

the history of the forced labor camp of ^{Roszk}

The political and economic background of the establishment of the forced labor camp.

In the spring of 1950, the AVO had ^{the} ~~essen~~ ^{ie completely} ~~and~~
 in form ^{into} ^{extent} a great ~~part~~, taken over the guarding of the
 political prisons ⁱⁿ in the detention establishments and ^{the} in-
 tern ^{ment} camps. This taking over had three important rea-
 sons:

1. The AVH, as the terror organ of Hungarian Bolshevists, ^{under} deemed it necessary to keep continuous control the arrested and convicted persons, not only to ^{maintain} ~~keep~~ supervision over them, but also because in the establishments guarded it wanted to impress the power and the terror that it could exert. That is, it wanted to prolong the torture which it applied during the course of the investigation.
2. It (the AVH) did not find the previous guards of the prisoners and the non-political police - which was named "grey" after the color of its uniform - to be reliable.
3. Numerous members of the AVH had just arrived in that period from the Soviet Union, where they had studied the methods of the Soviet terrorist organizations. These had probably arrived with ready plans for organizing their activities in Hungary according to a Soviet

pattern. As ^athe great part of the political prisoners in the Soviet Union have served in forced labor camps, it was natural that something similar would be organized also in Hungary. Added to this conception is the fact that, in 1950, there had been signs of a serious shortage of labor, because of the over-stretching of the ^Five Year Plan, and for certain labor, especially for hard physical labor, they could not have found others than prisoners.

The Hungarian economic organs, in the course of planning the tasks for the Five Year Plan, had taken ^{into consideration} ~~in view~~ this source of labor, too. The work of the prisoners, who were actually slaves, had been calculated into the Plans of the establishments of Inota, Kazincbarcika, Tiszapalkonya and Hortóbágy.

Looking at it backwards, we can establish that the principal originator and executor of this projector had been Lt. Colonel Princs, and his most important co-worker First Lt. Tóth from the AVH, of whom we found out later that he had actually held the rank of a major.

The first victims ⁱ of this Project were the Social Democrats who had been arrested in July of 1950. The AVH did not know what to do with these people. As they had not been guilty of any crime, it would have meant too long a torture, even with the assistance of the courts ^{which} ~~who~~ then sat, to concoct a charge against them and mete out a sentence; but in those days, the totalitarian Bolshevist state power had no

such requirements and did not feel it necessary to waste time and money on one or two mock trials, which would have raised some interest even on ^{an} international level, when these problems could be solved with a lot easier method.

According to the specifications of the Soviet patterns, complete liquidation faced the Social Democrats; why should they have exerted themselves, therefore, to grant them a trial, according to the general principles of jurisprudence, in a way that might have left a record. This would have been entirely unnecessary, according to the views then prevalent. According to Moscow's regents in Hungary, the Bolshevization of the country had already been an established fact, they could not have thought that once someone may ask them to account for the disappeared people. The hundreds of arrested Social Democrats were excellent material, therefore, to have their energies utilized in these forced labor camps, that applied new method, for the reinforcement of the Bolshevist power. Perhaps you can~~ny~~ even call this new inhuman method modern slavery. No, it did not differ from any of those methods which the Marxist social history teaches about those states which used to have the institution of slavery.

One surveys the given opportunities within the restrictions of the existing methods. ^{Between} ~~is~~ the system of slavery, ^{which} that existed in ancient times and that ^{which} ~~de~~ exists in our modern time, there is no essential difference. Only the spike made of bronze

is replaced, if replaced at all, with a chipping hammer operated by compressed air. The system is unchang^{ed} only the tools progress.

The always returning ^{methods} are determined by man himself and are restricted to very small variables. Possibilities are furnished by the age and ^{its} technical tools, as they are altered and expanded.

And on this earth man is a more constant factor ^{than} the tools at his disposal at any time. In the phenomena that occur in our society ^{we notice} the only slightly variable methods impressing their marks; and that applies to the actions of the slave states, should they be in ancient times or in the most modern times. What difference can we discover between the Gallic slave of the Romans who worked in the copper mines of Eastern Africa and the political prisoners of the forced labor camp of ^{Recsk} ? Essentially none.

^{Thus it was} this man so poorly equipped with new methods, ^{who} ^{wanted} to make useful those Social Democratic slaves who were taken out of circulation. If for no other reason than ~~at least~~ ^{political} because among the prevalent factors of the Soviet state, there ^[i.e. Social Democrats] were no such elements, ^{therefore,} ^{the [of the Soviet]} servile copying ^d has rendered them unnecessary in Hungary.

This is how approximately one hundred and seventy Social Democrats had arrived in August of 1950, in the slave labor camp ^{Recsk} of ^{Recsk} as pioneers, only to be followed after a few days by

those political internees who were previously kept in the intern^{ment} camp of Kistarcsa, who were similarly ripe for liquidation.

The Geographical position of the forced labor camp.

