

Cultural life in Hungary was directed by the Party in two ways: (1) through different immediate and indirect Party organs, (2) through Party members or non-Party members in charge of different functions.

The Central Committee's Scientific, Cultural as well as canvassing and "agitprop" divisions were the supreme <sup>directive</sup> ~~institutions~~ organs of scientific and cultural life and <sup>of</sup> mass education, by using, among others, the media of press, film, theater, etc.

Nation-wide leaders received their instructions either from the <sup>P</sup>olitical Committee or from the Central Committee's <sup>C</sup>secretary in charge of Cultural Affairs. (József Révai, in pre-revolutionary times, Marosán and Kállai, at the moment.) The Scientific and Cultural divisions of the Party's Central Committee supplied the Cultural Divisions of the Budapest and county Party Committees, as well as the cultural divisions of the Trade Unions and Councils, with the adequate instructions - either directly, or through the lower forums of the Party. The scientific and cultural divisions also directed the so-called Artists' Union. These unions (for instance the Union of Theater and Motion Picture Art - ( ) were supposed to solve the theoretical <sup>istic h</sup> problems of the individual artist/branches, by organizing discussions, lectures, etc.

The aforementioned union of Theater and Motion Picture Art had divisions of directing, acting, dramaturgy, stage management, research, as well as a significant scientific library. (Its chief secretary was appointed by the <sup>P</sup>olitical Committee.)

The persons in charge of different functions, for instance theater managers and directors, school principals<sup>a</sup>, newspaper publishers, officials of trade unions and councils, received their daily instructions - as far as administrative affairs were concerned - from their immediate superiors, but, on <sup>the</sup> one hand, they had to report weekly on their work to the local Party Committee (which, <sup>in</sup> on its turn, received instructions from the Central Party Committee - if it happened to be an institution of national importance - or indirectly from the political, Scientific, Cultural, and/or agitprop division) and, on the other hand, they received instructions or criticism from the respective Party organ (theaters from the Central Committee, schools from the local Councils, rather local Party organ), or at informal meetings and, sometimes, at professional discussions. These instructions were mostly of a theoretical nature, but sometimes they dealt with personnel or working problems (theaters were told whom to hire, whom to fire, who are going to be <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ members for the coming season.)

Until 1953, total centralization prevailed - after 1953, the aspiration for more independence of the local Party and Council organs broke the central discipline. The forming of a local opinion (in many cases, that of an institution) prevailed and often opposed the opinion of the Central organs (Central Committee, Ministries). Many leaders of institutions "mis-<sup>the</sup>used" the rivalry for power between a local and central organs for the conveyance of their own will. The continuous struggle

around centralization and decentralization broke the iron discipline and the ground was ready not only for the forming, and in many cases even enforcement, of independent opinion of the subordinate organs, but for the expression and even assertion of the opinion of single artists' groups or individuals. Rehabilitation in many cases reactivated persons who either agreed with the new strivings or simply supported them because of their antipathy toward Rakosi and his circle. This political atmosphere favored the spiritual preparation of the Revolution.

In the field of the theater the main directing and controlling role of the Party consisted in the appointment of theatrical leaders, organizing of companies, choice of plays and establishing the frequency of performances. The organization of dramatic companies started each year in April and ended in August. Theater managers, representatives of the actors' union, of the theater division of the Ministry of Peoples' Culture and of the Central Committee of the Party decided on subsequent meetings (human "fare") about the composition of the companies. In these meetings, only in exceptionally few cases were the will and desire of individuals taken into consideration. Contracts were always made according to the decisions of the politically strongest theater managers.

The managers had to set up the repertory of next year's plays by the end of May. This repertory plan, before 1953, had the following composition: 30 percent Soviet plays, 50 percent

Hungarian classics, 10 percent new Hungarian plays, 10 percent other "Peoples' Democracies", 20 percent classics, 15 percent other. As there were only a few Soviet or new Hungarian plays, their performances had to be as frequent as to fill out two-thirds of the performing days. These performances, however, were not attended, in spite of the most persistent recruiting of the public, theaters were filled only to 30-40 percent, although tickets to these performances were sold with discounts of ~~from~~ 10-40 percent.

