

(1) The question is hard to answer. There is first of all the revolt itself. But then what you should know of the Hungarian development is primarily the beginning of the process of fermentation in December 1955 when the writers first began to strike out for greater freedom. (This leads directly into)

(2 a) Ehrenburg¹⁸, traveling through Hungary to Yugoslavia stopped over in Budapest for about two hours. He talked with several journalists and writers (one of these present was Gyula Hay). Ehrenburg expressed surprise at the continuing "rigidity" of the attitude of Hungarian writers and urged to strike out more boldly for greater creative freedom. This had immediate effect, because E. was one of the most respected Soviet writers. His Thaw (translated into Hungarian) also had a tremendous effect. It is noteworthy that Ehrenburg was the only Soviet writer whose name did not appear on any Soviet manifesto concerning the Hungarian uprising.

The Geneva conference of 1955 also played a role in easing things. The hope was raised that pressure on the satellites would life a little.

(2 b) Stalin's death had no immediate effect. It was not until July 1953 that a change was felt. This was in connection with Nagy's appointment as prime minister. This was, of course, already after the East German riots.

(2 c) Imre Nagy's speech of July 4 had a tremendous effect. It was extremely tempting to believe that real changes were coming. Nagy himself was even at the time just about the only Communist who enjoyed popularity.

They called him "the old one." But there was much doubt as to ^{the} real significance of his appointment. Many people remained sceptical. They had grown to believe that the Communists could be consistent only in their inconsistencies. In fact only the peasants scored real gains under Nagy. As for the other aspects of the regime -- no serious changes took place.

(2 d) Moscow's smiles at Tito elicited only doubt and some disgust in Hungary. Despite some dislike for Tito, he was respected for his defiance of the USSR. When the Russians began to cater to him, people were worried lest he be taken in by their blandishments. Especially his trip to Moscow in May 1956 and his speeches there made a bad impression. A joke about Tito was that he is like a soccer ball, at first they inflate him, then they kick him, then they chase him (i.e., run after him). Most important of all, Soviet smiles for Tito were not interpreted as meaning softening attitude toward other satellites as well.

(2 e) The Twentieth Party Congress had tremendous effect on party members. They were shaken in their faith and lacked orientation. Many had developed a true belief in the Stalin myth and were now completely broken up. Respondent talked with one factory secretary of the CP who became completely disillusioned and withdrew from political activity.

Knowledge of Khrushchev's secret speech was widespread among the Party hierarchy, but not among the population. I (respondent

talking) learned about it from a journalist friend who was a lecturer of Szabad Nep and covered the Congress for the paper. He talked about it on March 28, 1956, among a few close friends. So by word of mouth the news was passed on, but general KMM knowledge was not widespread. This friend told me that things began at the very first session of the Congress, when Khrushchev was greeted with strong applause. He whacked the rostrum, said it was inappropriate to carry on like this, it was all right under Stalin, but no longer. This had an electrifying effect on the assembly which from then on followed Khrushchev's speech with rapt attention. There was much agitation through the hall and general animation unlike under Stalin.

- (2 f) Poznan coincided with the Petofi Circle's great debate (June 27) and its aftermath. Of course, everyone knew of Poznan, but people were preoccupied with the Hungarian Workers' Party's reaction to the Petofi debate so that the significance of the Polish event was somewhat lost.
- (2 g) Rakosi's resignation was regarded as a concession to discontent, but did not seem too significant because Gero succeeded him and he was cut out of the same cloth.
- (2 h) There was a turning point in developments. That was the reinterment of Rajk and his colleagues. It took place on an ugly rainy day, yet hundreds of thousands of people went. It was sort of a silent demonstration against the regime. Mrs. Rajk was there -- a central

~~KHYZE~~ figure in the whole affair. Imre Nagy was there, standing erect, hands clasped. Although nothing happened, the regime took precautions. It hid several hundred AVO men in crypts with tear gas bombs. I know this from a friend of mine whose younger brother was there. He was an AVO recruit.

