

The aim of the thesis

Most of Sándor Márai's journalism was republished in the last decade. The carefully selected volumes try to give a cross-section of his writings that mainly came out in the *Újság* (News) and *Pesti Hírlap* (Pester Herald) or of his earliest public writings published in German language area before his second emigration. The overall review is still to be done as there are a number of writings that were left out of the collections and his activity at the Hungarian Radio is completely unexplored. After the self-imposed exile there are even fewer texts published in the emigré media that we can rely on and in this respect partly the Márai bibliography, partly the literary remains brought home are relevant.

My thesis aims to introduce the early period of his radio journalism, focusing on the works read in Radio Free Europe between 1951 and 1956 that has come down in manuscript.

The nature of the subject, its being unknown made it necessary to choose a wider perspective, so a detailed analysis of home journalistic antecedents comes before the primary recital. Márai's activity was motivated by the same depression after World War I as the one that originally led to the appearance of the crisis-philosophy in Western Europe on the one hand and to the appearance of the essayist generation in Hungary on the other hand, whose ideas were determined by the Hungarian fate, reflected in the vision of the declining Europe and once and for all sealed by Trianon. György Poszler takes the „literal responsibility psychosis” – built of national characterology, predestination research and prophetism – to be the basic character of the „essayist generation” that attempted to think the relation analysis – the Hungarians' relations with their past, with the neighbouring nations, with Europe - demanded by the historical situation over theoretically.

The effects of the Western European tendencies cannot be stressed enough especially in respect of the interpretation of the crisis situation and the respond to it. The criseology originated from Nietzsche is diverging though: while Spengler proclaims the irreversible deterioration of the European culture, Ortega – on the basis of the diagnosis established by himself – already racks his brain about the solution. He does not think the decline necessary, but reminds us of the similarity and dangers of totalitarian systems, of the constant fight of individuals and crowds, quality and quantity and their power position, changing with the era. Huizinga, after having reconed with the cultural grieves of his age, declares that there is still an „intellectual partnership” which preserve the values for posterity and hand its knowledge over to the younger generations. Benda explicitly makes the scribes lowering themselves, betraying their mission responsible for the European situation, for the general corruption of

the public. The European thinkers, who believed in the moral renaissance, trusted the preserving power of the intellectual unity, met annually at the meeting of the Association of European Spiritual Cooperation established under the aegis of the League of Nations. It is symbolic that Valéry presumed to discover the first *homo europeus* in Leonardo da Vinci who immediately thought of building a bridge, when he saw a swirl of tide. Thomas Mann's bellicose humanism found response among the Hungarian writers after the Budapest conference – with the title: *About the Task of Humanistic Mind in the Formation of Today's Spirit* (1936). “The human solidarity is alive, the responsibility of culture and intelligence shines in this dark age (...)”, Márai professes (*Humanism - Humanizmus*), and similarly Mihály Babits has confidence in the organic power of culture, in the responsible moral courage and resistance of intellectuals (*The Public and the Nation – A tömeg és a nemzet*).

The essayists made good use of the idea of intellectual home-defence, connected with the preservation of values. During their European and home surveys, as if being on collective “patrol”, they were weighing the nation's possibilities entwined with continental chances. And while making a diagnosis, they did not forget to take an inventory of the remaining values. Zoltán Szabó's *Loving Geography (Szerelmes földrajz)* and Áron Tamási's *Homeland (Szülőföldem)* can be ranked with travelogues broadening into essays that were started nearly at the same time (1936) by László Cs. Szabó (*Crossing at Dover – Doveri átkelés*) and Sándor Márai (*Western Patrol – Napnyugati őrzéskor*). The ways of the two of them are often interwoven during the interbellum. The former is more prolific, he organises his ideas around an attitude: In the *Letters from the exile (Levelek a száműzetésből)* he analyses his roving as a spiritual exercise, he probes into his roots, his genealogy; In the *Hungarian Observer (Magyar néző)* and the *Europe in Arms (Fegyveres Európa)*, taking the part of an unarmed consoler, of a stock-taker, he is meditating about Europe's past and present, her chances as well as the mission of small and big nations (*Homeland and the Wide World – Haza és nagyvilág*). He is the one, who acknowledges Márai's exemplary role in creating the „patrol literature” (*Genre and Generation - Műfaj és nemzedék*) and as the editor of the cultural programmes of the Hungarian Radio he cast the spell of the voiced medium on Márai. And both of them reported about their birthplaces having been rejoined to Hungary (Upper Hungary (*Felvidék*) /1938/, Transilvania (*Erdély*) /1940/) with a cartographer's knowledge and with a deep emotion: the former for the radio, the latter for the *Pester Herald (Pesti Hírlap)*.

