

(Respondent is a 55 year old married man, who never had any money making occupation. He lived with his wife on the charity of their relatives and friends. During the Nazi occupation of Hungary, he was dragged away to a concentration camp in Germany. His arm still bears his number tattooed on it.)

I am an aesthetician, a philosopher, but I was very much preoccupied also with political science, and with painting. Some of my writings appeared before the war, but since that time, especially I was only vegetating. I was, however, always active on the intellectual scientific field. I would say that I worked in a certain kind of underground movement in purely intellectual way, however not only since 1945, but already since earlier time. Politically I belonged since 1920 up to the beginning of 1946 to the Social Democratic Party, but I was never active in the Party.

In 1936 I prepared with the assistance of a colleague of mine, who worked with a shipping company, an essay entitled "Indictment of the Spirit" (Vádirat a Szellem Ellen). At the meeting of the Pen Club in Budapest, on which Thomas Mann was our illustrious guest, this essay attracted quite an attention. Together with its

second part, entitled "Spritual Geography of Europe" ("Európa Szellemi Földrajzához") it gave a cross section description of the spiritual currents in the Europe of the '30-ies and gave an indication of our ideological attitude. It dealt with Marxism, Positivism, Psychoanalysis, and existentialism.

(As far as the interviewer could find out, the first part of the above essay was the only writing ever published by the respondent.)

During the last 10 years, I was in steady contact with my former colleague (with whom we wrote together the essay, mentioned above) and also with the intellectually more active part of the younger generation. There were engineers, writers, painters, and other professional people in my circle of friends and acquaintances, but only such men, whose interest was not limited to the mechanical, technical aspects of their occupation only, but were keen to learn also the spiritual, aesthetic side of their vocation.

Since I have learned about Marxism by scientific investigations, I was able to indicate its dangers already in 1944/45. In this way, those young people who were in my circle and had been warned by me, were spared all the great surprises and disillusionment which befell

many naive young men during the first years of the Communist regime.

Between 1945 and '47, we held a series of open lectures and discussions in the apartment of one of my friends. We continued later these evenings behind closed doors. Our topics included Marxism and other currents of philosophy, and also different problems of philosophy of mathematics, psychology, etc.

Between 1945/47 and again in 1956 during the month preceding the Revolution, these meetings and debates have not been too dangerous but they could not be called very opportune either. In the intervening time, we came together less frequently and limited our circle to the closest and most reliable friends. We also strived to discuss the most important and essential and for the Communists the most dangerous problems and ideas in a strictly scientific and artistic basis. Since I preoccupied myself always with Marxism and history of religion, I could cause suspicion toward my person very easily. However, I always attacked questions of ideology quite openly and nobody could accuse me of an inimical ideology, since I always posed and was known as a Marxist philosopher.

Immediately preceding the Revolution the whole atmosphere

in Hungary was loosening up and the same kind of debating circles sprang up spontaneously on the scientific and artistic field as the Petöfi Circle was on the literary field. Within these circles enthusiastic and spirited, but often also very sharp discussions, were conducted.

The economic development of Hungary during the last years was predestined by the ideological myth of the Communists. The fact that Hungary was not even more ruined and that the Communist policy did not end in total bankruptcy already years ago, ^{can be explained} only through the talent and ability of the Hungarian Communist leaders. One should not forget that the fanatical moscovite guard in Hungary had been the pupils of the circle formed by Jászi, Ady, Ervin Szabó. Many Hungarian Communists belonged to the galaxy of stars of the international Communist movement. For example Béla Kún, Jenő Varga, József Révai, Mihály Rákosi, Ernő Gerő, and intellectually the most talented of them; György Lukács.

It is interesting to mention as characteristic to the fanaticism of the moscovites, but also to the European culture the following example of contrasts. Révai, when told about the events having taken place in the Petöfi Circle, gave the following comment: "Why didn't you shoot them?" The same Révai has saved

László Németh and his circle of writers during the greatest terror. It is even more interesting, that today, when the Communist writers Déry and Zelk are in jail, László Németh and his circle, the leaders of the Christian Youth, with other words, in the view of the Communists, rightist fascists, are free and their books are published and their plays are on the program of the theaters.

(Since interviewer was unable to find out more information from respondent about the "underground" intellectual work, performed by respondent and his circle, neither about their views about the entire Communist doctrine and its manifestations in theory and practice, in the life of Hungary, he asked the respondent to speak about the outstanding Hungarian intellectuals and writers who, according to him, were known to him personally.)

György Lukács was interviewed by the Revolutionary youth during the Revolution. Although he gave very cautious answers, he let them know that he was definitely on their side.

László Németh has published first several small articles and essays in periodical "Nyugat". Later, during the '30-ies, he edited for four years a literary magazine entitled "Tanu", the witness. This magazine was actually almost entirely written by him. His ideas, as expressed

in his periodical, have been strongly anti-German and pro-Latin. He was trying to influence and lead the Christian Hungarian intellectuals as differentiated from the conservatives and the cultural Jews (Kulturssidótság). He developed the idea of "Kertmagyarország" "Garden Hungary". In the field of foreign policy, he was for a Danubian Federation and for Latin orientation.

During that time appeared Stalin's: "The Questions of Leninism." in French. This was reviewed by László Németh. I can still quote loosely two sentences. He wrote of the style "the questions are explained just the way as if the bailiff of Szilásbalhás would explain to the hired men what to do on the field that day." He closed his review with the remark that "whether the borelom or the Socialism will devour this world this is about the Hamletian question."

Laszlo Nemeth has introduced Miklós Szentkúthy to the Hungarian literature. Szentkúthy, who is called the Hungarian Joyce, is perhaps the most talented writer of the young generation in Hungary.

Another talented young writer is Sándor Karácsonyi. He is one of the foremost representative of the so-called popular writing népies irány. He belongs to the

circle of Laszlo Nemeth and Pêter Veres, but actually he is a pupil of Zsigmond Mórca. He is one of the leaders of the Christian Intellectual Student Movement in Hungary. He is a Protestant, an excellent organizer of youth and talented pedagogue.

The most outstanding members in the Ministry of Public Education have followed Karácsonyi's line even during the terror of Rakosi's reign. Shortly before the October Revolution the personnel of the ministry was attacked because of this by the moscovite Bolsheviks. This happened in the Spring of 1956.

The battle developed in connection with the debate at the university around a dissertation for qualification as a lecturer at the university, which was written by a moscovite. The chief defense was done by Agnes Heller and the attack was led by József Szigethy both of them former Lukacs pupils. The Lukacs - Karácsonyi camp has virtually torn to threads the content of the dissertation. This was the greatest defeat on the scholarly scientific field of the Rakosi - Révai camp before the Revolution.

Interviewer's note on respondent.

Respondent was speaking only in general terms and no effort from the part of the interviewer was able to elicit concrete data and information either on him or on his circle and their activities. I.e. it was impossible to find out how respondent was able to live with his wife through all these years without either of them ever having a job. Respondent claimed to have known practically all the talented young intellectuals but, when questioned, he gave hardly any information about them and about the intellectual life of Hungary in general. He showed an air of annoyance and fatigue (interview was taken on an unbearably hot day); Interviewer was unable to determine whether the reluctance on the part of the respondent was due to this physical circumstance, or to an intentional reserve and unwillingness, perhaps distrust, or simply ignorance, in which case the story about his background, his work and connections was simply made up by him.