

SHPR

CULTURE IN



HUNGARY



THE NEW HUNGARIAN QUARTERLY

is 70 and still going strong. This English language periodical, published in Budapest, carries articles on various aspects of Hungarian life, translations of poems and short stories, and reviews of the arts. No. 70, the Summer 1978 issue, includes articles on "Socialist Society and Humanism" by Minister of Culture Imre Pozsgay, "Ten Years of the Hungarian Economic Reform" by Bela Csikos-Nagy, chairman of the national price office, and on "The Hungarian crown" by art historian Dezso Dercsenyi. Other topics discussed include "Culture and the Socialist Way of Life" and the "Freedom of the Arts in Hungary".

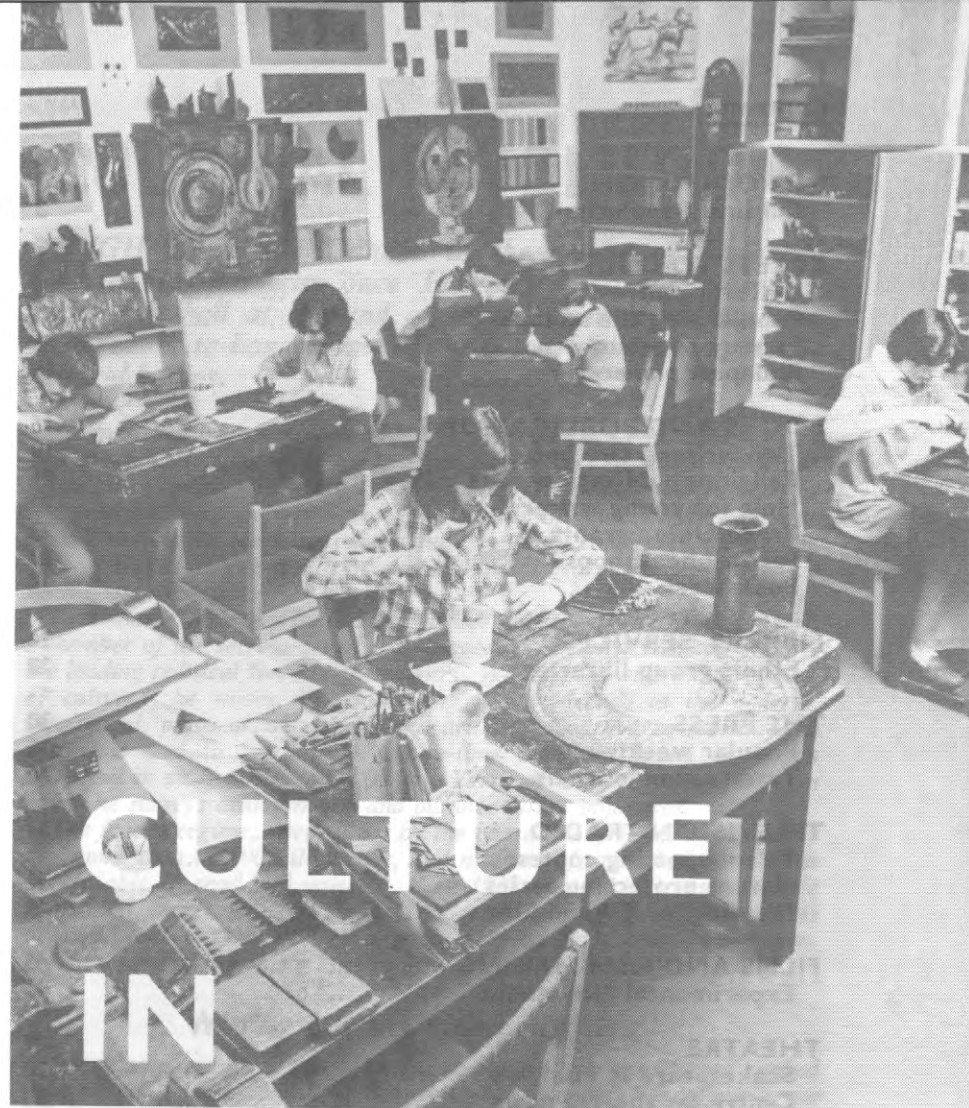
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COVER PHOTOS: A Budapest school choir sings at a memorial concert for Zoltan Kodaly in the Academy of Music (top left); the "Farmstead" strolling theatre group, made up of young artists from a number of theatre companies, gives a street performance in the central Hungarian town of Kecskemet (centre); Istvan Kada, one of Hungary's "primitive" painters, at an exhibition of his works (bottom left), SHOWN OPPOSITE is the art and design workshop of a new cultural centre for children and young people, opened in the mining town of Komlo in May 1978.



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HUNGARY

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CULTURAL REVOLUTION

HIGH above the Danube in the centre of Budapest stands what was once Hungary's Royal Palace. A burnt out shell at the end of World War II, it has now been rebuilt to house some of the country's most important cultural bodies.

The post-war transformation of this former court of kings and emperors into a national treasure house is symbolic of the revolution which has taken place in this field since 1945. No longer is culture looked upon as the prerogative of the privileged few, as was the case in the inter-war period. Access to education and culture is today considered one of the normal rights of every citizen and the aim is to raise cultural levels throughout society.

*Just what is envisaged by this was spelled out recently by Miklos Ovari, a member of the secretariat of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the leading political force in the country. We take "a wide interpretation of culture", he writes, "as something which extends to the general, ideological, political, vocational and artistic education, to morality, to life style and to worthwhile leisure-time activities." His comments appeared in an article headed *Thirty Years of Cultural Revolution* in which he surveys achievements and outlines future objectives.*

The fascist regime, swept away by the liberation of 1945, left a legacy of "more than 600,000 illiterates, and millions of untrained people just barely able to read and write. . . . In 1938 only 10,000 young people graduated from secondary school and each year only 2,000 students acquired university or college degrees." (In contrast, over 74,000 completed secondary schooling in 1976 while 26,392 graduated.)

Wiping out the "historical lag"

Large numbers of "eminent artists and scientists were forced to find jobs abroad" (including Bela Bartok and Alexander Korda) while the "few progressively-minded intellectuals, writers, artists and scientists" at home "were severely restricted in their activities" so that their influence was "confined to a small circle". It is against this background that the post-war cultural advance must be measured.

Initially the main object was "to make up for the great historical lag" by wiping out the cultural monopoly of the old ruling class and by the widespread dissemination of culture. Schools were brought under public control and compulsory education up to 14 introduced. The theatre, cinemas, newspapers, periodicals and the radio came under public ownership. Book publication boomed, with output doubling almost year by year; theatre and concert audiences doubled; in five years (1949-55) the cinema audience more than trebled.

There were changes in values as well as in the numbers with access to culture. Not least of these was a new attitude to neighbouring peoples. "This was the first time in their history," writes Ovari, "that the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe . . . had a chance to learn about each other's life and culture. This rapprochement did much to relax the convulsions of centuries of conflict and hatred . . . and opened up wider internationalist horizons in place of the one-sided Western orientation of earlier times."

By the 1960s the cultural revolution had profoundly affected all sections of society. Hungary was no longer a backward country in this respect. Indeed, according to a UNESCO survey carried out between 1962 and 1972, she ranked sixth among the countries of Europe, between Holland and France. The assessment was based on a "cultural index"—facilities such as libraries, radio and TV, and the uses made of them.

Rising living standards

This period saw an intensification of the cultural revolution, spurred on by rising living standards and increasing scientific and technical demands from industry and agriculture. Between 1960 and 1973 for instance, the numbers engaged in scientific research trebled from 26,427 to 77,493, books published went up in number from 35 to 64 million copies while museum visitors increased from 3.5 to 9.3 million. In the education field, only a third of those over 15 had completed eight years schooling in 1960; by 1970 the ratio was more than half (51.7%).

