

(1) Yes, I was, and still am, interested in politics. I come from a poor peasant family. During the years when I began to acquaint myself with the world's intellectual and spiritual values and phenomena, the question of the peasantry and the question of the poor people was the overriding question of the day.

One of the inevitable parts of every person's development is the fact that every individual begins to think, to a certain extent, through, and in terms of, his own family, and assigns values to many things and ideas by using his father's fate in society as a yardstick. I got extremely interested in the peasants' and poor people's problems; the question became my constant preoccupation, an irresistible habit, similar to the drinking habit of an alcoholic. My formative years, the only years when I was really permitted to relate my views, were years saturated with politics. It was in 1938 when I made my first political statements to an audience of six men. Events followed one another in rapid succession, luring me to take a stand and offering ample opportunities at the same time for me to take part more and more in what I thought was decent, good, logical, and beautiful, -- namely ~~fighting~~ combatting German anti-Semitism.

In 1945, an opportunity presented itself to reorganize *our country* according to the wishes and desires of the wide masses of the ~~XX~~ people. I participated in these developments as a youth leader. I was later forced to continue this struggle under the most unfavorable circumstances, against unequalled odds, all the way down to the gates of the concentration

camp at Reesk. Developments permitted my release after 1953, and I continued, first in a clandestine fashion and later, during the Revolution, in the open, my struggles for a free and democratic Hungary. In this fashion did I politicize away a large portion of my life.

- (1 a) For me, politics was the foundation, the starting point. This was precisely the reason why I chose to become an economist, to enable myself to give expert answers to all the questions. I clearly recognized the great interrelationship between politics and economics; to what great extent the raison d'être and stability of a political system depends on the economic foundation underlying it and supporting it. I firmly believed that my economic ~~studies~~ studies would help me <sup>most</sup> ~~most~~ in my determination to assist the people in reorganizing and directing the new Hungary with a view of achieving the maximum good for the wide masses. My primary, though not exclusive, interest centered around the agricultural question; the developing of better production and marketing methods with a view of minimizing, if not eliminating, the costly services of the middle men; how could an agricultural industry be organized which would utilize fully all the fruits of our agricultural<sup>e</sup>, giving <sup>both</sup> security to the farmer and raising the standard of the rest of the population. This is only one of the many examples clearly indicating how decisions in economic questions depend on the political structure of the country, and how the economic life, on the other hand, is capable ~~of~~ <sup>underscoring</sup> either ~~of either~~

~~EE~~ or undermining political structure and orientation. At first I was interested in political questions only and only later did I recognize the importance of economics.

(1 b) My interest was fairly stable, constant, and unchanged.

(1 c) In 1938, I was leader of a local KIE (YMCA) group. In that group others and I analyzed minority questions. We investigated the problems of Germans, Serbians, Slovaks, and other minorities in Hungary, as well as problems of Hungarians living in other lands. We were investigating the possibilities and conditions of cooperation and coexistence of people of different nationality, tongue, and culture.

‡ In 1943 I became a member of the anti-Fascist Liberty Front of Hungarian Students. ~~XXXX~~ Towards the end of 1943, I became a member of the executive committee of the Freedom Front of Hungarian Youth, an organization of youths of peasant, worker, and intellectual origin. This organization, ~~which~~ was part of the Independence Front (Függetlenség Front) in which Communists, Social Democrats, and other parties participated. This Independence Front, working in a clandestine fashion between 1943-45, represented the nucleus of those political forces which took over the direction of Hungary after 1945. I was a representative of the Smallholders' Party.

‡ In March, 1945, we organized a peasant youth movement, under the name of Independent Youth (Független Ifjuság) of which I was elected chairman. The founding meeting took place in the

assembly room of the central City Hall of Budapest, under the strict observance of democratic rules and procedures. In May 1945 I was also elected chairman of the National Council of Hungarian Youth (Magyar Ifjuság Országos Tanácsa). This latter was a youth coalition, made up of the Independent Youth, a smallholder youth organization, of Social Democrat Youth, of Communist Youth, of the KIE (YMCA), of the KALOT (Catholic), of the MEFESZ (university students) and of the youths of the Communist Party.

On November 4, 1945, the first postwar elections of Hungary were held. This was a list election, where voters chose between political parties, without voting for individuals. Hungary was divided into electoral districts and the political parties presented a list of nominees in each district. The voters gave their votes for this or that party's list. The list itself contained the names of party nominees, set up according to rank. 16,000 votes called for one mandate. (If, for instance, in Szolnok County the smallholders received 160,000 votes for their list, then the first ten people whose names appeared on their list were thereby elected members of Parliament.)

From 1945 to 1947 I was Member of Parliament, representing the Smallholders' Party. Between 1948-1950 I was living under constant police surveillance, at the end I was arrested, and in March 1950 I was already in the Reek camp. I was permitted to leave the camp in September 1953, being placed under police

supervision again.

During the years 1954 and '55, I succeeded in reestablishing all the contacts with political friends (since I could not leave the village in which I was interned, various people came to me). We continued our discussions of the exciting and interesting political questions of that time, all the way down to the Revolution.

During the Revolution, I was elected member of the Workers' Council of the Pest County brick factories. I was also a member of the executive committee of the Revolutionary Committee of Hungarian Intellectuals, a member of the executive committee of the  $\frac{1}{2}$  Petöfi Circle and a member of the executive committee of the resurrected Smallholders' Party. In my latter capacity, I was chiefly concerned with the organization of the party in the rural districts. I continued my activities till December 1956, leaving Hungary on December 4.

- (2) At the time of Hungary's exit from the second World War, my place in the political life of the country was already clarified; it was determined by my activities and attitude before and during the war -- my role in the youth movement as well as my illegal anti-German activities.

My first political step on the youth front took place at the beginning of 1945, when, in discussions with leaders of other youth groups with whom we cooperated during the war, we decided to continue to seek ways and means of further discussing and exchanging

our views on matters of principle and organization.

It was our sincere endeavor to continue our wartime cooperation with all the other youth groups, including the Communists, and we really believed that such a cooperation would be fruitful and beneficial to all. The idea of cooperation was also imperative in a sense, since on the national level the Cabinet also represented a ~~XXXX~~ coalition. The cooperating national parties wanted to see similar cooperation among the youth groups. As a result, partly on initiative from above, partly as a response to Russian desires, we decided to create the MADISZ. The MADISZ, then, was a super-structure, embodying the youth coalition, and serving as a coordinati arm among the various groups which, while sending delegates to the ~~XXXX~~ all-Hungarian youth organization, continued their separate existence as before.

The MADISZ coalition lasted only for a few months; we soon became impatient with the domineering tactics of the Communist, who were bent on taking over the direction of everything. The MADISZ presented the same picture which <sup>took</sup> ~~take~~ place in Parliament at the time, since the Communist youth leaders received the very same political instructions which directed the activities of Rákosi and of his group in the national Parliament.

While the coalition of the national parties lasted until 1948, we, in the MADISZ, not affected by those economic forces which kept the parties together, decided to act much earlier; I severed all

my connections with the MADISZ at the end of April 1945 and my exit -- I having represented the Independent Smallholders' Party -- meant the end of cooperation of that party with the MADISZ. After a few weeks the Social Democrats and the Peasant Party youth also left the MADISZ. Only the Communists remained.

Having left the MADISZ and having completed the organization of the Smallholders' Party's Independent Youth Movement, I was repeatedly accused of anti-Communist tendencies and ~~was~~<sup>was</sup> branded an extreme rightist who opposed both the land reform and the Russians. The manoeuvre did not succeed thanks to the powerful support I received from many quarters. A small residue of anti-Soviet feeling did remain in my ~~views~~<sup>views</sup>, however, and I was well taken care of on this account during 1948-1956.

The Independent Youth ~~MK~~ was an organization of peasant youth, a group whose spiritual mentors were the populist writers -- we sympathized particularly with the views of László Németh. We were the so-called Third Road-ists (harmadik utas), desiring to build up Hungary according to the wishes of the people. This political credo placed us against the Germans first and later also against the Russians and Communists, whose basic aims were similar to that of the Germans, even though their tactics and methods were different.

Our decision to leave the MADISZ had great repercussions in the life of the nation. Many articles were written <sup>also</sup> for and con,

and I heated polemics continued for some time. At the end the Communists and the Russians, still desiring and insisting on at least a loose cooperation between the various youth groups, after long and protracted negotiations the National Council of Hungarian Youth (Magyar Ifjúság Országos Tanácsa) was brought into being. A committee, made up of delegates of the various groups, held meetings once a week. Actions, if an when agreed upon, were executed by the various groups themselves. I became the chairman of the National Council, at the same time maintaining my chairmanship of the Independent Youth. György Non, the secretary-general of the Communist youth organization, became secretary-general of the National Council also. The work of the Council consisted of the continuous and bitter political duel between Non and me, a struggle in which I lost out in the end, the Communists having succeeded in bringing about a gleichgeschaltet youth organization in 1948.

For the period 1948-1956, I don't have much to say. We could politicize in small communities only. The political fronts reemerged even in the prison camp, only on a much wider scale than in 1945; beginning with the extreme left all the way to the right, every shade of color was amply represented. These colors were, after all, the very reason of their holders' being in prison. In the various prison camps a coalition came into being which later



represented the political framework of the Revolution. This coalition embraced all shades from the progressive Christians to the national Communists.

After 1953 (when I was freed and placed under police supervision) and to the beginning of 1956, I was a passive onlooker of the events. I talked politics only among friends. Circumstances changed towards the end of 1955 and towards the beginning of 1956; the Petöfi Circle was in the process of formation. Those young people who ultimately organized it represented, for the most part, the populist colleges, -- a group that grew up <sup>on</sup> ~~in~~ the breasts of the populist literature (a népi irodalom emlőin nevelkedtek föl).

In the formation of the Petöfi Circle and in the development of its guiding principles I also took part, though not publicly (I was still under police supervision), but by means of private conferences and discussions among my friends.

Real political problems came ~~only~~ after the victory of the Revolution, when the political parties reemerged again. I went back to the Smallholders' Party, became a member of its executive committee, and concerned myself with party organization for a few days. During these days I had ample opportunity to check and to establish that the generation, torn to pieces and scattered during 1947-1948, did not go under, but survived the storm. That generation reappeared and assembled again; everywhere I met the same people with whom I cooperated in the Independent Youth Movement. Thus the line, originating with the 1938 village researchers (falukutatók

is unbroken and uninterrupted all the way up to the Revolution.

This youth attempted its first politicizing in ~~X~~<sup>and</sup> through the youth movements, limiting itself first to problems affecting the youth alone, taking its place, in 1956, in the life of the entire nation.

- (2 a) I was a member of the Smallholders' Party.
- (2 b) No, he did not. He was a great admirer of Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky, and he had quite a few unpleasant difficulties because of this.
- (2 c) My views changed since 1945 in so far as I learned a great deal since, and in so far as they were conditioned by later changes in Hungary's status and condition. The basic questions confronting Hungary are the same and my basic principles also remained unaltered.
- (2 d) I cannot explain this by giving a static answer. Opinion and feeling is a process which never ceases developing. I have many Communist friends. I always distinguish between Communists and the Communist Party, and especially between these two and the leadership of the Communist Party. This leadership always catered ignominiously and stupidly to all Russian wishes and desires. I could never agree to that.
- (2 e) You must, I think, know what my initial attitude towards communism was, before I can intelligently answer ~~XX~~ your question.

I never approved of communism, viewing it always as incapable of realization, -- as an asocial (nem közöségi) system. For this reason I always opposed it. I have the feeling that communism

as a system was based on the criticism of early capitalism and, with the passing of time, and with changes which occurred in the capitalist system, many forceful affirmations and statements of the Communist credo have likewise lost their application, usefulness, and ingredients of truth which they initially possessed.

Every person likes to construct his own life, and it is imperative that he is given an opportunity to do so. Levelling, equalization is necessary (nivellálóítás kell), but not to the point where each man possesses only one cup. Nor did communism achieve such results; there are social and class differences under communism just like everywhere else. The position of the leaders and of the good cadres is immeasurably better than that of the rest. There is a group of privileged few under both capitalism and communism, the difference is that the life of those who are not members of the group of the privileged few is incomparably more hopeless under communism than under capitalism. If capitalism oscillates to the detriment of the many, there is always room for slow but orderly and peaceful adjustment. If oscillation of an identical kind occurs under communism, a determined movement towards the caste-system is the result, and the only way out for the masses is the way to prison. I value personal freedom above all else and for this reason I oppose communism in principle.

Before and after 1945 I was very often together with individual Communists and I trusted them to a certain extent. Later my attitude

became more rigid and rejecting, because I saw that decent Communists don't have much influence in their own camp and that the Communists have put an end even to political freedom and human liberty. This increased even more my opposition to them.

(2 f) One thing is certain; I always opposed the Communists' efforts. I should perhaps add that I have my own political views which I value and that I was a partner in this political era, but in no way a collaborator.

(2 g) Very many people felt the way I did. The Independent Youth Movement, starting as it did from scratch, under those political conditions after the war, received its political program from me. And yet the Independent Youth Movement grew to be the largest youth organization of the country. It had almost one million members, -- a phenomenal number, unique in Hungarian political history. I cite this to show that there were many indeed <sup>who</sup> held the same views as I did. These people were predominantly peasant youths, intellectuals of peasant stock, and children of the intellectuals of the provinces.

(2 h) The explanation is rather simple; there was no freedom in Hungary. The AVH was very well developed, together with the informer system which operated secretly, and the people were afraid to move. Beside these secret institutions you had the party network, the labor union network, covering every inch of the land and every individual; these two organizations uncovered and disclosed in public every single manifestation or attempt against them.

The entire country lived under constant fear, laws and rights had no validity. There was no possibility for <sup>Judicial</sup> traditional redress, no recourse to the courts. With nobody trusting anybody else, everybody was on his own; there was no way of contact or organization. The ~~MM~~ automobile stopped in front of the house and a person was taken away; he never came back. Often the whole family was taken away and dispersed in all directions. Under such conditions it is rather difficult to be courageous. A people does not, and cannot, commit suicide. A people cannot live for long in a way which incites its adversary to continuously plague and harass it, what it wants is peace and tranquillity. Its object is to survive historical trials and tribulations. In order to do so it is inclined to render to God what is God's and to Caesar what is Caesar's. It does this as it sees fit, as it is possible.

The instinctive judgment is about as follows: there is only one life; and most people (the masses) do not consider themselves responsible for the evils and mistakes emanating from the actions of the regime in power and, considering it an outside factor clearly beyond their competence or duty or power to abrogate it, they accept it and resign themselves to it, forming their lives as best they can.

