

(Personal History)

I was born in Belgrade in 1936, of Russian emigre parents. My father died, when I was young, my step-father is also a Russian. My family, including myself, obtained Soviet citizenship in 1944. We were very glad to get it, because the <sup>possession</sup> ~~possession~~ of a Soviet passport, compared to the status of a white emigre, provided a certain safety in Communistic Yugoslavia. Till 1950, we lived in various provincial towns in Yugoslavia, where my mother was teaching Russian. After the Cominform break with Tito, my mother was asked to renounce Soviet citizenship. She would not do this, and she was hoping to be deported to Trieste, knowing that already some 8 000 Russian citizens living in Yugoslavia have been sent there. Unfortunately, however, instead of being sent to Trieste, we were handed an exit visa to Hungary ~~and so on~~. At Kelebia, (the Hungarian-Yugoslav border station) we were received by civilian AVOs, who were extremely polite, escorted us in the train to Budapest, took us by taxi to the AVO headquarters in Stalin Street 60, where we spent a few hours, were interrogated, and were given an excellent lunch. From there, we were driven to the Soviet Embassy. There, already a number of people in a position similar to ours were assembled. The Soviet Embassy found a share of an apartment for us, and in a month's time they <sup>allotted</sup> ~~allotted~~ us a two-room self-contained

apartment. Both my mother and my step-father were promptly given jobs in the Horizont Bookstore and Publishing House, which was specializing in Russian literature. The other deportees from Yugoslavia were as a rule placed in Soviet mixed enterprises.

(The Yugoslav Prison Camp System.)

After the Rajk and Kostov trials, Tito decided to counterattack and take it out on Russian nationals living in Yugoslavia. This gave rise to the Sarajevo process. These people, condemned of espionage on behalf of the Soviet Union, were released after Khrushchev made it up with Tito, and were repatriated to Russia. <sup>they were</sup> While in transit through Budapest, I talked to a number of them. It was clear from what they said that the treatment of prisoners in Tito's National Communist Regime was not at all better than that in Hungary. One of the accused in the Sarajevo process was a Greek-Orthodox priest, a nationalist and proud of being a Russian. Despite all tortures he would not sign any confession. The UDBA killed him the day before the trial because he just could not be broken. The others, too, were anti-Communists, honest Russian nationalists, who had no more sympathy for Tito than for Stalin. The main technique the Yugoslavs used in preparing the prisoners for trial was to make them sit for 24 hours in a chair without being permitted to move their head an inch.

In the Yugoslav camps, fresh arrivals were made to run the gauntlet of their fellow prisoners, who had to beat them with heavy sticks as hard as they could. About 1/5 of the new people used to die after this, and 4/5 survived. They were taken to the camp hospital, fed and well-treated, and warned that in the case of any misbehavior, they will be made to run a gauntlet again. The worst camps were those on the barren Adriatic Islands, where there was no vegetation at all, only stone. No guards lived on these islands, only the boats came once a day to bring the food. The prisoners were divided into 3 categories, the first category had to quarry stone for 16 hours a day, the second category 10 hours a day and the third 8 hours a day. To start with, each new arrival was put in the first category, kept there for a few days and told that he will be put back into the first category if there is ~~xxx~~ anything amiss with him. The third category politicals, or the ordinary convicts, supervised the first and second category people, and it was the practice to make one prisoner responsible that the other does not commit suicide. When a prisoner had to be punished, a fellow prisoner, often his best friend, was made to beat him. There were many Greek Orthodox priests among the prisoners, and the others were sometimes made to tear out their beards.

(The Gorkij School.)

After our arrival in Hungary, seeing that I spoke no Hungarian, and that the Soviet Embassy was responsible for us, I was found a place in the Gorkij School, which was then in Queen Vilma Street and was later transferred to the Zuglo. This was a standard Russian 10-year school, for boys and girls from 8 to 18, and all subjects were taught in Russian. At first, the teachers were mostly the wives of Russian officers stationed in Hungary, they were kind and decent, but quite inefficient in indoctrinating us. This was noticed and gradually they were being replaced by professional pedagogues imported from the Soviet Union. Many, but not all, of these were true-blue Communists. The student body numbered perhaps 400 or so. They were the children of the Hungarian Communist aristocracy, predominantly of Muscovite Jews. Among my class mates was the nephew of Tibor Szamuely, the son of Szijjarto, and the sons of the AVO colonels or generals Gazdik, Sabo, and Garasin. Gazdik, I think, was a Muscovite Jew, whilst Sabo and Garasin were 100% Russians. To conceal his Russian origin, Garasin used the Hungarian-sounding name of Garasi, and another high-ranking <sup>Russian</sup> AVO officer, the father of another school mate of mine, who was called Sebeko, went by the Hungarian name of Sebök. The sons of the AVO hierarchy were decent kids, great boogymen, who wore hats out of school, went to dances and nightclubs, and were always looking towards