- (2 1) I could not say so. It was impossible to foresee anything. There was tension in the air, but nothing specific.
- (3 a,b) The worst thing was the political oppression which stifled everyone. But equally bad were the economic conditions. Hungary felt like an exploited colony totally at the mercy of the Russians. There was a tremendous shortage of living space. Workers were dissatisfied. The students were also full of economic grievances and deplored the lack of contact with the West. National pride was terribly hurt by Russification.
- (3 c) Cannot say. Impossible to guess. Perhaps Polish events had a good deal to do with it. In any case it was quite accidental that it broke out.
- (4 a) No.
- (4 b) Because the AVO started shooting.
- (4 c) No.
- (4 d) Yes.
- (4 e) The same applies as to Question 3.
- (4 f) Yes. Quite. Freedom, self-government.
- (4 g) There were three: independence, freedom, neutrality.

- (4 h) Policies that would represent and cater to national interest (nemzeti érdekét viselő § politika).
- (4 i) No. Not at the start. It became that after the first night, though.
- (4 j) There were many Communists who were disillusioned and dissatisfied and quite patriotic.
- (4 k) The Hungarian Communist regime would have been swept away. There would have been freedom and democracy and a happy life for all.
- (4 l) No, things went quite beyond the Polish events on the very first day.
- (4 m) Nobody, everyone agreed in fundamentals.
- (4 n) No one. No one at all.

I must admit that I did not participate in the fighting. I am really a coward. I got white whenever I saw blood, dead and wounded.

On October 23 I heard about the demonstrations. I joined the crowd. I was not before the radio building, but before the Stalin statue when it came down. Got very little sleep that night. In the morning there was § martial law. Nevertheless, I went out in the street. I wanted to make my way to Buda from Ferencvaros where my friends were. I made it by night.

October 25, 26, 27 I worked as a Red Cross aide in a hospital. (Note above reference to reaction to blood). Worked day and night, feverishly. They brought in dead, wounded, especially from the Parliament Square. It was awful. After the 27th, I was appointed a member of the revolutionary committee of the youth of the Ninth

Budapest District (Ferenevaros).

We worked feverishly at headquarters. I did posters, painted signs, wrote pamphlets. Everybody worked without thought of anything else. It was a glorious time.

Students and young workers worked hand in glove. There was harmony.

(10) None. There weren't any for many days. No telephone service.

Heard about things by word of mouth. There were also couriers between groups.

I listened to the radio only after November 4, when I was glued to it for days to find out what went on.

After November 4, when the Russians started shooting, I went up in the roof of our building and watched with binoculars what went on. I stayed in the house for days.

(11 a) Collapsed.

(11 b) Disintegrated.

(11 c) Was beaten apart.

(11 d - h) Ceased functioning.

(11 i) ?

(11 j) All collapsed -- none remained, the buildings were expropriated.

(11 k) None, created new ones.

(11 l) Student councils and especially workers' councils.

(11 m) They grew out of mass meetings of workers who selected the best and most trusted people to represent them. This was quite spontaneous. They took over direction of the plants. Decided on who to be fired.

- (11 n) Completely democratic, representative of the people's will.
- (12 a) Yes.
- (12 b) Yes. The ones at first fought listlessly. Others later fought more ruthlessly, but even these when given handbills to read would stop to do so and many of them were begging for food and were willing to give away their guns for $\frac{1}{2}$ bread.
- (12 c) No comment.
- (12 d) Don't know.
- (12 e) Don't know.
- (12 f) It varied considerably, but,
- (12 g) they had no real prestige and that is why the whole regime collapsed.
- (13) November 24, 1957. I was very depressed and saw no future. I had been brooding for days and now I saw that the situation would not improve and I could not go back to the university. So I decided to leave.
- (13 b) I did not discuss my plan with anyone. I went alone and to tell you the truth I went with false papers. I prepared a false Soviet "propusk" which stated that I was a journalist and should be permitted to travel. I had stolen a Russian typewriter from the district headquarters of the revolutionary council when the revolt was smashed. Armed with this I left by train for the border. At the station, soldiers examined the pass and let me go. I then walked over the border alone unmolested.
- (13 d) I wanted to go abroad to study and work on behalf of Hungary.
- (14) Yes, sometimes.

