatest indignation of the opposition rallying around Urquhart, even on the eve of the Crimean war, Palmerston considered the obstruction of British marchant vessels on the Danube to be little more than the conflict of petty local interests.<sup>13</sup>

In spite of the British–Austrian trade agreement, trade between Hungary, the Danubian countries of Eastern Europe and Britain that would undoubtedly also have stimulated the development of social relations never really took off. The reason for this should not only be sought in the economic backwardness of the countries in question, in the British navy that was more suited for maritime trade, in the Russian occupation of the Danube delta or in Palmerston's insistence that

the *status quo* must be preserved. Palmerston, who was reluctant to pick a quarrel with Russia after the latter's occupation of the mouth of the Danube, nonetheless expected a strengthening of Eastern European trade relations from the Austrian-British agreement, and the counterbalancing of Russian expansion. When in 1837 the Foreign Office suggested the reduction of the duties imposed on certain commodities to be transported to Austria, it met with Palmerston's whole-hearted approval:

"The insertion of British cotton goods, woollens, and hardwares in that List [the list of exportable goods] would be of great importance; and such a reduction of Duty on these Commodities, as might permit them to be consumed in the States of Hungary, and in the Southern Provinces of Austria, would be the only means of extending our intercourse with those Provinces."<sup>14</sup>

Neither can Palmerston be blamed for the stagnation of trade relations with Hungary. The Foreign Secretary had toyed with the idea of appointing a British consul to Budapest, but Prince Metternich, who considered the establishment of foreign consulates in Hungary as fuel to the separatists' ambitions of the "rebel" Hungarians, had already in 1841 rejected the founding of an American consulate in Hungary. He had his doubts as to the desirability or utility of a consulate and finally decided that it would cause such grave damage as is the duty of his Cabinet to counteract.

"The necessity and utility of such an innovation do not appear in any manner demonstrated. It could on the contrary, produce inconveniences of a grave nature which is the duty of every government to avoid.

It is also for these reasons that the Imperial and Royal Court has already found itself obliged to decline definitively more than one proposition of this kind which has come to it from the side of other foreign Governments, and it could consequently, defer to the wish of the United States of America without justly exciting complaints and pretensions sufficiently embarrassing, on the part of the said Governments."<sup>15</sup>

Thus, neither was Britain permitted the establishment of a consulate in Hungary and in 1848 J. A. Blackwell, the diplomatic agent of the British Ambassador in Vienna—who had his eye on the post of the consul in vain—was the single British subject to semi-officially sojourn in Hungary and send reports of the events.<sup>16</sup> It can be said that Palmerston had in fact devoted attention to the reports written by the agents, merchants and travellers who had journeyed to Eastern Europe, and that David Urquhart and his opposition was mistaken in assuming that the Foreign Secretary did not in the least take notice of Russia's expansionist policies.<sup>17</sup> Palmerston agreed with the establishment of commercial relations and the increase of British influence. It was Chancellor Metternich to whom the official presence of foreign/British trade in Hungary would have been tantamount to the disruption of the given relationships of the kingdom, and who flatly refused cooperation and seized every opportunity to thwart all efforts that in his opinion endangered the unity of the Monarchy.

## Notes

1. Paget, John: *Hungary and Transylvania with Remarks on their Condition, Social, Political and Economical* (London, 1839, John Murray).
2. Julia Pardoe (1836, 1839–40), Michael J. Quin (1835), George E. Hering (1836), G. R. Gleig (1837), C. B. Elliott (1838) and Palgrave Simpson (1846) visited Hungary at about this time, and a number of anonymously published books, such as *Sketches of Germany and the Germans with a Glance of Poland, Hungary* also reached the British public.
3. Hobsbawm, E. J.: *Industry and Empire. An Economic History of Britain since 1750*. (London, 1968, Weidenfeld and Nicolson.)
4. This opinion is echoed by several essays published in the *Portfolio*, appearing regularly since 1836, that featured various documents and articles discussing issues of foreign policy, as well as by the book of its editor David Urquhart. See *The Portfolio or a Collection of State Papers. Illustrative of the History of Our Times*. (London, James Ridgway) and Urquhart, D.: *Progress of Russia in the West, North, and South, by Opening the Sources of Opinion and Appropriating the Channels of Wealth and Power* (London, 1853, Trübner Co.).
5. The Danube Steamship Company of Austria was formed in 1829. According to D. Urquhart, British steam shipping on the Danube increased from two ships in 1834, to 15 ships in 1835, and their number practically doubled by the next year, 1836.
6. Széchenyi was appointed Superintendent of the Regulation of the Danube by Francis I in 1833.
7. Urquhart, D.: *Progress of Russia*.
8. Ibid.
9. Beudant, François-Dulpice: *Voyage minéralogique et géologique en Hongrie 1–4*. (Paris, 1822). It was published in English in 1823.
10. Turnbull, Peter Evan: *Austria. Narrative of Travels* 2 Vols. (London, MDCCCXL, John Murray).
11. *Jelenkor*. 1838. 26 October, 1838. p. 333. (*Jelenkor* was a prominent newspaper of the period.)
12. Urquhart, D.: *Apology for Russia...*, p. 335
13. Ibid., pp. 347–50.
14. Palmerston to Lamb, 30 September, 1837. In: Barany, George: *Stephen Széchenyi and the Awakening of Hungarian Nationalism, 1791–1841* (Princeton, N. J., 1968, Princeton Univ. Press).
15. Metternich's answer to the Vienna agent of the USA was dated to 16, June, 1841. In: Barany, George: *The Interests of the United States in Central Europe: Appointment of the First American Consul to Hungary* (Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and letters, Vol. XIII, 1962).
16. For Blackwell's activities see Kabdebo, Thomas: *Joseph Blackwell's first Hungarian Mission* in: *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, Vol. XXVIII. pp. 151–164.
17. For Metternich's political conservatism, see: Woodward, E. L.: *Three Studies in European Conservatism* (London, 1963, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd.).

# ROMANTICISM AND BIEDERMEIER IN EAST-CENTRAL EUROPEAN LITERATURES

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## I

A modified and quiet romanticism is more evident and significant in Eastern and Central European literatures than anywhere else.<sup>1</sup> However, two main deficiencies of research in this area have until now hampered the correct appreciation of this phenomenon by romantic scholarship. The first is reluctance to seek earnestly for unifying traits in the area east of Germany. The second is the failure to understand correctly the relationship between romantic developments in different areas of Europe. As a consequence the general concept of romanticism was weakened and, repeatedly, uncertainties about the chronological borders of the period arose.

The transmission of literary phenomena inside a culture recognized as unitary has been analyzed *theoretically* even less than the reception of impulses from outside that culture. We know more about Arab influences on the Middle Ages or Chinese motifs flourishing in the eighteenth century than about the delicate mechanism through which Baroque forms spread through Europe or about how romanticism came to travel from one center of initiative to many remote areas. Such omissions result from a failure to understand the peculiar pluralistic organization of Western culture (as opposed to, say, the Chinese or the Egyptian or indeed the Greco-Latin culture). The phases of romanticism and its internal growth can well be discussed as a unified model; how the succession of these phases actually occurred in different areas of Europe varied from case to case.

In his fundamental comparative studies of European industrialization in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Alexander Gershenkron established a number of principles which have methodological interest even for those who do not subscribe to the stricter theories of socioeconomic determination of aesthetic constructs. Among these are the following:

1. The more backward a country's economy, the more likely was its industrialization to start discontinuously as a sudden great spurt proceeding at a relatively high rate of growth of manufacturing output.

2. The more backward the country's economy, the more pronounced was the stress of its industrialization on bigness of both plant and enterprise

3. The more backward the country's economy, the greater was the part played by special institutional factors designed to increase supply of capital to the nascent industries and, in addition, to provide them with less decentralized and better informed entrepreneurial guidance; the more backward the country, the more pronounced was the coerciveness and comprehensiveness of those factors.<sup>2</sup>

Gershenkron also described areas as advanced or backward in terms of the sequence in which they used the following institutions during the stages of their

industrialization as sources for their capital supply: factories from the beginning; banks and later factories; or state capital, then banks, and only last factories. In other words, Gershenkron showed that industrialization in various countries was similar in result, but that the processes of industrialization differed and that where the prerequisites of development (for example, according to the English model) were missing, substitutes occurred. In fact, Gershenkron explained, "the more backward was a country on the eve of its great spurt of industrial development, the more likely [were] the processes of its industrialization to present a rich and complete picture." (p. 358) Once a model of development is chosen, a certain orderly predictability in its occurrence from country to country can be established by posing sets of patterns of substitutions.

## II

In what ways is a pattern of substitution homologous to that of Gershenkron applicable to literary realities? We have to start from certain postulates which cannot be demonstrated here, but which are neither unreasonable nor arbitrary. The first is that the carrier for the changes of Romanticism is a "human model", a complex of values and behaviors that is found rather consistently behind the events or developments of a certain age, and which can be encountered (perhaps under different shapes with different degrees of precision) in a cross section of society.

The second is that Western literatures (primarily English and German, and to some extent French) reach their Romantic peak around 1790-1815 by a gradual accumulation of expansionary gestures: inclusions of space and time (continents and historical areas), of sex, age and social condition, inclusions of new stylistic and generic forms, of models of religiosity, and most important of psychological states and mental faculties gaining massive access to literary texts. These expansions lead to a model that is based upon the principle of completeness and totality, almost approximating a recovery of (usually secularized) paradisiacal perfection, as M. H. Abrams rightly suggested.<sup>3</sup> The postlapsarian antinomies between reason and imagination, consciousness and nature, man and God, let alone social divisions were supposed to disappear in the intense flames of a cosmic comprehensiveness. Blake and Wordsworth, Hölderlin and Novalis, Schelling and Hegel clearly shared this effort, which went in parallel with the absolute claims of the French Revolution at its peak, no less than with mystical and occult endeavors or with the searches of a science enamored of universal magnetisms. This "High-Romanticism" was (and could not but be) explosive and inconstant; its project had to end up in disappointment, relativism, irony and fragmentation. Throughout Europe, in the 1820s and 1830s we witness a "taming" of Romanticism, the emergence of a low Romanticism, most characteristically in the German-speaking areas as "Biedermeier", the silver age of the European bourgeois imagination. Features such as withdrawal in idyllism, a modest sentimentalism, an emphasis on home and hearth, piety, political conformity and provincialism were soon detected as characteristic for the literature (and indeed for the whole culture) of Europe between 1815-1848. It took a slightly longer

time to notice that there were also other ways in which "lower Romanticism" or Biedermeier modes expressed themselves: the reduction of the all-encompassing aspiration to unity to smaller targets, such as national revival, social reform or even individual growth. Irony, relativism and disappointment were also orientations that flourished strongly. The emergence of an intricate dialectic of liberalism and conservatism is characteristic of the Biedermeier age and proved of tremendous importance, setting the terms of the debate in a way that influenced later decades, all the way to our own days. Finally a central characteristic is the substitution and/or entermeshing of idealist and aesthetic values with empirical and didactic pursuits in a way that seems rarely to have been equalled or imitated.

My third postulate is that whereas in Western Europe we have a clearly defined succession of separate phases, in the more peripheral areas, e.g. Southern Europe (Spanish and Italian literatures), in American literature, as well as in Eastern and Central European literatures, the salient feature is the overwhelming strength of the Biedermeier or lower Romanticism, which almost comes to subsume the short Enlightenment and the occasional explosions of high Romanticism. Let me now return to the concept of "backwardness" and to the debate on Romantic periodization in Eastern Europe.

### III

Clearly neither the concept of backwardness nor that of development can be applied to a cultural situation lightly. Empirically, a case could be made for measuring whether a cultural situation is more or less advanced by the use of indicators such as literary editions, total number of authors, authors declared outstanding (according to some conventional set of criteria), and authors who are in tune with the prevailing trends in comparable countries. Such a sociological undertaking would be legitimate and interesting, but does not seem feasible in the near future. Even the concept of development is less than likely to coincide with some acceptable view of progress, as it does in economic history: in this respect even Marx had serious reservations. In fact, I can hardly think of a modern literary history that conceives of its own theme as linear progress.

Nonetheless within limited periods of time of say 100 to 150 years, it would be easier to decide that there is a general direction of literary movement and that in terms of this *relative* movement an author or work can be seen as more or less advanced. Let me further qualify this statement by noting that this sense of the term *advanced* or *backward* is strictly limited to time and has little to do with quality or value; indeed, such are the dialectics of literary development that a valuable work that seems "chronologically displaced" is likely to seem after a while more challenging and influential than an equally important one that is fully integrated. I suspect that here some variant of the law of deviances (*écarts*) is functioning, this time from a historical-literary rather than a strictly stylistic point of view.

Thus, assuming that the general European literary development includes a succession of phases such as: Enlightenment (neoclassic), Enlightenment (preromantic, or classicism modified in different directions), high romantic, and later romantic or Biedermeier, it is clear that the full range of phases developed

only in England and, to a lesser extent, in Germany and France. In most other countries one or more stages are missing, or the order seems dislocated, or one stage seems to absorb the others. The last case is most interesting, since it indicates a kind of "telescoping" (to employ a term used in the social sciences), a simultaneous occurrence of several phases over a relatively short period of time.

Eastern European social and literary historians tend to respond in three ways when faced with a Western pattern of development and the demand to apply it to a stubborn local context. The first is simply to proclaim that the literary-historical categories in Eastern Europe differ from those in the West and must be defined in their own way. Thus many historians of Russian literature refer to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century as the "Age of Silver" or "Pushkin's age", or they limit the Russian Enlightenment to the latter half of the eighteenth century. Czech literary historians talk very often about a period of "national renaissance" (1780-1830), and so on. This kind of response tends to emphasize local historical circumstances, for example, the national, sociopolitical, sometimes revolutionary implications of romantic literature in the East, as opposed to the Western stress on imagination and individual completeness, and the reformist and moderate nature of the Enlightenment in East-Central Europe, as opposed to its radical implications in the West. The concept of *Goethezeit* sometimes provides a paradigm for the alternative Eastern European literary development.

The second response seems to be inspired by an epidemic vision of fixed cultural categories. These are seen as traveling from West to East like an infectious disease, changing conditions and contaminating vast populations. Each period or subperiod in the West has to find some kind of equivalent in the East, despite a possible lag of thirty or fifty years. Thus, Czech preromanticism is said by some to flourish between 1815 and 1830, Romanian preromanticism is sometimes pushed to 1848 or later, the Hungarian Enlightenment is generally situated between 1772 and 1820, and so on. This "contagious illness" vision was reinforced by the Marxist preconception that the phases of historical development (slave-owning society, feudalism, capitalism, socialism) must follow each other by necessity and in a complete chain for each separate country.

Only the third group of responses seems to approach Gershenkron's methodology in the social sciences. Authors such as Vera Călin, István Sótér or Al. Ciorănescu contend that in Eastern Europe, at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, a telescoping of periods takes place. Enlightenment and romanticism, both inspired by the West, overlap and thus create a new kind of cultural mix after 1770 or 1780. Obviously, this theory incorporates a bit of each of the preceding ones: the influence aspect from one, the locally specific aspect from the other. Perhaps the most convincing argument made is that most Eastern European societies (but particularly Czech, Hungarian, and Romanian) were throughout most of the eighteenth century in a state of stagnation and decline. Therefore even moderate proposals of reform could elicit passionate responses, high-flying sentiments of a romantic nature, visions of bliss and regeneration. In other words, Enlightenment produced romanticism, not in

a dialectical succession, by contrast and continuity, but rather in a dialectics of simultaneity, as a contemporary outgrowth, a supplement.

It is this antihistorical side of the theory that I am uneasy with. I believe that a somewhat different explanation is valid for the periods 1780–1800 and 1820–1840 in these literatures. I shall survey very briefly three East-Central European literatures and then outline my proposal and indicate in what way I believe the classification applies to other literatures.

#### IV

Romanian literature was dormant throughout the eighteenth century. There was a fair amount of cultural assimilation (translations and adaptations from French, or even English and German writers).<sup>4</sup> The technical means of cultural communication (printing presses and private, scholarly, or even public libraries) were dramatically improved; many of the traditional genres (chronicles, moral-religious writings, popular-mythical novels) continued to flourish, but there was little creative writing activity that could be correlated to European developments. Indeed seventeenth-century and very early eighteenth-century Romanian writings (D. Cantemir), seem by contrast to correspond more closely to the prevailing Western trends. Not until the late 1780s was there a significant literary change.

At that point, in Bucharest the Văcărescu brothers, following Greek and Italian models, developed an Anacreontic poetry. They paved the way for a new phase in Romanian literature, because their rococo eroticism was often mixed with heroic and nationalist strains; the influence of folklore themes and forms in their poetry is plain. More significantly, a group of philologists, historians, and critics later dubbed *Scoala Ardeleană* (the Transylvanian School) discovered, after studies in Rome and Vienna, the Latin roots of Romanian and established the theoretical bases of the debate over national identity that was to rage in the nineteenth and deep into the twentieth century.<sup>5</sup> In the writings of Samuil Micu (1745–1806), Gheorghe Șincai (1754–1816), and Petru Maior (1760–1821) there was a strong radical-romantic component that turned into full romantic theorizing only a few decades later, in the work of their follower, Timotei Cipariu (1805–1887). The obsessions with linguistic and racial purity, return to the roots, history as fable, and the myth of regeneration after fall and decay are clear indications of their general thrust.

Although these movements clearly reflect the Enlightenment, it is difficult to share the opinion of most Romanian literary historians that a Romanian Enlightenment lasted until, say 1830, followed by a preromanticism, 1830–1848, and by a romanticism, whose highest achievements belonged to the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>6</sup> Paul Cornea, in his fundamental work on the origins of Romanian romanticism,<sup>7</sup> shows very clearly by analyzing the period 1790–1850 that elements of sentimentalist idyllism, Enlightenment neoclassicism, and didacticism, along with full-fledged romantic features, can be distinguished among the mass of minor poetic production of the time.

The most interesting problems are raised by the 1830–1860 period; its half-romantic nature is easily recognized. The main poets of the time were

influenced by Lamartine, Hugo, and Byron: Grigore Alexandrescu, Dimitrie Bolintineanu, and Cezar Bolliac wrote melancholy meditations, colorful oriental and historical ballads, and rebellious social pamphlets, but usually kept away from the central concerns of romantic imagination and transfiguration. The greatest poet of the period, Vasile Alecsandri, was the soul of moderation: he added an academic or ironic polish to the marginally romantic motifs treated by his contemporaries, affected the serenity of Horace and the ironic sprightliness of Ovid, and touched all romantic themes with a graceful detachment, which indicates a lack of poignant involvement similar to that of the Biedermeier.

Among the main authors of fiction, Costache Negruzzi and Alexandru Odobescu wrote historical tableaux that can only be described as Biedermeier in their careful historicist manner, while Nicolae Filimon's novel *Ciocoii vechi si noi* (Old and New Landowners, 1863) evinces a post-Balzacian mixture of sensationalism and social realism—very far from the visionary intensities of core Romanticism. Bălcescu wrote history in the manner of Jules Michelet and Edgar Quinet; Ion Ghica's letters and Odobescu's *Pseudokynegetikos* are only the foremost among a vast body of conversational essays, strikingly close in manner, tone, and elegance to Lamb's and Xavier de Maistre's productions—with which they were hardly acquainted.<sup>8</sup>

The visionary romanticism of Mihai Eminescu in the 1870s is an anachronic but logical reconstruction of an aspect all but missing in the early nineteenth century;<sup>9</sup> the important qualification is that this phenomenon took place "underground", in unpublished projects and manuscripts. Titu Maiorescu, the sternly Victorian mentor of Romania in matters aesthetic, encouraged or even dictated their suppression, while promoting the realistic, serious, Biedermeier, and Victorian aspects of Eminescu's work. Eminescu's philosophy, a combination of Schopenhauer, J. F. Herbart, H. T. Buckle, Herbert Spencer, and Hegel, is largely responsible for the schizophrenic aspect of the poet's work: the "Neptunian", diurnal, discursive, and rational-social side ever opposed to the "Uranian", nocturnal, visionary, fiercely subjective, and mythical side.<sup>10</sup>

## V

Somewhat similar processes occurred in the richer neighboring Hungarian literature. The eighteenth century was a period of literary decline after the flowering of Renaissance and even baroque writing in the previous two centuries; Hungarian Enlightenment is usually said to begin after 1772 and to go deep into the 1820s, while the "Reform Age" or "Vormärz" (roughly 1820–1844 or 1820–1850) is said to represent Hungarian romanticism.<sup>11</sup>

But what kind of Enlightenment do we discover when we look closely at the facts? There is no question that the ideas of Locke, Voltaire, and Montesquieu were introduced in Hungary, particularly by György Bessenyei and by his followers, who thought of themselves as representatives of Josephinism. But from the very beginning, there were mingled with these a stress on national sentiment, an admiration of the past, indeed of rugged conservatism, that seem to be, if anything, in *advance* of their time; at the very least they give a decisive

preromantic coloring to the Hungarian Enlightenment. The prevalence of the extended topos of a societal idyll (often, but not always transposed into the historical past) is also a typical feature. Benedek Virág (1754–1830) and the circle of his admirers, Sándor Kisfaludy (whose most influential work appeared around 1800), and Dániel Berzsenyi (who, it is true, became known only after 1813) provide illustrations of this characteristic aspect. In all of them we encounter a peculiar mixture of the romance tradition (Horatian or Petrarchan) with a more nativist melancholy or exaltation of a dark golden age.<sup>12</sup> Among other examples are Mihály Csokonai Vitéz, who did most of his writing in the 1790s, and Mihály Fazekas, who wrote his one important work, *Ludas Matyi* (Mátyás the Gooseboy), in 1804. The former displays a peculiar mixture of belated rococo and sentimentalism (*Dorotya* was clearly influenced by Pope's *Rape of the Lock*) with an intense quasi-romantic awareness of folk themes and folk-stylistic devices;<sup>13</sup> and his drama *Tempefői* is a good presentation of the myth of the *poète damné*, in spite of its amiable form and lack of bitterness. A similar mixture is easily recognized in *Ludas Matyi*.

In other words, it would seem that these preromantic writers slide imperceptibly into a kind of early Biedermeier while still preparing the romantic explosion. We may apply here the views of Alexandru Ciorănescu regarding Romanian literature: namely, that compared to the stagnating cultural (and, I should like to add, social) situation in East-Central Europe, both Enlightenment and romantic features could be regarded as revolutionary departures, and thus used interchangeably.<sup>14</sup> There is no organic connection between a developing Enlightenment model and its romantic outcome and negation. Rather, what we encounter is a combination, a kind of hasty averaging of features. In this early stage the quasi-Biedermeier features are perhaps not more than a coincidence; the retreating Western romanticism of the 1820s and 1830s tried to occupy a middle ground between romanticism and a recuperated Enlightenment similar to that the Eastern Europeans were seeking in the 1780s and 1790s. But we must also take into account the sociocultural situation in which the decision that conservative-nostalgic and radical-didactic impulses are not incompatible was made even before the French Revolution.<sup>15</sup> In this respect Eastern Europe was more similar to England than to France and Germany.

Therefore it is not strange that the Hungarian "romantics" after 1820 differ from the preceding generation in value more than in substance. Mihály Vörösmarty's main works, the hexameter epic *Zalán futása* (The Flight of Zalan, 1825) and the historical tragedies, followed fairly closely the tradition of Csokonai and Berzsenyi. His historical plays of blood and revenge are in the manner of Victor Hugo. His political and philosophizing shorter poems have the ring of Jung Deutschland; they offer individual pessimism and doubt mixed with social and national hopefulness, which throughout Europe is indicative of the breakdown of the core-romantic paradigm.<sup>16</sup>

A number of minor figures could be termed purely Biedermeier: János Garay, whose *feuilletons*, short descriptive pieces, and humorous poems are in the spirit of Lamb and Hunt; Ferenc Toldy, a typical late-romantic historian and critic; Miklós Jósika, whose historical novels of the 1830s and 1840s adapted Scott's approach to Transylvanian history; Pál Vasvári, who philosophized in the manner

of Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Michelet; or Mihály Tompa, whose assimilation of folk versification and themes was controlled by a Biedermeier seriousness and respect for industriousness.

The prime piece of evidence will be provided by Sándor Petőfi himself. Of his main poetic epics, *A helység kalapácsa* (The Hammer of the Village, 1844) was immediately recognized as antiromantic, deflating conventions and masterfully playing with the lower register halfway between Heine and Puskin, and certainly not far from the manner of Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*. János Vitéz (Childe John, 1845), on the other hand, uses the fantastic in the playful, deliberate manner of the later romantics, and certainly kept clear of the prophetic intensity of imagination of the first romantic generation. Naturally, one may debate whether in some of his shorter lyrics, in the short novel *A hóhér kötele* (Hangman's Rope), and some other writings of the years 1845–1846, Petőfi does not identify himself with a purer romanticism. It seems to me that, even after possibly answering this question in the affirmative, we shall find this high-romantic episode engulfed in a mass of idyllic, descriptive, and moody genre poetry, which includes *Az Alföld* (The Plain, 1844), *Téli esték* (Winter Evenings), and *A vén zászlótartó* (The Standard-Bearer, after 1847) and, indeed, his travel diaries and occasional prose pieces for *Pesti Divatlap*.<sup>17</sup> In *A Tisza* (1847) and the related genre and descriptive poems, we find Petőfi at his most characteristic: idyllic and tempestuous scenes alternate rather than organize themselves along a past versus future (alienation versus redemption) pattern of intelligible progress. What is more, Petőfi's characters show an awareness of Dickens' eccentrics and misfits, and close analysis of his treatment of structures borrowed from folk poetry shows how thoroughly he had "out-run" the romantics.<sup>18</sup> In a word, the progress from Csokonai to Petőfi is one of mastery or, perhaps, of aesthetic information, not a deeper one involving the self-shaping of human existentiality.

## VI

A few brief comments on the periodization of Czech literature will, I hope, further clarify the specific romantic pattern of development in Eastern Europe. As William Harkins has shown, there has been a very serious debate on this subject and the conclusion rather generally accepted would have it that the Czech Enlightenment lasted well into the nineteenth century, followed by fairly short preromantic and romantic periods between roughly 1815 and 1860.<sup>19</sup> This view fits the second category of theories described above, the one which holds that all phases of the Western pattern must be rediscovered in identical sequence in the East, with an average lag of half a century. A closer look easily reveals a different situation.

The Czech Enlightenment had an explosively radical quality that makes it close kin to romanticism. That is why so many literary historians refer to it as the period of renaissance.<sup>20</sup> It would be impossible to overlook the many features pointing to romanticism even in the work of a rationalist like Josef Dobrovský, who was influenced by Herder, who admired the Schlegels, who thought that Indian and Slavic mythology had a common basis, and who tried to localize universal reason in the specific Slavic way.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, A. J. Puchmajer thought he could

encourage or develop romanticism through poetry in the manner of the *Göttinger Hain* and rococo stylistics. The same type of mixture is evident in the work and approach of the more nationalistic representatives of the literature of the time, such as Josef Jungmann or Ján Kollár. Jungmann disliked romantic poets and promoted the works of Voltaire and Wieland, Pope, Goldsmith, and Goethe (from among the latter's works he translated, significantly, *Hermann und Dorothea*). But at the same time he rhapsodized about a fantastically modified past of the Slavs and displayed intense nationalism. I shall not discuss the typical transitional ("preromantic") play of the fabricated manuscript collections of Králóve Dvur and Zelená Hora (the imaginative work of Vacláv Hanka with the help of Josef Linda and others)—certainly prime examples of the imagination working with mixed theoretical and literary material.

But Ján Kollár and F. L. Čelakovský express even better the highly ambivalent attitude toward romanticism of writers belonging to the Czech "renaissance". These are people who were well aware of the main romantic figures in Europe (sometimes through personal contact) and who nevertheless were trying to find a middle road, specifically different from that of Western European core romanticism. During his German studies Kollár admired Goethe, Arndt, and Jahn; the ideas of Lorenz Oken, J. F. Fries, and Heinrich Luden were digested as suggestions for a patriotic-national vision of Slavic grandeur and mythical potential; better even than in Jungmann, we can observe the mechanics of structure transfer from the cosmic to the mundane in Kollár's poetic output or theoretical ramblings.<sup>22</sup> His courses and published or posthumous manuscripts on the identity of the Slavic zodiac with the Indian-Egyptian one or the fantastic-philosophical etymologies of the concept of *Slav* parallel similar attempts to structure poetically large areas of intellectual discourse throughout Europe in the early nineteenth century. Such features of Biedermeier metamorphosis make even Kollár's later conservatism and admiration for A. S. Khomyakov irrelevant. Earlier, and perhaps more drastically than others, Kollár expressed the culture-civilization tension which from Herder on obsessed German and Eastern European intellectuals until well into the twentieth century.

Josef Mühlberger contends, correctly I believe, that the common, old Slavic concept of *Mir* with its implications of both peace and cosmos and its foundation in the matriarchal village-state with common ownership based on moderation and quiet growth was important to the shaping of the traditional perceptual assumptions of Czech literature.<sup>23</sup> It certainly provided, when rediscovered, a convenient historical and even religious legitimacy for a variety of holistic visions. It is easy to see how Puchmajer or others might in turn have related their rococo idyllism to this more vigorous and weightier construct. But it was left for Čelakovský to spell out the opposition in his two series of poems of 1829 and 1839: *Ohlas písní ruských* and *Ohlas písní českých*. Čelakovský himself claimed that he was pointing to differences between ethnic-psychological morphologies in opposing the deep forests, rugged cliffs, and tumultuous waves of the Russian spirit to the open lawns, friendly bushes, and murmuring creeks of the Czech song.<sup>24</sup> I submit that Čelakovský was observing the transition from high romanticism to the lower but consistent harmonies that the Biedermeier was seeking.

The literary atmosphere of the 1830s and 1840s in Bohemia could never be thoroughly understood without the concept of Biedermeier. The main figures of the period certainly display Biedermeier features, and it seems surprising that almost none of the major literary historians (not even Wellek) were willing to tackle this fact. It is true that, for example, Josef Kajetán Tyl's musical plays, full of fairytale fantasy, black humor, and fiddling obsessions have always been compared to those of Nestroy and even Raimund. A brilliant, recent article by Milorada Součková has disclosed the wealth of implications in Tyl's famous poem, which later became the national anthem of the Czechoslovak republic *Kde domov můj?*<sup>25</sup> Although Součková's account is illuminating, I believe that her exclusive reliance on Cosmas's *Chronicon* is confining; whatever Tyl's sources, the responses to his poem were part of an intellectual climate in which a more modern idyllic model was shaping the perception of imaginative and empiric realities. The best evidence is provided by some of Tyl's contemporaries, such as František Jaromír Rubeš—the first important representative of the easy, humorous, miniature, descriptive genre dealing with the ordinary life of ordinary people that was to inaugurate in Czech literature a tradition lasting from Karolina Světlá (d. 1899) all the way to Marie Pujmanová, Alois Jirásek (d. 1930), Jarmila Glazarová, František Táborský (d. 1940), Ignát Herrmann (d. 1935), Karel Poláček (d. 1944) and indeed to Jaroslav Hašek himself.

The acknowledged masters of this tradition came at its very beginning; contemporaries of Tyl and Rubeš, though younger, Božena Němcová and Jan Neruda provided classical examples of Biedermeier writing by any standards. Němcová's *Babička* (Granny, 1855) with its static choices and multitude of vivid details illustrates the main strategy of this literary approach. The examples of minute and credible harmony in the life surrounding us are multiplied to surfeit. They have to convince us that their mere accumulation suggests an all-encompassing harmony. Leslie Stephen and others have spoken of circumstantial realism in the writings of Defoe; I suggest that Němcová similarly fuses the idyllism of the late eighteenth century with the hope that at least a fleeting outline of the primeval Slavic *mir* can be recaptured. But the cumulative effect proves stronger: the reception is one of atmosphere, not of comprehensive structure. The charge that this is sentimentalism—a mere mixture of sadness and humor—is, coming from a modern reader, neither more or less justified than when applied to other contemporary writers: it only points to the deeper contradictions of any Biedermeier formula. Similarly, Jan Neruda in his *Malostránské povídky* (Small Side Stories, 1878) or in his earlier collections of stories insisted on the capacity of the smallest structures to reflect the complexity and diversity of the universe as a whole. Neruda has sometimes been compared to Gottfried Keller. There is no question that in any periodization scheme their function in their respective literatures would be quite similar. They both abandoned the confining schemes of later romanticism in favor of the nonpurposive description of realism. But although the schemes were abandoned, the thematic material remained the same—the life and habits of the small rural or urban bourgeois environment—and the range of possible combinations of events did not become broader. However, a better suggestion, in my opinion, is that Neruda paralleled Wilhelm Raabe, with whom he shares a slightly nervous use of humor and a rather bashful

sentimentality. Many of Neruda's short stories relate psychologically sophisticated, almost "modernist" experiences, but they are placed in frameworks of hard stone: students at night smoking quietly on the Gothic roofs, surrounded by gables and gargoyles, or a teenager deciding to spend the night in St. Venceslas Cathedral, while other stories begin with lavish descriptions of the fat, smelly darkness of little houses. Thus the events are smothered and miniaturized by their own environment, not a rural, but an urban one. Layers of heavy civilization flatten out the would-be dramatic contours of events.

Czech literature certainly displays striking parallels to German literature; the two have probably the most orthodox and richly developed Biedermeier system. Czech literature has its equivalent of Heine or *Jung Deutschland* in the person of Karel Havlíček-Borovský—who founded the epigrammatic-skeptical pole of Czech Biedermeier, just as Rubeš had founded the idyllic one. Another stock character of the Biedermeier cast is also present—the leisurely, erudite, imaginative essayist. Indeed, Frantisek Palacky can be seen in the best of European company, with Michelet, Carlyle, and Quinet, as one of the greatest belletristic historians, whose ideological-polemical vision is informed by a dominant myth—the pragmatic version of the romantic paradigm of immanent transcendence. Palacky's stylistic olympianism combined with his later-romantic visionary brilliance make him an eminent representative of the European Biedermeier.

Karel Hynek Mácha is such an important figure that he has been discussed from a comparatist angle more often than others. René Wellek has been quite concerned with Mácha's status: in a famous article he shows that the parallel between Byron and Mácha is limiting and has to be replaced by categories of similarities to different authors (most of whom I would characterize as Biedermeier).<sup>26</sup> Let us note among the parallels enumerated by Wellek those with Bulwer-Lytton and with Scott. Although Mácha's lyrical intensity is much more impressive than that of his English colleagues, he did share some basic concerns with them. Chief among these seems to me realistic concealment. Like all later romantics, he shied away from the absolute hero, from the typical figure embodying the experience of mankind as a whole, but tried nevertheless to maintain the general abstract stages of this experience.

Even though he and his contemporaries would not have resorted to stark myth, and even though they did not have the courage to proclaim that they were writing on "the poet's mind" or the "world's soul", they were eager to tackle the subject somehow. Much as he differed from his conventional contemporaries, Mácha did strive for typical experiential stages in highly individualized circumstances. The abstract and symbolic scheme is hiding in realistic or melodramatic garb. It is not exaggerated to call this procedure a mimetic concealment, a deliberate attempt to throw the doubters off track and to illustrate the same general points with individual cases. This attempt required the increasing use of external "romantic" elements, that is, the spectacular romantic machinery that one finds in *Eugene Aram* or *The Last Days of Pompeii*, no less than *Cikáni* (The Gypsies) or *Máj*.

A different process is at work in Mácha's reception of Scott. The structure of Scott's historical novels is deformed in a high-romantic direction. This is a phenomenon that can be recognized in many literatures with a weak or even a

missing high-romantic phase (French, Polish, Romanian, and others): the emergence of a substitute intensified romanticism at the tail end of the whole phase. *Křivoklat* or *Cikáni* are dense, fast-paced stories, in which suggestion and allusion come into their own as central devices, and energetic melodrama gradually acquires the shades of hermetism.

## VII

In spite of Mácha's apparently ambiguous position, Czech literature, like Hungarian and Romanian, can essentially be divided into two phases: preromanticism and late romanticism (Biedermeier). The transition between the two is smooth. The more uniform character of the Eastern European romantic periods and movements prevents the sharp differences seen elsewhere, for example, between Goldsmith, Wordsworth, and Landor. Petőfi and Csokonai, Puchmajer and Rubeš, are close in style and matter, and the work of one continues smoothly from the work of the others.

This is not to say that such literatures lack pure Enlightenment features. Rather, a curious stratification takes place, perhaps as a consequence of the more elitist and stratified nature of Eastern European societies as opposed to Western ones: Enlightenment activities are bestowed from above, Enlightenment doctrines are designed to help the rising social groups. Not Dobrovský, but rather his humbler colleagues in the learned societies of Prague and Olomouc are true representatives of the Enlightenment. Václav Matěj Kramerius, with his journalistic and editorial production, is also such a representative. Echoes of the Enlightenment can be heard very late, in the statues and work of the *Matice Česká* (after 1831).<sup>27</sup> For Eastern European literatures the Enlightenment is not a flourishing of the neoclassicist human paradigm, or the bold intellectual consequence of the structural tensions between elitism and egalitarianism, as it is for Diderot and Hume. Rather, it is a purely *practical* background of educational reform, importation of intellectual information, careful dismantling of religious absolutes by the addition of scientific or rationalist elements, renewal of social usage and intercourse. Most of these features had been rather secondary aspects of Western Enlightenment.

There is another major difference between the Western European and the Eastern European Enlightenment. In Hungarian, Romanian, and Czech literatures, the earlier phases of the Enlightenment were ignored and a strong late phase, already distorted in a preromantic direction, flourished. *Scoala Ardeleană*, Kollár and Dobrovský, Csokonai and Fazekas are prime examples. However, many scholars would agree that the possibility of a strong romantic revolution depends on a fully developed Enlightenment base. It is indeed the complete implementation and dialectic *Aufhebung* (suspension-denial preservation) of the Enlightenment program. The romantic human model does not emerge out of nothing; total expansion must proceed from gradual extensions. The absence of high romanticism in these Eastern European countries is not a quirk of fate, nor is it a matter of arbitrary choice. The cluster of values (Enlightenment plus preromantic) that appeared there in 1770–1790 had

to develop its own momentum; it was simply not spacious enough, not comprehensive enough, not organic enough to lead to a spasm of transuniversal harmony. On the other hand, the same construction was well able to adapt itself to late-romantic (Biedermeier) configurations. In France, Lamartine and Musset represented a retreat from the temerities of Saint-Just and Sade; in England, Scott and Lamb moderated the absolute claims of Wordsworth's conscience; in Germany, Mörike and Heine reduced to scale the mythical intensities of Hölderlin and Novalis; but in Eastern Europe the entrance to the Biedermeier was effected smoothly, with merely a passing frown at the excesses of Western romantics. Indeed, in Mácha or Eminescu or Petöfi, the genuine intensities of romanticism were repressed or hidden.

The practicality of the Biedermeier—national and social bodies as agents of development—appealed to the historical forces at work there, while the idyllic and domestic side of the Biedermeier could well compensate for the agonies of historical change. To put it more forcefully, precisely because the Biedermeier was dualistic in nature. It had a wider appeal in Eastern Europe than the absolute unity postulated by core romanticism. The inherent conservatism of Eastern European political development that seemed so puzzling to outside observers was not “genetic” or “inevitable”; it just represented the unfolding of the specific model of their entrance into the modern age. This dualism explains how the smooth surface of continuous moderation is punctured by occasional outbursts, how social cohesion is challenged but not disrupted by harsh stratification, and finally how selfish materialism and social idealism coexist so placidly in this part of the world.

Thus, Gershenkron's suggestions can prove useful in many ways. The human model (the carrier of literature) develops in several phases; it is quite possible for a community to identify with a late phase and not with an earlier one. I believe that this is precisely what happened in Eastern Europe: there was no full-fledged Enlightenment, only a catching up with its *last* phase (preromantic warts and all). Analogously, we can conclude that there was no high romanticism—merely a powerful and complex Biedermeier (1820–1850), fully synchronized with the corresponding Western phase.

