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## Hungarian Literature in the West

### Writers and literary institutions

Hungarian literature in the West (it is also called as émigré literature) was born as a result of great historic upheavals. In the decades following World War II—right after the war, at the dawn of the ‘coalition era’, and in the late autumn of 1956—a number of Hungarian writers settled or started their writer’s career in the Western countries of the world. Literary gatherings, periodicals, and publishers appeared on the scene, and a very articulate, continuously developing literary life evolved with plenty of results. An essential characteristic of this literature was that it was functioning amongst the difficult circumstances of the ‘diaspora’ and these circumstances made the continuous institutional development possible only at the cost of great sacrifices. This situation was due to the fact that although such establishments were founded frequently—a bibliographical surveys reported on almost a thousand Hungarian periodicals and papers—only a few of them was capable of functioning without interruptions. The vast majority of literary periodicals and publishers failed quickly amongst the adverse circumstances of emigration.

Hungarian literature in the West was far from forming a unified, homogeneous block and also its political spectrum revealed a great diversity. We can find here the representatives of literary conservatism of the period between the two world wars, the one-time participants of the *Nyugat* (West) movement, the popular writers proclaiming the politics of ‘the third way’, civil radicals, social democrats, and even former communists. Naturally, it also has a peculiar role and significance, who and when—in 1945, 1948, or 1956—left the country. Besides, we can find numerous varieties of behaviour which determine the relations of the writer living in the Western world and the homeland: there are important writers, who kept at a distance from the domestic intellectual life (and did not live to see the fall of the party state system), like Sándor Márai, and there are others, like László Cs. Szabó or Győző Határ, who found their place in this life at least with their works, which are, of course, entailed assets of Hungarian literature.

Many papers, periodicals, publishers, and literary societies were founded during the four-decade-long history of emigration but most of them ceased to exist in the meanwhile. The periodical entitled *Új Látóhatár* (New Horizon) edited by Gyula Borbándi and József Molnár and published in Munich was the most highly respected forum of Hungarian intellectual life in the West. It gave publicity to the works of both the writers growing up with the ideas of popular movement and those following civic liberal notions. We can mention among the permanent contributors Győző Határ, Gyula Gombos, Zoltán Sztáray, Elemér Illyés, Tamás Kabdebó, Mátyás Sárközi, Lóránt Czigány, and Pál Albert (that is, Gyula Sípos)—thus, there were not only belletrists, but also scientists and literary critics among them. Beside this, there were the *Katolikus Szemle* (Catholic Review)

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edited by Gellért Békés in Rome, the *Irodalmi Újság* (Literary Gazette) edited by Tibor Méray in Paris, and the periodical of Ferenc Mózsai: his *Szivárvány* (Rainbow) of Chicago was successful in publishing émigré literature. The *Magyar Füzetek* of Paris, the *Bécsi Napló* (Viennese Diary), and the *Nemzetőr* (National Guard) published in Munich were significant much more with respect to science and publicism. The avant-garde periodical entitled *Magyar Műhely* (Hungarian Workshop) was published in Paris and edited by the followers of experimental and visual literature, Alpár Bujdosó, Pál Nagy, and Tibor Papp. This periodical returned home after the political transformations and has played in a role in the organization of young avant-garde literature and art. In the row of publishers we have to mention the following: the Aurora and Herp publishers in Munich, the Európai Protestáns Szabadegyetem (European Hungarian Protestant Free University), the Svájci Magyar Irodalmi és Képzőművészeti Kör (Hungarian Literary and Art Circle in Switzerland), the Occidental Press of Washington, the Corvin Press of Sándor Püski in New York, and the Framo Press of Ferenc Mózsai in Chicago. The *Magyar Műhely*, the Szepsi Csombor Circle in London, and the Mikes Kelemen Circle in the Netherlands published important books as well.

