

Respondent is at present manager of the Philharmonica Hungarica, the orchestra formed from exiled musicians which is resident at Baden bei Wien, Austria.

(Interviewer first asked respondent about his family background and life; respondent's answer):

I am of middle class origin, my father is a lawyer, he is living in Budapest. I am half Jewish, my mother was of Jewish origin. During the second World War I was strongly anti-Nazi, after the war in 1946 I became a member of the Social Democratic Party. After the fusion of the Social Democratic Party with the Communists, I was expelled from the Hungarian Workers' Party in 1949. During the second World War I finished my formal education, I studied at the Economic University and also at the Music Academy. After the war I studied at the Diplomatic Academy. Apart from my interest in Economics, I was strongly interested in music and also in international relations. I was also a practising journalist. For a year I was correspondent of the British News Agency Reuter. In 1946 I entered the Foreign Ministry as Cultural Referent, 1948 however I was dismissed under the accusation of betraying official secrets. The true reason of my dismissal was, however, that I worked for the British News Agency. Also my middle class origin was held against me. In spite of these handicaps, in 1949 I got a job with the Hungarian Radio and until 1953 I was Orchestra Programme Director. In January 1953 I was ousted from my job, the reasons were the same which ended my career in the Foreign Ministry, namely my middle class origin and my former job with

the English News Agency Reuter. For a while I was without a job, during 1954 I finally got a job at the Magyar Hesznet as a music critic. In 1955 I lost this job, reasons the same as before. I was rehabilitated in October 1956. I have been active as a musical writer. ~~XXXXXX~~ ^A French Publishing House ~~XXXXXX~~ commissioned me. to write a biography of Bartok. This book is under preparation, I did not succeed to finish it yet. I was also commissioned by the American Magazine "Musical Quarterly" to write the history of Hungarian music during the past ten years.

(Interviewer asked respondent to say something about ^{his} ~~xxx~~ relationship to the great Hungarian composer ~~XXXXXX~~ ^{Zoltan} Kodaly. Respondent's answer:)

I stood very close to Kodaly and I was instrumental in arranging "the public performance of his great work he wrote in 1954 entitled ^{Zrinyi's} ~~XXXXXX~~ Appeal." At this point I would like to say that although Kodaly did not oppose openly the regime and was acknowledged as ^{dean} the ~~XXXXXX~~ of Hungarian music under the Communist regime, in his own way he was also the leader of Resistance against the Communists. The best proof of this role Kodaly had played, is this great work I am speaking about. This was not commissioned by the Party at all. The work was a protest against Hungary's oppression under the Russian domination. Kodaly chose the theme of his work from a poem written by the great Hungarian poet and hero of the wars ^{Zrinyi.} against the Turks ~~XXXXXX~~. The poem speaks in glowing patriotic terms about the dangers surrounding the fatherland. The verses have a tremendous patriotic power and the music Kodaly wrote

for orchestra and chorus translated the verses in music with a terrific force. The climax of the work is when the chorus sings "Do not harm the Hungarians. A terrible dragon is destroying the gardens of the nation." The dragon in the verse is identified as the Turk, but of course under the given circumstances the dragon was the Russian. For months Kodaly kept the completed work on his desk and did not know how to proceed with its performance. I convinced him that he must perform the work. He ~~gave me~~ ^{gave me} permission to take action and I gave the score to the conductor of the ~~choir~~ ^{choir} of the Hungarian Radio. While rehearsals went on in the Radio, we started to write about the work in the Press, thus the public learned about ~~the~~ Kodaly's work and public pressure has been thus created, demanding the performance of the work. The performance took finally place in 1955. The Concert Hall of the Music Academy was filled to capacity and thousands of people who could not get in, were standing around the building. The performance was a tremendous success. The ovation rendered to the composer took the form of a national demonstration. This was well understood by one of the leading Stalinists present at the concert, ~~Kozsok~~ ^{Jozsef} Revaj, who left the Concert Hall in the midst of demonstration. The regime, of course, pretended not to understand the true meaning of Kodaly's work, but the nation ^{as a whole} ~~in the Hall~~ understood it. It played an important role in the revolutionary fermentation during the year of 1954 and especially 1955. During 1955 the work was performed under the aegis of the Petöfi Circle in the Karolyi Gardens. Five thousand people attended the concert and ~~in~~ many more thousands were crowding the streets around. It was a

terrific success again and a very important link in the event that led to the revolution. During the revolution itself the ^{was playing} Radio/the work countless times. My role in bringing Kodaly's work before the public was well-known to the regime ~~and it~~ as a punishment during 1955-56 the Ministry of ^{Peoples' Culture} / which controlled the newspapers, silenced me twice for one month. As a result of the order of the Ministry of ^{Peoples'} ~~Peoples'~~ Culture I could not write for those periods of silence.

