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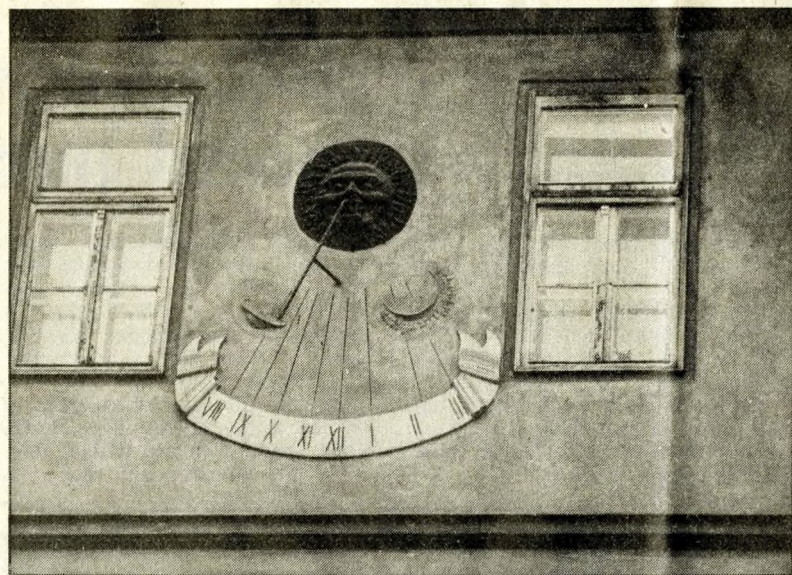
Walks in Budapest-V

We are back at the Astoria precinct in the heart of Pest, on the corner where a memorial plaque pays tribute to the historic 1918 Aster Revolution, during which Hungary's severance from Imperial Austria was proclaimed, turn-



PHOTO TAMÁS FENYES

The old County Hall links Semelews utca with Városház utca through its arched gateways



Old sun-dial in the courtyard of the County Hall

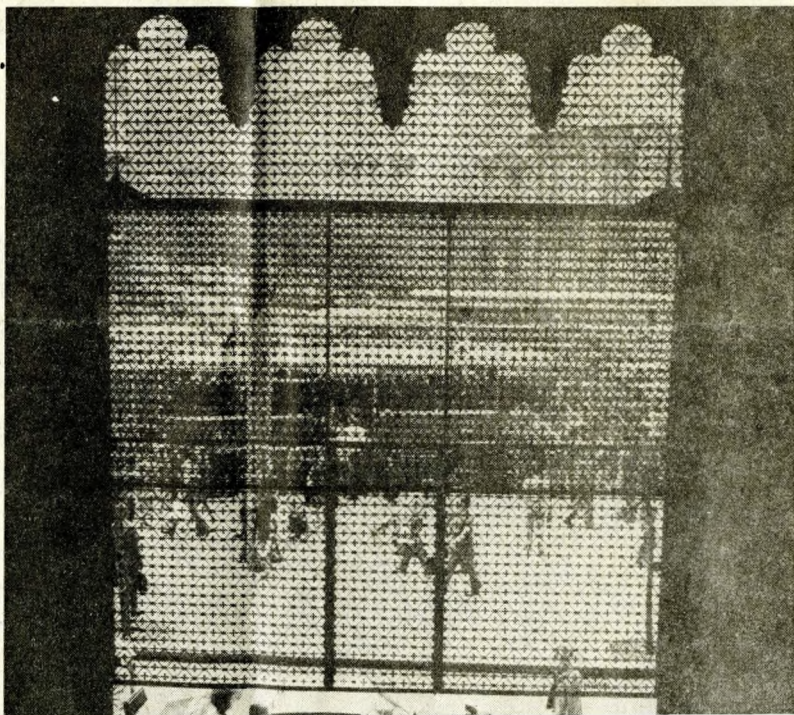
ing Hungary into a republic. Hotel Astoria was the headquarters of the National Council which proclaimed Hungary a republic. Starting from the Astoria, we shall explore the houses in the region, which are interesting for their characteristic passage-ways that link their entrances on parallel streets.

Several blocks down from the Astoria, stands one of the most original blocks of flats of the region. The passage-way that leads from Muzeum körút to Magyar utca has three sections, one even has its original wooden flooring, which absorbed the noise horses' shoes made when coaches drove into the courtyard.

Walking up along Rákóczi út, one comes to a cluster of houses with intricate passage-

attractive architectural sights in central Pest.