The various intellectual and literary societies had an important role in the organisation of culture. The most relevant of these were the Bornemissza Society in Vienna organized by István Szépfalusi, the Mikes Kelemen Circle in the Netherlands, the team of the *Magyar Műhely* in Paris, the Amerikai Magyar Baráti Közösség (Itt-Ott Kör) (Hungarian Communion of Friends, Itt-Ott Circle). The Hungarian Literary and Art Circle in Switzerland, the Catholic Pax Romana, and the European Hungarian Protestant Free University had a similar function as well. Every circle and society organized conferences on a regular basis, which were the active fora and hearths of Hungarian intellectual life in the West. These conferences had lecturers and guests coming from Hungary, Transylvania, and Upper Hungary.

The Hungarian literature in the West presents several excellent authors. The novels and diaries of Sándor Márai; the narratives, essays, and the travelogue entitled *Római muzsika* (Music in Rome) of László Cs. Szabó; the poetry of György Faludy, Tamás Tűz, Ferenc Fáy, and Tibor Tollas; the novel *Árnyak és asszonyok* (Shadows and Women) of András Domahidy; the novel *Az osztrák vádlott* (The Austrian Accused) of Miklós Domahidy; the prose of Tibor Dénes, and Dezső Monoszló; the autobiography of Imre Kovács; and the great oeuvre of Győző Határ, in which poetry, prose, dramatic play, and philosophic essays can be found all. It can proudly present such monumental works as the mythic drama series entitled *Golgheloghi* or the philosophic essay series entitled *Szélhárfa*. Well, all these have made the 'universal' Hungarian culture richer. Academic writing is another great strength of Hungarian literature in the West. I would refer first of all to the works on history, literary history, and philosophy written by Szabolcs Vajay, Mihály Ferdinandy, Pál Ignótus, Zoltán Szabó, Gyula Gombos, Gyula Borbándi, Elemér Illyés, Péter Gosztonyi, Péter Kende, Tibor Hanák, and Ferenc Szabó.

Exciting and valuable writings represent the younger generation of writers too. Even the domestic literature paid attention to the poems of József Bakucz, László Baránszky, Elemér Horváth, László Kemenes-Géfin, György Vitéz, Lajos Major-Zala, György Gömő-

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ri, István Keszei, Géza Thinsz, and Erika Dedinszky, the studies of Endre Karátson, Tamás Kabdebó, György Ferdinandy, and Mátvás Sárközi, as well as the works of visual poetry of the already mentioned three editors of the *Magyar Műhely*.

The Hungarian literature born in the West has become better known in Hungary and among the Hungarians of the neighbouring countries in the past two decades. The partial acceptance was based doubtlessly on the fact that the political debates with the emigration eased in the 80s and those prejudices and censorship restrictions of political nature were about to be dissolved which had made the real reception of émigré literature impossible up until then. Thanks to this, many Hungarian writers living in the West found a place for themselves in the intellectual life of Hungary. László Cs. Szabó visited Hungary several times in his last years, bequeathed his wonderful library to the Sárospatak Calvinist College Library, and finally, found his resting place in the cemetery of Sárospatak. Also others appeared with precious works in the domestic publishing industry. For example Lajos Zilahy, who had been very popular earlier, the travelogue writer Lajos Kutasi Kovács, Sándor Lénárt who settled in South America, and one of the greatest accomplished Hungarian writers: Győző Határ who established himself in London. Also György Faludy, András Domahidy, Gyula Gombos, Árpád Szélpál, Tamás Tűz, Gyula Thinsz, Erika Dedinszky, and György Ferdinandy have been present in book publishing in Hungary. Important gestures of acceptance were the three anthologies which were published in the 80s and early 90s: the 1981 anthology of poetry entitled *Vándorének*, the 1987 anthology of prose entitled *Két dióhéj*, and the 1991 anthology presenting studies and essays entitled *Párbeszéd Magyarországgal*. These works indicated that émigré literature has returned home at last.

