

In analyzing the Revolution and its background, we can clearly observe that three generations contributed to its inception: my own generation of University students, the generation ~~of~~ of the 30-40 year olds, and the generation of the 50-60 year olds.

The 50-60 year old generation. <sup>By</sup> ~~^~~ The 50-60 year old intelligentsia, I mean the writers and professionals <sup>who</sup> ~~^~~ were educated under the Horthy regime; they were 40 years old or so when it ended, and by the time the Communists took power, this generation was too tired to be able to produce an anti-serum to Communism. Because they were tired they passively served the Communist regime. One part of this <sup>generation</sup> ~~regime~~, of course, consisted of Communists, ~~Some were~~ National Communists who were in the underground party under the Horthy regime. After the war these people had important roles but lost their positions because of the Rajk trial, and became disillusioned. After 1953, they stood for a liberalizing the regime; I mean someone like Tibor Déry who is 63. Some of the Communists of this generation were Stalinists, and remained Stalinists till the end. I mean Béla Illés, who participated in the 1919 Revolution, and to whom these years were the greatest experience of their lives. Háy was also a part of this group but he, of course, became disillu-  
sioned at the end.

To this generation belongs a ~~2~~ group of ~~populists~~ <sup>including</sup> ~~populists~~ <sup>populists</sup> Kodolányi, Németh, Áron Tomási and Feja. István Szabó, a young and

talented peasant boy and writer, <sup>and I</sup> visited Kodolányi in the summer of 1955. In the face of my skepticism Kodolányi said that the explosive strength of the east European spirit would destroy Communism eventually. Kodolányi said that life goes on and that eventually, as the generations changed, there would be people in the leading positions who represented ~~the~~ ideas different from the regime's, although not consciously and deliberately. He claimed that other ideas would be injected into the regime, for instance through Imre Nagy who after all was a Moscovite and represented something entirely different. Kodolányi wrote in retirement and ~~was not able to publish after~~ <sup>was not able to publish after</sup> 1948, but began to have his things published as of early 1956. He had a vineyard and lived on the proceeds of that. Kodolányi, as the populists in general, had a much greater faith in the Hungarian nation and in the Magyar vitality than we did.

Márai's Halotti Beszéd (funeral oration) was read over the Hungarian radio at the end of 1953, with a fantastic effect. They had Áron Tomási answer it, who started to write again after Imre Nagy came to power in 1953. He was a-political and very clever about money. It was interesting that in his answer he couldn't deny Márai's facts but at the same time gave an optimistic and hopeful answer to him. At home, many people were very angry with Tomási for his rather superior tone. The Populists were in general willing to compromise more, and hence they were more realistic, just like the

Hungarian peasant. Tomási was also more optimistic with regard to the future than we were.

Illyés was more or less in between the ~~former~~ more <sup>in</sup>transigent Populists and the fellow-traveling Populists. Between 1949<sub>+</sub> and 1953, the Communists acknowledged him a great Hungarian poet. It was the policy of the Communists to show friendship toward some of the great anti-regime Hungarian artists such as Kodály and Illyés. Illyés escaped without having to publish anything ugly or disgusting. In 1955, his poems had an active role in alerting public opinion. His volume Kézfogások, (Hand Clasps), published in 1956, was a very important because it was the greatest of his books and because it perfectly mirrored the spirit of the 1955-'56<sub>+</sub> policy. See, for instance, his poem about the Geneva memorial to the Reformation. Thus, the problem of the Revolution unconsciously became an issue to the ~~wr~~ writers even as early as this, and they answered it positively. In this poem it was not a Revolutionary problem, but a problem of sacrifice. And Illyés ~~a~~ said it was worth the sacrifice. His own personal stand was not Revolutionary. I had a touching personal experience which justifies the affirmative answer of this poem. Here in Vienna there ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> a girl who was shot in the stomach during the Revolution; she's 21 years old, and she does not regret anything that happened to her. Her parents were killed by the Germans. Thus, the affirmative answer of the poem was justified. It is characteristic that she found this poem; this is not accident.

It shows the close connection between poetry and life, which is only possible in Hungary and nowhere else. Illyés has a constant gesture of: "I will tell the story ...". See his satire on the Horthy regime - Kacsalábon Forgó Vár. He has a reporting gesture, though he doesn't necessarily participate. Now he has a nervous breakdown. His nemesis has overtaken him. In his play Fáklyaláng, (Torch Light), he discusses Kossuth and Görgey, the leader who compromises and the leader who doesn't. As against restoration he chooses endurance. This play had a deadly <sup>1</sup>timeliness on November the 4th, since it discussed the question of whether it was worthwhile to continue resistance. The fact that Illyés discussed these problems in these two works was not conscious or deliberate; <sup>he</sup> ~~he~~ wasn't aware of the fact that these were to become the basic problems. It was interesting that Illyés could have <sup>had</sup> these works published in Hungary without opposition by the Communists. Nobody noticed that there was a fatal <sup>timeliness</sup> ~~handiness~~ behind the ~~his~~ historical tableau of Torch Light.

The third group of Populists in this generation consisted of ~~xx~~ Pál Szabó and Peter Veres who cooperated with the Communists. Szabó did it for money. He said: "Only the money counts." - (In Hungarian "Csak a monéta számít.") Around September, 1956, he published a powerful short story about the mother of a Hungarian who was a prisoner-of-war in Russia. <sup>Szabó swam</sup> ~~he~~ ~~was~~ with the stream of oppor-  
tunism. As for Veres, he was very vain; he didn't do it for money.

He had enough money of his own.

Féja remained silent throughout this period; he was silenced by the regime because of his role in the forties. He was too much of a rightist to be accepted even by the proponents of the liberal bourgeois ~~solution~~ solution. Féja was rehabilitated during the Revolution. At this time, he had a radio speech over Radio Békéscsaba in which he said: "A Duna völgyében ~~a~~ csoda történt nem-  
get született." ("A mystery <sup>was</sup> occurred in the valley of the Danube; a nation was born.")

Sinka was silent until the end, and refused the constant offers of the regime to publish. He didn't even give them his old works to publish, like Kodolányi. I think this was a very narrow-minded and limited attitude. During the Revolution he discovered that this ~~was~~ <sup>had been</sup> foolish. Dezső Keresztúry also published some of his things in 1956, in the periodical Dunántúl (Transdanubia). He is an intelligent writer, German-oriented culturally. He was active in the Writers' Association during the Revolution.

All these writers were members of the Petőfi Party during the Revolution. Pál Szabó and Veres were rejected by the Petőfi Party because they compromised with the regime. During the Revolution Veres was asked whether he had any faith that the West would intervene in Hungary. Veres said: "No, I don't believe so, because it <sup>is</sup> well known that shit doesn't explode."

Between 1949 and 1956, Németh translated Russian classics into

Hungarian. He received an Attila József Prize for his translations. Németh is also a physician. To Németh Russian culture meant a great deal, qua Eastern culture.

Then there were the bourgeois writers of the 50-60 generation. Milán Füst was actually older, ~~the~~ the last man of the Nyugat (The West) generation. (Others like Cs. Szabó, Zilahy and Márai are abroad.) Some of the bourgeois and Social Democratic writers like Ignóty and Faludy are actually ~~in~~ in the Forties. Pálóczi-Horváth is no longer a Communist today. He no longer has any principles; how could he have them? This is a barren condition. A number of these writers were imprisoned, among them the poet István Vas, etc. Those who were not imprisoned were silenced also; they made a living by translations. After 1953, however, the situation of these writers improved; many of them were freed from prisons, etc.

The Catholic writers, without regard to age, were grouped around the excellent periodical Vigilia. This was run by Sándor Sik and Rónai, and was very popular until the very end, especially among youth. Of the young people, Gómóri, (now in Oxford) published under the name of Tamás Tomori and Ádám Makkai (now at Harvard) also had his poems published here. Until 1953, it was the only readable literary periodical in Hungary, and was still very popular after 1953. It published such Western Catholic writers like Claudel, etc.

In general there were more Communists and Populists among the

writers than among the rest of the intelligentsia, and there were more of them among the intelligentsia than among the people in general. There were no real Communists among the people; only the petty bourgeois or the intelligentsia were convinced Communists. The workers and peasants were immune to Communism to a great extent. The intelligentsia is much more left-wing than the people; Communism, Socialism, Leftism, are illnesses of the intelligentsia.