"General education cannot of course, be identified with the cultural revolution as a whole," Ovari comments. "But the present phase of our development opens up new and great perspectives. While it charts the course which can be travelled by today's generation, it also sketches the full achievement of the cultural revolution; it projects the many-sidedness of the culture of a communist society, with its possibilities for the free development of the personality."

IT depends among other things on general culture, on the active interest of people in culture, as to whether more advanced production and higher living standards can at the same time result in the wide and rapid development of a community style of living which also stimulates the many-sided development of the individual.

GYORGY ACZEL
Deputy Prime Minister

How to continue the cultural revolution and expand opportunities for "the free development of personality" is very much in the public eye today, not least because higher living standards and shorter working hours have brought leisure time activities to the fore. Plans include a big expansion in cultural facilities outside the scope of formal education, with particular emphasis on areas where these lag behind the general level—new working class housing estates for instance, or the remoter countryside communities.

The weight given to these questions is underlined by the fact that Hungary's first comprehensive legislation on public culture was put on the statute book by Parliament on October 16, 1976. Participation in public



● Budapest's one-time Royal Palace (shown above) was devastated in World War II. It has now been rebuilt and turned into an arts centre *par excellence*. In October 1975 the Hungarian National Gallery was rehoused in the magnificent central building—the opening ceremony is pictured below. With more space, like that in the central cupola hall, shown on the right, many treasures in store for years can now be put on show. Two major museums were already in occupation—the Budapest Historical Museum and the Museum of the Hungarian Labour Movement. They are due to be joined by the National Szechenyi Library, the country's most important collection of books and documents, a theatre company and institutes for the study of drama, literature and music.



culture is a civic right, says the act, and no single class or section of society should be privileged when it comes to what the state can offer in this field. National and universal cultural treasures should be "public property", Minister of Culture Imre Pozsgay said when he introduced the legislation in Parliament. "More and more people should be drawn into creating and propagating cultural products. And they should be given more assistance in developing their creative capacities."

One important fundamental principle of the new law is that national minorities must enjoy the same cultural rights as other citizens and at the same time must receive support in their efforts to foster their language and cultural heritage.

The law also states that creating the proper conditions for mass access to culture is the obligation of the state. Locally the councils are responsible for suitable facilities. This does not exclude voluntary initiative on the part of individuals, firms or social organisations; on the contrary these are to be encouraged. The act details the tasks which fall to the various bodies concerned, including cultural centres, public libraries, publishers, art institutes, scientific bodies, museums and sports clubs. But companies and co-operatives are also under a moral obligation to promote the cultural activities of their employees and members. And companies must set up cultural funds which may not be used for other purposes.

National and local cultural councils

One comparatively new body played a leading part in drawing up the guidelines for the new law—the National Council for Access to Culture, set up by the government in July 1974. Members include an under-secretary of state from each government ministry, representatives from all bodies which have national jurisdiction, and delegates from the mass organisations—the trade unions, women's organisation and youth movement for instance. The council was set up with two main objectives in mind—to draw up proposals, projects and guidelines which affect access to culture in general, and to manage funds allocated by the government for investments intended to promote public culture.

At the same time local cultural councils, similar to but not subordinate to the national council, were set up at county level. Their activity is focused on three main objectives:

- 1) to ensure that local councils and bodies, including companies, consider the effects which their economic plans may have on public culture;
- 2) to establish proper conditions for educational and cultural activities at the place of work by ensuring that the necessary money and premises are available; and
- 3) to mobilise local intellectuals to help in raising the cultural level of the working people.

As well as their part in drawing up the new legislation, these bodies have helped to prepare and co-ordinate a long term, 15 year development plan up to 1990. Based on a comprehensive survey of the present position in all fields of culture, it has been drawn up with the help of both the Ministry of Culture and the National Planning Office. Among the social changes projected is that the ratio of the population with secondary and higher educational qualifications should go up from 19% to 37%.

Developments are considered under three main headings—national or central projects, regional and local plans. On a national level attention is focussed first and foremost on radio and television, which have come to play such an important part in the last 15 years or so. (In 1976 over 2½ million held radio licences, with nearly as many TV licence holders; this means that virtually every family among the 10½ million population has a radio and/or television set.)

Here there will be development both on the technical side—to ensure that all regions can enjoy good TV reception for instance—and on the programme side. Many new programmes, such as specialised TV courses, are projected; amateur activities are to receive greater coverage; and audience services, such as film libraries and studios for audience use, are to be expanded.

Drive to decentralise

Present policies will continue in other fields—book publishing, the production of films and gramophone records, concerts and exhibitions. High priority will go to the renovation of buildings which are important culturally either because of intrinsic artistic or historic interest or because of the use made of them. There will also be a drive to decentralise, with some bodies now in Budapest moving to the provinces. Five main provincial centres have been designated—Debrecen (in the east), Győr (north west), Miskolc (north east), Pécs (south west) and Szeged (south east).

Regional institutions, including museums, libraries, theatres and concert halls, come under the second heading. Here new institutions will be set up and existing facilities developed. But the most dynamic headway is called for at local level, particularly in remoter areas. The aim is to provide "cultural complexes" for all settlements where there are less than 2,000 inhabitants. These should include a school, cultural centre, public library, cinema and facilities for sports and other clubs. Where new buildings are not feasible, existing ones are to be adapted.

The 15 year plan is an ambitious one and calls for thousands more qualified persons to work in the cultural field—there will be jobs for 75,000 of them by 1990. Training facilities have already been extended. University faculties for training in public cultural work and librarianship are expanding (in these two branches the intake of students doubled in the 1975-76 academic year). These two subjects have been added to the curricula of teachers' training colleges and student teachers are now expected to take one of them as an additional subject. In secondary school courses have also been introduced, to train auxiliary staff.

At the same time Minister of Culture Imre Pozsgay has called for greater recognition for those who work in the cultural field. "We cannot be satisfied with the social status of such work," he says. "The cause of this lies in part in the interpretation and the approach, and in part in the shortage of staff, low remuneration and lack of facilities." One of the aims of the new Public Culture Act is to remedy this by "a gradual improvement in the supply of personnel and funds". But he adds that other measures will also be needed; these will be "introduced later to the extent made possible by the economic growth of the country, a growth which depends to no small degree on the assistance culture is able to offer"



Cultural and sports centre at Szombathely, western Hungary. The central hall, which can be used as a theatre or for sports events, seats 1,200.

ONE of the recent changes in the cultural field in Hungary has been in the attitude to adult education. Indeed the Minister of Culture, Imre Pozsgay, claims that this concept has been replaced by that of "access to culture". Writing in a recent issue of the English language publication, the *New Hungarian Quarterly* (No. 66), he comments:

"We have substituted the notion of access to culture for that of adult education which had mechanically divided people into educators and those to be educated, into those who create, propagate and passively receive." This "places emphasis upon personal participation, communal character and continuity . . . it presupposes that every man carries some specific knowledge or experience which is worth sharing with the community."

This does not mean that bodies which have long specialised in "adult education", such as the Association for the Popularisation of Science, have been scrapped or that there are no longer opportunities for adults at work to acquire higher educational qualifications, but rather a change of attitude. Indeed the courses open to those who want to make up for lost schooling or obtain more advanced qualifications and the financial and other help which is given to them are today more widespread than ever before.

Apart from formal schooling, which is outside the scope of this pamphlet, access to culture is provided through many channels—the spoken word (radio, lectures, discussions), the printed word (books, libraries, the press), the visual image (television, drama, film). In addition there are a number of bodies and institutions which are particularly suited to encouraging the two-way process which the Minister of Culture refers to, like the local cultural centre. The following pages are an attempt to survey these channels of access.

Cultural centres

THE village of Bekes in southern Hungary, near the borders with Romania, was the site of the country's first cultural centre. Opened in 1949 it was at that time "expected to operate as a tool in helping to turn culture from a monopoly of the privileged few into the common property of the millions".

