

I was born in Budapest in 1934, as a son of a chemical engineer. I attended the Istvan Gymnasium, where in the sixth class a very brilliant Communist history teacher instilled in me great respect for Dialectic Materialism. She taught a course called the Age of Revolutions. My favorite book was the "Struggle of Four Centuries", by Aladar Mod. I soon became the leader of the study group in DISZ, in charge of introducing politics into our studies.

I finished a course in Marxism in '48-'49, and I accepted the position of a district functionary in DISZ. By 1950-51, I was fed-up, and I asked to be relieved from my duties, to prepare for my exams. This was successful, and I got admitted to the university without any trouble. Although only to the technical university, while I wanted to be journalist. I studied two years to become a mechanical engineer, until I was given permission to transfer, when I studied a year at journalism school. At that age, age 14 to 16, and at that time 1948-49-50, all of us were impressed with Communism. But two years later 99% of us knew better. By the time of the wakening, 80% of us admitted our disillusionment, and 19% discovered that by playing the game, one found opportunities to get ahead. One per cent was still convinced Communist. In my own mind, I decided that Fascism was but a late development of Capitalism, in which^a/state lagging behind

others in economic productivity, and economic development will succeed only through terror by accusing a black sheep. For the Nazis this was the Jew, for the Bolsheviki it is the middle classes.

I was long since disillusioned by the practice, but I shall never rid myself of thinking in Marxist terms. Class warfare, class distinctions, dialectic historical materialism, are terms I understand, and believe in. Forms of social organizations, follow each other inevitably, and this I also accept. But I reject, one, the ~~the~~ necessity of a violent revolution, and two, the weakest link theory. The latter is a contradiction in itself - I accept the inevitable development of ideas of communal living.

The parts Russia played in this Marxian social development scheme, is that of a second migration of peoples.

Russian civilization is catching up with the West, it also tries to match the West in its economic development. But meanwhile, we as Hungarians for example, have to follow suit in the footsteps of the barbarians, and ^{for} this purpose, ^{we} first have to be barbarized to their level.

We must first retreat in humor, in arts, and generally in culture, we must retreat and follow the Russians, in their quest for culture. Once the Russians start painting cubistic, then the Hungarians also will be permitted. Lenin and his Communists believe, that by knowing the laws of social change, they can control social developments.

But I think, that the United States for instance, has greatly advanced on its way toward socialization. Inevitably social and economic developments are slower in the East; one reason of this is, that the middle classes are more apt to achieve goals set out, a group on which the regime could not rely. Instead they relied on the peasant worker classes, who were in turn grateful but not creative. The worker and peasant classes are trying to grow to be the new middle class, at least they followed the old middle classes, ~~adopting~~ adopting their standards and ideas. So, they were 1) grateful, and 2) accepted many of the middle class carrier opportunist attitudes. Inevitably a few did start using their brains, and these felt an actual dislike for the system, when they realized their unsatisfied need for freedom.

If the raw material was there it needed the yeast of a reliable teaching force, to mold these young people in a Communist pattern. For this teacher control was the main problem. In the lower schools, the way achieved by mixing up the faculties of different schools, replacing teachers, shifting them back and forth. With many new or strange teachers on a faculty, the teachers became careful to hide their emotions, whatever they may have been. After a few years, new teachers were being graduated who were often reliable, as good kader background staunch supporters of the regime. Aside from these, the teachers

were genuinely afraid of the DISZ secretaries, and any other students who may have acted as informers. Aside from these, history teachers for instance, had to undergo a compulsory re-education course. The Hungarian middle classes were always cynical, and so they now co-operated once again. Absolute intellectual honesty was always a rarity. At the same time they knew, as well as I know, that democracy is impossible without slavery, or its modern counterpart; automation.

During the critical period in 1949-50, they simply did not teach history on the other critical historic periods, until the teachers were properly re-educated - many of the old teachers used this time to get themselves pensioned off.

During my sixth year in gymnasium, I had a Communist teacher who was most interesting and intelligent. She was a kind of agitator, who was annually transferred from one school to another, to establish a Marxist atmosphere in each school. Her successor was a newly graduated teacher, a dull average person, who gave the course material per outline. In contrast some old teachers were much more enjoyable, who at times permitted themselves a smile, when giving the Communist historic lectures. Neither one had any opposition from the pupils. Actually all of the pupils were well-meaning opportunists, who participated in various social work activities, in order to get to the university. All these has changed radically

by 1953, when cynicism was the most accepted faith, by then no one cared for politics.