The Populists <sup>position was justified in the revolution;</sup> ~~justified in the revolution;~~ one can be a Populist only where the people deserve it. In Hungary the people did deserve it. October, 1956, was needed to <sup>prove</sup> ~~realize~~ this. Not for the last thirty years did the people behave so well morally.

The 50-60 year old generation was the elite of the Writers' Association, although it included the other two generations as well. But the 30-40 year old generation was more active as a member of the Petöfi Circle. After 1953, and until 1956, the Writers' Association was the only place in the country where one could speak relatively freely.

<sup>The non-writer intelligentsia of</sup>  
 The 50-60 year old generation was to a great extent Horthyist, though not necessarily in the bad sense of the word. They opposed Trianon, wanted a greater Hungary, were nationalistic, etc. They were tired because they saw the Hungarian national cause fail twice in two world wars. They felt that the Hungarian cause was correct ~~if~~ even if Hungary was on the side of the wrong Allies. Some of them were reactionary in the good sense of the word. During the Revolution, they sat in the cellar, <sup>listened</sup> ~~listened~~ to RFE, and worried about

their sons at the University who were making the Revolution. This generation, especially the women, said: "It <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ too bad that ~~this~~ this Revolution was ~~stated~~ <sup>stated</sup>." The fathers said: "Well, you see that rotten West can only talk; we are the only ones who can act." (At home they felt very strongly about America's neglect. The terrible thing about the United States is that it has no program, that it has no political plans.) The older generations could keep its positions only by parroting lies; they ~~did~~ <sup>only</sup> ~~did~~ as much of this as they had to, to keep their jobs. Nobody cared. They gave an apathetic wave of the hand and that was that. The trouble was that passive resistance meant making concessions to the regime.

The 30-40 year old generation.

This is the Petöfi Circle generation, and includes not only writers, but the rest of the intelligentsia. This generation was far more active, partly in the Petöfi Circle, than the older generation of non-writer intellectuals. This younger generation participated actively in things. But the majority of this generation was also passively anti-Communist. The 30 year old generation also included the majority of those who were willing to accept national Communism - at least until the night of October 23rd, or until the Russians started to shoot. Within this generation there were very few Stalinists. The social origin of this generation is decisively different from the previous one; a significant part of



this generation of the intelligentsia comes of worker and peasant origin. The majority finished their studies after 1945, and were not influenced by the Horthy regime. They rejected the Horthy regime during the war, many of them were deserters from the army, and there were very few Nazis or Arrow-Crossists among them. This generation was 20 or 22 years old in 1945. The past under the Horthy regime was a negative experience to them.

Between 1945 and '48, there was a considerable degree of freedom, and opportunity for vigorous political activity. It was this period which separated them from the former generation, which was tired and passive by then. Between 1945 and '48, they had three years which enabled ~~in~~ them to express themselves. The national conception was important to them because of the great reshuffling which took place socially. First of all the Communists wanted to replace the old intelligentsia with a new intelligentsia which came from the people. Thus, after 1945, the Nékosz, (the People's Colleges) had an important role. See András Hegedűs, for instance, of the Gyórfy College (Gyórfy Kollégium). Then there was the Jewish petty bourgeoisie which joined the Communist Party because of its experience with Nazism. Their slogan was: to prevent what happened to them, from happening again. This, I think, is a dishonest motive. If they didn't trust the Hungarian people, they should have emigrated, or else they should have said: "Let Hungary have democracy!" And then they should have submitted to this democra

But the way they chose was disgusting; to impose a tyranny in opposition to Magyar interests. A <sup>dishonorable</sup> ~~dishonorable~~ argument. During the Revolution, my experience in Transdanubia was that the peasants would say it doesn't matter if someone is Jewish as long as he is a Magyar. The Hungarian people are anti-semitic but they respect <sup>u</sup> human dignity.

x  
At any rate, after 1945, a part of this generation, belonging to the People's Colleges (Nékosz) and the petty bourgeois Jewery, supported the regime. A great many of the AVO officers, the Communist bureaucracy, etc., came from this generation. The aim of the regime was to develop an apparatus of functionaries, and a new intelligentsia. The former were more reliable; the latter learned through their own experience and saw that the regime prevented free scholarship, etc. Hence the new intelligentsia became an enemy of the regime, realizing that it did not need the regime to exist. It turned against the regime when it realized that its training and intellectual capacities would enable it to succeed ~~x~~ under any regime. This was the road of the Petöfi Circle generation. After 1953, these people became more and more courageous, and established themselves in various positions. I mean <sup>someone</sup> ~~somehow~~ like Balázs Nagy (now in @ Paris), young scholars, doctors, teachers, scientists, even some lawyers. I would also include some of the University graduates at the Ministries, and a small number of functionaries who were University graduates. They said: "But on

the basis of Socialism..." The Petöfi Circle debates reflect the attitude of this group. This generation had ~~an~~ ab ovo two reservations vis-à-vis the regime from 1948 on: 1) the Jewish petty bourgeoisie, although it didn't resist until 1953, was essentially cosmopolitan and had ~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> respect for Western culture, and therefore, opposed the regime's insistence on isolation from the West 2) the group from the People's Colleges, the young men of <sup>ant</sup> peasant origin, were essentially anti-Soviet, and ~~are~~ imbued with a national consciousness, a ~~folk~~ folk, <sup>a</sup> Populist ideology, which the regime did not respect.

Thus, after 1953, the National Communist lineup took shape; to some extent it had the same ~~the~~ tone and atmosphere as the struggles of the Russian intelligentsia in the 1920's against Stalin. Essentially Imre Nagy represented the Magyar way in economics and agriculture. In Moscow there is no public opinion as in Budapest, <sup>where</sup> ~~the~~ 20,000 to 30,000 people seethe (nyűssög). That's why there is no hope of anything like this happening in Russia. There is <sup>a</sup> joke which perfectly expresses this situation: two Jews meet in Moscow and neither of them says a word. It is interesting that the Russians and the Americans do not connect the ~~the~~ regime with their living conditions. On the other hand, Hungarians find it natural that they should blame the regime for everything; they make an issue out of everything. The Russians and Americans accept their regime naturally, without thinking about it.

The National Communists consisted of various groups. The Lukács school was a stronghold of National Communism, and prepared the ideological <sup>revision</sup> ~~revision~~ of Stalinism. Some of the members of the Lukács school were Ágnes Heller who is today editor of the Philosophical Review, (Filozófiai Szemle) and her husband István Hermann who is a typical case of a Jewish petty bourgeois ~~turn~~ Communist. He was a Zionist and cosmopolitan until 1948; today he supports Kádár. These people are dishonorable. Another member of the Lukács group was István Eörsi who is about 28 years old and now was sentenced to five years in prison because of his poems in Igazság - (The Truth). He was more passionate and more lyrical, and threw himself into things.

Until 1953, until Stalin's death, there was complete darkness. Then Imre Nagy came to power and his New Course had a strong support from the generation of the <sup>thirty-year-olds</sup> ~~thirties~~. They were attracted by such things as the possibility of again publishing great works of world literature, and the fact that Imre Nagy followed Magyar <sup>agriculture</sup> traditions in ~~agriculture~~. In 1949, this group supported Rajk, essentially, ~~especially~~ because there was a connection ~~was~~ between Nékosz and the Rajk camp through Rajk's wife. Within this generation there was an intertwining of the Rajk-Nékosz-Lukács camps. Some of these people, of course, remained Communists in spite of imprisonment, and being allowed to leave prison in 1955, became living symbols of resistance. An example of this is Imre Lakatos, a

speaker at the Petőfi Circle and busybody (nyüszög). To me this group had a disgusting pathos in 1956; I found them very morbid.

Imre Nagy, as a professor at the college of economics, formed a group around himself; a number of revisionists like István Zádor joined him. The strong Communist core of this group continued to support Nagy after his fall in March, 1955. This was the turning point.

When Rajk's followers forged ahead in the Party in 1956, they were backed by the Nékosz people and vice versa. Within the Party this group was backed by Münnich, Donáth, Szántó, Losonczy, etc. Münnich belonged to this group because he had been in the Spanish Civil War with Rajk, and had good relations with Belgrade. There were many signs that this group sympathized with Yugoslavia. Once, before a Petőfi Circle meeting, they sang a Petőfi Brigade March about the friendship of Yugoslavs and Hungarians stressing the <sup>words:</sup> "new world". Then there was Lukács' article about the Yugoslav example in a September issue of Irodalmi Ujság. This sort of thing was made possible by the Krushchev visit to Belgrade.

