Hungary & Eastern Europe - Sixty Years Ago
A Press Review by a Hungarian Refugee

Geza Anda Heard in Debut With Ormandy's Orchestra

1955. 11. 16–30.

- *Hungary Seeking Trade With West*
- *Adam and Eve. Magyar Memories of Freedom*
- *Hungarian Pianist Geza Anda Heard in Debut With Ormandy's Orchestra*
- *Post-War German Novelist*
- *U. S. Ban on Visit by Red Corn Experts Assailed*
- *Red Hungary Reshuffles Party Chiefs*

Times 11/8/57

HUNGARY SEEKING TRADE WITH WEST

But Reds' Deputy Minister, Paralleling Moscow Line, Talks Slightingly of It

By JOHN MacCORMAC

Special to The New York Times.

VIENNA, Nov. 1—Hungary's Communist Government would like to increase its trade with the West. It believes none of the changes it has made in the national economy need hinder such increase.

This is what Budapest's Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade Jenoe Baconi told this correspondent in a recent intervew in Budapest, in which Mr. Baconi reviewed the whole subject of East-West commerce.

Mr. Baconi's attitude showed an almost exact parallel with Soviet spokesmen since Moscow toward the end of 1951 began to woo world trade. Emphasis was given to this parallel by a large Russian map of the world on the wall behind the deputy minister.

The map showed the Soviet Union in the exact center of the world, bestriding the two great oceans, squatting on top of India and China and hovering over Australia and New Zealand. Almost off the map in the lefthand corner were North and South America, depicted as attenuated ghosts. Europe was exhibited as an insignificant tentacle of Russia.

Opinion on Embargo

It was not surprising, against this background, that Hungary's deputy minister of foreign trade represented the Soviet economic block, including Hungary, as wishing rather than needing to trade with the West.

Mr. Baconi said the United States embargo on the export of strategic goods in its original form had not directly affected Hungary, since she did not want war goods. It had had significant indirect effect, however, in making other Western countries reluctant to trade wtih Hungary even in nonembargo goods.

"That was useful in the long run," said Mr. Baconi, "as it forced us to make for ourselves such things as antibiotics. It had one interesting result in that the East bloc sometimes exported embargoed materials to the West. These difficulties have decreased since the embargo list was modified."

He insisted the West exaggerated the difficulties of trading with a Communist country like Hungary. It was not the state itself that traded, but a state trading corporation, which was a legal person. The general directors were largely independent and made deals in the name of the corporations, he declared.

His ministry, he said, did not interfere, it merely supervised. The Hungarian Trade Corporation had its own representatives permanently in the West or they could travel there.

Promotion Ruled Out

"Some Western countries have raised the question of establishing trade representation here," said Mr. Baconi. "That is not the basis of the problem. We welcome Western travelers and business men. But offers of foreign trade that come to Hungary are examined by our experts so that there is no need for foreign trade promotion."

Mr. Baconi said Hungary now had trade relations with nearly every country in the world and her trade with the West had greatly increased compared with 1953 and 1954. Hungary was willing to buy from countries to which she sold and she insisted on selling to those from which she bought, he emphasized.

Asked whether overvaluation of the forint in terms of the dollar did not bar trade with the United States, Mr. Baconi said it made no difference since Hungary in trading with the West, traded in dollars.

"In Hungary," he said, "you must differentiate between foreign markets and home prices. In the home market we have currency and price system coordinated with and appropriate to our five-year plans, but we don't want to mix the two price systems together. That is why, although Hungary may be expensive for Western visitors, it is not for Hungarians."

During this correspondent's two-week stay in Budapest, several Western business men passed through there.

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EDITORIALS

ADAM AND EVE

MAGYAR MEMORIES OF FREEDOM

After Louis Kossuth led Hungary's uprising for independence and self-government in 1848, he defeated the Austrian troops sent to suppress the revolt. What crushed Hungarian liberty was a stab in the back from behind—a massive intervention by Russia.

On Nov. 4, 1945, almost a century later, the Hungarian people had the first and only free election in their history. The Soviet occupation authorities carelessly assumed that, with Communists in control of all important bureaus, they could win at the polls. To their embarrassment the Communists polled only 17% of the votes while anti-Communists polled 83%—including a smashing 58% majority for the Smallholders party. But the voters' courage was in vain; within two years their elected leaders were prisoners or fugitives and their nation the captive of a Communist *coup d'état*. Once more Hungarian independence had been crushed by massive Russian intervention.

On the 10th anniversary of this first and only free Hungarian election, some of these exiled leaders, including President of the Parliament Bela Varga, former Prime Minister Ferenc Nagy and 45 members of parliament, are holding a celebration in their new home, the U.S.A., the traditional refuge for Hungarian fighters for freedom. It is a reminder that we must continue pressing the Soviets to remove the occupation troops which, in violation of the peace treaty, suppress Hungarian freedom.