## VIII

It is interesting to look at these three literatures in comparison to the powerful and highly developed Polish and Russian literatures of the same period. (It would not be absurd to argue that in the 1820s and 1830s a politically inexistent Poland produced the most valuable “low-Romantic” literature in Europe). These two cultures did not suffer, like neighboring literatures, from the relative sterility of two centuries (1550–1750). In fact they both displayed a well-sketched (if not fully colored) Enlightenment phase and at least Poland was from the Middle Ages on fully synchronized with Western literatures. They had, as the literary historian Chizhevsky observed, royal courts and state organizations that could support Enlightenment efforts and experiments.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless it is easy to note that in Russia neoclassicism was tinged by sentimentalism and all the other traits that we associate with the preromantic cluster of features (the Rousseauism of

Karamzin for instance). In turn Polish Enlightenment was largely shaped by Baroque momentum, Western echoes and a preference for the picturesque, the eccentric and fantasy. As in Central European literatures, 1820 did not mark a major change in literary structure, but simply in the quality of the output which rose considerably, not in style or themes, but rather in attitude or literary conscience. What changed rather radically around 1815–1820 is self-perception, and ultimately an awareness of the (Western) high-romantic paradigm in literature and philosophy. Central and Eastern European literatures caught up with Western European trends at their most advanced point. They skipped high romanticism and “became Biedermeier” somehow pretending that they had experienced the upheaval of an effort toward human regeneration by revolution and of the Romantic cosmic embrace by totalizing consciousness. Pushkin and Gogol were immediately synchronized with their late-Romantic colleagues in Vienna or Paris. Scott and Byron were understood with the same enthusiasm all over Eastern Europe. Garay or Odobescu were synchronic with the Spanish *costumbristas* or the likes of Lamb, Hunt and Hazlitt. Mickiewicz and Slowacki explored more deeply than their Western counterparts the relationship between dream, relativity, rebellion, hopelessness and *Geborgenheit*.

At this point certain common Central European features became salient. They have to do with a kind of institutionalization of Biedermeier attitudes, with their integration in the perception of national identity. This is true about Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia, to a good extent about Romanian culture, and even about some South Slav literatures, that I am imperfectly familiar with. (Thus the Serbian Jovan Steria Pöpovič, 1806–1856, has been roundly declared a Biedermeier writer by some critics and in the twin Croatian literature the founders of realism, August Senoa and Ante Kovačić built on a strong pastoral-idyllic basis.)<sup>29</sup> The types of sensibility expressed in the Biedermeier age, the intellectual debates unfolding at that time, the great names produced then shaped the community consciousness of Hungarians, Romanians, Czechs and others and channeled their modes of thinking until at least the middle of the twentieth century, and this despite further progress in literature and science, as well as in sociohistorical levels. In Polish and Russian cultures cultural and historical events prior to the Biedermeier age, as well as others soon following it had equal importance or more in organizing the future course of the community. In this respect Poland and Russia resemble more England or France, while the Central European experience resembles (up to a point) the one in German language areas.

One very important way in which the Biedermeier shaped the future was the emergence of what I would call a “Central European learning ethos” by contrast to (Max Weber’s) “Protestant work ethos”. Unfortunately there is no room here for more than a short definition. The Central European learning ethos grew out of a combination of Enlightenment and Romantic features. It postulated the liberation and advance of the human individual or group by an increasing access to science, information, and humanistic values. The immersion in the values of high culture and professional competence were supposed to be rewarded (indeed, as often as not, in the Danubian area, they *were* rewarded) by access to a higher level of humanity, by integrative acceptance, ultimately by a kind of liberation. This *ethos*, of Biedermeier origin, was truly comprehensive and inclusive. It

applied to the peasantry: ceaseless toiling, a deliberate limitation of living standards, stinting and hoarding were justified by the hope that a younger generation would pass the barrier separating it from full liberated humanity. It applied to the middle classes, and perhaps in particular to the Jewish middle classes in their effort at social integration and cultural acceptance.<sup>30</sup> It applied to the working class and to the large bureaucratic apparatus of the Double Monarchy and of the successor states in inculcating the values of duty, order, honesty and legality, punctuality and responsible behavior (the symbolic embodiment of which became for a while Emperor Franz Josef I). It informed even the aristocratic layers, casting about for an existential rationale and for some positional legitimation in a gradually modernizing world. It is interesting to note that the "Central European ethos" (and I am not saying that somewhat related meritocratic and enlightening concepts did not exist in other parts of Europe, notably in England, but they were less generalized, and did not comprise all ethnic groups and social classes as in the Danubian basin) exerts even now an influence on people's consciousness. Thus in North America, where it was brought by Central European immigrants and particularly by Jewish middle-class communities, this Biedermeier artifact continues to persist even at the end of the twentieth century.

The other group of examples to be adduced briefly here is more institutional in nature. The purposes of national revival were defined in all these cultures in the moderate mode of Biedermeier reformism and traditionalism. Hence the emergence of "liberal-conservative" political doctrines.<sup>31</sup> Hence the preference for written media and pamphletary challenges to the existing order (rather than violent means). Hence the cultivation of sentimental myths about the "golden ages" of national origins (particularly in Hungarian and Romanian literatures, to some extent in others also). Hence the proliferation of associations of all kinds (as intermediary structures between state and individual).<sup>32</sup> Hence in particular (as mentioned above) the founding of organizations that defined national identity and cultural-scientific concerns: *Matice Česká*, *Astra*, *Matice Srpska* and many others. All these developments can be connected with cognitive and sensitivity categories born in the crucible of the Biedermeier age.

How can we evaluate these features and developments? The first conclusion must be that it is not necessary for one national literature to repeat all the phases of another or of the "general" European development, nor must we postulate the need for a time lag in more marginal literatures.

Eastern European literatures were not able to overcome by themselves the pressure of the Enlightenment and of neoclassical momentum. On the contrary, in Central Europe the Enlightenment mentality usually managed to absorb the incipient modifications of its own *figura*. Of course that meant that it was enriched and provided a richer intellectual and psychological environment, one capable of satisfying the needs of local intellectual elites. At the same time it meant that, after 1815 or 1820 when disappointment, Restoration and a general lowering of sights set in in the West, Eastern and Central European literatures found it easy and natural to synchronize with the prevailing European Romantic model. A broader late Enlightenment found the newest (and limper) Romanticism accommodating and indeed exciting. Some of the interesting and, I believe,

creative consequences for Eastern and Central Europe were just mentioned. But they should not blind us as to the massive sociohistorical disadvantages of this "counterpoint" type of progress.

Admittedly any kind of Romanticism has at its center an absence: the impossibility of achieving the kind of rebirth of human nature and the kind of integrality of the social, the natural, and the divine that were the supreme goals of Romanticism. However, the attempt itself—whether as revolutionary break, violent consciousness raising, supreme fantasy, Napoleonic continental upheaval, or otherwise—became in large parts of Western Europe a kind of presence and accelerated the movement towards modernization. Wherever a "high-romantic" phase was skipped a double absence installed itself at the background of further historical advances. Beyond the inbuilt certainty of failure of Romanticism, owing to its absolute claims, there was East of the Elbe the failure to take advantage of the accelerating energies of sociocultural experiments and of their organic assimilation. In Central Europe the assimilation was there, but its object was absent. Many of the best and most endearing aspects of the region, and many of its most discouraging and backward features were caused or generated by it. (Deficiencies in the relationship to reality, slothful modernization, excessive nostalgia, the chronic addiction to retrograde populisms of all kinds are just some of the latter historical handicaps.)

For a polycentric culture, such as the European one, the East and Central European experience was and is valuable and enriching. Its version of the Biedermeier provided—precisely because it was synthetic, telescoped and substitutive—many suggestions for the future. In retrospect, Gogol appears as Kafkian and surrealist; Mácha was claimed by many modern groups; Krasiński pointed to expressionism and avantgarde and so forth. The sociohistorical consequences of a specifically Biedermeier emphasis in the Danubian area were however, at best, mixed in their historical merits.

#### Notes

1. A full treatment of this topic is in my book *The Taming of Romanticism. European Literature and the Age of Biedermeier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), and particularly in Chapter 4, from which several sections of this paper are adapted or taken literally, as well as in "Ostmitteleuropäisches Biedermeier. Versuch einer Periodisierung (1780–1850)," in Herbert Zeman, ed., *Österreichische Literatur. Ihr Profil im 19. Jahrh. (1830–1880)* (Graz: Akademische Druck u. Verlagsanstalt, 1982), 125–139.
2. Alexander Gershenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (1952; rpt. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 353–4, 5–30, 354–64.
3. M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism* (New York: Norton, 1971).
4. Alexandru Duju, *Coordonate ale culturii românești în secolul al XVIII-lea* (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură, 1968).
5. Ion Lungu, *Școala ardeleană* (Bucharest: Minerva, 1978). The one significant literary work associated with the group is *Țiganiada* by I. Budai-Deleanu, a Voltairean mock-heroic poem in which some preromantic notes can be detected.
6. Typically, Alexandru Dima et al., eds., *Istoria literaturii române* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R. S. R., 1968), II. 9–229.
7. Paul Cornea, *Originile, romantismului românesc* (Bucharest: Minerva, 1972). See Vera Călin, "Aspects de la superposition des courants littéraires dans la littérature roumaine au cours de la

- premiere moitié du XIXe siècle," in *Actes du Ve congrès de l'Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée* (Belgrade: Mouton, 1969), pp. 225–230. Călin speaks mostly about the simultaneous reception of classicism, Enlightenment, preromanticism, and romanticism in Romanian poetry.
8. Mention could also be made of Nicolae Filimon's *Escursiuni in Germania meridională* (1860), or his many artistic, musical, and economic reviews. Mihai Kogalniceanu published in the 1840s a large number of delightful observations (ironic and objective) on Moldavian social customs; see *Scrisori: Note de calatorie*, ed. Augustin Z. N. Pop and Dan Simonescu (Bucharest: Eminescu, 1967). Vasile Alecsandri's fragmentary memoirs and some of his prose (*Istoria unui galbăn și a unei paralele*) belong to the same category.
  9. A conceivable exception is Alecu Russo, *Cîntare României* (1850). But even Russo was influenced by Xavier de Maistre an author greatly appreciated by Romanian literati of the time in his minor writings.
  10. Ion Negoitescu, *Poezia lui Eminescu* (Bucharest: EPL, 1967).
  11. Tibor Klaniczay, József Szauder, and Miklós Szabolcsi, *History of Hungarian Literature* (London: Collet's, 1964) is Marxist. Julius von Farkas, *Die ungarische Romantik* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1931) is Nadlerian. A typical position (widely shared by traditional Eastern European Marxists) is that the problem of periodization should be subordinated to a belated nation-forming process, which drew from different sources simultaneously. It is put forward by László Sziklay, "La Formation de la conscience nationale moderne dans les littératures de l'Est de l'Europe Centrale," in *Les Lumières en Hongrie, en Europe Centrale et en Europe Orientale*, ed. Béla Köpeczi (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971), p. 56. Interesting and sophisticated is István Sótér, *The Dilemma of Literary Science* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1973), pp. 101–240—both on the theory of periodization in European literature, and on the way this can be applied to Hungarian literature. He applies the *Goethezeit* model and relies a lot on expanded *Sturm und Drang*; ultimately he takes 1817 as the starting date.
  12. One of the many parallel examples in neighboring literatures is provided by the Slovak J. I. Bajza's René (1783–1785). Usually characterized as an Enlightenment novel, it might well be understood as showing romantic features. See Jan Tibensky, "Les Traits fondamentaux et les principaux représentants slovaques de l'époque des lumières," in Köpeczi, *Les Lumières en Hongrie*, p. 66.
  13. It should be noted that Csokonai's *Dorotya* has often been compared to *Pan Tadeusz* and *Onegin*. See, e.g., F. Szilágyi, "Les Changements du lexique de la langue littéraire et courante hongroise à l'époque des lumières, en rapport avec les changements de la conscience (collective) linguistique (stylistique)," in Köpeczi, *Les Lumières en Hongrie*, p. 86.
  14. Alexandru Cioranescu says: "le romantisme ne peut être conçu comme renversement ou comme réaction que là où il y a eu préalablement un classicisme" (*Revue de littérature comparée*, 48, no. 1 [1974], 160–161). This opinion is shared by many Eastern European specialists. Besides Vera Călin (n. 7), see the opinions of K. Horvath and L. Sziklay in Köpeczi, *Les Lumières en Hongrie*, pp. 59 and 101, on simultaneous reception
  15. Both in Hungary and in Romania. See Andrew Janos, "Modernization and Decay in Historical Perspective: The Case of Romania," in *Social Change in Romania 1860–1940*, ed. K. Jowith (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, 1978), pp. 72–117. See also Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Modern Hungary, 1825–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).
  16. A possible exception is his philosophic fairy play in verse *Csongor és Tünde* (1831), much indebted to the atmosphere of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
  17. Parallel examples are Mácha, Eminescu, Hugo, and, in another sense, Norwid and Nerval.
  18. Sótér, pp. 196–197.
  19. William Harkins, "The Periodization of Czech Literary History, 1774–1879," in *The Czech Renaissance of the 19th Century: Essays Presented to Otakar Odložilík*, ed. Peter H. Brock and H. Gordon Skilling (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), pp. 3–13.
  20. Vaclav Flajšhans, *Pisemnictví české slovem i obrazem od nejdávnějších dob az po naše časy* (Prague: Grosman a Svodoba, 1901), Arne Novák, *Die tschechische Literatur*, Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft, 18, ed. Oskar Wälzel (Potsdam: Athenaion, 1931), pp. 1–114. (Novák later changed his mind.) See Arne Novák, *Dějiny české literatury*, 3 vols. (Prague: Práce Československé Akademie Ved, 1959–1967).

21. Matthias Murko, *Deutsche Einflüsse auf die Anfänge der Böhmisches Romantik* (Graz: Styria, 1897), p. 23.
22. See *ibid.*, pp. 197–216, 234; see also the interesting sonnet analysis of the way in which a new “wholeness” is created out of separate parts by a mimetic process, pp. 213–214.
23. Josef Mühlberger, *Tschechische Literaturgeschichte* (Munich: Ackermann-Gemeinde, 1970), pp. 4–5.
24. Novák, *Die tschechische Literatur*, p. 46.
25. Milorada Součková, “*Locus Amoenus: An Aspect of National Tradition*,” in Brock and Skilling, *Czech Renaissance*, pp. 26–32.
26. René Wellek, *Essays on Czech Literature* (The Hague: Mouton, 1963), pp. 148–179. Parts of the essay were published in 1937 and 1938. Milorada Součková, *The Czech Romantics* (The Hague: Mouton, 1958), pp. 39–86.
27. Stanley Kimball, “The ‘Matices Česká,’ 1831–1861: The First Thirty Years of Literary Foundation,” in Brock and Skilling, *Czech Renaissance*, pp. 53–73. Similar organizations were created by the Transylvanian Romanians (in fact, Archbishop Saguna was directly inspired by his Uniate philologist predecessors—Micu and Sincai) and the Serbians: *Astra* and *Matica Srpska*. For a more general Czech background, see Arne Novák, *Die tschechische Literatur*, pp. 35–37.
28. Dimitrij Chizhevsky, *Comparative History of Slavic Literatures*, trans. Richard Noel Porter and Martin P. Rice (1968; reprint, Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1971), pp. 119–149.
29. See the studies of Aleksander Flaker and Dragysha Zhivkovich.
30. Viktor Karady, “Les Juifs, l’Etat et la société dans la monarchie bicéphale,” in: ed. A. Deszles, M. Molnár; *Le génie de l’Autriche-Hongrie* (Paris, P. U. F. 1989), pp. 83–98.
31. Cf. J. C. Nyiri, *Am Rande Europas. Studien zur österreichisch-ungarischen Philosophiegeschichte* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1988).
32. Miklós Molnár, “Société civile et vie associative” (in: *Le génie*, pp. 53–64.).

## KOSSUTH AND AMERICAN NON-INTERVENTION

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On the night of 4 December 1851, the former Hungarian Governor Lajos Kossuth landed in New York City to a scene that could only be described as unbounded enthusiasm.<sup>1</sup> Never in the history of the United States had a foreigner received such a welcome. Americans, who had eagerly followed his exploits during Hungary's recent struggle for independence in 1848-49, saw in Kossuth those liberal and democratic qualities they identified in themselves. He was Washington reborn in a Hungarian mould. Even the British had identified these qualities. On 21 July 1849, Ralph Osborne of Middlesex told Parliament, "Kossuth was a representative of religious and civil liberty, just as Washington was. He was fighting for principles which had always been traditionally popular in British public opinion".<sup>2</sup> In a Burkeian sense, Kossuth was fighting for the rights of Englishmen just as the Americans had done in their revolution in the previous century. Little did the Americans realize that Kossuth had come to their shore to awaken them of their responsibilities as a World Power<sup>3</sup> and to get them to abandon Washington's dictum against non-interference in European affairs.

Kossuth believed it was necessary to draw America out of its isolationism thereby utilising its strength and democratic principles to help change Europe in the direction of democracy. By taking her (United States) rightful place among the Great Powers she could join with Great Britain in an alliance of democratic states that would prevent the absolute powers of Europe, particularly Russia, from violating the policy of non-intervention.<sup>4</sup> Kossuth's mission was to convince America to intervene in European affairs for the purpose of enforcing the policy of non-intervention. On the surface this seems somewhat absurd: convince the Americans, who adhered to the policy of non-intervention to openly violate the principle for the purpose of its enforcement. But in Kossuth's reasons for proposing such a venture there is a certain logic that makes this policy acceptable and necessary for Hungarian independence.

For Kossuth Russia was the main obstacle to Hungarian independence and European security. During the latter months of the Hungarian War for Independence, Nicholas I sent troops to aid the Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph that were responsible for Hungary's defeat. Kossuth and the rest of the world believed that the Austrian Empire had been saved by Russia's intervention.<sup>5</sup> At the time of the invasion, Kossuth requested from British Foreign Minister Palmerston an "explicit statement ... on behalf of the principle of non-intervention."<sup>6</sup> In May 1849, when discussing the matter with the Russian minister in London, Baron Ernest P. Brunnow, Palmerston told him: "Make and end to it (the intervention) very quickly."<sup>7</sup> Earlier, in a letter to the British Minister in

St. Petersburg, Palmerston stated that the British Government did "not consider the occasion to be that which at present calls for any formal expression of the opinion of Great Britain on the matter..."<sup>8</sup> Austria's existence was vital to Britain's concerns. Austria was a bullwork against Russian expansion in the Balkans, and thereby protected British interests in regards to the Eastern Question and keeping the straits out of Russian hands. So even though the British identified with Kossuth's liberal democratic principles, an independent Hungary was contrary to British interests. Therefore, the British gave both Russia and Austria *carte blanche* for their joint operation against the Hungarians. Naturally, all this remained unknown to Kossuth.

Following the failure of the Hungarian Revolution Kossuth took exile in Turkey, where he became the focus of an "Eastern Crisis". Kossuth understood the "overwhelming influence" Britain exerted upon the European political theatre. He also realized the importance of public opinion in influencing parliament and the cabinet. He was forever receiving letters commenting upon the popularity he enjoyed on the island. He hoped through this popularity and his connections within Britain to convince them to accept his principle "the intervention for non-intervention".<sup>9</sup> He wrote from Turkey:

"Being thoroughly convinced of this principle's importance ... I regard it as my most important task to agitate for this as soon as I am free. I shall do the same in America. By carrying this into effect, Hungary will be free and independent very soon."<sup>10</sup>

On 23 October 1851, Kossuth landed in Southampton on the first leg of his journey. He hoped to convince the British to accept his non-intervention ideas then go to America and convince them to form an Anglo-American alliance to oversee its enforcement. Such an alliance would counterbalance the alliance of despots.<sup>11</sup> In a speech at Winchester on 25 October, Kossuth, Cobden and Crosskey, the American Consul in Southampton, outlined Kossuth's ideas to the British public. First, Kossuth said, "Russian's intervention destroyed all hope of reconciliation ... with the Habsburgs".<sup>12</sup> He had deposed the monarchy; while governor of Hungary, he was ruling out any future cooperation with them. Cobden was next in suggesting that Britain enforce the principle of non-intervention and to prevent others from violating it. Finally, Crosskey said that a US-Britain alliance would prevent the recurrence of another Hungary.<sup>13</sup> A speech delivered three days later by the former secretary of the treasury, Robert Walker, who mentioned that Kossuth's liberation from Turkey "was the first joint intervention of England and America in favor of freedom".<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately for Kossuth, he would be carried away with the enthusiastic receptions he received from his speeches in both Britain and America. As will become evident, such enthusiasm did not mean acceptance of his ideas.

Kossuth continued to give speeches, all very moderate in tone, until he left for New York on 20 November. According to Dénes Jánossy, "He never wanted to risk (losing) the sympathy of the bourgeoisie which retained the power of the governing against all attempts of the working classes".<sup>15</sup> He had already generated bourgeois distrust by the tone of his speech at Marseilles.<sup>16</sup> After arriving at Southampton he refused the socialist workers invitation to deliver a

speech at a banquet in his honor. Later on, he felt compelled to accept the workers invitation to Copenhagen House, for which the conservative press, particularly *The Times*, attacked him.<sup>17</sup> Kossuth used the opportunity to attack communism and socialism as being destructive of social order and personal property, and as being the same movement because they desired the same result.<sup>18</sup> Here it is quite clear that Kossuth was not advocating a class struggle or revolution for Hungary, as many conservative circles frated after his Marseilles speech. What he was advocating was an independence movement that used the American model rather than the French.

What must be discussed is the lack of attention that was given by Kossuth and the British to the nationality problems within Hungary. Although the failure of the revolution was in part due to Kossuth's inability to solve these problems, this important aspect was not discussed, and there were no attempts to meet the Romanian emigrés to discuss future joint cooperation.<sup>19</sup> Up to the Crimean War Kossuth's speeches illustrated that he firmly believed Hungary was strong enough to secure its own independence as long as Russia was not allowed to interfere.<sup>20</sup> Kossuth considered he was dealing from a position of strength. He needed neither the nationalities nor an association with them, to achieve the Hungary he desired. Cooperation with the nationalities would mean giving them concessions within Historic Hungary. All Kossuth needed was to convince America to abandon its traditional policy of non-interference, as established by Washington during his farewell address, and to adopt a policy of interference for the protection of the right of non-interference.<sup>21</sup> This was his goal when he landed in New York.

After receiving a tumultuous reception from the people of New York, Kossuth embarked upon convincing the Americans to accept his ideas. In a speech at Utica, New York, he told a crowd of admirers that "the continent of Europe was afflicted with three diseases in 1848—monarchist inclination, centralization and the antagonism of nationalities".<sup>22</sup> This speech was delivered before he reembarked for England. However, these three issues were the focus of all his speeches across America. Not only did they hold the key for the failure of the revolution, he thought, but they represented a threat to the American Republic as well as the emerging states of Europe. In his memoirs he wrote the following:

"The principle of this central power is identical with that of the power of Russia. Every government, therefore, whose principle was identical with that of the government of Austria could always depend upon assistance of that power. Thus, the west of Europe stands here face to face with a permanent coalition, having an opposite principle of existence. A coalition must be met by a coalition."<sup>23</sup>

On 6 December, in Castle Garden, New York, Kossuth began his work on the formation of such a coalition. He told his audience that Britain had "for ever abandoned every sentiment of irritation and rivalry, and desires the brotherly alliance of the United States ..."<sup>24</sup> Supposedly, according to Kossuth, Britain desired such an alliance "to league with you (the United States) against the league of despots, and with you to stand sponsor at the approaching baptism of European liberty."<sup>25</sup> This baptism that would bring Hungarian independence as its objective.

For the United States, a country that was absorbed in its own domestic crisis over slavery, European events were viewed from the tainted vision of a people distantly removed and out of touch with the actual situation. But Kossuth's struggle had epitomized those ideals that Americans understood as their own. Using their own revolution as a model they viewed all kings and monarchies as innately evil and vehemently anti-republican. All monarchies opposed and suppressed those ideals that the United States had fought their revolution to achieve. They infringed upon the Lockean liberties that were so dear to the American soul. Kossuth was one of them. In heart, spirit, and sentiment he was an American. But as he spoke they did not listen as much as they attempted to draw him into the cauldron over the slavery issue. Kossuth reiterated that he took it "to be duty of honor and principle not to meddle with any party question of your (US) domestic affairs".<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless he could not rid himself of the slavery issue no matter how hard he tried. Thus, while he professed his "admiration for the glorious principle of union, on which stands the mighty pyramid of your (US) greatness".<sup>27</sup> He had to walk the thin line defining American sensitivity. It was never easy. Particularly when he traveled in the South where his reception was not nearly as warm as it had been in the North. In March 1852, he told a crowd in New Orleans:

"What have I to do with abolitionism or anti-abolitionism? Nothing in the world. That is not my matter; I am no citizen of the United States; I have neither the right nor the will to interfere with your domestic concerns; I claim for my nation the right to regulate its own institutions; I therefore must respect, and indeed I do respect, the same rights in others."<sup>28</sup>

Kossuth attempted to avoid the problem of slavery in his speeches. But as Donald Spencer points out Kossuth, like Americans themselves, could not "praise 'freedom' and 'independence' and 'liberty' (for) Hungary without noticing the simultaneous absence of these rights among black slaves at home".<sup>29</sup>

On 11 December, at a Speech at the Cooperation Dinner in New York, Kossuth conveniently quoted from Secretary of State Daniel Webster's speech on the Greek Question. Webster had said, "The law of nations maintains that in extreme cases resistance is lawful, and that one nation has no right to interfere in the affairs of another."<sup>30</sup> Of course, Kossuth used this as a springboard in his speech on Hungary. The monarchist forces had not only destroyed Hungary, but were a threat to destroy all nations who valued freedom, particularly the United States. On 26 December, he told a crowd in Philadelphia that, "... we struggled for the great principle of self-government against centralization because centralization is absolutism; and is inconsistent with constitutional rights".<sup>31</sup> The following night he warned a crowd in Baltimore about the Russian menace. He used Napoleon I's warning about how in fifty years, Europe would either be republican or Cossack.<sup>32</sup> He then proceeded to link the fortunes of republicanism with that of Hungary: "Hungary once free, Europe is republican; Hungary permanently crushed, all Europe is Cossack."<sup>33</sup> One month later in Pittsburgh, 26 January 1852, he told his audience that, "there are many here in this Hall who will yet see the day when the United States shall have to wrestle for life and death with all Europe absorbed by Russia".<sup>34</sup> In Cincinnati he attacked centralization as the

enslaver of nations.<sup>35</sup> Finally, when America had begun to lose enthusiasm for Kossuth's cause, he told a crowd in Salem, Massachusetts, 6 May 1852, that had America recognized Hungary and declared Russia's intervention to be a violation of international law, Hungary could already have its independence.<sup>36</sup> Kossuth believed America had the power and obligation to prevent Russian interference in Hungary. The theme of Kossuth's speeches is grasped quite correctly in Spencer's following quote:

"... the United States (according to Kossuth) was no longer simply the mecca of republicanism but had become its arsenal as well. Even when he bullied his hosts, as he did regularly, he reinforced this theme by challenging them to accept their destined role as a world power."<sup>37</sup>

It was mentioned earlier that Kossuth had also blamed the nationalities for Hungary's failure in the revolution. In Britain, he was able to avoid this topic, but not in America.<sup>38</sup> In a speech at the Banquet of the Press in New York City, Kossuth said the following concerning the nationalities:

"... permit me to speak on the question of Nationalities, a false theory of which plays so mischievous a part in the destinies of Europe. No word has been more misrepresented than the word Nationality, which (has) become in the hands of absolutism a dangerous instrument against liberty."<sup>39</sup>

Kossuth was alluding to the Habsburg's policy of using population statistics to show that the Hungarians were a minority in their own land, not to their military use of the minorities during the revolution.<sup>40</sup> This policy, Kossuth believed, was necessary "... to justify before the world the extinction of Hungary, the partition of its territory, land reincorporation of the dissected limbs into the common body of servitude (Austria) ..."<sup>41</sup> Later on, Kossuth boldly told his critics such falsehoods as this:

"The Croatian and Slavonians themselves repeatedly urged us in the common parliament to afford them opportunity to learn the Hungarian language, that having the right, they might also enjoy the benefit of being employed in the government offices of our common Hungary."<sup>42</sup>

Kossuth was trying to use the American example of cultural assimilation in a Hungarian mode. The nationalities, like those coming to America daily, would gladly Magyarize themselves to become one with the standard ruling culture. In an age of awakening nationalism Kossuth attempted to convince his American audiences that the nationalities within Historic Hungary possessed no national sentiments of their own. Hungarian cultural superiority was so prevalent and universally accepted that the minorities were willingly assimilating to the Magyar nation. Since most Americans were ignorant of the politics in Eastern Europe, and were more concerned about their own domestic problems, it is easily understandable why many believed Kossuth's explanation of the nationality problems. It is also understandable why Kossuth was so lukewarm about supporting the confederation with the nationalities while he was in Turkey. He had no desire to share power or to associate with the minorities. He still had the misconception that Hungary was capable of achieving its own independence if

Russian intervention was prohibited. Not only did he refuse to share power with his fellow Hungarian emigres, he also wanted to use the minorities, much like the Habsburgs had been doing, to get the results he wanted: an independent Hungarian state. One can easily predict how the exiled minority leaders must have felt after reading transcripts of Kossuth's speeches. It is understandable why the Romanian and Serbian leaders showed great reluctance in accepting Kossuth's future confederation plans. They simply did not trust him. Ironically, at a banquet in Washington on 5 January 1852, Kossuth said the following:

"... whenever there exists a nation of sufficient knowledge and wealth and population to constitute a government, then a National Government is a necessary and proper result of nationality of character."<sup>43</sup>

Apparently, according to Kossuth, the nationalities in and around Hungary did not possess the "nationality of character" to constitute a nation, let alone a government.

Kossuth received a great deal of encouragement and resources for his liberation movement. The tone and sentiment of his speeches suggested that he expected Hungary's second war of independence to begin shortly. In all probability, he would begin organizing the campaign once he returned to Europe. He already had an organization set up in America, with Paul Hajnik as treasurer to supervise the American half of the venture. Americans were more than willing to donate to Kossuth's cause. When Kossuth returned to England he left his unorganized organization behind him selling Hungarian bonds and purchasing more munitions. Also, ships had to be leased or purchased to ferry the supplies overseas when he sent the word that he was embarking on his noble crusade to liberate Hungary. However, time, lack of funds and mismanagement eventually took its toll on Kossuth's American resources.

Kossuth was not just busy buying arms. While in the South, he attempted to form "a well trained army, presumably tested in battle, and ready for deployment against Austria at his command."<sup>44</sup> He planned to control and direct both military and political leadership. He told his audiences, however, that after achieving Hungarian independence, he would, like Cincinnatus and Washington before him "retire and leave the running of the country to someone else".<sup>45</sup>

Kossuth's credibility came under serious attack when the purpose of this expeditionary force became known.<sup>46</sup> The battle tested troops were to get their experience in Haiti. Actually, Kossuth and a Southern colonel named Pickett,<sup>47</sup> planned to organize this force, consisting mainly of southerners, to assist the Dominican Republic in its struggle against the black republic of Haiti. The force was to have six small battalions of about 1500 American and foreign troops.<sup>48</sup> Although the invasion never took place, Kossuth, an ardent supporter of the principle of non-intervention, had shown himself willing to violate it when the opportunity served his purposes.<sup>49</sup> Interestingly enough, after the Crimean War, he would willingly advocate the principle's violation as the only means to attain Hungarian independence.

Kossuth left American soil in July 1852. In all probability he had overstayed his welcome. America, regardless of the enthusiastic receptions it had given

Kossuth, had grown tired of him and his cause. The pressing issue of slavery in those territories acquired by virtue of the Mexican War of 1846-48, and the passionate moral issue over the institution itself, was reaching its emotional and constitutional climax in the decade before the American Civil War. Americans were more concerned with domestic issues than with a conflict thousands of miles away in defense of a people they did not know. Also, Kossuth had had the effrontery to tell his American audiences that Washington's dictum of non-interference in European affairs was anachronistic. He continually cajoled them to take their "destined role as a world power",<sup>50</sup> which only brought condemnation and further criticism from his enemies in Congress and the press. Kossuth did not understand the psyche of the American people and the importance of the slavery issue. Nevertheless, one must give him his due. He had taken America by storm and won its heart. As was mentioned earlier, they admired those qualities that he possessed that they identified as their own. Nothing illustrates this more than he becoming only the second foreigner, after the Marquis de Lafayette, to be honored in the United States Congress.<sup>51</sup>

By the time Kossuth had returned to England he had been away from Hungary for almost three years. In such a brief span the differences between the Hungarians within Hungary and their emigrés began to widen, and the gap between the emigrés themselves began to show greater stress. One thing was for certain, in an age of Neo-Absolutism within the Habsburg Monarchy, Hungary was not strong enough to achieve its own independence. Kossuth, much like the poet Mihály Vörösmarty and other Hungarians within Hungary, hoped for the next best alternative: a general European war. They believed that such a conflict between the Great Powers would result in the destruction of the Habsburg monarchy along with the re-establishment of an independent Hungary. Kossuth was eagerly waiting to assist in such a venture.<sup>52</sup> The Crimean War was to be the answer to his prayers. However, the effects of the conflict were to be of great importance to Kossuth's final commitment to the Danubian Confederation. When the war broke out and the dissolution of Austria did not follow, Kossuth and the emigrés saw once again the importance of Austria's role in the balance of power and in the Eastern Question. More important, it was finally realized that Britain would not aid the emigrés in a re-creation of Hungary. On the contrary, she would do all in her power to hinder such a move. The only way Britain would recognize an independent Hungary would be through a *fait accompli*, or rather, the independence of Hungary successfully achieved by means that excluded Britain's participation and influence.

Despite Kossuth's preparations, America did not rush to join the British in destroying the deadly alliance of the absolute powers. Obviously, the Americans must have found the war quite strange with Austria and Russia on opposite sides. After all, Kossuth had spent months warning them about the threat they faced from the alliance of despots. More important, even with their domestic crisis the United States had differences with Great Britain in South America. As Jánossy states, "Britain's growing influence in Nicaragua and the Sandwich Isle was anxiously watched by American commerce."<sup>53</sup> America still felt Britain was its main nemesis; they had more to fear from the British than any other power. Also, America's closest Great Power ally was Russia, which desired a strong America

to counterbalance British power in the Mediterranean. Both America and Russia saw the main threat to their expansive policies coming from Britain. Once again, reality had taken precedence over ideals. Democracy played second fiddle to world politics.

Kossuth failed to understand the effects of American isolationism, and he was livid when America did not enter the Crimean War. He criticized President Franklin Pierce and the American people for not entering the war:

"His (Pierce) was the guilt; but whose was the fault? I cry out to heaven and to earth; it is yours! People of America, who accept the shame of that nothingness from your sewart, whom you could command."<sup>54</sup>

Regardless of what expectations Kossuth had when he left America, Americans were not about to abandon Washington's advice and become embroiled in European affairs for which they had nothing to gain. Furthermore, the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 and Popular Sovereignty had moved their domestic crisis one step closer to civil war. Once again, Kossuth had to search out help for his cause. This time the road led to Mazzini and Napoleon III and the new idea of violating the non-intervention policy to achieve Hungarian independence.

#### Notes

1. For Kossuth's objectives while in America see: Jánossy, Dénes A., *A Kossuth-Emigráció Angliában és Amerikában 1851-1952*. I. (Budapest, 1940).
2. Osborne, Ralph, Parliament, 21 July 1849, cited in Jánossy, Dénes A., *Great Britain and Kossuth*, (Budapest, 1937), p. 26.
3. Kossuth was farsighted enough to realize that the United States would be a Great Power. He misunderstood, however, when the United States would come to realize this fact. His was the error of time. Conversations with Gábor Pajkossy, 5 August 1988, Budapest. Cited below as *Conversations*.
4. Non-intervention stipulated that the powers had no right to interfere in each other's domestic affairs. Agreed upon during the Treaty of Vienna in 1815, this allowed the absolute powers to suppress reactionary and republican movements within their borders. Also, it gave them a free hand in handling their minorities, particularly the Poles, who were partitioned between Russia, Austria and Prussia.
5. It is my contention that in 1849 Hungary lost the opportunity for military victory; however, I am not convinced that Austria possessed sufficient strength to conquer Hungary by itself. I do believe that a draw or a negotiated peace could have been achieved as long as a Hungarian fighting force and government eluded the Habsburgs. The Russian invasion negated any possible success for such a negotiated peace.
6. Kossuth-Palmerston, cited in Jánossy, *Britain*, p. 22.
7. Brunnow-Nesselrode, London, 18 May 1849, cited in Jánossy, *Britain*, p. 24.
8. *IBID*. Note: These included Richard Cobden, a member of Parliament and the Peace Party; David Urquhart, former diplomat who was very supportive of Turkey and anti-Russian; and the Hungarian emigrés Ferenc Pulszky and László Teleki.
9. Jánossy, *Britain*, p. 57.
10. Kossuth-Teleki, Kutiahia, 22 August 1850, cited in Jánossy, *Britain*, p. 57.
11. Kossuth, The Democratic Society of the Friends of the Constitution, London, 6 November 1851, cited in Jánossy, *A Kossuth-Emigráció*, pp. 817-818. Note: Kossuth believed since Britain would not interfere in the domestic affairs of any state she "would not tolerate the intervention of other states (Russia) in a third state's (Austria) internal affairs".

12. Jánossy, *Britain*, p. 88. Whoever took up arms broke the law. Austria initiated the conflict by invading Hungary in 1848. Franz Joseph was never crowned King of Hungary. He had never taken the oath to the Hungarian constitution, so he was not the legal King. Ferdinand still held that title. Hungary was fighting for the April Laws of 1848. Kossuth's deposition of the monarchy was consistent with the constitution, but foolish since it ruled out the possibility of a negotiated settlement during the latter days of the war. *Conversations*.
13. Jánossy, *Britain*, pp. 88–89.
14. Abbot Lawrence–Kossuth, London, 28 October 1851, cited in Jánossy, *Kossuth-Emigráció*, pp. 714–15.
15. Kossuth–Thornton Hunt, Winchester, 25 October 1851, cited in Jánossy, *Kossuth-Emigráció*, p. 713; also, Jánossy, *Britain*, p. 95.
16. The French Government refused to let Kossuth travel through France. Afterwards, Kossuth wrote a “fiery article” to the *Peuple de Marseille* denouncing Napoleon III and his government while praising the French People.
17. Jánossy, *Britain*, p. 95.
18. *IBID.*, p. 100. Also, see Tibor Frank, *Marx és Kossuth* (Budapest, 1955).
19. Spencer, Donald S., *Louis Kossuth and Young America: A Study of Sectionalism and Foreign Policy 1848–1852* (Columbia, MO, 1977), p. 53.
20. It needs to be mentioned that the idea of a Danubian Confederation, that Kossuth discussed with the Romanian, Serbian and Polish emigrés while he was an exile in Turkey in 1849, resurfaced in discussions within the emigre community in 1853. Kossuth granted considerable territorial and political concessions to the other nationalities. See: Kovács Endre, *A Kossuth-emigráció és az európai szabadságmozgalmak*, Budapest, 1967.
21. Spencer, p. 53.
22. Kossuth Louis, *The Select Speeches of Kossuth* (New York, 1854), p. 397.
23. Kossuth Louis, *Memories of My Evile* (New York, 1880), p. 38.
24. Jánossy, *Kossuth-Emigráció*, p. 253; also, Kossuth, *Select*, p. 38.
25. Kossuth, *Select*, pp. 38–39. Note: Kossuth had to take extreme caution about not being used as a political tool in the domestic politics of Britain and America. Cobden warned him to “keep out” of British politics. In the United States he was at the mercy of the slavery issue. According to John Komlos (*Kossuth in America 1851–1852*, Buffalo, 1973), “extremists in both sections of the United States were prepared to judge the Hungarian cause only in terms of their own domestic struggle”. See *Komlos*, p. 66.
26. *IBID.*, p. 39.
27. *IBID.*
28. Spencer, p. 149.
29. *IBID.*, p. 180.
30. Kossuth, *Select*, p. 60.
31. *IBID.*, p. 87.
32. *IBID.*, p. 131. Note: Below is a letter from A. Dudley Mann, Special Emissary to the rebel authorities, appointed by President Zachary Taylor, to the Secretary of State, that illustrates the effect Kossuth had on convincing the Americans to support his cause: “The question whether continental Europe shall be under Cossack or Republican rule hereafter will, in all probability, be definitively decided on the plains and in the passes of Hungary.” 8 August–27 September 1849, Spencer, p. 26.
33. Kossuth, *Select*, p. 131.
34. *IBID.*, p. 191.
35. *IBID.*, pp. 228–229.
36. *IBID.*, p. 340.
37. Spencer, p. 179.
38. Historian and *North American Review* editor Francis Brown wrote an article for the review calling the Hungarian War of Independence a “war of races,” and Kossuth and the Hungarians, “arrogant, cruel and tyrannical”. Harvard University's board of overseers revoked his appointment to the distinguished McLean Chair. See Spencer, pp. 43–44; Brown, Francis, “The War of Races in Hungary,” in *North American Review*, 70 (January 1850), p. 121; Bowen, Francis, “The Rebellion

- Against the Magyars," *IBID.*, 72, (1851), pp. 238-240; Also *National Cyclopedia of American Biography*, II, p. 452; Ekirch, Arthur A., *The Idea of Progress in America, 1815-60*, p. 59.
39. Kossuth, *Select*, p. 78.
  40. According to Pajkossy, the Habsburgs did not need to show that the Hungarians were a minority in Hungary. Statistics, specifically church and those of Elek Fényes, *Magyarország statisztikája*, I-III (Pest, 1842-3), Vol. I, pp. 33-4, Table 52B, showed the Hungarians were minimal, but no minority. *Conversations*.
  41. *IBID.*, p. 80.
  42. *IBID.*, p. 86.
  43. *IBID.*, p. 147.
  44. Komlos, p. 124.
  45. Kossuth, *Select*, p. 72, and *Memories*, p. 100.
  46. Komlos, p. 126.
  47. This is not General George Pickett of the Confederate Army who led the illfated charge at Gettysburg, 3 July 1863. He became a captain in the American army in 1855.
  48. Komlos., p. 124.
  49. *IBID.*, p. 126.
  50. Spencer, p. 179.
  51. Jánossy, *Britain*, pp. 111-112; also, *Komlos*, p. 105, from Eugene Pivany, *Sixty Years Ago*, An address delivered before the First Hungarian Association for Self-Culture. Philadelphia, 4 December 1911.
  52. This idea circulated amongst the different emigre communities of Europe. All of them believed that a European war would see the weakened Monarchy go asunder.
  53. Jánossy, *Britain*, p. 112.
  54. Kossuth, cited in Spencer, p. 174.

