

- (1) I take it for granted that you know all about Hungary that there is to be known. At any rate, one should know, I think, the Hungarian events as they happened, in chronological order. As far as ~~the~~ the Revolution is concerned, one ~~should~~ should know i.e. that it was neither a planned uprising, nor an organized one, when it did come about.
- (2) Its intellectual origin is traceable to the 20th Communist Congress. We felt it was coming, we gave outward expression to our hopes in it, when we gave external manifestations to this feeling of ours (any time we met friends on the street we would use our secret sign, grimacing with our facial ~~muscles~~ muscles.) Our nerves were strained to the breaking point and we kept on asking ourselves the question: For how long yet would ~~Rakosi~~ Rakosi hold out? His political usefulness was gone and over. Of course, we envisioned a different kind of change. Our hope was high and we felt the coming ~~change~~ ^{change} ~~was~~ in the air. But we did not imagine it the way it did come about. And, most important, we never even dreamed of such a sudden, dramatic and spontaneous eruption of all of our emotions; that our mask would fall down from our faces in a matter of hours, and that every one would be forced, whether he liked it or not, to soon declare his allegiance one way or the other.
- (2a) ^{Its} ~~main~~ effective start must be identified with the 20th Communist Congress. But its origin goes as far back as the death of Stalin. The anti-Christ has died, and we have gradually

awakened from our deep lethargy. Our first ray of hope began to shine then. Stalin's death was followed with the politics of smiling (*msoly politika*). We all hoped the West would recognize this for what it actually was (a theatre). I must say here that I am a member of the middle class, and that my views represent the general opinions of that class. I have no accurate way of knowing how members of the other classes felt about these events. It was during this period of the politics of smiling that the Conference in Geneva took place. We all assumed that the Russians decided to confuse the Western Powers again. Then came the 20th Communist Congress. This was the ~~year~~ period of self criticism and rehabilitations. During the last year many Social Democrats' political prisoners were released from their jails. In a word there was a slackening of things. We have all smelt with some intensity the wonderful aroma of freedom. Thereafter it was very difficult to satiate our desires in this respect.

The slackening of things after the death of Stalin did not satisfy the people. They still remembered the radio speech of Imre Nagy delivered during the summer of 1953. I have a very vivid mental picture of those events in my mind even now. My parents were forcibly evacuated from the city of Budapest. My mother died in the process. Rákosi ~~retreated~~ / ~~reappeared~~ at that time, but only for a short period. After Imre Nagy delivered his ~~memorable~~ memorable speech in the summer of 1953, ~~in~~ within hours many a Communist Party Secretary was beaten up in ^{RURAL} ~~subur~~ regions. People, peasants, embraced

themselves in ~~unrestrained~~ expression of their joy. If Rakosi had not succeeded in strangling this political and emotional revival, a political trend or movement to the Right would have been inevitable. This is particularly true in the case of the peasants.

(2d)

Tito is just like all the other Communists. But the fact that he resisted, did bring about a respect ~~for~~ for him in the minds of many people. We all knew, of course, that geographically he was very close to the West. Because of this geographic proximity of Yugoslavia the resistance of Tito did not amount to too much. We did not take his success too seriously. We considered Yugoslavia to be a state within the Communist state. We considered the ~~resistance~~ controversy to be a purely personal one. Moscow, of course, rejected even a remote resemblance to a trend toward bourgeoisie. All in all, we never knew if Tito was honest in his actions, ~~if he was~~ ^{if he WAS} taking his actions as a possible ~~move~~ ^{RUSE}, or as stemming from economic and financial difficulties.

(2f)

The Poznan events did have quite an influence. In this respect one should consider even the revolt that took place in Berlin in 1952. All these events ~~unrestrainedly~~ evoked an intense sympathy in our hearts. We have seen these restless movements, or I should say we heard of them, and we concluded that, since such things are taking place, they must be possible. We thought all along that the revolt would start in Poland. Some friends and acquaintances of mine have been in Poland and visited the Poznan Fair. Upon their return they told us all about it. Hungarian newspapers minimized ~~the~~ the whole thing, explaining

them as minor events when some people jumped overboard, and stated that reactionary elements were responsible for the whole thing.

