

### III. THE SCHOOL SITUATION

A. Tell me something about school in Hungary.  
What subjects did you have?

"First of all, we had arithmetic, reading, writing, then geography, gym, singing, and drawing. Besides these we also had a class that was held by our class headmaster and it was called 'conversation class.'"

Now, ~~xxx~~ let's have something more detailed about each class you had. What did you talk about in the conversation class, for instance?

"Well, usually we discussed all sorts of events that happened in the town or in Hungary, or sometimes also abroad. All sorts of topics. The headmaster also talked a great deal about how everything is mechanized in Russia."

What did you study in your reading and writing classes?

"We learned to write and read proper Hungarian."

What about geography?

"We learned the geography of Hungary. Later on we would have learned the different parts of the continents."

What about gym?

"Well, we had all sorts of calisthenics and played soccer, and we had short distance dash, ~~xxxx~~ and sometimes we had tugging rope--I don't know if you know what that means."

What about the singing lessons?

"We usually sang Hungarian, Russian or German songs. ~~But~~, of course, all of them with ~~xxxxxxxx~~

Hungarian words."

Which was your favorite subject?

"First of all, I loved gym. Then, I loved reading, and then mathematics."

Tell me why you liked gym.

"First of all, I liked to do gym very much, and also my ~~xxx~~ teacher told me I was really the best in the whole school. So, of course, I liked it very much."

What about reading?

I like to read because I knew very well how to read, and I read a great deal. Math, I just like it very much, and that's all."

Tell me something else. Were there only boys in your classes?

"No, we had boys and girls, and it was usually that we were seated one boy one girl, alternatingly. We were ~~xxx~~ always equal in number."

Now, I would like you to tell me something about your teachers. Did you like them?

"Up to the third grade I liked all my teachers, because we only had lady teachers. But, in the fourth grade we had a man. I thoroughly disliked him."

Why did you dislike him?

"First of all, he was ~~xxxx~~ always taking sides. He was much nicer to the kids whose parents he knew, or whose parents gave him some money, so their kids could pass the grade. With the ~~px~~ kids whose parents he did not know or did not bribe him, he was very ~~x~~ rude. He beat us up always terribly. You know, he was quite an old

man, and he was terribly jumpy and nervous. It was only the girls that he liked, and he was nice to them. He was always beating us up. This man taught us reading."

Did you have any one teacher for all subjects?

"No. In the ~~xxxx~~ third and fourth grades every subject was taught by a different teacher. We had ladies and men. The teacher who taught us singing was a man. He was very nice. He played with us a great deal. The other subjects were taught by lady teachers. They were all very nice as teachers, but sometimes they yelled a great deal with us. They liked to boss us around. They put us in the corner, but they never beat us."

How come that this old man dared to beat you?

"You see, it was like this: even if we complained about it, nobody ~~was~~ dared to denounce him. And the old man always said that if someone did not approve of his methods, he should go to another school, because he is going to teach as he sees fit."

"You see, Miss, this mark on my shoulder? Once he beat me up with a cane so hard that it drew blood, and these marks were quite raw for some time."

"There were also other teachers who did not treat all the children equally. There was, for instance, the one who taught math. If she knew the parents of the kid, she gave him very easy homework."

Did you have any Communist teachers?

"No." [The boy thought for quite some time and then said: "No, I'm convinced that they could not have been Communist because they never spoke for Communism, but against it. Even the old man

who beat us up was anti-Communist."

Who were your friends at ~~szkola~~ school?

"My very best friend was the son of a painter. You know, he was a very famous artist and well-known. He held many exhibitions and he sold his pictures for as much as 1000 forints. Then there was another boy, he was the son of a doctor. The three of us were very good friends."

How were the other classmates?

"We were 28, and six of the boys were Jewish. You know, the Jews did not want their children to attend the public schools, and they preferred to pay. At this school we had to pay ten forints a month. In the public ~~szkola~~ school the tuition was ten forints for the whole year. We did not associate with the Jewish kids very much because ~~we~~<sup>they</sup> were terribly snobbish. They walk around as if they were kings, putting on airs. We just greeted them, because we had to, but we never played with them. The girls were especially bad. Then, I did not make friends with other classmates of mine, because some of them were very naughty boys. They played out in the streets, and they talked about filthy things."

What did you play with ~~on~~ your friends?

"We made excursions, we climbed the Mecsek Mountain, we played soccer, and such things."