# THE RUSSIAN INTERVENTION IN HUNGARY IN 1849: SOME THOUGHTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

I. W. ROBERTS

“The fate of Hungary will largely influence the future condition of all Europe.”  
(Lord Aberdeen to Princess Lieven, 18 August, 1849).<sup>1</sup>

“The fate and condition of Poland are now, as they have been for the last century, the key to the whole policy of Russia.” (Edinburgh Review, April 1847, Vol. CCXXII, p. 292).<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

On the evening of 21st April 1849 during a visit to Moscow to dedicate the reconstructed Great Palace in the Kremlin, originally built by Catherine the Great and burnt down during the French retreat in 1812, the Emperor Nicholas I finally decided to accede to the request made by the Austrian government for military assistance in suppressing the revolt in Hungary which had begun the previous year. The Tsar's decision was announced in public after a formal letter had been sent by Francis Joseph to Nicholas on 1st May.

The Russian intervention in Hungary which was on a massive scale began on 17th June and lasted eight weeks. On 13th August the major part of the Hungarian army led by General Görgey surrendered to the Russians at Világos (Şiria). Shortly afterwards the Russian army began its withdrawal from Hungary, the Austrians exiled General Görgey to Klagenfurt and on 6th October they shocked Europe by executing thirteen Hungarian generals at their military headquarters in Arad. Although the British and French governments did not oppose the intervention, they sent units of their Mediterranean fleets to the Dardanelles after it was over to lend support to Turkey which was finding it difficult to resist Austrian and Russian demands to hand over Hungarian and Polish members of the rebel armies who had sought refuge there. The Russians, followed by the Austrians withdrew their demands, and the possibility of a general European war was averted. Although the Russian intervention was of short duration, it made a deep impression on the rising middle class in Western Europe and had far reaching consequences for the future relationship between Russia and the Habsburg Empire, which was never to be the same again. The memories of the intervention have never dimmed and it has formed an inexhaustible subject for study historians.

In this article five aspects of the intervention will be examined. The first will be the reasons which caused Nicholas to decide to intervene; the second the reasons for Görgey's decision to surrender to the Russians, rather than the Austrians; the third the policy of non-intervention adopted by Lord Palmerston and the

British government; the fourth the financial background to the intervention and finally, a few remarks about the nature of some of the historical sources on the intervention.

### The Reasons for Nicholas' Intervention

There has been much debate among historians about the reasons for Nicholas' decision to intervene in Hungary. Was he concerned with the defence of the cause of legitimacy or was he guided by a wish to protect Russia's own interests, especially in Russian Poland? In order to answer these questions, we must first consider the course of Russian foreign policy during the reign of Nicholas I.

Nicholas succeeded to the Russian throne instead of his elder brother, the Grand Duke Constantine, the ruler of Russian Poland, in the aftermath of an unsuccessful military revolt in St. Petersburg in December 1825. Constantine, who had no wish to become Tsar, had made his decision known to Alexander I before he died. Nicholas' main interest in life was the Russian army and throughout his reign he was to reiterate that he would have much preferred to follow a military career rather than become the ruler of the Russian Empire. He was the personification of an absolute monarch and believed implicitly that he had been chosen by God to rule over his subjects. More German than Russian in his ancestry, he lost his father at the age of five when the Emperor Paul was assassinated in St. Petersburg in 1801 by a group of disaffected officers. His eldest brother Alexander I, who then succeeded to the throne, left his education to their German mother and a group of tutors who brought Nicholas up during the Napoleonic wars in which he was too young to take part. Naturally straightforward and unwilling to compromise with his principles, he found it difficult to conceal his true feelings, but as the years went by, he was to gain the reputation of being a good actor and was able to exert considerable charm when necessary. As Queen Victoria wrote to her uncle King Leopold of Belgium after Nicholas' visit to her in 1844 to discuss the future of the Ottoman Empire, "he is sincere, I am certain, *sincere* even in his most despotic acts, from a sense that this *is* the *only* way to govern".<sup>3</sup>

Although the diplomatic correspondence of the period, both Russian and foreign, makes frequent reference to "le cabinet russe" no such institution in the Western sense existed in Russia at that time. The State Council and the Council of Ministers were essentially advisory bodies which, in some instances, were called upon to implement decisions which had already been taken by the Tsar. Nicholas had regular meetings with his ministers individually and with the Military Council; the Commander in Chief of the Russian Army, Prince Paskevich, who replaced the Grand Duke Constantine as ruler of Russian Poland, also reported directly to the Tsar. Thus Nicholas acted as his own Prime Minister and his ministers were little more than the faithful executors of his decisions.

The cosmopolitan Count Nesselrode, whom Nicholas inherited as Minister of Foreign Affairs from Alexander I, and kept in office throughout his reign was no exception to this rule. Disliked by the old Russian nobility because of his foreign ancestry, he was a model bureaucrat, industrious and hardworking, who sometimes persuaded Nicholas to have second thoughts and so saved him from

the consequences of some of his impulsive decisions. In the words of the author of a contemporary handbook on European diplomats, Nesselrode was the enlightened hand which wrote the Emperor's will and he was appreciated as "un homme de bon conseil".<sup>4</sup> More unkindly, a British journal of the period described him as "the mere head clerk of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs without one spark of genius, or any other talent than the talent of keeping his place and plodding placidly on".<sup>5</sup>

At the beginning of Nicholas' reign, Russian foreign policy was dominated by three problems, two of which had their origin in the reign of Catherine the Great. These were the ultimate fate of the Ottoman Empire which had begun its long and slow process of decline; the consequences of the partition of Poland between Austria, Prussia and Russia at the end of the eighteenth century; and finally, the fear of the resurgence of revolutionary France under the leadership of a successor to Napoleon Bonaparte.

Nicholas began his reign by having to act against his instincts and make common cause with Great Britain and France in assisting the Greeks to establish an independent state, much to the dismay of Metternich and the Emperor Francis of Austria. He then fought a war with Persia which brought Russia further gains in the Caucasus. An attempt made at the beginning of his reign to reach a peaceful settlement with Turkey on outstanding problems failed and was followed by a long and costly war in 1828/1829. Once again Nicholas' instinctive wish to occupy Constantinople had to give way to the more measured advice of a special committee he had established which recommended that Russia's best interests would be served by the preservation of the Ottoman Empire and the solution of its problems in concert with the other European powers. The war was ended by the Treaty of Adrianople which consolidated Russia's hold on the mouth of the Danube and strengthened her influence in the Danubian Principalities and Serbia. 1830 witnessed the outbreak of revolution in France and the advent to power of Louis Philippe, as well as a revolt in Belgium which led to the establishment of an independent state. Nicholas always regarded Louis Philippe as an usurper but had no success in his efforts to create an alliance to suppress the revolutions in France and Belgium by armed intervention which would have included the use of part of the Polish army. At the end of the year there was a revolt in Russian Poland and in January 1831 the Romanov dynasty was deposed. Nicholas, who had always been an unenthusiastic supporter of the Polish constitution granted by Alexander after the Napoleonic wars, had no hesitation in using the Russian army to crush the Poles. Paskevich, who had played a prominent part in the campaigns in both Persia and Turkey, replaced Diebitsch who died of cholera, and captured Warsaw on 8th September 1831. The revolution collapsed and the Polish leadership, which had been divided by internal dissensions, fled abroad, mainly to France, where its two main factions were to continue their efforts to foment revolution in their divided country and re-unite it. Russian Poland lost its constitution and its own army and retained only a small measure of administrative autonomy under the rule of Paskevich.

Immediately after the Polish revolt, Nicholas' attention was again engaged by the problems of the Ottoman Empire, when the first Egyptian-Turkish crisis occurred. In July 1833 he scored a notable success with the Treaty of

Unkiar Skelessi by which Russia and Turkey agreed to come to each other's aid in the event of attack. But he had not forgotten the problems of western Europe and after a vain attempt to involve Great Britain and France in reviving the alliance established by his elder brother after the Napoleonic wars, he found himself compelled to turn to Austria in his efforts to prevent the spread of liberalism. Austrian reservations about Russia's relationship with Turkey were set aside and Nicholas was persuaded to overcome his innate suspicions of Metternich and Austrian policy.

In September 1833 at a meeting between the elderly Emperor Francis and Nicholas in the Bohemian town of Muenchengraetz (Mnichovo Hradište) a new alliance was established in which Prussia was eventually to take part. Although the declared purpose of the Muenchengraetz agreement was to prevent a break up of the Ottoman Empire which would be detrimental to the interests of Austria and Russia, the three absolutist powers were equally united by the common purpose of opposing the French principle of non-intervention and preventing the reunification of a divided Poland. In the eyes of Great Britain and France, the new alliance concluded at Muenchengraetz was nothing more than the revival of the Holy Alliance established after the Congress of Vienna and as a result, Europe became divided into opposing camps.

In 1839 the second Egyptian-Turkish crisis led to dissension between France and Great Britain of which Russia sought to take advantage. At one time it appeared that there would be war between France and Germany but eventually in July 1841 the five great powers signed the Straits Convention in London which closed the Bosphorus and Dardanelles to all foreign warships in peace time. Nicholas' subsequent attempts to establish by personal diplomacy a special understanding with Great Britain about the future of the Ottoman Empire during his visit to London in 1844 did not lead to the signing of any formal agreement. Nicholas' belief that he had reached a "gentlemen's agreement" was to be the cause of much misunderstanding in the period before the outbreak of the Crimean War.

In 1846 the attention of Austria, Prussia and Russia again focussed on Poland when a revolt in Galicia and Cracow was suppressed by the combined military intervention of Austria and Russia. In the absence of any serious opposition by Great Britain and France who were occupied with the affairs of the Iberian peninsula, Prussia was persuaded by Austria and Russia to agree to the suppression of the independent state of Cracow, created in 1815, which was incorporated into Austrian Galicia.

Nicholas, who had always regarded Cracow as a thorn in his flesh, especially since the Polish revolt of 1830, was delighted that a further blow had been delivered to the cause of Polish independence. Nevertheless, as the decade of the 1840s drew to a close, he became more and more uneasy about the state of the Russian alliance with Austria and Prussia. On more than one occasion he was to express the view that it no longer consisted of three powers but one and a half. By this he meant that he could no longer rely on his brother-in-law Frederick William IV of Prussia who was failing to stand up to liberal pressure and that he had doubts about the ability of the Austrian State Council, which ruled Austria during the reign of the weak-minded Emperor Ferdinand, to keep the Habsburg

Empire together in the face of increasing restiveness among the nationalities and serious financial problems. In short, Nicholas felt that Russia was the only member of the alliance which would be able to stand firm against the rising tide of liberalism and nationalism which was sweeping across the countries of Europe as they were gradually being transformed into modern industrial societies.

In February 1848 the overthrow of Louis Philippe in France, shortly followed by the fall of Metternich in Vienna and revolts in Hungary and Italy, as well as Frederick William IV's concessions to the liberals in Berlin confirmed Nicholas' worst fears. His immediate reaction was to order a massive mobilization of the reserves of the Russian army. At the same time he attempted to isolate Russia from revolutionary ideas by imposing strict censorship and limiting foreign travel. These actions were followed by the publication of a manifesto and official commentary in March 1848 proclaiming Russia's defiance of revolution along with an assurance that Russia would not intervene in the affairs of other countries.

Nicholas' greatest fear was that the changes in Austria and Prussia would give further encouragement to the Poles in Poznan and Galicia and that revolution would spread from these provinces to Russian Poland. It even seemed possible at one time that France would lend its support to Prussia and the Prussian Poles. But France did not match its words with deeds and by the end of May both the Austrian and Prussian governments had been able to put an end to the troubles in their Polish territories. Throughout these disturbances Russian Poland remained quiet. However, Nicholas continued to be alarmed by the actions of Frederick William IV because of his support for the cause of German nationalism in the dispute with Denmark on the Schleswig-Holstein question. He was content to allow Great Britain to mediate in the affair, but at the same time made limited use of the Russian fleet in the Baltic to lend moral support to the Danes and their Swedish allies.

Nor could Nicholas ignore the consequences of the revolution in Western Europe in the Christian provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Disturbances occurred in both Moldavia and Wallachia. After much hesitation, Nicholas decided to send Russian troops into Moldavia in July. Finally, after protracted negotiations with Turkey he sent a Russian force into Wallachia to assist the Turks in carrying out a joint occupation of the Danubian Principalities. As always, Nicholas was perturbed by the role of the Poles in fomenting revolution in these provinces. Their strategic importance and use as a base for any future operations against Hungary in support of Austria was obvious.

At the end of 1848, after the successful suppression of a revolt in Vienna in October, a new Austrian government led by Schwarzenberg took office and the Emperor Ferdinand abdicated in favour of his young nephew, Francis Joseph. The Austrians were now able to turn their attention to the restoration of Habsburg rule in Hungary. In Prussia Frederick William IV, encouraged by the Austrian example, dissolved the Prussian constituent assembly and promulgated a new constitution. As 1848 drew to a close, it seemed as if order was being restored. However, in January 1849, the effects in Europe of Kossuth's decision to make use of the Poles in the Hungarian forces brought an unpleasant surprise in the shape of the victories of the Hungarian army in Transylvania led by General Bem. At the request of the local Austrian military commander and in the face of

opposition from Schwarzenberg, Nicholas reluctantly agreed to a limited intervention by some of the Russian troops based in the Danubian Principalities in support of the Austrians. The intervention was not successful and by the end of March the Russian troops were forced to withdraw along with the defeated Austrian forces. Nicholas was dismayed and determined that any further military intervention he might be called upon to make would be on a suitably massive scale.

Bem's success in Transylvania was followed by further Hungarian victories elsewhere on Hungary under the leadership of General Görgey and by the middle of April the situation had become critical. The replacement of Windischgraetz by Welden as Austrian Commander-in-Chief in Hungary brought no improvement. Despite Radetzky's victory against Piedmont at Novara on 23rd March, continuing Austrian difficulties in Italy made it impossible to transfer troops from there for use against Hungary. As a result, a reluctant Schwarzenberg and Austrian Council of Ministers were compelled to yield to military necessity and appeal to Nicholas for Russian assistance in suppressing the revolt in Hungary.

Austria's first request was for aid in restoring the situation in Transylvania which was rejected by Nicholas as being impractical. This was followed by an urgent personal appeal to Paskevich in Warsaw for the dispatch of Russian troops to assist the Austrians in dealing with the threat of a Hungarian attack on Vienna and renewed outbreak of revolution in the city. Much to Nicholas' displeasure Paskevich sent a composite Russian division by rail from Cracow to Moravia without seeking the Tsar's approval.

Nicholas had made it clear from the outset of the revolutions in Europe which began in 1848 that he would not intervene unless Russia's interests were directly threatened. He could hardly refuse a request from the Austrians for aid especially as he had given a solemn promise to the Emperor Francis before his death that he would come to the assistance of his "idiot son" or successor if misfortune should occur.<sup>6</sup> Nicholas was not the man to break his promise and in any case, he was being asked to defend the cause of order in the struggle against revolution which had begun in France in 1789. Nevertheless, just as he had been reluctant to intervene in the Danubian Principalities the previous year, he wished to be certain that Russia's own interests were directly threatened.

The increasing involvement of the Poles in Hungarian affairs provided Nicholas with the answer to any doubts which he may have had. Bem's successes in Transylvania were followed by reports of a threatened invasion of Galicia, possibly led by General Dembinski, another of the Poles who had joined the Hungarian cause. A Polish general was active in the Sardinian army and Nicholas had not forgotten the part played by the Poles in causing disturbances in the Danubian Principalities. It seemed to him that Hungary was about to become the centre of a general conspiracy led by Russia's eternal enemies, the Poles, against all that was sacred.<sup>7</sup> The Hungarian military successes were beginning to have a disturbing effect on the population of Russian Poland and accordingly Austria's request for aid must be granted for Russia's own safety.<sup>8</sup> In early 1848 Nicholas had spoken to an Austrian diplomat of his concern about the threat from Galicia to Russian Poland<sup>9</sup> and he was to use the same phrase "une insurrection à mes

portes" to the French Ambassador who arrived in Warsaw as the campaign in Hungary was drawing to a close. In a conversation about the reasons for his intervention<sup>10</sup> Nesselrode was to compare the role of the Russian intervention force to that of a fire brigade sent to prevent the spread of a fire which had broken out in a neighbour's house.<sup>11</sup>

The Austrians were, of course, well aware of Nicholas' concern about the Poles and it seems quite probable that they deliberately played on his feelings by exaggerating the number of Poles who had enlisted in the Hungarian army. The official commentary which accompanied the Russian manifesto of 8th May 1849 announcing the intervention in Hungary referred to 20,000 Poles serving in the Hungarian army, whereas the true number was much less, possibly 3,000 or 4,000.

Besides defending the conservative principle, as Nicholas wrote to the Sultan of Turkey at the end of the campaign,<sup>12</sup> and protecting Russia from Polish inspired subversion, Nicholas was also anxious to ensure that Austria continued to play an active part in German affairs, especially in suppressing the revolutions which broke out in May in the smaller territories.<sup>13</sup> He was fearful of the possibility of Germany becoming united under the rule of his vacillating brother-in-law, Frederick William IV, even although the latter had refused the offer of the crown of a united Germany made by the Frankfurt Parliament. At the same time as he was agreeing to send a Russian army to Hungary, he was warning the King of Prussia not to fire on the Russian ships he had sent into the Baltic and to give in gracefully to the Danes on the Schleswig Holstein question. At one stage he even spoke to the French Ambassador of Russia and France making common cause if Germany were to be united under a ruler who was a threat to the rest of Europe.<sup>14</sup>

It has sometimes been suggested that Nicholas was interested in fostering the unity of the Slavs in the Austrian and Ottoman Empires and that this was a contributory factor in his decision to intervene in Hungary. This suggestion is quite incorrect and was contrary to one of Nicholas' cardinal principles that subjects had no right to rebel against their lawful ruler. Both the Croats and the Serbs in Hungary endeavoured to obtain Russian support in their struggles against the Hungarians, but received no encouragement. Nicholas approved of the military support given by the semi-independent Principality of Serbia to their fellow nationals, so long as it was directed to restoring the authority of the Austrian Emperor. By the same token he was prepared to support a proposal to recreate a Slovak legion, originally raised by the Austrians, to assist Paskevich in his operations in Northern Hungary. He also allowed the Russian commander in Transylvania to make use of the anti-Hungarian Romanian guerilla leader Avram Iancu. This approval was given for strictly military purposes, just as Nicholas had been prepared to make use of the Bulgarians in his campaign against Turkey in 1820/1829 without giving any encouragement to the political aspirations of the Bulgarians to establish an independent state. In Russia the Slavophiles were regarded with as much suspicion as any other persons who ventured to disagree with official policy. In March 1849 Nicholas ordered the arrest of Ivan Aksakov, the brother of the prominent Slavophile, Konstantin Aksakov, because of incautious remarks he had made in his correspondence. The Slavophiles were believed to have links with the Czecha who had organized the Slav Congress in Prague in June 1848. Nicholas forbade the few Russians invited to attend the

Congress and the only Russian present was the renegade Mikhail Bakunin who was subsequently to be arrested by the Austrians and handed over to the Russians after the collapse of the revolt in Saxony which took place in May 1849.

In short, Nicholas' reasons for intervening in Hungary were a combination of a commitment to the cause of absolutism and monarchical solidarity, combined with a desire to prevent the spread of Polish inspired subversion to Russian Poland and Western Russia. There seems little doubt that it was fear of the Poles which tipped the scales in favour of Austria's request.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, when the news of Görgey's surrender to the Russians on 13th August reached Warsaw Nicholas fell on his knees and thanked God that he no longer had to sacrifice Russian blood for a cause which was not directly the cause of Russia.<sup>16</sup> As Bismarck was to remark in his memoirs, Nicholas was an idealist with a chivalrous nature who never lost this characteristic throughout his reign.<sup>17</sup> But Austria's refusal to come to Russia's aid during the Crimean War was to show Nicholas that there is no such thing as gratitude in politics and that he had been right to have doubts about the wisdom of intervention.

### **The Reasons for Görgey's surrender to the Russian**

In the immediate aftermath of the Hungarian War of Independence there was a violent revulsion against Görgey because of his decision to surrender to the Russians. The legend arose that Görgey was a traitor who had betrayed the Hungarian cause for Russian money and had saved his own life at the expense of his fellow officers. The debate about Görgey's treachery raged in Hungary up to his death in 1916 and it was only afterwards that a calmer and more detached view was taken of his action in 1849. In her study of the Russian intervention published in Moscow in 1935 R. Averbukh revived the accusation of treachery. On the basis of a draft note dated 24th July 1849 found in Paskevich's personal papers she made the assertion that Nicholas I had approved a proposal to bribe Görgey and that he received the money before he went into exile in Klangefurt.<sup>18</sup> A careful examination of the events leading up to the surrender reveals a rather different story.

The use of bribery to persuade an enemy to surrender is an old stratagem in warfare practised by all nations. When the 3rd Corps of the Russian army commanded by General Rüdiger occupied Cracow and Western Galicia as a preliminary to intervening in Hungary in May 1849, the Russians were presented with a unique opportunity to gain an insight into the divisions in the Hungarian leadership which had occurred after Kossuth had deposed the Habsburgs and issued the Declaration of Independence at Debrecen on 14th April. Thanks to the good offices of General Legeditsch, the military commandant of Cracow, General Rüdiger was able to have a personal interview with a paternal uncle of Görgey's, Johann Görgey, who was a retired hussar officer. In this interview, Görgey's uncle gave an account of his nephew's disapproval of the Declaration of Independence and the role of the Poles, especially Generals Bem and Dembinski, in the Hungarian army. It was clear to the Russians that there was a fundamental disagreement between Kossuth and Görgey. General Rüdiger asked

outright whether it would be possible to bribe Görgey to surrender and was told that he was not interested in money. If the Hungarian revolt had not taken place in 1848, Görgey would almost certainly have continued with his chemistry studies and not resumed his abandoned military career by joining the Hungarian army. An account of Rüdiger's interview was sent to Nicholas and Paskevich in Warsaw, as well as General Berg, the Russian liaison officer with the Austrian army.<sup>19</sup>

It is not surprising that General Rüdiger and his staff did not forget this interview and attempted to profit from it at a later stage in the campaign. The first person to do so was Colonel Khrulev, a resourceful cavalry officer, who when surrounded by a larger Hungarian force, attempted to negotiate a surrender with Görgey without any written authority at Rimaszombat (Rimavská Sobota) on 20th July 1849. Shortly afterwards, on 24th July, Görgey was to receive a similar letter from Rüdiger himself who was quite convinced that Görgey could be persuaded to surrender to the Russians, because he considered it impossible to defeat such a huge army.

Görgey duly informed his corps commanders and the Hungarian government of these approaches by the Russians. There followed a series of negotiations with the Russians which were to continue for the rest of the month and into August. It was in the course of these negotiations that Kossuth put forward the proposal that the Hungarian crown should be offered to a member of the Russian royal family.

Paskevich appears to have been surprised by the actions of Colonel Khrulev and General Rüdiger who, as he subsequently informed the Tsar, had acted entirely on his own initiative without prior approval. At the same time he did not wish to let slip an opportunity of shortening the campaign by seeking a negotiated surrender with Görgey and his forces. As a first step he wrote to General Berg on 23rd June asking the Austrian Commander General Haynau for his views on how the Russians should react to the Hungarian offer of a surrender and some indication of the terms that might be offered. The text of this letter has not been published, but the text of Berg's reply, dated 28th July which was cleared with Haynau before despatch is available. In this letter Berg stated that Haynau agreed that any offer from Görgey should be accepted, since it might encourage other Hungarian units to follow his example. Görgey could be offered immunity and "a certain sum of money", but there could be no question of a general amnesty for any other Hungarian officers.<sup>20</sup>

Paskevich also informed Nicholas in Warsaw of what had occurred. The complete text of this letter which is dated 24th July has never been published, but parts of it are available in two Russian publications, the authors of which had access to official papers. In his letter Paskevich pointed out to the Tsar that the Austrians showed no desire to conciliate the Hungarians and that it appeared that the Hungarians were prepared to trust the Russians. He was worried about his own health and was afraid that the campaign would not be finished in eight weeks as he had originally hoped, but would drag on into the autumn. There were rumours that the Hungarians would be willing to accept a member of the Russian royal family as King of Hungary such as Nicholas' second son, the Grand Duke Constantine who was serving with the Russian army in Hungary. From a careful study of the published parts of the letter it seems possible that Paskevich

incorporated his proposal to bribe Görgey, making use of the draft note of the same which is quoted in Averbukh's book. However, in the published text of Nicholas' reply to this letter, dated 28th July, there is no reference to any such proposal. Instead, the Tsar gives his views on the future conduct of the war. He describes Colonel Khrulev's initiative as "amusing" and makes it clear to Paskevich that he has no wish to allow any member of the Russian royal family to become King of Hungary, or to annex any Hungarian territory.<sup>21</sup>

R. Averbukh does not quote any document in her book in support of her assertion that Nicholas approved the proposal to bribe Görgey. In fact, Nicholas had a curiously ambivalent attitude to this kind of activity and there is evidence from the diary of a senior Russian official writing in 1849 that he strongly disapproved of governments that resorted to this kind of stratagem, rather than risk open warfare.<sup>22</sup> Nor is there any justification for Averbukh's statement that the money was paid to Görgey after he surrendered before going into exile in Klagenfurt. On that occasion Görgey, who had no money of his own apart from the now worthless Kossuth notes, accepted gifts from Paskevich to cover expenses which amounted to 1100 half-imperials (5500 roubles). The amount proposed as a bribe mentioned in Paskevich's draft note of 24th July is far larger, 10,000 chervonets or 100,000 roubles. It was unfortunate for Görgey that the amount of money he received from Paskevich was grossly exaggerated, especially by the Hungarian emigrés who escaped and fled abroad after the war was over.

The explanation for Görgey's decision to surrender to the Russians is therefore not the simple one given by R. Averbukh, but is rather to be found in the fundamental difference in outlook between Görgey and Kossuth about Hungarian policy and the conduct of the war. As a former Habsburg officer and practical soldier, Görgey knew that wars were won by well-equipped and well-disciplined armies rather than by eloquent appeals to patriotism and constitutional rights. After the surrender he spoke freely to the Russian officers at Paskevich's headquarters about the reasons for his decision to surrender. One of the most interesting of these conversations is described in a letter sent on 29th August 1849 by one of Nicholas' aides-de-camp, Colonel Glinka, to the wife of the Russian Minister of War, Princess Chernysheva.<sup>23</sup> As soon as Görgey knew that Russia would intervene, he realized that the war was lost. The Tsar was not a man who indulged in half-measures and he would fight to the bitter end. Görgey believed he could have prolonged the war, but this would have ruined the country and in any event, he had no taste for guerilla warfare. The "Budapest lawyers" had other ideas and Kossuth's attempt to take over the supreme command only made matters worse, since he was ignorant of military matters. Görgey admitted that the decision to lay siege to the fortress of Buda was „the greatest mistake" which could have been made, since it prevented the Hungarians from following up the military successes they had achieved against the Hungarians in early April.<sup>24</sup>

In addition, Görgey did not approve of the Declaration of Independence proclaimed by Kossuth. Ever since the Declaration of Vác on 5th January 1849, he had made it clear to Kossuth that he disapproved of those who broke their oath to defend the constitution. The Declaration of Independence made it impossible to negotiate with the Austrians who were thirsting for the blood of the Hungarians.<sup>25</sup> It therefore seemed sensible to negotiate with the Russians who

appeared to be more well-disposed to the Hungarians in the hope that the Tsar and Paskevich would be able to alleviate their lot by interceding with the Austrians on their behalf.<sup>26</sup> Once Kossuth had handed over power to Görgey, it was possible to take this decision.

Although Paskevich had insisted on unconditional surrender, he had a certain amount of sympathy for the Hungarians and believed that Austria should carry out a policy of reconciliation in Hungary after the war was over in order to keep the Habsburg Empire in being. He also knew that Nicholas' normal policy in dealing with a revolt was to punish the ring-leaders and pardon those who had been led astray. Accordingly, after the surrender had taken place, he urged Nicholas to persuade the Austrians to grant an amnesty and wrote similar letters to Francis Joseph, Schwarzenberg and Haynau. Nicholas, realizing that the honour of the Russian Army was at stake, decided to send his eldest son Alexander to Vienna for a personal meeting with Francis Joseph in the hope that the young Emperor, with whom he believed he had established a special relationship, would be able to overcome the objections of his advisers to the granting of an amnesty. In his letter to the Austrian Emperor he offered to grant asylum to Görgey and assured him that appropriate measures would be taken to prevent him stirring up trouble in Hungary in the future.<sup>27</sup>

Unfortunately for Nicholas and Paskevich, the Austrians were not to be moved in their policy of firmness towards the Hungarians. In their eyes, those Hungarians who had broken their oath to their lawful ruler were rebels and did not deserve to be treated as ordinary prisoners-of-war. In the multi-national Habsburg Empire loyalty to the Emperor was the supreme virtue which had to be upheld at all costs. Consequently, in his replies to Nicholas and Paskevich, Francis Joseph rejected the idea of a general amnesty, but agreed to spare the life of Görgey who to be handed back to the Austrians and sent into exile in Klagenfurt in Carinthia. In due course, the Russians handed over their prisoners to the Austrians and a round of court-martial proceedings and other punishments began for those Hungarians who had previously served in the Habsburg Army. On 6th October, the anniversary of the revolt in Vienna and the murder of Count Latour, the Austrian Minister of War, thirteen Hungarian generals were executed at Arad. The Hungarian garrison in the fortress of Komárom (Komárno), commanded by General Klapka, was more fortunate; its members were allowed to leave and go abroad on 5th October when the fortress surrendered to the Austrians after several weeks of negotiation.

Nicholas was outraged when he received the news of the executions at Arad and instructed Nesselrode to make his views known to the Austrian government. He was particularly angry that the Austrians had executed generals who had surrendered to him and had been handed back to the Austrians with a recommendation for clemency. Paskevich and Rüdiger were equally angry and Paskevich even talked of handing back the Austrian decorations he had received. When Haynau was attacked by a hostile crowd during a visit to London the following year, the Russians in Warsaw could not conceal their delight at what had happened to the Austrian general who had executed the prisoners-of-war of his allies.<sup>28</sup> For Görgey, however, the harsh treatment meted out by the Austrians

to his fellow-Hungarians was far worse than he had expected. Many years later he was to admit that the wound it caused could never be healed.<sup>29</sup>

Bismarck believed that Görgey should have behaved like Cromwell and dissolved Parliament after Kossuth had dethroned the Habsburgs. Having become military dictator, he should then have tried to make peace with Austria before the Russian Army set foot in Hungary. Although Görgey had little respect for politicians, he was not cast in the mould of the Iron Chancellor. Nicholas, for his part, seems to have believed that the granting of an amnesty would have made it easier for Francis Joseph to deal with the nationality problem in the Habsburg Empire. As usual, he over-estimated the influence that a sovereign could exert on policy, especially when the dominant force in the Austrian government was a person like Schwarzenberg who was determined to teach the Hungarians a lesson. Nevertheless, Nicholas' faith in Francis Joseph remained unshaken by this episode and he continued to support him in the struggle with Prussia for hegemony in Germany in the following year. Only later did he realize the extent of his misjudgement of the nature of his relationship with Francis Joseph.

### **Lord Palmerston and the British Government's Policy of Non-intervention**

One of the reasons which caused Nicholas to intervene in Hungary was the virtual certainty that there would be no opposition from the British government. Despite his liberal principles and a direct appeal from a personal envoy of Kossuth who had been sent to London, Palmerston was neither prepared to recognise the independence of Hungary, nor to oppose the Russian intervention. David Urquhart, who had been dismissed from the British diplomatic service by Palmerston and was a passionate Turcophile and Russophobe, took a great dislike to the Foreign Secretary. When he became a Member of Parliament, he attempted to have Palmerston impeached for high treason, alleging that he was in the pay of the Russians. The charge was ludicrous and the Foreign Secretary had little difficulty in refuting it. A more sophisticated explanation for Palmerston's conduct put forward by some writers, is that he was a hypocrite who secretly favoured the cause of reaction. This charge has been made in recent times by the Hungarian historian of the diplomatic background to the Russian intervention, E. Andics, who has written that, although Palmerston liked to give the impression in public that he was a mortal enemy of Nicholas I, he was, in reality, a supporter of the tsar's counter-revolutionary policy; hence his unwillingness to do anything to help Hungary.<sup>30</sup> In support of this argument much use has been made of a few words spoken by Palmerston to the Russian ambassador in London, Baron Brunnow, at a court function given by Queen Victoria which was attended by members of the diplomatic corps. The words used were: "Finish it off quickly."<sup>31</sup> The true explanation of Palmerston's attitude to the Russian intervention is much more complex and cannot be understood on the basis of a short sentence.

In a speech made in the House of Commons on 1st. March 1848, Palmerston made his famous declaration that Great Britain had no eternal allies and no perpetual enemies. Besides being the champion of justice and right, the most

important task for a British Foreign Secretary was to protect the political and commercial interests of Great Britain.

British commercial and political interests were wide-ranging and the protection of these interests in the Middle East and India inevitably brought Britain into conflict with Russia in Persia and the Ottoman Empire. Palmerston always regarded the Treaty of London of 1841 which finally settled the question of the Straits as one of his greatest diplomatic triumphs, because it would keep Russia in check. When trouble broke out in the Danubian Principalities and Russian troops occupied them during the latter half of 1848, Palmerston declined to recognise the independence of Wallachia, nor did he give any encouragement to Stratford Canning's pleas for some kind of action in support of Turkey. As a former Secretary of State for War he had a keen appreciation of military realities and immediately grasped that the Russian occupation of the Danubian Principalities was closely linked with the troubled situation in Hungary. It was not the first step in another Russian campaign to gain possession of Constantinople. There was nothing that Great Britain could do to prevent it; the only possible course of action was to encourage the Turks to appeal to the other European powers, if the Russians exerted too much pressure on them. Despite the Russian success in renegotiating the terms of its occupation of the Danubian Principalities in April 1849 by the Convention of Balta Liman, Palmerston did not waver from this line of conduct; throughout the campaign in Hungary he exhorted Stratford Canning to urge the Turkish government, whose sympathies lay with Hungary, to remain neutral. Nor did he respond to the pleas of the French government who were perplexed by Palmerston's apparent indifference to the long-term implications of the Russian occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia for the future of the Ottoman Empire.

Although Palmerston was sympathetic to the Polish cause and would have liked Nicholas to restore to Russian Poland the constitution and privileges granted by Alexander I, which were withdrawn after the 1830 revolt, he had no wish to see Russia and Prussia go to war over the future of Prussian Poland. In April 1848 he instructed the British Ambassador in Saint Petersburg to convey his views to Nesselrode, but to add that, despite Britain's sympathy for the Polish cause, the British government would give no support to any attempt made by Polish emigrés to cause trouble in Poland. Apart from Belgium, Great Britain and Russia were the only countries in Europe which had not been affected by the revolutionary upsurge of 1848 and Palmerston had no wish to see this situation altered.<sup>32</sup> As for France, there could be no question of organizing a coalition against her and not recognizing the new government which had replaced that of Louis Philippe, in accordance with the usual British practice of recognizing a regime which was firmly established. Nicholas accepted this and later in the year was content to allow Palmerston to mediate between Denmark and Prussia on the Schleswig-Holstein question, since the Foreign Secretary, like the Tsar, disapproved of Prussia's policy and attempts to gain possession of Danish territory.

Throughout 1848 much of Palmerston's energy was devoted to attempts to assist Austria in solving her problems in Northern Italy. He believed that Austria should give up Lombardy and Venetia and consolidate its position north of the

Alps. As always, he was anxious that France should not become involved in a war with Austria over Italy. Palmerston's efforts to mediate on the Italian question were not appreciated by Schwarzenberg and by the end of 1848 relations between Austria and Great Britain were far from cordial. Queen Victoria, who strongly disapproved of Palmerston's anti-Austrian policy on Italy, was particularly annoyed that no special envoy from the Austrian royal family was sent to London to notify her of the abdication of the Emperor Ferdinand and the accession of Francis Joseph.

In early 1849 Palmerston's attention was again drawn to the Danubian Principalities when Russia used them as a base for a short-lived and unsuccessful incursion into Transylvania in support of Austria. Russia's continuing occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia aroused his latent misgivings about her long-term aims in the Middle East. Accordingly, he directed Lord Ponsonby, the British Ambassador in Vienna, to remind the Austrian government of the threat to her security in the East posed by the presence of the Russian troops in the Danubian Principalities. At the same time Palmerston realised that, for military reasons, Russia would not withdraw its troops until Austria had suppressed the revolt in Hungary. In his view, Austria had no choice but to turn to Russia for assistance, just as a bad swimmer clung to a good one when in difficulty. From the practical point of view there was nothing that Great Britain could do to prevent Russia from sending an army into Hungary; no fair words could outweigh the fine divisions of an autocrat.<sup>33</sup> The sooner a Russian intervention was over and the situation in Hungary was restored, the better for Europe. It was a realistic appraisal of the situation and entirely in line with the Foreign Secretary's general policy of keeping Britain out of a war in Europe. Even although Nesselrode had advised the Tsar that this would be the likely British reaction to an intervention in Hungary, there were those in Russia who found it difficult to believe in the Foreign Secretary's tacit support of the Russian action. One such person was Nicholas' wife who wrote to Princess Lieven in London after the news of Görgey's surrender reached Saint Petersburg, that Palmerston must be upset at the defeat of his "dear Hungarians."<sup>34</sup>

In Hungary Kossuth remained convinced that the prospect of a Russian intervention would cause Britain and France to come to his aid. His two envoys, Ferenc Pulszky in London and László Teleki in Paris, did their best to win support for the Hungarian cause. Although Palmerston was prepared to meet Pulszky privately, there was no question of reversing Britain's official policy, which was fully endorsed by Lord John Russell, the Prime Minister. Nevertheless, there was a good deal of popular support for the Hungarian cause which the government found it difficult to ignore. On 21st, July in a debate in the House of Commons shortly before Parliament adjourned, Palmerston defended the government's policy of non-intervention. While making it clear that he regarded the separation of Hungary from the Habsburg Empire as a great calamity because it would upset the balance of power in Europe, he also expressed the hope that Austria would settle its differences with Hungary when the fighting was over.

At the beginning of August, when it was apparent that Hungary stood little chance of resisting the overwhelming strength of the Austrian and Russian armies, Palmerston sent a long despatch to the British Ambassador in Vienna. In his view,

the disarming of Hungary would not remove the fundamental causes of discontent in that country; the only solution was to restore the constitution. If Austria was not prepared to be conciliatory, Hungary would continue to be a political cancer which would corrode the vital elements of the existence of the Habsburg Empire. Lord Ponsonby was therefore instructed to offer British mediation in an attempt to solve the problem.<sup>35</sup> In an accompanying private letter Palmerston elaborated on these official instructions. He was under no illusion that the ambassador would be faced with a difficult task. The Austrians would resent the British offer of mediation, but the future of Hungary was too important to be ignored by the rest of Europe. Ponsonby should emphasize the danger from Russia which would be the only country to benefit from a further weakening of Austria. Palmerston also informed the ambassador that he would read out his official despatch to Count Colloredo, the Austrian Ambassador in London.<sup>36</sup>

Schwarzenberg, who had been rejected as a possible Austrian Ambassador in London by Palmerston in the '30s, was enraged by the Foreign Secretary's presumption and the British offer of mediation. Nor had he forgotten an earlier clash with Palmerston in 1833 when both had been involved with King William of Holland in attempts to settle the Belgium question. Lord Ponsonby, who had no sympathy for the Hungarian cause and had consistently supported the conservative elements in the Habsburg Empire, was much embarrassed by Palmerston's initiative and the task he had been given. He urged the Foreign Secretary not to persist in his efforts to persuade the Austrian government to adopt a conciliatory policy towards Hungary, since it was clear that they had no intention of doing so. As for the danger from Russia, he reminded Palmerston that the Danubian Principalities were a reason why Austria would always have reservations about allying itself exclusively with Russia. After an interval of several weeks, Schwarzenberg sent a formal reply to the Austrian Ambassador in London rejecting the British offer of mediation. Austria did not presume to offer Great Britain advice about the conduct of its affairs in Canada or Ireland and Britain's advice about Austria's future policy towards Hungary was neither welcome nor necessary.

