

- (1) I think it is important for you to ~~KNOW~~ find out the truth and to be able to distinguish it from pure propaganda. The facts are known to many Americans, but they wonder what is true, and what is not. People can read newspapers, but they are unable to understand the general prevailing atmosphere and climate of political conditions. From newspaper articles you cannot understand what is life like under a Communist regime. Of course every fact can be interpreted, but I think the very fact that an unprecedented number of Hungarians, approximately 2 percent of the total population, had left the country, proves sufficiently what had happened there.
- (2) It is difficult to answer this question in general terms.
- (2 a) One phase was the premiership of Imre Nagy. A second phase was the Twentieth Party Congress. A third phase was the movement of the writers and university students. The university students were joined by the Army and the workers and so the Revolution broke out. I think that the movement of the writers was the first indication that a definite deviation from the past was in the offing.
- (2 b) Stalin's death affected the process only indirectly. To be sure, one could expect changes, but not all out changes. The indirect effect of Stalin's death was that certain important shifts took place in high-level personnel. This had no direct effect on the people, but it was important in the process as a whole.
- (2 c) Yes. Definitely. The significance of Imre Nagy's first premiership was that a more liberal movement had started and the people

did not want to go back again to the old Stalinist line. They did not want to give up the concessions which they had received.

The Communists wavered, they were mixed up, their faith in Stalin and in the whole Communist dogma as interpreted by Stalin was shaken. Many Communists did not know what was the right line, once their faith was shattered they could not very well put on the Stalinist mask again, they lost their former determination, their ever ready firm attitude in regard to everything.

- (2 d) I don't think the reconciliation ~~XXXX~~ between Moscow and Tito had any particular significance in the process. To be sure, it fitted into the general picture, it fitted into the general pattern of development. I think the reconciliation was characteristic of the whole trend that was shaping up after Stalin's death. I don't think it had any outstanding impact.
- (2 e) I did not know of Khrushchev's secret speech, but everything else was published about it in the Hungarian newspapers and it had a terrific impact. The ~~XXXXXXXX~~ faith of the old Stalinists in the Party line was completely shaken and many Communists did not know where to turn.
- (2 f) Everybody knew about the Posnan riots; in spite of what the Hungarian Communist newspapers wrote, everybody knew it was not an imperialistic undertaking or design. Actually, the Posnan riot had no riot bearing on Hungary. This, too, fitted into the general pattern. People saw in the revolt a lesson that the success of such a revolt would not be tolerated and therefore the people did not consider it as a specific inducement to revolt. But yet the revolt was significant because in itself it was characteristic that

people did revolt. In this sense it fitted into the general pattern that is that people could talk and express their views a little more freely than before.

(2 g) At that time I did not think it had any special significance. It was a personal change, or rather a change in the leading personnel. Gero came, but this did not necessarily mean that anything is going to change. Rakosi's replacement was only significant in the sense that the anti-Stalinists succeeded. Again, the replacement of Rakosi must be seen as a reflection of the political changes as a whole. Communist policy does not depend on people, individuals, therefore out of his resignation not too much could necessarily be expected.

(2 h) There was no particular turning point before the Revolution. The whole thing was a process. Apart from this, two dates might be mentioned. October 23, when Gero delivered his militant speech over the Hungarian radio. Had he given a normal speech, perhaps the Revolution would not have broken out. Today it is difficult to say what would have happened if he did not deliver that speech but undoubtedly it had a great deal to do with the outbreak of the Revolution. Gero delivered a Communist speech, with no concessions a speech which he could have delivered perhaps four or five years ago. The speech was based on brute force, he wanted to know nothing about the demands of the people. If he had made certain concessions, if he had appointed Imre Nagy to premiership, maybe there would have been no Revolution.



The other turning point during the Revolution was November 4, when the Russians attacked the sleeping Budapest.

- (2 1) One could not really expect great many changes. What one actually expected were the step by step changes, the direction of the development of a more liberal period. From the very fact that fiery speeches were held in the Petofi Circle, one expected a gradual change. Such change would take place within the Communist Party, not from the outside, but from within, not a violent overthrow of the Party from the outside, but rather a gradual internal change.

No one had actually dreamt of getting rid fully of Communism. That was really too much to expect.

- (3 a) Practically everything that had taken place in the economical and political life of the country has led to the Revolution. The Revolution became a possibility at the very moment when people could talk and criticise things in general. The most important factor was the fact that the people had a chance to voice their opinions and that they wanted changes.

- (3 b) Specifically the economic circumstances under which the people lived, the low salaries, the unsatisfactory working conditions, the low wages etc led to the Revolution. Politically the people got completely fed up with the constant lies and with the fact that they themselves were told to lie and they could not tell the truth. The people were daily fed with the various propaganda slogans. They had to act as if they had enjoyed everything. Finally they got fed up with everything.

