

Friends of the Hungarian people, <sup>ladies</sup> ~~leaders~~ and gentlemen;

It is for me a moving experience to find myself among you on the occasion of the commemoration of that fateful day of October 23, 1956 when a whole people rose in anger to reconquer <sup>their</sup> ~~its~~ independence and <sup>their</sup> ~~its~~ freedom. Four years have passed since that day, four years during which no day has passed without some evidence that the world has not forgotten what it owes to those men and women, young and old, intellectuals and workers, who took part in the fight. Those who participated in the fateful events might not have achieved their immediate objectives but their actions have passed into the everyday vocabulary of nations. Just the other day, I heard a news commentator characterize events in countries far removed from Hungary as "Hungarian-type bloodshed".

*During the past year and because of the pressure*  
I have been called upon in the past year to do what is in my power *to perform*  
*had the desire*  
to alleviate the sufferings of the people in Hungary and, in this *complexly context*  
connection, I was ~~called upon~~ to study the many facets that characterize  
the Hungarians as a people. A small people who were the last of the  
waves of migrations to establish themselves in Europe, a people *rich*  
*of eastern roots and*  
in ~~the~~ heritage of the East who nonetheless embraced Western civilization

with passion, a fierce people who since their arrival one thousand years ago in Europe defended their independence to a point where they nearly extinguished themselves, a sentimental people in whom <sup>full of paradox</sup> gaiety and sadness appear practically simultaneously. Isn't there a saying in Hungarian that it is by crying that the Hungarian has <sup>enjoy himself</sup> a good time? But what impresses me above all is the variety of the artistic and literary contributions that Hungarians have brought to the rest of the world. Hungarian writers, actors, musicians, and painters are so numerous and participate so fully in the life of the countries where they live that I am told that in the film producing studios of Hollywood there is a sign which reads: "To prospective applicants - 'if you know Hungarian it helps but it is not enough'".

Listening to the music that has been played tonight with such skill and fervour makes me think particularly of one aspect of the Hungarian character, namely, the role of the artist, the writer, in the struggle for freedom. Small countries do not always have at their disposal the political means to achieve freedom and try to find other ways in which they can give expression to one of the most fundamental yearnings in all human beings. This desire then is brought to the

knowledge of the world through music, through poems, through writings  
~~of all types~~. Not that the musician or artist wants to become a  
politician, far from it, he would in most cases probably much prefer  
to write lyrical poems. His connection, however, with events and  
sufferings of his country is, so to say, in spite of himself.

Unwittingly he is mixed up in events, he inspires, calls to action,  
expresses the suffering and mourns the defeat. Petofi, whose patriotic  
fervour brought to a pitch the popular feeling of 1848, nonetheless  
wrote beautiful lyrical poems and would have doubtlessly written a  
great deal more of them had he not been killed in the fight for freedom  
in 1848. Gyula Illes <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ also led by political events taking place <sup>over</sup> a  
hundred years later to write the immensely moving poem on tyranny.

Hungarians seem to give the most of themselves when their freedom is  
at stake. It was during the periods of stress and greatest suffering  
that the most beautiful masterpieces were created. I am thinking of the

Consolation Cycles written by Liszt after the executions of Arad in 1848.

*I am also thinking of Vorseman's "Old again" poem  
written by a Hungarian in the oppression*  
Maybe political adversity sharpens the talent. Bartok continued

to write music after he fled Hungary during the Nazi occupation; so did

Dohnanyi after he fled the Russian occupation. As to Kodaly, who stayed in Hungary, he finds his outlet in writing a symphony on the theme of another great hero of independence - Zrinyi. Never was a saying more untrue than that of Virgil: "The muses are silent during the wars".