At the so-called Program Conferences on plays to be performed and their frequency of performance, held by the Ministry, Actors' Union, Central Committee of the Party, discussions went on for several weeks - the theater managers always wanted more Western plays, while the Party more Soviet ones.

The finally accepted plans always had to be changed, during the season - due to the subsequent failures of Soviet and Peoples' Democracies plays, the theater had to produce new ones. These "new" plays were, in the majority of cases, classic dramas.

After 1953, a thaw was noticeable also in this field. Theater managers claimed more independence, the resistance of the Central Committee of the Party weakened, subvention was reduced (as a consequence of the general economic ~~conditions~~ conditions), thus the composition of the repertory was significantly changed. So-called bourgeois play-wrights (Molnar, Heltei, Brody) were included in the repertory, and in the field of the operetta: Lehar, Kalman, Huszka, etc. Many Western classical as well as

contemporary writers: Anouilh, G.B. Shaw, Sartre, etc. Their plays were shown in long series (Saint Joan had 150 performances, Cyrano - 300) in Budapest as well as in the provinces. Thus, the balance of performances changed completely: Soviet and Peoples' Democracies plays had no more than 10-20 percent of the sum total. Plays, criticizing the deficiencies, failures of the regime appeared, such as Holnapre kiderül (György Sós), Üborkafa (Ernö Urban) and the Political Cabaret with its daring and sharp humor.

In so-called "Theater Meetings", playwrights, actors, directors boldly criticized the patronizing attitude of the Party and <sup>of</sup> the Ministry and claimed a new, colorful, up to date theater policy. Articles of the same content appeared in the periodical of the union: "Theater and Film Art". All this was in accordance with the writers' aspirations. Discussions arising around single plays, for instance around <sup>d</sup> The Tragedy of Man became affairs of nation-wide interest and thus greatly contributed to the liberalization of the political atmosphere. During this period, 1955-1956, the Party organs were in a completely defensive position.

Subvention. <sup>hundred</sup> percent of the expenses of all theaters were supplied by the government in the form of a quarterly subvention. As the tickets were relatively cheap, all the theaters were in deficit, even if all seats were sold. The governments yearly loss, as far as theaters and circuses were concerned, was about

eighty million forints. The Subvention of the Ministry of Peoples' Culture was several hundred ~~of~~ millions ~~of~~ forints yearly. The government's yearly contribution for cultural ~~expenses~~<sup>purposes</sup> was two milliards forints - about 4 percent<sup>e</sup> of the entire budget. Apart from this, 0.6 percent of the profit of all institutions and enterprises had to be used for cultural purposes.

Scholarships. Scholarships were ~~is~~ given in all fields of art and science, partly during the<sup>school</sup> ~~college~~ year, partly after graduation, during the so-called practicing years. This scholarship~~s~~ covered about 50 percent of the ~~ix~~ living expenses during the one-two years ~~of~~ after graduation, and 70-80 percent during the college years.

Academy of dramatic and motion picture art. Admission was granted on the basis of a screening examination. The decisive factor was the social background. The teachers were the top representatives in the specific field. Majors fields were: acting (drama, operetta), directing (film, theater), dramaturgy; these were again divided into specialized sub-branches, according to the nature of the major field. Length of studies: four-five years. Students were screen<sup>ed</sup> every year again~~s~~ and again, mainly on the basis of their political attitude, however, the teachers, in opposition with the directorship of the Academy,

tried to judge their pupils on the basis of their talents.  
 (The Academy became one of the hot-beds of the Revolution -  
 see the case of József Galí.)