Márai's activity as a journalist can be judged by his essays (*Pamphlet on Behalf of the National Education – Röpirat a nemzetnevelésről, Patrol in Kassa – Kassai őrzéskor, etc.*) and

by his practice as a columnist (*News – Újság, Pester Herald – Pesti Hírlap*) as what he sets forth academically in the former, he makes it clear for everybody in the latter giving morally positive or negative examples. The *exemplum* – based on the traditions of antique historians, philosophers (especially the stoic, that Márai valued highly) and orators – has always been suitable for framing the expectations of the public, for the retention of cultural traditions, so the writer, who was forced into self-imposed exile after 1948 but who still threw in his lot with the Hungarians, often used it. He kept the heading, *Sunday Chronicle (Vasárnapi krónika)* in *Pester Herald (Pesti Hírlap)* that he took over from Ferenc Molnár and integrating it into the Homeric form, he fulfilled what László Cs. Szabó thought „the ideal radio chronicler’s” task at the Radio Free Europe from the beginning of the 1950s.

The study, revealing-introducing the early period of voiced emigration journalism undertakes to introduce the chiselling of his ranges of ideas, which determine the writer’s views. Also, it tries to show the continuity of the interpretation of the writer’s mission originating from these in emigration. In the light of the new material, thinking the question of mission and role, writer and politics, writer and the public, intellectuals and spiritual Europe, being Hungarian and being European over again, the essay – in respect of the diaries, the earlier written journalism and at some places his novels - tries to shade the picture that is accepted/imagined in the common knowledge about Márai.

II. Methods used in the elaboration of the subject

The first chapter of the thesis outlines the historical situation after the First World War. It is fundamental that the state of the continent divided into ranges of interest consolidated. The same depression, alleged continuous, weighed heavy on the thinkers', philosophers' and the writers' mind that determined Nietzsche's picture of Europe.

I reconstructed the Hungarian philosophical and literal reception of the criticism of the period, establishing a diagnosis of the deterioration of the European culture based on *Athaeneum* and *West (Nyugat)* and on the works of the essayist generation. The survey puts Sándor Márai's interpretation of his role as a writer into a broader horizon, as the uncertainty of existence caused by the awareness and the lack of values left its mark on not only a generation of writers, but also on the way of thinking of Western European circles preaching humanism. It is no mere chance that in contradiction to the culture pessimist Spengler, these authors were connected by their belief in the survival of the European culture, the individual taking of responsibility and the need of education. The influence of Ortega, Huizinga and Benda can be traced on the base of the journalism and the diaries of the age, although in case of certain questions – right because of his wide range of refinement – it is only true together with somebody else's ideas (e.g. language: Ortega – Heidegger, game: Huizinga – Einstein etc.). We can point out, at the same time, that among the generation of essayists the attitude of connecting being Hungarian and being European disguised certain contradictions. That gives reasons for analysing László Németh's *The Hungarians and Europe (Magyarság és Európa)* and Sándor Márai's *Pamphlet* simultaneously.

I gathered information about the antecedents of his radio activity in the program supply of *Radio Life (Rádióélet)*. And although it helped me only to some dozens of titles, it illuminated the fact that in Márai's case, the two fields of journalism, the written and the voiced conveyance cannot be separated.

