

The major industrial investments of the Communist system.

I was an engineer working with the Engineering Planning Office at Budapest, which had an important part in planning the major industrial investments of the Communist system. For my part, I was working in the planning and supervising at Sztalinvaros and Kovagoszollos. The following description is based on my personal experiences and other knowledge gained during my work on those projects. The beginnings of Sztalinvaros go back in time and are connected with the different ^{changes} ~~phases~~ in the Communist policy. Shortly after 1945, the Communist system began to build a huge combine at the city of Mohacs. According to the original plans which must have been worked out as early as 1946, the big plant was supposed to be situated about eight kilometers from the Yugoslav border and it was supposed to include a power station plus a furnace for iron ore. According to the original plans the iron ore should have come from Yugoslavia ~~through~~ through cheap water transportation. This was the plan and the construction work was begun in 1947. In the following year, however, the well-known change in the Yugoslavian policy ~~occurred~~ occurred. As a result, the plants, very near to the border, were given up. The foundation work of the shops and plants were abandoned and left as they were till finally they were ruined by the weather. The city of Mohacs was the only gainer in the interrupted enterprise since 18 large apartment houses of four stories each were built there and as a gain

the city of Mohacs received many new apartments. Because of the Yugoslav split, the Hungarian government had to look for another place for a large plant iron furnace.

Finally it was decided that it should be built at ~~the~~ Dunapentele. This was at that time a typical Hungarian village along the Danube River with about 3,500 inhabitants. It was decided that the site of the new plant should ^{be} about two kilometers from the village - right at the Danube on a high plateau. I don't know who made the ~~final~~ decision, but it turned out to be a very poor place for such a huge plant. The plateau was situated about 200 meters above the level of the Danube River. So it was difficult to approach it from the Danube. The transportation of the material from the river to the site of the plant proved to be a very hard problem all the time. Moreover, it seems to me that the final decision concerning the site of the plant had ¹ not been preceded by a thorough geological research. As it turned out later during the construction work, the high plateau at the Danube consisted of that kind of sandy soil which is so common on the great Hungarian plains between the rivers of the Danube and the Tisa. The loose and unsettled sandy soil there is usually very good for certain types of farming but it's not good for the construction of large plants. Finally, as a third disadvantage, the selected ~~site~~ site of the plant was far away from any highway and railway. The transportation system had to be built up but during the first two or three years of the construction, all

material had to be transported by trucks. Whatever the original failures were, during the year 1950, the plans for ~~the~~ Sztalinvaros were worked out. According to those plans, the plant and the furnace should be built on the plateau at the river and there should be a stretch of about three kilometers ~~and~~ between the plant and the city of Sztalinvaros. According ^{to} the ~~the~~ original plans, this in-between stretch should be covered with park and woods in order to filtrate the soot and smog of the plant and permit good clear air for the city.

The construction work itself was begun in February 1951, and the construction of the plant and the city was going on simultaneously. As the construction work started, the first problem emerged, as that of recruiting the necessary labor force. To achieve this purpose, the Communists began a great campaign and promised many advantages for the "Pioneers" of Sztalinvaros. The Pioneers who volunteered to work there were promised many advantages, particularly a ^b considerably higher pay than in Budapest. As another advantage all volunteers were accepted as laborers. A person who couldn't get a job in Budapest or in any other place could easily find employment in Sztalinvaros. This is how I came to work at Sztalinvaros. At that ~~the~~ time I was unemployed because of my family background and because of my former job in the Hungarian Civil Service. Then at the end of 1950, I was hired by the Engineering Planning undertaking at Budapest with the understanding that I would

go to Sztalinvaros. My basic pay was at that time 900 forints a month but as long as I worked at Sztalinvaros, I received a per diem of 19 forints plus a family allowance of 97 forints for my family staying in Budapest plus an extra 10 percent of pay because of the urgent and dangerous job.

