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At first I wanted to enter the theological field and become a minister, but even in elementary school I studied music and this interested me very much. In middle school, they put me into the field of music, in 1940 in Kolozsvár, which city had been returned with Transylvania to Hungary. I got acquainted with the flute. My teacher secured for me a scholarship and I went up to Budapest. In 1945 I was admitted to the Music Academy. I got a job in a small orchestra and supported myself thus. Since I had a job, no stipend was given me. I then spent 8 years with the Gerdülö and with the Máv Symphony Orchestra. We had a first class repertoire of 120 to 140 operas, our season was mainly in the winter. The people liked the Gerdülö Opera and it was popular with them. We went to the smallest places to perform. However, the Communists soon ended the existence of the Gerdülö Opera <sup>along</sup> with other serious musical institutions that they organized. They said it was not needed, they wanted to eliminate the expense and they felt that they had won the people to their side. Of course this was the <sup>reason</sup> ~~reasons~~ for instituting the Gerdülö Opera at first to win the people and show them how much the Communist regime is doing for them.

In 1945, students only of worker or peasant origin were admitted to the Music Academy. Perhaps I got in because I was a good student and not because of my family origin. I did not have to pay any tuition all the way through. A tremendous number of my friends did not get in to the Music Academy.

The placement of music students upon their graduation was impossible or extremely difficult because there was no place to go. Later under

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the Communist system, many music institutes were eliminated for the simple reason that too many music students were being produced and there was no employment for them. If a particular student had finished one or two years of music, the better Kader came forth, the first student was kicked out of the Academy and the better Kader took his place.

At the Music Academy the study of Russian language was required along with Marxism, Leninism and military science courses. The students debated a great deal about why they had to take these courses. The students always opposed these courses almost militantly. However, if a student missed these required political courses, three times, then he was kicked out of the Academy. The idea they held was that if the student does not know Marxism, then he cannot be a good musician. The students had to spend eight hours in class and then prepare very diligently and study the political courses. Thus he was unable to occupy himself with the practice of his musical instrument.

Frequently music professors closed their eyes so to speak if a student had not prepared adequately for his music lesson although this was the student's major subject and the student was unable to devote sufficient time required for his major instrument or subject. Music students felt that if anyone wanted politics, then they should go to the Lenin Institute. This attitude and the existing situation was an essential motivating and initiating force in bringing about the Revolution in Hungary. The fact, also, that the students demanded the autonomy of the Universities was a spark igniting the Revolution.

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Reasons for the Revolution and Causes leading to the Revolution.

In the first years, when the Russians came into Hungary, we thought things would be better, that is we the youth of Hungary. The Communist system put on a heavy propaganda campaign to win people. This went on in the schools also. They knew that the youth was a decisive force in a nation. With this propaganda they fed the idea of a better country, but after a time, students saw things differently. They felt themselves deceived and cheated (Bec apva érezte magát az egész társaság). We wanted to study the proper courses for all professions and all fields, i.e. engineers, study engineering, music students study music and not Marxism and Leninism. This brought about the loss of faith and disappointment. We saw that in practice Communism was not what they teach. For a time the workers in 1945 and for a time afterwards, wanted to see what this thing Communism is and then, as soon as Communism was more established, the Communists began to pull the carpet from under the workers. The Communists established the norm system and began to increase the norms demanded in production, however, they did not introduce modern machinery, so that the higher norm may be produced. During the Revolution I went out to many factories and out to Red Csepel, as the Communists called it, I also went to mines. The Communists said that these were the areas on which they could depend 100%, but I found that the miners and the workers at Csepel were in favour of the Revolution and they said the regime had to be opposed, that regime which at first pampered them

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But first, in the early years of Communism in Hungary, there was a parallel between the workers and students; both for a time were in favour of Communism or were of the opinion "let us wait and see".

Participation in the Revolution.

I took part in the Revolution from the beginning on October 23rd and afterwards. After decorating the 'Ben' statue, the students went to the Radio Station, while another part of the group went to the 'Stalin' statue. At the Stalin statue, trucks came very quickly with rigs. It was amazing how quickly they arrived from almost nowhere. An engineering student climbed to the neck of the Stalin statue and attached a line which, after a number of attempts at pulling the statue down and using torches, finally came down. The other group of students, going to the Radio Station, wanted their demands broadcast. They had 11 points in their proclamation. The group was allowed into the station but the student group did not come out. Then a second group went in, they didn't come out. The director of the Radio Station did not allow the broadcasting of the proclamation. Then when Gerö in his radio talk called the students 'Csöcsösek', - a mob or rebel crouzers - this put oil on to the fire. The crowd wanted to go into the Radio Station and with beams broke into the station. The AVH had bayoneted rifles. When a few of the crowd died, tear gas was dropped on them, the youth on the street began to take guns from the police who were standing around. The a truck-load of guns arrived, I don't know from where, we were surprised. Also from the barracks soldiers helped us. Trucks and lorries brought loads of guns



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and arms. This lasted until midnight. The students had the Radio Building, but then the Russians arrived and took the station.