(2g)

Everyone hoped and expected Rákosi's dismissal. But we knew him too well to express any opinion in this respect. We were afraid of Rákosi. We knew he was an important personality in Moscow. We knew him to be an intelligent, politically shrewd and well trained person. We kept on wondering what would really happen if he didn't go. Perhaps it would be better, but then again it might even turn out to be worse. I must mention here also the Petöfi Club as an important factor. The Petöfi Club was the intellectual moving force behind this whole thing. It published a weekly periodical. As soon as the periodical appeared on the streets it was bought up in a matter of hours. Some people paid as much as 10 forints for a copy.

(2h)

We realized this only subsequently with the benefit of our hindsight. The turning moment was of course the outbreak of the Revolution.

(2i)

My son, who was a university student, told me of a student meeting that took place at the university of Szeged. According to him, the students there agreed upon a demand of Sixteen Points, ^{which} ~~that~~ they decided to present to the government. I was shivering when he told me of these demands, knowing full well what courage it must have taken to even advance any of the demands. Upon reflection I thought the government would most probably give way, make some promises, ~~perhaps~~ perhaps the Sixteen Points would be reduced to Ten or even less than that.

and that some sort of an understanding would be reached. These demands contained such points as a demand that the Russian ~~army~~ troops be withdrawn and that free elections be held. Now we knew quite well that the withdrawal of Russian troops was a very delicate matter. We also knew that the government would never agree to a free election. But then we thought, that perhaps the West, learning of these events, would exert its beneficial influence.

(3)

The overriding factor, I believe, was the general discontentment of the people. Even those who were relatively well off were dissatisfied with their situation. Another great factor was the general knowledge that the country was being fully ~~exploited~~ exploited by ~~Russia~~ Russia. The attitude of the Hungarian youth, the attitude of the University students underwent a ~~gradual~~ gradual change during the last few months before the Revolution. The Poznan Revolt and the situation in Poland gave the impetus and supplied the intellectual framework ~~of~~ ^{to} these student activities. The Poznan events, the activities of the Petöfi Club, and the ~~general~~ general slackening of things as they were felt even in Hungary prompted the university students to try to get some concessions from the government. They decided on a sympathy march to the statue of Bem. The youths, of course, did not know the attitude of the general public at the time, they were ~~unable~~ not able to foresee that the whole population would join them.

(3c)(contd) We have looked upon these children with the full realization that we, the older generation, probably have failed. We thought we were ^{COWARDS} covered, and that they, the youth, would take matters into their hands and would do something.

One can keep on telling lies only to a certain point. This goes both for the government and for the individual. Religious restrictions were so severe. We have taught our own children how to tell a lie, in order to prevent the possibility of their unwillingly betraying us. The whole society was based upon a systematic lie. Our motto was that not even the ~~the~~ contrary of what appeared in the newspapers could possibly be true.

(4) The Revolution was not exploded. It erupted by itself. A stone was thrown away, creating a chain reaction. Just like when someone throws a stone into a water and creates water waves. Some groups went to the Parliament Building, some others to the statue of General Bem. Still some others were active in the vicinity of the Stalin statue. It was these events that created the revolutionaries, not the other way around. The anger created by one's feeling of incapability, of impotency to change his own situation, and the repressed energy of thousands, tens of thousands of people erupted at the same time like a terrific volcano. No one thought about these things, no one tried to rationalize his actions. Everyone gave full range to his emotions, not caring one way or the other if he is followed by his neighbors, by his countrymen or not.

(4b) I must say here again that the Revolution was not exploded, —

it erupted by itself. The eruption did take place because the will of the masses has met a resistance, and the masses, as a result, were forced to take the offensive. Its general aim was to go to the radio station and there^{to} proclaim the popular demands of the people. People were not permitted to enter the radio building. They tried to break the door. At that very moment, shots were fired from the radio building upon the people. This then started the chain reaction. Meanwhile masses arrived from the Parliament Building and from the area of the Stalin statue also. Finally Imre Nagy gave in and we knew that he was also with us. At this moment our aim was to have Imre Nagy installed again, and have him continue where he left off in 1953. But when we had seen that the Cabinet, ^{which} ~~that~~ he has formed, has within its ranks so many people from the old guard, this, of course, we could never approve of. In this connection, the speech of Gerd was very significant. His speech was a series of derogatory remarks to the people, he even threatened that he would know how to handle these reactionaries and mobs.

