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First I asked the respondent to tell something about his life. Respondent's answer:

I was born in 1908. After finishing the gymnasium in Budapest in 1926/27 I have studied at the Vienna University sociology and social anthropology. In 1927 I went to the United States and from 1927 to 1929 I was student at the Franklin Marshal College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. I was working also on the staff of the Hungarian Daily Szabadsag in Cleveland, Ohio. When I returned to Hungary I became a ~~news~~ newspaperman and was on the staff of the Daily Pesti Naplo and Magyarorszag from 1930 to 1939. Simultaneously I was also Budapest correspondent of the New York ~~staff~~ <sup>SUN.</sup> I was in opposition to the ~~regime~~ <sup>Horthy</sup> regime and in 1941, in April I left Hungary. I was working as a political adviser in Hungarian affairs for the British Special Operation Executive under the Middle East General Headquarters, I was stationing in Istanbul and in Cairo. I was a partisan liaison, my ~~task~~ task was to assist the satellites of Nazi-Germany to break with Germany. In this capacity I was dealing of course with Hungarian affairs. In 1945, after the war was over, until 1947 I was on the Hungarian desk of the British Broadcasting Corporation. In May 1947 I returned to Budapest I was editor of the newspaper Tovabb which was suppressed in October 1947. From February 1948 to February 1949 I was foreign news director of Radio

Budapest. I was ousted from my job in February 1949 when I became literary director of the Hungaria Publishing House. I was arrested on September 5, 1949, tried and sentenced to prison. I was in prison until September 13th 1954. The main charge against me was that I was general secretary of the Hungarian Association ~~xxxx~~ for the UN. Incidentally the president of the Association was <sup>Mihaly</sup> Karoly, ~~xx~~, and the vice-president of the Association was Imre Nagy. And of course I was also charged with other activities hostile to the People's Democracy. These other charges were based on my wartime activities abroad and my postwar association with the BBC. After my release from prison in 1954 I received a research job at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in the Historical Research Institute. I was working on a book entitled "Man and Right in the Countries under Hitler Occupation": I was working on the basis of German documents mainly. The subject of my work was such that it offered itself for comparison with the policy of the Communists. And the conclusion anyone bearing in mind <sup>Communist</sup> ~~this~~ terrorism could draw from my research was that the terror of the Communists in suppressing the rights of man was even worse than that of the Nazis. The job was interest<sup>ing</sup>~~at~~, but I earned very little and I ~~was~~ was living under precarious material conditions; in a way I was responsible for that,

because I refused to be rehabilitated after my release from prison. I should mention that I entered the Communist Party in September 1947. Had I accepted the rehabilitation after my release from prison, I could have lived much more comfortably, but I preferred hardship to re-entering the Communist Party. Things began to go better in the summer of 1956. I was then allowed to write for the Irodalmi Ujsag. I was well-paid for my articles and received also a fixed income. During the Revolution in October I was liaison between the Writers' Association and the Committee of the Revolutionary Forces, which was an agent of the Revolutionary Council. I was in charge of press affairs together with Zoltan Molnar. He was responsible for the domestic news ~~news~~ service, while I was responsible for the foreign news division. After the Russian attack <sup>living</sup> On November 4th I was ~~staying~~ in deadly fear of arrest; both on account of my earlier activities and my activities during the Revolution I was almost sure that sooner or later they will come after me. I had been in prison and did not want to taste it again. Thus, to save my life and the lives of my wife and little son was the main motivation that prompted me to leave Hungary which we did on the ~~six~~ night of November 27th-28th. We arrived at Vienna wherefrom we came to London.

