

TRANSLATORS' NOTE

In his probe of the effect of a new society on a Hungarian peasant, the author has chosen writing techniques not usually found in fiction of universal impact. These are:

- a) narration as well as dialogue in the informal language used by residents of a specific working-class district of Budapest;
- b) a virtually cinematographic succession of happenings without transitions to connect them.

Consequently our translation had to preserve an apparent poverty of style which deliberately tries to reproduce illiteracy. Frequently the English is awkward; the scenes are disconnected in a kind of loosely chronological montage.

There are also gaps in the frame of reference that may be disturbing to the reader of this translation:

Queen Borbella: the peasants' escape from abject poverty into an imagined world of fairy-tale existence combined with superstition;

Private sector: in all of the Communist states of eastern Europe, minuscule undertakings may be licensed to operate as free enterprise; all employers and establishments mentioned after the dawn exodus to Brügecs (end of the Second World War) are state-owned and managed;

Streets, espressos, and sweet shops: use of these proper names offers Hungarian readers instantaneous recognition of their location relative to the quarter in which the

Habetlers live. This quarter (the Jozsef City) remains the hub of the Habetler universe throughout the forty years of the story.

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