#### **The achievements of the Hungarian literature of the West**

The Western (émigré) literature has a dual aspect: also this literature is in part a system of works (oeuvres) and in part a system of institutions. In the previous sections, we have discussed the institutions, so let us take a look at the other aspect to see how the Hungarian émigré literature, as a system of works, has contributed to the whole of contemporary Hungarian literature. The birthplace of this latter is traditionally understood as the virtual Hungary of the Carpathian Basin, namely, the Hungary of Trianon together with Transylvania, Upper Hungary, Transcarpathia, and the southern regions; besides Budapest, Debrecen, Pécs, and Szeged, Nagyvárad (Oradea), Kolozsvár (Cluj), Marosvásárhely (Targu Mures), Pozsony (Bratislava), Kassa (Košice), Ungvár (Užhorod), and Újvidék (Novi Sad). I shall present you this time a rough outline of this 'different character' of émigré literature.

#### *1. Preservation of values and traditions*

It is a great merit of émigré literature (and of the institutional framework of emigration) that it was able to preserve those literary values and traditions, which the literary culture at home could not preserve—or only incompletely—because of censorship, that is, harsh

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political necessities. This does not mean that Hungarian writers, who left, under the pressure of necessity or voluntarily, a Hungary overwhelmed by the communist dictatorship, could work and publish more or less freely amongst the circumstances of emigration. I am thinking of Sándor Márai, László Cs. Szabó, György Faludy, Győző Határ, Imre Kovács, Zoltán Szabó, Gyula Gombos, and those who started to work already in the emigration, among others, József Bakucz, László Baránszky, Endre Karátsón, Tamás Kabdebó, Géza Thinsz, György Gömöri, Tibor Papp, Pál Nagy, György Vitéz, László Kemenes-Géfin.

Preservation of values and traditions of values also means that émigré literary culture was successful in defending and providing publicity for those writers, who were silenced or censored by political power: Lajos Kassák, Béla Hamvas, Sándor Weöres, Miklós Szentkuthy, János Pilinszky, Miklós Mészöly, György Konrád or exactly László Németh, whose most important studies on national politics could reappear only in the eve of political transformations. Or, Gyula Illyés, whose book entitled *Szellem és erőszak* (Spirit and Violence) confiscated by György Aczél, was presented to at least a narrower public thanks to a bold action of József Molnár living in Munich. In short, Hungarian literary institutions in the West contributed very actively to the process that would help the Hungarian literature get rid of the shackles of the so-called 'socialist-realism', and maintain its great traditions and defend its values.

The safeguarding of interests and the preservation of traditions included also preservation of the spirituality of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian literature. For who could deny that the restricted and artificially mutilated intellectual traditions were maintained in part and completely freely by the emigrants. I consider here the traditions of the *Nyugat* and the *Újhold*, the intellectual traditions of the Hungarian avant-garde and populist writers, or precisely the Transylvanian literature (the *Erdélyi Helikon*). The émigré institutions, thus, the *Új Látóhatár*, the *Irodalmi Újság*, and the *Magyar Műhely* played a great role in preserving these traditions without any serious distortion and in making them prevail also at home from the second half of the 70s on. For the continuity of literature and the liveliness of literary tradition are spiritual forces of primary importance, as both development and innovation would become impossible without them. Hungarian literary emigration and its institutional framework remained always consistent in taking the responsibility for preserving this continuity and it managed to achieve this with success (and with much sacrifice).

## 2. Recording the experiences of emigration: the emigrant personality

A national literature records the historic experiences of a national community as well, and we can find the emigrant experience among these (just as the historic experience of living among a minority). For a nation, which was compelled to release great emigration waves several times during a fifty year period of its 20<sup>th</sup> century history (in 1919, 1939, 1945, 1948, and 1956) and suffered the emigration of a considerable part of its creative intellectuals during these waves, the emigration experience becomes of vital importance and an inherent part of common history. I think primarily not of the ways

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Hungarian émigré literature depicted the struggles and everyday life of emigration, and the Hungarians life in Vienna, Munich, Paris, London, New York, and Toronto. Instead, I consider how it gave an account of the spiritual history and experience of the emigrant existence, of the processes happening in the inner circles of the personality. Undoubtedly, the Hungarian poetry of the West is the most important medium of this.