In 1973, when Bekes had so grown in stature that it was granted town status, there were 2,815 cultural centres in operation. Their activities that year included the organising of 100,000 lectures on popular science, the staging of 33,000 musical and literary evenings for audiences which totalled seven million, and the running of nearly 10,000 amateur groups and 6,000 specialist clubs. The very scope of these activities was evidence that the country was long past the stage when it was necessary to break down the barriers which had fenced off culture as a "monopoly of the privileged few".

During the intervening years the role of the cultural centre has changed. In the early stages they were for the most part the scene of large scale events—theatre performances, dances, rallies and popular lectures given by prominent people who were known nationally. But as cultural standards went up and in particular as the influence of radio and television became more widespread, the demands made on the centres changed and became more varied.

Outlet for talent

Today they range from the desire for specialist knowledge, or an outlet for latent talents, to the need for human companionship with others of similar tastes. Cultural centre activities have therefore become increasingly diversified and are often linked with local or specific issues.

At the Bekes cultural centre a new programme of comprehensive operation, embracing work on local problems, was adopted in 1969. One such problem concerned

the local gypsy settlement—comprising 650 of the town's 21,000 inhabitants. As with other gypsy communities in Hungary, the schooling of the children had been sporadic, the general level of culture was below that of the rest of the community and there were long standing prejudices against them which had not yet been eradicated.

Local youth club

With help from the cultural centre, local youth started a special club, aimed at breaking down these prejudices. Named the "Pista Danko" club, after a 19th century gypsy song writer who is famous throughout Hungary, it offers help to those who want to catch up on any formal education they have missed, while at the same time trying to tap the wealth of gypsy culture.

Initially 68 workers joined up for the lecture courses, which included the study of gypology, while a number of amateur activities were launched. A gypsy red cross group was also set up.

Another specialised activity initiated by the centre is help for children with speech defects. With the assistance of experts in this field, a course was organised for local school children; about 60 of them were aided to such a degree that they were able to overcome their various disabilities. As a result of this success, a local institute for handicapped children has now been set up, which includes experts in speech defects on the staff.

Study groups for secondary school pupils, designed to help them choose a future career, is another activity. There are courses in Hungarian language and literature, history, chemistry and biology.

Amateur activities

These are intended primarily for the children of manual workers who want to go on to university but cannot get the same help at home as a boy or girl from a professional family. There is an art club to give encouragement to youngsters who want to go to the art college at Szeged, the nearest university town.

Amateur activities have long been fostered by the cultural centre network. At Bekes itself some of the country's first amateur "cultural brigades" were formed with the object of carrying a full

Evening class in the language laboratory at the Kobanya cultural centre.



evening programme to local factories, rural settlements and schools. Their performances were often given where no plays or concerts had ever taken place before.

Music lovers

Today the centre runs a club for young music lovers, which has its own choir and distributes concert season tickets among the local secondary school pupils, a theatre group run on similar lines, and an amateur film club. Competitions for local groups are also staged.

The Bekes cultural centre is the oldest in the country. It is housed in a former village guest house, dating from 1884, which has been adapted to suit its new purpose. Most of the more recent centres, however, are purpose built. The activities of two of them give further illustration of how these centres are operating.

Factory help

The cultural centre in the Budapest working class district of Kobanya was built and financed jointly by local factories, the local district council, the Ministry of Culture, the Young Communist League and the trade unions. It is intended to serve a local population of over 100,000, catering in particular for the needs of young people and workers.

The centre building has been carefully designed and provided with a wide range of facilities. There is a theatre which seats 500 and a smaller, chamber theatre with seating for 50. Large halls suitable for dances can be divided into smaller club rooms by means of sliding wall panels. Sports facilities include a well equipped gymnasium.

There is a language laboratory which claims to be one of the best equipped in the country and a library with a stock of over 100,000 volumes; this includes a reference section, reading room and a children's room, where puppet and film shows are also put on.

Great care and attention has been lavished on the decor and furnishing in order to make the centre as inviting as possible. The halls and foyers are decorated with specially commissioned works of art.

Creche and nursery

There are clubs for all tastes from pigeon fancying to philately; they cater for all age groups—facilities at the young mums' club, for instance, include a creche and nursery where the children can be left under expert supervision, while their mothers relax in the company of other adults. Courses in dressmaking, secretarial work, elocution and motor mechanics are at present the most popular among the education classes.

One regular activity is a monthly pre-release film show, where a new Hungarian or foreign feature film is screened. This is followed by a discussion, either with one or more of those involved in making the film, or with a film expert. The centre also has its own amateur film studio.

Extra tuition

The Kobanya centre works in close co-operation with the local schools, offering extra tuition for children who are taking exams and are recommended for additional help by their teachers. Once again this is primarily intended to help the children of manual

workers. The centre also has ties with the adult education faculty of the Budapest University of Arts and Sciences, with students visiting the centre to do some of their practical work.

At the Danube-side town of Vac (population 34,000), 21 miles north of Budapest, the new cultural centre was opened in April 1976. Purpose built, at the heart

THE basic idea running through the entire programme of public education is to promote the continued democratisation of culture by ensuring access to it.

IMRE POZSGAY
Minister of Culture

of the centre is a circular theatre topped by a dome which can be seen from all parts of the town. The dome was manufactured and donated by one of the Danube shipyards.

Air conditioned

The building, which is air conditioned, consists of three areas—a quiet section where a number of small societies have their headquarters, the club section and the theatre and cinema hall. The theatre is the only one in Vac and as the town has no permanent company, is host to groups from all over the country.

There is a high powered astronomical telescope at the centre, for use by members of the astronomy club; and a mirrored dancing room where ballet and folk dance are taught and practised.

A do-it-yourself section, equipped with a variety of tools, is under the direction of a full time skilled worker who is something



The new cultural centre at Vac.

of a "jack-of-all-trades". He gives help and advice to do-it-yourself enthusiasts who can use the centre to make a variety of articles including furniture. All they pay for is the cost of materials.

Lectures and discussion evenings are free of charge; the cost for entrance to entertainment programmes is 10 forints for an adult,

with admission free for children; the charge for a series of 32 language lessons is 320 forints (about 10% of the average *monthly* industrial wage). The membership fee for various clubs is 30 forints for a six month period.

Providing Saturday afternoon entertainment for the whole of the family is one of the aims of this particular centre. There is a nursery school teacher in attendance to look after the younger children; for the older children there are puppet and conjuring shows; for three hours the parents are then free to enjoy any of the centre's activities, taking in a talk, discussion or film show and then relaxing at the snack bar, browsing at leisure at the book stall or playing cards with their friends in the games room.

POPULARISING THE SCIENCES

THE Association for the Popularisation of Science (APS) is an autonomous body which has long played an important role in providing access to culture. Activities include extra mural studies, lectures, sight seeing tours and visits to museums and studios, and involve about five million people a year—almost half the population.

The association also has its own publishing house which issues both books and a number of journals. The best known of these is **Elet es Tudomány** (Life and Science), a popular, illustrated, scientific weekly which is widely read. But there are also more specialised monthly and quarterly magazines covering sociological questions, natural history, research subjects, the preservation of monuments and many other fields.

Forerunner of the present-day association was the Hungarian Society for Natural History, founded in 1841, a body which rapidly established an international reputation. Early Hungarian members included Lajos Kossuth, national hero and leader of the 1848-49 war of independence, and Ignac Semmelweiss, one of the doctors who pioneered safer childbirth. Foreign members included Thomas Huxley and Charles Darwin, and when the society acquired its own publishing house in 1872, Darwin's **On the Origin of the Species** was one of the first books to be published.

One early activity was the collection of museum objects in the natural history field, a collection which was later bestowed on the National Museum. Members gave active support to the museum and also fostered the idea of founding a zoological gardens in Budapest, which was put into practice in 1866. At the turn of the century the society joined hands with the Social Democratic Party to organise "free schools of social science", which were aimed at raising the educational and intellectual level of the working class.

After World War II the society was reorganised and took its present name in 1948. Since then the Association for the Popularisation of Science has been closely associated with other bodies engaged in adult educational activities, including the trade unions, the Patriotic People's Front, the Young Communist League and the National Federation of Co-operative Societies.