- (14 a) Yes. It was an historic object lesson for the West. I showed the bankruptcy of communism and the completely exploitative nature of Communist economic colonialism.
- (14 b) Yes, but this is hard to say. If the West had helped, if we had asked for help sooner. There were some ideas that the students would address a manifesto to the neighboring countries to help (i.e., Rumania and Czechoslovakia) but more deliberate elements prevented this.
- (14 c) Nothing.
- (14 d) Because the Hungarians are a particularly hotheaded, volatile, proud people and the terror in Hungary had exceed that in all other countries.
- (14 e) He was a good hearted man, but irresolute. He limped one step behind the developments throughout the Revolution.
- (14 f) There were few personal leaders -- Maleter, Kiraly were the best known, Bela Kovacs also, but the real heroes of the Revolution were the workers
- (14 h) Workers -- heroically
 Peasants -- supplied food for free
 White collar -- were in sympathy with revolt
 Youth -- provided intellectual leadership
 Intelligentsia -- likewise
 Soldiers -- quite surprisingly went over to the Revolution.
- (14 i) No
- (14 j) No
- (14 k) The Petofi Circle played a ~~small~~ role in giving vent to criticism. It was a forum for debate and encouraged people in expressing themselves. It gave confidence for further criticism. No, this was

not surprising because the Communists at first thought they could channel criticism and contain it in this way. Later they found that things got out of hand.

- (14 1) The peasants did not fight. But they were with the Revolution and acted decently.

- (1) I wanted to study, but was rejected thrice,
- (2) So I worked as a clerk. I would have liked to do something else, but have a weak heart. I had three jobs:
- 1) 1951-54 bank clerk at M Ferencvaros Savings Bank.
 - 2) 1954-55 clerk in financial section of a state food store.
 - 3) 1955-56 translator (Rumanian-Hungarian) at the state translation office.
- (3) The jobs were routine. Translating was most fun, because there would be lots of political articles to translate for Szabad Nep and the people who worked there were more educated and interesting.

At the same time the atmosphere in the other two places was more congenial.

Every job had its compensations. Translating was interesting because it was connected with publications of political content. The other jobs were more routine. Moreover I considered them all to be sort of "slave labor" (kényszermunka) because I wanted to study but could not be admitted to the university until 1956 because of my father and social background. (Father had been arrested and imprisoned for two years as a capitalist exploiter).

- (4) My pay was generally good. I could not jump around with it, but it was comparatively good.

In my first job I started with 900 forints monthly and ended on an average of 60-70 forints a month as bonus.

In the second job I earned 1200 forints. No bonuses.

In the third job base pay was 1500 forints. But average earning was 1700-1800 forints because there would be translations for Szabad Nap which had to be done in a hurry and they paid well.

Deductions: 1% for trade unions

(1% with higher salary)

60-70 forint tax

3.20 forint for each cafeteria lunch, and

300 forint peace loan (taken out in 6 instalments)

whenever they levied it.

- (5) In the first two jobs 48 hours a week: 4 days -- 8 hours
1 day -- 10 hours
1 day (Saturday)-6 hours.

In addition, as bank clerk I spent 3-4 days a month working like a lave without additional compensations.

In the translation job I worked 42 hours a week. For overtime we got paid 20% up to 4 hours, 50% after 4 hours in addition to base pay.

Discipline less severe than in U.S. It was not too easy to come late habitually, but one could do it. The "ten-minute movement" was not in effect.

There were 6 or 7 holidays and 2 week vacation which they could not take away. If local trade union officials tried to monkey around, one could go to complain to T.U. headquarters and the local

boys got it in the neck.

- (6) Conditions of work were all right. Sanitary facilities O.K.
I spent about 20 minutes going to work.
- (7) There were about three layers of workers (colleagues): old-time specialists, newcomers of political advancement and my group (mostly young people who for one reason or another could not find a better job).
- (7 b-g) Relations on the whole were good.
- (7 c) Quite a bit. We went to each other's homes for parties. There was a good deal of confidence among one another so that we did not fear that one of us was an informer. There was not too much talk of politics, but jokes were cracked.
- (7 h) Party had a cell, but not too important. They had meetings at which policy was discussed. Members were not supposed to talk about this. But it was possible to ferret out information.
- (7 i) Not much. Promotion easier for Communists.
- (7 j) All right.
- (7 k) No.
- (7 l) Had very little to do except for social welfare functions.
- (7 n & o) Do not apply.
- (7 p) Yes, but in a little more subordinate role than Party members.
- (7 q) Nothing.
- (7 r) Don't know.
- (7 s) Don't know.
- (7 t) Yes, but I don't know of any.
- (7 u & v) See elsewhere.