Since respondent was a member of the Communist Party

next I have asked him to tell me something about the motivation of the people who joined the Party after 1945. Respondent's answer:

In 1945, I estimate that about <sup>10</sup>~~30~~ to 75 % of the workers and intelligentsia in Hungary believed sincerely in the co-operation with the Communists ~~and~~ <sup>they</sup> believed also that Communism/will become something which they can support. It was in this mood of the country that the Communist Party was growing from 1945/48. I estimate that at least one third of the Party members, which grew to one million, that is to say about 300.000 people ~~joined the Party~~ joined the Party sincerely. Of course, I may say ~~to them~~ that if they were sincere they were either idealists or plain stupid. Worries among the sincere Party members started around 1948, and, of course they grew worse and worse through the next years during the terror between 1949 and 1952/53. I assume that when the terror ended there were hardly any sincere Communist Party members. A further factor in strengthening and articulating dissolutionment was Imre Nagy's regime in 1953. Between June 1953, when Nagy assumed the premiership, until October 1954, when his power definitely began to decline, great many people, Communists, among them, were released from prisons and concentration camps. Many of them were rehabilitated. <sup>They</sup> ~~Some~~ told the story of their inter-  
rogation/in prison, and their eye-witness stories

created a tremendous moral indignation; not merely among the rank and file of the Communist Party, but throughout the country. The impact the released prisoners exercised on the Communist Party in Hungary was of very great significance. It was then that even the most faithful or the most misled became aware of the terrible facts of terror. It was then that they have learned about the extents of terror. ~~By the~~ As a result they found themselves in an intellectual no man's land. I cannot emphasize enough the impact the released prisoners had on those who were <sup>not</sup> imprisoned, because those who were not imprisoned became aware of the fact that they themselves were instrumental in perpetrating the terror. ~~Strength~~ <sup>Pangs</sup> of conscience, hatred swept over their minds. This is what created in them what I called an intellectual no man's land, a vacuum. this ~~affected~~ affected the Communist elite, the writers, the actors, the young scholars, the Party functionaries, DISZ functionaries. I could cite here just one outstanding example how one of the Communist writers, Zoltan Zelk, suffered a nervous breakdown when he realized the crimes the Communist Party has committed under the rule of terror. This impact of the rehabilitated victims of Communist terror on the Communist intellectuals is particularly important in understanding the fermentation within the Communist Party among the intellectuals. This is one of the most important

factors in the emergence of the opposition within the Communist Party against the Rakosi regime. The other important factor was of course the conflict that developed between Imre Nagy and Rakosi. These two factors are to be borne in mind in understanding the revolution of events that led to the 1956 situation. Or, to be more accurate I would list four factors in the following order:

- 1) The era of Imre Nagy's regime.
- 2) The impact of the rehabilitated.
- 3) The policy of concessions.
- 4) The conflict between Rakosi and Imre Nagy.

It was under the impact of these four factors that the entire edifice of the Communist system began to break down. On the one hand the idealists were eagerly seeking the roads to reform, to purification; and on the other hand the Party machine which supported the regime began to feel uncertain. Fear had spread wide and far within the regime. The AVO, the pillar ~~xxxxxx~~ of the terror regime was struck by fear. And while the foundations of the Communist regime had been thus shaken, the country began to breathe <sup>a</sup> more freely. Here, however, I would like to point out that the majority of the population was viewing this development with ~~apathy.~~  
~~apathy.~~ What was happening, was regarded by the country as quarrel among the Communists themselves. The workers were hungry and they were not interested

in politics. But it was only a matter of time when the disintegration of the Communist terror system ~~would~~ <sup>would</sup> activate the forces of dissatisfaction and <sup>the</sup> hatred against the regime. Rákosi was fighting stubbornly against the ~~disintegration~~ <sup>disintegration</sup> of the Communist terror system; until the 20th Party Congress of the Russian Communist Party in February 1956 Rákosi quieted down the Stalinists who were becoming more and more nervous. The resolutions of the 20th Party Congress caused a terrific <sup>ic</sup> explosion. Thereafter Rákosi's influence was on the wane. Criticism and ~~attacks~~ attacks against his rule passed unpunished. He was not in the position any more to control the forces gathering <sup>within</sup> ~~in~~ the <sup>regime</sup> ~~structure~~ against him. In vain was his effort to suppress for a time at least the resolutions of the 20th Party Congress. To conceal the facts Rákosi ordered once even the confiscation of the Moscow Pravda which published parts of the 20th Party resolutions. Terror and fear struck the members of the AVO above all. I remember <sup>once an</sup> ~~one~~ AVO man ~~that~~ told me: " [redacted], if I can get away with five years, I will be happy." It was at this juncture that the students, the writers, the <sup>intelligentsia</sup> entered the scene with growing force. It was at this juncture that the passivity of the masses, of the industrial workers, above all, changed into the active belief that something could be done about the existing situation which they hated. It was at