Did you have a classmate at school you did not like?

"There was one boy who was extremely naughty. Also, he was a very bad student. He was accepted at this ~~szkola~~ school because this old teacher I told you about, the one who beat us up, knew his parents, and he promised them that he was going to try to teach him, and bring him up



properly. I think this boy was a little bit nuts. Do you know what he did, for instance? He ~~he~~ drank all the ink out of the fountain pens. Now, isn't that stupid?"

Were there any Communists among your classmates?

"Yes, there was one boy. His father did not live in Pecs. He lived in Budapest, and he came seldom to visit the boy, because he did not get along with the boy's mother."

How did you know that the boy was a Communist?

"Well, you know, he was always talking about how the Russians are wonderful, and what good things they are doing, and also he always tried to argue with us. Our ~~my~~ singing teacher even warned us that we should not talk in front of this boy, and not to start any arguments."

Did the other teachers know that he was a Communist?

"Yes, all teachers knew, but, you know, they did not pay much attention to the boy. They just made him recite lessons. They didn't explain anything to him, they just ~~ignored~~ ignored him. This boy was friends only with the Jewish kids."

Did you have any children in your class whom you looked up to?

"Yes, there was a boy. He was extremely small, very slight, ~~but~~ the smallest in the class. But, all of us liked him, because he was a very good little boy and also he studied very hard. You ~~know~~ know, he didn't even come out to play with us because he was always studying and studying like mad. His father was a police lieutenant."

The answer to the next question is typical of

this young boy's logical thinking.

Now, let's say there are two children of your age. One of them is the son of a man who was once a lawyer, but is now a common laborer. The other boy is the son of a man who was a common laborer ten years ago, but now is the manager of a factory. Which of them would you rather have as a friend?

"The one whose father was a lawyer", said the boy immediately.

Why?

"Because, had the father been a Communist, he would not have been forced to make a living as a common factory hand."

I explained to the boy that neither of the two fathers is a Communist, and told him to give me his preference. After thinking a couple of minutes, the boy said:

"I still would prefer the son of the lawyer because, you know, in Hungary it was quite impossible for a common laborer to become a factory manager unless he is a Party member."

What about religious instructions. Did you have any at school or elsewhere?

"No, we did not have it at school, and neither did I attend any religious instructions anywhere else. My mother told me very little about religion."

(The child was extremely interested to hear that he can attend religious instructions here in Sunday schools, and asked me the address of the parish where he could find out where he could attend in the Fall.)

B. Did you tell your parents ~~always~~ always what happened at school?

"There was no need to tell them because they knew perfectly well what we were studying there. The only thing I usually told my parents was when that teacher was nasty, and beat me up."

What did your parents say to this?

"Of course, they weren't very glad to hear this. ~~But~~ But, since we were never taught anything about Communism in school, they did not care very much."

C. Did you ever talk about what happened at home when you were at school?

"No, I did not, because, after all, you never knew who was a Communist, and when you are being spied on. I heard of the parents of many children who had been imprisoned because the kid didn't keep his mouth shut. You know, Miss, ~~there~~ there was that AVH police who were so terrible. They used to go around in civilian clothes in the city, and were spying on everyone, and listening to what people were talking about."

Had you been warned not to talk about some things, and who warned you?

"It was Daddy who ~~was~~ told me about these things. I always obeyed my dad, and did what he told me. This was important to me, always."

D. What did you do after school hours?

"First of all, when I went home after school I did my homework. When I was through with this, I went to do the shopping for my mother. She told me what to buy. But, you know, this took an awful long time always. It got so late by the time I came home. I had to line up at many places, and sometimes I had to go to

several shops until I could find what mother wanted me to buy. So, by the time I got home it was nearly five o'clock. I had tea and then I went out to play until supper. After supper I took my bath, went to bed, and read."

What kind of books did you read?

"Mostly they were fairytales, and stories about famous warriors. Some of them were Hungarian books, the others were Russian translations."

Where did you obtain these books?

"I got them from the circulating library of the school. But, mostly I read Hungarian fairytales. We had 'The Seventy-seven Hungarian Folk Stories', and also I read the stories of Grimm, 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs', and so on. I also had books of my own. These I bought with the money Daddy gave me."

What about other amusements?

Oh, we very often went to the movies, Daddy, Mummy, and myself. On Sunday mornings I attended the matinees alone. You see, mother was working in the office of a movie, and so ~~we~~ we were always allowed to attend the movies free."