There was a very strong Populist tendency within this generation; it included provincial teachers, etc., especially intelligentsia of peasant origin. In Nékosz the Communist and Populist ideologies were intertwined. Others of this generation were not Communists at all; some had no ideological profile at all, and were passively anti-Communist. There was also a bourgeois liberal line within this

generation which followed modern Western litera<sup>ry</sup>~~ture~~ trends. After 1945, they were represented by the periodical Uj Hold - (New Moon.) To this group belonged Gyózo' Határ (now in London) and Balázs Lengyel who is in prison. They followed French surrealist literature and Existentialism. They didn't publish at all between 1949 and '53, made a living by translations, and started to write again in '56.

The turning point came when Rákosi exploited ~~the~~ the Krushchev-Malenkov affair to overthrow Imre Nagy. For the first time in the ~~the~~ history of this dictatorship, a front was established against the returning Rákosi. The people and a considerable part of the intelligentsia<sup>had</sup> hated the regime from the beginning, now the disillusioned Communists joined with the people against the returning Rákosi. The old intelligentsia remained passive towards the regime, which was supported only by Stalinists and Party functionaries. Hardly anyone among the 30-40 year old intelligentsia generation supported Rákosi now. Now a front was formed, consisting of a good many people who had key positions in the regime, who now used these positions to undermine the regime from the inside. This is significant. Actually what happened was not that they wanted to destroy the regime from the inside, but that they wanted to save it through Imre Nagy; they could have brought about a Gomulka-type of situation at least temporarily. This sort of temporary situation could have existed for as long as ten years; the people would have been happy

to accept a Gomulka-type regime temporarily. While Imre Nagy was in power, these Communists felt that it wasn't shameful any longer to be a Communist; Communism was made Salonfähig again. Now that Rákosi returned these people were placed into an impossible ~~situation~~ situation, because it became clear that nothing could be done within the regime, within Communism. There was tremendous disillusionment when Rákosi came back with the help of the Russians. This was the heroic era of the Hungarian intelligentsia. It is significant that in 1955, the struggle of the writers began without hope. Communists and non-Communists struggled together against Rákosi, although it is true that it was the 20th Party Congress which made this possible. But the struggle began in the spring and summer of 1955. A debate began ~~in~~ over Veres' Öregék és Fiatalok, ~~the~~ <sup>(The</sup> Old and the Young) which, in a concealed fashion, was actually a statement in favor of Imre Nagy's program. They pretended that nothing <sup>had</sup> happened, that Rákosi didn't return, <sup>thus</sup> causing an inevitable collision with Rákosi. The writers started to attack the economic situation, illegality, etc., in 1953 and 1954. The socio-graphic campaign of the writers which sent them to the country to study the agricultural situation had a catastrophic effect, causing them disillusionment, and acquainting the entire country with the failure of the regime's agricultural policy. The socio-graphic method became very popular after 1953. Imre Nagy's supporters had a Populist flavor, they talked about intensive

agriculture, etc. (Imre Nagy is an honest, limited, a-political person; I like, but do not trust him. I met him twice at the Parliament during the Revolution.) The writers were not willing to give up their freedom of opinion because of Rákosi's return. It was the Writers' Association and its Party organization which organized the struggle; the struggle started from here. The writers felt that the country supported them. The Party organization of the Writers' Association had to accept the March, 1955, resolution against Nagy, together with all the other Party organizations of the country. But at the same time, at the meetings of the Party organization the Writers' Association, the Communist writers attacked the Rákosi policy with regard to culture, the banning of Nemeth's Galilei and Western literature. These meetings took place in the summer and fall of 1955. They continued to champion the June, 1953, resolution, within the Party, and tried to shift the Party line into a different direction on the basis of this resolution. Hay, Dery, Zelk, etc., turned against the Stalinists, and the result was the memorandum of 1955, to the Party.

was. I believe that Imre Nagy didn't have a great deal of concrete personal contact with the Party organization of the Writers' Association; his contacts were mainly with journalists like <sup>Grimes</sup> ~~Grimes~~, etc. In Budapest public opinion reacts immediately to delicate shifts in the tone of the press, hence the importance of journalism<sup>+5</sup>.



Towards the end of 1955, Rákosi counter-attacked. There was a purge of journalists, and he was planning a physical purge of the writers. There was to be a "literary Rajk trial" involving Déry and others. Then came the bolt of lightning: the 20th Party Congress. It was during Rákosi's attacks on the writers that the Communist intelligentsia began to wonder whether it was possible to do anything within Communism; they asked themselves: "must we fear at every moment a restoration of Rákosi and Stalinism?" They started to search for assurances against such a restoration and the search led them out of Communism. Partly it was a question of their own physical existence, but partly it was a question of principle. They asked: "Who can give us assurances that there will be no more illegalities?" The re-examination of the Rajk trial, and the fact that many of those who had been imprisoned in connection with the Rajk trial were now allowed to leave prison contributed to this questioning. This increased the tension in this atmosphere. Among those ~~who~~ freed from prison were Losonczy, and Donath, the Social Democrats, as well as non-Rajkist Communist like Kádár and Kállai. The latter were predestined to work for Rákosi because they shared responsibility for the Rajk trial. Now, because of the ~~Rajkist~~ revelations about the regime's Justizmord, it was very difficult to remain a Salonfähig Communist, except through a thoroughly anti-Stalinist attitude.

The 20th Party Congress sustained many of the <sup>aims</sup> ~~interests~~ of the

anti-Rákosi group, <sup>which</sup> ~~was~~ would have liked to purify the Party, to remain true to the Communist ideal. But they fatally overestimated the significance of the 20th Party Congress; they thought that ~~it would~~ <sup>allow</sup> ~~the~~ the establishment of an independent and Communist Hungary. They didn't see that this could not be done because of two hindering factors: 1) Soviet imperialism 2) the Hungarian Stalinists who attempted to justify their role to Moscow. Rákosi ordered his opponents, people like Dery and Hay, to his office and told them ~~how~~ how well off they were and asked them what they wanted. His tactics employed a mixture of threats and personal bribery. He affected the airs of a Renaissance dictator, and could be quite jovial. By then the Communist writers hated him because of his murder of Communists - not of class aliens - and they refused his offers with disgust. About two weeks before his fall, Rákosi called in Lukács, told him what a great philosopher he was, and asked him to ~~write~~ write a study justifying the Rajk trial ethically. Lukács left the room without a single word. Lukács told this ~~story~~ story during the Revolution. After the banning of the Petőfi Circle, Rákosi wanted to stage a trial for four ~~hundred~~ hundred members of the intelligentsia, and this is what caused his downfall. Lukács was included on this list. This was quite typical of Rákosi's methods. This projected trial of four hundred was quite well known in Party circles, and was proof of the paralysis which overtook Rákosi before his fall. He was right, however. He knew how to treat Hungary. The Revolution

bore out the correctness of his methods.