During the manifold philological research, I basically collected the lectures broadcast by the Radio Free Europe in the early period of his second emigration. The caesura of the period between October 1951 and December 1956 is not arbitrary; it can be connected to the blaming the radio for the Hungarian Revolution which had nearly sealed its fate. To get to know the whole primary material, I have studied both Márai's literary remains in safe custody of the Petőfi Literary Museum, and the written material of Radio Free Europe preserved in the Microfilm Section of the National Széchényi Library. I also examined the recordings that have popped up in the mean time, which a little bit fills in the hiatus of 1956. In the first case

it was his correspondance, in the second, examining other programmes tingled the picture of his personal connections, his broader activities and the criticism of his belletristic work. In the system of radio programmes the material in the microfilm library as well as the talks with Gyula Borbándi and Jenő Thassy gave a fixed point. About a quarter of the 343 examined manuscripts were suitable to illustrate the formation of Márai's individuum-attitude during the emigration in more ways (in respect of literature, politics and culture).

In the final chapter, introducing the selected material, I described the exiled writer's picture of the spiritual Europe in outline. As if the descriptions of the towns at the starting and finishing points of the "magic circle" as well as the double portraits in between would hold a distorting mirror for each other. At the beginning of the 50's, the pilgrim could still perceive the shining of spiritual Europe in the Italian towns, moreover in the city of the New World taking in exiles. He could believe that the American notion of freedom would have reaction on The Old Country, but in connection of the Hungarian Revolution he had to realize with disappointment that the western spirit could not rely on any help from outside. That is why he puts persons on the pedestal of his imaginary museum who can serve as positive or negative examples for the Hungarian public. Among the statesmen he reposts with Stalin for Churchill, among the scientists with Gyula Szekfű for Bálint Hóman or with the remigrating Lajos Jánossy for the emigrating Einstein and with Illyés, trotting out with *The Ozora Example* (*Az ozorai példa*) or *Torch-light* (*Fáklyaláng*) for László Németh, working on *Galilei* among the writers.

III. The results of the survey

The mode of existence after the emigration did not bring any change in Márai's attitude as a publicist. Being the outside worker of Radio Free Europe, he gained the possibility of speaking Hungarian to the Hungarians, that is a sort of creativity and last but not least, financial security. But it did not mean his giving up his personality. On the contrary, he went on with his concept in many aspects.

With his choosing his pen-name (Ulysses), he calls the attention not only to the necessity of pondering, analysing and resisting intellectuals while there is a totalitarian system on Hungarian soil, but he also emphasises the responsibility of the uttered words. His intellectual migration can be explained as his rebuilding his writer's self as well as a task that has to be fulfilled for the Hungarian nation. His wandering (about European towns, libraries, museums) reflects the spiritual searching for home of the 30's.

Under the title taken from the column of *Pesti Hírlap* (*Vasárnapi Krónika – Sunday Talk*) in which he used to report about the thousand – faced Europe, in the emigration he composes his thoughts at the same standard. His awareness in the emigration can be characterised with the hopeful voice and tone of the 30's right until 1956. The network of shining cathedrals, serving as landmarks in a dark Europe then, comes to life again in the readings about the portraits of the traditionally intellectual towns and creative people. Through these figures of his imaginary museum of politicians, scientists and writers one can see the forming self-portrait of Master M. S.

From the beginning of the 50's, Márai's publicism is concentrated to the readings in the Radio Free Europe, except for some articles published in papers as *Látóhatár*, *Szabadság* etc. Besides his own weekly programme, one could hear his book-reviews and radio plays. On two occasions he got even closer to the radio, although he always tried to keep a certain distance. First, right at the beginning, when he accepted to be the editor of *Free University*. Four of his lectures – *Hungarian Literature in the World Literature* – can be mentioned, which deals with the predominant question of the writer's early period. For the second time in 1956, when he volunteered for daily comments. In his first attempt he tried to find the answer to the question 'Why could not the Hungarian literature and culture gain ground in Europe, while four years later in connection with the Hungarian Revolution, he analyses the responsibility of The West for leaving the Hungarians alone in their struggles for a European notion. The events after the Hungarian Revolution made him convinced that he was mistaken when he believed in the coming true of the ideas boosted by the American propaganda. Márai

revises his concept at that time and admits the role of the Hungarian writers in starting the revolution and in creating the new 'magic centre'.

We can conclude that the so far unknown lectures heard during his emigration put an end to the problems drow up by Julien Benda and dealt with a whole generation of writers. The chronicler gave the answer: the connection between writer and politics is not a question of relation but that of taking moral responsibility. You can leave a nation, but you must not leave them on their own. Especially not when they are oppressed and they are in need.