Old actors' homes. Named after Mari Jászai and Árpád Odry. In two big, beautifully furnished buildings lived the old actors and theatrical workers. Considerable part of the old actors were admitted to these homes. The initiative for the founding of homes came from the actors; their organizing committee financed, from the income of <sup>special</sup> performances, <sup>for</sup> ~~arranged with~~ the purpose of founding these homes, the construction and the furnishing. The government, <sup>u</sup> urged by the public, was forced to take over and manage the homes.

Organization of audiences. In Hungary, and in the Peoples' Democracies in general, the recruiting of audiences was one of the most effective methods of the "education" of the public and, at the same time, one of the most vividly debated institutions. In order to understand the essential point of the question, we have to go back to the years after the "liberation".

Until 1948, all theaters, except the traditional state theaters (Opera house, <sup>M</sup> municipal, <sup>N</sup> national theater, <sup>T</sup> Theater of Szeged), were privately owned. Political parties, however, tried very hard to use some specific theaters as a base for propaganda. The Social Democrats, Communists, Peasants' Party, and the Smallholders' Party (the so-called coalition of government,

or government parties) occupied with equal rapidity the field of the theater and the distribution of concessions was effected ~~on~~ on the ~~basis~~ basis of parity. Concessions given to single Party members made the theater an organ of the respective party, because the ideology of the manager prevailed not only in the program policy but also in the <sup>selection</sup> ~~engaging~~ of his employees - members of his company. The cultural department of the respective party could enforce its will through the person of its manager, who ~~owned~~ owed his position to his party. With the growing strain of the struggle of party policies and the step-by-step gaining of ground of the Communists, their influence prevailed more and more in the field of the theater, as well. Following the principle of parity, in each theater, regardless of the party affiliation of its manager, single members of all parties had to be represented in the administration, among directors, dramaturgs<sup>ist</sup>, actors and workers. In practice, this worked out in the following way: Communists penetrated into the non-Communist theaters and founded the theater's Communist Party organization. These organizations gained more and more ground through their aggressive and demagogic methods; they terrorized the manager who could not expect any protection from his own R party, which also had a "bourgeois mentality" and thus was completely helpless against Communist maneuvers. With their infiltration into the Workers' Unions, protecting the rights of ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> members with their <sup>demagogic</sup> ~~strategic~~ and impossible-to-carry-out claims, concerning salaries and work protection, the Communists caused permanent



uneasiness in the non-Communist theaters. On the other hand, they also gained some popularity, being the only "fighting organ", "safeguarding the interests of the workers". In the theaters, just as in <sup>the</sup> political life, they seized every opportunity to increase their influence, beginning with individual terror, continuing with irresponsible economic claims and promises, unworthy of a government party. At the same time, workers of other parties, engaged in at Communist theaters on the basis of parity, either belonged only nominally to other parties but illegally ~~in~~ received their instructions from the Communist party (these employees were to be found numerous in every field of endeavor and performed useful work for the Communists), or, after getting into a Communist theater, were completely helpless, partly due to ~~parities caused by their~~ clinging to their jobs, partly due to disagreement among themselves (three different parties being represented) and thus being unable to perform any effective action. ~~Work~~ Working conditions were more favorable at Communist theaters as "the <sup>P</sup> party" had more money than the others (not only from the Russians but also from profitable industrial, commercial and banking ~~firms~~ firms in their possession).

The National Theater, the first theater of the country, was under Communist leadership. (Tomás Major) Thus, economically and cultural-politically, the Communist influence prevailed far beyond the numerical proportions of the Communist members. In

economic field, the Communists could prove with facts their achievements in the theaters where they were in power; on the other hand, the National Theater always had a spiritual leading role in Hungary. (To become a member of its company, had ~~almost~~ been an almost inaccessible dream for most of the actors.) These two factors were excellent means in the hands of Major, who spread his power like a spider web over all the theaters of the country.