This is how the Petöfi Circle was established in 1954: In 1954, Imre Nagy formed farmers' circles in the villages - a typically Imre Nagy gesture - in accordance with the People's Front policy. The intelligentsia wanted to ~~do~~ follow this and subsequently established a Kossuth club, while the young intelligentsia formed the Petöfi Circle under the sponsorship of DISZ. It was supposed to be a debating circle for young intellectuals. At this time most of the members came from the workshop of young writers <sup>(F.I.M.)</sup> ~~who~~ who were not yet members of the Writers' Association. Then other young intellectuals followed. Until 1956, it was chiefly a social club and had no political significance yet. Then after the 20th Party Congress, some people realized that the Petöfi Circle had wonderful organizational possibilities. They wanted to make it a serious debating society which would work for the building of socialism in every field. One of the initiators was Gábor György Tánczos, whose father owned a paint store in Baja. I knew Tánczos well. He was an eccentric with avant-gardist provincial ambitions. He had a chemical laboratory in Baja, and in the 1940's he started reading Marx. In Baja there was a small group of Communist-Hungarian Jews who <sup>had</sup> escaped from Ujvidék (Novi Sad). This group stuck together, had meetings, etc., and it had a great role in indoctrinating the youth of Baja. They gave Tánczos such books as Illes' Russia, Marxist ~~literature~~ literature. Tánczos's

father, a Jew, ~~he~~ died in Auschwitz. Tanczos himself revolted against provincial conditions. He used to shock the priests at the Cistercian gymnasium <sup>he attended.</sup> He greeted the changes of 1945, with great joy. György Non took him to Budapest to work in Madisz, and when he came back from Budapest he was instrumental in making the peasants anti-semitic. He was the new world. He worked at Madisz until 1948, and then became a graduate student in (aspirans) Marxism-Leninism at the Lenin Institute. In 1948, he broke with his family, his mother, although he continued to send his wash home. He denied his origin because he was a bad káder. When somebody ~~it~~ denied his parents, the ~~an~~ regime appreciated him much more than those who were good káders to begin with. They paid a compromiser of this type much better. Tanczos had a rather disorderly private life with regard to women. From the very beginning he was the supervisor of Petöfi Circle for DISZ. In 1954, he visited his family and friends, including my mother, to apologize for his past attitudes. Many Communists did this around this time; it was a mass <sup>i</sup> epidemic. It was Imre Nagy who made him see the truth. Tanczos was a splendid tactician. The atmosphere of the Petöfi Circle is unforgettable; it was the only place where one could hold such meetings. I climbed in through a window to be able to hear the press debate - this was the grandest of all the Petöfi Circle meetings. It is interesting that this debate took place two days after Posnan. The critical moments and events in Hungary and Poland developed parallel to each other. Déry talked about the

youth of March, 1848, and said that he trusted that the Hungarian youth of 1956, ~~would~~<sup>would</sup> behave ~~with~~ with equal valor. Sándor Fekete of the Party opposition, now a Kádárist, talked about his interviews with leading Yugoslavs. He said that the struggle against darkness was ~~being~~ being fought not in Moscow or Belgrade but here. There was thunderous applause. We laughed, and said that this was just like the arrival of the Pilvax messenger announcing the beginning of the Revolution in Vienna. We laughed all along until the 23rd; we are a skeptical generation. To tell you the truth, it is a mystery to me how the regime managed to exist this long.

Tánczos didn't establish relations with Imre Nagy until September, 1956, for tactical reasons. The other Petöfi Circle people however visited Imre Nagy. In September, 1956, these Communists thought that a Danubian Confederation with Yugoslavia was the only sensible road, but this was undermined by the Gerö clique. The organizers of the Petöfi Circle consisted of the Lukács group; they were young Communist intellectuals in their thirties. The University students served as a mass basis.

After Litván attacked Rákosi ~~and~~<sup>at</sup> the Petöfi Circle, Boldissár kissed his behind at the Lukács swimming pool as a sign of his approval.

The platform of the Petöfi Circle was to work within the framework of Socialism but <sup>wanted</sup> to achieve very much within that. This, at any rate, was the only solution. Those who waited for the Renaissance

of Marxism overestimated the importance of the 20th Party Congress. They didn't realize that the Hungarian people were not satisfied with National Communism after the fall of Imre Nagy. National Communism was besieged from all sides. It was besieged by the Stalinists, the Soviet Union, as well as the Hungarian masses.

Rákosi was put on the spot by the 20th Party Congress which was in opposition to his line. He was badly informed, and hoped that his Stalinist connections in Moscow would stop the landslide. He hoped that he could persuade Moscow that his policies were necessary in Hungary. From the beginning he <sup>had</sup> decided to sabotage the 20th Party Congress. Rákosi clung to power in the most disgusting manner, trying to butter up Moscow <sup>with</sup> such things as his revolting self-criticism regarding the Rajk trial. The loathing in Hungary for Rákosi was just fantastic. People were disgusted by his sexual perversion, which was well known. Rákosi couldn't stop the Petöfi Circle, though he tried to do so by denouncing it in Moscow, explaining that the Petöfi Circle did not express the spirit of the 20th Party Congress, as it appeared. This was true, but they didn't believe him in Moscow. After the banning of the Petöfi Circle, Rákosi called in Tanczos and tried unsuccessfully to make him practice self-criticism. ~~But~~

The 20 year old generation.

This generation, my own, refused to allow the regime to do to it what it did to the other two generations. It gives me an enormous feeling of satisfaction, it makes me very very proud that the Communists failed with my generation, and that they failed in such

a demonstrative<sup>and</sup> spectacular fashion. ¶ Between 1949 and 1953, I attended the General Gymnasium in Budapest. There were only two or three Communists in the class. One of them a proletarian whose father had a good Party position. He was not dangerous. The other two Communists were two Jewish intellectuals; the father of one was a well-to-do physician and the father of the other had been killed by the Nazis. This was an elite ~~gym~~ gymnasium until 1947 or '48; the so-called "Mintagimnázium", run in a very liberal spirit. Then in 1948, it was filled up with proletarian students. The members of my class distrusted each other at first, but by our second year there was a wild ~~and~~ anti-Communist spirit rampant. The son of the Jewish doctor was the school principal's informer. He was transferred to the Madách Gymnasium where he continued to serve as an informer until he was beaten to a pulp, when he stopped his activities. This sort of thing was ~~the~~ characteristic. That's why this generation was intransigent when it got to the University; we predicted that it would be so. The second Communist of the class also transferred somewhere else, and so only the "proli" who was not dangerous, was left. The teachers were always ~~being~~ being transferred so that no community spirit could develop between them. But at any rate there were no Communists among them. The principal was the only Communist~~x~~ in the Gymnasium; he was a rightist before 1945, a careerist, and nothing more. In my class the students openly talked politics among themselves, though not before the teachers.

That's why the Communist students were forced to leave. The class was not typical; I would say that it was above ~~the~~ average in political consciousness. I myself was among the leaders in these political discussions. I was also, later, one of the 15-22 members of the University Revolutionary Committee. I think that you will find that most of these were already more ~~active~~ active in ~~the~~ Gymnasium. There were several reasons for our political opposition. First of all, everyone was badly off economically, and furthermore, the Jewish intelligentsia stratum hated the regime on principle. For instance, in 1952, when Eisenhower was elected president, everybody expected war because a soldier had been elected president. Also, people were glad because the Democrats were unpopular due to their attitude to China, and because of Roosevelt's concessions to the Soviet Union. Eisenhower talked about liberation, etc., and although the more sensible didn't believe it, everyone was glad. In Third Gymnasium we discussed Eisenhower's election.

The teachers taught what the regime wanted them to teach, but all the students knew that these were lies. "Az ~~is~~ egész ország cinkos, néma ..." ("The entire country, consisting of silent accomplices ...") There was a degree of open opposition in Gymnasium. For instance, in 1953, we asked provocative questions in our modern history class. The teacher, a woman, was worried and asked parents to ~~prevent~~ prevail on their kids not to do this sort of things. My class had strong literary interests. We read a great deal. My whole generation is like this. We respected each other



for our cultural attainments - our literary knowledge. We did not respect knowledge of natural sciences. We had a strongly developed set of values based on intellectual and spiritual attainments. In cultural and literary matters our stand was basically anti-regime. The Jewish intellectuals, who would have sympathized with Communism, otherwise, couldn't swallow the regime's attack on Babits, etc.