this juncture that the meetings of the Petöfi circle crystallized and rallied the forces of opposition. The Party, still under ~~Rakos~~ Rakosi's leadership, was helpless, it began to lose control over the situation. The pressure was growing.

At this point I asked the respondent to explain how and why did he decide to return to Hungary in 1947.

Respondent's answer:

I was a Marxist at that time. I believed in supporting the Hungarian regime coming at that time ~~tax~~ increasingly under Communist leadership, because I believed that this is the desirable way of developing a progressive democratic order in Hungary. The Communists were also luring individuals of my kind to return to Hungary by calling me home in order to help during the forthcoming elections. A Communist friend of mine, Georges ~~Also, in~~ ~~was~~ ~~urging~~ me in particular to come home. ~~the~~ 1946, when a Hungarian government delegation visited London, Rakosi was very kind to me. He used all his charms in convincing me that my place was at home. Also another Communist friend ~~was~~ <sup>while</sup> visiting London/<sup>early</sup> in 1947 ~~was~~ urged me to come home. He talked me about plans to publish a literary magazine and he said I was selected to become editor in chief of the magazine. It entailed considerable sacrifices on my part ~~to~~ to leave London, because I had a good job with the BBC. But although I had



considerable hesitations to go home, I did so in May 1947. And I did so in spite of the good advices of clever friends among them the historian Hugh ~~CC~~ <sup>Seton-</sup> Watson. But I am sure that there were others who were happy to see me leave London. Those were the people who considered me too leftist, too progressive, a fellow traveller that ~~is~~ <sup>is, and they</sup> might have thought it is better to get rid of him. So this is how I returned to Hungary in the spring of 1947.

Next I have asked respondent to explain how he decided to enter the Communist Party. Respondent's answer: ~~After~~ <sup>After</sup> I decided to go home, it was a logical sequence ~~that~~ that I entered the Party a few months later in September 1947. As I have said, I was a Marxist. In general I have approved what the Communists were doing. I believed that they are marching in the direction of human progress. I believed Marxism and Communism to be the ~~ways~~ <sup>ways</sup> of the future. I believed also in strengthening the Communist movement ~~with~~ <sup>by</sup> Western progressive democratic elements. Of course, it was not unknown to me that not everything was right what the Communist were doing, in particular I was well aware of the fact that the Communists in Hungary were suppressing freedom, as I have conceived freedom; on the other hand I thought it the task of a Marxist to fight against the bad Marxists who suppressed freedom, in particular I believed that future of Marxism

in Hungary and the future of freedom in Hungary would depend on our success to free Hungary from the Russian Communist influence. In this respect I believed the role of the Marxist intellectuals is especially important, because only they can be instrumental in purifying the movement. It is only the intelligentsia that is capable of fostering the ideology, not the workers or peasants, or the professional revolutionaries. It will need, I believed, four or five x generations of new intellectuals to create a strong ideology, which then can carry the battle for freedom to a successful conclusion. So it was with these ideas in my mind that I have joined the Party in September 1947. My conflicts with the Party actually began with the moment I have entered the Party. I was at ~~the~~ <sup>logger</sup> ~~logger~~ <sup>s</sup> head with Party discipline from the very beginning. I remember in particular my disputes with Georges Lukacs, who was reminding me of the necessity of Party discipline and was trying to impress on me the idea of discipline which I rejected and detested. The way I conceived <sup>my role</sup> /in the Party was that of the intellectual elite whose role it is to warn and admonish the Party against mistakes and wrong actions. I did not mince words in expressing my views that the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be directed against the proletariat. I was of the view

that the rank and file of the Party, the workers and the peasants, should take active part in the Party's work. These were of course ideas which were not acceptable to the Stalinist leadership of the Party. The Stalinists, headed by Rakosi, believed in terror. I clearly remember what Rakosi said in 1948. He said: "The chief ~~main~~ moving force of work is terror." What Rakosi and his fellow Stalinists believed in could be summed up in these two points:

- 1) Follow blindly the Soviet interests.
- 2) Follow blindly the Party's directives.