Hungarians, in this respect, learned very quickly; they only spoke their opinions at home, often keeping their thoughts to themselves even at home.

The basic elements of such behavior are not peculiarly Hungarian, nor are they restricted ~~to~~ in their applicability to Hungary. Stemming from the very nature of man, it is universally true. The Hungarian people did not in any way behave peculiarly.

(2 1) This was a very extensive and very well developed system. The dossiers were very good instruments.

These loyalty dossiers regulated every person's career and everybody tried to do his utmost in his own sphere to reach ~~to~~ *the* best results possible; he either joined the party or, even if he was not a member, he tried to behave ~~in~~ in such a manner as to make it impossible for those in charge to enter on his cadre sheet some such remark which would tend to hinder him later in his possibilities of advancement. Nobody really knew, nor did he have any way of knowing, what incriminating information was held against him. We have seen these dossiers during the Revolution. Many of them contained malevolent and often ridiculous remarks.

(3) For me personally the very life itself was injur<sup>o</sup>us. This was fairly common, I was by no means a unique case, in that I spent years in prison and was living later under police supervision; I was not allow<sup>ed</sup> ~~to go~~ *to go* to any public place. I could not go legally into movies, to the theater, to the store, to a restaurant, I could ~~not~~ not receive visitors, I could not have a radio or a telephone, not to even mention that I had no basic rights whatsoever.

(3 a) xiii, 1, ix.

(3 b) ii, iii, vi.

(3 c) xiii, viii, ix.

(3 d) ii, xiv, vi.

(3 e) xv, 11, vi.

(3 f) At Reck, on Sundays, we were carrying firewood for the AVH in formations of sixty from 6 a.m. till 3 p.m; I felt very vividly, at every turn, the bleakness, desolation, and utter hopelessness of life as I then knew it. As we kept on going back and forth, carrying our loads, I thought it would never end. Each turn seemed like eternity.

This was about a day. After I was freed, it was not much better or different; getting up in the morning, going to the factory, eight hours work, production conference, explanation and interpretation of the daily press, comments on the press and on the interpretation, remembering Stalin in a few words of praise, going home and on the way home the acute realization that there is no money left at home to buy what I wanted to buy, and that there probably won't be any for a long time, if ever.

(3 g) People very seldom spoke about these things with others who knew them just as well. Weekdays were not discussed, people just lived them. At times people broke out in protest and dissatisfaction, without realizing that the cause of their outburst was the dreariness and hopelessness of their lives.

The impatience of people was rather pronounced and fairly common. The parents were very often angry at one another or at the children.

- (3 i) There were innumerable little annoyances, but it is difficult even to reproduce or relate them. A man could only be a truly anti-Communist in Hungary; when the trolley car came and there was no room on it, one usually cursed; and he was cursing the regime. When there was no lard in the store, one ~~XXXX~~ got impatient and one cursed the Soviet Union. Such incidents were innumerable.
- (3 j) There were such compensatory things. This again is a universal human ambition to make life more beautiful and more comfortable under whatever conditions. There were really beautiful family lives. There were other occasions. One went to the theater, in spite of the police prohibition. Others drank their three half-deciliters even though the money spent meant no potatoes for tomorrow. Etc., etc.
- (4) The Communist Party had the real power in Hungary.
- (4 a) All legislation stemmed from the party, all bills introduced in Parliaments<sup>1</sup> being party proposals or recommendations. The party proposed something or recommended a measure. The Council of Ministers then constructed the Bill and ~~the~~ Parliament accepted it. Take the national economy; every essential function was in the hands of trusted party ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ functionaries; take the AVH, it received its instructions from the top leaders of the party and was responsible to them and to them only.<sup>2</sup>
- (4 b) The Council of Ministers executed the party's commands and acted upon the party's plans. The Council of Ministers was also<sup>3</sup> manned by the Communists, and the more important posts were held by important members of the party's Central Committee.



- (4 c) Rakosi and a few people around him ran the government after 1948.
- (4 d) The Parliament's role was secondary or even tertiary; it provided an ~~MMM~~ aura of constitutionality. Its sessions were very rare. The Presidential Council had the right and power to legislate at such times when Parliament was not in session, i.e., it could proclaim decrees which had the legality and force of law. Between 1948-1956 most laws had the form of Presidential Council decrees. During elections, the Communist were able to get those people elected whom they pleased.
- (4 a) They held elections because elections were prescribed by, and were part and parcel of, the so-called Constitution. And the regime was using this simple but crude device to <sup>Legalize</sup> ~~realize~~ itself. Elections are a convenient device to do just that. The regime felt it had<sup>r</sup> to create the appearances of legality to which it could refer occasionally. It could claim to be the legal and desired representative of the people.
- (4 f) Yes, there was a bureaucracy. It was much larger than that before 1944.
- (4 g) Yes, there was graft. Fear of consequences, however, kept it in check.
- (4 h) Two kinds of people went into the government service: (a) those employees of the old government who were either indispensable or became party members; (b) worker~~s~~ cadres: these were given quick training courses or evening courses.
- (4 i) Professional army officers represented a privileged stratum. They were a new class. The regime gave them everything. Their pay

was very high. They had many advantages and their position carried a high prestige. They had no housing problems.

This class was composed of two elements: worker cadres or poor peasant stock. A determined effort was made ~~to~~ to get rid of the remnants of the old officers corps and to replace them with new blood.

- (4 j) In Hungary, in filling of all important positions, two principles were operative: (1) to <sup>t</sup>regain of the old personnel those who became party members as well as those who were both indispensable and docile; (2) to replace all others with new men according to regular cadre procedure. There were a host of worker-directors. The more intelligent workers, if they otherwise qualified, were sent to business administration courses and became plant directors.
- (5) Undoubtedly, membership in the DISZ did bring with it certain advantages. In questions of admission to the universities and when the question came up whether a student would, or would not be permitted to continue his ~~his~~ university studies, membership in the DISZ, or <sup>more</sup>precisely, active participation in its affairs, was <sup>the</sup>basic if not the determining consideration. Such active membership counterbalanced a student's unfavorable social background; if a student came from a family of intellectuals -- <sup>a</sup>the factor ordinarily excluding him from the university -- he was able to continue as a bona fide student if his DISZ activities warranted it.
- (5 a) One could not very well speak of ~~drawbacks~~ drawbacks in those days.

It was interesting, though, that people were always careful in avoiding too great an involvement lest this be held against them at a future date.

- (5 b) Joining was not an obligation. There were campaigns, however, to enlist all the students. In these campaigns joining was declared an obligation and non-members were equated with enemies of the people's democracy. All kinds of methods were used to prompt and to pressurize people into joining.
- (5 c) There were several ways which students and others connected with the universities could use as an excuse not to join the DISZ. One of these was that a person dugged himself into some technical or scientific problem or project and said that he <sup>was</sup> primarily a scientist and that he was not interested in politics. This, of course, was not an adequate defense and in practice everybody was a member of the DISZ, at least nominally, the most that people could do was to refrain from active participation in its affairs.
- (5 d) I was not a member of the DISZ after 1948. In this connection I should like to say that, in 1945, when the DISZ, or more correctly the MADISZ, was brought into being, I was one of its founding members. The MADISZ, or at least the idea of it, was born before the termination of the ~~2nd~~ second World War when, in our struggles and battles against the Germans, ~~we~~ who were our ~~enemies~~ enemies at the time, we recognized the necessity of creating a common and unified youth front to better serve our purposes. At the time we

thought it a good thing to continue our wartime cooperation even after the termination of hostilities and with this view in mind we created the MADISZ (Association of Democratic Hungarian Youth) in January 1945. In this undertaking all youth groups participated, including the scouts and the denominational KIE (Protestant) and KALOT (Catholic), together with the youth groups of the political parties. It soon turned out that this youth coalition or cooperation was unworkable. It did not work out, in my judgment, because the Communists were unable to accommodate themselves to the changed situation and they continued to strive to occupy all positions, a practice which characterized their attitude already during the illegal period. Since the changed situation provided them with even greater possibilities, they naturally took full advantage of it. The result was that the others were forced to assume the defensive and were seeking ways and means to extricate themselves from this uncomfortable and disagreeable situation. The Social Democrats took the exit first, followed by the Smallholders and others, so that towards the summer of 1945 only the Communists remained in the MADISZ.

(5 e)

As I mentioned before,  
The Freedom Front of Hungarian Youth made the decision as early as 1944 of maintaining a common front even after the termination of hostilities. This common front, as it was later agreed upon, was to take form in the framework of the MADISZ -- an organization

created in youth conferences at Szeged and Debrecen, and officially inaugurated in January 1945. I was one of the founding members of this ~~EM~~ group.

- (5 f) I was a member of the MADISZ's executive committee and as such I was the chief of the press section. (Question: Would you say that there was an essential difference between the DISZ and the MADISZ? Answer:) There certainly is an essential difference between the MADISZ OF <sup>1945</sup> ~~1947~~ AND THE DISZ of 1948. The MADISZ was a democratic youth association in which the various groups representing differing views and parties had equal rights and their participation, in principle, was based on equality. <sup>That</sup> ~~THE~~ the MADISZ could not satisfy the expectations placed in it was due mainly to the Communists' inability to cooperate. They acted in the same fashion as did the Communist Party of Hungary during 1945 and after. While in big politics people seemed to show more patience and restraint -- the national coalition did last, after all, from 1945 to 1948 -- the coalition of the youth exploded already in May 1945 with all the constituent groups establishing separate organizations.

The MADISZ and later the DISZ became <sup>a</sup> ~~THE~~ Communist youth organizations. The Communists did not like to talk about this from 1945 to 1948, constantly emphasizing the democratic nature of these organizations which had nothing to do with the Communist Party. In 1948 they openly admitted, ~~however~~, that the DISZ was a Communist\*

organization under the direction of the party, its aim being the fostering of Communist education of the youth.

- (5 g) I was only a member of the MADISZ, which, as I explained, had no connections whatsoever with the later DISZ. We all cooperated during the war and it was our aim to create a common organization which would permit our young people of different parties and views to grow up together and discuss fully their different aims, methods, and approaches. This seemed to us a worthwhile and useful thing, especially so if we consider that we all considered the Germans to be our only enemies, especially after their forceful intervention in our nation's affairs, which became very pronounced after the beginning of 1944. The presence of the common enemy certainly held us together, circumstances, however, changed completely after 1945.

In the MADISZ I ~~was~~ represented the youth organization of the Smallholders' Party ~~I~~ on the executive committee.

- (6) Since I was never a member, I can hardly give an answer to your question.

- (6 a) The Communist Party underwent a change between 1945-1956. It would be best, I think, if we spoke about the most critical period, the years from 1949 to 1953, and tried to give an answer to the question within that period.

Membership in the party during this period was closely connected with questions of employment ~~and~~ opportunities and professional success. Certainly all those people who desired to

advance in their fields not only were obliged to become members of the party, but were also expected to actively participate in the work of the party. Certain jobs automatically required a Communist party membership and people desiring to work in intellectual fields were hardly able to do so without it, excepting those, of course, who, because of their outstanding capacity or knowledge, were simply indispensable. In the latter case no pressure was exerted upon the individual to enter the party. The official party agitation underlined this; party secretaries were so advised and they made certain that applicants for certain offices and jobs were party members.

- (6 b) It is very difficult to answer this question with some degree of precision; all those wanted to become members who desired to advance professionally or who were bent on making a career. These were people who wanted to secure for themselves economic advantages by using their party membership as a lever. It is hard to guess what the total number of party members may have been at this time, but estimating it conservatively it must have been well over the million mark. A large number of these represented people who were looking for economic advantages.
- (6 c) I am not familiar with the Communist party's ~~rules~~ rules and procedures. At most I can tell you only what I deduced from ~~the~~ outward appearances. Speaking of membership rights it is certainly true that party members were more free to both raise and

discuss questions, within and outside of the party. I never took part in any meetings of the Communist Party, but I was able to observe that on production conferences party members did raise controversial and delicate questions which another, not a member of the party, would never have dared to do.

- (6 d) Of course, I knew a great many of them. I was living in a small town near Budapest and I represented that town in Parliament from 1945 to 1947. I knew a great many people and even more people knew me. It was not an unusual procedure for many of my constituents to come up to me and tell me how they could have this or that job, provided they entered the Communist Party. They wanted to know my opinion and asked me for advice. Giving advice was not an easy thing under such circumstances, but I will tell you frankly that I always told them to enter the party undisturbed (csak nyugodtan lépjen be a kommunista pártba, etc., etc.). After all, what else could these people have done? Many of them were ~~men~~ heads of families, responsible for the rearing of numerous children, who had to make a decision on the spur of the moment. Their decision meant a difference between a well-paid position of going without bread. This, then, was the reason why many people joined the party.
- (Question: Was there any conscious effort made by the leaders of the non-Communist parties, such as yourself or others, to systematically flood the Communist Party with applicants who were not Communists themselves, in order to gain inside information on the



one hand and to water down the effectiveness and discipline of the Communists on the other? Answer:) There were no such things, at least ~~XX~~ I am not aware of them. There was a sentimental check in that people were not enthusiastic about entering the party. When a person came to a decision and felt he had to enter, the act of joining caused him a considerable inner disturbance; there was always a feeling of abstention with a residue of fear; people felt that while they may solve their problems, at least momentarily, by joining the party, their decision to join may later be held against them.

- (6 e) A great many people changed after becoming party members. Their situations was similar to that of a person entering a room, the contents of which he does ~~KN~~ not know; he does not know what awaits him behind the door. Once a person entered the party, he came under the impact of those forces which were operating there. Various people reacted differently and obeyed the party in a different manner. The weaker ones succumbed completely and their actions and views, at least in their outward manifestations, suffered an abrupt change from one day to another. Views they held one day they ~~BN~~ rejected completely on the next, obviously in order to be able to maintain those advantages which they thereby secured to themselves.
- (6 f) The dissatisfaction of Communists had several reasons. When speaking on this question, I should like to restrict myself to a few

individuals with whom I was acquainted. Both cases are familiar to me. I could tell<sub>x</sub> you, for instance, about a newspaperman who became a staff member of the Szabad Nép in 1945. The regime gave to this man everything it could offer him, demanding of him, at the same time, everything that a totalitarian regime is capable of demanding. He was expected to write about things and about events which my friend knew quite well were not true. This was a concrete case and the reasons cited were his concrete reasons which caused his gradual disillusionment. When he could not stand it any longer, he gave up his position and all the benefits his position represented to exchange it, after an unsuccessful attempt to cross the frontier in 1948, with imprisonment. This is not a generally known case. There are other, historic examples, the cases of the Hungarian writers, for instance; <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ question of the writers' rebellion is generally known.