(Work in this field is co-ordinated by the National Council for Adult Education, a non-government body which was set up in 1957.)

Joint symposium

THE first ever Anglo-Hungarian symposium on adult education was held in Budapest from March 28-April 1, 1977. It was organised jointly by the British Council and the Hungarian Institute for Cultural Relations to foster the exchange of ideas in this field.

Heading the British delegation was Mr. H. D. Hughes, principal of Ruskin College, Oxford and president of the Workers' Education Association. Delegates included educationalists involved with education work in the trade unions and with community education. On the Hungarian side were representatives from the Ministries of Culture, Education and Labour, the trade union council, the National Council for Adult Education and the Trade Union College.

Summing up at the end of the conference Mr. Hughes told the English language paper **Daily News** that the main differences between the Hungarian and British adult educational systems was that the Hungarian concentrated more on the obtaining of school and university diplomas.

The British delegation had visited educational centres in Csepel, Tata and Győr and the members were much impressed by the facilities and standards provided for those interested in the courses available. It was clear, he said, that Hungary was making efforts which were similar to those in Britain in the fields of recreational and leisure activities and popular education.

Current APS activities include the organisation of university extension courses, language schools, general knowledge academies, study circles, clubs and collective study tours. The first two of these are organised through the **Attila Jozsef University of Extramural Studies** (named after Hungary's best known pre-war working class poet), which is run by APS.

In the 1976/77 academic year over a hundred courses were offered, 80% of them covering new topics. They included 38 courses in the social sciences, 11 in literature and linguistics, 22 in the arts, 18 in the natural sciences and 14 on special topics. Subjects included protection of the environment, ergonomics and system-theory.

In the language school, audio-visual methods are by now used in about one in four of the classes. Tuition in a wide range of languages is offered, including Oriental and classical tongues as well as modern European.

General and professional knowledge

Workers' Academies, the first of which were founded in 1959, are another branch of APS educational activity. What they have to offer differs from the university courses in that those taking part do not necessarily have a secondary school education behind them. Usually based on an industrial company, the academies are more adapted to local interests and may include scientific topics relevant to the particular firm—the art of shaping metals for instance, or the world of telecommunications. Increasing emphasis is on a combination of general and professional knowledge.

APS also runs academies for co-operative farm workers, which feature talks on agricultural techniques and management, and for women and parents, where topics include scientific aspects of the growing role of women in society, and the education of children. Special courses are also offered for those engaged in the conduct of public affairs ranging from membership of a "tenants' committee" which has to deal with practical problems in a block of flats, to service as a lay assessor in the civil or criminal courts.

The **study circles** organised by APS offer help in extending technical knowledge or artistic skills in a wide range of leisure activities. The emphasis is on practical training; subjects include bee-keeping, gardening topics, archeology, amateur photography, radio engineering and a wide range of handicrafts. **Cultural clubs** include readers' clubs, usually attached to a library, which organise conferences between readers and writers, discussions and poetry readings, music and jazz clubs and collectors' clubs.

Local clubs—study tours

There is also a "society of film friends" which dates back to 1961 and has a network of local clubs, where the history of the film, film aesthetics and similar topics are discussed. Group visits to the cinema, theatre, concert hall or art gallery are of course included in many club programmes.

APS **study tours** aim at providing knowledge both about Hungary and other countries. Tours within Hungary visit places of historic and artistic interest or those of economic importance, including new centres of industry and agriculture. They are led by a qualified guide—usually

a secondary school teacher—and are organised in co-operation with IBUSZ, the Hungarian tourist agency.

IBUSZ and APS also run joint tours to study other countries and for this purpose they run a Travellers' Club which has branches all over the country.

The other side of the international activities of APS are the annual **summer and winter universities** which are organised in association with local universities and colleges. These are intended to give foreign visitors a chance to study various aspects of Hungarian life. The many topics covered include music and music education, folk art and ethnography, the Hungarian language and literature, social and economic conditions in Hungary, and Esperanto.

For the past nine years a winter university has also been held at the spa resort of Harkany in southern Hungary. Topics at the December 1977 course were: the development of Hungarian society; questions of the international defence of peace; the 60th anniversary of the Russian revolution; and the centenary of Endre Ady, a major figure in Hungarian literature.

Budapest gets a modern planetarium

OPENED in August 1977, the Budapest Planetarium is one of the most up-to-date in Europe. It is an important acquisition for the Association for the Popularisation of Science, which organises daily lectures and programmes.

The main installation is a universal planetarium projector, from the Zeiss Works in Jena, which is equipped with 160 sub-projectors and 32 electrical motors. These can be used to represent the movements of the stars and planets on the huge dome—20 metres high and 23 metres in diameter.

The inside aluminium covering of the dome, pierced by over 50 million pinpoint holes, is considered to provide ideal acoustic conditions. There is seating for 390 people in the auditorium.

There are over 12,000 amateur astronomers who belong to clubs throughout Hungary. The only other planetarium is a much smaller one at Pecs in the south.



BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

A NATION of readers—this claim is backed up by the number of Hungarian books published and sold. In 1976 nearly 90 million were printed, between eight and nine volumes for every member of the population. It is a ratio which puts Hungary among the first five nations in Europe.

The figures—8,391 titles printed in 89,300,000 copies—show a 50% increase on five years ago. And they mark a tenfold increase compared with pre-war (nine million books were printed in 1938).

prices remain stable while publishing expenses, from wages to cost of paper, go up.

But another, more profound reason is the change in people's lives—increased leisure hours, higher standards of education, and the need felt by so many to keep up with the technical revolution which affects both their work and life style.

The popularity of new works on the different trades and professions reflects this. And while literature of all kinds continues

including school text books), over 18% of all books issued.

The bulk of publishing is in the hands of 17 state operated houses. They operate under the jurisdiction of the Publishing Directorate of the Ministry of Culture, which harmonises plans and ensures supplies of paper. But the various publishers are largely independent when it comes to selecting books and drawing up plans. There is no office of censorship.

The present structure of book publishing evolved in the 1950s. Most houses specialise in one or more fields. **Szepirodalmi** and **Magveto** handle Hungarian literature almost exclusively while **Europa** publishes foreign literature in translation. **Corvina Press** publishes Hungarian works in other languages and art books. **Ferenc Mora** and **Ifjusagi Kiado** publish books for young people.

Political works are put out by **Kossuth** which also publishes popular science works, while **Gondolat**, who publish for the Association for the Popularisation of Science, specialise in this field. **Tancsics**, of the Central Council of Trade Unions, brings out political works and books on trade union affairs, including labour and social insurance questions.

Akademiai Kiado belongs to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which has been putting out publications since the 1830s. Their first concern is to publish original works by Hungarian scientists and economists, but they also publish dictionaries and encyclopedias. **Akademiai** has contracts with about a hundred foreign business associates and enjoys considerable international prestige. Works are published in many



Popular boxer Laszlo Papp autographs copies of a new book about him in a Budapest bookshop.

languages, including 13 of the European, Arabic and Chinese.

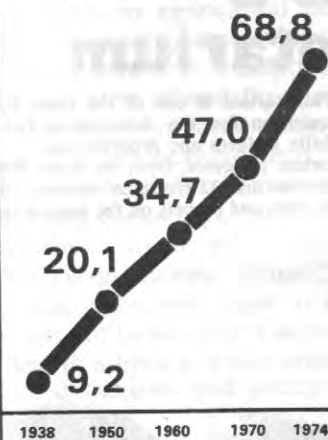
Another company with wide international contacts is **Editio Musica**; they publish musical scores, professional and popular books on music and the dance, and other works related to music. Activities include the production of joint editions for the world market.

Smaller specialist houses include **Zrinyi** (military works), **Medicina** (professional works on medicine and hygiene) and publishers for works on law and economics, agriculture and technical matters. **Text-Book Publishers** produce about 25 million school text-books each year.

In addition to the state run houses, a number of bodies can publish independently. These include the various churches and the Central Statistical Office. Local councils, libraries and others who apply for such rights can also publish independently.