(Next interviewer asked respondent to discuss the musical policy of the Communist regime. Respondent's answer:)

I would divide the regime's policy into three periods. The first period was from 1945 to 1948, i.e. until the Communists' takeover. During this period, the regime's policy was relatively ^{lenient.} ~~kindness~~ Two Communist composers Szabo and Kodosa were busy promoting the idea of Soviet superiority in ~~but~~ but with not much success. Soviet composers were played in an increasing degree, but until the communists' takeover in 1948, Hungarian musical life succeeded in maintaining its traditional ties with the West. The change came in 1949, when the Communists launched their offensive against Western music, branding it bourgeois and decadent. A Soviet composer by the name of Tschulaki arrived to Budapest in 1949 to lay down the schemes for the Sovietization of the Hungarian musical life. Tschulaki was anxious in particular to discredit Bartok's later works which he branded as cosmopolitan. Only the earlier works of Bartok, applying harmonious tunes of the Hungarian folklore, were to be esteemed. It was, of course, not just the music ^{which} ~~xxx~~

Bartok wrote in his later years that aroused Tschulaki's criticism. It was also the fact that Bartok lived in the United States that was held against him. The new slogan of musical policy was social realism; it purported to end the monopoly of the bourgeoisie in enjoying music. It purported to extend enjoyment of music to the people. Apart from its attacks on modern Western music, this new policy, I must say in all fairness, produced some praiseworthy results. No doubt, that under the new policy the access of the masses to music enjoyment has been improved considerably. People who never had a chance to go to concerts before, ~~never~~ ^{were} now given an opportunity through a widespread system of cheap subscriptions. Also, the so-called rolling opera introduced operas to new audiences in the country-side. People who never heard an opera before, were now given an opportunity to attend the opera performances and enjoy music. Where ~~xx~~ ^{as in} the past Budapest was the only centre of musical life, now a decentralization took place. Symphonic orchestras have been organized in many cities such as Győr, ~~xxxx~~ ^{Pecs,} Szeged, Debrecen ^{Credit} ~~xxxxxx~~ etc. ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{xxxxxx}/for these achievements should be given of course to the musicians, ~~and~~ ^{while} to the regime only insofar as it enabled the musicians to develop Hungary's musical life on an unprecedented scale. Perhaps the most interesting and important initiative of the postwar area was the founding of the Music School in Bekestados in 1949. It was a school for peasant children who received elementary and middle-school education, and meanwhile they were engaged in an intensive study of Hungarian music. The patron of this school was ~~xxxxxx~~ ^{Zoltan} Kodaly himself while

the Director was Gyorgy Gulayas. The school was a phenomenal success. The choir of the school achieved national reputation. The spirit of the school did not please the regime at all. The school was devoted to the cultivation of Hungarian musical traditions and it paid no tribute to Soviet superiority in music. The school was a target of criticism and was finally disbanded in 1955 when Rakosi returned to power following Imre Nagy's downfall. In 1956 there was a ~~vigorous~~ ^{vigorous} campaign led in favour of restoring the school.

(Next, interviewer asked respondent to say something about the reaction of the people to the new musical policy under the Communist regime. Respondent's answer:)

The musical audience multiplied at least five times since the second World War. This was an important aspect of the great social change in Hungary. I should hasten to add, however, that the greater opportunities people have enjoyed in going to concerts, theatres, did not enhance the popularity of the regime. The people took the new opportunities for granted, ~~but~~ ^{but} were rather critical of the regime ^{for} forcing them to see or hear something they did not like. This was in particular so in the theatre where the performances of Soviet plays were very poorly attended. It became a common habit that the subscribers of theatre series skipped simply the plays of Soviet origin, or for that matter any plays with political message. To sum up, I would say that the public rejected indoctrination but acclaimed entertainment. They were ^{the} more anxious to go to concerts and theatres because this

was a sort of escape for them from the drudgery of every-day life. To a certain extent, the regime had to give in to public pressure in programming such plays ^{of} which the public was ~~informed~~ ^{fond.} ~~about~~ The directors of the theatres themselves put on great pressure on the Ministry of People's Culture, they said if we do not play what the public likes, then we will not make money, ~~and~~ ^{They} /were supposed to make money. They had to fulfil their plan. This was a conflict between the Ministry of Finances which demanded the Directors to collect a certain amount of money, and the Ministry of Popular Culture, which demanded the theatres to perform pieces with political overtones. On the whole, this conflict ended with the triumph of the Ministry of Finances, the tendency being to give such plays which the public was willing to pay for.