the West. They were gay boys, they hardly ever talked politics and were not interested in it. After the Revolution, I saw the Gazdik boy in the blue uniform of the Kadar militia, and he told me laughingly that he envies those who fled, because he would much rather live in Australia. He hated the Soviet Union. Of course, the whole life in the school was based on pretences, these were clever boys. They all knew it was a pretence, they maintained a "constructive" attitude, but "between four eyes" they often told unprintable and violently anti-Communist things. There were among us several Jewish boys and girls, orphans whose parents had been killed in Auschwitz, - they concealed their bourgeois origin and talked big, pretending to be Communists, but they were duly removed later.

Among the children of other notables, there was Renata Parkas, (the daughter of Mihaly and the sister of Vladimir Parkas), the 2 sons of Jozsef Revai, the adopted Russian son of Rakosi, and Svetka Illes, the daughter of Bela Illes. Communism meant bread and butter for these kids, and they knew it. In the Gorkij School itself, the food and everything else was luxurious. Boys and girls, however, dressed quite simply, and in the morning they were <sup>not</sup> driven right up to the school gate, but were dropped 100 meters or so short of it. On the other hand, they never came in Pobedas, only in chauffeur driven ZIS or ZIM cars. The children of the highest Communist

aristocrats never showed off amongst us, nor could they, - we would not have stood for it, we once shut up the fat boy of a minister in the girls' lavatory. Nor was there any difference between AVO and non-AVO children, - if anything, the former were more decent and frank. Some poor parents' children got in too, for instance the children of old fighters in the workers' movement, or very bright Russian scholars, - e.g. there was even the son of a fire brigade officer among us, whose father earned 1600 forints a month! The main qualification for this latter sort of boy was that he had to be good in Russian.

On the other hand, the normal thing to do for a Hungarian boy who specialized in Russian, or planned to go to a Soviet University, was to go to the Kosevoi Gymnasium in Budapest. There too, the teaching was in Russian, but it was a different sort of place from the Gorkij School.

Those Hungarian boys who went to Soviet universities came back as confirmed anti-Communists, but were invariably taken by the Hungarian population for Communists. On the other hand, these Hungarian graduates of Soviet universities formed a sort of free masonry, they would know of each other and help each other.

(AVH Officers)

I know all about AVH officers, I know what kind of people

they are. They fall into various groups. One group is that of the miserable little Jews, the proletarian Jews who could never get anywhere under their own steam. The second group is that of the careerist Jews, these are rather better class and more talented opportunists who have made up their mind that the Soviet Union was strong and winning. After the Revolution, very few of the latter type returned to join Kader's militia, - they said they would rather sweep the streets than risk their necks again. A third group, non-Jews, were just Sadists. Among the lower ranks, there are a great number of stupid peasant boys. But the real top brass in the AVO consisted almost exclusively of Russians. I do not mean Russo-Hungarian or Russian Jews, but Russians pure and simple. These spoke Hungarian more or less well, they were nkwd officers of long standing who have been training for this job and who have been studying Hungarian for 10 or 20 years.

A friend of mine, the son of a high-ranking Russian AVO officer, told me at the time of the "discovery" of the doctors' plot in Moscow that this was a great stupidity at this stage, anti-Semitism should have been deferred for several years, and he said the Jews are our friends in Hungary and in the other people's democracies, they are helping us and we lose their support because of these tactical mistakes and stupidities. He said we will liquidate the Jews in a body after we no longer need their support, but that time has not come

yes, and we will do it at the one hit, not annoy them piecemeal. I believe he had these ideas from his father. I visited the homes of children of high-ranking AVO officers a couple of times, they lived comfortably, and their mothers were usually robust Russian peasant women. During the Revolution, the Soviet Embassy destroyed the card index of Soviet citizens living in Hungary, lest it should fall into Hungarian hands and the identity and citizenship of high AVO officers, ministers etc. be revealed. These people were registered on the cards both by their real and <sup>by their</sup> Hungarian names. I knew of the destruction of the index <sup>as</sup> after January all of us had to fill in new cards at the consulate. This was done very quietly, whenever somebody called at the consulate, he was asked whether he has already filled in a new card, and he was told to tell his acquaintances to drop in and fill one out too. They did not want to advertise the fact publicly that there were so many Russians living in Hungary ~~living~~ under assumed Hungarian names.