(4c)

Yes. There was first of all the common goal in which everyone was in agreement. This common goal consisted of a desire to see the ~~Russians~~ Russians go, and to have free elections in Hungary soon thereafter. There were, of course, individual speculations. ~~Every~~ Everyone would have liked to fry his own chicken. (The actual Hungarian expression:).

This was especially true in the case of people of the older generation, people 50 years or older, who were either in high positions before the war or were workers. For instance, in my own family, the older members would have been considered reactionary according

to Hungarian standards. My son, however, was not prepared to go back to what obtained before 1944. The older generation, which I was referring to above, did not really actively participate in the Revolution. They were sitting home, listening to the radio and expressing their own political viewpoints to whomever wanted to hear them. Their reactionary zeal was more of a wishful thinking, rather than an idea for which they were prepared to fight and die.

Also some 77 parties were organized. (Interviewer's note: Respondent used this expression only in a figurative way, the number as such has no significance.) If there were a congregation of five people, these five people would have had six different ideas. We knew full well that Imre Nagy himself could not remain at the helm for long. He was not a leader. Our greatest misfortune was that we did not have a leader, a man who could unite the large masses on some vital issue. Every man who could have otherwise become a leader, has compromised himself in one way or another. On the other hand it was impossible to import leaders from the former emigré group.

(4d) On the third, or perhaps the fourth day, of the Revolution, when they had seen that the revolutionists are still holding their own, those, who were careful and lukewarm up to that moment, became revolutionary enthusiasts themselves. There were some schemes involved in this. Many thought, perhaps we will win, and then, having participated in the revolt may mean a great deal. I couldn't give you even an approximate percentage of the people so involved.

(4e) This differed from class to class, with variations within a class >

but no matter what the type of individual dissatisfaction^{there} may have been, it stemmed from the dissatisfaction with the Communist regime. A student may have been dissatisfied because he was refused permission to go to the university, another one may have been dissatisfied because it was impossible for him to advance *in* his position, housewives were dissatisfied with the constant and great ~~many~~ economic problems they faced, etc.

A ~~Hungarian~~ Hungarian is only able to fight against something, he is never able to fight for something. As soon as the common enemy vanished from the scene, there was no reason for holding together any longer. Why should we hold together, people asked.

Foreign policy played a very important ~~part~~ role in this. We expected help from the West. We were led to believe that such expectation, expectation of military assistance from the West, was not entirely ^{just} a noble dream. We were basing our hopes in this respect on the broadcasts of the Radio Free Europe, BBC, Voice of America, the radio stations of Paris and of Madrid. We thought that the radio station ~~of~~ Free Europe represented the official sentiment of the Western governments. In other words we looked upon Radio Free Europe not as an official broadcasting station of the West, but a radio station whose broadcasts and opinions were authentic. Without the Radio Free Europe broadcasts the desire of the Hungarian people to regain its freedom couldn't have maintained itself.

The Voice of America was nourishing this sentiment equally strongly. ~~and~~

Our first disappointment in this respect took place during the Geneva Conference. We had seen then that the Russians were able

and were permitted to block the question of the satellite countries with one resolute "Nyet". Generally speaking the population hated the West after that, while it only detested the Russians. This hate exemplified itself particularly against the United ^{States} ~~States~~. Only then did we realize that we were sold in cold blood. If there has been a sell-out at Yalta, if we were made slaves by an agreement, why this continuous ~~travelling~~ in the past twelve years. If we did not amount to anything as a nation anymore in the eyes of the West they should have let us alone.

Hammerskjold could have visited Hungary between October 27th and November 4th. He could have done that without a Russian permission. If he did go now he would see only the cemeteries.

Speaking of assistance coming from the West, we did not ^{fear} ~~hear~~ or think of war, ^{OR} of military engagements, we simply believed and assumed that the United Nations has a tremendous power. That it could effect a change by a simple majority vote.

People rebelled against the absolute ~~unlimited~~ autocracy. We did not have our own, individual, personal free will. We depended upon, ~~them~~ and acted at, the will of others. A few people assumed dictatorial powers, and acted in a manner as if they represented the entire population.

(4f) People were craving for freedom, freedom of movement, freedom to change their kind and type of employment, freedom to express their opinions without the fear of being arrested for it, in a way, freedom to live as individuals. A freedom that we ourselves should be permitted to guide our own destiny. The motto, that stealing from the state is a good and glorious deed is significant in itself. Everyone indulged in this feeling only in order to

inflict some damage on the government. No one felt that what he was stealing was his own. In the studio where I worked I kept on throwing pencils into the wastebasket. We kept on heating all the studio rooms while all the windows were kept open.