(Next, interviewer asked respondent to speak about the ^{performers.} ~~performers.~~)
Respondent's answer:)

The ~~performers~~ ^{performers} could ^{be} /divided in two groups and this division was as true in music as in the other fields of art. In the one group belonged the stars. They had very high salaries, an average of 1.000 fts. per month, they had an auto, a villa, they could make trips abroad. ^{To} the other group belonged the rest whose income was between 1500-3000 fts. per month, they had no autos, no villas and could make no trips abroad. In the field of music, the situation of this second group was precarious. We had an over-production of musicians, we had almost three times as many musical artists than we could employ in spite of the great expansion of the musical

life.

(Next, interviewer asked respondent about the political behaviour of the performing artists. Respondent's answer:)

The political pressure on the artists was rather subtle especially in the case of the stars. I would say both the regime and the star artists were opportunists. The regime did not pressure the artists too hard and the artists did not resist too hard. The star performers as a rule were satisfied people. It was different with the other group. They were dissatisfied and prone to resist. It is noteworthy that those musicians who left Hungary after the Revolution were from the second group. The favorite stars of the regime stayed, while the artists who did not have enough chance either artistically or economically left.

(Next, interviewer asked respondent to elaborate further on those artists who left Hungary after the Revolution. Respondent's answer:)

As I have said earlier, the ~~diffidence~~ ^{dissidents} came from the average crowd who did not do so well rather than from among the stars. So ~~usually~~ usually there were economic reasons for their decision to leave. There were, of course, political reasons too, although I would mention that, as far as I know, none of the ~~dissident~~ ^{dissident} musicians participated in the Revolution as ~~&~~ freedom fighters. Political reasons there were nevertheless such as the oppressive atmosphere which they have known and which was unbearable to them and which they anticipated to become even worse after the suppression of the Revolution. Third, there were professional reasons. There was

no possibility for development at home for them. They suffered the drawbacks of provincialism and of course they expected greater opportunities in the West. In summing up I would say they wanted to join Europe. They were anxious to become a part of the free world's artistic life.

(Next I have asked respondent who were the stars since he drew a sharp distinction between the stars and the average artists. Respondent answered by listing names; I attach this list.)

(Next I asked respondent what he thought of the attitude of the musicians during the Revolution. Respondent's answer:)

As I have said, the artists were less concerned about politics. Of course, they were opposed to the regime, they hated the regime and they hated the Russians, but they were primarily concerned about artistic life.

(Next I probed respondent about the political attitude of the artists. Respondent's answer:)

They were concerned of course about politics too, but ^{as} I said their concern was primarily centred on the artistic life. I do not wish, however, to create the impression that the artists were indifferent politically and perhaps I add something to what I have said before about the political motivations of the musicians who left Hungary. Although they were not ^{freedom} fighters, many of them participated actively in the Revolution and no doubt fear of arrest played a role in their decision to leave. Yet I feel, as I have said, that primary reasons for

leaving were of economic and artistic nature.

(Next I asked respondent about his own position. Respondent's answer:)

As for myself I left because I was afraid that the Russians will arrest me. I have had trouble with the regime before the Revolution and my articles during the Revolution, especially the one which was entitled "Do not harm the Hungarian," gave me ^{enough} ~~enough~~ reason to worry. The decision to leave came natural to me.

(Next I asked respondent to say something about those artists who did not leave. Respondent's answer:)

The stars did not leave and I have explained already why they did not. As for the average, those who stayed probably thought their position will be improved due to the great number of artists who have left the country. Many stayed, I assume, because they thought they can take over the jobs of those who had left. Although it is difficult to generalize, but I would say that those who were confident of their talents have left and those less talented have stayed.