Nearly half the new titles released in 1976 came from independent publishers, although in most cases only in small editions.

No. of copies in total (million books)



No. of published books per 100,000 inhabitants in 1971



The publishing boom has been matched by increased sales. Book trade turnover in 1976 was 16.8% up on the year before. One reason for high sales is that books are cheap, thanks to generous government support. Indeed subsidies increase year by year, for book

to attract the largest number of readers, there is increasing demand for popular scientific, educational and technical books.

Another field in which demand has exploded is books for children and young people; 16,500,000 of them were published in 1976 (not

Individuals may also arrange for their works to be published at their own expense, provided that such works do not advocate war or the overthrow of Hungary's socialist regime, or are not pornographic. Many writers make use of this right, particularly in the field of literature. Privately published works at times account for as much as 5% of the new titles in this field.

Prize for poets

AVANT-GARDE poet Odon Palasovszky has won the 1977 Robert Graves prize, awarded each year to the Hungarian judged to have written the best poetry. The prize was founded in 1970 when poets from many lands met in Budapest.

Robert Graves donated revenue earned in Hungary from translations of his works to provide the prize money. The eight prize-winners to date represent the main trends in Hungarian poetry today—the avant-garde and the traditional.

Two main companies distribute and sell books—the **State Book Distributing Company** in Budapest and **Muvelt Nep** (Cultured People) in the provinces. Shops run by the **General Consumers' Co-operative** also handle books and make most of the sales in the villages. Sales went up in all three sectors in 1976—by 6.3% in Budapest, 12.1% in the provincial towns and 33% in the villages.

Booksellers and publishers are banded together in the **Association of Hungarian Publishers and Distributors**. Set up in 1969, this body safeguards the interests of the profession and has advisory rights on decisions which affect

the development of both publishing and distribution.

The association has its own market research group which, apart from keeping the trade abreast of public demand, carries out surveys on questions like changes in readership. In 1974, for instance, when a random sample of 4,500 bookshop customers were interviewed, it turned out that three out of four were under the age of 40. Another survey showed that industrial workers were buying more books. While they accounted for 6% of all customers in 1964, by 1974 they accounted for just over 26%.

The **Hungarian Writers' Association** includes poets, prose writers, critics and literary translators in its ranks. Formed in February 1945 and reorganised in 1957, after the 1956 counter-revolution, this body takes part in working out government policy on literary questions, has the right to make recommendations for literary awards, and is behind a number of nationally important educational projects, such as the movement "For a reading public".

The association has five sections, covering poetry, prose, drama, writing in general, translations of both prose and poetry, and criticism. Apart from Budapest, there are local branches in five provincial towns.

The **Hungarian PEN Club**, founded in 1921, is a fully fledged and active member of the international PEN, playing host to international gatherings and writers from other countries on numerous occasions. Hungarian PEN issues a seasonal bulletin and is considered to be a workshop for high-standard translations of literature.

The protection of copyright in all fields, including music and the theatre, is the task of **Artisjus**, the Hungarian Bureau for Copyright Protection, which was set up in 1953. The country's first laws on copyright date back to 1884, but the most recent legislation is the Copyright Act of 1969.

Fundamental aim of the new law was to codify the socialist concept of copyright, in which the interests of the author are co-ordinated with those of society.

It is in the writer's interest that his or her work should reach as wide a public as possible and he or she has the right to expect proper payment—royalties which will allow for continued work, undisturbed by financial worries. At the same time it is in the interests of socialist society that new, creative works should see the light

of day and reach the largest possible public.

Among the provisions of the 1969 act are terms of contract which are obligatory when a publishing house or other body concludes an agreement with a creative artist. Scales of payment for royalties are indicated within a wide range of minimum and maximum rates. The contract is seen as an agreement between parties of equal standing.

Hungary is a member of the two world copyright conventions, the Berne and the Universal Copyright Convention (which operates under UNESCO auspices) and plays an active part in the work of both. **Artisjus**, the copyright bureau, also co-operates closely with similar bodies in other countries, such as the Performing Rights Society in Great Britain.

Two writers, two books

GYORGY MOLDOVA'S *The Spell of the Rail* attracted immediate attention when it appeared in June 1977. A 400-page book published in 40,000 copies, it was acclaimed by the critics and sold out in two weeks.

Editor of the *New Hungarian Quarterly*, **Ivan Boldizsar** commented: "It is not a novel, yet it is more exciting than a crime story. It is no social study, yet it digs deeper than many sociological surveys. It is difficult to classify, but the same could be said about Moldova's work in general.

"His is the case of a typical contemporary Hungarian writer. At 43 he is classed as a 'young writer', and I believe this will hold good when he is 70. He was born in the Budapest working-class suburb of Kobanya. He has taken all manner of jobs—was in turn cotton picker, canning factory operative, miner in the southern colliery of Komlo. He even worked in a film studio—not as actor or director, but as boiler-room mechanic.

"He worked as roadbuilder in Budapest, bricklayer in Nyiregyhaza, and has completed his studies in the College of Drama. But throughout his versatile career he always worked as a writer and journalist. He wrote novels, short stories and social surveys which are halfway between sociological studies and on-the-spot journalism. All his works are both intriguing and strictly factual.

RELIGIOUS PUBLICATIONS

"His latest work is about the railways. He studied them for over a year. He viewed them from the side of the passengers, but made efforts to see them even more clearly from the other side, which is unknown to the passengers. He has written a convincing report on the hard life and even harder working conditions of the railwaymen, of the oppressive amount of red tape, and of the self-sacrificing devotion and faith of so many of them. He also has an eye for the sad state of disorganisation which exists here and there. Yet the overall impression is of a fine organisation, operated by dedicated men.

"Every line is imbued with a critical approach, which many foreigners imagine is impossible in Hungary. And what is the result of so much outspokenness? The top officials of the Hungarian State Railways, far from taking the hard words with resentment, have made Gyorgy Moldova an 'honorary railwayman!'"

ANTAL VEGH, a popular novelist, was among those who published a new work privately in 1977, not because his publishers had rejected it, but because he felt it would reach his readers more quickly. It was in fact brought out in record time.

He gave his reasons—and an account of the mechanics of publishing privately—in an interview in *Elet es Irodalom* (Life and Literature).

He approached the Durer Printing Works in Bekescsaba (southern Hungary) with a collection of short stories called *A Leltar* (The Inventory). They offered to publish for 370,000 forints, with a 10% margin either way. Payment was to be made 30 days after publication.

Although he did not have the cash in hand, Vegh calculated that in that period his book was likely to sell out and he would have the money from the takings. He had already published one book privately, which had sold out in three days. The *State Book Distributing Company* agreed to handle the book at the usual 33% discount and advance orders were taken from bookshops and libraries.

Cost of the book to the public was about double the usual price—42 forints a copy (about £1.20) as there was no government subsidy. But as the author pointed out, the reading public was quite prepared to pay that kind of price for "entertainment literature" which is not subsidised. He quoted an Agatha Christie work, half the length of his own, which sold for 38 forints.

The gamble paid off. Apart from 200 copies which the author retained himself, the 20,000 issued sold out well within the 30 days.

Antal Vegh summed up by saying that he thought everyone had benefited. He was satisfied because his book had appeared promptly, had sold well and had netted him a profit of 80,000 forints, which is what he would have got if it had gone through the normal channels. (Two more of his works, incidentally, were with state publishing houses at that very time.) The state had saved between two and three thousand forints in subsidy, the printers had been paid promptly, and the *State Book Distributing Company* had made between two and three thousand forints on the sales.

The readers, it is true, had to pay more than usual. But their compensation was that they did not have to wait for the book.

TWO new translations of the Bible were published in 1974 and 1975—one for the Catholic, the other for the Protestant churches. They are the first scholarly, modern translations to appear in Hungarian, supplementing the Gaspar Karolyi translation of 1590 used by Protestants and the 17th century version by Gyorgy Kaldi used by Catholics.