It is true that anybody who was willing to work at Sztalinvaros could make a lot of money. On the other hand, this recruiting system of the Communists resulted in getting the scum of the population to work at Sztalinvaros. The place became filled with no-good drunkards, loafers and prostitutes. The name got such a bad reputation that a good worker would not go to work there. In my case I had to work there for two years. After that, in 1953, I was transferred to Budapest as a reward for my good work. *x

As the first job, the barracks for the workers were erected. They were very crude wooden constructions situated at the edge of of the planned furnace. In the center of each barrack, there was a ^r corridor dividing it into two parts, one part was the ~~quar~~ quarters of the men, the other part, the quarters of the women, and ten to fifteen persons were crowded into one room. The result was that anybody eager for a love adventure crossed the corridor at night and constant love affairs were going on. ~~It is true that a~~ great number of illegitimate children were born. The whole situation was so ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ scandalous that quite a number of people complained to the Party secretary. The Party secretary, however, answered: "As long as the government does not prohibit sexual

intercourse, everybody can do as he likes."

By the way, this Party secretary participated in the Revolution in Miskolc in 1956, and I understand that he has been sentenced to twenty years in prison.

The work at Sztalinvaros needed a huge labor force. By 1953, 15,000-16,000 people were working there. It is true that many of them commuted from the neighboring villages and cities and went home every day. However, the rest of them, at least 12,000 people, were situated in the different barracks under very poor conditions. The first permanent apartment houses for the workers were opened in 1953. However, the apartments were available for those people only who became employed in the furnace and stable plants of Sztalinvaros and they were not available for the construction workers. The construction workers were all the time situated in the different barracks. The apartment houses built for the workers were very good when compared to the living conditions in Budapest. But they had many ^{dis}advantages. They were built according to the patterns of the Russian architecture and looked like huge gray army barracks of the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy rather than friendly homes. However, every worker could ~~xxxx~~ receive an apartment consisting of two rooms plus a kitchen, modernly equipped with central heating, bathroom, running hot water, and so on. This nice apartment was a great allurements and it prompted many people to take up jobs at the furnace or brickfactory of Sztalinvaros. It is true that the

apartment houses were built in the same sloppy way which characterizes all construction of the Communists. For example, somebody moved into an apartment and took a bath. After the bath, he had to realize that the bathtub was not connected with the sewage system and consequently the dirty water flooded the floor of the bathroom. In many other cases the toilet was not ~~was~~ functioning or one of the windows was missing or the plaster of the ceiling began to fall at the first very slight movement. Because of the poor construction work, the apartments which looked so nice and attractive at the beginning became very shabby within a short time. After two years of use, an apartment house looked as ramshackled and worn out as a 50 or 60 year old apartment house in one of the tenement areas of Budapest. ~~It~~

As soon as the barracks ~~was~~ for the workers and the first temporary roads were finished, the construction of the plant began. It was during this work, that the great difficulties presented by the sandy soil came to daylight. Any excavation had to be boarded up immediately in order to prevent a cave-in. In many cases three layers of boards were necessary to ~~keep~~ keep the ~~sandy~~ sandy ground wall from caving in, even in this case many cave-ins occurred with a great number of victims. In other cases it happened that people stole the boards because in the Communist system they steal everything. A sudden ~~by~~ rainfall or frost caused many cave-ins and other difficulties. Anyhow it was impossible to keep any deadlines

during the construction work because of those accidents which could not be foreseen. As a first step in constructing the plant, a central mechanical shop was ~~was~~ finished and as the second step a central heating system. This central heating system is supposed to ~~to~~ furnish the heat not only for the whole plant but even for the whole city or at least for those apartment houses which are owned by the plant. Then a fire-resistant brick factory was built which began its operation in 1954. The construction of the power station was begun later than that of the brick factory. However, the power station was finished by the end of 1953, and from that time on, except for two rather serious breakdowns, furnished the whole Sztalinvaros with power.

The soking plant, which was supposed to ~~to~~ ^{furnish} the raw material for the furnace, was finished much later than the power plant. In the meantime the necessary coke - necessary for the central heating system and other operations was delivered from Komló which meant ~~that~~ ~~that the coke had to be delivered by railway and trucks which meant that in the meanwhile~~ the coke necessary for the central heating plant or in other operations had to ~~be~~ delivered from the coke factory in Komló in a distance of 150 ^{miles} on trucks and railways. The furnace itself began its operations ~~in~~ in the spring of 1954, but because of the usual ~~time~~ ^{time allowance for} experiments, the regular production began only about the end of the year.