South from the village of Recsk, in the county of Heves, north from the eastern extension of the Matra mountains, *at the foothills of* "Kettős Győrke" arises a height of about five hundred meters above the sea level, named Csákány^y, which geologically counts as a volcanic summit. The *northern part* of this peak shows a very steep stony formation because of the clay and the sub-ground and because of the dislocation of the upper layer. The barren wall must be approximately one hundred meters high. And throughout the surface of the wall the columnar formations typical of volcanic rocks are showing. In all probability, this rock wall called the attention to the fact that there are ^{there} several millions of cubic ^{meters} of andesite and prompted the establishment of a stone quarry, on the top of the mountain. At the beginning of 1950, plans had been made for the reconstruction of the railroad substructures, and for the bedding of these substructures the country needed more stone than what the already existing stone quarries could secure. It was to be the duty of the stone quarries to be established in the mountains of the Mátra, as there had been plans for the establishment of several stone quarries on that site, to furnish the Hungarian plain, that had no stone material of

its own, which ^{is} material for beddings and for pavements.

The plans were to establish a larger railroad station for freight trains between the railroad stations of Kál Kápálna, which is located on the railroad line of Miskolc, and Kisterenye, which is located on the railroad line of Salgótarján, and on the railroad line that lies right close to Recsk, in the eastern end of the village, where ^{to} the stones, mined from the quarries in the neighborhood, would be transported by the aid of an aerial cableway.

With about one hundred meters beneath the steep walls of the Csákánykö, on the part that broadens into a relatively horizontal plateau situated over a brook that flows in a deep bed, there were sheep raised by one of the former landowners who lived in Recsk. This site was marked to be the site of the forced labor camp. The area was for this purpose singularly adequate, as it could not be seen from the two villages of Recsk and Parád which lay in the valley of the Tarna stream, but lay immediately under the mountain peak that was to be worked upon. The area itself was poor in water supply, partly because of its relative height and partly because of the soil that contained volcanic *tuff*, which permitted the water to seep in deeper. This was an interesting phenomenon, as the Mátra ^{is} that part of the country ^{which} receives the most rain fall, an annual 900 ~~mm.~~ mm. The territory that can be counted as a plateau laid on the northern side of the mountains, unprotected from the effects of the ^{northern} winds.

This fact showed itself in the flora as the plants were the kind more typical to Mountains which lie much further to the north. All this is worthy of mention only to be able to make it felt why the political prisoners who have worked in this place have suffered from the climate.

When the Social Democrats arrived in this place, there existed no other buildings than the large stable used by the sheep during the winter. They were temporarily placed in these and the AVH personnel guarding them lived in tents.

The building up of the forced labor camps.

The Social Democrats who had first arrived there, and the internees from the Kistarcsa camp who had followed them shortly, had first of all commenced fencing themselves in under the supervision of an engineering captain from the AVH forces. The fence was prepared by poles made from trees of the locality and from barbed wire. First only a single fence. On the outside of the fence, ^{watch} guard towers have been set ~~am~~ up for the guards, on every 100 to 150 meters. The fence surrounded a wooded area of about 200 acres and included the peak of the ~~2~~ Csákányeső that was to be worked upon. From the village of Recsk that lay about 40 kilometers away, they had conducted electricity into the camp and even a road was built^f for the camp by the efforts of inhuman labor. Subsequently they commenced with the erection of the barracks for the guards and after their completion, they ^{built} a huge barrack structure of raw wood that ^{contained} four roofs. This the prisoners had built for themselves to get rid

of the unbearable congestion of the sheep ^{pen} stable and from the hay (full of manure and chiggers) which was originally placed there for the sheep, but was also retained for the use of the men.

Later, as the number of prisoners in the camp had increased, - according to my judgment there must have been some 1500 there, - they have constructed ^{more} ~~newer~~ and ^{more} ~~newer~~ buildings.

The living quarters and the offices of the guards, and also the storage rooms, were placed on the side of the hill so they could keep under constant observation those barracks and workshops that were established for the use of the prisoners and

placed on the opposite side. These two groups of buildings had later been separated by a barbed wire fence and ~~complete~~ ^{made complete} security was ~~rendered~~ by the high, (about 30 meters) tower equipped with a machine gun. Later they built a series of ponds ^{which} flowed into the river that was between the two groups of buildings and, ^{in addition} ~~next~~ to the barbed ~~wire~~ fence, this system of ponds also contributed to the security of the AVH ^{who were} ~~was~~ equipped with machine-g ^{and} tommy guns and, ^{who} ~~they~~ apparently figured that the unarmed prisoners would attack them.

Outside the living quarters of the prisoners, that is in the area of the guards, was also the ^{compound} sunk under the surface of the earth; this was essentially only a room dug into the earth. This cistern symbolised the comparatively ^{conditions} ~~endurable~~ ^{atmosphere} of the camp and was a constant reminder that those

who could not acquiesce ^{to} the cruel treatment, could be placed in a lot worse situation. Relativity, a serious weapon of the Bolshevik system, made its appearance ^{under} ~~in~~ this form in this particular camp.