Hungarian freedom is part of the American tradition. When Louis Kossuth arrived in New York on Dec. 5, 1851, the people went "*clean daft.*" Hungarian history, music, dances and wines became popular; Kossuth clubs were organized. Huge crowds shed tears when he addressed them. He left behind him Kossuth beards, Kossuth hats, Kossuth overcoats and Kossuth County, Iowa. We can give no better message to the Hungarian exiles of 1955 than that which Daniel Webster gave to Kossuth at the banquet toasting his arrival:

"We shall rejoice to see our American model upon the Lower Danube and on the mountains of Hungary. . . . I limit my aspirations for Hungary, for the present, to that single and simple point: Hungarian independence, Hungarian self-government, Hungarian control of Hungarian destinies."

Modern Sunday school courses, if they mention them at all, have little to say about Adam and Eve. When they look at the pictures of their ancestors on page 78, not many kids will miss these two. A strange fate for the most famous pair in human history, but it is surely not the end of their fame.

Except for dogmatic materialists and fundamentalists, who are still fighting, the war between Darwinism and the Bible has been over for many years. It was over, in fact, almost as soon as it began. The first serious review of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in America (by Asa Gray in 1860) pointed out that man's biological kinship with animals was consistent with his special creation, and was neutral or even helpful to one of the favorite Victorian arguments for God, the "argument from design." The intellectual clergy of the time agreed. Henry Ward Beecher—self-styled "cordial Christian evolutionist"—declared that "design by wholesale [*i.e.*, via natural selection] is grander than by retail." Reading about the heated arguments of the 1870s and 1880s, one is struck by how quickly and fully the main points of reconciliation were made—and how little has been added to them since.

Why then did Darwinism cause such a violent revolution in people's ways of thinking and believing? For it did. It knocked the props from under the Victorian cosmogony of a literal six-day creation of the world, climaxed by Adam and Eve. A cosmogony is a working map of the universe and man's place in it; it is not a religion, which explains man's moral relationship to God. But Darwin's correction of Genesis gave secret materialists a public excuse to abandon the Christian religion as well. The age-old case for man's divine origin and purpose went unrefuted—but forgotten. For a time Darwinism even supplied its own phony cosmogony: that human progress, both economic and moral, could safely be left to nature's automatic ways.

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This shallow Victorian optimism, along with the doctrine of perpetual and universal struggle which Darwin derived from Malthus, is pretty well discredited by now. As Bergson put it, "Adaptation explains the sinuosities of evolution, but not its general direction, still less the movement itself." The materialist cosmogony has proven just as unsatisfactory as a literal reading of Genesis, or as Ptolemy's earth-centered welkin, or as the clockwork universe of Newton. And the secret of man's origin and purpose on this planet remains no more and no less mysterious than before.

An interfaith Conference of Spiritual Foundations in Washington last week declared that "A renaissance of civilization in the postmodern era . . . depends upon a revival of faith in God and a fresh synthesis of faith and reason." One requirement of such a synthesis is surely this: that men should rediscover their own uniqueness and solidarity as a species. The brotherhood of all men, preached for generations by Christianity and other religions, is obviously needed in the world we live in; but to realize it among the living we shall need a better sense of our kinship with past generations as well. The Australian primitive (*see p. 90*) has the same huge brain-body ratio, protracted infancy, erect carriage and gift of language you do; so, 300,000 years ago, did Swanscombe Man (*see cover*).

To enlarge our sense of this human uniqueness, the old prescientific Hebrew story is more relevant than is commonly supposed. Science itself (especially its laws of mathematical probability) discourages the notion that either the universe, or life, or man could have evolved by pure chance. The late Lecomte du Noüy, author of *Human Destiny*, is not the only scientist who has pointed out this argument for divine creation, but he added an unorthodox suggestion about the role in it played by Adam and Eve. In the first chapter of Genesis, God created all life, including man, and commanded them to increase and multiply, which (obeying their animal natures) they did. But in the second chapter of Genesis, God created Adam by breathing into his nostrils; "and man became a living soul." The sign of Adam's difference from his cousins of Genesis I such as Java Man (all of whom have died out) was a moral restriction on his animal liberty. Here was "a new discontinuity in nature." Conscience—the sign of human divinity—entered evolution.

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Du Noüy's reading may not be good biblical scholarship, but it illuminates the unique importance of Adam to the human race. He was the first man who knew God, the first to have his infant conscience put to a free test. All of us have been a private battleground between soul and animal ever since. Man controls more and more of his environment, but every man and generation re-enacts Adam's moral struggle.