People like myself in their eyes were actually fellow travellers whom they intended to use for their own ends. But in spite of realizing the conflicts between my views and those of the Stalinist Party leadership I continued to believe for some time in the possibility and necessity of co-operation. I expected of course that the developments outside the Soviet orbit will move to the left too. I believed that the world is moving towards collectivism. I expected that before the 20th century will be over the great democracies of the West, England, France, the United States of America will become collectivistic. My vision of the future was that of a scientifically managed social welfare state. I believed that the Soviet system possesses the elements of such a future society: The management of the society by councils. Events in Hungary, of

course, were marching fast and my disillusionment was coming very fast too. And my ~~dis~~ disillusionment was the greater because the terror that engulfed the country was the work of those people whom I considered brilliant at one time. I am referring to Rakosi, Gerö, Revai, not, however, to Parkas. Personally I began to feel the squeeze towards the end of 1947. Early in 1948 when I wanted to travel abroad they did not let me go. The ceaseless references to Party discipline were the more revolting to me, because they had never given any reasons. I felt more and more isolated and surrounded by hatred. If I would analyse to-day what were the causes of this hatred directed against me and others ~~like~~ like me, I would clearly distinguish four factors:

- 1) The social origin.
- 2) The intellectual capability.
- 3) Western ~~leanings~~ leanings.
- 4) I would list even physical appearance.

All these four were equally detestable to the Stalinists. In all frankness, however, I must say that even when I was arrested in September 1949, I was still a Marxist and I was a believer in the Marxist future of mankind. I believed that, in global terms, ~~future~~ the future development will follow the lines of my Marxist conviction. Somehow my disappointment and disillusionment was limited to what was happening in

Hungary. But I did not lose my faith in a world in which Marxism as I have conceived it will ultimately prevail. My anti-Marxist development was the result of my long imprisonment. Perhaps the crucial moment came on a day in 1951 when I was taken from the prison in Vac to the AVO prison in ~~HankaxxThaxxi~~ ~~xxxxxxThaxxi~~ Foutca in Budapest. There I heard a worker saying: "Szar az egész, úgy ahogy van." ("The whole thing is a mess and nothing <sup>but</sup> ~~is~~ a mess!") I will never forget these words uttered by a simple worker, a proletarian, a fellow prisoner of mine. His simple and rude words gave me the final push to see things clearly. I was no Marxist any more and no Communist. Since that moment I consider myself an ex-Communist. Of course, the terrible torture and humiliation I have suffered is also a part of the story. I do not consider myself even an ex-Communist to-day. Since 1955, after my release, Communism ceased to represent for me a central, a focal experience, as it did until then. I am a writer, I am an artist.

Next I have asked respondent to tell about the ~~fermen-~~ ~~tation that xxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~preceded~~ ~~the~~ ~~Revolution~~ ~~in~~ ~~1956~~. Respondent's answer:

Until the summer of 1956 the Communists have been active, whereas the population at large was passive. It was not until on the eve of the Revolution that the broad masses of the population stepped in. Until

then what was happening was an affair of the Communists, an affair of the Communists among themselves. It was not until on the eve of the Revolution that the non-Communist masses have entered the scene. The feeling was spreading all over the country that something will happen, that something surely will happen. No one know what. But there was a great expectation in the air. This expectation has been promoted, above all, by the press, which took over the new spirit of free criticism, initiated by the writers, the whole press except the official organ of the Communist Party, the Szabad Nép. The events on October 23rd and 24th mark the collapse of the regime. Fear and the atomisation of the population which enabled for the Communist regime to maintain itself by terror, ~~and~~ disappeared overnight. The regime proved itself weak already in the first ~~the~~ phase of the Revolution on October 23rd, when after some hesitation it gave permission <sup>to</sup> the street demonstrations. The AVO was ordered from the streets and this was the first and ~~crucial~~ crucial concession the regime gave to popular pressure. This was also the beginning of the end. The attempt of Gerö to turn the clocks back on the evening of October 23rd aggravated only the situation. The masses rose spontaneously and swept away the regime. Gerö's speech on the evening of October 23rd was the last attempt of the regime to return to terror.