In the spring of 1951, the stone quarry was opened. First the woods were cut from the northern part and later, with the most primitive tools, with a shovel and a drag plow as well as with ~~the~~ bare hands, they began to remove the layer that covered the layer of stone and which was of no use in the quarrying operation. This project seemed to be an endless task in the beginning. The work of these men who were dwarfed by the enormous peak of the mountain seemed to be so hopeless, futile, and without any ^{aim, that} only the endless snow covered territory of Siberia could have seemed more desolate.

The tempo of the laborer, however, had accelerated later and the quarry ^{which} started to become organized, had received some man-drawn stone carts that moved on rails, and even a drill operated by compressed air had been furnished. Of course, these primitive implements had not relieved the hard physical labor to any degree.

The construction of the so-called lower camp was commenced in 1952. This was necessary, because they had also ^{started} the construction of the freight station which had been planned to be located next to the railroad line. Here they had also built a smaller camp, which could be seen well from the road leading between Sirok and Recksk, where all those prisoners were placed

who had first built the area up, ~~to~~ to be used for the freight station, by stone mined from the side of the mountain, and who had later commenced the construction of the freight station itself. At the same time, those who remained in the upper, that is the original camp, had continued to build the mine; a third group performed the construction of the road between the railroad station and the quarry, and a fourth group began the construction of an aerial cableway.

Until the fall of 1953, that is until the camp was disbanded, the quarry construction was not completed. The quarry itself could have been in an operating condition, but neither the aerial cableway nor the railroad freight station had reached completion

Thus,

the line became closed down after the prisoners had been released or had been transported to a different prison. Some part of the stone reserve that was mined by *the prisoners* had been transported through the highways. The abandoned quarry has been guarded by only one civilian guard, beginning in 1954. When some of the former prisoners visited this mine this year, they found barbed wire fences in disrepair and ^{watch} guard towers lying on the ground. The population of the surrounding villages took off the shingles of those guardhouses which were built outside the camp, as they have also carried away the doors and the windows of these houses.

Living conditions prevalent in the forced labor camp:

The prisoners were quartered in two, 80 meter long, rows of barracks. Each row of barracks consisted of four ~~20~~ 20 meter long and 70 meter wide rooms, respectively. They^{re} were 150 to 170 people in each of these rooms generally, depending on the degree of congestion of the camp at the time. Namely, there ^{had been} a period, as mentioned above, when a part of the prisoners had worked in the lower camp.

The barracks had been built by the prisoners from the wood produced around the territory of the camp in such a way that they built a wooden construction on the pile foundation and filled the thus constructed wooden frames with cut timber from the exterior and, from the interior, with brick. During the winter of the first year, these barracks had no ceilings, so any heat escaped through the openings of the rooftop, through which the sky could be seen.

There were two rows of double tiered bunks along the two walls running the length of the barracks. Under this row of bunks, we have to understand, that from raw branches about as thick as a human arm, they had manufactured shelves and these they laid in close proximity with sacks stuffed with hay. As hay had to be brought from a distance and was also expensive, ^{in those days} the men always felt the pressure of the knotty tree ^{branches} on their bodies. The complete length of one of the rows of bunks must have been about 75 meters in one of the places. It is only a matter of calculation to establish after all this, that in a

place where there were ~~175~~ 175 people accommodated, there was only ~~a~~ room of 40 centimeters left for one person. As these people, although they had grown extremely thin, were still forced to wear at least their skeletons, they couldn't even accommodate that in a place of that size. There was no other solution then to lie sideways constantly

There had ^{also} ~~also~~ been ~~the~~ times when there was only 35 centimeters of space in one barrack left for one forced laborer of Reck. ^{in the barracks}

Besides the bunks, ^{one} could only find an oven-like "stove" made of brick, and a few pails of drinking water. There was no need for anything ^g else.

On the bunks there were two blankets of a very inferior quality for each person, which had to be folded in an exemplary order. The fleas made it impossible to stay in the barracks for any length^y period of time. There had never been ^{ice} in Reck, but the dogs who guarded the camp lent their fleas to the prisoners, who had developed a complete breeding. It was hardly possible to sleep, as a man cannot sleep even after a day's tedious labor, if he becomes covered by hungry fleas who have not eaten all day. The prisoners attempted to protect themselves through various methods. They put certain plants into their hay sacks ^{that} the fleas were ~~alleged~~ ^{ly} to dislike. This experiment was unsuccessful. They obtained some disinfectants (carbolic) from a fruit orchard and smeared their

blankets with it ^{Those} became greasy and black, but the fleas remained. It proved to be the best method to wet these blankets thoroughly as these small monsters had a smaller degree of inclination to climb between these wet blankets. Even so it had occurred that a prisoner who started on his nocturnal hunt, produced 100 to 150 fleas from his underwear.

Finally the ~~mine~~ ^{at the quarry} work had decreased to such a degree because of the fatigue of the people who were unable to sleep, that they began to exterminate these insects institutionally with some, not much, effect.

Similarly to the fleas, the AVH people had ~~also~~ ^{in peace} not left, the prisoners in the barracks ~~in peace~~, as the aim must have been to make the prisoners' sojourn in the camp unbearable with every means at their disposal. As the prisoners provided some entertainment during the nocturnal visits, it has to be considered that no theaters or movies had been provided for the AVH personnel in camp, the bored guards had a particular inclination for such modes of entertainment. These are human weaknesses. After the football field had been built for the guards, it seemed that their visits had subsided.