Along with the Communists gradually gaining ground in the theaters, they occupied more and more important positions in the public institutions which were directing the cultural policy. At the Ministry of Peoples' Culture, the cultural department of the city hall, the Ministries of Interior and Finance, even the head of the department or his deputy were Communists. Even if the head of the department was not a Communist, <sup>but</sup> only his deputy, in practice it was always the Communist's will which had to be carried out - <sup>an</sup> ~~in~~ executive who belonged to another party than the Communist ~~one~~ could never get any backing; thus, out of fear of losing his job, he rarely dared contradict his Communist subordinate. Thus, naturally, the co-operation between the Communists in different theaters and those of the leading organs increased and they used their acquired ~~strength~~ strength for attaining more power. (This kind of policy was labelled by Rakosi: "Salami-~~cut~~ policy" - the liquidation of the enemy by the Communists slice by slice.)

The Social Democratic Party was the only one which showed some slight resistance but even that party was too weak and yielding in front of the Communists. (This may be explained partly with the presence of the Russians and <sup>of</sup> the AVH, and that of traitors within the Party, partly with the democratic, non-terroristic nature of the Social Democratic Party.) (As <sup>the</sup> Social Democratic exponent of the <sup>[Hungarian Theater]</sup> Magyar Szinhaz, I had an opportunity to experience the gradual changes in the methods; my past role there ~~was~~ severely influenced all aspects of my life until 1954; this is true for all former Social Democratic functionaries, they all felt the consequences of the "past sins".)

This gradual Communist advancement naturally affected the program policy of the theaters. As the latter is a means of propaganda, it is, as such, a very decisive question for the Communists. "To entertain~~x~~ educationally", this Russian slogan was characteristic for the whole of the Communist culture policy. In this sentence the word "educational" was essential; the "entertain" had to stay only because in a bourgeois society the public usually went for entertainment to a theater or a <sup>movie</sup> ~~mixte~~ (in the field of the film, the same methods were used) and it would have been a failure to tell the public, used to entertainment: "you have to go to the theater in order to learn from the vivid example the truth of the Party principles, to see how Communists are ready to sacrifice themselves, to learn

about the enemy (abroad or at home) and going home, you have to exercise self-criticism because of your <sup>past</sup> individualistic, bourgeois life and attitude and make a vow that, from now on, you will try your best to live like the Communists you have seen tonight on the stage - sacrifice yourself and your family for the Party and the people and, at the same time, watch with vigilance in order to unmask the enemy and smash him, wherever you find him." So the word "entertain" had to remain.

The decisive change in the program policy ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ occurred in 1948, the year when the Communists overtook the power. As ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ <sup>a</sup> result of the nationalization, the Communist Party received significant influence in the management of all theaters, and as in all theaters Communist managers were installed, the program policy also underwent a rapid change. Western plays disappeared from the stage, classics became rare, bourgeois operettas disappeared, there were hardly any Hungarian classics <sup>etc.</sup> - the theaters played Soviet, Russian classicals, Peoples' Democracies' and new Hungarian plays in an overwhelming majority. Examples: Hungarian plays: Melyszántás (Deepploughing); Netköznapiak hősei (Everyday's Heroes); Gyilkosok (Assassins); Soviet plays: Front mögött (Behind the Front); Új barázdát szánt a föld eke (Ploughing of new Furrows); Ifjú gárda (The young Guard), etc.

~~Against these~~  
~~Toward these~~ schematic, badly written, mendacious plays, glamorizing the painful act of work, a two-fold resistance

asserted itself immediately.

At the theater, the actors themselves hated these plays, because they glorified <sup>outlook on life</sup> ~~as a world view~~ which differed from their own, because they were mendacious, openly served the Russians' imperialistic aspirations and because they offered practically no acting opportunities. The public almost unanimously rejected these plays essentially due to the same causes.

Theaters played before empty houses, which were filled only when the dramas reflecting normal human feelings (classics) were performed.

To stop these conditions, something had to be done without delay - the Party organized the nation wide Public Recruiting Network.