During the same time the harbor at the Danube River was

finished. It proved to be quite a construction job because of the sandy soil and because of the great ~~xx~~ height of the plateau. ~~I remember~~ I ~~remember~~ the harbor was officially opened ~~up~~ on one Sunday in 1953. I was not present, of course, since I spent my weekends with my family in Budapest. However, I read about it in the newspapers. The cabinet ministers appeared there and many good Party line speeches were delivered. On the Monday following the festive opening the concrete wall of the harbor caved in, fell into the river and blocked the place for any approaching boats. The result was one of those tremendous scandals.

Our planning office planned the harbor and the people in charge of this work were immediately arrested. Fortunately ~~xx~~ enough our boss was able to prove that the final plans were worked out in another office. Then the usual play of passing the ball began. Everybody tried to toss the responsibility into the lap of another office. The contractor^{ing} enterprise^{which} ~~who~~ did the ~~xx~~ construction job said that the concrete was no good. The concrete factory proved that the concrete was alright. There is still an investigation going on and I suppose nobody knows exactly who should be responsible for the cave-in. I think that many people must be held responsible. Everybody worked in a sloppy way and I do think that the workers stole the concrete, consequently the mixture did not contain the necessary amount of concrete. Anyhow after the festive opening, the harbor could not be used for about three months. X

The construction of the plant ~~z~~ went on after this date, too. The iron furnace was expanded into an iron sheet factory which was finished in 1956, and is operating every since. Up to this time, the iron produced at Sztalinváros was transported on barges to Csepel. No^{is} it ~~was~~ no longer necessary to do so. Finally a coke factory is now being constructed and originally it was supposed to be ready in 1957. At the same time, there is construction work going on on a ~~third~~ furnace which is scheduled to be ready in 1958.

Sztalinváros undoubtedly represents ~~as~~ a gigantic undertaking of the Communists. Out of the nothing, they established a huge plant and a large city which in the summer of 1956, had about 25,000 inhabitants. However, the whole plan has one great shortcoming. Hungary has no iron ore which could give the necessary raw material for the furnace. The iron ore comes from the Soviet Union and it seems to be a crazy idea to transport the iron ore over three thousand kilometers to ^{be} worked up in Hungary. The transportation itself presents a great many difficulties. According to the original plans, the iron ore was supposed to come on waterways from the Soviet harbors in the Black Sea through the Danube to Sztalinváros. However, the Yugoslavs made difficulties for the Soviet boats passing on the Danube River. Consequently the iron ore had to be transported on railways and the result ~~was~~ was that the transportation never arrived in time. There were several cases when the furnaces had to be shut down because of the lack of raw

material. Then a large amount of iron ore was shipped in and the workers had to work overtime to work the shipment up. The iron ore yielded by Hungary and coming ~~from~~ mainly from the area of Miskolc is negligible and too small to keep the huge ~~xx~~ plant going.

The years between 1951-and '53, which I spent in Sztalinváros are the unhappiest years of my life and the messiest years in the history of Sztalinváros. The place was filled with an army of no-good people living in temporary barracks amidst very poor and immoral conditions. The construction workers made a lot of money, but many of them worked only in order to get the necessary money for drinks. The streets, the barracks were full of drunk people every night. Fights were of daily occurrence and even murders happened very often. An officer of the local police force told me that there ^{were} ~~are~~ ten times as many murder cases in Sztalinváros as they were in Budapest. The sanitary conditions were incredibly poor. In the barracks there were no facilities for keeping oneself and one's bed clean. In many cases the unmarried mothers murdered their newly born infants and threw them into the ~~xx~~ toilet or into the openings of the sewage ~~xx~~system. The sewage system became clogged up almost every week. It had to be ripped up and the worker brought up the bodies of the poor infants. After 1953, the numbers of construction workers decreased and the regular workers moved into their apartments. From this time on the living conditions came to

