

III. THE SCHOOL SITUATION

A. Can you tell us something about your school in Hungary? What were your subjects?

"Our subjects were reading and writing, arithmetic, drawing, ~~gym~~ gymnastic, singing. These were all compulsory. We didn't have any Russian instruction. There was also a possibility to register for lunch, but the lunch was very meager -- usually just a plain roll with a thin slice of cheese. Therefore, I didn't register for it."

Which subjects were liked the most, and which the least?

"I liked gymnastic and drawing the most, because I didn't have to study for those subjects. Otherwise, it was just the same. I didn't care much about the other subjects."

Tell me something now about your teachers.

"We had only one teacher for all the subjects. She was an old lady who had three big sons. I liked her. She was never rude, but just. If somebody behaved she praised the boy and he got a star. And if we behaved badly, she treated us accordingly. Either she pulled our hair a little bit or let us stand in the corner. If somebody gathered ten stars, he got a toy or some reward from her."

Did she treat all the children equally?

"No, I can't say that. Two boys in the class always got special privileges. They were two fat boys. Their mothers always brought flowers and gifts to the teacher, and came to visit her every once in a while. These boys got a star every day. The teacher really spoiled those two boys because they flattered her."

Did you have Communist teachers?

"I don't know. We never talked about it. But we had a big Russian shield on the facade of the school. My father helped to take it off during the revolution."

Tell me something now about your classmates. Who

were your friends? Tell me something about them.

"I had friends mostly in the house where we lived. But I had some from the school too. The school was once in the morning, once in the afternoon, and therefore I always played with those boys who were free at the time when I was free. We played all kinds of games together. We fought with large sticks against another group of children, or we played football. We rode bicycles. We usually gave each other our own toys or tools. I ~~it~~ loved also to play in the sand, and we always made all different kinds of figures and puppets from chestnuts."

What did you talk about with your friends?

"We usually talked about our games. We planned what we would play the next day, where should we go, because we lived ~~at~~ at the foot of a hill, and we could go out to climb the hillside, or play in the meadow. But you know, since the Russians came back in November, everything changed. It was so different. We couldn't even go out to play. Everything became bad."

Whom did you not like at school?

"There was a boy who was a thief, and he was always dirty. I didn't like this boy. And there was another boy who had a bicycle. When I had my own bicycle, I always gave it to him if he asked for it, but he never gave me his. This is why I just hated him."

Were there any Communists among your classmates?

"I don't know. I just didn't think of that."

Were there any Communists among your playmates?

"I don't know either. We just played together."

Were there any children at school who were looked up to by all of you?

"I don't remember but, yes, there was one boy, a very good student, and he came to school every day in a clean outfit, a new outfit. We honored him for that, but

on the other hand he was a very bad boy. He broke the windows, he hung on the streetcars. His father was a doctor."

Now let's say there are two children of your age. One of them is the son of a man who once was a lawyer, but is now a common laborer. The other 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?

"I made friends with everybody. I didn't make any distinction. I had a good friend in our house. I don't even ~~x~~ know who his parents were, but we sent him a package already from here."

Did you have religious instructions at school or some place else?

"Oh no, it couldn't be. In the schools they didn't allow us to learn about religion. If somebody just made the sign of the cross on himself, he was already sent home from the school. It was impossible to be a Catholic. I went to the church with my mother, but we had to go far to a different part of the city. My mother told me about religion, and my ~~x~~ father bought books about God, and from these books my mother read to us every evening before we went to sleep."

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

"I always told everything that happened at school to my mother. I started to tell it as soon as I got home, and I continued during supper."

Did your parents ever talk to you about school, and what you learned?

"My father only always told me that if we fought with the boys, I should hit back, but if I did so, then my mother always scolded me. She always said, "If somebody throws a stone at us, we should throw back with bread." I think about this now very often, that mother was always right. Only I didn't do it well somehow, sometimes."

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

"No. I didn't talk to anybody about what was at home. I thought, why, it would mean just trouble. At the end, they would have beaten me up if I said something wrong."

Did anybody ever tell you not to talk about something at school?

"No. But the teachers ~~xxid~~ in Hungary said something entirely different from what the teachers say here in the U.S."

But did your father, for instance, ever tell you something different from what you heard at school?

"Yes. Sometimes he did, and I always believed him."

What did you do after school hours?

"First I did my homework, and if the weather was good, then we went out to Sas Hill to play."

Did you read anything? What books did you read?

"I didn't like to read in Hungary. I remember only reading one small book. It was about a family, how they lived, and that there was a boy who was rich, and a boy who was poor, and at the end, the poor boy became rich. I read this book very fast. It didn't take me more than two days."

Did you ever go to the movies or some other entertainment?

"Yes, we went to the movies sometimes -- about every Sunday, and at Christmas. We also went to the Amusement Park, and outdoors ~~xx~~ during the weekend with my parents."

Did you take part in any sports?

"No, I didn't do any sports."

What did you play with other children?

"We built tents on the hillside, and shot with arrows. We climbed the trees, and threw stones."

Did you participate in the Pioneer Movement?

"No, I was not a Pioneer."

IV.

Now tell us something about your family. What did your father and your mother do?