I clearly remember the time of Stalin's death in March, 1953. Just before his death, we asked <sup>in</sup> ~~at~~ our biology class, referring to the medical report which preceded his death, whether the fact that ~~a~~ blood was found in somebody's urine ~~meant~~ meant death. The day of his death is unforgettable. I remember waking up automatically around 7:00 a.m. and hearing Chopin's Funeral March being played over the radio on the top floor. I ~~was~~ rushed into my mother's bedroom and said: "Mutti, megdöglött" - ("Mother, he's <sup>dropped</sup> ~~is~~ dead.") We kissed each other. I was struggling with fits of laughter all day, in spite of the fact that all over Budapest there was hushed silence. In the Gymnasium we said to our friends: "Johnny, he dropped dead!" There was whole-hearted enthusiasm all over school. We also asked ourselves and each other: "What's going to happen now?" We were afraid that he couldn't die; that's the sort of concept Stalin meant to us. The exalted Jewish Communist women wept and said that they could <sup>Not</sup> imagine that ~~was~~ He could die. This was the first great cult in Hungary. In 1952, we were ordered

to decorate our class with various Communist symbols, and we put up 56 Stalin pictures in different poses, as a joke. Nobody said anything about ~~it~~. That morning we removed all the pictures. Our class also walked in single file all over the school (ballagás - a Hungarian school tradition), and we sang ~~the~~ "The traitor is dead ..." - ("Meghalt a ~~sz~~ cselssóvo") from László Hunyady. The teachers shut themselves up in their own studies so that they would not have to ruin their future by watching us do what we ~~were~~ were doing. Between ten and eleven we had Constitution class; the pressure had lifted from us. It was fantastic! The discussion involved Socialist patriotism which included love for the Soviet Union and Stalin. Somebody got up and said, "But what about Comrade Malenkov?" The teacher answered? "Well, let's not forestall events." When Stalin's funeral was taking place, ~~the~~ we were supposed to ~~have~~ <sup>observe</sup> two minutes <sup>of</sup> silence. It was during our physics class, and after the first half minute there was open laughter. The teacher couldn't help himself, he was laughing too but he was also scared and said: "Boys, boys, stop it."

The Revolution accomplished a very important thing; that youth began to trust each other and talk to each other. There is joke according to which there is one Communist in Hungary, and nobody knows who he is. ~~Every~~ <sup>Now</sup> on October 23rd, Gymnasium students attend school with black arms-bands on their sleeves, and seven and eight year-olds ostracize the children of functionaries. At this time my class was ~~one~~ <sup>unique</sup> <sup>ag</sup> in ~~stating~~ such an open demonstration but at

the time of Stalin's death. In Constitution Class I said: "The chief is dead, why don't they close the shop?" The teacher pretended that he didn't hear. We could tell that most of the teachers were reactionaries; they taught the required material but everybody knew that it was a lie. They were not intensely or actively anti-Communist; they belonged to the passive 50-60 year old generation. They were not intellectually active. It's strange about the word reactionary; the Communists made people accept the word, and it had a connotation of something good until the Revolution. This shows the degree of contamination ~~of~~ <sup>regarding</sup> words. The Communists disgraced the concepts of Socialism, progress, etc., and these concepts were rehabilitated in the Revolution. Among the young teachers there were some National Communists, but on the whole the older generation of teachers <sup>was</sup> ~~were~~ scared stiff. We, the students were the first generation which was not scared. After all, we had nothing to lose, and we also had the feeling that we just couldn't bear this for an entire life. When you are twenty, you simply cannot bear the thought that you would have to live this way until you are 60. What was terrible was not the low living standards, but the rudeness in the shops, the pushing in the streetcar, the impertinence and insolence, which were due to the fact that nobody was responsible for anything. One had a constant feeling of pressure; see Illyés on this subject. This constant feeling was very disturbing and poisoned one's life, especially the life of that

segment of the youth which had a feeling of moral responsibility. The fact is that the struggle against Communism was fought by our sick and neurotic youth; it was prepared by us, <sup>and</sup> all the physical fighting was done by the healthy. In Hungary there was a certain pathos, a certain glory in being neurotic. In the West this does not exist. In Hungary neurosis meant a danger to the regime, and therefore there was a good reason for being neurotic. For 22 years I strove to attain delicacy, subt<sup>le</sup>ty, sensibility, etc. this is something which I will have to give up in the West. My aim was to live ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> nothingness, since I am ~~at~~ the last stage and there is no point in making children. I was convinced that the regime couldn't be changed within my own life time, and therefore my single purpose was to free myself of its encumbrances. The aim was to achieve the utmost, the extreme ripening, to reach the outermost edge of decadence. Decadence was the only way to resist the regime, and it was also my own need, because I do not like work and I am weak physically, etc. To get away from it all I used to go to Castle Hill with women, with wine, in order to forget. But it was impossible to forget. There was a feeling of desperation about it.

My favorite poets are Attila Jóssef, Sandor Weöres and László Nagy; the latter two are the greatest living lyric poets in Hungary today, and should not be neglected for Háry and Déry. Déry is a good writer, but his field is chiefly political literature. In Gymnas

almost everyone read, and some of us did a great deal of reading. We were a very mature class. To the best of us modern Hungarian literature provided the first great experience.

I entered the University in September 1953, and attended it until I left Hungary in 1956. I attended both the faculties of Philosophy and Law. I had difficulties in being admitted to the University, and was finally successful by winning a contest. If I had not been admitted, it would have meant the end! I had difficulties because of my kader. At the University I would have wanted to attend the faculty of Law - this was a family tradition - but every University had rules about compulsory attendance. Students had to attend 30 hours of classes a week. The fact is that I have a visual memory, and also I find it very difficult to get up in the morning. I am capable of only four to five hours of intellectual work a day. Therefore, because I knew that on the faculty of Languages, the number of hours attended was supervised less stringently, and because I knew that regardless of the ideological indoctrination I would at least learn the languages, I was attracted to this faculty. But there were drawbacks. A litterateur had to be an opportunist and serve the regime, and I was unwilling to do that, although I could have made a career for myself. Or else, one could become a researcher, but this was a very dull job. I hate Communism as an individualist, and because my way of life is in opposition to the regime. The only reason I was not expelled from the Univers:

was because I knew ideology, I knew Marxism-Leninism better than anyone else, and because I told them I could not be <sup>come</sup> a Communist, since I was a religious Jew. This was quite unusual!

I read Szabad Nép, and since 1949, I also read the ~~Neue Zürcher~~ <sup>Neue Zürcher</sup> regularly. I had access to Western newspapers and periodicals through my free-lance jobs as a translator.

Existentialism was one of the basic great experiences of my life; I liked Nietzsche because of his pride, and his ~~attitude~~ attitude <sup>of</sup> ~~was~~ basic disgust with humanity.

In Western languages there were three ways open to a university student: 1) teaching in some provincial town, 2) linguistics, 3) serving the regime through literary criticism, etc. So I decided to attend both the faculty of Philosophy and Law at the same time, and thus by receiving two diplomas my future would be more or less secured. I received permission to attend both faculties. I decided on this course, even though I knew I would have to take 16 exams instead of 8.

My professors liked me because they felt the atmosphere of the past about me, because of my cultivation and manners. After all, I was not an embarrassed peasant boy. They were interested in me, and invited me to their apartments, etc. In 1955, I was expelled from both faculties, the faculty of Law and Western Languages, because I didn't attend classes, although I took the exams. They accused me of "hoarding diplomas". It was the registrar's department

† (tanulmányi osztály) which was responsible for this move; they didn't bother to ask my professors. I was quite insolent at the University; for instance, I used to ~~stand~~<sup>greet</sup> the Marxist proles on the Marxist faculty ~~with~~<sup>with</sup> "I kiss your hand". When I was dismissed from both faculties, I decided to use my pull to remain on at least one, the faculty of Law. A friend of mine changed to the French faculty from the faculty of Law, which enabled me to take his place. My case caused quite a sensation: they called me a class alien who attended two faculties, etc. It was just like the numerus clausus under Horthy.

The ~~real~~ history of Hungarian literature is the real history of Hungary; there was always a close connection between literature and history in Hungary. Literature was always the only field in which there was a possibility of resistance, the possibility of taking a political stand.

Until 1953, there was absolute darkness. One couldn't get permission to read special books. After that one could get permission from the professors, who were glad to give it, to read books on the index. In 1953, the regime effected a pose of freedom, and at the end they choked on this pose.

On the faculty of law Ferenc Eckhardt, professor of Hungarian legal history, was a focal point of freedom. The regime put up with him because he was needed, and because they respected his left-wing stand under Horthy. Sándor Eckhardt was another courageous

professor; he kept his position as a member of the editorial committee of ~~the~~ Vigilia, and he asserted his independence by refusing to rise during the rhythmic applause for Stalin. Another professor who was allowed to keep his job, although he was a known anti-Communist, ~~was~~ was Albert Gyergyay. The experts of Western literature had a comparatively easy time of it, because the so-called super~~m~~visors didn't know their jobs. But there were difficulties in this field also, because only a limited amount of students were allowed to attend this faculty; there ~~was~~ was a numerus clausus. If a student was not admitted, he sometimes went to a different university, or perhaps he waited a few years until he was admitted. This was not a matter of principle on the part of the regime, but sadism.