be consolidated. The regular workers are ordinary good people and they tried to keep up their places. However, the confused planning system of the Communists caused many difficulties for them. I remember there was a time perhaps in 1954, when the city was already built up but there were no roads built. People had to wade through mud holes to reach their apartments but at the same time, large neon signs were burning every night and advertising such state owned ~~property~~ ^{stores} as the movie, a radio repair shop or an espresso. The neon signs ~~gave~~ gave a metropolitan character to the place. - The mud holes an Asiatic character. Actually, I think the whole Sztalinváros is a characteristic construction of the Communist system - a Patomkin place which is just an empty show place for propaganda purposes but has nothing real behind it. Sztalinváros has still a very bad reputation all over the country. However, I ~~think~~ think that the population of it is just as good as in any other industrial city of the country. There are a great number of skilled workers there who are very good in their branch. Another part of the workers were recruited from the peasantry, living in the ^{ad} adjacent villages. If you walk along the plant there, you can still see many workers in their characteristic peasant clothing. These peasants still do not ~~live~~ ^{live} in the city of Sztalinváros, but go home every night or at least for every weekend. It is true that the average working week is much longer in Sztalinváros than in the other industrial centers of the country. In Sztalinváros the average working week is still 55 to 58 hours. But, of course, the

workers get the regular overtime pay for every hour above 48. The work of the plant^{is} ~~is~~ always rushed. Particularly because of the difficulties in obtaining raw material. Sztalinváros belongs to the so-called first pay class, which means that the hourly pay rate is the same as in Budapest. However, there are many additional advantages in Sztalinváros and the situation is that the workers there can still make more money than in Budapest-even at Csepel.

In 1953, I was transferred to Budapest and from this time on I worked at the Central Office of our undertaking. During that time

I participated in the planning of some other important construction work of the Communist system. For example, in the planning of Tiszalök, Tiszapalkonya, Komló and Kazincbarcika. However, I was associated with each of the plants for a short time only and worked in Budapest visiting the different sites for ~~xx~~ short times only. Consequently, my information is rather scarce concerning those other ~~XXXXXXXX~~ constructions.

The power station at Tiszalök is in my mind a very good and useful investment of the Communist system. It represents a dam in the river of Tisza, which is supposed to serve the canalization of the Hortobágy and supply water to the rice fields there. I think the problem was successfully solved. It was a good project, well carried out. During my last visit at Tiszalök, I was greatly affected by what I could see there. I could see the canals in good working condition and on the side of the canal as a symbol of the

old Hungary, I could see the shepherd with his herd, ~~and~~ standing there in his old national costume. This picture, still living in my memory, gives me the idea that one must not ridicule all the investments made of the Communists. Similarly, I think that the power station at Tiszapalkonya is a very good and useful job. It made possible the electrification of villages in a large part of the country which had ~~had~~ not had any electricity before the Communist system. The situation now-a-days is that there are very few villages along the Tisza without electric lights. As you may remember, in the pre-Communist system this was one of the most backward parts of the country.

X On the other hand, the new coal mines of Komló represent again one of the poor and senseless investments of the Communists. The coal basin of Komló is of very poor quality. That type of coal which can be found there is called in Hungarian Brown Coal and is contrasted to the good anthracite. The coal of Komló is full of slate and rock. Moreover, the coal deposit there is of a very slight ^{QUANTITY} ~~deposit~~. In the best case enough for ten to twelve years. It was unrealistic to establish such a large mining enterprise on such a slight and poor coal deposit. The Hungarian coal deposits are right now reaching the stage of complete exhaustion. That's why in Komlo and in many other places, the so-called outside mining is being carried out. It means that they take the coal which is ^q quite near to the upper soil and which is mixed with soil itself. This

outside mining is more expensive than the import of good anthracite coal would be. Moreover, it ruins good arable land. For example, in Komlo at least 1,000 yokes of good arable land was ruined because of the mining. As far as I know^w, the situation is ~~the~~ ^{the} same at the mining area of Varpalota. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

From the beginning of 1955, I was employed in the planning work of Kovagoszollos. From this time on, up to the time of the Revolution, my major work concerned this mining development and I have made several trips to Pecs and Kovagoszollos. From all these experiences I can give you the following history of Kovagoszollos.

