

( On August 19, 1957, and the following days, I (the interviewer) was supposed to have an interview with an Hungarian farmer or his wife in St. George Hotel, Brooklyn, New York. They were the only people available there for being interviewed. When I arrived in the hotel at 2:40 p.m., they were not at home and I could meet them only at about 4:40 p.m., at their dinner table. After I duly explained the purpose of the interview, the man was perfectly ready to start it. I arranged with the ~~landlady~~ <sup>MCWC</sup> to get a room for interviewing. The man, however, insisted ~~that~~ on having the interview in his hotel room occupied by the whole family, man, wife and two children of about six and five. I agreed as I considered it necessary to be obliging towards respondents in any possible way.

Already in the early part of the interview respondent remarked several times that answers he could give referred to ~~such~~ <sup>matters</sup> that certainly are very well known in the United States; he, a simple peasant, would not be able to add anything. I explained to him that even <sup>though</sup> ~~so~~ much was known about the Revolution and conditions under Communist rule in Hungary, the purpose of the interview project is exactly to find out how far the ~~known~~ <sup>known</sup> picture was correct. I added that the interviewing of several hundred recently arrived Hungarian refugees aimed exactly at this. After this we went on, but soon the respondent asked another question: why was exactly he chosen for being interviewed? My reply was that we were glad to have here an Hungarian farmer, because many people of other occupations have been interviewed already, but there were very few if any farmers among them. He still objected that there must be other people in the Hotel St.

George who certainly could be much more informative than he. ~~Kiddak~~, I had to explain in ~~my~~ turn that presently he and his family members were the only refugees in the hotel who would remain for enough days for completing our project. We were again able to advance a little bit, but after about a little bit more than an hour's interviewing, the respondent insisted that the interview should not be continued. He referred to the fact that both he and his wife have parents and other relatives in Hungary and should data given by him leak out, this could cause them much harm. Also, he added that he felt ~~persecuted~~ <sup>terrified</sup> too much at home by the Communists and was afraid of my interviewing about life in Hungary even in America. The only thing he wants is to be left alone with his family and have a job to care for them.

I did my best to convince him that his concerns ~~are~~ were ill-founded and that the organizers of the whole project are the most careful not to permit that respondents be identified by anybody ~~studying~~ studying the analysis of the interviews. I referred also to the fact once more that lots of people were interviewed already, but nobody before him refused. All of them were perfectly convinced by the explanations of interviewers that their cooperation is likely to help the Hungarian cause and the data will not be made available to Communists or Fellow Travelers. However, I was not able to change the respondent's mind and eventually had to stop the interview. The respondent's conclusion was after the additional thirty minutes ~~of conversation~~ <sup>of conversation</sup> that things he told he considered perfectly ~~sufficient~~ <sup>our</sup> sufficient to cover ~~our~~ purposes and he refused to add anything more to his ~~answers~~ answers already given.

His wife was present all the time and joined her husband in his re-

funeral and probably was for discontinuing the interview even more than her husband.

Therefore, the report of the interview necessarily is restricted as follows.)

(1)

I was an independent farmer in a small town in Western Hungary close to the Yugoslav-Hungarian border. In 1952 terrible conditions prevailed in the towns and villages. Not even bread was available for us. Conditions were so bad that a revolution should have broken out at this time already. But even later things did not become better in fact. Everything was taken from farmers by the State, even the attic was searched and swept to find out whether there was something to be delivered. When two men were in a house, one of them had to go away and take a job with an industrial enterprise in order to take care of the livelihood of the family. It was the women who had to do every kind of hard agricultural work.

Deportations started in 1952 in the border area where I lived. ÁVE men appeared in the homes of twenty farmers at 1:00 a.m. and ordered them to be ready for being deported after a little bit more than one hour. They were driven by motor cars to the eastern part of the country, to the Hortobágy. One day I paid two thousand forints for taxes and two weeks later I was told to pay the same amount. I worked from early morning until night and could not make enough money to care for my family. It was not better with industrial enterprises and state farms. There were two or three brigades of privileged people. Workers in them were paid well, but every other people had the poorest wages.

(2a)

Promises were given but nothing happened.

(2b)

When Stalin died, we felt as if a stone had fallen from our hearts. Everybody wished that the other top Communists should die after him.

Imre Nagy's first premiership (in 1953) seemed as a rebirth for everybody. He promised that deported persons would be permitted to return to their ~~own~~ homes, but very soon Rakosi came and the promise came to nothing.

We lived along the Mura River very close to the Yugoslav border. We were very hopeful that reconciliation of Moscow with Tito would bring some relaxation and help for us but again we became disappointed.

Events of the 20th Congress of the Russian Communist Party were beamed by Western radios. We listened to them regularly and those not listening could hear the news from other people. Eventually the less important men in the town knew about it and ~~we~~ rejoiced in it. I don't know anything about what happened in Poznan.

Everybody felt that Matyas Rakosi must go because his policy led to complete bankruptcy that couldn't last long. People felt glad that he had to disappear.

In the Rajk funeral we saw the admission of heavy crimes committed by the Communist rulers and accordingly a sign of a better period, but people were disappointed that nothing important happened.

Gomulka's return to power in Poland was a short time before the Hungarian Revolution. We hoped that something good would come out of it for Hungary, too. We were aware of the fact that where Communists are directing the country no good things can happen and felt that the recent events in Poland were a good step toward the change.

(2c-1)

Everybody was full of hope but there was nothing that could be called a real turning point and we did not have any feeling either that a big

change was imminent.

- (2e) I heard hardly anything about it.
- (2f) There were many promises in the Ssabad Nep, the Communist daily, but after previous experiences we did not trust them.
- (2g) No one.
- (3a) I can't give an explanation. It was permanently the same through years; it would not have surprise me should a revolt have broken out in 1952 already when there was a hardly supportable food shortage throughout the whole country. The revolt was like an irresistible elemental force grown out from bitterness. People wanted a change no matter what the price, because it was no life in fact we had to live. I talked to several railroad workers late in October 1956, and all of them told me it was absolutely necessary that the Russians leave the country.
- (3b) I heard about demands formulated in twelve points. I don't know exactly what were in them, probably we want a better life and bread.
- (3c) We heard very few about this.
- (3e) The Communist radio called revolutionaries stupid fascists, but it was a general conviction in our town that the Revolution was made by hard working people who by no means could be considered as fascists.
- (3f) There were one or two leading Communists in the town who threw out everything from the Town Hall by the time of the Revolution, but when the Russians returned he threatened the people with hard repression.
- (3g) There were passive people who felt like an ox that had to carry a yoke.
- (3h) I did not hear about any popular slogan.
- (3i-j) I can only tell that in our town everybody wanted the Russians to leave the country except very few people who felt content because of privileges they enjoyed.

(3k,lm,n) I don't know.

(This was the point where it became evident that it is impossible to continue interviewing because of the complete refusal of the respondent.)

(Respondent was approximately thirty years old and his wife was about the same age.)