It spelled death for the regime. It ~~marked~~ marked the end of the Communist story. The Russians could restore their power and put their stooges in power after November 4th, but there was no return to the situation before October 23rd.

Next I have asked respondent to discuss the changes in the Hungarian society under the decade of ~~Communist~~ Communist rule. Respondent's answer:

I never thought this question over systematically, but I will try. The first phase runs from 1945 to 1947. This is the period of the coalition system in Hungary. The Communists were gradually <sup>squeezing</sup> ~~expelling~~ out the coalition partners from power. ~~During~~ During this period the overwhelming majority of the Hungarians who trusted the non-Communist parties in the coalition were hopeful that the Russian Communist conquest of the country could be avoided. There was hope in war, hope that the United States may ~~be~~ liberate the country from Soviet domination. The real turning-point came 1948 with total nationalisation, total Sovietisation; this was the period of vanishing hope that the process of Communist domination could be stopped. This was also the period of the great social transformation of the Hungarian society. A new society of peasants, workers came into being. This ~~was~~ was good, because it was during this period that the old society has been ~~smashed~~ smashed, destroyed completely and irrevocably. The standard of life was rising too during this period. Between 1947 and 1949

the country was witnessing a ~~pariaf~~ period of prosperity. The standard of life was higher for the broad masses than under the ~~Horthy~~ <sup>Horthy</sup> regime. These structural changes in the Hungarian society during these years are the most important part of the story of social transformation. But parallelly the evil of the new society was growing strong too: The growth of Communist bureaucracy. The foundations for the rule of terror had been laid which raged from 1949 to the end of 1952. This was the most ~~disak~~ disastrous phase of the post-war development, the era of lawlessness when everything and everybody was at the mercy of the regime. The society has been identified with the ~~odk~~ <sup>all-</sup> powerful state. Nothing mattered, who you were, what you were, what you were doing, what you were worth, only the Party bureaucracy was decisive. Thus, the new society which emerged from this ~~per~~ rule of terror has suffered all the evils of bureaucratic despotism. The result was chaos and atomisation.

During our preliminary conversations respondent has mentioned that a Christian revival took place during these years. Therefore I have asked respondent what <sup>meant</sup> he ~~mean~~ by this Christian revival. Respondent's answer:

Under the impact of terror, suffering, persecution, people at large became more religious than before. Even the so-called religiously indifferent people



began to regard with sympathy and acknowledgement religious religion, even though they did not ~~not~~ become religious. Just to give a personal example: I am not religious, but when my son was born, secretly we baptized him.

(Next I have asked respondent to discuss anti-Semitism. Respondent's answer:)

Anti-Semitism is total and general. Even if anti-Semitism had not had roots in Hungary, such a development would ~~not~~ have been inevitable. After all, all the key positions in the country were filled with Jews. A substantial part of the AVO was manned by Jews. I would estimate that 90% of the Communist leaders, that is the summit of the bureaucratic despotism, were Jews.

X (I have asked respondent what he thought of the future position of the Jews in Hungary. Respondent's answer:)

The future position of the Jews in Hungary is anything but bright. The Jews themselves realized that and the regime itself too. The <sup>present</sup> regime is anxious to get rid of the Jews, at least in the highest positions, ~~and~~ and the Jews are most anxious to leave Hungary.

(Next I have asked respondent what he thought of the future of the Soviet orbit. Respondent's answer:)

I think that the entire Soviet orbit is filled with fissionable material, it is undermined by the hatred, dissatisfaction of the broad masses. Only a spark ~~is~~

is needed to detonate this fissionable material. Not only the masses of the satellites are no Marxists, no Communists, but even to the Russian patriots Marxism is alien. Communism, both in Russia and in the satellites, finds itself in a state of impasse. Only a super-Stalinist terror could continue to rule over these areas.