In the 1950's a large scale exploratory work was carried out in ^a Transdanubia in order to find oil. The actual plan called for tapping the same oil deposits from which Lipe was fed. One part of the exploratory work was carried out in and around the city of Pecs. During this work no oil, but Thorium_A ore, was found and the deposits were promising. At that time, a Russian commission from the Soviet Union arrived to inspect the finding. On the basis of the report of the Russian commission, the plans for thorium mining were established and the ~~explorative~~ ^{explorative} ~~operations~~ ^{operations} began in 1955. The deposits of the thorium ore were opened up at a place near to the village of K^ov^ag^os^zo^ll^os, where ~~at~~ the underground ore deposits were near to the top soil. I was told by experts that the selection of this ~~is~~ site for the mining operations was prompted by the desire of the Communists to get results as fast as

possible. Anyhow, during the year 1955, three pits were opened up. In the following year, three more pits were opened. Altogether there are, or at least there were at the end of 1956, six pits operating at Kővágószőlős. Also in official language there were only three numbers used. For example, we spoke of pits number one, two and three. The operations of opening up the pits, and, pretty soon, the exploiting operations, were carried out under very primitive circumstances.

The drilling power was built out of wood and it lifted the iron ore from a depth of 15 to 20 meters. The miners who worked in three shifts descended into the pits in the same elevator which brought up the ore. The elevator was a very small and primitive construction which could take three workers in at one time (only). In the foreground of the pit, where the little elevator system ended, the classification of the iron ore took place. The classification was carried out by one person in one shift and in any pit and this was the only person equipped with protecting equipment. He examined the ore with the aid of a geiger counter and sorted out the thorium ore and the waste. The elevator carried this material out of the pit and the waste was shoveled right away into a slag heap right at the drilling power. Actually the slag heap blocked the way. It was impossible to move around the drilling power except for one road left open. For example, it was impossible for us or at least very difficult, to erect the necessary buildings around

the first temporary drilling tower. The valuable thorium ore was stored in the open air on the other side of the road. It was kept there for a few hours, but sometimes even for a few days. It was so mainly because of the primitive transportation possibilities. The iron ore was transported on trucks and every truck had not only a driver but an AVO person as a guard. They used a special kind of truck with an iron body for the transportation of the ore. In such a way the ore was transported ~~from~~ to the Danube where it was loaded into barges ^{for} the Soviet Union.

During my visits to Kővágošzöllős in 1955, I was shocked to see the extremely poor social conditions there. Nobody was living near the pits, since the nearest point of the village of Kővágošzöllős was about three to four kilometers from the opening of the pits. It would have been very easy to maintain the necessary sanitary conditions, however, the cafeteria used by the workers was filthy and infested with a great number of flies. The locker room was neglected and dirty. I was told that many workers did not use the locker room but went down in the pits and worked in the same clothing they used at home. Before taking any meals, the workers were supposed to wash their hands with limey water. This was the only precaution taken and I hardly think it was of any use against radiation. In 1955, there were several cases of typhoid fever among the workers. I have no idea what the outcome of the radiation danger on the workers was, since the infection from

radiation comes out only after a long time. The neglect of the mines stemmed to a great extent from the poor transportation system. There was no railway going to Kővágószőlős and as far as I know the railway system under construction since 1955, has not been finished until the end of 1956. From Kővágószőlős one had to take the bus to reach the city of Pécs - the nearest railway station. The distance was only 16 kilometers. However, because of the poor roads and the many stops, it took an hour to reach the railway station. ^P I know that Kővágószőlős and Pécs was full of Russian experts. The operations of the mines were under the Bauxite Trust of Pécs and the name Bauxite was generally used to denote the thorium deposits.

← The Bauxite Trust had an office building right outside of the city of Pécs along the main highway. ^R That was the place which was full of Russian experts. ^P I have no idea how large the thorium ore deposit of Kővágószőlős might be. However, in about May, 1956, I ^h heard several rumors in the office to the effect that the ore deposits are of enormous extent. Anyhow, in August 1956, a special so-called Bauxite Planning Enterprise was established - an independent enterprise, independent from our planning office. Quite a number of my colleagues were transferred and they began to work out the plans for Kővágószőlős. The plans called for a large scale mining operation plus a large processing plant. According ~~to~~ to the plans, the processing plant was supposed to be constructed in

the years 1957 and '58. It was supposed to be ready for operation at the end of 1958. However, up to that time, as the plants provided, the iron ore was supposed to be delivered for processing to the Soviet Union. By the way, I have heard from the same colleagues that according to some other related plans, the first atomic reactor of Hungary was supposed to be ready about the same time as the processing plant of Kővágozsóllyás. So actually, it was a part of the atomic plants of Hungary.