One of the inspiring people was Marcell Benedek who gave a small seminar on literary translations, and also taught history of drama. He was one of the few inspiring professors. In spite of appearances Szekfu was not approved by the Communists, because he simply gave off sparks of legitimism. Szekfu was one of the great experiences for me. I am a legitimist because of family tradition, and because the Hapsburg monarchy was far more humane than any other regime Hungary <sup>has</sup> experienced. Until the Revolution I always felt that we could recruit a ~~an~~ certain historical stratum for <sup>a</sup> the Revolution by holding <sup>out</sup> the hope of a democratic monarchy.



I felt that the ideal solution would be an Austro-Hungarian Confederation under a king. I think my beliefs were extremely unusual. ~~My~~ My personal adherence to monarchy<sup>h</sup> was due to our family traditions; I inhaled this atmosphere at home. This was not really a Hapsburg conception, but merely a conception of monarchy. The Revolution proved that the strata which would have been attracted to such a monarchy were not important. The whole idea was simply not timely.

It is tragic that the historic Hungary was lost as a result of ~~the~~ lack of leadership, corruption and decay since 1920. And it is touching that it was the hooligan of Ferencváros who created ethics out of nothing during the Revolution. It ~~was~~ would have been better if the old tradition of the nobility had not disappeared. The Revolution clearly showed the moral values ~~that~~ existing in the nation; it was fantastic that the nation was capable of this. They started from nothing, from zero, ethically. How did this happen? ~~It~~ Toynbee says that suffering is the greatest creator of human and ethical values. There has been no such purity since the birth of Christ, and it was brought about through the humiliation ~~of~~ to which the nation was exposed. In the past the noblest era of Hungary was the reform ~~era~~ era Szekfu talks about; the era of Szechenyi which was less chaotic than any other in Hungarian history. Incidentally, I am convinced that the post-humous study by Szekfu<sup>1</sup> was falsified by Ortutay. Kosary was another

historian who was a problem for the regime because of the Petöfi Circle's demand for his rehabilitation. The young historians pushed this demand, and hence Kosáry had a positive role in the events of 1956.

On the French faculty of the University Kafka was one of the favorites of the students. ~~But~~ All the students here were anti-regime; only certain minorities, certain faculties had pro-regime students. For instance, the Lenin Institute, <sup>and</sup> the faculties of history and journalism, were carefully screened, and at least 10 percent of their students were pro-regime. At the University we loved poetry with a religious adoration, it was a cult with us, and formed the basis for our friendships. This was quite different from the West. Among us poetry, a love for the same poets, led to deep personal bonds. And when these bonds of friendship were established, then we told each other why we felt humiliated and disillusioned. We also talked about politics, of course. I belonged to no single circle of friends; I had many small circles of friends, and this was fairly atypical. The reason for this was that I didn't want to let people really close to me, and didn't want to tell all to any single person. Among my friends were déclassé aristocrats, students of Hungarian literature at the University, young ~~xxx~~ writers, poets like Gómöri, young aesthetes with whom I read at the Szechenyi Library, music students at the Academy of Music, half-cultivated ~~xxx~~ members of

the gentry living in Buda, night people of the boulevards with uncertain existences, etc.

I could never get up in the morning, and sometimes I stayed in bed for weeks. I missed a great many of my lectures at the University. I had three kinds of women friends; some were university students, students at the ~~State~~ School of Pedagogy, psychologists. Some were typists and clerks, half-prostitutes actually, who were very much impressed by our apartment, and who were willing to go to bed for a dinner and an evening's fun. The third type were prostitutes. Sex was one of the ways I escaped from the regime; I have never been in love and I wonder if I ever will be. I am so jaded by the sordid<sup>ness</sup> of the many sexual experiences I have had that I doubt if I will ever fall in love. The students of peasant origin had difficulties in their sex ~~life~~ lives because they only had the student dormitories to go to. The sex life of the bourgeois students was <sup>variable</sup> ~~variable~~, and the bohemians and musicians got it where they could, right and left, all the time.

The best students at the faculty of Philosophy read a great deal of modern Hungarian<sup>and</sup> and world literature; they especially liked Ferenc Juhász, Attila József, László Nagy and <sup>weöres,</sup> ~~weöres,~~ Among the French moderns, they liked Proust, Sartre, Camus, or <sup>at least</sup> whatever was translated of his writings, as well as Gide. The ~~Populist~~ students were chiefly primitive peasants, although I was friends with the more intelligent among them. Many of them tried to write, mostly badly, although some wrote quite well. They read the Populist

writers, and in general their literary tastes tended to be more political. We read the Populist writers, too, <sup>but</sup> to us they were not as important. The Magyar peasant, the Magyar fate, was more important to them. They also liked Dostoyevsky. Dostoyevsky became very popular in 1956, as well as earlier, among the youth. Soviet culture didn't approve of him and his style impressed the youth. Pista Szabó and some of the other peasant students <sup>liked</sup> ~~loved~~ Dostoyevsky, and it was bad for them. Dostoyevsky's bad for the Hungarian peasant; the Hungarian peasant shouldn't philosophize about the stars. Also, his style <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ sloppy, a bad example for these boys. Also, he lacked realism. There was a great Dostoyevsky cult among students. Some of the students like Dsida; Gómöri for instance. ✕ Of the Hungarian writers, Milán Füst had a great many followers, and some people, among them myself, liked Tersánszky. Budapest also had a Huxley ~~was~~ sect among the intelligentsia, though not so much at the university. In 1955, young psychologists performed mescaline experiments in secret. Modern psychology was fashionable; modern trends in every field were fashionable. There were many small circles of this type, circles studying Existentialism, etc.

Not only the Populists, but a great many other students were influenced by Németh's: A Minőség Forradalma - (The Revolt of Quality). I was an exception <sup>to</sup> this, because his concept of Socialism was repugnant ~~was~~ to me. The Populists wanted to achieve many of the aims Németh outlines, the free land collectives, etc. There was no

real political difference among us; we all agreed on the basis, we all wanted a normal parliamentary democracy, giving the Hungarian people ~~at~~ the right to decide. Slowly, slowly we began to discuss ~~these~~ things freely with each other; everyone with everyone. This is the way one found out whether someone was trustworthy. We started <sup>probing the reliability of a person</sup> by attacking a Soviet movie or pointing out how tragic it was that we didn't teach psychology in Hungary. This continued gradually until, in two or three weeks, we could tell <sup>him</sup> ~~each~~ <sup>at least</sup> each other everything. This way we discovered that ~~at least~~ 90 percent of us <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ in opposition to the regime. All of this, of course, took place after Stalin's death, after the relaxation in politics. Before that, things were awful; before that, it was a ~~xxx~~ reign of terror.

The professors didn't influence us in finding ourselves and each other. It all came from us, from nothing, and ~~from~~ Hungarian literature which was the only pure value of the nation. The teachers influenced us chiefly by opening intellectual horizons to us, and not by politics.

It was logical that once we got to the University there would be trouble. We hated ourselves and our fate when we entered the University. What could you expect? The best thing we could hope for was <sup>a</sup> provincial teacher's position, with no money, no opportunity for travel. For the intelligentsia living in the provinces is sheer death. There seemed to be no hope for getting

ahead in the humanities without selling oneself politically. My generation is a ~~st~~ disillusioned generation, because of the Germans, and because of the Soviets in 1945. We were eight or ten years old then, but the things which happened to us made us mature early. My father died in Germany as a hostage of the Nazis, and I myself was <sup>held</sup> ~~expressed~~ by the Arrow Crossists for a while. My generation was skeptical and cynical until the 23rd of October. By the time we learned about bourgeois democracy after the war, the Communists took over in 1947 and '48, and we had to change all our ideas. Our basic experience of life was that the world is ugly. What we saw was a political cesspool, the rotting of Hungarian society, ever since 1945; constant lies from the Communists, constant but changing lies. The basic problems of humanity and man's nature, the problem of the goodness of man was neglected by Marxism, and youth was hungry for them. But Marxism was good to the extent that it made youth critical and sensible with regard to such issues as Nazism. The Revolution was a reaction to the attitude which the regime forced on youth; it was as if youth had lost its parents and ~~it~~ was not allowed to mourn, but had to sing, smile, praise, etc. They raged because they were not allowed to mourn. Thus, slowly the young people got to know each other, while the old people didn't even start to talk to each other. This youth <sup>aged</sup> ~~disparaged~~ itself, <sup>in regard to its own Magyariness;</sup> ~~feeling it was not sufficiently Magyar.~~ This was the first generation which was critical and negative <sup>concerning</sup> ~~with regard to~~ its own Magyar-