My life at the Technological University, was an entirely new chapter in every way. Pleading that my work load was too heavy, I refused to accept any social work, that is DISZ, or other party appointments. Also, of course, the university has an independent DISZ secretary, which means that, that was his full-time job. Thus students themselves were not as much involved in DISZ work, as in secondary school. The most dreaded part of any university, is the division of scholarship (Tanulmányi Osztály). This is the Communist cell, from where the personnel policies and the students' futures are decided. Corresponding to the personnel division of a plan, this is where the kader sheets are kept, and where all confidential information comes together. The employees at this place were all reliable Communist women. It took somebody like me, to walk into their office with a loud "kiss your hands ladies" for a greeting. This completely anti-social bourgeois mannerism, instead of the standard "freedom comrades", touched these women strangely, they were flattered and thrilled, and embarrassed at the same time. The organization of the study plan, was up to this section, together with the dull group of Party and DISZ functionaries. I think, there were quite a few sadistic temperaments among the personnel of the Scholastic Division. The entire educational process, was in the hands of these groups, and they assisted by

volunteer spies from among the students. These latter were a separate class, that developed from among meritorious worker and peasant kader children, and others, who were obligated to the regime, and felt that they owed absolute loyalty to it. In our practical classes, we were split into study groups, of 20 to 30 men each. Each group had a leader, who took the role, was responsible for the group and as such acted as informer. Inevitably, their activities however, mellowed with time, and after the first year, they realized the senselessness of an extremist position. Roll-call was the strongest weapon, at these people's disposal, and in the beginning, they made use of it. Anyone absent twice, without an excuse, was subject to disciplinary action, and eventually expulsion. Roll-call, in the theoretical classes, was in contrast nothing serious. About 20 times a year, the lecturer past out slips, which all had to sign. Thus absence there, was no problem. My own adventures with university authorities, are worth recalling. In the two years at the Technical University, I received 7 disciplinary citations. Considering, that as a rule, people get kicked out of the university after three, I had an enviable record. Several of these, were due to my refusal to accept a role with the university DISZ. I was given the first disciplinary citation, for cleaning my fingernails, during a lecture on Marxism. A young man, who couldn't stand me, denounced me to the instructor, and I had to appear before the disciplinary

Committee. Once there, however, I spoke their language, I knew how their minds worked, and I simply asked them, if I would still be in front of them, had it been a class in mathematics. The hearing was soon ended, and I got out with a warning. With some people denouncing became a sport, and in such cases the Disciplinary Board had no idea, why the person was cited. On occasion they had asked me "Now, why are you here?", the question was made sarcastically, but actually it was sincere. They did not know. I simply suggested, that since they had asked me to appear, they must have a reason for it.

Desperately looking for clues, after a fruitless conversation, the Chairman of the Board, finally pulled out one of my medical excuses for absence, in a firm tone he announced "this medical excuse was falsified!" at this, I simply smiled and left the room. Luckily I knew that that specific one, was perfectly good. I was often criticised at seminary meetings, was told by members that I was a disturbing element. They very much resented my flippancy and independence.

Political control of a technical faculty, is a considerable problem, If no other reason, because technical competence can not easily replaced, while political unreliability can not be tolerated. There were certain patterns, in which this issue was ^{resolved} ~~resolved~~ the faculties were greatly enlarged, this took place primarily by moving up competent gymnasium teachers, to the university as instructors, or

assistant professors. Obviously most of these people, have now made a career undreamt of before. Most of them were very grateful, and at least they did not blame the regime. When we talk of opportunists, the word must be used in its countless variations, and not as a flat cliché. A number of professors, who had been teaching at the university before, were so enmeshed in their bourgeois way of life, that they saw no alternative to compromising with the regime politically. It was extremely important for them, to preserve their standard of living, a standard according which, the wife does not work, a standard which demands that the children should attend the university. These were the people, who joined the Party and made short speeches at seminars, to insure their good standing. No one minded, if they praised Stalin keeping to ~~some~~ colorful accolades, as long as they did not harm anyone. On the other hand were those, who kept mum, during meetings, and they were respected, and once they lost their jobs, they were pitied.

I should like to distinguish here, between men in the professions and those, whom in lieu of a better term, I have to call, men of calling. The former, the people in the profession, have traditionally been tied to their jobs. There always was a shortage in intellectual jobs, that is why the average helper has much more independence, for he always finds similar employment. A much more critical role, is that of the writers, journalists, and cleric people, who

have a calling to follow. They did have a responsibility, which can not be compared with that, of the professionals. Generally there was much hatred ^{of} ~~for~~ talented young people, who sold out to the regime, but again if there are many in a given field, the competition makes people sharp and cruel.

I mentioned, that while in secondary school, I worked as a district DISZ functionary, a job I held fulltime during the summer. I worked in the DISZ Center of the fifteenth district of Budapest. Perhaps the most significant fact about my job, was that it made almost no demands on me. We received a secret monthly booklet, outlining current issues, prescribing the attitudes we must take. Speeches, or policy steps were evaluated, and the whole job was very easy, for all thinking was centrally pre-digested for us. Unless one had ^a very keen inquisitive and imaginative mind, nothing was easier, than to fall into a pattern of accepting and adopting ideas, and views already worked out. Just in case, one was still in doubt about something, one followed the daily editorials of Szabad Nép, which was a must for every functionary. The District DISZ Secretary, was a cynical drunkard, who was not a Communist haven at all. For several on the staff, the Center was a ~~XXXXXXXX~~ from work, and I should like to illustrate the atmosphere by a remarkable instance, which once occurred. A committee from the Central DISZ Headquarters showed up, on a five minutes notice, at 11.00 a.m. unfortunately, everyone

except me, were stewed, the DISZ secretary, a man of tremendous will power, was sick, but he pulled himself together and managed to treat our visitors to some brandy, before they had a chance to notice our breaths. The Agit-prop ~~secretary~~ secretary of a weaker constitution, was supporting himself in the toilet bowl, as he relieved himself, but I finally succeeded with cunning strategy, to whisk him to an empty garage, where I locked him up. It was unfortunate, that the Committee came to see him, but of course he was not available.