But that was not the end of the matter. After Görgey's surrender and the joint Austrian and Russian *démarche* to Turkey for the surrender of the Hungarian and Polish refugees, Palmerston yielded to the insistent demands of Stratford Canning for action, in concert with France, in resisting Russian and Austrian pressure on Turkey. Units of the British and French Mediterranean fleets were despatched to Turkish waters to lend support. Palmerston was, in any case, incensed by reports of Austrian brutality in the territories occupied by its troops and was to describe the Austrians as the "greatest brutes that ever called themselves by the undeserved name of civilized men".<sup>37</sup> Europe appeared to be on the brink of war, but Nicholas who was equally incensed by the Austrian execution of the thirteen Hungarian generals at Arad dropped his demands for the Poles and, in due course, the Austrians followed suit. The British and French naval vessels were withdrawn and the crisis came to an end.

Once again Queen Victoria found herself disagreeing with Palmerston about his policy and protested to the Prime Minister about Britain's support for foreign revolutionaries abroad. In a spirited reply to Lord John Russel, Palmerston

defended the Hungarian revolutionaries and compared them to those in Britain who had carried out the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Austria's action in seeking Russian aid to restore order in Hungary could only be compared to England calling on the aid of France to preserve the union with Scotland.<sup>38</sup> Nor did Palmerston spare Ponsonby who had also protested to the Prime Minister about the tone of some of the letters he had received from the Foreign Secretary. In his own reply Palmerston rebuked Ponsonby for his failure to support the British government's policy on the refugee question, while Lord John Russell chided the ambassador for taking „a very Austrian view of the politics of Europe”.<sup>39</sup> Nesselrode, for his part, although relieved that a possible European war had been averted, was convinced that Palmerston's "criminal action" had been carried out in a spirit of revenge as a result of the Russian victory in Hungary.<sup>40</sup>

Palmerston's latent sympathy for Hungary continued to show itself on other occasions. In September 1850 Queen Victoria insisted that Great Britain should apologise to Austria for the hostile reception given to General Haynau when he visited Barclay's Brewery in London. Palmerston threatened to resign but, in the face of the Prime Minister's support for the Queen, he withdrew his threat and sent a suitably apologetic note to the Austrian government. There was further trouble during Kossuth's visit to Great Britain during the autumn of 1851 after his release from exile in Turkey, where, as Palmerston knew, the Austrians had plotted to have him abducted and brought to trial in Austria. As a result of pressure from Queen Victoria and the Prime Minister, Palmerston abandoned his original plan to receive Kossuth who, in his view, was a man who had stood up for the rights of his country. Instead, he received an address from a radical delegation which praised the Foreign Secretary for his services to liberty in general and Kossuth in particular. In the same address the Austrian and Russian monarchs were described as odious and detestable tyrants. Such conduct only served to increase Palmerston's unpopularity with Queen Victoria and at the end of 1851 Palmerston was finally forced to resign as Foreign Secretary, when he recognised Louis Napoleon as Emperor after his *coup d'état* on his own initiative. But it was not long before he was back in office and towards the end of the Crimean War Queen Victoria had no choice but to accept Palmerston as her Prime Minister. Apart from a short break in 1858/1859, he was to remain in that office until his death in 1865.

Palmerston's decision not to oppose the Russian intervention in Hungary was taken on the basis of his judgement that the Habsburg Empire, provided it was reformed, was an essential element in the balance of power in Europe. It is unfortunate that his selfasserting manner and brusque speech earned him many enemies both at home and abroad, so that his advice was often ignored. But there can be no doubt that the British statesman who lost his Tory seat in Parliament because of his support for the Reform Bill of 1832, was sincere in his belief in the cause of constitutional rule rather than absolutism.

### Financial Aspects of the Intervention

When Nicholas agreed to offer Austria military aid in suppressing the Hungarian revolt, his only stipulation was that Austria should pay for the cost of the supplies, transport and medical care which the Russian army would require. This decision that Austria should refund to Russia only a proportion of the actual cost of the intervention was taken against a background of financial difficulties in both countries which has been somewhat neglected in historical writing on the intervention.

In the first half of the nineteenth century both Austria and Russia found it difficult to balance their budgets in the aftermath of the heavy military expenditure both states had incurred during the Napoleonic Wars. Both countries resorted to foreign loans to assist in solving their financial problems, but Russia enjoyed one advantage over Austria. During the reign of Nicholas I there was a huge increase in the production of gold in Russia. Halfway through his reign in 1837 the amount of gold produced had increased from a small amount in 1825 to 402 puds (17669 lbs. worth £900,673); by the end of 1848 the corresponding figures were 1768 puds (63,667 lbs. worth nearly £3 million). A currency reform carried out in 1843 also contributed to a brief period of financial stability which helped Russia to recover from the heavy costs of the wars with Persia, Turkey and Poland incurred at the beginning of Nicholas' reign. By contrast Austria had few reserves of precious metal on which to draw and despite attempts to reduce military expenditure, by the end of 1847 the total foreign debt had reached 1,131 million gulden (about £113 million), while the silver reserves of 20 million gulden (£2 million) covered only one-eighth of the total amount of paper money in circulation which was 160 million gulden (£16 million).

In January 1848, before Europe became engulfed in a wave of revolutions, Metternich decided to turn to Russia for financial assistance. In conditions of great secrecy and unknown to the Austrian *Chargé d'Affaires* in Saint Petersburg, an official from the Austrian Ministry of Finance was sent to Russia to negotiate a loan. At first Nicholas was prepared to give favorable consideration to the Austrian request and at the beginning of March Austria was granted a loan of 6 million silver roubles (about £960,000). However, as a result of the revolutions in Vienna and elsewhere in the Habsburg Empire, the loan was cancelled, before any money was actually sent to Vienna; Nicholas had no intention of lending money to the government of a country which had now become a doubtful ally in the fight against revolution. Besides this, Nicholas was faced with the practical problem of finding extra money to finance the increased military expenditure he had authorized in the aftermath of the disturbances in Western Europe. A request from Denmark for financial assistance in its struggle with Prussia over Schleswig-Holstein was to be rejected a few weeks after the cancellation of the Russian loan to Austria.

The outbreak of revolution in Vienna caused a run on the banks as anxious citizens sought to convert paper money into metal coins. Before long silver coins disappeared from circulation and had to be replaced by paper money. In his speech to the Hungarian Diet in Pozsony (Bratislava) on 3rd March 1848 Kossuth included a demand for the setting up of a separate Hungarian Ministry of Finance

and the following month he became Minister of Finance in the first Hungarian government formed by Count Lajos Batthyány. On assuming office, Kossuth wasted no time in altering the methods of financing Hungarian government expenditure which had previously existed. His most important act was an attempt to create by means of a state loan and other methods a reserve of 5 million forints in bullion on the basis of which he could issue Hungarian banknotes to the value of 12 1/2 million forints. The authorities in Vienna were opposed to the issue of separate Hungarian bank-notes, but at the beginning of August Archduke Stephen, the Hungarian Palatine, was persuaded to agree to the issue of 1 and 2 forint notes which the Hungarians were now able to print on their own press, independently of Vienna. (1 and 2 gulden notes had been issued in Vienna on 1st May 1848.) An Austrian attempt to prevent the circulation of the Hungarian notes was quickly followed by Kossuth's decision to ban the use of the Austrian 1 and 2 gulden notes in Hungary. Kossuth then followed up this decision by the first unconstitutional act of the Hungarian government which was the issue of Hungarian 5 forint notes in September, backed by a loan of 61 million forints approved by the Hungarian National Assembly in August, but not ratified either by the Palatine or the Emperor in Vienna. The issue of 10 and 100 forint notes followed shortly afterwards, as well as 15 and 30 pengő (kreuzer) notes in January 1849 to remedy the shortage of copper coins used as small change.

When Schwarzenberg took office at the end of 1848, he soon became aware of the parlous state of Austrian finances and readily agreed that a further attempt should be made to seek a loan from Russia. In a letter sent to Buol-Schauenstein, the newly appointed Austrian Ambassador to Russia, he wrote that if the ambassador were to succeed in obtaining a loan, he would have rendered Austria the greatest service a diplomat could give his country.<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately for the Austrian government, the decision to renew their approach to Russia for financial assistance was made at an inopportune moment. As a result of the increase in military expenditure made in the first half of 1848 Nicholas had been worrying about the 1849 budget for some time. He did not know how he was going to be able to manage and in November he wrote to Paskevich that it was possible that Russia would have to seek a loan abroad.<sup>42</sup>

After arriving in Saint Petersburg, Boul-Schauenstein duly raised the question of a loan during his first audience with the Tsar, but did not meet with an enthusiastic response. Subsequently Nesselrode, who was to act as the ambassador's intermediary in his negotiations with The Russian Ministry of Finance, admitted that Austria's request was badly timed because of Russia's own financial problems. However, the negotiations continued throughout the first weeks of 1849 without any satisfaction for Austria. The Russian Minister of Finance refused to strengthen the silver reserve of the Austrian National Bank by a transfer of silver coins from the Russian reserves. Russia's subsequent offer of a 7 year loan in French government stocks was rejected by Austria. During one audience with Buol-Schauenstein, Nicholas summed up the matter with characteristic bluntness and brevity: "As for money, I can't give any to Austria; I need it too much myself."<sup>43</sup>

When Windischgraetz and the Austrian army entered Hungary and occupied Budapest at the beginning of 1849, they found that the notes issued by Kossuth

were being used throughout the country. In the absence of any clear instructions from Vienna, Windischgraetz had no alternative but to allow his troops to be paid in this money. Eventually the Austrian Minister of Finance decided that the Hungarian 1 and 2 forint notes which had been issued legally with the backing of a bullion reserve could be exchanged for their Austrian equivalents whereas all the other Hungarian notes were declared to be illegal and should be withdrawn from circulation. By this time the metallic reserve of the Hungarian National Bank left behind in Budapest after the Hungarian government and bank-note printing press had moved to Debrecen in January, was transferred to Vienna. The Austrian delay in issuing instructions to Windischgraetz about the Hungarian notes proved to be fatal. As soon as the printing press was reassembled in Debrecen, Kossuth gave orders for more paper money to be printed, but was careful not to exceed the credit which had been voted for this purpose. The country was flooded with more Hungarian notes. It is not surprising that in the period before the Russian intervention, Baron Kübeck, a senior Austrian official sent to Budapest to discuss the Hungarian situation with Windischgraetz in the middle of March 1849, noted gloomily in his diary that Austrian finances were on the brink of a catastrophe.<sup>44</sup>

The Austrian request for a loan from Russia was soon overtaken by the more urgent request for military aid in suppressing the revolt in Hungary. But even in these negotiations, Austria's financial problems played their part. One of the reasons which lay behind Austria's request to Paskevich to despatch General Panyutin's composite division by rail from Cracow to prevent a possible Hungarian attack on Vienna was the fear that the Austrian precious metal reserve of 30 million gulden (£3 million) stored in the capital might fall into the hands of the Hungarians.<sup>45</sup> After Nicholas had agreed to grant military aid, officials from Austria and Russia set to work to draw up an agreement about the division of costs between the two countries. The agreement was signed in Warsaw on 10th June and was ratified by Schwarzenberg in Vienna on 21st June, shortly after the intervention had begun.

Meanwhile Nicholas had to decide how he was to find the extra money needed to finance the intervention in Hungary. There had been a budget deficit of 32 million roubles in 1848, largely as a result of increased military expenditure and a shortfall in revenue caused by a poor harvest, widespread summer fires in the provinces and a serious cholera epidemic. Despite the authorization of extra credit, withdrawals from the precious metal reserves and the sale of gold abroad, Nicholas found himself having to consider raising a loan abroad, as he had done several times earlier in his reign. In June 1849 negotiations began with Baring Brothers in London through their partners Hope & Co. in Amsterdam, but at the beginning of July they were broken off, since it appeared that the Hungarian campaign would soon be over. However, on 22nd August shortly after Görgey's surrender to the Russians, a further 21 million roubles was raised by the issue of a new series of credit notes. The official decree referred to the extra expenditure caused by military operations abroad. By the end of the year it was apparent that the 1849 budget deficit would be even larger than in 1848, since the increase in military expenditure alone was 38 1/2 million roubles more than the original estimate. Accordingly, Nicholas decided to revive the negotiations with Baring

Brothers by requesting a loan of £5 1/2 million (31 million silver roubles) for the completion of the railway from Saint Petersburg to Moscow, the construction of which had begun in 1842. The official decree about the loan was signed on 21st December 1849. A few days later, on 9th January 1850, Baring Brothers received their first notification of the Tsar's decision when a bank official from Saint Petersburg visited them in London and handed over a letter and a copy of the decree. In the face of a threat that the Russian government would go elsewhere in the City, if the loan were not granted, Baring brothers, after consultation with their partners in Amsterdam, acceded to the request.

It was generally believed in liberal circles in Britain that the true purpose of the Russian loan was to finance the cost of the intervention in Hungary, especially as the Russian government never published details of its budget. The Russian historian A. S. Nifontov states this as a fact and asserts on the basis of documents in Russian archives that Nicholas approved the insertion of a false figure for Russian military expenditure (60 1/2 million as opposed to 99 million roubles) in the 1850 budget estimates submitted to the State Council for approval at the end of December 1849. One of the reasons for this decision was a wish to prevent the true size of the 1849 Russian deficit becoming widely known and affecting the loan negotiations which were about to begin the following month.<sup>46</sup> After the loan had been granted, the British Ambassador in Saint Petersburg discussed the matter with the Russian authorities and was assured that the loan had been requested because of an increase in the cost of building the railway compared with the original estimate.<sup>47</sup> In 1851 the railway was completed and opened to the public by Nicholas.

After the wars in Hungary and Italy were over, Austria, like Russia, also found it necessary to raise a loan abroad, since the raising of credit by domestic loans was not sufficient to meet the extra military expenditure incurred during 1848 and 1849. But the immediate problem for the Austrian government was the liquidation of the debt they had incurred in seeking military aid from Russia.

As soon as the fighting was over, Paskevich ordered his own commanders to submit their accounts. The accounts for the 5th Corps which had fought in Transylvania were submitted separately. The Austrians appointed Count Ferenc Zichy, the civil commissioner for Hungary attached to Paskevich, to take charge of the negotiations on their side. Paskevich estimated that the war had cost Russia 10 million roubles. He had not forgotten the length of time that Austria had taken to settle its accounts with Russia after the Napoleonic Wars (they were not settled until 1821) and he hoped that Austria would keep its side of the agreement signed in Warsaw in June. It soon became apparent that Austria would find it difficult to pay off the debt immediately and after much discussion with Zichy, Nicholas finally agreed that Russia would ask Austria to repay 4 1/2 million roubles, of which half a million was the estimated cost of the operations in Transylvania. In the event, the amount of the account submitted to the Austrian government in February 1850 for the Russian operations in Hungary and Galicia was 3,483,236 roubles 96 1/2 kopecks to which the sum of 200,000 roubles was to be added for the operations in Transylvania, making a grand total of 3,683,236 roubles and 96 1/2 kopecks. On 2nd April 1850 a special supplement to the agreement of 10 June 1849 was signed in Warsaw. Under its terms Austria agreed to pay 3 million

roubles in cash in three annual instalments with interest. The balance of 683,236 roubles 96 1/2 kopecks was to be paid in salt from the mines at Bochnia and Wieliczka in Galicia. Thus the debt was not finally settled until 31st July 1853, shortly before the outbreak of the Crimean War.<sup>48</sup>

In fact, the official figure for the extra military expenditure incurred by Russia in 1849 was 24,838,677 roubles (about £ 6 million). Nicholas' decision to reduce this amount to a sum slightly less than 4 million roubles (about £700,000) displayed a degree of generosity which was, to quote the words of the British Consul-General in Warsaw, "all the more deserving of notice, as it is well-known that the Russian available funds are anything but abundant".<sup>49</sup> Count Zichy was delighted with the success of the negotiations and was sent to Saint Petersburg to convey Francis Joseph's personal thanks to the Tsar.<sup>50</sup> But there were others who considered that Nicholas had been foolish to settle for such a small amount. These persons included Paskevich who had warned Nicholas during the negotiations that Austria was displaying ingratitude and was showing reluctance to sign any agreement.

The bitter remarks that were made in Russia during the Crimean War about Austria's ingratitude reflected Russian feelings about the refusal of another Christian country to come to the aid of a country engaged in a war with the Turks. Russian resentment at Austria's conduct on this occasion becomes even more understandable in the light of Nicholas' generosity at the end of the Hungarian campaign and it is not surprising that neither he nor Paskevich ever forgave the Austrians for their behaviour.

### Some Remarks on Sources

Research into the Russian intervention in Hungary inevitably entails the critical evaluation of historical sources in various languages which have been published in various countries. Some of the problems connected with this process will now be examined in further detail.

One of the most useful sources for the actual campaign are the memoirs written by some of the Russian officers who took part in it. A few were published as books, but the majority are to be found in the serious Russian periodicals published in the second half of the 19th century. There was much writing on the War of Independence in the Hungarian press during the same period which included translations into Hungarian of memoirs written by Russian officers. Regrettably much of the material published in periodicals such as "*Vasárnapi Újság*" in the eighties of the last century appears to be lacking in authenticity, since an exhaustive search in the appropriate places has failed to locate the Russian originals from which the translations are said to have been made. One example of this type of material which has been widely used by historians over the years are the memoirs written by Baron Osten-Korff, described as one of Paskevich's adjutants, which was published in "*Vasárnapi Újság*" in 1886. Space does not permit the citing of other examples of similar material which was also published in other periodicals besides "*Vasárnapi Újság*", for example, "*Egyetértés*" and "*Pesti Napló*".<sup>51</sup>

A second problem is the selective editing of official documents before publication. The following example illustrates the problem. As has already been mentioned, the Russians were prepared to subsidize and make use of the Rumanian guerrilla leader, Avram Iancu, in their operations in Transylvania. In a conversation with E. Poujade, the French consul in Bucharest, after the campaign was over, General Lüders, the commander of the Russian 5th Corps, stated that he could not have succeeded without Iancu's assistance. This statement was included in Poujade's official despatch to the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris and in a book he subsequently wrote which drew extensively on his official reports. However, it is omitted from the text of the same despatch published in the great "Humurzaki" collection of documents on the History of Romania.<sup>52</sup>

A third problem arises from the effects of the strict censorship of historical material published in Russia before 1917. One of the most useful sources for the reign of Nicholas I are the memoirs of Baron M. A. Korf, a senior official who, *inter alia*, produced the final version of Nicholas' manifesto on the intervention in Hungary published on 8th May 1849 which was originally drafted by the Tsar himself. These memoirs were carefully censored by Alexander II before publication and appeared in print in the Russian periodical "*Russkaya Starina*" in the years 1899/1900. A Soviet historian who was able to examine the original manuscript material in the '20s reported that it contained many lines or pages which had been blacked out; in addition, many passages were marked with the instruction "not to be printed".<sup>53</sup> The difference between the printed version and the original is clearly demonstrated in the following example:

a) *Version extracted from original*

(Published as footnote on page 72 of A. M. Zaionchkovsky, *Vostochnaya Voyna*, Volume I, Saint Petersburg, 1908.)

"In his views on the method of carrying out military operations the sovereign was a firm opponent of various kinds of illegal military stratagems, such as the bribing of one's enemies and other ruses which were so often tolerated by civilized states and spoke 'with extreme loathing' of a government which preferred to resort to bribery instead of risking cruel bloodshed."

b) *Printed version*

(Published in *Russkaya Starina*, Volume 102, 1900, p. 272)

"The sovereign spoke with extreme loathing of Bem's action and the conduct of the insurgents who had agreed to accept the money offered to them, but approved the instruction of the Austrian government which had preferred to resort to bribery, instead of risking cruel bloodshed."

The above few examples illustrate some of the problems which face the historian seeking to write an objective account of a subject which is as sensitive as the Russian intervention in Hungary. It is clear that the most careful scrutiny is necessary in order to arrive at some understanding of the facts.

### Conclusion

The Russian intervention in Hungary was one of the most significant events that took place during the revolutionary years of 1848 and 1849. Its success had an unfortunate effect on Nicholas who became even more convinced of his own omnipotence and even less willing to listen to argument.<sup>54</sup> This judgement by one of the Tsar's closest advisers, A. S. Menshikov, the Minister of the Navy, is echoed by Lord Bloomfield, the British Ambassador to Russia, who had his first audience with Nicholas on 17th December 1849 after his return from leave in mid-October. (The delay was caused by the refugee crisis in Turkey.) In a private letter to Palmerston sent two days afterwards, the ambassador wrote that the "trial of 1849" had succeeded beyond the Tsar's expectations and that he now believed he could "dictate the law to a great portion of Europe." Nicholas seemed to be completely unaffected by the political changes which had taken place and appeared to be more convinced than ever of the "superiority of absolute government and the irresistibility of his vast power".<sup>55</sup> Despite these words, even Lord Bloomfield seemed over-awed by the sheer size of the Russian army and after receiving a report on it from his French colleague, General de La Moricière, wrote to Palmerston of its great efficiency.<sup>56</sup> The Crimean War was to prove to be a greater test for the Russian army than the eight week campaign in Hungary.

Besides over-estimating his military power, Nicholas also over-estimated his political influence. It was Nicholas' misfortune that he became the ruler of Russia in an age of change, just as Philip II became ruler of Spain in an age of dissolving faith. Nicholas completely failed to understand that ideas could not be kept out of Russia in the age of the railway and the steamship. Nor could he comprehend the nature of a constitutional monarchy and that in the Europe which had emerged after the Napoleonic Wars relations between states could no longer be conducted on the basis of personal relationships between sovereigns, as had been possible in the previous century. The point was made to him by Queen Victoria in a reply she sent to one of the Tsar's personal appeals shortly before the outbreak of the Crimean War;

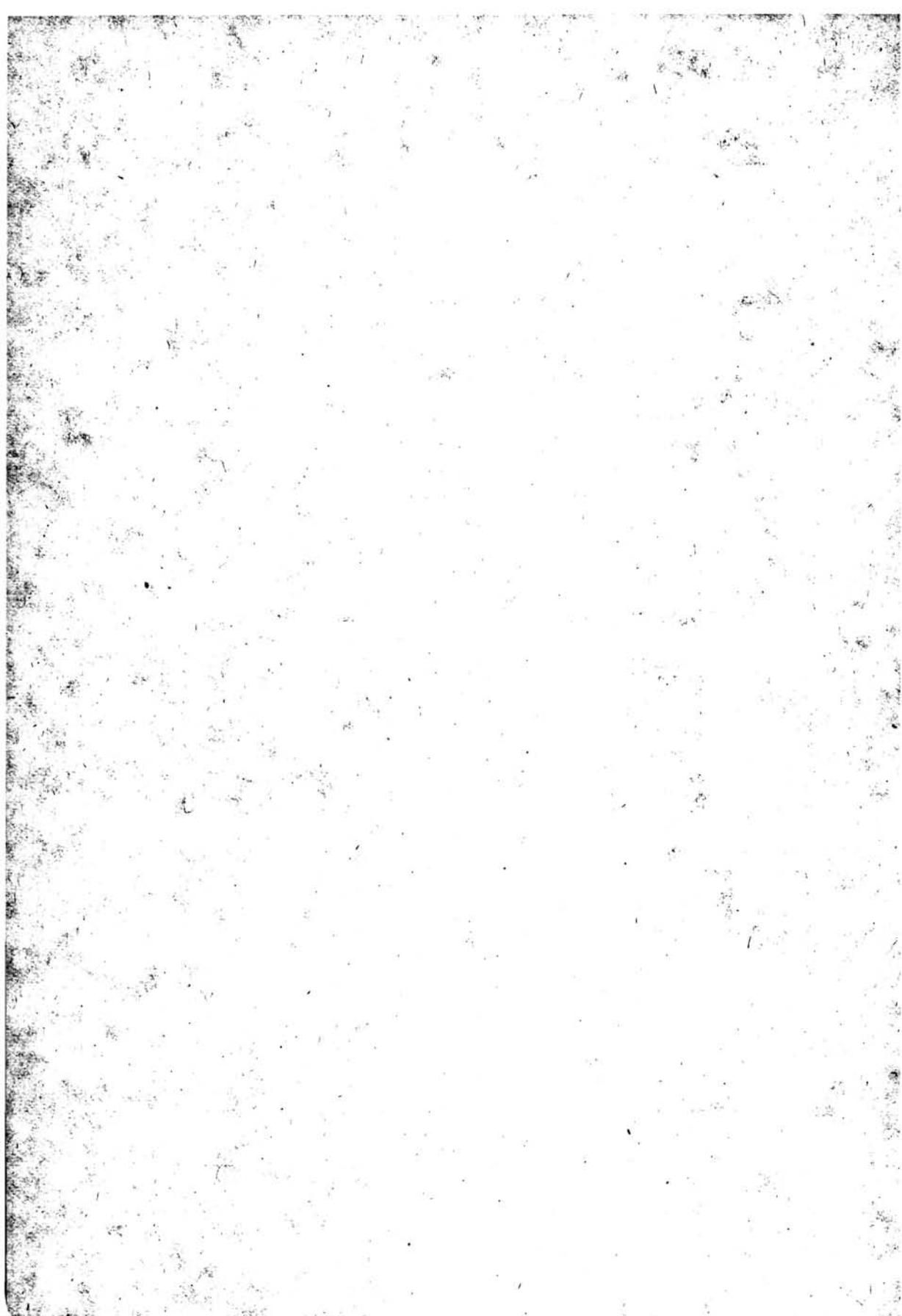
"Whatever the purity of the motives which direct the actions of a sovereign of even the most elevated character, Your Majesty knows that personal qualities are not sufficient in international transactions by which a state binds itself towards another in solemn engagements."<sup>57</sup>

Thus it came about that four years after his intervention in Hungary Nicholas found himself, as Nesselrode had warned him, fighting a war against Great Britain, France, Turkey and Sardinia while his erstwhile allies Austria and Prussia remained neutral. Even more ironically he found himself wondering how he could best exploit any disturbances that might break out in Hungary in the course of the war in order to make Austria carry out his wishes.<sup>58</sup> It was an outcome to his intervention in Hungary which must have seemed utterly remote on the evening of 21st April 1849, as he sat in his study on the first floor of the Grand Palace in the Kremlin, looking out on the river.

## Notes

1. Lord Aberdeen to Princess Lieven, 18 August 1849. (*Aberdeen Papers*, Add. Mss. 43053, Vol. XV.)
2. *Edinburgh Review*, April 1847, Vol. CCXXII, p. 292.
3. Queen Victoria to King Leopold, 11 June 1844. (*Letters of Queen Victoria*, Vol. II, p. 17, London 1908).
4. J. B. Capefigue *Les Diplomates Européens*, Vol. I., p. 357, Paris 1843.
5. *Illustrated London News*, 24 August 1844, p. 118.
6. *Seymour Diaries*, Vol. XV., 17 October 1851 (Add. Mss. 60305) and Seymour to Palmerston, No. 47 of 20 October 1851 (FO 65/395)
7. Nicholas to Paskevich, 25 April 1849. (A. G. Shcherbatov, *General Fel'dmarshal Knyaz' Pakevich, Ego Zhizn' i Deyatel'nost'*, Vol. VI., p. 281, Saint Petersburg 1888.)
8. *Zapiski Barona M. A. Korfa*. (*Russkaya Starina*, 1900, Vol. 102, pp. 40/43.)
9. De Guichen, *Les Grandes Questions Européennes*, Vol. I., p. 79, Paris 1925.
10. E. Bapst, *L'Empereur Nicolas Ier et la Deuxième République Française*, pp. 73/74, Paris 1898.
11. Nesselrode to Metternich, 18 February 1850. (E. Andics *Metternich und die Frage Ungarns*, p. 332, Budapest 1973.)
12. De Guichen, op. cit., p. 414.
13. Buchanan to Palmerston, No. 168 of 10 May 1849. (FO 65/364).
14. E. Bapst, *Les Origines de la Guerre de Crimée*, p. 78, Paris 1892.
15. This is the judgement of the British Ambassador to Russia Sir H. Seymour, writing three years after the event. (Seymour to Malmesbury, No. 44 of 8 April 1852, FO 65/408.)
16. Princess Lieven to Aberdeen, 25 August 1849, quoting a letter from her nephew, K. K. Benckendorff, one of the tsar's A. D. Cs., who was present in Nicholas' study in Warsaw, when the news of Görgey's surrender arrived. (*Aberdeen Papers*, Add. Mss. 43053, Vol. XV.)
17. Bismarck, *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, Vol. I., pp. 217/218, Stuttgart 1898.
18. R. A. Averbukh, *Tsarskaya Interventsiya v Bor'be s Vengerskoy Revolyutsiei*, pp. 166/176, Moscow 1935.
19. A. K. Baumgarten, *Dnevnik 1849 goda*. (*Zhurnal Imperatorskago Russkago Voennago Istoricheskago Obshchestva*, 1901, Vol. 4, pp. 18/19.) This event is also mentioned briefly in the memoirs of Rüdiger's adjutant, F. Grigorov. (See *Russkaya Starina*, 1898, Vol. 94, p. 494.)
20. P. K. Men'kov, *Zapiski*, Vol. III., pp. 261/262, Saint Petersburg 1898.
21. The published parts of Paskevich's letter of 24 July 1849 to Nicholas can be found in Shcherbatov, op. cit., pp. 125/128 and I. Oreus, *Opisanie Vengerskoy Voyny*, Appendices (*Prilozheniya*, pp. 98 and 101. For Nicholas' reply of 28 July 1849, see Shcherbatov, op. cit., pp. 314/317.
22. A. M. Zaiionchkovsky, *Vostochnaya Voyna 1853/1856 gg.*, Vol. I, Footnote p. 72 quoting the unpublished version of the diary of Baron Korf. (Saint Petersburg 1908.) See also C. de Grunwald, *La Vie de Nicolas Ier*, p. 248, Paris 1946, for Nicholas' views on intervening with a secret subvention in the affairs of Switzerland in 1847.
23. An extract from Glinka's letter is quoted in L. Islavin, *Documents: Nicolas Ier et Francois-Joseph*, (*Le Monde Slave*, 1929, pp. 455/456.) There is also a brief reference to the same conversation in the diary of Baron L. P. Nikolai, another of the tsar's A. D. Cs. See *Russkaya Starina*, Vol. XV, 1877, p. 403.
24. A. Görgey, *Kratky Obzor Voennykh Deystviy v Verkhney Vengrii*, (*Voenny Sbornik*, March 1859, p. 242.)
25. E. Hanslick, *Aus Meinem Leben*, Vol. I., p. 180 (Berlin 1894).
26. P. K. Men'kov, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 158.
27. Nicholas to Francis Joseph, private and official letters of 16 August 1849 quoted in L. Steier, *Haynau és Paszkievics*, Vol. I., pp. 408/410, Budapest n.d.
28. Du Plat to Palmerston (Private), 28 September 1850 (FO 65/383.)
29. Hanslick, op. cit., p. 180.
30. E. Andics, *A Habsburgok és Romanovok szövetsége*, p. 156 et seq., Budapest 1961.
31. Brunnow to Nesselrode, 11 May 1849 quoted in R. Averbukh, op. cit., pp. 289/291.

32. Palmerston to Bloomfield, No. 94 of 14 April 1848 (FO/65/344) and Palmerston to Bloomfield (Private) of 4 April and 11 April 1848 (FO 356/29).
33. Palmerston to Ponsonby, No. 59 of 20 March 1849 (FO 7/363) and Palmerston to Lord John Russell, 16 March 1849 and 9 April 1849 (PRO 3/22/7F).
34. Princess Lieven to Aberdeen, 10 September 1849, quoting a letter from the wife of Nicholas I. (*Aberdeen Papers*, Add. Mss. 43053, Vol. XV.)
35. Palmerston to Ponsonby, Nos 102 and 103 of 1 August 1849 (FO 7/364).
36. Palmerston to Ponsonby (Private), 2 August 1849, quoted in T. Kabdebo, *Diplomat in Exile*, pp. 144/147, Columbia UP, NY 1970.
37. Palmerston to Ponsonby (Private), 9 September 1849, quoted in H. C. F. Bell, *Lord Palmerston*, p. 16, London 1966.
38. Palmerston to Russel, 14 September 1849, quoted in Bell, op. cit., pp. 13/14.
39. Palmerston to Ponsonby, 27 November 1849, quoted in E. Ashley, *The Life of H. J. Temple, Viscount Palmerston*, Vol. I., pp. 167/169, London 1876. and S. Walpole, *Life of Lord John Russell*, Vol. II., p. 53 footnote, London 1889.
40. Nesselrode to Vorontsov, 14 November 1849 (*Arkhiv Knyazyza Vorontsova*, Vol. 40, p. 356, Moscow 1895).
41. Schwarzenberg to Buol-Schauenstein (Private), 31 December 1848 (*Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv*, Vienna, PA X 27.).
42. Nicholas to Paskevich, 16 November 1848 (Shcherbatov, op. cit., pp. 261/262).
43. *Diary of Buol-Schauenstein*, Vol. IV., p. 319. (HHStA, Vienna.)
44. *Aus dem Nachlass des Freiherrn Carl Friedrich Kübeck von Kubau*, p. 21, Graz 1960.
45. Du Plat to Palmerston, No. 26 of 10 May 1849. (FO 65/349.)
46. A. S. Nifontov, *Rossiya v 1848 Godu*, p. 39., Moscow 1949.
47. Bloomfield to Palmerston, No. 39 of 30 January 1850 (FO 65/376).
48. V. Aratovsky, *Rasporiazheniya po prodovol'stviyu Deystvuyushchey Armii v 1849 Godu. (Voenny Sbornik, 1872, No. 1, pp. 258/261.)*
49. Du Plat to Palmerston, No. 14 of 17 February 1850 (FO 65/383.)
50. Du Plat to Palmerston, No. 21 of 1 April 1850 (FO 65/383.)
51. The same conclusion about the authenticity of these Hungarian translations is mentioned in the introduction to a selection of Russian memoirs translated into Hungarian which has recently been published in Hungary. (See page 11 of "A Magyarországi hadjárat" 1849, Editor T. Katona, Budapest 1988.) I am grateful to Professor G. F. Cushing for enabling me to see this book.
52. E. Poujade, *Chrétien et Turcs*, p. 305, Paris 1859., and Poujade to Tocqueville, 17 September 1849, quoted on p. 205 of *Documente privitoare la Istoria Românilor*, Vol. XVIII al Colectiei "Hurmuzaki", Bucharest 1916.
53. N. S. Egorova, *Archiv M. A. Korfa (Dela i Di*, pp. 432/436, Petrograd 1920).
54. The unpublished memoirs of General A. E. Zimmermann quoted on p. 181 of P. A. Zaionchkovsky, *Pravitel'stvenny Apparat Samoderzhavnoy Rossii v XIX Veke*, Moscow 1978.
55. Bloomfield to Palmerston (Private), 19 December 1849 (FO 356/29).
56. Bloomfield to Palmerston, No. 65 of 4 March 1850 (FO 65/376).
57. Queen Victoria to Nicholas, 14 November 1853 quoted on p. 334 of F. F. Martens, *Sobranie Traktatov i Konventsii*, Vol. XV, Saint Petersburg, 1909.
58. E. Tarle, *Krymskaya Vopyna*, Vol. I., p. 468, Moscow 1941.



# HERKUNFT EINES PHILOSOPHEN

DIE KINDHEIT VON GEORG LUKÁCS

JÚLIA BENDL

MTA Filozófiai Intézet

Georg Lukács hat sich seit den 1910-er Jahren ständig bemüht, sein Privatleben auf einen sehr engen Kreis zu reduzieren, es von der öffentlichen Tätigkeit zu trennen und sein früheres Leben in den Hintergrund zu drängen. Selbst in den am Ende seines Lebens mit István Eörsi und Erzsébet Vezér geführten Gesprächen<sup>1</sup> erledigt Lukács seine Kindheit und Jugend mit wenigen, meist abschätzigen Andeutungen. Erst nach Lukács' Tod, nach dem Auftauchen des 1917 in Heidelberg zurückgelassenen Koffers, ist es möglich geworden, die persönlichen Beziehungen des jungen Lukács zu erforschen. Da aber Lukács als marxistischer Denker, in manchen Jahren sogar als Parteiideologe bekannt war, hat man oft versucht, das Leben des jungen Lukács rückläufig so zu rekonstruieren daß es dem späteren, marxistischen Lukács entsprach.<sup>2</sup> Und der Philosoph, dem die Tatsachen seines eigenen Lebens anscheinend nie besonders wichtig waren ließ sich dadurch nicht stören. Die Lukács-Forscher haben sich meistens damit begnügt, einige Schemen über die frühen Jahre von Lukács zu wiederholen (über das rebellische Kind, das sich gegen die „Protokolle“ und gegen die materiellen Werte der Familie und der Gesellschaft auflehnt, das schon als „Teenager“ für die gesellschaftliche Gerechtigkeit eintritt usw.). Nach der Entdeckung des 1917 in Heidelberg zurückgelassenen Koffers hat man aufgrund der gefundenen Materialien wieder nur einzelne Tatsachen, unzusammenhängende Episoden aufgegriffen; man hat sich nicht darum gekümmert, ein wirklich zusammenhängendes und möglichst wahrheitsgetreues Bild vom Familienhintergrund und vom Leben des späteren Philosophen zu zeichnen, obwohl eine der wichtigsten Augenzeugen, die Schwester von Georg Lukács, in den Interviews oft erwähnt hat, daß das Bild des späten Lukács über die Familie und über sich selbst der Wahrheit ihrer Meinung nach an mehreren Stellen nicht entspricht.<sup>3</sup> Die im Ausland erschienenen Bücher über den jungen Lukács übernehmen meistens die von Lukács erzählten Episoden als Tatsachen, so z. B. Lee Congdon, Ernst Keller, aber auch István Hermann,<sup>4</sup> der als Lukács-Schüler die abgerundeten Geschichten von der Kindheit des Philosophen aus erster Hand kennt. In den Briefwechselbänden,<sup>5</sup> die Briefe aus den Jahren von 1902 bis 1917 von und an Lukács enthalten, finden wir aus den Jahren vor 1908 insgesamt 7 Briefe (obwohl Lukács schon 1902 als Maturand einige Jugendschriften veröffentlicht hat, und auf anderen Gebieten, z. B. in der Thalia-Gesellschaft in der literarischen Öffentlichkeit auch tätig war). So ist das Bild von Lukács als Kind und als jungem Mann selbst für die Lukács-Forscher unbekannt oder zumindest lückenhaft, und dies birgt ein zusätzliches Problem in sich: die nicht-ungarischen Lukács-Forscher können in diesem ungenauen Bild die

ungarischen Wurzeln des Philosophen nicht entdecken, obwohl die Entwicklung von Lukács bis zu den 1910-er Jahren keinesfalls vom kulturellen Leben in Ungarn zu trennen ist.

In den autobiographischen Aufzeichnungen, die Lukács in den letzten Monaten seines Lebens als Skizzen zu den mit Eörsi und Vezér geführten Gesprächen geschrieben hat, steht über Kindheit und Schule der folgende Satz: „Aus rein jüdischer Familie. Gerade darum: Ideologien des Judentums gar keinen Einfluß auf geistige Entwicklung.“<sup>6</sup> Man muß aber versuchen zu rekonstruieren was diese „rein jüdische Familie“ um die Jahrhundertwende in Ungarn tatsächlich bedeutet hat.