Hungarian poets in the Western world, also the ones who emigrated in 1959, have spent long decades in their chosen home: by today their thinking, realm of experiences, and, in general, the structure of their personality is already shaped by this experience long several decades. The determining factors of their general condition were homesickness and the problems of adaptation at the turn of the 60s—but later on usually not; homesickness rang in their works more rarely and even then not in the form of some consuming passion but at most as a quiet nostalgia which blended their poems with the intimate memories of the natural and personal environment of youth. They considered the chosen home to be their natural social medium and although they travelled in the world a lot, they felt they grew roots somewhere. Or exactly the opposite happened and they were confined to the margins of the recipient society, what is more, of human existence, just like István Keszi who died in Paris.

Thus, their condition as poets was usually characterized not by the bitter conflict of nostalgia and the inevitable life abroad even if they expressed the pain of having to leave. Their thinking and emotions were formed on the basis of other experiences. As emigrants, as poets living in a literary diaspora, they were exposed to the tragedy of the person's isolation, which came about in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the world, in a more intense solitude. Their poetry depicted time after time the distressed inner world of the alienated personality who lost all human relationships.

The most important conflicts of the struggle of bringing the personality to fullness or preserving it were caused no doubt by the paradoxes of the emigrant existence: they had to be an American engineer, a Swedish editor at a publisher, an English teacher of Polish, a Canadian psychiatrist, and at the same time Hungarian poets separated from the currents of Hungarian literary life who hardly found an audience who understood them. They were constrained to self-publish their works and they had a chance to exchange their ideas with their fellow poets only at the writers' meetings of emigrants organized once in a while. The situation of the Hungarian poet living in a foreign land called for continuous shifting of roles. A poem of György Gömöri expressed authentically the consequences of this 'Proteusian' destiny: 'I change language-mask daily. / Sometimes I feel: my face is this mask already, / and sometimes: the spirit strains in vain, / it can find redemption in its own language only.'

However, the redemptive power of mother tongue was not so unambiguous at all: the representatives of émigré poetry of the period after 1956 were forced to communicate in everyday life, maybe even within the family, in a foreign language and they used their mother tongue only in the lonesome hours of work. Who wanted to find shield from the linguistic 'schizophrenia' had to have a strong creative personality and an instinct of mother tongue. Once in a while, exactly this dual linguistic situation became the spring of poetry; this fact that the Hungarian poet living in the Western world was able to

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express ideas with almost the same ease in Hungarian and French, Hungarian and Swedish, Hungarian and English.

Especially the poets of the post-1956 emigrant generation developed their poetic self in an isolated world. They projected the dramas occurring in the deeper spheres of personality into their poems; in poetry, they were searching for a shelter for the integrity of the personality. Nevertheless, not even they were able to escape the influence of social and political conflicts of the world. Moreover, their relations evolved with their homeland had a great role in the developments of their poetic world concept. At the same time, emigrant life meant a greater openness to the civilization problems of the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Hungarian poet living in a diaspora, merely because of the abundance of the gathered information, reacted in a more sensitive fashion to the occurring crisis situations than the poet who worked in the intimacy of the protection of national culture. The general condition of the emigrant, who lived as a foreigner and felt rootless, was naturally defenceless against the crises of historic existence, just as his or her personal fate had been decided by these crises earlier.

When they spoke of a sense of ill-being, the insecurity felt in the world and a fear of war infiltrated time and again their anxiety. The poetic grotesque of Géza Thinsz entitled *Hírügynökségünk jelenti* (Our news agency reports) brought news about these worries: 'our news agency reports: there is no reason for optimism: / shout: blade-dreams: fickleness of our agency: flesh-tearing fear reports: there is no reason for lunatic optimism.' Many poetic works reveal similar uneasiness.