This week many Christian churches celebrate All Saints' and All Souls' days, commemorating all saints and martyrs known and unknown, and all the dead souls who ever belonged to the human family. It is a way of acknowledging our unique humanity and the startling continuity of the human adventure. Man's is a young family as species go; probably a fifth or a sixth of all the humans who ever lived are alive now. Though Adam's grave will never be found, his story remains the archetype of the human story. His is a great family not because it rules the earth, but because it is capable of so many saints, martyrs, geniuses and heroes, known and unknown; and because it has a purpose for which it is answerable, breathed into Adam's nostrils by God.

Wash. Post 9 XI 955

Postlude

Hungarian Pianist Geza Anda Heard In Debut With Ormandy's Orchestra

By Paul Hume

The great news of the Philadelphia Orchestra's concert last night in Constitution Hall was the completely satisfying bow of Hungarian pianist Geza Anda.

Under the most sympathetic conducting of Eugene Ormandy, and with the support of an orchestra whose tone for the Brahms B Flat Piano Concerto is unrivalled anywhere in the world to our knowledge, Anda brought in a performance of the famous giant among concertos that may long stand as a model for other pianists, few of whom will ever succeed in approaching it.

Anda is in his early thiries. His home is in Switzerland, his musical understanding places him among the world's cosmopolitan artists who would be at home wherever he sat before a fine piano. There is something in the way he begins to play that lets you know at once that he is utterly dependable.

At the same time you realize that this dependability is not going to hold back anything in the way of fire. He can thunder but he only does so when the music calls for it.

In between large effects he provides a scale of graduated sounds, constantly at his slightest command, that reminds you of the piano's capacity for beautiful sound. His scales and arpeggios are never of the same volume throughout unless they are so marked by the composer.

There is light and shadow everywhere, even in this concerto which is so often—and so wrongly—described as a battle between orchestra and pianist, in which the pianist usually loses. Not at all. It is a great canvas in which the painter gives both conductor and soloists the opportunity for rich effect. Only those lacking imagination paint all in red.

Anda, with the noble assistance of first cellist Lorne Munroe, made of the slow movement the kind of sustained revery that produces a spiritual benediction of enormous weight. I have always wanted to hear it go as slowly as that, and now I am convinced that no faster tempo is right. It was a moment of absolute perfection.

The Philadelphia Orchestra and its conductor bring us many things. For Geza Anda and this Brahms Concerto we shall always remember them gratefully.

We are therefore unhappy that the first half of the concert left so few impressions of pleasure. Roy Harris's Seventh Symphony is a turgid work in which the composer finds it surprisingly easy to induce a sense of monotony.

Pretentious in its aims, the music is built of ideas constantly thwarted, with bursts of sounds and rhythms that get nowhere. It is good to hear new works. It is also good to re-hear such known works of merit as the Harris Third Symphony.

As for the Smith transcription of the Great G Minor Fantasy and Fugue of Bach that opened the concert, we have said it all before. It was, however, one of the most complete misrepresentations of one of Bach's mightiest works we have ever heard.

The Fantasy was far worse than the Fugue. Where was the blazing drama of the opening phrases, where the incomparable power of the middle section? This was weak, sentimental, puling, emasculated trash. Do not think it was Bach you heard, or missed hearing. If you do not know the "great" G Minor, you still have it to hear.

N. Y. Herald Trib. 13 Jun 43

Post-War German Novelist

ADAM, WHERE ART THOU?
By Heinrich Böll. Translated by Mervyn Savill. *176 pp. New York: Criterion Books. $3.*

Reviewed by
DENVER LINDLEY

HEINRICH BOLL, one of the most vigorous and productive of Germany's latest crop of writers, makes his second appearance in this country with a novel about the final months of World War II in Europe, and more particularly in Hungary. "When I call it a bastard war," a lieutenant in the book remarks, "I mean that war is all right when you're winning, but the one we're fighting now is a particularly lousy war."

The publishers have compared this novel to "All Quiet on the Western Front," and thereby done it some disservice. In Remarque's book, the experience of war was registered by an individual able to react, and even to act, for himself, to think and feel in a way that universalized his experience. Böll's characters are broken; they have been reduced to automata, existing in a nightmare of boredom and violence. The events they endure are flashes in the dark, vividly presented but without connection or extension. The reader's field of vision ends with the margin of the page.

The title, explained by a quotation from Theodor Haecker, indicates that the author had a moral in mind: war "can serve as an alibi before God." But it is hard to see how these crumpled and harrowed creatures, who have ceased to hope and almost ceased to feel, could assert any sense of moral responsibility even if they were capable of conceiving it. The exceptions—Filskeit, the psychopathic singing master who runs an extermination camp (saving out the best voices to the last), and Ilona, the saintly girl teacher who died in that camp, though not in the gas chamber as she had expected—would presumably have been psychopath and saint in peace as well as war. For the fighting men of the company on which Böll fixes his eye, everything can be summed up in the one word "pointless." The reader, however, watching them meet their bizarre and sudden ends, is aware of something else, a controlling force that in the end becomes almost a personal presence: Irony. The events of war, Böll seems to be saying, appear meaningless to the individual victim and ironical to the detached observer. Irony spins the plot and every one loses.