Die Großeltern väterlicherseits wohnten in Szeged (Szegedin), der Großvater hieß Jakob Löwinger, in der Matrikel steht „Deckenmeister“ als Beruf, die Großmutter hieß Julie Pollak. Es ist bisher nicht erforscht, seit wann die Familien Löwinger und Pollak auf ungarischen Gebiet wohnten, wegen der Namen ist es aber wahrscheinlich, daß sie von Nord-Osten her nach Ungarn gekommen sind. Sie gehören aber eindeutig zu jener „ersten Welle“ der jüdischen Einwanderer, die vor dem Ausgleich (1867) nach Ungarn gekommen sind; für diese Einwanderer ist es charakteristisch, daß sie sich sowohl wirtschaftlich als auch politisch in die in Ungarn vorgefundene gesellschaftliche Ordnung einfügen wollten<sup>7</sup> – und dies schien damals auch möglich zu sein. Josef (József) Lukács, damals noch Löwinger, wurde am 16. November 1855 geboren. Er war das jüngste Kind in der Familie; wir wissen von einer Schwester, die später (nach 1879) mit den Löwinger-Eltern, mit der finanziellen Unterstützung von Josef Lukács, nach Pest gezogen ist, und von einem Bruder, der angeblich Arzt in Pest gewesen sein soll. Josef Löwinger mußte schon als 13 jähriges Kind in einer Bank in Szeged arbeiten, da die Eltern nicht wohlhabend waren, und ihn nicht schulen konnten. Maria Lukács erinnert sich, daß der Großvater in seiner Arbeit so anständig war, daß seine Tätigkeit nicht rentabel sein konnte. In Erzählungen heißt es von ihm, daß er nur seinen Namen unterschreiben konnte, und Maria Lukács weiß rückblickend zu berichten, daß es manchmal Anlaß zu spaßhaften Bemerkungen gab, daß der Großvater in der revolutionären Armee von Kossuth gekämpft hatte. Aufgrund der Erinnerungen ist es eindeutig, daß die Großeltern in manchen Formalitäten die Vorschriften der jüdischen Religion befolgt haben, im Hause von Josef Lukács hat man aber nicht einmal die größten jüdischen Feiertage eingehalten.<sup>8</sup>

In den Lukács-Biographien wird immer wieder ein „Talmudist“ in der Verwandtschaft erwähnt. In der Familie erzählte man von ihm, daß er sich um Frau und Kinder nicht, sondern nur um die „Schrift“ gekümmert habe, und Lukács soll mehrmals spaßhaft gesagt haben, daß er die Philosophie bestimmt von diesem „Onkel“ geerbt habe.<sup>9</sup> Jener war aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach der Vater der Großmutter väterlicherseits und hieß Zsigmond (Siegmond) Pollak.<sup>10</sup>

József Löwinger war also in einer Bank angestellt, und neben der Arbeit lernte er Sprachen, Ökonomie und Geschichte. Eine bemerkenswerte Tatsache ist, daß die Schule und das Wissen in den jüdischen Familien im allgemeinen höher geschätzt wurden als in den ungarischen Familien, besonders bei den nicht kapitalisierten Schichten des Mittelstandes.<sup>11</sup> Charakteristisch sind für die Einschätzung dieses „jüdischen Wissensdurstes“ z. B. die Sätze von Péter Ágoston,

geschrieben 1917: „Man könnte sagen, daß die Juden darum vorwärtskommen, weil sie mehr wissen. Das ist wahr, sie werden aber nicht mit diesem Wissen geboren. Wie die Juden die jüdischen Schüler unterstützen, so sollten sie auch die nicht-jüdischen unterstützen, denn wenn sich die Juden in einem Land, wo sie gleichberechtigt sind, ausschließlich unter einander gegenseitig unterstützen, so hat dies unvermeidlich zur Folge, daß die Juden zum Vorteil kommen. Da aber die Juden diesen Vorteil dem aufnehmenden Volk verdanken, das auch für sie einen Staat verwirklicht hat, werden sie in den Augen der aufnehmenden Völker antipathisch, woraus der Antisemitismus folgt.“<sup>12</sup> Ein paar Jahrzehnte nach József Löwingers Jugendzeit wurden also die Juden bereits für ihr eigenes Wissen verantwortlich gemacht, wozu in Ungarn zum Teil die prosperierende Generation von József Löwinger die Grundlage geliefert hat. Er konnte mit 18 Jahren bei einer Pester Bank eine ausgeschriebene Stelle als leitender Korrespondent bekommen, und mit 24 war er schon Direktor einer Pester Bankfiliale, so war er also Anfang der 80-er Jahre bereits ein angesehener Finanzfachmann. Seine Karriere ist für das sich kapitalisierende Ungarn charakteristisch, und es birgt zugleich ein weiteres Problem der Assimilierung der Juden in sich. Die rationelle Denk- und Lebensweise: der in Ungarn lebenden Deutschen und Juden war für die kapitalistische Entwicklung des Landes viel mehr geeignet, da sie von den gesellschaftlichen Voreingenommenheiten viel freier waren als die ungarischen Einwohner des Landes. So konnten (besonders die Juden) auf die Kapitalisierung viel schneller reagieren,<sup>13</sup> und sie nahmen sehr schnell proportionell auffallend viele Stellen in den neuen finanziellen Organisationen, in der sich entwickelnden Industrie und im Handel ein. Einer dieser schnell reagierenden und begabten neuen Finanzfachleute war József Löwinger.

Anfang der 80-er Jahre heiratete József Löwinger Adél Wertheimer, eine früh verwaiste Neuschloß-Enkelin. Die Neuschloß-Familie war in der Holzindustrie und im Großhandel der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie tätig und gehörte zu den vermögendsten Schichten. Die Wertheimer-Familie war wahrscheinlich verwandt mit Bankiersfamilien in Deutschland,<sup>14</sup> und es ist anzunehmen, daß Eduard Wertheimer (1848–1930), Publizist und Historiker, Mitglied der Ungarischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Professor an verschiedenen ungarischen Universitäten, auch zu der Verwandtschaft gehörte, ebenso wie Adolf Wertheimer, Bankdirektor und Kunstsammler. Über die angebliche Wiener Erziehung von Adél Wertheimer haben wir keine zuverlässigen Angaben, obwohl dies die meisten Lukács-Biographien für eine Tatsache halten.<sup>15</sup> Ganz sicher ist soviel, daß sie als zehnjähriges Mädchen schon einen in Budapest wohnenden Vormund hatte.<sup>16</sup> Adél Wertheimer brachte in die Ehe das Vermögen, József Löwinger die Position. Von dem Vermögen der Mutter zeugt auch ein Brief von József Lukács an seinen Sohn aus dem Jahre 1911, wo der Vater über die Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der finanziellen Unterstützung seines Sohnes schreibt.<sup>17</sup>

Adél Wertheimer wurde also in einem grundsätzlich anderen Milieu erzogen als ihr Ehemann. Sie war den Erinnerungen ihrer Kinder gemäß klug und gebildet, sie hatte angeblich auch ein Diplom als Lehrerin, spielte Klavier und schrieb ungarische und deutsche Gelegenheitsgedichte. Ihre Bildung war aber laut der

Einschätzung ihrer Kinder oberflächlich, und sie waren als Kinder oft empört, daß die Mutter auch über solche Bücher sprach und urteilte, die sie nicht kannte.<sup>18</sup> Beide Eltern konnten sowohl Ungarisch als auch Deutsch, es ist aber eindeutig, daß zum Vater eher die ungarische, zu der Mutter eher die deutsche Sprache gehörte. Ein Beweis dafür ist, daß die Briefe des Vaters an seinen Sohn ungarisch geschrieben sind, ausgenommen die während des Weltkrieges verfaßten, die wegen der Zensur zwischen Ungarn und Deutschland deutsch geschrieben waren, damit sie schneller den Adressaten erreichten. Die wenigen Briefe der Mutter sind (bis auf einen) deutsch geschrieben.

Nach dem Ausgleich zwischen Österreich und Ungarn (1867) begann in Ungarn eine verhältnismäßig rasche Kapitalisierung, die aber die starken feudalen Züge der Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft nicht abschaffen konnte. Der Rationalismus der kapitalistischen Wirtschaft bedeutete in Ungarn nicht den Umsturz der feudalen Grundlagen und der feudalen Beziehungen; auf das feudale Fundament wurde nur eine Schicht der kapitalistischen Wirtschaft aufgebaut. Diese feudalen Grundlagen waren mit der traditionellen Aristokratie, mit der adeligen Schicht eng verbunden – so war die ganze Gesellschaft in vieler Hinsicht grundlegend antidemokratisch, nationalistisch und konservativ. Und unter diesen Bedingungen war nicht einmal die demokratisierende Wirkung des Kapitalismus möglich.<sup>19</sup>

In dieser sich nicht gesund und gleichmäßig entwickelnden Gesellschaft ist die Assimilation der nicht-ungarischen Einwohner von Großungarn (etwa 50% der ganzen Bevölkerung) zu einem illusionären Programm geworden. In den Parolen hat man im letzten Drittel des Jahrhunderts die „Magyarisierung“ von Ungarn verkündet (darunter verstand man aber nur eine sprachliche und die Namen betreffende „Magyarisierung“), die Vorbedingung für die wirkliche Assimilation, die tatsächliche Gleichberechtigung der Einwohner des Landes, war aber nicht vorhanden. Die Assimilation der in den Städten wohnenden nicht-ungarischen Einwohner von Ungarn konnte keinerlei Wirkung auf das Fortbestehen oder auf den Zerfall des Landes haben, da die Mehrheit der nicht-ungarischen Einwohner am Rande von Ungarn und auf dem Lande wohnte. Trotzdem wurde die Assimilation nicht für eine einfache Tatsache und private Angelegenheit genommen, es war eine lobenswerte und Anerkennung verdienende patriotische Leistung. Ein wichtiges Problem dieser Assimilation war aber, daß man sich nicht zum ganzen Ungartum assimilieren konnte, sondern nur zu einzelnen Klassen, Institutionen, Schichten, Gruppen usw., da in Ungarn am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts keine einheitliche Wertordnung und auf Gleichberechtigung beruhende Einschätzung des Menschen vorhanden war.<sup>20</sup>

József Löwinger war aber von der Möglichkeit der vollständigen Assimilation überzeugt,<sup>21</sup> und er hat sich berechtigt für einen vollwertigen Ungarn gehalten. Lukács erzählt in Gelebtes Denken eine diesbezügliche Anekdote: „... Mein Vater (sagte) am Anfang der zionistischen Bewegung..., daß er bei Konstitution des jüdischen Staats Konsul in Budapest sein wolle.“<sup>22</sup> Die richtige Interpretation dieser Anekdote (die damals als ein üblicher Witz in Budapest erzählt wurde) ist, daß József Löwinger in Budapest bleiben wollte, selbst wenn ein eigenes Land für die Juden gegründet werden sollte. József Löwinger ließ also seinen Namen der damaligen Propaganda gemäß ungarisieren; er wählte den ziemlich häufigen

ungarischen Namen Lukács,<sup>23</sup> den seine Kinder bereits ausschließlich gebrauchten. 1899 bekam József Lukács von Kaiser Franz Josef den Adelstitel mit dem Zunamen „szegedi“.<sup>24</sup> Über die Welle der Vergabe von Adelstiteln an prominente Juden schreibt McCagg in seinem grundlegenden Buch, daß die Ursache dafür die Politik von Kálmán Tisza war, der die Spannung zwischen den traditionellen Komitaten, den dort wohnenden Adeligen und der zentralen Regierung lösen wollte, indem er eine zentralisierte bürokratische Staatsverwaltung ausbauen und mit ihrer Unterstützung das Parlament in Budapest zum Zentrum des Nationalismus werden ließ.<sup>25</sup> Dies steht mit der Meinung der verschiedenen Historiker im Einklang: Gyula Szekfü schrieb in seinem Buch, daß das Fehlen der moralischen Haltung und Integrität der Juden (und des jüdischen Journalismus) darauf zurückzuführen sei, daß sie im Dienste der Illusionen der ungarischen Adeligen tätig waren.<sup>26</sup> Oszkár Jászi schreibt, daß der Mittelstand als Vasall der Regierung in der ganzen Monarchie bestrebt war, gesellschaftlich höher zu kommen und geadelt zu werden.<sup>27</sup> Zoltán Horváth formuliert es von einem anderen Blickwinkel aus gesehen: der Kapitalismus in Ungarn hat seine historische Rolle, nämlich den Ausbau der bürgerlichen Demokratie, erst vom Proletariat gelernt.<sup>28</sup> Die drei Meinungen von unterschiedlich eingestellten Historikern zeigen alle, daß die neuen Klassen die Sache der bürgerlichen Demokratie nicht entsprechend förderten, sie standen im Dienst der herrschenden adeligen Schicht. Sie hatten immer die Normen der Adeligen vor Augen, und ein Moment dieser Norm war das Adelsprädikat. Wie labil die Einschätzung und Anerkennung der Juden um die Jahrhundertwende war, kann mit vielen Einzelheiten belegt werden. Ágoston formulierte z. B. die Gefahr, daß die Juden wieder zu einer Nationalität würden, wenn sie die hebräische Sprache gebrauchten, (die Juden wurden in Ungarn immer als Angehörige einer Religion registriert), dadurch würde die Anzahl der nicht-ungarischen Einwohner von Ungarn ansteigen, und die Gefahr, die die Nationalitäten für Ungarn bedeuteten, vergrößern. So sollten die in Ungarn – lebenden Juden gegen die neue Welle der jüdischen Einwanderer auftreten – schreibt Ágoston 1917.<sup>29</sup> Die nicht eindeutige Lage der Juden zeigt auch der Zwiespalt, der dadurch entstand, daß die Juden seit 1867 gleichberechtigte Staatsbürger von Ungarn waren, ihre Religion aber erst 1895 anerkannt wurde. Bis dahin konnten sie Angehörige der anderen Religionen nur dann heiraten, wenn sie zu dieser Religion übertraten. Demgegenüber waren die Juden in den Städten, besonders in Budapest, sehr stark vertreten; 1910 waren z. B. mehr als 50% der Großindustriellen, der Großhändler, der leitenden Finanzfachleute, der Ärzte und der Juristen in Budapest Juden – obwohl ihr prozentualer Anteil an der Bevölkerung in Ungarn um 5 betrug.<sup>30</sup> Ágoston schlägt in seinem Buch vor, daß sie nicht so sehr die prosperierenden Berufe wählen sollten, sie sollten sich viel mehr die gesellschaftliche Nützlichkeit vor Augen halten und für das Vaterland leben.<sup>31</sup> Den Juden wurde um die Jahrhundertwende sehr oft vorgeworfen, daß sie die Schlüsselstellen der ungarischen Kultur, der Literatur und des Journalismus an sich gerissen hätten, „ohne die wirklichen Eigentümlichkeiten der ‚ungarischen Seele‘ zu kennen“<sup>32</sup> – dies ist auch ein häufiger Vorwurf gegen die frühen Schriften von Lukács. Ende des 19. Jahrhundert schien es in Ungarn eine einzige Stelle zu geben wo die Assimilation

und die Gleichberechtigung tatsächlich verwirklicht werden konnten: die Freimaurerei. Ab 1882 war auch József Lukács Mitglied dieser Organisation.<sup>33</sup> Franz Alexander faßt über seinen Vater Bernát Alexander schreibend die Grundeinstellung der Generation folgenderweise zusammen: „Die Generation von meinem Vater konnte ihr Leben ohne jedes Zweifeln einer progressiven, aufgeklärten nationalen Kultur widmen, die die geistige Bildung der Staatsbürger fördert... Daran hat sie ohne innere Konflikte geglaubt. Sie hat sich harmonisch in die herrschenden Richtungen des kreativen Jahrhunderts eingefügt, sie hat fest an die Macht der Vernunft und an die grenzenlosen Möglichkeiten des Wissens geglaubt und sie sah mit höchster Verehrung, daß das Individuum sich kreativ ausdrücken kann.“<sup>34</sup> Diese Zeilen hat man über den Professoren geschrieben, der Lukács am Anfang seiner literarischen Karriere viel geholfen hat.

Das Ehepaar József Löwinger/Lukács und Adél Wertheimer hatte vier Kinder, drei Söhne und eine Tochter (1884, 1885, 1886, 1887), der zweite Sohn war György Bernát, geboren am 13. April 1885. Der dritte Sohn ist als kleines Kind gestorben. Die Familie war, den Erinnerungen von Maria und Georg Lukács gemäß, in zwei „Lager“ gespalten: dem einen gehörten die Mutter und der ältere Sohn János an, dem anderen Mária und György und später vielleicht der Vater.<sup>35</sup> Als die Kinder klein waren, hatte der Vater keine Zeit gehabt, sich mit den Kindern zu beschäftigen, und dies war damals auch nicht üblich. Die Erziehung der kleinen Kinder war bei den wohlhabenden Familien die Aufgabe der Mutter, der Amme, des Kindermädchens und des Hauslehrers. Lukács erinnert sich im späten Interview, daß das Leben der Familie und auch der Kinder vom Protokoll bestimmt war.<sup>36</sup> Ein Teil des Protokolls war damals auch die Religion, die bei den wohlhabenden jüdischen Familien zu dieser Zeit keine tatsächliche Rolle mehr gespielt hat: „gesellschaftliche Teilnahme an Heirat, Begräbnis etc. von Bekannten: Teilnahme an Zeremonien. Da selbst auf das Erlernen des Hebräischen kein Gewicht gelegt, für Kind diese ohne jeden Inhalt, rein, protokollarisch‘ (Hut in Kirche, verlernt, daß dort gesprochene oder gesungene Texte überhaupt einen Sinn haben können). Damit Einordnen der Religion in normales gesellschaftliches Leben...“<sup>37</sup> In religiöser Hinsicht scheint für Lukács’ Entwicklung auch die Tatsache nicht von Bedeutung zu sein, daß einer der Hauslehrer bei der Lukács-Familie der Sohn eines Rabbiners war, der Bruder von Simon Hevesi, des späteren Rabbiners in der zentralen Synagoge in Budapest.<sup>38</sup> Dieser Hauslehrer (später Advokat) war Illés Handler, der Lukács nach dem Abitur auf die Reise nach Skandinavien begleitet hat.<sup>39</sup>

Aus den Interviews und Erinnerungen bekommt man ein Bild von Georg Lukács, das ein verhältnismäßig revoltierendes Kind zeigt, das die Formalitäten und Gebundenheiten, die es für sinnlos hält, schwer duldet. Georg Lukács erinnert sich, daß er vor allem gegen die Mutter einen Partisanenkrieg geführt hat,<sup>40</sup> seine Schwester erwähnt aber öfters, daß sich Lukács in dieser Hinsicht nicht immer richtig erinnert. Der oft erwähnte Unterschied zwischen den Mitgliedern der Familie, der in Lukács’ Erinnerung sogar eine Spaltung ist, kann wahrscheinlich zum Teil auf die unterschiedliche Erziehung der Eltern zurückgeführt werden. Die Mutter hatte viel mehr an Konventionen mit sich gebracht, und darin war ihr der ältere Sohn János gefolgt.<sup>41</sup> Der jüngere Sohn

und die Tochter haben, besonders später, als junge Erwachsene, die Einstellung des Vaters geschätzt, der laut der Erinnerungen nie vergessen hatte, daß er einmal arm gewesen war<sup>42</sup> (dementsprechend unterstützte er zahllose Freunde, Bekannte und Kollegen seines Sohnes György und seiner Tochter, aber auch Unbekannte, und seine persönliche Sympathie oder politische Überzeugung hat ihn dabei nicht beeinflußt. Er organisierte die finanzielle Unterstützung manchmal so, daß der Unterstützte nicht erfuhr, woher das Geld kam).<sup>43</sup> Eine wichtige Ursache der Meinungsverschiedenheit zwischen der Mutter und dem jüngeren Sohn war sicherlich die Überzeugung der Mutter, ihr älterer Sohn sei der Begabtere.<sup>44</sup> Dies kann anhand der Schulergebnisse der Kinder leicht bezweifelt werden. Die Brüder hatten dieselbe Schule besucht, so konnte die tatsächliche Leistung leicht verglichen werden,<sup>45</sup> dies überzeugte aber anscheinend die Mutter nicht.

Eine anekdotische Szene, die Lukács oft erzählt hat, ist auch für das ganze spätere Leben des Philosophen charakteristisch; in Gelebtes Denken steht es wie folgt: „Gegen meine Mutter führte ich einen Partisanenkrieg. Meine Mutter war nämlich streng mit uns. In der Wohnung gab es eine Holzkammer, eine Dunkelkammer. Es gehörte zu den Strafen meiner Mutter, daß sie uns dort einsperrte, bis wir um Verzeihung baten. Meine Geschwister baten auch sofort um Verzeihung, während ich scharf differenzierte. Wenn sie mich morgens um zehn einsperrte, dann bat ich fünf Minuten nach zehn um Verzeihung, und alles war in Ordnung. Mein Vater kam um halb zwei nach Hause. Meine Mutter vermied es nach Möglichkeit, daß es bei der Ankunft meines Vaters Spannungen gab. Dementsprechend hätte ich um nichts in der Welt um Verzeihung gebeten, wenn ich nach ein Uhr eingesperrt wurde, weil ich wußte, daß ich fünf Minuten vor halb zwei auch herausgelassen werden würde, ohne um Verzeihung gebeten zu haben.“<sup>46</sup> Ähnlich lautet die Zusammenfassung von Lukács über diese Frage in den biographischen Aufzeichnungen: „Widerstand vorher – aber Unterwerfung mit Bewußtsein: geht mich nicht an; wenn ich will, daß die Erwachsenen mich in Ruhe lassen: Unterwerfung mit dem Gefühl: die ganze Sache hat keinen Sinn...“<sup>47</sup>

Die Lukács-Kinder hat man – dem gesellschaftlichen Status der Eltern entsprechend – erst nach den ersten vier Klassen in eine öffentliche Schule geschickt, so hat Lukács erst im evangelisch-lutherischen Gymnasium eine größere Gemeinschaft kennengelernt. Das kulturelle Niveau der Lukács-Familie forderte, daß die Kinder mehrere Sprachen erlernen sollten. Bei der Immatrikulation ins erste Gymnasium hatte man auch die Sprachkenntnisse der Kinder registriert. Beim 9 1/2 Jahre alten György Lukács, Sohn des Bankdirektors József Lukács, steht Ungarisch, Deutsch und Englisch, und in den Matrikeln der achten Klasse auch Französisch.<sup>48</sup> Es ist nicht geklärt, wie man die tatsächlichen Sprachkenntnisse geprüft hat.

Das evangelisch-lutherische Gymnasium am Rande der Innenstadt entsprach dem gesellschaftlichen Status der Eltern; in dieser Schule war um die Jahrhundertwende immer etwa die Hälfte der Schüler der Religion nach Israelit,<sup>49</sup> Lukács gehörte in der Schule zu den reichsten, zu den sogenannten „Leopoldstädter“ Kindern, obwohl die Familie nie in der Leopoldstadt gewohnt hat. Um die Jahrhundertwende war ein neues Wohnviertel außerhalb der

Ringstraße gebaut worden, und viele wohlhabende jüdische Familien sind aus der Leopoldstadt hierher gezogen. Die Lukács-Familie hatte mehrere Häuser in dieser Gegend. Die Benennung „Leopoldstädter“ bezeichnet hier also nicht den Stadtteil, sondern den gesellschaftlichen Status. Lukács sagt darüber in Gelebtes Denken folgendes: „Am evangelischen Gymnasium war die Leopoldstadt die Aristokratie. Ich spielte dort nie als Jude eine Rolle, sondern als Leopoldstädter Jüngling, der an dieser Schule als Aristokrat galt. Folglich tauchten die Fragen des Judentums nicht auf. Daß ich Jude bin, wußte ich immer, doch hatte das niemals wesentlichen Einfluß auf meine Entwicklung.“<sup>50</sup> Lukács hat sich über das evangelisch-lutherische Gymnasium immer ein wenig abschätzend geäußert. Zusammenfassend steht in den Aufzeichnungen: „Alles in allem: Gymnasium-Zeit zwischen Kindheit und bereits auf Produktion eingestellter Jugend eher bloß ausgefüllt als wesentlich und konkret gefördert.“<sup>51</sup> Lukács vergißt immer zu erwähnen, daß die Grundlagen seiner späteren Bildung, seiner umfassenden Belesenheit doch teilweise in der Schule gelegt worden waren, sowohl im Unterricht als auch im literarischen Kreis der Schüler, wo Lukács seine ersten Aufsätze über selbstgewählte Themen geschrieben hat. Die andere Quelle der Bildung war für Lukács die Bibliothek des Vaters, der sich nicht nur für finanzielle und wirtschaftliche Fragen interessierte. Über die Einrichtung und Stimmung des Lukács-Hauses kennen wir eine spätere Beschreibung, aufgrund von Erlebnissen aus den zwanziger Jahren, von Albert Gyergyai.<sup>52</sup> Er war Hauslehrer neben den Kindern von Mária Lukács, die nach dem Tode der Mutter (1917) mit ihrem Vater auf dem Gellert-Berg gewohnt hat. Leider steht das Haus nicht mehr, nach dem Tod von József Lukács hat es die Tochter verkauft, und im zweiten Weltkrieg wurde es vollständig vernichtet. Die Erinnerungen beschreiben die wertvollen Bilder, die József Lukács von lebenden ungarischen Künstlern gekauft hatte, da nur sie eine finanzielle Unterstützung benötigten. Das Haus hatte manche berühmte Gäste und Bewohner. Nach 1919 wohnte dort Béla Bartók mehr als ein Jahr lang, wahrscheinlich im Bewußtsein, daß er dem alten Lukács eine Gefälligkeit tat.<sup>53</sup> Ern Dohnányi war Ende der 1910-er Jahre und auch später ständiger Gast des Hauses, wo oft Musik gespielt wurde, da Mária Lukács eine begabte Cellistin war, die aber nie eine selbständige Künstlerkarriere gewagt hat. Obwohl Mária Lukács als Studentin der Musikakademie in Budapest mit fast allen bedeutenden Musikern der Zeit befreundet war, hat Lukács keine nähere Beziehung zu den Musikern gehabt.

Einer der berühmtesten Gäste des Lukács-Hauses war Thomas Mann, der in den 20-er Jahren mehrmals József Lukács besucht hatte, bei einem Aufenthalt in Budapest hat er auch beim „guten, alten, weisen Herrn von Lukács“<sup>54</sup> gewohnt. In einem Brief an Dr. Seipel schreibt Thomas Mann: „Ich war in früheren Jahren in Budapest wiederholt in seines (Lukács') Vaters Hause zu Gast und denke, während ich Ihnen schreibe, an das stolze und glückliche Lächeln des kürzlich verstorbenen alten Herrn, wenn man mit Achtung von den hohen Geistesgaben des Sohnes sprach.“<sup>55</sup>

Die Eltern haben sich nicht nur um die geistige, sondern auch um die körperliche Erziehung der Kinder gekümmert. Die rückwärts projizierten Bilder vom immer lesenden aber körperlich und gesundheitlich schwachen Kind scheinen nicht berechtigt zu sein. Lukács erzählt ja selber, daß , ...ich nach-

mittags um halb vier bis dreiviertel vier meine Hausaufgaben fertig hatte und Fahrrad fahren ging, und mein Bruder, wenn ich gegen sieben Uhr nach Hause kam, immer noch lernte.“<sup>56</sup> Wenn ein Kind um die Jahrhundertwende täglich 3–4 Stunden radfahren konnte, kann man schwer glauben, daß es nicht gesund war. Aus der Schule hat er auch nicht mehr gefehlt als die anderen Kinder.

Der beste Freund von Lukács war in der Kindheit und Jugendzeit Leo Popper, Sohn des namhaften Violoncellisten Dávid Popper. Die zwei Jungen waren gute Freunde, noch bevor die Schwester von Lukács von Dávid Popper unterrichtet wurde. Die Erinnerungen behaupten einstimmig, daß Leo Popper äußerst begabt und vielseitig war. Von der Tiefe dieser Freundschaft und von Poppers Wirkung auf Lukács zeugen neben den im Lukács-Archiv aufbewahrten zahlreichen Briefen aus den Jahren 1908–1911 die Bücher von Lukács. Im Essayband *Die Seele und die Formen* ist die erste Schrift Leo Popper gewidmet, und in der *Ästhetik* gedenkt Lukács auch auf einigen Seiten seines früh verstorbenen Freundes,<sup>57</sup> dessen „Versuche“ neulich auch deutsch erschienen sind.<sup>58</sup> Die äußerst starke Bindung zwischen Lukács und Popper kann auch daraus abgelesen werden, daß Lukács sein bis dahin ungarisch geschriebenes Tagebuch nach dem Tode von Leo Popper (und Irma Seidler) deutsch fortsetzte.<sup>59</sup>

Neben Leo Popper war in den Jahren 1900–1905 Marcell Benedek, Sohn des bedeutendsten ungarischen Märchendichters, Lukács' Freund. Für den Sohn des Bankdirektors war die Unterschiedlichkeit der Benedek-Familie der Leopoldstadt gegenüber von großer Bedeutung. Darüber erzählt Lukács im Interview folgendes: „Auf jeden Fall wurde meine literarische Tätigkeit durch diese Freundschaft außerordentlich begünstigt, und hierbei spielte ein nicht eindeutig literarischer, sondern ein literaturethischer Einfluß, den Elek Benedeks Persönlichkeit auf mich ausübte, eine Rolle. Ich muß hinzufügen, daß ich dem Schriftsteller Elek Benedek niemals etwas abgewinnen konnte, auch damals nicht. Aber auf seine puritanische Art trat Elek Benedek immer für seine eigenen Wahrheiten ein, und zwar im Widerspruch zu einem Milieu, in dem der Erfolg, der durch Kompromisse und auch durch Schlimmeres erreicht wurde, sozusagen einziges Kriterium menschlicher Werte war. Ich kann sagen, weder damals noch später interessierte mich, worum es in dieser Wahrheit ging. Doch die Tatsache an sich, die Tatsache der Parteinahme, hatte zur Folge, daß Elek Benedek als moralische Person in meiner Jugend mit den nachhaltigsten Einfluß auf mich ausübte.“<sup>60</sup> Die Eltern von Elek Benedek wohnten in Kisbácon, in Siebenbürgen, und die Lukács-Kinder, vor allem „Gyuri“, verbrachten dort in den Schulferien öfters einige Wochen. Da Lukács am Leben der Benedek-Familie und der Verwandtschaft tatsächlich teilgenommen hat, ist die erwähnte moralische Wirkung vorstellbar. Lukács wurde wahrscheinlich in diesem Dorf erstmals mit dem ihm völlig fremden Leben der Bauern konfrontiert, der Gast der Benedek-Familie erfuhr aber diese Erlebnisse wahrscheinlich in erheblich gemilderter Form. Aus den Memoiren von Marcell Benedek, in denen er ausführlich über die Beziehung mit Lukács schreibt, und aus den zahlreichen Briefen der beiden ist es eindeutig, daß Georg Lukács als Kind das für sein Alter übliche Leben gelebt hat. Zur Rolle der Benedek-Familie in Lukács' Leben gehört noch, daß die ersten Publikationen des Maturanden Lukács 1902 in der

volkstümlich nationalen Zeitschrift „Magyarság“ von Benedek Elek erschienen sind.<sup>61</sup>

Lukács erwähnt in den Interviews als ein grundsätzliches Moment seiner geistigen Entwicklung ein Buch von Max Nordau,<sup>62</sup> das er als 15 jähriges Kind gefunden hat; darüber sagt er in einem 1966 gegebenen Interview folgendes: „Als liberaler Leser der Neuen Freien Presse besaß mein Vater in der Privatbibliothek zufällig Max Nordaus Entartung. Ich las das Buch, und mir wurde dadurch klar, was äußerste Dekadenz bei Ibsen, Tolstoi, Baudelaire, Swinburne usw. war. Zum Glück zitierte Nordau die Gedichte von Baudelaire, Swinburne und anderen wörtlich. Ich war vollkommen hingerissen und akzeptierte natürlich sofort die bei uns zu Hause geschmähten Tolstoi und Ibsen.“<sup>63</sup> In der etwa 15 Jahre später geschriebenen Aufzeichnungen lautet dasselbe wie folgt: „Erst um das 15-te Jahr: Wendung. Finden Nordaus ‚Entartung‘ in Vaters Bibliothek. Hier mußte ‚nur‘ Umkehrung von 180 Grad stattfinden um zu entdecken: Baudelaire, Verlaine, Swinburne, Zola, Ibsen, Tolstoi als wegweisende Gestalten.“<sup>64</sup>

Diese „Wendung“ verdient die nähere Betrachtung. Nordau war ein charakteristischer Journalist der Jahrhundertwende. In Ungarn aus einer jüdischen Familie geboren, lebte er in Paris, schrieb seine Werke deutsch, und diese erscheinen vor allem in Berlin und Leipzig. Nordau schrieb Theaterstücke, Feuilletons, kultur-kritische Werke über Geschichte usw. – kurz: er sagte über alles seine umfassende, die Zusammenhänge oft klärende oder klären wollende Meinung. Die leitende deutschsprachige Tageszeitung in Ungarn, Pester Lloyd, brachte häufig seine Schriften. Nordau hat die ungarische Sprache nicht verlernt, und hat sich anscheinend auch für manche Fragen der ungarischen Dichtung interessiert.<sup>65</sup> In seinem Buch Entartung gibt er einen Überblick über die ganze Literatur am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts – mit Hilfe von sehr unterschiedlichen Gesichtspunkten. Seine Grundeinstellung scheint soziologisch zu sein. Nordau charakterisiert das sich schnell modernisierende Leben in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts, er sieht manche Folgen des immer schneller werdenden Lebensrhythmus, der sprunghaft steigenden Anzahl der Stadtbewohner und läßt auch die Folgen der explosionsartigen Vermehrung der Informationen nicht außer Acht. Diese an sich modernen Gesichtspunkte sind aber bei Nordau aus ihren Zusammenhängen gerissen und das Ganze ist in eine streng konservative Grundhaltung eingebettet. Trotz der in vielen Momenten richtigen Beurteilung des modernen Lebens hält Nordau die Erscheinungen der modernen Literatur (von den Prä-Raffaeliten an) für Symptome von Krankheiten: der Degeneration und der Neurasthenie.<sup>66</sup> Er stellt die Merkmale dieser Krankheiten fest, welche seiner Meinung nach an den modernen Schriftstellern fast ausnahmslos zu beobachten sind. Die Merkmale der Entartung haben selbstverständlich auch körperliche Parallelen, so ist der Grad der geistigen und seelischen Entartung aufgrund von körperlichen Kennzeichen feststellbar.<sup>67</sup> Nordau erwähnt in seinem Buch mehrmals, daß die modernen künstlerischen Richtungen sich damit rechtfertigen wollen, daß der Evolutionismus und der Positivismus viele Wege vor der möglichen Lösung von wichtigen Fragen der Menschheit verstellt hat, ohne währenddessen manche aufgeworfene Fragen lösen zu können; Nordau ist übrigens der Meinung, daß von der Wissenschaft nie gefordert werden kann, die Menschheit „allwissend und glücklich“ zu machen. Dies können sich nur die

Metaphysik und die Theologie als Aufgabe stellen, da diese grenzenlos Märchen erfinden können.<sup>68</sup> Nordau zählt die bedeutenden Denker des 19. Jahrhunderts auf: Poe, Carlyle, Spencer, Darwin, Comte, C. Bernard, Barthelot, und stellt fest: „eine tollere Narren-Quadrille haben Vorstellungen noch nie in einem zerrütteten Gehirn getanzt.“<sup>69</sup> Und bevor er sowohl die neue Literatur als auch die neuen Denker für wertlos erklärt, stellt er am Anfang seines Buches fest: „Ein Geschichtsabschnitt neigt sich unverkennbar zur Rüste und ein anderer kündigt sich an. Durch alle Überlieferungen geht ein Riß und Morgen scheint nicht an Heute anknüpfen wollen. Das Bestehende wankt und stürzt, man läßt es niedertaumeln, weil man seiner satt ist und nicht glaubt, daß seine Erhaltung eine Anstrengung werth ist. Die Anschauungen, die bisher die Geister beherrscht haben, sind todt oder wie entthronte Könige verjagt; ...sehnsüchtig blickt man nach dem kommenden Neuen aus, ohne indes zu ahnen, aus welcher Richtung es zu erwarten ist und was es sein wird. Im Durcheinander der Gedanken erhofft man von der Kunst Aufschlüsse über die Ordnung, welche dem Wirrwarr folgen soll.“<sup>70</sup> Nordau hält aber die moderne Kunst für nicht geeignet, diese neuen Wege zu zeigen: „Der Schöngeist, dessen einseitig ästhetische Bildung ihn nicht befähigt, den Zusammenhang der Dinge zu verstehen und ihre wirkliche Bedeutung zu erfassen, täuscht sich selbst und die Anderen über seine Unwissenheit mit klingenden Redensarten hinweg und spricht hochmüthig von ‚einem unruhigen Suchen der modernen Seele nach einem neuen Ideal‘, von den ‚reicheren Schwingungen des verfeinerten Nervensystems der Zeitgenossen‘, von den ‚unbekannten Sinneswahrnehmungen des Menschen der Auslese‘.“<sup>71</sup>

Diese Gedanken sind denen des jungen Lukács ähnlich. Er suchte ja in den frühen Schriften ebenfalls den Dichter oder Denker, der den Weg zur ‚Revolution‘ zeigen würde die Revolution bedeutet aber bei Lukács zuerst ausschließlich und noch Mitte der 1910-er Jahre oft eine kulturelle, gedankliche Umwandlung. Nur war er Nordau gegenüber damals der Überzeugung, daß zur Verwirklichung dieser ‚Revolution‘ die Kräfte der Kunst und der Gedanken genügen. Die „Umkehrung von 180 Grad“ scheint eine rückläufige Vereinfachung von Lukács zu sein. Man könnte eher sagen, daß er in Nordaus Buch (nicht nur in den abschätzend zitierten Werken, sondern auch in seinen eigenen Gedanken) solche Elemente gefunden hat, die ihm behilflich waren, die eigenen Aversionen der Welt gegenüber zu formulieren, in der er aufgewachsen ist.

Aufgrund der Tatsachen aus Lukács' Jugend läßt sich vermuten, daß seine Auflehnung gegen die Werte und gegen die Lebensweise der Eltern gar nicht so plötzlich realisiert werden konnte. Lukács hat ja, wie seine Schwester vermutet, nach dem Abitur noch nicht gewußt, was er eigentlich machen sollte, so hat er 1902 die Studien an der juristischen Fakultät in Budapest begonnen. Zu dieser Zeit war dies der selbstverständliche Weg der Jugendlichen, die vermögend genug waren, aber keine eindeutigen Neigungen in eine Richtung aufweisen konnten. Um 1900 betrug die Anzahl der Studenten an der juristischen Fakultät 35004000, und etwa 30% der Studenten waren der Religion nach Israeliten.<sup>72</sup> Auf die Frage, wieso Lukács die Prüfungen in Kolozsvár abgelegt und auch das Diplom dort bekommen hatte, kann nicht mit Bestimmtheit geantwortet werden. Zum einen war dies damals eine ziemlich oft gewählte Form der Studien, es ist aber auch

möglich, daß ihn familiäre Bekanntschaften oder Verwandtschaften dorthin gewiesen haben. Er schloß die Studien mit einem Dokortitel der Staatswissenschaften im Oktober 1906 ab.<sup>73</sup>

Danach verbrachte er fast ein Jahr in Deutschland mit literarischen Studien, deren Grundlegung die praktische Arbeit in der Thalia-Gesellschaft war, nach 1904 und während der Studien an der juristischen Fakultät hat er häufig die philosophische Fakultät besucht, um dort an ästhetischen, literarischen und kunsthistorischen Vorlesungen teilzunehmen. Während der in Deutschland verbrachten Zeit schrieb Lukács seine 1908 mit dem Krisztina – Lukács-Preis gekrönte Arbeit über die Hauptströmungen des modernen Dramas.<sup>74</sup> Die Entscheidung konnte nicht besonders schwer gewesen sein, da insgesamt nur zwei Aufsätze zur Kisfaludy-Gesellschaft eingereicht worden waren.<sup>75</sup>

Nach Abschluß der Universität, als Lukács allen Anzeichen nach noch nicht wußte, was er machen sollte, hat ihm sein Vater empfohlen, Abgeordneter der Tisza-Partei zu werden. Lukács erinnert sich daran, daß er seinen Vater wegen dieses Vorschlags ausgelacht hat.<sup>76</sup> Ein Brief von Mária Lukács an ihren Bruder scheint dies zu bezweifeln. Sie schreibt am 30. Juli 1907: „Über deine Pläne für Herbst hab ich so viel und das gehört, was auch Du selber geschrieben hast. Ich habe nicht gehört, das Du mit Riki (Richard Lessner, Mann von Maria Lukács. Anm. Verf.) gesprochen hast! Er wird sich über die Sachen im Abgeordnetenhaus erkundigen. Er hat dort sehr gute Beziehungen. Ich hoffe, daß hier etwas gelingen wird.“<sup>77</sup>

Lukács nahm im September 1907 die evangelisch-lutherische Religion an,<sup>78</sup> und dies kann mit persönlichen Neigungen nicht genügend erklärt werden – es ist aber eindeutig, daß eine christliche Religion zu dieser Zeit bei allen öffentlichen Karrieren günstiger war. Lukács trat im selben Monat eine Stelle in der Kommerzialbank in Budapest an und er hielt diese Stelle noch im Sommer 1909 aufrecht,<sup>79</sup> obwohl er seit 1907 nicht mehr dort arbeitete. Dies kann wahrscheinlich damit erklärt werden, daß er sich von der angeblich so verabscheuten Lebensweise doch nicht so einfach lösen konnte oder wollte – und den Dokortitel in Ästhetik hat er erst im November 1909 bekommen,<sup>80</sup> so war er als „Literat“ bis dahin nicht vollständig legitimiert.