ness. That's why the Revolution was pure on this score. <sup>Youth</sup> ~~They~~ knew that Hungary <sup>had been</sup> ~~was~~ Hitler's satellite. It was hurt when it realized that while in Poland and Germany there were movements against Communism, we were <sup>being</sup> excessively servile towards the Soviet Union. (Tulnyalunk). At the same time this youth insisted on boundary revision, on the annihilation of Trianon, while proclaiming: "We are no good as a people". The other form of self-disparagement was that youth asked itself: "What kind of youth is it which is not youth?" I mean, that we had no freedom, no opportunity to travel, no entertainment, etc. Life was drab. I think the majority at the University felt this way. Mine was the lost generation, and this feeling of being lost contributed to the tension, the pressure, which finally led to the Revolution. In the West they didn't know that in Hungary <sup>young</sup> ~~young~~ musicians <sup>and artists</sup> experimented with the twelve-tone system and modern painting, that young people, including myself, <sup>that in 1955 young psychologists experimented with mescoline</sup> read Jaspers and Heidegger, We couldn't utilize these pursuits in our careers; they were ends in themselves, and allowed us to assert ourselves in our own circle of friends. A counter-scale of values developed in us, and in the entire country, against the scale of values of the regime. When the Petöfi Circle started, the University youth naturally attended in droves. Before that the attitude of youth towards Communism was skeptical, cynical and passive. At the same time it had a feeling of being sentenced to death. In this generation there is a great intention

and desire for purity: to do nothing ugly! This is a reaction to the Communists' mendacious idealism. At the Petöfi Circle the disillusionment of the organizers about Communism met with the disillusionment of youth. The disillusionment of Déry over the Rajk trial met with the feeling of hopelessness in youth; youth reacted to this. It was a paradox that the older generation went from enthusiasm to disillusionment, and youth from ~~disillusionment~~ disillusionment to enthusiasm. October 23rd was a creative gesture; the combination of nihilism and <sup>the</sup> sorrow of the nation result<sup>ed</sup>/in great national poetry.

After the 20th Party Congress, changes were instituted in the instruction of Marxism-Leninism. Without the compulsory Marxism and military training there would have been no Revolution in Hungary. However, this training was beneficial in its negative effects; i.e., it taught the a-political to engage in politics, and it taught youth how to handle guns. It came in handy during the Revolution. The officers in the summer military camps <sup>for</sup> ~~were~~ students were stupid and brutal, and therefore the students established a common front against the officers. The students in these military camps often proved insubordinate, and every summer had its share of revolts, especially among the ~~the~~ law students who had a <sup>long</sup> tradition of this sort of thing. After the 20th Party Congress political activity at the University increased, as was demonstrated <sup>start</sup> at the Marxist seminars. Slowly we, the students, could/to fight



for concrete aims. There were demands for greater freedom, etc., at Disz meetings; mass organizations like DISZ were exploited by us when the prevailing line allowed it. Now the Communists were forced into a moral ghetto, so that, in spite of the fact that everything belonged to them, it was ~~them~~ they who were afraid. The atmosphere in those days was terrific. In June, Rákosi established an 18-day reign of terror after the banning of the Petöfi Circle; then one could see that a Revolution was coming. Everybody refused to obey him; he couldn't find any journalists to write for him, etc. When Gerö came to power, everyone said that he had three months. The political activities of the University <sup>y</sup> ~~situ~~ accelerated in the fall because of Rákosi's fall during the summer. After Rákosi's fall the students in the summer military camps felt a distinct change of atmosphere; the officers changed their tone towards them. Before that they would say: "Is it the Petöfi Circle you want? I'll Petöfi Circle you!" When the University opened, everyone wanted to outline the details of the political demands we wanted to make. Before that we concentrated on Rákosi's fall, and didn't bother about the rest of it. Now everyone was making demands. The doctors in the hospitals were demanding the opportunity to study abroad; everyone tried to get more freedom in his own field. Suddenly in September the country was activated. In international affairs there was talk about the National Communist solution, i.e., the Yugoslav conception. The

National Communists felt that this was the only way to save Communism. The separate demands of the Rajk group, the Lukács group, the National Communist and anti-Rákosi Party opposition, were merged under the leadership of Imre Nagy. The anti-Communist masses of the country also turned to him for leadership because his position was not yet clarified, and he was still not readmitted to the Party.

In ~~the~~ September the first serious political issue was the problem of the functionaries. Only the AVO and the Party apparatus still supported the regime. Those Communists who felt that Communism was compromised through the activities of these functionaries demanded a campaign against them. At the same time, the question of the rehabilitation of Imre Nagy was brought up. At the University this was discussed at the Marxist seminars. In the ~~the~~ toilets in the University, one could see political slogans, something which did not occur since 1947. On the streets one could also see signs: "Long live Imre Nagy", "Down with Rákosi and Gerö!" This took place as early as the summer, according to the rules of the games established at the 20th Party Congress. The first important move was the Writers' Association Congress in September; 700,000 copies of the issue of Irodalmi Ujság which printed the minutes of the Congress were snapped up in no time. The Petöfi <sup>Circle</sup> also held meetings although officially it was still banned. In the press Rákosi's fall was exploited by the journalists, the 30-40 year old

generation, who turned it into a fall of Rákosiism. Rákosi's list of 400 proved to them that here the return of Rákosiism was always possible. They demanded the purging of the functionaries; this was a form of spiritual revenge, a way to pay <sup>them for</sup> back <sup>all the</sup> mental torture they had been through. They also demanded guarantees against the restoration of Stalinism, realizing that only democracy could provide these guarantees. The radio and the newspapers, all except Szabad Nep, were in the hands of the Party opposition, who now widened the struggle. In September the papers were full of photographs of Imre Nagy, although he had not yet been rehabilitated by the Party. The National Communists realized that if the functionaries were fired, new people would be needed. But who? <sup>Thus</sup> the National Communists, who had no wide mass basis, had to ally themselves with the people. To the National Communists, the anti-Stalin forces in Moscow appeared to be strong, and Moscow seemed to approve some idea of a Danubian Confederation with Belgrade. To the National Communists, Belgrade looked better than the West, because after all Yugoslavia also had cadres, etc. I think it was the Hungarian Stalinists, <sup>including Stalinist</sup> ~~and the~~ <sup>generals</sup> ~~and the~~ <sup>Stalinists,</sup> ~~Stalinists~~ who, <sup>possibly</sup> with the help of <sup>the</sup> Moscow, <sup>prevented</sup> the launching of this Yugoslav solution. Locally the Hungarian Stalinists had a <sup>disgusting</sup> ~~disgusting~~ role; they were responsible for the <sup>commissariat (tagosítás)</sup> ~~commissariat~~ of land in the villages, etc. In other words, there were, even at the height of the political ferment, counter-forces ~~and~~ dragging the country back. The country could clearly feel these Stalinist

forces pulling it back. For the first time the adjectives reactionary and conservative were used about Stalinists, and not about Mindzsenty. It was now the National Communists who called the Stalinists by these names. The Losonczy-Friss debate about the functionaries was the basic and central symptom of the struggles of the National Communists against the Stalinists. Now the local, provincial intelligentsia also started to organize, to protest the banning of the Petöfi Circle. Now the Party preferred to have merely professional, instead of political, debates. Now they suddenly said that the writers should write literature and not political pamphlets. Now it was they who wanted to be a-political and narrowly professional. One could get around this sort of thing by saying at a meeting, in the spirit of the 20th Party Congress, that the Party secretary had no professional qualifications for his job, instead of attacking him on political grounds.