### 3. *Recording the experiences of emigration: travelling in the world*

Part of the emigration experiences is made up of the experiences connected to the globetrotting of Hungarian literature dispersed in the world. This is recorded primarily by the prose literature and one of its particular experiences is exactly taking into one's possession the foreign countries and cultures. The focus of the narration of the emigrant writer is the biographical character from the beginning—this is proved for example by the fact that among the works of Sándor Márai written in emigration, the diaries have an inherently great role (in literary history). But the biographical and diary-like character has a significant part also in the prose works of László Cs. Szabó. Bibliographical nature often recalled far away, in cases, exotic experiences and scenes.

Hungarian writers living in Western countries pick up many kinds of experiences and knowledge which were naturally missing from Hungarian literature, among these: the acquaintance with the life and civilization of distant societies, with lifestyles inherently different from the reality at home. Earlier, at most the colours of Paris (Gyula Illyés, Sándor Márai, András Hevesi) and Italy (Antal Szerb) were found and only the South American novels of Zsigmond Remenyik showed 'exotic' tints. The Hungarian writers living abroad now present their observations gained in remote countries and continents without any hint of shyness: the diarist Sándor Márai writes about Italy and North America, László Cs. Szabó about Rome and Greece, and György Faludy about England and Canada. The English environment appears in several works of Győző Határ, András Domahidy

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describes the Hungarians living in Australia, Tamás Kabdebó rambled in Guyana and the Antilles, György Ferdinandy in Puerto Rico, the narratives of Endre Karátson take place in a Parisian and Mediterranean, the stories of Mátyás Sárközi in an English environment, and so on—the telling examples can be quoted almost in any number.

#### 4. *The integration of modern literature*

Western Hungarian literature, especially the work of the 1956-generation of poets, took different paths than Hungarian lyric poetry, which developed at home or in the neighbouring countries. The contemporary endeavours and poetic experimentations of Western Europe and America had a greater influence on it. The Hungarian poets living in the Western diaspora felt it was their mission to integrate everything they got to know in modern French, German, English, or American literature into their own poetic world and make it become an organic part of Hungarian poetry. They wanted to conquer new and rich territories for Hungarian poetry—and their passion of discovery with which they took possession of the many achievements and innovative experiments of modern poetry came from here. The representatives of the younger émigré literature chose almost at the same time in the 60s masters like T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, E. E. Cummings, Gregory Corso, Allen Ginsberg, René Char, Francis Ponge, Michel Deguy, Denis Roche, and Jacques Roubaud. They came under the influence of English esotericists, French surrealists, American beatniks, and then the various lettrist schools, schools of semiotics, and concrete poetry in rapid succession. These modern poetic influences prevailed in the work of József Bakucz, Elemér Horváth, Ádám Makkai, and especially in the poetry of Pál Nagy, Tibor Papp, and Alpár Bujdosó, who were representatives of the avant-garde experimentalism of the *Magyar Műhely*.

However, not even those poets broke with the traditions of Hungarian lyric poetry, who felt most attracted to modern aspirations. The editors and theoreticians of the *Magyar Műhely* had Lajos Kassák as their first master, but they drew on the innovations of Sándor Weöres and Miklós Szentkuthy as well. The influence exerted by the poetry of Attila József, Sándor Weöres or János Pilinszky on this generation of Hungarian poets in the West, hints at a more abstract heritage of philosophical character left by the Hungarian poetry of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This could be most felt in the works of Áron Kibédi Varga, József Bakucz, Elemér Horváth, László Baránszky, György Vitéz, Vince Sulyok, and György Gömöri.

Those motivations, which the younger generation of these poets received from the old Hungarian verse and the so-called 'folkloristic surrealism', indicate the assimilation of another trend of Hungarian poetic traditions. The folkloristic surrealistic song-like character brought to the limelight by László Nagy and István Kormos, is present in the ballads and spells, maintaining or connected to traditions of popular poetry, written by Imre Máté and Erika Dedinszky. The old Hungarian poetry: the poetic tradition of the soldiers at the borders, the Protestant pastors, and the Kuruc highwayman is traceable in the deeper historic interests and archaising poetic language of a few of the representatives of the post-1956 generation, first of all István Siklós and László Kemenes-Géfin.