- (3 c) Before you could arrive at a Revolution, you have to go through certain events and developments. As I have said earlier, the Revolution was the result of ~~XXXX~~<sup>a</sup> long process. After the process reached a certain point, events followed very swiftly. I personally did not believe that a Revolution would break out when it did. Looking back on it with the benefit of hindsight, I would say that it had to break out when it did. There was something of a revolutionary dynamism, a spirit which got hold of the people. You just could not wait till the next day.
- (4) The Revolution had no specific leaders. Therefore one cannot say that it was or could have been directed.
- (4 a) I don't think that there was a definite or predetermined aim. Of course every revolution has certain general aims. The Hungarian Revolution drew upon the 1848 Hungarian Revolution and it also utilized perhaps some of the ideas of the French and the American revolutions. But beyond these, there was no single definite goal in mind. What one might say is that there was ~~XXX~~<sup>a</sup> trend in the direction of utter human rights and civil liberties, independence and neutrality for ~~Q~~ Hungary. But the whole thing did not start out with this. Any of the demands submitted originally by the University students ~~I~~ concerned the abolition of the hated DISZ, a Communist youth organization. Chronologically perhaps one of the last demands was that of neutrality for Hungary.
- (4 b) The question has been answered under 4 a.

- (4 c) Maybe there were certain differences, perhaps in regard to timing and speed of action. These demands submitted by the Freedom Fighters were not Nazi or Fascist demands as frequently characterized by the Communists. These were demands put forth by the people as a whole. If there were any Fascists, their number was insignificant.
- (4 d) Everybody wanted a real democracy in Hungary. People wanted to get rid of the Russians. The only difference of opinion was in regard to timing. Some people perhaps did not dare to utter their views at a particular time. Apart from this, they were all unanimous that they wanted real democracy. ~~REMI~~
- (4 e) As I have said already earlier, the people were against the whole economic and political setup. The lack of free elections, the nonexistence of political parties. In particular they were against the suppression of the freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and other democratic freedoms and human rights. The political parties which nominally were still in existence, had no practical significance. For instance, Istvan Doby, a former member of the Small-holders' Party, <sup>who</sup> ~~REMI~~ under the Communists was a member of the Presidential Council, <sup>was</sup> ~~REMI~~ also addressed as "Comrade." I think this instance indicates the type of political party freedom that they had in Hungary prior to the Revolution.
- (4 f) Apart from human rights and political freedoms, people wanted free travel, free Western contacts, wanted to renew their cultural contacts and association with the West. I personally had not been able to read anything written by Western authors for the past ten years.

- (4 g) I suppose, .....rights and freedoms, free elections, the slogans of the Hungarian, French, and American revolutions.
- (4 h) This was not defined by the Revolution. National independence meant "Russkis go home." What would have developed from the Revolution is of course another question.
- (4 i) Perhaps it did not start like that, but actually this was just a mask. In reality, the Revolution was anti-Communist from the very beginning. ☒
- (4 j) There were two kinds of Communists. The democratic, or liberal faction of the Party and those who followed the old Stalinist line. The former would have been willing to comply with the people's demands. They would have even been willing to permit free elections. They knew, however, that the Communists had lost out in Hungary. They knew that they could not win in a truly free election and they knew that they must start all over again, that they would have to proceed in a different fashion, peacefully, not by force. They knew that the new party that they would establish of liberal Communists could not be a successor to the Hungarian Workers' Party, that is the Communist Party. In other words, the democratic Communists, <sup>who are</sup> ~~was~~ the liberal faction of the Communist Party, wanted to establish a new party and they supported the revolutionaries in their demand for a free election. The Stalinists, on the other hand, supported the restoration by force of the old oppressive system, and of the exploitation of the people.
- (4 l) I am sure the Revolution would have been successful. All the demands of the people would have been fulfilled, free elections would have been held.



- (4 m) I think the answer depends on when. At the time when the Rakosi-clique was in power, definitely yes. After the success of the Revolution no one would have been satisfied with a development like that in Poland. "Darn it, we had enough of that." ~~THAT~~
- (4 n) There were no careerists so far as I know, but of course you can't read the people's minds.
- (4 o) The Stalinists. Apart from this there were some people who were afraid, people who had compromised themselves, as the saying goes: people in glass houses should not throw stones. Actually not everybody in the AVO was fearful of what would happen to them if the Revolution were successful. Many people in the AVO were inductees. They had nothing to fear, as they played no part in its political persecutions.
- (5 a) Naturally I did not participate personally in the Revolt. Only on one occasion was I present. I have witnessed the demonstration before the Stalin statue in the evening of October 23. I was visiting my cousins who lived in the vicinity of the statue and I have seen a huge crowd gather on the square and many trucks pulled in full of people. Some of them climbed up to the statue, put ropes around it, photographs were taken, speeches were held, the National Anthem was sung, plus a lot of yelling, shooting, and screaming. After people had heard that there was shooting going on before the Radio, many of them left.
- (5 b) The situation was rather confusing. You couldn't very well tell what was going on. The radio said that only hoodlums participated in the shooting, but as soon as I could go out into the street, it was ~~quite clear that this was not just a shooting by a few hoodlums,~~ but an actual revolution.



was quite clear that this was not just a shooting by a few hoodlums, but an actual revolution.