I also participated in stopping a Russian column of motor vehicles which wanted to go to Pest from the Buda side over to Margit bridge. A crowd of people stood in the road, blocking the way of the Russian column. Two trucks had been turned over in the way of the column and then the column stopped, the people rushed the column and punctured the tires of the vehicles, then they were turned over and the fire started in each. My other activity was in helping the wounded, taking bread from the bakeries out to distribution centres and making deliveries without any organization or discussion; it was amazing that spontaneously how everything went ahead on the part of the Hungarian people. Everyone on his own voluntarily did things.

On the Rákóczi Út many stores had broken windows. In these broken windows, some of them jewelry shops, there hung on a string a small placard saying the following: "the Revolution is holy and pure" (i.e. A forradalom szent és tiszta). Nothing was taken from these windows, the jewelry, food, everything remained, there was no burglary or looting until the Russians came in and they took jewelry and what they found.

Employment as a Musician.

When the existence of the Gerdülő Opera or Rolling Opera came to an end in 1954, the Government said the Rolling Opera could not go on because of economic reasons. Then the future of our

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Symphony Orchestra was in the air too. We did not know what to do or what would happen to us. Finally they decided to have our orchestra continue to go out into the country-side but now give two concerts a day with no staging expenses, no costumes, no scenery to worry about as was the case with the opera. Now the Symphony orchestra became a milking cow, they wanted to get a bigger income out of it and have less expense, moreover, to offer two concerts day, one in the afternoon and one in the evening.

Even our per diem changed, we got less now. Previously, with the rolling opera, we were given 65 forints a day per diem, and now for two concerts we received 25 forints per day. A musician could hardly perform two concerts without eating two suppers, it is a physically exhausting task to perform twice without eating and having the strength for the second concert.

Working with the rolling opera was enjoyable. Now the second performance of the concert was drudgery and despised.

Our <sup>pay</sup> ~~pay~~ with the orchestra was fixed and above that, I had to help myself by taking on teaching in Bekescsaba, 200 km away from Budapest. We got 72 forints per diem and I went down four times a month. After I was married, I was able to have only suit made and we had to live out of what I had been able to save while I was a bachelor.

In the beginning there was a great wave of interest in the artists in Hungary on the part of the Communists. It was a Mézes-Mázos, sweet kindness, kind of interest, ~~for this interest~~, it continued for a while and then everything was taken away. Such was the

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fact that the ~~xxxxxx~~<sup>rolling</sup> opera was kicked over as a project and the "Békés-Tarhos" School of Music, the most unique and outstanding institution was closed in 1954 also.

Kodaly, with his international prestige, tried everything he could to change the decision of the Communists. He fought a lot and even got into personal opposition with Rakosi, but the Communists did not dare touch Kodaly. Kodaly said that he would deny the permission and rights to have all of his pieces performed in Hungary. The Communists knew that he would carry a tremendous echo of sympathetic opposition with him from abroad if anything happened to him, but no change was brought, although only Kodaly dared to oppose the regime. They heard his viewpoint to let him express himself, but they did not do anything.

The whole artistic world in Hungary disliked Communism. After the Revolution, outstanding actors such as <sup>first</sup> AGI MÉSZÁROS said "I will not step on to the stage as long as the Soviet soldiers are in Hungary," followed by others/such as IVAN DARVAS .

A person could feel the effect of Kodaly and the heritage of Bartok in Hungarian music and the effect of Hungarian folk music was more pronounced than before. The regime exploited this for their own use. Pál Kádosa, with some of his thrashy compositions was awarded two Kossuth prizes, but a serious musician could not accept them, he tried to use as a basis for his music Hungarian folk music. His works did not get beyond the premières. However, in Hungarian music life, he had a great voice. A person could feel the strong Russian influence in the Hungarian music life. At one time we had to play a ~~xxxxxxxx~~<sup>tremendous</sup> number of Russian works in

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our orchestra. There were a few acceptable works, but most of them were not. We had to mimic the Russians.

A Russian Artistic Committee, that was travelling in Hungary, one time said to our rolling opera group "why don't you play something ~~with~~ other than Russian works. You Hungarians have a ZSIGMOND MORICZ and others". We over-mimicked the Russians. A Russian opera was introduced by our group entitled "Az Ifjú Gárda" but this work did not get beyond the première.