They completely broke away from the bourgeois ticket methods and issued a new slogan: "To go to the theater and movies is a Communist's duty and, at the same time, means taking sides for or against the regime." The theaters engaged so-called "public organizers or recruiters" (three-fifteen to each theater) who had to visit the factories and offices, and through the public recruiters of the factories and offices and the "culture activists" (kulturaktivak) of the Trade Unions - who did their activities after the working hours, as a "social work" - they "mobilized the masses". The essence of their work was: they accepted in consignment tickets for ~~such~~ plays which were considered useful by the Party organs, ~~they~~ they visited the workers at their jobs or at home, told them about the contents and importance of

the plays, as pointed out by the Party, and pestered them into accepting to go with a group of ten-hundred on a given date to a given theater, mainly because the contents of the play happened to coincide with the subject of the seminar, and the lesson could be excellently used at the next session.

Going to the theater is naturally not obligatory but it was the organizer's considered opinion that if the worker didn't go, it definitely might be resented by the Party. Thus, they terrorized/<sup>people</sup> poured in groups into the theaters which, in consequence, had/<sup>a</sup> series of/<sup>a</sup> hundred performances of the worst Soviet or new Hungarian plays. To ~~these~~ <sup>these</sup> plays, <sup>a</sup> theaters sold tickets with a reduction of 30-60 percent. With ~~them~~ this "push-button" method, they could fill theaters and movies with a public of ten thousand but, at the same time, the masses learned to hate the Soviet and the new Hungarian culture, and through these, even more, the Soviet Union and the Party.

After 1953, the situation changed also in this field. Program-policy had been "loosened" - the favorite classics and operettas, etc., returned, the Party's leading role lost ground, the public organizers of the theaters and offices considered their work as a business and persuaded the people to see the plays, which in their own opinion, were best. The theaters, still tied to the program-policy, ~~try~~ tried to recruit audiences for politically important plays, as well. Thus a strange, new form of tie-in sale came into being. For instance,

tickets to the Csardas-Queen (Csardaskiralyno) were only available if one bought, simultaneously, tickets to the Soviet play Stormy Sundown (Viharos alkonyat). This raised a great deal of discussion about program policy between the theater managers, audience recruiters, the public on one hand, and the Party and the labor unions, on the other. This struggle spread all over the nation and, ~~as~~ as before 1953, the Party organs were the ones which made a political question<sup>of</sup> the theater, now, after 1953, the masses considered it a political question, and discussions centered around plays became the subjects of a plebiscite, for instance The Tragedy of Man affair. The masses got excessively wild about the government managing the theaters and the question grew far beyond its importance, under normal conditions. As all cultural problems, it became a political one and had a reversed effect on the Party.

In 1956, the whole field of the theater, along with the audience recruiting organization, played an important role in the spiritual preparation of the Revolution, precisely due to the shortsighted, inhuman, uncultured methods used by the Party since 1948.

Coming back to the spiritual preparation of the Revolution, do you know, Respondent asked me, whose the lion's share was? - Shakespeare's. The Rajk affair is described in Richard III in the scene where Lomell and Radcliff come in with Hastings'

head and are greeted by Gloucester, Buckingham and the Mayor. The AVH system is described in several scenes of - Hamlet. We looked up the aforementioned scenes & (I happened to have the comedies, histories and ~~xxx~~ tragedies ~~xx~~ of Shakespeare with me.)

"Do you begin to understand," he asked me, "why Hungarians adored the classics during the decade of Communist rule?"

#### Respondent's background

In 1949, he became the deputy economic chief of the Varosi Theater, Royal Színház and Kamara Variété. In the Municipal Theater there were performed operas, in the Royal revues, and in the Kamara Variete, varieties. Respondent was accused by the Budapest Party Committee for the following "crimes": in the Municipal Theater transcendent, anti-marxist operas are being performed (Faust, Cavalleria Rusticana): at the Royal: American plays are being performed (Gershwin, An American in Paris) and in the Kamara bourgeois plays are being performed (Quartet). On top of that, he is not willing to fire actors and dancers who have a bourgeois background. The accusation, in one sentence, was: Respondent is being responsible for having smuggled in capitalist culture into Hungarian culture. The investigation lasted a year (Central Committee of the Party, Cultural Department of the AVH); as a result, he was fired as unreliable and was deported.