The beginning of this rebellion took place in 1953, after Imre Nagy assumed the premiership, at a time when, as a result of certain decrees of the Nagy government, a process of liberalization got under way in the country. In connection with these decrees, the writers visited factories, villages, farms, and cooperatives (TSzCs's) to acquaint themselves with the real situation. In the course of these visits the writers came to the realization that, while official Hungary praised the success of cooperative farms to high heavens, ~~proclaiming~~ proclaiming the great advantages these have as against private farms, the members of the cooperatives lived

under such miserable economic conditions which ~~was~~ were only comparable to those of agricultural laborers (béresek) living on the large estates before the second World War.

These visits, and what they saw during them, represented the principal cause of the writers' disillusionment. If all this is so bad, they said, and, if to that the nation is systematically deceived about the real situation, there obviously must be something wrong with the top leadership. In innumerable speeches and articles they deplored the situatio<sup>n</sup>, but continued to maintain, for a long time, that not the basic principles of the party were at fault here, ~~EXPLAINING~~ <sup>blaming</sup> the situation on the incompetence of the individuals who put the directives into practice. It was during 1953 that the writers made their second great discovery, finding that the colossal failures cannot be blamed on officials alone and that the very people ~~from~~ from whom the directives and principles emanated are basically at fault. The party and the party's organization is to be blamed, they asserted. Thus came the following steps the end conclusions of which was the discovery that the people are led and directed by a stratum which is completely separated from it, a stratum entirely unaware of the condition of the population, a stratum which knows nothing of the problems of the people. The writers took then the next great step and, beginning at the other end of the problem, they endeavored to discover what really were the problems of the people, what were

their difficulties, how did the whole system operate. In this fashion they discovered step by step that in Hungary ~~KEM~~ a false economic front was maintained, that the regime speaks about economic prosperity, economic developments at a time when people do not possess the minimum standards of existence. They observed at the same time -- they were in a position to do so -- the striking differences between the standard of living of the large masses and that of the ruling stratum which directed the country's social and economic life; the one group <sup>WAS</sup> ~~with~~ equipped with television sets and all the modern conveniences, the other had no bread to eat. These, then, were the reasons for the writers' rebellion, during the course of which they discovered the real situation of the country, facts <sup>which</sup> greatly contributed to the outbreak of the Revolution itself.

- (6 g) If I have to categorically answer the question, I must say that without party membership one could attain no position. This, however, would not be the whole truth. A person's technical knowledge ~~was~~ and the employer's actual need of such a person also was a determining factor.

In this connection the basic considerations were the applicant's social background, whether or not a party member, the contents of his cadre sheet, his relationship to work, and party activities. These were the determining factors. There were, however, excellent engineers, or agricultural experts who, in their respective fields, were simply indispensable. In situations of this sort, one of

two procedures were followed: (1) The indispensable expert was either assigned to work under a less competent man who was a reliable party member. The expert performed his job, with his superior being credited for it, or (2) the Communist Party and/or the government tried to pay off these people by giving them all kinds of economic benefits. I have in mind here such people as Mr. Wesemeyer, for instance, an agricultural expert of European reputation, whom the government tried to buy off in this fashion by giving him the Kossuth prize, all kinds of benefits, good dwelling, good pay, freedom to travel in Europe, etc., etc.

(6 h) No, I was not a member.

(6 p) I don't really think that I could have joined. Perhaps yes, between 1945 and 1948, and perhaps even between 1948 and 1950. My situation, you must understand, was a peculiar one; I am the son of a poor peasant and my socio-economic condition, as it was termed in Hungary, tended to underline and to strengthen my opinions under certain circumstances. In 1945 if I could have joined any party of my choosing, it certainly would not have been a problem. There were even between 1945 and 1948 a few attempts to enlist me. I met Rákosi a couple of times, who, in a half-jovial manner remarked to me that I am not in that position to which my social origin ought to predetermine me. He continued to say how great a service I could render to my country if I were occupying my proper position. He did not leave any doubt in my mind what

he meant by "proper position." There were a few more attempts between 1948 and 1950, the period when I was already in a troubled situation and, being under a strict police supervision, I no longer was a free partner who could freely say yes or no to a ~~XX~~ question of this sort. The ~~KXX~~ fact that I did say no greatly contributed to my being placed under even more tight conditions.

- (6 q) Non-membership certainly affected both my life and career, though you cannot very well oversimplify matters by considering this factor alone; I would have had a possibility to continue my activities even if I had not become a member of the Communist Party, in the form and fashion which was open to many Smallholders and Peasant Party representatives. I have in mind here the position of a passive collaborator, who nods approvingly to whatever the Communists do.
- (6 r) This is a question where there is no room ~~KXX~~ for dispute whatsoever. The party was run by Rákosi and by a few others of his circle, all the way to somewhere in 1956 (the date escapes me) when Rákosi finally fell.
- (6 s) I would have to know who those "some of the leaders" are. (Question: ~~X~~What do you think about Rákosi~~X~~, for instance? Answer:~~E~~)  
Regarding Rákosi I am going to cite the opinion of an older friend of mine who ~~EX~~ played an important role in Hungarian politics and who, in my estimation, possessed a very clear vision. He said of Rákosi at the end of 1947 that Rákosi was a very intelligent

rascal (nagyon értelmes csirkefogó).

- (6 t) The policy of the party undoubtedly changed, since, no matter how programmatical ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ their actions may have been, they could neither disregard nor precisely determine the force-factors which unexpectedly came up as time went on. We can state truthfully, however, that the 1945-1953 developments were exceptionally ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ programmatic, well thought-out, and proceeding as planned. We ought to speak in this connection primarily about agriculture -- it was there that the Communist plans were most conspicuous, -- that agricultural policy which characterized the regime, and which <sup>ME T</sup> meant the stubborn resistance of the peasants between 1945-1953, was definitely a very well developed policy -- though based on theoretical considerations only. Otherwise the population's mood, interests, and points of view would also have been considered, in which case this policy <sup>WOULD</sup> could not have been carried out, or, at least not in the ~~EXX~~ manner we knew it.

The first disturbing moment in the Communists' policy was undoubtedly Stalin's death in 1953, and the various disturbances which took place at different times and locations, shortly after Stalin's death. I have in mind here the East German events which occurred in 1953 as well as the events in and other ~~IX~~ places in the Soviet Union where local uprisings took place. These were isolated events in themselves, but their effect must not be underestimated. These events led the Soviet Union to give certain concessions to the Soviet people and to the

satellites.

(7) I was not a member of any party or society after 1950.

(7 g) Membership in the party as well as membership in the mass organizations fell in almost the same category, it being considered a necessary evil, where one was obliged to be a member, had to perform certain duties in order to maintain his present position or to be entitled to get another.

(7 1) This, of course, differed with places and people and organizations. I can only tell you of my own little town, where I was more or less acquainted with the people. There, a variety of types of people participated in the many organizations, the number of convinced Communists being the smallest. Convinced Communists were almost a rarity, I recall one now, the secretary of one of the TSzCs's, who was such a convinced Communist. This man was, I feel, the most pleasant person to deal with in the whole village. I maintained close and friendly relations with him and we were able, even during the toughest times, to discuss all sorts of things in a friendly manner. These were the exceptions. ~~KE~~ Other types were the opportunists. I certainly consider it a waste of time ~~ME~~ to deal further with these in greater detail. There was one group ~~XXXX~~ which deserves mention; it consisted of people who had reason to fear reprisals, either on account of their pre-World War II activities, or on account of their class origin. The former group consisted of people whose pre-war political or economic activities



were irreconcilably opposed to the post-war political and economic picture. The latter group was made up of ~~14~~ individuals who, had it not been for their timely decision to enter the party, would have been considered bad cadres.

In either case they knew that their behavior must be exemplary from every point of view, that they must do according to their best abilities, and even better, whatever task ~~they~~ they may be assigned to work on.

In order to cover up their past economic or political "mal-orientation" or their class background, these people, in a constant search of means of compensation, seized every opportunity to prove their ~~to~~ loyalty to their superiors by not only reaching, but also exceeding, the "norm" expected of them.

The Communist Party was literally loaded with such people. This was the worst Communist type.

(7 1) Here I speak of local chapters of mass organizations, the functioning of their national leadership being an entirely different matter where other principles and points of view came into play.

These local organizations or chapters had their state-affiliated programs. There were several government-sponsored actions, such as the celebration of May 1, of April 4, in the preparation of which these local groups participated. They also participated in the peace-loan campaigns, in the numerous campaigns for peace and anti-imperialist demonstrations. In a word, these

groups took care of such and similar political tasks, being used mostly on such occasions when direct participation of the Communist Party would have been inopportune and disadvantageous.

(7 n) The workers did not trust the labor unions. Here again I speak only of that period when I myself was a labor union member (1953-1956.) I began to work in the fall of 1953 and was employed in a brick factory. I was in the midst of workers, who performed a very heavy physical labor. These laborers were not the best-paid workers in the country. Aside from political slogans, they did not receive much else from the labor union. As a result, the workers considered the union as an adjunct of the Communist Party, an instrument for the execution of certain governmental decrees. They in no way regarded the union as serving to their benefit.

Let me relate to you a small episode which took place in 1954. The labor union conducted a campaign, as usual, that people should read more and should use more fully the factory's library facilities. The workers complained that there were no books available to their liking. A discussion followed in which it became evident that the labor union received each year a fixed amount of money from the factory's budget for library purposes. This money was spent every year on books, the list of titles being compiled by the labor unions, without regard to the taste or interests of the members. A great number of books were available, ostensibly for the education of the workers, which nobody read. The workers did not have even

that much influence over their leaders, who <sup>in turn</sup> were singularly indifferent towards their rank and file.

- (8) There were very, very few convinced Communists. Those few had a reputation recognized far and wide.
- (9) This is a very involved and complex question, very closely connected with the education of the youth.

Révai made a speech in Parliament in 1948, in which he discussed the question of the education of Hungarian youth. Révai stated that the position of the Communist Party will only then become stable in Hungary, if and when the Communists succeed in bringing up a generation whose very first childhood experiences and impressions will be of a type and quality which only a Socialist state is capable of providing.

In line with this view of the chief Communist theoretician, the regime has spent enormous sums for educational purposes. ~~The~~ <sup>DISZ</sup> ~~this~~, too, it had an enormous budget at its disposal, with the help of which it provided many libraries and entertainment facilities for its members. The fact that in October 1956, besides those who were in their early thirties at the time, the Communist regime's youngest generation proved to be the Revolution's noblest army, only proves how completely the Communists failed in their attempt at Communist education.

This failure became clear only during the Revolution. We, who were released from prison in 1953, were <sup>more</sup> ~~still~~ surprised by this

young generation's attitude than anybody else. From 1953 to 1956 we often discussed the youth, and the general consensus was that we might as well forget them entirely, so bad were our impressions of them. We considered them a lost generation, devoid of the very notion of liberty and human freedom.

If we are searching for an explanation of this spectacular transformation from what we honestly thought was a lost generation into a determined army of anti-Communists, the only plausible explanation we can come up with is that, it seems, the family and home had exerted a greater, deeper, and more lasting influence on the youth -- contrary to all superficial appearances -- than did the school and society at large.

The children got used to a peculiar condition, in which they knew they had to speak one language in school and another at home. In the family, a unit of which every child was a member, the mistakes and faults -- never touched in schools -- were thoroughly discussed. This critical approach of the family, covering both sides of the coin,  $\text{\textcircled{H}}$  exerted a greater influence on their minds, it seems, than other factors.

The fact alone that the family, where everybody worked and yet was unable to get anywhere (*mégsem tudott ötről hatra vergődni*); where the child saw his father, laboring for so many years and yet unable to show any results;  $\text{\textcircled{H}}$  this and similar facts alone may have convinced the young people, more than any amount of words would,

how hopeless their own future appeared to ~~XXXXXXXX~~ <sup>be, all</sup> the phrases and promises heard in school and elsewhere notwithstanding. These moments, it seems, were stronger than anything else.

- (10) Communist terror was an inseparable ingredient and part of everyday life in Hungary in those times, and I am thoroughly convinced that a person can only be a real anti-Communist in a place like Hungary. There, a mode of thinking, a peculiar reasoning process ~~had~~ <sup>has</sup> become part of the human nature. For every ~~is~~ nuisance and difficulty, for shortages and problems, individuals almost involuntarily blamed the leadership of the state, and that part of the state machinery which prevents people from living their lives in their own fashion; which prohibits certain things, holds back some needed supplies, or consumers goods, prevents certain voices and opinions from being heard, etc., etc. If a man in Budapest is waiting for the No. 6 trolley car which is not coming, or, if it finally arrives but is so full of people that he cannot get on it, his first reaction is against the AVH and against the Cabinet, a reaction which is characterized by cursing. ~~XX~~ Those dirty Communists are responsible for all this. Our man got up early in the morning, gave himself plenty of time, but could not get on the trolley car. He arrives six minutes late in the office and as he enters the building he meets the head of the personnel section. The personnel chief does not say a word, of course, he just views our man from head to foot with a look which makes one shiver in his bones. The next thought is automatic: what is he going to write on my cadre sheet?! Our

man was not really late, the real work does not start till after four minutes, ~~but~~ but he has missed the important "ten-minute movement," during which he was supposed to prepare and set up the day's work. An endless series of such little incidents permeate all people's lives, day after day. This was one face of the terror. The other was even more brutal; between 1948 and 1956, innumerable Hungarians were put to prison. These innumerable people had families and relatives and friends, whose number was many times that of the imprisoned. All these people were affected, some more, some less. These people, whose father or mother or sister or brother or son or daughter was imprisoned, were not permitted to talk about their sufferings, they were expected to conceal this fact, to keep it a veiled secret. If they talked they, too, became enemies of the people's democracy, they were supposed to invent stories, to ~~invent~~ tell a lie when somebody inquired about the whereabouts of the missing member of the family.

This contradiction, where people could not speak the truth, could not reveal what was on their minds, and beneath the calm and carefree surface their hearts were aching nonetheless, this contradiction was unbearable. When talking about these things, people experienced an intense fear, never knowing with whom they were talking, never being certain who among their acquaintances, relatives, and even among their own family, might be a planted ~~spy~~ spy or an agent provocateur. They could never tell when their

~~when their~~ own children might inadvertently reveal a family secret. A husband could never trust his wife in an absolute sense, nor could ~~is~~ the wife be entirely certain of her husband. The AVH was all too well known to have turned numerous family members against one another.