A great explosion may come at any time. This is a very different situation from what existed before Stalin's death.

When and how such a great explosion will come I do not know. But I do not believe in the possibility of a peaceful evolution.

(Next I have asked respondent whether he thinks that an explosion in Soviet Russia is imminent. Respondent's answer:)

An explosion in Soviet Russia is a possibility. As I have said, the situation has changed completely since Stalin's death. Until then the masses had been conditioned to live under terror and dictatorship. They were conditioned like Pavlov's dog. To restore this state of things, which would be <sup>the</sup> only way to assure the continuation of dictatorship, would necessitate a re-conditioning of the masses. Now, this I do not think is possible. A new generation has grown up in Russia since 1953 which has not been conditioned under terror. The fermentation and confusion is wide-spread in the Soviet Union. Khrushchev is trying to <sup>muddle</sup> ~~sort~~ through this crisis, but his problems are multiplying. The

Hungarian Revolution was just one of the problems. Through all the satellites unrest is simmering. The more liberal views pronounced in China by Mao-tse-Tung recently are adding more to Khrushchev's headaches.

(I have asked respondent what he thought would happen in Central Europe if explosion ~~occurred~~ occurred in the Soviet Union. Respondent's answer:)

There will be a nationalist free-for-all in Central Europe if an explosion occurred in Soviet Russia. All the old hatreds and animosities of the past would come to the fore. It would be total confusion; just think of it that already ~~and~~ during the Hungarian Revolution there was growing unrest among the Hungarians in Transylvania. If an explosion would occur in the Soviet Union, a nationalist revolution would spread like wild fire throughout the satellite area; and with nationalist revolution would come the nationalist antagonism among the Central European nations. How and who would ~~ever~~ solve this confusion, I would not venture to prognosticate.

(I have asked respondent whether <sup>he</sup>/thinks revisionist sentiments are strong among Hungarians. Respondent's answer:)

There is no revisionism in the old sense of the word. I do not think that any Hungarian in his sane mind would demand the restoration of a thousand years

old Hungary. On the other hand it would be a great mistake to believe that the ~~Hungarians~~ Hungarians are not aware of the fact that their nation is dismembered, and the suffering of the Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring countries is well-known. The problem of these Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring ~~states~~ countries has popped up during the period when the Revolution was victorious, e.g. around November 1th I remember in the Writers Union some young writers suggested that we raised the issue of Hungarian minorities in the Irodalmi Ujsag.

(I have asked respondent what he - or in general the Hungarians - thought of the situation of the Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring states. Respondent's answer:)

The situation of the Hungarian minorities is worst in Rumania. The oppression and the attempt to assimilate the Hungarians is strongest in Rumania, in spite of the so-called autonomous territory in Transylvania. In Czechoslovakia the situation was very bad right after the war when the Czeche made the attempt to expel the Hungarians. This attempt, however, ended in failure and after a while the situation of the Hungarian minority has improved. Best is the situation in Yugoslavia, that is to say it is best in comparison with the other

two ~~separate~~ countries, Rumania and Czecho-slovakia, for the simple reason that Yugoslavia since the Second World War is organized as a multi-national state and within this new system the dangers of nationalist oppression and assimilation have decreased.

(Next I have asked respondent what he thought of the present situation in Hungary. Respondent's answer:)  
The only concern the Hungarians have to-day is that the Russians should go.

## INTERVIEWER'S RATINGS

Reports, frankness, co-operativeness: Excellent.

No sign of compliance or flattery.

As to the value of the respondent's statements distinction should be made between what he says about his personal experiences, which give an interesting story of a disillusioned Marxist, and his views concerning the ~~present~~ <sup>present</sup> and the future. In the latter part, I think, he gave all evidence of his being now a writer and an artist. He is evidently very emotional about these questions and is prone to listen to his sentiments rather than to his reason.