Even the anti-Communists trusted and wanted to use Imre Nagy. They reasoned like this: "Both National Communists and we, non-Communists, would be included in the regime. The National Communists would be the facade, and we would be the real power behind them." Gradually ~~there was~~ a <sup>rapprochement took place</sup> ~~reconciliation~~ between the National Communists and the people, ever since Imre Nagy's fall, <sup>and</sup> especially <sup>after</sup> ~~since~~ the banning of the Petöfi Circle and the September struggles. The National Communists opted for the people, and wanted to go together with the people. It is characteristic that today my friends

include people with whom I didn't talk for eight years, for instance Gábor Tánzos. <sup>Now, in the fall,</sup> When I talked to them I didn't mention the fact that I wanted to go further than they. They knew, however, what their fate would be, and it was honorable of them to accept a secondary role. See Kádár's pride ~~about~~ <sup>in</sup> the new <sup>pure</sup> Party, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> the fact that the Revolution was organized by Communists. Maléter is a good example of this type of Communist.

After the 20th Party Congress, there were many demonstrations in public places. For instance, there was an amazing ten-minute shouting, thunderous applause at the premiere of Zrinyi's Appeal (Zrinyi Szózat), The same sort of thing happened when the ~~new~~ <sup>Hungarian</sup> flag was again used at a performance of The Gypsy Baron. And when Bánk Baji was performed there was an eight minute demonstrative applause after the aria "Hazám, Hazám", (My Country, My country). There were similar demonstrations following the premieres of modern musical works, though with different motives. I could cite many examples of this sort of thing.

b

In October, the demands within the Party for rehabilitations grew gradually stronger; the Rajk camp wanted it for personal reasons, the Lukács camp for ideological reasons, and Imre Nagy's camp as a move against Stalinism and as a way of bringing back Nagy. The people didn't care. At the funeral of Rajk, the Danse Macabre of the Party was fully revealed. The Imre Nagy camp made a break-through in the throbbing atmosphere of early October. The press ~~was~~ attacks

on the Gerö regime became sharper and sharper. The Petöfi Circle demanded Imre Nagy's rehabilitation, and there was a fantastic newsreel about the Rajk ~~funeral~~<sup>funeral</sup>. The newsreel first showed the funeral, the widows and the orphans. Then it showed some examples of the cult of personality, montages of newspapers with pictures of Stalin, then Rákosi, and headlines about Rákosi's and Gerö's attacks on Rajk. There were newsreel clippings of rhythmic applause and shouts of "Long Live Rákosi." Then the commentator said: "And this is why this man had to die at the height of his powers, etc." Then the newsreel came back to the funeral and the commentator said: "Never again..., etc. These men will guarantee that such a thing will never occur again." And while he was saying <sup>his</sup> the newsreel showed some of the people who were present at the funeral and stopped on Imre Nagy face among the mourners. Who was responsible for his sort of thing? Young 30-40 year old national Communists or possibly not even Communists, who had positions in the press and movie industry, etc. All the newspapers published pictures of Imre Nagy at the funeral with a caption: "Among the ~~mourners~~ mourners", without mentioning his name. The Communists made these gestures with pathos and deadly honorableness. To us, however, this was a comedy.

It was the demonstration which took place during and after the funeral of Rajk which first revealed the importance of University students. Perhaps if it had not ~~rained~~ rained, there would have been a Revolution that day. The first student circle

was started in Debrecen and then spread to other universities. The students wanted to establish a new youth organization to replace DISZ, and tactics demanded that they use as pretext the claim that DISZ had lost contact with youth. They didn't say that they wanted a new youth organization against Socialism. Szeged had the first organized, planned, new Mefesz organization, ~~was~~ because Szeged was somehow not supervised as stringently as the other universities. Now started the meetings at the various universities to establish Mefesz. I participated in the establishment of the Vasváry Circle at the faculty of Law. The activities of the Stalinists and the impact of the Polish events contributed to the outbreak of the Revolution. Now we felt we couldn't wait any longer; we had to be constantly ashamed ~~and~~ <sup>that</sup> we were still talking when in Poland the blood had ~~flowed~~ <sup>flowed</sup>. At the universities there were permanent meetings. To refute Marosán's speech, the universities sent a delegation to the factories; the young workers of Csepel, ~~formed~~ <sup>formed</sup> the Attila József Circle. Now we were united, the people and youth had found each other. When we decided on Monday to hold a demonstration on Tuesday, the young writers who were university students informed the Writers' Association. The Petöfi Circle, the factories, and the military academies were also informed. The fact that ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> Bem and Petöfi Officers' Schools joined us, gave us self-confidence. At the Polytechnic Institute, there was an all

night meeting, preparing the classic draft of the 16 demands. I believe this will go down in history beside the 12 points of March 15, 1848. When on the morning of the demonstration, Piros prohibited it, Tanczos led a university delegation to Geró at the Central Committee offering the Petófi Circle's guarantee that the demonstration would not be exploited by hostile elements. Geró reluctantly agreed. We sat on the stairs of the University while the girls made tri-colored cockades. We were pale and scared because we were sure that we would be shot at. In answer to a note in Szabad Nép, inserted by György Máté, <sup>Party</sup> Stalinist/secretary of the Writers' Association, to the ~~effect~~ effect that the Association was opposed to the demonstration, all the writers participated. I saw Zelk, Veres and Déry at the Bem statue. I was one of the directors (rendező) of the demonstration; with a tri-color armband, I ran <sup>to</sup> the universities, and the Rákosi works to make sure that the workers ~~was~~ would join the demonstration because we knew that in that case the AVO's couldn't do anything. And then the demonstration, and suddenly the town was ours, for the first time in ten years. During the Revolution I wrote articles for the revolutionary papers, among them Függetlenség - (Independence) of Dudás and Egyetem Ifjuság <sup>(University youth,)</sup> and I also wrote for the radio. I participated in the demonstration of the 25th, I wrote leaflets, ran around.

Youth made the Revolution, and lived in an ecstasy of purity during the Revolution, in sharp contrast to its nihilistic attitude



of the past few years. László Németh once said that Hungarian literature was a swamp-flower (lápvirág). I would add to this that on October 23, this swamp-flower impregnated the people, so that the purity which had been characteristic of Bartók and Németh now characterized the entire Hungarian people. If we had won, we could have faced the West with an arrogant attitude: we could have picked and chosen as to what to adopt and what to reject from the West.

We were all disgusted by the attitude of the Western diplomats during the Revolution. It was revolting! They sat in the cellar and trembled. What revolting lack of heroism!

During the Revolution the white shirts gleamed; you have to be well-groomed when you make a Revolution. I remember standing in a doorway with a friend, with shots spattering the street from the top of the roofs. My friend said: "Old man, your left cuff has slipped up your sleeve." And while we stood in that doorway we recited French poetry, and Italian poetry of the Risorgimento.

R On November 3, I went to Győr as a member of the delegation of the University Revolutionary Committee, and returned to Budapest on the following Thursday. I left again the following Saturday, and arrived at the Austrian border on Tuesday.

INTERVIEWER'S COMMENTS:

A deliberately cultivated attitude of neurotic decadence makes Respondent appear almost a caricature of a particularly over-

ripe character by Thomas Mann or Proust. He is a vitally brilliant, ~~an~~ eccentric, and precocious boy, with personal habits which suggest a rather shocking degree of dissipation. Scion of a prominent political family ~~and~~ of upper middle-class Jewish intelligentsia, his personality is partly a reflection of the overbred, hypersensitive, raffiné quality of this social stratum of Hungary. Partly, however, his attitude was a reaction, a form of escape, a method of resisting the regime.

A few stories his friends tell about him tend to emphasize the quality of the pose and the personality. When he arrived at the very respectable hotel where his friends and he were quartered in Vienna, dead tired, ragged and muddy, after his escape from Hungary, he looked around, and with a note of great surprise and disillusionment in his voice said: "This is the West?" He also wanted to return to Hungary to fetch his special and indispensable silk-lined bedroom slippers which he had left behind.

At home, in Hungary, he liked to sleep late, and when a friend at one time found him in bed in a darkened bedroom, at noon, surrounded by volumes of Proust, Respondent exclaimed: "Please leave me alone! I am associating." He belonged to a small coterie of similarly inclined young aesthetes in Budapest, who formed a club of snobs whose initials were intended to mock the similarly ~~initial~~ ~~initial~~ initialed Communist organizations. This Association of Snobs sent letters of censure to those it found guilty of bad taste; some

victims received letters for wearing ugly neckties, while Professor Albert Gyergyay once received such a letter for having written a Marxist critique of some aspect of Western literature.