Which movies did you like best?

(Here, the little boy, with the most serious poker-face, said: ~~xxx~~ 'Dramas.')

What sort of dramas do you mean?

"oh, there was one that was about a poor little boy. It was called 'The Black House.' But, the film I liked best was an English film. It was a color film, and it was about the 100th million dollar bill, or something like that."



What about sports?

"I usually went to swim at the big municipal pool in Pecs. In the winter I went skating and tobogganing."

What did you ~~pas~~ play with the other children?

"Well, we just played hide-and-seek, and catch-as-catch-can, and built tents, and played soldier, etc. We also played ball and hop-scotch with the girls."

Did you participate in the Pioneer movement?

"Yes."

Was it compulsory?

"No, it was not compulsory, but whoever was a good student was admitted to the Pioneer Movement in the fourth grade. We received red neckties, and we had to ~~wear~~ wear them always. You ~~know~~ know what they told us? They said we must be very proud to wear those red neckties because they are ~~xxxxxx~~ a piece of the Russian flag. What do you say to such a stupid thing? Also, whoever did not put on his red Pioneer tie and came to school without it received a bad mark. The younger children who were not sworn in as Pioneers yet wore blue neckties. These were what they called 'Pals'."

What did you do at the Pioneer Movement meetings?

"Well, we had meetings which were more or less compulsory, but we very seldom attended them. They were terribly boring."

What do you mean by boring?

"Well, it just wasn't interesting. They never ~~had~~

said anything that was interesting. They did not have a Pioneer home, as they did in other cities, and usually we had the meetings in the school. Here a boy of seventeen was our leader, and he talked all kinds of stuff and nonsense."

"We also did some excursions with the Pioneers and the whole school went on those excursions, but only if we had been good for quite some time." We were taken by busees, usually for the whole day. Then we went out somewhere far in the mountains. We put up our tents, we caught butterflies, we walked, played the number game, etc. We did not have any lectures on these excursions.

"However, there was something which was compulsory for the parents. All parents had to attend the parents' meeting every Tuesday at six o'clock, and here they discussed us with the teachers. My Daddy never told me what they talked about, he just said that they discussed our progress and our studies."

IV.

Tell me now something about your family. What did your father do for a living at home?

"Daddy had a tailor's shop and he also had two men working for him. One was an apprentice and the other was an assistant. He was, what do you call it, *maszek*. You know, he made quite good money, but the trouble was that everything went into ~~tax tax~~ taxes. The more money he made, the more taxes he had to pay. So, mother also went to work in the movie's office. Also, she did the housework at home."

(In order to get the family background I also asked the boy about his grandparents. He told me that the paternal ~~grandfather~~ grandfather was a workman in the Zsolnay porcelain factory, which is a very famous factory in Hungary manufacturing all kinds of china goods. The paternal grandmother was a domestic servant, and the little boy told me that although she is over sixty, she is still does the same kind of work.)

When asked about living ~~conditions~~ conditions the youngster told me that the father's shop was in the middle of the city separated from the place where they lived. They lived in an apartment house where they had a large terrace, hall, one separate ~~fx~~ room for the boy, another one for the parents, kitchen, larder, bathroom. He also informed me that they paid 102 forints per month, and before they got this apartment the father had to pay 7000 forint premium to get it. He said they lived for seven years at this ~~place~~ place, and his father told him how much they had to pay for this good apartment.

Who did the housework?

"It was Mummy, but I had the shopping, chop wood, and also clean the apartment. Sometimes I helped her carry/~~take~~<sup>up</sup> the laundry~~xxxx~~ to the loft to hang it up. Also, I always carried down the garbage."

Who took care of you after school?

"Nobody. You know, when I was a small ~~big~~ baby Mummy did not go out to work. But, when I grew up, she did."



V. REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

A. Have you been rewarded at school for good work or good behavior?

"Yes, we received books, prizes, at the end of the year. Also, sometimes, fountain pens."

B. Were you ever punished at school?

"Yes, of course, we were. We were sometimes locked up in the classroom, depending on how naughty we were, one or two hours. Since classes were from eight to one, and on Saturdays, from eight to two, we sometimes had to stay at six o'clock if we were naughty. For instance, if someone did not know the lesson or the homework, he had to ~~xx~~ stay behind until he studied it thoroughly, and had to report to the teacher. Also, we received report cards which had to be signed by our parents.