As mentioned above, the exploiting operations began in 1955, when there were no buildings around the pits. The necessary operation^{al} buildings were erected during the year 1956 only. For example, the so-called Number Three ~~xxx~~ pit had four buildings around it. Pit Number One had only one. I remember that the transformer station was the first building erected around the pits and in each case it was erected in 1956 only. At the same time, there was a large scale road construction going on. Originally there were only poor country roads leading to the pits which made the transportation very difficult. In 1955 macadam roads were built which still proved to be too poor for the heavy trucks. The construction of a final road began in 1956. However, when I visited the place for the last time, ^{the way} it was still very far from being in a useful state.

I visited Kővágozsóllyás for the last time about the end of September or in the first days of October, 1956, since at that time our planning company still had some works going on at the

place. At that time there were about 2,500 workers employed at Kővágószőlős, not counting ~~that~~^{the} office and engineering personnel as well as mechanics who worked in the city of Pécs. Out of the 2,500 workers, perhaps half was engaged in mining operation whereas the other half was engaged in construction work.

Concerning the labor force, the Communists followed the same policy which I described in reference to Sztalinváros. The Communist authorities attracted the necessary number of workers through special premium pay. For example, ~~xxx~~^a 10 percent danger premium was paid to every worker. The underground workers received a second premium. However, the labor force at Kővágószőlős was even worse than that in Sztalinváros. In Kővágószőlős, the laborers were recruited from the neighboring counties of Transdanubia which were notorious because of their bad morality. The majority ~~if~~ of the laborers ~~at~~ Kővágószőlős were young peasant boys of the ages of 20 and 22 who made a lot of money, did not care about the dangers of the mining operation and every night got royally drunk. As far as I know, there were no sicknesses caused by radiation. Once there was a panic among the workers because of the sudden unexplained death of one of the miners. At that time a number of doctors came down from Budapest. The research of the doctors stated that the sudden death of the worker could not be attributed to radiation. The doctors made several recommendations. However, none of them were carried out up to the Revolution.

Up to that time, none of the miners had any protective clothing. They just worked in their regular suits. The only person who had protective clothing was the so-called assorter who worked with the geiger counter. By the way, a friend of mine, a geologist, told me that in the history of the village of Kővágószőlős no illness coming from radiation has been known, ^{although} ~~also~~ the wells of Kővágószőlős go down to the depth of 20 meters - that's the same depth wherefrom the thorium ore is brought up. So far none of the inhabitants has been affected by radiation.

I was scheduled to visit Kővágószőlős in December, 1956. Because of the Revolution, however, work stopped in our office and has not been really resumed up to the time ^{when} ~~that~~ I left the country. I left Budapest on December 15th, 1956. After that date, I have no more first hand information concerning the economic investments of the Communists.

Part II

"B-10" INTERVIEW

JK

Sport Life in Communist Hungary

As mentioned above, in 1953, I was transferred to the Budapest office of our planning enterprise. From this time on, up to my departure from the country, I was working there. At that time when I was transferred every white collar employee of ^{an} ~~important~~ ^{office} ~~was~~ supposed to carry out some so-called social activity which meant that he was supposed to participate in one of the mass organizations

of the Communists. Shortly after my transfer, my ~~boss~~^{boss} approached me and told me that I had to do my part in the social activity.

Since I was interested in athletics, and regarded it as the most innocent social activity, I participated from this time on in the life and the management ~~and~~^{of} the sport club of our large enterprise. First I became secretary of the tennis section of our sport club, later I served with some other sections and finally I became elected deputy secretary of the whole sport club. During those activities and because of my interest in sports, I received some information concerning sport life under Communism.

To understand the situation, one has to keep in mind that the Communist system gives a tremendous ~~and~~ financial and political support to the sports, but it has two main objectives. First of all, the outstanding athletes are supposed to be the propagandists of the Communist~~s~~ system. Propagandists abroad who, with their participation in the different races and games, contribute to the international prestige of the Communist system. At the same time, sport is regarded as a very good propaganda activity at home which helps to insure the loyalty of the classes to the political system. As a second objective, the Communists want to promote semi-military education through the mass organizations. This is the reason why ~~and~~ such great masses are supposed to participate in the different sport activities and moreover those fields of sport which ~~and~~ have a military importance are emphasized by the Communist

system. This second objective will be explained more thoroughly later on.