Work on the two projects has been going on for years, with clerical and lay scholars collaborating, and with the Academy of Sciences lending support. Both new bibles comprise the complete Old and New Testaments and are based on critical editions of the Hebrew and Greek texts (the early versions were from Latin).

The publication of the new translations, which have been welcomed for their high scholarly and literary standards, has been of major importance for the country's religious press. In the case of the Protestant bible it has led to the setting up in 1977 of a new publisher, the *Hungarian Bible Council*, which joins the existing seven religious publishing bodies serving Hungary's various religious denominations.

In 1976 a total of 64 religious works in 627,500 copies were published. About a third of them treated with theological questions and problems of religious life, a quarter were intended for religious instruction, and nearly a third (29%) were volumes of church music, religious poetry, short stories and novels. Prayer books accounted for 14%.

The Catholic Church, the

biggest in Hungary, has three publishers and together they put out the largest number of works. The *Saint Stephen Society* is the oldest (founded in 1848) and in 1976 published 12 works in 226,000 copies.

The society is the official publisher of the Hungarian Bench of Bishops and the Apostolic Holy See and therefore issues liturgical works for use in church services, textbooks for religious instruction and prayer books. The 1976 publications also included the collected poems of a noted Catholic poet, Sandor Sik.

The *Ecclesia Co-operative* issued 10 books in 124,000 copies. These included the second edition of the Hungarian translation of the "Confessions of St. Augustine" and a revised and enlarged edition of a 1968 publication, "The Life of the Saints" by Antal Ijjas.

● Works by Martin Luther, published during his lifetime, are among the rare books and documents held by the National Szechenyi Library in Budapest. The collection includes a small catechism published in Nurnberg in 1531, a letter to King Henry VIII of England and the attack against the clerics of Mainz.



The third Catholic publisher, **Katolikus Szo** (Catholic World) printed 70,000 copies of a small number of works. The most popular among them was their annual religious calendar.

The **Reformed Church Press**, which serves Hungary's Calvinists and Presbyterians, issued 27 works in 179,000 copies, including a pictorial Calvinist Calendar which appeared in 50,000 copies. Other works included a biblical novel, "David and Moses" and a collection of religious poetry, "Church Window". A volume published in honour of the 300th anniversary of the birth of Janos Apaczai Csere paid tribute to a great Hungarian theologian of the past.

The **Evangelical Church Press** (Lutheran) published eight books in 47,400 copies, most of them religious studies. The **Free Council of Churches**, which embraces ten denominations, including Baptists and Methodists, has its own press which published four works in 21,000 copies in 1976.

The Jewish religious community also has its own press, which put out three works in 12,800 copies. They included a Hebrew calendar which is considered to be unique in Central and Eastern Europe.

Apart from the publication of books, the religious press issues 15 different newspapers and periodicals, including three weeklies and four bi-weeklies. Among the most widely read are the Catholic papers **Uj Ember** (New Man) and **Katolikus Szo** (Catholic Word) and **Vigilia**, a prestigious literary journal.

Protestant papers include **Reformatusok Lapja** (Reformed Journal) and **Evangelikus Elet** (Evangelical Life), while the Jewish paper **Uj Elet** (New Life) also enjoys high prestige. A new Reformed Church periodical, **Confessio**, was launched in August 1977 and appears quarterly in 5,000 copies. The first issue included an article on the "Churches under Socialism" by Dr. Tibor Bartha, M.P., Bishop of Debrecen.

Help for young writers

WHEN the Hungarian Writers' Association met in May 1976, the general secretary spoke of a "vigorous young generation of writers" who had appeared in the last few years. He might have added that the Association gives considerable help to young writers, in co-operation with the Ministry of Culture and the publishing houses.

In 1973 they helped to set up a club for young writers, the **Attila Jozsef Circle**, named after the pre-war working class poet. The club is open to writers under the age of 35. They can join once they have some piece of writing in print, whether it be a short story, article or poem. (Full membership of the Writers' Association is open to those who have had one or more books published.)

The young writers have their own journal, **Mozgo Vilag** (Moving World), started in 1975, which is designed to promote their work. Special scholarships are also open to them. Named after another progressive figure in Hungarian literary history, the novelist Zsigmond Moricz, ten of these scholarships are available each year.

Those who win them receive 3,000 forints a month for a year. (In 1976 average industrial earnings were just over 3,200 forints a month.) The recommendations for the scholarships are made by the Writers' Association, but the money is provided by the state through the Arts Fund (which provides cash for all the arts). The fund also covers contributions to the social services scheme, usually paid by the employer.

Twin aims of the Zsigmond Moricz scholarships are to give young writers an opportunity to deal with contemporary problems and to work on a first major project, free from financial worries.

There are other awards which are designed to encourage the young writer. Each year there are awards for the best new work in the fields of both poetry and prose. Both carry cash prizes of 7,000 forints.

A number of publishers also provide outlets designed to promote the work of new writers. Two current series devoted to this aim are **Uj Termek** (New Works), published by **Magveto** and **Kozmosz**, produced by the **Ifjusagi** (Youth) publishing house. Parallel with this, works for a new series of books on Hungarian history have been commissioned from young historians.

Once a young writer has a work accepted for publication, he can expect an edition of about 10,000 copies, if it is a novel, or between 3,000 and 5,000 for a work of poetry. This compares with editions of between 50,000 and 100,000 copies which the most popular of the established contemporary writers can expect for a new book.

Trade union grants

TWO-YEAR scholarships for young writers who want to study working class life at first hand are offered by the **Central Council of Trade Unions** under a co-operation agreement with the **Writers' Association**. The two bodies jointly organise contests to select the winners.

The **Writers' Association** advertises the contest and judges the entries, co-operating with the trade unions in setting the terms of the scholarship. The trade unions provide the cash and the facilities.

The co-operation agreement, which was signed in 1976, also covers other forms of help to writers who want to collect material about contemporary working class life. It suggests that opportunities to work in the trade union cultural bodies within the factories are likely to be among the most fruitful forms of mutual aid. It is also proposed that writers should help to organise reading circles for workers and to run national competitions for young workers in fields such as amateur acting and poetry reading.

One of the main objects of the agreement is to encourage the portrayal of everyday life in contemporary literature and to extend the co-operation between writers and the trade unions, which has existed for a number of years. Traditions go back to pre-war days when the trade union publishing house issued a number of literary works dealing with working class life and published sociological and other studies which were unlikely to be published elsewhere at that time, because of their progressive content.

FACTORY BOOKSHOPS

The growing network of workplace bookshops is playing a significant part in the increase in book buying by individuals and the building up of family libraries. An account of how this network operates appeared in a recent issue of "Hungarian Trade Union News".

BOOKS are now on sale in almost all factories, institutes and offices. Larger firms have their own bookshops, or at least book-stalls, while in the smaller work places volunteers organise the sale of books, acting as agents. The great advantage, of course, is that books are available to workers on the spot. They can also be paid for by instalments.

READING ROOM

FOREIGN language newspapers and journals went on loan to the public of Sopron when a new reading room opened in November 1977. The first of its kind in the provinces, it is run by the Budapest Newspaper and Periodicals Publishing Company.

The reading room is in the town centre and is intended for both residents and tourists.

Supplies are organised by the usual distributors—the **State Book Distributing Company** in Budapest and **Muvelt Nep** (Cultured People) in the provinces. These two companies also promote books thought to be of importance from the point of view of educational and cultural policies.

Leaflets giving details of new publications are in regular supply. Lists of recommended reading, intended to help those building a home library, are also supplied. A new practice, which is on the increase, is to offer factory book-

shop customers the chance to select books, free of charge, to the value of 10% of purchases made over a twelve month period.

Lectures, writer-reader meetings, and book exhibitions are organised, either independently or jointly with the factory library.

The local trade union is responsible for selecting factory bookshop personnel and for seeing that suitable premises are provided. The trade union also advises on book sales in workers' hostels, supervises the supply of books, and keeps an eye on the range and composition of stocks.