(4g)

One of the most popular slogans was GO Home Russki. There were innumerable others: Free Elections, Nagy Imre Should Come Back, Who Is A Coward Will Run Home, He Who Is Brave Will Remain With Us. (Actual Hungarian words used: *AKI GYÁVA, HAZA SZALAD, AKI MÉRÉSZ, VELENK MARAD.*) Another one was Let The AVH Perish. (Hungarian: *VESZEN AZ AVH*).

A mass hysteria was in full swing. This mass hysteria was kept alive and was nourished not so much by the desire to regain the freedom, but by the desire to express one's hate. One's unlimited hate.

(4h)

Under national independence we meant a Western democracy. A system similar to that of Switzerland and Austria. We had neither a king nor *Ottó* ^{in mind.} (Interviewers note: reference is made here to a member of the Hapsburg family.) In the first two days there was a great expression of anti-Semitic feeling. Those who engaged in this sort of thing were soon calmed down. The Jews immediately organized their own groups. Anti-Semitic feelings were based more on a personal feeling, rather than on a ~~passion~~ popular general outburst.

If there is such a thing as a clean revolution, then our our revolution must have been it. This was true at least until November 4. Thereafter careful elements gradually withdrew into obscurity.

(4i) ~~It~~ It was absolutely an anti-Communist revolution.

(4j) Those Communists who did join the revolution were not real Communists. They were Communists only in name. Others who may have been convinced Communists in the beginning, have joined the revolution because they became disillusioned with the regime. For instance, 80% of the Hungarian workers were Social democrats and they were called Social Democrats until the time of the fusion, thereafter, at least officially, all these people belonged to the Communists Party.

(4k) If the people had been able to capture the radio station, this whole thing would not have mushroomed into the proportions it actually did take. The people were incited to action by the fact that Gerö called the Russian deluge on us. If it hadn't been for that, there would have been an *Ausgleich*. We thought that whatever we succeeded in accomplishing would have been a net profit for us. We even would have had free elections thereafter.

(4l) A solution ~~in that~~ similar to that in Poland would not have been satisfactory. But the ~~direction~~ ^{direction} of the revolution was in the hands of the masses.

I now recall, ^{it} which now comes to my mind, that the rehabilitation of ~~the~~ Rajk played also a significant role in the outbreak of the Revolution. The son of Farkas, Vladimir, who ~~personally~~ personally cross-examined Kadar, while the latter was in prison, was asked some very embarrassing questions in the Petöfi ~~circle~~ ^{circle}. Kadar, it was known, was subjected to incredible tortures at the time. Needles were pushed underneath his nails, and Vladimir personally urinated into Kadar's mouth. It is for this reason,

~~because~~ because of ~~these~~ ^{These} experiencing ~~of~~ ^{es and} these tortures that we trusted in Kadar. We thought that a man like him, with such sort of experience, could not possibly be a Communist any longer. For this reason, in the beginning phase of the Revolution, we did not have an object to the inclusion of Kadar into the Cabinet. It was the greatest surprise of our life when we saw that Kadar actually turned against us. I have no way of explaining his actions, I don't know why he did act as he did.

(4n)

At first everybody was guided by the sacred aims. Thereafter it was said that while the sacred aims are good and necessary, we could never live by them alone. Everyone had some sort of a job to do under the ~~magnam~~ regime, but merchants, small businessmen, peasants, taxi drivers and an innumerable number of other groups were desirous of establishing their own little businesses. People were ~~desirous~~ desirous of establishing some sort of a security in their livelihood. Then of course the question came up as to who is going to replace the ~~present~~ ^{present} leadership. ~~Others~~ Others were preoccupied in trying to raise the ~~living~~ standard of wages in factories to Western levels. But all these ~~desires~~ ^{tinged} desires and systems were ~~tinged~~ with socialistic ideologies. I have never met anyone during the Revolution whom I could honestly call a revisionist. People wanted to ¹ certainly ³ own ⁴ certain ² basic ⁵ necessities of life. Others were desirous of having a car, of having a weekend ^{cottage} ~~passage~~ on the Lake ~~of~~ Balaton. ~~It~~