The terror, in a word, was everywhere, it was part of the fabric of life, intervoven with whatever a person was engaged in, meeting him on every step from the moment he woke to the time when he fell asleep again. This is the explanation why people went so forcefully and with so much hate against the AVH during the Revolution. And this is precisely what people in the West failed to grasp or understand; why did the Hungarians hang so brutally so many AVH-men (the number was not large, as a matter of fact), why did people set themselves up as arbitrary judges of other men? I will readily admit that the hangings were neither legal nor right or proper, but I also know that underneath the elemental force thus unleashed, the AVH's inhuman and endless terror was the propagating force. The AVH and its associated organizations have managed to penetrate the innermost corners of the human soul, so that a person could not even trust an other in bed, not knowing what he or she might do the following morning, whether he will be reported to the AVH or not. This was in rough outlines the great terror, with which a whole nation was held trembling of fear at the mercy of the AVH.

(10 a) See answer to Question 10.

- (10 b) The AVH was organized in the faithful image of the Russian NKVD <sup>OR</sup> ~~of~~ MVD. Its purpose and task was the securing of Hungary's transformation into a Communist society. It was supposed to do those cleansing jobs within the country which the Communists considered indispensable before <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ during the transition.

The AVH was organized after 1945 and from the very beginning it supported the Communist Party, whose creation it really was. It was the center of a very heated struggle of Hungary's post-war politics, because the various administrative heads of the new state, representing as they did the several political parties of the coalition, soon realized that they had no control ~~or~~ influence over the AVH and over its activities. The later political developments in Hungary are generally known.

The repeated efforts to bring the AVH under the jurisdiction of the Council of Ministers remained unsuccessful up until 1948, and after 1948 this jurisdictional question was no longer a problem. Later developments gave the AVH an absolute freedom of action. Between 1948 and 1953 the AVH was responsible for the security and smoothness of that social transformation which took place in the country, which meant in practice an AVH control over the courts (igazságszolgáltatás), over the liquidations, over social activities, and over the political life. It would be more precise to say that these controlling powers belonged to the Executive Committee of the AVH, which in turn was ultimately a political instrument and lever in the hands of those who directed its activities, namely



Rákosi and a few others.

- (10 c) The AVH's activities were twofold: (a) Operative activities. Here you had such tasks as liquidation, arrests, interrogation, prisons, etc. (b) Defensive activities. Here you had two divisions. The one was concerned with counter-espionage, the other had in its charge the internal defense and security. This latter supervised the various institutions and organizations. It had sections dealing with the ministries, with the remnants of the post-1948 political parties, with the Churches, with the various social institutions, with the youth organizations, with the labor unions, and you could go on enumerating ~~the~~ others.

These sections performed their tasks in two ways: (a) They gathered information from the various institutions and organizations by means of planted agents and (b) they built up an extensive network of informers whom they either bribed or blackmailed or forced to spy on individuals, or groups, or both.

The AVH made every attempt, of course, to place its own men into strategic positions everywhere, and in this respect the AVH did have certain constitutional or legal possibilities; thus for instance in the army, beside every commander there was a political officer, representing the AVH, who was not under the jurisdiction and control of the higher military command, and who reported all his observations and data directly to the respective section of the AVH headquarters.

There were, then, two sources of information at the AVH's disposal. The one source was the official source which reached the AVH by regular means, through the defense department. In every Ministry, you must know, there was an official AVH representative, and the AVH had the right to interfere in the Ministry's work.\* At the same time the AVH received confidential reports from its political officers who were sitting next to every commander and reported independently. These were situation report, daily reports, and reports regarding concrete events or situations.

The same was true of every institution, organization, or association; there were the official reports and the confidential reports made by planted AVH agents. These agents had their own checkers and supervisors, and the supervisors in turn were supervised by others, etc.

At the same time you had the network of informers who reported on concrete events and situations, usually specializing in such phenomena which the regime considered to be of a negative nature.

(10 d) I already said a few words about the informer system. This system represented such channels of intelligence which were beyond the limits of the professional AVH's sphere of activity, and possibility, or effectiveness; people everywhere in the country knew and recognized planted professional AVH agents. Everybody knew, for instance, that the political officer in the army was an AVH-man; that the personnel section chief in an office or factory or TSzCs was an AVH-man, etc., etc. In the presence of these agents the

people were more careful and, if one of these agents took part in a meeting, few speeches and no protests of any kind were heard, not even such which otherwise might have been voiced.

In order to be able to collect information from these territories also, where the AVH's own men were quite ineffective, the network of informers, the so-called wamszer network, was established. For this purpose the AVH, using all sorts of methods, was trying to recruit first of all such people who were wholly beyond possible suspicion. These people had the opportunity to continue to speak freely. If a man spoke too loudly at a meeting and fearlessly denounced Rákosi and Stalin, people immediately knew that he was an informer, a wamszer. (Interviewer's note: respondent here obviously means an agent provocateur.)

The AVH was fond of using methods -- needless to say -- whereby people were made to spy on their friends. They were anxious to collect incriminating personal data, data concerning a family, closely-guarded family secrets, which they used in turn as blackmail material, thereby forcing the victim to supply them with information regarding his own family or others. They searched people's past histories to discover black spots and incriminating evidence, facts which, if used against the victim, would be sufficient reason to imprison him immediately. The AVH did not prosecute these men. They let the person get away with whatever he may have done on condition that he would turn informer and would supply the AVH with desired intelligence.

I can relate to you a concrete case in this connection. During 1948, many of my friends tumbled down with whom I worked together before and after the war. Towards the end of 1948, one of my friends came up to me. He was very upset and wanted to see me immediately. We went to another ~~WASHON~~ room where we were <sup>e</sup> along and where he told me that he had been arrested three days before, was taken to the AVH headquarters ~~W~~ (describing what they did to him, which was not very pleasant). My friend was a family man, had several children, he held a very good job (he was an engineer.) In short, he was permitted to leave on the understanding that he would secure certain data concerning two of his friends, one of whom was I.

In view of the beatings received, and because the proposal was presented to him in such a way that he would not even think about its implications, he accepted the offer. He went home, etc., etc., finally deciding to contact us, telling us beforehand what it was all about. I listened to his tale and since I myself was in a very difficult situation, I did not know what to say. Finally I advised him to tell whatever he knew of me, if that would help keep him above water. He left, but people were already waiting for him outside and took him away. Later, in 1950, I was myself arrested and I met him again in prison. Then I learned what he got for not doing his job. My friend was also freed in 1953.

(10 e) Regular members of the AVH were recruited on a voluntary basis. These volunteers had to satisfy certain conditions; they had to

be members of the Communist Party, their social origin was strictly scrutinized, and they had to be recommended by certain party organizations or by certain party functionaries. I must add here that AVH membership meant very many economic privileges and advantages; they were better paid than any other person (an AVH lieutenant received twice the amount of pay of his counterpart in the army). They had many advantages in the purchase of clothing, securing of apartments, etc.

- (10 f) It is rather hard for me to give a statistical picture of the AVH, since I have not seen one. I must base what I say on what I observed. AVH members, or more correctly, the privates and lower echelons of the AVH were without question mostly people of worker and peasant origin.

As far as the officers and the entire leadership of the AVH is concerned, -- though it is painful and unpleasant to relate the truth in this situation -- these people were for the most part Jews. The AVH leadership and officers of the AVH, as well as the Jewry of Hungary were, to a certain extent, considered under one hat ~~MAKA~~ (egy kalap alá voltak véve) excepting, of course, those honorable Jews who were on the other side of the fence, who, as a matter of fact suffered a great deal exactly for that reason.

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

(Question: What do you think were the motives of the simple peasants and workers who volunteered ~~KE~~ for work in the AVH?

Answer:) Material advantages prompted them to volunteer and, on

very rare occasions, political beliefs. (Questions: Did the Jews have any special plan or reason when they decided to join to AVH? What prompted them to do so? Answer:) I do not think that it is proper to speak of Jews as Jews in this connection. As a ~~JEWISH~~ group I do not think that they had any plans. It is an undeniable fact, <sup>however</sup> ~~whoever~~, that the leadership of the Communist Party after 1945 was in the hands of ~~JEWISH~~ Jewish people or people of Jewish descent. In view of the fact that immediately after 1945 the essential role in the country's economic life was played by the Communists, those people who had been both interested and involved in Hungary's economic life before the second World War, as well as those, who were either desirous of receiving from the state compensations for suffered losses, or were anxious to play essential parts again in the now socialized sector of the national economy, -- all these categories of people gravitated towards, and actually entered, the rank of the Communist Party. These categories did not consist of Jewish individuals exclusively. However, since the nation's pre-war economy for the most part was in ~~THEIR~~ their hands, Jews did represent the great majority.

As far as the attitude with ~~THEM~~ respect to the AVH is concerned, I feel that there was a basic and -- from the human point of view -- a very legitimate moment, which ~~THEM~~ prompted at least a part of the Jews to enter the AVH. In 1950 I had conversations with people who were Jews and who had been members of the AVH since 1945. I asked them a question similar to your

question now. They told me how their families were exterminated before 1945; they told me of the sufferings they themselves went through, -- an explanation which I fully accepted since I myself have seen several atrocities during the war.

Now after 1945 one of the basic aims ~~has~~ <sup>has</sup> been the liquidation of the Fascists in Hungary. In this connection the basic human motive for the Jews was that, as people whom Fascism touched most, as people hardest hit by Fascism in Hungary, they immediately volunteered for this job of liquidation. (Question: Are you suggesting that the Jews entered the AVH because desirous of revenge? Answer:) The feeling of revenge undoubtedly played a role in the decisions of many people, a revenge ~~which~~ which went over and above the very honorable procedure of liquidation itself. People, after all, are not always the same, and they are not always angels. This, of course, was a rather unfortunate thing.

Like every development taking its origin somewhere, after a while oversteps its framework and assumes a life of its own; a Jewish individual became a member of the AVH framework in 1945, -- I assume here that X he went there with good intentions, with the intention mainly of liquidating the remnants of Fascism in Hungary. Now after he got in and after he secured for himself a position, the conditions changed, while he retained his position. Under these changed conditions his own relation to the AVH organization necessarily had to change and, since there was no other

possibility, he had no choice but to accept the new situation and the new task which went with it.

I consider this whole thing, the AVH and the Jews' participation in it, as rather unfortunate because the population later connected the AVH with the Jews, a procedure which undoubtedly had a solid base. The whole thing resulted in a very determined feeling of resentment towards the Jews, ~~and~~ a feeling which practically never entered the hearts of Hungarians before.

(10 h) Yes, very definitely.

(10 i) Regular AVH personnel were regular members of this organization. The secret informers were free-lancers, -- to use an American expression.

(10 j) There was a very great resentment and distrust between the police and the AVH; the AVH considered the police a bunch of reactionaries, who ~~was~~ could not be trusted, whereas the police definitely feared the AVH.

(10 k) If we look at this question of AVH-Party relationship from a vertical point of view, if we compare the AVH and party representatives as they existed and functioned in a village or a small town, the AVH there had ~~great~~ much greater authority than the party. Locally, therefore, the AVH was superior. We must not forget, however, that, nationally, the only organization which did exercise control ~~of~~ over the AVH was still the central leadership of the party. The fundamental directives, and principles of procedures, came to the AVH from the party.



- (10 1) Yes. I knew Oliver Benjamin, the chief of police of the city of Budapest between 1945 and 1948. He was arrested in 1949, was sentenced and imprisoned. He was freed in 1956.
- (11) Most of my friends and I myself were arrested after 1945.
- (11 a) This seems to be an extreme question, so I shall try to give you an extreme answer.

I knew a young man who was imprisoned together with me. He was a store-clerk (kereskedősegéd) by profession. He used to work in a store on the Baross-street in Budapest. It so happened that his name and the name of somebody else whom the AVH wanted were identical. The AVH picked up this man instead of the other. I don't have to tell you that this poor young ~~man~~ boy received a tremendous beating. He simply did not want to know any of those things for which the AVH possessed proof. And of course he really knew nothing. The mistake was discovered only in 1952.

There was another case; this man was a ~~man~~ <sup>district</sup> veterinarian in the County of Tolna. He, too, was arrested as a result of a name mixup. The other man, whom the AVH really wanted, was a Horthyist army officer who was alleged to have committed various atrocities on the Russian front, including the extermination of a whole village, etc. He was arrested and the AVH asked him the usual questions, where had he been, etc. This poor man denied everything and his denial tended to even more aggravate his prospects. The AVH was unable to get anywhere with him and, he was not brought to court as originally planned, but was simply

interned. This all took place in 1948. He was later transferred to Kistarcsa and still later to Reesk. At the beginning of 1953, after the death of Stalin, a great rechecking of cases took place at Reesk. Every prisoner was again interrogated and new minutes (protocols) were prepared. When this man's turn came and he dictated his personal data, his mother's name was not the same as the name recorded in the AVH's files. The man was interrogated and beaten again for some three weeks until ~~XXXXX~~ finally, in 1953, the AVH admitted that a mistake in names was made. An intensive search began for the real criminal, and it was found that he died some 18 months earlier. My friend was informed of all this in March 1953 and he was very happy that he would be freed at last. But he was not freed. They freed him only months later, in October 1953, when by decree of Imre Nagy all forced labor camps and prison camps were liquidated.

I was arrested on March 31, 1950. Three AVH people came to my apartment during the night and conducted a house search lasting all night. They took me to 60 Andrassy ut, having filled two bags with various books and notes of mine. I was at the Andrassy ut 60 for more than three weeks. At that time, the beginning of 1950, the AVH was in the process of liquidating the remnants of the so-called conspiracy cases, and they made determined efforts to link my case also to one of these cases. They did not succeed in this. They were not able to take a protocol during the almost four-weeks long investigation and finally issued an order of interment (véghatározat) and shipped me to Kistarcsa. Part of

an imperialist spy, -- another accusation which no longer had much credence in the eyes of the population. I clearly saw that I would have to sign something in order to be freed, so I did.

I was finally freed at the end of September 1953, with the stipulation that I would be placed under police supervision. This meant in practice that I was permitted to choose a village for my residence -- I chose a village near Budapest where I formerly also resided, a village which I was now not permitted to leave. I could not take a job other than in the village, I had to report to the local police at stated intervals and I had to abide by those rules which are generally applicable for police supervision cases. (I could not go to the movies, public places, I could not receive guests, I could not keep a radio or telephone, etc., etc.)

