

### III. THE SCHOOL SITUATION

A. "Can you tell me something about your school back in Hungary? For instance which subjects did you take?"

"Oh, we had quite a lot of subjects at school. You know I was just starting the sixth grade before we left Hungary. We had first of all Mathematics, then geometry, Hungarian language and literature, history, drawing, gym, singing, geography and natural history. Further more we had of course Russian language. All these subjects were compulsory.

"Tell me something more. What did you learn for instance in literature, history geography and so on?"

"You see we learned quite a lot about Stalin and how he liberated Hungary and all the glories of the Russian people in our literature classes. Also in our history classes we had to learn a great deal about the achievements of the Soviet Army. Regarding geography, in the fifth grade we learned about Hungary, but in the sixth grade we took Russia. This teacher who taught us geography was extremely <sup>5</sup>with us. We had to learn by heart, all the different member states of the Soviet Union, (the socialist member states of the Soviet Union.) On the whole we had to know this subject extremely well.

"Tell me, which were your most favorite subjects?"

"I liked most Hungarian literature and the Hungarian language lessons. Further also math and geometry. I was interested in those subjects, but also I liked these subjects because my teachers were extremely nice. Not only that they ~~talked~~ <sup>taught</sup> very well, especially the one who taught Hungarian literature was a very very nice person. In fact I was her favorite, but she was very strict with us, but extremely just. If I did not know something, in spite of my being her favorite, she always gave me bad marks. This lady had great troubles before, because she was the sister of the former cabinet minister, from the old times.

Then we had a teacher for Russian. She <sup>was</sup> a very strict one, however, I must admit that she was quite fair with everybody also. This lady <sup>had</sup> attended a teacher's college in Russia and spoke therefore an extremely good Russian. Of course everything Russian or everything that came from Russia was perfect and wonderful for her. Her favorite was a girl whose parents were janitors in a house where Russians lived, and ~~she~~ <sup>she</sup> spoke fluent Russian. Of course these two always conversed in Russian. Later for some reason unknown to me, we got another teacher for the Russian language who later became our headmistress. She was very nice.

As I said I said before, the teacher who taught Hungarian literature and grammar was very nice and extremely fair.

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She did not teach us much about Russia, but only about Hungary and Hungarian literature. I also remember that she sided with the girls. Once we wanted to go to church on Good Friday and she did not report us missing from our classes.

"Tell me now, did the teachers treat all children equally, or did any of the children get special privileges?"

2 What I have seen at my school is that the teachers who taught for instance drawing, gymnastics, singing, always liked the kids who were good in these subjects, and who were talented. ~~Of~~ Then they spent much time on them. Regarding other subjects such as math, history, etc. here again those children who were weak in those subjects were given more attention by the teachers. They were very decent in this way.

Then again the teacher who taught Hungarian literature was a great favorite of mine, but I was hers too. We could always talk to her like to her mother. She sometimes let me take home all the classwork for her. Nevertheless, I knew she liked me but she was very strict with me.

"Can you tell me if any of the teachers was a communist?"

I believe that the Russian teacher must have been. The way she talked and the way she praised everything that was Russian indicated that she must have been a Communist. Whether she was a Party member or not I really couldn't tell. Furthermore all other teachers were extremely badly paid and you could see how they dressed. They were always poorly dressed and plain and simple. This teacher who taught Russian on the other hand was always dressed up as if she was going to a party. ~~As~~ <sup>ASLINE</sup> you ladies here dressed up in the morning. She had earrings and necklace, pearls, etc. You know in Hungary our mothers and grown-ups did not dress up like here. Also I have often observed that whenever we made anti-communist or anti-Russian remarks, the other teachers just smiled indulgently, the Russian teacher immediately looked daggers." <sup>10 years</sup>

On the whole I would say that those teachers whom we knew to be anti-communist we always talked freely. These people were always nice and very tolerant with us. On the other hand, the headmistress for instance, (not of the class, but of the whole school) and the teacher who taught Russian were very impatient were very impatient, always shouting at us, yelling at us. I know that the headmistress of the school was a party member."