Lukács wollte sich also als Halbwüchsiger, wie es in diesem Alter oft vorkommt, von der Wertordnung der Eltern lösen, und dabei war ihm anscheinend u. a. das Buch von Nordau behilflich. Ein wichtiger Bestandteil dieser Entfernung kann die Tatsache sein, daß Lukács die Illusion der vollständigen Assimilation – und die damit verbundenen Illusionen der väterlichen Generation bezüglich der ungarischen Gesellschaft – nicht mehr ohne Kritik annehmen konnte. Inzwischen waren ja die tatsächlichen Möglichkeiten der einzelnen Menschen und die wirklichen Tendenzen der Gesellschaft offener geworden. Die scharfen Worte des 80 jährigen Philosophen scheinen aber nicht gerecht zu sein, wenn er erklärt, daß er Elek Benedek im *Widerspruch* zu einem Milieu gewählt hat, „in dem der Erfolg, der durch Kompromisse und auch durch Schlimmeres erreicht wurde, sozusagen das einzige Kriterium menschlicher Werte war“.<sup>81</sup> Obwohl Lukács später, in Gelebtes Denken über die Periode um 1908 mit etwas milderem Worten schreibt („...zu Hause absolute Entfremdung. Vor allem Mutter; fast kein Verkehr, Bruder überhaupt nicht ... Nur Vater und – Peripherie – Schwester“),<sup>82</sup>

muß das Bild der Familie und vor allem des Vaters deutlicher gezeichnet werden, um die Anfänge von Lukács' Karriere, der bis 1911 sozusagen eindeutig ein ungarischer Schriftsteller werden wollte, besser verstehen zu können.

Die Bedeutung von József Lukács besteht nicht nur darin, da er es mit der selbstgeschaffenen Umgebung seinem Sohn finanziell ermöglicht hat, sich bis 1918 vollständig der Kunst und der Wissenschaft zu widmen. Die Enterbung seines zweiten Sohnes nach 1919 hat auch einzig dem Zweck gedient, seinen Erbteil für ihn zu retten; und Lukács hat es nach dem Tode des Vaters tatsächlich von der Schwester bekommen.<sup>83</sup> Als eine Geste der Genugtuung sollen hier einige Sätze aus dem Nekrolog für den Hofrat Josef von Lukács stehen, die in der bedeutendsten deutschsprachigen Tageszeitung von Ungarn am 23. Januar 1928<sup>84</sup> erschienen sind (es ist bemerkenswert, daß die zahlreichen Todesanzeigen der verschiedenen Organisationen, in denen Josef Lukács eine Stelle innehatte, in derselben Zeitung ausnahmslos ungarisch erschienen sind).

„Mit Josef Lukács wird ein Mann zu Grabe getragen, der als Mitarbeiter Siegmund Kornfelds und Adolf Ullmans daran mitgewirkt hat, den ungarischen Banken im In- und Ausland eine Vertrauensstellung zu erringen, die selbst die Ereignisse des Weltkrieges und der Nachkriegsepoche nicht zu erschüttern vermochten.

Aus den engsten Verhältnissen, aus eigener Kraft hat er von der Pike aus seinen Weg gemacht: vom Bankpraktikanten zum Leiter der Anglobank-Filiale, sodann zum Leiter der Bankabteilung der Ungarischen Allgemeinen Creditbank. Mit unermüdlichem Fleiß und peinlicher Gewissenhaftigkeit seine täglichen Obliegenheiten erfüllend, war er stets bemüht, sich die volkswirtschaftlichen Kenntnisse und die allgemeine Bildung anzueignen, deren auch der tüchtige Fachmann nicht entraten kann, wenn er bei der modernen Großbank eine leitende Stellung einnehmen will. Hiebei kam ihm auch die Begabung zustatten, verwickelte juristische Probleme intuitiv zu erfassen, und für seine Ideen die richtigen Konstruktionen zu finden oder verständnisvoll zu übernehmen. All dies gepaart mit einem untrüglichen Gefühl für das, was der Engländer mit ‚fairness‘ – geschäftlicher Reinlichkeit – bezeichnet. ...Überhaupt war er der Überzeugung, daß eine große Bank nicht ein gewöhnliches Privatunternehmen, sondern eine Institution ist, die stets und vor allem die Interessen der Allgemeinheit sich vor Augen zu halten und zu beschützen hat... Vermöge seiner Herzensgüte verstand er es, nicht nur die Achtung, sondern auch die Sympathien und die Anhänglichkeit der Beamten zu erwerben, und als ihn die traurigen Verhältnisse der ersten auf die Sowjetherrschaft folgenden Tage bewogen, in den Ruhestand zu treten, geschah dies zum aufrichtigen Bedauern der Mitarbeiter.

Die Trauer um Josef Lukács geht weit über den Kreis derjenigen hinaus, die geschäftlich mit ihm in Berührung kamen; es trauern um ihn all diejenigen, die so glücklich waren, ihm auch außerhalb des Geschäftes näher zu treten, und deren gibt es eine große Zahl in allen Schichten der besseren Gesellschaft, in erster Linie im Kreise der sogenannten Intellektuellen. Denn der Verblichene hegte reges Interesse für Kunst und Literatur, für volkswirtschaftliche und allgemein-wissenschaftliche Fragen... In seinem vornehmen Heim, dem seit Jahren seine auch als Musikerin hochgebildete Tochter vorstand, verkehrten neben den Leitern der verschiedensten Unternehmungen hervorragende Gelehrte, Dichter,

Künstler, Journalisten, hohe Staatsbeamte, Ärzte und Juristen des In- und Auslandes; er selbst war ein ausgezeichneter und lebenswürdiger Causeur...

Alle, denen es vergönnt war, in den Lebenskreis dieses selten wertvollen Mannes zu treten, werden ihm aufrichtige Hochachtung und ein liebevolles Andenken bewahren.“

Zum Bild von Josef Lukács gehört untrennbar, was er 1909 seinem Sohn geschrieben hat: „Du sagst es selbst, daß ich Dir großzügige Freiheit bei deiner Entwicklung und der Wahl der Entwicklungswege gewähre. Ich tue das bewußt, weil ich Dir grenzenlos vertraue und Dich unendlich liebe – ich will alle Opfer bringen, um Dich groß, anerkannt, berühmt werden zu sehen, es wird mein größtes Glück sein, wenn es über mich heißt, ich sei der Vater von Georg Lukács. Doch eben weil dies so ist, möchte ich Dich vor weiteren Enttäuschungen behüten und sehen, daß Dich bei der Wahl Deiner Gesellschaft und Deiner Freunde das berechnete Selbstbewußtsein und die aristokratische Wahl lenken mögen, die Dir Deine ganze Persönlichkeit, Deine Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft natürlich vorschreiben.“<sup>85</sup>

#### Anmerkungen

1. Lukács, Georg, Gelebtes Denken (G. L. im Gespräch über sein Leben). Hrsg. von István Eörsi. Suhrkamp 1980. S. 35–237; Gelebtes Denken (Autobiographische Aufzeichnungen) S. 239–277.
2. Anscheinend dienen Lukács' eigenhändig verfaßten Lebensläufe demselben Zweck. In den nach 1918 geschriebenen wird seine frühe Tätigkeit immer nur sehr flüchtig erwähnt, z. B.: „Daneben ließ ich einige Bücher ungarisch veröffentlichen“ – Lebenslauf vom 21. März 1953. In: Lukács György, Curriculum vitae. Hrsg. János Ambrus. Magvető Kiadó, Budapest 1982, S. 471–472.
3. Z. B. sagt sie im Gespräch mit Mária Holló, geführt im September 1971 in London, auf deutsch: „Er hat sich in der Alter Sachen zurechtgelegt, in seiner Kindheit, die eigentlich nicht existierten.“ Tonbandaufnahme, Lukács Archiv und Bibliothek, Budapest.
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# MIKLÓS RADNÓTI AND FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN AS READERS OF THE BOOK OF NAHUM

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When, late in 1936 or early in 1937, Miklós Radnóti was asked to furnish, for the then aborning biographical project *Az új Könyvek könyve* (The New Book of Books), an autobiographical statement on his most important readings, he wrote, in part: "Állandó, jobban mondva visszatérő olvasmányaim az utóbbi időben Károli Gáspár Ó- és Újtestamentuma..." ("Constant, that is to say recurrent, readings of mine, in more recent times, have been the Old and New Testaments of Gáspár Károli...").<sup>1</sup> That these readings are not merely "more recent", but that they in fact also reach back to the years of Radnóti's adolescence, is documented by early poems; that his nascent readings in the Károli Bible included prophets, major and minor, is suggested by his early poem *Este, asszony, gyerekekkel a hátán* ("Evening, Woman, Child on Her Back"), where, in line 3, the poet describes himself as coming toward the city, "szegényen, mint régi próféták" ("poor, as the prophets of old").<sup>2</sup> From the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843), whose work Radnóti translated and who influenced the Hungarian poet in significant ways,<sup>3</sup> we find, happily enough, a very specific statement in his early readings in the minor prophets of the Old Testament; presumably in the fall of 1792, Hölderlin writes to his friend at the Tübingen Stift, Christian Ludwig Neuffer:

Ich las neulich im Propheten Nahum; der sagte von den Assyrischen Burgen, u. Vesten, sie seien, wie überreife Feigenbäume, so dass einem die Früchte ins Maul fallen, wenn man sie schüttle. Und ich war scherzhaft genug, es so ganz für mich auch auf mich anzuwenden. Meiner Treu! lieber Bruder! ich glaube, man dürfte nimmer viel schütteln, so stände der junge Baum nakt da mit dürren Zweigen.

(I read recently in the Book of Nahum; he said of the Assyrian towns and fortifications that they are like overripe fig trees, so that the fruit falls into one's mouth when one shakes them. And I was in enough of a jesting mood to take it as if meant for me and to apply it all to myself. Dear brother of my heart! I believe one should never shake too much, else the young tree would stand there naked, with dry branches.)<sup>4</sup>

That such a biblical paraphrase is applicable not only to the person but also to the poet and to his work, seems to urge itself from the outset. And when the poets are not one but two—Radnóti and Hölderlin—applicability looks ripe with promise from a comparative perspective as well. Readers of Radnóti's poetry will recall the importance that the Book of Nahum had for him especially at Bor, specifically for the writing of *Nyolcadik ecloga* ("Eighth Eclogue").<sup>5</sup> We also conjure Hölderlin's last completed Pindaric hymn, "Mnemosyne", with its image of the fig tree at the opening of stanza 3: "Am Feigenbaum ist mein / Achilles

mir gestorben" ("It is at the fig tree / My Achilles died, depriving me").<sup>6</sup> In the work of two great modern European poets, Hölderlin and Radnóti, "Mnemosyne" and "Eighth Eclogue" represent points of supreme poetic fulfillment, as well as a point of affinity between the two. Below I hope to show that the latter is no accident, and that it is prepared on either side by a significant number of poems that concern themselves with prophecy and its fulfillment. Pointing to such fulfillment, poems display common interest in the three major terms of the prophecy in the verse from Nahum: the tree, the individual, and the city (or: community). Limited to a discussion of semantics and only occasionally pointing to matters of form, the paper considers conjunctions of images of the tree and the individual (part I) and of the tree and the community (part II) as significant preliminaries to the role played by tree, person, and city in late prophetic work by either poet (part III).

### I. The Tree and the Individual

Relevance of poetry to prophecy and to the Book of Nahum is our theme: however indirectly, the pertinent image is assumed to contain, optimally, four ingredients: focus on the poetic "I"; an element of prophetic vision; ultimate physical or metaphysical concern; and metaphor or simile, preferably the former. Tree imagery in Miklós Radnóti's poetry is legion; tree-person metaphor occurs in one of his earliest collections, *Újmódi pásztorok éneke* (Song of Modern Shepherds). The first truly complete tree-man metaphor, one that satisfies all four of the above requirements, comes in the closing poem of Radnóti's 1935 collection *Újhold* (New Moon), *Kortárs útlevelére* ("Into a contemporary's Passport"). Its closing stanza reads:

Gondold el! hogyha lázadsz, jövendő  
fiatal koroknak embere hirdet  
s pattogó hittel számot ad életedről;  
számot ad és fiának adja át  
emlékedet, hogy példakép, erős fa  
legyen, melyre rákúszhat a gyöngye növendék!  
(Think it over! if you rebel, the man of those  
coming young ages publishes you abroad, and with  
crackling faith lays down accounting on your life;  
will make accounting, will hand on your memory  
to his son, so that he, as an example, may be a strong  
tree, up which the tender vine may climb!)<sup>8</sup>

It is a complex poem; understanding it requires some background in Radnóti's personal circumstances at the time he wrote it. Its dedicatory inscription to the Szeged Youth Arts College, the activist cultural group to which the poet and most of his close friends belonged at the University he attended<sup>9</sup>—and the date below the poem: 5 February 1934—tell us that these are still school days, although among the last; Radnóti was not to defend his doctoral thesis on the novelist Margit Kaffka (1880–1918) until May of that year.<sup>10</sup> For all that, it is practically a

valedictory address. Its double reference—to the society into which the poet was born and, within it, to the smaller society of his spiritual allies—underscores an imagistic nexus this paper leaves understood: that between the individual and the community. The rhetoric of the poem, which throughout employs the self-addressing second person singular,<sup>11</sup> levels severe judgment on the society of Radnóti's day, but it does this from the point of view of the thinking and aspiring individual, as much ashamed to belong to the larger community as he is proud to belong to, and indirectly to address, the Szeged group:

... sárként kell majd tapadnod orvul  
lábát, ha rádlép, nyalogatni puhán  
s mutatnod a hátad, hogy nyomát viseled  
és hogy mily becses néked ez emlék!  
medália hátadon s az asszonyod  
ott a piacon, délidőn róla dicsekszik.

\*

Ha ezt követed, élhetsz valahogy;  
bólinthatsz meleg ételek fölött  
és az esti csöndben leköpheted magad!

(...you must stick like mud, underhanded,  
softly lick a foot, should it step on you,  
and show your back: oh yes, you bear its mark,  
and how prized a souvenir it is for you!  
it's a medallion on your back, and your woman  
out there at market brags about it at noon, she does.

\*

If you follow this, you can live somehow;  
you can go nodding over hot dishes,  
and in the evening silence you can spit on yourself!<sup>12</sup>

But there is an alternative—the poet can rebel:

Vagy föllázadsz, mindezt ha nem tudod  
és híredet most itt nem hirdetheti  
semmise akkor és legelső fürdőd is  
hiába volt! Mert mocskol e kor. De  
híred jövő, fiatal korokon  
vonul át égi fényeknél fényesebben!

(Or rise up, if you can't bear any of this,  
and nothing can then proclaim your fame  
here, either; and then even your very first bath was  
all in vain! for the age pollutes you. But your  
fame proceeds through future, young ages,  
brighter than all celestial lights!)<sup>13</sup>

This is a manifesto of a clean poetic existence; Dezső Baróti is right to point, as analogue, to the key line in Radnóti's poem *Járkálj csak, halálraítélt!* ("Walk On, Condemned!): "Ó, költő, tisztán élj te most" ("O poet, live a life of purity now"), although he might also have thought of drawing on key lines in such poems as *Montenegrói elégia* ("Montenegro Elegy") and the uncollected *Henri Barbusse meghalt* ("Henri Barbusse Is Dead").<sup>14</sup> But the point is made unforgettably, and

it is precisely here that the tree metaphor becomes productive. Strictly speaking, it does not offer the equation "tree equals poet"; rather, treelike qualities are perceived in a son of a father of a future age, a son whose treehood is nevertheless inspired by the example that the poet had set before him: the father in the poem's concluding stanza "will hand on your memory / to his son, so that he, may be a strong / tree, up which the tender vine may climb!" In this arboreal language the three-dot ellipsis is occupied by text claiming that the son too will do this in order to set an example to others. One additional, fascinating, feature of Radnóti's poem is its concluding word, "növendék," meaning at once "that which grows" (the vine) and "pupil". The translation is unable to catch this engaging pun, but it is of supreme importance for proper understanding of the poem's prophetic content. Just as the images of father and son, poet and son, past tree and future tree suggest and confirm the idea of futurity, so does the teacher-pupil topos do this, as suggested by the tree and the tender vine.

Already as a student, Radnóti is right—his prophecy is ultimately one of victory, even if it implies the death of the individual organism. A very similar theme is adumbrated by Hölderlin in his ode *Rousseau*, written at the end of 1799 and left a draft. The poet addresses the philosopher, dead for over two decades by the date of the poem. "Wie eng begränzt ist unsere Tageszeit" ("How circumscribed the time of our days on earth"), the poet muses in his opening line, and offers, in stanza 5, wisdom applicable to us all:

...der Baum entwächst  
Dem heimatlichen Boden, aber es sinken ihm  
Die liebenden, die jugendlichen  
Arme, und trauernd neigt er sein Haupt.  
(...the tree shoots up,  
Out of the soil of home, but they now droop,  
Those loving ones, of youthful vigor:  
His arms, and, mourning, he bows his head.)<sup>15</sup>

What is stressed is a physical, not a spiritual process. As far as Rousseau himself is concerned, the abundance of life lives in the tree that he was; eternal law, it is couched in the present tense: "...und gegenwärtig, / Wärmend und wirkend, die Frucht entquillt ihm. // Du has gelebt!" ("... and, present, / Warming, doing its good work, the fruit springs from him. // You have lived!")<sup>16</sup> The poet's celebration of Rousseau is a celebration of language. His ongoing life points beyond the universally valid tree metaphor; in his late Pindaric hymn *Der Rhein* ("The Rhine"), Hölderlin honors the French philosopher as a demigod of speech, whose proper metaphor is the river, whose very driving force is the flow of speech. As stanza 10 of "The Rhine" sings it, Rousseau is one to whom it was given:

Zu reden so, dass er aus heiliger Fülle  
Wie der Weingott, thörig göttlich  
Und gesezlos sie die Sprache der Reinsten giebt  
Verständlich den Guten, ...  
(To speak such that out of holy abundance,  
Like the wine god, foolish, divine,  
And lawless, he gives it, language, to the purest,  
To the good, with understanding, ...) <sup>17</sup>

Language is the vehicle of prophecy; poetic metalanguage the means of clarifying its occasion. We must take a step back. When Hölderlin wrote his early elegy *Die Musse* ("Leisure"), it was late in the day for the War of the First Coalition (1793–1797); the presumable dating of the poem, late in 1797, suggests that it may have been written some time after the Treaty of Campo Formio, signed in October of that year. It seems fair to suggest that everyone was tired of war, and that the overall attitude that the poet takes in his poem is one of temporary withdrawal from the tumultuous events of his day, in order to contemplate them in a state of philosophic calm.<sup>18</sup> Out on the meadow, flower, foliage, fish, and birds meet him: "Sorglos schlummert die Brust und es ruhn die strengen Gedanken" ("Carefree, my heart is asleep, and at rest the severest of thoughts now") – this calm sentence forms the poem's opening line. Fish, birds, butterflies, bees keep the poet company, and with quiet logic it comes, the first tree image, which is at the same time a simile uniting tree and poet:

..., da wandl' ich  
Mitten in ihrer Lust; ich steh im friedlichen Felde  
Wie ein liebender Ulmbaum da, und wie Reben und Trauben  
Schlingen sich rund um mich die süßen Spiele des Lebens.

(..., I wander  
Right in the midst of their joy; I stand in a peace-filled meadow  
Just like a love-filled elm tree, and like the vines and the clusters,  
Sweetly the playfulness of life comes winding around me.)<sup>19</sup>

This is valuable leisure, indeed; how does the poet use it? He puts it to almost unparalleled use, by sorting out philosophic thoughts on peace and war. His path leads him back to the busy lives of people. In the distance, in sunlight, he sees the city; majestically it rears, looking as if forged by a maker of armor against the power of the god of war and of men ("Gegen die Macht des Gewittergotts und der Menschen").<sup>20</sup> But soon, in moonlight, the visionary sees ruined cities, hit by the terrible god, "der geheime / Geist der Unruh, der in der Brust der Erd' und der Menschen / Zürnet und gährt" ("the secret / Spirit of restlessness, who in breasts of the earth and of humans / Rages and seethes").<sup>21</sup> This spirit, this god war, rips the cities apart like lambs, works like a volcano, uproots forests, wrecks ships at sea, is yet seen by the poet as a part of the eternal order of nature, erasing not a syllable from the tables of her laws. The poet sees himself as contemplating a spirit "der auch dein Sohn, o Natur, ist / Mit dem Geiste der Ruh' aus Einem Schoose geboren" ("who is also your son, o Nature, / Born of the selfsame womb with the Spirit of peace and of quiet").<sup>22</sup>

Much as this outlook may owe to attitudes toward peace and war entertained by the ancients,<sup>23</sup> it seems very difficult for us to accept today. Two possible means of rapprochement seem promising: to say that Hölderlin's feelings arose from his support for a particular war, a support shared by many of his contemporaries in hopes for a better, more democratic future for the Germany of Hölderlin's time, may be one way. The other is to suggest that this is the German poet's equivalent for the kind of unaccepting acceptance that Radnóti expresses in his *Töredék* ("Fragment"), written on 19 May 1944. Radnóti does

not accept the horrors of his age, less even what the age has made of his fellow humans. But neither does he blame specific individuals:

Oly korban éltem én e földön,  
mikor az ember úgy elaljasult,  
hogy önként, kéjjel ölt, nemcsak parancsra,  
s míg balhitekben hitt s tajtékozott téveteg,  
befonták életét vad kényszerképzetek.  
(I lived on this earth in an age  
when man became so debased  
that he killed on his own, with lust, not just on orders,  
and while holding false beliefs and foaming raving, lost,  
wild obsessions braided, choked off his lot.)<sup>24</sup>

It is a dynamic picture and at the same time a static one; in line 5 of this stanza, there is just the suggestion of the tree, braided, choked by the vine of self-destructive delusions. The image leads us back to Hölderlin's poem, with which we are no more finished than Hölderlin himself is. For there is evidence of awareness on this poet's part that more needs to be said on these natural-political *dioskouroi*, Rest and Unrest; the poet's philosophic calm gives itself away at the poem's end:

Leben! Leben der Welt! du liegst wie ein heiliger Wald da,  
Sprech ich dann, und es nehme die Axt, wer will dich zu ebnen,  
Glücklich wohn' ich in dir.  
(Life! o life of the world! like a hallowed old forest you lie there,  
I then speak; let him take up the axe, whoever would clear you,  
Happy, I dwell in your midst.)<sup>25</sup>

Are we hearing correctly? The resemblance of this passage to the tree motif at the end of *Első ecloga* ("First Eclogue") is almost unbelievable; it is almost as if Hölderlin had read Radnóti. But here is that beautifully courageous simile, which once again certifies the deeper kinship between these two moderns:

*Pásztor:*

Hát te hogy élsz? visszhang jöhet-é szavaidra e korban?

*Költő:*

Ágyudőrej közt? Üszkösödő romok, árva faluk közt?  
Írok azért, s úgy élek e kerge világ közepén, mint  
ott az a tölgy él; tudja, kívágják, s rajta fehérlik  
bár a kereszt, mely jelzi, hogy arra fog irtani holnap  
már a favágó, -várja, de addig is új levelet hajt.

*(Shepherd:*

What about you? can *your* words find any echo in these times?

*Poet:*

Cannon rumbling? in ashen ruins, with villages orphaned?  
Still, I write, and I live in the midst of this mad-dog world, as  
lives that oak: it knows they'll be cutting it down; that white cross  
on it signals: tomorrow the tree men will buzz-saw the region;  
calmly it waits for that fate, yet it sprouts new leaves in the meantime.)<sup>26</sup>

We are in the presence of self-prophecy—what is foretold is the defeat of the individual organism, of the discrete *civitas* of body and liberty that each of us, in life, constitutes. Radnóti saw it coming ever since 20 July 1936, the day on which Radio Granada announced the outbreak of hostilities in Spain. On that day, Radnóti wrote his poem *Istenhegyi kert* (“Garden on Istenhegy”); its fourth stanza reads:

S fiatal férfi te! rád milyen halál vár?  
 bogárnyi zajjal száll golyó feléd,  
 vagy hangos bomba túr a földbe és  
 megtépett hússal hullsz majd szerteszt?  
 (And for you, young man! what kind of death?  
 Will a bullet come flying, with an insect sound,  
 or will a noisy bomb plow into earth,  
 so that, your flesh torn, you will fly about?)<sup>27</sup>

By now we know: Radnóti had his answer in less than eight years from the date of that poem. That a bullet did come flying, hardly with an “insect” sound, is irrelevant to the poetic formulation of the fulfillment of self-prophecy, which came in memorable parts, not all of them involving the image of the tree. We are here thinking, among Radnóti’s repeated premonitions of his own early death throughout the last three collections,<sup>28</sup> of positive prophecies as well: of the promise that his work will survive, in such major lyric statements as *Nyugtalan órán* (“In a Restless Hour”):

...szétszór a szél és – mégis a sziklaszál  
 ha nem ma, – holnap visszadalolja majd,  
 mit néki mondok és megértik  
 nagyranövő fiak és leányok.  
 (...; the winds will scatter you. Yet that cliff...  
 will echo all-tomorrow, if not today—  
 I’m telling it, and sons and daughters  
 growing in stature will understand it.)<sup>29</sup>

and *Sem emlék, sem varázslat* (“Not Memory, Nor Magic”):

szivemben nincs harag már, bosszú nem érdekel,  
 a világ újra épül, –s bár tiltják énekem,  
 az új falak tövében felhangzik majd szavam; ...  
 (...I hold no grudge, no interest in revenge;  
 the world will be rebuilt—and though my work is banned,  
 you’ll hear my word resound at the foot of each new wall; ...)<sup>30</sup>

All of these statements meaningfully lead to the tree metaphor of his *superma dies*. Tibor Melczer is right—the poem *Gyökér* (“Root”) is allegory, an extended metaphor of the life of the tree, as well as of the life of man.<sup>31</sup> Man’s uprooted condition, in death, is one of which Radnóti sang on the occasion of the death of his friend, the poet Mihály Babits (1883–1941); the poem *Csak csont és bőr és fájdalom* (“Only Skin and Bones and Pain”) sings, in stanza 1:

S akár a megtépett, kidőlt fatörzs  
 évgyűrűit mutatja,  
 bevallja ő is gyötrött éveit.  
 (And just as the torn, uprooted tree  
 displays its annual rings,  
 so he too admits to his tormented years.)<sup>32</sup>

What is true of his friend, however, is not true of him. Unnoticed until now, an interesting feature of the poem "Root" tells us all—namely, the fact that all of the poem speaks of the rootedness of man, not merely the closing two stanzas. Moreover, that man is the poet himself. "Gyökér vagyok magam is most" ("I am now a root myself")—masterly metaphor-metonymy communicates the sense of rootedness, of the whole tree, of the whole man. And the end, the fulfillment of the self-prophecy in "First Eclogue", could not come with more force and compelling poetic truth:

Virág voltam, gyökér lettem,  
 súlyos, sötét föld felettem,  
 sorsom elvégeztetett,  
 fűrészsír fejem felett.  
 (Once a flower, I have turned root,  
 heavy, dark earth over hand and foot;  
 fate fulfilled, and all is said,  
 a saw now wails above my head.)<sup>33</sup>

## II. The Tree and the Community

Prophecy, terribly fulfilled on the level of the individual consciousness, comes home to roost to the community with almost syllogistic logic. In the foregoing section we observed that, in the elegy "Leisure", at a crucial point, Hölderlin is by no means finished with his poem; that terribly triumphant image of the axe that may yet level his forest was yet to come. Now, as we return to "Leisure" and to the poems in its immediate vicinity, we note that, so far from being finished with the particular poetic utterance, what Hölderlin is really not finished with is his theme. "Leisure" turns out to be but a prolegomenon to an even more powerful, although shorter poem following on its heels—*Die Völker schliefen, schlummerten...* ("Nations kept silent, slumbered..."). We remember, from the onset of line 29 of "Leisure", the wording "Geist der Unruh"; this formula is repeated verbatim at the end of line 4 of the present poem. Again, the spirit of unrest stirs—and brings us, from the poet as war correspondent, language that precisely mirrors that of verse 3 of chapter 12 of the Book of Nahum:

Der regte sich, wie Feuer, das im Herzen  
 Der Erde gährt, das wie den reifen Obstbaum  
 Die alten Städte schüttelt, das die Berge  
 Zerreißt, und die Eichen hinabschlingt und die Felsen.  
 (It stirred, as does the fire that seethes  
 In earth's heart, that shakes the old cities  
 Like the ripe fruit tree, that tears the mountains  
 Asunder, and hurls down the oaks and the cliffs.)<sup>34</sup>

Now the passage does not specify fig trees, but this omission alone creates no doubts in the mind of Friedrich Beissner, one of Hölderlin's distinguished modern editors, that the crucial passage from chapter 3 of Nahum is being alluded to.<sup>35</sup> This alone would already bring Hölderlin's poem close in spirit to "Eighth Eclogue". Beyond this perhaps logical point of affinity, the detailed imagery of destruction, both in "Leisure" (lines 30–34) and in "Nations kept silent, slumbered..." (lines 5–17), bring these two amazing poems by Hölderlin poetologically close to *Második ecloga* ("Second Eclogue"), *Harmadik ecloga* ("Third Eclogue"), as to "Eighth". Two wars or sets of wars move through the mature lives of these two poets. For Hölderlin, the French Revolution was as distant, and as instigative to poetic production, as was the Spanish Civil War for Radnóti; this is, of course, not to suggest that the two events compare, for the two poets, in moral import. But it is true that neither event touched these two writers physically. Nothing could be further from the facts when we consider the pertinence to Hölderlin's life of the Wars of the First and Second Coalitions, or the force with which the Second World War bore down on and determined Radnóti's career.<sup>36</sup> What seems amazing in either set of poems is that imagery so specifically involved in historic events is as rare, indeed as unlikely in the work of Radnóti as of Hölderlin as the naming of specific war criminals in the work of the former would be unthinkable.

A play-by-play account of horrors is one approach to poetry that is political and at the same time poetologically valid—glancing allusion, another. Radnóti was a master of the latter; indeed a complete inventory of poems that refer to events reported in the news without detailing them would be a long one. One such, short yet powerful poem is *Lapszéli jegyzet Habakuk prófétához* ("Marginal Note to the Prophet Habakuk"). Because of its importance, I would like to quote the text entire:

Városok  
lángoltak,  
robbantak  
a faluk!  
légy velem  
szigorú  
Habakuk!

Kihült már,  
fekete  
a parázs;  
bennem még  
lánggal ég  
a tüzes  
harapás!

Ételem,  
italom  
keserü.  
Kormozz be  
talpig te  
fekete düh!

(Cities  
stood in flames,  
villages  
erupted!  
Be with me,  
strict  
Habakkuk!

Cold now,  
black, the  
cinders;  
within me  
the fiery  
bite  
still embers!

Bitter  
my drink,  
my food.  
Black rage—  
cover me  
head-to-foot  
with soot!)<sup>37</sup>

In Radnóti's oeuvre, specific concerns grow from the soil of recurrently documented general interest. Just as the few tree-person metaphors and similes stand out in the landscape of abundant tree imagery, so in a poetry replete with allusions to the realia of Christian religion—to Christ, Mary, John, the Innocents slain by Herod<sup>38</sup>—three references to and treatments of Old Testament prophecy have commanding eminence: “Marginal Note to the Prophet Habakkuk”, the 19 May 1944 “Fragment”, with its closing allusion to the prophet Isaiah, and “Eighth Eclogue”, the record of the great imaginative encounter between Nahum of Elkosh and the poet. Reading “Marginal Note to the Prophet Habakkuk”, we again wish to consult our Bible; here is chapter 3, verse 17 of the Book of Habakkuk, as Miklós Radnóti read it in the Károli Old Testament:

17. Mert a fügefafa nem fog virágozni, a szőlőkben nem leszén gyümölcs, megcsal az olajfa termése, a szántóföldek sem teremnek eleséget, kivész a juh az akolból, és nem lesz ökör az istállóban.

In the King James Bible, this passage reads:

17. ...the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls...

We are told the how of the prophecy of doom upon a people (see also Habakkuk, chapter 1), but not the why. Radnóti wrote “Marginal Note” in 1937; the burning cities and the exploding villages portrayed in the opening four lines of the poem are those of Spain, attacked by the rightist rebel forces of Franco. A beautifully right correlate to the language of the biblical passage just quoted is offered by

lines 9–12 (stanza 3) of *Hispania, Hispania*, which Radnóti began during his second trip to Paris; the date below the poem is 6 August 1937:

...suhogó, fekete szárnyu háború,  
szomszédból szálló rémület!  
nem vetnek már, nem is aratnak  
és nincsen ott többé szüret.

(O whirring-snapping, black-winged war,  
terror flying from a neighboring land!  
they don't sow any more, there's no more reaping,  
and the vintage is no longer held.)<sup>39</sup>

What we are not told about is the why. Surely liberty-loving Spain did not deserve the horrors visited upon it, as did Habakuk's, people the descent of the Chaldaeans? The parallel is, of course, not valid; Radnóti is not dealing merely in the particulars of history. One way to deal with the twist of prophetic invocation here is to suggest that, as in Hölderlin's view of the fate to which man must submit, in Radnóti's complex of feelings too there is an element of philosophical acceptance. This, as we see in "Fragment", does not mitigate the indictment of man fallen low, nor does it lessen the poet's rage, as expressed in "Marginal Note".

We note that in this poem of rage, nowhere, except by implication, is there reference made to a tree. But does that matter? In its very absence, that image reminds us of the importance of attending, here as elsewhere, to the problem of form. In chapter 18 of my monograph, *The Poetry of Miklós Radnóti*, I point to the importance of perceiving that "Root" is one of the slender hymnic structures in Radnóti's work. It is a lean poem, a poem that is itself a root, a metaphor of its own meaning, reaching upward (plant life) and downward (the human subject).<sup>40</sup> Just so, no direct tree allusion is made in the Habakuk poem, but the poem itself is the tree, and not only the poem, but also the man of whom the poem is a portrait. What the poem is, in fact, is a mirror image of the man. Not the mirroring, the optical problem of left versus right, is important, but rather the totality of portraiture, the dialectic of up versus down. Head to foot, the poetic "I" wishes to be, and comes to be, covered with the soot of rage, a rage not helpless, one that expresses itself, unforgettably, and exerts its influence on all who know how to read poems. The poet's head, the crown of the tree, is there in the very speech act; the foot and the head are together realized as lexical presences in the poem's penultimate line. Rootedness is evident in the erect posture of the man become poem, in the unbent beauty of enraged and outraged living poeticity. The poem, and within it, the bond between tree and man, has become a living metaphor of its own meaning.

Tight metaphor the poem may offer, yet metaphor realized even thus far is not a sufficient translate of the poem's manifestly intended total meaning. For the poem as we have it thus far merely uses the poet within it as an instrument. Indeed the poetic persona constitutes a musical instrument, a high-strung monochord—let us say—on which the epic poet accompanies his dreadful tale. The ballad, the black narrative of those burned cities and exploded villages is the real

substance of the poem, the occasion for the poetic portrait's formal existence. And as the relation of the imploded, prominently unrehearsed, tale of the human community to the initial metaphor of tree and human construct silently becomes the poem's most compelling metaphor, the triune triangle of prophecy closes. The individual presence connects the poem's arboreal being with the community that is its acknowledged subject, and it does this no less convincingly in "Marginal Note on the Prophet Habakuk" than this has already happened in Hölderlin's two closely related poems "Leisure" and "Nations kept silent, slumbered...", as observed above.

Trees, real trees, a whole community of noble oaks are back at the center of attention in one of Hölderlin's mature poems on nature and human community, the Frankfurt hexameter poem *Die Eichbäume* ("The Oak Trees"). Written in late 1795 or early 1796, it is one of Hölderlin's earliest truly mature poems, and one in which he manages effectively to symbolize his liberation from the oppressive influence of Schiller.<sup>41</sup> This would be less worth stressing here, were it not for our theme of community, to which it bears the closest relevance. For it is precisely Schiller, toward whom Hölderlin maintained lifelong ambivalence, and the philosopher Fichte, whose lectures at Jena the poet attended in the fall of 1794, who form the historical background of this tellingly ambivalent poem. "The Oak Trees" is a perfectly foursquare performance: a poem written in dactylic hexameters (maximum number of syllables per line: seventeen), it is seventeen lines long. Let us see what its first eleven lines tell us:

Aus den Gärten komm' ich zu euch, ihr Söhne des Berges!  
 Aus den Gärten, da lebt die Natur geduldig und häuslich,  
 Pfliegend und wieder gepflegt mit dem fleissigen Menschen zusammen.  
 Aber ihr, ihr Herrlichen! steht, wie ein Volk von Titanen  
 In der zahmeren Welt und gehört nur euch und dem Himmel,  
 Der euch nährt' und erzog und der Erde, die euch geboren.  
 Keiner von euch ist noch in die Schule der Menschen gegangen,  
 Und ihr drängt euch fröhlich und frei, aus der kräftigen Wurzel,  
 Unter einander herauf und ergreift, wie der Adler die Beute,  
 Mit gewaltigem Arme den Raum, und gegen die Wolken  
 Ist euch heiter und gross die sonnige Krone gerichtet.  
 (Out of the gardens I'm coming to you, you scions of mountains!  
 Out of the gardens—there, nature resides, with patience, domestic,  
 Caring and cared for in turn, with industrious humans, together.  
 You, though, o splendid ones! you stand like a nation of Titans  
 In a far tamer world, and belong to yourselves and to heaven,  
 who once nourished and reared you and, yes, to the earth who had borne you.  
 Not one among you has yet been a pupil where people attend school,  
 And you, happy and free, now press to the heights from the strong root,  
 Upward among yourselves, and you grasp, like the eagle its live prey,  
 Space with your powerful arms, and in the direction of clouds, your  
 sunfilled crowns point upward with joy, and an aura of greatness.)<sup>42</sup>

"The Oak Trees" is perhaps Hölderlin's first truly original poem; formally as well as thematically, it is a stunning conception. Unparalleled in Hölderlin's own work, it is comparable in Radnóti's oeuvre perhaps only with the late *Zsivajgó pálmafán* ("In a Clamorous Palm Tree"), to which we turn below. Hölderlin

encounters a community of trees—godlike, resembling Titans, they are sufficient unto themselves, and aspire to the divine. One of the key lines in the eleven-line section that we have just quoted is line 7: “Keiner von euch ist noch in die Schule der Menschen gegangen” (“Not one among you has yet been a pupil where people attend school”)—this blessed condition of immunity from the folly of human *Wissenschaft* (here most fittingly rendered: philosophy) is what makes them so admirable to the poet who in his own turn, alas, has very much partaken of that bitter fruit. No major treatment of “The Oak Trees” that I have yet encountered takes note of the very interesting fact that in wording and tone line 7 strongly resembles the following passage from Hölderlin’s novel *Hyperion, oder Der Eremit in Griechenland* (Hyperion, or, The Hermit in Greece):

Ach! wär ich nie in eure Schulen gegangen. Die Wissenschaft, der ich in den Schacht hinunter folgte, von der ich, jugendlich thöricht, die Bestätigung meiner reinen Freude erwartete, die hat mir alles verdorben.

Ich bin bei euch so recht vernünftig geworden, habe gründlich mich unterscheiden gelernt von dem, was mich umgiebt, bin nun vereinzelt mit der schönen Welt, bin so ausgeworfen aus dem Garten der Natur...

(Oh! had I never attended your schools. Philosophy, which I followed down into the mine shaft, from which, in youthful folly, I awaited the confirmation of my pure joy—for me, it has spoiled everything.

I have become so thoroughly reason-bound among you, I have learned so fundamentally to mark myself off from what surrounds me, I am now in a state of loneliness in the midst of the beautiful world, am very much outcast from the garden of nature...)<sup>43</sup>

The point of line 7 of the poem, namely, that the poet regards *Wissenschaft* as the forbidden fruit from which he has now tasted, implies, amazingly enough, yet another tree metaphor, that of the Tree of Knowledge. But the author of “The Oak Trees” hopes to regain his former state of innocence. Notable is the text’s double opener: “Out of the gardens” opens both lines 1 and 2, and the vision of heavenly self-sufficiency, titanic aspiration, and innocence that the poet encounters among the noble grove of oaks, more than rewards him. “Eine Welt ist jeder von euch” (“Each of you makes up a world”), the poet sings in line 12; is it any wonder that, given the right relaxation of social constraints, he would wish to dwell among the trees? He would not envy that forest, “Könnt ich die Knechtschaft nur erdulden” (“Could I but stand that bondage”); and yet, “Fesselte nur nicht mehr ans gesellige Leben das Herz mich, / Das von Liebe nicht lässt, wie gern würd’ ich unter euch wohnen!” (“Were it not that I’m tied to my social life by a heart that / Will not abandon love, how gladly I’d come live among you!”).<sup>44</sup> Only the poet’s love for another human being redeems a society that, as the poem would have it, he would abandon at a moment’s notice for the privilege of joining godlike beings.