The personal equipment and clothing of prisoners:

Every prisoner could have in his possession only the following clothing and other articles: one cape, one jacket, one pair of pants, one shirt, one pair of drawers, one pair of puttees, one pair of foot gear (high boots or laced boots) and

a cap. ^e These articles of clothing were the bad, inferior articles discarded by the AVH people. The cape, the cap, the jacket, and the pair of pants was marked with a wide red stripe in order to make them conspicuous. Everyone was further permitted to keep one small piece of rag with which to dry himself. To these personal belongings were added a napkin and a spoon. If any articles other than these were found on any person, the article was confiscated and the person was incarcerated.

After the passage of a few months one realized that the AVH personnel was right - a man required no more articles than these anumerated. There was one who lost his mess kit, and as a consequence, he was forced to eat his cooked meal from his greasy cap. He could discover no distinction in this unusual way of having served the meal. The quantity of the meal was of essence and of this he could not have received more in a mess kit. # The prisoners had suffered a great deal because of their inferior clothes. It did not offer adequate protection against cold and rain. As they had performed all work in the open, they were constantly exposed to the caprice of the elements. Rain had fallen continuously for three months during the fall and winter of 1950. The prisoners' clothes would never become dry, they were taken off wet and put on wet again. The shirt and the pair of drawers became somewhat dry on their bodies during the night. That is when it happened that one

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AVH lieutenant from the sanitary department protested against the method of drying the completely wet puttees on the beams, during the night, when this was a most unhealthy way of doing it. They should rather place them on the haystacks and lie over them, he suggested. This second lieutenant had been a barber at number 60 Andrassy Street and had occasion to trim Respondents - not his hair, but his beard and moustache. Later in the camp he performed small *operations*, taking out the knife from the hand of the prisoner physicians. There were some who alleged that in civilian life he was a gypsy dog catcher. The hapless one was a gypsy alright, but his dog catching activities could not be ascertained reliably.

Foot gear was in a terrible condition, as it was already useless at the time the AVH personnel discarded it. Almost everyone had his shoes and boots full of mud when it rained. There was also a period when several hundred people had no foot gear at all. They had to borrow the foot gear of the sick who remained in camp, so they could go to work. ^{That} the shoe or boot was larger or it was not one complete pair made no difference. The people had footgear after all, and their feet did not become bloody from the stones of the quarry.

The road construction workers who had loaded the stones, suffered a great deal because of the lack of gloves. The prisoners' hands became tough while working with the wet cold stone in a -20 degree ^[Celsius] cold weather. As a consequence of this toughness,

the rough grained *stone* rubbed the skin off a man's hands and thus they were forced to work with such hands which had no skin on the ends of their fingers ^{only} live flesh, for several months. They could even get used to that, but the cold weather and the stone splinters that got pressed into the live flesh were very uncomfortable. Later they were furnish^{ed} with a glove-like inferior substance, but that became rags in a matter of days. So the prisoners had continued their work without gloves.

Sanitary conditions:

In the first few months, there was a tremendous shortage of water. The daily share of a man was hardly more than 1½ liters of water. This amount included the portion used for cooking, thus it is evident that little was left for washing. There was nothing to do, no one had washed himself for several months - not at all. Similarly, they^{re} could be no exchange of underwear for about three months. In the first few weeks, this appeared as an inconvenience, but later they became accustomed to it. Perhaps the only conspicuous thing was the earth like color of the underwear. The olfactory organs became adapted to the order of dirt.

The mess kit could not be washed during these months either. People didn't bother much about that anyway, the saying went that it was not worth washing it, this way there remains some grease on it that clings to the side. If one would still have liked to rinse his mess kit, then the only thing for him to do,

during this period, was to use the rinsing water passed down from mess kit to mess kit. Can it be imagined what this relayed water looked like at the twentieth mess kit?!

Later on, after the completion of the cistern which was located above the camp, we were better equipped with water and those who wanted to, could wash themselves regularly, even if that was somewhat circumstantial.

The trouble was that there were some who fell in^{to} such a^a lethargy, as a consequence of the forceably primitive life, that they didn't want to wash themselves at all. These were forced to observe the sanitary ethics sometimes by their friendly comrades, and sometimes, by the *slaves* of the AVH.

The relief of some other needs was performed in a way unimaginable to a Western man. And there seems to be no reason for sketching it. They would not understand it, because they would not understand that in the prison of the military political barracks^{is} of Nador street, the men who were detained, had to eat out of the same mess kit into which they also had to relieve themselves. Even there this wasn't the worst part of it.