"Also, we were often made to kneel in the corner. You know, the floor of the school was kept clean and rubbed with oil, so we had to kneel on bare knees on the floor so our parents could see that we had oily knees, and we had been naughty. We also got rapped on the knuckles, or slaps on our palms. However, there was only the old teacher who gave us physical punishment. We always boasted that 'You will learn your lesson, and the one who does not know it will be slapped.'"

C. Were you ever punished by your parents?

"Yes,"

How did your parents punish you?

"Well, for instance, I was not allowed to go out to play with my friends for three or four weeks, or I had to stay at home and work hard. For instance, I had to clean the whole apartment."

For what were you punished?

"Well, I was naughty. For instance, I ~~ba~~ broke a window, or I left the tap on in the laundry room and the whole place was flooded. And another time I kicked the football on the neighbor's terrace. There was a parakeet in its cage. Of course, the cage broke and the parakeet flew away. Also, you know, ~~th~~ we fought a great deal with the other boys, so my parents disapproved of all this.

"Also, you know, my parents did not like that I was choosy with my food. You know, I cannot eat green peas and beans. Whenever Mother cooked them, I started to talk back, and told her I'm not going to eat them. But, there was no help. I had to eat them whether I liked them or not."

Who usually did the punishing?

"Well, ~~both~~ <sup>mother</sup> my mother and father. But, you know, ~~Mommy~~ <sup>mother</sup> is much stricter, because, after all, she is the one who is mostly at home. But, it never happened that one of my parents took the side against the other."

VI.

I would like to ask you something about the revolution.

A. Can you tell me why the Hungarians started the revolution?

"It happened because the Hungarian people, and the young people, and all those who were not Communists, wanted the Russians to leave Hungary. But, the grumbling was started by the university students who arranged a big demonstration in Budapest after which the revolution broke out."

Who told you this? Why do you think this was the reason?

"You know, some university students used to come to visit with us. These students came to our place to listen to our radio. We had a very big radio at home, and we could hear Radio Free Europe very clearly. These students told us about the revolution."

Did you see anything of the revolution at Pecs, where you lived?

"Yes, the printing offices were just next to our house, and from the courtyard I could see very well what was going on. The university students chased out the workers of the printing office and started to print their own newspaper. Also, there was a great deal of shooting going on around the printing offices where the university students fought against the Communists."

"There were also people marching in the city, and there were great goings on there. We had a man in our apartment house who was a Communist. He was the manager of a big bank. He had eleven kids. Imagine, so many. But, you know, Daddy never let him come in our apartment. If he came to ~~an~~ order a suit or something, Father always told him to please go to the shop. This man told us how the people in the town have pulled down the red stars everywhere and ~~we~~ have broken all Communist signs.

"You know, people always went out in the streets even if shooting was going on. The university students finally retired to the Maszek Mountains from where they shot down on the Communists. They were digging in there. Also, my father went there and offered his services. He wanted to fight with them. But, when they found that he has a family, they sent him ~~home~~ home. The university students had lots of food because the state transportation company trucks carried the food up to the mountains for them.

"And you know what was quite funny? The Russians just stood and looked. When people pulled down the red stars, they did not do a thing. People got more and more ~~xx~~ impertinent. They were shouting 'Hang Gero!', and 'Down with Rakosi!'. Also, everyone wore the red, white, green, ribbons in his lapel. The ~~xxxxxxxix~~ university students walked around with black ribbons on their arms, showing that they were mourning for the university students who were killed in the Budapest fightings.

"The fights were going on for a long time from the top of the mountains. There were big explosions and you could see the fire of the cannons. Finally, one Sunday there was a big rumbling, like a                      going on at night. By daytime the whole city was just crowded with Russian tanks. You were not allowed to go near them either, because they immediately



19/VI.

started shooting.

"After awhile father and mother were fed up, and they planned to escape from Hungary. So we distributed everything we had. We gave all our things to grandmothers and grandfather and friends. We left for the direction of Zalaegerszeg. A man came with us who spoke good Russian and he always talked to them whenever we were halted by the Russians. Do you know, we walked 40 kilometers one day in four hours. We walked terribly fast. In the end, Mummy's and my shoes were completely torn. Finally we arrived in a village where my father's ~~assistant's~~ assistant's parents lived, and this man helped us. There was pig killing just going on and he gave us wonderful food, and at night he took us over the border. There was a terrific mud, and I sank into the mud up to my knees. When we crossed the border there was an automobile there which took us to the next village."