Where workers are engaged in vocational training, more and more trade union committees are helping to obtain the relevant books by keeping the distributors informed as to what their particular factory needs in this field.

The trade unions have also introduced special awards for factory bookshop personnel to give them encouragement and recognition. They are made during the annual Book Week.

There has been a dramatic rise in workplace book sales in recent years, within the general increase in book buying. While total sales increased by 40% between 1971 and 1974, workplace sales went up by over 200%. These now account for a quarter of all turnover.

Imre Gonczy



BOOK WEEK 1977 featured 90 new works among the 114 books specially published. They included volumes of poetry, fiction, political writings, social studies and works in translation and appeared in 2,400,000 copies all told.

Held annually, books are on sale at a discount during the week both in bookshops and at stalls put up in town and village streets and at work. Sales in 1977 reached 75,500,000 forints (about £2,100,000 at current exchange rate), three million more than in 1976.

Special book promotion days were first held in Hungary in 1927. At that time the event was an attempt by writers and publishers to publicise their work and combat the general disinterest outside a narrow circle of intellectuals. Today the week long festival touches all sections of society. Writers meet the public, autographing their works and visiting factories and villages to talk with their readers.

1977 events included an exhibition of beautiful books, a book and poster exhibition, and the award of prizes to writers and publishers. One feature was the promotion of books in the languages of Hungary's national minorities—special stalls to sell them were set up in the regions where they are concentrated.

Anthologies featured among the new Hungarian works. *Panorama 77*, 24 short stories by contemporary writers, was published in a hard cover edition and was on sale at half price—16 forints (about 48p) instead of 32. A companion volume, *Poets' Lyre 1976*, featured 84 poets and was on sale for 14 forints instead of 28. *Footlights 75-76* presented new plays staged during the previous season, while *The Writer's View* was a collection of articles by journalists and others.

Political works included a new book from Deputy Premier Gyorgy Aczel, *Socialism—the Present and Future of Freedom*, and the memoirs of Mihaly Karolyi, the Count who was Hungary's first president and who gave his land to the peasants during the 1918-19 revolutions. (Count Karolyi later lived in Britain; his memoirs have appeared in English under the title *Faith without Illusions*.)

Works in translation ranged from Jane Austen's *Emma* to the poetry of Paul Eluard. *Holdings On* by Mervyn Jones was among the contemporary novels published. In Hungary for the event, he told *Daily News*, the Budapest English language paper:

"I am extremely impressed by the interest in books. This process of people coming along the streets and buying new books in large numbers is something that probably you would not see in many other countries. It clearly reflects the great interest in books and reading . . . and a week which is devoted to writers is something amazing . . ."

LIBRARY SERVICES

THE library network which today serves all sections of the Hungarian community is a product of the post war period. For although Benedictine monks at Pannonhalma set up a library in 1001, the year in which Hungary became a state, it was not until after the 1945 Liberation that comprehensive services were introduced.

There are historic libraries—university, church and other collections which were founded in earlier centuries. But public library facilities were neglected until the recent period. In 1938 the total public library stock was only 1½ million books with a readership of a mere 3-4% of the population. (In 1975 public library book stock was 31½ million and readership about 22% of population.)

Pre-war network

Pre-war Budapest was better served than the provinces. A municipal library was founded in 1904, largely due to the efforts of **Ervin Szabo** (1877-1918), a Marxist social reformer who was one of its first directors. The library, which today bears his name, was made public during his management and he began to build up a network of branch libraries.

These activities however did not extend beyond the capital. There were club-type rural libraries, but their stocks were small and they were little used.

It was not until 1949 that a public library was opened in a village. By 1952, when the first legislation governing libraries was

introduced, there were 3,000 village libraries. In that year county libraries were set up to act as centres for supply and for the interchange of books. They were supplemented by district libraries in 1960; by then there were libraries in every village and outlying hamlets were served by "library buses", so that services were nation-wide.

In March 1956 a comprehensive Library Act came into force, setting up a national network of libraries, able to pool their resources and draw on stocks throughout the country. Under this act there are five main groups of libraries.

Group one consists of the **National Szechenyi Library**, the country's central library, which is linked with three historic collections—the former Franciscan library at Gyongyos in the north, the former Cistercian library at Zirc in the west, and the library at Keszthely, Lake Balaton, which used to belong to the aristocratic Festetics family.

Copyright library

The Szechenyi Library, founded in 1802, has been a copyright library since 1804 and receives copies of all matter printed in Hungary. The library regularly puts out a national bibliography, a list of Hungarian periodicals and a review of foreign periodicals which contain articles of Hungarian relevance.

Central catalogues are maintained which act as the brain centre for the national network,

facilitating inter-library exchange. International exchanges are also handled by the Szechenyi. A **Centre for Library Science and Methodology** was set up in 1959 to provide expert help to public libraries and to direct research.

The collection of books and manuscripts housed by the Szechenyi is the most important in the country. It includes more than 400 medieval codices, 32 of them from the famous library of King Matyas Corvinus (1443-90), and the library of Lajos Kossuth, head of the 1848 liberation movement. The Szechenyi is in the process of moving to the new cultural complex in Buda Castle, where facilities will include a reading room with seating for 500.

The second group under the 1956 Act are the scientific and special libraries. These include the **Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences** (founded 1826), which has its own network of research and scientific institutes, the university libraries, and museum and art gallery libraries.

Local libraries

The public libraries constitute the third group. These are of two main types—local libraries run by the local councils and work-place libraries run by the trade unions.

School libraries make up the fourth group. They are open to the local community as well as pupils and staff. There is a **Central Library of Education** in Budapest which heads this group, co-ordinating services and offering advice.

Finally there is a small group of specialised libraries, including the ecclesiastical. Historic among them are those at the Benedictine Abbey at Pannonhalma, at Eszter-

gom Cathedral, at the Reformed Church College in Debrecen, and that of the Lutheran Church in Budapest.

Collections of national importance include the **Parliament Library** (founded 1866), which houses works on politics and jurisprudence and has been open to the public since 1951, the **National Agricultural Library**, the **Hungarian Technical Central Library** and the **Hungarian Medical Library**.

Overall responsibility for the various libraries lies with the bodies to which they belong, while professional supervision is in the hands of the Library Department of the Ministry of Culture.

New legislation

In May 1976, the 1956 Act was updated by a new decree, framed after extensive consultation with both library users and those engaged in library work at all levels. At the time there were over 15,300 libraries—5,111 under council management, 3,185 under the trade unions, 5,100 in schools and 1,935 scientific and trade libraries.

The new decree confirmed that public libraries must provide their main services free of charge, i.e. the loan of books, use of reading rooms, supply of information, and obtaining books from other libraries. Registered readers do pay a small, annual fee of 3 forints (about 9p), however.

It was stressed that citizens are entitled to get books on loan both locally, where they live, and where they work. Local councils are responsible for providing local facilities, including books in their mother tongue for national minority groups.



Great room of the Zirc Abbey Library in western Hungary which houses one of the country's historic collections.

Free, public access was extended to all trade and university libraries. Specialist libraries, built up by the various ministries, were also linked with the national network.

Today the emphasis is on modernising library techniques and extending the scope of activities. Indeed by now only a small and diminishing number of libraries just lend books. Audio-visual and high-speed copying services in particular are expanding, but many other activities, from exhibitions to writer-reader meetings, are centred on the local libraries.

Special attention is also focused on services for children. Apart from the school libraries, which

have a stock of over 12 million books, there are children's libraries or library sections throughout the public library network.

Many children first visit a library when they are still at nursery school (3 to 6 years). Throughout their school years they go to the local library as a class, learning how to use the various facilities. Special library classes, linked with other school subjects, are also held to encourage them to use more than one source for their studies. It is estimated that over 60% of school children use the libraries.

Training staff

With modernisation and the extension of services, facilities for training library staff have also been stepped up. A five-year course at Budapest University provides the most comprehensive training, while intermediate courses are run by the methodological department of the National Szechenyi Library.