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The work of the prose writers, that of the 1956 generation in particular, developed in the spirit of similar integration endeavours. Their attention was focused at the analysis of the internal stirrings and conflicts of personality. This determined the character of their narration: they continued confessional and introspective traditions of Hungarian prose and they sought to master the achievements of those schools of modern Western literature, which aspired at abstraction. Tamás Kabdebó was influenced by the ironic English novel; in a certain period, György Ferdinandy by the French 'new novel'; László Márton by the Joycean depiction of stream of consciousness; Endre Karátson by the mythic parable of the Argentinean Borges. In case of Pál Nagy and Alpár Bujdosó, the influence of the semiotic-like 'textology literature' could be felt which completely blurs the boundaries between epic and lyric poetry, and makes an effort to form an entirely new system of symbols. These writers represented and conveyed properly the situation and consciousness of the Hungarian intellectuals of the West through modern experiments with the prose.

**The return of the Hungarian literature of the West**

The Hungarian literature of the West (the émigré literature) was a winner and a loser at the same time with respect to the political transformations of 1989-1990. Winner, because it moved at once from the 'prohibited' status to the 'supported' intellectual accomplishments; its representatives were free to return home and settle in Hungary. This way, the works written in the emigration—including political literature and thus, also the works of the literature, which criticized or attacked the communist regime—became free to be published. Moreover, it happened not once that they appeared for the Hungarian readers in new, Hungarian editions. Naturally, the transformation itself proved the truth of those writers and workshops, which maintained the ideas of civic mentality and the freedom of the writers amongst the often adverse circumstances of emigration for decades and who could gather information without any ideological restraint among the intellectual and literary trends of the world.

Nevertheless, many of the representatives of the émigré literary life feel that the literary culture they created with the self-sacrificing work of decades has been lost with the transformations. Several of them believe that, in reality, Hungarian literary life did not integrate or did not integrate properly the literature of the Hungarians in the West. Gyula Borbándi referred to Czigány Lóránt when he pictured the dissatisfaction of the westerners in his volume entitled *Emigráció és Magyarország* which examined the history of Hungarian emigration to the West—and parallel to this, the history of integration here at home: 'The survey above—he concluded the chapter outlining the annals history of the return of the Hungarian literature—might give you the impression that the integration of Hungarian writers living in the West into the institutional framework at home and the unification of the two literary centres have taken place. Grievances could be heard at most on the part of those, who were left out of this for some reason. In spite of all this, general satisfaction did not result in Western circles. Lóránt Czigány rightly stated when he summarized the experiences of a decade saying that the Hungarian émigré writer had

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the same feeling of lack with respect to the reception at home than what have been felt for a long time in the public opinion at home in connection to the reception of domestic Hungarian literature in the West. Émigré literature could not 'sell' at the market at home just as the domestic one could not make it in the West. Both feel the lack of presence. Domestic Hungarian literature—according to Czigány—is absent from the Western literary awareness. Similarly, the Hungarian émigré writer is absent from the literary awareness at home.'

A great part of the Hungarian writers living in the Western world still feel themselves a bit 'homeless' in their old country and in its intellectual life. This is due to several reasons and this homelessness naturally cannot be explained merely by the 'ungenerosity' of Hungarian literary life. The return of the one-time emigration raises a number of social, political, cultural, and, besides these, psychological questions because the Hungarian 'society fragment' in the West and the society at home reveals social and cultural structures which are not reconcilable. Thus, reintegration has to tackle great challenges. And merely also because of the fact that the Hungarian emigration of the past decades had to remain away from the homeland for a longer period than the ones before: the inevitable or voluntary exile was less than two decades long after 1849 and two and a half decades after 1919. After 1945, 1948 or 1956, no less than three and a half decades. As all this time was elapsing, even the most resolute emigrant could find his or her place in the new society, political emigration became meaningless, and today, there is neither intention nor possibility for returning home in large numbers. That is, the reasons of reception and integration at home have diminished for the majority of the emigrants.