(Question: Who signed your deportation order? Answer:) It was signed by Décsi Károly AVH colonel, who was the head of the investigating section of the AVH at the time. This man tumbled down later on, and received some fifteen years. (Question: I should like to ask you to tell me something of the four weeks during which you were held at 60 Andrassy ut. What did they do to you? Answer:) This is a rather fantastic episode. I hate to talk about myself, not wishing to put me into too good a light. The questioning started with picture taking and fingerprinting. Thereafter they took me ~~to~~ to a questioning room where I met an AVH captain. I don't know his name. He conducted my questioning later on also. He was a very polite and correct man, he personally never

beat me, leaving that part to others. He wanted to know essentially two things: (a) of which conspiratorial group was I a member, and (b) which were the imperialist spy organizations with which I was connected and which regularly sent me money and instructions. I could not answer either of these questions in the affirmative -- I was not a member of any conspiracy and, unfortunately, I was not a member of a spy ring either. I would have gladly given them all the information they wanted had I possessed them, because I would have spared myself a great many things that way. I was forced to "stubbornly deny" everything", to use the captain's phrase. The result was that after the end of the questioning session I was not permitted to sit down when I returned to my cell. To the contrary; I was told to stand in perfect attention immediately behind the cell door, about a foot away from the door itself. The guard, obviously following instructions, checked and re-checked me frequently and at varying intervals.

Standing in attention was a rather easy thing at the beginning, becoming more and more difficult and tiring as time went on. It is amazing how a man's power of resistance weakens under such exertions. If you think about <sup>this</sup> ~~KNIFE~~ now, you are apt to wonder what there is to it really -- it does not appear to be a dreadful thing -- but if you stand in attention continuously for almost 96 hours, then this sort of thing tends to be an infernal thing, becoming more and more hard and harder to endure. I believe that

towards the end of this stretch -- which was interrupted once -- I was no longer in a normal state of mind.

Certain things happened to me which -- even the act of relating them now -- does strain the critical capacities, at least of a normal person.

At about the middle of this long stretch they took me up for questioning and put me in a small room which was facing the room of my questioner. The small room had a sofa, a desk, and a chair. The window was protected by heavy iron bars. They gave me a large stack of paper and told me to write down the story of my life; they advised me to write down honestly and truthfully what I did against the people's democracy, with whom did I conspire, of what spy organizations am I a member, etc. Then they left me alone. While I was trying to think what I should do and how I should do it, my questioner, the captain, came in <sup>and</sup> took me into his room. As I stepped into the captain's room -- there was a large, deep easy chair next to his desk -- the first thing I noticed <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ that a very close relative of mine <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ sitting in that chair. Her face is leaning slightly on her hand and her shoes, dress, in a word, everything she had on, I knew and recognized immediately. At that instant, and later on as well, I had no doubt whatsoever in my mind that the person sitting in that chair was she. I wanted to go towards her and to tell her something, but they grabbed me, ~~she~~ holding my mouth and hands tight, but permitting me to stay there for a second or two, giving me ample opportunity

to view her to make certain that the person sitting in that chair was really she and that no deception occurred and no attempt was made to mislead me. Having accomplished that, they took me back into the small room. There they again told me to sit down and to ~~be~~ being writing my life's story if I wanted to get out of there. They also advised me that, should I refuse to write, the person whom I have just seen would be "well taken care of," and gave me a vivid description of what would happen to her.

(Question: ~~KEN~~ You do not consider it important or perhaps ~~KOZ~~ you do not wish to further identify the person you have seen? Answer:) She was my wife.

I was again alone in the small room and suddenly I began to write. All things have their psychology and a man is able to exert but a very small resistance under certain circumstances. I began to write and I filled out three pages. Then I stopped; upon deliberating I realized or rather thought that I could not trust these people after all. If I write down all sorts of stupidities, -- such things as they want me to admit -- they will still not keep their word and will not do what they promised to do. Therefore I am not going to write anything at all, I decided. I looked at the three filled pages before me and was trying to decide what to do with them. I took the three pages and ripped them into small bits.

Now the problem was what to do with these bits of paper.

No matter what I did with them, if I threw them down on the floor, or into the wastebasket, or if I kept them on my person -- I could not throw them out through the window -- they would no doubt discover them, they would put the bits together, and I would be exactly in the same situation as if I had not ripped up the sheets at all. A big and daring thought came into my mind; I knocked on the door and when the guard came I asked him to take me to the bathroom. He obliged and I threw the bits of paper into the toilet, flushing them down the drain with the water. I went back to the small ~~XX~~ room, sat down, and did not write. After about an hour they came for me; so you don't want to write? I don't have anything to write down other than what I have already told you, etc., etc. They took me back to the captain's room and a long questioning followed to discover why I did not want to write, during which time I passively endured those things which they did to me. (Question: Did they beat you? Answer:) Yes, of course, they did.

The most interesting thing in this whole matter was a circumstance which I have completely neglected to consider; namely the fact that they carefully counted the number of sheets of paper before they gave them to me. They immediately discovered that three sheets of paper were missing. The next round of questioning centered around this fact; what did I do with those three sheets, and what did I write on them. Eventually this, too, came to an end and I was taken back to my cell. There I continued

standing in attention as before. All my thoughts and energy were geared now to ~~XXXXX~~ discover, somehow, if my wife was still in the building and, if so, what happened to her. I was not able to discover anything of this kind, I was locked in and was surrounded by a system which functioned to perfection.

Towards the end of ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ this 96-hour period -- I shall return to my story later, ~~XX~~ wishing to complete the story of my standing episode now, -- towards the end of the fourth day -- I of course did not know if it was morning, afternoon, or evening, my cell was way down in the cellar with the electric light constantly on; in ~~XXXX~~ a word, I did not know the hour of the day and the fact that I had stood in attention for such a long time became to <sup>me</sup> be clear only later, after this episode's termination, when I was transferred to another place on which occasion I was able to determine that four days had passed between two periods, the beginning and end points of which I knew.

It was towards the end of the fourth day when the following things happened to me: two white cats approached my heavily barred window. My cell had an arched ceiling and the ventilation window, its lower end being two and a half meters above the floor, was an arched tubelike opening. The window itself was heavily barred. The two white cats approached this window and one of them grabbed the heavy bars and lifted it out of the wall. I knew precisely that outside on the street a telephone truck was waiting with a heavy cable drum and equipment on it. On the cable drum itself



a very heavy type of white cord was rolled on. X One of the cats tied a hook on the end of the cord and threw it down to me. I knew that as soon as I grabbed the hook, the apparatus on the truck would set the cable drum in motion, rolling up the cord and pulling me out of my prison cell. The two cats would free me, of that I was absolutely certain. I waited a little while, until the guard would come again and would check my position by opening a little door which was within the cell door itself. He soon came, opened the little door, saw me standing in attention and, closing the door again, he X left. At that very moment I grabbed the hook.

From that moment on I don't remember anything at all. The next thing I knew was that the guard was pouring cold water on me and I was lying on the cell floor. As it later turned out, they took me down from the window opening. I climbed up the two and a half meter level wall and was hanging, X unconsciously, my hands solidly holding the iron bars. This was the end of the attention-standing episode.

I later was transferred from 60 Andrássy ut and was taken to Kistarcsa, where on two occasions during my stay at the camp the prisoners were permitted to talk for five minutes with their relatives. The conversation itself took place between two barred walls. I was also permitted twice to write a letter to my wife. (I was at Kistarcsa from April to October 1950.) On both occasions I wrote to my wife, asking her to visit me and advising her that I had a very important X question to ask her, a question to which

she must give me a straightforward and unreserved answer. My wife came and I asked her if she had been at 60 Andrassy ut. On both occasions her answer was a definite no. I, of course, did not believe her. I was meanwhile transferred again, this time to the prison camp at Reck, where I spent some three and a half years. After I was freed and got home to my wife, my first action was to ask her again the above question. My wife was not at 60 Andrassy ut. (Question: How do you explain this, or rather, what is your explanation for all this? Answer:) I haven't got the slightest idea. I don't know what they did to me; whether I was in such a condition that I saw those things which they wanted me to see, or whether they placed a person in that chair whose clothes and shoes, etc., were identical or similar to those of my wife's. (Question: Did you not see her face? Answer:) Yes, I definitely saw her face. (Wasn't her face practically covered by her hand, which may have prevented you from her full view? Answer:) Her face, or rather, head, was leaning on one of her hands, but I clearly saw her face, her full face, there is no question about it. To this day I do not really know what happened. This, then, was the psychological result of the four-day long attention standing, Beating, and repeated slapping of a person's face are not the only means of punishing a person, there are other means which are even ~~more~~ more effective in putting a man in a state of mind where he does not know what he is doing, nor is he responsible for his actions. (Question: When did the AVH finally give ~~me~~ up, during the weeks you spent in 60 Andrassy ut, their attempt to get something out of you? Answer:) After the guard

awakened me with cold water, they frequently interrogated me ~~in~~ for several days (two, three times a day), putting me later ~~in~~ into another cell, where there was already a prisoner. This young man was a professional prison companion -- as I soon found out -- who, by talking a great deal about himself, is supposed to get certain facts out of you. I was with him for about a week. After this they put me into a solitary again for another week or so and took me for frequent interrogations again. This happened for several days. They could not get anything out of me. Later they put me ~~in~~ into still another cell, in which there was an elderly man, a former officer of the police. This, however, is rather irrelevant, since they kept me only to see if they could unearth some loose ends or new evidence on which to base a renewed assault. In this they obviously did not succeed, as later events definitely proved. Finally they called me in one day and made me sign the order of internment, which I did not sign until years later, at Kistarcsa, I signed another protocol, immediately lodging an appeal, but nothing came of it. (Question: What sort of place was Kistarcsa?) (Answer:) Kistarcsa was an internment camp where only political prisoners were held. The same is true of Icsk. After 1945 we did have several internment camps in Hungary, all of which were liquidated towards the end of 1948 or in the beginning of 1949. Very many people were freed at that time. Those people whom the regime did not want to let go were all transferred to Kistarcsa. During 1950, those inmates of Kistarcsa who were 50 years old or younger were again

transferred  
to Reesk. (Question: How many people were there at Kistarcsa at the time? Answer:) Their number was between two and three thousand. There were four regiments, so called, each occupying a building, and a female regiment besides this, women being held separately. We had our regular daily routine; reveille in the morning. Some of the people worked. There were some arts and crafts shops. Most of the prisoners did not work at all, sitting in their rooms all day. At Kistarcsa we had occasional opportunities to write letters and see our relatives, and everybody used his own, civilian clothes, things which we no longer had at Reesk. (Question: Under whose authority and supervision was the Kistarcsa camp?) The camp was under the grey (regular) police up until May 1950, when the AVH took it over. (Question: What was the difference between Kistarcsa and Reesk? Answer;) The difference was enormous. We did not like our life at Kistarcsa and later at Reesk we always had a longing for it. At Reesk everybody had to work. We all were employed in a quarry (kőbánya) which we ourselves opened. In short, we came to Reesk in October 1950, cleared a 200-hold forest, then we built barracks, first for the AVH and then for ourselves, then we built a road from the barracks to the mines and another road, a 5 km-long road, to the village, then we cleared the top of the mountain of some 2-5 meter deep humus, then we cut into the side of the mountain, establishing three mining levels. After that we built a 6 km-long funicular railway (kötélpálya) and at the lower end of it we also built a railway loading platform equipped with

nine pairs of tracks.

(11 b) Practically all my acquaintances were arrested.

(11 c) There certainly were many instances of physical abuse. Such abuses were admitted by members of the AVH themselves who, in order to secure some credit to themselves, or in order to prove their personal innocence, freely admitted them during the Revolution.

I myself have seen the effects of such physical abuse in a number of cases. So as not to always speak about myself, let me tell you of a case of a fellow-prisoner; with me was an old man in Andrassy út 60, a former police inspector, who served during the Horthy regime. This man has been sitting <sup>HERE</sup> for ~~for~~ than a year and a half in the Pestvidéki Prison, from where the AVH transported him periodically (bi-monthly, monthly, or even more often) to Andrassy út 60 for further questioning. The time when I met him there -- we were cellmates for a few days -- must have been the most trying period of his life; he became insane. I could not tell you what species of physical abuse was he exposed to because the man never spoke much about these things. What I have seen, however, spoke clearly enough, and told me many things; his face was beaten (this was so natural that it is even superfluous to talk about it), his entire body, but especially his feet, were covered with wounds and large blue spots, -- obvious evidences of beatings, kickings, and other forms of torture. The very fact that this man has lost his mind while with me in the cell is

especially revealing; a man, no matter how weak and how much afraid, does not usually lose his mind overnight. He must have experienced intense fear and torment for a long time, over and above the physical torture, before reaching that condition. He was portraying his own funeral; he played in turn the roles of the cadaver, of his wife, of his children, and of the other crying and lamenting relatives. The sight he presented was both fantastic and unforgettable.

- (11 d) Those ~~people~~ people got arrested first of all who actively participated in politics from 1945 to 1948, people whose political viewpoints went contrary to the Communists' real or stated objective

Members of the old middle class were also frequently exposed to arrest; this, of course, was an ideological question. As the Communists put it, the old ruling classes had to be liquidated.

Besides <sup>e</sup> these two groups all people ran the risk of being arrested who either said or did something, no matter how minute or insignificant, against the regime, or against the people who represented the regime. Let me give you just one example; the beating up of a member of the AVH was considered a major political offense. With me in Recsk were several people who were imprisoned for many years simply because they happened to have the same girl friends, and quarrels and fights developed over this situation.

- (11 e) I have no personal knowledge of any concrete case involving the "ház-" or "tömbbizalmi."

There can be no doubt of the fact, however, that these

organizations were set up and operated with this purpose in mind. The "házbizalmis" were supposed to observe all people living in a given apartment house; these observations had to do primarily with the surface appearances; that a certain individual is visited by many people, or that he or she has a constant visitor; that a person usually comes home late; that a person repeatedly gets home in a drunken state; the person brings home a package; the person buys furniture; one could go on enumerating ~~the~~ God knows how many such facts which the ~~same~~ "házbizalmi" from time to time reported to the AVH regarding people under his "care." I must add here that the mere fact of a person's employment as "házbizalmi" did not necessarily mean that such person was also an AVH spy, though this was true in the majority of the cases.

(11 f) Getting in touch with arrested people was one of the most difficult things. Once a person was arrested he could not see any of his relatives or friends until such time when he was either tried or sentenced or, failing that, was shipped to one of the numerous internment camps. If relatives of an arrested person happened to inquire and to ask questions about his whereabouts, the authorities simply answered in the negative; they did not know anything about that person.

Once a person was tried and sentenced, he was permitted to have visitors once every half year, bi-monthly, or monthly, depending on the nature of his "crime." A similar schedule of letter-writing

was also permitted. This procedure applied for Kistarcsa, for instance. There were, on the other hand, such forced labor camps where no contacts whatsoever were permitted with the outside world. Nobody knew who or how many people were at such places, there was no visiting and no letter-writing. Such a place, for instance, was Recsk. Relatives learned that a person was at Recsk only after his release.