Two societies are counterpoised in “The Oak Trees”; the poet sees himself as wishing although unable to choose between a community of humanly godlike presences, and one of humans with souls as wooden as are the bodies of the Titan-like oaks. Two communities, likewise, are envisioned by Radnóti in his late poem “In a Clamorous Palm Tree”, which bears the date 5 April 1944:

Zsivajgó pálmafán  
 ülnék legszívesebben,  
 didergő földi testben  
 kuporgó égi lélek.

Tudós majmok körében  
 ülhetnék fenn a fán  
 és éles hangjuk fényes  
 záporként hullna rám;

tanulnám dallamuk  
 és végül zengenék...

(In a clamorous palm tree  
 I'd like to sit most of all,  
 in a shivering earthly body  
 a crouching skyborn soul.

Up in that tree I'd sit  
 with a circle of learned apes,  
 their cutting voices would fall on me  
 like brilliant rain.

I'd study their melodies  
 and would sing with the crew...)<sup>45</sup>

Hölderlin's ambition is to redeem himself of the error of having eaten of the Tree of Knowledge; Radnóti's, to sit in the Tree of Life. In marked contrast to Hölderlin's tree, however, Radnóti's is very much a tree of philosophic contemplation and calm. We must note that, in Hölderlin's symbolic constructs, reason-bound is not the same as reasonable; nor, in Radnóti's formulation, is being an ape the same as being apelike, not quite human. Prerationality, an issue in both poems, is in fact considered both by Radnóti and by Hölderlin to be a state superior to a state of humanity in which humans have abandoned their birthright to right thinking and wisdom. Sitting in his palm tree, the poet would have time to contemplate that very fundamental difference, in his historic situation, in an age whose inhumanity he would so powerfully limn in "Fragment". As he makes it so clear in the present poem:

...szégyelném magam  
 az emberfaj helyett;

a majmok értenének,  
 bennük még ép az elme,—...  
 (...I'd burn with shame  
 for all humanity;

the apes would understand me,  
 their minds are still in good health.— health...)<sup>46</sup>

And yet, from the point of view of prophecy, it is equally true that, in both visions and both poems, there are not two societies but rather only one. Neither

Hölderlin nor Radnóti ultimately prefer flora or fauna to people; what they envision is a human community in which people do not need to apologize for being human—in which they are nothing less than human. So too the posture of Rousseauistic withdrawal from civilization, the image that closes either poem, the craving to dwell among oak trees or apes, may well be understood, within either poem's prophetic perspective, as an act of return to a presumably better state of human sharing and understanding. So viewed, the two mythical mirrors these poets hold up to those around them also symbolize, to a significant extent, acts of reconciliation. The individual poetic consciousness ultimately makes its peace with the gray of everyday reality, to an extent even with the unspeakable. In the vision of either poet, there can be no life either without real trees or without the tree of mythical consciousness. And ultimately, real peace will come, as Radnóti formulates it in the poem that, in his 1938 collection *Meredek út* (Steep Road), just precedes "First Eclogue" *Himnusz a békéről* ("Peace: A Hymn"): "Mert egyszer béke lesz. // Ó, tarts ki addig lélek védekezz!" ("...for we shall have peace in the end. // Till then, spirit, don't cease—hold out, defend!").<sup>47</sup>

### III. Late Prophecy at Nürtingen and at Bor

Our choice of two poems like "The Oak Trees" and "In a Clamorous Palm Tree" is governed not by insights on relative degree of maturity in either poet at the time of composition,<sup>48</sup> but rather by observations on personal circumstance. The two poems stand, in fact, at approximately homologous positions in the two oeuvres. Circumstance too helps determine what we are free to mean by asserting that both Radnóti and Hölderlin held out and defended their spiritual fortresses to the end. Although the German poet lived to be seventy-three years old, both men may be said to have died young. By young I mean, give or take six months, at thirty-six years of age. At a point in life when Radnóti is executed and buried in a mass grave, Hölderlin is forcibly delivered for psychiatric treatment at the Autenrieth Clinic in Tübingen. His life too appears to break in two; tradition has it that around September of 1806 he went insane.<sup>49</sup> Nearby Nürtingen is where Hölderlin's widowed mother lived; this is where the poet returned after his arrival, on foot, from France in June of 1802. Here, in a burst of late creativity, Hölderlin either drafted or completed a number of his Pindaric free-verse hymns, among them *Der Einzige* ("The Only One"), *Patmos*, *Andenken* ("Remembrance"), and "Mnemosyne". These approximately thirteen poems, along with their variant drafts, are generally accepted to constitute the body of the German poet's late visionary or prophetic poetry.<sup>50</sup> "Mnemosyne", discussed in this closing section, is the last of these, and a strange prophecy it is.

Radnóti's situation was, as we know, very different; for him, the last months of his creative life coincided with the last months of his physical existence. It is fair to assume, therefore, that the pressure of time bore down much harder on him than it did on Hölderlin. Mitigating this pressure, so to speak, are the now well-known facts that at Lager Heidenau and on the road, Radnóti was allowed to write; that while all his other books were impounded, he was left his Bible; and that with the help of the latter, he was enabled to compose prophetic poetry.

And for a poet in Radnóti's straits, prophecy's other hemisphere, memory, looms large indeed. What would the corpus of the Bor poetry have become, had he not been allowed even his Bible? Would we still have "Eighth Eclogue"? I would like to venture a reply in the affirmative. We must recall that at Lager Heidenau, during those half-hour cultural programs on Sunday afternoons, some of the men, Radnóti included, performed prodigious feats of piecing together poems and long passages of drama from memory.<sup>51</sup> The student of the writer in extremis will also do well to remember that neither Radnóti nor Hölderlin was, at the time considered, either a novice or unminful of where, as poets, they were trying to go. Both had university training or its equivalent, and to their late and latest poetry, which they knew constituted their last opportunity as artists, they took all the learning and talent they could marshal during those difficult final months. Their library resources resided within them.

"Eighth Eclogue" is a unique performance, in the stricter sense the only prophecy among the ten poems of the *Bori notesz* (Bor Notebook). Not that it does not contain elements of remembrance, and axiomatically so. It is based on surviving writings, by one of the authors of the Old Testament. As "Poet" himself observes, in line 9: "Ismerem ős dühödöt, mert fennmaradott, amit írtál" ("I know your ancient rage, for your words have survived, and we have them"). But the poems surrounding "Eighth Eclogue" concentrate far more intensively on the past than they do on the future. *A la recherche*, the poem which in the *Bor Notebook* immediately precedes "Eighth Eclogue", seems to be a trend-setter in this respect. It is also true that despite the poet's sense of a demolished past, to the point of his intuition that the Tree of Life is no more (see only the image of the broken plum tree in line 9 of *Erőltetett menet* ["Forced March"]), several major Bor poems contain a glimpse, if not of prophecy, then at least of prediction, a moment's projection into a point of future and hope.<sup>52</sup> Among its neighbors, "Eighth Eclogue" stands out as a poetic design in reverse, in its concentration on prophecy in the strict biblical sense, in its poetic delivery on the promise of the new kingdom of the spirit that is to rise upon the ruins of the old order. Promise and dynamic evangelism are inseparable in this vision; the community of believers is to take to the road, to proclaim abroad that the new order is at hand. In the following lines, "Prophet" extends his invitation to "Poet":

Próféták s költők dühe oly rokon, étek a népnek,  
s innivaló! Élhetne belőle, ki élni akar, míg  
eljön az ország, amit ígért amaz ifju tanítvány,  
rabbi, ki bétöltötte a törvényt és szavainkat.  
Jöjj hirdetni velem, hogy már közelít az az óra,  
már születőben az ország. Hogy mi a célja az Úrnak, ...  
kérdém? lásd az az ország. Útrakelünk, gyere gyűjtsük  
össze a népet...

(Anger of prophets, of poets: they're closely related, and peoples  
find them their food and drink. Those who'll live, could live on it, till that  
kingdom arrived which a certain youthful disciple had promised:  
rabbi, who came and fulfilled our law and the word of the prophets.  
Come, proclaim with me that the hour is close, very close—that  
kingdom is being born—wait! What is God's plan and what is his purpose?  
I once asked, and see: it's that kingdom. We'll take to the road. Let's  
gather the tribe...)<sup>53</sup>

The poet gathers the tribe and, in a summoning of poetic power that transcends discourse, the language of the tribe. To live—that, now, is the supreme task, invested with superior moral significance. Knowing he will die physically, the poet sees to it that he goes on living in his work, as did the Prophet himself in the writings by him that we have. In addition, the survival of the individual consciousness is assured in the survival of a community that understands the ethical and historic sense that the phoenix-like rise of the kingdom of God over the smoldering ruins of the old city makes. And while, here as elsewhere, the poet himself makes sure that we do not take the parallel between Nineveh and Budapest too literally,<sup>54</sup> “Eighth Eclogue” nevertheless constitutes a closely argued use of biblical *auctoritas*, and specifically of one of the prophetic books. In twentieth-century Hungarian poetry, Radnóti’s poem is exemplified probably only by *Jónás könyve* (The Book of Jonah, 1938), by Mihály Babits, Radnóti’s fatherly friend.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, in a linguistic and poetological tour de force, Radnóti, like the angel of Isaiah mentioned in “Eighth Eclogue” (lines 35–38), puts the live coals to Nahum’s mouth and makes him speak in an idiom that to the historical Nahum would have sounded strange indeed—strict Vergilian dactylic hexameters. Behind this reconciliation of pertinent values of biblical and classical antiquity stands, of course, Vergil’s own *Fourth Eclogue*, with its promise of a child and of a new order of the world that has had so many specifically Christian commentators. In any event, we moderns, approaching “Eighth Eclogue” with ears contemporary to us, would never dream of questioning this use of classical prosody as a vehicle for the basso profundo of Hebrew prophecy. Mediaeval Dante and baroque Milton each found their own metaphors for synthesis; surely here too we are encouraged to compare Radnóti’s achievement with that of Hölderlin, one of the great reconcilers of the two traditions in modern times. Christ, Hölderlin’s mediator, stands at the very center of Nahum’s prophecy, as made manifest at the end of “Eighth Eclogue”.<sup>56</sup>

Once again, we are led back to the three terms of prophecy, as defined above; to the tree, the individual, and the community. Where, in “Eighth Eclogue”, do we find the tree? Once again, as in “Marginal Note to the Prophet Habakuk”, the poet’s method is indirect and suggestive. There is, surely and firmly, the great, erect image of the Prophet himself. In the opening three lines of the poem, “Poet” speaks:

Üdvözlég, jól bírod e vad hegyi úton a járást  
szép öregember, szárny emel-é, avagy üldöz az ellen?  
Szárny emel, indulat úz s a szemedből lobban a villám...  
(Greetings! you’re keeping in fine form, walking the mountain’s wild trail,  
handsome old man; is it wings bear you high, or do enemies give chase?  
Wings lift, emotions pursue you, and lightning flashes from both eyes...)<sup>57</sup>

The second tree image, or rather, indirect suggestion of arboreal presence—metaphor-mentonymy, in contrast with the above implied metaphor—comes at the end of “Eighth Eclogue”, where “Prophet” invites his interlocutor to start fashioning walking sticks for the journey:

Vándornak jó társa a bot, nézd, add ide azt ott,  
 az legyen ott az enyém, mert jobb szeretem, ha göcsörtös.  
 (Wanderers find companionship in a walking stick; look:  
 do let that one there be mine; I prefer having one with the deep knots.)<sup>58</sup>

And that tells us a great deal about the context the ongoing context of prophecy. The prophet Nahum prefers the companionship of a knotty stick, being a knotty personality himself. The tree, or any part of it, as a companion to man is a recurrent image in Radnóti's poetry at least since *New Moon*; as examples, we might cite central images in such major poems as *Október, délután* ("October, Afternoon"), *Lomb alatt* ("Under the Bough"), *Törvény* ("Law"), and the title poem *Tajtékos ég* ("Sky with Clouds").<sup>59</sup>

Technically, the tree is missing in "Eighth Eclogue"; it takes an act of interpretation to find it. We may ask the corollary question; what, other than the tree, is left of prophecy in Hölderlin's last Pindaric hymn, "Mnemosyne"? Strictly speaking, there is no biblical prophecy in this enigmatic prophetic-visionary-utterance whatever. If, as we did in our discussion of "Eighth Eclogue", we once again treat the last stanza to be of key significance,<sup>60</sup> we realize that the fig tree image in its opening line is not a biblical reference at all:

Am Feigenbaum ist mein  
 Achilles mir gestorben,  
 Und Ajax liegt  
 An den Grotten der See,  
 An Bächen, benachbart dem Skamandros.  
 (It is at the fig tree  
 My Achilles died, depriving me,  
 And Ajax lies  
 By the grottoes of the sea,  
 Near streams, neighboring the Skamandros.)<sup>61</sup>

We are in the Troad, in the world of Homer. Acknowledging that Hölderlin, alluding to a world of antiquity and myth that interests him, may yet have ringing in his ears that verse from the Book of Nahum that he both paraphrased in a letter and utilized in a poem scarcely a decade before,<sup>62</sup> we suddenly realize that the above two opening lines, locating the tree, Achilles, and the poetic "I" in tightly circumscribed space, deliver tripolar prophecy with strictly orthodox élan. The theme of "Mnemosyne" is a frightening one it is the death of memory of the individual, if not of the race. The theme of death is struck by the poet as in the quotation above, "Und es starben / Noch andere viel" ("And many others / Died as well").<sup>63</sup>

Am Kithäron aber lag  
 Eleutherä, der Mnemosyne Stadt. Der auch als  
 Ablegte den Mantel Gott, das abendliche nachher löste  
 Die Loken.  
 (But at the Kithairon lay  
 Eleutherai, Mnemosyne's city. They too, as soon as  
 God laid down his cloak, the powers of evening severed thereafter  
 A lock of hair.)<sup>64</sup>

Eleutherai, in Boeotia, was already in classical antiquity a place of ruins and darkness. It was associated with Mnemosyne, one of the Titanids, a mortal being, her divine lineage to the contrary notwithstanding. Karl Kerényi remembers correctly that an earlier title given the hymn "Mnemosyne" was "Die Nymphe":

Nymphen waren sterblich, sie vergingen, wenn auch nach jahrhundertelangem Leben, sie straben mit ihren Quellen und Bäumen. Mnemosyne hatte eine ähnliche Konkrettheit auch, ..., die Konkrettheit einer Stadtgöttin, und im Konkreten, nicht in blossen Namen, wollte Hölderlin die Götter sehen: .... Mnemosyne war in einer Stadt konkret da und hiess doch "Erinnerung", "Gedächtnis"! Dies war das Erschütterndste:...

(Nymphs were mortal; they passed away, even if after lives lasting for centuries; they died with their sources and trees. Mnemosyne had a similar concreteness, ...; she had the concreteness of a city goddess, and it was in concrete phenomena, not in mere names, that Hölderlin wanted to see the gods: .... Mnemosyne was present in a city, there in all her concreteness, and yet her name was "Memory", "Remembrance"! That was the most unnerving aspect:...) <sup>65</sup>

Eleutherai, demolished and occupied fortress of memory, suggestively points back to the fig tree, at whose foot Achilles died, and to the two lines that are perhaps the most difficult to construe in a poem already one of Hölderlin's most recondite. "It is at the fig tree / My Achilles died, depriving me." Prerequisite to correct understanding of these two lines is a look at an earlier Pindaric hymn that Hölderlin wrote at Nürtingen, one whose title *Andenken* ("Remembrance"), is suggestively close to that of "Mnemosyne". In "Remembrance", Hölderlin evokes his days in France, in Bordeaux, where in the early winter and spring months of 1802 he was house tutor. There is in the poem affectionate tree imagery, and indeed nothing less than mention of a fig tree:

Die breiten Gipfel neiget  
Der Ulmwald, über die Mühl',  
Im Hofe aber wächst ein Feigenbaum.  
(Its broad treetops the forest of elms  
Spreads out, over the mill,  
But in the courtyard, there grows a fig tree.) <sup>66</sup>

The three fig trees—those in or near Bordeaux, in the Troad, and in and of Niniveh symbolize three degrees of security versus demolition. The French tree is secure and protected; the Trojan, threatened; the Assyrian, annihilated. It is of some interest to note that on this scale Hölderlin's tree suggests but does not univocally represent a conquered fortress of the spirit. The hymn in which the image occurs is to be sure Hölderlin's last Pindaric utterance celebrating aspects of the Hellenic "day of divinity" ("griechischer Götterttag" is Hölderlin's term). But it is not only in stanza 2 of "Mnemosyne" (which, textually, is almost identical in the three versions), with its interest in medieval imagery, that the poet promises to go on and, time permitting, to devote himself to subjects closer to concerns of the home country. <sup>67</sup> He was not to be given this opportunity, although terms employed by his editors bid us to be cautious. In volume 2, part 1 of the *Stuttgarter Ausgabe*, a section whose half title page bears the words *Die Vaterländischen Gesänge* (The Songs of the Fatherland) actually contains the Pindaric hymns, the series of noble realizations of which "Mnemosyne" is the last. Following this

section, we find one headed *Hymnische Entwürfe* (Hymnic Drafts); this contains the poems, all of them left in fragments, that show concern, mostly with non-Greek themes (e.g. *Tinian, Kolomb, Der Vatikan*). We may, if we wish, view this latter section as a field strewn with the rubble of the demolished fortress of memory. At the same time we are asked to acknowledge that all of these hymnic fragments are of high literary merit, and that some of them are gnomic, oracular, and of an import as deeply prophetic as any of the Pindaric hymns, or the mature odes and elegies preceding them.<sup>68</sup>

What, then, are the consequences of prophecy for Radnóti and for Hölderlin? For the latter, oracular utterance that is not last self-reflexive. “Reif sind, in Feuer getaucht, gekochet / Die Frücht und auf der Erde geprüft” (“Ripe, dipped in fire, cooked, / The fruits are, and tested on earth”), the opening two lines of the third version of “Mnemosyne” sing; the sun has cooked the fruits; it is late in the day. A world of images and associations is conjured again by these two lines; we are reminded of the forbidden fruit of the tree of philosophy, of the ripe fig tree which one must not shake too hard. And there, in one of the oracular hymnic fragments, in the one entitled *Einst hab ich die Muse gefragt...* (“Once, I asked the Muse...”), the poet has an answer to his question as to the sense the divinely inspired utterance, prophecy in his sense, has come to make. If the answer concerns the poet’s sense of home, of the fatherland of the spirit, Hölderlin has certainly struggled with it for a long time before he wrote these lines:

Einst hab ich die Muse gefragt, und sie  
 Antwortete mir  
 Am Ende wirst du es finden.  
 Kein Sterblicher kann es fassen.  
 Vom Höchsten will ich schweigen.  
 Verbotene Frucht, wie der Lorbeer, aber ist  
 Am meisten das Vaterland. Die aber kost'  
 Ein jeder zuletzt, ...  
 (Once, I asked the Muse, and she  
 Answered me  
 In the end you will find it.  
 No mortal can grasp it.  
 Of the highest, I will keep silent.  
 Forbidden fruit, like the laurel—that, however,  
 Is what the Fatherland is for the most part. That, though,  
 Everyone had better taste last, ...)<sup>69</sup>

It Radnóti’s experience comparable to Hölderlin’s? Is the “fatherland”, the sense of home, of a country he can call his own, forbidden to him, too? A fair answer to that requires that we remember that Radnóti’s struggles too were with higher powers, but in contrast to what Hölderlin seems to have felt were the forces at work against him, Radnóti’s enemies were not the gods. And he was able to make a fine distinction that Hölderlin, for all his work on problems touching on what he may call his, had not thought of. Radnóti held that Hungary was his beloved homeland, and that fascist officialdom will not succeed in taking it away from him. The faith that sustained him as he wrote *Nem tudhatom...* (“I Cannot Know”), sustained him at Bor.<sup>70</sup> By this I do not mean to say that there

are not significant overlaps in the personal situations of the two poets. To mention only one important similarity between the two poets' personal circumstances: both Radnóti and Hölderlin were denied professional opportunities to make a living. Certified at Szeged for secondary-school teaching, Radnóti was unable to secure a position at Budapest; tutoring and work for various publishing houses took the place of job security. Hölderlin was trained for the Protestant ministry, and while he would not consider it as a career, he did at one point have hopes of an appointment at Jena, which never materialized. Two of the four tutoring positions that he held took him to Switzerland and to France; on the eve of his departure for Bordeaux, he wrote to a friend, in painful love that was not his alone: "Deutsch will und muss ich übrigens bleiben, und wenn mich die Herzens- und die Nahrungsnoth nach Otaheiti triebe" ("German, by the way, is what I will and must remain, even if the miseries of heart and hunger should drive me to Tahiti").<sup>71</sup> Could Radnóti have written those lines, given similarity in time and circumstance? I think he could have.

In closing, we are encouraged to look once again at the quotation from Hölderlin's letter to his friend, Neuffer, provided at the beginning of this paper. There, in jest perhaps more seriously intended than he realizes at the time, Hölderlin writes: "I believe one should never shake too much, else the young tree would stand there naked, with dry branches." We must ask: how hard did either Radnóti or Hölderlin shake their respective trees of prophecy? To answer it, we must acknowledge that it is in the nature of great poets to shake their trees of truth, of divine wisdom that matures in song, harder than they perhaps should. Hölderlin and Radnóti both overspent their energies; of this we have frightening glimpses from within the poetry itself. There is the passage in the early hymn *Wie wenn am Feiertage...* ("As When on a Holiday...") in which the poetic persona calls himself "den falschen Priester" ("the false priest"), or the realization, in the Pindaric hymn "The Only one", that he, the poet clings excessively to Christ.<sup>72</sup> There, too, on Radnóti's side, are the equally unsettling moments in the poetry when he appears to fear oncoming insanity, as in *Talán...* ("Perhaps..."), or in *A félelmetes angyal* ("The Terrible Angel"). As the third stanza of the third and final version of "Mnemosyne", a stanza from which the word "prophetisch" (the adverb "prophetically") is by no means absent, puts it; "Und immer / Ins Ungebundene gehet eine Sehnsucht" ("And always, / A longing goes into regions uncontrolled"). But Radnóti was able to recover himself, as the "Palinode" section of "Perhaps..." portrays him, with its magnificent simile involving Empedocles, "falling with a smile / Into Etna's crater!" Hölderlin, it seems fair to say, has this for an answer:

...Nemlich sie wollten stiften  
Ein Reich der Kunst. Dabei ward aber  
Das Vaterländische von ihnen  
Versäumet und erbärmlich gieng  
Das Griechenland, das schönste, zu Grunde.  
(...For, don't you see, they wanted to found  
A realm of art. In the process, however,  
They neglected what concerns  
The Fatherland, and, miserably,  
Greece, the most beautiful, perished.)<sup>73</sup>

Both poets win; both are favored by the gods; and yet the foregoing would seem to tilt the balance ever so slightly in Radnóti's favor. Missing in our necessarily brief discussion is the tutelage of William Blake (1757–1827), who steadfastly held that classical culture exhausted itself in war, while Israel ran a true spiritual cycle.<sup>74</sup> But our point is, I believe, clear. In the area of poetic prophecy, Radnóti and Hölderlin are kindred spirits. Affinity here only confirms what material borrowing and influence may have succeeded in highlighting elsewhere.

## Notes

1. See Miklós Radnóti, *A könyv és az ember* ("Book and Man"), in *Radnóti Miklós Művei* (Miklós Radnóti, *Works*), ed. Pál Réz (Budapest, Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1978), pp. 556–558. Cited hereafter by *Művei* and page.
2. This is one of the later poems in Radnóti's 1930 poetry collection *Pogány köszöntő* (Pagan Salute); see *Művei*, p. 23; also Miklós Radnóti, *The Complete Poetry*, ed. and trans. Emery George (Ann Arbor, Ardis Publishers, 1980), p. 65. This translated edition is cited by *MR* and page.
3. For a detailed discussion, see Emery George, *The Poetry of Miklós Radnóti: A Comparative Study* (New York, Karz-Cohl Publishing, 1986), pp. 216–233. Cited below by *PMR* and page.
4. See Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke, Grosse Stuttgarter Ausgabe*, ed. Friedrich Beissner [and Adolf Beck], 8 vols. in 15 (Stuttgart, W. Kohlhammer Verlag, J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1943–1985), vol. 6, part 1: *Briefe*, ed. Adolf Beck., pp. 80–81, 80 (letter no. 54, lines 5–11). See also Beck's note (to lines 5–9), *ibid.*, part 2, pp. 610–611. This edition is cited below by *StA*, volume, part, and page.
5. For text, see *Művei*, pp. 211–213; for a translation, *MR*, pp. 273–274. Cf. n. 8 below.
6. *StA* 2 : 1 : 197–198 (text of third version of hymn), 198. In this paper, this third and last version is looked at. The opening two lines of stanza 3 constitute lines 35–36 of the poem. All translations from Hölderlin offered in this essay are my own. As to the Pindaric nature of this hymn and of others immediately preceding it, see M. B. Benn, *Hölderlin and Pindar* (Anglica Germanica no. 4; S-Gravenhage, Mouton & Co., 1962), especially chapters 3 and 4; also Albrecht Seifert, *Utdersuchungen zu Hölderlins Pindar-Rezeption* (Münchner Germanistische Beiträge, no. 32; Munich, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1982).
7. It seems safe to say that every other poem by Miklós Radnóti contains tree imagery (presenting part of a tree, tree, grove, or forest). The early tree-person metaphor that I have in mind occurs in the poem *Elégia egy csavargó halálára* ("Elegy on the Death of a Hobo") (*Művei*, pp. 35–36; *MR* p. 80). In stanza 3, the poet describes his dead friend as having been "tömzsi" ("thick-set"); in stanza 7 we read: "tegnap megölelt: / a tömzsi gyümölcsfa az út mellett / kivirágzott a porban" ("yesterday he hugged me; / the thick-set fruit tree on the roadside / blossomed in the dust"). We must keep our wits about us as we read; the poet re-creates the dead hobo, in his aspect as fruit tree. In the analysis below, tree metaphor, simile, and metonymy as combined with either, are commented on.
8. *Művei*, p. 90; *MR*, p. 141. In this quotation, the wording of the final stanza of the translation is improved. Below, the poems of the *Bori notesz* (Bor Notebook) are quoted not after *MR*, but after the reprintings of these translations in my article "Textual Problems of Miklós Radnóti's Bor Notebook," *Hungarian Studies* 2, no. 1 (1986): 65–115, 103–113. These latter reprintings are themselves improved versions of the translations that may be found in *MR* (pp. 269–277).
9. The best – the most detailed, personable, and reliable – account of Radnóti's years at the University of Szeged, and within that, of his associations with other key members of the Szegedi Fiatalok Művészeti Kollégiuma (Szeged Youth Arts College), is still that found in the partial biography by Dezső Baróti, *Kortárs útlevelére, Radnóti Miklós, 1909–1935* (Into a Contemporary's Passport: Miklós Radnóti, 1909–1935) (Budapest, Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1977). Cited below by *Passport* and page.
10. See *PMR*, p. 96. In fact, *Újhold* appeared on the poet's twenty-sixth birthday, on 5 May 1935. At least this is hinted at by letter no. 10, reproduced in Krisztina Mikó, "Radnóti Miklós levelei

- Buday Györgyhöz" ("Miklós Radnóti's Letters to György Buday"), *Kritika*, 1978, no. 9. pp. 13–14. As we know, the volume was illustrated by Buday.
11. Cf. *Negyedik ecloga* ("Fourth Eclogue") (*Művei*, pp. 188–190; *MR*, pp. 248–249) and *Razglednicák* (Picture Postcards), no. 4 (*Művei*, p. 215; *MR*, p. 277; *Hungarian Studies* 2 : 102–103, 113). On the poetics of this lyric mode, see Béla Németh G., "Az önmegszólító verstípusról" ("On the Self-Addressing Poem Type"), in Béla Németh G., *Mű és személyiség. Irodalmi tanulmányok* (Work and Personality: Literary Essays) (Elvek és Utak; Budapest, Magvető, 1970), pp. 621–670.
  12. *Művei*, p. 90; *MR*, p. 141.
  13. *Művei*, p. 90; *MR*, p. 141.
  14. See Baróti's discussion of the poem "Into a Contemporary's Passport" in *Passport*, pp. 404–414. The word combination "clean life" occurs in line 4 of both poems here suggested; "Montenegro Elegy": "s késő koroknak hirdeti tiszta életét" ("and it will sing his clean life to later ages"); also "Henri Barbusse Is Dead": "és most tisztán fekszel, tiszta élted után" ("and now, / clean you lie, after your clean life") (see *Művei*, pp. 74, 272; *MR*, pp. 123, 332).
  15. *StA* 2 : 1 : 12–13, 12; *ibid.*, pp. 403–407 (critical apparatus and notes); see also Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke, "Frankfurter Ausgabe,"* ed. D. E. Sattler [et al.], 20 vols. planned (Frankfurt am Main, Verlag Roter Stern [later: Basel, Frankfurt am Main, Stroemfeld/Roter Stern], 1975–), vols. 4–5; *Oden*, ed. D. E. Sattler and Michael Knaupp; 4 : 280–282 (MS and diplomatic transcription), 5 : 783–788 (constituted text). This edition is cited below by *FHA*, volume, and page.
  16. "Rousseau," lines 23–25. The locution "Du hast gelebt!" is commented on by Beissner (*StA* 2 : 2 : 407), without mention of Vergil as a possible source ("vixi" in Dido's farewell speech, *Aeneid* 4.653). But see Beck's comment on letter no. 35, line 23 (*ibid.*, 6 : 2 : 567).
  17. "The Rhine," lines 144–147; *StA* 2 : 1 : 142–148, 146. Framed by images of forest (lines 2, 211), this Pindaric hymn is one of Hölderlin's mighty river poems, and one of three in the series of late hymns that concern themselves with rivers (the other two being *Am Quell der Donau* ["At the Source of the Danube"] and *Der Ister* ["The Istros", the Greek name for the Danube; cf. Beissner's note, *StA* 2 : 2 : 813–814]). These poems do their part in reminding us that prophecy is inseparable from speech, and thus is inseparable also from the lives of rivers; in "At the Source of the Danube," the poet celebrates Asia, and remembers "deiner Patriarchen und deiner Propheten, // O Asia, deiner Starcken, o Mutter!" ("your patriarchs and your prophets, // O Asia, your strong ones, o Mother!") (lines 79–80; *StA* 2 : 1 : 128).
  18. It is well known that from 10 July until the end of September 1796, Hölderlin, then house tutor at the Gontard family, has to flee Frankfurt; accompanied by Mrs. Gontard and a daughter, Marie, the poet visits Kassel and Bad Driburg, in Westfalia. See Hölderlin, *Eine Chronik in Text und Bild*, ed. Adolf Beck and Paul Raabe (Schriften der Hölderlin-Gesellschaft, nos. 6–7; Frankfurt am Main, Insel Verlag, 1970), pp. 44–45.
  19. "Leisure," lines 9–12; *StA* 1 : 1236. The elm, around which the vine winds itself, is a classical topos; from Horace (*Carmina* 2.15.4–5) we get a hint as to the difference between the "platanus caelebs" and the "ulmus."
  20. "Leisure", line 22; *StA* 1 : 1 : 236.
  21. "Leisure", lines 28–30; *StA* 1 : 1 : 236–237. Of particular interest in this passage is line 27: "Aber ins Mondlicht steigen herauf die zerbrochenen Säulen" and its indication that by the ruin of cities Hölderlin means, exemplarily, the fates of cities of antiquity. Cf., in this respect, the treatment of imagery in such poems as *Der Main* (1 : 1 : 303–304), *Der Nekar* (2 : 1 : 17–18), and *Lebensalter* ("Age of Life") (2 : 1 : 115). In the last-named, in line 3, the noun "Säulenwälder" ("forests of pillars") very tellingly points to Hölderlin's idiomatic, all but subconsciously expressed interest in combining images of tree and architectural detail. The impact of the poem "Age of Life" on the language of the early Radnóti is considered from a very different angle in *PMR*, pp. 227–229.
  22. Hölderlin, "Leisure", lines 36–37; *StA* 1 : 1 : 237. Cf. Beissner's note on these two lines, *ibid.*, p. 549.
  23. See especially the article "Peace, War, and Philosophy," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards, 8 vols. (New York, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1967; rpt. 1972), 6 : 63–67; also the article "War and Militarism", in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. Philip P. Wiener, 5 vols. (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 4 : 500–509. Among those

- closest to Hölderlin, Hegel certainly held views on war very close to that expressed in lines 36–37 of "Leisure".
24. Töredék ("Fragment"), stanza 1 (*Művei*, p. 206; *MR*, p. 267). Cf. *Majális* ("May Picnic"), line 12, where of the boys it is said: "s nyugodtan ölnék majd ha ölni kell" ("and when they'll have to kill, they'll do it at ease") (*Művei*, pp. 204–205, 205; *MR*, p. 265). One important difference between the two poems is the note of hope struck in the latter (see stanza 4).
  25. Hölderlin, "Leisure", lines 41–43; *StA* 1 : 1 : 237. The word *Axt*, "axe", is a hapax legomenon in the German poet's verse; see *Wörterbuch zu Friedrich Hölderlin, I. Teil: Die Gedichte*, ed. Heinz-Martin Dannhauer, Hans Otto Horch, et al. (Indices zur deutschen Literatur, nos. 10–11; Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1983), s.v. "Axt".
  26. Lines 27–32 (*Művei*, p. 141; *MR*, p. 197). For a discussion of "First Eclogue" pertinent to Radnóti's status as a war poet and to his fate, see *PMR*, pp. 367–369.
  27. Lines 13–16 (*Művei*, p. 93; *MR*, p. 145). On the significance of "Istenhegy" in the title, see the note on *Szerelmes vers az Istenhegyen* ("Love Poem on Istenhegy") (*Művei*, pp. 88–89; *MR*, p. 139), *MR*, p. 370.
  28. See especially Zsuzsa Bíró, "A halálmotívum Radnóti költészetének utolsó korszakában (*Tajtékos ég*)" ("The Death Motif in the Final Period of Radnóti's Poetry [*Sky with Clouds*]"), *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 82, no. 3 (1978): 345–53.
  29. Lines 13–16 (*Művei*, p. 156; *MR*, p. 213). This poem by Radnóti carries strong Hölderlinian overtones; for a comparison with Hölderlin's ode *An die Parzen* ("To the Parcae"), see *PMR*, pp. 229–230.
  30. Lines 14–16 (*Művei*, p. 204; *MR*, p. 264). On the banning of Radnóti's work, see the documentary volume *A cenzúra árnyékában* (In the Shadow of Censorship), ed. Györgyi Markovits and Áron Tóbiás (Budapest, Magvető, 1966), pp. 283–312 (the documents of the confiscation trial in connection with Radnóti's 1931 collection *Újmódi pásztorok éneke* [Song of Modern Shepherds] only). In later years, Radnóti's work was suppressed even more systematically. No new independent poetry volume by him was permitted after the appearance of his 1938 collection *Meredek út* (Steep Road).
  31. See Tibor Meczer, "Radnóti Miklós Gyökér című verséről" ("On Miklós Radnóti's Poem: Root"), *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 74 (1970): 721–733; also the discussion of "Root" in *PMR*, pp. 493–497.
  32. Lines 4–6 *Művei*, p. 176; *MR*, p. 235. Melczer (pp. 722, 732) points to passages from Babits's own poetry with which Radnóti's root and tree motifs may be seen to display marked affinity. To the many tree and root images from Radnóti's corpus cited by Melczer, we might add two: that in *Elégia* ("Elegy"): „konokon élek, szívós téli tő" ("stubbornly I live, a steadfast winter root") (line 20; *Művei*, p. 115; *MR*, p. 167), and the one in "Picture Postcards", no. 1: the beloved is seen as motionless and mute, "akár az angyal, ha pusztulást csodál, / vagy korhadt fának odván temetkező bogár" ("like an angel awed by death's great carnival, / or an insect in rotted tree pith, staging its funeral") (*Művei*, p. 214; *Hungarian Studies* 2 : 112).
  33. "Root", lines 18–21 (line numbering as suggested in *Hungarian Studies* 2 : 75, also *ibid.*, pp. 83, 89–90, 96, 106, and un. 20–22). The image combines metonymy and metaphor, as this happens also in the love poem *Himnusz* ("Hymn") (*Művei*, pp. 94–95; *MR*, p. 148). Notable also is the fact that Hölderlin's poem "Leisure" has "axe", while "Root" has "saw". In the original, "First Eclogue" line 32 "favágó" (literally: "tree cutter") does not name a tool. In my translation, "buzz-saw" is not an intended point of similarity; in retrospect, it makes the closing line of "Root" fulfill the prophecy of "First Eclogue" to the letter.
  34. Lines 5–8 (*StA* 1 : 1 : 238; see also *FHA* 3 : 105).
  35. See Beissner's note on the 6–7 of the poem, *StA* 1 : 2 : 552.
  36. On Hölderlin's side, see the historically searching article by Werner Kirchner, "Hölderlins Entwurf 'Die Völker schwiegen, schlummerten' und die Ode 'Der Frieden,'" in Werner Kirchner, *Hölderlin, Aufsätze zu seiner Homburger Zeit*, ed. Alfred Kellertat (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), pp. 7–33. In addition it is of no mean interest that the Pindaric hymn *Friedensfeier* ("Festival of Peace"), which Hölderlin most probably wrote in 1802, is a direct response to the signing of the Peace of Lunéville in February of 1801. Radnóti's oeuvre would undoubtedly also have been different in some respects, had war not prompted him to write as he does in his concluding three collections. István Vas even thinks it highly probable that Radnóti would have warmly welcomed

- an "acceptable society", "mert gyökereivel is szerette a békét" ("because even with his roots, he loved peace") ("Jegyzetek Radnóti La Fontaine fordításához" ["Notes on Radnóti's La Fontaine Translation"], in István Vas, *Az ismeretlen isten. Tanulmányok 1934–1973* [The Unknown God: Essays 1934–1973] [Budapest, Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1974], pp. 793–799, 795). Cf. the conclusions reached at the end of this section of the present paper.
37. *Művei*, pp. 136–137; *MR*, p. 192. Cf. a poem, likewise on a biblical subject, that Radnóti left uncollected, *Lapszéli jegyzet Lukácshoz* ("Marginal Note to Luke") (*Művei*, p. 273; *MR*, p. 333). The poem is dated 20 October 1937.
38. See the discussion of religious concerns and imagery in poems especially by the early Radnóti, *PMR*, pp. 46–47.
39. *Művei*, p. 153; *MR*, p. 211. For an essay on "Hispania, Hispania" combining biography and criticism, see Baróti, "Radnóti Miklós és Párizs" ("Miklós Radnóti and Paris"), in Dezső Baróti, *Írók, érzelmek, stílusok* (Writers, Sensibilities, Styles) (Budapest, Magvető, 1971), pp. 404–428, 413–420. On the theory that lines 11–12 derive from the wording of Tibullus, book 1, elegy 10, which Radnóti translated around the time he worked on "Hispania, Hispania", see *PMR*, chapter 7, n. 70.
40. *PMR*, pp. 493–497, especially p. 495. On the poetics of the slender hymn in Radnóti's development, see also *ibid.*, pp. 142–149 (chapter 6, the section headed "The Beginnings of Radnóti's Hymnic Style").
41. Despite this, Schiller published the poem in his periodical *Die Horen* (in no. 10 of the 1797 volume). See Momme Mommsen, "Hölderlins Lösung von Schiller. Zu Hölderlins Gedichten 'An Herkules' und 'Die Eichbäume' und den Übersetzungen aus Ovid, Vergil und Euripides", *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Schillergesellschaft*, Vol. 9 (1965), pp. 203–244, especially pp. 221–223. See also Beissner on the transmission of the poem, *StA* 1 : 2 : 500.
42. *StA* 1 : 1 : 201; *FHA* 3 : 51 (line 3: "mit den fleissigen Menschen").
43. *Hyp.* I, 11, 14–12, 2 (*StA* 3 : 9). Beissner's system of volume, page, and line numbering refers to that of the first edition of the novel (Tübingen, Cotta, 1797 and 1799). Mommsen ignores the parallelism between the poem and the novel, and so does the otherwise illuminating essay by Rudolf D. Schier, "Trees and Transcendence: Hölderlin's 'Die Eichbäume' and Rilke's 'Herbst'," *German Life & Letters* 20, no. 4 (July 1967): 331–341. Schier treats line 7 in general terms (p. 334). The parallel is supported, however, both by the fact that for Hölderlin, reader, in the fall term of 1794, of Fichte's *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*, *Wissenschaft* does indeed mean systematic philosophy, and by the fact that, in the area of philosophy, the final version of *Hyperion* represents a repudiation of positions taken towards the *Wissenschaftslehre* by earlier stages of the novel. See, for background, Beck's notes on letters nos. 89 (to Neuffer, Jena, November 1794) and 94 (to Hegel, Jena, 26 January 1795), *StA* 6 : 2 : 702–704, and p. 723; and especially Lawrence Ryan, *Hölderlins "Hyperion". Exzentrische Bahn und Dichterberuf* (Stuttgart, J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1965), pp. 33–103 (chapters 2 and 3).
44. "The Oak Trees", lines 16–17 (*StA* 1 : 1 : 201; *FHA* 3 : 51).
45. "In a Clamorous Palm Tree", lines 1–10 (*Művei*, p. 203; *MR*, p. 263). The image of the palm tree, with its monkeys, documents two of Radnóti's most enduring interests: the exotic and the grotesque. On one possible source of the poem in an African tale, see *PMR*, pp. 129–130. One view of the palm tree image seems to be that it is a metaphor for his home; as the chronicler Ábel Kőszegi writes: "1944. április 4. óta nem mozdul ki a lakásból. Nem hajlandó viselni a sárga csillagot" ("Since 4 April 1944 he has not stirred from his apartment. He is not willing to wear the yellow star.") (*Töredék, Radnóti Miklós utolsó hónapjainak krónikája* [Fragment: Chronicle of Miklós Radnóti's Final Months] [Mikrokozmosz Füzetek; Budapest, Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1972], p. 9) Note the date of the poem.
46. Lines 16–19.
47. "Peace: A Hymn", lines 32–33 (*Művei*, p. 14; *MR*, p. 195). The language of line 32 comes amazingly close to that of *Eröltetett menet* ("Forced March"), line 19. In the earlier poem, we have: "Így lesz-e? Így!" ("Will all that be? Yes!"); in the later one: "De hisz lehet talán még!" ("But all that *could* still be—...!") ("Forced March": *Művei*, p. 214; *Hungarian Studies* 2 : 111). That "Forced March" is one of the ultimate poems in which the poetic spirit is holding out and defending need not, I think, be belabored.