To say that Böll has not written a great novel is not to deny him solid qualities. His reporting is brilliant. The terseness and lucidity of his writing (dimmed but not concealed by a hasty and occasionally ungrammatical translation) should earn him an increasing audience in this country.

Wash. Post 13 XI 957

U.S. Ban on Visit by Red Corn Experts Assailed

COON RAPIDS, Iowa, Nov. 12 (AP)—Roswell Garst, head of an Iowa seed concern who recently visited Russia, says that the United States State Department is acting "childish" in holding up visas for 10 Soviet hybrid corn specialists to visit this country.

Garst is an officer of Garst & Thomas Hybrid Corn Co. of Coon Rapids. He and Dr. Geza Schutz, economist for the firm, returned recently from a European tour.

Garst had personally invited the Russian corn specialists to visit the United States while he was in the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, Schutz also assailed the State Department, accusing it of "deliberate, misleading distortion" of the facts concerning the proposed Russian tour.

While Garst and Schutz were in Russia, the New York Times said, they made tentative arrangements for very large sales of hybrid seed corn to the Soviet.

Garst also visited Romania and Hungary, making similar deals there and also inviting agricultural specialists to visit the United States, the newspaper reported.

Schutz was quoted as saying that it was suggested to each country that it send farm machinery experts along with the visiting groups because "to get the best results from American hybrid seed they should utilize our machinery and methods of cultivation."

As a result of the State Department's action, Schutz told the Times, "millions of dollars" in sales of seed and machinery were being jeopardized.

In Washington Friday State press department officer Lincoln White said the ten applications for visas were held up because there was no indication the Russians would permit a return visit by Americans.

White told a news conference "if there is to be a general exchange type of operation it should be a two-way street. It would have to be clearly understood that it would work both ways."

Garst said he believed that the State Department is "losing its sense of proportion and taking itself too seriously."

In Washington, the State Department said today it stands on White's statement.

According to the Department, Garst's recent swing through Russia and her satellites netted him $1½ million in orders for seed corn. This includes a million dollars from Russia, about $200,000 from Romania and $300,000 from Hungary.

Officials said the Russians considered a ten-man delegation should be allowed to tour the United States to reciprocate for Garst's visit.

(In Washington yesterday, Garst's colleague Schutz said the Department statement on the firm's contracts was highly incorrect. He explained no contracts are to be signed until the delegations make an on-the-spot inspection of what they are getting and Hungary, actually, has not yet even decided on how much it intends to purchase.

(Schutz also said the Department had already approved visas for two of the three Romanian delegates invited and supposedly was about to act on visas for the three Hungarians and the members of the Russian delegation.

(Schutz said the only ukase the Department had given him up until now was in forbidding the Russians' itinerary to include Iowa State College at Ames.

(Schutz concluded: "It's not just the Iron Curtain countries. The businessmen of Free Europe complained to me they don't know from one day to the next where they stand on trade relations with the United States. We seem to be changing the rules all the time.")

Wash. Post 14 XI 956

Red Hungary Reshuffles Party Chiefs

VIENNA, Nov. 13 (AP)—Communist Hungary reshuffled its party leadership and government today in a move that may mean a slight relaxation of the extreme communization policies of boss Matyas Rakosi.

Istvan Kovacs, an opponent of Rakosi's policies of ignoring the consumer and pressing farmers into collectives, was appointed to the Communist Party's central committee secretariat. It is the party's ruling body and Rakosi is the first secretary. Kovacs is also Communist boss of industrial Budapest.

Kovacs' appointment was made, Radio Budapest announced, after Rakosi's return a few days ago from Moscow. At the same time, Janos Matolcsi was removed from the secretariat and named Agriculture Minister, Radio Budapest announced. Matolcsi, a Rakosi supporter, is a believer in an unrelenting campaign to collectivize farming.

On the surface, this might seem to indicate collectivization of farms in Hungary was being intensified. But most Westerners in Vienna regarded Matolcsi's demotion to mean a lessening—rather than an intensification—of collectivization.

Matolcsi took over as Agriculture Minister from Ferenc Erdei, who was made a Deputy Premier.

Beside Kovacs, a newcomer named Gyula Egry was appointed to the secretariat, raising the membership of the body from five to six. Kovacs, Bela Szalai and Lajos Acs are all moderate, anti-Rakosi men. The other members are Rakosi himself, Gyula Egry and Bela Veg.