(11 g) The greatest concentration camp in Hungary was the Pestvidéki Fogház. This installation was used as a military prison during the second World War. After 1948, it was taken over entirely by the AVH and was used as a detention camp.

All, or practically all, people who were arrested were taken there and were kept there while their case was pending. The interesting feature of this detention camp was that people sat there for years without anything being done in their cases. They would be taken occasionally to 60 Andrássy út for questioning, but that was about all.

The majority of those tried and sentenced were taken to Vác. Vác was the center of convicted political prisoners, where the victims of the recurring arrest waves met one another ever since 19

Those arrested individuals who were not convicted or, more precisely, those who, because of lack of evidence were not brought to trial, were usually interned. Kistarcsa was the central internment camp. From here people were sent out to various concentration or hard labor camps, such as Recsk or Kazinczy-Barcika, where they



spent long years without every being tried.

There were other hard-labor camps, which were reserved for those Hungarian POW's who were returned from Russia. One such camp was located at Tiszapalkonya, where these former POW's built the great hydro-electric works (dam) of that name. These camps were the most important ones.

(11 h) (Your question, I assume, has to do with deportations which took place before the Revolution.)

About these your best possible sources would be such people who were taken to the Soviet Union and who managed, in some miraculous fashion, to get back to Hungary.

The Soviet way of treating prisoners or deportees was about the same as that in use in Hungary. The Hungarians, to be more precise, copied an already tested and well functioning Russian system.

Those who were taken to the Soviet Union could no longer communicate with their relatives in Hungary. This was simply out of the question. What happened to these people once in the Soviet Union? Some of them, no doubt, were better off than others, but none of them could ever hope again to maintain contacts of any kind with their loved ones, once they crossed Hungary's frontiers. (Question: What would you say was the number of these deportees? Answer:) Their number was substantial. First of all you had a great number of POW's who were taken out during the war. To this you must add the great number of civilians whom the Russians simply

kidnapped and took off the streets of Budapest and other cities after the cessation of hostilities.

From those few deportees who returned we learned the Russian view that, since the Hungarians, fighting on the side of the Germans after 1942, did a lot of damage in Russia, it was reasonable for the Russians to detain POW's and to deport civilians to repair that damage. The trouble was that most of these people never got back. They were used for hazardous jobs, i.e., opening up ~~of~~ mines, etc. The accident and mortality rates were high, food and other supplies were wanting, etc.

(12) See answer to Question 11 a.

(12 a,b,c,d) As above, answer to Question 11 a.

(12 f) Yes. I find it rather hard and painful to give you statistics in this connection. If at all possible, I'd rather not talk about it.

(12 h) See 11 a.

(12 i) Not applicable.

(12 j) Not applicable.

(12 k) Not applicable.

(12 l) See 11 a.

(12 m) See 11 a.

(12 n) See 11 g.

(12 o) Health and sanitary conditions were fairly bad in the prisons, though each prison had a physician. These physicians were usually

prisoners themselves, supervised by an AVH sanitary. Very many people contracted TBC while in prison, as the result of insufficient food and of inadequate health standards. There was a hospital for prisoners in Budapest, where the serious cases from the many prisons were taken, cases requiring urgent attention. These patients were sent back, if they did get better, to their respective prisons later.

Many people died -- I of course can cite here no figures -- as a result of inadequate or improper medical care. How greatly prison policy determined the state of health services in prisons and to what extent ~~SE~~ the well-being of inmates was subordinated to other, more important considerations of the AVH or prison-management is characteristically illustrated by one of my experiences. In the spring of 1952 I was afflicted with both inflammation of the lungs and pleurisy. After some three days when my temperature ran very high and I was more or less unconscious, they finally took me into the small prison infirmary. The infirmary consisted of three X rooms, one used by the doctors, the other two serving as patient-rooms. Of these the larger had eight, the smaller four beds. The smaller room was used as an isolation room, mostly for advanced TB patients who awaited their transfer to the prison hospital. Prior to my illness I was in a punish-brigade, strictly segregated from the rest of the prisoners. The doctors did not know what to do with me; according to prison regulations, I was

not to communicate with anybody. Now that I got sick they did not know where to put me. Finally they asked ~~ME~~ the Prison Command for instructions. As a result, I was placed in the smaller room, already occupied by three TB patients. To this day I don't know how I didn't get TB, most probably because my TB afflicted comrades took good care of me.

(13)

I find it very hard to give you an answer to this question. Much would depend, no doubt, on whom would I be asked to advise.<sup>5</sup>

There are two ways of steering clear of trouble with the secret police; the one way makes this almost probable; I have in mind ~~ME~~ joining the Communist Party, and active participation in party activities, or participation in one of the mass organizations. These are the means a person has of demonstrating his "fidelity" to the People's Democracy." <sup>The</sup> My other way is simply that you try to remain exceptionally quiet. This latter method, of course, is not a certain guarantee of avoiding trouble. An individual's personal security does not depend solely on his own personal behavior; it depends, among other things, on the turn of day-to-day <sup>politics,</sup> politics, on such political decisions as a close scrutiny or arrest of a certain group~~s~~, or of a social stratum. I would, for obvious reasons, recommend the latter method, a method which is not a sure-fire guarantee of longevity in Hungary today.

(13 a)

No, there is no such thing as a safe profession. There is no such thing simply because the whole life in Hungary is politicized.

from a point of view which the Communists like to call "dictatorship of the proletariat" or "class-struggle." Whatever your profession, even if you occupy the most insignificant post, in areas far removed from politics and the center of gravity, the work-method is politicized; your relationship to work, i.e., how you perform your job, what your attitude is, how you take orders, etc. These things are not internal organizational questions of a factory, but are political questions of great importance. This makes intelligible enough, I hope, my statement that there simply is no profession which is outside of, and safe from, politics.

(13 b)

Yes, being politically active in the party definitely helps.

Political activity, participation in party work, means an improving cadre status. A copy of the cadre sheet is on file in the AVH.

If a person participates in party work and there definitely affirms and approves of those things which are taking place in Hungary, such a person's faults and shortcomings are often overlooked and forgiven. There are many people in Hungary who belonged to the old middle class or to the old bureaucracy, whom the Communists accepted as party members after 1945, and who continued to keep their old positions.

Being politically active, then, certainly did help, but a status like that, of course, did not represent absolute security or

protection; If a person happened to be a party member and there in the party committed an "error," he was even more quickly discovered and dealt with than if he had been an outsider.

(13 c)

Personal connections are useful everywhere, even in Hungary. In Hungary this sort of thing is called "Socialist connection." Favoritism (protekció) was loudly abolished and something else had to be invented instead; thus "Socialist connection." This meant in practice that certain questions or problems could only be solved through the Party, through the instrumentality of party leaders. In smaller matters, which were within the jurisdiction of the village or city administration, a word or recommendation from the party secretary and even from other party functionaries very often meant a great deal. When it came to admission to the university, it was extremely important that the applicant be properly recommended by party functionaries of the school he had last attended. This same applied to cases of job seeking, etc. In a word, recommendations from the party were the decisive factor in all cases. In certain areas of employment such a recommendation was a basic prerequisite, a sine qua non.

Personal connections were also useful when it came to dealings with the AVH, though in a more restricted sense. The AVH was a closed organization (zárt testület), with its inner laws and regulations; it was impossible for party secretaries of the lower and middle echelons to intervene in the AVH's work, though the

AVH always listened to a party secretary's opinion, if the exigencies of a case warranted it. When it came to dealings with the AVH, it was the top leaders of the party only, such as Rákosi and his inner circle, who were able to successfully intervene.

(13 d)

A good class background (népi származás) definitely represented an advantage. This fact was carefully registered on a person's cadre sheet. A cadre sheet showed not only an individual's personal data, but, in the fashion of pre-1944 Semitic Laws, an individual was required to furnish proof regarding his parents' and his grandparents' socio-economic status, and other pertinent information.

If a person concealed his unfavorable class origin, and his true status was later detected, he was liable to immediate dismissal from his job and there was no room for appeal. Persons holding higher positions in the bureaucracy, members of the officers' corps, members of the police force and, of course, the AVH, were also subject to criminal prosecution for failing to reveal their true class origin. X

(13 e)

It is quite conceivable that it does help in certain cases. I heard of cases where borderguards helped people to cross the border in return for money. My feeling is, however, that money helps only in a few special cases. People are, or rather were, much too afraid of possible consequences to be willing to accept bribes. It was not uncommon for the AVH to have agents X do just that, i.e., bribe somebody, and then arrest the recipient. People were much too uncertain, never really knowing who the payoff man might

be, a genuine customer or an AVH agent.

(13 f) Generally speaking, yes.

(13 g) Religious questions were political questions<sup>o</sup> in Hungary. This fact had its necessary political consequences in certain cases. In connection with the Mindszenty trial, very many Catholic priests were arrested. There was, of course, no open religious persecution in Hungary. One ~~isn't~~<sup>could</sup>, on the other hand, speak of indirect persecution, one facet of which was exemplified in religious instruction. A 1948 law made religious instruction an elective subject in schools. Administrative interpretation of this law required both parents to request that their children be given religious instruction. Such requests were deposited with the school principal, who forwarded them to higher authorities, who, in turn, turned the information over to the AVH. The AVH used such material right away or kept it as blackmail evidence for future use. The fact is that people holding responsible positions of trust immediately felt the consequences of their action. They were told bluntly that a person holding such a position cannot have his children receive religious instruction. They had to either reverse themselves or give up their jobs. There were, on the other hand, various social pressures exerted against religion, which I explained previously in great detail. Young people were not only discouraged from participating in religious activities, but such participation automatically precluded their acceptance in such organizations as the DISZ, which in turn was a basic prerequisite



later for admission to the university.

- (14) Yes, there certainly were such fluctuations. After 1948, the terror tended to ~~NE~~ increase (with a corresponding intensification) and after 1953 the exact opposite was true. There was an attempt to increase and to intensify this terror during 1954-1955, and there was a noticeable increase towards the end of 1955. This again was checked by the pre-Revolution events, and was completely eliminated during the Revolution.
- (14 a) There were quite a number of such purge-waves. Right after 1945, a system of political classification (bélisztázás) was ~~g~~ begun. In practice this meant the elimination of anti-Democratic elements from all spheres of activity and their replacement by more trustworthy elements. This was only the beginning and, in view of the war and the changed circumstances, this purge was more or less understandable. After the Communists took over the power in Hungary in 1948, these purges became more numerous. The first step was the re-evaluation of the army officers' corps; the old officers, including those who retained their rank and position after 1945, were either pensioned, downgraded, or transferred to less important non-strategic positions. This process was also characteristic for the entire economic and social life. Everywhere, if at all possible, old people were replaced by new ones. Between 1948-1951, a great many <sup>u</sup> qáck-training courses were given, where people were permitted to acquire diplomas or other qualifying certificates

within a few months or a year. This meant that people were prepared for such jobs as notaries, teachers, plant directors, administrative <sup>heads</sup> ~~hands~~, etc. All this means, of course, that the Communists were determined to effect a quick personnel change in the economic, social, and cultural spheres of the country.

Then from time to time the groups which already had been scrutinized were checked and double checked again; after 1949, the Rajkists were done away with. This process continued up until 1956. One group or another was always being checked and personnel was continually being changed -- a process which in social forms such as obtain in Hungary is, so to speak, an indispensable necessity. The close and constant supervision, the fact that everybody is constantly checked, everybody has a supervisor whose identity is, of course, not known, -- all this means in practice that reports are being sent in periodically to the center ~~PMK~~ (to the AVH, Cabinet, and the party). The center, in turn, checked the operation of the state machinery, and ~~in~~ discovering some alarming defects in certain territories, strived to eliminate the faults by using the only method it knows: change of personnel.

(15)

The Soviet Union played a very important role in Hungarian affairs. This, of course, is true not only of Hungary, but of all East European states living under the Soviet orbit, -- the so-called people's democracies.

It is my firm belief that the decisions in all important matt

affecting these states, including Hungary, were made in Moscow; Moscow's approval had to be sought and secured in all important matters prior to promulgating and carrying out policy and prior to introducing significant changes.

(15 a) See answer to Question 15.

(15 b) I had no direct contact with Moscow, to be sure, and therefore I did not receive any information from them. On the other hand, the various economic and political methods employed in Hungary clearly demonstrated that this must have been the case.. This was underscored, among other things, by the fact that the Hungarian Government was quite willing and prepared to enter into, and to accept, the obviously harmful provisions of, foreign trade agreements with the Soviet Union. The Hungarian Government went even further, and publicly praised these agreements as beneficial and very advantageous instruments for Hungary. These foreign trade agreements permitted the Soviet Union to pick and choose what commodities or material she wanted from Hungary. Most important, the Soviet Union set the price, delivery and other conditions, and the Hungarian Government accepted these..

‡ In the final analysis, then, these agreements were not the result of a bilateral understanding, of a mutual give and take, rather they represented unilateral demands and dictates on the part of the Soviet Union. The very fact that the Soviet Union imported

raw materials from Hungary and exported in return finished products, only clearly shows Hungary's colonial status.

Over and above the economic sphere, such absurdities are also evident in the political sphere. Look at the October Revolution. Mikoyan, one of the figures of the Soviet leadership, was practically residing in Hungary at the time. As is known, the Hungarian Stalinists did not give up their struggle except on his nodding. Take the case of Rákosi; his position was quite strong, and he did not think of giving up his post until, in June 1956, somebody arrived from Moscow -- in this case Mikoyan again -- and informed him of the Moscow decision that Rákosi must resign and retire. These facts are fair samples of a host of similar other ones and they justify the deduction and generalization that all major decisions having to <sup>do</sup> ~~the~~ with Hungary are made outside of Hungary.

(15 d)

No.

(15e )

Soviet influence was most pronounced in the political sphere.

Soviet influence was very significant also in the economic area, especially after 1948, exercised through the so-called Soviet-

Hungarian enterprises. These enterprises controlled, among other

things, the production of oil, the mining of bauxite and aluminum

production. Soviet influence here was greatest. Hungary's <sup>state</sup> ~~balance~~*trade*

balance, for example, was completely dependent on the Soviet Union.

Over 50 percent of all Hungarian exports between 1948-1956 went

to the Soviet Union. A similar or higher percentage of all our

imports came to us from the Soviet Union.