"Do you know about the flag ceremony we had to attend every day before school started? This was- It was like this. We had to be at school at quarter to eight everyday and in closed ranks we had to file out from the classrooms into the courtyard and into the gymnasium."

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We had to sing Russian and Hungarian songs and the flag was hoisted. At the same time the list of those girls who studied well was read and also the lazy ones were reprimanded. I remember how strictly the school headmistress maintained order. If we dared to chatter, or our ranks were not perfect, she yelled her head off, and the whole ceremony had to be repeated."

"Tell me something about your classmates."

You know this was a public school since it had been nationalized by the state and they were also girls and boys who attended the school. The majority of ~~them~~ were quite decent. There were of course a number of lower social-class children there. The school was co-educational. Last year, however, we had to be separated from the boys because there was always trouble with them. I really do not know since every grade had two classes, ~~why~~ <sup>why</sup> did not divide us right in the beginning into boys- and girls- classes.

We had one boy in our class who was a communist. He was an awful cad. Of course he was the president of the class. They lived just across the street in a beautiful villa. Once the whole class was invited. They were showing films, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> I could ~~see~~ see the apartment. It must have been an apartment that was confiscated from some very rich person. The father of ~~that~~ boy was a member of the AVN and once I saw the grandmother come to visit them. She was a very plain looking old peasant woman. This boy, <sup>was</sup> ~~everybody~~ thoroughly detested, not only the girls, but also the boys, <sup>by</sup> \*

We usually talked about everything at school, ~~but~~ we were pretty careful with whom and what. However, I <sup>HAD</sup> two very special friends with whom I talked about everything.

I would like also to mention that ~~the~~ despite the fact <sup>THAT</sup> the communist boy was thoroughly disliked even by the teachers, they were extremely fair with him because he had lots of brains. It was only the Russian teacher who was always trying to be very friendly and nice to him.

All children who were good at some subject were well liked and we always looked up to them. There was one little girl who was a big liar and we therefore didn't like her."

"What about religious instruction. Did you have any at school?"

No, we did not have any religious instructions, that is it was not compulsory. Only those attended religion classes who wished to do so. There was a priest who came to teach at the school building, however, it was not very

advisable. The school headmistress could control who went to religious instruction. ~~Итак, так как~~ ~~нежелательно~~ ~~для меня~~ ~~было~~ ~~посещать~~ ~~религиозные~~ ~~уроки~~ ~~в~~ ~~школе~~ ~~, я~~ ~~пошла~~ ~~на~~ ~~специальные~~ ~~религиозные~~ ~~уроки~~ ~~у~~ ~~английских~~ ~~сестер~~ ~~на~~ ~~некоторое~~ ~~время~~ ~~дальше~~ ~~от~~ ~~школы~~ ~~в~~ ~~Зуглиге~~. Here I also made my first communion.

I asked the little girl why she said it was unadvisable especially for her to attend religious instruction. She said :

"You know I had a very bad class background. My father was an officer, therefore I not only had to be at the top of the class and get the best marks, but I had ~~to~~ to be very careful of what I did. In order to be admitted to high school, these children who had a bad class background, always had to have top marks. This was the only way to get any education.

B. "Did you always tell your parents what happened in school?"

"Yes, of course, I always told my mother everything. Sometimes, however, I must admit I was rather scared to tell when the teacher reprimanded me for bad behavior. However, we never discussed the family affairs at school except with those people on whom I could rely. My mother knew that I was always very choosy about the people to whom I talked things over. Of course I never talked about politics at school and I didn't even repeat some of ~~the~~ ~~jokes~~ that we heard from other people.

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What we learned at school, especially at the Russian lesson and ~~then when~~ we had to learn about Russian history we just learned it there and let it go in one ear and out ~~the~~ other. I preferred to believe what my mother and parents told me and what I heard at home to that which I heard in school. We also had a great deal of compulsory reading to do, but ~~were~~ ~~THE~~ ~~TEACHERS~~ very fair in this. They just told us which things we had to read, but they never forced us to do so. You know the whole political indoctrination was very half-hearted in that school.

"What did you do after school hours?"