B. What impressed you most during the revolution?

After some thinking the little boy said: "It was so nice that everyone was happy. At the time when Hungary was in the hands of the university students, everyone was glad, smiling, and happy. But, when the Russians came back, everyone became terribly sad."

(The boy got up and rummaged in one of the draws in his room and pulled out the Time magazine which had the Freedom Fighter on the ~~xxx~~ cover. He showed it proudly to me and said, 'Have you seen this? Isn't that beautiful?')

VII.

I wonder what you would like to be when you  
grow up.

"First of all, I would like to become a pilot  
or a practical engineer, because I like that.  
You know, when we came to America, all the way  
I was allowed to stay with the pilot in the  
front of the plane. I was sitting next to  
him. He put his earpieces on my head, and I  
could hear how the pilots talked in the air.  
Of course, it was English and I didn't under-  
stand any at the time, but I heard them  
nevertheless."

I have some very, very hard questions to  
ask you. Think hard and tell me what you  
think. What is a good father like?

"A good father must teach his son whatever  
is good, and tell him not to do anything  
that is wrong. A good father should also  
not beat the child, but always talk to him  
and discuss everything, and explain."

Very good. Now tell me how do you imagine  
an ideal teacher to be like?

"I think that a good teacher should explain  
everything, five or six times if necessary,  
until we understand it well and can learn  
it. But, a good teacher should never beat  
the children."

Now, finally, tell me what does a good mother  
do?

"A good mother teaches everything that is  
good and beautiful."

What are the three worse things a kid can do?

"First of all, lie. Secondly, steal, and ~~xxx~~  
~~xxx~~ thirdly, to fight and beat up other boys."

What are the three most important things  
children should be taught?

(Here the little boy thought ~~xxx~~ hard for  
quite some time.)

"I think that first of all to be decent.  
Then to be polite, and friendly to everyone."

Now, finally, what are the three worse things  
you could say about somebody?

"That he is a thief, he is a liar, that he  
talks dirty things."

VIII. SPECIAL SECTION

A. Who do you think are the three greatest people in the world?

After some hesitation the little boy said:  
"God."

What about the other two?

"There aren't any others. After all, there can be only one man who is greatest. This is God, nobody else."

Well,<sup>who</sup> ~~what~~ do you think are the three greatest people in the world ~~max~~ today?

Again the little boy thinks hard and finally says: "Eisenhower." There isn't any other man.

Well, who do you think is the greatest living Hungarian?

(This question caused a great deal of hesitation, and finally he said that he doesn't know. We have to remember that the child did not study history yet.)

B. Now, I am going to give you a few names of famous Hungarians. Maybe you can tell me something about each of them. Who was St. Stephen?

"He was a king."

What about King Medeas?

"He too was a king."

Who was Francis Rakosi?

"He was a Freedom Fighter."



What About \_\_\_\_\_ Petofi?

"He was a poet."

What about Kossuth \_\_\_\_\_ ?

"He was the same sort of a person, like Petofi.  
He was fighting for freedom."

Istvan \_\_\_\_\_

"I don't know."

The child did not know anything about \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ either. Regarding  
\_\_\_\_\_ he said, "He, too, took part  
in the revolution of 1848."

Regarding George \_\_\_\_\_ he said, "He was  
a leader of some sort of Freedom Fighters  
in 1552, if I remember well."

When asked who Miklos Horthy was, he said,  
"Oh, this man lived ~~just~~ quite recently, didn't  
he."

About Josef Mydzenty, he only said, "He was a  
priest."

He remarked on Imre Nagy, "He was a member of  
the Hungarian government ~~at~~ quite recently."

IX.

What strikes you as being completely different in the United States from Hungary?

"First of all, the houses, and then the cars."

Why the houses?

"Because at home we did not have houses that were built of wood."

And why the cars?

"Because there are so many new makes. And besides, you know, at home no private person was allowed to own a car."

Can you tell me what the things are you like most about the United States?

"Yes, I think it's wonderful that people are so happy here because there is nothing wrong. There is no war going on, and you don't have to fight for your freedom, because you have it here."

Now, there is a last question. What are the things you disapprove of here?

"There isn't such a thing, Miss."

T H E E N D