Conditions of nourishment:

The food *ration* of the first few months was adequate. It was prisoners' food, but it showed a certain improvement over the kind of food that the prisoners had in some of their previous prisons. Of course, this food was not sufficient, as the amount had not always represented the adequate value in calories. We

also have to consider that the work performed required nourishment equivalent to 5,000 calories, but the food distributed never even came close to that amount. In the most difficult times, it frequently did not even exceed the 1,000 calories daily. In the days of the greatest terror, they gave $\frac{1}{2}$ a liter of diluted cooked cabbage ~~in the morning~~^{in the morning,} and bread, and with this we had to perform the heavy construction work, consisting of breaking of stone, quarrying and packing, until six o'clock in the evening. Then they gave us again very frequently $\frac{1}{2}$ liter of diluted vegetables. Nothing during the daytime.

Men had eaten raw bran that was to be fodder for the horses. They have also eaten mushrooms found in the woods, also raw, although they knew well that they had no value as a nourishment. They ate raw snails. They also ate salamanders and, at one occasion, they ate a cat. These latter ones they didn't eat raw, they had fried them somehow. They have eaten peelings intended for the hogs and they dug up bones mixed with dirt on which they hoped to find some meat. Raw tallow which was furnished for the healing of cracked hands, at one time, was considered a delicacy. After they discovered that people were eating the tallow, they mixed it with some kind of a repulsive chemical after which it was consumed with a similarly good appetite.

During the summer, nettles meant some source of supply of vitamins for the people. But nettles were not supposed to be

plucked and the AVH personnel incarcerated those who were caught picking it.

Working conditions:

The primitive *working tools* and the working methods were most indicative of the working conditions. If someone had closely examined the economic goals of the quarry managements, then he could not have understood why they had not applied ~~for~~ more modern working tools and working methods. The only acceptable ^{ex}planation could be, the punitive nature of this work. They had to have these men perform such kind of labor that also represented a serious ^{punishment.} In all probability, it caused a great deal of worry to the management of the camp to keep in the required proportions these two opposite requirements: that is the punishment and the production result. In the middle of the twentieth century, it is hardly imaginable, even in ^a penal institution, that the prisoners do quarry work with their bare hands and that they transport enormous pieces of stone over several kilometers on their shoulders, without any means of transportation. This had happened and was ^{in fact} the usual. A greater part of the Sunday rest had been spent in such transportations of stone. This was to escape from the usual work of the week.

There was a norm established for the work to be performed. This was so high that it could not have been reached by any means and represented a multiple of the norm established in

an ordinary stone quarry. Those who lagged behind the prescribed work performance to a great degree, were punished by several ^{methods.} They were either incarcerated or placed on a restricted diet. As if someone who was given half of already insufficient food could work better! Because everyone wanted to work. There were no ways of avoiding to furnish one's best working potential under the conditions.

They had attempted to increase the performance by some other methods ^d also. Once they announced that whoever could break a ~~an~~ certain amount of stone within the day, would be permitted to write to his family. As the greater ~~a~~ majority of the people there had not been able to get ^{out} news about themselves ~~out~~, those people strained themselves and reached the prescribed amount. There were some who became invalids, as a consequence of the strain. Of course, no one was permitted to write the letter. The whole trick was necessary only to raise the norm saying: "See, you can work more if you want to, really."

The work was performed in brigades. The leader of such a brigade had always been one of the prisoners of weaker morality, who had often caused more harm to his co-workers than the AVH personnel itself. There were some who became involved ^d in fights. And ~~an~~ about 20 year old scoundrel, also a prisoner, once beat one of our older ^{comrades} until he was bleeding. All this ~~an~~ occurred ^{in the presence} ~~with the presence~~ of the AVH.

The most difficult kind of work was the road construction

and the small stone breaking. This not only required the most energy but also was the most depressing kind of work in its monotony. It can easily be imagined what this kind of work meant in the hot sun, perhaps through twelve hours a day, with hardly any nourishment at all.

While performing their work, the prisoners had suffered a great deal from the cold. ^{In their} inadequate clothing, exposed to the cold winter wind, they had to perform their work the same way as in any other season. It made no difference if, by the morning, snow covered the woods about half a meter high. The enormous logs had to be carried on their shoulders to the place where they loaded them, as any other time.

All work was performed by human labor. The horsecarts, loaded with stone, were also drawn by the prisoners and they pushed the stone carts as well. There was no trace of a modern machine that could have performed the *earthwork*.

It was typical of this inhuman labor that also the useless rocks, that were located on the top of the mountain, had to be removed by handcarts. The soil, covered with clay, was wet from the rain and the wheel of the handcart stuck in the mud. It was impossible for a man, even with the exertion of his energies to the last, to move this implement designed for the exploitation of man. Thus, a second man was furnished who pulled it with a rope from the front. When even that didn't work, because the ground was so wet, they harnessed a

third man to it, but they had to move and put all their energies behind it.