To insure the necessary and desired participation of the masses in sports, every place of employment ~~must~~ must have its own sport club. Any factory or office with more than 100 employees must have a sport club of its own, whereas the smaller places must band together and must establish common sport clubs. Our planning office had about 450 employees and consequently it had its own sport club with about 300 to 350 members. It should be added that this large membership in the sport club must not be attributed to the spontaneous interest of the workers in sports. At that time, in 1953 and '54, it was thought that joining the sport club is the best way for the white collar employees to fulfill their duties concerning membership in mass organizations. Many middle aged engineers, draftsmen, clerks, and so on joined the sport club, not because they really wanted to play tennis, but because they preferred it to the Hungarian-Soviet Friendship Society or anything similar. This was the time of the ready for work and fight movement. Consequently the sport club had a large membership and only about half of the members were really active in some sport. The rest of the members appeared once or twice a year on the tracks and watched what the active sportsmen were doing. Membership in the sport club usually did not entail any fees.

The members of our sport club were white collar employees who

~~MEMBER~~

were interested in those branches of sport which suit the white collar employee's interest. Tennis was the most popular sport with them. On the other hand, the Communists ranked the sports according to their military importance and ~~it~~ disfavored tennis because it had ~~it~~ no importance in educating the future soldiers. According to the military evaluation, the most important branch was pure athletics, the second place was taken in by flying, the third one by riding, ^{although} ~~also~~ it had been regarded as a "bourgeois sport" in Hungary, ~~the~~ fourth by swimming, the fifth by pentathlon, the sixth by football or soccer. The ^{six} branches were the so-called emphasised ^{branches} of sport for which money was available through the trade unions. On the other hand the tennis section of a sport club has never received enough money. This is where my difficulties as the secretary of the tennis section started. Most of our people were interested in tennis and we wanted to rent a fairly large size tennis lawn. The rent of a tennis lawn is expensive even in the Communist system. We had to pay 2,500-~~fr~~ ^{on.} 3,500 forints for a season. On the other hand, I couldn't get the necessary money, ^{although} ~~also~~ the other sections of the sport club received a nice allotment from the sport fund of the company and of the trade unions. Finally, we solved the problem by agreeing that the members interested in tennis should pay a monthly membership fee. It was one forint per month - a very small sum and it solved

from the trade union as a part of the trade union membership fee paid by the members or from the enterprise which can spend a part of its profit on such purposes as ~~a~~ sports or other benefits for the workers. In the case of our sports club, 60 percent of our fund came from out ^{of the} trade union and ~~5~~ 40 percent came from our management. Every year we had to prepare an activity plan enumerating all the important activities, races, the number of members and so on, what we planned for the next year. At the same time we had to submit a budget ~~spec~~ specifying the necessary amount of money we needed for the planned program. Let us suppose that our planned budget called for 14,000 forints for the next year. This plan was then submitted to our management, to our trade union and finally to the National Social Sport Committee. Each of these authorities examined our budget and slashed it. By the time we got it back, our budget was slashed to 7,000 forints. Out of the 7,000 forints it was impossible to carry out the planned program.

The Communists had a very effective system to select ~~an~~ able sportsmen. Every year huge masses of people participate in sports who are carefully watched. Those who show promising achievements are immediately selected and given changes to ^c ~~im~~ improve themselves. If they are really good, they are rewarded in many ways, with titles, with money and jobs. Concerning the titles, the Communists introduced two of them, one, the lower title is "worthy sportsman" and the other one which is actually higher is called "excellent