Furthermore, the population of the Hungarians of the Western world and its institutional power has radically lessened in the course of the 90s. It is true, let us be frank, that the number of Hungarians settled in Western countries, e.g. in America, was not so great earlier either as what the statisticians who wanted to see the world through rose-coloured glasses professed. Reports were published several times according to which there lived altogether 2.600.000 Hungarians outside the Carpathian Basin, that is, in scattered areas, and from among them almost 2.000.000 settled in the North American continent. This is evidently an exaggeration. Two well-known and distinguished personalities of the Hungarians in America, Károly Nagy, university professor and László Papp, former president of the Western region of the World Federation of Hungarians, published a survey a few years ago in which they estimated the number of Americans of Hungarian origin to be around 1.600.000. However, from among these at most every tenth, roughly 150.000 persons speak Hungarian at home and the rest is connected to the Hungarians and the homeland of the ancestors only by some dim awareness of their origin. Ferenc Szabó A., professor at the Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University, reveals similar figures when he concludes that there are no more than 148.000 Hungarians living in the United States, 25.000 in Canada, 65.000 in Western European countries, and some 280.000 in the rest of the Western world (including South America and Australia)—this amounts to less than 15% of the frequently remembered figures of the past decades.

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Thus, the Hungarian population in the West is much smaller than what is claimed by confident politicians. Nevertheless, they constitute a relevant power, first of all, intellectual power even with this. Yet, this power, also according to my personal experiences, is decreasing every day. Sure, it is natural that the weight and influence of an ethnic and cultural community cannot be calculated merely on the basis of their number. The Hungarians of the Western world had a great prestige and political and cultural influence in the 90s even in the societies of the receiving countries. There is an impressive number of Hungarians or persons of Hungarian origin among noted politicians (e.g. the American Georges Pataki and Tom Lantos, the French Nicolas Sarkozy), masters of economy, Nobel Prize winner scientists, university professors, successful physicians, engineers, economists, writers, etc. They should be reached in any case by the political and intellectual elite of Hungary in order to have them represent and defend the Hungarian interests—of course, the interests of the minority Hungarians in the Carpathian Basin as well—in the world as volunteer ‘diplomats’. In fact, they engaged in such diplomatic activity ‘without mandate’ earlier too, for in the decades of the Kádár regime there were several national (universal Hungarian, minority Hungarian) interests, which were conveyed to the public of the world solely by the emigration.

The Hungarians living in the West accumulated a relevant quantity of intellectual assets in the decades of emigration and it is a real question whether these values have been integrated by the intellectual life in the homeland after the transformations. Let me refer here this time only to the Hungarian émigré literature. Some of the writers of the one-time emigration received various high honours: Sándor Márai the posthumous Kossuth Prize, György Faludy and Győző Határ the Kossuth Prize, Gyula Gombos and Gyula Borbándi the Széchenyi Prize. At the same time, a great number of Hungarian writers worked in the world from László Cs. Szabó to Zoltán Szabó, from József Bakucz to András Domahidy who were not recognized this way while the awards went even to the more modest achievements of persons working at home.

Deservedly, an oeuvre series of Sándor Márai is published and many works of literary criticism have been occupied with his life-work. At the same time, the reception of several other excellent Hungarian writers is still not on its way: the oeuvre series of László Cs. Szabó and Imre Kovács have not been started and the works on the series collecting the writings of Zoltán Szabó stopped.

The masters of Hungarian intellectual life living in the West can be present without any condition in the periodicals of Hungary (or Transylvania) but still, their presence is not continuous—not even today. The Hungarian émigré culture has lost a great deal of publicity also because almost all the fora through which they reached the public ceased to exist: the *Új Látóhatár*, the *Irodalmi Újság*, the *Katolikus Szemle*, and most recently, the *Szivárvány*. Today only the *Bécsi Napló*, which is published in relatively small volumes, and the *Magyar Műhely*, the avant-garde periodical which moved to Budapest, maintain the continuity.