"My father was a stove setter. You see, he made these big, beautiful stoves with glazed tiles. There were very few stove makers in Hungary like my father. Therefore he was asked to come everywhere. He made a lot of money. We always had everything to eat, and a lot of toys. Especially during the revolution, we had plenty of food. My mother's sister, my aunt, she worked in a food factory and we got everything from her. If one of my suits became old, I immediately got a new one."

Who were your father's friends?

"My father's friends were a railway man who worked at the railway, then another one was a teamster. He had a carriage with horses, and he always carried bricks or mortar."

Where did you live in Hungary?

"We lived at the Saanegy, in the 11th district. We lived in a very nice house, with a big garden. There were a lot of flowers and bushes in the garden. Four other families lived in the same house. We had two large rooms. I slept in the same bed as my mother. My father had a bed alone, and my sister and my brother slept in the same bed. Our bedroom wasn't so large. The other room was much larger, and we had a bed in that room for our guests. Once in a while I slept there. It was very good to sleep there, because the air was so good in that room."

Who did the housework?

"My mother worked in the household. Nobody helped her. I helped her sometimes to wash the dishes, or to sweep the room. Sometimes I even helped with the laundry. I liked to do everything very much, but my brother and my sister were lazy. They always went out to play instead of helping my mother."

Who took care of you after school?

"When my mother was at work, then another woman came in.

She came from very far, and she took care of us until our parents came home. My father paid her for that. She slept there once in a while in the other room. If she couldn't come then we went to the Day Care Center. It was very good. The food was so good there, and it was also nice -- light and bright, and we did whatever we wanted to."

V. REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

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

"If I made a good exercise, or I did something good, I got a star. As I told you before, if we had ten stars we got a toy from the teacher."

B. Were you ever punished at school?

"If I didn't know the lesson, or if I hurt someone, then our teacher beat me, or I had to take home a report of my unsatisfactory conduct. She gave me a slap once in a while, but it was all right. However, my sister -- she was hit by the teacher so hard and got such big slaps on her face that the traces of ~~his~~ her fingers could still be seen on her face when she got home. My father went to the school and told the Director about it, and the teacher was dismissed. Even so, she was a good teacher. My sister told me she was. But she said also that she didn't do anything, and still she got this big slap."

Were you ever punished by your parents?

"Oh yes. My father hit me once in a while. He always hit me on my head. But I wasn't afraid of him, even if he was strict with me. If I lied, or I broke a window, or I fought with someone who didn't do anything to me and I just started, or if I didn't do what my parents told me, or ~~x~~ I broke a plate -- in such cases I was punished. But mostly by my mother. My father hit me sometimes only. My mother beat me up with a wooden spoon, especially if she sent me somewhere and I didn't go; or she asked me to kneel down in the corner of a room. It happened once in a while that my father and my mother didn't agree on the methods of our punishments -- whether we should be beaten or not."



VI.

- A. Can you tell us a little bit about the revolution? Why do you think the Hungarians started the revolution?

"The revolution broke out because three men in Russia wanted to do something that Stalin didn't want and didn't like, and he didn't want to allow them. Therefore he was killed. We heard it over the radio when he was buried, and this caused the revolution. I know about the revolution only what my father told me -- that he went out one evening and saw a big crowd which started to shoot at each other. The Russians arrived if they wanted to help us, but it turned out that they fought against the Hungarians. I saw the Russians come with the tanks, and the Hungarians even helped the Russians when they got stuck. But I saw also that if the Russians didn't shoot, the Hungarians didn't shoot either, and vice versa. I saw many things during the revolution. They were shooting every day right under our window, every night. My mother's face is all burnt because she went out to buy bread, and the Russians threw a bomb from a truck, and it burned by mother's whole face. I also saw from the window that a Communist who lived nearby wanted to run into a house barefoot, and the people shot him. My father told me that the people threw leaflets all over the streets, and that the AVH shot a small boy who ran on the street. In our house there was a 13-year old boy who had a real pistol. He hid it, and the Russians looked for it and therefore the boy had to escape. Many boys had to escape. And after the revolution, we found in the back of the garden and in the meadows many pistols and ammunition."

VII.

What would you like to be when you grow up?

"I would like to become a swimmer, a sportsman. I would like to do this the most, because I would be strong and healthy from that."

A. What is a good father like; tell me.

"A good father buys everything for a child that he wants, and that he needs. I am always so happy if my father buys me everything. It is good for me, and for my daddy as well."

What is an ideal teacher like?

"A teacher should be strict. A strict teacher is much better for the children. He really disciplines them."

What is a good mother like?

"Oh, she must be like my mother. She does everything her child asks of her, but if the child is bad, then the mother punishes him."

What are the three worst things a child can do?

"To lie, to be disobedient to his parents, to smoke a cigarette if he is such a small boy as I am."

What are the three most important things a child should be taught?

"A child should be taught arithmetic, to be wise, and to be healthy."

What are the three worst things one can say about someone?

"That he is envious, he doesn't make a friendship with me, and he doesn't do any good to other people."



Respondent doesn't know about Mindszenty.

Imre Nagy - "I heard his name, but this is all."

IX.

Now, at the end, tell us what strikes you as being completely different in the U.S. from Hungary?

"The movies are different here, and the cold drinks. I like the school here, and the plastic glasses, because they don't break."

And what are the things you disapprove of in the U.S.?

"I don't like spaghetti, chewing gum, and the toy automobiles. I got bored with them because I am already a big boy."

THE END