48. Cf. Schier, who writes: "... only the meditations of the late Rilke move on a level of thought equal to that of the early Hölderlin" (*German Life & Letters* 20 : 341). I do not agree with this assessment, nor do I think it proper to assign "The Oak Trees" to the lyric production of the early Hölderlin. At this stage, the poet would have to be identified as at least early mature. "The Oak Trees" and "In a Clamorous Palm Tree" are strongly comparable poems, even apart from extrinsic questions.
49. The tradition is well documented by reports of contemporaries who visited Hölderlin in Tübingen between 1806 and his death in 1843 (see *StA*, vol. 7, parts 1–3: *FHA*, vol. 9), and has since then been discussed in a towering secondary literature. It was started, as it seems, by Wilhelm Waiblinger, in his biographical memoir *Friedrich Hölderlins Leben, Dichtung und Wahnsinn* (Leipzig, 1831). For a prominent dissenting opinion, see Pierre Bertaux, *Friedrich Hölderlin* (Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1978).
50. See Beissner's preface to his section headed "Die Vaterländischen Gesänge" (*StA* 2 : 2 : 680–681); also Beissner, "Vom Baugesetz der Vaterländischen Gesänge", in Friedrich Beissner, *Hölderlin. Reden und Aufsätze*, 2nd ed. (Cologne, Vienna, Böhlau Verlag, 1969), pp. 144–161. The late visionary and prophetic status of the Pindaric hymns has been generally acknowledged since Norbert von Hellin-grath's preface to volume 4 (1916) of the critical edition of Hölderlin's works and letters begun by him and completed by Friedrich Seebass and Ludwig von Pigenot (6 vols.; Munich, Georg Müller [later: Berlin, Propyläen-Verlag], 1913–1923).
51. According to Kószegei (p. 29), Radnóti and his friends pieced together poems by Berzsenyi, Arany, García Lorca, and long passages from Racine. Even apart from this, Radnóti had a phenomenal memory, enabling him to compose his poems in his head and to retain them until he could have access to writing materials. He reported at Vác on 20 May, arrived at Lager Heidenau on 1 June, and most probably acquired his notebook in mid-July (*ibid.*, pp. 10–13).
52. Points of hope are portrayed in: "Seventh Eclogue", line 23 ("a csodákat") ("miracles"); "Letter to My Wife", lines 31–36; and "Forced March", lines 11–20. An important earlier correlate of the image of the broken plum tree as a symbol of community is the image of the plum tree in *Számadás* ("Accounting") (*Művei*, p. 79; *MR*, p. 128).
53. "Eighth Eclogue", lines 47–54 (*Művei*, p. 213; *Hungarian Studies* 2 : 111).
54. See especially *Nem tudhatom...* ("I Cannot Know..."), lines 29–35 (the seven-line section immediately preceding the closing line) (*Művei*, p. 198; *MR*, p. 257), a rare passage in which the poetic voice broaches the question of public guilt versus private innocence. See also the reply in "Eighth Eclogue", where "Poet" gently hints at the need for moderation (line 31 "Már szóltál" ["That you have done"]).
55. On this, see *PMR*, chapter 11, n. 37: on biblical sources of images in "Eighth" and other eclogues by Radnóti, see *ibid.*, chapter 11, n. 31.
56. According to this, Radnóti joins the ranks, among poets in the Western tradition, of the reconcilers of the two antiquities. On Christ's mediating role in Hölderlin, see also the German poet's elegy *Brod und Wein* ("Bread and Wine"), and his late hymns "The Only One" and "Festival of Peace". The opening word of the preliminary drafts of the last-named work is "Versöhnender" ("Conciliator"); it refers to Christ. On Radnóti's side, in "Eighth Eclogue", the "rabbi" (line 50) is the fulfiller of the Word, the conciliator, the bringer of peace.
57. Lines 1–3. The fact that "Eighth Eclogue" is written in dactylic hexameter seems inseparable from the status of these opening lines as an elaborate Homeric greeting.
58. Lines 55–56.
59. *Művei*, pp. 87–88, 108–109, 110–111, 164–165; *MR*, 138, 161, 163, 222.
60. According to Beissner, lines 35–36 form the germinal words (*Keimworte*) of Hölderlin's manuscript (Homburg J 18<sup>v</sup>; see critical apparatus, *StA* 2 : 2 : 817, lines 14–16).
61. "Mnemosyne," third version, lines 35–39; *StA* 2 : 1 : 198. The fig tree image, for Hölderlin, involves Homer, and the New as well as the Old Testament; see Beissner's note on lines 35–36, *StA* 2 : 2 : 828. A somewhat more exhaustive list of references is provided in Flemming Roland-Jensen, "Hölderlins 'Mnemosyne'. Eine Interpretation", *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 98, no. 2 (1979): 201–241, especially pp. 222–226, and nn. 37–42.
62. Cf. Roland-Jensen, p. 224, and n. 42, where attention is called to the possibility that Hölderlin's Nahum inspiration may also have connections with the New Testament sources that he used for the composition of "Patmos".

63. "Mnemosyne", third version, lines 44–45 (*StA* 2 : 1 : 198). These additional death images from Homer only help highlight the highly ambiguous nexus of Achilles and the fig tree. Notable is the fact that lines 35–36 are the only place where the poetic voice draws itself in by means of the first-person possessive and ethical dative: "Am Feigenbaum ist mein / Achilles mir gestorben". Two additional illuminating analyses of the hymn will be found in Raymond Furness, "The Death of Memory: An Analysis of Hölderlin's Hymn 'Mnemosyne'," *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, new series, Vol. 40 (1969–70), pp. 30–68; and in Jochen Schmidt, *Hölderlins letzte Hymnen 'Andenken' und 'Mnemosyne'* (Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literaturgeschichte, no. 7; Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1970).
64. "Mnemosyne", third version, lines 45–48.
65. Karl Kerényi, "Hölderlins Vollendung", *Hölderlin-Jahrbuch*, Vol. 8 (1954), pp. 25–45, 44–45.
66. "Remembrance", lines 14–16. An astute analysis of the relation between "Remembrance" and "Mnemosyne", and of the problem of the two fig trees, is available in Dieter Henrich, *Der Gang des Andenkens. Beobachtungen und Gedanken zu Hölderlins Gedicht* (Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, 1986), especially in the chapter entitled "'Mnemosyne' und 'Andenken'" (chapter 18, pp. 179–187), and in n. 103, where we are reminded of Roland-Jensen's finding that the nexus between Achilles and the fig tree is not one established by tradition. What Hölderlin is here working on, we must conclude, is a sense of mythical locus – the fig tree becomes a metaphor for the poet's threatened spiritual fortress.
67. See Hölderlin's dedicatory inscription of the Sophocles translations to Princess Augusta of Homburg (*StA* 5 : 119–120). There, he promises to sing "die Eltern unsrer Fürsten und ihre Sizze und die Engel des heiligen Vaterlands" ("the parents of our princes and their places of residence and the angels of the holy fatherland") (*ibid.*, p. 120).
68. In addition, the major elegy *Stuttgart* ("Stuttgart") also distinguishes itself by showing energetic concern with mediaeval themes (text, *StA* 2 : 1 : 86–89). This broaches the complex of problems in the late Hölderlin's thought, referred to in the literature as the poet's "Vaterländische Umkehr" or "abendländische Wendung" ("about-face toward the fatherland"; "Occidental turn of mind"). For a concise and excellent treatment, see Peter Szondi, "Überwindung des Klassizismus. Der Brief an Böhlendorff vom 4. Dezember 1801", in Peter Szondi, *Hölderlin-Studien. Mit einem Traktat über philologische Erkenntnis* (Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), pp. 95–118.
69. Lines 1–8; *StA* 2 : 1 : 220. On the significance of the last two lines in this passage, see Friedrich Beissner, *Hölderlins Übersetzungen aus dem Griechischen*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1961), 147–184 (the section headed "Griechenland und Hesperien").
70. See especially the analysis of the late poem "I Cannot Know..." by Ferenc Kiss, "Radnóti patriotizmus" ("Radnóti's Patriotism"), in Ferenc Kiss, *Művek közelről* (Works from Close Up) (Elvek és Utak; Budapest, Magvető, 1972), pp. 81–91. No–Radnóti's enemies were, ultimately, not the gods; I maintain this view here, in no contradiction of my earlier observations on Radnóti's early poem *Emlék* ("Memory") and its comparability with Hölderlin's "Patmos" (see *PMR*, pp. 227–229). Meaning often shifts and is rendered richer and more complicated in the perspective of further poems examined, especially if they are also later ones.
71. Hölderlin to Casimir Ulrich Böhlendorff, Nürtingen, 4 December 1801; letter no. 236, lines 86–88; *StA* 6 : 1 : 425–428, 428. This is the famous letter in which Hölderlin redefines what Occidental artistic potential and sensibility has, and does not have, in common with the Greek.
72. "As When on a Holiday...", lines 71–73; "..., sie werfen mich tief unter die Lebenden / Den falschen Priester, ins Dunkel, dass ich / Das warnende Lied den Gelehrigen singe" ("..., they are hurling me deep among the living, / Me, the false priest, into darkness, that I / Sing the song of warning to those who will learn") (*StA* 2 : 1 : 120). Two passages from "The Only One": lines 48–50: "Ich weiss es aber, eigene Schuld / Ists! denn zu sehr, / O Christus! häng' ich an dir, ..." ("But I know: it's my own Fault! for far too much, / O Christ! I cling to you") (*ibid.*, p. 154), and lines 84–86: "Diesesmal / Ist nemlich vom eigenen Herzen / Zu sehr gegangen der Gesang" ("This time, / You see, from my very own heart, / Song has come forth far too much") (*ibid.*, p. 155; both passages from the first version). After poetic admissions of this intensity, we might guess the sense in which Achilles "died on the poet" at the foot of his fig tree. What Achilles meant to Hölderlin may also be gathered from his essays, especially from "An Kallias" ("To Kallias"), "Bemerkung über Homer" ("Note on Homer"), "Über Achill" ("On Achilles"), and "Ein Wort

über die Iliade" ("A Word Concerning the Iliad") (see *StA* 4 : 1 : 218–219, and *ibid.*, pp. 223, 224–225, and 226–227).

73. "... Meinst du es solle gehen..." , lines 3–7 (*StA* 2 : 1 : 228). I do respect Furness's view, however, that the turn away from Greece is not involuntary on the poet's part, and ultimately not evil, And yet, Hölderlin could not totally give up his older vision; "the roots he had struck in the pagan world were too deep for memory of its heroes to die, and a new vision to arise" (Furness, p. 68).
74. See Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Princeton, Princeton Univ. Press, 1947; rpt. Boston, Beacon Press, 1962).

**Concepts of National Identity. An Interdisciplinary Dialogue**

(Edited by Peter Boerner. Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft. Pp. 262. FRG)

This collection of papers offered at a conference at Indiana University in Bloomington in 1985, presents a subject worthy of profound analysis. The volume is a timely and scholarly addition to the growing literature on national and ethnic identity.

There are considerable terminological uncertainties, not only in English but also in other languages, relating to the use of the term "nation", as well as its derivatives, such as *national*, *nationality*, *nationalism*, etc. These concepts can be intimately linked to phenomena connected with ethnic groups at least as much the State, if not more so. One finds extremely different interpretations concerning the essence of "nation" and "national" in scholarly publications, in political rhetoric or in the press. Authors representing different geographical and cultural areas, belonging to various disciplines (sociology, history, political science or anthropology) follow separate paths in the explanation of this major social phenomenon. Therefore a wide-ranging survey and an "interdisciplinary dialogue" – as the subtitle of the volume indicates – can only be welcomed in the process of clarification of this important notion.

In the past, most studies related to the concept of national identity or national character have been concerned with its development separately in individual countries. This book differs from the general run in that Western, East European and also African national identity problems are treated here in a comparative manner and introduced by a series of common questions.

In the Introduction, *Peter Boerner*, the editor of the volume, provides a stimulating presentation of some general conceptual problems e.g. the need to consider specific constellations of political, economic, religious and cultural influences with regard to the socio-psychological development of an individual nation. He notes that the ideological contents of concepts of identity differ from nation to nation and from historical situation to historical situation. Boerner describes the variety of factors constituting a collective identity, first of all the relationships that have existed and could exist between the political entities and the ethnic and emotional complexes. *Raymond Crew's* contribution "The Construction of National Identity" opens the discourse. He gives a short survey on the extent to which the main intellectual trends have paid and continue pay attention to question of the national identity, its formation and functioning in various historical circumstances. Grew's conclusion is that national identity becomes significantly different and apparently more important in the nineteenth century than it was before. The decisive role in its genesis was played by the individual states, but industrialization, increased communication and mobility also contributed to its development.

For those, who are interested in Hungarian and East Central European studies, *Mihály Szegedy-Maszák's* paper "The Idea of National Character: A Romantic Heritage" provides an especially valuable analysis concerning the evolution of national thinking in this part of Europe. The thought that nations, as well as individuals have a unique character, can be traced back to Romantic era. Under the influence of German *Geistsgeschichte*, this idea prevailed among Central and Eastern European intellectuals for a long time. It served honest political aims in certain cases (e.g. it helped national minorities preserve their identity), but – as the author points out – it also fostered a derogatory view of other nations, together with mystical images and prejudices which contributed to mutual distrust in inter-ethnic relations. In the construction of national identities a permanent comparison with other collective sentiments and behaviours is involved. *Orest Ranum's* paper "Counter-Identities of Western European Nations in the Early-Modern Period: Definitions and Points of Departure" examines the question of the competing communal values and the contrasts of the schematic "they – we" image. He presents historical cases where the process of identification with

one community's values and qualities implied in some way the alienation (estrangement) from those of others. However, the perception of foreign culture and its comparison with our own culture does not lead necessarily to stereotyped images; it may also stimulate all-human ideals and supra-national loyalties. *Konrad Bieber's* essay "Patriot without a Flag: French Writers Look at their Country and across the Border" is a superb presentation of the way in which, various dimensions of collective sentiment (national, European and universal) were integrated by some famous French intellectuals. It is a historical fact that group identities are not always competitive; they can be complementary or even mutually reinforcing. The various scales and levels of collective loyalties do not displace each other; they correspond to separate – however related – basic human needs.

*Jack E. Reece's* paper "Outmoded Nationalism and Emerging Patterns of Regional Identity in Contemporary Western Europe" discusses the causes and consequences of the recent ethnic revival in the western part of our continent. There is no doubt, that the state has an impressive arsenal for inculcating loyalty, including the school system and the power to design and manipulate symbols etc. On the other hand, the appearance of national minority and ethnoregional movements in the old states of Western Europe suggests that "nation-building" has its limits. Nation-states have lost much of their prestige and other forces have scored remarkable successes in identity formation. One of the basic conclusions which can be drawn from this study is that in many cases the complexity and multiplicity of ethnic phenomenon does not permit us to equate national identity with a feeling of loyalty to the state. In Europe there are only very few countries where the ethnic and political borders coincide; so it would be also theoretically more appropriate to differentiate (ethno)nationality from citizenship, (ethno)nationalism from patriotism, etc.

In contrast to Reece's essay, *Robin Alison Remington's* contribution "The Balkanisation of Communism: East European Nations in the 1980s" seems to be less consistent in differentiating ethnonationalism from state-nationalism. An obvious example is the way the "Romanian National Defiance" is presented in this paper. The fact that Rumania (and especially Transylvania) is a multinational state, and has a considerable non-Rumanian (ethnic Hungarian, German, Slav and other) population, is even not mentioned by the author. Thus "nationalism" receives a narrow, almost exclusively inter-state interpretation, and its important intra-state (anti-minority; discriminative and forcibly amalgamating) aspect is simply ignored. In the case of Yugoslavia and (to a lesser degree) Bulgaria the relationship between ethnic components and international factors is analysed in a more balanced way.

The various dimensions and levels of collective loyalty are also discussed in *Richard Bjornson's* study "National Identity Concept in Africa: Interplay between European Categorization Schemes and African Realities". Smaller and larger scale attachments, tribal, regional and national solidarity ties are described here through the example of Cameroon. Four papers present the way in which the historical and present day aspects of national identity interplay in the German-speaking area of Europe. *Conrad Wiedemann's*, *Heinrich C. Seeba's*, *Werner Weidenfeld's* and *William M. Johnston's* thoughtful and well-written essays analyse the causes of the absence of a clear German and Austrian self-image. In these contributions the growing need for a community awareness is written neither from a *grossdeutsch* nor a *kleindeutsch* point of view. The papers show evidence of old issues having been thoroughly rethought during the last decades, and above all liberated from the concept and rigid mold of the nation-state, in search of new criteria for identification.

*Udo Rossback's* "Documenting Publications Related to the Concept of National Identity" concludes the selection of essays with a list of relevant international literature.

This book will engage the attention of the serious general reader as well as the social scientists representing various disciplines. It should be a required reading for all students of the national question. Especially for those who are interested in study of ethnically intermingled areas such as East-Central Europe, where a large number of national groups live in communities extending across state boundaries, and where a particularly sharp antagonism between the "nation-state" and "national culture" has emerged and is still taking place.

**Bethlen István emlékirata 1944. Sajtó alá rendezte és a jegyzeteket írta  
Romsics Ignác, bevezette Bolza Ilona és Romsics Ignác**  
(Budapest, Zrínyi Katonai Kiadó 1988, 175 pp., 49,00 Ft.)

In 1985 there appeared, as volume 27 of the *Studia Hungarica* series published by the Ungarisches Institut München, a slender bilingual volume: Count István Bethlen, *Hungarian Politics During World War Two. Treatise and Indictment*, edited by Countess Ilona Bolza. It contains a facsimile reproduction of Bethlen's handwritten Hungarian memorandum, its English translation by Dr. Victor de Stankovich, and a short essay by Bolza, entitled "Count István Bethlen. A Former Prime Minister in Hiding (1940)" in English (pp. 1-7), and "A bujdosó gróf Bethlen István (1944)," in Hungarian (pp. 38-44). The latter version is probably the original.

The book under review contains the transcribed text of the memorandum (pp. 95-149), an essay by Romsics on the political career of Bethlen (pp. 5-70) and an enlarged version of the reminiscences of Ilona Bolza (pp. 71-93). Explanatory notes prepared by Romsics and an index complete the volume.

István Bethlen (1874-1947) was one of the protagonists of the so-called Horthy-era, a narrow time-span wedged between the twin tragedies of the two World Wars. Prime Minister from 1921 to 1931, he was the chief architect of the „consolidation” of Hungarian political life and remained a most influential figure in Parliament where he served first as a deputy, later as member of the Upper House. He was closely associated with the Regent to whom, to the end, he had direct access. Because of the anti-German stance he had taken, in the summer of 1944 he had to go into hiding, and from the end of July to early October he found asylum on the estate of the Bolza family. The Countess Ilona Bolza, who had good relations with Horthy, acted as a go-between for him and Bethlen, and to her was given for safe-keeping the manuscript of the memorandum: "A magyar politika a második világháborúban. Politikai tanulmány vagy vádirat."

Although the memorandum throws no new light on the events it describes, it makes for fascinating reading because it shows how this wise and thoroughly professional politician viewed them. I find it particularly interesting that – as many others, less well informed – he too stood baffled by the political *salto mortale* (as Bethlen puts it) of Imrédy, a competent and rather dreary banker, who suddenly changed into the champion and *particeps criminis* of the extreme Right Wing. I also loved his icy comment on Kálmán Darányi (Prime Minister 1936-1938) whom he describes as a "patriotic, conscientious" man, but hesitant and undecided, plagued by a heightened inferiority complex, rooted in a "correct self-assessment". [p. 130... "Minderwertigkeitsgefühl", amely a helyes önismeretéből származott".] Bethlen is eminently objective, and takes no advantage of hindsight. This is particularly noticeable in his attitude towards the Germans; he does not condemn the foreign policy of Gömbös (Prime Minister 1932-1936) based on alliance with Italy and Germany. (It is little known that the term "axis", generally used in connection with the Mussolini-Hitler alliance, was coined by Gömbös.) This is all the more interesting because, just as Teleki, so Bethlen was also convinced that Germany could not win the war. The point that Teleki had something of a boy-scout in him is well taken, and one stands amazed at noting that the two men shared the unrealistic view that Great Britain or the United States would in any way help Hungary.

Bolza's reminiscences are moving and recall a period when similar cloak-and-dapper adventures were part of the daily lives of many. Romsics' essay is a sober, clear-headed presentation of Bethlen's political career beginning with 1901. He is the author of a fine book dealing with Bethlen's earlier years [*Gróf Bethlen István politikai pályája 1901-1921*. (Budapest, Magvető, 1987)] and there is reason to hope that this essay heralds the publication of another detailed study dealing with the post-1921 period. The notes provided by Romsics to the memorandum and also to Bolza's reminiscences are helpful. One misses an exact reference to the original publication and there are some misprints. To mention but two, the name of Héjjas Iván is correctly given in the index, but the text has István. Another typographical error is quite dangerous. It does make a big difference whether in July 1931 the government was unable or obliged to close the banks; on p. 60 *képtelen* should read *kénytelen*.

It is pleasing to note that Hungarian historians may now write about the interwar years with no obligation to decry just about everything that happened unless it was initiated by socialists or communists. We are grateful to Ilona Bolza for her courage and generosity in saving and making public the memorandum. We are indebted to Ignác Romsics for its highly professional presentation.

**Struggle and Hope: the Hungarian-Canadian Experience**  
**By N. F. Dreisziger with M. L. Kovacs, Paul Bódy and Bennett Kovrig**

Published by McClelland and Stewart Ltd. in association with the Multiculturalism Directorate,  
 Department of the Secretary of State and the Canadian Government Publishing Centre,  
 Toronto, 1982. 247 pp. (A History of Canada's Peoples)

**The Hungarian-Americans. By Steven Bela Vardy**  
 (Twayne Publishers, Boston, 1985. 215. pp.)

While in recent years there has been a belated, but very timely and welcome interest in Hungary in the fate of the Hungarian minorities living in the states surrounding Hungary (unfortunately mainly due to the arrival of alarming news and thousands of refugees), much less attention has been paid to the Hungarians who live in North America, although their size stands near the million mark, outnumbering the Hungarian population both of Czechoslovakia and of Yugoslavia. It is true that in traditions, cohesion, and consequently in their chances for survival these Hungarians cannot be compared to those who never left their ancestral land, who were reduced to minority status only by the hand of history. Nevertheless the American-Hungarians (as they are seen from Hungary) or the Hungarian-Americans (which they have willy-nilly become) represent a large segment of all Hungarian-speakers, with a history recalling in turbulence and dramatism that of the main stock in the Carpathian Basin. What may lend further interest and importance to the study of their history is that the improvement in East-West and in particularly in Hungarian-U. S. (Canadian relations have already increased both official, scholarly and private contacts, and that development is bound to improve both the life-expectancy of the Hungarian communities of America and their chance of playing a role in the lot of the Hungarians in the old country and around it.)

In the United States and Canada a vigorous and academically very valuable branch of Hungarian history has surfaced in recent decades. American scholars (mainly born in Hungary but sometimes native Americans) have produced a substantial number of monographs and studies on Hungarian and East-Central European history, which rightly won the acclaim of the scholarly community, and began to be recognized – alas belatedly – in Hungary, too. A special section of this literature deals with the history of their own community, with the Hungarians of the United States and of Canada. Unlike the forerunners, too often rather pedestrian, laudatory, poorly researched pieces of antiquarianism, these are the works of trained and practising historians, who have already made many contributions on “larger”, mainly European or Hungarian issues. These authors are building on such traditions as the Hungarian *Siedlungsgeschichte* school which flourished in the inter-war period, but their main driving force is undoubtedly the “ethnic revival” of the 1970’s and the new encouragement shown to ethnic traditions by governments, agencies and popular trends. Unfortunately the writings appearing on the past of the American Hungarians (whether written in English or in Hungarian) are hardly known, almost never noticed (or reviewed), and on no account are for sale in Hungary; the main reasons for that are no longer political, but rather bureaucratic and economic: nobody has ever thought of selling Western books in the hard-currency shops in Hungary, and Western prices translated into forints would be hardly competitive in the bookshops in Hungary. (Perhaps one day joint ventures will enable these shops to stock such works, especially those related to Hungarian history.)

*Struggle and Hope* is a truly pioneering work: the first scholarly and comprehensive history of one hundred years of Hungarian life in Canada; many of its parts based on archival resources which required great pains to be located and researched. It also brought together some of finest American historians of Hungarian origin, who are equally at home in traditional (national or world) history and in ethnic studies. Special credit is due to the principal author, N. Dreisziger, who must have been the first to realize the need for a work of such type, was undeterred by the difficulty of finding sources and resources, and ensured the high quality of the result. The other contributors proved worthy colleagues in these tasks. Bennett Kovrig wrote a masterly short account of the history of the old country, an essential piece, since the many upheavals, territorial amputations, social and economic ills were the major cause of Hungarian emigration to America. Paul Bódy, the only author who is not a resident of Canada, prepared a very perceptive analysis of the motives and tendencies of that emigration, interspersed with telling personal accounts, interviews and other primary

recordings. His very careful study of the sources and figures of the Hungarian immigration into the whole North American continent presents the wider demographic background to the story of the Hungarian-Canadians. M. L. Kovacs recounted the saga of the first settlers, those Hungarian peasants who escaped from the intolerable industrial colonies of Pennsylvania to the prairies of Saskatchewan, where they "reconstituted themselves into folk communities [...] on the pattern of their ancestral villages". (p. 82.) This chapter is a summary of painstaking original research and writing done throughout several decades.

The remaining five chapters are the works of Nandor Dreisziger, who had already proved his skills in diplomatic, political and military history, and here shows a rare ability for understanding and elucidating the daily struggles of ordinary, simple, yet in many ways heroic people, who preserved so much from Hungary and contributed so generously to Canada. While the most important element in their epit is economic and social history, showing how they grew from a rural into an industrial, urbanized community, their cultural and religious life as well as their politics is duly recorded, making the whole not only a very readable and reliable but also an exciting account. Dreisziger also avoided the not uncommon pitfall of ethnic histories: he never lost his way in petty local squabbles, but was able to integrate the history of this particular Hungarian community into general Hungarian and Canadian history, showing the impact of the two world wars, the Great Depression, the post-1945 political changes in Hungary, and the 1956 uprising. He, too, had few predecessors to rely upon, and in view of this one is especially impressed by the mastery shown in discovering tendencies, patterns, dividing lines, prevailing frames of mind. Political controversy was never a rare feature among Hungarians, not even in Canada, but the author shows remarkable fairness, lack of bias, while not refraining from having an opinion and showing due criticism. The story unfolding is a true drama: high expectations followed by great advances in the 1920's, untold hardships throughout the 1930's in the wake of the Great Depression, leading also to political-ideological rifts, then the tormenting years of World War II when Hungary, largely a victim of hostile circumstances, became an enemy state, and lost many relatives and friends as well as territories precious for the Canadian-Hungarians, too. The 1950's at last turned into a Golden Age of prosperity, while the tragedy of 1956 proved also a source of new strength thanks to the sympathy and generosity aroused in the government and people of Canada, and also to the achievements of the 40,000 newcomers. The conclusion is still pending: demographic and social change making language and cultural maintenance precarious, but the new, encouraging attitude to ethnic diversity, the policy of multiculturalism, slowing down assimilation, in which the expansion of ties with the mother country must also have a say.

Steven Béla Vardy, a prolific professor from Pittsburgh, who has contributed much both to Hungarian and American historical scholarship, had a little easier task than his Canadian colleagues when he set out to write a short, comprehensive history of *The Hungarian-Americans*, since he could already rely on several modern studies, including the seminal work of Julianna Puskás of Budapest. Lack of adequate space was a great restraint, but Vardy turned it into an advantage: he produced a masterful short, but nevertheless thorough account, which can be (should be) enjoyed and read by all those 1.8 million Americans who claimed at least a partial Hungarian ancestry at the last census. Such a history naturally had to concentrate on the immigration, acculturation, internal political and cultural life, and achievements of the 850,000 ethnic Hungarian immigrants of the United States in the last hundred years. Vardy added some less common aspects: an attempt to reconstruct their political role as well as their political/social mentality. He covered the Hungarian-Americans' (necessarily limited) participation in American political life, their attitude to and influence on events back in Hungary, as well as the collective thinking and consciousness of the various groups emerging after 1945. In this reviewer's opinion these rather difficult and controversial subjects were tackled with great tact, objectivity and detachment, although the result is bound to displease some readers.

The major patterns and tendencies in the U. S. were similar to those observable in Canada, but there were major differences, too, as pointed out by the author. Despite the fact that 90 per cent of the pre-1914 Hungarian immigrants were peasants, in the United States they seldom went into farming, they hoped to get enough out of the mines and industries of the eastern regions to enable them to return to their home village. On the other hand, mainly after 1945, the middle class and intellectual element became far more marked than in Canada. The result was a politically more active, economically (at least in many individual cases) more successful, but also more divided group,

hence in the U. S. "Hungarian unity" became even more ephemeral and impossible than in its northern neighbour.

Vardy's approach is also chronological, but special chapters are devoted to the organizations, political and intellectual activities of each major wave of immigrants. It is not a narrow ethnic history: Hungary and its cataclysms always loom large in the background, and the many forms of interaction between the old country and the new are given due attention. The most original part explains the differences in the social background, fate and thinking in the three large groups of "the great political immigration": the 16,000 "45-ers", the 10,000 "47-ers", and the almost 50,000 "56-ers". Hardly anyone is more qualified to speak on the consciousness of the 45-ers than Professor Vardy, who had an opportunity to study them closely. He is quite right to emphasize that only a small proportion of this group was a supporter of the extreme right, their majority simply nurtured the pre-1945 world and their survivors even today represent an unique historical reservation of pre-war Hungary. Despite the illusory aspect of this attitude and the historically erroneous or at best one-sided picture they draw of the Horthy-era, this group, especially the Scouts movement which has strong ties with it, shows a remarkable (in my view in many ways commendable) veneration of the Hungarian past, not only of its "glorious" aspects, but of all really positive achievements, and spreads knowledge of that with admirable unselfishness and dedication, although with less success. While they are usually called conservative, and Vardy rightly finds their symbol in the political philosophy of Cardinal Mindszenty, he is mistaken to lump the late British historian C. A. Macartney together with this group. Perhaps the most conspicuous element of the historical consciousness of the 45-ers is that while they have a thorough knowledge of pre-1944 Hungarian history, they are completely in the dark about later developments, and make very few efforts to learn about them. But their relationship to the United States is also ambiguous, the one-time D. P.-s find it obviously hard to forget the cold, often hostile reception they received upon arrival and their inability to find themselves a place in American society commensurate with their education and position in old Hungary.

The lot of the 45-ers was in marked contrast to the support and sympathy those politicians received who fled from Hungary around 1947 when the post-war coalition was replaced by monolithic and Stalinist one-party rule. These people were envied and disliked or suspected by most of the other Hungarian-Americans, and even the dispassionate Vardy censures their inevitable involvement in the politics of the Cold War.

Whereas all previous waves of immigrants laid great emphasis on preserving their Hungarian heritage and made increasingly hopeless efforts to impart that into the second generation, Vardy tends to share the view that the 56-ers melted too readily and happily into the American mass, and thinks that one of its reasons was that they had received an "anticlassical and practical, antitraditional and progressive, antinationalist and prointernationalist, and even anti-Hungarian (i.e. disparaging of Hungarian historical traditions) and pro-Soviet" education and training in the 1950's (p. 118.). But I don't think that such an education was very effective and lasting, much of it had been instinctively rejected even when it was taught. Perhaps Vardy is right about the rapid assimilation of the numerical majority of the 56-ers, who - unlike the earlier groups - saw no hope to return and had increasingly little desire to do so, but I found that on the whole the 56-ers have not only become the most successful Hungarian immigrant group, but a very large part of them (whether numerically or only spiritually large, it is hard to say) has remained Hungarian not only in accent, language preferred, in culinary taste, but in consciousness as well. They may have apparently integrated into American life, may have married (and divorced) Americans, but in their academic positions, in their business affiliations, in the many odd places where they found themselves, they on the whole acted like good advocates of many good Hungarian causes, they patronized and spread Hungarian culture, helped (as far as it was possible and compatible with honesty and with their position) Hungarians and Hungary in many, often hardly noticeable ways. Perhaps their very best achievement was bringing together their two worlds, the old Hungarian one and the new American. Very often they acted and act in isolation, usually they did not join (or soon left) the various Hungarian associations, churches, other communities, were often impatient with their older compatriots, but they cannot escape their original nationality, and most of them do not want to do so. Some of these people are very history-conscious, have collected marvellous little libraries on Hungarian subjects, and lay great emphasis on furthering a better and more sympathetic knowledge of Hungarian history throughout America. The best brains

of the 56-ers also have an almost inexplicable, instinct affinity with a Central European approach to history, hoping for better understanding between the peoples of the Danubian basin.

Both works profited from the recent results of historywriting in Hungary, and Vardy (partly because of the nature of his book) was more influenced by them than his colleagues in Canada. Although he is far from uncritically accepting all their verdicts, sometimes it is not clear whether Vardy is simply quoting, or also agrees with his colleagues in Hungary, who are also beginning to disagree more often. Perhaps the post-45 emigrations are not so nationalist and anti-communists as they had been described, a better term might be patriotic and anti-Stalinist. Gyula Borbándi's recent history of the Hungarian political emigration<sup>1</sup> or László Papp's account of Hungarian students' movements in North America<sup>2</sup> has provided much evidence for that, while the new revelations about Stalin and his henchmen shed new light on the behaviour of those Hungarians who escaped from the terror of Rákosi.

The past and present of the American-Hungarians has been presented to the English-speaking public by Bódy, Dreisziger, Kovacs, Kovrig and Vardy. Further work is being done in Hungary, especially since the establishment of the Institute for Hungarian Studies at the National Széchényi Library. It is to be hoped that both sides are going to learn from the other and that Hungarians both in America and in the Carpathian Basin will become familiar with the results.

Géza Jeszenszky

1. Borbándi, Gyula, *A magyar emigráció életrajza, 1945-1985* [The history of the Hungarian emigration] (Bern: Európai Protestáns Magyar Szabadegyetem, 1985)

2. Papp, László ÉMEFESZ, *Az amerikai magyar egyetemisták mozgalma az 1956-os forradalom után* [The movement of American Hungarian students after the revolution of 1956] (New Brunswick: Magyar öregdiák Szövetség Bessenyei György Kör, 1988)

### Aujourd'hui

*Anthologie de la littérature hongroise contemporaine*  
(Editions Corvina, 1987, 236 p.)

On ne peut que se réjouir, a priori, de la parution en langue française d'une anthologie de la littérature hongroise contemporaine: un tel ouvrage, pour autant qu'il respecte les critères essentiels requis par le genre, pourrait trouver sa place dans le processus de constitution de cette "langue mondiale de la poésie" dont Gy. Somlyó, après H. M. Enzesberger, croit discerner les prémices. La question qu'il faut alors se poser est la suivante: cette anthologie se soumet-elle suffisamment, raisonnablement, aux lois du genre?

Bien que le titre et le sous-titre de l'ouvrage prêtent assez malencontreusement à confusion, son contenu est pour l'essentiel conforme au champ qui nous est présenté par l'auteur de l'avant-propos, E. Tóth: par littérature hongroise "contemporaine", il ne faut pas entendre principalement littérature hongroise *actuelle*, moins encore *d'avant-garde*, *d'aujourd'hui*, comme le donnerait à penser le "MA"<sup>1</sup> emprunté à Kassák, mais littérature hongroise moderne, de l'entre-deux-guerres à nos jours. La référence appuyée au "Nyugat", crée en 1908,<sup>2</sup> et à ses trois générations successives, ainsi que la place fort modeste réservée aux auteurs nés après 1945, le montrent bien. Mais comment justifier, dans une telle perspective, l'éviction du grand poète A. József, alors même que la poésie, qui nous est justement présentée comme le genre dominant en Hongrie, occupe une bonne partie de l'ouvrage?

Si "la fleur" (anthos) des poètes "contemporains", avec G. Illyés, J. Pilinszky, L. Nagy, S. Weöres, I. Vas, F. Juhász, S. Csoóri, A. Nemes Nagy, semble pour le reste convenablement représentée, les oeuvres choisies (legein) sont-elles aussi "la fleur" de la production de chacun d'eux, et les textes français, ainsi que leur présentation, permettent-ils au lecteur d'en apprécier le parfum?

Seul un bon connaisseur, et de surcroît impartial, est en mesure d'apporter une réponse satisfaisante à la première question. Nous nous contenterons seulement, concernant G. Illyés, de déplorer l'absence

de l'un de ses poèmes qui eut le plus grand impact en Hongrie: *Une phrase contre la tyrannie*. Quant à la seconde, qui est plus à notre portée, nous exprimerons ici quelques regrets, et une grande satisfaction.

Satisfaction au vu de l'excellence des textes français qui nous sont proposés: la qualité littéraire des textes en prose comme des textes poétiques fut à l'évidence l'un des objectifs principaux des responsables de cette publication, et l'on doit s'en féliciter.

Regrets en ce qui concerne leur présentation: un certain nombre d'améliorations dans ce domaine aurait pu faire de cet ouvrage l'équivalent, sur le plan pratique, de *L'Anthologie de la Poésie hongroise* établie par L. Gara.<sup>3</sup> On aurait pu développer plus largement l'avant-propos, et veiller à ce que chacun des auteurs retenus dans l'anthologie y soit systématiquement mentionné: aucun représentant de la jeune génération, celle d'après la Libération, n'y figure. On aurait dû, dans le même esprit, et comme le fit L. Gara, offrir au lecteur une notice, si sommaire fût-elle, sur chaque écrivain et peut-être même chaque texte. Comment le lecteur français profane pourrait-il par exemple goûter *Naissance d'un poète*, de Kosztolányi, s'il ne sait rien de Petőfi, des circonstances et de la date précise de sa naissance, enfin de son rôle politique et littéraire? Comment, encore, pourrait-il apprécier avec perspicacité la prose pour le moins déroutante de P. Esterházy? On aurait dû également dater rigoureusement chaque oeuvre afin de pouvoir mieux évaluer la dimension "contemporaine" des textes proposés. Pour finir, il eût été souhaitable, dans la mesure où les termes d'*adaptation* et de *traduction* sont constamment utilisés dans le corps de l'ouvrage, d'exposer en préambule ce que l'on entendait par l'un et l'autre.

Ces regrets exprimés, *L'anthologie de la littérature hongroise contemporaine* se présente à nos yeux comme un ouvrage d'une indiscutable utilité: si, en notre qualité de "hungarisant", nous émettons certaines réserves sur les choix opérés et la présentation des textes, nous estimons par ailleurs que cette sélection d'oeuvres contemporaines, la première du genre, a en effet comme le dit la préfacière le mérite de faire connaître aux Français "de la bonne littérature", et notamment de mettre en relief un trait peut-être inattendu de la littérature hongroise: sa variété.

Nicolas Cazelles

1. "Aujourd'hui", en hongrois
2. Voir *Le Symbolisme en Hongrie*, de A. Karátson P. V. F., 1969
3. Éditions du Senil, 1962.

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