The self-liquidation of Hungarian periodical-literature in the West is not merely a Hungarian national loss. These periodicals followed the political and intellectual events in Hungary (and in the Carpathian Basin) from a certain distance (not only geographic but

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also from a distance of views) and generally expressed unbiased opinions. In contrast to this, we can perceive opposing 'camps' articulating their views in the domestic literary life, and that this impartiality and objectivity can scarcely be found. Consequently, we can conclude with some discontent that the disappearance of Western Hungarian fora left a certain void and that the critical analysis provided earlier for example by the *Új Látóhatár* and the *Irodalmi Újság* is missing.

Certainly, I know that the editors of these periodicals very much deserved to be able to retire from the everyday tasks of being an editor. On the other hand, they were very right not to withdraw so much as failing to continue expressing their opinion and criticising freely. I am thinking of writers and publicists like Gyula Borbándi and Tibor Méray. It is doubtless that the political and intellectual leadership of the one-tome Hungarian emigration reached an old age and the institutional framework of the emigration has mostly disintegrated. In spite of this, there are many Hungarian intellectuals working at the outposts of the former Hungarian emigration even currently (in Hungarian societies or at the universities, scientific institutions of the receiving countries) whose opinion should be considered by the public and intellectual life of Hungary. Let me mention just a few names to illustrate this. I am thinking of persons like Károly Nagy, professor at the American Rutgers University, András Ludányi, Lajos Étető, István Deák, Hungarian professors in America, István Gereben whose writings can be read on a regular basis in the Hungarian press in America, Béla Lipták whose activity in connection to the protection of the Danube is well-known also to the public opinion at home, Ernő Deák (Vienna), György Schöpflin (London), Tamás Schreiber (Paris), Gyula Hellenbart (Hamburg) who are active participants of scientific and journalistic life. The number of scientists, university professors, publicists living in the Western world who could be mobilized in defence of universal Hungarian interests, amounts to several hundred (at least according to the grand work of Gyula Borbándi entitled *Nyugati magyar irodalmi lexikon és bibliográfia* (Lexicon and bibliography of Hungarian literature in the Western world). The leaders of Hungarian public and intellectual life have drawn upon this 'relationship capital' so far only scarcely in spite of the fact that it would have been necessary to join forces exactly with them for the sake of the assertion of Hungarian interests and the favourable shaping of the country's image in the eyes of the world.

True, the all-Hungarian conference *Magyarország 2000* (Hungary 2000) which had a great number of participants, assembled several times in the past years and exactly in the centre of the life of the Hungarian State, the Parliament. Numerous representatives of Hungarian intellectuals of the West had an opportunity to set forth their ideas regarding the future of the country. However, a whole series of opinions and suggestions heard at the discussions remained a dead letter for hardly anything happened that would have helped the views of these Hungarians enter the circulation of domestic public life. Moreover, the conference series did not continue after 1999.

After all this, we can hardly be surprised by the fact that Hungarian intellectuals living in Western countries—just as the writers—feel disappointed in general. Not only because the past decade scarcely fulfilled the enthusiastic expectations regarding the transformations, but also because the actual power most of the time eluded or ignored them

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indifferently. Instead of the really suited and influential Hungarian intellectuals—with few exceptions—those were addressed officially, who were more willing to profit from the Hungarian transformations than to help the problems of the vast majority of the population of the homeland. Furthermore, many one-time emigrants received a role and influence in Hungary, who were unable to get rid of the obsolete ideas and even more outdated illusions of the former political emigration.

Thus, I maintain that the dialogue of Hungarians at home and in the West did not accomplish the results, which were expected on both parts. Certain perplexity and confusion can be perceived in the history of this dialogue—also the aforementioned conclusions of Gyula Borbándi and Lóránt Czigány refer to this. Consequently, it can be said that at home, the situation of Hungarian intellectuals and, among them, the literary circles, remains unsettled and indicates further tasks for both of the parties (Western and home): first of all, their dialogue should be intensified.