- (6 a) I have stayed home most of the time and listened to the radio. A few times I went outside to see what was going on.
- (6 b) The fact that I did not participate in the Revolt follows from my personal background. I am not a militant type. I don't like to participate in actual fighting.
- (6 c) There wasn't anything like that. You either were of those who did the actual fighting, or you were anxiously watching the events.
- (6 d) One might get a bullet in one's head. Apart from this, people did not ponder too much. The question is too academic. People did not think or consider what might happen later to them, that their involvement might later be personally beneficial or disadvantageous. No one thought of these in those times.
- (6 e) Nothing.
- (6 f) As I have stated, I have participated only in the demonstration before the Stalin statue.
- (7 a) There was very little fight in our district. I lived on the Madach Square. Only a few Freedom Fighters were fighting on Russian tanks. That was all I saw.
- (7 b) I haven't seen, but I have heard that Russian tanks took many Hungarians along to Parliament Square, so that they could demonstrate in favor of the H revolutionary demands.
- (7 c) No.
- (7 d) I have seen dead bodies and wounded.

- (8) Does not apply.
- (9 a) I participated only in the demonstration on October 23 before the Stalin statue.
- (9 b) My strike consisted in my refusal to go to work in the Central Research Institute for Physics where I was employed. It was only toward the end of November, or the beginning of December, when we started to go back to work again.
- (9 c) No.
- (9 d) No.
- (9 e) No.
- (9 f) No.
- (9 g) No.
- (9 h) I stayed home most of the time.
- (9 i) I am not a militant type.
- (9 j) The peasants gave their wholehearted support to the revolutionary cause. They were sending loads of food supplies to the city of Budapest. It is the irony of the situation that finally the worker-peasant alliance had become a reality, something that the Communists wanted so much, the unity was finally achieved. Only this time the workers and peasants were united against the Communists.
- (10 a) The newspapers played a tremendous role. Everybody was hunting for newspapers. People were dying to get printed, or even written information. I don't recall the names of the various newspapers. I have read all the newspapers I could lay hands on, otherwise I

listened to the radio. People also passed on news, but mostly about stories that would scare you.

(10 b)

It is hard to say, because only a few issues appeared during the Revolt. There was for instance the Nepszabadsag, a semi-Communist paper which tried to slow things down. One day articles would appear in it with strong Stalinist undertones, still the articles would support the revolutionary aims. The former Communist paper, the Szabad Nep, ceased. ~~KISS~~ Above all, some of the old Party papers like the Kis Ujsag and the Nepszava were recast (?). They gave objective accounts of what had taken place. In addition you had the Irodalmi Ujsag and a number of University papers, some of which were mimeographed. In quality the latter were poor.

(10 c)

Mostly ~~KIS~~ rumors were communicated by word of mouth. People talked about the ~~KISSKISS~~ fightings, what the Russians did, what had taken place.

(10 d)

Yes, I did. Mostly at home. At crucial moments during the Revolt I listened to the Budapest Radio, otherwise I also listened to the EBC, the Voice of America, and <sup>Radio</sup> Free Europe. As far as the events in Hungary were concerned, we received the informations from the Budapest Radio. If I was interested in foreign comments, I would listen to the foreign broadcasts. After the Revolution had been successful, of course you could read everything in the newspapers and you could listen to the free radio stations in Hungary.

(10 e)

The telephone was one of the most important means of communication. People called up each other to tell what happened in their district and to find out what happened in the other districts. The telephone



service was excellent. It functioned all the time.

- (10 f) Before the Revolt the Western radio broadcasts were quite important in terms of gathering news. Also the Irodalmi Ujsag carried interesting news. During the Revolution the Budapest Radio and newspapers were the most important. In regard to local events in Budapest the telephone was the most important means of communication.
- (10 g) The radio and the newspapers covered mostly nationwide events, that is the telephone served as a means for communicating the local news.
- (11 ) Most of them disintegrated.
- (11 a) High Party functionaries disappeared. Party centers ceased to exist. Nothing remained of the old Party organization. So far as I know, most of the Party members at the Research Institute of Physics where I worked were the supporters of Imre Nagy. During the Revolution a Revolutionary Council was formed and many people opposed the idea of admitting any former Party members.
- (11 b) The police joined the freedom fighters.
- (11 c) The AVO was disbanded. It wasn't too strong in terms of arms and ammunition. It had only smaller weapons and guns, but it could not stand up against the Army.
- (11 d) So far as I know, nothing happened to the courts. They were not ~~affected~~ affected. Time was too short. The Revolution wanted an independent judiciary.
- (11 e) The Army joined the freedom fighters.
- (11 f) ~~Those in high positions in the old trade unions~~ Those in high positions in the old trade unions were eliminated. The workers formed workers councils.