In the movies, any time, one could not see anything but Russian films, 99% of them were very bad, they had nothing artistic to say; they had one theme, trying to acquaint the public with the socialist type of man. Then there came the Kolkhoz theme and the people were nauseated by this repetition. They did not attend. The French film or English film, such as 'Oliver Twist' came, the audiences were so large and the demands so great, one could not get tickets. For a Russian film the tickets were given away cheaply, but a person would not go to a second Russian film.

The Gypsies and their music in Hungary under the Communists.

The Communists wanted to give the gypsies equality before the Court and in society. The newspapers and the Communists spoke of eliminating all reference to the gypsies as 'Gypsies', eliminating the prejudice about them. However, this all remained in its initial status and slowly faded from attention. However, the gypsy orchestras were no longer to be referred to as 'gypsy orchestras' but as 'folk orchestras' or 'bands'. Thus, on the entrance to a café or night spot, the sign had to read "So and so



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and his folk (Nepi) orchestra "or Banda", not "So and so and his Gypsy Band or Orchestra." So also officially in the newspapers advertisements there was no reference to the Gypsy music, it was always "Folk Music" or "Nepi Zene". The Hungarian people became accustomed to the Communists trying to change everything but then they knew it was a Gypsy orchestra playing and they sang the same songs what they sang before. As one person has put it from 8 o'clock until 5 in the office, the Communists officially followed the line and then from 5 until 2 in the morning in the Cafés they were Hungarians who sang the Hungarian songs and listened to the Gypsy orchestras.

The post - 1945 students were 75 to 80% worker origin. These students were told that if the Communist regime were not in power, they would not be able to attend Universities and Schools. However, these students of worker origin soon became acquainted with those students who were not good Kaders and not of worker origin or those young people who were denied the opportunity to continue their education because they were not of worker origin. This the students of peasant and worker origin saw as injustice. The artificial wall which the Communists tried to build up were struck down or disappeared completely and in fact, during the Revolution. In our orchestra we had Communist lectures and seminars. They were not required, but we had to be there. The same was true with the Peace Loan. They said it was voluntary, but they took 800 forints. I said, I don't want you to take 800, only 200, how is this voluntary if you already take it out of my pay. The people did not want to speak against these demands

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and the terror increased. A spark was needed to let loose and break out all the feelings that were held back against the regime.

The resistance was present and existed among the artists. This was there without any organization, in fact, a person could not organize resistance. 99% of the artists had healthy political thoughts. Some artists and directors took their Party membership as a cover-up so that the Party would think that he is for the Communists. Many such were helpful to us and to the resistance. Among the dead of the Revolution were innumerable Party secretaries and Party members.

It was fantastic how people knew what was going to happen in the Communist system. On the streetcar in the morning they would be talking about what would be happening in politics that day or in the future. The Music Academy was the first institution to ~~take~~ <sup>oppose</sup> a Russian influence in music. This opposition also saw daylight in literary school.

Political and economic Views.

I believe the mines and railroads should be in State ownership, but let small industry and small business men exist. The country which does not have MASZEK for private ownership of small industrial competition is not able to develop. ~~From~~ <sup>At</sup> the collectivized farms the workers were not interested in working for the state. The peasants and small landholders from their own private land received greater reward. The Communist trick that was used on the peasants was that all the land was nationalized,

then divided, given to the peasants and then collectivized and taken away from them.

The Communist system has a few show pieces for store window politics and exhibition in Hungary, but nothing that the Communists produce will be realized, for example they have ruined the wine industry. The vineyards have been run down for the last four years, what wine is made from the grapes of Hungary is exported for foreign currency value, and for domestic consumption artificial wines need to be made.

With regard to family life, both the husband and wife have to work, nursery schools were necessary in order to take care of the children.

The Communists give 146 forints per month pension to my father, on this it is impossible to live, but the same Communists have all kinds of money for tremendous parades and processions on May 1st and other holidays. They also had money to tear down a church in the centre of Budapest in order to build the Stalin statue. Family life has been interfered with not only by work on the part of both parents, whereas in our family we lived a life by correspondence, i.e. we wrote notes to one another, because we both worked at different hours. The Communists also visited the families in order to see what family life is like and to see if they can interfere in any way. There were many family problems and troubles.

Now in Hungary I find out from my brother that the state is allowing certain small industry. My brother was a ~~Hivestető~~ <sup>Hivestető</sup> (shop forman)

or manager) in a textile plant. Now he has started his own little shop with a few machines. I have written him to be careful, not to invest too much money because t'is may be only a NEB period for Europe.