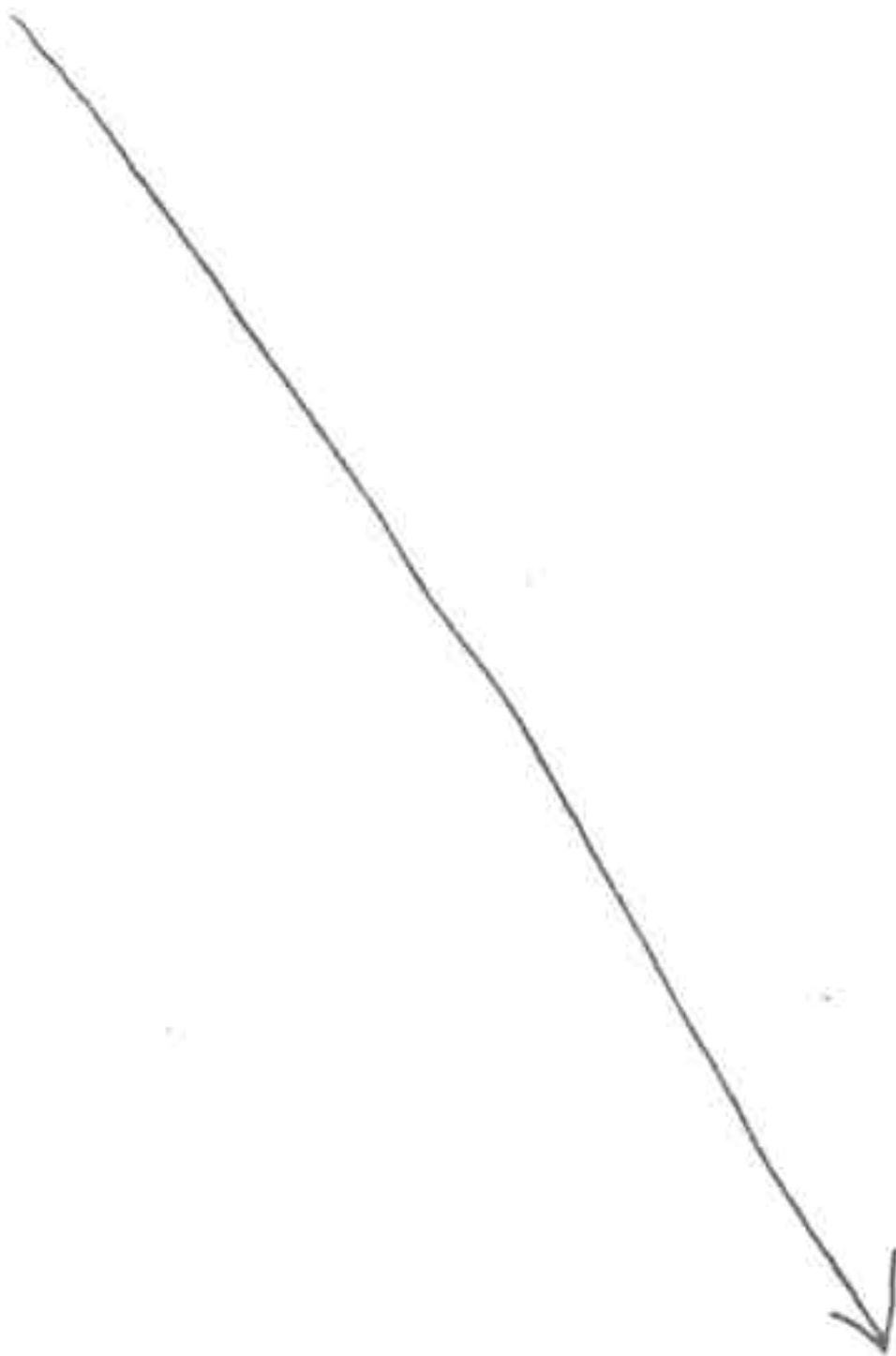
The work continued without interruptions. There occurred some working days of about twelve to fifteen hours of labor. In the first few years, no days of rest were given. As a rule, they required even harder work on Sundays. In the last years, however, they only required a lighter restful kind of work and there has also been a period where no work was required at all.

Punishments:

Beatings, which in one or two instances ended fatally, were daily occurrences. They were not even considered as punishment. The real punishment was, in the preliminary period, the underground *compound*, and in the subsequent period, in the *stockade*. Of the restricted diet, I have already spoken.

The underground *compound* (bunker) was a hole dug in the ground in which the rainwater collected and, as this could not dry up, there had always been mud in it up to the ankles. Once they placed some hay in it, too, but, with the passage of time, the unlucky creatures who were imprisoned there trod it into the clay. Here they kept the people for days and days without food and water. In the meantime, they have tortured them with the most varied methods in regular or irregular intervals. Those who were beaten half dead in the first few minutes were immediately forced to sing cheerful soldiers' songs

or folk tunes or popular songs. If they found out that one had a small child at home, then they gave one a piece of wood and shouted at him, "Rascal, here is your brat, dandle him." The unfortunate father, who had not seen his child for several years, had to dandle the lifeless piece of wood in his arms and had to sing a lullaby to it so the "baby" could sleep better. If he did not hold the wood stump in the correct way, they shouted at him, "Rascal, he can't even take care of his little brat."



There was one who was poured down with water in the winter and who was left in the cold. The unfortunate ^{person} ~~one~~ was not strong enough and he froze. ~~There~~ There was one whose hand they had burned. There was one who was beaten to death and there was one who was shot to death under unknown circumstances.