- (11 g) Revolutionary councils were formed in the local government and in the municipalities.
- (11 h) The time was too short. Only a few key positions in a few ministries were filled.
- (11 i) Some church leaders got out of prison, but before too much could have been done, the Revolution was defeated.
- (11 j) In brief, all political institutions collapsed. Unpolitical institutions remained. Of course the time was too short to work out the details. People weren't interested during the short time in the non-political institutions or in what would happen to them. There were other things which they considered much more important.
- (11 k) No old institutions were utilized as such. Military units were, of course, used, but not so much in the old form but rather in a new one. I believe the same would apply to the police, though there was such a thing as a unified Budapest police and the Freedom Fighters made use of that organization.
- (11 l) The revolutionary workers councils. In addition, many new and old political parties emerged and they were trying to establish or revive counterparts of old institutions.
- (11 m) The workers councils finally fulfilled political functions. They were headed by a president. There was a revolutionary workers' council of Great Budapest. They were organizing mass demonstrations. They were representing the demands of the workers vis a vis the Government. The councils were elected by the workers and were controlled and directed by the workers.
- (11 n) I think the same kind of government as that of 1945. It would have been a coalition government of national unity and free elections

would have determined the actual structure of the government. It would have been a democracy for the democrats.

- (12 a) Yes, I saw Soviet troops at the time of their withdrawal from Budapest. They were scared to death.
- (12 b) Some of the Red Army men joined the revolutionaries. This refers especially to those who were stationed in Hungary at the time of the outbreak of the Revolt. Troops which were brought into Hungary after the outbreak of the Revolt were completely ignorant of their whereabouts. Once they found out that they were in Hungary, they were scared to death. They were told that they were in Berlin, in Paris, or at the Suez Canal fighting the German Nazis, the Americans, and so on. Some of them looked at the Danube and they thought that they were at the Suez Canal. Many Russian tank units came from Eastern Germany through Czechoslovakia into Hungary. They came through blind guidance all the way and they didn't have the foggiest idea of where they were. Many of these units were entirely demoralized and they were not reliable from the Russian point of view. They had to be transferred practically every two weeks. If they had stayed long enough in Hungary, the whole Russian Army would have fallen apart. As far as the Revolution was concerned mostly those Russian units joined the freedom fighters which were stationed in Hungary or had been station in Hungary at the time of the Revolt.
- (12 c) Personally I didn't think so. Nor did I think that they would attack Budapest after their withdrawal. I was convinced that they did so many stupid things in the past that they would not crown



this with an even greater stupidity, but then I saw that there was, or could be, such a high degree of stupidity that they could not reach.

- (12 d) I do not know. Probably most of them got on the planes ~~ME~~ right away after the outbreak of the Revolution.
- (12 f) I don't know.
- (12 g) Before October 23, the influence of the Soviet authorities in Hungary was paramount. They were omnipotent in every walk of life. You could not see the Soviet authorities around because they were working behind the scenes in the ministries, offices, and elsewhere. I have heard that there were many Soviet experts in Budapest. During the Revolution the Russians brought in about 200,000 Soviet troops into Hungary. In addition the Russian leaders Mikoyan and Suslow were negotiating with the Hungarian Government. The whole thing proved to be a deceiving trick. After the defeat of the Revolt, their influence became just as complete as it was before October 23. Perhaps to some extent the form has been changed, but the Communist influence and the paramount interest of Russia remained the same.
- (12 h) The Communist system of <sup>the</sup> inspection~~ē~~ and supervision~~ē~~ and spying and suppression is based on the fact that the people wouldn't dare to move. It is based on the one by one elimination of its opponents. If you single out a few people and eliminate them, this would serve as a dreadful example and the rest of the people wouldn't dare to move. However, when the mass is on the go, you can't stop it.

You can no longer use the individual singling out, the individual method of elimination. You must resort to arms in order to be able to put down the masses.

Following the de-Stalinization efforts of the Kremlin, the very belief of the Communists in their whole dogma was shaken in its foundations. This swayed not only the whole political system, but its concomitant, the inspection system as well. People started to talk a little bit more freely and as a result everybody was becoming more and more restless. Thus the system of individual elimination could no longer operate. The people were all united in their aims and they expressed this unity. Hence the only way in which you could stop the masses was by the resort to arms.