But the world changed, actors became stabilized, and some of them who had "push", arranged for him to be able to come back to



Budapest after nine months in the provinces. He became the economic chief of the Falu Színház (Village Theater) <sup>[Touring Theater Company]</sup> - his salary was 7,000 forints less than his previous one - this was the <sup>punishment</sup> ~~re-primination~~. He stayed in this job until December of 1953.

In December of 1953, Ferenc Jánosy (the son-in-law of Imre Nagy) became the first deputy of the Minister of the Peoples' Culture (Darvas). Ferenc Jánosy told him that the Central Economic Directorship of the Theaters is being formed and Respondent is being entrusted as its chief. "If you do not accept this position, we'll be obliged to feel that you are the partisan of the ancient regime." He accepted it.

After 1953, his part became more and more important because the knowledge of Western languages became a prime requisite. In '56, he came to Paris to arrange the tour of the Hungarian Circus. One of the ~~reasons~~ <sup>for which</sup> reasons he accepted the job was that it brought with it the possibility of traveling. But he could only travel alone - his wife was not allowed to accompany him.

In Paris he made the acquaintance of the Director of the Bertram Mills Circus - one night the two of them went to the Moulin Rouge. They have had champagne... ~~Shall I~~ "Shall I, or shall I not, this was this question. - Shall I ask this man whom I did not know yesterday to be my accomplice, to help me get out of my country where I cannot live any more?! Would he understand?! How shall I, in a couple of minutes, at the Moulin

Rouge, tell him what life is like in Hungary, why I am so des-  
parate that I/<sup>am willing to</sup> put my fate into the hands an unknown person?  
Shall I?" He did. His story was not long. At the end, the  
Director~~x~~ said: "You tell me what I should do for you and I  
will do it." The plan worked.

At home, <sup>his wife</sup> received a collective passport - she was accepted as  
a member of the group of actors who were allowed to make an  
excursion to Vienna, by boat. When she had the necessary papers  
in her hand, she wrote to his friend. The situation is ripe,  
send me the cable. The cable came. It was from the director of  
the Bertram Mills Circus and it stated that Respondent is ex-  
pected in London to transact the 15,000 English pounds business.  
He took the cable to Darvas who immediately called up the pas-  
port division (this one was not identical with the one which  
issued collective passports). In a couple of days, he had an  
individual passport. He took his wife to the boat, said good-  
bye, ~~x~~ in front of everybody. When the boat arrived in Vienna,  
he was on the dock. No explanations were necessary, all the  
actors congratulated them heartily.

The economic and technical directorship of the theaters. " it  
was a middle organ between the theaters and the Ministry, it  
was a financing organ. It gave the subsidies to the theaters and  
took care also of ~~the~~ technical problems (modernization, re-  
pairs, etc.). The Directorship was responsible toward the  
Ministry of Finance for the economic situation of the theaters

and circuses, and for the fulfillment of the program policy.

Theaters. Their managers were appointed by the Minister of the Peoples' Culture, with the exception of the ~~one~~<sup>directors</sup> of the Opera and the National Theater, who were appointed by the Council of Ministers (the recommendation of the Scientific<sup>ic</sup> and Cultural Division of the ~~the~~ Central Committee of the Party was also necessary). In the case of Budapest theater managers, the recommendation of the Scientific and Cultural division of the Budapest Party Committee was necessary.

The manager was responsible for everything which was going on in his theater - as far as responsibility was concerned, there was a constant fight between him and the theatrical chief division of the Ministry. The problem of responsibility was also taken up at the discussions of the Petofi Circle.

Each theater had an artistic director who had to be a graduate of the Academy of Dramatic Art.

There also was a technical director - political appointee - the main criterion<sup>o</sup> being his workers' kader.