Turning right, one arrives at one of the largest buildings of the area, the old Town Hall (it is still the headquarters of the Metropolitan Council). It was built more than 250 years ago as a barracks by Charles III. It later became the House of Invalids, and then the Town Hall. Through its maze of passage-ways one can walk back to Tanács körút. It is known only to people over 60 that in

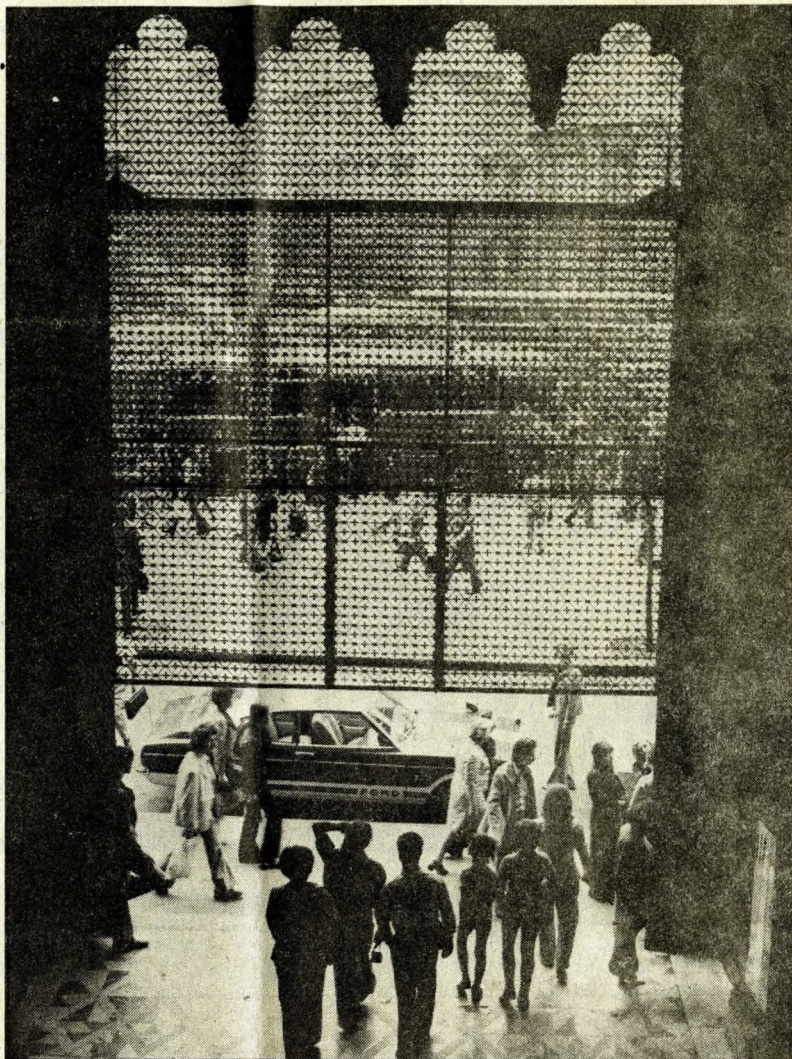


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Walking up along Rákóczi út, one comes to a cluster of houses with intricate passage-ways, lying on an area of half a square mile. The one-time classicist building of Hotel Pannonia (now serving as a hostel for students of the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the Budapest University) has an interesting relief on its facade, which was placed there at the time when the urn, carrying the ashes of the great 18th-century freedom fighter, Prince Ferenc Rákóczi, were transported along this street to Kassa (now in



The "Parisian Courtyard" between Kígyó utca and Petőfi Sándor utca

Czechoslovakia) in 1916. Across the street, there is another hundred-year-old house with a passage-way leading to Dohány utca. Turning into the courtyard of the house of the Film Museum (a cinema where old-vintage films are shown), one may walk back to Tanács körút. These passage-ways now house small shops and boutiques. Opposite, there is an impressive building, the one-time Rózer bazaar, through which one may walk back to the heart of Pest. Another classicist building comes into view, the old County Hall, which today is the headquarters of the Pest County Council. Pedestrians walking across its numerous courtyards hardly think of the fact that the gallows used to stand in one of the inner courtyards, and the inner wing of the building used to be a prison from where convicts were taken to their final walk to the gallows. Nowadays the courtyard is used for summer open-air concerts. The facade of the building, with its line of Corinthian columns, is one of the most

the early 20th-century one of the inner courtyards was used as a livestock market on Tuesdays and Fridays.

No. 7 in Városház utca is a large classicist building which was built 200 years ago. It has three arched gateways, through which one may walk across to Petőfi Sándor utca, next door to Restaurant Korzó, which specializes in Italian cuisine. The building itself used to be the headquarters of the Secretariat of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in the 1830s, before their permanent home was built on the left bank of the Danube next to the Chain Bridge.

Another famous passage-way, called "Parisian Courtyard", takes one back to Felszabadulás tér. Just like most of these passage-ways, it also has a café and a number of shops where the tired traveller may take a cup of coffee and put his feet up.

Tamás Fényes