(Next I asked respondent whether the hopes of the musicians, who left Hungary, had come true or not. Respondent's answer:)

I would be tempted to answer this question by saying that the musicians are terribly disappointed, but let me elaborate and I am speaking about the history of the orchestra, the Philharmonica Hungarica, which I know best. Now the very fact that the ~~orchestra~~ orchestra has been formed, proved the hopes of the musicians wrong,

They expected individual opportunities but they had to soon realize that it is not so easy to get jobs in the West. This was, of course, not the sole reason why the orchestra had been formed. There was a feeling of solidarity among the musicians, they had received the idea of creating an Hungarian orchestra in exile with great enthusiasm. The idea itself to form an orchestra came from our conductor ~~Zoltan~~ ^{Zoltan} Rozsnyai. It was in the early days of exile that Rozsnyai discussed this plan with me at the home of his uncle where he stayed first in Vienna, he is [REDACTED] ^{reputation} ~~reputation~~ because he was placed as fourth at the International Young Conductors' Competition in Rome in the summer of 1956. It made big news when he left Hungary in November following the collapse of the Revolution. He was immediately invited to the United States, ^{Antal Dorati} ~~Antal Dorati~~ ^{Minneapolis} ~~Minneapolis~~ invited him to conduct the ~~orchestra~~ ^{orchestra} and he had great success. He discussed the plans of forming an orchestra with ~~Ormandy~~ ^{Ormandy} and others in the United States such as Stokovski, the famous conductor. Also Alfred Fellner, the former president of the Society of Friends of the Budapest Opera and praised enthusiastically the plans. The City of Milwaukee offered financial help. It was proposed that the Hungarian orchestra in exile should become the City Orchestra of Milwaukee, but as negotiations went on, it seemed more advantageous to start the project in Europe. In its first stage the plan was that the orchestra will be formed in Zürich, Switzerland; a so-called "Verein für ein freies ungarisches Orchester" was founded in Zürich and financial help has been promised. I am sorry to say that very little of

this financial promise came to be realized. Negotiations have dragged ~~xxx~~ ^{on} but with no result. Then finally in March 1957 the **Forum Kulturhilfe** ~~Forum Kulturhilfe~~ in Vienna took the initiative. The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the International Rescue Committee and also ~~the~~ the Ford and Rockefeller foundations lined up behind the plans. Thus in the Spring of 1957 in Baden bei Wien, the organization of the orchestra began. It was a 100 days project and it was during these 100 days that the orchestra came into existence. Simultaneously with the organization of the orchestra, plans have been laid for the formation of a Ballet Ensemble and also for the formation of a Hungarian Theatre in cooperation with the escaped actors. The first appearance of the Philharmonica Hungarica in Vienna in the Spring of 1957 was a great success but we don't know where do we go from here. Material, financial help is uncertain, there is great confusion and disillusionment in the ranks of the musicians. Many of them are married, they have families and those are in particular disappointed. (In conclusion I asked the respondent to describe the present state of mind of the musicians. - Respondent's answer:)

In spite of disillusionment the artists do not think of going home. Although they ^{are} disappointed, they do not hate the West, what happened to them is that they got adjusted to the conditions of life in the free world. This is a world of free economy, free competition and we know that if ~~they~~ ^{we} ~~xxx~~ will be good, we will succeed. The musicians have learned the ~~xxx~~ complicated system of free economy. They accept the conditions as they are, they want to live in the West, none of them as far as I know, is thinking of

going back to Hungary. They are confident of their talents and they hope that in one way or another either individually or as members of the Philharmonia Hungarica they will succeed.

Interviewer's Rating:

Rapport with the respondent was excellent, so was cooperativeness. As far as frankness and compliance or flattery, ^{is concerned} ~~XXXXX~~ I have some doubts, especially after I have found out that respondent is a rather controversial figure. He was described by people whose judgment I trust, as an opportunist. I have heard even rumours about respondent's dubious dealings both in the free world and under the Communist regime. As far as his dealings in the free world are concerned, I was told that he does not enjoy the confidence of the orchestra. I have heard also about conflicts between respondent and conductor Rossanyi. As far as rumours concerning respondent's life under the Communists' regime one rumour had it that he was an AVO informer at one time. I am not in the position to evaluate the veracity of these rumours, but I record them because they may be useful in evaluating respondent's statements, informations and opinions expressed during the interview.

LIST OF STARS

SVED, SÁNDOR *

SZÉKELY, MIHÁLY

OSVÁTH, JÚLIA

FISCHER, ANNIE

ZATHURECKY, EDE *

HERNÁDI, LAJOS

GARAI, GYÖRGY

FERENCSEK, JÁNOS

SOMOGYI, LÁSZLÓ

NOTE: * According to interviewer's information, ZATHURECKY left Hungary not long time ago and settled down in the United States. Also ~~xx~~ Sved according to interviewer's information, left Hungary after the Revolution.