(16) <sup>W</sup>here was the Soviet influence least pronounced? Perhaps in the area of education. This does not mean that the Soviets did not make determined efforts in this field, nor does it imply that their influence was not strongly felt -- just look at the introduction of Russian as a compulsory subject in schools. The Soviet efforts, however, were definitely least effective in education. Well, now, it all depends on what sort of feelings you have in mind. A man has what I call an official feeling (hivatalos érzület) and also a private opinion, an inner, sentimental conception of things.

There were a great many institutional occasions and events which provided ample opportunity for people to express their devotion and fidelity to the people's democracy. I need only cite the various parades, celebrations, the many factory meetings, the daily Szabad Nép half-hours, weekly labor union meetings. All these were occasions to provoke people to make confessions and/or to declare their allegiance to the people's democracy and to the leaders of the Communist Party. Such declarations were forthcoming but more and more was demanded, and people had to repeat them time and again.

As far as the manifestation of one's real feelings was concerned there was practically no opportunity at all. After all, in many instances not even the family was a secure place, since suitable teachers, using the children as their instruments, actually

controlled the parents. Such teachers <sup>would</sup> ~~could~~ question their pupils to find out what their parents were talking about at home; what did the parents think about Rákosi, or about this or that political or economic problem or issue. It happened quite frequently that parents, even if they did not suffer more serious consequences, were confronted with compromising statements extracted from their children and KNE were publicly reprimanded for their mistakes or deviations.

- (16 c) I really don't know what to answer you. You are frank with those whom you trust and vice versa. The question is what the yardstick of this trust is. It is a fact that many people paid heavily for their mistaken assumption when they thought they could trust the other person. A case I know is characteristic of conditions in Hungary, respecting trust. There were two brothers, both members of the AVH. Both brothers corresponded with their parents, yet neither of them dared reveal to the other the contents of the letters he received from home. The parents were simple people, living in an obscure village. In their letters they reported this and that, grievances and hardships, not always in conformity with the party line. The two brothers were afraid of one another, each fearing the other might report him.
- (16 d) Generally speaking, people did not talk freely about political questions. Regarding economic difficulties, the regime was not able to completely silence the people. Such facts as insufficiency

of food, the lack of proper clothing, the insufficiency of pay for the feeding and clothing of children, -- these were painful and basic problems, and the regime did not succeed in stopping people to talk about them. These questions were discussed more freely, but only as particular, personal misfortunes, and not as general maladies or grievances. Every generalization meant taking a political stand<sup>and</sup>/that, of course, was extremely dangerous.

(17)

Naturally, there is always a possibility to do such things, and in Hungary the opinion was prevail<sup>lent</sup>~~ing~~ that ignoring or circumventing of official orders did not constitute morally wrong acts. Everybody <sup>knew</sup> knew that the promulgated laws did not serve the good of the nation, but were designed for the benefit of only a few, of only one sector of the population.

How did people go about in ignoring or circumventing orders? This was a rather difficult and hazardous task. The execution of orders in the villages ~~was~~ was supervised partly by the AVH and partly by the regular police. The situation was similar in the cities.

(17 b)

This was simply impossible to do between 1948-1953. The reason is very simple: there were government inspectors at the threshing machines, who supervised the entire operation. The government knew the exact amount of grain a peasant had at his disposal. In most instances the forced delivery quotas were taken out of a peasant's <sup>grain</sup> ~~grain~~ ~~grain~~ right then and there, Irrespective of whether the peasant

had sufficient amounts for food and seed left. Also, village officials and the police made periodic checks in the house of every peasant. They visited the peasant's house, went ~~down~~ <sup>down to</sup> the cellar, checked his attic, looked into every room and closet, and made sure that the peasant did not conceal anything. Needless to say, the penalties for violations were so draconic that no one tried even as much as think about outwitting the authorities.

(18)

The strong points of the regime consisted of the AVH and of the ~~extensive~~ <sup>extensive</sup> AVH-supervised ~~network~~ network of informers. To this you must add the cadre system, the cadre sheets also being at the disposal of the AVH. Hungary was, in essence, a typical police state, where every government order, as well as all cultural, social, and political activities were under a strict police supervision. It was a police state where the laws were characterized by punishing those who failed <sup>do</sup> to do something as well as those who did something. A classical example of this was the failure to report somebody to the police, a law which required the wife to report the husband and vice versa. This perfect police organization was the main strongpoint of the regime.

What was its weak point? The weakness of the regime lie in that the nation ~~had~~ <sup>The regime had no</sup> had no faith in it, (nem volt hitele az ország népe szemében). <sup>credit in the eyes of the population.</sup> Those in charge of the regime time and again made statements affirming obvious falsehoods, they were trying to present falsified data as authentic and true, they were trying to



present conditions as just when everybody knew full well ~~it~~ that they were inhuman. The result of all this was that people simply did not believe any more in official pronouncements and, far from accepting the veracity of the regime's leaders, the population learned to believe in exactly the opposite of what was said.

(19) This thing ~~is~~ has many facets, and the question is so broad, but let's start out with a concrete example.

Let's take an industrial enterprise, a factory, as the basis of our discussion. The factory ~~had~~ <sup>had</sup> its norm system, its organization, the various supervisors, union representatives, informers, and what have you. All these supervisors checked and controlled and supervised every activity from the time the raw material arrived to the time the finished product left the factory gates.

Now the norm system was so tight in most places, and changes in the norm itself were effected with such a complete disregard of the worker, that the workers saw themselves forced to use every opportunity coming their way to circumvent and evade the norm system. Thus the workers did not perform the several work processes according to the prescribed manufacturing manual. When disregarding the provisions of the manual, they were fully aware that the quality of ~~the~~ their products will not reach the standard anticipated by the production plan. In spite of that, they consciously continued in this violation. They consciously slowed down their work tempo, ~~they~~ they consciously left out some phase of the work process, or

altered these steps, or did not put in the necessary material, etc. All these conscious efforts had the same aim: to evade and to weaken that extremely strict and brutal system which ~~was~~ weighed so heavily on their lives.

This was much more difficult in the case of the peasants. The industrial laborers had advantages in this respect, their violations could not be detected so easily; it was impossible even in Hungary to place a supervisor behind every single worker to observe the worker's every motion for eight hours a day. The peasantry could not elude the watching eyes of the supervisor, nor was it hard to effectively check agricultural production. All they had to do was to see that the peasant sowed the required amounts and kinds of seed in the spring, and to check the amounts\* of grain during threshing-time. The peasants, unable to cheat on either of these occasions, tried to use the intervening time to their own advantage. They cut down their wheat while it was still green, for instance, and used it as animal fodder. One could go on enumerating other methods of the peasantry, employed in its resistance to the regime.

An intellectual, always depending on the peculiarities of his profession, tried to find ways and means whereby to weaken, and to make less successful the operation of the state machine.

People did not have a feeling of responsibility towards the regime. To the contrary, people prided themselves if they managed to block the ordinary process here or there, or if they succeeded to negatively influence the outcome of things.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

The resistance of the Hungarian people in the period 1948-1956 must be sought in these little things, in these seemingly insignificant evasions of official rules, laws, and procedures, -- there was no other possibility of resistance.

(19 b)

It is my belief that the industrial workers, as a group, were most hostile to the regime. They were the most vehement opponents. In the peasant class this hostility was less apparent, though the peasants' hostility to the regime had much deeper roots and was instinctive. The industrial workers were the favored group in Hungary and a good skilled worker could talk much more, and more freely, than anybody else. The workers naturally made use of their opportunity.

Why were they opposed to the regime? Their opposition stemmed from a very basic human consideration: the utter helplessness, hopelessness, of their lives; the people felt that their future held nothing in store for them other than the vague assurance that they would have a job somewhere, that they would earn a fixed amount of money every week or month, a sum which would permit them to just about get by, and maybe to buy an occasional piece of clothing, and that they would be permitted to retire at the age of 60 or 65 on a pension that would let them vegetate a little longer. Other than these a person could not hope for, nor could he have any ambition.

I feel that every person has a burning desire in him to construct his own little life in his own peculiar fashion,

according to his smaller or greater ambition, and that the hope to be able to do so keeps him going. In Hungary not even the most minimal ambitions had a chance of realization. This was the basic reason of hostility to the regime.

(19 e)

There was a special, and rather small group of people, who did not oppose the regime. These were such members of the party to whom party membership represented their livelihood. These people were the adherents of the regime. I am not even certain if all within this group were truly faithful admirers of the system. Some of them ~~surely~~ <sup>certainly</sup> were, others gave at least the appearance of being such. At any rate, if a member of the AVH had ~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> distinct position in Hungary not only socially, but also economically, so that it is hard to conceive an AVH officer as an enemy of the regime. An AVH officer could never have hoped of creating for himself a more advantageous position than the position he already held. The Hungarian Communist leadership intentionally created this situation to secure to itself a highly mobile and faithful control apparatus.

These people were compensated by higher pay, many advantages, and better social status, the value of which, absolutely speaking, was no more than two cups of beans in a prison instead of just one cup. But, if the total population is just about vegetating on a starvation diet, a difference of one cup of beans represents ~~XXXXX~~ a tremendous value, and is a sufficient inducement for the

creation of a small group of adherents.

d  
(19mi)

Between 1953-55, the opposition did not increase in the sense of an opposition against the regime. What happened was that the activity of the people was greatly ~~was~~ augmented and people tried very hard to stabilize and better the situation. People tried to maximize their chances within the broader framework given to them by the Nagy Government. So this was not a resistance pure and simple, but rather a very sharp criticism of the past, a criticism designed and conducted with the view of preventing, as far as possible, the return of that past.

(19 e)

In 1955 <sup>you</sup> we had Rákosi's last determined attempt to regain the power, and to bring things back to where they were before 1953. In 1955, however, the resistance was very broad and universal. The criticizing became loud and open in the factories, on the farms and elsewhere. Also, curiously enough, Rákosi's moves in 1955 were not as sure and determined as they were before 1953. He did not ~~SE~~ order wholesale arrests, though many people were arrested, tried, and imprisoned in 1955. (Quite a few people, freed in 1953, got back to prison again. )

In 1955, the resistance grew to a loud and open criticizing. Also, you had the rapprochement between the new Soviet leaders and Marshal Tito. Now there was an open, personal, clash between Tito and Rákosi. All these circumstances influenced Moscow to pull Rákosi out of the arena and to experiment with new political tactics.

(19 f) My opinion is that the resistance was ~~an~~ entirely<sup>a</sup>/personal matter, though you did have smaller organized groups in the Catholic Church who held discussions and considered possible action. On the whole, the resistance was a personal matter, everybody acting individually on personal responsibility and in secret, not informing anybody before or ~~or~~ after of his acts. The perfect police supervision rendered concerted conspirative actions dangerous and foolhardy.

(19 1) The MEFESZ was first organized in 1945. That year saw the organization of the entire Hungarian youth and it was a necessity that the university youth be also organized. The peculiar feature of the MEFESZ after 1945 was that it did not represent a party, but functioned as a coalition. Students of differing views and party associations all participated in its activities. At the time of the Communist advance and seizure of power, the MEFESZ ~~was~~ did not prove a suitable instrument either as a group supporting the seizure of power, or as an organization accepting the Communist political line, and was therefore dissolved just as all the other youth organizations, to be replaced by the unitary DISZ.

Now, before the Revolution, the MEFESZ was again called into being, because it had very strong, almost historical traditions, behind it; in the life of the students the MEFESZ always represented a certain degree of freedom, freedom of expression and a possibility of free criticism, ~~values~~ <sup>values</sup> which are not the least important in the eyes of the students. These were the sentimental motives

which led the students to re-establish the MEFESZ.

The emergence of the Petőfi Circle ~~entirely~~ had entirely different reasons behind it, though its origins also go back to the DISZ. It was called into being first as the Petőfi Circle of the DISZ. The Government gave its approval to the establishment of this debate forum in the assumption that it would function as an integral part, and within the framework of the DISZ, under the supervision and control of the trusted leaders of that organization. The Government further assumed that the DISZ Petőfi Circle, while becoming a forum of discussion, of debate, and of quarrel, would never really get out of hand; the debaters would find themselves face to face with the ~~circle's~~ <sup>Circles</sup> leaders, guardians of the interests of the people's democratic state, the issues raised would be discussed and either solved by means of debate or else troublesome people could simply be silenced.

The Petőfi Circle did not assume the rôle the Government assigned to it, because from the very outset former and rehabilitated Communists and Rajkists were also admitted as members. Now the Rajkist youth guard -- (actually they were no longer too young at that time) -- had important and close personal contacts, established during the second WORLD War, with leading members of other disbanded youth organizations; young members of the Győrfi Kollegiums, the later Rajkists, fought ~~XX~~ side by side with other anti-Fascist groups in 1943 and 1944. Close personal contacts

~~relationships~~  
and friendships existed, therefore, between the Rajkists and the other dissident groups.

Now the Rajkists were accepted as members of the DISZ Petöfi Circle and were given important assignments there. The Rajkists pulled in with them their personal friends, former wartime anti-Fascist collaborators, who had become leaders and influential members of various youth organizations between 1945-1948, but who now, at the time of the Circle's creation, because of their political status, could not openly participate in the Circle's activities. Many of these people were, like myself, still under police supervision. The result of all this was that the Circle's front became very wide, with a very broad base, encompassing virtually all anti-Stalinist and anti-Rákosi elements. This structural change brought with it a change in the course of the Circle, leading it on its now well-known path. This, then, is the explanation not of the emergence, but of the transformation of the Petöfi Circle. Obviously, the Circle's transformation, not its emergence, is the substantial element in question.

(19 m) Young intellectuals differed in their political intentions according to what their views and opinions were. But they all agreed in one thing; they agreed that what transpired in Hungary after 1948, was bad, and inhuman, and that the most important objective was to correct the abuses and/or to replace existing



principles and practices with new and better ones. This view was accepted by all, and this view represented that common denominator which the Petöfi Circle, the Writers' Association, and their camps or followers accepted as a firm base, and point of departure.

The overall views of young intellectuals differed -- which was only natural -- but the majority, be they Communists, or educated under communism, could not even imagine a solution other than improvement of existing conditions, within the existing framework. In this practically all were agreed. One could hardly depend on the West, certainly not on the basis of previous experiences. On the other hand, the proximity of the Soviet Union could hardly be disregarded in Hungary in the past dozen years. All this led people to think in terms of the existing framework; in a state bordering the Soviet Union, therefore, in a Socialist state, must we improve the conditions, and inaugurate <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ process of development which, while at a later time might undergo changes and suffer corrections, could not reasonably be expected to change then. This is the explanation why these young elements, almost in one voice, demanded new leadership at the top of their respective parties. This was the reason behind the extreme popularity of Imre Nagy. He became so popular precisely because he was a Communist, and being such, seemed to offer an opportunity for improvement within this existing framework. Nobody ever thought in terms of parting with the Soviet Union, or of engineering a political change against

the Soviet Union. All people sought was an improvement of existing conditions, a solution with the least <sup>number</sup> ~~amount~~ of bad features within the existing framework.