"Well you see, when I came home I sat down and did my homework first of all, then I went to visit with my friends. I had two very special friends, one of them was a little bit older than me, but she came from the same sort of family and she also had a bad social background. Her father too was an officer. The other girl lived in the house where I did and she was also my classmate. We usually went and played puppet show, and then ball. We played with our dolls, cooked for them and dressed ~~for~~ them, but mostly I

read a great deal because I liked reading. I can say that I was very lucky, because from my elder brothers I got handed down many stroy books of the good old times, and these were very nice books. I must say however, there was one book that was printed during the communist regime call<sup>d</sup> "Seventy-seven Hungarian folk stories," and these were very ~~max~~ nice. There was nothing about Russia in it.

Then I must tell you another thing. Once by mistake mother bought me a book which had a very nice title, but you should have read the story! It was a real and true communist story: how the poor little girl was not allowed to pick a flower because the ~~z~~ "imperialists" wouldn't ~~max~~ let her, and how the Russian soldiers came and liberated the little girl and how then she was again allowed to pick all the flowers she wanted. You know it was the silliest story I ever read in my life. I had a good laugh when I found out that mother had made this mistake.

We also went to the movies sometimes. Once the three of us went alone to a movie where they gave only newsreels and here my friend, the older one, was accosted by a very naughty man we had a hard time getting away from him. We asked the help of another nice man to ~~max~~ help us <sup>to</sup> get away. Since then my parents never let me go alone. So I went sometimes with my parents and we saw some Russian colored pictures and opera movies which were very beautiful. Also other movies, but I do not remember any titles.

"Did you do any sports?"

"I did only calisthenics at school and at home where my father who is very ~~smart~~ <sup>smart</sup> in this taught me a great deal. In the summer, I ~~also~~ went swimming. ✓ GOOD AT

"Did you participate in the Pioneer movement?"

"Yes, of course, I had to. It was said it is not compulsory, but of course we were checked askto whether or not we belonged to the Pioneer movement. We had to pay our membership stamps. We had to wear red neckties on top of the school uniforms. However, I never attended the so called Pioneer camps during the summer. Only the proletariat children went to these camps. I never did.

I asked the little girl what the others who attended those camps said about them. She said: "Those kids who went to those summer camps liked it very much because they had a lot of entertainment. That's all I know about it."

#### IV. FAMILY

"I would like to know something about your family now. What was the profession of your father? What did he do? And your mother?"

"My father worked as a mechanic technician at the Csepel a factory for machine tools. Of course you know this was not his regular profession. Only since communism. Otherwise he was a graduate of the Hungarian officer's academy and an officer in the air force by profession. Mommy worked in the office of the Cooperative of the small craftsman. I

Tell me something about the apartment where you lived and so on."

The part of the town where we lived was called <sup>a</sup>Psaret. I expect you know where that is. We had a very nice apartment. Three large rooms, kitchen and bathroom. We lived in this apartment: my parents, myself, my two brothers and an old aunt who helped my mother with the housework since mommy too was working. She looked after all the household chores and she also cooked for us. She also looked after me when I came home from school, but she never let me help her in the household work.

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

Oh yes, I received a big diploma saying what a wonderful student I was. I received a little medal also with my name engraved on it and saying ~~xxxx~~ "for the wonderful <sup>PROGRESS IN</sup> studies!" These diplomas and medals were given only for your good studies. For good behavior you received a little note which was sent to the parents saying that you behaved decently and were a good girl.

B. "Were you ever punished at school?"

"of course we all were. If we didn't study properly then our parents were notified of it and every three months and also they were called to the parents meeting.

For bad behavior we were disciplined in classes. We had to stand in front of the office of the school headmistress for half an hour or so.

C. "Were you ever punished by your parents?"

"Oh well of course. Nevertheless, I can count it on my one hand, how many times I was really punished by my parents. Once I remember I lied. I got a terrific smack in my face and first mother beat me up with the carpet beater and then I got the smack in my face. When I was five years old and went to visit my friend in the neighborhood and came home at ~~right~~ 10 o'clock both parents ~~of my parents~~ gave me a thorough whacking. Then also I recall that ~~once~~ I studied badly and my mother got a note from school to this effect and I was not allowed to go with them on an excursion.