sportsmen". Anybody can achieve the title of ^{worthy} ~~worthy~~ sportsman" who reaches a certain specified achievement^{ent.} For example, any trackman who can make 100 meters in 10.6 seconds receives the title of "worthy sportsman" ~~mg~~ which is given out by the National Social Sport Committee. The required achievements are specified in every branch of sport and are published so the competition for the title of "worthy sportsman" is open. On the other ^{hand}, the title of "excellent sportsman" is granted by the government and it is not based on any specific achievement. In this case the political reliability of a person is of great importance. For example our excellent trackman Iharos who held a world record did not receive the title of "excellent sportsman" because it was not granted to him, ^{for} some reason or another he was not regarded as reliable. As another reward, good sportsmen receive definite jobs and many benefits at their jobs. For example, the truckman Goldoványi, Béla was a colleague of mine working at the planning enterprise with me. He is a very ~~nice~~ nice person with good qualification. Generally, however, for such outstanding ~~a~~ sport people it was ~~is~~ much easier to take the examinations at the university and then get a ~~is~~ safe and secure so-called soft job in Budapest. ~~is~~ For example, Goldoványi spent not more than three months a year in our office. The rest of his time was taken up with training camps, preparations, races and so on. Finally the excellent sportpeople received a certain special pay. For example, they regularly received a 10 percent premium, which is called the physical benefit premium and is

supposed to ~~xxx~~ serve their physical benefit. Moreover, there are many additional benefits, such as certain fees for every training program or race attended. For those athletes who participate in international sport events, the travel abroad is the greatest benefit. This is ^{alone a} ~~xxxxxxxx~~ reward which allures many youngsters. In the Communist world it is not only a great pleasure to be able to leave the country and to ~~ix~~ look around in the West, but it is at the same time, a profitable undertaking. Those sport people when returning home, bring always a suitcase with smuggled goods which they could sell in Hungary at exorbitant prices. Some sport people made in such a way 10,000 forints and more in one trip. In spite of the many benefits, I do not think that the outstanding sport people would be enthusiastic Communists. They are used for propaganda by the Party but they do not approve the Communist policy. I remember once I had to receive at the railway station, a Hungarian sports team which was just returning from Poland. We prepared a nice reception for them and they spoke freely about their experiences in Poland. All of them criticized very sharply the Communist system in Poland and in Hungary. I remember another case when the Kinizsi sport club of the Packing Factory of Kecskemét visited Budapest. After the race there was a short celebration and when going home the boys from Kecskemét were singing anti-Communist songs on the streets of Budapest. This is so in spite of the fact that the outstanding sports people are under a kader department so their past and present behavior is ex-

amined and recorded all the time. Only those people are permitted to participate in races in foreign countries who are good kaders. For example, the son of the former Nazi editor, Batori-Hüttner, is an outstanding skier of Hungary. He was permitted to go to foreign races in the satellite countries - in Poland for example, but he was not permitted to go to the West.

Finally I have to say a few words ~~of~~ about the public of the sports. Sport is the cheapest entertainment and recreation of the masses. It is actually the most popular ^{propaganda} ~~sport~~ organization of the Communist system. On an average Sunday in Budapest at least 300,000 people attend the different soccer ~~k~~ games. The Communists want to turn sports into propaganda. On ~~going~~ the other hand, the public wants to turn it into an anti-Communist demonstration. For example, the football or soccer star, Puskas, was the most hated person in Budapest up to the Revolution. Whenever he did something good in the game, the whole public roared like one man: "You dirty Major," since he was a major in the army. Obviously he became the scapegoat and people could live out their anti-Communist sentiments by cursing him. If any of the sport clubs receive the approval of the Communist Party or of the government, it loses its popularity immediately - disregarding its sporting qualities. The famous soccer team of Vasas is undoubtedly one of the best of the country. It won the so-called Middle European Cup several times. However, it is believed to be favored by the govern-

ment and the Party, ^{and,} consequently, ~~the~~ people hate it and they are glad whenever the Vasas lose^s a game. It is an interesting thing indeed that the Vasas is the center of two kinds of demonstrations. Whenever it wins an international game there is a huge banquet given in its honor. All the ^b cabinet ministers and Party leaders show up. The players of the Vasas receive all the possible medals and titles from the government. On the other hand, the whole public demonstrates all the time against the same team, ^{although} ~~also~~

I think that the poor boys of the Vasas cannot do anything ~~for~~ or ~~against~~ the Communist system.

Altogether I do not think that the support given to sports contributed very much to the popularity of the ~~Soviet~~ Soviet system in Hungary. Let's take my case, for example. My participation in our local sport club, exempted me from any participation in the trade union or any similar organization. At the same time I do not think that because of my participation in the sport club, I became a better Communist or promoted the Communist cause in any way.