The more sober sides of DISZ activities, were prescribed by Central DISZ directives. However, we stood under the direct supervision of the District Party secretary, and our chain of command went through him, to Central DISZ Headquarters. When difficult political problems ^{occurred,} ~~appeared~~ our DISZ secretary could approach the Party secretary for advice. All these, existed on a very precarious basis, and everybody was subject to everybody else's "below the belt" attacks. The inter-party fighting, was not just one of personality disagreements. Actually, there were still a number of people in leading positions, who felt the need for toning down the excesses of the regime, offering more moderate policies, friendly criticism, and advice. These people banded together more haphazardly than by design, under Imre Nagy's guidance. As we know, the differences came out in the open, and by 1953, the Party unity was broken. These meant a ray of hope for the people, and

Party members as well as the general public, begun to evaluate different party people on the basis of their reputations. The term "an honest CP member" came into use, opposed to this were the opportunists. Soon however, these very terms were used by the party apparatus in exactly the opposite sense, and the so called rightist deviationists were branded the opportunists.

Out of this moral morass, some very pure and honest idealism developed. The moral purity of the revolution was the most notable achievement. The running story is about the thief who stood yearningly in front of a broken store window, with all goods within arm's reach, thinking "if only we wouldn't have a revolution."

It would be unjustified to take this moral purity in the conventional sense. In sexual matters none of this applied. Sexual morality developed on several patterns, the most prevalent perhaps, was imitation of the West in the emancipation of women, and the equalization of both sexes. Also sexual freedom was considered as a sign of freedom, and the "I do as I please attitude" had some political over tones. In the middle classes, there was also some snobbery, and since it was fashionable to have relations, one kept up with the times. Completely reversing her former attitudes, the smart mother started to inform her circle of friends, of a boy's affair with her daughter to gossip him into marrying her. The gentle irony of the times, however was in the fact that the average proletarian

boy secretly hoped to marry a virgin to satisfy his bourgeois ambitions.

Relations with the Soviet Union played such a paramount role in domestic life, that a word must be said about it. I wonder if anyone knew, how dependent the regime was on the Russians, but on the other hand everybody took the inevitable presence of the Russians for granted. Russian economic demands were continually increased, and Rakosi had to bend his back more and more, until he no longer was a Communist, but only a Soviet pro-consul. I do not doubt his original good intentions, but once he was in power, the Russians gave him the choice to be either a good Communist, or a good supporter of the Soviet Union. Possibly he became too pro-Soviet, and over-zealous in his policies. These were even corrected by the Russians, either by a personal visit, which was rarer, or else by an article in "Pravda", which on ^{occasion} ~~sometimes~~ greeted the Szabad Nép's lead article, tacitly correcting certain views by simply and intentionally misquoting Szabad Nép. I think for instance, that the persecution of the churches in Hungary, was one of these over-zealous policies frowned upon in Moscow.

Economic exploitation was related but separate problem, it was Soviet policy to raise the standard of living in Russia, with the help of the satellite's economies. The problem was basic in Russia, and the standards once raised could not be again reduced. In capitalist countries,

foreign economic domination and influence takes place, either by goods or capital export. The Soviet Union turned its concept around, and profited on its satellites through raw material export. This trend would be difficult to reverse. This Soviet eagerness for economic gain, run counter its principles. Lenin insisted that Communism should not be attempted to spread, until the West was actually surpassed in production. I think that the chances of acceptance of Communist theories internationally have been lost. I don't think that Soviet intelligentsia believes in imperialism, as practiced by the regime, in contrast they very much accept domestic Communist as the force responsible for domestic advances. The practical workings of this imperialism were perhaps best felt in Hungary, as a result of the uranium shipments. I had the opportunity to attend a technical debate of the Petöfi Club last spring, where details of the uranium exploitation were publicized, Prof. Jánossi who was there publicly announced that officially he was never informed of uranium finds in Hungary.

Interviewer estimate of respondent: Respondent is a sensitive and talented person, whose close connection with party apparatus resulted from what interviewer believes to be idealistic regard for Communism. Respondent's seriousness and determination are tempered by poetic lightness, he considers his unquestioning acceptance of the regime as a youthful folly, while at the same time he could not or would not rid himself of Marxist philosophy as the basis of his own thinking.