In addition, librarianship is one of the subjects offered at two teachers' training colleges. Some secondary schools (14 to 18 years) also provide courses on how to manage public collections which qualify students for work in libraries, museums and archives.

A special department of the **State Book Distributing Company** deals with the supply of books to libraries, given priority over bookshops when it comes to ordering. A new advisory body was set up in 1977 to help public libraries by drawing up recommended lists of new books, on the basis of advance plans from the various publishers. This is attached to the **Budapest Centre for Library Sciences and Methodology**.



Ethnic group libraries

MOHACS public library in southern Hungary is geared to serve a local population which includes South Slavs and Germans. A district library, the major part of the book stock and the many periodicals subscribed to are in Serbo-Croat and German.

It was estimated that local council libraries held about 200,000 books in the languages of the country's various national minority groups at the end of 1977.

There are also 15 main "minority" libraries—six German, four Slovak, four South Slav and one Romanian. These cater for 160 German villages, 60 Serbo-Croat, 97 Slovak, 14 Romanian and 9 Slovenian.

THE PRESS

HUNGARY'S press aims at catering for all interests, offering readers a selection of over 900 newspapers and periodicals. A survey carried out in 1975 by the Research Centre for Mass Communication gave the figures as: 29 dailies, 56 weeklies, 99 bi-weeklies, 337 monthlies and 399 journals which appear at longer intervals.

The circulation of dailies has trebled since 1950 and three out of every five families buy a daily paper regularly. About 80% of sales are to subscribers. Both subscriptions and delivery to kiosks and street vendors are handled by the Post Office.

Since the press was reorganised in 1948 most papers belong to an organisation—political bodies, the trade unions, local councils and the churches for instance. Four dailies are published in Budapest and have a national circulation.

Article 64

THE Hungarian People's Republic guarantees the freedom of speech, the freedom of the press, and the freedom of assembly in a manner conforming to the interests of socialism and the people.

CONSTITUTION OF THE HUNGARIAN PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

The most popular is **Nepszabadsag** (People's Freedom), central paper of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, which has a week-day circulation of 800,000, rising to a million on Sundays. (Dailies do not appear on Mondays, but carry Sunday supplements for the week-end reader.) It is the successor to **Szabad Nep**, founded in 1942 during World War II, by the then illegal Communist Party.

Nepszava (People's Voice), published by the Central Council of Trade Unions, has a circulation of 300,000. Founded in 1877, it is the oldest of today's papers and first appeared daily in 1905. **Magyar Nemzet** (Hungarian Nation)—circulation 120,000—was founded as an anti-fascist paper in 1938. Banned in 1944, it reappeared after the Liberation and is today the paper of the Patriotic People's Front. **Magyar Hirlap** (Hungarian Herald), a semi-official government paper, was started in 1968 and has a circulation of 60,000.

Nepsport (People's Sport), a daily since 1958, is published by the Union for Physical Education and Sport, while the Budapest evening **Esti Hirlap** (Evening Herald) is brought out by the local HSWP committee.

The 21 provincial dailies cover all regions and are published either by the local HSWP or the county councils. All have notched up rising sales in the last 20 years. Today combined circulation is about 950,000, compared with 154,000 in 1954.

The Hungarian News Agency, MTI, has published a bilingual paper since 1967—**Daily News**—**Neueste Nachrichten**. **Vilaggazdasag** (World Economy), started in 1969, is published jointly by the Institute for Market Research and the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce. (Church papers and periodicals are listed on pages 21-22.)

Most popular weekly is **Radio es TV Ujsag** (Radio and TV News) which has a circulation of over a million. **Nok Lapja** (Women's Journal), an illustrated colour magazine with a wide readership among both sexes, has a circulation of nearly 800,000.

Other popular weeklies include: the satirical journal **Ludas Matyi** (Mattie the Gooseboy), circulation 526,000; **Kepes Ujsag** (Illustrated News), c. 440,000 and **Szabad Fold** (Free Land), c. 352,000, both popular with country readers; **Magyar Ifjusag** (Hungarian Youth), c. 247,000; **Magyarorszag** (Hungary), c. 200,000, an illustrated general affairs magazine which gives extensive international coverage; and **Elet es Tudomany** (Life and Science), c. 200,000, published by the Association for the Popularisation of Science.

Four weekly papers appear in the languages of the national minorities—German, Slovak, Serbo-Croat and Romanian. These cover domestic issues, such as economic policy and the government's social programme, from the viewpoint of the minorities. News of events run by the different national minority federations and short stories, articles and poems by "minority" authors are published, as well as translations from Hungarian and world literature. Each has a supplement for young readers.

Literature claims much attention in the press. Most dailies publish short stories and poems and novels are serialised. One weekly, **Raketa** (Rocket), is devoted to serials and short stories, both Hungarian and foreign.

The weekly published by the Hungarian Writers' Association, **Elet es Irodalom** (Life and Literature), circulation 30,000, is the best known literary journal. There are two monthlies which carry new Hungarian works, **Kortars** (Contemporary) and **Uj Iras** (New Writing), both published in 20,000 copies, while **Nagyvilag** (Wide World), circulation 23,000, carries translations of contemporary foreign literature.

Sales reflect changing tastes

Changing tastes and rising living standards are also reflected in the papers which people buy. **Auto-Motor**, an illustrated weekly for the car driver and motor mechanic, which first appeared in 1948, now has a circulation of 280,000, while the illustrated quarterly **Lakaskultura** (Taste in the Home) has increased circulation from 100,000 in 1971 to over 150,000. A **Kutya** (The Dog), founded in 1937, also has a growing readership.

A number of periodicals are produced in foreign languages. Best known is **The New Hungarian Quarterly** which has an international reputation. Published in English, it includes translations of articles, short stories and poems, discussion on contemporary life in Hungary, and reviews of the arts. The illustrated monthly **Hungarian Review** appears in English, French, Russian and Spanish. The Hungarian Chamber of Commerce publishes a number of trade journals, including **Hungarian Foreign Trade** (English, German and Russian editions) and the **New Hungarian Exporter**.

Foreign journals are widely available, especially in libraries and reading-rooms. The Parliament Library alone subscribes to 2,000 dailies and periodicals. January sales of foreign papers each year from 1967



Aerial view of the town showing the old town centre; the Holy Trinity Column, dating from 1701, stands in Beloiannis Square with the 13th century Benedictine Church and the Evangelical Church in the background. Shown below is the reconstructed House of the Two Moors, an outstanding example of peasant Baroque architecture.

SOPRON— Preservation prize for an historic town

SEVEN hundred years ago, in 1277, Sopron was granted a charter as a “free royal town”. Today as a small country town near the Austro-Hungarian border, with a population of 54,000, she enjoys the distinction of having won the Europe Prize for the Preservation of Historical Monuments, presented by the Freiheer von Stein Foundation of Hamburg. When the prize was awarded in 1975, the international jury stated:

“The town of Sopron has proved through her historical monuments that she has preserved a long history which is organically linked with the culture of Europe. With an exemplary sense of purpose and with the support of state and local organisations and the Town Council, she has not only enabled the historic town centre and its surroundings to be excavated and archeological relics to be uncovered, but has also ensured their conservation and restoration, which has been carried out in a scientific manner. All this has been done in harmony with the requirements of modern life.”

Sopron’s oval shaped town centre, on the site of a one time Roman city, was declared a conservation area by the Ministers of Building and Education in 1965, when the restoration of historic monuments was also decreed. Since then nearly 200 buildings have been restored on an area of about 75 acres. At the same time a living city has been created out of them with modern flats and offices where people can live and work in comfort. The centre, girdled by ancient walls, is a pedestrian precinct.



Modern living in a medieval setting—an example of how one of Sopron’s Gothic houses has been adapted to provide comfortable flats. Below are the Romanesque fire tower and the Holy Trinity Column.



Street view looking towards the town tower where a watch was kept for fire.



The arched front of one of the town’s medieval houses.