(1) I am going to restrict myself to the 1948-1956 period. The characteristic methods and possibilities for gathering information varied of course from year to year in my case, not only because I was in several places and under different circumstances during these years, but because the government's intentions also showed changes in this period.

Let's start with 1948; the tendency of the government then was to restrict the information media to domestic and Russian sources, which, dealing with the domestic and international issues of the day, naturally gave a characteristically slanted picture.

The government, of course, could not prevent at least a part of the population <sup>from</sup> ~~to~~ somehow control <sup>ling</sup> this development.

In 1948 the so-called campaign of lies got under way in which both the Soviet center and the people's democracies attempted to show that all things on their ~~side~~ side were good and all things on the other side were bad. This brought about a contrary reaction between 1948 and 1953, developing two things in the minds of the people; a., ~~IX~~ they did not believe anything at all that reached them through these media, b., the people quickly learned to read between the lines.

I was in an interment camp from 1948 to 1953, which, especially after 1950, was completely shut off from the outside world. A camp of that size (1200 inmates) cannot, of course, be completely shut off from at least the immediate surroundings, and we in the

camp developed an extra sense. From discarded newspaper fragments we were able to put together a reliable mosaic picture, and were always well informed and remarkably up to date. I may truthfully say that though a prisoner, shut off from all ordinary news media, I was better informed regarding both national and international developments between 1950 and 1953 than every before or after.

I was freed in 1953 and my situation changed. And so did the general situation. Foreign newspapers were gradually coming in, Communist newspapers of course, the French L'Humanite being especially favored.

The L'Humanite was an excellent source for us, since it wrote quite differently than the Pravda or the Szabad Nép. It was, after all, a Western newspaper, which had to treat and to comment on very many things and events, for the sake of its own clientele who were interested, which in Hungary or Russia were either entirely distorted or not even mentioned at all. The L'Humanite was a free press for us, from which, and through which, we could see the world with much less effort than was the case with Pravda or with the Hungarian papers.

After 1953, the situation becoming more free, the people, myself included, felt more free to listen to Western radio broadcasts. I listened to all radio broadcasts, beginning with Free Europe through the BBC and the Hungarian broadcasts of the French radio, listening to every and all stations I could get.

These were essentially the information possibilities which, being fragmentary and incomplete, -- one could not regularly and systematically listen to the radio, nor could one read all the newspapers, -- each person had to use his own innate intelligence to construct the mosaic picture from the available parts and to add, -- usually by deductive methods -- whatever parts were missing.

This led some people, -- especially those who patronized the Radio Free Europe -- to live a life of a happy illusion, particularly with respect to Western assistance to Hungary. How mistaken these people were the Revolution proved beyond doubt, and how ~~ill-advisedly~~ <sup>advisedly</sup> Radio Free Europe acted is impossible to say as yet, since we cannot precisely measure the damage it did, not being able to call to the witness stand the innumerable dead who fought and died as late as November 4, in good faith, not knowing how fallacious their premises were.

(1 a)

L'Humanite.

(1 b)

Western Hungarian-language radio broadcasts, the most important being Radio Free Europe, giving at times a 24-hour program.

(2)

My answer to this question will be hardly typical, and for obvious reasons; I was imprisoned first (1948-1953), and lived later under police supervision, which, as I already explained previously, meant the imposition of very many restrictions. Just to cite you one example: the police did not mind my subscribing to the Szabad Nép, but I could hardly hope to subscribe to other, say Western, newspaper

Other people, at the same time, did have this opportunity. I read the following domestic papers: Szabad Nép, Magyar Nemzet, Szabad Föld, Csillag (edited by Pál Szabó), Társadalmi Szemle (ideological), Közgazdasági Szemle, and others.

(2 g)

L'Humanite, at times <sup>I</sup> saw The Times and, on a few occasions, The New York Times.

(2 j)

I did run across some leaflets sent to Hungary by means of balloons. Let me use this opportunity to make some comments on this. The leaflet, signed by the Magyar Függetlenségi Mozgalom or some such signature, was what I now know a mimeographed newsletter. I read it, and felt immediately that it was a product of a man who was not living in Hungary. The data it contained were so general, and somehow did not seem to fit into Hungary's life at the time.

(3)

I could not go to the movies because of the police supervision. I could go, nevertheless, occasionally, to Budapest, where I also went to the movies.

(3 b)

I tried very hard not to look at Soviet pictures when I did go.

(3 e)

I went to the theater four or five times during three years. It was rather risky, in my case, since someone familiar with me or with my case may easily have recognized me.

(4)

Yes, I did read books. You must, of course, realize that I performed heavy physical labor and resting for me was more important than reading of books.

(4ex)

I was a great collector of books before the second World War.

I had a small library of some 2000 - 2500 books, which, thanks to my family, were preserved while I was in prison. After 1953, when I was home again, I re-read many of these books. Western books were practically impossible to get, excepting such titles as Orwell's 1984, Hemingway's works, the works of Lewis Sinclair, the works of G.B. Shaw, -- in a word such Western writers were permitted who were either classics or modern authors of a materialist naturalist complexity and world view.

As far as Hungarian authors went, I read the Hungarian classics Mikszáth, Zsigmond Móricz, Mihály Babits, Dezső Kosztolányi, Endre Ady, Lőrinc Szabó, István Sinka, László Németh, Péter Veres, Gyula Illyés, etc., etc.

- (5) Yes, I did listen to the radio. I enjoyed especially radio plays, using them as substitutes to the theater, and I also listen<sup>ed</sup> to commentators, always hoping to get some negative information, or rather information in a negative way, thereby.
- (5 b) I had a so-called people's set, a cheap, little set, capable of getting only Budapest I and II, this being the only type permitted in my case.
- (6) Yes, but not in my own house. I usually visited friends who had more powerful sets.
- (6dm) The BBC's commentaries were the most objective, followed by the Paris radio, and only much behind these the Radio Free Europe.

- (7) Of course, I lived among people, don't forget, and I had very many friends and acquaintances, not only in Budapest, but in other parts of the country as well. They usually came to see me, in steadily growing numbers, as we approached the Revolution, because I myself was not permitted to travel. This was the basis of my word-of-mouth information. We usually talked about politics and events pertaining to Hungary, and were concerned only secondarily with events of international significance.
- (8) See answer to Question No. 1.
- (8 d) Digging out the truth, or the possible truth, from a welter of misinformation or slanted reporting is basically a work of the intellect, ~~XXXXXXXX~~ where the result depends on the person's training, knowledge, and point of view. If you want to get at the truth in a source which you know is slanted, you certainly must have a viewpoint of your own from which to analyze it, to which to ~~XXX~~ compare it. I, too, had such a viewpoint, ~~XXXXX~~ namely an interest in what goes on in the international scene which might bring about a change in Hungary, or a possible liberalization at least. This was my yardstick, and it is probably ~~XX~~ excusable that I viewed every international event, -- be it in the Middle or Far East -- from the point of view of Hungary only. Of course, today I am interested in the facts, in what goes on in the United Arab Republic or Jordan, or ~~JEMEN~~ Yemen. In Hungary, however, we were under an unwanted burden, under a heavy mass, and we could not help viewing



whatever occurred through this mass, always acutely aware of its tremendous weight.

- (8 e) The English newspapers are well known for their succinctness and objectivity. This goes for the BBC broadcasts also. And in Hungary the English papers were synonymous with the Western press, they being the only ones which were sometimes permitted to enter. American newspapers were excluded.

When it comes to Russia, domestic, and other satellites' news media, the opinion generally held among Hungarians respecting their reliability will be by now clear to you also. If you want to know what my view is, I think exactly the opposite was true of what they said or wrote.

- (8 f) I was a subscriber from the very beginning. I had a very high opinion of it, it was a well-written, well-edited paper, it had a beautiful style, it used correct, grammatical Hungarian, a rarity in those days. Its content also was of a kind which commanded everybody's interest at the time. The Irodalmi Ujság was not just a paper, but a spokesman, a sounding board as well. We eagerly awaited its publication days in advance.

- (9) If we compare the people's requirements, ~~XXXX~~ (igény), needs for information, to that before the war, we see that many more people read papers. People got used to, and were forced to, regularly read the papers and to closely follow the many developments, because their very destiny depended on being well-versed and well informed. People not only read the news, but analyzed the events and the

developments, because only by such an analysis of the developments could they form an opinion of what chances they, or Hungary, had for the future.

Since Hungary was oppressed, the people were searching for consolation while following the trend of events, bringing occasional to their otherwise unenviable situation a ray of hope. Thus the people's need for information tremendously increased, especially after 1948.

(10)

I knew about that, learning of it shortly after the occurrence. I knew that the dropping of the bombs ended the war against Japan. The signing of the armistice, the coming of the emperor, the former God, to MacArthur on the U.S. battleship made a very deep impression on me.

We viewed the land reform in Japan with great interest, knowing full well it was prepared by United States experts. We overwhelmed with joy when we saw that the United States had finally made a correct step, has finally decided to throw its support to the democratic elements of a country, a decision almost unique, and totally lacking since then.

The United States, it seems to me, systematically supports the reactionary elements, the narrow oligarchy of the underdeveloped countries, when it comes to economic assistance or commercial agreements, against the truly democratic and wide masses of these countries.

This explains at least partly the events and developments of present-day Asia; when it comes to a movement for freedom or independence in any of these countries, the leaders of such movements have no connections whatsoever to, no relations with, the Western democracies. They obviously have to have relations and connections, after all no man is an island, no country can live alone in the world, somewhere, somehow, they know they must become parts of the international community, of international politics; they must oppose certain forces, and must also seek sympathies somewhere. These are nationalist, yet essentially democratic efforts trying to create during their nationalistic upsurge a better situation, better conditions for their country. They are interested in industrial development, in the rising of the standard of living, etc., etc., -- a process which would lead, or could lead eventually, to a process of democratization.

Now those forces who represent this desire, and determination to effect a change, a democratization of their countries, -- be it in Indonesia or elsewhere -- have no connections, no relationships whatsoever with the Western democratic countries, and very often are outright opponents of the West. I am not saying that the ~~very~~ <sup>WAY</sup> American economic aid is given and is administered as if the only factor responsible for the situation, but that it greatly contributed to it is beyond any doubt.

- (10 b) The official Hungarian view is well known. The American imperialists started the war, and in the freedom fight of the North Koreans many Hungarians -- notably doctors and engineers -- also participated

I was not a free man at the outbreak of the Korean war. The news of the outbreak reached us much later, and in meaningless fragments. We in prison regarded the conflict as a conflict between the United States and Soviet Russia, believing at the same time that a world conflict might erupt out of it.

- (10 c) I know as much about this as Méray wrote in his articles, no more and no less.

- (10 b) A great deal was written and said about this in Hungary. You again had the official opinion. In the opinion of the population, West Germany was regarded as a country which <sup>very</sup> rapidly recovered economically and reached a very high standard of living -- if not the highest in Europe. Even in the darkest days of the Stalinist oppression, some people did manage to visit West Germany and reported about prices, standard of living, etc.

We knew of the rapid military progress East Germany made under Russian auspices, that its growing army was provided with the most modern Soviet weapons, though newspapers never wrote about this. We were also fully aware of the West German developments, and generally we were in sympathy with them.

- (10 f) Newspapers reported this event two or three days after, saying that a fascist-imperialist uprising has just been suppressed. Within a

few weeks, we knew the precise picture. We knew that the uprising had economic undertones, that economic discontent was behind it.

- (10 g) We viewed with great expectancy the summit meeting. We hoped that some sort of a solution would be arrived at respecting Germany, and, *as a result*, a situation would come about which would permit a solution of the question of East Central Europe also at a later time.

No one expected the redemption of Hungary as a result of the meeting, though Eisenhower did say that the question of East Central Europe would be put on the agenda. The disappointment was deep and widespread as the question was not even discussed. The United States used it as a tactical weapon to further its sinking prestige in the area. We were not all too enthusiastic about the way the West behaved in Geneva.

- (10 h) We knew a very little about émigré activities. We knew that there was a Hungarian National Council in New York which, in the early 'fifties, repeatedly appeared on the air through the Radio Free Europe disappearing later completely. We usually learned of its activities in a negative way, when spoken of in official Hungarian and Soviet news media. The emigre groups were never seriously considered and there was no link between the emigrants sitting in New York and receiving pay on the one hand, and those leaders who were in jails at home on the other.

It is interesting to note that during the Revolution certain elements demanded the immediate closure of Hungary's Western

~~XXXXXXXX~~ borders, -- after they had been just opened -- to prevent the Western emigrants from entering the country. The Revolution wanted to solve its own problems, with no foreign interference. This meant of course that the emigration's ties were completely cut off from Hungary. I don't know what the Council did during the past ten years, the resonance of the thing in Hungary was that nothing was done by the Council, which would have facilitated things at home, or would have prepared the way for an eventual liberation.

As a result, the National Council was neither popular nor was it considered a factor. People thought of it as a sort of "reactionary" group. We just could not imagine how a Kallay or a Bakich-Bessenyei, -- to cite only a few -- could possibly fit into the Hungarian picture.

Permit me now to draw a parallel between the situation in Asia and that of East Central Europe; a large number of emigrants reside in the West from the latter area, among them Hungarians also. Here again, I must say, the United States had supported the right-wing elements of the emigration. The American foreign policy simply did not recognize that history and developments in East Central Europe have simply left these people far behind. It is my feeling that the United States does not recognize this fact even now. They are trying to support those people in whom they invested money, who have in the course of time established close personal contacts, and there is a growing tendency to discard those elements whose views do not agree with the views of the older emigration.

This will, of course, have its effects later, and these effects will not be advantageous to the United States. Though I do not believe that any Hungarian emigration, -- of whatever variety -- would be able to triumphantly re-enter Hungary, sitting in the saddle of a white horse, that the emigration, myself included, will be received with triumphal arches, though it is also clear that at least some of us will be able to return, if the situation improves somewhat. The emigration will have to account for itself, and certain members of it will be at least in the position to advise, ~~ENLIGHTEN~~ enlighten, and to help the leaders of ~~THE~~<sup>a</sup> future Hungary, -- leaders who definitely will not be emigrants. I would consider it a great misfortune indeed if these returning emigrants would not, or could not, ~~SEEK~~ see their way clear to advise a future government to seek a Western orientation, and to search in a Western alignment for the future destiny of the country. This danger is clearly a reality, as it is a reality in Asia today.