The third executive was the economic chief who necessarily had to have a business background.

In <sup>d</sup>addition to the aforementioned three top executives, there were two-three directors, one-two dramaturgs<sup>ist</sup>, six-seven administrative personnel, actors, about fifty in Budapest theaters and thirty-thirty-five in provincial theaters. The number of the technical personnel was about fifty to sixty in Budapest theaters,

and twenty-twenty-five in provincial theaters. Of course, the numbers of the above-mentioned categories were much bigger at the Opera and at the National Theater.

The dramatic theaters of Budapest were: the Hungarian National Theater - its intimate theater being the Kamara (ex-Belvárosi); Madách, the intimate theater of which was the Kicsi Madách. [small] [People's Army] Néphadsereg Theater (Vigszínház, rebuilt by Mihály Farkas - he was a very vain man and wanted the army to have the most beautiful, absolutely modern theater) its intimate theater was the József Attila which played in the suburbs, not only dramas, but also musical comedies.

The Petöfi [Youth] (Ifjúsági) Theater with its intimate theater: Józsi.

Political cabarets were played in the Vidám and Kiss Theaters. [Gay]

Operettas were played in the Fővárosi, Operette and in the Blaha Lujza Theater, which also presented musical comedies. [Capital's]

The Falú Színház [Touring Theater Company] (Village Theater) had twelve touring companies, the main being stationed in Budapest. Two distinct types of actors functioned at the Village Theater: 1) good actors but unreliable politically 2) most ungifted actors. The Village Theater performed dramas, operettas and musical comedies. There was also a Marionette Theater (Bábszínház) in Budapest which played in the afternoons for children and in the evening for grown-ups.

Operas were performed at the "opera" ~~xx~~ and at the Erkel Theater.

The latter presented mainly light operas - Italian ones.

There were three very significant open air theaters: the [Margaret Island] Margitszigeti, where operas and ballet were presented, the [200] Allatkerti where operettas and variety programs were presented, and the Károlyi Teri where mainly concerts were given.

Besides the above three, there <sup>are</sup> about twenty-two open air theaters in Budapest, the majority of which would play two-three times per week. The Margitszigeti, Allatkerti, Károlyi Teri open air theaters gave performances <sup>every</sup> ~~each~~ second day.

There were also two Variété theaters - the Budapest Variété and the Kamara Variété. There was one permanent circus in Budapest and nine circuses toured the country.

The cities of Szeged, Miskolc, Debrecen had three companies (drama, operetta, opera) in one theater building.

The cities of Pécs, Győr, Szolnok, Kecskemét, Békéscsaba, Kaposvár, Eger had permanent theaters.

An organ which provided Budapest and the country with classic music was the National Philharmonia (Országos Filharmonia) - it staged about 3,000 concerts per year.

Each trade union, factory, and council had a cultural division - these staged about 3,000 programs per year. The latter were mixed: about 40 percent was supplied by professional and the rest by the so-called culture guard (kulturgárda) of the respective union, factory or council.

It is undoubtedly true that the effectiveness of the articles which appeared in the <sup>I</sup>Irodalmi Ujsag was due to the fact that the cultural organs had prepared the terrain ahead of time - the Irodalmi Ujsag only changed the direction in which the, by now, cultured masses should move.

Hungarians did have to pay a terrific ~~sum~~ price for being awakened intellectually - and this awakening was due, paradoxically, to the Communist regime!

I had dinner with respondent and his wife. She is an extremely attractive person who <sup>was</sup> had a revue star in the '40's. She was, at the time, married to a capitalist who had been imprisoned when his factories were nationalized. If she had consented to divorce him, when he was put into prison, her career would not have suffered. This she did not do, so she was relegated to the Village Theater and lived in the utmost misery for years. When her husband was released from prison she divorced him and shortly afterwards married - my Respondent.

Dinner was extremely pleasant, it lasted about three hours, and during this time we touched many, many questions of personal and general interest. I'm going to try and summarize some of her opinions.