As to who punished me, I can tell you that both of my parents did. My mother's hand was much quicker, but when I got something from my father it was ~~more~~ more efficient, so to say. <sup>HE</sup>

VI. THE REVOLUTION

"Let me ask you now something about the revolution."

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

This is easy, because everybody in Hungary just hated the Russians. There was no justice for the Hungarians. The Russians took away everything: all our coal, uranium and all our food. Hungary was not allowed to be independent. After all you know that it was the students who ~~xxxx~~ started the whole revolution. "

B. "What impressed you most during the revolution?"

"There were so many things that were awful during the revolution, I cannot really remember what was the most terrifying. I remember it was awful when we had to go down to the cellars. Some smoke bombs were thrown in that district. Then also later on when we went along in the Buda district, I saw how many houses were destroyed. The big general post office building for instance. I also heard that so many children were killed quite small ones, and young girls. I also remember how awful it was when on November 4th the Russians came back with all their tanks. It was quite dark very early in the morning.

C. "Did you take part in the revolution?"

"Oh no, but, I heard the very same day that the revolution started how the Stalin statue was pulled down and cut up into pieces. You know our janitor was there and he told me. One day I remember that I went with my mother to town and we saw how one Russian memorial was also pulled down.

One day I went also to the nearby Saint John hospital to help. I was working in the kitchen and peeled potatoes together with my friends. It was only one day that we were allowed to do this.

During the revolution you know, my parents mostly kept us home. We children played all kinds of parlor games and of course like everybody else we also listened to Radio Free Europe.



VII. "What would you like to be when you grow up?"

I would like to be a designer I think, but I admit honestly that I haven't thought very much about my future yet. I started to learn ballet dancing when I was three years old and I was told I was quite good at it because there was an audition at the opera in Budapest, and I was among the ones who were selected. However, due to my class background, I was not admitted. And so I think that I had better give up this career altogether,

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"I am going to give you now the names of a few Hungarians. Please tell me a little about each of them."

Who was Saint Stephen? "Saint Stephen was a holy king"

Tell me something about King Mathias. "King Mathias became a Hungarian king when he was very young. He was elected by the Hungarian people on the Danube which was frozen all over at that time. He had two wives, one of them an Italian. He brought Italian culture to Hungary and many Italian artists were living at his court."

What do you know about Ferenc Rakoczi II? "He was the leader of the Kuruc people. He was in prison and then he was compelled to go into immigration. He lived in Turkey and also died there. His secretary was the famous Kelemen Mikes."

Who was Alexander Petofi? "He was a very famous Hungarian poet. He fought in the freedom fight in 1848. He also wrote a very great many famous poems. (Here the little girl gave the title of several of them.)"

Who was Louis Kossuth? "He also lived in 1848 and he was the Hungarian prime minister."

Who was Stephen Szechenyi? "He also lived at this time and he was the one who had the famous chain bridge built. He also was the founder of the Hungarian Scientific Institute."

Do you know anything about Ferenc Deak? "I'm afraid I don't know anything about him."

What do you know about Maria Theresa? "Oh I know that she was a queen and she lived in Vienna and she liked the Hungarians."

What about Gabor Bethlen? "I don't know anything about him."

Who was Michael Tancsics? "I know that he was a Hungarian writer who for six years was in prison for ~~six years~~. He lived in 1848. Later on he was liberated however."

Who was George Dozsa? "He was the man who led the revolt of the Hungarian peasants. He was put in prison and executed in a most horrible manner. He was put on a red hot iron throne and a red hot iron crown was put on his head. When he died, the other leaders of the revolting peasantry had to eat his flesh."

Who was Josef Mindszenty? "He was the Prince Primate of Hungary and was imprisoned by the communists and held as prisoner near Pecs. During the revolution he was liberated and he went to the American legation where he still is."

What do you know about Imre Nagy? "I know that he was our minister during the revolution. And he fought and stood up for Hungary. He was very much against the Russians and therefore he was put into prison."

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THE END