Shakedowns were held in the barracks regularly. These shakedowns ~~have~~ ^{were as a pretext} used for general beating up. At such occasions they have beaten up every inhabitant of the barrack, whether there was reason for it or not.

There was some discussion about the fact that the AVH had beaten people out of pleasure. Such mode of entertainment was also an experiment ^{to find out} ~~but~~ after how many slaps would one collapse? There were people they have tied ^{up} ~~to the parts~~ and dragged them up to the mine this way.

~~Since~~ Among the punishments we have to count the various forms of humiliation and shame. That they have called a bum and a scoundrel everyone is only natural. On special occasions the prisoner had to take off his cap and stepping aside wait at attention until the AVH soldier passed by him whom the prisoner had to call Mr. Supervisor. It was a custom to thank for the slaps received on such occasions. Thus, "Thank you, Mr. Supervisor, it will prove to my health and to my improvement." ^{a:}
The Punitive brigade was a special institution. The incorri^{a:}ble ones ~~where~~ detailed to this outfit and were tortured with ~~an~~ especially inhuman work and inhuman treatment. These unfortunate ^{people} ~~ones~~ had to lay prone when a prisoner, who was not a member of

the punitive brigade, passed by them, and to turn their heads away from him so they couldn't even see who passed by. It would be a pity to continue the enumeration of these various methods, as they seem to be sufficient to ^{form} ~~give~~ a picture of the variations applied.

Escape from the forced labor camp.

On May 20, 1951, Sunday work ^{was in progress} ~~proceeded~~ in the territory of the camp. It was barely 11:00 a.m., when, all of a sudden, everyone was chased into his barracks and the AVH held a quick head count. This was conducted in a very rough manner ^{from} ~~of~~ which we could conclude that something very unusual must have ^a happened. Later a few men were taken to the headquarters building for interrogation. No dinner or supper was given. We had to stand in formation even in the evening-from 11:00 a.m. on-and were permitted to lie down only around midnight. Even before going to bed, every occupant of the barracks was beaten up. By that time we surmised that an escape had occurred, ~~by~~ but we did not know who had escaped. The next day at dawn we observed thirty trucks in the camp area and on each of them there sat 30-30 AVH personnel. In the morning, at half hour intervals, a reconnaissance plane returned and circled over the territory of the camp. No one was permitted out of the barracks. People were constantly taken for interrogation. ~~■ ■■~~ Only after the passage of a few days did we find out that eight people escaped from the camp, and how they had escaped, we only found out much later, after our release.

Eight men had conspired some weeks ^{earlier} ~~before~~ to prepare their

escape. At nights, under the cover of their blanket and with the aid of the lamplight that simmered in from the outside, they had cleaned an ~~old~~ AVH uniform - everyone wore those but they were painted - they also prepared an AVH cap, cut out of wood a tommy-gun, and acquired a belt from somewhere. One of the prisoners who looked most like one of the guards, dressed in this uniform. The other two men took a drag~~s~~ plow, loaded it with bricks and sand and under the escort of their colleague, who was dressed in the AVH uniform, proceeded toward the fence in that direction where, outside the fence, there was a storage room construction underway. At the fence the "guard" ordered halt and asked the AVH guard who stood guard in the watch-tower, "Watch for these bums, my buddy, until I open the fence." Then he opened the fence, stepped through it with his seven conspirators, replaced the barbed wire and proceeded in the direction of the storage room ^{construction,} ~~to be built~~ which was outside the vision of the guard.

As they had not returned after a while, the guard became another worried, for ~~although~~ one of the prisoners was also ^{being} searched for by his brigade leader. So they discovered, barely after an hour and a half, that an escape had occurred. All the AVH of the country, and all the police were looking for the escapees, even the aid of an airplane was used. They had caught seven of them, some still in the country, and some in Czechoslovakia. The eighth one had not been returned and had been accounted for in our ~~daily~~ ^{of the day} order, as having been shot at Hegyeshalom.

The returned men received a thorough beating and were taken away to be tried. Escape was punished particularly severely in Hungary; and one received five years the other one an eight-year sentence to prison.

It was not true that the eighth ^{man} ~~one~~ got shot. He succeeded in his ^{ing} escape to the West after a few weeks. He registered with the Western organizations in Vienna, but no one believed him, as the adventure story of his escape really sounded incredible. They also refused to accept the list of the inhabitants of the camp as authentic, and only after long months were they willing to give news to the relatives of the prisoners, informing them of who stayed in the prison camp of Recsk. It has been said that ~~the~~ the Radio Free Europe and the French radio had repeated the list of names furnished by this prisoner in spite of all.

The behavior of the guards.

For guarding the camp of Recsk, the AVH ^{men} were specially selected. Some of them were transferred to this mountain location, which counted as an undesirable duty, as a punishment, and was also inconvenient for them. These have always looked for the most complex methods ^{of} ~~for~~ torturing and humiliating the prisoners. There were ~~an~~ approximate^{ly} three to four hundred guards watching the 1300 prisoners. Except for about two or three ^{in the} AVH personnel, they were all cruel. There was only one who had always behaved decently.

There were, however, several dozens of ^{them} /who tortured the prisoners with various methods of torture and searched for an opportunity

to do so.

The prisoners' behavior among themselves.

The first breach of the communal order was committed by the Social Democrats, to whom they lied that they were only kept in Recsk temporarily, until the construction of the camp ~~has not~~ ^{was} been completed. Then they would be released and only the rest of the "Fascists" would be kept there. That is why the Social Democrats accepted the role of informers and brigade leaders and sometimes had even exceeded the cruelty of the AVH.

Later the misery had completely transformed the people. The ordeal had converted decent and proud people into moral ruins. They informed upon each other and stole each other's bread.

In an approximate estimate about one-fifth of the camp contained ^{"built-in"} ~~"stank"~~ stooges.

Thus, nothing could be done ~~me~~ without the ^{camp} ~~plant~~ ^{managem} ~~ent~~ immediately finding out about it, since the circle of informers had continuously been expanded and one could never know exactly who had already been "organized".

There were some who could remain human, true, extraordinarily few.

Cultural life.

In the initial period there could be no talk of such a thing. People were so much under the influence of the inhuman labor and of the terror that there was hardly any opportunity for spiritual expressions. Later on the people's desire ~~for~~ and

demand for, a cultural life had developed in a miraculous ~~way~~ way. Small groups were formed and these had discussed ~~poetry~~ poetry, music, and various sciences. They had copied entire literary works, edited a musical encyclopedia, and even produced a study in natural philosophy with pencils manufactured by themselves and written upon paper obtained from sacks which contained mortar.

Of course these works always fell victims to ~~sk~~ shakedowns, but man's wonderful desire for the preservation of culture had reproduced some of these anew in the midst of the greatest misery. It must have been the influence of a supernatural power that prompted these wretched people not to be afraid of the most severe punishments if they wanted to write ^{down} a poem ^{by} from Ady or Gyula Juhasz.

About this problem I cannot speak at random, I would ruin the thing which I have to say. How can I express what the ^M man in the Nude means.

The dissolution of the Camp.

The release of those retained in the international ^{ment} camps had commenced after Stalin's death. This did not transpire as easily in Recsk. First everyone's "case" was examined. This work was ~~performed~~ ^{performed} by extremely stupid, uneducated AVH personnel who were not only young and incompetent but also wanted to charge every one with some kind of a crime.

How this had been tran^sacted is well demonstrated in the following authentic ^{story of an incident of these proceedings} ~~about this activity~~: "What is your name," asked the AVH sub-lie^tenant. "XY," answers the prisoner of Recsk. "Why are you here?" - "I don't know." - "What, do you

mean to say that you don't know why you are being retained here for already the fifth year?" - "I don't know." - "Well listen here, I shall read to you the record that was signed by you at ^{the} that time in number 60 Andrassy Street." With this the AVH reads the record according to which the prisoner confessed five years ago that he was a spy. "Well, do you know why you are here now?" asks the AVH again, ^{having} after reading the record. - "No," answers the prisoner. - "Was it not you who signed the record?" - "But ~~that~~ yes." - "Well then?" - "They forced me." - "Well anyone can say that. Are you willing to sign the record again?" asked the AVH. - "Sure, it doesn't make any difference if I signed a record of the same contents for if you only have the one that I have already signed," answers the prisoner quite logically and deeming it unnecessary to extend ^d the period ^{of} for the interrogation in his lethargy. "Well, let's go, sign it!" says the AVH not tolerating any contradiction. The prisoner signs the record and wants to go. "Wait. I have not yet taken your personal data! When ~~where~~ were you born?" - The prisoner tells him, he also tells him where. "What is your mother's name?" - "T.M." answers the unfortunate ~~one~~ who wants to leave now by all means. "What? what is ^{her} your name?" - "T.M." repeats the prisoner. - "That is impossible, there is an entirely different name in this log book. Well, give me the real name of your mother!" - "That's what I gave you," answers the man. The AVH becomes impatient, slaps the interrogated man two or three times in the face, and tells him to scam.

It was only in the course of the court trial, where by the way, the prisoner was sentenced to five years in prison, ^{that the fact came out} that he signed a deposition of someone else. Namely, there were two similarly named prisoners in that camp. No complications evolved from that. The other one also got five years in prison. It makes so little difference why ~~we~~ one should be imprisoned in Recsk for three years, and before that for two years somewhere else.

The last prisoners were released in October of 1953, from Recsk.

The number of those who perished in the forced labor camp.

During the three years about 120-130 men died. This figure hardly reaches ten per cent. But if we consider that in this camp, principally strong young men were being ^{held} carried, then it ^{is so} appears fairly high. This, especially, ^{because} since the number of the dead had not been evenly spread over the period. ^{them} Mainly 80% of these perished in the winter of 1951-1952 by starvation.

Of those who were released from the camp, about thirty to forty people became crippled so they were unable to work.

It is said that the forced labor camp of Recsk also has one AVH dead, one sergeant who was particularly cruel and who was during the Revolution, according to some eyewitnesses "torn to pieces" (thank ^G god not by those from Recsk).